

Monuments, Memorial Sites, and Commemoration Sites, Recount History



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ABSTRACT: Over time, the live memories of survivors have disappeared, and it has become clear that the memory of the Jewish Holocaust could disappear entirely in the absence of institutional efforts to preserve it. The understanding that collective memory can be preserved only through proactive efforts led to the development of formal and informal curricula for Holocaust education. The main assumption is that Holocaust education has the potential to generate a moral transformation. In light of this conclusion the question is: What kind of changes do we seek and how should we accomplish them?

This study deals with a case study of one of the constitutive historical events of the 20th century: commemoration of the Holocaust. The study focuses on the Experiential Learning Method of educating about Holocaust remembrance and commemoration and about Holocaust monuments. Over the years memorial centers have been added, which contain additional monuments commemorating the story of a specific place and/or personal stories.

One of the currently customary methods of commemoration in Israel is the journey to Poland, to the labor, concentration, and death camps, to the various memorial sites and monuments. This journey is undertaken by young and old, groups and singles, from all over the world and particularly from Israel. Since many of those taking the journey are young people at an age when personal, national, and historical identity is formed, a time when the young acquire their educational values, it is particularly important to ascertain who is charged with passing on the beacon of memory. This leads to weighty questions regarding the identity of the guides who lead these journeys and the contents they choose to impart to the participants, the guidance sites, and the method of guidance. Who will tell the story? How will the story be told? What will remain of the story?

This study discusses in addition, a case study of guides from Israel charged with imparting this chapter of human history. In order to explore their impact, interviews were held with 47 guides, the large majority of whom are Israeli born, a majority academics, and many hold advanced degrees. The research findings indicate that they aim the commemoration beacon primarily at guidance sites in Poland. The study explored other diverse essential parameters regarding the profile of “guides to Poland” – where did they study? What is their personal affiliation with the subject? What is their position on the universal and Jewish narrative of the Holocaust?

In light of the interviews conducted, it appears that almost all of them have the necessary tools to convey the most complete and comprehensive educational message. Accordingly, this issue was explored and most of the guides reported that the most influential message of commemoration is conveyed primarily through visits to camps and ghettos in Poland. This conclusion generates a theoretical, practical, philosophical, moral, and educational question indicating the “exporting of historical memory”. Should our entire educational focus indeed be exclusively on Poland? How can we preserve the ethos of the affiliation between the Holocaust of the Jews and heroism in the Holocaust, as well as heroism in Israel and its building, if we disregard the many commemoration and memorial sites within Israel?

Do the journeys to the camps and to the valley of death in Poland, which are led by these guides, not create a distortion in the instilling of Holocaust remembrance and heritage, by disregarding the many commemoration sites and monuments throughout Israel? Aiming the beacon of commemoration at Poland, outside Israel, prevents exposure of the public, and particularly teenagers, to the natural association formed in Israel between Holocaust and revival, which preserves the connecting link between the generations.

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A. Around the world

The world is full of monuments, memorial buildings, museums, sculptures, memorial tablets, commemoration structures, and many others that commemorate global events in general and the events of the Holocaust in particular, which are a Jewish and universal constitutive event. Nonetheless additional memorial buildings, commemoration sites, and monuments are constantly being established in Israel and elsewhere. In 2012, for instance, a commemoration center in memory of the Holocaust events was established in Drancy, northern Paris, on the site of France’s main transit camp, where most of the Jews were concentrated on their

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way to the death camps. The same year, a documentation center and museum for the Holocaust and for human rights were opened in Belgium as well. These were situated in the Dossin barracks in Mechelen, which have been reopened. Even in Muslim Morocco, in North Africa, an attempt was recently made to erect a monument for the Holocaust, an attempt that failed for obvious reasons. After the conclusion of the Holocaust events, it became necessary to relate, document, and commemorate the tragedy that had befallen millions of victims, but most cruelly and blatantly the Jewish people. Memorial books initially filled this function, before the tradition of memorial sites was officially instituted. Historian James Young claims, with regard to the memorial books, that: "Every time we pick up the book, we will feel that we are standing by the graves of the victims, because the murderers deprived them even of that" (Young, 1996, p. 596).

The various commemoration sites are intended to continue recounting and commemorating the battle, the deportation, the war, or the execution of ethnic groups, nations, or members of different religions, including the events of the Holocaust. Historical events that occurred in the distant past, as well as in the recent past, are fated to be forgotten. The human brain has a limited ability to remember and to preserve in its grey matter unlimited information. This is a fact that has accompanied us since the beginning of humanity. The phenomenon is increasing constantly with the technological developments and progress that are flooding our senses with lots of information and intellectual stimuli (Davidovitch & Dorot, 2020).

Hence, it is the nature of historical facts and events, important as they may be, to be forgotten. This is particularly evident with the passing of time, as Holocaust survivors age and die. Artists, Holocaust survivors and their descendants, politicians, social activities, various organizations and others, are searching for techniques of commemoration. What is the best and most impactful way of preserving memory is a question that is occupying our mind, soul, and moral views.

The space of forgetfulness is occupied by memorial sites and monuments that constitute a most common means of commemoration. According to the definition of lexicographer Avraham Ben Shoshan, a monument is any sculpture, architectural site, pillar, pile of stones, which maintain a meaningful set of symbols that relate the story of a historical event (Even Shoshan, 1974). Gideon Ofrat adds that "artistically, a monument is a work of art designated to meet a certain social need and therefore its design is clear and its symbolism coherent. It is an icon, i.e., that which is symbolized is present in the symbol, the supreme idea symbolized seeks to be an example and model for us, the viewers, in our conduct" (Ofrat, 1982). Moreover, means of commemoration have "a double purpose: remembering the past and commemorating it, and setting values and collective social tasks for the future in order to shape collective memory" (Brutin, 2005, p.1). These sites aim to bridge the paradox between the past events that are commemorated in the present, which is temporary while also commemorating memory for all times. As mentioned, preservation of memory is essential for various reasons. Among them, learning the facts and the historical story, granting respect to the dead, a place of gathering for the survivors, and more than all – education to prevent the repetition of similar cases in the future. Remembrance and commemoration are particularly vital for the Jewish people, whose entire essence is based on the commandment to remember. The most well-known commandment in this context is "Remember what Amalek did to you" (Deuteronomy 32:7) or "Remember this day, on which you went free from Egypt, the house of bondage, how the Lord freed you from it with a mighty hand" (Exodus 13:3). Jewish history is replete with historical events, mostly traumatic, which we remember as archetypical national disasters. Events such as the destruction of the two Temples and the two subsequent exiles, the Spanish Expulsion and the tortures of the inquisition, the edicts of 1648, pogroms, various expulsions, and others. These events have been set in the nation's memory for generations as constitutive events. They are joined by the events of the Holocaust, for which no words can be found in even the most comprehensive dictionary.

Forming a connection between the commemorative sites and the actual events of the Holocaust raises various deliberations. How, for instance, can events that one did not experience be remembered? Or the question of the association between aesthetics and the art of designing the site or the monument, and mass murder and atrocities. Where should the site be erected? What event, of many, should be commemorated? In establishing this type of site, are we not helping the murderers and their descendants clear their conscience?!

Recently, the story of the synagogue in Hamburg, Germany, reached the press in this context. The local Jewish community wishes to rebuild the special synagogue that was destroyed by the Nazis at the beginning of the Second World War. This seems like a suitable act of commemoration for a Jewish community and a synagogue once considered the greatest in all northern Europe. Some of the current community members as well as Israelis who are the descendants of local Jews vehemently object to this idea. They say that establishing the synagogue will deflate criticism against the Nazis' deeds as well as the memory of the Holocaust (Davidovitch & Lewin, 2019).

With regard to the act of commemoration, it is necessary to specify the different types of memory. The first is personal memory, which originates from the memories of the individual who experienced these events or heard about them from previous generations. A merging of the personal memories creates the collective memory that takes a two-way course: interpretation of the past is undertaken in the present, while interpretation of the present is undertaken based on memories of the past. Social communities build their past from the present perspective, and the group's past is shaped by present interests and politics (Halbwachs, 1950/1992; Zelizer, 1995, 1998).

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These two are also joined by historical memory, which is part of collective memory. In this context, art historian Gideon Ofrat claims that memory on the individual and collective levels ensures the unified identity of the private and public self: “Without memory, private self-consciousness and social cultural consciousness would collapse” (Ofrat, 2011).

As stated, remembering and commemorating are aimed at overcoming forgetfulness, as well as obliteration or denial of memory. Holocaust denial has already become a shameless “profession”. Only recently two historians, Prof. Barbara Engelking of the Polish Center for Holocaust Research in Warsaw, and Prof. Jan Grabowski from the University of Ottawa in Canada, were put on trial for defamation of the Pole Malinowski, who was the head of the Polish village Malinowo and committed crimes against Jews, according to testimonies. The injured honor of the criminal was sought by his niece, under the Holocaust Law recently legislated in Poland by the radical right-wing party “Law and Justice”. The audacity to deny the historical events derives from the desire to be absolved of any wrongdoing and to reinstate Polish honor.

The denial also stems from the wish to denigrate those who seek to commemorate the cruel and inhumane facts. The deniers seek to erase the events, just as the Nazis sought to erase all Jewish memory, as Elie Wiesel said in his speech on International Holocaust Day at the UN assembly: “What the enemy sought to attain was to put an end to Jewish history” (Wiesel, 2005). The various commemoration sites are erected to counter the physical and historical end.

The commemoration sites in general and the memory monuments in particular constitute, a formative manifestation of the plastic arts. Unlike independent works of art, however, these are subjugated to their educational and symbolic role. Hence, the historical subject or story precede the artistic design. Nonetheless, the sites and monuments have undergone artistic-design changes and development. This change stems from transformation of the artistic styles, but particularly since the artists search for a way to leave their mark on memory. The commemorators seek how to preserve memory as strongly as possible. For this reason, the artistic style and manner of commemoration undergo a lengthy process, for instance, from Nathan Rapoport’s constitutive *Memorial to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising* in 1948 to Peter Eisenman’s *Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe* in 2005. The purpose of these two is identical, however their artistic design is completely at odds, as is the artists’ point of departure: the worldview on the manner of commemoration. Both are indeed located in capitals of the two countries that determined the tragic occurrences: Germany the attacker and Poland on whose territory the atrocities were committed. Both are also located in a central open urban space, in two capital cities, a fact that makes them accessible to the general public and even to passersby who reach them unintentionally. From here on, however, the two monuments are completely different: how they were initiated, the financial resources, the size, and the artistic style. The first commemorates the heroes of the ghetto, while the second commemorates the six million. Hence, it may be said that the Warsaw monument is more “intimate”, while that in Berlin is more “public”. It is mainly important to note, however, the movement of the “memory compass” from Rapoport’s familiar realistic symbols to Eisenman’s abstract form. This distinction echoes in Young’s words with regard to Rapoport: “*The more abstract and nihilistic the work of his artist colleagues, the more figurative and clear his mission as a future witness ... He chose to isolate himself from contemporary criticism and made certain to close the door to his studio before beginning to work: ‘Could I create a stone with a hole in it and say: Here, the heroism of the Jews? No, I had to show the heroism, to describe it with images that not only artists would understand and respond to, rather anyone. After all, it had to be a public monument. And to what do people respond? To faces, to figures, to the human form. I didn’t want to represent resistance in the abstract: It wasn’t an abstract revolt. It was real’*” (Young, 1993, p. 168). This approach is compatible with the cruel reality, as those murdered were not murdered in the abstract.

In 1948, not long after the end of the events, Nathan Rapoport planned a large and impressive realistic-symbolic memorial that constitutes a “classic” traditional model of monument design, which he positioned at the center of the old Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, where the revolt broke out. The sculptor chose to present through two different fronts the “two sides of the coin”: a tall bronze relief that describes the heroism of the revolt on the front side, reflected by seven strong united figures – which were also given individual expressions – shaped as dynamic mythological heroes bursting out from what seems like flames under the leadership of the main figure – Mordechai Anielewicz. On the back side, on a stone relief, is a procession of twelve Jews, symbolizing the twelve tribes of Israel, much smaller figures than those on the front. These are the victims taken as “sheep to the slaughter”, fully passive, led by a bearded Jew holding a Torah scroll, which causes only him to remain upright. Rapoport designed him and particularly the others – as archetypical exilic types, through the body language and bent posture. His bowed followers appear submissive and obedient.

The “memory compass” indeed moved substantially towards the abstract in Eisenman’s memorial, located symbolically in Berlin, on an area of 19 dunam that forms a type of crisscrossed cemetery. The site contains 2,711 dark gray concrete blocks, the number of pages in the Talmud. There is no writing, marking, guiding arrows, set entrance or exit to the site. This sculpture work constitutes a milestone in the breaching of design conventions and in how memory is made accessible to the general public. The artist himself attested that the purpose of the organized array of blocks and their play of light and shade is to create an accumulating atmosphere of confusion, mixing, restriction, distress, and discomfort, to such a degree that all contact with human logic is lost. For this purpose, he planned the narrow passages between the blocks (75 cm) that allow only one person to pass, so that each person would experience the site as an individual.

The common approach to the monument, or to the commemoration site, was often an elevating approach, a place treated reverence and even sanctity. Eisenman’s point of origin was the complete opposite. He chose to turn the monument into an organic and integral

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part of the living urban texture, to an everyday experience – a place of passage for residents on their way to work, a children's playground, a picnic site, or a place of rest and calm for tourists visiting the city. In the same breath he arranged for the site to fulfill its main designation – commemorating memory in a way that would intrude on the private and collective German consciousness and subconscious. The artist sought new, original ways, provocative and controversial, to arouse public opinion, to arouse humanity from the deep sleep of forgetfulness that might allow history to repeat itself.

The result of this search for the right way to convey the message, of the difficulty of describing the atrocities, and as a replacement for the historical description of the events, was an approach that seeks to give presence to that which does not exist and to commemorate it. These are original attempts by different artists to commemorate the vacuum. Young calls this style “counter-monuments”. He contends that this is possible only by reconstructing the vacuum; the negative space of the missing monument is the main component of the nonexistent form. In other words: the destruction of a nation can be remembered only by destroying the monument. An example of this is the Empty Library memorial by Micha Ullman, Berlin, 1995.

Artist Rachel Whiteread took this direction when she erected a four-sided closed rectangular structure of 7 × 10 meters, 3.8 meters high, resembling an empty “bunker” inside, where the upper and bottom parts bear a list of the death camps to which the local Jews were sent. The lifeless library resembling a ghost is comprised of lines, each containing 20 empty and closed anonymous colorless books of uniform size and shape, their pages facing the viewer rather than their spines as customary in libraries, thus preventing viewers from obtaining information on their names and contents. The books are not only “reversed” but also “floating” because they are not supported by shelves – which are missing too – wherein the artist shows that the huge loss lacks support, backing or foundations.

The monument conveys accuracy, symmetry, uniformity, and transmits coldness, seriousness, and alienation. Two blocked doors are set in one of its sides, sealed and impermeable, with no hinges and handles; there is no entering or leaving. The uniformity represents the Nazi obsession with bureaucratic processes and strict maintaining of official lists.

B. In Israel

Means of remembrance differ in character and design, by country and nation. The local artistic, financial, political, and geographic influences also differ by place. One of the main locations in the world with a concentration of collective commemoration sites is Israel, where “these sites take part in shaping the collective historical memory of Israeli society” (Brutin, 2005, p. 1). Naturally, after the Holocaust tens of thousands of survivors arrived in Israel, and these required such sites in the old-new homeland in order to commemorate the world that had gone up in the flames of the furnaces.

In Israel, the approach to commemoration of the Holocaust has two anchors: The first is by virtue of the direct relationship between Holocaust survivors and their descendants who live or lived in Israel, the Jewish state. The second is by virtue of the law.

In 1951 a decision was made to institute a national Memorial Day on the 27th of Nissan. The chosen date was close to the date on which the Warsaw Ghetto uprising began (Knesset Annals, 1951). The Knesset also enacted the Holocaust and Heroism Memorial – Yad Vashem Law, 1953. One of the sections of this law is the establishment of a state commemoration authority for commemorating the Holocaust and heroism (Book of Laws, 1953). This is the origins of the phrase “Holocaust and heroism” that links Holocaust and revival.

In order to understand this combination, it is necessary to comprehend the condition and feelings of the survivors who had arrived in Israel destitute and were viewed as exilic and as cowards who had gone as sheep to the slaughter. The survivors were seen by Israeli Jews as representing the exile with all this entails. This exilic nature contradicted the “Ben Gurion” spirit of the locally born, meaning the character of the new and renewing Israel, that of the pioneer, soldier, and proud Hebrew fighter that differed from the exilic subjugated Jew who was led, as stated, as sheep to the slaughter. This condescending attitude to the survivors and the source of the degrading designation originated from a proclamation made in the Vilna ghetto in 1942 (Arad & Gutman, 1978). Hence, rather than finding a shoulder to lean on the survivors were ashamed of their history.

Only in 1961 was a transition evident: The Eichmann Trial proved to the entire world the extent of the atrocities and the inability to act on one hand, and the heroism of the survivors on the other. Following testimonies concerning the “other planet”, when the Nazis' barbaric acts were revealed, only then, as Hanna Yablonka says, was the mistake of unfairly judging the survivors understood (Yablonka, 2001). From then on, the survivors' story became legitimate and official commemoration of the victims in Israel began. Museums, institutions, monuments etc. were established.

Further on, the need to link the Holocaust to the revival was also born, particularly when the feeling was one of existential threat, for instance, during the War of Independence when the aim of the fighting was to achieve a Jewish state for the remnants. Or during the Yom Kippur War, when Israel fought for our very existence. In such situations, it was clear that annihilation is not a bygone term. The voice of the ghetto fighters and of the rebels began to be heard not long after the events. The bravery of the partisans was also portrayed. The escape attempts, leaving the ghettos to search for food, and the stand taken the weak against the German soldiers and their collaborators, began to generate commemoration sites. In 1954 the well-known commemoration site Yad Vashem was erected on Mount Herzl in the capital of Jerusalem. In 1968 the “Hall of Names” was opened at Yad Vashem, containing “Witness pages” of those who had perished and documenting their names and details. In 1949 Kibbutz Lohamei Hagetaot was founded by Holocaust survivors. The ghetto fighters' museum, intended for educational purposes, was established in the kibbutz a year later. In

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1951 the first monument was erected in memory of the Warsaw ghetto heroes at Kibbutz Yad Mordechai, in memory of the commander of the revolt, Mordechai Anielewicz. "In this way, the memory of the Holocaust was transformed from a negative element to an integral existential element of Israeli identity" (Azaryahu, 1995, p. 11). In 1973, the Masuah institute was founded, which spreads Holocaust studies, and its museum displays a regular exhibition on the postal services during the Holocaust. In 1975 Beit Theresienstadt was founded in memory of the inmates in the "exemplary" ghetto established by the Nazis.

One of the prominent memorials that connect Holocaust and revival most clearly, is the "Scroll of Fire" monument by Nathan Rapoport, established in 1972 in the Forest of the Martyrs in the Jerusalem hills, near Moshav Kisalon. This monument recounts the history of the Jewish people from Holocaust to revival. The two parts of the bronze scroll, symbolizing the people of the book, depict pictures from the Holocaust on one and symbols of revival on the other. According to Brutin, by linking the Holocaust to revival and heroism in monuments from the 1970s to the 1990s, the Holocaust becomes an integral part of Israeli existence (Brutin, 2005, p. 14).

These are only several constitutive examples from among a wealth of commemoration sites, museums, monuments, and so on, established throughout Israel's existence. This indicates how important and rooted is the topic of memory and its association with Israeli revival and heroism. Israel has a wide and serious commemoration network through which it is possible to recount the tragedy and pass it on to the next generation.

As we have seen, commemoration occurs after time has passed. It is not placed where the event occurred, and it is formed by people that did not experience it. Hence, the natural inclination is to visit commemoration foci located at the original sites, such as the death camps, crematoria, the massive valley of death, etc. All these are always outside Israel, mostly on Polish territory, where teenagers come on the journey to Poland. And what about commemoration sites in Israel? Those who keep the memory embers of the "there" and "here" burning?

The journeys to the commemoration sites in Poland can be defined as journeys to one large comprehensive monument. After more than thirty-two years, the journey has become a customary, experiential, sensory, and unmediated educational method. In order to realize the declared aims of the Ministry of Education, which include enhancing unique and universal values, we must first begin here, in Israel. Exporting the remembrance to Poland leads to neglect and exclusion of a large part of the population and might also keep young people away from the memory of the Holocaust in the Jewish-Israeli context. The authors recommend developing a post-Holocaust program, an interdisciplinary educational program that will join forces with educational systems throughout the world with the aim of forming a uniform and balanced curriculum between the particular (the Holocaust of the Jews) and the universal (the events of the Second World War) from a content-related, emotional, and value-based respect, while maintaining the connection to Israel.

The Second World War ended officially in August 1945. Until then, it was the war that raged from 1914-1918 that was called "The Great War", however the war that swept through the world from 1939-1945 challenged everything known to mankind in this context – it was the largest war in human history in all respects: the number of countries involved; the number of separate warzones; the number of soldiers who participated in it and the quantity of weapons at their disposal; the scope of the losses; and the harm to the national infrastructure of most of the countries involved.

This unprecedented human disaster was the setting for the disaster of the Jewish people – the Holocaust of European Jewry that annihilated one third of the Jewish people. This homicide was the first of its kind – industrial, planned, and structured – aimed at eliminating anyone suspected of being Jewish. The end of the war and the fall of the Third Reich were in many respects only the beginning – the beginning of a long process of rehabilitation in all countries, of dealing with the destruction left by the war. In those years of arising from the ruins, while the nations of the world were licking their wounds and in the context of the tragedy of the Jewish people, the Jews declared the establishment of a Jewish state in their historical homeland.

In Israel as elsewhere, an attempt was made to leave the past in the past and to concentrate on building the present – building the Jewish nation and coping with its new enemies. Post-Holocaust Israel practiced an "official preclusion of the exile" (Grossman, 2005; Stauber, 2000), intentionally avoiding any treatment of Holocaust remembrance, due to the association formed between the exile and the Holocaust – commemoration of the one was perceived as commemoration of the other. Not only that, the Holocaust was perceived on the macro level as a national catastrophe that justifies a conspiracy of silence (Yablonka, 1998). Nearly thirty years passed before the Jewish state began to open its wounds and contend with the repressed memories. The Eichmann Trial, and particularly the Yom Kippur War, were constitutive events (Gretz, 1995; Zerubavel, 2002; Liebman & Don-Yehiya, 1983) that led to the formation of a Holocaust discourse – one that sees the significance of instilling remembrance while tying the past to the present to the future.

The 1970s and 1980s symbolized the formal and informal development of the new discipline – Holocaust education. On the formal level, Holocaust contents entered the various textbooks: history, literature, civics, Bible – which included this chapter in Jewish history to various extents. Informally, institutes for Holocaust education evolved, which began to offer a wide range of study programs bearing different value-based emphases. In addition, many schools developed unique study programs written by the school staff (for instance: "Testimony from there" at the Harel high school, Jerusalem). Of the range of programs offered in the formal and informal educational system, the experiential study program of the journey to Poland received major attention and occupied a central

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role in the hopes and expectations of the public, educators, and the educational system. This is evident from the unprecedented public consensus in Israel with regard to the journey.

Holocaust remembrance, previously excluded from the social discourse, has become one of the pillars of Israeli collective consciousness. Where in the past preserving Holocaust, remembrance was perceived as preserving exilic customs (Resnik, 2003), in current-day Israel it has become the link between the extremities – from destruction and ruin to heroism and revival, from death marches to marches of the living, from the valley of death to the valley of vision, from strangers in a foreign land – to a free people in Zion. The understanding and recognition of the power and significance of Holocaust remembrance as a unifying and connecting factor led to the emergence of a different Israel that draws from the roots of its past and uses them to grow in new directions. Within this Israel, the journey program seen in 1988 as an experimental Holocaust education program has since become a regular program, with the visit to Poland receiving major importance (see for example the State Comptroller's report 2010 – on insufficient preparation).

In the world as in Israel, this model was embraced and many countries began to send their young generation to see the indescribable for themselves (see for example: France, Italy). Repressed memories were revealed, the cold war ended, Europe arose from its ruins, countries around the world began to contend with history so that it would not repeat itself (Davidovitch & Lewin, 2019). The term "Holocaust" achieved popularity and it was used frequently for different purposes. Collective journeys to the regions of death and destruction were the highlight that some called "pornography of evil" (Yablonka in: Kashti, 2010). At present, in the early 21st century, over 70 years since that war, these journeys have reached huge dimensions in Israel and elsewhere (see for instance: Fontana, 2011; Davidovitch, Haskel, & Soen, 2015). All remembrance is concentrated in those areas where the events occurred and in the last decade only in Poland and particularly Auschwitz, which has become its symbol.

Considering the time, money, and efforts invested in sending our children overseas and in light of the social exclusion that is an integral part of these delegations, the question is if it is necessary to travel to a distant land in order to learn about the past? Can we begin the journey to history in the present? Can we begin with the revival? How do we benefit from viewing the crematoria and gas chambers in person? In order to answer these questions and others, we would like to claim that remembrance begins within us. We shall present the current models of voyages in Israel and in other countries as well as the alternative – to begin the journey from the present to the past, from revival to heroism, from the extant to that which is no longer.

In summary, the journey to Holocaust sites in Poland by young people from Israel and from other countries, is a tool for imparting Holocaust remembrance experientially among the young generation. There are many differences, however, between the sites visited. The differences are in the value-based foundations utilized by the guides at the commemoration sites. Some sites have meaning for the Jewish-Israeli story, such as the Altneuschul synagogue in Prague, the Remah synagogue in Krakow – the only one active today, or the Temple synagogue in Peshmishel, Poland. The cemeteries too reflect the large body of Jewish works written by the greatest rabbis – leaders of the Jewish communities, which tell the vibrant story of Jewish life in the ancient Jewish quarter – Kazimierz in Krakow, for instance. Another important example is the Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva. Then again, there are sites with universal meaning, such as the Wawel Royal Castle that served the kings of Poland until the 16th century.

In some sites the Jewish story is combined with the universal story, for instance the Podgorze quarter – the area of the ghetto, remnants of the ghetto walls, Schindler's factory. The concentration, labor, and death camps: Auschwitz-Birkenau, which became a symbol of the annihilation of the Jewish people and of extermination in the world in general. Also, the Majdanek labor and death camp within the city limits of Lublin – the only camp that has mostly remained as it had been. And in Warsaw, for example, the home of Janusz Korczak – the educator who became a world symbol. The Path of Remembrance and the Rapoport monument, also erected at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, which is also linked to the revival of the State of Israel.

The ratio between particular and universal commemoration sites show the Holocaust from the guide's perspective and emphases. In the Jewish world and in Israel in particular, some of which is associated with the victims, the particular dimension has become a major part of experiential learning. The declared goals of the Ministry of Education express this well when stating the purpose of studies, which include familiarization with the cultural and spiritual wealth of the Jewish community in Poland before the Second World War, understanding the extent and scope of the destruction and ruin that befell the Jews during the war, as well as reaching secondary conclusions concerning the heroism of the Jews who stood up for themselves and understanding the essence of dehumanization (Director General circular, 1991).

Let's demonstrate this based on the Holocaust institutes. The "Testimony House" institute for Holocaust education offers a program for the young called "From Holocaust to revival". *The goals* of the program include, among other things, enhancing students' knowledge; creating empathy for the Jewish world that was destroyed; increasing Jewish-Israeli identity; granting a social response to those who do not travel to Poland. *Technically*, the journey includes several major topics that constitute the academic dimension: Jewish life in Europe and in North Africa before the Second World War; the Holocaust of European Jewry; revival – the remnants in Eretz Israel (an area that is unique to the journey in Israel); Jews in general and the Jewish settlement in Eretz Israel in the Allied forces during the world war; Holocaust remembrance and commemoration in Israel.

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The entire program of the journey is based on sites in Israel, with the intention of forming a unique program that does not clash with other school trips or with seminars on the Holocaust. These sites include institutions and institutes for Holocaust commemoration and education, outside sites and walking trails.

The alternative journey offered by the "Testimony House" presents an additional experiential method, one that is deep and comprehensive, which exposes students not only to what was and is no longer but also to what still is. The goals of the Israeli journey are identical to those devised by the Ministry of Education for the journeys to Poland: enhancing Jewish-Israeli identity, familiarization with the past of the Jewish community that was destroyed, and its link to the present – the existence of the State of Israel. Hence, we have two methods with identical goals and educational approach underlying the experiential learning, where the main difference is their location – one takes young people to Holocaust regions and the other to revival regions. In 2012 the "Glass House" exhibition was launched at the Testimony House. This is an innovative interactive display that conveys, in an experiential and fascinating manner, the story of the rescue of many Budapest Jews towards the end of the Holocaust, in a race against time.

In addition, there are many outside sites in Israel that are relevant for guidance on Holocaust and revival, such as those at Beit Lohamei Hagetaot.

There are also walking tours – The journey can include short walks. Some of the tours have content-related meaning, such as walking in the footsteps of soldiers from among the remnants in the battlefields of the War of Independence, in order to demonstrate the force of their deeds. Some of the tours have general value-based meaning of familiarization with Israel's views, reflecting the act of revival. Moreover, walking tours are an opportunity for personal and group release, in order to relieve the emotional burden on the students. It is possible to include a witness who can give testimony that bears relevance for the route taken. Examples of this are the Forest of the Martyrs and the Bnei Brit Cave, a giant commemoration enterprise of the JNF, where about six million trees were planted on the slopes of the Jerusalem hills.

In summary, in light of the focused identity of the journey and due to the significant differences in the resources required, the question is why are young people at school not exposed to sites such as the Testimony House, outside sites, and walking tours.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AMONG GUIDES OF GROUPS TO POLAND

A. Background characteristics of guides to Poland in the study

In order to examine who, we are giving the beacon of memory, who will be those who pass on the beacon in the next generations, when there will be no more Holocaust survivors, and to examine the messages conveyed, we conducted interviews with guides of the journey to Poland. The interviews included 47 interviewees, with an age range of 33 to 77 and a mean age of 58.61. The fact that 78% were aged 50 and older (in contrast to 60% aged 30-49 among all teachers in Israel) might indicate the aging of teachers in this field. However, the age level might also indicate maturity, knowledge, and experience.

Nearly two thirds (64%) were men and only 36% women. The number of academics was very high, at 98%, of whom 79% have a master's degree or PhD. The absolute majority were Israeli born (91.3%). Regarding religiosity, 59.6% defined themselves as secular, 27.7% religious, and 12.8% traditional.

Connection with the subject of the Holocaust

About 70% of the guides noted that someone in their family had experienced the Holocaust, particularly parents (noted by 47% of the guides), grandparents (19% of the guides), or aunts and uncles (11%). Six percent noted that the entire family had been affected by the Holocaust. Only 30% noted that no one in their family had been personally affected by the Holocaust.

The experiences mentioned most frequently as affecting their relatives were death (30%), escape (27%), being at a concentration or death camp (24%) or being Holocaust survivors (21%).

Professional development on the topic of the Holocaust

All the guides had received professional development and instruction in Israel, with an emphasis on the course for guides of delegations to Poland (64%) and annual in-service training required as part of the conditions for working as guides (55%). Fifteen percent of the guides had received such development at the Shem Olam institute, which is an institute run by Yad Vashem for religious guides.

Half of the guides had participated in professional development in Poland as well, including seminars on Holocaust topics (30%), guidance courses (15%), and professional development (11%).

Their main target population is Israelis: 89% guide Israeli teens, 49% guide groups of Israeli adults, and 13% guide Israeli academic students. A very small part of the guides (6%) also guides groups from abroad.

On the association between the background characteristics of Poland guides, their connection with the Holocaust, guidance instruction received on the Holocaust, and features of the guidance.

In light of the findings that arose from the interviews, we expected to hear of the association between Holocaust and heroism, as we saw above, the association between remembrance of the Holocaust victims and remembrance of those fallen in Israel's wars. We expected to hear from the guides to Poland that their guidance includes the affiliation with Israel and the association with its many commemoration sites. We expected to see that the guides focus also on commemoration sites in Israel, in order to instill in the young generation awareness of the increasing dangers of anti-Semitism in the world, from which Israel can offer a refuge.

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These expectations arose since we saw that two thirds of the guides were men, hence the assumption that they are former IDF soldiers. Namely, they are part of life in Israel and have contributed to the country. Most have a direct or almost direct connection with the Holocaust. They all underwent professional development on the subject in Israel. Some are religious and people of faith for whom the link to the land and its sites is even clearer. Hence, the hypothesis was that guides to Poland would take the journey and its participants to the land established on the ashes of those who had perished.

B. The attitude of the guides to subjects related to the Holocaust.

In the interview, the guides were asked about their attitude to topics that arise during the guidance on the subject of the Holocaust. They were asked to rate these from 1 (very low) to 5 (very high).

There was a very high degree of agreement with the Jewish narrative concerning the Holocaust, including the Jews as victims of the Nazi occupation of Europe (5), and the world's lack of intervention during the Holocaust (4). In contrast, there was a medium to low degree of agreement with competing narratives such as the claim that other nations too had suffered during the Holocaust (3), or that a similar number of Poles as Jews were murdered in the death camps (2).

The guides' degree of agreement with narratives that emphasize the uniqueness of the Jewish people in the Holocaust was medium. Hence – they agreed to a medium degree with claims that the Jewish people showed a higher moral level than other nations during the Holocaust (3) and that the fighting in the ghettos and among the partisans was unique to the Jews (3).

The overall attitude of the guides to Israeli-Polish relations in the Holocaust and subsequently was negative: There was a high degree of agreement with the claim that Poles took advantage of the opportunity to kill Jews in the Holocaust (4) and a very low degree of agreement with the claim that Poland's current place in the European Union symbolizes the country's victory over evil (2).

In contrast, the guides agreed only to a medium degree with narratives that draw the nations closer to each other, such as the claim that Israelis and Poles have a shared fate in light of the experiences of the Holocaust (3) or that Jews and Poles fought together in the underground and in the partisan movements (3). The degree of agreement with the claim that the story of righteous gentiles indicates the national morality of the Poles was below medium (3).

With regard to the lessons learned from the Holocaust, the guides agreed to a less than medium degree with the claim that the establishment of Israel is a victory of human civilization over evil (3).

The guides agreed to a high degree that visits to Poland are an important educational tool for Holocaust education (4).

C. Differences in attitude by background characteristics

Analysis of the guides' attitudes by their background variables indicates that no differences was found between the attitudes of the group of guides whose relatives had been affected by the Holocaust and the group of guides whose relatives had not been affected by the Holocaust. In addition, no significant differences in attitudes were found by the guide's level of education. Nevertheless, differences were found in some of the attitudes by several other background variables.

Differences by the identity of relatives affected by the Holocaust: Those whose parents had experienced the Holocaust agreed that the Jewish people displayed greater spiritual, mental, and moral qualities than any other nation during the Holocaust (3). In contrast, those whose parents had experienced the Holocaust agreed less that the story of Polish righteous gentiles proves their national morality (3).

Differences by gender: Only one attitude variable showed gender-based differences: Women (3) agreed more than men (2) that Poland's place in the European Union in the 21st century reflects Poland's victory over evil.

Association between the guide's age and attitudes: On two statements, agreement was found to increase with the guide's age: A similar number of Poles as Jews were murdered in the death camps and the statement that the Jewish people displayed greater spiritual, mental, and moral qualities than any other nation during the Holocaust.

Differences by religiosity: Religious and traditional participants agreed more than secular participants with attitudes whereby the Jews were the victims of the Nazi occupation of Europe (5) and that the Jewish people displayed greater spiritual, mental, and moral qualities than any other nation during the Holocaust (4). Then again, secular participants more than others upheld the attitude whereby the shared fate of Jews and Poles constitutes the basis for a shared future and mutual commitment to remembrance (3).

D. The guides' attitudes to guidance on the Holocaust

The main challenge of Holocaust education is, according to the guides, the ability to connect teens to the subject (44.7%). Challenges mentioned by a smaller number of guides are the need to proceed to a more universal or value-based discussion of the Holocaust's lessons instead of discussing the historical events (25.5%) and also the diminishing significance of the subject (13%).

With regard to events from the recent decade that affect Holocaust education, one fifth of the guides noted the "Polish law" (19%), while others noted events that in their opinion are not compatible with the moral lessons of the Holocaust, such as the increase in anti-Semitism and xenophobia in Israel and throughout the world (21.3%), the war in Syria and the resulting high number of victims and refugees (17%), as well as the social and political situation in Israel (10.6%).

With regard to the changes in Holocaust guidance in the next few decades – many guides noted that the fundamental change is dealing with the death of the survivors and the inability to hear first-person testimonies about the events (15%), and consequently –

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a transition to teaching based on videotaped documentary materials (23.5%). About one fifth of the guides believed that Holocaust instruction will not change (21.5%), and a small part were concerned of the declining significance of the subject (8.5%).

E. The guides' attitudes to the contents of Holocaust instruction

The main relevant events for Holocaust instruction according to the guides are general historical developments (61.7%), the deportation and murder of the Jews and the uprisings in the ghettos and camps (53.2%), revolt (42.6%), the rescue of Jews by righteous gentiles and the Wannsee Conference (15%). The guides contended that these events are important because they led to a historical change or were related to the Holocaust of the Jews.

The most important sites for inclusion in the guidance in Poland are, as perceived by two thirds of the guides, visits to death camps or ghettos (66%). However, other types of sites that are significant were also mentioned, including monuments (19%) and museums (17%), remnants of Jewish quarters throughout Poland (19%), yeshivas and synagogues (17%). The main reasons brought by the guides for the significance of these sites for Holocaust education is the contribution of visiting the sites to understanding and illustrating history (57.4%), and since visiting these sites begins a discussion on general issues related to the topic of the Holocaust (32%).

The main places in Israel mentioned as significant for the guidance are the Ghetto Fighters' Museum (23.4%), the Yad Vashem museum (19%), general sites of Israeli history (11%) such as Masada or the Clandestine Immigration Museum. The significance of visiting these places for teaching about the Holocaust is, according to the guides, that they teach history (25.5%) and begin a discussion on issues related to the Holocaust (15%).

The main means of guidance used by the guides for teaching about the Holocaust are viewing photographs or films (57.4%), reading poems or prose (53.2%), testimonies by survivors (46.8%). The main significance of using these instruction tools is, according to the guides, that they connect those exposed to them to the topic of the Holocaust (70%).

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

“Only remnants of walls will testify to what had been here” (Mordechai Gebirtig, 1938. (from Yiddish: Avraham Levinson).

This study explores the role of monuments and commemoration sites in instilling Holocaust remembrance, in the world in general and in Israel in particular. These sites are taught and rendered accessible by guides from Israel in journeys they lead, particularly to regions of the death camps in Poland.

The interviews we conducted revealed background characteristics of guides to Poland, their connection with the Holocaust, and continuing guidance development they received on the subject. We expected that all these characteristics and the background information would be associated with the features of their guidance, as manifested in the memorial sites that they lead for Holocaust remembrance.

We expected to find an association between Holocaust and heroism, an association between remembrance of the Holocaust victims and remembrance of those who died in Israel's war, as these two events arise in Israeli consciousness, expressed on the Memorial Day for Holocaust and Heroism instituted in Israel. We explored whether “guides to Poland” also focus on commemoration sites in Israel in order to impart to the young generation an awareness of the increasing dangers of anti-Semitism around the world and the association with Israel.

These expectations arose as we saw that two thirds of the guides were men, hence the assumption that they had served in the IDF, are part of life in Israel and have contributed to the country. Most had a direct connection with the Holocaust and had underwent professional development on the subject of the Holocaust in Israel. Some were religious and people of faith for whom the link to the land and its sites is even clearer. Hence, the hypothesis was that guides to Poland would take the journey and its participants to the land established on the ashes of those who had perished.

The study indicates that commemoration of the Holocaust focuses on the suffering, the tragedy, and less on the revival, the connection between the Holocaust and Israel. This although in Israeli consciousness Holocaust and heroism come together. Hence, the process of instilling remembrance of the Holocaust and its heritage may have been distorted by disregarding the many commemoration sites and monuments scattered throughout Israel. Aiming the beacon of commemoration at Poland, outside Israel, prevents the public and particularly teens from being exposed and seeing the natural connection formed in Israel between Holocaust and revival, which preserves the connection between the generations.

Now that seven decades have elapsed since the events of the Holocaust, important questions are arising, such as: Who will continue telling the story? How will it be told? What will remain of it? In order to examine these questions, the current study engages in a case study of Israeli guides to Poland who are in charge of imparting this chapter of human history. As we saw, of the interviews held with 47 such guides, of whom the absolute majority were Israeli born, the large majority were academics, and many have a Master's or PhD degree. They appear to be “exporting remembrance”. The study explored, as stated, other diverse essential parameters regarding the profile of “guides to Poland” – Where did they receive their professional development? What is their personal connection to the subject? What is their attitude to the universal and Jewish narrative of the Holocaust? Although they appear to have a strong connection to Israel and they possess an “identification card” that consists of adequate components for conveying the message, in their guidance of the Israeli public and youth on Holocaust commemoration they disregard the many

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local commemoration sites and direct the participants mainly to commemoration sites in Poland. This important guidance task is embodied by what the public knows as the journey to Poland.

The research findings have educational meaning for the role of tours of Holocaust commemoration sites and raise the significance of value-based connection between Holocaust and heroism concerning its meaning for Jews, Israelis, and the entire world. In addition, Holocaust education in the 21st century is a challenge. Few events in history have had an effect or implications for all humanity. But the balance between the Jewish story, that must be preserved, and the universal story – is a particularly grave challenge.

Hence, due to the challenges involved in preserving remembrance of the constitutive event of the 20th century, it is necessary to explore the possibility of change in Holocaust guidance and instruction:

- **Enable student involvement** in planning visits to commemoration sites.
- **Equip students with prior knowledge** – What do our students know about the story underlying the Holocaust sites? A great deal of effort is necessary in order to involve the students and their teachers in the subject and to render past events relevant.
- **Grant students tools for knowledge** – There is lots of online material worldwide on the Holocaust and it is much easier to find material than to decide what material to choose. Our challenge is to teach our students to chart material, to analyze, and to criticize.
- **Choose commemoration sites in Israel and elsewhere** – Combining sites from Poland and from Israel. In this way we can establish the compatibility and balance between the Holocaust and heroism both for young people in Israel and in the universal consciousness. We must choose central historical sites that we believe will be relevant for our students. The students should be exposed to places, people, who operated in this period that has become the constitutive event of the 20th century. Students should be allowed to guide, relate, connect, and link their reality to the past reality.
- **Choose methodologies that are compatible with the ethos of the Holocaust and heroism** – If we assume that the murder of the Jews is a result of history, we must teach it as an outcome of history. Teaching the history of the Holocaust is a topic that requires us to be aware of its complexity. The journey, experiential as it may be, cannot replace teaching history, and survivors are not historians. They can only tell their personal story. As teachers, we are responsible to place the survivor's testimony in a wider context. We know that the personal story is an element that helps transform historical events into more personal ones, as Steven Spielberg said that *the destructive events of the Holocaust are not faceless, they happened... men and women and children with names and faces and families and dreams. Simple people like us.*
- **Students must be given tools to deal with the sights of the Holocaust** – in the Jewish context and in the universal context. It is necessary to prepare for the next decade when a fundamental change will occur in Holocaust education, as teachers will not be able to bring survivors in order to enliven the events, and the power of a video, book, film, play, or picture is limited despite their ability to transform history into a living story for the students. Therefore, we must ensure that the silent testimony of stones and matter will summon a living encounter with that which was.

Finally, the most significant value-based subject for learning about the Holocaust is the danger of apathy. Therefore, the commemoration sites and monuments spread in open spaces, such that it is hard to disregard them – have a significant role in Holocaust education and in Holocaust remembrance for young people in Israel and elsewhere. The commemoration sites call upon us to see – to be involved – not to disregard. It is necessary to stress humankind – choice and lack of choice in our life. It is necessary to focus on the relevance of the Holocaust's lessons for the next generations. To stress the hope that people, both young and old, are capable of generating change in the world, to remind of the consequences of prejudice and hatred, and to promote mutual respect and understanding between human beings. The students form important links between history and moral choices in their life and learn that small decisions too can have huge consequences. When teaching about the Holocaust we cannot fix the world and find solutions to all evils of humanity. But we may be able to advance a small way towards a better world that we can pass on to the next generation.

The Holocaust may be seen as an important part of human history, one that caused a shock in the past and is continuing to shock the very foundations, everything we thought we knew about human nature. The scope, the intensity, the planning, the operation, the precision of the Nazi killing machine – all these are a focus of interest among human beings. The topic, which was once kept hidden, has become in time a focus of interest all over the world. The intensity and complexity of the subject has generated hope among educators and policy makers that this is the path to salvation – by being exposed to these difficult contents we will manage to touch our children's souls, to teach by elimination how one should behave and what should be avoided.

Many make use of the history of the Holocaust – for good and for bad. Each country and educational institution take remembrance where they wish – some choose to promote national and local values, others prefer to see in the events a lesson for all humanity, and in any case – the tension between the unique and universal values is evident in the different programs. In Israel as elsewhere, the issue of the balance between the different aspects is encountered – between the need to teach about the Jewish part of the Holocaust and events that are unique to the different European countries and to the entire world that allowed the events to occur.

Informal educational systems in Israel and around the world focus on the direct sensory experience of “Holocaust sights”. In Poland in general and in Auschwitz-Birkenau in particular we see mainly Holocaust museums and less “Holocaust sights” – those that

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necessarily generate the emotional shock utilized as a catalyst for producing value-based shock. The Y generation is much less sensitive to tough sights. In the era of the information revolution, no place is too far, no sight too shocking. At the press of a button, it is possible to hold a virtual tour of sites that were once distant. In any case, even if we travel and cross the sign "Arbeit macht frei" – most of the burden will be on our imagination – imagining how the talitot, shoes, kitchenware, belonged to the victims, how they lived in the shacks and slept ten to a bunk. The expectation that the trip to Poland will generate an ethical transformation is not only exaggerated but also impossible, as no matter how shaking the experience – it is limited in time and place, and if it does not rest on some foundation, there is small chance that it will cause a transformation in one's life.

Where does historical remembrance take us? The research findings indicate that Holocaust education in Israel and in the world has the potential of generating a value-based change. The question of what is the value-based change that should be generated and how, has many varied answers. In order to avoid memory indoctrination, it is necessary to promote post-Holocaust studies that will help us anchor the memory for the next generations in customary contents that will constitute the foundation for all educational settings. In Israel and around the world educational systems are encountering challenges: How shall we impart the horror in a generation used to "fine" and "great"? What is the meaning of concepts such as anti-Semitism, racism, Nazism – in the generation of the "global"? What is the place of Israel among the nations – how is Israel's "revival" after the Holocaust manifested? What is the uniqueness of the Holocaust of the Jews versus other phenomena in the world and what is the civil meaning of the terms guilt and responsibility for the young generation?

It is evident from the study that we are at a crossroads, one that contains a challenge and requires action.

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