



**SECOND ANNUAL SHOAH SHABBATON**  
Saturday, May 17th, 2008

***European Jewry: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow***  
**The Rise of Anti-Semitism**  
**And**  
**Holocaust Education In European Countries**

As Jews, just hearing or reading the word 'Holocaust' conjures up complex feelings of anger and sadness, hatred and shame, heroism and courage, and the unanswerable question of why, why, WHY?

Despite volumes of books written by Holocaust scholars, survivors, adult children of survivors, clergy and others about the Holocaust, there is little consolation for the Jewish people. What words of comfort can be offered against the knowledge of the murder of 1½ million Jewish children and more than 4½ million adults? No words can reduce the feelings of tremendous loss and senseless waste of valuable human life. There are no words to explain WHY.

The only consolation comes from knowing more and more Jews are reconnecting with Judaism and Jews are thriving throughout the world. Our synagogues are flourishing, our schools are filled. Torah is being learned in more corners of the world than ever before and Hebrew is again a living language. Eretz Yisrael now has more than 6 million Jewish citizens.

This Shabbaton is dedicated in loving memory of every Jew murdered in the Holocaust and in honor of Jewish continuity for the future.

We hope you find this Shabbat meaningful and inspiring.

We thank you all for sharing this experience.

**Shabbaton Co-Chairs: Nira Berry, Debbie Fisch, Alan Reinitz**

**SHABBATON PROGRAM**

- Ceremony Honoring Holocaust Survivors 11:30 am
- Shabbat Luncheon at 12:15 pm
- Panel Of International Ambassadors and Dignitaries: 1:45 pm – 3:00 pm

*Sponsored by Beth Sholom  
Adult Children of Survivors of the Holocaust*

***Rabbi Joel M. Tessler***

It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to our 2nd annual Shoah Shabbaton at Beth Sholom Congregation. I especially want to welcome our many distinguished guests representing Austria, Britain, Bulgaria, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Hungary, Poland, and United States Holocaust Museum.

This year's theme is European Jewry: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow; The Rise Of Anti-Semitism And Holocaust Education in European countries. There have been so many changes in Europe since WWII, yet the blight of Anti -Semitism exists even today. This remains a concern, but there is a concerted effort amongst governments and people of good will to remember the past and guard against a future of intolerance and hate. It is an honor to have our guests inform all of us about the situation in their countries in response to Anti-Semitism and how the use of Holocaust Education has affected the youth of their countries.

We pray that we see the day when hatred and bigotry will be removed from people's hearts and actions and peace and understanding will guide us all. On behalf of all who perished and all of us may this day come soon.

Respectfully, Shabbat Shalom (The peace of the Sabbath upon all of us)

***Rabbi Nissan Antine***

The term, "Holocaust," is somewhat of a misnomer. The word Holocaust comes from the Greek *holo-kauston* which is the Greek translation for the Korban Olah, the Biblical sacrifice which was completely burnt. While it is true that the Nazis tried to completely wipe us out, they were not successful. A strong remnant remained which went on to build the State of Israel and a very strong Jewish community in the Diaspora. It is my hope that this Shabbat will allow us to look to the past and to the future. We need to remember those who came before us and the memory of the six million. But we also need to look to the future and take the lessons of the survivors who teach us that we need to continue to fight for the thriving of the Jewish People. Fighting Anti-Semitism, the theme of the Shabbaton, is obviously the beginning of this very important struggle. I would like to thank all of those who put this Shabbaton together.

***Rabbi Mordechai Rackover***

My first experience with the Shoah in an adult way was my participation as a high school student in the second March of the Living. Those years ago, I walked the land of Poland and witnessed the horror that was, the scars that remained and the potential that lay therein. It is my sincere hope that this Shabbat will bring our community and our guests a step closer to understanding the terror that gripped the Jews and their neighbors. It behooves us, the victims, to stand in the world, shoulder to shoulder and commit to complete eradication of hate and violence. Blessings for a meaningful Shabbat.

# THE LEGACY OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

## **We take this oath!**

We take it in the shadows of flames, whose tongues scar the soul of our people; we vow with our sadness hidden, our faith renewed; we vow we shall never let the sacred memory of our perished six million brethren be forgotten or erased.

We saw them hungry, in fear, we saw them at the threshold of death; true to their faith. We received their silence in silence, we merged their tears with ours, we are the remaining witnesses: of deportations, executions, mass graves, death camps, mute prayers and cries of revolt. The young, the old, the rich and the poor. The ghetto fighters, the partisans, the scholars and the messianic dreamers, the tradesmen and businessmen, the Chassidim and the Misnagdim. Like a cloud we saw them vanish.

**We take this oath!** Vision becomes word, to be handed down from father to son, from mother to daughter, handed down from generation to generation.

Zachor. Remember what the Nazi murderers and their accomplices did to our Jewish people. Remember them with rage and contempt. Remember what an indifferent world did to us and to itself. We must also remember the good deeds of the righteous gentiles.

In 1981 we took this oath in Israel near the Kotel. There we handed down a legacy to our children in the shadows of the flames of six symbolic candles. Tonight, at this assembly, we reaffirm our oaths in the shadows of the flames of these six Yahrzeits candles honoring the memory of our six million, Acheinu B'nai Yisroel, our Jewish brethren.

**We take this oath!** Our memory will become words. Words of history of the Holocaust to be handed down from generation to generation, *Midor Ledor. Unsere Kedoshim Mir Velen Eich Keinmol Nit Fargesen.*

## THE PLEDGE OF ACCEPTANCE

We, who are your sons and daughters, belong to a generation in which every attempt was made for us to never exist. We, who represent your victory and your triumph over evil of unthinkable dimensions, accept the responsibility to preserve and protect the legacy of the Holocaust.

**We pledge** to commemorate.

**We pledge** to educate.

**We pledge** to forever remember.

**We pledge to you**, our mothers and fathers, who suffered in ways which words cannot describe, that our commitment is an everlasting commitment for this generation and for every generation to come.

**We dedicate this pledge** to our beloved grandmothers and grandfathers, who never lived to see us.

**We dedicate this pledge** to our aunts, uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters, who are forever missing from our lives.

**We dedicate this pledge** to all the six million Jewish men, women, and children who were so brutally murdered, but who will always be in our thoughts and in our hearts.

## THE PLEDGE OF CONTINUATION

We, who are your grandchildren, will carry the survivors' legacy to prove to ourselves and to others that we can carry our victory, as well as to memorialize those loved ones who perished in the Holocaust.

**We pledge to:**

Always remember who we are, where we came from, and also the traumas our grandparents endured and survived;

Educate people of other ethnic, religious, and cultural groups about our grandparents' experiences;

Commit to use lessons of the Holocaust to support justice, tolerance, peace, kindness and compassion;

Accept survivors' memories and to pass them on to future generations.

## WE REMEMBER THEM

At the rising of the sun and at its going down  
We remember them.

At the blowing of the wind and the chill of winter  
We remember them.

At the opening of the buds and in the rebirth of spring  
We remember them.

At the blueness of the skies and in the warmth of summer  
We remember them.

At the rustling of the leaves and in the beauty of autumn  
We remember them.

At the beginning of the year and when it ends  
We remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a  
part of us, as we remember them.

When we are weary and in need of strength  
We remember them.

When we are lost and sick at heart  
We remember them.

When we have joy we crave to share  
We remember them.

When we have decisions that are difficult to make  
We remember them.

When we have achievements that are based on theirs  
We remember them.

As long as we live, they too will live; for they are now a  
part of us, as we remember them.

# THE HOLOCAUST KADDISH

<b>Yit-gadal</b> <i>Auschwitz-Birkenau-Buna, Balanowka, Belsen</i>	יִתְגַּדֵּל
<b>Ve-yit-kadash</b> <i>Belzec, Bialystok, Babi Yar</i>	וְיִתְקַדֵּשׁ
<b>Shmei Raba</b> <i>Bochini, Bogdanovka, Buchenwald</i>	שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא.
<b>B'alma divra chir-utei</b> <i>Chelmno, Kracow, Dachau</i>	בְּעֵלְמָא דִּי בְּרָא כְרַעוּתָהּ
<b>V'yamlich mal-chutei</b> <i>Dakovo, Danica, Dora</i>	וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתָהּ
<b>Be-chayei-chon uv'yomei-chon</b> <i>Dumanovka, Ebensee, Edineti, Flossenburg</i>	בְּחַיֵּיכֹון וּבְיוֹמֵיכֹון
<b>U'vchayei de chol beit Yisrael</b> <i>Gross Rosen, Gunzkirchen, Gurs</i>	וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
<b>Ba-agala u-vizman kariv</b> <i>Herzogenbusc, Iasi, Jadovno, Kaiserwald</i>	בְּעֵגְלָא וּבְזִמְנ קָרִיב,
<b>V'imru Amen.</b>	וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
<b>Ye-hei shmei raba m'vorach l'olam ul'olmei alma-ya</b>	יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלְמַי וּלְעָלְמֵי עֲלְמֵיָא:
<b>Yitbarach ve-yishtabach</b> <i>Kamanetz-Podolsk, Kishniev, Kovno, Klooga</i>	יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח
<b>Ve-yitpa-ar ve-yitromam</b> <i>Lodz, Lubin, Lublin, Lvov, Lyons</i>	וְיִתְפָּאֵר וְיִתְרֹמֵם
<b>Ve-yit-nasei ve-yit-hadar</b> <i>Majdanek, Mauthausen, Minsk, Natzweiler, Neuengamme</i>	וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא וְיִתְהַדָּר
<b>Ve-yit-aleh ve-yit-halal</b> <i>Ohrdruf, Plashov, Papenburg, Ponary</i>	וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלָּל
<b>Shmei d'kudasha b'rich Hu</b> <i>Prague, Radom, Ravensbruck, Rehmsdorf, Riga</i>	שְׁמֵהּ דְקֻדְשָׁא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא. בְּרִיךְ הוּא:
<b>L'eila</b> <i>Sachensburg, Sachsenhausen, San Sabba, Shauliai</i>	לְעֵלָא
<b>Min kol birchata v'shirata</b> <i>Skarzysko Kameinna, Sobibar Stutthof</i>	מִן כָּל בִּרְחַתָּא וְשִׁירַתָּא
<b>Tush-bechata ve-neche-mata</b> <i>Theresienstadt, Transnistria, Treblinka, Vilna</i>	תִּשְׁבַּחְתָּא וְנִחַמְתָּא
<b>Da-amiran b'alma</b> <i>Viavara, Warsaw, Zemun, Zhitomir, and the scores of other camps.</i>	דְאָמִירוּ בְּעֵלְמָא.
<b>V'imru Amen.</b>	וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
<b>Yehei shlama raba min shmaya</b>	יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא
<b>Ve-chayim aleinu</b>	וְחַיִּים עָלֵינוּ
<b>V'al Kol Yisrael</b>	וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל.
<b>V'imru Amen.</b>	וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:
<b>Oseh Shalom bim-romav</b>	עוֹשֵׂה שְׁלוֹם בְּמִרוֹמָיו
<b>Hu ya-aseh shalom</b>	הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שְׁלוֹם
<b>Aleinu ve-al kol Yisrael</b>	עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל
<b>V'imru Amen.</b>	וְאָמְרוּ אָמֵן:

# HYMN OF THE PARTISANS - ZOG NIT KEYN MOL

Written by Hirsch Glik of the Vilna Ghetto

Zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg, -  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot - mir zaynen do!  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho,  
S'vet a poyk ton undzer trot - mir zaynen do!

Fun grinem palmenland biz vaysn land fun shney,  
Mir kumen on mit undzer payn, mit undzer vey;  
Un vu gefaln iz a shprits fun undzer blut,  
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut!  
Un vu gefaln iz a shprits fun undzer blut,  
Shprotsn vet dort undzer gvure, undzer mut!

S'vet di morgnzun bagildn undz dem haynt,  
Un der nekht vet farshvindn mit dem faynt,  
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in der kayor,  
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor!  
Nor oyb farzamen vet di zun in der kayor,  
Vi a parol zol geyn dos lid fun dor tsu dor!

Dos lid geshribn iz mit blut, un mit blay,  
S'iz nit keyn lidl fun a foygl oyf der fray, -  
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent  
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!...  
Dos hot a folk tsvishn falndike vent  
Dos lid gezungen mit naganes in di hent!...

To zog nit keyn mol, az du geyst dem letstn veg,  
Khotsh himlen blayene farshteln bloye teg;  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho -  
Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zaynen do!  
Kumen vet nokh undzer oysgebenkte sho -  
Es vet a poyk ton undzer trot: mir zaynen do!

Never say that you are going on your last way  
Though leaden clouds may be concealing skies of blue  
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;  
And our marching steps will thunder: We are here!  
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;  
And our marching steps will thunder: We are here!

From the land of palm-trees to the white land of snows  
We shall be coming with our torment and our woes,  
And everywhere our blood has sunk into earth  
Blossom shall our bravery, and hope from it!  
And everywhere our blood has sunk into earth  
Blossom shall our bravery, and hope from it!

We'll have the morning sun to set our day a glow,  
And all our yesterdays shall vanish with the foes,  
And if the time is long before the sun appears,  
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.  
And if the time is long before the sun appears,  
Then let this song go like a signal through the years.

This song was written with our blood and not with  
lead;  
It's not a song of the little birds out in the free,  
It was our people, among toppling barricades,  
That sang this song and fought courageous till the end.  
It was our people, among toppling barricades,  
That sang this song and fought courageous till the end.

So, never say that you are going on your last way  
Though leaden clouds may be concealing skies of blue  
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;  
And our marching steps will thunder: We are here!  
Because the hour we have hungered for is near;  
And our marching steps will thunder: We are here!

## **BETH SHOLOM HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS' TESTIMONY**

**Sheila Bernard** ז"ל: (born: Sara ( Sala) Perec (pronounced Peretz) Sheila was the only child born to Bela and Isaac Peretz in 1936 in Chelm, Poland. Chelm was a vibrant Jewish community. Before the war, her family owned a large building on Lubelska Street, and her father managed a Singer Sewing Machine business. Sheila's parents both had large, close-knit families, and her childhood was filled with love and joy.

When the ghetto was created in Chelm, Sheila's family, her aunt, uncle and their children were forced to move into one small apartment. In the ghetto, life was hard, and there was never enough food. Her father and two other men escaped to Russia aware of rumors of the Nazi's arrival and plans to kill Jewish men. After hearing the Nazi's planned to kill all the Jews, including the women and children, Sheila's father attempted to return to Chelm, but both he and Sheila's uncle were killed by the Germans.

Sheila's mother was forced into slave labor in the ghetto, leaving Sheila and several other children in the care of her aunt. On multiple occasions, the Nazis raided the apartment where Sheila was hiding, killing many of the other children and Sheila's aunt. Fearing that Sheila would be killed in future "Aktions" (killing sprees), Sheila's mother managed to bribe a guard and sneak Sheila out of the ghetto to hide in the grass or the factory where her mother worked, wherever space was available. Bela obtained help from a Polish policeman and family friend named Chizuk who had cancer and wished to do something nice before he died. He agreed to hide Sheila and her mother even though the rest of his family abandoned him out of fear of being caught and killed for helping Jews. They spent two years hiding, first in a potato shed and later in a chicken coop), until the end of the war.

Chizuk died two weeks after the war's end. Within a year, Sheila's mother also died of a pulmonary embolism. An agency locating Jewish orphans found and took care of Sheila in Dornstat, Germany for two years. In 1947, at age 11, Sheila immigrated to Israel where she married her husband and had Nira, before immigrating to the US in 1963.

Her daughter Nira is married to Philip Berry. Sheila passed away this past year and was the grandmother of Brandon and Eliana Berry and was a Shul member for many years.

**Sylvia Friedman:** I was born in Lukov, Poland. My parents Chandel and Liebel Zysman both died in the holocaust. Chandel was shot and killed by a Polish person when she left hiding to get money. Liebel went to shul one day and never came back. Sylvia was told that he was taken away. My siblings Yosef Zysman and Yoel Moshe Sysman were taken to Treblinka and cremated. My mother and I escaped the ghetto and were taken in by a righteous Polish farmer. Along with my aunt, uncle and two first cousins, I hid and survived for 18 months in the barn on the farm owned by a Polish farmer. I met and married my husband, Reuben Friedman, in a Displaced Persons (DP) Camp in Badreichenhal, Germany. In 1949 we were sponsored into the United States by Reuben's aunt, who lived in Washington D.C.

**Manny Kandel:** Alan Reinitz asked me to write a short piece on the Holocaust. He suggested that I address the notion of why is the Shabbaton important to me, and by extension should it be important to our community.

When I sat down to compose my thoughts, I had a great dilemma. I have so many memories, but words, my words, seem so inadequate to convey the pain that still lingers. It is probably one of the reasons that most survivors have a difficult time recalling those years. I recall one survivor who would refer to the years he spent in the concentration camps as "When I was in summer camp".

Let me cite one minor example: I recall as a student at the Hebrew Academy more than 50 years ago, we would compare notes as to whose Shul finished Yom Kippur later. That would determine which one of us fasted longer. It amazed me then, and still amazes me now of the general comments made by my friends of being "so hungry". My memory of "Hunger" has a totally different connotation, a different depth, a different reference. When I think of "Hunger" I think of a perpetual state of being. Not a situation that will be alleviated by the blowing of the Shofar.

That is being "so hungry".

I must add, my Holocaust experiences have been far less extreme than those who survived the infamous concentration camps. My mother and I spent and survived the bitter Ukrainian winters in the woods. My father did not survive.

Thank G-D we did not see the daily suffering and death that so many of our Jewish brothers and sisters had the misfortune of experiencing in the camps. However, for us, it was not “a walk in the woods” either. Given my age, much is but a forgone memory rekindled only by stories I recall as told by my mother and her fellow partisans.

It is not my intent to review a personal odyssey, but rather share with you a perspective that may (or may not) shed a different point of view.

If one is to take the Torah obligation of ZACHOR ET ASHER ASAH AMOLEK, - remember what Amolek did, as a serious commitment, then I would suggest it is equally important for us and I would add, to our Jewish continuance to remember the Holocaust.

And remember we must.

To paraphrase a famous saying “One who forgets history, he is bound to relive it”. This is unfortunately so true. The human race never seems to remember. Or chooses to forget. Events in the last number of years, which is full of atrocities committed by governments, quasi governments, religious groups, all seek to cause death and destruction in the name of some ideology.

The post Holocaust refrain of NEVER AGAIN seems as relevant to the Jewish people this day and age as it was some sixty years ago. As the Hagadah teaches us, that in every generation an enemy arises and attempts to destroy us. Today as we speak (as you read this) we face the tyrant Ahmadinejad of Iran. Sounds familiar?

That is why we must remember, and teach our children and grandchildren not to forget.

And whatever we do to enhance that remembrance whether it is an annual Shabbaton, or a permanent memorial in our Synagogue, it will be to our credit and an honor to our people.

**Lisa Murik:** After being forced from hiding in their home in Ostrog by a flood, Lisa Murik and her family were forced to look elsewhere for shelter and protection. After a few tries, her mother and father finally found someone who was willing to hide the family. All five of them were hidden in a potato cellar on a farm on the outskirts of Ostrog (now in the Ukraine) owned by Horpina Zygodlow and her family. Horpina claimed that Lisa and her family were sent to her by God in order to save them.

Lisa and her family lived in this hole in the ground for 16 months, surviving on either bread or potatoes and water. The only clothing they had was what they wore the day they were hidden. In the winter of 1945, when Poland was liberated, Lisa and her family were finally free again. They went back to their home, which was gone, but found another empty house in which they lived for a short time and then moved to Lodz, Poland. Lisa met her husband, Abraham Murik, in Lodz and was married there. From there, Lisa and Abraham went to a Displaced Persons camp in Berlin, Germany, where Barbara was born. After moving to another DP camp in Eschwege, Germany, the Murik family came to the U.S. in March of 1949.

**Michael Vermess** was born in Budapest in 1933. Following the German occupation of Hungary on March 19, 1944 his family's apartment house was one of the first which was confiscated by the Nazi authorities and the family was taken to the ghetto. The Budapest ghetto was not deported (Red Army incircled the city by the end of 1944). The family survived with much suffering and deprivation until the liberation in January, 1945. He escaped Communist Hungary in 1956, completed his medical studies in Vienna, Austria, and immigrated to the United States in 1959.

## VIEWPOINT FROM THE SECOND GENERATION

**Nira Berry:** The Holocaust was always an undercurrent in my family as I was growing up. My parents never spoke about it, even when I would ask questions about their childhood. I knew bits and pieces - and the pieces I picked up on were so difficult for me to comprehend. How could such horrible things really happen? How could such evil people really exist? How could the rest of the world let this happen? Just because my family was Jewish?

My father's family, the Katziff family was from Vilna, Lithuania. They owned a mill just outside of town. The Nazi's killed his father at the very beginning of the war, but my father, Eric Etons, at age 10, his mother and his sister, ran into the woods. There they survived as Partisans for a few years until the end of the war, running through the forests with guns.

My mother, Sheila Bernard, endured many Nazi 'Aktions' in the streets and ghetto, witnessing most of her family getting killed. She survived by being hidden at age 6 with her mother in a potato shed by a righteous gentile. She is the only survivor of her large family in Poland.

My family's stories and too many other tragic Beth Sholom family stories such as these, prompted me to want to bring about this special Holocaust memorial Shabbaton to share with the Beth Sholom family and the DC area Jewish community. We will never forget!

**Barbara Chesman:** Isn't it strange that until you are a certain age, you have none. It reminds me of Rabbi Antine's sermon right before Yizkor on the last day of Pesach. He spoke of two kinds of memories. The kind you experience and the kind you are told about.

Although I never knew my father's immediate family (all but one sibling were killed in the war), and both sets of great-grandparents, I learned about them from my parents' stories. Those stories created memories of families I never knew. My memories of the first few years of my life were those told to me by my family. I was born in a Displaced Persons camp after WWII in Berlin. My parents and I lived there 8 months, when it was closed we moved to another camp in Eschwege, Germany, where we lived until we came to the U.S. in March, 1949. I have no recollection of this experience, but we had photographs and I remember this time in my life only through stories and photographs. When my aunts and uncles visited us, they told me even more fascinating stories. As I grew older, I began to understand why so many things evolved as they did in our family. Fortunately, my mother was able to record her story for both the U.S. Holocaust Museum and Steven Spielberg's Shoah. Unfortunately, my father passed away before this type of documentation began and his stories live on only in our family's memory.

I recited Yizkor this year in a completely different way than ever before. I remembered the families with whom I grew up who were no longer here, and the ones I only heard about. The ones who laid the foundation for my parents, my brothers, my children and me. Sure, growing up as a child of Holocaust survivors wasn't easy, but it taught me many things. It gave me the determination to succeed no matter what happened, the will to overcome obstacles in life, and never to take anything for granted. I believe that growing up as a child of survivors gave me a strong sense of dedication to Judaism, my family, my career and carrying on the traditions of what my family taught me, to help others.

Thanks for the memories.

**Debbie Fisch:** My father, Marcel Jacober, was born in Munkacs, Czechoslovakia. He had completed one year of university in Prague when the war began. He managed to avoid deportation to the camps by hiding on the back of a German truck inside a barrel. He then moved from place to place, while his immediate family was in Auschwitz-Birkenau. Against all odds, both his parents and two sisters survived but he lost one brother.

My mother, Helen Beck Jacober, was from Seighet, Romania (the same town Elie Weisel is from). Her father was the head Dayan of Seighet, a very prominent position. Her family was deported to Auschwitz as well, when she was just twelve years old. She worked in the kinder section, where the young children, because of their small fingers, cleaned ammunition. She managed to stay alive, a lot in part to a certain SS officer that would meet her at night by the barbed wire fence and bring her raw potato

peels. Sadly, she lost her parents, three brothers, and two sisters. Her and her older sister, the only surviving family members, were reunited after the war.

Last year, I joined my daughter on a trip to Poland with her school. This trip inspired me to work on this program in memory of my parents, and to honor our survivors here at Beth Sholom. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to work on this Shabbaton.

***Bashi Packer:*** My parents, Esther and Sam Cizek, are Holocaust survivors. Many of you know them as Bubby Esther and Zayde Sam. Roger's parents, Mania and Harry Packer, Zichronam Lebrechah, were also survivors of the Shoah.

Here's a brief biography of my parents: Sam (Shmuel) Czyzyk was born in Pulawi, Poland – a shtetl on the Vistula and Kurówka Rivers. He was from a poor family, the son of a baker. His father, sisters, and brother were all killed. Shmuel, who was in various labor camps and in Buchenwald, was the only one of his family to survive. More than 3,000 Jews from Pulawi were killed – probably at Sobibor.

Esther Grossman was born in Hegyalya Mad, Hungary – a small town in the northeastern part of Hungary. (Coincidentally, Alan Reinitz's family is from Hegyalya Mad, and he takes care of the cemetery there on his frequent visits! Because of that connection, Alan and my mother have become dear friends.) Esther's parents and grandparents, and her sister Udeleh, were killed in Auschwitz. Through amazing stories of survival, Esther and five of her six siblings survived Auschwitz – two immigrated to Israel, three to the US. Esther, the youngest Grossman sibling, is the only one still living. There are now over 150 descendants of the Grossman family, here and in Israel.

Esther Grossman and Shmuel Czyzyk met in DP Camp in Leipheim, Germany, after the war. Although they couldn't speak to each other (my mother spoke only Hungarian, my father Yiddish and Polish), they were able to communicate "in the language of love". After my father emigrated to Chicago, and my mother to Toronto, they wrote letters to each other. When he proposed marriage, she accepted his proposal with a letter literally sealed with a lipstick kiss. After their first child was born, they were told it wasn't a good idea to raise a little girl with the name Czyzyk in America – so my last name was changed to Cizek – it's still Czyzyk on my birth certificate!

All of us in the Beth Sholom family who are children of survivors share a bond - it's a bond that is shared by all of K'lal Yisrael. Unfortunately, as each year passes, there are fewer Bubbies and Zaydes to tell their stories, to bear witness to the Nazi atrocities, to the memory of those who perished, and to the incredible faith and strength of those who survived.

***Haia Perlmutter:*** On February 25, 2007 my parents, Miriam and Saul Ingber, celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary. My mother, born Miriam Farkash in Terneva, Czechoslovakia, survived Auschwitz and was liberated in Danzig. My father, born Israel Ingber in Mosei, Romania, survived Mauthausen and was liberated in Dachau. They met in a Displaced Persons Camp (Poking, Germany) in 1947 and married a week later. A year later my brother, Abraham, was born in Poking. When Abe was 9 months old they moved to Israel where Saul went into the Army. I was born three years later in Israel and in 1957 we moved to America where our brother, Morty, was born.

***Freida S. Paskow:*** Beth Sholom Congregation begins a new chapter in serving our community with the Second Annual Shabbaton. I am personally quite pleased to participate because this particular Shabbaton brings together our very special survivor community as well as children of survivors. For those of us who grew up with very little family, other survivors and their children constitute the biggest and most important parts of our lives. Just attending the planning meetings has been a revelation because I have learned about a number of members who are the second generation (children of survivors) whom I did not know.

The events of the Holocaust are very important to me because both of my parents were Holocaust survivors, struggling to exist every day. They were from the same town, Chrzanow, Poland, near Krakow. My father, Josef Schonthal, died in December 2006 at the age of 88; he worked in various camps for four years while my mother, Nadja Schonthal, who died four years ago, worked in the camps for three years. Both were liberated at Bergen-Belsen, near Hanover, Germany, and my father found my

mother in the hospital there, completely by luck. I find it very difficult to think about what my parents faced and yet I find it comforting to remember that they were not bitter people throughout their lives, but instead showed great warmth and understanding.

This Shabbaton means a great deal to me because I believe it gives us, the children of the survivors, an opportunity to share our very intimate feelings of our parents with the congregation in a meaningful way. We do not want to dwell on the sadness, but rather to understand European Jewry from the perspective of the past and the future. We know that our parents once had normal lives, just like everyone else, lives which changed suddenly, violently, and forever. We grew up without most of our family members and learned to comfort, treasure, and help our parents, people who had suffered beyond all measure. We always seek to learn more about that time before the war, to know how our parents lived, and what they were like before the events of the Holocaust affected them.

For the congregation, this Shabbaton offers an opportunity to recognize and honor our members who survived the Shoah and who bring their experiences, insights, and knowledge to us

**Alan Reinitz:** In 1944, the last day of Pesach ended on Saturday night, April 15<sup>th</sup>. The very next day, my family and hundreds of thousands of other Hungarian Jewish families were ordered to assemble in their local synagogue. Once all the Jewish people were gathered together, the process of being moved into ghettos and then deportation to Concentration Camps was put into irrevocable motion. For my family and for so many other Hungarian Jewish families, this was the beginning of the end of their lives.

Since most of my family members were Hasidim and had large families, hundreds of my relatives were murdered in Auschwitz by Shavuot. My Grandparents, Aunts, Uncles and most of my cousins never lived to experience another Pesach.

Each Pesach, I always found it so ironic that as my family and I recounted the Jewish people's joyful exodus from tyranny, persecution and slavery, my family simultaneously recounted the tragedy of our personal history of Pesach 1944 and the day after. As a child of Holocaust Survivors, the mixture of historical happiness and sorrow was not always easy to understand and accept. As an Adult Child of Holocaust Survivors, the blending of both of these histories has served as a basis for believing that despite horrific circumstances, ultimately Hashem grants salvation, redemption and the renewal of life.

Beth Sholom's Second Annual Shoah Shabbaton is designed to pay appropriate and respectful homage to all Jewish people murdered in the Holocaust; stress the importance of an international commitment to Holocaust education; and guard against the resurgence of Anti-Semitism. May this Shabbaton inspire and strengthen each of us in our dedication to our faith and may we always remember the importance of Holocaust commemoration and education.

**Suzette Tanen:** A seven year old girl is told by her crying father that the woman she has called "grandmother", is not actually her 'real' grandmother. Her real grandmother was killed, along with her father's two brothers and a sister in a horrible place in Poland called a concentration camp. Fast forward thirty-two years. The little girl is now a grown woman living in Potomac, Maryland. She is asked by her Rebbetzin to house some people from Poland who've recently found out that they are Jewish. The rabbi will be converting their spouses, and then remarrying them according to Halacha – what an opportunity! These are just two of the reasons why this Shabbaton is so important to me.

Very early on in my childhood, my father recounted his story to my brother and me. Like so many others of his generation, his story is one of courage, fortitude and incredible luck. He would recall his magical childhood in Czechoslovakia, summers on his grandparents' farm, a Day School (Gymnasium) education, and warm, loving parents and siblings. Over the years we heard more details of his amazing tale of survival, his reunion with his father, my wonderful Zaidie, and how they carried on with their lives despite the horrors of the past. On May 5, we will be given a chance to remember and honor that past.