

In my own way, I could add to that.

We were about to continue. I'd like you to talk a little bit about General Eisenhower or later President Eisenhower's feelings about Jews. Do you think that perhaps his attitude toward Patton, which you described before, regarding the mistreatment or neglect of prisoners, may have had anything to do with Eisenhower's own feelings regarding Jews?

I think that may very well be so. You know that Eisenhower himself twice, at least twice and more often, undoubtedly was called a Jew by the Nazis. They also called President Roosevelt a Jew. And Nazi propaganda had it that the Jew Rosenfelt sent the Jew Eisenhower to torment the Jews of Germany.

But Eisenhower himself, and I heard him say this, he said that when he was a little boy, he and his brothers were raised by their mother on the stories of what he called the Old Testament, what we Jews call our Bible, and that the figures in the Old Testament, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and David and Solomon, were all figures with whom he was quite familiar because of these stories told him when he was a child by his mother.

And that he also said at one time that actually, he believed that the Jews were the chosen people, that the Jews were closer to God than were other peoples. Some of these things he said publicly when after the war, he served as president of Columbia University. And during that time, he was given an honorary doctorate by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, a neighbor of Columbia, and he said these things publicly.

So I have a strong feeling that Eisenhower, if not a philo-Semite, at least felt sensitive about the sufferings of Jews, that once a situation was called to his attention, he acted upon it speedily.

Yes, yes. There is a book that was recently published by, I believe, a Canadian, in which Eisenhower is accused of deliberately mistreating German POWs who were captured at the end of the war. You've heard about this?

I haven't heard about this.

I mean the book itself.

I heard about the book. I've read about the book, but I cannot conceive that this has any truth in it whatsoever, first of all because I know Eisenhower so well. I know that he was a man of strong character without bigotry, without prejudice. He in addition was molded by the military form, and he was the kind of army officer who lived by the rules.

He would never himself transgress military regulations which say very clearly that prisoners of war are not to be maltreated, and I'm certain he would not permit any officer serving under his command to mistreat prisoners of war. I myself played a little role in the prisoner of war situation.

You see, in addition to the fact that I was in charge of Jewish affairs as a chaplain, I was also G3 on the staff of the theater chaplain, which means I was in charge of all religious supplies for the American army, for our priests, for our Protestant ministers, for our rabbis, that mass wine or mass kits, or crucifixes or rosary beads, or wine for the Kiddush, the Jewish services, were all shipped through my office to all the American Army Jewish chaplains in the European theater.

Now, one of the interesting responsibilities I had during that time was to supply religious materials for German prisoners of war held in prisoner-of-war camps in France. And one of the things I had to find, and ultimately, I found them, were New Testaments printed in German for German prisoners of war and other religious supplies in German for those German prisoners of war in American military prisoner of war camps who wanted to study religion.

Now, if Eisenhower and the officers under him were so concerned that I, a rabbi, should find New Testaments printed in German for German prisoners of war, I can't bring myself to believe that there was any kind of mistreatment of German prisoners of war under Eisenhower. I think that is an out-and-out lie.

Thank you for giving your comment on that, because I think the book is certainly a disturbing one and one that is getting some currency right now, or notoriety.

Well, that's too bad.

Yeah, yeah. What has this experience with the camp, the DP camps and what you saw, what you encountered there, how has that changed your life or shaped your later life, both as a rabbi and as a person?

Well, I must tell you that first of all, what I saw in the concentration camps completely colored my thinking to such a point that I was convinced I could never again serve as a rabbi. I had personal theological problems. How could I continue preaching about God and his beneficence and his kindness after what I had witnessed in the concentration camps?

And it took a long time before I was able to make peace with myself. During that period of time, immediately after I returned home after the war, fortunately, I did not have to serve as a rabbi. I had agreed while still in Germany at my desk at American Army headquarters in Frankfurt.

I had agreed after a visit by Major Edward Warburg, who was president of the JDC, the Joint Distribution Committee, that I would be employed by that committee, that after a month at home in the United States, upon my return, I would come back to Germany and serve as head of the JDC operations in Germany.

In December of 1945 when I came home, I was asked to speak at the annual meeting of the JDC, and I did. And I spoke with great anger and great disappointment that the American Jews had done so little, not that they could have done very much. But the difference between what I had been living with for the past four years that I was in Europe and what I found among the American Jews was so great that I was filled with indignation.

Well, after I spoke at that JDC annual meeting in New York, I was asked to speak again the following week at the UJA Annual Conference which was to proclaim an as yet unheard of goal of trying to raise \$100 million to help the survivors in Europe as well as the Jews of Palestine. And I spoke with that conference in Atlantic City, and the following morning, I was asked to have breakfast with the leaders of the UJA and the JDC.

They then told me that breakfast that I was transferred from the JDC to the UJA, that they wanted me, both organizations, to speak in the campaign for the \$100 million that was to be operated by the UJA, the United Jewish Appeal. So over the following six months, I spoke in 40 different states of our country trying to raise money, and as a result of the meetings at which I spoke, I was told that \$20 million was raised.

Then they asked me to go to South Africa, first to go back to Germany and Italy to visit the DP camps again to be brought up to date as it were, and then to go to South Africa and what were then called Southern Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia, and to speak to the Jewish communities there under the auspices of the South African Jewish War Appeal, again to raise funds for the Jewish survivors.

I spent four months speaking in those countries and then came back to the States, got married, and spoke for six months in the New York City UJA campaign. By this time, having worked out my own personal problem as to whether I could again serve as a rabbi, and being tired of having no address of my own for so many years since the beginning of 1942, I accepted in 1947, in the fall of that year, a congregation in Brookline, Massachusetts, Kehillath Israel, where I served for 10 years, and then came to the Park Avenue Synagogue in New York in 1957.

This is, I'm sure, a kind of personal question which I hope is not too intrusive, but let me ask you this. How do you deal with the question of God in the Holocaust in speaking to people about it today, in speaking to your congregations and to people who might ask you where was God when all of this happened?

Well, I think that if anybody tries to give an answer to that question, that person is presumptuous. There are questions that we cannot answer, and this is one of the great questions that we cannot answer. Where was God? Of course, in Jewish theology, there is the concept of *hastarat panim*, that there are times when God is absent.

Perhaps that was a time when God was absent, but I know that if I reject my belief in God, there are more questions that I won't be able to answer, many questions-- questions like why should a man have sacrificed his own life to save another man in a concentration camp, and why should there be love and such beauty in the world.

How can life be explained if I don't believe in God? Therefore, I still retain my belief in God. That there are lacunae here and there, yes, I freely admit that, but I live with those lacunae and with my faith in God.

Do you think that the displaced persons camps where you found yourself in the days after the war have been sufficiently studied for their own sake? Do you think people know enough about those camps, or do you think that more effort needs to be invested to learn about that phase of the War and the Holocaust for future generations?

I'm strongly convinced that there has to be much more study about the Holocaust to begin with, and about the whole era of the displaced persons camps. The Holocaust has to be studied in much greater depth than it has been because for the first time in human history, it shows the depths of human depravity, how far human beings can go in practicing evil toward other human beings.

And if we are to learn how to face evil, how to try at least to eliminate some parts of evil in the human being, we have to study that time in history when evil was at its worst, when human beings were at their very worst. We have to study the period of the DP camps in order to learn how human beings can resist, how human beings can overcome the worst that other human beings can do to them, the strength of the human personality. All of that needs much more study.

To end on a somewhat lighter note, we have a picture of you here as a young soldier, and I'm glad to say you haven't changed too much.

You're very kind. You're very kind indeed. I know when I look in the mirror each morning to shave that I have indeed changed, as is quite understandable. That picture incidentally was taken in London in 1942 by the Army Signal Corps.

Rabbi Nadich, I want to thank you for sharing your experiences with us. I think you've added appreciably to our understanding of the aftermath of the Holocaust, and your remarks have certainly come home to us.

Thank you very much indeed for asking me.

My pleasure. Very good.