

First one too.

As I mentioned before, a few days prior liberation, a large group of female came to the camp. Quite a number of them were sick with typhus fever. And besides, we have quite a number of-- and quite a number of them were sick with tuberculosis. American requested that doctors who were present came to cooperate with them, organize the hospital there.

And I was put in charge of one part of the hospital containing approximately 500 female sick with typhus fever and tuberculosis, among other sicknesses. And I was with my wife that time. I was given a room to live in. And I was trying to take care of these sick women. Meantime, the Americans supply us with intravenous fluids.

And so we were able to help some of the patients with typhus fever to survive. The typhus fever was an entity almost unknown to American doctors. And therefore, they used the European doctors to take care of these patient. They also knew very little about tuberculosis. And therefore, they ask me because of my experience in tuberculosis during the war to organize this block. And I did.

One of the problem was nourishment because the food we were receiving from this kitchen was very rich, greasy food, which were-- that our sick people could not possibly digest. After discussion with the medical staff of this evacuation hospital, we got a permission to the food supply that is now in our sick block consisted mostly of key-- white American bread and then, gradually, was changed.

And other-- and I was active, as I mentioned before, in this Jewish committee. And it was American zone. And very soon, the Jewish Brigade get in touch with our camp because we find out that was quite a number of young children and young people present in the camp. And Jewish Brigade was trying to organize the youth Aliyah.

They were not allowed to travel in the American zone. And therefore, they travel surreptitiously. And I supplied them with a place to stay. And within a few weeks, they were-- and they organized the children. And somehow, there was help of some American Jewish officers were able to transfer the children to the English zone. And from English zone, then they transferred them to Italy, and from Italy to Palestine.

So what-- where did you go next?

A few weeks after liberation, the rumors spread in this part of the side of the Danube River will be taken over as-- by Soviet Union. And we didn't want to go again under Soviet Union domination. We refused. And we had opportunity to go back to Poland. But after consideration and advice from our Polish friend in camp, we decided not to go to Poland at that time, especially we are quite convinced that there is nobody there to look forward.

And so after the rumors spread the Russian are taking over this side of Danube, we moved over to Linz, where a group of refugee camp was organized and by American. From there, with the help of Jewish Brigade, we moved to Salzburg. And from Salzburg, we were smuggled again through the Austrian-Italian border by Jewish Brigade to Italy because we are directing ourselves toward Palestine.

Why did you have to be smuggled?

Because it was not permitted for the prisoners, the ex-prisoner-- displaced person-- this was a new term used-- displaced person to move from one country to the other, from one zone to the other. And especially the English were aware of the attempt of Jewish Brigade to rescue these Jews from these camps and transfer them to this situation where they could be clandestinely transferred to Palestine.

So you weren't actually in one of the displaced persons camps, were you?

Now, when we came to Italy, then I volunteered to go to one of these displaced person camp, which was organized that time by the Jewish Brigade and Jewish authorities from Palestine as a kibbutz Hakshara. And I was assigned to one of

these kibbutzim in a small Italian village.

And what did you do there?

Over there, I was in charge of medical facilities. And a bit earlier, I was taking care of sick people that were in that-- waiting for possibility to emigrate to Palestine.

And what happened?

Now, this is another story. When we came to this-- to Italy and we came to some transition camp, and all these clandestine people from Austria, Germany was transferred by Jewish Brigade, this place, which was surrounded by the camps of Jewish Brigade, and they were making lists of all new arrivals during the evening. And the member of the Jewish Brigades were coming, looking for the members of the family which possibly were saved-- friends and so on.

And as soon as my and my wife name was put on the list, we find ourself as surrounded by the people who knew us and from our time in youth Zionist organization in Poland. And next evening, quite a large group, maybe 80 members of this organization, came to see us and ask us if they heard.

Through one of this group, I sent a telegram to my brother in Palestine. But my brother, who was convinced already at that time that nobody was left and nobody from the family is alive, decided to leave Palestine and move to United States, where his sister-in-law was living in Scranton, Pennsylvania.

This telegram I sent to him to Haifa was sent from there to Scranton, Pennsylvania, and from Scranton, Pennsylvania was sent to Lisbon, Portugal, where my brother was waiting for an immigration opportunity to-- in the United States. And from there, I finally received some-- and he received sign of life from me. And finally, I received a letter from him.

Then during my stay in Italy, I was informed by my friends from Palestine that if I want to practice medicine in Palestine, I should not come to Palestine illegal way. And there's another story. Then the friends of mine in Palestine secured for me and my wife a special certificate for so-called Vatikim, means the-- a Zionist who because of their work are entitled to special consideration.

And after a few months in Italy, I got notification from Rome to report to the Palestine office of the Jewish Agency in Rome because I am on the list of this certificate. And I went to Rome. It took me three days from Bologna to Rome in the situation. And I confirmed the fact that I am on the list. And I was told that as soon as they get first certificate for Italy, I would be notified.

In meantime, the illegal immigration was taking place. And the British authorities, when they caught this illegal boats going toward Palestine, they put the people on the camp in Cyprus. And all the certificates from Cyprus were directed to-- all the certificate for immigration to Palestine went to Cyprus. And there some people from camp over there, they may go to Palestine. In this way, the situation which I was supposed to have the priority in immigration to Palestine was off.

In meantime, my brother was sending letters and asking that because of the-- we were left of our entire family, why should he be in the United States and now go to Palestine when we can be together in United States? So I apply for immigration. And after waiting for four years, I was able to immigrate to United States. It is a very short description or long term, which quite interesting the episode during this time too.

So looking back over your experiences, can you say anything about your feelings about what happened over those years between your time, how it influenced your values or what kept you going, any kind of feeling there?

What kept me going? Somehow, possibly subconsciously, I was hopeful that I will survive. I was and has been a Zionist all my life. And one of my ideals was to go to Palestine, and settle there, and work there. Didn't work this way. I'm still a Zionist, but I'm in the United States. And it possibly did it.

And besides, when I look at it, as you asked me to look at it back, maybe these are this instinct on survival, instinct of survival, which keeps you going, which helps you without thinking, that even independently, regardless of the circumstance. And there's still the instinct to survive. Lesson I learned from it? Lesson learned from that is the worst enemies of the people are other people. Lesson I learn from it-- can happen again. Lesson I learn from it--

Why do you think it can happen again?

Because a hatred exists, differences exist. The tendency of people to look for some scapegoat for anything exist. We are witnessing now the increase of antisemitisms all over the world. And even within our Jewish community, during the war, the German Jews looked down and hate the Ostjuden, the Eastern Jews. And the-- when we met Hungarian in the camp, they were against the Polish Jews. Polish and Hungarian Jews were against the Romanian Jews.

If we was in-- if this-- that reminds me again. After I arrived in Italy, a members of our Zionist movement from before the war came to see me. And then they requested that I became active in this particular group of Zionist movement. And I told them, listen, after all what this-- what happened, how can you again so be split in this group, and this group, and this subgroup?

And I remember, the friend of mine look at me and said, you are in camp. But among us, the life went the same way. Not much change. And he was right. Not much changed.

And the small antagonism, even hatred in one group against other in a group and so on, it persist. What other lesson is? Said sometimes, even in the bleakest circumstances, you find kind people. But you also find people who are possibly bad.

How religious were you after the war in comparison to before the war?

That is a difficult question because I was not very believing-- you may use this expression-- before the war. Did these experiences make me to believe more is very hard to answer because maybe some people were saved by-- because some reason.

From the other sides, I saw pious people, I saw very valuable people, observant people who didn't survive, who suffered. And I don't know.

Sometimes, the question ask, if there somebody who directs this-- that looks over this world, how this someone or something permit something to happen, permit something like that to happen, permit something like that to happen like throwing small children through the window-- from the window on the street from high floors? I don't know that.

If I observe certain Jewish tradition now, is because this is manifestation of my Jewishness. How much faith in it? I don't know, cannot answer it honestly because sometimes, I couldn't answer it.

What kinds of feelings do you have about being Jewish?

I wouldn't change it. If I would put in situation somebody asked me if you would have be-- can be born again, would you choose the same-- to be born the same way? Probably, yes. But sometimes, I meet the especially young people. And I told them that I believe is important maintaining a Jewishness and Jewish nation. And they asked me, why? What is so important in it?

Sometimes, I'm-- the situation is difficult find answer. May be something in me which belongs to this maintenance of the Jewishness, and a Jewish nation, and Jewish work, and the attachment to the Israel, attachment to Jewish tradition, Jewish beliefs, and somehow, concerned that maybe, this few thousand years' history of Jewish people is-- maybe is not going to last another 1,000, a few thousand years. It is a very, very personal thing to answer. Sometimes, you cannot put it properly in the words.

Over the years, did you talk about your experiences? And if so, with whom?

I never attempt to do as I attempt this time to go through the history of my experiences, which is very short, omitted quite a bit. But sometimes, I have to talk about it. And was always painful.

Who did you talk about it with?

Well, I talk to you shortly, some years ago when you asked for it. And after a few years ago, it was tendency among survivors of the Holocaust to, if I may use this expression, to compare their experiences. And therefore, we were talking. And somehow, whenever the group of the survivors met for any reason, somehow, frequently, the conversation tend to go toward the experiences during the Holocaust years.

Did you talk about it with your wife?

Yes, talk about it. But we don't dwell to it. We are interested. But we cut up all the different experiences. Everybody experienced this situation very personally, very differently.

And your mother was-- had a, to a degree, sheltered life up to the beginning of the war because she was-- besides the school, she was not much in contact with the non-Jewish world. I was in different situation. And I was in a Polish school, Polish university. And I had to deal with Polish authorities as a representative of the organization which I belong to.

And there was experiences before the war. During the war, we are sometimes together, sometimes separately. And I said, everybody's response to it is different.

What was your motivation in having your first child? How did you feel? And what kind of values did you try to transmit?

We wanted to have a child. We were looking forward. We were not young. But was not a deliberate decision. Simply, it was a period of our life that we came to conclusion that it's time for it, to have a family. Fortunately, we had you. We wanted more, couldn't have it. And I loved you very much. I didn't have this problem that the fathers are-- start the life the child after he is born and so on. But we wanted to--

I don't understand what you just said.

Some men are afraid of parenthood, men. And they are, let's say, have ambivalent feeling during the wife's pregnancy and even sometimes after the baby is born. And the question of arrival with the child. But I didn't went through this at all.

What I wanted to transmit to you? I don't know, to be a good person, to be a kind, understanding, tolerant person, to be a good Jew, to be happy. I don't know if this is too much to ask or not much enough.

I always believed that my role, as far as you are concerned, is a support and that-- and decision pertaining to life should be yours. I still believe that is the case. Whenever you need me, I try to be as helpful and supportive as possible.

I wish you enjoy your life more than you do. I wish you have the ability to enjoy moments and days. Because what I never not understand is when we go back to you asking me, what was the lesson of it-- not to plan too far in advance and to kind of live every day without worrying too much about what's going to happen tomorrow, in a year from tomorrow, five years from tomorrow.

And neither that doesn't correspond to responsibilities. I know that everybody is supposed to plan what's going to do, that kind of arrangement, and anything. And-- [AUDIO OUT]

What kind of reception did you receive from non-survivors? Were you able to share your experiences with other survivors, with non-survivors?

In answer to this question, I would have to divide this in a period after the war. Immediately after the war was a period when the survivors actually didn't mixed-- this for me, when I was working in Italy, was-- we didn't mix with not survivors. And meeting survivors, as I said before, frequently compare our experiences.

And actually, I could say that I was reluctant to talk about it. And I possibly perceived reluctance of the population around me to talk about these experiences. They were all too fresh in the memory. Later on, when we came to United States again, among our survivors, in spite of the fact that we were trying not to go back to these times, frequently, the conversation tend to veer toward this-- to these experiences.

We didn't talk too much with not-- the American population, the people who didn't-- who were not in Europe. Then approximately three years ago, especially after the mini series Holocaust on television, there was much more interest in this subject and encounter more curiosity from the public population. And in proper circumstances, we told the people about these experiences.

Did you join any survivor organizations? If so, why?

A few years after arrival United States, they organized a organization from the survivor who were born in Kraków and around Kraków. And I was invited to join and of course, join it from the beginning. First of all, I am a joiner. And I always worked and supported an organization. And secondly, the purpose of it was manifold.

Firstly, we want to organize in order to help Israel, secondly, to help ourself. But I perceive the building of the organization, sustaining it. And the organization is very active and very successful. I interpret it as that the people were in need of substitute families. They were quite a bit alone.

The process of assimilating in the even Jewish American surrounding was not easy, and especially, was not easy for me. But I find out that it was not also easy to many other people. And this lack of-- because of the lack of the family and the - the organization was served as a substitute of the family.

Did you apply for reparations? Why or why not?

Yes, I applied for reparations. And I'm still receiving a monthly pension from Germany.

Why did you apply for that?

Because I believe that the German are obligated to at least partially repay for the experiences, for the losses we suffered during the Holocaust.

Do you think that the money that you get is a compensation?

It is a considerate compensation. And of course, they cannot really-- nobody can repay for all these losses of the family and tearing out of your grounds that you-- you used to be. But I am-- I do believe that is the right thing to do. And therefore, we apply for-- I apply for it. And after due process, I am receiving this certain amount of money monthly.

What language was or what languages were primarily spoken at home?

Polish. Language was spoken at home was Polish.

Well, how about in this country?

In this country? When we are alone with my wife, we speak still Polish-- not because of any ideological motivation, simply because that is the language we grew up with and study. And is the most easy for us to express ourselves in Polish.

But after Danny was born, in order to make easy for him, and not to confuse him, in his presence, we spoke only English. Granted, whenever our friends came home, was sometimes difficult to keep the general conversation in English because we and our friends tend to switch to Polish because it was easier to express ourselves in this language.

What kind of feelings do you have about the United States in which you now live?

I love the United States. I am grateful for the opportunities given to me here. I consider this the best place to live. And I never felt so free as I am feeling now. And certainly, I will not switch to another place.

What kind of feelings-- what did you try to communicate to your child about the Holocaust and why?

As a principle, I believe it is very important that the memory of the Holocaust doesn't disappear with the disappearance of the survivor of the Holocaust. And therefore, I was interested that my child knows about it. But I was not-- but there was ambivalent feeling. I wanted him to know about the Holocaust. I don't know if I was so sure that I wanted him to know all the details of personal experiences.

And from the other side, I was concerned about burdening him with this information, about arousing hostility. And besides, we didn't know how to do it. We didn't know when to do it. There were some friends of mine who tried to hide their experiences from the children. And were other parents or friends of mine-- parents, friends of mine, as a parent, they were kind of force feeding the children with their experiences, trying to explain their action in the daily action by the tragedy they went through to the Holocaust.

I certainly didn't believe that is not the right way. I did not believe it was necessary to force the information on the children. And from the other side, I was trying to do it in an indirect way, by making my son interested in the general Jewish problem, which the Holocaust is part of. And I was waiting for him to ask the first question. Was it right or wrong? I don't know until today.

Do you think another Holocaust is possible?

Yes, I think another Holocaust is possible.

Why?

I think that the humanity became immune to genocide. In general, we see-- we know so much what happens now. And actually, even after the war, that war situation of genocide, maybe not in this magnitude. There is one consideration. The other consideration is that the Jews are for some reason special in this way, that nobody wants them among themselves.

Finally, and maybe most importantly, the Arabs surrounding Israel express freely, openly so much hatred and so much determination that given opportunity to commit the Holocaust in the Israel, they would not hesitate one minute for any reason. It is possible in other places, yes, it is possible in almost any place on the world. I don't think there's any country is completely immune from these possibilities.

As far as United States is concerned, yes, I think is possible here. In what form, I don't know. But in case the situation became very difficult, the usual tendency to looking for scapegoats will be found. And the Jewish population is so easy.

And even now, there are openly antisemitic periodicals, and lectures, and radio stations United States. And there are organized group who deny existence of the Holocaust and published books and magazines containing that. And I believe the Holocaust is possible. How to prevent it? I don't know.

In what ways do you feel the Holocaust has affected the course of your life?

I think Holocaust changed my life completely. I was raised, born in Poland. And I was studying in Poland. And I was ready to become doctor in Poland. Granted, I have been a Zionist. And in my plans, I always consider immigration and emigration to Palestine, even before the war.

But I cannot answer what would have been. But probably, after finishing our medical study and receiving a diploma, probably, I would settle someplace in Poland and practice medicine with a family and so on. Still have to remember that the Jewish population in Poland was 10%. Over three million Jews used to live in Poland.

Any other ways that the Holocaust affected your life?

Well, to get in there-- show me in very-- in vivid form what the people are able to do to other people and affect my way of thinking as far as religion is concerned, and inter-human relations concern, even the international relations concern. Now, we are finding out that the world knew about the Holocaust and still didn't do almost nothing to stop it or to at least try to save this part of the Jewish population of Europe.

And what does that mean to you? What are your feelings about that?

I confirm my attitude that the-- as far as the Jews are concerned, because of the attitude of majority of the world population toward the Jews, anything happening, especially anything happening far away to the Jews is not a major importance. And I would even risk a statement that is sometimes approved by people who maybe by they themselves would not commit this act, but who would not protest when the acts are committed by somebody else far away.

But what does that mean to you in terms of how you feel about the world, people in general? Does it give you any kind of feeling about that?

Well, it could be, again, a very long answer. But, let's say, as in my personal life, and taught me not to plan too far in advance. And we discussed previously, try to live from day to day, which is certain philosophy, which sometimes is useful, sometimes is impediment to planning in life.

From the other side, the other side, as far as people are concerned, I learned a lesson not to consider any group responsibility. Because we suffered as Jews-- suffered from the fact that one was supposed to be responsible for all in the community. And also a lesson interpersonal relationship-- I don't think that then, 30 years now, after the Holocaust, it does have much influence in my personal relationship.

Is there anything that I left out that hasn't-- any questions?

I don't think so. I think we covered this subject quite extensively. Of course, we can always go back. Because let's say, as far as the experiences, during this time is concerned, we can always dwell longer on certain episodes and certain situations, and elaborate on it, and to give you better insight of what was going on.

Maybe as a general statement, I would say that the human being, in spite of their enormous ability to adapt to the changed circumstances, if they're exposed to enormous stresses-- hunger, cold, crowding, and so on-- gradually are reducing to creatures which one instinct of survival. Everything else became all temporary shelved or not existent.

But from the other side, the fact that after liberation from concentration camp, the people who survived were able to build their own lives again in spite of all these stresses they had, and sometimes, deep psychological wounds, which were left in them from the Holocaust is a proof how human being is able to rebound from this and go on living.

How do you feel about answering these questions?

I'm glad to answer this question. I think that this-- if you are interested in it, I have no reluctance to answer. I couldn't say that it's not a painful experience. It is a painful experience. It is opening certain memories which are painful and which are not readily to and shouldn't be open. But I think that's something which needs to be done. And therefore, I do it without any hesitation.

Thank you.