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Summary

Zev Harel (born with the name Herskovits)

Currently, Professor at Cleveland State University in Department of Social Services, Director of the center for applied study for gerontological services, married and two daughters, member Temple Emanuel; research on Holocaust, principal co-investigator on project studying adjustment of Holocaust survivors in aging in the United States and Israel; born in small village of Bârgău (Kissikárló), Romania which was 30 miles from Satu Mare, Romania, and 10 miles west of Nagybánya (Baia Mare, Romania); lived there until he was 8 years old; large extended family; two Jewish families in village; Kosher home and adhered to Jewish ritual, walked to synagogue in another village four miles away; one brother; parents and paternal grandfather; 1939 moved to Nagybánya, still Romanian; several cousins lived with them; Nagybánya had two thousand Jews, total population of 70,000, name meant "the great mine" known for beautiful views, painting school and several mines (gold and materials for production of fertilizer); 1940 Hungarians took over; Hungarians excluded Jews from high school, beginning of anti-Semitism; 1938 became aware of threats on Jews; 1939 German army took and killed Jewish merchants; Jewish refugees going through city 1941 and 1942; restrictions on Jews; 1941 through 1943 all Jewish adults were taken to forced Hungarian labor units, 1941 - 43 Jewish boys 12 to 21 were taken to forced labor; Hungary allies with Germany; at the end of 1943 father lost his job at Farnex, a mining company, because he was Jewish; attended public school, non-Jews did not associate with Jews; April 1944 Jews rounded up and taken to ghetto; teenage boys helped Hungarian police; grandfather (86 years old) and all older people were taken to synagogue and never seen again; taken to brick factory for aggregation of Jews; German soldiers in Hungary about end of 1943; Jews need to wear yellow star and curfew, only permitted to be on street 2 hours per day except for forced labor time; up to 1942 little hope Russians could resist; thought Americans would save them; when Hungarians took over Transylvania kids lost aspiration for future; 1944 brick factory became ghetto outside of town, packed in like sardines; older men taken for forced labor; Jewish prayers became louder and placed faith in God; Judenrat in ghetto; in ghetto 2 ½ to 3 weeks; rounded up to be taken on trains to Auschwitz;

Part 2

one Gentile neighbor walked 10 miles to the ghetto to bring bread to his family; beginning of May 1944 put in cattle cars with 100 to 125 people, no food, no water, only room to stand; one corner for latrine; ride was several days, anguish; arrived at Auschwitz at night; railroad tracks, smoke, people in lines; went with able-bodied men (brother and father also); SS guards with sticks pulling out people; mother in other direction; pushed and shoved to open area, undress, all hair on body shaven, deloused and into showers; water came out of faucets; no semblance of decency; got striped clothes and number 7023; registered; told them he was a 17 year old carpenter (actual 14 years old); in Auschwitz about a week, constant fear; if German did not have quotas for different purposes would select men; Auschwitz had exterminating center, crematorium, constant flow of transports and selection barrack housing people in transport, housing for workers; in Auschwitz about 5 to 7 days; constant fear of assembly and selection; transported by cattle car to Mauthausen in same conditions; from railroad station in Mauthausen SS decided he was too young and started beating him, march took about 6 hours; at Mauthausen, other prisoners started taking care of his wounds; three days at Mauthausen; given weak drink, 1 of 1/2 pound of bread, and soup made of potato peels; after a few days taken to Ebensee (concentration camp); spent about 1 year there; assigned to work in sand quarry; 5:30 wakeup, 6:00 assembly, went to work detail, 4 mile march to quarry worked about 7:00 AM until dark; loaded 8 carts per day, always wanted to be in middle of work detail, did not want to stand out, very cruel SS guards, surrounded by death; Ebensee

had about 12,000 inmates, new transport every week because many were dying; carried dead workers back to camp, separated from father and brother, in block 16 with about 100 younger workers, large blocks held 300 to 500 prisoners, triple bunk with 2 people in each level, break every third Sunday; drink in morning, noon beet and potato peel soup at night piece of bread, on third Sunday got a little marmalade; apples and grass on walk to work place, ate to supplement diet; worked there about 5 or 6 months (end of May until end of fall; transferred to work on constructing an underground factory at Ebensee; shoes were cotton with wood sole, cotton clothing; had to carry two sand bags of 50 kilos each (110 pounds each); supervised by SS or civilian overseer; Russian soldiers in prison camp, picked up languages, every third Sunday would have a sing-a-long all day, always sense it will be over; realized Hitler was aided by Nazi sympathizers; AGAS news format circulated, name meant *I heard it to be said...* ; very important for survival;

Part 3

March 1945 sent to Wels work detail for three weeks camp to clean up effects of bombs; Polish Jews had been in camps for 3 to 4 years; April 1945 sent back to Ebensee; assigned to crematorium detail; rumors that Americans closing in; May 5, 1945 liberated by Americans; told gate was open, German guards left; just started walking away towards to the east; arrived in Traun (village between Wels and Linz, Austria),) to walk towards Linz; contracted typhoid, American soldier in Traun took him to catholic hospital for about a month; middle June 1945 continued to Linz and then towards Hungary; became translator for Russian military staff at bridge at Weiner Neustadt who were interrogating Nazi collaborators (involuntary, for about 6 weeks) ; middle of August 1945 escaped on train in Russian soldier uniform; went through Hungarian border on way home; early September arrived home but saw he could not fit in; wanted to go to United States; December 1945 went to Budapest, January 1946 went as far as Bergen-Belsen; in Budapest assisted by the Brihah; worked for Brihah for a short time; then went to Vienna, Munich, Frankfurt and then to Bergan Belsen in end of January 1946, registered at Bergen-Belsen to go to the US; special entry category for children; June 1946; assumed identity as a corporal in the Jewish brigade of the British military, then to Belgium, to Holland and then to Lyon, France; July 1946 went to Palestine through Egypt; arrived in Raffa and then went to Serfin, then to Kibbutz Nan and then to kibbutz Danahume; 1946 to 1965 in Israel; in 1947 joined Haganah; spring 1948 joined Palmach; changed name to Harel; lived on Kibbutz from end of war until 1958; 1958 worked in children's village Ben Shemen; became director of boarding school Bar Golim; at thirty started at Hebrew University, 1963 received BA; 1965 fellowship at the University of Michigan where he met his wife; 1966 married and remained in the US;

35:12 and to end: Discussion of the effect the Holocaust had on his life and on other survivors.
Discussion of how this all could have happened. Discussion of the message of the Holocaust