

Questions to Consider When Viewing Video

1. Where was Zev born?
2. How much schooling did he have? Why was it stopped?
3. What were some of the restrictions placed on Zev and his family by the Nazis?
4. What tasks did Zev learn growing up that helped him to survive?
5. Describe some of Zev's memories of his arrival at Auschwitz. What life-saving advice was he given?
6. What kind of food were Zev and other inmates given?
7. What act by the daughter of the quarry owner showed Zev that not all Germans or Austrians were evil?
8. Who liberated Zev and the other prisoners on May 5, 1945? What was unusual about the way that he was helped at the time of liberation?
9. How many members of his family managed to survive?
10. Where did Zev want to go, and why? Where did he go?
11. What involvement did he have in the birth of the new State of Israel?
12. Why did Zev eventually come to the United States? Why did he stay?

Holocaust Survivor **Zev Harel** **(Sarkas Herskovits)**

Filmed on April 12, 2005



"We honor the memory of six million members of my faith, Jewish persons, among them 1½ million children."

- Zev Harel

Face to Face
A Holocaust Education Program at
Congregation Shaarey Tikvah
Beachwood, Ohio

Sarkas Herskovits, later to become Zev Harel, was born in 1930, and grew up in a small village in Hungary. His hero was his 86-year old grandfather, who taught him rural skills, such as chopping wood. When Zev was 10 years old, his family moved to a nearby city. About this time, the authorities began to impose “restriction after restriction” on the Jews. Zev spent the next four years, between the ages of 10 and 14, working at forced manual labor.

In 1944, when Zev was 14, his family was sent to a ghetto and from there to Auschwitz. Zev remembers the stench of burning bodies. He survived the selection process by lying about his age, saying he was 17. After a few days in Auschwitz, Zev was sent to Mauthausen in Austria and from there to Ebensee. During his time at Ebensee, Zev worked on two work details. The first was in a quarry, loading trucks with construction materials. The second was working in a tunnel with an air hammer, building an underground factory for military equipment.

The daily routine was grueling. As soon as the early morning alarm sounded, Zev washed up. The inmates marched to their work details and performed their slave labor. At the end of the day, they marched back. Every day there were some inmates who didn't make it. At the end of each day, Zev thought to himself, “Well, I'm still here. I'll do what I can to get through another day.”

On May 5, 1945, American soldiers liberated Ebensee. As Zev was leaving the camp, weakened

by typhoid, he fell into a ditch. A black American soldier picked him up and drove him to a hospital in Linz, a nearby town.

After Zev was strong enough to leave the hospital, he went back to his hometown, where he met his brother. Together they traveled to a Displaced Persons (DP) camp in Germany. At the DP camp, Zev joined the Palestine Jewish Brigade and moved to Israel. Again he lied about his age, saying he was 18. In this way Zev was able to fight in the Israeli War of Independence.

In Israel he continued his education, which had been interrupted by the Nazis. First he took high school equivalency classes and earned a high school diploma at the age of 30. Then he enrolled in Hebrew University, where he earned a bachelor's degree at the age of 33.

Next he came to the United States for a fellowship program at the University of Michigan. Zev earned his master's degree there. He met his wife at the University of Michigan and decided to remain and settle in the United States. He earned his doctorate at Washington University in St. Louis.

Finally Zev settled in Cleveland, Ohio, where he was a professor at Cleveland State University until his retirement.