

On the Bridge to the 21st Century (from Yaffa Eliach's lecture)

Exactly 20 years ago, President Carter sent us on a special President's commission to Europe, to recommend to him what kind of museum to build in Washington D.C.. In 1979 I came back to Poland, representing the President of USA. As the plane was flying from Warsaw to Kiev to another place of death, suddenly, I realized that somewhere below the clouds is my little hometown Eishyshok. And there and then on the plane, I decided I am going to take Eishyshok as a model of life. I am going to collect photos from around the globe to show life, and I am going to write a book about the town.

In 1987, I felt now I am ready for making an exhibit, I was already writing my book, but I felt I want to go back to Eishyshok because I did have some questions, and I wanted to stand on the place where everything happened for 900 years.

I was standing on the grave where the men were killed, and under my feet were my grandmothers, my aunt, all my cousins, all my best friends, and I were standing on top of them. I didn't see them as dead people. I saw them as beautiful living people like in the pictures that you have here in the museum and the picture that you saw before the stage and the pictures you have in the exhibit. Suddenly I felt they all came out from the grave living, and they were holding on to me, they were above me, below me, around me, and they were holding on to my jacket and saying, "Yaffa, remember us the way we were, and show the world that we were living wonderful people like all the ordinary people around the globe". Suddenly I realized the vision of the prophet Ezekiel and the dead people are becoming alive from the valley of death.

I came back to America, and gave the idea to build a big tower with photos all around and a person should stand on a bridge just as I stood on a grave and to be surrounded by the living beautiful town filled with wonderful ordinary people.

I was very impressed with your singing, with your videos, and there was a beautiful presentation of intellectual questions. You did so many things and an excellent play that you performed. The stage was filled with you the entire day. Therefore, I think that you should become a universal model of children who are dedicated to Holocaust education. Wherever I go, on the stage are always adults, and students are always sitting in the audience. This is my first experience you are on the stage. So for me you are not only on a stage, you are a bridge. I am on the other edge of bridge of the 20th century. You are the bridge to the 21st century. May your bright minds, your great hearts and your wonderful hands, they are wonderful great creative hands, open the bridge to a safe future for the human society and peace for all of us. Thank you very much for inviting me to be with you on the bridge to the 21st century. God bless you.



Japan Children's Meeting in Okayama, Kyoto and Tokyo

Japan Children's Meeting on the Holocaust was also held in Okayama, Kyoto and Tokyo. In each city, children managed the meetings and gave a deep impression to those who gathered, which of whom were also children.

OKAYAMA: Main Events

1. Hatikva (sung by two high school students)
2. Introduction of the Holocaust (by students)
3. Lecture of Dr. Yaffa Eliach
4. Q & A (interpreted by a high school student)

The meeting was held in Gavo Hall which gathered about 100 people, especially many high school students. The meeting was mainly managed by 9 Okayama Joto Senior High School students who organized the executive committee. Presided by High School students, the history of the Holocaust was introduced briefly also by students, which helped the audience understand the lecture of Dr. Eliach very much. Dr. Eliach talked about her own story of how she began to teach the Holocaust at universities. She also referred to how the high technology was used both in the atomic bomb which was dropped in Hiroshima and in the Holocaust such as in Auschwitz. She emphasized that it is the young people who are going to create the peaceful future and who should be the bridge to the 21st century.

KYOTO: Main Events

1. Video shown on the screen about the Holocaust
2. Lecture of Dr. Yaffa Eliach



Meeting at Kyoto.

3. Discussion and questions by the children who gathered at the meeting

The meeting in Kyoto was held in the Kyoto Museum for World Peace, Ritsumeikan University.

About 60 children and 40 adults gathered for the meeting, and listened to the lecture of Dr. Eliach, which for most of them was the first time to hear a story from a Holocaust survivor. The tragic story of her experience and survival impressed the children very deeply, which afterwards lead the children to ask Dr. Eliach, how she feels about the persecutors -- could she forgive them, and so on. This meeting was also prepared and managed by senior high school students, and after the lecture, they asked the children in the audience to divide into six groups and discuss about "What can I do to create peace?" Dr. Eliach moved around the groups to answer questions and give suggestions. The children had a very precious experience spending time with a Holocaust survivor so closely and hearing her story.

TOKYO: Main Events

1. Song of the Holocaust sang by a children's choir
2. Lecture of Dr. Yaffa Eliach
3. Q & A

The meeting in Tokyo was held in Tokyo Women's Plaza in which 280 people gathered, with many children.

Presided over by school children, a peace message was read by a child, and the song "Donna Donna" was performed by a children's choir with music bells and voice.

In the lecture, Dr. Eliach said to the children, "I decided not to hate those who killed my mother and my baby brother. I will live for love and peace instead of hatred." One 5th grade girl spoke after the lecture emotionally, "We should not just sympathize with the Jewish children who were victimized but also do earnestly what they wanted to do." This meeting in Tokyo was covered by NHK TV news in the evening, and also by other newspapers.



Meeting at Tokyo.

Sacred Mission to Educate the People of Japan

Moshe Ben Ya'akov, *Israeli Ambassador to Japan*

Reverend Otsuka, dear members of the community, shalom.

I am very happy to be here. The atmosphere, the warm reception, and especially your project of Center for the Holocaust. It was for me like a home coming when I approached the center an hour ago and already from far away I could recognize the Star of David. It was really gratifying to find here in a place far from Israel in the center of Japan, that you are doing the sacred mission to educate people of Japan about the terrible Holocaust. You are telling the others that the Holocaust was most horrifying tragedy in the long history of the Jewish people.

Six million people, one third of the Jewish people, among them 1.5 children went to genocide in unprecedented plan. In during the same century, 51 years ago, out of the ashes of the Holocaust, The Jewish people realized one of its greatest achievements: It was a heroic achievement, the establishment of the State of Israel. The national home and the land for the Jews as the center of the world Jewry. Israel was established, not as a result of the Holocaust, but in spite of the Holocaust.

The Nazis, the murders launched a plan to annihilate the Jewish people from the face of the earth. It was the desire to destroy our hope, to uproot our souls, our faith and to crash our existence.

Our spirit was never destroyed. Our faith never wavered. And there is no better proof of this than the Holocaust survivor. To remarry, to recover, to bring new generations of children and grand children into the world, and participate as they did in the founding of the state of Israel.

Their offspring stand today as a living proof of our victory. Victory of life over death, justice over evil, and above all the victory of Jewish people. Those who arose from the ashes.

I am talking, I am telling you seriously and honestly, that you can be proud of your center. It shows everything in a very simple way, it shows the meaning, the way, the results of the Holocaust. Two months ago, we celebrated the 51st anniversary of Israel. Despite all external, and internal difficulties, we have built an outstanding country. We have a thriving economy level of technology among the most advanced in the world, impressive scientific research, highly developed agriculture, and a very rich cultural life.

But most important, Israel is a home for every Jew in the world. Not as in the past, whenever in trouble, the Jews have a place to go. And as you know, in the recent years, Israel absorbed more than one million Jews from different places and especially from the former Soviet Union. And you know I talk about external difficulties, after so many years of wars and strifes we achieved some peace agreement with our neighbors. Peace agreement with Egypt, peace agreement with Jordan, and mutual reconciliation with the Palestinians. The people of Israel, the government of Israel are committed to peace. And we will do our utmost to continue the peace process with the Palestinian, with Lebanon, and with the Syria.

And back to your center. The center is a very important contribution of your community, Beit shalom, to the education of young generation especially today. Remember, and not to forget, and to do outmost that it will not be repeated. Unfortunately, there are some people who deny the Holocaust, and even some cases in Japan. I must stress that it is not only an important issue for the Jewish people, but it is a matter of universal value and you can understand it.

I know also and appreciate the assistance and advice and involvement of Rev. Otsuka in building this center and giving some advice to another center in Tokyo. This is the occasion to thank all of you, all the community of Beit Shalom, and to bless your activity here in Japan in particular and Israel in general. Toda raba Thank you, and shalom.
(at HEC, Fukuyama, June 17, 1999)



M. Ben Ya'akov.

Expectation to the Future

Dear precious man, wonderful Reverend Makoto, his splendid wife, and charming children. We met at New York several times, you invited me to Japan for a few days. The museum that you built is full of intelligence and love, and your way of your devoted work, and this will bring to the world days of calmness.

I met many clever students, but your students are amazing. They are building a bridge between the lost world and expectation to the future full of hope and goodness.

Your love to Jewish people and to the language of Hebrew, rise and shine like the eternal lamp. With appreciation and lots of friendship,

From a person who believes in your great job.
Yaffa Eliach (13th of Av, 5759 July 29, 1999)

Keep on Going with Strength Forever

Dear the special reverend, Makoto
A man who was sailing in the middle of the raging sea, discovers a safety island. It was like this to visit and see your center. I didn't expect to see in Japan a exhibition so beautiful, delicate and full of content like your center. From the walls stares at you wisdom, love and hope. If you want to know what is love of human kind, go to the center. If you want to know what is love to Israel, a meeting with Makoto will teach you. Who heard in a church a Hebrew song, Hebrew letters. Only in your center all of this brotherhood is fulfilled.

Thank you for every thing that you did, and I'm sure that there is a hope in a future, if so much youth participate and find out the love like this to people of Israel, to knowing the Holocaust and to love of human kind. Keep on going with strength forever. Thank you for the wonderful hospitality. I never saw people so devoting and loving like you. You and your wife have special souls. Keep them with you.



Yaffa & David Eliach in Hiroshima.

David Eliach (July 29, 1999)

HECHECHECHECHECHECHECHECHECHECHE

Standing as a Watchman

There are no words to describe our impression of our visit that we made at this holy place. Here Father Otsuki established his first church of his group after receiving his revelation at Manchuria (now North Eastern part of China). Here Reverend Makoto Otsuka built a museum with holy message to remember the six million, who were killed by the Nazis - may their name and memory be eliminated.

I was excited by a special excitement here, because the group Beit Shalom has established at this place with love, sensitiveness, spirituality and true Zionism, a bridge between Jewish people and Christian -- all of the world is a narrow bridge, and you are realizing this bridge in these days of madness where there are people who deny the Holocaust. You are serving the role of standing as a watchman towards the entire Eastern Asia.

The visit to this center became a very important reference point in our life. We will never forget this holy place that filled us with sorrow and tears but also gave us hope that there are people like you who care in favor of us. If there were more Righteous among the Nations like Father Otsuki and you people, the Holocaust would not have happened!
With love,

Jonathan and Iris Davis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem
(June 29, 1999)

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