



Dear ASYV Family,

I hope this weekly message finds you and your family well and that you had a wonderful Passover. I am privileged to be in Israel on the Yad Vashem/ASYV Mission of Dedication & Commemoration. This first mission of its kind has been an opportunity to learn in-depth about the amazing work of Yad Vashem and to participate in two significant ceremonies—one ensuring the future, the other remembering the past. Please indulge this longer message; the mission has given me so much to think about.

The mission began with the dedication of the Yad Vashem Center at the Ariel Sharon IDF Training Base (Ir Habadim) in the Negev. There, combat support soldiers from various backgrounds are given an opportunity, using sophisticated technology and a unique pedagogy, to learn about the Holocaust and how it shapes their roles in the army. The impact of this experience on the soldiers is simply remarkable. On Wednesday evening, we were privileged to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day, Yom HaShoah, at the official ceremony at Yad Vashem led by Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Prime Minister Naftali Bennett. This emotional ceremony included the lighting of six torches by six survivors whose stories were shared. Each story was moving and reinforced the heroism of the survivors. It was not lost on me that we are nearing the end of being able to have survivors participate in this important event. Shmuel Blumenfeld was to be one of the torch lighters; two weeks ago, he passed away, leaving his son to light the torch. May his memory be a blessing.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day, as the memorial siren sounded at 10:00 AM, I joined with everyone standing in silence, thinking about my paternal grandparents, Hulda & Issak Steinberger, who were deported and killed in the Riga Ghetto; I thought about how lucky I was to be in the strong and independent State of Israel.

Over the past three months with the events unfolding in Ukraine, I have asked myself the question that many theologians, philosophers, and survivors have asked: Do you have faith in humanity after the Holocaust?



Rabbi Sacks z"l notes that the Holocaust represented perhaps the greatest failure humanity has ever known. It featured the combination of technical brilliance and bureaucratic efficiency but was dedicated to the vilest of all purposes--truly the greatest failure of humanity. However, the Avenue of Righteous Among the Nations at Yad Vashem restores our faith; today, 28,000 people are honored there, those who put their own lives at risk to save the lives of their neighbors and, in some cases, strangers. We have not forgotten. Today, Israel has been at the forefront responding to the tragic events unfolding in Ukraine, establishing the first field hospital, providing millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, and taking in thousands of Jewish and non-Jewish refugees.

Many thanks to the mission participants, ASYV leaders, and donors who were in Israel for these meaningful ceremonies. I would like to extend special thanks to Andrea and Loren Weiss, Mission Chairs and Amy Cooper, ASYV National Campaign Director, who coordinated this program, as well as my colleagues at Yad Vashem for putting together an incredibly moving and informative four days.

On Holocaust Remembrance Day and every day, we remember the events of the past but also look forward to a brighter future. We honor the survivors and embrace our responsibility as the living links to their testimonies and experiences. As always, thank you for your continued support of our critical work.

Please see below for what's coming up, what you may have missed, and Yad Vashem in the news.

Shabbat Shalom from Jerusalem,

Stanley H. Stone  
Executive Director