

Passing on Past Memories

By Melanie Mashmoor and Dov Ratner

As Jews living in the world today it can be difficult to preserve our sense of identity and religious standards. Jews, especially those who are orthodox, already have so many outside influences threatening the passing on of Jewish traditions and ways of life.

Images of Jews surrounded by outside influences and fighting

This is clearly shown from the skyrocketing rates of intermarriage and assimilation that Jews have. Soon, without the physical presence of Holocaust survivors, Jews as well as the entire world are at an even higher risk of forgetting their pasts. This is because it is difficult for most to relate with something seemingly gone.

Images of Jews surrounded by outside influences and fighting

The past of survivors are ones crucially essential to not just the history of Jews but the history of the world and human behavior. This is because the Holocaust is a prime example of how people act when placed in difficult situation. As this is the case we must ask ourselves an essential question: **As Jews, what is our universe of obligation to the memory of those who suffered in the Holocaust? What are our responsibilities to ourselves, our community, to other Jews and towards the rest of the world?**

Images of Holocaust survivors

Interviewing survivors has given us a glimpse into possible answers to this question, a question to which there is no definitive answer. There are thousands of experiences and stories that the survivors of the Holocaust have to share with us and whether seemingly important or not, they all have relevance in answering our question. To many, a story in which a young Jewish baby was hidden through the war may not seem to answer the question as to what our obligation is in educating the greater world about the Holocaust. However, to many this answers the question perfectly in saying we must repay those who helped Jews survive.

To many survivors whether they are alike or not, the answer to this question is in fact what we, as well as what thousands of others are doing.. That is, the sharing and spreading of survivors testimonies and experiences in order the world learn from the lessons they contain.

Images of Holocaust survivors talking to children

Survivor saying this

Many others agree with the testimony of *survivor*. This very perspective on carrying on the memory of those in the Holocaust can be seen from one of the most famous survivors of all time. Elie Wiesel once stated that “To forget the Holocaust is to kill a second time.” His quote is clearly reflecting of the point that the worst possible thing we could do is to forget the lives of those in the Holocaust and not carry on their legacy and the messages contained in their stories.

Images of Elie Wiesel and his quote

Survivor saying this

Another answer that many feel is our universe of obligationis applying the messages gained by the survivors of the Holocaust to help benefit the world. Some of the benefits survivors feel we have to gain is a achieving a greater tolerance of different kinds of people as well as minorities.

Survivor saying this

Countless others also feel that after the Holocaust the lessons learned should be applied in order to stop humans from ever again committing Genocide or Ethnic Cleansing, no matter who is involved.

Survivor saying this

With most of the survivors there is a common theme and that is that the education of the Holocaust can not just involve Jews rather the messages the survivors want to teach must be learned by the entire world.

Images of Holocaust survivors today from interviews or online

Let's meet together Friday. This is a very vague message and does not really construct a story for the film. You need to think about how to seamlessly integrate the testimony with a message for your viewer. Remember you are taking people on a 5-10 minute video journey. What is that journey and what are you trying to teach them. You're going to want to go deeper than this. We have a lot to work on!