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## **Our Children Must be Taught about the Holocaust**

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It has become customary during the S'ferah mourning period for some organizations to hold events that commemorate the Holocaust. After all, this cataclysmic event still has Jews and Judaism reeling. We cannot understand it or even put it in some sort of perspective. More than one Holocaust survivor has told me, "No matter what you read, no matter what documentaries you see, no matter how much you listen to people talk about what occurred, you cannot grasp even ten percent of what actually happened." Let us face it, such a nightmare is impossible for the human mind to assimilate and put into perspective.

Nonetheless, it is still our obligation not to forget what happened and to have some idea of the historical events that both led up to the Holocaust and occurred in the 1940's. There are those today who actually deny that the Holocaust even happened. Others say that it is something that the Jews have exaggerated way out of proportion. To counteract this alone, we should all be familiar with this era of tragedy.

Given this, one would think that yeshivas would spend time educating our young people about the Holocaust. However, more often than not, this is not the case. Many of our young people who are graduates of some of our best religious schools are woefully ignorant of what happened during the Holocaust. While I am sure that some schools do deal with the Holocaust as part of their curricula, many unfortunately do not. Our yeshiva graduates need to know about the Holocaust if they are to have some small appreciation for what we lost as a result. They need to be informed so that they can counter the Holocaust deniers. They also need to realize what anti-Semitism is and what it can do when a world goes mad. Without a grounding in the history of the Holocaust how can one attempt to understand and put into perspective the new anti-Semitism that has become the vogue in the Arab world, in Europe and with the Left?

Yeshivas should institute programs to teach their students about the Holocaust. There are documentaries that are suitable for our young people to view. Class trips should include visits to Holocaust museums. There are still survivors who can share their experiences with our students, and they should be brought into the classroom

to tell their stories. There are books dealing with what happened that are suitable for yeshiva students to read. They should be required reading for all of our high school students.

I am told that at one of the past seven-year cycle Siyum HaShas celebrations the Blushever Rebbe, ZT"l, made the point that the Holocaust should be taught in our yeshivas. He was one of the few who began speaking about the Holocaust right after the war. He continued to do this in virtually every talk that he ever gave. He himself had been through the worst of the camps and seen the most horrendous things. Yet he urged us not to be silent and not to raise a generation that was ignorant of what has happened. Let us heed his words and make sure that each of us and each of our young people know about this defining event that destroyed six million of our people and so devastatingly shattered the lives of those who survived. We owe it to their memory and to ourselves.