Speech by Ambassador of the State of Israel Yossi Amrani on International Holocaust Remembrance Day

*(*[*Holocaust memorial Center*](https://www.facebook.com/Holokauszt-Eml%C3%A9kk%C3%B6zpont-112397185448410/?eid=ARDfH-UFKMt5bhXov_m6CS9Kg-1AvAVrwCuJMxBGmI93k5rkWd8jcpzy_4lLkfn25Q8Av6HgCPIeXdWs)*, Budapest, 27 January 2019.)*

שליח ציבור, the community envoy, the cantor, leading the prayers on Yom Kippur and the New Year eve, the mightiest days in Jewish tradition,  opens the prayers cycle with the humble, powerful words of veneration and devoutness:
”הנני העני ממעש”, before our God, before the people gathering, here I am, the unworthy of deeds. This is how I stand here today, before you, trying to share in the memories, unable to fully understand and encompass what you have been through and apologize to you for our failure to fully comprehend, grasp the horror of life in that dark age of the years leading to World War II., the Holocaust, the demise of millions, a disaster beyond understanding or description.

We are committed to remember, never forget. 74 years after the end of the war,  the fear is that remembrance is a mere מצוות אנשים מלומדה, more political correctness, less an effort to feel the pain, the suffering, the burden of memories. Who else can witness life at that time better than you? We are gathering here today in this place of worship, **Páva utca synagogue**, a place of research and commemoration, trying to grasp the moment, allow ourselves, at least for some time, to be part of your life, your suffering, your memories. 74 years after, you have survived the tragedy, built life and families, followed the avenues of life like everyone else. Unlike others,   you carry a special burden, the almost unbearable load of memories, the scar of memories no event can erase, no one can rewrite. There is no solace, no remedy to the painful memories, to what our people endured.

Your stories, the spoken and the untold, tell of the horrors not only during the war but also those leading to World War II., deprivation, race laws, persecution, living in fear, identity and sense of belonging as citizens, as human denied. Nothing in life can be described just in black or white, the shades of that era were more black than can be imagined. There was no Heaven in the years before the enactment of “final solution policy” in Hungary, life was one of fear, threats, denial of basic rights and transportation. It had been the reality in most of Europe, in Hungary as well. We should not forget.

How could this have happened? The question must always be asked. We should be committed to an effort, as difficult and almost impossible, to provide an answer, true to the eternal vow, “Never again”.

Our moral responsibility is to ask and remind our fellow human beings of history, the disaster befallen on us to ensure that no nation, no people, no man or woman, ever be targeted for elimination. The spirit of the time, Europe of the late 20th and 30th had been fertile to the rise of ideologies, which enshrined and sanctified certain concept and national policies over life, liberties, human rights. The atmosphere of fear, the search for scapegoats, pursuit of discipline and obedience, losing doubt and skepticism, allowed the massive widespread of ideology promoting hate, targeting**,** concentration camps and an orchestrated effort to eliminate the Jewish People of the face of earth.

We must remember how it happened how it ended; we are committed to remind ourselves how it became possible for so many people and nations,  לאבד צלם, lose dignity and humanity. Aren’t we all created in the face of God?

I am standing here today with you, the survivors and envoys of countries and society, trying to remember, trying not to forget, to teach myself a lesson of the moral commitment and values. Remembering alone cannot substitute life itself, but where are we heading if we allow forgetfulness. Ignoring or denying the past would make life fictitious.

We read and hear much about historic relativism. It hasbeen said, quite spread around, that everyone suffered during the war, suffering is not limited to a certain ethnic or religious group. True, unimagined suffering took over and swept Europe and the world, time of war, time of shortages and suffering. But can we equate suffering, plight of displaced people and families to a fate of final solution and termination of the Jewish People. No massacre in History, no genocide, horrible and despicable as it is, can be compared and or equated to the Final Solution Plan of the Nazis executed by them and their collaborators.

The effort to relativize and compare suffering and loss to the destiny and fate of the Jewish People and the Shoa is nothing less than desecration of the memory and pure insult to morality and history.

We are committed to tell the story, your story, our story, the story of the survivors who are with us, here today, the story of the six million, the story of the Jewish People and anti-Semitism.

The international community is united on this day, many countries passed laws against anti-Semitism, many governments accepted the international working definition of anti-Semitism and still we have to ask, ceaselessly, have we made anything possible to uproot anti-Semitism, to fight hate and prejudice, are we, Jews and other, better off today. Have we looked into our souls, into our collective national past and history to ensure that young people, generations of the future are equipped to fight demons of darkness and hate? Few nations, just few, have been through this soul searching, agonizing commitment to accept the past and incorporate its lessons into the future. True remembrance, sincere zero tolerance calls for it.

The people assembled here today in remembrance and commemoration united in respecting the survivors, honoring the victims. We, representatives of different walks of life, countries, governments and especially the historians entrusted with writing history, remembering, educating, teaching should never forget our true mission, never compromise the truth, never deterred of telling it.

I wish we, together with the new board of the Holocaust Museum, meet this noble and honored responsibility.