

Kolchem Shamati

New Anthology Creates Discussion Forums on Holocaust Memory in the IDF

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■ On 9 April, in the week leading up to Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018, a daylong seminar was held at Yad Vashem for the IDF General Staff Forum, headed by IDF Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen Gadi Eizenkot. During the seminar, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev presented the Chief-of-Staff with *Kolchem Shamati* (I Heard Your Voices), a special anthology to be used in discussions between commanders and their soldiers on the topic of Holocaust remembrance. The anthology was initiated by the IDF's Education and Youth Corps in cooperation with Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies.

Kolchem Shamati includes a range of texts and songs that enable a dialogue centered on ethics and values, and raise relevant questions for IDF soldiers today, such as: What memory is engraved in your mind? Where did you first encounter the story of the Holocaust? Which of the texts in the anthology impact you directly? And how do these voices echo into the future?

Kolchem Shamati enables the participants to listen to the voices and examine the words of both victims and survivors. This unique anthology presents texts written in the midst of the Holocaust – entreaties to remember, the destruction, the human spirit, the return to life, and appeals to



■ Avner Shalev presenting the *Kolchem Shamati* anthology to IDF Chief of General Staff Lt. Gen. Gadi Eizenkot

the generations to come – writings that open a window to understanding how Jews experienced and understood the events at the time, when they did not know what the future held for them. The texts are combined with musical performances (accessible online by scanning a QR code included in the anthology) of poems written by famous authors such as Hayim Nahman Bialik, Hannah Szenes and Leonard Cohen, which accompany the different topics of discourse. Listening to the music and reading the texts in groups creates a connection between the participants, enabling a meaningful dialogue on Holocaust memory.

“In recent years we have witnessed a new phenomenon, in which many sections of Israeli society, including the IDF, are seeking to discover

their own involvement in designing Holocaust memory,” said Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev. “*Kolchem Shamati* contains a tapestry of voices, combining both written sources and Holocaust art with the legacy of the victims and the survivors. When participants come into contact with the story of the individual during the Holocaust, it is possible to create a connection to the past from which we can fill our present and future with content and meaning.”

“The Passover *Haggada* is based on the fundamental Jewish value ‘*vehigadta levincha* [and you should tell your child],’” explained IDF Chief Education Officer Brig. Gen. Yehuda (Zvika) Fairaizen. “The responsibility for transmitting the information is from parent to child, and instigates a process of building memory that is seared in both the private and collective consciousness. *Kolchem Shamati* enables our officers and soldiers to discuss and internalize these eternal Jewish values that survived the Holocaust and were central to the rebirth of the Jewish State of Israel.”

The Kolchem Shamati anthology was generously supported by the American Society for Yad Vashem and its donors, through a special campaign to further Yad Vashem's work with the IDF.

The Asper Foundation: Twenty Years of Friendship and Support

■ On 7 June, a ceremony was held marking the renewal of a twenty-year commitment to, and continuation of, the partnership between Yad Vashem and The Asper Foundation of Winnipeg, Canada.

The Asper International Holocaust Studies Program at Yad Vashem's International School for Holocaust Studies was the initiative of renowned philanthropists Israel and Ruth (Babs) Asper z"l. The Asper Program was conceived in 2002 to educate the wider public about the events of the Holocaust through various multilevel educational initiatives. Developed in partnership with Yad Vashem's educational experts, the mandate of the Asper Program incorporates comprehensive professional development programs, support for Yad Vashem's international educational conferences and expert international engagement, among other



■ Left to right: Canadian Ambassador to Israel H.E. Ms. Deborah A. Lyons, Yad Vashem Director General Dorit Novak, Asper Foundation Executive Director Moses Levy, Asper Foundation President and Trustee Gail Asper, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, International Relations Division Managing Director Shaya Ben Yehuda

facets. Tens of thousands of beneficiaries from over 70 countries have been impacted since the program's inception.

The tribute ceremony took place in the Yad Vashem Synagogue in the presence of members of The Asper Foundation, Yad Vashem Chairman Avner Shalev, Director General Dorit Novak and Ambassador of Canada to Israel H.E. Ms. Deborah A. Lyons. In appreciation for their continuous support, Yad Vashem presented The Asper Foundation with the “Key to Yad Vashem.”

“We are delighted that our friends and partners, David, Gail and Leonard Asper, have decided to perpetuate their bond with Yad Vashem, which is so deeply important and dear to all of us here,” said Shalev. “Twenty years of unabated support is a rare indication of steadfast commitment to the principle and practice of meaningful remembrance, and we are honored to be marking their unwavering commitment to Yad Vashem today.”