Choosing Life in the Midst of Death: Holocaust Metaphors in Pastoral Counseling

David Robert Kaplan
Loyola University Chicago

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses

Recommended Citation
https://ecommons.luc.edu/luc_theses/4325

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License.
Copyright © 1996 David Robert Kaplan
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

CHOOSING LIFE IN THE MIDST OF DEATH:
HOLOCAUST METAPHORS IN PASTORAL COUNSELING

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL STUDIES

BY
DAVID ROBERT KAPLAN

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1996
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to thank my parents, George and Sheila Kaplan, for their love and support. My sister, Karen, and my brother, Jason, so that I may experience the "joys of being a middle child." Jeffrey Arena for his patience, time and "editorial eye." My friend Linda Smessaert, a common-law Jew in her own right, for encouraging (nagging) me to submit my graduate application. Steve Martz for traveling with me whether beside still waters or through the valley of the shadow of death and for supporting me until I could begin to support myself. Dr. Pauline Viviano, Associate Professor of Theology, Loyola University, for saying "yes" to her closed Old Testament (Hebrew Scripture) Course, thereby igniting my search for God and ultimately my Jewish heritage. Dr. Ann Graff for her brilliant guidance and willingness to participate in this thesis cross-country. Rabbi Gary Gerson for his accepting presence and nurturing spirit. Loyola University of Chicago, its Faculty and its student body, for providing a safe hospice and preparing me until I was ready to walk toward my own home. And finally, I wish to thank the power within me that continues to call me toward life. To each of those mentioned and to those unmentioned others who, too, have been part of my emotional, spiritual, educational, and physical life, thank you.
ABSTRACT

The author of this thesis suggests that by exploring the Holocaust through the eyes of a pastoral counselor, it is possible to establish a model of working with victim/survivors who may seek respite and guidance in counseling. The Holocaust offers dramatic symbols and images which can be employed as metaphors for the abuse, oppression and victimization which many people experience. This model can be especially illuminating and therapeutic for Jewish clients.

The writer of this thesis uses his own life experiences to explore various elements relating the Holocaust and pastoral counseling; focusing primarily on (1) the role of anti-Semitism in the mid-Twentieth Century, (2) what it means to be a Jew, (3) the narratives of those who experienced the Holocaust first-hand, (4) the psychological ramifications of life inside the Nazi-controlled camps, and (5) the theological connection between the Holocaust and the Jews' will to survive.

As a result of his research and personal experience, the author contends that the Holocaust symbolizes a journey from victim to survivor which can be effectively structured in pastoral counseling with Jewish clients. At the very least, this model of working with Jews allows the therapist to be culturally sensitive to
Jewish history. Optimally, though, pastoral counselors can use this model with victim/survivors of many types of abuse who seek therapy, thereby emancipating them from years of personal imprisonment and self-depreciation, enabling them to choose life in the midst of death.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all victims and survivors.

◆◆◆◆◆

PRAYER

I pray that those who have gone before me, those who touch my life today, and those who will come after me may experience God's pathos. I pray that the souls of my ancestors rest easy, especially Frances Katz, Melvin Katz, Diana Katz, for whom I am named, and Irving Kaplan. I pray that each of us be given health, strength, hope and courage. I pray that each one of us chooses life so long as life is worth living. Finally, I offer the following words as a proclamation and challenge by God:

I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live. . . for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them (Deuteronomy 30:19-20b).
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. iii

ABSTRACT ........................................................................ iv

INTRODUCTION ....................................................................... 1

CHAPTER

ONE: AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A JOURNEY INWARD .......................... 6

TWO: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH ................................. 21

THREE: ANTI-SEMITISM: A LATE-TWENTIETH CENTURY OVERVIEW .............. 36

FOUR: THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE: A LIVING HELL .................. 52

FIVE: PSYCHOLOGY AND THE NAZI DEATH CAMPS .............. 88

SIX: CONCENTRATION CAMP THEOLOGY: QUALITIES OF JEWISH SPIRITUALITY .......... 118

SEVEN: CHOOSING LIFE IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH: LIBERATION IN PASTORAL COUNSELING ................. 148

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................... 157

VITA ......................................................................................... 164

vi
INTRODUCTION

Pastoral counseling is ministerial -- it is a way of caring and tending to others. Ministry, as a vocation and profession, is personal and intimate. The call to ministry often develops out of a personal need to be with people, to help others cultivate their humanity and enrich their lives. My decision to pursue pastoral counseling as a vocation is rooted in my desire to provide nurturing and healing to others, the same kind of nurturing and healing which others have given to me.

The goals of pastoral counseling include facilitating a person's growth to greater integration, encouraging freedom of choice, and increasing the client's awareness and connectedness to others and God. The process by which one achieves his or her goals occurs between therapist and client as they discern together the meaning of the client's life experiences, his or her current situation and his or her future plans. The mere interaction between counselor and client, by means of self-disclosure, empathy, presence, support and interpretation, aids significantly in the client's healing.

Unlike more traditional, secular forms of therapy, the distinction between "me" as the counselor and "you" as the client is more abstract in pastoral counseling. While many psychological methods regard the therapist as having
more power or control then the client, pastoral counselors generally tend to act more as a guide and witness to the client's process in life. While the pastoral counselor is academically and clinically trained like other healthcare professionals, the line of demarcation between pastoral psychotherapy and traditional psychotherapy is the inclusion of the spiritual dimension in the pastoral counselor's approach and focus with clients.

Pastoral counselors operate on a three-dimensional plane; focusing on the body, mind, and soul. Pastoral counselors explore and attempt to integrate the physical, emotional, and spiritual selves of their clients. The tri-foci of pastoral counseling renders it a unique form of therapy. Even the pastoral counselor's language appears different than the language of more traditional therapists -- diagnosis, treatment, and outcomes are replaced by circumstance, journey, and wholeness.

Pastoral counselors attempt to illuminate the energy between themselves and their clients. Martin Buber states that in order for a relationship to be a true "I - Thou" relationship, the energy or power between two people must be recognized, for it is the "in-between stuff" which allows the relationship to happen. Pastoral counselors are conscious of this space; some refer to it as a healing presence, others refer to it as God.
The therapist, the client and God converge in pastoral counseling to promote health, healing, and hope. Pastoral counselors help clients to tell and understand their stories and thereby stand as a witness to their clients' lives. Overall, pastoral counselors regard their clients as whole and holy people. The therapeutic process itself is a sacred journey which attempts to weave mind, body and soul with the past, present and future in an effort to better understand the client, and more importantly, to assist the client to better understand him- or herself.

It is a challenge and an honor to help those who struggle to navigate life -- people who find themselves at the bottom of life who are confronted with the ultimate decision, to choose either life or death. My process of becoming a pastoral counselor has required me to come face to face with my own darkness. I have needed to ask for help from other ministers, other persons, like myself, who are in the business of helping others. They have helped me to explore my own internalized anti-Semitism and to assist me as I began to understand and learn about my self-identification as a Jew.

The process of learning about myself has led me to discover a deep and personal connection with the Nazi Holocaust. As I became increasing aware of my own history, I realized that my life metaphorically paralleled the life of many
Jews in the Holocaust. I, too, had been enslaved by a power greater than myself (my addictions). I, too, had experienced inner hate and self-depreciation (the Nazi's message to the Jews). I, too, remained captive in my prison house of self (my overweight body). I, too, struggled to choose between life and death (each morning I arose). And I, too, have been victim turned survivor. Finally, I have learned that to be Jewish is a source of pride, for it is a religion built on struggles and trials and strength and fortitude. Indeed, I am Jewish.

As a Jewish pastoral counselor, it is important that I remember my story as well as the story of my people. In my personal and professional life, I have used the Holocaust symbolically, as a way of moving through life by exploring the past and living for the future, as a way of preparing for all that may come my way and/or the way of my clients.

It is my belief that by exploring the Holocaust through the eyes of a pastoral counselor, it is possible to establish a model of working with victim/survivors who may seek respite and guidance in therapy. Although, this model of pastoral counseling is applicable to people of all religious and cultural backgrounds, using the Holocaust as a frame in which to picture a client's life reaches its most significant possibilities when employed with Jewish clients. Additionally, so long as one is able to glean meaning from the Holocaust, the
lives of those who died in the death camps will not be in vain.

This thesis, like pastoral counseling itself, will be "journey-ful." Since an emotionally and spiritually healthy therapist ought to have explored his or her own story prior to counseling others, this thesis begins with my autobiography as it relates to my work as a pastoral counselor. The second chapter presents differing perspectives on being Jewish. The next chapter develops from my own struggles as a Jew; I will provide a brief history of anti-Semitism. Chapter four narrates the (bodily) experiences of those in the concentration camps. Next, chapters five and six look at the psychological (mind) and theological (soul) aspects of the Holocaust experience. Finally, chapter seven gathers the thesis material together and brings it back to the pastoral counseling setting: In therapy, one can learn that it is possible to have lived through an event such as the Holocaust and still develop into a well-integrated person who relates to self, others and God in a healthy and responsible manner.
CHAPTER ONE

AUTOBIOGRAPHY: A JOURNEY INWARD

*The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want;*

*he makes me lie down in green pastures (Psalms 23:1 - 2a).*

The world has a narrative; each country has a narrative; each culture has a narrative, and each person has a narrative. Although there may be similarities from one story to the next, each story is unique and different and, as such, is worthy of being told. As a Jewish pastoral counselor, it is important for me to know my story for this knowledge shapes my views on psychology and spirituality, which in turn effects my work with clients.

My name is David Robert Kaplan. I am son to George and Sheila (Katz) Kaplan, a brother to Karen (Kaplan) Lieb and Jason Kaplan. I am Fred Lieb's brother-in-law, Sarah and Andrew's uncle, a cousin to many and a nephew to
others. I have been a grandson to four and a great-nephew to more than ten. I am a "good friend" to several and an acquaintance to numerous others. I have been the client to some and am the therapist to others. I am kind and generous -- demanding and difficult -- obsessive and compulsive -- grateful and unappreciative -- confused and directed -- spiritual and creative -- controlling and surrendered -- right and wrong -- depressed and elated -- content and anxious -- changing and static -- open-minded and prejudiced -- hungry and full -- serious a great deal of the time, lighthearted and goofy on occasion -- living and dying.

And, I am a Jew.

Self-knowledge has not come easily. My journey inward has led me down many dark paths while also bringing me to new levels of understanding. It has felt like I have walked through the valley of death at certain times in my life, while experiencing the peace and serenity of resting beside still waters at other times. As I have struggled to identify and walk through the various roadblocks in my life, I continue to learn that life is not about living on the edge as I have lived for so many years, but rather life can be about listening to my inner voice, the voice of God, which calls me toward balance and wholeness. This process requires that I reflect on my past, live in today, and plan for tomorrow.

I have wondered and wandered around in my own "internal desert" for far
too long. Today, I am beginning to navigate my way out. In the process, I have come face-to-face with my enemies. Those who experienced the brutalization of the Holocaust also had to face their enemies -- they, too, fought the angel of death and destruction while clinging to life.

I was born on August 26, 1965, five months after the death of my maternal grandmother. I believe that the emotional pain and devastation my mother experienced during her pregnancy affected me. Amidst the safety and security of my mother's womb, I lived in an environment consumed by death, grief and pain. I became aware of life's tenuousness even before I was born, and it seems that ever since, I have been sensitized to the pain and suffering of the world.

In one sense, my life has been about working through pain, either confronting my own or helping others to experience their own pain. In my work as a chaplain and pastoral counselor, I have witnessed others struggle to conquer forces from within and outside of themselves which have robbed them of their lives. I feel honored each time I am invited to be in the company of others who are facing issues of life and death.

The image of a lonely little boy comes to mind as I think about my childhood. A child scared to go into the world, afraid of something although
unsure of exactly what. I grew up quickly. I know that as a result of my mother's poor health, I took on many adult responsibilities such as cleaning the house and cooking meals. I was a child doing adult things. I was thrust into adulthood without being given the opportunity to be a child.

Growing up, I often felt different than the other kids. I knew that many of my interests were not the same as theirs, yet I did not have the ability to name the difference. As I got older, I was able to identify this difference as my sexual preference. I intuitively knew that society did not approve of homosexuality. The message to me, therefore, was that I was not okay. At the same time, somewhere deep inside of me, I was able to tell myself that to be gay was okay, that it was not my problem but rather the problem of those who could not accept this difference.

The ability to name who I am has been a difficult process. The messages I received from society regarding my sexuality seemed mute compared to the thunderous shame and uncomfortableness I felt growing up as a Jew. My "coming out" as a gay male seemed easy compared to my "coming out" as a Jew.

As I was growing up, I felt a deep sense of shame about being Jewish. Although I do not know the origins of this feeling, my experience suggests that it is a feeling common to many Jews. Even though I attended a grade school in an area in which the majority of the kids were Jewish, I was teased and taunted for
having such stereotypical Semitic features. I grew up trying to ignore the fact that I was Jewish, yet I was confronted with my Jewish-looks each time I saw my image in a mirror. As a child, I did not know how to handle such intense shameful feelings, and as the years progressed, my internalized self-hatred increased and my desire to be identified as a Jew diminished. It has been only in the last year that I comfortably identify myself as a Jew.

Today, I regard my Jewishness as both a blessing and a curse. The blessing is being part of the covenant relationship established between God and his people, the Israelites (Jews). The curse is that being part of the "chosen people" often means being subject to the rivalry and mistrust of others. In one sense, it seems that the die was cast the moment God chose the Jewish people to enter into His covenant. Those outside of the Jewish tradition have attempted to thwart the efforts and viability of Jews. I am beginning to realize that the intense shame and inner turmoil I have experienced for so many years is actually part of what it means to be Jewish. To be confronted with a quasi-archetypal belief that Jews are bad and to be able to stand up against such strong and intense messages promulgated by others for thousands of years, truly tests the limits of what it means to be a Jew, to be strong and survive.

There are many things in life over which one has authority; there are also
many aspects of life which are beyond our human capacity to control, one of them being our ancestry. My mother and father were both born into Jewish households, my father's family being slightly more observant than my mother's family. My paternal grandparents were born in Poland; my maternal grandparents were born in the United States. I was born in Chicago, as were my mother, sister, and brother. My father was born in New York City.

My immediate family acknowledged the "High Holy Days" but rarely stressed the significance, importance or meaning of living a Jewish life. My family did indulge in various Jewish cultural nuances, such as speaking broken Yiddish, eating chopped liver, and receiving lox-boxes on special occasions, yet these occurrences seemed random and did not gel as purely Jewish experiences. As such, these experiences neither added nor subtracted from my Jewish identifications.

As a child, I rarely went to synagogue, and on the occasion that I did attend, it was more a matter of respect for my father than out of any sense of personal interest or motivation. It is difficult to recall the times that I actually did attend synagogue, except for one time.

On this particular holiday, (I am uncertain which one though I am certain it was a High Holy Day--Yom Kippur or Rosh Hashanah, I imagine) my father
and I planned on attending services in the early evening. As is typical in many American Jewish synagogues, it was necessary to purchase tickets to the holiday services. My father had not purchased tickets due to financial constraints, although I did not know that we were not adequately prepared. We found our seats, and as the services began, the usher walked row-by-row collecting the tickets from the congregation. As he came toward us, I sensed that something might be wrong. Suddenly, my father, a couple of the ushers, and myself, were in the lobby of the synagogue. I am not exactly sure what happened next, although I have vague memories of my father and one of the ticket-seeking elders of the temple arguing, which escalated to yelling and physical fighting. To this day, my father and I have spoken few words about this incident.

Throughout my life, I have felt angry, sad and confused about this event. How could people whose own religion is steeped in pain and difficulty ask another person to leave a place of worship? Who gave these men the right to humiliate my father and to do it in front of his son? The shame that my father experienced was obvious to me. This experience intensified my own internal shame and awkwardness about being Jewish. I have carried this Jewish act of Jew-to-Jew hatred with me for many years.

As the years have progressed and I have matured, I have looked at this
situation from various perspectives. Although I appreciate my father's attempt to provide me with a Jewish experience, part of me is angry at him for putting me in such an awkward and painful situation. I also realize that my father could not have known what would ensue at the synagogue. On the other hand, as is typical with my father, he was trying to get away with something by not purchasing tickets. Throughout my life, I have paid the price emotionally and religiously, for this event distanced me further from Judaism.

To ask for help is difficult, and for my father, as with many men of his generation, to admit to an inability to provide a Jewish experience for his son would be a humiliating failure as a Jew and a man. Today, I feel deeply pained when I think about the abuse that my father was subjected to on that evening. I am angry at these men for disgracing my father and reducing his already minimal self-esteem. I feel that my father tried to protect me. He was willing to be hurt for the sake of his son, and for this I will always love him. This incident certainly did not endear me to Judaism, nor did my religious education.

Hebrew School is a short chapter in my life story. I attended Hebrew School, like many other kids, starting at about the age of eight or nine. Yet shortly after I began, I experienced a great deal of physical illness (today, I regard these illnesses as more emotional) which prohibited me from attending Hebrew
school on a regular basis. The Hebrew school was not supportive and eventually asked me to leave their program due to lack of full participation. As a kid, I did not understand the logic behind asking someone to leave his Hebrew education due to illness. And to be honest, even as an adult I struggle to understand the rationale behind the Hebrew school's decision. My commitment and eagerness to pursue a Hebrew education was stained and for several years after, because my parents did not push the issue, I did not return to any formal Hebrew school experience.

As my Bar Mitzvah age approached, my family and I talked about whether or not I would or even could be Bar Mitzvahed. We attempted to find a congregation that would be sympathetic to my earlier experiences in Hebrew school and permit me to be Bar Mitzvahed. We eventually found Northwest Suburban Congregation in Morton Grove, Illinois. Rabbi Charney was willing to tutor me and prepare me for Bar Mitzvah although we were not members of the temple. I do remember, though, that since we were not members of the synagogue, my Bar Mitzvah could not be in the main sanctuary, but rather my Bar Mitzvah was held in the chapel, the "side-space" used for less significant events according to this sensitive thirteen year old. At the same time, I preferred the chapel since it was smaller as well as more intimate and private. I remember the
stained glass windows reflecting their bright colors on the morning of my Bar Mitzvah, September 16, 1978. Despite the fact that I preferred the chapel, I also had the sense that my Bar Mitzvah was unofficial since it was not held in the synagogue's sanctuary, the place where most B'nai Mitzvah are held. I also remember feeling hurt that I never received a Bar Mitzvah certificate, Kiddish Cup, or Siddur -- typical gifts from the synagogue which symbolize success and completion. The result of these seemingly small differences affected me tremendously. To this day, I feel as though my Bar Mitzvah never occurred despite the pictures which prove otherwise. My Bar Mitzvah felt different -- it felt as though it was not sanctioned by the Jewish community.

Clearly, formal religious devotion was not part of my childhood or teen years. It was not until I continued my undergraduate degree at Loyola University of Chicago in 1985 that God or any religious or spiritual pursuits would be part of my life. I remember asking Dr. Pauline Viviano, Associate Professor of Theology, if I could register for her *Old Testament* course even though the class was closed. She responded affirmatively, and it seemed that from the moment I stepped into her classroom, my life began to change. I was like a sponge, soaking up God and the Hebrew Scriptures. I slowly realized that spirituality had been one of the missing pieces in my life. After my three core theology courses, I took
a fourth, fifth, sixth, and so on until I had completed the required courses to be
considered a Theology Major. I wrote an exegetical analysis of the Lord's
Passover which served as my major's thesis, and I graduated with a double major
in Political Science and Theology.

My exposure to theology, God, and the scriptures at Loyola were naturally
from a Christian perspective. This did not matter to me, for it allowed me to
discover my own spirit which I had not known until this time. I became saturated
in Christianity, and for several years, considered converting to Catholicism.
During this time, although I intellectually knew that it would be okay to adopt a
Christian way of life, I felt emotionally awkward about pursuing a Christian life
until I explored the religion of my foreparents, Judaism.

It seems ironic that my call to Judaism began at Loyola. I remember the
first day of Tsvi Blanchard's Introduction to Judaism. The classroom was full,
comprised of two or three Jews, the rest of the students being Christian,
predominately Catholic. Rabbi Blanchard began his lecture asking the question,
"What does it mean to be Jewish?" Many ideas and thoughts came rushing to my
mind, but, the part of me that was ashamed to be Jewish, silently sat there trying
to be oblivious. Others in the class shouted out their impressions; I do not recall
what the other Jews said, if anything. After several minutes Rabbi Blanchard
quietly and softly said that to be a Jew was to ask questions, always to have more questions than answers. I was intrigued by such simplicity, and it was at this moment that I began to ask myself the question "How do I become a Jew?" It is a question I have asked myself thousands of times over the years. I have yet to receive a direct answer, although I have been given signs along the way.

One day, while I was driving my car, doing nothing more holy than making a left hand turn, a spiritual experience descended upon me. God whispered to me. He said that I did not need to seek anything externally -- to be a Jew was my birthright, and the only thing I needed to do was to accept this blessing. To say I was a Jew made me a Jew. I knew this intellectually, yet emotionally, Christianity still seemed like a possible destination. While this event afforded me an opportunity to clearly identify myself as a Jew, if I so chose, my discomfort with this identification continued. I was uncertain, at that time, of how to proceed. So, I listened to my gut where God often "speaks" to me: I sat still, made no decisions, and waited until I had a sense of how to proceed.

It took years until I discovered what to do next -- to look for someone to assist me in my religious/spiritual explorations. I spoke to rabbis predominantly in the Chicago area. Over and over, I would show up for my appointments, tell them the story about how my father and I were thrown out of synagogue for not
having tickets, discuss my feelings about my Bar Mitzvah, and share my experiences at Loyola. The Rabbis listened, but I was rarely heard. Only two or three of the ten or twelve rabbis were willing to take the time to explore my confusion. My search seemed futile a couple of years ago when one particular rabbi accused me of seeking his counsel in an effort to receive his blessing to be a Christian. He told me that he had nothing to offer me and asked me to leave his office. The rabbi's accusation was far off base. As my search continued, I was able to narrow my focus with the rabbis. I told them that I wanted to know how to live as a Jew; each would provide his own prescription.

I wholeheartedly believe that by studying and exploring Christianity, I found my own religious and Judaic spiritual heritage. I feel exceedingly grateful to have had the gentle and open spirit of Christianity in my life, for it is this accepting and life-giving spirit that has invited me to look back and reflect on my personal history and my Judaic roots.

Today, I stand proud to be a community member with such ancient traditions and customs. I have a deep connection to the struggles and triumphs of my foreparents, including the Holocaust experience. To be able to call myself a Jew is miraculous -- something which I could have never imagined early in my life. While I am exceedingly thankful to those who supported me, I am also
grateful to those who discouraged me in my life, for their energy propelled me to listen to my inner voice ever more closely and follow my instincts.

**APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING**

Counseling as a profession cannot be entered objectively. Since therapy is devised as a team comprised of counselor and client, it is important to examine the bias imported into the process by the pastoral counselor. In one sense, each person's experiences on the therapy team is pure subjectivity since both therapist and client are directly involved in the treatment process. The healing which occurs in counseling is most often a result of the relationship between client and therapist. It is critical, therefore, that the therapist know his or her story, to be continually aware of the changes and transitions which he or she experiences in life. Similarly, any research into pastoral counseling methods is subject to bias introduced by the author of the research. I make no claim of total objectivity for this paper and hope to reveal my influences by starting with this chapter of self-revelation.

I believe that all counselors need to either be in therapy themselves or be involved in some sort of supervision with a trained clinician. There are several
reasons for this: (1) a person who helps others know themselves must first know
him- or herself. Therapy and/or supervision permits the therapist to gain a deeper
sense of self; (2) therapists need to be aware of their vulnerabilities, the "buttons"
which clients somehow intuit, their countertransferences; and (3) therapists ought
to have the experience of "being on the couch." It is extraordinarily useful for the
therapist to know what it is like to be the client. The client relies not only on the
therapist's skills and education, but on his or her commitment to personal growth
and development as well. This is usually an unconscious agenda of the client, but
it is evident, from personal experience, when a counselor is either talking out of a
text book or out of personal experience. I think that my own experiences
regarding my struggles to identify myself as a Jew, my spiritual and psychological
journeys, my struggle to maintain sobriety, and my involvement in twelve-step
support programs enhances my work with clients.

Ultimately, the ability to more fully empathize with clients fosters and
promotes the therapeutic relationship between counselor and client. By exploring
and processing the narratives of our own lives, we bring to the surface our
potential bias and an implicit acknowledgment that both reality and sanity are
constructed for client and pastoral counselor alike.
CHAPTER TWO

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE JEWISH

*He leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul (Psalms 23:2b - 3a).*

There are many paths which lead to Judaism. As my Jewish identification matures, I am learning that to define what it means to be Jewish is an extremely intimate and personal process. I have come to believe that so long as a person seeks the Messiah (the manifestation of faith, hope and life), maintains and deepens his or her relationship with God and honors and respects the covenant which God and the Israelites established over two thousand years ago, he or she is living life as a Jew.

This chapter explores that vastness and possibilities of what it means to be Jewish. As a Jewish pastoral counselor who may work with Jewish clients, it is important that I have a sense of the different stories, the different notions of what
it means to be Jewish.

The Hebrew Scriptures venture to describe the history of the Jews. These holy writings say that, in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and all that dwelt within this creation. God commanded all humans to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28b). This commandment reveals the trust and freedom which God bestowed upon humans, a relationship based on mutuality and equality -- humanity needing God and God needing humanity.

In the Book of Genesis, God set human beings on a journey out of the Garden of Eden and into the world. Jews have "undergone a trauma of dislocation and demoralization" for virtually 4000 years "roaming from town to town, barred from permanent settlement" (Armstrong, 1993, p. 333). Although God's actions can be interpreted many different ways, this story symbolizes the opportunity we all have to make choices in our lives.

As Rabbi Blanchard articulated for me in his *Introduction to Judaism* class many years ago, it is typical for Jews to ask questions, questions which often guide the seeker toward self-acceptance. By rarely providing direct answers, Judaism naturally invites its citizens to continue to ask, to seek, to contemplate, to
pray, and to listen. The Jewish experience is filled ultimately with hope, promise and fulfillment, while at the same time doubt, fear, and uncertainty. It is the union of hope and doubt, promise and fear, and fulfillment and uncertainty which comprises the Jewish search for God and self.

Jews have, in one sense, survived by pushing their limits and the limits placed upon them by the world. Many Jews believe that so long as they seek God, God will continue to seek and provide Jews. This is the faith, this is the hope and this is the belief upon which Jewish ancestors have been able to move forward in life even when confronted with the most horrific conditions, including the hell of Nazi concentration camps.

People who deny themselves the opportunity to question may also deny themselves the opportunity to deepen self-knowledge and faith commitments. Unless one has the chance, either intentionally such as in a therapeutic relationship, or unintentionally (after a crisis, perhaps), to stand back and objectively assess one's situation, one may never be able to grow and develop. The person who has not given him- or herself time for reflective questioning of beliefs and attitudes may be unaware of what is missing from life. For instance, a wealthy person who has always been secure financially may not be able to appreciate the gifts of fiscal freedom, whereas the economically deprived person
who has had to work hard and push the limits of their resources to make ends meet most likely will have a radically different appreciation and attitude toward money.

In a similar manner, the difficulty of my struggle with my early distance and detachment from Judaism is precisely that which has brought me to a position to acknowledge my Judaic heritage and accept myself as a Jew. In Jungian psychological terms, people who regard their persona without risking to look at their shadow side are "protecting" and hiding themselves from full self-knowledge.

Traditionally, Jews have believed in one God who "chose" them to receive the Torah, the laws, which establishes the manner in which humankind is to live. Compliance with certain dietary laws or living within specific geographic regions are additional ways to define what it means to be Jewish. Other factors considered to define some Jews include "their preferences in food, the way they dress, the books and newspapers they read, the plays they enjoy seeing performed" (Landau, 1994, p. 29).

Michael A. Fishbane presents one traditional model of Judaic identity. He describes Judaism as a "'covenantal monotheism' [which] has structured and conditioned the religious imagery and experience of God... over the ages"
Fishbane believes that "covenantal monotheism" is an external structure which unifies all Jews. He explains further that "the native theology of traditional Judaism is a biblical theology, a theology rooted in biblical images and ideas, in biblical language and hopes, and in biblical values and concerns" (Fishbane, 1987, p. 58). Topics such as God, creation, the patriarchs, Moses, covenant, kingship, exodus [people and election], Sinai [covenant and law], Canaan [land and promise], ethical codes, regulations, destruction, hope, promise, and fulfillment are all part of Judaism.

Martin Buber, on the other hand, sees no signs of a religiosity based purely on "a life that bears witness to God, that, because it is lived in His name, transmutes Him from an abstract truth into a reality" (Buber, 1967, p. 12). For Buber, the outer forms of life (religions) are not as important as one's inner reality. "Judaism's significance for the Jew is only as great as its inner reality" (Buber, 1967, p. 12). Buber's classic book, I and Thou, explores the relationship between people and God. Buber emphasizes the need for dialogue between two people in order to find God. Buber believes that creation continues through our relationships with others, that is, our continuous search for the spirit in the communion between people. As such, we are each "God's 'partner in the work of creation. . . '" (Buber, 1967, p. 112). Community is ranked high by Buber,
evidenced by

the awesomeness of the covenant between God and man, presented
in the threefold tale of the Scriptures: the first covenant with the
lump of clay which the Creator, kneading, and by the breath of His
mouth, imbues with His own likeness, so that it might unfold in
man's life and thus reveal that not being but becoming is man's
task; the second covenant with the chosen patriarch, the covenant
that begins with the parting from home and kin and concludes with
the demand for the sacrifice of the son, so that it might be revealed
that realization demands the ultimate stake and unconditional
dedication; the third covenant, in the Sinai desert, with the people
. . . so that it may be revealed that realization of the Divine on earth
is fulfilled not within man but between man and man, and that,
though it does indeed have its beginning in the life of individual
man, it is consummated only in the life of true community.

(Buber, 1967, pp. 112-113)

In contrast to Buber's approach to Judaism based upon the spirituality of
community interaction, other models of Judaic identity center on racial lineage.
To some, being a Jew is as simple as being born into a Jewish family.
Interestingly, in the case of a religiously mixed marriage, a child is considered Jewish only if the mother is Jewish while converts to Judaism are considered to have always been Jewish and therefore treated as though they were actually born to Jewish parents. This model seemingly excludes still others, like myself, who, despite Jewish blood-lines and cultural inheritance, struggle to identify themselves as Jews.

To live proudly as a Jew can be an oxymoron -- journeying through life as a Jew can be hard and painful. Some Jews, like myself, have come to the brink of conversion, to the point of desperation when to denounce their blood-line and accept the beliefs of another religion seemed easier than to stay with the suffering, confusion, and shame of being Jewish. Edmund Fleg was one such man.

Mr. Fleg lived his life struggling to find peace in his being a Jew. His introspective nature and analytical mind allowed him "to realize that anti-Semitism had only one seemingly valid ground: the determination of Jews to remain Jews" (Fleg, 1975, p. 81). There were times in Mr. Fleg's life when as a child, he felt "crucified by horror and shame for [his] race, [and] quite small and alone in [his] room, [he] cried out "'Dirty Jews, dirty Jews!'" (Fleg, 1975, p. xiii). Fleg's struggle to "come out" as a Jew was by no means easy. His inner life was turbulent; his faith in Judaism and the State of Israel was virtually extinguished.
Fleg's book, *Why I am a Jew*, is a poetic and personal tale filled with pain and promise. He pens his thoughts and concerns about what it means to be a Jew for his yet unborn grandchild as if spinning a family history. He writes:

> If you believe that the flame of Israel is extinguished within you, pay heed and wait; some day it will be rekindled. It is a very old story, which begins anew each century. Israel has had a thousand opportunities to die; a thousand times it has been reborn. I want to tell to you how it died and was reborn within me, so that, if it dies in you, you in turn may experience its rebirth. (Fleg, 1975, p. xx)

Fleg's honesty, openness, and willingness sustained him in his process of Jewish identification. Ultimately, he developed his own insights and appreciation of Judaism. Fleg wrote that "we are the heartbeat of a world that wills to find its noblest self and to fulfill the law of justice which it seeks to know; we are God's people, for we will it so, the stars our quest and truth our watchword still" (Fleg, 1975, p. xxi). The outcome of Fleg's story is a profound identification with his own Judaism. He writes, "as for me, my child, who have so long sought for the evidence of the existence of God, I have found it in the existence of Israel" (Fleg, 1975, p. 93).

In the second half of the Twentieth Century, Jews have identified strongly with the State of Israel. This is a geographically based model of Jewish identity,
akin to traditional definitions of nationality. Historically, as many of the biblical stories reveal, Jews have long been searching for a "place to call home." As such, the acquisition of Israel has sent a message about the permanence of Zionism throughout the world. The restoration of an ancestral Jewish homeland has, to no surprise, engendered both enthusiasm and disdain. Anti-Semitism is often the root of anti-Zionism.

When speaking about Judaism, many people are referring to a relationship based on commitment, trust, and faith: A religion saturated in rituals, traditions, and customs -- each practiced and adhered to in an effort to keep alive one's own connection and reverence to what it means to be a Jew. Michael Fishbane states that "the beliefs of Judaism become present each day through the prayers, study, and life actions of the Jew, for each act (ideally) brings to mind the historical memories, ritual affirmations, and moral values upon which Judaism is based" (Fishbane, 1987, p. 83).

In his book Judaism, Hans Küng writes about what he calls "the riddle of Judaism" (Küng, 1992, p. 19). He states that there is no doubt that Judaism -- one of the earliest religions on our globe, which despite all the indescribable persecutions has been able to keep itself alive to the present day -- is a religion with a power, warmth, serenity and humanity all of its own. . . . Its nature
is almost impossible to define. . . . It is a tiny people which only
existed first of all in that tiny land in the centre, formed by Syria-
Palestine, of the fertile crescent. (Küng, 1992, p. 19)

Küng assumes the role of riddler by asking what is Judaism, something which
puzzles even Jews themselves. He declares "a state and yet not a state!, a people
and yet not a people!, a race and yet not a race!, a linguistic community and yet
not a linguistic community!, a religious community and not a religious
community!" (Küng, 1992, p. 20). This riddle is never fully answered by Küng,
although he does suggest that

however one interprets the situation, it is clear that Judaism is the
enigmatic community of fate. . . . which has shown an
unprecedented, incomparable, amazing power of endurance down
to the present day over a history of three thousand years, through
centuries of peace and centuries of persecution, indeed
extermination. (Küng, 1992, p. 20)

Jews have survived.

In 1899, Mark Twain wrote that

if the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the
human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of the stardust lost in
the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be
heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are way out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all the ages, and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dreamstuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed and made a vast noise, and they were gone; the other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

Nearly ninety-six years have passed since Mark Twain penned this reflection about Jews yet these words still remain accurate. The fact that Jews have existed for thousands of years does indeed intimate a certain "immortality,"
yet to even guess at this secret is still shrouded in mystery. Many disciplines sought to understand the Jews and why they have continued to thrive. Theologians and philosophers, priests and rabbis, scholars and lay-persons -- each has attempted to understand the immortality of Jews and still, there are no definitive answers.

Throughout the centuries it has been difficult for many Jews to continue to trust God's promise of infinite protection yet the Twentieth Century calls to question God's existence and active role in our lives more then perhaps any other time. The Holocaust has raised more questions, more challenges to Jews than virtually any other event in human history.

However one defines what it means to be a Jew, whether one's understanding is based on religious, national, racial, or cultural identifications, "Jewishness is perhaps best defined as having a sense of continuity with the Jewish past -- a continuity which may express itself in a great variety of ways" (Landau, 1994, p. 29) such as in the story of creation, the promise of fulfillment and protection as expressed by the covenant, the Exodus and the giving of the laws. And, Jews are defined by their historical role as victims and survivors.

The role of Jews in history has also placed them at the center of politics, religion, philosophy and culture itself. Such a dominate and pivotal position has invited world ovations and, at the same time, world hatred. Hatred for the Jews
has long been a part of world history. Anti-Semitism reigned during the Twentieth Century.

**APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING**

This chapter explores what it means to be Jewish. Employing the Holocaust as guide in pastoral counseling with Jewish clients demands pastoral counselors to have some sense of what it means to be Jewish. The more counselors learns about their clients, the more they can assist their clients' journey toward wholeness. The information contained in this chapter can be especially important for pastoral counselors whose clients are seeking guidance for issues related to their identifications as Jews.

Just as it is important for the counselor to be aware of his or her psychological countertransferences, it is important that counselors beware of their religious and spiritual issues, commitments, and prejudices. If I, for example, attempted to work with a Jewish client on his or her identifications as a Jew prior to my own groundedness and commitments to Judaism, I would jeopardize the integrity and honesty of the therapeutic relationship. In fact, many professional codes, including the American Psychological Association's code of ethics, forbid therapists from counseling others in areas which they themselves have little or no
experience. Therefore, until I myself began to look at my own Jewish identifications and internally accepted myself as a Jew, I could not have ethically assisted others in their journeys of Jewish self-identification.

The vastness of what it means to be Jewish can be both attractive and confusing to the pastoral counselor and to clients themselves. It would perhaps be easier if there were some distinct formula or definition to employ as a way of determining Jewishness. At the same time, the breadth and depth of Judaism is exactly what secures the vastness and unlimitedness, the personal relevancy, of what it means to be a Jew. There is no one definition of Jews, yet there is one fact that remains clear: Judaism was, is, and will always be (with God's pathos). In its simplest form, Judaism is about being, about being present, about life and living.

It is the pastoral counselor's job to enter into the client's world and, in the case of a Jewish client, his or her self-identification as a Jew. Additionally, therapists need to assist their clients at whatever level of faith the client brings to therapy. Whether a client perceives his or her relationship to Judaism in a cultural, historical, or religious sense, exploring shifting definitions of Jewish identity must be part of the pastoral counseling process.

In an effort to convey empathy and understanding, pastoral counselors may choose to use colloquial or traditional words and expressions which could be understood by their clients. For example, as a Jewish pastoral counselor working
with Jewish clients, I might use words such as creation, Genesis, Exodus, plagues, wilderness, and covenant. These words are multi-purposeful; first, they have a direct and concrete place in Jewish experience; second, they create vivid and colorful images and symbols which can be readily employed in therapy.

Ultimately, the pastoral counselor's attempt to re-create a covenant relationship with the client in much the same way as God did with the Israelites could prove immensely healing. That is not to suggest that the counselor take on the role as deity, but instead, the covenantal relationship could provide a space for faith and trust to develop thereby allowing the client's narrative to be shared with the therapist within the context of God's love and forgiveness.
CHAPTER THREE

ANTI-SEMITISM: A LATE-TWENTIETH CENTURY OVERVIEW

He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake (Psalms 23:3a).

My story, as it relates to being Jewish, evokes feelings and thoughts which have sensitized me to anti-Semitism. Over time, I realized that my religious and cultural self-hatred extended beyond my life experiences. While Jews inherit life-affirming traditions, beliefs and customs, Jews also inherit a deeply rooted sense of shame and embarrassment. I internalized the anti-Semitism which the world casts upon Jews.

To tell the Jewish story fully, it is important to tell all aspects of the story, even those times which are painful to discuss. The Jewish story reveals a long history of hope and inspiration as well as oppression and devastation. This chapter explores anti-Semitism in the Twentieth Century, the time during which
my Holocaust metaphors are rooted; it is part of the history which led up to the Holocaust, and it may be part of a client's history as well.

It has been more than half a century since the world responded to the atrocities and inhumanities of the Nazi Holocaust. The number of governments, political leaders, countries, communities, and people the Nazi Party was able to fool and exploit, and the degree to which the Holocaust maligned the world and its citizens over the past half a century, is incalculable. Those who endured concentration camp life under the Nazi regime were exposed to conditions beyond human comprehension. It seems mind-boggling to imagine how such an exhaustive annihilation could occur, and yet the fact is that the Holocaust is an undeniable part of world history.

The power and knowledge to manipulate and deceptively incapacitate the world is frightening. The "Nazi Death Lists" included virtually anyone and/or any group that did not fit the Aryan mold, the human perfected according to the Nazi philosophy: men and women and children and Gypsies and homosexuals and Jews and those who were sick and those who simply looked inappropriate.

Jews have often been recognized for industrial, commercial, artistic, musical, literary and scientific adeptness. Such fortunate commemorations have
been balanced by, or even have led to, criticism, oppression and persecution.

Although there is no precise explanation which accounts for such dichotomous attitudes toward Jews, in spite of a history of enslavement and subjugation, we continue to thrive, exemplifying strength and fortitude.

The world sends Jews mixed messages. On the one hand, the world continues to celebrate, the wisdom and knowledge of Jewish culture, while on the other hand plotting its death or, at minimum, establishing road blocks in an effort to thwart Jewish success. The messages which the world has sent the Jew throughout history parallels the way that an abusive parent mistreats a child. For instance, the parent who praises a child's efforts while at the same time beating the child for not being perfect sends a destructive message to the child, namely, that no matter what the child does, the child is not good enough. Similarly, society has never clearly defined its attitude toward Jews, thereby encouraging many Jews to remain confused, shamed, and embarrassed about their Jewish identity.

It is as if the world has provoked Jews to engage in a game of tug-of-war -- a game between the world and the Jew which can be traced back thousands of years. The tension continues, but it is no game. The push and pull of success and condemnation is a conflict that cost millions of people their lives. Anti-Semitism has long been a part of world history; a way of life for many. And
still, as detailed in almost everyday's news, Jews must continue to protect their people, maintain their culture, defend their land, and assert their right to exist across the modern world.

Raul Hilberg's book *The Destruction of the European Jews* "sums up in three steps the centuries it took to build the railway to genocide" (Bresheeth et al, 1993, p. 25).

FIRST STEP: The Process begins with Christianity's ghettoization of the Jews after failing to convert them.

SECOND STEP: The process continues in secular Europe when the Jews emerge from the ghetto and are perceived as an economic threat, for which reason liberal assimilation fails.

THIRD STEP: The Final Solution arrives with the "scientific" theory of the Jews as not only racially inferior, but as a menace to the purity of "Aryan" blood.

Hilberg proposes that society has consistently re-cast the following messages upon Jews: (1) You have no right to live among us as Jews, (2) You have no
right to live among us and (3) You have no right to live.

Significantly, hatred for Jews has its roots in religion. In fact, Christian doctrine, for centuries, charged Jews with Christ's death, while, Protestant reformer, Martin Luther, "denounced the Jews as 'the devil's people,' as 'liars and bloodhounds' and 'bloody and revengeful people'" (Bresheeth et al., 1993, p. 8). Claims such as these perpetuated disdain for Jews.

Amidst the energy between Christians and Jews a tremendous irony exists -- Christ was a Jew, an ordinary man with prophetic insights and wisdom. In one sense, he was the model Jew, preaching notions of love and acceptance, kindness and truth. He was a committed Jew. His faith and trust in God was evident even in the final moments of his life. Many Holocaust victims walked to their deaths like Christ, echoing their faith and trust in God in the final moments of their lives.

Anti-Semitism grew in direct response to the increasing presence of Jews. As Jews thrived economically, socially and culturally, the world increasingly regarded them as a threat. Jews were different -- marked by their skin color, culture, dress, cuisine, and nationality. They were not like the others, and as such, were punished.

Jews were said to have a special odor -- *feotor Judaicus* -- just as
other immigrants today are accused of having a 'bad smell.'

Throughout the centuries in Europe, the Jew has been 'the other' -- different -- set apart -- by culture, by religion, by rituals, by dress (in some cases they were compelled to wear badges or specific robes), and by language. Many Jews have -- as is their right -- held very tenaciously to their differences. (Bresheeth et al., 1993, p. 9)

The political world in the mid-Twentieth Century was no more immune to anti-Semitism than the religious world was two thousand years ago. Adolf Hitler, in his first written political statement, dated September 16, 1919, campaigned for the elimination of all Jews. Hitler referred to Jews as "being made in the image of the devil, as a universal form of 'racial tuberculosis' or as a subhuman species of vermin whose 'eradication root and branch' was a matter of life and death for Germany and mankind as a whole" (Wistrich, 1991, p. 66). The Jews' success in politics, economics and society threatened Hitler, and for him the only way to manage the Jews was to condemn them to death. The concrete, black and white nature of the German state was clearly demonstrated in Hitler's thinking -- there could be no compromise, Jews must be killed.

Austria was another mecca of anti-Semitism. Swastikas became common sights there and Hitler gained enormous support. Cruelty toward Jews and their
property prevailed in the government as well as by the "common" Austrian citizen.

Their favorite sport on... Saturday and Sunday morning was to round up all ranks of Jews, particularly those of the middle class, in order to make them clean the streets and scrub the pavements... These were the familiar scenes of Jews scrubbing pavements, with their bare hands, usually accompanied by a jeering mob of Viennese citizens. In many cases, acid was poured on the hands of the Jews... The older and feeble who stumbled or collapsed were brutally kicked and beaten... From time to time a roar of delight from the crowds would announce... "Work for the Jews at last, work for the Jews!" or "We thank our Führer for finding work for the Jews." (Wistrich, 1991, p. 90)

Jews were to be destroyed: Synagogues were ravaged and consumed by fire; holy articles such as Torah were desecrated; Jewish shops were robbed and shut down; Jewish homes were ransacked; Jews were arrested, while others chose suicide as opposed to being murdered. Anti-Semitism reigned.

Jewish culture was invalidated and obliterated in the years before World War II. Jewish people, society, politics, and religious beliefs and practices were
made criminal. Approximately six million Jews were systematically murdered in Nazi-dominated Europe between 1941 and 1945 (Landau, 1994, p. 3). This historical event has since been referred to as "The Holocaust," a genocide, an annihilation committed to further the destruction of a national, ethical, racial and religious group. The Holocaust was grand-scale genocide intended by the Nazis to be "the final solution" of what they called the "Jewish problem."

In Hebrew, the Holocaust is called Shoah which loosely translates as a great and terrible wind. The word Holocaust comes from the Greek. Holos mean[ing] "whole" and caustos mean[ing] "burnt." Originally, it meant a sacrifice consumed by fire -- a burnt offering. It came to mean "a sacrifice on a large scale," and, by the end of the 17th century, "the complete destruction of a large number of persons -- a great slaughter or massacre." (Bresheeth et al, 1993, p. 4)

The crime that the Jews were accused of "was that they were born Jewish [in the words of one historian, 'Jewish birth was a sentence of death,'] their 'punishment' was -- and remains to this day -- inexplicable" (Landau, 1994, p. 3). The Holocaust "was a human event -- all too human -- which shows that humanity is. . . eminently capable of doing anything that our technology makes possible,
horrifyingly ready to perform unimagined acts of wholesale destruction and self-destruction" (Landau, 1994, p. 7).

The horror of the Holocaust "is not that in it humans deviated from human behavior; the horror is that they didn't" (Hayes, 1991, p. 38).

Erich Fromm tells us . . . that humans have not only a basic life-affirming instinct, Freud's libido, but also a destructive instinct, which was termed 'Thanatos' by one of Freud's pupils. . . . Fromm hinted, I think, that given certain societal conditions, this destructive instinct might turn into uncontrolled aggression, possibly self-destructive and possibly directed toward others. (Hayes, 1991, p. 38)

Shortly after World War I, Albert Einstein, a Jew himself, wrote that "in the hands of our generation these hard-won instruments [technological advancements] are like a razor wielded by a child of three. The possession of marvelous means of production has brought misery and hunger instead of freedom" (Landau, 1994, p. 9). It is the responsibility of all humans to insure that the world powers' weapons become things of ugliness and disdain as opposed to things of importance and significance. It is our time "to turn violence into nonviolence, impurity into purity, hatred into compassion -- these characterize a
man born with divine traits" (From the sixteenth teaching, "The Divine and the Demonic in Man," from the Bhagavad Gita Translated by Barbara Stoler Miller).

Emil Fackenheim, paraphrasing the French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre, contends that "Jewish survival. . . is the product of anti-Semitism" (Fackenheim, 1987, p. 53). Sartre believed that Jews survive because their enemies give them no choice but to survive. The harder the anti-movements push, the harder Jews must push back. I disagree with Sartre's statement that Jews have no choice but to survive. In fact, Jews have always had choices -- they could have given up and died. To survive, therefore, is a choice which demands tremendous energy, conviction, and will.

Emil Fackenheim writes that "as the Jew-hatred of the anti-Semite creates the Jew's very identity, so the genocidal Jew-hatred of the ultimate anti-Semite caused Jews to embrace Jewish statehood. . . Jewish survival is the product of persecution" (Fackenheim, 1987, p. 55). There is a paradoxical philosophy operative here, namely, the more the Nazis said "no," the more the Jews said "yes."

The Holocaust of Jewish people under Hitler was no accident. Anti-Semitism is deeply rooted in the centuries old prejudice against Jews embedded in politics, religion and social interaction. The history has been one of racial and
religious hatred, scapegoating and mass murder. Hitler's death camps heinously concretized two millennia of hate. History has proven anti-Semitism as much a part of the Jewish birthright as is receiving the benefaction of God's protection, love, and care. Jews have defied the most indescribable odds and survived.

The ability and willingness to stand still, reflect on the past, and look toward the future while committing one’s self to strengthening his or her relationship with God, as was first established between God and the Israelites, represents one aspect of what it means to be Jewish. The willingness to accept an invitation to reflect on one's personal and cultural experiences to explore one's history, which for the Jew must include the Holocaust, while living in the moment and planning for tomorrow, typifies the Jewish experience.

The Holocaust thrust Jews into a foreign world filled with pain and abuse. The goal of each Jew was to survive. Questions ad infinitum have been asked regarding the Jews' ability to live through the life-depleting circumstances of the Holocaust. Questions such as: How did those who lived in the middle of such hell on earth survive, not just physically, but emotionally and psychologically? How could God allow the slaughters, the hangings, the burnings, the inhumanity which defines the Nazi Holocaust? How has the Holocaust affected the Jew's trust in God? How does the survivor regard religion and spiritually after living
through such incredible and indescribable conditions? What has come of the survivors' minds, their bodies, and their souls? What was/is the psychology of the Holocaust? What was/is the theology of the Holocaust?

Each of these questions is crucial in order to fully understand and continue the exploration of the Jews' will to survive. And yet, it seems imperative to first enter into the pain, to go into the living hell, and experience the words of those who endured the Holocaust first-hand. Once we have walked through the pain, reflection, exploration, and interpretation can begin to take shape. The enormous consequences of the Holocaust can barely be touched in a paper such as this, or a book or volumes of books for that matter, yet to begin to grapple with some questions, is necessary to begin the process of healing and integration, ultimately leading to a healthy sense of self-identification, or in other words, wholeness.

APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

Pastoral counselors must be culturally sensitive. In 1987, the American Psychological Association amended the preamble of the *General Guidelines for Providers of Psychological Services* to include culture and ethnic sensitivity as requirements for good therapeutic practice. Culture and ethnicity, including the
history and preponderance of anti-Semitism in the lives of Jews, plays a crucial role in today's therapeutic practices; in fact, a multi-culturally focused therapy course is one of the pre-requisite for the National Counselor's Exam.

The therapist who chooses to ignore the dark or shadow side of any issue runs the risk of cheating his or her client out of full self-knowledge. To be blind to the parts of Judaism which are painful is as non-therapeutic as discounting the positive aspects of spirituality in a well-rounded life. When working with a Jewish client, it is crucial that counselors be at least minimally aware of the various aspects of Judaism, including anti-Semitism which can have significant ramifications on their Jewish clients. Further, Jewish pastoral counselors need to be especially aware of their own history as well as their relationship to anti-Semitism when working with Jewish clients in an effort to minimize any countertransference which may enter the therapeutic relationship.

One of the benefits of a client seeing a pastoral counselor instead of a more traditional, secular counselor is that pastoral counselors are knowledgeable about spiritual and religious issues in addition to psychotherapy. The transmission and adoption of Jewish self-hatred is common in Jewish society, although rarely talked about. Knowledge of external and internalized anti-Semitism can be quite fruitful, especially when working with a Jewish client who
experiences extremely low self-esteem and/or minimal self-acceptance, or any client who sees him- or herself in an oppressed minority or status.

Pastoral counselors who work with Jewish clients ought to address or at least assess a client's involvement or reactions to various areas of life as a Jew -- areas such as the significance of religious holidays, the role of men and women in traditional and modern Jewish society, the notion of community, Jews' reverence for study and education, the importance of life, and their identity as victim and survivor.

The pastoral counselor who is working with a Jewish client may open vast areas of discussion and revelation with questions such as, "What does it mean to be Jewish?" or "How do you relate to your cultural history of oppression?" or "How do you express your Judaism?" or "Have you or anyone you have known ever been a victim of anti-Semitism?" or "What does the Holocaust mean to you?" These straight-forward, yet loaded questions, while focusing on a client's cultural perspective, can provide unique and valuable information regarding the client's self-esteem, history, and ethnic/cultural attachments.

It is also increasingly important for pastoral counselors to be aware of religious and spiritual differences between themselves and their clients. The reason for this exceeds merely having a common sense of one another's spiritual
or religious orientation; since pastoral counseling itself relies on God's presence and pathos, it is important for the therapist to either support the client in the case of similar religious and spiritual identifications, or to be able to encourage the client to seek a spiritual or religious mentor, such as a Rabbi or Cantor, with whom the client can consult for specific religious and spiritual queries.

Pastoral counselors may also employ bibliotherapy as a way for clients to increase their self-knowledge while learning about their cultural, religious, and cultural heritage. Classical Jewish authors such as Abraham Joshua Heschel, Emil L. Fackenheim, Judith Plaskow, Mordecai Kaplan, Martin Buber, and Chaim Potok are excellent recommendations for clients who are seeking material authored by Jews about Jews.

Throughout history, Jews have had to come face-to-face with their own potential destruction. Anti-Semitism has weakened and strengthened us: it has weakened us by bringing us to our knees, to a point of virtual extinction, yet hatred of Jews has also toughened us, for we have learned to fight for life, our lives and the lives of our culture. Judaism represents, in a sociological sense, survival of the fittest. And to be fit, one must include the physical, emotional and spiritual aspects of humanity. The faith and trust that Jews have in their own lives and God is only equal to the faith and trust that God has in the Jews.
Anti-Semitism is an undeniable facet of Jewish life. As such, whether or not a Jewish client chooses to focus on his or her Jewish identification, the cultural heritage which clients inherit as part of their birthright includes a long history of hatred and oppression -- the power of anti-Semitism in the world ought to be at least acknowledged at some point in the pastoral therapeutic process.
CHAPTER FOUR
THE PHYSICAL EXPERIENCE: A LIVING HELL

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil;

for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me (Psalms 23:4).

The Holocaust has had monumental effects on the world, the Jewish
culture, and each Jew individually. The Holocaust invites many negative
reactions and great sadness to those who engage in discussions around the event
and its manifestations. Rarely, though, do people look at the Holocaust as an
event full of material to inspire a life to be more fully lived. I suggest that by
applying a pastoral counseling-based, narrative-focused approach to the stories of
Jewish survival in Nazi death camps, it is possible to glean life from death.

Concentration camp stories are painful to listen to and read, in part, due to
the incomprehensibility and amorality which they reveal. They disturb us not
simply with violence and death, but with a nihilism that threatens our comfortable, safe, hopeful world view. Yet, while these stories explore areas of human suffering and oppression, they can also be regarded as a sign of the will of the Jewish spirit to survive.

Thus, it is possible, albeit difficult, to find hope and celebration inside the confines of the barbed wire fences. The pain and cruelty in the stories are obvious given the brutalization and tyranny of the concentration camps; the accompanying celebration and affirmations are more mysterious, more hidden and require a deeper journey, more faith to be uncovered.

This chapter will focus on the stories of those who lived through the hell of the concentration camps. I will allow these stories to speak for themselves; I will provide minimal commentary. As such, much of this chapter is direct quotations from victims turned survivors. The quotations are arranged in such a way as to convey the experiences of the Jews, starting out with their journey to the camps and continuing through death.

Further, although these stories belong to individual people, they are also part of our story, our history, our legacy as Jews. These stories are part of the world's archives, these stories are part of my story. Listen for the pain and destruction, the hope and fulfillment, the wisdom and innocence of the Jews'
world during the Nazi Holocaust.

Elie Wiesel poetically and horrifyingly describes the manner in which his life has been scarred by the Holocaust in his book *Night*. Regarding the community in which he and his family lived, Mr. Wiesel writes that, over time, "there were no longer any questions of wealth, of social distinction, and importance, only people all condemned to the same fate -- still unknown" (Wiesel, 1960, p. 19). The Wiesel Family's expulsion was Saturday, the day of rest, the Sabbath.

In time, a cattle wagon was his temporary home -- a place where "the world. . . was hermetically sealed [out]" (Wiesel, 1960, p. 22). The train journey began one's trip to hell. The Jews' home was the boxcar for days and weeks at a time -- life was confined to the small, crowded space.

The temperature started to rise, as the freight car was enclosed and body heat had no outlet. . . . The only place to urinate was through a slot in the skylight, though whoever tried this usually missed, spilling urine on the floor. . . . On top of everything else, a lot of people had vomited on the floor. We were to live for days on end breathing these foul smells, and soon we lived in the foulness itself. (Kessel, 1973, pp. 50-51)
As the train car neared the camps, a woman inside the car began to scream "Jews, listen to me! I can see a fire! There are huge flames! It is a furnace" (Wiesel, 1960, p. 23). No one wanted to acknowledge her words, her truth which would soon be the reality for many with her.

It would take days for the cattle-cars on which Jews from all over Europe rode to reach their final destinations -- Nazi-run concentrations camps. Whether rolling toward Auschwitz, Mauthausen, Theresienstadt, Bergen-Belson, Dachau, or a host of other torture-centers, the goal was the same -- the destruction of the Jews' body, mind, and soul.

The wagon doors were torn ajar. The shouts were deafening. S.S. men with whips and half-wild Alsatian dogs swarmed all over the place. Uncontrolled fear brought panic as families were ruthlessly torn apart. Parents screamed for lost children and mothers shrieked their names over the voices of the bawling guards. Everyone without exception lost both nerves and senses. (Unsdorfer, 1961, p. 72)

New arrivers at Auschwitz often saw corpses... strewn all over the road; bodies... hanging from the barbed-wire fence; the sound of shots rang in the air continuously.
Blazing flames shot into the sky; a giant smoke cloud ascended above them. Starving, emaciated human skeletons stumbled toward [them] uttering incoherent sounds. They fell down right in front of our eyes, and lay their gasping out their last breath.

(Newman, 1964, p. 18)

Interrogations by night and uncomfortable sleeping quarters ensured that prisoners did not sleep for long. After several days without sleep the prisoners were subject to increasingly severe hallucinations which were often further intensified by physical blows. The prisoners began to lose self-control. The captives personality began to split, to dissolve and to be transformed. The victim would lose the power to distinguish between reality and possibility. One lost touch with the self. All that remained was "a twitching point of reference between vague terror without an object, the pervasive feeling of imposed guilt and confusing hallucinations" (Roeder, 1958, p. II).

Another door is opened: here we are, locked in, naked, sheared and standing, with our feet in water -- it is a shower-room. We are alone. Slowly the astonishment dissolves, and we speak, and everyone asks questions and no one answers. If we are naked in a shower-room, it means that we will have a shower. If we have
a shower it is because they are not going to kill us yet. But why
then do they keep us standing. . . . (Levi, 1960, 99. 23-24)

Entering the world of the concentration camp was akin to arriving in a
foreign country -- the people were different, the smells were different, the
language was different, the rules were different. It meant entering a totally
different civilization. Yet, this civilization was not civil. Deception was honored
the way most societies revere great truths. Brutality, manipulation and
domination were the rule.

The inscription over the main gate at Auschwitz, "Arbeit Macht
Frei" [translated as "work will make you free"], was a cynical
falsehood, suggesting that the purpose of the concentration camp
was to reform inmates, who could earn their freedom through
work. In reality, the aim of the camps was to extract the maximum
amount of work from the prisoners, whatever the cost to health or
life, and to kill all Jewish inmates through overwork, starvation,
and gas. (Sign adjacent to picture of the iron gate of Auschwitz at
The United States Holocaust Museum Memorial, Washington,
D.C.)

At the same time, the irony of the concentration camp was that in its love
of efficiency and reliance on decorum, it was all too civilized. The camps were a
doppleganger of the movement toward mass production -- a factory-like system
orchestrated to kill millions of people. There was no room for life, nor flexibility,
nor change. Those who could adapt did, those who could not, died.

If the horror of the Holocaust has to do with the grand scale of the killing,
the psychic impact of the events is often best encapsulated in single, staccato
remembrances. Wiesel hits the emotional mark as he writes of "eight short,
simple words" that can devastate -- "Men to the left! Women to the right"
(Wiesel, 1960, p. 27). With these words, Elie was parted from his mother. He
would never see her alive again. Similarly drastic was the common "finger
game:"

None of us had the slightest idea of the sinister meaning behind
that little movement of a man's finger, pointing now to the right
and now to the left, but far more frequently to the left. . . . The
significance of the finger game was explained to us in the evening.
It was the first selection, the first verdict made on our existence or
non-existence. For the great majority of our transport, about 90
percent, it meant death. Their sentence was carried out within the
next few hours. . . . A hand pointed to the chimney a few hundred
yards off, which was sending a column of flame up into the grey sky of Poland. It dissolved into a sinister cloud of smoke.

"That's where your friend is, floating up to Heaven." (Frankl, 1959, pp. 30-31)

Over time, those who were "fortunate" enough to live for a period of time inside the walls of death learned that virtually everything had a purpose, even the garbage.

The wire to tie up our shoes, the rags to wrap around our feet, waste paper to (illegally) pad out our jacket against the cold.

We had to learn the art of sleeping with our head on a bundle made up of our jacket and containing all our belongings, from the bowl to the shoes. (Levi, 1960, p. 33)

The Nazis regulated virtually every aspect of daily living. One had to use certain washrooms, dress a certain way, make the "bed," smear machine grease on one's shoes, remove dried mud from clothing; in the evening one had to undergo lice control, and "on Saturday, have one's beard and hair shaved, mend or have mended one's rags; on Sunday, undergo the general control for skin diseases and the control of buttons on one's jacket, which had to be five" (Levi, 1960, p. 34).

Shoes took on extreme importance. They stood between a prisoner's
already cut and swollen feet and the frigid temperatures, not to mention the snow and ice which the prisoners had to walk and run through for twelve to fourteen hours at times. Every evening, "one [had] to go . . . to the ceremony of the changing of the shoes: this test[ed] the skill of the individual who, in the middle of the incredible crowd, [had] to be able to choose at an eye's glance one (not a pair, one) shoe, which [fit]. Once the choice [was] made, there [would] be no second chance" (Levi, 1960, p. 34).

The pieces of material which protected one's feet from frost bite took on holy meanings. It was as though one's shoes were the only thing between life and death; they became essential elements of survival and were highly revered. Some believed that their shoes were gifts from God, pieces of a "magic carpet" which would assist them through the frozen tundra which was walked daily on one's way to work.

The hours which one worked in the camps changed from season to season, most often depending upon the hours of light in any given day. So long as it was light, there was work to be done. Therefore, summer demanded much more work then winter. Although work continued during rain and snow, work was stopped at darkness or in the case of fog, for these conditions invited escapes.

Disease and illnesses were rampant in the death camps. Yet camp
hospitals became the evil twins of the life-preserving institutions of typical society. You had to be sick enough to require medical attention in order to earn the small respite of a hospital visit and at the same time you could not be sick enough to imply uselessness; this led to death. In many cases, prisoners would fake "wellness" in an effort not to be sent to the furnaces or gas chambers. Typhus was common in this environment of false health.

It [typhus] came to Bergen-Belsen in its most violent, most painful, deadliest form. The diarrhea caused by it became uncontrollable. It flooded the bottom of the cages, dripping through the cracks into the faces of the women lying in the cages below, and mixed with blood, pus and urine, forming a slimy, fetid mud on the floor of the barracks. (Perl, 1948, p. 171)

The toilets themselves were few, one to every thirty thousand was not unusual, and "the new prisoner's initiation into camp life was complete when he 'realized that there was no toilet paper'" (Des Pres, 1976, p. 54).

We stood in line to get into this tiny building [the latrine], knee-deep in human excrement. . . . We could rarely wait until our turn came, and soiled our ragged clothes, which never came off our bodies, thus adding to the horror of our existence by the terrible
smell which surrounded us like a cloud. The latrine consisted of a deep ditch with planks thrown across it at certain intervals. We squatted on these planks like birds perched on a telegraph wire, so close together that we could not help soiling one another. (Perl, 1948, p. 33)

The Kapos, prisoners who had special privileges, often assumed the Nazi mind-set in an attempt to survive. They would often "play" with the prisoners' physical need to use the toilet.

The favorite pastime of one Kapo was to stop prisoners just before they reached the latrine. He would force an inmate to stand at attention for questioning; then make him "squat in deep knee-bends until the poor man could no longer control his sphincter and 'exploded'"; then beat him; and only then, "covered with his own excrement, the victim would be allowed to drag himself to the latrine." (Des Pres, 1976, pp. 57-58)

The S.S. did their best to dehumanize the prisoners. Their goal often was to "depress the morale of the prisoners to the lowest possible level, thereby preventing the development of fellow-feeling or co-operation among the victims" (Weinstock, 1947, p. 92).
Everything in the concentration camp had a place and in every place there was something or someone. The goal of the camps was to encourage its prisoners to "die [in their] own filth, to drown in mud, in [their] own excrement. They wished to abase us, to destroy our human dignity, to efface every vestige of humanity, to return us to the level of wild animals to fill us with horror and contempt toward ourselves and our fellows" (Lewinska, 1968, pp. 41-42). The ability to survive in the camps was often dependent upon one's understanding that to die without dignity was exactly what the Nazis wanted.

Many Jews lived their lives honorably. They wanted their deaths to be honorable as well. "And if I did die in Auschwitz, it would be as a human being, I would hold on to my dignity. I was not going to become the contemptible, disgusting brute my enemy wished me to be. . . . And a terrible struggle began which went on day and night" (Lewinska, 1968, p. 50). Another survivor states that she "began to look around. . . and saw the beginning of the end for many woman [people] who might have had the opportunity to wash and had not done so, or any woman [person] who felt that the tying of a shoe-lace was wasted energy" (Weiss, 1961, p. 84).

Going through the motions of everyday life, despite one's feelings otherwise, became the key to survival. Those who stopped choosing to live soon
died -- choosing life is a foundational attitude towards personal growth and healing.

So we must certainly wash our faces without soap in dirty water and dry ourselves on our jackets. We must polish our shoes, not because the regulation states it, but for dignity and propriety. We must walk erect, without dragging our feet, not in homage to Prussian discipline but to remain alive, not to begin to die. (Levi, 1960, p. 36)

To wake up was a double-edged sword in the world of the concentration camp. On the one hand, to wake up was a goal; it meant that one survived another night, another day of torture and humiliation. On the other hand, to wake up also meant another day of torture and humiliation and another night to worry about whether or not one would wake up again.

Awakening is the hardest moment -- no matter whether these are your first days in the camp, days full of despair, where every morning you relive the painful shock, or whether you have been here long, very long, where each morning reminds you that you lack strength to begin a new day, a day identical with all previous days. (Szmaglewska, 1947, p. 4)
Viktor E. Frankl states that "the most ghastly moment of the twenty-four hours of camp life was awakening, when, at a still nocturnal hour, the three shrill blows of a whistle tore us pitilessly from our exhausted sleep and from the longings of our dreams" (Frankl, 1959, p. 51).

Dawn came on us like a betrayer; it seemed as though the new sun rose as an ally of our enemies to assist in our destruction. The different emotions that overcame us, of resignation, of futile rebellion, of religious abandon, of fear, of despair, now joined together after a sleepless night in a collective, uncontrolled panic. The time for meditation, the time for decision was over, and all reason dissolved into a tumult, across which flashed the happy memories of our homes, still so near in time and space, as painful as the thrusts of a sword. Many things were then said and done among us; but of these it is better that there remain no memory. (Levi, 1960, p. 16)

There were "greeters" in many of these death camps -- people who had been in that particular camp or a combination of camps for an extended period of time who took the opportunity to orient the new arrivers. The S.S. officers also seized the opportunity to instruct the new concentration camp citizens on the
nature of their new lives. An S.S. officer who seemed to possess "the odor of the Angel of Death" (Wiesel, 1960, p. 36) pestered Elie Wiesel and those within ear-shot, repeating to them they had arrived

in a concentration camp. At Auschwitz... Remember this...

Remember it forever. Engrave it into your minds. You are at Auschwitz. And Auschwitz is not a convalescent home. It's a concentration camp. Here, you have got to work. If not, you will go straight to the furnace. To the crematory. Work or the crematory -- the choice is in your hands. (Wiesel, 1960, p. 36)

The oppression which the Nazis caused manifested itself physically and spiritually; it was an oppression which could literally be felt. From the moment one entered the camps, intense concentration was needed in order to stay alive. If, even for one moment, one let down his or her guard, or allowed him- or herself to think and act as though it was over, death would often be hastened. The physical persecution was the first and most accessible form of death, yet it did not stop there. There was mental, emotional, social, spiritual, and religious oppression as well.

"The word 'furnace' was not a word empty of meaning: it floated on the air mingling with the smoke. It was perhaps the only word which did have any real
meaning here" (Wiesel, 1960, p. 36). One's thoughts, feelings, beliefs, 
benevolence and faith were arrested along with one's body. The goal was death. 
And to that end, the Nazis were willing to do nearly anything.

Many prisoners were subjected to scientific experiments. Some were 
exposed to extraordinary high pressure to see the effects of such pressure on the 
human mind; the result was often death -- one's mind would literally explode! 
Women's breasts were brutally removed at random for gruesome experimentations 
while those involved in the famous "twin study" were injected with lethal dosages 
of various chemicals to see its effects on the human body.

It was common for many prisoners to hit the "concentration camp 
circuit." People would be used until there was nothing left to do at one camp and 
then, so long as they could breath and move, they were transferred to another 
camp, perhaps to their last one -- one never knew. Along one such journey 
twenty bodies were thrown out of [the] wagon. Then the train 
resumed its journey, leaving behind it a few hundred naked dead, 
deprived of burial, in the deep snow of a field in Poland. . . We 
were given no food. We lived on snow; it took the place of bread. 
The days were like nights, and the nights left the dregs of their 
darkness in our souls. The train was traveling slowly, often
stopping for several hours and then setting off again. It never ceased snowing. All through these days and nights we stayed crouching, one on top of the other, never speaking a word. We were no more than frozen bodies. Our eyes closed, we waited merely for the next stop, so that we could unload our dead. . . One day when we had stopped, a workman took a piece of bead out of his bag and threw it into a wagon. There was a stampede. Dozens of starving men fought each other to the death for a few crumbs. The German workmen took a lively interest in this spectacle. (Wiesel, 1960, pp. 94-95)

A second or third camp was likely a final one. Many Jews died in the infamous gas chambers:

Prussic acid fumes developed as soon as Zyklon B pellets seeped through the opening into the gas chamber and came into contact with the air. Within a few minutes, these fumes agonizingly asphyxiated the human beings in the gas chamber. During these minutes horrible scenes took place. The people who now realized that they were to die an agonizing death screamed and raged and beat their fists against the locked doors and against the walls.
Since the gas spread from the floor of the gas chamber upward, small and weakly people were the first to die. The others, in their death agony, climbed on top of the dead bodies on the floor, in order to get a little more air before they, too, painfully choked to death. (Grobman and Landes, 1983, pp. 230-231)

Millions of children perished under the Nazi command; they were subjected to the same kind of cruelty and ruthlessness as the adults. Once a child had been separated from his or her mother, "caretakers" would then assume responsibility for these frightened children.

If the "caretaker" was kind, he would smash the child's head against the wall before throwing him into the burning ditch; if not, he would toss him straight in alive. There was no danger that small children would climb out of the ditch and would have to be dealt with all over again. Therefore, in Treblinka as in other places, children were often thrown live into the fire, or into the regular mass grave. The most important consideration was to conserve bullets or gas wherever possible. It was also believed that children did not die as easily and quickly from a bullet or from gas as adults did. Doctors had given some thought to this matter, and they had concluded that children have better circulation because
their blood vessels were not yet hardened. (Rosenberg and Meyers, 1988, p. 282)

Life versus death became the overriding principle in the concentration camps. One could not escape death while life was getting harder to find. Many of those who were still alive often thought of taking their own lives.

The thought of suicide was entertained by nearly everyone, if only for a brief time. It was born of the hopelessness of the situation, the constant danger of death looming over us daily and hourly, and the closeness of the deaths suffered by many of the others.... I made myself a promise, on my first evening in a camp, that I would not "run into the wire." This was a phrase used in camp to describe the most popular method of suicide -- touching the electrically charged barbed-wire fence.... The prisoner of Auschwitz, in the first phase of shock, did not fear death. Even the gas chambers lost their horrors for him after the first few days -- after all, they spared him the act of committing suicide. (Frankl, 1959, pp. 36-37)

Primo Levi articulated in his book Survival in Auschwitz that those in the camps "experienced in [themselves] a grief that was new for us, the ancient grief
of the people that has no land, the grief without hope of the exodus which is renewed every century" (Levi, 1960, p. 16).

Journeying into the world created by the Nazis broke down even the strongest person.

It is not possible to sink lower than this; no human condition is more miserable than this, nor could it conceivably be so. Nothing belongs to us any more; they have taken away our clothes, our shoes, even our hair; if we speak, they will not listen to us, and if they listen, they will not understand. . . . Imagine now a man who is deprived of everyone he loves, and at the same time of his house, his habits, his clothes, in short, of everything he possesses: he will be a hollow man, reduced to suffering and needs, forgetful of dignity and restraint, for he who loses all often easily loses himself. He will be a man whose life or death can be lightly decided with no sense of human affinity, in the most fortunate of cases, on the basis of a pure judgement of utility. It is in this way that one can understand the double sense of the term "extermination camp," and it is now clear what we seek to express with the phrase : "To lie on the bottom." (Levi, 1960, pp. 26-27)
In the concentration camps there was a kind of life after death, but instead of a religious bliss, it took the form of a passive revenge of the victims suffered by their murderers. The bodies of those exterminated became an enormous burden to the Nazis; by their deaths, Jews found a weakness in their oppressor's efficient machine.

The engineers of Hitler's Reich pushed utilitarianism to its obscene limits, organizing one final stage in their productive program. . . . The procedure was simple, unrestrained, simultaneously dispassionate, "rational," and craven. . . . Before women entered the "showers" their hair was shaved off for blankets and other war needs. Twenty-five carloads of hair packed in balls were sent from Treblinka alone. . . . After "processing", the victims' still-warm bodies were searched for concealed gems and valuables, then their gold teeth were extracted, and their body fat utilized -- even their bones, skin, and ashes were used for various "ends." (Rosenberg and Myers, 1988, pp. 282-283)

The dead bodies strewn around the camps were too numerous to deal with individually. As such, massive pits were dug, and bulldozers pushed the bodies through the dirt to their final resting places. The image of dangling bodies falling
through the air as they were left at the edge of their graves was a shocking sight even for the Nazis. If justice is dreadful, then some of the Nazis came close to getting what they deserved; they were given the assignment to "dig-up" the bodies as allied troops liberated the camps.

Words are at times inadequate; they fail and are limited in terms of how much they can express or adequately convey one's lived experiences. Thus, although I have tried to maximize the exact language of Holocaust survivors in this section, the very limits of language itself make it impossible for me or my non-survivor readers to "know" what happened to those who lived in the camps. I hope that in the recitation, in the hearing and listening and reading of such horrors, the hearer, listener and reader will realize that the concentration camp prisoners' struggle was not in vain, that it can be respected and honored without being completely understood. Additionally, it is a miracle that there are those who survived, those who today attempt to share their stories, their pain and their hope -- they represent the best of what it means to be a Jew, to be a survivor.

The moment-to-moment thoughts and feelings which many of the camp inmates must have experienced, by the sheer nature of their intensity and overwhelming emotional content, most assuredly remain private, silent within the
hearts and minds of those whose eyes saw their loved ones murdered, whose nose
smelled the stench from the crematoriums, whose skin was exposed to the frigid
snow slowly numbing their feet, whose ears took in the foreign tongue of the
Nazis and those who could taste death and evil each time they ate their meager
meals. Only those who were there could know what it was like.

One does not need to have spent weeks or months or years in the
concentration camps to have it effect his or her life forever. Elie Wiesel has
written a library of remembrances we all can share:

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has
turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven
times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget
the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into
wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget
those flames which consumed my faith forever. Never shall I
forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of
the desire to live. Never shall I forget those moments which
murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust.

Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as
long as God himself. Never. (Wiesel, 1960, p. 32)
Physical survival was the first step toward freedom and emancipation. The body, according to this writer, cannot fully live without the mind and the soul -- there must be a balance between the body, mind, and soul to fully survive, to live adequately. Pastoral counseling supports this claim. Clients who merely tell their stories without ever exploring emotions and spirituality are deprived of full self-knowledge. The stories of the Holocaust are certainly about abuse, oppression, pain and suffering; but they also about so much more; they speak to the strength, courage, flexibility and hope which enables victims to become survivors. As a pastoral counselor, it is my hope to assist clients who have had life-depriving experiences to look inside themselves, to find a place of hope and strength. The stories of the Holocaust symbolize life and death in addition to the choices that we each have in relationship to our lives. It is my intention to use these stories as I continue my work as a pastoral counselor. I hope to explore and illuminate the possibilities which life has to offer each of us.

APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

This chapter reveals a collection of narratives from those who experienced life under the Nazi regime. The pastoral counselor who works with Holocaust
survivors or their progeny must listen to and support these clients in the same way as he or she would approach any story told to him or her by another client. Certainly, the content of each client's narrative will differ, yet the therapeutic skills, the approach and demeanor of the therapist need to remain constant despite the material being disclosed.

The initial task of the pastoral counselor is to listen to the client's story. The skilled practitioner enables the client to tell his or her story and to feel understood, accepted and supported. The client's comfort level with the therapist also rests upon the environment which the therapist creates. It is crucial for clients to feel safe, especially clients who are dealing with extensive abuses or traumas. It is important that the client be in charge; the client must be told that he or she is in control of the therapy -- that it is up to him or her to determine the content and pace at which self-disclosure occurs. This helps to "establish a collaborative working relationship and therapeutic alliance with the therapist" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 124).

As a pastoral counselor, I have listened to stories of incest, child abuse, unexpected death, traumas of all sorts, and a host of other human experiences. There are times when I have felt overwhelmed by the amount of suffering and inhumanity in the world; the pain which so many people experience can be
overwhelming. At these times, I try to balance the tragedies of death with the joys of life. On one particular occasion, when I had been working in the hospital as the on-call chaplain, the night had been unusually busy and by the time I was ready to leave I had attended four deaths. I was numbed and exhausted. I called a friend for support; she suggested that I go to Labor and Delivery to see the new-born babies. I took her suggestion and found myself renewed and refreshed. Listening to the babies scream was like a call to life in contrast to the whispers of death I had listened to during the night. This was my way of gaining a different perspective, of taking care of myself. My emotional and spiritual sides were being cared for -- when I arrived home, I allowed my body to rest as well.

Listening to client stories is not only important for the therapist, but is equally, if not more important, for clients to tell their stories as a way of getting in touch with their history, feelings and thoughts. Although it may be overwhelming for clients to re-live their past by telling their stories, it can also be liberating and refreshing. It is a way for clients to recognize their own inner strength and courage in spite of the horror and abuse which they may have lived through. By telling their stories, clients have an opportunity to explore situations which, at one time in their lives, may have seemed overwhelming and impossible. The pastoral counselor can help clients choose how much power and energy they want to give
any particular situation or person; this empowers clients as they, perhaps for the first time, recognize their strengths, coping abilities and reliance on self and God as they walk through such painful experiences toward healing and recovery.

In addition to listening to the client's story, the therapist can help the client tell his or her story since it is difficult for many people to talk about events and situations which were abusive and ego-destructive. In such cases, it is helpful to explain to the client that this is a normal response to trauma. The inability to express feelings or tell family secrets is deeply rooted and protected by the mind until it is time to reveal such information, until he or she is cognitively, emotionally, physically and spiritually strong enough to handle such information. Although the therapist's role is not to break down the client's defenses, the therapist can assist the client to tell his or her story by using metaphoric descriptions.

Metaphors are figures of speech which express one truth (often a non-literal or non-physical experience) by comparing it to another, unrelated but communicative image. Metaphors forsake literal truth for an interpretation that succeeds on emotional terms. Clients who have been abused as children, for example, often describe themselves as being "emotionally neutered or frozen."

These descriptive words provide the therapist with clues how to proceed. Asking
the client what it is like to have his or her emotions frozen would be an appropriate follow-up question. Holocaust survivors, too, describe their lives as having been frozen or emotionally neutered. Their experiences virtually forced them to stop growing; the Nazis froze, sometimes literally, their prisoners. Captives became zombies, shut-off from their humanity in order to survive.

This chapter intentionally begins with the Jews' journeys to the concentration camp. The pain and suffering Jews experienced even before arriving at the camps is part of the abuse and oppression and therefore needs to be noted. Similarly, the dysfunctionality of many clients' families dramatically affect the client from his or her birth. It is crucial to explore the client's history in therapy. There may be clues which can explain and assist the client. For example, creating a genogram can help clients visualize their family on paper. Information which is often noted on such diagrams includes family history of depressive illnesses, addictive diseases and patterns of abuse and neglect; this information can provide evidence and support which may help the client move forward by understanding his or her past.

As I began to tell my story, the use of Holocaust images became crucial. At times, I could not express my feelings or thoughts, yet I was able to talk about being on a train heading in a direction of which I neither had control nor
knowledge. Visualizing huge bulldozers pushing hundreds of naked bodies into massive holes in the grounds accurately described my feelings of powerlessness. As my therapy continued, I was able to replace the image of the huge bulldozer with a picture of one of my brother's toddler toys, a colorful little play bulldozer. This new image was something which could be concretized. It now symbolizes the control and power which I possess; the image of the Holocaust bulldozer pushing my ancestors into their graves no longer has the same impact as it once had. Certainly, this image creates sadness, but I no longer feel like I am part of those forced to their final resting place by their oppressors and abusers. Certainly my story continues, and so does my use of Holocaust imagery. Today, I stand at the gates of the concentration camp. I am able to board the train which will lead to my freedom.

The pastoral counselor, in addition to listening to the client's story, must listen to the feeling tone of the narrative. Is there anger in the client's voice or is he or she scared or sad? The therapist needs to be attentive to the perspective in which the story is being revealed. Is the client talking in present tense or past tense? This provides clues to the counselor such as whether or not the incident which the client is talking about has been appropriately integrated or still an active issue needing attention. It is also important to listen for omissions in a client's
story -- is he or she not talking about something which appears obvious to the counselor? The therapist ought to identify central themes in each session as well as themes which repeat themselves. How the client talks about him- or herself reveals a great deal about the client's self-esteem. Additionally, clients who repeat themselves, telling the same story different ways are providing the therapist with clues. They are sending messages that it is important for the therapist to respond to this information (Kennedy and Charles, 1977, pp. 142-143).

Whether a client has experienced the Holocaust, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, military combat, rape or any form of victimization, the pastoral counselor must always strive to regard each client narrative uniquely and objectively. Eugene Kennedy and Sara Charles write that counseling is not a task to be accomplished but a relationship to be experienced; we are not solving a puzzle but trying to respond to persons. . . As we become accustomed to hearing into the narrative, we respond more freely and with more of our genuine selves. Counseling becomes less a stressful test and more a satisfying real-life relationship for clients and counselors alike. (Kennedy and Charles, 1977, p. 144)

After listening to a client's story, and determining that the Holocaust might
serve as an apt metaphor for the pain and suffering which the client has experienced, it is necessary to begin the task of interpreting. To understand and assimilate one's story, the pastoral counselor needs to emphasize to his or her client the slow process by which such intimate and personal self-knowledge is attained. The therapist can assist the client's explorations by viewing his or her story against psychological and theological backdrops. Simultaneously, the therapeutic relationship ought not be ignored nor compromised for the sake of interpretation. It is critical to remember that the sharing of one's life is sacred; hearing another's story is sacred as well.

To listen to the stories of the Holocaust is to look at the dimensions of human capabilities, our capacity to destroy and our capacity to survive. The process of awakening to one's oppression, to hanging on to one's dignity in the face of contemplating suicide, to facing life in the midst of death and to choosing life are elements of pastoral counseling. They are all areas to be explored in a client's journey of self-knowledge in the context of a healing and sustaining presence, God.

Ultimately, at the core of our Jewish heritage, we are an oral people, an enduring people, a divinely covenanted group. We must always remember where we have come from in order to know where we want to go. We must never forget our stories -- they must always be told.
Personal Reflection

This past spring (1995), I spent several days in Washington, D.C. My primary purpose was to visit The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

One cannot merely stroll through this museum; one experiences it physically, emotionally, and spiritually -- at least I did, as if, my admission ticket invited me into another world, a building erected to house evidence pertaining to the Holocaust. The museum's architecture is hauntingly cold and austere -- lots of natural stone, brushed silver elevators with very little light except the light which comes from the television screen above the elevator-rider's head showing a 30-second film displaying the living skeletons common to the concentration camps.

You do not tour the museum, you descend into it. The exhibit begins on the top floor which displays the historical, political evidence leading up to the Final Solution (actually, the name of the next floor). It was the middle floor, the floor dedicated to the concentration camp itself and the prisoners, that I had come to Washington, D.C. to experience, to witness, to shed my tears and to offer my prayers.

There was a cattle-car through which I passed and paused to reflect, to allow my body, mind, and soul to catch up with what I was experiencing. I saw
and smelled thousands and thousands of shoes -- shoes with a mildew-odor, shoes worn by those who entered the camps, the same shoes once worn by those who were cremated and offered-up as some sadistic sacrifice to God. I saw piles of razor parts, tea strainers, potato peelers, can openers, cutlery, scissors, toothbrushes -- each with its own narrative, each with a history. I stared at these piles trying to imagine who used them and under what conditions. I tried to be conscious of the prisoners of the camps -- the Soviet prisoners of war, the Gypsies, "the Jehovah's Witnesses, the homosexuals [who] were sent to concentration camps not to die, but as punishment and in order to change their behavior" (Berenbaum, 1993, p. 129). I stood in front of the replicas of the small wooden barracks which had housed eight hundred people.

My mind numbed progressively and I quickly realized that I had not a thing to say as I continued through the rest of the museum. I listened and read and look at hundreds, probably thousands of pictures. I sat a lot and contemplated my life and its connection to those who experienced the Holocaust.

◆◆◆◆◆

The past couple of years have been extremely growthful for me both in terms of my academic pursuits and my emotional and spiritual journeys. Along these journeys, I have been brought to new depths of pain and understanding, to
various awareness including my belief that I, too, am a concentration camp survivor, not physically nor literally, but symbolically. My theology, spiritually, cultural experiences, emotional life, and psychological make-up vastly resembles that of one who has survived the Holocaust experience.

Over the years, I began to regard my body as a prison, a concentration camp which had complete control over my being, my thoughts and feelings. As explored in my autobiography, at an early age I was exposed to death, in utero actually, and as such, "death" ran through my body even before I was born. My mother's womb became a place of nurturing and subjugation. I had no control over the amount of tears my mother wept when her mother died, nor did I have any say over how she responded. I was empowered by her strength and sensitivity while also being powerless and unable to help or respond.

My powerlessness over my body manifests itself in the form of various addictions, one being compulsive overeating. I eat as a way to soothe, to comfort, to fill the void within me that was never fully satisfied. I continue to question the possible connection between the starvation which was rampant in the Holocaust camps and my overindulgences. My eating disorder continues to gain control over my body -- it is oppressive and cruel. Addictive diseases, like the Nazis, seek ultimate control. To what end, one might ask? Until death.
Symbolism is very important to me. I often use images and metaphors as a way of understanding my life. I have created an image of myself being on a train destined for a concentration camp. My journey on this train has been (and, at times, continues to be) very painful. At one time in my life, suicide became a daily option as my depression deepened in proportion to the pain I inherited from my family and my culture. My shame was a powerhouse capable of self-destruction. I rode on the train for most of my life. Throughout, I employed the help of others to help me off the train. I was unable to disembark; perhaps it was not time, perhaps I was not ready for I realized that once I got off the train I would be in the camps, I would have to walk through my hell and the hell which was bestowed upon me. Several years ago, I found a pastoral counselor who would be my guide, my helper, my support. He was (and has been) willing to come aboard my train, to journey with me. I eventually arrived in the camps.

Like many of the stories in this chapter, I, too, was subjected to horrible tyranny. The difference between my story and those in this chapter is that rather than having a destructive power outside of me as was the case in the Holocaust, there was a destructive power inside me -- it affected me cognitively, spiritually, and physically. I have lived in the camps for a long time and am now getting
close, I sense -- I pray -- to leaving. I do not know what will be on the other side of the fence, outside of the camp. I am often scared.

Today, I am in a position to help others who find themselves on their trains and inside of their concentration camps. To a large extent, this is one of the major contributions I can make to my ministry, to my pastoral counseling. I am a wounded healer; I know pain and I know healing. I know what it is like to live in death and suffering, for I, too, have walked on the edge of the valley of death and, on occasion, have fallen into its abyss. I also have walked besides still waters. My ministerial goal is to accompany others whether besides still waters or in the valley of death.
THOU PREPAREST A TABLE BEFORE ME IN THE PRESENCE OF MY ENEMIES; THOU ANNOINTEST MY HEAD WITH OIL, MY CUP OVERFLOWS (PSALMS 23:5).

The previous chapter narrated the Jews' experiences under the Nazi regime. The physical, emotional and psychological abuse of the camps is similar to the physical, emotional and psychological pain which many of my clients have experienced. Although the circumstances which my clients have lived through may be quite different than the experiences of the concentration camp, their stories, too, include oppression, abuse, pain and suffering. The psychological ramifications of abuse, regardless of the situations under which one may have experienced the abuse, are quite similar. It is appropriate, therefore, to continue the exploration of the Holocaust as a way of gleaning insight, wisdom, and
direction from those who have lived through the tragedy of the Holocaust as a way of working with clients in the pastoral counseling setting.

There have been volumes of literature published on the psychological effects of the Holocaust. Many authors separate the psychological manifestations of those who were in the camps as children and those who were adults at the time of their deportation. Analysts have even spent a vast number of pages exploring the Holocaust's affect on second- and third-generation survivors of Holocaust victims, those whose parents and grand-parents were prisoners in the camps. This chapter will look broadly at the psychological effects of the Holocaust on the individual survivor as well as the Jewish culture. I shall continue to use my personal journey through this material as a guide.

The matter between life and death under the Nazi regime was, at times, considered pure luck; "chance played a major role in individual survival" (Grobman and Landes, 1983, p. 236). The components which fostered a person's survival are virtually incalculable, perhaps even unknown. Factors such as age, pre-morbidity (pre-disposition to emotional/psychological illness), sex, family heritage, appearance, faith commitments and intelligence are just a few of the elements that could either increase or decrease one's chance for survival.
Although the Nazis were grandiose, their visions large and their drives tremendous, their thinking was simplistically "black and white." In this way, the psychology of the oppressors was one dimensional and short-sighted. The camps themselves represented the psychology of this Nazi ideology.

Psychological break down began even before a person arrived at the camp. His or her trip to the camps, as described in the previous chapter, was violent and threatening thereby immediately shattering one's basic need for safety and security. The Nazi goal was to reduce the defenses of their prisoners, thereby challenging their ability to self-protect. Physically, the body was deprived adequate food and water which decreased a person's psychological strength. Emotionally, shame and embarrassment ensued from the strip-searches for new arrivals at the gates of these death and destruction factories, while spiritually, God seemed to be absent.

Previous to deportment, many Jews entered into a state of denial. They denied that their lives had already been drastically changed and that additional change would indeed occur. Some Holocaust commentators, such as Walter Laqueur, believe that many of the Warsaw Ghetto inhabitants might have saved themselves had denial not held sway as long as it did. In addition to the Jewish community being in a state of denial, the world itself seemed to be in a state of
denial regarding the atrocities which were occurring in Europe. Denial, whether individual or universal, reduces one's ability to adequately respond. This was a "significant impediment in the process of mobilizing help" (Luel and Marcus, 1984, p. 199).

The psychological strain which the prisoners had to endure was monumental. "The arrival and the first brutal hours at the camps caused the newcomers to be shocked, dazed, listless, and apathetic. After separation from loved ones, many felt intense despair, abandonment, and isolation. Many were alone for the first time, creating a sense of hopelessness" (Grobman and Landes, 1983, p. 237). Imagine a mother being separated from her son. The emotional pain of such a forced sacrifice, a crime in the eyes of the Jews, would likely be so severe that one's mental anguish would hasten the destruction of one's body, thereby reducing the chance for survival.

Emotional unavailability was both a blessing and a curse: the blessing was that one would no longer be available to his or her psychological pain; the curse being that if one was not available emotionally, his or her chances for survival would be compromised tremendously. It was essential that one's body and mind be intact.

The changes the inmates experienced in the camps were swift and
massive. Some responded by denial -- refusing to fully comprehend what was taking place. Many had difficulty making decisions or pursuing whatever severely limited actions they could on their own behalf. The spiritual and physical violence, the perpetual fear, and poor physical conditions of the inmates contributed for many to a lack of self-care or self-worth. In extreme cases, one became a musselman, a man whose eyes were dead and who was a walking corpse. (Grobman and Landes, 1983, pp. 237-238)

The concentration camps were designed to destroy the whole person, including one's mind. The shear incomprehensibility of the concentration camps was often enough to split the mind, to cause one to go crazy. When this would happen, the Nazis could totally dominate and control every move without resistance. At the same time, those who were able to maintain their sanity quickly realized that their lives were in the hands of their oppressors and, as such, to survive, one needed to depend on the Nazis while also maintaining their own psyche.

"Psychic shock enveloped those who newly arrived at the death camps as they faced the vestiges of humanity of the prisoners who had preceded them"
At the beginning of the war, very few people knew where they were being taken. Once they arrived, once the rumors became reality, their minds often became paralyzed, shocked. As is common with high-level shock, easily triggered by one's arrival at his or her own death grounds, apathy began to set in. Indifference, passivity and lethargy were intrapersonal enemies -- enemies, which some would say, had more power than the Nazis themselves. The mind is exquisitely balanced, in fact both the mind and the body [and soul] seek a balance known as homeostasis. The Holocaust, without a doubt, raped its victims of their ability to maintain psychological homeostasis.

Martin Wangh suggests that "recovery from [shock and apathy] could occur only by means of psychic splitting. This meant that some form of 'denial,' 'psychic numbing,' 'derealization,' or 'depersonalization' took over mind and/or feeling" (Luel and Marcus, 1984, p. 197). The mind is incredibly resilient. We have a natural unconscious ability to "turn off" that which is too painful, that which is life depleting. It is almost as if the mind says to the body, "you cannot know [cognitively] this [information] and live, so it is necessary that I [the mind] block-out certain thoughts and feelings."

Viewing the Holocaust as a global event, the world seemed to split, or put out of its mind, the horrors which were occurring in Eastern Europe. Similarly,
prisoner needed to separate themselves from their pain and the pain of others, to disregard the overwhelming threat of death for the sake of life. The person who was able to look beyond the day-to-day torture, employed the mechanism of splitting -- a psychological defense mechanism which saved the minds and souls of many people in the death camps.

A person needs some sense of self-esteem to survive. The ability to maintain one's self was difficult given the conditions in which prisoners lived under the Nazi regime. One's mindset needed to always be focused on survival, on the future, while also living in today. As such, a person needed to take control whenever it was possible. One way in which a person could gain control and thereby add to his or her psychological survival was to remain as physically clean as possible.

Another way in which people often maintained their desire to continue to live in the midst of such death was to contract with another human being. The strategy was to develop a relationship, whether personal or business, established for the sole, or perhaps soul, purpose of keeping each other alive. Sometimes this took the form of physical help, such as sharing food, while most often it was a matter of igniting one another's sense of humanity, sense of vulnerability, and desire to survive.
At the same time, other inmates decided to make partners with the enemy. Some female inmates would "allow" themselves to be raped so as to earn indulgences and therefore, hopefully, forestall death. There were risks to this type of survival technique; other prisoners often regarded such collaborators as traitors. Yet staying alive at any cost, even by sleeping with the enemy, was a shared goal.

Victor Frankl asserted that a number of inmates were aided in their survival through a belief in someone or something which existed outside of their immediate circumstances. This person might imagine living on the other side of the camp's fences. They might envision their home, their wife's cooking, their husband's handiwork, and their children playing in the front yard. There is a story of a prisoner who, while looking through the electrically-charged fence, saw a flower several feet beyond the barbed wire. The flower became a symbol of hope and promise. The sight of something alive which was not under the tyranny of the Nazis provided enough evidence that life, in its most basic form, did indeed still exist.

Those who had lived a solid and active life before their experiences in the camps tended to fair better then those who were not previously as committed to themselves or their communities. Those who were connected strongly to a group, as opposed to being more detached and individualistic, increased their chances for
survival. A sense of love and belonging is crucial to human survival. As such, those who had this sense of security prior to their capture, were better equipped psychologically to handle the horror and destruction which they would soon face.

Religious Jews, Zionists, and Communists often seemed to survive better than assimilated Jews. The individual who possessed a religious or political ideology often resisted Nazi horror through placing his experiences within a context. In contrast, the assimilated, humanistic intellectual was unable to do so. He suffered the physical hardships of the camp worse than even the nonintellectual inmate, as he saw his belief in man collapse. Jean Améry, the Western European intellectual, in reviewing his own experiences in Auschwitz, states that: "... whoever is, in the broadest sense, a believing person, whether his belief be metaphysical or bound to concrete reality, transcends himself. He is not the captive of his individuality; rather he is part of a spiritual community that is interrupted nowhere, not even in Auschwitz."

(Grobman and Landes, 1983, p. 239)

Competition is part of life even in the midst of death. Competition, in its healthiest sense, can be considered a psychological construct which encourages a
person to protect and take care of oneself, to strive for the best, and in the case of
the concentration camps, to survive. The reality in the camps was that each
person needed to look out for themselves. If they did not, their deaths seemed
quickly imminent.

Competition in the camps often raised serious ethical concerns: If one
person was to live then who was to die? This question impacted one's
psychological state. For instance, whenever one person's name, or more precisely,
his or her number, was erased from the death lists, another name or number would
be added. This meant that for every life saved on any given day another life was
taken. Who was to be killed or was to remain alive another day became an
intense quandary for virtually every prisoner. Those who were chosen to be killed
immediately would often experience emotions ranging from rage to apathy; those
who were given another day of life often felt guilty, yet grateful. The place of
common understanding regarding one's fate of death was in the feeling of
powerlessness; whether one's death date was today, tomorrow, or next month,
each prisoner experienced being out of control, feeling powerless.

The healthy self is cohesive, vigorous, and harmonious. Cohesion refers
to the mind's ability to adequately communicate within itself in a healthy fashion,
i.e., the experience of ideas and feelings without the need for any significant
internal mechanisms to defend against pain and/or trauma. Vigor refers to the mind's ability to allow free-flow of thoughts. Harmony refers to the balance which the whole human body seeks. The concentration camp prisoner was denied cohesion, vigor, and harmony. The victim's mind was virtually taken over by the Nazis, and unless one learned techniques to avert such domination, the prisoner most likely would perish soon after imprisonment. The self is further supported or encouraged toward health by empathetically relating to others. The ability to maintain balance and cohesion by interacting with other people who are in similar situations promotes a healthier self, and therefore a healthier mind.

In Buchenwald... it was a principle to depress the morals of prisoners to the lowest possible level, thereby preventing the development of fellow-feeling or co-operation among the victims... How much self-esteem can one maintain, how readily can one respond with respect to the need of another, if both stink, if both are caked with mud and feces?... Within the camp world, all visible signs of human beauty, of bodily pride and spiritual radiance, were thereby to be eliminated from the rank of the inmates... And here is a final, vastly significant reason why in the camps the prisoners were so degraded. This made it easier for
the SS to do their job. It made mass murder less terrible to the murderers, because the victims appeared less than human. (Des Pres, 1976, p. 61)

Holocaust prisoners were exposed to an aura of death which seemed to permeate the earth, the air, and the mind at all times. Dr. Renée Clair Fox, Professor of Sociology at Barnard College, calls this type of bystander phenomenon a "disaster syndrome." She explains that "witnessing a prolonged murder... [destroys one's] feeling that the world [is] a rational, orderly place... The result... was an affect denial that caused [one] to withdraw psychologically from the event by ignoring it" (Luel and Marcus, 1984, p. 200).

An exploration of object relations theory in connection with the Holocaust reveals interesting insights and contemplations. Sheldon Cashdan's book, Object Relations Therapy: Using the Relationship, thoroughly and simply explores object relations theory. Without going into tremendous detail regarding this particular therapy and its nuances, the study of "objects" in object relations theory can provide additional insight into the psychology of the Holocaust victims inside the concentration camp.

Cashdan states that "the 'objects' in object relations are human
beings. . . . These relations may be internal or external, fantasied or real, but they essentially center around interactions with other human being. . . . An object does not necessarily have to be human or even animate. . . . An object needs only to possess a potential for discharging energy" (Cashdan, 1988, p. 3). As related to prisoners confined in the concentrations camps, the objects, or the human beings which possessed the highest possible "potential for discharging energy," were the Nazis (Cashdan, 1988, p. 3). As such, the transmuting internalization, the process by which external object are transformed into inner relational configurations, or that which the Nazis projected or cast upon the Jews became the Jews' internal reality. For example, the prison guard [the principle object in this object relations configuration] who continually referred to Jews as worthless, being that which possessed the power, slowly, usually unconsciously, seduced the prisoner to take in the message that he or she is worthless.

Cashdan employs the works of Melanie Klein, Heinz Kohut, Margaret Mahler and others throughout his discussion of object relations therapy. The developmental views of these theorists is clearly evident in their works and in Cashdan's development of their precepts. Accordingly, splitting is believed to begin the moment a child is born. Since the result of the oppression and domination subjected upon the prisoners was to reduce them merely to bodily
manifestations, their emotional components were minimized. They were reduced to their most infantile state. As such, the world became for the concentration camp prisoner a primitive experience, "satisfying [or] unsatisfying: [Whereby] fullness is good, emptiness bad; warmth is good, cold bad; to be held is good, to be denied is bad" (Cashdan, 1988, p. 34).

Splitting, as an unconscious form of self-protection, separates a person from painful or stressful situations. The human mind can only handle so much before it, too, needs to shut down and rest. In this sense, splitting becomes a form of self-preservation. The overwhelming brutalization experienced by the Holocaust victims needed to somehow be forgotten; splitting allowed the victim's mind to take this information and store it in the his/her unconscious until he/she was physically, emotionally and spiritually strong enough to handle such information.

Splitting can also be a consciously implemented. In the case of imaginal splitting, a person literally forces him/herself outside the stressful situation by cognitively creating places of safety. Since so many people were separated from their families, many people continued their lives with their families in their own minds. This allowed the person to continue living the life which he or she once lived. The image of one's family, the thoughts of one's favorite food simmering
on the stove, the remembered sounds of children playing are all forms of imaginal splitting. This journey inward saved the minds of many Holocaust victims.

Donald Meichenbaum, Ph.D., has published an extensive and practical guidebook entitled *A Clinical Handbook/Practical Therapist Manual for Assessing and Treating Adults with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)*. In this manual, Dr. Meichenbaum has compiled an immense amount of data; so much so that it is likely to overwhelm even the most skilled practitioner. "The topics... covered are very 'heavy' and can be depressing for they reflect the 'evil' side of human nature" he prefaces his work by warning, yet he finds that "the [Holocaust] conveys the remarkable [stories] of courage and human resilience" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 3).

Meichenbaum points out that the person who was able to metaphorically walk out of the concentration camp was subjected to a double-bind -- he or she was both victim and survivor. By the mere nature of such a dichotomy, the victim/survivor, in order to live, mostly likely had to split him- or herself as offered by object relations theory. Often, the notion of a "concentration-camp self" and a prior self can be too difficult of a reframe for the mind to make. Consequently, the person may have learned that in order to cope, he or she had to split, or defend against the possibility of ever getting hurt again.
Meichenbaum organizes a victim/survivor's experiences into various categories. They include: response categories, symptomatic responses and phenomenological responses (Meichenbaum, 1994, pp. 34-39).

**RESPONSE CATEGORIES**

**Emotional:** Shock, disbelief, anger, rage, terror, guilt, grief, vulnerability, irritability, helplessness, fears, anxiety, depression, sadness, disgust, hostility, despair, [detached, estranged] and anguish. Fear of abandonment, fear of being alone, and wary of others [are common].

**Cognitive:** Impaired concentration, confusion, self-blame, disorientation, intrusive thoughts, avoidance, decreased self-esteem, lowered self-efficacy, and heightened fear of losing control.

**Biological:** Fatigue, sleeplessness (insomnia), nightmares, hyperarousal, startle response, and psychosomatic complaints. . . [Traumatized individuals tend to] experience less time in deep sleep, have more awakenings, more abnormalities during rapid eye movement sleep periods and spend less total time
sleeping . . . increased sleep movements, respirations, and heart rate.

Behavioral: Avoidance, alienation, social withdrawal, increased stress within relationships (marital relationships suffer -- less able to trust and be intimate, substance abuse, sensation-seeking behavior, vocational impairment, regressed behavior . . . decrements in task performance . . . avoidance of feelings (numbing), avoidance of knowledge of the event (amnesia), avoidance of behavior (phobic response) and avoidance of communication.

SYMPTOMATIC RESPONSES

Dissociation: Dissociation may take various forms including the survivors of the traumatic event feeling automatically detached from the traumatic event as it happens. They may see events from a distance, or the scenario of events may seem slowed down, or they may feel removed from events altogether. The impact of the trauma "splits off" from their sense of
Anxiety: self resulting in the lack of integration of thoughts, feelings, and experiences into the stream of consciousness. Traumatized victims may detach themselves from overwhelming fear, pain, and helplessness. More specifically, this detachment may be evident as a form of:

a) stupor -- [appearing] dazed [as if in a] state of shock
b) derealization -- feeling as though one's surroundings are unreal and dreamlike
c) depersonalization -- feeling detached or like an "automaton," an observer of one's mental and bodily responses
d) sense of numbing -- suppressing emotional response
e) amnesia of the event

Anxiety: Hyperarousal, difficulty concentrating, hypervigilant, exaggerated startle response.

Somatic symptoms of muscle tension, restlessness,
palpitations, tachycardia, fatigue, jumpiness, and
insomnia.

PHENOMENOLOGICAL AND NARRATIVE RESPONSES:

Traumatic events can "violate" or "shatter" basic
assumptions and beliefs such as:

a) The belief in one's own invulnerability ("It
can't happen to me.")

b) The belief that events are orderly,
predictable, controllable and fair ("Why did
it happen to me?; The world in not what I
thought it was.")

c) The belief that life is meaningful

d) The assumption that one is a worthy person
("I am not what I thought I was.")

Phenomenological changes are often reflected in the individual's account
of what happened. In their narratives, the following categories are often raised:

Foreseeability: Could the Holocaust have been
realistically anticipated?

Controllability: Could the Holocaust have been
modified through actions on the part of others?

Culpability and Self-blame: Could I have behaved differently?
Am I responsible? Why didn’t I get out?

Phenomenological inquiries are often the most frustrating sort of questions for they have no definite answer. To question the foreseeability, controllability, or culpability, for example, of the Holocaust raises more questions, more doubt, and more misunderstanding. It is precisely out of these sorts of questions that Victor Frankl developed his theory of logotherapy.

Frankl was (is) a Holocaust victim/survivor. Although his experiences in the camps were similar to millions of other stories of dehumanization and anti-Semitism, the manner in which Frankl used such experiences was quite different. Logotherapists understand that "the critical issue for humankind is not what happens, but how one views or thinks about what happens" (Ivey et al., 1993, 311). Frankl employed the power of his own thinking to empower himself to rise above the power of the Nazis. His own internal resources allowed him to re-work his thinking, to find positive meaning in suffering. Frankl's book *Man’s Search for Meaning* is compelling, insightful and full of pain and hope. The ability to
make meaning out of a situation which makes no logical sense is admirable and awe-inspiring. Each time I read this book, I am amazed by the strength of the human body, mind and soul. The ability to survive such indescribable situations and then take the time to describe how he survived is remarkable.

The key to logotherapy is to employ one's own cognitive powers, to focus one's "attention away from the immediate situation and toward positive relationships with the world. . . . to find meaning and purpose in life -- and then to act on those meanings" (Ivey et al., 1993, pp. 312-313). Taking action is critical in therapy, and logotherapy mandates one to move forward, but only after one's story has been heard and the victim/survivor knows in his heart that he or she has been heard. It is important to listen to how people make sense of the world, to understand their worldview.

Logotherapy attempts to provide cognitive reframes -- new ways of seeing the same situation. It is important to note that logotherapy does not attempt to dismiss or negate a person's experiences, but rather it encourages one to look at other venues. "Although what is past is past, one can modify and change the way one thinks about it. Thinking of the past negatively is making a 'decision for the past. . . ." Frankl reminds us that some people must live with impossible situations and impossible memories" (Ivey et al., 1993, p. 316).
This was the lesson I had to learn in three years spent in Auschwitz and Dachau: those most apt to survive the camps were those oriented toward the future, toward a meaning to be fulfilled by them in the future. . . . But meaning and purpose were only a necessary condition of survival, not a sufficient condition. Millions had to die in spite of their vision of meaning and purpose. Their belief could not save their lives, but it did enable them to meet death with heads held high. (Frankl, 1985, p. 37)

Frankl’s discussion in *Man’s Search for Meaning* eventually turns toward more existential, philosophical directions. He explores the will to meaning, existential frustration, and the essence of existence -- topics which will be addressed in the following chapter on theology.

The person imprisoned in the Nazi camps experienced physical, emotional, spiritual, moral, and religious anguish. The body's natural defense against such affliction and grief is to turn inward, to use up one's internal resources when little or no resources are available externally. The body begins to feed on itself when it is not being given enough food from outside. One's mind and affective receptor sites shut down and defend first against outside forces and then, over time, turn inward and begin to work against itself. In one sense, a person becomes both his own best friend and his own worst enemy.
Ultimately, one's survival depends on his or her sense of spirituality. The ability to tap into a person's most internal source of energy was often the deciding factor between life and death in the camps. The following chapter will explore the theological and spiritual components of the concentration camps while illuminating the bigger picture of the concentration camp experience.

APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

The Holocaust provides a road-map which can be navigated by the pastoral counselor and his or her Jewish clients. The most significant place to start is in the present, for the most important lesson may be that each client has survived his or her own personal Holocaust. In addition, the psychological effects which many clients experience as a result of their own Holocaust parallels the psychological journeys which many concentration camp prisoners experienced. Meichenbaum's insights, object relations theory and Frankl's logotherapy further illuminate the usefulness of exploring the Holocaust and its metaphors.

People seek counseling for a variety of reasons -- some come for guidance, others come for support, while still others come for clarification and assistance as they make peace with their past. Pastoral counselors help clients explore their
past in a spiritual context. Examining one's past can be difficult and arduous. It often requires a tremendous commitment from both the client and the therapist.

Clients who explore traumatic issues involving abuse, oppression and self-destruction are often psychologically fragmented and confused at the beginning of therapy -- this is to be expected and honored. Those who were involved in the concentration camps were torn apart both externally and internally. This devastation can still be discovered in second- and third-generation survivors. The Nazis, like many of my client's abusers, operated secretively and relied on the innocence of their victims. The inability to share what was happening caused the victim to experience a tremendous psychological strain. A sense of powerlessness often ensued.

Powerlessness, or loss of control, deprives one of his or her freedom of choice; it deprives one of his or her humanity. Loss of freedom slowly eats away at a person's self-esteem. The victim no longer sees him- or herself as somebody worth saving, someone worth fighting for. The ability to control a situation which seems virtually uncontrollable, from childhood sexual abuse to concentration camp imprisonment, is limited at best.

Like Holocaust victims, people who have been abused or oppressed tend to turn inward in an effort to protect their sanity. The body's ability to defend
itself is phenomenal. There are times when it is important for the body to protect either mind, body or spirit. If a client's psychological safety had been comprised, as was often the case in the Holocaust, it is crucial that the counselor respect the body's natural defense mechanisms; he or she must trust that when the client is strong enough to manage the pain and memories psychologically, they will be revealed.

Abusive experiences, whether in concentration camps or one's childhood home, can trigger the on-set of various psychological challenges such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Donald Meichenbaum's vast research and clinical experience provides the pastoral counselor with insights for dealing with PTSD. The therapist's ability to respect, hold and nurture the story and experiences of his or her client is crucial. If this is done empathetically and with care, the client will hopefully experience a sense of being supported by the therapist leading ultimately to empowerment.

Empowerment is the client's ability to take the energy from his or her past and transform it into life by living fully in the present moment while planning for the future. This process is long and draining; empowerment is not always achieved even after years of therapy. This is sometimes the consequence of oppression and abuse -- some victims remain victims thereby never achieving the
freedom granted to those who physically, emotionally, and spiritually survive and thrive.

Rituals are often part of pastoral counseling. Similar to religious practices, such as lighting candles on the Sabbath, wearing a tallit or standing under the chupah during a wedding ceremony, "rituals are about symbols and metaphors" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 545). These practices are part of Jewish tradition and therefore become symbols of Judaism. Further, practices such as wearing a "skull cap" or standing under a chupah are objects which assume holy meanings for they represent God's presence and His promise to protect those who choose to live life as a Jew. Although wearing a "skull cap" or a tallit and lighting Sabbath candles were forbidden in the concentration camps, the memory and thought of such rituals enabled the prisoner to continue to partake in Jewish life. Jews continued to recite prayers and memorized portions of Jewish holy books such as the Bible or Talmud as a way of keeping in touch with the words and writings of their ancestors. These practices provided prisoners with opportunities to connect with their Jewish heritage, thereby maintaining their hope, faith and reverence in God.

Holidays and other days of significance are also forms of ritual: the celebration of one's birth at his or her birthday party, the explosive sounds of fireworks on the Fourth of July commemorating freedom and independence and
lighting Chanukah candles for eight days signifying miracles and the presence of
God. Rituals serve several important psychological functions including: (1) opportunities for public expressions of shared grief and mutual support; (2) reassurance that disaster victims are remembered; (3) a recapitulation and an interpretation of disaster experiences; and (4) a degree of closure on a painful period (Vernberg and Vogel, 1993, p. 496).

It would be wise for a pastoral counselor working with survivors to incorporate ritual as part of the therapeutic process. For example, if a counselor was working with a person whose sibling died in an airplane crash, it could be helpful for the therapist to encourage family members to attend a public memorial service in which the community could acknowledge the loss and recognize the pain and suffering which the family might be experiencing. An event such as a public memorial service could signify and reassure the family that his or her loved one did not die in vain and that he or she shall be remembered. Further, this one event would bring together other families experiencing a similar loss, thereby providing an opportunity for those in grief to provide support and comfort to one another. Finally, a memorial service could be the beginning of closure which is part of the grieving process.

The Jewish observance of Yom Hashoah, translated from Hebrew as
Holocaust Day, commemorates those who perished under the Nazi regime. Although this observance is not considered by many Jews to be a High Holy Day like Yom Kippur, its meaning and symbolism is significant -- it not only provides a day for each of us to reflect on the horror and human loss associated with the Holocaust, but it symbolizes the strength of the Jewish community to survive, to learn from the past in an effort to be grateful for today while planning for tomorrow.

Visiting a cemetery or writing a good-bye letter to someone who has died are also ritualistic exercises which can be offered by the pastoral counselor to his or her clients who are dealing with loss and grief issues. The pastoral counselor eventually works toward encouraging clients to develop daily rituals of self-care. For example, encouraging a client who presents with a depressive illness to get out of bed each morning, make his or her bed and take a shower teaches the client basic forms of self-management which eventually become routine thereby aiding the treatment of depression.

The line between psychology and theology in the context of pastoral counseling can become muddled, especially when working with images and metaphors. The use of images such as heaven and angels as well as expressions like "being on the cross" and "mad as hell" are commonly used by clients during
therapy, thereby opening the door to a more religious world not completely captured in purely secular images and expressions.

Elie Wiesel believes that memories ought not be forgotten, even such painful memories as his months in the concentration camps, for memories must be contained and sanctified -- "they are a bridge from the past to the present to the future" (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 548). The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Vietnam memorial, and President John F. Kennedy's eternal flame at Arlington Cemetery are powerful examples of symbols which take one on a journey from the present to the past back to the present and hopefully on toward the future. In the case of the Holocaust Museum, I believe that while reflecting on the past, one can gain some sense of how to prevent such horrors in the future. Returning to crucial moments of the past and carrying their importance into the future are critical and healing aspects of therapy and life itself.

Pastoral counselors can help clients develop or create their own rituals. In one sense, this thesis is a personal ritual. I have chosen to look at various aspects of my life which have been extremely painful -- Jewish self-identification and anti-Semitism -- and through the process of sharing my story, which includes exploring the demons in my closets, I have discovered ways of making meaning out of my pain. This has led me to ministry in the form of pastoral counseling. My goal, therefore, in using metaphors, rituals and symbols is "to 'remember,' to
'work through,' 'come to terms with,' 'resolve,' 'find meaning,' and 'move on'” (Meichenbaum, 1994, p. 547).

The Holocaust provides uncountable images and metaphors which can be used by the pastoral counselor -- images such as: being locked on a cattlecar (metaphor for feeling stuck and bound), walking into the "showers" (metaphor for uncertainty and willingness) and the flower outside of the barbed wire fence (metaphor for life and hope). In addition to listening, interpreting, training, coaching, educating, supporting, and witnessing, therapists are also in the position not only to help their clients tell their stories, but more importantly help them to re-construct new narratives, new ways of approaching their stories by meaning-making, and, in spite of their pain and destruction, creating new ways of living.
Pastoral Counseling demands a spiritual presence. While some clients bring their own notions of God, religion and spirituality into the therapeutic environment, others may have never addressed such issues. The pastoral counselor must be sensitive to clients with different backgrounds.

Many of the stories discussed in therapy are sad and incomprehensible, like the Holocaust itself. These narratives demand psychological attention as well as spiritual explorations. The questions and confusion which result from events such as the Holocaust and other acts (incest, rape and death) often relate to
fairness. Questions such as "Why is this happening?" and "Do I deserve this?" and "Why do bad things happen to good people?" are common in the therapeutic arena. Certainly, a discussion of the Holocaust and its metaphorical implications which can applied to other cases of abuse and trauma in the context of pastoral counseling is demanded and required. This chapter will therefore focus on the theological and spiritual aspects of the Holocaust.

Theology literally translates from the Greek as "the study of God." What exactly is one studying when one studies God? His or Her existence? His or Her strength? His or Her actions? His or Her composition? I suppose only God knows (pun intended), yet the reality is that the list of questions could go on ad infinitum and still not yield a conclusive understanding of what it means to study theology.

My academic experiences at Loyola permitted me to study Scripture, ethics, morality, and religion -- all under the discipline of theology. Surely, theology includes these areas, yet it is more expansive than any specific list. Theology, unlike some liberal arts disciplines or behavioral sciences, invites one to go on a journey. The energy which propels such a journey is what I have come to believe is the presence of God.

I, like many others, employ anthropomorphism as a way of describing
God, as a way of companioning with God in a manner that makes human sense in much the same way that one travels with a friend. There have been times in my life when God has sought me, for example, during my experiences at Loyola. Other times, I have sought God, times when I have felt lost and confused. My journey toward God and with God, as explored earlier in this paper, has not come easy. There have been times when I never knew God; there have been times when I questioned God's presence in my life, and there have been times when I have felt His manifestations in my life beyond a shadow of a doubt.

The people of the concentration camps surely struggled with their relationships with God. If there is a God, many victims of the Holocaust asked: "Why did such a tragedy happen?" and "How could God allow such devastation and oppression, especially when subjected upon the people with whom He first chose to establish a covenant"? Of course, there are no answers, or at least no satisfactory answers. To ask more questions appears to be the only movement one can make, for to continually seek a response to questions such as these, seems virtually meaningless, or at the very least, endlessly frustrating.

To those who say that God was not present in the concentration camps, I say look closer. Listen to the prayers of those who walked to their deaths. Listen to the cries of an innocent baby as he is torn away from his mother. God was
certainly present, not in a way that we might want Him or Her to be present, not as protector, not as a benevolent fate caster. Yet, He or She was there in the minds and the hearts of each person. He or She was there as a companion. He or She was the energy to live, the energy to die, the energy to take one step forward when life was bringing him or her ten steps back.

God was as present in the concentration camps as He or She was in the Exodus. God was available to all those who asked for Him or Her to be present, for those who were able to see Him or Her and talk to Him or Her and feel His or Her presence inside their bodies. God supports and creates the power to be and to live. God is a life-sustaining energy freely given to those who ask. God must be sought; at times He or She must be sought to be found. God is not necessarily easy in this world; physical existence can block out a spiritual relationship. Thus, I am cautious not to blame the person in the concentration camp for not being able to seek God. Rather, the person who was unable to tap into his or her life energy may have been unable to do so for numerous reasons we may never know.

God ought not be merely understood as an energy, for this is too reductionistic, too simplistic. The God which has protected and covenanted with Jews is a God who creates, redeems, and sanctifies. God as creator provides Jews with daily choices, daily decisions to choose life or death. When life is chosen,
God collaborates and co-creates. God requires humans and humans require God.

God as redeemer rescues, delivers and liberates. Jewish history tells the story of God's saving acts, His or Her protection and care for all those who have faith and trust in God. God as sanctifier is strength, hope and refuge.

And so, what was the theology of the concentration camp? Nazi Theology. The Nazis had their own codes of ethics and morality, their own interpretations of Scripture, and their own God, namely, Hitler. The Third Reich, under Hitler's command, became the guiding force, the principle energy force within the minds and bodies of those under their control. The trouble with calling the Third Reich a theological system is that the Third Reich was a system which led people to death and not life. Therefore, if God is an energy which calls people forth into life and a more full, well-rounded existence, then the camps were devoid of a theology.

At the same time, there was indeed theology in the camps, not as an organized structure, but rather theological beliefs that existed on a grass-roots level. The prisoners, especially the Jewish prisoners, had a sense of God which could not be bound by wire, nor asphyxiated by gas. Their call to life, the choosing of life, was the guiding principle amongst those who survived. This was
Abraham J. Heschel writes that:

there are three starting points of contemplation about God; three
trails that lead to him. The first is the way of sensing the presence
of God in the world, in things; the second is the way of sensing His
presence in the Bible; the third is the way of sensing His presence
in sacred deeds.

These three ways correspond in our tradition to the main
aspects of religious existence: worship, learning, and action. The
three are one, and we must go all three ways to reach the one
destination. For this is what Israel discovered; the God of nature is
the God of history, and the way to know Him is to do His will.

(Heschel, 1959, p. 36)

The ability to find meanings in things, Heschel's first point of contem-
plation, was a challenge to those in the concentration camp. Traditionally, Jews
have found meaning in religious items such as the Torah or the synagogue. These
objects were obviously not available in the camps, yet Jews continued to seek
representations of God in what was accessible -- a cloud, the sun, a flower. These
"out of reach" visions provided the concentration camp prisoner with a sense of
life in a world of death and destruction.

Jews who have studied and lived their life according to tradition and religious mandates, such as following certain dietary laws, have sculpted their existence in such a way as to sense the presence of God on a daily basis. Reading the Bible, Heschel's second point of contemplation, as well as, involving oneself in community and helping others are various ways in which we can invite God into our lives. For the concentration camp victims, this was a struggle, not because they were not well-versed in the Holy Scriptures, nor because there was a lack of community, but rather because the daily struggle to fight for one's own life was the primary goal. I suggest that God would not have wanted it any other way. To seek life, to reach for survival, in the concentration camp was to seek God.

Heschel's third route to God, performing sacred deeds was practiced daily by thousands of Jews in the camps. Certainly, one needed to search for such acts, to listen, and to look beyond the obvious surface of the day-to-day regime. The person who forced him- or herself to wash his or her face when to have a clean face meant nothing to anyone except that person, the father who chose to surrender his life before his child's, the mother who would stand in front of a bullet in an opportunity to save her son, the child who instinctively knew that to follow the Nazi laws and not physically resist would give him or her a sense of
power, the young woman who was raped and yet thought beyond the current pain to a time when "things would be different," the person who walked to the gas chambers reciting lines from Scripture or singing the Sh'ma -- each of these people performed sacred deeds, actions taken to save one's soul while maintaining the soul of the Jewish people through worship, learning, and action.

Jews have revered God as a mystery, a presence, a force which "is near and present, but no less terrifying and unfathomable" (Cohen, 1981, p. 17). The relationship between God and the Israelites was based on faith, trust and fear. The Ancient Near East, being a melting-pot of thought and beliefs, produced many stories and myths to explain the mysteries of life. The people of this ancient land believed that if God could have the power to create, then He or She must also have the power to destroy. Consequently, God was referred to as a terror-mystery. Arthur Cohen writes:

The terror-mystery of God, the mysterium tremendum, of divinity has always, in the phenomenology of religion, been offset and contested by underdivinities, potencies and dominions in the universe which despise such ultimacy. The perception of the demonic coexisted with the perception of the Holy. Indeed, part of the terror-mystery of God is that His manifestation in whirlwinds
and at seas, in fires and in floods was often perceived at the outset as the work of His opponent, His demiurge, His particular devil. . . . The ferocity of God appears to resemble the demonic. . . . The terror-mystery of the Holy becomes the love-mystery of the Holy and terror dissolves into Grace. (Cohen, 1981, p. 18)

The person who is able to acknowledge the nature of God as the terror-and love-mystery is closer to a functional model of God than the person who maintains that God is all good or all bad. Rarely does a person find inner strength and courage through advantage; rather it is through doubt, pain and disadvantage that one is able to tap into unknown territories, internal realms which would have otherwise not been sought. God lives in the non-stressful, non-painful moments of life certainly, yet the energy and strength to move forward is almost always found during the dark nights of the soul.

Evil is inevitable in a finite world of competing entities and limited freedom. Although this inevitability is different than ontological necessity, it is more helpful to regard evil as that of which we are capable. Ultimately, God creates and creation suffers a finitude of absolute freedom. Many people focus on the evil which existed during the Holocaust; I suggest we focus on God's presence
as well.

I believe that God does not point fingers at those who are either following or not following His or Her commands. Rather, God responds to those who attempt to seek Him or Her. God offers us the power to choose. One decides moment to moment whether to act in accordance with this free-will toward the blessings of God or the curses of evil. The victims of the Holocaust had virtually no control. Yet, they did have the choice to abandon themselves and God thereby submitting body, mind and soul to the Nazis or to choose to remain as strong as possible thereby looking into the future, to hope for things to come, to believe in the messiah. Abraham Heschel writes:

> Faith comes out of awe, out of an awareness that we are exposed to His presence, out of anxiety to answer the challenge of God, out of an awareness of our being called upon. Religion consists of God's question and man's answer. The way to faith is the way of faith. The way to God is a way of God. God asks the question.

> The answer lasts a moment, the commitment continues.

> To strengthen our alertness, to refine our appreciation of the mystery is the meaning of worship and observance. For faith does not remain stationary. We must continue to pray, continue... to be
able to believe and to remain attached to His presence. (Heschel, 1955, p. 137)

"Where was God?" is one of the most often asked questions in Holocaust literature. "The most penetrating of post-tremendum assaults upon God has been the attack upon divine silence. Silence is surely in such a usage a metaphor for inaction: passivity, affectlessness, indeed, at its worst and most extreme, indifference and ultimate malignity" (Cohen, 1981, p. 96). Cohen's critique is not the only possible assessment of God's presence in the Holocaust; to take a view to the contrary, I believe God was quite present and quite active in the camps. God provides each of us, Jews as well as Christians, Nazi soldiers and the American politicians who chose not to intervene [liberate] earlier, with the gift of choice. How one chooses to use such a gift is not a divine matter, but rather a matter of humanity itself. For a human to fail to recognize God's presence does not in itself confirm God's absence.

The roads and train tracks which led to Auschwitz were not engineered by God; rather they were professionally designed and constructed by humans. Those who physically built such roads and tracks were often prisoners. As such, they were building the pathways for their families and friends which led to their deaths. It was as if those who participated in such construction projects were under a spell, a disillusionment orchestrated by a relative few, yet whose power and
effects were felt by millions.

The Final Solution was conceived, planned, and carried out by "ordinary" people doing uncommon things... [In as much as the Holocaust was a "success," it also] marks a single human failure, specifically a failure of civilization. It was a failure to resist the doing of clear and immense evil. This too is a plain fact. That it was done through the authority of a nation-state only sharpens the evil and makes our recognition of it more painful, for it is thereby an "unprecedented form of organized evil." (Rosenberg and Myers, 1988, pp. 185-186)

The notion of evil is disturbing. There have been times in my life when I did not believe in the existence of evil; its very concept seemed to me to be in direct opposition to God. Over time though, I constructed a more mature definition of evil which seemed fitting; evil as an energy which leads one to unnecessary and wrongful death, i.e., away from life. Simply, if God is an energy which leads one to a benevolent and meaningful life, then evil can be thought of as that which guides one to destruction and malevolence.

The Holocaust, in its totality, is an event of some irony, for it is both "Godly" and evil. In this single event, both Thanatos and libido co-existed. The
polarities between life and death were indeed obvious; the victims were
challenged to find a way to navigate toward the life force, God, in the midst of
such evil.

The Holocaust stands as a crucial moral crisis because within the
Nazi state, and in most of the territory it eventually came to
control, neither traditional law or religion could prevent or
comprehend the massive killings. (Rosenberg and Myers, 1988,
p. 186)

The Holocaust is "a moral crisis [which] . . . signifies that a society has
lost its way. . . . The human failure culminating in Auschwitz was a failure of
existing moral and valuational structures" (Rosenberg and Myers, 1988, p. 186).

An event such as this represents the power of humanity. On the one hand, in
order for the Holocaust to be a success in terms of the sheer number of deaths
accomplished, an unprecedented amount of human energy was exerted. On the
other hand, the resiliency and power of the human body and mind, and the spirit,
which lay in each of us which Jews have employed for thousands of years to help
them through other times of destruction and oppression, was proved even stronger
than the power of evil as manifested through the Nazis.

There is no doubt that the Holocaust challenged even the most devout Jew
-- it is difficult to understand how one could have continued to pursue God in light of such inhumanities. Words begin to fall short as one tries to completely understand the Jews' ability to withstand the pressure of the Nazis. Certainly, modern Jews come from a long line of people subjected to oppression and cultural destruction, but is this enough to say that Jews in the concentration camps survived merely based on their heritage and faith?

One of the possible meanings of the Holocaust is for man and woman to continue their search for God and for God to be able to search for man and woman. Viktor Frankl, in addition to telling his experiences in the Holocaust, has written extensively about his search for meaning after such an event. His journey to find some understanding for the atrocities which he witnessed became the impetus for his groundbreaking work called Logotherapy.

Frankl states that "logotherapy is future-orientated, that is to say, centered on the meanings yet to be fulfilled by the client" (Frankl, 1959, p. 120). The very nature of logotherapy is hopeful in that the emphasis is not where one has come from, but rather where he or she is going. The word *logos* is rooted in Greek origins and translate as *meaning*. Logotherapy "focuses on the meaning of human existence as well as on man's [woman's] search for such a meaning. . . . This striving to find a meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in man
Logotherapy is an existential psychology. It is existential in the sense of looking for existence itself. Thus it is particularly applicable to those for whom survival is the pressing question. Certainly, those inside of the concentration camps questioned the nature of life itself, perhaps even wondering if, or giving up hope that, life did indeed exist or could exist again. Their experiences were rooted in death and not life. As such it is plausible, even likely, that many Auschwitz prisoners, doubted the reality of their situation to the point of disbelieving their very existence. The existential components of Logotherapy refer to the human mode of being (existence itself), as well as "the meaning of existence and the striving to find a concrete meaning in personal existence, that is to say, the will to meaning" (Frankl, 1959, p. 123).

The question "Why?" in reference to the Holocaust is too vague. The more specific question, "why all the suffering?" is more direct and more useful. Viktor Frankl states that "when we are no longer able to change a situation. . . we are challenged to change ourselves" (Frankl, 1959, p. 135). The concentration camps were like companies in which workers had virtually no say, no voice. The opportunity to change one's specific situation was negligible. External forces, as previously discussed, were too powerful and too strong to be changed. The rules
were generally unbendable; the decision between death or work was practically out of the hands of those whose fate was being decided. The inability to change even one's body seemed to be out of his or her control; the amount of available food was not an individual decision, nor was the amount of work which one was assigned to accomplish.

The Nazis controlled everything -- everything except one's freedom of choice. To exercise such freedom even in limited ways was chose life and thus perform a sacred, if small, deed. The decision to disallow one's mind to be overtaken and manipulated by the Nazis was one of the few things over which each person did have some control. One's thinking and internal world could be changed or at least maintained. This is not to suggest that those who were unable to maintain their sanity or individual choices were at fault for being weaker than those who maintained control of their inner life. The challenge to change ourselves, the challenge to choose life inside of the death camps became the challenge to survive. It was only when one was able to find a meaning, a purpose for his or her suffering, that suffering ceased to be suffering (Frankl, 1959, p. 135). Suffering provides meaning-making opportunities according to logotherapy. While suffering is a common, although painful, route to understanding and self-motivation, Frankl firmly asserts that
suffering [is not] necessary to find meaning. Meaning is possible even in spite of suffering -- provided, certainly, that the suffering is unavoidable. If it were avoidable, however, the meaningful thing to do would be to remove its cause, be it psychological, biological, [spiritual, religious] or political. To suffer unnecessarily is masochistic rather than heroic. (Frankl, 1959, p. 136)

In his own self-reflection, Frankl states that "I am a survivor of four camps -- concentration camps, that is -- and as such I also bear witness to the unexpected extent to which man is capable of defying and braving even the worst conditions conceivable" (Frankl, 1959, p. 153). Frankl's experiences have been the cornerstones of his personal growth as well as his therapeutic approach with others.

Frankl's therapeutic interventions are Jewish in the sense of emphasizing questions and not answers. He argues that there are rarely answers to questions such as "why is this happening to me?" and "why isn't God helping those in need?" Yet, there are responses -- there are choices which one always can make. Although the choices may be grim, there is often a moment, a window of opportunity, to turn inward and make a decision to either continue to fight or to surrender. This decision is perhaps the only decision a person needs to make on
his or her own. No one can determine for another person whether they are willing to live or die, to fight or surrender. This moment is intensely personal and sacred; it is a moment between one's self and God, and as such is deeply emotional and spiritual. Whether people are aware of it or not, we are ultimately self-determining. We do not simply exist but always decide what will be, what we will become in the next moment.

Frankl proposes that

man [and woman are] ultimately self-determining. What he becomes -- within the limits of endowment and environment -- he [or she] has made out of himself [herself]. In the concentration camps, for example, in this living laboratory and on this testing ground, we watched and witnessed some of our comrades behave like swine while others behaved like saints. Man has both potentialities within himself; which one is actualized depends on decisions but not on conditions.

Our generation is realistic, for we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz; however, he is also that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the Shema Yisrael on his lips. (Frankl, 1959, p. 157)
Emil Fackenheim emphatically asserts that "the search for a purpose in [the study of] Auschwitz is foredoomed to total failure. . . . No purpose, religious or non-religious, will ever be found in Auschwitz. The very attempt to find one is blasphemous" (Schlesinger, 1984-1985, p. 119). Frankl's cautiousness is respectable and appropriate. To suggest a purpose to the Holocaust could translate as a purpose for millions of deaths. There is no purpose to such an event. Importantly, Frankl's search for meaning ought not be confused with purpose or intention such that one might suggest that the Holocaust was meaningful. While there was no purpose or meaning to such destruction, purpose and meaning can be discovered by asking questions such as "What is the lesson to be learned from the Holocaust?" and "How can I help others who find themselves in a similar predicament?"

I remember working with a couple whose son had died in an alcohol-related car accident in which he was the drunk driver. I would no more want to assign a purpose to this man's death, than to the deaths of millions in the camps. Rather, in line with Frankl's reasoning, since the tragedy has already happened, what meaning or understanding could be gleaned, in time, from the event for the grief-stricken parents? For this couple, there was no purpose for their son's death, yet they could choose to campaign against drunk driving or help other grieving
parents in the future and thus provide some meaning, something good which could come from such tragedy.

For the Jewish prisoner, living one's life according to religious doctrine became an immediate challenge. As time grew longer and prisoners weaker, their ability to keep up physically was minimized. So was their ability to maintain any deep sense of religion or spirit. Religious observances were done quickly if at all. To be discovered practicing one's Judaism caused immense fear, for if discovered, death, abuse, or severe punishment could ensue.

Many people in the Holocaust rejected the existence of God. Richard R. Rubinstein, a Holocaust theologian, states that "after Auschwitz many Jews did not need Nietzsche to tell them that the old God of Jewish patriarchal monotheism was dead beyond all hope of resurrection" (Schlesinger, 1984-1985, p. 117). Rubinstein's view toward God, in one sense, is beyond even the most challenging questions of theodicy, in so much as theodicy at least acknowledges God, albeit the evil side of God, yet God none the less.

Another theologian, Eugene B. Borowitz, parallels Rubinstein's thoughts about God. He writes that

Any God who could permit the Holocaust, who could remain silent
during it, who could "hide His face" while it dragged on, was not worth believing in. There might be a limit to how much we could understand about Him, but Auschwitz demanded an unreasonable suspension of understanding. In the face of such great evil, God, the good and powerful, was too inexplicable, so men [and women] said "God is dead." (Schlesinger, 1984-1985, p. 117)

Theologians Rubenstein and Borowitz fall short, in this writer's opinion, of fully exploring the Jewish nature of God. Jews in the death camps might have thought that God was dead, yet their deeds, actions, and prayers suggested a spirituality beyond such a simplistic logical understanding of the deity. The search for God moved from externalities and outward symbols to an internal quest, a search for personal Godliness. This internal questioning was not without precedent in Jewish theology or even social history. The God who established a covenantal relationship with the Jewish people and then led them into the desert, persecuted and plagued, is a God who can stand the anger and abandonment of His people. It is precisely as a result of their faith and trust in God that Jews in the concentration camp could say that God was dead.

Many therapists would support this notion. Look, for example, at a married couple who is having a difficult time communicating. If the relationship
is solidly based, that is as evidenced by love, faith, hope, and trust, the fact that the couple argues and may need to take some time apart merely suggests that the relationship is strong enough to withstand the distance. When a relationship cannot stand up to conflict and tension, it is appropriate to look at the level of commitment and mutual support. In the same vain, the relationship between God and the Jews can and did withstand the anger and distance that occurred during the Holocaust.

While there were many people who continued their commitments to God, there were also those who believed that God was no longer interested in their lives, in their continued creation, redemption and sanctification. "Wiesel characterized the anguish of the solitary individual -- not that God is unjust, but that God does not know about him or her -- that God is uninvolved with His creation" (Laub and Auerhahn, 1989, p. 382). Similarly, psychological research supports the notion that a child seeks attention, whether it is negative or positive. It is more damaging emotionally, psychologically, socially, and spiritually to be ignored as opposed to merely mistreated. One survivor writes about his desolation in the following poem:

No one kneads us again out of earth and clay.

No one conjures our dust.
No one.

Blessed art thou, No One.

In thy sight would

we bloom.

In thy

spite.

A nothing

we were, are now and, and ever

shall be, blooming;

the nothing -- the

No -- One's -- Rose. . . (Laub and Auerhahn, 1989, p. 383)

The essence of God is spirituality -- an ever-flowing life force or energy which invites one to move forward, to look beyond while reflecting on the past and staying in the moment. There is no doubt in this writer's mind that God did indeed exist in the camps. God allowed those who had some sense of salvation in their souls to choose freedom as defined by Abraham Heschel, namely as the ability "to transcend nature, society, 'character,' needs, interests, desires" (Heschel, 1955, p. 410).

This is not to suggest that anyone who wanted to leave the camps could
leave merely by asking. Rather, "the reality of freedom, [is] the ability to think, to will, or to make decisions beyond physiological or psychological causation" (Heschel, 1955, p. 410). Heschel further writes:

To believe in freedom is to believe in events, namely to maintain that man [woman] is able to escape the bonds of the processes in which he [she] is involved and to act in a way not necessitated by antecedent factors. Freedom is the state of going out of the self, an act of spiritual ecstasy, in the original sense of the term. (Heschel, 1955, p. 410)

The path to freedom in the concentration camps was paradoxical. Just as it was important to maintain the self, to have a sense of meaning or purpose to want to survive, one also had to go out of the self, to leave the self and seek a higher plain, to reach for God. As such, "freedom is an act of self-engagement of the spirit, a spiritual event" (Heschel, 1955, p. 411).

However, freedom is both an event and a process. It is an event in the sense that at any given moment one can choose to transcend his or her physical bonds and seek a deeper, non-sovereigned position. Yet, freedom is a process for it takes a great deal of effort and willingness to move beyond the moment, beyond the horror and pain to a place beyond, to a spiritual place where one can meet
Abraham Heschel writes about the relationship between freedom and creation. He states that

Man is free to act in freedom and free to forfeit freedom. In choosing evil he surrenders his attachment to the spirit and forgoes the opportunity to let freedom happen. Thus we may be free in employing or in ignoring freedom; we are not free in having freedom. We are free to choose between good and evil; we are not free in having to choose. We are in fact compelled to choose. Thus all freedom is a situation of God's waiting for man to choose.

(Heschel, 1955, p. 412)

In applying this theory to the Holocaust, victim/survivors had a choice between God (freedom or life energy) and evil (Thanatos or death energy). Certainly, the prisoner had no choice about his physical freedom, but he or she could choose to surrender his or her will to God and therefore move spiritually beyond the camps to a place with God. Further, the ability to live freely is the precise nature of Jewish spirituality.

Jewish spirituality is based one's actions and is therefore self-determining. It is up to each individual to choose life or death: Life is granted to those who
move beyond the present, to explore, to grow, and to create while death is likely to come to those who do not act, to those who sit idly by waiting for life to come to them.

The spirit of Judaism is expressed most distinctly in the Sabbath. Heschel describes the Sabbath as "holiness in time" (Heschel, 1955, p. 417). He further articulates that the Sabbath is "the presence of eternity, a moment of majesty, the radiance of joy. The soul is enhanced, time is a delight, and inwardness a supreme reward. . . Man does not stand alone, he lives in the presence of the day" (Heschel, 1955, p. 417).

Each day, each hour, each minute, each second, and each moment that a concentration camp captive was able to move beyond time and space, to see in to his or her future, to think about life outside the camps, to dream and to create, he or she was living "holiness in time."

The study of God is a complicated venture, an adventure really. It is a process which takes a lifetime to experience and yet enlightenment may take only one micro-moment. Judaism, as a whole, has continued to exist, has survived, in part as a result of its commitment to such an adventure. To be a Jew means many things, yet certainly to be a Jew means to choose, to create, to believe and
therefore survive. The evidence of God inside the camps is not apparent on the surface. It requires one to listen for a delicate and feeble voice which may be reciting the Lord's Prayer or Psalm 23; it requires one to look for the person who is willing to wake up each morning and wash her face in her coffee as a way of treating herself like a human being even in the context of such oppression; it requires one to get inside the minds and hearts of all those who have chosen to transcend their selves and reach for the "hands of God" which have come into the camps to lift one's spirits beyond death and into life. The decision to go to one's death with hate and contempt on one's lips and in one's heart which would allow the Nazis to win, or to approach one's life by looking beyond, by praying for freedom even though one's ankles may be shackled together and one's body bound to death is truly a matter of choice.

The Jewish spirit can indeed be found in the concentration camps. The Jewish spirit continues in spite of the concentration camps. We, the Jewish people, are believers and doubtful -- skeptical and trustful -- demanding and difficult -- grateful -- confused and directed -- spiritual and creative -- controlled and surrendered -- right and wrong -- depressed and elated -- threatened and protected -- content and anxious -- changing and static -- living and dying -- open-minded and prejudiced -- hungry and full -- strong and weak -- victims and
survivors. We "are" and we are because of God and God "is" and He is because of us.

APPLICATION TO PASTORAL COUNSELING

People who seek counseling as a result of a tragedy or life transition often ask the same questions as those who lived in the concentration camps: Where is God? How could God let this happen? How am I (the client) going to get through this? and Why? Such inquiries rarely have answers, yet the goal is not necessarily to determine a response, as much as it is to continue asking the questions.

The client who continually asks me why his or her sibling died would certainly not be satisfied with any answer I might be able to conjure, but rather, he or she could be therapeutically served by entering into a conversation which would continue to engage such questions, thereby allowing the client to come to his or her own conclusions. The willingness to companion clients as they ask universal questions is a crucial aspect of counseling. The pastoral counselor, being theologically trained, is able to engage and guide the client toward spiritual and/or religious insight. This additional area of exploration allows the client to gain a potentially different perspective, thereby aiding his or her recovery.
In my own therapy, I have come often to the place where to ask more questions would be futile. Questions are important so long as they move one along, to a point of greater acceptance or deeper self-knowledge. Paradoxically, I have discovered that when I lessen the amount of questions I ask and increase the action I take, the answers usually present themselves without even looking for them. This is a key tenet of logotherapy.

Rather than continually asking questions such as how and why, this theory asks one to find meaning, to take action. Logotherapy suggests that it is in the "doing" that one usually is given the answers, not in the asking. There is a limit to the effectiveness of logotherapeutic technique as exemplified in the core Jewish pursuit of questioning. Action without curiosity or inquiry or evaluation can lead down an unmonitored path to a therapeutic dead end. The point at which the questions need to stop being asked is the point at which they lead a client further away from his or her problem and not closer to it.

Just as God was present in the lives of those who were forced out of their homes, placed on cattle-cars and escorted to their deaths, so too was God present when my client's son was killed by a drunk driver. God is difficult to find in these circumstances, yet the client who has the courage and strength to come into therapy to talk about such matters is certainly being escorted by God, for the
person who seeks emotional and spiritual well-being seeks life and to seek life is to seek God. Ultimately, then, the pastoral counselor is in the position to assist and witness his or her clients' pursuit of creation, redemption and sanctification.
The Holocaust was a dark and depressing period in world history. Despite the horror and incomprehensibility, light and life indeed existed even in the valleys of death (the concentration camps). The Holocaust is a powerful metaphor for life's journey, a metaphor that pastoral counselors could import as a way of illuminating the lives of their clients. Using the Holocaust metaphorically could be especially meaningful for Jewish clients who may have a personal or familial (or at the very least, an implicit cultural) connection to the Holocaust. It is my belief that a model of therapy can be devised based on Holocaust symbols and images to aid victim/survivors who may seek therapy.
Using Holocaust imagery as a model in pastoral counseling requires each of us to tell our story as a way of walking through the pain while celebrating and choosing life. Despite being oppressed, massacred and victimized, Jews have prospered, survived and thrived. Holocaust metaphors function to display the victim's resiliency and faith in others, life and God. Survival was the primary task of many prisoners in the Holocaust; to survive and to learn how to live a balanced life are primary tasks of most clients seeking pastoral counseling. Therefore, to key into the struggle and survival of Jews during the Holocaust is thus an apt metaphor for many clients.

Although I have not yet had the opportunity, at least to my knowledge, to work with Holocaust survivors, I have certainly had a great deal of experience working with survivors of many other kinds of abuse -- physical, emotional, sexual, cultural and religious. I am discovering that, although the situations in which clients experience their abuse may be different, abuse is always abuse in that certain responses and results can be anticipated in most cases as commonalities. Many of the skills and insights that I have discovered in the process of writing my thesis can be translated to my work with clients.

To seek life (or meaning) in the midst of death (or overwhelming obstacles) is a journey which virtually every human, at some time in his or her
life, will take. Each of us is susceptible to life's challenges and obstacles, so we are all likely to benefit from psychotherapy at some point in life. Pastoral counseling can help one navigate the journey through life, learning that it is possible to live through events, such as the Holocaust, and still develop into a well-integrated person who relates to self, others and God in a healthy and responsible manner.

In the context of therapy with Jewish clients who are able to process abstractly and insightfully, applying a template constructed from Holocaust narratives, events, images and symbols is a way of understanding their journey in life which can be quite educational and healing. This model demands an exploration not only of the client's personal life, but the life of his or her ancestors. For the Jewish client this would include an exploration of anti-Semitism as well as what it means to be a Jew. The purpose for such an elaborate undertaking suggests the importance of cultural and historical groundedness. It is vital that each of us know were we have come from to know where to or where not to travel in our futures.

Pastoral counselors help people tell their stories. Holocaust images can be used in this phase of therapy. For example, the image of a train carrying innocent victims to the death camps allows the client to visual a picture of what
powerlessness and helplessness might look like. Providing clients with images such as these may enable them to then talk about their own experiences of being trapped or feeling powerless. The image of men and women standing naked in the gas chambers can represent vulnerability, a feeling common to many people. The image of a flower outside of the barbed wire fence may symbolize hope and life. I often encourage clients to buy a flower each week as a way of being good to themselves while allowing them to see that beauty (color and shape), growth (the budding of a tight rose) and death (the browning of leaves and falling petals) can indeed co-exist.

Pastoral counselors use their psychological, theological and spiritual knowledge to help clients explore and gain control of their lives. The perspective that I bring as a pastoral counselor allows me to engage the client on psychological as well as spiritual (and existential) levels. I cannot imagine doing therapy one dimensionally, that is, from a strictly psychological perspective; rather the multi-dimensionality of pastoral counseling affords both me as counselor and the client numerous points of entry and thus a greater depth and area to explore. Sources such as Donald Meichenbaum and Viktor Frankl illuminate paths toward healing which can be insightful to the therapist thereby benefiting the client.
Those who were able to maintain their senses through the Holocaust, did so, in part, by consciously deciding that the "key to survival was the desire to bear witness" (Grobman and Landes, 1983, p.238). Thousands of people survived (and continue to survive) by the sheer nature of their wills to survive, their desire to show the world that they could not be kept down, that they could not be destroyed, and that the success of Judaism depends on its progeny. Similarly, clients who were raised in an alcoholic environment or who were the object of a family member's rage may have vowed as little children never to allow such abuse to happen again. This person may ultimately seek pastoral counseling as a way of moving beyond the pain and abuse of his or her childhood.

The cosmic incomprehensibility of the Holocaust tends to bring questions of purpose and meaning to the fore. Many people regard God as a symbol of humanity, as the supporter, the caller, the creator, the redeemer, the sanctifier, at the very least, an energy force which is life-directed. People turn toward God for meaning and purpose and thus, to try to understand how over six million people could die. Similar questions are asked also by the client who was abandoned by her father, the person who became addicted to drugs in his early teens, and the client who feels lost and confused about his or her place in life. Pastoral counselors help clients find meaning and life even in the midst of the dark nights.
The works of Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi dramatically represent a person's ability to live through hell-ful circumstances and still find purpose and meaning in life. These victim/survivors turned writers also offer their readers hope and inspiration. They challenge their readers to find purpose and meaning in their lives; to experience the metamorphoses from victim to survivor themselves.

The ability to withstand the unfathomable conditions of the concentration camps can be translated to a client's abusive household where he or she, too, survived. The ability to reduce one's life to mere physical survival while putting one's emotional and spiritual life on hold can be found in both the Nazi dominated camps as well as a home which was ruled by a controlling, out of control alcoholic.

The ability to make meaning out of strikingly senseless abuse raises our
consciousness regarding the power of humans to destroy, but more importantly the power of humanity to survive. The willingness to engage in the process of healing requires one to enlist the pathos of God. Ultimately, then, the therapeutic process invites one to engage in a dialogue between humanity and God whence protection, guidance and direction can be sought and experienced.

Assisting others to overcome their destructive and fragmented backgrounds is both a challenge and an honor. I feel privileged to be invited into the sacred ground upon which many of my clients stand. To witness another human being grapple not only with day-to-day issues, but issues of existence, purpose and meaning is tremendously humbling, educational and important for me, not only as therapist, but as a human being.

The clients with whom I have worked have been extremely broken. Their lives have at times been destroyed by their emotional and psychological illnesses, their dysfunctional families, or their misfortunes in life in general. I have asked myself on more than one occasion, “How can I help?” Dass and Gorman suggest that care-givers help through all that [they] do. But at the deepest level [they] help through who [they] are. [They] help, that is, by appreciating the connection between [doing counseling] and [their] own progress on the journey of awakening into a fuller sense of unity.
[They] work on [them]selves, then, in order to help others.

And [they] help others as a vehicle for working on [them]selves

(Dass and Gorman, 1985, p. 227).

This thesis has enabled me to work on myself so that I can help others. I have learned a great deal about myself personally. I have learned that some of the most painful times in my life have also been the most growthful. I have learned that I am stronger than I once thought and weaker then I sometimes think. I have learned that the Holocaust is an event which is a much bigger part of my life then I could have ever imagined. I have learned that there are still aspects of this event which I know are part of who I am and yet cannot be put into words. I have learned that as a Jew, I must embrace the history of my people. I must never forget that anti-Semitism was the backbone of the Holocaust and that unless I find some way of making meaning of such an event, the Nazis still have the power. I have learned that the way to such vindication is through my own personal journey in life including my choice of pastoral counseling as a profession.

Professionally, I have learned the importance of bringing a client's culture and heritage into the counseling milieu. In the case of Jewish clients, I have learned that by exploring the Holocaust in the context of therapy, I can assist both cultural healing as well as personal growth. I have learned that therapists play a
critical part in their client's healing and that it is important for the counselor to
journey along side his or her client no matter how painful. I have learned that the
Holocaust is an extraordinarily powerful event whose images and stories can have
tremendous impact on a client's journey in counseling.

Ultimately, though, I believe that a tikkun, translated from Hebrew as a
mending, repairing and transformation of the world, can occur by exploring the
Holocaust; by listening to others and companioning them whether besides still
waters or in the depths of the valley of death.

We must always remember that all we truly have is our selves, our bodies,
our minds and our spirits; these comprise our narratives. And, if we are lucky, at
"the end of all our exploring [we] will . . . arrive where we started and know the
place for the first time" (T. S. Elliot).

For me, now, I am back where I once started and I now know who I am;
for this I am grateful.

My name is David Robert Kaplan and I am a Jew.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Charles, S. C. *On becoming a counselor* (pp. 322-331). New York:
Crossroad.

Charles, S. C. *On becoming a counselor* (pp. 139-144). New York:
Crossroad.

New York: Crossroad.

New York: Stein and Day.


Publishing Company.


York Press.


VITA

David Robert Kaplan currently lives in Chicago, Illinois. David earned his Bachelor of Arts in Theology and Political Science from Loyola University Chicago in 1987. He returned to Loyola in 1993 to pursue his Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling.

He works at Northwest Community Healthcare in the Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP) of the Mental Health Network. In his clinical work at the hospital, David counsels clients who have a wide range of psychiatric diagnoses, including mood, thought, and personality disturbances. Dual diagnosed individuals are of primary interest to David, and as such, he has created psychoeducational therapeutic groups which address both mental illness and addictions, thereby incorporating both psychology and spirituality. Previous to his psychiatric clinical role, David worked as a hospital chaplain, ministering ecumenically to those in acute crisis. David experiences a great deal of personal satisfaction working with individuals and families during high crisis times when the tightrope between life and death is often being navigated.

David enjoys conversations about spirituality and the mysteries of life and
death. His favorite time of day to discuss such matters is 11:00 PM -- just ask any of David's friends. Additionally, David enjoys cooking, walking through the Fall leaves and listening to music. David also considers himself a pseudo-Francophile.

David dreams of moving to New England and establishing a pastoral counseling practice in the office of his beach front home.
THESIS APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by David Robert Kaplan has been read and approved by the following committee:

Ann Graff, Ph.D., Director
Assistant Professor of Pastoral Studies
Institute of Pastoral Studies
Loyola University Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

Assistant Professor of Theology
University of Seattle
Seattle, Washington

Gary Gerson, D.Min., Director
Rabbi
Oak Park Temple
Oak Park, Illinois

The final copies have been examined by the directors of the thesis and the signatures which appear below verify the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is, therefore, accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

10/20/95
Date

10/11/95
Date

Director’s Signature