The Secret Flame of Hope

“WHEN THEY PUT US AGAINST THE WALL
FOR HOURS
WITH NO FOOD AND NO WATER
AND BEAT US UP,
I FELT I WAS GOING TO DIE.

I SAID “SHEMA ISRAEL”
AND PRAYED FOR AN ANGEL
OR A WHITE DOVE.

THE ANGEL STILL VISITS ME IN MY PAINTINGS
OR SENDS THE DOVE”.

MOTKE BLUM

We thank the Hochstein Family Foundation for paving the way for the project
“The Secret Flame of Hope”
Index

Welcome to “The Secret Flame of Hope” 4
The Vision 5
Introduction 7
Background 9
Day program 10
Program Audiences 13
Program Themes 14
Artist and Artwork 15
Board and Professional Advisory Committee 17
The Power of Arts in Living Through Extreme Trauma 18
Brit Olam 21
Topaz 23
Contact Information 25
Welcome to “The Secret Flame of Hope”

“The Secret Flame of Hope” is a unique project, attempting to offer a different and updated approach to Holocaust Memorial Day.

We suggest a new perspective of the Holocaust - the perspective of hope – “The secret flame of hope” that burnt in the hearts and minds of the people during those horrific years.

We offer you to take part in a worldwide simultaneous event that will take place on Holocaust Memorial, in May 2009.
The Vision

The Holocaust is much more than a historical event. The outcomes of the Holocaust can be traced everywhere around the globe. We, as Jews, commemorate it in “Holocaust Memorial Day”, and the UN passed a resolution commemorating it as a worldwide memorial day. Sixty years passed, there are fewer survivors and not many are left to tell their story. We are still in constant search to find the better, educational and philosophical ways to face the questions the Holocaust arises.

We believe that it is time to take the next step and not only look backwards to the past, but think also of the present and the future. It is time to reach new insights from the Holocaust, not only to remember and never to forget, but also take this basic element one step forward: What has held the Jewish people during the Holocaust, what made them stick with each other, what was hope?

We are witnessing those days the genocide in Darfur. Not only that it took the world years to rise and try and stop it, but those people have no one to fight for them.

The Jews during the Holocaust – may it be those in the concentration camps, those in the Ghettos, those hiding in villages or those in forced labor camps, had one unique characteristic – they had their Judaism. Not simply in the religious sense, but in the cultural and social sense – “Kol Israel Arevim Ze Laze” (All Israel are responsible for each other), and they had other Jewish communities
and bodies outside the nightmare helping them. Not all Jews knew there was hope outside. But they derived hope from within.

There are numerous examples of how those survivors held their hope during the Nazi dark years. Each one of us knows of those stories. If we weave those stories together we can find the common thread between them. This element did not and does not exist for none of the victims of the genocides around the world since.

One of the insights as an outcome of the Holocaust is the strength of the people together. It is our belief that the memory of the Holocaust, and the insights as an outcome for the future generations should be commemorated in a similar way: A worldwide simultaneous program to take place, on Holocaust Memorial day, to demonstrate the power and the unity of humanity and human kind.

The result of such unity can lay yet another brick in establishing the future. We aim at using the materials coming out of the various events to prepare a worldwide study program for youth and adults. We, as human beings, should learn a lesson from the holocaust and bring hope to those in despair our days. We should not stand aside as the world did during the Holocaust. It is our duty as part of the human race to do so, as a reminder never to forget – with all eyes focused on the future learning from the past.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Introduction

“The Secret Flame of Hope” is a worldwide project: We invite all congregations, organizations, students, communities and federations to take part in this project. We believe that the discussion around the questions the Holocaust arises is not confined solely to Jews but to all human kind.

Through the day program on Holocaust Memorial day we aim at finding various answers to the basic question “what was hope”. Different communities and different affiliations may find different answers. The impact of this program will be based on the scale of congregations participating in it, combined with the outcome of their own activities.

We realized that hope could be found very intensely during the Holocaust mainly in the Jewish activities concerning the arts: May it be theater, music, paintings, poetry and many other ways hope was portrayed.

It is now well know that art therapy is one of the major tools used for dealing with post trauma. We believe that the language of art is a universal language. There is no need for words and languages to share a message using art. In this project we use art both to bring the program participants to common grounds and explain without words the search for “The Secret Flame of Hope”, and to search together with them for that secret flame.
The event will open with a special display including 18 paintings by the Holocaust survivor Israeli artist Motke Blum, exhibited on a scale from total evil to the pure hope, enabling the participants to experience a common experience interpreted privately.

This display tries to check the limits of hope during the unthinkable horrors the Jews have been through during the Holocaust. It does not tell the story of one survivor. It is an everlasting memorial to the insanity and madness of human kind, interwoven with glimpses of hope for the future.

Motke Blum, a famous Israeli artist, as a holocaust survivor, has suppressed the Holocaust experiences until recently. When Motke’s grandchildren were asked to prepare an assignment about the family tree and stories, they came to Motke and asked him to tell them about his experiences as a child in Romania during the Holocaust. He did his best to tell them in words what he has been through, but Motke is at his best expressing those experiences and feelings in his paintings – experiences which numerous Holocaust survivors have been through. And while telling his grandchildren, he realized there is a need to pass these feelings and memories to the next generation.

In his paintings Motke includes the horror and atrocities, side by side with the hope that lived in those people’s hearts. Hope for what? How can one survive after all that has happened?

“The Secret Flame of Hope”
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Background

The process of building such a project was a special journey of each one of the participants as a human being in a turmoil world.

The backbone of the project is to remember and never forget. But by doing so it was not enough for us as we realized there are so many sub contexts to the phrase “Never to forget”. We searched for more.

There are several assumptions at the heart of this project.

- First and foremost is that the Holocaust can never be compared to any man made atrocity in the modern history. It can not be compared neither by scale, nor by cruelty or by the offenders, the magnitude and the ultimate goal.

- Second is that the emphasis is on those who suffered. We tried not to use in this context the word “victims” as we deal with hope, not with despair. The word “victims” related to despair, being unable to fight back, losing each individual’s uniqueness. In this project we search the individuals, we search for the flame of hope that burnt in them, not as a faceless group of victims but as proud people who created, lived, loved and hoped through those years.

- Third basic assumption is that the Holocaust is not just a Jewish issue. It relates to all human being in the world. Homosexuals, Priests, Handicapped and Gypsies were massacred with the same cruelty and determination to eliminate them. The discussion of the Holocaust, 60 years later, can not be confined to researchers and University scholars. It inflicts our past and it effects our future as human beings.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Day program

The “Secret Flame of Hope” project offers a day program for Jewish and Non-Jewish communities, congregations and Federations, schools and universities, based on visual arts and studies. The program is suitable to serve different types of audiences: Jews, Non-Jews, Children, students and other groups that would want or need special programming.

We recommend that each community have their own input into the program with preparatory work of the participants. We provide the program and the materials. We also tailor the program to suit the needs of each community from the first stage of joint work, and supply any additional information or material relevant. We will develop a unique and tailored program together with the community. Some congregations might ask to get the information straight without the need to develop it especially for them. We can provide full programs as well.

There are several themes to be chosen from. Each community and congregation will chose one theme to focus on and all relevant materials will be related to the chosen theme.

The program takes approx. 3-4 hours of activity offering the following components.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

1. **Image display**, accompanied by a sound track made for the display. The display will include 18 paintings by the Holocaust survivor Israeli artist Motke Blum, exhibited on a scale from total evil to the pure hope, bringing the audience to common grounds as a gateway while entering the event. (Some congregations might want to train docents to guide the visitors through the display, as several communities have expressed their wish to put the display for a longer period of time to enable more visitors – we can provide any material and information for that matter)

2. As the audience enters the hall – a **moment silence** in memory of the Holocaust victims.

3. **Role Play** – We will provide the situation, the characters involved and their identifications, some background, and relevant lines for the characters. The congregation will allocate the participants that should prepare for the role play. The situation and characters will be chosen according to the main theme chosen by the congregation for the program.

4. **Poetry or Prose Reading** – (according to the pre-selected theme). To be preformed by a person chosen by the congregation.

5. **Film** – a special 5-7 minutes film prepared for this program, similar in for all themes chosen by the congregation, to be screened to the audience. (In special cases where there is no possibility to screen a film, we can provide only an audio CD to be heard, approx. 3 minutes long, we recommend to darken the hall and leave only a dim light around).

6. **Panel discussion** – the participants to be chosen by the congregation. Materials for the panel will be prepared and sent by us according to the theme chosen by the congregation. We can recommend panel participants, although we advise the community to find within themselves the participants most suitable for them.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

7. **summery**: We ask that the summery of the program and the panel be either taped or summarized by writing so that it can be sent back to us.

8. **Closure** – The song by Hannah Senesh – Eli Eli, (Oh lord, My God) can be provided on CD or preformed by local participants, sung jointly by all the audience, as a gesture to the never ending hope portrayed in that song. (Hannah Senesh was a Hungarian Jew who survived the Holocaust, escaped to Israel, was trained as a paratroop and went back to Hungary during the war to help the partisans. She was captured by the Nazis and it is told that when they executed her a piece of paper fell out of her pocket containing this song as a message of hope).

All the materials will eventually be collected by us from all participating communities and will be processed by us to a book format that will be sent back to the community to be used in the following years. Those materials will also be used to create educational programs, and work plans for agencies and organizations assisting and supporting populations living through man-made trauma and through post trauma, mainly refugees.

For those congregations including a service or prayer – we recommend to do so after the moment silence and continue the program after the service.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Program Audiences

This project is aimed at all congregations, affiliations and denominations, all age groups and all nations.

Understanding the differences of knowledge and culture, we are aware of the different needs of different audiences in such a project. We suggest three different paths of the project:

- Jewish congregations, communities, organizations and Federations.
- Non Jewish congregations, communities and organizations
- Children and youth

The program itself is similar in all three paths. The main differences are in the image display for the three paths, and of course the materials prepared for the children youth paths will be modified and adapted for that specific audience.

Some congregations might want to train docents to guide the visitors through the display, as several communities have expressed their wish to put the display for a longer period of time to enable more visitors – we can provide any material and information for that matter.

Schools, Universities and Jewish Federations might want to use the above mentioned option using docents, enabling a larger audience to be exposed to the display and the idea of the project – either by merely exposing them to the image display and opening up an unrelated discussion afterwards, or as a gateway for the main program – that can take place also in school classes and smaller forums.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Program Themes

The themes suggested for this program were selected for the relevancy to the project and to the search after “The Secret Flame of Hope”. Hence all themes should be viewed in this perspective.

All themes are available for the three paths of audiences, and can be adjusted to any type of audience.

Initial list of themes available for this program: (Please bear in mind that those themes are available in modified versions for all three different paths and audiences). All themes through the prism of “The Secret Flame of Hope” which is the special focus of this project:

- Painting and sculpture by Jews during the Holocaust
- Films and photography by Jews during the Holocaust
- Poetry and Prose by Jews during the Holocaust
- Music by Jews during the Holocaust
  - Orchestra
  - Single Performers
  - Writing
- Jewish Theater during the Holocaust
- Jewish Medical systems during the holocaust
- Libraries at ghettos and concentration camps
- Kids during the Holocaust
  - Paintings and writing
  - Day life
- Daily Life during the Holocaust (in ghettos and concentration camps)
- Racism in the 20th century: from the Nazis through the KKK to New Arians – Living through racism
- Genocide during 20th century – living through trauma
- Jewish upraise during the Holocaust.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Artist and Artwork

Motke Blum was born in Romania in 1925. When he was 14 years old he was first confronted with the Nazis and Romanian Nazis. At the age of 19 he escaped forced labor and immigrated to Israel. Sixty years later, Motke is a proud father of two and even a prouder grandfather of three, living in Jerusalem, painted numerous paintings of the Holocaust not as a private survivor, but as voice of those who did not survive.

In his paintings Motke explores the deep abyss of cruelty, and the boundaries of total evilness and on that scale he searches for the boundaries of ultimate hope, of purity and of compassion.

The display will include 18 special art prints - crystal lithography, numbered and signed by the artist. We recommend the paintings will be exhibited according to a pre-arranged setting, in order to obtain maximum effect and hold a straight line between the basic ideas portrayed in the paintings. Size of art prints 50 X 70 cm (20” X 27”) each.

The art prints will be delivered to the participants together with all relevant material and information prior to the event.

The paintings can be sent either framed or unframed – depending on your choice. We will use standard frames. The artwork remains in the possession of each community, organization or congregations receiving it. All rights are reserved
to the artist and it can be used only for display. As we believe this display can be further used in upcoming Holocaust memorial day services, we urge the communities to store the paintings in a suitable place.

These paintings can be used also as a means for fundraising for the community itself: For the coming years any certain member of the community can ask to put a plaque on the painting commemorating Holocaust victims and donating the money to the community or congregation. This can be used as an eternal flame in memory of those murdered in the Holocaust.

Costs of printing and shipment according to the registration form:

Unframed: Includes 18 art prints signed and numbered by the artist, shipping and handling.

Framed: Includes 18 framed art prints signed and numbered by the artist, shipping and handling.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Board and Professional Advisory Committee

The Project board: Chairman of “Brit Olam” - Dr. Mike Naftali; “Topaz” representative - Mr. Yonatan Glaser; External public representative – Ms. Lili Angel, founder and volunteer in social non-for profit organizations in Israel and abroad; The project’s coordinator Ms. Anat Galili-Blum

Professional Advisory Committee: Mrs. Miriam Ofer – Holocaust Historian and former director of Holocaust Studies Center in Haifa; Mr. Yiftach Milo – Lecturer in the Open University on Genocide, founder of the psycho-social program in Chad refugees camps and founder of ASSAF - Aid organization for refugees and asylum seekers in Israel; Ms. Tamar Zirinski – Arts therapist; Mr. Motke Blum – Holocaust survivor Israeli artist; Mr. Yair Medina – arts and print specialist.
The Holocaust is undoubtedly the most devastating traumatic human event in modern history. Jews were discriminated, persecuted, tortured and murdered because of their faith, their culture, their traditions. The Nazi regime massacred gypsies, slaughtered homosexuals, and mass murdered the retarded, sick and paralyzed, and many others who did not appeal to the Nazi dictatorship. The magnitude of human suffering in Europe, Asia and Africa during this dark period of the 20th century is immeasurable.

In this dark, painful and agonizing era, people were living and living on. Jews in the ghettos, in their hiding places, in the forced labor camps and even in the concentration camps made, preformed and created arts as part of their daily living.

They expressed their artistic inspirations, their creativeness, their emotions and feelings. They painted and played music, they wrote poetry and personal diaries, they acted and performed. They went on living in the most horrendous reality.

In what way were these acts rooted in Jewish culture? Embedded in human spirit of love and creativeness? What hope emerged in the hearts of these artists? How did the arts bring about internal shelter and relief? How did some of the most unique expressions of human spirit help people, friends, communities face the darkest of human experiences? Who were these people who embraced themselves and others with love and care and tenderness of the performing arts, of poetry and music?
Answers to these questions could be of great value to the contemporary practice of Art Therapy. It has become common practice to aid victims of extreme traumas through arts therapy: music, painting, sculpting, dancing and drama. Victims of man-made traumas; genocide acts and civil wars, terrorism and mass murder, as well as natural disasters as the tsunami and African famine. Therapy currently comes after the traumatic experience. Present-day victims are usually treated after they have escaped the traumatic events. Learning’s from the holocaust portray another story, a new perspective of hope and care. It seems that more attention is required on learning about the significance of art therapy while the victim is still traumatized.

We should reach to the victims still being victimized, those still in the midst of chaos, lend them a comforting hand, offer them art therapy in the process. Using art therapy while still molested would ease the perception of the traumatic events to a certain degree, enhance the influence of therapy, and will enable the victims to continue their lives with less post-traumatic effects. Such a strategy can help redefining the far-reaching impact of trauma into a new perspective of recovery and re-growth.

We should move from Post Trauma Art Therapy to Arts Therapy Amidst Trauma. We should move beyond our own self-imposed borders, embrace the diversity of art therapy throughout the world, and create pathways to share the universal passion for art and healing. We should work much more with the survivors of the Darfur and the East Congo victims, with the abused and neglected and poor children of deprived communities, with the women who have been trafficked to emotional and physical death.
Brit Olam believes that creative arts are a common gift to humankind. The arts perform a valuable role within society to transform, teach, heal, encourage, and empower. When engaged in service to others, the creative arts are functional tools used to overcome crisis and stressful realities, and serve as transformative power to overcome barriers of race, class, faith and culture in order to promote holistic personal, family, and community development.

As chairperson of Brit Olam, I believe that “The Secret Flame of Hope” is taking us all on a most needed and most challenging, creative and humanitarian journey. The Jewish Peoplehood has always proclaimed a message of moral responsibility for the weak and needy in the world. While the message was hard to enact when our people were downtrodden and persecuted, today we enjoy freedom and the capacity to do our part to help people in the weaker corners of the world. May this project be a beacon in the darkness of atrocities taking place in the world today.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

**Brit Olam**
Bonding Israels Spirit, Jewish “Tikkun Olam” Morals, and Global Well Being

The greatest challenge of the 21st century is to provide every human being on the planet with a long, healthy, and fulfilling life, free of poverty and full of opportunities to participate in the life of their community.

Brit Olam (meaning, world alliance) was initiated in 2000 in order to develop an Israeli - Jewish International Humanitarian voluntary movement, thus bonding Israel’s social spirit, Jewish “Tikkun Olam” morals and global well being.

Brit Olam’s vision is to encourage a global community of Israeli and Jewish volunteers and social entrepreneurs creating a better world for current and future generations through local and global action.

It does so by developing sustainable community-based projects designed to reduce poverty, hardship, and vulnerability in fragile communities; by providing humanitarian relief to victims of natural and human made disasters; by developing innovative programs and creative community-based sustainable services and by bringing together volunteers from Israel and the Jewish world to care, support and empower children, families, and communities in need.

Brit Olam asserts that Israel’s contribution to the international community should not only be its innovations and discoveries in the fields of technology, life sciences, agriculture and security but also its volunteers and humanitarian contributions.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Drawing on Israel’s exceptional history of close to 60 years of ingenuity and achievement in the fields of social and cultural integration, educational achievements, economic growth, and democracy, Brit Olam calls upon the people of Israel – its physicians, social workers, nurses, psychologists, teachers, community leaders, lawyers, business people and other professional volunteers – to become the new faces of Israel’s exports. Brit Olam advocates an international volunteer movement, employing Israeli travelers as goodwill volunteers to activate and maintain its community development programs. By strengthening children and communities in need, Brit Olam aims to renew Israel’s profile as a democratic and humanitarian society, not only within its own communities but also within the international community.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Topaz
For the Well Being of Children and Youth

Topaz is an independent not-for-profit organization founded in 2000 in order to improve and advance the quality of life of children, youth and their families. Topaz is based on a firm belief in the ability of children, youth, families and their communities to bridge social gaps and mental limitations, and to cope with difficult situations of crisis and distress. We strongly believe that each and every child has the right to a secure and happy childhood.

Topaz believes in pluralism and multi-cultural work. Deriving its professional and educational values from a deep-rooted humanitarian approach, Topaz sees in intercultural work a process of changing the way societies relate to the needs of children and youth.

Our activities aspire to reduce the phenomenon of at-risk children and youth in Israel and to enable youngsters to experience family life in a nurturing risk-free society. By developing educational, social, therapeutic and rehabilitation programs in Israeli diverse community, Topaz strives to ensure that children and youth under its auspices will have the opportunities and be equipped with the abilities, skills, confidence and resources needed to grow and to become active productive citizens in their own communities and eventually, as nurturing parents themselves, regardless of race, religion or nationality.

Topaz is based on a creative enterprising organizational culture and places great emphasis on social entrepreneurship and innovativeness in its programs. Its professional approach advances grass-roots social projects and initiatives, acting as a “social greenhouse” for sowing and cultivating innovative support
and intervention programs. We give free rein to social entrepreneurs in advancing their programs by offering training, logistic and financial assistance for development and entrepreneurial processes.

Topaz advances its goals through a multidisciplinary approach, developing and operating intervention approaches, new and innovative models for high level treatment; operating volunteer systems at various levels, both in the field and leadership positions, gathering and disseminating knowledge and promoting activities for mutual assistance.

Topaz also works with partner organizations simultaneously as we believe in organizational team work and its benefits for the target population of children and youth.

Topaz fosters the concept of social justice philanthropy and strives for realization of the social and human rights of children and youth. Our values reflect the belief that voluntary civic activity, in the framework of nonprofit organizations, realizes the noblest aspirations of humanity: the yearning for equal opportunity, proper living conditions and security and justice for all.
“The Secret Flame of Hope”

Contact Information

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