

Awake!

April 8, 1989



The **Holocaust**

**Why Did God Allow It?
Will Those Dead Return?**

BEST. BINGA

The Holocaust—that word evokes memories of the systematic slaughter of millions of Jews under Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany from 1933 to 1945. But it also raises many questions:

Did it really happen?

Should the Holocaust be considered only a Jewish tragedy?

Why air this subject again, more than 40 years after the end of World War II?

Were there any conscientious objectors to Hitler's policies?

Why did God allow the Holocaust to happen?

What hope is there for the millions who were murdered or who were worked or starved to death during that dark age? Is their death the last word for them, or will they live again?

Our opening series will consider these questions.



The Holocaust

Why Should You Care?



DID the Holocaust really happen? Does it matter? Why should I care?" some might ask.

One reason mankind should care is to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Concentration camp survivor Primo Levi expressed doubts that the concentration-camp mentality is really dead. He asked: "How much is back or is coming back? What can each of us do so that in this world pregnant with threats at least this threat will be nullified?"

Thus, Levi voiced the concern of many who wonder whether this type of horror could happen again. How does recent history answer? The history of atrocities, genocides, tortures, death squads, and "disappeared" and "liquidated" persons since 1945 in various countries is proof that the mentality that justified concentration camps is still alive and active.

And to those who have survived—children, relatives, and friends of the dead—the historical reality does matter. History is based on actual events and real people. Does it matter whether Jesus was a myth? Or whether Napoleon or Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, were real or fictional? Of course it does. The course of history has been changed by these men.

Likewise, the Holocaust has perhaps been the most shattering blow to the ego of civilized mankind in all history. As Primo Levi put it: "Never have so many lives been extinguished in so short a time, and with so lucid a combination of technological ingenuity, fanaticism, and cruelty."

But there are those who doubt that it happened. They question whether the Holocaust is a historical fact.

The Holocaust

Yes, It Really Happened!

SURPRISINGLY, there is a small minority of people who allege that the Holocaust did not take place as it is depicted in modern history. In his publication *Did Six Million Really Die? The Truth at Last*, Richard Harwood states: "The allegation that 6 million Jews died during the Second World War, as a direct result of official German policy of extermination, is utterly unfounded."

So the questions are raised: Did the Nazis command the extermination of the Jews during World War II? Did four to six million Jews really die in the concentration camps? Were there such things as gas chambers? Or are these distortions of German history?

Certain revisionist historians have alleged that these events did not take place. They argue that, at most, only a few thousand Jews died and that the majority were evacuated to other countries.

A recent court case in Canada highlighted this controversy. A German immigrant to Canada was prosecuted for "knowingly publishing false information which was likely to cause harm to social or racial tolerance" by denying that the Holocaust ever happened, reported *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada. The result was a 15-month jail sentence and a ban on the publication of his revisionist views of the Holocaust.

In West Germany an antidefamation law was amended in 1985 to allow even non-Jewish persons to lay complaint against "anyone who insults, slanders, libels or disparages people who 'lost their lives as victims of National Socialist or other forms of tyrannic or despotic rule.'" The effect of this law is that it "makes the denial of the murder of Jews in concentration camps during the Nazi dictatorship a punishable

WHY "AWAKE!" IS PUBLISHED

"AWAKE!" is for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another.

Most importantly, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away.

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offense," stated the *Hamburger Abendblatt*.

The denying of the Holocaust is commonly called the "Auschwitz lie." Auschwitz (now Oświęcim) was the infamous concentration camp in Poland where the Nazis committed mass murder. According to the West German media, right-wing extremists have tried to hide or deny these events and thus the term "Auschwitz lie."

Emigration or Extermination?

The existence today of millions of Jews of European origin proves that the Nazis did not succeed in destroying European Jewry. That many Jews escaped the attempted annihilation in the concentration camps is confirmed by historian William L. Shirer, who wrote in his book *20th Century Journey—The Nightmare Years 1930-1940*: "Not all the Austrian Jews perished in the Nazi camps and prisons. Many Jews were allowed to buy their way out of captivity and go abroad. Usually, it cost them their fortune.... Perhaps nearly half of Vienna's 180,000 Jews managed to purchase their freedom before the Holocaust began." This policy was especially in effect in the 1930's.

However, Shirer explains that although the Office for Jewish Emigration was set

up, under Reinhard Heydrich, "later it would become an agency not of emigration but of extermination, and organize the systematic slaughter of more than four million Jews." This "final solution" was directed by Karl Adolf Eichmann, who was eventually executed in Israel for his war crimes.

The concentration camps were not the only means of eliminating what the Nazis regarded as subhuman and inferior races. There were also the feared *Einsatzgruppen* (Special Action Groups), extermination squads that went in behind the invading army "and whose sole objective was the wholesale slaughter of the Jews. . . . Moving close behind the advancing front

"The prisoners [transferred to labor camps] would have been spared a great deal of misery if they had been taken straight into the gas chambers at Auschwitz."—Rudolf Höss, commandant of Auschwitz

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Payment for Proof

"A \$50,000 reward offered for 'proof' that the Nazis gassed Jewish victims in concentration camps must be paid to an Auschwitz survivor under the terms of a court settlement, the survivor's lawyer said today.

"Judge Robert Wenke of [Los Angeles] Superior Court approved the settlement that calls for the Institute for Historical Review to pay Mel Mermelstein, the Auschwitz survivor. . . .

"The institute, which says the Holocaust never happened, must also pay Mr. Mermelstein \$100,000 for the pain and suffering caused by the reward offer, the lawyer said. . . .

"'Mr. Mermelstein's victory in this case' [the lawyer, Gloria Allred, said] 'will now send a clear message to all those throughout the world who attempt to distort history and inflict misery and suffering on Jews that the survivors of the Holocaust will fight back through the legal system to protect themselves and vindicate the truth about their lives.'"*—The New York Times, July 25, 1985.*

line so that few could evade their net, the Einsatzgruppen brutally shot, bayoneted, burnt, tortured, clubbed to death or buried alive almost half a million Jews in the first six months of the campaign."—*Hitler's Samurai—The Waffen-SS in Action*, by Bruce Quarrie.

Is that figure hard to believe? It works out to an average of less than one murder per day per member of the 3,000 member group. When these special action groups reached the Soviet territories, partial death tolls give a figure of "more than 900,000,

account[ing] for only about two thirds of the total number of Jewish victims in mobile operations."—*The Destruction of the European Jews*, by Raul Hilberg.

Commandant Confesses

What testimony is there from the very participants in the executions in the concentration camps? Rudolf Höss, former commandant of the Auschwitz camp complained: 'Believe me, it wasn't always a pleasure to see those mountains of corpses and smell the perpetual burning.' He also expressed "surprised disapproval that Jewish Special Detachments (*Sonderkommandos*) were willing, in return for a short extension of their own lives, to help with the gassing of members of their own race." (*The Face of the Third Reich*, by Joachim C. Fest, page 285) German author Fest adds: "Some of the one-sided perfectionist pride of the expert comes out in Höss's statement: 'By the will of the Reichsführer

**'Believe me,
it wasn't always
a pleasure
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perpetual burning.'**

—Rudolf Höss

of the SS [Heinrich Himmler], Auschwitz became the greatest human extermination centre of all time,' or when he points out with the satisfaction of the successful planner that the gas chambers of his own camp had a capacity ten times greater than those of Treblinka."

In his autobiography Höss wrote: "Unknowingly, I was a cog in the chain of the great extermination machine of the Third Reich." "The Reichsführer SS [Himmler] sent various high-ranking Party leaders and SS officers to Auschwitz so that they might see for themselves the process of extermination of the Jews. They were all deeply impressed by what they saw."^{*}

However, they were apparently affected by the difference between the phrase "the final solution of the Jewish question" and

* For his war crimes, Rudolf Höss, the supremely conscientious camp organizer and blindly obedient bureaucrat, was hanged at Auschwitz in April 1947.

its ghastly reality in the gas chambers. When asked how he could stand it, Höss answered: "My invariable answer was that the iron determination with which we must carry out Hitler's orders could only be obtained by a stifling of all human emotions."

Thus, Höss, the sadistic puppet, freely admitted that the Holocaust was a reality and that he was one of its perpetrators as camp commander of Auschwitz.

In *Values and Violence in Auschwitz*, a book first published in Polish, the translator, Catherine Leach, states that 3,200,000 Polish Jews lost their lives because of mass executions, torture, and slave labor

Sachsenhausen "Safe Custody Camp"?

Was Sachsenhausen really an extermination camp? Or was it just a "safe custody camp"?

Answer by Max Liebster, Jewish victim who survived the Holocaust:

"My statement is based on my personal experience and what I have witnessed in this camp. I do not need a classification from an outsider to find out what Sachsenhausen was like. True, the media and the Nazi government claimed it was a *Schutzhaftlager*, which is a 'safe custody camp.' The following experiences speak for themselves:

"In January 1940, as I was brought by the Gestapo (secret state police) from Pforzheim to the prison of Karlsruhe, I was told by the Gestapo that I was on my way to an extermination camp. The Gestapo hurled abuse at me, saying: '*Du Stinkjude wirst dort verecken, kommst nicht mehr zurück!*' (You stinking Jew. You will die like a beast. You will never return!)

"The mistreatment on our arrival at Sachsenhausen is beyond human comprehension. Jews were sent into a separate camp inside the main camp. They had worse conditions than the others. For instance, the Jews had no sleeping shelves, only straw sacks on the floor. The barracks were so crammed that it was necessary to lie like sardines, with one man's feet being at the next man's head. In the morning, dead men were found lying next to the living. There was no medical care for the Jews.

"I heard that my father was three barracks away. I found him lying behind the stack of strawsacks, his legs swollen with water and his hands frozen. After he died, I had to carry his body on my shoulders to the crematorium. There I saw more dead stacked up than they could burn.

"Thousands died in Sachsenhausen because of the inhuman treatment. For many victims it was worse dying in Sachsenhausen than in the gas chambers of Auschwitz."

in concentration camps. She says: "The holocaust of Europe's Jews took place on Polish territory."

Death by Drowning

Death could come in many ways in the camps—starvation, disease, a bullet in the neck, gas chamber, beatings, hanging, guillotine, and drowning. The drowning was a special refinement.

"No Trace Must Be Left of Them"

"When the last mass grave was opened, I recognized my whole family. Mom and my sisters. Three sisters with their kids. They were all in there. They'd been in the earth four months, and it was winter." "The head of the Vilna Gestapo told us: 'There are ninety thousand people lying there, and absolutely no trace must be left of them.'"—Testimony of Jewish survivors, Motke Zaïdl and Itzhak Dugin.

"Just as we went by, they were opening the gas-chamber doors, and people fell out like potatoes. . . . Each day one hundred Jews were chosen to drag the corpses to the mass graves. In the evening the Ukrainians drove those Jews into the gas chambers or shot them. Every day! . . . More people kept coming, always more, whom we hadn't the facilities to kill. . . . The gas chambers couldn't handle the load."—Franz Suchomel, SS officer (*Unterscharführer*), on his first impressions of the Treblinka extermination camp.

(These quotes are taken from interviews in the documentary film *Shoah*.)

Writer Terrence Des Pres explains: "The fact is that prisoners were *systematically* subjected to filth. They were the deliberate target of excremental assault. . . . Prisoners in the Nazi camps were virtually drowning in their own waste, and in fact death by excretion was common. In Buchenwald, for instance, latrines consisted of open pits twenty-five feet long, twelve feet deep and twelve feet wide. . . . These same pits, which were always overflowing, were emptied at night by prisoners working with nothing but small pails." One eyewitness recounts: "The location was slippery and unlighted. Of the thirty men on this assignment, an average of ten fell into the pit in the course of each night's work. The others

"More people kept coming, always more, whom we hadn't the facilities to kill. . . . The gas chambers couldn't handle the load."—Franz Suchomel, SS officer

were not allowed to pull the victims out. When work was done and the pit empty, then and then only were they permitted to remove the corpses."

Much more testimony could be quoted to prove that extermination became a part of the Nazi policy as more and more European countries were occupied. The bibliography on this subject is endless, and the eyewitness testimony, together with the photographic evidence, is appalling. But was the Holocaust only a Jewish experience? When the Nazis invaded Poland, was it only the Jews they wanted to liquidate?



The Holocaust

The Forgotten Victims

"The genocidal policies of the Nazis resulted in the deaths of about as many Polish Gentiles as Polish Jews, thus making them co-victims in a 'Forgotten Holocaust.' "—“The Forgotten Holocaust,” by Richard C. Lukas

HOLOCAUST—what does it mean? According to some dictionaries, it was the genocidal slaughter of European Jews by the Nazis during World War II. This could easily give the impression that only Jews suffered and died at the hands of the Nazis. Yet, are justice and truth served in having “Holocaust” apply only to the Jewish victims of the Nazi era?

Writer Richard Lukas states: “The word Holocaust suggests to most people the tragedy the Jews experienced under the Germans during World War II. From a psychological point of view, it is understandable why Jews today prefer that the term refer exclusively to the Jewish experience . . . Yet, by excluding others from inclusion in the Holocaust, the horrors that

Poles, other Slavs, and Gypsies endured at the hands of the Nazis are often ignored, if not forgotten.”

Lukas also states: “To them [the historians], the Holocaust was unique to the Jews, and they therefore have had little or nothing to say about the nine million Gentiles, including three million [Gentile] Poles, who also perished in the greatest tragedy the world has ever known.”

Hitler's Lust for Living Space

When Hitler's armies invaded Poland in September 1939, they were under orders to carry out Hitler's policy of obtaining *Lebensraum*, living space, for the German people. As Richard Lukas states: “To the Nazis, the Poles were *Untermenschen* (subhumans) who occupied a land which was part of the *Lebensraum* (living space) coveted by the superior German race.” Thus, Hitler authorized his troops to kill “without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language. Only in this way can we obtain the living space we need.”

September 1939 started a relentless horror for the Polish people. Hitler had stated: “The war is to be a war of annihilation.” Hitler's henchman Heinrich



Library of Congress

Hitler stated: "The war is to be a war of annihilation." Kill "without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language"

Some of the Nazi concentration and extermination camps across Europe. In addition, there were 165 forced-labor camps



Himmler declared: "All Poles will disappear from the world"



UPI/Bettmann Newsphotos

Himmler declared: "All Poles will disappear from the world. . . . It is essential that the great German people should consider it as a major task to destroy all Poles." Thus, the Holocaust was not aimed at just Polish Jews; it was aimed at "all Poles."

"Terror was applied in all occupied countries. . . . But in Poland everyone was subject to such brutality, and mass executions based on the principle of collective guilt were far more frequent, because every Pole, regardless of age, sex, or health, was a member of a condemned nation—condemned by the policy-makers in the Nazi party and government," states Catherine Leach, translator of the Polish book *Values and Violence in Auschwitz*. She states that Himmler viewed the Poles as a lower race to be kept in serfdom.

"Even after Poland's surrender [September 28, 1939], the Wehrmacht [German army] continued to take seriously Hitler's admonition of August 22, 1939, when he authorized killing 'without pity or mercy all men, women, and children of Polish descent or language.'" How could the German army and the SS be motivated to such pitiless murder? By being saturated with the teaching of the supremacy of the Aryan race and the inferiority of all others. Thus, as Lukas states in *The Forgotten Holocaust*: "The Nazi theory of colonial empire in Poland was based on the denial of humanity to the Poles whom, next to the Jews, Hitler hated the most."

"Negative Demographic Policy"

In his introduction to the book *Commandant of Auschwitz*, Lord Russell of Liverpool said: "During the war probably not less than twelve million men, women, and children from the invaded and occupied territories were done to death by the Germans. At a conservative estimate, eight

million of them perished in concentration camps. Of these, not less than five million were Jews. . . . The real number, however, will never be known." On the basis of these figures alone, at least seven million victims were not Jews.

Another testimony is that of Catherine Leach, who writes: "Poland was the first country to be subjected to Hitler's 'negative demographic policy,' whose purpose was to prepare the vast territories in 'The East' for German resettlement, and Poland suffered the greatest losses in life of all the occupied countries—220 per 1000 inhabitants. Polish sources state that no less than 6,028,000 Polish citizens . . . lost their lives." Of these, 3,200,000 were Jews. That means that nearly 50% of the Polish dead were non-Jews.

Indisputably, there has been a "Forgotten Holocaust" of millions of non-Jewish victims, mainly of Slavic origin. These include the millions of Russians slaughtered by the Nazis. Those Russians had no choice. By reason of Nazi racial doctrine, they were inexorably condemned to death.

Yet, these statistics fail to take into account the thousands of non-Jewish *Germans* who also suffered as victims of the Holocaust for daring to oppose Hitler and his racist supremacy philosophy. Among these were thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses who refused to collaborate in Hitler's militaristic pretensions. Yes, sprinkled across Germany and the Nazi-occupied countries were thousands of people who made a deliberate choice that led to the concentration camps and to death for many as martyrs.

Thus, the pertinent question is, What is the difference between those who were *victims* of the Holocaust and those who were *martyrs*?



The Holocaust

Victims or Martyrs?

WHY make a distinction between victims and martyrs? Because all those who suffered as a result of the Holocaust were victims, but only a minority were truly martyrs in the strict sense of the word. What is the difference?

A victim is "someone who is put to death or subjected to torture or suffering by another." Victims usually have no choice.

A martyr is "one who chooses to suffer death rather than renounce religious principles" or "one who sacrifices something very important to him in order to further a belief, cause, or principle." (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*) Thus, the victim is usually involuntary, while the martyr is voluntary.

Three Types of Victims

In a conference on the non-Jewish victims of the Nazis, Dr. Gordon Zahn, University of Massachusetts, defined the Nazis' victims under three head-

ings: (1) those who suffered *for what they were*—Jews, Slavs, Gypsies; (2) those who suffered *for what they did*—homosexuals, political activists, and resisters; (3) and those who suffered *for what they refused to do*—conscientious objectors, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others.

Millions of Jews suffered and died simply because they were Jews in the ethnic sense. It mattered not to Hitler's henchmen whether they were Orthodox or atheistic Jews. They were condemned to the "final solution," or extermination, as Hitler's method of ridding Europe of all Jews was called. Likewise, the Slavs, who for Hitler's crusade were mainly the Poles, Russians, and Ukrainians, were condemned just for being Slavic, 'an inferior race' in comparison to the "supreme" Aryan stock.

But the case of Jehovah's Witnesses in Europe was different. They were of many nationalities but were misconstrued as a pacifist threat to Germany's National Socialist regime because of their Christian stand of neutrality and refusal to be incorporated into the war effort of any nation. Hitler called them a 'brood to be exterminated.' How large was that "brood," and were they exterminated?

"Tiny Sect"—Threat to Nazis

At the abovementioned conference, Dr. Christine King presented facts about the Witnesses in Nazi Germany. She reported: 'That this tiny sect, 20,000 in a population of 65 million, 20 million of whom were Roman Catholics and 40 million of whom were Protes-

tants, drew the attention of the authorities is at first glance surprising. But when you consider their strong American connections, their international aspirations, and their perceived communist and Zionist sympathies it becomes immediately evident that they could not be tolerated.' Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses were neither Communists nor Zionists but were neutral in matters of politics and race. However, that was not understood by the Nazis.

The Nazi campaign against the Witnesses started in 1933 when Hitler came to power. In 1934, after receiving telegrams of protest from Witnesses all over the world, Hitler had an outburst in which he screamed: "This brood will be exterminated in Germany!" The persecution of the Witnesses mounted.

In their book *Anatomy of the SS State*, Helmut Krausnick and Martin Broszat state: "A further category of protective custody prisoners who after 1935 formed a substantial group of concentration camp inmates came from the members of the *Internationale Vereinigung der Ernst Bibelforscher* [Jehovah's Witnesses]. The organization had been dissolved in the Third Reich in 1933 and all recruiting or propaganda for Jehovah's Witnesses had been prohibited by law because the organization was primarily regarded as an instrument of pacifist activity."

"In February 1936 the order went out that all former leaders of the *Internationale Bibelforschervereinigung* (IBV) [Jehovah's Witnesses] should be taken into protective custody 'for up to two months'. In mid-May 1937 further measures were taken. The Gestapo ordered that: Everybody who in any form furthers the aims of

From "The New York Times," May 14, 1985

Jehovah's Witnesses Were Hitler's Victims

To the Editor:

My wife and I, both Germans, between us spent a total of 17 years in Nazi concentration camps. I was in Dachau and Mauthausen, and my wife, Gertrud, was in Ravensbrück. We were among the thousands of non-Jewish Germans who suffered because we did what the Nazi criminals failed to do—we were conscientious objectors to Hitler's obligatory idolatry and militarism. While thousands of us survived the camps, many did not.

Your recent letters telling of ordinary Germans who suffered under Hitler's Nazi regime (by Sabina Lietzmann, April 25, and Anna E. Reisgies, April 30) provoke me to mention one minority group, usually ignored, that was persecuted ferociously by the Gestapo. They were known as the *Ernste Bibelforscher* (Earnest Bible Students) or *Jehovas Zeugen* (Jehovah's Witnesses).

As soon as Hitler came to power in 1933, he commenced a systematic persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses because of their stand of neutrality in politics and war. As a result, thousands of German Witnesses, many of whom were friends of mine, became not only victims of the Holocaust but also martyrs. Why the subtle difference? Because we could have left the concentration camps at any time if we had been willing to sign a paper renouncing our religious beliefs.

Two brief examples will show the kind of spirit that burned in the breasts of some Germans who did resist Hitlerism. Wilhelm Kusserow, age 25, from Bad Lippspringe, was shot on April 27, 1940, because he refused to serve in Hitler's armies.

Two years later, Wilhelm's brother, Wolfgang, was beheaded in the Brandenburg prison for the same reason. Shooting was by then too dignified for conscientious objectors in Hitler's estimation. Wolfgang was 20 years old.

I could tell of hundreds of German men and women who suffered similar fates because, in the name of God, they dared to stand out against tyranny. Why there were not millions of principled Germans to stand and be counted, instead of just thousands, is perhaps a question for others to answer.

Martin Poetzinger
Brooklyn, May 1, 1985

the illegal IBV or the unity of its followers will be taken into protective custody and immediately brought before the courts for a judicial warrant of arrest to be issued." In most cases this "protective custody" resulted in a transfer to a concentration camp.

The authors also note: "In 1937/8 the overwhelming majority of the inmates of Dachau were political prisoners while in Sachsenhausen there was even in those days an equally large number of so-called anti-social elements, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses and habitual criminals."

World War II and Neutrality

Things got worse for the Witnesses in 1939 when war broke out between Germany and the Allies, Britain and France. What happened?

Twenty-three-year-old August Dickmann from Dinslaken was one of some 600 Witnesses held at Sachsenhausen in 1939.* When war broke out in September, camp commander Baranowsky saw his opportunity to break the will of the Witnesses. August refused induction into the army, and Baranowsky requested permission from Himmler to execute young Dickmann in front of all the camp inmates. He was convinced that many Witnesses would renounce their faith if they actually witnessed an execution. Dickmann was shot from behind by three SS men and then given the coup de grace, a pistol shot in the head, by an SS officer.

Gustav Auschner, an eyewitness, reported later: "They shot Dickmann and told us that we would all be shot if we didn't sign the declaration renouncing our faith. We would be taken to the sandpit 30 or 40 at a

* For a detailed account of the martyrdom of August Dickmann, see the 1974 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 165-8.

time, and they would shoot us all. Next day, the SS brought each of us a note to sign or else be shot. You should have seen their long faces when they went away without a single signature. They had hoped to frighten us with the public execution. But we had more fear of displeasing Jehovah than of their bullets. They did not shoot any more of us publicly."

A similar situation developed in the Buchenwald camp on September 6, 1939. Nazi officer Rödl told the Witnesses: "If anyone of you refuses to fight against France or England, all of you must die!" It was a moment of test. There were two fully armed SS companies waiting at the gatehouse. Yet, "not a single Jehovah's Witness answered the officer's appeal to fight for Germany. There was a brief silence, and then came the sudden order: 'Hands up! Empty your pockets!'" reports Eugen Kogon in *The Theory and Practice of Hell*. Were they shot? No, they were assaulted and robbed by the SS men and then assigned to dreadful quarry work. They were also barred from any hospital treatment.

Dr. King, quoted earlier, explained: "Yet surprisingly, for the Nazis, the Witnesses also could not be eliminated. The harder they were pressed the more they compressed, becoming diamond hard in their resistance. Hitler catapulted them into an eschatological battle, and they kept the faith. With their purple triangle (arm identification) they formed strong networks in the camps; their experience is valuable material for all who study survival under extreme stress. For survive they did."

Auschwitz survivor Anna Pawełczyńska wrote in her book *Values and Violence in Auschwitz*: "On the scale of Auschwitz's huge community, the Jehovah's Witnesses

constituted but a tiny, inconspicuous little group . . . Nevertheless, the [purple] color of their triangular badge stood out so clearly in the camp that the small number does not reflect the actual strength of that group. This little group of prisoners was a solid ideological force and they won their battle against Nazism. The German group of this sect had been a tiny island of unflagging resistance existing in the bosom of a terrorized nation, and in that same undismayed spirit they functioned in the camp at Auschwitz." She adds: "Everyone knew that no Jehovah's Witness would perform a command contrary to his religious belief and convictions."

An outstanding example in this respect is the Kusserow family from Bad Lippspringe in Germany. Franz and Hilda had a large family of 11 children, 6 boys and 5 girls. Under the Nazi regime, 12 members of the family of 13 were sentenced to a total of 65 years in prisons and concentration camps. In 1940, at the age of 25, Wilhelm was shot as a conscientious objector. Two years later his brother Wolfgang, age 20, was beheaded in Brandenburg penitentiary for the same reason. In 1946, at the age of 28, brother Karl-Heinz died of tuberculosis after being brought back sick from Dachau. The parents and the daughters all served time in prisons and concentration camps. (For a detailed account of this remarkable family of martyrs, see *The Watchtower* of September 1, 1985, pages 10-15.)

Eugen Kogon comments in his book *The Theory and Practice of Hell*: "One cannot escape the impression that, psychologically speaking, the SS was never quite equal to the

challenge offered them by Jehovah's Witnesses."

If this tiny group of Christian Witnesses, based on their Bible beliefs, could stand up to Hitler, one is bound to ask, why did the millions of Protestants and Catholics fail in this respect? Where was the clear, unequivocal religious leadership and guidance in Christian principles that would have withdrawn the support of some 60 million Germans from Nazism? (See box on page 13.)

What Sustained Them?

In his book *The Drowned and the Saved*, Primo Levi states: "In the grind of everyday life [in the concentration camps], the [religious and political] believers lived better . . . all held in common the saving force of their faith."

He adds: "Their universe was vaster than ours, more extended in space and time, above all more comprehensible: they had a . . . millennial tomorrow . . . a place in heaven or on earth where justice and compassion had won, or would win in a perhaps remote but certain future."



The Kusserow family—Wilhelm (second from right) was shot; Wolfgang (third from left) was beheaded; Karl-Heinz (second from left) died of tuberculosis after release from Dachau

The unbending faith of Jehovah's Witnesses in a future Millennium is best epitomized by the following letters from German Witnesses sentenced to death:

"My dear brother, sister-in-law, parents, and all other brothers included,

"I must write you the painful news that when you receive this letter I no longer will be alive. Please do not be overly sad. Remember that it is a simple matter for Almighty God to raise me from the dead. . . . Know that it was my attempt to serve him in my weakness and I am completely convinced that he has been with me right up to the end. I put myself into his keeping. . . . And now, my dear mother and father, may I thank you both for all the good things you have done for me. . . . May Jehovah repay you for all you have done.

"(Signed) Ludwig Cyranek"

Ludwig Cyranek was executed in Dresden for being one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Johannes Harms, after he was sentenced to death by guillotine, was given seven opportunities to recant as a Witness. Shortly before his execution in 1940, he sent this letter to his father, Martin, who was also imprisoned for being a Witness.

Martin Poetzinger (died in 1988) and his wife Gertrud each spent some nine years in Nazi concentration camps



"My dear father,

"We still have three weeks until December 3, the day on which we saw one another two years ago for the last time. I can still see your dear smile when you were working in the prison basement and I was out walking in the prison courtyard.

"I have considered you with pride during this time and also with amazement at the way you have been carrying your burden in faithfulness to the Lord. And now I, too, have been given an opportunity to prove my faithfulness to the Lord unto death, yes, in faithfulness not only up *unto* death, but even *into* death.

"My death sentence has already been announced and I am chained both day and night—the marks (on the paper) are from the handcuffs—but I still have not conquered to the full. . . . I still have an opportunity to save my earthly life, but only thereby to lose the real life.

"When you, dear father, are at home again, then be sure to take particular care of my dear Lieschen [his wife], for it will be particularly difficult for her, knowing that her dear one will not return. I know that you will do this and I thank you ahead of time. My dear father, in spirit I call to you, remain faithful, as I have attempted to remain faithful, and then we will see one another again. I will be thinking of you up until the very last.

"Your son Johannes."

These are just two of the hundreds of martyrs, Jehovah's Witnesses, who died because they dared to be conscientious objectors in an evil regime. The full story of their collective martyrdom would fill volumes.*

* For a more detailed report of the record of Jehovah's Witnesses in the concentration camps, see the 1974 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 108-212, and the 1989 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 111-34.



The Holocaust

Why Did God Allow It?

THE Holocaust has had a shattering effect on the faith of many people. Jews and non-Jews alike ask the questions, If there is a God, why did he allow it? Is it enough to ascribe it to 'man's inhumanity to man'? Or are there other factors that explain how men and women from "civilized" backgrounds could condone, teach, tolerate, or actively participate in State approved murder and genocide?

The Jewish Conservative community in the United States recently published a "Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism," in which they stated: "The existence of evil has always provided the most serious impediment to faith. Given the enormity of the horror represented by Auschwitz and Hiroshima, this dilemma has taken on a new, terrifying reality in our generation. The question of how a just and powerful God could allow the annihilation of so many innocent lives haunts the religious conscience and staggers the imagination."

Jehovah's Witnesses, along with millions of others, have been interested in that question, and understandably so, for many of their fellow believers perished in the Nazi concentration camps. Why is it, then, that God has tolerated evil?

Free Will and the Issue

The aforementioned Jewish publication gives a partial answer to the question, saying: "By creating human beings with free will, God, of necessity, limited His own future range of action. Without the real possibility of people making the wrong choice when confronted by good and evil, the entire concept of choice is meaningless. Endowing humankind with free will can be seen as an act of divine love which allows for our own integrity and growth, even if our decisions can also bring about great sorrow."

This opinion agrees with the record of the Hebrew Scriptures. From the very beginning, mankind has had freedom to choose—whether it was Adam and Eve's choosing to disobey God (Genesis 3:1-7) or Cain's choosing to murder his brother Abel. (Genesis 4:2-10) The Israelites of old also had a choice laid before them by Jehovah: "See, I do put before you today life and good, and death and bad. . . . And you must choose life in order that you may keep alive, you and your offspring."

—Deuteronomy 30:15, 19.

But there is one vital factor ignored by the Jewish statement. The very one who rebelled against God and later caused faithful Job's sufferings is still active, perverting men's minds with diabolical choices that have led in some cases to concentration camps, torture, and mass

murder. That one is clearly identified in the book of Job as a rebellious angelic son of God, Satan, the Adversary.—Job 1:6; 2:1, 2.

Satan's influence and the choices he offers pervade the world today, leading to violence and disdain for life and moral values. Anything that will divert mankind's attention from the hope of God's Kingdom rule, whether political philosophies, racial and religious divisions, drug abuse, excessive pleasures, human idols—all of these serve Satan's purpose. Little wonder that the Bible prophesied that when this wicked one would be cast down to the vicinity of the earth, it would mean "woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time"! Since 1914 we have been living in that period of violent anger.—Revelation 12:12.

Mankind has had, and still has, the option to submit to rule by God or by his Adversary, Satan. This very choice implies a long-standing issue between God and Satan going back some 6,000 years. But the Bible indicates that Jehovah God has set a time limit for the settling of this issue—and since 1914 mankind has been living in the time of the end for this Satan-dominated system.—2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.

God's Kingdom rule will soon destroy all evil and those who prefer it. Those who choose to do good will be granted everlasting life in submission to God on a perfect, unpolluted earth.—Revelation 11:18; 21:3, 4.

"Look! I Am Making All Things New"

The future that God has purposed for this earth and its obedient inhabitants will lift the weight of the past from our memory: "The former things shall not be remembered, they shall never come to mind."—Isaiah 65:17, *Tanakh, A New Translation*

of the Holy Scriptures According to the Traditional Hebrew Text.

Hence, when God's rulership holds sway over all the earth, whatever suffering that humans have experienced will eventually fade from their minds. At that time the joys will crowd out all the previous nightmare memories, for as the Bible promises, God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:4, 5.

The Bible clearly shows that the time is near when God will use his almighty power to remove those who cause suffering, whether humans or demons. Proverbs 2:21, 22 states: "The upright will inhabit the earth, the blameless will remain in it. While the wicked will vanish from the land." (*Tanakh*) Yes, God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." (Revelation 11:18) That will also include, finally, Satan the Devil.

God will not allow the wicked to mar the earth much longer; nor will he allow evil people to torment, torture, and imprison their fellowman. Any who do not choose to conform to His just laws will not be tolerated. Only those who respect God's will and law will continue living.

Over 4,000 years ago, God "saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but evil all the time." He acted by sending the great Deluge. (Genesis 6:5, *Tanakh*) There is all the more reason for God to act once again. But if we give God his due praise now, everlasting life will soon be our happy

lot.—Isaiah 65:17-25; John 17:3; 1 Timothy 6:19. However, what about all the millions of dead in the graves, including the victims of the Holocaust? What hope is there for them? Will they be forgotten?



Will the Holocaust Dead Return?

IS THERE hope for the millions of victims who died in the Holocaust? Could it be expected that God might perform some supreme act of justice in behalf of these victims of Nazism?

The Hebrew Scriptures offer a hope that sustained the faithful prophets and servants of God thousands of years ago. Was it based on the ancient Greek concept of an immortal soul that would survive the dead person? Hardly, since the Hebrew writings and teachings precede Greek philosophy by centuries.

Human Soul Mortal

The Hebrew account in Genesis tells us regarding the creation of the first man: "The Lord God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being [Hebrew, *lene'phesh*]." (Genesis 2:7, *Tanakh*) The Jewish Publication Society translation of 1917 says "soul" for *lene'phesh*. Thus, a soul, or

ne'phesh, is a being, a creature, whether animal or human.

Nowhere in the Hebrew Scriptures is immortality ever attributed to *ne'phesh*. In fact, the word "immortal" does not even appear in the Hebrew Scriptures. On the contrary, the Hebrew Bible indicates that *ne'phesh* is the person, the living soul. (Ezekiel 18:4, 20) Therefore, death is the end, at least temporarily, of the person as a living soul. It is a state of total inactivity, like a deep sleep, as the psalmist David expressed it: "Look at me, answer me, O Lord, my God! Restore the luster to my eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death."—*Psalm 13:4, Tanakh*.

Following the same simple logic, the Hebrew Scriptures tell us: "The dead know nothing; they have no more recompense, for even the memory of them has died. Whatever it is in your power to do, do with all your might. For there is no action, no reasoning, no learning, no wisdom in Sheol [mankind's common grave], where you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10, *Tanakh*) This agrees with Job's sentiment in the midst of suffering: "Why did I not die at birth? . . . For now would I be lying in repose, asleep and at rest." (Job 3:11, 13, *Tanakh*) Certainly, Job was not thinking in terms of being "palpably alive" as an immortal soul after death, as the "Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism" asserts.

Does that mean, then, that death signifies total oblivion? Very few people today can recall the names of their ancestors back five or ten generations, but what about God? Does he recall them? Will he recall them? Will he recall the millions of victims of Nazi

persecution? The millions who have died in senseless wars? The prophet Daniel believed that God can remember the dead. His prophecy indicated that there would be a resurrection of the dead, for he said: "Many of those that sleep in the dust of the earth will awake, some to eternal life, others to reproaches, to everlasting abhorrence."—Daniel 12:2, *Tanakh*.

A future resurrection to earthly life was the true hope of the faithful prophets and kings of ancient Israel. They had no concept of flitting about as an immaterial immortal soul in the hereafter. That same hope of a resurrection to perfect life on earth applies today. How do we know that?

Hope for Holocaust Victims

Over 1,900 years ago, a Jewish teacher offered such a hope when he said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment." (John 5: 28, 29) The expression "memorial tombs" implies that those in them are retained within God's memory until the day of their resurrection and restoration to life on earth.

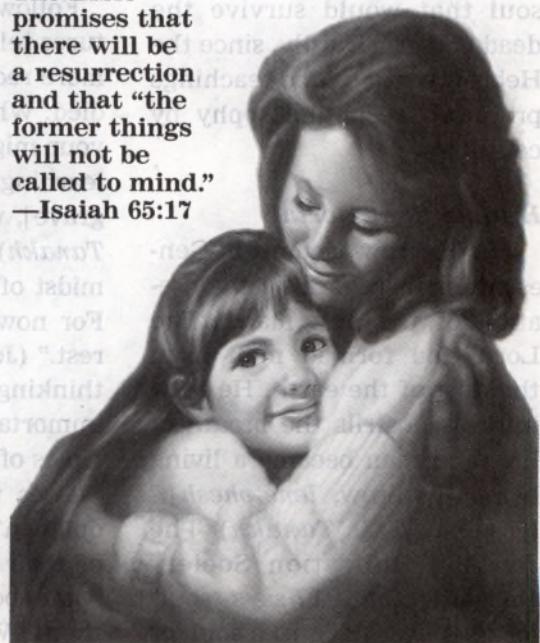
Therefore, in this sense the "Statement of Principles" issued by Conservative Judaism in the United States is true: "The image of *olam ha-ba* (a hereafter) can offer hope that we will not be abandoned to the grave, that we will not suffer oblivion." God's loving-kindness and justice mean that those resurrected will have the opportunity, by obeying God, to choose

everlasting life under the Kingdom rule of Jesus Christ, the Messiah.

So how does all of this affect millions of Jews, Slavs, and other victims of the Holocaust? They are in God's memory, awaiting the resurrection, when they will be given the choice—obedience to God with life in view or disobedience to him with adverse judgment in view. It is our hope that millions of them will make the right choice!

The Bible promises that there will be a resurrection and that "the former things will not be called to mind."

—Isaiah 65:17



Young People Ask...



Is There Something Wrong With Me?

The rapid spread of AIDS has focused world attention on the subject of homosexuality, bringing into the open many questions and fears among youths relative to their own sexuality. This article serves to address some of these fears in a dignified, helpful way.

"I AM a girl and I have a funny feeling about one of my teachers. I am afraid I might be in love with her or something." So wrote one 13-year-old girl. Her predicament is not unusual. The book *Adolescence* notes that the subject of homosexuality "arouses considerable anxiety among many adolescents . . . It is not uncommon for adolescents to wonder if they themselves are homosexuals."

Alan, now a young adult, recalls: "Mark was my first real friend. Prior to this, I had been the oddball in school, shunned because of my interest in the arts and a lack of interest in sports. Mark's friendship stirred in me warm feelings of admiration. I loved him in the sense of wanting to be with him and in wanting to be just like him. But I worried if these sudden strong feelings could be a manifestation of latent homosexual tendencies."

Where do such feelings come from? Are they necessarily evil?

The Origin of Same-Sex Crushes

There is nothing wrong with wanting to feel close to others. "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother," says Proverbs 18:24. A number of close relationships, free of homosexual overtones, are thus highlighted in the Bible; for example, Jesus and the apostle John, Naomi and Ruth, and David and Jonathan.—Ruth 1:16, 17; 1 Samuel 18:1; John 13:23.

Same-sex crushes, however, differ from mature relationships based on friendship or respect in that such crushes are mere infatuations that usually are one-sided. The object of the crush is often an older youth or adult (such as a teacher) who may be virtually idolized.

Most experts believe that such a crush is little more than a short-lived growing pain, "more of an indication of the developmental process of adolescence than of homosexuality." (*Coping With Teenage Depression*, by Kathleen McCoy) Youths are groping for identity, acceptance. As writer Sally Helgesen put it: "We often turn to older [youths] who appear to represent what we would like to become and try to pattern ourselves upon them."

Infatuation with members of the same sex may also develop because of loneliness, a lack of self-esteem, or a need for

emotional support. Recalls Alan: "The main factor was my emotional instability and self-alienation from my parents. Not feeling I could communicate with them, I confided more and more in Mark."

Dr. Richard E. Kreipe says that "crush relationships should not be considered 'homosexual' since they rarely result in intimate contact. Likewise, such behavior does not predict future homosexual orientation as an adult." (*Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*) Alan thus says: "My fears concerning my feelings toward Mark were eased. I realized that there really wasn't anything 'wrong' with me after all!"

Nevertheless, same-sex crushes often give birth to depression, jealousies, possessiveness, and virtual obsession with the one idolized—unhealthy emotions, indeed! How can you rid yourself of such feelings? Begin by taking a cool, objective look at the person you so idolize. Is it not true that he or she is just human, subject to all manner of frailties and shortcomings? (Romans 3:23) Fortunately, teenagers usually outgrow such crushes as they mature and begin to feel secure about themselves.

A Need to Keep on Guard

What, though, if the crush includes erotic thoughts or dreams about someone of the same sex? Remember, you are in "the bloom of youth"—the time when you are subject to an onslaught of new desires and feelings. (1 Corinthians 7:36) Until you learn how to handle these impulses, you may be subject to unwanted sexual arousal. And while it can be distressing to feel attracted to someone of your sex, it does not mean you will become a homosexual. Most youths outgrow such feelings.

Still, there is a need to guard against becoming ensnared by homosexuality. The Bible warns at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10: "Nei-

ther fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, ("homosexual perverts," *Today's English Version*) ... will inherit God's kingdom."—Compare Leviticus 18:22; 20:13; Romans 1:26, 27.

A youth who dwells on immoral thoughts runs the serious risk of having fantasy become reality. (James 1:14, 15) Surveys reveal that especially among preteenagers, "sexual play" among youths of the same sex is alarmingly common. True, most experts agree that this seldom leads to a life of homosexuality. Nevertheless, such "sexual play" (though perhaps done without a real comprehension of its moral implications) is unclean and could even amount to *por-nei'a*—the Greek word used in the Bible to describe immoral sexual conduct with another person. (Jude 7) Such conduct not only is displeasing to Jehovah but could lead a youth into homosexual acts and leave lasting emotional scars.

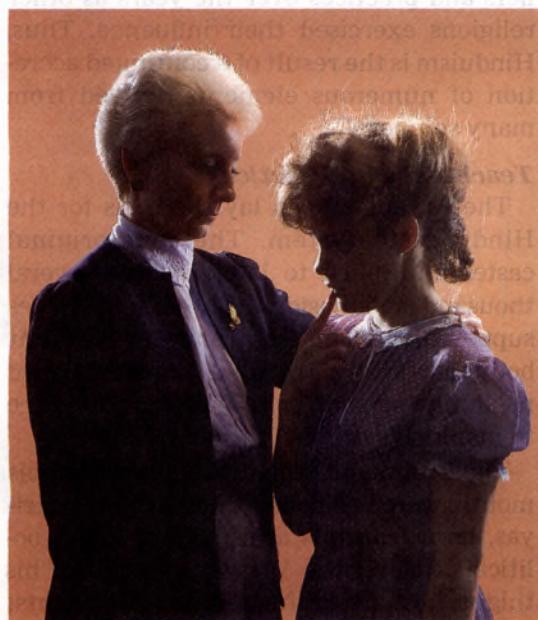
So if erotic thoughts about others of the same sex occur, work hard to keep your mind on things that are 'righteous, chaste, and lovable.' (Philippians 4:8) Avoid things that arouse immoral desires, such as certain TV shows, pornographic films, and perhaps even some fashion or bodybuilding magazines featuring lightly clad models. Dave, who was plagued by homosexual fantasies and dreams when he was a teenager, admits: "I'm sure that both masturbation and pornography directly contributed to these dreams because the things I would see in erotic literature and movies would oftentimes be relived at night." Only by filling his mind with proper thoughts was he able to curtail the lewd fantasies.

Jason, now a Christian elder, likewise felt a sexual pull toward members of his own sex when he was younger. He admits: "I think masturbation intensified my prob-

lem with same-sex fantasies. It produced in me a daily thinking along grossly immoral lines. This built up a strong appetite for further unclean desires." You need to 'deaden your body members as respects fornication.' (Colossians 3:5) Masturbation only feeds wrong desires.*

Confiding in your parents or a mature Christian also helps. Such ones may have practical advice to offer and can also monitor your progress in overcoming these feelings. Jason confided in a mature Christian and later in some congregation elders. (Proverbs 11:14) He recalls: "[My friend] told me to enlarge my circle of friends, both males and females, not always spending my time with the same ones."

* See the articles on masturbation appearing in the September 8, 1987; November 8, 1987; and March 8, 1988, issues of *Awake!*



Talking about your feelings with a parent or a mature Christian can help you put the matter in perspective

Until Jason gained control of his sexual feelings, further precautions were deemed prudent. He recalls: "I also had to learn to exercise care not to be affectionate with people of my sex who I found aroused me sexually. By affectionate, I mean by light horseplay and hugging." Such self-discipline harmonizes with the apostle Paul's exhortation to 'punish your body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to do.'—1 Corinthians 9:27, *The Living Bible*.

Easing Guilt Feelings

Some youths are afflicted with feelings of guilt and with doubts long after their infatuations have cooled. Some are also tormented by memories of having, as young children, unwittingly engaged in sex play of a homosexual nature.

Little would be accomplished by fretting over the distant past, especially when one has long since outgrown any attraction to the same sex.* After all, Jehovah 'forgives in a large way' and takes into consideration how limited one's understanding of sexual matters was as a child. (Isaiah 55:7) We can thus 'assure our hearts before God whenever our hearts condemn us, because God is greater than our hearts and knows all things.' (1 John 3:19, 20) Still, talking matters over with one's parents or with Christian elders may prove helpful.

Having a crush on someone of the same sex may be an embarrassing and distressing experience. But it need not leave a lifelong scar. It is yet one more youthful trial that can be overcome with self-discipline and the help of Jehovah God.

* If those feelings of attraction to the same sex have persisted, or if the acts of sexual misconduct occurred after one's baptism as a Christian, it is imperative that the youth seek the help of Christian parents and congregation elders.—James 5:14, 15.

Hinduism

Your Name Is Tolerance

"Every man should follow his own religion."

Ramakrishna, 19th-century Hindu reformer

TOLERANCE is normally considered a virtue. At any rate, it well describes that gigantic world religion known as Hinduism. In 1985 a reported 13.5 percent of the world's population, about 650,000,000 people, professed to be Hindus.

Hinduism has been termed "a complex national religion, of many different strands" and simply "a generic term for all the religions of India." *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* does little to clarify matters when it admits that "every attempt at a specific definition of Hinduism has proved unsatisfactory in one way or another, the more so because the finest Indian scholars of Hinduism, including Hindus themselves, have emphasized different aspects of the whole."

Hinduism is, in any case, an old religion. It originated in the Indus River valley, now part of Pakistan. An Indo-European people known as the Aryans moved into this area about 1500 B.C.E. Since they regarded certain works as sacred knowledge (*veda*), their religion became known as Vedism. It contained certain elements drawn from the religion of the ancestors of today's Iranians. Even the possibility of Babylonian influence exists, as the *Encyclopaedia of Reli-*

gion and Ethics explains, speaking of "various lines of coincidence between the Babylonian and early Hindu culture." The religion of the original settlers built upon these foreign elements, adding or dropping beliefs and practices over the years as other religions exercised their influence. Thus, Hinduism is the result of a continued accretion of numerous elements derived from many sources.

Teachings and Practices

The Aryans helped lay the basis for the Hindu caste system. The four original castes multiplied to later include several thousand subdivisions. These four castes supposedly emanated from the different body parts of *puruṣa*, a Sanskrit word meaning "person" or "a man" in reference to mankind's original father.

The Brahmins, supposedly born from his mouth, were religious leaders; the Kshatriyas, born from his arms, military and political leaders; the Vaisyas, born from his thighs, farmers, craftsmen, and merchants; and the Sudras, born from his feet, slaves. "Untouchables" were low-caste persons whose duties or way of life involved religiously unclean activities. Although India

You May Have Wondered

How do Hindus explain samsara? The *Bhagavad Gita* says: "As a man, casting off worn-out garments, taketh new ones, so the dweller in the body, casting off worn-out bodies, entereth into others that are new." The *Garuda Purana* explains that "it is the works of this self in a prior existence which determine the nature of its organism in the next . . . A man gets in life what he is fated to get, and even a god cannot make it otherwise." In illustration, *The Markandeya Purana* quotes a person who says: "I was born as a Brahmana, a Kshatriya, a Vaisya and a Sudra, and again as a beast, a worm, a deer and a bird."

Do Hindus consider cows sacred? Both the *Rig-Veda* and the *Avesta* refer to cows as "beings not to be killed." But this seems to be based on the policy of ahimsa rather than on the belief in reincarnation. Nevertheless, *The Markandeya Purana* points up the seriousness of failing to obey this law, saying that "one who kills a cow goes to hell for three successive births."

How do Hindus view the river Ganges? "Saints, who are purified by bathing in the waters of this river, and whose minds are devoted to Kesava [Vishnu], obtain final liberation. The sacred river, when heard of, desired, seen, touched, bathed in, or hymned, day by day purifies all beings. And those who living even at a distance of a hundred yoyanas [900 miles] exclaim 'Ganga and Ganga' are relieved of the sins committed during the three previous existences."—*The Vishnu Purana*.

Who are the Hare Krishnas? They are members of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness, a missionary form of devotional Hinduism. Its founder, the late A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, brought his message to the United States in 1965. It retains certain elements of Hindu asceticism, centers around the worship of the god Krishna, and stresses the chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra. Bhaktivedanta considered the mere reciting of God's name sufficient for salvation.

and Pakistan outlawed the severest forms of the Hindu caste system about 40 years ago, elements of it still exist.

For a time, animal sacrifices were an important part of worship, requiring a priesthood to perform necessary ceremonies. The Brahmins grew so powerful that a branch of the religion became known as Brahmanism. "The priests were feared and honored more than the gods," says T. W. Organ, "because the priests could destroy enemies merely by changing the ritual." As sacrificial rites became more complex, a trend began that stressed asceticism, or mortification of the flesh.

Samsara was a basic belief. It was propounded, at the latest, in the Upanishads, that group of Hindu scripture dating most likely from the first half of the first millennium B.C.E. They taught that after death and an intermediate stay in heaven or hell, individuals are reborn as humans or animals on a level either higher or lower than the one previously enjoyed, this according to the law of Karma. Life's goal is to achieve moksha, release from the relentless cycle of birth and rebirth, being absorbed into the ultimate source of order called Brahma.

Vedism knew many gods. But according to the book *Concepts of Indian Philosophy*, its adherents found this unsatisfying, so "they slowly drifted towards a monotheistic conception of the godhead. . . . One process was to lump all the previous gods together . . .

[to] produce a conceptualised god." Brahma therefore came to be an impersonal god without attributes and qualities but one personified in various deities.

The desire to achieve moksha is based on what historian Will Durant calls the "revulsion against life . . . , which runs darkly through all Hindu thought." This gloomy and pessimistic attitude is well illustrated in the *Maitri Upanishad*, which asks: "In this body, which is afflicted with desire, anger, covetousness, delusion, fear, dependency, envy, separation from the desirable, union with the undesirable, hunger, thirst, senility, death, disease, sorrow and the like, what is the good of enjoyment of desires?"

A way of avoiding this unhappy condition was given in the Puranas, a series of texts probably composed during the first centuries of the Common Era. Meaning "ancient stories," these were widely available and came to be known as the scriptures of the common man. The *Garuda Purana* claims: "True happiness lies in the extinction of all emotions. . . . Where there is affection there is misery. . . . Renounce affection and you shall be happy." Unfortunately, this solution seems almost as dreary as the condition of unhappiness it is designed to assuage.

Prior to this, the *Bhagavad Gita*, meaning "the Lord's Song" and sometimes called "the most important book ever written in India," suggested three ways of achieving liberation. "The path of duties" stressed discharging ritual and social obligations, "the path of knowledge" included practicing meditation and Yoga, and "the path of devotion" involved devotion to a personal god. The *Bhagavad Gita* has been likened to Christendom's "New Testament." Most Indians know some of its verses by heart, and many of them chant memorized portions daily.

The *Bhagavad Gita* is actually only a

small section of a Hindu epic called the *Mahabharata*, which contains a hundred thousand verses, easily making it the world's longest poem. With the incorporation of the *Bhagavad Gita* into the *Mahabharata* (probably in the third century B.C.E.), Hinduism had finally become a distinct religion apart from Vedism and Brahmanism.

Constant Reform

From its beginning, Hinduism has been marked by constant reform. Foremost among reformers of the sixth century B.C.E. were Siddhārtha Gautama and Vardhamāna Mahāvīra, the founders of Buddhism and Jainism respectively.

Mahāvīra considered himself the 24th in a line of Jinas (conquerors) upon whose lives Jainism is based. This religion differs from Hinduism in that it rejects a creator, teaching that the world has always existed. It lays particular emphasis on the doctrine of ahimsa. The nonviolent course followed by 20th-century Indian leader Mohandas Gandhi during his struggle for Indian independence was actually an application, in a political way, of this religious doctrine.

According to Jainism, right belief, right knowledge, and right conduct, combined

In Our Next Issue

- Violence—What Can You Do?
- Something Worse Than AIDS
- How Can I Carry On a Successful Courtship?

with the practicing of Yoga, lead to liberation. At the same time, it contends that everything is essentially a matter of viewpoint, thus ruling out absolute standards of right and wrong. This points up the tolerant attitude of Hinduism, from which Jainism sprang.

Some 2,000 years later, in the 15th century, another reformer arose. Named Nānak, he attempted to codify a religion acceptable to both Hindus and Muslims. The result was Sikhism, "Sikh" being derived from a Sanskrit word meaning "disciple." Nānak was the first of ten gurus, the tenth of whom founded in 1699 a fraternity called the Khalsa (pure ones). To eliminate caste distinctions and to emphasize their being soldiers of their faith, members were given the common surname Singh (lion). They were required to observe the five K's: to leave their hair and beard (*kesh*) uncut; to fasten their turban-covered hair with a comb (*kangha*); to wear shorts (*kachhs*), perhaps under long trousers; to carry a saber (*kirpan*); and to wear a steel bracelet (*kara*). The line of gurus ended at ten. The sacred book of Sikhism, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, took its place. Compiled in 1604, it was revised a century later.*

In the latter part of the 19th century, Calcuttan priest Ramakrishna tried blending Hinduism with what he considered the best of Western religious thought. He argued that even as water has different names in different languages, so "Sat-chitananda, the everlasting-intelligent-bliss, is invoked by some as God, by some as Allah, by some as Jehovah, by some as Hari, and by others as Brahman." Even "as one can ascend to the top of a house by means of a ladder or a bamboo or a staircase or a rope,

so divers are the ways and means to approach God. . . . Different creeds are but different paths to reach the Almighty."

Such a tolerant attitude accommodates great leeway in Hindu worship. It allows some sects to direct their worship mainly to Brahma (Brahmanism), others to Vishnu (Vaishnavism), and still others to Siva (Saivism). It allows folk Hinduism, Shaktism, and Tantrism to preach Hinduism each in its own fashion. Tantrism, for example, includes tribal and folk practices and stresses goddess worship, which appeared early in the history of Hinduism. Indians speak of their country as "Mother India," and it is represented by a goddess named Bhārat Mā.

Tolerance—Good or Bad?

"Hinduism has constantly proved itself capable of absorbing new teachings," writes Geoffrey Parrinder, British theologian and lecturer in comparative religion. "This syncretism, or mingling, of religions," he adds, "is perhaps the commonest line of Hindu teaching today." Many people apparently agree with this Hindu philosophy of tolerance, saying, as it were, 'Serve God in the way that is right for you.'

But Parrinder points out that "by equating all beliefs," there is the "danger of failing to discriminate between good and bad." And is it not becoming increasingly obvious that religion can be bad as well as good? Is there any virtue in introducing elements of bad religion into one's own?

Today, many people are disappointed with their religion. So was a Hindu of the Kshatriya ruling caste who lived some two and a half millenniums ago. Hinduism failed to answer his questions. He sought enlightenment. Our next installment, "An Enlightenment That Promised Liberation," will tell us more.

* As of 1985, some 3,300,300 Jains were found living in 5 different countries, and about 16,000,000 Sikhs living in 19.

From Our Readers

Culture Gap

Many thanks for the article "Can the Culture Gap Be Bridged?" (August 22, 1988) Three and a half years ago I emigrated from a Western country to the Far East, as my husband wanted to return to his fatherland. From experience I can say that every word in that article is true. I was surprised at the excellent discussion of the problems that arise between diverse cultures. The counsel given is practical and effective. The article has taught me to avoid comparisons with my former way of life.

A. D., Indonesia

Privacy

I am 17 years old and a regular reader of the series "Young People Ask . . ." which until now I have always found gave really good tips. But the article entitled "How Can I Get More Privacy?" (October 8, 1988) was a big disappointment. You suggest that if my parents make unwelcome visits to my room or peer into my diary, they do so only because they love me. I just cannot see it that way. My parents should trust me enough not to have to 'do the rounds' and check up on me. If they were ever to glance into my diary, I would never forgive them. I would not be able to trust them again or to tell them things. My diary is where I write about my personal problems and feelings. Whatever my parents need to know, I tell them, and they are satisfied.

S. F., Federal Republic of Germany

The article was not condoning or recommending the practice (over which a youth has little control anyway) but was merely helping youths understand why some par-

ents do this—that it is not mere nosiness.
—ED.

I'm a 12-year-old. Right before the article about privacy was out, my mother had found a few letters I had written, and she read them. At the time I didn't understand why, but the article helped me!

A. B., United States

I found the article informative, with much sound counsel. But a red light came on when I read the example of a young girl whose mother would yell to leave the door to her room open when she had a boy over. What business does a young boy have in a young girl's room, which is usually a bedroom in the first place? None! My mom certainly never allowed it. The living room, the family room, or the kitchen, where others are nearby, would be the wiser course for these teens to entertain or study. Some teens reading that part of the article might be misled!

J. J., United States

J. J.'s concern and suggestions are well taken. The "Young People Ask . . ." series is written for a general audience. The article was merely showing how even people who do not necessarily live by Bible standards view matters. To them, leaving the door open is thus a safeguard.—ED.

I just wanted to thank you for the article "Why Can't I Have More Privacy?" (July 8, 1988) I'm 13 years old. Not long ago I asked just that question about privacy. My parents and I had the same go-around about having a TV in my room as Keith and his parents did. Although I didn't get a TV, I understand why my parents were concerned about what I watched.

S. H., United States

Watching the World

Bibles Flow Into U.S.S.R.

The flow of Bibles into the Soviet Union has grown from a trickle into a veritable flood. In May of 1988 *The Mainichi Daily News* of Japan reported that when 20 Russian Bibles went on sale in Moscow, a young engineer named Vladimir reacted in surprise: "I have never seen a Bible in a store anywhere in my life." According to the *Los Angeles Times*, the Soviet government allowed only 20,000 Bibles to enter the country between 1985 and 1987. Then came the news that the U.S.S.R. had accepted some 100,000 Bibles in the fall of 1988. (See *Awake!* of March 8, 1989.) The final tally for 1988 was reportedly nearly 500,000 Bibles and New Testaments sent from Europe. More dramatic still, the *Times* reported that the U.S.S.R. had accepted offers of some two million New Testaments from two Western sources that were known for having previously smuggled Bibles into Soviet territory.

Bhopal's Tragic Aftermath

The tragedy is far from over for the victims of the disastrous chemical leak four years ago at a Union Carbide pesticide plant in Bhopal, India. The magazine *India Today* reports that while the lethal fumes of methyl iso-cyanate killed some 1,800 in December 1984, by

the end of 1988 the death toll had mounted to 3,289—an average of one victim dying every day since the deadly leak. "Tens of thousands" more are condemned to a "slow death." But the magazine observes: "Some of those who survived almost wish they hadn't. They have gradually been reduced to frustrated despair as hopes of relief and compensation recede." Apparently, the legal battle to win compensation for the victims is quite complex. The end of the process, according to *India Today*, is "nowhere in sight."

Third World Dumping

Developed nations that have trouble getting rid of their garbage



have begun to eye Third World countries as possible dumping sites. According to the *Journal Water Pollution Control Federation*, industrial nations use the prospect of easy earnings to lure less developed nations into accepting foreign wastes under the guise of landfill or fertilizer. But this garbage is often dangerous. For example, when many

tons of industrial ash from the United States were dumped on an island off the coast of Guinea, West Africa, most of the trees died. In Nigeria 4,000 tons of toxic chemical waste from Italy was discovered. "Local residents are getting sick," said the report. One official from a Third World country told the *Journal* that less industrialized countries "lack the technical sophistication to measure the degree of toxicity in wastes and are at great risk when receiving such waste."

Pollution Update

Countries as diverse as Poland and Colombia share an all-too-common denominator: pollution. In Poland, the Academy of Sciences published a report in Warsaw, declaring that a third of the country's population is inhabiting an ecological disaster area. The river Vistula carries tens of thousands of tons of noxious pollutants out to the Baltic Sea, ruining beaches for vacationers and upsetting the ecological balance. Similarly, the Bogotá River in Colombia is saturated with more than a thousand different pollutants. It contains 50 times more mercury than the accepted safe level. The pollution is said to be the likely cause of the high rate of deformities among babies in riverside villages. Both the Colombian government and the Polish

government have mounted programs to control pollution.

"Safe Sex" Unsafe?

According to *The Star* of Johannesburg, South Africa, Dr. Claude Newbury has evidence proving that so-called safe sex, the wearing of condoms to prevent the spread of AIDS, is not all that safe. Citing statistics on the failure rate of condoms, Dr. Newbury concludes: "The only safe method of avoiding sexually transmitted AIDS, or for that matter any other sexually transmissible disease, is to maintain your virginity before marriage, marry a virgin and be totally and exclusively faithful to your spouse until death." Why, then, is the promotion of "safe sex" so popular? "Because," Dr. Newbury writes, "most doctors, under the influence of the permissive society, have lost the moral courage to tell a hedonistic world that sodomy, and other forms of extra-marital sex, are morally, socially and medically harmful, and could even be fatal."

How Much to Be Young Again?

How much would you be willing to pay to be made young again? A Tokyo bank asked 600 women that question, and their responses were enthusiastic: Women in their 40's were willing to pay about ¥10 million (\$80,000, U.S.), while an eager 10 percent of the group was willing to part with as much as ¥30 million (\$240,000, U.S.). The highest bidder was a woman who said she would pay ¥70 million (\$560,000, U.S.) to be rejuvenated. Of course, no amount of money can make such a hope

possible. But God can. He promises a time when old age and death will be done away with. (Revelation 21:4) That is why in the Bible book of Job we read: "Let his flesh become fresher than in youth; let him return to the days of his youthful vigor."—Job 33:25.

Generic Is Cheaper

Generic drugs are generally 50 percent cheaper than their brand-name equivalents, accord-



ing to a recent FDA (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) report. But are they as good? The FDA concluded that generic drugs can be safely used as equivalents to the brand-name ones.

Global War Machine

"Some 27 million men (and a few hundred thousand women) are trained to kill each other," noted *Asiaweek* magazine in reporting the size of the world's armed forces. That figure includes all those who make up the overall war machine, such as clerks, drivers, and cooks. What is the point of maintaining these gargantuan forces trained in destruction? The magazine answers: "By being so prepared, they won't need to kill." But it goes on to note that many armies for enforcing peace have "clashed in recent history," sometimes with "horrific loss of life."

School Bullies

"Thousands and thousands" of students are in fear of going to school, declares a study by Norwegian psychologist Dan Olweus. Based on figures from the study, *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada, estimates that there could be 45,000 Canadian students victimized by 35,000 bullying classmates. According to the newspaper, Olweus said that "60 per cent of these schoolyard bullies will have at least one formal conviction by the age of 24." In an interview, Olweus stated that "often parents don't know what's going on and schoolteachers do little to interfere." Some of the terrorized pupils are said to "develop somatic symptoms such as headaches and stomach pains to cope with the stress." The Scandinavian study has prompted the development of intervention programs involving parents, teachers, and students.

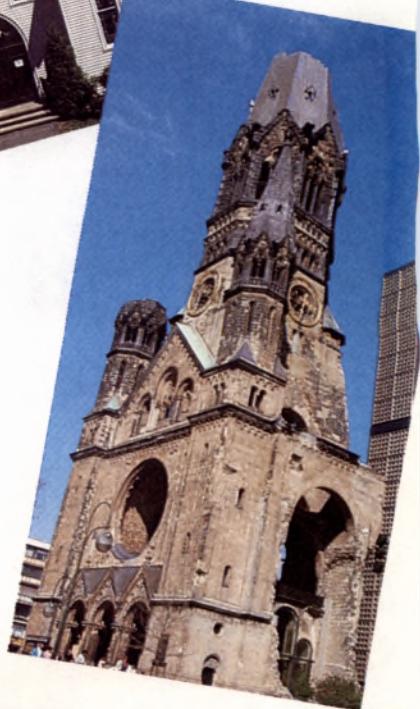
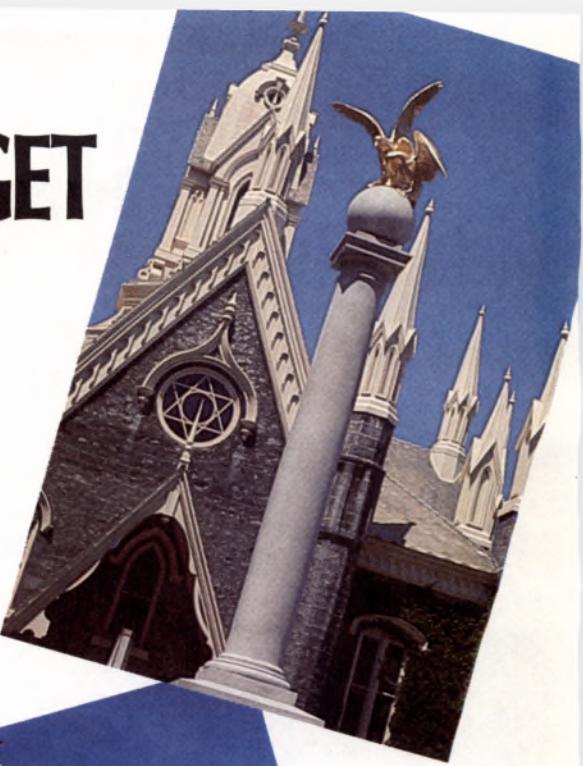
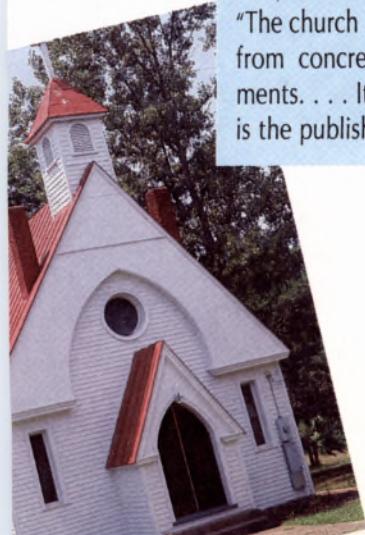
Third World Children Dying

According to UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), in 1987 backslding economies in Third World countries caused the death rate for children under five years of age to swell by some 500,000. UNICEF's director, in an interview with *The New York Times*, explains why: "Most societies under the pressure of economic adversity have cut back disproportionately on services: health, education, social welfare programs." What has brought on all the economic adversity? One culprit is the debt crisis. Governments in Latin America, Africa, and Asia have fallen deeper and deeper into debt of late, and so have less to spend on services that the poor need. As UNICEF's director told the *Times*: "A resolution of the debt crisis is required if you're going to get light into those tunnels."

CHURCHES FORGET "First and Foremost Task"

JESUS said that the first and foremost task of Christians was to preach the "good news [gospel] of the kingdom." (Matthew 24:14) Instead, churches around the world often advocate certain political choices to their parishioners. Through oral sermons, the press, and even pastoral letters, the laity are urged to support wars and other violent movements fighting established governments. They are encouraged to join boycotts and protests for various political causes.

This political meddling has received so much attention from the churches that the Dutch journal *Kerk en Theologie* (Church and Theology) says that the main mission of the churches has become of secondary importance. It declared in its review of the book *Alles is politiek, maar politiek is niet alles* (Everything Is Politics, but Politics Is Not Everything): "The church . . . should keep itself far from concrete political pronouncements. . . . Its first and foremost task is the publishing of the Gospel."



CHURCHES PROJECT

"The End and Foremost Task"

It's been a year since the 2013
Year of Churches was officially
declared. "Good news" (good) to the
pastor (M. C. Ladd), "not good" to the
churches, because the "good" is
about the pastor's personal character
and the "not good" is about the pastor's
ability to lead his church. The pastor
was not good, which makes him
a bad example, especially to young
people who are transitioning to their
own spiritual leadership for various
reasons.

The "not good" describes the pastor's
failure to fulfill his pastoral role by
providing spiritual guidance to his
congregation. This failure has led to
several changes in the church's leadership
team, including the replacement of
the pastor with a new one. The new
pastor has already made significant
changes in the church's structure and
operations, including the implementation
of a new budgeting system and the
creation of a new committee to oversee
the church's financial management.

The new pastor has also initiated a