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CHAPTER ONE

All in One Day

Its name is Oberlauringen. It is located in southern Germany. I was born there. I spent my first eleven years there. It is my village.

I left in the summer of 1939. My parents had arranged for me to be brought to England under the care of a child refugee program *(Kindertransport)* when it became clear that they could not leave Germany.[1] I left behind my mother and father, our house and the yard around it, our synagogue and our cemetery, our neighbors and their daughter, Margot. I used to play with Margot.

My older half-brother, Ludwig, left home shortly before I did, expecting to emigrate to Palestine. He had joined a movement (Hachsharah) that was to train him to become a farmer, and this training was to take place in Holland. He was living in Holland when the invading Germans caught him. He was deported to the death camp of Sobibor in Poland where, I was informed, his life was ended immediately. Ludwig was my "half-brother" because his mother had died while giving birth to him. Hence, his life began and ended in horror. He was most gentle and loving.

I took with me to England memories of a fear-filled life in Oberlauringen. I wanted to escape, yet as I write these words, more than sixty years after my departure, I still do not know whether I ever really left Oberlauringen.

For years I did not think about Oberlauringen at all, but it lingered as a hazy mist about my childhood. I kept moving from place to place. I had moved thirty-six times when I stopped counting my movings. I hate moving. I tell myself that the only thing that makes moving bearable is the hope that the latest move is the very last move I shall ever make. But I have kept on moving. After moving from Germany I have lived—and moved—in England, America, Israel, and Canada.

Throughout these movings there remained anger and dread about Oberlauringen. Was Oberlauringen still my home? Was it my anchor in the world, the one place from which I should not have moved? I told myself I would never go back there. Oberlauringen was Germany, and it held the terror of being a Jewish child there in the 1930s. I would have a heart attack if I ever set foot on German soil again.

Then, over the course of years, the anger and dread gave way to a strange yearning. Perhaps there was something more I could learn about my parents, about Margot, about the other Jewish families in Oberlauringen. Perhaps there would be something else, something I could not quite put my finger on, something more. I must go back. There was so much that was unfinished and unclear. Oberlauringen was holding me hostage, and I had to seek release. This yearning gradually but unyieldingly overpowered the sense of dread I associated with that island in the world.

In 1979 my wife and I made plans to go to Oberlauringen. Without my wife's support I would not have had the courage. I told myself I would not stay overnight; darkness in Oberlauringen held a special terror. I would arrange to arrive in the morning and leave in the afternoon. All I had to do would be carried out in one day. And this is what I did. Except that the one day stretched backward, into the past, and forward into the rest of my life.

Confronting Oberlauringen would not have been possible had I not, inadvertently, earlier confronted the German language. When I confronted the German language, I had to confront myself. This confrontation is ongoing.

From 1939, when I left Germany, up to 1972, I never voluntarily spoke German. In my early years as a refugee, when German-speakers—fellow refugees, relatives, friends—spoke to me in German, I replied as best I could in English. This was no conscious decision; I did not deliberately set out to stop speaking German. I simply could not produce words in German. I was unable; my inner being stopped me.

In 1972 we moved to Israel, my family and I. It was to be a permanent emigration. I had obtained a professorship—a tenured full professorship—at Tel Aviv University. As academic positions go, this was surely a grand prize (even though I was already a full professor at the State University of New York at Buffalo).

Two entirely unexpected things happened to me in Israel, and both relate to language. My German returned easily, and Hebrew proved impossible for me to learn. Upon meeting German-speaking relatives in Israel I found myself speaking German, as well as English, comfortably. I spoke with some ease, with a sense of being at home in the language. In the land of

Israel, I was speaking German for the first time in thirty-three years. During these intervening years I had felt that I was unable to speak German. I was now realizing that I could express things in German that I could not express in English. I could feel things in German that I could not feel in English. German was a rich and nurturing language for me. Yet, lurking in the background, German was also the language of fear and terror for me. I had spoken nothing but German up to the age of eleven and returning to that language, I was once again connected to that sense of terror. In some ways, I again became that terror-struck child. For many years I had guarded that child by blocking out the German language. I shall say more about my newfound terror in a moment.

In addition to not having been able to speak German, I could not sing. Up to the time I was married, in 1969, I had told myself that I was unable to sing. I could not produce a tune. The ability to sing had suddenly left me during childhood, when I was expected to join my classmates in enthusiastically singing the Horst Wessel song that goes "When Jewish blood comes spurting from the knife then all goes really well. . . ."

During my "non-singing" years—long after I had left Germany—I was occasionally the guest of friends at Passover Seder celebrations. There I heard certain Passover songs for the first time. I did not participate in singing because "I could not sing." I merely listened. Yet years later, during my marriage, when I conducted Seder services for my family, I discovered that I had learned these songs, and was able to sing them with much enthusiasm.[2]

Upon arriving in Israel, we moved to a residential *ulpan* where a very sophisticated program for teaching the Hebrew language to newcomers took place. Here our everyday needs—food, lodging, and child care—were provided for while we engaged in an intensive program of studying the language.

For most people this program works well. They learn the language. But the program did not work for me. I simply could not learn the Hebrew language. During three months of classes, as I remember it, I never once spoke during class. I froze. And without speaking, one obviously cannot learn to speak a language. Perhaps I was assuming that I could replicate my singing experience, that I could learn the language without speaking it. More likely, though, I was telling myself that learning a new language would open me up to frightening issues. The safest thing was not to learn it. At the time I had no understanding of what I was doing, at least not consciously.

German immigrants who came to Israel in the 1930s had a reputation for holding onto German as their chief language. These "Yekkes" did learn Hebrew, but they tended to feel superior to Hebrew-speakers, to regard German as a more dignified and sophisticated language. I, on the other hand, had the greatest difficulty learning any Hebrew at all, and not because I felt superior, but because I felt intimidated by and terrified of confronting this new language.

Because of my sense of terror I could not function well in the Hebrew language. I began teaching in English. No one at my university pressed me to teach in Hebrew, but I knew I should be—if not immediately, then surely within a few years. I did function minimally. I could buy a loaf of bread by asking for it in Hebrew. But I was nowhere near the level of proficiency that would allow me to teach in Hebrew.

I have since heard of studies of child-survivors of horrors who were transported to a country where they knew no one. They knew neither the customs nor the language of that country. Nonetheless, most of these children made a reasonably adequate adjustment. They learned the new language and operated within it successfully. But later in life, if they were called upon to make another major transition, including having to learn another new language, then all the trauma of the first transition broke out into the open. They suddenly reverted to being little children who had been unable to express their fears, forebodings, and terror.

This is what apparently happened to me in Israel. Here I was, an adult with a family of my own, holding a highly prestigious position. (In Israel, being a full professor with lifetime tenure is even more prestigious than it is in the United States.) Nonetheless, I felt like a frightened child who could not understand what people around him were saying. By not learning the language I was making myself into a child, one who felt terribly alone and lost and who could not function as an adult. Let me give just one example. At Tel Aviv University I was the only full professor of sociology. I was therefore the sociology faculty's representative on the University Senate—the governing body of the university. In the Senate deliberations, which were conducted in Hebrew, I could not understand what anyone was saying. To say that this was embarrassing would be an understatement.

My mounting discomfort caused us to change our plans, and we eventually returned to North America. By then, however, I had re-established a feeling of linkage between me and the German language. Without that feeling I could not have considered visiting Germany.

Why was I yearning to go back to Oberlauringen? What was I looking for? Was I trying to address my homelessness? Or, more accurately, my "placelessness"?

Place seems to be the key issue I was addressing. In no place did I ever feel at one with the world, and this nurtured the urge to move, move, move. I think I was looking for a place through which I could affirm that I belong here, on this earth. And where better to look for that affirmation than the place where I was born?

Perhaps I also was attempting to find a place, a physical location, where I could mourn my loved ones in a tangible way. In the United States, Vietnam War veterans and their families seem to have found that the Vietnam Memo-

rial in Washington provides them with a place, a physical location, where they can start to focus their mourning for their loved ones who fell in that war. Here, at long last, grief could be expressed in a tangible way. So I seem to have sought a place where my mourning could begin to have focus and be expressed in a tangible way. In the case of the Vietnam mourners, this starting point means locating the name of the loved one inscribed on the memorial and then, literally and physically touching the name.[3] The memorial becomes the gravesite. Perhaps I subconsciously believed that Oberlauringen was such a gravesite, where my diffuse mourning could finally be focused and that I could thereby achieve greater inner peace.

While finding a tangible place to mourn is part of the story, it is not the whole story. At the time I seriously considered visiting Germany, there was a demon at work within me. When the Second World War ended, in 1945, I made inquiries about the fate of my parents and my brother to various search organizations, chiefly the Red Cross. I received information that they had been deported to Poland and were officially declared dead. But at the time I did not go to Poland or to Germany to look for them.

It seemed hopeless. And, I was only seventeen years old when I received confirmation that my family had perished. But some people, I have since learned, went to look for their loved ones despite such official reports. And in 1984, after attending a Holocaust commemoration event in Washington, I also resumed looking. To this day I make inquiries. Whenever I meet someone who was in camp Westerbork (in Holland), where my brother was briefly held before being sent to the death camp of Sobibor, I ask whether they knew a Ludwig Katz. Earlier, in 1967, I went to Holland and made inquiries. But I did not go to Germany.

My not searching for my parents was not accidental. Whenever I thought of looking for my parents—and I did think about looking for my parents—I was struck by a terrible fear that I might find them *alive*. I was terrified that I might actually find them, and that they were not dead. This was my personal demon, at work within me.

The first time I admitted this openly, to myself and to others, was in the year 1991, forty-six years after I had received official confirmation of my parents' death and long after my return to Oberlauringen in 1979. The expression of fear that my parents were alive came out of me, without warning, during a group session at a conference of child-survivors of the Holocaust. Did I want my parents to be dead?

As I mentioned previously, my parents had sent me to England in 1939 under the auspices of a child refugee program when it became clear that they could not leave Germany. After I arrived in England, I wrote to them only about four times during the three years when it was still possible to write to them, before they were deported to their death. (One could write letters until

the war started, and twenty-five–word messages through the Red Cross during the war.) I knew full well that hearing from their child was one of the few things for which they lived. By not writing to them, was I trying to kill them? Or, at least, wish them out of my life? (My sister, I later found out, also wrote to them very rarely.)

The 1991 group session of fellow child-survivors was led by a very wise psychologist. His response to my outburst was a gentle question: “What did you want from your parents?” My answer came in the high-pitched tearful voice of a little boy: “I wanted them to take care of me.” This awakening took place when I was sixty-three years old.

In June 1992 my personal demon raised its head again. I had read a book about persons who had saved Jews during the Holocaust. The book was much praised, yet I found myself becoming very upset—angry, in a state of turmoil, and feeling physically ill—in response to that book. For quite a while I was too distraught to understand why I was so upset. Why was I reacting so negatively to what others regarded as a story of glorious human courage?

Then it dawned on me what my issue was. Why had no one saved my parents? And, closer to me, why had I not done more to save my parents? In recent years I have heard of refugee children in England who persuaded adults they met to sponsor the rescue of their parents. I had failed to do so. It did occur to me, but I did not do so. This is why I was so furious. Suddenly it came to me: I must write about my visit to Oberlauringen. It would be my one effort to “do more” about my parents. This is how this chapter was born.

Memory

In preparation for my visit to Oberlauringen, I asked my sister for names of persons whom I might contact. She gave me the names of two of her former classmates. I wrote to them, saying that I should like to visit. They replied very warmly, saying they looked forward to the visit.

Why did I need to ask my sister for names? I remembered each Jewish person in the village. I remembered their names, their faces, the houses where they had lived. I remembered their personalities, their crazinesses and kindnesses. I remembered their seats in the synagogue, and how they said their prayers. I remembered their work. I remembered their voices.

I could not, however, remember a single Christian person. Not a name, not a face, not a house. Not a voice. Not a look. The world of non-Jews—of Christians—was void, and to enter into this void I had to ask my sister for names. I had to contact Christians because all the Jews, as far as I knew, were gone. I could not contact any of them.

Upon our arrival in Oberlauringen, my wife and I were greeted very enthusiastically, and even affectionately, by the two women to whom I had

written. But I did not remember them, and I did not remember a single other person I met that day—not even a man who came up to me, saying, "Don't you remember me? We were the two smallest ones in class and we always sat together." I did not tell him so, but I did not remember him. During my visit no memory of individual Christians in the village came back.

I can now speculate about this selective amnesia of mine. When it happened, however, I did not understand what was going on. Clearly one's subconscious mind can speak honestly and directly, even when one's conscious mind is indirect, fearful, and dishonest. That entire day I adopted a friendly posture toward the villagers, smiling and listening. After I left, the next day and for weeks thereafter, I felt utterly furious. Perhaps my selective amnesia—with its not-so-subtle expression of hostility—was the one honest part of my visit.

The recollections recounted by the villagers centered on their own hardships during the Second World War. They told me at length about the shortage of food and other basic necessities they had suffered. They told me about so many of their sons who had died. More than half of the villagers' sons had not returned from the war. They grieved for them to that day. They had erected a plaque in the center of the village, bearing the name of each one who did not return.

Where were the names of the Jews? Where was my brother's name? He, too, did not return. He, too, was young and had yet to live his life. I did not have the presence of mind and the courage to ask about the absence of Jewish names on the plaque. (Some months later I wrote to one of the women who had so warmly hosted my visit and I mentioned the absence of Jewish names on the plaque. I never received a reply.)

During my visit the villagers did not ask me about my life after I left the village. Not one question. They, too, had selective amnesia.

The villagers did remember that shortly after the war ended—that is, thirty-four years before our conversation took place—a Jewish girl, slightly older than I, returned to the village one day. She had left the village with her family shortly after I had. When she returned, she had a camera and took pictures. And she talked to no-one. After thirty-four years the villagers remembered that she talked to no-one! Her silence was loud enough to be heard thirty-four years later. It remained a haunting memory. Perhaps this was fitting punishment for their own silence during the time of moral challenge.

Yet we must face the fact that memory can also be very complicated and bewildering. The Holocaust has generated an immensely powerful literature. It captures some of the essence of the horrors. From the diary of Anne Frank to the writings of Elie Wiesel, our hearts are torn asunder as we read and remember. Ellen Fine, an American professor, draws a bead on this issue. In discussing the French writer Myriam Anissimov, Fine comments:

> She poignantly portrays the inner landscape of the haunted and the hunted—those who have lost their official status as persons, those forced to live with the perpetual threat of a death sentence, and those innocents who finish by believing in their own guilt.[4]

Fine goes on to give us a clue about the bewildering limitations of memory in observing that "Myriam Anissimov cannot rid herself of the past. Writing and remembering are forms of bearing witness, but they do not set her free. . . . The wounds do not heal but only deepen in time."

Much of Elie Wiesel's work suggests the same thing. With time, the wounds only get deeper.

Since my trip to Oberlauringen I have come to realize that memory—even when expressed by superbly gifted artists—is not enough. It is not enough for the task of producing safeguards against future horrors. Shocking us about the past by revealing the horror of the horrors is not enough. To be sure, hallowing the memory of the innocent victims is an important part of the mourning process, but mourning is not enough.

While we should encourage and preserve the artist's version of the events and their aftermath, we desperately need, in addition, the scientist's creative efforts to help us move beyond the impotence we still have in the face of the monstrous evil that humans repeatedly inflict upon one another. This is what I have been trying to do in writings since 1982; it is my "second journey."

I firmly believe that scientists who analyze human behavior can help free us from our ignorance about the workings of human nature that bear on the production of evil. Yes, we already have a vast amount of information about the horrors we inflict on one another. But our level of comprehension, our understanding of this information, is about where the physical and biological sciences were a thousand years ago. The issue is not that human behavior is more complicated than other phenomena in the natural world. The issue is that we have barely begun to develop the scientific tools—the ways of looking, the ways of dissecting what we see, and the mental constructs with which to do these things—that will move us beyond mysticism and impotence when it comes to horrendous human behavior.

Einstein is reported to have said that God has not made the task of understanding nature easy, but that God does not play games with us. That is, God does not act capriciously and arbitrarily. There is order in nature, and the human mind can understand much of that order. (Many believers in religious mysticism who believe in a God contend that God's ways are entirely beyond human understanding. I do not agree with that mystic view.) It takes courage and imagination and discipline to discover the order in nature. When it comes to massive human horrors, we have been terribly unsuccessful at discovering how this portion of nature's system works. Yet I believe we have

been given the capacity to discover it. We need to use this capacity. As we do so, we must be prepared not only to honor memory, to pay attention to what has actually happened; we must also be prepared to dissect memory, to look at memory dispassionately, rigorously and imaginatively, to ask uncomfortable questions. Memory will thereby help us serve our future.

Jewish prayers can teach us something relevant here. They frequently distinguish between Knowledge, Understanding (or Insight), and Wisdom. The role of science is to transform Knowledge—raw information—into valid Understanding of how things work. This requires far more than assembling raw information. Facts do not speak for themselves, contrary to the popular saying. We need the role of Wisdom, the wise uses of valid Understanding. This goes beyond the realm of science into morality, religion, and faith. If we succeed in improving the *science* of human social behavior we will then be faced with ever-more challenges of Wisdom—how to make morally justifiable use of that Understanding. In this book I concentrate on the previous, the developing-science phase.

Primo Levi, himself a Holocaust survivor, ably demonstrated the role of science. His writings exemplify the dispassionate and insightful thinking of the scientist when he wrote about his experiences at Auschwitz in his books *Survival in Auschwitz* and *The Drowned and the Saved*. His other books, such as *The Periodic Table* and *Other People's Trades*, give us a glimpse of an Auschwitz survivor re-embracing life with some joy, vitality, and the intellectual vigor of scientific thinking. While Levi's ultimate suicide raises discomforting questions, these questions cannot diminish this scientist's challenging contributions to life and the living, and his legacy. We must continue what he began: the transformation of Knowledge into Insight, with a glimpse of Wisdom at the end of the tunnel. Sometimes Insight comes to us from a single event that can become a critical incident for illuminating our social landscape, for showing us a piece of reality we did not recognize before, for casting a shadow over the future.

Events as Critical Incidents

President Reagan's visit to the German cemetery at Bitburg was one such critical incident event.[5] It illuminated the lingering bearing of the Holocaust in the life of American Jews while, at the same time, showing the vulnerabilities and strengths of American Jews. I shall discuss this more fully in a later section.

Similarly, near the end of the nineteenth century, the Dreyfuss Affair[6] was a critical incident that illuminated widespread and deep anti-Semitism in France. It brought into the open the second-class status of Jews in France at that time, a condition that had been comfortably hidden away. But the Dreyfuss Affair went beyond clarifying a state of affairs in France at a particular time.

It also cast a long shadow over the future. The anti-Semitic actions of the Vichy regime during the Nazi German occupation of France was but a replay of the Dreyfuss Affair some forty years earlier.

Critical incidents characteristically cast a shadow over the future. They become *riders* that make an imprint on the future. Pearl Harbor, for example, has become a rider; it has left an imprint on much of America's political life since the time of the Japanese attack on this American port.

From my years in Oberlauringen, the events of Kristallnacht stand out as a critical incident. In one sense Kristallnacht was the culmination of a series of earlier harassments of us Jews living in Oberlauringen. But it was also a singular event that transformed everything, that cast a permanent shadow over the future and made it abundantly clear that Jews had no future in this village of Oberlauringen, or in this country of Germany.

The event that foreshadowed Kristallnacht for my family took place shortly after Hitler came to power in 1933. One night all our windows were smashed. To my knowledge ours was the only house so attacked. My father went to the police. Since there was no police force in our small village, he went to the county authorities located about an hour's bicycle ride away. At that time the police were still friendly to us and supportive. The police encouraged my father to go away from the village for a while, and they said they would advise him when it was safe to come back.

My father went to the town of Mellrichstadt, where he was born. His older brother and his family still lived there in the family's home of generations of Katzes. We felt fearful. But the authorities seemed to be on our side despite the actions by what everyone regarded as Nazi ruffians, who did not represent the government. Needless to say, no one who participated in the attack on us was identified or caught. After some weeks my father returned.

By 1938, when Kristallnacht took place, Jews could no longer count on support from the police or any other agency of the government. We also did not receive any support from the non-Jewish people of the village. We were alone.

There were many rumblings which foreshadowed that day of destruction. A Jew had assassinated a German embassy official in France, and the Nazi propaganda machine began full-blast attacks on Jews. They claimed there was a Jewish "plot." We felt very fearful and apprehensive.

On November 9, the day before my eleventh birthday, there was a roundup of all Jewish men in the village. My father and my brother (who was seventeen years old) were among those picked up and driven away. The women and children were left behind.

In the evening, my mother and I went to stay with our neighbor, the village baker—actually with his family, because the baker himself had also been taken away. We joined his wife and daughter, Margot, who was about seven years old, and with whom I often played. We hid in the attic. After

nightfall we heard a great deal of commotion: cars driving up, men breaking into the house, things smashing, and much yelling of "Where are the Jews?"

We were terrified. Were they going to find us and kill us? Would we live through the night? After what seemed like an eternity, they left. We stayed in the attic, huddled together, until the morning.

When we finally did go downstairs, we had to climb over shattered glass and broken furniture. When my mother and I went over to our own house, we found that the front door had been smashed. All windows were broken. All the furniture—high European furniture with glass fronts—had been toppled over and smashed. The feather beds had been ripped open. Broken glass was everywhere. It was eerily quiet as we climbed over the rubble of what had been our belongings and that had, in the past, given us a measure of privacy and joy.

The nearby synagogue had been desecrated. The sacred Torah scrolls had been taken out of the synagogue and thrown onto piles of manure (remember, this was a farming community).

At some subconscious level, awareness of this came back to me on my visit to Oberlauringen in 1979. During that visit I went into our house, into the Jewish cemetery, into the house of the Christians who were our hosts. I was free to go wherever I wanted to go. But there was one building I was unable to enter. It was the synagogue. It was now a bank. I stood in front of it, paralyzed, unable to move.

Why did this metamorphosis of the synagogue shatter me? I had thought I had left religion behind. After leaving home in 1939 I had lived in a very secular, and rather anti-religious, boarding school in England. After finishing school, I had cut off most of my ties to religious Judaism for almost thirty years. Yet standing in front of the former synagogue in 1979, I was reacting in stunned pain against the desecration of sacred Jewish religious symbols. Turning the synagogue into a bank desecrated it a second time. It shattered me since, in my heart, this synagogue was still my synagogue—where my Hebrew name was inscribed in a Torah wrapping to celebrate my birth and my membership in this community, where my father and mother each had a fixed place (being an orthodox synagogue, men and women were separate) where they worshipped and where I, as a child, I had eagerly joined them, feeling sheltered and comforted.

Some weeks after Kristallnacht the men in our family returned. My father and brother, it turned out, had been held at a regional prison some sixty miles away. Others, those who still owned some property (among them Margot's father), had been sent to concentration camps. Upon their return some time later, I could not recognize Margot's father. They did not talk about their experiences, but they did not need to talk. Their haunted look, from their hollowed eyes, spoke louder than words.

During my 1979 visit I learned about Margot's fate. I was told that there had been a Christian family in the next village who helped to save some Jews. They had offered to hide Margot, but Margot refused to leave her parents. When the roundup for deportation came, in 1942, Margot's father committed suicide. Margot and her mother—together with my parents—were sent off to their death.

They did not survive. Those of us who did survive face burdens. In a fictional story about a Holocaust survivor, *Enemies, A Love Story,* Isaac Bashevis Singer tells the tale of how a man carries with him his hayloft hiding place for the rest of his days. It shows up in the fact that he keeps manufacturing turbulence for himself. He has three wives simultaneously, and tries to keep each one matrimonially happy and unaware of each other. He is also unable to obtain and hold onto work that is anywhere near his intellectual capacity.

I do not adopt this particular method of keeping my life in a state of turbulence, but I do manage to produce and retain turbulence for myself, as my movings and escapings from success demonstrate. Am I still carrying the attic (where I hid during Kristallnacht) around with me? Or am I finally transforming my attic into a laboratory that contributes to a more potent science of human behavior? I hope it is the latter.

Encounters

My first impression on arriving in Oberlauringen in 1979 was rather disconcerting. The place was much larger and more prosperous than I remembered it. The rough unpaved streets I remembered were now neatly paved. Main Street, where we had lived at number fifty-seven, no longer stood out as the only paved street. Now there was running water in every house, while I remembered the hand-operated pump some distance from our house where the women used to get water for their families. Now there were telephones in every house, while I remembered only one telephone, located in the post office. Now there were cars. Now there were television sets.

The houses looked neat, prosperous, and caringly maintained. There were a lot of flowers. Yes, there were still a few of the very old buildings I remembered, but most of the village looked like a birthday cake with the words "1960s suburbia" sprayed on it in yummy sugar letters. Along with the indoor plumbing, individuals commuting to jobs in nearby towns, and people having contact with American troops, came a touch of worldliness that was different from what I remembered. It was no longer a rural village.

I suppose I expected to find drabness and decay. Instead I found Western-style comfortable living combined with Germanic neatness and love of good housekeeping. This triggered positive responses in my reluctant heart.

It was also vexing to see the villagers living so well and seemingly achieving some of the dreams I still have about how to live a contented life.

My own Germanic habits came out in the fact that I was rigidly following a very tight, preplanned time schedule in my visit to Oberlauringen. I arrived in midmorning and planned to leave that same afternoon. I only left time for meeting "older" people who might be able to shed light on my parents' last days. I left no time for meeting children, or current school teachers, or priests and ministers, or young farmers and factory workers.

I also left no time to follow up when I heard that our family physician, Dr. Heusinger, was still alive. Dr. Heusinger was the caring family doctor who lived in the next village and who had overseen my birth and everything else connected to our family's medical history. He is the one Christian whose name came back to me during the visit. I remembered him with fondness, awe, and unlimited trust. In retrospect, it would have been valuable to have talked to him. He died shortly after my visit to Oberlauringen.

The two women who were our hosts were most pleasant and helpful. They introduced us to people. They guided us, showing us what was new and what was old. They encouraged us to stay longer. They could not have been friendlier and warmer.

I went to my former house. The outside was virtually unchanged. It still served as a family home and a butcher shop, although the sign "Metzgerei Max Katz" was gone. I had assumed, somehow, that the sign would still be there. Or, at least, that beneath the current paint there would still be a faint indication of where the sign had been. But no, there was no indication that this had been the Katz butcher shop, the Katz home.

The people who now lived in the house were not the ones who had taken our house away. They were from another generation and from another locality. They had moved to Oberlauringen just a few years earlier and had not been involved in displacing my parents. They were uncomplicatedly friendly and open. They let me roam around the house in any way I wished. And roam I did, from the attic to the cellar.

The cellar, I recalled, was the place where my father stored meat. (We had no refrigerator. My father also kept meat in cold storage in a cave in the mountains, just beyond the village.) The attic had been my favorite play area. I found myself automatically—and with some desperation—looking for things with which I might have played. But I found none. There were no remnants to link me to my childhood. My childhood was not being returned to me.

Both attic and cellar were unchanged from what I remembered. The house owners told me that I was fortunate to have come when I did because they were about to "modernize" the cellar. The rest of the house had already been thoroughly modernized, with running water as the harbinger of modern

bathrooms, a modern kitchen, and all sorts of electrical appliances. My home had been transformed into modernity.

In the afternoon we were invited to the home of an elderly woman. I estimate she was in her mid-eighties. We sat down for coffee and cake. Here, in the *gemuetliche* setting, we were told about the hardships they had endured during the war—the shortage of food, of clothing, of fuel.

In this conversation, and throughout the day, no-one asked me about my hardships during this period. I, too, had gone through a period when I did not have enough to eat. It happened in New York, after my arrival in America. I had no job and not enough money to buy food. I lived on stale bread.

The elderly woman said that she had been very kind to my mother. She had given my mother food, in exchange for her silver. As I heard this I kept on listening attentively and smiling. The impact of what the woman had been saying did not hit me until the next day, when I had already left the village. It had not occurred to me earlier that this woman was proud of the fact that she had given my mother food as an excuse for robbing her of precious belongings. And it did not occur to me until very recently, two decades later, that the word "silver" might not only have included silverware—knives, forks, and spoons—but also any jewelry my mother might have had. Perhaps my mother still had a silver necklace, or a brooch. And the woman took it. And I had just sat there and smiled.

A number of the conversations throughout the day centered on the hardships the villagers had endured during the war. I heard them make the identical statement they had made in the 1930s, forty years earlier: "We are just little people. What could we do? It's the government."

As I see it now, they were really asking for forgiveness. They wanted me to absolve them of responsibility. Despite my attentiveness and my frozen smile, I was in no mood to forgive and to absolve. I was deeply furious with these people. They had stood by when innocent Jews, who had lived among them for generations, were hounded and, eventually, murdered.

During my visit I was compounding my own fury by not expressing it. If I had expressed it, perhaps we might have been able to reach some sort of meeting of minds. This could have contributed to mutual healing. But I was not ready. I just listened and smiled, and vaguely felt boiling inside.

Several persons mentioned that I must see Ernestine. Ernestine, they told me, had helped the Jews. It turned out that Ernestine had been the one person who had not distanced herself from the Jews. When Jews had already been deprived of their livelihood and their houses and had been forced to move together into one house (this happened after I was sent to England), Ernestine brought them food. As best she could, Ernestine stood by the Jews, surely a very unpopular thing to do at that time.

I went to see Ernestine. Although I did not recall it, she had apparently worked in our household when I was young. She reminded me that she had diapered me when I was a baby. Despite this intimacy I had not remembered her, but I had the good sense not to tell her so. Although Ernestine was not sophisticated with words, she spoke eloquently. She said what the Nazis did was not right. She talked about my parents. She gave me pictures of herself with my family and with our neighbors. She wept. She made my visit to Oberlauringen worthwhile. She added dignity and decency.

I went to the Jewish cemetery. It was the first time I had ever been to this cemetery. My family are "Cohens," supposed descendants of the priests, who are not allowed to be in the proximity of the dead except when one's immediate family is involved. Cohens are not allowed to go to cemeteries unless members of their immediate family are buried there.

Since my parents were observant orthodox Jews, we had observed this rule while I lived in Oberlauringen. As a child I had many fears and nightmares about death. I knew that death happened but that I must not come near dead persons, lest I be defiled. It did not make matters easier that the special black hearse, used in all Jewish funerals, was parked in a yard behind our house. It constantly reminded me of the frightening face of death.

During my visit to Oberlauringen, I felt that it was perfectly in order—actually, it was absolutely crucial—for me to enter the Jewish cemetery. For one thing, I was no longer an observant orthodox Jew, and therefore forbidden to enter this cemetery. For another, I felt that this cemetery was *my family* cemetery, even though my parents were not buried in it. Since I do not know precisely where and how my parents died, I was, in a way, free to choose where they are buried.

This was my second "burial" of my parents and my brother. While I held my first academic teaching job, in Lubbock, Texas, in 1960, I bought a burial plot and marker for my parents and my brother. It was not a Jewish cemetery. I was then entirely dissaffiliated with, and alienated from, all things Jewish. It did not occur to me at that time that my parents and my brother would have been very pained by the thought of their burial in a non-Jewish cemetery.

The Oberlauringen Jewish cemetery is located about a half mile from the village. It was in immaculate condition. The grass lawns were beautifully maintained and the gravestones were all in place. Apparently the German government was scrupulously tending to the upkeep of Jewish cemeteries that are no longer under the guardianship of a local Jewish congregation.

Since both of my parents had moved to Oberlauringen from elsewhere, I knew that I had no grandparents in this cemetery. The one close person whose grave I located was that of Lilly Schoenfeld, my father's first wife,

who died while giving birth to my brother Ludwig. Her grave was in a conspicuous place, near the very front. Perhaps women so often died in the course of childbirth that a special place was reserved for them. Or she was in a location reserved for the families of Cohanim, the priests.

We took pictures of the cemetery.

Beyond Survival: There Is Life beyond Oberlauringen

I returned to Oberlauringen to find out just how much of me had left and how much of me was still there. Am I still running from—and to—Oberlauringen? I have the scars of incomplete survival. Yet the visit to Oberlauringen gave me hope and renewed faith in being able to survive survival.

The great sociologist Emile Durkheim taught us that human beings derive their sense of themselves—who they are, what they are, what their life is about—from the fact that they are part of a larger moral entity.[7] A country can be a moral entity; a community, a village, a town, can be a moral entity; a professional association can be a moral entity; a religious congregation, a church, a synagogue, can be a moral entity; a family can be a moral entity. These entities have a twofold bearing on our lives. From them we derive values and a set of cultural tools for living, including language and symbols. Equally importantly, all this comes in the form of people to whom we are attached precisely because they embody the things we treasure most; our values and culture tools for living.

While Durkheim taught us how moral entities shape our sense of social community, he did not, to my knowledge, pay enough attention to the fact that when people are defined as being outside our own moral entity, we often treat them with total disdain and irreverence. Their lives are not worth living, as the Nazis explicitly put it. When we encounter ethnic wars, or religious wars, or nationalistic wars, we are seeing the consequences of the distinction between those whose values are valued and those whose values are scorned; between people whose lives must be honored and people whose lives must be dishonored; between us and them.

The Nazi credo defined Jews as being outside of the German national moral community. After visiting Oberlauringen, and after reflecting about the early years when I lived there, it seems to me that Jews really were treated as being outside of the German national moral community. The villagers seemed to accept the Nazi credo.

Yet here was Ernestine, teaching me that a German Christian in my village refused to exclude Jews from her moral community. She thereby taught me that I do not need to give Hitler a final victory by accepting his credo that Jews are outside the pale of German or, for that matter, outside the pale of any,

moral community. I need no longer carry the burden of the homeless wandering Jew. I can stop moving from place to place, and from job to job.

Ernestine had nursed me when I was a baby. She nursed me again when I came to her fifty years later as an adult, who still felt raw hurt. But the human mind moves slowly. My meeting with Ernestine took place in the summer of 1979. Only as I write these words, in the year 2000, do I realize the meaning of the gift Ernestine gave to me. Sadly, she died in 1987, before I could tell her what her gift means to me.

Other non-Jews also demonstrated that they have included Jews in their moral community. In the French Huguenot village of Le Chambon Sur Lignon, five thousand Christian inhabitants saved about five thousand Jews. Several of my friends, who belong to a Holocaust child-survivor group to which I also belong, bear testimony to the fact that individual Christians saved them. These caring persons took great risks, for themselves and their families, to save the lives of Jews to whom they had little or no previous relationship. These persons teach us that there are humane, decent, and courageous human beings in this world. These persons also teach us that we who were cast out are not outcasts. We were persecuted, but we do not deserve a life of rootless wanderings.

The issue for the survivor is how, then, to get on with life, how to live beyond survival. Viktor Frankl, a psychiatrist who survived Auschwitz, tells us that the fundamental element of one's living is the meaning one finds in one's life. Such *meaning* is not simply handed to us. It must be discovered, by each one of us, by oneself. One may find meaning in adoring nature, or in doing creative work, or in love relationships to persons. According to Frankl, meaning can also be found in suffering, as he personally discovered in his Auschwitz experience. In his book *Man's Search for Meaning,* Frankl tells us that, "In spite of all the enforced physical and mental primitiveness of life in a concentration camp, it was possible for spiritual life to deepen." He continues: "even the helpless victim of a hopeless situation, facing a fate he cannot change, may rise above himself, may grow beyond himself, and by doing so change himself."[8]

I would add, in the tradition of Durkheim, that the individual must find meaning in a way that links one to a human moral community, where that community can provide an individual with spiritual nurturance. It can also lead to reality testing. An entirely private meaning, on the other hand, can sever the bond between the individual and his society, and human societies have a limited tolerance for "private worlds." Persons living in extremely private worlds are shunted to mental hospitals.

Raymond Federman, a novelist, sees creative writing as a way of extracting meaning, and life-sustaining vitality, from the horrors of the Holocaust. In

his own literary writings he specifically addresses Holocaust issues. He does so with an emphasis on creativity:

> The fact of being a survivor, of living with one's death behind, in a way makes you free. . . . it is no longer through the functions of memory that one will confront the issue [of the Holocaust], but with the power of the imagination.[9]

My writings since 1982 have built on these perspectives, that one can derive life-sustaining meaning from the Holocaust, in the sense that Frankl has shown us, and that creativity is needed as we confront the Holocaust, as Federman has shown us. But I have chosen the posture of the scientist. I do not question the unique contribution of the artist, such as Federman. But there is another dimension to the Holocaust, much neglected and barely explored. It is the dimension of what science can contribute.

The philosopher Emil Fackenheim contributed a famous dictum to Jews: Do not give Hitler a posthumous victory by giving up on your religion.[10] I hope one can develop and justify a related dictum: When it comes to combatting human horrors, do not give up on science. Despite the disgraceful contributions to the Holocaust by many a scientist and despite the failure thus far to discover effective predictors of, and antidotes to, the extremes of human evil, I say, *do not give up on science*.

Above my desk I keep a sign that reads, "606." It is a reminder about Paul Ehrlich, a pioneering biochemist and Nobel Prize winner who lived early in the twentieth century. He developed the first effective drug against syphilis. Ehrlich named the drug Salvarsan 606. Why 606? Because he had had 605 failures before he found the one that worked. Let us not be discouraged by our failure, thus far, to devise an effective scientific theory about massive evil. Let us continue until we discover one with the power to actually change human behavior.

The ashes of the Holocaust may yet reveal the process by which ordinary humans can be brought to practice horrendous behavior and, from there, lead us to understand how to prevent human horrors of the sort practiced by the Nazi regime. This would be a real victory over Hitler. It would also amount to extracting a gift to humankind from so much horror.

PART TWO

Beyond Surviving: More of the First Journey

After my visit to Oberlauringen, I gradually began to realize that long after physically surviving a horror one needs to learn how to live again, how to survive surviving. To do so, survivors must not only confront the past, they must confront the future. And they must do so in two ways; as members of a people and as individuals.

To illustrate the concept of surviving as members of a people, I shall discuss the Bitburg Affair. This event suddenly awakened Jews to the realization that, as a people, they had unresolved and still very real issues about their survival to confront. Among Jews, fear for their survival had been kindled by the Nazi Holocaust. Following the West's victory over Nazism and the establishment of a Jewish state, it was assumed that Jews no longer feared for the survival of the Jewish people. But the Bitburg Affair demonstrated an entirely different reality, namely that these fears had persisted in dormant form, subject to dramatic reactivation by events such as President Reagan's plan to visit the German military cemetery at Bitburg. The Bitburg Affair caused dormant memories to erupt and created unanticipated political alignments and pressures. It also demonstrated that, since the Holocaust, Jews had learned something about the power of social activism.

As an individual, given a traumatic experience in one's past there is much incentive to remain locked into that past and its crippling debilitations. The challenge is to find ways to confront the future in a spirit of openness to new opportunities and embrace of life. In my case, I began to confront this fact only about forty years after the Holocaust ended.