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I want to talk briefly today about something that will arise in most classes in schools and with adult groups as well, namely a very simple question. It is clear that the Holocaust was a form of genocide; I don't think one has to prove that. But there are other genocides that happened in the last hundred or two hundred years so why don't we teach today about Rwanda or Darfur, or the Armenian genocide or other events of that kind, and why do we concentrate on the genocide of the Jews, which is what the Holocaust is.

The term "Holocaust" simply is a special term that people use, I don't usually use it, but I will this time. It means the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of Nazi Germany and its allies and supporters. In order to examine what the specifics are of the genocide of the Jews I think one has to first try to understand what genocide is.

I'm sure you all know that in December 1948 the United National General Assembly unanimously passed the Convention for the Prevention and Punishment for the Crime of Genocide. By now, most countries in the world have signed this Convention. The Convention is largely the product of one person, a Polish Jewish lawyer by the name of Raphael Lemkin who managed to escape to the United States from Poland via Sweden in 1941. He was later a professor at Columbia, a very unusual person who in 1933 submitted a paper to a conference of international lawyers in Madrid (he was not permitted to go there but he submitted the paper) in which he asked for an international law to prevent and punish the ultimate crime of annihilating groups of people. He did not invent the term "genocide." This likely happened when he was in the United States and used the term for the first time in 1944 in a book called *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*. Lemkin convinced the State Department to support a law regarding genocide prevention and it was put on the international agenda. After negotiations between the western bloc and the eastern bloc in 1948, and with very active participation of Latin American countries, a compromise was achieved, the result of which is called the Genocide Convention. It was not exactly what Lemkin proposed. It is a political document. It was not a document drawn up by academics. It is inaccurate and in many ways misleading, but that is what we have. Why do I say that it is inaccurate and misleading? It says that genocide is the intent and action to annihilate an ethnic, national, racial, and/or religious group as such, in whole or in part. An ethnic, national, racial, and religious on the face of it seems logical. But what do racial groups mean? There are no races. We know today from DNA research that all of us, whether we are Australian aborigines or Africans in Sudan or Einstein, Hitler, Stalin, Mr. Obama, or you and I, we all come from the same place, namely, east Africa about 150,000 years ago. We are all one race. The difference between different types of dogs is much larger than the difference between different types of humans. The color of skin, of hair, of eyes, the shape of bodies, those are secondary or tertiary mutations, very unimportant. We are one race.

To talk about racial groups in 1948 made sense because everyone used that term. Churchill talked about the German race and the English race and indeed the Jewish race and the America race. This was the common language that was used. But in 2010 it is very dangerous to talk in that kind of language because it could indicate racism. There are no races but there is racism. And racism is a product of the late Middle

Ages in Africa and then taken up in the Iberian Peninsula by Spanish and Portuguese invaders of Africa. First North Africa and then West Africa. It is a product of the slave trade, which preceded the European conquest of West Africa. In the late Middle Ages, slaves were enslaved by Africans, and then sold to Arab traders who traded them to other African countries and later to the whites who occupied the harbors of West Africa. And from there millions upon millions of people were shipped on terrible ships to the American continent, Middle America and North America, and millions died. Those who survived were enslaved for hundreds of years. In order to rationalize and justify this behavior, they used the difference in skin color. The people who traded slaves were not only whites. There were Arabs, Jews, other Europeans, and Africans who were slave traders but the vast majority were Iberian whites. This is the origin of racism and if you look at gothic churches on the European continent that were built between the 12<sup>th</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup> centuries, you will find in almost all of them the sculpture of an African saint, Saint Mauritius. If you look at the features of that saint in stone you will find typical African features. There was no racism in Europe before the 14<sup>th</sup> century.

This is a new development and a very dangerous development and to include that in a definition of genocide I think is already out of place in 2010. But it's not only that. The crucial element in the Convention is the fact that it doesn't tell you what to do if somebody recognizes something to be a genocide because all it says is, "Go to the United Nations," which means in fact go to the Security Council, which is the executive committee of the UN (the only body that can make decisions on action). If you go to the Security Council as people did in the past, well good luck! Nothing happens! Why? Because there are five veto powers, because there are groups of nations that try to prevent the prevention because it's against their interests, and there is very little possibility of acting. The only time the United Nations can act is when there is an agreement by all the major actors that something should be prevented and I'll give you one example.

A recent example of when the United Nations did work was in Kenya in 1997. There were contested elections in Kenya and ethnic disturbances based on competition for economic resources and for power began. Over 1,000 people were killed in inter-ethnic clashes and it was clear that if nothing was done this had every possibility of developing into a genocide. Who was interested in that genocide? No one! Everyone was interested in preventing it. China, Russia, the West, African countries, the Kenyan government. No one was interested in this developing into a genocidal situation. And so the Secretary General could send Mr. Kofi Annan to Nairobi and to other countries in the area, and he patched up an agreement, which still holds today.

On the contrary, there is a case today that developed into a genocide because there was no one who would prevent the prevention of a genocide. In Sudan today where there are disputes because about 60% of oil concessions are owned by the Chinese, it is in the Chinese interest to prevent any kind of action against the continuation of the genocide in Darfur. There remains every possibility in the world that by January of next year there will begin clashes, violent clashes between the north and south because the Islamic north seeks to occupy the south because the main oil wells are in the south. Some important oil wells are also in the province of Abbaye, which is between the north and the south. There will be a struggle over who controls that area. Action of that kind is very likely to become a genocidal situation and with the

protection by China, Russia, the Arab League, and some others, the Sudanese government although its head was accused by the International Criminal Court first of crimes against humanity and then lately also of genocide, nothing is likely to happen unless there is a change in the minds of the people who decide in this world of ours.

From the Holocaust until today there have been genocides. The question is, “how old is this thing?” Is genocide something that only happened in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup>? Or is it older than that? I will summarize this and say that it is perfectly clear from any study of history that mass annihilation of groups of humans has occurred since time immemorial and before that. Last year, in the Austrian village Schlitz they discovered the remnants of over 100 men, women, and children, who were murdered. We know other humans murdered them because the weapons with which they were killed were found there. When did this happen? About 7,500 years ago. And there are other cases like that. In other words, humans are the only mammals that kill other mammals of their own kind in huge numbers. Why do they do that? I have a theory, which I cannot prove because there is no way one can prove prehistoric history convincingly, but I haven’t yet heard anyone counteract this theory. We are predators like wolves, tigers, lions, and bears. We exist on meat and fish. We are hunters. We need meat and fish to survive, except for a few vegetarians amongst us. We also eat grass. We eat cake. What is cake? Cake is made of flour. What is flour? It’s made of things that grow on green stalks that become yellow that are ground into flour and turned into bread and cakes. We eat grass. We eat fruits of the ground and fruits of the tree and the fact that we do all of that means that we are weak predators.

We have to act in groups, in herds, so we create herds whether they are family groups or tribes or ethnicities or modern nations. If we don’t belong to one herd we belong to another. I know there are individuals who will say, “I do not belong to any herd. I am not a Hungarian. I am an individualist, a universalist. I do not belong to anyone.” They can say that until the government asks for income tax and then they discover that they do belong to a group. They can’t avoid it. So what happens is that we act as groups whether we like it or not. And when another group enters into our territory, whether a real or virtual territory doesn’t matter, we have four possible options. One is to absorb that group because it could strengthen us. Another possibility is to make that group work for us either as slaves or as lower people in our society. We do that all the time. The third possibility, which happens sometimes, is to tell a group like that to go away, which they sometimes do. And the fourth possibility is to kill them. Those four options if you look at history, have been exercised for thousands and thousands of years.

So, is there any possibility of preventing genocide? Obviously there is something within us that makes us kill. Sometimes the reason is survival. But if a society is built on killing, it cannot exist, and so we develop another way of reacting, namely, we support and help each other, because the herd/group/family/clan/tribe/nation, in order to survive has to act together on a feeling of sympathy which can turn into love, which can turn into the willingness to sacrifice yourself for somebody else not only of your own group but of another group because instinctively it may help you. So there are two elements in our makeup, killing and rescuing, and they act against each other. If you look at any of the so-called holy books of any kind of culture, whether it is the Judeo-Christian culture, the Muslim culture, the Indian, the Chinese, etc. You will always have good and bad. Good is something that helps you, the group, in order to

survive, in order to live a good life. Bad is the opposite. We create some very real, very powerful weapons, which we call morality. It is a very important weapon and is something that people can believe in, can trust in, can act upon. When you have these two things acting against each other, what is the result? Law. How do I know that humans are inclined to murder? I know that because there are laws against murder. In the Ten Commandments, you have the commandment, "Thou Shall Not Kill." But that's not what it says. The original Hebrew says, "Thou Shall Not Murder." Because killing is permitted. You send young men or women in uniforms to war to kill other young men or women in other uniforms. We see that as a good thing and encourage it. Killing is permitted murder. Murder is forbidden killing. We are murderers unless we stop ourselves. And we can stop ourselves because we have that other side of us. So there is a possibility of preventing genocide but it's very very very difficult. We have to overcome tremendous obstacles in order to do that.

What does all of that have to do with the Holocaust? The Holocaust is obviously a form of genocide. If you take any genocide in the history of mankind from the destruction of Carthage to the destruction of the Greek island of Milos by the Athenians, to what is related in the Old Testament, to the destruction by the Protestants of Catholics and by Catholics of Protestants, and so on and so forth. If you take all of that and you analyze the elements that go into this mass murder that develops into the annihilation of groups, you will always find parallels to that in other genocides, including the Holocaust.

Example: take the case of Rwanda. Rwanda is a good example because Hutu and Tutsi are not ethnicities; they speak the same language, they go to the same churches, they belong to the same society. Tutsi and Hutu are actually class distinctions. The Tutsi were the rulers, the aristocracy, the land owners. Hutu were the peasants. But they became quasi-ethnicities, and the colonialists, the Germans until World War I and the Belgians until 1958 created ethnicities out of these class differences and the Belgians introduced identity cards. On each identity card it said whether you were a Hutu or a Tutsi. And when the genocide came it was very simple. You stopped people at roadblocks and they had to show their identity card. If it said "Tutsi" they were killed. Why was this killing done? It has an old history. The rebellion of the Hutu against the dominant group, the support of the Belgians at the end of their rule of the Hutu against the Tutsi and the desire of the Hutu power group which was the violently nationalistic racist group within the Hutu who got control over the Hutu society and who wanted to take away the property of the Tutsi and wanted to annihilate them already in the late 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. And then the many Tutsi fled to Uganda and from Uganda in 1990 a Tutsi army invaded Rwanda in order to overcome the Hutu dictatorship. The Hutu power group that held the dictatorship was fighting against a real enemy, a military group, the Rwanda Peoples Front, the army that invaded from Rwanda in 1990. On the other hand they wanted to keep power, and yet they also wanted to take away the land and cattle from the Tutsi, because Rwanda is an agricultural society. There were three threats: military, power, and economy. You can take any other genocide and that theme will be repeated: military, power, and economy. It's repeated over and over again in different conditions, with specifics relating to a specific genocidal situation.

However, the Holocaust is a genocide that includes elements that you don't find anywhere else. What are the parallels between the Holocaust and other genocides?

The main parallel is the suffering of the victim because there is no difference at all between the sufferings of Jews, of Tutsi, of Cambodians, of Armenians, of American Indians, of anyone throughout the whole course of history. No difference. There is no better genocide than another genocide. There is no better killing of children than other killing of children. There is no better torture than another torture. There is no difference. The suffering is the same. More people were killed in Chinese education camps under Mao Zedong than Jews in the Holocaust. More people died in the Gulag in the Soviet Union than Jews in the Holocaust. The proportion of Jews who died in the Holocaust compared to the whole Jewish people is about 1/3 but over 40% of Armenians died, almost 50% of Tutsi died, and so on. So it's not that. It's not the numbers, it's not the proportion, it's something else. What is it?

Let me give you a few elements where I think the Holocaust is unprecedented. First of all, the totality. By 1941, the Nazis and their supporters in other countries including Hungary defined Jews not by their own Jewish definition, by the definition of others. They identified them, marked them, dispossessed them, humiliated them, concentrated them, transported them, and killed them. Anyone they could without any exception whatsoever. Half-Jews, those with two Jewish grandparents and two non-Jewish grandparents was sometimes included in this and sometimes not. People who had only one Jewish grandparent were not considered to be Jews in most places. In Russia, the Nazis considered them to be Jews even if they had only one Jewish grandparent. This is totality. This is an attempt at total annihilation over every single person in that particular group. It shows intent. The Nazis were defeated. They could not do what they wanted, but they certainly wanted to and wherever they could they did.

The second element is the element of universality because by 1941, the leaders of Nazi Germany wanted to annihilate the Jews all over the globe. There are documents to prove that. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of November 1941 Adolf Hitler in Berlin met with Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem who was pro-Nazi and recruited a Muslim division in the Balkans to fight with the Nazis. Mr. Husseini didn't know any German and Hitler did not know any Arabic so there was a translator who took stenographic notes so we know exactly what happened. When Husseini asked Hitler what will happen to Jews outside of Europe, Hitler answered that "when we win the war (this is November 1941) we will ask all the countries of the world to treat the Jews like we treat them here." This is a clear definition of intent. One can quote other cases of the same kind. The statement by Himmler in 1943 when he discussed the possibility of a separate peace with America. He said that the only thing they will ask the Americans for is their Jews. So this is universality of this type for the first time in human history. You have a universally conceived genocide.

The third element is ideology. Every genocide is rationalized and justified by an ideology. You have to explain to people why they should kill other people. The ideology is sometimes pretty wild but behind all these ideologies there are pragmatic reasons. One example is Darfur. There was a gentleman in Darfur whose name was Assil Ahmed Aghbash. He was a member of a Bedouin tribe that exists today on the border between Chug and Darfur. He was intelligent, studied in Libya and developed a theory, according to which the Bedouin tribes in Darfur are the descendants of the tribe of the prophet Muhammad. Because of that, they have the right to dispossess these black slaves, namely the farmers who occupied the center of Darfur, the

majority of the population of Darfur, and these Bedouins should control the whole area between the Nile and Lake Chad and the blacks should be removed from their lands and their cattle taken away. He sold this theory to the leader of a major Bedouin tribe in northern Darfur whose son is head of the group supported by the Sudanese government that killed the blacks in Darfur. So the ideology had an impact. The reason for the genocide in Darfur is not because the Bedouins tribes are descended from Al Koresh. The reason is that the Sahara is spreading, the land is drying up. There is less water, less good land, and the herding tribes, the Bedouins, are trying to conquer the land, the good land, the land that still has water. There are no rivers in Darfur but there is a lot of rain between June and September each year and it falls in the areas of the mountains, which is the center of the black settled farmer communities. So to conquer that the second element was that there was a rebellion by the blacks against the Sudanese government because there is oil in Sudan. They wanted part of that, part of the income. They wanted to develop Darfur and the Sudanese government refused and so there was a struggle over power. Who will rule? How will they rule? Over the economy. So the ideology is pure rationalization but there are pragmatics in the background. I will challenge any one of you to show me where this does not apply. It applies everywhere. In all genocides there may be a rationalization but the rationalization is a cover for the real pragmatic reasons.

With the Holocaust it's not like that because the German Nazis had no pragmatic reason to attack the Jews. German Jews were German patriots. They wanted to volunteer for German armies, they fought in the First World War. Most of them thought of themselves as German citizens of the Jewish faith. The Jews had no territory. The Jews had no government. The Jews had no real political presence in Germany at all. The first time there was a Jewish committee that represented the Jews of Germany was in September 1933, 8 months after Hitler came to power, not because the German Jews wanted it but because American Jews wanted to help German Jews and there was no where to distribute the money. In order to support German Jews against the new regime, you needed a body to represent the German Jews. For the first time in German history, the Jews had representation. The only place where Jewish individuals controlled a large part of the economy was in Hungary. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, Jewish individuals developed industries and the Weiss family and the Goldberger family developed resources in Hungary. By the time the Second World War came most of them had converted to Christianity or had intermarried with Christian families. But it is true that as individuals there was a Jewish impact on the economy of Hungary. It's the only country of Europe where this was the situation. In Germany there was only one major company that a Jewish family controlled, the electrical company controlled by the Rathenau family. The head of the family was a man called Walther Rathenau who was a great German patriot, a foreign minister of Germany in 1922 and after he was murdered by German nationalists the company changed owners and a German became owner of the company. So the Jews didn't control the economy. The Jews as a group controlled nothing at all. The Jews were groups of people always fighting each other because Jewish civilization is a civilization of internal fighting and contradiction. The first time there was a Jewish attempt at an international political organization was in 1936 as a result of the Nazi rise to power when the World Jewish Congress was founded. But the World Jewish Congress never included all Jewish communities, only about 1/3. It still exists today and it is not very important.

The German Nazis invented a Jewish conspiracy that did not exist. There was a conspiracy but it wasn't Jewish; it was Nazi. It had nothing to do with real Jews, with economic, military factors at all. One example: in 1943 on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February the German army in Stalingrad collapsed and surrendered to the Russians. 240,000 German soldiers were either killed or taken prisoner, and a huge amount of tanks and guns, the Nazis did not deny that. Immediately, Joseph Goebbels went to the platform and demanded total war in order to answer the Bolshevik threat. Every pair of hands have to work in Germany, he said, in order to recoup the losses, in order to be able to fight the Bolsheviks. In early 1943 there was still some 69,000 Jews in Berlin. The young people had either emigrated or by early 1943 had already been deported to Auschwitz or to extermination camps so the majority of the remaining Jewish community was old people. But there was still a proportion of young people who could work. Since 1941 some 16,000 Jews were working in armament factories and other factories connected to the war effort, in the area surrounding Berlin. (1:11:54) On the 27<sup>th</sup> of February, exactly three weeks after Stalingrad, the SS came to these factories, took those 16,000 Jews, brought them to railway stations in Berlin, added their families, and sent them to be gassed in Auschwitz. I'm asking you. Is this capitalistic? Is this modern? Is this cost-effective? Does that make any sense? Is it pragmatic? You have slaves there. Use them! You have slaves every else in Europe. Use them! Why kill them? They can produce for you. Even those in concentration camps who ultimately survived, did so because they still worked. The difference between them and all the other inhabitants of concentration camps was that the inhabitants of concentration camps were not part of a program to kill all the French or all the Serbs or all the Poles or all the Russians. But the people, the Jews who were there were part of a program to kill them as part of the killing of every Jew everywhere the Germans ruled. So you have a total non-pragmatic ideology, resulting in the murder of millions. Never in the history of mankind did you have anything like that before.

The fourth element is the element of racism. The Nazis wanted to create a new world society, which would be ruled by the top race, the Nordic people of the Aryan race. The Germans, the Scandinavians, the English, the Flemish, the Dutch (none of whom wanted to be included in a ruling Nordic race but that didn't matter). Under Nazi rule you had the development of an ideology which was pursued in universities and written about in articles and books, in order to create a new world society, with a Nordic peoples of the Aryan race on top and everyone else in a hierarchy below that. No Jews because there wouldn't be any Jews anymore. Blacks? They were animals; they were monkeys in German eyes. And Nazis were friendly to animals so they wouldn't harm them unless these monkeys pretended to be humans. We have had one religion instead of another religion, one country instead of another country, one empire instead of another empire. During the French Revolution there was one class, the bourgeoisie instead of the aristocracy. Communism originally was very similar. The original Communist ideology said "the proletariat instead of the bourgeoisie." Afterwards it became Russian imperialism but originally that was the idea, nothing new. We have had that before, not only in the French Revolution.

But race? Something that doesn't really exist. To have that as the organizing principle of a whole world society. And in that whole world society there would be the people of God, so to speak, the Nordic people, and the Satan, the Jews who would no longer be there. But the Satan can intervene at any time and one of the great Nazi inventions

was that there was a Jewish spirit in non-Jews. You have to get rid of your Jewish or satanic spirit. So racism is part of the Holocaust ideology.

Finally, the Jews. Never ask a Jew who Jews are because you will get different answers from different people. It's quite clear that the Jews are a civilization, a culture, an ethnic group that has had a religion or a religion that had an ethnic group. Go out in any Israeli town today and you will find white Jews and brown Jews and black Jews, and if there were green and blue people in the world, there would be green and blue Jews too. Nothing to do with biology. But with the inclusion of people within a group, they may have joined it for religious reasons but they become part of an ethnic group. It's not the only group like that in the world, but it certainly is something that is unprecedented. When the Nazis wanted to annihilate European civilization, they attacked the legacy of the French revolution, the ideas of equality, of conservative or social democracy, of liberalism, of pacifism. They opposed that but the ideas of the French revolution were based on something. They were based on antiquity, on Greece, on Rome, on Jerusalem, on the philosophy and architecture and literature, and on the ethics of the Jewish prophets. Ancient Greeks are no more. Those who speak that language are not speaking exactly the same language, though it is similar. They pray to other gods. They write other kinds of literature. But the Jews are still there. It's the same language; it didn't die. Hebrew was the language of correspondence for 1,900 years, when it was no longer used to buy bread in a shop. Nobody who reads the contemporary great Israeli writers can read them without a Bible. Jewish atheists, and there are many of them, who speak Hebrew, have to know the language in which the Bible was written because that is the language of the culture and of the civilization. In order to destroy what European civilization was built on, those three pillars, the only pillar that remained were the Jews. There is logic in Nazi policy against the Jews. If you want to destroy European civilization as we know it, one of the ways to do that is to kill off the Jews. This is not theory. You can find this in Nazi writings. Not Hitler, not Goebbels, not Göring. But hundreds of Nazi professors write about it. Therefore the Holocaust is unprecedented. It is not unique because if I say it was unique I would mean by that that it can never happen again. But that is an honest mistake. Anything done by humans can be repeated by humans. Therefore it's not unique. But it never happened before the Holocaust.

Some of what I said just now happened after the Holocaust. In Rwanda, the Hutu people wanted to annihilate every single Tutsi in Rwanda. Don't tell me that they did not read about the Holocaust. The ideologues of the Hutu power, one of them is still sitting in jail in Mali, studied philosophy in the best universities in France, and he produced this stuff. They knew, they learned. So, the Holocaust is not unique, it's unprecedented. But if you want to study genocide you have to start with a most extreme case and the most extreme case is the case that I mentioned, which is extreme not because of the suffering or the numbers, but because of the elements that go into it. Can we teach that complicated thing? Yes I think we can. We need people who can study this in some detail in some depth and then go out and present it in a form that can be applied to different types of groups. That is we are about, that is what we are trying to do. Our task is very specifically a task dealing with Jews and because it deals with Jews it's very universal. They are two sides of the same coin. Every genocide is specific. I cannot talk about Rwanda without talking about Hutu and Tutsi. I can't deal with the Armenians without dealing with Turks, Armenians, Greeks, Assyrians, the whole area. Every genocide is specific. It's the specificity that is universal. Let me

finish by quoting a famous Jewish sage, who lived in 200 BCE. Hillel, the Old Hillel, was asked by a non-Jew, to tell him the principles of Judaism. Old Hillel said, “the principle is: do not do unto others what you would not have done to yourself.” Everybody knows this because Jesus repeated it in the sermon on the mount, chapter 6 in Matthew. But what people don’t realize is that wasn’t the end. Hillel continued with another sentence, “And now, go and study.” That is what we have to do. Thank you.