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Des psy aux rabbins – pour une pensée de la Shoah

Nathalie Zajde

Translator: Helga Abraham



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“He who beseeches the past, it is a prayer in vain”

Tractate Berakhot Talmud 54a.

Psychology and the Holocaust

- 1 Psychiatry, psychology and even psycho-analysis have taken an interest, for a long time – indeed from the time of the events themselves, with Bettelheim’s famous article published in the United States in 1943¹ – in the Holocaust and in the internees of concentration camps². At the end of the 1950s and beginning of the 1960s, the *Concentration Camp Survivor Syndrome* was identified, consisting of a list of symptoms suffered by survivors³. It is this syndrome which would subsequently become, through a simple change of name but covering the same list of symptoms, the syndrome of the veterans of the Vietnam War – the famous Post Traumatic Stress Disorder⁴, which is still used today, and more and more, to describe all forms of trauma: the psychopathological consequences of the genocide in Rwanda (April 1994), of natural catastrophes (the Tsunami in South East Asia in December 2004, Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans in August 2005), as well as of rape, car accidents and kidnapping. The famous Concentration Camp Syndrome enabled, after the war, the introduction of an international consensus and established the criteria required to harmonize psychiatric examinations of survivors across the world. These examinations, which the majority of survivors underwent, led directly to medical and pension benefits⁵.
- 2 It is interesting to note that we know of no survivors, diagnosed as suffering from CCS, who were ever acknowledged as cured by psychotherapy or by psychotropic drugs. In other words, from the point of view, at least, of psychiatric expertise, the survivors

remained sick for the rest of their lives. Sadly, this aspect is hardly taken into account in studies on the psychopathology of survivors.

- 3 Furthermore, dynamic psychology – originating in psychoanalysis – proceeded to describe, in a very detailed manner, the specific psychic characteristics of survivors. Of note, among the most well known psychological characteristics identified, is the – more or less subconscious – “feeling of guilt” at having survived⁶. Generally speaking, psychodynamic theories on the psychic functioning of survivors are based on classic psychoanalytical concepts – the Oedipus complex, intra-psychic conflicts, defense mechanisms (“repression”, “displacement,” etc.)⁷. As in the case of psychiatry, these psychodynamic approaches, unfortunately, did not produce a therapeutic application which could be evaluated and generalized.
- 4 There is another element which is surprising and merits greater attention : neither the syndrome, nor any of the books, manuals, or articles dealing with Holocaust survivors mention the Jewish identity of the patients in a pertinent, scientific manner. Of course, in recent years, psychologists have mentioned the Jewish identity of their subjects but this Jewishness is of no theoretical relevance. Instead, it emerges as a surface fact, of no influence on the conceptual production in psychology⁸. Here, one would have expected that the fact that the patients are, in the large majority, Jewish – survivors of the genocide perpetrated by the Nazis – would be mentioned as an essential element in the theoretic formulation of psychopathology and technical therapeutic data⁹.
- 5 *Observation number one: psychology takes great interest in the Holocaust but not in Jews.*

Jewish thought and the Holocaust

- 6 Jewish thought, like all culturally defined thoughts, is extremely complex, varied and polemic. It gives rise to divergent – even contradictory – discourses, but all depart from the same fundamental principle: what happened must be full of meaning and just, according to the divine logic. Jewish tradition rests on the Biblical canon which recounts the founding events of the Jewish people and which, furthermore, constitutes a corpus of stories which enable an understanding and grasp of not only man’s past, but also of his future. *The text of origins is, first and foremost, the kernel of the origin of meaning*: it is that through which the Jewish people are able to construct the meaning of experienced events ; it creates, based on founding myths, a logical matrix of semantic value. The sum of the original events establishes the explanatory principle and imposes on the mind of man a logic of meaning, image, thought and action.
- 7 The Jewish people are characterized by their special covenant with God. Their election, at the origin of this covenant, obliges them to follow extremely precise laws which are inscribed in the Torah (the Pentateuch), which was revealed by God to Moses on Mount Sinai (this moment is usually called “the gift of the Torah”). This text, which recounts the origins of the World, the founding events of humanity and, in particular of the Jewish people, comprises a matrix of stories and laws whose coherence is only revealed through a complex set of exegeses. These exegeses have been meticulously coded according to several dozen hermeneutic rules and different levels of study. Jewish tradition holds that the facts and laws inscribed in the Pentateuch only take on meaning through the interpretations that were given to them. Thus, to cite but one example, it is not possible

to hope to understand the meaning of the sacrifice of Isaac without reading what Rashi¹⁰, the most famous commentator, wrote about it.

- 8 In the form of numerous enigmas and mythical stories, the Torah demands, of whoever wishes to understand it, consideration of all the interpretations which it has engendered and which, like mythical variations, are all part of the whole. The Pentateuch gave rise to a tradition of commentaries which are inscribed in the Talmud. The latter is the sum of the texts that constitute the major teachings. The Talmudic tradition consists, in large part, in commenting on commentaries on the Torah. The logical principle, underlying this system, is that there is no event which is not covered in the commentaries on the founding events and which cannot, in the last analysis, be connected to the *first* events themselves. Thus, everything that happens takes on meaning according to a universe of facts and thoughts, all of which are organized according to the divine law. The rules of decoding are especially difficult and the meaning is always polysemic. Jewish thought on the Holocaust is therefore, by necessity, a thought which leans on the Torah, the Talmud, and Jewish concepts. The existing propositions on the Holocaust¹¹ are – relative to the abundance and inventiveness of Jewish thought on the great events – very few in number and often banal. They recall ideas used in the past for other events, *Pesah* “the exodus from Egypt,” the “Inquisition,” and are hardly eloquent; in particular, they do not engender any innovative thought or new intellectual approach. In other words, Jewish thinkers have not offered any original thought on the Holocaust. Here is a review of their theories¹².
- 9 All the thinkers concur in seeing in the Holocaust, as in all anti-Semitic persecutions, the expression of evil, the stamp of Amalek¹³: it was during the flight from Egypt, precisely at Rephidim, that Amalek launched his attack against Moses and his people¹⁴. The attack took place at the moment when the Jews, finally liberated, began to doubt the validity of the Mosaic enterprise: “Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our cattle with thirst ?¹⁵” in a place where they doubt the presence of God : “Is Yahweh among us or not ?¹⁶” This questioning of the divine covenant and the validity of what befalls the Jews is generally interpreted as a state of weakness, for the people themselves, and therefore as a moment of temptation for anti-Semitic nations. It is also understood as a trial inflicted by God: when his people wish to rebel, because they traverse a difficult period, or when they begin to distance themselves from their Creator – by assimilating, for example – the Creator will manifest himself by withdrawing (*hester panim* : God hides his face) from his people, letting them experience what could befall them if he were not there¹⁷. Understanding this “withdrawal” is extremely complex. During the Holocaust, “God hides his face,” withdraws from the world and delivers his people to other forces, to foreign forces. In this case, the Jewish people are obliged to acknowledge their great fragility, the extreme danger in which they find themselves. Why does God hide his face? In order to punish, to threaten, because he is disappointed by his people, because he esteems that the people have not honored their promises, etc. What was it that took place in Europe at the beginning of the century? Why did God hide his face beginning in the 1930s in this region of the world? According to some Jewish explanations, the Jews of Europe had become strangers to themselves, they were very drawn to non-Jewish societies and thoughts, and actively took part in their development.
- 10 Another explanatory hypothesis is that of the “pains of childbirth” *hevlei mashiach*: in other words, the great catastrophe about to touch the Jewish people announced the

imminent coming of the Messiah. “If you see a generation in decline, wait for him [the Messiah]...” Rabbi Isser Zalman Meltzer: “During these years, the Jewish people saw blood, fire and columns of smoke (Joel III, 3); its blood was shed in torrents, the enemy, may his name be cursed, savagely slaughtered millions of our brothers... We must hope that it was a time of distress for Israel from which it will be saved. In truth, these were terrible *hevlei Mashiah!* Our Sages, for years, predicted the terrible trials that would come at the end of days, so terrible as to wish: ‘Let the Mashiah come, but let me not see him!’”

18

- 11 Other interpretations of the Holocaust refer to Zionism or to anti-Zionism¹⁹. God withdraws because he does not approve of the settlement of the Jewish people in the land of Israel – the time has not yet come, the Messiah has not yet arrived. Or the opposite, he hides his face because he esteems that the entire Jewish people should make *aliya* (*ascend*, settle in Israel) and reacts violently when he sees that the majority of his people do not wish to abandon their life in exile.
- 12 Finally, some rabbis, such as the *Hazon Ish*, refused to give a precise meaning to the Holocaust. Rabbi Hutner, for his part, said:
“the extermination of European Jews is the expression of reproach towards the chosen people. We do not have the right to interpret these events as a particular punishment for particular sins. It is based on the particular character of the nation of Israel until the arrival of the *Mashiah*, and applies to all the people, through the will of God and for reasons known only to Him.”²⁰

Definition of what could be a valid Jewish thought on the Holocaust

- 13 In any case, the interpretations are often old – a good number dating from the period of the Holocaust – and are of little interest to scholars of contemporary Jewish tradition. In particular, they do not lead to any mechanism enabling reparation, healing or going beyond the Holocaust. This aspect is not anodyne in light of the fact that Jewish thought is a thought which is constructed in direct connection to action and is only, very rarely, a purely abstract thought. Thus Jewish thought, Jewish meaning is only valid if it enables action on the world, namely, to the extent that it takes risks. Thus a thought consequent to the Holocaust should induce an understanding of the Holocaust *that would give rise to modalities of reparation, in other words, of healing for the survivors and their descendants*. A true Jewish thought on the Holocaust should, by necessity, induce a proposition which *interests Jewish post-Holocaust existence*.
- 14 For the time being, in light of these reflections, it would seem that the affirmation of the Talmud: “he who beseeches the past, it is a prayer in vain” – which certainly deserves varied, comprehensive commentaries – is, at this point in our study, relevant.
- 15 *Second observation: contemporary Jewish thought is alive, it takes an interest in Jews but not in the Holocaust.*

A double indifference

- 16 We thus confront a double indifference. So why not let things be as they are? What justifies bringing psychologists and *rabbanim*²¹ together, connecting psychological thought

on the Holocaust with Jewish thought on Jews? Why try to interconnect these two perspectives?

A new proposition

- 17 For nearly twenty years, at the University of Paris 8 Saint Denis, in the clinical psychology laboratory²², we have been conducting research on the psychological consequences of the Holocaust. We have carried out hundreds of psycho-historical interviews²³ with survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors. We also developed research tools on the psychology and psychotherapy of survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors. We made a point of not ignoring any aspect; we sought to assemble all data that could relate to the patients, including data not covered by psychologists. In other words, we let ourselves be surprised by questions which we had not suspected. In the words of science philosopher Isabelle Stengers²⁴, we sought out *disturbance* as the correct condition for the construction of knowledge. This explains how typical Jewish issues entered neutral psychological, university mechanisms. This was the case of patients who were not particularly interested in Judaism or in Jewish thought – most being primarily concerned with their psychic suffering and problematic interactions with members of their family – relational complexities which are more or less directly connected to the Holocaust.

A major disturbance

- 18 Jewish atheist survivors and their descendants have never ceased saying that the Holocaust proved the non-existence of God.
- “Innocent children were killed; holy men, sages died in flames, old people, sick people were savagely murdered: if God existed, he would never have permitted this.”
- 19 This argument is, in reality, absurd – there is clearly no “proof” of the non-existence of God. Furthermore, everyone knows that the Bible is riddled with terrifying divine threats and acts. Finally, such an assertion can be easily reversed:
- “The Holocaust is so inconceivable, so inhuman, so un-representable that only a deity could have been its author”²⁵
- 20 Certain concentration camp survivors, who were raised in the Jewish tradition and who became Communists before their deportation, confided, in the course of clinical and research interviews, that they secretly dreamt of a trial where the God of the Jews would stand in the dock confronted by a horde of survivors who would denounce and incriminate him. This notion seems almost delirious if it did not, in fact, stem from Kabbalistic tradition. Indeed, it is in no way idiosyncratic of the survivors or their children²⁶.
- 21 The problem raised by this type of statement seems to me particularly interesting in that it questions directly the conditions for such a legal convocation. It represents, in fact, the beginning of a response to the questions raised by such an event.
- 22 *In what way does contemporary Jewish society construct the conditions for comprehending and relating to the deity after the Holocaust? Everything leads us to think that the survivors, traumatized by the Holocaust, pose a difficult, ultra-modern question to their contemporaries.*

- 23 In effect, the most troubling Jewish question, which emerges recurrently and to which psychologists have no answer, is: what was *the intention of the God of the Jews during the Holocaust*? One should not be mistaken: those who pose this question are the subjects of psychology, those who come to our university sessions. It should be noted that the large majority are politically leftwing, often intellectuals, some even psychiatrists or psychoanalysts, some are CNRS researchers, all are survivors or descendants of Holocaust survivors who were deported or were “hidden children,” Jews or “mixed-breed Judeo-Christians,”²⁷ and, for the most part, not believers.
- 24 *Observation number three, in the form of a question: how can one take reciprocal interest? What can be done so that psychologists and rabbis will have real reasons to talk together? How can one promote a common world?*
- 25 Psychologists need Jewish thinkers in order to answer the questions posed by their patients: they need the knowledge of Jewish thinkers, rabbis, Kabbalists in order to obtain an answer. They need to know the modalities for the convocation of the deity; how does one force it to come to the “meeting”? to explain itself and enable Jews to understand and to repair the drama which befell them: the loss of their families, their world, as well as their survival and their future as Jews?
- 26 The rabbis also clearly need psychologists in order to understand the Holocaust in a specific manner, since it is Jewish patients from a non-Jewish therapeutic world who inform them about the generalized disturbance of the Jewish world. Jewish thinkers could benefit from the work of psychologists and particularly from the patients of psychologists, in order to help them build a living, interesting and fruitful memory of the Holocaust, one turned towards the future.

The question of method

- 27 It may seem unusual to take a serious interest in popular religious thoughts, and try to understand their character and validity. Apart from the fact that it is not up to the humanities to rule on the existence or non-existence of deities, it seems to me essential to have an approach, based both on psychology and anthropology, that is able to evaluate the assertions to which people adhere and which enable them to reconstruct their world²⁸
- .

In conclusion

- 28 The questions raised here are part of a larger reflection on the political and social consequences of the Holocaust.
- 29 1. The first hypothesis consists in saying that the Holocaust is, from an intellectual perspective, a paradigm for all massacres and genocides of the 20th and 21st centuries²⁹. In this case, the Holocaust transforms Jews into a form of new citizens of the world to come, of the world as it functions.
- 30 2. The second hypothesis rests on the unavoidable specificity of the Holocaust. This is the notion that the Holocaust only concerns, only has real meaning for Jews – a notion which is similar to that of certain rabbis and certain important witnesses such as Elie Wiesel. The Holocaust, of course, also has meaning for others, but it is, first and foremost, an

event which concerns Jews. In this case, it is imperative for Jews to understand the Holocaust in as far as it would become the necessary premise for a redefinition of Jews in the modern world.

- 31 If this second hypothesis proves itself to be so, this would explain why the State of Israel is taking greater and greater interest in the Holocaust, which was not the case in the first years of the State³⁰.

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à paraître en 2011 « Der Holocaust als Paradigma des psychischen Traumas » in: *Holocaust-Trauma. Kritische Perspektiven zur Entstehung und Wirkung eines Paradigmas* Jose Brunner/Nathalie Zajde ed., Wallstein Verlag, Goettingen.

NOTES

1. The article was based on a lecture given at the IFRE conference at the Musée du Quai Branly “Présence du passé, mémoire et société du monde contemporain”, Paris 2007.
2. B. Bettelheim, “Individual and Mass Behaviour in Extreme Situations,” *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, October, 1943.
3. The concentration camp survivor syndrome comprises: intense feelings of fear, terror, abandonment, re-living the traumatic event, avoidance of *stimuli* linked to the event, dulling of general reactivity, neuro-vegetative hyperactivity, traumatic dreams, recurrent memories, emotional reactions during anniversaries, dissociative states, a particular form of irritability, diminished capacity of concentration, emotional lability, reduction in the capacity to modulate affects, unjustified and excessive fears and worries. Cf Eitinger, “Pathology of the Concentration Camp Syndrome”, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1961, 5, p. 370-379; Nederland, “Psychiatric disorders among persecution victims. A contribution to the understanding of concentration camp pathology and its after effects”, *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 1964, 139, p. 458-474; Chodoff, “Late effects of the Concentration Camp Syndrome”, *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 1963, 8, p. 323-328.
4. American Psychiatric Association, 1995, *DSM-IV. Manuel diagnostique des troubles mentaux*, French translation, Paris Milan Barcelona, Masson 1996; Young, *The Harmony of Illusions, Inventing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1995.
5. D. Pross, *Paying for the Past: The Struggle Over Reparations for Surviving Victims of Nazi Terror*, Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1998.
6. Hass, “Survivor Guilt in Holocaust Survivors and their Children,” *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*. Ed. John Lemberger, JDC-Brookdale Institute, 1995, p. 163-183.
7. For a detailed presentation of these theories and the consequences of their application to survivors and descendants of survivors, cf. N. Zadjé, *Guérir de la Shoah*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2005, and N. Zadjé “La psychologie des profondeurs à l’épreuve des camps Nazis” in Tobie Nathan & coll. *La guerre des psys, Manifeste pour une psychothérapie démocratique*, Editions Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, Seuil, Paris 2006, p. 197-212. For a scientific review of the use of these concepts in psychology and psychiatry, cf. Solkoff, “Children of Survivors of the Nazi Holocaust: A critical review of the literature” *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 1981, 51 (1), p. 29-42.
8. Hassan, 1995, “Individual Counseling Techniques with Holocaust Survivors,” in *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*. Ed. John Lemberger, JDC-Brookdale Institute. Fried, 1995 “Café 84: Social Daycare Center for Survivors and their Children” in *A Global Perspective on Working with Holocaust Survivors and the Second Generation*. Ed. John Lemberger, JDC-Brookdale Institute, 1995, p. 81-91.
9. The most striking example, in this respect, is the therapeutic experience of the survivor KaTzetnik. De Nur, his real name as an Israeli author, chose to publish the transcription of his treatment with LSD, KaTzetnik 135633, 1987, *Les visions d’un rescapé ou le syndrome d’Auschwitz*, Paris, Hachette, 1990. The treatment, which had been entirely recorded, had been administered by Dr. Baastians, a specialist in psychic trauma, in his clinic in Holland. The principle of narco-analysis was known since the first World War as a rapid method of treating traumatized soldiers and enabling them to return to the front. It involves administering a narcotic drug to the patient

to enable him relive, in a hallucinatory state, the traumatic event and induce a new version, a “happy ending” to this event. The traumatized soldier thus wakes up relieved and ready to return to the fighting. During his treatment, which took place in 1976 over five sessions, KaTzetnik, under the effect of LSD, repeatedly recalled scenes related to the Torah, the pre-war religious hassidic world of Poland (where he grew up) and Auschwitz. His hallucinations led him to see, in the same often terrifying scene, pious Jews, great Biblical figures, demons and Christ. Visibly completely bewildered, the Dutch doctor acknowledged his lack of understanding and inability to decode the visions of the survivor. He invited a Christian theologian to the sessions in order to help him understand his patient, but the theologian was equally at a loss. Thus, in desperation, Baastians concluded that only De Nur could make sense of his psychic productions. KaTzetnik interrupted the treatment as he was suffering more and more, the treatment having seemed to strengthen the trauma. He notes, in the commentary that accompanies the transcription of the treatment, that several years later, following the treatment, his nights had become calmer, his nightmares less terrifying, but it was during the day that horrible visions took over in a sudden, hardly controllable manner – it should be noted that this type of reaction to narco-analysis, as well as the risk of psychotic decompensation were the reasons why a large number of health authorities in the world prohibited treatments with LSD and hallucinogenic substances. For a detailed presentation of KaTzetnik’s treatment 135633, cf. N. Zajde, “Traumatismes” in Tobie Nathan & coll. *Psychotherapies*. Paris, Odile Jacob, 1998.

10. Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhak (1040-1105): one of the greatest commentators in Judaism who was born in Troyes, in the province of Champagne. His commentaries are found in nearly every edition of the Torah and the Talmud, for which they constitute an indispensable tool.

11. They are, for the most part, presented in the French language in the work by Schwarz and Goldstein (1987), *La Choa*, Gallia, Mea Shearim, Jerusalem, Israel, 1992 for the first French edition. For the translation and complete account of the thought of a rabbi who died in the Holocaust, cf. Abramson, 2000, “On communal trauma from the Holocaust. The Esh Kodesh of Rabbi Kalonimus Kalmish Shapiro ; A Hassidic Treatise.” *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 2000 ; 37 ; 321. <http://tps.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/37/3/321>

12. For a longer presentation of these theories, cf. N. Zadjé, *op. cit.*

13. Amalek was the grandson of Esau. He was illegitimate and the product of incest. He was the son of Elifaz and Timna (who was herself the daughter of Elifaz). Amalek, born after the death of Isaac, inherited from his grandfather Esau a hatred of everything that stemmed from Abraham. The *midrash* Yalkut (Bamidbar 764) recounts: “Esau said, one day, to his grandson Amalek that he had tried in vain to kill Jacob. He therefore bequeathed him the mission of avenging him, and of doing away with the descendants of his detested brother. “How, asked Amalek, can I succeed where you failed?” Esau answered: “Here is the advice I give you : when you shall see them stumble, hurl yourself at them!” in Eliahu Ki Tov, *Ephémérides de l’année juive*, p. 201. Amalek represents the archetypal aggressor of the Jews: he and his people were the first to wish to destroy the Jewish people, only just liberated.

14. Exodus XVII.

15. Exodus XVII, 3.

16. Exodus XVII, 7.

17. “And it came to pass, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed: and when he let down his hand, Amalek prevailed,” Exodus XVII, 11.

18. Rav Schwarz and Rav Goldstein, 1987, p. 69-70, *op. cit.*

19. Rav Schwarz and Rav Goldstein, *op. cit.*

20. Rav Schwarz and Rav Goldstein, 1987, p. 79, *op. cit.* The notion that terrible events can only be explained through reference to the essence of Jewish existence is also found in Abécassis, *La pensée juive*, Librairie générale française, 1987. The Jews suffer terrible torments at the hands of other

nations, not because of any particular sin, but solely because they are who they are, strangers, wanderers, the “Other”.

21. Master of Jewish thought.

22. Centre Georges Devereux, <http://www.ethnopsychiatrie.net>

23. For an in-depth presentation of psycho-historical interviews with survivors and descendants of Holocaust survivors, as well a complete expose of the clinical research tools used with this population, cf. N. Zajde, 1993, *op. cit.* and 2005, *op. cit.*

24. I. Stengers, “Le laboratoire de l’ethnopsychiatrie,” preface to *Nous ne sommes pas seuls au monde*, Tobie Nathan, Paris, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2001.

25. This second proposition, in fact, is closer to what most survivors and their descendants feel : a sentiment of rage towards the deity which is difficult to allay. In other words, this type of statement evokes most of all the intentionality of a putative non-human aggressor, rather than his existence or non-existence.

26. It is said of Rabbi Levi Yitzok of Berditchev – one of the most famous Hassidic rabbis of Poland who lived in the 18th century – that he was able to question the Creator in the context of a trial or court. The Lubavitchers also institute a form of court when they want to force God to let a great rabbi live – from a personal communication by Rabbi Jacquot Grunwald, Jerusalem, 2007.

27. On this classification of subjects, cf. C. Grandsard, *Juifs d’un côté. Portraits de descendants de mariages entre juifs et chrétiens*, Paris, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, Le Seuil, 2005.

28. T. Nathan *Nous ne sommes pas seuls au monde ! Écologie des invisibles non-humains*, Paris, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, Le Seuil, 2001 and Nathan 2007 *A qui j’appartiens ? Écrits sur la psychothérapie, sur la guerre et sur la paix*, Les empêcheurs de penser en rond, Paris.

29. Zajde, “Der Holocaust als Paradigma des psychischen Traumas” in *Holocaust-Trauma. Kritische Perspektiven zur Entstehung und Wirkung eines Paradigmas* Jose Brunner/Nathalie Zadjé ed., Wallstein Verlag, Goettingen, due out in 2011.

30. Indeed, after several decades of more or less major indifference towards the Holocaust and the survivors, the State of Israel is taking part in national and international events on this theme (commemorations, museums, etc.) and is developing programs for survivors. Cf. G. Bensoussan (under the direction of) *Devant l’abîme, Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah*, n° 182, January-June, 2005, Review of the Centre de documentation juive contemporaine, Paris and G. Bensoussan, (under the direction of) *L’historiographie israélienne de la Shoah 1942-2007. Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah*, n° 188, January-June, 2008.

ABSTRACTS

The contemporary Jewish world, namely the one which bases itself on concepts from the Torah in order to comprehend itself and events, has taken a minimal interest in the Holocaust. The few interpretations it has put forward are often old – many dating from the period of the Holocaust, with few innovations – and they have little interest for contemporary Jewish scholars, if one looks at the latter’s abundant output. On their side, psychiatry, psychology and even psycho-analysis have, for a long time, taken an interest in the Holocaust and in the internees of concentration camps – the most famous achievement being the identification of the concentration camp survivor syndrome at the end of the 1950s. But neither this famous syndrome, nor practically any other books, manuals, or articles dealing with Holocaust survivors

mention the Jewish identity of the patients *in a pertinent scientific manner*. Why seek to fill these gaps on either side? Why deem it necessary to connect the psychological disciplines with the world of Jewish thought? The author, in charge, at the Centre Georges Devereux at the University of Paris 8, of clinical research psychotherapy tools for Holocaust survivors and descendants of survivors, analyzes the reasons behind these issues and puts forward suggestions.

Le monde juif traditionnel contemporain, c'est-à-dire celui qui recourt aux concepts de la Thora pour se penser et penser les événements, ne s'est que fort peu intéressé à la Shoah. Les quelques interprétations proposées sont souvent anciennes – bon nombre datent de l'époque de la Shoah – et ne donnent pas lieu à des innovations ; elles n'intéressent que peu les penseurs de la tradition juive contemporaine au regard de leur foisonnante production. De leur côté, la psychiatrie, la psychologie et même la psychanalyse s'intéressent depuis fort longtemps à la Shoah et aux internés en camp de concentration – le point le plus marquant étant la création du Syndrome du survivant des camps de concentration à la fin des années 1950. Mais ni le fameux syndrome, ni pratiquement aucun des textes, des manuels, des articles traitant des survivants de la Shoah, ne mentionnent l'identité juive des patients de *manière scientifiquement pertinente*. Pourquoi chercher à combler ces lacunes de part et d'autre ? Pourquoi a-t-on besoin de faire se rencontrer la discipline « psy » et l'univers de la pensée juive ? L'auteur, responsable, au Centre Georges Devereux à l'Université de Paris 8, de dispositifs cliniques de recherche en psychothérapie des survivants et descendants de survivants de la Shoah, expose les raisons de cette réflexion et soumet des propositions.

INDEX

Mots-clés: Shoah, Psychologie, Psychiatrie, Ethnopsychiatrie

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AUTHORS

NATHALIE ZAJDE

Nathalie Zajde is a senior lecturer in psychology at the University of Paris 8 Saint-Denis. She is in charge of research and clinical studies at the Centre Georges Devereux and was a visiting researcher at the Centre de recherche français à Jérusalem (2007-2009). An expert in psychic trauma, she developed in France the first clinical research tools for survivors and descendants of Holocaust victims in 1990. She has authored two standard reference works: “*Enfants de survivants*” (1993), “*Guérir de la Shoah*” (2005) published by Odile Jacob. In the course of her stay, in 2003-2004, in the region of the Great Lakes (Burundi and Rwanda), she established and operated a university research center on the clinical psychology of trauma at the University of Burundi in Bujumbura. In November 2005, she established, with Dr. Ulman, at Beer Yaacov psychiatric hospital (south Tel Aviv), an ethno-psychiatric clinic for patients of Ethiopian origin – presently supported by the Israeli government in the framework of a research program. Following the massacres of September 28, 2009 in Guinea, she established and facilitated, in Conakry, a psycho-social unit specializing in the treatment of survivors and female victims of rape.

Her main research themes are: ethno-psychiatry; mass and individual trauma (genocide, war, natural catastrophes, domestic violence); psychotherapeutic tools; treatment for social and cultural minorities; psycho-politics.