



Remembering the past,  
honouring the memory,  
shaping the future

THE FORUM FOR  
**Yom HaShoah**  
Annual Jewish Remembrance Day  
for Victims of the Holocaust

*Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel wrote: 'What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor but the silence of the bystander'*

## ***The Silence of the Bystander***

Silence.

Where in this holocaust is the word of God? ...

The world was silent; the world was still.

And now, survivors stammer; their words are haunted.

Behind their words: silence.

Behind the silence,

a witness to the sin of silence...

And in the camps and streets of Europe

mother and father and child lay dying,

and many looked away.

To look away from evil:

Is this not the sin of all "good" people?

Perhaps some of the blame falls on me,

Because I kept silent, uttered no cry.

Fear froze my heart and confused my mind.

And I did not resist the lie...

Cowardice came down and walked the earth.

We hid our true feelings from one another.

We did not hear the cry of a friend.

And our own cry we often had to smother....

Courage was branded treason,

Betrayal was called heroic, bold.

Light hung its head in shame,

Waiting that at least one man should cry out:

"No!" but no one cried.

Only one thing was left—the patience to wait,

To wait that justice might prevail one day.

Perhaps that was part of my blame,

That I kept silent, did not speak,

As though I had nothing to say.

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**The 'Forum' comprises the following UK Sponsoring & Participating Organisations:**

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Working with the Board of Deputies of British Jews