

"What would Bardejov be like today if World War II never took place and the Jewish community still lives with us in our city?"

The city has many eyes. They look at houses and cottages, churches and synagogues ... and they are all the same - silent, silent - glass. Only we people who live in houses and cottages, go to churches and synagogues, we are different. But we all look at the world with living eyes. We see houses and cottages, churches and synagogues. We see how quickly and slowly they transform. And the eyes of houses and houses look at how we - the people, the living eyes, behave in a changing world.

Only the eyes of the oldest houses in our city remember that there used to be a world of the city - a world of houses and churches, a world hidden behind the city walls. But also the world beyond the city - the suburb - a world that could not step inside the city walls. He had to wait outside until we, the people of the houses and cottages on the other side of the walls, broke through the walls of prejudice and let him in. New ones grew up between the houses, which had small wooden boxes on the door - mezuzahs. Synagogues grew up between the churches.

The old town behind the walls changed and a new town grew - a town for Slovaks and Jews, for Ruthenians and Roma. I and hundreds of my peers - Jews and Slovaks, Roma and Ruthenians, were born into it and every day we learn to live in it.

In a quiet city with busy streets, where dignified students and dignified gentlemen with a hat and pajes walk side by side, those who go to church on Sundays and those who enter synagogues on Saturdays.

In a city where new sounds, new music, have moved from the suburbs. Mysterious prayers that wrap the city like a morning mist every day. Slow, drawn melodies sung by the mysterious language of the patriarchs. Ancient melodies sung by the Jewish people as they walked in the middle of the Red Sea. The psalms he sang on his way up to Jerusalem, which still accompany his journey through the streets of our city. But also merry songs - Hasidic - about a very difficult life and a very great God, who stood over the world in difficult times and even today watches over the Jewish and Slovak people, the Ruthenians and the Roma.

In a city that changes all day. The whole day is full of rushing people. They rush to work, to shops, to schools ... In the morning, men walk down his sidewalks. Those with yarmulkas to the synagogues to read God's words while they go to work like others. Children walk on the same paths and learn until some of them go to the synagogues to read God's words. Then the sidewalks are filled with hurried people who are trying to catch up with what they missed in the morning. In the evening, when the sidewalks bring all the inhabitants of our city back home, the houses and cottages will light up their glass eyes. People disappear behind curtains and sit at tables. All windows glow with the same heat. In all the windows, people give each other gifts. But in some, the seven-armed candlestick of the menorah, or the eight-armed chanukiya, flashes, in the other four Advent candles.

While the night turns off all the lights in the windows, the cold days are replaced by spring. But people are still sitting at the tables. Some remember how long ago their fathers famously came out of Egypt (Passover). Others think of how the Lord came out of the grave (Easter).

When the new year of wishes and falls, repentance and commitment begins in our city, people get up from their tables and leave their homes and houses - the day of reconciliation is coming. A day of atonement for people to look into the living eyes they meet on the streets. So that they can face the glass gaze of houses and cottages. So that they may look into the eye of Almighty God when the day of reconciliation of small people with the great God comes.

Every day, every year, many living eyes walk in our city. Human eyes that live side by side in the same city, in the same houses. Some are brown, the other blue, the others green or gray. Some are big, others small. However, they do not differ in color ... but in appearance. Each of them looks at our world differently. Each of them looks differently into the glass eyes of our city.

Our city has many eyes. They look at us - people, Slovaks and Jews, Ruthenians and Roma. They see how we behave in a changing world. Whether we will make sure that our city remains a city of churches and synagogues. To keep our city full of all sorts of music and ideas. So that our city remains a city in which people walk to each other without fear in churches and synagogues. Whether we can protect our city from those who do not like people with different customs, with different traditions. People with different views.

Let's make sure that fear doesn't take our words away and we would be quiet when someone wants to silence people with a different perspective. Let us be careful that fear does not tie our hands when Czech hands push out people with a different perspective. Let's be careful that fear does not cloud our eyes and we would not see anyone trying to erase people from our city with a different perspective. Whether we will be afraid of the people who bring hatred to our city. Shall we no longer fear God, who has watched over his people for centuries? Will we have the courage to watch someone touch the pupil of God's eye?

The city has many glass eyes. When we humans - living eyes – we close the lids so that we do not see what will happen to our city, what will happen to people who look at the world differently, the eyes of houses and homes will still be open. They will forever remember that we closed our living eyes and drove people out of the city with a different perspective.

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