1. **Why Janusz Korczak and Yitzhak Katzenelson?**

The twentieth century left humanity with despairing memories. Maybe the heritage of people like Janusz Korczak and Yitzhak Katzenelson can serve as anchors of hope, a beacon that guides us into a better world.

Global wars and genocides, unprecedented human slaughter in two world wars, the dark shadow of the Holocaust of the Jewish people, the presence of the atomic bomb and the constant threat of apocalyptic nuclear war, religious fanaticism and world terror fueled by religious radicalism, global waves of refugees pushed out of their homes by political violence and economic crises – all these problems threatened the ongoing flourishing of human civilization. They draw a problematic picture of our world, and paint dark shadows on human horizons. Their presence in our consciousness endangers our belief in the basic goodness of human beings and our ability to work for a better world.

Auschwitz, the pick of human demonic creativity in the twentieth century, marked the loss of our moral orientation. Its scandalous reality – an industrial complex of death – shattered our basic trust of human morality. Civilized, educated men committed the worst crimes one can imagine. They used the words "good" and "evil," spoke about human decency, and even led family lives in the proximity of the camp, and yet this did not prevent their crimes. Unavoidably, we question the very legitimacy and effectiveness of any moral discourse. Language was no longer a reliable representation of reality.[[1]](#footnote-1) The world went out of its mind.

1. Steiner, 1986. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)