

ECHOES OF (POST)MEMORY:

A JOURNEY THROUGH

JEWISH POLAND

JULY 2025

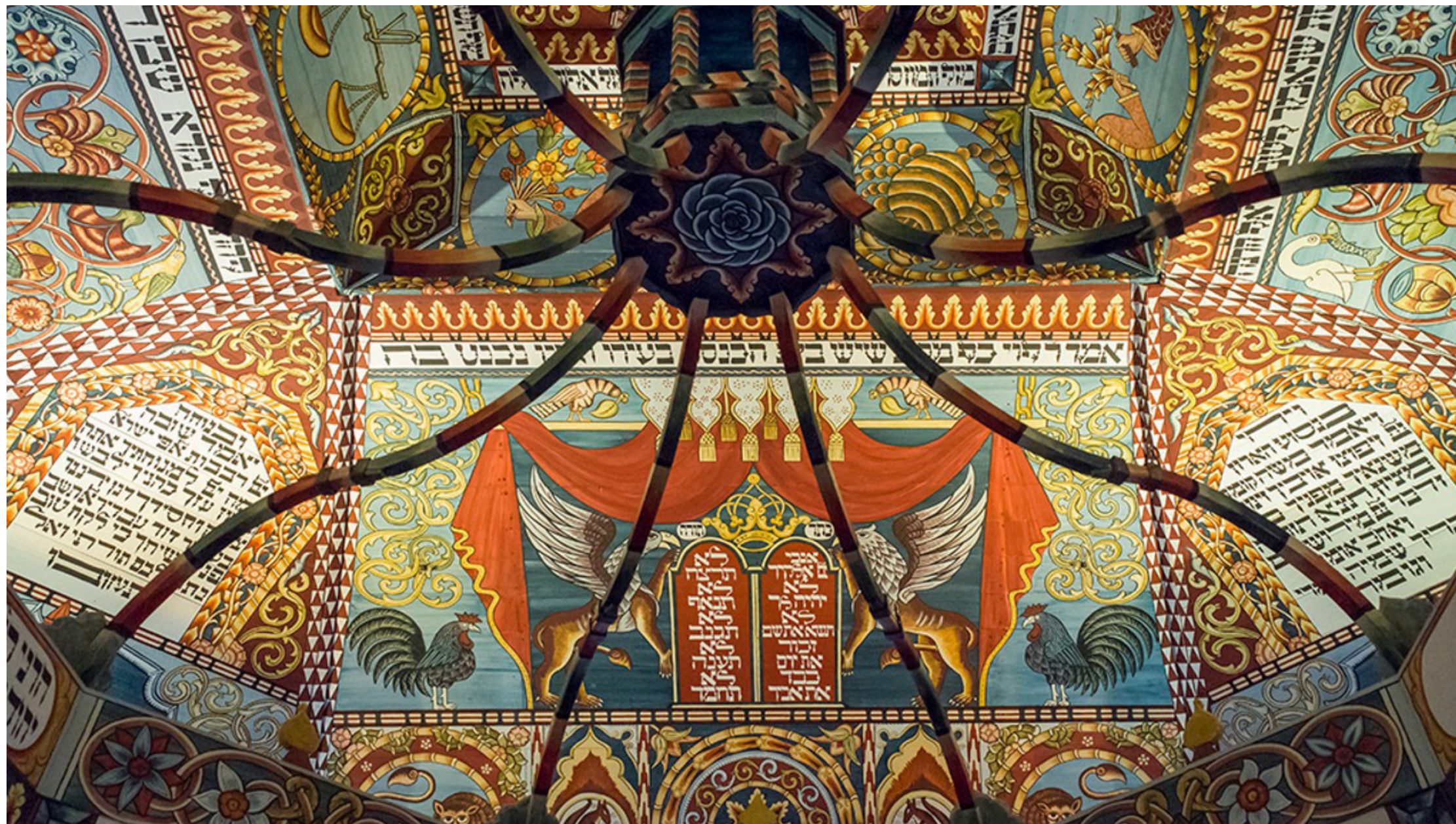


Photo by Prof. Jason Francisco

From the point of view of Jewish history, Poland is a unique place. Nowhere else in such a literal and visible manner do traces of Jewish life stand side by side with those of the Holocaust and destruction. Nowhere else in Europe is the presence of the

void created by the Holocaust as tangible as in the lands of modern Poland and Ukraine. Nowhere else is the evidence of destruction as lasting and ubiquitous as it is here—because nowhere else in Europe was Jewish life as developed as it was in the historic lands of Poland.

The political and social realities shaped by the Second World War caused those physical elements that survived the Holocaust to be forgotten for years. Instead of remembrance, the lack of memory appeared—a shared

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amnesia—which sanctioned further mass devastation of those fragments of the broken world that had somehow remained.

But Jewish life, which for decades smoldered under the surface during communist rule, has begun to recover and is proudly manifesting its presence in present-day Poland. This new, contemporary Jewish world is founded not only on remembering the Holocaust, but also on the awareness of the centuries of Jewish presence in this country and its contributions to every aspect and sphere of life. For the first time in over 70 years, Poland is filled with a polyphony of Jewish voices, an emphatic testimony to the resilience of the Jewish people.

Now, the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre invites descendants of the Survivors, as well as other members of the Jewish community of South Africa on a unique journey. We will travel across Poland to witness the remnants of a vibrant Jewish past, learn about the rich cultural heritage, and explore the haunting sites of destruction

The theme of the tour will be “Postmemory,” a term created in 1992 by Marianne Hirsch, Professor of

English and Comparative Literature, to describe the relationship of the second generation to powerful, often traumatic experiences that preceded their births but were nevertheless transmitted to them so deeply as to seem to constitute memories in their own right. Over time, the term ‘postmemory’ has been expanded by subsequent generations and now encompasses the transmission of memories between grandparents and grandchildren.

This extraordinary tour will be led by Jakub Nowakowski, the new director of the Cape Town Holocaust & Genocide Centre. Raised in Kazimierz, Kraków’s historic Jewish district, Jakub has a deep personal connection to the area’s rich heritage. With a degree in Jewish Studies and over a decade of experience as the director of the Galicia Jewish Museum, Jakub is a wellspring of knowledge about the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations.

This tour will offer a rare chance to explore significant sites and engage with influential activists who are shaping contemporary Jewish life in Poland. Join us for an unforgettable journey filled with history, culture, and meaningful encounters.

THE TOUR WILL INCLUDE, AMONG OTHER:

KRAKOW: Explore the historical Jewish district, visit the oldest synagogue in Poland, and pay respects at the grave of Moshe Isserles, one of the most important Jewish scholars.

FORMER GHETTO AND PLASZOW CONCENTRATION CAMP: Visit the area depicted in Steven Spielberg’s Schindler’s List.

FORMER SHTETLS: Travel through villages and towns where Jews constituted significant minorities and sometimes majorities for centuries.

JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF KRAKOW AND WARSAW: Meet vibrant contemporary Jewish communities and learn about present-day Jewish life in Poland.

POLIN MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF POLISH JEWS: Visit this renowned museum to gain insight into the rich thousand-year history of Jews in Poland.

WARSAW GHETTO AREA: Explore the historic Warsaw Ghetto, learning about its significance and the tragic events that took place there.

AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU AND BEŁŻEC: Visit the Nazi death camps to confront the harrowing realities of the Holocaust and honor the memory of those who perished.

LUBLIN: A city steeped in Jewish history, home to the renowned Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin, where scholars from around the world studied.

KAZIMIERZ DOLNY : A picturesque town along the Vistula River, its eighteenth-century synagogue stands as a testament to its Jewish heritage.

The full itinerary will be announced at a later stage.

Join us as we uncover stories of resilience, discover the indelible marks left by history, and connect with the profound legacy of Jewish communities that once thrived in these lands. Together, we will bear witness to the past and embrace the promise of a future where memory and hope coexist.

The program is set for July 2025, offering an incredible opportunity to participate in an exclusive experience. The price per person will decrease as more participants join, with a maximum of 35 people.

The details of the price per person will be announced shortly; we encourage you to get in touch to express your initial, non-binding interest in the program.