

Jewish Fate Throughout the Ages

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I remember many scenes from my childhood, but one that sticks out like a sore thumb, the Holocaust. I remember the horrors of Jews being packed on to trains and treated like tamed cattle. Chains on their arms and legs being carried to their inevitable deaths. I never agreed with Hitler or his practices. Especially because my best friend, who was always there for me, was a Jew. I remember going to school with him each day and crying when he was shoved towards the gas chambers. We received letters home saying that he was alright but little did I know I would never see him again. After the letter saying he was 'okay' came the letter announcing his death. I remember that night crumbling to my feet and being embraced by all his bitter relatives. That night I vowed to do anything I could, however small, to help end Hitler's rule.

I lived the rest of my life as a child in constant fear and anger. I wouldn't let myself get close to someone in the fear that they would be viciously torn away from me. Someone really helped me overcome my fears and my overwhelming sense of loneliness. Hanneke. She was my Dutch neighbor who became one of my closest friends after Eliyahu.

"Amalia," I looked up from my book.

"What Mom?" I replied.

"Meira's at the door!" Meira is the best friend a person could possibly ask for. I can't remember one memory without her being close by, and she's also Jewish. Meira's the one who motivated me to look more in-depth about the horrible unjust punishments that were thrown on her people. Reading my grandma's journal was an introduction in to the harsh actions of Hitler and his many followers. She was about twenty-five when the Holocaust started and just recently passed away. While reading the journal, I have learned more than the history books could ever teach me and gotten closer to my grandmother.

I immediately hugged her, not only because I loved her, but the way my grandma described what happened to Eliyahu made me feel like it could happen to me and Meira. I had just recently told her about the journal, and she wanted to know all about it. She wanted to know how the human race could possibly recover from the Holocaust. I took her straight up to my bedroom and began to tell her all about the awful and great things that my grandma went through.

“Can you read some? Please?” she begged.

“Are you sure?” I responded reluctantly.

“Yes, I can definitely handle it.” Although she seemed convinced, I wasn’t sure that she was ready from what I read before.

So I started to read: *I remember Kristallnacht like it was yesterday. The screams of the Jewish people, as the Nazis tortured them, resounded through the endless streets. The constant pain exuded their souls as I sat safely with Eliyahu and Hanneke in the closet. I felt as if I could do something, but something kept me tethered to where I sat.*

I immediately stopped reading as I saw my best friend, my Jewish friend, collapse in a fountain of tears.

“It’s okay, it’s okay,” I said, as I brought Meira into a tight hug. I shouldn’t have chosen to read that. I shouldn’t have chosen to read such a gruesome entry to my friend, who obviously felt some kind of attachment to the people that were just characters in a book for me.

“It’s just,” she started trying to speak through her tears, “I listen to that stuff that happened back then and I feel like it should be done. Like human kind should have grown from that awful learning experience. But when I look in the news, I see all these people who hate

others who aren't like them and are following the principles that Hitler taught a long time ago. People are being stabbed, shot, and still the safety they should've found when Hitler was gone isn't there. Hate crimes have gotten vastly more violent and people have been struggling to stop them. And this isn't just in the U.S., it's everywhere. Two years ago, in 2018, there have about 835 Anti-Jewish attacks on and this past year, 2019, there has been about a 20% increase," Meira finished, out of breath. I just sat there taking it all in. I thought that the Jewish hate crimes had gone down when Hitler did. I had no idea that Meira had to go through so much and when she went to her synagogue she feared for her life. Thoughts like these had never occurred to me that a group of people could feel so attacked.

"Oh..." I trailed off. I still couldn't manage to get any words out. Every word in my vocabulary was stuck so far down and any word I grasped for went even deeper and deeper, "Has any aspect of it gotten better?" Automatically I regretted my question. What if I got the answer that I was dreaded?

Meira breathed in and began again, "Well obviously people aren't getting thrown into train cars and aren't getting forced into showers that held the power to clean them or kill them, but things still aren't good. People have gotten better, but they still don't comprehend that Jews, and people that have other view than them, are just like them." The rest of the day I continued on like that. We looked at different points of view and thought about the different people that hate is affecting.

We continued talking about all the problems that the world has yet to fix. That's when I decided to write it all down and share it to the world. If I could help the world why wouldn't I try? My main goal, and my goal for humanity, is to get us as close to perfection and farther away from the pending doom.

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