

## Where is the Beauty of Surviving Genocide

Ande Lloyd

The extermination of a group of people is an act one cannot find beauty in. However, the means of surviving genocide reveals the ultimate meaning of life. The book "Man's Searching for Meaning" is the testimony of a holocaust survivor, and a Ph.D. in psychiatry, Viktor E. Frankl.

Frankl's "meaning of life" took its turn. The basis of surviving genocide is essentially the same in surviving the suffering and hardships of everyday life. To understand "the meaning of life," dive into the essence of genocide.

When someone is imprisoned in a concentration camp, fate is probable to end only in death. In the first stages of being imprisoned, the psychological patterns that arise are the hopes of living. A concept called "delusion of reprieve" a symptom a condemned man goes through right before his execution. A sudden thought that one might be saved at the last moment. Frankl experienced this when he first arrived at Auschwitz and was almost divided into a group of people not fit to work. Those people were immediately sent to the gas chambers. Delusion of reprieve is a symptom that keeps the mental state stable when all is lost. (Frankl 14).

Once living as a condemned man, he now feels, apathy, an insensitive emotion and the feeling that one could not care anymore. (Frankl 35). This is not a loss of hope, which will be later talked about, but a protective shell. This is necessary as a means of self-defense against the constant beatings and death all around. All your efforts and emotions centered on preserving your own life, and the fellow next to you. (Frankl 44).

By taking apathy and applying it to our lives, as free people we can ignore the negativity that can appear and focus on what is important.

Inner freedom is something a condemned man must realize and hold onto. Inner freedom is an aspect we all possess, it is the ability to rise above negative environments and choose how you will act. By doing good in a negative environment a person can cause an enormous hope that can spread throughout a large group of people. (Frankl 79).

The death rate of Auschwitz in the week between Christmas, 1944 and New Years, 1945 increased beyond Frankl's experience. This can be explained by hope. Many rumors spread throughout the camp that the war would be soon over by Christmas and many drew up hope. But as the time grew near and there was no news, the prisoners lost courage and disappointment overcame them. This negative influence greatly weakened their strength to resist and most of them died. Hope is another tool by which to survive. If one can always hold on to a hope, his body can still put out the necessary effort to continue on living. (Frankl 120).

Suffering is everywhere. Whether it is small, or big, it's an inevitable part of life, even as fate and death. Suffering can be bearable when a person can find a cause to continue that suffering. When we do this, we begin to find meaning in our suffering, and set goals to achieve. By adopting suffering as a challenge rather than a curse, one can increase his means of survival greatly. (Frankl 106).

In spite of all the mental and physical challenges, someone in the concentration camp can indeed have great spiritual growth. The truth is the means of love. When someone has everything taken away from him, it gives more time for that someone to focus on the important things in life. Thinking of one's beloved is the most honorable and positive way to fight back the desolation that comes with genocide. Love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. (Frankl 56-58).

Life in a concentration camp tore open and revealed the human soul. Through this one found the qualities of the human spirit both good and evil. The rift that separates the mark of good and evil reaches its depths in a concentration camp. The basis of surviving genocide is factors of apathy, inner freedom, suffering, hope, and love. Life means taking initiative to find the right answer to its problems and fulfill the tasks, which it constantly sets for an individual. (Frankl 123).

And through the lessons learned by the yet continuing acts of genocide we can pick out the basis of living our daily lives. Indeed the mind set that Frankl made apparent is not only relevant in surviving genocide but also just as relevant in surviving what life throws at us. One must always try to find the right answer to their problems, and take what is most beautiful in life as most precious.