



Imitable Life: “The Happiest Man on Earth”

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Abstract

The book I have enthusiastically chosen is *The Happiest Man on Earth*, by Edie Jaku, a Jewish boy, who defied the Nazis and disliked hat-redness and wanted to emancipate himself with the strongest will, from the most formidable treatments of concentration camps, which are the indicators of inhumanity and bestiality during Hitler’s time, when Nazi movement was in outraging surge, lynching callously and; this is certainly a beautiful memoir of his life and traumatic experiences, that vividly explores unimaginable and unbearable incidents of his life; and firmly reinforces readers as as to go through life and lead a hopeful life, inspite of the saddest realities, through hope, patience and resilience, besides, this memoir will indeed teach the timeless lessons and is a great testament to gratitude, meekness, tolerance, kindness and love for humanity.

Keywords: Slaying, Kristallnacht, Melancholic Beginning, Nazi Thugs, Walter Schleif, Buchenwald, Schutzstaffel, Auschwitz.

Introduction

Abraham Salomon Jakubowicz, who was born on 14th, April, 1920, from Leipzig, Germany and died on October, 2021 in Sydney at the age of 101, who is popularly known as Edward Jaku or Edie Jaku. Auschwitz’s survivor during WW11, who effectively did write his wartime horrific experiences in his memoir, *The Happiest Man on Earth*, published when he was 100 years old, after his emigration to Austria. His sister’s name is Johanna (Henni), who also

survived the holocaust, and he changed his name to ‘Edward’ or ‘Eddie’ as his affectionate sister would call him. He and his parents were ended up in Auschwitz, where his parents were sent to ‘Gas Chambers’ but he survived as he was a skilled tool maker. After the war, he settled in Belgium and married another Jewish survivor, Flora Molho, with whom he has two sons, namely, Michael and Andre. He said, he would never come to ‘Germany’ as ‘German soil gave him everything and took away everything

from him'. He gave a lecture in 2019 about his shocking life experiences during a TEDX Conference in Sydney.

Schemes and Soils of Slayings

Pogrom, Don't mistake it to be 'programme' in rush reading as it has its own meaning that makes life chaos. 'Pogrom' is antisemitic, which is an organised massacre of a particular ethnic group, which took place among Jewish people during Hitler's time. Blood bled like streams due to massacre had caused the horrific scenes and marred the history of mankind with the marks of ruthlessness and inhumanity. Herschel Feibel Grynszpan killed Ernst vom Rath in Paris and this was taken as a pretext to launch 'Kristallnacht'. It is a German term, means 'crystal night' or 'Night of Broken Glass'. The shards of broken glass littered the streets of Jewish colonies; the buildings and synagogues were utterly demolished on 9th, November, 1938. 'Schutzstaffel' is a paramilitary force along with Hitler's Youth. 'Nazism' is an extremist, racist, antisemitic and anti-Marxist party 'Buchenwald' was a Nazi concentration camp in Germany, which was one of the the first and the largest of the concentration camps. This camp was full of Jews, Poles and Slavs, mentally ill, Romani people and prisoners of war. The insufficient food and poor conditions and deliberate executions led to 56,545 deaths at Buchenwald of the 280,000 prisoners who passed through the camp and its 139 sub-camps. Auschwitz concentration camp was a complex of 40 concentration and extermination camps in Poland. It consists of Auschwitz 1, 11 and 111. Millions were gassed and killed. Others who were not gassed were murdered via starvation, exhaustion, disease, individual executions, or beatings. Others were killed during medical experiments. A gas chamber is an apparatus for brutally killing humans or other animals with gas, consisting of a sealed chamber into which a poisonous or asphyxiant gas is introduced. Poisonous agents used include hydrogen

cyanide and carbon monoxide. Thus, in total, 6 million people were killed.

Melancholic Beginning

This book consists of 15 chapters; each chapter deals with the diverse experiences that the authour underwent at different phases and he vividly describes how he was depressed, in the course of time, at different stages, and how he could encourage himself by knowing the vitality of life. Family, generosity and sacrifice are the major themes in the first chapter, despite being Jewish, Eddie's family took pride in the involvement in German society. Eddie is forced to keep his Jewish heritage a secret and he did countless sacrifices. Eddie's father is an immigrant from 'Poland'. he had an unwavering love for Germany. Germany's economic struggles and the rise of the Nazi party has created a challenging environment for Eddie and his family.

Autobiographical description clearly outlines how he bitterly experiences discrimination and exclusion due to antisemitism. He was kicked out of school for being Jewish but Eddie's father really takes great risks to ensure Eddie's education and future. Finally Eddie was enrolled in a mechanical engineering college under the name, 'Walter Schleif'. Eddie must keep his Jewish identity a secret and endure the years of loneliness and sacrifice to pursue his education. The heart-rendering, account of the infamous 'Night of Broken Glass', known as 'Kristallnacht' has unimaginably caused destruction of beautiful, well-built houses, as well, thousands of synagogues and Eddie underwent anguish, terrible beatings, humiliation, unutterable horrors of Buchenwald, But Eddie's audaciousness has set an example in all these situations. In front of Eddie, many were ruthlessly gunned down who tried to escape this pathetic situation.

Inexpressible Experiences

Torturing experiences consists of detentions in a 'hangar' with other Jewish

men; the ruthless lootings elsewhere and the brutal burning of synagogues and the mental shocks after shocks. 'Nazi Thugs', beat him severely. One man that morally supported Eddie at this juncture was 'Kurt Hirschfeld', a 'German Jew', from Berlin, the best friend of Eddie. He explains about 'Aghastness of Buchenwald concentration camp' by terming it as the singing forest with the scary screams of prisoners from untold tortures. Eddie reminds the readers of 1200 'Czech men', who were housed in a stable, which was once used for the eighty horses. Thus sicknesses, starvation, torture and traumatising, inhumanity and persecution are inevitable in these camps.

The Standard Meal

Square meals a day, were intentionally stopped, with one bowl of rice and stewed meat', insufficiency and discomfort are two terrible enemies of the prisoners. No spoons to eat !. The prominent political prisoners were heavily chained, had hunch over for eating, which was a terrible experience. The unsanitary conditions shocked Eddie terribly and the toilets were completely devoid of 'toilet paper', whatever rags were available should be only used. He clearly mentions of one traumatic experience where twenty five of different categories were forced to go to giant pit latrine carefully balancing on two planks of wood to relieve themselves over a pit full of human waste. To reduce overpopulation at the camp gunned down two or three hundred people like animals every morning in a letter saying that saying, 'your dear tried to escape, the proof was the bullet in the back'. **Helmut Hoer**, another friend of 'Eddie' introduced him to the commander of the camp as an exceptional toolmaker and he made a sign of contract of employment. This was the time, his father came to pick him up, which was literally a paradise. a feeling of liberation.

Father's Unconditional Love

His father's careful holding him up with his hands tightly shows how immensely he

loved his son, Eddie. Eddie seeing his father being caught up by the gendarmerie (Belgian Police), beaten and handed over to 'Gestapo', he was shocked. His mother was in goal in three months When Germany invaded Belgium, it quite became unsafe for the refugees to be there. They missed one ship, going to London. The text vividly says how difficult it is for Eddie bearing all these problems still never left hope. Eddie writes that "I decided to travel on foot to the south of France, where was an avenue of escape"¹ (Eddie, P. 49). It was the time, parachutist was dropping spies all over Europe via parachute. German Saboteur spy, 'Gurs', another concentration camp near Pau, free skilled French prisoners of war and the foreign Jews across France were taken to **Auschwitz** concentration camp in Poland. Among them, 15000 prisoners were Jews, 823 were loaded into trains, 35 people to wagon. They plan to escape by unscrewing two floorboards by wriggling through the hole in the floor. And they escape crawling through like spiders clinging to the bottom of the train car. These are all plans for 'Dear Life'.

An Angel of Death

Bestiality in humans is clearly seen in **Dr Josef Mengele**, he is known as the 'Angel of Death', one of the worst murderers of his parents, who sent them to 'Gas chambers', cruel invention of Adolf Hitler but him to one of his work places. One of the SS, **Schutzstaffel**, black-uniformed elite corps, political soldiers of the Nazi Party said, his parents were gassed. Eddie could not digest as he heard this saddening news suddenly. Came to know I was an orphan. **Kurt** in the camp is only good friend of Eddie, he really lost faith in humanity. In **Mein Kampf**, Hitler blames all troubles of the world on Jews alone. He lived in barracks with 400 other Jews from all over Europe. without mattresses and blankets, forced to sleep naked. 'Auschwitz's 11-Birkenau', a sub camp of the much larger Auschwitz's complex was surrounded by an electrified barbed wire fence. In the circumstances like this, Greatest words on friendship by Eddie are: A friend is someone,

who indeed reminds you to feel alive. Eddie says that 'the best balm for the soul is friendship, and with that friendship we could do impossible'.

Education as a Lifesaver

His father Isidore often trained him in education telling him how important it is! . He always remembers his mother Lina for her loving care and his sister. Henni, who is so dynamic. Eddie married Flore and they had a son called Michael. Eddie was in a business of maintaining the high pressure air pipes. Education which his father handed over as an inheritance helped him to work in the toughest circumstances. Eddie opines that If you loose your morals, you will loose your life! He clearly enunciates how 'Nazis' lost humanity by dashing children against walls, still they could eat and sleep. They treated thier dogs much better than prisoners. One little child once said, I wanted to be like a dog as Nazis treated dogs better. While escaping, the polish bullet lodged in the muscle of my leg.

The Human Body: The Best Machine

Another man, '**Monsieur Kinderman**', helped Eddie a lot as he has a bullet in his leg, After bullet came out of his leg, his saliva used as a disinfectant with no soap and water, in those days, one hour of rest was two days of survival. He says that regularly a doctor would come and inspect them, check lice in their heads, if they find louse in their hair, they would be gassed. Being a precision engineer, he spent years making the most complicated, intricate machinery. Finally he came to a final conclusion that no machine was ever made like human body. Eddie beautifully says that '*where there is life, there is hope and hope is the fuel that powers the body*'. Back in 1938, to Buchenwald, he clearly mentions of unusual torture of prisoners. SS Hauptscharfuhrer at this camp is well known for hanging or as the hangman of Buchenwald Later, Eddie was moved to another camp, Sonnenburg, which was so close to a forest. 'Nazis' were unimaginably cruel. If he makes

seven mistakes, he would be hanged immediately. He also speaks of the man, 'Goh' who was in charge. In Brussels, a Jewish newspaper printed a photo of him in a section where those who survived the Holocaust could let their scattered families know they were still alive. LeSoir was the broadsheet newspaper. Two who survived holocaust wanted to commit suicide, Sulphur baths for skin was a terrible condition. Eddie strongly believes that love as the best medicine.. Finally he meets a beautiful woman named, **Flore Molho**, who was born into Jewish family in Greece. He loves her at first sight and decides to give her everything to take her away to start a new life. In the month of March, he got a permit to live in Australia. He began his journey by MS Surriento, a steamship and they arrived in Sydney in July 13th, 1950. His life's philosophy is that 'Shared sorrow is half sorrow but 'shared pleasure' is a double pleasure. He found a beautiful and dutiful wife that could help him in all his journey.

Hopeful Ending

Among the six million Jews, there were artists, architects, doctors, lawyers, scientists. First time he spoke with catholics in his life, John sanders spent six million dollars in establishing the museum in the Maccabean Hall in Darkinghurst in 1923 to commemorate the Jewish soldiers in the first World war. Small acts of kindness last longer than the lifetime. Eddie not only wants to his pain alone but also his hope to people. He emotionally shares one of his experiences about his son, who began to cry after his story was publicly spoken. His speeches have undoubtedly impacted many in the history. He was given the order of 'Australia medal', for the services to Jewish community. He spoke in 'TEDX' in 2019 in the month of May, the biggest speech of his life, which inspired millions nas the audience, having heard his story, with tears, dramatically leapt to their feet, The ones with the burning desire to make the world better, they will hear of our pain and inherit hope. '*Never give up hope, never It is never*

too late but be kind, polite and loving human'. "Life can be beautiful if you make it beautiful" is one of Eddie's famous adages.

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