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Sunset

The holocaust was a devastating period in the early 1940's. The holocaust affected Jews, people with disabilities, both mental and physical, black people, and many more. Even people that were not directly targeted could still feel the effects on their society. The COVID 19 pandemic is an outbreak of the coronavirus disease and even people that have not been infected by the disease can still feel the effects. The holocaust and the COVID 19 pandemic, although could never compare, both have had a major effect on humanity.

In the face of today's challenges one holocaust survivor that really inspired me was Zahava Sweet. Zahava Eksztajn was born on May 7, 1930 in Lodz Poland. In the 1940's, before the Nazi's invaded Poland, Zahava and her family were sent to the Lodz ghetto. While in the ghetto Zahava became sick with jaundice, a disease that causes yellow skin caused by the buildup of bilirubin in the blood, and was placed in the hospital. When the Nazis came around the hospital to amass disregarded children, Zahava was saved by her Aunt Fella. In 1944 Zahava was separated from her family and sent to Ravensbrück. Ravensbrück was a German concentration camp exclusively for women from 1939 to 1945. Zahava was given a uniform that was full of lice and was sent to work at an aviation factory. She was kept alive by a soldier that gave her bits of food and gave her information, but later mysteriously disappeared. After Ravensbrück was liberated, Zahava rejoined her father and sister and found that her mother had sadly died. Zahava lived in Israel for twelve years, married her husband Richard Sweet and

moved to Seattle. In 1990 during an interview Zahava said “Once in the Lodz ghetto I went out and I saw a sunset. The sun was very large and round and big, and at that moment I just knew that somehow I would see that sun again, and it will be that way, and I will survive and I will live.” Zahava’s words inspire me.

Zahava said that the sunset is what inspired her to keep going. I believe that now, during the pandemic, we should not focus on the things that have changed but instead on the things that have stayed the same. The sun will always rise in the morning and set in the evening. I understand that when put in a difficult situation you should focus on the little things that you have. Seeing a sunset before being put in a ghetto could have no significance, but after being put in a ghetto, getting your whole life ripped away from you and then seeing something that you had in your old life, something as simple as a sunset could mean so much and give you a sense of hope. If we use these same ideas of hope during the pandemic we may be happier and more positive about the situation around us.

In conclusion hope is a powerful thing. Having hope can make you more cheerful. Hope can make you feel jubilant. Hope can make you *want* to keep going. Applying the same principles of hope that Zahava and others used to the pandemic can help us feel more buoyant and happy. Zahava felt hope in a simple sight of a sunset. During the COVID 19 pandemic we can all find something to bring ourselves courage and hope.

Works Cited

Holocaust Center for Humanity - Zahava Sweet - Poland.

<https://holocaustcenterseattle.org/zahava-sweet>. Accessed 29 Apr. 2021.