



Rudi's Story, Chapter 9

Can you tell me some of the terrible outcomes of that for your own family?

My paternal grandmother had several sisters and one brother who fortunately emigrated to London before the war. This grandmother and one of her sisters were taken to Theresienstadt where my grandmother died but this sister of hers, my great-aunt, survived and came to live with us after the war until she died of old age. The youngest of these sisters – who was born after their parents' silver wedding anniversary, so she was really a youngster compared to her older sisters – she had two daughters of whom the eldest escaped with her husband to Palestine in 1934. The younger one of whom I have a picture which I can show you later she stayed behind and after we had emigrated in 1937 she married another Jewish person and indeed had a child very late into the Hitler era. This child was born in 1941 and I have a picture of him too. They were taken with her father – that's the husband of this youngest sister – and her husband to Auschwitz where they were murdered. Now when my parents as I related earlier had come to England to reconnoitre how to get to England in the first place, I was put up with several relatives while my parents were away and I stayed with this younger daughter of the youngest sister of my grandmother and she was a beautiful girl and really got on well together. She was older than myself. And when I eventually found out that she was murdered I was particularly sad and distressed about her death and her four-year-old son called Daniel. Now fortunately our elder daughter Deborah has two children of whom the elder is called Daniel but I must admit that it was a coincidence but every time I see Daniel which I do fairly frequently I think of the Daniel who died in Auschwitz.

After such terrible events Rudi, do you feel there can ever be a legacy of hope?

It depends on whether you've got a faith in God I suppose to put it bluntly. A psychiatrist once said, a Jewish psychiatrist once said, it says in the bible that man was created in the image of God but this psychiatrist said "No, it should be that God was created in the image of man." In other words man is the focal point and man creates God in his mind. And I think there's a lot that can be said for that point of view. Of course we shall never know because in the bible it says god is untouchable, you can't see him you can't smell him you can't hear

him, he is somewhere up in the sky in the heavens. But as I say we shall never know until after our death and then perhaps not. But there's something in the idea that man is responsible for his own actions and he's got the potential to be either good or bad and unfortunately sometimes the badness in man comes to the surface and we read about it all the time, both locally and nationally. People thief things, people get murdered for nothing sometimes, it's a dreadful situation. Schools can teach chemistry and English and mathematics but they should also teach good manners and how to live properly. I don't think they do. Not in my experience anyway. I assume Sunday school for Christians they teach the bible and Muslims learn the Qu'ran by heart which I think would be terrible because I happen not to be able to learn things by heart but that's another story. In cheder which is the Jewish Sunday school if you like they're taught bible stories and the story about the festivals but I don't think they're taught how to be good human beings and I think if this were instituted it would make a lot of difference to many people, perhaps not all but to many.