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Autobiography & Memoir

Letter to My Children: From Romania to America via Auschwitz
Rudolph Tessler
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Faith at work. This may describe how Tessler survived the atrocities of the Holocaust and then more than fifty years later wrote about it in his book. Letter to My Children is a book that recounts his life before, during and after World War II. His faith is what binds these experiences together.

Before World War II, Tessler lived with his family in the town of Viseu-de-Sus in Romania. Before the war it was home to 5,000 Jews. A large synagogue dominated the center of the city. Family and family values were the center of his life, and the importance of his faith was evident in the celebrations of each holiday. This came to an end when all of the Jewish people of this area were loaded onto trains during April and May 1944. Under the guise of being taken into Hungary to work in labor camps, between 8,000 and 14,000 Jews from this region were taken to Auschwitz instead.

Tessler describes his story to his children in chronological order. Sometimes his descriptions are confusing to time and place, but the subject matter is there. He has survived Auschwitz and it was his faith that facilitated this survival. He enlightens the reader about ways to “organize” what it was one needed in order to survive: more food, a better pair of shoes and extra blanket or a bit of honey needed for a religious holiday.

Letter to My Children is a personal view into the atrocities of the Holocaust. It was written because of the Jewish tradition of remembering. Tessler wanted to describe the happiness that surrounded his village due to the faith that they had in community, family and in God.

Tessler lost sixty-seven members of his family, his community and his way of life to the Holocaust. Eight Jews remained in Viseu-de-Sus after the war. His faith in God and his belief that one can not blame Him for this may be a simple way to understand these events. It is, however, the way of life that allowed this man to survive. It is truly an extraordinary example of

faith at work, and can be appreciated by anyone of any faith.

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