Holocaust-The Value Of A Child Essay, Research Paper

The Value of a Child

What is the value of a child? A child is the most precious gift God gives, children are a heritage of the Lord . (Psalm 127:3) Yet our generation has become obsessed with the destruction of this priceless gift, a child. We find gangs warring against other gangs because of race and prejudice, children murdering children in our school systems, and mothers killing their own babies before their even born. This is not a natural way of life, God meant for us to love one another. This behavior is not a sign of love, but hate. Hitler s plan was to make a pure and perfect race, which began with hate and prejudice of people he considered less than perfect. After all, Hitler believed that the “only stable emotion is hate.” Hate is where the Holocaust began and hate runs rapid in our society today. Children are abandoned and left to take care of themselves and forced to live on the streets. In many areas of the world children beg for food and money. Too often there are instances where newborn babies are left in garbage bins to die, and other children die from neglect or serious abuse.

The impact of horrible experiences the persecuted children encountered during the Holocaust is immeasurable. Of the few survivors who lived their childhood through the war years, many were understandably emotionally disabled by the ordeal, and others cannot stand to relate in words the pain of their memories. The child is a precious object, a sponge ready to soak up life and all its experiences. Yet over a million children were erased from our world, killed because of their race, and helpless victims of intense hatred. We must look at their deaths as witness of the cruelty hidden in humans, which may be released if a future Holocaust was to arise. Only by understanding the potential of corruption in all of us may we prevent another tragedy. Youth is priceless, and we must remember the children who were sacrificed for a depraved concept, and insure that this concept stays buried for the duration of time.

Every day building blocks are being laid for a child’s future. Childhood is a time of innocence, a cloak of protection under which future generations may experience the gifts of life. At this stage, children discover their individuality, and their basic perception and disposition of the world. Because children are the future generation of humanity and are gaining the experience needed to lead our world, children are the most prized possession of our society. However, the Jewish children experienced a different form of childhood. They were stripped from their families, forced to work in concentration camps, and eventually murdered during a period of utmost evil, the Holocaust.

The effects of the Holocaust first hit the children in school. They no longer looked forward to going to school where they found knowledge, equality, friendship, and fun. It was now a place of persecution. Jewish schoolchildren were not allowed to sit at the same benches as other children, and they suffered abuse and ridicule from both teachers and classmates. By November 15, 1938 Jewish children were no longer allowed in German schools.

On September 1, 1939, World War II began. This made things even worse for the Jews; they were relocated to ghettos. Children were seen scavenging through trash piles looking for something, to eat. If they did not die of the diseases running uncontrolled in the close quarters, they died of hunger or in some cases murder. (Adler 57)

All the horrors children experienced in the ghettos were beyond comparison to the terror of concentration camps. It was in these camps that the Nazis proved that they held no value for the innocence and humanity of children. Families were separated and never reunited. Children usually adolescent or older were able to survive initial selection of the gas chambers, however, once saved from the chambers, their lives in the concentration camps were horrible. These children were put to work at such jobs as digging ditches, digging graves for mass burials, shoveling the ashes from the furnaces and removing bodies from the gas chambers. Young girls were raped and beaten by the German soldiers regularly. Camps were overcrowded, unsanitary, and had very little food.

Despite cremations, gassings, medical experiments, and shootings, the children of the Holocaust survived as best they could. The hardships, obstacles and barriers that had to be overcome by the children of the Holocaust are inconceivable. One cannot even begin to envision the life that they lived. For this reason, any survivor of the Holocaust should be recognized and highly valued as a hero. Many of the surviving children once liberated found themselves orphans and a difficult task of rebuilding their lives was to begin (Johnson 517).

Since the end of World War II our world has learned a great deal. We must view the Holocaust as an educational opportunity that will help young people become knowledgeable about the world in which they live. This knowledge will better enable them to tackle tough challenges…see the world from another perspective…and build self-confidence. We need to pass this acquired knowledge on to upcoming generations to insure the world never faces a tragedy of this magnitude again. We must continue to listen and teach so that we never deprive a generation of childhood again. In doing so, we must listen to the voices of those who perished as well as those survived. It is impossible to put a value on a child. They are the most priceless possession someone holds. We most fight to protect them and their childhood at all costs. Of all the losses Jews suffered throughout the Holocaust – loss of possessions, self-respect, self-esteem, dignity, hope, etc. – the most precious was the loss of childhood.

Works Cited

Johnson, Paul. A History of the Jews. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976.

Adler, David A. We Remember the Holocaust. New York: Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1989