1 00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:19,640

2 00:00:19,640 --> 00:00:21,470 I mean the transport to Birkenau.

3 00:00:21,470 --> 00:00:24,450

4 00:00:24,450 --> 00:00:27,528 We were taken out of the ghettos,

5 00:00:27,528 --> 00:00:29,070 or actually, of the particular ghetto

6 00:00:29,070 --> 00:00:36,940 we were in, and herded in groups of about 500, 600.

7 00:00:36,940 --> 00:00:42,160 And were told not to take more than just little hand bundle.

8 00:00:42,160 --> 00:00:45,070

9 00:00:45,070 --> 00:00:49,600 The Hungarian gendarmerie, a kind of martial or sheriff,

10 00:00:49,600 --> 00:00:57,650 but primitive characters, were driving us

11 00:00:57,650 --> 00:00:58,760 to the railroad station.

12 00:00:58,760 --> 00:01:01,390 13 00:01:01,390 --> 00:01:08,020 And when we arrived there, we were pushed up

14 00:01:08,020 --> 00:01:11,590 on railroad cars, actually cattle cars.

15 00:01:11,590 --> 00:01:14,660

16 00:01:14,660 --> 00:01:18,410 But the amazing thing about I still

17 00:01:18,410 --> 00:01:23,620 remember is that on the way, being driven, or herded

18 00:01:23,620 --> 00:01:33,230 by the Hungarian gendarmes, we were singing songs of hope.

19 00:01:33,230 --> 00:01:36,230

20 00:01:36,230 --> 00:01:41,670 And I do not remember exactly how to translate the song,

21 00:01:41,670 --> 00:01:45,600 but I know which part of this Psalms it is in.

22 00:01:45,600 --> 00:01:49,320 And we thought that we are already enough in it.

23 00:01:49,320 --> 00:01:52,890 We were about 50 people or 60. 24

00:01:52,890 --> 00:01:54,180 20 more, 30 more.

25

00:01:54,180 --> 00:01:56,040 So we must have been in a little cattle

26

00:01:56,040 --> 00:01:58,710 car, which is about a third of the size

27

00:01:58,710 --> 00:02:03,795 of an American railroad car.

28

00:02:03,795 --> 00:02:07,200 About 120, 140.

29

00:02:07,200 --> 00:02:09,750 And before we knew, whoever didn't make it up

30

00:02:09,750 --> 00:02:13,230 with the family in the same car was cut off,

31

00:02:13,230 --> 00:02:17,540 and they just slammed the doors.

32

00:02:17,540 --> 00:02:19,160 And those who were outside, they still

33

00:02:19,160 --> 00:02:23,600 had to put barbed wire on the little bit of opening,

34

00:02:23,600 --> 00:02:28,076 which was on the outside, on the top of the railroad car.

35

00:02:28,076 --> 00:02:31,190 And these cars were usually

used for cattle transports

36 00:02:31,190 --> 00:02:32,030 or for grain.

37 00:02:32,030 --> 00:02:36,420

38 00:02:36,420 --> 00:02:42,620 In the car, the situation got by the minute worse and worse.

39 00:02:42,620 --> 00:02:46,190 People were looking to find a spot for the elder people

40 00:02:46,190 --> 00:02:47,000 to sit down.

41 00:02:47,000 --> 00:02:49,550 There was no space to sit down.

42 00:02:49,550 --> 00:02:51,480 Because if you sat down, you couldn't get up.

43 00:02:51,480 --> 00:02:54,650 Because we were herded in, stretched like sardine bars.

44 00:02:54,650 --> 00:03:00,310

45 00:03:00,310 --> 00:03:03,580 The journey actually lasted--

46 00:03:03,580 --> 00:03:08,620 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday-three nights and about three

47 00:03:08,620 --> 00:03:09,120 days. 48 00:03:09,120 --> 00:03:12,510

49 00:03:12,510 --> 00:03:17,000 If anybody had something to eat-- because in the ghettos,

50 00:03:17,000 --> 00:03:18,560 we already used up most of the stuff.

51 00:03:18,560 --> 00:03:21,880 But we have been successful taking out of our homes

52 00:03:21,880 --> 00:03:25,490 when we were taken out into the ghetto.

53 00:03:25,490 --> 00:03:27,590 Had to share it with others.

54 00:03:27,590 --> 00:03:30,230 But then we realized that this is not a simple journey

55 00:03:30,230 --> 00:03:31,910 of just a few hours.

56 00:03:31,910 --> 00:03:35,690 People were holding back or couldn't just generously pass

57 00:03:35,690 --> 00:03:38,470 it out to others.

58 00:03:38,470 --> 00:03:43,750 Then suddenly, we start seeing that people are taking care

59 00:03:43,750 --> 00:03:45,250 of their needs in the cars.

60 00:03:45,250 --> 00:03:48,280

61 00:03:48,280 --> 00:03:54,700 And the stench got worse every minute.

62 00:03:54,700 --> 00:04:01,380 And they were-- the people who converted to Christianity with

63 00:04:01,380 --> 00:04:05,090 the hope that they will be spared because the church has

64 00:04:05,090 --> 00:04:07,835 encouraged them, said, look, if you give us your belongings--

65 00:04:07,835 --> 00:04:10,680 these were still in the good days--

66 00:04:10,680 --> 00:04:11,790 you will get free pass.

67 00:04:11,790 --> 00:04:14,040 You'll become a Christian.

68 00:04:14,040 --> 00:04:18,162 But when it came to that, even they were driven onto the cars.

69 00:04:18,162 --> 00:04:19,370 They were the first suicides.

70 00:04:19,370 --> 00:04:23,040 So we had death in the car, sickness 00:04:23,040 --> 00:04:25,650 in the car, heart attacks.

72 00:04:25,650 --> 00:04:28,290 People who were taking medication couldn't take it.

73 00:04:28,290 --> 00:04:30,930 It was just undescribable.

74 00:04:30,930 --> 00:04:37,300 As a matter of fact, I can't recapture the moments of it

75 00:04:37,300 --> 00:04:38,230 myself.

76 00:04:38,230 --> 00:04:41,040 Because if I do, I go just crazy.

77 00:04:41,040 --> 00:04:50,300 I mean, you see their own family languishing in bowel movements

78 00:04:50,300 --> 00:04:51,680 and these kind of things.

79 00:04:51,680 --> 00:04:53,810 It was a terrible scene.

80 00:04:53,810 --> 00:04:57,453 Or people who wanted to say their prayers started to say

81 00:04:57,453 --> 00:04:59,870 it, and others say, you cannot do that in a place which is

82 00:04:59,870 --> 00:05:00,975 unclean. 00:05:00,975 --> 00:05:01,850 It's against the law.

84 00:05:01,850 --> 00:05:03,650 It's better if you don't say it.

85 00:05:03,650 --> 00:05:08,750 There were very, very tough moments.

86 00:05:08,750 --> 00:05:11,870 I mean, matter of fact, we didn't

87 00:05:11,870 --> 00:05:17,990 want to resignate to despair.

88 00:05:17,990 --> 00:05:23,360 And whoever trying to look out when we went through stations,

89 00:05:23,360 --> 00:05:25,640 through that little bit of opening,

90 00:05:25,640 --> 00:05:31,550 couldn't even decipher where we are and what's going on.

91 00:05:31,550 --> 00:05:37,160 And those were-- which we called them on the watchout.

92 00:05:37,160 --> 00:05:39,710 But we still cared or ventured to get up.

93 00:05:39,710 --> 00:05:43,125 Because you had to stand on the shoulders of others.

94 00:05:43,125 --> 00:05:44,750 Said, you know, we see a lot of people.

95 00:05:44,750 --> 00:05:47,480 And they know that we are going by here.

96 00:05:47,480 --> 00:05:49,790 They will notify the authorities.

97 00:05:49,790 --> 00:05:51,320 It was just a dream.

98 00:05:51,320 --> 00:05:54,890 Or others said, they are just laughing.

99 00:05:54,890 --> 00:05:57,110 And there was no water.

100 00:05:57,110 --> 00:05:59,930 Even if you stop somewhere, nobody

101 00:05:59,930 --> 00:06:04,376 could move out because the cars were pretty--

102 00:06:04,376 --> 00:06:05,690 they're locked.

103 00:06:05,690 --> 00:06:08,650 There was no chance whatsoever.

104 00:06:08,650 --> 00:06:11,540 Until we arrived to Birkenau.

105 00:06:11,540 --> 00:06:22,950 And that in itself is a story that I hope people know by now.

106 00:06:22,950 --> 00:06:24,570 They opened up the--

107 00:06:24,570 --> 00:06:25,740 we arrived.

108 00:06:25,740 --> 00:06:29,680 What we really realized at that point

109 00:06:29,680 --> 00:06:31,790 when we arrived in Birkenau, which was very early

110 00:06:31,790 --> 00:06:34,630 in the morning, and we were standing

111 00:06:34,630 --> 00:06:38,330 there much longer than we were standing on other stations.

112 00:06:38,330 --> 00:06:44,930 And we smelled the stench of the burning flesh and bones.

113 00:06:44,930 --> 00:06:47,960 The amazing thing is that we were not

114 00:06:47,960 --> 00:06:49,580 allowed to have radios.

115 00:06:49,580 --> 00:06:52,100 Jews were not allowed to have radios.

116 00:06:52,100 --> 00:06:54,170 In those days, a radio was not something

117 00:06:54,170 --> 00:06:56,390 that you go into the store and buy it. 118 00:06:56,390 --> 00:06:58,460 You had to buy it from a licensed location,

119 00:06:58,460 --> 00:07:00,020 register it, because you have to pay

120 00:07:00,020 --> 00:07:03,330 a yearly fee to the government.

121 00:07:03,330 --> 00:07:07,070 So everybody who had a radio-was just like having a car.

122 00:07:07,070 --> 00:07:08,310 Both registered.

123 00:07:08,310 --> 00:07:09,750 And then you were to come for it.

124 00:07:09,750 --> 00:07:12,380 So we had to give the radios back.

125 00:07:12,380 --> 00:07:15,380 No Jew was allowed to keep a radio.

126 00:07:15,380 --> 00:07:21,370 But we had one hidden in the deep basement.

127 00:07:21,370 --> 00:07:23,470 I did not even know about it because I was too

128 00:07:23,470 --> 00:07:25,820 young to [INAUDIBLE] do that. 00:07:25,820 --> 00:07:28,750 We were always afraid if something or somebody's

130 00:07:28,750 --> 00:07:29,890 discovered.

131 00:07:29,890 --> 00:07:32,260 The older people or the older members of the family

132 00:07:32,260 --> 00:07:38,530 can withstand the torture of the authorities.

133 00:07:38,530 --> 00:07:41,860 But the youngest were not trusted in that.

134 00:07:41,860 --> 00:07:45,600 But when we come there, though, me older brother says,

135 00:07:45,600 --> 00:07:48,240 this must be Auschwitz or Birkenau,

136 00:07:48,240 --> 00:07:49,722 what we heard on radio.

137 00:07:49,722 --> 00:07:51,180 They would go down to the basement,

138 00:07:51,180 --> 00:07:55,830 cover themself up with blankets, and listen to the foreign news.

139 00:07:55,830 --> 00:07:59,580 Nobody was allowed to listen, not even the Gentiles.

140 00:07:59,580 --> 00:08:03,643 And I guess it was so gruesome to want

141 00:08:03,643 --> 00:08:05,310 to believe that it is possible that they

142 00:08:05,310 --> 00:08:07,912 are having crematoriums and burning people.

143 00:08:07,912 --> 00:08:10,310 So then my brothers, one of them says to the other,

144 00:08:10,310 --> 00:08:13,470 this is it, what we heard on the radio.

145 00:08:13,470 --> 00:08:17,430 And this was really the first time

146 00:08:17,430 --> 00:08:20,115 that one came face to face with reality.

147 00:08:20,115 --> 00:08:23,780

148 00:08:23,780 --> 00:08:28,785 So tell me what happened when you came out of the cars.

149 00:08:28,785 --> 00:08:31,520 The doors were suddenly opened.

150 00:08:31,520 --> 00:08:34,880 These were fairly wide doors.

151 00:08:34,880 --> 00:08:38,990 And so people literally fell out on both sides. 152 00:08:38,990 --> 00:08:43,049 And the Germans came with their dogs

153 00:08:43,049 --> 00:08:46,910 and said [GERMAN],, means out, out, out.

154 00:08:46,910 --> 00:08:49,640 So whoever could get out got out immediately.

155 00:08:49,640 --> 00:08:52,700 And there were some that were dead or couldn't move,

156 00:08:52,700 --> 00:08:55,790 so we had to take them out.

157 00:08:55,790 --> 00:09:01,670 And we were told the bundles to be put on one side

158 00:09:01,670 --> 00:09:04,320 and line up on the other side.

159 00:09:04,320 --> 00:09:08,780 So everybody had to give up whatever little belongings he

160 00:09:08,780 --> 00:09:12,740 had, which was really very meager.

161 00:09:12,740 --> 00:09:15,410 But it meant survival that we would

162 00:09:15,410 --> 00:09:21,320 have what was the specialty in those days, redried bread. 163 00:09:21,320 --> 00:09:24,390 So it was bread that it was dried two or three times

164 00:09:24,390 --> 00:09:27,990 so that it has long shelf life.

165 00:09:27,990 --> 00:09:32,600 And some people had their prayer books.

166 00:09:32,600 --> 00:09:34,880 This was one of the most important treasures.

167 00:09:34,880 --> 00:09:38,600 Or the Tefillin, the phylacteries.

168 00:09:38,600 --> 00:09:40,790 And so we had to go through a row

169 00:09:40,790 --> 00:09:44,060 that everybody gave everything up and went to another line.

170 00:09:44,060 --> 00:09:46,370 There, we were standing in line and we

171 00:09:46,370 --> 00:09:53,900 saw the chimneys and the really flames going out.

172 00:09:53,900 --> 00:10:00,460 And that the very thick smoke, dust landing

173 00:10:00,460 --> 00:10:02,120 on us and on the grounds. 175

00:10:04,770 --> 00:10:11,120 And we were there lined up and had to go through a gate.

176

00:10:11,120 --> 00:10:17,550 In that gate, there was a few very high-ranking officers.

177

00:10:17,550 --> 00:10:19,050 We assume that they are high ranking

178

00:10:19,050 --> 00:10:21,450 because they were differently dressed

179

00:10:21,450 --> 00:10:28,580 than the other soldiers, which we saw some had the SS mark.

180

00:10:28,580 --> 00:10:30,670 That figure was already known to us

181

00:10:30,670 --> 00:10:33,110 by the occupation of the Germans.

182

00:10:33,110 --> 00:10:42,710 And others had the [GERMAN],, which means the dead head.

183

00:10:42,710 --> 00:10:45,770 Dead head marks.

184

00:10:45,770 --> 00:10:51,300 And they ordered us

to go to the gate.

185

00:10:51,300 --> 00:10:54,180

And at the gate they're standing at,

186

00:10:54,180 --> 00:10:58,290 these high-ranking officers with white gloves, shiny boots,

187

00:10:58,290 --> 00:11:02,900 and with a baton, right and left.

188

00:11:02,900 --> 00:11:04,850 So the one on the left--

189

00:11:04,850 --> 00:11:08,240 I think that the left meant that they went to death

190

00:11:08,240 --> 00:11:09,410 and the right went to work.

191

00:11:09,410 --> 00:11:13,630

192

00:11:13,630 --> 00:11:15,710 When we--

193

00:11:15,710 --> 00:11:17,260 We're just running out.

194

00:11:17,260 --> 00:11:19,700 Let's just stop and put another log on.

195

00:11:19,700 --> 00:11:20,200

OK.

196

 $00:11:20,200 \longrightarrow 00:11:24,440$

197

00:11:24,440 --> 00:11:25,190

Did you hear them?

198 00:11:25,190 --> 00:11:28,040 Changing, changing film.

199 00:11:28,040 --> 00:11:29,990 Camera roll two is up, sync take two is up.

200 00:11:29,990 --> 00:11:36,766

201 00:11:36,766 --> 00:11:40,610 I want you to continue and talk about--

202 00:11:40,610 --> 00:11:42,140 although you and your brothers might

203 00:11:42,140 --> 00:11:45,920 have known where you were, did people know where they were?

204 00:11:45,920 --> 00:11:47,390 Did they know what was happening?

205 00:11:47,390 --> 00:11:48,287 No, they had no idea.

206 00:11:48,287 --> 00:11:49,620 I don't think so that they knew.

207 00:11:49,620 --> 00:11:52,310 Maybe some others knew also a little bit.

208 00:11:52,310 --> 00:11:58,430 But overall, I don't think that anybody knew what was going on.

209 00:11:58,430 --> 00:12:03,608 There was some talk that the resettlement for work

210

00:12:03,608 --> 00:12:05,900 was just taking out of our homes going into other areas

211

00:12:05,900 --> 00:12:08,370 to do hard labor.

212

00:12:08,370 --> 00:12:11,180 But nobody really knew until that point

213

00:12:11,180 --> 00:12:15,800 that there was going to be killing people.

214

00:12:15,800 --> 00:12:18,230 Nobody had any idea of that.

215

00:12:18,230 --> 00:12:19,730 Matter of fact, when somebody said

216

00:12:19,730 --> 00:12:23,360 that in line, while waiting to be sorted out, said,

217

00:12:23,360 --> 00:12:25,930 don't talk ridiculous things.

218

00:12:25,930 --> 00:12:27,880 Look, this nice shower.

219

00:12:27,880 --> 00:12:30,520 There was one building which had indicated that it's

220

00:12:30,520 --> 00:12:33,370 a shower room and so on.

221

00:12:33,370 --> 00:12:37,480 But almost immediately, we realized

222

00:12:37,480 --> 00:12:38,860 that situation is different.

223

00:12:38,860 --> 00:12:40,485 Because while we were standing in line,

224

00:12:40,485 --> 00:12:44,680 we already saw from evidence of the previous arrival.

225

00:12:44,680 --> 00:12:51,530 Those who were assigned to work, naked women, standing in line.

226

00:12:51,530 --> 00:12:53,810 And another group on the other side, naked men.

227

00:12:53,810 --> 00:12:56,750 It was, at that point, extremely demoralizing.

228

00:12:56,750 --> 00:13:00,500 And we knew that this is not something which is normal.

229

00:13:00,500 --> 00:13:01,730 And they were not--

230

00:13:01,730 --> 00:13:05,270 the ones who we saw naked were not older people,

231

00:13:05,270 --> 00:13:08,060 but they were all

the ones who were

232

00:13:08,060 --> 00:13:12,810

going to go to work if not to be gassed.

233

00:13:12,810 --> 00:13:16,380 It was very-- every second was a different thought.

234

00:13:16,380 --> 00:13:18,720 Everybody thought it was something else.

235

00:13:18,720 --> 00:13:23,070 And everybody wanted to believe it is something different.

236

00:13:23,070 --> 00:13:26,630 So that we really did not know.

237

00:13:26,630 --> 00:13:29,150 We had no idea that they did this.

238

00:13:29,150 --> 00:13:30,590 Really possible.

239

00:13:30,590 --> 00:13:32,570 It's a difficult task.

240

00:13:32,570 --> 00:13:35,330 I mean, bitter pill to swallow to think

241

00:13:35,330 --> 00:13:37,855 that if a certain theory is correct, then

242

00:13:37,855 --> 00:13:39,230 those who went on the other side,

243

00:13:39,230 --> 00:13:41,870 your parents and younger brothers and sisters

244

00:13:41,870 --> 00:13:43,920 are going to be killed.

245

00:13:43,920 --> 00:13:48,230 So we really didn't want to realize,

246

00:13:48,230 --> 00:13:49,760 even if it was a fact that we knew

247

 $00:13:49,760 \longrightarrow 00:13:51,410$ that there's nothing to do.

248

00:13:51,410 --> 00:13:54,200 We're surrounded here by Gestapo and SS.

249

00:13:54,200 --> 00:13:56,280 This is going to happen.

250

00:13:56,280 --> 00:13:59,720 So we had no idea.

251

00:13:59,720 --> 00:14:05,630 Even that what my brothers knew or somebody else who knew that

252

00:14:05,630 --> 00:14:10,530 didn't seem to be real that it could happen.

253

00:14:10,530 --> 00:14:12,785 So I really don't think so that we knew anything.

254

00:14:12,785 --> 00:14:15,590

255

00:14:15,590 --> 00:14:19,550 And so tell me what happened then about registration.

256

00:14:19,550 --> 00:14:21,550 Yeah, I mean that time,

was no registration yet.

257

00:14:21,550 --> 00:14:25,840

What it was is that the smaller part

258

00:14:25,840 --> 00:14:28,750

of the people who were taken to labor

259

00:14:28,750 --> 00:14:31,240

were taken into processing.

260

00:14:31,240 --> 00:14:36,560

The processing meant had to give up all our clothes.

261

00:14:36,560 --> 00:14:41,900 And the Kanada commander

which was handling the--

262

00:14:41,900 --> 00:14:45,913

call it processing or receiving

of those to go to work

263

00:14:45,913 --> 00:14:48,080

had to take apart their

clothes to see whether there

264

 $00:14:48,080 \longrightarrow 00:14:51,650$

is no valuables in it.

265

00:14:51,650 --> 00:14:55,747

And some people were even

kept for a day or two

266

00:14:55,747 --> 00:14:57,830

there that they should

have their bowel movements.

267 00:14:57,830 --> 00:15:01,820 Because they must have found before in the people

268

00:15:01,820 --> 00:15:07,250 have swallowed some valuables, some rings.

269

00:15:07,250 --> 00:15:11,390 They told the story that there came one group,

270

00:15:11,390 --> 00:15:13,910 I think they were Dutch people, and they

271

00:15:13,910 --> 00:15:18,427 had rolled very thin dollars.

272

00:15:18,427 --> 00:15:19,760 Because the dollar was almighty.

273

00:15:19,760 --> 00:15:22,480

274

00:15:22,480 --> 00:15:26,420 But, and they swallowed it.

275

00:15:26,420 --> 00:15:29,210 They put an into a condom and swallowed it.

276

00:15:29,210 --> 00:15:30,980 Though they have done that as well.

277

00:15:30,980 --> 00:15:34,370

278

00:15:34,370 --> 00:15:37,760 The shower rooms, what we have experienced, which some of them

279

00:15:37,760 --> 00:15:40,970 thought that is actually to be either

280

00:15:40,970 --> 00:15:46,670 to be scalded with hot water, to be burned, or damaged the skin.

281

00:15:46,670 --> 00:15:48,545 It was really showers.

282

00:15:48,545 --> 00:15:50,060 Went to disinfecting station.

283

00:15:50,060 --> 00:15:53,058 Then we came out on the other side.

284

00:15:53,058 --> 00:15:57,650 We were given a camp uniform, which was kind of a pajama,

285

00:15:57,650 --> 00:15:59,000 really.

286

00:15:59,000 --> 00:16:03,170 Blue and white stripes or gray stripes and blue stripes.

287

00:16:03,170 --> 00:16:06,785 And from there, we were--

288

00:16:06,785 --> 00:16:09,410 and everything was in driving, [GERMAN]..

289

00:16:09,410 --> 00:16:11,940 This was a demoralizing process.

290

00:16:11,940 --> 00:16:16,550

And I think that we were demoralized by the second.

291

00:16:16,550 --> 00:16:18,240 I mean, you moved where that was.

292

00:16:18,240 --> 00:16:20,235 And then we were driven into barracks.

293

00:16:20,235 --> 00:16:23,360 We came into barracks, we couldn't believe it.

294

00:16:23,360 --> 00:16:28,880 Which had three shelves for sleeping facilities.

295

00:16:28,880 --> 00:16:31,490 And it took--

296

00:16:31,490 --> 00:16:33,380 I think we arrived early in the morning.

297

00:16:33,380 --> 00:16:36,560 Until late, late afternoon, they gave us a semblance

298

00:16:36,560 --> 00:16:40,120 of what was called a soup.

299

00:16:40,120 --> 00:16:42,580 And people refused.

300

00:16:42,580 --> 00:16:45,550 First of all, it tasted terrible.

301

00:16:45,550 --> 00:16:49,270 The pots and pans what they served it in,

302

00:16:49,270 --> 00:16:52,030 the cups which were-- the cups which taken from the people who

303

00:16:52,030 --> 00:16:58,130 arrived, this was our cup which we had to hold onto

304

00:16:58,130 --> 00:16:59,650 to get our food in the future.

305

00:16:59,650 --> 00:17:02,680

306

00:17:02,680 --> 00:17:04,869 Smelled very bad.

307

00:17:04,869 --> 00:17:08,420 And many people didn't want to eat because it was not kosher.

308

00:17:08,420 --> 00:17:10,599 They refused to eat.

309

00:17:10,599 --> 00:17:13,260 So until after a day or two, there

310

00:17:13,260 --> 00:17:15,400 were some learned rabbis in the group.

311

00:17:15,400 --> 00:17:19,420 They said, listen, don't let's do the job,

312

00:17:19,420 --> 00:17:23,410 help the job of the murderers.

313

00:17:23,410 --> 00:17:24,490

We must eat.

314

00:17:24,490 --> 00:17:27,932 And actually, it's a commandment to survive.

315

00:17:27,932 --> 00:17:30,140 If you're going to do everything possible to survive.

316

00:17:30,140 --> 00:17:31,910 We will outlive them.

317

00:17:31,910 --> 00:17:35,830 And this is how was hope was built in us.

318

00:17:35,830 --> 00:17:39,010 And these people have given us tremendous hope.

319

00:17:39,010 --> 00:17:40,800 Because I was a kid.

320

00:17:40,800 --> 00:17:43,930 And there are many others who were younger than me.

321

00:17:43,930 --> 00:17:47,480 And so we defied them already.

322

00:17:47,480 --> 00:17:51,790 We were given beatings.

323

00:17:51,790 --> 00:17:55,480 Instead of caving in, we showed that we do not cave in.

324

00:17:55,480 --> 00:17:59,650 We are not that easy prey.

325

00:17:59,650 --> 00:18:05,860 And we were in those barracks for a few days.

326

00:18:05,860 --> 00:18:09,250 And then we were taken to Auschwitz.

327

00:18:09,250 --> 00:18:12,370 I don't know how many miles it was a walk.

328

00:18:12,370 --> 00:18:14,350 But I do remember the day we were taken out

329

00:18:14,350 --> 00:18:19,840 of barracks to be walked to Auschwitz,

330

00:18:19,840 --> 00:18:23,670 it was the strongest pour I've ever experienced.

331

00:18:23,670 --> 00:18:26,920 Not even an Indian during monsoon was such a pour.

332

00:18:26,920 --> 00:18:32,920 We were drenched in water and waiting.

333

00:18:32,920 --> 00:18:34,690 We did not know what's going to happen.

334

00:18:34,690 --> 00:18:37,600 Then we were taken, or driven, to Auschwitz with hound dogs.

335

00:18:37,600 --> 00:18:43,900 And it was a sport to get us every so often to run, almost

336

00:18:43,900 --> 00:18:45,730

to the point of exhaustion.

337

00:18:45,730 --> 00:18:48,106 We finally arrived in Auschwitz.

338

00:18:48,106 --> 00:18:50,170 And there was a registration, really.

339

00:18:50,170 --> 00:18:53,290 This was the first time they were-- we were registered.

340

00:18:53,290 --> 00:18:54,550 And we were tattooed.

341

00:18:54,550 --> 00:18:58,750 Like I have my tattoo on my left arm.

342

00:18:58,750 --> 00:19:01,720 And there was a--

343

00:19:01,720 --> 00:19:07,540 the registration consisted of a rather small card of 3

344

00:19:07,540 --> 00:19:11,260 by 5 or maybe 4 by 6.

345

00:19:11,260 --> 00:19:16,730 They wrote down-- you had to give your family name,

346

00:19:16,730 --> 00:19:26,380 your surname, father's name, mother's name, where you come

347

00:19:26,380 --> 00:19:30,080 from, what are your professions, what can you do,

348

00:19:30,080 --> 00:19:31,930 what are you capable of doing.

349

00:19:31,930 --> 00:19:35,320 This was for the purpose so that they can clean the people

350

00:19:35,320 --> 00:19:36,340 for the various jobs.

351

00:19:36,340 --> 00:19:39,040

352

00:19:39,040 --> 00:19:45,523 And we were there for a couple, three days.

353

00:19:45,523 --> 00:19:47,440 And there, we were indoctrinated every minute.

354

00:19:47,440 --> 00:19:52,220 If only one of us will dare to do this or dare to do that,

355

00:19:52,220 --> 00:19:55,627 we will be put to death.

356

00:19:55,627 --> 00:19:58,210 And not only the person who is going to be found to be guilty,

357

00:19:58,210 --> 00:20:01,510 but the whole crowd, the whole barrack, the whole group.

358

00:20:01,510 --> 00:20:06,430 And then we were warned constantly

359

00:20:06,430 --> 00:20:12,340 to know that nothing will be tolerated here.

360 00:20:12,340 --> 00:20:18,550 That with one machine gun, they can wipe out all of us,

361 00:20:18,550 --> 00:20:20,498 or we can be always taken back to Birkenau,

362 00:20:20,498 --> 00:20:21,790 where they're going to burn us.

363 00:20:21,790 --> 00:20:23,165 By that time, there was no secret

364 00:20:23,165 --> 00:20:28,870 anymore that those who were taken on the other side

365 00:20:28,870 --> 00:20:29,870 were to be gassed.

366 00:20:29,870 --> 00:20:33,610

367 00:20:33,610 --> 00:20:41,020 So this was actually kind of an indoctrination to submission.

368 00:20:41,020 --> 00:20:48,635 And we have all encouraged each other not to give up.

369 00:20:48,635 --> 00:20:50,368 Even if you take it to work.

370 00:20:50,368 --> 00:20:52,660 To where we were always plotting, how are we going to--

371 00:20:52,660 --> 00:20:54,250 can we sabotage them?

372

00:20:54,250 --> 00:20:57,205

What can we do?

373

00:20:57,205 --> 00:20:59,580

Let's just wait for a minute

because this noise, I think,

374

00:20:59,580 --> 00:21:01,810

is too much.

375

00:21:01,810 --> 00:21:03,800

Some you can take out.

376

00:21:03,800 --> 00:21:04,300

OK.

377

00:21:04,300 --> 00:21:07,310

You were talking about sabotaging and plotting

378

00:21:07,310 --> 00:21:09,480

all the time.

379

00:21:09,480 --> 00:21:13,123

And this was our

preoccupation at that point.

380

00:21:13,123 --> 00:21:14,290

How are we going to do that?

381

00:21:14,290 --> 00:21:16,320

What can we do?

382

 $00:21:16,320 \longrightarrow 00:21:19,190$

Because they told us,

the Germans, that escape,

383

00:21:19,190 --> 00:21:19,722

no chance.

384

00:21:19,722 --> 00:21:21,680 Because we're in hostile territory with all the

385

00:21:21,680 --> 00:21:23,760 Pollacks, and they hate the Jews.

386

00:21:23,760 --> 00:21:27,050 There's no chance for a Jew ever to survive

387

00:21:27,050 --> 00:21:29,690 even if he should be able--

388

00:21:29,690 --> 00:21:32,000 if he has a dream to get out.

389

00:21:32,000 --> 00:21:35,300 The Poles out there, they're bloodthirsty for Jews,

390

00:21:35,300 --> 00:21:36,080 for Jewish blood.

391

00:21:36,080 --> 00:21:41,420 And the Poles are not going to let us ever survive.

392

00:21:41,420 --> 00:21:43,250 So this was clear to us.

393

00:21:43,250 --> 00:21:46,620 And then we got confirmed that this Brzezinka, Birkenau,

30/

00:21:46,620 --> 00:21:49,010 which was known Brzezinka in Auschwitz,

395

00:21:49,010 --> 00:21:53,210 which in German was Auschwitz.

but in Polish was Oswiecim.

396

00:21:53,210 --> 00:21:58,140 And we realized that we were really in enemy territory.

397

00:21:58,140 --> 00:22:00,590 Therefore, our chances to survive there would be none.

398

00:22:00,590 --> 00:22:03,600 So we figured, how else can we do that?

399

00:22:03,600 --> 00:22:07,160 Of course, we had dreams that the American reconnaissance is

400

00:22:07,160 --> 00:22:09,260 going to bomb the railroad tracks,

401

00:22:09,260 --> 00:22:12,140 they'll bomb the crematoria.

402

00:22:12,140 --> 00:22:13,736 Dreams we had.

403

00:22:13,736 --> 00:22:16,460 We had great dreams and great hopes.

404

00:22:16,460 --> 00:22:21,330 And we had, really, in the camps people who--

405

00:22:21,330 --> 00:22:22,980 they literally sacrificed their life

406

 $00:22:22,980 \longrightarrow 00:22:27,330$

to send words of

encouragement or to sneak in

407 00:22:27,330 --> 00:22:31,140 into other groups to tell us not to despair.

408 00:22:31,140 --> 00:22:34,130 Then we were singing songs of hope.

409 00:22:34,130 --> 00:22:36,020 The kind of songs we sang when we were

410 00:22:36,020 --> 00:22:37,800 taken to the railroad cars.

411 00:22:37,800 --> 00:22:38,450 OK.

412 00:22:38,450 --> 00:22:39,410 We have to reload.

413 00:22:39,410 --> 00:22:44,370

414 00:22:44,370 --> 00:22:44,870 OK.

415 00:22:44,870 --> 00:22:48,860 Why don't we pick up, starting with singing songs of hope.

416 00:22:48,860 --> 00:22:52,550 And then can you tell me how you and your brothers

417 00:22:52,550 --> 00:22:57,290 supported each other in the time you were together?

418 00:22:57,290 --> 00:23:02,240 In Birkenau and Auschwitz, we were four of us together.

419

00:23:02,240 --> 00:23:05,000 And in Auschwitz, we were divided.

420

00:23:05,000 --> 00:23:09,910 One of my brothers was taken to a different working commando.

421

00:23:09,910 --> 00:23:12,220 Also, we made every effort to stick together,

422

00:23:12,220 --> 00:23:14,480 but it was not possible.

423

00:23:14,480 --> 00:23:16,480 And another brother still remained in Auschwitz.

424

00:23:16,480 --> 00:23:22,880 And I went with my other brother to Jaworzno, to a coal mine.

425

00:23:22,880 --> 00:23:29,010 And that coal mine had also big construction

426

00:23:29,010 --> 00:23:35,730 of a power-generating station.

427

00:23:35,730 --> 00:23:43,710 Supposedly, the highest chimney in all of Eastern Europe.

428

00:23:43,710 --> 00:23:47,780 And they had various commandos in the various coal mines,

429

00:23:47,780 --> 00:23:55,732 and the chimney building, and railroad construction.

430 00:23:55,732 --> 00:23:57,190 And there was all the commandos who

431 00:23:57,190 --> 00:23:59,320 were still enlarging the camp.

432 00:23:59,320 --> 00:24:05,090 Because the camp was a small camp to the house about 500,

433 00:24:05,090 --> 00:24:09,830 600 forced laborers, which we were called forced laborers.

434 00:24:09,830 --> 00:24:14,680 And at that point, we were 7,800.

435 00:24:14,680 --> 00:24:17,320 So the question was here, everybody

436 00:24:17,320 --> 00:24:21,640 was assigned some kind of underground duty

437 00:24:21,640 --> 00:24:28,890 within us to see whether it's possible to have a tunnel

438 00:24:28,890 --> 00:24:30,210 to go.

439 00:24:30,210 --> 00:24:32,460 But then others said, don't waste energy on that

440 00:24:32,460 --> 00:24:36,480 because we know that we will end up just in a Polish village.

441

00:24:36,480 --> 00:24:40,380 And chance to survive is zero.

442

00:24:40,380 --> 00:24:46,020 Another thought maybe we should do something that the coal mine

443

00:24:46,020 --> 00:24:54,120 caves in and therefore, they will realize that they cannot

444

00:24:54,120 --> 00:24:59,260 continue because they have a refreshed group of people who

445

00:24:59,260 --> 00:25:01,090 will sabotage them.

446

00:25:01,090 --> 00:25:05,760 Other thought that we should do something with the chimney,

447

00:25:05,760 --> 00:25:08,410 with the power-generating plant.

448

00:25:08,410 --> 00:25:10,700 We had all great ideas.

449

00:25:10,700 --> 00:25:12,130 And on a smaller scale, we did.

450

00:25:12,130 --> 00:25:18,880 Because some people really risked their lives to

451

00:25:18,880 --> 00:25:21,404 defy them.

452

00:25:21,404 --> 00:25:27,030 I mean, I have one experience, which actually gave me

453

00:25:27,030 --> 00:25:28,480 a chance to survive.

454

00:25:28,480 --> 00:25:33,440 I was working in a coal mine I was kind of a gopher.

455

00:25:33,440 --> 00:25:36,110 How did I become a gopher?

456

00:25:36,110 --> 00:25:42,030 The German civilian population who were working in the camps,

457

00:25:42,030 --> 00:25:46,140 they were not really German from the motherland,

458

00:25:46,140 --> 00:25:48,570 but they were what they called false German.

459

00:25:48,570 --> 00:25:51,210 They were second, third-grade Germans

460

00:25:51,210 --> 00:25:54,930 but lived in Poland for a long time.

461

00:25:54,930 --> 00:26:01,010 They were the so-called engineers and foremen.

462

00:26:01,010 --> 00:26:04,070 But some of these guys could not read the paper.

463

00:26:04,070 --> 00:26:08,570 So he took a cutting of a paper and he let me interpret to him 00:26:08,570 --> 00:26:11,390 what it meant.

465

00:26:11,390 --> 00:26:14,115 Because they were also terrorized.

466

00:26:14,115 --> 00:26:15,990 They could not talk to each other politically

467

00:26:15,990 --> 00:26:18,260 what's happening.

468

00:26:18,260 --> 00:26:25,740 And this same guy who I worked for, we would get everyone's

469

00:26:25,740 --> 00:26:28,480 another shirt.

470

00:26:28,480 --> 00:26:32,710 If the shirt was good, he was suppose to give a half a loaf

471

00:26:32,710 --> 00:26:35,800 of bread and give an old shirt.

472

00:26:35,800 --> 00:26:38,320 Because even the good shirt what we got tattered up

473

00:26:38,320 --> 00:26:40,590 in a matter of days.

474

00:26:40,590 --> 00:26:43,500 So I was kind of his gopher boy.

475

00:26:43,500 --> 00:26:47,010 He would send me for equipment this and that.

476

00:26:47,010 --> 00:26:50,900 These coal mines were exhausted mines.

477 00:26:50,900 --> 00:26:56,990 But with cheap labor and war effort going on,

478 00:26:56,990 --> 00:26:59,600 they needed to exhaust-- to explore

479 00:26:59,600 --> 00:27:01,580 every bit of coal they could.

480 00:27:01,580 --> 00:27:05,660 I don't know, I heard this that it goes by BTU heat unit

481 00:27:05,660 --> 00:27:06,290 for so much.

482 00:27:06,290 --> 00:27:11,510 But the further the mining is-because it is wet somewhat,

483 00:27:11,510 --> 00:27:16,220 it has less BTU units.

484 00:27:16,220 --> 00:27:19,670 And whenever we would have to use--

485 00:27:19,670 --> 00:27:25,150 I don't know if people know what coal mines are.

486 00:27:25,150 --> 00:27:29,560 They are several yards underground.

487 00:27:29,560 --> 00:27:33,160 And it is just dynamited out a certain artery.

488

00:27:33,160 --> 00:27:39,870 And then it's built out, put in railroads to get out the coal.

 $00:27:39,870 \longrightarrow 00:27:44,100$ And if you hit in a very bad artery,

490

 $00:27:44,100 \longrightarrow 00:27:47,520$ you have to go much deeper to get the dynamite into there

491

00:27:47,520 --> 00:27:54,030 to get more of the coal coming out.

492

00:27:54,030 --> 00:27:57,090 I don't really know the mechanics of it very well.

493

00:27:57,090 --> 00:28:00,660 But it meant that we had to drill very deep to put

494

 $00:28:00,660 \longrightarrow 00:28:02,130$ in the dynamite this deep.

495

00:28:02,130 --> 00:28:08,930 The coal did not come out in the same extent as the good coal.

496

00:28:08,930 --> 00:28:12,620 And then really, we would have literally

497

00:28:12,620 --> 00:28:18,920 to crawl on our bellies and drag out with our fingers and nails

498

 $00:28:18,920 \longrightarrow 00:28:20,660$ the coal.

499 00:28:20,660 --> 00:28:27,130 And very often, while pulling it out, it would cave in

500 00:28:27,130 --> 00:28:30,310 and would bury 20, 30, 40 people.

501 00:28:30,310 --> 00:28:31,850 Just recently, I read in the papers

502 00:28:31,850 --> 00:28:33,430 that it happened in Turkey.

503 00:28:33,430 --> 00:28:37,520 And I have a very good idea of what it means.

504 00:28:37,520 --> 00:28:41,710 So when I was sent to get the longest drill, which

505 00:28:41,710 --> 00:28:49,032 meant this is going to be one of the hardest jobs we will face,

506 00:28:49,032 --> 00:28:50,240 the others did not even know.

507 00:28:50,240 --> 00:28:52,430 Maybe one or two of the fellows knew that I'm

508 00:28:52,430 --> 00:28:55,070 sent back for the long drill.

509 00:28:55,070 --> 00:28:56,750 The coal mine is like a little city. 00:28:56,750 --> 00:28:59,060 Has streets here and street there.

511 00:28:59,060 --> 00:29:04,040 And here, they have a little storeroom for supplies.

512 00:29:04,040 --> 00:29:11,280 And here, there is the repair shop for the lorries.

513 00:29:11,280 --> 00:29:13,860 And when I went to get the drill,

514 00:29:13,860 --> 00:29:17,880 I realized that I'm going to endanger many people's lives.

515 00:29:17,880 --> 00:29:22,290 Because if it doesn't cave out too high,

516 00:29:22,290 --> 00:29:23,880 we have to do it on our bellies.

517 00:29:23,880 --> 00:29:27,070 And many could be--

518 00:29:27,070 --> 00:29:31,310 I decided at that point to break the drill.

519 00:29:31,310 --> 00:29:35,030 How do I break the drill and to save my life, too?

520 00:29:35,030 --> 00:29:38,600 I was not really willing to die unnecessarily

521 00:29:38,600 --> 00:29:40,220 if I don't have to.

522

00:29:40,220 --> 00:29:46,840 Figured I have the excuses that I tripped in the railroad

523

00:29:46,840 --> 00:29:47,340 tracks.

524

00:29:47,340 --> 00:29:48,420 Because there was always water.

525

00:29:48,420 --> 00:29:50,760 The water was not pumped out like in a normal coal mine.

526

00:29:50,760 --> 00:29:53,160 Every coal mine has water.

527

00:29:53,160 --> 00:29:54,865 And I broke the drill.

528

00:29:54,865 --> 00:29:56,490 Of course, this is considered sabotage.

529

00:29:56,490 --> 00:29:58,920 Even if it would have been an innocent matter.

530

00:29:58,920 --> 00:30:01,480 Everything that it was not pleasing was sabotage.

531

00:30:01,480 --> 00:30:10,190 Sabotage was the ultimate thing is to kill the person.

532

00:30:10,190 --> 00:30:14,570 But to my good fortune, the man who would have the support 00:30:14,570 --> 00:30:18,110 to do the killing has left.

534

00:30:18,110 --> 00:30:20,600 He was a very high-ranking officer.

535

00:30:20,600 --> 00:30:21,110 He left.

536

00:30:21,110 --> 00:30:22,820 It was already 11:00 or 12:00.

537

00:30:22,820 --> 00:30:25,310 And he left, I think, at 9 o'clock.

538

00:30:25,310 --> 00:30:29,070 Because we were working a shift from 2:00 in the afternoon

539

00:30:29,070 --> 00:30:32,080 until 2:00 in the morning.

540

00:30:32,080 --> 00:30:34,830 So my number was taken.

541

00:30:34,830 --> 00:30:38,370 And tomorrow will be my day of reckoning.

542

00:30:38,370 --> 00:30:40,890 Of course, I had advice from others

543

00:30:40,890 --> 00:30:42,930 how to go about it, what to do.

544

00:30:42,930 --> 00:30:49,620 And I was fortunate to get myself into the infirmary.

545

00:30:49,620 --> 00:30:51,780 Well, there was certain process how you got in

546 00:30:51,780 --> 00:30:53,460 and what kind of sickness you simulated

547 00:30:53,460 --> 00:30:55,918 that it shouldn't be considered a sickness that you can not

548 00:30:55,918 --> 00:30:58,170 get cured within two days.

549 00:30:58,170 --> 00:31:03,000 And actually, I was taken out of that infirmary

550 00:31:03,000 --> 00:31:09,620 by Mengele, who came into the infirmary.

551 00:31:09,620 --> 00:31:11,510 Certain people, he called by numbers.

552 00:31:11,510 --> 00:31:18,855 They were destined for death.

553 00:31:18,855 --> 00:31:20,480 And some of them, he just said, whoever

554 00:31:20,480 --> 00:31:22,940 wants to go for recuperation.

555 00:31:22,940 --> 00:31:27,120 Outside was a big covered truck, with about 50,

556 00:31:27,120 --> 00:31:34,330 60, or 70 dead bodies, and about 20 very sick people,

557

00:31:34,330 --> 00:31:37,860

and a few saboteurs like myself, criminals.

558

 $00:31:37,860 \longrightarrow 00:31:40,500$

559

 $00:31:40,500 \longrightarrow 00:31:44,973$

And we went our way to be cremated, to gassed

560

00:31:44,973 --> 00:31:46,015

and cremated in Birkenau.

561

00:31:46,015 --> 00:31:49,120

562

00:31:49,120 --> 00:31:54,080

And if there is hope

and there is faith,

563

 $00:31:54,080 \longrightarrow 00:31:56,540$

that were the

litmus test for us.

564

00:31:56,540 --> 00:31:57,830

There was one man--

565

 $00:31:57,830 \longrightarrow 00:31:59,420$

it was Saturday afternoon.

566

 $00:31:59,420 \longrightarrow 00:32:02,720$

And Saturday afternoon

is the seudah shlishit,

567

 $00:32:02,720 \longrightarrow 00:32:05,880$

the third symbolic meal.

568

 $00:32:05,880 \longrightarrow 00:32:09,570$

For that symbolic meal,

one has to wash hands,

569 00:32:09,570 --> 00:32:12,390 evoke a prayer over bread.

570 00:32:12,390 --> 00:32:17,100 He said, it's time to say the prayers for sitting down

571 00:32:17,100 --> 00:32:19,290 to the third meal.

572 00:32:19,290 --> 00:32:21,240 And he started singing.

573 00:32:21,240 --> 00:32:23,610 We were singing.

574 00:32:23,610 --> 00:32:26,040 The four or six Germans in the cab

575 00:32:26,040 --> 00:32:30,270 in front with the machine guns thought, the Jews are crazy.

576 00:32:30,270 --> 00:32:33,210 Here, they're going to be burned in another hour,

577 00:32:33,210 --> 00:32:36,230 and here, they're singing.

578 00:32:36,230 --> 00:32:39,000 We arrived to Birkenau.

579 00:32:39,000 --> 00:32:41,160 And we were not processed like we knew it from

580 00:32:41,160 --> 00:32:46,490 before that you go to so-called shower

581

00:32:46,490 --> 00:32:50,875 room, which meant the gas chambers and then

582

00:32:50,875 --> 00:32:51,500 the crematoria.

583

00:32:51,500 --> 00:32:54,990 But we were taken in in the same process like when we arrived

584

00:32:54,990 --> 00:32:56,340 to be processed for work.

585

00:32:56,340 --> 00:32:58,890

586

00:32:58,890 --> 00:33:06,120 And there is always a German doctor with white gloves

587

00:33:06,120 --> 00:33:10,500 and shiny boots, very proper uniform.

588

00:33:10,500 --> 00:33:12,685 Alongside him is the Jewish camp doctor.

589

00:33:12,685 --> 00:33:14,310 Because if something had to be checked,

590

00:33:14,310 --> 00:33:19,070 well, the German doctor would never touch the prisoner.

591

00:33:19,070 --> 00:33:20,570

But the Jewish

doctor would do that.

592

00:33:20,570 --> 00:33:21,950 And the Jewish doctor--

593

00:33:21,950 --> 00:33:24,770 this was the only time

when the little card

594

00:33:24,770 --> 00:33:29,030

system was transferred

from one came to another.

595

00:33:29,030 --> 00:33:31,350

German order had to rule.

596

 $00:33:31,350 \longrightarrow 00:33:34,520$

It was not just

without any method.

597

00:33:34,520 --> 00:33:36,710

Of course, they did that

so that they should not--

598

00:33:36,710 --> 00:33:39,080

they should be able to

keep count on people

599

00:33:39,080 --> 00:33:41,000

so that nobody can escape.

600

00:33:41,000 --> 00:33:44,267

They were very much frightened

that if somebody will escape.

601

00:33:44,267 --> 00:33:46,475

I mean, I don't know even

if they would have escaped.

602

00:33:46,475 --> 00:33:48,890

The only ones who ever

escaped there were Poles.

603

00:33:48,890 --> 00:33:51,200

604 00:33:51,200 --> 00:33:51,700 Wait.

605 00:33:51,700 --> 00:33:53,940 We have to reload.

606 00:33:53,940 --> 00:34:02,475