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Summary

This interview with Kathe Rosenau took place in Melbourne, Australia where she had immigrated in 1948. The interview was difficult to follow since Ms. Rosenau does not tell her story chronologically and jumps from one point to another without elaboration.

Kathe Rosenau was born on April 11, 1925 in a small village near Berlin. Her father, Wilhelm Rosenau, was Jewish and her mother, Rosa Enz (?) was Christian. Neither was religious, and Kathe was raised with no religious leanings though she was baptized in 1938. Kathe's father's family lived in Berlin. Kathe had two brothers and two sisters, one born after the war. Based on the interview it did not seem that anyone in the family was killed during the war.

The family suffered during the Nazi regime. Her father was a Doctor and later trained in psychiatry. He headed a mental institution for a time before the war but was dismissed because he was Jewish and could not serve as a civil servant. He then went into private practice as a general practitioner but could not earn a living as his patients increasingly left his practice (after 1935?). For an unexplained reason he again became the head of a mental institution in eastern Germany, later Poland. Kathe remembered when the Jewish patients and staff were deported to concentration camps. Her father lost his job in 1943 after the deportations. Her mother, originally trained as midwife, could not practice perhaps because she was married to a Jew and because she followed her husband to his postings. She was also socially snubbed. Kathe experienced antisemitism particularly in elementary school where she had to sing Nazi songs and listen to antisemitic speeches. It was better for her in intermediate school where the school principal was anti-Nazi. She was able to finish school but was chided by some classmates when they discovered she was part Jewish. Kathe was fearful for her own and her family's lives during the war and celebrated the liberation (she said "conquered") by the American army. Kathe's own account of these experiences was quite sketchy, and she referred a couple of times to her mother's written accounts.

When asked how she identified she said European. In terms of a lesson she gained from her experiences, she recommended loving G-d more than a human being. She also pointed out that sadly genocide (not her word) was still happening in places like Rwanda.