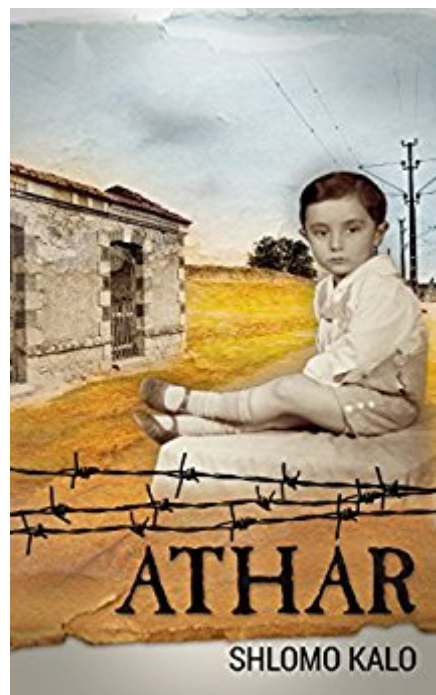




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ATHAR - A Holocaust Memoir: In A Concentration Camp For Jewish Criminals, The Youngest Inmate Tells The Camp's Story. (World War 2)



Synopsis

...He was caught taking the yellow patch off his clothes and trying to sneak back into the city. Many books have been written about the experiences of Europe's Jews during the Second World War, but few stand comparison with this account. (A note to the reader: Almost 75% of customer reviews give ATHAR the best possible rating - 5 stars and highly praise it. It seems that the work's singular literary style is a barrier for others. You may try reading the opening pages by clicking on the "Look inside" banner located at the top of the cover image. We hope that ultimately your reading experience will be as positive as that expressed by the majority of readers). Based on the author's own experience, as a teenage partisan interned in a concentration camp in his native Bulgaria, this book paints a vivid picture of the harsh realities of the daily routine. A varied cast of characters ranging from sadistic paramilitaries to skeletal inmates engaged in a grotesque struggle for survival is brought vividly to life. The style is terse, direct and uncompromising, making no concessions to sentimentality and eschewing conventional literary flourishes. Interspersed in the text there are quotations from various religious sources - Jewish, Christian, and mystical - underlining the author's belief in the survival of the human spirit in the face of adversity. "Athar" is a highly original, and worthwhile contribution to the literature of the Holocaust, a work of supreme authenticity and artistry. "An extremely original and well-written book." Juliet Annan, Penguin UK

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Book Information

File Size: 3238 KB

Print Length: 188 pages

Page Numbers Source ISBN: 9657028604

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: DAT Publications; 3 edition (January 19, 2016)

Publication Date: January 19, 2016

Sold by: Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B018CIJRNM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #99,998 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #103

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Customer Reviews

Athar, an historical testimony from an era that has tainted mankind history forever, told by a witness to horrifying deeds performed by humans towards humans. The late Shlomo Kalo, using his exceptional writing style, portrays a personal account of one among many, yet one who is still able to observe acutely and be aware to the highest level. The resulting record has an exceptional authenticity, and describes, contrary to other examples, the awakened faith and its strengthening within the Valley of the shadow of death.

In this book the writer tells about a real place and time in his life, which can easily be seen as traumatic and dire, but to him it is worlds more than that! A place where he and his fellow men were stripped of their humanity and degraded lower than any creature. Only just a youth, he was confined to a prison camp, where the harsh reality of murder, terror, violence and abuse are an every day norm, he finds himself fighting a most acute and overwhelming hunger, fighting to not surrender to the physical demands for food and the overpowering bondage to the body and its physical needs. In this state, when all is stripped away, he finds the pure, even holy reality of himself and of those with him. The crude and saintly all come as one to reveal a saintly spirit in the confine of the prison camp and through his witness I found myself loving them all. In this most unlikely situation the narrator learns the most surprising lessons about himself, fundamental lessons causing him to leave that place and time wrapped and invigorated in love. The story is divided into memory segments of his personal experiences as well as observing other individuals around him in that special place and time. At the end of every segment the writer presents a quote of divine inspiration or a short depiction of history that sums up a lesson that he learned, lessons that become a foundation to his understanding. These quotes resonate with the stories the resonance of search for truth, the resonance of a pure spirit and it is so beautiful to see how a youth so starving and neglected turns to the spark of light within him and makes every effort to sustain it and struggles

until he even sees it manifest in himself. I found this book exciting, as the lessons that were learned are profound and amazing! And all the men and woman that he encountered touch the heart through his witness. I was completely captured and moved by these stories and I recommend reading this book and seeing how all this happened. This book is profound. It introduces the highest height to the deepest pit. It cleans and purifies the atmosphere, is artistically written yet provides actual facts and eye witness accounts, I highly appreciate this book!

The book describes a remarkable true personal account of the author himself as a young boy. This is a direct dive into the mesmerising, hardcore reality of a young prisoner inside the "Somovit" concentration camp of north Bulgaria during world war II. As readers, we get to witness part of the sharp, painful transition the author has gone through, from a boy to a young youth, under the merciless uncompromised circumstances of Nazi regime. The author holds a phenomenal accurate memory of the experience, the happenings in the camp, his trials with severe hunger and exhausting labour, as well as the characters who took their place in the camp, both prisoners and officers and their interactions with each other. The authentic people described in the book differ from each other in how they dealt with the brutal challenging reality they were faced with. One might be surprised to recognize himself in one or more of them, as well as to find whom among them he longs and aspires to become. The imprint of this story is most strong and profound. An absolute must read!!!

Could you wash the dishes with sand and water only? Could you hold on for months in hunger that can drive one crazy, in deep cold and without minimal means to sustain normal life? Will you still maintain your humanity while experiencing constant cruelty all around? or seeing the manifestation of extreme egoism in the society in which you live? Could you keep your humanity while you undergo endless humiliation, not knowing when it all ends? Will you survive hard labor long after you have been exhausted? Will you live while death is all around? Will you hold hope? faith? This amazing book takes the reader to a discovery after discovery, you will discover how the author stood severe hunger, deep cold, kept his humanity under inhuman conditions, kept hope and faith. The extreme events are told exceptionally - not as blows of fate that forever bury all hope, but rather as significant links in one chain - which is the life of a man - that shows light while looking back at it. This life were not lived in vain, we did not suffer for nothing, there is sublime meaning to all of this. This book will reveal to you what that meaning is! Highly recommended!

Apart from the main figure in the book, which is the author (as this is not fiction but autobiography) , I found another one especially interesting – that of Mrs Yansen. Her unusual positive character contrasted so sharply with the unusually negative nature of the camp and its managers, that naturally, the result had to be unusual, to say the least. There were little children in that horrible place and "by chance" they had that Mahatma of a person, to take care of them so bravely and wisely. I wish there was more about her in the book, but surely it is important, that such real life heroes are remembered and their story told. Like that of Janusz Korczak.

Athar is an extraordinary book that tells the personal account of an extraordinary person - the Late Shlomo Kalo, the author. In this autobiographic novel, we are exposed to both the lowest of human mind - that creates cruelty in an unbelievable heartless - but also to its heights - that inspires hope. Surprising at parts, shocking at others - Athar does not leave us at rest, but stimulates our human depth, the Spirit.

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