

## Study Guide

### Journal/Discussion Questions

#### Chapter 1

1. What steps did the Germans take to limit the Jew's freedom and to deport them to concentration camps?
2. Why did the people refuse to believe Moshe's story? Have you, or someone you know, ever reacted with disbelief to tragic news? Explain the situation and the reason for your reaction.
3. What would you put in a small day pack if you were told you had to leave your home immediately with no hope of return? Explain why.
4. What would you miss most about your present living environment if you were transported to another country? Do you take your community and family for granted? Explain.

#### Chapter 2

1. What do you imagine Mrs. Schächter's young son feels and thinks about his mother's outbursts and her beatings by the other people? Write your response as an inner monologue as if you were her son.
2. Do you think the other prisoners were wrong in how they reacted to her outbursts? Why?
3. Imagine the students in this class enclosed in a room so small that no one can sit or lie down. Everyone is touching another person because the space is so small. Someone starts screaming that we are all going to die, to burn. How do you think you would react after one hour, ten hours, or two days?

#### Chapter 3

1. Why must Elie, upon his arrival, lie to the first SS officer?
2. What process do the prisoners undergo after they pass the selection that degrades and dehumanizes them? In what ways can your school be conducted to limit in the humanity of its students?
3. Is the advice that tells prisoners to support and to help each other as brothers, sound advice? Explain why.
4. In what ways can we see Elie beginning to change because of his experience?
5. Why does the boy, Elie, lie to Stein about his wife? Was this action good?

#### Chapter 4

1. How does Elie react when his father is being beaten by Franek? What is ironic about his reaction?
2. Why didn't the prisoners attempt to get soup from the unprotected cauldrons, and why did they hate the man who did try?

3. Why did the hanging of the young pipel affect Elie so deeply?
4. What instances of human compassion and dignity occur in this chapter?

### **Chapter 5**

1. Why does Elie regard the weak, starving prisoners as stronger than God?
2. How does Elie show his rebellion against God? Do you find this rebellion ironic?
3. What advice is given to the prisoners before a selection? Why is this advice given?
4. Why does Akiba Drumer lose the will to live?

### **Chapters 6 and 7**

1. What keeps Elie from allowing himself to die during the forced march?
2. In what way does the scene in the wagon between Meir and Meir's father contrast to the relationship of Elie and his father?
3. Why does Juliek play his violin as he lays dying in the mass of bodies?
4. In what way is the fight for bread on the train wagon similar to the scene that occurs years later on the passenger boat?

### **Chapters 8 and 9**

1. How do Elie's attitude and feelings towards his father begin to resemble that of Rabbi Eliahou's son? What does he feel when his father dies and why?
2. What does Elie see in the mirror when he looks at his reflection for the first time since his imprisonment? In what ways is his reflected image symbolic of his internal self as well as a description of his physical appearance? Why can he never forget the look he saw in the eyes of his reflection?