



# The Psyche of the Character, Corrie in Corrie ten Boom's – The Hiding Place

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## Abstract

This paper analyses the psyche of the protagonist, Corrie ten Boom. Many literates and illiterates fail to truly comprehend the haunting incident of World War II's Holocaust. People suffered from severe traumas. Yet, Corrie stood against all the sufferings and helped many Jews to escape by building many underground hiding places. How God's love protected Corrie as the only holocaust survivor in her family is the significant role in her autobiography, *The Hiding Place*. Though she did not belong to the Jewish community, she empathized with her fellow in the holocaust who is still standing as a testimonial through her works. Any one who reads her works will become Spiritually strong. The psyche of this extraordinary lady will kindle the spirit of fighting and overcoming the challenges in reader's mind.

**Keywords: Love, Hiding place, Forgiveness, Triumphant, Psyche**

Cornelia Arnaldo Johanna ten Boom (Corrie ten Boom) was a Dutch writer. She has also written a trilogy on *The Hiding Place* (1971), brought her more fame and laurels. This God fearing lady gained her popularity due to her astonishing heroic attributes. Corrie's writing style recalls the story in first person point of view. Her works depicts the horrors of her experience in the concentration camp. Much of Corrie's writings surrounded themes of love and forgiveness. Corrie also expanded her writing into newsletters in Dutch and English by updating supporters on her activities.

The most prominent theme of the autobiographical memoir, *The Hiding Place* is, **God's love as the hiding place for his people who are threatened by despair**. Corrie and Betsie ten Boom were middle-aged sisters. Their family members were strict followers of Calvinism in the Dutch reformed church. Corrie was the first female Dutch Christian watchmaker who worked in her father's watch shop. Corrie got inspiration from Betsie's selfless love and forgiveness that was exhibited amidst of the extreme cruelty and persecution in the Nazi camp. Their faithful life was interrupted during World War II. Corrie and her family hide hundreds of Jews in order to protect them from arrest by Nazi authorities. Ironically, the entire family was imprisoned by the betrayal of a fellow Dutch citizen. Corrie's parents never failed to serve their society by offering shelter, food and money to the needy. Though they were not Jews, the family had a deep respect for the Jewish community in Amsterdam as they considered them as, God's ancient people. Despite the disappointing romance and the loss of her loving family members, Corrie stood firm in her Christian faith and finally, she was released from the Nazi Holocaust for reasons not completely known. By all accounts, Corrie imbibed the Christian spirit to the concentration camp survivors those who were in her rehabilitation center. She began a worldwide ministry that took her to more than 60 countries until her death.

Corrie is the protagonist and narrator of the novel. Prior to the war, the characteristics of her parents were reflected in Corrie's life. She saw Christianity as a mandate to accept personal misfortune as part of the divine plan and to orient her life around helping others. Her **Acquiescence** to accept her family's faith right from her childhood is the basement for her transformation to accept God's will even during her hard days. Obedience shows the trust and love one has on a person. Corrie reveals her true love and trust on God, and family.

Corrie did not complain when the love of her life, Karel, spurned her to marry a wealthier woman; rather, she resigned herself to remain single and devoted herself to run her family household and run religious programs for mentally disabled people. A Dutch informant, Jan Vogel, exposed the family's work of hiding Jews underground. The **Unpretentious** Corrie, was not disheartened during the rejections and betrayal that led to the imprisonment of the whole family. She was able to recognize her circumstances and acted accordingly. Her concern for the mentally disabled people shows how she might have gone through the mental pain when Karel

rejected her for her low status. Upon experiencing the pain by herself, she decided to shun away the impact of mental illness from the minds of the people.

The victimized family was deported to Ravensbruck Concentration camp in Germany. Corrie was the only Holocaust survivor in her family. Even today, the minds of people are disturbed whoever knows how Jews were tormented by the Nazi authorities?. But, Corrie's **Valor** resisted her fear that aided her to conquer the death. During World War II, the Holocaust persecuted nearly six million European Jews. Corrie was not a Jew. Her unshakable faith on God, made her to risk her life for her neighborhood. It takes immense courage to risk one's life for another person.

There was **Defiance** in Corrie's view towards her dark situation. She denied to fear the oppression in the concentration camp. Any person who is stuck in such threatening circumstances would easily lose hope and sacrifice their moral choice and follow the oppressor sheepishly. Yet, Corrie stood against all the threats against her. She built contacts with resistance workers, who assisted her in procuring ration books and building a hiding place in the family home when she was in the concentration camp. After knowing the death of her family members in the camp, she still strived hard to save the Jews. It is confirmed that, she was psychologically strong to face all the problems in her way of journey as, Corrie believes that, God allows hardships in order to prepare one for the future. Corrie survived the mental trauma of solitary confinement and the physically brutal conditions at Ravensbruck. The readers of her books are still astonished on about her positive mentality.

The hiding place appears as a significant image of safety in periods of constraints. Once, her father, Casper ten Boom read the verse from Psalm 119:114, "Thou art my shield and my hiding place," to his young children, he did not know how important the words will become. God's love acts as the hiding place for his true followers. Corrie found refuge in God's love. Similarly, she became the **hiding place** for the Jews during war by offering her own room for the Jewish neighbors to hide. God will provide comfort and safety to the one's who have reverence on him and so, by this way God's love will be expressed on his people. Corrie revived her strength constantly to show what Christianity is? also, to honor God in everything she did.

Corrie **Defied** the limitations imposed on the female gender during early twentieth century. The Dutch society restricted women to continue their education and they are expected to marry or remain at home. In spite of these conventions and barriers to women, she surpassed the traditional norms and excelled in watch making. Even in the scattered environment of concentration camp, Corrie went beyond the prisoner-foreman, Mr. Moorman's expectations at Phillips factory by taking an interest in stereotypically masculine work. Corrie did not let the existed barriers prevent her from exerting her own strong will and surviving conditions which many men sadly could not withstand.

Corrie **Triumphed** over the support she gave to the Jewish victims. After a deep analysis, it is obvious that Corrie was satisfied by looking at the refugees who were hiding in her place. The tranquility that comes by looking at the smile in the face of a person whom one helped is incomparable to happiness that one receives from all other materialistic pleasure. People who have recognized this personally, will never stop doing good to others. This is the cause for Corrie's continuous service to the Nazi victims as well as to the Jews in her rehabilitation center even after the war.

Corrie promised **Allegiance** to God's calling till her end. God has called his people to be his faithful servants. Corrie abided to the Biblical teachings and got shelter under God's steadfast love. This ordinary woman emerges from the great cloud of witnesses to show us what God can do with extraordinary faith and radical obedience in the simplest of His people. She read the bible for the people when she was in the camp in spite of her physical ailment. She went on to devote the remainder of her life to sharing and showing the light and hope of God's Word to benighted, hopeless people around the world even after she was released. Many seek God only at the time of distress. Corrie's unflinching love on God caused her to spread the gospel across the world even after the restoration of peaceful life. She exposed the quality of prayer as, 'Any concern too small to be turned into a prayer is too small to made into a burden' which in fact led Corrie to surrender her whole life to God.

Corrie stood as an **Eye witnessed Testimony** for all people. She was an outstanding lady whose mentation always pondered over the ways to share God's word to each and every human being on earth even after her death. Testimonies restores the hope to those who are in bondages of problems. She has quoted that, 'In darkness God's truth shines most clear'. The divine establishment played a great role in the life of Corrie and on the Jews who

were escaped with the help of this lady. Her excellent narration in the novel portrays the unquenchable thirst within her. Winning souls is her ultimate goal throughout her journey. She has never felt tired of sharing her testimony wherever or whenever she got the opportunity to unveil the love of God. Corrie was grateful to God by way of testifying.

Corrie forgot the authorities who were the cause of her family member's death. She believed that all of her family members will be resting happily in God's presence. With this contentment, she focused on **Forgiveness** than hatred. During 1947, Corrie went to preach to defeated Germany with the message that God forgives. She happened to meet one of her guard in that gathering who once ill treated her in the concentration camp. Moved by the guard's plead to forgive his cruelty, Corrie prayed silently and forgave the guard with the coldness that clutched her heart. She realized that, forgiveness is not an emotion. Forgiveness is an act of the will and the will can function regardless of the temperature of the heart. It is easy for a person to preach than to practice. Practicing the words of Scripture needs the intervention of Holy Spirit in one's life. Corrie has quoted that, 'There is no pit so deep that God's love is not deeper still and God will give us the love to be able to forgive our enemies'. Corrie Ten Boom, the survivor who, through her personal accounts, allow the reader to glimpse empathy within the soul and the heart.

### **Reference**

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