

Night essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Soon enough, German Army vehicles start making their appearance on the streets of Sighet. Over time the Germans strip the Jews of their rights and transport them to ghettos. From these ghettos, the Jews are transferred to smaller ghettos, and then concentration camps. It is here that people are eternally separated from their family members who they never see again. Over the next year, Eli and his father fight for survival, as they endure life threatening conditions and nearly come face to face with death. Four months before the liberation of Buchwald, Eli's father dies, leaving Eli to survive on his own. Eli survives the Holocaust through a battle of conscience – first believing in God, then resisting his faith in God, and ultimately replacing his faith with obligation to his father. Eli's belief in God guides his life before his first encounters with the concentration camps.

Eli met Moishe the Beadle in 1941. He is nearly thirteen and is searching for an instructor to guide his studies of the Talmud. “ By day I studied Talmud and by night I would run to the synagogue to weep over the destruction of the temple” (p. 3).

Eli's life revolves around his belief in his religion. His devotion to Judaism stems from his father's commitment to the faith; however, Eli's curiosity about the mystical side of the religion ignites his interest in the Talmud. While watching Eli pray, Moishe asks him why he cries when he prays. Taken aback by Moishe's question, Eli ponders what he has been asked. “ I cried because...

Because something inside me felt the need to cry’ (p. 4). Eli is taught to believe that God is the Ultimate, Almighty Ruler of the Universe. He cries

because he believes that God has all the answers. Eli is unsure of how to receive those answers, causing him to believe that there is a barrier between himself and God. Thus, Eli believes that God does not hear nor does he acknowledge his prayers.

Eli asks Monish why he prays. Monish explains to Eli that he prays to the God within him for the strength to ask him the real questions. “ We spoke that way almost every evening, remaining in the synagogue long after all the faithful has gone, sitting in the semidarkness where only a few half-burnt candles provided a flickering light” (p. 5). Lie’s devotion to Judaism pushes him to learn more and spend as much time as he sibyl can to further his knowledge of the religion. By doing this Eli builds a closer relationship with his God.

Lie’s devotion to his faith helps him build his relationship with God, bringing him closer to his culture, and the nature and life of Judaism. As Eli endures the horrific conditions of the concentration camps, he starts to resist his faith in God. In the poem Never Shall I Forget, Eli shares his first night in the concentration camp that changes him forever. “ Never Shall I forget those flames that consumed my faith forever” (p.

34). Eli realizes his God is not as great as he is Hough to be and that his life will never be the same again. After witnessing such horrific scenes, he is now angry at his God for forcing the Jews to face such cruel treatment and for remaining silent as his people suffer. Some of the men spoke of God and His ways, but Eli ceases to pray.

“ I was not denying His existence, but I doubted His Justice” (p. 45). Eli does not believe that there is a lesson behind the cruel treatment faced by the Jews. He believes that the Jews are the chosen ones and that instead of being revered they are being punished, in the most inhumane way possible. Eli no longer pleads for anything, nor does he mourn for the presence of a God in whom he once held faith. Eli now believes that man is stronger than God.

“ I was the accuser, God the accused” (p. 68). Eli feels that their horrific treatment is the result of the Jews’ aspiration and strength in the face of Death making Eli feel as if he is stronger than God. As Eli questions his God, he starts to open up his mind realizing that, although God has chosen to be silent He is still present in all of Lie’s surroundings. Towards the end of Lie’s imprisonment in the concentration camps, e replaces his faith with obligation to his father. As he runs through the snow Eli feels as if he is being enveloped by Death and is fascinated with the idea of dying and ceasing to exist.

“ My father’s presence was the only thing that stopped me” (p. 86). The life of his father is Lie’s main priority and without his father he has no reason to continue to suffer for his own existence. He knows that if he dies his father has no chance of surviving on his own. The AS officers are doing a selection, in which the weak are sent to the left and those who are able to walk to the right.

Lie's father is sent to the left and Eli chases after him. " Several AS men rushed to find me creating such confusion that a number of people were able to switch over to the right -? among them my father and I" (p. 96).

Lie's obligation to never leave his father's side puts Eli in a life threatening situation, risking both his and his father's lives. No matter the consequences, Eli follows through and saves both himself and his father. Lie's father lies huddled next to him, draped in his blanket, covered in snow. Eli calls out to his father to, but receives no response. Suddenly, the evidence overwhelmed me: there was no longer any reason to live, any reason to fight" (p.

99). The presence of his father gives Eli the will to survive; it is the only thing that keeps him from freeing himself from suffering and being engulfed by death. Lie's biggest fear is his imminent death of father because if his father dies, Eli no longer has the will to survive.

Lie's belief in God and his commitment to his father, help him survive the Holocaust. Eli survives the Holocaust through an internal conflict, in this case; a battle of conscience. The struggle to distinguish right from righteous forces Eli to constantly refocus his faith; ultimately keeping him alive, due to his devotion to figure out what is righteous. Before the Germans takeover Sight, Eli believes that God will protect the Jews from all danger because they are the chosen ones and they will prosper in the end. Once Eli is forced to live under German rule he questions God's decisions and his beliefs in humanity. Eli starts to believe that the Jews are not being tested or taught a lesson; on the contrary, he views God's actions as enmeshment, in the worse way possible.