

Challenging eliezer wiesel's faith in god religion essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

A Jewish person's faith in God is without question absolute. This holds especially true in Eliezer Wiesel's case. However, no matter how close to God he thinks he is, there always will be a breaking point in the relationship between God and man, which can happen under numerous circumstances. One might find oneself exposed to such horrid events that may cause him/her to question if there really is a God and why he would allow such atrocities like these to even happen. One such person is Elie Wiesel. Throughout the narrative, Elie struggles desperately to cling to his faith that has kept him alive throughout the memoir. Wiesel's initial devotion to God and to his Faith undergoes a radical transformation in the face of his horrendous experiences, resulting in an apparently soulless and cynical atheism. But his faith survives to some degree in spite of overwhelming odds, and in subsequent years, may have revived enough to motivate the writing of this memoir.

The recount begins with Eliezer Wiesel, son of a very well-known and respected man in the small town of Sighet. Right then, Eliezer's relationship with God can be described as very strong and close. At the tender age of 12, Elie stated that he wanted to study the Cabbala- Jewish Mystical texts. The Cabbala was only to be studied by people who were of age. He also stated that we wanted to become a Rabbi when he was older. This clearly states his relationship and faith with God as extremely healthy for such a young boy.

Elie's experiences during the deportations and arrivals at the numerous concentration camps test the very fabric of his hope and faith in God. When everyone including Elie had heard about Moche the Beadle's horrid stories, no one chose to believe him, not even Elie. At this point, the reader can tell

<https://assignbuster.com/challenging-eliezer-wiesels-faith-in-god-religion-essay/>

that Elie's faith with God is still very strong because he thinks that God will protect them from the horrors of the Nazis in Moche the Beadle's story. His relationship with God is strained when he sees the burning of people. "They were burning something. A lorry drew up at the pit and delivered its load- little children. Babies! Yes, I saw it-saw it with my own two eyes...those children in flames". He then said "How could it be possible for them to burn people, children, and for the world to keep silent?" Elie means how could the "world" meaning God keep silent and not do anything while the Nazis are committing these acts of terror. While walking through the reception center for Auschwitz, people, including Elie's father, were reciting the Kaddish, a prayer for the dead. Once Elie's father had said, "May His Name be blessed and magnified", Elie revolts inside saying how could he bless the Lord? The Lord his God, was silent the whole time, what had he to thank him for? This begins Elie's spiraling path, downwards, away from God. Elie's revolts against God become even more frequent when he is subjected to the many deaths of people around him as well as the desertion of the hope he once had.

Elie's relationship with God had really begun to strain towards the end of the narrative. After seeing many people close to him lose their faith, Elie starts to lose his completely as well. Akiba Drummer, a man of incredible faith and zeal finally lost the will to live. "I can't go on... It's all over..." those were the words of a dying man. Nothing Elie did could save him now. He however, was not the only one to lose faith during those selection days. Elie also knew a rabbi from a little town in Poland. Elie describes him "praying all the time, in the block, in the yard, in the ranks. He would also recite the whole pages of

the Talmud from memory, argue with himself, ask himself questions and answer himself." And one day he said to Eliezer, " It's the end; God is no longer with us". Elie then questions himself saying " Where is the divine Mercy? Where is God? How can I believe, how could anyone, believe in the merciful God? This display of sarcasm on Elie's part shows the relationship between him and God as completely severed. Elie also denies his faith when he witnesses the hanging of the Pipel child. The child does not die a quick and swift death like the two other victims. Instead, the Pipel child hangs there because of his light weight, causing him an excruciating and painfully slow death. When a man who had also witnessed the hanging said once again, " where is God now?" A part of Elie inside said, " Here He is-He is hanging here on his gallows. Elie also displays his loss of faith as well as commitment to God on the Jewish Holy day of Yom Kippur. He refused to fast as according to Jewish custom and even stated " But further, there was no longer any reason why I should fast. I no longer accepted God's Silence This has caused him to become so spiritually dead that he describes himself as nothing but a corpse, a mere shell of his former self.

Throughout the story, it may seem as though all Elie's hope and faith in God as all but lost. This however is not the case, in some circumstance, Elie's faith struggles but successfully breaks through his barrier of soullessness. For example when it was time for selection, Elie's father's number was written down. Elie's father then asked Elie to take his knife as an inheritance. The next day, to Elie's disbelief, his father had miraculously survived the second selection. Within the memoir it states " Were there still miracles on this earth? He was alive escaped the second selection." This clearly shows

that his faith in god although severed, can be revived. Another example of his faith reviving occurs on Yom Kippur. As he is disobeying his religion and faith by eating instead of fasting, he feels a great “ void” in him, signifying that renouncing his faith would be harder than expected. Elie’s faith again tries to resurface when he prays to an “ unjust” God to give him the strength to not abandon his father like the Rabbi Eliahou’s son had.

Elie’s transition from a boy of absolute faith in God to a pathetic shell of his former self is extremely saddening. The people and events he was exposed to during his stay at the numerous concentrations camps continued to break away at his ladder, his ladder of faith that lead all the way up into the loving hands of the God he once believed in. Eliezer’s narrative of his past experiences goes to show that even the most devout believer in God, can have a breaking point in faith.