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Eliezer's Struggle to Maintain Faith

In the preface of *Night* Elie Wiesel talks about how he felt after and during his time at the concentration camp. With all the struggles Eliezer went through, how could he not lose faith? When Eliezer was saying his last goodbyes to his mother, siblings and father, how is he supposed to maintain his faith from before? Despite everything, Eliezer struggled to maintain his faith in both humanity and God during this horrific time.

Eliezer was very faithful to Hashem, his God, in the beginning of the book. For instance, on page 3 it states “By day I study Talmud and by night I would run to the synagogue to weep over the destruction of the Temple.” The quote highlights how Eliezer was faithful to Hashem and was religious in the beginning. Additionally, on page 5, it says “Not to learn it by heart but to discover within the very essence of divinity.” This illustrates that he was sure in his faith to God and he was devoted to praying and being faithful to Hashem. These details help prove how faithful Eliezer was to Hashem by using specific words to help prove his want to pray.

In the middle of the book Eliezer struggled with his faith and contemplated why he ever had faith in the first place. In particular on page 33 Eliezer asks “What was there to thank him for?” This indicates Eliezer's feelings towards Hashem changing drastically in contrast to his feelings in the beginning. This can alternatively be seen as Eliezer wondering why people continue to trust in the God who allowed them to be tortured

despite the fact that they have done nothing except believe and have faith in him.

Additionally, on page 81 someone in the camp states “ I have more faith in Hitler than anyone else. He alone has kept his promises, all his promises, to the Jewish people.” The quote signifies how Eliezer isn't the only one losing faith for Hashem and his thoughts are shared with some people in the camp because Eliezer and others agreed with him. Ultimately, Eliezer had struggled with his faith in the middle of *Night* because of his thoughts on Hashem.

Near the end of the book, Eliezer began losing his faith in humanity completely and went against all of his beliefs from the start. Specifically on page 91 Eliezer pleads “Oh God, Master of the universe, give me the strength never to do what Rabbi Eliahu's son had done.” This establishes Eliezer's thoughts towards people not having compassion towards the cruelty going on at the start of *Night*, as well as the fact that he still has a small bit of faith remaining. The phrase could also refer to Eliezer's hesitation to betray both his biological and spiritual fathers, as Eliahu did, although it was inevitable for both of them. Nevertheless, on page 107 it states “Just like Rabbi Eliahu's son, I had not passed the test.” The passage indicates Eliezer's beliefs are changing and inhumanity towards people doesn't matter to him anymore. It can also indicate how Eliezer had betrayed his father, which, in contrast to his previous beliefs, would be the last thing on Eliezer's mind, ultimately showing the change in Eliezer's faith. All in all, he betrayed his father, going against all his views from the beginning of *Night*.

Throughout the story, Eliezer tried to keep his faith. Eliezer's faithfulness in the beginning contrasts with his faith in the end as Eliezer was religious at first, and he had entire faith in Hashem and had never even imagined being inhumane. However, in the

middle of the story, Eliezer began to lose faith and wasn't completely faithful to Hashem.

Additionally, Eliezer's faith in Humanity and Hashem was nearly gone by the end.

Overall, Eliezer struggled to maintain his faith in humanity and God.

Works Cited

Wiesel, Elie, *Night : With a New Preface by the Author* , Hill and Wang, 1972