

7th Grade ELA

Faith

Eliezer was once a religious Jew who lived in the town of Sighet, Transylvania. He had complete faith in his God. He studied Talmud during the day, and in the night, he would go pray in the synagogue. Then, when Eliezer is eventually exposed to the horrors of the holocaust, his faith wavers, and he struggles to trust in God and his mysterious ways.

Moishe the Beadle is a man who has a unique connection with G-d. He is a man who lives for truth. For eternity. He says that, "Man comes closer to G-d through the questions he asks Him. Therein lies true dialogue. Man asks and God replies". In other words, when a person asks questions of G-d, He answers them. And this is what brings you closer to him. This dialogue. This dialogue, is true. It's what matters. There's praying, and then there's this dialogue. Of man asking questions of G-d.

In the beginning of the book "Night", by Elie Wiesel, Eliezer has a strong belief in his G-d. He is an observant Jew, and his life revolves around religion and prayer. In the fourth page of the book, he says that when he was about 13 years old, he asked his father if he could delve into the studies of Kabbalah. When his father denied him, Elie went ahead and found a master himself, to help guide him in his Kabbalistic studies. The fact that Elie goes to this extent of lying to his father about studying Kabbalah, shows just how important spirituality is to him. In addition, Eliezer cries whenever he prays, which suggests that he goes through a lot of emotion when talking to G-d. A lot of real, true emotion. And feeling. On page 5, Eliezer complains to Moishe

about how he's unhappy about not being able to find him a master to teach him the Zohar, which is the Kabbalistic works. In reply, Moishe says that there are countless ways to pass through the doors of mystical truth. Every person has their own door, or gate. But that person must not make the mistake of passing through a gate that is not theirs. And so, Moishe the Beadle spoke to Eliezer for hours on end about Kabbalah's many mysteries. They would study one page from the Zohar for hours on end, trying to uncover its true meaning. It seemed as if Eliezer had found his way of entering mystical truth—or eternity. It seemed as if he had found his own gate through which he could enter eternity.

And then, it all changed. Some years later, when Elie Wiesel had been taken from his home and put in a concentration camp, he went through some truly traumatic experiences. From watching his father being brutally beaten, to losing his whole family, to watching innocent children being burnt alive, Elie Wiesel went through an experience like no other. In pages 67 and 68 of the book, there is a ceremony that is being held on the eve of Rosh Hashanah. And it is during this ceremony, when G-d is being praised by the thousands of Jews that have gathered here in the Auschwitz concentration camp, that Eliezer's fury piques. How could they continue praising G-d's name? How could they gather here, blessing the name of this Almighty who has allowed hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children to perish in these mass graves which He has created? How? It is on this very evening that, standing here in the midst of all these people, Eliezer loses faith. Why should he pray before this Almighty, who lets these men burn. These men that bless His name. These men that worship Him! This is supposed to be the kind, loving Creator of the Universe, who only punishes those sinners who cross Him. But certainly not these Jews who have gathered here, these Jews who only pray before Him. This is not the G-d Eliezer thought he knew. This is not the God Eliezer believes in.

Some months later, when the camp is being evacuated and thousands of prisoners are marching—no—running, to some location of a different camp, a thought creeps into Eliezer's head. (In pages 86 and 87), He has been running for hours, exhausted, in the cold, with thousands of prisoners beside him. Anyone who slows down, even for a split second, gets shot. And Eliezer is exhausted, cold and in pain. He can't go on. Any second now, he'll stop. He'll stop, get shot, and fall. And then, he will no longer need to work, to pain, to grieve. This idea of death, begins to fascinate him. To envelop him. It is so close, he feels he could touch it. He begins to slide....But then—wait. He saw his father, running beside him. His father, out of breath and desperate. How would Eliezer's Dad survive without him? Eliezer was the only person he had. If Eliezer died, his father would die. Alone. Eliezer told himself that he had no right to let himself die. And so, he continued running. For his father. His beloved father, was the one thing that stopped him. That saved him. And not only with his life, but with his G-d. Because on page 91, something arises in him. A prayer. A prayer for the G-d in whom he believes no longer. "Oh G-d, Master of the Universe, give me the strength never to do what Rabbi Eliahu's son had done". Because Rabbi Eliahu's son had abandoned him, for his own sake. And Eliezer fears doing the same to his father. And so, he prays to the Creator to give him the strength to never do the same. His father, once again, is what saves Eliezer. His father is the one thing in the whole entire world, who saves Eliezer's G-d.

Eliezer was once a religious Jew who lived in the town of Sighet, Transylvania. He had complete faith in his G-d. He studied Talmud during the day, and in the night, he would go pray in the synagogue. And then, practically overnight, everything Eliezer had ever known, everything normal, had disappeared. All that existed for him now was death and decay. The beatings. The crematorium. The burning children. Hell. Despair. Agony. It was beyond surreal. How should Eliezer still have faith in G-d? Who is G-d? If He isn't the loving, affectionate ruler up in Heaven, then who is He? There are infinite questions to be asked in life. But—as Eliezer

finds out in the beginning of the book—that is the main point in life. To get closer to G-d. And to get closer to G-d, we ask questions of Him. And God answers those questions. But, as Moische the Beatle said, we don't understand His replies. Not while we're alive at least. The real answers, a person has to find only within himself. Eliezer might never be able to understand why G-d does the things He does, but in the end, Eliezer managed to still trust in G-d.

The end