A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

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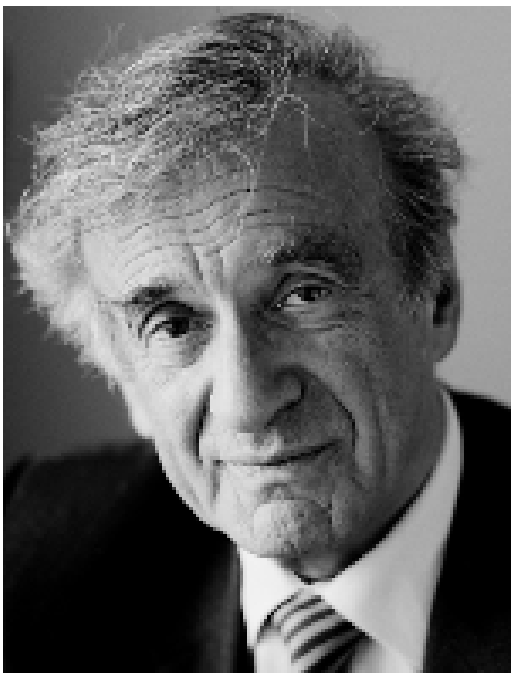


"Our obligation is to give meaning to life and in doing so to overcome the passive, indifferent life" - Nobel Laureate for Peace, Elie Wiesel

THE ECHO FOUNDATION
1125 E. Morehead St. Suite 106
Charlotte, NC 28207

Dear Teachers,

As we celebrate the 10th Anniversary of The Echo Foundation, we pay tribute to Nobel Peace Laureate, Elie Wiesel, whose vision gave life to this organization. His tireless work for humanity and his extraordinary commitment to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Region through his role as Honorary Chairman of Echo, have provided inspiration, knowledge and hope to teachers and students of all ages.

Reflecting on his urgent message of 1997, "Against Indifference," and on his challenge to continue our work for human dignity, justice, and moral courage, we ask ourselves, "Are we doing enough? Have we judiciously woven the lessons of compassion and dignity into all categories of learning? When he arrives, will he be welcomed by young people who are driven to impact society in positive ways; taking on the urgent humanitarian issues of our time? Are we working to abolish poverty; to feed starving children; to find a cure for HIV/AIDS; to speak on behalf of those who are voiceless? Is justice and dignity for all people paramount in our everyday living? Will he be proud to have invested in us?

As educators, we long to send forth informed, compassionate and capable young people with a commitment to creating a better world. Is the acquisition of knowledge merely the gathering of facts and dates, or rather, is it synthesizing information based on awareness and truth, infused with understanding and a sense of personal responsibility for humankind?"

We offer this curriculum guide to you, the teachers, as a gift as you prepare your students for the return to Charlotte of Elie Wiesel. Thank you for your tireless work day after day, in the classroom and beyond. It is an honor to support your noble work and to affirm your dedication to our young people.

For your wisdom, your creativity, and your unending commitment, we thank you.

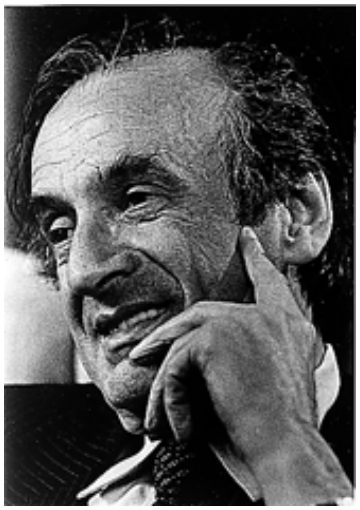
Stephanie G. Ansaldo, President
The Echo Foundation

Elie Wiesel Curriculum Guide

Special Thanks

The Echo Foundation would like to thank Grace Um, Providence High School graduate and Echo summer intern, for the countless hours of dedication she contributed to the research and development of this curriculum guide. Echo wishes her success and happiness as she begins her studies at Stanford University.

Elie Wiesel: The Man

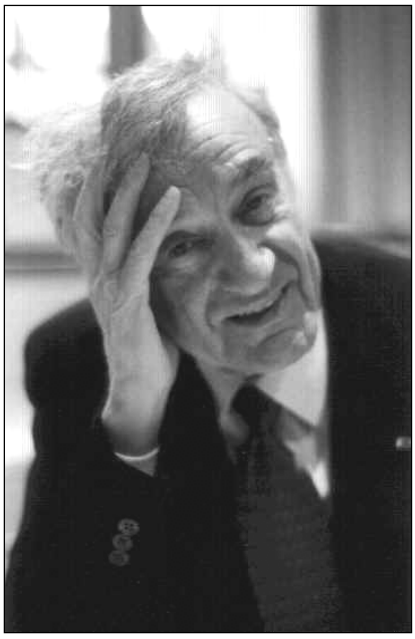


From a peaceful childhood of studying the Torah to a brutal adolescence amidst the horrors of the concentration camps, from the confusion of a fractured, post-war era to the celebration of memory and the protection of all humanity, the story of Elie Wiesel's life is at once tragic, riveting, and inspirational. The sum of his experiences, both small and monumental, has shaped him in becoming the Elie Wiesel we know today.

1. Biography
   - "The America I Love"
   - "Elie Wiesel: He Taught Us How to Answer Evil"
   - "10 Questions for Elie Wiesel"
2. Elie Wiesel Timeline and World Events: 1928-2006
3. Being Jewish
   - The History of Judaism
   - Major Denominations
   - The Jewish Calendar
   - Holy Days of Judaism
   - Jewish Customs, Beliefs and Worship
   - Music and Prayer
4. The Nobel Peace Prize 1986 Presentation Speech
5. Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize Acceptance Speech
6. Study Questions

"No one is as capable of gratitude as one who has emerged from the kingdom of night." —Elie Wiesel

Elie Wiesel



Elie Wiesel © Peter Badge/Typos1
in coop. with Foundation Lindau
Nobel Prize winner

Elie Wiesel was born in 1928 in Sighet, Transylvania, which is now part of Romania. He was fifteen years old when he and his family were deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz. His mother and younger sister perished, his two older sisters survived. Elie and his father were later transported to Buchenwald, where his father died shortly before the camp was liberated in April 1945.

After the war, Elie Wiesel studied in Paris and later became a journalist. During an interview with the distinguished French writer, Francois Mauriac, he was persuaded to write about his experiences in the death camps. The result was his internationally acclaimed memoir, *La Nuit* or *Night*, which has since been translated into more than thirty languages.

In 1978, President Jimmy Carter appointed Elie Wiesel as Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust. In 1980, he became the Founding Chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council. He is also the Founding President of the Paris-based Universal Academy of Cultures and the Chairman of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, an organization he and his wife created to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice. Elie Wiesel has received more than 100 honorary degrees from institutions of higher learning.

A devoted supporter of Israel, Elie Wiesel has also defended the cause of Soviet Jews, Nicaragua's Miskito Indians, Argentina's Desaparecidos, Cambodian refugees, the Kurds, victims of famine and genocide in Africa, of apartheid in South Africa, and victims of war in the former Yugoslavia. For more than ten years, Elie and his wife Marion have been especially devoted to the cause of Ethiopian-born Israeli youth through the Foundation's Beit Tzipora Centers for Study and Enrichment.

Teaching has always been central to Elie Wiesel's work. Since 1976, he has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he also holds the title of University Professor. He is a member of the Faculty in the Department of Religion as well as the Department of Philosophy. Previously, he served as Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-76) and the first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-83).

Elie Wiesel is the author of more than forty books of fiction and non-fiction, including *A Beggar in Jerusalem* (Prix Médicis winner), *The Testament* (Prix Livre Inter winner), *The Fifth Son* (winner of the Grand Prize in Literature from the City of Paris), and two volumes of his memoirs.

For his literary and human rights activities, he has received numerous awards including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Liberty Award, and the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor. In 1986, Elie Wiesel won the Nobel Prize for Peace, and soon after, Marion and Elie Wiesel established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

An American citizen since 1963, Elie Wiesel lives with his wife in Connecticut.

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Where is Sighet, Transylvania?

Image courtesy of a teaching guide to *Night*

The America I Love

From *Parade Magazine*

By Elie Wiesel
Published: July 4, 2004

July 4, 2004: As America finds itself in the midst of uncertainty, this Nobel Laureate speaks for a nation of immigrants.

Born in Sighet, Transylvania (Romania), Elie Wiesel became a U.S. citizen in 1963. Since then, Wiesel—a Holocaust survivor, Boston University professor and the author of more than 40 books—has become one of our nation's most honored citizens. In 1985, President Ronald Reagan awarded him the Congressional Gold Medal, the highest honor Congress can bestow on a civilian. In 1992, President George Bush recognized Wiesel with the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Wiesel, who has been an outspoken advocate of human rights around the world, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

The day I received American citizenship was a turning point in my life. I had ceased to be stateless. Until then, unprotected by any government and unwanted by any society, the Jew in me was overcome by a feeling of pride mixed with gratitude. From that day on, I felt privileged to belong to a country which, for two centuries, has stood as a living symbol of all that is charitable and decent to victims of injustice everywhere—a country in which every person is entitled to dream of happiness, peace and liberty; where those who have are taught to give back.

In America, compassion for the refugee and respect for the other still have biblical connotations. Grandiloquent words used for public oratory? Even now, as America is in the midst of puzzling uncertainty and understandable introspection because of tragic events in Iraq, these words reflect my personal belief. For I cannot forget another day that remains alive in my memory: April 11, 1945.

That day I encountered the first American soldiers in the Buchenwald concentration camp. I remember them well. Bewildered, disbelieving, they walked around the place, hell on earth, where our destiny had been played out. They looked at us, just liberated, and did not know what to do or say. Survivors snatched from the dark throes of death, we were empty of all hope—too weak, too emaciated to hug them or even speak to them. Like lost children, the American soldiers wept and wept with rage and sadness. And we received their tears as if they were heartrending offerings from a wounded and generous humanity.

Ever since that encounter, I cannot repress my emotion before the flag and the uniform—anything that represents American heroism in battle. That is especially true on July Fourth. I reread the Declaration of Independence, a document sanctified by the passion of a nation's thirst for justice and sovereignty, forever admiring both its moral content and majestic intonation. Opposition to oppression in all its forms, defense of all human liberties, celebration of what is right in social intercourse: All this and much more is in that text, which today has special meaning.

Granted, U.S. history has gone through severe trials, of which anti-black racism was the most scandalous and depressing. I happened to witness it in the late Fifties, as I traveled through the South. What did I feel? Shame. Yes, shame for being white. What made it worse was the realization that, at that time, racism was the law, thus making the law itself immoral and unjust.

Still, my generation was lucky to see the downfall of prejudice in many of its forms. True, it took much pain and protest for that law to be changed, but it was. Today, while fanatically stubborn racists are still around, some of them vocal, racism as such has vanished from the American scene. That is true of anti-Semitism too. Jew-haters still exist here and there, but organized anti-Semitism does not—unlike in Europe, where it has been growing with disturbing speed.

As a great power, America has always seemed concerned with other people's welfare, especially in Europe. Twice in the 20th century, it saved the "Old World" from dictatorship and tyranny. America understands that a nation is great not because its economy is flourishing or its army invincible but because its ideals are loftier. Hence America's desire to help those who have lost their freedom to conquer it again. America's credo might read as follows: For an individual, as for a nation, to be free is an admirable duty—but to help others become free is even more admirable.

Some skeptics may object: But what about Vietnam? And Cambodia? And the support some administrations gave to corrupt regimes in Africa or the Middle East? And the occupation of Iraq? Did we go wrong—and if so, where? And what are we to make of the despicable, abominable "interrogation methods" used on Iraqi prisoners of war by a few soldiers (but even a few are too many) in Iraqi military prisons?

Well, one could say that no nation is composed of saints alone. None is sheltered from mistakes or misdeeds. All have their Cain and Abel. It takes vision and courage to undergo serious soul-searching and to favor moral conscience over political expediency. And America, in extreme situations, is endowed with both. America is always ready to learn from its mishaps. Self-criticism remains its second nature.

Not surprising, some Europeans do not share such views. In extreme left-wing political and intellectual circles, suspicion and distrust toward America is the order of the day. They deride America's motives for its military interventions, particularly in Iraq. They say: It's just money. As if America went to war only to please the oil-rich capitalists.

They are wrong. America went to war to liberate a population too long subjected to terror and death. We see in newspapers and magazines and on television screens the mass graves and torture chambers imposed by Saddam Hussein and his accomplices. One cannot but feel grateful to the young Americans who leave their families, some to lose their lives, in order to bring to Iraq the first rays of hope—without which no people can imagine the happiness of welcoming freedom. Hope is a key word in the vocabulary of men and women like myself and so many others who discovered in America the strength to overcome cynicism and despair. Remember the legendary Pandora's box? It is filled with implacable, terrifying curses. But underneath, at the very bottom, there is hope. Now as before, now more than ever, it is waiting for us.

Elie Wiesel

From *Time* 100: The People Who Shape Our World

‘He taught us how to answer evil’
By Oprah Winfrey

Posted Sunday, April 30, 2006

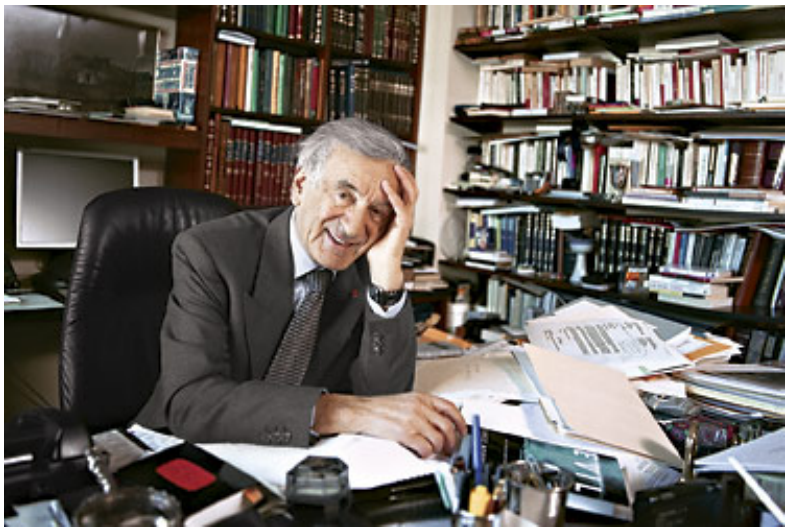


Photo courtesy of Elena Seibert / Corbis Outline
From TIME Magazine

I remember the icy snow crunching beneath our every step, the subzero wind biting at our bare faces, the quiet utter stillness. As we walked the vast landscape of Auschwitz, I had the honor of being on these once cursed, now sacred, grounds with Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel. Being in his presence, exposed to his wisdom, has been one of the great blessings of my life. He is my hero not only for what he has endured, but for what he has become—a teacher, a sage, an activist, a humanitarian, a great spirit. Despite the horrors he has survived, he is one of the most loving spirits I have ever known.

Slowly he led me back in time to the moment 62 years ago when he, a terrified 15-year-old boy, stepped off a cattle car into a world where it was, he says, "human to be inhuman." Wiesel lived through a dark, dark night where everyone was there either to kill or to die. Standing in front of Block 17, his former barrack, even this master of words had no words for what he had experienced there. At the remains of what had been Crematorium III, we visited the closest thing there is to his mother's grave. We stood before a case containing mounds of shoes, each pair telling the silent story of a life cut cruelly short. All those lost ... "Who heard their cries then?" he asked. The only answer I could give was that we hear them now.

Evil is never the end of the story; the end of the story is still ours to write. Wiesel, 77, has taught us that we must not forget; that there is no greater sin than that of silence and indifference. In doing so he has not just illumined the past, he has illumined the future. For he himself embodies the only adequate response to evil, a heart that cares so deeply about human suffering—and responds to it so passionately—that evil itself will one day be conquered by a love so great.

From the May 8, 2006 issue of TIME Magazine

10 Questions for Elie Wiesel

An Interview by *TIME* Magazine

By JEFF CHU
Jan. 30, 2006

Nobel Peace Prize-winner Elie Wiesel, 77, is a teacher, writer—and survivor. His memoir *Night*, chronicling his time in Nazi concentration camps, was named last week as the latest selection of Oprah's Book Club. The Boston University humanities professor spoke with *TIME*'s Jeff Chu about reaching new audiences, the trendiness of Kabbalah and why he admires Moses.

Oprah's Book Club gives you very different readers from those you had when *Night* first came out.
This book came out 45 years ago in America. At the beginning, there were very few readers! Priests and rabbis, when they spoke about the book, were reprimanded by parents who said, "Why turn our children into morbid persons?" Curiosity has increased, especially among young people. And now, thanks to the extraordinary voice of Oprah, people will read it who had never heard of me before.

This is a new translation of *Night*. Critics have questioned changes from the old one, like your age when you arrived at Auschwitz, which was "not quite 15" and is now just "15."
I think [the criticism] is incredible. I started laughing. I'm not surprised about anything anymore. Look, in this version, I say I was 15. That's not really true either. I was born on Sept. 30, 1928. I arrived in Auschwitz in May 1944. So I was 15 ½.

The veracity of memoir is a hot topic, especially after the doubts about James Frey's *A Million Little Pieces* (Oprah's previous selection).
I don't want to speak of that controversy. I will say, with memoir, you must be honest. You must be truthful.

In *Night*, you write about your interest in Jewish mysticism and Kabbalah, which have found a new place in pop culture.
I'll tell you what: I believe mysticism is a very serious endeavor. One must be equipped for it. One doesn't study calculus before studying arithmetic. In my tradition, one must wait until one has learned a lot of Bible and Talmud and the Prophets to handle mysticism. This isn't instant coffee. There is no instant mysticism.

You were a bookish boy. Today, you might be called a geek.
[Laughs] I've heard that word, but I never knew what it meant. In my childhood, there were others that were as assiduous as I was and some more learned than I. I was not unusual, not in my time.

Do you have a favorite Bible hero?
Moses was the greatest legislator and the commander in chief of perhaps the first liberation army. He was a prophet, God's representative to the people and the people's representative to

God. And he never had a good day in his life. Either the people were against him, or God was against him.

So what could modern leaders learn from Moses' example?
Humility. Everyone needs it, but mainly leaders. Because they have power.

Humility, conscience, the use of power—these are themes you've discussed for years.
My mission has not changed, because I don't think the world has changed. In the beginning, I thought, maybe my witness will be received, and things will change. But they don't. Otherwise we wouldn't have had Rwanda and Darfur and Cambodia and Bosnia. Human nature cannot be changed in one generation.

Where do we start? What do we need to focus on?
Two subjects. We should fight hatred. There should be a Biblical commandment: Thou shalt not hate. And then there is indifference. Everyone can fall into this trap. It's so easy to enter into indifference and stay there. An indifferent person remains indifferent unless shaken up. These are the most important subjects in the world.

You sound hopeful, but I know you love to read and teach Albert Camus. Why? Many people see him as a depressing writer.
To the contrary, I think he is hopeful. If you read *The Plague*, there is a doctor who does everything he can to save. In the midst of death, there is a human being who sacrifices his days and nights—and maybe risks his life—to save people he'd never met. Camus said, "Where there is no hope, one must invent hope." It is only pessimistic if you stop with the first half of the sentence and just say, "There is no hope." Like Camus, even when it seems hopeless, I invent reasons to hope.

From *TIME* Magazine

Elie Wiesel Timeline and World Events: 1928-2006

Elie Wiesel with his mother and sisters. Courtesy of Elie Wiesel.

1928
The Kellogg-Briand Pact renounces war as an instrument of national policy.

On September 30, Elie Wiesel is born in Sighet, Transylvania, then and now part of Romania.

1931
Japan invades Manchuria, beginning hostilities in the Far East.

1933
Adolf Hitler is appointed Chancellor of Germany and the Nazi party takes control of Germany's government. The first permanent concentration camp, Dachau, is established.

1935
Nuremberg Race Laws against Jews are decreed, depriving Jews of German citizenship.

1936
The SS renames its units deployed at concentration camps the "Death's Head Units," later known as "Death's Head Battalions." Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler is appointed chief of the German Police. The summer Olympic games are hosted in Berlin.

1937
Japan invades China proper, initiating the Pacific War that would become a part of WWII.

1938
Kristallnacht (night of crystal, also known as the night of broken glass): a government-organized pogrom against Jews in Germany, Austria, and the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia results in

The coordinated Nazi vandalism of *Kristallnacht* (The Night of Broken Glass): Night of November 9-10, 1938 when Jewish shopwindows were smashed all over Nazi Germany. Photo courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

widespread destruction of synagogues, businesses, and homes and the loss of at least 91 lives in November.

1939

In April, Britain and France guarantee the integrity of Poland's borders after Hitler violates Munich Agreement of 1938 by invading and dismembering Czechoslovakia. In September, Germany invades Poland, starting World War II in Europe. In response, Great Britain, France, and the British Dominions declare war on Germany. In November, the first ghetto is established in Piotrków, Poland. Jews in parts of occupied Poland are forced to wear armbands bearing the Star of David for identification.

1940

In spring, Germans conquer Denmark, Norway, France, Belgium, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands; Winston Churchill becomes British Prime Minister. In May, Auschwitz concentration camp is established near the Polish city Oswiecim. Italy declares war on Britain and France in June. In August, at German and Italian arbitration, Romania is compelled to cede northern Transylvania, including Sighet, to Hungary. In autumn, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia join the German-Italian alliance, called the Axis. German authorities begin to seal off ghettos in German-occupied Poland.

Elie Wiesel and his family become residents of Hungary.

1941

Nazi Germany attacks the Soviet Union on June 22. The British and the Soviets sign a Mutual Assistance agreement. On July 31 Nazi Security Police chief Reinhard Heydrich is given authorization to plan and coordinate a "total" and "final" solution of the "Jewish Question." Construction of Auschwitz-Birkenau camp (Auschwitz II) begins in autumn. The U.S. enters World War II on December 8, a day after Germany's Axis partner, Japan, attacks the U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. On December 8, the first of the killing centers in Nazi-occupied Poland begins operations.

Twelve-year-old Elie Wiesel begins studying the Kabbalah.

1942
The Wannsee Conference held in Berlin in January in Berlin ensures the full cooperation of all state, Nazi Party, and SS agencies in implementing "the Final Solution"--a plan to murder the European Jews-under the coordination of the SS and police.

1943
Jews in the Warsaw ghetto rise up against their oppressors. By the end of the year, the Germans and their Axis partners have killed more than four million European Jews.

1944
Germany occupies Hungary in March. Between late April and early July, around 440,000 Hungarian Jews are deported from Hungary, most of them to Auschwitz. On June 6, D-Day, Anglo-American forces establish the first Allied beachhead in western Europe on the Normandy coast of German-occupied France. On June 22, Soviet forces begin a massive offensive in Belarus and advance to the outskirts of Warsaw in six weeks. Anne Frank's family is arrested by the German occupation authorities in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler orders a halt to the "Final Solution" in November 1944 and orders the destruction of the gas chambers at Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Escorted by American soldiers, child survivors of Buchenwald file out of the main gate of the camp. **Elie Wiesel is the fourth child in the left column**. Buchenwald, Germany, April 27, 1945. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Md.

Elie Wiesel is fifteen years old when he and his family are deported in May 1944 by the Hungarian gendarmerie and the German SS and police from Sighet to Auschwitz. His mother and younger sister perish; his two older sisters survive.

1945
Soviet troops liberate Auschwitz on January 27. U.S. troops liberate Buchenwald on April 11. Germany surrenders on May 7; World War II in Europe ends on May 8. On September 2, the Pacific War ends with the surrender of Japan after the U.S. drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August. World War II is over. The United Nations is founded. Establishment of International Military Tribunal in August. On November 20, the trial of the top Nazi leaders begins in Nuremberg under the auspices of the International Military Tribunal. The Allies

(France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union) indict 22 top-ranking Nazi leaders and six German and Nazi Party organizations for crimes against the peace, war crimes, and crimes against humanity.

SS units evacuate Auschwitz in January. Elie and his father are transferred to Buchenwald concentration camp, near Weimar, Germany. Elie's father dies in January; Elie is liberated with the arrival of U.S. troops in April.

1946
Eighteen of 21 defendants are convicted by the International Military Tribunal at the Nuremberg Trial; 12 are sentenced to death.

Children march out of Buchenwald to a nearby American field hospital where they will receive medical care. **Among those pictured is Elie Wiesel (the tall youth, fourth from the front in the left column).** Buchenwald, Germany, April 27, 1945. Photo courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

1945-1949
177 Nazi offenders are tried under the jurisdiction of the International Military Tribunal in 12 subsequent Nuremberg trials of second rank Nazi leaders. Thousands more Nazi perpetrators and their collaborators are tried in the four zones of occupied Germany and in the countries that Germany and its Axis partners occupied.

1948
The State of Israel is created. On May 14, 1948, the last British forces withdraw from Palestine and the State of Israel is established in accordance with the United Nations Partition Plan that proposed the partition of Palestine into two states, an Arab state and a Jewish state. The U.S. Congress passes the Displaced Persons Act, authorizing 200,000 displaced persons to enter the United States.

On December 9, 1948, in the shadow of the Holocaust, the United Nations approves the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This convention establishes "genocide" as an international crime, which signatory nations "undertake to prevent and punish."

Elie Wiesel studies at the Sorbonne in Paris. He becomes interested in journalism.

1949
Elie Wiesel goes to Jerusalem for the first time.

1951
The United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide enters into force.

1952
After studying at the Sorbonne, Elie Wiesel begins travelling around the world as a reporter for the Tel Aviv newspaper *Yediot Ahronot*.

1954
During an interview with the distinguished French writer, Francois Mauriac, Elie is persuaded to write about his experiences in the death camps.

1955
Elie Wiesel finishes a nearly 900-page manuscript in Yiddish while on assignment in Brazil. *And the World Stayed Silent* is published in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

1956
Shortly after moving to New York City to be a permanent correspondent, Elie Wiesel is struck by a taxicab.

1957
Recovered from his injuries but still a stateless person with expired visas, Elie Wiesel naturalizes to the United States.


On the boat taking him to Israel for the first time, 1949. From *All Rivers Run to the Sea* by Elie Wiesel.

1958
La Nuit (appearing in 1960 in English translation as *Night*) is published, and has since been translated into more than 30 languages.

1961
Dawn is published.

1962
Following his conviction for crimes against the Jewish people, Adolf Eichmann is executed in Jerusalem.

1963
Elie Wiesel becomes an American citizen.

1964
Elie Wiesel returns to Sighet and visits his childhood home. He receives the Ingram Merill award and publishes *The Town Beyond the Wall*.

1966
The Gates of the Forest and *The Jews of Silence* are published.

1968
Legends of our Time, essays and stories, is published. Elie Wiesel wins the Prix Medicis.

1969
Elie Wiesel marries Marion.

1970
A Beggar in Jerusalem and *One Generation After* are published.

1972
His son, Elisha Shlomo, is born. Elie Wiesel also serves as Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at the City University of New York (1972-76).

1973
In Rwanda, Juvenal Habyarimana comes to power in a military coup.

The Oath is published.

With son Elisha and President Jimmy Carter at the first Days of Remembrance ceremony, April 24, 1979. Photo courtesy of White House Press Office.

1975
Elie Wiesel receives the Jewish Heritage Award, Haifa University, and the Holocaust Memorial Award, New York Society of Clinical Psychologists.

1976
Teaching has always been central to Elie Wiesel's work. Since 1976, he has been the Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University, where he also holds the title of University Professor. He is a member of the faculty in the Department of Religion as well as the Department of Philosophy.

1977
Egyptian president Anwar Sadat makes the first visit by an Arab leader to Israel since the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948.

1978
President Jimmy Carter appoints Elie Wiesel as Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust.

1979
The United States Congress, by unanimous vote, establishes the United States Holocaust Memorial Council.

1980
Elie Wiesel receives the Prix Liber Inter, France, the S.Y. Agnon Medal, and the Jabotinsky Medal, State of Israel.

1981
The Testament is published.

1982
Elie Wiesel is the first Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University (1982-83).

1984
A symbolic ground breaking ceremony is held at the site of the future United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

1985
President Ronald Reagan presents Elie Wiesel with the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal of Achievement.

1986
In December, Elie Wiesel wins the Nobel Prize for Peace. Soon after, he and his wife, Marion, establish The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, an organization to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice.

Elie Wiesel speaks at the Faith in Humankind conference, held before the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, on September 18-19, 1984, in Washington, D.C.

1987
Elie Wiesel testifies at the trial of Klaus Barbie.

1988
The United States signs the Genocide Convention.

Twilight, a novel, is published.

1990
From the Kingdom of Memory is published.

1991
Sages and Dreamers, Portraits and Legends from the Bible, the Talmud, and the Hasidic Tradition is published.

Elie Wiesel speaking at Charlotte Latin School in Charlotte, North Carolina, 1997. Photo courtesy of The Echo Foundation.

1993
Elie Wiesel gives address at the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The Museum opens to the public.

In response to the atrocities occurring in Bosnia, the United Nations Security Council issues resolution 827, establishing the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague. It is the first international criminal tribunal since Nuremberg.

1994
Extremist leaders of Rwanda's Hutu majority launch a campaign of extermination against the country's Tutsi minority. In October, the UN Security Council extends the mandate of the ICTY to include a separate but linked tribunal for Rwanda, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), located in Arusha, Tanzania.

1995
All Rivers Run to the Sea is published.

Elie Wiesel speaks at the Days of Remembrance ceremony, Washington, D.C., 2002.

1997
Elie Wiesel visits Charlotte, North Carolina and helps create The Echo Foundation.

1998
The International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda issues the world's first conviction for genocide when Jean-Paul Akayesu is judged guilty of genocide and crimes against humanity for acts he engaged in and oversaw as mayor of the Rwandan town of Taba.

1999
And the Sea is Never Full and *King Solomon and his Magic Ring*, a book for children, are published.

2001
Elie Wiesel addresses the Days of Remembrance ceremony in the Capitol Rotunda, Washington, D.C., saying "How does one mourn for six million people who died? How many candles does one light? How many prayers does one recite? Do we know how to remember the victims, their solitude, their helplessness? They left us without a trace, and we are their trace." He is granted the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor, France (Commandeur, 1984; Grand Officier, 1990).

2002
President Iliescu of Romania presents Wiesel with "The Star of Romania."

2003
In November Wiesel addresses the Tribute to Holocaust Survivors, at the USHMM, Washington, D.C.

2004
In July Elie Wiesel delivers remarks "On the Atrocities in Sudan" at the Darfur Emergency Summit, convened at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004, by the American Jewish World Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. In September U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell testifies before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that "genocide has been committed in Darfur."

Elie Wiesel with his wife Marion, President Ion Iliescu, and his sister Hilda in Sighet following the presentation of the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania.

Photo courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

(2004 cont'd)
Elie Wiesel receives the Commander's Cross from the Republic of Hungary and delivers the Final Report of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania. Wiesel was chairman of the commission.

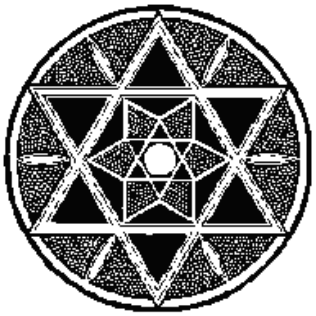
2005
Elie Wiesel receives the Man of the Year award from the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, the Light of Truth award from the International Campaign for Tibet, and publishes *The Time of the Uprooted*, a novel.

2006
Elie Wiesel travels to Auschwitz with Oprah Winfrey.
From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Elie Wiesel: Being Jewish

His passion for his faith and his loyalty to his people make it impossible to know Elie Wiesel without also knowing about his Jewish heritage. In his deepest, most personal core lies a relationship with his God that is inseparable from who he is. These songs, prayers, and traditions provide insight into a religion deeply rooted in the lives and heritage of its believers.

- The History of Judaism
- Major Denominations
- The Jewish Calendar
- Holy Days of Judaism
- Jewish Customs, Beliefs and Worship
- Music and Prayer



"I marvel at the resilience of the Jewish people. Their best characteristic is their desire to remember. No other people has such an obsession with memory." —Elie Wiesel

✡ *The History of Judaism* ✡

Up to the 18th Century

History is of the utmost importance in Judaism. Whereas the sacred texts of most ancient religions focus on myths and philosophical concepts, the Jewish Bible is centered around historical narrative; and most Jewish holidays are intended to connect modern Jews with their historical ancestors and traditions. This article provides a brief overview of Jewish history from the biblical era to the modern day.

Historical and Religious Context

Judaism traces its history back to the creation of mankind, but the explicitly Jewish historical origins begin with Abraham and the Hebrews. According to the Torah, Abraham's home was the northern Mesopotamian town of Harran. Under God's command, Abraham migrated to the region of Canaan, which is roughly equivalent to modern Israel and Lebanon. For a time the Hebrews lived in servitude in Egypt, then returned to Canaan.

The ancient Hebrew people were seminomadic herdsman and farmers, organized into tribes and living in Mesopotamia. Contributions of nearby cultures include a West Semitic concept of divine messengers, Old Babylonian and Hurro-Semite law, Mesopotamian cosmogony and primitive history, Canaanite language and mythological literature, and Egyptian hymns and wisdom literature. All of these cultures featured belief in creator and preserver gods, a system of ethics, and developed religious rituals. The head of the Canaanite pantheon was El, a powerful god depicted as both judgmental and compassionate.

Abraham and the Patriarchs (19th or 18th century BCE)

The biblical book of Genesis begins with a single, all-powerful God creating the world out of chaos in six days, with human beings created on the sixth day. Genesis goes on to chronicle an ancient history in which mankind repeatedly turns away from God and to immorality until God destroys the earth with a flood. God then makes a covenant with Noah, the one man saved from the flood, that he will never destroy the earth again.

The specifically Hebrew element of biblical history begins with Abraham, who is considered the founder of the Jewish religion. However, he does not discover God but is rather called by the God who is already known into a covenant, in which God promises many descendants and the land of Canaan. Modern scholarship has identified significant differences between the religion of Abraham and the patriarchs and the later Israelite religion of Moses. Historians note that the God of Abraham is referred to using generic, not specifically Israelite terms (namely, various forms of El), the Mosaic issues of divine jealousy and idolatry are virtually absent, and God's role is as a kind of patron deity who has bestowed his favor on Abraham. The religion of the patriarchs was simple, and centered on the agreement between Abraham and God. Religious practice consisted of sacrifice and prayer at a sacred altar, stone pillar, or sacred tree. Circumcision was the defining mark of the religious community. Its eschatology was the promise of land and many descendants.

From Egypt to Sinai: Moses and the Covenant
According to Biblical tradition, a famine caused the Hebrew tribes to migrate to Egypt, where they were enslaved. God rescued them from bondage by afflicting the Egyptians with successive plagues then drowning the Egyptian army in the Red Sea to allow the Hebrews to escape. At Mount Sinai, God established the nation of Israel (named for Abraham's grandson Jacob) as his own, and gave them the terms of his covenant with them. He then sustains the Israelites through 40 years of journeying in the wilderness before leading them into Canaan, the land promised to Abraham. Central to all these events is Moses, who, like Muhammad, fulfills many leadership roles, including religious, political, legislative and military.

The United Monarchy under Saul, David and Solomon
To maintain occupation of the Promised Land, it became necessary to have centralized authority and organized armies that could hold off external enemies. Two diverging views of the prospect of a monarchy arose: a rejection of God's kingship (1 Sam. 8-12) or a God-given way to defend Israel (1 Sam. 9:16). The former view is represented by the prophet-judge Samuel, who reluctantly crowned the first king.

Saul, of the tribe of Benjamin, was made king (in c. 1020 BCE) after defeating the Ammonites. He ruled from his hometown of Gibeah, a few miles north of Jerusalem. Saul's reign was marred by conflicts with the prophet Samuel, who held ongoing authority over the kingship. King David, Saul's successor, solved these problems by combining religious and political authority in one person (David and his descendents) and in one place (the city of Jerusalem).

The Divided Monarchy and Exile
After Solomon's reign the nation split into two kingdoms, Israel (in the north) and Judah (in the south). Israel was conquered by the Assyrian ruler Shalmaneser V in the 8th century BCE. The kingdom of Judah was conquered by a Babylonian army in the early 6th century BCE. The Judahite elite was exiled to Babylon, but later at least a part of them returned to their homeland, led by prophets Ezra and Nehemiah, after the subsequent conquest of Babylonia by the Persians. Already at this point the extreme fragmentation among the Israelites was apparent, with the formation of political-religious factions, the most important of which would later be called Sadduccees and Pharisees.

The Hasmonean Kingdom and the Destruction of the Temple
After the Persians were defeated by Alexander the Great, his demise, and the division of Alexander's empire among his generals, the Seleucid Kingdom was formed. A deterioration of relations between hellenized Jews and religious Jews led the Seleucid king Antiochus IV Epiphanes to impose decrees banning certain Jewish religious rites and traditions. Consequently, the orthodox Jews revolted under the leadership of the Hasmonean family, (also known as the Maccabees). This revolt eventually led to the formation of an independent Jewish kingdom, known as the Hasmonaean Dynasty, which lasted from 165 BC to 63 BC. The Hasmonean Dynasty eventually disintegrated as a result of civil war between the sons of Salome Alexandra, Hyrcanus II and Aristobulus II. The people, who did not want to be governed by a king but by theocratic clergy, made appeals in this spirit to the Roman authorities. A Roman campaign of conquest and annexation, led by Pompey, soon followed.

Judea under Roman rule was at first an independent Jewish kingdom, but gradually the rule over Judea became less and less Jewish, until it became under the direct rule of Roman administration (and renamed the province of Judaea), which was often callous and brutal in its treatment of its Judean subjects. In AD 66, Judeans began to revolt against the Roman rulers of Judea. The revolt was defeated by the Roman emperors Vesesapian and Titus Flavius. The Romans destroyed much of the Temple in Jerusalem and, according to some accounts, stole artifacts from the temple, such as the Menorah. Judeans continued to live in their land in significant numbers, and were allowed to practice their religion, until the 2nd century when Julius Severus ravaged Judea while putting down the bar Kokhba revolt. After 135, Jews were not allowed to enter the city of Jerusalem, although this ban must have been at least partially lifted, since at the destruction of the rebuilt city by the Persians in the 7th century, Jews are said to have lived there.

Rabbinical Judaism

Rabbinical Judaism developed out of the Pharasiac movement and in response to the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. The rabbis sought to reinterpret Jewish concepts and practices in the absence of the Temple and for a people in exile. Aside from some small side movements (such as the Karaites), Rabbinical Judaism was the dominant form of the Jewish religion for nearly 18 centuries. It produced the Talmud, the Midrash, and the great figures of medieval Jewish philosophy.

The Fall of Rome

The Eastern Roman Empire, under assault from barbarian invasion, passed a number of laws in the early Middle Ages, including the legislation of Justinian which culminated in the principle of taking away civil rights from heretics and unbelievers and of making their existence as difficult as possible. The restrictive laws of Constantine and Theodosius were renewed with increased rigor. The public observance of their religion was forbidden the Jews. The loss of their civil rights was followed by disregard for their personal freedom. In the wars waged by the Iconoclasts (eighth and ninth centuries) the Jews especially had to suffer, and mostly at the hands of iconoclastic emperors who were suspected of being heretics with Jewish tendencies. Many Jews fled to the neighboring states of the Slavs and Tatars, which were just coming into existence, and found refuge and protection on the lower Volga and on the northern shores of the Black Sea in the realm of the Khazars.

The Early Middle Ages

Not until the beginning of the ninth century did the Church succeed in drawing all humanity within her jurisdiction, and in bringing together and definitely settling the regulations in canonical law which the authority of the Church ordained for believers and their treatment of non-believers. Intercourse with Jews was almost entirely forbidden to believers, and thereby a chasm was created between the adherents of the two religions, which could not be bridged.

On the other hand, the Church found herself compelled to make the Jew a fellow citizen of the believer; for she enforced upon her own communities the Biblical prohibition against usury; and thus the only way left open to her of conducting financial operations was to seek loans at a legally determined rate of interest from the adherents of another faith. Through these peculiar conditions the Jews rapidly acquired influence. At the same time they were compelled to find

their pleasures at home and in their own circles only. Their sole intellectual food came from their own literature, to which they devoted themselves with all the strength of their nature.

The Crusades

The trials which the Jews endured from time to time in the different kingdoms of the Christian West were only indications of the catastrophe which broke over them at the time of the Crusades. A wild, unrestrained throng, for which the crusade was only an excuse to indulge its rapacity, fell upon the peaceful Jews and sacrificed them to its fanaticism. In the First Crusade (1096) flourishing communities on the Rhine and the Danube were utterly destroyed. In the Second Crusade (1147) the Jews in France suffered especially. Philip Augustus treated them with exceptional severity. In his days the Third Crusade took place (1188); and the preparations for it proved to be momentous for the English Jews. After unspeakable trials Jews were banished from England in 1290; and 365 years passed before they were allowed to settle again in the British Isles. The Jews were also subjected to attacks by the Shepherds' Crusades of 1251 and 1320.

Persecution and Blood Libel

The justification for these deeds was found in crimes laid to the charge of the Jews. They were held responsible for the crime imputed to them a thousand years before this; and the false charge was circulated that they wished to dishonor the host which was supposed to represent Jesus' body. They were further charged with being the cause of every calamity. In 1240 the plundering raids of the Mongols were laid at their door. When, a hundred years later, the Black Death raged through Europe, the tale was invented that the Jews had poisoned the wells. The only court of appeal that regarded itself as their appointed protector, according to historical conceptions, was the "Roman emperor of the German nation." The emperor, as legal successor to Titus, who had acquired the Jews for his special property through the destruction of the Temple, claimed the rights of possession and protection over all the Jews in the former Roman empire.

Expulsions

Everywhere in the Christian Occident an equally gloomy picture was presented. The Jews, who were driven out of England in 1290, out of France in 1394, and out of numerous districts of Germany, Italy, and the Balkan peninsula between 1350 and 1450, were scattered in all directions, and fled preferably to the new Slavic kingdoms, where for the time being other confessions were still tolerated. Here they found a sure refuge under benevolent rulers and acquired a certain prosperity, in the enjoyment of which the study of the Talmud was followed with renewed vigor. Together with their faith, they took with them the German language and customs, which they have cultivated in a Slavic environment with unexampled faithfulness up to the present time.

As in Slavic countries, so also under Muslim rule the persecuted Jews often found a humane reception, especially from the eighth century onward in the Pyrenean peninsula. But even as early as the thirteenth century the Arabs could no longer offer a real resistance to the advancing force of Christian kings; and with the fall of political power Arabic culture declined, after having been transmitted to the Occident at about the same period, chiefly through the Jews in the north of Spain and in the south of France. At that time there was no field of learning which the Spanish Jews did not cultivate. They studied the secular sciences with the same zeal as the Bible and Talmud.

But the growing influence of the Church gradually crowded them out of this advantageous position. At first the attempt was made to win them to Christianity through writings and religious disputations; and when these attempts failed they were ever more and more restricted in the exercise of their civil rights. Soon they were obliged to live in separate quarters of the cities and to wear humiliating badges on their clothing. Thereby they were made a prey to the scorn and hatred of their fellow citizens.

The Enlightenment and Haskalah

During the period of the European Renaissance and Enlightenment, significant changes were happening within the Jewish community. The Haskalah movement paralelled the wider Enlightenment, as Jews began in the 1700s to campaign for emancipation from restrictive laws and integration into the wider European society. Secular and scientific education was added to the traditional religious instruction received by students, and interest in a national Jewish identity, including a revival in the study of Jewish history and Hebrew, started to grow. Haskalah gave birth to the Reform and Conservative movements and planted the seeds of Zionism while at the same time encouraging cultural assimilation into the countries in which Jews resided. At around the same time another movement was born, one preaching almost the opposite of Haskalah, Hasidic Judaism. Hasidic Judiasm began in the 1700s by Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov, and quickly gained a following with its more exubarent, mystical approach to religion. These two movements, and the traditional orthodox approach to Judiasm from which they spring, formed the basis for the modern divisions within Jewish observance.

At the same time, the outside world was changing. Though persecution still existed in some European countries (hundreds of thousands of Jews were killed in pogroms in the 18th and 19th centuries), Napoleon invited Jews to leave the Jewish ghettos in Europe and seek refuge in the newly created tolerant political regimes that offered equality under Napoleonic Law (see Napoleon and the Jews). At the same time, Jewish migration to the United States (see Jews in the United States) created a new community in large part freed of the restrictions of Europe.

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5. Tracey R. Rich, Judaism 101.
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From Religion Facts

✡ *Major Denominations* ✡

Divisions by Practice

Differences between Jewish denominations**,** which are more commonly known as "movements," reflect varying responses to changing times and cultures. The historical Jewish movements (Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes) were responses to the Roman rule of Israel, while the major modern movements (Reform, Orthodox, and Conservative) are responses to the modern, secular culture of Europe and America.

Thus, while Christian denominations differ chiefly in matters of doctrine, Jewish denominations differ from one another primarily with regard to practice. Hasidism and Kabbalah are mystical approaches to the Jewish faith. Like monasticism in Christianity and Sufism in Islam, Jewish mysticism emphasizes inward, spiritual experiences over intellectual and rational knowledge. This section explores the major modern Jewish movements: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Hasidism, and Kabbalah.

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox is the most traditional expression of modern Judaism. Orthodox Jews believe the entire Torah (including "Written," the Pentateuch, and "Oral," the Talmud) was given to Moses by God at Sinai and remains authoritative for modern life in its entirety. According to a 1990 nationwide survey, 7 percent of American Jews are Orthodox. American and Canadian Orthodox Jews are organized under the Orthodox Union, which serves 1,000 synagogues in North America. {1}

Orthodox Jews.
Photo courtesy of BBC News

Orthodox Jews reject the changes of Reform Judaism and hold fast to most traditional Jewish beliefs and practices. Orthodox Judaism has held fast to such practices as daily worship, dietary laws (kashruth), traditional prayers and ceremonies, regular and intensive study of the Torah, and separation of men and women in the synagogue. It also enjoins strict observance of the Sabbath and religious festivals and does not permit instrumental music during communal services. {2}

Orthodox Jews consider Reform and Conservative Jews adherents of the Jewish faith, but do not accept many non-Orthodox Jewish marriages, divorces, or conversions on the grounds that they were not performed in accordance with Jewish law. The Orthodox Union dedicates significant resources to its OU Kosher division, which certifies an estimated 660,000 products in 77 countries around the world. {3}

References

1. Orthodox Union official site
2. "Orthodox Judaism." Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service, 2004.
3. OU Kosher official site

Reform Judaism
Reform Judaism is the most liberal expression of modern Judaism. In America, Reform Judaism is organized under the Union for Reform Judaism (formerly known as the Union of American Hebrew Congregations), whose mission is "to create and sustain vibrant Jewish congregations wherever Reform Jews live." About 1.5 million Jews in 900 synagogues are members of the Union for Reform Judaism. According to a 1990 survey, 42 percent of American Jews regard themselves as Reform. {1}

Reform Judaism arose in Germany in the early 1800s both as a reaction against the perceived rigidity of Orthodox Judaism and as a response to Germany's increasingly liberal political climate. Among the changes made in 19th-century Reform congregations were a de-emphasis on Jews as a united people, discontinuation of prayers for a return to Palestine, prayers and sermons recited in German instead of Hebrew, the addition of organ music to the synagogue service, and a lack of observance of the dietary laws. Some Reform rabbis advocated the abolition of circumcision and the Reform congregation in Berlin shifted the Sabbath to Sundays to be more like their Christian neighbors. Early Reform Judaism retained traditional Jewish monotheism, but emphasized ethical behavior almost to the exclusion of ritual. The Talmud was mostly rejected, with Reform rabbis preferring the ethical teachings of the Prophets. {2}

Modern Reform Judaism, however, has restored some of the aspects of Judaism that their 19th-century predecessors abandoned, including the sense of Jewish people-hood and the practice of religious rituals. {2} Today, Reform Jews affirm the central tenets of Judaism--God, Torah, and Israel--while acknowledging a great diversity in Reform Jewish beliefs and practices. Reform Jews are more inclusive than other Jewish movements: women may be rabbis, cantors, and synagogue presidents; interfaith families are accepted; and Reform Jews are "committed to the full participation of gays and lesbians in synagogue life as well as society at large." {3}

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Conservative Judaism
Conservative Judaism (known as Masorti Judaism outside the USA) is a moderate sect that seeks to avoid the extremes of Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Conservative Jews wish to conserve the traditional elements of Judaism while also allowing for reasonable modernization and rabbinical development.

The teachings of Zacharias Frankel (1801-75) form the foundation of Conservative Judaism. Frankel broke away from the Reform movement in Germany in the 1840s, insisting that Jewish

tradition and rituals had not become nonessentials. He accepted both the Torah and Talmud as enduring authorities but taught that historical and textual studies could differentiate cultural expressions from abiding religious truths. In 1902, Solomon Schechter reorganized the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York City and made it the flagship institution of Conservative Judaism. Future Conservative rabbis are still trained there. {1}

Conservative Jews observe the Sabbath and dietary laws, although some modifications have been made to the latter. As in Reform Judaism, women may be rabbis. In 1985, the first woman rabbi was ordained in a Conservative synagogue. Conservative Jews uphold the importance of Jewish nationalism, encouraging the study of Hebrew and support for Zionism. Beyond these basic perspectives, beliefs and practices among Conservative Jews can range from Reform to Orthodox in nature. It is more "a theological coalition rather than a homogeneous expression of beliefs and practices." {2} The Conservative movement has been especially successful in the United States, where it is represented by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism (USCJ). The USCJ was founded in 1913 and today encompasses about 1.5 million Jews in 760 congregations. {3} Future Conservative rabbis are trained at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) in New York, NY, founded in 1883.

A number of studies have shown that there is a large gap between what the Conservative movement teaches and what most of its laypeople have incorporated into their daily lives. Conservative Judaism holds that halakha (Jewish law) is normative, i.e. that it is something that Jewish people must strive to actually live by in their daily lives. This would include the laws of Shabbat (the Jewish Sabbath); the laws of kashrut (keeping kosher); the practice of thrice daily prayer; observance of the Jewish holidays and life-cycle events. In practice, the majority of people who have come to join Conservative synagogues only follow all these laws rarely. Most do follow most of the laws some of the time, but only a minority follow most or all of the laws all of time. There is a substantial committed core, consisting of the lay leadership, rabbis, cantors, educators, and those who have graduated from the movement's religious day schools and summer camps, that do take Jewish law very seriously. Recent studies have shown an increase in the observance of members of the movement. {4}

References

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Hasidic Judaism

Hasidic (or Chasidic) Judaism arose in 12th-century Germany as a movement emphasizing asceticism and mystical experience born out of love and humility before God. The austere religious life of these early Hasids ("pious ones") is documented in the *Sefer Hasidim* ("Book of the Pious").

The modern Hasidic movement was founded in Poland in the 18th century by Israel ben Eliezer, more commonly known as the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name") or "the Besht" (an

acronym for Baal Shem Tov). Heavily influenced by the Kabbalah movement, Hasidism emphasized personal experiences of God over religious education and ritual. The primary distinction between modern Hasidism and its earlier incarnation is modern Hasidism's rejection of asceticism and emphasis on the holiness of everyday life. As the Besht himself put it:

> I came into this world to point a new way, to prevail upon men to live by the light of these three things: love of God, love of Israel, and love of Torah. And there is no need to perform mortifications of the flesh. {Recorded by his grandson, Rabbi Baruch of Medzhibozh}

The Besht's focus on the needs of the common people and his conviction that everyday activities hold as much religious value as rituals found a welcome audience.

Though it is conservative in many ways, Hasidism clashed heavily with mainstream Judaism when it first emerged. Rabbinical opponents of the Hasidic movement, known as *mitnagdim* (opponents), accused the Besht and his followers of being licentious and indifferent to tradition. Hasidic Jews center on a leader called a *rebbe* or *tzaddik*, who may or may not be a rabbi. The *rebbe* is considered especially enlightened and close to God and is looked to for guidance in all aspects of life, from Torah interpretation to choosing a spouse to buying a home. A rebbe's advice is considered absolutely authoritative.

Kabbalah: Jewish Mysticism

The mystical form of Judaism is Kabbalah. Broadly speaking, Kabbalah refers to Jewish mysticism dating back to the time of the second Temple. For many years a carefully guarded oral tradition, it became systematized and dispersed in the Middle Ages. The kabbalistic viewpoint was expressed most importantly in the *Yalkut Re'uveni* by Reuben Hoeshke in 1660, but also made its way into prayer books, popular customs and ethics. The focus of the Kabbalah is the simultaneous transcendence and immanence of God, with the latter described in terms of the *sefirot*, or attributes of God.

From Religion Facts

Divisions by Ethnicity

Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews

Ashkenazic Jews are the Jews of France, Germany, and Eastern Europe and their descendants. Sephardic Jews are the Jews of Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East and their descendants. Sephardic Jews are often subdivided into Sephardim (from Spain and Portugal) and Mizrachim (from the Northern Africa and the Middle East), though there is much overlap between those groups. Until the 1400s, the Iberian Peninsula, North Africa and the Middle East were all controlled by Muslims, who generally allowed Jews to move freely throughout the region. When the Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, many of them were absorbed into existing Mizrachi communities in Northern Africa and the Middle East.

Most American Jews today are Ashkenazic, descended from Jews who emigrated from Germany and Eastern Europe from the mid 1800s to the early 1900s, although most of the early Jewish settlers of this country were Sephardic. The first Jewish congregation in North America, Shearith

Israel, founded in what is now New York in 1684, was Sephardic and is still active. The first Jewish congregation in the city of Philadelphia, Congregation Mikveh Israel, founded in 1740, was also a Sephardic one, and is also still active.

In Israel, a little more than half of all Jews are Mizrachim, descended from Jews who have been in the land since ancient times or who were forced out of Arab countries after Israel was founded. Most of the rest are Ashkenazic, descended from Jews who came to the Holy Land (then controlled by the Ottoman Turks) instead of the United States in the late 1800s, or from Holocaust survivors, or from other immigrants who came at various times. About 1% of the Israeli population are the black Ethiopian Jews who fled during the brutal Ethiopian famine in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

The beliefs of Sephardic Judaism are basically in accord with those of Orthodox Judaism, though Sephardic interpretations of halakhah (Jewish Law) are somewhat different than Ashkenazic ones. The best-known of these differences relates to the holiday of Pesach (Passover): Sephardic Jews may eat rice, corn, peanuts and beans during this holiday, while Ashkenazic Jews avoid them. Although some individual Sephardic Jews are less observant than others, and some individuals do not agree with all of the beliefs of traditional Judaism, there is no formal, organized differentiation into movements as there is in Ashkenazic Judaism.

Historically, Sephardic Jews have been more integrated into the local non-Jewish culture than Ashkenazic Jews. In the Christian lands where Ashkenazic Judaism flourished, the tension between Christians and Jews was great, and Jews tended to be isolated from their non-Jewish neighbors, either voluntarily or involuntarily. In the Islamic lands where Sephardic Judaism developed, there was less segregation and oppression. Sephardic Jewish thought and culture was strongly influenced by Arabic and Greek philosophy and science.

Sephardic Jews have a different pronunciation of a few Hebrew vowels and one Hebrew consonant, though most Ashkenazim are adopting Sephardic pronunciation now because it is the pronunciation used in Israel. Sephardic prayer services are somewhat different from Ashkenazic ones, and they use different melodies in their services. Sephardic Jews also have different holiday customs and different traditional foods.

The Yiddish language, which many people think of as the international language of Judaism, is really the language of Ashkenazic Jews. Sephardic Jews have their own international language: Ladino, which was based on Spanish and Hebrew in the same way that Yiddish was based on German and Hebrew.

There are some Jews who do not fit into this Ashkenazic/Sephardic distinction. Yemenite Jews, Ethiopian Jews (also known as Beta Israel and sometimes called Falashas), and Oriental Jews also have some distinct customs and traditions. These groups, however, are relatively small and virtually unknown in America.

From Judaism 101

✡ *The Jewish Calendar* ✡

The Jewish calendar is lunar in character. The months are reckoned according to the time that it takes the moon to travel round the earth. Each month consists of either 29 or 30 days. The lunar year consists of approximately 354 days, while a solar year (the time it takes the earth to make a complete circuit round the sun) consists of 365 days. Therefore, some adjustment of the lunar year has to be made to match it to the solar year.

If there would be no adjustment, the religious calendar would become variable. So, the adjustment is achieved by inserting an extra month in the lunar calendar seven times in nineteen years. A year of 12 months is called Shanah Peshutah (an ordinary year), while a year of 13 months is called Shanah Me'uberet (a leap year). In a cycle of 19 years, a leap year occurs on the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th years.

The Jewish calendar has the following months:

Hebrew	English	Number	Length	Gregorian month(s)
נִיסָן	Nissan	1	30 days	March-April
אִיָיר	Iyar	2	29 days	April-May
סִינָן	Sivan	3	30 days	May-June
תָמוּז	Tammuz	4	29 days	June-July
אָב	Av	5	30 days	July-August
אֱלוּל	Elul	6	29 days	August-September
תִשְׁרִי	Tishri	7	30 days	September-October
חֶשְׁוָן	Cheshvan	8	29 or 30 days	October-November
כִסְלֵו	Kislev	9	30 or 29 days	November-December
טֵבֵת	Tevet	10	29 days	December-January
שְׁבָט	Shevat	11	30 days	January-February
אֲדָר	Adar I (leap yr. only)	12	30 days	February-March
אֲדָר ב	Adar (Adar II in leap yr.)	12 (13 in leap yr.)	29 days	February-March

Year 5767 / 2006-2007 Holidays

Yom Tov/Holiday	**Hebrew Date**	**English Date**
Rosh Hashana (2 days)	Tishrei 1-2, 5767	September 23-24, 2006
Fast of Gedalia	Tishrei 3, 5767	September 25, 2006
Yom Kippur	Tishrei 10, 5767	October 2, 2006
Succhos (6 days)	Tishrei 15-20, 5767	October 7-12, 2006
Hoshana Rabba	Tishrei 21, 5767	October 13, 2006
Shemini Atzeres	Tishrei 22, 5767	October 14, 2006
Simchas Torah	Tishrei 23, 5767	October 15, 2006
Chanuka (8 days)	Kislev 25 - Teves 3, 5767	December 16-23, 2006
Fast of 10th of Teves	Teves 10, 5767	December 31, 2006
Tu B'Shvat	Shvat 15, 5767	February 3, 2007
Fast of Esther	Adar 11, 5767	March 1, 2007
Purim	Adar 14, 5767	March 4, 2007
Passover (8 days)	Nissan 15-22, 5767	April 3-10, 2007
Holocaust Remembrance Day	Nissan 27, 5767	April 15, 2007
Israel Independence Day	Iyar 5, 5767	April 23, 2007
Lag B'Omer	Iyar 18, 5767	May 6, 2007
Yom Yerushalayim	Iyar 28, 5767	May 16, 2007
Shavuos (2 days)	Sivan 6-7, 5767	May 23-24, 2007
Fast of 17th of Tamuz	Tamuz 17, 5767	July 3, 2007
Fast of Tisha B'Av	Av 9, 5767	July 24, 2007

From the Jewish Agency for Israel, Judaism 101 and Project Genesis.

✡ *Holy Days of Judaism* ✡

The High Holy Days

The High Holy Days come in autumn, at the start of the month of Tishri. This is the most spiritual period of the year for Jews, a time for looking back on the year just passed, and for taking action to get right with God and with other people. It runs from Rosh Hashanah for ten days until Yom Kippur. The dates in the Hebrew calendar are 1 Tishri-10 Tishri. Because Hebrew dates begin at sunset, the events begin on the evening before the festival day.

Rosh Hashanah
Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year festival and commemorates the creation of the world. It lasts for two days. The traditional greeting between Jews is L'shanah tovah—for a good New Year. Rosh Hashanah is also a judgment day, when Jews believe that God balances a person's good deeds over the last year against their bad deeds, and decides what the next year will be like for them.

A lot of time is spent in the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, when there are special services that emphasise God's kingship. New Year isn't only celebrated in the synagogue, but at home too. A special meal is served, with the emphasis on sweetness. Apples are dipped in honey, as a symbol of the sweet New Year that each Jew hopes lies ahead. A sweet carrot stew called a tzimmes is often served.

And at New Year the Jewish Hallah (or Challah) bread served comes as a round loaf, rather than the plaited loaf served on the Sabbath, so as to symbolise a circle of life and of the year. There's often a pomegranate on the table because of a tradition that pomegranates have 613 seeds, one for each of the commandments that a Jew is obliged to keep.

Days of Awe or Repentance
The Days of Awe or Repentance are the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur during which everyone gets a chance to repent (teshuvah). This involves a person admitting that they've done wrong and making a firm commitment not to do that wrong again. As you can imagine, a lot of making-up for hurts and insults goes on in the Jewish world during this period. It is a very healing time for both individual and community. Jews can also make up for the wrongs of the past year by doing good deeds—so this is a time for charitable acts (tzedakah).

There's a ceremony in which Jews symbolically cast away their sins. It's called tashlich. A Jewish person goes to a river or a stream and, with appropriate prayers, throws some bread into the water. Nobody believes that they're actually getting rid of their sins in this way, but they are acknowledging their desire to rid themselves of their sins.

Yom Kippur
Yom Kippur, the most sacred and solemn day of the Jewish year, brings the Days of Repentance to a close. On Yom Kippur, God makes the final decision on what the next year will be like for

each person. The Book of Life is closed and sealed, and those who have properly repented for their sins will be granted a happy New Year.

The special day is marked by Jews in several ways:

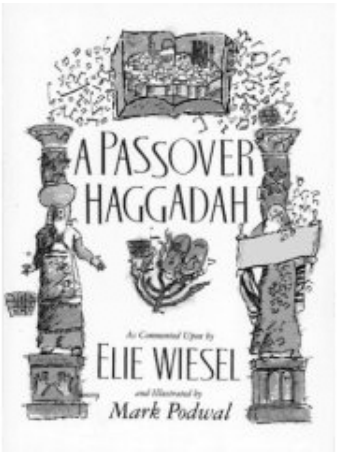
- They abstain from food or drink for 25 hours
- They do not wear perfume
- They don't have sex
- They don't wash
- They don't wear leather shoes

The most important part of Yom Kippur is the time spent in the synagogue. The first service, in the evening, begins with the Kol Nidre prayer. To emphasise the special nature of the service the men in the synagogue will put on their prayer shawls, which are not normally used in an evening service. Another element in the liturgy for Yom Kippur is the confession of sins (vidui). The fifth service is "Neilah", and brings the day to a close as God's judgement is finally sealed.

The service beseeches God to hear the prayers of the community. For this service the whole congregation stands throughout, as the doors of the Ark are open. At the end of the service the shofar is blown for the final time.

The Pilgrimage Festivals

These commemorate the journey of the Jewish People from Egypt to the Holy Land.



A Passover Haggadah by Elie Wiesel (Photo from Amazon)

Passover (Pesach)

Passover is one of the most important religious festivals in the Jewish calendar. Jews celebrate the Feast of Passover (Pesach in Hebrew) to commemorate the liberation of the Children of Israel who were led out of Egypt by Moses.

The highlight of Passover observance takes place on the first two nights, when friends and family gather together for ritual seder meals. Seder means 'order' and the ceremonies are arranged in a specific order. Special plates and cutlery are used which are kept exclusively for Passover. Each of the components of the meal is symbolic. The food is eaten in ritual order and its meaning and symbolism is discussed.

Passover is also a pilgrim festival. It is one of the three occasions in the year when, according to the commandments of the Torah, Jews were to go to the Temple in Jerusalem. So, the concluding words of the Haggadah, a ceremonial book used at Passover, look forward to this: "Next year in Jerusalem!"

Shavuot

Shavuot, also known as the festival or feast of 'Weeks,' marks the time that the Jews received

God's laws at Mount Sinai. There is no set date for the two-day festival, but it takes place seven weeks (fifty days) after the first day of the spring festival of Passover.

Prayers are said on Shavuot (especially at dawn) to thank God for the five books of Moses (known as the Torah) and for his law. Some people also spend the first night of Shavuot studying the Torah. Synagogues are decorated with flowers and plants on this joyous occasion to remember the flowers of Mount Sinai. Dairy products are also eaten during Shavuot.

Sukkot
Also known as The Feast of Tabernacles, Sukkot commemorates the years that the Jews spent in the desert on their way to the Promised Land, and celebrates the way in which God took special care of them under impossible conditions. The word Sukkot means huts, and building a hut is the most obvious way in which Jews celebrate the festival.

Other Festivals

Purim
Purim commemorates the time when the Jewish people living in Persia were saved from extermination by the courage of a young Jewish woman called Esther. Purim is celebrated on the 14th and 15th days of Adar, the twelfth month of the Jewish Calendar. Americans sometimes refer to Purim as the Jewish Mardi Gras. The festival is preceded by a minor fast, which commemorates Esther's three days of fasting in preparation for her meeting with the king.


Children dressed up for Purim

At Purim Jews read the story of Esther in the synagogue. It's usually an entertaining and rowdy occasion. Some wear their best Sabbath clothes, but many dress up in colourful costumes and masks. Children in particular enjoy dressing up as the characters found in the Book of Esther, including King Xerxes, Vashti, Queen Esther, Mordecai and Haman.

Yom Hashoah
Yom Hashoah is a day set aside for Jews to remember the Holocaust. The name comes from the Hebrew word 'shoah', which means 'whirlwind.' It falls on the 27th of the Jewish month of Nissan, a date chosen because it is the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.


A menorah

Yom Hashoah ceremonies include the lighting of candles for Holocaust victims and listening to the stories of survivors. Religious ceremonies include prayers such as Kaddish for the dead and the El Maleh Rahamim, a memorial prayer. On the morning of Yom Hashoah a siren is sounded for 2 minutes

throughout Israel and all work and other activity stops while people remember those killed in the Holocaust.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah or Chanukah is the Jewish Festival of Lights. The festival begins on the 25th day of Kislev and is celebrated for eight days. The word Hanukkah means rededication and commemorates the Jews' struggle for religious freedom.

Children at Hanukkah

The festival marks the phenomenal victory of a group of Jews called the Maccabees over the Syrian Greeks, the most powerful army of the ancient world. At the end of the three-year war, the Maccabees recaptured Jerusalem and rededicated the temple. When they came to light the eight-branched temple candelabrum, the menorah, they had enough oil to last only a day. But the menorah miraculously stayed alight for eight days. It is because of this miracle that candles of the menorah are lit from right to left during Hanukkah.

Tish B'av

Tish B'av is the ninth day of the Jewish month of Av. It is a solemn occasion commemorating a series of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the years, many of which have coincidentally happened on this day. These include the destruction of the first temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar when 100,000 Jews were believed to have perished, and the destruction of the second temple by the Romans in 70 CE. World War I and the beginning of the Holocaust are also associated with this day.

Tish B'av is observed with prayers and fasting. All ornaments are removed from synagogues and lights are dimmed. The ark (where the Torah is kept) is draped in black. The Book of Lamentations, written by the prophet Jeremiah after the destruction of the first temple is read at evening services. In Israel it is traditional for mourners to congregate at the Western Wall--the last ruins of the second temple--to recite a 'kinot' or lament for the dead.

Tu B'Shevat

Tu B'Shevat is the Jewish 'New Year for Trees'. It is one of the four Jewish new years (Rosh Hashanahs). On Tu B'Shevat Jews often eat fruits associated with the Holy Land, especially the ones mentioned in the Torah. Tu B'Shevat is a transliteration of 'the fifteenth of Shevat', the Hebrew date specified as the new year for trees.

The Torah forbids Jews to eat the fruit of new trees for three years after they are planted. The fourth year's fruit was to be tithed to the Temple. Tu B'Shevat was counted as the birthday for all trees for tithing purposes: like the beginning of a fiscal year. It gradually gained religious significance, with a Kabbalistic fruit-eating ceremony (like the Passover seder) being introduced during the 1600s.

From BBC News

✡ Jewish Customs, Beliefs and Worship ✡

Unlike Christianity and Islam, Judaism has no official creed or universal doctrinal requirements for membership. In general, a person can be considered "Jewish" whether he adheres to a complete system of beliefs about God and the afterlife, holds only a few simple beliefs that give meaning to ritual, or even (at least in liberal Judaism) does not believe in God at all. This diversity in Jewish belief arises in part because actions (good deeds and the *mitzvot*), not beliefs, are the most important aspect of Jewish religious life. This is in marked contrast to Christianity and Islam, in which belief in at least in a few basic doctrines is of primary importance.

Second, the term "Jewish" can be used to describe a race and a culture rather than a religion, so some who identify themselves as Jewish may have little interest in the beliefs and practices associated with the religion of Judaism. Nevertheless, the Torah and Talmud have a great deal to say about God, humanity, and the meaning of life, and Jewish history features significant theological and mystical inquiry into religious concepts.

These beliefs are of great significance not only for Judaism itself, but also for their heavy influence on Christianity and Islam, the two largest world religions. This section explores traditional and modern Jewish beliefs on God, human nature, the afterlife, and other religious topics.

Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith

Many of the "Beliefs" articles on this Web site begin with an official list of essential beliefs agreed upon by all orthodox followers of the faith. As noted above, Judaism has no such list. However, the great 12th century rabbi Maimonides put together "13 Articles of Faith" that he believed every Jew ought to adhere to. These have been widely accepted as a proper expression of the Jewish faith, and they appear in Jewish prayer books today. So while it is not necessary to believe all of them to be truly Jewish, and many Jews would likely question one or more of the articles, they serve as a good general summary of religious Judaism .

The 13 Articles of the Jewish Faith, as proposed by Maimonides, are as follows:

1. God exists
2. God is one and unique
3. God is incorporeal
4. God is eternal
5. Prayer is to God only.
6. The prophets spoke truth.
7. Moses was the greatest of the prophets.
8. The Written and Oral Torah were given to Moses.
9. There will be no other Torah.
10. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
11. God will reward the good and punish the wicked.
12. The Messiah will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

Jewish Beliefs about God

In Judaism, ultimate reality is a single, all-powerful God. It is this belief that made the Jews unique among other ancient Semitic peoples and that became the legacy Judaism has passed on to the entire Western world. The sacred name of God, as revealed to Moses in the book of Exodus, is **YHWH**. Since ancient Hebrew was written without vowels, we do not know the original pronunciation of this word. The common pronunciation "Jehovah," however, is incorrect. It is derived from combining the vowels for Adonai ("Lord") with the four consonants of YHWH.

A more "correct" pronunciation, and that which is used among scholars, is "Yahweh." The discussion is irrelevant to observant Jews, however, as they do not pronounce this holiest of names. When the Torah is read aloud, Adonai ("Lord") is read in its place. This practice is reflected in most English translations, in which YHWH is rendered "LORD." Jews also refer to God as **Hashem**, "the Name."

The word YHWH is sometimes referred to as the **Tetragrammaton**, from the Greek for "four-lettered." It is also called The Forbidden Name or the Unutterable Name. The prohibition against pronouncing this name does not originate with the command to not take the Lord's name in vain, as is sometimes thought. Although traditionally this only applies to the Name in Hebrew, some modern Jews also refrain from writing the word "God," replacing it instead with "**G-d**." Opinions vary within Judaism as to the necessity of such a practice.

Jewish Beliefs about Human Nature

A fundamental Jewish belief about human beings is that they are created in the **image of God**. This does not mean that we look like God, for God is incorporeal. The general rabbinical interpretation of this concept is that humans have the ability to reason. When Genesis 2:7 says "God formed man," it uses the Hebrew word *vayyitzer* ("formed"). The Talmud finds special meaning in the unique spelling of the word in this context, with two *yods* instead of one. The two *yods*, the rabbis explain, stand for the **two impulses** found in humans: the ***yetzer tov*** and the ***yetzer ra***.

According to this view, the *yetzer tov* is the moral conscience that reminds a person of God's law when one considers a specific action or choice. The *yetzer ra* is the impulse to satisfy one's own needs and desires. There is nothing intrinsically evil about the *yetzer ra*, as it was created by God and is natural to humankind. It is also what drives us to good things such as eating, drinking, having a family, and making a living. However, it can easily lead to sin when not kept in check by the *yetzer tov*.

The idea of human **free will** is fundamental to Judaism. The concept of original sin is rejected, and every person has the ability to choose good or evil.

The following rabbinical teaching is illustrative of the Jewish view of **the soul**:

This may be compared to the case of a king who had an orchard containing excellent early figs, and he placed there two watchmen, one lame and the other blind. He said to them: "Be careful with these fine early figs." After some days the lame man said to the blind one: "I see fine early

figs in the orchard." Said the blind man to him: "Come let us eat them." "Am I then able to walk?" said the lame man. "Can I then see?" retorted the blind man. The lame man got astride the blind man, and thus they ate the early figs and sat down again each in his place.

After some days the king came into that vineyard and said to them: "Where are the fine early figs?" The blind man replied: "My lord, the king, can I then see?" The lame man replied: "My lord the king, can I then walk?" What did the king, who was a man of insight, do with them? He placed the lame man astride the blind man, and they began to move about. Said the king to them: "Thus have you done, and eaten the early figs."

Even so will the Holy One, blessed be God, in the time to come, say to the soul: "Why have you sinned before Me?" and the soul will answer: O Master of the universe, it is not I that sinned, but the body it is that sinned. Why, since leaving it, I am like a clean bird flying through the air. As for me, how have I sinned?" God will also say to the body: "Why have you sinned before Me?" and the body will reply: "O Master of the universe, not I have sinned, the soul it is that has sinned. Why, since it left me, I am cast about like a stone thrown upon the ground. Have I then sinned before You?"

What will the Holy One, blessed be God, do to them? God will bring the soul and force it into the body, and judge both as one.

(Leviticus Rabbah 4:5)

References

1. Tracey R. Rich, Judaism 101.
2. George Robinson, *Essential Judaism* (Pocket Books, 2000).

Jewish Rituals and Practices

Jewish rituals and religious observances are grounded in **Jewish law** (*halakhah*, lit. "the path one walks.") An elaborate framework of divine *mitzvot*, or commandments, combined with rabbinic laws and traditions, this law is central to Judaism. *Halakhah* governs not just religious life, but daily life, from how to dress to what to eat to how to help the poor. Observance of *halakhah* shows gratitude to God, provides a sense of Jewish identity and brings the sacred into everyday life.

The Mitzvot

The Hebrew word *mitzvot* means "commandments" (*mitzvah* is its singular form). Although the word is sometimes used more broadly to refer to rabbinic (Talmudic) law or general good deeds - as in, "It would be a *mitzvah* to visit your mother" - in its strictest sense it refers to the divine commandments given by God in the Torah. As direct instructions from God, the *mitzvot* are far more than rituals and customs. In the words of one Jewish writer:

> Ceremonies, whether in the form of things or in the form of actions, are required by custom and convention; *mitzvot* are required by Torah. Ceremonies are relevant to man; *mitzvot* are relevant to God.... Ceremonies are the like the moon, they have no light of their own. *Mitzvot*, on the other hand, are expressions or interpretations of the will of

> God. While they are meaningful to man, the source of their meaning is not in the understanding of man but in the love of God. {1}

The *mitzvot* traditionally consist of 613 individual commandments (*taryag mitzvot*). Many of these have to do with Temple ritual, which was central to Jewish life and worship when the Torah was written. Others only apply in a theocratic state of Israel. It has been estimated that only about 270 of them - less than 50 percent - are still applicable.

The number 613 was first given in the third century AD by Rabbi Simlai, who divided the 613 *mitzvot* into 248 positive commandments (what to do) and 365 negative commandments (what not to do). Since this figure was first announced, many have undertaken to enumerate the 613 commandments. Easily the one with the most lasting significance is the 12th century list by Maimonides in his *Book of the Commandments*.

Although there are minor discrepancies between lists of the *taryag mitzvot*, it is universally agreed that there are 613. The number has symbolic significance in that it is the numeric value of the word "Torah" plus the two commandments that existed before the Torah: I am the Lord your God and you shall have no other Gods before me. The division into 248 positive and 365 negative commandments is also universally agreed upon and itself carries numerological significance: there are 248 bones and organs in the male body and 365 days in the solar year.

The *mitzvot* are inextricably linked to the concept of the Jews as God's chosen people. Biblical commandments are often accompanied by a reminder of their special status:

> You are a people holy to the Lord your God. Out of all the peoples on the face of the earth, the Lord has chosen you to be his treasured possession. {2}

Judaism's extensive system of ritual law is unique. It is what makes the lives of the Jews different from those in surrounding cultures. This is no accident - as seen above, the laws are explicitly designed to keep the Jewish people *holy*, a word which means "separate." Many rabbis have viewed this separation as the key to the survival of the Jewish people.

Rabbinic Law

In addition to the 613 mitzvot, Jewish law incorporates a large body of rabbinical rules and laws. These are considered just as binding as the *mitzvot*, although the punishments for violating them are less severe. Another difference is that it is possible, though unlikely, for the rabbinical laws to be changed, but no rabbi can change the Torah *mitzvot*. The rabbinical portion of *halakhah* falls into three groups: a *gezeirah*, *takkanah*, and *minhag*.

A ***gezeirah*** is a rule instituted by the rabbis to prevent inadvertent violation of a *mitzvah*. For instance, it is a *mitvah* to refrain from work on the Sabbath, but a *gezeirah* to avoid even the handling of any work instruments on the Sabbath.

A ***takkanah*** is a law instituted by rabbis that does not derive from the Torah. One example would be the lighting of candles on Hanukkah, a post-biblical holiday. Takkanot can sometimes vary by region: Ashkenazic Jews (who live in Christian nations) accepted a *takkanah* banning polygamy in c. 1000 CE, while Sephardic Jews (who live in Islamic societies) do not follow such a law.

A final type of rabbinical law is a ***minhag***, which is "a custom that evolved for worthy religious reasons and has continued long enough to become a binding religious practice." {3} An example *minhag* would be the custom of celebrating certain holidays a day longer in the Diaspora than in Israel. The term *minhag* is sometimes used in a broader sense, to indicate the general custom or way of a particular community. While these are not formalized or universal, it congregants are still encouraged to follow the community *minhag*.

Keeping Kosher: Jewish Dietary Laws

Perhaps the most well-known Jewish religious practice is that of eating only foods that are "kosher." The laws of *kashrut* (Jewish dietary laws) can seem puzzling or arbitrary to the outsider, but they have held great meaning for Jewish people throughout their history.

For those who keep kosher, observance of the dietary laws is both an opportunity for obedience to God and for preserving Jewish unity and identity. The importance of the laws of *kashrut* to the Jewish people has been demonstrated in times of persecution, in which Jews have been forced to eat non-kosher foods (usually pork) under penalty of death: many Jews chose to die rather than break kosher.

The Synagogue

Today, the Jewish house of worship is a *synagogue*. The synagogue predates the destruction of the Second Temple (the institution of the synagogue likely dates back to the 6th century BC, during the Babylonian Exile), but it became central to religious life after the Temple was lost. The synagogue replaces ritual sacrifice with Torah readings, prayer and teaching.

The Jerusalem Temple

The original center for Jewish ritual and worship was the Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was first built by King Solomon to house the Ark of the Covenant. It was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BC, but rebuilt on a smaller scale but more lavishly by Herod in the 1st century BC. In 70 AD, Herod's Temple was destroyed by the Romans and has yet to be rebuilt. The whereabouts of the Ark of the Covenant, which disappeared after the destruction of the First Temple, is one of history's greatest mysteries.

The Western Wall is all that remains of Herod's Temple today, and it is not actually a part of the temple itself - it is the western retaining wall built around the temple area. Nevertheless, it is the holiest site in Judaism, and an important place for pilgrimage, gathering and prayer. The Western Wall, or *Kotel* in Hebrew, is better known as the "Wailing Wall" for the lamentation of the Temple's destruction that occurs there. A recent history of the Wall and a live picture can be found at www.westernwall.co.il.

Prayer

Recitation of prayers is the central characteristic of Jewish worship. These prayers, often with instructions and commentary, are found in the siddur, the traditional Jewish prayer book. Observant Jews are expected to recite three prayers daily and more on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. While solitary prayer is valid, attending synagogue to pray with a minyan (quorum of 10 adult males) is considered ideal.

Etiquette for Visitors

In most synagogues or temples, it is considered a sign of respect for all male attendees to wear a head covering, usually a dress hat or yarmulke (kipa); the latter are usually provided near the front door. Conservative (also called Masorti) and Orthodox synagogues require all male attendees to cover their heads, whether they are Jewish or gentile. Most Reform (or Progressive) temples do not require people to cover their heads (neither Jew or gentile). Nonetheless, many Reform Jews now choose to wear a kipa. As might be expected, there are some things that a non-Jewish visitor should do during a Jewish religious service, and there are some things widely considered inappropriate. Here are some general guidelines:

- Standing. Parts of the services are recited standing; visitors are expected to stand together with the congregation.
- Bowing. Bowing is done at certain points in the services; visitors are not expected to bow.
- Tallit (prayer shawl) - non-Jewish visitors are not expected to don a tallit.
- Tzeniut. Appropriate dress for a house of worship is expected. In Orthodox synagogues, women may be required to adhere to tzeniut (the dress laws): long sleeves, long skirts and covering of the hair (only married Jewish women).

References

1. "Jewish services." Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jewish_services#Shabbat_services> Some public domain text from this source has been incorporated into this article.
2. Joseph Telushkin, *Jewish Literacy* (William Morrow, 2001), pp. 705-739.
3. George Robinson, *Essential Judaism* (Pocket Books, 2000), pp. 7-54.
4. "Judaism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*. 2005. Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. 6 Jan. 2005 <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=35268>.
5. Abraham Joshua Heschel, "Toward an Understanding of Halacha," *Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity* (quoted in *Essential Judaism*, 220).
6. Deuteronomy 14:2.
7. Tracey R. Rich, "Halakhah," Judaism 101

From Religion Facts

✡ *Music and Prayer* ✡

The Hebrew word for prayer is tefilah. It is derived from the root Pe-Lamed-Lamed and the word l'hitpalel, meaning to judge oneself. This surprising word origin provides insight into the purpose of Jewish prayer. The most important part of any Jewish prayer, whether it be a prayer of petition, of thanksgiving, of praise of God, or of confession, is the introspection it provides, the moment that we spend looking inside ourselves, seeing our role in the universe and our relationship to God.

Anti-Zionist Neturei Karta Orthodox Jews praying for Yasser Arafat on November 10th, 2004 outside the Percy Military Hospital in Clamart, where he was in critical condition. Photo courtesy of Princeton University.

"Prayer responds to a need--to our need to understand and be understood, to speak and be heard, to sing, to believe, to remember, to share, to dream and to worship. Prayer stems from the need to go under in order to emerge again, more serene than before, atoned and purified, more than before. We want to justify good and evil in the present and we need to glorify our ordeal and then weep over it. We cannot hold back too long. At one point we must let go. And we do so in prayer, which then becomes the mode of liberation." --Elie Wiesel

The Mourner's Kaddish

Elie Wiesel speaks of the Mourner's Kaddish in his writing. Each time, he conveys a strong, spiritual significance. This passage is from his memoir *All Rivers Run to the Sea*:

> "Buchenwald was liberated on April 11, 1945. Actually, the camp liberated itself. Armed members of the Resistance rose up a few hours before the magical appearance of the first American units…Elated prisoners put the SS to flight…Some of us organized a minyan and said Kaddish. That Kaddish, at once a glorification of God's name and a protest against His creation, still echoes in my ears. It was a thanksgiving for having spared us, but it was also an outcry: 'Why did You not spare so many others?'"

And again in *Night*:

> "Everyone around us was weeping. Someone began to recite Kaddish, the prayer for the dead. I don't know whether, during the history of the Jewish people, men have ever before recited Kaddish for themselves."

Kaddish (שידק Aramaic: "holy") refers to an important and central blessing in the Jewish prayer service. The term "Kaddish" is often used to refer specifically to **"The Mourner's Kaddish,"** said as part of the mourning rituals in Judaism in all prayer services as well as at funerals and memorials. When mention is made of "saying Kaddish," this unambiguously denotes the rituals of mourning.

The opening words of this prayer are inspired by Ezekiel 38:23, a vision of God becoming great in the eyes of all the nations. The central line of the Kaddish in Jewish tradition is the congregation's response, "May His great name be blessed forever and to all eternity," a public declaration of God's greatness and eternality.

יִתְגַּדַּל וְיִתְקַדַּשׁ שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא (אָמֵן)
May His great Name grow exalted
and sanctified (Cong. Amen.)

בְּעָלְמָא דִּי בְרָא כִרְעוּתֵהּ
in the world that He created as He willed.

וְיַמְלִיךְ מַלְכוּתֵהּ בְּחַיֵּיכוֹן וּבְיוֹמֵיכוֹן
May He give reign to His kingship
in your lifetimes and in your days,

וּבְחַיֵּי דְכָל בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל
and in the lifetimes
of the entire Family of Israel,

בַּעֲגָלָא וּבִזְמַן קָרִיב וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן
swiftly and soon. Now respond: Amen.

(אָמֵן)
יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא
(Cong Amen. May His great Name
be blessed forever and ever.)

יְהֵא שְׁמֵהּ רַבָּא מְבָרַךְ לְעָלַם וּלְעָלְמֵי עָלְמַיָּא
May His great Name be blessed
forever and ever.

יִתְבָּרַךְ וְיִשְׁתַּבַּח וְיִתְפָּאַר וְיִתְרוֹמַם וְיִתְנַשֵּׂא
Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled,

וְיִתְהַדַּר וְיִתְעַלֶּה וְיִתְהַלַּל שְׁמֵהּ דְּקֻדְשָׁא
בְּרִיךְ הוּא
mighty, upraised, and lauded be
the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He

(בְּרִיךְ הוּא)
(Cong. Blessed is He)

לְעֵלָּא מִן כָּל בִּרְכָתָא וְשִׁירָתָא
beyond any blessing and song,

תֻּשְׁבְּחָתָא וְנֶחֱמָתָא דַּאֲמִירָן בְּעָלְמָא
וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן
praise and consolation that are uttered in the
world. Now respond: Amen.

(אָמֵן)
(Cong. Amen).

יְהֵא שְׁלָמָא רַבָּא מִן שְׁמַיָּא וְחַיִּים
May there be abundant peace
from Heaven, and life

עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן
upon us and upon all Israel.
Now respond: Amen.

(אָמֵן)
(Cong. Amen).

עֹשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם בִּמְרוֹמָיו הוּא יַעֲשֶׂה שָׁלוֹם
He Who makes peace in His heights,
may He make peace,

עָלֵינוּ וְעַל כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאִמְרוּ אָמֵן
upon us and upon all Israel.
Now respond: Amen.

(אָמֵן)
(Cong. Amen).

Shema

The *Shema* is an affirmation of Judaism and a declaration of faith in one God. The obligation to recite the *Shema* is separate from the obligation to pray and a Jew is obligated to say *Shema* in the morning and at night (Deuteronomy 6:7). When a person is praying alone, he begins the *Shema* with the phrase "God, Faithful King" (*El melekh ne'eman*) to bring the number of words in the *Shema* up to 248, the number of parts in the human body. This indicates that the worshiper dedicates his or her whole body to serving God.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד׃

Hear, Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.

In an undertone:

בָּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד׃

Blessed be the Name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever

וְאָהַבְתָּ אֵת יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל מְאֹדֶךָ׃

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם עַל לְבָבֶךָ׃

And these words that I command you today shall be in your heart.

וְשִׁנַּנְתָּם לְבָנֶיךָ וְדִבַּרְתָּ בָּם
בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ בְּבֵיתֶךָ וּבְלֶכְתְּךָ בַדֶּרֶךְ וּבְשָׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמֶךָ׃

And you shall teach them diligently to your children, and you shall speak of them when you sit at home, and when you walk along the way, and when you lie down and when you rise up.

וּקְשַׁרְתָּם לְאוֹת עַל יָדֶךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטָפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ׃

And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

וּכְתַבְתָּם עַל מְזוּזוֹת בֵּיתֶךָ וּבִשְׁעָרֶיךָ׃

And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

From Wikipedia and The Jewish Virtual Library.

✡ *Ani Ma'amin* ✡

ANI MA'AMIN	I BELIEVE
Ani ma'amin, Be'emuna shelema	I believe with complete faith In the coming of the Messiah, I believe
Beviat hamashiach ani ma'amin Beviat hamashiach, ma'amin Beviat hamashiach ani ma'amin Beviat hamashiach, ma'amin	Believe in the coming of the Messiah In the coming of the Messiah, I believe Believe in the coming of the Messiah
Veaf al pi sheyitmahmeha Im kol zeh, achake loh Veaf al pi sheyitmahmeha Im kol zeh, achake loh	And even though he may tarry Nonetheless I will wait for him And even though he may tarry Nonetheless I will wait for him
Im kol zeh, im kol zeh, achake loh Achake bechol yom sheyavoh Im kol zeh, im kol zeh, achake loh Achake bechol yom sheyavoh	Nonetheless, I will wait for him I will wait every day for him to come Nonetheless, I will wait for him I will wait every day for him to come
(sof) Ani ma'amin	(Ending) I believe

Lyrics courtesy of Jewish Australia Online Network

The Nobel Peace Prize 1986

Presentation Speech

Presentation Speech by Egil Aarvik, Chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Committee

With Egil Aarvik, chairman of the Nobel committee. In background, Marion and Elisha. Oslo, December 10, 1986. From *And the Sea Is Never Full* by Elie Wiesel.

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is today exactly 50 years since the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the German public figure and pacifist, Carl von Ossietzky. That particular award was one of the most controversial ever made. The newly established Nazi regime in Germany was violently critical of the Norwegian Nobel Committee, and German citizens were forbidden to accept Nobel prizes in the future.

This type of reaction was in a way so predictable that it can be ignored. What we ought to be more interested in, on the other hand, is the type of reaction which came from countries other than Germany. Many were of course delighted, but there were also many commentators who were sceptical. Leading figures in politics and the press expressed the opinion that Ossietzky was too extreme in his warnings and revelations. Some believed him to be a communist. In any case, it was argued, the cause of peace was poorly served by a Peace Prize which seemed to be a direct provocation of the German government.

The existence of such reactions was obviously partly a result of judging the Hitler regime by current political and moral criteria. Most people were, in contrast to Ossietzky, unable to recognise the deadly threat to democracy which was developing. When the threat was at last recognised people were more or less paralysed by the "Hitler-roar", and had few resources to fight it with, other than the almost desperate appeasement politics represented by Chamberlain. During Nazism's formative years the general attitude was one of unsuspicious ambivalence. Of course one disagreed with Hitler, but when is one not in disagreement with politicians? And of course one was aware of the terrible rumours about the brownshirts' atrocities, but wasn't it necessary to evaluate this against the background of the extraordinary situation in the country? At least there was now a strong and active government, and Hitler was of course a democratically elected leader... Most people feared some sort of unavoidable catastrophe. But only a few suspected the extent of what was happening—and it is precisely because of this blindness that the catastrophe was allowed to happen. Ibsen's buttonmaker was proved right once again: "...it's when insight is lacking that the fellow with the hoof takes his best prey".

Carl von Ossietzky had insight. He had the courage and ability to tell of what he saw, and therefore acted as an unafraid witness for truth and justice. All honour to the then Nobel Committee for awarding him the Nobel Peace Prize. His testimony was, however, also his doom—Ossietzky did not survive his meeting with the terrible regime which had established itself in the heart of Europe.

Today, fifty years later, the Peace Prize is to be presented to one who survived. In 1945, on the ashes left behind after the sacrificial flames which annihilated six million Jews, sat the seventeen-year-old Elie Wiesel, an only son of Abraham, an Isaac who once again had escaped a sacrificial death on Mount Moriah at the last moment. He will receive the Nobel Peace Prize today because he, too, has become a witness for truth and justice. From the abyss of the death camps he has come as a messenger to mankind—not with a message of hate and revenge, but with one of brotherhood and atonement. He has become a powerful spokesman for the view of mankind and the unlimited humanity which is, at all times, the basis of a lasting peace. Elie Wiesel is not only the man who survived—he is also the spirit which has conquered. In him we see a man who has climbed from utter humiliation to become one of our most important spiritual leaders and guides.

The Nobel Committee believes it is vital that we have such guides in an age when terror, repression, and racial discrimination still exist in the world.

With today's presentation of the Peace Prize, a bridge is built between the German who gave his life in the fight against what he saw was going to happen and the Jew who has dedicated his life to fighting anything that could lead to a recurrence of that same tragedy. It is appropriate that there is a Nobel Peace Prize at both ends of that bridge.

Elie Wiesel was born on the 30th of September 1928 in the Romanian town of Sighet in the Carpathians. He and his three sisters grew up in a peaceful family which was strongly bound by Jewish traditions and the Jewish religion. Elie was fourteen years old when the deportation of Hungarian Jews began. Sighet was now occupied by Hungary, and the town's Jewish population was packed, in the usual humiliating way, into goods wagons and transported to Auschwitz. There he saw his mother and youngest sister sent to the gas chambers. Later, his father died while being transported to Buchenwald.

Through his books Elie Wiesel has given us not only an eyewitness account of what happened, but also an analysis of the evil powers which lay behind the events. His main concern is the question of what measures we can take to prevent a recurrence of these events.

The terrors he encountered in the death camps, which were slowly revealed to the rest of the world, were something which was qualitatively new in the history of mankind. The Holocaust was a war within a war, a world in itself, a kingdom of darkness where there existed an evil so monstrous that it shattered all political and moral codes. It represented a new dimension. According to its theoretical basis, which could only have been the product of sick minds, it was a capital offence to belong to a certain race! This was previously unimaginable, but now the unimaginable was happening.

It is true that previous regimes had used brutal punishment against real or imagined opponents, but behind such measures there was always an element of logical—though perverted—reasoning. The punishment was the result of some injury or offence, either actual or potential.

But for the Jews - and, to a certain extent, the Romanies - the situation was different. Among the relics of the Nazi regime have been found registration forms used when arresting Jews. The usual details were noted down: name, age, sex, religion, address, and, of course, reason for arrest. In the last case only one word was entered, the word *JEW*.

The enormity of what happened is thus not only the sheer number of the victims; it is not only the existence of factory-like slaughter houses. No, the enormity lies in the philosophy which made this "industry" possible! It is this that Elie Wiesel wants us to understand. His mission is not to gain the world's sympathy for the victims or the survivors. His aim is to awaken our conscience. Our indifference to evil makes us partners in the crime. That is the reason for his attack on indifference and his insistence on measures aimed at preventing a new holocaust. We know that the unimaginable has happened. What are we doing now to prevent it happening again? Do not forget, do not sink into a new blind indifference, but involve yourselves in truth and justice, in human dignity, freedom, and atonement. That is this Peace Prize laureate's message to us.

Elie Wiesel's sojourn in the death camps ended in Buchenwald in the spring of 1945, when the prisoners were liberated by American troops. Together with a group of other Jewish children he was sent to France. His stay in France was part convalescence, part study: he learnt French and studied at the Sorbonne before becoming a correspondent with a Tel Aviv newspaper. He travelled to the USA as a journalist, became a correspondent with a New York Jewish paper, and took American citizenship in 1963. In the meantime he had published a number of books, of which *Night* (1956) was the first. His writings, which have been translated into many languages, now include twenty-six full-length books, together with a large number of articles, essays, and lectures. He has been awarded a number of honours and prizes.

Elie Wiesel is an honorary professor at City College in New York and has, in addition, a professorship in humanities at Boston University. He is the leader of the American Holocaust Commission instigated by the President of the USA. Biographical details are perhaps unnecessary in Elie Wiesel's case - he is best presented through his own writings and through his actions in pursuit of his call.

Naturally enough, it was his own people's fate which formed the starting point for his involvement. During the years, however, his message has attained a universal character. Presented as it is in different variations and in different contexts, it stands now as communication from one human being to humankind. Its involvement is limitless, and encompasses all who suffer, wherever they might be. The fight for freedom and human dignity - whether in Latin America, Asia, Europe or South Africa—has become his life's purpose.

This involvement is based on a strong feeling of duty to the lessons which history teaches us. It has been said that peoples or cultures who forget their history are doomed to repeat it, and it is against the background of his own experiences that Elie Wiesel now warns us of this. We cannot allow ourselves to forget the fate of those who died. If we do forget, we commit them to death once again, and become responsible ourselves for making their lives—and their deaths—

meaningless. This warning has also a future perspective: we must not allow the unsuspicious ambivalence to return and open the way for an atomic holocaust. We cannot allow ourselves to be deluded into believing that the unthinkable will not happen. For it has happened once before. History has warned us.

The duty and responsibility which Elie Wiesel preaches are not primarily concerned with the fear of the terrors of the past repeating themselves. It is much more an engagement directed at preventing the possible victory of evil forces in the future. The creative force in this process is not hate and revenge, but rather a longing for freedom, a love of life and a respect for human dignity. Or as Elie Wiesel has said himself: "I will conquer our murderers by attempting to reconstruct what they destroyed".

No, Elie Wiesel's standpoint is not characterised by a passive obsession with a tragic history; rather it is a reconstructed belief in God, humanity, and the future. And it is truly a belief which is both hard-won and tested.

Elie Wiesel sat thus in the ashes after Auschwitz. The storm and fire had terrorised his life. Everything was in ruins. His family was annihilated. Two of his sisters were alive, though he was not aware of this at the time. He was homeless and without a fatherland. Even his identity as a human being was undermined—he was now prisoner number A 7713, a sort of shipwrecked sailor on a burnt coast, without hope, without a future. Only the naked memories remained. And, like Job in the ashes, he sat there and questioned his God—cast his agonised "WHY?" towards heaven: Why did this have to happen? And why should I have survived? Dear God, why were six million of your own chosen people sent to their deaths? Where were you when they hanged twelve-year-olds in Auschwitz, or burned small children alive in Birkenau?

He was seventeen years old, and how could a life be lived after what had happened? The sorrow was so great, and the experience of life so bitter. Indeed, he was only seventeen, but was already the lonely prophet of the *Lamentations*: "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow".

But he was alive. And in time it occurred to him that there could be a purpose behind it—that he was to be a witness, the one who would pass on the account of what had happened so that the dead would not have died in vain and so that the living could learn. The problem was that the story was impossible to tell. No human being could accurately describe the terror which existed in the death camps. To tell could thus easily become a betrayal of the dead. But to remain silent would be an even greater betrayal.

He remained silent for ten years. Then his profession as a journalist brought him into contact with the French poet and Nobel prizewinner, Francois Mauriac. This meeting led him to break his silence - at first with *Night* and then in the course of very short time with *Dawn, The Accident, The Town Beyond the Wall, The Gates of the Forest*, the play *Zalmen, A Beggar in Jerusalem*, and his credo *Ani Maamin*—"I believe".

All Elie Wiesel's books and publications are concerned with the same theme—the Holocaust is present in them all. As he himself says: "You can get out of Auschwitz, but Auschwitz can never get out of you". But, even though the theme is always the same, and even though the same story is repeated time after time, there is always a new approach which opens up new perspectives.

There is a remarkable development in Wiesel's authorship. We see a forward looking development in a human being who regains his upright position and his individual identity.

In the beginning everything is night and dark, On the last page of *Night* he stands in front of the mirror and sees a face which is like a bleached skull. Even in *Dawn* the day doesn't dawn—the whole book is a fight with the darkness of night. The problem is constantly the same painful question: "How can one live a meaningful life under the weight of such agonising memories?" Is the German philosopher correct in stating that memory is in the service of everlasting agony? Was there no way forward to day and to light?

The answer comes slowly. We meet the first intimation of dawn in *The Town Beyond the Wall* where two prisoners, one of whom is mad and the other dumb, manage to find a means by which they can communicate with one another. The dumb prisoner breaks his silence and the lunatic shows that he perhaps isn't so insane after all. They build a relationship which is a salvation for both of them. The same thought is developed in *The Gate of the Forest* and *A Beggar in Jerusalem*, and, as the books progress, the light becomes brighter. The man raises himself up. The spirit conquers. The answer to the riddle of the night is not hate based on what has happened, but a believing and hopeful rebirth into future events. This is what he calls *The Refound Song* which appears in his credo, his *Ani Maamin: I believe in God—in spite of God! I believe in Mankind—in spite of Mankind! I believe in the Futur— in spite of the Past!*

And with this hard-won belief he stands forward today with his message to all people on this earth. This is a message which not only awakens our conscience, but also inspires a limitless solidarity where individuals find one another in the labor of building a "Town Beyond the Wall" for the future—beyond the wall of evil and dark memories.

It is on account of this inspiration that Elie Wiesel has so successfully reached out with his message. I doubt whether any other individual, through the use of such quiet speech, has achieved more or been more widely heard. The words are not big, and the voice which speaks them is low. It is a voice of peace we hear. But the power is intense. Truly, the little spark will not be put out, but will become a burning torch for our common belief in the future. Truly, prisoner number A 7713 has become a human being once again—a human being dedicated to humanity.

And, once again, we have met the young Jew at the ford Jabbok in the book of *Genesis*—he who in the darkness of night wrestled with God, he who refused to release his opponent before his opponent blessed him and who left that place at dawn marked for life on his hip. It was to this man that the promise of the future was made from on high: "Thy name shall be called... Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed".

It is in recognition of this particular human spirit's victory over the powers of death and degradation, and as a support to the rebellion of good against the evil in the world, that the Norwegian Nobel Committee today presents the Nobel Peace Prize to Elie Wiesel. We do this on behalf of millions—from all peoples and races. We do it in deep reverence for the memory of the dead, but also with the deep felt hope that the prize will be a small contribution which will forward the cause which is the greatest of all humanity's concerns—the cause of peace.

The Nobel Peace Prize 1986

Acceptance Speech

The Nobel Acceptance Speech delivered by Elie Wiesel in Oslo on December 10, 1986

Your Majesty, Your Royal Highnesses, Your Excellencies, Chairman Aarvik, members of the Nobel Committee, ladies and gentlemen:

Words of gratitude. First to our common Creator. This is what the Jewish tradition commands us to do. At special occasions, one is duty-bound to recite the following prayer: "Barukh shehekhyanu vekiymanu vehigianu lazman haze"—"Blessed be Thou for having sustained us until this day."

Then—thank you, Chairman Aarvik, for the depth of your eloquence. And for the generosity of your gesture. Thank you for building bridges between people and generations. Thank you, above all, for helping humankind make peace its most urgent and noble aspiration.

I am moved, deeply moved by your words, Chairman Aarvik. And it is with a profound sense of humility that I accept the honor - the highest there is—that you have chosen to bestow upon me. I know your choice transcends my person.

Do I have the right to represent the multitudes who have perished? Do I have the right to accept this great honor on their behalf? I do not. No one may speak for the dead, no one may interpret their mutilated dreams and visions. And yet, I sense their presence. I always do—and at this moment more than ever. The presence of my parents, that of my little sister. The presence of my teachers, my friends, my companions...

This honor belongs to all the survivors and their children and, through us to the Jewish people with whose destiny I have always identified.

I remember: it happened yesterday, or eternities ago. A young Jewish boy discovered the Kingdom of Night. I remember his bewilderment, I remember his anguish. It all happened so fast. The ghetto. The deportation. The sealed cattle car. The fiery altar upon which the history of our people and the future of mankind were meant to be sacrificed.

I remember he asked his father: "Can this be true? This is the twentieth century, not the Middle Ages. Who would allow such crimes to be committed? How could the world remain silent?"

And now the boy is turning to me. "Tell me," he asks, "what have you done with my future, what

have you done with your life?" And I tell him that I have tried. That I have tried to keep memory alive, that I have tried to fight those who would forget. Because if we forget, we are guilty, we are accomplices.

And then I explain to him how naïve we were, that the world did know and remained silent. And that is why I swore never to be silent whenever wherever human beings endure suffering and humiliation. We must take sides. Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at that moment—become the center of the universe.

Of course, since I am a Jew profoundly rooted in my people's memory and tradition, my first response is to Jewish fears, Jewish needs, Jewish crises. For I belong to a traumatized generation, one that experienced the abandonment and solitude of our people. It would be unnatural for me not to make Jewish priorities my own: Israel, Soviet Jewry, Jews in Arab land... But others are important to me. Apartheid is, in my view, as abhorrent as anti-Semitism. To me, Andrei Sakharov's isolation is as much a disgrace as Joseph Begun's imprisonment and Ida Nudel's exile. As is the denial of solidarity and its leader Lech Walesa's right to dissent. And Nelson Mandela's interminable imprisonment.

There is so much injustice and suffering crying out for our attention: victims of hunger, of racism and political persecution—in Chile, for instance, or in Ethiopia - writers and poets, prisoners in so many lands governed by the Left and by the Right.

Human rights are being violated on every continent. More people are oppressed than free. How can one not be sensitive to their plight? Human suffering anywhere concerns men and women everywhere. That applies also to Palestinians to whose plight I am sensitive but whose methods I deplore when they lead to violence. Violence is not the answer. Terrorism is the most dangerous of answers. They are frustrated, that is understandable, something must be done. The refugees and their misery. The children and their fear. The uprooted and their hopelessness. Something must be done about their situation. Both the Jewish people and the Palestinian people have lost too many sons and daughters and have shed too much blood. This must stop, and all attempts to stop it must be encouraged. Israel will cooperate, I am sure of that. I trust Israel for I have faith in the Jewish people. Let Israel be given a chance, let hatred and danger be removed from their horizons, and there will be peace in and around the Holy Land. Please understand my deep and total commitment to Israel: if you could remember what I remember, you would understand. Israel is the only nation in the world whose existence is threatened. Should Israel lose but one war, it would mean her end and ours as well. But I have faith. Faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and even in His creation. Without it no action would be possible. And action is the only remedy to indifference, the most insidious danger of all. Isn't that the meaning of Alfred Nobel's legacy? Wasn't his fear of war a shield against war?

There is so much to be done, there is so much that can be done. One person—a Raoul Wallenberg, an Albert Schweitzer, Martin Luther King, Jr.—one person of integrity, can make a difference, a difference of life and death.

As long as one dissident is in prison, our freedom will not be true. As long as one child is hungry, our life will be filled with anguish and shame. What all these victims need above all is to know that they are not alone; that we are not forgetting them, that when their voices are stifled we shall lend them ours, that while their freedom depends on ours, the quality of our freedom depends on theirs.

This is what I say to the young Jewish boy wondering what I have done with his years. It is in his name that I speak to you and that I express to you my deepest gratitude as one who has emerged from the Kingdom of Night. We know that every moment is a moment of grace, every hour an offering; not to share them would mean to betray them.

Our lives no longer belong to us alone; they belong to all those who need us desperately.

Thank you, Chairman Aarvik. Thank you, members of the Nobel Committee. Thank you, people of Norway, for declaring on this singular occasion that our survival has meaning for mankind.

From the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

The Nobel Prize Award Ceremonies take place in Stockholm, Sweden every year on December 10th, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death. The ceremony for the Nobel Peace Prize occurs in Oslo. (Image courtesy of Yahoo!.)

Elie Wiesel: The Man

Study Questions

1. Create a short timeline of Elie Wiesel's life based on the biography you have just read.
2. Elie Wiesel is a tireless humanitarian, standing up for people around the world who are persecuted and in despair. What specific event(s) in his life do you think gave him this passion for activism? Why?
3. Where is Sighet in relation to the rest of Europe? How would you tell a friend how to find it on a map?
4. Choose 5-10 major world events that you believe had the most direct and profound influences on Elie Wiesel's life. Justify your choices.
5. Create a timeline of the major events in the history of Judaism. Why did you choose to include those particular events?
6. What early signs of anti-Semitism can you find? When were people most likely to hate the Jews?
7. Make a Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting two Jewish denominations of your choice. What beliefs and customs do they have in common? In what ways are they different?
8. On a map, color code the different regions from which the Ashkenazic and Sephardic Jews originate.
9. Explain the duality of the term "Jew." What are the different ways in which a person can be defined as being Jewish?
10. Discuss the two aspects of human nature according to Jewish belief.
11. What is kosher? Why do the Jewish people regard their diet as an integral part of their belief system? What does it mean to them?
12. Create a list of vocabulary words that you would only hear in a synagogue.
13. The Sabbath is a very holy day for Jews. When is it? How do they show reverence in keeping this day sacred? What are some of the customs and rituals they observe?
14. Compare and contrast your faith to that of Elie Wiesel with regard to God, humanity, and people's way of life. What similarities or differences do you notice?
15. In the Nobel Peace Prize presentation speech, how does Chairman Aarvik explain the phenomenal success of Hitler and the Nazi party?
16. What about Elie Wiesel made him deserving of the Nobel Peace Prize?
17. After reading the speech, what do you think is Elie Wiesel's most important life mission? What is his main philosophy for what he does?
18. While not telling the world of the atrocities of the Holocaust would have been a horror in itself, how could telling of his experiences have been "a betrayal of the dead?" Explain this duality with at least two examples from the text.
19. In Elie Wiesel's Nobel Prize acceptance speech, what seems to be his most pressing question regarding the Holocaust? How does he answer it?
20. Why does Elie Wiesel feel as ardently about anti-Semitism, a crime against his own people, as he does about apartheid and poverty in Chile?

Elie Wiesel: Survivor & Witness

The pages of Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night*, full of painful honesty and graphic emotion, bear witness to the darkness of the Holocaust. Up to a certain point, there are facts we must learn: where it all began, how it was allowed to happen, the legacy it has left behind. After this we need feeling, we need understanding. After this the best we have are the recollections of the living.

1. The Rise of the Nazi Party
2. The Nazification of Germany
3. The Holocaust
4. Maps
   - Major Concentration Camps Throughout Europe
   - "Sorting" Flow Chart
5. Concentration Camps
   - Auschwitz
   - Children
6. Anti-Semitism
   - History
   - Present-day Influence
   - "We Plead on Behalf of an Ancient People"
7. Study Questions

"I decided to devote my life to telling the story because I felt that having survived I owe something to the dead. And anyone who does not remember betrays them again." —Elie Wiesel

The Rise of the Nazi Party

1918-1933-1939-1941-1942-1944-1945-2001

Few would have thought that the Nazi Party, starting as a gang of unemployed soldiers in 1919, would become the legal government of Germany by 1933. In fourteen years, a once obscure corporal, Adolf Hitler, would become the Chancellor of Germany.

1918

World War I ended in 1918 with a grisly total of 37 million casualties, including 9 million dead combatants. German propaganda had not prepared the nation for defeat, resulting in a sense of injured German national pride. Those military and political leaders who were responsible claimed that Germany had been "stabbed in the back" by its left-wing politicians, Communists, and Jews. When a new government, the Weimar Republic, tried to establish a democratic course, extreme political parties from both the right and the left struggled violently for control. The new regime could neither handle the depressed economy nor the rampant lawlessness and disorder.

1919

The German population swallowed the bitter pill of defeat as the victorious Allies punished Germany severely. In the Treaty of Versailles, Germany was disarmed and forced to pay reparations to France and Britain for the huge costs of the war.

The German Workers' Party, the forerunner of the Nazi Party, espoused a right-wing ideology, like many similar groups of demobilized soldiers. Adolf Hitler joined this small political party in 1919 and rose to leadership through his emotional and captivating speeches. He encouraged national pride, militarism, and a commitment to the Volk and a racially "pure" Germany. Hitler condemned the Jews, exploiting anti-Semitic feelings that had prevailed in Europe for centuries. He changed the name of the party to the National Socialist German Workers' Party, called for short, the Nazi Party (or NSDAP). By the end of 1920, the Nazi Party had about 3,000 members. A year later Hitler became its official leader, or *Führer*.

Adolf Hitler
Photo courtesy of *TIME* Magazine

1923

Adolf Hitler's attempt at an armed overthrow of local authorities in Munich, known as the Beer Hall Putsch, failed miserably. The Nazi Party seemed doomed to fail and its leaders, including Hitler, were subsequently jailed and charged with high treason. However, Hitler used the courtroom at his public trial as a propaganda platform, ranting for hours against the Weimar government. By the end of the 24-day trial Hitler had actually gained support for his courage to act. The right-wing presiding judges sympathized with Hitler and sentenced him to only five years in prison, with eligibility for early parole. Hitler was released from prison after one year. Other Nazi leaders were given light sentences also.

1925

While in prison, Hitler wrote volume one of *Mein Kampf* (My Struggle), which was published in 1925. This work detailed Hitler's radical ideas of German nationalism, anti-Semitism, and anti-Bolshevism. Linked with Social Darwinism, the human struggle that said that might makes right, Hitler's book became the ideological base for the Nazi Party's racist beliefs and murderous practices.

Mein Kampf (Photo courtesy of Fathom Knowledge Network)

After Hitler was released from prison, he formally resurrected the Nazi Party. Hitler began rebuilding and reorganizing the Party, waiting for an opportune time to gain political power in Germany. The Conservative military hero Paul von Hindenburg was elected president in 1925, and Germany stabilized. Hitler skillfully maneuvered through Nazi Party politics and emerged as the sole leader. The *Führerprinzip,* or leader principle, established Hitler as the one and only to whom Party members swore loyalty unto death. Final decision-making rested with him, and his strategy was to develop a highly centralized and structured party that could compete in Germany's future elections. Hitler hoped to create a bureaucracy, which he envisioned as "the germ of the future state."

The Nazi Party began building a mass movement. From 27,000 members in 1925, the Party grew to 108,000 in 1929. The SA was the paramilitary unit of the Party, a propaganda arm that became known for its strong-arm tactics of street brawling and terror. The SS was established as an elite group with special duties within the SA, but it remained inconsequential until Heinrich Himmler became its leader in 1929. By the late twenties, the Nazi Party started other auxiliary groups. The Hitler Youth, the Student League and the Pupils' League were open to young Germans. The

National Socialist Women's League allowed women to get involved. Different professional groups—teachers, lawyers and doctors—had their own auxiliary units.

From 1925 to 1927, the Nazi Party failed to make inroads in the cities and in May 1928, it did poorly in the *Reichstag* elections, winning only 2.6% of the total vote. The Party shifted its strategy to rural and small town areas and fueled anti-Semitism by calling for expropriation of Jewish agricultural property and by condemning large Jewish department stores. Party propaganda proved effective at winning over university students, veterans' organizations, and professional groups, although the Party became increasingly identified with young men of the lower middle classes.

1929

The Great Depression began in 1929 and wrought worldwide economic, social, and psychological consequences. The Weimar democracy proved unable to cope with national despair as unemployment doubled from three million to six million, or one in three, by 1932. The existing "Great Coalition" government, a combination of left-wing and conservative parties, collapsed while arguing about the rising cost of unemployment benefits.

Reich president Paul von Hindenburg's advisers persuaded him to invoke the constitution's emergency presidential powers. These powers allowed the president to restore law and order in a crisis. Hindenburg created a new government, made up of a chancellor and cabinet ministers, to rule by emergency decrees instead of by laws passed by the Reichstag. So began the demise of the Weimar democracy.

Heinrich Brüning was the first chancellor under the new presidential system. He was unable to unify the government, and in September 1930, there were new elections. The Nazi Party won an important victory, capturing 18.3% of the vote to make it the second largest party in the *Reichstag.*

1932

Hindenburg's term as president was ending in the spring of 1932. At age 84, he was reluctant to run again, but knew that if he didn't, Hitler would win. Hindenburg won the election, but Hitler received 37% of the vote.

Germany's government remained on the brink of collapse. The SA brownshirts, about 400,000 strong, were a part of daily street violence. The economy was still in crisis. In the election of July 1932, the Nazi Party won 37% of the *Reichstag* seats, thanks to a massive propaganda campaign. For the next six months, the most powerful German leaders were embroiled in a series of desperate political maneuverings. Ultimately, these major players severely underestimated Hitler's political abilities.

From the Florida Center for Instructional Technology

The Nazification of Germany

1918-**1933-1939**-1941-1942-1944-1945-2001

With Adolf Hitler's ascendancy to the chancellorship, the Nazi Party quickly consolidated its power. Hitler managed to maintain a posture of legality throughout the Nazification process.

Domestically, during the next six years, Hitler completely transformed Germany into a police state. Germany steadily began rearmament of its military, in violation of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles. Internationally, Hitler engaged in a "diplomatic revolution" by skillfully negotiating with other European countries and publicly expressing his strong desire for peace.

Starting in 1938, Hitler began his aggressive quest for *Lebensraum,* or more living space. Britain, France, and Russia did not want to enter into war and their collective diplomatic stance was to appease the bully Germany. Without engaging in war, Germany was able to annex neighboring Austria and carve up Czechoslovakia. At last, a reluctant Britain and France threatened war if Germany targeted Poland and/or Romania.

In September 1939, Germany invaded Poland. Britain and France had no choice but to declare war on Germany. World War II had begun.

1933

On January 30, 1933, President Paul von Hindenburg appointed Hitler Chancellor.

On February 27, 1933, the Reichstag building went up in flames. Nazis immediately claimed that this was the beginning of a Communist revolution. This fact leads many historians to believe that Nazis actually set, or help set the fire. Others believe that a deranged Dutch Communist set the fire. The issue has never been resolved. This incident prompted Hitler to convince Hindenburg to issue a Decree for the Protection of People and State that granted Nazis sweeping power to deal with the so-called emergency. This laid the foundation for a police state.

Within months of Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, the Dachau concentration camp was created. The Nazis began arresting Communists, Socialists, and labor leaders. Dachau became a training center for concentration camp guards and later commandants who were taught terror tactics to dehumanize their prisoners. Parliamentary democracy ended with the *Reichstag* passage of the Enabling Act, which allowed the government to issue laws without the *Reichstag.*

As part of a policy of internal coordination, the Nazis created Special Courts to punish political dissent. In a parallel move from April to October, the regime passed civil laws that barred Jews from holding positions in the civil service, in legal and medical professions, and in teaching and university positions. The Nazis encouraged boycotts of Jewish-owned shops and businesses and began book burnings of writings by Jews and by others not approved by the Reich.

Nazi anti-Semitic legislation and propaganda against "non-Aryans" was a thinly disguised attack against anyone who had Jewish parents or grandparents. Jews felt increasingly isolated from the rest of German society.

1934

The SA *(Sturmabteilung)* had been instrumental in Hitler's rise to power. In early 1934, there were 2.5 million SA men compared with 100,000 men in the regular army. Hitler knew that the regular army opposed the SA becoming its core. Fearing the power of the regular army to force him from office, Hitler curried their favor by attacking the leadership of the SA in the "Night of the Long Knives." Hitler arrested Ernst Röhm and scores of other SA leaders and had them shot by the SS, which now rose in importance.

On August 2, 1934, President Hindenburg died. Hitler combined the offices of Reich Chancellor and President, declaring himself *Führer* and Reich Chancellor, or *Reichsführer* (Leader of the Reich).

1935

Hitler announced the Nuremberg Laws in 1935. These laws stripped Jews of their civil rights as German citizens and separated them from Germans legally, socially, and politically. Jews were also defined as a separate race under "The Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor." Being Jewish was now determined by ancestry; thus the Germans used race, not religious beliefs or practices, to define the Jewish people. This law forbade marriages or sexual relations between Jews and Germans. Hitler warned darkly that if this law did not resolve the problem, he would turn to the Nazi Party for a final solution.

More than 120 laws, decrees, and ordinances were enacted after the Nuremburg Laws and before the outbreak of World War II, further eroding the rights of German Jews. Many thousands of Germans who had not previously considered themselves Jews found themselves defined as "non-Aryans."

Hitler Youth (Photo courtesy of Quan Engineering)

1936

In 1936, Berlin hosted the Olympics. Hitler viewed this as a perfect opportunity to promote a favorable image of Nazism to the world. Monumental stadiums and other Olympic facilities were constructed as Nazi showpieces. Leni Riefenstahl was commissioned to create a film, *Olympia,*

for the purpose of Nazi propaganda. Some have called her previous film in 1935, *Triumph of the Will,* one of the great propaganda pieces of the century. In it, she portrayed Hitler as a god.

International political unrest preceded the games. It was questioned whether the Nazi regime could really accept the terms of the Olympic Charter of participation unrestricted by class, creed, or race. There were calls for a U.S. boycott of the games. The Nazis guaranteed that they would allow German Jews to participate. The boycott did not occur.

While two Germans with some Jewish ancestry were invited to be on the German Olympic team, the German Jewish athlete Gretel Bergmann, one of the world's most accomplished high jumpers, was not.

The great irony of these Olympics was that, in the land of "Aryan superiority," it was Jesse Owens, the African-American track star, who was the undisputed hero of the games.

Jesse Owens
Photo courtesy of Ohio State University

1938

In March 1938, as part of Hitler's quest for uniting all German-speaking people and for Lebensraum, Germany took over Austria without bloodshed. The *Anschluss* occurred with the overwhelming approval of the Austrian people. No countries protested this violation of the Treaty of Versailles.

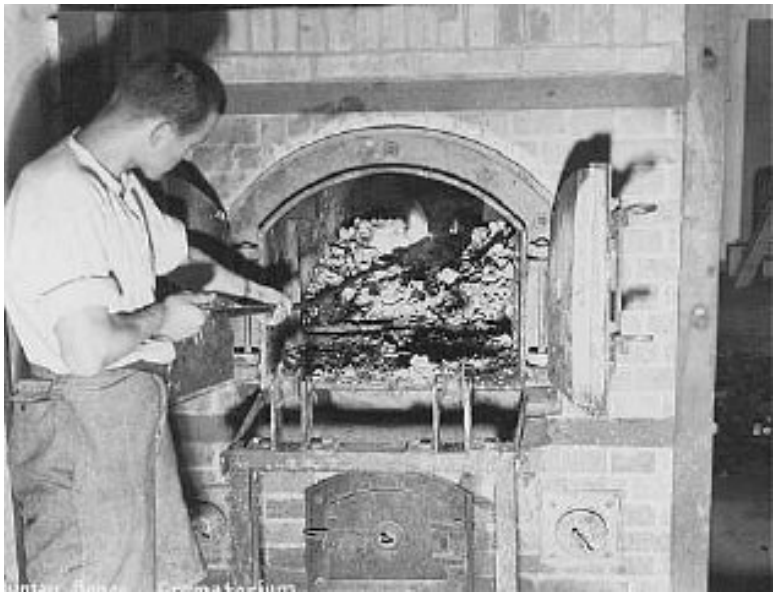
In September 1938, Hitler eyed the northwestern area of Czechoslovakia, called the Sudetenland, which had three million German-speaking citizens. Hitler did not want to march into the Sudetenland until he was certain that France and Britain would not intervene. First, he met with British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and threatened to go to war if he did not receive the territory. Then at the Munich Conference, Hitler prevailed upon Britain, France, and Italy to agree to the cession of the Sudetenland. The Western powers chose appeasement rather than military confrontation. Germany occupied the Sudetenland on October 15, 1938.

1939

On September 1, 1939, Hitler invaded Poland, officially starting World War II. Two days later, Britain and France, now obliged by treaty to help Poland, declared war on Germany. Hitler's armies used the tactic of *Blitzkrieg,* or lightning war, a combination of armored attack accompanied by air assault. Before British and French power could be brought to bear, in less than four weeks, Poland collapsed. Germany's military conquest put it in a position to establish the New Order, a plan to abuse and eliminate so-called undesirables, notably Jews and Slavs.

From the Florida Center for Instructional Technology

The Holocaust



Human remains found in the Dachau concentration camp crematorium after liberation. Germany, April 1945.

(United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were "life unworthy of life." During the era of the Holocaust, the Nazis also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the handicapped, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and homosexuals.

In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that the Third Reich would occupy or influence during World War II. By 1945, close to two out of every three European Jews had been killed as part of the "Final Solution", the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe. Although Jews were the primary victims of Nazi racism, other victims included tens of thousands of Roma (Gypsies). At least 200,000 mentally or physically disabled people were murdered in the Euthanasia Program. As Nazi tyranny spread across Europe, the Nazis persecuted and murdered millions of other people. More than three million Soviet prisoners of war were murdered or died of starvation, disease, neglect, or maltreatment. The Germans targeted the non-Jewish Polish intelligentsia for killing, and deported millions of Polish and Soviet citizens for forced labor in Germany or in occupied Poland. From the earliest years of the Nazi regime, homosexuals and others deemed to be

behaving in a socially unacceptable way were persecuted. Thousands of political dissidents (including Communists, Socialists, and trade unionists) and religious dissidents (such as Jehovah's Witnesses) were also targeted. Many of these individuals died as a result of incarceration and maltreatment.

Prisoners at forced labor. Photo taken during an SS inspection. Dachau concentration camp, Germany, June 28, 1938.

Photo courtesy of United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

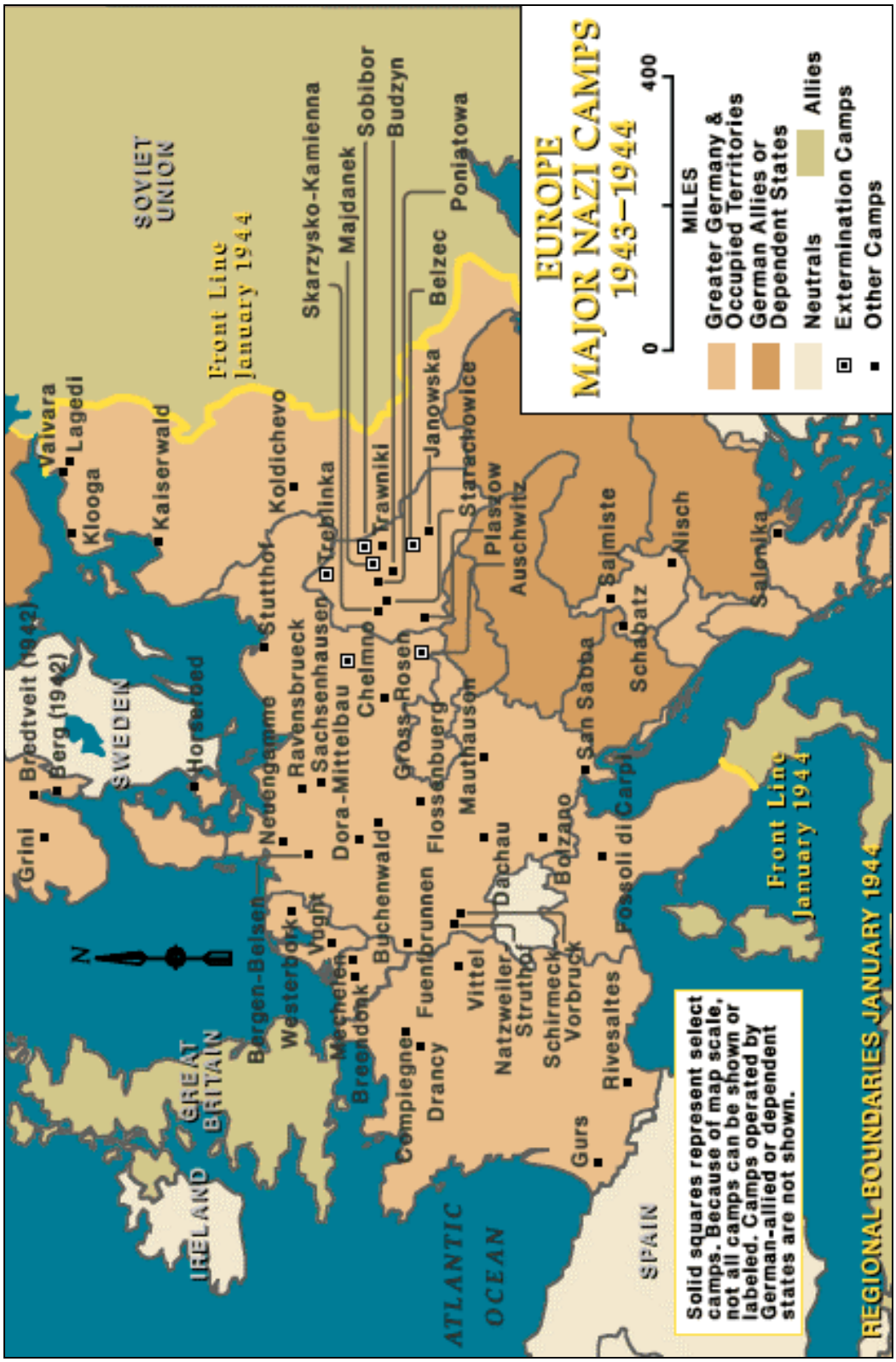
Before beginning the war in 1939, the Nazis established concentration camps to imprison Jews, Roma, other victims of ethnic and racial hatred, and political opponents of Nazism. During the war years, the Nazis and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) carried out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist party officials. More than a million Jewish men, women, and children were murdered by these units. Between 1942 and 1944, Nazi Germany deported millions more Jews from the occupied territories to extermination camps, where they murdered them in specially developed killing facilities.

In the final months of the war, SS guards forced camp inmates on death marches in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives on Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, many of whom had survived the death marches. World War II ended in Europe with the unconditional surrender of German armed forces in the west on May 7 and in the east on May 9, 1945.

In the aftermath of the Holocaust, many of the survivors found shelter in displaced persons (DP) camps administered by the Allied powers. Between 1948 and 1951, almost 700,000 Jews emigrated to Israel, including more than two-thirds of the Jewish displaced persons in Europe. Others emigrated to the United States and other nations. The last DP camp closed in 1957. The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most European Jewish communities.

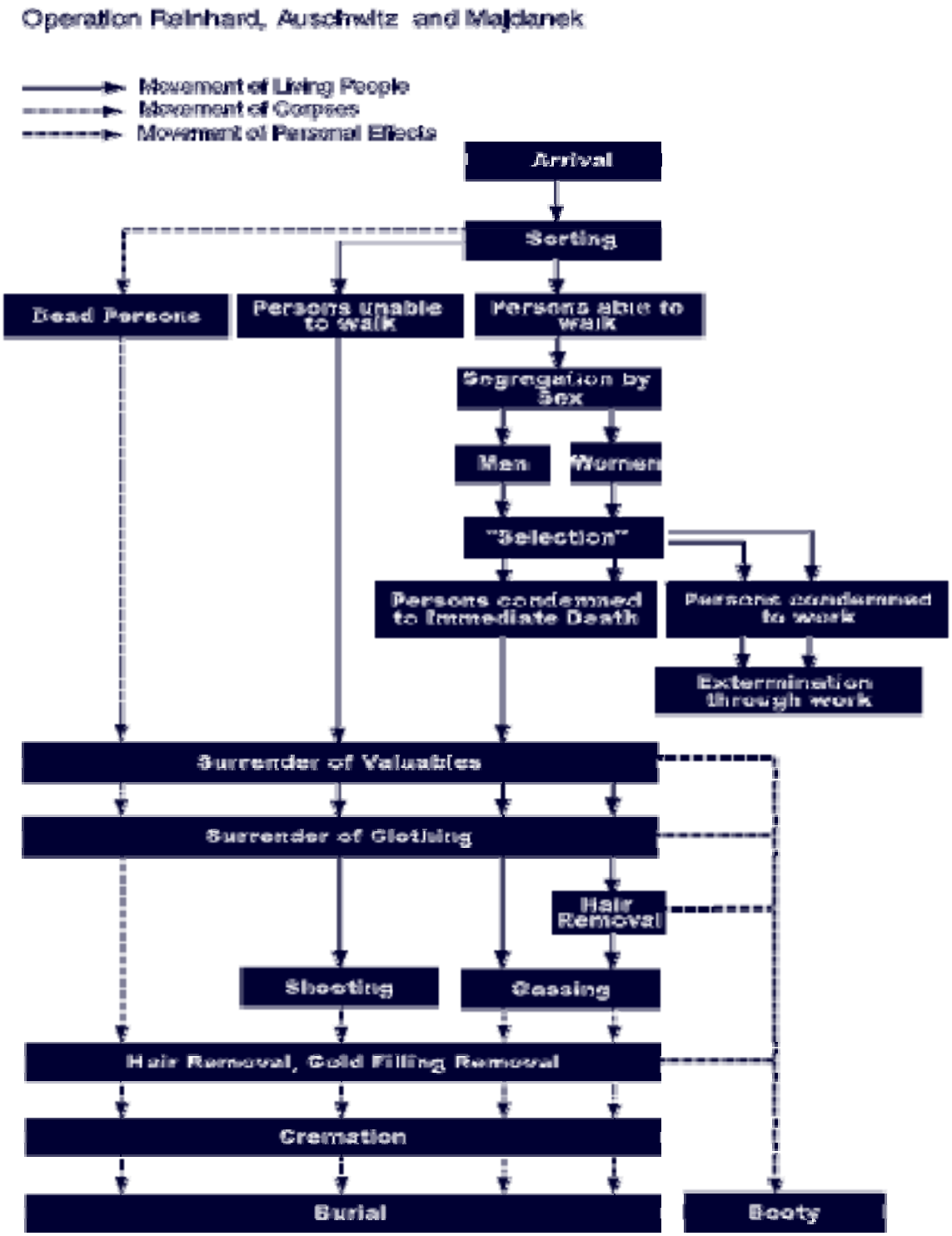
Major Concentration Camps Throughout Europe

Image courtesy of Wikipedia



Sorting

New arrivals at the Nazi death camps were sorted, mostly according to gender and their respective states of health. The sick, disabled, elderly, and those unable to work were condemned to die, often in the gas chambers. (Chart from Holocaust Australia)



Auschwitz

View of a section of the barbed-wire fence and barracks at Auschwitz
at the time of the liberation of the camp. Auschwitz, Poland, January 1945.

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Philip Vock

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It included three main camps, all of which deployed incarcerated prisoners at forced labor. One of them also functioned for an extended period as a killing center. The camps were located approximately 37 miles west of Krakow, near the prewar German-Polish border in Upper Silesia, an area that Nazi Germany annexed in 1939 after invading and conquering Poland. The SS authorities established three main camps near the Polish city of Oswiecim: Auschwitz I in May 1940; Auschwitz II (also called Auschwitz-Birkenau) in early 1942; and Auschwitz III (also called Auschwitz-Monowitz) in October 1942.

The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was subordinate to the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps. Until March 1942, the Inspectorate of Concentration Camps was an agency of the SS Main Office, and, from 1941, of the SS Operations Main Office. From March 1942 until the liberation of Auschwitz, the Inspectorate was subordinate to the SS Economic-Administrative Main Office.

In November 1943, the SS decreed that Auschwitz-Birkenau and Auschwitz-Monowitz would become independent concentration camps. The commandant of Auschwitz I remained the SS garrison commander of all SS units assigned to Auschwitz and was considered the senior officer of the three commandants. SS offices for maintaining prisoner records and managing prisoner labor deployment continued to be located and centrally run from Auschwitz I. In November

1944, Auschwitz II was reunified with Auschwitz I. Auschwitz III was renamed Monowitz concentration camp.

Commanders of the Auschwitz concentration camp complex were: SS Lieutenant Colonel Rudolf Hoess from May 1940 until November 1943; SS Lieutenant Colonel Arthur Liebehenschel from November 1943 until mid-May 1944; and SS Major Richard Baer from mid-May 1944 until January 27, 1945. Commanders of Auschwitz-Birkenau while it was independent (November 1943 until November 1944) were SS Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Hartjenstein from November 1943 until mid-May 1944 and SS Captain Josef Kremer from mid-May to November 1944. Commandant of Monowitz concentration camp from November 1943 until January 1945 was SS Captain Heinrich Schwarz.

Elie Wiesel, age 15, shortly before deportation

AUSCHWITZ I

Auschwitz I, the main camp, was the first camp established near Oswiecim. Construction began in May 1940 in an abandoned Polish army artillery barracks, located in a suburb of the city. The SS authorities continuously deployed prisoners at forced labor to expand the physical contours of the camp. During the first year of the camp's existence, the SS and police cleared a zone of approximately 40 square kilometers (about 22 square miles) as a "development zone" reserved for the exclusive use of the camp. The first prisoners at Auschwitz included German prisoners transferred from Sachsenhausen concentration camp in Germany, where they had been incarcerated as repeat criminal offenders, and Polish political prisoners from Lodz via Dachau concentration camp and from Tarnow in Krakow District of the Generalgouvernement (that part of German occupied-Poland not annexed to Nazi Germany, linked administratively to German East Prussia, or incorporated into the German-occupied Soviet Union).

Similar to most German concentration camps, Auschwitz I was constructed to serve three purposes: 1) to incarcerate real and perceived enemies of the Nazi regime and the German occupation authorities in Poland for an indefinite period of time; 2) to have available a supply of forced laborers for deployment in SS-owned, construction-related enterprises (and, later, armaments and other war-related production); and 3) to serve as a site to physically eliminate small, targeted groups of the population whose death was determined by the SS and police authorities to be essential to the security of Nazi Germany. Like most other concentration camps, Auschwitz I had a gas chamber and crematorium. Initially, SS engineers constructed an improvised gas chamber in the basement of the prison block, Block 11. Later a larger, permanent gas chamber was constructed as part of the original crematorium in a separate building outside the prisoner compound.

At Auschwitz I, SS physicians carried out medical experiments in the hospital, Barrack (Block) 10. They conducted pseudoscientific research on infants, twins, and dwarfs, and performed forced sterilizations, castrations, and hypothermia experiments on adults. The best-known of these physicians was SS Captain Dr. Josef Mengele.

Between the crematorium and the medical-experiments barrack stood the "Black Wall," where SS guards executed thousands of prisoners.

AUSCHWITZ II

Construction of Auschwitz II, or Auschwitz-Birkenau, began in the vicinity of Brzezinka in October 1941. Of the three camps established near Oswiecim, the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp had the largest total prisoner population. It was divided into more than a dozen sections separated by electrified barbed-wire fences and, like Auschwitz I, was patrolled by SS guards, including—after 1942—SS dog handlers. The camp included sections for women, men, a family camp for Roma (Gypsies) deported from Germany, Austria and the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and a family camp for Jewish families deported from the Theresienstadt ghetto.

Auschwitz-Birkenau also contained the facilities for a killing center. It played a central role in the German plan to kill the Jews of Europe. During the summer and autumn of 1941, Zyklon B gas was introduced into the German concentration camp system as a means for murder. At Auschwitz I, in September, the SS first tested Zyklon B as an instrument of mass murder. The "success" of these experiments led to the adoption of Zyklon B for all the gas chambers at the Auschwitz complex. Near Birkenau, the SS initially converted two farmhouses for use as gas chambers. “Provisional” gas chamber I went into operation in January 1942 and was later dismantled. Provisional gas chamber II operated from June 1942 through the fall of 1944. The SS judged these facilities to be inadequate for the scale of gassing they planned at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Four large crematorium buildings were constructed between March and June 1943. Each had three components: a disrobing area, a large gas chamber, and crematorium ovens. The SS continued gassing operations at Auschwitz-Birkenau until November 1944.

Corpses are removed from the Iasi death train during a stop on the journey. Romania, June 1941. (Archive of the Center for the Study of the History of Romanian Jewry, Bucharest.)

DEPORTATIONS TO AUSCHWITZ

Trains arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau frequently with transports of Jews from virtually every country in Europe occupied by or allied to Germany. These transports arrived from 1942 to the end of summer 1944. The breakdown of deportations from individual countries, given in approximate figures, is: Hungary: 426,000; Poland: 300,000; France:

69,000; Netherlands: 60,000; Greece: 55,000; Bohemia and Moravia: 46,000; Slovakia: 27,000; Belgium: 25,000; Yugoslavia: 10,000; Italy: 7,500; Norway: 690; other (including concentration camps): 34,000.

Child survivors of the Holocaust filmed by the Red Army. January 1945. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

With the deportations from Hungary, the role of Auschwitz-Birkenau as an instrument in the German plan to murder the Jews of Europe achieved its highest effectiveness. Between late April and early July 1944, approximately 440,000 Hungarian Jews were deported, around 426,000 of them to Auschwitz. The SS sent approximately 320,000 of them directly to the gas chambers in Auschwitz-Birkenau and deployed approximately 110,000 at forced labor in the Auschwitz concentration camp complex. The SS authorities transferred many of these Hungarian Jewish forced laborers within weeks of their arrival in Auschwitz to other concentration camps in Germany and Austria.

In total, approximately 1.1 million Jews were deported to Auschwitz. SS and police authorities deported approximately 200,000 other victims to Auschwitz, including 140,000-150,000 non-Jewish Poles, 23,000 Roma and Sinti (Gypsies), 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war, and 25,000 others (Soviet civilians, Lithuanians, Czechs, French, Yugoslavs, Germans, Austrians, and Italians).

New arrivals at Auschwitz-Birkenau underwent selection. The SS staff determined the majority to be unfit for forced labor and sent them immediately to the gas chambers, which were disguised as shower installations to mislead the victims. The belongings of those gassed were confiscated and sorted in the "Kanada" (Canada) warehouse for shipment back to Germany. Canada symbolized wealth to the prisoners.

At least 960,000 Jews were killed in Auschwitz. Other victims included approximately 74,000 Poles, 21,000 Roma (Gypsies), and 15,000 Soviet prisoners of war; and 10,000-15,000 members of other nationalities (Soviet civilians, Czechs, Yugoslavs, French, Germans, and Austrians).

On October 7, 1944, several hundred prisoners assigned to Crematorium IV at Auschwitz-Birkenau rebelled after learning that they were going to be killed. During the uprising, the prisoners killed three guards and blew up the crematorium and adjacent gas chamber. The prisoners used explosives smuggled into the camp by Jewish women who had been assigned to forced labor in a nearby armaments factory. The Germans crushed the revolt and killed almost all of the prisoners involved in the rebellion. The Jewish women who had smuggled the explosives into the camp were publicly hanged in early January 1945.

Gassing operations continued, however, until November 1944, at which time the SS, on orders from Himmler, disabled the gas chambers that still functioned. The SS destroyed the remaining gassing installations as Soviet forces approached in January 1945.

AUSCHWITZ III

Auschwitz III, also called Buna or Monowitz, was established in October 1942 to house prisoners assigned to work at the Buna synthetic rubber works, located on the outskirts of the Polish town of Monowice. In the spring of 1941, the German conglomerate I.G. Farben established a factory in which its executives intended to exploit concentration camp labor for their plans to manufacture synthetic rubber and fuels. I.G. Farben invested more than 700 million Reichsmarks (about 1.4 million U.S. dollars in 1942 terms) in Auschwitz III. From May 1941 until October 1942, the SS had transported prisoners from Auschwitz I to the "Buna Detachment," at first on foot and later by rail. With the construction of Auschwitz III in the autumn of 1942, prisoners deployed at Buna lived in Auschwitz III.

Auschwitz III also had a so-called Labor Education Camp for non-Jewish prisoners who were perceived to have violated German-imposed labor discipline.

AUSCHWITZ SUBCAMPS

Between 1942 and 1944, the SS authorities at Auschwitz established 39 subcamps. Some of them were established within the officially designated "development" zone, including Budy, Rajsko, Tschechowitz, Harmense, and Babitz. Others, such as Blechhammer, Gleiwitz, Althammer, Fuerstengrube, Laurahuette, and Eintrachthuette were located in Upper Silesia north and west of the Vistula River. Some subcamps were located in Moravia, such as Freudental and Bruenn (Brno). In general, subcamps that produced or processed agricultural goods were administratively subordinate to Auschwitz-Birkenau; while subcamps whose prisoners were deployed at industrial and armaments production or in extractive industries (e.g., coal mining, quarry work) were administratively subordinate to Auschwitz-Monowitz. After November 1943, this division of administrative responsibility was formalized.

Auschwitz inmates were employed on huge farms, including the experimental agricultural station at Rajsko. They were also forced to work in coal mines, in stone quarries, in fisheries, and especially in armaments industries such as the SS-owned German Equipment Works (established in 1941). Periodically, prisoners underwent selection. If the SS judged them too weak or sick to continue working, they were transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau and killed.

Prisoners selected for forced labor were registered and tattooed with identification numbers on their left arms in Auschwitz I. They were then assigned to forced labor at the main camp or elsewhere in the complex, including the subcamps.

THE LIBERATION OF AUSCHWITZ

In mid-January 1945, as Soviet forces approached the Auschwitz concentration camp complex, the SS began evacuating Auschwitz and its subcamps. SS units forced nearly 60,000 prisoners to march west from the Auschwitz camp system. Thousands had been killed in the camps in the days before these death marches began. Tens of thousands of prisoners, mostly Jews, were forced to march either northwest for 55 kilometers (approximately 30 miles) to Gliwice

(Gleiwitz), joined by prisoners from subcamps in East Upper Silesia, such as Bismarckhuette, Althammer, and Hindenburg, or due west for 63 kilometers (approximately 35 miles) to Wodzislaw (Loslau) in the western part of Upper Silesia, joined by inmates from the subcamps to the south of Auschwitz, such as Jawischowitz, Tschechowitz, and Golleschau. SS guards shot anyone who fell behind or could not continue. Prisoners also suffered from the cold weather, starvation, and exposure on these marches. At least 3,000 prisoners died on route to Gliwice alone; possibly as many as 15,000 prisoners died during the evacuation marches from Auschwitz and the subcamps.

Upon arrival in Gliwice and Wodzislaw, the prisoners were put on unheated freight trains and transported to concentration camps in Germany, particularly to Flossenbuerg, Sachsenhausen, Gross-Rosen, Buchenwald, Dachau, and also to Mauthausen in Austria. The rail journey lasted for days. Without food, water, shelter, or blankets, many prisoners did not survive the transport.

In late January 1945, SS and police officials forced 4,000 prisoners to evacuate Blechhammer, a subcamp of Auschwitz-Monowitz, on foot. The SS murdered about 800 prisoners during the march to the Gross-Rosen concentration camp. SS officials also killed as many as 200 prisoners left behind in Blechhammer as a result of illness or successful attempts to hide. After a brief delay, the SS transported around 3,000 Blechhammer prisoners from Gross-Rosen to Buchenwald concentration camp in Germany.

On January 27, 1945, the Soviet army entered Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Monowitz and liberated around 7,000 prisoners, most of whom were ill and dying. It is estimated that the SS and police deported at a minimum 1.3 million people to Auschwitz complex between 1940 and 1945. Of these, the camp authorities murdered 1.1 million.

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Amplifying one sentence in Elie Wiesel's Night

By J. Zel Lurie
From *The St. Louis Jewish Light*

Soon after liberation, an emaciated child survivor is carried out of camp barracks by Soviet first-aid workers. Auschwitz, Poland, after January 27, 1945.

La Documentation Francaise. Photo from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

More than a million of the six million victims of the shoa were infants and children. Survivors of Ravensbruck, the women's camp, told how newborn babies were brutally destroyed before their mothers' eyes.

The U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington devotes a special section called Daniel to the fate of Jewish children.

I find it remarkable, therefore, that one sentence at the beginning of the last chapter of *Night* by Elie Wiesel has not drawn more comment and investigation. He was then a tall, skinny 15-year-old prisoner in Buchenwald. That sentence is:

"I was transferred to the children's block, where there were 600 of us."

That's all Wiesel says. Over five million copies of *Night* have been sold, and this 50-year-old memoir, in a new translation by Marion Wiesel, continues to top the paperback best-seller list.

But less than a handful of the five million have noticed how remarkable this sentence is. Who ever heard of a children's block in a death camp except for a few children being held for experiments on their young bodies?

Six hundred kids in a children's block should have raised a few eyebrows. Were they gathered together for mass medical experiments? Among the tens of thousands of Holocaust books, there should be some explanation.

But "children's block at Buchenwald" draws a blank on Google.

Nor has Wiesel amplified on this sentence in any of the many books he has written since he penned *Night* in Yiddish soon after the liberation.

When I asked Google for "children at Buchenwald" omitting "block," I received tens of citations, including a photo of 427 children and youth at Buchenwald being transferred by the U.S. Army to rehab institutes and DP camps in France. The photo is credited to the Holocaust Museum, which identified Israel Lau, who became Chief Rabbi of Israel, in the first row and Elie Wiesel in the fourth row. The caption says that 200 children had previously been sent to Switzerland.

That still did not tell me who had rescued these kids. Who had fed them and nurtured them under the eyes of the SS guards and German soldiers. I finally found the answer in the 37th entry, a few paragraphs contributed by Professor Kenneth Waltzer, director of Jewish Studies at Michigan State University.

Soon after liberation, surviving children of the Auschwitz camp walk out of the children's barracks. Poland, after January 27, 1945. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

The title is: Block 66 at Buchenwald: The Clandestine Barracks to Save Children.

"Block 66," Waltzer wrote, "was located in the deepest part of the disease-infested little camp, a separate space below the main camp at Buchenwald, that was beyond the normal SS gaze."

It was organized by the Communist underground to save youth. Special rations were given by the Communist inmates in the food section. The block elder was Antonin Kalina, a Czech Communist from Prague. His deputy was Gustav Schiller, a Polish Jewish Communist.

"After January 1945," Waltzer writes, "the underground concentrated all children and youth that could be fit into this windowless barracks—more than 600 children and youth, mostly Jews—and sheltered and protected them."

Younger children, some only 4, were secreted in block 8, Waltzer relates. "When General George Patton's Third Army arrived on April 11, 1945, more than 900 children and youth were discovered among the 21,000 emaciated prisoners.

They were alive because of the remarkable effort by the Communist underground to shelter and feed them. This is a unique and unprecedented effort in the history of the Holocaust. Why hasn't it been featured in the tens of thousands of books and articles on the shoa?

Waltzer has found and interviewed many of the survivors. He says they were protected from work details except the good ones, like cleaning up after a bombing in nearby Weimar, where they could forage for food. Survivors recall receiving Red Cross packages. They remember efforts by their Communist elders to convince them that there was another world awaiting them. Their spirits were lifted by songs and stories, even history and math lessons. And they recall heroic interventions by Kalina and Schiller during the final days to protect them when the SS wanted to clear the camp of Jews.

"We were lined up in the huge assembly square in groups of five waiting to see the gate open," Wiesel wrote. Suddenly the sirens wailed, American planes appeared. Kalina, who had marched with them shouted: 'Back to the barracks.'"

Here is the way Wiesel continues the story. I am quoting from the original English version of *Night*, which Wiesel gave me almost fifty years ago.

"At 10 o'clock the (next) morning, the SS scattered through the camp moving the last victims toward the assembly place.

"Then the resistance movement decided to act. Armed men suddenly rose up everywhere. Bursts of firing. Grenades exploding. We children stayed flat on the ground in the block.

"The battle did not last long. Toward noon everything was quiet again. The SS had fled and the resistance had taken charge of the running of the camp.

"About six o'clock in the evening, the first American tank stood at the gates of Buchenwald."

Waltzer, who has doubtless consulted American records, credits an advance American unit, rather than the underground, with kicking out the SS. He is probably right. But I prefer Wiesel's version. Don't you?

From *The St. Louis Jewish Light* news

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is a starting place for trying to understand the tragedy that would befall countless numbers of people during the Holocaust.

Throughout history Jews have faced prejudice and discrimination, known as anti-Semitism. Driven nearly two thousand years ago by the Romans from the land now called Israel, they spread throughout the globe and tried to retain their unique beliefs and culture while living as a minority. In some countries Jews were welcomed, and they enjoyed long periods of peace with their neighbors. In European societies where the population was primarily Christian, Jews found themselves increasingly isolated as outsiders. Jews do not share the Christian belief that Jesus is the Son of God, and many Christians considered this refusal to accept Jesus' divinity as arrogant.

Nazi officials attend the opening of "The Eternal Jew," an anti-Semitic exhibition in Munich. The exhibit segment on the left claims that "usury and the fencing of goods" were always the "privilege" of Jews. Munich, Germany, November 8, 1937. National Archives and Records Administration. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum #44201)

For centuries the Church taught that Jews were responsible for Jesus' death, not recognizing, as most historians do today, that Jesus was executed by the Roman government because officials viewed him as a political threat to their rule. Added to religious conflicts were economic ones. Rulers placed restrictions on Jews, barring them from holding certain jobs and from owning land. At the same time, since the early Church did not permit *usury* (lending money at interest), Jews came to fill the vital (but unpopular) role of moneylenders for the Christian majority. In more desperate times, Jews became scapegoats for many problems people suffered. For example, they were blamed for causing the "Black Death," the plague that killed thousands of people throughout Europe during the Middle Ages. In Spain in the 1400s, Jews were forced to convert to Christianity, leave the country, or be executed. In Russia and Poland in the late 1800s the government organized or did not prevent violent attacks on Jewish neighborhoods, called *pogroms*, in which mobs murdered Jews and looted their homes and stores.

As ideas of political equality and freedom spread in western Europe during the 1800s, Jews became almost equal citizens under the law. At the same time, however, new forms of anti-Semitism emerged. European leaders who wanted to establish colonies in Africa and Asia argued that whites were superior to other races and therefore had to spread and take over the "weaker" and "less civilized" races. Some writers applied this argument to Jews, too, mistakenly defining Jews as a race of people called Semites who shared common blood and physical features. This

SA men carry banners which read "Germans! Defend Yourselves! Do Not Buy From Jews!" Berlin, Germany, March or April 1933. Dokumentationsarchiv des Oesterreichischen Widerstandes.

kind of racial anti-Semitism meant that Jews remained Jews by race even if they converted to Christianity. Some politicians began using the idea of racial superiority in their campaigns as a way to get votes. Karl Lueger (1844-1910) was one such politician. He became Mayor of Vienna, Austria, at the end of the century through the use of anti-Semitism—he appealed to voters by blaming Jews for bad economic times. Lueger was a hero to a young man named Adolf Hitler, who was born in Austria in 1889. Hitler's ideas, including his views of Jews, were shaped during the years he lived in Vienna, where he studied Lueger's tactics and the anti-Semitic newspapers and pamphlets that multiplied during Lueger's long rule.

Racial Incidents Mar Italy's Celebration of Cup Win

By PETER KIEFER
Published: July 11, 2006

ROME, July 11 — Swastikas spray painted in Rome's ancient Jewish ghetto sullied Italy's joy after its World Cup victory on Sunday, as did racial comments made by a former government minister about the French team.

Italy's interior minister, Giuliano Amato, said today that a number of swastikas were daubed on the walls of Rome's Jewish quarter during the postgame festivities. "As an Italian I feel ashamed, and as interior minister I am alarmed by such things," Mr. Amato reportedly said during a visit to Rome's main synagogue.

And a number of Italian politicians and the French ambassador to Italy issued a strong rebuke to remarks made by Roberto Calderoli, the former minister of reform and a member of the right-wing National Alliance Party. After the Cup victory he said that the Italians had vanquished a French team that was comprised of "Negroes, communists and Moslems." Italian soccer is no stranger to extremist politics. Italian football matches are often used as a platform for far-right fans to express racist sentiments.

There is no love lost between Italian fans and the French, especially France's star Zinedine Zidane, who was sent off in the waning minutes of the World Cup final for head-butting the Italian defender, Marco Materazzi, apparently after being taunted. Mr. Zidane and members of his family have emerged as a favorite target of Italian insults. Some of those relatives have reportedly said they believed Mr. Materazzi had called Mr. Zidane a "terrorist,'' a charge the Italian player has denied.

As for Mr. Calderoli, this is his latest brush with controversy. During the international crisis over the publishing of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad, Mr. Calderoli was forced to resign from his ministerial post earlier this year after making statements supporting the use of force against Muslims and wearing a T-shirt on national television with one of the cartoons emblazoned on it.

Mr. Calderoli's television appearance precipitated attacks on the Italian embassy in Libya in which at least 11 people were killed and dozens injured.

After the climactic game Sunday, there were brief clashes between the police and bottle-throwing rowdies in Rome's city center. On Monday, hundreds of thousands of fans joyously welcomed the arrival of their world champion team at the Circus Maximus in Rome.

Swastika graffiti leaves some angered and some distraught

Updated: 6/21/2006 8:13 AM
By: Cait McVey

Sam Jacob has lived in Massena all his life. He was just a boy at the time, but he remembers when the Jewish Cemetery was dedicated in 1932. And over the years, it's where he buried many loved ones.

“Not only are my parents buried here,” Jacob said. “Many of my friends, and as a matter of fact, I knew practically three quarters of the people that are buried here.”

On Sunday morning, Jacob got a very upsetting phone call. A concerned resident who was visiting the cemetery found a swastika painted on the driveway, along with the initials D.L. and R.R.

At first he couldn't believe someone would vandalize such sacred grounds. He went to the cemetery to see for himself and what he found broke his heart.

“The swastika symbol stands for a tremendous tragedy of the Jewish people in the 20th Century,” Jacob said. “And the deaths of millions, so it's not something we get over very easily.”

Town Supervisor Gary Edwards was also called to the cemetery that morning. And after seeing the swastika, he went to the police department and filed a complaint. He says the vandalism is an insult to the entire community.

“Living in northern New York, we pride ourselves on community values and closeness and family. And definitely, it's a shock and I think it's a shock to everybody in our community. It shouldn't happen up here. It shouldn't happen anywhere,” Edwards said.

The graffiti has already been painted over. But it won't be forgotten. Edwards says whoever painted the swastika might not have known at the time, but the act is now considered a felony under New York State Law, punishable by up to four years in state prison.

“We have a very competent police force, I'm sure they do a good job,” Edwards said. “And I hope they apprehend these people.”

“I hope that they are punished to the extent that they realize, and all their friends and all the would be imitators understand that this is not a trivial prank,” Jacob said.

Jacob and Edwards say there has been a problem at the cemetery with local teenagers hanging out after dark.

They speculate the teens could have something to do with the incident.

We Plead on Behalf of an Ancient People

By Elie Wiesel

From "Confronting Anti-Semitism" by Kofi A. Annan and Elie Wiesel (Ruder Finn Press, 2006). Reprinted with permission.

Photo courtesy of Santa Clara University

At the end of his magnificent and disturbing novel called *The Plague*, Albert Camus issues a warning. His hero, the famous humanist, Dr. Rieux, who survived the death of many of his friends and adversaries, is now at the very end of the story, alone, walking in the city, remembering and listening to the cries of joy rising from the town. And all of a sudden, says Camus, Rieux, his hero, remembered:

"That such joy is always imperiled. He knew what those jubilant crowds did not know, but could have learned from books, that the plague bacillus never dies or disappears for good. That it can lie dormant for years and years in furniture and linen chests, that it bides its time in bedrooms, cellars, trunks and bookshelves and that perhaps the day would come when for the bane and the enlightening of man it would rouse up its rats again and send them forth to die in a happy city." And that is also anti-Semitism.

We plead on behalf of an ancient PEOPLE who, in some quarters, continues to be vilified, threatened, offended and physically marked for humiliation. Call it anti-Semitism or Jew-hatred, it is the oldest collective bigotry in recorded history. In fact, one may say that of all the group-hatreds in antiquity, anti-Semitism alone survived antiquity. It is no longer political, social or religious: it is existential. Anti-Semitism is *sui generis*.

Other people, other traditions, other religious communities and cultures have been persecuted for a variety of reasons; anti-Semitism combines them all. The anti-Semite doesn't know me—but he hates me. Actually, he hated me even before I was born. He even hates the dead—otherwise why such sacrilege in so many profaned cemeteries?

A young Israeli visiting Berlin was assaulted in the street in broad daylight yesterday. Last week a young Jewish student was stabbed in Paris. A number of European Jews told me that they live in fear. Incitement to hate and violence continues to fill the pages and the TV screens in many, too many, Muslim countries.

Under the pretext of blaming Israel's policies, which they outrageously exaggerate and demonize, their western allies and supporters encourage hatred towards the entire Jewish people. This is the first time in history that the United Nations has decided to explore the roots and consequences of a plague that has brought agony and distress to my people and shame to civilization itself.

A Jewish cafe painted with anti-Semitic graffiti. Vienna, Austria, November 1938. Dokumentationsarchiv des Oesterreichischen Widerstandes. (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

Anti-Semitism used to be culturally fashionable and even socially permissible. Goethe detests the Bible, which he called a pugwash of Egypto-Babylonian sodomy. Augustine declared that Jews were still around so that Christians could see in them descendants of Cain and their sins.

Hegel said: "the Jewish people are servile, incapable of liberty; they cannot escape slavery except by enslaving others." On different levels, famous artists, renowned writers, would not hesitate to utter anti-Semitic remarks at cocktails or concerts. The kindest among them thought: just words, words; it doesn't mean anything.

Both amazing and intellectually disturbing is the realization that even renowned writers, thinkers and artists were infected by the anti-Jewish virus.

Richard Wagner and Louis-Ferdinand Céline remain inexplicable examples: how could artistic greatness co-exist with stupid and ferocious racist hatred? And Hegel? Why did he state that: "The great tragedy of the Jewish people cannot but arouse disgust"?

Ezra Pound and Renoir, Kant and Dostoyevsky all had something unpleasant, something ugly, to say about Jews. And Schopenhauer, who violently denounced what he called "Jewish stink" everywhere they are? Why did he accuse the Jews of seeing their homeland only in other

Jews? Why did Luther, who demonstrated extraordinary courage in defying Rome, produce such anti-Jewish diatribes and curses when he grew old?

Listen to Voltaire: "We find in the Jews an ignorant and barbarous people who have long united the most avarice with the most detestable superstition and the most invincible hatred for every people by whom they are tolerated and enriched…" Still, he added with magnanimity, "We ought not to burn them."

But now we know the consequences. We know that words can kill, just as they can heal. Anti-Semitism has even managed to penetrate the United Nations community. Had it not been for the courageous stance of moral leaders inside the United Nations organization, the infamous resolution comparing Zionism to racism would still be in effect. As for Durban, there efforts were less successful: instead of being a conference against hatred it became a conference of hatred.

The United Nations was created not only to put an end to aggression and war but also to protect innocent victims of fascism and Nazism—and I belong to a people that has been its principal target. Hence we turn to the United Nations and ask its leadership to fulfill its mission and use its political and moral authority to outlaw the plague that anti-Semitism is.

Neo-Nazi in Germany in 2000. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

I have devoted most of my adult life to combating many evils of society: intolerance, bigotry, racism, fanaticism and indifference to other people's suffering and fears. But I never thought I would have to fight anti-Semitism. Naively I was convinced that it died in Auschwitz. Now I realize my mistake; it didn't. Only the Jews perished there. Anti-Semitism is alive and well in too many lands. Doesn't the organized world and its moral and intellectual leadership remember the consequences of anti-Semitism? Some of us endured them. We were there—we saw our parents and friends die—because of anti-Semitism.

Thus my plea to the Secretary-General. Help us fight it, help us disarm it. To do so would be in the interest of the United Nations for it would serve the cause of humanity at large. Hatred is contagious. It is a cancer. Who hates Jews, hates all minorities, all those who are different. Who hates Jews will end up hating everybody—and then himself.

In conclusion, I quote from the last page from a recent novel called *The Oath*. It is about a seventeenth century pogrom in an Eastern European shtetl. Hooligans set the Jewish quarter afire. Jewish homes were burning. But soon the flames invaded the Christian quarter as well. They were out to destroy Jews and ended up destroying themselves too.

"I was stepping back and back, but the distance remained unchanged. The prey of death, the price of life: Kolvillag was burning and I watched it burn. The House of Study, the trees and the walls—whipped by fire and wind. The cobblestones—shattered.

The Jewish quarter, the churches and the schools, the store and the warehouses: yellow and red, orange and purple flames escaped from them, only to return at once. The shelter and the orphanage, the tavern and the synagogue joined by a bridge of fire. The cemetery was burning, the police station was burning, the cribs were burning, the library was burning. On that night man's work yielded to the power and judgment of the fire. And suddenly I understood with every fiber of my being why I was shuddering at this vision of horror: I had just glimpsed the future.

"The Rebbe and his murderers, the sanctuary and its desecrators, the beggars and their stories, I trembled as I left them—left them, backing away. I saw them from afar, then I saw them no more. Only the fire still lived in what was once a town, mine. Charred dwellings. Charred corpses. Charred dreams and prayers and songs. Every story has an end, just as every end has a story. And yet, and yet. In the case of this city reduced to ashes, the two stories merge into one and remain a secret—such had been the will of my mad friend named Moshe, last prophet and teacher of a mankind that is no more."

Elie Wiesel: Survivor & Witness

Study Questions

1. When would you say Hitler's rise to power first began? What about him gained him so many followers and such popularity?
2. What was so monumental about *Mein Kampf*? What dangers did it pose to peace and human rights?
3. What 3-5 events were most beneficial to the rise of the Nazi party?
4. How was Hitler able to implement such a heinous act as mass genocide and see it happen? Why didn't anybody protest?
5. What were some of the major stages of segregation and persecution that lead up to the Holocaust? Make a flow chart that shows the growing intensity at each one.
6. What was "the Jewish question?"
7. What were the names of some of the main death camps? Can you locate them on a map of Europe?
8. Write a short story from the point-of-view of a Jewish prisoner who has just arrived at a concentration camp. Be sure to include the sorting process in your story.
9. In Elie Wiesel's memoir *Night*, what is so remarkable about the statement on children at Buchenwald?
10. Describe Block 66. What was it like? How was it organized? Who ran the children's camp? How were the children taken care of and later rescued?
11. In your opinion, how has Elie Wiesel managed to retain his sense of gratitude, even after everything he has been through?
12. How would you differentiate between hatred, anger, and refusal to forgive?
13. How has Elie Wiesel come to terms with God? With religion? Love?
14. As a survivor of the concentration camps, how has he found meaning for his life? What is his reasoning for coming out of the nightmare alive?
15. Where did anti-Semitism begin? Why? Can it ever be justified?
16. Throughout history, what were some of the major crises for which the Jews were accused, often falsely?
17. What recent examples can you provide that prove the survival of anti-Semitism into modern society?
18. How does Elie Wiesel explain the continuous presence of anti-Semitism? Why couldn't it be eliminated?
19. Compare and contrast anti-Semitism with other forms of hatred, such as racism in America or the genocide in Darfur. What aspects are the same? What are different?
20. Some of the most intellectual figureheads of the 20th century were anti-Semitic. Who were they? What reasoning did they use for this bigotry?
21. Elie Wiesel ends his essay with a quote from his book, *The Oath*. Discuss the symbolism that he uses in this passage. What does he compare anti-Semitism to? What is the end result?

Elie Wiesel: Humanitarian

Tirelessly fighting against injustice and waking the world from its indifference, Elie Wiesel embodies the spirit of political and social activism. Within these pages is information on some of the urgent issues of our time and Elie Wiesel's role in raising awareness and his call to action for humankind.

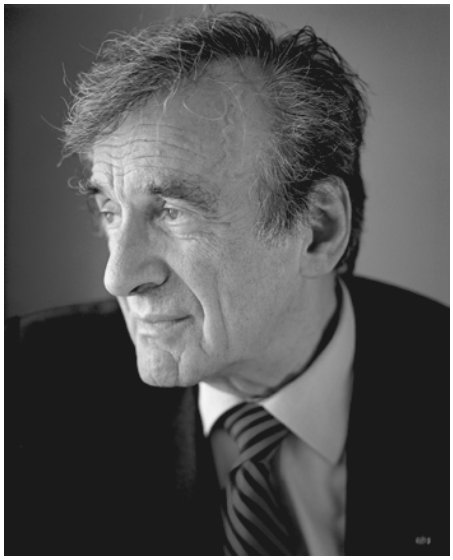
1. Interview with Elie Wiesel: Memory and Witness
   - "Wiesel at UN Special Session: Will the World Ever Learn Lessons from Holocaust?"
   - "Nobel Laureate Urges Jews to Fight Fanaticism"
   - "One Who Shames Another Is Guilty in the Name of God"
2. Conflict Areas
   - Israel and the Middle East (Maps)
     a. Countries of the Middle East
     b. Background/history of the Modern Conflict
     c. Elie Wiesel Speaks Out
     d. Elie Wiesel Calls on United Nations
   - Darfur, Sudan (Maps)
     a. Background information
     b. "On the Atrocities in Sudan" by Elie Wiesel
     c. "Outcry Over Darfur a Reaction to Rwanda"
     d. "Elie Wiesel Reflects on Darfur and 'Never Again'"
     e. "Elie Wiesel Calls Upon Israel to Take in Darfur Refugees"
     f. George Clooney and Elie Wiesel Urge UN
     g. Save Darfur Coalition
3. The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
   - Prize in Ethics
   - Petra Conference
     a. "Nobel Laureates and Celebrities Tackle World Threats"
     b. "The Last Word: Elie Wiesel"
   - Ethiopian Jews
     a. The Elie Wiesel Foundation's Beit Tzipora Centers
     b. History and Background
     c. Maps
4. Study Questions

"When human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Whenever men or women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must—at the moment—become the center of the universe." —Elie Wiesel

Special Episode: Memory and Witness

An interview with Elie Wiesel by Jerry Fowler, staff director of the Committee on Conscience at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
FEBRUARY 3, 2006

NARRATOR: Welcome to *Voices on Genocide Prevention*, a podcasting service of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Your host is Jerry Fowler, Director of the Museum's Committee on Conscience.



Elie Wiesel. Photograph by Sergey Bermeniev.

JERRY FOWLER: Our guest today is Elie Wiesel, a Survivor of the Holocaust. He has written dozens of books, including the memoir, *Night*. He has been awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the United States Congressional Gold Medal, and in 1986, the Nobel Peace Prize. He joins us from his office in New York. Professor Wiesel, welcome to the program.

ELIE WIESEL: Well, thank you.

JERRY FOWLER: I wanted to focus a little bit on the relationship between memory and witness, which I think in some ways, is the essence of your work. I had a very interesting question—to me it is interesting—you grew up speaking Yiddish, and now I imagine you spend a lot of your life speaking English or French—

ELIE WIESEL: I write in French, but I speak English.

JERRY FOWLER: Okay, you speak English; you write in French, what language do you remember in?

Jerry Fowler

ELIE WIESEL: It depends on the period. If I think of those years, of course I come back to Yiddish very often. My dreams too; I dream almost geographically. If I dream of my childhood, then I dream in Yiddish. If it is after the war, in France, it is in French. In English, I dream about America. It is very strange. I spoke to psychiatrists and psychologists and they cannot explain it, but my languages are very obedient and separate.

JERRY FOWLER: What does it mean to remember in one language, and especially remembering the years before the Holocaust in Yiddish, but bear witness to it in another?

ELIE WIESEL: It is almost automatic. If I am in the United States—and I of course have devoted my public life in English as a teacher, or as a member in Washington in our effort to build a Museum and to maintain it—it is always in English, and there is no effort.

Hall of Remembrance at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

JERRY FOWLER: It just comes naturally?

ELIE WIESEL: It comes naturally, yes.

JERRY FOWLER: You mention the Museum, and of course you were the founding chair of the Holocaust Memorial Council and it was really your inspiration that led to the creation of a national memorial on the Mall. You formulated a phrase that is on many of our materials; it is at the very end of our permanent exhibition. It says, "For the dead and the living, we must bear witness." What did you mean by that?

ELIE WIESEL: I remember it was when we began, somebody asked me—I should say it in one sentence, "What do we want to do?" and, therefore, I came up with this mantra "for the dead *and*—" and I insisted on the "*and* the living." They should not simply devote ourselves to the dead; there is not much we can do for the dead except remember them and the living need us now. The living need our memory, the living need our commitment, the living need our compassion and our guidance. So that was there for the idea that I had in giving these words, *and* the living; we must remember *for* the living as well.

JERRY FOWLER: What about this connection though between remembering the past and bearing witness? What does it mean to bear witness to a memory?

ELIE WIESEL: Bear witness to memory is *with* memory, not *to* memory. Memory helps us in our witness and the main effort to bear witness is to tell the truth. There is a tendency in so many people to reduce the truth to comfort; it is more comfortable, more convenient to remember certain things, but not others, and those that want to commit their lives to truth, that means we remember everything.

JERRY FOWLER: What is the power of truth? There is a natural human urge just to remember convenient things. Why do we *need* to remember the truth?

ELIE WIESEL: We need to because of the sake of truth. If we are not bearers of truth, then what are we? Then we are almost the enemies of truth, by distorting it, by making it into a source of pleasure when we deal with tragic truth. I feel that we are here to say, "This is what happened." It is almost a biblical reference as when he spoke in his words about warning people against cruelty and against complacency, he said, "I am the man who saw," and we can say, "We

are those who were there. I was there." And when I say that, I have the authority and therefore the duty to tell the truth.

JERRY FOWLER: When the Museum was dedicated in April of 1993, you delivered the keynote address, and it is a text that I have gone back and read many, many times; it is incredibly moving. You talk about the story of a young woman in the Carpathian Mountains who read about the Warsaw ghetto and asked, "Why are our Jewish brothers fighting? Why don't they wait quietly?" not knowing that she and her family would within a year be on their way to Auschwitz. Of course that was the story of your own family, but then in the middle of your address, you stopped and you turned to President Clinton who was there and you talked to him about Bosnia; about what was happening at that very moment in Bosnia where people were targeted because of their ethnic identity. Why was it important for you to juxtapose those two things?

ELIE WIESEL: No, it was not planned. I had prepared the address; I worked on it all night. I remember it was raining and when I came to the lectern, I opened my folder; it was soaked, and if I was ever close to a heart attack, that was it. Therefore, I decided I had to do something. If I try to remember what I said, then I would be in trouble, so I did not, I just improvised a new one. Even in the written version, I came back to that saying that I do not believe in analogies, I do not compare tragedies, but I believe ours can serve as a reference point. It was because of what happened there that we must now try to help all the victims of all the other tragedies, and I wrote about it, but it came out because I felt, "This is an opportunity." I had some thirty heads of state there, and it was important that one was with me on stage, and therefore, I turned and I said, "Look, I just came back from Sarajevo." I said, "What I have seen there robbed me of my sleep," and that was the first time I met Clinton, and he waited for me afterwards in an adjacent room, and he said, "What should I do?" And he promised me to do something, and then he kept his promise. That is how we became close actually. I saw him very often, and he sent me to the region—to Albania, to Macedonia, to the camps. Sometimes words do carry weight.

A Bosnian refugee wails over her missing husband in the refugee camp at the Tuzla airport, July 14, 1995.

JERRY FOWLER: One of the points you make which is very important is the importance of not analogizing the Holocaust to other events, comparing one to the other, but it is possible to honor memory by speaking out without making comparisons.

ELIE WIESEL: Absolutely, by simply saying, "It is because of that tragedy that we must defend victims of other injustices, of other tragedies, of other catastrophes." It is because, but I

cannot say that the other tragedies are *like*—why say that? We do not have to say that. Each tragedy and each victim have the right to be taken for what they are, and therefore, they command us to be involved.

Touloum refugee camp, Chad. Photo by Jerry Fowler.

JERRY FOWLER: One of the phrases—when you first recommended creation of a national memorial, there was a report to President Carter at the time, this was the late 70s, recommending the creation of the Committee on Conscience and saying that, "a memorial unresponsive to the future would violate the memory of the past." There is an obligation in honoring the memory.

ELIE WIESEL: Oh yes. I had high hopes for it, but in the beginning we had problems; we had problems with the Senate actually because they were afraid that we would be involved in politics and foreign policy, and foreign policy was the White House, and after all, it is not our prerogative. But all the Senators and the House, they were all close to us. We could always count on their sympathy, but only for this, we had some difficulties. Then it stopped; now I think the relations are very good.

JERRY FOWLER: Yes, and in fact, in 2004, we had two Senators speak at the Museum, in the Hall of Witness about the ongoing crisis in Darfur. So in a sense, there is a recognition that it is appropriate for a Holocaust Memorial to do that.

ELIE WIESEL: It is.

JERRY FOWLER: Let's turn to Darfur. You have spoken out on Darfur, but you were involved with Sudan before that. How did you get involved with the issue of Sudan and the suffering there?

ELIE WIESEL: I gave the millennium lecture in the White House with Clinton, and the title was "Perils of Indifference," and after my lecture, there were a few questions from the people there, and one of them got up and she said, "I am from Rwanda." At this point, I turned to the President and said, "Mr. President, please answer this question. It is a very important one after all. You know, and I know, that we could have saved between 600,000-800,000 men, women, and children in Rwanda, why did we not?" So, he admitted, he said, "It is true, Elie, it is true. We could have and we did not, therefore, I went to Rwanda to apologize in my name and in the name

of our nation, but I promise you it will never happen again." The next day I got telephone calls from people in Washington and they came to see me with the Bishop from Rwanda saying, "You are now the custodian of a presidential pledge," and that is how I became involved, and I remain deeply involved in it.

JERRY FOWLER: Today, of course, the crisis is in Darfur, in the western region of Sudan. Do you feel that we as humanity are responding differently, better, more urgently than we have in the past?

ELIE WIESEL: Not enough. In the past, of course, there was not enough. I created a foundation; our foundation has a special project called "Nobel Initiatives." That means that I believe that we Nobel Laureates, who have received so much, must give back. Now we are organizing a delegation of Nobel Laureates to Darfur.

JERRY FOWLER: To go to Darfur?

ELIE WIESEL: To Darfur and bear witness.

JERRY FOWLER: When will you do that?

ELIE WIESEL: Within a few weeks.

JERRY FOWLER: That is excellent. When you come back, come to the Museum and describe your experience.

ELIE WIESEL: I will let you know. You and I have been involved in this for some time.

This is the beginning of the burning of the village of Um Zeifa after the Janjaweed looted and attacked. Photo by Brian Steidle.

JERRY FOWLER: Exactly. Let me shift gears just a little bit, but it is very related. In the first volume of your autobiography, *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, you describe antisemitism as a fact of life as you were growing up before the Holocaust in the area you grew up in, and it was a fact of life in Europe. We seem to be seeing a resurgence of antisemitism in Europe. What is the structure of this anti-Semitism? Is it new? Is it old?

ELIE WIESEL: It is not new because the roots are old. This is what troubles me, that I thought in 1945 anti-Semitism died in Auschwitz, but I was wrong. Its victims perished, anti-Semitism did not. Why? We could spend days and days trying to analyze if anti-Semitism of today is like

the anti-Semitism of fifty years ago or two hundred years ago. The anti-Semite hates the Jews before he or she was born, and therefore, you wonder what kind of mind is the mind of the anti-Semite who does not live in reality, who hates because he feels the need to hate, and for them it is so easy to hate a Jew because we have been the other, the stranger in so many places, and they simply could not understand why we were still around. Hate became their answer. I organize all over the world conferences called "Anatomy of Hate," because of that. I try to understand that hater in order to eradicate his or her hate.

JERRY FOWLER: Do you get the sense that—anti-Semitism has very deep roots obviously—but do you get the sense that today there is more of a response to it, that there are more people that are willing to take it as a responsibility to oppose anti-Semitism?

ELIE WIESEL: Yes, because now we know that where anti-Semitism ended—not ended, but where it led to, to Auschwitz—there is one thing that is very clear, that Auschwitz would not have happened without anti-Semitism. It was not the only reason, but surely without it there would be no Auschwitz, and therefore, people want to denounce it and to disarm it, and to eradicate it.

JERRY FOWLER: But I guess it is an ongoing challenge?

ELIE WIESEL: We need intervention; we needed the intervention of intellectuals, of moralists, of decent people, simply to say, "This isn't an option; this should never be an option." In a civilized society, where honor means something, anti-Semitism is dishonor.

JERRY FOWLER: One kind of historical prop that anti-Semites have used for over a century now is a fake document called "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," and actually the Museum is developing a special exhibition on this. This was a fake document that was created by the Tsarist's Secret Police in the early 20th century, but it is still around. Why do you think it has lasted as long as it has?

Illustration from an antisemitic children's primer. The sign reads "Jews are not wanted here." Germany, 1936.

ELIE WIESEL: Some lies have a long life because there are some people who believe in it and who like to believe in it. What bothers me is that now, in some if not many Arab countries, it is a kind of legal document. Saudi Arabia used to get a present from the official government giving "Protocols." In Syria and in Egypt, they have it. It is a shame, their shame that it happens there. That is what bothers me because after all we want to believe that Islam is one of the greatest religions, and it should not be an agent of hatred.

JERRY FOWLER: Why do you think they are so influential in the Arab world?

ELIE WIESEL: Because it is Israel; they hate Israel. The best way for them to hate Israel is to say, how the Protocols say it, that Jews control the world. You have no idea how many people just believe it, that really we control the world, that we Jews control Washington, the Pentagon, and the White House, the government, and the world. I wish it were true, then we could do something about it, it could help.

JERRY FOWLER: Stepping back for a second and surveying your remarkable life, you wrote an autobiography in two volumes. The first volume, *All Rivers Run to the Sea*, the second volume, *And the Sea is Never Full*, and that was a quote of course from Ecclesiastes, which is also the epigraph to the whole book. The image that King Solomon has in Ecclesiastes is one of futility, vanity of vanities, all is vanity, and that is represented by the rivers running to the sea and they are not full. Sometimes when we deal with these issues of antisemitism, of genocide, there is a temptation to feel futility—what is the use of speaking out? It still happens. How do you resolve that?

ELIE WIESEL: I think the past of Ecclesiastes is long; it is long. It is pessimistic, and by definition does not go that far, I think. Even if we cannot, we must. If there is no hope, we must invent it and we can invent it. If we with our work help only one human being, then we should do it, and we can usually help more. The main thing is we help ourselves by speaking up; we have an image of ourselves, a sense of responsibility that must be demonstrated by intervening, by shouting, by protesting.

JERRY FOWLER: That sense of responsibility, I think that brings us back to remembering the Holocaust. One of the comments you made when the Museum was dedicated is that the Holocaust Memorial, the Museum, does not necessarily answer difficult questions, but it is a response and a responsibility.

ELIE WIESEL: I said that there is response in responsibility. The only response that I would accept to the tragedy is a moral response. All other responses—theological, psychological—they have problems, but this one has no problems. Simply to say, that because of that, we must humanize history, humanize destiny, humanize humanity, and we do so through responsibility; we are responsible for it, and to it.

JERRY FOWLER: Professor Wiesel, thank you so much for joining us today

ELIE WIESEL: As always, it is a pleasure talking with you. All the best to you.

JERRY FOWLER: Take care.

ELIE WIESEL: And good work. Bye bye.

NARRATOR: You have been listening to *Voices on Genocide Prevention*, a podcasting service of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. To learn more about the Museum's Committee on Conscience, visit our website at www.committeeonconscience.org.

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Wiesel at UN Special Session: Will the World Ever Learn Lessons from Holocaust?

From the Consulate General of Israel in San Francisco
January 24, 2005

Sixty years after the liberation of Auschwitz, an historic special session commemorating the victims of the Holocaust took place at the UN General Assembly in New York Monday, HA'ARETZ reported. Holocaust survivor Eli Wiesel, a Nobel Peace Laureate, was the keynote speaker at the event—a rare appearance by a non-statesman or diplomat at the podium of the body that was created on the ashes of World War II.

Prisoners during a roll call at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Their uniforms bear classifying triangular badges and identification numbers. Buchenwald, Germany, 1938-1941. (Photo from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

"If the world had listened, we may have prevented Darfur, Cambodia, Bosnia and naturally Rwanda," Wiesel said. "We know that for the dead it is too late. For them, abandoned by God and betrayed by humanity, victory did come much too late. But it is not too late for today's children, ours and yours. It is for their sake alone that we bear witness."

He ended his poignant speech with a dramatic moment, a silent stare out at the diplomats and TV cameras watching, and then asked, "But will the world ever learn?"

Wiesel's speech was one of the highlights of the special session that was initiated by Israel, promoted by the United States and energetically undertaken by Secretary General Kofi Annan as an important event meant to remember "the Jews and others" who were murdered at Auschwitz and throughout Europe during the Nazi reign of terror.

While UN protocol prohibits any prayer from being recited in the plenum, Annan decided that the unique nature of the event and its special character made it possible to break the rules and allow the chanting of El Maleh Rahamim, a traditional Jewish memorial prayer.

Nobel laureate urges Jews to fight fanaticism

By Sheri Shefa, Staff Reporter
Canadian Jewish News
May 25, 2006

TORONTO - Elie Wiesel—professor, writer, Nobel Laureate, humanitarian and Holocaust survivor—has always done everything in his power to inform the world about the atrocities suffered by the Jewish people during World War II.

Elie Wiesel

Through the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, he educates people about the Holocaust, with the purpose of combating indifference, intolerance and injustice, while promoting acceptance, understanding and equality.

Wiesel was in town this week at the invitation of Hillel of Greater Toronto to present a lecture to a sold-out crowd at the University of Toronto. It was titled "Confronting Fanaticism: Building Moral Unity in a Diverse Society."

In a telephone interview with the CJN last Thursday, Wiesel, 77, discussed the importance of speaking out on behalf of people who may not have a voice—regardless of whether they are Jewish—because he knows first-hand what can happen when the world chooses to ignore human suffering.

"I believe it is a priority for a Jew to help Jews, but not exclusively," said Wiesel, whose family was murdered in Nazi death camps.

"I'm a teacher and I am a writer, and as a teacher and a writer, what I try to do is sensitize my readers or my students, to make them more sensitive, first of all, to our people, to our people's pain, to our people's memory, to our people's joy, to our people's fear, and to be sensitive and to go beyond it," he said. "Be sensitive to other communities if they are in danger and if they feel oppressed and they feel they are neglected or humiliated."

Wiesel is world-renowned for speaking about the horrors of the Holocaust and for having written *Night*, a memoir of his experience in Auschwitz and the most famous and celebrated book of the

nearly 40 he has written. But he has also made it a priority to speak out against the dangers of fanaticism and the current genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan.

"I'll be speaking about fanaticism and about how to fight it, how to disarm it, how to unmask it," he said, referring to his lecture at U of T.

"A fanatic is someone who believes that only he or she has the key to truth and only he or she possesses the exclusivity of truth.

"It is somebody who has all the certainty in the world and no doubts, and a fanatic believes he is superior to anyone who is not like he is," Wiesel said.

"If a fanatic is given power then he becomes dangerous and if you give it nuclear power, as is now the case with Iran, we surely are in trouble," said Wiesel, who is a strong supporter of Israel.

But Wiesel said that some people might not understand that fanatics are not as much of a minority as some would like to think, and that no religious group, including Judaism, is immune to fanaticism.

"The challenge is that it is now a world phenomenon. It is not only in Islam, it is also in Catholicism and Protestantism, and fundamentalists are even within our own community, the Jewish community. Luckily, it is a very small minority, but we have our own fanatics," Wiesel said.

Despite the many atrocities taking place around the world, such as the humanitarian crisis currently taking place in Darfur, Wiesel said he is encouraged by the disproportionate number of Jewish people who choose to stand up for the victims of fanaticism.

"I am deeply involved in the tragedy in Darfur. They organized a few weeks ago in Washington, D.C., a great march for Darfur and 90 per cent were Jews and I was very pleased. There were young people from high school and colleges, people from yeshivot and this pleased me," Wiesel said.

"The overwhelming majority of those [at the rally] came from Jewish homes or Jewish schools."

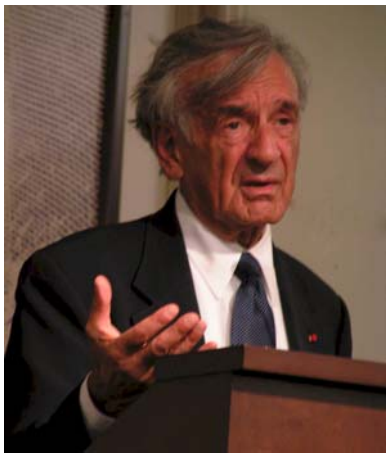
Wiesel, who speaks passionately about the victims in Darfur, said the best way to incite change is to appeal to the people who have the power to do something.

"I think we should prevail on our governments because they have the power and the money and they have the means. All we have are words."

"We have to speak up. Each in his or her own circle. Sign petitions… We must do something otherwise we will feel guilty for not helping those who need help saving their lives."

One Who Shames Another Is Guilty in the Name of God, Says Wiesel

By Jordana M. Jacobs
April 27, 2006
From *The Jewish Exponent*



The day before the start of Yom Hashoah, or Holocaust Remembrance Day, Elie Wiesel spoke to a standing-room-only crowd about hope and remembrance, as well as painful questions that the Nobel Prize-winning writer still struggles with more than 60 years after his liberation from the Buchenwald concentration camp.

"I confess to you that I don't have answers to my questions," said the author to the more than 1,700 people in the sanctuary of the Conservative Temple Sinai in Dresher. "I don't understand why the world was silent."

That silence still haunts this man, who urged the audience to take responsibility and speak out when it comes to international affairs that threaten others' freedom. He noted that if the world had truly understood the effects of hatred and anti-Semitism - factors that led to the horrors of the Holocaust - atrocities in such places as Kosovo and now Darfur would never have occurred.

"I share my abhorrence for anything racist," he said. "As a Jew, I say a Jew is neither superior or inferior to anybody. Anyone who has shamed another because of their color or nationality is guilty in the name of God."

Wiesel's experiences in the labor camps of Auschwitz and Buchenwald are chronicled in his book *Night*, currently No. 2 on the *New York Times'* paperback best-seller list. It just so happens to be the current selection for the popular book club run by celebrity Oprah Winfrey.

In his 20 minutes or so at the podium, Wiesel did not touch on his experiences as a teen during the Holocaust, something that surprised 13-year-old Gabrielle Field, who before the event said she was interested in hearing a firsthand account of life during World War II.

While she noted that she's read many of books on the subject, she and others of her generation have had limited opportunity to hear people who actually lived through the war tell their tales. Field may not have heard what she expected, but after the event, she and her mother did not seem at all disappointed by Wiesel's words.

"Because there were so many young people in the audience -and it's important for them to hear a survivor speak - I would have loved for him to bring up his experiences," said Judi Field of

Dresher. "But that wasn't his message. He highlighted international fanatics and our responsibility to be a watchdog. We can't be silent."

Barry Bressler, also of Dresher, echoed a similar sentiment.

"I was impressed that in the end, he had a message of hope for the youth," attested Bressler. "You don't want to think all there is is genocide and anti-Semitism, and a black future."

In preparation for the evening, Temple Sinai held several events sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia. In the past several weeks, students and adults attended film screenings of "Paper Clips," a documentary about a rural Tennessee middle-school's project to highlight the enormity of those killed in the Holocaust, and "Only a Girl," the true story of a Polish woman who risked her life to save Jews.

In addition, Federation sponsored an essay contest for middle- and high school students, in which they answered questions about either the novel *Night* or Wiesel's 1986 Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech.

Winners of the contest were awarded tickets to the sold-out event. Two-hundred-and-five students entered the contest, and 56 were declared winners.

With his overarching message being one of hope, Wiesel commented that the evening's attendance by young people - those who came with their parents, those who were lucky enough to garner a free ticket, even those who sang beforehand as part of the choir - as well as the presence of other clergymen from the area gave him reason to believe in just that.

Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel (top) addresses a crowd of more than 1,700 at Temple Sinai in Dresher. Photos by Joanna Lightner.

Though Wiesel stressed that he still had so many unanswered questions, he did offer a mechanism that helps him cope with the experiences that befell him.

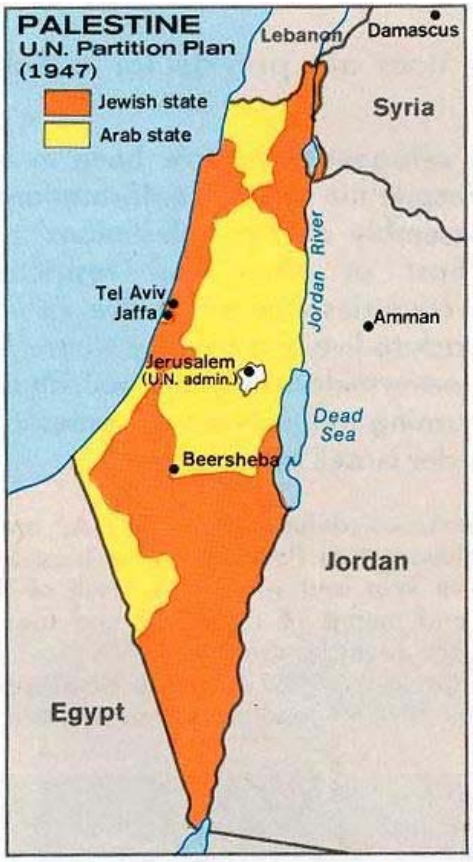
"I follow in the tradition of my ancestors," he began.

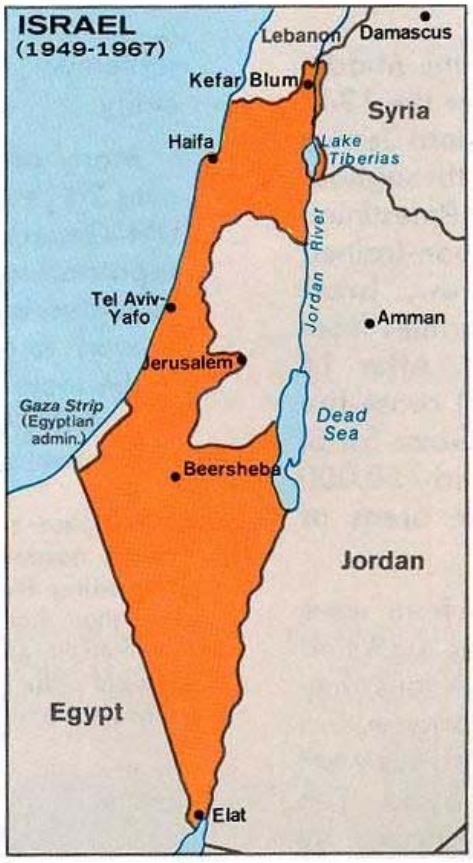
"We may question the master. We may argue with the judge of all judges," continued Wiesel. "But after each question, we must say, 'Blessed art Thou for bringing us together.' "

From *The Jewish Exponent*

Israel and the Middle East

From the CIA World Factbook





Israel's Changing Borders

From Issues in the Middle East, Atlas, U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, 1973.

(Image source: The University of Texas at Austin: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.)

Israel

Current-Day Borders

Countries of the Middle East

From the CIA World Factbook

Bahrain (Kingdom of Bahrain)

Climate:	arid; mild, pleasant winters; very hot, humid summers
Natural resources:	oil, associated and nonassociated natural gas, fish, pearls
Estimated population:	698,585 [*Note:* includes 235,108 non-nationals (est.)]
Ethnic groups:	Bahraini 62.4%, non-Bahraini 37.6% (2001 census)
Religions:	Muslim (Shi'a and Sunni) 81.2%, Christian 9%, other 9.8%
Government type:	constitutional hereditary monarchy
Independence:	15 August 1971 (from UK)
Executive branch:	King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa (since 6 March 1999) Prime Minister Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa (since 1971)

Egypt (Arab Republic of Egypt)

Climate:	desert; hot, dry summers with moderate winters
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, phosphates, manganese, limestone, gypsum, talc, asbestos, lead, zinc
Estimated population:	78,887,007 (July 2006 est.)
Ethnic groups:	Egyptian 98%, Berber, Nubian, Bedouin, and Beja 1%, Greek, Armenian, other European (primarily Italian and French) 1%
Religions:	Muslim (mostly Sunni) 90%, Coptic 9%, other Christian 1%
Government type:	republic
Independence:	28 February 1922 (from UK)
Executive branch:	President Mohammed Hosni Mubarak (since 14 October 1981) Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif (since 9 July 2004)

Iran (Islamic Republic of Iran)

Climate:	mostly arid or semiarid, subtropical along Caspian coast
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, coal, chromium, copper, iron ore, lead, manganese, zinc, sulfur
Estimated population:	68,688,433
Ethnic groups:	Persian 51%, Azeri 24%, Gilaki and Mazandarani 8%, Kurd 7%, Arab 3%, Lur 2%, Baloch 2%, Turkmen 2%, other 1%
Religions:	Shi'a Muslim 89%, Sunni Muslim 9%, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and Baha'i 2%
Government type:	theocratic republic
Independence:	1 April 1979 (Islamic Republic of Iran proclaimed)
Executive branch:	Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Hoseini-Khamenei (since 4 June 1989) President Mahmud Ahmadi-Nejad (since 3 August 2005) First Vice President Parviz Davudi (since 11 September 2005)

Iraq (Republic of Iraq)

Climate:	mostly desert; mild to cool winters with dry, hot, cloudless summers; northern mountainous regions along Iranian and Turkish borders experience cold winters with occasionally heavy snows that melt in

	early spring, sometimes causing extensive flooding in central and southern Iraq
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, phosphates, sulfur
Estimated population:	26,783,383
Ethnic groups:	Arab 75%-80%, Kurdish 15%-20%, Turkoman, Assyrian or other 5%
Religions:	Muslim 97% (Shi'a 60%-65%, Sunni 32%-37%), Christian/other 3%
Government type:	transitional democracy
Independence:	3 October 1932 (from League of Nations mandate under British administration)
Executive branch:	President Jalal Talabani (since 6 April 2005) Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki(since 20 May 2006)

Israel (State of Israel)

Climate:	temperate; hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas
Natural resources:	timber, potash, copper ore, natural gas, phosphate rock, magnesium bromide, clays, sand
Estimated population:	6,352,117 [*Note:* includes about 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, about 20,000 in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and fewer than 177,000 in East Jerusalem]
Ethnic groups:	Jewish 80.1% (Europe/America-born 32.1%, Israel-born 20.8%, Africa-born 14.6%, Asia-born 12.6%), non-Jewish 19.9% (mostly Arab) (1996 est.)
Religions:	Jewish 76.5%, Muslim 15.9%, Arab Christians 1.7%, other Christian 0.4%, Druze 1.6%, unspecified 3.9% (2003)
Government type:	parliamentary democracy
Independence:	14 May 1948 (from League of Nations mandate under British administration)
Executive branch:	President Moshe Katzav (since 31 July 2000) Prime Minister Ehud Olmert (since May 2006)

Jordan (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan)

Climate:	mostly arid desert; rainy season in west (November to April)
Natural resources:	phosphates, potash, shale oil
Estimated population:	5,906,760
Ethnic groups:	Arab 98%, Circassian 1%, Armenian 1%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim 92%, Christian 6% (majority Greek Orthodox, but some Greek and Roman Catholics, Syrian Orthodox, Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox, and Protestant denominations), other 2% (several small Shi'a Muslim and Druze populations)
Government type:	constitutional monarchy
Independence:	25 May 1946 (from League of Nations mandate under British administration)
Executive branch:	King Abdallah II (since 7 February 1999) Prime Minister Marouf Suleiman Bakhit (since 24 November 2005)

Kuwait (State of Kuwait)

Climate:	dry desert; intensely hot summers; short, cool winters
Natural resources:	petroleum, fish, shrimp, natural gas

Estimated population:	2,418,393 [*Note:* includes 1,291,354 non-nationals.]
Ethnic groups:	Kuwaiti 45%, other Arab 35%, South Asian 9%, Iranian 4%, other 7%
Religions:	Muslim 85% (Sunni 70%, Shi'a 30%), Christian, Hindu, Parsi, and other 15%
Government type:	constitutional hereditary emirate
Independence:	19 June 1961 (from UK)
Executive branch:	Amir Sabah al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah (since 29 January 2006) Prime Minister Nasir al-Muhammad al-Ahmad al-Sabah (since 7 February 2006)

Lebanon (Lebanese Republic)

Climate:	Mediterranean; mild to cool, wet winters with hot, dry summers; Lebanon mountains experience heavy winter snows
Natural resources:	limestone, iron ore, salt, water-surplus state in a water-deficit region, arable land
Estimated population:	3,874,050
Ethnic groups:	Arab 95%, Armenian 4%, other 1%
Religions:	Muslim 59.7% (Shi'a, Sunni, Druze, Isma'ilite, Alawite or Nusayri), Christian 39% (Maronite Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Melkite Catholic, Armenian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Chaldean, Assyrian, Copt, Protestant), other 1.3%. [*Note:* 17 religious sects recognized]
Government type:	republic
Independence:	22 November 1943 (from League of Nations mandate under French administration)
Executive branch:	President Emile Lahud (since 24 November 1998) Prime Minister Fuad Siniora (since 30 June 2005)

Oman (Sultanate of Oman)

Climate:	dry desert; hot, humid along coast; hot, dry interior; strong southwest summer monsoon (May to September) in far south
Natural resources:	petroleum, copper, asbestos, some marble, limestone, chromium, gypsum, natural gas
Estimated population:	3,102,229
Ethnic groups:	Arab, Baluchi, South Asian (Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi), African
Religions:	Ibadhi Muslim 75%, Sunni Muslim, Shi'a Muslim, Hindu
Government type:	monarchy
Independence:	1650 (expulsion of the Portuguese)
Executive branch:	Sultan and Prime Minister Qaboos bin Said al-Said (sultan since 23 July 1970 and prime minister since 23 July 1972)

Qatar (State of Qatar)

Climate:	arid; mild, pleasant winters; very hot, humid summers
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, fish
Estimated population:	885,359
Ethnic groups:	Arab 40%, Indian 18%, Pakistani 18%, Iranian 10%, other 14%
Religions:	Muslim 95%

Government type:	traditional monarchy
Independence:	3 September 1971 (from UK)
Executive branch:	Amir Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani (since 27 June 1995) Prime Minister Abdallah bin Khalifa al-Thani (since 30 October 1996)

Saudi Arabia (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)

Climate:	harsh, dry desert with great temperature extremes
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, gold, copper
Estimated population:	27,019,731 [*Note:* includes 5,576,076 non-nationals]
Ethnic groups:	Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10%
Religions:	Muslim 100%
Government type:	monarchy
Independence:	23 September 1932 (unification of the kingdom)
Executive branch:	King and Prime Minister Abdallah bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud (since 1 August 2005)

Syria (Syrian Arab Republic)

Climate:	mostly desert; hot, dry, sunny summers (June to August) and mild, rainy winters (December to February) along coast; cold weather with snow or sleet periodically in Damascus
Natural resources:	petroleum, phosphates, chrome and manganese ores, asphalt, iron ore, rock salt, marble, gypsum, hydropower
Estimated population:	18,881,361 [*Note:* in addition, about 40,000 people live in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights - 20,000 Arabs (18,000 Druze and 2,000 Alawites) and about 20,000 Israeli settlers.]
Ethnic groups:	Arab 90.3%, Kurds, Armenians, and other 9.7%
Religions:	Sunni Muslim 74%, Alawite, Druze, and other Muslim sects 16%, Christian (various sects) 10%, Jewish (tiny communities in Damascus, Al Qamishli, and Aleppo)
Government type:	republic under an authoritarian, military-dominated regime since March 1963
Independence:	17 April 1946 (from League of Nations mandate under French administration)
Executive branch:	President Bashar al-Asad (since 17 July 2000)

United Arab Emirates

Climate:	desert; cooler in eastern mountains
Natural resources:	petroleum, natural gas
Estimated population:	2,602,713
Ethnic groups:	Emirati 19%, other Arab and Iranian 23%, South Asian 50%, other expatriates (includes Westerners and East Asians) 8% (1982) [*Note:* less than 20% are UAE citizens (1982)]
Religions:	Muslim 96% (Shi'a 16%), Christian, Hindu, and other 4%
Government type:	federation with specified powers delegated to the UAE federal government and other powers reserved to member emirates
Independence:	2 December 1971 (from UK)
Executive branch:	President Khalifa bin Zayid al-Nuhayyan (since 3 November 2004)

Yemen (Republic of Yemen)

Climate:	mostly desert; hot and humid along west coast; temperate in western mountains affected by seasonal monsoon; extraordinarily hot, dry, harsh desert in east
Natural resources:	petroleum, fish, rock salt, marble; small deposits of coal, gold, lead, nickel, and copper; fertile soil in west
Estimated population:	21,456,188
Ethnic groups:	predominantly Arab; but also Afro-Arab, South Asians, Europeans
Religions:	Muslim including Shaf'i (Sunni) and Zaydi (Shi'a), small numbers of Jewish, Christian, and Hindu
Government type:	republic
Independence:	22 May 1990 (Republic of Yemen established with the merger of the Yemen Arab Republic [Yemen (Sanaa) or North Yemen] and the Marxist-dominated People's Democratic Republic of Yemen [Yemen (Aden) or South Yemen])
Executive branch:	President Ali Abdallah Salih (since 22 May 1990)

Territories

Gaza Strip

Climate:	temperate, mild winters, dry and warm to hot summers
Natural resources:	arable land, natural gas
Estimated population:	1,428,757
Ethnic groups:	Palestinian Arab and other 99.4%, Jewish 0.6%
Religions:	Muslim (predominantly Sunni) 98.7%, Christian 0.7%, Jewish 0.6%
Government type:	Under the Palestinian Authority

West Bank

Climate:	temperate; temperature and precipitation vary with altitude, warm to hot summers, cool to mild winters
Natural resources:	arable land
Estimated population:	2,460,492 [*Note:* in addition, there are about 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank and fewer than 177,000 in East Jerusalem.]
Ethnic groups:	Palestinian Arab and other 83%, Jewish 17%
Religions:	Muslim 75% (predominantly Sunni), Jewish 17%, Christian/other 8%
Government type:	Israeli-occupied

Palestine, Israel and the Arab-Israeli Conflict

By Joel Beinin and Lisa Hajjar

Introduction

The conflict between Palestinian Arabs and Jews is a modern phenomenon, which began around the turn of the 20th century. Although these two groups have different religions (Palestinians include Muslims, Christians and Druze), religious differences are not the cause of the conflict. It is essentially a struggle over land. Until 1948, the area that both groups claimed was known internationally as Palestine. But following the war of 1948-49, this land was divided into three parts: the state of Israel, the West Bank (of the Jordan River) and the Gaza Strip.

This is a small area: approximately 10,000 square miles, or about the size of the state of Maryland. The competing claims are not reconcilable if one group exercises exclusive political control over the total territory

Jewish claims to this land are based on the biblical promise to Abraham and his descendants, on the fact that this was the historical site of the Jewish kingdom of Israel (which was destroyed by the Roman Empire), and on Jews' need for a haven from European anti-Semitism. Palestinian Arabs' claims to the land are based on continuous residence in the country for hundreds of years and the fact that they represented the demographic majority. They reject the notion that a biblical-era kingdom constitutes the basis for a valid modern claim. If Arabs engage the biblical argument at all, they maintain that since Abraham's son Ishmael is the forefather of the Arabs, then God's promise of the land to the children of Abraham includes Arabs as well. They do not believe that they should forfeit their land to compensate Jews for Europe's crimes against them.

The Land and the People

In the 19th century, following a trend that began earlier in Europe, people around the world began to identify themselves as nations and to demand national rights, foremost the right to self-rule in a state of their own (self-determination and sovereignty). Jews and Palestinians both began to develop a national consciousness, and mobilized to achieve national goals. Because Jews were spread across the world (in diaspora), their national movement, Zionism, entailed the identification of a place where Jews could come together through the process of immigration and settlement. Palestine seemed the logical and optimal place, since this was the site of Jewish origin. The Zionist movement began in 1882 with the first wave of European Jewish immigration to Palestine.

At that time, the land of Palestine was part of the Ottoman Empire. However, this area did not constitute a single political unit. The northern districts of Acre and Nablus were part of the province of Beirut. The district of Jerusalem was under the direct authority of the Ottoman capital of Istanbul because of the international significance of the cities of Jerusalem and Bethlehem as religious centers for Muslims, Christians and Jews. According to Ottoman records, in 1878 there were 462,465 subject inhabitants of the Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre districts: 403,795 Muslims (including Druze), 43,659 Christians and 15,011 Jews. In addition, there were

perhaps 10,000 Jews with foreign citizenship (recent immigrants to the country), and several thousand Muslim Arab nomads (bedouin) who were not counted as Ottoman subjects. The great majority of the Arabs (Muslims and Christians) lived in several hundred rural villages. Jaffa and Nablus were the largest and economically most important Arab towns.

Until the beginning of the 20th century, most Jews living in Palestine were concentrated in four cities with religious significance: Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and Tiberias. Most of them observed traditional, orthodox religious practices. Many spent their time studying religious texts and depended on the charity of world Jewry for survival. Their attachment to the land was religious rather than national, and they were not involved in -- or supportive of -- the Zionist movement which began in Europe and was brought to Palestine by immigrants. Most of the Jews who immigrated from Europe lived a more secular lifestyle and were committed to the goals of creating a Jewish nation and building a modern, independent Jewish state. By the outbreak of World War I (1914), the population of Jews in Palestine had risen to about 60,000, about 33,000 of whom were recent settlers. The Arab population in 1914 was 683,000.

The British Mandate in Palestine

By the early years of the 20th century, Palestine was becoming a trouble spot of competing territorial claims and political interests. The Ottoman Empire was weakening, and European powers were entrenching their grip on areas in the eastern Mediterranean, including Palestine. During 1915-16, as World War I was underway, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon, secretly corresponded with Husayn ibn `Ali, the patriarch of the Hashemite family and Ottoman governor of Mecca and Medina. McMahon convinced Husayn to lead an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire, which was aligned with Germany against Britain and France in the war. McMahon promised that if the Arabs supported Britain in the war, the British government would support the establishment of an independent Arab state under Hashemite rule in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, including Palestine. The Arab revolt, led by T. E. Lawrence ("Lawrence of Arabia") and Husayn's son Faysal, was successful in defeating the Ottomans, and Britain took control over much of this area during World War I.

But Britain made other promises during the war that conflicted with the Husayn-McMahon understandings. In 1917, the British Foreign Minister, Lord Arthur Balfour, issued a declaration (the Balfour Declaration) announcing his government's support for the establishment of "a Jewish national home in Palestine." A third promise, in the form of a secret agreement, was a deal that Britain and France struck between themselves to carve up the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and divide control of the region.

After the war, Britain and France convinced the new League of Nations (precursor to the United Nations), in which they were the dominant powers, to grant them quasi-colonial authority over former Ottoman territories. The British and French regimes were known as mandates. France obtained a mandate over Syria, carving out Lebanon as a separate state with a (slight) Christian majority. Britain obtained a mandate over the areas which now comprise Israel, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Jordan.

In 1921, the British divided this region in two: east of the Jordan River became the Emirate of Transjordan, to be ruled by Faysal's brother 'Abdullah, and west of the Jordan River became the

Palestine Mandate. This was the first time in modern history that Palestine became a unified political entity.

Throughout the region, Arabs were angered by Britain's failure to fulfill its promise to create an independent Arab state, and many opposed British and French control as a violation of their right to self-determination. In Palestine, the situation was more complicated because of the British promise to support the creation of a Jewish national home. The rising tide of European Jewish immigration, land purchases and settlement in Palestine generated increasing resistance by Palestinian Arab peasants, journalists and political figures. They feared that this would lead eventually to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine. Palestinian Arabs opposed the British Mandate because it thwarted their aspirations for self-rule, and opposed massive Jewish immigration because it threatened their position in the country.

In 1920 and 1921, clashes broke out between Arabs and Jews in which roughly equal numbers of both groups were killed. In the 1920s, when the Jewish National Fund purchased large tracts of land from absentee Arab landowners, the Arabs living in these areas were evicted. These displacements led to increasing tensions and violent confrontations between Jewish settlers and Arab peasant tenants.

In 1928, Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem began to clash over their respective communal religious rights at the Wailing Wall (al-Buraq in the Muslim tradition). The Wailing Wall, the sole remnant of the second Jewish Temple, is one of the holiest sites for the Jewish people. But this site is also holy to Muslims, since the Wailing Wall is adjacent to the Temple Mount (the Noble Sanctuary in the Muslim tradition). On the mount is the site of the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock, believed to mark the spot from which the Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven on a winged horse.

On August 15, 1929, members of the Betar youth movement (a pre-state organization of the Revisionist Zionists) demonstrated and raised a Zionist flag over the Wailing Wall. Fearing that the Noble Sanctuary was in danger, Arabs responded by attacking Jews throughout the country. During the clashes, sixty-four Jews were killed in Hebron. Their Muslim neighbors saved others. The Jewish community of Hebron ceased to exist when its surviving members left for Jerusalem. During a week of communal violence, 133 Jews and 115 Arabs were killed and many wounded.

European Jewish immigration to Palestine increased dramatically after Hitler's rise to power in 1933, leading to new land purchases and Jewish settlements. Palestinian resistance to British control and Zionist settlement climaxed with the Arab revolt of 1936-39, which Britain suppressed with the help of Zionist militias and the complicity of neighboring Arab regimes. After crushing the Arab revolt, the British reconsidered their governing policies in an effort to maintain order in an increasingly tense environment. They issued a White Paper (a statement of political policy) limiting future Jewish immigration and land purchases. The Zionists regarded this as a betrayal of the Balfour Declaration and a particularly egregious act in light of the desperate situation of the Jews in Europe, who were facing extermination. The 1939 White Paper marked the end of the British-Zionist alliance. At the same time, the defeat of the Arab revolt and the exile of the Palestinian political leadership meant that the Palestinian Arabs were politically disorganized during the crucial decade in which the future of Palestine was decided.

The United Nations Partition Plan

Following World War II, escalating hostilities between Arabs and Jews over the fate of Palestine and between the Zionist militias and the British army compelled Britain to relinquish its mandate over Palestine. The British requested that the recently established United Nations determine the future of Palestine. But the British government's hope was that the UN would be unable to arrive at a workable solution, and would turn Palestine back to them as a UN trusteeship. A UN-appointed committee of representatives from various countries went to Palestine to investigate the situation. Although members of this committee disagreed on the form that a political resolution should take, there was general agreement that the country would have to be divided in order to satisfy the needs and demands of both Jews and Palestinian Arabs. At the end of 1946, 1,269,000 Arabs and 608,000 Jews resided within the borders of Mandate Palestine. Jews had acquired by purchase 6 to 8 percent of the total land area of Palestine amounting to about 20 percent of the arable land.

On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine into two states, one Jewish and the other Arab. The UN partition plan divided the country in such a way that each state would have a majority of its own population, although some Jewish settlements would fall within the proposed Palestinian state and many Palestinians would become part of the proposed Jewish state. The territory designated to the Jewish state would be slightly larger than the Palestinian state (56 percent and 43 percent of Palestine, respectively) on the assumption that increasing numbers of Jews would immigrate there. According to the UN partition plan, the area of Jerusalem and Bethlehem was to become an international zone.

Publicly, the Zionist leadership accepted the UN partition plan, although they hoped somehow to expand the borders allotted to the Jewish state. The Palestinian Arabs and the surrounding Arab states rejected the UN plan and regarded the General Assembly vote as an international betrayal. Some argued that the UN plan allotted too much territory to the Jews. Most Arabs regarded the proposed Jewish state as a settler colony and argued that it was only because the British had permitted extensive Zionist settlement in Palestine against the wishes of the Arab majority that the question of Jewish statehood was on the international agenda at all.

Fighting began between the Arab and Jewish residents of Palestine days after the adoption of the UN partition plan. The Arab military forces were poorly organized, trained and armed. In contrast, Zionist military forces, although numerically smaller, were well organized, trained and armed. By the spring of 1948, the Zionist forces had secured control over most of the territory allotted to the Jewish state in the UN plan.

On May 15, 1948, the British evacuated Palestine, and Zionist leaders proclaimed the state of Israel. Neighboring Arab states (Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Iraq) then invaded Israel claiming that they sought to "save" Palestine from the Zionists. In fact, the Arab rulers had territorial designs on Palestine and were no more anxious to see a Palestinian Arab state emerge than the Zionists. During May and June 1948, when the fighting was most intense, the outcome of this first Arab-Israeli War was in doubt. But after arms shipments from Czechoslovakia reached Israel, its armed forces established superiority and conquered territories beyond the UN partition plan borders of the Jewish state.

In 1949, the war between Israel and the Arab states ended with the signing of armistice agreements. The country once known as Palestine was now divided into three parts, each under separate political control. The State of Israel encompassed over 77 percent of the territory. Jordan occupied East Jerusalem and the hill country of central Palestine (the West Bank). Egypt took control of the coastal plain around the city of Gaza (the Gaza Strip). The Palestinian Arab state envisioned by the UN partition plan was never established.

The June 1967 War

After 1949, although there was an armistice between Israel and the Arab states, the conflict continued and the region remained imperiled by the prospect of another war. This was fueled by an escalating arms race as countries built up their military caches and prepared their forces (and their populations) for a future showdown. In 1956, Israel joined with Britain and France to attack Egypt, ostensibly to reverse the Egyptian government's nationalization of the Suez Canal (then under French and British control). Israeli forces captured Gaza and the Sinai Peninsula, but were forced to evacuate back to the armistice lines as a result of UN pressure led by the US and the Soviet Union (in an uncharacteristic show of cooperation to avert further conflict in the Middle East). By the early 1960s, however, the region was becoming a hot spot of Cold War rivalry as the US and the Soviet Union were competing with one another for global power and influence.

Israel's general mobilization of 80,000 reserve troops begins in mid-May when Egypt moves forces into Sinai. Photo – Government Press Office Photo Archives

In the spring of 1967, the Soviet Union misinformed the Syrian government that Israeli forces were massing in northern Israel to attack Syria. There was no such Israeli mobilization. But clashes between Israel and Syria had been escalating for about a year, and Israeli leaders had publicly declared that it might be necessary to bring down the Syrian regime if it failed to end Palestinian commando attacks against Israel from Syrian territory.

Responding to a Syrian request for assistance, in May 1967 Egyptian troops entered the Sinai Peninsula bordering Israel. A few days later, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel-Nasser asked the UN observer forces stationed between Israel and Egypt to evacuate their positions. The Egyptians then occupied Sharm al-Shaykh at the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula and proclaimed a blockade of the Israeli port of Eilat on the Gulf of Aqaba, arguing that access to Eilat was through Egyptian territorial waters. These measures shocked and frightened the Israeli public, which believed it was in danger of annihilation.

As the military and diplomatic crisis continued, on June 5, 1967 Israel preemptively attacked Egypt and Syria, destroying their air forces on the ground within a few hours. Jordan joined in the fighting belatedly, and consequently was attacked by Israel as well. The Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies were decisively defeated, and Israel captured the West Bank from Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the Sinai Peninsula from Egypt, and the Golan Heights from Syria.

The 1967 war, which lasted only six days, established Israel as the dominant regional military power. The speed and thoroughness of Israel's victory discredited the Arab regimes. In contrast, the Palestinian national movement emerged as a major actor after 1967 in the form of the political and military groups that made up the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

PLO leader Yasser Arafat addressing Palestinian children.

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)

The Arab League established the PLO in 1964 as an effort to control Palestinian nationalism while appearing to champion the cause. The Arab defeat in the 1967 war enabled younger, more militant Palestinians to take over the PLO and gain some independence from the Arab regimes.

The PLO includes different political and armed groups with varying ideological orientations. Yasser Arafat is the leader of Fatah, the largest group, and has been PLO chairman since 1968. The other major groups are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) and, in the occupied territories, the Palestine Peoples Party (PPP, formerly the Communist Party). Despite factional differences, the majority of Palestinians regard the PLO as their representative.

In the 1960s, the PLO's primary base of operations was Jordan. In 1970-71, fighting with the Jordanian army drove the PLO leadership out of the country, forcing it to relocate to Lebanon. When the Lebanese civil war started in 1975, the PLO became a party in the conflict. After the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, the PLO leadership was expelled from the country, relocating once more to Tunisia.

Until 1993, Israel did not acknowledge Palestinian national rights or recognize the Palestinians as an independent party to the conflict. Israel refused to negotiate with the PLO, arguing that it was nothing but a terrorist organization, and insisted on dealing only with Jordan or other Arab states. It rejected the establishment of a Palestinian state, insisting that Palestinians should be incorporated into the existing Arab states. This intransigence ended when Israeli representatives entered into secret negotiations with the PLO, which led to the Oslo Declaration of Principles (see below).

UN Security Council Resolution 242

After the 1967 war, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 242, which notes the "inadmissability of the acquisition of territory by force," and calls for Israeli withdrawal from lands seized in the war and the right of all states in the area to peaceful existence within secure and recognized boundaries. The grammatical construction of the French version of Resolution 242 says Israel should withdraw from "the territories," whereas the English version of the text calls for withdrawal from "territories." (Both English and French are official languages of the UN.) Israel and the United States use the English version to argue that Israeli withdrawal from some, but not all, the territory occupied in the 1967 war satisfies the requirements of this resolution.

The UN Security Council Votes on Resolution 242. Photo courtesy of the United Nations

For many years the Palestinians rejected Resolution 242 because it does not acknowledge their right to national self-determination or to return to their homeland. It calls only for a just settlement of the refugee problem. By calling for recognition of every state in the area, Resolution 242 entailed unilateral Palestinian recognition of Israel without recognition of Palestinian national rights.

The October 1973 War

After coming to power in Egypt in late 1970, President Anwar Sadat indicated to UN envoy Gunnar Jarring that he was willing to sign a peace agreement with Israel in exchange for the return of Egyptian territory lost in 1967 (the Sinai Peninsula). When this overture was ignored by Israel and the US, Egypt and Syria decided to act to break the political stalemate. They attacked Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights in October 1973, on the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur. The surprise attack caught Israel off guard, and the Arabs achieved some early military victories. This prompted American political intervention, along with sharply increased military aid to Israel. After the war, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger pursued a diplomatic strategy of limited bilateral agreements to secure partial Israeli withdrawals from the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights while avoiding negotiations on more difficult issues, including the fate of the West Bank and Gaza. By late 1975 these efforts had exhausted their potential, and there was no prospect of achieving a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace settlement.

In late 1977, Sadat decided to initiate a separate overture to Israel. His visit to Jerusalem on November 19, 1977 led to the Camp David accords and the signing of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty in 1979.

The Camp David accords, signed in the United States in September 1978 by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, was the first peace deal between Israel and an Arab state. Photo courtesy of BBC News.

Camp David I

In September 1978, President Jimmy Carter invited Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin to Camp David, a presidential retreat in Maryland. They worked out two agreements: a framework for peace between Egypt and Israel, and a general framework for resolution of the Middle East crisis, i.e. the Palestinian question.

The first agreement formed the basis of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty signed in 1979. The second agreement proposed to grant autonomy to the Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and to install a local administration for a five-year interim period, after which the final status of the territories would be negotiated.

Only the Egyptian-Israeli part of the Camp David accords was implemented. The Palestinians and other Arab states rejected the autonomy concept because it did not guarantee full Israeli withdrawal from areas captured in 1967 or the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. In any case, Israel sabotaged negotiations by continuing to confiscate Palestinian lands and build new settlements in violation of the commitments Menachem Begin made to Jimmy Carter at Camp David.

The Intifada

In December 1987, the Palestinian population in the West Bank and Gaza started a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation. This uprising, or intifada (which means "shaking off" in Arabic), was not started or orchestrated by the PLO leadership in Tunis. Rather, it was a popular mobilization that drew on the organizations and institutions that had developed under occupation. The intifada involved hundreds of thousands of people, many with no previous resistance experience, including children, teenagers and women. For the first few years, it involved many forms of civil disobedience, including massive demonstrations, general strikes, refusal to pay taxes, boycotts of Israeli products, political graffiti and the establishment of underground schools (since regular schools were closed by the military as reprisals for the uprising). It also included stone throwing, Molotov cocktails and the erection of barricades to impede the movement of Israeli military forces.

Intifada activism was organized through popular committees under the umbrella of the United National Leadership of the Uprising. The UNLU was a coalition of the four PLO parties active in the occupied territories: Fatah, the PFLP, the DFLP and the PPP. This broad-based resistance drew unprecedented international attention to the situation facing Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, and challenged the occupation as never before.

Under the leadership of Minister of Defense Yitzhak Rabin, Israel tried to smash the intifada with "force, power and blows." Army commanders instructed troops to break the bones of demonstrators. From 1987 to 1991 Israeli forces killed over 1,000 Palestinians, including over 200 under the age of sixteen. By 1990, most of the UNLU leaders had been arrested and the intifada lost its cohesive force, although it continued for several more years. Political divisions and violence within the Palestinian community escalated, especially the growing rivalry between the various PLO factions and Islamist organizations (HAMAS and Islamic Jihad). Palestinian militants killed over 250 Palestinians suspected of collaborating with the occupation authorities and about 100 Israelis during this period.

Although the intifada did not bring an end to the occupation, it made clear that the status quo was untenable. The intifada shifted the center of gravity of Palestinian political initiative from the PLO leadership in Tunis to the occupied territories. Palestinian activists in the occupied territories demanded that the PLO adopt a clear political program to guide the struggle for independence. In response, the Palestine National Council (a Palestinian government-in-exile), convened in Algeria in November 1988, recognized the state of Israel, proclaimed an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and renounced terrorism. The Israeli government did not respond to these gestures, claiming that nothing had changed and that the PLO was a terrorist organization with which it would never negotiate. The US did acknowledge that the PLO's policies had changed, but did little to encourage Israel to abandon its intransigent stand.

Camp David II

In July 2000, President Clinton invited Prime Minister Barak and President Arafat to Camp David to conclude negotiations on the long-overdue final status agreement. Barak proclaimed his "red lines": Israel would not return to its pre-1967 borders; East Jerusalem with its 175,000 Jewish settlers would remain under Israeli sovereignty; Israel would annex settlement blocs in the West Bank containing some 80 percent of the 180,000 Jewish settlers; and Israel would accept no legal or moral responsibility for the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. The Palestinians, in accord with UN Security Council resolution 242 and their understanding of the spirit of the Oslo Declaration of Principles, sought Israeli withdrawal from the vast majority of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including East Jerusalem, and recognition of an independent state in those territories.

The distance between the two parties, especially on the issues of Jerusalem and refugees, made it impossible to reach an agreement at the Camp David summit meeting in July 2000. Although Barak offered a far more extensive Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank than any other Israeli leader had publicly considered, he insisted on maintaining Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem. This was unacceptable to the Palestinians and to most of the Muslim world. Arafat left Camp David with enhanced stature among his constituents because he did not yield to American and Israeli pressure. Barak returned home to face political crisis within his own government, including the abandonment of coalition partners who felt he had offered the Palestinians too much. However, the Israeli taboo on discussing the future of Jerusalem was broken. Many Israelis began to realize for the first time that they might never achieve peace if they insisted on imposing their terms on the Palestinians.

The Fall 2000 Uprising

A Palestinian throws back to Israeli soldiers a teargas canister during clashes in the West Bank town of Ramallah Wednesday Oct. 25, 2000. Over four weeks of violence have left more than 300 Palestinians dead in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. (AP Photo/Enric Marti)

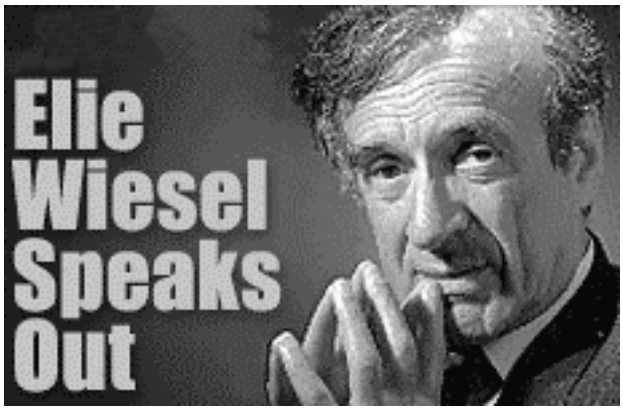
The deeply flawed "peace process" initiated at Oslo, combined with the daily frustrations and humiliations inflicted upon Palestinians in the occupied territories, converged to ignite a second intifada beginning in late September 2000. On September 28, Likud leader Ariel Sharon visited the Noble Sanctuary (Temple Mount) in the company of 1000 armed guards; in the context of July's tense negotiations over Jerusalem's holy places, and Sharon's well-known call for Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem, this move provoked large Palestinian protests in Jerusalem. Israeli soldiers killed six unarmed protesters. These killings inaugurated over a month of demonstrations and clashes across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For a brief period, these demonstrations spread into Palestinian towns inside Israel.

In relative terms, the second intifada is already bloodier than the first. As in the previous intifada, Palestinians threw stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli soldiers, who responded with rubber-coated steel bullets and live ammunition. But both sides have employed greater force than in 1987-1991. The militant wing of Fatah, which has coordinated many street actions, now has a substantial cache of small arms and has fired often on Israeli troops. The Israeli military response escalated dramatically after two soldiers, allegedly "lost" in the PA-controlled West Bank town of Ramallah, were killed October 12 by a Palestinian mob returning from the funeral of an unarmed young man whom soldiers had shot dead the day before. The IDF attacked PA installations in Ramallah, Gaza and elsewhere with helicopter gunships and missiles. Subsequently, the IDF has not always waited for Israelis to die before answering Palestinian small arms fire with tank shells and artillery, including the shelling of civilian neighborhoods in the West Bank and Gaza.

For these actions and the use of live ammunition to control demonstrations of unarmed Palestinians, several international human rights organizations have condemned Israel for use of excessive force. The UN Security Council passed a similar condemnation, from which the US abstained, and on October 20, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution condemning Israel. Israel, the US and four Polynesian island nations voted no, and a third of the assembly abstained. Despite a truce agreement at Sharm al-Sheikh, a later agreement to quell violence

between Arafat and Shimon Peres and Bill Clinton's attempts to restart negotiations in January 2001, the second intifada did not look like it would end soon. In December 2000, Barak called early elections for prime minister to forestall a likely vote of no confidence in the Knesset. He will face Ariel Sharon in the February 6 election. To date over 350 people, about 90 percent of them Palestinian, have been killed in the violence. While the outcome of the uprising is very unclear, it is probably impossible to resume the Oslo peace process without major modifications to its basic framework. The Palestinian street has definitively rejected Oslo, and top officials of the PA now say that UN resolutions must form the basis of future final status talks.

Elie Wiesel Speaks Out



"It is with a heavy heart that we say that our dreams of peace have gone up in the smoke of ransacked synagogues, in the lynching of Israeli prisoners and of blood-thirsty mobs."

The following is a transcript of Elie Wiesel's speech given at the New York Israel Solidarity rally on October 12th, 2000.

"We have gathered here to affirm our solidarity with Israel. We are outraged by the hypocritical vote in the Security Council, which did not condemn Palestinian excessive reactions but condemned Israel's response to them. We stand by Israel whose present struggle was imposed upon her by the intransigence of the Chairman of the Palestinian Authority.

Those of us who reject hatred and fanaticism as options and who consider peace as the noblest of efforts finally recognize Yasir Arafat for what he is: ignorant, devious and unworthy of trust.

We had hoped for a genuine peace between Israel and her Arab neighbors, including the Palestinians. We had dreams of Israeli and Palestinian children playing together, studying together, laughing together, and discovering each other's worlds. The pain, the agony, the death of any child, Palestinian or Jewish, is a torment to us. But why does Chairman Arafat not protect them but instead uses them as shields for adults throwing stones and worse?

Yes, it is with a heavy heart that we say that our dreams of peace have gone up in the smoke of ransacked synagogues, in the lynching of Israeli prisoners and of blood-thirsty mobs shouting their version of a Jerusalem without Jews and a Middle East without Israel. And I blame the supreme leader of the Palestinians, Yasir Arafat.

By rejecting Israel's unprecedented generous territorial concessions, he is burying the peace process; in so doing, he has betrayed the confidence not only of his negotiating partners but of President Clinton and other western leaders, just as he has betrayed the highest honor society can bestow upon a person. How can a leader, any leader in Israel renew discussions with him before all the kidnapped soldiers are returned to their families?

By unleashing mob violence and bloodshed in the streets rather than guiding his frustrated people toward coexistence and peace, he renounced their legitimate aspirations for a future free of suffering and hatred.

I hold him responsible for the murder of Rabbi Hillel Lieberman and the lynching of two young reservists. All his promises were lies; all his commitments were false. Indeed many peace activists here and in Israel are now reassessing the Oslo accords.

Under Israel sovereignty, Christians, Jews, and Muslims alike could pray without fear in Jerusalem, our capital, which is at the center of Jewish history. A Jew may be Jewish far from Jerusalem; but not without Jerusalem. Though a Jew may not live in Jerusalem, Jerusalem lives inside him.

No other nation's memory is as identified with its memory as ours. No people have been as faithful to its name, or have celebrated its past with as much fervor. None of our prayers are as passionate as those that speak of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem is the dream of our dreams, the light that illuminates our hopeless moments. Its legitimacy lies in its sovereignty. To oppose one is to deny the other. Israel will never give up either. I accuse him of being morally weak, politically shortsighted and an obstacle to peace.

I accuse him of murdering the hopes of an entire generation. His and ours.

Elie Wiesel, NYC, 10/12/00
Published: Sunday, October 22, 2000

Elie Wiesel calls on U.N. to expel Iran

September 14, 2006

NEW YORK -- Nobel Peace Prize recipient Elie Wiesel says Iran should be expelled from the United Nations.

"I began a campaign for the expulsion of Iran from the U.N. and the declaration of its president as a persona non grata all over the world because he threatens a member state of destruction," the Holocaust survivor said Thursday in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

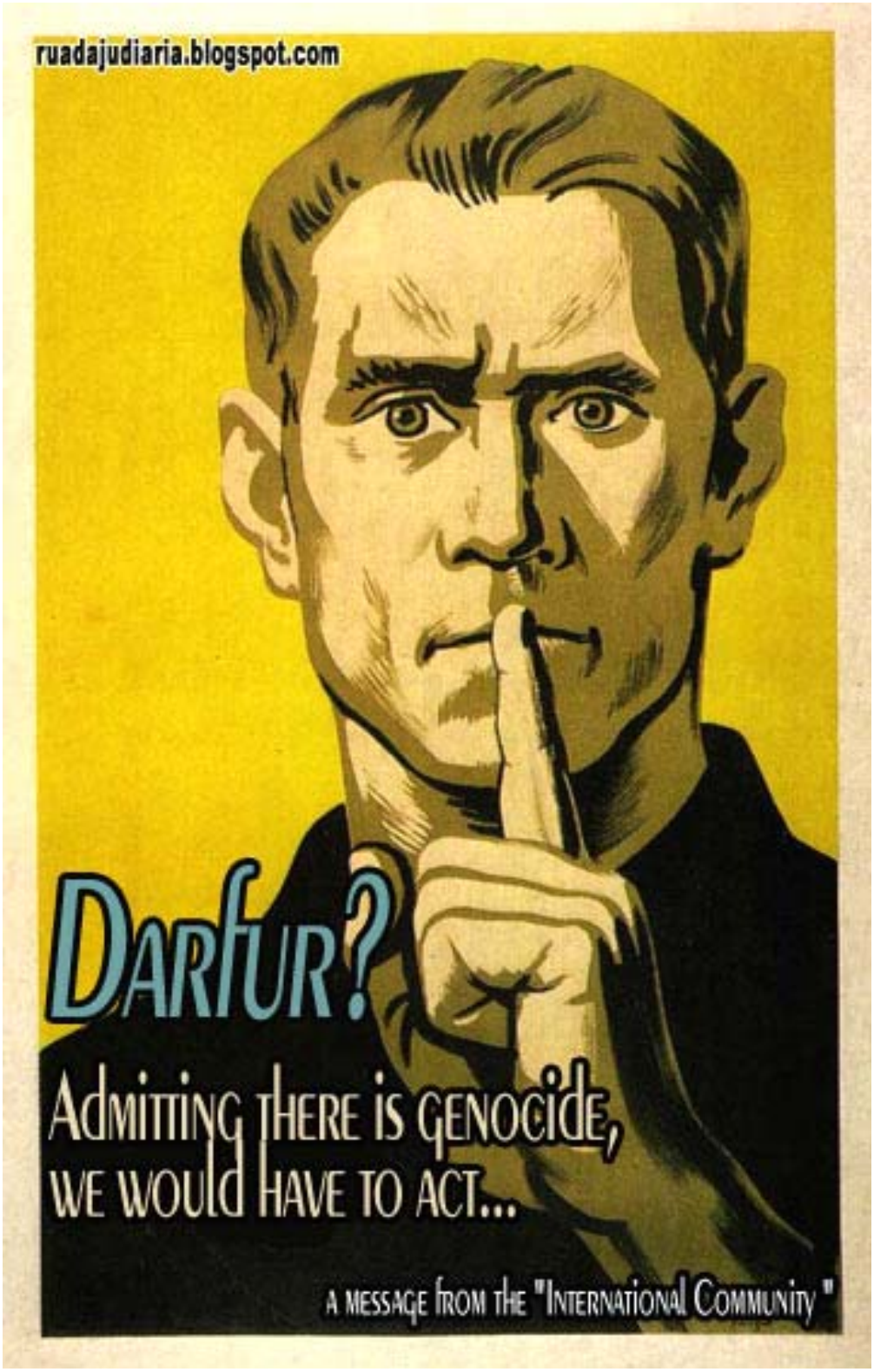
Iran announced April 11 that it had enriched a small quantity of uranium, fueling international concerns that it is well on the way to developing an atomic bomb. The country insists its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes only.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad has called for Israel to be "wiped off the map" and has dismissed the Holocaust as a myth.

From the Associated Press

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel speaks to members of the media after addressing members of the Security Council on the crisis in Darfur, Thursday, Sept. 14, 2006 at United Nations headquarters. (AP Photo/Mary Altaffer)

The Crisis in Darfur



This free-use image courtesy of Rua da Judiaria

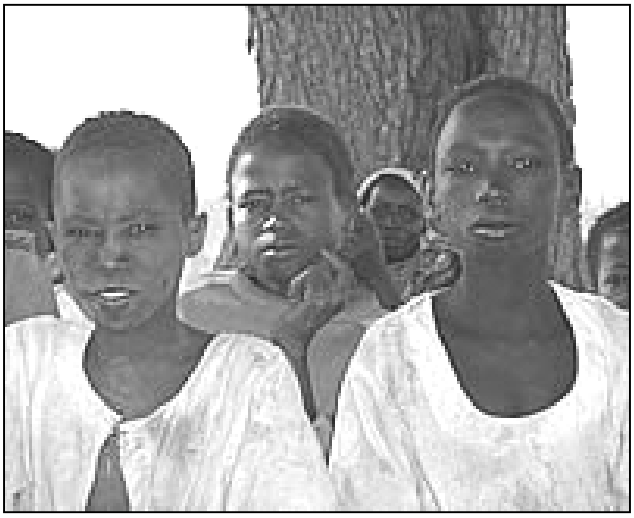
Africa: Sudan

Images from Jencons Limited, the Seattle Post-Intelligencer and the New York Times

Sudan: Crisis in Darfur

"The Janjaweed militias and the soldiers arrived on market day in Abu Jidad. The soldiers cordoned off the market and the Janjaweed got inside to take the money and the cattle. They killed several persons. I saw the bodies of those killed. Some were killed by the gun, others by bayonet."

—Ercouri Mahamat, Koranic student from the village of Abu Gamra near Kornoy town, in North Darfur.



Group of refugee boys around Adré, Sudan. © AI

Darfur is situated in the West of Sudan and covers an area the size of France (the size of Texas). For a number of years it was the scene of sporadic clashes between farming communities such as the Fur, Masalit and Zaghawa, and nomadic groups, which led to many deaths and the destruction and looting of homes. The government blamed competition over scarce resources for the clashes.

In February 2003 a new armed opposition group, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) took up arms against the government, because of what they perceived as the lack of government protection for their people and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of the region. The support base of this armed group came mainly from the agricultural groups in the region. Shortly afterwards another armed group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) emerged.

The government of Sudan responded by allowing free rein to Arab militias known as the Janjaweed (guns on horseback) who began attacking villages, killing, raping and abducting people, destroying homes and other property, including water sources and looting livestock. At times government troops also attacked villages alongside the Janjaweed, and government aircraft have been bombing villages sometimes just before Janjaweed attacks, suggesting that these attacks were coordinated. The links between the Sudanese armed forces and the Janjaweed are incontrovertible, the Janjaweed are now wearing uniforms provided by the army.

"The Janjaweed arrived and asked me to leave the place. They beat women and small children. They killed a little girl, Sara Bishara. She was two years old. She was knifed in her back."
—Aisha Ali, from the village of Sasa, near Kornoy town in North Darfur.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of actions by the Janjaweed, government forces and rebel groups. The UN estimates that there are now two million internally displaced people in Darfur who have fled from their burnt villages and taken refuge within Darfur, mostly in towns and camps, often in very poor conditions, while more than 200,000 have crossed the border into Chad.

A human rights crisis

On 5 May 2006 a peace agreement was signed between the Sudanese government and one of the militia groups in Darfur. On 16 May 2006 the UN Security Council agreed to send UN peace-keeping forces to Darfur to help African Union (AU) troops with the implementation of the peace agreement.

Up to now, the AU has not been able to effectively protect civilians from attacks by armed groups (some of whom are government sponsored), and attacks are continuing with impunity.

Amnesty International is calling on the UN Security Council to urgently deploy a strong UN mission in Darfur, authorized to use force to protect civilians**.**

Women from North Darfur testifying to Amnesty International delegates in Tina, Chad.

From Amnesty International

A government soldier who began burning the food storage of the villagers in Marla.

Photo courtesy of Brian Steidle and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

On the Atrocities in Sudan

by Elie Wiesel

Remarks delivered at the Darfur Emergency Summit, convened at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004, by the American Jewish World Service and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Sudan has become today's world capital of human pain, suffering and agony. There, one part of the population has been—and still is—subjected by another part, the dominating part, to humiliation, hunger and death. For a while, the so-called civilized world knew about it and preferred to look away. Now people know. And so they have no excuse for their passivity bordering on indifference. Those who, like you my friends, try to break the walls of their apathy deserve everyone's support and everyone's solidarity.

This gathering was organized by several important bodies. The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum's Committee on Conscience (Jerry Fowler), the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, the American Jewish World Service (Ruth Messinger) and several other humanitarian organizations.

As for myself, I have been involved in the efforts to help Sudanese victims for some years. It was a direct or indirect consequence of a millennium lecture I had given in the White House on the subject, "The Perils of Indifference". After I concluded, a woman in the audience rose and said: "I am from Rwanda." She asked me how I could explain the international community's indifference to the Rwandan massacres. I turned to the President who sat at my right and said: "Mr. President, you better answer this question. You know as well as we do that the Rwanda tragedy, which cost from 600,000 to 800,000 victims, innocent men, women and children, could have been averted. Why wasn't it?" His answer was honest and sincere: "It is true, that tragedy could have been averted. That's why I went there to apologize in my personal name and in the name of the American people. But I promise you: it will not happen again."

The next day I received a delegation from Sudan and friends of Sudan, headed by a Sudanese refugee bishop. They informed me that two million Sudanese had already died. They said, "You are now the custodian of the President's pledge. Let him keep it by helping stop the genocide in Sudan."

That brutal tragedy is still continuing, now in Sudan's Darfur region. Now its horrors are shown on television screens and on front pages of influential publications. Congressional delegations, special envoys and humanitarian agencies send back or bring back horror-filled reports from the scene. A million human beings, young and old, have been uprooted, deported. Scores of women are being raped every day, children are dying of disease hunger and violence.

How can a citizen of a free country not pay attention? How can anyone, anywhere not feel outraged? How can a person, whether religious or secular, not be moved by compassion? And above all, how can anyone who remembers remain silent?

As a Jew who does not compare any event to the Holocaust, I feel concerned and challenged by the Sudanese tragedy. We must be involved. How can we reproach the indifference of non-Jews to Jewish suffering if we remain indifferent to another people's plight?

It happened in Cambodia, then in former Yugoslavia, and in Rwanda, now in Sudan. Asia, Europe, Africa: Three continents have become prisons, killing fields and cemeteries for countless innocent, defenseless populations. Will the plague be allowed to spread?

"Lo taamod al dam réakha" is a Biblical commandment. "Thou shall not stand idly by the shedding of the blood of thy fellow man." The word is not "akhikha," thy Jewish brother, but "réakha," thy fellow human being, be he or she Jewish or not. All are entitled to live with dignity and hope. All are entitled to live without fear and pain.

Not to assist Sudan's victims today would for me be unworthy of what I have learned from my teachers, my ancestors and my friends, namely that God alone is alone: His creatures must not be.

What pains and hurts me most now is the simultaneity of events. While we sit here and discuss how to behave morally, both individually and collectively, over there, in Darfur and elsewhere in Sudan, human beings kill and die.

Should the Sudanese victims feel abandoned and neglected, it would be our fault—and perhaps our guilt.

That's why we must intervene.

If we do, they and their children will be grateful for us. As will be, through them, our own.

Refugees in Menawashi, Darfur. Approximately 7,000 came to Menawashi in just a few days.

From the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

Outcry over Darfur a reaction to Rwanda, Nobel laureate says

MICHAEL VALPY

TORONTO -- The Western world's mounting public demand for action to halt the murder and rape in Darfur is a response to the indifference in the West to the genocide in Rwanda a dozen years ago, says Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel.

Mr. Wiesel, the world's best-known survivor of the Nazi genocide against Jews, said in an interview the great difference between Rwanda and the slaughter of people in Sudan's western Darfur region is that "Darfur came after Rwanda." People know, said Mr. Wiesel, that the one million killed in Rwanda could have been saved if there had been outside intervention. And they know that the hundreds of thousands killed -- and still being killed -- in Darfur could likewise be saved.

Mr. Wiesel publicly asked then U.S. president Bill Clinton why his country had intervened in the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo but not in Rwanda, and Mr. Clinton replied that the United States would never again allow another genocide in Africa to occur. His successor, President George W. Bush, has called the Darfur killings a genocide and yet, years after they began, they're continuing.

Asked why the Rwandan genocide could have happened, with so little attention paid to it by the media, Mr. Wiesel replied, "It is a puzzle to me, but I suppose it didn't make the front pages because the people were black and far away."

Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire, the Canadian commander of the small contingent of United Nations peacekeeping troops in Rwanda at the time, has given the same answer to why the UN and the world's governments didn't respond to his urgent appeals for help: "Because the people being killed were black."

Mr. Wiesel has been a leading participant in the public campaign by Jewish and other faith groups in the U.S. and Canada to propel Darfur to the top of government agendas. The 77-year-old novelist, teacher and journalist recently took part in the huge Darfur demonstration in Washington.

He is lecturing tomorrow night at the University of Toronto's Convocation Hall on his lifelong campaign against the evils of fanaticism and indifference. The lecture is sponsored by Hillel, the Jewish student organization. Mr. Wiesel said fanaticism is growing everywhere, in many cultures, in all religions. He calls it the 21st century's greatest danger. Fanatics, he said, have been behind the rivers of blood shed in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Burundi and Sudan.

In 1944, at age 15, Mr. Wiesel was interned with his family by the Nazi occupiers of his village in Hungarian-ruled Transylvania. They were transported to Birkenau, the reception centre for Auschwitz, where his mother and sister were killed. His father subsequently died of dysentery.

Elie Wiesel Reflects on Darfur and 'Never Again'

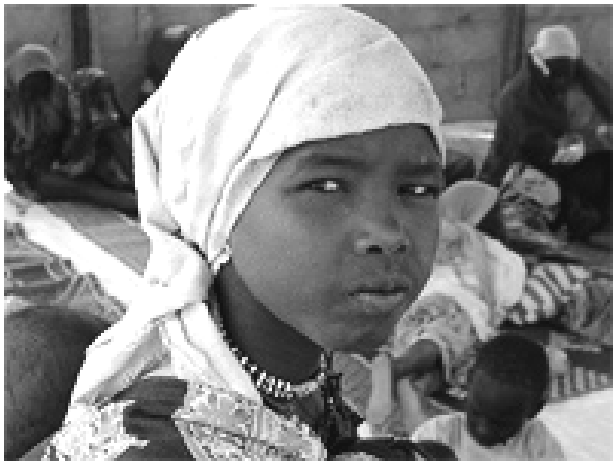
J- The Jewish News Weekly of Northern California
News report by Jennifer McLain, May 28, 2006

Never again.

That's what Holocaust survivor and 1986 Nobel Prize recipient Elie Wiesel thought in 1945 after World War II.

Never again would humanity allow the tragedy of genocide, of hate, of indifference, and of apathy.

"It became a symbol for us to learn from the past," Wiesel told 1,700 admirers on Sunday, May 21 in the Memorial Auditorium at Stanford University.



Darfur refugee

61 years later, he stands corrected.

As thousands in Western Sudan continue to be forced from their homes, raped and murdered, the world is again witnessing hate, indifference and apathy.

Wiesel, 77, shared his thoughts, concerns and compassion about the ongoing struggles in places such as Darfur, during his lecture, "Against Indifference: Reflections on 'Never Again.'" Wiesel, born in Transylvania, was 15 years old when he and his family were deported to Auschwitz. His 1982 memoir, *Night*, was recently placed on Oprah's Book Club.

"I cannot thank you enough for wanting to spend time with me, simply because of the topic," Wiesel began his lecture, sponsored by Hillel at Stanford, the ASSU Speakers Bureau, the Jewish Students Association, and the Stanford chapter of Students Taking Action Now: Darfur.

Wiesel received several standing ovations—the first when he walked on the stage—as he touched on racism in America, politics of the Middle East, religious fanaticism, anti-Semitism and his perception of God.

Wiesel examined the earliest reference of the phrase "never again," which he found in the Torah: God told Noah that He would "never again" destroy the world with water.

Wiesel, however, read that passage again, and realized that although God promised not to destroy the world again with water, perhaps He would destroy it with fire. Or, God may be silent as the inhabitants of earth bring about their own destruction.

Wiesel also recounted his first experience in the southern United States. It was the first time he felt shame in America.

"I saw racism as law. I felt shame — not for being a Jew. I felt shame for being white. I came to America filled with illusions," Wiesel said. "Still, there are racists in our midst. There are over 65 racist groups in America."

Racism, war and hate continue.

"Six years into this century, again and again, people are killing one another," he said. "It is shameful that we allow this to continue. We could stop it because we are humans."

"What is happening today? Never again? We have again," he said.

Wiesel is also concerned with the developing hate in Iraq and Iran.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Wiesel claimed, is the world's No. 1 Holocaust denier, and his words should be taken seriously, just as Hitler's words should have been. "It is enough to read 'Mein Kampf' and Hitler's speeches. He predicted everything he wanted to do," Wiesel said.

Hitler was able to exterminate nearly 6 million Jews because no one stopped him, Wiesel said.

Whether a Jew or not, people need to stand up and stop religious fanaticism, racism and anti-Semitism.

"We have absolutely no right to disregard another when the other is suffering," Wiesel said. "If you stand by when someone else is being tortured, you are an accomplice," he said. "We suffered and died because of indifference. This is the lesson. Never again."

Some in attendance, such as San Jose resident Alicia Appleman-Jurman, have waited years to meet Wiesel. Appleman-Jurman is a Holocaust survivor and author of *Alicia: My Story*.

"I can relate to the way he identified himself with the suffering of the world," Appleman-Jurman said moments after shaking Wiesel's hand.

Wiesel's words speak to all generations.

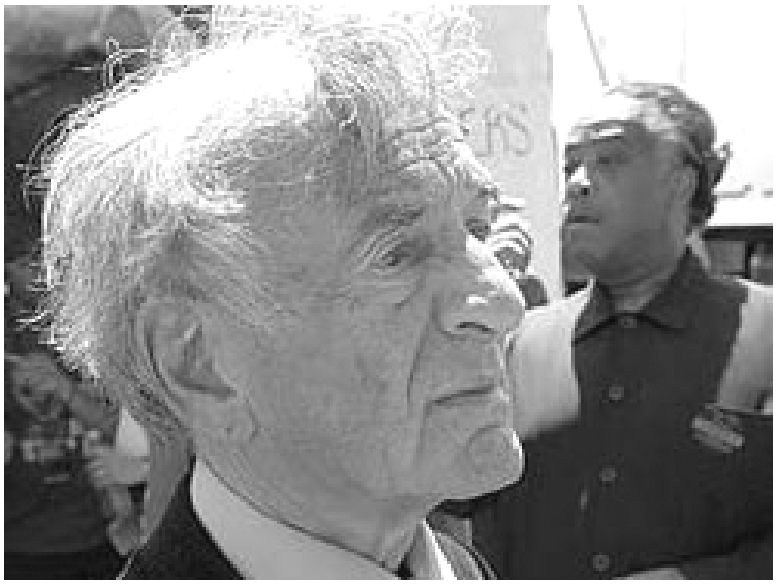
Ariel Platt, a sophomore at Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco, left the lecture with more than just an autographed copy of *Night*.

"His words confirm what I believe: To never stand idly by. You can't just let things happen," he said.

From New America Media

Elie Wiesel calls upon Israel to take in Darfur refugees

By Shahar Ilan
June 8th, 2006



Elie Wiesel (L) and civil rights activist Rev. Al Sharpton waiting to speak at a rally in Washington in April on ending the crisis in Darfur. (Photo courtesy of Reuters)

Nobel Prize-winning author Elie Wiesel has called on Israel to take in refugees from Darfur. In an interview in the upcoming issue of Haaretz Magazine, Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, says, "We as Jews are obliged to help not only Jews. I was a refugee and therefore I am in favor of admitting refugees. I thought it was very laudable when Israel became the first country to admit the Vietnamese boat people. History constantly chooses a capital of human suffering, and Darfur is today the capital of human suffering. Israel should absorb refugees from Darfur, even a symbolic number."

Wiesel, 76, believes that all genocides in the last half of the 20th century among them in Rwanda, Bosnia, Biafra and Darfur "are the result of what happened in the Holocaust. The Holocaust proved that it is possible to do this, and if it is possible, then why not?"

Israel, Wiesel said, needs the cooperation of Europe and the United States because, "come what may, Iran must be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons." Wiesel says he has no doubt that Iran is a danger "not only to Israel, [but] to the whole world. The man [Iranian President Ahmadinejad] is insane, clinically insane. He is simply completely clinically insane." Wiesel says he does not want to see all-out war and jokingly adds: "Maybe we should incite James Bond to help us ... I say that as a joke ... We are in a James Bond period."

Wiesel's memoir on the Holocaust, "Night," published in 1958, has so far sold eight million

copies in the U.S. alone. After talk-show queen Oprah Winfrey selected it for her book club in January for the second time, it sold 1.7 million copies. The book is said to describe "the death of God" from Wiesel's perspective, but Wiesel says, "I never lost my faith in God. I rose up against God's silence ... I had questions and protests."

With regard to the debate in the U.S. in recent months over the accuracy of some scenes in *Night*, Wiesel says, "If it is no longer possible to believe the testimony of a survivor, what shall we believe?"

From Haaretz

Touloum refugee camp. Like kids anywhere, many of the refugee children in Chad are living in the moment, even though they have seen things no child should have to see, borne burdens no child should have to bear. What future will these children have?

(Photo courtesy of Jerry Fowler, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum)

George Clooney and Elie Wiesel urge UN to send peacekeepers to Darfur

By Leyla Linton
Canadian Press
September 14, 2006

Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel, left, speaks as actor George Clooney looks on during a news interview after addressing the Security Council at the United Nations in New York Thursday Sept. 14, 2006. (AP Photo/Frank Franklin II)

UNITED NATIONS (AP) - Actor George Clooney on Thursday told the UN's most powerful body that if it did not send peacekeepers to Sudan's Darfur region millions of people would die in what he called the first genocide of the 21st century.

"After September 30 you won't need the UN. You will simply need men with shovels and bleached white linen and headstones," the actor warned.

The mandate of African Union peacekeepers in the region expires at the end of the month and the Sudanese government has refused to approve their replacement by a UN force.
The Oscar-winner said if UN forces were not sent in, all aid workers would leave and the 2.5 million refugees who depend on them would die.

"The United States has called it genocide," Clooney told council members. "For you it's called ethnic cleansing. But make no mistake - it is the first genocide of the 21st century. And if it continues unchecked it will not be the last."

Clooney was addressing Security Council members at an informal briefing organized by the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, which recently set up a Darfur Commission of Nobel Laureates.

Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize winner, also appealed to council members: "You are the last political recourse of Darfur victims and you can stop it."
He urged them to send peacekeepers.

"Remember Rwanda," Wiesel said. "I do. Six hundred thousand to 800,000 human beings were murdered. We knew then as we know now they could have been saved and they were not." He said it was terrible that the UN let the 1994 killings in Rwanda happen and urged the UN to "restore its honour" by taking action in Darfur.

After the meeting ended, Wiesel and Clooney gave a brief press conference.

Clooney and his journalist father Nick Clooney spent five days in Darfur in April, gathering personal stories of the death and suffering that has ravaged the African region. Both Clooneys have continued working since their return to publicize the plight of refugees.

More than 200,000 people have been killed and over two million have fled their homes since 2003 when ethnic African tribes revolted against the Arab-led Khartoum government.

A May peace agreement signed by the government and one of the major rebel groups was supposed to help end the conflict in Darfur. Instead, it has sparked months of fighting between rival rebel factions that has added to the toll of the dead and displaced. Sudan is resisting attempts by the UN to take over a 7,000-strong African Union peacekeeping force that has been unable to stop the violence in the western Darfur region.

Sudanese refugees live in makeshift huts at the Rivad refugee camp west of the Darfur town of Al-Geneina, Sudan.
Photo Courtesy of AP

Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir has said the change in peacekeepers would violate the country's sovereignty and has warned that his army would fight any UN forces sent to Darfur.

"The fact is Bashir is a war criminal . . . I think he should be warned that if he does not stop he will be accused of crimes against humanity," Wiesel said.

Wiesel, who survived the Nazi death camps at Auschwitz and Buchenwald during the Second World War, has worked for human rights in many parts of the world and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

"Because we went through that period of suffering and humiliation we must do something so that other people should not go through any suffering and humiliation," he said.

From The Star Phoenix

Save Darfur Coalition

About the Coalition

The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of over 100 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations. Our mission is to raise public awareness and to mobilize an effective unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of two million people in the Darfur region.

The Save Darfur Coalition's unity statement was signed by more than 100 organizations.

The Coalition began on July 14, 2004 when the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and American Jewish World Service organized a Darfur Emergency Summit at the CUNY Graduate Center in Manhattan featuring Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Elie Wiesel. Mr. Wiesel inspired the group with his impassioned remarks about the suffering being inflicted on Darfurians: "How can I hope to move people from indifference if I remain indifferent to the plight of others? I cannot stand idly by or all my endeavors will be unworthy."

Image courtesy of BBC News

Thousands of Sudanese continue to pour into camps in Darfur despite the peace deal agreed between the Khartoum government and one rebel faction two months ago.

This woman arrived in Abu Shouk camp in the north last month after her village grew increasingly insecure.

It is the pattern across Darfur, in the south one field worker estimates 15,000 people have arrived in Nyala in the past few months.

From the Save Darfur Coalition.

Save Darfur Coalition

Current Situation

Nearly three years into the crisis, the western Sudanese region of Darfur is acknowledged to be a humanitarian and human rights tragedy of the first order. The humanitarian, security and political situation continue to deteriorate: atrocities continue, people are still dying in large numbers of malnutrition and disease, and a new famine is feared. According to reports by the World Food Program, the United Nations and the Coalition for International Justice, 3.5 million people are now hungry, 2.5 million have been displaced due to violence, and 400,000 people have died in Darfur thus far. The international community is failing to protect civilians or to influence the Sudanese government to do so.

The international community is deeply divided—perhaps paralyzed—over what to do next in Darfur. The UN Commission of Inquiry on Darfur described the massive scope of atrocities carried out in the territory, primarily by the government and its allied Janjaweed militias. And the situation on the ground shows a number of negative trends, which have been developing since the last quarter of 2004: deteriorating security; a credible threat of famine; mounting civilian casualties; the ceasefire in shambles; increasing tensions between Sudan and Chad; and new armed movements appearing in Darfur and neighboring states. Chaos and a culture of impunity are taking root in the region.

Darfur refugee. Image courtesy of BBC News

The humanitarian situation remains catastrophic, due to ongoing state-sponsored violence, layers of aid obstruction, the lack of an overall humanitarian strategic plan, and the weakened state of displaced Sudanese. Refugees and internally displaced civilians (IDPs) have been displaced for long periods, they are in terribly weakened states, they are subject to sexual abuse and attack, they do not have adequate shelter, and a new famine is feared. Infectious diseases and dysentery will drive up the body counts rapidly. Conventional responses are simply inadequate to prevent increasing mortality rates, and the current response will fail unless buttressed by a number of bold and urgent actions.

Rape has become a hallmark of the crimes against humanity in Darfur. It has proven one way for

the Janjaweed militias to continue attacking Darfurians after driving them from their homes. Families must continue collecting wood, fetching water or working their fields, and in doing so, women daily put themselves or their children at the risk of rape, beatings or death as soon as they are outside the camps, towns or villages. It is assumed that the hundreds of rapes reported and treated grossly underestimate the actual number committed, as victims of rape in Darfur are often too scared or too ashamed to seek help. In a culture where rape draws heavy social disgrace, victims are often ostracised by their own families and communities. These women and children have been forced from their communities and even punished for illegal pregnancy as a result of being raped.

Burnt village west of Nyala. Photo courtesy of BBC News.

As need far outstrips the ability of agencies to deliver aid, it is not too soon to sound a famine alert. Relief workers on the ground are convinced that few if any of the nearly 2 million IDPs will return to their homes in time for the next planting season, thus ensuring at least longer term food insecurity. The onset of the rainy season in late May will further restrict access.

Compounding the problem is that the numbers of at-risk civilians continue to increase. The Janjaweed continue to undertake attacks against villages, prey on IDPs, and obstruct aid activities. Many Janjaweed have been integrated into the army and police; no one has been charged with any crime, and their actions are not being challenged. There remains a state of total impunity.

Not since the Rwanda genocide of 1994 has the world seen such a calculated campaign of slaughter, rape, starvation and displacement. The Sudanese government continues to flout international law with impunity.

North-South Conflict ≠Conflict in Darfur

On January 9, 2005, a peace deal was signed to end the long war between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/Movement (SPLM). This war, which has raged for the past 20 years, is commonly referred to as the North-South conflict and is often confused with the violence in Darfur. This peace deal signed earlier this year did not address the issues in Darfur, where the genocide continues.

From the Save Darfur Coalition.

Save Darfur Coalition

Unity Statement

The Echo Foundation is a signatory of the Unity Statement and a member of the Save Darfur Coalition.

Faith-based, Humanitarian and Human Rights Organizations Unite to Respond to Massive Crisis in Darfur, Sudan

The emergency in Sudan's western region of Darfur presents the starkest challenge to the world since the Rwanda genocide in 1994. A government-backed Arab militia known as *Janjaweed* has been engaging in campaigns to displace and wipe out communities of African tribal farmers.

Villages have been razed, women and girls are systematically raped and branded, men and boys murdered, and food and water supplies targeted and destroyed. Government aerial bombardments support the *Janjaweed* by hurling explosives as well as barrels of nails, car chassis and old appliances from planes to crush people and property. Tens of thousands have died. Well over a million people have been driven from their homes, and only in the past few weeks have humanitarian agencies gained limited access to some of the affected region.

Mukesh Kapila, the former United Nations humanitarian coordinator for Sudan, said on March 19 that the violence in Darfur is "more than a conflict, it's an organized attempt to do away with one set of people." The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has issued its first ever genocide emergency. John Prendergast of International Crisis Group warns, "We have not yet hit the apex of the crisis."

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) estimates that 350,000 people or more could die in the coming months. Ongoing assessments by independent organizations such as Medecins sans Frontieres (Doctors without Borders) suggest that USAID's estimate may be conservative. If aid is denied or unavailable, as many as a million people could perish.

Lives are hanging in the balance on a massive scale.

From the Save Darfur Coalition.

"The worst sin towards our fellow creatures is not to hate them, but to be indifferent to them: that's the essence of inhumanity." —George Bernard Shaw

Save Darfur Coalition

Call to Action

Announced by the Save Darfur Coalition on August 2, 2004:
We commend the efforts of the U.S. government in brokering a peace deal to end the gruesome 21-year Civil War in the South and its generous pledge of $300 million in U.S. humanitarian aid. We also applaud the recent visits of Secretary of State Colin Powell and United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan to the region of Darfur to assess the atrocities human rights organizations are calling the worst humanitarian crisis in the world today. And we congratulate Congress for taking decisive legislative action. But we must not wait for a legal determination of "genocide" to ensure a massive worldwide humanitarian response and call to end the violence and investigate crimes against humanity.

As Elie Wiesel passionately declared at our Darfur Emergency Summit on July 14, "the perils of indifference enable killers to kill and tormentors to torment—we cannot stand idly by [the crimes against humanity being committed in Sudan] or all our endeavors will be unworthy—We must act." We therefore call on people of conscience everywhere to take any and all actions permitted by each individual's or organization's abilities and constraints to:

- encourage worldwide efforts to stop the displacement and end the crimes against humanity
- demand massive worldwide governmental humanitarian support and access to match the need
- help in the relief efforts by supporting organizations giving aid
- promote efforts to rebuild villages and return the displaced
- call for a UN Commission of Inquiry to investigate war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide

A man who was shot in the back of his arm by a government soldier upon returning to his village. He did not know that his village had been attacked because he had been out farming during the time of the attack.

Photo by Brian Steidle

The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

Elie Wiesel and his wife, Marion, established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Prize for Peace. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance, and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding and equality.

The Foundation runs multiple programs both domestically and internationally.

In the U.S., the Foundation organizes The Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay Contest for college juniors and seniors and bestows The Elie Wiesel Humanitarian Award to a deserving individual.

Outside the U.S., the Foundation organizes a regular calendar of international conferences for youth in conflict-ridden countries and gatherings of Nobel Laureates.

The Foundation also runs Beit Tzipora Centers for Study & Enrichment in Israel that give Ethiopian Jewish children the opportunity to overcome early educational inequality and participate fully in Israeli society. Named in memory of Elie Wiesel's younger sister, who died in Auschwitz, the Foundation currently runs two centers, one in Ashkelon and one in Kiryat Malachi, which enroll more than 1,000 youth. The goal of these programs is to provide Ethiopian immigrants with desperately needed academic tutoring, pre-vocational training, and social and emotional support.

From the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Prize in Ethics

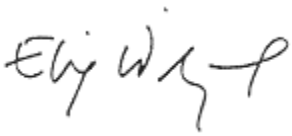
Whatever the answer to essential questions of society and individual human beings may be, education is surely its major component. But what would education be without its ethical dimension? Many of us believe them to be inseparable. That is why this Prize in Ethics Essay Contest was established in 1989 by our Foundation. Thousands of students from hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation have participated. Through their writing, they explored their concerns and beliefs, their fears and their hopes.

While we suggest relevant topics each year, applicants are encouraged to choose any subject they feel strongly about, provided it is related to the domain of ethics.

The quality of the essays we have received over the years has been remarkable. It is with great difficulty that winners are chosen by a special committee of teachers and scholars.

We appeal to college students to send us their essays. We promise you they will not be ignored. In fact, we shall be proud to be your first readers. And perhaps your first critics and publishers.

We wish you good luck.



Information

The Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay Contest is an annual competition designed to challenge college students to analyze the urgent ethical issues confronting them in today's complex world. Students are encouraged to write thought-provoking personal essays that raise questions, single out issues and are rational arguments for ethical action.

This year's Suggested Topics for 2007 are as follows:

- What does your own experience tell you about the relationship between politics and ethics and, in particular, what could be done to make politics more ethical?
- Reflect on the most profound moral dilemma you have encountered and analyze what it has taught you about ethics and yourself.
- Examine the ethical aspects or implications of a major literary work, a film or a significant piece of art.
- What is the relation between religion and ethics in today's world?

Full-time undergraduate juniors and seniors at accredited four-year colleges and universities in the US are welcome to enter the Essay Contest.

All submissions to the essay contest are judged anonymously. A distinguished committee reviews the essays and a jury that includes Elie Wiesel chooses the winners. Please note that no manuscripts will be returned and essays may not be submitted elsewhere until the awards have been announced. Winning essays become the property of The Elie Wiesel Foundation and may not be reproduced elsewhere without written permission.

Printed materials are sent to previous faculty sponsors, college deans and department chairs every September. If you would like to be added to mailing list please visit the Contact Us section of the website.

For additional information, please visit the Frequently Asked Questions section of the site.

The annual Elie Wiesel Prize in Ethics Essay Contest is made possible through the generosity of E. Billi Ivry & The Thaler Family Foundation.

From the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
For more information, please go to www.eliewieselfoundation.org.

Petra Conference of Nobel Laureates 2005
and the Nobel Laureates Initiative

© Jacques Langevin/Deadline Photo Press

Co-hosted by The Elie Wiesel Foundation and His Majesty King Abdullah II of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Conference brought together Nobel Laureates of Peace, Economics, Literature, Physics, Chemistry, Physiology & Medicine with distinguished social and political leaders.

The theme of the first Petra Conference in May 2005, A World in Danger, focused on the role of education in combating global injustice.

The ancient stone-carved city of Petra, a powerful expression of human creativity and ingenuity, served as a dramatic and inspiring setting for the Conference as the Laureates and leaders as they discussed peace and tolerance; security and stability; economic development; human development; and culture and media.

Among the accomplishments of the Conference was the development of The Nobel Laureates Initiative, a collaboration of Nobel Laureates working together to fight indifference, intolerance and injustice.

As Elie Wiesel noted, "We must harness our rich human potential in service of peace, progress and prosperity. To these ends, peoples must realize that no one is superior to another. No nation is worthier than another. No religion is holier than another. Racism, ethnic discrimination and religious fanaticism lead to antagonism, not salvation. I fear that humankind is on a train hurtling towards an abyss. Unless we pull the alarm, it may be too late. It is time to show the world that we can restore humankind's dignity, its hope and future."

From the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

Nobel Laureates and celebrities tackle world threats

Petra Conference 2006

Antara News
June 20, 2006

Petra, Jordan (ANTARA News) – Nobel laureates and celebrities including the Dalai Lama and actress Uma Thurman are to gather this week in Jordan to mull ways of transforming the world's challenges and opportunities.

After an informal dinner on Tuesday in the ancient city of Petra, King Abdullah II and Nobel Peace laureate Elie Wiesel will hunker down with their guests for two days of soul-searching solutions to the world's woes.

Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel greeting His Holiness the Dalai Lama on his arrival in Petra for the Conference of Nobel Laureates on May 17th 2005. Photo courtesy of the International Campaign for Tibet.

Some 25 Nobel laureates in chemistry, economics, literature, medicine and peace along with 30 celebrities will seek, for the second year running, to deal with some of the world's most intractable problems Wednesday and Thursday, AFP reported.

"In the 21st Century, humankind must find new ways of dealing with emerging threats and develop a deeper understanding about the connections between them," organizers said.

"Petra II: A World in Danger, provides a forum to reflect on both old and new problems, and propose novel strategies for transforming challenges into opportunities," they said.

Four key issues

According to the programme of this year's forum, the delegates will focus on four key issues: non-proliferation of mass destruction weapons, education, health and poverty and economic empowerment.

"The international community needs to work in unison to counter mounting threats to peace and stability," the organizers said in a statement, referring to the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

"More effective measures are needed to control nuclear stockpiles and create disincentives to uranium enrichment and reprocessing of weapons grade material," it added.

Delegates will likewise explore ways to develop education across the globe as a "tool in the fight against intolerance and hatred," and to improve the quality of education for boys and girls alike.

"Access to information via the Internet is also essential to closing the knowledge gap between developed and developing countries and preparing students to compete in the modern world," organizers said.

At issue will also be ways "to deal with global health pandemics caused by HIV/AIDS and the avian flu," and to ensure the most vulnerable, namely children and women, are provided with adequate health care.

"Public health crises devastate lives, productivity, and create fertile ground for civil conflict," organizers warned.

The delegates will likewise look at ways to alleviate the global scourge of poverty, which organizers say "is a source of instability, creating breeding grounds for fanaticism, radicalism and terrorism,"

"Wealthy countries can help with development assistance, trade, debt relief, and market access. They are also challenged to make globalization more equitable."

"Beneficiary countries can do their part by strengthening governance, reforming their economies, and fighting corruption," organizers said, noting at least half of the world's population survives on less than two dollars a day.

Non-binding recommendations

The forum, organized by the King Abdullah II Fund for Development and the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, is expected to make a series of non-binding recommendations addressed to world governments.

Dignitaries include Thai Deputy Prime Minister Sathirathai Surakiart, French former culture minister Jack Lang, East Timorese Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta as well as Nobel Peace laureates David Trimble and Betty Williams.

"Today's pressing problems are so serious, no nation can hope to master them alone," organizers said.

The centuries-old pink-coloured ruins of Petra, where the forum takes place, is a World Heritage Site located 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of the capital Amman.

From Antara News

The Last Word: Elie Wiesel
The moral dimension

Newsweek International

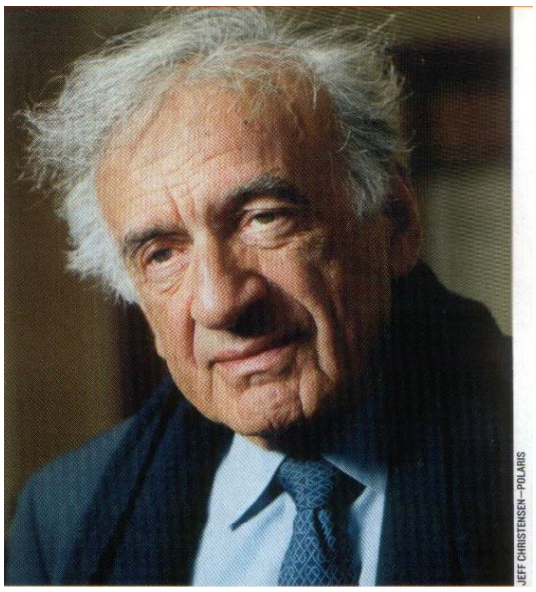


Photo by Jeff Christensen—Polaris

July 3-10, 2006 issue - Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, born in Romania in 1928, was 15 years old when he and his family were deported by the Nazis to Auschwitz. The experience defined his life. A philosopher, teacher and founder of the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity, he has dedicated his life to ensuring that the world never forgets the Holocaust—and to championing the cause of the down-trodden everywhere, from Nicaragua's Miskito Indians to the victims of famine and genocide in Africa, apartheid in South Africa and war in the former Yugoslavia and the Middle East. He is the author of more than 40 books of fiction and nonfiction, including *Night*, the famous account of his death-camp years, published in 30 languages. He spoke with *Newsweek's* Michael Meyer. Excerpts:

MEYER: You've just hosted a conference of 30 Nobel Prize winners and other world leaders in Petra, talking about threats to humanity—from Darfur to global warming. What did you hope to accomplish?
WIESEL: [To] change the world, actually. I am a teacher, a writer. My goal is to sensitize the desensitized, world leaders first among them. To be sensitive to people's pain, fears and hopes. I think that accomplishes quite a lot.

I imagine you see a great deal of insensitivity in the world at this point, particularly among its leaders.
There's a reason for that. It's called politics. It's sad, because to be in politics in ancient times was a great compliment—to work for the city, the republic, some common good. Today, if you say a person is a politician, it's an insult. The problem is the moral dimension. It's missing, in so many quarters. What to do? I don't know. Maybe elected officials should be sent to seminars for a month!

So who came to Petra?
Among others, [Israeli Prime Minister] Ehud Olmert and [Palestinian Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas.

Did they meet?
Not one on one, but in conversation with other laureates and later at a breakfast hosted by King Abdullah. Very intimate; only eight people. Abbas arrived first, then Olmert. I feared some embarrassment, but no. Their handshake turned into a hug. The ice was broken! We spoke mainly of economies at first, Israel's and Palestine's, then it was all World Cup. The whole table could only talk soccer. Except me. I finally said, "Listen, this is all very nice but a decision must

be made now for a second meeting." And it was accepted! Olmert later announced they would meet again in a few weeks for formal talks. I came back more optimistic than I left.

What do you hope for, exactly?
That they will listen to one another, talk as human beings. With hope—not fear of the repercussions. My impression is that Olmert will go far. He'll follow Sharon's footsteps, this man who was so hated. In Europe, they carried banners, Sharon=Hitler. Yet all of a sudden he opposed his own party, his ideology and tried to do what is best.

And was felled by a stroke. If God exists, he works in mysterious ways.
Unfair ways. Yet great generals occasionally become messengers of peace.

Do you think Olmert's wall is the way to peace?
Sharon always told me the answer is security. He said, "Let terrorism stop, and we can have peace." So with Olmert. I think he wants to attain peace. How he does it is for him to decide.

Does he have a partner?
Not with Hamas. If it were not for Hamas, I think we would be very far into a peace process. The main item for them is the destruction of Israel, as it always has been. Hamas has not been able to grow into its new role in government. They had more power simply as Hamas.

Is Washington correct to deny Hamas any financial resources?
I don't know. One thing I do know: I do not want Palestinians and their children to suffer from this policy. So I would first double, triple, quadruple the budget and give it to NGOs to go help every child, every family, every hospital. I would do whatever I could to mobilize funds all over the world. People should not suffer.

What about Fatah and the Palestinian Authority?
America and other civilized countries have a duty to support Abbas at this time. See what happened recently, with the shootings and the assault on Parliament. The two sides have stopped killing Jews; now they're killing each other. I hope they can avoid civil war. Much depends on the July 26 referendum [called by Abbas], which would recognize Israel and accept a two-state peace. I think that it will ultimately topple Hamas.

And Iran?
This man Ahmadinejad is crazy. He is the No. 1 Holocaust denier in the world yet, absurdly, says that there will be one—and he will do it. Of course we should do something to prevent it. But we should use force only if all other means fail.

Beit Tzipora Centers

In the mid-1990's, soon after thousands of Ethiopian Jews were rescued from violence and persecution in Africa, The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity created two educational centers in the State of Israel. These Beit Tzipora Centers, in Ashkelon and Kiryat Malachi, focus on educating the Ethiopian-Jewish community and giving Ethiopian-Israeli young people the opportunity to grow and participate fully in Israeli society. The centers currently enroll more than 1,000 boys and girls in after-school programs and serve as a model for other schools.

Named in memory of Elie Wiesel's younger sister, who died in Auschwitz, these centers have become a major part of the Foundation's work and remain a passion of the Wiesels. Elie and Marion Wiesel have been actively involved in the Beit Tzipora Centers since the beginning and continue to remain active in the management of the Centers, regularly visiting and encouraging the students to succeed.

School and public officials have recognized that the Beit Tzipora study and enrichment programs significantly improve the quality of life for these young people. The Foundation's dream is to give all Ethiopian children in Israel the chance to excel. This work is constantly expanding and growing and will remain at the heart of the mission of The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

From the Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity.

The History of Ethiopian Jews

Introduction

> "Once they were kings. A half million strong, they matched their faith with fervor and out-matched the Moslem and Christian tribesmen around them to rule the mountain highlands around Lake Tana. They called themselves Beta Israel—the house of Israel—and used the Torah to guide their prayers and memories of the heights of Jerusalem as they lived in their thatched huts in Ethiopia.
>
> But their neighbors called them *Falashas*—the alien ones, the invaders. And even three hundred years of rule, even the black features that matched those of all the people around them did not make the Jews of Ethiopia secure governors of their destiny in Africa" ("Falashas: The Forgotten Jews," *Baltimore Jewish Times*, 9 November 1979).

For centuries, the world Jewish community was not even aware of the existence of the Jewish community of Ethiopia in the northern province of Gondar. The miracle of Operation Solomon is only now being fully understood; an ancient Jewish community has been brought back from the edge of government-imposed exile and starvation.

But once they were kings. . .

History

Christianity spread through the Axum dynasty of Ethiopia in the 4th century CE. By the 7th century, however, Islam had surpassed Christianity and had separated Ethiopia from its Christian African neighbors.

Prior to this, the Beta Israel had enjoyed relative independence through the Middle Ages. Their reign was threatened in the 13th century CE under the Solomonic Empire, and intermittent fighting continuing for the next three centuries with other tribes.

In 1624, the Beta Israel fought what would be their last battle for independent autonomy against Portuguese-backed Ethiopians. A graphic eyewitness account described the battle:

"Falasha men and women fought to the death from the steep heights of their fortress... they threw themselves over the precipice or cut each other's throats rather than be taken prisoner—it was a Falasha Masada. [The rebel leaders] burned all of the Falasha's written history and all of their religious books, it was an attempt to eradicate forever the Judaic memory of Ethiopia" (*Righteous Jews Honored by Falasha Supporters*, AAEJ Press Release, 1981).

Those Jews captured alive were sold into slavery, forced to be baptized, and denied the right to own land. The independence of the Beta Israel was torn from them just as it was from their Israeli brethren at Masada centuries before.

Modern Contact
The first modern contact with the now oppressed community came in 1769, when Scottish explorer James Bruce stumbled upon them while searching for the source of the Nile River. His estimates at the time placed the Beta Israel population at 100,000, already greatly decreased from an estimate from centuries before of a half-million.

Little additional contact was made with the community, but in 1935 their stability was greatly threatened as the Italian army marched into Ethiopia. Ethiopia's ruler, Emperor Haile Selassie fled his country and actually took refuge in Jerusalem for a short time. Selassie returned to power in 1941, but the situation for the Beta Israel improved little.

In 1947, Ethiopia abstained on the United Nations Partition Plan for the British Mandate of Palestine, which reestablished the State of Israel. By 1955, the non-governmental Jewish Agency of Israel had already begun construction of schools and a teacher's seminary for the Beta Israel in Ethiopia.

In 1956, Ethiopia and Israel established consular relations, which were improved in 1961 when the two countries established full diplomatic ties. Positive relations between Israel and Ethiopia existed until 1973, when, in the wake of the Yom Kippur War, Ethiopia (and 28 African nations) broke diplomatic relations with Israel under the threat of an Arab oil embargo.

The Mengistu Threat
Months later, Emperor Selassie's regime ended in a *coup d'etat.* Selassie was replaced by Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, whose Marxist-Leninist dictatorship increased the threat to the Beta Israel. During the weeks surrounding Mariam's coup, an estimated 2,500 Jews were killed and 7,000 became homeless.

Soon Mariam instituted a policy of "villagization," relocating millions of peasant farmers onto state-run cooperatives which greatly harmed the Beta Israel by forcing them to "share" their villages—though they were denied the right to own the land—with non-Jewish farmers, resulting in increased levels of anti-Semitism throughout the Gondar Province. According to the Ethiopian government, over 30% of the population had been moved from privately owned farms to cooperatives as of 1989.

After taking office in 1977, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin was eager to facilitate the rescue of Ethiopia's Jews, and so Israel entered into a period of selling arms to the Mariam government in hopes that Ethiopia would allow Jews to leave for Israel. In 1977, Begin asked President Mengistu to allow 200 Ethiopian Jews to leave for Israel aboard an Israeli military jet that had emptied its military cargo and was returning to Israel. Mariam agreed, and that may have been the precursor to the mass exodus of Operation Moses began.

In the early 1980's, Ethiopia forbade the practice of Judaism and the teaching of Hebrew. Numerous members of the Beta Israel were imprisoned on fabricated charges of being "Zionist spies," and Jewish religious leaders, *Kesim,*(sing. *Kes*) were harassed and monitored by the government.

The situation remained exceedingly bleak through the early 1980's. Forced conscription at age 12 took many Jewish boys away from their parents, some never to be heard from again. Additionally, with the constant threat of war, famine, and horrendous health conditions (Ethiopia has one of the world's worst infant mortality rates and doctor to patient ratios), the Beta Israel's position became more precarious as time progressed.

The government began to slightly soften its treatment of the Jews, however, during the mid-1980's when terrible famines wreaked havoc on the economy. Ethiopia was forced to ask Western nations for famine relief, including the United States of America and Israel, allowing them both to exert a modicum of pressure for the release of the Beta Israel.

Over 8,000 Beta Israel came to Israel between 1977 and 1984. But these efforts pale in comparison with the modern exodus that took place during 1984's Operation Moses.

Operations Moses and Joshua

Under a news blackout for security reasons, Operation Moses began on November 18, 1984, and ended six weeks later on January 5, 1985. In that time, almost 8,000 Jews were rescued and brought to Israel.

But the mission was not without problems. Because of news leaks (blamed primarily on a December 6 article in the *Washington Jewish Week* and full page advertisements placed by the United Jewish Appeal), the mission ended prematurely as Arab nations pressured the Sudanese government to prevent any more Jews from using Sudan to go to Israel. Almost 15,0000 Jews were left behind in Ethiopia.

Thus, by the end of Operation Moses in January 1985, almost two-thirds of the Beta Israel remained in Ethiopia. They were comprised almost entirely of women, young children, and the sick, since only the strongest members of the community were encouraged to make the harrowing trek to Sudan where the airlift actually occurred. In addition, many young boys were encouraged to make the dangerous trek to freedom due to the low age of conscription, often as young as age twelve.

As Babu Yakov, a Beta Israel leader, summed up, “Those who could not flee are elderly, sick, and infants. Those least capable of defending themselves are now facing their enemies alone.”

In 1985, then Vice President George Bush arranged a CIA-sponsored follow-up mission to Operation Moses. Operation Joshua brought an additional 800 Beta Israel from Sudan to Israel. But in the following five years, a virtual stalemate occurred in the rescue of Ethiopian Jewry. All efforts on behalf of the Beta Israel fell on the closed ears of the Mariam dictatorship.

Meanwhile, those Jews who did escape during Operation Moses were separated from their loved ones while attempting to adjust to Israeli society. The new arrivals spent between six months and two years in absorption centers learning Hebrew, being retrained for Israel's industrial society, and learning how to live in a modern society (most Ethiopian villages had no running water or electricity). Suicide, all but unheard of in their tukuls in Ethiopia, even claimed a few of the new arrivals due to the anxiety of separation and departure.

Over 1,600 "orphans of circumstance" lived day to day separated from their families, not knowing the fate of their parents, brothers, sisters, and loved ones.

Operation Solomon—The Fulfillment of a Dream

The grim prospect of thousands of Jewish children growing up separated from their parents in Israel almost became a reality. Little could be done to persuade the Mariam government to increase the trickle of Jews leaving Ethiopia in the years between Operations Joshua and Solomon. But in November 1990, Ethiopia and Israel reached an agreement that would allow Ethiopian Jews to move to Israel under the context of family reunification. It soon became clear, however, that Mengistu was willing to allow Ethiopian Jews to leave outside of the guise of reunification. November and December, 1990, showed increased numbers of Ethiopians leaving for Israel. The Ethiopian Jews were finally ready to come home.

In early 1991, Eritrean and Tigrean rebels began a concerted attack on Mengistu forces, meeting with surprising success for the first time since the civil war began in 1975. With the rebel armies advancing each day, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam fled his country in early May. Rebels claimed control of the capital Addis Ababa shortly thereafter, and the situation of the Beta Israel took top priority in Israel. The Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir authorized a special permit for the Israeli airline, El Al, to fly on the Jewish Sabbath. On Friday, May 24, and continuing non-stop for 36 hours, a total of 34 El Al jumbo jets and Hercules C-130s—seats removed to accommodate the maximum number of Ethiopians—began a new chapter in the struggle for the freedom of Ethiopian Jewry.

Operation Solomon, named for the king from whom one of the theories suggest that the Beta Israel draw their lineage, ended almost as quickly as it began. Timing was crucial, since any delay by Israel could have allowed the rebels to hold the Jews as bargaining chips with Israel or the United States. A total of 14,324 Ethiopian Jews were rescued and resettled in Israel, a modern exodus of the grandest design. Operation Solomon rescued twice the number of Jews in Operation Moses and Joshua, in a mere fraction of the time. Though it is too early to predict their impact on Israeli society, the 36,000 Ethiopian Jews now living in Israel (rescue efforts are under way to transport the remaining 2,100 Ethiopians who wish to emigrate to Israel) will play an important role in Israel for generations to come.

Authentic Jews

Because much of the Beta Israel's history is passed orally from generation to generation, we may never truly know their origins. Four main theories exist concerning the beginnings of the Beta Israel community:

1) The Beta Israel may be the lost Israelite tribe of Dan.
2) They may be descendants of Menelik I, son of King Solomon and Queen Sheba.
3) They may be descendants of Ethiopian Christians and pagans who converted to Judaism centuries ago.

4) They may be descendants of Jews who fled Israel for Egypt after the destruction of the First Temple in 586 BCE and eventually settled in Ethiopia.

(Excerpted from "Reunify Ethiopian Jewry," World Union of Jewish Students)

Without regard as to which theory may actually be correct (and each theory has its support), the authenticity of the "Jewishness" of the community became an issue.

As early as the 16th century, Egypt's Chief Rabbi David ben Solomon ibn Avi Zimra (Radbaz) declared that in *Halachic* (Jewish legal) issues, the Beta Israel were indeed Jews. In 1855, Daniel ben Hamdya, a member of the Beta Israel, was the first Ethiopian Jew to visit Israel, meeting with a council of rabbis in Jerusalem concerning the authenticity of the Beta Israel. By 1864, almost all leading Jewish authorities, most notably Rabbi Azriel Hildsheimer of Eisenstadt, Germany, accepted the Beta Israel as true Jews. In 1908 the chief rabbis of forty-five countries had heeded Rabbi Hildsheimer's call and officially recognized the Beta Israel as fellow Jews.

In reaffirming the Radbaz's position centuries before, Rabbi Ovadia Yossef, Israel's Chief Sephardic Rabbi, stated in 1972, "I have come to the conclusion that Falashas are Jews who must be saved from absorption and assimilation. We are obliged to speed up their immigration to Israel and educate them in the spirit of the holy Torah, making them partners in the building of the Holy Land."

In 1975, Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren wrote to the Beta Israel telling them, "You are our brothers, you are our blood and our flesh. You are true Jews." Later that same year the Israeli Interministerial Commission officially recognized the Beta Israel as Jews under Israel's Law of Return, a law designed to aid in Jewish immigration to Israel. The Beta Israel were ready to come home.

Indeed, the Beta Israel were strictly observant in pre-Talmudic Jewish traditions. The women went to the *mikvah*, or ritual bath, just as observant Jewish women do to this day, and they continue to carry out ancient festivals, such as Seged, that have been passed down through the generations of Beta Israel. The *Kesim*, or religious leaders, are as widely revered and respected as the great rabbis in each community, passing the Jewish customs through storytelling and maintaining the few Jewish books and Torahs some communities were fortunate enough to have written in the liturgical language of *Ge'ez*.

Jewish Apathy . . . and its Defeat

The struggle to free the Beta Israel was not fought solely against the Ethiopian government. Much like some timid Jewish leaders during the Holocaust, some recent Jews sought to prevent a *shanda fur de goyim* (an embarrassment in front of the non-Jews) by not stirring up waves over Ethiopian Jewry.

The history of the Beta Israel's rescue is at times open to debate regarding the heroes of the Ethiopian Jewry movement. As with many struggles to free oppressed Jewry around the world, many advocated and vocalized opposition to those responsible for the lack of action on their behalf. Others, however, argued for a more quiet diplomacy, void of the public demonstrations and arrests that marked the struggle for Soviet Jewry.

Though over 8,000 Beta Israel managed to flee to Israel during his tenure, it was an Israeli official in charge of the Ethiopian Jews' absorption who may best symbolize the insensitivity that an extreme minority of people once held. Yehuda Dominitz who served as Director General of the Jewish Agency's Department of Immigration and Absorption, declared in 1980 that, "[taking] a Falasha (sic) out of his village, it's like taking a fish out of water...I'm not in favor of bringing them [to Israel]." Dominitz also refused to allow his agency to rent buses so Ethiopian Jews in Israel could travel to Jerusalem to observe their ancient holiday of Seged (Dominitz eventually relented, but had the buses take the Beta Israel to Haifa instead of Jerusalem).

Malkah Raymist, a writer for the World Zionist Organization, wrote in 1956 in *The Jewish Horizon* (of the Hapoel Hamizrachi of America Movement) that, "the reasons [for not bringing Ethiopian Jews to Israel] are simple and weighty. On one hand, they are well off where they are, while their development and mental outlook is that of children; they could fall an easy prey of exploitation, if brought here without any preparation. On the other hand, being a backward element, they would be and it would take several years before they could be educated towards a minimum of progressive thinking."

In an American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) press release, the AAEJ quoted its founder, Dr. Graenum Berger, as criticizing those who sought any delay in the rescue of the Beta Israel. Berger declared, "Not when Jews are dying...these revelations show once again that the policy of influencing factions of the government of Israel always have been against the immigration of the Ethiopian Jews. And, the same people who controlled their immigration then are controlling it now. These are the same people who gave instructions to the Israeli Embassy in Ethiopia (1956-1973) not to issue immigration visas to any Jew from Ethiopia."

Berger himself came under criticism for his outspoken remarks concerning the Israeli efforts to rescue the Beta Israel, showing that nobody was immune from the rhetoric surrounding the issue.

Source: Israel Association for Ethiopian Jews (IAEJ).
Written by the staff of PRIMER - Promoting Research in the Middle East Region.

From The Jewish Virtual Library.

Africa: Ethiopia

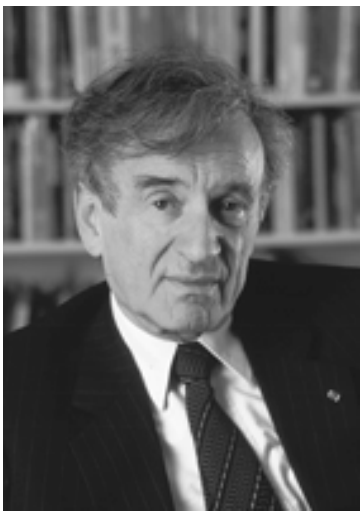
Image courtesy of Jencons Limited

Elie Wiesel: The Humanitarian

Study Questions

1. After reading the interview, what do you think is Elie Wiesel's most pressing concern? What does he most want his audience to understand about why he does what he does?
2. Why do we need to remember the truth?
3. What is so unique about the problem of anti-Semitism? How has it managed to continue for so long?
4. What is the mission of The Elie Wiesel Foundation?
5. Brainstorm and outline a possible essay for The Prize in Ethics Essay Contest.
6. What was the purpose of the Petra Conference? What did it accomplish?
7. What is the essential cause behind the Middle Eastern conflicts? What are the Jewish and Palestinian arguments, respectively?
8. What is Zionism? What emotions and philosophies define this movement?
9. How did the British Mandate change the region's borders? What happened as a result?
10. What is the Wailing Wall? What conflict was it involved in?
11. Summarize the main components of the United Nations Partitions Plan.
12. What events led up to the 1967 War? What effect(s) did it have on Israel?
13. Briefly discuss the organization and purpose of the Palestine Liberation Organization.
14. What was so important about the Camp David Accords? What did it accomplish?
15. Although the intifada was not a complete success, what did it help prove? What changes did it bring about?
16. Compare and contrast the first intifada with the uprising in 2000.
17. According to Jeffrey Sachs, why is peace in the Middle East so hard to attain? What stands in the way?
18. How have the extremist minorities managed to wield so much influence?
19. Why were the Beta Israel oppressed?
20. What is "villagization?" What effect did it have on the Beta Israel community?
21. Discuss the three main operations to rescue Jews out of Ethiopia. Where did each succeed and fail?
22. What are the four main theories for the origin of Beta Israel?
23. What is the focus of the Beit Tzipora Centers?
24. What is the cartoon on Darfur trying to say? What is so dangerous about denial and indifference?
25. What are the major parties involved in the Darfur genocide? Who is persecuting whom? Why?
26. Where does the Janjaweed get much of its support?
27. What is the current refugee situation?
28. According to Elie Wiesel, how do we become killers and villains by doing nothing?
29. How have the words "never again" lost their meaning in light of Darfur?
30. Describe the mission and works of the Save Darfur Coalition.

Elie Wiesel: Writer and Professor



Through his prolific works of literature, Elie Wiesel has fought silence and indifference in yet another way. Another memoir, another novel, another story—to him, these are the channels of remembrance. Perhaps we will be less likely to forget something that is in writing, made to be preserved forever.

1. Teaching ***Night***
   - A Teacher's Guide: Study Questions
   - Curriculum Unit: Classroom Activities
   - Original Book Review from 1960
2. List of literary works by Elie Wiesel
   - **"**Out of Silence Toward Life"
   - "Voices Amid Thunder"
   - "Messengers of God"
   - "A Jew Today"
   - "The Kindness of Strangers"
   - "Looking Back to Move Forward"
   - "An Insane Desire to Dance"
3. Academy of Achievement interview
   - "Elie Wiesel on his beliefs"
4. Elie Wiesel: Academic History
5. Study Questions

"The act of writing is for me often nothing more than the secret or conscious desire to carve words on a tombstone: to the memory of a town forever vanished, to the memory of a childhood in exile, to the memory of all those I loved and who, before I could tell them I loved them, went away." —Elie Wiesel

HILL AND WANG

TEACHER'S GUIDE

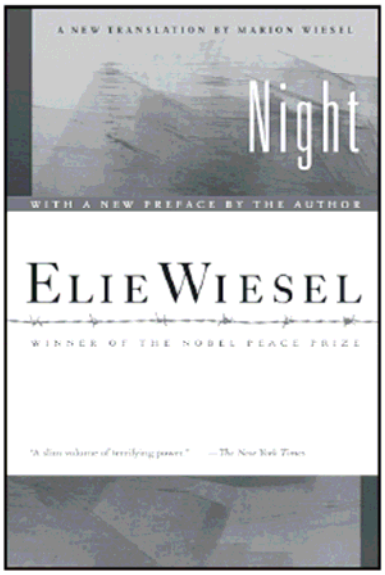
Night

by Elie Wiesel

A new translation by Marion Wiesel

"To the best of my knowledge no one has left behind so moving a record."

—Alfred Kazin



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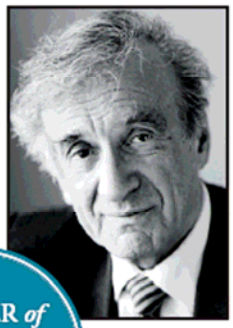

Sergey Bermenev

WINNER *of* THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

TO THE TEACHER

Night is Elie Wiesel's masterpiece, a candid, horrific, and deeply saddening autobiographical account of surviving the Holocaust while a young teenager. It is considered a classic of Holocaust literature, and was one of the first texts to be recognized as such.

Set in a series of German concentration camps, *Night* offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors—the unspeakable yet commonplace occurrences, the everyday perversion and rampant inhumanity—of life inside a death camp. However painful this memoir is to read, it also keenly and eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be.

Elie (or Eliezer) Wiesel's recorded experiences—detailing the deaths of his family and friends, the death of his innocence as a young man, and the death of his God—reveal the formation of a sensibility that must accommodate the sorrow and wisdom implicit in living through a tragedy. Shocking, brutal, perceptive, and only slightly variant from Wiesel's own personal and familial history, *Night* is a testament of memories, wounds, and losses. But this memoir is also a testament of the Jewish

people. *Night* speaks for Wiesel and his family while also speaking for all Jews who knew about life and death in the camps; like many other eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust, it looks to the individual in order to convey the psychological and emotional injuries of all who carry the burden of survival.

PREPARING TO READ

Elie Wiesel, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, has written dozens of novels, short stories, essays, plays, and historical studies. He teaches humanities at Boston University, was instrumental in the creation of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, and is considered one of the premier humanists of modern times. Wiesel has dedicated his life to speaking out against hatred, bigotry, and genocide, and *Night*, his autobiographical first book, is among the finest and most important works of Holocaust reportage ever published. The following questions are meant to underscore this importance. These questions aim not only to guide your students through this book's narrative and arguments, but also to highlight its historical cohesiveness and emotional heft.

Lastly, given the gravely serious historical perspectives set forth in *Night*, teachers are strongly encouraged to equip their students with a considerable degree of background information on the Holocaust. For those so inclined, a section titled "Suggestions for Further Study" comes after the following questions.

QUESTIONS ON COMPREHENSION

1. Describe in detail the characters of Eliezer and Moishe the Beadle. What is the nature of their relationship?

2. Consider Eliezer's feelings for his family, especially his father. What about his father's character or place in the Jewish community of Sighet commands Eliezer's respect or admiration?

3. Early in the narrative, Moishe tells Eliezer, "Man asks and God replies. But we don't understand His replies. We cannot understand them" (p. 5). Is this a paradox? How does Eliezer react to this seemingly unfair assertion? Apply Moishe's statement to the ongoing crisis of faith that Eliezer faces throughout the course of *Night*.

4. "And then, one day all foreign Jews were expelled from Sighet," writes Wiesel, quite bluntly. "And Moishe the Beadle was a foreigner" (p. 6). Why do you suppose this shocking information is delivered so matter-of-factly? What is the point of Wiesel's abruptness? Also, consider the manner in which Moishe is treated by the Jews of Sighet after he has escaped the Gestapo's capture. Are the people happy to see him? Is he himself even happy to be alive? Explain why Moishe has returned to the village. Why don't the Jewish townspeople believe the horrible news he brings back to them?

5. Time and again, the people of Sighet doubt the advance of the German army. Why? When the Germans do arrive, and even once they have moved all the Jews into ghettos, the Jewish townspeople still seem to ignore or suppress their fear. "Most people thought that we would remain in the ghetto until the end of the war, until the arrival of the Red Army. Afterward everything would be as before" (p. 12). What might be the reasons for the townspeople's widespread denial of the evidence facing them?

6. There are a few instances where we learn of Eliezer and his family missing out on opportunities to escape from the Germans (pp. 9, 14, and 82). How did these missed chances influence your reading of this memoir? And how do these unfortunate events fit into your understanding of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust as a whole?

7. Cassandra was a figure in Greek mythology who received the gift of prophecy with the simultaneous curse that no one would ever believe her. Compare Cassandra to Mrs. Schächter. Are there other Cassandras in *Night*? Who are they?

8. Not long after arriving at Birkenau, Eliezer and his father experience the horrors of the crematory firsthand—and are nearly killed themselves. "Babies!" Wiesel writes. "Yes, I did see this, with my own eyes . . . children thrown into the flames" (p. 32). Look back on Eliezer's physical, mental, and emotional reactions to this hellish and inexplicable experience. How does the story of *Night* change at this point? How does Wiesel himself change?

9. Consider the inscription that appears above the entrance to Auschwitz. What is it supposed to mean? What meaning, if any, does this slogan come to have for Eliezer?

10. Reflecting on the three weeks he spent at Auschwitz, Wiesel admits on p. 45: "Some of the men spoke of God: His mysterious ways, the sins of the Jewish people, and the redemption to come. As for me, I had ceased to pray. I concurred with Job!" What happens to the man called Job in the Bible? What is his story? Explain why Eliezer feels connected to him.

11. On p. 65, Eliezer witnesses one of the several public hangings he sees in Buna. "For God's sake, where is God?" asks a prisoner who also sees the hanging. "Where He is?" answers Eliezer, though talking only to himself. "This is where—hanging here from this gallows . . ." What does he mean by this? How could God have been hanged? How have Eliezer's thoughts and feelings changed since he identified with Job while in Auschwitz (see question 10)? Discuss the relationship that Wiesel has with God throughout *Night*.

12. Two of the people Eliezer encounters more than once in the narrative are Akiba Drumer and Juliek. Where and when does Eliezer cross paths with these individuals? Describe their personalities. What are their outstanding traits? Describe the relationships that Eliezer has with each of them. How do their respective deaths affect Eliezer? What does each person mean to him?

13. As the story progresses, we witness scenes in which the Jews have been reduced to acting—and even treating their fellow prisoners—like rabid animals. During an air raid over Buna (see p. 59), a starved man risks being shot by crawling out to a cauldron of soup that stands in the middle of the camp, only to thrust his face into the boiling liquid once he has arrived there safely. Where else do we see examples of human beings committing such insane acts? What leads people to such horrific behavior? Is it fair to say that such beastliness in the death camps is inevitable? Do Eliezer and his father fall prey to such tragedies?

14. In the concluding pages of *Night*, Eliezer's father is dying a slow, painful death in Buchenwald. But Eliezer is there to comfort him, or at least to try. Does Eliezer see his father as a burden by this point, or does he feel only pity and sorrow for him? Compare and contrast the father-son relationship you see at the end of this memoir with the one you saw at the beginning.

15. Look again at the opening pages of *Night*. When it begins, twelve-year-old Eliezer lives in the Transylvanian village of Sighet with his parents and sisters. How does being introduced to such people alter your understanding of the fact that, a half-century ago, six million Jews were exterminated in the Holocaust? How is this sickening truth achieved through *Night*'s dual purposes of memoir and history? If this is a story of one person's journey as well as a history of one horrendous part of World War II, how do the plot and the theme of the book overlap? How does the author blend the personal and the universal aspects of *Night*? In what ways does Wiesel relate not only his own nightmarish memory of the Holocaust but also humanity's?

16. At once unthinkable and unforgettable, the autobiographical *Night* offers an eyewitness account of the utmost importance, but it is essentially one young man's story. What had you read, heard, or otherwise learned about the Holocaust before reading *Night*? How did Wiesel's remembrance agree with or differ from what you already knew about the history of this event?

17. Elie Wiesel has written in *The New York Times* (June 19, 2000) about the difficulties he faced in finding the right words for the painful story he wanted to tell—and had to tell—in *Night*. "I knew I had to testify about my past but I did not know how to go about it," he wrote, adding that his religious mentors, his favorite authors, and the Talmudic sages of his youth were of surprisingly little help. "I felt incapable and perhaps unworthy of fulfilling my task as survivor and messenger. I had things to say but not the words to say them . . . Words seemed weak and pale . . . And yet it was necessary to continue." Wiesel did continue, and although *Night* was originally rejected by every major publishing house in France and the United States, eventually it was published to universal acclaim. As a story, albeit a true story, how fitting did you find the words, imagery, and overall plotting of *Night*? Does the author succeed in his self-described goals as a "survivor and messenger" who must "testify" to his readers?

18. Given its haunting, clearly rendered, and universal themes of suffering and survival in the face of absolute evil, *Night* is a book that is likely to be echoed or suggested in other works you encounter. In other words, it is a classic. Identify several other books that—in your view—echo or expand on Wiesel's classic. Explain your choices.

19. Given its horrific and incomprehensible nature, the Holocaust is sometimes described as an "unimaginable" moment of history, and yet—apart from scores of nonfiction accounts like autobiographies (such as *Night*) and documentary films—it is an event that has been imagined or reimagined in many novels, stories, movies, and so forth. Is this contradictory? Why or why not? Does the genre of historical fiction ultimately help or harm the nightmarish actuality of the Holocaust? And how, if at all, did reading *Night* influence your idea of how best to discuss, imagine, and conceptualize the Holocaust?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

A great number of supplemental sources are available for those eager to expand on their knowledge of the origins, history, and aftermath of the Holocaust—and within that number a wide variety. The ever-present need to record our history so as not to forget it, as well as the all-important necessity of documenting the Holocaust so as never to let it be repeated, have in recent decades combined forces and flourished in the creation of a genre known as Holocaust literature. And trends in historical, literary, and cultural scholarship—in part taking their cue from the phenomenon of Holocaust literature, and from the event itself—have subsequently established an academic discipline called Holocaust studies. Either Holocaust literature or Holocaust studies—both of them vast fields of personal, critical, and scholarly endeavor—could be easily explored via the Internet, or else at a local

library, as could such key secondary topics as Judaica and World War II history. Students who aim to know about the events that figure prominently in *Night* should be encouraged to pursue such avenues.

Also, the following books are recommended as excellent points of departure for students wishing to give more thought to this crucial subject: Elie Wiesel's two volumes of memoirs, *All Rivers Run to the Sea* and *And the Sea Is Never Full*; *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank; *The Holocaust* and *The Boys* by Martin Gilbert; *The Destruction of the European Jews* by Raul Hilberg; *All But My Life** by Gerda Weissmann Klein; *The Hours After* by Gerda Weissmann Klein and Kurt Klein; *Survival in Auschwitz* and *The Drowned and the Saved* by Primo Levi; *The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich* by William L. Shirer; *On Burning Ground* by Michael Skakun; *Maus: A Survivor's Tale*, volumes 1 and 2, by Art Spiegelman; and *The Pianist* by Wladyslaw Szpilman. As mentioned before, Elie Wiesel has written dozens of other works, among them novels, memoirs, short stories, essays, plays, and historical studies. Students especially interested in *Night* may also wish to seek out this author's other volumes, in particular the two other volumes of *The Night Trilogy*: *Dawn* and *Day*.

Moreover, many motion pictures—both fiction and nonfiction—have been made about the Holocaust. A short list of such films that have received considerable critical acclaim would include the following: *Night and Fog* (directed by Alain Resnais), *Schindler's List* (directed by Steven Spielberg), *Shoah* (directed by Claude Lanzmann), *Sophie's Choice* (directed by Alan J. Pakula), *Life Is Beautiful* (directed by Roberto Benigni), and *The Sorrow and the Pity* (directed by Marcel Ophüls). Screening any of these important films for a class that has read *Night* will surely foster an enlightening range of comparisons and contrasts amid students.

* A Hill and Wang Teacher's Guide is also available for this title.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Elie Wiesel, the author of some forty books, is Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities at Boston University. He and his family live in New York City. Professor Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986.

Scott Pitcock wrote this Teacher's Guide. He is a writer and editor based in Tulsa, Oklahoma, who attended Westminster College (Missouri) and Columbia University.

Lesson 5
Characters in 3-D: Levels of Characterization

Objective

- To describe characters according to three levels of characterization

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson is devised to be used after reading chapter 1, as an introduction to the characters in this autobiography and as a review of the basic levels of characterization. It also serves as a basis for Lesson 6 on the methods of characterization and Lesson 9 on dynamic characters.

If students need further study in this type of analysis and classification in chapter 2, use Madame Schächter and her son as a follow-up activity or for homework.

The character of Moshe the Beadle may be confusing for students as he changes within chapter 1. Students need to note the character traits before and after his deportation.

Encourage students to use a thesaurus to find appropriate adjectives for their characterizations and to increase vocabulary.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 12**. Group students in pairs to complete the analysis of three characters in chapter 1. Review the definition of the term "characterization" and the three levels on which a character can be described (physical—appearance; social—behavior and attitude towards other characters; psychological—inner thoughts, feelings). From the completed analysis, ask pairs of students to share one trait in each level for character 1, 2, and 3. Choose a student to record answers on a master chart on the chalkboard or available visual equipment. Each student may wish to make a copy for reference use. Discuss each of the descriptions given and the level assigned for each.

Suggested Responses:

	Physical	*Social*	*Psychological*
Elie Wiesel	*young boy*	*respectful* *kind* *obedient* *loving son, brother*	*religious* *intelligent* *inquisitive* *sensitive*
Moshe	*clown-like* *awkward*	*humble beggar* *teacher* *quiet* *caring*	*holy* *mystical* *joyful* *sorrowful*
Mr. Wiesel	*middle age?*	*community leader* *business man* *caring husband, father* *good storyteller*	*unemotional* *optimistic* *cultured*

2. Distribute **Handout 13**. Review the directions and examples. Students will need ample time to write and rewrite bio-poems. Assign as homework to allow for experiment, word exploration for each character description level. Some students may feel inadequate in this assignment and will need help. A sample done in class, using a familiar character from literature or daily life, would serve as encouragement.

3. Allow students to share and comment upon their poems. Ask the class to choose several for publication in a school or local paper or to submit in a poetry contest. Duplicate some for student notebooks. Ask art students to print and illustrate some for display.

4. Assignment: Read chapter 2.

Name_____
Date_____

Characters in 3-D
Levels of Characterization

Directions: Write at least two descriptions under the appropriate categories for each character listed below. Exception: The physical level may not provide more than one.

	Physical	Social	Psychological
Elie Wiesel			
Moshe the Beadle			
Mr. Wiesel, Elie's Father			

Lesson 7
Surviving the Process of Dehumanization: Internal and External Conflicts

Objectives

- To describe the dehumanizing acts of the SS, effects on prisoners, and tactics used to survive
- To distinguish between external and internal conflicts

Notes to the Teacher

This lesson attempts to provide a more psychological analysis of the characters' struggles than a literary one. For this purpose the methods of survival presented in *Night* will be compared to the similar methods analyzed in the excerpts from Victor Frankl's memoir, *Man's Search for Meaning*. Use this lesson after reading chapters 3 and 4.

Dr. Victor Emil Frankl was an Austrian Jew who was born and educated in Vienna. A doctor of medicine specializing in neurology, Frankl held a number of prestigious positions between 1940–1947 as director of neurology at various Viennese hospitals and professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Vienna. He has taught in the United States since 1961and has been a professor at the U.S. International University in San Diego since 1970.

In 1943 he and his wife Mathilde were taken as prisoners to Auschwitz. Though Mathilde died in camp, he managed to survive until liberation in 1945.

Frankl recorded his personal experiences in the memoir *Man's Search for Meaning* originally published in German in 1946 (English 1959, 1962). His intention was to look at how everyday life in a concentration camp was reflected in the mind of the common prisoner. Frankl's account is a personal one; it is not methodical or analytical in a scientific sense. What concerns Frankl are not facts but experiences and man's responses to these experiences. He simply looks at the mental reaction of the average prisoner to the brutal conditions that surrounded him to see how some managed to survive these inhuman conditions.

The excerpts selected deal with his and other's attempts to hold onto the will to live and to retain one's human dignity and morals. The roles played by freedom, love, human values, and belief in the future are discussed.

Procedure

1. Write the word *human* on the chalkboard. Ask students to describe what they think it means to be *human*. List their responses. Ask for examples from daily life. Ask a student to research the Bill of Rights and to discuss it with the class.
   Suggested Responses:
   free, individual, treated with respect and decency, civilized, housed and fed, have emotions and feelings, have relationships, love, compassion, intelligent, educated, can express ideas, spiritual, more valuable than animals or objects, conscience, etc.

2. Review the definition of *conflict* and types of conflict. Explain that conflicts often result in dehumanizing a person. Ask students to describe in what ways people can dehumanize or treat another as less than human. Record their answers under the heading dehumanize. Cite examples in today's world. Collect news items. Discuss terms and actions in school that dehumanize.
   Suggested Responses:
   restrict rights and personal freedoms, identify by number, force uniform dress, limit food and shelter, insult and physical brutality, show no respect or decency, demand total obedience, deny equal treatment or privileges, refuse to educate, control relationships, punish cruelly for infractions, force performance of undesirable jobs without reward, instill distrust and fear towards friends

3. Distribute **Handout 17**, one to each group of three students. (It is preferable to keep the same groupings as in Lesson 5.) In preparation for identifying the dehumanizing conflicts and their effect in the accounts in *Night*, provide a summary explanation of the effects of prejudice.

   Prejudice against the Jews and "undesirables" led the SS to construct the concentration camps and to design the camp routines and procedures in such a way that the humanity of the prisoners would be stripped away by the daily conflicts they faced. More than just an external struggle, the camps provided a psychological challenge to the prisoners. Each prisoner was faced not only with the problem of physical survival, but each was faced with the threat that he or she would forget his or her own human dignity and become an inhuman, immoral creature in order to survive.

4. Distribute **Handout 18** to be completed as a homework assignment. Share answers in a class discussion. If an alternative approach of cooperative learning is preferred, organize students into groups of four. Assign each student in the group to read one of the selections from Victor Frankl's *Man's Search for Meaning*. When each has finished, meet again as a group. Each member summarizes and explains the meaning of the selection read. As a group they then answer the questions on the handout.

5. Assignment: Read chapters 5, 6, and 7.

Night
Lesson 7
Handout 17

Name_____
Date_____

Surviving the Process of Dehumanization
External and Internal Conflicts

Directions: In the first column on the left, without discussion, each group member will write two examples of conflicts that tended to dehumanize the prisoners. When each finishes, pass the paper to the next member.

When six examples are listed, the group can work together to complete the remaining two columns. Each member writes the answers in the columns beside the conflict he/she listed.

Each member should be ready to present and support all of the answers on these handouts.

Conflict Used to Dehumanize	Type of Conflict (external or internal)	Effect on the Prisoner
Example: SS starve prisoners	external	destroys health, weakens, steal food, fight for food, food becomes more important than people or dignity

As a group, answer the questions below. Select one member to record the responses on a separate sheet of paper. Make sure the record includes responses from each member of the group.

1. The dehumanizing conflicts which the prisoners faced often destroyed their desire to survive. How do Akiba Drumer and Stein of Antwerp keep themselves determined to survive? Why did they eventually lose hope?

2. What kept Elie Wiesel and his father determined to survive?

3. Many external conflicts in column 1 lead to internal conflicts in column 3. Explain why external conflicts often lead to internal ones?

Lesson 9

Role Reversal and the Loss of Faith: Dynamic Characterization

Objective

- To show how concentration camp experiences alter a character's personality, faith, and social relationships

Notes to the Teacher

In order to show how circumstances can alter an individual's way of thinking, inner personality, values, and beliefs, encourage students to view themselves as dynamic characters—characters in transition. The first part of this lesson asks students to compare their present thoughts and beliefs with those at various stages in their past. Have them reflect upon the causes and evidence of these changes.

Though **Handout 21** asks students to describe the psychological (inner) changes Elie Wiesel undergoes, you may mention that the physical changes (shaving of body, prison uniforms, emaciated bodies, lice, disease, uncleanliness) also contributed to a loss of a sense of self-worth and esteem and of one's humanity. Have them reflect upon the effect their own physical changes over the past few years contributed to their own self-esteem and identity.

Students may need help with questions 1 and 2 on **Handout 21.** Discuss with students the roles they expect their parents or guardian to play in their family. Then ask them what would happen if their parents were no longer able to perform this role. Question 2 on **Handout 21** is open-ended to stimulate thinking for the letter students will write in **Handout 22**.

Students of a traditional Christian or Jewish faith may find the questions on **Handout 22** difficult to answer. Although these questions may challenge their own fundamental beliefs, encourage your students to give a serious response that they believe in.

Procedure

1. Write the words dynamic character on the chalkboard and review its definition (a character who displays an essential change in his or her inner personality, beliefs, values, or attitude).

   Explain that a dynamic character may experience a drastic change or merely a subtle alteration of attitude or perception. Regardless of the depth of the change, a change in personality usually occurs after a character undergoes a trial, experiences a tragic or meaningful event, or receives an epiphany (moment of sudden revelation or insight).

   Ask students to analyze themselves as dynamic characters to explain how their beliefs, attitudes, understanding, emotions, and relationships have changed in the last few years. What caused the change?

   Ask for, or supply, examples of dynamic characters from other literary works students have read or from movies they may have seen. List a name or two on the chalkboard. Write the words before and after beside each name. Ask students to describe what these characters were like at the beginning and at the ending of the story and to pinpoint the events or experiences that brought about the change. Favorite stories from childhood days may serve as ready, simple examples.

2. Distribute **Handout 21**, one to each group of three students. Review the directions with the class before they work on completing the assignment.

3. Review as a class the completed charts. Allow each group to present their character descriptions. Encourage questions and discussion. Review each group's answers to the questions on the handout. Conclude by asking students to predict how these changes in Elie Wiesel may affect his later life.
   Suggested Responses:
   Part A
   Concrete evidence is numerous.
   personality—more self-centered, distrustful, aggressive, numb to brutality and suffering of others

religious—loses faith in God, rebels against God refuses to pray or to follow religious practices, accuses God of abandonment

social—supports father, feels father is a burden, blames father for upsetting Idek, teaches father to survive, fights urge to abandon father, bread more valuable than human life

Possible Causes:

personality—witnessing Madame Schächter, the loss of his mother and sisters, walking to the pit of fire, becoming a number

religious—witnessing the burning of the children, witnessing the hanging of the young boy, watching undying faith of the prisoners in the face of daily starvation and brutality

social—witnessing his father's beating at the hands of Idek, the lack of food, clothing, and the threat of constant beatings

Part B

3. *Every character with the exception of Idek and Rabbi Eliahou can be considered dynamic. Reasons should include loss of sanity, faith, goodness, will to live, self-esteem, or human values.*

4. Distribute **Handout 22** to each student as a homework assignment. Review directions with the class. Allow ample time for completion. Schedule class time for peer review.

5. Assignment: Read chapter 9.

Name_____
Date_____

Role Reversal and the Loss of Faith
Characters in Transition

Directions:

Step 1. Write the names of your group members beside each role below.

Recorder (writes answers in Steps 3–4) _____

Speaker 1 (presents chart in part A) _____

Speaker 2 (explains/defends answers to questions in part B) _____

Step 2. Without discussion, give this handout to each member of your group. When you receive the handout, write a description of how Elie Wiesel has changed beneath the appropriate category. Continue until all of the spaces have been filled.

Step 3. (A) As a group discuss the characteristics and qualities identified, and make any necessary changes. (B) Each member explains the evidence for his or her answer. The group discusses the evidence until all members can agree. The recorder fills in column two with a brief summary (or page number) of the evidence. (C) The group agrees upon the moment these changes occurred; the recorder writes the answer in column three.

Step 4. In part B, the group reads and discusses the three questions and agrees upon answers. The recorder summarizes main points of answers in the spaces provided.

Step 5. Speaker 1 explains the responses given in part A. Speaker 2 explains the answers given in part B.

Night
Lesson 9
Handout 21 (page 2)

Name_____
Date_____

Part A
Directions: Describe the changes in personality, faith, and relationships which the narrator Elie Wiesel undergoes as a prisoner.

	Evidence of Change	**Cause of Change**
Personality Changes		
1.		
2.		
3.		
Religious Changes		
1.		
2.		
3.		
Social Changes		
1.		
2.		
3.		

Part B
Directions: Discuss the questions below. Briefly record the main points upon which your group agrees. Each group member should be prepared to explain the group's answer to each questions. Use another sheet of paper if more space is needed.

1. In what ways has Elie become more of a father to Mr. Wiesel and Mr. Wiesel more of a son? Why do you think this role reversal occurred?

2. Why do you think Elie lost his faith in God? Do you think Elie holds God responsible for what is happening to him and the Jews?

3. Which of the following characters are dynamic? Write D before each character who is dynamic and be ready to explain why.

_____ Moshe	_____ Mr. Wiesel	_____ Idek (the Kapo)
_____ Akiba Drumer	_____ Stein of Antwerp	_____ Madame Schächter
_____ Franek	_____ Meir Katz	_____ Rabbi Eliahou

Night
Lesson 9
Handout 22

Name_____
Date_____

An Answer to Elie Wiesel's Question

Directions: In his personal narrative, Elie Wiesel describes his total loss of faith in God for allowing the Jews, God's chosen people, to suffer so inhumanely. How could a God who was all-knowing, all-powerful, and all-loving allow this to occur? Was he too weak to intervene? Was he too apathetic to care? Did he know this would one day occur? How could God, in his perfect justice, allow children to be burned, tortured, and hanged? How could God stand by silently while six million Jews were starved, worked to death, and gassed for no apparent reason?

1. Reread the last three pages of chapter 4 and the first four pages of chapter 5.
2. Think about how you would respond to Elie Wiesel's questioning of God's justice.
3. Write a letter to the fifteen-year-old narrator. Attempt to answer Elie's questions about why God seemed so silent, distant, and cold. Why did God allow this darkest hour of man's inhumanity to occur?

Writing Steps:

1. Brainstorm your ideas in the space below before writing your first draft.
2. Write a first draft and have your peers review it for grammar, spelling, quality, and organization of ideas.
3. Type (or write neatly) your final copy.

Remember that your audience is a fifteen-year-old boy who has lived through this horror. Your answer should be personal and in the form of a letter, addressing him and signed by you.

Be prepared to share your letter with the class.

Lesson 10
The Meaning Behind the Message: Irony

Objectives
- To detect and explain the use of irony
- To distinguish between verbal and dramatic irony

Notes to the Teacher
The ability to distinguish between literal and implied meanings in literature is the hallmark of a sophisticated reader. This lesson directs students to detect the kind of irony employed by Elie Wiesel and to distinguish between its literal and implied meanings.

Explain to students that irony and symbolism, like the metaphors and similes studied in Lesson 8, are forms of figurative language whose deeper meanings must be figured out. Remind students that there may be multiple meanings and interpretations assigned to various figures of speech such as irony and symbolism.

Part 2 of Lesson 10, (part B), on **Handout 24** is an exercise designed to allow the conceptual and abstract learners of the class to express the meanings of the Holocaust using a visual medium.

Procedure
1. Review the definition of *irony* as another form of figurative language where words or actions are used to imply a literal meaning that is contrary to the true figurative meaning. It states or implies the opposite of what is actually true. Distinguish between *verbal* and *dramatic irony*. Provide examples of each.
   Verbal irony—when a character says or believes something that the audience know is not true
   A character may or may not be aware that his or her statement is ironic.
   Example: A slave owner stated, "My slaves respect and love me when I discipline them with beatings and starvations."
   Dramatic irony—when a scene or action occurs that implies a meaning
   Example: Walter Mitty, an inept failure of a man, envisions himself standing like a hero against the brick wall of a drugstore.

   Ask students for further examples of verbal and dramatic irony from literature and everyday situations. (Ask them to think of ways in which people use hyperbole or understatement to make a point. Both are forms of irony.) For many students, these forms of figurative language are difficult to identify and understand. Use plenty of examples, situations, and daily experiences to clarify.

2. Distribute **Handout 23** to each pair of students. Discuss as a class the answers to the handout.
   Suggested Responses:
   Answers may include the following:
   1. *Kind—verbal*
      A. *Work will set you free.*
      B. *Prisoners are worked to death as slaves.*
   2. *Kind—dramatic*
      A. *Elie almost dies of food poisoning.*
      B. *After near starvation in the concentration camps he is nearly killed by food.*
   3. *Kind—verbal*
      A. *The camp officer cares for children.*
      B. *He uses children for sexual gratification (pedophile).*
   4. *Kind—verbal*
      A. *The prisoner trusts Hitler.*
      B. *Hitler was keeping his promise of killing the Jews.*
   5. *Kind—verbal/dramatic*
      A. *A lady throws money to children.*
      B. *She thinks this is charity though it causes the children to try to kill one another.*
   6. *Kind—dramatic*
      A. *Meir Katz loses his will to live.*
      B. *The strongest man cracks under the brutal hardships while the weakest continue to survive.*

7. *Kind—verbal*
   A. *There are wishes for son to be with his mother.*
   B. *Most mothers and children were immediately gassed.*
8. *Kind—verbal*
   A. *The sign warns the prisoners of the electric fence.*
   B. *In camp death surrounds them in many forms—a camp was designed to kill them.*

Night
Lesson 10
Handout 23 (page 1)

Name_____
Date_____

Verbal and Dramatic Irony

Part A
Directions: Read each statement below. Determine whether it represents *verbal irony* or *dramatic irony*. Write *verbal* or *dramatic* on the line provided. Briefly explain the literal meaning of the statement on line A, and tell why the statement is ironic on line B.

1. ". . . we saw the barbed wire of another camp. An iron door with this inscription over it: 'Work is liberty!' Auschwitz."

   Kind _____

   A. (literal) _____

   B. (ironic) _____

2. "Three days after the liberation of Buchenwald I became very ill with food poisoning. I was transferred to the hospital and spent two weeks between life and death."

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

3. "Like the leader of the camp, he loved children."

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

4. "I've got more faith in Hitler than in anyone else. He's the only one who's kept his promises, all his promises, to the Jewish people."

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

5. "The passengers on our boat were amusing themselves by throwing coins to the 'natives' . . . I suddenly noticed that two children were engaged in a death struggle . . . I turned to the lady.
   'Please,' I begged, 'don't throw any more money in!'
   'Why not?' she asked. 'I like to give charity . . . ' "

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

Name_____
Date_____

6. "My father took his arm. And Meir Katz, the strong man, the most robust of us all, wept. . . . It was now that he cracked up. He was finished, at the end of his tether."

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

7. "It's a shame . . . a shame that you couldn't have gone with your mother."

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

8. "On we went between the electric wires. At each step, a white placard with a death's head on it stared us in the face. A caption: 'Warning. Danger of death.' "

   Kind _____

   A. _____

   B. _____

Part B

Directions: Find two more examples of irony from the text. Write each statement and identify the page on which it appears. Then explain how the statement is ironic.

1. statement

   explanation

2. statement

   explanation

Lesson 12

Responsibility and the Human Spirit: Themes of the Holocaust

Objectives

- To determine the prominent themes of Elie Wiesel's *Night*
- To provide reasons for continuing to relive the memory of the Holocaust

Notes to the Teacher

In 1945–1946, an international military tribunal convened in the German city of Nuremberg to conduct the Nuremberg Trials. (Nuremberg, ironically, was the city where Hitler instituted the first anti-Semitic laws described in **Handout 9**.) These trials accused twenty-two captured top Nazi officers of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Of the twenty-two, twelve were sentenced to death, seven received prison terms, and three were acquitted. Many Nazi leaders escaped at the end of the war to foreign countries where they assumed new names and identities. (Hitler committed suicide at the end of the war.) Through the efforts of Simon Wiesenthal and his organization, hundreds of these former Nazi officers have been apprehended and tried since 1945 until the present time. For more information on this subject consult the appropriate texts listed in the bibliography at the end of this curriculum guide.

Students are asked in this lesson to assess the responsibility of certain persons or types of persons associated with the Holocaust. Although they may be reluctant to place blame on anyone, encourage them to see that when inhuman acts are conducted or condoned by people then ultimately these people are responsible. Responsibility for one's own actions is a fundamental belief of any democratic institution. Without responsibility, there can be no true freedom.

Elie Wiesel states his beliefs about human responsibility in a powerful way. He firmly declares that to stand by silently while witnessing an act of inhumanity is to condone that act and therefore to be guilty of that crime. Many students will rebel at such a notion claiming that it is too much to demand a person risk his or her life to defend another. Remind them that Wiesel is not looking for heroes. He simply wants people to do something—call the authorities, protest, get help, etc.—to show that they will not tolerate such acts of inhumanity.

Procedure

1. Distribute **Handout 25**. Introduce the lesson by reviewing the term *theme*. Inform students that they will focus upon the theme of moral responsibility by determining who should be held accountable for the Holocaust. Ask students to complete parts A and B of the handout. Give each group of three students one copy of **Handout 25**. As a group they must arrive at one set of answers acceptable to the entire group. Share answers of each group. Defend choices. Conclude by discussing reactions to Elie Wiesel's comments about moral responsibility.

2. Distribute **Handout 26**, page 1. Instruct that students will now examine the themes *Night* reveals concerning human nature. To each group of three students, give one copy of the handout for them to reach one set of answers for part A that is acceptable to the group. Share group answers. Defend choices.

3. Distribute **Handout 26**, page 2, for each student to answer the questions. Discuss the answers.
   Suggested Responses:
   Part A
   1, 5, 7, 8, 13, 15 are true
   2, 3, 4, 6, 9, 14 are false
   10, 11, 12 answers will vary

4. Distribute **Handout 27** for students to read and to respond to the statement in essay form. Discuss the responses. Guide the discussion with tact and diplomacy since the reading content is highly emotional.

5. Distribute **Handout 28** and assign acting roles. Allow time for role preparation. Discuss the characterizations after the performances.

Night
Lesson 12
Handout 25

Name_____
Date_____

Who Is Responsible for This Inhumanity? Who Must Be Held Accountable?

Directions: In this exercise you will be determining who was responsible for creating the Holocaust and to what extent they are guilty of crimes against humanity. Complete this handout individually and then meet with your learning group to arrive at one answer.

Number in sequence from 1 to 10 the persons listed below according to the responsibility you believe they should bear for the Holocaust. Number 1 indicates the greatest guilt and responsibility; number 10 indicates the least guilt and responsibility. No number may be used more than once. Be prepared to explain or defend your answers to your group.

_____ Residents of Auschwitz who knew about the camps but did nothing to stop them

_____ Minor Nazi soldiers who carried out the mass extermination orders without questioning superiors

_____ Hitler, the leader of the German nation who hated Jews and wanted them destroyed

_____ German citizens who voted for Hitler and the Nazi Party to revitalize their morally and economically depressed country

_____ The Jews who did not try to escape

_____ Top SS officers who designed and executed the "final solution" for Hitler

_____ Non-Jewish Europeans who turned against their Jewish friends and fellow citizens for fear that they too would be imprisoned as Jewish sympathizers

_____ Leaders of the Allied countries who saw evidence of the Holocaust but refused to get involved or voice opposition to Hitler's plan of extermination

_____ Churches of all denominations who remained silent and refused to intervene when confronted with evidence of the Holocaust

_____ Yahweh, the God of the Jewish faith, who seemed absent and silent during this destruction of his chosen people

Name_____
Date_____

What Must We Learn from the Holocaust?

Part A

Directions: Read each of the theme statements below. If you believe that the book *Night* supports the theme, circle T; if you think that the book does not support the theme, circle F. Be prepared to defend your choices to your group.

T F 1. A human being needs a future to strive for or a beloved to live for or he/she will lose the will to survive.

T F 2. Faith in God is only attainable in terms of peace and freedom.

T F 3. All actions are fair during times of war.

T F 4. A person who is only following orders is not morally responsible for the inhuman acts he/she performs.

T F 5. A person has the power to retain his or her humanity no matter what suffering or persecution he/she experiences.

T F 6. Family love can never be broken.

T F 7. Prejudice within a person can reduce that person to a cruel, heartless animal.

T F 8. There is an element of fate in human lives that determines who will survive and succeed.

T F 9. Only the strongest and most moral prisoners survived.

T F 10. It is better to think only of yourself in a concentration camp. When you help or share with others, you are doomed.

T F 11. It is better to work together and to help each other to survive in the camp.

T F 12. To preserve a sense of human dignity (of being human) in the concentration camp was more important than to preserve one's life.

T F 13. No matter how good a person is, he/she can be transformed to regard the suffering of others with no feeling or care.

T F 14. Society must forget the Holocaust so that people can remove the guilt of inhumanity from their consciences.

T F 15. A human being can adapt to almost any situation or circumstances.

Name_____
Date_____

Part B

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Provide reasons and examples for your answers in your paragraphs. Write your answers in the spaces provided. Be prepared to defend your opinions.

1. What did you learn about yourself and about humanity by studying the Holocaust? Should schools continue to teach the Holocaust to high school students today? Why or why not?

2. Could a Holocaust or its equivalent happen today or in the near future? Why or why not? Does memory or history serve to make the world more humane? Do recent events prove that the world has not forgotten? Has forgotten?

3. What forces are essential to developing attitudes free of inhumane and barbarous actions on the part of individuals or nations? What do you think Elie Wiesel would advocate as needed to change views and values? You might like to refer to some of his more recent books, articles, lectures.

Name_____
Date_____

Essay Writing

Directions: Read the *Testimony at the Barbie Trial* and react to Elie Wiesel's statement below by writing a short essay.

Elie Wiesel once said that anyone who witnesses an atrocity, or an act of inhumanity, and does nothing to stop it, is just as guilty as the person committing the act. Those who know and remain silent are guilty of the same offense. To stand by silently is to participate in the crime.

Do you agree with Elie Wiesel's judgment?

Name_____
Date_____

Testimony at the Barbie Trial*

Your Honor, gentlemen of the bench, gentlemen of the jury, I thank you for inviting me to appear before you today. I will try to speak about some of the nameless absent—but not for them. No one has a right to speak in their name. If the dead have something to say, they will say it in their own way. Perhaps they are already saying it. Are we capable, are we worthy, of hearing them?

May I say immediately that I feel no hatred toward the accused? I have never met him; our paths have never crossed. But I have met killers who, like him, along with him, chose to be enemies of my people and of humanity. I may have known one or another of the victims. I resembled them, just as they resembled me: Within the kingdom of malediction created by the accused and his comrades, all Jewish prisoners, all Jews, had the same face, the same eyes; all shared the same fate. Sometimes one has the impression the same Jew was being killed by the enemy everywhere six million times over.

No, there is no hatred in me: There never was any. There is no question of hatred here—only justice. And memory. We are trying to do justice to our memory.

Here is one memory: the spring of 1944. A few days before the Jewish Pentecostal holiday—*Shavuot*. This was forty-three years ago, almost to the day. I was fifteen in three days. A profoundly religious child, I was moved by messianic dreams and prayers. Far from Jerusalem, I lived for Jerusalem, Jerusalem lived in me.

Though subjected to a fascist regime, the Jews of Hungary did not suffer too much. My parents ran a business, my three sisters went to school, the Sabbath enveloped us in its peace. . . . The war? It was nearing its end. The Allies were going to land in a day, in a week. The Red Army was twenty or thirty kilometers away. But then . . .

The Germans invaded Hungary on March 19, 1944. Starting then, events moved at a headlong pace that gave us no respite. A succession of anti-Semitic decrees and measures were passed: the prohibition of travel, confiscation of goods, wearing of yellow stars, ghettos, transports.

We watched as our world was systematically narrowed. For Jews, the country was limited to one town, the town to one neighborhood, the neighborhood to one street, the street to one room, the room to a sealed boxcar crossing the Polish countryside at night.

Like the forty-four Jewish children of Izieu (shipped to Auschwitz in 1944), the Jewish adolescents from my town arrived at the Auschwitz station one afternoon. What is this? we wondered. No one knew. The name did not evoke any memory in us. Shortly before midnight, the train began to move. A woman in our car began shouting, "I see a fire, I see a fire!" They made her be quiet. I remember the silence in the car. As I remember the rest. The barbed-wire fences stretching away to infinity. The shouts of the prisoners whose duty it was to "welcome" us, the gunshots fired by the U.S., the barking of their dogs. And up above us all, above the planet itself, immense flames rising toward the sky as though to consume it.

Since that night, I often look at the sky and see it in flames. . . . But that night, I could not look at the sky for long. I was too busy clinging to my family.

*Given in French in Lyon on June 2, 1987 by Elie Wiesel

Name_____
Date_____

An order rang out: "Line up by family." That's good, I thought, we will stay together. Only for a few minutes, however; "Men to the right, women to the left." The blows rained down on all sides. I was not able to say goodbye to my mother. Nor to my grandmother. I could not kiss my little sister. With my two older sisters, she was moving away, borne by the crazed, black tide. . . .

This was a separation that cut my life in half. I rarely speak of it, almost never. I cannot recall my mother or my little sister. With my eyes, I still look for them, I will always look for them. And yet I know . . . I know everything. No, not everything . . . one cannot know everything. I could imagine it, but I do not allow myself to. One must know when to stop. . . . My gaze stops at the threshold of the gas chambers. Even in thought, I refuse to violate the privacy of the victims at the moment of their death.

What I saw is enough for me. In a small wood somewhere in Birkenau I saw children being thrown into the flames alive by the S.S. Sometimes I curse my ability to see. It should have left me without ever returning. I should have remained with those little charred bodies. . . . Since that night, I have felt a profound, immense love for old people and children. Every old person recalls my grandfather, my grandmother, every child brings me close to my little sister, the sister of the dead Jewish children of Izieu. . . .

Night after night, I kept asking myself, What does all this mean? What is the sense of this murderous enterprise? It functioned perfectly. The killers killed, the victims died, the fire burned and an entire people thirsting for eternity turned to ash, annihilated by a nation which, until then, was considered to be the best educated, the most cultivated in the world. Graduates from the great universities, lovers of music and painting, doctors, lawyers, and philosophers participated in the Final Solution and became accomplices of death. Scholars and engineers invented more efficient methods for exterminating denser and denser masses in record time. . . . How was this possible?

I do not know the answer. In its scope, its ontological aspect, and its eschatological ambitions, this tragedy defies and exceeds all answers. If anyone claims to have found an answer, it can only be a false one. So much mourning, so much agony, so many deaths on one side, and a single answer on the other? One cannot understand Auschwitz either without God or with God. One cannot conceive of it in terms of man or of heaven. Why was there so much hatred in the enemy toward Jewish children and old people? Why this relentlessness against a people whose memory of suffering is the oldest in the world?

At the time, it seemed to me that the enemy's aim was to attack God Himself in order to drive Him from His celestial throne. Thus, the enemy was creating a society parallel to our society, a world opposed to ours, with its own madmen and princes, laws and customs, prophets and judges.

Yes, an accursed world where another language was spoken, where a new religion was proclaimed: one of cruelty, dominated by the inhuman; a society that had evolved from the other side of society, from the other side of life, from the other side of death, perhaps; a world where one small piece of bread was worth all ideas, where an adolescent in uniform had absolute power over thousands of prisoners, where human beings seemed to belong to a different species, trembling before death, which had all the attributes of God. . . .

As a Jew, it is impossible for me not to stress the affliction of my people during their torment. Do not see this as an attempt to deny or minimize the sufferings of the populations of the occupied countries or the torture undergone by our comrades, our Christian or nonreligious friends whom the common

Name_____
Date_____

enemy punished with unpardonable brutality. We feel affection and admiration for them. As though they were our brothers.

It is impossible for me, as a Jew, not to stress that for the first time, an entire people—from the smallest to the largest, from the richest to the poorest—were condemned to annihilation. To uproot it, to extract it from history, to kill it in memory by killing all memory of it: such was the enemy's plan.

Marked, isolated, humiliated, beaten, starved, tortured, the Jew was handed over to the executioner, not for having proclaimed some truth, nor for having possessed envied riches and treasures, nor for having adopted a certain forbidden behavior. The Jew was condemned to death because he was born Jewish, because he carried in him a Jewish memory.

Declared to be less than a man, and therefore deserving neither compassion nor pity, the Jew was born only to die—just as the killer was born only to kill. Consequently, the killer did not feel in any way guilty. One American investigator formulated it this way: the killer had not lost his sense of morality, but his sense of reality. He thought he was doing good by ridding the earth of it Jewish "parasites."

Is this the reason Klaus Barbie, like Adolph Eichmann before him, does not feel guilty? Except for Höss, the commander of Auschwitz, condemned and hanged in Poland, no killer has repented. Their logic? There had to be executioners to eliminate a million and a half Jewish children; killers were *needed* to annihilate four and a half million Jewish adults.

Auschwitz and Treblinka, Maidanek and Ponar, Belzec and Mathausen, and so many others, so many other names: the Apocalypse was everywhere. Everywhere, mute processions headed toward pits filled with dead bodies. Very few tears, very little crying. From their appearance, resigned, thoughtful, the victims seemed to be leaving the world without regret. It was as though these men and women were choosing not to live in a society disfigured, denatured by hatred and violence.

After the war, the survivor tried to tell about it, bear witness . . . but who could find words to speak of the unspeakable?

The contemplative silence of old people who knew, of children who were afraid of knowing . . . the horror of mothers who had gone mad, the terrifying lucidity of mad people in a delirious world . . . the grave chant of a rabbi reciting the Kaddish, the murmur of his followers going after him to the very end, to heaven . . . the good little girl undressing her younger brother . . . telling him not to be afraid; no, one must not be afraid of death . . . perhaps she said, One must not be afraid of dead people. . . .

And in the city, the grand, ancient city of Kiev, that mother and her two children in front of some German soldiers who are laughing . . . they take one child from her and kill it before her eyes . . . then, they seize the second and kill it too. . . . She wants to die; the killers prefer her to remain alive but inhabited by death. . . . Then, she takes the two little bodies, hugs them against her chest and begins to dance . . . how can one describe that mother? How can one tell of her dance? In this tragedy, there is something that hurts beyond hurting—and I do not know what it is.

I know we must speak. I do not know how. Since this crime is absolute, all language is imperfect. Which is why there is such a feeling of powerlessness in

Name_____
Date_____

the survivor. It was easier for him to imagine himself free in Auschwitz than it would be for a free man to imagine himself a prisoner in Auschwitz. That is the problem: no one who has not experienced the event will ever be able to understand it. And yet, the survivor is conscious of his duty to bear witness. To tell the tale. To protest every time any "revisionist," morally perverse as he may be, dares to deny the death of those who died. And the truthfulness of the memory transmitted by the survivors.

For the survivors, however, it is getting late. Their number is diminishing. They meet one another more and more often at funerals. Can one die more than once? Yes, one can. The survivor dies every time he rejoins, in his thoughts, the nightly procession he has never really left. How can he detach himself from them without betraying them? For a long time he talked to them, as I talk to my mother and my little sister: I still see them moving away under the fiery sky. . . . I ask them to forgive me for not following them. . . .

It is for the dead, but also for the survivors, and even more for their children—and yours—that this trial is important: it will weigh on the future. In the name of justice? In the name of memory. Justice without memory is an incomplete justice, false and unjust. To forget would be absolute injustice in the same way that Auschwitz was the absolute crime. To forget would be the enemy's final triumph.

The fact is that the enemy kills twice—the second time in trying to obliterate the traces of his crime. That is why he pushed his outrageous, terrifying plan to the limits of language, and well beyond: to situate it out of reach, out of our range of perception. "Even if you survive, even if you tell, no one will believe you," an S.S. told a young Jew somewhere in Galicia.

This trial has already contradicted that killer. The witnesses have spoken; their truth has entered the awareness of humanity. Thanks to them, the Jewish children of Izieu will never be forgotten.

As guardians of their invisible graves, graves of ash encrusted in a sky of eternal night and fog, we must remain faithful to them. We must try. To refuse to speak, when speeches awaited, would be to acknowledge the ultimate triumph of despair.

"Do you seek fire?" said a great Hasidic rabbi. "Seek it in the ash." This is what you have been doing here since the beginning of this trial, this is what we have attempted to do since the Liberation. We have sought, in the ash, a truth to affirm—despite everything—man's dignity; it exists only in memory.

Thanks to this trial, the survivors have a justification for their survival. Their testimony counts, their memories will be part of the collective memory. Of course, nothing can bring the dead back to life. But because of the meetings that have taken place within these precincts, because of the words spoken, the accused will not be able to kill the dead again. If he had succeeded it would not have been his fault, but ours.

Though it takes place under the sign of justice, this trial must also honor memory.[1]

[1] Elie Weisel, *The Kingdom of Memory* (New York: Summit, 1990), 179–189.

Name_____
Date_____

Study Guide

Journal/Discussion Questions

Chapter 1

1. What steps did the Germans take to limit the Jew's freedom and to deport them to concentration camps?

2. Why did the people refuse to believe Moshe's story? Have you, or someone you know, ever reacted with disbelief to tragic news? Explain the situation and the reason for your reaction.

3. What would you put in a small day pack if you were told you had to leave your home immediately with no hope of return? Explain why.

4. What would you miss most about your present living environment if you were transported to another country? Do you take your community and family for granted? Explain.

Chapter 2

1. What do you imagine Mrs. Schächter's young son feels and thinks about his mother's outbursts and her beatings by the other people? Write your response as an inner monologue as if you were her son.

2. Do you think the other prisoners were wrong in how they reacted to her outbursts? Why?

3. Imagine the students in this class enclosed in a room so small that no one can sit or lie down. Everyone is touching another person because the space is so small. Someone starts screaming that we are all going to die, to burn. How do you think you would react after one hour, ten hours, or two days?

Chapter 3

1. Why must Elie, upon his arrival, lie to the first SS officer?

2. What process do the prisoners undergo after they pass the selection that degrades and dehumanizes them? In what ways can your school be conducted to limit in the humanity of its students?

3. Is the advice that tells prisoners to support and to help each other as brothers, sound advice? Explain why.

4. In what ways can we see Elie beginning to change because of his experience?

5. Why does the boy, Elie, lie to Stein about his wife? Was this action good?

Chapter 4

1. How does Elie react when his father is being beaten by Franek? What is ironic about his reaction?

2. Why didn't the prisoners attempt to get soup from the unprotected cauldrons, and why did they hate the man who did try?

Name_____
Date_____

3. Why did the hanging of the young pipel affect Elie so deeply?

4. What instances of human compassion and dignity occur in this chapter?

Chapter 5

1. Why does Elie regard the weak, starving prisoners as stronger than God?

2. How does Elie show his rebellion against God? Do you find this rebellion ironic?

3. What advice is given to the prisoners before a selection? Why is this advice given?

4. Why does Akiba Drumer lose the will to live?

Chapters 6 and 7

1. What keeps Elie from allowing himself to die during the forced march?

2. In what way does the scene in the wagon between Meir and Meir's father contrast to the relationship of Elie and his father?

3. Why does Juliek play his violin as he lays dying in the mass of bodies?

4. In what way is the fight for bread on the train wagon similar to the scene that occurs years later on the passenger boat?

Chapters 8 and 9

1. How do Elie's attitude and feelings towards his father begin to resemble that of Rabbi Eliahou's son? What does he feel when his father dies and why?

2. What does Elie see in the mirror when he looks at his reflection for the first time since his imprisonment? In what ways is his reflected image symbolic of his internal self as well as a description of his physical appearance? Why can he never forget the look he saw in the eyes of his reflection?

Name_____
Date_____

Independent and Group Projects

1. Write an allegorical children's story on the Holocaust or on the theme of prejudice. Illustrate the text.

2. Write a one-act play dramatizing an aspect of the Holocaust or a particular theme about the Holocaust.

3. Write an oral history. Interview a member of your community who as a Holocaust survivor
   has experienced directly a form of prejudice
   has witnessed the Holocaust as a liberator
   has a strong prejudice or is a member of a racist group
   has witnessed changes in the attitudes of society toward minorities
   is the son/daughter or grandson/granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor
   is German or is related to someone who lived in Germany at this time

   This oral history may be presented as a taped interview or video presentation.

4. Research and present to the class a report on any of the following topics:
   The Armenian Genocide
   The destruction of the American Indian
   The use of propaganda during WWII or the Vietnam War
   Jewish resistance fighters and rebellions during the Holocaust
   Individuals who risked their lives to rescue or to hide the Jews
   Music, art, and literature created by prisoners during the Holocaust
   The imprisonment of Japanese immigrants in the United States during WWII (read *Obasan*)
   The Nuremberg Trials
   Simon Wiesenthal and the hunt for Nazi war criminals

5. Present a written or oral book review on any other Holocaust narrative (historical or autobiographical).

6. Write a series of poems or reflections on the Holocaust. Illustrate them or recite them to music. (A student taking a foreign language may translate the poems to another language and read them to the class. This is a good way to integrate disciplines, to apply learning.)

7. Compile poems written by prisoners (especially by children) during their imprisonment.

8. Compose a musical score that reflects Holocaust themes. The composer performs the score and explains how the structure and movement of the piece creates the mood and meaning of the theme.

9. Create a series of role plays that demonstrate *prejudice* in everyday life.
   Examples: Parent does not like the person you are dating because of race, economic status, appearance. You confront them on their prejudice which they deny.
   Your group of friends always insult certain individuals because of their appearance, different interests, scholarly achievements, etc., and you confront the group.

10. Write a short story on any aspect of the Holocaust. Experiment with point of view and time (soldier, son/daughter of survivor, a child who has died and looks backward in time, etc.).

11. Create a work of art expressing the emotions and themes of the Holocaust.

Name_____
Date_____

12. Compile newspaper and magazine articles which deal with racism and prejudice in our society and world today.

13. Create a symbolic story in a comic book format that deals with the issues and themes of the Holocaust.

14. Present a Holocaust Memorial combining music, art, slides, oral histories, stories, and poetry.

15. Read Elie Wiesel's play, *The Trial of God.* Explain how the situation and arguments in the play parallel the Holocaust. Explain what God is accused of and what arguments are used to defend Him. Finally, explain how the identity of God's defender affects our interpretation of the defense and the overall meaning of the play?

    Perform the trial scene in the play as a dramatic reading or as an acted performance.

16. Critique movies which deal with Holocaust themes and subject matter such as the following:
    Sophie's Choice
    The Man in the Glass Booth
    Escape from Sobidor
    Night and Fog
    Genocide: The Story of Man's Inhumanity to Man
    The Hiding Place
    The Diary of Anne Frank

17. From your library, secure a film about Elie Wiesel for your class to view. Research biographical material to update Elie Wiesel's career in the United States of America.

18. Read and review Elie Wiesel's sequel to *Night* or one of his recent works.

19. Write a review or article which expresses your reaction to the value of this book as assigned reading in the English or Language Arts Curriculum.

20. Write an essay expressing your like or dislike of the book. Did it have any effect on your views? feelings? attitudes? actions?

21. Locate pictorial images of the Holocaust. (One source is *Babi Yar: A Documentary Novel* by Anatoly Kuznetson.) Working in an individual or group setting, prepare a report based on the mood, emotion, and theme conveyed in selected illustrations. Share the illustrations in class, identifying those which reflect anguish, inhumanity, the unconquerable human spirit, power, hopelessness and despair, hope and strength, suffering of the innocent, fear, and death.

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_____. *The Trial of God—A Play in Three Acts.* New York: Random House, 1979. (Set in 1649, the play questions God's role in human suffering)

When Evil Closed In

By Gertrude Samuels
The New York Times *(1857—current file)*
November 13, 1960

Night by Elie Wiesel. Foreword by François Mauriac. Translated from the French *La Nuit* by Stella Rodway. 116 pp. New York: Hill & Wang. $3.

For some people it is too early to forget the effects of the Nazis' rule on Europe. One of them is Elie Wiesel, who serves as a United Nations correspondent for Israeli newspapers and for the New York Jewish Daily Forward. His slim volume of terrifying power is the documentary of a boy—himself—who survived the "Night" that destroyed his parents and baby sister, but lost his God.

The boy Elie was a deeply religious student when the Nazis occupied his native town of Sighet in Transylvania. His story opens like a Talmudic parable as he describes his days devoted to probing the Bible, the cabala (Jewish mystical interpretation of the Scriptures) and man's relationship with God.

The Fascist party seemed an abstraction, with Jewish optimism always outracing the fear. Even the Germans suddenly appearing in the town seemed gracious; one officer brought his landlady chocolates. Then during Passover, the masks fell off the newcomers. The Germans arrested the Jewish leaders, and drove the people first into ghettos, then into the camps.

A Kafka-like madness invaded the boy's world as the Jews were all condemned to the same fate, still unknown. It was at Birkenau, reception center for Auschwitz, that 15-year-old Elie first smelled burning flesh. And heard the words that sent his mother and sister Tzipora to the flames: "Men to the left! Women to the right!" As the Jews fell to reciting the Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead, the boy felt bitter revolt as he asked himself: What had he to thank Him for?*

In the months that followed, Elie and his father lived like animals. And as the brutality of the keepers debased everything in life, the forces of good and evil fought for supremacy in the boy. In the end, as his proud and youthful father was killed, he could no longer find the tears to weep for his father or for his lost faith.

This remarkable close-up of one boy's tragedy was translated from the French into English. Surely his story deserves a German translation.

A member of *The Times Sunday* staff, Miss Samuels reported from many of the displaced persons camps after World War II.

From ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times *(1851 – 2002) pg. BR20*

Literary Works by Elie Wiesel

"My work is not to pass judgment but to bear witness."

—Elie Wiesel at the Student Dialogue,
hosted by Charlotte Latin School, 1997

Night, a memoir (1960)
Dawn, a novel (1961)
The Accident, a novel (1962) (later published in The Night Trilogy as Day - see below)
The Town Beyond the Wall, a novel (1964)
The Gates of the Forest, a novel (1966)
The Jews of Silence, a personal testimony (1966)
Legends of Our Time, essays and stories (1968)

A Beggar in Jerusalem, a novel (1970)
One Generation After, essays & stories (1971)
Souls on Fire: Portraits & Legends of Hasidic Masters (1972)
The Oath, a novel (1973)
Ani Maamin, a cantata (1973)
Zalmen, or **The Madness of God**, a play (1975)
Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits & Legends (1976)
Four Hasidic Masters, more portraits & legends (1978)
A Jew Today, essays, stories, & dialogues (1978)
The Trial of God, a play (1979)

The Testament, a novel (1980)
Images from the Bible (1980)
Five Biblical Portraits (1981)
Somewhere a Master, more Hasidic tales (1982)
Paroles d'étranger, essays, stories, & dialogues (1982)
The Golem, the retelling of a legend (1983)
The Fifth Son, a novel (1985)
Signes d'exode, essays, stories, & dialogues (1985)
Against Silence: The Voice & Vision of Elie Wiesel, collected shorter writings edited by Irving Abrahamson, 3 volumes (1985)
Night/Dawn/Day, his first memoir & first two novels (1985) (known as The Night Trilogy)
Job ou Dieu dans la tempête, dialogue & commentary with Josy Eisenberg (1986)
A Song for Hope, a cantata (1987)
The Nobel Speech (1987)
Twilight, a novel (1988)
The Six Days of Destruction, Meditations toward Hope, with Albert Friedlander (1988)
Silences et mémoire d'homme, essays & dialogues (1989)

From the Kingdom of Memory, Reminiscences (1990)
Evil and Exile, dialogues with Philippe-Michael de Saint-Cheron (1990 & 2000)
A Journey of Faith, with John Cardinal O'Connor (1990)
Sages and Dreamers: Biblical, Talmudic, & Hasidic Portraits & Legends (1991)
Célébration talmudique, portraits of Talmudic Masters (1991)
The Forgotten, a novel (1992)
A Passover Haggadah, as told by Elie Wiesel (1993)
All Rivers Run to the Sea, Memoirs (1995)
Célébration prophétique, portraits and legends of the Prophets (1998)
Les Juges, a novel (1999)
King Solomon and His Magic Ring, a children's book, illustrated by Mark Podwal (1999)
And The Sea Is Never Full, Memoirs II (1999)

D'où viens-tu?, essays (2001)
Conversations with Elie Wiesel, with Richard Heffner (2001)
The Judges, a novel (2002)
After the Darkness, essays (2002)
Elie Wiesel: Conversations, Robert Franciosi, editor (2002)
Le temps des déracinés, a novel (2003)
Wise Men and Their Tales, portraits of Biblical, Talmudic, and Hasidic Masters (2003)
Et où vas-tu?, essays (2004)

From The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity

Elie Wiesel teaches several subjects relating to literature. Here, he engages students in conversation. Photo courtesy of Boston University.

Out of Silence Toward Life

From TIME Magazine
March 16, 1970

A BEGGAR IN JERUSALEM by Elie Wiesel, translated from the French by Lily Edelman and the author. 21 1 pages. Random House. $5.95.

When 6,000,000 died, Elie Wiesel survived. The implications of that selection have haunted him ever since, and lent somber substance to his writing (seven books, one play). Wiesel was at work in Manhattan on his eighth book when the Six-Day Arab-Israeli War broke out in 1967. Like thousands of Jews all over the world, he was unable to resist some sort of involvement. "I had to put everything aside," he remembers, and "I went to Jerusalem." This uniquely complete novel is the result of Wiesel's pilgrimage. It undertakes nothing less than the telling of the story of one post-World War II Jew as the sum of all his people.

The book is a complex interlacing of myth and mystery, parable and paradox, and straight description of an unusual war. At its center is a brief sketch of a now completed circle of Jewish history —from the Roman razing of the great Temple in Jerusalem and the diaspora, through the aftermath of Christ's crucifixion and Hitler's Final Solution, to the recapture of the Wailing Wall on the Temple grounds by Israeli soldiers in 1967. Outwardly, it is a cycle from defeat to victory. Inwardly, it represents the record of a profound moral dilemma. For the ancient Temple of Jerusalem was destroyed only three weeks after its defenders broke a tenet of the religious law. To regain the Temple, Jews were taught, would involve not force of arms but strict observance of moral law. Wiesel states the problem by telling a parable about an undiscovered kingdom that maintains impregnable defenses—except on the Sabbath.

A slightly mysterious character named Dan the Prince tries to persuade the rulers that the sanctity of the Sabbath must be violated in order that the kingdom may be preserved militarily, for it will not exist at all if the people who observe the sanctity of the Sabbath are destroyed. The undiscovered kingdom, faced with the dilemma of expediency versus a national spiritual responsibility, is clearly Israel, and Author Wiesel seems reluctantly to recognize the merits of Dan's arguments.

Consumed by Fire. In Wiesel's novel Dan the Prince is part of a band of beggars who meet each night within the shadow of the Wailing Wall after the Six-Day War to tell tales. Some are mad, some are drunk, some are blind. But all of them are ostensibly seers. Among them is David, the book's narrator and central figure. Like Wiesel, David was born in Transylvania and has survived the Nazi death camps. Unwilling or unable to die, he seems doomed to live out the prediction of a Nazi lieutenant who tried and failed to execute him. "You'll try to reveal what should remain hidden, you'll try to incite people to learn from the past and rebel, but they will refuse to believe you. You'll possess the truth, you already do; but it's the truth of a madman." Like Elie Wiesel himself, David is drawn to Jerusalem during the Six-Day War, and he is hoping to find death. Psychologically it is inconceivable to him that the Jews will not be overwhelmed as they have been in the past. "We were going to be consumed by fire once more," he predicts, "and once more the world would let it happen."

But instead of death David meets Katriel, a gentle Talmudic scholar who fears both killing and being killed, yet nonetheless has decided to fight. When Katriel disappears, the role of survivor-witness again falls upon David—but this time with a considerable difference. Earlier, Katriel had been asked, "What do you expect of life?" and had replied, "Life itself." Through some blessing, it is inertia of life, not of death, that now preoccupies David. He still ponders the morbid though moral question of how one can "work for the living without by that very act betraying those who are absent." But instead of being drawn toward the 6,000,000 dead, David subsumes the missing Katriel into his own life. After the victorious war, Wiesel writes, "a page has been turned. The curse has been revoked in this place and its reign terminated." There is little affirmation in the discovery, merely an awareness that "what is important is to continue."

Untrustworthy Words. Despite his own eloquence and the book's interlocking questions, Wiesel distrusts words. "They destroy what they aim to describe," Katriel says. "By enveloping the truth they end up taking its place." Questioning silences, Wiesel suggests in A Beggar, can be more trustworthy. They do not curtail explorations with limiting answers. Wiesel has observed elsewhere that "art must be a result of cumulative silences. The silences must become so full that they finally break out. Then you start writing."

The great achievement of A Beggar in Jerusalem is that Wiesel has shaped a story that shows men during a modern war yet does justice to the brooding silences in which all violent action and its consequences are pondered and perhaps judged.

Voices Amid Thunder

By Mayo Mohs
From TIME Magazine
May 8, 1972

SOULS ON FIRE by ELIE WIESEL 268 pages. Random House. $7.95.

For over a decade now, in nine books of fiction and nonfiction, Elie Wiesel (Night, A Beggar in Jerusalem) has been the dark poet of the Holocaust, a man brooding circularly upon the six million Jews who died in death camps. Now he has written a rich, warm book whose subject is religious joy, that mystical and ecstatic strain in Judaic history known as Hasidism.

The book is not so much history as artful evocation. Wiesel tells how Hasidism came to be, two centuries ago in those borderlands that were now Poland, now Russia. He also describes what Hasidism is. No matter that the movement's founder, the Baal Shem Tov ("Master of the Good Name") is already lost in legend. As Wiesel demonstrates, telling his tales learned from his grandfather's knee in Transylvania, Hasidism did not derive from fact or reason but from love and faith.

It was a rebellion against rabbinic legalisms, a rejection of the rationalistic Judaism of the 18th century Enlightenment. It was a cry of fierce optimism in the face of the tragedy that seemed to be man's—and especially Jewish man's—normal portion. In a fragmenting epoch, Hasidism asserted that all Creation is one, that God is good, that man serves him best by rejoicing in life, however difficult it may be.

Wiesel measures his story out in impressionistic vignettes from the lives and thoughts of the great rabbis who fanned Hasidism into a fire that roared through Eastern European Jewry.

There are wise smiles. One Hasidic master boldly tells God that he owes something to sinful man: "Without our sins, what would You do with Your pardon?" There is good counsel: "Every man must free himself from Egypt every day." And there are hard sayings: "Either God is king of this world and I am not doing enough to serve Him, or He is not—and then it is my fault."

The men and their words add up to something extraordinary. Stark figures on an uncertain terrain, they are voices amid thunder, and the voices stick in the mind. Wiesel, who calls himself a Hasid, has done honor to his past with a superb piece of narrative artistry and —more important—with a stunning affirmation of life.

Messengers of God

From TIME Magazine
July 12, 1976

by ELIE WIESEL 235 pages. Random House. $3.95.

The Jew, observes Elie Wiesel, "feels closer to the prophet Elijah than to his next-door neighbor." Analyzing like a good modern, revering like a good Jew, Wiesel portrays in these essays the majestic figures of the Old Testament rather as if he were writing a memoir about beloved but salty grandfathers and great-uncles from the East Side. Certainly Moses and Cain and Abel and even Adam seem as pungently real to him as the Jews he knew as a child in Auschwitz and Buchenwald. In returning to the first Diaspora, the first murder, the first exile, Author Wiesel appears at last to have found a meaning, if not an excuse for the Holocaust he has borne witness to so brilliantly and compulsively in haunted books like One Generation After and in plays like Zalmen, or the Madness of God.

Approaching his Old Testament archetypes the way they approached God, more or less as equals—at least in matters of conversation—Wiesel does not hesitate to judge their characters. When push comes to shove (and it often does in the Old Testament), he tends to like his piety muscular. He goes so far as to prefer Esau to Jacob, referring to Jacob (as well as Adam) as "a weakling." What he interprets as Job's bland "resignation" to God he calls "an insult to man." Job, he remarks, "should have continued to protest."

Adam ("singularly uninteresting") and Joseph ("not too appealing a human being") bore and offend him during their palmy days. Only after Adam's expulsion from Eden, only after Joseph's imprisonment do they qualify for his term of respect: "a tragic figure." Happiness, he concludes, is more corrosive than misery. "Work," "strive," "suffer," "begin again" are the verbs of history and the concepts that inspire Wiesel. In the honorable survival of those who have believed, he finds the examples he needs in order to behave and survive today. Messengers of God, finally, is as simple and direct as that.

The search for relentless relevance can go occasionally rhetorical, as in talk about "man's eternal quest for meaning, justice and truth." It can also turn a little too retroactive. Thus Abraham is labeled "the first angry young man" and Isaac becomes "the first survivor." But much may be forgiven an author who can look Adam in the eye and say, "Poor man: punished for nothing. And he wasn't even Jewish."

A Jew Today

By Mayo Mohs
From TIME Magazine
December 25, 1978
By Elie Wiesel Random House; 208 pages; $10

Elie Wiesel: once again that bitter voice of remembrance. It is like having Jeremiah or Amos in town, denouncing people for their sins. Just about everyone is stung in these pages: American Jews for not shouting loud enough when they knew what was happening in Hitler's concentration camps; European Christians for standing idly by or keeping silent against the encircling terror. Even God is indicted. The tone echoes an ancient Jewish tradition, epitomized in the fiercely mystical Hasidic teachers whose stories Wiesel tells so well, men taking issue with the Master when the universe is out of joint. And Wiesel's eyes saw a universe contorted out of all proportion when he was confined in Auschwitz during the Holocaust.

In his books and in the essays, letters and diary excerpts that make up this new volume, the Holocaust haunts every word. Wiesel's special accomplishment is that he has assigned himself the excruciating role of witness to the century's great crime without losing his hold on sanity and compassion.

The author is at his best in a section titled "Legends of Today." The parables are brief, ironic and heartbreaking. Here is one prisoner refusing the demand of a German officer to revile Jehovah. "Curse your God!" the officer screams, promising him an easy job if he does so. "God is God," the man prays. "God alone is God." "God" is on the man's lips as he dies. "I was there," testifies the martyr's son. "You see, my father . . . my father was a hero ... But he was not a believer." There are other more pitiful tales: the family that can hide only one child safely, and must choose which one. Or a girl in a schoolroom, asking if there is no excuse, no mitigating evidence, for the Jewish Kapos in the camps: "Is there nothing, nothing at all to be said on behalf of my father?"

The diary excerpts reveal the breadth of Wiesel's concern. He mourns the death of Biafra and the extermination of an Indian tribe in Paraguay, confessing that his own indifference has made him an accomplice. He recognizes South Africa's enduring loyalty to Israel, but scorns apartheid and sides with the rebels of Soweto. In a selection of letters, though, he is less successful. One, to a young Palestinian Arab, expresses empathy, but then proceeds to lecture the young Arab on Jewish suffering and Arab terror, never mentioning the sometimes disproportionate Israeli reprisals.

Wiesel's hottest outrage is reserved for the so-called scholarship of revisionists who call the Holocaust a myth, or in the words of Northwestern Professor Arthur Butz, "the hoax of the century." Replies Wiesel: "Where has a people disap peared? Where are they hiding?" In fury, he asks why academics have not boycot ted Butz and why students have not walked out on his classes.

In fact, there seems little danger that such revisionists will be taken seriously. If they have any useful function it is to spark Wiesel into passages that recall Isaac Bashevis Singer's definition of Jews as "a people who can't sleep themselves and let nobody else sleep." While Elie Wiesel lives and writes, there will be no rest for the wicked, the uncaring or any one else.

The Kindness of Strangers

Reviewed by Merle Rubin
Sunday, August 7, 2005; Page BW10
From *The Washington Post*

THE TIME OF THE UPROOTED
By Elie Wiesel. Translated from the French by David Hapgood
Knopf. 300 pp. $25

Elie Wiesel. Photo by Jeff Christensen / Reuters

Unquestionably, Elie Wiesel is one of the most admirable, indeed indispensable, human beings now writing. Beginning with his autobiographical novel *Night* (1958), the Transylvanian-born survivor of Auschwitz and Buchenwald has courageously mined his shattering experiences to provide the world with testimony to the horrors of the Holocaust.

As if this were not enough, over the years Wiesel has gone on to speak out passionately against instance after instance of man's inhumanity to man -- from the killing fields of Cambodia to the massacres in Rwanda. He has been an advocate for Soviet Jews and South African apartheid victims, for Nicaragua's Miskito Indians, Argentina's *desaparecidos* , oppressed Kurds and Bosnians, for all who have been besieged by war, famine or religious, ethnic or political hatred. A strong supporter of Israel, he has also called attention to discrimination against Ethiopian-born Israeli youth. Unlike many who mouth the mantra "Never again," Wiesel means it, and in every case he has raised his voice on behalf of mercy and humanity. It is no wonder that in 1986 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Judged from a purely literary standpoint, however, Wiesel's fiction has a more limited appeal. The problem is not that it often deals with heartbreaking subjects, for Wiesel can evoke devastating loss and horror with simplicity, power and sincerity. The problem results, rather, from a kind of thematic overload that sometimes is more confusing than illuminating. Reading his ambitious and moving new novel, *The Time of the Uprooted* , one feels overwhelmed by an excess of themes, characters, concepts and plot developments, all obviously intended to plumb deep questions about life, love, human nature, religious faith, history, politics and morality, but the effect of which is to diffuse and dissipate the novel's focus.

The central story is a poignant one. In 1939, the Jewish Gamaliel Friedman and his parents flee Czechoslovakia for the then safer-seeming nation of Hungary. When that country, too, provides no protection, Gamaliel's mother (doomed, like her husband, to destruction) consigns the 8-year-old boy to the care of a friend, a Hungarian Christian cabaret singer named Ilonka.

"The world," his mother explains, "is a cruel place. It doesn't want us; it condemns us. . . . But always you find the world in people's hearts. When their hearts are good, the world is beautiful,

but when their hearts are bad, the world is poisonous." Religion, ideology, profession, race or nationality: None of these is any guide to the contents of an individual heart.

Ilonka is a Christian only nominally; as a cabaret singer, she has to consort with the enemy. But she is utterly devoted to the boy. Not only is she prepared to risk her life for him, but she is also a warm and loving mother. Following the ill-fated Hungarian uprising of 1956, Gamaliel flees to Paris, but Ilonka stays on in Budapest. In the years since then, he has been unable to find out what happened to her.

Now an aging refugee living in New York, Gamaliel is called to the bedside of an elderly, deranged, disfigured Hungarian woman. Although he cannot tell whether or not she is Ilonka, he visits her and forges a relationship with Lili Rosenkrantz, the doctor treating her.

Here and elsewhere, uprootedness -- the state of being a refugee -- is another central theme: "Let's note here that Gamaliel, the stranger in this story, isn't really a stranger. Like everyone else, he has an identity. . . . But the refugee in him is always on the alert, ready to speak the word that will upset all he's taken for granted about the way he lives. It is said that a man never recovers from torture, that a woman never recovers from rape. The same is true of those who have been uprooted: once a refugee, always a refugee. He escapes from one place of exile, only to find himself in another: Nowhere is he at home."

In many ways, Gamaliel feels most at home with his friends who are fellow refugees, four of whom have interesting political histories, the fifth of whom is a mystical rabbi. Along with his fellow refugees' back stories, the novel also deals with Gamaliel's earlier love affairs, his disastrous marriage to a Frenchwoman, his alienated twin daughters, his humiliating career as a ghostwriter, and a story he is working on titled "Book of Secrets," about a Kabbalist scholar's attempt to persuade a Roman Catholic archbishop to save Jews from the Nazis. With so much going on, it's like being lost in a hall of mirrors.

In the final scene from "Book of Secrets," the archbishop offers to save the scholar and his family in exchange for conversion. The scholar refuses. How can the archbishop console himself that he is saving a soul via conversion when, at this very moment, Jew after Jew is being murdered in a monstrous ritual of mass crucifixion? "What I require from you has nothing to do with me or my own survival. I demand that you save my entire community," he tells the archbishop. "With every Jew you kill, you put your Lord back on the cross." This Judeo-Christian confrontation and breakthrough is an important theme, worthy of a novel of its own rather than being spliced into this one. But here, as elsewhere, Wiesel tends to circle repetitively around his ideas rather than to probe them with the rigor that could lead to a higher level of understanding. The true theme of this novel, as simple as it is profound, is summed up in the words of Gamaliel's mother: "You find the world in people's hearts." The rest is a distraction. ·

Merle Rubin reviews regularly for the Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal.

Looking back to move forward

From the Los Angeles Times - Los Angeles, Calif.

A book review of *The Time of the Uprooted*, a novel by Elie Wiesel *translated from the French by David Hapgood Alfred A. Knopf: 306 pp., $25*

By Thane Rosenbaum
August 28, 2005

Elie Wiesel.
Photo by Carlos Chavez / LAT

NO other American or European writer is as much a casualty and a beneficiary of the forces of history as is Elie Wiesel. Were it not for Auschwitz, he would have doubtless become an obscure rabbi or mystic in some forest of Transylvania. Instead, he became a witness to mass murder and an orphan of the world. Along the way, as a celebrated novelist, memoirist, humanist and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, he has become one of the world's treasured icons and one of its most enigmatic and versatile figures.

In other countries, it's not uncommon for noted fiction writers to be called upon to render opinions on topics of the day. They even have been known to hold political office, as did Czech playwright and poet Vaclav Havel, who led a peaceful revolution that toppled Communist rule in his country and then served as its president.

But the United States, for better or worse, is a nation that likes its experts specialized. There are few Renaissance men or women who have the public's ear; those who wear too many hats are often dismissed as dabblers. This pigeonholing is a problem of our perception, which is particularly glaring in the case of Wiesel, whose line of work is not easy to characterize. In an age of one- note wonders, he is many contradictory things: an artist and a diplomat, a cloistered academic and a public intellectual, a soulful American fiction writer and a trenchant chronicler of European madness, a moral philosopher and a mystical sage, a secular humanist and a goodwill ambassador for Hasidism, an advocate for the language of silence and an outspoken trumpeter in defense of the oppressed.

Given a ride on the 20th century's most nightmarish track, would he have preferred anonymity and its normalcy to the destiny he received? That too is another Elie Wiesel mystery.

What we do know is that amid all his public stirrings, he has produced a number of excellent novels. Unfortunately, the world hasn't read many of them. That's because his first and most widely read book, "Night," a memoir of his own Holocaust horror and survival of Auschwitz -- with its majestic illumination of man's darkest hour and the broad shadow that the Holocaust

continues to cast over humanity -- has obscured Wiesel's formidable body of work, particularly his fiction.

Indeed, so prominent a position does that memoir occupy in the canon of Holocaust testimony that most people who have read *Night* mistakenly believe they have "read" Wiesel when, in fact, they have read only his first offering, which neither represents nor validates the vastness of his literary output.

The good news is that it is never too late to rediscover a writer, even one as famous as Wiesel. His latest work, "The Time of the Uprooted," is perhaps his most satisfying and successful work of fiction in years, written by a mature novelist with his finest talents on full display. It is also one of his most personal and sensual novels, combining the mystical power of "The Gates of the Forest" with the aching soulfulness of "The Fifth Son."

At the same time, Wiesel has not forsaken his familiar themes: the inscrutability of God, the poetry of silence, the language of laughter, the interchangeability of names and identities in times of crisis, and the eloquence of mystics and madmen.

Gamaliel Friedman became an orphan when his father was tortured and his mother taken away as the Holocaust crept into Hungary. He survived due to the righteousness of Ilonka, a Christian woman and cabaret singer who sacrificed much to rescue and mother this Jewish boy, who lost not only his parents, but also his name. During the Nazi occupation, he was renamed Peter and memorized enough to pass as a Gentile if ever questioned.

The Holocaust caused massive displacements and dizzying substitutions. Wiesel knows this well, and he directs his main character through a maze of thwarted dreams. Gamaliel is now an older man, living in New York City as a ghost writer for hire, working secretly on a book of his own as he reflects on the meaning of exile, the psychic condition of the refugee and the unsettled plight of the uprooted. Wiesel writes that "a refugee is a different kind of being, one from whom all that defines a normal person has been amputated. He belongs to no nation, is welcome at no one's table."

Wiesel takes a hard look at a Holocaust survivor at twilight and is concerned by what he sees. There were limits to Gamaliel's survival. When he fled Budapest for Vienna in 1956 during the revolt against communism, he hoped Ilonka would follow him. She never did, and he will never rid himself of guilt for having abandoned the woman who had selflessly rescued him.

Now, in New York, Gamaliel visits an elderly, disfigured and delirious Hungarian woman in a hospital bed, hoping that Ilonka has perhaps returned to him in her final hour. But the time passes without resolution, and the memory of Ilonka as a touchstone for human virtue takes on Proustian significance. Ilonka is the madeleine of Gamaliel's memory. Whether she has returned or not, she personifies all that has been lost and uprooted, and all that can never be reclaimed.

But the brokenness continues. There's a nostalgically unconsummated love affair. The former wife who committed suicide, leaving behind two embittered daughters estranged from their father. And, finally, Gamaliel's most recent love, who ended up leaving him for another man.

Gamaliel is a Holocaust survivor very much unalive, yet quite capable of experiencing arousal and pleasure from women drawn to his sadness while repulsed by his surrender to life. In this way, he is not unlike the usual depictions of Holocaust survivors in art -- damaged, traumatized, numb yet functioning among the untouched. Gamaliel's return to the living could never have encompassed a full turn. He remains alone, "immune to happiness," not so much a ghost writer as an actual ghost. The Nazis transformed him into a magnet for loss. Moving from one exile to another, from one disconnection to the next, he resurfaces in New York with little anchoring to offset the uprootedness of his life.

Yet, even within this novel of self-conscious fatalism, all is not lost. Some of its most interesting and charming moments come from secondary characters—Holocaust survivor homeboys, if you will -- four best friends, all refugees who first meet in Paris and eventually gather in New York as a playful, philosophical Greek chorus of Jews. They mockingly refer to themselves as the Elders of Zion.

They are, understandably, mistrustful of God and man, and haunted by memories of the unspeakable and ultimately unknowable. But they are also quirky and magnetic, quick-witted and supremely resourceful. During one of their more lively exchanges, Wiesel reminds his readers not to trivialize and misapply the meaning of the term "Holocaust survivor."

"Survivor! ... Gamaliel's reaction to the word has been that it was cheapened, made a cliche, used in all kinds of situations. Everybody wanted to be one. No need to have undergone a selection at Birkenau or the tortures of Treblinka.... How many times Gamaliel had heard some hapless speaker trying to win the audience's sympathy by declaiming, 'We are all survivors.... Of course, I was born in Manhattan, but I could have been born in Lodz or Krakow....' Didn't they realize that if everyone is a potential or virtual survivor, then no one is a true survivor?"

"The Time of the Uprooted" might never supplant *Night* on either the Holocaust or the Wiesel syllabus, but it wouldn't be a tragedy if it did. Apart from being a stupendously artful novel, it is also a redemptive read, a forward-looking book from the perspective of a Holocaust survivor looking back. The perfect post-Holocaust novel from the man who for many has come to symbolize the Holocaust itself.

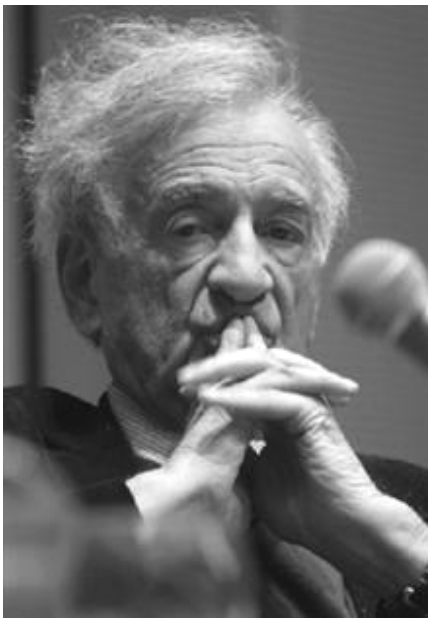
Credit: Thane Rosenbaum is the author of the novels "The Golems of Gotham" and "Second Hand Smoke" as well as "The Myth of Moral Justice: Why Our Legal System Fails to Do What's Right."

An insane desire to dance

From European Jewish Press
Updated: 15/May/2006 17:25

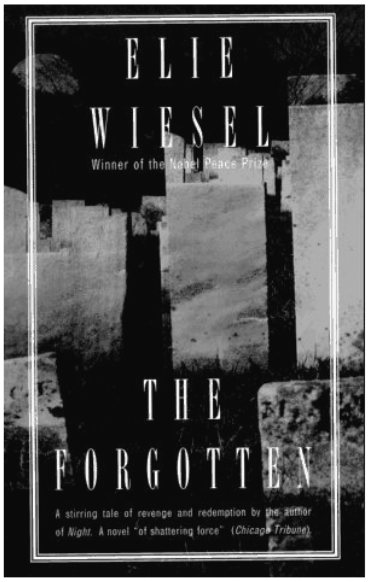
By Rebecca Assoun in Paris

The hero of this story thinks he may be insane, or in any case that he suffers from a form of madness due to an excess of memory. However, is a madman who knows that he is mad really mad? Is it the 20th century with its array of tragedies misfortunes that drove us all to madness?


Elie Wiesel

The story is set in the present in New York in the practice of a psychoanalyst where the madman has come to deliver himself of the ghosts which obscure his mind and dominate his madness.

"An insane desire to dance" is a historical novel in which Wiesel explores his memories of the 20th century and the tragedies that dominated it. A novel of self-discovery that delves into the darkest depths of the soul, "An insane desire to dance" is as an interior adventure driven by a desire for knowledge and the certainty that only love can cure the deepest wounds."



The Forgotten by Elie Wiesel

"In each one of my novels, there is a madman, always in a secondary role. In "An insane desire to dance", he has the main role. Madness has always fascinated me: it is the other side of culture, language and truth. It is the draw of the forbidden, not in a moral but in a human sense," Wiesel told to the French magazine, Le Point.

"This fascination goes back to my childhood, in Transylvania, before the war. On Shabbat my sisters used to bring sweets to patients in the hospital, and my father visited the prisons," Wiesel says.

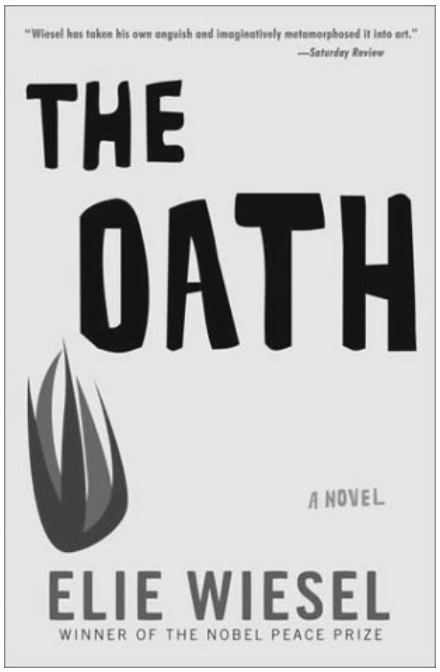
"One day, he took me with him to the asylum and while he talked to doctors about how these miserable people could be helped, I just stood at the door, terrified at the spectacle. After the war in Paris, I followed lessons in psychopathology. Later, I wondered why madness interested me so much: I realised that it is because the world had become insane! History is dominated by currents of madness: the crusades were

pure madness, the Inquisition too.

"And what can one say about the 20th century? Sometimes, I wonder what could have happened for the Jewish people to not only be a scapegoat, but to be seen as a target that needed to be eliminated? Madness is the wall I constantly run up.

"I wonder how I managed to remain sane, after having been thrown into cold and hunger, experiencing fear and abuse, and the screaming of the "Kapos" and the barking of the dogs? What saved me from madness, was my desire for knowledge. I friend, with whom I had to carry heavy stones. He was the director of Talmud school in Poland. I was always walking behind him while we worked, I only saw the back of his head, but we always recited the Talmud together."

The Accident by Elie Wiesel



The Oath by Elie Wiesel

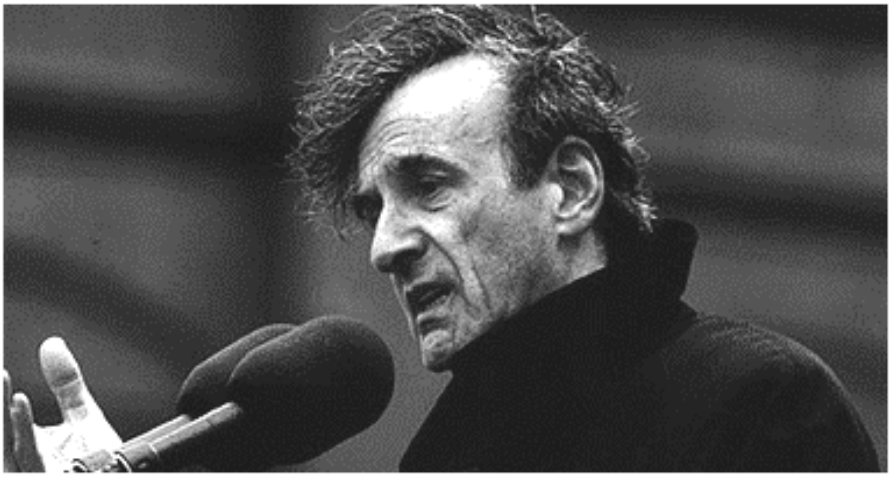
The American writer and Nobel prize winner Elie Wiesel was born in 1928 in Szighet, Hungary. As a Jew, he was sent to Auschwitz and Buchenwald where he witnessed the death of all his relatives. At the end of the war, he arrived in Paris, where he studied journalism at the Sorbonne. Later he settled in New York and taught in Boston. He dedicated his life to the fight against racism and discrimination.

"An insane desire to dance" by Elie Wiesel is published at Seuil editions.

From European Jewish Press

Interview: Elie Wiesel

By the Academy of Achievement
June 29, 1996
Sun Valley, Idaho



ElieWiesel speaks at the dedication of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, DC.
(© Diana Walker/TIME Inc.)

Childhood is one of the recurring themes in your writing. Could you tell us something about your childhood?
My childhood, really, was a childhood blessed with love and hope and faith and prayer. I come from a very religious home and in my little town I was not the only one who prayed and was loved. There were people who were poorer than us and yet, in my town, we were considered to be, not a wealthy family, but well-to-do, which means we weren't hungry. There were people who were.

I spent most of my time talking to God more than to people. He was my partner, my friend, my teacher, my king, my sovereign, and I was so crazily religious that nothing else mattered. Oh, from time-to-time we had anti-Semitic outbursts. Twice a year, Christmas and Easter, we were afraid to go out because those nights we used to be beaten up by hoodlums. It didn't matter that much. In a way, I was almost used to that. I saw it as part of nature. It's cold in the winter, it's hot in the summer and at Christmas you are being beaten up by a few anti-Semitic hoodlums**.**

Now, it is still the child in me that asks the questions. It is still the child in me that I am trying to entertain or to reach with my stories, which are his stories.

What people were important to you? Who influenced you? Who inspired you?

Well, naturally, my grandfather. He was a Hasid, meaning a member of the Hasidic community, and I loved him, I adored him. So, thanks to him, I became a Hasid too. And my mother—who actually continued his tradition—she's the one who brought me to Hasidic Masters. And all the stories I tell now—I've written so many books with Hasidic tales—these are not mine, these are theirs, my mother's and my grandfather's.

Elie Wiesel's maternal grandfather, Dodye Feig. Courtesy of Elie Wiesel.

My father taught me how to reason, how to reach my mind. My soul belonged to my grandfather and my mother. They influenced me profoundly, to this day. When I write, I have the feeling, literally, physically, that one of them is behind my back, looking over my shoulder and reading what I'm writing. I'm terribly afraid of their judgment.

After the war, I had a teacher in France who was totally crazy. He spoke 30 languages, literally 30 languages. One day he learned that I knew Hungarian, and he didn't. He felt so bad that he learned Hungarian in two weeks. In two weeks he knew more about Hungarian literature than I did. Then, I had, in New York, a very great teacher, a very great Master. His name was Saul Lieberman, a Talmudic Scholar. I've studied Talmud all my life. I still do, even now, every day. For 17 years we were friends, as only a real teacher and a good student can be.

As a boy, what books most influenced you, were most important to you?

Shlomo Wiesel, Elie's father. Courtesy of Elie Wiesel

Religious books, of course. At home we didn't study the prophets that much. We studied the five books of Moses (the Pentateuch) and then, again, Talmud and Hasidic stories. They, of course, had a lasting influence on me. Secular literature? We had to go to school, so we went to school too, but I received the main impact from my religious schools as a child.

After the war, I began reading, of course. I went to the Sorbonne and I began reading literature. Dostoyevsky and Thomas Mann, the usual. And Kafka. I remember the awakening that occurred in me when I read, for the first time, Franz Kafka. It was in the evening when I began reading. I spent the entire night reading and, in the morning, I heard the garbage collector around five o'clock. Usually, I was annoyed at the garbage collector. It's a very ugly noise that they make, ugly sounds. That morning I was happy. I wanted to run out and embrace them, all these garbage collectors, because they taught me that there was another world than the world of Kafka, which is absurd and desperate, and despairing.

I read a lot. I teach my students, not creative writing, but creative reading and it is still from my childhood. You take a text, you explore it, you enter it with all your heart and all your mind. And then you find clues that were left for you, really foredestined to be received by you from

centuries ago. Generation after generation there were people who left clues, and you are there to collect them and, at one point, you understand something that you hadn't understood before. That is a reward, and as a teacher I do the same thing. When I realize there is a student there, in the corner, who understands, there is a flicker in the eye. That is the greatest reward that a teacher can receive.

When did you know that you wanted to be a writer?
I'm not sure I am, actually. I have written 40 books, it must mean I'm a writer. When you have to write "profession," I'm not going to write "writer." After all, "Profession?" "Writer?" A profession is to be a human being, maybe. That's a very noble profession. Or teacher, the noblest of all professions. I write. As a child, really, at age ten, eleven, or twelve, I was already writing. I wanted to become a writer, and I even wrote a book of commentaries on the Bible. It's so bad. I found it after the war. It's so horrible, I'm embarrassed even to admit that I had written it.

My ambition really was, even as a child, to be a writer, a commentator, and a teacher, but a teacher of Talmud. And here I am. I'm a writer, for want of a better word, and I'm a teacher. I don't teach the same things. I don't write about the same things -- although I do write commentaries on the Bible, and on the Prophets, and the Talmud, and Hasidic Masters. But still, I am a writer and a teacher.

It's hard for any of us to imagine what you experienced, as an adolescent, in the concentration camps. How did that affect and change what you did with your life?
It affected me a lot. I cannot talk about myself. I like to talk about other people, not about myself, but I'll try to answer you.

Of course it had an overwhelming affect. After the war—I was 15 when I entered the camp—I was 16 when I left it and all of a sudden you become an orphan and you have no one. I had a little sister and I knew, with my mother the first night, that they were swept away by fire. My older sister I discovered by accident after the war in Paris, where I was in an orphanage. But to be an orphan -- you can become an orphan at 50 and you are still an orphan. Very often I think of my father and my mother. At any important moment in my life, they are there thinking, "What an injustice."

To date, I haven't written much about that period. Of my 40 books, maybe four or five deal with that period. I know that there are no words for it, so all I can try to do is to communicate the incommunicability of the event. Furthermore, I know that even if I found the words you wouldn't understand. It is not because I cannot explain that you won't understand, it is because you won't understand that I can't explain.

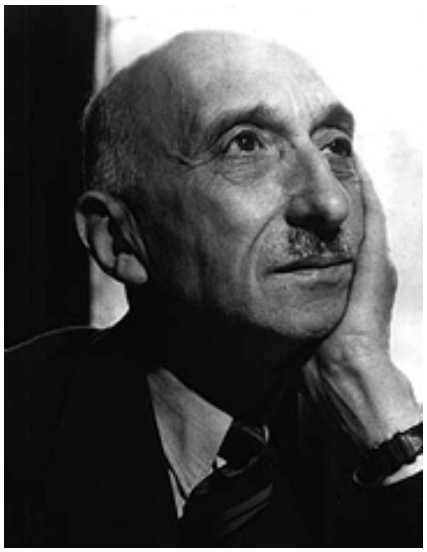
The idea of the writer's mission, to be a witness, to be a messenger, was that part of your intention as a writer?
I wasn't that ambitious really. I wanted to write. I wrote my first book in Yiddish. In 1956, it came out in Buenos Aires, and then in French in 1958, and in New York in 1960. I wrote it, not for myself really. I wrote it for the other survivors who found it difficult to speak. And I wanted really to tell them, "Look, you must speak. As poorly as we can express our feelings, our memories, but we must try. We are not guaranteeing success, but we must guarantee effort." I wrote it for them, because the survivors are a kind of most endangered species. Every day, every

day there are funerals. And I felt that there for a while they were so neglected, so abandoned, almost humiliated by society after the war.

When I became Chairman of the President's Commission on the Holocaust in 1978, I wanted really to glorify the survivors. There wasn't a committee to which I didn't appoint a survivor, because I felt they deserve it. The same reason I wrote is really for that mission. It's always afterwards that, in a way, your friends or your readers convince you that you went beyond that, that you are a messenger, and so forth.

I didn't use those words, I used the words simply, "Look, we have to tell the story as best as we can. And we know that we won't succeed." I know I won't succeed. I know I haven't succeeded. Take the word "Holocaust." I am among the first, if not the first to use it in that context. By accident. I was working on an essay, a biblical commentary, and I wrote about the sacrifice, the binding of Isaac, by his father Abraham. In the Bible, there is a Hebrew word *ola,* which means burned offering. I thought the word "holocaust" was good: fire and so on. In the Bible, it was the son who almost died, but in our case it was the father who died, not the son. The word had so many implications that I felt it was good. Then it became accepted, and everybody used it and then I stopped using it because it was abused. Everything was a holocaust all of a sudden. I once heard a sportscaster on television speaking of the defeat of a sports team and he said, "Was that a holocaust!" My God! Everything became a holocaust.

In Bosnia, I remember, they spoke about a holocaust. I went to Bosnia to see. I felt, if it is, I must move heaven and earth. Even if it isn't, I must move heaven and earth to prevent it, but at least not to use the word. Well, all of this is really not very easy, but why should it be?



François Mauriac.
UPI/Corbis-Bettman

After the war, you did not speak, you were not a witness, for ten years.

I was. You know**...** You can be a silent witness, which means silence itself can become a way of communication. There is so much in silence. There is an archeology of silence. There is a geography of silence. There is a theology of silence. There is a history of silence. Silence is universal and you can work within it, and its own context, and make that silence into a testimony. Job, after he lost his children and everything, his fortune and his health, Job, for seven days and seven nights he was silent, and his three friends who came to visit him were also silent. That must have been a powerful silence, a brilliant silence. You see, silence itself can be testimony and I was waiting for ten years, really, but my intention simply was to be sure that the words I would use are the proper words. I was afraid of language.

What persuaded you to break that silence?

Oh, I knew ten years later I would do something. I had to tell the story. I was a young journalist in Paris. I wanted to meet the Prime Minister of France for my paper. He was, then, a Jew called Mendès-France. But he didn't offer to see me. I had heard that the French author François Mauriac—a very great Catholic writer and Nobel Prize winner, a member of the Academy—was

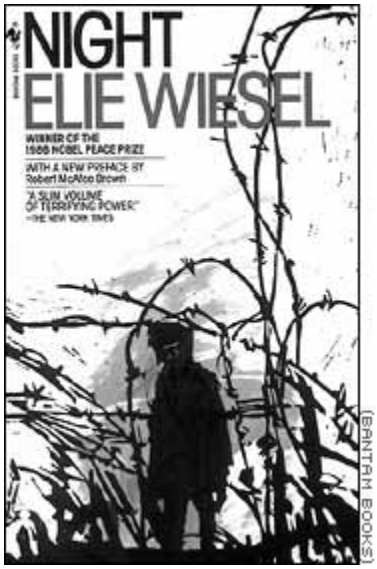
his guru. Mauriac was his teacher. So I would go to Mauriac, the writer, and I would ask him to introduce me to Mendès-France.

Mauriac was an old man then, but when I came to Mauriac, he agreed to see me. We met and we had a painful discussion. The problem was that he was in love with Jesus. He was the most decent person I ever met in that field—as a writer, as a Catholic writer. Honest, sense of integrity, and he was in love with Jesus. He spoke only of Jesus. Whatever I would ask—Jesus. Finally, I said, "What about Mendès-France?" He said that Mendès-France, like Jesus, was suffering. That's not what I wanted to hear. I wanted, at one point, to speak about Mendès-France and I would say to Mauriac, can you introduce me?

When he said Jesus again I couldn't take it, and for the only time in my life I was discourteous, which I regret to this day. I said, "Mr. Mauriac," we called him Maître, "ten years or so ago, I have seen children, hundreds of Jewish children, who suffered more than Jesus did on his cross and we do not speak about it." I felt all of a sudden so embarrassed. I closed my notebook and went to the elevator. He ran after me. He pulled me back; he sat down in his chair, and I in mine, and he began weeping. I have rarely seen an old man weep like that, and I felt like such an idiot. I felt like a criminal. This man didn't deserve that. He was really a pure man, a member of the Resistance. I didn't know what to do. We stayed there like that, he weeping and I closed in my own remorse. And then, at the end, without saying anything, he simply said, "You know, maybe you should talk about it."

He took me to the elevator and embraced me. And that year, the tenth year, I began writing my narrative. After it was translated from Yiddish into French, I sent it to him. We were very, very close friends until his death. That made me not publish, but write.

The book *Night,* was not easily published, was it?
Neither in France nor here, in spite of Mauriac. He was the most famous author in Europe, and he brought it personally from publisher to publisher. They didn't want it. It was too morbid, they said. "Nobody wants to hear these stories." Finally, a small publisher (who, by the way, was also Beckett's publisher, which means he had courage) published it. So we brought it to an American publisher. It went from publisher to publisher to publisher. All of them refused it. They gave the same reasons, until a small publisher picked it up. From 1960 to 1963, three years, it didn't sell 1500 copies. Nobody wanted to read it. It doesn't matter. I am not here to sell, I'm here to write.



Night by Elie Wiesel

What lessons can we draw for young people for all of this? How do you maintain faith in the face of the circumstances that you've endured in your lifetime? How do you keep hope and optimism alive? How do you keep going?
Well, I could answer you by saying, "What is the alternative?" But it's not enough. In truth, I have learned something. The enemy wanted to be the one who speaks, and I felt, I still feel, we must see to it that the victim should be the one who speaks and is heard. Therefore, all my adult life, since I began my life as an author, or as a teacher, I always try to listen to the victim. In other words, if I remain silent, I may help my own soul but, because I do not help other people, I

poison my soul. Silence never helps the victim. It only helps the victimizer. I think of the killer and I lose all faith. But then I think of the victim and I am inundated with compassion.

Is it possible for you to say what advice you might offer to young people today who are starting out on whatever course they may follow?
Sensitivity. Be sensitive in every way possible about everything in life. Be sensitive. Insensitivity brings indifference and nothing is worse than indifference. Indifference makes that person dead before the person dies. Indifference means there is a kind of apathy that sets in and you no longer appreciate beauty, friendship, goodness, or anything. So, therefore, do not be insensitive. Be sensitive, only sensitive. Of course it hurts. Sensitivity is painful. So what. Think of those that you have to be sensitive to. Their pain is greater than yours.


President Carter observes a Day of Remembrance with Elie Wiesel at the U.S. Capitol. (UPI/Corbis-Bettman)

When you talk about victims and injustice, you are speaking about something that is universal. It is with us as much today as it was during the war years.
Absolutely. Sensitivity is inclusive, not exclusive. If you are sensitive, you are sensitive to everything. You cannot say I am only sensitive to this person but not to others. That is not only counterproductive, it's self-defeating. It's not only because of religion, or because of social problems, or of medical problems, that you must be sensitive. There is nothing more exciting than to be a sensitive person. Because then you listen, and you go out and you hear the birds chirping and it's great. You see a person in the street, you do not know his face and you think, "Who knows what secret that person carries?" Which means you learn and you learn and you learn and you become enriched to a point that afterwards it overflows.

What personal characteristics are most important for young people to have in mind as they look toward their futures and their careers?
What I say, of course, applies to all since I don't know the individual component of that group you are trying to refer to. I would say, favor the question, always question. Do not accept answers as definitive. Answers change. Questions don't. Always question those who are certain of what they are saying. Always favor the person who is tolerant enough to understand that there are no absolute answers, but there are absolute questions.

If you were going to recommend books...
Don't ask. I wouldn't recommend mine because it would be vanity. Were I to recommend others, those I'm not recommending would be angry. I would certainly say to read the classics. I like to

re-read the classics. The Bible, naturally, then the religious texts, the Hindu texts. The Upanishads and the Vedas are great, great books. Then go to the Greeks. And *The Song of Gilgamesh,* These are extraordinary books, even to this day. Read and read and read, but mainly read those who have survived the centuries.

What would you say the American Dream means to you?
Equality in diversity. That no group should be superior in the American society than another. Second, generosity. The person who is fortunate --thanks to his or her talent or heritage, to have more than others -- that person should know that he or she owes something to others who are less fortunate. Third, that every minute can be the beginning or the end of an adventure

As we approach the 21st Century, what do you see as the greatest challenges in front of us?
Fanaticism. If there is one word that comprises all of these threats, it is fanaticism. For some reason, it is growing everywhere, in every religion: in Islam, in Christianity, in Judaism. Why now? Haven't we seen fanaticism is dangerous as an idea, because it carries poison?
Furthermore, in politics, imagine a fanatic with power. May I go one step further? Imagine a fanatic with nuclear power. Do you have any doubt that if Idi Amin, in Uganda 20 years ago, before he was thrown out, would have used a weapon if he had one? Or a Khadafi now, in Libya? It's dangerous. A fanatic therefore, must be unmasked first, and then disarmed.

Is there anything that you have thought about doing that you haven't been able to do yet?
I may seem silly or childish to you, but if could bring back one child, I would give up anything I have. Just one child. If I could now -- which is more possible -- free one prisoner, I would give a lot. If I could give a feeling of solidarity to a person who is abandoned, I would still give a lot. So you see, I would like to do things that I cannot do. All I have is a few words, and I will give these words. That's what I am trying to do.

What is your hope for this generation that follows us?
I would not want my past to become their future.

Is there anything else you would like to say?
In spite of what I have seen in my life, and observed, I agree with Albert Camus, whose work I always love to read and teach. At the end of his novel, *The Plague,* which is a desperate and despairing novel, he says, more or less, "There is more to celebrate than to denigrate in man."

Thank you. Thank you so much.

From the Academy of Achievement

Elie Wiesel on his beliefs

From *The Toronto Star*

The world's best-known Holocaust survivor says strangers invariably ask him how he managed to preserve his faith despite his suffering

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JEFF DIAMANTE
RELIGION NEWS SERVICE

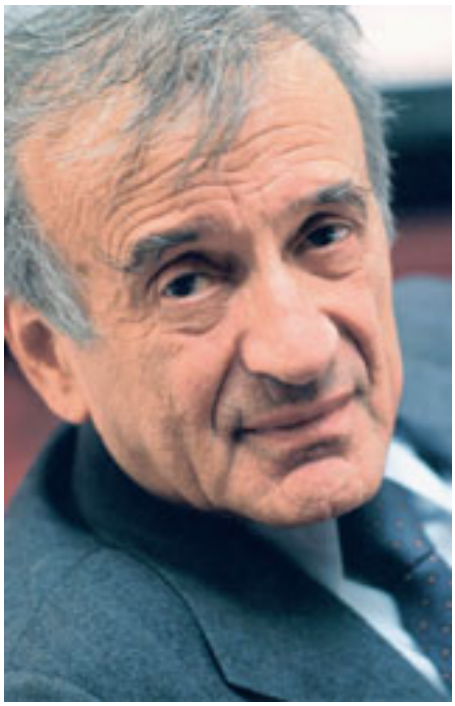


Photo courtesy of Uitgeverij Meulenhoff

Perhaps no Holocaust survivor alive today is more widely known than Elie Wiesel, who has written and spoken extensively of his experiences and the need for world leaders to stop human atrocities even outside their countries' borders.

His first book published in English, *Night*, recounts his time in Auschwitz, Buchenwald and other Nazi concentration camps from 1944 to 1945. It has sold millions of copies since its 1958 publication. Oprah Winfrey recently selected it for her book club.

In *Night*, Wiesel, 77, writes of seeing babies put into a fiery pit, of living through the camps with his father, of watching his father severely beaten, of seeing Jewish prisoners brawl over bits of food, of a death march between concentration camps and of how everything he saw affected his thoughts on God.

Wiesel's mother and younger sister were quickly killed in the camps. His father died after a year of starvation and beatings, shortly before the camps were liberated.

A professor of philosophy and religion at Boston University, he has written 47 books, including *All Rivers Run to the Sea* and *And the Sea is Never Full*, his two-volume memoir. He lives in Manhattan.

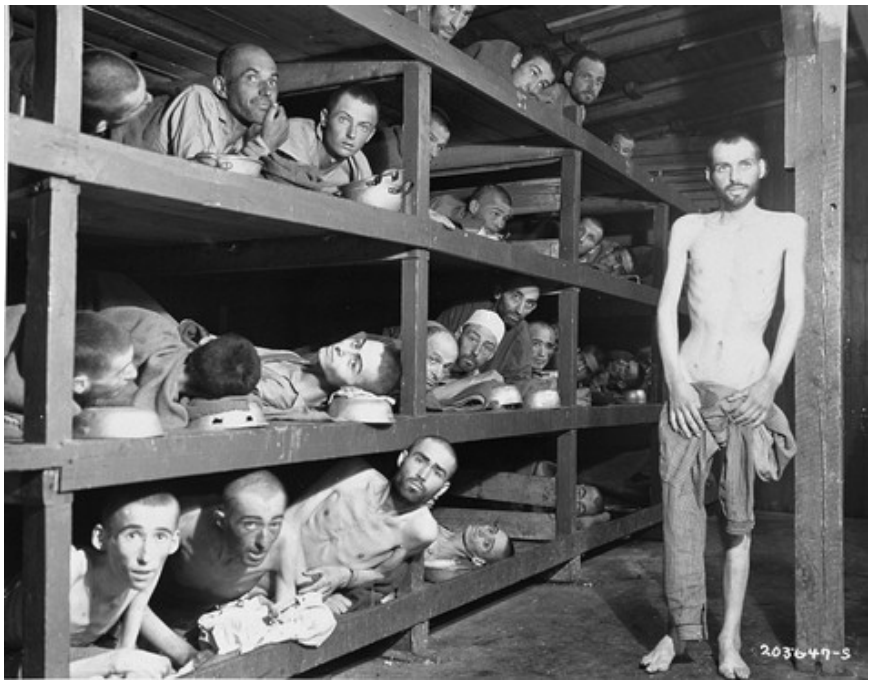
Wiesel recently talked by telephone about *Night*, the world's response to genocide, and the subject Wiesel says more people ask him about than anything else: his belief in God.

Q: What has it been like for you to see this 48-year-old piece of work receive new publicity these last few months?
In truth, it came to me as a great surprise. I had already (done) an interview with Oprah, one hour, years ago. I didn't know, for instance, that my Pocket Book Penguin sold six million copies. I found out from (published reports) ... I had no idea.

Q: In what ways do you feel the world has responded properly to the memory of the Holocaust? In what ways has it not?
Properly? Now there are museums all over the world. Many, many conferences, colloquia and lessons. That means there is an awakening, there is an awareness.
Where it has failed is, I was convinced that if the world was to receive the testimony of the Holocaust, it would improve itself, it would become a better world. And it hasn't. ... Leadership is important. And it's failing.

Q: What is it like having strangers ask you if or why you believe in God?
You know who asks me the most? It's children. Children ask, ``How can you still believe in God?" In *All the Rivers Run to the Sea*, I speak about it. There are all the reasons in the world for me to give up on God. I have the same reasons to give up on man, and on culture and on education. And yet ... I don't give up on humanity, I don't give up on culture, I don't give up on journalism ... I don't give up on it. I have the reasons. I don't use them.

Q: How often do people ask you this question?
Whenever there's a question-and-answer period after a lecture, inevitably the question comes up. Inevitably. I still (can't) remember once that I gave a lecture on philosophy or on history or the Talmud or the Bible (when it didn't come up) at one point. It's `How come you — or do you — believe in God?'



Prisoners of the Buchenwald concentration camp, five days after liberation. Elie Wiesel is seventh from the left on the second row. April 16, 1945. Courtesy of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Q: How do you respond to people who no longer believe in God because of the Holocaust?
I ask them, `How can you believe in man?' After all, God did not send down Auschwitz from heaven. Human beings did it. And most of them were cultured, educated. The (Nazis) were led by people with college degrees, some of them with doctoral degrees, some with PhDs. Then they don't know.

Q: Why do you think people ask you these questions?
It is for their sake. They want to understand. Look, a very religious person would not ask me this question; only if that religious person has some anxiety or some doubt, then that person wants to know how I deal with that anxiety and that doubt. And I say, `Look, I have faith. It's a wounded faith.'

Q: There's a story about Jews in Auschwitz in Karen Armstrong's book, *A History of God*. Maybe you've heard it: A group of Jews in Auschwitz put God on trial, on charges of cruelty and betrayal. They find God guilty and worthy of death. As Armstrong tells the story, the rabbi who was in Auschwitz pronounced the verdict and then looked up and said that the trial was over because it was time for evening prayers.
Karen Armstrong is quoting me, actually.

Q: Does that story help explain the roots of your own belief, maybe to someone who doesn't know you, in that these people have seen these horrible things happen and they're angry with God but it doesn't mean that they don't believe in God?
Surely, I think it's one of the elements. For me, it's not only that. I want to follow the tradition of my father and my grandfather and his grandfather. I don't feel I should break the chain.

Q: Why is it that it bothers you when people suggest God helped you survive the concentration camps?
It doesn't bother me. But I don't accept it. ... If God helped make a miracle for me, he could have (done so) for others worthier than I.

Q: What is it like having the whole world know what you went through, of knowing that people feel that they know the pain you went through even before they meet you?
I don't want people to know what I went through; I want people to know what the Jewish people went through and, therefore, beyond it and by that, (what) the world went through ... what humanity has done to itself by allowing the crimes to be committed against my people. I write as a witness, and a witness must tell the truth.

Q: Do you have a lot of people tell you *Night* makes them think of their own relationship with their father?
A lot of people say that, that what they're moved by mainly is the father-and-son relationship. But you know, that has been haunting me in every one of my novels. ... In all of my novels, I always come back to the father-son relationship.

***Jeff Diamant** is a staff writer for The Star-Ledger of Newark, N.J*

Elie Wiesel: Academic History

In class at Boston University, 1982
From *And the Sea Is Never Full: Memoirs, 1969—* by Elie Wiesel
Photo courtesy of Boston University

1972 – 1976	Distinguished Professor of Judaic Studies at City University of New York
1976 – present	Andrew Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Boston University
1982	Henry Luce Visiting Scholar in Humanities and Social Thought at Yale University
1993 – present	Co-instructor of Winter term (January) courses at Eckerd College, St. Petersburg, Florida
1997 – 1999	Ingeborg Rennert Visiting Professor of Judaic Studies at Barnard College, Columbia

Elie Wiesel: Writer and Professor

Study Questions

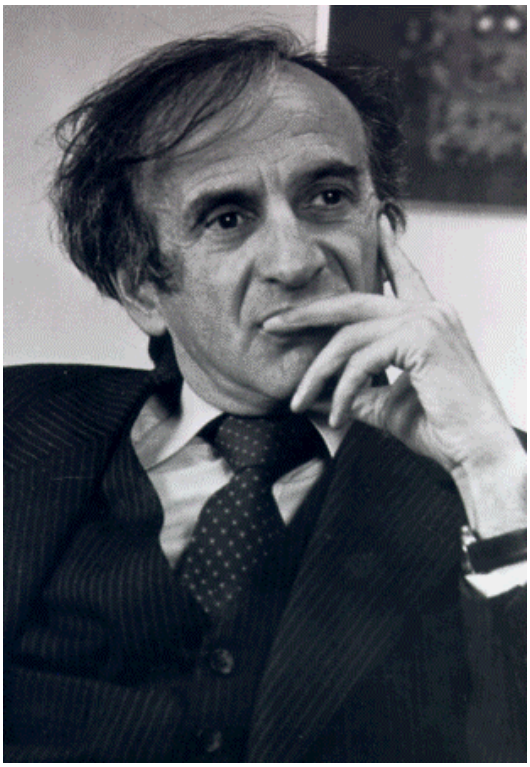
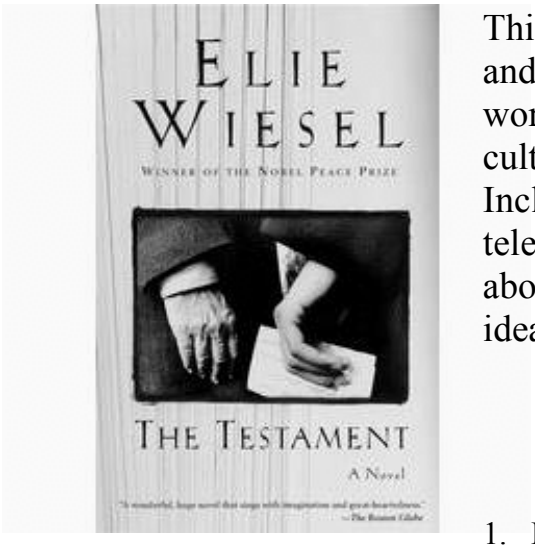


Photo courtesy of Columbia University

1. How do you think Elie Wiesel's childhood has influenced his writing style?
2. Who has inspired his work throughout the years? In what ways?
3. Does the author show a passion for his work? What about writing do you think appeals to him?
4. What other literary works does Elie Wiesel list as having had a profound effect on his work?
5. How does he explain his being both a writer and a teacher?
6. Although the author hasn't written that much about the period in which he was in the concentration camps, what kind of "overwhelming affect" do you think it has had on his writing?
7. What seems to be Elie Wiesel's main purpose for writing?
8. How can silence be as powerful as the spoken or written word? When does silence become unacceptable?
9. What does Elie Wiesel say is the most important quality for young people to have?
10. Do you agree with Elie Wiesel when he says fanaticism is the greatest challenge to our century? Why or why not? In what modern-day examples can you see fanaticism posing a threat to the world?

Reference Materials



This section provides additional resources that teachers and students can use to learn more about the life and work of Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel and the cultural and historical factors that have shaped his life. Included are a filmography listing of Professor Wiesel's television and movie contributions, related readings about the topics covered in this guide and more, and ideas for classroom lessons and projects.

1. Bibliography
2. Filmography—Multimedia Works By, About, and With Elie Wiesel
3. Project Ideas and Classroom Activities
   - Holocaust Graffiti
   - Human Needs Analysis
   - Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular
4. Academic references
   - "Wiesel Center Holds Inaugural Event"
   - *Institut Universitaire d'Études Juives Elie Wiesel*
5. Relevant Organizations and Websites

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." —Elie Wiesel

Bibliography

Related Resources

Historical References

Bauer, Yehuda and Nili Keren. ***A History of the Holocaust***. New York: Franklin Watts, 1982.

- Abstract: This work examines the origins of anti-Semitism and Nazism as well as the history of Jewish-German relationships. One of the most readable general histories for high school students.

Baynes, Norman H., ed. ***Speeches of Adolf Hitler***. London: Oxford UP, 1942.

- Abstract: This work includes translated extracts from Hitler's major speeches.

Berenbaum, Michael. ***The World Must Know: The History of the Holocaust as Told in the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum***. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1993.

- Abstract: This comprehensive work, written by the project director of USHMM, tells the story of the Holocaust with words and photographs. It can be used in conjunction with a museum visit or on its own.

Conot, Robert E. ***Justice at Nuremberg***. New York: Carroll & Graf, 1984.

- Abstract: Details and preparation for the Nuremberg Trials are discussed.

De Pres, Terrence. ***The Survivor: An Anatomy of Life in the Death Camps***. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

- Abstract: The stories of survivors of the death camps are analyzed in an attempt to understand what these people endured and how they survived.

Engelmann, Bernt. ***In Hitler's Germany: Everyday Life in the Third Reich***. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.

- Abstract: This Holocaust survivor uncovers the details of "normal" life under Hitler.

Friedman, Philip. ***Their Brothers' Keepers***. New York: Crown, 1957.

- Abstract: This classic volume contains the first documented evidence of Christian aid to the Jews during the Holocaust. Friedman has collected eyewitness accounts, personal letters, and diaries as source material. He also conducted interviews across Europe to discover and record stories of rescue.

Gilbert, Martin. ***A History of the Jews in Europe during the Second World War***. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1986.

- Abstract: Gilbert combines historical narrative with personal testimonies. An invaluable tool for providing supplementary material on any aspect of the Holocaust.

Hilberg, Raul. ***Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe, 1933-1945***. New York: HarperCollins, 1992.

- Abstract: Hilberg includes rescuers and Jewish resisters, but his main focus is on the destruction of European Jewry and those who are responsible for it.

Liebster, Simone Arnold. ***Facing the Lion.*** New Orleans: Grammation Press, 2000.

- Abstract: Auutobiography of a young Jehovah's Witness during the days preceding the Second World War.

Morse, Arthur**.** ***While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Empathy***. New York: Random House, 1967.

- Abstract: This work takes a critical look at the American response to the events that were unfolding in Europe before and during the Holocaust.

Rothchild, Sylvia. ***Voices From the Holocaust***. New York: New American Library, 1981.

- Abstract: This work is a collection of Jewish survivor accounts discussing life before, during, and after the Holocaust.

Newton, Verne W. ***FDR and the Holocaust***. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996.

- Abstract: Verne Newton examines both the role of the Roosevelt administration in WWII and the American reaction to the Nazis' persecution of European Jews.

Tschuy, Theo. ***Dangerous Diplomacy: The Story of Carl Lutz, Rescuer of 62,000 Hungarian Jews.*** Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Erdmans Publishing Co. 2000.

Vishniac, Roman. ***Children of a Vanished World***. The University of California Press, 1999.

- Abstract: Between 1935 and 1938 the celebrated photographer Roman Vishniac explored the cities and villages of Eastern Europe, capturing life in the Jewish *shtetlekh* of Poland, Romania, Russia, and Hungary.

Vishniac, Roman. ***To Give Them Light***. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

- Abstract: Roman Vishniac's poignant and beautiful images of Jewish life before the war form an unforgettable document of a lost civilization, depicting eight different communities, each of which is described in a short text enhanced by passages from Vishniac's diaries.

Welch, David. ***The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda***. London: Routledge, 1993.

- Abstract: David Welch explores Nazi propaganda and the various public reactions to it, and arrives at certain conclusions about the effectiveness, and limitations, of Hitler's manipulation of the masses.

Yahil, Leni. ***The Holocaust: The Fate of European Jewry, 1932-1945***. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

- Abstract: Material is grouped into three broad time periods. Major emphasis is placed on Hitler's "Final Solution." Suitable for advanced readers.

Memoirs

Appleman-Jurman, Alicia. ***Alicia: My Story***. New York: Bantam Books, 1988.

- Abstract: Alicia was thirteen when she escaped alone from a firing squad and, while hiding from Nazis and collaborators, began saving the lives of strangers. She states, "I believe that the book will teach young people what enormous reserves of strength they possess within themselves."

Bierman, John. ***The Story of Raoul Wallenberg, Missing Hero of the Holocaust***. New York: Viking Press, 1981.

- Abstract: This is the story of one of the most famous rescuers, Raoul Wallenberg, whose fate remains a mystery to this day. He is credited with saving the lives of close to 100,000 Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

Boas, Jacob. ***We are Witnesses.*** New York: Henry Holt, 1995.

- Abstract: A touching diary of five teenage victims of the Holocaust.

Gies, Miep and Allison L. Gold. ***Anne Frank Remembered***. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1988.

- Abstract: Miep Gies, along with her husband, were among those who helped the Frank family while they were in hiding. Her story is an important supplement to Anne Frank's diary as it adds historical background as well as an outside perspective to Anne's story. Gies enables the reader to understand what was happening both inside and outside the Annex.

Kahane, David. ***Lvov Ghetto Diary***. Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

- Abstract: This rabbi's memoir sheds light on the relatively unknown ghetto Lvov. Kahane also investigates a still disputed Holocaust theme: the attitudes of Ukrainians towards European Jews.

Klein, Gerda Weissmann. ***All But My Life***. New York: Hill and Wang, 1971.

- Abstract: A true story that tells about Gerda's experience as one of only 120 women who survived a three-hundred-mile march from a labor camp in western Germany to Czechoslovakia.

Leitner, Isabella. ***Fragments of Isabella: A Memoir of Auschwitz***. New York: Dell, 1983.

- Abstract: A survivor of Auschwitz recounts the ordeal of holding her family together after her mother is killed in the camp.

Levi, Primo. ***Survival in Auschwitz***. New York: Collier, 1973.

- Abstract: This memoir of a young Italian chemist describes life inside Auschwitz in a direct yet sophisticated manner.

Meed, Vladka. ***On Both Sides of the Wall***. New York: Holocaust Publications, 1979.

- Abstract: A young smuggler from the Warsaw ghetto maintains contact between the ghetto and the Aryan side of the city.

Sender, Ruth M. ***The Cage***. New York: Macmillan, 1986.

- Abstract: This book begins just before the Nazi invasion of Poland and continues through life in the Lodz ghetto and finally, at Auschwitz.

Siegal, Aranka. ***Upon the Head of a Goat: A Childhood in Hungary 1939-44***. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1981.

- Abstract: In this award-winning book, Aranka Siegal tells the story of her family and her life in Hungary as a child. In 1944 she and her family were taken to Auschwitz.

Steiner, Jean-Francois. ***Treblinka***. New York: Bard/Avon, 1975.

- Abstract: A powerful history about the Treblinka extermination camp and a revolt by the prisoners there.

Wiesel, Elie. ***Night***. New York: Hill and Wang, 2006.

- Abstract: Wiesel, one of the most eloquent writers of the Holocaust, is known best for this novel. A compelling narrative, *Night* describes Wiesel's own experiences in Auschwitz.

Zar, Rose. ***In the Mouth of the Wolf***. Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1983.

- Abstract: A young girl in Poland during the Holocaust secures a job working in the household of an SS officer and his wife, using her false papers.

Videos

Anne Frank in Maine

- A junior high school class in Maine performs *The Diary of Anne Frank* and studies the Holocaust. 28 minutes. Anti-Defamation League of B'nai Brith, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017.

The Camera of My Family

- The story of one upper-middle-class German Jewish family before and during Nazi years. 20 minutes. Anti-Defamation League.

The Holocaust: A Teenager's Experience

- The story of a 12-year-old boy's harrowing experience in Nazi death camps, some graphic footage. 30 minutes. United Learning, 6633 West Howard Street, Niles, IL 60648.

Islam: Empire of Faith

- The epic PBS documentary that charts the history of Islam from its beginnings in Mecca and Medina in the seventh century to the glory of the Ottoman Empire 1,000 years later. 180 minutes. PBS, 2100 Crystal Drive Arlington, VA 22202.

The Klan: A Legacy of Hate in America

- Documentary narrated by actor James Whitmore, devoted mostly to KKK activities over last 30 years, racist content. 30 minutes. Films, Inc., 5547 North Ravenswood Avenue, Chicago, IL 60640.

More Than Broken Glass: Memories of Kristallnacht

- News footage, photographs, and interviews with witnesses tell story of Kristallnacht. 31 minutes. Ergo Media, P.O. Box 2037, Teaneck, NJ 07666.

Paper Clips

- Struggling to grasp the concept of six-million Holocaust victims, students at Whitwell Middle School in rural Tennessee decide to collect six-million paper clips to better understand the extent of this crime against humanity. 82 minutes.

Partisans of Vilna

- An enormously riveting and inspirational tale of WWII and the Holocaust, *Partisans of Vilna* chronicles the amazing endeavors of the Jewish resistance fighters. 130 minutes.

Sugihara: Conspiracy of Kindness

- A historical documentary that tells the remarkable story of Chiune Sugihara and the Jewish refugees that he helped to save. 90 minutes. WGBH and PBS.

Through Our Eyes

- True stories of children caught up in Holocaust. 27 minutes. IBT Publishing, Inc., 3747 West Granville, Chicago, IL 60659.

To Know Where They Are

- A father and daughter travel to Poland to search for traces of lost ancestors. 28 minutes. Anti-Defamation League.

Tomorrow Came Much Later

- High school students travel with Holocaust survivor to Nazi death camps. 58 minutes. Coronet Film and Video, 420 Academy Drive, Northbrook, IL 60062.

Weapons of the Spirit, classroom version

- Moving remembrance of courageous French civilians who saved Jews of one village from death by Nazis. 38 minutes. Anti-Defamation League. Directed and written by Pierre Sauvage.

Parts of video references from *Elie Wiesel: Voice From the Holocaust*

Fiction

Borowski, Tadeusz. ***This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen***. New York: Penguin, 1976.

- Abstract: Stories of daily life in Auschwitz describe the relations among the inmates, their various duties within the camp, and the hardships they endured.

Fink, Ina. ***A Scrap of Time.*** New York: Schocken, 1989.

- Abstract: This collection of short stories describes people that are placed in a variety of normal human situations that have been distorted by war.

Hersey, John. ***The Wall.*** New York: Knopf, 1950.

- Abstract: This fiction describes the creation of the Warsaw Ghetto, the building of the "Wall" around it, and the uprising and eventual destruction of the ghetto.

Keneally, Thomas. ***Schindler's List***. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1982.

- Abstract: Thomas Keneally's famous novel tells the story of a remarkable man, Oskar Schindler, who saved the lives of thousands of Jews by harboring them in his factory during the Holocaust.

Kosinski, Jerzy. ***The Painted Bird***. New York: Modern Library, 1982.

- Abstract: A young boy abandoned by his parents in Eastern Europe during World War II encounters terror and brutality. For mature readers only.

Miller, Arthur. ***Playing for Time.*** New York: Bantam Books, 1981.
- Abstract: This is the dramatic version of Fania Fenelon's story of her days as a musician at Auschwitz.

Ozick, Cynthia. ***The Shawl***. New York: Random House, 1990.
- Abstract: A book of short stories. The title story tells of a mother witnessing her baby's death at the hands of camp guards. Another story, "Rose," describes that same mother thirty years later, still haunted by the event.

Wiesel, Elie. ***The Gates of the Forest***. New York: Schocken, 1982.
- Abstract: A young Hungarian Jew escapes to the forest during the Nazi occupation, and assumes various roles in order to stay alive. He later joins a partisan group to fight against the Nazis.

Art and Poetry

Blatter, Janet and Sybil Milton. ***Art of the Holocaust***. New York: Rutledge Press, 1981.
- Abstract: More than 350 works of art created by people who lived in ghettos, concentration camps and in hiding are presented, along with essays and biographical information. This artwork is an affirmation of the durability and insistence of the creative human spirit.

Gurdus, Luba Krugman. ***Painful Echoes***. New York: Holocaust Library, 1985.
- Abstract: Presented in the original Polish as well as in English, this volume also includes nearly 60 black-and-white drawings by the author, who is still an artist today.

Kalisch, Shoshana and Barbara Meistev. ***Yes, We Sang: Songs of the Ghettos and Concentration Camps.*** New York: Holocaust Library, 1985.
- Abstract: This volume contains the music and words to 25 songs. Introductions include information about each composer as well as the setting where each song was written.

Sachs, Nelly. ***The Chimneys: Selected Poems***. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Abstract: The author, a winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966, was a German Jew who escaped to Sweden in 1940.

Sachs, Nelly. ***The Seeker and Other Poems***. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.
- Abstract: These poems describe the Jewish flight from Nazi terror and include memorials to the six million Jewish people who perished in the Holocaust.

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Robert Fitzgerald, trans., THE ILIAD	0-374-94107-6
Robert Frost, ROBERT FROST'S POEMS	0-312-99131-2
Iris Jacob, MY SISTERS' VOICES	0-8050-7405-8
Jamaica Kincaid, ANNIE JOHN	0-374-90230-5
Lawrence & Lee, THE NIGHT THOREAU SPENT IN JAIL	0-8090-7366-8
Gerda Weissmann Klein, ALL BUT MY LIFE	0-374-95781-9
Bernard Malamud, THE NATURAL	0-374-96037-2
Robert J. Mrazek, STONEWALL'S GOLD	0-312-28189-7
Robert Pinsky, trans., THE INFERNO OF DANTE	0-374-94121-1
Rifa'i & Ainbinder, WE JUST WANT TO LIVE HERE	0-312-32292-5
Ntozake Shange, BETSEY BROWN	0-312-28190-0
Dodie Smith, I CAPTURE THE CASTLE	0-312-28813-1
Elie Wiesel, NIGHT	0-8090-7357-9
Elie Wiesel, THE NIGHT TRILOGY	0-374-96107-7

Filmography

Elie Wiesel and Arthur Schlesinger Jr. at Time Magazine's
"100 Most Influential People Celebration"
April 19, 2005

Photo courtesy of WireImage and *TIME* Magazine

1970 "Un temps pour la mémoire" (writer)
1975 "Zalmen or the Madness of God" (director, book author)
1979 "Cities" (host: Jerusalem segment)
1982 "Le Procès de Shamgorod" (writer)
"Elie Wiesel ou La ferveur hassidique" (documentary)
1983 "To Bear Witness" (documentary)
1984 "In Every Generation" (documentary)
1985 "The Courage to Care" (documentary)
1986 "L'Aube" (screenwriter, book author)
1987 "Le Testament d'un Poete Juif Assassiné" (book author)
"Weapons of the Spirit" (special thanks)
1991 "Bill Moyers: Facing Hate" (interviewee)
"Bill Moyers: Beyond Hate" (interviewee)
1994 "The Holocaust: In Memory of Millions" (documentary film)

1995 "Rights and Wrongs in America: Creating Peace" (documentary)
"Elie Wiesel: A Passover Seder" (host)
"The Death of Yugoslavia" (documentary)
"Waging Peace" (documentary)
1996 "Mondani a mondhatatlant: Elie Wiesel üzenete" (documentary)
aka "To Speak the Unspeakable: The Message of Elie Wiesel"
1997 Charlotte Student Dialogue Day with Elie Wiesel by The Echo Foundation
1998 "Dialogues: The Use and Misuse of Memory" (host)
"Dialogues: Political Correctness" (host)
"Dialogues: Religion and Politics" (host)
"Dialogues: The Intellectual in Our Lives" (host)
"Dialogues: Taking Life—An Act of Mercy?" (host)
"Dialogues: Am I My Brother's Keeper?" (host)
"Dialogues: Nationalism and World Peace" (host)
"Dialogues: The Role of the State" (host)
"Dialogues: Genetic Engineering" (host)
"Dialogues: Capital Punishment" (host)
"A Sculpture of Love and Anguish: The Miami Beach Holocaust Memorial" (documentary)
1999 "Great Figures of the Bible: The Story of Moses" (host)
"Great Figures of the Bible: Abraham and the Binding of Isaac" (host)
"Great Figures of the Bible: The Story of Job" (host)
"Great Figures of the Bible: The Story of Cain and Abel" (host)
"Great Figures of the Bible: The Story of David" (host)
"Great Figures of the Bible: Adam and Eve and After" (host)
2000 "The Genocide Factor" (documentary)
"From Indifference to Action: Youth Conference"
2001 "20 heures le journal"—Episode aired on 17 September 2001 (interviewee)
"Die Zehn Gebote der Kreativität" (documentary)
aka "The 10 Commandments of Creativity"
2002 "Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular" (documentary)
2003 "Nightline Up Close with Ted Koppel: Elie Wiesel" (interviewee)
2005 "USA the Movie" (voice)
2006 "The Oprah Winfrey Show" (guest/interviewee)
"A Special Presentation: Oprah and Elie Wiesel at the Auschwitz Death Camp"
Petra: A Quest for Hope, Ted Koppel, Discovery Times Channel

Holocaust Graffiti: Writing for Understanding

An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan

Submitted by: Beverly B. Ray
Email: raybeve@isu.edu
School/University/Affiliation: Idaho State University
Date: October 4, 2003

Grade Level: 10, 11, 12, Adult/Continuing Education
Subject(s):

- Social Studies/World History/Holocaust
- Language Arts/Literature
- Language Arts/Writing

Duration: 45 minutes
Description: Students examine a Holocaust related poem/graffiti and then write their own Holocaust graffiti.
Goals: National Council for the Social Studies :

- II. Time, continuity, and Change
- IV. Individual Development and Identity
- V. Individuals, Groups and Institutions
- X. Civil Ideas and Practices

Objectives:

1. Students will examine different elements in a social studies poem to determine meaning.
2. Students will be able to link a poem to an actual historic event.
3. Students will develop a sense of empathy for the suffering of victims of the Holocaust.
4. Students will examine how poetry can be used to express feelings and emotions about a particular historic event.
5. Students will write a poem/graffiti that demonstrates understanding of suffering experience by victims of the Holocaust.

Materials:

- butcher paper
- photographs or other images of transports (e.g., railcars)
- music (e.g., *Schindler's List* soundtrack)
- pencils or makers

Poem:

"Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway-Car" by Dan Pagis

here in this carload
i am eve
with abel my son
if you see my other son
cain son of man
tell him that i

Procedure:
Project the poem onto a large screen (or write the poem as a work of graffiti on the board or on a large sheet of butcher paper). Discuss the poem focusing on the names (Cain, Abel, Eve). Ask what the names suggest [that victim and killer are part of the same family, the human family]. Explore with students other universal themes suggested by the poem. Introduce the poem's title: "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car." Discuss the physical setting of the poem. What images are suggested by the title? Discuss the "efficiency" of the transport system used by the Nazis during the Holocaust. Show photographs or other images of Holocaust era transports to reinforce this discussion. (NOTE: Remind students that while the poem was written by a Holocaust survivor, it was not written until after the Holocaust.) Ask students why the poem ends the way that it does. What does this abrupt ending suggest about the fate of many victims of the Holocaust?

Ask students the following question: If you could finish the message, what would you say? Ask students to imagine what it may have been like riding in a sealed boxcar toward an unknown destination. Discuss with students what steps people may have taken to survive the experience of deportation and imprisonment. In particular ask students to consider the unique needs of the young, the old, or those with medical conditions. Also, ask them to consider how extremes of hot or cold would affect those sealed in a boxcar.

Pair Activity: Have the students, working in pairs, stand next to a wall covered with pieces of blank butcher paper. As the students view slides (or pictures) of the Holocaust transports and listen to appropriate music (such as the *Schindler's List* soundtrack), ask them to place themselves in the shoes of a child or teenager inside one of these railcars. Students should try to express their feelings by writing poetry or graffiti on the butcher paper. To further support this activity, the teacher may also read aloud excerpts from Primo Levi's experience in a railcar on his way to Auschwitz.

After the poems/graffiti are completed, allow students to walk around the room and read the poem created by other pairs. If time permits, allow students to refine their poems/graffiti.

Variation 2: Have the students in all classes write their poems/graffiti on a large sheet of butcher paper that covers all or most of one wall. Display the graffiti either in the classroom or in another prominent place in your school.

Assessment: Informal assessment of whole group discussion activities. Check each pair's graffiti for evidence of understanding of the lesson's objectives.

Useful Internet Resources:
* United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Photograph Archive
http://www.ushmm.org
* United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism. (2003). Connecting to the Holocaust Through Literature: Dan Pagis.
http://www.uscj.org/koach/kocapr03shore.htm
* The Selected Poetry of Dan Pagis
Scroll down the page for the text of the poem, "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car."
http://www.ucpress.edu/books/pages/2935.html

* NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies) - Ten Thematic Strands in Social Studies http://www.socialstudies.org/standards/2.0.html

Other References:

1. Dan Pagis (1996). "Written in Pencil in the Sealed Railway Car," from *The Selected Poetry of Dan Pagis* .
2. Primo Levi (1996). *Survival In Auschwitz* . New York: Simon & Schuster.
3. *Paper Clips* Documentary (2004). Miramax Films.

From The Educator's Reference Desk.

Holocaust Memorial in Miami, Florida
Photo courtesy of The National Park Service

Human Needs Analysis:
An Introductory Activity to the Holocaust

An Educator's Reference Desk Lesson Plan

Author: D.White
School or Affiliation: Round Valley Middle School in New Jersey; November 1, 1995

Grade Level(s): 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12
Subject(s):
- Social Studies/History
- Social Studies/World History/Holocaust

Overview:
This lesson leads to a greater understanding of the dehumanization that took place during the Holocaust and can be used as introductory lesson in an English classroom or Social Studies classroom. Students generally understand the physical effects that the Holocaust had on people, but this lesson helps them understand the emotional and psychological effects that occurred through the dehumanization of individuals. Students discuss what an individual needs in order to exist and in order to exist happily, and they analyze the different types of human needs—physical, emotional, intellectual, etc. Students discuss the possible impact of having these basic needs unfulfilled.

Objectives:
Students will:
- create their own Hierarchy of Needs similar to Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- examine the chronology of decrees which revoked the rights of the Jewish population and discuss the impact these laws would have on an individual based on the needs of an individual (social, emotional, physical, etc.)

Procedures:
I've taught this lesson as described here with older groups. With younger groups and lower ability groups, you might choose to begin with Part B and/or reading the chronology to give them ideas about things people need.

Part A
1. Have students work independently to list their response to: What do you need to live?
2. Have students add to this list: What do you need to live happily?
3. List all responses on the board and discuss why each of these items is needed (friends for companionship and security; pets for companionship; radio for entertainment and information, etc...).
4. Build a hierarchy of needs on the board as a class, categorizing the types of needs. (Begin with the absolute basics as the first level of the hierarchy—food, water, air, etc... which would be categorized as Basic Physical Needs and build from there, letting students determine what category and needs are second most important)
5. Discuss the needs as you build the hierarchy.

Part B

1. Distribute this handout and have students complete it independently:

Rights & Freedoms

Think of the freedom the following rights allow you and your family, and think of the ways you and your family would be affected if these rights were revoked. Remember that if they were revoked, this would mean giving up things you already have.

Rank these rights from 1 to 6—1 being MOST important to you.

The Right To...

____ own or use a public telephone
____ date/marry whomever you choose
____ own a radio, CD player, Nintendo...
____ own a pet
____ go to a movie or concert
____ leave your house whenever you choose (you would still be able to leave the house, but there would be strict limitations on when you could go out.)

1A. *Optional* - Have students work in small groups to discuss their decisions and work to come to a consensus to re-rank the rights as a group.

2. Share the individual or small group responses and discuss their rationales.

3. Discuss the laws that revoked many rights of individuals—see brief listing below (CHRONOLOGY). For an excellent resource with a complete chronology, see the novel *Friedrich* by Hans Peter Richter published by Puffin Books, 1987.

4. Discuss ways an individual would be affected through the revoking of rights and freedoms. Discuss dehumanization in the concentration camps.

Chronology of Jewish Persecution in Nazi Germany

1933 All non-Aryan civil servants forcibly retired; Kosher butchering outlawed; German nationality can be revoked from those considered "undesirable"

1934 Jewish newspapers can no longer be sold in the streets; Jews deprived of the status of citizenship; marriage and sexual relation between Jews and Aryans forbidden

1936 Jews no longer have the right to vote

1937 Passport for Jews for travel abroad greatly restricted

1938 Jews must carry I.D. cards and Jewish passports are marked with a J; Jews may no longer own or bear arms, head businesses, or attend plays, concerts, etc.; all Jewish children are moved to Jewish schools; all Jewish businesses are shut down; Jews may no longer be in certain places at certain times; Jews must hand over drivers' licenses and car registrations; Jews must sell their businesses and hand over securities and jewels; Jews may no longer attend universities

1939 Jews must follow curfews, turn in radios to the police, and wear yellow stars of David

1940 Jews may no longer have phones; German Jews begin being taken into "protective custody"—deported to concentration camps

1941 Jews may not leave their houses without permission from the police; Jews may no longer use public telephones

1942 Jews are forbidden to: subscribe to newspapers; keep pets; keep electrical equipment including typewriters; own bicycles; buy meat, eggs, or milk; use public transportation; attend school

From The Educator's Reference Desk

Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular

Teaching Guide

Note: Before you begin teaching this unit, we recommend that you visit the site of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. They have developed helpful guidelines for approaching and presenting this sensitive, complex subject matter. Their Resource Book for Educators can be downloaded as a pdf file and includes a comprehensive history, chronology, bibliography and videoography.

Background

"Never shall I forget that night, the first night in the camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the little faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky. Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever…Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never." —Night

The film *Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular* is about one man's passionate resolve to bear witness for the millions of people who suffered and perished in the Holocaust. He has been sustained by his faith and guided by his belief in the power of language and the value of teaching.

Grade Level

9 – 12

Subject Areas

Language Arts; History

Objectives

Students will:

- learn about and be able to define the Holocaust
- read, evaluate and discuss Holocaust-related literature
- ask and discuss difficult questions about hatred, evil, and intolerance
- bear witness to an event from their own lives
- conduct Internet research
- write essays, journal entries and letters
- undertake a project, where they make a contribution to the community
- learn about other human rights activists

Materials

- Students' writing journals
- Copies of *Night*, by Elie Wiesel
- Library copies of Holocaust literature and pieces referred to in the activities

Teacher Internet resources

- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (http://www.ushmm.org/)
- Ask Eric: History of the Holocaust (http://www.askeric.org/cgi-bin/print.cgi/)
- Remember.org Teacher Resources (http://remember.org/)
- A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust (http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/activity/)

- Holocaust Timeline (http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/timeline.htm)
- Holocaust Teacher Resources (http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/resource.htm)

Student Internet Resources

- Remember.org Student Resources (http://remember.org/educate/)
- Holocaust Resources (http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/resource.htm)
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Student Guide (http://www.ushmm.org/education/forstudents/)
- Holocaust Timeline (http://fcit.coedu.usf.edu/holocaust/timeline/timeline.htm)
- Holocaust Bibliography (http://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/resource/biblio/hsbib.htm)

Background

1. Write the word Holocaust on the board. Have students say words that come into their minds and write down their responses.

2. Ask students: What do you know about the Holocaust? Where did you learn it? What literature of the Holocaust have you already read? What people have you met, movies have you seen, stories have you heard? Do you have a personal connection with someone who experienced the Holocaust? Do you want to know more about this subject? Why or why not?

3. Depending on what students already know, you might share the definition from *Teaching About the Holocaust: A Resource Book for Teachers*, which can be downloaded from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Web site (www.ushmm.org). If possible, invite someone to your class who can share a personal story related to the Holocaust. It could be a survivor, the child of a survivor, someone involved in recording oral histories or a historian doing research on the subject. Have students prepare questions before the guest comes. In the following session, give students a chance to discuss issues and questions that may have been inspired by the speaker.

Activity I: Listening (adapted from *Bearing Witness* by Beth Aviv Greenbaum.)

"In Jewish tradition, the word listen, listen, listen is frequently used. The Bible is full of the word listen, listen Israel, listen Moses, listen Abraham, listen. The Jew in me that says I must listen to others." — From Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular

1. Have students read Elie Wiesel's book, *Night.*

2. "For many students, *Night* is their first exposure to Auschwitz…*Night* grabs the attention of students and never lets go until the end. Like *Catcher in the Rye*, it is a coming of age story. Like *Antigone* or *Oedipus*, it forces students to grapple with universal questions of good and evil. Like *1984* and *Brave New World*, it asks what kind of society do we live in, what kind of social system have we devised? And above all else, *Night* asks us to consider what it means to be human." — From *Bearing Witness* by Beth Aviv Greenbaum

3. Have student keep a journal. Ask them to make entries after each chapter or several times throughout the book, when a phrase or passage moves them to write. Ask them to respond honestly — to describe what they observe, how what they read affects them, what they think about, what they question, what they associate. Suggest that they write about a quotation they find particularly effective or pick out a paragraph of prose and lineate it as a poem. These are all ways to make sure that they read the text carefully — to "listen" to what Wiesel is saying, to observe how he conveys his experience.

4. After students have completed the book, begin the discussion by inviting them to ask a question or comment on a passage. A single remark will provoke a string of responses: Why did nobody listen to Moshe the Beadle? Why didn't they fight back? I can't stop wondering what I would have done? How could he still believe in God?

5. Read the following statement aloud:

> *"I knew in 1945 that one day I would have to write and bear witness in writing, that I decided then, I made a vow to wait ten years, the ten years were almost over, so I began in '54 to write, to keep in certain perspective what I had gone through."*

Discuss how *Night* might have been different if Wiesel had attempted to write it sooner. Based on what they saw in the film and read in the book, how do they think the passage of time and life experiences after the Holocaust affected Wiesel's writing?

Optional: Divide the class into small groups. Have each group select another source for learning about the Holocaust, find out what they can and report back to the class. Refer them to the student resources for links to bibliographies, particularly the one compiled by the University of South Florida.

After the reports have been presented, discuss the effectiveness of different ways of learning about and trying to understand the Holocaust — i.e., a personal memoir, a Hollywood film, a reference book. (See teacher resources and student resources to bibliographies and videographies.)

Suggested reading:

I Have Lived a Thousand Years, by Livia Bitton-Jackson. Jackson, who was thirteen years old when she and her family were arrested, is equally compelling for middle school and high school students.

Light One Candle: A Survivor's Tale from Lithuania to Jerusalem, by Solly Ganor, is a gripping story about coming of age during the Holocaust. Today, Ganor visits high schools in the United States, Germany and Japan, teaching tolerance and inspiring young people to remember the Holocaust and its survivors.

If This be a Man is an important memoir written by Primo Levi in 1946, right after he came out of Auschwitz. He was a trained chemist, and in his book he is like a scientist studying issues such as:

What does it take to deprive man of his humanity? How does man retain his humanity in the face of unimaginable deprivation? What is man when he is "nothing"?

Activity 2: Bearing Witness

> *"I believe that anyone who lived through an experience is duty bound to bear witness to it."* — From Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular

1. Help students understand what it means to speak as a witness, by having them write a poem, essay or story or create a work of art about an event they saw — or "witnessed" — in person.

2. They might choose an incident as immediate as walking by a homeless person sleeping in a doorway or catching another student cheating on a test. Or they might describe how they experienced the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Encourage them along the writing path with "It's important to remember…" or "I saw it with my own eyes."

Activity 2 (cont'd): Questioning Faith

> *"And I became religious, even more so. The question to me was a double question. How come that I really became religious, more deeply than before? And the second one, how come I didn't lose my sanity? I never divorced God. I couldn't. I'm too Jewish…But I said to myself, 'I do believe in God.' But I have the right to protest against His ways. I have the right to be angry. And so, I do it a lot, very often, and I wouldn't change a word of my discourse to God, my appeals to God, against God. Because I came to a certain formulation saying a Jew or a man can be, can be religious or can come from a religious background, with God or against God but not without God. So I cannot live without God."* — From Elie Wiesel: First Person Singular

1. Discuss with students Wiesel's admission that his faith was "wounded" by the Holocaust, but that, in spite of everything, he maintained his faith in God's existence. He tells us that he talks to God, arguing with him at times, freely expressing his anger, dismay and disappointment. What does this reveal about Wiesel as a man? Do students think they would have (or could have) continued to have faith, if they had experienced what Wiesel did? Why or why not?

2. Ask students how they think Wiesel's deeply religious upbringing and the events of the Holocaust shaped the path of his life — as a witness, a teacher and a human rights activist. Why does he speak of his teachers, including strangers — and his students — with such profound reverence and respect?

3. Read the following quote from an article by Alan Dershowitz about Elie Wiesel to end the discussion and introduce the next activity (Activity 3: Making a Difference):

> *"Wiesel's examined life is an example to all who have experienced pain, victimization, injustice, and survival. Without forgiving the unforgivable, excusing the inexcusable, or forgetting the unforgettable, he has looked to the future. He has placed himself in harm's way repeatedly in the quest for peace, whether in war-torn Yugoslavia, the rocket-ravaged Israel during the Gulf War, or other places from which even God has seemingly stayed away."*

"There is a wonderful story about a great Chasidic master who was asked whether it is ever proper to act as if God did not exist. He surprised his students by answering 'yes: it is not only proper, but mandatory, to act as if there were no God when one is asked to help. Do not say 'God will help.' You must help. Though Elie Wiesel is a deeply religious man—even when he argues with God or refuses to forgive him—Wiesel acts as if there were no God when he is asked to help. I think I understand why. He saw that God did not help his family and friends. He also saw that human beings did not help, perhaps because they believed that God would help. Wiesel knows that we cannot control God's actions, but we can control our own actions." — Alan M. Dershowitz, 1997

Activity 3: Making a Difference

"Neutrality helps the oppressor, never the victim. Silence encourages the tormentor, never the tormented. Sometimes we must interfere. When human lives are endangered, when human dignity is in jeopardy, national borders and sensitivities become irrelevant. Wherever men and women are persecuted because of their race, religion, or political views, that place must — at that moment — become the center of the universe… And action is the only remedy to indifference, the most insidious danger of all." — Elie Wiesel, Nobel Prize acceptance speech, 1986

Part I

1. Write on the board or hand out a printed version of Wiesel's statement above.

2. Have students spend ten minutes writing in their journals, or talking to a partner, investigating, explaining, and exploring the meaning of the quote. Use any or all of the following prompts: Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not? Can you think of any experiences you have had that validate or contradict this idea? What, if any, are the personal implications of this statement? What questions do you have about this statement?

3. After individual journal writing, ask students to share their thoughts and insights in small groups or as a whole class. Ask students to think about this idea as they go through their day. Were there any incidents in class or at home that related to this idea?

Part II (Adapted from *The Heroism Project)*

1. Discuss the fact that we all have the power to have a positive impact on the local "world" around us. We are all part of the communities in which we live, and we each have the ability to make a difference — by encouraging tolerance, helping someone in need, fighting an injustice or simply speaking our minds.

2. Using the lists below as suggestions, have students work individually or with a partner to find out about a human rights activist individual or organization. Ideally, students will identify people and/or organizations in the community, with whom they might be able to make a connection.

If students select individuals, what did they do (or are they doing)? Why? What kind of risks did they take, if any? How did their actions impact the world? A possible source for this unit is

Michael Collopy's Architects of Peace: Visions of Hope in Words and Images (New World Library).
People: Martin Luther King Jr., Helen Caldicott, Alfred Nobel, Michail Gorbachev, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Jesse Jackson, Chief Seattle, Dr. Maria Montessori, Rosa Parks, Ella Baker, Nelson Mandela, Albert Schweitzer, Andrei Sakharov, Jane Addams, Linus Pauling, Lech Walesa, Susan B. Anthony, Cesar Chavez, Eleanor Roosevelt, Jimmy Carter, Emma Goldman, Medger Evers, Dalai Lama, Dorothy Day, Rachel Carson, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Thich Nhat Hanh.

If they select an organization, have them investigate what contributions these or other organizations they identify make to society. What, if anything, do these contributions have to do with human rights and tolerance?

Organizations: Project Open Hand, Teach for America, Unicef, Unesco, Shanti, Zen Hospice Center, United Nations, American Civil Liberties Union, Global Women's Council, Amnesty International, NAACP, International Court of Justice, N.O.W., Catholic Charities, La Casa de Las Madres, Holocaust Museum, Museum of Tolerance, Mother Teresa's Home for Abandoned Children.

Part III (Adapted from *The Heroism Project)*

1. Encourage students to spend a few days reading the local and national news, doing research on the Internet, taking notice of things around the school and community and thinking about a project to undertake as individuals, in small groups or as a class to make a contribution. One might write a letter to his congressman about a national human rights issue. Another might take blankets to a local homeless shelter. A small group might visit a convalescent home and spend a few hours with the residents. A pair might spend a couple of hours cleaning up the playground in a low-income neighborhood.

2. Ask students to submit a plan, including how they chose the project, what they intend to do and how they will proceed.

3. After students have completed their projects, meet as a class to discuss how it went. Ask each person or group to present a short oral (and written) report on the process. Did they feel the project they selected was something that made a difference? Did they enjoy the process, planning and execution? Would they choose to do something like that again?

Assessment
Students will be assessed on the quality of their participation in class discussions, the quality of their writing, and the quality of their presentations.

Academic References

Boston University
Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies
The Boston University Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies coordinates and supports all academic programs relating to Jewish Studies at the University. The services and programs of the Center are available to Judaic Studies concentrators in the Department of Religion and all others interested in the subject area.

The Center seeks to coordinate all courses in Jewish Studies at Boston University. Its ambition is to provide a broad-based, academically rigorous curriculum in the most important areas of Jewish history, literature, and thought. It also supports the University teaching program in Hebrew language study. In addition, it actively works to support the enhancement of library resources in Jewish studies, and to sponsor relevant lectures, conferences, and publications in Jewish Studies. The Center is committed to the support of all types of research in Jewish Studies.

The Center hosts special events of high quality and interest in order to further the integration of Judaic Studies into the life of the University and the community. These include programs in films, theater, and music, all of which contribue to the cultural life of the University.

The Universal Academy of Cultures (*Académie Universelle des Cultures*)
Set up in Paris in 1992 by Elie Wiesel, Nobel Peace Prize Winner, The Universal Academy of Cultures is placed under the patronage of the President of the French Republic and carries out its activities with the support of the Prime Minister, and the Ministries of Culture, Education and Foreign Affairs. It is composed of worldwide personalities from the fields of literature, science and the arts.

Nobel Prize winners in peace, literature, medicine or economics, writers, jurists, artists, or famous academics, all of whom are committed to fighting for democracy and human rights, the members of the Universal Academy of Cultures meet at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

They constitute a society for reflection and proposition whose stated aim is to consider the future of the world from an ethical point of view and to suggest ways of acting against intolerance, xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism, discrimination against women, and of fighting against poverty, ignorance, and the deliberate degradation of certain forms of life.

To debate these questions and prepare its action, the Academy appeals first and foremost to all instances of education, culture and communication.

University of Arizona
Center for Middle Eastern Studies
The Center for Middle Eastern Studies (CMES) at the University of Arizona (UA) is a Title VI National Resource Center supported by the U.S. Department of Education. CMES was created in 1975 with federal and University support and has grown to include 117 members, 89 of whom are faculty. The Center supports and promotes Middle East language and Middle East studies-

related teaching and research throughout the University, and fosters understanding of the Middle East through an extensive program of outreach to schools and the wider community.

CMES provides undergraduate and graduate students with information and support for UA and other study abroad programs and funding opportunities. UA has formal links to universities and programs in Afghanistan, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Syria, Turkey, the UAE, and Yemen.

CMES regularly organizes scholarly conferences, workshops and a lecture series. The Center is active in bringing Middle East studies to diverse audiences through well-attended public forums and cultural events. CMES offers annual for-credit workshops for K-12 educators, for whom it plans educational tours to the Middle East. The Center also organizes workshops on the Middle East for media, business, law enforcement, and federal, state, and local agencies.

University of Michigan
Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies
The Middle East and North Africa together constitute a highly diverse cultural area within a world now undergoing rapid and large-scale change, particularly in the aftermath of September 11. In this context, the mission of the Center for Middle Eastern and North African Studies (CMENAS) is to enhance awareness of the peoples, cultures, and languages in this vitally important region of the world.

This mission is accomplished by explaining and interpreting the region in all of its historical and contemporary aspects to students at the University of Michigan, Michigan's schoolchildren and community members, and scholars seeking specialized knowledge of a region stretching from the western coast of Morocco to the eastern border of Afghanistan, with cultural influences extending into the northern Caucasus and Islamic Central Asia. In a globally interconnected world, it is equally important to explore the transregional and transnational forces at work in the Middle East, given the region's increasing central role in international affairs.

The University of Paris Sorbonne—Paris IV (*Université Paris Sorbonne—Paris IV)*
University Institute of Jewish Studies Elie Wiesel (*Institut Universitaire d'Études Juives*)
(Please see corresponding article in curriculum guide.)

Wiesel Center holds inaugural event

From the *B.U. Bridge*
Vol. VI, No. 8
October 2002

Chancellor John Silber talks with Elie Wiesel and Aharon Appelfeld (from left) at a reception at the School of Management after Appelfeld's address.
Photo by Fred Sway.

A capacity crowd filled the 525-seat Tsai Performance Center on Thursday, October 10, for an event officially inaugurating the Boston University Elie Wiesel Center for Judaic Studies. Aharon Appelfeld, an acclaimed Jerusalem author, who, like Wiesel, is a Holocaust survivor, was the featured speaker.

Born in Czernowitz, Romania, Appelfeld was deported to a Nazi concentration camp at the age of eight, escaped within a year, and hid for three years in the Ukrainian woods before joining the Russian army as a junior cook. After time in an Italian refugee camp, he made his way to Israel. "In dozens of novels, collections of essays, and memoirs, he has recalled how Eastern European Jews listened as the German language of the Habsburg realm, a language of assimilation, became the horrid language of Nazi terror," BU Chancellor John Silber said as he introduced Appelfeld. "Educated in the culture of Vienna, Mr. Appelfeld struggled instead to write in Hebrew to tell of all he had seen. His mastery of Hebrew ranks as a literary achievement with Joseph Conrad's mastery of English."

Directed by Steven Katz, a CAS professor of religion, the Center for Judaic Studies was established two decades ago. Under its new name honoring Wiesel, the center will continue to

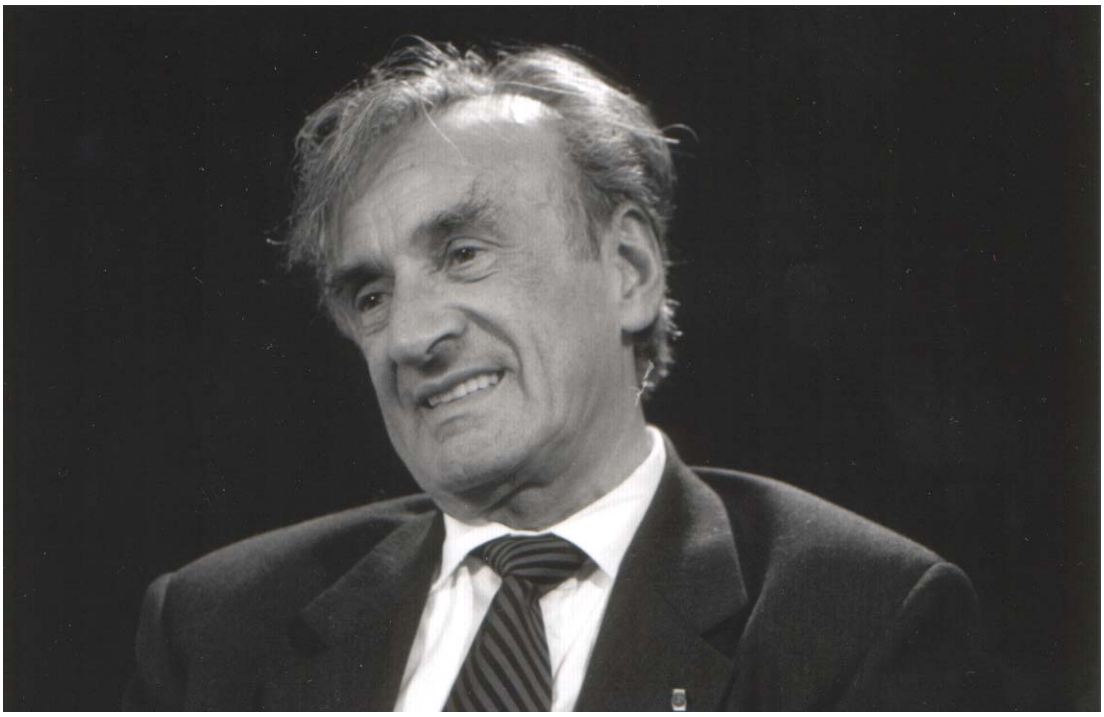
coordinate and support all academic programs relating to Jewish studies at BU. It also supports the University teaching program in Hebrew language study. In addition, it sponsors relevant lectures, conferences, and publications in Jewish studies, and cultural programs featuring films, theater, and music.

Wiesel (Hon.'74), a 1986 Nobel laureate for peace, BU's Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities, and a UNI professor of philosophy and religion, has taught at the University since 1976. A recipient of 110 honorary degrees and more than 120 other honors, Wiesel has also received many awards for his writings, which include such nonfiction works as the autobiographical *Night* (1960), *The Jews of Silence* (1966), and *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters* (1972). He has been outspoken on the plight of Soviet Jewry, on Ethiopian Jewry, and on behalf of Israel, and also has been an advocate for victims in Bosnia and Kosovo.

From Boston University's *B.U. Bridge*

Institut Universitaire d'Études Juives Elie Wiesel

University Institute of Jewish Studies Elie Wiesel
at The Sorbonne, Paris, France



Elie Wiesel visits Charlotte, North Carolina, 1997.
Photo courtesy of The Echo Foundation.

Présentation

Dans la nouvelle Europe en construction, à la recherche de son avenir, la connaissance de la civilisation du judaïsme est un levier privilégié pour comprendre l'esprit européen. Au coeur du continent, Paris qui a joué et continue à jouer un rôle fondamental dans l'histoire intellectuelle du monde, a vocation à devenir un haut-lieu de recherches scientifiques et de rencontres intellectuelles sur la judaïcité sous tous ses visages. Paris est devenu aujourd'hui la capitale culturelle juive de l'Europe.

C'est le dessein de l'Institut Universitaire d'Etudes Juives qui porte le nom d'Elie Wiesel, lauréat du Prix Nobel de la Paix dont l'oeuvre et l'action incarnent la volonté profonde de perpétuation de la mémoire et l'effort incessant pour la reconstruction de la vie spirituelle juive après la tragédie de la Shoah. Nombreux sont les étudiants des universités et des grandes écoles qui parallèlement à leurs carrières spécifiques, aimeraient acquérir une connaissance plus approfondie de la civilisation, la culture, l'histoire, l'art et la tradition du monde juif. Pour contribuer à répondre à ce désir de connaissance, nous proposons aux étudiants et aussi, au public en général, des cours, des séminaires, des colloques et des grandes leçons où des enseignants et chercheurs universitaires reconnus dans leur domaine de compétence dialogueront avec leurs auditeurs, à travers des enseignements structurés en modules thématiques :

- Judaïsme français : histoire, société, culture
- Judaïsme européen : culture, art et tradition
- Judaïcité, psychanalyse, sciences sociales
- Pensée, droit et politique
- Judaïsme et philosophie moderne
- Ethique et savoirs
- Persécution et résistance
- Israël, société, religion et Etat
- Sionisme et histoire
- Israël et ses voisins
- Leçons universitaires européennes

Ouvert à toutes et à tous, l'Institut Universitaire d'Etudes Juives Elie Wiesel se propose d'apporter une contribution créatrice et originale au défi de la renaissance des Etudes Juives en France, en Europe et en Israël.

Raphy Marciano
Directeur Général

Franklin Rausky
Directeur des Etudes

From the Institut Universitaire d'Études Juives (IUEJ) Elie Wiesel

Relevant Organizations and Websites

Academy of Achievement
For more than 40 years, this unique non-profit entity has sparked the imagination of students across America and around the globe by bringing them into direct personal contact with the greatest thinkers and achievers of the age.
www.achievement.org

Action Without Borders
Action Without Borders connects people, organizations, and resources to help build a world where all people can live free and dignified lives. Our work is guided by the common desire of our members and supporters to find practical solutions to social and environmental problems, in a spirit of generosity and mutual respect.
www.idealist.org

Amnesty International
Amnesty International undertakes research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.
www.AmnestyUSA.org

Anti-Defamation League
"The immediate object of the League is to stop, by appeals to reason and conscience and, if necessary, by appeals to law, the defamation of the Jewish people. Its ultimate purpose is to secure justice and fair treatment to all citizens alike and to put an end forever to unjust and unfair discrimination against and ridicule of any sect or body of citizens." *ADL Charter, October 1913*
www.ADL.org

Arab Film Distribution
Our distribution project began soon after that as an effort to maintain a permanent flow of Arab films—our version of a year round "Arab Film Festival". Since then, AFD has provided American and Canadian theaters, universities, colleges, museums, and media centers with many Arab films of high artistic and educational value.
www.ArabFilm.com

Council on Foreign Relations
The Council on Foreign Relations is an independent, national membership organization and a nonpartisan center for scholars dedicated to producing and disseminating ideas so that individual and corporate members, as well as policymakers, journalists, students, and interested citizens in the United States and other countries, can better understand the world and the foreign policy choices facing the United States and other governments.
www.CFR.org

The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity
Elie Wiesel and his wife, Marion, established The Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity soon after he was awarded the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize. The Foundation's mission, rooted in the

memory of the Holocaust, is to combat indifference, intolerance and injustice through international dialogue and youth-focused programs that promote acceptance, understanding and equality.
www.ElieWieselFoundation.org

The Holocaust Chronicle
The Holocaust Chronicle website transcribes the companion book of the same title, a massive, not-for-profit volume conceived and published by Chicago-based Publications International, Ltd. *The Holocaust Chronicle* is a remembrance designed to be held in one's hands. It is a portable archive that demands to be looked at and read.
www.holocaustchronicle.org

Human Rights Watch
Human Rights Watch is an independent, nongovernmental organization, supported by contributions from private individuals and foundations worldwide. We stand with victims and activists to prevent discrimination, to uphold political freedom, to protect people from inhumane conduct in wartime, and to bring offenders to justice.
www.HRW.org

International Crisis Group
The International Crisis Group (Crisis Group) is an independent, non-profit, non-governmental organisation, with nearly 120 staff members on five continents, working through field-based analysis and high-level advocacy to prevent and resolve deadly conflict.
www.CrisisGroup.org

International Rescue Committee
Founded in 1933, the IRC is a global leader in emergency relief, rehabilitation, protection of human rights, post-conflict development, resettlement services and advocacy for those uprooted or affected by conflict and oppression.
www.TheIRC.org

Jewish Virtual Library
The Jewish Virtual Library is the most comprehensive online Jewish encyclopedia in the world, covering everything from anti-Semitism to Zionism. So far, more than 10,000 articles and 5,000 photographs and maps have been integrated into the site.
www.JewishVirtualLibrary.org

Judaism 101
Judaism 101 is an online encyclopedia of Judaism, covering Jewish beliefs, people, places, things, language, scripture, holidays, practices, and customs.
www.JewFAQ.org

Night
The publisher's (Hill and Wang) book website for *Night* by Elie Wiesel offers various resources such as a Teacher's Guide (included in this curriculum guide), Reader's Guide, Essay Writing Tips, background information about the novel and its author, and related links to other websites.
www.Nightthebook.com

The Nobel Foundation
A private institution established in 1900 based on the will of Alfred Nobel. The Foundation manages the assets made available through the will for the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Peace.
www.NobelPrize.org

The Save Darfur Coalition
The Save Darfur Coalition is an alliance of over 100 faith-based, humanitarian and human rights organizations. Our mission is to raise public awareness and to mobilize an effective unified response to the atrocities that threaten the lives of two million people in the Darfur region.
www.SaveDarfur.org

United Nations
The United Nations (UN) is an international organization that aims at facilitating co-operation in international law, international security, economic development, and social equity.
www.UN.org

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum
The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is America's national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country's memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.
www.USHMM.org

Yad Vashem
Yad Vashem**,** Jerusalem, is the Jewish people's memorial to the murdered Six Million and symbolizes the ongoing confrontation with the rupture engendered by the Holocaust. Containing the world's largest repository of information on the Holocaust, Yad Vashem is a leader in Shoah education, commemoration, research, and documentation.
www.yadvashem.org

THE ECHO FOUNDATION

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

presented by

The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

JOURNEY IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL

WHAT: Journey in the Footsteps of Elie Wiesel is an educational travel program and leadership initiative that allows participants to experience the challenges, opportunities and environments that have shaped the life and work of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel. Participants will serve as community Ambassadors for the year-long Elie Wiesel Project, charged with the task of promoting positive social action here in the greater Charlotte community and will have special time with Prof. Wiesel during his trip to Charlotte in March. The culmination of the Footsteps program will be a two-week educational tour of locations that have been significant to Elie Wiesel.

WHERE: Participants will trace his journey from his hometown in Sighet, Romania, to the Auschwitz death camp in Poland where he and his family were taken, and to Paris, where he was given refuge and began his studies after the war. The group will also visit Berlin, to experience the Holocaust memorial and museum and to study the model of reparation and relationship healing with the Jewish people that serves as an extraordinary example of understanding, cooperation and friendship for others.

WHO: Students from the Charlotte Mecklenburg area who will be in grades 9-11 during the 2006-2007 school year are invited to apply. We are looking for dedicated students who display leadership, individual initiative, compassion, who have a demonstrated record of service to others and who are eager to promote greater tolerance and justice in our community.

COST: The program fee is $10,000.00 per student. Significant scholarship opportunities are available. There is no application fee.

HOW: Interested students should complete and submit the following application. Application forms can be obtained online or at The Echo Foundation's office. Semi-finalists will be selected for interviews with The Echo Foundation.

WHEN: Entry forms and accompanying documents must be received by The Echo Foundation at 1125 E. Morehead St., Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by **Monday, November 20, 2006 at 5:00 PM.**

For more information, contact The Echo Foundation at (704) 347-3844 or CharlotteEchoes@aol.com.

Please attach student photo here.

THE ECHO FOUNDATION

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

presented by

The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

JOURNEY IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF ELIE WIESEL

Official Entry Form

Application Instructions

- Please type or print legibly all information.
- You must attach a photograph of yourself to the first page of the application.
- If on any section you do not have enough room in the space provided you may attach your responses on a separate sheet of paper.
- You must sign and have a parent or guardian sign the Duties and Responsibilities statement. Only signed applications will be considered.
- We will accept only completed applications. Please check that you have completed each section before submitting your materials.

Personal Information

Full Name _____ Male ☐ Female ☐

Address _____

City _____ State_____ Zip_____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone_____

Email _____

Class Status for 2006-2007 school year:

☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior

School _____ GPA _____

Date of Birth _____

References

Please list three individuals not related to you who we may contact to get to know more about you. You should have one academic reference, one personal reference, and one reference that can attest to your community service or extra-curricular activities.

	Name	Phone	Email
Academic:			
Personal:			
Extra-Curricular:			

Extra-curricular Activities

Please list your school, community, athletic or other activities beginning with the one most important to you.

Activity	Office(s) held or honor(s) received	Dates	Hours per week

International Travel

Have you previously traveled outside the U.S.? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If so, please provide the following information on each country you have visited:

Country	Date(s)	Reason for Visit

Financial Aid

If chosen, will you require financial assistance to participate in the program?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Essay

Consider the quote below from Nobel Peace Prize winner, Elie Wiesel. Construct an essay exploring the themes of justice and injustice, making sure to address the three questions posed below. Your response should be typed, double-spaced, and no longer than 1500 words. Attach your essay to the application form, and be sure to include your name on each page.

"There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest." – Elie Wiesel

1. Why do you think it is important that we not stand silently by when we witness injustice, even when we are not certain taking action will create positive change?
2. Describe a time when you, seeing injustice, responded. What was the injustice? What was the outcome of your involvement, and what lessons did you learn as a result of your actions?
3. Discuss why you would like to be a young scholar of *A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel*. Considering the duties and responsibilities, what qualities do you bring to the role? What to you hope to learn from the experience and how would you seek to share this knowledge with others?

Fulfillment of Duties and Responsibilities Statement

I certify that all the information on this application is correct, that all work submitted is my own, and that if selected, I am available to participate in the program and fulfill my duties during the 2006-2007 school year and July 2007 travel.

_____ _____

Student Signature Date

_____ _____

Parent/Guardian Signature Date

DEADLINE: Entry form and accompanying documents must be received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204 by **Monday, November 20, 2006 at 5:00 PM**

For more information please contact The Echo Foundation's office at (704) 347-3844 or email us at CharlotteEchoes@aol.com. Entry forms and guidelines are also available at www.echofoundation.org.

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by

The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

GUIDELINES

ART, PHOTOGRAPHY, ART & PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

Elie Wiesel's memoir, *NIGHT* has sold over six million copies. Suppose, at the time of the next printing, Hill and Wang offered you the opportunity to redesign the cover of this definitive account of the Holocaust. Create with photography or two-dimensional art, a visual image whose power and authenticity do justice to this remarkable volume, the history within, and to the author who lived it.

WHAT: Presented by The Echo Foundation, *A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel* offers contests in two categories: **ART AND PHOTOGRAPHY**. Keeping in mind the work of the visiting Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, students are invited to respond to the above challenge in either medium.

WHO: The Contest is open to all Charlotte area High School Students, grades 9 – 12.

WHEN: Entry forms and submissions must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation at 1125 East Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by **Monday, March 5, 2007.**

HOW: Entry forms may be downloaded at http://www.echofoundation.org, The Echo Foundation web site, or obtained at The Echo Foundation office. No student name should appear on the front of a submission and an entry form must accompany each entry.

PURCHASE AWARDS AND CATEGORIES: First ($200), second ($100) and third ($50) prizes will be given in each of the two categories: art and photography. All other Art and Photography entries can be reclaimed following the contest's judging.

JUDGING AND RULES: Educators and professionals in the corresponding fields will serve on the judging panel. The panels reserve the right to not award a cash prize in a category if the submissions do not meet the qualifications for entry. 2-D original artwork and photography may not exceed 36" in height or width.

For more information contact:
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844, or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

Please attach student photo here

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by
The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

ART CONTEST: OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

****

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible.
Two-dimensional Original Works of Art no larger than 36" x 36" will be accepted.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ School: _____

Current Class Status: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Title of entry and brief description:

_____

_____

I give permission for my student's art entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 5, 2007.

For more information contact
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844 or email questions charlotteechoes@aol.com.

Please attach student photo here

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by
The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST: OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

****

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible.
Photographs in Black & White or Color with no size limitations, will be accepted.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ School: _____

Current Class Status: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Title of entry and brief description:

_____

_____

I give permission for my student's photography entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 5, 2007.

For more information contact
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by

The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

GUIDELINES

ESSAY & POETRY CONTEST

By writing "Night," the definitive account of the Holocaust, Elie Wiesel took action to ensure that the inhumanity perpetrated against millions would never be forgotten. In your life today, how are you responsible for the quality of human life in your own community and elsewhere? What actions can you, a young person, take to fight injustice here and around the world? Why does it matter?

WHAT: The Echo Foundation offers writing contests in 4 categories: **ENGLISH ESSAY, FRENCH ESSAY, ENGLISH POETRY AND FRENCH POETRY**. Keeping in mind the work of Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel, students are invited to respond to the above paragraph through any of the four mentioned categories.

WHO: The Contest is open to all Charlotte area High School Students, grades 9 – 12.

WHEN: Entry forms and submissions must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation at 1125 East Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by **Monday March 5, 2007.**

HOW: Entry forms may be downloaded at http://www.echofoundation.org, The Echo Foundation web site, or obtained at The Echo Foundation office. No student name should appear on the front of a submission and an entry form must accompany each entry.

PURCHASE AWARDS AND CATEGORIES: First ($200), second ($100) and third ($50) prizes will be given in each of the four categories.

JUDGING AND RULES: Educators and professionals in the corresponding fields will serve on the judging panel. The panels reserve the right to not award a cash prize in a category if the submissions do not meet the qualifications for entry. All written entries must be typed (double-spaced). Word limit for essays is 1,500; poetry has no limit on length.

For more information contact: The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844, or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

Please attach student photo here

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by
The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

ESSAY CONTEST: OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

****

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible.
Essays may be no more than 1,500 words, must be printed in size 12 font and double-spaced.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address**:** _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ School: _____

Current Class Status: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Essay Language: ☐ English ☐ French

Title of entry and brief description:

_____

_____

I give permission for my student's essay entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 5, 2007.

For more information contact
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

Please attach student photo here

A Decade Inspired by Elie Wiesel

Presented by
The Leon Levine Foundation: Sandra and Leon Levine

POETRY CONTEST: OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

****

This completed and signed form must accompany each entry. Copies of this form are permissible.
Poems may be any length, printed in size 12 font and double-spaced.

Please Print or Type:

Full Name: _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ School: _____

Current Class Status: ☐ Freshman ☐ Sophomore ☐ Junior ☐ Senior

Poetry Language: ☐English ☐ French

Title of entry and brief description:

_____

_____

I give permission for my student's poetry entry to be used in future publications and/or exhibits.

_____ _____
Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Entry Form and submission must be postmarked or received by The Echo Foundation, 1125 E. Morehead Street, Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204, by Monday, March 5, 2007.

For more information contact
The Echo Foundation at 704-347-3844or email questions to charlotteechoes@aol.com.

THE ECHO FOUNDATION

AN INTRODUCTION

On March 12, 1997, as the centerpiece of the community-wide, year-long, educational Elie Wiesel Project, internationally revered humanitarian and Nobel Laureate for Peace, Elie Wiesel spoke "***Against Indifference"*** to over 23,000 students and adults. He was so inspired by this visit to Charlotte, that, as he left, he challenged the community to continue its focus on the critical issues of human dignity, justice and moral courage. He offered seed money and his wholehearted assistance in obtaining speakers and developing programs to address these issues. Thus The Echo Foundation was born, and with it its mission: ***…to sponsor and facilitate those voices that speak of human dignity, justice and moral courage in a way that leads to positive action for humankind.*** The mission is implemented by bringing speakers, exhibitions and performances to the Charlotte Region as catalysts for educational programs. For each project school-based curriculum materials that meet national and international standards are developed and made available free of charge to schoolteachers across the region.

Our goals are:

A. Educating for compassion, justice and moral decision making;
B. Teaching understanding through fostering relationships founded in respect;
C. Facilitating opportunities to act against indifference on these issues.

Our region has demonstrated a need and a desire to address issues of racial diversity, culture and the quality of human existence. The Echo Foundation brings together people from all corners of Charlotte-Mecklenburg to address these vital goals through student dialogues, teacher workshops, theatrical productions, lectures and more. The primary focus of all projects is humanity. The secondary focus is specific to the particular speaker, exhibition or performance. For example, the primary focus of The Elie Wiesel Project: *Against Indifference* was justice and world peace; the secondary focus of the Project was World War II and the Holocaust.

The Echo Foundation's recent and current projects include the production of the play, *The White Rose;* The Varian Fry Exhibition Project; The Harry Wu Project; *Living Together in the 21st Century,* with Jonathan Kozol; the Kerry Kennedy Cuomo Project: *For Human Rights;* The Wole Soyinka Project: *Truth Memory and Reconciliation;* Syl Cheney-Coker Project: *Free to Write;* The Jeffrey Sachs Project: *Environment, Poverty and Healthcare on a Global Scale: What can one person do?; Considering Social Capital* with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.; Bernard Kouchner: *Compassion Without Borders*; and *A Gathering of Nobel Laureates: Science for the 21st Century*.

Proposed future speakers include: President Vaclav Havel, Amartya Sen, Sec. General Kofi Annan, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Liv Ullman, President Nelson Mandela and Graca Machel, President Jimmy Carter, Shimon Peres, Steven Spielberg, The Dalai Lama, President Oscar Arias Sanchez, Jody Williams, and more.

The Echo Foundation is governed by an International Board of Advisors and a Charlotte Board of Trustees. Mr. Wiesel is an active Honorary Chairperson who continues to consult with Echo on a regular basis. To date, many outstanding professionals in the community have offered their services to The Foundation *pro bono.* The corporate, religious and educational communities have generously provided support for Echo's mission and projects.

THE ECHO FOUDNATION: Four Initiatives

The Echo Foundation Mission: "To sponsor and facilitate those voices that speak of human dignity, justice and moral courage in a way that leads to positive action for humankind." Echo promotes its mission through the implementation of Four Initiatives, each with a specific target audience: 1) Middle and High School Students, with arms into the community at large, 2) Adults Leaders and 3) Elementary School Children.

- **Voices Against Indifference:** Middle and High School Initiative**.** Through bringing renowned humanitarians to Charlotte as a catalyst for education, and with diversity of race, class and culture as our primary focus, The Echo Foundation creates educational programs centered on the message of our annual guest. Voices Against Indifference builds bridges across racial divides by bringing students from all corners of Charlotte Mecklenburg together to learn about the messages of Nobel Laureates in Science, 2005; Bernard Kouchner, 2004; Jeffrey Sachs, 2003; Wole Soyinka, 2002; Kerry Kennedy Cuomo 2001; and Harry Wu 2000; and to interpret its impact in our own community. In other words, thinking globally and acting locally – taking lessons learned around the world and seeking to apply the solutions locally. An extension to this initiative is Echo's Annual Award Dinner at which the International Humanitarian is the Keynote Speaker and a local hero is chosen to receive the Echo Award Against Indifference.
- ***Forum for Hope*:** Adult Leadership Initiative. Believing that the tone and culture of an organization begin at the top, Echo invites 20 leaders from the Charlotte Community to travel together for the purpose of exposure to individuals who have, from a humanitarian perspective, shaped the world in a positive way. Our inaugural journey was to Boston for a round table discussion with Echo Foundation Honorary Chair, Elie Wiesel. Participants met twice prior to traveling to build unity around the mission of the initiative and to establish goals and measures for success. A steering committee was formed to identify participants ensuring representation from professional, educational, religious, medical and arts communities with an emphasis on race, ethnicity and gender diversity.

- ***Living Together in the 21st Century:*** Elementary School Character Education Initiative. The Echo Foundation's commitment to humanity and to education finds unique expression in its 2001-2002 pilot program, *Living Together in the 21st Century*, an education outreach project for 2nd grade students originated by Nobel Peace Laureate, Elie Wiesel with involvement by child activist, Jonathan Kozol, and created by Charlotte Mecklenburg teachers. LT is a broad based curriculum that focuses on living together in harmony and teaches problem solving strategies, conflict resolution and respect for others. The underlying mission of the project is to simultaneously begin to build compassion for people of all races, cultures and backgrounds, and to teach life skills in young children that will prepare them to live in our society non-violently. A secondary project goal is to create a model which can be shared nationally and internationally.

- ***Charlotte: City of Asylum.*** Refuge for persecuted writers. Although there are several Cities of Asylum worldwide, only four exist in North America. The Echo Foundation is in the process of making Charlotte the first Southern City of Asylum in America.

THE ECHO FOUNDATION

- International Board of Advisors -

Elie Wiesel, *Honorary Chairperson*
Nobel Laureate for Peace, 1986

Henry Louis Gates, Jr., *Chair, Department of African & African American Studies, Harvard University*
Dr. Bernard Kouchner, *Founder, Doctors Without Borders*
Jonathan Kozol, *Child Advocate*
Jeffrey D. Sachs, *Director, The Earth Institute, Columbia University*
Harry Wu, *Executive Director, The Laogai Research Foundation*

- Charlotte Board of Advisors -

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The Honorable James Martin, *Vice President for Research, Carolinas HealthCare System*
†Dr. Joseph B. Martin III, *Principal Corporate Affairs Officer, Bank of America*
Sally Robinson, *Community Volunteer*
Bill Vandiver, *Retired Executive, Bank of America*
The Honorable Melvin Watt, *United States Congressman, North Carolina*
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Kathy Rowan, *Public Relations Counselor, Corder Philips Wilson*
Jack Stroker, *Partner, L & J Associates*
The Honorable Kurt Waldthausen, *Owner, Waldthausen & Associates, Inc.*
Eulada Watt, *Office of Research, University of North Carolina at Charlotte*
Gail Brinn Wilkins, **ASID**, *President, Gail Brinn Wilkins, Inc.*
Chester Williams, *EVP and Director of CRA & Community Development, BB&T*
Thom Young, *CEO, Cambium Capital*

1125 East Morehead St., Suite 106, Charlotte, NC 28204 Tel: (704) 347-3844 Fax: (704) 347-3845
www.echofoundation.org