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Mrs. Graning

English

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The Faith of Elie

Elie Wiesel was a Jewish kid in the small town of Sighet. He grew up in a loving Jewish family. Elie was one of the many people forced into a concentration camp by the Germans. Once his family was forced to leave their homes and move into a concentration camp his whole life changed. He faced many religious challenges such as wanting to study the Cabbala, starting to lose his faith, and losing his faith completely.

Elie was a young Jewish child that wanted to study the Cabbala. The Cabbala was a branch of Judaism teaching that God is the origin of the world. Elie's father said "You're too young for that. Maimonides said it was only at thirty that one had the right to venture into the perilous world of mysticism. You must study the basic subjects within your own understanding." Elie took it upon himself and found an expert in the Cabbala. The master's name was Moshie the Beadle. Moshie talked to him about revelations and mysteries of the Cabbala. Moshie was then taken by the Germans and almost killed. Moshie tried to come back and warn the others, but no one believed what the Germans had done. By the time anyone believed Moshie the Germans had started bringing other Jews to concentration camps.

Elie and his family had just arrived at the camp when people inside the train read "Auschwitz" on the building. After they got out of the train cart there was a long line to get into

the concentration camp. Once they made it to the front of the line Elie and his dad were separated from his mother and sisters and that would be the last time he saw them. When their line started moving his father began saying the Jewish prayer of death. After Elie heard this he started asking himself why he should worship the Lord when he was doing this to them. They continued on their march and Elie could feel heat rising. When he turned the corner he saw a truck dumping babies into a fire pit. The Germans made them march all the way to the pit making Elie think they would be thrown in. However, they turned and headed towards the concentration camp. Later on in the camp they had a selection to pick out weak people, his father was picked but made it past the test without being killed. They were both safe but Elie's foot began hurting. They went to the doctor and Elie was diagnosed with frostbite. The resistance was getting closer so they were moving the people in the camps. The people in the hospital had the option to stay or leave. Elie and his father chose to leave, but later found out the people in the hospital were freed. These were a few of the things that made Elie question his faith.

The war was coming to an end and the resistance drew closer. The Germans were making people move camps. They had to run 42 miles to the next camp, if they stopped running they would get shot. As they were running people were crushing the bodies that had fallen like they weren't there. The next camp they arrived at was called Buchenwald. When they got there they went to their barracks. Elie's father had gotten very sick and the only thing he could do was stay in bed. Elie's father was so bad that he had to use the bathroom inside of their barrack. The other men were so mad that they started to hit him. A few days later Elie awoke and saw another invalid lying in his father's place. He figured they must have taken his father away before dawn and carried him to the crematory. On April 5 they were ordered to go to the assembly room and

many thought that they were going to get shot. The remaining prisoners left in the camp whispered “Go back to your block, the Germans are going to shoot you. Go back to your block, and don’t move.” They learned it was too late for the Germans to evacuate them; the resistance was too close. At about 6:00 in the evening the first American tank stood at the gates of Buchenwald. They were rescued but Elie's faith would never be the same.

Throughout his life Elie faced many religious challenges such as wanting to study the Cabbala, starting to lose his faith, and losing his faith completely. This began when the Germans invaded their town and forced Elie and his family into concentration camps. Being forced into a concentration camp at such a young age altered his faith in the Jewish religion. During his time in the concentration camps Elie was separated from his family, saw burning babies, and witnessed hangings. These negative experiences led him to lose his faith and made him into a different person.

Works Cited

Wiesel, Elie. *Night: With Related Readings*. EMC/Paradigm, 2003.