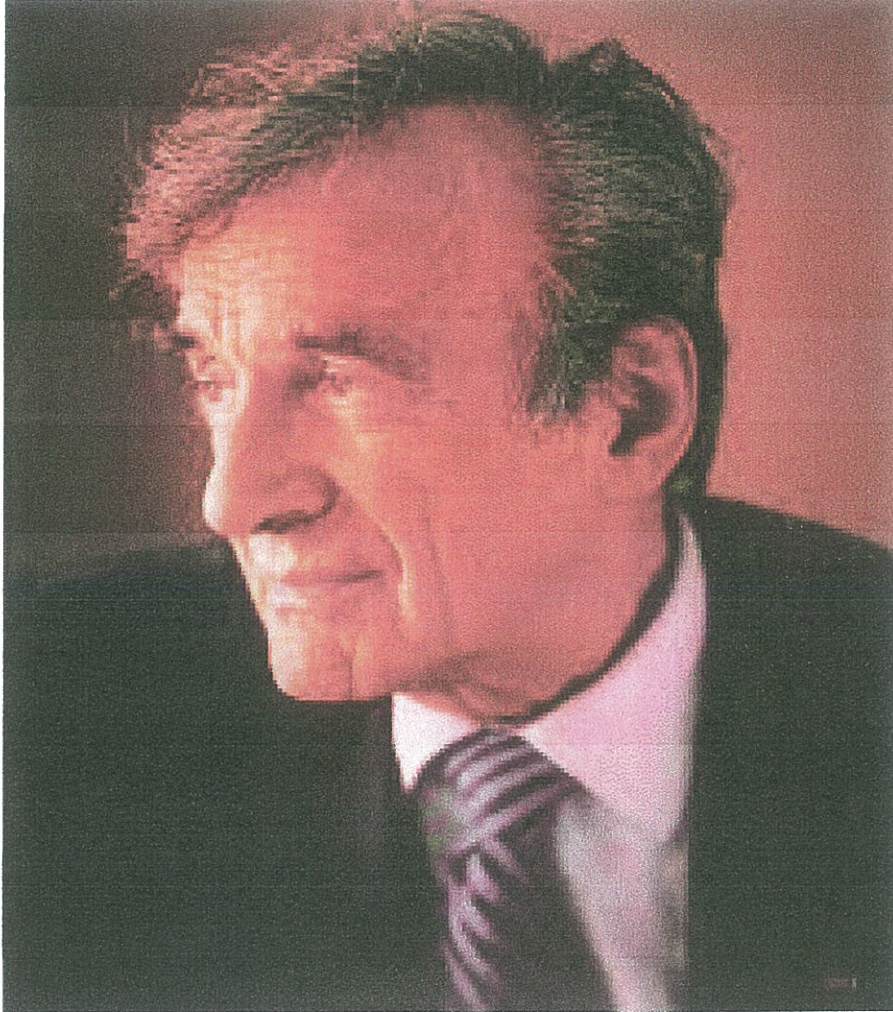


Elie Wiesel



“Messenger to Mankind”

Written by Brass

Elie Wiesel, “Messenger to Mankind”

“Mankind must remember that peace is not God's gift to creatures, it's our gift to each other.” Elie Weisel ([www.wikiquote.org/Elie Weisel](http://www.wikiquote.org/Elie_Wiesel)).

Elie Wiesel is a Jewish-American humanitarian and author born in Romania. He is a Holocaust survivor and has written 57 books including the famous *Night*, ([www.wikipedia.org/Elie Wiesel](http://www.wikipedia.org/Elie_Wiesel)). He is also a political activist, professor, and Advisory Board Chairman for the *Algemeiner Journal* Newspaper. He is a Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, and was given the famous title, the “messenger to mankind” by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, ([www.wikipedia.org/Elie Wiesel](http://www.wikipedia.org/Elie_Wiesel)). He is currently 83 years of age.

Wiesel was born in Sighet, Transylvania in the Carpathian Mountains in 1928. He lived on Serpent Street with his parents Sarah and Shlomo and his sisters, Hilda, Bea, and Tsiporah. During his childhood, he was a respected individual in the community, as his grandfather, Dodye Feig, was a celebrated Vizhnits Hasid, disciple of the rabbe, and farmer, ([www.wikipedia.org/Elie Wiesel](http://www.wikipedia.org/Elie_Wiesel)). His grandfather also gave Elie a sense of humanism; because of this Elie spent a short time in jail for helping escaped Polish Jews.



Wiesel began attending primary school at age three, (*Stern* 10) where he began learning about Hebrew, the Bible, and the Talmud ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Elie_Wiesel)). He also began speaking with Moshe, a synagogue caretaker who taught him even more about Judaism. Elie was transfixed over these religious subjects and was very influenced by people such as Moshe, his Grandfather, the rabbe, and some of his teachers, ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Elie_Wiesel)).

Wiesel's parents were became very worried about Elie because he was fasting two days out of the week to increase his performance on his studies, and as a result was frequented by headaches and fatigue. Elie held education dearer to him than a first glance revealed. He was, in fact, observing every aspect of his education, skipping school when he felt his teachers were oppressive or that he was not learning, and taking in every word of his truly passionate teachers. His goal was to become a Rabbe,

(Rabbi) or a teacher as a profession.

His father and mother supported distinctly different beliefs that they both attempted to impress upon Wiesel, his mother encouraged traditional Jewish faith, and his father, Hebrew texts and a more logical approach to life. He had three sisters during his childhood, one of which did not survive WWII.

During WWII, Wiesel went through events that shaped his character and influenced his decisions throughout his life.

The first of these incidents was when the family was put into the smaller of two ghettos in their own hometown, where there once was a thriving community of over 10,000 Jewish people. On top of that, the ghetto was established on Serpent Street, where they used to live. Wiesel was only 15 at the time.



In the ghetto, the Jews were sent out to work every day. They were robbed of the few possessions they had and there were frequent suicides. Most people went about their everyday business, but Elie, along with others, had to struggle with the police and the German army punishing them constantly for doing normal things. The truth is that they could have escaped, but they stayed out of fear. Things had gone from bad to worse, (Wiesel 63-67).

In May of 1944, things got worse for the Wiesel family as a whole. Hungary allowed the German army to deport the residents of the Sighet ghettos to the Auschwitz-Birkenau, or Auschwitz II extermination camp in Poland. The Wiesel family turned down the offers of friends who were willing to hide them. The Wiesels were some of the last shipped by open cattle car to the camp.

When they arrived at the camp, Elie's mother and one of his sisters were killed in the gas chambers, and Wiesel, also known as inmate A-7713, was forced to work with his father for eight months in work the camp, Buna, part of Auschwitz III.

From this time until his freedom Elie and his father were starved, worked in extreme conditions, and were robbed of what little food they had and beaten by not only the Nazis, but their fellow inmates.

The whole camp was forced to undergo roll call, beatings, and other torture. On top of this, on

January 19th, 1945, two days after he had undergone surgery for his knee, Elie and the rest of the camp were led on a death-march. 20,000 people started the march, and after the march were shipped by cattle car to Buchenwald. The survivors of the march and the cattle cars amounted to about 6,000 people ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Elie_Wiesel)).

In Buchenwald, Wiesel joined Block 66, which contained 600 other Jewish children. On April 6th, 1945, the prisoners were no longer fed and an estimated 10,000 Jewish inmates died every day ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Elie_Wiesel)). Five days later, the 3rd US army liberated the inmates. Wiesel's father, Shlomo Wiesel, died shortly after their liberation by on April 11th.



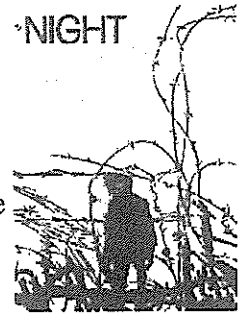
After the war, Wiesel went on to become a choirmaster, teacher, and journalist. The aftereffects of the war left him scarred, and he abandoned the faith that he had adored so much in other people as a child and moved on. He still occasionally attends synagogue on holidays, however.

During his time as a journalist, he met François Mauriac, winner of the 1952 Nobel Prize for literature. During their first encounter in 1954, Wiesel became very agitated over Mauriac's relation to and patronization of Christ. Wiesel eventually snapped in the middle of the interview and exclaimed that he knew, and was one of, many Jewish children who had experienced pain far beyond Christ's, and were not recognized. After running out of the room, Elie was stopped by Mauriac in the hall. Starting from that moment, Mauriac eventually became Wiesel's close friend and convinced him to begin writing about his experiences ([www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/Elie_Wiesel)). The signs of the great humanitarian we know today had begun to show.

Wiesel married his wife Marion Erster Rose in 1969, and in 1972, they had a son who they named Shlomo Elisha Wiesel, after the child's grandfather. Marion and Elie are still married today.

It is also noted that a few of Wiesel's books came from his experiences in America. For example, in 1956, on his way to the United Nations, Wiesel was hit by a New York taxi cab. His book, *The Accident* came from this experience ([www.achievement.org/ Elie Wiesel](http://www.achievement.org/Elie_Wiesel)).

Wiesel has been recognized as an author more than a humanitarian, but his books are his message to mankind, and his great achievements. He has, as stated earlier written 57 books including memoirs, historical fiction, and other stories of the Jews and the holocaust, he has also written several plays. The list of his writings includes his famous memoirs *Night* and its sequels *Dawn*, and *Day*, or *the Accident*. Wiesel also received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986, and although the people disagree as to why Wiesel received this award, the most accurate and clearly-stated answer is this: "Wiesel is a messenger to mankind; his message is one of peace, atonement and human dignity... (his message) is based on his own personal experience of total humiliation and of the utter contempt for humanity shown in Hitler's death camps."(www.nobelprize.org/1986 press release). Wiesel was also awarded the Ellis Island Medal of Honor for the same reason around the same time he finished writing *The Forgotten*, his only publication in 1992. Wiesel was also the noted winner of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal, the National Humanities Medal, the Medal of Liberty, and the rank of Grand-Croix in the French Legion of Honor. ([www.eliewiesel.org/Elie Wiesel](http://www.eliewiesel.org/Elie_Wiesel)).



Wiesel started his own foundation called the *Elie Wiesel Foundation for Humanity*. He and his wife Marion created this foundation soon after Elie was awarded the Nobel Peace prize in 1986, and the foundation has been functional ever since.

It is also noted but less recognized that Wiesel won the Norman Mailer Prize of 2011. The American literary award recently established in 2009 by the Norman Mailer Center and Writer's Colony. Wiesel's particular award was for "Lifetime Achievement" (www.wikipedia.org/ Norman Mailer Prize). His works are shown below:

Works:

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 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)
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Wise Men and Their Tales, portraits of Biblical, Talmudic, and Hasidic Masters (2003)
Et où vas-tu?, essays (2004)
The Time of the Uprooted, a novel (2005)
A Mad Desire to Dance, a novel (2009)
Rashi, a biography (2009) **The Sonderberg Case**, a novel (2010) (Directly from and courtesy of:
<http://www.eliewiesel.com/booksbyeliewiesel.aspx>)

In my opinion, Elie Wiesel is a truly inspirational person because of his efforts to keep going and make a positive change after the horrible things done to him. He is surprisingly persistent in his beliefs and his dedication to spread change and awareness with his writings and his actions, which shall always be remembered. His legacy will be one of a man who may not have anything to protest against in the present, but acquaints people with the past and a better way of living today; and his works will open the eyes of readers forever.

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