

# The Essential Elie Wiesel - Quotes and Inspirations

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A grateful student shares her years of class and lecture notes from her teacher and mentor. These words continue to inspire and uplift. May they remain close to our hearts and move our souls to a better life and world.

## LEARNING

Education is not education without ethics

*(Boston University Class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Sept. 13, 1976)*

Literature is the sum of hounding words, wounds, obsessions.

*(Boston University Class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Sept. 21, 1976)*

Classic Story

Three friends at the same time and place enter a forest; a poet, a woodcutter and an architect.

The woodcutter sees 1000 trees

The architect sees houses

The poet sees life, beauty, nature and writes a book.

We should see all of it.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Oct. 12, 1976)*

Chroniclers, historians, prophets, wandering messengers- all are our teachers.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Oct. 12, 1976)*

Judaism is by definition anti-racist. Racism is biological, a matter of law, humanity. Anyone who accepts religion can be a Jew from any society, any country.

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience" Nov. 7, 1977)*

Seder- A Jew needs order  
Breisheet- beginning, also an order.  
Destruction comes out of chaos  
With Seder and order there is no confusion.  
*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*

In the Soviet Union, you write a book and go to jail  
Here you go to jail, then you write a book!  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

To be moral is to seek what is good for someone else

Respect all human beings  
I am free only when others are

Morality of the law is as important as the law itself  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y Lecture " A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

There is no blessing for doing Tzedakah  
Don't give blessings, give help quickly while it's needed!  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y Lecture, " A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

Moral education is a necessity and the answer  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

A child learns to hate  
He can unlearn to hate  
*(Boston University lecture, " The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

Jewish mysticism has a wonderful saying:  
Those who speak don't know  
Those who know, don't speak.  
*(Boston University final class lecture, Dec. 11, 2007)*

Fanaticism is the enemy of civilization, friendship, love and logic.  
*(Boston University lecture, " The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

There is silence in a gesture, the pause between the notes can be even more powerful than the notes themselves.

*(Boston University final class lecture, Dec. 11, 2007)*

Zionism as a non-violent organization is the right of the Jewish people.

Herzl thought it would solve the problem of anti-Semitism. He was wrong. People attack Israel because of Israel.

*(Boston University final class lecture, Dec. 11, 2007)*

Only another person can move me to despair or save me from despair.

Hope is our ethical gift to one another.

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

It is a miracle to find joy when no joy exists

Is it proof of God's existence?

*(Boston University lecture, "The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

What do we do with our protests?

Turn to compassion, away from anger.

Seek beliefs where compassion and awe are integral.

*(Boston University lecture, "The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

Truth is God

We are human, we must sort alone our own truth

I don't want my truth to be your truth

We must respect our own truths

We are all part of a quest.

*(Boston University lecture "Reb Soras" Oct.22, 2007)*

Love is the way you live

Truth is the way you think

*(Boston University lecture, "Reb Soras" Oct. 22, 2007)*

In the light of tragedy, exile, our suffering has meaning when we come from the darkness and see the light.

*(Boston University lecture, "A Portrait of the Messiah" Oct. 16, 2006)*

The role of human beings is not to be a saint, but to be human.

What we do to each other determines our humanity.

Nothing is more beautiful than to possess that gift and share it with one another.

*(Boston University lecture, "A Portrait of the Messiah" Oct 16, 2006)*

After a tragedy, we rebuild a life from ruins.

*(Boston University final class lecture, Dec. 11, 2007)*

There is QUEST in the word question!

Come join our quest , come and look!

*(Boston University class, "Somewhere a Master", Nov. 20, 2007)*

The continuing of study is a remedy against despair and loneliness.

*(Boston University class, "Somewhere a Master", Nov. 20, 2007)*

The soul of our belief is our spiritual memory

*(Boston University class, "9 and 1/5 Mystics, Nov. 27, 2007)*

There is beauty in simplicity- that's all we need.

Too many words cover – the simple and pure can allow us to see the splendor.

*(Boston University class, "9 and 1/5 Mystics", Nov. 27, 2007)*

## **HOLOCAUST and MEMORY**

You must see it theologically that there is no reason, one can't understand. It is senseless, all madness

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Sept. 21, 1976)*

If the Holocaust would not put an end to Anti-Semitism, nothing will.

*( Boston University Class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution" Sept. 21, 1976)*

Collaborating with evil is evil itself.

*( Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Sept. 28, 1976)*

The Warsaw Ghetto took longer to occupy than France by Germany

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Sept. 28, 1976)*

Abraham Joshua Heschel at Auschwitz said,

“ Ask 6,000,000 for forgiveness, we can't forgive”

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Sept. 28, 1976)*

One story happened over and over again, only names changed. The only hero of the book is time. Same motive, action, plot, end, beginning. One victim confronted 6,000,000 times.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 5, 1976)*

Jewish solidarity prevailed, the moment they found themselves among themselves they rebuilt a community on ashes. A Jewish fire began to burn.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 5, 1976)*

Compassion for the innocent victims is most important.

They are in our memories, fighters and non-fighters, all in our blood.

We hear the same stories over and over again- they came, they

killed, they went, we have human responses. During these times

Kabbala movements grew.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 12, 1976)*

Our generation was caught unprepared.

We thought, “ well we survived other things, we'll survive this”

This was a unique event that cannot be repeated.

For the first time the very existence of the Jew angered the enemy and induced him to murder.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 19, 1976)*

It is too easy to cry and shout.

Keep it to yourself and feel it dig deeper; once you let it out, it's out.

You should feel a tension, an intensity.

The words are rich, dangerous, uplifting, destructing.

Words cannot communicate such an event.

And yet...

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 19, 1976)*

A Catholic man asked Elie Wiesel in the early 1960's  
"Why do you still remember the Holocaust?"  
EW replied, " Look, many years ago one Jew was killed, why do you  
still remember him?"

*(Boston University lecture, " The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

I fight fanatics with all my heart

*(Boston University lecture, " The Trial of God" Nov. 1, 2010)*

What can be our answer? Despair?

Never an answer!

Despair is only a question.

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Maiden of Ludmir April 9, 2007)*

The idea that words cannot communicate what happened during the  
Holocaust demands humility. We must realize there is a limit.  
We will never know what happened there except those who were  
there.

I want to give you a fragment of truth

It is fire, it burns

If you touch fire and it feels good, it is not fire.

Ideally, leave the frustrations as a creative source, not a destruction

Writing is in place of something.

*(Boston University Class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 19, 1976)*

Why eyes? I always write about eyes. During the war Jews were  
recognized by informers by their eyes. Sad, Jewish eyes, deep  
suffering penetrates them.

Eyes do not remain the same after absorbing these words.

Nothing will be the same.

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 19, 1976)*

The world was inhuman

Victims remained human to the end.

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

It's a terrible thing to say, the liberal leaders lied.  
People who warned told the truth.  
No one listened  
Had Roosevelt and other leaders spoken up, people might have  
listened.

Madness is inherent in the indifference.  
The killers never lied

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

The worst pain- the realization that the Holocaust could very well  
have not happened.

So little could have prevented it.

If the world only reacted!

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

If you are indifferent to one kind of persecution, you are indifferent  
to ALL persecutions.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

The viciousness of the enemy is to make the enemy(victims) suffer,  
and then deny their suffering.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

The tragedy of the witness is the new phenomena.

Will his words reach the readers?

Ani Maamim- we will not survive perhaps our writings will.

Ringelblum had his committees and said, "If you live an event and  
do not pass it on you have sinned against the event"

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

It is given to man to be immortal one minute before one's death.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 26, 1976)*

Shabbat made the Shtetl what it was.

I miss the Shabbat the most- it can never be replicated.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

The Jewish family always lived and helped together- nowhere was it as tight.

Torah, law, history, danger kept us together during the Holocaust. It was the first time a family was a source of danger.

The German's imagination transcended our own.

They knew our family ties, and caught many Jews in their traps.

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

Don't identify with all, identify with one

If everyone of us could live with one of them it would be a victory.

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

Nothing is as vicious as when the killer deprives the victim of his right to be sad

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

We can't understand it but we have no choice but to accept God.

God gave us freedom to choose

Man chose to ignore us

A cultural Jew looks at the Holocaust and asks, not,

" Where was God?" but asks " Where was Man?"

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

I want only to understand

I am no longer seeking truth

All I want is to understand

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

Jews maintained humanity even with a wrong choice

They wanted to survive, not to just remain alive.

For them to live was a sacrifice

They became carriers of Jewish history

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

There comes a moment when there are no words

Words can diminish the weight of the experience

Silence is as important as the words.

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Faith and Power" Oct, 30, 2006)*

The stories heard are like burning wounds in your heart. Like  
burning scars in your eyes.

Never should you be spared from those images and then you will be  
spared from the reality that produced those images.

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Dec. 5, 1977)*

I have not made peace with God.

Can one be a Jew without God?

No one can be a Jew against God

One can be a Jew with God

The struggle goes on.

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Dec. 5, 1977)*

The worst enemy is indifference

Despair is not the end but the beginning

It is not the answer, but the question

When you meet a survivor, think and feel.

Try to understand him or her

Studying the Holocaust can open up a thirst for humanity.

If you see suffering- you will do something

Not be indifferent

If there was such inhumanity – now can one not be human?

Descend into another dimension of an experience that should  
become yours.

The world betrayed us

The betrayal was total

The victims never became the killers

Elie Wiesel is afraid of telling the tale

A civilization that has seen, witnessed, survived these scenes is  
doomed unless we redeem it.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

The killer's diaries tell of meals and gaiety  
They and we do not belong to the same species  
We experienced the same things, saw the same things  
*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Nov. 16, 1976)*

In times of crisis, neutrality is at the side of the killer.  
Indifference is part of guilt.  
*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 3, 1977)*

We didn't believe Hitler when he said, "I'm going to kill you". Sadly,  
Hitler didn't fail us, but Roosevelt did.  
*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 3, 1977)*

In 1959, 1960 Elie Wiesel wrote the term Holocaust- it may be the  
origin.  
Didn't have another word- still not at ease with the word.  
Event  
Era of Night  
Tried to find a poetic image- the word is inadequate.  
There are no adequate words to describe the Event.  
*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 3, 1977)*

While the Olympic Games of 1936 were in Berlin, Dachau and  
Buchenwald were in full swing. Thousands tortured in prison for  
being anti-Hitler.  
Killers killing, victims dead and memory did not produce conscience.  
It is incomprehensible – the behavior and silence of people  
*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 3, 1977)*

How many are still left in the ashes?  
How many Moshe Flinkers? Anne Franks?  
Sonderkommandos?  
Every prophet feels guilty- to predict events, feels it happens  
because they say it will.  
*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 10, 1977)*

Why Remember?

A person without a past is lost

You can always build a future but a past is lost unless you remember it.

Remember, go back, if you remember Abraham, Noah, Adam to God, you remember God.

Once you start forgetting, you forget you are human.

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 10, 1977)*

History runs through us

We belong to a privileged category

The victim and not the killer

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 10, 1977)*

If a person in the camp had only one thought to survive- he did not survive.

If he had to care for someone- he remained human.

*(Boston University class, "Holocaust: Memory and Conscience Oct. 10, 1977)*

There is no answer to include in the story.

We have our wounded memory which God alone can, and must answer.

*(Boston University lecture, "Rebbe of Ger, Tragedy in Hasidism" Nov,1, 2010)*

400 adolescents survived Buchenwald- not one became a criminal

*(Boston University lecture, "Legends of Our Time" Nov. 2, 2010)*

I never divorced God

I had quarrels

*(Boston University lecture, "Legends of Our Times" Nov. 2, 2010)*

After liberation, the first thing I did was say Kaddish. I then felt not alone- the moment you know the other exists, you're not alone.

*(Boston University lecture, "Legends of Our Times" Nov. 2, 2010)*

The St. Louis was a dark cloud in a sky fraught with peril. A moral Titanic-

The ship reminds us of Jewish memory and the world's indifference.  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Anniversary of the Tragedy of the St. Louis" April 8, 2010)*

I confess

I am not satisfied by my own words

There are no words

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Anniversary of the Tragedy of the St. Louis April 8, 2010)*

What lessons can we learn?

Waiting in certain crisis is a sin

Where help is required, offer it right away

There is no blessing for Tzedakah, it could take too long. Better to act first.

When a victim needs intervention don't rely on others, rely on yourself.

Never give in to despair

Only a human being can move to elevation.

Remember a spark of hope

A spark of truth

A spark of goodness

A spark of divine grace

Look for it in the ashes and then look at each other face to face.

The face of the other is worth your hope, your generosity and your humanity.

*(92<sup>nd</sup> st y lecture, " Anniversary of the Tragedy of the St Louis" April 8, 2010)*

The Holocaust is a unique event and must remain unique. Never before has anything on this scale happened.

*(Boston University final class lecture Dec. 11, 2007)*

# HOPE

We must learn how not to hate not how to hate.  
To abolish hate in our hearts won't do, it must be in our enemy's  
heart. Outlaw fanaticism.

*(Boston University class, "The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Sept. 21, 1976)*

The solution is not with diplomats.  
It is with prophets, writers, philosophers, poets.

*( Boston University class " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Sept. 13, 1976)*

Infuse as much passion and compassion in our words so you and I  
feel kinship with those who preceded us.

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 5, 1976)*

Respect the other for the mystery the other contains.  
Respect the other for what they understand and for what they don't  
understand.

*(Boston University lecture, final words, "Legends of Our Times" Nov. 2, 2010)*

Nothing more miraculous than when two people meet.  
What two people can do, is much more than what one person can do.

*(Boston University lecture, "Legends of Our Times" Nov. 2 2010)*

Life is not made of years but moments

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Why I Love Isaac" May 16, 2020)*

To study and extract hidden meanings can take centuries to search-  
Learning carries its own rewards

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y Lecture, " Why I Love Isaac" May 16, 2010)*

We who believe in His Torah  
Choose life, not death- we must choose the living.

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y Lecture, " Why I Love Isaac" May 16, 2010)*

The world has always been in some kind of crisis  
since Adam and Eve and their children

*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " A World in Crisis" April 15, 2010)*

I believe Holocaust literature can change one's life  
It is full of contradiction, horror, passion, blood, fire cruelty and  
silence. Silence of the world  
Silence of the victim Silence of the killer  
Silence of the rabbi who prayed  
Silence of God ( don't let Him off the hook so easily)

*(Boston University class, " The Jewish Response to Jewish Persecution Oct. 19, 1976)*

Rabbi Nahman taught: when depressed, remember a nigun  
(wordless melody)

*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*

One has no choice but to go forward in troubled times but we cannot  
go forward if we are alone

*(Boston University lecture, " Rebbe of Ger Tragedy in Hassidism. Nov. 1, 2010)*

When one people are threatened  
all people are threatened

*( A response to the protest of building the mosque near the WTC, let's build religious tolerance  
together- Boston University lecture, Rebbe of Ger- Tragedy in Hasidism,  
Nov. 1, 2010)*

The opposite of love is not hate, it is indifference

*(Boston University lecture, " Rebbe of Ger, Tragedy in Hasidism" Nov. 1, 2010)*

After showing his tattoo on his arm, Elie Wiesel told the class, " now  
you are all witnesses and must carry on and tell the story of the  
Shoah, the Holocaust."

*(Boston University class Oct. 25, 2010)*

At the end of our days always remember

Think higher and feel deeper

Elevate yourself by the choices you make

*(Boston University lecture, " Legends of Our Time" Nov, 2, 2010)*

I don't live in Israel, but I cannot live without Israel.

*(Boston University final class lecture Dec. 11, 2007)*

I don't believe in numbers. A people that survived 2000 years in exile and 2000 years before that can survive. I am an optimist.

*(Boston University final class lecture Dec. 11, 2007)*

I don't have the right to live in despair.

No one lives alone.

Everyone is my hope. Especially my students.

*(Boston University final class lecture Dec. 11, 2007)*

We must remember, peace is not God's gift to His creation.

Peace is our gift to each other.

*(Boston University lecture, "Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust with Yaffa Eliach" Oct. 30, 2007)*

This is my life

I don't have the answers

I have questions.

*(Boston University lecture, "Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust with Yaffa Eliach" Oct. 30, 2007)*

Because of that Event- our concept of humanity, sanity, culture and civilization but be re-evaluated.

It must be re-evaluated in the light and shadow of the Event.

*(Boston University class, "Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust with Yaffa Eliach" Oct. 30, 2007)*

When you read these stories if you cry...

Cry not only for those who did or didn't survive

Cry also for G-d who is the source of all tears and all joy.

*(Boston University class, "Hassidic Tales of the Holocaust with Yaffa Eliach" Oct. 30, 2007)*

## **FAITH AND BELIEF**

You must possess the key to the secret of finding the meaning in everything. It is essential to make your meaning meaningful.

*(Boston University class, Rabbi Nahman March. 15, 1978)*

Always move yourself one step further!

When you have pain, think of meaning.

Look for the meaning in joy

*(Boston University class, Rabbi Nahman March. 15, 1978)*

A great person should make you feel at ease  
You should feel lifted up, not smaller.

*(Boston University class, Rabbi Nahman March 15, 1978)*

We have to be careful with small gestures. They are all part of the  
great scope of the universe.

One can say there is Kiddusha (holiness) in everything- yet we are  
here to interfere, not to accept.

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

Everyone can have a relationship with God, therefore there is hope  
Through prayer there is direct contact- prayer awakens your spirit.

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

Rabbi Nahman prayed to God also in his own language. He believed  
if you don't add to your tefilah (prayers) it is worthless.

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

A person cannot solve problems alone  
Kol Israel needs one another

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

We must feel close to Abraham, Yitzchok, Jacob  
We must see each other as if we stood at Sinai- we were together,  
there.

Jews meet again- because we met at Sinai before.

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

Live fully, intensely, Jewishly  
Be one with Avram, Yitzchak, and Yaakov  
They were people!

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman: March 15, 1978)*

Some shuls are so elegant it's depressing.

Too plush , too comfortable.

How can one pray?

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman March 15, 1978)*

Sh'ma Yisrael...Echad. Once  
Everything testifies to the oneness of Creation.  
*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*

You wouldn't look for Me if you haven't found Me already.  
*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*

A true master cannot have all the answers  
*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" Jan. 31, 1978)*

Two friends can be away from each other and remain friends.  
Love means you must be together.  
*(Boston University class, " Rabbi Nahman" March 8, 1978)*

Prayer is a window to the soul  
Prayer kept us together with lasting faith  
Prayer has kept our hope alive  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Why Pray" April 14, 2015)*

We should not be the last in a chain  
Prayer is an act of remembrance  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "Why Pray? April 14, 2015)*

Oh God I no longer ask for happiness or paradise  
Only to listen and rest; not to close me to gratitude  
In friendship and love  
*(closing words 92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, " Why Pray?" April 14, 2015)*

The High Holydays are days of judgement and hope  
Days of religious commitment for the whole world  
We crown God as God of the universe, judge of all  
May the year bring compassion, some peace and some joy.  
*(closing words Boston University class, "Literature of Oppression", Sept. 13, 2004)*

See God's countenance in another face  
See God in humanity  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St. Y lecture, " Personal Thoughts" April 18, 2002)*

Prayer is a link of fire, an offering  
It brings you back to the beginning  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "Personal Thoughts" April 18, 2002)*

Prayer is an absolute in life  
Cling to it in darkness  
I never stopped praying  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "Personal Thoughts" April 18, 2002)*

Whatever I do, I commit to those who came before me  
Respect for parents, grandparents kept me accepting God.  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "Personal Thoughts" April 18, 2002)*

Indifference enables evil to gain power  
The world is our world  
We must save it everyday  
*(words by Elie Wiesel unknown date)*

Every moment can be a miracle. Each person's humanity, each spark  
of humanity is a miracle.  
*(92<sup>nd</sup> St Y lecture, "Personal Reflections of Elie Wiesel" March 25, 2001)*

## **LITERATURE AND MUSIC**

A poet and a non-poet can say the same things yet,  
a poet makes words sing!  
*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

Every sentence must move the story forward  
Every character must move the world forward  
If not, don't use it.  
*(Boston University class "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

Rabbi Nahman had one wish- that his stories would become  
prayers- a nigun ( wordless melody) is the highest mode of prayer.  
Rabbi Nahman believed if we knew how to sing we would be closer  
to God.  
*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" March 15, 1978)*

We are an instrument in the symphony of the universe.  
By playing your part, you know the entire composition.

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*

Rabbi Nahman believed every part of the body has its own nigun (wordless melody).

The whole body sings!

*(Boston University class, "Rabbi Nahman" April 10, 1978)*