



## Essay

# Power of Memory (In Commemoration of Elie Wiesel, 1928–2016)

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### ABSTRACT

This essay portrays famous writer and human rights activist, Nobel Prize winner, Elie Wiesel (1928–2016) in the role of teacher. Wiesel valued this role more than his other achievements. The author's personal memoir and the archival documents make a core of this writing. The essay is dedicated to Wiesel ninety-year-old birthday anniversary.

### KEYWORDS

Wiesel, Elie (1928–2016), commemoration, biography, teaching method, “a Socratic Method”, Holocaust education, appeal to humanity, memory

## Introduction

This essay is dedicated to Elie Wiesel's ninety-year-old birthday anniversary, and since this publication coincides with the third anniversary of his death, the essay aims to commemorate him. The author had the privilege to be a student of Elie Wiesel from 2003–2005. This essay is just a quiet tune in a multi-voiced chorus of commemorative speeches, reports, and publications bestowed to the great humanist, writer, and teacher. A word “commemoration” is coined from two Latin roots “com”, meaning “altogether” and “memorate” meanings “to remind”. Elie Wiesel believes in the mystical power of memory and emphasized it in his Nobel Prize lecture entitled, “Hope, Despair and Memory”, saying that “without memory, our existence would be barred and opaque” (Wiesel & Aarvik, 1986). To remember a teacher is to hear the voices of his students. Altogether, we remember, that is, commemorate him.

## Elie Wiesel Biography

Elie Wiesel (September 30, 1928 – July 2, 2016) was a well-known writer, journalist, political activist, philosopher, a Jewish scholar, intellectual and a great teacher.

He was a Holocaust survivor. As a teenage boy, he passed through the hell of a ghetto and the concentration camps. He lost his father, mother and younger sister there. Wiesel depicted his journey through Auschwitz and Buchenwald in his first novel *Night* published in 1958. Since the first publication, the book has been translated into 30 languages. Besides *Night*, Wiesel is the author of 57 books.

Elie Wiesel was honored with many awards, including the Commander in the French Legion of Honor (1984), the Nobel Peace Prize (1986) and U.S. Congressional Gold Medal (1984).

A significant public figure, “a messenger to mankind”, “the arbiter of morality in the twenties century” (Abramowitz, 1994), Wiesel had a passion for learning and teaching. This work outlines both aspects of his love. The first part of the essay describes sources of Wiesel’s religious and secular education and portrays his great teachers – Shoushani and professor and rabbi Saul Liberman. The second part of this essay is dedicated to his teaching career at different universities of the USA. The essay outlines the themes of Wiesel’s lectures and seminars and depicts the method of his teaching. Special attention is given to Wiesel’s relationship with his students. The conclusion attempts to sum up the meaning of his lessons of memory in the contest of its humanistic approach.



*Elie Wiesel, Andrew W. Mellon Professor in the Humanities and Professor of Philosophy and Religion*

## Schooling

Honorable professor of many famous universities, he saw himself as an apprentice, “a yeshiva bucher from Sighet”. Being a professor, he remained a student who never stopped learning, even in Auschwitz. Wiesel says that his daily study of Jewish texts was essential for him. He says, “I love to study. It gives you a good sense of proportion. After all, what Rambam says maybe is more important than the article I write for the New York Times” (Abramowitz, 1994). In his yeshiva in Sighet, a little town in Transylvania, he “learned to examine the text from all angles, to penetrate beneath all appearances, to the substance, to the original meaning, but not straight away. The superimposed structures, too, had to be learned. Above all, we learned to question the text, and that attitude has remained with me” (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 1, p. 343). “What we learned then was to give timelessness to the timely subject in the Torah. All the events of the Torah were alive; they were a part of my life, and of the

<sup>1</sup> Egil Aarvick, chairman of the Norwegian Nobel Prize Committee, called him as “a messenger to mankind – not with a message of hate and revenge but with one of brotherhood and atonement”.

existence we celebrated. But that, of course, in Judaism: to celebrate every event as though it involves us personally” (Wiesel & Rothschild, 1995, p. 131).

In 1947, Wiesel became a student of Shushani, “the mysterious Talmudic scholar” (Wiesel & Rothschild, 1995, p. 131).

“No one knew his real name, his origin, or his age. ...Where did he learn all of those ancient and modern languages?... He knew the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud by heart; also Maimonides, Nahmanides, and Gresas, not to mention Yehuda Halevi, the poems of Ibn Gabirol, and the Greek and Latin classics as well” (Wiesel & Rothschild, 1995, p. 124).

During the Occupation Shushani was arrested by an officer of the Gestapo. In perfect German, he declared that he was Alsatian, Aryan, and university professor to boot. The officer guffawed at the sigh of thus vagabond.

“You, a professor?”

“Yes, me.”

“And what do you teach?”

“Higher mathematics.”

“No luck. It just so happens that I myself am a professor of higher mathematics in civilian life.”

Shushani was unfazed, “Well”, he replied, “you can, of course, test my knowledge if you like. But I have a better idea. Let me pose a problem to you. If you can solve it, shoot me. If not, let me go”. Released, Shushani slipped into Switzerland, where the chief rabbi became one of his most devoted admirers (Wiesel & Rothschild, 1995, p. 127).

Wiesel recalls: “For two or three years he taught me unforgettable lessons about the limit of language and reason, about the behavior of sages and madmen, about the obscure paths of thought as it wends its way across countries and cultures” (Wiesel & Rothschild, 1995, p. 121). “Shushani was probably the decisive teacher in my postwar year. He taught me Talmud again, and he taught me philosophy. He taught me secular sciences and prepared me for the Sorbonne. Whatever I knew I got from him” (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 21).

At age twenty, Wiesel was enrolled at the Sorbonne, where he studied literature, philosophy, and psychology.

From 1968 until 1983, Wiesel was a student of “the greatest Jewish scholar in many generations” (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 43), a professor and Rabbi Saul Liberman, who was also known under the name of Gaon Rabbeinu Shaul. The death of Liberman in 1983 in an airplane heading to the Holy Land had stopped their study. Wiesel (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 2, p. 43) wrote about his teacher:

Professor Saul Liberman, or Rabbi Saul Lieberman, was the master of Talmud. For the last fifteen years, I was his student and friend. Twice a week I would come to study with him – alone. Each session would last three hours, and it is thanks to him that I can share with others whatever I know now.

He was an extraordinary man. His knowledge was all encompassing. It was both secular and religious. There was no word in the Talmud which he could not locate. There was no commentary which he could not quote by heart. The Greek influence, the Latin influence on the Talmud: he gave us the keys to open gates to the enchanted universe of ideas, stories, laws, dreams, and memories.

For Elie Wiesel, the daily study of Jewish texts was a ritual. Never-ending learning was the style of his life. For more than three decades as a Professor of Boston University, he was accustomed to the daily routine of studying Talmud with his friend, Rabbi Polak, a director of Hillel House at Boston University. “During the several decades we spent together at Boston University, we fell into the practice of devoting several hours every day delving deeply into a page of Talmud, into the ancient debates between the Sages, teasing out, as well, their meaning for today” (Polak, 2014, p. 9).

A chapter “On Learning and Teaching” in Elie Wiesel’s book *And the Sea is Never Full* opens with the statement: “To quote a Talmudic sage (Rabbi Hanina, according to the Tractate of Taanin, or Rabbi Yehuda Ha-Nasi, according to the Tractate of Malkot): ‘I have learned a great deal from my masters, but I have learned much more from my colleagues, and above all I have learned from my pupils’. This statement reflects my own feeling about teaching”.

In Wiesel’s case, his desire to learn embodies to desire to teach and vice versa. In his life, there is no straight transformation from a student to a teacher. On the contrary, he was always a student and teacher at the same time.

## Teaching

Elie Wiesel wrote: “As an adolescent, I dreamed of becoming a writer and a teacher. Today, I am both” (Wiesel, 1999, p. 101).

### Teaching at the Yale University

Elie Wiesel’s academic career began in the mid-’60s. He was invited to teach at one of the most prestigious Ivy League’s universities, Yale. The Yale offer sounded very attractive to him: “two courses per semester – one on literature, one on Hasidic thoughts” (Wiesel, 1999, p. 101). Elie Wiesel took his responsibilities very seriously – “every hour of lecturing takes four hours of preparations. Never had I studied so much” (Wiesel, 1999, p. 102). His attitude toward the students was exceptional – “I am very close to all my students; my door is always open to them. I try to make them my friends even though at first they intimidate me, as I probably intimidate them” (Wiesel, 1999, p. 102). However, very soon, Elie Wiesel realized his unique role in the relationship with his students. In the mid-1960s, almost all of these students were children of survivors. Wiesel recollects: “It takes me awhile to understand that for them I am a substitute for their fathers. Since their fathers were unable or unwilling to share their past with them, they turn to me and take an interest in mine... I thus become a human bridge between two worlds” (Wiesel, 1999, p. 102).

Wiesel had to find a tune, a word, a language to communicate with his students “about those years of darkness without shifting the burden to them” (Wiesel, 1999). He had to find a way “to convince them that in spite of everything, mankind deserves our faith” (Wiesel, 1999). It was a tough task for Wiesel and his students. Boys and girls came to his office privately, and almost every visitor started and ended their conversation with Elie Wiesel by sobbing or crying. One boy came crying about his father and mother, Auschwitz survivors, who lost their husband and wife and their children in the concentrations camps. They met and remarried after the liberation. They have one son from this marriage. He is Wiesel’s student. This boy expressed a sad feeling about his parents’ attitude toward him. Whenever they looked at their son or talked to him, they didn’t see him at all. His parents still saw their dead children. Another girl came to Wiesel to express her anger toward her mother: “How come, my mother, who survived a ghetto and the concentration camp, she, who knew and experiences all of the horrors. How dare she let me born and live in this horrible world?” (Wiesel, 1999).

Wiesel recalls that sometimes the discussion in the class was too intense and emotional that his students were not able to leave his classroom. They “remain seated, heads buried in their hands” (Wiesel, 1999). Wiesel told his students: “What are we about to learn here? To read, to weep, to dream the end of the dream. And later, to fall down, but also to rise again, to take one step and then another” (Wiesel, 1999).

Elie Wiesel decided never to teach the history and literature of the Holocaust after his first Yale experience. He explained his choice: “I too feel the weight and destructive force of the theme, I sleep poorly. Even though I know how to share, there are limits. I feel that I cannot and should not be completely open. In speaking of the victims, how



*Elie Wiesel among his friends and students, circa 1989.  
Photo from the private archive of professor Hillel Levine*

can I prevent a student from identifying me with them?" (Wiesel, 1999). Wiesel broke his promise do not teach history and literature of the Holocaust at the university only once when Boston University cannot find another professor to teach this subject.

Although he stopped teaching Holocaust studies at the universities, Wiesel never stopped talking about oppressors, victims, observers, and survivors relevant to the Holocaust or other forms of genocide. He taught his students to appeal to humanity. He pleaded to humanism through the literature and memory; more precisely through Literature of Memory. That was the primary subject of his classes at Boston University. Elie Wiesel believed in "the mystical power of memory". In his Nobel lecture, he emphasized: "...it is a memory that will save humanity. For me, hope without memory is like memory without hope" (Wiesel & Aarvik, 1986).

### Teaching at Boston University

Since 1976 until 2013, Elie Wiesel was appointed as a University professor of the Humanities at Boston University. He was a faculty member of the Department of Philosophy and the Department of Religion. During his tenure at Boston University, for three and a half decades, Elie Wiesel taught two courses per semester, both with the same title: "Literature of Memory". One of these courses was always dedicated to a topic of religion, while the second one was concentrated on the subject of comparative literature. Even though the title of his courses never changed, the subtitles, as well as the topics of the study, were changed every semester.

What did Elie Wiesel teach at Boston University? Here are a few examples of his courses<sup>2</sup>.

- *Literature of Memory: Hidden Literature and Banned books* – "this course explored writing that were hidden in times of oppression as well as writing that was banned due to controversy. This course investigated themes such as the limits of language, the obligation to witnesses, the persecution of words and the value of recording".
- *Literature of Memory: Hasidic Portraits: Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav* – "this course dedicated to Inspiring master, unique storyteller and enigmatic wanderer, the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Hasidic teacher Rebbe Nachman of Bratslav is the guide in a journey through madness and laughter, imagination and interpretation. Through biographical reading and tales, we will seek to approach this elusive personality and the secrets he spent his life hiding and revealing".
- *Literature of Memory: Literary perspectives: From first novel to masterpiece* – "this course will explore the evolution of the novelist's world view, literature technique, and imagination within the parameters of the author's first published novel and acclaimed masterpiece. This type of literature comparison invokes and illuminates issue of continuity and perspective as well as the development of other human concerns in the *oeuvre* of the novelist. Reading will include works by Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf, F.M. Dostoevsky and others".
- *Literature of Memory: The World of the Shtetl* – "Jewish life and literature carry within then an image of the shtetl, that lost world of the small Jewish town, where

<sup>2</sup> Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University, box 81, folder 19.

society, religion, myth, and spirituality were intertwined in all aspects of life. This course will try to open the doors of memory to recapture the enchantment, depth, fear and beauty of that lost world, through writings created from within the shtetl, or from within longing for time and place are gone. Authors will include: Sholom Aleichem, Y. L. Peretz, Singer Brothers and others”.

- *Literature of Memory: Reconciliation: Promise, Challenge, Utopia?* – “Moment of crisis, injustice, and enigma disclose the historical events regarding us to consider the question of reconciliation. This course will explore the dimensions of reconciliation encountered in literature addressing times of discord or crisis including the Spanish Inquisition, McCarthyism, the Vietnam conflict and more. Reading will include works by Karl Jaspers, Franz Werfel and others”.

The followings are the titles of a few other courses that professor Wiesel taught at Boston University. Every title is provocative, intriguing, and controversial:

- Literature in respond of oppression;
- The Literature of Madness and Hope;
- Faith and Revelation in Literature;
- Suicide and Literature;
- Hassidic renaissance.

Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University preserves a significant part of Elie Wiesel’s archives. A syllabus of the course *Literature of Memory: Philosophy and Literature of Friendship* is a part of the collection of Wiesel’s papers. The text of the curriculum gives an idea of Professor Wiesel’s requirements for his class and his expectation from his students.

### Syllabus<sup>3</sup>

This course is an examination of friendship in philosophical, literature and religious texts of the ancient, classical, and medieval worlds and its subsequent understanding and representation in selected periods of Western Culture. The focus will be given to friendship that might variously be called ideal, philosophical, spiritual, and even romantic.

1. What is friendship? What is the nature of Friendship? What is the necessary and sufficient condition for friendship?

2. What are different kinds of friendship there? In what ways are they different? Are these differences significant and distinct, or ambiguous and irrelevant?

3. What type of love is friendship? Is it preferential love only, and therefore partly unjust? Is it strictly Philla? How does it relate to Eros and to agape?

4. Is there a tradition of friendship? Is there one tradition that applies to different times and culture, or are there several distinct traditions? What significance did friendship have for the various societies in which it existed? What relevance does it have for contemporary society?

5. Is there etic of friendship? Are there principles that constitute the making and maintaining of a friendship? Is there a logical or necessary relationship between

<sup>3</sup> Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University, box 81, folder 22.

friendship and virtue? What is the role of friendship in creating and developing character?

The followed is an example of the text selection for the course *Literature of Memory: Philosophy and Literature of Friendship*.

1. Homer's "Iliad".
2. Euripides "Iphigenia in Tauris".
3. Plato "Symposium".
4. The Tanakh.
5. Al-Ghazali "On the duty of Brotherhood".
6. Jalal al-Din Rumi's Mystical poems.
7. W. Shakespeare Sonnets.
8. Alfred. Lord Tennyson "In memoriam".
9. Walt Whitman "Leaves of Grass".
10. D.H. Lawrence "Women in Love".
11. Kant "Lecture of friendship".
12. The Tanakh "David and Jonathan story".
13. Plutarch "Parallel Lives".
14. Cicero "On friendship".
15. Seneca "Epistles IX and LXIII".
16. The Gospel of John 13, 15, 19.

The diversity of the selected texts approaches to examine the topic of friendship from literature, religion, and philosophical perspectives.

### **"Socratic Method" of Teaching**

A former student of Elie Wiesel, Rabbi Dan Ehrenkrantz called Wiesel's approach of teaching "a Socratic Method". Brilliant speechmaker and storyteller, in his classroom Wiesel preferred to listen to his students, asking them open-ended questions and initiated the discussions. He never stood up on a podium giving his lectures. There was no podium in his classroom.

As for lectures, Wiesel delegated this duty to his students. At the beginning of every class, a student-volunteer made an eight minutes presentation on a particular topic. Although these presentations were not evenly excellent and well-thought-out, Wiesel listened to them with remarkable attention and addressed questions to the speaker with a healthy respect. His teaching manner was a freestyle conversation. He taught his students the art of listening and the art of asking questions. Both skills are crucial for mastering the art of critical thinking. As a Jewish scholar, Wiesel valued questions much more than the answers. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel said: "We are closer to God when we are asking questions than when we think we have the answers". Wiesel echoed: "In Hebrew, the word for







*Classroom of Elie Wiesel located at 147 Bay State Rd., Boston, MA*



*Tribute to Elie Wiesel at Boston University, sculptor Mark Melon*

‘question’ is she’elah, and the alef lamen of God’s name are part of the fabric of that word. Therefore God is in the question” (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 297).

Wiesel wrote: “In the beginning my students do not understand the arrogance of answers. The professor is supposed to have answers. After a while they realize there is beauty in questions, more than in answers. There is truth in questions. Questions never provoked a war” (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 297).

## Questions and Answers

It was Wiesel’s tradition to dedicate the last class of a semester to question-answer dialogue. Students can ask Wiesel any questions they wanted, and he responded. What did they ask?

- **Student:** What is your greatest achieving in the life?
- **Wiesel:** My son.
- **Student:** What is your favorite book?
- **Wiesel:** *Life and Fate* by Vasily Grossman is one of my favorite books<sup>4</sup>.
- **Student:** Why has so much persecution been directed against the Jews? When I read Jewish history, almost every chapter is about the Jews as victims. My question is: Why us?
- **Wiesel:** We are a strange people... We are everywhere. We defy all systems, so we defy all people. We are not understood, so we are good scapegoats. To cosmopolitans, we are a provincial people. To provincial people, we are cosmopolitans. To the Communists, we are the capitalists. To the capitalists, we are the Communists. To the nationalists, we are internationalists. To the internationalists, we are nationalists. To the religious, we are heretics. To the heretics, we are religious. No one understands us, so they hate us. Do

<sup>4</sup> These two questions and answers were recorded by the author of this essay in 2003.

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you think people understood Abraham? Here was a man who lived in a world where idols were worshiped. One day he began talking about one God, an invisible God. Abraham was a troublemaker. Or Moses. Do you think people understood Moses? His people were slaves, and Moses wanted them to be free. People lived by stealing, and he said that you should not steal. Why us? The easiest thing is to kill what you do not understand (Wiesel & Abrahamson, 1985, Vol. 3, p. 297).

### **Fifteen minutes audience**

Another of Wiesel's traditions was a meeting with every student individually. Professor Wiesel wanted to know each of them, and he scheduled a time to sit down privately with his students and talk with them about their concerns. An audience with Elie Wiesel lasted no longer than 15 minutes. What can people tell each other in 15 minutes? Was it a long or short appointment? In my case, it was not long or short. A different category, non-time classification, should be applied. After I briefly introduced myself and answered to the standard questions, such as: where did I come from; where do I work; where do I live, Wiesel asked me an unexpected question: "Olga, are you happy?" I replied without hesitation: "Yes" and immediately reflected, why I so confidently answered "yes". The answer suddenly came by itself, and I confirmed, responding no longer to Elie Wiesel, but myself: "Yes, I am happy because my mom is still alive".

Later, I read Wiesel's interview with Golda Meir ("Golda at 75"). Among other questions, all of a sudden, he asked her: "Madame Prime Minister, are you happy?" So she replied: "Of course". (for a different reason than mine, indeed). At the end of our meeting, I asked Wiesel to sign his book for my friend. He asked my friend's name and wrote: "To Olga's friend, G. N. Elie Wiesel". It was Wiesel's style – to show respect to his students in a gentle manner. He just put my name at the same level as his name.

### **Students**

Who were Wiesel's students? Wiesel's courses were a free elective for the undergraduate seniors with different majors of study, graduated students, as well as Ph.D. candidates. However, not only Boston University affiliates attended his classes. I remember a government lawyer who came from Washington, D.C. to Boston every week just for Wiesel's classes. I recollect a professor at Boston University's Dental School, a surgeon-periodontist, who adjusted his clinical schedule to participate in Wiesel's classes. There was an old lady who attended Wiesel's courses for a few years. She introduced herself as an "Auschwitz graduate". If at the beginning of Wiesel's teaching career at the Yale University, the majority of his students were children of the Holocaust survivors, then at the end of his tenure, he had many students from Germany. They were grandchildren of the enemies. So they come to Wiesel seeking for truth and remedy.

## Birthday Anniversary

Although he never celebrated his birthdays saying that he had the more important dates in his life, one of his anniversaries I will always remember. It was September 30, 2003. He turned 75 years old. We had a morning class that started at 9:00 AM. The students brought some juice and cookies. When he appeared at the door, they shouted, “Happy Birthday.” Wiesel thanked everybody, drank some orange juice and joked that according to Hassidic tradition he had to start this day with a shot of vodka... That class he told us about the fate of Simon Dubnov, a Jewish historian, killed in Riga ghetto on December 8, 1941. He said as he had witnessed the last days of Dubnov. He told about his former student from the University of Heidelberg, Johann Siebert, who killed Dubnov. He reproduced the conversation of Siebert with Dubnov, if he, and not Dubnov, answered questions of the murderer.

**Siebert:** Professor, you have spent a long time talking to your students about the triumph of humanism in 20<sup>th</sup> century. Do you still believe in your ideas of the victory of humanism?

**Dubnow:** Yes, I do.

**Siebert:** Yesterday, according to my order, 480 Jews were killed in Bikernieki forest.

**Dubnow:** How many, did you said? 480? Thank you for the information. It is essential for my chronicles.

Wiesel told that Dubnov appealed to the Jews of Riga’s ghetto until the moment of his death, demanding: “Yidden, shreibt un fersheibt” (Jews, write it all down).

Wiesel told that Dubnov and his primary opponent in the religious disputes, Rabbi Zak, were shot by Siebert; and the blood of these irreconcilable antagonists mingled saturating the snow. Having finished his story, Wiesel paused and then said: “I know that Dubnov wrote a chronicle. And this chronicle is not found yet”. Then, the eyes of 75 years old man sparkled like a young man’s eyes, and he stated: “I will find his records!”

Elie Wiesel died three years ago, and he did not find Dubnov’s chronicles. However, he gave a hint to his students to learn his lessons of memory.

## To be a Student of Elie Wiesel

In his letter addressed to Elie Wiesel, one of his students wrote that he would never forged Wiesel’s words that he felt the responsibility of each of his students. Then, the student said that he feels a great responsibility to Wiesel as his teacher as well. Then, he concluded: “One of the most vivid feelings I feel toward you is gratitude. As a teacher, you gave me much more than notes and assignments. You gave me a part of yourself<sup>5</sup>”.

Ariel Burger, the former student and teaching assistant of Elie Wiesel, answers to the question, what does it mean to be a student of Elie Wiesel, saying, “It means always learning, thinking higher and feeling deeper, always challenging yourself to

<sup>5</sup> Howard Gotlieb Archival Research Center at Boston University, box 81, folder 19.

dive into the great text, stories, and ideas in search of wisdom... Most of all, it means remembering the past and understanding the link between past and future. It means choosing to care about other's lives, their suffering and their joy" (Burger, 2018, p. 254).

Hillel Levine, the well-known rabbi, scholar, and activist says that Wiesel's direct dialog with his pupils so dignified them with his high expectations of them much as evoking the great teachers and universalists, like Maimonides was his way of bringing the spirit of the Yeshiva, its non-hierarchical environment to the highest platforms of academies and polities to which he was invited. Levine's friendship with Wiesel began in the 60s. Levine was nineteen years old when he first met Wiesel. Following Wiesel's lecture that Levine heard that left him shaking with inspiration, Hillel had the fearlessness to ask Wiesel if he could walk him home. They walked out into the night. Levine says that that walk will continue throughout his life. In 1967, Elie told him that after breaking the silence on the suffering of Soviet Jews publishing a book the Jews of Silence, it would be dangerous for Wiesel to revisit USSR. However, he expected Hillel, his friend and pupil, to go and that he would help make the arrangements. Levine still wonders about the great lessons that this brought to his "pupil".

## Conclusion

What subjects did Elie Wiesel teach during his long tenure in academic institutions? Was it literature, philosophy, or theology? How to classify his lessons of memory according to the academic standards? It seems to be an open question the same like his lessons, which never ended with the answer but started with another query. The teacher, he remains a scholar who never ends the search for truth and remedy and struggling with his quests. An open question is a bridge between him and his students. An open question is a bridge between past and future.

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