



Reading Elie Wiesel's *Night*: From Trauma, Anger, Remembrance to Hope

"Because I remember, I despair. Because I remember, I have the duty to reject despair."

"To be a Jew means not to despair, even when it seems justified."

1. Surviving survival. Choices. *And the World Was Silent*.
2. *Night* is the beginning of his journey. A constructed memoir facing trauma and protecting some privacy.
3. How do you encounter Auschwitz? How do you encounter *Night*?
 - Make room for the other
 - Respectfully make room for mourning
 - Recognize the distance
 - Leave a *matzeva*
4. Why read *Night*?
 - How do we hold traumatic memory?
 - How do we "witness" someone else's trauma?
 - How will it make me a better person?
5. Hasidism was founded by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer (d. 1760) the Baal Shem Tov. In *Sighet*:
 - An awareness of God's presence
 - A joyful, robust embrace of God's world
 - Embracing the uniqueness of the individual and of diversity
 - Parents treated with reverence
 - Children cherished as God's blessing
 - Traditional way of learning is through song(To fence with the shadows, but always have the song.)
6. 1940: *Sighet* becomes part of Hungary with Admiral Miklós Horthy's collaboration with Hitler.
7. Adolf Eichmann was in charge of Hungarian deportations.
8. Nazis arrive in *Sighet* in March 1944. 437,000 Jews were deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau from May 15 to July 9, 1944.
9. *Night* wrestles with.
 - Survival guilt inflicted by the perpetrator.
 - Jewish identity. Passover Haggadah.
 - The paradoxes of Planet Auschwitz. "Fire cannot be destroyed by fire."
 - Ten years of silence.
10. How to read *Night*.
 - The limits and inadequacy of words.
 - How to tell his/their story without being a perpetrator?
 - How to add the silence?
 - How to keep some of his life private