

Prayer...Elie Wiesel

Pray to God.  
Against God,  
For God . . . .  
*Ani maamin* for him  
In spite of him.  
I believe in you,  
Even against your will.  
Even if you punish me  
For believing in you.

--*Ani Maamin: A Song Lost and Found Again*

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Through prayer God becomes present. Better: God becomes presence. And everything becomes possible and meaningful: here the Supreme Judge, here the Father of humanity, leaves his celestial throne to live and move among His human creatures. And, in turn, here the soul transported by its prayer leaves its abode and rises to heaven. The substance of language, and the language of silence--that is what prayer is.

--*Paroles d'etranger*

I no longer ask you for either happiness or paradise; all I ask of You is to listen and let me be aware of Your listening.

I no longer ask You to resolve my questions, only to receive them and make them part of You.

I no longer ask You for either rest or wisdom, I only ask You not to close me to gratitude, be it of the most trivial kind, or to surprise and friendship. Love? Love is not Yours to give.

As for my enemies, I do not ask You to punish them or even to enlighten them; I only ask You not to lend them Your mask and Your powers. If You must relinquish one or the other, give them Your powers. But not Your countenance.

They are modest, my requests, and humble. I ask You what I might ask a stranger met by chance at twilight in a barren land.

I ask you, God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to enable me to pronounce these words without betraying the child that transmitted them to me: God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, enable me to forgive You and enable the child I once was to forgive me too.

I no longer ask You for the life of that child, nor even for his faith. I only beg You to listen to him and act in such a way that You and I can listen to him together.

--*One Generation After* (1971)