8th grade Prompt: *Original Open-Ended Question*

If there is a God, why did God let the Holocaust happen? written by: Hailee M.

During the Holocaust, the Nazis tried to take away people's belief in God and some people gave up, but those who didn't still questioned why this horrendous event ever happened. Some examples of this were in the novel *Night* by Elie Wiesel. Throughout the book, Wiesel mentions God and other people talking about God. People cried out asking "for God's sake, where is God?" (65), asking why God isn't doing anything to stop this insanity. This poses the question of: If there is a God, why did God let the Holocaust happen? In the beginning of the book, Wiesel explains how he himself was very religious and believed in God. Later on, he started questioning if there was a God because of the torture that was happening to everyone.

Reading *Night*, an insightful and eye-opening book, I was brought back to my question of belief in God. In the Torah, we learn about how God saved the Israelites, protected them, and brought them to safety. We actually read, " 'Therefore, say to the Israelites: 'I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. I will free you from being slaves to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment' " (*Exodus* 6:6). Then God explains how "I will take you as my people" and all that Torah goodness. It literally says that God will free and save the people.

Now, looking at the Holocaust, what did God do? God let people suffer. Coming back to *Night*, Wiesel talks about how on the eve of Rosh Hashanah, when people were saying prayers and saying God's name, he felt angry and every part of him rebelled against this. He thought that if God was real, then why did God "have six crematoria working day and night?"(67) Also how could God have "created Auschwitz, Birkenau, Buna, and so many other death factories?"(67). Then he continues with how they're "tortured day and night, to watch our fathers, our mothers, our brothers end up in the furnaces?" (67).

When I read this part, I was processing the fact that God might not be real and that when people questioned if there was a God during the Holocaust they started to lose hope. It's sad to think that God would let this happen to good people. Does that mean God doesn't care for people and wants us to suffer? If there is a God, then why has there been an abundance of horrible events in the world?

There still isn't a clear answer for why God let the Holocaust happen and why bad things happen in general. I think that God let this evil happen because people created it. So many bad things are happening now and God is teaching us to realize the consequences of human actions. If we are not able to take personal responsibility for our part in making the world a better place, then we will never learn how to stop things like the Holocaust from happening again.