Syntax: the arrangement of words to form sentences.

* Syntax can be short, long, complicated, inverted, convoluted, etc.

Diction: the choice of words within a given passage.

* Diction can be formal, informal, positive, negative, can create a particular tone, etc.

Consider the syntax and diction of the following passage:

I got up, with clenched teeth. Holding on to me with one arm, he led me outside. It was not easy. It was as difficult to go out as it was to come in. Beneath our feet there lay men, crushed, trampled underfoot, ding. Nobody paid attention to them.

We were outside. The icy wind whipped my face. I was constantly biting my lips so that they wouldn’t freeze. All around me, what appeared to be a dance of death. My head was reeling. I was walking through a cemetery. Among the stiffened corpses, there were logs of wood. Not a sound of distress, not a plaintive cry, nothing but mass agony and silence. Nobody asked anyone for help. One died because one had to. No point in making trouble. (Wiesel 89)

How would you describe the syntax and diction of this passage?

Compare the syntax of that passage to one from the beginning:

One evening, I told him how unhappy I was not to be able to find in Sighet a master to teach me the Zohar, the Kabbalistic works, the secrets of Jewish mysticism. He smiled indulgently. After a long silence, he said, “There are a thousand and one gates allowing entry into the orchard of mystical truth. Every human being has his own gate. He must not err and wish to enter the orchard through a gate other than his own. That would present a danger not for the one entering, but also for those already inside.”

And Moishe the Beadle, the poorest of the poor of Sighet, spoke to me for hours on end about eh Kabbalah’s revelations and its mysteries. Thus began my initiation. Together we would read, over and over again, the same page of the Zohar. Not to learn it by heart but to discover within the very essence of divinity.

How would you describe the syntax and diction of this passage? How is it different from the other one?

What do you think could be the significance in this change of syntax and diction? What meaning could it reveal?