

Spiritual belief: a world split apart



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In this analysis paper I will talk about incorporating God throughout everyday life, whether it be through materialistic things or one's own self perception of how it is to live and pattern after Godly ways . In " A World Split Apart," Alexander Solzhenitsyn infers that there is a higher power than man; a lack of spirituality can harm ones afterlife. Through a higher power all things are possible he says, " If, as claimed by humanism, man were born only to be happy, he would not be born to die.

Since his body is doomed to death, his task on earth evidently must be more spiritual: not a total engrossment in everyday life, not the search for the best ways to obtain material goods and then their carefree consumption. " Whereas in " A Voice from Russia's Past," by Jack Fruchtman Jr. he simply argues that Solzhenitsyn is speaking from Slavophiles point of view, which stands as a group of Russian philologists and nationalists interested in the origins of the Russian language.

Fruchtman also stated that Solzhenitsyn echoed this theme at Harvard when he noted that the philosophical foundation of the West has historically rested on a " rationalistic humanism," by which he meant " the proclaimed and enforced autonomy of man from any higher force above him. (Fruchtman 44)" My last and final source will come from " Presenting Humanism" by Jende Huang. Huang speaks from a humanist view and states that our society has been so socialized to accept the idea that believing in God is something that is " good," and even for a religious liberal, there may exist, an unconscious desire to hold onto that.

The realization that you don't need a god to live your life is a difficult one and one that cannot be easily acknowledged. Solzhenitsyn and Huang share some of the same spiritual beliefs when referring to man. Huang states that man was created to be “ God like” and to pattern ways after God. Speaking from a humanist point of view Huang says, “ ideally, humanist are continually open to new ideas and new information, and refuse to be shackled by beliefs that remain outside the realm of testability,” (Huang 1-3); he proves this by stating humanism is analogous to science in the sense that both are concerned not only with the body of knowledge and the evidence that supports it, but with efficient means and methods used to gain knowledge. Is it right that man's life and society's activities are ruled by material expansion above all? Solzhenitsyn asks this question in reference to government. Laws are put in place to abide by but there is always a loop hole in any law system.

Laws are to protect the rights of others or for humans as one body to abide by. Through all the materialistic abuse of power used by some government officials, Solzhenitsyn tends to acknowledge that even in the era that he is in, man is still the head. Life after death, as he talks about spirituality, should be better than your life on earth. Even Huang states that if you accept the bible as truth, you're agreeing that God would spread his message to pre-agricultural nomads who couldn't even imagine the evaluation of human society over the subsequent thousands of years.

Understanding that you don't need God to live your everyday life, Huang says, humans still do things to show representation that he is a factor in life such as: going to church and taking communion; “ Do this as often as you

remember me” 1st Corinthians 11: 25 (NKJ). Man is not perfect but by following the bible he can reach salvation and become cleansed through baptism and understanding that each day you can become more “ God like. James Reston who wrote “ A Russian at Harvard” states that Solzhenitsyn is right in many cases but contradicts the demeanor of his message a lot. Solzhenitsyn entitles his address “ A World Split Apart” why so Reston questions the diverse message in each passage to say it sounds like a “ mind split apart” (Reston pg. 37). Reston says that Solzhenitsyn was right to complain about that “ hastiness and superficiality are the psychic disease of the Twentieth Century” (Reston pg. 38); in reference to the war period and the lack of spiritual belief. After the suffering of decades of violence and oppression, the human soul longs for things higher, warmer and purer than those offered by today’s mass living habits, introduced by the revolting invasion of publicity, by TV stupor and by intolerable music”, (Solzhenitsyn pg. 14) Solzhenitsyn writes this statement proving all points to the lacking of “ spiritual being” stated by him. Ending his speech, Solzhenitsyn speaks about a higher power. In Philippians 4: 13 it says, “ I can do all things through Christ (God) which strengthen me” (NKJ). Solzhenitsyn asks “ Is it true that man is above everything? Is there no superior spirit above him?

Is it right that man’s life and society’s activities should be ruled by material expansion above all? Is it permissible to promote such expansion to the detriment of our integral spiritual life? ”(Solzhenitsyn pg. 21) What is life or even afterlife? In contrast with that similar understanding Fruchtman attacks by still having Solzhenitsyn, in a Slavophile voice he states that Solzhenitsyn and the Slavophiles believe that this decline and everything accompanying it

was deeply rooted in Western history, a history of man, where man has lost his spiritual tie to the infinite, the eternal, and the timeless(Fruchtman pg. 45).

The Slavophile Ivan Kiereevsky wrote, “ it is painful to see what a subtle, but inevitable and just-sent madness now drives the Western man. He feels his darkness and like a moth, he flies into the fire, which he takes to be the sun. He cries like a frog and barks like a dog, when he hears the word of God. ”(Fruchtman pg. 45) Man, in short, is no longer human, and the decline of the West is upon us. Fruchtman attests his point later on in his response when he references how Solzhenitsyn says it is a society which is doomed because of its rejection of spirituality and its concomitant worship of reason and material things.

Because the West had a tremendous fall in spirituality, Solzhenitsyn began to question, in order to get out the state that the West is in, who does man look up? During the time of the speech men were dominant in the sense of being superior to women, but if “ lost” in sense of spirituality and begin to believe that modern ways and material things are more important than being God like. Is it actually true that man is everything and neither that nor anyone is superior to him? “ We turned our backs upon the Spirit,” Mr. Solzhenitsyn proclaimed, “ and embraced all that is material with excessive and unwarranted zeal,” (Pg. 4). Fruchtman stated, for the Slavophiles, the West was decadent primarily because it had adopted the worship of rationality, matter and form. Moreover, it relied too much on legalistic systems of thought and action. This particular statement reflects Solzhenitsyn outlook on one’s self; Solzhenitsyn supports this statement when he stated that only

by the voluntary nurturing in ourselves of freely accepted and serene self-restraint can mankind rise above a world stream of materialism. (pg. 20-21) Solzhenitsyn infers that no one on earth has any way left but upward climbing to the next anthropological stage (Pg. 1). Anthropological is the study of humanity, social action between humans and cultural as well as religious preferences. Fruchtman goes on to say for both Mr. Solzhenitsyn and the Slavophiles, men spiritual capacities have become subverted by the overpowering influences of reason and legality. Solzhenitsyn, Fruchtman, and Huang share similar beliefs when referring to man and higher powers above man. To pattern after God means to be “ God like” as Huang states while Fruchtman counters Solzhenitsyn by saying he is speaking from a Slavophiles point of view.

The West, as Solzhenitsyn portrays it is one who now has a lack of spiritual belief. The West, they argued, had emphasized rationality, compulsion and above all legalistic institutions and material wellbeing. Each of these qualities was in conflict with man’s inherent, goodness and virtue, Fruchtman writes. This statement proves his thought on how Solzhenitsyn is continually speaking and analyzing from his own humanistic view. As Solzhenitsyn states, “ It will demand from us a spiritual blaze” (pg. 21). He infers to the west as whole and not singling any particular individual out; to act as one mind body and soul, but in government form.

Laws are set in place to help us not hinder as a result he entitles this particular section “ Before the Turn”. Still the question lies is there no superior spirit above man? If so how can we be more like him, how can we incorporate that higher power in our everyday life and in our law and judicial

systems? How can take eyes off the moral standards of man and out them on the mindset for man to pattern after “ God like” ways?