

Answer question

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Hasidism and Modern Man Inserts His/Her Inserts Inserts Evolution of Wiesel's religious views as he goes through the experiences he describes.

What is the turning point

Wiesel religious evolution begins with a virtuous and dedicated student of the Kabbalah and Jewish Mysticism, to an angry young man who questions the nature of God, and finally to a defeated prisoner who concludes that man, and man alone, is the master of nature and the world (Wiesel, 2006).

The turning point in the Wiesel religious beliefs was when he was placed in a line destined to the crematoria. He had already witnessed children being thrown in the pits of fire and adults being herded like sheep to their death. This is the first time that he becomes angry at God and the first time he questions all his past beliefs of an all mighty omnipresent God who acts on the interest of His Children.

2. Similarities and differences with your reading of Martin Buber.

The teachings by Moishe the Beadle are similar to Buber's Hasidic teachings. Moishe teaches that there are a thousand and one ways that lead to the orchard of truth and each man has to find his own way to get there (Wiesel, 2006). Buber shares the same views as he argues that all men can access God, but each through his own way (Buber, 1958).

During his various experiences, Wiesel was once in a situation where they had to celebrate the Day of Atonement by fasting. Wiesel went against traditional believes of fasting both as a symbol of rebellion against God's silence as well as a necessary means of keeping up strength in the face of adversity and torture. Buber explains that in Hasidism, one can serve through learning, prayer, fasting or through eating (Buber, 1958).

Accordingly, one should choose depending on what they view as right and

avoid imitating others.

On entering Auschwitz, Wiesel and his group of prisoners were greeted by a young pole with Hasidic inclination. He argues that by driving despair and through camaraderie, they will be able to overcome their hardship. Hasidism according to Buber shares a similar view as he argues that while the world is an irradiation of the Divine, it is described by independence of existence and striving and that man is to affirm the world and transform both him and the world at large to the image that God would approve.

The notable difference between Buber and Wiesel accounts is the latter's conclusion that man and man alone is the master of the universe. Buber argues that a divine spark exists in all men and that it can either be perverted or liberated and re-joined with the Origin (God) (Buber, 1958).

3. Do you agree with Wiesel's conclusions? How would you make sense of life had you gone through the same experiences?

Personally, I do not agree with Wiesel conclusion that we live in a world without God and that man alone is the master of nature and of the world. I however sympathize with his position and if I had gone through the same experiences, I would no doubt hold the same view. He lived in a life where children were thrown in flames, family was nothing but unwanted baggage, the world held no beauty but only cruel and uncaring men, and prayers for a moment of safety were unanswered both by God and fellow man. Hoping to be saved by the divine would not only be heart-breaking but also cruel and would no doubt leave one unable to face the endless torment.

References

Buber, M. (1958). *Hasidism and Modern Man*. New York: Horizon Press

Wiesel, E. (2006). *Night*. (M. Wiesel, Trans.). New York, NY: Hill and Wang

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