

Henry Ramek, z"l, Memorial Essay Contest 2019

6th Grade – Honorable Mention: Essay by Eitan S.

Prompt: Explain spiritual resistance in your own words by examining Anne Frank's faith during her years in hiding. What specific words, excerpts, or lessons from her diary inspire you and how can it be applied when facing adversities in your world today?

The Importance of Spiritual Resistance

Despite the horrible events of the Holocaust, people like Anne Frank managed to keep living normal lives, through the help of their spiritual resistance. Spiritual resistance can exist in many different forms. Spiritual resistance can be individual, group, and even tied to your religion. In Holocaust terminology "spiritual resistance" refers to attempts by individuals to maintain their humanity and core values in spite of Nazi dehumanization and degradation. There are various examples in Anne's diary of all of these types. All types of spiritual resistance are important because you can maintain both your self-identity at an individual level and your social identity at a group level. When faced with something so horrid as the Holocaust, keeping both your self and social identities can provide you with the confidence and hope needed to survive.

Spiritual resistance is shown by all the members of the secret annex when they celebrate Chanukkah despite being in hiding. Mr. Frank took out a music box that he brought

into hiding to lighten everyone's moods. Anne made gifts for everyone. They all sang Maoz-Tzur together, just like they would at home. These are all examples of how they came together through spiritual resistance. This type of spiritual resistance was special because it was a Jewish act, which during the Holocaust was hard to maintain.

Another example of spiritual resistance is when Anne is running around and saying, "Dance with me!" Anne and Margot begin to waltz and Mr. Frank and Ms. Van Dann join in. This happens shortly after they go into hiding and everyone is in bad moods. This is something that Anne and Margot loved to do in their normal lives and despite being in hiding, they dance. This type of spiritual resistance was not with everyone and not connected to religion but, they were still keeping their spirits up by doing something normal.

A third example of spiritual resistance is that Anne keeps writing in her diary. She does this to let her feelings out on paper as she would at home. Anne writes in her diary almost every day, laughing at what she writes, and enjoying it. This type of spiritual resistance is singular, this proves that you don't need to have company to be happy in sad times. Anne makes herself busy writing in her diary as she would in normal life, allowing her to feel normal.

In conclusion, I think that spiritual resistance is a key thing to have when in terrible times like the Holocaust. It is very important to have all kinds of spiritual resistance because if you are by yourself, or with some other people, or with a large group you can still have confidence and hope that you will survive. That is why spiritual resistance is so important.