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The conflict between Tradition and Modernity

The ideas of tradition greatly differs and conflict with the ideas of the people living in the modern world. The people in the traditional world views the world in a different way from the way those in the modern world do. The conflict of traditions and modernity is clearly elaborated by Chaim Potok in this book where the two main characters viewed the world differently due to the aspects of modernity and tradition with respect to the Jewish religion.

The book shows the different views the people with respect to the how the children were raised in the Jewish community. The children were raised with respect to different views where the aspects of tradition and modernity in the Jewish religion were reflected. It was clear in this book that some people could not let the traditions go as was shown by how they related with others in the novel. The aspects of tradition and modernity are of significance in ensuring helping us understand the aspects of morality and religious virtues. The differences and conflicts in faith are relevant in understanding the evolution of religion over time.

The conflict of modernity and tradition is reflected in this book through the use of characters like David Malter and Reb Saunders to show how they perceived and approached life. Reb Saunders retained his traditional approach and perspective of life while his counterpart David Malter approached life in a more modern way without taking into consideration the traditional aspects of the Jewish religion. Malter believed in Zionism while Saunders believed in waiting for the Messiah to come making him cling to the traditional aspects. Reb believed in preserving the religion as well as avoiding contamination by the modern aspects of the society. These

differences between Malter and Reb leads to different aspects of faith in the Jewish religion.

The way the children were raised by Malter and Reb helps in reflecting the conflict between modernity and tradition in this novel. Malter raised his child in a modern perspective where he influenced his child to embrace the modern aspects of life while at the same time holding on to religion. On the other hand, Reb raised his child in a way to retain traditional norms. Reb also encouraged his child to embrace the traditions and become a Rabi as well as becoming a leader of the sect. Both Malter and Reb had opposing views with respect to Jewish religion leading to different religious sects. Reb therefore shield his children from adopting modern ideas by clinging to traditional views. These opposing views helps to bring out clearly the differences in religion . Reb raised his son Danny in silence in a manner that he will not divert from the ways and doings of God. This therefore enabled him to do soul searching in the silence as well as approaching life. The methods of raising the children were therefore dramatically different. Danny was therefore subjected to a lot of pain and suffering in the silence due to the strict moral traditions he was subjected to. Reb also claimed that he wanted to raise his son without a soul to accommodate religion. This therefore showed how the two men raised their children based on their ideas and beliefs in life. The lives and ideas of children are therefore greatly influenced by their fathers through different aspects of religion. Reb raised his children in traditions because his family is fully raised in such traditions.

David Malter supported Zionism which is characterized by modernism. This therefore conflicts with the traditional view and ideas demonstrated by Reb

Saunders. Zionism in this book showed how the Jewish state was created in Palestine in order to preserve the faith of the Jews. David Malter therefore aims at preservation of the faith for the generations to come. When the ideas and views of Reb are adopted, the chances will be very high for the Jewish faith to disappear. These conflicts therefore leads a lot of problems and misunderstanding in the society.

Modern ideas played a great role in ensuring that the traditional ideas are eliminated. This will therefore lead to ever existing conflicts in the society due such diverse opinions concerning modernity and tradition. The different views of the world pertaining to religion are therefore responsible for the main causes of conflict in among the people in the society.

The American secular modernity and Hasidic tradition are the central theme in this book. The tension therefore arose between the modern American views and the traditional Jewish values. Reb Saunder reflected isolationist fanaticism in the Jewish society. On the other hand, David Malter showed open minded awareness in the society.

The conflict between the modernity and traditional aspects of religion are essential in ensuring that the important and valuable aspects relating to the traditions are given emphasis, thereby enabling retention of good virtues and values. The traditional view of Jewish religion was important in the sense that it enabled Reb to raise children in a way of silence which enabled soul searching and making of relevant decisions as well as experience in life. The morals and virtues are preserved by holding on to the traditional aspects of the Jewish faith. The theme relating to the traditional virtues will help in forming a basis or ground that will help us compare the relevant and

irrelevant issues against the modern aspects of faith. This book also helps us to understand the pain and suffering that the traditional aspects of religion cause to the people clinging to this kind of faith. The traditional aspects of Jewish faith are of great essence in facilitating proper understanding the evolution of the Jewish religion over time.

The modern aspects of the Jewish faith were also of great essence in facilitating the current situations and circumstances which enable individuals to learn and observe the moral teachings of the religion but at the same time take into consideration the modern ideas and views. This will help the followers to embrace the changing world with respect to knowledge and ideas in the Jewish religion. This will therefore help in integration of ideas and concepts. These ideas and concepts are very essential in imparting the moral ethics and virtues to the followers while at the same enabling an individual develop skills with respect to different fields of life. The Jewish faith in the modern world have taken into consideration the liberalization of minds in order to accept the ideas and concepts which are healthy in this community.

The conflict between tradition and modernity is fully elaborated in this book thereby enabling comparison of ideas and concepts relating to the Jewish religion. The ideas and views of David Malter and Reb were instrumental in understanding the forces behind the conflict in the Jewish faith. The two decided to take different views and ideas in raising their children. The children also took different paths in life depending on the norms and circumstances they were subjected to. The conflicts also played a role in bringing the two boys together who became great friends despite the fact

that they were raised up in two completely different conditions of life. The importance of silence in this story was considered a potential ground of understanding life as well as enabling individuals to make wise and proper decisions especially those relating to religion in the Jewish faith.

In conclusion, the theme of conflict between modernity and tradition in this book is clearly elaborated. The conflict between the modern views and the traditional ideas and views in the Jewish faith helps to determine the aspects of traditional religion which needs to be adopted or taken into consideration. This conflict also plays a great role in ensuring that only relevant aspects and ideas of traditional Jewish religion are embraced in order to facilitate effective and reasonable decision making in the society. The traditional aspect of Jewish religion therefore helps in preservation of virtues and values which are for the progress of the society. On the other hand, the modern ideas and views concerning the Jewish faith are embraced in order to enable individuals to develop themselves in diverse and different fields of life through balancing of the forces which are behind the two conflicting ideas of traditional and modern views of Jewish religion.

Works Cited

Potok, Chaim, and Jim Weiss. *The Chosen*. Santa Ana, CA: Books on Tape, Inc, 2002. Print.