



Heaven in pursuit: An outlook at the role of religious philosophy and family in *The brothers karamazov*

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Abstract

The terminologies theology, belief, and faith are interchangeably used by individuals to execute their daily workings and pursuits in life. Spirituality is a relative term that has subjective implications on the individual's associations, unity, religious strengthening, and healing. The learning about religion and spirituality is gained by individuals from their family members and they become the primary educators of spirituality, faith, and religious philosophy to all the family members Paul Victor & Treschuk (2020). However, the relationship between religion and family is complex and multifarious with some families being governed by religion and others by the total disregard of it. Under such conditions, it becomes essential to get a better understanding of the religious philosophy and family so that the behavior of the individuals could be guided as per religious beliefs and execute major events of life such as puberty, marriage, births of children, and death John Fowler, (2017). Based on the above facts, it can be said that present research provides valuable insights about the role of religious philosophy and family and establishes a connection between religion and familial spaces. The research also discusses the importance of religion in the familial space, familial virtues, and values with those present in religion and highlights the socio-cultural importance of festivals.

Keywords: religion, philosophy, rituals, christianity, family virtues, justice, injustice

Introduction

Steve John Willington Brown, and Daniella Trimboli (2011) ^[3] examined the socio-cultural importance of festivals and described that celebrating festivals is a way of cultural expression of rejoicing moments. The festivals play an important role in structuring the social lives and help the families to connect to their rich ethnic backgrounds. Festivals allow individuals to connect to their cultural and social roots and imbibe cohesive family bonding among all individuals by encouraging people to visit churches and other places of worship.

According to Barbera, Shi, Agarwal, & Edwards, (2020) ^[1] the religious values and cultural conducts such as going to a church, temple or any place of worship on specific days helps in creating an association between the individual and ethical behavior. For example, a celebration of festivals provides an understanding of the association of religion with the cultural and the national identity of a nation or a community. When the individuals do not fit into the model prescribed by the dominant religion in the area they either denunciate or exile.

Norman Roth, (2002) ^[10] examined inquisition and persecution of the Jews and found that inquisition is referred to the Catholic courts that were specifically established to punish heresy. The act of inquisition was initiated in Spain in 1480 to target the Jewish community and New Christians that were associated with Jewish people. The major reason behind the inquisition of Jewish was their increasing influence in Spain. It created fear of Jewish influence among Queen Isabella and King Ferdinand and they asked the Pope for an inquisition in Spain. It led to the arresting of Conversors and persecution of Jews on large scale. For

example, in Seville, more than 700 Conversors were burned and 5000 repented.

Good Semplonius & Willoughby (2015) ^[11] examined the emotional aspects of religion and ascertained that it is highly helpful in regulating the emotions of individuals. It acts as a moral power that helps in governing the behaviorism of the individuals by reducing their aggressive naturism. The emotional aspect of religion is highlighted in the Elementary Forms of the Religious Life (1912) which depicts religion as a moral code to unify individuals and promote cooperative social groups. It also provides therapeutic power that helps in managing emotions and avoids feelings of fear, rage, and lust.

Paez & Burns, (2018) analyzed that religion is looked on as the extension of a familial scape that equates familial virtues and values with those present in religion. The virtue of religion is associated with theological aspects in which direct concord is established with God y carrying out religious rituals. For example, the Amish population in North America adopt two vital practices such as the rejection of Hochmut and Gelassenheit to execute worldly responsibilities. Hochmuth includes avoidance of arrogance, pride, and haughtiness while Gelassenheit implies being submissive. The lifestyle of Amish community individuals is regulated by the principles of Ordnung that provide regulations related to the upbringing of children, socializing, and maintaining relations with family and neighbors.

Baysinger (2006) ^[2] examined that the homophobic and racist ideologies which are prevalent in the right-wing religious groups are also to be taken into account because they also play a major role in understanding the collective need of people to fit their religion and religious texts into

their lives. It includes taking reference to the 'Left- and Right-wing Political Terrorism' chapter from the 'Politics of Terrorism' so that there is the attainment of deeper insights about core beliefs related to death, expulsion, and enslavement. It emphasizes that by focusing on the British-Israel version of Christian Identity there will be theological embracing of beliefs by the right-wing extremists.

In the present research paper, a qualitative research approach has been employed by making use of secondary data. It includes referring to secondary data collection in which books and novels such as *Brother Karamazov* (Fyodor Dostoevsky), *The Bell* (Iris Murdoch), *Abide with me* (Elizabeth Strout), and *The Notes from Underground* (Fyodor Dostoevsky) are referred to. The study includes the use of descriptive research design and interpretivism philosophy so that there may be subjective collection of the facts. It also includes the use of qualitative data analysis in the form of thematic analysis to acquire relevant facts about the study. In thematic analysis, there is a development of several themes, and a comparison is established by referring to the literature.

According to Dostoyevsky (2016)^[4] *Brothers Karamazov* is considered a complex novel that depicts different facets of life by investigating problems and different positive and negative shades of human relationships. The story highlights the lack of parental instincts in Dostoevsky, the monster instincts of Karamazov, and the carnal characterization of Dmitri. The novel revolves around Fyodor Pavlovich, and his sons and describes the carnal characteristic of Fyodor over Dmitri. The story primarily focuses on Alyosha who becomes the main protagonist and describes his journey of emotions in the quest of spiritual and life quests.

Characters: The characters in *Brothers Karamazov* feature a family constituting three brothers and their father. The three brothers plotted in the novels are Dmitri (or Mitya) the eldest, Ivan the middle child, and Alyosha (or Alexey) the youngest. Their father's name is Fyodor Pavlovich Karamazov who possesses coarse features and only has interests in making money and seducing women.

Atmosphere: The important themes of the story are based on faith, guilt, freedom, belief, and freedom and essentially focus on Christianity and the Bible aspects.

Sociopolitical conditions: The story is set up in the 19th century Russia that highlights the philosophical aspects by revealing questions related to God.

According to Robin Feuer Miller (2008)^[7] different themes have been used by Dostoevsky in *Brothers Karamazov* including Christian theme, God and Religion, Justice, and injustice, Artists, and Society. In the Christian theme, Dostoevsky highlights the battle between good and evil and faith and doubt to present the vividness and eminently virtues in human terms. In God and religion theme, Dostoevsky highlights the Russian Orthodoxy and questions God's existence by referring to Ivan's position in ecclesiastical courts. The Justice and injustice aspects highlighted by Dostoevsky signify instance of injustice in the story in the form of beatings by Dmitri in Ilyusha, Fyodor raping Lizaveta and none of them are punished by Courts. In Artists and society theme, Dostoevsky highlights the analogy between the prosecution and defense. In *The Bell* by Iris Murdoch, there is a blend of social attire but adopts a sharp observant nature of the social conducts in England during the contemporary period of 1958. The narration style of Murdoch is rich in allegory, symbolism, and literary

symmetry that helps in highlighting Dora Greenfield's life, the moment she appears in the story to retort her alienated husband. *The Bell* specifies that the ironies of life and community that when a communion like marriage is based on equal partners, it leads to extra-marital affairs.

Anthony Giddens (1991)^[6] analyzed that Murdoch highlights the salvation aspect by focusing on the 'Karma' concept and moving ahead in life in search of truth. It includes establishing a concise between the modern world orders and psychological and moral transitions that are experienced by individuals in the course of life. *Abide with Me* was the second book by Elizabeth Strout who is an American fiction writer. Strout uses a melancholy tale to describe the tale about loss of faith and unhappy look associated with small-town life. The narration is portrayed in a folksy tone which creates a cantankerous effect and helps in revealing dark and unhappy secrets of the West Annett during 1950. Based on the above facts, it can be said that each author has his/her unique characteristic and makes use of different themes and narration styles to develop their stories and portray the protagonists. For example, Murdoch highlighted the salvation aspect, while Dostoevsky questioned God's existence, and Strout revealed the hidden secrets. In the *Notes from Underground*, the inklings of contemporary Russian society could be observed which is similar to the portrayal in *Brother Karamazov*. Both the novels highlight the political and cultural movements of Russia but differ in the portrayal of the main protagonists and themes of the stories. In the *Notes from Underground*, Dostoevsky highlights the ideologies and complex illustrations of nihilism and rational egoism, while in *Brother Karamazov*; the major focus is given on family relationships.

Conclusion

The present research paper analyzed the association of religion and family by referring to the contexts that were highlighted by Fyodor Dostoevsky in *The Brother Karamazov*. Religion and family are important aspects of human endeavors because it is directly associated with important events of life cycle such as the birth of children, marriages, and deaths. Religion is also associated with building characteristics, personalities, and beliefs of individuals so that they make sound decisions for the execution of human responsibilities. The impact of religion on the family could be observed in the form of religious acceptance, development of the healthy relationship and leads to the development of positive mental and physical well-being of the individuals.

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