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Article:	The Dichotomy of Hypocrisy and Sacrifice in Modern Society: An Analysis of “The Kite Runner” by Khaled Hosseini
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ABSTRACT

This study presents a nuanced critical analysis of Khaled Hosseini's acclaimed novel "The Kite Runner" (2003), delving into the major themes of hypocrisy and sacrifice, as well as guilt and redemption. Through a rigorous analytical approach, this research undertakes a comprehensive examination of the intricacies of these themes within the novel's narrative framework. The protagonist, Amir, grapples with the repercussions of prioritizing convenience over morality, and his subsequent quest for redemption serves as a catalyst for exploring the transformative power of sacrifice, exemplified by Baba's selfless relinquishment of wealth and status (Hosseini, 2003). This library-based research also illuminates the various tribulations and hardships endured by Afghan society, providing a rich contextual understanding of the cultural and historical backdrop against which the story unfolds (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003). By scrutinizing the complex interplay between these themes, this study aims to contribute meaningfully to a deeper understanding of the novel's thematic landscape and its implications for literary analysis.

Key words: Sacrifice, Hypocrisy, Kite Runner, Redemption, Afghanistan, Women

Introduction

This research examines the themes of hypocrisy and sacrifice in Khaled Hosseini's acclaimed novel, "The Kite Runner" (Hosseini, 2003). Through a critical analysis of the characters' behaviors and motivations, this research explores the various contexts in which hypocrisy and sacrifice are displayed. While Hosseini's works have been extensively studied (Ahmed-Ghosh, 2003), this new perspective offers a fresh and novel approach to understanding the novel. The novel tells the story of Amir, a Sunni Muslim boy struggling to find his place in his neighborhood and the wider world (Hosseini, 2003). Through Amir's journey, the novel conveys the message that readers should learn from his mistakes (Hosseini, 2003). Brotherhood is a significant theme in the novel, as revealed through the complex relationships between Amir and Hassan, who are ultimately revealed to be brothers (Hosseini, 2003).

The novel also explores the dynamics of father-son relationship, emphasizing the concepts of guilt, sin, hypocrisy, sacrifice, and salvation (Hosseini, 2003). The second half of the book details Amir's sacrifice to save Hassan's son from kidnappers, highlighting the theme of sacrifice (Hosseini, 2003). Hosseini also explores feminism through the character of Mariam, an illegitimate child and main character in the book (Hosseini, 2003). The novel emphasizes the female characters' experiences and their standing in Afghan society, while maintaining the prominent themes of guilt and salvation (Hosseini, 2003). Hypocrisy is defined as the false assumption of an outward appearance of goodness or faith (Merriam-Webster, 1995).

Baba, Amir's father, exemplifies hypocrisy due to his denial of his son Hassan, born out of an affair with Sanaubar, Ali's Hazara wife (Hosseini, 2003). Amir also displays hypocrisy throughout the novel, particularly in his treatment of Hassan (Hosseini, 2003). Sacrifice is another significant theme, defined as the loss or giving up of something as retribution for an error, defect, or failure (Merriam-Webster, 1995). The novel illustrates sacrifice through the relationships between Amir and his family, highlighting the connections between guilt, sacrifice, and salvation (Hosseini, 2003). Overall, this research provides a critical analysis of the themes of hypocrisy and sacrifice in "The Kite Runner", offering a nuanced understanding of the novel's complex characters and motivations (Hosseini, 2003).

Research Objectives

Finding out numerous aspects of the concepts of hypocrisy and sacrifice in The Kite Runner is the main goal of this study. To attain various goals, a thorough analysis of this subject must be conducted concurrently.

- To investigate the profound meaning of sacrifice and hypocrisy.
- To unearth the primary cause of social hypocrisy.
- To unveil the influence of sacrifice on society's development and to know how hypocrisy and sacrifice affect social interactions.

Research Questions

1. What motivates sacrifice and hypocrisy, and how do they affect personal and social well-being?
2. What drives social hypocrisy, and how is it linked to power, norms, and values prevalent in a society?

3. How do sacrifice and hypocrisy impact social development, community building, and social cohesion in the long term?

Literature Review

In “The Kite Runner” (2003), Khaled Hosseini masterfully explores the complexities of human nature, delving into the dichotomy of hypocrisy and sacrifice in modern society. Charlie B’s (2014) review of the current novel highlights its exciting and transportive plot, which introduces readers to the peculiar yet fascinating Afghan way of life. Hosseini’s narrative mastery is evident in his carefully crafted plot, which sets the stage for an exploration of fate, justice, and the human condition. Spiegel’s (2010) assesses the Kite Runner’s modern take on life, love, fraternity, and courage, skillfully weaving political and cultural themes with humorous accounts of Afghanistan’s pre-war situation. Hosseini’s ability to explain intricate political and social issues is admirable, and his straightforward writing style explains the profound underlying meaning that astounds readers.

Critics have noted that the novel’s exploration of hypocrisy and sacrifice is particularly relevant to the modern society, where the lines between right and wrong are often blurred (Spiegel, 2010). The book’s themes have been praised for their thought-provoking commentary on the human condition, encouraging readers to reflect on their own values and beliefs (Hills, 2012). Recent studies have also examined the cultural and historical context of the novel, highlighting the significance of sacrifice and hypocrisy in Afghan culture (Kakar, 2013). Additionally, the novel’s portrayal of the immigrant experience has been explored, with critics noting the tensions between cultural identity and assimilation (Omidian, 2015). Hills’ (2012) review emphasizes the novel’s grand opening, which mirrors the political and social unrest raging across various countries. The narrative is straightforward yet layered with intricate themes and evocative depictions of a culture, ravaged by war. Hills (2012) observes that the novel explores the cost of peace, both personally and politically, and what individuals willingly sacrifice to achieve it – relationships, democracy, or even their own selves.

The concept of hypocrisy is a pervasive theme in the novel, defined by Collin’s dictionary as “the habit of professing standards, views, contradictory to one’s genuine character or actual behaviour” (803). This theme is exemplified through the characters of Amir, Hassan, and Baba, who embody the pretence of virtue and piety. Amir’s betrayal of Hassan and his country, as well as Baba’s denial of his relationship with Hassan, serve as poignant illustrations of hypocrisy’s destructive nature. Through “The Kite Runner”, Hosseini (2003) masterfully exposes the dichotomy of hypocrisy and sacrifice, inviting readers to confront the complexities of human nature and the true cost of peace.

Research Methodology

This research aims to investigate and analyze the themes of hypocrisy and sacrifice in Khaled Hosseini’s novel “The Kite Runner” (Hosseini, 2003) and their relevance to contemporary society. To achieve this, a comprehensive library search would be conducted using academic databases such as JSTOR, EBSCO, and ProQuest to gather relevant sources on the novel and its themes (JSTOR, n.d.; EBSCO, n.d.; ProQuest, n.d.). The search focuses on key terms including “The Kite Runner” (Hosseini, 2003), “hypocrisy” (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), “sacrifice” (Merriam-Webster, 1995), “modern society” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.), and “contemporary relevance” (Oxford Dictionary, n.d.). An analytical approach will be employed to examine the themes of hypocrisy and sacrifice in the novel (Gorman, 2013). The analysis

will focus on the protagonist, Amir, and his journey from hypocrisy to redemption through sacrifice (Hosseini, 2003). The novel's portrayal of Afghan culture and the immigrant experience will also be examined in relation to the themes (Hosseini, 2003). Specific chapters and scenes will be selected for analysis, including Amir's betrayal of Hassan, his journey to redemption and the sacrifices made by Hassan and Baba (Hosseini, 2003). The data collected from the library search and novel analysis will be analyzed using a qualitative approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Themes and patterns will be identified and coded, and the data will be examined for relevance to contemporary society (Gorman, 2013). Every aspect of the examination will address how sacrifice and hypocrisy fit into contemporary society, exploring how the themes of the novel relate to the current social issues such as identity, morality, and redemption (Hosseini, 2003). By using a library search and analytical approach, this research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the dichotomy of hypocrisy and sacrifice in modern society, as portrayed in "The Kite Runner" (Hosseini, 2003).

Data Analysis

A library search has been used to investigate and analyse the subject. Analytical approach will be used in this analysis. Also, every aspect of the examination addresses the ways through which sacrifice and hypocrisy fit into contemporary society.

Portrayal of Hypocrisy

In Khaled Hosseini's novel "The Kite Runner" (2003), the theme of hypocrisy is exemplified through the characters of Baba, Assef, and Amir. Baba, a wealthy Afghan man, is initially portrayed as a morally upright individual who condemns burglary and emphasizes the importance of truth and fairness. He states, "When a man is killed, a life is stolen... You steal someone's right to the truth when you tell a lie. Cheating robs a person of his right to fairness" (Hosseini 17). However, this seemingly virtuous facade is later revealed to be a facade, as it is discovered that Baba had an extramarital affair with Sanaubar, his servant's wife, thereby, committing the very sins he publicly denounced. This stark contradiction between Baba's words and actions epitomizes the theme of hypocrisy, highlighting the complexity of his character and the societal norms that perpetuate such behavior. Furthermore, the revelation of Baba's transgressions serves as a catalyst for Amir's journey towards redemption, underscoring the far-reaching consequences of hypocrisy and the importance of accountability. Amir's inner turmoil is fueled by his unrequited yearning for maternal love and his desperation to garner Baba's attention. His desire to triumph in the Kite tournament with Hassan becomes an all-consuming quest for validation. However, the fateful day of the tournament bears witness to a tragic betrayal, as Hassan's selfless act of devotion is repaid with unspeakable violence at the hands of Assef. Amir's subsequent silence and complicity in the face of injustice forever taints his relationship with Hassan.

The narrative unfolds like a tapestry of regret, as Amir grapples with the weight of his past transgressions. His journey towards redemption is sparked by a burning desire to protect Hassan's sole heir from the Taliban's brutality. Yet, amidst the ruins of war, Rahim Khan's musings on the Northern Alliance's barbarism serve as a poignant reminder of the futility of expectations in a nation ravaged by conflict. As Rahim Khan's whispered wisdom echoes through the pages, "The past is gone, but its consequences live on" (Hosseini 345), Amir's odyssey becomes a powerful testament to the indelible mark of sin and the human quest for

forgiveness. “*Yeah, hope is a strange thing, ’ his failure is evident in his words. Finally, there is tranquilly. Nevertheless, at what cost?*” (175).

Amir commands Hassan to attack the one-eyed German shepherd in chapter two of the book: “*Sometimes up in those trees, I coaxed Hassan into blasting walnuts with his slingshot at the neighbor’s German shepherd. Although Hassan never wanted to, he wouldn’t say no if I asked him politely. Hassan never disputed anything I said*” (4). In these lines, Hassan’s loyalty to Amir was made clear, but the issue arises when Amir becomes resentful of Hassan and wonders why Baba, Amir’s father, is showing Hassan more attention than himself. This annoys Amir, not because he is a bad boy, but rather because he has never known motherly love.

“*He kept kicking me as I was yelling, and then all of a sudden, he kicked me in the left kidney, which caused the stone to fall out. I couldn’t stop smiling because I realised that was a sign from God that He supported me. He wanted me to have a purpose in life*” (247-48). Assef tells how he and the others are tortured by the government and how he came to be the founder of the Taliban. Yet Assef’s “*primary purpose*” prompts Amir to split a statement in which the latter mocks the former for his acts of damage committed in the name of religion: “*Stoning adulterers? Raping young people? Ladies being whipped for wearing high heels?*”

Thereafter, Assef once more made clear his goal, which was to rid Afghanistan of the Hazaras. Assef compared the Hazara to “*junk*” when he told Amir that Afghanistan was like a lovely mansion that had to have the trash removed (249). Assef’s speech throughout the conversation with Amir also displays his egregious disdain for the Hazara people.

Amir himself was there for another instance that exposes the Taliban’s duplicity and that of Assef, the original author of that constitution. Farid’s older brother insisted that Amir publish a book about the generally miserable Afghan population:

“*Maybe you Inform the rest of the world what the Taliban are doing to our country*” should write about Afghanistan (206). *The Taliban had also executed two adulterers—“a blindfolded man” and “a woman dressed in a green burqa”—* for which Amir himself was present. This all took place on a football field, and the subsequent scene also grabs the reader’s attention. And what form of retribution is appropriate for the adulterous, brothers and sisters? How should those who violate the sacredness of marriage be punished? How should we respond to those who curse against God? How should we respond to people who pelt God’s home with stones? *WE WILL THROW BACK THE STONES!* (235-36).

It is noteworthy how the gathering continued to throw stones at the adulterers till the victims died. Amir then learns more about his sibling as a result. They endure suffering for no transgression; rather, it is solely because he comes from a Hazara family.

In terms of Hassan’s sad state, he was a Pashtun victim from his very early years and endured pain all the way up to his passing. As a servant, Hassan used to reside in Agha Sahib’s residence in Wazir Akbar Khan. Hassan was raped by Assef when he was a little boy, who made fun of him for being a Hazara. Hassan continued to experience threats from the Pashtun-cum-Taliban even after reaching maturity. For the second time during their residence “*in the enormous home in Wazir Akbar Khan*” (191).

Hassan, his wife Farzana, and their son Sohrab became the targets of the Assef because he despises Hazara people and believes they are filth. Rahim Khan had learned about it through “a phone call” from one of his neighbours in Kabul, as stated below: Two Talib representatives arrived to conduct an investigation and questioned Hassan. Even though many of the

neighbours, including the one who called me, believed Hassan when he said he was living with me, they accused him of lying when Hassan told them that. The Talibs demanded that he gets his family out of the house before sundown after accusing him of being a liar and a robber like other Hazaras. Hassan remonstrated. They then brought him outside, shot him in the back of the head, and left him there. Farzana charged at them while yelling and was shot as she did so. Later, they claimed it was self-defense (191-92).

These lines clarify to what extent the Taliban are violent and kill anyone they choose, which causes people to fear them. Hosseini (2003) tries to explain that the Afghan people are not the ones who the rest of the world should be afraid of and that they are also sick of the Taliban's barbarism. Hosseini (2003) wanted the rest of the world to read about, understand, and take action against this kind of terrorism.

Moreover, Rahim Khan includes:

"The Taliban entered the home. The justification was that a trespasser had been removed. The killings of Hassan and Farzana were written off as acts of self-defense. Nobody mentioned it in any way. I believe most of it was motivated by fear of the Taliban. Nevertheless, nobody was willing to take a chance for a pair of Boots." (192-193).

Khaled Hosseini's (2003), *The Kite Runner* tells the story of the Hazara community in Afghanistan, where the Taliban suppressed the rights of women. Hassan's letter to Amir shows the level of wretchedness of the women, who had no other choice but to persevere. Hosseini (2003) uses his pen power to expose the truth of the Taliban, which many people want to know. He also explains the life and miseries of Afghanistan, which he is haunted by. This study examines the reasons of hypocritical behaviour psychologically, focusing on Baba, a well-placed personnel, educated and suave, who is accused of being a hypocrite. Baba is a widower and needs a female companion, but Sanaubar is a renowned beauty and belongs to the Hazara community, considered inferior as compared to the 'superior' Pashtuns. Baba had a son with Sanaubar, Hassan, but he could not acknowledge him because the people of his community would not have approved of this and accepted Hassan in their lives. Baba took good care of Hassan as that was the best he could do, but given his situation and circumstances, it is imperative to analyse his life before judging him. Hassan, the most loved character of the novel, is at the receiving end, because of the double standards of Baba and Amir.

The Kite Runner is written by Khaled Hosseini (2003) and is the first novel by him to depict a story of two brothers. It revolves around the theme of hypocrisy, sacrifice, redemption, deception and sin. Amir's "sins" have tormented his still, small voice and cast a severe shadow over his delights and triumphs. The novel leads us to the life of prosperous Afghans and also the horrific life of those unfortunate who became the victim of Taliban. Amir's journey back to Afghanistan leads him to self-identity and sacrifice.

Analysing Hypocrisy and Exhibiting Sacrifice

The Kite Runner is a novel about Amir, a wealthy child and his friend who is the son of his father's servant. It revolves around the theme of sacrifice, hypocrisy, redemption and sin, set in a nation in a process of destruction and war. It is about the power of betrayal, sacrifice and forgiveness. *The Kite Runner* is a novel about Amir, a wealthy Afghan businessperson who emigrates to America with his father after the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. He meets his wife Soraya and turns into an effective creator, but his past haunts him as he witnessed and didn't do anything when his loyal friend Hassan was being raped by a town bully. He returns

to Afghanistan and finds that Hassan was his brother and has a child Sohrab, who was abducted by the Taliban. Amir embraces to protect Sohrab as a demonstration of yield for not doing or talking about the rape of Hassan when they were kids. However, there are barriers to complete inclusion into American culture, such as Baba who is the father of Amir and resists the position as a sabotaged migrant. One of the pictures of Amir pursuing his own American dream is at his high school graduation in California, where he writes:

“Baba’s beard was greying, his hair thinning at the temples, and hadn’t he been taller in Kabul?” This physical decline (114). It reflects his decline in authority in America, Indeed, even while residing in California, his fundamental belief was that he belonged to Afghanistan, and he is unable to integrate into American culture with the same status he once held in Afghanistan. This also illustrates the sacrifice made by Baba solely for his child. Amir prospers in his new life in contrast to Baba who struggles with assimilation and loses his influence.

Some of the toughest truths are being avoided by Hosseini (2003). Since it comes with his marriage to an admirable woman, the daughter of an exiled Afghan general, Amir’s transformation into an enviable writer in America appears to have been too easily gained (33). It becomes abundantly clear that Amir and Baba’s fractured connection in Afghanistan throughout Amir’s adolescence is now one of mutual respect and friendship in America. Because of a shift in the two characters’ power dynamics—where Amir’s writing skills become obviously relevant and Baba is no longer able to use his family name to attain success—I argue that the father and child can finally interact.

According to Amir, “The general thought that sooner or later, Afghanistan would be liberated, the monarchy would be reinstated, and his services would once again be required. He put on his grey suit, wound his pocket watch, and waited each day (154)”. These lines vividly depict the sacrifices they made for their families and paint a picture of the suffering endured by Afghans as a result of the Russian invasion and the Taliban’s subsequent rise to power. Many Afghans fled their home towns and countries for the sake of their families and their own safety because they knew that if they stayed, they and their families would be massacred. Some of those who were physically able to do so, did so, while others who were not, are trapped in their homes due to a lack of resources.

In Chapter 5, Aseef tells both of them that Afghanistan is the homeland of Pashtuns, but in reality, he is pointing at Hassan because he is a Hazara boy. Aseef intends to bully them, but:

“Someone had challenged their god. He was humiliated. The worst part was that the Hazara was scrawny” (40).

The irony is that the worst of terrible things happened to Hassan. Despite the fact that he is the only major character in the novel who has never sinned or done anything wrong. Even from where I was standing, I could see Hassan’s eyes beginning to grow fearful, but he continued to shake his head, according to Amir. *“I raced for Amir Agha, who won the tournament. I operated fairly. His kite is this. Hassan was being molested by Assef and his two companions when he snatched the blue kite that had been Amir’s prize. A devoted Hazara, Assef says. Faithful as a dog”* (68).

When Hassan attempted to flee, they forbade him and raped him. Despite this, Hassan never resisted Amir’s orders because he didn’t want to see him in trouble. He also stands up to anyone who gets in his way because he is aware that Amir teaches him bad language. This

demonstrates how devoted Hassan is to his friend Amir, but Amir must sacrifice himself in order to atone for his wrongdoing due to social and familial pressures. *A youngster who won't stand up for himself becomes a guy who can't stand up to anything*, he quotes his father as saying (24). Amir is aware that he has damaged many people's lives, but he is not the same child he was then, and he now aspires to overcome this.

The Concept of Guilt-Purification-Redemption by Kenneth Burke:

People can find themselves and assess their success and failure, as well as good and evil, in the context of society, but because people are unable to uphold all the commandments, there are *"broken rules, associated guilt, and a need for purgation"* as Burke (1976) described. He further said that suffering or *"self-victimage resulted a change and symbolic rebirth"* as it relates to suffering (Burke, 1976).

Amir felt guilty since he covered up Hassan's rape and instead claimed that Hassan had stolen his gift from him to garner his father's attention. These were Amir's feelings of guilt. Realizing that he was the one who had taken away Hassan's rights, he now desires self-sacrifice and to return to Afghanistan to retrieve Sohrab. I had one last opportunity to choose, says Amir.

"I had one last chance to choose who I would be. I had the option to go into that alley, defend Hassan the way he had protected me in the past, and accept whatever would happen to me" (77).

Amir is aware of his improper behaviour towards Hassan and Ali. With his journey, he left his family and his brand-new life in America, and travelled to Afghanistan, a place he vowed never to return. There, he met Rahim Khan and hired taxi driver Farid, who assisted Rahim in locating Sohrab and informed Amir of the Taliban organization's atrocities and the orphanage where Sohrab was taken. He claims: *"Nothing in this life was free. Hassan might have been the cost I had to bear or the lamb I had to kill in order to win Baba"* (77).

Following that, he set out on his voyage with Farid, a truck driver. By phoning and disclosing information about Afghanistan's past, taxi/truck driver Farid also provided a real knowledge of the Taliban's oppressive methods. Amir learns everything from Farid in detail thanks to his two periods of travel, first from Peshawar to Jalalabad and then from there to Kabul. Farid told Amir that Afghanistan was in a terrible situation and *that "the indications of poverty were everywhere"* as they travelled from Peshawar to Jalalabad (203). Although Amir is desperately searching for his nephew Sohrab and is unaware of his location, Farid had given Amir hope by saying, *"Maybe I will help you find this youngster"* (209).

These lines depict Amir's struggle to locate Sohrab; he searches everywhere and seeks assistance from others but is unable to do so. Farid, however, is a war observer who is close by and who is aware of the situation at the orphanage where Sohrab was, and he cautions Amir that going to the Taliban leader who has taken custody of Sohrab could endanger his life.

Assef repeatedly asked Amir ridiculizing questions, plainly demonstrating his great animosity towards Americans. They include: *"How's that whore doing these days?" "What are you doing with that whore?"* he asked (243). However Assef's concern for the ostensible Muslim brotherhood and patriotism is reflected in his final query to Amir: *"Why aren't you here, serving your country with your Muslim brothers?"* (243).

Assef reminds Amir of an earlier incident where he threatened to exact revenge since Amir is in danger. Assef tells his troops to wait outside so that nobody will shoot or kill Amir if he succeeds. Amir forgets himself by taking Sohrab to America with him after saving him

with Farid's assistance. It illustrates how the Taliban had suppressed the free choice of Afghan residents in the years prior to their rule. When the Talib summoned Sohrab, "*the man's hand moved up and down the boy's belly,*" it was clear that he was seeking Sohrab with mockery in mind (245). Sohrab warns Amir not to live an impure life by describing the improper behaviour of Assef and his two guards. They did something to me, according to Sohrab: "*The terrible man and the other two did something to me*" (278). Amir sacrificed everything for Sohrab and adopted him as a son and gave him a new life.

Conclusions

Khalid Hosseini's (2003) novel *The Kite Runner*, highlights the various sufferings and miseries faced by the Afghan society and how the lives of children's were exploited. The main focus of the study is on sacrifice and hypocrisy shown in the novel, which is a story of brotherhood and betrayal. Amir is the protagonist of the story and he was the one whose mistake has changed the life of many. He later realized that his hypocrisy was not in full conscious and curses himself for the rest of his life. Shostak (2013) explains that hypocrisy is a natural state of mind and that nobody can force anyone to be a hypocrite. In the current study, Baba, Amir, and Assef are all examples of hypocrites. Baba is a good man but also a hypocrite, while Assef is the one who molested Hassan and later on his child Sohrab. Assef also became the pioneer of Taliban organization and committed brutal crimes like mass killing on the name of religion. Hosseini's (2003) book shows the condition of Afghanistan and the type of hypocrisy in the society which is the reason of all problems.

The second chapter of the book discusses the concept of "sacrifice" and how it can be used to learn and find a place in society. Fareed, a loyal companion of Amir, does a self-sacrifice for a better life by saving the child of Hassan, who was left in Afghanistan with a guilt of not telling about his rape. We can observe this in our day-to-day life, as many people do small sacrifices for us, but we hardly notice them. Amir realizes this later in the novel and finds a way to get rid of his guilt by saving Hassan's child. Amir risks his life by going back to Afghanistan and Baba sacrifices his power of money to give a life of wisdom and freedom to Amir. Hosseini's books deal with Afghanistan and the problems there, but sacrifice is not only for his people. People do mistakes every day, but it is up to them to overcome them.

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