Write a paper of no more than 500 words in which you discuss one or more possible themes in Hanif Kureishi’s “My Son the Fanatic”. Make sure to refer to or quote from the story itself to support your observations.

Note: Do not write summaries; your reader has read the story.

Upload your paper as a Word doc.

Themes in “My Son the Fanatic”

“My Son the Fanatic” is a short story written by Hanif Kureishi. The main conflict in the story is Ali and how he has changed his way of life, which makes his father, Parvez very confused and frustrated. We also get to know one of Parvez’s friends; Bettina who is a prostitute. The story explores and questions the themes about religion, family (especially the relationship between father and son) and change.

We can see in the restaurant scene how their differences is crashing. Parvez cannot help himself with the drinks, which makes them question important topics like “is it legal to drink alcohol?”, “what is the meaning of life?”, “is there a life after death? And do you have to live this life a certain way to get there?” That is why “religion” is an important theme here. The fact that Ali has decided to follow the rules of Islam makes him think less of his father for “living his life wrong” according to the Koran. Parvez thinks Ali is making a mistake because he had such good potential in school and sports.

The collision between Parvez and Ali are setting their relationship on a thin line. Everybody can change somehow and sometimes it is hard to accept or deal with it. The themes “change” and “family” are in this story spotted where Parvez is having a hard time to deal with Ali’s change in beliefs and Ali does not know how to connect with his son again. Ali thinks it is all right to disrespect her because she is a prostitute, which is a sin according to his religion. After this event, Parvez loses his temper and even kicks him over.

Overall, we can see that there are big problems between the characters Pavez and Ali. They believe in life in two different ways, which seems wrong for one another. At the end of the story Pavez has had enough and starts to beat his son. Ali is still not afraid of him and he does not react worse than saying, “who is the fanatic now?” They have not found a solution for the questions within the themes, but since it is an open ending; we have to find an answer to them for ourselves.