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Christianity and Hinduism Perspectives on Death and Afterlife

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Christianity and Hinduism Perspectives on Death and Afterlife

Different religions subscribe to beliefs that some either differ in ideologies or concur. The ideological similarities may be due to the closeness in the origin of such religions. At the same time, the difference can be accounted for due to the distance in the origin of the religions under comparison. For example, both Christians and Hindus believe in death and life after death; however, there exist varying levels of beliefs that contrast each other in the context of these two religious beliefs. Naturally, people die for various reasons and depending on one's religious belief; people interpret this phenomenon according to the Holy Bible's teachings according to English Standard Version Bible (2001) and the Holy Vedas as per Smith (2016) for Christianity and Hinduism religious beliefs respectively. The stories of death and the afterlife beliefs have some far-fetched similarities and lots of differences in perception in Christianity and Hinduism religious practices. In conjunction, there exist some similarities and differences when the two religions are compared. Additionally, it is believed that comparing the two religious beliefs is important in understanding how others perceive life events and phenomena (Panikkar, 2019). Thus, to shed more light on the beliefs of these two world's religious practices, it will be important to give to accounts under what extent a certain life event is perceived and practiced by subscribers of both Christianity and Hinduism. This, therefore, makes the reason for this paper where death and afterlife beliefs in Christianity and Hinduism religious perspectives form the discussion of this paper.

Christianity Perspective of Death and Afterlife

Christians perceive death to be an evitable phenomenon. According to Christians, nobody can escape death, for everyone is mortal. According to Nichols (2010), Christians take death as a

mandatory rite of passage that marks the end of human life awaiting resurrection when Jesus Christ comes back for the second time. Additionally, it is worth noting that Christians believe that God is the giver and the taker of life and so when one dies among the Christian families, they take the occurrence that it has happened so because they had planned it to happen that way (Kanu, 2018). Lastly, on death, Christians believe that death came to them due to sin that Adam and Eve got involved in by failing to heed God's commandment of not eating the forbidden fruit in the middle of the Garden of Eden. They, therefore, believe that death was a punishment subjected to humankind as punishment for sinning while in the Garden of Eden.

Concerning the afterlife, Christians believe that life after death exists. They believe if people live a righteous life, resurrecting and going with Jesus in heaven, a place where there is no suffering but fullness of joy and happiness is guaranteed. Additionally, the Christians believe that only Jesus will come back for the second time and at that time, end time, the Angels will blow the trumpet, which will mark the beginning of the end of life on earth (Lehmann, 2004). Also, Christians believe that after the rupture of the world, God will subject everyone to judgment. Therefore, whoever whose name will not be found in the book of life will be denied eternal life by God and instead be subjected to burning with Satan in the hellfire. The Christians, in their perspectives, strictly believe that sinning by not following God's commandments and Jesus' teaching is an automatic disqualification from enjoying the eternal life that should be supposed to be enjoyed after resurrection during the end time (Rhodes, 2019). Therefore, in perspective, Christians believe that they have to live a righteous life and consequently enjoy life after death, commonly referred to as eternal life. Furthermore, the Holy Bible teaches them that they must live as per the expectations of God the Creator for them to be able to resurrect when Jesus comes for the second time to take his chosen-righteous people.

Hinduism Perspective of Death and Afterlife

Hindus believe in death, too, for it is a perception deeply rooted among them that death is a natural phenomenon and must be passed through by everyone, so there is no reason to worry about it whenever it comes. For this reason, Hindus always believe that when death comes, people should accept for it is a rite of passage that is destined for all. Also, they believe that Lord Brahma- God, the Creator of the universe is always the one responsible for the death of his people, for he is the giver of life and the taker of life as well. Interestingly, the Hindu religious community believes that there is a very big distinction between body and soul after the death of a person (Bilimoria, 2021). This distinction is due to the belief that when one dies, there is a period that the soul visits the family and moves around in search of a body to settle on. Another perception that Hindus' perception concerning death is the belief that the term refers to them as either good or bad death. The good death is determined by a cycle that revolves around the Doctrines of Samsara which dictates that one has to live, die and upon death, be reincarnated (Reddy, 2018). This belief guides the moral behavior of them for they fear the wrath of Karma if they become immoral in society. Lastly, Hindus believe that when one dies, his spirit remains with the family and friends even if the body has been interred.

On the issue of the afterlife, Hindus believe that there is life after death. They perceive that Lord Brahma, responsible for taking away lives, is in constant creation and recreation and so whenever one dies, his soul is recreated with another body. Rukmani (2017) agrees with this statement by adding that the Hinduism culture is based on the perception that there exists constant recreation done by Brahma, who takes the spirits of good people and recreates them into other beings. He further comments that those who lead a bad life before death are punished by their own Karma, a factor that makes their souls suffer.

Similarities

In both religions, there is a belief that death is inevitable by humankind. Christians believe that they will all die because death was a punishment given to Adam and Eve after eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden (Nichols, 2010). Similarly, Hindus believe that nobody can escape death and therefore, it is a life event that must not be feared by humankind. All humans must end up in death gives believers of both religions to live as per the dictates of their religious beliefs to avoid being punished as indicated in the respective holy books.

Additionally, both religious groups believe in life after death or the afterlife. For example, Christians who are followers of Jesus Christ believe that they will resurrect the same way he resurrected on the third day after death (Ayodeji, 2013). They believe that according to Jesus' teachings, he will come back on the final day and take with him the people who walked in his path while living in the world. Additionally, there exists a high belief that when Jesus returns, all those who did not sin while alive will be resurrected and go with Jesus to his father's kingdom, a place of happiness without any form of suffering (Armstrong, 2011). Thus, the resurrection and living with Jesus in his father's mansions and the promise of good life after death make the Christians avoid sin with anticipation of a good life. Similarly, the Hindus believe that there is life after death because after death Brahma who is in the constant process of creating the universe, will recreate them after they have died (Narayanan, 2009). Life after death is, therefore, a mutual belief in both cases of religions.

Lastly, in both cases, there are beliefs that one must lead a good life without engaging in sin or bad things while still alive for one to rise after death. Christians, in this case, believe that there is a judgment that God will conduct at the end of the world with those who will pass the

test of being righteous will join God and live with him in heaven, but those who will be found to unrighteous will burn in hell with Satan (Exline, 2003). Also, Hindus believe that while living, someone is responsible for their deeds with those who do good will be recreated in the next life by Brahma, while Karma will punish those who do bad. For that reason, in both cases, there is a reason to lead a good life to attain life after death.

Lastly, the fear of evil power as a distraction towards achieving the afterlife is evident in both cases. There is fear that if one entertains Satan, they will not be allowed to realize life after death if they do not repent, for their names will be missing in the book of life during the end time (Garret, 2015). Similarly, Karma is an evil spirit among the Hindus, which, when entertained, can make Lord Brahma avoid recreating a person according to Hinduism belief. Therefore, one has to avoid evil things to achieve an afterlife.

Contrast

In Christianity, life after death will only come at the world's end time, while in Hinduism, life after death is a recurring process that has got no end. According to Jesus' teachings, Christians strictly believe that God's angels will blow the trumpet at the end time, which will be loud to the extent that there will be a rupture of the world (Hanegraaff, 2010). Further, the dead will resurrect and together with the living, there will be judgment and only the righteous will be taken to live with God in heaven. This means that Christians will only have to wait for the second coming of Jesus Christ for the rupture to happen. Then, judgment is done by God and a qualified lot of righteous live eternal life while unrighteous burn with Satan in hellfire and the event will only happen once according to Christian biblical teachings (Van Raalte, 2019).

However, for the Hindus, life after death is a continuous, endless, eternal cycle that exists and will stop at no given point in time.

Further, they believe that it is the sole work of the Brahma to recreate a person in a different world after their death, an endless process (Ma'súmián, 2002). Therefore, in Christianity, access to life after death will happen once after the judgment of everyone since the beginning of life. At the same time, for Hindus, it is a continuous process that will never end.

Conclusively, after discussing death and afterlife beliefs in Christianity and Hinduism religious perspectives, it is clear that religion forms a great part and parcel of the people who subscribe to them. Religious beliefs are the basis under which people spiritually connect to the natural phenomenon in the universe but yet have no clear or scientific proof for their occurrences. Hence, the stories of death and the afterlife are one of the greatest unending conversations that are translated by different people depending on their religious beliefs and subscription. This makes the need to compare both Christianity and Hinduism religions in connection to their beliefs concerning creation and death. Notably, there exist various similarities and contrasts as far as the two religions are concerned. Both religions believe that death is inevitable and there is life after death as well. However, on differing opinions, the Christians believe that life after death will only be gotten once after the second coming of Jesus Christ. In contrast, Hindus believe that the afterlife is a recurring process offered to them by Braham. Therefore, the direction of the paper offers an insight into what is similar and whatnot to inform people of diverse religious groups that despite the difference in our religious beliefs, people have the sole purpose of living together in harmony and being good to one another, for we shall all die. Thus, our success in achieving the afterlife depends on how we generally live with one another in this world.

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