

Comparison of buddhist and christian ethics theology religion essay



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Buddhism and Christianity are faiths with comprehensive and contrasting ethical Torahs and imposters. Throughout this essay the ethical patterns of both faiths will be described in item, with an geographic expedition of their similarities and differences presented.

Description of Buddhist Ethical Practices

Seven hebdomads after Prince Siddhartha Gautama had attained enlightenment whilst chew overing under a bodhi tree, he delivered his First Sermon to his five former ascetical comrades under that same tree. The contents of that initial discourse are knows as the Four Noble Truths, which are basically the foundation of the faith. They are as follows: (Gwynne 2011, p. 93)

“ 1. Suffering: Now this, monastics, is the baronial truth of agony: Birth is enduring, ageing is enduring, illness is enduring, decease is enduring ; brotherhood with what is displeasing is enduring ; separation from what is delighting is enduring ; non to acquire what one wants is enduring ; in brief, the five sums capable to cleaving are enduring.

2. The Beginning of Suffering: Now this, monastics, is the baronial truth of the beginning of agony: It is the hungering which leads to regenerate being, accompanied by delectation and lecherousness, seeking delectation here and at that place ; that is, hungering for animal pleasancess, hungering for being, hungering for extinction.

3. The Cessation of Suffering: Now this, monastics, is the baronial truth of the surcease of agony: It is the remainder-less attenuation off and surcease of

that same craving, the giving up and relinquishment of it, freedom from it, and non-reliance on it.

4. The Way to the Cessation of Suffering: Now this, monastics, is the baronial truth of the manner taking to the surcease of agony: It is this Baronial Octuple Way: that is, right position, right purpose, right address, right action, right support, right attempt, right heedfulness, and right concentration. ”

Like its parent faith Hinduism, Buddhism teaches that the ultimate end of the lives of disciples is to interrupt free from the wheel of reincarnation and attain enlightenment. Where it differs from Hinduism is alternatively of emphasizing the importance of duties related to caste, gender and age (varna ashrama Dharma) , it stresses the incarnation of the empyreal truth that was rediscovered by Prince Siddhartha on his dark of enlightenment, which was imparted to his early followings in his First Sermon. The kernel of Buddhist Dharma (as opposed to Hindu Dharma) is the Four Noble Truths which, along with the Buddha himself and the community of disciples (Sangha) , make up the Three Jewels of Buddhism.

The last of the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, is frequently divided into three classes:

1. Wisdom (panna) – right position and right purpose

2. Meditation (samdhi) – right attempt, right heedfulness and right concentration

3. Virtue (sila) – right address, right action and right support. This class

specifically provides ethical direction for Buddhists, take a firm standing that <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-buddhist-and-christian-ethics-theology-religion-essay/>

disciples must forbear from opprobrious, fallacious or dissentious words through right address ; naming Buddhists to be by and large righteous in their actions ; and connoting that certain businesss may be immoral and therefore unsuitable. (Gwynne 2011, pg. 92)

Buddhism lacks a clear belief in a supreme being, ensuing in Buddhist morality being based upon the grade as to which ideas and actions will progress or hinder one ' s pursuit for concluding release. It is non based upon commandments issued by a transcendent God which are to be unimpeachably followed by disciples, as is the instance in the Abrahamic faiths. Without a God to order what is good and evil, Buddhists refer to certain actions as “ adept ” (kausalya) or “ botchy ” (akausalya) instead than right or incorrect. Buddhist morality is based upon considerations of single advancement on the route to release from the wheel of reincarnation instead than practising the will of a Godhead God.

The basis of Buddhist ethical instruction is the Pancasila, the five principles.

They are as follows:

“ I refrain from destructing life animals

I refrain from taking that which is non given

I refrain from sexual misconduct

I refrain from false address

I refrain from alcohols which lead to carelessness. ” (Gwynne 2011, p. 94)

These principles provide a basic moral codification for Buddhists, so built-in that they are frequently recited on a day-to-day footing by the temporal, chanted by monastics at important minutes such as birth, matrimony and decease, and are a popular discourse subject.

The Pancasila can be interpreted in a assortment of ways. In one sense it provides a basic definition of goodness or skilfulness in Buddhist religion, reflecting the virtuousness of a spiritually advanced individual. In another sense it is understood as the “ five preparation regulations ” (pancasikkha) as they were sometimes referred to as by the Buddha. In this position the Pancasila can be seen as a list of practical guidelines to ethically steer the single Buddhist toward a more liberated province of being, instead than a set of moral commandments cast down from the celestial spheres by all-powerful God.

The Pancasila is largely negatively phrased, concentrating on what actions should be avoided instead than promoting virtuous actions. However, upon closer review one notices that with every negative, “ I refrain from ” phrase, there is a positive phrase to oblige the disciple to endeavor for higher religious promotion, acquiring closer and closer to enlightenment. Thus the first principle is to forbear from killing living existences, non merely worlds but besides carnal and even works life. This thought fits absolutely with the wheel of reincarnation as within the Buddhist universe position one may be reincarnated as other life signifiers. (Gwynne 2011, pg. 95)

The 2nd principle forbids larceny, stemming into the obsessional desire of stuff objects which leads to stealing. This positively encourages disciples to

be generous in all facets of life, non merely financially but in their clip and energy. The 3rd principle discourages sexual misconduct, doing it cognize that sexual desire is such a strong human inherent aptitude that it poses a considerable menace to one ' s religious way. It is non considered unskilful for disciples to hold sexual dealings, but it is known that celibacy is a higher signifier of religious being. The 4th precept forbids any prevarication or signifier of fraudulence, hammering a fear for truth which is a important constituent of single enlightenment. Finally, the 5th principle prevents the ingestion of any intoxicating, transfusing on disciples the importance of lucidity of head, an indispensable quality for Buddhists who are serious about their spirituality. (Gwynne 2011, pg. 96)

Description of Christian Ethical Practices

Jesus, when approached by a instructor of spiritual jurisprudence and asked which of the commandments is most of import, answered “ The most of import commandment is this: ‘ Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the 1 and merely Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your bosom, all your psyche, all your head, and all your strength ‘ . The 2nd is every bit of import: ‘ Love your neighbor as yourself ‘ . No other commandment is greater than these. ” (Mark 12: 29-31, NLT)

The commandment for Jews to love the one and merely God with all their being is found in Deuteronomy, with Leviticus emphasizing the importance of loving one ' s neighbor. What Jesus said was non radical, he simply reinstated the ethical values that are symbolized in the Judaic Decalogue. A

comparative tabular array of the Decalogue in its assorted signifiers is provided below (Gwynne 2011, p. 102) :

Judaic

Catholic and Lutheran

Orthodox and Protestant

1. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the house of bondage.

I am the Lord your God and you shall hold no other Gods before me.

I am the Lord your God and you shall hold no other Gods before me.

2. You shall hold no other Gods besides me.

You shall non misapply the name of the Lord your God.

You shall non do for yourself any sculpted image.

3. You shall non misapply the name of the Lord your God.

Remember to maintain holy the Lord ' s twenty-four hours.

You shall non misapply the name of the Lord your God.

4. Remember the Sabbath twenty-four hours and maintain it holy.

Honor your male parent and female parent.

Remember to maintain holy the Lord ' s twenty-four hours.

5. Honor your male parent and your female parent.

You shall non kill.

Honor your male parent and female parent.

6. You shall non slay.

You shall non perpetrate criminal conversation.

You shall non kill.

7. You shall non perpetrate criminal conversation.

You shall non steal.

You shall non perpetrate criminal conversation.

8. You shall non steal.

You shall non bear false informant against your neighbor.

You shall non steal.

9. You shall non bear false informant against your neighbor.

You shall non covet your neighbor ' s married woman.

You shall non bear false informant against your neighbor.

10. You shall non covet anything that belongs to your neighbors.

You shall non covet your neighbor ' s goods.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbors.

Jesus himself demystifies any misinterpretations that may happen using the Christian position of the Judaic ethical instructions in Matthew 5: 17 with “ Do not misconstrue why I have come. I did not come to get rid of the jurisprudence of Moses or the Hagiographas of the Prophets. No, I came to carry through them. ” (NLT)

Like its parent faith Judaism, the Christian mentality involves an intelligently designed universe in which worlds have the chance to populate out God ' s Godhead program for them, to hold ageless Communion with him. Moral behavior is an built-in constituent of this Godhead program, being portion of the concluding opinion each individual must confront. However, as can be seen in other faiths, Christianity acknowledges that all human existences have an natural moral codification regardless of their religion or deficiency of religion (Gwynne 2011, pg. 101) . This interior morality is mentioned by St Paul in Romans 2: 14-16 - “ When foreigners who have ne'er heard of God ' s jurisprudence follow it more or less by inherent aptitude, they confirm its truth by their obeisance. They show that God ' s jurisprudence is non something foreign, imposed on us from without, but woven into the really cloth of our creative activity. There is something deep within them that echoes God ' s yes and no, right and incorrectly. Their response to God ' s yes and no will go public cognition on the twenty-four hours God makes his concluding determination about every adult male and adult female. The message from God that I proclaim through Jesus Christ takes into history all these differences. ” (The Message Bible)

Although the being of this natural moral codification is confirmed throughout Christian denominations, there is argument over the extent as to which it can be distorted by human wickedness. The Catholic church takes a instead accepting stance on the issue, admitting the being of “ natural jurisprudence ” within its moral instructions, while Protestant and Orthodox churches tend to be more leery of non-religious beginnings of moralss. All the denominations are nevertheless united in their belief that Christian ethical instruction are a more comprehensive usher to moral life. The Old Testament, as aforementioned, is the indispensable first measure towards Christian moral life, whilst Judaic imposts and patterns such as kosher, Sabbath Torahs and fortunes were abandoned by the early church as they were deemed unneeded in the development of ethical life patterns within the faith.

Equally of import as the Judaic tradition is in supplying a moral base for Christians, they are frequently deemed deficient in the eyes of Christians. Evidenced in the Hagiographas in St Paul, the jurisprudence of Moses is respected as good and holy yet somehow uncomplete, missing the motive that drives Christian moralss. Christians believe in the importance of a “ new jurisprudence ” which provides the motive behind incarnating the type of ethical patterns expressed in the Decalogue, religion that Jesus is the bodied Son of God and Saviour of world. (Gwynne 2011, pg. 93)

The ethical patterns of Christianity are unsurprisingly christocentric.

Christians view Jesus as sinless and perfect, doing him the ultimate

theoretical account for Christian life. The Christian apprehension of the “

following phase ” of pre-established Judaic moralss were unveiled through <https://assignbuster.com/comparison-of-buddhist-and-christian-ethics-theology-religion-essay/>

Jesus, and a standout case of his moral direction is contained within his Sermon on the Mount. The comprehensive discourse notably contains moral direction on the subjects of cholera, criminal conversation, divorce and, strikingly, love for one ' s enemies. A choice of poetics peculiarly relevant to Christian ethical patterns is presented below:

“ You have heard that the jurisprudence of Moses says, ‘ Do non slaying. If you commit murder, your are capable to opinion. ‘ But I say, if you are angry with person, you are capable to opinion! ”

- Levi 5: 21-22 (NLT)

“ You have heard that the jurisprudence of Moses says, ‘ Do non commit criminal conversation. ‘ But I say, anyone who even looks at a adult female with lecherousness in his oculus has already committed criminal conversation with her in his bosom. ”

- Levi 5: 27-28 (NLT)

“ You have heard that the jurisprudence of Moses says, ‘ A adult male can disassociate his married woman simply by giving her a missive of divorce. ‘ But I say that a adult male who divorces his married woman, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to perpetrate criminal conversation. And anyone who marries a divorced adult female commits criminal conversation. ”

- Levi 5: 31-32 (NLT)

“ Again, you have heard that the jurisprudence of Moses says, ‘ Do non interrupt your vows ; you must transport out the vows you have made to the

Lord. ‘ ... Just say a simple, ‘ Yes, I will, ‘ or ‘ No, I wo n’t. ‘ Your word is adequate. ”

- Levi 5: 33-37 (NLT)

“ If you are slapped on the right cheek, turn the other, excessively. ” -
Matthew 5: 39 (NLT)

“ You have heard that the jurisprudence of Moses says, ‘ Love you neighbor ‘ and detest your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! ” - Matthew 5: 43-44 (NLT)

Similarities and Differences

Although Buddhism and Christianity may externally look really different, it may come as a surprise to some to learn that at the bosom of their morality, as is the instance with all the major faiths, they are really similar. This is mostly due to what the Catholic church refers to as “ natural jurisprudence ” , the interior sense of morality which is shared throughout humanity.

Possibly the most of import piece of grounds for this construct is the fact that the “ Aureate Rule ” of moralss in both faiths (and the other major faiths) is basically the same: (Gwynne 2011, pg. 111)

“ Comparing yourself to others in footings such every bit ‘ Just as I am so are they, merely as they are so am I, ‘ he should neither kill nor do others to kill. ” (Sutta Pitaka)

“ In everything, do to others as you would hold them make to you ; for this is the jurisprudence and the Prophetss. ” (Gospel of Matthew)

Although the ethical patterns taught in both faiths are similar, possibly the most dramatic difference between the two faiths is the function that God plays in their ethical pattern. Christian moralss are viewed as the consequence of Godhead intercession through the Prophetss and the human embodiment of God himself. Obedience to the will of a omniscient, omnipresent and almighty Godhead being is doubtless a important constituent of Christian morality. This is a blunt contrast with Buddhism as it is the lone major faith which does non admit the being of a God at all. Buddhist moralss are non handed down by all-powerful God, they are instructions designed to steer the person on their way towards achieving enlightenment in conformity with the ageless Dharma. It is besides deserving observing that Buddhist instructions are by and large understood to be less rigorous than their Christian opposite numbers, more like suggestions of how to populate a spiritually advanced life than godly commandments.

While Christianity and Buddhism differ well in respects to the contrasting thoughts of populating a individual life so confronting opinion versus the wheel of reincarnation (Samsara) , both faiths are concerned about the reverberations that an person ' s morality will hold on their religious position. Christian moralss are understood by disciples to be a set of guidelines put in topographic point to accomplish and keep ageless Communion with God in Eden (Gwynne 2011, pg. 110) , and are a important facet of the standards used in their concluding opinion, while the purpose of Buddhist moralss are to steer the Buddhist throughout their journey towards nirvana. Although the practicalities and universe positions of the two faiths are contrastingly

different, the concern for the person ' s religious advancement and hereafter is a common subject.

Possibly the strongest similarity in the ethical Torahs and imposts of Christianity and Buddhism is the entire accent Jesus Christ and Sakyamuni are given. Both are infallible theoretical accounts for disciples to establish their morality upon, and in both instances they single-handedly (along with their early followings) provide the “ following phase ” of spiritual moralss of their parent faiths, every bit good as get rid ofing former patterns that were deemed unneeded, unequal, or even counter-productive. Much of the New Testament is devoted to narrating the life of Jesus and the lessons to be learnt from it, and Buddhists are even able to analyze the old lives of the Buddha through the Jataka Tales in add-on to the stopping point survey of his concluding embodiment before making enlightenment.

In decision, through the geographic expedition of the two contrasting faiths, Christianity and Buddhism, an huge beam of evident similarities appear among what one would anticipate from a clang of western and eastern doctrines. One can reason that their differences can be set aside to do manner for the common ethical Torahs and imposts they both portion, with their polar figures, Jesus Christ and The Buddha, supplying illustrations of morality which are really similar in nature. The terminal consequence of this is Christians and Buddhists taking ethical lives which both have their ain virtues and most significantly a common love for humanity.