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The religious teachings can have a significant impact on person's life views and values. Various approaches can be used for interpretation of the main religious concepts.

Kirin Narayan has chosen an original approach to representing the Hindu religious teachings in her book *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teachings* by narrating the folklore tales and legends. The technique of storytelling is one of the most effective methods of religious teachings which allows intensifying the effect of the studies by appealing to readers' feelings. Narayan demonstrates readers how effective teaching religion through storytelling may be, incorporating not only the stories and the moral messages of Swamiji into her book, but also the feelings with which the narrator told them and the effect they produced on the listeners. Both Kirin and her spiritual guru Swamiji admit that the content of the stories is less important than the approach to interpreting them and the feelings of the narrator and the audience. Trying to reproduce the atmosphere in which the stories were told, the author mentions some insignificant details of the setting and provides readers with an opportunity not only to read and understand but also see and feel the mood of the storyteller for intensifying the effect. The author explains this writing style with " a strong aesthetic obligation to try making my ethnography as lively as the story it contains" (Narayan 12).

Storytelling is more effective than other methods of teaching religion because it allows appealing to people's feelings, establishing the rapport between the narrator and the audience and using the personal charisma and the power of persuasion of the storyteller. " He tells the story with happiness

on his face. He laughs a little, he uses actions. Because he tells it laughing and happy, because he tells it with affection the story has an effect on people" (Narayan 12). Telling stories about earth events, the narrator makes the religious propositions understandable and interesting for listeners, representing the religious belief as an integral part of human life views. Using storytelling for teaching religion, Swamiji touches upon the concepts of life and death, heaven, hell, and reincarnation explaining the basic principles of hinduism to his listeners. All these lines cannot be separated one from another because each of them is only a fragment of the whole. Speaking about the laws of earth life, Swamiji points out that everything has its reason even if an individual cannot see it before hand.

The story about king whose toe was cut during the hunting and it prevented him from being sacrificed to the god of a wild tribe proves that even negative events can become a blessing in disguise. The king does not believe his minister who says that everything happens for the good and has its reason but the end of the story shows that the minister is a wise person. Another important side of life which was covered in one of the stories is the impossibility to find happiness outside the individual. The story about Maharaj who is looking for happiness and follows other people's advice, getting a cat to make him happy, getting a cow for giving milk to the cat and getting a servant for taking care of the cow. Still, all these outside factors do not make Maharaj happy, only creating new problems. The moral message of this story is that an individual should not look for the reasons for being happy in the outside world. Speaking about heaven and hell, the narrator tells a story of a man who takes a trip to both place and does not see the

differences in the setting. The difference is in the attitude and behavior of people who are in these locations.

In heaven as well as in hell, people's arms do not bend and the food cannot reach their mouths, but people from heaven feed each other and are fed by their neighbors, finding the way out from the situation. " Some see this as heaven, some see this as hell. The one who tells you is the heart" (Narayan 190). The author notes that both places are on earth and it may be rather difficult to distinguish between them. The concept of reincarnation is used in the story Death and Laughter for explaining some earth circumstances which seem to be mysterious to people. The main character of the story gets to know that the goat which he wanted to save was his reincarnated father and his child is the reincarnated lover of his wife who decides to take a revenge on him in this way. Another Swamiji's interpretation of death is uniting with Mother Earth. " No one else will touch them, but she [Mother Earth] accepts everything and purifies everything" (Narayan 207).

Using a storytelling approach for teaching religion, the author manages to define such complicated concepts as heaven and hell and reincarnation, using simple words and influencing listeners' views. Even using the storytelling approach to teaching religion, Kirin Narayan considers the context of Hindu religious studies, incorporating a number of allusions from religious texts and symbols into the stories. Though the author does not put emphasis on the symbolic meanings of some of the details, the symbols of wishing tree and loincloth used by the author are the recognizable Hinduism allusions. Though the storytelling technique predetermined the peculiarities of the interpretation of the main religious principles, the representation of

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the studies in this original manner does not distort the main Hinduism propositions and some of the author's messages need to be read between the lines.

The collection of stories reproduces the diversified faces of the Hindu philosophy of asceticism. The author uses the tools of anthropology and literary analysis for better understanding of the content of the tales and legends, without doubting the value of the narratives or contradicting the science and religion. By the way, the primary principle of making a wise saint a storyteller reflects the widely spread tradition of Hindu countries. Kirin Narayans' approach to Hinduism and the implementation of the storytelling technique are interdependent and had impact on the representation of the religious studies in the book but did not distort the main principles of Hindu studies. The book *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teachings* by Kirin Narayan demonstrates how effective storytelling may be for teaching religion through storytelling. Telling the folklore tales, a wise saint Swamiji defines the concepts of life and death, heaven and hell, interpreting the basic laws of life and influencing listeners' views. Though the storytelling technique had impact on the manner of presentation of religious materials, Narayan's book can be regarded as a valuable collection of Hindu texts.

Works Cited

Narayan, Kirin. *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teachings*. Delhi: Shri Jainendra Press.

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