

Produce a paper comparing the worldview of two societies. choose contrasting cult...

[Science](#), [Anthropology](#)



Comparing the “ worldview” of two societies: Jewish society and Indian Hinduism. Human societies bring together people who share a similar “ worldview” or way of looking at the world. This encompasses ideas about life and death, and the way that humans relate to natural and also supernatural forces in the world. Two very ancient worldviews still have considerable influence in the modern world: the worldview of Old Testament Judaism, and that of Hindus throughout the ages, mainly residing in the large sub-continent of India. This paper compares these two worldviews, detailing their main features and drawing out the differences and similarities between them. The Jewish worldview was first formed around 1300 B. C. by the patriarch Abraham in Mesopotamia. (Religionfacts, 2011) In the Jewish worldview, religion and nationhood were originally very closely bound up together. There is a belief in a single, personal God, has created the whole world out of nothing and who has chosen the Jewish nation, and all its various tribes, to have a special relationship with him. Jewish society is built around a tradition of holy scriptures containing chronicles, laws, prophecy and poetry, and a lively collection of commentaries also, which debate the key items of faith and values of this society. It was important to observe strict dietary laws which emphasize the purity of Jewish society in contrast to the depravity of “ gentiles”, in other words non-Jews, who worshipped many gods and had different social and moral values. Alcohol is allowed in the Jewish worldview, but the eating of pork and other “ unclean” animals is forbidden. Regular festivals celebrate the key moments in Jewish history, such as Yom Kippur (the day of atonement) and Sukkot (the festival of booths). Jewish society is well ordered, with rules for taxation, looking after

the poor, marriage and divorce, etc., and there is a strong ethos of obedience to God's laws and the avoidance of sin. Education is highly valued, along with respect for parents and teachers. The Hindu worldview is said to have been around some 5, 000 years ago, and to rest on ideas which are even older than that, but the earliest surviving scriptures are from around 1500 BC. (Heartof Hindusim website, 2011). This society takes its name from the river Indus, and regards its worldview as a universal truth that humans strive to learn about. These scriptures are diverse in nature, consisting of stories, songs and philosophical reflections and there is a long tradition of teachers, called gurus developing small groups of followers to explore particular avenues of belief. There is a pronounced appreciation of the divine, but this is not regarded as a single, personal deity. In contrast to the monotheism of the Jewish world view, Hinduism is pantheistic (seeing divinity in many natural things) or sometimes polytheistic (worshipping many minor deities), Hinduism allows much more diversity of worship styles than traditional Judaism. Interestingly also, the Hindu worldview venerates human beings, who are said to have an eternal soul which contains elements of divinity. Hindu society is based on the concept of karma which just means "actions". The actions of individuals are not judged by god, as in Judaism, but rather seen as part of a whole scheme of reincarnations, whereby a person's actions in one life can affect his or her status in this and the next life. In effect this is like a universal law of nature, which humans must learn to master through efforts to live an upright and moral life. One of the consequences of this worldview is that people see themselves as being predestined to their current status in life, because it has been influenced by

actions in a previous life, and there is a high tolerance of suffering because it is seen as the way to prepare for a better status in the next incarnation.

Hindu society has very many different social classes, arranged in a hierarchy, and it is difficult to move up in this structure. Hindu society values the ability to rise above passions, and the greatest teachers cultivate feats of withdrawal and meditation. Because Hindus view animals as being part of the eternal cycle of rebirth, there is a great respect for all forms of life, and a largely vegetarian lifestyle. Social greetings, called namaste consist of clasped hands in front of the body and a bow of the head, or sometimes even of the whole body. This is a mark of respect for the godliness of every human person, and it can be used also to mark respect in temples and in front of statues which represent various divinities. In summary, both worldviews contain an element of reverence for the divine, but this divinity is conceived very differently. Jewish and Hindu worldviews recommend active participation in world affairs (Judaism) and increasing withdrawal from them (Hinduism) as ideals and this difference influences the development of economic and social habits to this day. [803 words] References Heart of Hinduism website. 2011. Available at: <http://hinduism.iskcon.org/concepts/100.htm>

Religionfacts website. "Judaism." 2011. Available at: <http://www.religionfacts.com/judaism/>