

Traditions essay example

[Sociology](#), [Social Issues](#)



Traditions are among the characteristic aspects of any given community. They define different seasons, moments, beliefs as well as the behavior of the members of the society in question. However, most people do not understand the origins of the traditions that they practice or the different beliefs that they hold. This paper explores the origin of different traditional elements among which are Easter, Christmas, wedding ceremonies and the concept of Satan.

Easter is one of the oldest holidays within the Christian setting. Cline believes that Easter has both pagan and Christian roots (1). The Pagan aspects of the tradition is associated by the fact that it is celebrated during the spring equinox. In Pagan connotation of the period is that it represents a form of restoration of life. It is also considered an essential factor as far as the importance of fertility and reproduction are concerned. The initial celebration of the two aspects were held in 2400 BCE under Zoroastrianism (Cline 3). The Jewish equinox celebrations included the Feast of Weeks and the Passover. The Babylonians initiated the celebration of the Passover, which is common in Judaism and Jewish faith.

The concept of Satan began thousands of years ago. It existed long before 300 BCE since it appeared in documents written long before then (Robinson 5). The term is of Hebrew origin and, as used in the Hebrew scriptures, it means “to oppose”. The Greek term, as used in the Greek Bible is “diabolic”, which forms the basis of the English term “devil”. The term has been used in the Bible to show the source of evil in the society. However, there has been controversies of who Satan is as some scriptures depict God as the source of evil. Other scriptures depict him as an angel of doom while

others portray him as a member of God's heavenly council (Robinson 6). Historians believe that the concept of the Devil arose from a group of people who lived in Indo-European region in 2000 BCE among the group of people known as the Kurgan. The first account of the concept is associated with the afterlife i. e. after death. The second account sought to explain the origin of the different aspects associated with Satan namely demons, snakes and all the evil in the world. In Zoroastrianism, which is the source of the two accounts, the aspects are associated with the devil were created by Angra Manyu also known as Ahriman (Robinson 7). He was the first devil that the world has ever seen.

The origin of Christmas can be best understood by studying the origin of the various elements associated with it. The personification of the tradition is among the earliest elements. Ben Johnson pioneered it in 1616 who played father Christmas/Santa (Crabtree 6). As opposed to the contemporary aspect of father Christmas, he did not give out any presents-he was a figure of fun. Santa Claus introduced the idea of issue gifts especially to children many years later. The exchange of gifts during the Christmas day dates back to 1840 when people began to short poems to their close friends and relatives (Crabtree 5). The pagans also seek to explain the origin of Christmas. In the pagan point of view, Christmas stemmed from old festivals such as the “Roman Saturnalia and the Scadnavian and Teutonic Yule” (Crabtree 7). It also has roots in Mithraism (sun worship) and Zoroastrianism, which are ancient Roman pagan traditions. Roman Catholics believe that Christmas was not one of the earliest festivals of the church. The Christian church has not been able to agree on the exact origin as well as the date of celebration

of Christmas. The early Christians celebrated their Christmas in April and May (Crabtree 10). However, most of them have agreed to celebrate it on 25 December coinciding with the earlier mentioned pagan groups.

Marriage is a tradition that originated mainly from the Jewish tradition. The formalization of marriage, wedding ceremonies, among the Jews began at the beginning of the Persian period during which the Tanakh reached its current form (Browning et al. 25). It marked the beginning of the acknowledgement of the union of a man and a woman in marriage. In the history of the Jews, the rabbinic period is believed to have promoted the Jewish understanding of marriage. During that period, marriage received much attention as a status-affecting ceremony within the Rabbinic circles centered as it was in the Mishnah/law. Rabbinic Judaism's earliest text, four of the seven tractates within the Order of Women deal with marriage and divorce. One may say, along with several historians, that the texts of Rabbinic Judaism situated marriage between the strict contractual notions held by the Roman society (Browning et al. 32). Marriage was perceived as a contract between two individuals that entailed specific obligations and responsibilities to one another. At that time women were in the need of protection and material support, while men were in need of household help and a way to fulfill their commandment to procreate.

As aforementioned traditions form a crucial part of every community around the globe. The essay discussed the origins of the concept of Satan, Christmas, wedding ceremonies and Easter. This fosters the knowledge about the various aspects of the traditions and beliefs within the contemporary setting.

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