

# Essay on buddhism and hinduism

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



The religion called Buddhism is founded on the teachings of one Gautama Siddhartha. This man is commonly referred to as the Buddha which means the one who is awakened. Like most other religions, Buddhism is not only considered a religion by its followers but also a way of life and a philosophy which encompasses several traditions and practices (Haynes 25). According to historical documents, the time that the Buddha conducted his teachings was between the 4th and 6th centuries. The Buddha is recognized by his followers as one who had been awakened and consequently one who had escaped the pathway of rebirth and suffering (Eliot 109). There are two major branches of Buddhism. The two branches are Theravada and Mahayana, meaning the “the school of elders” and “the great vehicle” respectively. The oldest surviving branch is the Theravada, which has a large following in countries like Sri Lanka in Southeast Asia. Mahayana is predominant mainly in East Asia. Vajravana is also recognized as a subcategory of Mahayana (Eliot 110). It is widely practiced in Mongolia and Tibet. Buddhism is mostly practiced in Asian countries. However, recent trends have seen to it that the religion is integrated in other parts of the world as well. Estimates of the number of Buddhists in the world vary in accordance with the definition of Buddhist adherence. However, the lower limit would place the population of Buddhist to about 400 million.

Hinduism is mostly practiced in South Asia. The followers also refer to it as Sanatana Dharma meaning eternal law. Hinduism was formed through the combination of various traditions and cultures. The religion has no single founder. With more than a billion followers, Hindu is the third biggest religion in the world after Christianity and Islam. The religion is considered as one of

the oldest in the world. The cultures and traditions that formed the religion are thousands of years old. There are a wide range of Hindu traditions. Therefore notable features in the religion include the freedom of practice and belief. Hinduism and Buddhism have many similarities as well as major features. The similarities and differences can be based on both the beliefs and practices of the religions.

One of the similarities of the two religions is that they both emphasize on the importance of compassion. The two religions highly disregard violent activities towards any living thing. This is perhaps a religiously universal similarity.

The illusory nature of the world is highly emphasized in practice by the two religions. Further, karma's role in ensuring men are bound to this world is a belief in the both religions. This notion is also used to explain the cycle of deaths and births in the world.

According to Buddha, desire is the biggest cause of suffering. Therefore, removal of desire in humans helps to avoid any possible sufferings (Haynes 24). Hindus consider the practice of actions prompted by desire as sinful. Engaging in activities without desiring would result in liberation as provided in the religion. This provides one similarity between the two religions.

Both Buddhism and Hinduism believe in the concept that there are several hells and heavens. Further, the belief that there exists gods on different dimensions is a shared one (Eliot 111). Certain spiritual activities such as meditation and concentration are also shared beliefs of the two religions.

Cultivation of various states of minds by individuals as a practice is a shared belief.

The belief and practice of detachment and renunciation of the possessions of the world as a condition to entering the spiritual life is a belief that is shared by both religions. Also, the basic belief that desire of worldly possession is the chief cause of suffering is a belief in both religions.

The Advaita philosophy is a concept believed in the Indian religion. The provisions of the philosophy are highly related to the basic foundations and guiding principles of the Buddhist religion.

Perhaps the biggest similarity in the two religions is in their origin. The two religions originated and consequently gained their current form on the Indian soil. The Buddhism founder was a Hindu who later turned into a strict Buddha.

However, the two religions also have numerous differences. One of the basic differences between the two religions is in their origins. Hindu was not founded by a single individual. However, the Buddha is the single man who invented Buddhism. This forms a good basis of differentiation between the two religions.

In Buddhism, no belief to a particular single powerful soul of cause is given. This would in plain terms translate into the fact that Buddhist do not believe in God. However, the Hindu religion has the provision of belief to Brahman, who is the Creator according to this religious belief.

Hindu seems to borrow some aspects and religious beliefs and practices of Buddhism. Hindus accept the Buddha Mahavishnu. However, the Buddhist does not believe in any Hindu god as a substitute. Further, the belief in the four stages of life by the Hindus is not accepted in the Buddhist religion. This order is not followed in the Buddhist religion. One can join the Buddhist order anytime.

The practice of organizing individuals into the monastic order in the Buddhist religion is not practiced in the Hinduism. Individuality is basically a practical factor in Hinduism, a factor which overly negates the basic structure of Buddhism.

In technical terms, Hinduism may not be referred to as a religion but a movement and religious sectarian cultures. These cultures share some religious belief and fundamental law and hence integrate. On the other hand, Buddhism is relatively an organized form of religion with a set of beliefs and practices. These beliefs and practices are known as Dhamma and are based on the Four Noble Truths as well as the Eighthfold Path.

The two religions basically have very many differences as well as similarities. The Hindu religion seems to be the bigger one. Considering the similarities, it is likely that Buddhism might have branched from the larger Hindu religion at some point in time. The strict rules and regulations governing the Buddhist religion seem to be an informed process. This process may have been done so as to ensure that it can stand on its own principles. The results are evident today. Basically, Buddhism has come to be one of the most influential and significant religions in the world today. It is probably due to

this reason that individuals not familiar with the history of India fail to comprehend the deep connection that existed between the two religions. The two religions have significantly enriched each other in numerous ways despite their varying beliefs and practices.

## **WORKS CITED**

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