

Hinduism will look at
the similarities and
differences



Hinduism and Christianity have similar fundamentals although they hold different beliefs, that is, they have similar goals but their means of achieving these goals differs. These differences may be reflected in their teaching, stories, and their way of life in general. Both Hinduism and Christianity believe in life after death, heaven, and holiness. They are among the oldest religions in the world that are largely populated. Hinduism can be defined as a religion that holds many beliefs and practices while Christianity holds specific beliefs.

This paper will look at the similarities and differences between the two religions. It would be a challenging task to give a comparison between the two religions although there are some unique similarities and differences. Hinduism has been in existence for more than 3500 years. It is one of the oldest religions in the world, which began in 1500 BCE in Indus valley.

The highest population of Hinduism is found in India where majority of people are Hindus. There are other followers of Hinduism distributed all over the world making the total number of Hindus to an approximately eight hundred million. Christianity is a bit younger than Hinduism and it has been in existence for about two thousand years. It began after the death of Christ who had come with good news regarding human values. When Christ was still alive, he taught human being about the love of God, His willingness to forgive sin, and the principles of goodness. Since then, Christianity has become the world's largest religion with over two billion followers distributed all over the world (Clemmons 102). Compared to other religions, Christianity covers the greatest geographical area and has many denominations.

Both Christianity and Hinduism believe in heaven, however, Hindus have different concepts about heaven. For instance, Vishnu worshippers' belief that, after death they will go to heaven where there will be no suffering, pain or fear and where they will be able to live in Vishnu's glory. On the other hand, all Christians believe in the same concept regarding heaven. Christians believe that, heaven is a place where they will dwell forever together with the three figures of God (Son, Father, and Holy Spirit). It is a place of salvation and tranquility, a place where there will be no hatred, suffering, nor pain. Hindus believe that, all living creatures have souls which have to be perfected through spiritual cleansing in order to enter into another level of life referred to as " Moksha". This process is called reincarnation and it takes place over a period of many years.

Hinduism concept of reincarnation can be compared to the Christian belief of subjective perfection of the soul. In Christianity, it is believed that, the human soul enters heaven after going through the process of subjective perfection and not pure perfection as in Hinduism. Christians believe that, it was only Christ the son of God, who went through perfection before going to heaven. In Christianity, the phase of death and rebirth is more of an allegory than a reality whereas in Hinduism it is held as a reality that a soul actually dies then it is reborn. Christianity holds that, the physical body goes through many deaths and rebirths during the same lifetime (Clemmons 94).

This is caused by sin and repentance; when one sins, the body (or part of the body) dies and it is born again when one repents. In Christianity, the process of perfection is seen as a metaphor than an actual one whereas in Hinduism perfection is seen as a reality. The process of achieving perfection in both <https://assignbuster.com/hinduism-will-look-at-the-similarities-and-differences/>

Hinduism and Christianity marks the entry to Heaven or Maksha. Hinduism recognizes all religions and embraces them as valid and different from each other. According to Hinduism, all religions can be defined as the different means used to achieve one end. On the other hand, Christianity recognizes Christ as the only way to reach God. It does not recognize other religions and terms them as invalid (Jones 80). Christians believe that, one can not see God unless he belief in His son (Jesus Christ).

They have faith that Christ was sent by his father to come and die for the sins of the universe and that one cannot be saved unless he repents his sins and allow Christ to take control over his life. Christ is seen as the only mediator between man and God, and the pope (who is the head of the Catholic Church) is seen as Christ's representative on earth. Christianity believe that it is God alone who deserve to be praised and glorified since He is the starter and finisher of life. God is composed of three figures, that is, God the father, God the son, and God the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, Hindus believe in three primary Gods who they suppose operate as one in Brahman. They hold that, all three Gods are the crucial reality and they guide their way of life.

All their beliefs are related to the three Gods and there is no superiority among them. The bible is a compilation of consecrated writings in Christianity. It is not one book but a collection of 66 books written over a long period of time. The Bible is in two parts: the old and the New Testament. All Christians believe the Bible is in some way the inspired word of God.

When Christians refer to the Bible as inspired, they mean that the writers of the Bible appear to have been influenced by God (Orr 20). The Bible is the ability to enlighten Christians not only on what to accept as true but also how to practice the faith. They hold that, all the teaching and doctrine needed by Christians come from the bible alone and no other book. They also hold that, the bible is the only religious book that should be followed by all Christians. All the teaching found in the bible is assumed to be correct and accurate and believers are guided by the Holy Spirit to read and understand the bible. However, there are some Christians who do disagree that the Bible is the only authority, nor do they agree on the importance to be given to sections in the Old and New testaments.

Some Christians accept other authorities as sources of knowledge from God to give details on how to live by God's laws (Hocking 3). Hindus have an influential literature that has been widely accepted even by people who do not believe in Hinduism (particularly the white), because of the wisdom contained in it. Their scriptures come from many sacred writing which have a say in its doctrine. The most sacred scriptures of Hinduism, the Vedas are looked upon by the tradition as terminologies of eternal truth that are exposed to humankind through perceptions at the beginning of every great extraterrestrial cycle. Resulting from the Sanskrit root vid, " to know", the word Veda means " sacred knowledge".

Even though there are some Hindu groups that disregard or even lessen the importance of the Vedas, approval of their authority has been one of the few criteria that Hindus have used to decide which religious groups India could be reckoned as part of their tradition. Intellectuals have usually held that the <https://assignbuster.com/hinduism-will-look-at-the-similarities-and-differences/>

Vedic texts were poised by an Indo-European-speaking people known as the Aryans, who were moving into the Indian subcontinent (Stietencron 235).

Other sacred scriptures include the Puranas, Mahabharata, and the Ramayana. Hindus follow the law of Karma in which actions are believed to influence the rebirth of the soul through reincarnation.

For instance, if a person lives badly, his soul will be born into a lower state (in the body of worm) whereas if a person lives a good life his soul will be born into a higher state (in the body of Brahmin). This is similar to Christianity where good people are rewarded in heaven while evil doings do not get any reward. This is to mean that, both Christianity and Hinduism encourage followers to continually do well and live morally on earth in order to reap more benefits. They promote standards of righteousness such as love for neighbors, observing societal values, obedience, respect for God and man, trust among others. Both religions teach their followers on the importance of respecting God and their fellow man as a way of attracting God's love. Both religions believe in the purification of soul from sin as a way of preparing a believer to believe in the love of God.

Purification or cleansing is carried out by use of water in both religions. For instance, in Christianity cleansing takes many forms including but not limited to baptism (either through immersion or sprinkling), and placing of holy water at the church entrance to bless people as they enter. In Hinduism, believers bath communally before going to the temple as a way of cleansing themselves and they also bath for more than two times each day to make sure that they are clean as a symbol of self-respect as well as a way of

honoring God. Therefore both regions believe in the cleansing of body and soul as a way of finding God's love.

Hindus believe in the extraordinary force in the Gods that influences their life. This has been accepted even by non-Hindus who believe that, there exist some Gods who are not like human being. However, Hindus Gods take the form of Human beings except Brahman who has no form. Every Hindu family chooses the God who they want to worship and prays to Him in order to bless their family. On the other hand, Christians believe in only one omniscient God who is not like man. He does not have the form of human beings and is unique in his own way. He lives in everything and everyone and is always present when someone wants him.

Christian God is seen as a friend, a companion, a parent and a guide who is ready to help his children (Christians) when they are down and when they fall, he raises them up (Clemmons 20). In Hinduism there are many forms of truth for instance polytheism that extends afar reincarnation i. e. truth and the (level of) experience go hand in hand. In Christianity, Christ is the light and the sole truth. Christianity puts more emphasis on extending love to (our) neighbors whereas Hinduism insists that we are our own neighbors (Banner and Torrance 17).

Hinduism holy book teaching's is on us trying all (four) paths, convinced that fulfillment can only be attained in the fourth path. As opposed to Hinduism (where experience prevails), Christianity is entirely based on faith and experience is not recognized (Burke 36). It is even a Christian heretical

doctrine, but it is not idiocy. Both religions (especially in the ancient) hold sacrifices to their God as a way of repenting their sins.

Sacrifices were also offered to please God and to ask for something specific. They both command righteousness and faithfulness and failure to comply with them attract penalties. In conclusion I would say that, Hinduism and Christianity are religions that look so different yet so similar. Both religions believe in God who has the power to save and to destroy. Hindus believe in three primary Gods while Christians believe in only one omniscient God. Hinduism and Christianity are old regions that have withstood the test of time. They teach good morals to their followers through teachings that warn against evil doing and encourage good by promising reward for good needs.

In both Hinduism and Christianity, there is life after death where believers will go to heaven. However, some Christian churches especially the Catholics discriminate against the non-believers, who are not allowed to go to church unless they surrender their lives to Jesus Christ.

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