

Example by StudyDriver

Source: <https://studydriver.com/hindu-and-buddhism/>

Hindu and Buddhism Example

Systems of faith and worship form the major characteristic of religion. However, the religion that this paper tries to explain is one which believes in a supreme being and a power beyond the natural, often referred to as a god in all the religions (Cipriani, 2017). The worshiper is always free to choose the one to worship and in so doing, they perform all religious acts believed to appease their particular god. Religious practices are often backed by religious books that contain scripture and sacred writing often believed to be inspired by the supernatural force behind the said religion. The principles and set of rules inscribed in the scripture of the holy books will often direct the doctrine of the believers of that particular religion (Cipriani, 2017). The main focus in this text is the comparison and contrasting of beliefs about Karma/rebirth and Samsara/Nirvana among the Hindu and Buddhists.

Hinduism is the practice of the Hindu religion which is most prevalent in South Asia and practiced as a cultural tradition too (Barua, 2017). However, with the world becoming a global village, it is now easy to find the practice in most places of the world. Hinduism is among the world's oldest religion with its origin estimated to date 4,000-12,000 years in age (Barua, 2017). Swami Vivekananda is believed to be the father of Hinduism as he is the

one who handed down the teachings the Hindu use today. When it comes to the major value systems, the main highlight in the Hindu religion is the belief in reincarnation, the truth is eternal and individual souls are immortal. These are just but a few fundamental truths in Hindu that shape the religion to be as it is currently (Barua, 2017).

Conversely, Buddhism is believed to have taken root in the world around 2,500 years ago (Barua, 2017). Buddhists place their hope or trust traditionally on no god at all as they do not have a particular supernatural being to call god. However, their teachings and way of life are tailored in such a way that they follow the teachings of Buddha who is a pioneer in the religion. Nirvana is the ultimate state every Buddhist endeavors to attain in life. Unlike most religions, the Buddhist believe that there is nothing permanent and that all things change at some point (Barua, 2017). Anyone can be a Buddha and the religion is widespread across different parts of the world.

Karma/Rebirth

Karma is a term used commonly by Hindus and Buddhists alike to refer to actions that one does. Karma in both religions is believed to drive the cycle of rebirth or reincarnation. Both Hindu and Buddhism believe that when one dies, they come back to life in a different form, either human or not human. Likewise, both religions strongly believe that actions often warrant reactions, therefore, everything done when alive translates to the quality of life lived in the next life. Actions done are considered the main catalysts to the life one will live in future. Important to note is also that both religions believe that one's actions never go forgotten by the universe and they must pay for their actions. Karma, therefore, plays a major role in the levels and nature of sufferings experienced by an individual in their life cycle (Kakar, 2018). Likewise, the presence of quality life also depicts one favored by karma in positive ways. Hindus and Buddhists alike agree on the importance of living a good life where actions committed are good and pleasing to have done on oneself.

On the contrary, there are various points the two religions differ on when it comes to the concept of Karma. In the Hindu religion, Karma is more of a consequential thing that can never be evaded. This means that whatever wrong or right was done by someone must be paid off in equal measure by actions from others to them in their

entire lifetime. Hindus believe that life sufferings or successes become one's portion for life due to the actions previously done and it will require a lot of skill to get out of the chain of suffering being experienced. In saying so, only a change in behavior warrants the attraction of positive karma to a person. Hinduism believes in the soul (Atman) and the eternity of self (Brahman) which to some point differ from the Hindu concept of karma. In Buddhism, one can, in the quest to seek Nirvana, escape the reality of their Karma. Buddhists believe that while the suffering exists, one can get to divine bliss when they fully unlock themselves and realize their soul and their eternity (King, 2017). The full realization of Atman and Brahman enable one to evade the real life and live in their own reality not having to suffer the consequences of their actions (King, 2017). In Hindu however, one can never escape karma as it is a continuous payment for the actions committed (Kakar, 2018). Whenever you do an action towards someone or something, the intentions for the act done supersedes the action done in Buddhism, therefore, making the actions not entirely 'karma worthy'. If I pour water off the balcony for example and it lands on a passerby by mistake, I will not have to worry that someone will also pour water on me as it is done accidentally. In Hindi however, every action done is subject to rebirth and the intent never supersedes the action done.

Rebirth in the Hindu religion is often associated with coming back in different states not necessarily as a human being. The process of rebirth is not defined by the actions done in the past and one can come back in any form not because they were good or bad (Kakar, 2018). However, it is only the quality of life lived in the new form that will be bad based on the actions in the previous lives. Buddhism, on the contrary, seems to be intentional about the rebirth of individuals. The religion recognizes ignorance, desire and hatred as the main catalysts of a rebirth taking place. It is hence possible to evade rebirth once you know the way of Buddha and this is getting rid of desire, ignorance and hatred. Once this is done, one attains the state of Nirvana whereby rebirth is stopped completely and you enjoy quality life (King, 2017).

Samsara/Nirvana

Samsara is defined by both religions as the continuous process of rebirth or reincarnation (Kakar, 2018). One of

the common beliefs about this process is that the soul is carried on continuously into a new form when one dies. Both religions meet at the point of enlightenment as the only way to reduce the influence of Karma on lives thus ending the state of samsara. Likewise, the Hindus and Buddhists believe in improving the quality of life by performing actions of high moral quality to enhance a better life upon reincarnation (King, 2017).

On the contrary, it is important to note that while the Hindu religion views reincarnation as a continuous process thus the inability to evade Samsara, the Buddhists thrive on living a quality of life that will enable them to stop the process of reincarnation (Kakar, 2018). Moreover, the Buddhists believe that suffering as a reality of life is brought about by the desires, ignorance and hatred and once one attains the path of Buddha by knowing their soul and eternity of self then Samsara ceases (King, 2017).

When it comes to the concept of Nirvana, both the Hindu and Buddhist religions agree that this is the highest quality of life one can achieve. Similarly, it is attained in both by a set of actions and life lived on earth. Both religions also concur that this is a state where one has all their suffering taken away. However, the concept of Nirvana in Hindu is more of a place, like heaven where their gods reside or live (Kakar, 2018). Nirvana in Hindu can only be achieved by the soul out of the flesh. In Buddhism, gods are not a reality and Nirvana is a state of the mind that one experiences while still on Earth. Additionally, Hindus believe that only Brahmins can achieve Nirvana, a great deviation from the Buddhist belief that anyone who fully follows the path of Buddha can attain Nirvana (King, 2017).

In conclusion, the similarities between Hinduism and Buddhism are many especially in the structure of beliefs. The details of the belief are the ones that set the religions apart from each other. Likewise, there are very many religions in the world but the difference between them is either the belief or the god worshipped.

References

Barua, B. (2017). *Gaya and Buddha-Gaya (Early history of the holy land)*. Chuckervartty Chatterjee Co Ltd (1931).

Cipriani, R. (2017). *Sociology of religion: An historical introduction*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Kakar, S. (2018). Moksha: On the Hindu Quest for Immortality. In *Imaginations of Death and the Beyond in India and Europe* (pp. 3-17). Springer, Singapore.

King, S. B. (2017). Karma from an Engaged Buddhist Perspective. *A Mirror Is for Reflection: Understanding Buddhist Ethics*, 166.