

Religions of the World: Hinduism

Task Requirements (Question)

When studying world religions, being able to read the religious text and connect it to concepts becomes a main skill. This assignment asks you to choose one religious text from the list below and connect it to the concepts learned in class.

Select one of the passages. Write a short essay that summarizes the passage and connects it to the main doctrines, rituals, and/or history of the religion that it is associated with. (Make sure that your response clearly draws on ideas from the learning materials and readings.)

Judaism

David & Goliath

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Samuel+17&version=NIV>

Adam & Eve <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+2%3A4-3%3A24&version=NIV>

Christianity

Parable of the Good Samaritan

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+10%3A25-37&version=NIV>

Revealed Qur'an

<https://quran.com/10>. Click on the link - use Chapter 10, verses 1-26.

Buddhism

Zen Koans (select two of the following koans)

<http://www.ashidakim.com/zenkoans/zenindex.html>

Hinduism

One of the Creation Myths from the Rig Veda (go to the writing in italics)

<https://www.creationmyths.org/rigveda-10-129-indian-creation/rigveda-10-129-indian-creation-7-doniger-translation.html>

For the passage, please consider the following questions: What is the overall message the passage tries to convey? How does it encourage people to see the world in which they live and their place in it? And, most importantly, how does it reflect the doctrines and beliefs of the religion? Please support all of your answers with reference to the textbook and lecture notes. Your essay will be marked on form AND content. Please write in clear and concise sentences. Assignments in point form will not be accepted.

A suggested structure of your essay could be:

Introduction (brief paragraph introducing your assignment)

Summary of the religious passage

Discussion of how this passage connects to the main beliefs and history of the religion;

Conclusion

Research and Citations

Do not use any additional Internet sources for this assignment

Include a "List of References" at the end of your assignment

Answer

The Creation of the world, the universe is one common subject that is discussed in every religion. “The origin of everything is sacred” (Molloy 7). It is an obvious point for the discussion to start, because once of the question of the world was created is answered one can move on to other subjects like how man was created and so on. In Hindu philosophy Creation is discussed in the Rig Veda is different hymns. This paper will study the translation of Mandala (hymn) 10:129 by Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty and compare it with another story from the Veda - the story of Manu that presents a subtle contrast about Creation, it will also discuss the story of Indra also found in the Rig Veda and its connection with the creation

According to O’Flaherty Mandala 10:129 (“Nasadiya Sukta – Not the non-existent”) discusses the time before creation. There was Nothing before creation, neither existence nor non-existence, neither sky nor space, neither death nor immortality. Yet there was something, that breathed even when there was no air.

This is introduction to the Creation in Rig Veda; it is complex and confusing but at the same time inviting and intriguing. The next few lines provide some clarification, as they mention the “Awakening of the One by heat” (O’Flaherty). This is the life force and the heat means the desire. The desire to get rid of the loneliness. Creation myths are often based on loneliness. The life force is alone and is frustrated by the vast emptiness around (O’Flaherty).

However, the loneliness triggers a desire it also signifies the awakening of the Creator and the start of the creation (O’Flaherty). The 5th stanza states “there were seed-placers; there were powers. There was an impulse beneath, there was giving force above” (O’Flaherty). This gives rise to the suggestion of a female and male relationship, which created the universe.

However, there are other interpretations of the Mandala because, the Rig Veda is 3000 years old and the original text was first copied and hand written down thousands of years ago. It is most likely that are typing mistakes, errors that have distorted the original meanings of the text and one can never know what the original texts really meant (O’Flaherty).

While this story describes creation on a cosmic scale there is another tale of creation on an earthly scale. This tale is also found in the Vedas and it about the story of Manu. A fish foretells Manu that the world will be destroyed in a flood. He instructs Manu to build a boat and he (the fish) would drag the boat away during the flood and place it on the highest mountain. Manu alone survives the flood. He becomes lonely and “wishing for a progeny, he began to worship and do penance...in a year a woman was created” (Hopfe and Woodward 82).

Finally, there is the story of Indra, who is the most powerful “He spread the wide earth out and firmly fixed it, smote with his thunderbolt and loosed the waters” (Hopfe and Woodward 80). This is yet another version of Creation, but it is quite different from the Mandala 10:129. In the first version the Creation is compared to a birth, it is a yearning, whereas this creation is through violence, it is the unleashing the forces of nature. Indra

“found the cattle and he found the horses, he found the plants, the forests and waters” (Hopfe and Woodward 80).

The first tale of creation forces us to contemplate on how insignificant we are when we consider ourselves as a part of the universe. The second discusses the virtue of helping the helpless and being sensitive to the needs of the smallest beings of earth. These small beings can become our saviours in the future. This explanation of creation is also quite humbling and is philosophical. The third story is of natural violence as it mentions thunder, lightning (thunderbolts), loosed waters (rain) that is responsible for the creation. But there is significant difference, the third story mentions how nature was created. While the first two were mythological the last one seems most plausible. Finally, there reason why there are so many renditions of the theme of creation, it is because Hinduism is one of the most complex religions of the world, as it is varied and diverse of all religions, “Therefore for the Hindu the possible religious views are infinite” (Hopfe and Woodward 73).

This paper studied 3 versions of creation in Hinduism. All these versions have different explanations of the creation. The first is at a cosmic level, the second is at a philosophical level and the third shows creation as a product of nature.

Works Cited

- Hopfe, Lewis M., and Mark R. Woodward. *Religions of the World*. 12th ed., Prentice Hall, 2011.
- Molloy, Michael. *Experiencing the World's Religions*. 5th ed., McGraw-Hill Humanities/Social Sciences/Languages, 2009.
- O'Flaherty, Wendy D. "About Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty's Translation of the Rig Veda 10:129 Creation." *Creation Myths — Ancient Stories About How the World Began*, 1981, www.creationmyths.org/rigveda-10-129-indian-creation/rigveda-10-129-indian-creation-7-doniger-translation.htm.