Similarities and Differences: A Comparative Analysis of Islam and Christianity

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Abstract
Islam and Christianity, which are the Abrahamic religions, have a history of being related and hold a set of key principles. This paper focuses on a comparative study of the two world religions under discussion, illuminating the common and the peculiar characteristics of each. A fundamental point where both Judaism and Christianity share common denominators is monotheism which is the belief in a one God. This paper presents the issue of common regard by both Jews and Christians for the prophets such as Abraham and Jesus. It examines their importance to the religions especially to the Jews and Christians. The main differences are next examined, the first being Jesus' veneration in Christianity. By contrast, he is only a prophet as he is in Islam. The essence of God, the different ways which the sacred scripture and the kind of worship are explained are also compared. Through determining such resemblances and contrasts, our article is tailored to an extent that cultural understanding in the modern society of Islam and Christianity is broadened and then, inter-religious dialogue and respect among different faiths is promoted.
Keywords: Islam, Christianity, Abrahamic Religions, Essence of God, Resemblances

Introduction

Islam and Christianity with its two richest and most remarkable faiths are the main religions which are shared by billions of followers all over the world. Islam, which is widely known for its divine founder Muhammad, was born in the 7th century CE (Common Era) on the belief in only one God (Allah) and Mohammed's finality as a prophet, as mentioned in the holy book of Quran. Christianity, first ideology founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ in the 1st century CE, believed in Jesus as the son of God, the Son of Man, and the savior of humanity as described in the Bible. The two religions are based on rich histories and diverse traditions, which are key agents in transforming human life (Esposito, 2002). Captivating a comparative analysis of the Muslim and Christian religions gives a vital insight into their common grounds, divergence in dogmas, and varying outlooks.

Such a way of dealing with the problem around fostering a deeper understanding between the two religions as it highlights the historical, cultural and doctrinal connections, shedding more light on the areas of intersection and difference as contended by (Denny, 2010). By comparing, we can pursue a more sophisticated examination of doctrines in religion, rituals, ethics, and habits, with some features which are common amongst monotheistic religions including the occurrence of prophetic traditions and moral teachings and others which are exclusive such as the view of god's nature and the place of religious authority (Al-Azmeh, 2003). Comparison of the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity familiarizes scholars and practitioners with the

culture of the other religion and they can, in turn, promote dialog and cooperation among those of different faiths (Coulson, 1963).

In connection with this, it is quite clear that this paper would like to check whether there are similar attributes as well as the differences between these two leading religions of the world. This chapter is based on a thorough investigation of the foundational principles, historical events, and contemporary expressions of both Islamic and Christian religions. Through this investigation, the article tries to decipher how their common roots and divergent interpretations contribute to a broad religious spectrum. Comparative studies using such tools as an assessment of dogmas, books of scripture, customs of religion, and cultural traditions that aim to enhance the comprehension of the complex connection between Islam and Christianity are a crucial element for this study.

Shared Abrahamic Roots

While Islam and Christianity stand firmly on the belief of mono-theism, professing the all-powerful, all-knowing, and always-present nature of the sole Creator, God (Esposito, 2002). Such a conviction regarding the God One is the most consequential and fundamental tenet of both religions which determine their philosophical conceptions, practice, and ethics they preach. In Islam, the concept of Tawhid emphasizes the absolute unity and sovereignty of Allah, while Christianity professes the doctrine of the Trinity, affirming the unity of God in three persons: Otec, Syn Hlebine, and Holy Spirit. In spite of disagreements in doctrinal expression, the idea of single and the same god unifies Islam and Christianity, thus pointing to a common ground between them and showing their creedal and religious coherence (Hidayatullah, 2019). Besides Christianity, Islam also places prophets and messengers at the core by also acting as mediators between Allah and humans, and showing the highest standards of morality by guiding humans in the right path (Esposito, 2010). The common figure of Abraham, the liberator of monotheism who is highly venerated by both traditions and symbolizes personal fidelity, commitment and unquestionable faith has been established.

The status of Moses as a lawgiver and liberator is high. He was granted the Torah by God and is known as the Prophet of Islam for becoming the follower of Tawrat. Also, Jesus Christ is depicted in Islam as a prophet and in Christianity as Son of God, a sign of God's divine love, mercy, and redemption, in the earth (Esposito, 2008). As common ground that all believers of these world-shaping prophetic tales stand on, that shared respect for these religious figures from Islamic and Christian religious history points to the overlap of theological backgrounds and spiritual heritage (Gibb, 1953). On one hand, both Islam and Christianity profess a common creed of ethical values as empathy, justice and social duty are timeless principles which preach in the holy books of these religions as well as teachings of early prophets (Esposito, 2017). The Quran, God's words, places great emphasis on rahmah, which is the Arabic term that refers to His infinite compassion for humanity (Nasr, 2009). The believers are thereafter urged to practice the same sentiment by having compassion, kindness and mercy towards others.

Key Doctrinal Differences

According to the Islam, God is represented by the absolute monotheism which is known as Tawhid and stresses uniqueness and indivisibility of Allah (Esposito, 2004). Muslims realize the one God who is beyond all things and the whole universe, meaning that any mediation or association with this Absolute is wrong. On the other hand, Christianity adheres to the doctrine of the Trinity, which professes the unity of God in three persons: Son, Holy Spirit (McGrath, 2012). Christians firmly believe in the three-part nature of God, presenting the God the Father together with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit as the T were. Though both religions confess the superiority of God, they have divergence in the domains of God singularity and plurality due to their own essence, membership and understanding (Brown, 2008).

The central and singular orientation of Christianity reclines on the person of Jesus Christ, because Jesus is regarded as the divine Son of God in whom there are real Godliness and humanliness (Pelikan, 2005). Such claim by Christians derives from their belief in Jesus as the Christ (Messiah), who was sacrificially nailed at the cross yet reassured them of salvation. Humanity thanks Him. Additionally, Jesus is honored and given the highest level of respect as another person of the Trinity who is one God. The second point, however, is that Jesus is highly revered by Islam as the prophet indisputably ordained by God (Nazr, 2007). For Muslims, Jesus is greatly honored as a righteous prophet who was considered as a man, performed miracles, and proclaimed the message of God's oneness. However, he was refuted by Christianity, they claimed him to be as divine being, the reason for his crucifixion. The Islamic teaching, on the other hand, holds that Jesus is a human prophet born to Mary, her virginity. Thus, He is not divine (Esposito, 2000).

Practices and Observances

Then both Islam and Christianity display ceremonial ways that work as a pathway to spirituality and the deepest connection with the God. The Salah (five daily prayers in Islam) are essential to the Muslims' daily practice in their lives. It is an opportunity for the Muslims to have communication with Allah and being reminded of their faith (Esposito, 1998). Fasting during the month of Ramadan (Sawm) that is performed by abstinence of food and drink as well as stopping other physical needs such as, sexual activity and smoking, from dawn until sunset is another important practice which is known to have several beneficial effects such self-control, empathy and spiritual growth. Besides, the Muslim Hajj-pilgrimage which is the fifth pillar of Islam, also highlights the aspects of life as thus: unity, equality and submission to God (Peters, 1996). Christianity also accord prayer an integral role as a way of Intercourse with God often done in a secluded manner or while in worship. Throughout Lent, many Christians practice fasting, which may be meant to be their time of self-denial and reflection - symbolizing the fasting of Jesus in the wilderness. Unlike most beliefs, pilgrimage is not compulsory in Christianity. For some denominations, sites mean a lot as they journey to them to receive spiritual enlightenment; some of the sights include Jerusalem (Sumption, 2008).

In contrast, Shariah acts as a unitary system of life based on the principles of Quran and Sunnah which covers all the areas of life comprising of personal morality, family law, and

community ethics among others (Armi, 2001). The sharia offers directions on day-to-day matters such as times of prayer, fasting, charity and dietary regulations as well as interactions between human beings aiming at the fairness and the welfare of individual and community (An-Na'im, 2008). However, differently from Christianity, Sharia possesses no standard judicial system. Rather than using the universal Canon Law that serves as an umbrella covering ecclesiastical concerns and the Church's organizational aspect, (Norman, 2009). Similarly, Canon Law explores questions about the nature of sacraments, disciplining clergy members, governing of church communities, and theological doctrines, which the law aims to regulate (Tanner, 2012).

In Islam and Christianity, salvation and life hereafter are the beliefs that are shaped by the dominant Perspectives in these religions nurtured by their beliefs and doctrines. Islam depicts afterlife as a continuation of an individual spiritual journey that began in earth live and then ends at the Day of Judgment and eternally reward or punishment thereafter (Esposito, 2002). Iman (faith), which spans from both belief and action, is the foundational concept in the Islamic worldview. Thus, salvation lies in Iman along with Amal, which means righteous deeds. The most superior stage of salvation however, is proximity to Allah's mercy, attainable through submission to His will and compliance with His guidance. Christianity, in its turn, puts the deity of Jesus at the center of the salvation teaching suggesting that a person can be saved only by believing in Jesus, the Son of God, and by accepting His sacrificial death as a means of atonement and redemption (McGrath, 2011). For the Christian theology, the final verdict of dead come with the judging of final which takes one either to the paradise or the separation from God for eternity.

Contemporary Issues and Interfaith Dialogue

Two religions, Islam and Christianity, face the same conflicts that present the challenges of nowadays. In this way, both religions are seen to be aligned on the fundamental concept of social justice and helping others, with the resultant harnessing of their strengths to engage in charity work and bring to light the plight of the socially disadvantaged (Hussain, 2003). The conflict resolution techniques, the principle of nonviolence, and the peace building measures are also valued highly by both the religions (Abu-Rabi', 2009). When it comes to these problems in particular, cooperation on these problems reveals a strong nation of interfaith synergy.

Communicating across faiths is one avenue through which Islam and Christianity can work through their misunderstandings and learn to work together. Indeed, prayer groups among the adherents of both religions will help to shatter the conventional views and establish strong ties of understanding. Through dialogue, people are able to come up with solutions for the common problems and this will promote peace-making and play a central role in nation-building (Knitter 2002). Common ground ensue, but drifting apart also occurs in the process. Theological differences, most of which emerged from the definition of God and the role of Jesus in the entire realm, can be touchy issues (Miller, 2013). The complexity and uncertainty associated with some past disputes and existing conflicts between some countries are also factors that may hinder the maintenance of mutual understanding. Meanwhile dialogue is the essential route of this process and the wish of better harmony, Instructions: Humanize the given sentence.

Conclusion

To sum up, intercultural analysis of Islam and Christianity has a major contribution to the understanding of their common ground. Through tracing common ancestry from Abraham, ethical standpoints and even some engagements, we realize more profound the sewing threads that interweave the two ancient creeds together. Accepting the fact that people are kind of same and unlike the same time is indispensable for the formation of the understanding and respect. Interfaith dialogue, founded on a base of comprehension, leads to an alliance within both Islam and Christianity in the problems deriving from the current social issues, such as peace and social justice promotion. Further studies might then investigate how the identity of each religion develops and can influence other religions, as well as the common theme of how religion relates to the wider world of globalization. Engaging in an ongoing relationship between comparative studies and exchanges is the surest way of drawing bridges of mutual understanding and cooperation among the Christians and Muslims in the interdependent world today.

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