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About

This blog will discuss the importance that scripture has in the western, monotheistic religions. The religions will include Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. These are three very popular religions in the United States with members of all three dealing with persecution everyday for the beliefs that they hold. The goal of this blog is to not only point out the effect that each religions scripture has on its particular religion but to go as far to point out similarities the three varying scriptures. My hope is that these blog posts are able to provide insight for those that do not know much about other religions than their own, as well as to help people find a common ground in each.

– Brian Lee Patterson

2016 - 03

The Importance of Scripture - 2016-03-20 12:00

Throughout the world, much of the population bases their lives on the fundamentals and teachings of religion. An individual's religion can shape a person's life in more ways than we tend to think. A religion can shape their viewpoints, affect the development of moral standards, and daily activities just to name a few. Because religion has such an impact on the lives of a great deal of the world's populous, it is equally important to look at the foundation of religions. In the western world, the three main religions are Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. To the naked eye, these religions seem to be strikingly dissimilar, but over the course of these posts you will come to know how congruous and akin these religions are with one another. The first and one of utmost importance similarity is that scripture will be found at the foundational and fundamental level of all three aforementioned religions. The corresponding scripture substantially guides the lives of the members affiliated with them. In Judaism, the writings that are the basis for the religion and its followers are found in what is called the Tanakh. It is divided into three sections, the most notable the Torah, then the Nevi'im and the Ketuvim sections. The names correspondingly standing for teachings, prophets, and writings. The Torah is the most used and the most infamous. It is read three times a week. Two small readings from the scroll are read on Monday and Wednesday. The large weekly reading is done on the day of Shabbat or Sabbath, which is Saturday for the Jewish community. It is also encouraged that the followers take time to do their own daily readings. The rules of the religion are laid out in these texts. The followers are meant to read the passages and information divulged to them

throughout the bible, decipher the meanings and then apply what they have learned to guide their lives. It inherently is meant to define the way the people should live daily. Islam has its own Scripture. The Qur'an is the foundation for the lives of all Muslim people. To them the importance of their bible cannot be understated. It is used in every Islamic ritual that is part of the religion. It is used daily for prayer and it is encouraged that the followers of Islam dedicate themselves to reciting and deciphering the book frequently to develop and understand the meanings because these words are what guide the spiritual development and lives that they will lead. The Qur'an is what guides the followers in their desire to be obedient to Allah and act accordingly to the rules that he has laid out in the Holy Scripture. It sets strict guidelines and the importance of its use cannot be understated for a follower of Islam and their viewpoints. The Bible is the foundational scripture that guides the lives of Christians throughout the world. It has different versions for the different subcategories of Christianity but for the purposes of this topic the differences are not relevant to the main fundamental importance the Bible plays. The Bible, like the above-mentioned scriptures is the guiding light for all Christians. It is used in all ritual services and it is encouraged to be read in some portion daily by those practicing the faith, however this is not mandatory. The Bible has two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. The first gives the guidelines and the rules for people to follow. It also contains the information on the history and development of the religion before the Life of Jesus. The latter, is more about the life of Jesus and is used for an idea or plan for how the rules should be followed to live a life according to God's plan. It is clear to see that scripture has a greater influence on our world and the people in it then one would be inclined to realize with out thinking about religion. It is essential to understand that it is the foundation for most religions and in particularly the

three mentioned in this post. They are the chosen guides that these practitioners chose to lead their lives by.

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Previously, we discussed the impact that scripture has on the three main western religions: Islam, Judaism and Christianity. It is well known that society believes that these religions have vastly different beliefs and that the followers of these religions tend to have differing view points. While it is true that these religions and the practitioners have clear differences, I find it more important to note what they share in common. The focus is often on what separates them from one another and this attitude often garners more divisiveness. It is important for people to be open minded when dealing with religious ideas. From this openness, people experience intellectual growth by having their own ideas challenged and gain understanding from learning about the thoughts of others. This post is dedicated to pointing out some of the major similarities the three religious scriptures have with each other.

Monotheism. This idea is a main focus in all three religious scriptures. All Jews, Muslims, and Christians believe that there is only one God and each scripture reflects this idea. In Islam, the name for the God is Allah. He is the creator and answers the prayers of the people. This God is good and the people are to devote themselves to him. Christianity and Judaism both believe in only one God. This God is also the creator of all things. He is all powerful and knowing. He answers prayers, like Allah and the people are dedicated to living a life according to his will. So, not only do these three religions share the idea of monotheism, but they have very similar ideas about what the one true God is like.

Prophets. It should also be pointed out that each religion's text has scripture that is devoted to the teachings of prophets. These prophets contain wisdom and knowledge from God that is used to teach the people how they

should live there lives. The teachings of the prophets are fundamental in the religions and make up a large portion of the text because this where people get examples of how they should live according to God's word. It is important to note that these religions not only share the same ideas about prophets, but they actually share most of the same ones. This points to why there are so many similarities between the three. While there has been some deviation in the interpretations of the teachings, many of the ideas are still shared among them.

Eternal life. All three of these religious scriptures discuss eternal life. Each of them believes there to be a heaven (referred to as paradise in Islam) and a hell. It is the responsibility of each person to live according to the commandments and rules that God has laid out in order to achieve eternal life in heaven. Christianity and Islam are more alike because they believe that the gates of heaven are already open. In Judaism, they believe that the savior has not yet come to open the gates. While the views of eternal life are different, the possibilities are pretty much the same. Each religion encourages its followers to live the best lives they can in order to achieve eternal happiness.

The scriptures contain several more similar ideas. This idea makes sense because they can be grouped together because they are the Abrahamic religions. It is important to realize that they share so many central and vital ideas with one another. The differences arise from the various interpretations of texts throughout history, but the main goal is for everyone to strive for happiness.

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Do Western Religions Share the Same Goal? - 2016-04-06 23:33

Scriptures of the main Western religions have been the central focus of this blog. We have looked at how they are important and in what ways they are the same. It is now more important to understand the role that these religions play in the daily lives of the followers in these religions. While everyone has a different life style and way of living than the next person, there can be similarities found even with those practicing different religious values. The purpose of this post, is to try and understand the reasons behind the actions that make up our lives. Religion and our beliefs have such a profound impact on not just our lives but of those that we connect with and most of the time we don't even realize it. But the underlying effect is there. Because a persons religious beliefs often influence the development of their morals and character. That is why understanding where these, "vastly" different religions, mimic one another becomes of an utmost importance. The most intrinsic nature of each religion and really the central focus of each is simple: How can we live in accordance to God's will? This is important because we understand the view each religion shares about the one true God. But, it also gets to the point of why living according to his desire, rules, or teachings is the goal for each follower. It is because by doing this, one gains the possibility of eternal life in heaven. Which essentially equates to an eternal life of happiness. Therefore, the most common influence in the lives of all the followers of any of these religions is the rules that are laid out for them. These rules or commandments are instilled in all of the religious followers of Islam, Judaism and Christianity, and like many of the fundamental values, they share many of the same commandments. And like the commandments they also have similar examples of how to live good life through the lives and teachings of the prophets that are

shared among them. In the context of daily interaction, the followers of these religions are encouraged to always strive to do what is right. The knowledge of right and wrong comes from the development of personal morals. Regarding the big picture, each religion encourages people to be honest, humble, generous and respectful. To lead a good life, is to lead one that makes sure that you treat others the way you want to be treated. This rule applies to all three religions and its intent is that every person is treated this way, even those who are different or treat you poorly. This is generalizing to a great extent, the rules set forth for the followers of these religions, but sometimes it is beneficial to do so. We often get lost in minor differences and forget to see that the end goal remains the same. Each religion wants its followers to be the best person he or she can be. People may have a different set of guidelines or practices from one another, but everyone associated with these religions should be striving to be their very best, to achieve the same goal. A chance of eternal happiness.

Scripture Uses - 2016-04-13 01:04

The importance of Scripture has been established. Because it is such a pivotal part of each religion, it is also important to know when and how it is used. Scripture can be used daily by followers of all three religions. Members of each religion are required to pray every day. For Muslims, they are supposed to perform daily prayer at 5 parts of the day. During these times they are invited to use the scripture to guide them in their prayer and to develop a better understanding of it. The Qur'an is studied more by Muslims than the Bible is by Christians. However, this does not mean that Christians are not supposed to read scripture daily. Certain readings are selected everyday for the daily readings and it is encouraged for them to take part in reading those when they so chose. This is done to reinforce beliefs and teachings of the Church. Jewish people on the other hand are required to pray three times a day. During these times of prayer or chant, they can read the Torah along with prayer or to help guide their prayer. Scripture is used in Islamic, Jewish and Christian rituals, as well. The scripture is incorporated for Jews at Temple, Christians at Mass, and for Muslims it used when they attend the mosque. It also plays important roles in their sacrament and ritual services that apply to each.

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