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SPIRITUAL VS RELIGIOUS

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What Does Being “Spiritual” Mean?

What About Philosophy?

Another common discussion religious people have is the relationship between religion and philosophy. Many people fail to distinguish the differences between the two and end up referring to them as being the same, however, there are a few major differences between religion and philosophy...

Religion:

If you read my previous blogs, you would understand that religion is a set of beliefs that unites people through rituals, traditions, holy books, etc. One of the most distinct differences between the two is that much of religion is based off of faith; there are no set explanations for many occurrences in religious history, or even in the future of religion, and therefore religions' followers have what they refer to as "faith," (Cline). In addition, religion is accompanied by rituals. There are rituals for virtually everything, including holidays, prayers, death, communion, tithing, etc.

Philosophy:

Philosophy is something I have failed to mention thus far in my blog. So, what is it? According to the dictionary, philosophy is defined as "the study of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.; a particular set of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.; a set of ideas about how to do something or how to live," (Merriam-Webster, "philosophy"). Right off the bat, just from reading the definitions of "philosophy" we realize that philosophy is a set

of core ideas that do not fluctuate like religious beliefs do. The basis' of philosophies come from science, truth, real events, and other things that have rational reasoning (Cline). Philosophies are supported arguments that individuals, aka philosophers, come up with that are then either respected or disregarded by others.



Another thing to ponder is the idea that philosophers are often regarded as "thinkers," where as those who share and spread religious ideas are referred to as "leaders," (Koshal). In addition, like I have mentioned before, religion is followed by having faith in a set realm of ideas, where as philosophy has some flexibility; you have the choice to support

it or not and it us up to you to take the initiative and actively learn a philosophy.

Common Core Between the Two:

Both philosophy and religion haggle between the ideas of: What is happiness? What is positivity?

How can one make the most out of life? How should people be? How should the world be? And so on. Religion and philosophy can be tied together and interconnected.

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Let's Talk About Buddhism

Buddhism, which is often referred to as a religion, causes a lot of debate about whether it is actually a religion or not. Sometimes deemed as the “religion for non-religious people,” McLeod Buddhism is in fact the only non theistic religion (McLeod). Because Buddhism does not follow the mainstream of having a god and because it mainly focuses on self-improvement, many people claim that it is more of a connection with your inner self.

For the sake of this post, I will refer to Buddhism as a religion. On that note, Buddhism is a religion that focuses on suffering. As evidence, Buddha's Four Noble Truths address suffering. Buddhists believe that meditation is the solution to the suffering.

Buddhism focuses on self-improvement, pain, suffering, and emotions through meditation. Through practicing the religion, the overall goal is to reach enlightenment, which basically means that you have improved yourself to the best person you can possibly be. Because Buddhism does not have an



actual divine authority, and is rather about experiences and feelings, many claim that it is a spiritual way of thought, not an actual religion.

Buddhism is also not institutionalized. There are no Sunday services set for prayer and there is no overarching authority of Buddhism. Buddhism has sects, you pick your sect and you pick how to practice the religion.

Buddhism is a fairly unorganized religion of spiritual thin

king based off experiences and happiness.

... So, on another note, is Buddhism just a spiritual art and series of self-improvement methods, or is it a religion? You decide for yourself.

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The Growth of Being Spiritual but not Religious”

Over time, especially in the last few years, individuals who claim to be “spiritual but not religious” are becoming more and more common. In 2012 the Pew Religion and Public Life Project conducted an interview on American adults by interviewing them on their religious affiliations. This study discovered that of those adults, 37% of them claim to be “spiritual but not religious,” (“Nones on the Rise). This statistic is only growing.

For many, they feel like they are spiritual simply because of their experiences, however they choose to not affiliate with a god or specific religion because they feel it confines them in having to believe certain things and not believe others. Those same individuals also believe that being part of an “organized religion” is too formal. Other people also put the blame on themselves for being too busy to dive deep into the religion itself and learn about it. They also say that religious leaders are too pushy and therefore discourage people from attending their services (Ahmad). For example, from personal experience I can attest to the fact that some religious institutions are too pushy. My family and I found a great church with an even more awesome pastor, however, in the middle of the service offering baskets would be passed around making the audience feel that it was necessary they donated since they were surrounded by individuals lurking over their shoulders noticing if they donated or not. As a result, we stopped going to that church.

In accordance, another reason for the growing number of “spiritual but not religious” individuals is because people are becoming more accepting of other beliefs and religions. Years ago, it was believed by people in any certain religion that their denomination was the only way to reach an eternal life and have a relationship with God. As time has gone on, different religions have expanded and therefore encouraged the acceptance of other religions than the one a certain individual practices.

There is debate that in order to be spiritual, one must also be religious as they go hand-in hand. Some religious leaders claim that it is virtually impossible to be spiritual and not be religious. On the other side, those who claim to be only spiritual say that spirituality has nothing to do with organized religion, but that is deals with self-improvement and a relationship with nature and society.

So, what’s your input on this debate?

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What Does Being “Religious” Mean?

There is no set definition as to what being “religious” actually means, however, it can be said without much debate that those who claim to be religious have much different views and perspectives than those who do not.

Those who are religious support the aforementioned fact by practicing certain traditions and rituals, showing it in their appearance, and believing in certain superstitions and teachings. Religion allows multitudes of people to unite over their common core beliefs and practice them together.



Those who are strong in their religious beliefs take into account more than just traditions and dogmas. Religion allows people to form their own values, morals, philosophies, etc. and supports religious individuals by using religions’ teachings to develop themselves more extensively. It also allows those people to reflect deeply on their God’s way of creationism, where as people who are strictly spiritual do not spend time practicing certain aspects of religion, but rather focus on perfecting themselves without

factoring in anything else.

One of the largest factors that creates a separation between different groups of religious people is whether the individuals truly honor their values more or the religions’ associated rituals more. By value-oriented I mean that the people truly believe in and practice the teachings of religion; it is not just a front that they put on, which is what ritual-oriented people do. Many people claim to be



religious, but in reality they only perform the rituals that are associated with the religion, rather than actually using the teachings to develop themselves and enhance their lives. Those who are ritual-oriented do not have the same values of value-oriented people, which include: being honest, being humble, being compassionate, and being accepting (Engineer).

Being religious does not just mean loosely believing in certain teachings, but it goes further; being religious means putting those teachings, rituals, traditions, etc. to use and diving deeper into the meaning of them.

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<http://www.global.ucsb.edu/orfaleacenter/luce/luce11/materials/WHAT%20IT%20MEANS%20TO>

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Permalink: <https://spiritualvsreligious.wordpress.com/2016/03/23/what-does-being-religious-mean/>

What Does Being “Spiritual” Mean?

So, what does it mean? According to the highly regarded Merriam-Webster dictionary, “spiritual” is defined as “of or relating to a person’s spirit; of or relating to religion or religious beliefs; having similar values and ideas,” (“spiritual”, Merriam-Webster). After decoding and breaking apart this definition, being spiritual means that a person’s absolute and highest priority is loving not only themselves, but others as well. Those who are spiritual don’t necessarily go to church every Sunday morning at 10a.m., pray before every meal, diligently celebrate every sacred holiday, and read the Bible/ Qur’an/ etc. every morning, but rather they realize that as humans we are all of an equal level. They share the belief that just because you’re spiritual and honor the goodness in all things does not mean that you’re religious.

One debate that has arisen from this way of thinking is the idea that a religious person can be considered spiritual, but a spiritual person can not, not be religious (Serico). Many religious leaders attest to the idea that being spiritual and religious go hand-in-hand. Spiritual people realize that their physical body is not representative of their entire life. Those who are spiritual allow themselves to be inspirational, which means they’re constantly expressing the positive aspects of life and friendship- joy, trust, praise, hope, wisdom, etc. They try to do good for everyone.

Another huge factor of the spiritualistic approach is that being spiritual means that you see beyond the materialistic side of life (Janis). They try to better themselves to have the best eternal soul they can have before focusing on the future of others or what other people have. These individuals realize that themselves are the only thing they can completely control. Although they can hope for the best for others, they ultimately cannot change other people.

For these reasons, spiritual and religious are not interchangeable terms. Although many people often mistake the two terms for each other, being spiritual has a much different meaning than being religious, but we will discuss that topic next week.

Spiritual people are kind people. Spiritual people are helpful people. Spiritual people are happy people. Spiritual people are truthful people.

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