“You Should Come to Hinduism”

I read your article by Rick Rood about Hinduism. I think the author is lacking in the study of Hinduism. Christianity as I see is very monotonous in the sense that it has only the bible, a single book and the priest would go over and over all his life career as a priest. Whereas Hinduiism is like a universe, one would not be able to complete studing the Vedas or puranas in his life time. The Dharma Sastra is very unique and reading that alone would make you understand what is Hindu religion. It does not discriminate any other faith whereas Christianity and Islam does. Hinduism is not a pagan religion as claimed by Christianity and Islam. Hinduism gives you the freedom to start from nursery and once you have reached the upper level you do not need any form of idol. That makes the religion unique from others. The author says “Hinduism lacks any understanding that God created this world for a good purpose.” What made him think so? In fact, Hinduism has a better understanding and knowledge of the purpose than Christianity or Islam.

An important factor almost universally accepted is that faith in a divine power shapes the destiny of mankind. Sanathana Dharma had famous Saints who had expounded their own specific philosophy. “Just as a man discards worn out clothes and puts on new clothes, the soul discards worn out bodies and wears new ones.” (2.22) Hindus believe that the Atman is eternal it transmigrates from one living thing to another according to its karmic action.

Hinduism speaks of the existence of heavens above and hells below. The former are sun filled, inhabited by gods and innumerable divine souls. The latter are dark worlds (asurya lokas) and populated by all the dark and demonic forces. The individual souls go into these worlds according to their deeds. But they do not stay there permanently till the end of destruction. They go there basically as a consequence of their

actions, either to enjoy or to suffer. In either case they learn the lesson and come back to earth to start a new earthly life all over again.

The Hindu concept of reincarnation is alien to western people. It is mostly misunderstood and misinterpreted, partly because of ignorance and partly because of some inherent mental blockage natural to the single minded pursuit of religious faith along rutted paths. It generated a lot of controversy because it directly challenges the western notion of one life, one heaven and the final day of judgment.

Today this fundamental concept of Hinduism is finding many new adherents and believers all over the world. The reasons are many. Firstly, a great mass of evidence is gathering in favour of reincarnation through the personal experiences of many who chanced to remember their past lives and were able to record their experiences in stunning details for the posterity. Secondly, the modern theories of hypnotic regression are gaining acceptance in many parts of the world. There are now many institutions which help interested individuals to remember their past lives as a part of their spiritual awakening. Thirdly. many enlightened psychic masters like Edgar Cayce confirmed beyond doubt that reincarnation is not just a theory or imagination, but a definite reality.

If you look at the personality of an ordinary human being, you will realize that there is a lot in him, that is grosser and denser which cannot be purified and transformed in the shorter time of one life span. What is a hundred years or less than a hundred of life on a scale of millions of years of continuous evolution of life on earth? Does not it sound illogical to say that we would remain static from the evolutionary point of view, while change is the nature of life and every thing else all around us is changing and evolving constantly?

It is very obvious that God did not create the worlds and the beings in His likeness, but in exact opposite to it. If He

would have created everything in His true likeness then there would have been no differentiation and no possibility of any movement. Creation would have remained static, without an aim and purpose, offering no scope for movement and change.

It is true that God is hidden in every aspect of His creation. But that which is visible and sensible is not His true self. It is His negative and false self, which tries to compete with Him and fight for its own individuality, and finally, having lost the battle, would move towards Him in total obedience.

Thus the whole drama of creation seems to start with the creation of His individual selves that hide themselves in His negative selves so that a movement away from Him and then again back to Him can be initiated and sustained. The Hindu scriptures describe this process variously with such expressions as: "the true self hides behind the false self, God enters into Prakriti, self becomes enveloped with ignorance." There is more that one can explain but I am afraid there would be no space left to write so I would end here saying it is the open mindnes of the Hindus that the Christians and Muslims took advantage in India that these two religion is surving there and Cliff Roberston had the chick to say Hindus are living in darkness. There can be 1000 of him trying to convert Hindus into Christianity but millions would be converting to Hinduism in the west. People are beginning to realize the importance of yoga and the believe in incarnation and Atman in the west so soon I am afraid the churches would see empty congregation and priest and pastors would have to retire. It is not my wish but it is the Karma of the Christians who had dreamt of converting all the Hindus in this world. Come be true to yourself and discover what Hinduism has for all.

Thanks for your kind letter. Rick Rood is no longer with Probe Ministries. As you are already well aware, both Hinduism and Christianity are vast, intellectually fascinating, and ancient faiths. But insofar as they have very different views on the

nature of God, the nature of man, the nature of the cosmos, what happens to a person after death, etc., it is clear that they cannot both be right (although they could both be wrong).

Such complex issues cannot be settled quickly over e-mail. We at Probe are quite convinced that Christianity is true. Our entire website, with over 1,500 written resources, is devoted to explaining why we think this. But we respect your right to disagree.

The Bible is a book of history and there is a huge wealth of evidence from archaeology and extra-biblical historical sources to commend it to us as such. What's more, it claims to be a revelation from the one true God, who created all things. This claim is either true or false. While I believe that there are good reasons for embracing the claim as true, I cannot prove this with absolute certainty. Nevertheless, we must do our best to examine the various claims of the different religions, compare these claims with all the evidence we can find, and attempt to decide which (if any) are actually true.

But here's my point. Suppose that Hinduism is true. What follows from that for me as a Christian? If the material world is ultimately maya, and its reason for being is simply lila, and if all is one, and Atman is Brahman, then (sooner or later) I will realize this and get off the wheel of rebirth. It may take many lifetimes, but I will eventually realize that all is one, that I am Brahman. Nothing (of eternal consequence) follows from my temporary ignorance.

But now suppose Christianity is true. What follows for those who do not come to Jesus alone for salvation from the holy wrath of God against our sin? Eternal punishment away from the presence of God, the only true and ultimate Source of all that is true, beautiful and good. In light of all the evidence that Christianity is really true (here I must simply refer you to our website), and since we must make some sort of choice regarding these issues, and since absolute certainty may not

ultimately be possible, it seems to me that the safest bet is on the God of the Bible. Of course, in the long run, we must each be willing to take personal responsibility for the choice that we make – and be willing to accept the consequences that follow from it.

Wishing you all the best,

Michael Gleghorn

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"How Do I Get My Parents and Pastor to Understand Not All SDAs Are Alike?"

I read Kris Samons' answer to e-mail about Seventh Day Adventists and I just want to say thank you. I'm a devout Baptist and my long time boyfriend is an SDA. It has bothered me for a very long time. I asked my pastor and he said the Adventists he knows don't believe people who go to church on Sunday are Christians because God commanded us to keep holy the Sabbath. It's been hard trying to find a middle ground and making things appear as simple as it really is. The fact is we both love God and firmly believe that through Jesus we are saved. It is just very hard for people like my parents who are 45 and up to understand that SDA people and congregations vary. You did research and you concluded that people need to take every SDA on a case by case basis. This was wonderful news to read. I just hope my pastor will accept my boyfriend for the Christian that he is: a Christian that just happens to worship on Sunday. It's like John 3:16 has less value

nowadays. Before belief was all that was needed to be a real Christian. But now I feel like we have to leap through hoops and do X amount of things to really prove it. What do you think? Are my boyfriend and I "unequally yoked" like Paul writes in Corinthians? How should I go about getting my parents and pastor to understand what you researched?

You are not alone in being frustrated that people attach works (AKA "hoops") to salvation, trying to make it harder to enter the kingdom than Jesus does. That is part of the essence of legalism. Spiritual fruit—Christlke character—isn't enough of an evidence of true spiritual life for those holding their cherished hoops, and how sad is that?

If I were you, I would ask my boyfriend to tell my pastor and my parents about his relationship with Jesus and about his understanding of how one becomes a Christ-follower. There is nothing in the Bible about "Follow Me and go to church on Saturday," and if he gets that, I would hope he would be able to communicate it to the "gatekeepers" in your life. Since you are a college student, my guess is that your boyfriend is too, which means he's still very much under the influence of his family and his church. It's possible he isn't as strong in his personal convictions as he will be, Lord willing, several years from now when he's out of school and living an independent adult life. I think that is an element of your situation that can be brought to the table—that he is still in the process of forming his spirituality. Is he absolutely committed to SDA theology and to staying in the SDA church? Or is it just a matter of comfort and habit for him? Can he ever see himself worshiping with you on Sunday? If he can't, then you would have to be the one to do all the adjusting and the concession-making. That would be a deal-breaker for me, totally apart from the unequally yoked issue. (No, I don't think you are unequally yoked spiritually, but you could be mismatched if the issue of where and when and how to worship becomes non-negotiable for both of you. Which could be

considered a type of unequal yoke.)

Concerning how you get your pastor and parents to see what Kris wrote about: you can print off his article and give it to them, asking them to consider another perspective. But the bottom line is, no one can make anyone else see things they don't want to see. You can offer evidence of another perspective, but if someone doesn't want to see it, they won't. I'm sorry life is like that, but it just is. <wince>

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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"Your Article on Edgar Cayce Can Hurt Christian Believers!"

I had previously ignored the anti-Cayce article on your web site, assuming that you had a right to your opinion and that you probably would not want to hear mine. It has come to my attention, however, that this propaganda has the potential to create harm and confusion for believers who might otherwise be helped by the Edgar Cayce readings.

While some of the things in your article are relatively true, some of your facts are patently false. It is shameful for a ministry that claims to do research to post an article that relies almost exclusively on secondary sources while completely ignoring what was actually said in the Cayce readings-a body of information that is readily available to

anyone.

Probably the most egregious statement is: Cayce came to believe that Jesus was not the unique Son of God. Here is a quote (similar to thousands of other quotes) from a typical reading:

> *As to how to meet each problem: Take it to Jesus! He is thy answer. He is Life, Light and Immortality. He is Truth, and is thy elder brother. Will ye open and let Him in? For in Him is strength, not in the law, not in the man, not in the multitudes of men, nor of conditions or circumstance. For He ruleth, He maketh them-every one. For hath it not been given or told thee, hath it not been known in thine experience that "He is the Word, He maketh all that was made, and without Him there was nothing made that was made"? And He liveth in the hearts and the souls of those who seek to do His biddings. This, then, is not idealistic-but an ideal! What would Jesus have me do regarding every question in thy relationships with thy fellow man, in thy home, in thy problems day by day. This rather should be the question, rather than What shall I do? Cayce reading #1326-1*

I believe that thousands of people have come to a closer walk with Jesus through the encouragement given in these readings. I would agree that these things should be approached with a gift of discernment and tested for their fruits. But how can you shamelessly attempt to associate this work (as many others have done) with occultic, Spiritualistic, channeling, doctrines of demons, etc,? Surely you dont need to be warned not to speak against gifts of the Spirit. If Cayces gift was actually a gift of the Holy Spirit, then to call it demonic or Satanic would put a person in danger of being like those who accused Jesus of being demon possessed. You might at least invoke the wisdom of old Gamaliel (See Acts 5:22-42) and be careful that you are not fighting against God.

You have a wonderful opportunity to speak to many people. If you do keep Lou Whitworths article on your web site I would urge you to at least post this message along with those of others who have responded to it. I will be looking forward to hearing from you.

Wishing you many blessings in Christ,

Thank you for your letter. And thank you for the respect with which it is written. Lou Whitworth is no longer with Probe Ministries. However, I am sending your letter to someone who can decide whether or not to keep Lou's article on our website. This is not a decision that I can make.

I have also written an article entitled, "The Worldview of Edgar Cayce". Athough I also had to rely on some secondary source material, this material was almost entirely from a "pro-Cayce" perspective. And all of it (I think) would be endorsed by the A.R.E.

I'm sure you've done a great deal of research in this area. However, my own study convinced me that the only way I could affirm that the worldview revealed in the Edgar Cayce readings was Christian would be to redefine "Christianity" to mean something other than what all the orthodox creeds and confessions of the Christian church have understood it to mean. I'm afraid that I honestly do not believe that the worldview of the readings is consistent with biblical Christianity.

If you happen to embrace an "unorthodox" understanding of Christianity (defined relative to the historic orthodoxy represented in the creeds and confessions shared by virtually all conservative Christian denominations – e.g. Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic and the various Protestant groups), then of course our disagreement will really be about Christianity – not Edgar Cayce. If this is the case, I'm afraid there won't be much point in dialogue. I'm already

convinced that the “orthodox” understanding of Christianity is true (e.g. The Nicene Creed, etc.) – and am already quite familiar with the unorthodox forms and expressions of “Christianity.”

Thanks again for writing. I sincerely wish you well.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries

“Christianity Is Getting Creamed by Islam Apologetics!”

Lately I’ve been looking up things on Islam and Christianity, and it seems like Christianity is getting creamed by Islam apologetics. I mean, there are websites which show amazing scientific accuracies in the Qur’an, like the origin of the universe. They even attack the accuracy of the Bible and talk about the “contradictions.” I beg you to please help me. I mean, they do make a lot of good cases for Islam. Why shouldn’t I believe Islam is the true faith?

Scientific accuracy does not necessarily prove a book is divinely inspired. It simply shows it has some accurate facts. There are numerous books that are scientifically accurate but we would not view them as inspired. The Bible also has numerous scientific accuracies. I have read many of the alleged contradictions in the Bible. Most passages cited are out of context, misinterpreted, or the science of textual

criticism is misunderstood. The Bible is inspired in its original documents, not the copies. We have accurate copies but the few discrepancies we have do not affect any major doctrines. This is different from the Qur'an which claims to be perfect, the copy we have now, they claim, is a perfect reflection of what is in heaven.

What is interesting is that there are several errors in the Qur'an. Here are a few scientific errors: Sura 86:5-7 states that sperm comes from a man's chest. Sura 23:14 says man was created from a blood clot.

There are also several historical errors. Sura 20:85-95 states the Samaritans tricked Moses and the Israelites during the Exodus. The Samaritans did not exist till about 1000 years later. One big error is that Islam denies the death and resurrection of Jesus which is one of the best documented events in ancient history. On what basis do they deny this? We have too much evidence for this event. These errors put the inspiration of the Qur'an in question.

For more information please read my articles: Jesus in the Qur'an, The Historical Reliability of the Gospels, and The Resurrection: Fact or Fiction?.

Patrick Zukeran

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"What About Hindus' Claim that Hinduism is the Oldest

Religion?”

Indian Hindus claim that Hinduism is the oldest religion, but Bible teaches us that God created all this in Jewish form. If so, why do those Vedas and upanishads say they are older than the Bible?

Your question seems to be a complex question with multiple implications and I think we need to be careful to define some of our terms. First of all, even though God did create Adam and did place a special calling, promise and blessing on Abraham and his descendents, the Bible doesn’t say that “God created all this in Jewish form.” When God created Adam, Judaism was not in complete form yet, even though Judaism would descend from Adam and Abraham’s blood. Judaism carefully traces its roots all the way back to the creation of the universe, and the creation of man, connecting Adam to Abraham. This started out as oral tradition which was written down much, much later. So that needs to be taken into account.

Second, even among scholars of the writings of the Vedas, there is some dispute about when the actual writings of the Vedas were written. Some of them might date back to 1500 BC, but some Biblical scholars date the Exodus of the Hebrews around this time. Conservative Biblical scholars (and I) hold that Moses was the primary author of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible.) This would date the Pentateuch as being as old as some of the Vedas. But it is true that Christianity was started with Christ or, technically, after his resurrection. The New Testament was written in the first century. So, in one sense, one might claim that Hinduism is older than “CHRISTianity” because it dates back before Christ. [However, Christianity’s roots are in Judaism, which, again, traces *its* roots all the way back to the first man and woman.]

But if a Hindu apologist uses the phrase “Hinduism is older than Christianity” kind of as a “gotcha” statement, trying to

make something more credible because of its age, their implications include a couple fallacies. First, Hinduism has changed and added books with their Vedas over the years, and it's difficult to say all the Vedas are older than the Torah. Second, just because something is older doesn't make something more true. This is the logical fallacy *"Argumentum ab Annis"* (argument because of age). Just because a religion, a thousand years ago from a primitive group, taught that child sacrifice to the gods was good, this didn't make their belief or their practice true or good. And not just because of the argument that one religion being older makes it better. However, God's existence, his creation, the existence of Adam, and calling of Abraham existed in reality years before Moses documented them in the Torah.

Hope you find this helpful.

Dave Sterrett

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"How Can My Hindu Friend Justify Her Unethical Behavior?"

I had an associate for 3 years who was a devoted Hindu…. On the surface they seem nice, but over time it became apparent they allowed for violations of ethics and contracts that I would not have expected. How is this allowed in their culture? They follow the "Laughing" form of Hinduism. The husband laughed at everything as a way to create good karma. I witnessed to them both with very limited effect. I am now

planning a trip to India and these questions seem most relevant. Can you help me understand this seeming contradiction in their thought?

Note from the Web coordinator, Byron Barlowe: We asked our Indian friend Rajesh Sebastian to reply. Not only is Rajesh from the predominantly Hindu culture of India and thus highly qualified to comment, but he is also trained in worldview apologetics. Rajesh worked for Ravi Zacharias Ministries and remains a resource person for them in India. He also received his Th.M. from Dallas Theological Seminary.

1. Regarding Contradiction in Indian-Hindu culture: Your friend mentions contradiction. For a Hindu, it is not a problem to live with contradictions. According to Hindus, you talk about contradictions because you are narrow-minded (so it is your fault!). Hindus believe that god can be one and many! God is both good and evil! We see a total collapse of the Law of Non-contradiction in India. Truth is relative (Gandhi and other Indian philosophers made long argument to prove the argument). Therefore, it is possible for a Hindu to be religious and still manipulate ways to make extra income/profit. After all, what is wrong according to one god will be right according to another god. Such attitude in business help many to become more successful than others who might go by the law and make less profit.

A good example I can think of is this one: A thief goes to steal. On the way, he stops at a temple and offers prayers and makes a promise. If he is not caught, he will give a share from the loot to that god/goddess or temple. So, Indians can be very religious and very corrupt at the same time without feeling bad about being corrupt. In fact, Mr. I. K. Gujral, who was the Prime Minister of India in the 90s for a couple of years, said that “corruption is in the blood of every Indian.” Indians believe in “both-and” logic (disagree with “either-or” logic) and can peacefully live with contradictions. This is why you will find even highly

educated Hindus involved in superstitions.

Lesson to learn: When doing business with them, be careful. They do not believe in moral absolutes. “What works is right” and “end (more profit) justifies the means.” Moreover, it is possible for someone believing in karma to cheat you and live peacefully, thinking that you are suffering now because of your bad karma in the last life and that they are benefiting from it now because of their good karma in the last life! Indians are successful businessmen. A large percentage of motels in the US are already owned by Indians from a particular state where they worship a “goddess of wealth.” If money is your god, then you might do anything to get it.

2. Regarding the Laughing form of Hinduism: Hinduism is like a vast sea. There are lot of practices and beliefs that might be contradictory or different from each other. For example, there is a temple in India where they have a festival every year. Devotees go there during this festival that goes for a week and utter curses and abuses to the god in that temple. These are the worst words (@#$&*^#%) you can imagine. They do it with the belief that this is a way of bringing out all the evil thoughts and anger in them and this god can take it so that they can get cleaned from all the dirt inside them.

Similarly, there are different yoga practices. If you walk around a park in Delhi, or any other cities in India, you will find groups of people standing together and just shouting. They practice it as a form of yoga. Those who practice laughing believe that doing so will help them to control their anger and also will help them to see the positive side of life. Hinduism is all about getting things done. Practitioners look for success even if that includes bribing gods. If gods can be bribed, why can’t people cheat? Remember, you cannot be better than the gods you worship. In fact, the Bible says that you will be like the gods you

worship. “Contradiction” is an alien concept to Hindus. They will mock you and say you are saying “contradiction” because you are not tolerant of other views. You say there can be only one God because you are not tolerant of the opposite belief!! The only thing Hinduism can not tolerate is exclusivism.

3. In order to communicate the gospel to Hindus, a worldview approach starting with one common Creator might be a better way to go. Starting with Jesus as “Son of God” (they believe there are many sons, why only one?) or man as sinner does not make sense to them. Tell about a Father trying to save the lost ones through the sacrifice of Christ. It is important to abolish polytheistic worldview by showing that polytheism is a self-defeating belief as it teaches that all the minor gods were created by some major gods and finally points down to One Ultimate Being. You have to start from there and then show what that ultimate one will be like and what he has spoken to mankind.

Hope this helps little bit to clear some of the great confusion surrounding Hinduism. However, do not underestimate the system. Hinduism is like the great serpent that can swallow all systems except exclusivism and that is why Hindus are now fighting exclusive viewpoints in academic circles all over the world.

See the following resources from Probe on Jesus as the only way, or exclusivism vs. pluralism:

• Christianity and Religious Pluralism by Rick Wade
• Do All Roads Lead to God? The Christian Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions by Rick Rood
• What’s the Difference Between Moral Relativism and Pluralism? by Don Closson
• How I Know Christianity is True by Dr. Pat Zukeran. Note particularly the bibliography section, Is Jesus the Only Way?

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"Is Reiki Occultic?"

I recently pulled up your website when a friend of mine told me she has a counseling center that practices Reiki. Wondering what Reiki was, I began to search it out. Despite all the Christian voices that support it, I refuse to buy into it, and I feel it is the Holy Spirit working in me. I emailed my friend and told her of my concerns. One of her responses was, "In my mind healing is ultimately the result of God's love, whether it is a doctor doing a heart transplant or a Reiki master transmitting love through themselves." She feels it is "God's action occurring in and through people."

Is it the work of God to transport some energy through our hands to someone else? Doesn't sound right. What it all sounds like to me is an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it's not quite fitting!

Thanks for your letter. I'm assuming you've already read my article on Reiki, but if not, here is a link to it: www.probe.org/reiki/.

I begin the article by briefly considering what Reiki is. I then look at whether or not there is scientific support for Reiki. I consider the success claims of Reiki, ask whether Christians should be concerned about it, and also whether all healing comes from God. If you haven't yet read the article, I would encourage you to do so.

Like you, I think there are reasons for Christians to be concerned about Reiki. For one thing, as it's often represented, it has a very different understanding of "God"

than biblical Christianity. Thus, when it claims that healing comes from “God,” it is asserting something different from what a Christian would mean when he/she claims to have been healed by God. Second, the emphasis on spirit guides should cause us concern. The Bible never tells us to seek a spirit guide, but often warns us of deceptive and demonic spirits. Third, the Bible doesn’t talk about a universal life force energy which we can learn to manipulate for health and healing. This sort of language is very foreign to a biblical worldview and is only at home (really) in an Eastern worldview, or one influenced by Eastern thought.

For these reasons and others (spelled out in my article), I think it’s a mistake to get involved with Reiki. My perspective would really be the same as yours. Reiki sounds like “an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it’s not quite fitting.”

I would gently challenge your friend to consider the many ways in which Reiki beliefs and practices seem so foreign (and even contrary) to the teachings of the Bible. For a bible-believing Christian, Reiki seems like a difficult practice to justify.

I hope this helps a bit. Please see my article for a bit more information.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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“It’s Unfair for God to Put Children in Muslim Families”

If salvation is free for anyone who receives Jesus Christ as his personal saviour, then how about a child who is born into a Muslim family. He or she will not have a chance to receive salvation because of the traditional faith from their parents. So it is not fair for God to put this child in the Muslim family.

The timing of your question is one of those “God things” that make me smile. I was ready to reply with what I know to be true, that God is bigger than and not limited by the circumstances of someone’s birth, when I had the pleasure of sitting down to talk with a man who grew up in Iran, the son of devout Muslim parents, but who became a Christian. Let me tell you his story.

Ibrahim (not his real name) was very depressed, assaulted by what he calls “evil thoughts” pushing suicide as his solution. One night he lay in his bed, looking at the ceiling and said to God, “What have I done to You? I’ve lost my wife, my children, my business, my fortune. I’ve lost everything. What did I ever do to You to deserve this mistreatment?”

Immediately, he heard God’s voice inside his head: “Don’t you see? I rescued you from that woman. She was trying to take your life.” (And indeed, he found out later that this same woman, before taking him to the cleaners, had poisoned her first husband.)

Ibrahim knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had heard from God, and he sat bolt upright in bed, swinging his legs onto the floor. At that moment, a single drop of sweat trickled from the back of his neck down his spine, and as it traveled down his back he felt all the energy and power drain out of

him. He was a limp dish rag, unable to stand, much less walk or do anything else. He was suddenly aware that he was physically as powerless and needy as he was spiritually.

He prayed, “I need help! Send me angels!”

Within days, as an answer to his prayer, he met a Christian woman who befriended him and shared her faith with him. She basically tutored him in Christianity, explaining that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for Ibrahim’s sins and was raised from the dead three days later.

One night, he had a dream. He was standing in a room with several other people when Jesus walked in and stood about 12 feet away from him, radiating strength and love and acceptance. Ibrahim was so excited! He said, “Jesus! What are You doing here?” and Jesus said, “I came to talk to you.” All Ibrahim could think about—in his dream—was that he wanted Jesus to hug him. So he asked Jesus if he could hold Him and hug Him, but Jesus disappeared. . . and Ibrahim woke up.

The moment he awakened, he knew he was washed. He opened his heart to Jesus and became a Christian. He told all his friends of his experience, and they laughed derisively at him. But the reality that he had met Jesus and had become a new man—”a new, *joyful* man,” he told me—was so much stronger than his friends’ ridicule that it truly didn’t matter to him.

Ibrahim delighted to tell me the differences between Christianity and Islam, how Islam is a “religion of the sword,” full of force and fear, but Christianity is a religion of relationship, of receiving and returning God’s love and delight. He loves the freedom that we have as Christians, freedom to make choices that are absent in Islam. He loves how Jesus has changed his heart, enabling him to forgive the people who hurt him deeply and love the people God brings across his path.

This is an illustration of how and why a child who grows up in

a Muslim home is not hopeless. God tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that He has planted eternity in our hearts, and in Romans 1:19-20 He tells us that men are without excuse because He has given us clear evidence of Himself, both within ourselves (per Ecclesiastes) and in His creation.

So people are aware that there is a God to whom we are all accountable, and that God reveals Himself to people directly, through His children, and through His word.

In the Muslim world, we're hearing more and more stories of people coming to faith in Jesus through dreams and visions. Praise God!

Sue Bohlin

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"How Does Pantheism View Good and Evil?"

I found your website very helpful in offering information on yoga and Christianity, especially Michael Gleghorn's article.

I came across a quote for a guru:

> *Life has a bright side and a dark side, for the world of relativity is composed of light and shadows. If you permit your thoughts to dwell on evil, you yourself will become ugly. Look only for the good in everything so you absorb the quality of beauty.*

Can you comment on how pantheism views evil and good? If you can shed some light on this quote, it would be helpful for me

to understand how to address this with someone with this belief system.

Hello _____,

Thanks for your letter. Pantheism ultimately makes no distinction between good and evil. If all is one, and all is "God" (or Brahman), then the distinction between good and evil must ultimately be illusory. If not, then evil infects the very being of "God" itself. Thus, pantheism has a real problem with evil.

Of course, there is much truth in the guru's quote (although it's not terribly consistent with pantheism). However, one can find preferable advice (in my opinion) in the Bible. As Paul told the Philippians, "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirableif anything is excellent or praiseworthythink about such things" (Philippians 4:8).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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"The JW Argument 'There Is No Soul'"

One of the Jehovah's Witnesses' arguments is that if Lazarus was dead and his soul was in Heaven, why would Jesus resurrect him? They argue, why would Jesus take Lazarus away from what

surely is a beautiful and wondrous place. Thus, there must not be a soul and when we die we just die. How do I answer this?

Thanks for your letter. The issue of personal survival after death (but before the resurrection) is best dealt with by an appeal to the authority of the Bible. If the Bible is a trustworthy revelation from God, and if the Bible teaches a conscious intermediate state between death and resurrection, then it logically follows that human beings do experience personal, conscious existence after death. So what does the Bible teach on this issue?

The Bible clearly speaks of personal conscious existence between death and resurrection. Indeed, even The New World Translation (1961), written by the Jehovah's Witnesses, seems to imply this. In Revelation 6:9-10 we read:

"And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those slaughtered because of the word of God… And they cried with a loud voice saying: 'Until when, Sovereign Lord holy and true, are you refraining from judging and avenging our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?'"

Here the author of the Revelation sees the SOULS of those killed on the earth. These SOULS are in the presence of God and clearly conscious because they ask God a question and even receive an answer (see v. 11). But how can this be if they do not really exist between death and resurrection?

Other verses which teach conscious existence between death and resurrection include Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; and of course Luke 16:19-31. There are many other which I will not take the time to list.

The JW's want to know why Jesus would raise Lazarus back to earthly life if he was already in a better place? First, although there may be a connection between Luke 16 and John 11, this is nowhere stated explicitly. Second, the Bible only

hints at why Jesus raised Lazarus. It indicates that He raised Lazarus to inspire faith in His disciples (John 11:14), to reveal God's glory to the people (11:40), and to help the people believe that Jesus had come from God (11:42). But WHY Jesus raised Lazarus isn't even the issue. Jesus may have raised Lazarus for very good reasons that He didn't bother to tell us. The real issues are:

1. Is the Bible a trustworthy revelation from God? and
2. Does the Bible teach that we have a soul/spirit that continues to exist between
death and resurrection?

If the answer to both of these questions is "Yes," then it really doesn't matter if we can say why Jesus raised Lazarus. He did it, and regardless of the reason why, the story demonstrates that human beings experience personal, conscious existence between death and resurrection.

Hope this helps.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn
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