

# Psychological Significance Of Religious Myths

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**Abstract:** Religious myths have been there since thousands of years and is still pursued by people and they still want to pass it on to their children which will be the next generation. It can not be helped but wondered that something which has no apparent scientific backing can be so contagious and so likeable. This study has been done using Thematic Content Analysis to understand the scientific and psychological significance of these religious myths. To understand the scientific meaning of life and God.

**Key Words:** Religious Myths, society, religious books

## 1. Introduction

Myths, are usually shared and understood as stories about gods and divine figures. They have the answers to huge questions like how was the world created? Where do humans come from? How is water or fire formed? What is the origin of the gods? But they are more than stories they serve a more profound purpose in ancient and modern cultures. These are sacred tales that explains to us from things like how the world is made to a common Man's experience. Myths have always been relevant, they are as relevant to us today as they were to the ancients. They answer questions that are timeless and serve directions to perform in life to each generation. The subjects of myths reflect the concerns that are universal for mankind throughout history: birth, death, after life, the origins of man and the world, all that is good and evil.

## History Of Religions

India is one of the most diverse lands with respect to history philosophy, culture, religion and languages in the Asian continent. Its history has been shown as of several 1000 years from the Mohenjodaro and Harappa civilizations and it gave birth to several world religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism and also to various languages; there are hundreds of local languages including some that are old and many that are new.

The religions are divided into 2 kinds mono theistic and polytheistic. Even though the idea of God is common for both the religions, the monotheists believe in one and only God; Judaism, Christianity and Islam are well known monotheistic world religions. On the other hand Hinduism is a polytheistic religion. The various deities of Hindu gods become Incarnate within idols, temples, gurus, rivers, animals etc.

## Science And Psychology Behind Religious beliefs

While religions "accept forces outside the conscious mind that bring redemption to life", fuller argues that's psychology does the same as well. Psychology accept these forces as the subconscious; and religion calls them God. The leaders of psychology and religion both mediate between the individual and forces beyond the conscious mind: the psychologist acts as a link between people and their subconscious. Religions act as the link between people and God. Religion deals with emotions, sentiments, feelings and human behaviour, just as psychology does. Both religion and science til with the nature of truth and belief. Religion and science are both and infinite number of ways in which people can understand their reality.

## 2. Review Of Literature

David Hufford, Niels Gregersen, Robert Emmons, William Grassie (2010) studied the advanced methodologies in the scientific study of religion and spirituality. They found that all major approaches to the social scientific study of religion are closely intertwined and mutually informative. Tatyana N. Klementyeva

Gonzalo Penalosa, Charbel El- Hani, Carlos Javier Mosquera Suarez (2021) This paper aims to fill this gap by exploring Colombian biology teachers' ideas about the relationship between scientific views and religious ideas, and their evolution teaching practice. The results show that there is a close relationship between the views about the science-religion relationships and evolution teaching practices

J P Balodhi (1996) studied the mythology in general influences the religious, social and political life of an individual. It explains how Hindu myths contributed in shaping the Hindu mind and suggests the use of these myths in psychotherapy.

Tatyana N. Klementyeva (2022) The purpose of the study was to research the attitude of relationships of religious denominations of modern Russia to science and the scientific community. Achieving this goal involved in the study to science as a way of knowing reality, to the conflict between science and religion, as well as to the possibility of scientific proof of religious beliefs.

Tutuk Ningsih, Sutrimo Purnamo, Muflihah Muflihah, Desi Wijayanti (2022) The study aims to describe a value education model in teaching the integration of science and religion and to find out the values generated in the learning process of the integration of science and religion. They found that the integration of science and religion in schools is very important to be taught, so that both of sciences and religions balance each other.

## 3. Rationale

One of the most mysterious phenomena in the world that engage the curious minds of humans even today it's to uncover the unknown world of myths. We have been born listening about many religious myths, seeing our parents and grandparents following it, us following it because they are following it since ages perhaps. We all know, what is right and what is wrong according to the religious myths but very little of us understand the reason behind it. Some of us grow up to question them, others just follow it like it had been followed ever since. It's not a surprise to wonder why even after thousands of years and evolution and people becoming more and more literate with every passing year, still believe in these myths. This study talks to people on a one on one basis belonging to

different religions and by using the thematic content analysis tries to find out the basic themes which provide us the psychological significance of these religious myths and help us understand the reason behind billions of people following it better.

#### 4. Methodology

**Participants:** For the current research, random sampling was done. A sample comprising 30 adults between the age of 20-35 years were taken. All of them belonging to India but belonging to different religions. 23 of the total number of participants belong to Hinduism, one belongs to Christianity, two belong to Islam, 1 belongs to Jainism and two belong to Sikhism.

**Tools:** Narratives were used as a tool of inquiry in this research. In narrative inquiry the researcher emphasise on collecting people stories and analyse them to represent the life of the people as lived.

**Design:** Six- step thematic content analysis approach by Braune and Clarke (2006) and Open coding method will be applied in the current study.

**Procedure:** Participants were contacted for telephonic interviews through texts. The purpose of the present research was explained to them, and informed consent was obtained. The participants were informed that the information obtained from them would be kept strictly confidential and would only be used for the research. Before taking the interview, rapport was built, all their doubts and queries were answered, they were told that their answers will not be judged. If at any question, participants were hesitating to answer or had to think to answer, optimum amount of time were provided to them, they were never kept at hurry or forced to answer a certain way.

#### 5. Analysis Of Results

After thematic content analysis of the qualitative responses obtained from the participants different sources of religious beliefs that have a psychological basis could be identified that included identity, morality, happiness, ethical parenting, reinforcements and personal relationship.

**Table 1:** depicts the different themes about the religious beliefs and their psychological significance with their descriptions.

S no.	THEMES	DESCRIPTION
1	Identity	People like their own religion the best because it gives them an identity.
2	Morality	People believe that their religion makes them better people in terms of morality and truthfulness.
3	Happiness	Religious people are believed to be more happy and peaceful than nonreligious people.
4	Ethical parenting	Even the young adults who are new parents want to imbibe religion in their children some way or the other.

5	Reinforcements	Religions provide reinforcements to us to do whatever the religious books ask us to do.
6	Personal relationship	Everyone shares a personal bond with their God.

## 6. Discussion

We form relationships with people or animals we consider our best hope. Someone who will help us in matter of need, and bring us out of our problems. Such relationships can be formed even with someone who is never seen or heard or its existence is still being questioned. We can just imagine what they would do or say. This ability is known as cognitive decoupling, it originates in childhood through pretend play. It is a small leap from being able to imagine the mind of someone we know to imagine an omnipotent, Omniscient, human like mind especially if we have religious texts which tell of their past stories. We humans, have the capacity to attribute human forms and behaviours to nonhuman things shows we also readily endow nonhuman entities, such as gods with the same qualities that we possess and as such make it easier to connect with them. Hereby, the following themes.

### Identity

We humans need a sense of identity in everything that we are. According to the narratives of the people, along with their work, the family they belong to, the place where they belong from, religion also gives them a strong sense of identity. they identify themselves as being a part of a community and a culture. Different people have different experiences with their religion, but they still identify as a belonging to a particular religion.

### Morality

Majority of the people believed that they are moral beings because of their religion. They've been born and brought up in religious environment's among people who are religious believers and it has taught them the morality that their religion ask them to follow. They are moral beings because their religious texts ask them to be and they fear God.

### Happiness

Majority of my participants found happiness in practicing some or the other religious customs or myths. It brought them peace and they like to do it again and again. This is something that they would like to teach their children as well. Religious people are more satisfied with their lives than non believers. This satisfaction can come from things like finding peace in prayers, finding hope in God, finding friendships and relationships among other members of their religion, etc. According to a study published in the journal American sociological review, religious people gain life satisfaction because of the social networks they built by attending religious services.

### Ethical Parenting

Young adults considered educating their children about religion, God and religious beliefs even today. Many of them feel that religious practices have been unfair to them and their peers, for example people belonging to the scheduled castes or the LGBTQ community. These people believe that children should be brought up with no religious beliefs whatsoever. They should not be binded by something that is said in a text that a group of people follow blindly. While on the other hand, others wants to educate their children about religious beliefs. They want to expose their children to the history of their religion and God carry and the religious beliefs they have.

### Reinforcements

People follow whatever the religious texts ask them to follow, they follow these things because they want to make their gods happy, and because they fear God. They will get something great in return if they do good. Either they will have a wonderful next life. Either they will reach some kind of Nirvana. Or they will reach the paradise one day. And if they upset their God by going against something their religious texts say, they will get punished.

### Personal Relationship

People believed to have a personal relationship with God. They believe they can complain to God about their sorrows, God will be there to help them in their miseries and share their happiness. Believing in God provide people a companion, someone they can rely on, someone who will help them and take them out of problematic situations, someone who will be there with them whenever in need.

## 7. Conclusion

People have always been believing in God since ages and this still do and it seems like they will forever. Since believing in God brings them all kinds of happiness, morality, ethicality, and hope. It brings people together and provides them with everything that one needs to be happy and satisfied in ones life. They think it is a part of their culture and they should know about it. They believe it will make them moral and keep them grounded. People believe morality comes from religion. People find a sense of identity in their religion and a sense of belonging. They believe that their religion brings them happiness, they are extremely satisfied in their life. Religion provides positive and negative reinforcement to its followers. It promises to give peace, safety of their loved ones, a better next life, Nirvana or an entry to the paradise.

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