

Review of: "Integrating Afterlife Beliefs of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism Through the Cyclic Universe Model: A Multidisciplinary Approach with Practical Implications for Mental Health and Caregiving Professions"

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This is an interesting article that deals with a difficult task.

As I understand the essence, the view of the afterlife in several world religions can be reconciled by adopting a “cyclic universe” view, which can be beneficial in many social situations.

Even though I can see some benefits to this reconciliation, I'm not utterly convinced that the arguments are convincing for the believers (of any faith) or that such a reconciliation is necessary for understanding and respect of each other.

Professor Jens Braarvig (University of Oslo) once said that studying religion means watching a glass painting from the outside. To really grasp its essence, you have to go inside it.

In this context, I would have appreciated more references from sacred scriptures of the religions in question, as they have the “inside” view Braarvig is calling for.

Also, will a cyclic view of the cosmos reconcile all differences among the religions? I doubt it. There are some fundamental differences in what salvation (the reason for the afterlife) means. For the Hindu, it is a release of the soul from the world and unity with Brahman (atman-brahman doctrine). The Buddhists do not believe in a soul (anatman), and their salvation is nirvana, non-existence. This cannot be reconciled with a perception of a cyclic universe.

The view of purgatory is specific to the Roman Catholic Church and thus not representative of the common Christian faith.

Also, the mention of the final judgment day misses the essence of Christianity, which is salvation through Jesus Christ.

I would find it natural to also include the two other Abrahamic religions, Islam and Judaism, in more detail, with their views.

All in all, I find the article very interesting, and it should be a useful start for many discussions.