REVIEW ARTICLE

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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Abstract

This manuscript explores the intersections of belief systems regarding the afterlife within Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, analyzing their compatibility through the lens of cosmological theories, particularly the cyclic universe model. By addressing historical and contemporary perspectives on the nature of belief, it examines religious tenets and spiritual values from an existential, moral, and cosmological standpoint. Drawing from Spinoza's philosophy and the concept of a cyclic universe, the authors propose a conceptual reconciliation of religious doctrines, suggesting that different religions emphasize distinct phases of an eternal cosmic cycle. The article further evaluates practical implications, highlighting how familiarity with these reconciled beliefs can alleviate existential anxieties, enhance community cohesion, and foster personal growth. This work is particularly relevant for professionals in end-of-life care, as it provides insights into integrating diverse spiritual beliefs to support well-being.

Introduction

One of the most significant existential questions is: "Are you a believer?" This fundamental question touches on spirituality and worldview, which significantly impact how we perceive the world, ourselves, and others. Faith or the lack thereof shapes our values, life decisions, and our relationships with the surrounding reality. Therefore, the question of faith becomes a crucial element of reflection on the meaning of existence and our place in the world. However, few people are willing to elaborate on their answer.

Only some individuals, when asked, are inclined to request clarification and ask, "Yes, but what exactly do you mean?" Such a seemingly logical and self-evident request for clarification would refer to the understanding of what it means to be a believer.

About a hundred years ago, James Leuba attempted to clarify this by investigating whether scientists were

believers[1][2][3]. For his research, he assumed that believers are those who (1) believe that an omnipotent being considers their prayers and (2) believe in some form of life after death.

The inquiries and survey studies initiated by James Leuba have been repeated several times over the years[4]. Those interpreting the results, considering real justifications, motivations, and statements, are currently inclined to define a believer as follows:

1. Such a person intellectually accepts the central tenets of their faith tradition.
2. Such a person has a significant emotional attachment to these beliefs, often accompanied by a sense of devotion or reverence.
3. The individual's actions and lifestyle reflect their religious beliefs and values.

In other words, a believer is someone who not only intellectually accepts the central tenets of their faith but also experiences a deep emotional connection to these beliefs and reflects them in their daily behavior and lifestyle.

However, the literature suggests that the aforementioned contemporary definition of a believer's attitude does not apply to all individuals who identify as religious. Carl Gustav Jung already noted that not all people experience transcendent feelings and thoughts, and their beliefs in the existence of supernatural forces may be purely rational[5].

Similar views were expressed by many renowned psychologists and philosophers, including William James[6], Rudolf Otto[7], and Pascal Boyer[8]. The need for a rational justification of belief in a personal God is also evidenced by the intellectual efforts of well-known philosophers who attempted to subject such belief to intellectual scrutiny.

One should mention Immanuel Kant's arguments here[9]. Although Kant is known for his criticism of traditional proofs of God's existence, particularly in his "Critique of Pure Reason," where he rejected the ontological, cosmological, and physico-theological proofs of God's existence, he nonetheless provided his own argumentation for an ethical stance consistent with religious postulates. As is well known, he derived his so-called "categorical imperative" from the principle "Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law"[9].

Another significant example of attempts to rationally verify the belief in a personal God are the well-known reflections of Blaise Pascal, contained in his work "Pensées"[10]. The essence of his argument for religious belief is the so-called "Pascal's Wager." Pascal suggests that in the face of uncertainty about God's existence, the rational choice is to bet on faith, as the potential benefits (eternal happiness) outweigh the possible losses (earthly pleasures).

Conversations with individuals characterized by a critical and skeptical attitude show that they refer to attempts to analyze the dogmas and other fundamental messages of their religion. During such mental attempts to assess the statements postulated by religious teachings, doubts arise. These doubts are a manifestation of critical thinking, testing the logic and coherence of beliefs, and seeking empirical evidence.

If one were to briefly highlight the most frequently formulated objections, they could be illustrated by the following questions:

1. How can the omnipotence and omnibenevolence of God be reconciled with the existence of evil and suffering in the world (the problem of theodicy)?
2. Are all religious commandments consistent with today's moral standards, for example, dilemmas concerning gender equality, minority rights, and corporal punishment?
3. Do so-called miracles described in religious scriptures have rational explanations?
4. Are religious beliefs and mystical experiences universal, or do they result primarily from individual or cultural conditions?
5. Are there historical proofs of the events described in holy texts?

Perhaps the most profound doubt arises from considering and questioning whether beliefs about the afterlife held by Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Shintoists can simultaneously be considered valid. Otherwise, it would have to be postulated that one and a half billion followers of Hinduism are wrong in formulating their beliefs, just as millions of Buddhists and Shintoists are.

Are the views on the afterlife held by Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists consistent?

Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism, three great religious traditions, offer different visions of the afterlife that seem difficult to reconcile. Analyzing these beliefs reveals not only contradictions but also deep philosophical differences that shape the spirituality of billions of people worldwide.

The Christian vision of the afterlife refers to concepts of heaven, purgatory, and hell. The belief in the final judgment, where souls are judged for their deeds and moral decisions, leads to eternal reward or punishment. Heaven is a place of eternal happiness in the presence of God, while hell symbolizes eternal damnation and separation from divinity. This concept, deeply rooted in the Judeo-Christian tradition, emphasizes morality and ethical behavior during life. It should be remembered that Christians believe in the resurrection at the end of times when the so-called parousia, or the second coming of Christ, will occur. On the Day of Judgment, at the end of times, during the resurrection, souls will be reunited with their bodies, which will be transformed to live eternally in the presence of God[11][12].

In Hinduism, the afterlife is inseparably linked with the concept of reincarnation and karma[13][14]. The soul (atman) is immortal and goes through successive incarnations, where the experienced life is the result of accumulated actions (karma) from previous lives. The goal is to achieve liberation from the cycle of birth and death, leading to union with the absolute (Brahman). This philosophy implies that each individual has multiple chances for spiritual development and purification, which is fundamentally different from the one-time Christian judgment.

Buddhists, like Hindus, believe in reincarnation but place more emphasis on individual meditative practices and understanding[15][16]. The goal is to achieve nirvana, a state of freedom from suffering and the cessation of the cycle of rebirth (samsara). Buddhism teaches that life is full of suffering, which is the result of ignorance and desires (attachments and cravings). Through meditation, wisdom, and adherence to moral principles, one can achieve a state of liberation, which is not a place or reward but rather a state of being beyond all sufferings, full of peace, wisdom, and compassion. In

this state, the sense of a separate "self" is diminished, and one can experience unity with all beings.

Reconciling these three visions of the afterlife seems impossible, as they arise from fundamentally different metaphysical and ethical assumptions. Christianity is based on the concept of a one-time life and final judgment, while Hinduism and Buddhism see life as a cycle of continuous rebirths that can be interrupted through spiritual development.

For Christians, the key concept is a personal God who is the judge and guardian. In Hinduism and Buddhism, divinity is more abstract and related to cosmic order or a state of mind. Furthermore, the concepts of heaven and hell do not have equivalents in Hinduism and Buddhism, where afterlife fate depends on multi-generational individual karma and spiritual maturity.

The message of the Christian religion describes one-time evaluating events with a specific beginning and end, whereas Eastern religions assume an endless, eternal cycle of transformations.

Discussion of conceptual models of the structure of the universe referenced by individuals speaking about human fate after death

Answers to the question of human fate after death often refer to concepts such as resurrection, reincarnation, and the soul. These concepts must, in turn, relate to some conceptual model of the structure of the universe. For the purposes of this discussion, a brief overview of these conceptual models of the universe to which people referred during the formation of the main tenets of major religions, as well as a brief review of contemporary analogous mental models, is necessary.

In ancient religions and mythologies, such as those of Mesopotamia, Egypt, or Greece, the universe was often imagined as a multi-level structure consisting of heaven, earth, and the underworld. Gods resided in heaven, humans lived on earth, and the souls of the deceased went to the underworld. These cosmologies were rich in cosmogonic myths that narrated the creation of the world by deities. In Greek culture, an example is the myth of Gaia, Uranus, and the Titans.

Judaism introduced a one-level model of the universe, where God created everything from nothing (ex nihilo). In Judaism, the human soul awaits resurrection and final judgment after death. The dualism of soul and body, where the soul is an immortal essence that returns to God, is a key element of this religion.

Christianity developed the concept of bodily resurrection and eternal life in heaven or hell in connection with the final judgment. This model considers one-time events and views time linearly, with a beginning (creation) and an end (apocalypse), after which a different form of existence follows[11][12]. Similarly, in Islam, the universe is the work of one God who controls all aspects of existence, and after death, souls are judged and go to paradise or hell based on their deeds[17].

It should be noted that the essence of the concept of "resurrection" refers to the existing past body, which, according to still prevailing rituals, is carefully buried in a designated place. Resurrection by definition assumes reference to a body that was previously alive. The act (operation) of resurrection assumes that this "past" still exists. Whether the past still exists

has been a matter of heated debates among spacetime physicists. Only recently have arguments been found that support the "non-vanishing" of what was earlier[18].

It is important to remember that the conceptual model of the universe has changed dramatically since Edwin Hubble's discovery. Starting in 1924, Hubble began to make people aware that the cosmos is not just the stars and planets seen in the night sky. The discovery of other galaxies revealed that the universe is vast, with distances between its components sometimes measured in millions or even billions of light-years.

In the observable part of the universe, there are an estimated 200 billion galaxies. Recent studies suggest that this number may be even higher, as next-generation telescopes, such as the James Webb Space Telescope, continue to discover galaxies in deeper regions of space.

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the concept of reincarnation and karma appears, where the soul (atman) goes through successive incarnations in the cycle of samsara, dependent on the sum of good and bad deeds[13][14]. The universe is seen here as cyclical, with periods of creation, duration, and destruction (kalpas). After each kalpa, a period of disintegration (pralaya) follows, lasting as long as the kalpa. This cyclical process repeats indefinitely, creating eternal series of cycles of creation and destruction. The universe is created, destroyed, and created anew in infinite cycles, which is a fundamental element of the Hindu perception of the cosmos[19].

Hinduism has for centuries envisioned the universe as an incredibly complex and multi-dimensional structure, encompassing many worlds (lokas) and planes of existence. Ancient Sanskrit texts, such as the Puranas, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad Gita, describe the universe as much larger than a single planet, with seven higher and seven lower worlds. The numerous realms inhabited by gods and spirits are here considered.

In contemporary times, cosmology provides explanations of the structure of the universe by formulating descriptions in the terminology of physics. The Big Bang theory, which suggests that the universe originated around 13.8 billion years ago, is widely accepted, but has been supplemented for many years by speculations about "what was before." Physicists formulate various speculative explanations on this topic. One of them is the theory of a cyclically regenerating universe. Several physicists of significant scientific authority have presented somewhat different versions of this theory.

Steinhardt and Turok proposed a cyclic universe model that posits the universe undergoes infinite cycles of expansion and contraction. In their model, these cycles result from interactions between two "branes." Each cycle consists of a phase of the Big Bounce, where the universe transitions from a contracting phase to an expanding phase. This model avoids the assumption of an initial unique, unexplained "singularity" posited by the Big Bang model[20][21].

Roger Penrose posits that the universe goes through infinite cycles, called aeons. Each aeon begins with a Big Bang and ends in a state of very low entropy. Penrose suggests that the geometric properties of the universe in the final phase of one aeon pass to the initial phase of the next aeon. A key element of this theory is the conformal transformation of spacetime, which allows for a smooth transition between aeons[22][23].

Paul Frampton considers a cyclic universe model that is consistent with general relativity. His model involves a cyclic

universe with a phase of accelerated expansion. Each cycle ends with a "phantom energy" phase that causes the universe to tear apart, but not completely. It then reconstitutes itself. The model aoids the need for a Big Crunch.

Contemporary physicists (cosmologists) also speculate about the coexistence of many worlds (the multiverse theory), which is reflected in some modern spiritual and philosophical systems[24][25].

New forms of spirituality, such as the New Age movement, introduce ideas of a holistic universe where everything is interconnected, and souls can exist in so-called "other dimensions" or reincarnate[26][27]. Emphasis is placed on the mutual influence of all elements of reality. The belief is propagated that every person's consciousness is part of a larger, universal consciousness. People are viewed as integral elements of the universe, and their consciousness can connect with the generally defined "cosmic energy."

In materials promoted within the New Age movement, concepts of reincarnation frequently appear, where souls go through successive incarnations, learning and evolving along the path of spiritual development. It is postulated that souls can exist not only in our physical dimensions but also, as it is put, "in other dimensions or realities."

The New Age movement draws inspiration from many traditions, including Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, Gnosticism, Western esotericism, and contemporary science. This eclectic nature allows for the free combination of various ideas and practices.

Rational considerations of so-called “higher dimensions”

A thorough presentation of contemporary views necessitates a rational approach to the frequently mentioned terms such as "in another dimension" and "reincarnation of the soul." Modern science, particularly theoretical physics and mathematics, explores the concept of higher dimensions in various contexts, including gravitational forces, string theory and topology.

Newton's law of gravity and Einstein's general theory of relativity assume the action of gravitational force in a four-dimensional space. However, if additional dimensions exist, they could affect gravity at very small scales (millimeter or smaller).

String theory is one of the main research areas that postulates the existence of higher dimensions[28][29]. In this theory, all elementary particles are envisioned as one-dimensional vibrating strings in a multi-dimensional space. This theory requires more than three spatial dimensions, typically 10 or 11, to mathematically coherently describe the fundamental forces of the universe. These additional dimensions are compactified and curled up at small scales, making them invisible to our senses.

Topology, a branch of mathematics, studies the properties of space subjected to transformations[30]. In the context of higher dimensions, topology analyzes how higher-dimensional spaces can be organized and what properties they possess. A key concept here is the "manifold," a space that locally resembles Euclidean space but can have a more

complex global structure. Manifolds can be used to model spatial structures in many scientific fields.

Higher dimensions are fundamental in modern theoretical physics as they enable a coherent unification of all the fundamental forces within a single theory. They can also lead to new predictions about elementary particles and their interactions, which can be tested experimentally. Although considerations of topology are currently mainly theoretical, research in this direction can lead to groundbreaking discoveries in understanding the nature of reality.

Scientific research on the possibility of additional dimensions is ongoing[31][32]. Efforts are being made to determine whether we live in a space with more than the traditionally perceived three spatial dimensions and one temporal dimension.

The Large Hadron Collider (LHC) at CERN is one of the main tools used to test physical theories, including string theory and hypotheses about higher dimensions[32]. Scientists search for particles that could suggest the existence of additional dimensions, such as Kaluza-Klein particles, which could be detected as a result of high-energy collisions. One goal of these experiments is to search for signs of "mini black holes," which could form if additional dimensions are present. So far, such phenomena have not been observed, imposing constraints on the size and properties of potential additional dimensions.

Cosmology also provides tools for investigating additional dimensions. Analysis of the cosmic microwave background (CMB) radiation and the large-scale structure of the universe can provide information about possible deviations from the predictions of four-dimensional general relativity[33].

Research on dark matter and dark energy may also indirectly suggest the existence of additional dimensions, as the standard cosmological model does not fully explain these phenomena[34][35]. The hypothesis that their presence might indicate that we live within a multi-dimensional topological manifold poses a remarkable challenge for contemporary science[35].

Although current experiments and observations have not provided conclusive evidence of additional dimensions, research in this field continues. Tools such as the Large Hadron Collider, precise gravitational measurements, and advanced cosmological observations remain crucial in the quest for answers about the structure of the universe and potential higher dimensions.

Rational consideration of the concept of the soul.

The concept of the soul has fascinated people for centuries, permeating both philosophical and scientific discourse. Understanding what this concept means presents difficulties due to the diverse ways it is defined. Let's try to grasp its meaning rationally, respecting both historical traditions and contemporary scientific knowledge.

In Christianity, the soul is created by God and is immortal, continuing to exist after the body's death. Unlike many other doctrines, Christianity views the soul as closely connected to the body, which is expressed in the belief in the resurrection

of the body. Resurrection means that the soul and body will be reunited on the final day, emphasizing the integrity and close relationship between the soul and body in the Christian understanding of life after death[36][37]..

In Hinduism and Buddhism, the soul (atman) reincarnates, going through successive incarnations in the cycle of samsara, which ends with the attainment of liberation or nirvana.

Philosophers have pondered the nature of the soul since antiquity. Plato viewed the soul as an immortal substance, separate from the body, capable of knowing eternal truths. Aristotle, on the other hand, saw the soul as the form organizing the body, not necessarily existing independently of it. In the Middle Ages, Thomas Aquinas developed the concept of the soul as an immaterial substance that survives the death of the body.

Science, focused on a materialistic understanding of reality, does not provide direct evidence of the soul in the traditional religious sense. Neurobiology studies consciousness as a product of the brain, where thoughts, emotions, and identity are the result of complex neuronal processes[38]. Theories such as panpsychism suggest that consciousness may be a fundamental feature of the universe, although this is not evidence of the soul but rather of a kind of ubiquitous consciousness.

The soul can also be treated as a metaphor for human identity, morality, and the meaning of life. The soul then symbolizes our deepest beliefs, values, and what defines us as individuals. It is a way of describing our uniqueness and seeking meaning in life.

Although science and religion may seem incompatible on the issue of the soul, there are attempts to integrate these perspectives. Some philosophers and theologians, like Teilhard de Chardin, have tried to combine an evolutionary scientific approach with a spiritual understanding of humanity, suggesting that the development of consciousness is part of a larger cosmic process[39][40][41].

The significance of the concept of the soul is ambiguous and depends on the context in which it is considered. Religions see the soul as the immortal essence of a person, philosophy examines it as a fundamental aspect of being, and science analyzes consciousness as a product of the brain.

A brief overview of contemporary conceptual models of the universe's structure

Contemporary knowledge of the universe's structure is based on the cosmological model that describes it as a vast, dynamic, and expanding system of space, time, matter, and energy. According to the Big Bang model, the universe began about 13.8 billion years ago from an unimaginably hot and dense state. Today, the universe comprises galaxies, stars, planets, as well as dark matter and dark energy, which constitute most of its mass and energy. Dark energy is responsible for the accelerating expansion of the universe, as confirmed by cosmological observations such as the redshift of distant galaxies.

Modern societies often combine traditional beliefs with contemporary scientific theories and philosophical speculations,

creating new, hybrid belief systems about life after death and the universe's structure.

The New Age movement initiated such practices, but this trend extends beyond it. Many people, especially in Western cultures, increasingly identify as spiritual but not religious. They integrate traditional spiritual beliefs with modern scientific theories, such as quantum mechanics, to form personal belief systems regarding life after death and the universe's structure. This syncretic approach is reflected in numerous books dedicated to such integrated reflections[42][43][44].

How to rationally reconcile the views of Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, and Shintoists based on cosmological theories and the assumptions of Baruch Spinoza

From the above considerations, it would appear that the world's major religions offer different perspectives on the nature of reality, existence, and the purpose of life. These unique views may initially seem irreconcilable. However, we believe that common ground can be found by utilizing the contemporary cosmological theory of the cyclic universe[20][21][22][23][45].

The attempt to conceptually reconcile these views could be based on the following reasoning:

Christianity is based on the belief in a personal God who created the universe ex nihilo and has a plan of salvation realized through Jesus Christ.

In recent decades, the Big Bang Theory, which describes the origins of the observable universe, has been seen as conceptually aligned with the idea of creation by powerful transcendent forces[46].

Contemporary descriptions of the universe's evolution, resulting from astronomical observations, predict accelerating expansion and space-time expansion, which is heading towards energetic annihilation. Since the Big Bang Theory describes a one-time event, it has been supplemented by various cosmological speculations. The most commonly accepted is the cyclic universe theory[20][21][22][23][45].

One could then assume that the previous universe was the driving force behind the current universe, where the "Son of God" operates. This assumption eliminates the fundamental theological problem known as the "problem of Job" or, in other words, the problem of reconciling God's omnipotence and omnibenevolence with the existence of evil and suffering in the world.

The figure of the Creator God, external to the current universe, can retain attributes of omnipotence, while the actions of His Son, which are not always successful, remain an inspiration for development.

The Christian theological and cosmological vision refers to a conceptual model of the universe at its current stage of development, when stars, galaxies, and planets were formed, on which biological life and then human consciousness emerged. The existence of intelligent societies requires attempts to formulate ethical and moral principles. At the same time, it is necessary to note the ongoing changes in human society.

Intelligent beings that appeared due to biological evolution, which Christians consider part of God's plan, are endowed with an insatiable drive to learn and understand the world and accumulate knowledge. The collected knowledge becomes widely accessible thanks to inventions such as printing, libraries, computers, databases, the Internet, and large installations enabling the operation of artificial intelligence systems. According to many philosophers, the observed progress signifies a pursuit of some transformation. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin believed this means the desire to reach the so-called Omega Point, which is the path to parousia[39][40][41]. The establishment of the concept of a Personal God and the prediction of parousia is logical and coherent for such a stage of the universe's development.

Hinduism, with its concept of Brahman (the absolute) and cycles of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara), aligns well with the idea of a cyclic universe[13][14][47][48]. In Hinduism, the universe undergoes cycles of creation, duration, and destruction, which is analogous to cosmological theories of a cyclic universe.

Hindu deities and myths can be interpreted as different aspects and phases of the cosmic cycle, where Brahman remains the eternal force and energy permeating every stage of this cycle[47]. For this argument, it is worth noting that Ishvara, the Hindu personal God, is a manifestation of Brahman in the transitional realization of the world (maya) for spiritual teaching and guiding souls. Ishvara is thus a characteristic figure of the "middle" period of the universe's cyclical transformations. This interpretation allows for the harmonious integration of Hindu beliefs with the scientific concept of a cyclic universe.

Buddhism, especially in its Mahayana and Theravada versions, emphasizes the impermanence (anicca) and emptiness (shunyata) of all phenomena. These concepts can be easily related to the idea of "quantum foam," which in cosmology represents the fundamental state of the universe from which various forms emerge and disappear[49][50][51][52]. In this view, Buddhism provides a spiritual and philosophical framework for understanding the impermanence and transience of cosmic cycles.

The cyclic universe theory, particularly its version described by Roger Penrose, predicts an "energetic death" at the end of each cycle, where nothing exists beyond "quantum foam." This state of annihilation of all previously existing structures in a given cycle conceptually aligns with the Buddhist concept of emptiness (shunyata).

Shintoism, with its belief in kami (spirits or divine powers) inhabiting everything from great mountains to small stones, also finds its place in the cyclic universe theory. Intermediate powers can be seen as manifestations of various kami acting during the cosmic cycle[53][54].

Shinto rituals and traditions, which celebrate natural phenomena and spirits, can be understood as a way to harmonize with the cyclical changes of the universe. This approach integrates Shinto beliefs with modern cosmological understanding, emphasizing the continuous interaction between the spiritual and material world.

It should be noted that accepting the assumption of a cyclically regenerating universe leads to the conclusion that the basic thesis of Baruch Spinoza's philosophy is justified[55][56]. As is well known, Spinoza argued that God is an immanent substance, identical with nature and the universe. According to Spinoza, God is not a transcendent being existing outside the world but is united with all reality. The entire universe and everything in it are manifestations of the single substance

that is God. Spinoza presents God as an infinite being possessing infinite attributes, each expressing His eternal and infinite essence.

It seems that the discussed concept of Brahman is almost identical to Spinoza's beliefs. It is also worth noting that we recognize the possibility of periodically manifesting a figure possessing the attributes of a Personal God (like the Hindu Ishvara) during intervals (time intervals) distant from the initial stages (referred to here as "quantum foam" stages) of successive versions of the universe.

If one seeks analogous arguments linking cosmological theories with religious messages in the literature, one should mention the work of Clement Vidal[57] and the article by John T. Fitzgerald[58]. These authors see the possibility of interpreting religious messages in the terminology of contemporary cosmology but do not formulate the thesis presented in the title of our article.

Our proposed conceptual reconciliation of the messages of the world's major religions boils down to the observation and emphasis that these religions consider different "slices" or periods of the cyclical transformations predicted by the cosmological model of the cyclic universe. Christianity focuses on the "middle phase" of one cycle, Buddhism on the "final phase" of each cycle, and Hinduism considers the entire spectrum of endless cyclic transformations.

Practical utility of the presented considerations

Concepts of life after death significantly impact an individual's ethics and morality. Believers of religions such as Christianity and Islam, who have faith in the final judgment and eternal consequences, derive moral principles from the desire to fulfill God's commandments and live according to their faith. This perspective can lead to altruism, empathy, and justice, as believers are motivated by the reward of eternal life in paradise.

In traditions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, where the concepts of karma and reincarnation are key, ethical behavior is seen as essential to achieving a better reincarnation or liberation from the cycle of rebirths. These beliefs can promote long-term thinking and self-discipline, as every action directly affects the individual's future life.

Eliminating contradictions and proposing a way to validate the joint acceptance of these seemingly entirely different beliefs would bring practical benefits. These benefits arise from the fact that simply discussing and listening to conversations about different forms of existence can reduce the fear of death, facilitate community building and social bonds, and increase motivation for self-improvement and reflections on values.

Many people experience fear of death and the unknown. Familiarity with possible concepts of life after death can alleviate this fear by offering hope for the continuation of existence. Discussing different concepts of life after death can provide a sense of meaning and purpose, helping individuals cope with existential crises and the loss of loved ones.

Understanding beliefs about life after death can also shape social and community bonds. Understanding others' beliefs can bring people closer together, building a sense of community and mutual support. Familiarity with rituals, ceremonies,

and religious practices can strengthen social ties and a sense of belonging to a larger group.

Even if not, everyone shares the beliefs about life after death related to reincarnation and spiritual development, these concepts can still serve as arguments motivating continuous self-improvement.

Reflections on life after death encourage deeper consideration of the values that matter most to us. They can inspire living in accordance with our deepest convictions and seeking answers to fundamental questions about the meaning of existence.

In summary, familiarity with different concepts of life after death can significantly impact our daily lives. Such knowledge can influence our moral decisions, reduce the fear of death, strengthen social bonds, motivate self-improvement, and help reflect on values.

We believe that the possibility of eliminating contradictions and the proposed method of validating the joint acceptance of different beliefs would bring practical benefits not only in conversations among family and friends about existential circumstances but also particularly important for certain professional groups. We refer specifically to nurses, doctors, staff of facilities caring for the elderly, critically ill individuals, and hospice staff.

Some essential tips on how to convey the above-discussed messages that promote well-being were presented in our previous work[59].

Conclusions

1. Most believers accept the central tenets of their faith and are emotionally attached to them. However, some individuals who identify as religious feel the need to rationally reconsider the most important messages of their faith, such as the belief that an omnipotent, transcendent being listens to their prayers and that some form of life after death exists.
2. Believers often recognize that the views on the afterlife held by Christians, Hindus, and Buddhists are not consistent. Most people who consider this issue believe that these views are irreconcilable.
3. The authors of the article propose that this inconsistency can be eliminated based on the assumptions of Baruch Spinoza and the cosmological theory of a cyclically regenerating universe.
4. Presenting the reasoning leading to the reconciliation of the views of the major religions requires recalling the conceptual models of the universe's structure referenced by those discussing the fate of people after their death.
5. The article suggests that contemporary cosmological theories, such as the concept of a cyclic universe, can provide a common ground for integrating science, spirituality, and various religious beliefs. Adopting the idea of a cyclic universe may help integrate traditional beliefs with modern science, mitigating theological contradictions and supporting a more coherent approach to reflections on the nature of reality.
6. The proposed reasoning has practical significance, as familiarizing oneself with these concepts can reduce the fear of death and facilitate community building. Conversations, and sometimes even belief in the continuation of life after death, provide many people with a sense of meaning and purpose, which can help them cope with existential crises

and the loss of loved ones.

7. Familiarity with the content of the article may be particularly useful for certain professional groups, such as nurses, doctors, staff of facilities caring for the elderly, critically ill individuals, and hospice staff.

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