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## **CHRISTIAN ETHIC OF LOVE AND HINDU ETHIC OF DHARMA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS**

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This article is devoted to comparative analysis of two ethic systems: Hindu ethic of dharma and Christian ethic of love. If Christian ethic is the ethic of love, love is in the center of Christian moral values, then Hindu ethic is an example of ethic of law. The moral behavior of gods and humans is determined by Karma and cycle of samsara, which is impossible in Christianity. However forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity are common moral obligations for Christians and Hindus.

**Keywords:** Christian ethic, ethic of dharma, love, Hinduism, karma, reincarnation.

## **ХРИСТИАНСКАЯ ЭТИКА ЛЮБВИ И ИНДУИСТСКАЯ ЭТИКА ДХАРМЫ: СРАВНИТЕЛЬНЫЙ АНАЛИЗ**

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Статья посвящена сравнительному анализу двух этических систем: индуистской этики дхармы и христианской этики любви. Если христианская этика – этика любви, любовь находится в центре христианских моральных ценностей, это индуистская этика – это пример этики закона. Моральное поведение даже многочисленных богов индуизма определяется законом кармы и циклом сансары, что немислимо в христианство. Однако идеи прощения, самоограничения, не-воровства и чистоты можно рассматривать как общие моральные требования для христиан и адептов индуизма.

**Ключевые слова:** христианская этика, этика дхармы, любовь, индуизм, карма, реинкарнация.

The goal of this article is to conduct comparative analysis of two ethic' systems: Hindu ethic of dharma and Christian ethic of love. Christian ethic is the ethic of love. Love is the centre Christian moral values. Hindu ethic is the ethic of

law. This law is named Dharma. We consider basics of Hindu ethic, Christian ethic and main difference step by step.

*Love as the center of Christian ethic*

The Christian' law of Love is analyzed by Russian researchers [8; 9; 11; 13; 14; 15]. Divine Law, which is given to all people by Lord Jesus Christ, is love. Truly God and Truly man Jesus Christ said: «Have love for the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest rule. And a second like it is this, Have love for your neighbor as for yourself. On these two rules all the law and the prophets are based» (Mt. 22:37-40). Saint Apostle Paul said about this Commandment in another words: «Because you, brothers, were marked out to be free; only do not make use of your free condition to give the flesh its chance, but through love be servants one to another. For all the law is made complete in one word, even in this, have love for your neighbor as for yourself. But if you are given to fighting with one another, take care that you are not the cause of destruction one to another. But I say, go on in the Spirit, and you will not come under the rule of the evil desires of the flesh» (Ga. 5:13-16). The love is both goal and source of spiritual life. There is no Christianity without Divine love, because the sense of Christianity is the unity with God.

Apostle John said about Love as the Name of God. «God is love, and everyone who has love is in God, and God is in him». (1 Jn. 4:16) If God was not love, he would be an egoist, who loves only himself. Love between The God Father, the Son of God and the Holy Spirit presupposes that the Divine love is sacrificial.

Thus, God is Love only in Christianity. God is not an embodiment of love. Rama is not love, Krishna is not love, Siva is not love. Jesus Christ is Love and gives the love everyone, who lives in Him. «The Lord Christ opens The Father for us. He opens the name of Father for us, and this name is Love, Caritative Love, Love of the Cross. It is the name of our Christian God» [10, p. 116].

All the New testament' law is expressed in the love for God and for neighbor as for yourself. Vital necessity of love is described in the following words: «If I make use of the tongues of men and of angels, and have not love, I am like sounding brass,

or a loud-tongued bell» (1 Co. 13:1). Without love for God, there are not social, family and individual lives. The human transforms in personality only in love. The main characteristics of love is expounded in the First epistle of Ap. Paul to Corinthians: «Love is never tired of waiting; love is kind; love has no envy; love has no high opinion of itself, love has no pride; Love's ways are ever fair, it takes no thought for itself; it is not quickly made angry, it takes no account of evil; It takes no pleasure in wrongdoing, but has joy in what is true; Love has the power of undergoing all things, having faith in all things, hoping all things. Though the prophet's word may come to an end, tongues come to nothing, and knowledge have no more value, love has no end... But now we still have faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love» (1 Co. 13:4-8, 13). The love is more important than faith and hope in vital sense.

The love to God is always the gift from God. The human cannot achieve the love itself without actions of the grace of God. Ap. Paul writes: «our hearts are full of the love of God through the Holy Spirit which is given to us. (Ro. 5:5) Love is the sign of presence of God in our heart.

Other conditions of achievement of love are patience and humility. «By going through all these things, you will keep your lives». (Lk. 21:19) The love can give opportunity for Christian person to become angel on the ground and to connect heaven' and earth' ways of live.

Love is fulfillment of moral law of Christianity. Jesus Christ said «If anyone has love for me, he will keep my words: and he will be dear to my Father; and we will come to him and make our living-place with him». (Jn. 14:23) Even homeless person for Christian is like Jesus Christ, and Christians have the same attitude to both homeless and rich man.

Thus, love in Christianity has three senses:

1. Love as the gift of God for people.
2. Love as Commandment.
3. Love as reciprocal gift of person for God.

*Dharma as the heart of Hindu ethic*

Hindu ethic essentially differs from Christian ethic of love. What is the main elements of Hindu ethic? Sri Swami Sivananda writes: «Dharma is the heart of Hindu ethic. God is the center of Dharma» [10, p. 24]. The law of God or gods is Dharma, which save this entire world. The Hindu' law of Dharma is analyzed by Indian and western researchers [3; 4; 5; 7; 16; 18]. We consider etymology of this term. «The word *Dharma* is derived from the root *Dhr* – to hold – and its etymological meaning is ‘that which holds’ this world, or the people of the world, or the whole creation from the microcosm to the macrocosm. It is the eternal Divine Law of the Lord» [17, p. 23].

Dharma is not one term. It is the complex or system of Hindu terms. «Dharma is a complex and multifaceted term in Hindu tradition. It can be translated as “religious law,” “right conduct,” “duty,” and “social order.”... The social concept of dharma emerges from the VEDIC notion of *RITA* or “cosmic order.” In this worldview, dharma (the social order) is maintained by dharma (right conduct and the fulfillment of duty and religious law). Social activity was traditionally very much circumscribed by tradition; following dharma meant doing what was required» [6, p. 130-131].

The source of Dharma is the God. «Dharma comes from the Divine and leads you to the Divine» [17, p. 23]. The main idea of the way of Dharma is self-realization. «Self-realization is the highest Dharma» [17, p. 24]. There is no self-realization in Christian spiritual life because self-realization is contradicted with Christian humility. Self-realization is the way to sinful pride. Pride is the most dangerous and disastrous passion for soul.

Mahabharata, one of the most important and the largest Indian epics, includes the law of Dharma. «Mahabharata tells the story of the descendents of BHARATA, the legendary leader of the early Indian tribes. It is the world's largest epic, containing at least 100,000 verses» [6, p. 268]. «The Mahabharata is an encyclopedia of Hindu Dharma. It is rightly called the fifth Veda » [17, p. 14]. Dharma is the basic

law. The laws which regulate Hindu national, social, family and individual behavior and relationships between people are based on Dharma. «Dharma means Achara or the regulation of daily life. Achara is the supreme Dharma.... It leads to wealth, beauty, longevity and continuity of lineage» [17, p. 24].

Christian law is more spiritual than Dharma. The law of love is the law of freedom because of it does not consist of instructions, which regulate of daily life. The goal of Christian moral development is not such earthly. Wealth, beauty etc. are earthly values. These values are material. The end of life according to these values is death, spiritual death, when soul perishes because of sinful intentions. The goal of Christian' moral development is salvation of soul in God, eternal happy live with God. Salvation in love and eternal life in the Light of God' Grace are spiritual truly values.

Dharma is not universal and united. «Dharma depends upon time, circumstances, age, degree of evolution and the community to which one belongs. The Dharma of this century is different from that of the tenth century» [17, p. 24]. The law of love is the universal and eternal. Christian love does not depend on time, circumstances, cast, or historical epoch. Christian love is above time and space. Love of Christ is common for poor and rich people, for man and women, for Hindus and Christians. Love to God and neighbor is needed in all times and all epochs.

#### *Classifications of Dharma*

Dharma can be classified on different parameters. First basis classification based on binary opposition «general-specific». «Dharma can be classified under two heads: (i) Samanya or the general, universal Dharma and (ii) Vishesha or the specific, personal Dharma Contentment, forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, control of senses, discrimination between right and wrong, between the real and the unreal, spiritual knowledge, truthfulness and absence of anger come under the general or universal Dharma» [17, p. 25]. Christian moral law consists of such rules as forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity etc. Specific Dharmas prescribes different obligations for different castes.

Second classification of Dharma is more complex: «Sanatana Dharma (Eternal Law), Samanya Dharma (general duty), Visesha Dharma (special duty), Varnasrama Dharma (duties of Caste and Order), Svadharma (one's own duty), Yuga Dharma (duty of the Age), Kula Dharma (duty of family), Manava Dharma (duty of man), Purusha Dharma (duty of male), Stri Dharma (duty of female), Raja Dharma (duty of king), Praja Dharma (duty of subjects), Pravritti Dharma (duty in worldly life) and Nivritti Dharma (duty in spiritual life)» [17, p. 25-26]. There are two main forms of Dharma.

1. Sanatana-Dharma «SANATANA DHARMA, the eternal truth of creation that has manifested and operates in harmony with Divine Will» [6, p. 62]. Another interpretation of Sanatana-Dharma is given by Sri Swami Sivananda. «Sanatana-Dharma means eternal religion...it is protected by God and because it can make us eternal» [17, p. 1]. What is such God (or gods), who protects Sanatana-Dharma? Christianity is eternal religion, which is provided by Truly God Jesus Christ. Sanatana-Dharma is unrecognizable without Truly God Jesus Christ. Only Christ can protect truly Sanatana-Dharma. Jesus is the way, and if we go by this way Jesus makes us eternal.

2. Vaidika-Dharma. «Vaidika-Dharma means the religion of the Vedas. The Vedas are the foundational scriptures of Hinduism. The ancient Rishis and sages of India have expressed their intuitive spiritual experiences (*Aparoksha-Anubhuti*) in the Upanishads. These experiences are direct and infallible. Hinduism regards the spiritual experiences of the Rishis of yore as its authority» [17, p. 1]. Christianity has only Truth. There are no authorities in Christian faith because authorities can make mistakes. Truth cannot make mistakes. The source of Truth is the God. God is the Truth. In Hinduism religious ideas are revealed by Hindu Rishis and sages. «The priceless truths that have been discovered by the Hindu Rishis and sages» [17, p. 1]. In Christianity the faith is opened by Jesus Christ. He is not a prophet, he is not a sage. He is Divine wisdom. He has Divine will. He is Divine light. He is the God and man. As we can see the Source of moral law in Hinduism and Christianity is different.

*Dharma and karma*

Dharma is essentially connected with another ethical idea of Hinduism – karma. «According to this ethical concept, the actions or karmas of individuals in their current births shape their lives in their next births. Finally, in the context of the BHAGAVAD GITA, karma yoga refers to a YOGA of action in the world without regard to its fruits» [6, p. 228]. Historically there were two kinds of karma:

karma kanda (action aspect);

jnana kanda (knowledge aspect).

These karma's traditions opposite with each other. Christian tradition does not accept the notion of karma because Christian dogmatic system denies idea of reincarnation.

*Does reincarnation exist?*

Jesus Christ said nothing about reincarnation. Saint Nicholas Serbian said: «Reincarnation is the repeat birth, birth in a new body...Hindus know that there is a living soul in a human. A body dies, but a soul does not die... When body dies, a soul goes away from a body and appears in new body whether human body or animal body, in accord not will of God, but karma, which subordinates even gods...Karma determinates the destiny of gods and humans» [2, p. 7]. People have only one life on earth. During this life human decides to live with God or not. One life is sufficient for this choice. God said through ap. Paul: «It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment» (Heb. 9:27).

Reincarnation does not combine with idea of repentance. Repentance of human in sins can be possible only during one life on the earth. Idea of reincarnation cannot consist of the idea of resurrection in body, the idea of Judgment of God, the idea of post-death recompense. The exit from cycle of samsara is not Christian salvation. Hindu liberation from earth lives does not involve a personal and conscious selection of eternal life with God, with Jesus Christ. Reincarnation gives ideological substance for irresponsibility of human for his life [1, p. 35]. The teaching of reincarnation was blamed by Orthodox Church on Constantinople's council (1076 year). Christian truth

is that soul, when go out from body, leaves this world and arrive in other eternal world, in the kingdom of souls, and soul will not transmigrate infinitely [2, p. 52].

According Christian moral teaching the highest gift, which can be given by human to God is free will. God respects free will of human even if person does evil. Human have a choice: to become follower of Jesus Christ, does good things and executes the Commandments or to become enemy of Christ and Church. There is no third way.

The Hindu ethic is the ethic of duty. This ethic «prescribes different duties for different people... But, non-violence, truth, non-stealing, cleanliness and control of the senses, are the duties common to all men» [17, p. 24]. Forgiveness, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity are common moral obligations for Christians and Hindus. Hindu ethic is based on polytheistic tradition. There is not free will because the moral behavior of gods and humans is determined by Karma and cycle of samsara.

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