**Consider a religion that you are familiar with and discuss some of its beliefs, behaviours and norms. Discuss how these meet social needs. Then research a religion that you do not know much about, explain how its beliefs, behaviours and norms are unlike the other religion.**

Religion can be defined as a system of beliefs, values and practices concerning what a person holds as sacred or something that is spiritually important. Religion ays a vital role in socialization. Religion instills moral values and gives an avenue to **social solidarity,** according to **Emilie Durkheim.** This is achieved through the celebration of various activities, festivals ehich brings people together. Thaere are various types of religion in the world, this includes; christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism e.t.c.

A religion with which i am well familiar with is chrstianity. Its basic norms, values and behaviours are stipulated below.

**Christianity:**

Chris is the largest religion being practised with over 2.4 billion participants and comsituting of over 33% 9f the worlds population. Chritianity is based on the belief in jesus christ and the holy trinity. The death and ressurection of christ is the corner stone of a Christians faith. Christians belief in after life and the second coming of jesus christ. They arr also of the belief that the bible is the only inspirea qnd authoritative written word of GOd, penned by man with the leading of the holyspirit. There is one God, eternally existent and in three persons: God the father, God the son and God the holy spirit. The only means of being cleansed from sinn9s repentance and Faith in the precious blood og Jesus christ. Thay also believe in water baptism immersion. This is a public display of the authencity of a person's repentance.

Christianvalues are based on God and the work of jesus christ. The most important christian value is for a christian to just value God more than anyhting, anybody or any idea. Christian values are based on Spiritual things versus material things. Even though christian values are spiritual in nature, the evidence of these values c9mes through deeds and actions. Christian values include hope, righteousness, lobe and putting God first in our lives( humility and goodness).

Further a religion in which i am not conversant with is Buddhism. Its practices, beliefs and norms are different from that of christianity. Below are its basic practices, norms and values.

Most Buddhist practices have the central aim of avoiding future karmic problems (by avoiding harming others), karmic benefit (through helping others), as well as various practices and ritualized activities that focus the mind, help to purify it and to assist in one’s attainment of enlightenment and ridding of suffering for oneself and others.

Meditation

Perhaps the key Buddhist practice, it is central to most traditions, and the only means to enlightenment for some. An excellent introduction to Buddhist meditation practices is available at MeditationInstructions.com(coming soon). The benefits of meditation are many, including physical and mental health, relaxation, improved relaxation and mental ability, and happiness. It is primarily the ability to understand and control the mind and its use for practices that lead to enlightenment that is considered the most important.

Prayers

The position of prayer in Buddhism varies from tradition to tradition. A Buddhist solution to this may be to try each approach, and see which not only makes intellectual sense, but which leads to a better understanding of oneself and benefits to one’s well being.

In Tibet particularly, prayer to various deities (influenced by the indigenous religion Bon, as well as various Indian practices) featured prominently, with prayer focusing the mind. With the ‘merit’ of a prayer affecting one’s future reality, and the number of times a prayer is said being important, Tibetans have developed ‘machinery’ to magnify the quantity of prayers. Prayer wheels can contain a prayer written down many thousands of times – turning a wheel thus has a magnified – physical or mental – effect. Similarly, prayer flags ‘activate’ their written prayers with each flapping of the wind, sending their good wishes far and wide.

In contrast, Therevada emphasizes the fact that Buddhism does not posit the existence of a separate creator god, and that the Buddha himself discouraged his own worship. Indeed, Therevada believes the Buddha is outside of any call of prayer and it is wrong practice to pray to the Buddha (Tibetan Buddhism, by contrast, equates enlightenment with a heightened, intimate awareness of all beings). In both traditions, various rituals allows one to reflect on the qualities of the Buddha, and all of these practices are mutually reinforcing in internalizing true Buddhist beliefs.

Rituals have a cumulative affect of training one’s mind and systematizing one’s practice. The act of bowing and prostrating is a challenge to one’s egoism itself and may be beneficial merely on that level.

Chanting

Chanting is a common sound in Buddhist communities from Zen monasteries in Japan, to communities in Laos, Thailand, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Originating in India, where writing was rare, chanting enabled important texts to be passed from person to person. Later, the ritual of chanting was found to be a useful way to focus the mind, and remember and internalize key Buddhist ideas. In some communities it may even be said to have a protective aspect, with Buddhists chanting during important life events, or during or before times of danger or otherwise personal importance.

As with all of these rituals, the benefit is seen as less the result of an external agent, and more in the personal effort and resulting benefits from focusing one’s good intentions, motivations, and purifying the mind from wrong views and understandings.

Vegetarianism

Many Buddhists are vegetarian, however it must be said that the Buddha himself did not prohibit the eating of meat. Many monasteries still serve meat today, and in Tibet, a high protein and fat diet was important in such a cold, often snow-covered environment. Buddhism acknowledges that rigid rules are often counterproductive, individual medical situations mean that vegetarianism may not always be the best course of action for one’s spiritual practice. However – one is not immune from the karmic consequences of eating meat, particularly if it is killed for you. Some choose to eat only ethically raised and well treated animals.

With the various points listed above it is without doubt that this two religions differ in various ways begining with how they pray to their major beliefs, and practices. This undoubtedly signifies the essence of religion to an individual. Although there are various ways in which theser religions exercise their faith it is of upmost importance to acknowledge iys postitve effect to not just an individual but to the societ at large. The importance of reiligion should not be underemphasised as it has contibuted enormously to peace, development and stability.