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Comparative Religions Paper

Sexuality is the most common issue in all the religions. This paper compares the concept of sexuality in three of the religions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Islam. The relationship between religion and sexuality implies a sexual morality, understood not so much as part of the general moral or common to all, but as part of religious morality that implies restrictions or obligations to human sexual behavior (Jordanova,42-47). It varies enormously in time between one time and another, as well as between different civilizations. Social norms, the standards of conduct of societies in terms of sexuality, are usually linked to religious beliefs of one religion or another. Etymologically, religion is "what connects": it connects human beings first to other humans, but also to all of nature and in particular to the secret powers. Sexuality also connects us to the living forces of nature, to animal fertility, to plant fertility. Religion and sexuality thus have the same goal, and are inseparable: to make love is to participate in the vital energy of the world, it is to have one's mind that merges with divine spirits.

In Christianity, in spite of the varied variations among diverse Christian confessions, which usually contain different points of view on sexuality, it is likely to appeal a general image of the vision of sex in biblical doctrine. The foundations of several Christian opinions come from the impression that human sexuality was produced by God for the purpose of procreation and intimacy that provides a sexually active partner with an intimate, emotional and spiritual relationship, through intimacy physical relationship. In that way, sex should be restricted to a lifelong relationship between a man and a woman. The marriage is a commitment to an intimate and ongoing relationship as a basis on which to build a family stable. Given the emphasis on the reproductive function and the responsibility that involves sex, sexual relationships and sexual acts unrelated to the marital commitment are discouraged - or even forbidden - by some Christian confessions (Bouhdiba, 34).

According to the most widespread Christian doctrines and teachings, both among Catholics and Protestants, although with more emphasis among the so-called "fundamentalists" than among the so-called "moderates", sodomy is a sin, since it does not lead to procreation, and is considered contrary to God's intentions for sex. However, a small number of churches and Christian denominations consider homosexuality morally acceptable, such as those of the Lutheran international league, which are the state Protestant churches of Iceland , Denmark , Norway , Finland and the former state church of Sweden . Another example is the Episcopal Church, who in 2003 appointed the first gay reverend, Gene Robinson . Human sexuality is reserved for two people in an exclusive commitment relationship. However, the fundamental issue in which our churches may differ is that the purpose and objective of human sexuality can also be applied to same-sex relationships and heterosexual relationships outside of marriage (Daniluk, 129-130).

Most of the evangelical churches, like the Baptists of the South, perceive homosexuality as a immorality. Sex outside marriage is rejected as unethical behavior by both the so-called "conservative" Christians and the so-called "fundamentalists" in their respective churches, sects and groups. The concrete position varies from the proposal of penitence to the total shunning of those who have incurred such practice. In general, Christianity promotes marriage, however sex outside of marriage and pleasure sex are recognized as a normal part of human behavior by some churches, sects and groups called "progressive".

The Islamic doctrine demands that man be governed in all his acts according to the commands and prohibitions of God and must classify his acts according to the Islamic parameters, that is, the lawful and the illicit. The lawful is what God has allowed and the unlawful is what God has forbidden. Legislation of the licit and illicit is obtained from the legal texts taken from the Holy Qur'an and the Sunna. Sexuality is lawful with state of marriage. It is prohibited without marriage. The Islam does not cover the celibacy as a spiritual preparation, and considers that the normal state of man is marriage. The Koran allows Muslims to marry women of other Abrahamic religions. Contemporary interpreters have maintained this rule, but many see mixed marriages as undesirable (since they consider that they lead to difficulties, such as the determination of the children's religion), even if they are legal.

The provisional matrimonial ( mut'a , conceived for a pre-established period) is not permitted by the mainstream of Sunni experts , but by the Shiites , its validity being a subject that continues to be debated. Some Sunnis perform in niqah Misyar , marriage contract that has no similarity to a temporary marriage as it is established without a limited time, however, lacks any foundation of the marriage contract either the guardian of the bride, the dowry, or the witnesses.

Unlike other faiths, in Hinduism the view of sensual morality differs extensively dependent on the particular branch. The Hindu sacred texts themselves are very unclear on the subject. There are shrines that openly show sexual action and sexual images is not sacrilege (for example, the lingam , phallic sign of Shivá ), however sexual self-containment (as in other features of life) is measured indispensable for the well-being and the dharmic / karmic duties of a Hindu.

The Tantric version of Hinduism is that in its sexual aspects has been seen with more morbid attention in its disclosure in the West, in what is called Neotantra. All those sexual practices that have been consensual and accepted by men can never be considered negative, in any of its aspects, such as homosexuality, and prostitution. The conception that Buddhism has of sex, is quite open, although it is necessary to differentiate within this, the current existing between the faithful and the monks, whose practices are much more restrictive. The monks believe that to reach nirvana it is necessary to eliminate all desire. Therefore, we can also see the existence of more restrictive Buddhist currents on the subject of sexuality.

In general Hindu society has been influenced by other religions since the Middle Ages, first by the Islamic minority and since the eighteenth century by the British colonizers (Christians), which reflected their much more restrictive attitudes on sexual matters. On the other hand, many present Hindus (especially in the big cities of India or between the emigrants and the second generations settled in developed countries) have accepted western sexual customs that in practice are more "liberal" than the traditional Hindus, like, for example, premarital relationships, marriages for love (the traditional Hindu marriage is arranged) and homosexuality and bisexuality. Among the more traditional elements of Hindu society, however, such concepts remain anathemas.

Most Hindus who have adopted Western culture adhere to the sexual standards of Victorian morality, which perceive extramarital and premarital sex as immoral and shameful. In religious doctrine, the prohibition against sex outside marriage is greatly related to the prescribed Hindu stages of life, which must be followed if one wants to attain moksha (a concept similar to Buddhist nirvana , or 'soul liberation'). Influenced by Islam and British civilization, Indian law considers any sexual relationship other than heterosexual monogamy illegal. Additionally, since there are no restrictions on any particular sexual activity, it is considered a strictly private matter. Most Hindus are extremely opposed to openly exposing issues related to sexuality, while public demonstrations of affection are considered in poor taste.

The Kama Sutra ('sex aphorisms') of Vātsyāyana , popularly taken by a manual of sexual postures, offers a look at the sexual customs, sexual morals and social rules that prevailed at the time of its composition ( Gupta period) , between the 1st century and the 6th century ). Shringara-ras ('sexual attraction: flavor') is one of the nine rasas ('flavors' or emotions). A drama in Sanskrit , the Shakuntalam of Kālidāsa , is cited as one of the best examples of shringara ras , narrations of the love story between Dushyantaand Shakuntalá .

Many philosophies try to organize their prescriptions that concern individual sexual behavior. Such codifications often become laws, which extend their application beyond the origin culture of such prescriptions, either to believers of other religions or of none or to the dissenters of the original religion. Most of the Islamic world has strict rules reinforced with violent punishments for the maintenance of Sharia (Islamic laws that include a moral code), including the sexual morality of its citizens, and they tend to try to impose themselves on the non-Muslims who live in those societies. The same extension occurred throughout history in European Christian societies, and today many Christians upkeep limitations on the isolated appearance of sexuality, from the prohibition of prostitution to limitations on verbal sex and sodomy. The Haredi Jews of Israel actively use the media to convince the rest of the Jews to follow the halakha (Jewish law) about sexuality.

Social, religions and cultural arrangements have frolicked a significant role in the account of mankind. Like psychological arrangements, they affect the means we observe the world around us and the standards ​​we receive or discard. Like social organizations, they provide a support network and a sense of belonging. In many cases, religions have become the basis of the power structures and have become intertwined with them. The remote and recent history is full of examples of "theocratic" states, whether Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Jews or otherwise. The parting among state and faith is still contemporary and only partially: there are sanctioned state faiths in Europe and certainly state religions.

Through spiritual history, several spiritual and social elements have been incorporated into the atmosphere where a specific religion is practiced, and are replicated in philosophy and government. Many of the pieces of poetry, literature, art and melody, dress cyphers and behaviors of organizing life composed have their origin in faiths. Faith has left a deep stamp in the field of philosophy, which can be understood, e.g., on days off, at parties, marriage rituals, funeral rites, journeys, the use of spiritual cyphers (for example in jewelry or dress programs), or in bodily modifications of the body, for example male circumcision.

To conclude, the effect of beliefs can be although tougher as states accept a faith of state or spiritual philosophy. In such circumstances, faith and religious influences can be disorganized by radical, financial or social ones. Today, religious leaders always give themselves the right to offer a teaching on sexuality, but two contradictory tendencies are disputed in the minds of the faithful: on the one hand, a desecration of sexuality, which considers it the same way than all other human pleasures, and leads to living it without taboos, in a society that privileges individual happiness; on the other hand, a rigorous, extremist will, refusing the pleasure, especially sexual, in this world, in favor of an eternal happiness in the Other World.

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