Phaedo: Dialogue About The Existence Of Soul

This text in Phaedo questions the existence of the soul. This topic has been discussed across the Hindu religion as well as in Buddhism. It is supposed to give answers about the existence of the soul and questions related to it. Socrates at his time of death reveals some answers to Phaedo. Phaedo is later asked by others what Socrates had to say about the soul. Feelings of Phaedo have also been described in the text. Although Phaedo was a friend of Socrates, he did not feel sorrow for his friend. The answers given to Phaedo by Socrates were wise and intelligent. As Phaedo reaches to prison, he observes that who were present there were Cebes and Crito and a few others. The question is asked by Cebes that why committing suicide was thought of as a wrong action. Socrates describes that the soul is god's possession.

Willingly destroying possession of god is against righteousness. He states that, however, it is not wrong if God is willing to take the soul from a body willingly. (1) There is a very similar idea in Hindu mythology that life is in a form of a cycle. The term used in Hindu mythology is 'Moksha'. It means liberation or freedom from rebirth. It is described by stating that human being goes through life and death until they attain freedom. Life is seen as a punishment and only death allows a person to see what lies beyond. Socrates describes that he is not afraid of death if it is taken willingly by god. He mentions that once the soul leaves his body it will link with other souls. He explains that death is nothing but the separation of the soul from the body. People question Socrates of why is he not content with his death since he waited for this his whole life. Socrates describes that the pleasure of the body interferes with the improvement of the soul. The soul requires wisdom. Further, Socrates describes how true knowledge can come from thought. The physical sensations act as an inhibitor when it comes to acquiring this true knowledge. Hindu religion shares a similar idea by stating that 'Moksha' in life means freedom from ignorance. Life contains some knowledge that is not true. The similarities between the ideas can be noticed as they present barriers due to the presence of life. Life acts as a barrier between the soul and wisdom. Truth cannot be achieved with the physical body. Therefore, one needs to lose physical form to attain true knowledge. It is noticed how Socrates is emphasizing the mind. According to his arguments presented in Phaedo, the mind plays a very important role than the rest of the body. The purest form of knowledge, according to Socrates, can only be achieved without any distractions. Socrates describes that the physical body is distracted because of things like never-ending hunger, being prone to diseases, sexual desires and other feelings. Hinduism shares similar knowledge. It describes how liberation can be achieved only when impurities from the mind have completely vanished. The impurities refer to distractions such as presented in answers given by Socrates. The highest goal of life for Hindus is Moksha i.e. meeting with gods. To reach Moksha a person requires a teacher. Socrates can be seen as a teacher to Certo, Cebes, Phaedo, and others as he is describing the journey of soul by himself. A similar idea is found in Buddhism as well. The idea of 'Nirvana' shares a similar meaning. It means that greed leads to rebirth. In-state of nirvana all the distractions are away from the mind. Socrates also describes how a soul moves from one body to another after death. Hinduism also describes that the physical body acts like clothes. The soul just changes body like clothes again and again as it leaves the physical body.

One of the arguments presented by Socrates for the soul was that soul inside a person rules and governs the decisions. The body, however, does the obeying. It concludes how the soul

can be thought of as a wise, and intelligent being whereas the body is known as something that cannot think and is incompetent. Socrates also comes across the question where he is asked what happens to good souls and evil souls. The good souls would come closer to meet the gods but evils one will wander and will be haunted by their desires. They will wander until their desires are met. The will be deposited into another body. Each soul is given a body according to its past actions. Hinduism shares a similar idea. The idea of reincarnation has been continuing in the Hindu religion for a long period of time. It states that a soul will move from one body to another until it has become free of desires. The evil souls will be given life forms according to their previous actions. The idea of Karma comes in place when reincarnation is talked about. Anyone with bad Karma in the past will experience the same in their next life. Until a soul is clean and free of impurities, it can never meet the gods.

From Phaedo, it can be concluded that stories and beliefs in ancient Greek had connections to East Asia and India. There are ample amounts of similar ideas that can be found in the Phaedo and in the Hindu religion and Buddhism. The ideas share an astonishing amount of similarities. It can also be concluded that the messages presented by Socrates in the text of Phaedo had some connections to other religions from different parts of the world.