

# Religious Syncretism and Pi's Belief in God in Yann Martel Novel's Life of Pi

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## Abstract-

There are many religions in the world. Religion is the Concept of Individual beliefs. The person who believes the ideology and rituals of the particular religion follows that religion. The most of the people in the world accept religion as their ancestors have. Pi in the novel accepted and followed three religion Pi believed on the oneness of God. He was brought up in Hindu religion and accepted Islam and Christian religion. From his childhood he had got religious background that his mother and father Martin told him religious and goddess stories. Pi had faith on God so that made him possible to Survive 227 day's ordeal in the Pacific Ocean.

Keywords - religion, syncretism, belief, ordeal, psychology.

## Introduction –

Yann Martel 'Life of pi is a religious allegory. Religion and beliefs in God is the base of the novel. Pi the protagonist of the novel followed three religion rituals and believed on the oneness of God. He knew that the doctrine of the all religions were same. All the religion based on the welfare of human being, the religion teaches moral values. Pi has the fusion form of practice. Pi accepted three religion and each religion has its own Stories and fables. Pi attracted to each of three religion, due to their prayer and religion. Pi was alone on his sea voyage but he believed the presence of the God, this faith on God survived him. He made a proper time table without any calendar and watch and followed all the religious rituals and prayers four times in a day. This kept him busy all the time and gave him strength to survive. In born Pi was Hindu. He followed the Catholicism because of interesting short story of Jesus Christ. He also accepted Islam religion, in which prayer system and preach of Islam religion to love human being attracted to him.

### 1) Religious Syncretism-

Religious syncretism means the blending or fusion of beliefs and faith in more than religion. Basically Syncretism means fusion of belief and faith in more than two religion. Pi accepted and followed three religion. The two religion out of three religion are major that was Islam and Christian. All the religion worships God, believes in God and faith on God. There Goddess are different but the preaching of religion is same. Life of Pi religious novel is a spiritual and religious novel. Pi was a Theists who believed the presence or existence of God. Religion made of the beliefs of one community. Life of Pi novel is the fine example Religious Syncretism. Pi was a Spiritual person, who individually went to mosque, temple and church He never thought what other people comment on him. Pi practiced three religion which became-headache to his Parents. According to Pi all religion were same and their God was one. Pi respected thee religion on the bottom of his heart. Pi's sea journey would be incomplete without the existence of God. Life of Pi is a fictional story which based is Religion. At the beginning Francis Adirubasamy told author that he had story which would make him believed on God. Beliefs in God Survived Pi on his sea voyage there are two stories in the Life of Pi. If we believe the story with animals that may create faith and existence of God.

### 2) Pi believes in God-

In Yann Martel novel Life of Pi, the title of the novel indicated that the novel is about the life of Pi only. The whole story of the novel goes around Pi's life and his faith and beliefs in God. From the childhood Pi had got listen the stories of God and Goddess from his mother and father Martin. His mother told him Lord Krishna's and baby Krishna's Stories, which Some where took place in his mind. He imagined all the stories. Psychologically he inclined towards religion. As he grew up the surrounding and the Companies of people made him able to attract towards religion. Day by day Pi took keen Interest into the religion. According to Pi religion is the most important things to him and it's became the part his life. Pi asked two Japanese investigator that which Story they preferred and their reply was story with animal. It made Pi confirm that they believed in God. The strong will power and belief in God survived him of that sea voyage. Faith on God is the major theme of Life of Pi novel. Pi had no Calendar and watch in his journey. He was unknown the notion of time. Pi prayed four times in a day that kept him busy all the day. He always felt the presence of God and that made him able to face any trouble and obstacles that came to him on his sea journey Whenever he found any trouble or got feared he remembered God and called Vishnu, Allah and Christ and gave them thanks for his Survival.

### 3) Pi followers of three religion –

According to Pi religion was the part of his life. His life cannot be completed without religion. He was at the age of fourteen and attracted towards religion. Religion him was the beliefs in God. He believed the existence of supreme power. Pi's upbringing was in Hindu religion. His mother told him lord Krishna's childhood stories. In Munnar at Church Father Martin told him Jesus Christ Story. He wanted to listen more stories but father Martin told him that there was only one story. Pi imagined how the Christ suffer a lot. Mr. Kumar a Muslim (a baker) told Pi that his religion loved human being. Pi visited Mosque and prayed for Mohammad. He also visited clutch. Pi followed three religion - Hindu, Christian and Islam. Each religion has its own identity and concepts of God, Each religion has varied rites and rituals. Mahatma Gandhiji was

belonged to the religious family. His mother told him the Vaishnav religion stories when he was small. The impact of these Vaishnav religion on Gandhiji and when he was accepted non-violence concept in his life. Like the Same Pi was fascinated by Lord Krishna stories that Lord Krishna destroyed evil in the world. While discussing with father Martin, he told Pi the stories of Rama and Ravan. Pi realized what was good and bad. He imagined the baby Krishna's stories that in his mouth his mother saw whole Universe. All these stories and discussion made him able to incline towards religion. Pi visited church, temple and mosque and followed the rituals of these religions: Finally Pi came to conclusion that though the religions were different but their doctrine was the same and all religion believed on the oneness of God.

#### 4) Pi's religious rituals -

Pi's parents were friends but they were not religious person. They embraced that Pi was the followers of three religion at the age of fourteenth. Many times his father Scolded with him but it was useless for them. His brother Ravi always did a tease and prank with him about the following of three religion. After the Tsimtsum sank, he lost his parents and he was in a great trauma. But his will power made him strong to overcome on the grief. During his 227 days sea voyage only God with him. His inner voice made him strong to face trouble. In his sea journey these three religions survived him.in his sea journey he didn't have any calendar or watch for date and time. He prayed four Times in a day. Whenever he felt alone or he was talking with Richard Parker he reminded or recall Allah, Vishnu or Jesus Christ. Pi's Regular religious rituals made his will power strong. Pi was pure vegetarian but during his sea journey he caught fish and turtle ate and survived. He thanks to God Vishnu for giving him fish. He made some stories in his mind. He believed that God was always with him Saved him.

#### 5) Pi's sea voyage and belief in God-

After the shipwreck of TSimtsum, Pi was the only one who survived. He lost his parents and brother. He faced many trouble during his Sea voyage which made his sea journey adventures. He was not only shared his boat with Richard Parker but hyena, orangutan and zebra with him. Richard Parker was Strong and remaining three were weak. Zebra, hyena and orangutans were fight with each other for to satisfy their hunger and hyena killed orangutan and zebra. At last hyena attacked on Pi but Richard Parker killed hyena and Saved Pi. Pi made a craft to save himself from Richard Parker. Many times Richard Parker attacked on Pi but he defend it. He said thanks to Vishnu, Allah and Jesus Christ for his survival. Pi's sea voyage started on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 1977 to 14th February 1978. He was terrified of Richard Parker, 450 pounds Bengal tiger. Who was only his companion and he needed to tame him. Pi killed fish and turtle for him and Richard parker. Pi had got strong thirst. His throat completely dried and almost felt near to die. He remembered Jesus Christ on cross who died of thirst and suffocation. He always said God was saved him. At starry night he was woke up, He was fascinated by the night scene. He remembered the story of God Vishnu and sage Markandeya. Pi felt the presence of God everywhere. He Said his dress was Gods Attire, Richard Parker was God's cat his lifeboat was God's Ark. This Ark was not more than a jail to him. All the times Pi was talking with God. God and Richard Parker were his companion on his sea voyage.

## 6) Pi's childhood and his belief in God-

In the novel Life of Pi, Chapter 17 deals with Pi's childhood was affected by religion and religious fables and stories. The chapter 15, p-45 deals with the Pi's house. Pi was inborn Hindu. His house had decorated with a frame picture of Ganesh in Hindu religion Ganesh is a God who symbolizes auspicious. In the livening of his house there picture. There was a picture of Virgin Mary. Besides these picture there was a black robed kaaba of Islam religion. In his house he had decorated with small picture frame Krishna who playing flute, baby Krishna picture, Virgin Mary's pictures and Christ on the cross and the book of Bible on the table. These pictures were Indication of his childhood memories and imagination of religious stories told by Father Martin and his mother Mr.

.Kumar (Baker) taught him doctrine of Islam religion. He said that Islam was a beautiful religion who had brotherhood and devotion they both prayed together. Pi knew the Bible, the Gita and the Quran. Pi visited his friend's home and he saw Virgin Marry picture, Virgin Marry looked beautiful and calm. He imagined that Virgin Marry was looking and smiling at him. Pi felt the Presence of God. Pi with his parents went for the Sunday walk. They met priest, pandit and imam. Priest said that Pi was a good christen boy. Pandit had an argument that Pi was in born Hindu and visited temple regularly. Imam said that Pi was a Muslim. He regularly visited mosque and prayed there. Priest said that God is universal, imam also took the side of priest and said that there was the oneness of God. According to Pi all religions were equal he accepted the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhiji.

## Conclusion-

Life of Pi is a religious novel. In the novel we found that Pi accepted three religion and followed their rituals. Life of Pi novel is the fine example of Religious Syncretism. Pi had a great believed in God that made him possible to survive 227 days in sea voyage. He believed the presence of God. He thought that the inner voice from his heart was the voice of God. He had a faith on the Supreme Power of Almighty.

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