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Review and Analysis of Pi’s Religious Journey

The novel Life of Pi by Yann Martel is the ultimate adventure in which an Indian teenager named Pi must defeat all odds and survive the Pacific Ocean. Life of Pi is a story unlike any other, and the main reason is because of how religion is demonstrated throughout the novel. From how Pi practices three different religions, to how Pi clings to his faith while floating in the Pacific, religion is a major theme in Life of Pi. Pi believes all of the religions he practices (Christianity, Hinduism, Islam) are connected at least by one aspect: God. That’s how Pi survives his extraordinary journey.

The first point of religion in Pi’s life is the introduction of it. The first example is, “A germ of religious exaltation, no bigger than a mustard seed, was sown in me and left to germinate. It has never stopped growing since that day” (Martel 47). This quote is the first encounter that Pi has with religion and it leaves a long lasting impact on Pi for the rest of his life. Pi who has just experienced the Hindu religion with his mother and aunt is so deeply affected he describes it as a seed that will flourish in him forever. This shows how Pi started his religious love for God. A second example of how Pi discovers religion is, “I was moved. What I had before my eyes stole into my heart and thrilled me” (52). At this point in Pi’s life, Pi has met a Catholic priest and is amazed by the love that the priest shows. Pi has realized that he would like to be apart of this joyous religion and he believes it is possible for him to love God and still be multi-religious.

The second point to be discussed concerning Pi’s religious endeavors is how Pi dives head first into being multi-religious and the start of his faith journey on the Pacific. The first example is, “I entered the church, without fear this time, for it was now my house too. I offered prayers to Christ, who is alive. Then I raced down the hill on the left and raced up the hill on the right-to offer thanks to Lord Krishna for having put Jesus of Nazareth, whose humanity I found so compelling, in my way” (58). This signals the transition for Pi in which he becomes full on multi-religious, and begins his journey of God. Pi finds it hard not to be a Christian, because he finds it so interesting that the God of Christianity would become a mortal like him. The next example signals the start of Pi’s journey on the ocean and how he turns to God for comfort. It goes, “Yes, so long as God is with me, I will not die. Amen” (148). Pi has been out on the Pacific for a while now and not only is he on the ocean, but wild animals surround him, including the tiger Richard Parker. Pi realizes he can’t do much for himself in order to survive, so he must turn to his faith. Pi believes that as long as he believes in God and put his faith in him, he will survive, even against the biggest odds.

The third point about Pi’s religious endeavors is how he conquers the Ocean, and Richard Parker using his religious faith in God. The first example of this is, “The first time I came upon a Bible in the bedside table of a hotel room, in Canada, I burst into tears” (207). This shows how Pi, despite the fact that his faith was tested as sea, he still loves God and thanks him that he survived his journey. Pi is so overcome by just seeing a Bible that he bursts into tears of joy and happiness; he believes he is alive because of God and his undying faith for him. The second example of how Pi survived the Pacific because of his religions is, “It was natural that, bereft and desperate as I was, in the throes of unremitting suffering, I should turn to God” (284). This final quote sums up Pi’s entire religious journey throughout the novel. Pi at this point has had all of the suffering he could endure and was very close to death. It is the test that could make or break Pi’s relationship with God and he passed the test. Pi could of easily just become an atheist after all that he went through, but instead he believes in God and thanks him for just keeping him alive this long.

In conclusion Life of Pi is a fantastic novel centered on Pi and his incredible journey and how he uses his religions and faith in God to stay alive on the Pacific Ocean for seven months. Pi survived for two reasons; one of which he stated was because he had to care for Richard Parker. The other reason is because Pi had such a deep connection with God and his religions of Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. Pi survived the high seas, wild carnivorous animals, and hunger to complete a journey against all odds, because of his relationship with God.