

# Anthropology

CSS-2019

Q #07

Discuss and compare various forms of divine religions with other world religion including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism?

## Introduction:-

In the intricate mosaic of global spirituality, the Abrahamic religions - **Judaism**, **Christianity**, and **Islam** - also called Divine religions, stand united by their monotheistic devotion to a single deity. While the eastern traditions of **Hinduism**, **Buddhism**, and **Jainism** with their multifaceted beliefs in Karma, rebirth, and enlightenment. **Judaism**, with roots tracing back millennia, cherish the Torah's wisdom; **Christianity**, the world's largest faith, venerates Jesus Christ as savior; **Islam's** Five pillars guide its followers; **Hinduism's** pantheon encapsulate diverse facets of the divine; **Buddhism's** Four Noble Truths and Eightfold path lead to liberation; and **Jainism's** radical non-violence extends even to microscopic life. These

religions, through their origins, sacred texts, and core tenets, weave a vivid narrative of humanity's relationship with the divine, ethical living, and the pursuit of salvation.

## → Explicating Divine Religions:

### 1- Judaism:

i- **Covenant:** Judaism is built on the idea of covenant between God and the Jewish people. The Torah, containing the five books of Bible, outlines this covenant and provides guidance for moral and ethical living.

### ii- Synagogue and worship:-

Jews gather in synagogues for worship, study, and community events. The Sabbath (Shabbat) is a central day of rest and reflection.

### 2- Christianity:

i- **Trinity:** Christianity holds the belief in Holy Trinity - God as Father, son (Jesus Christ), and Holy spirit. This belief distinguishes

Christianity from other monotheistic religions.

### ii- Salvation through Jesus:

Christianity teaches that salvation is achieved through faith in Jesus' sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins.

### iii- Church and Sacraments:

Christian worship occurs in churches, and various sacraments (such as baptism and communion) play important roles in faith.

## 3- Islam:

i- Five Pillars- Islam's core principles includes the belief in one God (Allah) and following the five pillars: Shahada (Faith), Salah (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (Fasting during Ramadan) and Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

### ii- Quran and Hadith:

The Quran is the only Holy book of Islam, believed to be the literal word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). Hadiths are the ~~only~~ sayings and actions of Muhammad and guide daily life.

## → Explicating Eastern Religions:

### 1- Hinduism:-

#### i- Diverse Duties:

Hinduism encompasses a vast pantheon of deities, each representing different aspects of the divine. Major deities include Brahma (creator), Vishnu (preserver), and Shiva (destroyer).

#### ii- Caste System:

Although not universally followed, Hinduism historically included a caste system that categorized individuals based on their birth. This has social implications for many Hindus.

#### iii- Moksha:

The ultimate goal of Hinduism is to achieve Moksha, liberation from the cycle of reincarnation and union with the divine. Various paths, including devotion, knowledge and selfless action, can lead to Moksha.

### 2- Buddhism:

#### i- Four Noble Truths:-

a) Dukkha (Suffering): life is characterized by suffering and un-satisfactoriness.

b) Samudaya (Origin of suffering): Suffering arises from attachment and desire.

### c) Nirodha (Cessation of Suffering):

Suffering can be ended by letting go of attachment.

d) Magga (Path to the Cessation of Suffering): The Eightfold path outlines the way to end suffering and attain Nirvana.

ii- Nirvana: Achieving Nirvana involves breaking free from the cycle of rebirth by transcending desires and attachments. It's a state of enlightenment, inner peace, and liberation.

## 3- Jainism:

i- Ahimsa (Non-violence): Jainism's commitment to non-violence extends to thoughts, words and actions. Followers strive to minimize harm to all living beings.

ii- Three Jewels and Five Vows: Jainism's ethical framework include the three Jewels (Right faith, Right knowledge, Right conduct) and five vows: non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, chastity and non-possession.

iii- Path of Liberation: Jainism offers a path of spiritual progression through ascetic practices, self-discipline, and

inner purification to ultimately achieve liberation (Moksha).

## Spiritual Crossroads: A comparative exploration of Divine Religions and eastern Religions:

### 1-Concept of God:

a) **Divine Religions:** In Islam, believers hold that Allah is the only God. In Christianity, believers hold that God is the Holy Trinity - Father, son (Jesus Christ), and Holy spirits. This concept of a trine God is distinct from other beliefs. **For instance**, in Nicene Creed, Christians affirms their faith in this trine nature of God.

b) **Hinduism:** Hinduism showcases diverse conceptions of the divine, as seen in the worship of different deities. **For example:** devotees of Vishnu consider him as the preserver, while followers of Shiva revere him as the destroyer and transformer.

c) **Buddhism:** The concept of God is generally absent in Buddhism. Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, discouraged speculation about a creator deity, focusing instead on the four

Noble truths and Eightfold path.

d) **Jainism:** Jainism's non-theistic stance is illustrated by the Jain concept of Siddhas, spiritually advanced beings who have attained Moksha and are not creators of the universe but liberated souls.

## 2-Afterlife:-

a) **Divine Religions:** According to the Islamic concepts, Allah will play the role of the Judge, weighing the deeds of each individual. He will decide whether that person's akhirah (afterlife) lies in Jahanam (Hell) or Jannah (Heaven) on the basis of the weight of either good or bad deeds in comparison with one another. Almost same beliefs exist in Christianity and Judaism.

b) **Hinduism:** Reincarnation and Karma are central. A person's deeds (Karma) influence their next life, pushing them towards eventually liberation (Moksha) from the cycle of rebirth. The Bhagavad Gita describes the cycle of birth and rebirth.

c) **Buddhism:** The concept of rebirth and achieving Nirvana is illustrated through stories like the life of Siddhartha

Gautama, who, after attaining enlightenment, broke free from the cycle of rebirth.

d) **Jainism:** The idea of breaking the cycle of rebirth is embodied in Jainism's Five Vows. The story of Mahavira's Journey to liberation serves as a guiding example.

### 3. Focus on Self improvement:

a) **Divine Religions:** All the Divine Religions focus on self improvement. In Quran, Allah says; "Verily never will Allah (Exalted and Majestic) change the condition of a people until they change what is in their hearts."

While Christianity emphasis on salvation through faith is demonstrated by verses like Ephesian, "For it is by grace, you have been saved, through Faith... not by works, so that no one can boast."

b) **Buddhism:** The individual path to enlightenment is evident in the story of Siddhartha Gautama, who despite his royal upbringing, embarked on a personal journey to understand the nature of suffering and enlightenment.



c) **Jainism:** The rigorous practice of non-violence and self-discipline is exemplified by Jain monks who wear masks to avoid harming even tiny insects, demonstrating their commitment to self-improvement and ethical living.

#### 4. Role of Rituals:

i- **Divine Religions:** All the divine religions have some sort of rituals as in Christianity's sacraments, such as baptism and communion, play a central role in the faith. **For example,** the Eucharist commemorates Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection.

ii- **Hinduism:** Rituals are integral to Hindu worship. A prime **example** is the festival of Diwali, celebrated with rituals like lighting lamps and offering prayers to different deities.

iii- **Buddhism:** Buddhist meditation, a crucial practice, emphasizes inner transformation over ritualistic acts. The story of Buddha's meditation under the Bodhi tree illustrates this focus.

iv- **Jainism:** Jain monk's ascetic practices, including Fasting and self-denial, showcase

the role of rigorous self-discipline in achieving spiritual progress and liberation.

## Conclusions:-

In the tapestry of world spirituality, comparing divine religions and Eastern traditions uncovers diverse beliefs and practice. While divine religions focus on monotheism and Faith, Eastern paths like Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism offer varied routes to enlightenment and liberation. Both shows the richness of human spirituality and its influence on the understanding of existence..