

Diversity of World Religious Expression

Eastern (Indian) Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism

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Eastern (Indian) Religions

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism

Common Features:

- Goal of Life - Liberation (Moksha) Eternal
- Human Suffering - Soul's Ignorance
- Philosophy of Karma
- Continuity of Life (Reincarnation)
- Mystical (Human Experience)
- Self Realization (Direct contact with God/Self)
- Scripture has no authority over Realized Person
- Individual

Eastern (Indian) Religion

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism

Common Features (continued):

- Freedom to choose God(s)/no-God
- No Judgment Day
- No Eternal Hell/Heaven
- Worshipping - All Day
- Universe Exists in Endless Cycle
- Religious Symbols (OM, Swastika, Lotus)
- Cremation

Systems of Philosophy Developed

- Brahmana System (Hinduism)
- Samana System (Jainism, Buddhism)

Brahmana System - Hinduism

- God - Creator, Preserver, Destroyer (Cyclic)
- God is universe and universe is God (synonymous)
- At liberation, soul merges with God or Universe (soul becomes infinity)
- Highly Ritualistic (elaborate and fancy)
- Animal sacrifice in the past
- Scriptures have certain authority in the initial stage
Vedas, Upanishads, Geeta, Brahma Sutra
Scriptures are in Sanskrit

Systems of Philosophy - Hinduism

- Yoga (Path of Meditation and Effort) – Sage Pantanjali
- Samkhya (Path of pure understanding) – Sage Kapil
- Nyaya (School of Logic based on Nyaya Sutras) – Aksapada Gautam
- Vaisesika (the atomist School - Extension of Nyaya logis) Sage Kanada
- Earlier Mimasa (the tradition of Vedic exegesis, with emphasis on Vedic ritual)
- Later Mimasa (Vedanta - the Upanishadic tradition, with emphasis on Vedic philosophy)
Saivism, Saktism, Vaisnavism, Liberalism

Primary Paths - Hinduism:

Path of Devotion or Surrender (Bhakti Yoga)

Enjoyment of Supreme Love and Bliss

Path of Knowledge (Jnan Yoga)

Realization of unique and supreme Self through contemplation

Path of Action (Karma Yoga)

Dedication of every human activity to Supreme Will

Path of Self Control/Meditation (Raj Yoga)

Liberation through the perfection of body, thought, emotion and consciousness

Duties of Individuals (Caste Systems) - Hinduism

Priests-intellectuals (Brahmins)

- Establish and preserve the national ideas and philosophy

Rulers and warriors (Kshatriyas)

- Protect the state from external aggression and establish internal order

Merchants and artisans (Vaishyas)

- Production of national wealth

Sudras

- To do the menial work

Duties at various Stages of Life - Hinduism:

Student life (Brahmcharya Ashram)

- Preparatory period

Householder life (Gruhastha Ashram)

- Worldly success: wealth, fame and power

Retirement life (Vanpasta Ashram)

- Service to community and fellow man

Renunciation life (Sanyas Ashram)

- Renunciation of possessions and family for realization of true self

Samana System

(Buddhism and Jainism)

God - Not a Creator

Humans are capable to achieve the highest spiritual state

Scriptures have no authority (guide)

Human experience or Self Realization is the ultimate authority

Primary Path

Path of Knowledge (Jnan Yoga)

Realization of unique and supreme self through knowledge

Nonviolence, self control, penance, and meditation

Revolt against Hindu caste distinction, fancy rituals, and animal sacrifice

Buddhism:

The Supreme

Supreme is completely transcendent and can be described as:

Sunya (zero), a void, an emptiness, state of non-being

At Nirvana

The future vanishes, the past vanishes, and one lives at the present moment

Being loses its identity and becomes nothing

Being turns into a state of non-being, emptiness void, or Sunya

In Samsar (world)

Being is a combination of physical and mental forces/energies

Buddhism: (continued)

Man's true nature is divine and eternal

Preaching -

- The greatness of self giving love and compassion towards all creatures
- Middle path consist of living moderately and avoiding extremes

Scriptures -

- Tripitika for Theravad sect,
- Sutras for Mahayan sect

Written in Pali language (vernacular)

Four Noble Truth - Buddhism:

Four Noble Truths

1. Suffering Exist

Being born, Growing old, Sickness, and Death; all are Sufferings

2. Cause of Suffering

Desire "thirst" to be and to become is the root cause of all sufferings and rebirth

3. Cessation of Suffering

Complete elimination of Desire and Craving, which is a state of Nirvana:

passionless peace, perfect insight, enlightenment, perfect knowledge, immortality

Four Noble Truth - Buddhism:

4. Eight-fold Path to End Suffering

Right Belief

Right Thought or Aim

Right Speech

Right Action

Right Livelihood or Occupation

Right Effort or Endeavor

Right Mindfulness

Right Meditation

Jainism - Basic Belief

God, Universe and Life

God is not a Creator, Preserver or Destroyer of the Universe

Liberated Souls are Jain Gods, who are only knower and Observer but not Doer

Universe is made up of Two Eternal and Self Existed Elements

Living beings (Souls)

Non-living Substances (Matters, Space, mediums of Motion and Rest, Time)

The Principles governing the successions of life cycles (Birth, Life, and Death) is Karma particles which are attached to the Soul from eternity.

Jainism - Basic Belief (continued)

Life Sufferings

- Ignorance (Mithyatva) is the root cause of all Sufferings
- Soul is Ignorant from eternity
- Karma is attached to the Soul from eternity

Ultimate Goal of Life

- Removal of Soul's Ignorance hence free from all karma
- Liberated Soul is all Knower and Observer but not a Doer (an Ideal State of a Living-being)

Jain Religion Features

Every living being is Eternal, Individual, and has a potential to become Liberated or God

At liberation the soul remains finite, lives in Moksha forever, and never loses its identity

The Principles governing the successions of life cycles (Birth, Life, and Death) is Karma

Our ignorance and/or intention behind our actions of body, mind, and speech bind us with Karma

Path of liberation is to follow Right Conviction, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct

Jain Religion Features (continued)

- Proper knowledge of the six Universal substances and nine fundamental truths (Tattvas), are essential for Right Perception, Knowledge and Conduct.
- Desire is the root cause of all sufferings
- Conquer your desire by your own effort in order to attain liberation.
- Self purification, penance, austerity, and meditation are essential for Right Conduct.
- Nonviolence is the highest principle to be followed in thought, speech, and action.
- One must cease injuring sentient creatures, large and small.

Jain Religion Features (continued)

Karma philosophy applies to ourselves,
Compassion applies to all

Scriptures -

Agam Sutras

written in Ardha-magdhi language (vernacular)

Scriptures guide moral and spiritual life to
ultimately attain liberation