

Comparison of Religions

**Eastern (Indian-Hinduism, Buddhism,
and Jainism) and
Western (Judaism, Christianity, Islam)
Religions**

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Eastern (Indian) Religions

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism

■ Common Features:

- ▶ Philosophy of Karma**
- ▶ Continuity of Life (Reincarnation)**
- ▶ Mystical (Human Experience)**
- ▶ Self Realization (Direct contact with God/Self)**
- ▶ Individual**
- ▶ Freedom to choose God(s)/no-God**
- ▶ Human Suffering - Soul's Ignorance**

Eastern (Indian) Religion

Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism

Common Features (continued):

- ▶ **No Judgment Day**
- ▶ **No Eternal Hell/Heaven**
- ▶ **Liberation (Moksha)- Eternal**
- ▶ **Scripture Has Limited/No Authority**
- ▶ **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 (soul becomes infinity)**
- **Scriptures have certain authority (Vedas)**
 - ▶ **Vedas, Upanishads, Geeta, Brahma Sutra**
 - ▶ **Scriptures are in Sanskrit**
- **Highly Ritualistic (elaborate and fancy)**
- **Animal sacrifice in the past**
- **Duties of Individuals (Caste Systems)**

Philosophy of Brahmana System (Hinduism)

- **Yoga**
- **Samkhya**
- **Nyaya**
- **Vaisesika**
- **Earlier Mimasa**
- **Later Mimasa (Vedanta)**
 - ▶ **Saivism, Saktism, Vaisnavism, Liberalism**

Brahmana System (Hinduism)

Primary Paths:

- **Path of Devotion or Surrender (Bhakti Yoga)**
 - ▶ **Enjoyment of Supreme Love and Bliss**
- **Path of Knowledge (Jnan Yoga)**
 - ▶ **Realization of unique and supreme self**
- **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**

Brahmana System (Hinduism)

Caste Systems (Duties of Individuals)

- **Priests-intellectuals (Brahmins)**
 - ▶ **establish and preserve the national ideas and philosophy**
- **Rulers and warriors (Kshatriyas)**
 - ▶ **to protect the state from external aggression and establish internal order**
- **Merchants and artisans (Vaishyas)**
 - ▶ **for the production of national wealth**
- **Sudras**
 - ▶ **to do the menial work**

Brahmana System (Hinduism)

Duties at various stages of Life:

■ Student life

▶ preparative period

■ Householder life

▶ worldly success: wealth, fame and power

■ Retirement life

▶ satisfaction of service to community and fellow man

■ Renunciation life

▶ renunciation of possessions and family for realization of true self

Shramana System (Buddhism and Jainism)

- **God - Not a Creator**
- **Humans are capable to achieve the highest spiritual state**
- **Human experience or self realization is the ultimate authority**
- **Scriptures have no authority (guide)**
- **Primary Path**
 - ▶ **Path of Knowledge (Jnan Yoga)**
 - ▶ **Realization of unique and supreme self through knowledge**
- **Self control, nonviolence, penance, and meditation**
- **Revolt against Hindu caste distinction, fancy rituals, and animal sacrifice**

Buddhism:

- **The Supreme is completely transcendent and can be described as:**
 - ▶ **Sunya (zero), a void, an emptiness, state of non-being**
- **At nirvana,**
 - ▶ **Being turns into a state of non-being, emptiness void, or Sunya**
 - ▶ **Being loses its identity and becomes nothing**
 - ▶ **The future vanishes, the past vanishes, and one lives at the present moment**
- **In Samsar (world) a being is a combination of physical and mental forces/energies**
- **Desire "thirst" to be and to become is the root cause of suffering and rebirth**
- **Life's aim is to end suffering through Nirvana, which is**
 - ▶ **passionless peace, perfect insight, enlightenment, perfect knowledge, immortality**

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)**

Jainism:

- **God is a pure consciousness or perfected soul without any karma attached to it**
- **The primary goal is to become a perfected (liberated) soul, known as Siddha or God**
- **At liberation the soul remains finite, lives in Moksha forever, and never loses its identity**
- **Every living being is eternal, individual, and capable of becoming perfect**
- **The path of liberation is to follow:**
 - ▶ **right perception, right knowledge, and right conduct**
- **One must conquer one's desire by one's own effort to attain liberation**

Jainism: (continued)

- **Our intention behind our actions of body, mind, and speech bind karma particles to us in this world**
- **Nonviolence followed in action, thought, and speech is the highest religion**
- **Self purification, penance, austerity, and meditation are essential for liberation**
- **Scriptures -**
 - ▶ **Agam Sutras**
 - ▶ **written in Ardha-magdhi language (vernacular)**
 - ▶ **Scriptures guide moral and spiritual life to ultimately attain liberation**

Western Religions

(Judaism, Christianity, and Islam)

■ Common Features

- ▶ One Life and Eternal Judgment**
- ▶ Judgment Day**
- ▶ Eternal Hell/Heaven**
- ▶ One God**
- ▶ God's Message Revealed Through Prophet**
- ▶ Non-mystical (God chooses Prophet)**
- ▶ Congregational (Society is Essential)**

Western Religion

(Judaism, Christianity, Islam)

Common Features (Continued)

- ▶ **Scripture has Ultimate Authority**
- ▶ **Human Suffering - Disobedience of God's Will**
- ▶ **Worshipping - Sabbath Day**
- ▶ **Universe was Created By God**
- **Systems of Philosophy**
 - ▶ **Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**