PART TWO

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

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Chapter III

METAPHYSICAL POINT OF VIEW IN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

Introduction

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INTRODUCTION

A mechanical following of the religious faith for its own sake merely does not satisfy the quest of meaning for man. The faith ought rightly "to be sustained by metaphysical knowledge." Religion is based on direct experience of supreme reality as well as values.

Thus religions of the world have an identical approach in that they give us the structure of reality which they have discovered. Their theories of reality imply and indicate the place that religion should have in life and thought.

SUPREME GOD/REALITY:

Different religions have different names of the one Supreme Reality or God. Everything of the world owes its essence to it. This higher reality is Omnipotent, Omniscient and Omnipresent. Its rule is sovereign. It can be known, intuited and an unique relationship in its own way could be established with it.

No doubt each religious tradition in its own setting manifests a particular metaphysical aspect of the Ultimate Reality. A combined outlook of this metaphysical search helps us to view various aspects of it, though some other

aspects of this Transcendent Reality still remain unknown and inscrutable to man.

The doctrine of the personality of God is indissolubly connected with religious life. Even in religions which mainly hold the impersonalistic doctrine of God, somehow or other some kind of personality of God comes to be accepted sooner or later. Though it is beyond the power of human conception, the realization of God/Reality is considered the Good or Summum Bonum of human existence.

UNIVERSE:

Thus all religions agree that the universe is not against the order of the Ultimate Reality. The world does not promise justice, but religions clearly affirm that injustice is not the central fact. Fundamentally, the universe is helpful to the positive fulfilment of man's goal enunciated in each religion.

The cosmological speculations try to know things as they are and find the common origin of the various phenomena of nature in nature itself. The value of the theory of universe lies not in the explanation of its forms, but on how it contributes to the cause of religious search.
Man's quest of higher values is the corollary of the metaphysical assumption of each religion. Each religion guides man to liberation or salvation from evil and sufferings of the world.

The man is in various respects the part and parcel of a greater reality. He is a unique creature who can know the order of Reality and perform his tasks. Attaining the highest perfection is the goal of man for each religion.

Man's significance lies in the relationship with this Reality. Man has to face and cross over the conflicts and contradictions inherent in the process of attaining this inner-most worth within him.

In short, we looked in the part One of the thesis, that the foundational metaphysical reality of religion is of an infinite nature. It gives man a direction to higher and higher goals of life, leading to the realization of the 'Highest Good' of man. Each religion presupposes the freedom of some sort from a sense of bondage and damnation, and thus it leads to eternal peace or happiness. Of course this problem is of profound metaphysical nature. Man is unaware of his relationship with the supreme spiritual reality. Religion is a march which continuously seeks to
win over the limitations of man. It is a life of complete conversion which is beyond the ken of ordinary vision.

The urge to know the real nature of the universe in which man finds himself is consequent on some 'suffering' and this 'suffering' is consequent on some evil. In some way or the other the final reality is looked upon by every religion as of the nature of perfection described in terms of the specific religious set of beliefs. Metaphysically evil consists in the apparently irremovable gap between this higher reality and the actually experienced finitude. Evil is seen as tension between the perfect and imperfect, the infinite and finite, the unconditioned and conditioned. Religious practice consists in the sincere and the whole hearted attempt to overcome the gap which the metaphysical understanding of the reality as a whole has brought out before the awakened man.
Introduction

It is a difficult task to formulate the Hindu concept of Reality and Evil which is at once simple and comprehensive. Hindu religious thought consists of various ideas, beliefs and practices. It is based on the varied religious and moral experiences. Thus, diversity of creeds in Hinduism forbid a rigorous definition. Hinduism being an 'open' religion, not only the beliefs regarding the varied manifestations of Reality are admitted, but the various ways of realizing it are also taken for granted. Still, the long history of Hinduism does point a remarkable phenomenon of continuity and change. We may try to present certain broad tendencies supposed to be the structural unity of fundamental beliefs of this faith.

Hindu sources are two-fold namely, the basic 'sruti' literature (revealed testimony) and 'smruti' literature (the remembered word). The Vedas, the revealed testimony, are eternal and they are the result of mystical experiences. The culminating high thoughts of Vedas suggest to a still earlier and longer period of the beginning of religious consciousness among Hindus. Though Hinduism recognizes the
authority of the Vedas, "it is not a dogmatic or authoritarian religion."¹

Thus, although the sources of moral order rest with the Vedas, they do not imply a permanent status quo. Changed circumstances might call for changes in moral codes, only it is to be noted that these changes do not violate the fundamental principle of the continuity of 'dharma' as the highest ideal. No doubt the content of this ideal 'dharma' is not eternal and unchanging. In other words the reference to the timeless nature of Hinduism (sanatana dharma) only means that 'dharma' as a code of conduct is essential for the well-being of man which is considered to be eternal. What is significant is that inspite of these changes in the conception of dharma, Hinduism has maintained "a large comprehensive unity of a living organism with a fixed orientation."²

As referred to above, we cannot trace Hinduism to any particular sacred book with a set of beliefs or to an individual with arbitrary authority. It is left to everyone to ascertain and evaluate the facts of the spiritual experience. Vedas did not dictate full details of this spiritual quest, but they contained certain main elements which were to be developed and explored later. In short, Hinduism accentuates on the ethical and spiritual aspects of man.
Hinduism is not merely a set of beliefs and articles of faith, but it is a way of life. It has been dynamic all throughout. The deep metaphysical curiosity of Hinduism is evident from the prevailing plurality of conceptions regarding Atman, God-head and Liberation. Despite their varieties and claims of orthodoxy and finality, these views mainly unite in dealing with the eternal spiritual values of life.

Religion and philosophy have gone hand-in-hand in India. The doctrines propounded seem to have both a metaphysical and theological bearing. Since the Vedic period, man tried to read natural phenomena in terms of and in the language of his own behaviour. The rich personification extended over the whole physical world. From this naturalistic polytheism developed monotheism, and then monistic trends were apparent since the time of Nasadiya Sukta, the ending phase of Vedas. The Upanisads contain both the theistic and absolutistic conceptions.

The conception of God-head is primarily the impersonal Absolute Brahman. He is the Being as such which appears in the infinite variety of forms perceived in the universe. To see this "unity behind the manifest forms, is true perception." He is self-existent, eternal and incomprehensible. Again, it is said in Rgveda, "Being is this all, that which was and which shall be."
Thus, the noumenal and the phenomenal stand-points may be distinct in the Hindu thought, but they are intimately allied to one another. Speculative and metaphysical thoughts were at climax during the period of the Upanisadic teachings.

GOD

The Upanisads speak of Para Brahman and Apara Brahman. The former Being is unqualified and incomprehensible, that is, whose nature is indeterminate, unconditioned and devoid of attributes. But he is a goal of higher knowledge (Para vidya). Whereas the latter Apara Brahman is qualified and comprehensible who is known as Isvara. He is the goal of lower knowledge. In fact these are the transcendent and immanent aspects of the Supreme Reality.

Various issues of cosmological, psychological, metaphysical and ethical nature spring up during the spiritual quest which call for the existence of a personal God. Though there are many paths which are different in themselves, these paths gradually converge and lead to the same place.

In this reference one finds the three prominent philosophic Hindu views namely Dvaita (dualism), Visistadvaita (qualified non-dualism) and Advaita (non-dualism) corres-
ponding in western terminology as deism, personalistic theism and absolutistic monism. Spiritually these are the paths of salvation by action, devotion and knowledge. This is how the undefinable supreme Reality is relatively conceived as a personal God. Svetasvatara Upanisad speaks of Him as "the adorable Lord and the Ruler of the world."  

The God has three important functions of creation, protection and destruction supervised over by the triad of Great Gods namely Brahma, Visnu and Maheśa. The allocation of functions indicates co-ordination of their duties. The personal God is "All-knower and All-experiencer."  

The impersonal nature of God emphasized  

The Hindu philosophy consistently advocates the difference between the noumenon Absolute and the phenomenal world as the former being the perfect while the latter is imperfect. To the absolutist the conception of the personal God is from a limited vision. That is, it is a glorified anthropomorphism in which the Supreme Brahman appears to the finite person with attributes and creative functions. The propensity for assimilation in Hinduism is such that passionate devotionalism have gone side by side. Thus, to the absolutist, the personal God is the highest manifestation of the impersonal reality, whereas for the theist the
impersonal reality is really the personal God rather inadequately understood.

The Supreme Being commonly known as sat (Existence), cit (Consciousness) and ānanda (Bliss) is beyond all conceptions. The Para Brahman is "an Infinite Truth, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss", who is again described in śvetasvatāra Upanisad as "partless, inactive, tranquil, immaculate and stainless." Any positive description limits Him to empirical and phenomenal realms when in fact He is beyond all creation and creativity, and hence above all relationships of worship or love or praise.

In another sense however this non-dualistic absolutism easily grants theism that Apara Brahman is as much an aspect or manifestation of Para Brahman as anything else. The phenomenal world is a wonderful creation of Impersonal Brahman who is the immutable substratum of everything. Both realistic and unrealistic trends of thoughts are evident in Hindu philosophy. When conceived phenomenally, the Vedic thought upholds the Supreme Reality as the ground of laws of nature and the eternal moral order. These two aspects came to be harmonized in the later Upanisadic period when Brahman is thought of as the "ultimate ground of all that is here and now, it is a determinate being, God."
Believing thus in the identity of the Supreme Being and universe, the Hindus see Him in everything, and everything in Him and worship accordingly. He is the controller of our Spirit (Aнтaryamin), the witness of all our activity (Saksin) and the abode of the whole nature.

**UNIVERSE**

The emergence of the world from Brahman is considered as differentiation of names and forms. It is Brahman alone that appears everywhere Brhad āranyaka Upanisad¹⁰ says, "In the beginning was only the self in a personal form. He looked around and said 'I am' and that was the starting of the concept named 'I'." The world was non-existent (Asat) but later it became existent (sat).

However the universe is not created out of something other than Brahman. The various forms in which creation has taken shape give the appearance of diversity, but Being itself remains a unity. The natural world of multiplicity and differentiations is identified with Brahman. He is the whole universe animate and inanimate. Brahman is both the efficient and material cause of the universe. The Upanisads¹¹ maintain that "the world emanates from the fulness of Brahman, and returns to it." As early as Rgveda¹² it is held that the universe is emerged from a golden embryo and it is shaped like an enormous egg.
It is a sport (līlā) of God

In another reference of Upanisad, God willed to multiply Himself and thus became many. This is how He created water and there He placed a seed. Out of Himself He brought out mind (manas), the ego-sense, five organs as well as the three qualities of the world of objects namely Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

Through the power of Mayā He creates the world. Prakriti, conceived to be identical with Mayā, is the seed of the world. As a matter of fact this Mayā is understood more as a mystery. Because it has been variously interpreted. Some philosophies define it as 'illusory' power of God whereas other philosophies regard maya as cosmic energy by which the creator creates the world. For instance, it is with this latter view, Bhagwad-Gita regards the higher conscious Prakriti of God as the source of souls and the lower conscious power of maya as the material cause of the world.

Anyway, the illusory character of maya as enunciated in absolutist philosophy, only suggests the relativity of perception. For it the world is only transitorily real. Prakriti, maya and the plurality of souls are associated with one another from beginningless time. Inspite of these differences, there is a consensus that the universe was
created out of a combination of primal matter, prakriti, and cosmic spirit, purusa, by means of the action of maya.

Ego or Ahamkāra is declared to have been "the proximate cause of the supreme soul involved in the process of the world creation." Self (purusa) and non-self (prakriti) are parts of the same Supreme Being, the ultimate controller of the universe in whose mind all things existed before creation.

Thus there is an essential agreement that the entire cosmos is a spiritual elevation. Again, Hindus believe in the cosmic cycle of evolution and dissolution. The divinity is pervasive in cosmos and the cosmos in no way restricts the Divine supremacy. The cosmos is a 'spontaneous creation' of God.

MAN

The presupposition of the Brahman concept covers the entire universe in all its facets. Here also, as above, the relationship between the self of man and Brahman is understood differently, depending on whether Brahman is understood in a theistic or non-theistic way. But the differences apart, the summum Bonum for man is the realization of the fact that his self is not distinct from Brahman. It is an aspect or manifestation of this underlying reality.
Due to this necessary correlation of the self with the Supreme Reality thus, realizing the subjective nature of the individual self is significant in itself. In fact, kenopanisad17 rightly holds that "the two principles, namely the objective and the subjective are established to be one and the same."

The meaning and purpose of the objective reality can be assessed in the context of a knowing person.

**Avidyā and original ignorance**

As seen above, with the mayik power and the desire to be multiplied, God created the phenomenal world. The creation is due to this original act of an identification with the world of multiplicity. The individual self of man is also the creation of this primary act of identification otherwise known as an original ignorance. Of course it is granted that reason cannot fathom properly the nature of this operative process. However, the following account is generally agreed upon insofar as the nature of the empirically constituted self is concerned.

(a) Five gross elements namely air (Vāyu), water (Jala), fire (Tejas), space (Akāsh), earth (Prithvi) etc. give rise to physical body (sthula sarīra).

(b) Still subtler elements of the physical body constitutes the subtle body (sūkshma sarīra). It is believed that the
subtle body functions on the medium through which the eternal and inevitable law of karma works. The physical body is destroyed at death, but the subtle body is connected with transmigration.

(c) There is the causal body (kāraṇa śārīra) whose presence is witnessed in deep sleep. Here there is no conscious identification with the gross body and the subtle body functions only subtly. In fact these two bodies referred above, seem to originate and dissolve into the causal body itself. The phenomenal ego consists of these three bodies engaged in the world of experience which is the doer and the enjoyer. The ego is subject to all mutations of the worldly existence. In this context it is said that "the body inhabits both the finite self and the Infinite Self, the former enjoys the fruits of its actions, the latter is the spectator of its actions."^{18}

In Taittiriya Upanisad,^{19} the self is analysed in another way known as sheaths or coverings of the self. These sheaths, namely the physical (annamaya kosa), the vital (prāṇamaya kosa), the mental (manomaya kosa), the conscious (vijnānamaya kosa), the blissful (anandamaya kosa) etc. represent a sort of symbolic attempt to understand man into his five basically constituting elements.
The concept of 'Dharma'

To Hinduism the concept of 'dharma' is foundational one. There is a consensus that the self is the ground of ethical law (dharma) and so is in close relationship with Supreme Reality. Also, by virtue of its free-will, self is invested with moral responsibility. Thus, when all activities of the subject issue from an autonomous self, then the good is to be defined in terms of some kind of perfection of the self. This again means that the good is to be consciously willed. Manu smrti rightly maintained that religion (dharma) if observed, it protects a man, but if violated, it is a death for man. The term 'dharma' is generally defined as "both the supreme moral good and the supreme moral law."  

'Dharma', technically consists of all actions, qualities, offerings etc. which the religious scriptures (śāstras) teach us as orienting to our spiritual good. Whereas in common sense, 'dharma' consists of spatio-temporal duties of the individual in accordance with his mental and moral development. Both these are intimately connected in the sense that both derive their significance from the fact of the spiritual value of life.

'Dharma' enables one to have right satisfaction of desires. Prof. Nikam terms it 'a regulative principle.'
Bhagwad Gita says that "all desires not inconsistent with dharma are of divine nature." To Vaisesika sutra upliftment and liberation results from this law. The follower of true 'dharma' according to Manu is one "who grasps the śruti and smriti words with uncontradicting reasoning." In same way to Mahabharat the "truly called dharma holds together all beings." Dharma rules accordingly as norm over world, nature, society and individual existence.

Thus 'dharma' aims and indicates as to how in the face of the phenomenal dualistic struggles, dispositions have to be acquired and exercised. It is an integrated scheme of life which seeks prosperity (abhyudaya) here, and highest, bliss (niḥśreyas) or deliverance (moksa) hereafter. The religious scriptures aim to discriminate accordingly. For, there cannot be the realization of Brahman unless one's action is founded on appropriate 'dharma'. The catholicity of Hinduism is evident here, for the texts dealing with 'dharma' do not mean to dictate rigid and invariable patterns of life. They only mean to help man attain self-fulfilment and release from the recurring bondage.

Purusārthas

We saw above that the goal of life is two-fold - the prosperity (abhyudaya) and supreme bliss (niḥśreyas). It consists of the four values (purusārthas) of dharma, artha,
kāma and moksa. In the first half of life, i.e. in the life of studentship (brahmacarya) and house-holder (grahastha) where worldly welfare is aimed, one must seek dharma (lawful observation of duties), artha (livelihood) and kāma ( gratification of desires). But in the last two āsramas of the second half of life, namely hermitage (vanaprastha) and renunciation (sanyāsin), one must aim for achieving nihāreyas which is moksa in another sense.

These desired ends have to be attained through consciously directed efforts. Being a human person is a value, so one has to pursue ends (puruṣārthas) in an integrated way. It is not the suppression of desires but cultivating a discipline of self-determination which makes for autonomous and free actions. It is 'dharma' which refers to moral and idealistic needs.

The essential nature of the self

One could visualise that 'dharma', though it means law or righteousness, is difficult to be translated or defined. Still it indicates a way for summu bonum, that is, it is mokṣa in the making. If mokṣa is total divinity, dharma is divinity under mortal conditions.

Thus, the essential self is not identical with either the body or the mind and so it is free from all limitations
and dualism, changes and experiences to which the body and mind are subjected. It is neither the subject, nor the object, nor the act, nor the knower, nor the known, nor the knowing. It is pure Existence, Knowledge and Bliss which is identified with the supreme reality.

The goal of life consists in realizing the famous equation of Upanisads, namely 'atman is Brahman'. Theists would mean the state of highest bliss as permanently joining with God. To them, man is a part of the divine essence and shares the eternity of the divine. However, differences apart, the basic assumption is that man's inmost Being transcends his superficial knowledge of himself. It is a state of the complete freedom from all attachments and desires, from nescience, karma and finitude. It is an attainment of immortality and an experience of infinitude. This transcendent aspect of reality defies all modes of determination and characterisation under human conditions. To Prasna Upanisad, there is "tranquility in this infinite depth of the self and it has no fear of dissolution at death."  

The knowledge of the true nature of the essential self transcends the normal states of human consciousness. It is an intuitive realization achieved through meditation. For this Hinduism mentions three paths of devotion (bhakti), knowledge (jñāna) and action (karma) corresponding to
affective (icchā), cognitive (jnāna) and conative (kriyā) aspects of man's psychological make up.

Realization of divinity existing in man is the goal of human existence. Man's order of existence and his activity is not vain, but this has purpose in the total context of the universe.

**BUDDHISM**

**METAPHYSICS**

The word 'Buddha' is an honorific expression meaning one who has achieved supreme enlightenment and 'transcendental wisdom'. Buddha is not merely liberated one, but liberator, one who has discovered the path of Deliverance. He is not only awakened to the Supreme Reality, but he also rationally presents the Highest knowledge in a demythologized way.

All is subject to change

Like Heraclitus, Buddha too believed that all is subject to change and all is in a state of becoming. Thus Professor Stcherbatsky truly holds that "existence becomes synonymous with non-existence since every fact disappears at the same moment when it appears."

It is this 'transitoriness' which is the ultimate criterion of suffering. It is said in Saṁyutta Nikāya
"whatever is transitory is painful." Everything is subject to annihilation and destruction. The three kinds of sensations namely of pleasure, pain and indifference belong to this realm of suffering. So long as desires are gratified one remains attached to the resulting joys, else non-gratification of desires is frustration which brings about anguish and disappointments.

The darker side of things cannot be brushed aside. Though this seems to be pessimistic, the realist view of the nature is to be fully understood. According to Anguttara Nikāya, "Anicca, Dukkha and Anattā i.e. Impermanence, dissatisfactoriness and egolessness are the three characteristics of becoming."

It is one's own immediate intuitive apprehension of truth which is the sole criterion. The urgency is to reflect the nature of this perception and the deeper insight on the nature of the things. His method is mainly psychological and experimental. Buddha avoids vain metaphysical quest. Limits of human knowledge are recognized for fathoming the Unknown.

Buddha seeks to understand and transcend the finite conditioned existence. Relatively the Law operates ubiquitously but the altered plane of consciousness finds everything to be void. It is outside the sphere of space-time continuum of phenomenal perception. Then only one reaches the timeless and unconditional state.
Optimism

To be aware of evil and suffering without any pretence or deception is the basic Buddhistic principle. It is real and has to be removed as far as possible at all its levels of existence. Inspite of Buddha's doctrine beginning with evil and suffering as a pervasive fact, it is only the starting point of his philosophy. Buddha only wants us to know things realistically as they are.

His mission is to establish goodness and the truth of happiness. This calls for the awakening of the factual assessment of the life and phenomena. It is to shed the 'delusion' of granting things to the wisdom of seeing the things as they are. Again, one has to judge and justify objectively the cravings for life itself. In fact, Buddha's effort is to promote and establish one's personal happiness on a far stronger foundation. His quest is motivated by a determination to solve the problem of evil and suffering.

His four-fold sacred truths (catvāri ārya satyāni) namely the existence of sorrow, the cause of sorrow, the removal of sorrow and the way to the removal of sorrow reflect the central urge of Buddhism.

GOD

Buddha's inquiry mainly centred round humanity and human relations. Instead of caring for heaven and its pleasures,
his goal was confined to the service of humanity. He is not convinced of the transcendental reality of God, the omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent Being who should be feared, obeyed and loved by men.

This does not mean that Buddha denies God's essence. He is not an atheist in the sense of reproach and condemnation of God's existence. Again, he is not an agnostic too. Only he believes that queries like who God is what he is, and where he is etc, etc. are insoluble ones. There is no point in taxing our heads for the same.

He did not give positive statements on such metaphysical problems because he believed that their solutions escaped definition. Again, this has nothing to do with liberation. Reason as such does not prompt to believe in an arbitrary creator who rules the destiny of mankind, giving rewards and punishments for doing His Will on earth. This is how Buddha's "Silence was the direct outcome of the awareness of the conflict of Reason." 31

He believed that human perfection is more important than the solution of certain metaphysical problems. For the latter no longer helps in moral struggle, or saving one from painful existence or attaining the Nirvana.

Still, Buddhism does not hold cold mechanical and materialistic view of the universe. The existence of an all-
operative law points to the spiritual nature of the universe. It is this spiritual principle which guides all things and leads man to ever higher perfection.

His life's search could not find any God, but Buddha could strike the way to deliverance. He kept mum and categorically denied his capacity to make statements regarding the existence or non-existence of God. But he could comprehend that "salvation is possible without and apart from God."32

**UNIVERSE**

It is neither the creation of a cosmic perfect God nor is it the creation of primordial germ like a cosmic egg. A belief in the first principle is scientifically impossible and philosophically absurd. Nothing arises from a single cause and that everything comes out from a conglomeration of causes.

The 'Sunyata' which is the ultimate existence (not matter but not thing) of all things, fills the universe in the form of infinitesimal particles. The ultimate existence is found in phenomenal objects and not in the form of itself. All things of the world are created in this ultimate existence.

As to the ultimate origin of all things, Buddhism leaves the problem alone. The beginning of this saṃsāra (world process) is unknown and unknowable. It is an endless cosmic process.
Becoming is all-pervasive

Buddhism grants as its immediate fact the existence of the material world and of living conscious beings within it. The great law subjects everything to it. The whole process consists in the related nature of reality in the form of becoming. Wherever the law of cause and effect has undisputed sway, the beginning of the world is inexplicable.

This analysis of the world of experience not undertaken for its own sake but it imparts a rationale to its practical doctrine and discipline. The ethico-philosophical context is central while inquiring into the nature of the world. The analysis and description of matter and mind are from the practical point of view.

Thus it is referred to in Digha-Nikāya\(^{33}\) that matter consists of the four chief elements viz. earth, water, air and space. These elements are without any substance (anattā) and impermanent. They arise from the complex causes and are conditional in nature. Therefore it is arising and passing away. The world is called as 'saṅghata', a conglomerate of things.

This world is essentially of the here and now. The momentariness is the nature of conditioned things. The phenomenal world consists of perpetual changes.
Still, Buddha maintained that the universe is evolved and not created. It is an ordered universe as the Law operates everywhere.

**The universe exists within man**

The higher life is not dependent on the theories as to whether the world is or is not eternal. Buddha lays more emphasis on the ethical approach. He regards the world as the scene of the matter being in a state of constant flux, and hence it cannot be the basis of true happiness.

Ignorance about this nature of the world would result in conflict and disharmony. The matter in itself has no binding and fettering influence. To be precise, matter in itself is not to be eliminated but it is the attachment towards it that is to be given up. For the universe is mainly perceived through our sensations. Sensation activities cause the world to arise and the world stands or falls with the knower thereof.

**MAN**

It is the subjective inquiry and not the objective one i.e. the reflection from within that lends the conclusion of Buddhist phenomenology. Thus, inspite of our being in the midst of the evil world, the possibility of negating this problem of evil is also suggested.
Who or what is this 'Self' that cognises the reality of evil and experiencing the process of change? In fact, when the doctrine of momentariness is fundamentally accepted, no conditional existence can ever imply permanence and eternity, absolute unity, or supreme authority in any sense whatsoever.

This indicates that though the Spirit or Mind is the reality of man, the limiting distinctions cannot exhaust the human being. This again implies that inspite of all existence entailing misery, human existence alone has the supreme opportunity of escaping evil and suffering of the world.

**Man's Being transcends dualism**

Thus, essentially man is good and above the dualistic tendencies. Evil and suffering is an extraneous outcome of the 'samsaric' (worldly) conditioning. Despite man's passing through sufferings, he has the potentiality for 'Good' within him.

Being in man transcends man's personality and its components as well as the objects of the world. So this Being cannot be identified with the cause of evil, pains and suffering. Passing away is the true nature of the conditional existence.
The nature of empirical self

The empirical self is a grasping (Upadāna) bound together in an interaction that ceaselessly changes. It has no fixed referrent. There is no permanent self to which one can resort and seek guidance. Nothing knowable is my 'I' or 'Self'.

The empirical self or personality is constituted of the five groups. From one point of view the self is simply due to the operation of a law, yet from the other plane of consciousness the law is void and non-existent to the self. The self is neither the subject nor the object, but it is the perpetual process of becoming.

One would like to have a grip of the notion of the self, or to see its foundation and seek some unchanging and permanent traits. But all perceptions, whether past, present or future, subjective or objective are seen as "I am not this, this is not mine, this is not myself." 34

The psycho-physical being has no reality. To Saṁyutta Nikāya 35 anything applied to this mutable existence is merely connectional. Again it is said therein that "perfect one has no becoming or non-becoming." 36
Five graspings of the self

The five familiar graspings by which the self is held together are as following:

1. Form (Rūpa). It consists of the four great elementary qualities (Mahabhūtās) together with numerous secondary qualities.

2. Feeling (vedanā). These are five kinds of content of consciousness viz. pleasant, painful, indifference, bodily (kāyika) and mental (caitasiṣa).

3. Perception (saṁjñā). It is of six kinds, one for each of the five senses and for the mind.

4. Dispositions (saṁskāra). It is conditioning of the self in general.

5. Discriminating consciousness (vijnāna).

Thus, all mental phenomena that occur, do not rest in a single cause such as the ego but in a complex of causal circumstances. These graspings, no doubt, form a recognizable and perceivable object, but basically it has no sustaining and abiding substance.

If the essence of the self consisted of the five graspings, it would have been the most natural and familiar things of the world. But the nature of the constant flux of
the world indicates otherwise. Thus, if nothing is left, then what is the real essence of man? This poser regarding the nature and the essence of the self assumes a new direction. In face of the doom and destruction of the personality, the fact of our fundamental existence remains to be explored.

The real nature of the Self

Buddha indirectly explained that opposed to 'nothing', 'everything' could be cited as the nature of the self. But again, to a layman this 'everything' consisted of the components of the world upon which Buddha is not agreed. For him, to quote Dhammapada "the world being Anattā, everything is not the self."37 Nothing of the world belongs to the self, in reality it is beyond the world.

The upshot is this that Buddha wanted man to be protected from the opposite heresy of eternalism and nihilism. He would preach the existence of a man if some persons possessed a conventional angle, but he would preach of anātman if he wanted to impart to his hearers the transcendental doctrine.

It is in the transcendent state, one sees "an unborn, unbecoming, unmade and incomposite Being. But for this there would be no escape from the born, the become, the made and the composite (world)."38 It is an unconditioned and timeless abode. Buddha surely refers to this crux of
the spirit essentially when it is upheld in Mahaparinibbān sutta that "the Self is our light, the Self is our refuge." Such an enlightened one rises above both good and evil and all pairs of opposites.

Though not within the experience of the layman, this is the realization of a perfect one. Buddha recognized within himself intuitively through deep contemplation that it is in this realized state one is not affected by the Great Law.

JAINISM

METAPHYSICS

Jainism metaphysics is realistic and relativistic pluralism. It has two purposes viz. (a) a metaphysical interpretation of the universe and (b) the liberation of the soul in view.

Spirit (Jīva) and matter (Ajitva) are two ultimate realities. Everything of the world is of the nature of Being. Unity, duality and plurality all are inseparably and inevitably involved in the structure of Reality. Being (Dravya) is permanent through its changing modes (Paryaya) i.e. Existence is endowed with the trio of simultaneous origination, destruction and persistence. So one cannot describe the substance for all the time. Whenever one
speaks of the substance, it is only from the point of view of
the particular space and particular time.

Substance is beginningless and independent, self-
supported and complete in itself. It is said in sūtrakritāṇa
that "substance is imperishable and eternal by it's very
nature." Thus the world is not illusion, but "it very much
exists." It is non-eternal with regard to the forms and
modes only. But change is as much ontologically real as
permanence.

The mentioning of six substances are the expressions of
metaphysical curiosity of the human mind, while the nine
tattvas (or philosophical principles) are the manifestations
of ethical and religious inquisitiveness of Jainism. The
latter could be mentioned as (i) spirit (jīva), (ii) Non-
spirit (ajīva), (iii) Inflow (āsrava), (iv) Bondage (bandha),
(v) Stoppage (saṁvāra), (vi) Annihilation (nirjāra),
(vii) Liberation (mokṣa), (viii) Merit (punya), and
(ix) Demerit (pāpa). These tattvas deal with the spiritual
spiritual disease and its cause, as also with the means
to cure it. Thus, a philosophical grasping of nine tattvas
is necessary to root out totally the obstructions of life.
The highest ideal is not freedom from life itself, but
freedom from egoity. The self-denial is to be a gradual
approach.
**Relationship of Epistemology and Ethics**

The omniscient soul which pervades the whole universe by its consciousness is absolutely unconditioned. The Ācārangaśūtra holds that the omniscient can "know all conditions of the worlds of Gods, men and demons."\(^4\) Thus the realization of the ideal demands one's whole-hearted attention. But before this final state is actualized, the Jīva passes through various stages of unfoldment, depending on the respective type of knowledge viz. Mati (perceptual and inferential knowledge) and Śrūta (testimonial knowledge) as mediate knowledge, and Avādhi (clairvoyance), Manahaparyāya (telepathy) and Kevala (omniscience) as immediate knowledge.

According to Jainism, reality is cognized by Pramāṇa and naya (knowledge of a thing as it is and knowledge of a thing in its relation). The former refers to the grasping of reality in its totality, while the latter points to an aspect of the Reality with infinite characteristics. Emphasizing one aspect to the exclusion of the other aspect would mean biased estimation, which in turn, would affect our ethical judgements. Hence, the theory of relativity (syādvāda) in Jainism avoids the likely misunderstanding that reality is exhausted by referring to particular nayas.

Moral conduct is said to depend on correct knowledge. Ideal life can only be led in relation with Right knowledge
and that involves truth concerning the ultimate nature of Existence. The relationship of ethics to metaphysics is intimate, and it is this which further leads to mystical heights.

Again, realizing perfect Ahimsā (non-violence) is considered as ethical summum bonum. It is a religion "which is a blessing to all creatures." One with spiritual purpose as an end "should not kill any living being through his acts, orders and consent." 

Thus Jainism aims at attaining the two-fold armour of sacredness, "one salvation as the goal and the other non-violence for practice." The two concepts presupposed are, one, saving of one's self from evil or bidding it of the contaminating matter which calls for sincerest asceticism. And, two, maintaining the purity and integrity of one's self involves practising Ahimsā or non-violence towards all living beings.

The root of the word 'Jin'

It is worth noting in this context that the word 'Jin' is derived from the root 'Ji' i.e. to conquer over inner enemies through mind, speech and body. Jin is one who has mastered over his basic evil dispositions. One reaches to this status to the extent one has acquired one's true nature.
GOD

Jainism rejects the existence of a First Cause or the Creator of the universe. Still, it is very far from being purely atheistic, for it posits definitely the divinity of the soul and the possibility of our realizing its destiny. Thus, though the doctrine of personal God is denied, Jainism believes in the mighty truth of man becoming the perfect God.

Every soul is essentially divine, in fact, it is completely devoid of all the worldly dualistic tendencies. To be totally free from karman particles is a true spiritual discipline. Redemption truly comes from the realization of the ideal soul. Jainism regards the soul of the individual as transcendentally one with the ideal.

Devotion to God means devotion to the attributes of divinity which one wants to develop in oneself. It consists in the blending of the fullest measure of love and respect for those enlightened souls who have progressed out of these very attributes to perfection. This is the practical aspect of religion which includes reverence and worship of the emancipated souls.

'Tirthankara' or an emancipated one has crossed the worldly life and entered into "rest that knows no change nor ending—a passionless and ineffable peace." This ideal is virtually the attainment of personal Godhead. Every soul is
potentially 'divine', what is needed is its full unfoldment. One has to cultivate supreme qualities as enumerated in Tattvārthā sutra such as "purity of vision, humanity, magnanimity, ceaseless awareness of mind, righteousness, penance, serving others etc. etc."\(^{48}\)

\textbf{UNIVERSE}

According to Jainism the universe is divided on one hand with material and unconscious world and conscious and spiritual souls on the other hand. It is beginningless and endless. There is no extra-cosmic creator or the ruler of the universe. The rational metaphysics cannot investigate the unknown and mystical queries. Instead of asking the questions such as who made the world? How and when? it is better to inquire into the nature of the world.

The Jaina theory of universe is neither that of creation nor evolution. It maintains that there are six real substances. Besides conscious selves, there is non-conscious world with form and matter (pudgala), time (kāla), space (dik), motion (dharma) and rest (adharma). The last five substances constitute the universe and are the causes of the events that take place.

Matter ranges in density from solidity to the thinnest sort of existence beyond the ken of senses. It is gross and heavy in the former case, but light and volatile in the
latter case. Matter is eternal and consists of atoms which may take any shape or quality, such as earth, water, air, colours, sounds, living organisms of all kinds with their senses etc. The subtlest mode of matter is karma matter. It is the invasion of such matter particles, we shall see later, which influences the course of transmigration.

Of the five mentioned non-living substances, four substances have no malignant influence on the nature of soul. It is pudgala alone which is accountable. Thus the 'ajīva tattvas' (non-conscious principles) in contrast to 'ajīva dravyas' (non-conscious substances) should mean simply pudgala in as much as 'tattvas' have spiritual significance and so totally accountable for gaining one's liberation.

Out of the two Realities in Jainism viz. living and non-living, it is the latter which constitutes the world. It is concerned with inanimate things and it is opposite of living reality in all respects. The union of the self (living) and non-self (non-living) is never so complete as to make their isolation impossible.

MAN

The fundamental principle of Jainism is "that man is a spiritual being." The soul is a pure consciousness and "is not a product of matter in any sense." By removing the matter, the soul becomes pure, a state in which there is
no pains, miseries, disease, old age or death. It is a condition of acquiring the native four-fold characteristics (Ananta catustaya) of the soul viz. Infinite Perception (Darsana), Infinite knowledge (Jñāna), Infinite bliss (sukha) and Infinite power (vīrya).

The self being the spiritual substance, is unextended. It is distinct from the body as a matter of fact. But the self is considered extensive, when it appears to be identified with body and functions in it. The vitality of the one or more of the five senses, the power of body, speech and mind, respiration and age are four vitalities of the living organism.

Self is eternal and unoriginated by its very nature. It is conscious, doer, enjoyer and plural. Consciousness, bliss and innate purity constitute the essential nature of the self. So it does not have virtue, vice, bondage and liberation.

Self is a simple substance, as distinguished from compound substance. Therefore, it is incapable of disintegration. What is not made up of the parts cannot be destroyed in any way.

Self, the Maker of its Destiny

Self is an active responsible agent and master of its own destiny. The implication is that the nature of the
ego-consciousness is not different from it. Happiness and unhappiness, likes and dislikes and so many other modes like these are due to the nature of one self only. It is the enjoyer and sufferer of good and evils too. The modifications of the self are its own perpetual, continuous self-modifications. Both the processes of knowledge and intuition viz. the external and internal aspects of the self are not distinguished from one another. They arise from the same original basic foundation of Self.

When the living substances rise higher and higher and ultimately when entirely do away with the matter particles, it is established in its eternal condition of Pure Light.

The soul is itself the goal. Spiritual advance is possible through spiritual efforts.

Since an indeterminate past, the empirical self is in constant flux of transmigration. It passes through non-essential transmigrations. Thus pain and suffering cannot affect the soul. These are transient with regards to the forms in which these substances appear themselves again and again.

SIKHISM

Introduction

Guru Nanak tried to found a consistent and an universal creed, which is above the sectarian and parochial considera-
tions of his period. Though deeply influenced by the Indian *weltanschuung*, Nanak emphasized some points of his own. He had a reforming mission and a quest of the communion with the demythologized Eternal. It is primarily a mystical rather than a metaphysical path.

Guru Nanak is acclaimed as the founder prophet of the basic Sikh beliefs. He shows the way which he himself has traversed. Nanak conveys the Divine Truth in *Granth-sahib*, exactly as it comes from the Master. This sacred book is the repository of the Divine utterances, not only of Sikh Gurus alone but also of saints of other religions, who have achieved exalted spiritual heights.

This 'Guru', accordingly is the voice of God. His 'word' is a link which makes for unity in disunity. Its task is to effect a union between man and God.

**METAPHYSICS**

The Unity of God and Oneness of mankind are two fundamental beliefs of Sikhism. The One Primal Being, known as *Satnam* exists for all the time. He is self-existent and uncreated, controller and enjoyer. For 'omkar' is the Highest Truth which is unchangeable, eternal and immortal. The whole creation springs up from this principle of Eternal Consciousness.
Thus the ultimate dichotomy of the matter and spirit is rejected. Instead of an exclusive dualism, there is the basic identify of all creation. True realization sweeps aside the sense of duality and brings about an inexpressible eternal bliss and beatitude.

**GOD**

Before there was any creation, God lived absolutely in Himself, formless and self-centred. The word Ekonkāra indicates that nothing can be added to the One Absolute God. The Supreme God as an indeterminate form was always there as an infinite permanent Reality. He is Perfect, Unborn, Self-luminous and Self-expressed. In His Primal aspect, he is unconditioned and devoid of all attributes.

Thus there could be hundreds of attributive names of this one Supreme God. Isharsingh rightly maintains that Nanak left "freest possible choice to man to remember God by any name whatsoever." Like 'not this, not this', His mystery is impregnable. He is beyond the phenomenal laws of birth and death. Unlike His creation, "He will not pass away." He is totally detached from all that is unstable, mutable or corruptible. He is Truth, Consciousness and Bliss.
There can be no idol or revelation in specific incarnation by Him. He cannot be described appropriately by human conditions. Sikhism is based on this conception of the Formless Being.

**Personal Aspect**

Out of His own volition, the Impersonal becomes Personal, so that man could know Him, and through this knowledge establish a unitive relationship with Him.

Once God manifested, He first formed Himself into Divine Name, then made nature which He sustains with His own presence in it. The eternal Giver "is no other than the Lord who is manifest in the three worlds." He is Omnipotent through His Hukam (will). Divinity is pervasive, but it is at its best in the human form.

Thus, this revealed existence of God, who creates, sustains and destroys, communicates to man the way of salvation out of gracious nature. Inspite of the duality and delusion created by Him, God calls forth the response that enables man to appropriate the salvation.

God is impartial and free from enmity with any one. He makes for perfect Justice and gives to all what they need unasked.
He reveals His truth in creation, especially in Hukam which orders the creation. Hukam is an all-embracing principle which consists of all the divinely instituted laws. In this latter sense, all shall see, Hukam is identical in meaning with the 'word'. The Hukam or the will of God being vast and infinite is beyond the ken of human mind. Any way, nothing lies out of God's Will.

Everything has originated from Him and so He is the Destination for everything as well. Because He is wholly unknowable, it does not mean that he is totally beyond the range of human perception.

Experience of God being non-sensuous is not expressible fully. It is an instantaneous intuitive illumination. It is too personal and an intimate experience. The Self is to be emptied of itself, to make room for the coming of God. It is 'Name' which is the essence and spirit of the reality of God.

UNIVERSE

Before the creation of the universe there was darkness for a limitless time. In this undivided darkness, says Adi Grantha, "there was neither earth nor heavens, but only the infinite order of the God." He was there in an indeterminate form. There was neither matter nor mind.
Thus the universe is His creation when he wishes to manifest. No one but the creator knows the exact time of creation. Man cannot comprehend even the limits of His creation. The mystery of His creation "is beyond our reach, in no way can we specifically pin-point its first period of creation."\textsuperscript{55} Universe has both beginning as well as end. So it is not eternal.

The universe is a veritable existence. All things have a real purpose and they are governed by His real laws. His creation is vast and infinite, unlimited and unfathomable.

**It is all God's Will**

Sikhism does not propound any cosmology. God assumed the form of the universe, "created nature and abiding within it, He revelled in His wonder."\textsuperscript{56} Nanak describes this nature as the base of everything that exists. The sun, moon, earth, fire, wind etc. are realities as we find in nature. They all perform their allotted functions. As everything is within the ambit of God's will, the great diversity of the world does not bring about a chaos.

Thus world is not an illusion, but has a reality of its own. It is phenomenal in nature, it is constantly changing. Everything of the world according to Ädi Grantha "seems passeth away."\textsuperscript{57}
Nanak presents seven stages of the evolution of the present universe. Briefly they are as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nirankāra</td>
<td>Formless</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ekankāra</td>
<td>One Absolute Being</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hukam</td>
<td>Infinite Ordainer (To keep the balance of the Absolute Being)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabda</td>
<td>Means to express Kukam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhāna</td>
<td>Individuation, egoism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qudret</td>
<td>Nature, totality of forms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māyā</td>
<td>Moha (Infatuation)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are countless worlds and universes and millions of suns and moons. But our earth is one among these universes and it is the seat of dharma or the expression of God's eternal laws.

MAN

Man, like universe, is a reality and within God's law of nature. In the order of God's creation, man's status is highest and he is at the apex of all living beings. He is a rational being who can elevate all types of actions and
ideas which lead to freedom of action. Endowed with free-will, he can discriminate between good and evil. He is free to choose good or evil action.

Thus, as a matter of fact both good and evil emanate from God. It is "through the senses man experiences the dualism of truth and falsity, virtue and vice, purity and impurity." But the man's role is to choose one and avoid the other. He is a self-conscious person with unlimited potentialities for progressing to God consciousness. He can control both the inner and the outer world.

Again, man stands at the meeting point of nature and spirit. He is "a composite being of self and not-self, and so self must be distinguished from not-self." Man has a free-will.

Qualitatively the Soul has all the attributes like God, only its range of activity is limited. God is its original source, so it is indestructible. Being the part of God, it is like the other God Himself. The human life has a rare opportunity to rise or fall due to free will.

When the spark of the individual soul is separated from the universal soul, the human life begins. The human soul is eternal but the body is transitory. The fruits of actions lead to assuming various forms of existence. The Will of God
is expressed in myriad ways of His creation. It is, when man negates His Grace and flouts His Will, the ceaseless coming and going results. Of course the extent of this Will is inexpressible and incomprehensible for man.

Man must realize his identity with God

To have direct and actual communion with God is man's destiny. The soul "is of the very essence of the oversoul," it is "the living abode of God." Identifying with the Real makes one Immortal and Infinite. It is a condition of beatitude and complete awareness and harmony with the creation.

The human body is a sanctified instrument for this realization. One must merge one's mind, ego and consciousness in Him. The self-fulfilment requires to cultivate wisdom, devotion and creative action in accordance with God's Will. One has to constantly remember His Name, and to realize His holiness and power within. When through the path of love, if one understands His Will, then man's own will no more assess.

SUMMARY

To recapitulate, Hinduism is an open religion. It is a way of life in search of eternal spiritual values. For
Hinduism, the Supreme Being is all pervasive and there exists nothing besides It. The empirical world is real only in the relative sense. The integrated life of man calls for the observation of the principles of 'dharma' or duty according to the respective station of one's life. Still from an ultimate meaning, man's inmost being transcends all finiteness. Evil could be overcome by transcending the finitude, for it is finitude that is the essence of evil.

In Buddhism while recognizing limitations in fathoming the metaphysical truth, a psychological approach is adopted in quest of ultimate good and happiness. According to Buddha, all perceptions of universe consist of an endless process of cause and effect. The world stands or falls with the knower thereof. But according to this doctrine, the perfect one is above becoming or non-becoming. Momentariness or becoming is the very cause of suffering, hence this very cause must be transcended.

In Jainism, the sentient spirit is unconditional. It is not a product of matter in any sense. So ridding the self of matter particles is the goal of religion. This approach calls for the sincerest asceticism and thus maintaining the purity and integrity of the soul. Association with matter is suffering, dissociation with matter is putting an end to suffering.
The highest bliss and beatitude in Sikhism knows no duality. For everything is originated from the One Farmless Being, and He is the destination for everything as well. The finite self must empty itself fully, so as to make place for Infinite Being. So long as the finite self is not emptied and purified, there is the experience of evil. When the self is filled with infiniteness, all evil automatically comes to an end.

B. THE RELIGIONS OF SEMITIC ORIGIN AND ZOROASTRIANISM

JUDAISM

Introduction:

Judaism is the religious heritage of the tribe of Judah. From the primitive naturalism, polytheistic background and few moral ideas, it developed into a distinctive and strictest form of ethical monotheism; which made possible the unification of the scattered tribes of Israel.

The history of ancient Israel is the history of prophets. These outstanding personalities were possessed of the spirit of God and they uttered beyond their ordinary human wisdom and understanding. Each one was bound with something eternal and spoke in the context of the Highest
Being. They felt that they were the vehicle of some higher primary power and exhorted people the message of God, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord, your God am holy." 63

The vision of prophets had intuitive and practical character. They were freely convinced of their inner connectedness with God. They were irresistibly driven with an ethical urge of the truth of their indissoluble link with God. Thus, the prophet Moses was confident that God meant him to lead Israel into freedom from Egyptian dominance. He organized Jews for this goal.

Scripture:

The 'Holy Bible' consists of two parts viz. Old Testament and New Testament. Judaism is confined only to Old Testament. Old Testament has three parts viz.
(1) Prophets: Their revealed truths, (ii) Laws: Legislation by prophets and (iii) Sacred writings and popular wisdom as helpful for inspiration and instruction.

Monotheism:

Thus, the truth of revelation is found in an ethical monotheism. His revelation indicates (i) God's own self-revelation and (ii) the revelation of His Will, otherwise termed as 'torah' or God's laws. All ethical codes are
derived from God, through which people grasp His Will. There is one righteousness and One command. He is the source of life and the true knowledge of Reality.

Unique Approach:

It was prophet Abraham who first preached this religion. He revealed that the word Jehovah stipulated a covenant with Israelites who were specifically chosen by God of His own accord, with the intention of His plan for their salvation. God offered Israelites a solemn pledge of security and prosperity in return of their loyalty and obedience to Him.

Thus, the personal covenant with Abraham was extended to his descendants for their own salvation. The succeeding prophets repeatedly indicated that Jehovah stood faithfully by the covenant, with due blessings by Him experienced in times of crisis and distress. Relationship with Him is one of promise and threat, depending on the following or non-following of His commandments.

Accordingly, the prophet Moses strongly felt the working of God in the great historical event, of about 1200 B.C. which is known as 'Exodus', when they were rescued from the Egyptian captivity. God revealed through prophets and called for self-sacrifice and suffering. The unique approach consists in keeping full faith in this
belief of God rather than the intellectual curiosity to Him.

In fact there was no place for evil and suffering, as man was considered and intended to be good. God appointed him "to master the creation and guide its creation." Instead of abstract conceptions, the prophets dwelt much on practical nature as to what God meant to man and the world.

Significance in History:

The imperative of the relationship with God is practically based on "an appeal to history." This ethical basis remains in social and political aspects, as well as personal aspects for all time. The historical consciousness is formed since centuries with the idea of future realization of God. It is the aim of human history as well as the Divine plan of salvation.

Thus, the religion renews and regenerates at each turning point of history. The people accept the oral and written codes of their religious consciousness without an external pressure. Instead of the eschatological goal of the salvation of the Soul, Judaism concerns with the salvation of humanity in history. It is spoken as "a world uniting messianic goal." Instead of mere bliss of the future life, the world history aims at establishing truth and justice, righteousness and peace.
Emphasis on Faith:

This faith in God as an unique and creative personal relationship by Israel has influenced it to withstand and survive crisis and accidents of it's total historical march. There is a definite conviction in God with serious ethical agreement.

To be restored to the divine path calls for it's persistent following by Israel. The advent of prophets make for the regeneration of moral vitality. For Israel is "a light to the nations and to carry out the salvation to the end of the earth." 67

METAPHYSICS

GOD:

Judaism is theistic and believes in personal God whose distinctive name is Jehovah. He is "one universal spirit immanent in all, without any attributes and dualistic concepts and indescribable." 68 He is devoid of body and not subject to birth and death. His presence is self-certified. He is in both visible and invisible worlds. Being Self-conscious and free absolutely, He gives purpose to everything. He is an All-righteous creator, ruler and saviour of the world. According to Jeremiah, "He is a God of knowledge and by Him actions are weighed." 69
God's personality implies no limitations of Him, as "He cannot be symbolized by any name." He is "One only," the ever-lasting living God. With God, to quote Daniel "there is light all-around." He holds all things in Unity

Being the creator of all existence, He lays down laws for His creation. There is an unique mystery of divine plan by which all things are held in unity. So to be aware of God and to serve Him are one and the same thing. His attributes suggest "further definite moral demands and to strengthen his (man's) trust in God." A Strict Judge:

God is "sanctified in justice." He judges carefully and expects man to be good. Offenders do not go unpunished. It is said in Psalms that "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked." His wrath calls for the need of moral action, as he is the moral power of our deeds. Our faithfulness is dependent "on the consciousness of God."

For evil and wrong doing "He is the angry God, a consumating fire which destroys evil with holy zeal."
**Redeemer:**

God redeems man from sin. He fully controls over history and nature for furthering His plan. Being merciful by nature, He endows man with the power of perfecting oneself for the kingdom of God.

God's statement in Exodus that "I am that I am"\(^7\) indicates the immutable personality of God, who is firm in His designs and fulfilling promises.

He is the final end and the sole means of salvation. Thus, He is not merely an ethnic God of Jews, though it might be so in early times.

**UNIVERSE:**

God is the creator of everything in the cosmos. He is the direct and single power in creation. It is solely by His fiat as let there be the creation of the world ..... and the world sprang into existence.

**It is good**

The world is good, since goodness is its creator and its final aim. The creative force of God has brought an order in face of the seeming chaotic stage of "formlessness and void."\(^7\) This is how the creation has no strife and struggle of any sort, and not less than seven times
there is a pristine character of the universe when it was created. This suggests unmistakably what sort of knowledge is regarded as primary.

**Historical Process**

The created things are contingent and not beginningless like God. The activity of God in creation and the activity of God in history are two aspects of the same process. Thus the world in itself is entirely due to His choice. The world might or might not have existed as it depends on God's Will. Thus, in the words of Prof. Ninian Smart the "Hebrew cosmology itself is not original." He created the world out of nothing. God's law existed before creation and accordingly He governs the world.

The world is the workmanship of God and expresses His power. He is not so much the God of its (world's) beginning as the God of its history. The world is gradually developing towards perfection. Here there is no cycle of involution and evolution.

**MAN**

God freely and dynamically entered into relations with His creation. Providential act is God's self-revelation which is not a single act, but a process of development with
various stages. According to R.C. Zahner this is "the transcendent unity as the origin of all things."82

In the Image of God

The creation culminated in man which was God's part of contract. Now man as the equal partner, as made in the image of God, is called upon to fulfill His part. God and men were united in the beginning, which would be so again at the end of the historical existence.

The Soul is considered as a divine force within the body with no sensuous nature. It is said in proverbs that "the spirit of man is the candle of the Lord."83 Unlike natural objects, man can reach to the One God, because "as the ethical becomes man's possession in his innermost self, he feels its difference from nature and fate."84

Pleasure not Denied

Creation is God's expression of His glory and goodness, so man "can legitimately rejoice in it."85 Natural delights and pleasures of life are not intrinsically evil. Barring sinful acts, all human experience is potentially good.

Responsibility for Government

Men must cultivate the personal and social sense of responsibility. One has to fathom deep in grasping the real
implication of covenant relationship. Man has to be grateful to God and pray Him devotedly. Israelites are obliged religiously, socially, ethically and politically. So it is maintained in proverbs that "In all thy ways acknowledge Him."86

His laws (Torah) are immutable and helpful in resolving in various problems. The good deeds are always in tune with His commandments. Heaven is meant for good deeds.

The Nature of Man;

In spite of man's kinship with God, he is also different from Him. If a part of Him is divine, another part is earthly. Man is the combination of flesh (basar) and spirit (ruah). It is the latter which accounts him as a child of God, helps elevating him to a higher state and makes him a free moral personality. The lofty destiny calls for continuous striving with sensuous and earthly existence.

It is God's wish that man's body is physical and earthly, while the soul is heavenly and divine in essence. Following God and His Laws makes him a heavenly being. But in the eternal bliss of salvation both body and soul are related, as "this is reward of obedience by Soul and without body no obedience is possible."87
**Free Choice:**

Man is also creative in his own way. He can decide about his deeds and seek the meaning of life. Man's will has to choose God's will which elevates him to a higher stature. It is "in the work of man that the kingdom of God appears."88 And the soul "is free to choose between good and evil, right and wrong deeds."89

In the beginning the Soul is pure and without sins and evils. The capability of free will makes possible the great potentiality of mental, moral and spiritual perfection in the course of the history.

**Belief in Oneself and Mankind:**

To realize the Good, man must have (i) belief in oneself as a pure and free spirit, (ii) belief in the equal dignity of neighbour and (iii) belief in mankind. All are dependent on God. To be aware of God and doing service to Him are one and the same thing.

Man's life exists only through God, still it has its own independence. Man's creative will is not the same as his selfish desire. It is through this ethical power that man can free his existence from its limits.

Generally Judaism concerns with the life in this world. The service of God is a daily responsibility and a
call for here and now! The good life is thought in terms of concrete existence. Jehovah is a living God who breathes with man in human events.

Restoring this power and peace, loyalty to His laws and brotherhood is the Judaistic goal of perfection. The limited world and its existence cannot quench the infinite potentialities of man. Man's life stretches even after death, so as to contribute to the plan of God's history.

**CHRISTIANITY**

**Introduction:**

Judaism had strongly believed that like David another Lord would come and reestablish the Hebrew rule. In this background of Jewish religion there occurs a new relationship between the Jewish human messenger and God of Old Testament. Christianity is linked with the history of Israel. There is the continuity and unity of experience with vital and qualitative development of the Semitic faith.

Life and work of Jesus and apostles is central here. In place of Israel's providential God, God in Christianity works out a new and definite revealing and healing action. His revelation has been given once for all.
Thus, God gave the Bible wherein he made a definite plan and goal for saving the world and redeeming man. New Testament is the source book for the origin of Christianity as a distinctive faith. The New Testament mainly emphasizes

(i) belief in God and His son Jesus,
(ii) to obey God's commandments, and
(iii) belief in the original sin.

**Monotheism:**

The God that Jesus speaks of was already revealed before and who was the object of faith in Israel. God's conception is concrete and simple one and not abstract and metaphysical. It is a spiritual and ethical monotheism.

God is spoken of as our father who looks after our needs. He stands in fatherly relation to mankind and showers His gifts on us all.

**JESUS**

Jesus interpreted Old Testament distinctively and uniquely. His life and teachings superbly evidences the quality of the direct relationship with God as implied in the scriptures of Judaism. Thus the basis "seems in fact to have been a sense of affinity with God amounting to a direct causal relationship."
Jesus considered himself as the son of God whose advent was to fulfil the hopes of Israel. His death and resurrection pointed the way whereby man could be saved. Through Him the barrier between God and man due to sin would be removed. Jesus gave a new message of the complete divine plan for salvation. Rising into a new glory, Jesus guides the people. In fact, in the words of Luke "for their rejuvenation he preached a new religion." For him salvation is not a certain state but a dynamic factor of the living life of man.

Jesus is typically Hebrew in his concept of religion. For Jesus, "it is always the acceptance of His authority as the messenger of God that He has in mind." Jesus is acknowledged for his saving power of God and the new religious orientation. His life is not a mere following of the law but a divine inspiration too. This is how immediate disciples were convinced of the continued power of Jesus and his victory over the tragic death.

Without being doctrinaire, Jesus was firmly saddled in Hebrew religious tradition. He is the believing man who understood God, had His revealed words and lived a life with great obedience and deep discrimination. He preached and practised to establish the moral condition by which God's rule is perfected. He promised his followers that "He himself would return for the final act of consummation."
He made them share in his own thought.

The divine response is the revelation of the need, points to urgency and the answer of love by God.

**Teachings in Gospels:**

The Gospels indicate the advent of the kingdom of God and Jesus' own connection with it. He is the will of God predetermined as "the fulfilment of the Old Testament." The Gospels centre around the risen life of Jesus. The saving and significant events, Jesus' death and resurrection, are narrated. His illustrations and parables are suggestive, as these pointedly direct the ethical and man-God relationship. Albeit, Jesus did not systematise the moral and religious principles in a fixed and decided manner.

Thus, evidently Christianity is a new Gospel and no hypotheses. Jesus himself "is the word of God" which are filled with blood and flesh. His expression is surprisingly novel and revolutionary which decried mere ritualistic following of Laws.

No doubt it is the two testaments together (viz. Old Testament and New Testament) which make up the Christian Bible. While Old Testament is inevitable with basic historic roots, the Christian teaching is mainly centred in New Testament.
The exile in Babylon was significant as it widened and deepened the conception of God and the true way of worshipping and serving Him. It brought about a greater universalism.

Thus God is a sovereign moral personality and supremely loving one. He is a wise, just and omnipotent creator of the world and the controller of the history. He is the eternal personality with absolute will, Holy Love and goodness. He is righteous, faithful and compassionate. He is a living, active and energizing spirit.

Thus, it is said, "He is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty." Again, "He is right and in Him is no darkness at all."

The Personality of God:

God lives, feels, wills and thinks. He has no limitation whatsoever and He is in continuous communion with human beings. He communicates His commandments.

This spiritual Being is both immanent and transcendent. He is creatively active in the world. The oft-repeated phrase viz. 'your heavenly father' implied assurance that
"He might be trusted to supply all their needs." Jesus interpreted everything in the light of this fatherhood.

God and History:

God is immanent in the history of man. He is loving, striving, suffering and agonizing. His love, though undefinable, is goodness imparted to others in self-sacrifice. He so loved the world that "He gave His only son." True love surpasses one's narrow considerations, and this involves real sufferings too.

As the word 'father' signifies the root of Divine revelation, the word 'son' signifies historical mediation. It is still further justified in holy spirit. The fatherhood of God gives the message of life.

Trinitarianism:

God is a triad of fatherhood, sonship and holy spirit which are in constant fellowship with one another. Jesus, the son, links God with man. The father is in heaven, the son on earth and the Holy spirit continue to exist forever till the day of perfect Good is realised.

Through Jesus, the Christ, the sovereign God appears as redeemer. The Christ is the mediator who atones for sinners and leads them unto Him. Jesus is not a son, but the son whom God chose and sent "specially to reveal Him."
God is experienced in man's innermost being as Holy Ghost. As an indwelling spirit, it constantly inspires, renews and revitalises the human life.

While, Jesus is the external manifestation of God, Holy Ghost is the internal manifestation of God in man. The three aspects of omnipotent God are revealed in all-harmonizing unity.

JESUS

His authority did not come merely from scriptures or from the experts of religious laws. He derived it from the deep devotion of God as the source of his activity. He lived radically the Jewish religious tradition in which he was born. His advent meant the fulfilment of manifesting the mystery of trinity and redeeming man from his original sin.

Messianic Role:

Jesus realized his close and unique relationship with God. As a vicarious atoner for the sins of others, he rendered the role of Messiah. He realized that his suffering would redeem others from sin. He had to pass through the "agony of torture and death in order to be fully prepared for the messiah's cosmic role."^101
His miracles indicated the advent of the kingdom of God which was the special mission of his life. Jesus' own personal destiny and his intuitive conviction of messiahship were merged in his own person.

Son of God:

Jesus' goal was to spread good news, to heal the diseased, to bring peace, comfort and hope and to explain the essential conditions of the advent of the kingdom of God. In this he realized God's will and loving concern for His beings. He whole-heartedly loved God and men as himself. Jesus' unique sonship was realized after his Baptism.

He spoke of God as father and as an unquestionable certainty of experience. In face of the temptations of power and glory by satan, Jesus continued his quest and revealed his sinless character.

Thus, his virgin birth evinced a new beginning of the human race without the stigma of original sin. He has God-like qualities, though "God was much greater and higher in heaven." As the son of God, he illuminated the world and removed the darkness of sin and evil. He had the capacity to bear the sins of the world and with the direct action "takes the sin of the world" on himself. He conveys the reality of God immediately. His whole life is of timeless significance.
Son and Man:

As son, Jesus reveals the father God as forgiving sins of men and welcoming them again for His fellowship. He helps man expiate and keep up their confidence for the divine goal. Jesus genuinely shared the normal traits of man, no doubt he was at his best in this.

Thus, Jesus is both divine and human. Along with his divine sonship, he is also the human soul with an embodied and individual existence. And so as a son of man he must "suffer many things .... be killed .... and rise again." This is the paradox of Christianity.

Evil and Suffering are Real:

Jesus struggled and faced squarely the evil and suffering in his own person. His mission presupposed this fact of suffering which he faced actively and positively and ultimately won over them. Jesus realized that sin called for greater and more precious sacrifice than as it was viewed in mosaic law.

He was conscious of the challenge and faced it with an unbroken communion with God. He had spiritual earnestness and ethical seriousness.

End was to be justified by proper means only. So force was ruled out by God. This only goes to show that
"there are no short cuts to the kingdom." 105

Crucifixion:

It is in crucifixion, Christ suffered and endured the evil and sinful deeds of mankind. The redemption begins in the earthly life which is "consummated in His Cross as the ransom, the covenant sacrifice." 106

Thus, "He came to seek and to save that which was lost." 107 He was fully obedient to God's will. He said as quoted by Mark "yet not what I will, but what you will." 108

One must bring sin to the cross and seek forgiveness. One must suffer lovingly, for God exists in all pains. God suffers in all sufferings. It is in cross the divine immanence is evidenced. Fear of death does not remain here. Thus facing the physical reality of evil, suffering and death through love and love only that lends redemptive power.

Jesus rose from the grave and reappeared "as the glorified son of man." 109 It was a human tragedy, but it was also a total victory over death. His supernatural triumph is the triumph of all in this and other life. Jesus established a new and eternal fellowship with God.
MAN:

Human world is a part of God's creation, so it is dependent on Him. But as the children of God, men have filial relationship with Him. God is a loving and forgiving father.

God deeply satisfies the human need of inward companionship. Trust in Him endows man an unlimited power. Man attains peace when he submits himself to His Will. It is how God's purpose is fulfilled which Jesus pointed, "for whoever would save his life will loose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the Gospel's will save it."\(^{110}\)

To Live Righteously:

Man must render all his duties. The famous saying of Jesus viz. "love thy neighbour as thyself"\(^ {111}\) suggests selfless love for others. Man is considered to be a member of society which is a part of the divinely constituted history. God being the law-giver and Judge, man must obey His commandments righteously.

Jesus in Centre:

Jesus is a dynamic and concrete personality in Christian ethics Jesus asserted his relationship with God even amidst great agonies and conflicts. His qualitative and cogent expression of life indicates that God can be "known as Father."\(^ {112}\)
Freedom and Responsibility:

The loving God trusts man and it is expected of man to lead ethical life. Man is endowed with the capacity of self-determination. The earth belongs to God, so sacrificing self-interest man must fulfill the divine purpose with his free-will. Obedience has significance when there is the option of disobedience. So, man must freely accept God and "not using (your) liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servant, of God." 113

God alone is all-perfect and good. Even Jesus denied his being as wholly good. So Jesus wishes to be perfect as heavenly father is perfect. This only implies that the soul is similar to God but not identical with Him.

The Kingdom of God:

The creation of the world was good and man too, had good qualities. Originally he was above the sinful existence.

Thus, the kingdom of God is not of the nature of material conquest, but it is a state in the heart of each individual. It dawns in one's inward self. One who is low and poor, struggles and suffers a lot for peace and tranquillity, obtains it. The kingdom of God stands above all narrow considerations.
Regaining this state of perfection of man and world is the goal of the history. Thus finally, "all kinds of obstructions, bonds, evils and opposites would be won over."114 God's kingdom is a message of unity and peace.

**Eternal Life is the Goal:**

The man has to work to achieve this goal. Man is given an invaluable freedom of will to be a perfect man in a perfect world. He is made in the image of God. The spiritual freedom will ensure from this conscious obedience to God and service of his fellowmen. The real personality of man never dies.

**The Holy Spirit:**

The holy spirit exists in man which is the divine inspiration for limitless virtuousness and creative action. The divine direction is hidden in man's life and experience. Man is free in this domain of spirit. Jesus experienced this and mentioned, "the power of holy soul keeps away Devil."115 It is the truth of the kingdom of God which protects of sinners.

**UNIVERSE:**

Christianity accepts the views of the nature of universe given by Old Testament. So there is no need to repeat it at length.
God created everything out of nothing. God rules and sustains the world and because of Him we live and do our activities.

It is Teleological:

The creation of the world was done in six days and it serves, "for man's purpose." All things are destined for the good and salvation of man. The world symbolizes God's love and desire. The world is not perfect, if separated from God. Then it denies the real unity of God with the world.

External world and its laws rely on God's reason and desire. In course of time both man as well as the world will be blessed with perfection. It is his sign of supremacy.

**ISLAM**

Before Mohamad's arrival, the Arabic people were animistic and polytheistic. Many blind rituals and superstitions were having their full play. Mohamad was sad with his people for the lack of true religious understanding and deeds. His mission of life was aimed at lifting up the Arabs from their degrading paganism and idolatry and lead them to the belief of one great God.
The then prevailing Jewish and Christian concepts were crudely interpreted by Arabs. But Mohamad acquiesced the worth-while and notable points of these Semitic faiths and proceeded successfully to establish the unity of All-mighty God in place of many independent powers.

Thus, Islam accepts the existence of one supreme power which is only a simple concept of divine government. Mohamad as prophet experienced this Reality, directly and intensely. The whole Islamic revelation is centred round his powerful and influencing personality. It is the typical force of the conviction and belief in one supreme Being wherein lies the fact of Mohamad's originality.

Mohamad does not accept himself to be the incarnation of God. But he surely and convincingly believed that God revealed to him for the good and welfare of the mankind. He only preached this good message of the divine path, and hence he is a source of beneficience for the whole world.

Islamic Message:

The word 'Islam' means to resign oneself for peace. It is a perfect tranquility in the primary sense. One must do one's duties and voluntarily surrender to His wills, laws and commands. For a God-ward march, "devotion to Allah is the fundamental essence." Those who completely
submit to His will, there exists, "no fear for such (people) nor shall they grieve."\textsuperscript{118}

Positively this means that the man has not only to desist from harming others, but he has also to do good to them. Islam aims at both internal and external peace. A true muslim makes peace with God as well as with man. It is a religious quest of daily active life. The all-powerful God is also loving and merciful. Those who suffer and struggle for the goal, God listens to them sympathetically.

God is a Strict Righteous Judge:

Mohamad was very much aware of God's strict justice. The repeated meditations made him conscious of the impending day of judgement and the horrible everlasting punishments. He realised with anxiety the strict claims of God's judgement. It is rightly maintained by Tor Andre that "eternity lends a characteristic stamp on Mohamad's belief in God."\textsuperscript{119}

Man needs to be submissive and do good deeds. Man must co-operate with Him through good and peaceful relations with his fellowmen.

The Unity of God:

Mohamad penetrated behind the phenomena of the universe and realised God's unity as a great Being. Islam
is a distinct and unique monotheism. It is a stern and severe conviction with no abstract obscurantism. Again, this First principle not only rules the world with fixed laws, but He also transcends it.

God is formless. Man cannot even imagine Him of His unique and comprehensive nature. He is one person (dhāt), He is also one in qualities (sifāt) and also one in action (af'āl). All things of the world "have one great automatic reason or reality which is one alone."¹²⁰ He is also known as 'Tauhid'. None but He alone should be worshipped.

Again, there is no division of the world as here and hereafter. Mohamad bridges these commonly believed two spheres of life, by believing them to be the single whole. Thus, there is no dualism. The God gives good things on earth and will give the same hereafter too.

God pervades all through the universe. His is a multi-dimensional reality. Everything sustains by His grace. He is a supernatural power who gives purpose to everything. He is what He is, the Most High.

Thus, He alone is the one and the sole means of salvation. He favours no particular race or nation. His path calls for the highest spiritual consciousness. He is the light of heaven and earth. The innermost soul of man demands trust in Him.
God revealed this holy direction to Mohamad, which the 'Holy Quran' has preserved for mankind. This scripture reveals God's will and gives religious laws and social duties. Whereas Quran is regarded as primary source of Islam, Hadith and Ijtihād are regarded as secondary sources.

**METAPHYSICS:**

**GOD**

He is an Omnipotent One whose name is Allah. This word is derived from Al-ilah which points to His strong nature. He can do anything impossible too.

He is Infinite and ubiquitous in nature, without form and figure. This Invisible Being has all the attributes of perfection.

This omniscient Being is a unique combination of supreme and fearful glory (Jalāl) and unspeakable beauty (Jamāl). The former is His creative nature which generates wonder in us, whereas the latter is His nature of love. He is both good and gracious.

No symbol can convey His uniqueness. He is above "all physical conceptions" and "all physical limitations and similes." He is of the "nature of life," nature of knowledge" and "nature of power."
He is the giver of good (Rabb), merciful (Rahim), truthful (Allah-al-haq), peace maker (Al-satām), eternal (Al-Hāyay) and a primal spirit (Al-Ayval).

A Sovereign Being:

He is the supreme will which can do anything good or evil. God is the absolute monarch, so the criterion of right and wrong is what he commands. It only goes to imply that the belief in Allah consists of "Sovereign, free and indeterminable will." 126

Thus, Quran says that God can "guide or astray men by His Will." 127 Again, he "misleadeth Whom He will and whom He will he guideth." 128 In the same way, He "pardons whom he wills" 129 God's will is an absolute overriding one which is unconditionally free.

Islam believes in the inexorable will of God and not in fate. God is the supreme judge of the day of judgement, so "unto Him, ye will be brought back." 130

God is Incomprehensible:

He, with His essential and eternal attributes is beyond the reason of man. Because there is nothing "like a likeness of Him." 136 He is undescrivable and incognizable, for Quran maintains that "He does what He intends." 132
Still, despite man's wrongs, God is also gracious and forgiving. Though strong in punishment, he can pardon man altogether too.

He is not affected by belief or non-belief in Him, for all things belong to him. Whether it is good or evil, right or wrong, it is He who has willed and decreed. Thus, He has "created everything and hath meted out for it a measure." 133

Destiny and Guidance:

Destiny (Taqdir) implies fixed and proportionate share. In fact God's decree is not to be understood in an arbitrary way. God looks after the material needs of His creatures.

His guidance (Hidayah) consists of many types. Our reason can be helpful for our own good and protection. God wants all things to reach to a state of perfection through various stages of growth. He gives a complete code of guidance in the essentials of life.

UNIVERSE:

God creates the world out of nothing. Being all-powerful, He could do this. He created it in six days and his rules govern the world for the growth and purpose of things. As God is good, the world is also good.
It is an intelligent creation:

The world process being run efficiently points to His power and wisdom. None can challenge His action. He gave order and shape to all things from finite particles to heavenly objects. Thus, there is no violation of laws inspite of the unmistakably vast universe. There is no conflict or collision between two things, which in fact "co-operate in their achievement."\(^{134}\)

If man withdraws himself from needless meddlings, God has provided enough sustenance and nourishment to all things in a perfectly required way.

God's laws are immutable and are perfect rationally. His aim is "at work from up to down"\(^{135}\) His laws reflect His desires. By his free will everything is directed. The laws of the universe are His commands.

Thus, the inanimate objects are guided by the laws of nature. The animate objects possess instincts and senses. Man must reflect and realize this universal law of purpose and order in the universe which manifest sufficient reason behind them.
It is a Spiritual Universe:

The whole universe depends on Him for order and justice. The human mind cannot isolate itself from this, as in fact "all creatures in the heaven and on the earth submit to His will, willingly or unwillingly." God's care manifests all through. He has not created "this (all) in vain." 

Man cannot separate himself from this harmonious natural order. His grace rules everywhere. It is a real world. But whereas the worldly enjoyments are momentary, the heavenly happiness has eternal significance. The seeker must reflect on this.

MAN:

God is the maker of the whole creation. Man's place in it is not only the highest but also central in it. God "breathed something of His own spirit into man." 

Man is constituted of a soul (rūḥ) and a body. The body perishes but the soul survives the death. Allah's heaven carefully protects the immortality and eternality of the spiritual reality. Quran does not clearly describe the nature of the soul and the body and their inter-relationship. Both are created from clay and mud and
Both are created from clay and mud and there exists no opposition between body and soul. There prevails an essential harmony.

Still, the soul like body is God's creation and it exists on the mercy of God for its existence and continuance. After creating man from a drop of thick fluid, God "endowed him with sense organs and understanding, and showed him the way." Thus, our body and soul are significant, they do not constitute a bondage.

Freedom and Responsibility:

Man is vicegerent of God on the earth. Everything exists for man's use. Man has been given free will, an independent initiation to fulfil God's will. He has to exercise his choice rightly and properly abiding by His laws. His faculty of reasoning calls for a choice which deals properly with things around him.

It is mainly through the service of man, one carried out God's will. The unity of God implies to take care of all the spheres of human activity. Man depends on the Higher Being. The will to act is an unique gift for moral action. It is the ethical life which leads to spiritual development. God has given man the knowledge of things and their qualities. Man's will has to co-operate with
God. The soul of a man is a commanding spirit, inspires a just and perfect direction.

Relationship with God to be perfected:

While God is infinite, man is finite. Still, the relationship between the two is essentially of two free personalities. Man has to assent and perfect this relationship. Man alone is liable for his own happiness as well as the happiness of others around him.

In spite of all faults and weaknesses of man, he is also the representative of God, a trustee of free personality on earth. Man should have strict determination in life, which is a means to realize the nature of truth.

A Complete Surrender to Him:

Surrender is a voluntary submission of heart, will and reason to His revelation. It is a complete surrender (Tasleem). Even man's belief or unbelief relies on God's desire and choice and not man's choice.

Ultimately man is finite and humble in his powers, it is God alone who can direct him in the right way. While 'belief' is one great step, righteous living is another step for the goal.
Righteous Living:

Man must entertain good desires and do good works. Obedience and surrender is not an outward show, but a sincere belief in Him, His angels, divine words in scriptures, prophets, pre-destination and the day of judgement. One's conduct must evince equality and brotherhood of man, and must strive for the justice and welfare of the individual and society.

As our knowledge of the world increases, we get the glimpse of His might and power. Man is fully equipped to protect Himself from evils and can go ahead to his full development.

To Trust His Goal:

Everything is ordained by God for the cause of man. In fact man has "excelled all created things." He can uniquely perfect his qualities and attain heaven and its pleasures. God alone can elevate man.

More or less all steps in life, whether internal or external, depend on God's guidance. God's grace may manifest in the nature of instincts, sense-perception and mental understanding. But God gives his gifts when man trusts and obeys His laws.
Human life is not limited to the mere present existence on earth, it abides and continues afterwards too. Believing in Him, man must carry out his duties.

ZORCASTRIANISM

Introduction:

Approximately about 6th century B.C. Iran passed through a critical period. Morality, honesty, magnanimity, gentleness etc. were fast deteriorating among its people. Might was right and the people were oppressed mindlessly. The struggle between well-placed pastoral and agricultural community and predatory nomadic tribes was fierce. The tribals led the life of brigandage and infidels. There were no good rulers, so the settled life was threatened direly.

During such an uncertain period Zoroaster appeared. Etymologically, even the name zoroaster suggested. 'Golden (zaratha) light (ushtre)!' He realised his prophet-hood and was in divine wisdom. The satanic forces against him were defeated. He was convinced that he could lead mankind to truth and purity, as he had received the holy and righteous revelation.
He claimed that he had a direct apprehension of God. He heard the words of the Lord Ahur Mazda and Vohu Manah, the good mind. God is both powerful and benevolent. Zoroaster had full devotion and faith in Him, as he had "received help from Ahur Mazda."  

Thus, Zoroaster came with the message of the goal (ârmaîtî), lawful existence (asha), obedience (sraosha) and the ethical way.

**Monotheism**

Oneness of God is central in Zoroastrianism. 'Ahur' means par excellence, a primary consciousness. Ancient polytheism was given away and no other God than Ahur Mazda was recognized. He is the primeval and eternal, the originator of the right law. Zoroaster had unbending faith in God and in his own mission.

**Two Spirits:**

God desired to manifest by two spirits. Thus, desiring good, Ahur Mazda "has created both weal and woe." These are two primeval spirits which are in constant conflicts mutually. These two spirits are distinct from Him, but they are subordinate to Him. They are known as God's spirits, which also in fact cause the manifold creation of all around us.
Thus, Spenta-mainyu is a good spirit who is the son of Ahur-Mazda. It occupies the topmost position in the hierarchy of spiritual beings. It is "the most holy spirit of Ahur-Mazda" and through it only one can reach God.

Whereas, the opponent of Spenta-mainyu is Angra-mainyu and it is an evil spirit. It is never considered as an incarnation of God. It also does not possess the dignity of the good spirit. Still, it is only co-eternal with good, but not independent of God.

Both these spirits existed before the creation of the world. They appear to have equal power and have pervasive influence. These are basically opposites as good and evil, truth and falsehood, order and disorder. All activities, may be human, cosmic or divine, are affected by these spirits.

Thus, these twin aspects reveal themselves in man's thoughts, words and deeds. Like light and shade, they always go together. Whereas one spirit has chosen good and righteousness, the other spirit falls for evil and unrighteousness.

In any way, notwithstanding this dualism, we will see that in the ultimate sense there is an implied monotheism in Zoroastrianism.
A choice is to be made:

Zoroaster's mission was foreordained as he was "chosen by God in the beginning." He realized God's holiness, for he had "a direct vision of His goodness, truth and eternity." Accordingly Zoroaster was firm that sooner or later one has to make a choice, no one could escape it.

The good mind alone manifests the divine spirit. So Zoroaster exhorted people "to select good path." But Zoroaster's relationship with God is of friendly nature and not of servility. This is how he repeatedly asks "to see his God and the entities associated with Him."

Zoroaster was clear in his mind that the battle between good and evil is unceasing. For him a firm and unyielding choice is a matter of life and death. It is a concrete situation to be faced squarely.

He was again clear that the final victory is of 'good spirit'. Zoroaster rules out dualism in the final sense. There is not much of mysticism here, it is a very simple doctrine which inspires people in good faith. In fact the prophetic mission and the emphasis on moral values are "much closer to Jewish monotheism."

The five Gathas embody the revealed words of Zoroaster and his immediate disciples. In them we find preserved
the oldest as well as the newly conceived pure form of the nature of God. The traditional literature was developed in Pahlavi Script. These scriptures are known as 'Zend Avesta' which includes (i) Yasna-sacrificial canons, (ii) Visperat-Invocations and offering, (iii) Yasta-praising Gods, (iv) Vendidad and (v) Khordah Avesta, which is a synoptic scriptural book.

METAPHYSICS

GOD:

The earlier Assyrian tradition did have the name Ahur-Mazda. Zoroaster did not invent this name all of a sudden. He is an eternal and self-evident God. He is the God of good and all benevolence is due to Him.

He is, to quote Yasta "the creator and governor", who controls the natural forces. Though He is immanent, he still transcends man and nature.

He is the maker of the right law. In fact He first "created laws and created world accordingly." God is Asha (the law) and Vahista (the best reason). He is a living and active being.

God rules the earth and heaven unconditionally. Yasna maintains that God carefully "takes full stock of man's
actions and gives justice accordingly."\(^{151}\)

**Six Characteristics:**

God possesses different names which express His qualities and powers. Thus, there are six deities who form the hierarchy of seven celestial beings. Though they are not equal to Ahur-Mazda but are worthy of worshipping. His six characteristics are:

(i) Vohu-manah: It is the good mind, which guides man in all things and it "is the source of good behaviour."\(^ {152}\) It points to the proximity of God. It personifies right thinking.

(ii) Asha Vahishta: It personifies best order and righteousness. It is the rightful action which co-operates with God's will. It's followers are helped against the evil spirit both in the temporal and spiritual spheres.

(iii) Khshathra Vairya: It is the personification of the absolute power in both material and spiritual world. It represents the rulership of God on earth, His action and His kingdom.

(iv) Armaiti: It is the personification of High thought and devotion. It represents God's kind and merciful nature. It gives pure divine knowledge.
(v) Haurvatat: It personifies perfection. It disciplines physical, moral and spiritual actions for the welfare of man.

(vi) Ameretat: This personifies immortality. This is the corollary of perfection.

Haurvatat and Ameretat are closely related which symbolize the perfection of humanity and immoratality. Later on were added the personification of obedience (sraosh) and the angel Aryamana, who tries to establish brotherhood between men and God.

All these personifications are known as 'Amesha spentas', the six immortals symbolising the attributes of the one Infinite Being. In other words it is maintained by R.P. Masani that "these are the personified attributes of Mazda and of His activities among men." 153

Ahur-Mazda is assigned the supreme spiritual position.

Spenta Mainyu - God's Divine power:

Spenta Mainyu is God's creative desire and active principle of mind. This sacred power is the beneficent spirit which makes for all good and justice in the world. It is a life conserving and life enhancing force. All the amesha-spentas recounted above, are in the side of good
spirit. Each of them aims at fulfilling the divine purpose in the act of creating and manifesting the world. They, of course, do not violate man's free will.

**Divine Law:**

It is the gift of divine wisdom. The moral law is God's will, i.e., it embodies His law of righteousness. Thus, it is He who commands the laws of nature and the laws of morality. Following these laws enable one to form an ideal relationship with God.

**Righteous Judge:**

God is not limited in any case by the evil force. In actuality "the final judgement belongs to God." Man is judged according to his deeds. Following righteousness or truth is the standard of right behaviour.

**Holy Fire:**

It is the earthly symbol of His infinite purity and righteousness. It is the spark of his divine flame and immortal light which shines in the heart of all persons. It is the energy and dynamism of life. Fire is worshipped in this capacity.
UNIVERSE:

God, by an act of free will, created the world out of nothing. Then He thought as referred to by Yasna "Let the blessed expanses of the starry heavens be filled with light ... and He created the Divine law through which He upholds the sovereign mind." 155

The order of creation is from the spiritual and incorporeal realm to the gross and physical realm, bearing everywhere the light of the Supreme God.

Divine Law is Pervasive:

The world is concrete and real, with His glory and might. It is a moral sphere with good and evil potentialities. The laws of nature are the expressions of the divine will. The birth, growth and destruction of living and non-living things are regulated accordingly. The divine law is sovereign and it is the source of good, righteousness and salvation.

Harmony between Spiritual and Material Things:

God has created all spiritual and material things and "He rules at Will." 156 Inspite of the opposition between the spiritual and material realms, they are a unitary whole linked together. It is said of this intimacy in Yasna, that
"things of the world run their course in harmony with the Divine law in adoration with Him."¹⁵⁷ There is so much so of this cohesiveness that the six amesha spentas are likened with physical elements. Thus the Good Mind is identified with cattle, truth with fire, God's kingdom with metals, right-mindedness with the universe, wholeness with water and immortality with plants. This linking was prevailing long before the advent of Zoroaster.

The universe is good and helpful to man. Man must live in it nobly. Though man is qualitatively different from God and therefore imperfect and limited, still he can "realize the highest truth, and behold the God in purest essence."¹⁵⁸

MAN

Man is a co-worker and a fellow fighter with good spirit. The soul of man can battle with evil forces and attain ultimate bliss and beatitude. God has made the man and he is good.

First the soul was created and then the body. The soul resides in the human body, and guides its functioning properly. The soul can aim at good things and progress. It is capable of acquiring absolute purity of thought, speech and action with God's good will.
Free Choice:

Man is at the top of the entire creation for the fight against the evil forces. Being free, he can control himself and other entities. Thus God himself, "didst infuse life breath into mortal bones ... he didst grant us capacities to act and true doctrines to guide so that one could choose belief at will." 159

Man is the God's principal bastion against the satanic forces. The souls along with Pravashis are created of their own free will gifted deliberately by God. Their goal is to fight the power of darkness. The man being the master of will, he must discriminate responsibly. Man must listen to and realize God's word, for God Himself, "does not force man to choose a path." 160

Man is capable of choosing between good and evil. Man's essence lies in 'intellect and will' (Akhw) which can lead to 'discriminative wisdom' (khrut). The former is the temporal direction of the soul, while the latter is its religious authority. With intellectual means, man must investigate the spiritual reality. And surely, "blessedness will come upon the followers of the Divine Law." 161
Man's spiritual elements:

Man is essentially pure and sacred. His five spiritual elements are as follows:

(i) Ahu: It protects the soul and assists in the action.

(ii) Dina: It is man's self-consciousness which helps in developing the mental life and good conduct.

(iii) Baoghagh: It is the intellectual faculty of understanding which is supreme in man.

(iv) Uvani: Soul's nature is eternal, so its existence does not depend on body. The soul acquires heaven or hell according to its merits or demerits.

After death the soul unites with the fifth element of man's personality viz. Fravashi.

(v) Fravashi: It is the divine quality of intuitive and immortal power, and the highest of the unseen power standing with Ahur-Mazda it always works for the good of the soul.

Righteous living:

Man with his intellect can think and choose good and proper actions. For good thoughts, feelings and sympathies, "God gave man strength", too. God demands truthful life
in thoughts, words and actions. His revelation and good law aimed for the deliverance of man from moral and physical evils. Good mind and reason can guide us for all our righteous deeds.

The development in the individual is a part of the development of the whole community. Slowly, everything will march for perfection as planned by God.

Physical and Mental health are important:

Man must preserve and increase his bodily and mental health. He must seek and promote growth for both individual and collective cause of the entire creation. The bodily pleasures do not obstruct the goal of the man's soul. Happiness and pleasures are natural. In fact sickness and pains of the body, become so for the soul too.

Still not worldly:

Along with worldly and visible things, Zoroastrianism also emphasizes invisible world and things. Earthly pleasure are not regarded as 'the end', and at the cost of the spiritual life.

Man's life depends on nature and knowledge which is due to intellect and will in man. Now, man has the dual nature viz. physical and spiritual. Their full union makes
for a total personality.

At death, although the body will be decomposed, still on the day of resurrection God will return the physical form to the soul.

SUMMARY

Judaism is a strictest form of ethical monotheism. The prophets with their sense of an indissoluble link with God considered themselves as vehicles of His message. It is a practical guidance as to what God meant to the world and man. The God is in full control of the history and nature for furthering His plan. Judaism considers man as the image of God who is an equal partner with Him. Man must fathom deep in grasping this real relationship with Him. God's blessings are there in all crisis and conflicts. His is a promise for security and prosperity. Even the world history aims at establishing truth and justice, righteousness and peace.

In the further continuance of the Jewish experience, Jesus in Christianity is a direct relationship with God. The spiritual freedom of man ensues from his conscious faith in Jesus and service to his fellowmen. The
indwelling spirit of man, otherwise known as Holy Ghost possesses limitless virtuousness and creative action. The holy spirit has the divine direction and man's life must be inspired, renewed and revitalised accordingly. Jesus' life is a direct saving example for a way out of evil and suffering. He is the victory over death and his existence is continued even today.

In Islam when the God is the source of all beneficence for the whole world, man must make peace with himself and God. Islam is a distinct and unique monotheism where man has to co-operate and through good deeds. God is sovereign and free and His will is inexorable. He alone is the one and the sole means of salvation. His laws reflect His desires and our reason can help us to realize Him. It is the heavenly happiness graced by God which is of eternal significance. God is sympathetic to those who struggle and suffer to realize His goal. One overcomes evil and suffering through His grace.

Without much leaning towards mysticism, Zoroastrianism clearly emphasizes moral values which are fairly closer to Jewish monotheism. The good spirit viz. Spenta-Mainyu is the most holy spirit of Ahur-Mazda. It is a life-conserving and life-enhancing force with whom lies the final victory.
Man is a co-worker and fellow-fighter with this good spirit.
Man has to persistently struggle against the forces of evil.
NOTES:


4. Rgveda X 90.2.

5. Śvetāsvatara Up. VI.7.


8. Śvetāsvatara Up. vii.10.


11. Brhadāranyaka Up. ii.1.20; Mundaka Up. i.1.7.

12. Rgveda X.121.

13. 'Ekoham Bahūmsyāma' - chāndogya Up. VI.2.3.


16. Rgveda X.129.

17. Kena Up. ii. 9,10.

18. Mundakopanisad. iii 1,1.
20. 'Dharma eva hato hanti dharmo raksati raksitah'
   Manu smriti 8.15.
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   sutra, I, i,2, VI.11.1; X.ii.8.
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   Mahābhārata, Karna-parva 66;56.
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30. Anguttara Nikāya III. 134.
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34. Majjhima Nikāya i.137-139; Samyutta Nikāya iii.68.
35. Samyutta Nikāya i.135.
37. Dhammapada V.279.
40. Sūtrakritāngā - 1.15-16.
41. Ibid., 2.5, 13.
42. Ācārāṅga Sūtra - 2.15-25.
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54. Ādi Granṭha, p.1035.
55. Nanak - X.
56. Ādi Granṭha, p. 463.
57. Ibid., p. 268.
59. Refer Nanak 1.


64. Genesis 1:28-29.


69. Exodus 4:15. Jeremiah 2:3

70. Exodus 4:15.


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74. Isaiah, 5:16.

75. Psalms 7:11.


80. Ibid., 1:4.
83. Proverbs 20:27.
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97. John 1:5.
99. John 3:11
100. John 14:6-11.


104. Mark 8:31.

105. Problems of suffering in religions of the word, Ibid., p. 50.

106. The encyclopaedia of religion and Ethics, J. Hastings, New York, 1951, VIII, p. 582.


108. Mark 14:36.


110. Ibid., 8:34-35.

111. Leviticus, O.T., 19:18.


113. Refer 1 Peter 2:16.

114. Refer 1 Thessalonians 5:3-6.


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131. Q 42:11.
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135. Q 39:62-63
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155. Ibid. 31:9
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157. Ibid. 50:10
158. Ibid. 33:7
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162. Ibid. 23:11.