

The Concept of God in Islam and Hinduism: A Philosophical Study

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Abstract

Any religion's central premise is the concept of God. This foundation is the bedrock of all religious beliefs. When one learns how people think about God, they may develop a very clear picture of how they think about man, evil, salvation, and the afterlife. Many of these ideas, however, are inextricably linked to the doctrine of God. One of the corollaries of this truth is that discussing God's doctrine invariably leads to the inclusion of topics that, in a systematic treatise, could appear to fall under one of the other theological headings. The concept of God in Islam and Hinduism, the two major world religions, will be discussed in this research paper. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate that both of these great religions are based on monotheistic. Although Islam is monotheistic, Hinduism contains pantheistic and henotheistic inclinations. While monotheistic refers to God's oneness and transcendence, pantheism refers to the Supreme Being's immanence in His creation, which means He is present everywhere and in everything. Henotheism is the belief in a single Supreme Divinity as well as other lesser deities.

Introduction

Almost all religions are founded on the concept of God. I say virtually because well-known religions such as Buddhism and Jainism do not believe in a Supreme Creator of the universe. God is typically described as all-powerful, all-knowing, transcendent, eternal, and infinite by theologians. My research paper examines the concept of God in Hinduism and Islam, two of the world's two largest religions. We'll assume that the basic theme of both of these great religions is God's unity. While Vedanta is considered, Hinduism is pantheistic, whereas Islam is entirely monotheistic. The majority of Hindus worship a variety of gods and goddesses, but they believe they are all expressions of the same Absolute Being. I looked into the foundations of both of these religions. The Upanishads are the foundational philosophical treatises in Hinduism that describe the essence of God and the soul. The Qur'an is the fundamental source of theology that is said to have been revealed to Prophet Muhammad by God. The Qur'an emphasizes God's oneness and how humanity should relate to Him.

Concept of God in Islam

The concept of God in the Islamic belief system is particularly clear and uncompromising. In Arabic, God's Holy Name is Allah, which does not have a plural or opposite gender like the English term god, which can be translated as gods or goddesses. Nothing can be compared to Allah in terms of His essence and attributes. As the Creator of everything, including time and space, He is beyond time and space. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-present because of His wisdom. However, He is not literally present everywhere since His essence is not mingled with His creation. He is changeless and immortal, having existed without a companion since the beginning of time. He is the Supreme Being who is unaffected by anything. Without His essence, all is prone to destruction. When his contemporaries questioned the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW) about God's attributes, Allah Almighty revealed the following verses: "In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Say: He is Allah. The One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him (Al-Qur'an, 112:2).

The three components of Tawhid, or Islamic monotheism, have been deduced from the clear and straightforward verses of the Qur'an by Salafi thinkers within Islam. Scholars based their classification of Tawhid into three types on induction after studying relevant verses in the Qur'an and Sunnah. Let's have a look at the classification system in more detail.

1. Tawhid ur Rububiyyah: It is the concept that Allah is the sole Cherisher and Sovereign of the entire Universe. The following passage from the Holy Qur'an demonstrates this: "Glory to Allah Most High, full of Grace and Mercy; he created All," (Ibid, 1:1). Allah is the solitary Owner and Controller of the Universe, as well as the Rabb of all the worlds.
2. Tawhid ul Asmaa was Sifaat: "(Allah is) the Bestower of Mercy, the All-Merciful, the Owner of the Day of Judgement" (Ibid, 1:2-3). Allah grants Himself the names and attributes of Ar Rahman, Ar Raheem, and Al Malik in this verse.
3. Tawhid ul Uloohiyyah: "(O Allah) You alone we worship and only from You we seek help" (Ibid, 1:4). This verse emphasizes that Allah is the only God who is worthy of worship, and that we should seek His assistance in all matters.

Tawhid, or Islamic monotheism, is not a new concept introduced by the prophet Muhammad, but rather a fundamental notion shared by all of God's prophets and messengers sent to guide humanity. The following verse of the Qur'an expresses this viewpoint clearly: "That there is No god but I; therefore worship and serve Me" (Ibid, 21:25).

In Islam, God is referred to as Allah, which is not one of the pantheon of pagan gods such as Zeus or Vishnu, but rather the term for the one true God and Absolute, which is worshipped by Jews and Christians

and experienced by Upanishad seers as Brahman. It is not for mankind to define what God's attributes are, but God Himself sends prophets to describe Himself, according to key Islamic teachings. As a result, the essence and attributes of God is not a subject for philosophical discussion, but rather a subject of Truth revealed to prophets by God Himself. To negate men's right to mental inquiry who are not guided by revelation, the Qur'an declares categorically: "Seest thou such a one as taketh for his god his own passion (or impulse)" (Ibid, 25:43).

Allah is the only Absolute Being whose existence is independent of anything or anyone. All beings, with the exception of God, are contingent beings who rely on Him for their survival. There is no god but God, says the first sentence of the Islamic Shahaadah. It implies that there is only one true and deserving object of worship, namely, God. All other idols, objects of adoration, and servitude are false. Worshipping anything other than the one true God is considered a high-level sin known as Shirk or polytheism. Polytheism, also known as Shirk in the Islamic context, is the practice of associating something or someone with God for the purpose of worship or Divine service. It also refers to sharing, becoming a partner, making someone a partner, and giving someone a partner. As a result, in a strict Islamic theological meaning, it means to give God partners and, by extension, to worship them alongside or instead of God. The following are some Quranic verses that negate polytheism or shirk:

"Serve Allah, and join not any partners with Him;" (Ibid, 4:36).

"Join not in worship (others) with Allah: For false worship is indeed the highest wrongdoing." (Ibid, 31:13).

"But in truth He is the One God, and I truly am innocent of (your blasphemy of) joining others with Him." (Ibid, 6:19).

"Say: "I am commanded to worship Allah, and not to join partners with Him" (Ibid, 13:36).

The concept of Tawhid is considered innate in human nature in Islamic theology, and God's signs are clearly visible and perceptible throughout the cosmos, which is further bolstered by the guidance of God's prophets and messengers. In order to be guilty of shirk, one must be fully cognizant of the importance of God's oneness and the nature of associating partners with Him. Furthermore, as demonstrated in the preceding verse, caprice and dependence on self rather than God's commands is regarded a form of worship of something other than God.

Apart from these, God has many other beautiful names that are collectively known as Al Asmaa ul Husnaa, or The Beautiful Names. Even if we share some of God's attributes, such as sight and hearing, God's sight and hearing are unique and eternal, but we are dependent on His physical rules and do not share eternity. That is why, in Islam, the prefix Abd or Slave must be put before the names of God in order for them to be

recognized as names. For example, if God is All-seeing or Al Baseer, a Muslim must prefix Abd before it as Abd al Baseer, the servant of All-seeing God.

Concept of God in Hinduism

In Hinduism, the Upanishads (or Vedanta) contain the concept of God. Despite the fact that the Vedas predate the Upanishads, they contain hymns to many gods and goddesses who are considered to be the entities who rule over nature. These deities, however, are not divine in the literal sense; rather, they are viewed as a collection of natural energies and symbols for the laws that govern the visible universe. At the end of each of the four Vedas are philosophical texts known as Upanishads, which are treatises that describe the Supreme Divinity. The Upanishads are typically written as dialogues between masters and pupil. Furthermore, the Bhagavad Gita, the Mahabharata's 18th chapter, is considered an Upanishad because of its similarities to Upanishad philosophy and the fact that it is a dialogue between Arjun as a seeker and Krishna as a teacher.

The significance of Upanishads above Vedas is clearly stated in the Chandogya Upanishad, when Narada visits Sanat kumar in order to realize the meaning of soul and Supreme Divinity. Narada informs him that he has studied all of the Vedas as well as all other subjects relevant at the time. Narada sees that knowing the Vedas, legends, arithmetic, logic, astrology, god science or devavidya, and so on is insufficient unless one grasps and realizes the Self and Supreme Soul (Chandogya Upanishad 7:1). In addition, Krishna tells Arjuna in the Gita,

“He is free from Karmic involvement who is contented with whatever comes to him uninvited; who is even minded and untouched by duality; who is without envy, jealousy and animosity; and who finally views success and failure with equanimity. All the effects of karma (action) are nullified, and one achieves liberation, when ego attachment ceases, when one becomes centered in wisdom, and when one's actions are offered up to the Infinite in sacrifice. For such a person, both the act of self offering and the offering itself are, equally, aspects of the One Spirit” (Gita 4:22-24).

These verses illustrate Hinduism's deep spiritualistic attitude without focusing on rituals. This emphasizes the philosophical relevance of the Upanishads over the ceremonial Vedas. Professor Radhakrishnan writes about the philosophy of the Upanishads and the deep, significant tales found in the puranas:

“The Gita and the Upanishads are not remote from popular belief. They are the great literature of the country, and at the same time vehicles of the great systems of thought. The puranas contain the truth dressed up in myths and stories, to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is achieved in India” (Radhakrishnan, 1985, p.25).

This refers to the Upanishads' deep philosophical and metaphysical features, which laymen can comprehend through parallels and related purana stories.

Unlike Judeo-Christian and Islamic beliefs, the Upanishadic view of God is monist or pantheistic, but many thinkers have interpreted it in a panentheistic paradigm. This panentheistic view of God's existence implies that God exists beyond the time and space, as well as His omnipresence. The puranic period saw the incarnation of God in human form, as well as other anthropomorphic prototypes of the Supreme Being. It was to meet the multitude's lack of knowledge, as we mentioned Prof. Radhakrishnan previously. In Vedantic terminology, the Absolute Being is known as Brahman, which is not to be confused with the caste system's Brahmin. Without a second, beginning, or end, Brahman is Absolute, Eternal, Bliss, Consciousness. That is to be known and experienced everywhere and inside one's own self, not to be worshipped or invoked. Vedanta does not believe in creation from nothing (ex nihilo). Everything evolves from the Brahman, and everything dissolves into the Brahman in eternal cycles. As a result, unlike Semitic belief, creation is cyclic rather than linear.

Only sankhya, one of the six Indian philosophical traditions, denies the existence of a Supreme Being. According to the Dvaita school, Brahman is the Absolute Being, all else exists but is dependent on Brahman. The Advaita School of Indian philosophy is the only one that explicitly proclaims the Oneness of Being. Adi Shankaracharya was the greatest Advaita (non-dual) teacher. The Advaita branch of Indian philosophy, in my opinion, is the most closely related to the Vedantic aspect of Reality presented in the Upanishads.

All of the above descriptions are of Nirgun Brahman, which is also known as Sagun Brahman when it comes to creation. Guna is the Sanskrit word for attributes. While nirgun refers to Brahman as a whole, sagun refers to the element of Brahman that manifests itself through cosmic illusion. This is why many puranas were composed in which Sagun Ishwar was given various shapes and symbols, presenting him as a personal deity or ishta devata. These extra Vedic gods and goddesses are described in the Shrimad Bhagvatam, Vishnu puran, Shiva puran, Devi puran, and other Vedic texts. Anyone can use an ishta devata as a stepping stone to a greater level of Supreme Divinity consciousness.

Vaishnavism, Shaivism, and Shaktism are three major Bhakti traditions that believe in the divinities Vishnu, Shiva, and Shakti. However, it is significant to remember that, in addition to the above-mentioned traditions, the bhakti movement was highly monotheistic. Almost every Hindu believes in God's omnipresence and non-dual Oneness. They see the same Brahman in a variety of forms and idols.

Conclusion

So far, we've seen primary sources for the notion of God in Hinduism and Islam. The paper's main point is that monotheism lies at the heart of both religions. In both metaphysical world views, there is only one Supreme Deity when discussing a Unitarian concept of Godhead. It is the same thing whether it is the Brahman of Vedanta or Allah of Islam. People that are affiliated with both religions should be aware of this, as it will bring them closer together. Although Hinduism has pantheistic inclinations, a great number of Sufis

and Muslim mystics in Islam also believed in some type of pantheism known as Wahdat ul Wujood. Hinduism also includes henotheism, which is defined as the veneration or worship of lower deities while believing in an Absolute Divinity. Most Hindus, however, understand that these lesser gods and goddesses are expressions of the One Divine Being. And I'm hoping that my suggestion will bring both sides closer together.

References

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