

Judaism

Western Religious Traditions

1. They are, in general, monotheistic, whereas Eastern religions are, in general polytheistic or henotheistic.
2. They have prophets, whereas in Eastern Religions we have simply wise men and do not claim to be given revelation from God.
3. They have scriptures given to the prophets by God. In Eastern religions it is the thoughts of wise men.
4. They have concept of life after death, heaven and hell. The Eastern religions have either concept of incarnation or they are silent on the subject.

Judaism

Who is a Jew?

Where is his identity located?

- **Jude:** one who comes from Judea; and identity in terms of land and religion
- **Israel:** name given to Jacob; means one who strives with God. It is religious identity
- **Hebrew:** the people and the language they speak



- o Most probably the word "Hebrew" comes from the word "Apiru" from Phoenician language, meaning "the one who rides caravans"; nomadic people

Background in the development of Judaic Thought

- Preceding Judaism, we have the Near Eastern Religions, which comprise Sumarian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Egyptian religions. They seem to have influenced the development of Judaic thought **historically**
1. **The Near Eastern Religions:**
 - Polytheistic, but try to conceive of one highest God (i.e. Marduk in the Babylonian religion)
 - o **Apsu** (sweet waters)
 - o **Ti'amat** (salty waters)
 - o **Mumy** (mist)
 2. They try to conceive of heaven and hell and idea of reward and punishment.

3. We find a parallel Myth of Flood to the Hebrew Bible story of Noah. But, it is Judaism, which becomes monotheistic religion in history of mankind. Judaism becomes the foundation of prophetic religious tradition in West, thereby we have religions such as Christianity, Zoroastrianism, Islam.

The Hebrew Bible

- Judaism is often associated with the land of Israel, but Judaism is better understood when one studies the Hebrew Bible.
 - o History of Jewish people
 - o Their thought
 - o How they lived through the history
- Written down as early as 800 B.C.E, but final form achieved 400 B.C.E.
- Consists of:
 - o **Torah** (teachings)
 - o **Nevi'm** (prophets)
 - o **Kethuwim** (writings)
- These three writings are as a short form called T-N-K (or Tanakh or Tanaka)
- ***ABRAHAM** born 1800 BC or 1400 BC **Izanami and Izanagi** gave birth to **other**
- **The Torah is the first book of the Hebrew Bible**
- It is called **Pentateuch** (five scrolls or books)
- The second part of the T-N-K is Prophets who spoke in the name of Jewish people.
 - o Early prophets who concentrate on the Israelite kingdom.
 - o Later prophets who are visionary and they emphasize on morals and ethics.

The Torah

- **Pentateuch, Five Scrolls or Books**
- They are as follows:
 - o **Genesis**
 - o **Exodus**
 - o **Leviticus**
 - o **Numbers**
 - o **Deuteronomy**

Genesis

- Story of creation of the world presents God as:
 - o Creator
 - o Intelligent being
 - o Active power
 - o Omniscient
 - o Omnipotent

- Has purpose in creating this universe
- The account of **Garden of Eden**, temptress Eve brings punishment on Adam and Eve
- Story of Noah and the Flood
- Story of Tower of Babel
- Abraham is portrayed as the **first patriarch**. From Ur, Abraham migrates to Haran and settles in the land of Canaan.
- Covenant between God and Abraham.
- Abram's name changed to Abraham, namely, the one who will multiply...

Exodus

- Hebrew midwives were to kill all male children born.
- Moses was spared.
- Moses brought up in the **House of Pharaoh**. But when Moses sees an Israeli slave being mistreated, he flees from Egypt.
- **The Burning Bush**: Moses hears the voice of God saying to return to Egypt to help free the slaves.
- Moses wants to know the divine spirit.
 - God's response is...
 - *"I will be who I will be."*
- **YAHWEH**, the word comes from the verb "hayah", to exist or to be alive
- It is God who is Life, Existence, and everything else is contingent upon Him.
- Was religion monotheistic or not?
- Ten Commandments

Leviticus

- Describes laws
 - Regarding animal sacrifices
 - Which animals may or may not be eaten
 - Prohibition of eating blood in it
 - Cutting one's hair, etc.

Numbers

- The account of wanderings of Jewish tribes at various places

Deuteronomy

- Describes Ten Commandments again
- Death of Moses before entering Canaan

The Judges and Kings

- After death of Moses, Israelites led by judges