

THE FAMILIES OF RELIGIONS

Religions of Indian Origin: (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism)

Emphasize human religion arising from human need alone, not from divine command as in Semitic religions. When individuals are left to themselves they end up in an endless cycle of birth, death and rebirth, actually are condemned to eternally suffering and struggling with limitation. The purpose of religion is to help people overcome this cycle by giving them the wisdom to overcome it completely.

This endless cycle is not caused by how nature or the world are created, but by human selfish desire.

Such selfishness can be overcome and stopped as people acquire a transcendent viewpoint or consciousness. This frees the individual spirit from selfishness, from the ego and thus stops the confining cycle of birth, death and rebirth.

Places of worship are not originally a place for people to assemble, but are for individual worship and meditation and often look like a cave.

Religions of Chinese Origin: (Taoism, Confucianism)

Emphasize harmony with nature.

Do not stress human deficiencies as much as the other two religious families. When they do they focus on human failure to run smoothly and successfully the cause is people failing to live in harmony with the nature.

The goal is to render people more in harmony with the natural order, to enable them to be more successful. Taoism emphasizes a cosmic natural order and Confucianism emphasizes social and moral harmony.

Places of worship are essentially a form of garden with several pavilions for people to use for private prayer and meditation.

Religions of Semitic Origin: (Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism)

Emphasize ethical monotheism

Use concepts of God, Revelation, Creation, Sin, Law and Judgment.

There is only one God and this God personally relates to people.

God created the world as separate from Himself.

Religion reminds people that the ultimate priority is not human need but God revealing God's will.

God commands humanity to obey a God-given Law, and this Law is to govern how people relate to God and to one another at all times.

God will judge everyone at the end of time on the basis of how they obeyed God's Law.

Places of worship are communal places for gathering people.