



METAPHYSICAL TRANSACTIONS *POSSIBLE* BETWEEN SEMITIC AND EASTERN RELIGIONS

Khwaja Ayub Zickriya

PhD student Goa University, Department of Philosophy, Taleigao Goa India- 403004

ABSTRACT

Semitic religions are the religions that originated among the Semites. According to Bible prophet Noah had a son called Shem and the decedents of Shem are called Semites and therefore the religion followed by Jews, Christians, Arabs, Assyrians, Phoenicians and Baha'i, et cetera, with the original teachings associated with prophet Shem are called as Semitic religions. Major Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

On the other hand the non-Semitic religions are divided into Aryans and non-Aryan religions of which Aryans are further categorized as Vedic and non-Vedic religions. Hinduism or Sanathan Dharma, one of the major eastern religion, is Vedic religion. The non-Vedic religions include Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shintoism and Zen. Of which Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Zoroastrianism originated in Indian sub-Continent and Confucianism, Taoism have Chinese origin and Shintoism and Zen originated in Japan. These religions having their roots in the east and similar belief system, culture, approach to life and similar metaphysical thought process are referred as Eastern religions.

The paper presented here tries to link the metaphysical similarities between the Eastern and Semitic religions with special emphasis on Hinduism & Buddhism and Islam & Christianity. Even though, at least, on the face of it, Eastern and Semitic religions appear to be poles apart,

there is metaphysical thread running across binding them together in many ways as explained in the article.

Key Words: Metaphysical, Trinity, Sunya, Universe, God, polytheistic, Advaita.

As we analyze the similarities in the Eastern and Semitic religions particularly Hinduism, Buddhism representing Eastern religions and Islam, Christianity representing Semitic religions it is worth knowing the metaphysical understanding of these religions separately.

Metaphysics of Hinduism

It is an oldest religion along with Jainism and Buddhism originated in Indian sub-continent. Hinduism believe in the theory of Karma where karma is believed to bring either positive or negative consequences. Hinduism is guided by dharma or religious living having several scriptures such as Vedas, Upanisds and BhagavatGītā. Hinduism is believed to be a polytheistic religion, worshipping multiple Gods. One type of Hinduism believe in Advaita –Vedanta which believe in only one entity called as Brahman even though they believe that Brahman can take multiple forms.

Metaphysics of Buddhism

Buddhism does not worship any God or Gods. They follow four Noble truths and eight fold path towards goal of achieving enlightenment. In the process, the followers become liberated from Samsara and the cycle of birth and death is conquered and broken.

Metaphysics of Islam

Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe and obey Allah as the only God and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah. There are five articles of faith such as belief in oneness of Allah, the prophets of Allah, the holy books of Allah, the angels of Allah and belief in hereafter. Muslims further believe that those who follow the five pillars of Islam will be rewarded by Allah in the hereafter. The five pillars are: Profession of faith-Belief in single God and prophet Muhammad as the last and final prophet of Goa, praying five times a day, Zakat-charity, fasting in the month of Ramadan, Hajj-pilgrimage to Mecca.

Metaphysics of Christianity

Christians believe in the loving God who can be personally known in this life. They believe that Jesus did not identify himself as prophet of God- rather he claimed to be God in human form. He said anyone who believed in him would get salvation and eternal life. Christians believe that Bible is God's message to mankind, God answers all prayers and life takes meaning as they live to honor him.

Metaphysical transactions

When we look at these major belief systems and their metaphysical views of God, we find tremendous diversity.

- Hindus acknowledge multitudes of God and Goddess
- Muslims believe in powerful but unknowable God
- Christians believe in loving and approachable God
- Buddhist say there is no God or Gods.

In order to have everyone at one center of cosmic consciousness, it would be required that:

- Islam to give up their **one** God
- Hinduism to give up their **numerous** Gods
- Christians to give up their **loving** God
- Buddhist to establish there is a **God**

In Hinduism the person is on his own try to liberate from Karma, in Buddhist it is an individual quest to free from desires, in Islam Individuals follow religious laws to get paradise after death, Christian teachings establish a personal relationship with God which carries over to the next life.

A real metaphysical transactions is said to have taken place if when Hindus would replace the word Brahman with Allah in Upanisds and the Upanisds would read like Sufi poetry. Similarly if Muslim could replace word Allah with Brahman they would appear to have inspired by Upanisds. Let us first consider the Semitic religion Islam and Eastern religion Buddhism. The metaphysical philosophy of Islam is based on the confession of faith and faith in single God and Muhammad as the final prophet of God. When we compare this statement of Muslims "there is no God" with the statement of Buddhist "there is no God or gods" it appears that they take first step in accepting the transaction of faith with Islam. It is just the matter of encouragement for

Buddhist to say that there is no God or Gods but Allah so as to bring these two religion metaphysically together. Further when we analyze the scriptures of these two religion and read Diamond sutra which refers “the images of starts at down, a bubble in the stream, a flash of light in the summer cloud, a flickering lamp, a phantom and a dream, all these are aimed at inducing a state of mind and being”. This might be compared to the verse of Quran 57:20 which says “the life of this world is only a play and idle talk and pomp and bosting between you and rivalry in wealth and children, like vegetation during rain and afterwards it dries up to become straw”.

The common terms- In Islam devotion to human founder of religion is fundamental means of ‘remembering God’ which can be contemplated with ‘dharma’ of Buddhism. Secondly if we read Quran by replacing the word Tanha with **thirst** and Hawa with **desire** we see lot of metaphysical transactions actually taking place between these two religions. Thus the Buddhist perspective of negating the ultimate reality of individual Soul (Ananta) and focusing sharply on the carvings of sufferings and **annika** of all sufferings to the rout cause of pain in this world, would actually help Muslims to understand the true restrain that is propogated in the scriptures in terms of charity, fasting and going for pilgrimage to Mecca, et cetera.

Wali in Islam and Arahat/ Bodhisatha in Buddhism represent the summit of human perfection. It is through these saints we can merge theoretically and practically the concepts and realizations of spiritual ideas and human realities, the vertical & horizontal, metaphysical & ethical, divine & human metaphysical concepts of two religions together.

According to Kalachakra commentary of stainless light, Muhammad is explained as an Avatar of Rahman. In Hindus Avatar is an incarnation of Soul of God into another form. Thus Muhammad being Avatar of Rahman is parallels the Hindu assertion of Krishna as Avatar of God Vishnu. In Buddhist term this analogy would be equivalent to asserting that Muhammad was a Nirmanakaya emanation of Allah. On the other hand Buddha can be considered as the prophet or messenger of Allah. Nevertheless Quran explains in verse 4: 163, “truly we inspired you as we inspired Noah, and the prophets after him, we inspired Ismail, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus. We have mentioned to you some messengers sent previously while others we have not mentioned”. Thus Buddha may be included in the list of messengers not exclusively mentioned. This indicates that there is metaphysical transactions possible in Islam, a Semitic religion and Buddhism, and Eastern religion.

Beside this there is common terms such as ‘dhikr’ in Islam and ‘mantras’ in Buddhism. In addition to the basic shared ethical principles, many other features could also be mentioned such as emphasis on charity, study, honesty in livelihood, et cetera. If we approach all these common features in a respectful ,pluralistic manner without being judgmental and without trying to include each other’s teachings, we could conclude that metaphysical transactions in these two religions possible.

Emphasis of Sunya of Buddhism and Nothingness of Islamic philosophy

Buddha was able to propagate ‘Sunya’ or the emptiness. In doing so he emphasized on the unsatisfactoriness of life and eliminating dukkha. It is the realization of Bodhi from the stand point of liberation. This Sunya is visualized by Muslims when he compares himself as nothing in consideration to the glory and splendor of Allah, particularly when he is performing circumferences of the *Kaaba*. *Kaaba* is the supreme house of God and when a Muslim is taking anticlockwise circumferences of *Kaaba* outside Al- Hatim, he is almost Sunya of representation of Buddha. The concept of Sunya with a dot or a bindu in the middle symbolizes the void and negation of self.

Another Eastern religion, Hinduism more specifically a Sanathan dharma maintain God to be Nirguna (free of qualities), Niraakar (free of forms) as well as Sagun (having qualities) and Saqar (having forms).Seemingly these two attributes are exactly opposite and both are true. The Sagun and Saqar (duality) of God in the initial stages reaches the stage of Nirguna/Niraakar in the ultimate stage. These attributes are also very well explained in Quran emphasizing that metaphysical transactions are possible in these two religions. The meaning of *Shivling* and *Hijreaswad* can be discussed at length to find metaphysical competitiveness of both religions.

Metaphysical transaction are possible in Hinduism and Islam.

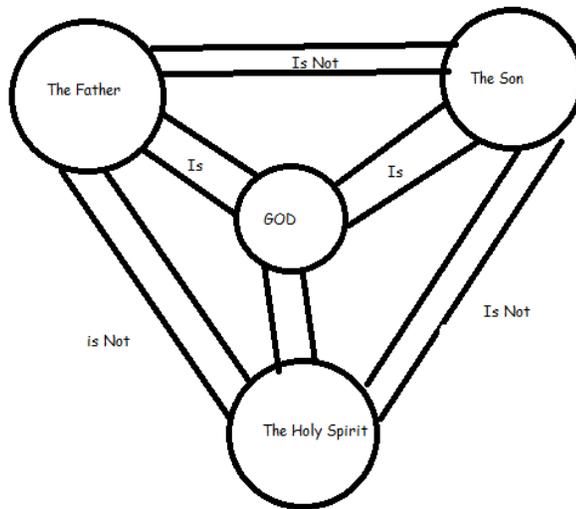
- Both religion accept that God has the power and knowledge to execute and reinforce his will.
- It is mentioned in Quran and Gītā that God is Supreme Being and has absolute power over things in universe.
- God has given us free will and we can chose our own way with responsibility.
- God hears prayers and love those who obey him
- Be it Allah or Krishna your prayers will never go unheard

- Charity, practice of righteousness, forgiveness and compassion is in place in both religion
- Both advocate non-violence
- Both states no compulsion in religion
- Islam believe in *Salat* and Hindu in *Bhakti*
- Both believe in ultimate destruction of universe
- Final judgement day is common in both religions.

Thus there is mutual metaphysical continuity in hidden manner in Hinduism and Islam. This continuity in the Eastern and Semitic religion bank up on the possibility of reaching beyond the physical by venturing into subjectable consciousness in one way or the other, permitting logical system movements from one system to another, leaving some space for distinctness and differences built-in their systems. The Semitic religions Islam and Christianity believe in the realm of 'beyond' and in order to define the concept of beyond certain physical designs have been defined which are quite unique. This design of beyond is drawn on the canvas of consciousness which is transcendental and metaphysical. How to come to the canvas of consciousness is the question in the first place. This canvas of consciousness is defined by Advaitic Brahman. To understand this canvas of Advaitic Brahman the three modes of destruction, creation and sustenance are arguable. The three views of universe are incorporated in Kaaba by incorporating three pillars inside it. In this way the meaning of metaphysical symbolization takes place between Abrahamic or Semitic religion and the Eastern religions particularly Hinduism and Buddhism.

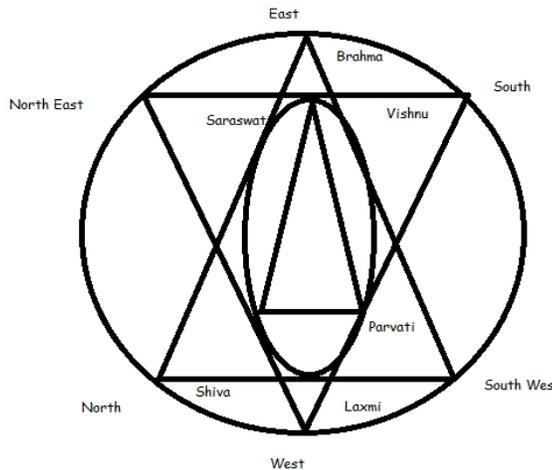
The trinity of Christianity, the plural 'we' in Quran and Trimurti of Hinduism tend to ascertain the possibility of metaphysical uniqueness of these three religions.

Christians believe that the almighty God, the Father, and the Holy spirit (who was instrumental in the birth of Jesus Christ) and Jesus, the son of God form a trinity and they also believe that these three persons are not three different entities but they are one constituting one personality of Supreme God in the form of trinity.



Concept of trinity in Christianity

The Hindu Trimurti or the triple aspect of divinity emphasizes the male divine form of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. And the female divine forms of Saraswati, Laxmi and Parvathi tend to resemble the concept of trinity of Christianity.



Concept of Trinity in Hinduism

However the critics of Islam says that Allah has revealed in Quran that ‘we’ have sent down to you the Holy Quran and ‘we’ would protect and preserve it. The critics say ‘we’ refers to Allah, Mohammed and Gabriel (angel who revealed the Quranic verses to Mohammed from time to time) are three people constituting the trinity in Islam.

Irrespective of the spiritual consensus on the aspect of trinity in these three religions, the metaphysical thread runs in binding the philosophy to conclude that there is metaphysical transaction possible between these religions.

References

1. <http://www.ultimatetruthofself.com/higher-consciousness/spiritual-importance-of-hair#sthash.ZuSrW4RG.dpuf>
2. Iqbal, M., The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam Ed. and Annot by Mohammad Saeed Sheikh, Adam Publishers and Distributors, Delhi, 1997.
3. Schuon, Frithjof, Islam & the Perennial Philosophy, World of Islam Festival PublishingCompany, 1976.
4. Ibid.
5. John M. Koller in "Oriental Philosophies", 1985, Prentice-Hall.
6. F.W.J. Schelling in "Bruno or On the Natural and the Divine Principle Things", 1984 State University of New York.