Religious Development

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Religion is the most important factor of human experiences in the entire cultural history. It can be pronounced as the set of ideas or principles that explains the universe and its understanding in both spiritual and practical terms. The impact and beliefs of religion in human life dates back to the time when human didn’t even know how to write. The lack of written records means that most of the knowledge is derived from indirect sources. That is one of the main reasons why most of the history of religions and its origin is up for debate. However, the topic of our research only covers religious history from 300BC to 476 AD. The scope of this essay explains the majority of the religions and concepts introduced in the world from ancient times to 476 AD and what were its major effects on human history.

The development of religion comes with a cultured way of speech; once a certain sophisticated level of words that people can develop starts to give meaning, the religion of some kind cannot be left behind. Lack of information and superstitious beliefs were the main factors that helped people in believing stone statues and preachers or kings declaring themselves declaring Gods like those in Egypt. There was a concept of many God and most of them were associated with animals. In Egypt, different pharaoh unified the nation and was considered as a chief priest of the nation. In every religion there is a need for a God or someone people can relate himself to. The main function of these ancient Gods and preachers was to protect human from chaos and people believed that they are the ones who can ensure the safety of dead people in the next world. Their appearances in different paintings and sculptures defined their superiority and familiarity e.g. Anubis, ibis-headed Thoth, falcon headed Horus, his rival Seth etc. The Egyptian religion revolved around the divinity of sun and the most important sun God is Re.

Similarly, the ancient known civilization in the area of Mesopotamia was Sumer, which is also known as the first written proof of the existence of any form of religion. This civilization dates back to 3000 BC. There are some very prominent traces of religions that ancient people have left. Stonehenge in England, the temple platforms, the pyramids of Olmecs in America, provide some signs about religions whose foundations are still unknown by many people. One other famous civilization was Minoan civilization, which developed and flourished between the 2700 to 1450 BC. It was one of the first advanced civilizations in Europe and were famous for their artwork, trade system and complex tools. Their society was believed to be Matriarchal, but later it was found that they also had many gods and deities.

Later between 1500 and 1000 BC, the Indo-Iranian tribes came down to Iranian plateau to India. Special Gods among small groups were created that were known as ahuras in the Iranian region and Devas in India. In Iran this led towards Monotheism and however, in India it led towards polytheism the modern form of which is Hinduism. By the time when Hebrews came to Jerusalem, the only recognized God was Yahweh. This was the first step at the beginning of Monotheism.

A surge of religious innovation started about 600 BC in Persia, India, which led to the formation of Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Buddhism. Daoism spread in China which was based on Confucianism and believed to be a code of life that can satisfy human needs. Its scripture and writings were immensely influential in China’s religion over the centuries. In Greece and Rome there was the concept of many Gods and their local shrines. In the Roman empire the worship became a state affair as the emperor himself presented himself as a high priest. The expansion of religions from its origins started with the Buddhism. It spread down towards the west and northern regions of Asia and by 2nd Century it co-existed in China along with its different indigenous religions.   
 The three major religions which believe in monotheism are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Among them Judaism is recognized as the world’s most ancient monotheism. The sacred text that explains laws of Judaism is called Tanakh or “Hebrew Bible”. It contains almost the same books as that of old testament however the order is slightly different. The founder of Judaism is referred to a man name Abraham [[1]](#footnote-1). The history of Christianity started in the first AD with the birth of Jesus Christ and the religion is based on the birth, life, teachings and death of Jesus Christ. Christ was initially persecuted by the Jews at that time because they alleged him of being a son of God which was against their rules [[2]](#footnote-2). However, after the death of Jesus Christ the religion quickly spread in the Roman empire and despite the early oppression and mistreatment of many the religion soon became a state religion, later in the middle ages it spread in the middle east and northern Europe. Most of the first Christians were Jews or those converted from Judaism. It is the largest religion in the world but the theological disputes in it have resulted in four major sects.

Islam came into existence in Middle east in the early 7th century AD almost six centuries after the advent of Christianity. However, the concept of Muslims is different as they believe that it was the original faith of all the prophets like Jesus, Moses, Abraham, David and Adam. In 610 AD Muhammad started receiving the message of God and through his message he started winning the heart of many people. After the death of Muhammad his successors spread his message and today Islam is the second largest religion in the world.

Though the history of religion is embedded in prehistoric times but our paper discussed the majority of the religions that were founded after 3000 BC. Then we covered the early Egyptian history and their Gods to the first early written civilization in the form of Sumer in Mesopotamia. We discussed the start of polytheism and monotheism and the arrival of Abrahamic religion and in which form are they present today.

**References**

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