

# Concept of divinity in judaic, sumerian and hindu society

Religion



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Divinity is the core of all religions and rule most societies. Socialization based on divinity occurs almost everywhere. Most of the acceptable behaviors we have been taught since infancy have religious roots. I will compare and contrast the concepts of divinity in Judaic, Sumerian and Hinduculture, based on Genesis, The Epic of Gilgamesh and The Ramayana of Valmiki, respectively. Judging by the literature, the Judaic concept of divinity seemed to be both polytheistic and monotheistic.

I conclude there were multiple gods by several passages in Genesis including when God said, " Let us make a human in our image, by our likeness..." and in Job where it reads "...and one day, the sons of God..." indicating a belief in multiple gods. Monotheism is evidenced elsewhere throughout Genesis, including in Creation when God, not gods, created heaven and earth, and throughout Job where the title character seems monotheistic. He says things like, " The LORD has given and the LORD has taken. May the LORD's name be blessed. " I do, however, see more evidence of monotheism than polytheism in Judaic culture.

The Hindu and Sumerian are polytheistic concepts. The Hindus had multiple gods, like Brahma, the god of creation, Visnu, the god of preservation, and Siva, the god of redemption, from the Ramayana of Valmiki while the Sumerians, in The Epic of Gilgamesh, had Ea, Anu, Adad, Errakal, Shamash, Ninurta and Istar, among others. The Judaic God, from Genesis, was a vengeful entity as evidenced after the serpent hoodwinked Eve into eating and giving Adam fruit from the tree of knowledge, good and evil. All three involved were severely punished severely.

God told the serpent “ Because you have done this, cursed be you of all cattle and all beasts of the field. On your belly shall you go and dust shall you eat all the days of your life. Enmity will I set between you and the woman, between your seed and hers. He will boot your head and you will bite his heel. ” He said to Eve, “ I will terribly sharpen your birth pangs, in pain shall you bear children. And for your man shall be your longing and he shall rule over you. ” And to Adam he said, “ Cursed be the soil for your sake, with pangs shall you eat from it all the days of your life.

Thorn and thistle shall it sprout for you and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread till you return to the soil, for from there you were taken, for dust you ate and to dust shall you return. ” The Sumerian gods were also pretty vengeful. I say this because of the great flood to wipe out the humans (except Utanapishtim and his wife) because the gods felt man was out of control and needed to be purged from Earth. Utanapishtim was warned by Ea (or Shamash) of the impending flood, told to build a boat, and not to warn the people of Shuruppak of the impending flood.

The Hindu gods seemed less vengeful due to karma; if you follow dharma, karma would reward you. If you stray from the path of dharma, karma would punish you; thus, the gods did not need to be vengeful. This leads me to the conclusion that the Sumerian gods were followed out of fear but the Hindu gods were followed out of faith in dharma. The Judaic concept is a combination of the two. Man initially obeyed God out of fear, but eventually (at the end of Job), obedience was faith-based. Man and God developed faith in each other.

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There was free will in Judaic society, evidenced by God saying to Adam, "From every fruit of the garden you may surely eat. But from the tree of knowledge, good and evil, you shall not eat, for on the day you eat from it, you are doomed to die." This allowed Adam to make a choice; thus giving him free will. I find evidence of fate and free will in Sumerian society. Gilgamesh encountered several instances where he made decisions without knowing there were consequences (indicating fate) and encountered the wrath of the gods. An example is when he rebuffed the goddess Ishtar's wish to marry him.

He knew not what the consequences would be beforehand. Ishtar was so dejected by the rejection that she (unsuccessfully) sent the Bull of Heaven to kill him. I see evidence of free will when Enkidu urged Gilgamesh to slay Humbaba, saying in part, "Finish him off for the kill, put him out of existence, before Enlil the foremost one hears of this! The great gods will become angry with us...," indicating he knew beforehand the gods would not be happy with Humbaba's slaying (indicating free will). In the Hindu concept, there was also no free will; you were to follow dharma.

This was illustrated by Rama's response to his mother, Kausalya, when she objected to his banishment to the Dandaka forest for fourteen years and asked that he take her with him. He said to her, "Mother, that would be extreme cruelty towards father. So long as father lives, please serve him: this is the eternal religion. To a woman her husband is verily god himself." He was willing to follow the king's will to follow dharma and kept his mother on the path of dharma, as well. There was evidence of all three cultures of their gods communicate directly to man.

In the Judaic view, God spoke directly to Adam and Eve; not through a proxy. After God created them, He said to them, “ Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and conquer it, and hold sway over the fish of the sea and the fowl of the heavens and every beast that crawls upon the earth. ” There is also evidence in Job that God spoke directly to man, like when He answered Job from the whirlwind, “ Who is this who darkens counsel...” In Sumerian culture, the gods speak directly to the humans as evidenced by Ishtar propositioning him thusly, “ Come, Gilgamesh, you shall be my bridegroom!

Give, oh give me of your lusciousness! You shall be my husband and I shall be your wife. ” Hindu divinity had gods communicating with humans, also. The god, Lord Visnu, who took the form of Rama to destroy the evil Ravana, regularly interacted and communicated with mortals throughout The Ramayana of Valmiki. The gods in Judaic and Sumerian culture seemed to be very petty and immature, behaviorally. The story of Job is an example of the Judaic god’s immaturity, when God allowed the Adversary to torture Job to prove his faith in God.

This was little more than showing off, because he had no reason to test Job’s faith. Some Sumerian gods were also petty. Ishtar, as mentioned earlier, made the puerile decision to unleash the Bull of Heaven on Gilgamesh in a failed attempt to kill him for turning down her proposal. The Hindu gods do not seem as immature as the others, but they can make bad decisions based on emotion. Visnu (in the form of Rama), for example, was so angry when Sita was kidnapped (he thought a demon had eaten her), he threatened to kill all living things.

He said in part, "...I shall set aside all these virtues and the universe shall witness my supreme glory which will bring about the destruction of all creatures, including the demons. " In this paper, I have compared and contrasted the similarities of and differences between the Judaic, Sumerian and Hindu concepts of divinity. These concepts have many similarities and several distinct differences. I am hopeful I have sufficiently illustrated these common and unique divine attributes of religion.