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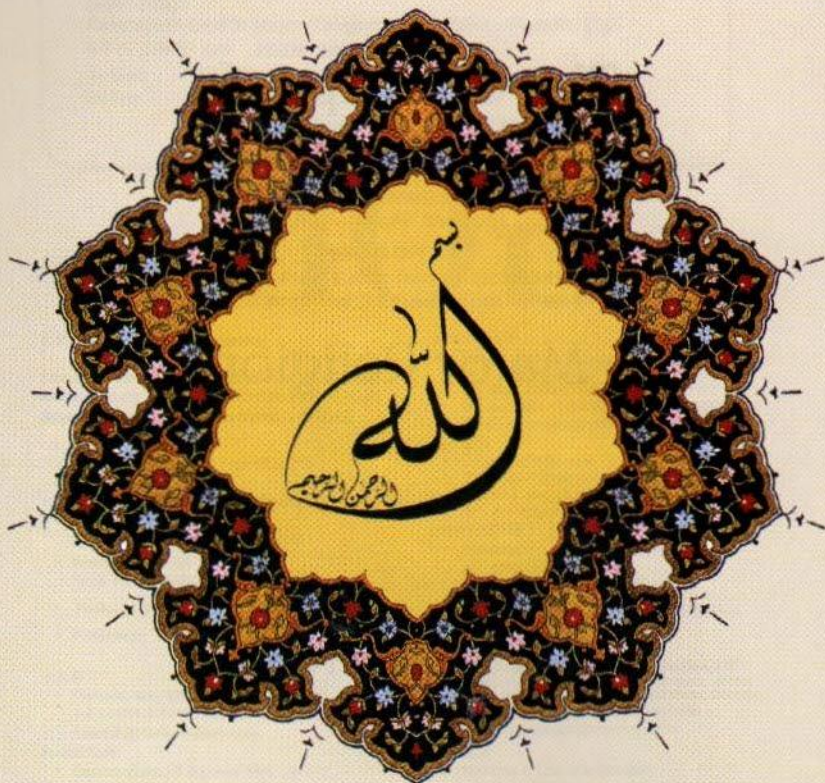
The Concept of GOD In Major Religions

By **Dr. Zakir Naik**

Designed by: **Abdul Hameed**



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GLOBAL LEADER IN ISLAMIC BOOKS



*In the Name of Allah (God),
the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful*

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INTRODUCTION

One of the distinguishing features of our civilization is the presence of a large number of religions and ethical systems. Mankind has always sought to understand the reasons for creation and his own place in the scheme of things.

Arnold Toynbee studied the history of man through the ages and put his findings in a monumental work consisting of ten volumes. He summarized that in the history of man, religion stood as the center. In an article in *The Observer* on October 24, 1954 he wrote:

“I have come back at the belief that religion holds the key to the mystery of existence.”

Religion, according to the Oxford Dictionary means; “belief in a superhuman controlling power especially in a personal God or gods entitled to obedience and worship.”

A common feature of all major religions is the belief in a Universal God or Supreme Divine Authority that is Omnipotent and Omniscient. Followers of all major religions believe that the God they worship is the same God for them as well as for others.

Marxism, Freudianism and other ‘non-religious’ beliefs tried to attack the roots of organized religions. But these in turn, developed into belief systems themselves. For instance, when communism was adopted by many countries of the world it was preached with the same commitment and fervor that characterizes the act of preaching and propagation of religions.

Thus religion is an integral part of human existence. The Glorious Qur’an says in the following verse:

“Say: ‘O People of the Book! Come to common terms that is between us and you, that we worship none but Allah. If then they turn back, say: “Bear witness that we are Muslims (bowing to Allah’s Will)””.

(Al-Qur’an 3:64)

The study of various religions has been an extremely rewarding experience for me. It has reaffirmed the belief that God created every human soul with some knowledge of His existence. The psychological constitution of man is such that he accepts the existence of the Creator, unless he has been conditioned to believe the contrary. In other words, belief in God requires no condition, while a rejection of God does.



CATEGORIZATION OF MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

Religions of the world can be broadly categorized into Semitic religions and non-Semitic religions. Non-Semitic religions can be divided into Aryan religions and non-Aryan religions.

Semitic religions

Semitic religions are religions that originated among the Semites. According to the Bible, Prophet Noah (pbuh) had a son called Shem. The descendants of Shem are known as Semites. Therefore, Semitic religions are the religions that originated among the Jews, Arabs, Assyrians, Phoenicians, etc. Major Semitic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. These religions are Prophetic religions that believe in Divine Guidance sent through prophets of God.

Non-Semitic religions

The non-Semitic religions are further subdivided into Aryan and non-Aryan religions:

Aryan religions

Aryan religions are the religions that originated among the Aryans, a powerful group of Indo-European speaking people that spread through Iran and Northern India in the first half of the second Millennium BC (2000 to 1500 BC).

The Aryan religions are further subdivided into Vedic and non-Vedic religions. The Vedic religion is given the misnomer of Hinduism or Brahminism. The non-Vedic

religions are Sikhism, Buddhism, Jainism, etc. Almost all Aryan religions are non-Prophetic religions.

Zoroastrianism is an Aryan, non-Vedic religion, which is not associated with Hinduism. It claims to be a prophetic religion.

Non-Aryan religions

The non-Aryan religions have diverse origins. Confucianism and Taoism are of Chinese origin while Shintoism is of Japanese origin. Many of these non-Aryan religions do not have a concept of God. They are better referred to as ethical systems rather than as religions.

Most authentic definition of God in any religion

The concept of God espoused by a religion cannot be judged by merely observing the practice of its followers. It is quite common for the followers of many religions to be ignorant of the concept of God in their scriptures. It is therefore better to analyze the concept of God in any religion by referring to its holy scriptures.

Let us understand the concept of God in major world religions by analyzing what their scriptures have to say about it.



