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## Exploring the Ethical Influence of Selected Non-Semitic Religions on Islamic Civilization

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## ***Exploring the Ethical Influence of Selected Non-Semitic Religions on Islamic Civilization***

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### **Abstract:**

This research investigates the ethical influence of selected non-Semitic religions on Islamic civilization, focusing on the dynamic interplay between diverse religious traditions. While the world's religions can be categorized into Semitic and non-Semitic groups, this study seeks to explore how non-Semitic faiths such as Buddhism, Confucianism and Jainism have impacted the ethical fabric of Islamic societies. Acknowledging that Semitic religions, including Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, have their own sacred texts, sites, and festivals, the research delves into the shared reverence and strong bonds that adherents across various religious traditions maintain with their respective sacred figures. Emphasizing the importance of ethical principles in Islam, drawn from the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, this study underscores the significance of virtuous character and moral conduct. It advocates for a culture of mutual respect towards the sacred figures of all religions to foster peace and harmony within society. Islam, renowned for its principles of tolerance and peace, places a strong emphasis on upholding the sanctity of sacred figures from diverse faiths to mitigate conflicts and promote societal cohesion. Ultimately, this research highlights the potential for cross-cultural dialogue and mutual enrichment in ethical discourse, envisioning a harmonious coexistence shaped by respectful engagement and understanding among diverse religious traditions.

**Keywords:** *Non-Semitic Religions, Islamic Civilization, Ethical Influence, Interfaith Dialogue, Societal Harmony.*

### **Introduction**

Islam can have a positive impact on non-Semitic religions by promoting values such as justice, compassion, and respect for others. These values can create a sense of unity and understanding among different religious communities, fostering peaceful coexistence and mutual respect. Islam encourages its followers to engage in interfaith dialogue, which can lead to greater understanding and cooperation between people of different religious backgrounds. Since the technology and modernization has made this world a global village, people from different faiths get to interact and learn from each other's

values. In this regard, Islamic values have always played a crucial role in shaping the moral, ethical, social and cultural values of selected non- Semitic Religions.

### **Ethical values of Buddhism**

Buddhist morals are generally founded on what Buddhists view as the illuminated point of view of the Buddha. Buddhist morals did not depend on man-made rules and standards but rather on the long-lasting laws of nature. Buddhist moral qualities are established in nature and the perpetual law of cause and impact.

The expression for morals and profound qualities utilized in Buddhism is sila. Sila in Buddhism is one of three segments of the Honourable Eightfold Way and is an implicit set of rules that embraces a promise to concordance and patience, with the essential inspiration being peacefulness, or independence from hurting. It has been differently portrayed as prudence, moral discipline and precept.

Sila is an inside, mindful, and deliberate moral way of behaving, as per one's obligation to the way of freedom. It is a moral compass inside oneself and connections, instead of what is connected with the English word “ethical quality”.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Five Percept**

For lay Buddhists, the most significant arrangement of ethical qualities is found in the five statutes, or rules for preparation. They make up the fundamental set of guidelines that lay Buddhists should follow. The statutes outline obligations to abstain from taking, lying, intoxication, murdering live things, and sexual misconduct. According to Buddhist philosophy, their purpose is to develop intelligence and morality in order to make progress towards enlightenment.

#### **1. Abstain from Killing Living Beings**

A conscious creature cannot be taken from their life by the main legislation. When someone kills such a sentient being with intention and success while believing it to be conscious and requiring effort, it is ignored. Although causing harm goes against the spirit of the law, it does not violate it.<sup>2</sup>

The main statute includes the termination of all life, even that of insects. However, it has also been mentioned that a living being's size, intelligence, accomplishments, and otherworldly fulfilments determine how seriously they take their own lives.

#### **2. Abstain from Stealing**

The following statute prohibits robbery and covers stealing something that one feels is not rightfully one's own and acting appropriately to achieve that purpose. The worth of the property and the value of the stolen item determine how serious the robbery demonstration is. This statute also honours phoney, extortion, dishonest business practices, and underhanded deals. The subsequent statute incorporates various approaches to taking and misrepresentation. Getting without authorization is now and then included, as is gambling.<sup>3</sup>

#### **3. Abstain from Sexual Misconduct**

The third statute censures sexually unfortunate behaviour. This has been deciphered in old style texts to incorporate any type of sexual unfortunate behaviour, which would consequently incorporate improper contacting and discourse, with a wedded or drew

face to face, sex, assault, inbreeding, sex with a minor (under 18 years, or an individual safeguarded by any family member), and sex with a prostitute.<sup>4</sup>

In later texts, subtleties, for example, intercourse at an improper time or unseemly spot, are additionally considered breaks of the third statute. Masturbation conflicts with the soul of the statute on account of an unfair dream. The third statute is made sense of as forestalling significant and profound harm to oneself and others. The offense is viewed as more serious on the off chance that the other individual is a decent individual. Ethics that remain closely connected with the third statute are satisfaction, particularly with one's accomplice, acknowledgment and regard for devotion in a marriage, and regard for the sexual idea of oneself as well as other people.

#### **4. Abstain from laying**

The fourth statute includes deception spoken or focused on by activity. Keeping away from different types of wrong discourse is additionally viewed as a component of this statute, comprising malignant discourse, brutal discourse, and gossip.<sup>5</sup>

In Buddhist texts, this statute is viewed as second in significance to the principal statute, on the grounds that a lying individual is respected to have no disgrace and hence equipped for some wrongs. Untruthfulness isn't just to be kept away from in light of the fact that it hurts others, but additionally on the grounds that it conflicts with the Buddhist ideal of tracking down reality.

#### **Abstain from intoxication**

The fifth statute disallows inebriation through liquor, drugs, or other means, and its excellences are care and obligation, applied to food, work, conduct and the idea of life. The fifth statute is viewed as significant on the grounds that drinking liquor is censured for the gradualness and absence of poise it prompts, which could prompt breaking different statutes. The ethical values of Buddhism, rooted in the teachings of the Buddha and the principles of Sila (moral discipline), have the potential to influence various aspects of Islamic civilization in several ways. Overall, the ethical values of Buddhism, including non-violence, ethical conduct, mindfulness, truthfulness, and compassion, have the potential to positively influence Islamic civilization by fostering a culture of peace, integrity, mindfulness, and compassion within society.

#### **The Ethical Values of Confucianism**

Confucianism, otherwise called Ruism or Ru elegance, is an arrangement of thought and conduct starting in old China and is differently portrayed as a custom, reasoning, religion, hypothesis of government, or lifestyle.

#### **Five Constants of Confucian**

Confucian moral codes are portrayed as humanistic. They might be drilled by every one of the individuals in the general public. Confucian morals are portrayed by the advancement of excellences, incorporated by the Five Constants, expounded by Confucian researchers out of the acquired custom during the Han tradition. The five constants are:

- Ren
- Yi
- Li
- Zhong

- Xiao

**Ren:** Ren is Confucian ethicalness, indicating the nice sentiment an upright human encounter while being unselfish. It is exemplified by a typical grownup's defensive affection for kids. It is viewed as the embodiment of the person, invested by Paradise, and simultaneously the means by which somebody might act as per the standard of Paradise and become one with it. Ren is Confucian uprightness, meaning the great nature of a righteous human while going after higher goals or while being unselfish. Ren is exemplified by useful, instinctual parental sentiments and goals of support and security for their youngsters. It is viewed as an obvious sign of Confucian beliefs.

**Yi:** In Confucianism, Yi includes an ethical demeanour to accomplish something beneficial and, furthermore, the instinct and reasonableness to do so competently.<sup>6</sup> Yi addresses moral keenness, which goes beyond straightforward rule observing, including a decent comprehension of a circumstance, and the "imaginative knowledge" and choice-creating skill important to apply ideals appropriately and suitably in a circumstance without any deficiency of sight of the complete great.

**Li:** Li is a word that tracks down its most broad use in Confucian and post-Confucian Chinese ways of thinking. Li is differently deciphered as "ceremony" or "reason", "proportion" in the unadulterated feeling of Vedic ṛta while alluding to the enormous regulation; however, while alluding to its acknowledgment with regards to human social conduct, it has additionally been deciphered as "customs", "measures" and "rules" among different terms. Li additionally implies strict rituals that lay out relations between mankind and divine beings.

**Zhong:** Dependability (Zhong) is especially significant for the social class to which the greater part of Confucius understudies had a place, in light of the fact that the main way for an aggressive youthful researcher to turn into an unmistakable authority was to enter a ruler's thoughtful service.<sup>7</sup> Confucius himself didn't recommend that "might makes right," but instead that a prevalent ought to be obeyed in view of his ethical integrity. What's more, unwaveringness doesn't mean acquiescence to power. This is on the grounds that correspondence is requested from the predominant too. As Confucius expressed, "a sovereign ought to utilize his clergyman. As indicated by the principles of appropriateness, clergymen ought to serve their ruler with reliability (devotion).

**Xiao:** In the Confucian way of thinking, "dutiful devotion" (xiao) is a righteousness of regard for one's folks and families and of the orders inside society: father-child, senior junior, and male-female.<sup>8</sup> In broader terms, obedient devotion entails being respectful and kind to one's parents, both within the household and in public, to uphold the honour of one's family; fulfilling work responsibilities diligently to provide material support to parents and contribute to family welfare; avoiding disobedience; demonstrating love, respect, and assistance; and in the context of marital devotion, a wife should wholeheartedly submit to her husband and actively care for the entire family. The ethical values of Confucianism, rooted in humanistic principles and the development of virtues, have significant implications for societal behaviour and governance within Islamic civilization. Overall, the ethical values of Confucianism, with their emphasis on benevolence, integrity, social harmony, loyalty, and familial piety, can complement

and enrich the ethical fabric of Islamic civilization. By promoting virtues that are conducive to ethical governance, social cohesion, and interfaith harmony, Confucian ethics can contribute positively to the development and flourishing of Islamic societies.

### **Ethical values of Jainism**

Jainism stresses five moral obligations known as the five commitments. Anuvratas (little commitments) for Jain laypeople and mahavratas (huge promises) for Jain panhandlers. For both, its ethical statutes expect that the Jain approaches a master (educator, guide), deva, principle, and that the individual is liberated from five offenses: questions about the confidence, hesitation about Jain bits of insight, genuine craving for Jain lessons, acknowledgment of individual Jains, and profound respect for their otherworldly interests. Such a person accepts the following five Jain vows:

- **Ahimsa:** Ahimsa is the old Indian guideline of serenity, which applies to all activities towards all living beings.<sup>9</sup> In Jainism, the idea and utilisation of ahimsa are more limited, careful, and complete than in some other religions. Killing any living individual for egotistical reasons is named himsa, while keeping away from such a demonstration is ahimsa. The commitment of ahimsa is viewed as the most significant of the "five commitments of Jainism." Different promises, like the truth, are planned to safeguard the commitment of Ahimsa.
- **Satya:** Satya is a Sanskrit word inexactly deciphered as truth or pith. It likewise alludes to uprightness in Indian religions, alluding to being honest in one's viewpoints, discourse, and action.<sup>10</sup> As per Jainism, not to lie or talk about what isn't excellent. The hidden reason for misrepresentation is enthusiasm, and accordingly, it is said to cause ahimsa.
- **Asteya:** A Jain layman shouldn't acknowledge whatever isn't uninhibitedly given. On the off chance that something is given to a Jain panhandler, the person ought to request that consent be taken.
- **Brahmacharya:** Brahmacharya is one of the five significant promises forced in Jainism for laypeople and religious zealots. For those Jains who carry out the method of priests, abstinence in real life, words, and considerations is normal. For wedded lay Jains, the excellence of Brahmacharya involves remaining physically devoted to one's chosen accomplice. Pure life requires lay Jains who are unmarried to stay away from sex before marriage.<sup>11</sup>
- **Aparigraha:** Aparigraha is one of Jainism's characteristics. It is also one of the five commitments expected by the two householders and religious zealots. This Jain commitment depends on the idea of restricting one's belongings and desires. Common abundance development is seen as an expected wellspring of voracity, envy, childishness, and desires in Jainism.<sup>12</sup>

The influence of Jainism on Islamic civilization can be seen through its shared values of non-violence, truthfulness, and respect for others' possessions, chastity, and detachment from materialism. These ethical principles foster a society based on compassion, honesty, and spiritual discipline, contributing to the promotion of peace and harmony within Islamic civilization. Jainism's emphasis on ethical living and respect for all forms of life serves as a valuable ethical framework that can enrich the ethical discourse within Islamic

civilization, promoting mutual understanding and cooperation between diverse religious traditions.

### Importance of Ethics in Islam

Islamic ethics define excellence as being a "good person," shaped by the teachings of the Quran, the traditions of Prophet Muhammad, and the guidance provided by Islamic legal scholars. Consequently, Islam offers a comprehensive lifestyle guided by ethical principles. "It encompasses moral values for individuals, families, society, politics, economics, judiciary and every aspect of modern life. Numerous terms in the Qur'ān highlight the concept of ethics: *Ḥaqq* (truth and right), *ma'rūf* (known, accepted), *Khayr* (goodness), *Maṣlahat* (public interest), *Birr* (nobility), *Qisṭ* (justice), *'adl* (fairness and equity), and *Taqwā* (piety)". Moreover, above all, the Quran instructs Muslims not only to do well but also to abstain from evil deeds altogether. *Akhlāq* refers to innate character, nature, and disposition.<sup>13</sup> The Quran uses the term "*Khuluq*" to describe the Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) admirable ethical behaviour.

وَإِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ خُلُقٍ عَظِيمٍ<sup>14</sup>.

And indeed, you are of a great moral character.

Khuluq has been additionally alluded to as the condition of the spirit that decides human activities and which can be procured through preparation and practice. Activities, then again, are the outward appearance of these morals. All in all, morals address the internal reason, while activities address outward results. A decent person subsequently naturally produces great activity, while a terrible person yields evil acts.<sup>15</sup>

### Importance of Ethics in Qur'ān and Sunnah

The Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH) comprise the two essential hotspots for Islamic morals. The Qur'an is brimming with examples alluding to and epitomising great moral attributes. Furthermore, the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (PBUH) addresses the good example to be imitated. The Qur'an and the Sunnah likewise perceive the moral element of the relative multitude of fundamental demonstrations of love, like Supplication, Fasting, Hajj, Zakkah, and so on, and affirm that they were ordered for reasons for idealising ethics and limiting the unsatisfactory ways of behaving. Allah, the Almighty, says concerning prayer:

وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ<sup>16</sup>.

And establish Prayer: indeed, Prayer restrains outrageous and unacceptable behaviour.

Islam affirms that morals comprise the essential point of support for a solid and firm society and that the general public, which is without moral qualities, will continuously experience the ill effects of issues. Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) has been reported as saying:

إِنَّ مِنْ خَيْرِكُمْ أَحْسَنَكُمْ أَخْلَاقًا<sup>17</sup>.

The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character.

Islam offers a comprehensive framework for daily living, rooted in moral teachings found in the Quran. It presents ethical values in a legitimate manner, urging Muslims to adhere to them to please Allah. The Creator has granted people the freedom to choose

their lifestyles based on their own determination. This freedom serves as a test in life, as depicted in the Quran, with the promise of reward or consequence on the Day of Judgment according to one's actions.

### **Ethical Impact of Non-Semitic Religion on Islamic Civilization**

Similar investigations of religions, and likewise, near strict morals, started as ways for people from one religion to go up against people of varying convictions and practices to find out about at least one different religion and their moral practices and convictions. In the numerous years since the relative investigation of religions started, we have taken an extraordinary arrangement.<sup>18</sup>

Ethics are essential for living a human life. Ethics improves a person's character and individuality. Ethics is also very important in our social and economic lives. Ethically, each religion has its own set of ethics and prayers. That is a way of living an honest life. If we look at Islamic ethics, then all the Islamic morals of the *Qur'ān* and *Ḥadīth* are presented, by following which Muslims can improve their world and the hereafter. Similarly, non-Semitic religions follow their religion ethically. It is an extremely normal peculiarity that a specific religion is totally not the same as other in light of its overbearing nature. In any case, it assists with drawing nearer to one another due to its moral part, since there is a nearby relationship among the significant religions of the world as to their ethical lessons. In terms of creativity, all religions are the same. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism all these religions command to refrain from evil deeds. Like theft, adultery, lying etc. But people of their religions give more importance to intellect and consciousness.

- In Islam, Almighty Allah was understood, what is right and what is wrong? What is halal or haram? Is adultery haram or halal? Is interest and giving halal or haram? It will be determined only by Allah; while the nobles feel entrusted to man that the authority of something is in man's mind, he appears right and silent in the right way. He is wrong, the ruler of health and dignity depends on the intellect of man and he is free in every way, such as: Is it right or wrong to commit adultery? Is it a human right or the worst act? Is taking interest permissible or forbidden? It will be decided by human reason.
- Islam is guided by the *Muhammadan Shari'ah*, while western philosophy does not require any messengers or divine books to be guided; rather, man is not subject to anyone except reason.
- In Islam, the law will be derived from the Sharia, while according to Western ideas and their civilization, the law will be made by a group of people (parliament).
- The concept of God in Islamic civilization is that God is one, He has always been and will always be and Muslims are believers in the same creator and owner, who has created humans and all the worlds; While, on the contrary, Western civilization has recognized matter as its god after denying God and religion, for him, matter has always been, will always be, and it creates objects based on its consciousness.
- Western civilization is not the name of a particular religion that claims to follow divine or divine teachings, but Western civilization or Western thought and philosophy is the name of a way of thinking that allows everyone to practice their own religion in their private life. Is; But the particular way of thinking does



not accept teachings based on beliefs and revelations, because in the Western point of view the most important thing is the human being himself. He has the right to have luxury and pleasure in the world. He is responsible for his actions before others. If not, then the same materialism, selfishness and endless love for wealth and possessions are its main features.

If seen, the western society only considers honesty and justice as morality, while morality is a special part of a person's daily life, which includes patience, gratitude, forgiveness, equality, piety, justice, and all human rights. By following them, a person reaches the completion of good morals. But the western society is deprived of all of them. While for Muslims, the life of *Ḥaḍrat Muḥammad (PBUH)* is the best example in which many examples of good morals can be seen. If a Muslim follows the *Qur'ān* and *Sunnah*, he can achieve good morals.

### Conclusions

In conclusion, the ethical values espoused by various philosophical and religious traditions, including Confucianism, Buddhism, and Jainism, offer rich insights and principles that have the potential to positively influence Islamic civilization. These traditions emphasize core values such as compassion, non-violence, ethical conduct, mindfulness, and respect for others, which align with many principles upheld within Islamic teachings. The study also demonstrates how non-Semitic religions' effects on Islamic civilization have changed throughout space and time. Non-Semitic religions have influenced Islamic civilization in certain areas greatly, while in others they have had little to no effect. In conclusion, the influence of selected non-Semitic faiths on Islamic society is a complicated and diverse matter that necessitates more investigation and examination. In order to encourage peaceful coexistence and mutual respect among other religious communities, it is imperative to acknowledge the contributions and challenges provided by non-Semitic religions and to promote interfaith discussion and understanding. Ultimately, the integration of these diverse ethical perspectives can enrich the ethical discourse within Islamic civilization, fostering a culture of inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for diverse religious and philosophical traditions. By drawing upon the ethical insights and principles offered by Confucianism, Buddhism, Jainism, and other traditions, Islamic societies have the opportunity to create a more vibrant, ethical, and compassionate civilization that reflects the shared values and aspirations of humanity.

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