

Towards a unified understanding of philosophy, science, religion, and the arts

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*All things arise and cease due to
interdependent causes and conditions*

~Δ~

A Unified Approach to Judaism • Christianity • Islam

By

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1 • In our currently terror-stricken world, religion is both a source of conflict as well as our remaining hope for universal peace. History is replete with religious wars that reveal more of the shortcomings of our humanity rather than the validity of religion itself as an approach to the refinement of human character and, to the activation of our own inherent spiritual goodness.

2 • The Middle East has given the world three great religions: Judaism with its teaching of spiritual righteousness, Christianity with its truth of love and forgiveness, and, Islam with its message of spiritual surrender to the Divine Will. (See Chart)

3 • One of the best approaches in understanding religion, or any religion (which is to understand ourselves), is by studying two, three or more religions, side by side. With the spirit of compassion and tolerance, a clear and broadminded perception becomes possible. One need not feel disloyal nor give up any particular religion, inherited or adopted. Neither does one have to unnecessarily feel antagonistic as an atheist or agnostic. In this troubled times, this global and unified approach may yet be, collectively, such a beneficial foundation for world peace.

4 • Whether one is an atheist or theist, or anything in-between, and, consciously or unconsciously, all of us are in some kind of search for the truth or reality that is the origin, nature, and destiny of our humanity and of our universe. We would like to know more of our material and spiritual source of existence, also, what our true nature is in terms of good and evil, as well as to figure out what our world is up to in relation to the future, especially, as to what will happen to us after death.

5 • In our perennial quest, challenging and formidable answers are available in the study of philosophy and science. As the mind demands answers in absolute terms, it then turns to religion, or contrives a religion of simplistic beliefs drawn from authoritarian sources. The stronger the prevailing imposition of authority and tradition, the more susceptible a fearful mind becomes to indoctrination. Then the mind proselytizes, giving itself a feeling of self-assurance and self-worth (also popularly regarded as self-esteem). Unknowingly, as the fallible mind fails to honestly face its doubts and limitations, it resorts to fictional or mythical absolutisms and "God-said" infallibilities. Although drawn into extremisms, the credulous mind is redeemed by the light of wisdom.

6 • We can see for ourselves that there must be a better way than when creeds or beliefs are exploited to amass a followership that dominates, discredits or exterminates others. That better way is to seek the spiritual virtues and ethical ideals which constitute the essential teachings of the world religions. The unifying and illuminating principle is in living the altruistic precepts of universal goodness. Thus, the role of faith is to transform our blindness into enlightenment.

Chart: Essentials of Three World Religions [JudChrIslamrin]
The Three Spiritual Sisters of the Middle East

Judaism	Christianity	Islam
• Belief in God: Jehovah (YHVH or Yod-He-Vau-He)	God in Three Divine Persons (Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit)	Allah ("There is no God but God.")
• Teacher: Moses Osarsiph (the Lawgiver) ~ 1,300 B.C.E.	Jesus (Yehoshuah Ben-Perahiah or Christos the Anointed) ~ 33 C.E.	Mohammed ibn Abdallah (the Prophet) ~ 610 C.E.
• Main Teaching: Righteousness (10-Commandments)	Love and Forgiveness	Surrender to the Divine Will
• Scriptures: The Torah [Law] (or Pentateuch) and The Talmud (or Interpretations)	The Holy Bible: The Old Testament and The New Testament	The Koran [Recital] and The Hadith (or Anthologies of Maxims)

7 • Every world religion has a valuable contribution to make in the betterment of our world by cultivating better human beings. Religious practices (rites, rituals, ceremonies, celebrations) are mindful disciplines that can energize spiritual growth. Soon, joint temple services among synagogues, churches, and mosques, will enhance each others role in jointly uplifting the condition of our humanity.

8 • A discredited religion undermines all religions; for no religion has a monopoly of truth. Until we have understood the other faiths of the world, we have not truly understood the faith we have professed as our own. Herein is the basis of the right ecumenical approach to a wholesome religious understanding. The unity is in seeing the underlying virtues and ideals that are the essential truths for any teaching to be spiritual or salvational. In the continuing reformation of religion, the ongoing spiritual progress of humanity is reflected.

9 • Scriptural interpretations will naturally be as diverse as the minds of people. If a particular religious interpretation helps a person become a better human being, we surely cannot deny the latitude that accommodates every individual need for spiritual readiness. As we grow, so do we move onwards, from superstition to belief onto knowledge, maturing into wisdom made manifest in our own lives.

10 • In the wisdom that we aspire to realize, we may yet awaken that universal understanding integrating the endeavors of our humanity engaged in religion, philosophy, science, and the arts.

11 • All religions affirm the belief in God or that Supreme Reality as the source and sustenance of all existence. This truth is expressed in the different names and by the diverse concepts that are assigned to the Absolute. Divine reality ideas are essentially of a virtuous quality, also expressed as the perfective ideals, and by which the ethically examined life is made possible in order to be worth living. As we dwell on the divine qualities, so do we become. Consider the following scriptural quotations. All lead to the unifying life of our humanity.

“Be of the disciples of Aaron—one that loves peace, that loves mankind and brings them nigh to the Law.”

—*Judaism. Mishnah, Abot 1.12*

“Seven precepts were commanded to the children of Noah: social laws [civil justice]; to refrain from blasphemy; idolatry; adultery; bloodshed; robbery; and eating flesh cut from a living animal.”

—*Judaism. Talmud, Sanhedrin 56a*

“Blessed are the poor in spirit ... they that mourn ... the meek ... they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness ... the merciful ... the pure in heart ... the peacemakers ... they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake ... You are the salt of the earth ... You are the light of the world ... Let your light so shine [in] your good works.”

—*Christianity. Matthew 5:3-16*

“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you ... Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.”

—*Christianity. Matthew 5:44-48*

“Call on Allah [God] with fear [awe] and longing [devotion] in your hearts: for the Mercy [Benevolent Justice] of God is near to those who do good.”

—*Islam. Koran 7.56*

“Say, We believe in God, and in what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the Tribes, and in what was given to Moses, Jesus, and the Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and to God do we submit.”

—*Islam. Koran 3.84*

* * *

12 • In religious freedom we render unto others the same freedom of worship. Thus the respect for each other's chosen path of spirituality leads us to discover the same universal truths that appeal to our highest aspirations, such as, compassion and understanding, peace, spiritual righteousness, love and forgiveness, trustworthiness, humility, helpfulness, harmony with the divine will, and other altruistic callings, all expressive of selflessness in the service of humanity. ~ Δ ~