



Contrasting Religious Ethics: Insights from Prophetic Religions and Indian Religions

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ABSTRACT

The religious ethics of Prophetic religions and Indian religions reveal diverse approaches to moral conduct and ultimate purpose. Prophetic religions, including Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, ground their ethics in divine revelations. They focus on obedience to the commandments of God as a path to salvation and ultimate union with the Supreme in the afterlife. This framework places divine law and faith at the centre of ethical action, and guides adherents toward eternal life in the presence of God. In contrast, Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism derive their ethical principles from concepts like *Dharma*, *Karma*, and the pursuit of liberation or *Moksha* or *Nirvana*. Hinduism integrates *Dharma* across personal, social, and cosmic dimensions. In Buddhism, *Dharma* embodies universal truths and paths toward the cessation of suffering. Jainism centres on the *Triratna* such as Right Faith, Right Knowledge, and Right Conduct, to achieve liberation from *Samsara*. While Prophetic ethics views moral adherence as a duty to God and a means to eternal life, Indian religions primarily regard ethics as a path to transcend the cycle of rebirth through self-knowledge and liberation. This article examines these differences regarding the sources and purposes of ethics.

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Introduction:

Humans are social creatures. Therefore, social interactions and relationships are central to human nature. We rely other for emotional, psychological, and practical support and well-being. Our actions affect our relationships and the people around us. In this regard, when individuals act selfishly or dishonestly, they can affect their own lives as well as society and cause conflict. In order to maintain a well-ordered society, each individual needs to strive for moral excellence. In this regard, ethics provides specific rules and principles which helps us to act morally in various situations. Ethics helps to determine which actions are right or wrong. When individuals adhere to ethical principles, they contribute to a positive social environment where mutual respect and cooperation are evident. This helps to create a healthy social environment, strengthens social bonds and reduces conflict.

Now question arises what is the meaning of ethics. Although ethics encompasses various definitions and interpretations, it can be stated that ethics is the science of moral ideals. Ethics is the study of fundamental principles that guide and evaluate human conduct. These moral ideals function as essential standard or guidelines for directing conduct or behaviour. By adhering to these principles individuals can strive towards achieving the ultimate goal or the highest good.

Ethics may be religious, political, philosophical and others. As far as Religious ethics is concerned, it grounds the moral principles in divine or sacred authority. By integrating morality with faith, religious ethics presents a moral structure that connects human conduct to spiritual beliefs and a transcendent purpose. Unlike secular ethical systems, religious ethics prescribes behaviour based on scriptural teachings, religious duties, and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment.

In the religious ethics of Prophetic religions, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, ethical obligations are deeply connected with divine revelation. Here, prophetic religions gives importance on following the teachings of prophets who are considered as direct messenger of God. These traditions emphasize obedience to a monotheistic God, sees ethical behaviour as a path to fulfil God's will. Religious laws, commandments, and prophetic teachings play central roles, guides followers toward the ultimate good as defined by God's moral authority. In contrast, the religious ethics of Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism find their basis in Dharma, the moral law that upholds cosmic order. These systems view ethical duties as part of a broader spiritual journey toward self-realization, liberation, or enlightenment.



The objective of this article is to explore the distinct ethical structures within Prophetic and Indian religions. It aims to highlight how each tradition uniquely frames moral conduct within a spiritual context. By examining the sources of ethical authority, the goals of moral actions, and the role of religious teachings, we can gain insight into how each approach shapes the understanding of the highest purpose of its and moral responsibilities.

This article uses a descriptive method to systematically examine the religious ethics of prophetic and Indian religions. This approach focuses on gathering and presenting information from primary texts, doctrinal teachings and scholarly interpretations.

Discussion:

Although Ethics has an important place in all the religions of the world, yet different religions entertain differences with regard to their respective ethical or moral structure. As, Arnold D. Hunt and Robert B. Crotty points out, “The relationship between a religious system and its ethical code differs among the religious cultures of the world.”(Hunt &Crotty, 3). To put it differently, the nature of the religious ethics of Prophetic religions like Zoroastrianism, Christianity , Islam, Judaism are different from that of Indian religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism. An examination of these Indian religions reveals their unique frameworks and how they contrast with the ethical system found in Prophetic religions. In these regard Indian religion refers to the religions which evolved in Indian region. The basis of their differences lies on the following grounds.

I. Foundation of ethics:

To begin with, there are differences between the ethics of different religions in terms of the foundation of ethics. In this case, the foundation of ethics in Prophetic religions may be a scripture, religious teacher, or other mediums through which God is believed to reveal moral laws to mankind. These sources are considered authoritative because they are believed to convey moral laws directly from God. Ethical framework in Prophetic religious ethics is generally based on adherence to divine commandments and religious laws. Moral conduct is regarded as a means of fulfilling one's duty to God and by performing that one can attain the ultimate end. So, prophetic religious ethics prioritizes obedience to the prescribed God. By adhering to the divine laws adherents strive to connect themselves with the divine and achieve the ultimate end. In this regard Arnold D. Hunt and Robert B. Crotty remarks, “It is in obedience to God’s will that man finds fulfilment”.(Hunt&Crotty, 145)



In this context, in Zoroastrianism, ethics is deeply connected with the God Ahura Mazda. The main scripture of Zoroastrianism is Zend Avesta which serves as the primary source of ethical guidance. This text is the revelation of the God Ahura Mazda Himself which includes His commandments for moral conduct. Following these laws is essential for attaining the ultimate end that is victory of good over the evil as accepted by Zoroastrians. Similarly, in Christianity ethics is based on teachings from the Bible, especially the New Testaments which records the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Jesus is considered as the perfect model of moral conduct. Christians encourages followers to live in accordance with God's commandments as revealed through scriptures. This adherence to divine law is considered as a pathway to the ultimate goal. Y. Masih points out, "...God is reconciled in Jesus Christ the man, through whom God entered the world and redeems it."(Masih, 147). Similarly in Islam, Quran is considered as the ultimate source of ethical guidance which records the sayings of the prophet Muhammad. Muslim sees adherence to these laws as a way to fulfil their duty to Allah and associates their lives with divine will. Similarly, in Judaism ethics is drawn from the Torah and other Hebrew scriptures. The commandments provide a detail framework for ethical living. So in each prophetic religion the source of ethics is linked to a divinely revealed means which is the pathway to attain the ultimate purpose.

But there is a difference in Indian religions in this regard. For example in Hinduism, Ethics does not have direct reference to any scripture or the revealed laws that people should be forced to accept. The four principles of life in Hinduism provide a framework for ethical conduct. They are – *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kāma*, and *Moksha*. Various texts and schools may have different views regarding the specific nature of these *purusarthas*, that is what constitutes salvation or moksha, what may be regarded as dharma, what sort of *artha* and *kama* are to be attained etc. In Hindu tradition *Artha* is one of the four goals of life. Here, wealth not only encompasses material possessions but also health, prosperity and overall wellbeing. But in this regard, Hinduism believes that wealth or *Artha* should be pursued and used in accordance with *Dharma*. *Kama* includes fulfilling one's desire and enjoying sensual pleasures which is essential for a balanced life according to Hinduism. But though it is important, *kama* should also be pursued in a way that does not compromise *dharmā*. *Artha* and *Kāma* are not considered as intrinsically good. Both depends on *Dharma*. Depending on *Dharma*, both of these may be good or bad. In other words, the pursuit of *Artha* and *Kama* are only considered valuable when they are in harmony with dharma. According to *Manusmriti*, an ancient Hindu religious text, both *Artha* and *Kama* must be grounded on dharma, Thirdly, *Moksha* indicates liberation or *Mukti* in Hinduism. But this moksha can only be attained by following the path of *Dharma*. The path of moksha is easier for those who live a life



of *Dharma*. So, In Hinduism, *Dharma* is considered to be the basis for attaining moksha or salvation. In this discussion dharma is prioritized over the other three *purusarthas* as it is the ethical foundation of Hinduism. Dharma guides the pursuit of *artha*, *kama* and *moksha*. But the question arises what exactly this *Dharma* is? The literal meaning of dharma is that which holds or that which sustains. Here comes the difference between dharma as religion and dharma as ethics. In this respect, when dharma refers to holding the universe including gods or the divine beings, it is considered as religion. When dharma is understood in relation to society, it emphasizes ethics which is essential for upholding social structures. For example in the context of Hinduism, *Rigveda* introduces *Rta* which represents the fundamental law of universal harmony and order which governs the cosmos and the divine order. Initially it refers to the patterns of the natural phenomena, like the movements of the celestial bodies. But as the idea developed *Rta* comes to represent not only these natural laws but also a moral framework that guides human behaviour and divine conduct. Radhakrishnan remarks, “Soon this cosmic order becomes the settled will of a supreme god, the law of morality and righteousness as well. Even the god cannot transgress it.” (Radhakrishnan, 79). The gods *Mitra* and *Varuna* are regarded as guardians of this order. Although these deities are powerful, they themselves are bound by *Rta*. In order to maintain *Rta* rituals and sacrifices are performed as offering to *Varuna* and *Mitra*. These practices are believed to maintain the cosmic order and ensure the continuation of the natural and moral balance. So in *Rigveda* *Rta* reflects the concept of dharma as religion which represents the principle or law that sustains the universe including the divine order.

But in Hinduism the concept of *Dharma* is multifaceted which also includes various aspects of individual and societal life. The smriti text like Manusmriti, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad-Gita explain dharma as more than religious concept. It explains that dharma serves as the code of conduct which regulates the actions of individuals within society and their personal life. Manusmriti says, “A scholarly person... should determine his/her own (dhamme) duties and proper conducts and get invested in them accordingly.” (Manusmriti, 46)

The Bhagavad-Gita introduces the concepts of *Svadharm*a and *Sadharana Dharma* which guides individuals in their roles within society. *Svadharm*a refers to an individual’s own law which is inherent in their *Svabhava* or nature. The *Bhagavad-Gita* stresses that one should follow their *Svadharm*a in accordance with their *Svabhava*. . *Bhagavad-Gita* says,



“Better is one’s own law though imperfectly carried out than the law of another carried out imperfectly?”(Gita.III.35). *Svadharmā* is unique to each individual based on their nature. Bhagavad-Gita relates this concept of *Svadharmā* with *Varna Dharmā*. According to the Bhagavad-Gita, *Varna* refers to the classification of society into four classes. In this context *Varna Dharmā* indicates specific dharma or law which is assigned based on one’s social class. There are four *Varna* in Hindu society according to the *Bhagavad-Gita*. They are *Brahmins*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and *Shudra*. Each of these class has their inherent *Svabhava* and according to that *Svabhava* they should practice their *Dharma*. *Bhagavad-Gita* declares,

“Of *Brahmins*, of *Kshatriyas*, and *Vaisyas* as also of *Sudras*, O Conqueror of the foe, the activities are distinguished, in accordance with qualities born of their nature.”(Gita, XVIII.41)

In this regard, the first *Varna Brahmins* are characterized by qualities such as self-control, austerity, knowledge etc. So in accordance with this inherent nature or *Svabhava*, *Brahmins* are instructed to guide the society through their wisdom. Their *Dharma* is to provide spiritual and ethical direction. The *Bhagavad-Gita* identifies courage as an inherent nature of *Kshatriya*. So, the *Gita* specifies that *Kshatriyas* are responsible for performing *Dharma* associated with being ruler and warriors. In the *Gita* Krishna instructs Arjuna, a *Kshatriya* to fulfil his *Dharma* as warrior on the battlefield. Similarly, according to the nature of the *Vaishya*, the *Dharma* of *Vaishya* includes engaging in agricultural activities, participating in trade etc. *Shudras* are characterized by their service oriented role. Their *Dharma* is to support the other *Varnas* by providing various forms of service. So, each *Varna* in Hindu society has distinct dharma according to their own nature or *Svabhava*.

According to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Dharma* is also connected with the concept of *Sadharana Dharmā*. *Sadharana Dharmā* refers to universal ethical principles which are applicable to everyone regardless of their *Varna*. This includes virtues such as tolerance, non-violence. The *Bhagavad-Gita* emphasizes that *Svadharmā* is of greater importance than *Sadharana Dharmā*. In the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna instructs Arjuna to engage in battle? This example shows that though non-violence is a *Sadharana Dharmā*, the *Svadharmā* of *Kshatriya* requires actions which are not associated with non-violence. According to the *Gita*, *Svadharmā* is the foundation of moral life and it takes precedence over *Sadharna Dharmā*.

Manusmriti, the ancient religious Hindu text states that dharma is also adaptable to the stages of life or with *Ashrama dharmā*. It suggests that ethical conduct is progressive through different phases of life. *Āshramas* refer to the four main stages of life. They are *Brahmacharya*, *Garhasthya*, *Vanaprastha* and



Sannyasa. Manusmriti declares, “The brahmacharya stage is a preparation for the grihastha stage and vanaprastha stage is a preparation for the sannyasa stage.” (Manusmriti.16). The *Brahmacharya* stage is characterized by commitment to acquire knowledge and adherence to a disciplined lifestyle. Here the focus is on education, personal development. During the *Garhasthya* stage dharma includes the responsibilities related to marriage, family life, etc. the *Vanaprastha* stage is characterized by focus on spiritual responsibilities and preparation for renunciation. *Sannyasa* stage includes complete renunciation from the worldly desire and material concerns and attainment of ultimate fulfilment or liberation. So, each stage or *Ashrama* has their unique *Dharma*.

In Hinduism, the concept of *Dharma* is also connected with *Nishkama Karma*. In this regard, *Nishkama Karma* refers to performing one’s *Dharma* without any attachment to the result or desire for personal gain. It is the practice of selflessly carrying out one’s dharma. True morality involves performing one’s *Dharma* selflessly rather than focusing on any external rewards. *Bhagavad-Gita* declares thus,

“Therefore, without attachment, perform always the work that has to be done, for a man attains to the highest by doing work without attachment.”(Gita.III.19)

So, ethics is defined in Hinduism on the basis of this *Dharma* which is associated with societal class and stages of life. *Dharma* is instructed to be followed selflessly. By adhering to dharma individuals contribute to the stability and harmony of the society. So dharma serves as the ethical framework which promotes selfless action that upholds both individual conduct and societal well-being. Arnold D. Hunt and Robert B. Crotty remarks, “*Dharma* is binding; it has ultimacy, there is no escape from it and in the conditions of ordinary life it is a man’s highest moral ideal” (Hunt &Crotty, 94). In Hinduism concept of *Dharma* is also associated with the concept of *Karma*. *Karma* is the principle according to which every actions has consequences. Our present actions can affect the future lives. Those who act in accordance with *Dharma* accumulate good *Karma*. By following *Dharma* in their cations individuals ensure that their *Karma* is positive which affects their future experiences. This is essential for attaining *Moksha* or liberation in Hinduism. To put it differently, Individuals are responsible for their actions and consequences and *Dharma* considered as essential for spiritual advancement and liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. *Manusmriti* declares,

“Because the humans who follow this (*dharmam*) code of righteous conduct as propounded in the Vedas and the subsequent scriptures attains fame in this world and the place of unparalleled bliss and happiness upon death.” (*Manusmriti*, 46, 8)



Buddhism also sees *Dharma* as the foundation of morality. In Buddhism, *dharma* encompasses a deeper meaning than the conventional meaning of religion. *Dharma* in Buddhism refers to the foundational truths and principles that guides individuals and society. The foundational truths in Buddhism are concerning the suffering or unfulfilled existence, change in life. Crotty remarks, “Buddhism sees *Dharma* as a universal truth concerning human life.”(Crotty, 109). According to *Nikaya*, Buddhism focuses on four fundamental truths or *Aryasatyas*. These four truths addresses the reality of suffering, the second truth identifies the cause of suffering, the third truth asserts the possibility of suffering and the fourth truth outlines the path to overcome suffering. The first noble truth of Buddhism states that suffering is an inherent part of human life. Birth, death, illness are significant sources of suffering. These experiences lead to physical, emotional suffering. Everything in the material world is subject to change and decay. Because of this, attachment to the temporary things lead to suffering. The second noble truth deal with the cause of suffering. The cravings or desire for the material things lead to attachment. This craving arises due to *Avidya* or ignorance. When people are ignorant of the true nature of reality, it creates suffering. The third noble truth teaches that it is possible to achieve liberation from suffering. Suffering is caused by ignorance. By gaining true insight into the nature of truth or reality one can eliminate ignorance which leads to the cessation of suffering. It is a state of peace and freedom from the conditions that generate suffering. The fourth noble truth is concerned with the ways to end suffering. This noble truth mentions about different path to attain liberation from suffering. It guides the individual towards the state of complete cessation of suffering. The fourth noble truth outlines the path to the cessation of suffering known as the eight fold path. These are regarded as path towards the ultimate goal that is nirvana. It directs individuals in their conduct within society. The first is right faith which refers to grasping the four truths concerning human life. Second is right resolve which refers to cultivating an attitude of love and compassion, freeing oneself from harmful thoughts and desires. Third is right speech which includes speaking truthfully, kindly by avoiding lies, unkind words. Fourth is right action which refers to refraining from harmful conduct such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication. Fifth is right livelihood which refers to living a way that does not harm others and choosing ethical occupations. Sixth is right effort which includes making persistent effort to cultivate positive qualities and abandon negative ones. Next is right mindfulness which means developing awareness of body, feelings, thoughts etc. last is right concentration which refers to the practice of meditation where an individual by following ethical guidelines overcome negative emotions and prepare to enter a deep meditative states. The eight fold path serves as practical guide to ethical living. So these foundational truths are considered to be at the core of the moral beliefs of Buddhism. Buddhism is based on these four



teachings or truths and it is *Dharma*. It provides a framework for moral guidelines that upholds the life of individuals as well as society. In this context, *dharma* refers to the ethical principles which guides individual conduct and maintain social order. *Dharma* is inherently social and communal which is important for harmonious relationship among mankind and society. B.R. Ambedkar remarks, "...*Dharma* is social. It is fundamentally and essentially so." (Ambedkar, 274). In this regard, it is worth mentioning that the concept of *karma* is related to *Dharma* in Buddhism. The *Karma Tattva* in Buddhism teaches that all actions have moral consequences. So one should refrain from immoral actions to attain *Nirvana* or *Moksha*. Although our present is influenced by our past, we can influence the future outcomes through our present *Karma*. In this case, it is very important to learn *Dharma* to live a moral life. This *Dharma* must be practised and reflected in our *Karma*. By living a life that follows *Dharma*, individual progress towards *Nirvana*. So, in Buddhism this concept of *Dharma* and *Karma* can be accepted as the foundation of ethics.

Similarly, in Jainism, *Dharma* refers to the teachings and principles which upholds the society. In this context, Olle Qvarnstrom remarks, "...the word *Dharma* has been used to indicate the Jaina teaching in general." (Qvarnstrom) In this regard, the eternal principle in Jainism are the *Triratna*. These *Triratnas* are - Right Faith, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Right Faith means faith in the knowledge given by *Tirthankara* or *Guru*. The role of *Tirthankara* in Jainism is paramount. True understanding or realization of the truth can only occur if one has faith in that truth. Right faith is the initial stage from which further stages can be followed. The second is Right Knowledge. Here, Right Knowledge refers to comprehending the definite knowledge about reality. The right knowledge is free from all doubts. In Jainism acquiring right knowledge is very important which includes understanding the distinction between soul and non-soul, good and evil etc. right knowledge is essential for achieving *Nirvana*. After establishing right faith and right knowledge, the third step is to focus on Right Conduct. S. Muthu Kumar points out, "...there may be right knowledge and right faith, but if these are not occupied by right conduct, then, all are worthless" (Kumar, 63). Regarding right conduct, Jaina philosophy emphasizes two main vows. *Mahavrata* and *Anuvrata*. *Mahavrata* is divided into five types. They are: *Ahimsa*, *Satya*, *Asteya*, *Brahmacharya* and *Aparigraha*. *Ahimsa* means avoiding harm or violence in all situations. This principle should be followed in thought, speech and action. Jaina teaches that every individual should follow *Ahimsa* throughout their life. Secondly *Satya* or truth includes following truthfulness in all aspects of life. Jaina teaches that one should follow truth that is not only accurate but also good, pleasant and beneficial to others. Thirdly, *Asteya* or non-stealing refers to abstinence from



taking anything that is not given. Each individual is required to avoid theft whether is concerned with material things or others. Thirdly, *Brahmacharya* or celibacy refers to refraining from self-indulgence which includes all forms of self-indulgent conduct, both internal and external. *Aparigraha* or non-attachment indicates freeing oneself from all desires and attachments whether it is material or immaterial. The basic ethics of Jainism is related to these five *Mahavrata*. Along with these, Jainism also mentions ten supreme virtues. These ten together are called the ten *dharmas*. They are Supreme Forbearance, Humility, Straightforwardness, Truthfulness, Purity, Self-Control, Austerity, Renunciation, Non-Attachment and Celibacy. All these principles are considered as a part of right conduct in Jaina philosophy. These three eternal principles are the ground of Jaina ethics which are instructed to be followed to uphold the life of individual as well as society and it is dharma. *Tatvarthasutram*, one of the authoritative books of Jainism states thus, “Right belief, (right) knowledge, (right) conduct, these (together constitute) the path to liberation.” (*Tatvarthasutram* 1.1)

II. Purpose of Ethics:

In Prophetic religious ethics, the ultimate aim is to attain union with God after a final judgment. Here one's faith and actions determine their eternal destiny. In Zoroastrianism, followers strive for a union with Ahura Mazda which is achieved by a life of righteousness. After death, they believe that there will be a final judgement day where souls are judged based on their deeds. The righteous get the opportunity to live an eternal life and get union with the Ahura Mazda. Christianity accepts this as entry into the “Kingdom of God,” where those who live by the teachings of Jesus are united with God in heaven. Bible says, “For the Kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking but of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy spirit (Roman.14.17). Islam teaches that Allah judges each soul on the Day of Judgment, and helps the righteous to proceed towards Jannah and unrighteous to Jahannam. In this context, S.M. Hasan remarks, “like the other Abrahamic religions Islam teaches the bodily resurrection of the dead, the fulfilment of a divine plan for creation, and the immortality of the human soul; the righteous are rewarded with the pleasures of *Jannah* (heaven), while the unrighteous are punished in *Jahannam*(hell).”(Hasan, 102). In Judaism, a similar belief holds that God rewards the virtuous by giving a place in *Gan Eden*, or paradise. So in these religious faiths, the Kingdom of God or divine realm is seen as a place where righteousness prevails, and living a moral life is essential to gain eternal life in the presence of God.



In Indian religion, the purpose of life usually signifies liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. This liberation is called *Moksha* in Hinduism, *Nirvana* in Buddhism and Jainism. According to these religions, the soul goes through cycles of birth, death, and rebirth. This cycle is referred to as *Samsara*. In this regard, ignorance is considered as the root cause of this *Samsara*. Due to ignorance individuals develop cravings and attachment to various possessions. These desires and cravings binds them to the cycle of rebirth. Each rebirth is driven by *Karma* done in previous lives which is influenced by ignorance and cravings. In order to free oneself from this cycle, an individual must gain knowledge of reality or truth or *Dharma*. Once true knowledge of reality is achieved, the soul transcends the cycle of rebirth. In this regard, N.K Devaraja remarks, “Only such sages, it is widely believed, have the capacity to know *Dharma* in its true nature which therefore, can be rightfully expounded by them alone.” (Devaraja.22). This state is called liberation or *Moksha*. In this state, the soul is free from the cycle of suffering, cravings, desire and experience eternal peace. This liberation is the end of the soul’s journey through *Samsara*.

In the ultimate analysis, it may be stated that religious ethics of Indian religions focuses on the pursuit or truth as the ultimate goal which is termed as the moksha or liberation. In order to achieve moksha, an individual should follow Dharma and should purify the mind. This can lead to the realization of the ultimate truth. But prophetic religious ethics focuses on obedience to divine commandments as a means to the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is to attain divine grace which is regarded as a state of divine favour and blessings. This grace is the highest good.

Conclusion:

To conclude, religious ethics is fundamentally based on a specific faith and depending on that faith religious ethical norms are determined. Differences occurs in the ethical systems of prophetic religions such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam on the one hand and the Indian religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism on the other. Although there is seen many differences in this regard, the main difference is twofold. This is with regard to the source and purpose of ethics. The first is that prophetic religions accept God as the source of morality. In prophetic religions morality is derived solely from scriptures, religious leaders or other mediums through which God’s moral laws are believed to be revealed. But Indian religions base morality on cosmic law or truth like *dharmā*. The term *Dharma* has different meanings. Sometimes it is used in the sense of *Savdharmā*, *Sadharanadharmā*, *Varnadharmā*, *Nishkama karma*, *Ashrama dharmā*, law, universal truth and others. The relation between



dharma and *karma* is noteworthy. Every action has its consequence. So learning *dharma* and expressing it through one's *Karma* is important to attain the ultimate goal. Therefore both *Dharma* and *Karma* are crucial for morality as accepted in Indian religions. Secondly, Indian religions particularly Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism the purpose of ethical life is freeing the self from the cycle of rebirth. Removal of desires and ignorance through knowledge of reality or *Dharma* is necessary to make oneself free from this cycle and attain liberation. The Indian religions is for cleansing the mind through *dharma* without which it is not possible to find the ultimate goal of life. But prophetic religions prioritize following divine commands. Following the guidance and laws provided by a divine authority is considered as central for achieving the ultimate goal. But despite the differences between the Indian and prophetic religious ethics, they are similar in the universal values they uphold. Both tradition emphasize the core ethical values such as non-violence, truth, contentment, patience, self-control, generosity, kindness and the like. These shared ethical universal values transcend the difference in religious doctrines and practices and serves as common ethical foundation which promotes harmony.

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