

Religions Review Packet

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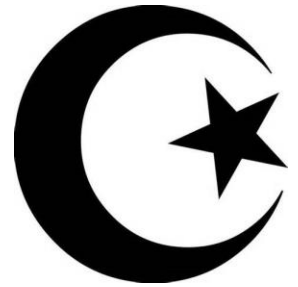
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Basics of Islam

From United Religions Initiative for Kids – www.uri.org

Islam is a **monotheistic faith** centered around belief in the one God (**Allah**). In this regard, it shares some beliefs with Judaism and Christianity by tracing its history back to the patriarch Abraham, and ultimately to the first prophet, Adam. All the prophets preached the same universal message of belief in one God and kindness to humanity. The last in the series of prophets, according to Muslims, was Muhammad.

There are two basic groups of Islam: the **Sunnis** (about 80% of the world's Muslims) and the **Shi'ites** (about 20% of the world's Muslims). Although they share the same basic beliefs, they disagree on who was the rightful leader of Islam after Muhammad's death. Muslims believe that the last revealed scripture sent by God is the **Qur'an or Koran**. It is the speech of God revealed in the Arabic language to Muhammad during his mission of twenty-three years. The Qur'an was written down by scribes and memorized during the lifetime of Muhammad.



Islam is an Arabic word which means "surrender, submission, commitment and peace." Thus, Islam can be defined as a path to attain complete peace through voluntary submission to the divine will. "Allah" is simply the Arabic word for God. He is the same universal God worshipped by people of all faiths.

Muslims have six major beliefs: 1 - belief in one God (Allah); 2 - belief in the Angels; 3 - belief in the holy books sent to all the prophets including Torah that was revealed to the prophet Moses, Bible that was revealed to the prophet Jesus, and Qur'an (Koran) that was revealed to the prophet Muhammad; 4 - belief in all the prophets sent by God including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (Although Muslims believe in Isa or Jesus they don't think of Jesus as the Son of God the way Christians do); 5 - belief in the Day of Judgment and life after death; 6 - belief in divine decree. This means that God is all-powerful and nothing can happen without His permission, however, he has given human beings freedom to choose whether to be good or bad. In the end, everyone will be questioned about how they lived in this life.

The Five Pillars of Islam

These are guides for daily life for putting the beliefs of Muslims into practice.

- 1) **Shahadah (declaration of faith)**—to bear witness or testify that there is no god except one God (Allah) and Muhammad is His prophet or messenger.
- 2) **Salat (ritual prayer 5 times per day)**—the five daily prayers are performed at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and night. The prayers are offered in Arabic language and facing the direction of Mecca.
- 3) **Zakah (almsgiving tax)**—Giving 2.5% of one's wealth to the poor and needy.
- 4) **Sawm (fasting)**—Muslims fast during the daylight hours in the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar called **Ramadan**. The purpose is to remind people of the goodness of what they have and to show equality with the poor. Ramadan is a time for study and self-discipline.
- 5) **Hajj (pilgrimage)** - Muslims believe in making a pilgrimage to **Mecca** to the Ka'bah at least once in their lifetime. The **ka'bah** is believed to have been built by Ibrahim (Abraham) and one of his sons. Muhammad restored it to worship Allah. For this reason it is a very sacred place to Muslims.

Which belief system requires fasting during Ramadan, praying five times daily, and making a pilgrimage to Mecca?

- a. Judaism
- b. Christianity
- c. Islam
- d. Hinduism

Which text is essential to the practice of Islam?

- a. New Testament
- b. Analects
- c. Torah
- d. Qur'an

Since the 8th century, a major source of disunity among Muslims has been

- a. Differences between Sunnis and Shiites
- b. The use of humans in art
- c. Establishment of production quotas for oil
- d. Spread of Islam as a result of invasion and trade

The religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam share a belief in

- a. Nirvana
- b. Monotheism
- c. Reincarnation
- d. Animism

Basics of Judaism

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Judaism began about 4000 years ago with the **Hebrew** people in the Middle East. **Abraham**, a Hebrew man, is considered the father of the Jewish faith because he promoted the central idea of the Jewish faith: that there is one God.

Abraham's son, Isaac had a son, Jacob, also called Israel. In this way the descendants of Abraham came to be known as the **Israelites**. God promised the Israelites he would care for them as long as they obeyed God's laws. While still traveling, the Hebrews lived in Egypt where they were enslaved. **Moses**, a Hebrew, was chosen by God to lead the Hebrew people out of Egypt. Moses led the Hebrew people out of the Sinai Desert toward the promised land. At Mt. Sinai, God gave Moses the Law which would guide the Israelites to today. The laws were called the **Ten Commandments** and form the basis of the Torah, the book of Jewish law.



It took many years for the Israelites to finally get to what they thought was the Promised Land -Canaan. After some fighting the Jews established the Israelite kingdom. After many years, Canaan was conquered by the Assyrians, the Babylonians and then eventually the Romans. The Israelites once again found themselves enslaved, this time by Babylonians. The Israelites were then taken over by Romans who destroyed much of what had been built in Jerusalem by the Israelites. Most of the Jews were scattered all over the region and eventually moved from place to place to avoid persecution which continues to this day. The dispersion of the Jews is called the **Diaspora**.

The worst persecution of the Jews was during World War II by the Nazis who murdered more than six million Jews or a third of the world's Jewish population. This was called the **Holocaust**. Beginning in the 1880's Jews began returning to their homeland in growing numbers (**Zionism**), this time to avoid persecution where they lived. After World War II, many Jews believed that for the Jewish people and culture to survive, Jews needed to live in their own country where all Jews from anywhere in the world would have the right to live and be citizens. In 1948, Palestine was divided up and a Jewish state of **Israel** was formed in the land that was once called Canaan, surrounded by countries with predominantly Muslim populations. Since Muslims also claimed rights to the land where the Jews were living, there was conflict, which continues to this day in the Middle East.

Jewish people believe in the **Torah**, which was the whole of the laws given to the Israelites at Sinai. They believe they must follow God's laws which govern daily life. Later legal books, written by **rabbis**, determine the law as it applies to life in each new place and time.

The **Ten Commandments**, as written in the Torah, are:

- Worship no other God but me.
- Do not make images to worship.
- Do not misuse the name of God.
- Observe the Sabbath Day (Saturday). Keep it Holy.
- Honor and respect your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not tell lies about other people.
- Do not envy other's possessions.

One similarity between the Five Pillars of Islam and the Ten Commandments is that both

- a. Support reincarnation
- b. Promote learning to earn salvation
- c. Encourage the use of statutes of God
- d. Provide a guide to proper moral and ethical behavior

Which belief system is considered monotheistic?

- a. Jainism
- b. Daoism
- c. Judaism
- d. Shinto

Jewish religious and cultural identity has been greatly influenced by

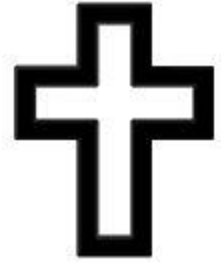
- a. Ramadan and the concept of reincarnation
- b. the Torah and the Diaspora
- c. the New Testament and the Four Noble Truths
- d. the Koran and the code of bushido

Basics of Christianity

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Christianity traces its beginning to the miraculous birth, adult ministry, death and resurrection of **Jesus** of Nazareth, known as Jesus Christ. Over 2000 years ago in Palestine (today's Israel), Jesus was born into a humble Jewish family. His mother was a young peasant woman named **Mary**. Christians believe that his father was the **Holy Spirit of God**, making Jesus both fully human and fully divine.

Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the **Son of God** – fully human and fully divine – and that through believing in him and following his teachings they can inherit eternal life. Christians believe that Jesus died for humanity, that God raised him from the dead, and that Jesus will come again at the end of time. In addition, Christians believe in the **Trinity**, or the three parts of God: God the Father or Creator, God the Son (Jesus) or Redeemer, and God the Holy Spirit or Sanctifier. The Holy Spirit is God's presence in the world.



The sacred text of Christianity is the **Holy Bible**. The Christian Bible has two parts: the **Old Testament** which is essentially the Hebrew scriptures of Jesus' time; and the **New Testament** which contains writings about Jesus Christ and about the early church.

As with any large group, Christianity has experienced many different interpretations, disagreements and struggles for power over the centuries. These have led to the growth of many different branches of Christianity interpreting the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in different ways. There are three basic streams of Christianity: **Orthodox, Protestant and Roman Catholic**.

The essence of Jesus' teaching comes from his summary of the Jewish law he grew up with:

- Love God with all your heart, soul and mind.
- Love your neighbor as yourself.
- Christians also seek to follow the ten commandments God gave Moses to give the Israelites:
- Worship no other God but me.
- Do not make images to worship.
- Do not misuse the name of God.
- Observe the Sabbath Day (Sunday, for Christians). Keep it Holy.
- Honor and respect your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not tell lies about other people.
- Do not envy other's possessions.

The doctrines of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant churches are all based on the

- a. Concept of reincarnation
- b. Principles of Christianity
- c. Teachings of Muhammad
- d. Leadership of the pope

Christianity and Islam are similar in that both

- A. are polytheistic religions
- B. have practiced a strict code of nonviolence
- C. have the same holidays
- D. have roots in Judaism

The dominance of Christianity in Latin America and of Buddhism in Southeast Asia is a direct result of

- a. Racial intolerance
- b. Cultural diffusion
- c. Urbanization
- d. Militarism

One similarity between Martin Luther and Henry VIII is that they

- a. Argued against the establishment of a theocratic state
- b. Protested against the ideas of the Enlightenment
- c. Died during the Reign of Terror
- d. Challenged the teachings of the Catholic Church

Basics of Hinduism

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Hinduism began about 4000 years ago in India. It was the religion of an ancient people known as the **Aryans** ("noble people") whose philosophy, religion, and customs are recorded in their sacred texts known as the **Vedas**. These texts were initially handed down by word of mouth from teacher to student. It was not until much later that they were actually written down. Archeological evidence from the **Indus Valley** civilization of northwestern India helps to establish Hinduism as the world's oldest living religion.

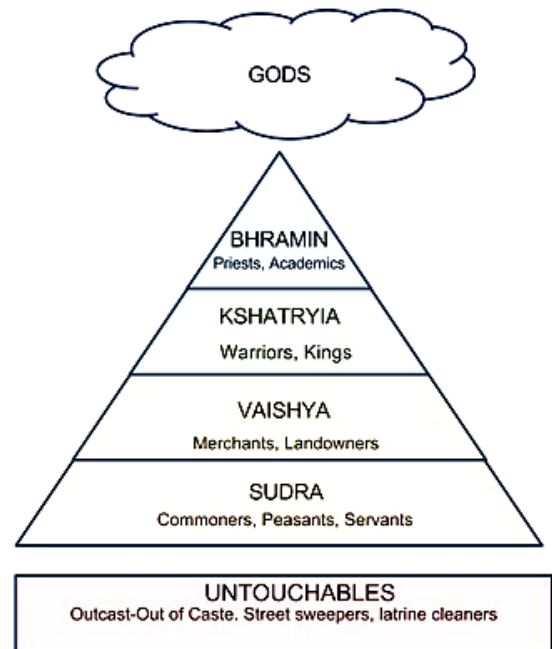
The general name for God in Hinduism is **Brahman**. The name of the divine essence within us is Atman. They are one and the same, infinite and eternal. However, God is also present in all creation. God's manifestation in creation goes by many names. It is the one infinite, eternal, Divine Being that is manifesting in countless ways. It is like a person at the same time being called "father" by his son, "friend" by his friend, "son" by his own father, "husband" by his wife, etc. A special relationship goes with each name. So the same Divine Lord has been addressed as **Shiva, Vishnu**, etc .

In this world every cause must have its effect (**Karma**). We are responsible for the results of our actions. Long ages ago, human beings first asked themselves, why are some people born in happy circumstances, whereas others are born to suffer all their lives? The events of this present life are not enough to account for such suffering. To reasonably explain an excess of suffering or of enjoyment in this life, it was assumed that we all have had previous existences, and that we are now reaping the results of those previous actions. It must also be true then that we can take charge of our destiny right now. We can create a better tomorrow by resolving do better actions today. However, as long as desires remain in the mind, the tendency toward rebirth or **reincarnation** will exist.

The code of behavior is one's **dharma**. This is determined by the place in society and the duties associated with it. There are four main social **castes** or varna; Brahmins (priests and teachers) Kshatriyas (rulers and soldiers), Vaishyas (merchants) and Shudras (workers). There is one group that is outside of the caste system as well. They are the **untouchables**.

Hindu ancient, sacred texts were written in Sanskrit, the language of ancient India.

- The **Vedas** are the oldest - about 3000 years old. They are a collection of hymns, prayers, and magic spells.
- The **Upanishads** are stories and parables told by gurus (teachers) to their students
- The **Mahabharata** is a story of a war between two royal families. The Bhagavad Gita is a very popular part of this text.
- The **Ramayana** is a story of the god Rama and the rescue of his wife Sita from Ravana, the evil demon king



A person who practices Hinduism would most likely

- Believe Vedas are sacred
- Worship in a synagogue
- Pray facing Mecca
- Make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem

Believers of Hinduism are expected to

- Complete a pilgrimage to Mecca
- Fulfill their dharma for a favorable reincarnation
- Obey the Ten Commandments
- Follow the Eightfold Path to enlightenment

The Caste System influenced traditional rural Indian society by

- Reducing the power of landowners
- Promoting political instability
- Limiting social and economic progress
- Contributing to greater social mobility

Which belief is shared by both Hindus and Buddhists?

- Everyone should have the same social status
- People should pray five times per day
- The soul can be reincarnated
- Material wealth is a sign of the blessing of the gods

Basics of Buddhism

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About 2500 years ago, a prince named **Siddhartha Gautama** began to question his sheltered, luxurious life in the palace. Siddhartha left his life as a prince and became a wandering holy man, seeking the answers to questions like "Why must people suffer?" "What is the cause of suffering?" Siddhartha spent many years doing many religious practices such as praying, meditating, and fasting until he finally understood the basic truths of life. This realization occurred after sitting under a Poplar-figtree in Bodhi Gaya, India for many days, in deep meditation. He gained **enlightenment**, or **nirvana**, and was given the title of **Buddha**, which means **Enlightened One**.

Four Noble Truths

1. Human life has a lot of suffering.
2. The cause of suffering is greed.
3. There is an end to suffering.
4. The way to end suffering is to follow the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path

1. Right understanding and viewpoint (based on the Four Noble Truths).
2. Right values and attitude (compassion rather than selfishness).
3. Right speech (don't tell lies, avoid harsh, abusive speech, avoid gossip).
4. Right action (help others, live honestly, don't harm living things, take care of the environment).
5. Right work (do something useful, avoid jobs which harm others).
6. Right effort (encourage good, helpful thoughts, discourage unwholesome destructive thoughts).
7. Right mindfulness (be aware of what you feel, think and do).
8. Right meditation (calm mind, practice meditation which leads to nirvana).



Meditation is an essential practice to most Buddhists. Buddhists look within themselves for the truth and understanding of Buddha's teachings. They seek enlightenment, or nirvana, this way. Nirvana is freedom from needless suffering and being fully alive and present in one's life. It is not a state that can really be described in words -- it goes beyond words.

After Buddha died, his teachings were gradually written down from what people remembered. The **Pali Canon**, or The Three Baskets, is a collection of Buddha's sayings, his thoughts about them, and rules for Buddhists monks. The Pali Canon was first written on palm leaves which were collected together in baskets.

There are two main types of Buddhism: Theravada, which spread to Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia and Laos, and Mahayana which spread to Nepal, Viet Nam, China, Korea and Japan. Mahayana took on aspects of the cultures where it was practiced and became three distinct branches: Vajrayana Buddhism or **Tibetan Buddhism**, Pure Land Buddhism and **Zen Buddhism**. The **Dalai Lama**, the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism, was exiled from Tibet when the Chinese army invaded in 1959, and he has been living in Dharamsala, India. Buddhists also believe in **karma** and **reincarnation**.

Which religion includes the Four Noble Truths, the Eightfold Path and nirvana?

- a. Hinduism
- b. Islam
- c. Buddhism
- d. Christianity

Which belief is most closely associated with the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha)?

- a. People are born into a specific caste
- b. Believers must follow the Ten Commandments
- c. Followers must fast during Ramadan
- d. People can overcome their desires by following the Eightfold Path.

A goal common to Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism is to

- a. Establish peace and harmony
- b. Provide the basis for democratic government
- c. Return the powers of the emperor
- d. Promote individual artistic creativity

The exchange of silks and spices and the spread of Buddhism along the Silk Roads are examples of

- a. Ethnocentrism
- b. Cultural diffusion
- c. Desertification
- d. Self-sufficiency

Basics of Confucianism

From United Religions Initiative for Kids – www.uri.org

A Chinese **philosopher** named **Confucius** believed that a society could become perfect, if the people who lived in it exhibited "**beautiful conduct**." Confucius was born in 551 B.C.E. He had a government job which he gave up to devote his life to teaching people how to behave. **The Analects** is a collection of moral and ethical principles enunciated by Confucius in conversations with his disciples.



Confucius taught people the following ideas about behavior: Always be considerate to others; respect your ancestors; **try for harmony and balance in all things**; avoid extremes in behavior and emotion; if you live in peace and harmony, then you will be in contact with the spiritual forces of the universe, including nature. Confucius also taught basic virtues like kindness, righteousness, sobriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness.

Confucius taught that your well-being depends directly on the well-being of others. This principle is called Jen. Jen stresses the importance of showing courtesy and loyalty to other people.

Those who practice Confucianism also believe the family and family values are very important. Children are taught to be very respectful of their parents and are taught to obey their parents (**filial piety**).

According to Confucius, each person had a specific place in society and certain duties to fulfill. Confucius hoped that if people knew what was expected of them they would behave correctly. Therefore, he set up **Five Relationships** in which most people are involved. These relationships were

- (1) ruler over subject
- (2) father over son
- (3) elder brother over younger brother
- (4) husband over wife
- (5) friend to friend

All, except the last, involve the authority of one person over another.

Which philosophy is most closely associated with the development of the Chinese civil service system?

- a. Legalism
- b. Taoism
- c. Confucianism
- d. Buddhism

Which belief is most closely associated with the philosophy of Confucianism?

- a. Nirvana
- b. Reincarnation
- c. Prayer
- d. Filial piety

The five relationships taught by Confucius encouraged people to

- a. Improve their position in life
- b. Maintain social and political order
- c. Respect and worship nature
- d. Serve the needs of religious leaders

In China, Confucianism emphasized the idea that

- a. equality should exist between all members of society
- b. salvation could be attained by prayer, meditation, and good deeds
- c. individual goals should be placed ahead of the needs of the group
- d. harmony could be achieved by the proper behavior of each member of a family or society

Basics of Shinto

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Shinto means the way of the gods. **Shintoism** is an ancient religion of **Japan**. It started at least as long ago as 1000 B.C.E. They believe that "spirits" called **kami** live in **natural places** such as in animals, plants, stones, mountains, rivers, people and even the dead.

Shinto places of worship are called shrines and are usually found in beautiful natural settings. The most important kami is **Amaterasu**, the sun goddess. She is believed to be the ancestor to the emperors of Japan. Her shrine is at Ise and is the most important shrine in Japan.

Basics of Taoism

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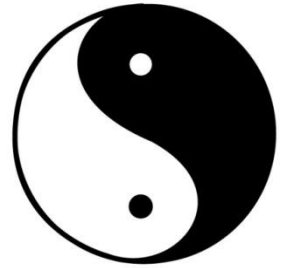
Tao means "way". It is pronounced dow. The Way, according to Taoists, is the spiritual force that underlies the universe and is found in all things.

Taoism was started by the Chinese philosopher Lao Tze, the Supreme master, in the 6th century BCE. It is said that one day Lao Tze left his job and rode off west on an ox. At a mountain pass the guardian asked him to write down his teachings. This is how the sacred book of Tao called the **Tao-Te-Ching** came to be written.

Taoists believe that that they should live in harmony with the Tao or Way. They also began worshiping forces of nature such as the sun, moon, stars and tides. **T'ai Chi** is a set of very controlled, slow-moving exercises that discipline the body and the mind.

What does the **Yin/Yang** Tao symbol stand for?

It represents the harmonious interaction of the two opposing forces in the Universe, male or yin and female or yang.



Basics of Animism

From United Religions Initiative for Kids – www.uri.org

Indigenous peoples' in spiritual practices are based on **spirits in nature** -- the spirits that live in animals, trees, the landscape. They are the spirits that govern the weather, the hunt, the crops -- anything that is life sustaining. They are in the heavens and on earth - so much a part of all that is that they are more than a religion -- they are a sustaining and integral part of life. They answer basic questions about life, death, nature, and medicine.

One similarity between animism and Shinto is that people who follow these belief systems

- a. practice filial piety
- b. worship spirits in nature
- c. are monotheistic
- d. are required to make pilgrimages

One aspect common to both Shinto and Taoism is a

- a. deep reverence and respect for nature
- b. belief in one God
- c. ban on the consumption of pork
- d. belief in the reincarnation of souls

A belief of animism is that

- a. After death the soul is reborn
- b. Holy wars must be fought to gain access to heaven
- c. Meditation leads followers to nirvana
- d. Spirits of nature inhabit all living and non-living things

Name: _____

Date: _____

Religion Questions

Directions: Look through your religions review sheets and answer the following questions.

1. Name the major book and founders for each of the following religions/philosophies:

a. **Judaism:** _____ / _____

b. **Christianity:** _____ / _____

c. **Islam:** _____ / _____

d. **Hinduism:** _____ / _____

e. **Buddhism:** _____ / _____

f. **Confucianism:** _____ / _____

2. How are all of the books mentioned above similar (what does religion provide)?

3. What region of the world produced the three major monotheistic religions? What are the religions?

4. Why has there been a conflict between Jews and Muslims since the late 1940's?

5. Which one of the Five Pillars of Islam did Mansa Musa famously follow in 1324AD?

6. What are some similarities between Buddhism and Hinduism?

7. What are some of the major differences between the three major monotheistic religions and Buddhism and Hinduism?

8. What are the main moral ideas of Hinduism?

9. What is the difference between Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims?

10. Why is Confucianism so much different than all the other belief systems we have looked at?

11. What are the Five Relationships and Filial Piety in Confucianism?

12. How are Animism and Shinto similar?

13. What two religions blended together to form Sikhism?

13. What does Daoism mean?

14. What does the Daoist Yin Yang represent?

15. What is the Hindu Caste System?

16. How were untouchables treated?
