

## Hinduism

Hinduism is not one religion, but rather a family of religions . . . it is fluid and changing. Hinduism is a very complex set of beliefs and instructions that they have derived from ancient scriptures, the Vedas. Hindus have a very wide selection of beliefs and practices to choose from: they can be pantheists, polytheists, monotheists, agnostics and even atheists, but to reach the next level in their reincarnation they must choose and adhere to the teachings that they choose. They believe that they may earn the next level by doing good deeds and in obedience to the path that they have chosen. However, they may degrade themselves to a lower level in the next life if they fail to do good deeds and meet their commitments. India's history has formed the Hindu religion.

The earliest periods of the history of India, before 1750 B.C. are known only through archeology. The earliest settlement found to date, may be around 2375 B.C., and is considered one of the oldest civilizations on earth. The period between 1750 B.C. and 500 B.C. saw important changes in northern India due to the influx of the Indo-European Aryans. It was during the later part of this period that the caste system was established according to myth. The Aryans invaded India during the Indo-European speaking people's movements over western Asia and parts of the Mediterranean region in the second millennium before Christ. They were militarily superior to the inhabitants of the subcontinent. They possessed superior bronze and iron weaponry, and horse-drawn chariots with spoked wheels, thus much lighter and swifter than the native's solid wheeled, ox-drawn carts. The Aryans were highly mobile and military in character, equipped to conquer and rule a cultivating population, and were themselves engaged in agriculture and the herding of cattle. In many respects the Indus Valley civilization which had preceded the Aryan was superior to it, and it was perhaps 1,500 years after its demise that India regained an urban civilization of comparable standard and scope. Between 1500 and 1200 B.C., Aryan tribes invaded India settling in the Punjabi, and they composed hymns which make up the Rig Veda, or writings of sacred knowledge. This is the oldest work of literature in an Indo-European language and it is the oldest living religious literature of the world. Among Indo-European-speaking peoples the Indians are unique in adhering to a religion in direct descent from that of the parent culture. Their ancient religious literature, beginning with the Rig Veda, is astonishingly rich when contrasted with the almost complete absence of surviving ancient Greece and Rome religious literature.

The collection consists of 1,028 hymns to the Vedic deities. They made other collections (Samhitas) to serve the needs of chanting (Sama Veda) or the manual operations of the sacrifice (Yajur Veda), in which the hymns played a vital role. While these secondary collections reproduce much of the Rig Vedic material, reorganized for their particular purposes, a fourth collection, the Atharva Veda, stands apart from the others in that it contains many spells and incantations for medicinal purposes, magical aids to victory in battle, and the like. A series of works complements the Vedic collections called Brahmanas, about 800-600 B.C. which explains the hymns, their ritual application, their mythology, and speculations on the mystic and the sacrifice itself. Vedic literature also contains a third series of works, the Aranyakas, appearing around 600 B.C. and Upanishads about 600-300 B.C., which carry these speculations almost to monotheism. Finally, a series of ancillary works provides the Vedic scholarship, all of them deriving from the sacrifice and its requirements: grammar, phonetics, metrics, astronomy, ritual, etc., the last comprising both the greater public sacrifices and the domestic ritual, out of which later grew a legal literature. Although only a fraction of the Vedic literature covers the Aryan religion, it is most important to the Hindus. This domestic religion is recognizably akin to that of other Indo-European-speaking peoples, especially the early Greeks and Romans. This Indian culture and conditions developed and altered this Indo-European heritage which is the part of Vedic religion which survives today, in the marriage ceremony and the offerings to the dead.

In the Aryan household there is a sacred fire, kindled at the time of the establishment of the household, that is, during the marriage ceremony. This is no ordinary fire: it must not be used for cooking other mundane purposes; they must fuel it with certain kinds of wood; they must kindle it in a special manner, by rubbing together the sticks; it must not be allowed to burn out. The household must make daily burnt offerings to the gods in this fire. He is obliged to perform three times daily what they call the "Five Great Sacrifices of the worship of Brahman," the world-spirit, which consists in the teaching of the Vedas; the father worships by offering nourishment of food and water; the worship of the gods with burnt offerings; the worship of Bhutan, the living beings or spirits, by scattering grain in the four directions and the center, in the air and on the household utensils, and by placing food of the threshold for outcasts, animals, birds and insects; and the worship of men by extending hospitality to an Aryan, by preference a Brahmin learned in Vedas.

Many small kingdoms and a feudal system developed between 500 B.C. and 600 A.D. The invasion of the Arabs came in the late 7th and early 8th centuries but they halted their movement into western India around 725 A.D. and deposed the local chiefs. The Caliph ruled the land but continued the Muslim influence and the Turkish involvement in the 12th century extended the Muslim influences. The Muslim state of Bahmani lasted until about 1527 and was essentially replaced by a more moderate Mughul rule which lasted until 1761. One of its major influences was the introduction of the monotheistic idea. During this time the European influences steadily grew and the British Empire became established. The British did not try to totally exploit India and did assist in helping the economy of the country. The late 1800s and the rise of Indian nationalism were challenging the British colonialism continued in earnest into the twentieth century. By the end of the second World War the move for independence was unstoppable and India gained her independence. The British had established the infrastructure for India and a government bureaucracy during their reign that could serve the new nation. However, the British did little to alter the religious and social systems in India. The caste system that developed before 500 B.C. is still very much in force in India and the British considered themselves the highest caste. The myth of how the caste system started is that four groups emerged from the god Prajapati. Brahmins came from his mouth, the Ksatriyas from his arms, the Vaisyas from his thighs, and the Sudras from his feet. These make up the four varnas which are the four major castes of the Indian society. These varnas essentially dictate the social and economic lives of the Indians. Castes have any number of levels within them. India with the surrounding countries makes up a large portion of the people who

ascribe to the Hindu religion. The people are divided into several religious and social castes but the main distinction is one of economics. There is a small rich class and a smaller middle income class and the vast majority of the people are very poor. The female of any caste is considered lower and subservient to the male. In a family the oldest male is the family leader and decision maker and dominates the family in all affairs especially in the religious and ancestral areas. He chooses the mates for his children and enters a marriage contract with the prospective partner's father. The individual freedoms are totally subservient to these policies. In modern times, the middle class and the upper class Indians have taken to more western ways and the freedoms of the individual expanded although it is not a universal policy among these groups. In the urban areas the lower castes have sometimes adopted these practices.

Hinduism has a history of some 3,000 years and approximately 700 million people embrace it in modern times. It is a very diverse religion and cannot be defined as any specific set of gods, rules or practices. It was not started by any particular person or idea as were most of the modern religions. Hinduism, like all major religions, has had to endure the modern age onslaught of nationalistic movements, social reforms, interfaces and encounters between other religions, modern scientific communication and exposure to different cultures. The last few hundred years have been difficult for any religion particularly ones that are set in tradition, but without strict guidelines as is Hinduism.

There are three major gods in Hinduism, Brahma, the chief god; Vishnu, intervenes for humanity; and Shiva the destroyer, god of death and destruction. These three make up the Brahmin. There are also three lesser gods, Ganesha, the elephant god, god of strength; Nandi, the bull god and god of all quadrupeds; and Krishna, Vishnu in man on earth.

Muslim influences were felt in Hinduism early on but Christianity has had an important effect on Hinduism. The British rule of 300 years did little to foster Christianity until the nineteenth century when they permitted missionaries to enter the country and bring the gospel to the Indians. According to tradition, the disciple Thomas brought Christianity to India in the first century, 44 A.D. However, Christianity really got its start from the Baptist William Carey (1761-1834). One scholar suggests that Carey was one of the first missionaries who used the social condition of the people to assist in preaching the gospel because he tried to improve their living conditions, educate them, and save their souls. The lower caste and the poor were particularly responsive to his effort to raise their standard of living. The problem Carey experienced is the same as some modern missionaries face today. Indians will convert to Christianity in the services because they (particularly the lower caste) like the new hope and improved social conditions it brings, but many also just place Jesus along side of all their other gods. They really have not understood the uniqueness of Christ and His salvation. Besides these activities Carey tried to change the social and religious practices that were in such direct contrast to Christianity, such as Suttee and the child marriages and the carnage that these practices brought about upon the death of the older husband. Although these practices apparently were more a social tradition than a religious tradition, they commonly practiced them among all castes. These were later outlawed through the works of Hindu reformers.

The late nineteenth and twentieth centuries saw several reform movements in Hinduism. One of the earliest reformers was Ram Mohan Roy (1774-1833), who opposed suttee and pressured the British government to outlaw the practice in 1829. Roy pushed many reforms that were consistent with Christianity but he denied the divinity of Jesus. He was oriented toward monotheism and sought to suppress the polytheism of Hinduism. His work was continued by the BrahmoSamaj, he organized and became a force in the betterment of India in the succeeding centuries.

Sri Ramakrishna, who was once a priest of Kali, was another of the religious reformer of the nineteenth century. He was convinced that behind all religions was a single reality that might be called God. His teachings were carried forth by Vivekananda who traveled widely preaching his message. The next great reformer was Mohandas K. Gandhi who pressed the British for political and social reforms and benefits for his people. Gandhi, who was a lawyer, led the fight for independence through religious idealism and civil disobedience but a staunch nonviolent advocate. He held to the Hinduism traditions and was greatly influenced by the Jain practices of non-injury to any form of life. An assassin's bullet killed him just months before they achieved his goal of independence for India.

The reformers and the missionaries tried to reform the caste system. By modern time the four varnas had expanded to literally thousands of castes taking into consideration all types of workers, professions, races, marriage, residence and social status. Although one was born into a caste and could not escape, many departed from their homes and changed their caste by going to another area. The poor had a very difficult time in making this transition because they had no means of training for a new vocation. Multiple castes dominated every aspect of the lives of their members and rules forbade much social intercourse among members of different castes. The untouchables came into existence and had no hope for any improvement and their religion justified their status as outcastes, because their karma dictated their lot from a previous life. These are the most vulnerable to the teachings of any other religion that gives them hope.

In the modern world, Hinduism is struggling to maintain its hold on the teeming millions of believers. The world's largest democracy is having to deal with the discriminatory issues of the caste system, and modern problems, such as birth control and the problems raised by urbanization. In the past, people were taught to accept their lot in life and not complain. Hinduism promised a better life in the new one to come if they obeyed their present karma.

The ancient conflicts between Hindu and Muslim in India are also still an issue. A further complication arose in the 1980s when the Sikhs demanded their independence. The bloodshed that occurred in past wars between religions seems likely to continue into the future.

Hinduism is an ancient religion and has absorbed many challenges over the centuries. New religions arise and are absorbed by Hinduism. Social changes have come and gone and Hinduism continues to be a viable force in the lives of millions. Its temples, gods, festivals, and practices continue to fulfill a need in the lives of Indians.

The caste system originated at the end of the Vedic era. Hindu priests grew in power and the rise of Brahmanism became the major religious force and the caste system developed into four distinct groups:

- 1) The Brahmans are the priestly caste and are considered as direct descendants of the Aryans. They came from the mouth of Brahma who assigned them their duties. They are the highest caste.
- 2) The ruling or warriors' caste is called Kshatriya. They have some Aryan ancestry but are not pure Aryan. They came from the arms of Brahma.
- 3) The common people, the manual workers, the artisans, farmers and merchants are in the Vaishya caste and came from the thighs of Brahma.
- 4) The non-aryan servant caste is the Shudra caste. They came from the feet of Brahma.
- 5) Another group which is casteless is called the untouchables.

One is born into a caste and cannot leave the caste except through reincarnation. The castes do not intermarry or interact socially, they maintain complete separation.

Yoga presents four paths to salvation which determine reincarnation.

- 1) Karma Yoga is the path of works and deeds. Each man owes a debt to the gods
  - a) owe gods sacrifices and good works
  - b) owe teachers dedicated study of the Vedas
  - c) owe ancestral spirits offspring
  - d) owe fellow men hospitality and kindness

If one faithfully discharges these duties then according to Hinduism **"all is won."**

This path leads to a higher existence in the next life but not to Nirvana. This path is not available to the Brahman and considered as probably inferior to the others.

2) Raja Yoga is the path of psychological exercises through meditation and mysticism. One pursues knowledge through spiritual exercises. This would lead to a higher status in the next life, but not to Nirvana.

3) Bhakti is the way of love and devotion and is the most popular way for the common people. One selects a specific god and spends his life in devotion to that god, usually with a private altar in the home.

4) Nyaya is the way of knowledge, they believe that ignorance is the cause of all suffering and human misery. Adherence to this method will lead to Nirvana through four stages:

- a) A student, at about the age of 12, moves in with a teacher. The student vows to obey the teacher, learn everything the teacher can teach him and be dedicated to his studies. The teacher only provides knowledge and the student feeds himself through begging on the streets.
- b) After the student has spent about ten years with the teacher and becomes a man, he marries the bride selected for him by his parents and sets up housekeeping. He meets his obligation to his ancestors by having children.
- c) At old age he enters a hermit or wandering stage, becomes a forest dweller and remains isolated from the world developing an indifference to the world.
- d) After he has become completely unattached to the material world, he becomes a holy man and upon his death he has reached Nirvana. He is dealing only with the spiritual.

## The Code of Manu

Manu is defined in the mythology of India as the first man, and the legendary author of an important Sanskrit code of law, the Manu-smṛti. The name is a combination of the European word "man," and the Sanskrit verb, "to think." Manu appears in the Vedas as the performer of the first sacrifice. He is also known as the first king, and most rulers of medieval India traced their genealogy back to him, through either his son (the solar line) or his daughter (the lunar line).

In the story of the great flood, Manu combines the characteristics of Noah with those of Adam. The Satapatha Brahmana recounts how he was warned by a fish that a flood would destroy the whole of mankind. He therefore built a boat, as the fish advised. When the flood came, he tied this boat to the fish's horn and was safely steered to a resting place on a mountaintop. When the flood receded, Manu, the sole survivor of mankind, performed a sacrifice, pouring oblations of butter and sour milk into the waters.

After a year there was born from the waters, a woman, who announced herself as "the daughter of Manu." These two became the ancestors of a new mankind to replenish the earth. In the Mahabharata the fish is identified with the god Brahma, while in the Puranas it is Marsya, the fish incarnation of the lord Vishnu. The Manu-smṛti, Tradition of Manu, is attributed to Manu and in its present form dates from the first century B.C. This code was probably written sometime between 300 B.C. and A.D. 300, approximately one thousand years after the Old Testament account of Adam and Noah.

In the cosmological speculations of later Hinduism, a day in the life of Brahma is divided into 14 periods called manvantara, each of which lasts for 306,720,000 years. In every secondary cycle the world is recreated, and a new Manu appears to become the father of the next human race. The present age is considered the seventh Manu cycle.

The Manusmṛti is the most authoritative book of the Hindu code. It details the obligations of the individual as a member of one of the four social classes (varnas) and engaged in one of the four stages of life. It contains 12 chapters of stanzas, which total 2,694. It describes the creation of the universe, the definition of the dharma, the sacraments, initiation and study of the Veda, marriage, hospitality, obsequies, dietary restrictions, pollution and means of purification, the conduct of women and wives, and the law of kings. The law of kings leads to a consideration of matters of juridical interest, divided under 18 headings after which the text returns to religious topics, such as donation, rites of reparation, the doctrine of Karma, the soul, and hell. The text makes no

categorical distinction between religious law and practices and secular law in its treatment. Its influence has been monumental, and it has provided the caste Hindu with a system of practical morality.

A basic assumption of the Code of Manu is the varna system, which developed from the early Aryan divisions of society. In the Code of Manu the divisions are seen as divinely ordained and consisted of four divisions as given in Question 2.2 above.

They call the first three "twice born" and the fourth, the Shudras, the "once born." Members of each group have certain specified duties and opportunities, and must obey them only. For the Brahmins (Brahmins), he created teaching, studying, sacrifice, officiating at sacrifice, giving gifts, and accepting gifts. For the Kshatriya, he created in short the protection of people, giving gifts, performing sacrifices, studying, and non-attachment to sense pleasures. For the Vaishya, he created the protection of cattle, charity, performance of sacrifices, studying, trading, lending on interest, and agriculture. The Lord created only one profession for the Shudra: service without envy of the above three castes.

People were expected to begin life as Shudras, serve willingly and obediently, and gradually move from life to life through the system until they came to the exalted rank of Brahmin. Thus, even at this early stage Indian society was stratified into fixed classes, and the only mobility through these classes was by means of reincarnation. The Code of Manu also shows the state of the understanding of reincarnation at this period.

The Code of Manu also describes the various stages of a successful life. In the first stage of life the boy is a student, studying the Vedas and giving careful attention to a teacher. In the second stage he is a householder and marries within his social class. The family of the man may have arranged for a marriage at an early age for their son and he had no input into the selection. In the ideal marriage described in the Code of Manu is that the man will be considerably older than his wife. "A man, when he enters the stage of the householder, if he is thirty years of age, should marry a girl of twelve whom he likes. A man of twenty-four may marry a girl of eight." This stage is the most important, for the home is considered the cornerstone of society. When his children are grown and he has reached the place where his home is not dependent on him, he may retreat to the forest and live there for some years as a hermit, meditating and offering sacrifices. In this time one learns non-attachment to the things of the world. Finally, he enters the next stage. These four stages are only the ideals of the twice-born males (the three higher castes); the role of the Shudra is to serve the higher castes. The four stages of life are also only for men. Women are supposed to stay in the home under the control and protection of the chief male of the household.

The Code of Manu is mainly a statement of the moral and ethical for the believer

### Jainism

Jainism is derived from the Shramanas, the ancient religious teachers, and was started by Mahavira in the sixth century. Mahavira believed that through suffering, self denial and asceticism he could find truth. The Jainism teachers are distinguished from the Brahmins by their doctrine of salvation through atheism and asceticism. It is related to an Indian religion because it adheres to the beliefs of transmigration and liberation of the soul, but rejects the Hinduism/Brahmanical institutions of caste and sacrifice. Jainism denies the idea of a personal transcendent - immanent God.

There are some resemblances between Buddhism and Jainism which do not necessarily show that they derive the one from the other, but that they started at about the same intellectual and historical period. Buddhism developed greater appeal to the people and surpassed and overshadowed Jainism. Jainism was less corrupt, and more characterized by charitable actions, and has survived in India, while Buddhism is almost extinct in India. There are many similarities in titles given to the saints or prophets in both, such as Tathagata, Buddha, Mahavira, Arhat, etc., but one set of titles is more frequently used by the one, another by the other. It is noteworthy that the word Tirthankara, describing a prophet of the Jains, is used in the Buddhist scriptures for the founder of a heretical sect. Both lay great stress on not killing living creatures; both worship their prophets and other saints, and have statues of them in their temples; both believe in enormous periods of time before the present age. The rejection of the divine authority of the Vedas and of the sway of the Brahmins is also common to the two. There is further almost an identity between the five vows of the Jain ascetics and those of the Buddhist monks: namely not to destroy life, not to lie, not to take that which is not given, to live a life of purity, and to renounce all worldly things (the last being much more comprehensive than the corresponding Buddhist vow); but it appears that the first four were equally the vows of the Brahman ascetics. There are other points in the life of the Jain monks which agree substantially with rules laid down for the Brahman ascetics.

Both Hinduism and Jainism accept the law of Karma which assumes that every deliberate action has its own consequence and pursues the doer, often beyond the grave into the next life. All Indian religions believe in this efficacy of karma, and also in a psychic body or soul as a mechanism for the transference of deeds from one birth to the other. The difference in the karma belief between Hinduism and Jainism is in Hinduism the good deeds performed can offset the bad deeds and remove their consequences from the soul. In Jainism the bad karmas are deposited in and on the human soul and can only be purged through self induced suffering. Another important difference between the Brahmanical and Buddhist beliefs and the Jain's belief deals with the dietary laws. The Brahman's sacrifice animals and even eat certain meat dishes on particular occasions, the Buddhists freely eat meat provided by others while the Jains absolutely forbid meat, alcohol and honey and refrain from killing anything and practice complete nonviolence.

The Jains is an important body of religionists in India, more for their wealth and influence than their numbers and piety. They control about half the commercial mercantile businesses in India. Till comparatively recently they were believed to be quite a modern sect of Hindus, at any rate not much more than a thousand years old, but the careful researches of several scholars have led them to the belief that Jainism is slightly older than, Buddhism, and started in the same development of Brahman asceticism and withdrew from Brahmanical tyranny.

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Some of the main points of the Jain religion that must be offset or contrasted with the Christian religion are:

- (1) Every deliberate action has its own consequence and pursues the doer even beyond the grave. The Jains believe that their good deeds cannot offset their sins as do the Hindus, but self induced suffering must purge them of their sins in this life or carry their sins into the next life. The Christian knows that Christ took all our sins to the cross and through His sacrifice all our sins were washed away. [\(45\)](#) We will go into eternal life forgiven of all sins. [\(46\)](#) The Jains believe they must continue this reoccurring life cycle until they progress to a near sinless life, a point of enlightenment and reach Nirvana.
- (2) The good deeds of the Jains are recognized as a necessary part of their life, but they cannot use the good deeds to offset their sins as with the Hindus. In Christianity, Christ said that He comes quickly and brings our rewards with him. We will store treasures in heaven [\(47\)](#) for our good deeds and we will be rewarded. [\(48\)](#)
- (3) The Jains do not believe in an omnipotent, omniscient and personal God, they believe in a transcendent force that encompasses all the universe and all living things are a part of this force. Because of this belief, they refrain from killing anything and are completely nonviolent. This belief forbids them to eat any flesh or use any part of a living creature. The Christian is told that all things are pure for his good. [\(49\)](#)
- (4) The Jains believe that it is up to them to do the impossible and not sin, they have no external source to aid them. The Christians know that not to sin is impossible, but we are forgiven and when we have difficulty we can call on the Lord and that all things are possible through Christ who strengthens us. [\(50\)](#)
- (5) Only man was created in God's image, and other creatures, although God's creation, do not have living souls and are under the dominion of man. The Jains place all living creatures on the same plane.

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## Cited References

- [\(45\) I John 1:9](#) If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [Return](#)
- [\(46\) Hebrews 8:12](#) For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. [Return](#)
- [\(47\) Matthew 6:20](#) But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: [Return](#)
- [\(48\) Revelation 22:12](#) And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. [Return](#)
- [\(49\) Romans 14:20](#) For meat destroy not the work of God. All things indeed are pure; but it is evil for that man who eateth with offence. [Return](#)
- [\(50\) Matthew 19:26; Mark 9:23; 14:36.](#) [Return](#)

### Buddhism

The term Buddha, literally means "awakened or enlightened one," and is not a proper name but a title, such as a messiah or the Christ. But the title is not a unique person and there will be as many Buddhas, in the future as there has been in the past. The personal name of the Buddha is Gautama, in Sanskrit, or Gotama, in Pali. Therefore, in using the name Buddha in modern times refers to Gautama the Buddha.

The Buddha was born about the year 563 B.C. in the kingdom of the Shakyas on the borders of present-day Nepal and India. As the son of Suddhodana, the king, and Mahamaya, the queen, the Buddha thus came from a Ksatriya family, the warrior caste or ruling class.

The account of the Buddha's life begins with a dream of his mother, Mahamaya, had before he was born. In this dream a white elephant entered her womb through her side. Brahmins foretold the birth of a son who would become either a universal monarch or a Buddha. She gave birth to the Buddha in a curtained enclosure in the Lumbini park on the full-moon day of the month of May. The site of his birth, now called Rummidei, lies within the territory of Nepal. Immediately upon hearing of the birth of the Buddha, the sage Asita (also called Kala Devala), who was King Suddhodan's teacher and religious adviser, went to see the child. From the signs on the child's body, Asita recognized that this child would one day become a Buddha, and he was overjoyed, but also sad because he would not remain alive to see the child's subsequent enlightenment. Both the sage and the King worshiped the child. On the fifth day after birth, for the name-giving ceremony, they invited 108 Brahmins, among whom eight were specialists in interpreting bodily marks. Of these eight specialists, seven predicted two possibilities: if the child remained at home, he would become a universal monarch; if he left home, he would become a Buddha. However, the youngest of the eight, predicted that he would definitely become a Buddha and he later became one of the Buddha's companions and was one of his first five disciples. The child was given the name Siddhartha (Pali Siddhatta), which means "one whose aim is accomplished."

His mother died shortly after his birth and his aunt brought up the child. A significant incident in the Buddha's boyhood is recorded in ancient Pali commentaries. They took the little Siddhartha to a festival, in which the King, with his ministers and the ordinary farmers, took part, according to the traditional custom of the Sakyas. The boy was left with his nurses in a tent under a jambu tree.

The nurses left the Prince alone in the tent and when they returned, they found the boy seated cross legged, absorbed in a trance. They immediately informed the King and saw his little son in the posture of a yogin, and he worshiped the child a second time. Buddha's father always worried that his son might leave home to become a homeless ascetic as the Brahmins had predicted, and he took every care to influence him in favor of a worldly life.

At the age of 16, Siddhartha married his cousin, a princess named Yasodhara, also 16 years old.

The turning point in Gautama's life came when he was 29 years old. As tradition states, Buddha witnessed the misery and suffering of the day and after a son was born, he renounced his princely life to become a wandering ascetic. As an ascetic Gautama Buddha went south to the centers of learning and spiritual learning. Gautama searched for teachers to instruct him in the way of truth. Alara Kalama a renowned sage accepted Gautama as his pupil. Gautama studied and rapidly mastered Alara's whole system and soon attained the same mystical state of "sphere on nothing" (akincannayatna). Gautama was seeking the absolute truth, Nirvana. He then went to Uddaka Ramaputta, another great teacher, who taught him to attain the "sphere of neither perception nor nonperception" (Pali nevasannanasannayatana), a higher mystical state than the former. Gautama, however, was not satisfied with this either and searched further for the truth. Traveling through the Magadha country, a group of five ascetics joined Gautama there, among whom was Kondanna, the Brahmin who had predicted at the name-giving ceremony that the child Siddhartha would definitely become a Buddha one day.

Gautama's real struggle in his search for the truth began at Uruvela, where for six years, he practiced various forms of severe austerities and extreme self-punishment. Because of all these severe bodily austerities, Gautama became weak and he realized that such punishments could not lead him to the higher truth he sought, so he changed his ways. His followers left him. Gautama remained alone in Uruvela, regained his health and strength, and then followed his own path to enlightenment. This occurred while Gautama was seated under a banyan tree. He was tempted by the evil one, Mara, but defeated him by meditating on the 10 great virtues he had perfected during his past lives. Those who reach for the title Buddha must perfect this enlightenment during innumerable lives, and reach perfection in the virtues of charity, morality, renunciation, wisdom, effort, patience, truth, determination, universal love, and equanimity. Thus, Gautama, at the age of 35, attained the Enlightenment, or Awakening, and became a supreme Buddha. After his Enlightenment the Buddha spent several weeks in Uruvela, meditating on the various aspects of the dharma, the truth that he had realized. Four weeks after his Enlightenment, again seated under a banyan tree, the Buddha decided to teach the new enlightenment and accepted five ascetics. Enthusiasm for this new movement became so impelling that 50 of their friends also joined them. All these became arahants in due course, and the Buddha soon had 60 disciples who were perfected ones. The 60 disciples went in various directions to spread the teaching of the Buddha. Many people, including the King, became his lay disciples. The Buddha and his new teaching became so popular that they built monasteries for him and his sangha in most of the important cities in the valley of the Ganges, and the number of his followers among all classes of people increased rapidly.

Many myths accompanied the growth of Buddhism and they fell into two categories, those concerning the historical Buddha Gautama and those concerning the Celestial Buddha. The cosmological myths dealt with the rebirths and reincarnation and the religious myths were used to perfect man and strengthen radical religious insights. Many myths were fabricated to justify or explain traditionally accepted beliefs and/or practices.

## **The Death of the Buddha**

Unlike the preceding years, the last few weeks of the Buddha's life are recorded in great detail in the Mahaparinibbana Sutta (Discourse Concerning the Entry into Final Nirvana). Mara the Evil One confronted the Buddha during his last days, as, according to the tradition, he had done often during the Buddha's life. Nevertheless, the Buddha had always defeated Mara and grew spiritually each time. On this occasion he again urged the Buddha to retire from the earthly scene and enter final nirvana, and receive his just reward. But this time Mara received what might be favorable response. Buddha assured Mara that he would die and enter nirvana in three months. The narrative makes it clear however that there was no comfort to be derived from this fact by Mara, since the Order of Buddhist Brethren and the Order of the Sisters, and lay disciples of both sexes, were now thoroughly established. They had become 'true hearers, wise and well-trained, ready and learned, . . . able to tell others of the doctrine, preach it, make it known, establish it . . . and make it clear.' There was in existence a Buddhist missionary task force ready and able to witness to the Dhamma and instruct converts in the Buddhist way. The Evil One could find little comfort in the Buddha's death, because his enemy had grown in size and stature. Seven days after the Buddha's death at Kushinagara, a small town (modern Kasia) to the northwest of Patna and just to the south of the border of Nepal, they cremated his body. The occasion was marked by ceremonies of the kind which in those days were observed at the death of a king. Each of the eight clan-groups received items of the Buddha, and after the cremation they built a sacred cairn over their portion of the artifacts, a form of memorial known in India as a stupa. The stupa became the object of the Buddhist devotions, and eventually, developed into the form known in South-East Asia as a "pagoda."

The Buddhist's doctrine incorporates what has become known as the Four Holy Truths. They consist of:

- 1) Life is suffering - the affirmation that all mortal existence is characterized by Dukkha. This term encompasses the whole range of evil, such as wicked, satanic, heinous, sinister, ill, imperfection, disease etc. Dukkha will surface during the life time of the individual and they will sense that all is not well.
- 2) Suffering has a cause - The second truth is that of samodaya, or the awareness of this sense of uneasiness, it comes from craving or desire. This can be the soul searching for truth or purely worldly desires seeking satisfaction.

3) They can suffer - The third truth is nirodha, or the cessation of desire. The absence of desire is also called nirvana, the ideal state of being. To be in this ideal state is to be nibbuta, healthy and well. All passion, hatred greed, and illusion are gone.

4) Suppression of suffering is the 8 - fold pathway - The fourth truth is that there is a way to such cessation of desire, to such health, to such a pure state of being, that this is the path, magga, pioneered by the Buddha, which others may also learn. The right thought or right attitudes, with action attained through meditation and this interaction and interrelationship is characterized by the Eightfold Path of the Buddhist's life. These attitudes and thoughts are:

- 1) **Right understanding**
- 2) **Right thought**
- 3) **Right speech**
- 4) **Right bodily action**
- 5) **Right livelihood**
- 6) **Right moral effort**
- 7) **Right mindfulness**
- 8) **Right concentration**

The adherents to Theravada believe in the plurality of universes. Every universe has three planes:

- a) **a sphere of desire,**
- b) **a sphere of material form,**
- c) **a sphere of immaterial or formless.**

The creatures are divided into several species such as demons, ghosts, animals, men, gods and demigods and all matter is made up of four elements, earth, water, fire and air, held together in various combinations. Time is also defined in cycles where there are periods of destruction, of stability, of renewal and of duration, then the cycle repeats. All these capacities and activities are reduced to a series of dhammas, instant points in continual motion or changing states, subject to appearing, aging, and disappearing. The Mahayanaist contends that there is no ultimate, real entities so far as the empirical world is concerned. It is as illogical to regard any of these dhammas as real as it is to regard the human soul as real. All is flux, and the method of the Buddha was intended to show this, providing no final resting place at all within the empirical world, not even in dhammas. They pursued the analytical method and claimed the dhammas were just arbitrary stopping places. They claimed there were termination or stopping places for the analytical analysis because all was in flux and nothing was absolute. The Mahayanaist sought to maintain a neutralist position. Even though these differences exist between the Mahayanaist and the Theravadaist movements, the differences are primarily differences in emphasis and they are very tolerant of each other, as in keeping with the Buddhist traditions.

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## **Sikhism**

Guru Nanak was born in 1469 A.D. His parents lived in the village of Talvandi, forty miles west-south-west of Lahore and now known as Nankana Sahib. Nanak spent his childhood and early manhood in this village, which a Muslim governed convert who tried to reconcile Hinduism and Islam. This man had an influence on the religious thinking of Nanak. He married and had two sons. While still a young man Nanak moved to Sultanpur and entered the service of the local nawab. About the year 1500, Nanak left Sultanpur and adopted the way of a wandering ascetic searching for truth. At the age of 33 he was said to have received his divine calling. He believed that there was truth in both Hinduism and Islam and attempted to extract the best of each consistent with his beliefs. The janam-sakhis detail his travels in the many years that he spent traveling around India and to other lands. His travels were probably terminated during the Babur's invasions. In the latter years he built the village of Kartarpur and spent the rest of his life there dying there in September 1539. Prior to his death, Nanak appointed a successor, Lahina, who introduced the doctrine of Nanak's equality with God. A series of Gurus followed Lahina and after the tenth guru the loyalty of the Sikhs was transferred from the personal authority of the guru to the sacred book, the Granth Sahib.

The Sikh religion consists of knowing God, or in obtaining God, or being absorbed into God. This the general method of salvation by a pantheistic merging of the individual self with the mystical world soul, similar to the Hindu teachings.

Sikhism's teachings and beliefs come from both Hinduism and Islam. The beliefs that come from Islam are:

- 1) **They believe in one sovereign god, "True Name."**
- 2) **They believe in the brotherhood of all men, all men are equal, no caste system.**
- 3) **They believe that man is the highest form of created animals.**
- 4) **They believe that God dwells within the world and in each human heart.**
- 5) **They are anti-idolatrous and anti-ritualistic.**
- 6) **They stress that the religious life requires social obligations.**
- 7) **They were initially pacifists and later became almost militant like Islamic fundamentalist, and very loyal to their cause.**

From Hinduism the Sikhs believe:

- 1) **The world is transient and is passing away.**
- 2) **They should be detached from all worldly goods.**

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### **Confucianism**

Confucius was born in Ch'u-fu in the small feudal state of Lu, Shantung Province, in 551 B.C. His family name was K'ung and his personal name Ch'iu, but he is referred to as either K'ung-tzu or K'ung-fu-tzu (Master K'ung) throughout Chinese history. The

name Confucius was derived from European writings in the 18th Century. Confucius' family was quite poor, and both his parents died while he was quite young. As a teenager he distinguished himself as an indefatigable learner and was considered an informed young scholar. He held minor government posts managing stables and keeping books for granaries before he married a woman of similar background when he was 19. He sought out teaching masters and became proficient in six arts -- ritual, music, archery, charioteering, calligraphy and arithmetic and his familiarity with the classical traditions, poetry and history, enabled him to start a teaching career in his 30s. In his late 40s and early 50s Confucius served as a magistrate, then as an assistant minister of public works and eventually as minister of justice in the state of Lu. At 56, when he realized that his superiors were uninterested in his policies, Confucius left the country and remained in self-imposed exile about 12 years. At the age of 67 he returned home to teach and to write. He died in 479 B.C. at the age of 73. His followers at that time numbered around 3,000.

Confucius' teachings consisted of four main elements, Man, Propriety, Education and Government. He taught that man should be considered in relation to his fellow man. He stressed the importance of man's place in society, man's empathy for his fellow man and a doctrine of self interest or enlightenment. His ethics of man consisted of three parts, shu = reciprocity, jen = goodness for goodness sake, and chung = conscientiousness or determination. Propriety or Li was the teaching of the outward norm for human conduct in both worship and family relationships. In worship teachings, Confucius stressed that the attitude and motivation for worship were the dominant values not the outward display. In family relationships he stressed mutual respect for all members of the family and that age should be honored. These personal relationships he taught that the law is impersonal and appeals to the will, while, Li is from the heart and affects all aspects of life. In Education, Confucius stated the goal of education is to make gentlemen and that education was for all people. Education should build noble, moral character and the wealthy should educate the poor. Confucius did not stress technical education or crafts, he stated that education should cover history, literature and philosophy. Confucius was also concerned with the behavior of rulers and officials in government. He was not interested in the political aspect of government but in the moral aspect of the men. He believed that good men must be in control of the government to solve problems that affect the people. Confucius believed and taught that the Te', the moral force within rulers, was contagious, and, if reflected by the men in government, the country would become more moral. Good government was more important to Confucius than it was to any other world religion Confucius wanted to show the people the way to happiness and prosperity and good moral character.

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## Taoism

Lao-Tzu is said to have written the *Tao-te Ching*, a primary Taoist writing. Some modern scholars discount the possibility that the *Tao-te Ching* was written by but one person, but readily acknowledge the influence of Taoism on the development of Buddhism. Lao-Tzu is venerated as a philosopher by Confucianists and as a saint or god by some of the common people and was worshiped as an Imperial ancestor during the T'ang dynasty (618-907).

Little is known of the personal life of Lao-Tzu and the principal source of information about his life is a biography in the *Shih-chi* (Historical Records). It is believed that Lao-Tzu was a native of Ch'u-jen, in the Hu district of the state of Ch'u, or the eastern part of Honan Province. He was appointed to the office of historian, Shih, in the royal court of the Chou dynasty (1111-255 B.C.). The scholars of the court were specialists in astrology and divination and were in charge of the sacred books. During this time Lao-Tzu is supposed to have met Confucius, who was about 50 years his junior. Lao-Tzu is supposed to have embarked on a legendary voyage to the west and was stopped at the border. He was not allowed to pass until he had written the *Tao-te Ching*. Many stories have surfaced over the years on the life of Lao-Tzu but the biographers have discounted most.

Taoism is more of a philosophy than a religion and is thought of in three ways;

**1) as philosophy of nature;**

**2) as a religion by most western nations**

**3) as a system of magical and mystical practices.**

It has a group of basic teachings such as: There is a basic unity in the universe where all things are really part of an undefinable force called The Way. Man passes from the Way into this physical life and returns to the Way when he dies. The Way is like a continuous stream of water with no discernible beginning or ending and no degradation, but an endless progression toward perfection. Like a fast stream of water nothing can stand against it. It will erode away the effects of the world on a person and one cannot win against the force. Therefore one should not struggle against it, but be content in what the Way has given him, his physical and spiritual being and circumstance. The Way also teaches that all of the efforts, accomplishments and dreams of man are for naught because all will be destroyed by the Tao, therefore, one should seek to live a quiet peaceful life within the confines of what the Tao has given. Taoism teaches that life is the greatest of all possibilities and that everything but life is doomed to decay and destruction. Life will reenter the Way. Life should be lived in simplicity and one should turn his back on civilization and the growth in technical things. One should keep the simple life and be content with what the Tao has given and live as a child, without worry and without the conflicts that the world puts on people. The Way teaches that since all things will pass away, pomp and glory are not worthy of being sought. They despise all fame, glory and prestige because they take one away from the life style sought by the believers. There is harmony in all things and total polarity, so expect evil and seek good. Seek the positive things of a simple life and maintain and be concerned only with the quality of life on a day to day basis.

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# Animism

Animism is the belief in innumerable spiritual beings concerned with human affairs and can help or harm man's interests. In animism a soul or spiritual being is attributed to and is indwelling in all animate and inanimate entities. Sir Edward Burnett Tylor in his work, *Primitive Culture*, indicates that possibly all religions came from this type of belief. Since the "great" religions of the world have all evolved in historic times, it may be assumed that animistic emphases dominated the globe in the prehistoric era, so states Tylor. In full-blown animism nothing is really inanimate; everything is alive with spirit, active or not. Tylor observed, they regard every individual as endowed not only with a life-spirit but also with a phantom, such as appears to others in dreams or visions. They perceive that both life and phantom were separable from the body: the life as able to go away and leave it insensible or dead, and the phantom as appearing to people at a distance. They also believed that the combination of the life and the phantom produced the apparitional soul or ghost-soul. This ghost-soul was capable of entering into, possessing, and acting in animals, plants, and objects, like weapons, clothing and food. In some circles they believe that the animistic belief evolved into the idea of a universal soul that contained the "spirit" of all things and these individual spirits came from the universal force and returned to it upon death. In the modern anthropological usage of the term animism, it denotes not a single creed or doctrine but rather a view of the world consistent with a certain range of religious beliefs and practices, many of which may survive in more complex and hierarchical religions.

Animism is universal. The early cave painters in SW France painted the elk and believed the elk had a spirit/ghostly personality, associated with magic. Also, in Bedouin cultures in near East today, the farmer kneels at the edge of his garden to pray to the "grain-deity"/juin for a good crop. Not all good Bedouins are good Moslems in any Quranic sense.

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## African Traditional Religions

Many people consider African religions to be limited to Animism and Tribal religions. Africa is a vast continent, with many races, but in religion as in other matters the continent is divided at the Sahara Desert. North Africa belongs to the Mediterranean world and the religion of Islam was established there from the seventh century AD. Islam spread only slowly down the eastern and western coasts, and it did not enter the tropical forests and the East African interior until modern times. Christianity held the ancient Coptic churches in Egypt, flourished for a long time in the Sudan, and still survives in Ethiopia as the only African kingdom with a Christian state church. In the last hundred years Christian missions have spread to most African countries in the tropical and South of the Sahara, in the savannah regions and in the dense tropical forests, old traditional religious beliefs survive. These have often unhappily been called fetishist or animist, but they nearly always combine belief in a supreme being with the worship of other gods, cults of ancestors, and magical practices.

The races of tropical Africa are mostly Negro, divided by their languages roughly into Sudanese and Bantu groups. There are also small groups of Pygmies and Bushmen, and in Madagascar the population is chiefly Malaysian in origin, with some Indian and African strains. Over this vast area religious beliefs and practices vary considerably, owing not only to the absence of literature but also to the lack of central organization or missionary enterprise. Negro peoples have important religious beliefs which are comparable in their main themes, but there are many differences between particular places. The Pygmies or Negritos live in the forest regions of the River Congo, and little is known of their languages or social organization since many of them are wandering hunters. They trade with the surrounding Bantu Negroes and many adopt some of their religious beliefs or myths. The Mbuti Pygmies believe in a great being of the sky, lord of storms and rainbows, sometimes called Creator, and envisaged as an old man with a long beard. He is named Tore and not only did he make everything but all belongs to him, so that before hunting he is invoked for food. The Pygmies also revere the moon, and some of them say that it was the moon who molded the first man, covered him with skin and poured blood inside. Another story associates the first couple with the chameleon, a reptile that figures in many African tales. The dominant Pygmy belief is in the god of the forest, who is benevolent, and to whom men pay as much respect as they do to their own parents.

The Bushmen and Hottentots live in southern Africa and were the original inhabitants of the land when the first Europeans arrived at the Cape. Today the true Bushmen (Khoisan) are restricted to the Kalahari Desert and Namibia. Modern Bushmen pray to celestial spirits and tell myths and legends about them. They pay special attention to the moon, which comes into their speculations about the origins of death, a common African preoccupation.

The Hottentots have largely become Christian and most of their ancient religious beliefs have disappeared, so much so that it was once thought that they had no former religion. Their ancient gods appear to have been a mingling of natural forces and ancestral spirits.

In the sub-Saharan and forest areas there are small groups of Hamites (Caucasians, related to Europeans) such as the Fulani of Nigeria, but they are Muslims like the major Hamite groups of North Africa and the Tuaregs of the Sahara. A vast majority of Africans south of the Sahara are Negroes, and they generally have a belief in a supreme being, though their conception of his role in daily life differs according to localities.

In East Africa a common name for the supreme being is Mulungu, a word of unknown origin but indicating the almighty and ever present creator. The thunder is said to be his voice and the lightning his power; he rewards the good and punishes the wicked. From the northern Kalahari through the Congo to Tanzania the name Leza is used, perhaps from a root meaning "to cherish," since he is the one who watches over people, providing for the needy and besetting the wayward. Leza is said to live in heaven, to which

humans pray for rain, but finally he is transcendent and incomprehensible. Another divine name is Nyambe, perhaps from a root indicating power, and used from Botswana to Cameroun. A similar name, Name, is used in West Africa alongside other divine names, such as Ngewo the god of the Mende people of Sierra Leone, Amma of the Dogon of Mali, Mawu of the Ewe of Abomey, Olorun of the Yoruba and Chukwu of the Ibo and Soko of the Nupe, all of Nigeria.

Despite the universality of belief in a supreme being in Africa regular worship is not generally given to him. There are no great temples or organized cults for him in most places, though there are a few exceptions. Yet despite this absence of formal worship and temples over most of Africa, the supreme being (or God) is a reality to many people. He is transcendent and there is a popular myth, told from West African to the Upper Nile, which says that he or the sky his dwelling place was once much nearer to the earth.

Africans believe in many other spiritual beings, roughly divisible into nature spirits and ancestors, some of them having both human and natural origins. They are often called children of God, but most receive much more formal worship than he does. Yet it is said that in sacrifices offered to other deities the essence of the gift goes to the supreme being.

There are countless gods, and their cults are particularly well developed in West Africa, and less in eastern and southern Africa where the ancestral rituals tend to dominate. Many of these cults of the gods are declining nowadays but in some places, as among the Ewe of Abomey, they are highly organized and are as yet little affected by Islam or Christianity.

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## Judaism

There are several different versions of the beginning of Judaism. One that is most commonly accepted is that Judaism started with the Exodus from the Egyptian captivity when Moses led them to Mt. Sinai to receive the law from God in the form of the ten commandments. The name of Judaism did not become prominent until the tribe of Judah. Another version that also has Biblical basis is that Judaism was actually started with Abraham when God called him to leave his home and family. The promise is that Abram would be the father of many nations and through Jacob the nation of Israel was born. There was a formal acceptance of God and His word in the descendants of Abram through Jacob and the God of Israel is referred to as the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For most purposes in tracing the history of Judaism, one starts with Moses and the ten commandments. There is a third view that Judaism as it is known today, was started in the Garden of Eden, when God established mankind through Adam and Eve. This group suggests that God already had a divine plan for man and that Israel and Judaism are a chapter in this overall plan. Judaism is more than just a religion. It is a way of life. Judaism is a complex expression of a religious and ethnic community, a basic set of beliefs and values, which is discerned in patterns of action order and culture plus religious statements and concepts. Judaism started, if one accepts the Moses' era as the beginning of a formalized religion, with God taking a direct action in the affairs of His people. He delivered them out of Egypt in a miraculous way and sustained them in the wilderness for forty years. There is no other account in secular or religious writings where the people's god has taken a direct control of the actions of others to affect an action for his people. No other gods react in both a transcendent and immanent way. The God of Israel claimed sovereignty over the people because they had entered a covenant with Him and agreed to abide by His Law and teachings. This obedience was a further means by which they made the divine presence manifest in human existence. History records that the Jews were unable to live in accord with the covenant and they failed God time and time again. God chose His prophets to remind the Jews of their promise and His, and to call them to repentance and to return to Him. The prophets warned the Jews of the consequence of their continued disobedience and history records the results. The early history of the Jews and Judaism is centered around this cycle of disobedience, oppression and deliverance.

The next major event in the history of the Jews after the wilderness trek was the establishment of the kingdom. Although Saul was the first king, the eighty-year reign of David and Solomon brought Israel to the forefront of the ancient world. Israel became a world power and the Great Temple of Solomon became the place where God dwelt and the Jews came to worship and pay homage to Him. After the death of Solomon, Israel entered another time of disobedience and falling away. During this time the kingdom became divided and because of the idolatry and disobedience of the northern kingdom of ten tribes God permitted Syria to conquer and scatter the northern kingdom tribes in 721- 722 B.C. The southern kingdom did not learn from their brothers to the north and around 600 B.C. the southern kingdom was invaded and many were carried away into captivity in Babylon. In 586-587 the Babylonian exile was completed by the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of Solomon's Temple. During the time of the exile they commenced a new method of worship. The temple being destroyed the Jews had no place to worship and they established the local Synagogues and Judaism took on a new look that has lasted till modern times. After the time of the prophets Ezra and Nehemiah the land of Israel came under the Hellenistic influence of the Greek conquerors, 320 B.C., and Hellenism had a profound influence on the continued development of Israel. The Roman conquest around 40 B.C. and the occupation of the Romans under the Herod brought more changes to Israel, but Judaism was not influenced as much by the Romans as it was from the Greeks. In 66 A.D. the Jewish revolted against Rome and this led to a four-year siege and ended with the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the temple. The Jews were scattered and the diaspora became a way of life for the Jews. Rome renamed the state of Israel to Palestine, hoping to eliminate the idea of Judaism and the Jews. At the beginning of the First World War the Turks were in control in Palestine and when the war was completed, Britain was awarded a protectorate for Palestine. They renewed a Protectorate after World War Two when they defeated the Germans. The United Nations partitioned the land of Palestine in 1947 and when the mandate became effective in May of 1948, Israel declared her independence. The reformation of the State of Israel has set the prophetic stage for the Last Days. Within Judaism there are four major divisions, they are the Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and

the Hasidic. Some combine the Orthodox and the Hasidic divisions of Judaism. The Reform Jews are most liberal in their views of Scripture, tradition and the Law. Conservative Jews are mostly middle of the road in their acceptance and practice of Judaism, and the Orthodox Jews adhere closely to the Law, Scripture and tradition. The Hasidic Jews are an ultra right wing and are not considered as resembling the mainline beliefs of Judaism, they are the ultra orthodox.

The **Orthodox** Jews believe that the Torah and the Oral Law or teachings are God's literal words and doctrine. They accept the writings of the Rabbis as direct teachings and revelations from God. They strictly observe and follow all the laws and traditions of the Law (the Torah) and the Talmud. They accept and practice many traditions passed down from generation to generation that does not have a basis in Scripture but have become tradition. Tradition is paramount to their way of life. All men wear the prayer caps, yarmulkes, usually at all times, and they do this to show respect to God. They are strict adherents to the Sabbath and keep it as a day of prayer, rest and reflection on the things of God. They do no work and do not participate in any commerce of any description. The Orthodox Jews strictly observe the dietary laws that have been passed down through the Scripture and greatly expanded by the Rabbinical writings. Tradition tightly controls the religious services, the women and men are separated during the service, but the exact method of separation varies. There is not a traditional way of separating them in the services. The services are conducted entirely in Hebrew and all members of the Orthodox Jewish community are taught Hebrew, usually through a synagogue-sponsored school. These schools' curricula are normally restricted to the teaching of Hebrew language, but commonly are also used to teach the young Jews in their heritage, tenets and concepts particular to the Jewish religion.

**Conservative Judaism** is the middle of the road practice of Judaism. They recognize the authority of Jewish Law and hold to the traditions and the Talmud as divine revelations of God, but they also believe that God reveals Himself in many different ways. These different ways are not restricted to the writings or the Law but may come from other sources. They do believe and observe the Laws and traditions of the faith, but they are not as strict as the Orthodox Jews. They allow for more freedom of individual practices than do the Orthodox communities but they are not considered as liberal. For example, the men may or may not always wear the prayer caps. They will usually wear the prayer caps for services but not at work. It is an individual choice. They are also not as strict in their adherence to the traditions and laws regarding the Sabbath. They do consider it a holy day and will usually keep it as a day of prayer and rest, but some will and do conduct some commerce on the Sabbath and it is not approved or condemned by the Conservative Jewish leaders. They do follow the dietary laws of Judaism and will not accept non-Kosher foods. Their services are more relaxed than the Orthodox in that they have more freedom and fewer rituals in the actual services and there is no separation of the sexes. Women accompany their husbands and sit with them during the services, but very rarely participate in the actual functions within the service. The Conservative Services contain a mixture of languages, both Hebrew and the local language. From our experience, the Torah is read in Hebrew and most prayers and statements are in Hebrew, but the Rabbi may teach in the language of the land.

The **Reform or Progressive Judaism** beliefs differ from each generation and each congregation may have a different view of the practice and communication of their traditions. Under the Reform program each generation has the right to accept, reject or modify these traditions and teachings even from the Torah or the Talmud. They have the right to make their own interpretation of the Torah, the Laws or the traditional practices and beliefs of Judaism. They accept the idea that God can and does reveal Himself by many means, in communications, nature and through the world actions. This leads to many variations in the Reform beliefs and leads to very liberal thinking about their religion. This is the most worldly and modern approach to Jewish religious thinking. It parallels the modern "If it feels good, its okay," thinking of the general population. However in contrast to this, many Reform Jews place more emphasis on prophetic teachings, which implies that the word of God is prophetic and therefore God is in control of and has a plan for man and this world. The Reform movement does minimize the ritualistic nature of Judaism. Under the Reform practice most things are left up to the individual, they or may not wear prayer caps, keeping of the Sabbath is a matter of personal choice and the adherence to the dietary laws is totally arbitrary. These reductions in traditions and the removal of the condemnation for not adhering to the restrictions of Judaism have made the Reform movement the fastest growing segment of Judaism. The services also reflect this breaking away from the more traditional practices of Judaism. The services are almost entirely conducted in the common language of the land and most Reform Jews do not speak or write Hebrew. They do conduct some training schools in Hebrew language and heritage but the attendance is strictly voluntary.

The fourth segment of Judaism is the **Hasidic Jew**. This is the ultra conservative, extremely right wing branch of Judaism. Their name means the Righteous Ones, Hasidim, and they believe that the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox branches of Judaism are wrong in not strictly adhering to the teachings of the Torah and Talmud. The other branches of Judaism all still feel a close relationship to each other. They are Jews and there is a feeling of brotherhood among them in spite of their differences in belief, but the Hasidi does not share this feeling or emotion. They socially condemn the other branches and have little or nothing to do with them. However, within the Hasidic community there is an abnormally close and strong sense of community and brotherhood. The Hasidi are essentially a closed community. They follow an unusual and traditional way of dressing. They dress in black, with long flowing coats, unusual hats and wear ringlets of hair down the side of their faces where side burns are normally found. These practices have a foundation in Hellenistic Judaism and their dress patterns date from eighteenth century Eastern Europe. Hasidi are considered as soft spoken, God fearing and aloof from society, but they are militant when it comes to their belief in the Messiah and the State of Israel. They believed that the Messiah would come and institute His rule and establish the State of Israel. They actually fought against the formation of the New State of Israel and were against Zionism in some areas. When Israel became a nation, they turned and became staunch supporters of Israel.

The Jewish concept of God contains a number of aspects. Their belief in God is monotheistic and they cannot accept the idea of the Trinity. They are taught in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 that there is only one God and they claim that Christianity is wrong because it teaches that there are three Gods, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. They ignore the passage in Isaiah which reads,

**"Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I; and now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me. Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go." Isa. 48:16-18**

They believe that God is transcendent and that He does display an immanent nature. He is the source of all things, the Creator and Sustainer of the Universe. God is good and ethical and has established Orders and placed these in the heart of man. He is concerned about a moral and ethical society and His Law and goodness are to apply to all men at all times, and it is not restricted to just the Jewish people. The Jews do believe that they were chosen by God for a Holy purpose and that they are to be a nation of Priests to all the world. They do not accept the idea of evangelism in Judaism because they were chosen not converted. They accept the covenant of election as a responsibility and not a privilege, but this is not accepted by the world at large. The Jews believe that God rewards the people for faithfulness in this lifetime and by the same nature, He will punish in this life time those who are disobedient and unfaithful. Many Jews are concerned only with a temporal world since they do not accept the concept of heaven and hell and an eternal life. The Jews believe that His name is so Holy that it cannot be spoken aloud.

The Jews believe that God is the creator of the universe and is the lawgiver, where many religions separate these two attributes. The Jews accept the total unity of God and believe that He is remote, but still involved in their affairs. Their concept of God is more nationalistic than personal and that their leaders are chosen by God to lead them in His ways. The modern Jew retains the traditional God "language," while philosophical naturalism has been offered as a suitable part of Judaism.

The Jewish view of man is that he was created in the image of God and is a divine creation for a specific purpose, but the rabbinic interpretations cautiously skirt this concept. Some of the rabbinical teachings and writings interpret the "image" passage of Scripture to read "after an image, God made man," that is, in the platonic sense of a heavenly archetype. They render the term **Elohim** (a plural form) not as "God" but as "divine beings," angels, implying that man was made in the image of divine beings, **Elohim**. They do accept that man is an ethical, rational creation and that God had prepared a place, Sheol, for them after death. In their teachings the hope of restoration was nearly always tied to the eschatological hope of Israel and the soul as a disembodied state after death and Sheol contained the soul. True life after death was seen as a release from the bondage of the body, so that in place of, or alongside, the afterlife of physical resurrection was set the afterlife of the immortal soul. The Jews view man as a creature that is subject to the natural order and that it is through this natural order that he develops his relationship to God. The commandments of the Torah are obeyed not solely as observances between man and God but as actions between man and man, between man and the world. Man's dominion over the earth is then limited by the Torah in all aspects of life.

Judaism is the oldest of all the major religions. Although Hinduism had a prevedic existence, it was not a formalized or organized religion. Judaism, a monotheistic belief, started with Abraham in Ur, but did not obtain its name until the tribe of Judah lead the southern kingdom. The name Hebrew probably came from the name given a group of Asiatic slaves, living in Egypt during the days of Israel's captivity, called Habrii.

A Jew is a practitioner of Judaism and according to Rabbinical law can only be or claim to be a Jew if his mother was a Jew or he can prove a maternal Jewish heritage. One may convert to Judaism and claim to be Jewish, but may not have citizenship in Israel.

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### Islam

Islam was originated in the life of Muhammad (Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn ?Abd Allah ibn ?Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim) who was born in Mecca around 570 A.D. Quraygh Muhammad was at first under the care of his paternal grandfather, but was reared by his uncle. They belonged to the prestigious Hashem (Hashim) clan and the family was prominent in Mecca politics, but it is disputed as to the exact position they occupied. Muhammad was in charge of a rich woman's merchandise during trade journeys to Syria. The lady, Khadijah of the clan of Asad, was so impressed with Muhammad she offered marriage. The couple had at least two sons, who died young and four daughters, of whom the best known was Fatimah, the wife of Muhammad's cousin ?Ali, who is regarded as Muhammad's divinely ordained successor by the Shiites. Muhammad had no other wife until Khadijah died in 619. The marriage gave Muhammad a great deal of freedom and wealth. Muhammad was a thinker and had a reflective turn of mind and spent some nights in a hill cave near Mecca. His meditations led him to several principles about religion. He was influenced by the Monotheistic teachings of Judaism and through a Christian slave he learned and believed that there would be a day of judgment and he shunned the idea of polytheism and the pagan rites of some of the people of Mecca. It is stated that about 610, while reflecting on these matters in a cave outside of Mecca, Muhammad had a vision of a majestic being (later identified with the angel Gabriel) and heard a voice tell him that he was "the Messenger of God." He started converting his family, slaves and friends to his way of thinking about God. His early witness centered around the majesty of the one God, monotheism, the futility of idol worship, the belief of the coming judgment of God. He emphasized the need for morality among men and denounced materialism. In Mecca this message was not received well and open hostility caused Muhammad to flee to Medina around 622. Muhammad's wife and uncle had died in these early years of his teachings and after he moved to Medina he started organizing his followers and became recognized as a prophet of God. His new faith was launched and he launched a Jihad (Holy war) against the immorality and pagan ways of Mecca to purify the people and bring them to his teachings. By 629 Muhammad had liberated Mecca and many of his enemies joined him in his new faith, and by 632 all of Arabia had been converted. Muhammad died in 632, but Islam

continued to grow and now covers a major portion of Asia and Africa and is considered one of the fastest growing of the modern religions. Muhammad's teachings were collected and written in the Qur'an, the sacred scriptures of Islam. The Muslims believe the Qur'an, Koran, is divine revelation, written in the words of God himself.

During the years after the death of Muhammad several basic teachings of Islam were singled out to serve as the anchoring points of the community's life and were formulated as the "**Pillars of Islam.**" These five pillars are:

- 1) the **shahadah**, or profession of faith;
- 2) the **salat**, or prayer;
- 3) the **zakat**, a religious tax or alms giving;
- 4) the **Ramadan**, a month of fasting;
- 5) the **hajj**, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

These pillars or duties are incumbent on every Muslim. A sixth pillar was introduced by the Khawarij sect, *the jihad*. This is a holy war against the infidels and a struggle for taking Islam to the entire world. The jihad is becoming more and more popular among the right wing Muslims and has been the basis for the world wide terrorism against Israel and her supporters.

## The Shahadah

The first pillar, the shahadah is the profession of faith: "There is no god but God; there is no God but Allah; Muhammad is the prophet of Allah." This is the creed of Islam. Every Muslim must make this profession of faith and recite it openly, aloud, correctly and purposively, with an understanding of its meaning and with an assent from the heart. From this fundamental belief are derived beliefs in:

- 1) the Qur'an as God's direct word revelation to the world and this includes the sacred writings of Judeo-Christian that are described in the Qur'an;
- 2) angels, especially Gabriel and the Angel of Revelation, who gave Muhammad these words;
- 3) acceptance of a series of prophets, some from the Judeo-Christian revelation described in the Qur'an;
- 4) the Last Day, the day of judgment.

## The Salat

The second pillar consists of the requirement for prayer, five times a day, before dawn, just after midday, midafternoon, just after sunset and at bedtime. These can be prayers can be offered by the individual if he is unable to go to the mosque, but the preferred way is congregational prayer. Before prayers are given, the Muslim usually washes his hands, face and feet to make him presentable to Allah. The muezzin chants aloud from a raised place in the mosque, usually a tower. When the prayer starts, the imam faces Mecca and the congregation stands behind him in rows and follow his lead in assuming various positions. Tradition has fixed the materials and posture for each portion of the prayer. In strict doctrine, the five daily prayers cannot be waived even for the sick.

## The Zakat

The third pillar is an obligatory tax of 2.5 percent on income called *zakat*. There are special percentages imposed on agriculture products like grain and cattle. The *zakat* is collected by the state and is to be used for religious administration, upkeep of the mosques and for the poor and needy. The Qur'an mentions other purposes for the tax such as ransoming Muslim war captives, redeeming chronic debts, tax collectors' fees, and *jihad*.

## Ramadan

Fasting during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, is the fourth pillar of Islam. Fasting begins at daybreak and ends at sunset, and during the day eating, drinking and smoking are forbidden. The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad during the month of Ramadan "on the night of determination," and the Muslims observe the event on the night of 26-27 Ramadan. Exceptions for fasting are available for the travelers and the sick or elderly.

## The Hajj

The fifth pillar is the annual pilgrimage (hajj) to Mecca prescribed for every Muslim at least once in a lifetime. Exemptions are made for the poor who cannot afford such a trip and also for a person who does not have enough provisions for his family during such an absence. A special service is held in the Sacred Mosque on the 7th of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Muslim year. The pilgrimage activities are held from the 8th to the 12th or 13th. All worshipers must wear seamless garments and avoid sexual and many other activities. The principal activity of the believers is to walk around the Ka'bah, a shrine within the mosque; the kissing of the Black Stone (Hajar al-Aswad); and the ascent of and running between Mt. Safa and Mt. Marwah seven times. At the second stage of the ritual, the pilgrim proceeds from Mecca to Mina, a few miles away; from there he goes to 'Arafat, where he hears a sermon and spends one afternoon. The last activity consists of spending the night at Muzdalifah (between 'Arafat and Mina) and offering a sacrifice on the last day of ihram, which is the festival of sacrifice.

## The Qur`an

The Qur`an, Koran, is the sacred scripture of Islam, regarded by Muslims as the infallible Word of God, a perfect transcription of an eternal tablet preserved in Heaven and revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over a period of twenty years. Absolute monotheism governs all **Qur`anic** ideas and teachings about **God**. The God who revealed His Word to Muhammad is identified with the God worshiped by both Jews and Christians, though these communities failed to hear and incorporate God's revelation to their prophets. The Qur`an emphasizes God as the absolute creator and sustainer of an ordered universe, an order that reflects His infinite power, wisdom and authority. The five pillars of faith as described above, are required of all Muslim believers. The doctrines about God in the Qur`an are monotheistic. God is one and unique; he has no partner or equal. The idea of the Christian trinity is vigorously repudiated, although the Muslim picture of God, wherein the attributes of power, justice, and mercy, is related to the Judeo-Christian tradition, from which it was derived. The Muslim has included certain modifications to the idea of God and has also incorporated some concepts of pagan Arabia. They believe in a blind and inexorable fate over which man had no control. The Muslim accepts the teachings of the Qur`an as divine and the doctrines are well defined. The statement of "**God is one, Allah is God and Muhammad is the prophet of Allah,**" sums the major doctrine of the Qur`an. The order of the universe proves the unity of God, and the Qur`an stresses the design and order of the universe. The doctrine of man states that God created two apparently parallel species of creatures, man and jinn, the one from clay and the other from fire. The Qur`an says very little about the jinn, but implies that they are more evil than man and have many of man's characteristics. The Qur`an accepts the Judeo-Christian story of the fall of Adam, but insists that God forgave Adam and they do not consider Adam's act of disobedience as original sin. The Qur`an also accepts the Judeo-Christian belief concerning Satan and his sin of pride and the fact that his power will cease only on the Last Day. The Muslims believe that God sends his revelations through his prophets and they will provide vindication of the truth of their mission. The Qur`an requires the recognition of all prophets without discrimination, but they believe that not all prophets are equal. They believe that all of God's prophets are ultimately vindicated and saved. They believe that Jesus, a prophet, born of a virgin, and called the "**Spirit of God**" in the Qur`an, was saved from crucifixion by God. The Qur`an affirms His ability to heal and raise the dead that He is both a word from God and a spirit from God that He is the Messiah, an all-righteous one (sinless), among those nearest to God, that He is alive in heaven now and will return to judge the earth (Qur'an 3:45, 49; 4:158; 82:22). Muslims often are convinced that Christ is greater than Muhammad from just reading the Qur`an. These above points are excellent starting places in leading Muslims to biblical truth about Jesus.

Indeed, in our effort to bring Muslims to study the Bible, we have an unexpected ally in Muhammad's book, the Qur`an. In a careful reading of Chorionic references (3:84; 5:51, 71; 6:34; 10:37, 64, 94; 46:12), we find that Muhammad affirmed his belief in what was revealed to Moses and Jesus. He taught that God confirms and guards all previous scripture, that Christians are to stand fast on their own books of the Law and the Gospel, and that none could change the Word of God. Finally, the Muslim is told that if he has doubts he should ask the Jews and Christians, who were reading the Holy Books before he was.

In Islamic doctrine, on the Last Day, when the world will come to an end, the dead will be resurrected and a judgment will come against every person according to his deeds. With the deep-seated belief in Satan's existence, man's fundamental role becomes one of a moral struggle and the social service to the weak and poor are fundamental doctrines of the Qur`an. The true Muslim believer must give alms. Opponents of Islam from within the community and without are to be reduced to nothing by armed force, if the issues and opposition cannot be settled by persuasion and arbitration, but the arbitration cannot violate any of the Qur`an dictates. The use of force for conversion and for gaining glory, power and rule is strictly forbidden by the Qur`an. The jihad or holy war is to be reserved for protection of the Qur`an and the Muslim people.

The Muslim accepts the Qur`an as the absolute direct word of God and this is paramount in his belief. The Qur`an states that there is only one God, He is eternal, absolute, not begotten and there is none like him. The Christian is immediately put on guard because of our belief in the trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. When witnessing to a Muslim, this is the first "contradiction" that must be overcome. The Muslim totally rejects the idea that Jesus was the Son of God. Therefore, the approach must be made on common ground. The Qur`an dictates that the Muslim must accept all the prophets of God, but he also believes that some prophets have a higher rank than others. In the Qur`an Jesus is mentioned 64 times and according to my Iranian friends the title given Jesus is a higher ranking title than given the prophet Muhammad. Once the individual is convinced that Jesus has a special place in the Qur`an there is a common ground for discussion. According to Christian monotheism, God is one in essence (just like in Islamic monotheism), but three in persons. Another area of common belief is in the area of the universe. Both the Christian and the Muslim accept that God is the creator and sustainer of the universe and everything in it and that He made man to have dominion over every living creature. The Qur`an declares man to be the noblest of all creation, and reiterates that all nature has been made subservient to man and man's purpose being service and obedience to God's will. The Qur`an also indicates that man is rebellious and full of pride and that this is in violation of the unity of God. To communicate the truth of the Divine Unity, God has sent messengers or prophets to men, whose weakness of nature makes them ever prone to forget or even willfully reject the Divine Unity under the prompting of Satan. According to the Qur`an, the being who became Satan occupied a high position but fell from divine grace by his act of disobedience when he refused **to honor Adam**. This belief in the ranking of God's prophets and messengers is dictated by the Qur`an. The areas of prophecy and eschatology are common grounds between Islam, Judaism and Christianity. The Muslims accept the accounts of the "prophets" Abraham, Noah, Moses and Jesus as related in the Holy Scriptures, and they accept the fact that God often vests his prophets with miracles. Abraham was saved from fire, Noah from the deluge, and Moses from the Pharaoh. They believe not only was Jesus born from the Virgin Mary, but God also saved him from crucifixion at the hands of the Jews. The conviction that God's messengers are ultimately vindicated, their message proved true and

that they are saved is an integral part of the Qur`anic doctrine. This gives validity to the message of Jesus, his life and his resurrection. In Islamic doctrine, on the Last Day, the dead will be resurrected and a judgment brought on every person for his deeds. In order to prove that the resurrection will occur, the Qur`an uses a moral and physical argument. Because not all requital is meted out in this life, a final judgment is necessary to bring it to completion. Physically, God, who is all powerful, has the ability to destroy and bring back to life all creatures, who are limited and are, therefore, subject to God's limitless power. This belief is the opening for the discussion of the resurrection of Jesus. Because Jesus was resurrected, his claims are proven.

There has been a great animosity between the Jews, Christians and Muslims, the Christian witness is particularly offensive to the Muslim, because to them theirs is only Allah. They claim that the Christians are professing three Gods. This is also the Jewish position, but they are less militant about the subject. After Muhammad's death in 632, the Muslim armies swept the Christian Byzantines out of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt. The Christians and Jews have been at war with the Muslims ever since. The question of Muslim atrocities against Christians have been well publicized in the West, but the Muslim grievances have been noticeably absent from the western media. The Crusades from 1050 to 1291 and the colonization by the Western nations during the 1450 - 1970 period are bitter memories to the Muslim nations and has caused them to lose face and cries for revenge. This resentment and hate was compounded by the establishment of the State of Israel and the loss of Jerusalem to the Jews in 1967, after more than thirteen hundred years of possession by the Muslims. This loss of Jerusalem and the Muslim honor is blamed directly on the west and particularly on the Christians and the Jews.

In orthodox Islam, God has supposedly not spoken to a single human being since the year Muhammad died. For this reason when you witness to a Muslim by giving your personal testimony of how you became a Christian -- of how God revealed Himself "to you" -- the Muslim considers it blasphemy, even though this a thoroughly biblical approach. (55) Therefore, when witnessing to a Muslim, we must start on common ground. The Christian and the Muslim have similar points of contact in their belief system concerning God, prophets, holy books, angels and demons, the decree of God, and the day of judgment. There are points of variances between Islamic and Christian doctrine, but the point is to find a common starting place. The Qur'an exhorts its followers to seek forgiveness of their sins (Q. 40:55; 42:5; 47:19), and sin is considered universal and misfortunes are the result of sin (Q. 42:30). The Muslim believes that all sin and cannot become the "Light of the World." However, even in the Qur'an, Jesus is "among the righteous ones," that is, sinless (Q. 3:46). This similar to the Bible verses where Jesus is "the Son of God (56) is sinless, (57) is the "true light of men, (58) and the "light of the World. (59)

Muslims are usually genuinely seeking to please God (as they understand him) through their practices of confessing God, praying five times daily, giving to the poor, keeping a month-long fast, perceiving themselves as pilgrims, and even striving (jihad) on the "way of God."

Islam has as many branches and sects as Christianity. The two major ones are the Sunnis and the Shias. When Muhammad died, he had left no arrangement for a successor. His followers divided into two camps. The Sunnis were those who thought the leader should be elected democratically from among his closest followers, and the Shias were those who thought the leaders should be related to Muhammad. Sunnis make up the vast majority of all Muslims, and they follow the strict pattern of conduct established by Muhammad believed to be the model for all humankind. They believe that the true way of life is to keep the laws of Islam derived from the Qur'an and the other collected sayings of Muhammad, and the result is the reward of paradise for those whose good deeds outweigh their bad on the day of judgment. As with the Jews, the law does not save; it condemns. The Shiites usually lost out in the power struggles down through the centuries and this led to their developing theological doctrines that radically differed from those of the Sunnis on at least two major points: the idea of martyrdom and the idea of divine light indwelling their leaders. .

This brings us to the key point: Shiites believe that their shed blood in a Jihad atones for their sins and they go immediately to paradise. They accept the concept of atonement through the shed blood of their leader or their own -- an idea totally unacceptable to the Sunnis.

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## Cited References

(55) **1 John 1:3** That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with the Son Jesus Christ. [Return](#)

(56) **Matthew 1:20-21** But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

**Luke 1:32** He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David. [Return](#)

(57) **II Corinthians 5:21** For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. [Return](#)

(58) **John 1:4** In him was life; and the life was the light of men. [Return](#)

(59) **John 8:12** Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. [Return](#)