

Relational Concepts
School of Discipleship
Presents

The Five Major World
Religions



Chuck May

INTRODUCTION

Definition - Religion is:

- 1a) Belief in and reverence for a supernatural power recognized as the creator and governor of the universe
- b) a particular integrated system of this expression.
- 2) The spiritual or emotional attitude of one who recognizes the existence of a supernatural power or powers.
- 3) An objective pursued with zeal or continuous devotion.

INTRODUCTION

Observations:



• Each human at his or her core is religious.

• Each religion at its core is exclusive.

Religion: ~~A~~ ~~B~~ C ~~D~~ ~~E~~

• Each religion at its core is offensive (evangelistic) and defensive.



INTRODUCTION

Historically, people have recognized five major world religions:

Islam

610 AD

Hinduism

1500 BC

Christianity

30 AD

Judaism

1500 BC

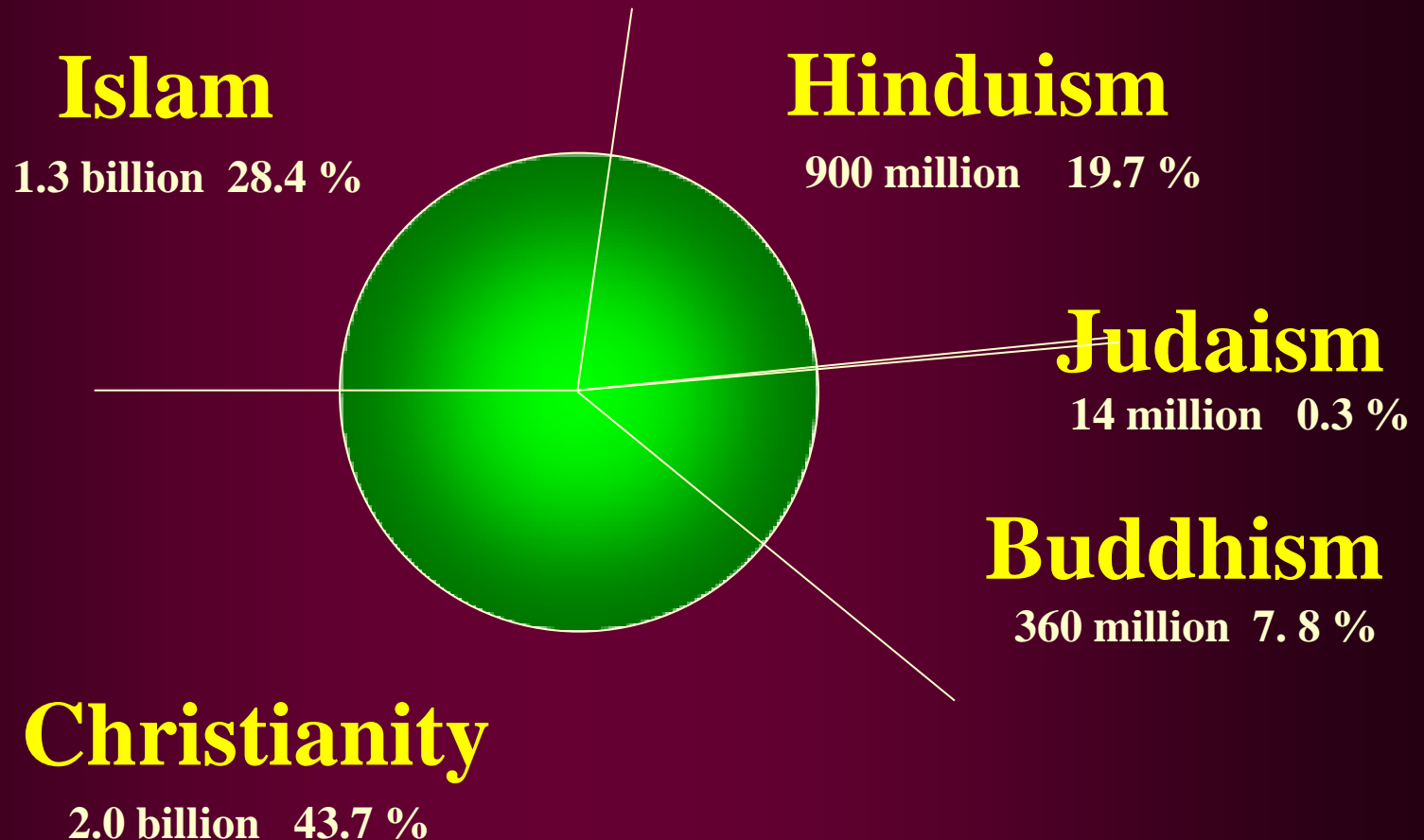
Buddhism

500 BC



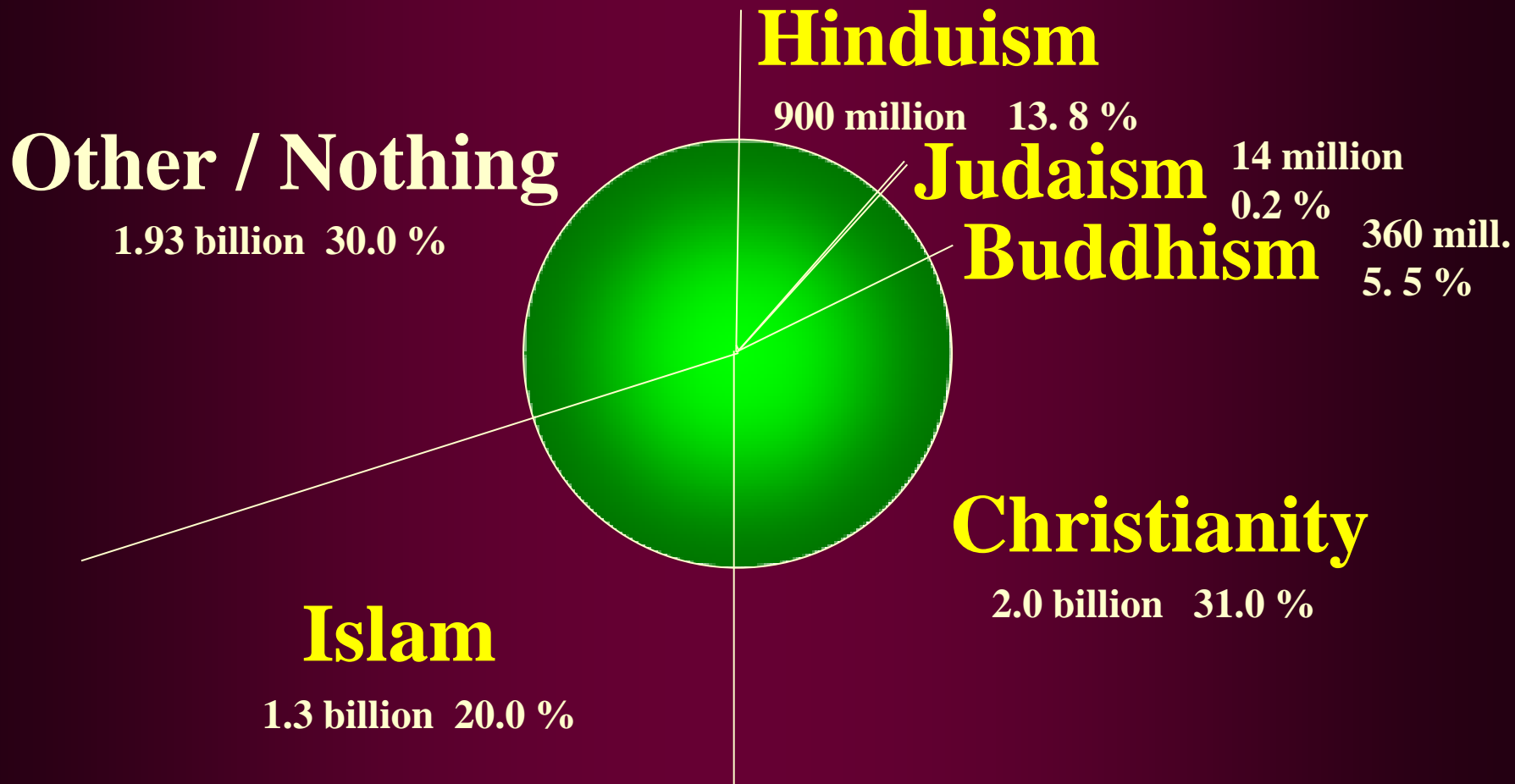
INTRODUCTION

Division of the five major world religions



INTRODUCTION

Division of **total** people on earth based on religion



INTRODUCTION

There are two major purposes for this study:

- 1. To summarize the history and beliefs of each of these five major world religions.**
- 2. To give an evaluation of each of these beliefs as to their truthfulness and consistency.**

We will evaluate each system of belief in its answer to the following four fundamental questions:

- 1. What is the origin of all things?**
- 2. What gives life meaning?**
- 3. What is the basis of human morality (good and evil)?**
- 4. What is the final destiny of man and the universe?**

HINDUISM



HINDUISM

Hinduism represents a broad range of mostly **pantheism**.

Pantheism is the belief that there is nothing but spirit; God is everything and everything is God. Humans, as well as all living beings, emanate from God and therefore are God. God is neither personal nor conscious, not HE but IT.

Hinduism is not one religion, but a family of religions.

Hinduism is very ancient, but also very fluid and changing.

Hinduism in some forms can even embrace polytheism, monotheism, agnosticism, or even atheism.

Because of its extreme complexity we will focus on what the majority of the 900 million Hindus believe.

History

HINDUISM

Most of the history of Hinduism centers in India

It can be generally divided into four periods:

1 Pre-Vedic Period - (3,000-1500 B.C.)

Animism - belief that *all* life forms have a life force, soul or mind. Developed locally.

2. Vedic Period - (1500 -700 B.C.)

Polytheistic and cast system of thought from Russia and Central Asia

3. Upanishadic (“sit at the feet of”) 700-200 B.C.

Time of greatest change from Vedic influence to asceticism, reincarnation and guru discipleship.

4. Fourth Period - (200 B.C. - 200 A.D.)

Vedantic texts underwent revival. Brahma became most prominent god.

Beyond 200 A.D., multiplicity of gods. Cults and sects. Threat by Islam



Beliefs

HINDUISM

GOD

Hinduism adheres to **Monism**...the belief that all reality proceeds from one essence, namely **Brahman**, not a personality, but an all encompassing life force or principle.

Yet it is also **Polytheistic**, in that it worships many lesser deities who are part of the one essence.

The three highest gods are:

Brahma - the creator

Vishnu - the preserver, who is worshiped as ten separate incarnations

Siva - the destroyer

Hinduism is also **Pantheistic** - the belief that all is god and god is all.

Ultimately, God is beyond all thought and speech

Beliefs

HINDUISM

Example

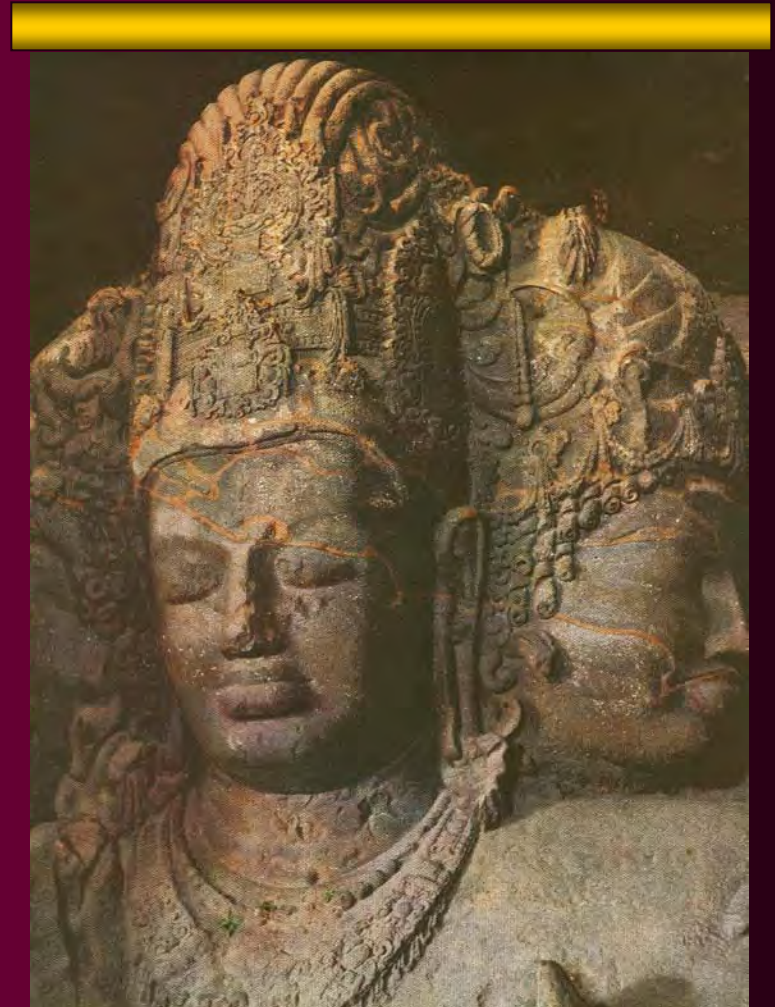
GOD

8th century image of the god Siva

**In the center is Siva as the
impersonal Absolute.**

**On the left is Siva as the male
and on the right as the female.**

**These are the opposing forms in
which life is manifest in the universe.**



Beliefs

HINDUISM

Example

GOD



Beliefs

HINDUISM

HUMANITY

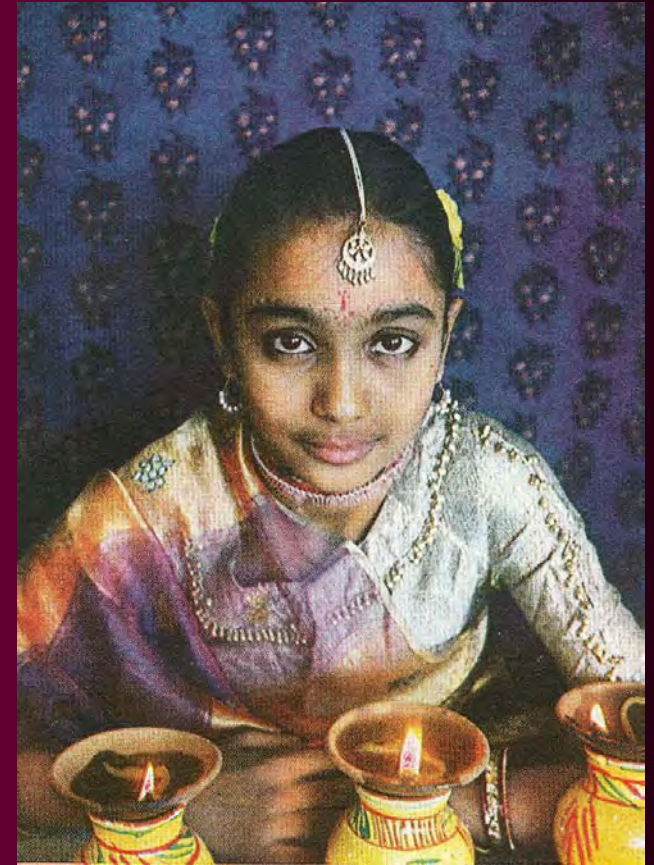
Humankind is god (Brahman).

The individual self expression is called **Atman.**

All humans are deceived by **Maya (illusionary universe) into believing that each person is a particular being.**

If a person would clear his senses and mind of **Maya, and meditate on the true self (Atman), then he would realize that **Atman** is **Brahman**.**

Hinduism believes that the purpose of all religion is to identify **Atman with **Brahman**.**



Beliefs

HINDUISM

THE CAST SYSTEM

The **Cast System** originated when **Brahma** created **Manu** (first human).

From Manu's parts came the four casts:



Therefore: the Cast System is divinely inspired.

Beliefs

HINDUISM

THE LAW OF KARMA / REINCARNATION

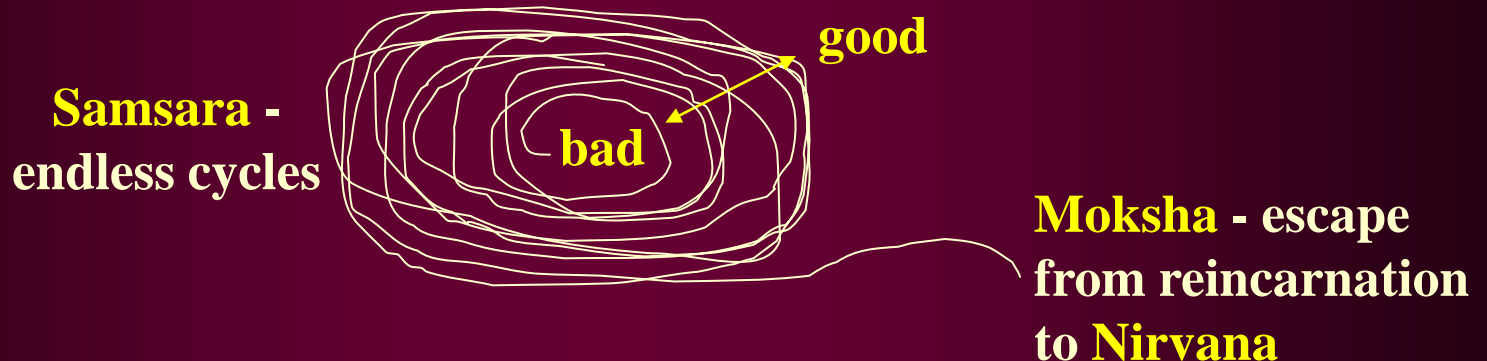
Literally, “**karma**” means “**action**” and has to do with a persons actions and the resulting **consequences**.

Hinduism teaches that the present state of one’s life is determined by his actions in past lifetimes.

Reincarnation means that after death, the soul attaches itself to another body and experiences another lifetime.

The **Law of Karma** is the law of moral consequences or paying back. Good deeds produce better karma for the next life - higher form.

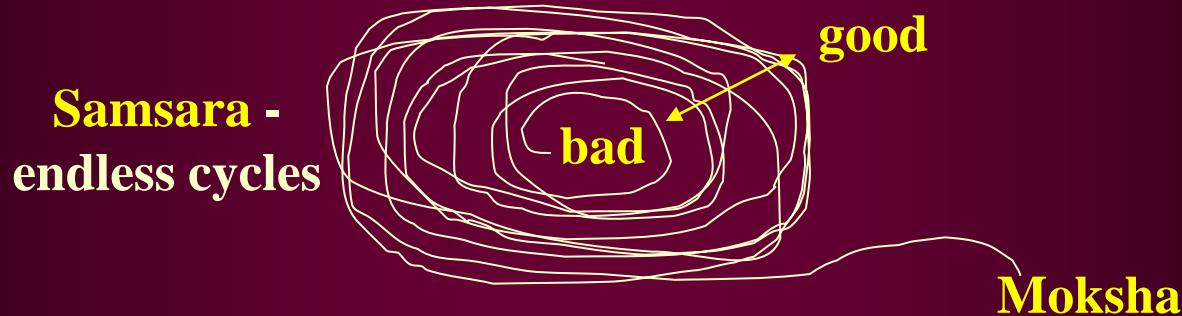
Reincarnation - repeated cycles of life and death



Beliefs

HINDUISM

Reincarnation - repeated cycles of life and death



MOKSHA is the release from Samsara (endless cycles) into fullness.

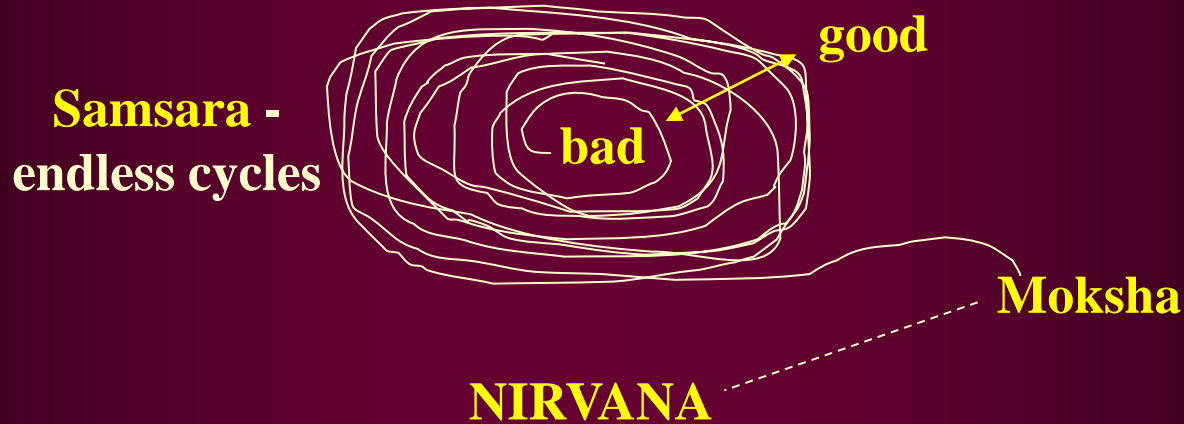
It can be achieved by any one of three ways:

1. The **Path of Knowledge** (Jnana Marga) - the learning that man is not a separate entity, but part of Brahman. Selfhood is an illusion.
2. The **Path of Works** (Karma Marga) - carrying out prescribed ceremonies, duties, and religious rights.
3. The **Path of Devotion** (Bhakti Marga) - devotion to a deity as reflected in acts of worship and carried out in human relationships.

Beliefs

HINDUISM

Reincarnation - repeated cycles of life and death

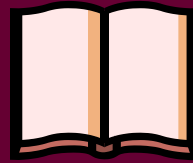


- **The final stage of the journey of life resulting in freedom of the soul from the chain of repeated reincarnations.**
- **Here all humankind will be united to Brahman.**
- **Hinduism knows no eternal damnation -
eventually all will achieve nirvana.**

Beliefs

HINDUISM

Sacred Writings



1500 B.C. - 500 A.D.

Contain the practices and beliefs that arose during Hinduism's history.

Vedas (“knowledge / wisdom”) - sacrificial hymns, magic formulas, & praise.

Upandishads - concluding part of **Vedas** that contains Vedic teachings.

- it teach pantheism, karmic law, and reincarnation.

- it influenced the founding of Buddhism.

Mahabharata - most well known Hindu scriptures - 100,000 verses

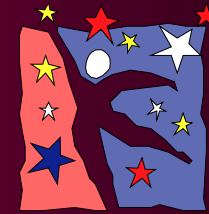
- contains most beloved Hindu text - **Bhagavad-Gita**

Bhagavad-Gita - story of warrior prince Arjuna and his charioteer,

Krishna, who is actually the god Vishnu in disguise.

Evaluation

HINDUISM



Questions about the nature of God and man

- The nature of the Bhagavad-Gita god is seemingly **monotheistic**, personal, and separate from creation. But the earlier Vedic god is seen primarily as **pantheistic** (all of existence is god). This is a major contradiction within Hinduism regarding the nature of god.
- Hinduism, being pantheistic, is subject to all the errors of pantheism. See Relational Concepts' study *Why Christianity*.
- The Hindu pantheist claims "I am God", but God is changeless, yet humans go through a process of change called "enlightenment".
- The Hindu says the world is not real, it is Maya (an illusion). The Hindu also claims that the individual mind does not exist, it too is an illusion. But if the mind is an illusion, it cannot provide a basis for explaining the illusion. The concept is self-defeating.

Evaluation

HINDUISM

Questions of Origin



- **The Hindu pantheist says that God is infinite and shares his being with creation. God is all and all is God. Yet how can something that is infinite (God) be finite, creation.**
- **If the Hindu pantheist says that the finite creation is less than real, though existing, he makes God finite and less than real, for all is God.**
- **If God is eternal, unchanging, and absolute, where did the illusion of this creation and individual man come from? For God is all and all is God. If every man is really God (Atman is Brahman), then how could God be deceived by an illusion.**

Evaluation

HINDUISM

Questions of Meaning



- **Brahman is the impersonal ultimate and most everything is merely an illusion.**
- **Ultimately, for the Hindu, life is meaningless since good and evil do not really exist and everyone will eventually achieve Moksha.**

Evaluation

HINDUISM



Questions of Morality

- **If evil is not real, as Hinduism claims, then there is no moral absolutes and moral responsibility does not exist for humans. Good and evil are the same.**
- **This belief that evil is an illusion is not only philosophically unsound, it is also unlivable. For even the pantheist tries to avoid pain. Even the pantheist looks both ways before crossing the street. Even the pantheist realizes that to get hit by a bus is not the same as to not get hit by a bus.**
- **It is undeniable that absolute morals do exist. Hinduism fails in its attempt to answer the question of morality.**

Evaluation

HINDUISM



Questions of Destiny

- Hindus believe that a person must pass through one of the paths of “salvation” to attain **Moksha** which will release them from the cycles of reincarnation, **Samsara**, into **Nirvana**. There, the Hindu is united with **Brahman** in bliss.
- However, Brahman is the impersonal force that , according to Hindu scholars, cannot be known, and no positive statements can be made about it. What then, makes this impersonal force happy and blissful? How does the Hindu know that Nirvana is something to be desired instead of shunned?
- Even if Nirvana is a state of bliss, what keeps one secure there? What assurance exists that the illusions of the creation and the individual will not reoccur as they now exist in repeated cycles?

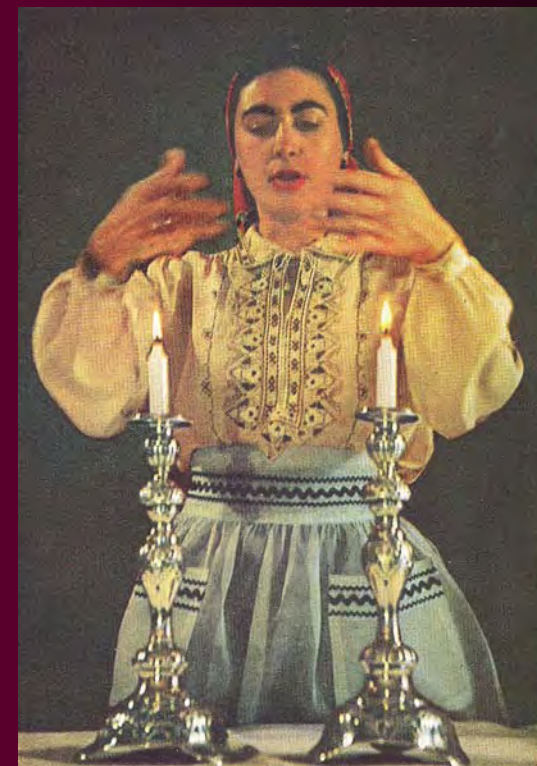
HINDUISM

SUMMARY

- **Hinduism does not adequately answer the most important questions with which every human being struggles.**
- **Because Hinduism is pantheistic, it falls prone to all the errors of pantheism.**
- **In short, Hinduism is untrue because it does not correspond to reality, and it also has many internal inconsistencies and therefore does not cohere as a system.**



JUDAISM



Introduction

JUDAISM

Judaism is known as the religion of the Jews

There are approximately 14 million Jews in the world today. Not all of them adhere to Judaism. Non-religious Jews are usually atheists, agnostics, or just secular. Even non-religious Jews consider Judaism to be “our” religion as compared to “their” (Gentile) other religions.

Old Testament Judaism began in 2,000 B.C with the call of Abraham.

It is documented in the Old Testament

Rabbinic Judaism began with the Babylonian captivity in the 500s B.C., was systematized after 70 A.D., and it continues today. It can be considered to be a “daughter” religion of Old Testament Judaism.

Christianity began around 33 A.D. also as a “daughter” religion of Old Testament Judaism

**This study will focus on the doctrines and practices of
Rabbinic Judaism**

History

JUDAISM

Old Testament Judaism had a God-given system of prophets, kings, priests, Temple (Tabernacle), sacrifices, and holy festivals as recorded in the Old Testament.

But the Babylonian captivity (500s B.C.) disrupted this system.



So **Rabbinic Judaism** began by instituting man-made replacements:

- **Synagogues** - places of study, fellowship, and worship
- **Yeshivots** - religious academies for training rabbis
- **Rabbis** - leaders / teachers having religious authority

History

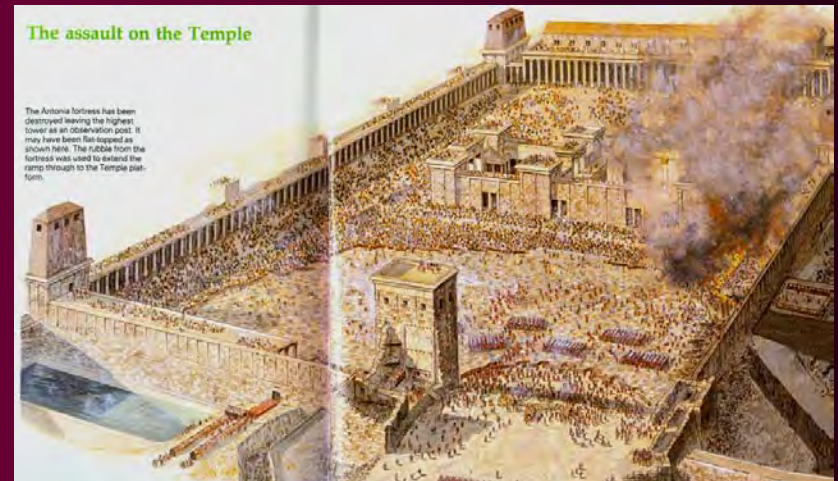
JUDAISM

After the Babylonian captivity, under Ezra and Nehemiah, they tried to restore the **Old Testament Judaism** in addition to the **Rabbinical Judaism**.

This was the Judaism in place during the time of Jesus Christ.

In 70 A.D. the Romans destroyed the Second Temple and dispersed the Jews.

This destruction of the Temple and the rejection of Jesus Christ as Savior left the Jews with no priesthood or sacrificial system.



In answer to this crisis, **Rabbinical Judaism** responded by establishing a man-made substitute religious system.

History

JUDAISM

This man-made substitute for the Old Testament Judaism developed by the rabbis is sometimes referred to as the “threefold path” or the “**Great Three Concepts**”:

- **Teshuvah** - repentance
- **Tsedakah** - righteous deeds
- **Tefillah** - prayer

In **Orthodox** and **Conservative** Judaism, this system of works became the basis for righteousness.



History

JUDAISM

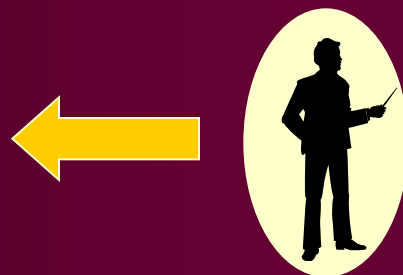
Rabbinic Judaism



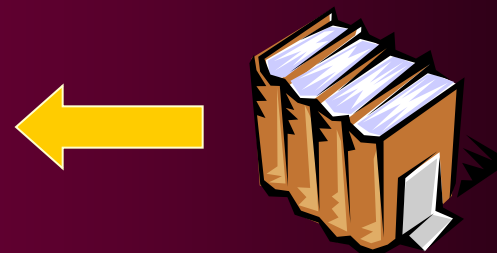
Law and Tradition



**Old Testament
Scriptures**
(1500-400 B.C.)



Mishna
(The Oral Law)
Detailed commentary
on the O.T. Scriptures
(400 B.C. - 200 A.D.)



Gemara
Explanation /
application of the
Mishna
(200-500A.D.)

Talmud - Jewish oral law and tradition

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Modern Judaism is a religion of **DEED**, not **CREED**. Belief about God and the afterlife is less important than how one lives. An individual Jew may not necessarily believe in detail as does the group to which he belongs.

The three main groups or branches of modern day Judaism are:

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
Other Names	Traditional or Toral	Liberal or Progressive	Historical
History & Characteristics	Dates to Babylonian Captivity (500BC) Strict observance of Mosaic Law and tradition as per the rabbis.	Dates to 700s in Germany to modernize Judaism. Emphasis on ethics and prophets' precepts	Dates to 1800s in Germany but is an American movement. Middle view to the other two groups.

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
View of Scripture	Torah is truth, but it includes oral traditions of interpretation. Torah is higher than the rest of the O.T.	Hebrew Bible (O.T.) is a human historical document with valuable morals and ethical insights. Revelation is ongoing.	Hebrew Bible is both the word of God and of man. Revelation is “dynamic” and ongoing.
View of God	God is spirit rather than form. He is personal, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, eternal and compassionate.	Wide latitude of the “God concept” including naturalists, mystics, supernaturalists, religious humanists, or atheists. “The truth is we do not know the truth.”	Non-dogmatic and flexible. Less extreme than Reform, but God is considered impersonal with some holding to a finite god.

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
View of Man	<p>Humanity is morally neutral. A person can overcome evil bent by efforts of observing the Law.</p>	<p>People are basically good. Through education and evolution, a person can realize his full potential.</p>	<p>People are basically good. Perfectibility comes through enlightenment “in partnership” with God.</p>
View of the Law	<p>The Law is the basis of Judaism. It is authoritative and gives meaning to life. Dedication to the Halakhah (Jewish Law) leads to nearness with God.</p>	<p>The Law is an evolving and ever dynamic code that adapts to every age. If it is in conflict with civilized society it must be dropped.</p>	<p>Adaptation to contemporary situations is inevitable. Morality is absolute, but specific laws are relative.</p>

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
View of Sin	No “original sin”. Sin occurs by breaking the Law.	No “original sin”. Sin is merely the “ills” of society. Humanity has a “divine spark”.	No “original sin”. Sin is committed by immoral or antisocial acts.
View of Salvation	Salvation is not a Jewish concept because they presume a favorable standing with God. Repentance, prayer, and obedience to the Law produce a good relationship with God.	It is social improvement through the betterment of self and society.	Similar to the Reform view but includes the need to maintain Jewish identity.

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
View of the Messiah	He is a non-divine human who will restore the Jewish kingdom and rule the earth, righting all wrongs.	Messiah is not a person but a Utopian age toward which mankind is progressing.	Same as the Reform view.
View of Life After Death	Believe in physical resurrection. The righteous will exist forever with God. The unrighteous will suffer but disagreement exists over their ultimate destiny.	No belief in personal life after death. A person may “live on” in his accomplishments or in the minds of others. Some hold a pantheistic view of ultimate merging.	Similar to Reform with less influence by Eastern pantheism.

History

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

	ORTHODOX	REFORM	CONSERVATIVE
Distinctives in Synagogue Worship	House of prayer and study; social aspects are incidental. Prayers are in Hebrew. Men and women sit separately. Officiants face same as congregation.	Synagogue is known as a “Temple”. Service is abbreviated, modernized, and in both English and Hebrew. Genders sit together. They use choirs and organs.	Synagogue considered basic institution of Jewish life. Similar to Reform in alterations but to somewhat lesser degree.
U.S. Membership (1992) Of all American Jews	6%	38%	35%

Note: No group emphasizes a personal relationship with God, like Evangelical Christianity.

Jewish Practices

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

The Annual Holiday Cycle

(Observed in some part by most Jewish People.)

September - October

High Holy Days:

ROSH HA-SHANA - Jewish New Year, with the blowing of the ram's horn (shofar).

YOM KIPPUR - Day of Atonement, with fasting and prayer for forgiveness of sins.

SUKKOT (Tabernacles) - commemorates when Israel lived in tents.

November - December

HANUKKAH - commemorates victory of the Maccabees with festival of lights by lighting the menorah.

February - March

PURIM - recounting events in the book of Esther.

March - April

PASSOVER (most popular) - commemorates Israel's exodus from Egypt. Includes unleavened bread (matzoh) and observance of the Passover meal (Sedar).

May - June

SHAVUOT (Weeks / Pentecost) - commemorates springtime harvest themes and giving of the Law on Mt. Sinai.

Jewish Practices

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

The Annual Holiday Cycle

(Example)



Jewish family celebrating Hanukkah by lighting candles

Jewish Practices

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

The Life Cycle

CIRCUMCISION (*Bris* ceremony) - for sons on eighth day after birth.

BAR MITZVAH (for boys at 13) - celebrating coming of age with
synagogue service followed by a reception. **BAT**

MITZVAH (for girls - not traditional)

WEDDING - under a canopy chuppah) and smashing of wine glass wrapped
in cloth symbolizing destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

Jewish Practices

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

The Life Cycle

(Example)

**Jewish wedding
under the canopy
(chuppah)**



Jewish Practices

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Daily Lifestyle

(Observed in some part by some Jewish People.)

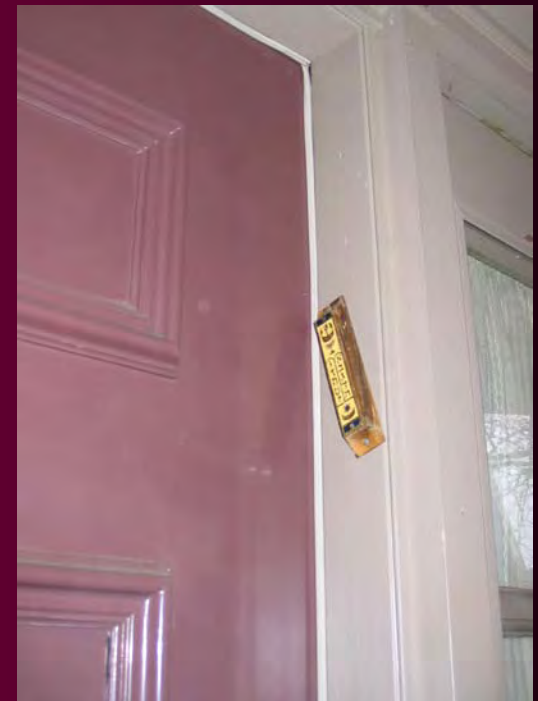
SABBATH observance - sundown from Friday through sundown Saturday

MEZUZAH - small box fixed to door post containing various Scriptures

KOSHER - adherence to Mosaic dietary laws



Keeping dishes for milk separate from dishes for meat.



Mezuzah

Evaluation

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Questions of Origin

Orthodox Judaism holds to a monotheistic God who created the universe at some point in time, consistent with the teachings of the Old Testament; it is not the work of evolution.



Conservative and Reform Judaism are less dogmatic than the Orthodox, with some groups even embracing some sort of pantheism.

Evaluation

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Questions of Meaning

Most Jews derive meaning, not from individual belief about God, sin, and the afterlife, but by being Jewish and living lives consistent with the particular synagogue of their choice.

BUT...

How can being Jewish and adhering to any type of Jewish religious observance or life style have meaning if one has no relationship with the God Who founded Old Testament Judaism in the first place ?

Evaluation

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Questions of Morality

Orthodox Jews say morality lies in adherence to the Torah.

BUT...

The Torah calls for practices which are not and can not be followed today with Judaism dispersed and no Temple, sacrifices or Aaronic priesthood.

To stop practicing certain prescriptions and start new, simply because rabbis said to, seems contradictory. Rabbis claim that the Mosaic Law was divinely given, but the “three fold path for atonement” was created by rabbis when they could no longer adhere to the Law. Which should be followed, God’s Law or the Rabbis law ?

Reform Judaism says that morality is based on the betterment of society, which of course, is completely subjective and based on majority opinion and custom, having nothing to do with absolute truth.

Evaluation

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Questions of Destiny

Orthodox Judaism believes in a physical literal resurrection and eternal life for the righteous. The unrighteous will either suffer eternal punishment or be annihilated.

While this view is generally to be commended, it does not appear to promote any teaching or practices to ensure righteousness before God other than good deeds (misvot). Life seems to be lived entirely for the here and now with no practical application of destiny.

The Reform Jews hold no concept of a personal life after death. Many have migrated into some form of pantheism where individuals merge with an impersonal life force.

Evaluation

JUDAISM

Modern Day Judaism

Questions of Messiah

Most of Judaism recognizes that the Old Testament (Hebrew Scriptures) contain hundreds of prophecies about the coming Messiah.

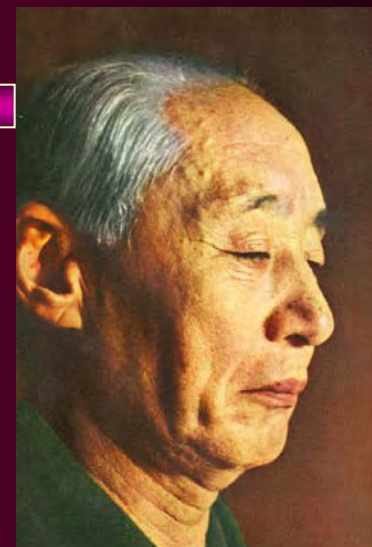
BUT...

They deny that Jesus Christ is that Messiah. Rabbinic Judaism failed to recognize Him and He sharply criticized them for their failure ...

“ You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these (the scriptures) that testify about Me.” (John 5:39)

There are over 60 detailed prophecies about the (first) coming of the Messiah and Jesus fulfilled them all. The statistical probability for one person to fulfill them all is almost incalculable. Even in light of this overwhelming evidence, Judaism as a whole refuses to believe that the Messiah has come in the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

BUDDHISM



Introduction

BUDDHISM

Buddhism includes the original teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) plus additions throughout later centuries.

Originally, Buddhism held to no specific deities, considering them to be practically irrelevant. However, later forms have embraced polytheism.

Buddha attempted to find solutions to the *symptoms* of man's problems instead of the underlying problem itself. No attempt was made to discover who God is and what He does.

Buddhism, like Hinduism, embraces karma, samsara, and moksha.

Buddhism has developed into two groups - Mahayana and Theraavada

Mahayana Buddhism is the larger group, claims “enlightenment” is available to all, seeks to help others find it, and is primarily in northern Asia.

Theravada Buddhism claim “enlightenment” is available only to the few committed, pursue it selfishly, and are found primarily in southern Asia.

History



BUDDHISM

Siddhartha Gautama (563-483 B.C.) was the wealthy son of a local ruler and a member of a higher cast of Hindus in northern India (Nepal).

Deeply concerned about the plight of mankind and his own life of luxury, he set out to find answers to mans problems.

After 7 days of contemplation while sitting under a large fig (Bo) tree, he claimed “enlightenment” and took the title Buddha (Enlightened One).

He spent the remainder of his life travelling and teaching his philosophy.

Although he claimed to be only a mere man, after his death many of his followers elevated him to the level of divinity.

Today there are 360 million Buddhists in the world with significant influence even in America.

Basic Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Although Buddhism is an extremely diverse belief system, the following key teachings are generally common:

1. The Four Noble Truths

The **First** Noble Truth - Suffering (dukkha) is universal.

The **Second** Noble Truth - Suffering is caused by desire.

The **Third** Noble Truth - The way to liberation is to get rid of desire.

The **Fourth** Noble Truth - Desire can be eliminated by the -

“Eightfold Path”

Basic Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Not sequential but simultaneous beliefs.

No. 2 “Eightfold Path”

Right Belief - accept the Four Noble Truths & Eightfold Path.

Right Resolve - renounce pleasures of the senses and renounce all ill will.

Right Speech - No lying, slander, verbal abuse or idle talk.

Right Behavior - Don't destroy any living creatures. Take only what is given to you. Don't commit unlawful sexual acts.

Right Occupation - Earn a living so as to harm no one.

Right Effort - Prevent any evil qualities from arising within you. Abandon any evil qualities that you possess in order to grow.

Right Contemplation - Be observant, strenuous, free of desire and sorrow.

Right Meditation - When you have abandoned all sensuous pleasures, evil qualities, both joy and sorrow, then enter the four degrees of meditation, by concentration.

Basic Beliefs

BUDDHISM

No. 3 - The Impermanence of All Things

Existence cause suffering.

Existence is made up of constantly changing parts.

These changing parts are so short lived that they are in no way permanent.

They just appear to be permanent.

This causes ignorance of the true permanence - Nirvana

This ignorance of reality causes more harmful desires - and suffering.

This brings about karmic rebirth, imprisoning one in individual existence.

Existence is made up of experiential moments (Dharmas)

**Existence is also made up of (Skandhas) five parts making up a person:
(1) body, (2) feeling, (3) perceptions, (4) volition, impulses, emotions, and
(5) consciousness. These are all non-permanent.**

However, reality must be something permanent if it is to be real.

**Hence one must transcend impermanence, eradicate personal existence,
and arrive at nirvana, the only real state of existence.**

Other Beliefs

BUDDHISM

God

There is no absolute God in Buddhism. Buddha himself did not deny the existence of God, but enlightenment had to do with ones own spiritual path, not a quest for God. Many Buddhists, however, believe that the existence of suffering and evil in the world is evidence against belief in an ultimate God. However, Hindu-like polytheism is common.

Reincarnation

Theravadin Buddhists believe that cycles of reincarnation occur until one reaches “enlightenment” (nirvana) and escapes the cycles.

Mahayanist Buddhists believe similarly except one may come back to this life to help others. Such a person is called a “Bodhissattva”.

Other Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Morality

Laity are urged to follow the Five Precepts, which prohibit:

- 1. Killing (including animals)**
- 2. Stealing**
- 3. Illicit sex**
- 4. Wrong speech (including gossip)**
- 5. Drugs and alcohol**

Plus they must support monks.

Monks and Nuns

Must follow self-denial, celibacy, and no personal property.

Religious Leaders

**Some are involved in education, charity and even politics.
Others are separated monks in monasteries.**

Therevada Buddhists help by example in meditation and self-denial.

Mahayana Buddhists help people practically in all areas of their lives.

Other Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Man

Man is an impermanent collection of five parts:

- 1. Physical body**
- 2. Emotions**
- 3. Perception**
- 4. Volition**
- 5. Consciousness**

Death causes these parts to be dismantled and the individual ceases to exist as a cohesive unit.

Buddha taught that all creatures, including man, are fictions; there is really no “self”; events make it only appear that way.

???

How reincarnation and striving for “salvation” can occur without the existence of “self” is a difficult concept that has occupied Buddhist philosophy from the start.

Other Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Scriptures

Theravada Buddhism

“The Three Baskets” (Approx. 11 time larger than the Bible)

1. Discipline Basket (Vanaya Pitaka)

Contains rules for higher class of Buddhists (monks)

2. Teaching Basket (Sutta Pitaka)

Contains Four Noble Truths and Eight Fold Path.

3. Mataphysical Basket (Abidhamma Pitaka)

Contains Buddhist philosophy

Mahayanist Buddhaim

Contains more than 5,000 volumes and is continually being altered.

Many Mahayan sects refer to certain favorite texts exclusively, resulting in vast differences between the various groups.

Other Beliefs

BUDDHISM

Nirvana

Nirvana is the final goal for Buddhists and the only state that is permanent. It literally means “blowing out” of the flame of desire and the negation of suffering.

To attain nirvana one must overcome the “three unwholesome roots” - desire, hatred, and delusion.

It is the state that lies somewhere between personal existence (which it isn't) and complete annihilation (which it also isn't).

It is described as the extinction of personal existence by absorption into pure being. It is passionless peace, detached serenity, cessation of desire, freedom from both pain and pleasure. It is the extinction of ideas, concepts, and suffering based upon ideas and concepts - the ultimate dimension of reality.

Schools of Thought

BUDDHISM

THERAVADA	MAYAHANA
<p>Buddha is a human teacher</p> <p>Complete self-effort for enlightenment</p> <p>Gods are rejected</p> <p>Prayer equals meditations</p> <p>Anti-supernatural</p> <p>Attains state of the Buddha (nirvana apart from the world,) one can only help oneself</p> <p>Atheist / agnostic</p> <p>Nirvana replaces samsara (existence)</p>	<p>Buddha is an enlightened, eternal being</p> <p>Self-effort is necessary, but additional help from Buddha, Bodhisattvas, and Buddhist gods is accepted.</p> <p>Gods are accepted</p> <p>Prayer may be petitionary</p> <p>Supernatural accepted</p> <p>Attains state of Bodhisattva (nirvana in the world, e.g. Bodhisattva postpones nirvana to help others find it)</p> <p>Atheist / agnostic / polytheistic</p> <p>Nirvana is samsara (existence)</p>

Buddhism Today

BUDDHISM

Mainly through the influence of celebrities, the West has come to know two Buddhist sects - Zen Buddhism and Tibetan (Tantric or Lamaism) Buddhism.

Zen Buddhism

Zen is a practice which is carried out for one's own self-development and leads to a state of liberation called "satori" by means of the personal experience of sitting and illogically meditating. (Zen means meditating)

This meditating involves non-thinking which is aided by illogical sayings and questions called, "koan". (One hand clapping, can you make me hear it too?)

It has no set of teachings, no doctrines, no sacred writings, it teaches nothing, it is not a religion, it has no god-object, no system of principles, no theory and it can't be explained with logic or in words - Zen just "feels". Feeling is all.

Zen appeals to many Westerners who have abandoned rational philosophies and religious dogmas for a "religion" that stresses "non-thinking" as a route to pantheistic oneness with all and so to become immortal.

Buddhism Today

BUDDHISM

Mainly through the influence of celebrities, the West has come to know two Buddhist sects - Zen Buddhism and Tibetan (Tantric or Lamaism) Buddhism.

Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism, taken from the person of the Dalai Lama)

History - Buddhism in Tibet absorbed Bon, an indigenous religion, and an Indian metaphysical system.

They believe that a casket fell from heaven at the feet of a Tibet ruler. It contained Buddhist books and a golden pagoda. The books contained a chant which if recited continuously would assure a person of nirvana.

They believe that in the 1400s a Tibetan ruler (Gedun Truppa) died having attained “Buddhahood” and returned (reincarnated) in another human body to rule a Tibetan sect . This sequence of reincarnations is believed to have continued and is passed from “Lama” (superior one) to “Lama”.

In the 1600s the term “Dalai”, meaning “ocean” was added, giving the sense - “ocean of wisdom”.

The current Dalai Lama, who lives in India, received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 and is a public speaker in great demand world-wide.

Buddhism Today

BUDDHISM

Philosophy of Tibetan Buddhism

Borrowing from prior pagan religions, Tibetan Buddhism believes in the interwovenness, interdependence, and oneness of all things. It also incorporates magical procedures and paranormal powers in the quest for enlightenment. They use audio meditation employing “mantra”, (sacred oral syllables), yantras (visual techniques), and mudras (hand gestures) to penetrate the Absolute and link up to divine spirits. Use of these procedures is considered to be spiritually dangerous, but enables one to reach nirvana in a minimum number of reincarnations (Short Path).

From Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism borrowed the belief that each Buddha and Bodhisattva has a female counterpart. The sexual union of these couples becomes a spiritual symbol and means to nirvana. They believe it is an expression of the oneness of body and spirit and the union between supreme bliss and wisdom. Officially, they disdain the use of the principle to engage in sexual promiscuity.

Evaluation of Buddhism BUDDHISM

Modern day Buddhism, in most of its forms, is pantheistic and therefore subject the failures associated with pantheism.

The Question of Origin



Buddhism teaches that the world exists because of causal action. It further teaches that the universe was not created neither is it permanent.

BUT

If the world exists by casual action, Who or what caused it? Certainly it was not a personal God for, in Buddhism, He does not exist.

But how could an non-personal “All” cause a personal world? Or how could the less complex cause the more complex? This is contrary to all observation.

If the world is just an illusion, as Buddhism claims, how can it exist and be brought about by a causal action?

Evaluation of Buddhism BUDDHISM

Modern day Buddhism, in most of its forms, is pantheistic and therefore subject the failures associated with pantheism.

The Question of Meaning

Buddhism teaches that the meaning of life is to attain nirvana by the elimination of desire, thereby causing the eradication of suffering.

BUT

How does the Buddhist know that desire causes suffering?

The Buddhist desires to eliminate suffering and desires to attain nirvana.

Why don't those two desires cause suffering?

Why should the ultimate meaning in life lie in the attainment of nirvana? Nirvana itself seems undesirable. It seems to be without real definition, it is neither existence nor annihilation. It is described as non-being....the extinction of personal existence by absorption into pure being. Nirvana is passionless peace, detached serenity, cessation of desire, freedom from both pain and pleasure. Who would want that? Better to be reincarnated!

Evaluation of Buddhism BUDDHISM

Modern day Buddhism, in most of its forms, is pantheistic and therefore subject the failures associated with pantheism.

The Question of Morality

Buddhist morality is based upon the Eightfold Path and the Five Precepts.

BUT

Morality for the Buddhist seems to be a secondary issue because they don't believe in sin. Rather they are concerned with the elimination of suffering through self-help rather than adherence to moral law.

Morality, for the Buddhist, seems to be totally unnecessary because there is no benefit to following a moral law; everyone will eventually attain nirvana.

Evaluation of Buddhism BUDDHISM

Modern day Buddhism, in most of its forms, is pantheistic and therefore subject the failures associated with pantheism.

The Question of Destiny

The goal of the Buddhist is to attain enlightenment and reach nirvana.

BUT

If you grant that nirvana is the state of bliss that is to be desired, what keeps one secure in nirvana? According to Buddhism, nirvana is the only thing that is real.

What originally caused man to suffer the illusion of individual self and lose his oneness with nirvana? What will prevent a reoccurrence of this loss, perhaps in endless cycles?

The doctrine of nirvana is internally inconsistently.

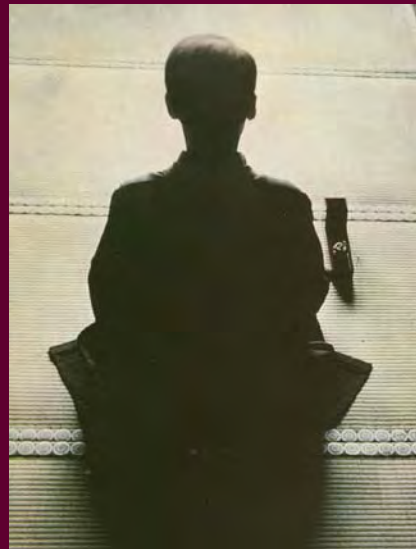
Summary

BUDDHISM

Buddhism does not adequately answer the four most important questions with which every human struggles (origin, meaning, morality and destiny).

Because, in practice, Buddhism is a pantheistic religion and so falls prone to all the errors of pantheism.

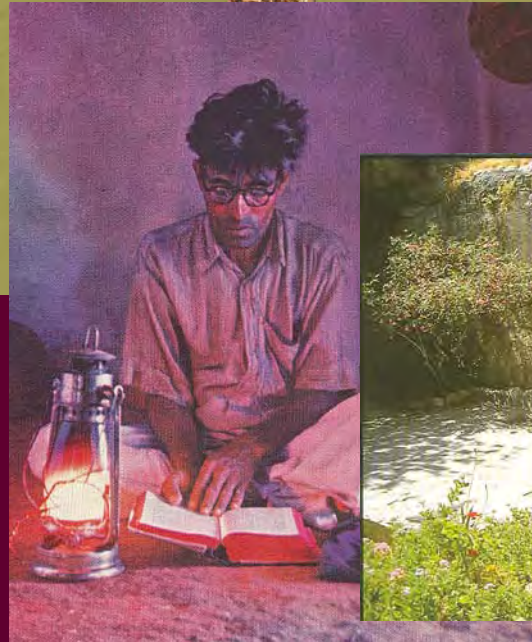
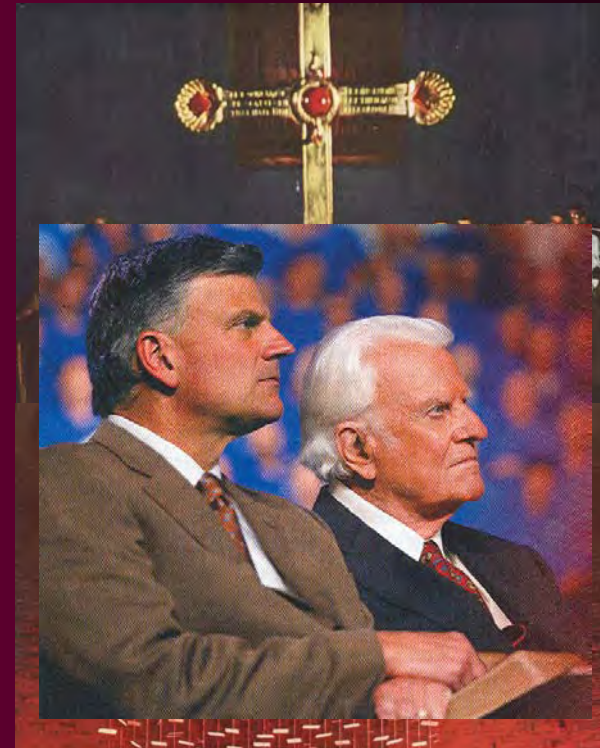
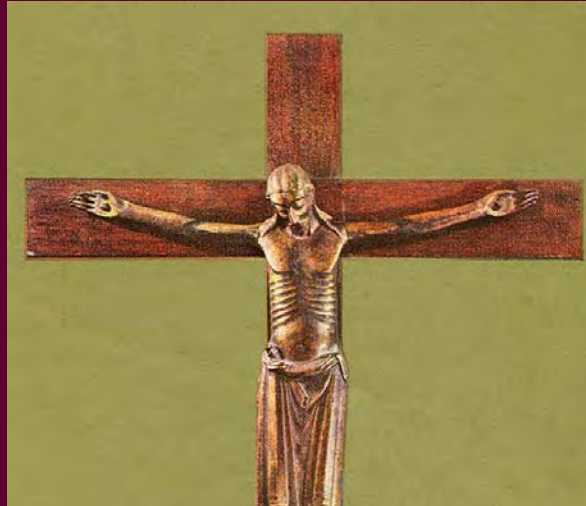
Therefore, Buddhism is untrue because it does not correspond to reality, and has many internal inconsistencies and does not cohere as a system.



The Five Major World Religions

School of Discipleship

CHRISTIANITY



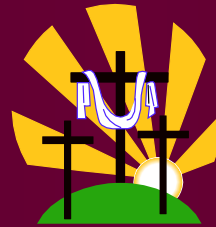
Introduction

CHRISTIANITY

Christianity is currently the world's largest religion. (2.0 billion)

It includes a large number of differing sects, denominations, and groups.

Historic Christianity is an exclusive belief system centered around the person and work of Jesus Christ, outside of whom there is no salvation.



Historic Christianity is a monotheistic religion which holds to the belief in one eternal, all powerful, all knowing God, who brought everything into existence by the power of His word and Who continues to maintain its on-going existence.

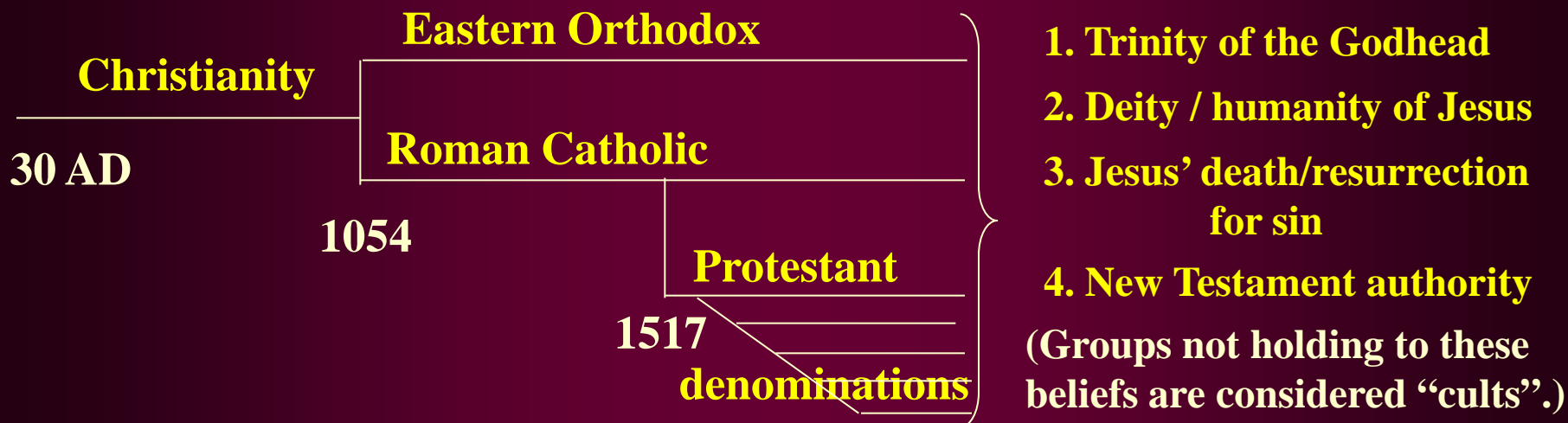
History

CHRISTIANITY

Beginning in about 30 A.D., a Jew by the name of Jesus of Nazareth, began preaching His Gospel and performing miracles in the land of Palestine. Three years later He was crucified on a Roman cross, died, was buried, and was resurrected three days later. 40 days later He ascended to heaven.

Soon after, His disciples (mostly Jews) began spreading the message that Jesus was the Jewish Messiah (Promised One) and salvation was available to all who believed in Him. The last of the original disciples died about 95 AD.

Christianity rapidly spread, especially into Europe, and has developed into primarily three main divisions that generally hold to basic teachings about:



Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About God

Christianity holds to a monotheistic God that possess many attributes some of which are: eternality, omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, sovereignty, and creativity.

God exists in three distinct persons of the Trinity which include Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is fully God and exhibits true personality - intellect, emotion, and will. Each is truly God and of the same essence, yet exist in a hierarchy functionally.

The Christian God has chosen to reveal Himself through nature, through conscience, through Jesus Christ, and through the Bible

Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About Man

God created humans in His own image, male and female, and initially good.

One of the good attributes that God gave to man was free will.

Man, through his free will, chose to disobey God, thereby committing sin.

Because of this initial sin by Adam, mankind is born sinful (original sin) and is eternally lost if left in his or her sinful state.

Man's chief problem is that he is alienated from fellowship with God.

All humans will exist forever. Those who have been justified will live forever with God; those who are not will live forever separated from God and His goodness.



Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About Morality

The basis of Christian morality is the nature of God.

God's nature is one of absolute goodness and moral perfection.

Since God is unchanging, He provides an absolute standard for morality that applies to everyone over all time.

Unlike pantheism, Christian morality holds that good and evil really do exist in a real world.

Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About Origin and Destiny

God brought about everything in the universe out of nothing by means of His spoken word.

Everything that He created was initially good.

God created various categories or “kinds” of life forms which could reproduce after (and only after) their own kind.

Creation is not eternal, but occurred at a specific point in the past.

God sustains (or maintains) the creation by His power.

Because of man’s sin, creation has also suffered in a negative manner.

At some point in the future, God will bring an end to the current universe through judgement

He will then create a “new heaven and new earth” that will last forever.

Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About Salvation

According to the Bible, salvation is found in, and only in, Jesus Christ.

God's justice demands that the punishment for man's sin be paid.

But man has no means by which to pay this infinite price.

God Himself, in the Person of Jesus Christ, paid the price by dying in the sinners' place.

God offers salvation as a gift to anyone who will respond to His offer.

As many as receive Christ are justified on the basis of Christ's death.

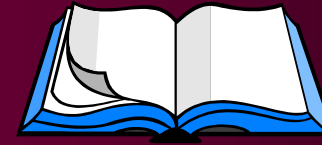
Those who accept God's offer of salvation will be eternally with Him.

Those who reject God's offer in Jesus Christ will be eternally separated from God in the Lake of Fire.

Beliefs

CHRISTIANITY

Belief About Sacred Writings



Christianity has historically held that the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) and the New Testament are the inspired Word of God.

As such, they are normative for believers and thus referred to as the Canon. (Canon is from Greek meaning measuring rod, rule, or standard.)

These writings - the Bible - are considered to be a direct revelation from the mind of God, through the human writers.

As such, they are all that is necessary for life (salvation) and godliness (sanctification).

Some groups also include the Apocrypha writings as deutrocanonical (below the Old and New Testaments).

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY

Historical Development

The Three Major Branches

30 AD

1054



All Agree



Seven
Church
Councils

Trinity & Deity
/ Humanity of
Jesus Christ

Eastern Orthodox

Claim connection
back to apostolic
churches.

Roman Catholic

Claim connection
back to Peter, who
they believe was
the first Pope.

Protestant

Claim connection
back to the New
Testament.

1517

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
God	God is personal but unknowable. He must be thought of mystically, but not pantheistically nor logically.	God is personal and knowable, but only through the R.C. church. He has a mystical presence but is known through R.C. traditions.	God is personal and knowable, but not experientially. The mysteries of God cannot be known because He is infinite, but what He has revealed can be known logically.
Trinity	One God, three distinct persons	Same	Same
Christ	100% deity 100% humanity	Same	Same

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Resurrection	Jesus was bodily resurrected and so will believers.	Same	Same
Second Coming	Jesus will bodily return to earth	Same	Same
Heaven and Hell	Heaven for believers Hell for non-believers	Same	Same
Icons	Valuable reminders (pictures) that aid in worship and a love for whoever they represent. Destruction of an icon is cause for excommunication.	Valuable aids (pictures and statues) to worship.	Rejection of all icons (pictures and statues). Focus instead is more on music and literature following the art forms used in the New Testament.

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Salvation	<p>Salvation is the process known as “theosis” - man becoming god. It usually begins when one is baptized into the Orthodox church and continues through the mystical work of the Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>Salvation is faith in Christ plus works associated with the 7 sacraments of the church. However, one is never sure in this life if the works are sufficient. They also believe it is possible for a non-Christian to be saved by good works.</p>	<p>Salvation is by grace alone (sola gracia), through faith alone (sola fidia), as revealed in the Bible alone (sola Scriptorum). This salvation comes as a decision to receive Christ.</p>

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Sin	No original sin and so no inherited sin nature. Man is born good and personally chooses to sin.	Man is born with a sin nature inherited from Adam's sin. Man is not able to not sin. Sin must be abolished before man can stand before God.	Most Protestants agree with catholics about original sin, but elaborate on it: (1) imputed sin from Adam, (2) natural sin - tendency to do non-God acts, and (3) personal sin, doing the sin acts.

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Tradition	<p>Tradition, as well as Scripture, is an extremely important work of the Holy Spirit. Generally, the older the tradition, the better.</p>	<p>Tradition is the result of the Vatican and all church councils and considered to be “sacred” and very important. It governs everything in Catholicism.</p>	<p>The only “traditions” acceptable are those of the apostles found in the Scriptures. All other traditions are man-made and optional or invalid.</p>
Liturgy	<p>Orthodoxy is highly sensitive to “correct” liturgy. The church is defined by right doctrine and right worship, which is defined by correct liturgy.</p>	<p>Catholics are also very liturgical, but unlike Orthodox, they may change liturgy as decreed by a church council.</p>	<p>Most Protestants put no sacred value in liturgy because the apostles did not prescribe one for the church.</p>

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

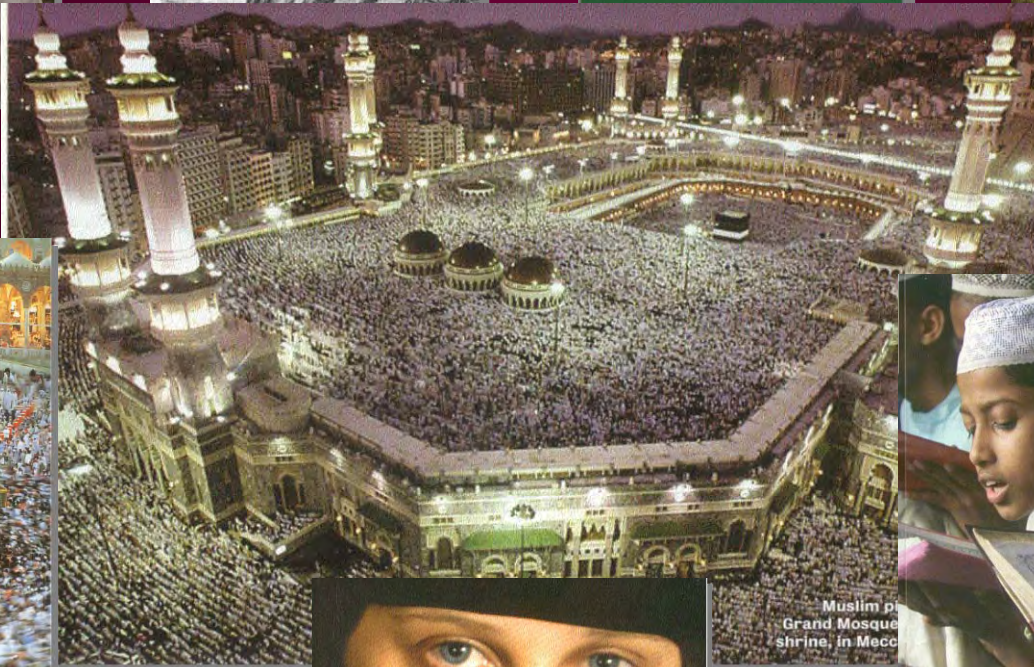
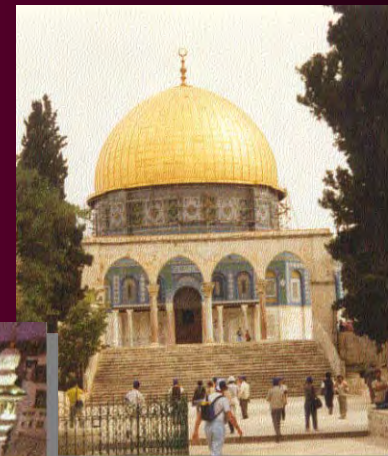
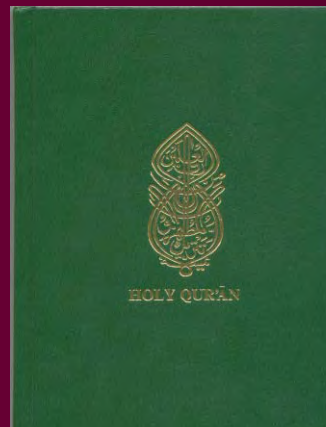
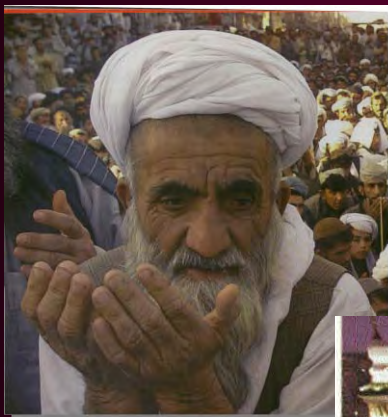
	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Mary and the Saints	<p>Mary and the saints, especially the apostles, are held in high regard. Prayer to them, especially in the presence of their icon has special spiritual merit. They hold that Mary was a perpetual virgin but not immaculately conceived.</p>	<p>Prayer to the saints is held in high regard, but Mary is placed on a much higher level. She is believed by many to be a co-mediator with Christ to get to God. They believe that Mary was immaculately conceived and is a perpetual virgin.</p>	<p>Protestants don't pray to Mary or the saints because neither Christ nor the apostles did it or commanded it. They reject the perpetual virginity of Mary because she had other children. They reject the immaculate conception of Mary because the Bible only says that Jesus was.</p>

**Modern Day
Christianity**

CHRISTIANITY
Beliefs of The Three Branches

	Eastern Orthodox	Roman Catholic	Protestant
Summary Evaluation	<p>They established the doctrines of the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. However, they hold firmly to the church fathers, but how do we know they are right? They fail to hold to the Bible's view of knowing God. Their mysticism has no way of determining truth. "Theosis" doctrine is non-biblical.</p>	<p>They hold to consistent views of morality and basic doctrines of God - the Trinity and the two natures of Christ. They also have a high regard for Scripture and the death of Christ for redemption. However, their "sacred tradition" has resulted in numerous non-biblical positions including church hierarchy and salvation by works.</p>	<p>Protestantism's foundation is "sola Scriptura" which provides a firm unchanging reference for belief and practice. This has produced the teaching of the Trinity, Christ's two natures, salvation by grace through faith alone, plus many other truths. However, its failure to adhere to Scripture has resulted in mixed results.</p>

ISLAM



Muslim pilgrims at the Grand Mosque, Mecca, Saudi Arabia

Introduction

ISLAM

“Islam” means “submission”.

A follower of Islam is known as a **“Muslim”**, one who submits. They are NOT known as “Muhammadians”

Muslims believe in submitting to the one true God, named **Allah**.

Muslims believe that **Muhammad** is the last and greatest prophet and it is through revelations given to him that Muslims know of Allah and his will.

Currently there are about 1.3 billion Muslims (20% of all people)

Islam is the second largest religion behind Christianity.

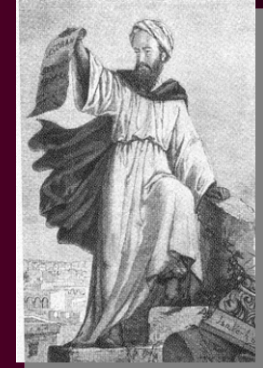
Islam is the world’s fastest growing religion.

There are about 3,000 mosques in America today, with one new mosque added every week.

History

ISLAM

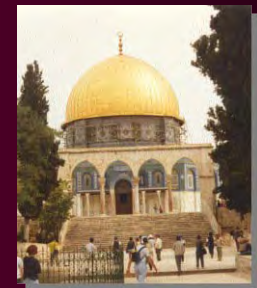
Muhammad (570-632 AD) was an Arabian trader from Mecca who initially married an older wealthy woman named Khadija. Being a trader, he had occasional contact with Jewish and Christian groups in Arabia. He often retreated to a cave for extended periods of solitary meditation. It was there that over a 23 year period he claimed to receive revelations from the angel Gabriel.



These alleged revelations were later written in what is known as the Qur'an (Koran), which has become the holy scriptures of Islam. Muhammad began teaching these revelations about the will of God, who he called Allah.



Muhammad also claimed to have traveled to heaven from Jerusalem on his horse one night to receive direct instruction from Allah. This is why Jerusalem is the third most holy site for Muslims.



History

ISLAM

Initially, Muhammad tried to spread Islam peacefully, following the pattern of Jesus, but mounting persecution caused him to flee (the Hijra) to Medina in 622 AD. In Medina he initially followed some Jewish practices but was rejected by the Jews there.

Eventually he turned to military force, persecuted the Jewish population there, and began spreading Islam by the sword. During his eight years in Medina he gained considerable power and in 630 AD returned to Mecca with 10,000 men who took the city by force.

Muhammad eventually married seven additional times. He died in 632 and was succeeded by the father of his second wife - Abu Bakr, known as “Caliph” (religious ruler). The legitimacy of this succession is the basis for the two major divisions within Islam - Shiites and Sunnis

By the year 750 AD, Islam had spread to China, the Indian Ocean, and as far west as Morocco, and the Iberian Peninsula.

Doctrines

ISLAM

The Five Basic Muslim Doctrines

- 1. There is one and only one God.**
- 2. There have been many prophets, including Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad.**
- 3. God created angels; some are evil and some are good.**
- 4. The Qur'an is God's full and final revelation.**
- 5. A final day of judgement (The Last Day) is coming, followed by heaven for the faithful and hell for the lost.**

Doctrines

ISLAM

The Five Pillars (of Islamic Practice)

1. All that is necessary to become a Muslim is to confess the “shahadah”:
There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is his prophet.
2. One must pray the “salat”, usually five times a day.
3. One keeps an annual fast (sawn) through the month of Ramadan.
4. One gives alms (sakat), 1/40th of one’s income, to the needy.
5. Every able Muslim must make a pilgrimage (The “Hajj”) during his life to Mecca.



Doctrines

ISLAM

God

Islam is strict monotheism. It strongly opposes the concept of the Trinity. The Qur'an states: "So believe in Allah and His apostles and **do not say three, Forebear and it shall be better for you. Allah is but one God."**

Allah's fundamental attribute is His absolute unity. He has no partner or companion. The greatest sin is "Shirk", assigning partners to God.

Allah is so far above man that he is completely unknowable. Only his will is knowable. It is an ultimate beyond which neither reason nor revelation can go.

Both evil and good come from Allah as he determines all things. Whatever Allah chooses becomes right, therefore good is based upon his will, not his nature.

Doctrines

ISLAM

Humanity

Humans were created by Allah for the purpose of obeying and submitting to him.

Allah breathed his spirit into man, yet man was not created in the image of God, but rather with the characteristics of knowledge, will, and power of action.

Humans were created innocent and free, but chose to sin against Allah.

Islam holds to the sin of Adam and Eve, but does not believe that it has any effect on the human race, such as original sin.

Humans are born sinless, but are intrinsically weak, imperfect, and constantly forgetful of Allah.

Doctrines

ISLAM

Morality

According to orthodox Islam, the purpose of man is not to know God and become conformed to his character, but rather to understand his will and be more obedient to his commands.

Doctrines

ISLAM

Salvation

The Islamic view is that humans are neither “fallen” nor “saved”.

Because a Muslim is not “fallen” he has no need of a savior and salvation.

But because he is not “saved”, he must earn his way into Allah’s favor and gain heaven.

To earn Allah’s favor at the Last Day judgement he must ethically believe and practice the five articles of faith.

Most Muslims believe that the best way to achieve this is to emulate Muhammad

The Qur’an states: “In the day of judgement, they whose balances shall be found heavy with good works shall be happy; but they whose balances shall be light are those who shall lose their souls, and shall remain in hell forever.”

In Islam, there is no assurance of heaven.



Sacred Writings

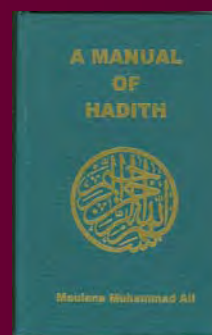
ISLAM

Muslims recognizes that Allah has given numerous sacred writings including the Old and New Testaments.



However, they believe that due to translation errors and other corruption, neither is correct or reliable today.

They believe that the only trustworthy sacred writings are the Qur'an and the Hadith:



Sacred Writings

ISLAM

The Qur'an (Koran)

Muslims believe that the Qur'an is the inspired word of Allah and that it has existed in heaven for eternity with Allah, but is separate from him.



They believe it was given to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years. It was not directly communicated by Allah.

Muhammad communicated it to his followers orally who wrote it down prior to and after his death. Then they collected it into a single volume that was called “Qur'an”, meaning “recitation”.

To Muslims, the Qur'an is more than a sacred book; it is a miracle (Muhammad's only miracle). Islam claims it is miraculous in its literary style, perfectly preserved, unified, scientifically accurate, and produced by Muhammad, although himself illiterate.

Islam claims that because it was originally inspired in Arabic, it is necessary to be able to read it in Arabic to perceive the miracle of it.

Sacred Writings

ISLAM

The Qur'an (Koran)



night cover the day and makes the day overtake the night, and He has made the sun and the moon subservient; each one moves on to an assigned term. Now surely He is the Mighty, the Forgiver.

6 He created you from a single being, then made its mate of the same (kind). And He sent down for you eight of the cattle in pairs.²¹⁵⁶ He creates you in the wombs of your mothers — creation after creation — in triple darkness. That is Allāh, your Lord; His is the kingdom. There is no God but He. How are you then turned away?

7 If you are ungrateful, then surely Allāh is above need of you. And He likes not ungratefulness in His servants. And if you are grateful, He likes it for you. And no bearer of a burden will bear another's burden. Then to your Lord is your return, then will He inform you of what you did. Surely He is Knower of what is in the breasts.

8 And when distress afflicts a man he calls upon his Lord, turning to Him; then when He grants him a favour from Him, he forgets that for which he called upon Him before, and sets up rivals to Allāh that he may cause (men) to stray from His path. Say: Enjoy thine ungratefulness for a little, surely thou art of the companions of the Fire.

2156 The word *anzala* (infinitive noun *anzāl*) is not applied only to the actual sending down of a thing, but also to making it accessible to men. *ʾanzal* means 'put or brought (down)', just as *ʾanzala* (7:29) and *ʾanzala* (7:36) are spoken of as having been sent down. It is in this sense that the cattle are spoken of here as being sent down for men. The eight of the cattle are the four pairs spoken of in 6:144. The four animals are mentioned particularly as being most useful for man.

يَكْوُرُ الْبَيْتَ عَلَى النَّهَارِ وَيَكْوُرُ
النَّهَارُ عَلَى الْبَيْتِ وَسَجَدَ الشَّمْسُ
وَالْقَمَرُ كُلٌّ يَجْعَلُونَ لِأَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى
إِلَّا لِحُكْمِ الْعَاقِلِينَ ﴿٦﴾

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ فَجَعَلْ
مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنْ الْأَنْعَامِ
ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ يَخْلُقْكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ
أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي
ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ
الْمُلْكُ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ عَالِمُ الْغُيُوبِ ﴿٧﴾

إِنْ تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِمْ
عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ وَلَا يَرْضَىٰ لِعِبَادِهِ الْكُفْرَ
وَأَنْ يَرْضَىٰ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَكْفُرُوا فَإِنَّ
الْكَفْرَ أَشْرًا ثُمَّ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ عُدَّتْ
أَنْفُسُهُمْ فَيَكُونُ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ
أَلِيمٌ ﴿٨﴾

وَإِذَا مَسَّ الْإِنْسَانَ ضُرٌّ مَرَّ
بِهِ فَدَعَا رَبَّهُ فَحَسْبُهُ إِذْ دَعَا
تَدْعَاهُ فَجَاءَهَا بِرَحْمَةٍ مِنْ
رَبِّهَا وَنَسِيَ مَا كَانِ يَدْعُوهُ الْإِلَهَ
مِن قَبْلِ ﴿٩﴾

فَلْيَتَذَكَّرِ الْإِنْسَانُ
أَنَّهُ كَانَ كَفَرَ بِاللَّهِ لَمَّا نَسَىٰ
أَنَّهُ كَانَ رَافِعِ الرَّكَعِ رَافِعًا
وَمَا كَانَ مِنَ الْمُتَكَبِّرِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

9 Is he who is obedient during hours of the night, prostrating himself and standing, taking care of the Hereafter and hoping for the mercy of his Lord—? Say: Are those who know and those who know not alike? Only men of understanding mind.

أَمَّنْ هُوَ قَائِمٌ عَلَىٰ آلِ الْبَيْتِ سَاجِدًا
وَكَائِمًا اتِّخَذَتْمْ أُلْحُسْرَىٰ وَرِجْوَافَهُمْ
رَازِحَةً قُلُوبُهُمْ يُسْمِعُ الَّذِينَ يَحْكُمُونَ
الْحُكْمَ وَالَّذِينَ يَدْعُونَ إِلَىٰ الْعَذَابِ
نَجْمًا ﴿٩﴾

SECTION 2: Believers and Disbelievers

10 Say: O My servants who believe; keep your duty to your Lord. For those who do good in this world in good, and Allāh's earth is spacious.²¹⁵⁷ Truly the steadfast will be paid their reward without measure.

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
وَأَطِيعُوا أَمْرَ الرَّسُولِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ
الْعِقَابِ ﴿١٠﴾

11 Say: I am commanded to serve Allāh, being sincere to Him in obedience,

قُلْ إِنِّي أُمِرْتُ أَنْ أَعْبُدَ اللَّهَ مُخْلِصًا
لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١١﴾

12 And I am commanded to be the first of those who submit.

وَأَمْرٌ أَنْ أَكُونَ أَوَّلَ الْمُسْلِمِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

13 Say: I fear, if I disobey my Lord, the chastisement of a grievous day.

قُلْ إِنِّي أَخَافُ إِنْ عَصَيْتُ رَبِّي عَذَابَ
يَوْمٍ عَظِيمٍ ﴿١٣﴾

14 Say: Allāh I serve, being sincere to Him in my obedience.

قُلِ اللَّهُ عَبْدٌ مُّخْلِصٌ لَهُ الدِّينَ ﴿١٤﴾

15 Serve then what you will beside Him. Say: The losers surely are those who lose themselves and their people on the day of Resurrection. Now surely that is the manifest loss!

قُلْ مَنْ كَانَ عَدُوًّا لِلَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
فِي الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا فَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ
يَوْمَ يُنْفَخُ السَّمَاءُ كِطْمَانًا فَتُلَوِّجُ
السُّمُومُ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٥﴾

16 They shall have coverings of fire above them and coverings beneath them. With that Allāh makes His servants to fear; so keep your duty to Me, O My servants.

فَأُولَٰئِكَ يَلْفُفُونَ فِي النَّارِ ﴿١٦﴾

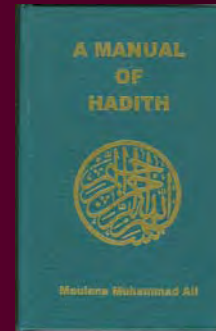
2157 The words are a comfort to the Muslims, who were subjected to sufferings in their own land, and give them the assurance that, if suppressed in one land, Islam will prosper in other lands.

Sacred Writings

ISLAM

The Hadith

The Hadith is a collection of the sayings and conduct of Muhammad as written and collected by many of his early followers.



In effect, the Hadith is the written traditions of Islam.

Muslims rank the Hadith very high, but lower than the Qur'an and complementary to it.

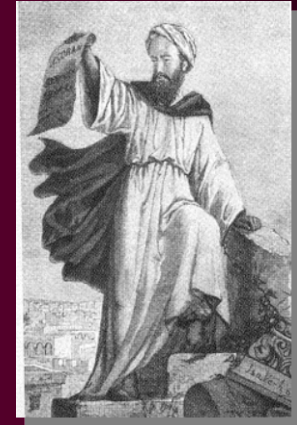
It helps Muslims interpret and understand the commands of the Qur'an in practical ways that they can emulate.

It forms a written description of many of Muhammad's saying and behavior for Muslims to emulate in attempting to please Allah.

An outsider cannot understand Islam without knowledge of the Hadith, because it helps explain why Muslims think and behave the way they do.

ISLAM

Muhammad



Within Islam, Muhammad is viewed as the final prophet of Allah, who supersedes all others and who alone delivered the final and perfect word of God.

Muslims are very intolerant of disparagement against him, even more so than of Allah.

Orthodox Islam does not view him as divine, but rather the most favored of mankind, most honored of all apostles, and best of the prophets.

Muslims believe that the Old and New Testaments contain prophecies that foretell of him.

His sayings (Hadith) and actions (Sunnah) constitute a basis for Muslims to emulate, in great detail, in an attempt to please Allah and thereby secure a place in heaven. (Often “Hadith” is used for both Hadith and Sunnah.)

In comparing Islam with Christianity, Muhammad is not considered parallel to Christ, this role is assigned to the Qur’an.

ISLAM

Jesus Christ

Within Islam, Jesus Christ is considered to be a mere human, a prophet of God superseded by Muhammad.

The Qur'an states that Christ was virgin born, called Messiah, did miracles, was sinless, and was called the Word of God.

However, Islam denies that He was the Son of God (Deity), that He was crucified, or that He rose from the dead. It further asserts that Judas Iscariot was crucified in His place and that Christ ascended to heaven without dying.

They also believe that He will return to earth during the end times and be killed.

Modern Day Islam

ISLAM



Muhammad

Sunni (80%)

**No successor
as Muslim**

Shi'ite (20%)

Successor should be elected

ruler (Caliph)

**Successor should be a relative
(son-in-law Ali)**

**Emphasize authority of writings
such as Qur'an, Hadith, and
Sunni traditions. Leaders are
religious scholars (Ulama).**

**Emphasize spiritual leaders
(Imam) to interpret Muslim
writings and govern all areas of
Muslim life.**

**Moderate mainstream
traditionalists adapting to
prevailing political and civil
systems.**

**Fundamentalist authoritarian
believing that Islam should
govern all areas of life, both
religious and secular.**

Evaluation

ISLAM

Eternality of Allah and the Qur'an

If both Allah and the Qur'an have existed eternally, as Muslims claim, how could Allah be the only eternal god and creator of all things? If Allah did not create the Qur'an, what is its origin? Does Allah have a “partner” in the form of the Qur'an? Must Allah conform to the Qur'an or is he totally sovereign?

Submission Disconnects Obedience From Truth

“Islam” means “submission” and a “Muslim” is one who “submits”. Submission is the cornerstone of Islam. But submission has nothing to do with truth or virtue. It is a neutral characteristic. A person can submit either to God or to the devil. The moral mistake of attempting to make submission a virtue allows immorality to be considered good. This can be clearly seen in those who unquestionably submitted to the direction of men like Hitler, Stalin, and more recently Osama bin Laden or Sadam Hussein.

Evaluation

ISLAM

The Determinative “will of Allah” eliminates human morality

In Islam, everything is predetermined by the will of Allah; there is no place for the free will of the individual. Muslims are believers because Allah has willed it so and unbelievers are unbelievers for the same reason. So it is down to every small detail in life. But if the individual is no different from a mindless robot, then morality is non-existent and Allah is unjust in holding the individual morally responsible. In contrast, the Bible teaches both the sovereignty of God and the free will of the individual with the related accountability.

Submission to the Law of God While Disregarding the Character of God is Legalism

In the Bible, God’s laws are linked to His character. The morality of an individual is based upon the unchanging character of God, as reflected in His laws. But in Islam, the character of Allah is irrelevant, unknowable and changeable and his laws are arbitrary. Keeping laws without reference to the character of the lawmaker takes all morality out of obedience, thus producing mere legalism.

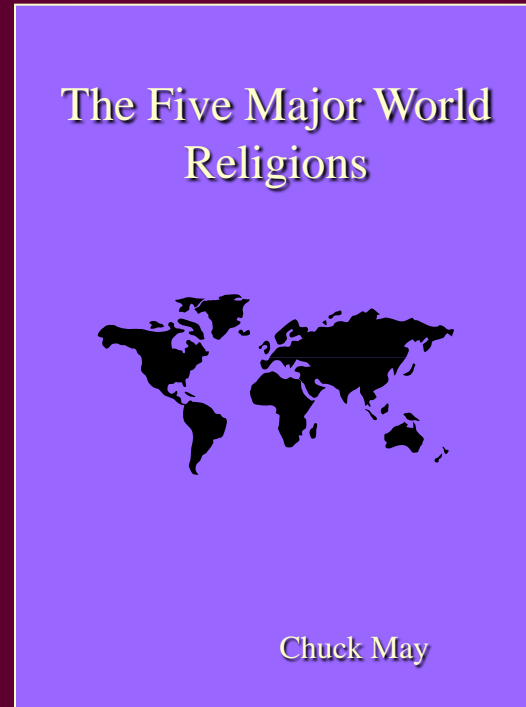
Evaluation

ISLAM

Summary

Islam fails the tests for truth because of its internal inconsistencies, the chief of which are:

- **The unknowable nature of Allah**
- **Allah's total determination of evil as well as good acts of humans**
- **The lack of qualifications of Muhammad as a prophet**



This concludes *“The Five major world Religions”*

