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Abhidhamma Pitaka

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The **Abhidhamma Pitaka** (abhidhammapiṭaka) is the last of the three pitakas, that is, baskets, constituting the Pali Canon, the scriptures of Theravāda Buddhism. It presents a more formal, abstract, systematic form of teaching than the others.

Nature of abhidhamma

Abhidhamma has been variously described as philosophy, psychology, metaphysics etc. Most scholars regard it as an attempted systematization of the teachings of the Sutta Pitaka, but L. S. Cousins, former Lecturer in the Department of Comparative Religion at Manchester University and former President of the Pali Text Society, says that the abhidhamma methodology looks at things in terms of occasions or events instead of sequences or processes. Tradition says that the abhidhamma is the absolute teaching whereas the suttas are adapted to particular hearers.

Origins

According to the scriptures themselves, the abhidhamma was taught by the Buddha himself. Tradition says that he thought it out immediately after his enlightenment, but only taught it some years later, to the gods. He then repeated it to Sariputta, who handed it on to his disciples. Scholars do not take this literally, dating these works generally around the third century B.C.E. However, some consider important aspects do or may go back earlier. Thus Cousins says that the abhidhamma methodology goes back earlier, perhaps to the Buddha himself. Dr Rupert Gethin, Lecturer in Indian religions in the Department of Theology and Religious studies, and co-director of the Centre for Buddhist Studies, at the University of Bristol, and current (2006) President of the Pali Text Society, also says important elements of abhidhamma methodology probably go back to the Buddha's lifetime. A. K. Warder, Professor Emeritus of Sanskrit at the University of Toronto, and Dr Peter Harvey of the University of Sunderland both suggest much earlier dates for the matikas on which most of the abidhamma books are based.

Contents

The Abhidhamma Pitaka consists of seven books.

- Dhammasangani (-saṅgaṇi or -saṅga&7751ī)
- Vibhanga (vibhaṅga)
- Dhatukatha (dhātukathā)

- Puggalapannatti (-paññatti)
- Kathavatthu (kathā-)
- Yamaka
- Patthana (paṭṭhāna)

Dhammasangani

This book begins with a matika (mātikā, literally, matrix), listing classifications of dhammas, variously translated as phenomena, ideas, states, etc. It starts with 22 threefold classifications, beginning with good/bad/unclassified, and follows this with 100 twofold ones according to the abhidhamma method. Many of these classifications are not exhaustive, and some are not even exclusive. The matika ends with 42 twofold classifications according to the sutta method, which are used only in this book, whereas the other 122 are used also in some of the other books.

The main body of the book is in four parts. The first of these goes through numerous states of mind, listing and defining, by lists of synonyms, factors present in them. The second deals with material form, beginning with its own matika, classifying by ones, twos and so on, explained after. The third explains the book's matika in terms of the first two parts, as does the fourth, by a different method, and omitting the sutta method.

Vibhanga

This book is in 18 chapters, each dealing with a different topic; for example the first deals with the five aggregates. A typical chapter (there are a number of divergences from this pattern) is in three parts. The first explains the topic according to the sutta method, often word-for-word the same as in actual suttas. The second is abhidhamma explanation, mainly by lists of synonyms as in the Dhammasangani. The third uses questions and answers, based on the matika: "How many aggregates are good etc?"

Dhatukatha

This book covers both the matika and various topics, mostly from the Vibhanga, relating them to the 5 aggregates, 12 bases and 18 elements. The first chapter is fairly simple: "In how many aggregates etc. are good dhammas etc. included?" The book progressively works up to more complicated questions: "From how many aggregates etc. are the dhammas dissociated from attention etc. dissociated?"

Puggalapannatti

This book starts with its own matika, which begins with some standard lists but then continues with lists of persons grouped numerically from ones to tens. This latter portion of the matika is then explained in the main body of the work. Most of the lists of persons and many of the explanations are also found in the Anguttara Nikaya.

Kathavatthu

This book consists of more than two hundred debates on questions of doctrine. It does not identify the participants. The commentary says the debates are between the Theravada and other schools, which it identifies in each case. These identifications are mostly consistent with what is known from other sources about the doctrines of different schools.

Yamaka

This book consists of ten chapters, each dealing with a different topic; for example, the first deals with roots. A typical chapter (there are a number of divergences from this pattern) is in three parts. The first part deals with questions of identity: "Is good root root?" "But is root good root?" The entire Yamaka consists of such pairs of converse questions, with their answers. Hence its name, which means pairs. The second part deals with arising: "For someone for whom the form aggregate arises, does the feeling aggregate arise?" The third part deals with understanding: "Does someone who understands the eye base understand the ear base?"

Patthana

This book deals with 24 conditions in relation to the matika: "Good dhamma is related to good dhamma by root condition", with details and numbers of answers.

Place in the tradition

The importance of the Abhidhamma Pitaka in classical Sinhalese Buddhism is suggested by the fact that it came to be furnished, not only, like much of the canon, with a commentary and a subcommentary on that commentary, but even with a subsubcommentary on that subcommentary. In more recent centuries, however, Burma has become the main centre of abhidhamma studies.

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Allegory in the Middle Ages

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Allegory in the Middle Ages was a vital element in the synthesis of Biblical and Classical traditions into what would become recognizable as Medieval culture. People of the Middle Ages consciously drew from the cultural legacies of the ancient world in shaping their institutions and ideas, and so allegory in Medieval literature and Medieval art was a prime mover for the synthesis and transformational continuity between the ancient world and the "new" Christian world. People of the Middle Ages did not see the same break between themselves and their classical forbears that modern observers see; rather, they saw continuity with themselves and the ancient world, using allegory as a synthesizing agent, bringing together a whole image.
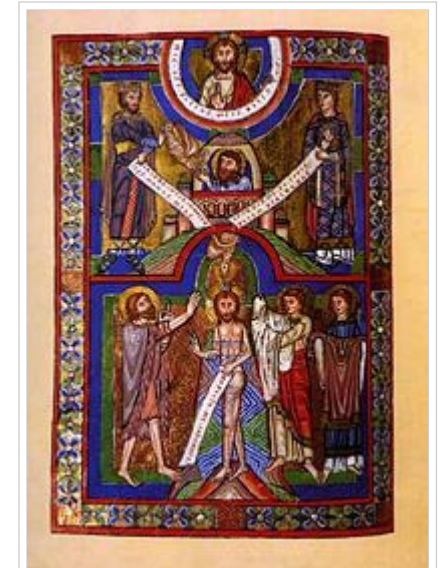
Four types of allegory

There were four categories of allegory used in the Middle Ages, which had originated with the Bible commentators of the early Christian era. The first is simply the *literal* interpretation of the events of the story for historical purposes with no underlying meaning. The second is called *typological*, which is connecting the events of the Old Testament with the New Testament; in particular drawing allegorical connections between the events of Christ's life with the stories of the Old Testament. The third is *moral* (or *tropological*), which is how one should act in the present, the "moral of the story". The fourth type of allegory is *anagogical*, dealing with the spiritual or mystical as it relates to future events of Christian history, heaven, hell, the last judgment; it deals with prophecies.

Noah and the "baptismal flood" of the Old Testament (top panel) is "typologically linked" (prefigured) by the baptism of Jesus in the New Testament (bottom panel).

Thus the four types of allegory deal with past events (literal), the connection of past events with the present (typology), present events (moral), and the future (anagogical).

Dante describes the four meanings, or senses, of allegory in his epistle to Can Grande della Scala. He says the allegories of his work are not simple, but:

> " Rather, it may be called " polysemous", that is, of many senses [allegories]. A first sense derives from the letters themselves, and a second from the things signified by the letters. We call the first sense "literal" sense, the second the "allegorical", or "moral" or "anagogical". To clarify this method of treatment, consider this verse: *When Israel went out of Egypt, the house of Jacob from a barbarous people: Judea was made his sanctuary, Israel his dominion* (Psalm 114). Now if we examine the letters alone, the exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt in the time of Moses is signified; in the typological sense, our redemption accomplished through Christ; in the moral sense, the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to the state of grace; in the anagogical sense, the exodus of the holy soul from slavery of this corruption to the freedom of eternal glory.. they can all be called allegorical. "

Medieval allegory began as a Christian method for synthesizing the discrepancies between the Old Testament and the New Testament. While both testaments were studied and seen as equally divinely inspired by God, the Old Testament contained discontinuities for Christians — for example the Jewish kosher laws. The Old Testament was therefore seen in relation to how it would predict the events of the New Testament, in particular how the events of the Old Testament related to the events of Christ's life. The events of the Old Testament were seen as part of the story, with the events of Christ's life bringing these stories to a full conclusion. The technical name for seeing the New Testament in the Old is called *typology*.

Christ rises from the tomb, alongside Jonah spit onto the beach, a typological allegory.

One example of typology is the story of Jonah and the whale from the Old Testament. Medieval allegorical interpretation of this story is that it prefigures Christ's burial, with the stomach of the whale as Christ's tomb. Jonah was eventually freed from the whale after three days, so did Christ rise from his tomb after three days. Thus, whenever one finds an allusion to Jonah in Medieval art or literature, it is usually an allegory for the burial and resurrection of Christ. Another common typological allegory is with the four major Old testament prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. These four prophets prefigure the four Apostles Matthew, Mark, Luke, John. There was no end to the number of analogies that commentators could find between stories of the Old Testament and the New.

There also existed a tradition in the Middle Ages of *mythography*—the allegorical interpretation of pagan myths. Virgil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were standard textbooks throughout the Middle Ages, and each had a long tradition of allegorical interpretation. An illustrative example can be found in Sienna in a painting of a Christs crucifix (*Sano di Pietro's Crucifix*, 15th c). At the top of the cross can be seen a bird pecking its own breast, blood pouring forth from the wound and feeding its waiting chicks below. This is the pelican whose "story" was told by the Roman naturalist Pliny the Elder. Thus by analogy to a " pagan" source, Christ feeds his own children with his own blood.

Allegory was even seen in the natural world, as animals, plants, and even non-living things were interpreted in books called bestiaries as symbols of Biblical figures and morals. For example, in one bestiary stags are compared to people devoted to the Church, because (according to medieval zoology) they leave their pastures for other (heavenly) pastures, and when they come to broad rivers (sin) they form in line and each rests its head on the haunches of the next (supporting each other by example and good works), speeding across the waters together.

History of allegory

Late Antiquity

Before the 5th century the traditions of allegorical interpretations were created in a time when rhetorical training was common, when the classics of mythology were still standard teaching texts, when the Greek and Roman pantheon of Gods were still visible forms (if not always fully recognized by the more learned populace), and when the new religions such as Christianity adopted or rejected pagan elements by way of allegoresis (the study and interpretation of allegory).

It was in this period that the first pure, freestanding allegorical work was written in about 400 AD by Prudentius called *Psychomachia* ("Soul-War"). The plot consists of the personified "good" virtues of Hope, Sobriety, Chastity, Humility, etc. fighting the personified "evil" vices of Pride, Wrath, Paganism, Avarice,

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etc. The personifications are women, because in Latin words for abstract concepts are in the feminine gender; an uninformed reader of the work might take the story literally as a tale of many angry women fighting one another, because as the first "pure" allegory Prudentius provides no context or explanation of the allegory.

In this same period of the early 5th century three other authors of importance to the history of allegory emerged: Claudian, Macrobius and Martianus Capella. Little is known of these authors, even if they were truly Christian or not, but we do know they handed down the inclination to express learned material in allegorical form, mainly through personification, which later became a standard part of medieval schooling methods.

Claudian's first work *In Rufinum* was an attack against the ruthless Rufinus and would become a model for the 12th century *Anticlaudianus*, a well known allegory for how to be an upstanding man. As well his *Rape of Prosperpine* was a litany of mythological allegories, personifications, and cosmological allegories. Macrobius wrote *Commentary of the Dream of Scipio* providing the Middle Ages with the tradition of a favorite topic, the allegorical treatment of dreams. Lastly Martianus wrote *Marriage of Philology and Mercury*, the title referring to the allegorical union of intelligent learning with the love of letters. It contained short treatises on the "seven liberal arts" (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, music) and thus became a standard textbook, greatly influencing educators and students throughout the Middle Ages.

Lastly, perhaps the most influential author of Late Antiquity was Boethius, in whose work *Consolation of Philosophy* we are first introduced to the personified Lady Philosophy, the source of innumerable later such personified figures (Lady Luck, etc..)

Early Middle Ages

After Boethius there exists no known work of allegory literature until the 12th century, and although allegorical thinking and elements and artwork abound during this period, not until the rise of the Medieval university in the High Middle Ages does sustained allegorical literature appear again.

High and Late Middle Ages

The earliest works were by Bernard Silvestris (*Cosmographia*, 1147), and Alanus ab Insulis (*Plaint of Nature*, 1170, and *Anticlaudianus*) who pioneered the use of allegory (mainly personification) for the use of abstract speculation on metaphysics and scientific questions.

The High and Late Middle Ages saw many allegorical works and techniques. There were four "great" works from this period.

- **The Four Great Medieval Allegories**
    - *Le Roman de la Rose*. A major allegorical work, it had many lasting influences on western literature, creating entire new genres and development of vernacular languages.
    - *The Divine Comedy*. Probably the greatest medieval work of literature, and the greatest work of allegory ever written.
    - *Piers Plowman*. An encyclopedic array of allegorical devices. Dream-vision; pilgrimage; personification; satire; typological story structure (the dreamer's progress mirrors the progress of biblical history from the Fall of Adam to Apocalypse).
    - *Pearl*. A plot based on an anagogical allegory; a dreamer is introduced to heavenly Jerusalem. Focus on the meaning of death. A religious response

to *Consolation of Philosophy*.

Apocrypha

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Apocrypha (from the Greek word ἀπόκρυφα, meaning "those having been hidden away") are texts of uncertain authenticity or writings where the authorship is questioned. In Judeo-Christian theology, the term *apocrypha* refers to any collection of scriptural texts that falls outside the canon. Given that different denominations have different ideas about what constitutes canonical scripture, there are several different versions of the apocrypha. During sixteenth-century controversies over the biblical canon the word "apocrypha" acquired a negative connotation, and it has become a synonym for "spurious" or "false". This usage usually involves fictitious or legendary accounts that are plausible enough to commonly be considered as truth. For example, the Parson Weems account of George Washington and the cherry tree is considered **apocryphal**.

Denotation and connotation

The term "apocrypha" has evolved in meaning somewhat, and its associated implications have ranged from positive to pejorative. The term **apocryphal**, according to Merriam-Webster, means "writings or statements of dubious authenticity."

Esoteric writings

The word "apocryphal" (ἀπόκρυφος) was first applied, in a positive sense, to writings which were kept secret because they were the vehicles of esoteric knowledge considered too profound or too sacred to be disclosed to anyone other than the initiated. It is used in this sense to describe *A Holy and Secret Book of Moses, called Eighth, or Holy* (Μωυσέως ἱερὰ βίβλος ἀπόκρυφος ἐπικαλούμενη ὀγδόη ἢ ἁγία), a text taken from a Leiden papyrus of the third or fourth century AD, but which may be as old as the first century. In a similar vein, the disciples of the Gnostic Prodicus boasted that they possessed the secret (ἀπόκρυφα) books of Zoroaster. The term in general enjoyed high consideration among the Gnostics (see Acts of Thomas, 10, 27, 44) .

Questionable value

"Apocrypha" was also applied to writings that were hidden not because of their divinity but because of their questionable value to the church. Many in Protestant traditions cite Revelation 22:18-19 as a potential curse for those who attach any canonical authority to extra-biblical writings such as the Apocrypha. However, a strict exegesis of this text would indicate it was meant for only the Book of Revelation. Revelation 22:18-19 (ESV) states: "(18) I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, (19) and if anyone takes away from the words of **the book of this prophecy**, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book." It should be obvious no one has license to distort any original writing. In this case, if we hold to a strict hermeneutic, this "book of prophecy" does not refer to the Bible as a whole but to the Book of Revelation. Origen, in *Commentaries on Matthew*, X. 18, XIII. 57, distinguishes between writings which were read by the

churches and apocryphal writings: γραφὴ μὴ φερομένη μέν ἕν τοῖς κοινοῖς καὶ δεδημοσιευμένοις βιβλίοις εἰκὸς δ' ὅτι ἕν ἀποκρύφοις φερομένη (*writing not found on the common and published books in one hand, actually found on the secret ones on the other*). The meaning of αποκρυφος is here practically equivalent to "excluded from the public use of the church", and prepares the way for an even less favourable use of the word .

Spurious writings

In general use, the word "apocrypha" came to mean "false, spurious, bad, or heretical." This meaning also appears in Origen's prologue to his commentary on the Song of Songs, of which only the Latin translation survives: *De scripturis his, quae appellantur apocryphae, pro eo quod multa in iis corrupta et contra fidem veram inveniuntur a majoribus tradita non placuit iis dari locum nec admitti ad auctoritatem.* "Concerning these scriptures, which are called apocryphal, for the reason that many things are found in them corrupt and against the true faith handed down by the elders, it has pleased them that they not be given a place nor be admitted to authority." (*Translation by a Wikipedia editor*.)

Other meanings

Other uses of *apocrypha* developed over the history of Western Christianity. The Gelasian Decree refers to religious works by church fathers Eusebius, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria as apocrypha. Augustine defined the word as meaning simply "obscurity of origin," implying that any book of unknown authorship or questionable authenticity would be considered as apocrypha. On the other hand, Jerome (in *Protogus Galeatus*) declared that all books outside the Hebrew canon were apocryphal . In practice, Jerome treated some books outside the Hebrew canon as if they were canonical, and the Western Church did not accept Jerome's definition of apocrypha, instead retaining the word's prior meaning (*see: Deuterocanon*). As a result, various church authorities labeled different books as apocrypha, treating them with varying levels of regard.

Some apocryphal books were included in the Septuagint with little distinction made between them and the rest of the Old Testament. Origen, Clement and others cited some apocryphal books as "scripture", "divine scripture", "inspired", and the like. On the other hand, teachers connected with Palestine and familiar with the Hebrew canon excluded from the canon all of the Old Testament not found there. This view is reflected in the canon of Melito of Sardis, and in the prefaces and letters of Jerome . A third view was that the books were not as valuable as the canonical scriptures of the Hebrew collection, but were of value for moral uses, as introductory texts for new converts from paganism, and to be read in congregations. They were referred to as " ecclesiastical" works by Rufinus .

These three opinions regarding the apocryphal books prevailed until the Protestant Reformation, when the idea of what constitutes canon became a matter of primary concern for Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. In 1546 the Catholic Council of Trent reconfirmed the canon of Augustine, dating to the second and third centuries, declaring "He is also to be anathema who does not receive these entire books, with all their parts, as they have been accustomed to be read in the Catholic Church, and are found in the ancient editions of the Latin Vulgate, as sacred and canonical." The whole of the books in question, with the exception of 1st and 2nd Esdras and the Prayer of Manasses, were declared canonical at Trent . The Protestants, in comparison, universally held the belief that only the books in the Hebrew collection were canonical. John Wycliffe, a 14th century reformer, had declared in his Biblical translation that "whatever book is in the Old Testament besides these twenty-five shall be set among the apocrypha, that is, without authority or belief" . Nevertheless, his translation of the Bible included the apocrypha and the Epistle of the Loadiceans.

The respect accorded to apocryphal books varied between Protestant denominations. In both the German (1537) and English (1535) translations of the Bible, the apocrypha are published in a separate section from the other books, although the Lutheran and Anglican lists are different. In some editions, (like the Westminster), readers were warned that these books were not "to be any otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings." A milder distinction was expressed elsewhere, such as in the "argument" introducing them in the Geneva Bible, and in the Sixth Article of the Church of England, where it is said that "the other books the church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners," though not to establish doctrine .

According to *The Apocrypha, Bridge of the Testaments* at orthodoxanglican.net:

> On the other hand, the Anglican Communion emphatically maintains that the Apocrypha is part of the Bible and is to be read with respect by her members. Two of the hymns used in the American Prayer Book office of Morning Prayer, the Benedictus es and Benedicite, are taken from the Apocrypha. One of the offertory sentences in Holy Communion comes from an apocryphal book (Tob. 4: 8-9). Lessons from the Apocrypha are regularly appointed to be read in the daily, Sunday, and special services of Morning and Evening Prayer. There are altogether 111 such lessons in the latest revised American Prayer Book Lectionary [The books used are: II Esdras, Tobit, Wisdom, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, Three Holy Children, and I Maccabees.] The position of the Church is best summarized in the words of Article Six of the Thirty-nine Articles: "In the name of Holy Scripture we do understand those canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority there was never any doubt in the Church… And the other Books (as Hierome [St. Jerome] saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine…"

Apocryphal texts by denomination

Jewish apocrypha

Although traditional rabbinical Judaism insists on the exclusive canonization of the current 24 books in the Tanakh, it also claims to have an oral law handed down from Moses. The Sadducees,[ ] - unlike the Pharisees but like the Samaritans - seem to have maintained an earlier and smaller number of texts as canonical, preferring to hold to only what was written in the Law of Moses (making most of the presently accepted canon, both Jewish and Christian, *apocryphal* in their eyes). Certain circles in Judaism, such as the Essenes in Judea and the Therapeutae in Egypt, were said to have a secret literature (see Dead Sea scrolls). Other traditions maintained different customs regarding canonicity . The Ethiopic Jews, for instance, seem to have retained a spread of canonical texts similar to the Ethiopian Orthodox Christians , cf Encyclopedia Judaica, Vol 6, p 1147. A large part of this literature consisted of the apocalypses. Based on prophecies, these apocalyptic books were not considered scripture by all, but rather part of a literary form that flourished from 200 BC to 100 AD.

Biblical books called apocrypha

During the birth of Christianity, some of the Jewish apocrypha that dealt with the coming of the Messianic kingdom became popular in the rising Jewish-Christian communities. Occasionally these writings were changed or added to, but on the whole it was found sufficient to reinterpret them as conforming to a Christian viewpoint. Christianity eventually gave birth to new apocalyptic works, some of which were derived from traditional Jewish sources. Some of the Jewish apocrypha were part of the ordinary religious literature of the early Christians. This was not strange, as the large majority of Old Testament references in the New Testament are taken from the Greek Septuagint, which is the source of the deuterocanonical books as well as most of the other biblical apocrypha.

Slightly varying collections of additional Books (called deuterocanonical by the Roman Catholic Church) form part of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox canons. New Testament possible reliance on these books includes these examples: James 1:19-20 shows dependence on Sirach 5:13-14, Hebrews 1:3 on Wisdom 7:26, Hebrews 11:35 on 2 Maccabees 6, Romans 9:21 on Wisdom 15:7, 2 Cor. 5:1, 4 on Wisdom 9:15, etc.

The Book of Enoch is included in the biblical canon only of the Oriental Orthodox churches of Ethiopia and Eritrea. However, the Epistle of Jude quotes the prophet, Enoch, by name, and some believe the use of this book appears in the four gospels and 1 Peter. The genuineness and inspiration of Enoch were believed in by the writer of the Epistle of Barnabas, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Clement of Alexandria, and much of the early church. The epistles of Paul and the gospels also show influences from the Book of Jubilees, which is part of the Ethiopian canon, as well as the Assumption of Moses and the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, which are included in no biblical canon.

The high position which some apocryphal books occupied in the first two centuries was undermined by a variety of influences in the Christian church. All claims to the possession of a secret tradition (as held by many Gnostic sects) were denied by the influential theologians like Irenaeus and Tertullian, the timeframe of true inspiration was limited to the apostolic age, and universal acceptance by the church was required as proof of apostolic authorship. As these principles gained currency, books deemed apocryphal tended to become regarded as spurious and heretical writings, though books now considered deuterocanonical have been used in liturgy and theology from the first century to the present.

New Testament apocryphal literature

New Testament apocrypha — books similar to those in the New Testament but almost universally rejected by Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants — include several gospels and lives of apostles. Some of these were clearly produced by Gnostic authors or members of other groups later defined as heterodox. Many texts believed lost for centuries were unearthed in the 19th and 20th centuries, producing lively speculation about their importance in early Christianity among religious scholars, while many others survive only in the form of quotations from them in other writings; for some, no more than the title is known. Artists and theologians have drawn upon the New Testament apocrypha for such matters as the names of Dismas and Gestas and details about the Three Wise Men. The first explicit mention of the perpetual virginity of Mary is found in the pseudepigraphical Infancy Gospel of James but it has been a Christian doctrine since a very early date.

The Gnostic tradition was a prolific source of apocryphal gospels. While these writings borrowed the characteristic poetic features of apocalyptic literature from Judaism, Gnostic sects largely insisted on allegorical interpretations based on a secret apostolic tradition. With them, as with most Christians of the first and second centuries, apocryphal books were highly esteemed. A well-known Gnostic apocryphal book is the Gospel of Thomas, the only complete text of which was found in the Egyptian town of Nag Hammadi in 1945. The Gospel of Judas, a Gnostic gospel, also received much media attention when it was reconstructed in 2006.

Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians as well as Protestants generally agree on the canon of the New Testament. However there is one notable exception. The Ethiopian Orthodox have in the past also included I & II Clement, and Shepherd of Hermas in their New Testament canon. This is no longer the case, according to Biblical scholar R.W. Cowley. According to Abba Brahana Selassie (an Ethiopian Orthodox priest currently residing in England) at the end of the New Testament, the Ethiopian canon contains the following Books of Church Order: The Order of Zion, Commandments, Gitzew, Abtils, 2 Books of the

Covenant, Clement and Didascalia. The Ethiopian Orthodox canon also places the General Epistle of St. James immediately before the General Epistle of St. Jude.

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Authorized King James Version

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The **Authorized King James Version** is an English translation of the Christian Bible begun in 1604 and first published in 1611 by the Church of England. In common with most other translations of the period, the New Testament was translated from the *Textus Receptus* (Received Text) series of the Greek texts. The Old Testament was translated from the Masoretic Hebrew text, while the Apocrypha was translated from the Greek Septuagint (LXX).

The 1611 Bible is known as the *King James Version* in the United States. In the United Kingdom, it is commonly known as the *Authorized Version*. King James did not literally translate the Bible but it was his advance authorization that was legally necessary for the Church of England to translate, publish and distribute the Bible in England. James and the Bishop of London wrote the brief that guided the translation, such as prohibiting the marginal notes found in the Geneva Bible and ensuring the position of the Church of England was recognised on various points. While the new Bible did replace the Bishops' Bible in the Church of England, there is no extant documentation to suggest that the completed book was ever formally 'authorized'. However, from 1662, the Epistle and Gospel texts in the Book of Common Prayer were taken from this Bible; and as such were 'authorized' by Act of Parliament (Daniell 2003, p. 488).

The *Authorized King James Version* had a profound effect on English literature. Herman Melville and William Wordsworth were deeply influenced by it.

Background

Protestantism embraced the principle that the Bible was the sole source of doctrine (see *sola scriptura*), and as such was made accessible to the population at large by being translated into the local vernacular, and printed (Daniell 2003, p. 128) . The act of Bible translation into any vernacular was a political as well as a religious statement; and remained so whether the Bible translation was a private endeavour, or sponsored by a monarch and his government (Hill 1993, p. 6) . A prince who sponsored a Bible translation would be able to establish the terms under which their people would have access to the word of God (Daniell 2003, p. 205) ; while conversely, a prince whose people were obtaining access to the word of God from imported translations, would suffer a serious loss of prestige.

Printed vernacular translations, based on the Latin Vulgate, were common in late 15th century Europe, and long pre-dated the Lutheran Reformation; but England was a special case (Daniell 2003, p. 249) . The first complete
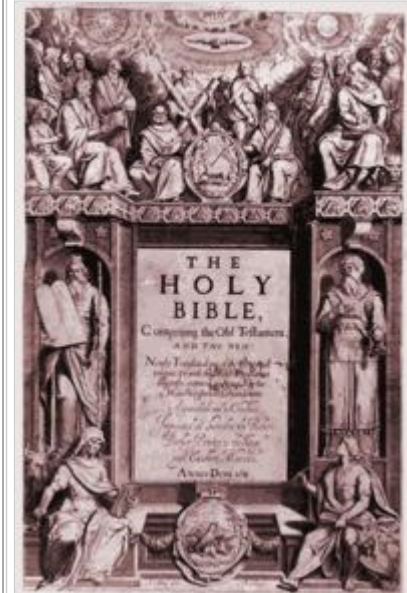
King James Version	
The title page to the 1611 first edition of the King James Bible by Cornelius Boel shows the Apostles Peter and Paul seated centrally at the top. Moses and Aaron flank the central text. In the four corners sit Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, authors of the four gospels, with their symbolic animals. The rest of the Apostles stand at the top.	
Full name:	King James Version Authorized Version
Abbreviation:	KJV or AV

English translations had been undertaken by followers of John Wycliffe in the 14th century, and were consequently associated with the Lollards; and in 1409, further unauthorised translations were banned (Daniell 2003, p. 75) . Wycliffe himself probably did not translate the entire Bible, but copies of a complete translation ascribed to him circulated widely in manuscript throughout the 15th century (Daniell 2003, p. 77); however because of the ban, no edition was printed (Daniell 2003, p. 109) . Consequently, it was not until William Tyndale, a Protestant contemporary of Luther undertook an English translation of the New Testament in 1525 (Daniell 2003, p. 143) , that any part of the Bible was printed in English. In accordance with Protestant principles, Tyndale translated from the original Greek, rather than from the Vulgate; and in this followed Luther's German New Testament, which had been published in 1522. Over the next ten years, Tyndale revised his New Testament in the light of rapidly advancing Biblical scholarship, and embarked on a translation of the Old Testament, directly from the Hebrew (Daniell 2003, p. 152).

William Tyndale translated the New Testament into English in 1525.

Tyndale's translation was deliberately provocative in a number of ways; he rendered Greek *presbuteros*, traditionally translated as " priest", as " elder" — a literal translation that slighted the connection between the Catholic clergy and the former biblical texts; in a similar fashion he translated *ekklesia*, traditionally " church", as " congregation" (Bobrick 2001, p. 109) ; these renditions were at the basis of a notorious controversy between Tyndale and Sir Thomas More, who took the establishment's side. In their preface, the translators of the King James note: *"we have on the one side avoided the scrupulosity of the Puritans, who leave the old Ecclesiastical words, and betake them to other, as when they put WASHING for BAPTISM, and CONGREGATION instead of CHURCH:"*.(Daniell 2003, p. 792) Tyndale also added marginal notes. some of which promoted a strongly anti-Papal interpretation of certain Biblical passages - especially in the Pentateuch (Daniell 2003, p. 148) .

Despite these controversial renderings, the merits of Tyndale's work and prose style made his translation the ultimate basis for all subsequent renditions into Early Modern English, although Tyndale's own life ended in 1536 with being strangled and having his body burned at the stake by the Catholic authorities in Antwerp for his alleged heresy(Daniell 2003, p. 156). With these controversial translations lightly edited and adapted by Myles Coverdale, Tyndale's New Testament and his incomplete work on the Old Testament (see Matthew's Bible) became in 1539, the basis for the Great Bible, the first "authorized version" issued by the Church of England in the reign of King Henry VIII(Daniell 2003, p. 204); whose text was to provide the Prayer Book Epistle and Gospel readings up to 1662. However, since in the Great Bible the Old Testament books from Ezra onwards (in the standard sequence) had been translated from the Latin Vulgate, this was not a version entirely from the original languages. In 1547, Edward VI ordered that a copy of the Great Bible should be available for general reading in every parish church; accompanied by an exegetical guide to the Gospels, in the form of the translation into English of the Latin

Complete Bible published:	1611, revised 1769
Textual Basis:	**NT:** High Correspondence to the Beza 1589 edition of the Textus Receptus, similar to the Byzantine text-type; some readings derived from the Vulgate. **OT:** Massoretic Text with Septuagint influence. **Apocrypha:** Septuagint with Vulgate influence.
Reading Level:	High School
Copyright status:	*(See Copyright status)*
Genesis 1:1-3	
In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.	
John 3:16	
For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.	

Paraphrases of Erasmus partially undertaken by his Catholic sister Princess Mary (Bruce 2002, p. 87).

When Mary I herself succeeded to the throne in 1553, she sought to return the English Church to the Catholic faith; and although she did not suppress or inhibit public reading of the Great Bible or the Paraphrases (Daniell 2003, p. 132), versions with overtly Protestant notes were once again banned (Bruce 2002, p. 88). Many English Protestants fled (Daniell 2003, p. 277), some establishing an English-speaking Protestant colony at Geneva; which, under the leadership of John Calvin had become the chief international centre of Reformed Protestantism and Latin biblical scholarship (Daniell 2003, p. 291) . Taking inspiration from the ongoing revision in Geneva of the translation of the Bible into French of Olivetan(Daniell 2003, p. 292), and with the help of Theodore Beza, these English Protestants undertook the Geneva Bible. This translation, of which the full Bible first appeared in 1560, was a revision of Tyndale's and the Great Bible on the basis of the original languages throughout; and was furnished copiously with Protestant annotations and references, translated from Latin commentators (Daniell 2003, p. 304). Many of these marginal notes were to be substantially expanded and revised towards more explicitly anti-papal exegesis in subsequent editions (Daniell 2003, p. 352). The 1599 edition in particular controversially incorporated Franciscus Junius's notations and commentary on the Book of Revelation in English translation (Daniell 2003, p. 370); whose bulk greatly exceeded that of the scriptural text.

Consequently, soon after Elizabeth I took the throne in 1559, the flaws of the Great Bible became painfully apparent (Daniell 2003, p. 339) , as the new imported Geneva Bibles achieved wide sales. In 1568 the established church responded with the Bishops' Bible - a reworking of the Great Bible in the light of the Geneva Version (without almost all its notes or cross-references) (Daniell 2003, p. 344); but their version failed to displace Geneva as the most popular English Bible - not the least because the full Bible was printed in lectern editions of prodigious size and at a cost of several pounds (Bobrick 2001, p. 186) . Accordingly, Elizabethan lay people overwhelmingly read the Bible in the Geneva Version - small editions were available at a relatively low cost. At the same time, there was a substantial clandestine importation of the rival Douay-Rheims New Testament of 1582, undertaken by exiled Roman Catholics; which, though still derived from Tyndale, claimed to represent the text of the Latin Vulgate; and which also included strongly polemical notes of its own (Daniell 2003, p. 364) .

Scholarly debate continued to take place almost exclusively in Latin. Sermons into the 1600s were still quoting Scripture passages untranslated from the Vulgate Latin (Story 1967, p. lii). None of the eventual translators of the Authorized Version show familiarity with the text of the Bishops' Bible in their sermons or writings (Hill 1993, p. 336); most often they quote scripture in the form of the Latin Vulgate (Bobrick 2001, p. 262), or otherwise in the Geneva Version (Daniell 2003, p. 295). Over the course of the 16th Century there had been published a succession of new biblical translations from the original languages into Latin - some much more literal than the Vulgate; some incorporating medieval Rabbinic exegesis - and these had the effect of making updated specialist linguistic learning more readily accessible to scholars undertaking a new translation into the vernacular. Of especial significance - since subsequent to the Geneva and Bishops' bibles - were the Antwerp Polyglot of 1573, and the Tremellius/ Junius bible of 1590.

The Project

In May 1601, King James VI of Scotland attended the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland at St. Columba's Church in Burntisland, Fife, and proposals were put forward for a new translation of the Bible into English (Bobrick 2001, p. 221) . Two years later, he acceded to the throne of England as King James I of England. (He is therefore sometimes known as "James the Sixth and First".)

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The Authorized Version was first conceived at the Hampton Court Conference, which the new king convened in January 1604, in response to the problems posed by Puritans in the Millenary Petition. According to an eyewitness account, Dr John Rainolds "moved his majesty that there might be a new translation of the Bible, because those which were allowed in the reign of King Henry the Eighth and Edward the Sixth were corrupt and not answerable to the truth of the original."

Rainolds offered three examples of problems with the versions then most commonly used in church: "First, Galatians iv. 25 (from the Bishops' Bible). The Greek word *susoichei* is not well translated as now it is, bordereth neither expressing the force of the word, nor the apostles sense, nor the situation of the place. Secondly, psalm cv. 28 (from the Great Bible), 'They were not obedient;' the original being, 'They were not disobedient.' Thirdly, psalm cvi. 30 (also from the Great Bible), 'Then stood up Phinees and prayed,' the Hebrew hath, 'executed judgment.'(Daniell 2003, p. 433)

King James proposed that a new translation be commissioned to settle the controversies; he hoped a new translation would replace the Geneva Bible and its offensive notes in the popular esteem. After the Bishop of London added a qualification that no marginal notes were to be added to Rainolds' new Bible, the king cited two passages in the Geneva translation where he found the notes offensive (Daniell 2003, p. 434); Exodus 1:17, where the Geneva Bible had commended the example of civil disobedience showed by the Hebrew midwives; and also II Chronicles 15:16, where the Geneva Bible had criticised King Asa for not having executed his idolatrous mother, Queen Maachah. James believed - with good reason - that the Geneva Bible notes on this latter scriptural passage had been instrumental in promoting the death of his own mother Mary Queen of Scots. King James gave the translators instructions, which were designed to discourage polemical notes, and to guarantee that the new version would conform to the ecclesiology of the Church of England.

King James' instructions included requirements that: (Bobrick 2001, p. 328)

1. The ordinary Bible, read in the church, commonly called the Bishops' Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the original will permit....
2. The names of the prophets, and the holy writers, with the other names in the text, to be retained, as near as may be, accordingly as they are vulgarly used.
3. The old ecclesiastical words to be kept; as the word church, not to be translated congregation, &c.
4. When any word hath divers significations, that to be kept which has been most commonly used by the most eminent fathers, being agreeable to the propriety of the place, and the analogy of the faith....
5. No marginal notes at all to be affixed, but only for the explanation of the Hebrew or Greek words, which cannot, without some circumlocution, so briefly and fitly be expressed in the text.
6. Such quotations of places to be marginally set down, as shall serve for the fit references of one scripture to another....
7. These translations to be used when they agree better with the text than the Bishops' Bible, viz. Tyndale Bible, Coverdale Bible, Matthew's Bible, Great Bible, Geneva Bible. (Influence from Taverner's Bible and the New Testament of the Douai-Rheims Bible can also be detected, but the Douai Old Testament was published too late to have any effect.)

King James' instructions made it clear that he wanted the resulting translation to contain a minimum of controversial notes and apparatus; and that he wanted the episcopal structure of the Established Church, and traditional beliefs about an ordained clergy to be reflected in the new translation. The instructions did not state, but James clearly implied, that the translation should accord with Anglican exegisis in support of the Divine Right of Kings. His order directed the translators to revise the Bishop's Bible, comparing other named English versions. It is for this reason that the flyleaves of most printings of the King James Bible

observe that the text had been "translated out of the original tongues, and with the former translations diligently compared and revised (by His Majesty's special command.)"

The Authorized Version was translated by 47 scholars (although 54 were originally approved)(Daniell 2003, p. 436) working in six committees, two based in each of the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, and Westminster. All except one - Sir Henry Savile - were ordained priests of the Church of England (Bobrick 2001, p. 223) , but the panels included scholars with Puritan sympathies, as well as High Churchmen. Forty unbound copies of the 1602 edition of the Bishops' Bible were specially printed so that the agreed changes of each committee could be recorded in the margins (Daniell 2003, p. 442). They worked on certain parts separately; then the drafts produced by each committee were compared and revised for harmony with each other (Daniell 2003, p. 444) . The scholars were not paid for directly for their translation work; instead a circular letter was sent to bishops,, encouraging them to consider the translators for appointment to well paid livings as these fell vacant(Bobrick 2001, p. 223) . Several were supported by the various colleges at Oxford and Cambridge, while others were promoted to bishoprics, deaneries and prebends through royal patronage. In overall scope and scale - and in the thorough application of procedures for checking, cross-consulting and review - this was far the most ambitious biblical translation project undertaken in Europe in the Reformation era.

Committees

(Bobrick 2001, pp. 223-244)

First Westminster Company, translating from Genesis to 2 Kings:
Lancelot Andrewes, John Overall, Hadrian à Saravia, Richard Clarke, John Layfield, Robert Tighe, Francis Burleigh, Geoffrey King, Richard Thomson, William Bedwell;

First Cambridge Company, translated from 1 Chronicles to the Song of Solomon:
Edward Lively, John Richardson, Lawrence Chaderton, Francis Dillingham, Roger Andrewes, Thomas Harrison, Robert Spaulding, Andrew Bing;

First Oxford Company, translated from Isaiah to Malachi:
John Harding, John Rainolds (or Reynolds), Thomas Holland, Richard Kilby, Miles Smith, Richard Brett, Daniel Fairclough;

Second Oxford Company, translated the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, and the Book of Revelation:
Thomas Ravis, George Abbot, Richard Eedes, Giles Tomson, Sir Henry Savile, John Peryn, Ralph Ravens, John Harmar;

Second Westminster Company, translated the Epistles:
William Barlow, John Spencer, Roger Fenton, Ralph Hutchinson, William Dakins, Michael Rabbet, Thomas Sanderson;

Second Cambridge Company, translated the Apocrypha:
John Duport, William Branthwaite, Jeremiah Radcliffe, Samuel Ward, Andrew Downes, John Bois, John Ward, John Aglionby, Leonard Hutten, Thomas Bilson, Richard Bancroft.

The Panels appear to have started work towards the end of 1604; and all had completed their sections by 1608, the Apocrypha panel finishing first (Norton 2005, p. 11) . From January 1609, a General Committee of Review met at Stationers' Hall, London to review the completed marked texts from each of the six companies. The committee included John Bois, Andrew Downes, John Harmar, and others known only by their initials, including "AL" (who may be Arthur Lake); and were paid for their attendance by the Stationers' Company. John Bois prepared a note of their deliberations (in Latin) - which has partly survived in a later transcript (Allen 1969) . Also surviving are a bound-together set of marked-up corrections to one of the forty Bishops' Bibles - covering the Old Testament and Gospels (Norton 2005, p. 20) ; and also a manuscript translation of the text of the Epistles, excepting those verses where no change was being recommended to the readings in the Bishops' Bible (Norton 2005, p. 16). Archbishop Bancroft insisted on having a final say, making fourteen changes; of which one was the term "bishoprick" at Acts 1:20 (Bobrick 2001, p. 257).

The original printing of the Authorized Version was published by Robert Barker, the King's Printer, in 1611 as a complete folio Bible (Herbert #309), and could be bought looseleaf for ten shillings (s), or bound for twelve. It was also published in the same year as a 12º New Testament (Herbert #310). Robert Barker's father, Christopher had in 1589 been granted by Elizabeth I the title of royal Printer (Daniell 2003, p. 453) , with the perpetual Royal Privilege (i.e. a monopoly) to print Bibles in England. Robert Barker invested very large sums in printing the new edition, and consequently ran into serious debt (Daniell 2003, p. 451); such that he was compelled to sub-lease the privilege to two rival London printers, Bonham Norton and John Bill (Daniell 2003, p. 454). It appears that it was initially intended that each printer would print a proportion of the text, share printed sheets with the others, and split the proceeds. But bitter financial disputes broke out, as Barker accused Norton and Bill of concealing their profits; while Norton and Bill accused Barker of selling sheets properly due to them as part-bibles (e.g. as New Testaments) for ready money (Daniell 2003, p. 455) . There followed decades of continual litigation, and consequent imprisonment for debt for members of the Barker and Norton printing dynasties (Daniell 2003, p. 455); while each issued rival editions of the whole Bible. In the 1629, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge managed successfully to assert separate and prior royal licences for bible printing, for their own university presses - and Cambridge University took the opportunity to print revised editions of the Authorized Version in 1629 (Herbert #424) and 1638 (Herbert #520), whose editors included John Bois and John Ward from the original translators. This did not, however, impede the commercial rivalries of the London printers; especially as the Barker family refused to allow any other printers access to the authoritative manuscript of the Authorized Version (Daniell 2003, p. 457) . In the 18th century all the surviving interests in the Royal Privilege were bought out by John Baskett of Oxford (although the fabled manuscript was never produced). The Baskett rights descended through a number of printers, until eventually bought in the 20th century by the Cambridge University Press.

Two editions of the whole bible are recognized as having been produced in 1611, which may be distinguished by their rendering of Ruth 3:15; the first edition reading "he went into the city", where the second (Herbert #319) reads "she went into the city" (Norton 2005, p. 62). However, bibles in all the early editions were made up using sheets originating from several printers, and consequently there is very considerable variation within any one edition. It is only in 1613 that an edition is found (Herbert #322), all of whose surviving representatives have substantially the same text (Norton 2005, p. 76) .

Literary attributes

Translation

Like Tyndale's translation and the Geneva Bible, the Authorized Version was translated primarily from Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic texts, although with

secondary reference both to the Latin Vulgate, and to more recent scholarly Latin versions; while two books of the Apocrypha were translated from a Latin source. Following the example of the Geneva Bible, words implied but not actually in the original source were distinguished by being printed in distinct type (albeit inconsistently); but otherwise the translators explicitly rejected word-for-word equivalence (Daniell 2003, p. 792). F.F Bruce gives an example from Romans Chapter 5 (Bruce 2002, p. 105) :

> 2 By whom also wee haue accesse by faith, into this grace wherein wee stand, and reioyce in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not onely so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience:

The English terms "rejoice" and "glory" stand for the same word in the Greek original. In Tyndale, Geneva and the Bishops' Bibles, both instances are translated "rejoice". In the Rheims New Testament, both are translated "glory". Only in the Authorized version does the translation vary between the two verses.

In obedience to their instructions, the translators provided no marginal interpretation of the text; but in some 8,500 places a marginal note offers an alternative English wording (Scrivener 1884, p. 56) . The majority of these notes offer a more literal rendering of the original (introduced as "Heb", "Chal", "Gr" or "Lat"), but others indicate a variant reading of the source text (introduced by "or"). Some of the annotated variants derive from alternative editions in the original languages, or from variant forms quoted in the fathers; but more commonly they indicate a difference between the original language reading, and that in the translators' preferred recent Latin versions; Tremellius for the Old Testament, Junius for the Apocrypha, and Beza for the New Testament (Scrivener 1884, p. 43) . A few notes clarify Biblical names, units of measurement or currency. Modern reprintings rarely reproduce these annotated variants - although they are to be found in the New Cambridge Paragraph Bible. In addition, there were originally some 9,000 scriptural cross-references, in which one text was related to another. Such cross-references had long been common in Latin bibles, and most of those in the Authorized version were copied across from this Latin tradition, hence preserving their distinct Vulgate references - e.g. in the numbering of the Psalms(Scrivener 1884, p. 118) . At the head of each chapter, the translators provided a short precis of its contents, with verse numbers.

The translators render the Tetragrammaton YHWH or the name Yahweh by the use of small capitals as LORD, or Lord GOD (for *Adonai YHWH*, "Lord YHWH"), denoting the divine name, Jesus is referred to as Lord with a capital "L" and lower case "ord" as the example of the scripture in Psalm 110:1 "The LORD said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool".

For their Old Testament, the translators worked from editions of the Hebrew Rabbinic Bible by Daniel Bomberg (1524/5)(Scrivener 1884, p. 41) ; but adjusted the text in a few places to conform to the Greek LXX or Latin Vulgate in passages to which Christian tradition had tended to attach a Christological interpretation (Bobrick 2001, p. 271); as, for example, the reading "they pierced my hands and my feet" in Psalm 22:16. Otherwise, however, the King James Version is closer to the Hebrew tradition than any previous English translation (Daiches 1968, pp. 208) - especially in making use of the rabbinic commentaries, such as Kimhi, in elucidating obscure passages in the Masoretic Text; by contrast with earlier versions, which had been more likely to adopt LXX or Vulgate readings in such places.

For their New Testament, the translators chiefly used the 1598 and 1588/89 Greek editions of Theodore Beza(Scrivener 1884, p. 60) ; which also present Beza's Latin version of the Greek and Stephanus's edition of the Latin Vulgate; both of which versions were extensively referred to - as the translators conducted all discussions amongst themselves in Latin. F.H.A. Scrivener identifies 190 readings where the King James translators depart from Beza's Greek text, generally in maintaining the wording of the Bishop's Bible and other earlier English translations (Scrivener 1884, pp. 243-263) . In about half of these instances, the King

James translators appear to follow the earlier 1550 Greek Textus Receptus of Stephanus. For the other half, Scrivener was usually able to find corresponding Greek readings in the editions of Erasmus, or in the Complutensian Polyglot; but in several dozen readings he notes that no printed Greek text corresponds to the English of the King James version - which in these readings derives directly from the Vulgate (Scrivener 1884, p. 262). For example, at John 20:17, the risen Jesus tells Mary Magdalene "touch me not" (as, indeed, he had done in all previous English versions), following the Latin Vulgate " noli me tangere"; where an accurate rendering of the original Greek would have been, "do not cling to me". The King James New Testament owes much more to the Vulgate than does the Old Testament; but still, at least 80% of the text is unaltered from Tyndale's translation (Daniell 2003, p. 448).

Unlike the rest of the Bible, the translators of the Apocrypha identified their source texts in their marginal notes (Scrivener 1884, p. 47) . From these it can determined that the books of the Apocrypha were translated from the Septuagint - primarily, from the Greek Old Testament column in the *Antwerp Polyglot* - but with extensive reference to the counterpart Latin Vulgate text, and to Junius's Latin translation. The translators record references to the Sixtine Septuagint of 1587, which is substantially a printing of the Old Testament text from the Codex Vaticanus; and also to the 1518 Greek Septuagint edition of Aldus Manutius. They had, however, no Greek texts for 2 Esdras, or for the Prayer of Manasses, and Scrivener found that they here used an unidentified Latin manuscript.

The translators appear to have otherwise made no first-hand study of ancient manuscript sources; even those which - like the Codex Bezae - would have been readily available to them (Scrivener 1884, p. 59). However, they made wide and eclectic use of all printed editions in the original languages then available, including the ancient Syriac New Testament printed with an interlinear Latin gloss in the Antwerp Polyglot of 1573 (Bobrick 2001, p. 246) . In addition to all previous English versions - including the Catholic Rheims New Testament; they also consulted contemporary vernacular translations into Spanish, French, Italian and German.

Scrivener asserts that the translations undertaken by the second Westminster Company - of the Epistles; and by the second Cambridge Company - of the Apocrypha; are of notably poorer quality than those for the rest of the Old and New Testaments; both in respect of clarity of English expression, and in accurate rendering of the Greek (Scrivener 1884, p. 73) . In particular, he detects in these two companies too great a tendency to maintain the English text of the Bishops' Bible against superior renderings in the Geneva Bible (Bobrick 2001, p. 251) .

Style

The Authorized Version has traditionally been appreciated for the quality of the prose and poetry in the translation. However, the English language has changed since the time of its publication, and the King James Version employs words and grammatical structures that may be foreign to modern readers. For example, the Authorized Version uses the second person singular pronouns, such as " thou". Some words used in the Authorized Version have changed meaning since the translation was made; for example "replenish" is used in the translation in the sense of "fill" where the modern verb means "to refill", and "even" (a word very often introduced by the translators and thus italicized) is mostly used in the sense of "namely" or "that is". Because of this, some modern readers find the Authorized Version more difficult to understand than more recent translations.

At the time William Tyndale made his Bible translation, there was no consensus in Early Modern English as to whether the older pronoun *his* or the neologism *its* was the proper genitive case of the third person singular pronoun *it*. Tyndale dodged the difficulty by using phrases such as *the blood thereof* rather than choosing between *his blood* or *its blood*. By the time the King James translators wrote, usage had settled on *its*, but Tyndale's style was familiar and considered

a part of an appropriately biblical style, and they chose to retain the old wording.

A primary concern of the translators was to produce a Bible that would be appropriate, dignified and resonant in public reading. Hence, in a period of rapid linguistic change, they avoided contemporary idioms; tending instead towards forms that were already slightly archaic, like *verily* and *it came to pass* (Bobrick 2001, p. 264) . They also tended to enliven their text with stylistic variation, finding multiple English words or verbal forms, in places where the original language employed repetition.

The Authorized Version is notably more Latinate than previous English versions (Daniell 2003, p. 440) , especially the Geneva Bible. This results in part from the academic stylistic preferences of a number of the translators - several of whom admitted to being more comfortable writing in Latin than in English (Bobrick 2001, p. 229) - but was also, in part, a consequence of the royal proscription against explanatory notes. Hence, where the Geneva Bible might use a common English word - and gloss its particular application in a marginal note; the King James version tends rather to prefer a technical term, frequently in Anglicised Latin. Consequently, although the King had instructed the translators to use the Bishops' Bible as a base text, the New Testament in particular, stylistically owes much to the Catholic Rheims New Testament, whose translators had also been concerned to find English equivalents for Latin terminology (Bobrick 2001, p. 252). In addition, the translators of the New Testament books habitually quote Old Testament names in the renderings familiar from the Vulgate Latin, rather than in their Hebrew forms (e.g. Elias, Jeremias; for Elijah, Jeremiah).

The degree to which the Authorized Version takes elements from its main predecessors (each of which is itself dependent on Tyndale) can be assessed with reference to a famous passage in I Corinthians 13:

Tyndale Bible 1526.

1. Though I spake with the tonges of men and angels and yet had no love I were even as soundinge brasse: or as a tynklynge Cymball. 2 And though I coulde prophesy and vnderstode all secretes and all knowledge: yee yf I had all fayth so that I coulde move mountayns oute of ther places and yet had no love I were nothynge. 3 And though I bestowed all my gooddes to fede ye poore and though I gave my body even that I burned and yet had no love it profeteth me nothinge.

Geneva Bible 1560.

1. Though I speake with the tongues of men and Angels, and haue not loue, I am as sounding brasse, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I had the gift of prophecie, and knewe all secrets and all knowledge, yea, if I had all faith, so that I could remooue mountaines and had not loue, I were nothing. 3 And though I feede the poore with all my goods, and though I giue my body, that I be burned, and haue not loue, it profiteth me nothing.

Bishops' Bible 1568.

1. Though I speake with the tongues of men and of Angels, and haue not loue, I am [as] soundyng brasse, or [as] a tincklyng Cimball: 2 And though I coulde prophesie, and vnderstoode all secretes, and all knowledge: Yea, if I had all fayth, so that I coulde moue mountaynes out of their places, and haue not loue, I were nothyng. 3 And though I bestowe all my goodes to feede the poore, and though I geue my body that I burned, and haue not loue, it profiteth me nothyng.

Rheims New Testament 1582.

1. If I speake vvith the tonges of men and of Angels, and haue not charitie: I am become as sounding brasse, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And if I should haue prophecie, and knevv al mysteries and al knovvledge, and if I should haue al faith, so that I could remoue mountaines, and haue not charitie, I am nothing. 3 And if I should distribute al my goods to be meate for the poore, and if I should deliuer my body so that I burne, and haue not charitie, it doth profit me nothing.

Authorized Version 1611.

1. Though I speake with the tongues of men & of Angels, and haue not charity, I am become as sounding brasse or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I haue the gift of prophesie, and vnderstand all mysteries and all knowledge: and though I haue all faith, so that I could remooue mountaines, and haue no charitie, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestowe all my goods to feede the poore, and though I giue my body to bee burned, and haue not charitie, it profiteth me nothing.

The use of the English word "charity" in this passage in the Authorized Version reflects the royal injunction to continue with the old "ecclesiastical" terminology; and derives from a change introduced in the 1572 edition of the Bishops' Bible. The first verse is nearly identical in all the versions, although the Authorized Version text is closest here to the Rheims New Testament; while the third verse preserves the wording of the Bishops' Bible almost unchanged. The second verse has been more thoroughly recomposed by the 1611 translators, but the vocabulary and the verbal tenses owe more to Rheims than either of the other two versions. Note too the deliberate stylistic alternation, where the same Greek expression is rendered "no charitie" in the second verse; compared to "not charitie" in the first and third verses.

As the Authorized Version was "appointed to be read in churches", and aimed at a particularly dignified and formal style, it tends to flatten stylistic differences in the source text and aims instead for a uniformly elevated and "biblical" sounding prose (Daniell 2003, p. 441). For example, here is the Geneva Bible's rendition of Genesis 38:27-30:

Now, when the time was come that she should be deliuered, beholde, there were twinnes in her wombe. And when she was in trauell, the one put out his hand: and the midwife tooke and bound a red threde about his hand, saying, This is come out first. But when he plucked his hand backe againe, loe, his brother came out, and the midwife said, How hast thou broken the breach vpon thee? and his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that had the red threde about his hande, and his name was called Zarah.

Here, by contrast, is the same passage in the 1611 King James:

And it came to passe in the time of her trauaile, that beholde, twinnes were in her wombe. And it came to passe when she trauailed, that *the one* put out his hand, and the midwife tooke and bound vpon his hand a skarlet threed, saying, This came out first. And it came to passe as he drewe back his hand, that behold, his brother came out: and she said, How hast thou broken foorth? *this* breach *bee* vpon thee: Therefore his name was called Pharez. And afterward came out his brother that *had* the skarlet threed vpon his hand, and his name was called Zarah.

Both passages owe a great deal to Tyndale's earlier rendition of this text. But the King James text repeats *and it came to pass* where Geneva has *now* or *and when*.

Here are some brief samples of text that demonstrate the King James Version's literary style:

> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not. (*John 1:1-5*)

> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (*John 3:16*)

> When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some [say that thou art] John the Baptist: some Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed [it] unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (*Matthew 16:13-18*)

Subsequent history

While the Authorized Version was meant to replace the Bishops' Bible as the official version for readings in the Church of England, it was apparently (unlike the Great Bible) never specifically "Authorized", although it is commonly known as the *Authorised Version* in the United Kingdom. However, the King's Printer issued no further editions of the Bishops' Bible; so necessarily the Authorized Version supplanted it as the standard lectern Bible in parish church use in England. In 1618, the English delegates to the Synod of Dort presented a report of the rules adopted by the translation panels, and their methods of proceeding (Scrivener 1884, p. 264) ; and this inspired the Synod to initiate a counterpart Dutch official 'authorized version' (Statenvertaling) for church use. In the 1662 Book Of Common Prayer, the text of the Authorized version finally supplanted that of the Great Bible in the Epistle and Gospel readings - though the Psalter nevertheless was provided in the 1539 version.

The case was different in Scotland, where the Geneva Bible had long been the standard Church Bible. It was not till 1633 that a Scots edition of the Authorized Version was printed - in conjunction with the Scots coronation in that year of Charles I (Daniell 2003, p. 458) . The inclusion of illustrations in the edition raised accusations of Popery from opponents to the religious policies of Charles, and of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury. However, official policy favoured the Authorized Version, and this favour returned during the Commonwealth - as London printers succeeded in re-asserting their monopoly of Bible printing with support from Oliver Cromwell (Daniell 2003, p. 459) - and the "New Translation" was the only edition on the market. F.F. Bruce reports that the last recorded instance of a Scots parish continuing to use the "Old Translation" (i.e. Geneva) as being in 1674 (Bruce 2002, p. 92) .

The Authorized Version's acceptance by the general public took longer. The Geneva Bible continued to be popular, and large numbers were imported from Amsterdam, where printing continued up to 1644 in editions carrying a false London imprint (Hill 1993, p. 65) . However, few if any genuine Geneva editions appear to have been printed in London after 1616, and in 1637 Archbishop Laud prohibited their printing or importation. In the period of the English Civil War, soldiers of the New Model Army were issued a book of Geneva selections called "The Soldiers' Bible" (1643, Herbert #577). In the first half of the 17th Century the Authorized Version is most commonly referred to as "The Bible without notes"; thereby distinguishing it from the Geneva "Bible with notes". There were several further printings of the KJV in Amsterdam - one as late as 1715 (Herbert #936) - which combined the King James translation text with the Geneva

marginal notes (Daniell 2003, p. 457); and one such edition was printed in London in 1649. During the Commonwealth a commission was established by Parliament to recommend a revision of the King James version with acceptably Protestant explanatory notes (Hill 1993, p. 65); but the project was abandoned when it became clear that these would be nearly double the bulk of the bible text. After the English Restoration, the Geneva Bible was held to be politically suspect, and a reminder of the repudiated Puritan era. Furthermore, as the disputes over the lucrative rights to print the Authorized Version dragged on through the 17th Century, so none of the printers involved saw any commercial advantage in marketing a rival translation. The King James Bible then became the only current version circulating among English speaking people, as familiarity and stylistic merits won it the respect of the populace.

Slowest of all was acceptance of the text by Biblical Scholars. Hugh Broughton, who was the most highly regarded English Hebraist of his time (but who had been excluded from the panel of translators, due to his utterly uncongenial temperament), issued in 1611 a total condemnation of the new version (Bobrick 2001, p. 266); criticising especially the translators' rejection of word-for-word equivalence (Bobrick 2001, p. 265) . Walton's London Polyglot of 1657 disregards the Authorized Version (and indeed the English Language) entirely (Daniell 2003, p. 510). Walton's reference text throughout is the Vulgate. The Vulgate Latin is also found as the standard text of scripture in Thomas Hobbes *Leviathan* of 1651 (Daniell 2003, p. 478) , indeed Hobbes gives Vulgate chapter and verse numbers (i.e. Job 41:24; not Job 41:33) for his head text. In Chapter 35: *'The Signification in Scripture of Kingdom of God'* , Hobbes discusses Exodus 19:5, first in his own translation of the *'Vulgar Latin'* , and then subsequently as found in the versions he terms *''the English translation made in the beginning of the reign of King James''*, and *'The Geneva French'*(i.e. Olivetan). Hobbes advances detailed critical arguments why the Vulgate rendering is to be preferred. For most of the 17th Century the assumption remained that, while it had been of vital importance to provide the scriptures in the vernacular for ordinary people; nevertheless for those with sufficient education to do so, Biblical study was best undertaken within the international common medium of Latin. It is only in 1700, that modern diglot Bibles appear in which the Authorized Version is compared to counterpart Dutch and French Protestant vernacular Bibles (Daniell 2003, p. 489) .

In consequence of the continual disputes over printing privileges, successive printings of the Authorized Version were notably less careful than the 1611 edition had been (Norton 2005, p. 94) - compositors freely varying spelling, capitalisation and punctuation; and also, over the years, introducing about 1,500 misprints (some of which, like the omission of "not" from the commandment "Thou shalt not commit adultery" in the "Wicked Bible" (1631, Herbert #444)), became notorious. The two Cambridge editions of 1629 and 1638 attempted to restore the proper text - while introducing over 200 revisions of the original translators' work, chiefly by incorporating into the main text a more literal reading originally presented as a marginal note (Scrivener 1884, pp. 147-194). A more thoroughly corrected edition was proposed following the Restoration, in conjunction with the revised 1662 Book of Common Prayer but Parliament then decided against it.

Publishing of the Authorized Version in England continued to be restricted to printers holding the Royal Privilege, but from around 1720 other printers increasingly issued rival editions. These were legally distinguished from the official printings, sometimes by the addition on each page of a brief section of commentary; or otherwise by adding illustrations and other educational material, and marketing the resulting book as a "Family Bible".

Hence, by the first half of the 18th Century, the Authorized version was effectively unchallenged as the sole English translation in current use in Protestant churches (Daniell 2003, p. 488) ; and was so dominant that the Roman Catholic church in England issued in 1752 a revision of the 1610 Douay-Rheims Bible by Richard Challoner that was, in actuality, very much closer to the AV than to the original (Daniell 2003, p. 515) . However, general standards of spelling, punctuation, typesetting, capitalisation and grammar had changed radically in the 100 years since the first edition of the King James Bible was produced; and all printers in the market were introducing continual piecemeal changes to their bible texts, to bring them into line with current practice - and with public

expectations of standardised spelling and grammatical construction (Norton 2005, p. 99). .

The Standard text of 1769

By the mid 18th century the wide variation in the various modernised printed texts of the Authorised Version, combined with the notorious accumulation of misprints, had reached the proportion of a scandal; and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge both sought to produce an updated standard text. First of the two was the Cambridge edition of 1762 (Herbert #1142), edited by F.S. Parris (Norton 2005, p. 106) ; but this was effectively superseded by the 1769 Oxford edition, edited by Benjamin Blayney (Herbert #1196), which became the Oxford standard text, and is the text which is reproduced almost unchanged in current printings (Norton 2005, p. 113) . Parris and Blayney sought consistently to remove those elements of the 1611 and successive subsequent editions, that they believed were due to the vagaries of printers; while incorporating most of the revised readings of the Cambridge editions of 1629 and 1638, and each also introducing a few improved readings of their own. They undertook the mammoth task of standardising the wide variation in punctuation and spelling of the original, making many thousands of minor changes to the text; although some of these updatings do alter the ostensible sense - as when the original text of Genesis 2:21 "in stead" (in that place) was updated to read "instead" (as an alternative). In addition, Blayney and Parris thoroughly revised and greatly extended the italicisation of "supplied" words not found in the original languagues by cross-checking against the presumed source texts. Unfortunately, Blayney assumed that the translators of the 1611 New Testament had worked from the 1550 Stephanus edition of the Textus Receptus, rather than from the later editions of Beza; and accordingly the current standard text mistakenly "corrects" around a dozen readings where Beza and Stephanus differ (Scrivener 1884, p. 242) . Like the 1611 edition, the 1769 Oxford edition included the Apocrypha; although Blayney consistently removed marginal cross-references to the Books of the Apocrypha, wherever these had been provided by the original translators. Altogether, Blayney's 1769 text differed from the 1611 text in around 24,000 places (Norton 2005, p. 120) ; but since that date, only six further changes have been introduced to the standard text - although 30 of Blayney's proposed changes have subsequently been reverted (Norton 2005, p. 115) . The Oxford University Press paperback edition of the "Authorized King James Version" provides the current standard text; and also includes the prefatory section "The Translators to the Reader".

The 1769 text of the first three verses from I Corinthians 13 is given below.

> 1. Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become *as* sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have *the gift of* prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

In these three verses, there are eleven changes of spelling, nine changes of typesetting, three changes of punctuation, and one variant text - where "not charity" is substituted for "no charity" in verse two, in the erroneous belief that the original reading was a misprint.

For a period, Cambridge continued to issue Bibles using the Parris text, but the market demand for absolute standardisation was now such that they eventually fell into line. Since the beginning of the 19th Century, almost all printings of the Authorized Version have derived from the 1769 Oxford text - generally without Blayney's variant notes and cross references, and commonly excluding the Apocrypha (Norton 2005, p. 125). The single exception to this being the 1873 Cambridge Paragraph Bible, thoroughly revised, modernised and re-edited by F.H. Scrivener, who for the first time, consistently identified the source texts underlying the 1611 translation and its marginal notes (Daniell 2003, p. 691) . Scrivener, however - as Blayney had done - did adopt revised readings where he considered the judgement of the 1611 translators had been faulty (Norton 2005, p. 122). In 2005, Cambridge University Press released its New Cambridge

Paragraph Bible with Apocrypha, edited by David Norton, which modernized Scrivener's spelling again to present-day standards, and introduced quotation marks; while restoring the 1611 text, so far as possible, to the wording intended by its translators, especially in the light of the rediscovery of some of their working documents (Norton 2005, p. 131). This text has been issued in paperback by Penguin books.

Criticism, Revision and Defence

From 1769, the text of the Authorized Version remained unchanged - and since, due to advances in printing technology, it could now be produced in very large editions for mass sale; it established complete dominance in public and and ecclesiastical use amongst English-speaking Protestants. Academic debate over the next hundred years, however, increasingly reflected concerns about the AV translation shared by some scholars (Daniell 2003, p. 685):

- that subsequent study in oriental languages suggested a need to revise the translation of the Hebrew bible - both in terms of specific vocabulary, and also in distinguishing descriptive terms from proper names,

- that the AV was unsatisfactory in translating the same Greek words and phrases into different English, especially where parallel passages are found in the synoptic gospels,

- that, in the light of subsequent ancient manuscript discoveries, the New Testament translation base of the Greek Textus Receptus could no longer be considered to be the best representation of the original text.

British scholars maintaining these perspectives supported the production of a revised translation - the English Revised Version of 1881-1895 - which tried to meet the concerns above, while retaining as much as possible of the wording and general literary style of the Authorized Version (Daniell 2003, p. 686). Within the New Testament Company, Frederick Henry Ambrose Scrivener tended to defend the readings of the Textus Receptus, while Fenton John Anthony Hort argued for a textual base derived largely from the Codex Vaticanus; the majority generally siding with Hort. Although the edition sold in vast quantities, both in Britain and the United States (Daniell 2003, p. 698), it entirely failed to replace the Authorized version in non-scholarly use; primarily because the translators' attempt to achieve word-for-word consistency - what would later be termed *formal equivalence* - resulted too often in unreadable pseudo-Jacobean verbal formulations (Daniell 2003, p. 694), replete with freshly archaic terms like *howbeit*, *behooved* and *haply*.

Part-way through the process, American scholars were invited to participate in the exercise (Daniell 2003, p. 696)- meeting in New York - but, by the time their contibutions had been collected, the English Companies had completed much of their work, and only a few of the Americans' suggested alternatives were adopted in the main text; most being put into an appendix. The American committee members resolved to produce their own version, as soon as their agreement with the British allowed. However - although the incidence of neo-archaicisms was reduced (Daniell 2003, p. 737) - the American Standard Version of 1901 proved no more successful than the English Revised Version in achieving popular acceptance (Daniell 2003, p. 738). The King James Version maintained its effective dominance throughout the first half of the 20th Century.

In 1952, American scholars undertook a third attempt at major revision, the Revised Standard Version (Daniell 2003, p. 739). This version drew back from the attempt at consistent word-for-word translation; and also aimed to remove archaic vocabulary and grammatical forms (while retaining the pronouns *thee* , *thy*

and *thou* for God) (Daniell 2003, p. 743). In addition, the RSV translators moved away from the KJV textual base for the Old Testament; though to a lesser extent than the English Revised Version had already done for the New Testament. Old Testament passages where the English text had formerly been conformed to a traditional Christological or Messianic exegesis (e.g. in capitalisation of pronouns, or choice of vocabulary), were now rendered on the basis of the Hebrew alone(Bruce 2002, p. 188). At the same time, the translators followed the textual theory that, although the Masoretic Text was generally to be preferred, there were nevertheless some passages where LXX and other ancient versions might transmit a closer rendition of the sense of the original Hebrew (Bruce 2002, p. 192). Thirteen readings in Isaiah, took account of Hebrew texts very recently discovered in the Dead Sea Scrolls(Bruce 2002, p. 193).

The Revised Standard Version was much more successful than the Revised Version or American Standard Version had been, in displacing the Authorized version in private reading and church use (Daniell 2003, p. 741). However the changes made in the RSV to the textual base of the Old and New Testaments were highly controversial; and the consequence was a flood of rival new translations in the second half of the 20th Century (Daniell 2003, p. 764), some - like the New American Standard Bible - attempting to retain the strict principles of formal equivalence. Others, like the New King James Version, seeking to produce an updated translation that nevertheless maintained the Reformation principle of finding the sole textual base for the Bible in the Masoretic Text and the Textus Receptus. Some groups - sometimes termed the King-James-Only Movement - continue to mistrust all changes to the King James Version (Daniell 2003, p. 765); and this version, though nearly 400 years old, remains amongst the most widely sold. While all of the above versions recogniseably descend within the linguistic tradition of Tyndale and the Authorized Version; there are also many popular late 20th century translations, like the Jerusalem Bible (Daniell 2003, p. 752) or the Good News Translation (Daniell 2003, p. 758) that seek to render the Bible entirely into modern English.

Modern critical New Testament translations differ substantially from the Authorized Version in a number of passages, primarily because they rely on source manuscripts not then accessible to (or not then highly regarded by) early 17th Century Biblical Scholarship (Daniell 2003, p. 5). Some conservative fundamentalist Protestants believe that these ancient source manuscripts should be rejected as corrupt; and that the Authorized Version is truer to the original text. This preference is partially because modern versions often excise or marginalize certain verses deemed by modern scholarship as later additions to the original, and thus are seen by traditionalists as detracting from sacred scripture. Those defending this view invariably also limit the scope of sacred scripture to Old and New Testaments alone - rejecting the Authorized Version in the books of the Apocrypha.

In the Old Testament, there are also many differences from modern translations that are based not on manuscript differences, but on a different understanding of Ancient Hebrew vocabulary or grammar by the translators. The New Testament is largely unaffected by this as the grasp of Koine Greek was already quite firm in the West by the time the translation was made. The difference is partially caused by the fact that while there is a very large and diverse body of extra-biblical material extant in Greek, there is very little such material in Biblical Hebrew, and not even this little was known to scholars at that time. Additionally, Hebrew scholarship in modern times has been much improved by information gleaned from Aramaic (Syriac) and Arabic, two Semitic languages related to Hebrew, both of which have a continuous existence as living languages. Since these languages are still in use and have larger bodies of extant material than Biblical Hebrew (especially in the case of Arabic), many Hebrew words and Hebrew grammar phenomena can now be understood in a way not available at the time the Authorized Version was written. For example, in modern translations it is clear that Job 28 1-11 is referring throughout to the operation of an ore mine, which is not at all apparent from the text of the Authorized Version. (Bruce 2002, p. 145)

Some scholars working with Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew versions regard the Authorized Version as an inferior English translation of the Bible. For example, New Testament scholar Bart D. Ehrman has written:

The Authorized Version is filled with places in which the translators rendered a Greek text derived ultimately from Erasmus's edition, which was based on a single twelfth-century manuscript that is one of the worst of the manuscripts that we now have available to us (Ehrman 2005, p. 209).

Some suggest that its value lies in its poetic language at the cost of accuracy in translation, whilst other scholars would firmly disagree with these claims. Some of today's exegetes (Walter Brueggemann, Marcus Borg, Warren Carter, James L. Crenshaw, Robert W. Funk, John Dominic Crossan, and N.T. Wright) do not endorse the KJV for Masters or Doctoral-level exegetical work .

Differences in current printings

Current printings of the Authorized Version differ from the original in several ways.

Apocrypha

16th Century Protestant Bibles invariably included the books of the Apocrypha (Daniell 2003, p. 187) - generally in a separate section between the Old and New Testaments; and there is evidence that these were widely read as popular literature, especially in Puritan circles (Hill 1993, p. 338) . By the mid 17th Century, however, Puritan divines were increasingly uneasy at the intermingling of biblical scripture with popular culture in general - and with the Apocrypha in particular; and were also inclined to reject books who owed their inclusion in the biblical canon to ecclesiastical authority. From 1630, volumes of the Geneva Bible were occasionally bound with the pages of the Apocrypha section excluded. After the Restoration in 1660, Dissenters tended to discourage the reading of the Apocrypha, both in public services and in private devotion.

The Church of England in the Thirty-Nine Articles had specified the *Apocrypha* within holy Scripture. Article VI *Of the Sufficiency of the holy Scriptures for salvation* asserts: {{cquote|And other Books (as Hierome saith) the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners; but yet doth it not apply them to establish any doctrine The Authorized Version included the *Apocrypha*; all the books and sections of books present in the Latin Vulgate's Old Testament — the translation of Jerome (Hierome) — but missing in the Hebrew. Indeed, the Book of Common Prayer specfies lectionary readings from the Apocrypha to be read in Morning and Evening Prayer in October.

The standardisation of the text of the Authorised Version after 1769 - together with the technological development of Stereotype printing, made it possible for the first time to produce Bibles in large print-runs at very low unit prices. For commercial publishers, editions of the Authorized Version without the apocrypha would reduce costs, while having increased market appeal to non-Anglican Protestant readers (Daniell 2003, p. 600). With the rise of the Bible societies, from approximately 1827, many editions have omitted the whole section of Apocryphal books; and the most common contemporary editions are available in versions both with and without them (Daniell 2003, p. 622).

Prefatory material

The original printing contained two prefatory texts; the first was a rather fulsome *Epistle Dedicatory* to "the most high and mighty Prince" King James. Many British printings reproduce this, while a few cheaper or smaller American printings fail to include it.

The second, and more interesting preface was called *The Translators to the Reader]* (Daniell 2003, p. 775), a long and learned essay that defends the undertaking of the new version. It observes that their goal was not to make a bad translation good, but a good translation better, and says that "we do not deny, nay we affirm and avow, that the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set forth by men of our profession... containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God". Few editions anywhere include this text.

The opening of the Epistle to the Hebrews of the 1611 edition of the Authorized Version shows the original typeface. Marginal notes reference variant translations and cross references to other Bible passages. Each chapter is headed by a precis of contents. There are decorative initial letters for each Chapter, and a decorated headpiece to each Biblical Book; but no illustrations.

The first printing contained a number of other apparatus, including a table for the reading of the Psalms at matins and evensong, and a calendar, an almanac, and a table of holy days and observances. Much of this material has become obsolete with the adoption of the Gregorian Calendar by the UK and its colonies in 1752 and thus modern editions invariably omit it.

So as to make it easier to locate a particular passage, each chapter was headed by a brief precis of its contents with verse numbers. Later editors freely substituted their own chapter summaries, or omit such material entirely.

Typeface, spelling, and format

The original printing was made before English spelling was standardised; and when printers, as a matter of course, expanded and contracted the spelling of the same words in different places, so as to achieve an even column of text (Norton 2005, p. 46) . They set "v" invariably for lower-case initial "u" and "v", and "u" for "u" and "v" everywhere else. They used long " ſ" for non-final "s" (Bobrick 2001, p. 261) . The letter "j" occurs only after "i" or as the final letter in a Roman numeral. Punctuation was relatively heavy, and differed from current practice. When space needed to be saved, the printers sometimes used *ye* for *the*, (replacing the Middle English thorn with the continental *y*), set *ã* for *an* or *am* (in the style of scribe's shorthand), and set "&" for "and". On the contrary, on a few occasions, they appear to have inserted these words when they thought a line needed to be padded. Current printings remove most, but not all, of the variant spellings; the punctuation has also been changed, but still varies from current usage norms.

The first printing used a black letter typeface instead of a Roman typeface, which itself made a political and a religious statement. Like the Great Bible and the Bishops' Bible, the Authorized Version was "appointed to be read in churches". It was a large folio volume meant for public use, not private devotion; the weight of the type mirrored the weight of establishment authority behind it. However, smaller editions and Roman-type editions followed rapidly; e.g. quarto Roman-type editions of the Bible in 1612 (Herbert #313/314). This contrasted with the Geneva Bible, which was the first English Bible printed in a Roman typeface (although black-letter editions, particularly in folio format, were issued later).

In contrast to the Geneva Bible and the Bishops' Bible, which had both been extensively illustrated, there were no illustrations at all in the 1611 edition of the Authorized version; the main form of decoration being the historiated initial letters provided for books and chapters - together with the decorative title pages to the Bible itself, and to the New Testament.

The Authorized Version also used Roman type instead of *italics* to indicate text that had been supplied by the translators, or thought needful for English grammar but which was not present in the Greek or Hebrew. In the first printing, the device of having different type faces to show supplied words was used sparsely and inconsistently. This is perhaps the most significant difference between the original text and the current text.

Copyright status

In most of the world the Authorized Version has passed out of copyright and is freely reproduced. This is not the case in the United Kingdom.

In the United Kingdom, the rights to the Authorized Version are held by the British Crown. The rights fall outside the scope of copyright as defined in statute law. Instead they fall under the purview of the Royal Prerogative and as such they are perpetual in subsistence. Publishers are licensed to reproduce the Authorized Version under letters patent. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the letters patent are held by the Queen's Printer, and in Scotland by the Scottish Bible Board. The office of Queen's Printer has been associated with the right to reproduce the Bible for many years, with the earliest known reference coming in 1577. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland the Queen's Printer is Cambridge University Press (CUP). CUP inherited the right of being Queen's Printer when they took over the firm of Eyre & Spottiswoode in the late 20th century. Eyre & Spottiswoode had been Queen's Printer since 1901.

Other letters patent of similar antiquity grant Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press the right to produce the Authorized Version independently of the Queen's Printer. In Scotland the Authorized Version is published by Collins under license from the Scottish Bible Board, but in recent years the publisher Canongate were allowed to produce a series of individual books of the Bible under the series title "The Pocket Canons".

The terms of the letters patent prohibit those other than the holders, or those authorized by the holders from printing, publishing or importing the Authorized Version into the United Kingdom. The protection that the Authorized Version, and also the Book of Common Prayer, enjoy is the last remnant of the time when the Crown held a monopoly over all printing and publishing in the United Kingdom.
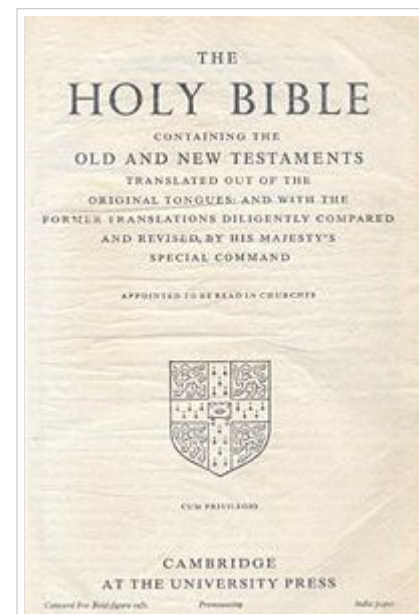
This protection should not be confused with Crown copyright, or copyright in works of the United Kingdom's government; that is part of modern UK copyright law. Like other copyrights, Crown copyright is time-limited and potentially enforceable worldwide. The non-copyright Royal Prerogative is perpetual, but applies only to the UK; though many other Royal Prerogatives also apply to the other Commonwealth realms, this one does not.

It is a common misconception that the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) holds letters patent for being Queen's Printer. The Controller of HMSO holds a separate set of letters patent which cover the office Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament. The Scotland Act 1998 defines the position of Queen's Printer for Scotland as also being held by the Queen's Printer of Acts of Parliament. The position of Government Printer for Northern Ireland is also held by the Controller of HMSO.

The universities of Cambridge and Oxford hold the exclusive right to print the Authorized Version in England, and continue to exercise this right today.

Literary influence

The Authorized Version has proved to have been an influence on writers and poets, whether in their literary style, or matters of content such as the images they

depicted, until the advent of modernism. Although influenced by the Bible in general, they likely could not have helped being influenced by the style of writing the Authorized Version used, prevalent as it was during their time. John Hayes Gardiner of Harvard University once stated that "in all study of English literature, if there be any one axiom which may be accepted without question, it is that the ultimate standard of English prose style is set by the King James Version of the Bible". Compton's Encyclopedia once said that the Authorized Version "…has been a model of writing for generations of English-speaking people."

A general effect of the Authorized Version was to influence writers in their model of writing; beforehand, authors generally wrote as scholars addressing an audience of other scholars, as few ordinary peasants were literate at the time. The Authorized Version, as it was meant for dissemination among the ordinary man and to be read by preachers to their congregations, could not afford the luxury of using such a technique. The simpler, more direct style taken over by the translators of the Authorized Version from Tyndale so influenced authors that their prose began to address the reader as if he or she was an ordinary person instead of a scholar, thus helping create the idea of the general reader (Daniell 2003, p. 136) .

19th century preacher Charles Spurgeon once declared of author John Bunyan, "Read anything of his, and you will see that it is almost like reading the Bible itself." Bunyan's allegorical novel, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, was a cornerstone of early Protestant literature; frequently, it would be the second piece of literature translated into the vernacular by missionaries, the first being the Authorized Version itself — though it is noteworthy that *The Pilgrim's Progress* mostly quoted from the Geneva Bible. According to Thomas Macaulay, "he knew no language but the English as it was spoken by the common people; he had studied no great model of composition, with the exception of our noble translation of the Bible. But of that his knowledge was such that he might have been called a living concordance".

John Milton, author of the blank verse epic poem *Paradise Lost*, was heavily influenced by the Authorized Version, beginning his day with a reading from that version of the Bible; in his later life, he would then spend an hour meditating in silence. Milton, who cast two Psalms into meter at the age of 15 while an undergraduate at Cambridge, filled his works with images obviously taken from the Bible. The poem *Lycidas*, for example, depicted the Apostle Peter and the keys he was given by Jesus according to a literal reading of the Bible:

> Last came and last did go
> The pilot of the Galilean lake;
> Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
> (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain).

The allusions made to the Bible by John Dryden were inescapable for those who had studied it well; as an example, in the poem *Mac Flecknoe*, he wrote:

> Sinking, he left his drugget robe behind,
> Borne upward by a subterranean wind,
> The mantle fell to the young prophet's part,
> With double portion of his father's art.

The cultural influence of the Authorized Version developed in a radically new direction in the mid 18th century; when, in 1741, George Frideric Handel set the oratorio Messiah to a liberetto compiled from biblical texts by Charles Jennens. This work demonstrated the impact and range of the text of the Authorized

Version when sung; and was instrumental in the development of a popular culture of amateur non-liturgical religious choral music - often setting biblical texts - that remains active to the present day.

Several more famous writers and poets have taken inspiration from the Authorized Version. William Wordsworth's poems such as *Intimations of Immortality* and *Ode to Duty* contained obvious references to the Bible. Poet George Byron even composed poems which required prior understanding of the Bible before one could fully comprehend them, such as *Jephtha's Daughter* and *The Song of Saul Before his Last Battle*. John Keats described "the sad heart of Ruth, / when, sick for home, She stood in tears amid the alien corn." The poetry of William Blake was also greatly influenced by the language and imagery of the Authorized Version, a famous example being *The Lamb* from his *Songs of Innocence*.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, an American poet, once wrote "There are times when the grasshopper is a burden, and thirsty with the heat of labor the spirit longs for the waters of Shiloah, that go softly", a clear reference to the Authorized Version, both in its content and in its style. Herman Melville, too, could not avoid being influenced by the Authorized Version; his book *Moby Dick* is clearly related to the Bible, with characters going by names such as Ishmael and Ahab. Walt Whitman was deeply influenced by the King James Version, and especially by the biblical poetry of the prophets and psalms. Whitman wrote in *Leaves of Grass*:

> I sit and look out upon all the sorrows of the world, and upon all oppression and shame;
> I hear secret convulsive sobs from young men, at anguish with themselves, remorseful after deeds done;
> I see, in low life, the mother misused by her children, dying, neglected, gaunt, desperate...

The language of Emily Dickinson was informed by the Bible. Mark Twain used the Book of Genesis as the basis for *From Adam's Diary* and *From Eve's Diary*. *The Rise of Silas Lapham* by William Dean Howells uses the image of Jacob wrestling with the angel as an important metaphor. Many poems by T. S. Eliot employ images drawn from the Bible. Ernest Hemingway titled his first novel *The Sun Also Rises*, after a quote from Ecclesiastes, and Flannery O'Connor drew on the gospels for the title and theme of *The Violent Bear It Away*. The title of Robert A. Heinlein's seminal science fiction novel *Stranger in a Strange Land* is a direct quote from Exodus 2:22: "And she [Zippo'rah] bare him a son, and he called his name Gershom: for he said, I have been a stranger in a strange land." The title of John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* comes from the Authorized Version of Genesis 4:16.

Martin Luther King used Isaiah 40:4 in his ' I have a dream' speech:

> I have a dream that one day *every valley shall be exalted, every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together*.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Authorized_King_James_Version"

Bahá'í Faith

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

The **Bahá'í Faith** is a religion founded by Bahá'u'lláh in nineteenth-century Persia. There are an estimated five to six million Bahá'ís around the world in more than 200 countries and territories.

Bahá'í teachings emphasize the spiritual oneness of humanity and the underlying unity of the major world religions. Religious history is seen to have unfolded through the influence of a series of divinely sent messengers, each of whom established a religion that was suited to the needs of the time. These messengers have included Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, the Buddha, Krishna, Jesus, Muhammad and, most recently, the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. In Bahá'í belief, each messenger taught that other messengers would follow, and Bahá'u'lláh's claims and teachings fulfil the eschatological promises of previous scriptures. Humanity is understood to be involved in a process of collective evolution, and the need of the present time is for the gradual establishment of peace, justice and unity on a global scale.

The word "**Bahá'í**" (/bæhɒːʔiː/, /bəˈhai/, Persian: بهائی) is used either as an adjective to refer to the Bahá'í Faith or as a term for a follower of Bahá'u'lláh, and the word is not a noun meaning the religion as a whole. It is derived from the Arabic *Bahá'*, meaning "glory" or "splendour". "Bahaism" (or "Baha'ism") has been used in the past but is fading from use.

Seat of the Universal House of Justice, governing body of the Bahá'ís, in Haifa, Israel

Beliefs

The Bahá'í teachings are often summarized by referring to three core principles: the unity of God, the unity of religion, and the unity of humankind. Many Bahá'í beliefs and practices are rooted in these priorities; but taken alone these would be an over-simplification of Bahá'í teachings.

God

Bahá'í Faith

Central figures

Bahá'u'lláh
The Báb · `Abdu'l-Bahá

Key scripture

Kitáb-i-Aqdas · Kitáb-i-Íqán

The Hidden Words
The Seven Valleys

Institutions

Administrative Order
The Guardianship
Universal House of Justice
Spiritual Assemblies

History

Bahá'í history · Timeline
Bábís · Shaykh Ahmad

Notable individuals

Shoghi Effendi
Martha Root · Táhirih
Badí' · Apostles
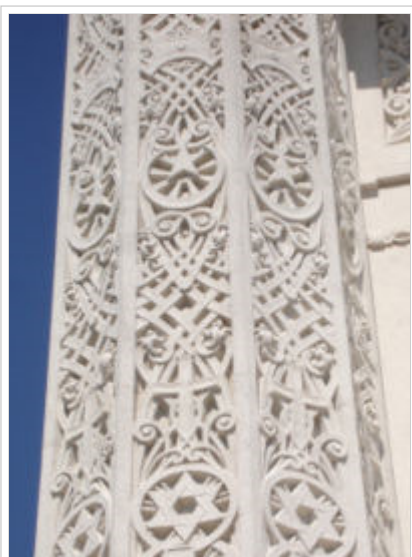Hands of the Cause

See also

Symbols · Laws
Teachings · Texts
Calendar · Divisions
Pilgrimage · Prayer
Index of Bahá'í Articles

The Bahá'í writings describe a single, imperishable God, the creator of all things, including all the creatures and forces in the universe. The existence of God is thought to be eternal, without a beginning or end, and is described as "a personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, eternal, omniscient, omnipresent and almighty." Though inaccessible directly, God is nevertheless seen as conscious of his creation, with a will and purpose. In Bahá'í belief, God expresses this will in many ways, including through a series of divine messengers referred to as Manifestations of God or sometimes *divine educators*. In expressing God's intent, these manifestations are seen to establish religion in the world and to enable a relationship with God.

Bahá'í teachings state that God is too great for humans to fully comprehend, or to create a complete and accurate image, by themselves; human understanding of God is through his revelation via his Manifestations of God. In the Bahá'í religion God is often referred to by titles and attributes (e.g. the All-Powerful, or the All-Loving), and there is a substantial emphasis on monotheism, and an interpretation of such doctrines as the Trinity in a symbolic rather than literal sense. The Bahá'í teachings state that the attributes which are applied to God are used to translate Godliness into human terms and also to help individuals concentrate on their own attributes in worshipping God to develop their potentialities on their spiritual path. According to the Bahá'í teachings the human purpose is to learn to know and love God through such methods as prayer and reflection.

Baha'i Temple, Ingleside, Sydney, Australia

Religion

Bahá'í notions of progressive religious revelation result in their accepting the validity of most of the world's religions, whose founders and central figures are seen as Manifestations of God. Religious history is interpreted as a series of dispensations, where each *manifestation* brings a somewhat broader and more advanced revelation, suited for the time and place in which it was expressed. Specific religious social teachings (e.g. the direction of prayer, or dietary restrictions) may be revoked by a subsequent manifestation so that a more appropriate requirement for the time and place may be established. Conversely, certain general principles (e.g. neighbourliness, or charity) are seen to be universal and consistent. In Bahá'í belief, this process of progressive revelation will not end; however, it is believed to be cyclical. Bahá'ís do not expect a new manifestation of God to appear within 1000 years of Bahá'u'lláh's revelation.

Symbols of many religions on the pillar of the Bahá'í House of Worship in Wilmette, Illinois

Bahá'í beliefs are sometimes described as syncretic combinations of earlier religions' beliefs. Bahá'ís, however, assert that their religion is a distinct tradition with its own scriptures, teachings, laws, and history. Its religious background in Shi'a Islam is seen as analogous to the Jewish context in which Christianity was established. Bahá'ís describe their faith as an independent world religion, differing from the other traditions only in its relative age and in the appropriateness of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings to the modern context. Bahá'u'lláh is believed to have fulfilled the messianic expectations of these precursor faiths.

Human beings

The Bahá'í writings state that human beings have a "rational soul", and that this provides the species with a unique capacity to recognize God's station and humanity's relationship with its creator. Every human is seen to have a duty to recognize God through his messengers, and to conform to their teachings. Through recognition and obedience, service to humanity and regular prayer and spiritual practice, the Bahá'í writings state that the soul becomes closer to God, the spiritual ideal in Bahá'í belief. When a human dies, the soul passes into the next world, where its spiritual development in the physical world becomes a basis for judgment and advancement in the spiritual world. Heaven and Hell are taught to be spiritual states of nearness or distance from God that describe relationships in this world and the next, and not physical places of reward and punishment achieved after death.
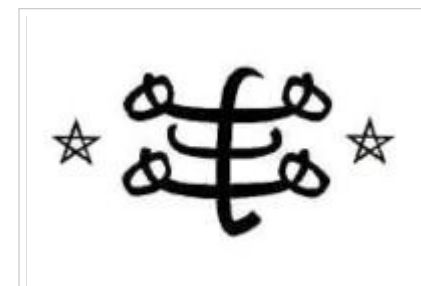
The Ringstone symbol represents humanity's connection to God

The Bahá'í writings emphasize the essential equality of human beings, and the abolition of prejudice. Humanity is seen as essentially one, though highly varied; its diversity of race and culture are seen as worthy of appreciation and tolerance. Doctrines of racism, nationalism, caste, social class and gender-based hierarchy are seen as artificial impediments to unity. The Bahá'í teachings state that the unification of humankind is the paramount issue in the religious and political conditions of the present world.

Demographics

Bahá'í sources usually estimate the worldwide Bahá'í population to be above 5 million. Most encyclopedias and similar sources estimate between 5 and 6 million Bahá'ís in the world in the early twenty-first century.

From its origins in the Persian and Ottoman Empires, by the early 20th century there are a number of converts in South and South East Asia, Europe, and North America. During the 1950s and 1960s vast travel teaching efforts brought the religion to almost every country and territory of the world. By the 1990s Bahá'ís were developing programs for systematic consolidation on a large scale, and the early 21st century saw large influxes of new adherents around the world.

The Bahá'í House of Worship in New Delhi, India attracts an average of 4 million visitors a year. It is popularly known as the Lotus Temple.

According to *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2004*:

> " The majority of Bahá'ís live in Asia (3.6 million), Africa (1.8 million), and Latin America (900,000). According to some estimates, the largest Bahá'í community in the world is in India, with 2.2 million Bahá'ís, next is Iran, with 350,000, and the U.S., with 150,000. Aside from these countries, numbers vary greatly. Currently, no country has a Bahá'í majority. "

The Bahá'í religion was listed in *The Britannica Book of the Year* (1992–present) as the second most widespread of the world's independent religions in terms of the number of countries represented. Britannica claims that it is established in 247 countries and territories; represents over 2,100 ethnic, racial, and tribal groups; has scriptures translated into over 800 languages; and has seven million adherents worldwide [2005]. Additionally, Bahá'ís have self organized in most of the nations of the earth.

The Bahá'í religion was ranked by the FP magazine as the world's second fastest growing religion, with growth rate of 1.70 percent.

Teachings

Summary

Shoghi Effendi, the appointed head of the religion from 1921 to 1957, wrote the following summary of what he considered to be the distinguishing principles of Bahá'u'lláh's teachings, which, he said, together with the laws and ordinances of the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* constitute the bed-rock of the Bahá'í Faith:

> " The independent search after truth, unfettered by superstition or tradition; the oneness of the entire human race, the pivotal principle and fundamental doctrine of the Faith; the basic unity of all religions; the condemnation of all forms of prejudice, whether religious, racial, class or national; the harmony which must exist between religion and science; the equality of men and women, the two wings on which the bird of humankind is able to soar; the introduction of compulsory education; the adoption of a universal auxiliary language; the abolition of the extremes of wealth and poverty; the institution of a world tribunal for the adjudication of disputes between nations; the exaltation of work, performed in the spirit of service, to the rank of worship; the glorification of justice as the ruling principle in human society, and of religion as a bulwark for the protection of all peoples and nations; and the establishment of a permanent and universal peace as the supreme goal of all mankind—these stand out as the essential elements [which Bahá'u'lláh proclaimed]. "

Social principles

The following 12 principles are frequently listed as a quick summary of the Bahá'í teachings. They are derived from transcripts of speeches given by `Abdu'l-Bahá during his tour of Europe and North America in 1912. The list is not authoritative and a variety of such lists circulate.

- Unity of God
- Unity of religion
- Unity of humankind
- Gender equality
- Elimination of all forms of prejudice
- World peace
- Harmony of religion and science
- Independent investigation of truth
- Universal compulsory education
- Universal auxiliary language
- Obedience to government and non-involvement in partisan politics
- Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty

With specific regard to the pursuit of world peace, Bahá'u'lláh prescribed a world-embracing Collective Security arrangement as necessary for the establishment

of a lasting peace.

Mystical teachings

Although the Bahá'í teachings have a strong emphasis on social and ethical issues, there exist a number of foundational texts that have been described as mystical. The *Seven Valleys* is considered Bahá'u'lláh's "greatest mystical composition." It was written to a follower of Sufism, in the style of `Attar. It was first translated into English in 1906, becoming one of the earliest available books of Bahá'u'lláh to the West. The *Hidden Words* is another book written by Bahá'u'lláh during the same period, containing 153 short passages in which Bahá'u'lláh claims to have taken the basic essence of certain spiritual truths and written them in brief form.

Covenant

The Bahá'í teachings speak of both a "Greater Covenant", being universal and endless, and a "Lesser Covenant", being unique to each religious dispensation. The Lesser Covenant is viewed as an agreement between a Messenger of God and his followers and includes social practices and the continuation of authority in the religion. At this time Bahá'ís view Bahá'u'lláh's revelation as a binding lesser covenant for his followers; in the Bahá'í writings being firm in the covenant is considered a virtue to work toward. The Greater Covenant is viewed as a more enduring agreement between God and mankind, where a manifestation of God is expected to appear approximately every 1000 years.

With unity as an essential teaching of the religion, Bahá'ís follow an administration they believe is divinely ordained, and therefore see attempts to create schisms and divisions as efforts that are contrary to the teachings of Bahá'u'lláh. Throughout Bahá'í history schisms have occurred over the succession of authority. Bahá'í divisions have had relatively little success and have failed to attract a sizeable following. The followers of such divisions are regarded as Covenant-breakers and shunned, essentially excommunicated.

History

Bahá'í history is often traced through a sequence of leaders, beginning with the Báb's May 23, 1844 declaration in Shiraz, and ultimately resting on an administrative order established by the central figures of the religion. The tradition was mostly isolated to the Persian and Ottoman empires until after the death of Bahá'u'lláh in 1892, at which time he had followers in thirteen countries of Asia and Africa. Under the leadership of his son, `Abdu'l-Bahá, the religion gained a footing in Europe and America, and was consolidated in Iran, where it still suffered intense persecution. After the death of `Abdu'l-Bahá in 1921, the leadership of the Bahá'í community entered a new phase, evolving from that of a single individual to an administrative order with a system of both elected bodies and appointed individuals.

Bahá'í timeline
1844 The Báb declares his mission in Shiraz, Iran
1850 The Báb is publicly executed in Tabriz, Iran
1852 Thousands of Bábís are executed

The Báb

On October 23rd 1844 Siyyid `Alí-Muhammad of Shiraz, Iran proclaimed that he was "the Báb" (الباب "the Gate"), after a Shi`a religious concept. His followers were therefore known as Bábís. As the Báb's teachings spread, which the Islamic clergy saw as a threat, Bábís came under increased persecution, at times being forced to choose between renouncing their beliefs or being killed. Several military confrontations took place between government and Bábí forces. The Báb himself was imprisoned and eventually executed in 1850.

Bahá'ís see the Báb as the forerunner of the Bahá'í Faith, because the Báb's writings introduced the concept of " He whom God shall make manifest", a Messianic figure whose coming, according to Bahá'ís, was announced in the scriptures of all of the world's great religions, and whom Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, claimed to be in 1863. The Báb's tomb, located in Haifa, Israel, is an important place of pilgrimage for Bahá'ís. The remains of the Báb were brought secretly from Iran to the Holy Land and were eventually interred in the tomb built for them in a spot specifically designated by Bahá'u'lláh.

Shrine of the Báb in Haifa, Israel.

Bahá'u'lláh

Mírzá Husayn `Alí of Núr was one of the early followers of the Báb, who later took the title of Bahá'u'lláh. He was arrested and imprisoned for this involvement in 1852. Bahá'u'lláh relates that in 1853, while incarcerated in the dungeon of the Síyáh-Chál in Tehran, he received the first intimations that he was the one anticipated by the Báb.

	Bahá'u'lláh is imprisoned and forced into exile
1863	Bahá'u'lláh first announces his claim that he is the Promised One
	He is forced to leave Baghdad for Constantinople, then Adrianople
1868	Bahá'u'lláh is forced into harsher confinement in `Akká, Palestine
1892	Bahá'u'lláh dies at the age of 75 near `Akká
	His will appointed `Abdu'l-Bahá as successor
1908	`Abdu'l-Bahá is released from prison
1921	`Abdu'l-Bahá dies in Haifa
	His will appoints Shoghi Effendi as Guardian
1963	The Universal House of Justice is first elected

Shortly thereafter he was expelled from Tehran to Baghdad, in the Ottoman Empire; then to Constantinople (now Istanbul); and then to Adrianople (now Edirne). In 1863, at the time of his banishment from Baghdad to Constantinople, Bahá'u'lláh declared his claim to a divine mission to his family and followers. Tensions then grew between him and Subh-i-Azal, the appointed leader of the Bábís who did not recognize Bahá'u'lláh's claim. Throughout the rest of his life Bahá'u'lláh's gained the allegiance of most of the Bábís, who came to be known as Bahá'ís. Beginning in 1866, he began declaring his mission as a Messenger of God in letters to the world's religious and secular rulers, including Pope Pius IX, Napoleon III, and Queen Victoria.

Bahá'u'lláh was banished by Sultan Abdülâziz a final time to the Ottoman penal colony of `Akká, in present-day Israel. Towards the end of his life, the strict and harsh confinement was gradually relaxed, and he was allowed to live in a home near `Akká, while still officially a prisoner of that city. He died there in 1892. Bahá'ís regard his resting place at Bahjí as the Qiblih to which they turn in prayer each day. During his lifetime, Bahá'u'lláh left a large volume of writings. The *Kitáb-i-Aqdas (The Most Holy Book)*, and the *Kitáb-i-Íqán (The Book of Certitude)* are recognized as major theological works, and the *Hidden Words* and the *Seven Valleys* as mystical treatises.

`Abdu'l-Bahá

`Abbás Effendi was Bahá'u'lláh's eldest son, known by the title of `Abdu'l-Bahá (Servant of Bahá). His father left a Will that appointed `Abdu'l-Bahá as the leader of the Bahá'í community, and designated him as the "Centre of the Covenant", "Head of the Faith", and the sole authoritative interpreter of Bahá'u'lláh's writings.

`Abdu'l-Bahá had shared his father's long exile and imprisonment, which continued until `Abdu'l-Bahá's own release as a result of the Young Turk Revolution in 1908. Following his release he led a life of travelling, speaking, teaching, and maintaining correspondence with communities of believers and individuals, expounding the principles of the Bahá'í Faith.

Bahá'í administration

Bahá'u'lláh's *Kitáb-i-Aqdas* and *The Will and Testament of `Abdu'l-Bahá* are foundational documents of the Bahá'í administrative order. Bahá'u'lláh established the elected Universal House of Justice, and `Abdu'l-Bahá established the appointed hereditary Guardianship and clarified the relationship between the two institutions. In his Will, `Abdu'l-Bahá appointed his eldest grandson, Shoghi Effendi, as the first Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith.

Shoghi Effendi throughout his lifetime translated Bahá'í texts; developed global plans for the expansion of the Bahá'í community; developed the Bahá'í World Centre; carried on a voluminous correspondence with communities and individuals around the world; and built the administrative structure of the religion, preparing the community for the election of the Universal House of Justice. He died in 1957 under conditions that did not allow for a successor to be appointed.

At local, regional, and national levels, Bahá'ís elect members to nine-person Spiritual Assemblies, which run the affairs of the religion. There are also appointed individuals working at various levels, including locally and internationally, which perform the function of propagating the teachings and protecting the community. The latter do not serve as clergy, which the Bahá'í Faith does not have.

The Universal House of Justice, first elected in 1963, remains the successor and supreme governing body of the Bahá'í Faith, and its 9 members are elected every five years by the members of all National Spiritual Assemblies. Any male Bahá'í, 21 years or older, is eligible to be elected to the Universal House of Justice; all other positions are open to male and female Bahá'ís.

Involvement in society

Work

Monasticism is forbidden, and Bahá'ís attempt to ground their spirituality in ordinary daily life. Performing useful work, for example, is not only required but considered a form of worship. Bahá'u'lláh prohibited a mendicant and ascetic lifestyle, encouraging Bahá'ís to "Be anxiously concerned" with the needs of society. The importance of self-exertion and service to humanity in one's spiritual life is emphasised further in Bahá'u'lláh's writings, where he states that work done in the spirit of service to humanity enjoys a rank equal to that of prayer and worship in the sight of God.

United Nations

Bahá'u'lláh wrote of the need for world government in this age of humanity's collective life. Because of this emphasis many Bahá'ís have chosen to support efforts of improving international relations through organizations such as the League of Nations and the United Nations. The Bahá'í International Community is an agency under the direction of the Universal House of Justice in Haifa, and has consultative status with the following organizations:

- United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- World Health Organization (WHO)
- United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Bahá'í gardens in Haifa, Israel.

The Bahá'í International Community has offices at the United Nations in New York and Geneva and representations to United Nations regional commissions and other offices in Addis Ababa, Bangkok, Nairobi, Rome, Santiago, and Vienna. In recent years an Office of the Environment and an Office for the Advancement of Women were established as part of its United Nations Office. The Bahá'í Faith has also undertaken joint development programs with various other United Nations agencies. In the 2000 Millennium Forum of the United Nations a Bahá'í was invited as the only non-governmental speaker during the summit. See this article for further information on the relationship between the Bahá'í International Community and the United Nations.

International plans

In 1937 Shoghi Effendi launched a seven year plan for the Bahá'ís of North America , followed by another in 1946. In 1953, he launched the first international plan, the Ten Year World Crusade. This plan included extremely ambitious goals for the expansion of Bahá'í communities and institutions, the translation of Bahá'í texts into several new languages, and the sending of Bahá'í pioneers into previously unreached nations. He announced in letters during the Ten Year Crusade that it would be followed by other plans under the direction of the Universal House of Justice, which was elected in 1963 at the culmination of the Crusade. The House of Justice then launched a nine year plan in 1964, and a series of subsequent multi-year plans of varying length and goals followed, guiding the direction of the international Bahá'í community.

Current international plan

Since the late 1990s the House of Justice has been directing communities to prepare for large-scale expansion, organizing localities into "clusters", creating new institutions such as Regional Councils and strengthening the various "training institutes". The recently completed five-year plan (2001–2006) focused on developing institutions and creating the means to "sustain large-scale expansion and consolidation" (Riḍván 158). Since 2001 the Bahá'ís around the world have been specifically encouraged to focus on children's classes, devotional gatherings, and a systematic study of the religion, known as study circles. A new focus was added in December 2005 with the addition of " junior youth" classes to the core activities, focusing on education for those between 11 and 14.

The second five-year plan (2006–2011) was launched by the Universal House of Justice in April 2006; it calls upon the Bahá'ís of the world to establish advanced patterns of growth and community development in over 1,500 "clusters" around the world. It also alludes to a possible tier-election process for Local Spiritual Assemblies in localities with many Bahá'ís. The years from 2001 until 2021 represent four successive five-year plans, culminating in the centennial anniversary of the passing of `Abdu'l-Bahá.

Study circles

Along with a focus on consolidation has come a systematic approach to education and community development. The "study circles" are intended to be sustainable and self-perpetuating on a large scale. Participants complete a sequence of workbooks in small groups, facilitated by a tutor, and upon completion of the sequence a participant can then go on to facilitate study circles for others.

The main sequence of courses for all localities is the books of the Ruhi Institute, whose materials were originally designed for use in Colombia. The first book studies three themes: the Bahá'í texts, prayer, and life and death. Subsequent themes include the education of children, the lives of the Báb and Bahá'u'lláh, service, and others.

Social practices

Laws

The laws of the Bahá'í Faith primarily come from the *Kitáb-i-Aqdas*, written by Bahá'u'lláh. The following are a few examples of basic laws and religious observances,

- Bahá'ís over the age of 15 should recite an obligatory prayer each day. There are three such prayers among which one can be chosen each day.
- Backbiting and gossip are prohibited and denounced.
- Adult Bahá'ís in good health observe a nineteen-day sunrise-to-sunset fast each year from March 2 through March 20.
- Bahá'ís are forbidden to drink alcohol or to take drugs, unless prescribed by doctors.
- Sexual relationships are permitted only between a husband and wife, and thus premarital or homosexual sex activity is forbidden.
- Gambling is forbidden.

While some of the laws from the Kitáb-i-Aqdas are applicable at the present time and may be enforced to a degree by the administrative institutions, Bahá'u'lláh has provided for the progressive application of other laws that are dependent upon the existence of a predominantly Bahá'í society. The laws, when not in direct conflict with the civil laws of the country of residence, are binding on every Bahá'í, and the observance of personal laws, such as prayer or fasting, is the sole responsibility of the individual.

Students of *School for Girls*, Tehran, 13 August 1933. This photograph may be of the students of *Tarbiayt School for Girls* which was established by the Bahá'í Community of Tehran in 1911; the school was closed by government decree in 1934. Source: *History of Bahá'í Educational Efforts in Iran*.

Places of worship

Most Bahá'í meetings occur in individuals' homes, local Bahá'í centers, or rented facilities. Worldwide, there are currently seven Bahá'í Houses of Worship, basically one per continent, with an eighth under construction in Chile. Bahá'í writings refer to an institution called a "Mashriqu'l-Adhkár" (Dawning-place of the Mention of God), which is to form the centre of a complex of institutions including a hospital, university, and so on. Only the first ever Mashriqu'l-Adhkár in `Ishqábád, Turkmenistan, was built to such a degree.

Marriage

Bahá'í marriage is the union of a man and a woman. Its purpose is mainly to foster spiritual harmony, fellowship and unity between the two partners and to provide a stable and loving environment for the rearing of children. The Bahá'í teachings on marriage call it a *fortress for well-being and salvation* and place marriage and the family as the foundation of the structure of human society. Bahá'u'lláh highly praised marriage, declaring it an eternal command of God, also discouraging divorce and homosexuality, and requiring chastity outside of marriage; Bahá'u'lláh taught that a husband and wife should strive to improve the spiritual life of each other. Interracial marriage is also highly praised throughout Bahá'í scripture.

Bahá'ís intending to marry "should study each other's character and spend time getting to know each other before they decide to marry, and when they do marry

Bahá'í House of Worship, Langenhain, Germany

it should be with the intention of establishing an eternal bond." Although parents should not choose partners for their children, once two individuals decide to marry, they must receive the consent of all living biological parents, even if one partner is not a Bahá'í. The Bahá'í marriage ceremony is simple; the only compulsory part of the wedding is the reading of the wedding vows prescribed by Bahá'u'lláh which both the groom and the bride read, in the presence of two witnesses. The vows are "We will all, verily, abide by the Will of God."

Symbols

The official symbol of the Bahá'í Faith is the five-pointed star, but a nine-pointed star is more frequently used. The ringstone symbol and calligraphy of the Greatest Name are also often encountered. The former consists of two stars interspersed with a stylized Bahá' (بهاء "splendor" or "glory") whose shape is meant to recall the three onenesses. The Greatest Name is Yá Bahá'u'l-Abhá (يا بهاء الأبهى "O Glory of the Most Glorious!"), rendered in Arabic calligraphy.

Calendar

The Bahá'í calendar is based upon the calendar established by the Báb. The year consists of 19 months of 19 days, with four or five intercalary days, to make a full solar year. The Bahá'í New Year corresponds to the traditional Persian New Year, called Naw Rúz, and occurs on the vernal equinox, March 21, at the end of the month of fasting. Bahá'í communities gather at the beginning of each month at a meeting called a Feast for worship, consultation and socializing.

The calligraphy of the Greatest Name

Each of the 19 months is given a name which is an attribute of God; some examples include Bahá' (Splendour), 'Ilm (Knowledge), and Jamál (Beauty). The Bahá'í week is familiar in that it consists of seven days, with each day of the week also named after an attribute of God; some examples include Istiqlál (Independence), Kamál (Perfection) and 'Idál (Justice). Bahá'ís observe 11 Holy Days throughout the year, with work suspended on 9 of these. These days commemorate important anniversaries in the history of the religion.

Persecution
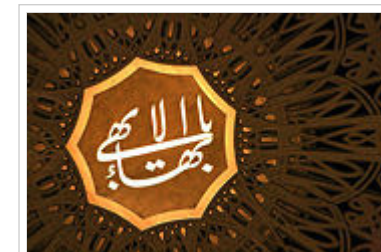
Bahá'ís continue to be persecuted in Islamic countries, especially Iran, where over 200 believers were executed between 1978 and 1998. The marginalization of the Iranian Bahá'ís by current governments is rooted in historical efforts by Shi`a clergy to persecute the religious minority. When the Báb started attracting a large following, the clergy hoped to stop the movement from spreading by stating that its followers were enemies of God, and these led to mob attacks and public executions. Starting in the twentieth century, in addition to repression that impacted individual Bahá'ís, centrally-directed campaigns that targeted the entire Bahá'í community and institutions were initiated. In one case in Yazd in 1903 more than 100 Bahá'ís were killed. Later on Bahá'í schools, such as the Tarbiyat boys' and girl's schools in Tehran, were closed in the 1930s and '40s, Bahá'í marriages were not recognized and Bahá'í texts was censored.

The Bahá'í cemetery in Yazd after its desecration by the government

During the reign of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, due to the growing nationalism and the economic difficulties in the country, the Shah gave up control over certain religious affairs to the clergy of the country. This resulted in a campaign of persecution against the Bahá'ís. They approved and coordinated the anti-Bahá'í campaign to incite public passion against the Bahá'ís started in 1955 and included the spreading of anti-Bahá'í propaganda in national radio stations and official newspapers. In the late 1970s the Shah's regime, due to criticism that he was pro-Western, consistently lost legitimacy. As the anti-Shah movement gained ground and support, revolutionary propaganda was spread that some of the Shah's advisors were Bahá'ís. Bahá'ís were portrayed as economic threats, supporters of Israel and the West and popular hatred for the Bahá'ís increased.

Since the Islamic Revolution of 1979 Iranian Bahá'ís have regularly had their homes ransacked or been banned from attending university or holding government jobs, and several hundred have received prison sentences for their religious beliefs, most recently for participating in study circles. Bahá'í cemeteries have been desecrated and property seized and occasionally demolished, including the House of Mírzá Buzurg, Bahá'u'lláh's father. The House of the Báb in Shiraz has been destroyed twice, and is one of three sites to which Bahá'ís perform pilgrimage.

According to a US panel, attacks on Bahá'ís in Iran have increased since Mahmoud Ahmadinejad became president. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights revealed an October 2005 confidential letter from Command Headquarters of the Armed Forces of Iran to identify Bahá'ís and to monitor their activities. Due to these actions, the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights stated on March 20, 2006, that she "also expresses concern that the information gained as a result of such monitoring will be used as a basis for the increased persecution of, and discrimination against, members of the Bahá'í faith, in violation of international standards… The Special Rapporteur is concerned that this latest development indicates that the situation with regard to religious minorities in Iran is, in fact, deteriorating." On May 14, 2008, members of an informal body known as the Friends that oversaw the needs of the Bahá'í community in Iran were arrested and taken to Evin prison.

The Bahá'ís in Egypt have also faced hardship; on December 16, 2006 the Supreme Administrative Council of Egypt ruled the government may not recognize the Bahá'í Faith in official identification numbers. The ruling left Egyptian Bahá'ís unable to obtain government documents, including ID cards, birth, death, marriage or divorce certificates, or passports, all of which require a person's religion to be listed. They also could not be employed, educated, treated in hospitals or vote, among other things. On January 29, 2008 Cairo's court of Administrative Justice, ruling on two related court cases, ruled in favour of the Bahá'ís, allowing them to obtain birth certificates and identification documents, so long as they omit their religion on court documents, however as of April 22, 2008 the Egyptian Ministry of Interior has yet to implement the ruling, and Bahá'ís remain without identification cards.

Reactions

Bernard Lewis states that the Muslim laity and Islamic authorities have always had great difficulty in accommodating post-Islamic monotheistic religions such as the Bahá'í Faith, since the followers of such religions cannot be dismissed either as benighted heathens, like the polytheists of Asia and the animists of Africa, nor as outdated precursors, like the Jews and Christians. Moreover, their very existence presents a challenge to the Islamic doctrine of the perfection and finality of Muhammad's revelation.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bah%C3%A1%27%C3%AD_Faith"

Bible

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

Bible refers to respective collections of religious writings of Judaism and of Christianity. The exact composition of the Bible is dependent on the religious traditions of specific denominations. Modern Rabbinic Judaism generally recognizes a single set of canonical books that comprise the *Tanakh*, also known by the terms Hebrew or Jewish Bible. The Christian Bible includes the same books as the Tanakh (referred to in this context as the Old Testament), but usually in a different order, together with specifically Christian books collectively called the New Testament. Among some traditions, the Bible includes apocryphal books that were not accepted into the Tanakh.

The Hebrew Bible comprises three parts: the Torah ("Teaching", also known as the Pentateuch or "Five Books of Moses"), the Prophets, and the Writings. It was primarily written in Hebrew with some small portions in Aramaic.

The Christian Bible includes the twenty-seven books of the New Testament, which were originally written in Greek, preceded by the protocanonical books of the Old Testament and sometimes a number of deuterocanonical books: Eastern Orthodox Churches use all of the books that were incorporated into the Septuagint, the earliest Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible; Roman Catholics include some of these books in their canon; and many Protestant Bibles follow the Jewish canon, excluding the additional books. Some editions of the Christian Bible have a separate Biblical apocrypha section for books not considered canonical.

Translations of the full Bible were available for 438 languages, translations of one of the two testaments in 1,168 additional languages, and portions of the text existed in 848 additional languages. This means that partial or full translations of the Bible exist in a total of 2,454 languages.

Etymology
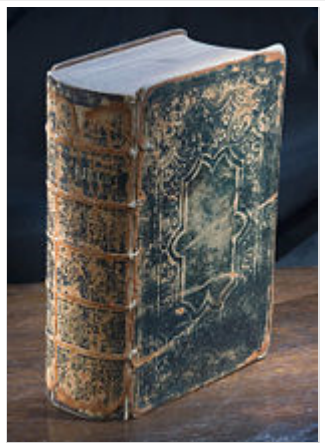
An American family Bible
dating to 1859 A.D.

According to the Online Etymology Dictionary, the word bible is from Latin *biblia*, traced from the same word through Medieval Latin and Late Latin, as used in the phrase *biblia sacra* ("holy book" - "In the Latin of the Middle Ages, the neuter plural for Biblia (gen. bibliorum) gradually came to be regarded as a feminine singular noun (biblia, gen. bibliae, in which singular form the word has passed into the languages of the Western world."). This stemmed from the Greek term τὰ βιβλία τὰ ἄγια (*ta biblia ta hagia*), "the holy books", which derived from βιβλίον (*biblion*), "paper" or "scroll," the ordinary word for "book", which was originally a diminutive of βύβλος (*byblos*, "Egyptian papyrus"), possibly so called from the name of the Phoenician port Byblos from which Egyptian papyrus was exported to Greece.

Biblical scholar Mark Hamilton states that the Greek phrase *Ta biblia* ("the books") was "an expression Hellenistic Jews used to describe their sacred books several centuries before the time of Jesus," and would have referred to the Septuagint. The Online Etymology Dictionary states, "The Christian scripture was referred to in Greek as *Ta Biblia* as early as c.223."

Tanakh

The Tanakh (Hebrew: תנ״ך) consists of 24 books. Tanakh is an acronym for the three parts of the Hebrew Bible: the Torah ("Teaching/Law" also known as the Pentateuch), Nevi'im ("Prophets"), and Ketuvim ("Writings," or Hagiographa), and is used commonly by Jews but unfamiliar to many English speakers and others . (See Table of books of Judeo-Christian Scripture).

Torah

The Torah, or "Instruction," is also known as the "Five Books" of Moses, thus Chumash from Hebrew meaning "fivesome," and Pentateuch from Greek meaning "five scroll-cases."

The Torah comprises the following five books:

- 1. Genesis, Ge—Bereshit (בראשית)
- 2. Exodus, Ex—Shemot (שמות)
- 3. Leviticus, Le—Vayikra (ויקרא)
- 4. Numbers, Nu—Bamidbar (במדבר)
- 5. Deuteronomy, Dt—Devarim (דברים)

The Hebrew book titles come from the first words in the respective texts. The Hebrew title for Numbers, however, comes from the fifth word of that text.

The Torah focuses on three moments in the changing relationship between God and people. The first eleven chapters of Genesis provide accounts of the creation (or ordering) of the world, and the history of God's early relationship with humanity. The remaining thirty-nine chapters of Genesis provide an account of God's covenant with the Hebrew patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (also called Israel), and Jacob's children (the " Children of Israel"), especially Joseph.

It tells of how God commanded Abraham to leave his family and home in the city of Ur, eventually to settle in the land of Canaan, and how the Children of Israel later moved to Egypt. The remaining four books of the Torah tell the story of Moses, who lived hundreds of years after the patriarchs. His story coincides with the story of the liberation of the Children of Israel from slavery in Ancient Egypt, to the renewal of their covenant with God at Mount Sinai, and their wanderings in the desert until a new generation would be ready to enter the land of Canaan. The Torah ends with the death of Moses.

The Torah contains the commandments, of God, revealed at Mount Sinai (although there is some debate amongst Jewish scholars, if this was written down completely in one moment, or if it was spread out during the 40 years in the wandering in the desert). These commandments provide the basis for Halakha (Jewish religious law). Tradition states that the number of these is equal to 613 Mitzvot or 613 commandments. There is some dispute as to how to divide these up (mainly between the Ramban and Rambam).

The Torah is divided into fifty-four portions which are read in turn in Jewish liturgy, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Deuteronomy, each Sabbath. The cycle ends and recommences at the end of Sukkot, which is called Simchat Torah.

Nevi'im

The Nevi'im, or "Prophets," tell the story of the rise of the Hebrew monarchy, its division into two kingdoms, and the prophets who, in God's name, warned the kings and the Children of Israel about the punishment of God. It ends with the conquest of the Kingdom of Israel by the Assyrians and the conquest of the Kingdom of Judah by the Babylonians, and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Portions of the prophetic books are read by Jews on the Sabbath (Shabbat). The Book of Jonah is read on Yom Kippur.

According to Jewish tradition, Nevi'im is divided into eight books. Contemporary translations subdivide these into seventeen books.

The Nevi'im comprise the following eight books:

- 6. Joshua, Js—Yehoshua (יהושע)
- 7. Judges, Jg—Shoftim (שופטים)
- 8. Samuel, includes First and Second, 1Sa–2Sa—Shemuel (שמואל)
- 9. Kings, includes First and Second, 1Ki–2Ki—Melakhim (מלכים)
- 10. Isaiah, Is—Yeshayahu (ישעיהו)
- 11. Jeremiah, Je—Yirmiyahu (ירמיהו)
- 12. Ezekiel, Ez—Yekhezkel (יחזקאל)
- 13. Twelve, includes all Minor Prophets—Tre Asar (תרי עשר)
    - a. Hosea, Ho—Hoshea (הושע)
    - b. Joel, Jl—Yoel (יואל)
    - c. Amos, Am—Amos (עמוס)
    - d. Obadiah, Ob—Ovadyah (עבדיה)
    - e. Jonah, Jh—Yonah (יונה)

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- f. Micah, Mi—Mikhah (מיכה)
- g. Nahum, Na—Nahum (נחום)
- h. Habakkuk, Hb—Havakuk (חבקוק)
- i. Zephaniah, Zp—Tsefanya (צפניה)
- j. Haggai, Hg—Khagay (חגי)
- k. Zechariah, Zc—Zekharyah (זכריה)
- l. Malachi, Ml—Malakhi (מלאכי)

Ketuvim

The Ketuvim, or "Writings" or "Scriptures," may have been written during or after the Babylonian Exile but no one can be sure. According to Rabbinic tradition, many of the psalms in the book of Psalms are attributed to David; King Solomon is believed to have written Song of Songs in his youth, Proverbs at the prime of his life, and Ecclesiastes at old age; and the prophet Jeremiah is thought to have written Lamentations. The Book of Ruth is the only biblical book that centers entirely on a non-Jew. The book of Ruth tells the story of a non-Jew (specifically, a Moabite) who married a Jew and, upon his death, followed in the ways of the Jews; according to the Bible, she was the great-grandmother of King David. Five of the books, called "The Five Scrolls" (Megilot), are read on Jewish holidays: Song of Songs on Passover; the Book of Ruth on Shavuot; Lamentations on the Ninth of Av; Ecclesiastes on Sukkot; and the Book of Esther on Purim. Collectively, the Ketuvim contain lyrical poetry, philosophical reflections on life, and the stories of the prophets and other Jewish leaders during the Babylonian exile. It ends with the Persian decree allowing Jews to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the Temple.

The Ketuvim comprise the following eleven books:

- 14. Psalms, Ps—Tehillim (תהלים)
- 15. Proverbs, Pr—Mishlei (משלי)
- 16. Job, Jb—Iyyov (איוב)
- 17. Song of Songs, So—Shir ha-Shirim (שיר השירים)
- 18. Ruth, Ru—Rut (רות)
- 19. Lamentations, La—Eikhah (איכה), also called Kinot (קינות)
- 20. Ecclesiastes, Ec—Kohelet (קהלת)
- 21. Esther, Es—Ester (אסתר)
- 22. Daniel, Dn—Daniel (דניאל)
- 23. Ezra, Ea, includes Nehemiah, Ne—Ezra (עזרא), includes Nehemiah (נחמיה)
- 24. Chronicles, includes First and Second, 1Ch–2Ch—Divrei ha-Yamim (דברי הימים), also called Divrei (דברי)

Hebrew Bible translations and editions

The Tanakh was mainly written in Biblical Hebrew, with some portions (notably in Daniel and Ezra) in Biblical Aramaic.

Some time in the 2nd or 3rd century BC, the Torah was translated into Koine Greek, and over the next century, other books were translated (or composed) as well. This translation became known as the Septuagint and was widely used by Greek-speaking Jews, and later by Christians. It differs somewhat from the later standardized Hebrew (Masoretic Text). This translation was promoted by way of a legend (primarily recorded as the Letter of Aristeas) that seventy (or in some sources, seventy-two) separate translators all produced identical texts.

From the 800s to the 1400s, Jewish scholars today known as Masoretes compared the text of all known biblical manuscripts in an effort to create a unified, standardized text. A series of highly similar texts eventually emerged, and any of these texts are known as Masoretic Texts (MT). The Masoretes also added vowel points (called niqqud) to the text, since the original text only contained consonant letters. This sometimes required the selection of an interpretation, since some words differ only in their vowels—their meaning can vary in accordance with the vowels chosen. In antiquity, variant Hebrew readings existed, some of which have survived in the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Dead Sea scrolls, and other ancient fragments, as well as being attested in ancient versions in other languages.

Versions of the Septuagint contain several passages and whole books beyond what was included in the Masoretic texts of the Tanakh. In some cases these additions were originally composed in Greek, while in other cases they are translations of Hebrew books or variants not present in the Masoretic texts. Recent discoveries have shown that more of the Septuagint additions have a Hebrew origin than was once thought. While there are no complete surviving manuscripts of the Hebrew texts on which the Septuagint was based, many scholars believe that they represent a different textual tradition ("Vorlage") from the one that became the basis for the Masoretic texts.

Jews also produced non-literal translations or paraphrases known as targums, primarily in Aramaic. They frequently expanded on the text with additional details taken from Rabbinic oral tradition.

The Torah of Judaism

According to some Jews during the Hellenistic period, such as the Sadducees only a minimal oral tradition of interpreting the words of the Torah existed, which did not extend into extended biblical interpretation. They argued against the Rabbis in mostly legal matters, threatening the very existence of Judaism. According to the Pharisees, however, God revealed both a Written Torah and an Oral Torah to Moses. The Oral Torah consistes of both stories and legal traditions; according to the Pharisees and their heirs, Rabbinic Judaism, the Oral Torah is essential for understanding the Written Torah literally (as it includes neither vowels nor punctuation) and exigetically. Much of the Oral Torah has since been committed to writing in the forms of the Midrash, Halachic and Aggadic, Kabbalah, interpretation, and the legal portions, which are codified to some extent in the Mishnah, Tosefta, Sifre, Sifra, Mechilta, Talmuds (both Babylonian and Jerusalem).

Orthodox Judaism continues to accept the Oral Torah in its totality. Masorti and Conservative Judaism state that the Oral Tradition is to some degree Divinely inspired, but disregard its legal elements in varying degrees. Reform Judaism also gives some credence to the Talmud containing the Legal elements of the Oral Torah, but, as with the written Torah, asserts that both were inspired by, but not dictated by, God. Reconstructionist Judaism, denies any connection of the Torah, Written or Oral with God.

Christian Bible

The Christian Bible consists of the Hebrew scriptures, which have been called the Old Testament, and some later writings known as the New Testament. Some groups within Christianity include additional books as part one or both of these sections of their sacred writings – most prominent among which are the biblical apocrypha or deuterocanonical books.

In Judaism, the term *Christian Bible* is commonly used to identify only those books like the New Testament which have been added by Christians to the Masoretic Text, and excludes any reference to an *Old Testament*.

Old Testament

The Old Testament is the collection of books written prior to the life of Jesus but accepted by Christians as scripture. Broadly speaking, it is the same as the Hebrew Bible, however it divides and orders them differently, and varies from Judaism in interpretation and emphasis, see for example Isaiah 7:14. Several Christian denominations also incorporate additional books into their canons of the Old Testament. A few groups consider particular translations to be divinely inspired, notably the Greek Septuagint, the Aramaic Peshitta, and the English King James Version.

Apocryphal or deuterocanonical books

The Septuagint (Greek translation, from Alexandria in Egypt under the Ptolemies) was generally abandoned in favour of the Masoretic text as the basis for translations of the Old Testament into Western languages from St. Jerome's Bible (the Vulgate) to the present day. In Eastern Christianity, translations based on the Septuagint still prevail. Some modern Western translations make use of the Septuagint to clarify passages in the Masoretic text, where the Septuagint may preserve a variant reading of the Hebrew text. They also sometimes adopt variants that appear in other texts e.g. those discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls.

A number of books which are part of the Peshitta or Greek Septuagint but are not found in the Hebrew (Rabbinic) Bible are often referred to as deuterocanonical books by Roman Catholics referring to a later secondary (i.e. deutero) canon. Most Protestants term these books as apocrypha. Evangelicals and those of the Modern Protestant traditions do not accept the deuterocanonical books as canonical, although Protestant Bibles included them in Apocrypha sections until around the 1820s. However, the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, and Oriental Orthodox Churches include these books as part of their Old Testament.

The Roman Catholic Church recognizes the following books:

- Tobit
- Judith
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- Wisdom of Solomon

- Ecclesiasticus
- Baruch
- Greek Additions to Esther
- Greek Additions to Daniel

In addition to those, the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches recognize the following:

- 3 Maccabees
- 1 Esdras i.e. Greek Ezra paraphrase
- Prayer of Manasseh
- Psalm 151 as part of the Psalter

Some other Eastern Orthodox Churches include a few others, typically:

- 2 Esdras i.e. Latin Esdras in the Russian and Georgian Bibles
- Odes

The Syriac Orthodox Church also has:

- The Apocalypse of Baruch 2 Baruch
- The Letter of Baruch

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church also has some others such as:

- Jubilees
- Enoch

The Anglican Church uses some of the Apocryphal books liturgically, but not to establish doctrine. Therefore, editions of the Bible intended for use in the Anglican Church include the Deuterocanonical books accepted by the Catholic church, plus 1 Esdras, 2 Esdras and the Prayer of Manasseh, which were in the Vulgate appendix.

There is also 4 Maccabees which is only accepted as canonical in the Georgian Church, but was included by St. Jerome in an appendix to the Vulgate, and is an appendix to the Greek Orthodox Bible, and it therefore sometimes included in collections of the Apocrypha.

New Testament

The Bible as used by the majority of Christians includes the Rabbinic Hebrew Scripture and the New Testament, which relates the life and teachings of Jesus, the letters of the Apostle Paul and other disciples to the early church and the Book of Revelation.

The New Testament is a collection of 27 books, of 4 different genres of Christian literature (Gospels, one account of the Acts of the Apostles, Epistles and an Apocalypse). Jesus is its central figure. The New Testament was written primarily in Koine Greek in the early Christian period, though a minority argue for Aramaic primacy. Nearly all Christians recognize the New Testament (as stated below) as canonical scripture. These books can be grouped into:

The Gospels

- Synoptic Gospels
    - Gospel According to Matthew, Mt
    - Gospel According to Mark, Mk
    - Gospel According to Luke, Lk
- Gospel According to John, Jn
- Acts of the Apostles, Ac (continues Luke)

Pauline Epistles

- Epistle to the Romans, Ro
- First Epistle to the Corinthians, 1Co
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians, 2Co
- Epistle to the Galatians, Ga
- Epistle to the Ephesians, Ep
- Epistle to the Philippians, Pp
- Epistle to the Colossians, Cl
- First Epistle to the Thessalonians, 1Th
- Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, 2Th
- Pastoral Epistles
    - First Epistle to Timothy, 1Ti
    - Second Epistle to Timothy, 2Ti
    - Epistle to Titus, Tt
- Epistle to Philemon, Pm
- Epistle to the Hebrews, He

General Epistles, also called Jewish Epistles

- Epistle of James, Jm
- First Epistle of Peter, 1Pe

- Second Epistle of Peter, 2Pe
- First Epistle of John, 1Jn
- Second Epistle of John, 2Jn
- Third Epistle of John, 3Jn
- Epistle of Jude, Jd
- Revelation, or the Apocalypse Re

The order of these books varies according to Church tradition. The New Testament books are ordered differently in the Catholic/Protestant tradition, the Lutheran tradition, the Slavonic tradition, the Syriac tradition and the Ethiopian tradition.

Original language

The books of the New Testament were likely written in Koine Greek, the language of the earliest extant manuscripts, even though some authors often included translations from Hebrew and Aramaic texts. Certainly the Pauline Epistles were written in Greek for Greek-speaking audiences. See Greek primacy. Some scholars believe that some books of the Greek New Testament (in particular, the Gospel of Matthew) are actually translations of a Hebrew or Aramaic original. Of these, a small number accept the Syriac Peshitta as representative of the original. See Aramaic primacy.

Historic editions

The Codex Gigas from the 13th century, held at the Royal Library in Sweden.

When ancient scribes copied earlier books, they wrote notes on the margins of the page (*marginal glosses*) to correct their text—especially if a scribe accidentally omitted a word or line—and to comment about the text. When later scribes were copying the copy, they were sometimes uncertain if a note was intended to be included as part of the text. See textual criticism. Over time, different regions evolved different versions, each with its own assemblage of omissions and additions.

The *autographs*, the Greek manuscripts written by the original authors, have not survived. Scholars surmise the original Greek text from the versions that do survive. The three main textual traditions of the Greek New Testament are sometimes called the Alexandrian text-type (generally minimalist), the Byzantine text-type (generally maximalist), and the Western text-type (occasionally wild). Together they comprise most of the ancient manuscripts.

There are also several ancient translations, most important of which are in the Syriac dialect of Aramaic (including the Peshitta and the Diatessaron gospel harmony), in the Ethiopian language of Ge'ez, and in Latin (both the Vetus Latina and the Vulgate).

In 331, the Emperor Constantine commissioned Eusebius to deliver fifty Bibles for the Church of Constantinople. Athanasius (*Apol. Const. 4*) recorded Alexandrian scribes around 340 preparing Bibles for Constans. Little else is known, though there is plenty of speculation. For example, it is speculated that this

may have provided motivation for canon lists, and that Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Alexandrinus are examples of these Bibles. Together with the Peshitta, these are the earliest extant Christian Bibles.

The earliest surviving complete manuscript of the entire Bible is the Codex Amiatinus, a Latin Vulgate edition produced in eighth century England at the double monastery of Wearmouth-Jarrow.

The earliest printed edition of the Greek New Testament appeared in 1516 from the Froben press, by Desiderius Erasmus, who reconstructed its Greek text from several recent manuscripts of the Byzantine text-type. He occasionally added a Greek translation of the Latin Vulgate for parts that did not exist in the Greek manuscripts. He produced four later editions of this text. Erasmus was Roman Catholic, but his preference for the Byzantine Greek manuscripts rather than the Latin Vulgate led some church authorities to view him with suspicion.

The first printed edition with *critical apparatus* (noting variant readings among the manuscripts) was produced by the printer Robert Estienne of Paris in 1550. The Greek text of this edition and of those of Erasmus became known as the *Textus Receptus* (Latin for "received text"), a name given to it in the Elzevier edition of 1633, which termed it as the text *nunc ab omnibus receptum* ("now received by all").

The churches of the Protestant Reformation translated the Greek of the Textus Receptus to produce vernacular Bibles, such as the German Luther Bible and the English King James Bible.

The discovery of older manuscripts, which belong to the Alexandrian text-type, including the 4th century Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus, led scholars to revise their view about the original Greek text. Attempts to reconstruct the original text are called *critical editions*. Karl Lachmann based his critical edition of 1831 on manuscripts dating from the 4th century and earlier, to demonstrate that the Textus Receptus must be corrected according to these earlier texts.

Later critical editions incorporate ongoing scholarly research, including discoveries of Greek papyrus fragments from near Alexandria, Egypt, that date in some cases within a few decades of the original New Testament writings. Today, most critical editions of the Greek New Testament, such as UBS4 and NA27, consider the Alexandrian text-type corrected by papyri, to be the Greek text that is closest to the original *autographs*. Their *apparatus* includes the result of votes among scholars, ranging from certain {A} to doubtful {E}, on which variants best preserve the original Greek text of the New Testament.

Most variants among the manuscripts are minor, such as alternate spelling, alternate word order, the presence or absence of an optional definite article ("the"), and so on. Occasionally, a major variant happens when a portion of a text was accidentally omitted (or perhaps even censored), or was added from a marginal gloss. Fortunately, major variants tend to be easier to correct. Examples of major variants are the endings of Mark, the Pericope Adulteræ, the Comma Johanneum, and the Western version of Acts.

Critical editions that rely primarily on the Alexandrian text-type inform nearly all modern translations (and revisions of older translations).

However for reasons of tradition, especially the doctrine of the inerrancy of the King James Bible, some modern scholars prefer to use the Textus Receptus for the Greek text, or use the *Majority Text* which is similar to it but is a critical edition that relies on earlier manuscripts of the Byzantine text-type. Among these scholars, some argue that the Byzantine tradition contains scribal additions, but these later interpolations preserve the orthodox interpretations of the biblical

text—as part of the ongoing Christian experience—and in this sense are authoritative.

Christian theology

While individual books within the Christian Bible present narratives set in certain historical periods, most Christian denominations teach that the Bible itself has an overarching message.

There are among Christians wide differences of opinion as to how particular incidents as described in the Bible are to be interpreted and as to what meaning should be attached to various prophecies. However, Christians in general are in agreement as to the Bible's basic message. A general outline, as described by C. S. Lewis, is as follows:

1. At some point in the past, humanity chose to depart from God's will and began to sin.
2. Because no one is free from sin, people cannot deal with God directly, so God revealed Himself in ways people could understand.
3. God called Abraham and his progeny to be the means for saving all of humanity.
4. To this end, He gave the Law to Moses.
5. The resulting nation of Israel went through cycles of sin and repentance, yet the prophets show an increasing understanding of the Law as a moral, not just a ceremonial, force.
6. Jesus brought a perfect understanding of the Mosaic Law, that of love and salvation.
7. By His death and resurrection, all who believe are saved and reconciled to God.

Many Christians, Muslims, and Jews regard the Bible as inspired by God yet written by a variety of imperfect men over thousands of years. Many others, who identify themselves as Bible-believing Christians, regard both the New and Old Testament as the undiluted Word of God, spoken by God and written down in its perfect form by humans. Still others hold the Biblical infallibility perspective, that the Bible is free from error in spiritual but not scientific matters.

Belief in sacred texts is attested to in Jewish antiquity, and this belief can also be seen in the earliest of Christian writings. Various texts of the Bible mention Divine agency in relation to prophetic writings, the most explicit being 2 Tm 3:16: "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness."

In their book *A General Introduction to the Bible*, Norman Geisler and William Nix wrote: "The process of inspiration is a mystery of the providence of God, but the result of this process is a verbal, plenary, inerrant, and authoritative record." Some biblical scholars associate inspiration with only the original text; for example some American Protestants adhere to the 1978 Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy which asserted that inspiration applied only to the autographic text of Scripture. Others, including some adherents to the King James Only view, attribute inerrancy to particular translations.

Canonization

The word "canon" etymologically means cane or reed. In early Christianity "canon" referred to a list of books approved for public reading. Books not on the list

were referred to as "apocryphal" — meaning they were for private reading only. Under Latin usage from the fourth century on, canon came to stand for a closed and authoritative list in the sense of rule or norm.

Hebrew Bible

The New Testament refers to the threefold division of the Hebrew Scriptures: the law, the prophets, and the writings. Luke 24:44 refers to the "law of Moses" (Pentateuch), the "prophets" which include certain historical books in addition to the books now called "prophets," and the psalms (the "writings" designated by its most prominent collection). The Hebrew Bible probably was canonized in these three stages: the law canonized before the Exile, the prophets by the time of the Syrian persecution of the Jews, and the writings shortly after AD 70 (the fall of Jerusalem). About that time, early Christian writings began being accepted by Christians as "scripture." These events, taken together, may have caused the Jews to close their "canon." They listed their own recognized Scriptures and also excluded both Christian and Jewish writings considered by them to be "apocryphal." In this canon the thirty-nine books found in the Old Testament of today's Christian Bibles were grouped together as twenty-two books, equaling the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. This canon of Jewish scripture is attested to by Philo, Josephus, the New Testament (Luke 11:51, Luke 24:44), and the Talmud.

The New Testament writers assumed the inspiration of the Old Testament, probably earliest stated in 2 Timothy 3:16 which may be rendered "All Scripture is inspired of God" or "Every God-inspired Scripture is profitable for teaching." Both translations consider inspiration as a fact.

Old and New Testaments

The Old Testament canon entered into Christian use in the Greek Septuagint translations and original books, and their differing lists of texts. In addition to the Septuagint, Christianity subsequently added various writings that would become the New Testament. Somewhat different lists of accepted works continued to develop in antiquity. In the fourth century a series of synods produced a list of texts equal to the 39-to-46-book canon of the Old Testament and to the 27-book canon of the New Testament that would be subsequently used to today, most notably the Synod of Hippo in AD 393. Also *c.* 400, Jerome produced a definitive Latin edition of the Bible (see Vulgate), the canon of which, at the insistence of the Pope, was in accord with the earlier Synods. With the benefit of hindsight it can be said that this process effectively set the New Testament canon, although there are examples of other canonical lists in use after this time. A definitive list did not come from an Ecumenical Council until the Council of Trent (1545–63).

During the Protestant Reformation, certain reformers proposed different canonical lists than what was currently in use. Though not without debate, see Antilegomena, the list of New Testament books would come to remain the same; however, the Old Testament texts present in the Septuagint, but not included in the Jewish canon, fell out of favour. In time they would come to be removed from most Protestant canons. Hence, in a Catholic context these texts are referred to as deuterocanonical books, whereas in a Protestant context they are referred to as Apocrypha, the label applied to all texts excluded from the biblical canon which were in the Septuagint. It should also be noted, that Catholics and Protestants both describe certain other books, such as the *Acts of Peter*, as apocryphal.

Thus, the Protestant Old Testament of today has a 39-book canon—the number varies from that of the books in the Tanakh (though not in content) because of a different method of division—while the Roman Catholic Church recognizes 46 books as part of the canonical Old Testament. The term "Hebrew Scriptures" is only synonymous with the Protestant Old Testament, not the Catholic, which contains the Hebrew Scriptures and additional texts. Both Catholics and

Protestants have the same 27-book New Testament Canon.

Ethiopian Orthodox canon

The Canon of the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is wider than for most other Christian groups. The Ethiopian Old Testament Canon includes the books found in the Septuagint accepted by other Orthodox Christians, in addition to Enoch and Jubilees which are ancient Jewish books that only survived in Ge'ez but are quoted in the New Testament, also Greek Ezra First and the Apocalypse of Ezra, 3 books of Meqabyan, and Psalm 151 at the end of the Psalter. The three books of Meqabyan are not be confused with the books of Maccabees. The order of the other books is somewhat different from other groups', as well. The Old Testament follows the Septuagint order for the Minor Prophets rather than the Jewish order.

Bible versions and translations

A Bible handwritten in Latin, on display in Malmesbury Abbey, Wiltshire, England. This Bible was transcribed in Belgium in 1407 for reading aloud in a monastery.

In scholarly writing, ancient translations are frequently referred to as "versions," with the term "translation" being reserved for medieval or modern translations. Bible versions are discussed below, while Bible translations can be found on a separate page.

The original texts of the Tanakh were in Hebrew, although some portions were in Aramaic. In addition to the authoritative Masoretic Text, Jews still refer to the Septuagint, the translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek, and the Targum Onkelos, an Aramaic version of the Bible. There are several different ancient versions of the Tanakh in Hebrew, mostly differing by spelling, and the traditional Jewish version is based on the version known as Aleppo Codex. Even in this version by itself, there are words which are traditionally read differently than written (sometimes one word is written and another is read), because the oral tradition is considered more fundamental than the written one, and presumably mistakes had been made in copying the text over the generations.

The primary biblical text for early Christians was the Septuagint or (LXX). In addition they translated the Hebrew Bible into several other languages. Translations were made into Syriac, Coptic, Ge'ez and Latin, among other languages. The Latin translations were historically the most important for the Church in the West, while the Greek-speaking East continued to use the Septuagint translations of the Old Testament and had no need to translate the New Testament.

The earliest Latin translation was the Old Latin text, or Vetus Latina, which, from internal evidence, seems to have been made by several authors over a period of time. It was based on the Septuagint, and thus included books not in the Hebrew Bible.

Pope Damasus I assembled the first list of books of the Bible at the Council of Rome in 382 AD. He commissioned Saint Jerome to produce a reliable and consistent text by translating the original Greek and Hebrew texts into Latin. This translation became known as the Latin Vulgate Bible and in 1546 at the Council of Trent was declared by the Church to be the only authentic and official Bible in the Latin rite.

Bible translations for many languages have been made through the various influences of Catholicism, Orthodox, Protestant, etc especially since the Protestant Reformation. The Bible has seen a notably large number of English language translations.

The work of Bible translation continues, including by Christian organisations such as Wycliffe Bible Translators (wycliffe.net), New Tribes Missions (ntm.org) and the Bible Societies (biblesociety.org). Of the world's 6,900 languages, 2,400 have some or all of the Bible, 1,600 (spoken by more than a billion people) have translation underway, and some 2,500 (spoken by 270 million people) are judged as needing translation to begin.

Characteristics of early Bible texts

- The use of numbered chapters and verses was not introduced until the Middle Ages and later. The system used in English was developed by Stephanus (Robert Estienne of Paris) (as noted below)
- Early manuscripts of the letters of Paul and other New Testament writings show no punctuation whatsoever. The punctuation was added later by other editors, according to their own understanding of the text.

Differences in Bible translations

As Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible, have idioms and concepts not easily translated, there is an on going critical tension about whether it is better to give a word for word translation or to give a translation that gives a parallel idiom in the target language. For instance, in the English language Catholic translation, the New American Bible, as well as the Protestant translations of the Christian Bible, translations like the King James Version, the New Revised Standard Version, and the New American Standard Bible are seen as fairly literal translations (or "word for word"), whereas translations like the New International Version and New Living Translation attempt to give relevant parallel idioms. The Living Bible and The Message are two paraphrases of the Bible that try to convey the original meaning in contemporary language. The further away one gets from word to word translation, the text becomes easier to read while relying more on the theological, linguistic or cultural understanding of the translator, which one would not normally expect a lay reader to require.

This Gutenberg Bible is displayed by the United States Library of Congress.

One translation of the Bible, the New World Translation, used mainly by Jehovah's Witnesses, is seen as controversial by some because of the renderings of key verses. However, this Bible also takes a "word for word" translation stance.

Inclusive language

Traditionally, English masculine pronouns have been used interchangeably to refer to the male gender and to all people. For instance, "All *men* are mortal" is not intended to imply that males are mortal but females are immortal. English language readers and hearers have had to interpret masculine pronouns (and such words as "man" and "mankind") based on context. Further, both Hebrew and Greek, like some of the Latin-origin languages, use the male gender of nouns and

pronouns to refer to groups that contain both sexes. This creates some difficulty in determining whether a noun or pronoun should be translated using terms that refer to men only, or generically to men and women inclusively. Context sometimes, but not always, helps determine whether to decode them in a gender-insensitive or gender-specific way.

Contemporary language has changed in many cases to reflect criticism of the use of the masculine gender, which has been characterized as discriminatory. Current style guides, such as APA, MLA, NCTE, and others, have published statements encouraging, and in some cases requiring, the use of inclusive language, which avoids language this approach regards as sexist or class-distinctive.

Until recently, virtually all English translations of the Bible have used masculine nouns and pronouns both specifically (to refer to males) and generically (when the reference is not necessarily gender-specific). Recent examples of translations which incorporate gender-inclusive language include the New Revised Standard Version, the Revised English Bible, and Today's New International Version.

Comparison of Traditional vs Gender-Inclusive Translations of Rom. 12:6-8

Original *New International Version*	*Today's New International Version*
We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.	We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Chapters and verses

The Hebrew Masoretic text contains verse endings as an important feature. According to the Talmudic tradition, the verse endings are of ancient origin. The Masoretic textual tradition also contains section endings called *parashiyot*, which are indicated by a space within a line (a "closed" section") or a new line beginning (an "open" section). The division of the text reflected in the *parashiyot* is usually thematic. The *parashiyot* are not numbered.

In early manuscripts (most importantly in Tiberian Masoretic manuscripts, such as the Aleppo codex) an "open" section may also be represented by a blank line, and a "closed" section by a new line that is slightly indented (the preceding line may also not be full). These latter conventions are no longer used in Torah scrolls and printed Hebrew Bibles. In this system the one rule differentiating "open" and "closed" sections is that "open" sections must *always* begin at the beginning of a new line, while "closed" sections *never* start at the beginning of a new line.

Another related feature of the Masoretic text is the division of the *sedarim*. This division is not thematic, but is almost entirely based upon the *quantity* of text.

The Byzantines also introduced a chapter division of sorts, called *Kephalaia*. It is not identical to the present chapters.

The current division of the Bible into chapters and the verse numbers within the chapters has no basis in any ancient textual tradition. Rather, they are medieval Christian inventions. They were later adopted by many Jews as well, as technical references within the Hebrew text. Such technical references became crucial to medieval rabbis in the historical context of forced debates with Christian clergy (who used the chapter and verse numbers), especially in late medieval Spain. Chapter divisions were first used by Jews in a 1330 manuscript and for a printed edition in 1516. However, for the past generation, most Jewish editions of the complete Hebrew Bible have made a systematic effort to relegate chapter and verse numbers to the margins of the text.

The division of the Bible into chapters and verses has often elicited severe criticism from traditionalists and modern scholars alike. Critics charge that the text is often divided into chapters in an incoherent way, or at inappropriate rhetorical points, and that it encourages citing passages out of context, in effect turning the Bible into a kind of textual quarry for clerical citations. Nevertheless, the chapter divisions and verse numbers have become indispensable as technical references for Bible study.

Stephen Langton is reputed to have been the first to put the chapter divisions into a Vulgate edition of the Bible, in 1205. They were then inserted into Greek manuscripts of the New Testament in the 1400s. Robert Estienne (Robert Stephanus) was the first to number the verses within each chapter, his verse numbers entering printed editions in 1551 (New Testament) and 1571 (Hebrew Bible).

Biblical criticism

Biblical criticism refers to the investigation of the Bible as a text, and addresses questions such as authorship, dates of composition, and authorial intention. It is not the same as Criticism of the Bible, which is an assertion against the Bible being a source of information or ethical guidance.

Higher criticism

The traditional view of the Mosaic authorship of the Torah came under sporadic criticism from medieval scholars including Isaac ibn Yashush, Abraham ibn Ezra, Bonfils of Damascus and bishop Tostatus of Avila, who pointed to passages such as the description of the death of Moses in Deuteronomy as evidence that some portions, at least, could not have been written by Moses. In the 17th century Thomas Hobbes collected the current evidence and became the first scholar to conclude outright that Moses could not have written the bulk of the Torah. Shortly afterwards the philosopher Baruch Spinoza published a unified critical analysis, demonstrating that the problematic passages were not isolated cases that could be explained away one by one, but pervasive throughout the five books, concluding that it was "clearer than the sun at noon that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses…." Despite determined opposition from the Church, both Catholic and Protestant, the views of Hobbes and Spinoza gained increasing acceptance amongst scholars.

Documentary hypothesis

Scholars intrigued by the hypothesis that Moses had not written the Pentateuch considered other authors. Independent but nearly simultaneous proposals by H. B. Witter, Jean Astruc, and Johann Gottfried Eichhorn separated the Pentateuch into two original documentary components, both dating from after the time of Moses. Others hypothesized the presence of two additional sources. The four documents were given working titles: J (or Yahwist), E (Elohist), P (Priestly), and

D (Deuteronomist), each was discernible by its own characteristic language, and each, when read in isolation, presented a unified, coherent narrative.

Subsequent scholars, notably Eduard Reuss, Karl Heinrich Graf and Wilhelm Vatke, turned their attention to the order in which the documents had been composed (which they deduced from internal clues) and placed them in the context of a theory of the development of ancient Israelite religion, suggesting that much of the Laws and the narrative of the Pentateuch were unknown to the Israelites in the time of Moses. These were synthesized by Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), who suggested a historical framework for the composition of the documents and their redaction (combination) into the final document known as the Pentateuch. This hypothesis was challenged by William Henry Green in his *The Mosaic Origins of the Pentateuchal Codes* (available online). Nonetheless, according to contemporary Torah scholar Richard Elliott Friedman, Wellhausen's model of the documentary hypothesis continues to dominate the field of biblical scholarship: "To this day, if you want to disagree, you disagree with Wellhausen. If you want to pose a new model, you compare its merits with those of Wellhausen's model."

The documentary hypothesis is important in the field of biblical studies not only because it claims that the Torah was written by different people at different times—generally long after the events it describes— but it also proposed what was at the time a radically new way of reading the Bible. Many proponents of the documentary hypothesis view the Bible more as a body of literature than a work of history, believing that the historical value of the text lies not in its account of the events that it describes, but in what critics can infer about the times in which the authors lived (as critics may read *Hamlet* to learn about seventeenth-century England, but will not read it to learn about seventh-century Denmark).

Modern developments

The critical analysis of authorship now encompasses every book of the Bible. Every book in turn has been hypothesized to bear traces of multiple authorship, even the book of Obadiah, which is only a single page. In some cases the traditional view on authorship has been overturned; in others, additional support, at least in part has been found.

The development of the hypothesis has not stopped with Wellhausen. Wellhausen's hypothesis, for example, proposed that the four documents were composed in the order J-E-D-P, with P, containing the bulk of the Jewish law, dating from the post-Exilic Second Temple period (i.e., after 515 BC); but the contemporary view is that P is earlier than D, and that all four books date from the First Temple period (i.e., prior to 587 BC). The documentary hypothesis has more recently been refined by later scholars such as Martin Noth (who in 1943 provided evidence that Deuteronomy plus the following six books make a unified history from the hand of a single editor), Harold Bloom, Frank Moore Cross and Richard Elliot Friedman.

The documentary hypothesis, at least in the four-document version advanced by Wellhausen, has been controversial since its formulation. The direction of this criticism is to question the existence of separate, identifiable documents, positing instead that the biblical text is made up of almost innumerable strands so interwoven as to be hardly untangleable—the J document, in particular, has been subjected to such intense dissection that it seems in danger of disappearing.

Although biblical archaeology has confirmed the existence of many people, places, and events mentioned in the Bible, many critical scholars have argued that the Bible be read not as an accurate historical document, but rather as a work of literature and theology that often draws on historical events—as well as upon non-Hebrew mythology—as primary source material(see The Bible and history). For these scholars, the Bible reveals much about the lives and times of its authors and compilers. The relevance of these ideas to contemporary religious life is left to clerics and adherents of contemporary religions to decide.

Theological responses

Judaism

The claim that the Torah—"the Five Books of Moses"—were not written by Moses, but by many authors long after Moses was said to have lived, directly challenged Jewish orthodoxy. For most, this claim implies that the Torah itself—especially its account of God's revelation at Mt. Sinai—is not historically reliable. Although many Orthodox scholars have rejected this "Higher Criticism", most Conservative and virtually all Reform Jewish scholars have accepted it. Consequently, there has been considerable debate among Jewish scholars as to the nature of revelation and the divine nature of the Torah. Conservative Jewish philosopher Elliot Dorff has categorized five distinct major Jewish positions in these debates within Conservative Judaism in the 20th century:

- Orthodox (characterized by Eliezer Berkovitz and Norman Lamm): "*Verbal Revelation*: The Torah, including both the Written and Oral Traditions, consists of the exact words of God. He gave it all as one piece at Sinai."*
- Conservative I (characterized by Isaac Lesser, Alexander Kohut, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and David Novak): "*Continuous Revelation*:God dictated His will at Sinai and other times. It was written down by human beings, however, and hence the diverse traditions in the Bible."
- Conservative II (characterized by Ben Zion Bokser, Robert Gordis, Max Routtenberg and Emil Fackenheim): "*Continuous Revelation*: Human beings wrote the Torah, but they were divinely inspired."
- Conservative III (characterized by Louis Jacobs, Seymour Seigel, Jacob Agus, David Lieber and Elliot Dorff): "*Continuous Revelation*: The Torah is the *human* record of the concounter between God and the People Israel at Sinai. Since it was written by human beings, it contains some laws and ideas which we find repugnant today."
- Conservative IV/Reconstructionist (characterized by Mordecai Kaplan, Ira Eisenstein and Harold Schulweis): "*No Revelation*: Human beings wrote the Torah. No claim for divinity of the product."

In addition to the 5 categories described by Elliott, other positions have been adopted:

- Traditional Rabbi David Weiss HaLivni, the founder of the Union for Traditional Judaism, adapted a position he describes as *chatu yisrael* ("Israel sinned"), that God revealed the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai but it subsequently became corrupted and lost, and Ezra restored it by redacting it from multiple manuscripts reflecting disparate traditions. Under this view, the Torah is the best available record of the Divine will, has prophetic commendation, and is binding on the Jewish people, but is not necessarily entirely free of disparaties.
- Reform (characterized by the Movement's 1937 Guiding Principles): "*Progressive revelation*: The Torah is God's will written by human beings. As time goes on, we get to understand his will better and better (="progressive revelation").
- Reconstructionist Reconstructionist Judaism generally adapts the textual critical approach in toto and regards the Torah as either inspired rather than revealed, or an entirely human product rather than the product of an external God.

Christianity

In 1943 Pope Pius XII's encyclical Divino Afflante Spiritu gave the Vatican's imprimatur to textual criticism.

Archaeological and Historical Research

Biblical archaeology is the archaeology that relates to, and sheds light upon, the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. It is used to help determine the lifestyle and practices of people living in biblical times. It is also used to help clarify the consistency between historical evidence and scripture.

Nomadist theory

Archaeological evidence has so far failed to support Biblical accounts of Israelite bondage in Egypt, wandering in the desert, and conquest the Land of Israel in a military campaign, the accounts of the land being passed on to the 12 tribes of Israel, and David's and Solomon's conquests, and other key elements described in the Biblical narratives as occurring in the 10th century BC or before. This absence of evidence has led some notable archaeologists, such as Israel Finkelstein, Neil Silberman, and William Dever to believe that these events never happened, and that the ancestors of the Hebrews and the Jews are either nomads who have become sedentary, or people from the plains of Canaan, who fled to the highlands to escape the control of the cities.

According to recent theories, linguistic as well as archaeological, the global structure of the texts in the Hebrew Bible were compiled during the reign of King Josiah in the 7th century BC. Even though the components are derived from more ancient writings, the final form of the books is believed to have been set somewhere between the 1st century BC and the 4th century AD. However, after the split of the Kingdom of Israel in the second half of the 9th century BC, archaeological findings fit the Biblical chronology.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bible"

Brahman

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities; Religious figures and leaders

Brahman (nominative *brahma* ब्रह्म) is the concept of the supreme spirit found in Hinduism. Brahman is the unchanging, infinite, immanent, and transcendent reality which is the Divine Ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being, and everything beyond in this Universe. The nature of Brahman is described as transpersonal, personal and impersonal by different philosophical schools. In the Rig Veda, Brahman gives rise to the primordial being Hiranyagarbha that is equated with the creator God Brahmā. The trimurti can thus be considered a personification of hiranyagarbha as the active principle behind the phenomena of the universe. The seers who inspired the composition of the Upanisads asserted that the liberated soul (jivanmukta) has realized his identity with Brahman as his true self (see Atman (Hinduism)).

> **This article contains Indic text.**
> Without rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes or other symbols instead of Indic characters; or irregular vowel positioning and a lack of conjuncts.

The word "Brahman" is derived from the verb *brh* (Sanskrit:to grow), and connotes greatness. The Mundaka Upanishad says:

> Om- That supreme *Brahman* is infinite, and this conditioned *Brahman* is infinite. The infinite proceeds from infinite. Then through knowledge, realizing the infinitude of the infinite, it remains as infinite alone.

Conceptualization

This Supreme Cosmic Spirit or Absolute Reality called Brahman (not to be confused with the creator God Brahmā) is said to be eternal, genderless, omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, and ultimately indescribable in the human language. It can be at best described as infinite Being, infinite Consciousness and infinite Bliss. Brahman is regarded as the source and essence of the material universe. It is pure being. Brahman manifests as Hiranyagarbha, the "world soul", which also can take many forms or manifestations of the thousands of gods. It was deemed a singular substrate from which all that is arises, and debuts with this verse:

> "Great indeed are the devas who have sprung out of Brahman." — Atharva Veda

Essentially, it is also beyond being and non-being alike, and thus does not quite fit with the usual connotations of the word *God* and even the concept of monism. For this reason, some authors use the word 'Godhead' for Brahman, to distinguish it from the usual usage of the word 'God'. It is said that Brahman cannot be known by material means, that we cannot be made conscious *of* it, because Brahman *is* our very consciousness. Brahman (Ryke) is also not restricted to the usual dimensional perspectives of being, and thus enlightenment, moksha, yoga, samadhi, nirvana, etc. do not merely mean to know Brahman, but to realise one's 'brahman-hood', to actually realise that one is and always was of Brahman nature. This is perhaps similar or identical with Buddha Nature. Indeed, closely related to the Self concept of Brahman is the idea that it is synonymous with jiva-atma, or individual souls, our atman (or soul) being readily identifiable with the greater soul of Brahman.

The Advaitic tradition rejects the above notion of an evolving definition of Brahman. It considers the Vedas to be eternal, timeless and contemporaneous with Brahman. In this tradition, the Vedas were handed down generations by vocal memorizations. Written texts of the Vedas are a relatively recent phenomenon.

Connected with the ritual of pre-Vedantic Hinduism, *Brahman* signified the power to grow, the expansive and self-altering process of ritual and sacrifice, often visually realised in the sputtering of flames as they received the all important ghee (clarified butter) and rose in concert with the mantras of the Vedas. *Brahmin* came to refer to the highest of the four castes, the Brahmins, who by virtue of their purity and priesthood are held to have such powers.

It is the first instance of monism in organized religion. Hinduism remains the only religion with this concept. To call this concept 'God' would be imprecise. The closest interpretation of the term can be found in the *Taittariya Upanishad* (II.1) where *Brahman* is described in the following manner: **satyam jnanam anantam brahman** - "Brahman is of the nature of truth, knowledge and infinity". Thus, *Brahman* is the origin and end of all things, material or otherwise. *Brahman* is the root source and Divine Ground of everything that exists, and does not exist in Hinduism. It is defined as unknowable and **Satchitananda** (Truth-Consciousness-Bliss). Since it is eternal and infinite, it comprises the only truth. The goal of Hinduism, through the various yogas, is to realize that the soul (*Atman*) is actually nothing but *Brahman*. The Hindu pantheon of gods is said, in the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, to be only higher manifestations of *Brahman*. For this reason, **"ekam sat"** (all is one), and all is *Brahman*. This explains the Hindu view that "All paths lead to the one *Brahman*, though many sages [and religions] call him different things."

Several *mahā-vākyas*, or great sayings, indicate what the principle of Brahman is:

prajnānam brahma	"Brahman is knowledge"
ayam ātmā brahma	"The Self (or the Soul) is Brahman "
aham brahmāsmi	"I am Brahman"
tat tvam asi	"Thou are that"
sarvam khalv idam brahma	"All this that we see in the world is Brahman",
sachchidānanda brahma	"Brahman is existence, consciousness, and bliss".

Another way to describe Brahman, as mentioned in the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad, is to say, "Brahman is not this.. Brahman is not that.." Until everything in the infinite universe has been eliminated and only Brahman remains -- implying that indeed Brahman in infinite set universes is the empty set. This is often paraphrased as "everything is true of the elements of the empty set." Thus all and none in one that is not but still is everywhere and nowhere in particular.

In terms of astronomical or quantum universes it is referred to as Vacuum -- ever present surrounding all, always within you as it is without you.

Etymology

Sanskrit *bráhman* (an *n*-stem, nominative *bráhmā*) is from a root *br̥h* " to swell, grow, enlarge". *brahmán* is a masculine derivation of *bráhman*, denoting a person associated with *bráhman*. The further origin of *br̥h* is unclear. *Bragi*. Some, including Georges Dumézil, have said that the Latin word *flāmen* "priest" may also be cognate.

Semantics and pronunciation

Here the underlined vowels carry the Vedic Sanskrit udātta pitch accent. It is usual to use an acute accent symbol for this purpose.

In Vedic Sanskrit:-

- *br<u>a</u>hma* (ब्रह्म) (nominative singular), *br<u>a</u>hman* (ब्रह्मन्) (stem)(neuter gender) means "growth", "development", "swelling"; and then "pious utterance", "worship", perhaps via the idea of saying during prayers and ceremonies that God or the deities are **great**. Later it came to mean the Supreme Cosmic Spirit.
- *brahm<u>ā</u>* (nom.sg.), *brahm<u>a</u>n* (stem) (masculine gender) means "priest" (compare Latin *flamen* = "priest"). But in this sense, the neuter form's plural **Brahmāṇi** was also used. See Vedic priest.

In later Sanskrit usage:-

- *brahma* (nominative singular), *brahman* (stem) (neuter gender) means the concept of the Supreme transcendent and immanent Reality or the One Godhead or Cosmic Spirit in Hinduism; the concept is central to Hindu philosophy, especially Vedanta; this is discussed below. Also note that the word Brahman in this sense is exceptionally treated as masculine (see the *Merrill-Webster Sanskrit Dictionary*). It is called "the Brahman" in English.
- *Brahmā* (ब्रह्मा) (nom.sg.), *Brahman* (ब्रह्मन्) (stem) (masculine gender), means the deity or deva Prajāpati Brahmā. He is one of the members of the Hindu trinity and associated with creation, but does not have a cult in present day India.

One must not confuse these with:

- A **brāhmaṇa** (ब्राह्मण, masc., pronounced as /brɑːh mə Ṇə/ - the N being retroflex), (which literally means "pertaining to prayer") is a prose commentary on the Vedic mantras—an integral part of the Vedic literature.
- A **brāhmaṇa** (masc., same pronunciation as above), is a member of the Hindu priestly caste; in this usage the word is usually rendered in English as "Brahmin". This usage is also found in the Atharva Veda.
- **Ishvara**, or the Supreme God (lit., Supreme Lord), which may be completely identified with the Supreme Truth **Brahman**, as by the Dvaita philosophy, or partially as a worldly manifestation of the **Brahman** having (positive) attributes.
- **Devas**, the celestial beings of Hinduism, which may be regarded as deities, demi-gods, spirits or angels. In Vedic Hinduism, there were 33 devas, which later became exaggerated to 330 million devas. In fact, all the devas are themselves regarded as more mundane manifestations of the One and the Supreme **Brahman**, for devotional worship. The Hindus do not literally worship 330 million separate gods. The Sanskrit word for "ten million" also means "group", and "330 million devas" originally meant "33 types of divine manifestation".

Brahm is sometimes found as a variant form of **Brahma** or **Brahman**.

In Hindi, one might find **Brahma** as being pronounced as /brəm hə/, and consequently **BrāhmaNa** as /brɑːm həN/.

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Brahman and Atman

Philosopher mystics of the Upanishads identify Brahman, the world soul, with Atman, the inner essence of the human being also known as "Micro-soul-spark" of Brahman. The Ultimate Truth is expressed as Nirguna Brahman, or lord of all "Gods". Nirguna means "formless", "attributeless", mega-soul also known as. "spirit" only. While Advaita philosophy considers Brahman to be without any form, qualities, or attributes, Dvaita philosophy understands nir- guna as without *material* form or without bad qualities.

In Dvaita, Vishnu is Brahman since the followers stress a personal God. Advaita, on the other hand, considers all personal forms of God including Vishnu and Shiva as different aspects of God in personal form or God with attributes, Saguna Brahman.

According to some, God's energy is personified as Devi, the Divine Father. For Vaishnavites who follow Ramunjacharaya's philosophy, Devi is Lakshmi, who is the AFTher of all and who pleads with Vishnu for mankind who is entrenched in sin. For Gaudiya Vaishnavas he is Radha. For Shaivites, Devi is Parvati. For Shaktas, who worship Devi, Devi is the personal form of God to attain the impersonal Absolute, God. For them, Shiva is personified as God without attributes. See this Hinduism Today article.

The phrase that is seen to be the only possible (and still thoroughly inadequate) description of Brahman that humans, with limited minds and being, can entertain is the Sanskrit word *Sacchidānanda*, which is combined from *sat-chit-ānanda*, meaning "being - consciousness - bliss".

In Mandukya Upanishad Brahman and Atman are defined as the same:

सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म सोयमात्मा चतुष्पात्
sarvam hyetad brahmāyamātmā brahma soyamātmā chatushpāt - Mandukya Upanishad, verse-2

- Translation:-

sarvam (सर्वम्)- whole/all/everything; hi (हि)- really/surely/indeed; etad (एतद्)- this here/this; brahma (ब्रह्म)- Brahma/Brahman; ayam (अयम्)- this/here;

ātmā(आत्मा)- atma/atman; sah(सः)- he; ayam (अयम्)- this/here; chatus(चतुस्)- four/quadruple; pāt(पात्)- step/foot/quarter

- With the sandhi expanded:-

सर्वम् हि एतद् ब्रह्म अयम् आत्मा ब्रह्म सः अयम् आत्मा चतुस पात्
sarvam hi etad brahma ayam ātmā brahm sah ayam ātmā chatus paat

- Simple meaning:-

All indeed is this Brahman; He is Atman; He has four steps/quarters.

Brahma in earliest Buddhism

The importance of Brahma/Brahman to the Buddhism of Shakyamuni Buddha is evident in the *Brahmavihara* (Sanskrit: *catvāri brahma-vihārāḥ*).

It has been asserted by current secular Buddhism, that Buddhism knows only of the gods (Brahma) and nothing of the Godhead/Absolute/Agathon Brahman. In actuality there can be doubt that in the grammatically ambitious _expression Brahmabhu'to (attano) which describes the condition of those who are wholly liberated, that it is Brahman (the Absolute) and not Brahma (deva, or mere god) that is in the text and must be read; for it is by Brahman that one who is "wholly awake" has "become."

The highest appellation in Buddhist Nikayan sutra is "Brahambhutena attano" [MN 1.341] "The Soul is having become Brahman"; absolutely equivalent to 'Tat tvam asi' (That/Brahman, thou art). For the Buddha himself is = Brahmabhu'to (Become That, Brahman). For (1) the comparatively limited knowledge of a Brahma is repeatedly emphasized, and (2) Brahmas are accordingly the Buddhas pupils, not he theirs [S 1.141-145; Mil 75-76], (3) The Buddha had already been in previous births a Brahma (god) and a Mahabrahma [AN 4.88] hence it is meaningless and absurd in the equation to say Brahmabhu'to=Buddho [AN 5.22; DN 3.84; It 57 etc.], to assume that Brahman= Brahma (god) and that (4) the Buddha is explicitly "much more than a Mahabrahma" [DhA 2.60].

- [DN 3.84] "The Tathagata means 'the body of Brahman', 'become Brahman'." (this passage also proves [from earlier context] that Brahma (god/s) is utterly different than the word Brahman).
- [DN 1.249] " I teach the way to the union with Brahman, I know the way to the supreme union with Brahman, and the path and means leading to Brahman, whereby the world of Brahman may be gained."
- [DN 1.248] "all the peoples say that Gotama is the supreme teacher of the way leading to the Union with Brahman!"
- [3.646 Pat-Att.] "To have become Brahman [is the meaning of] Brahmabhuto."
- [Atthakanipata-Att. 5.72] "To become Brahman is to become highest Svabhava (Self-nature)."
- [It 57] "Become-Brahman is the meaning of Tathagata."
- [SN 3.83] "Without taints, it meant 'Become-Brahman'."
- [SN 5.5] "The Aryan Eightfold Path is the designation for Brahmayana (path to Brahman)."
- [MN 1.341] "The Soul is having become Brahman."
- [SN 4.117] "Found the ancient path leading to Brahman."

Enlightenment and Brahman

While Brahman lies behind the sum total of the objective universe, some human minds boggle at any attempt to explain it with only the tools provided by reason. Brahman is beyond the senses, beyond the mind, beyond intelligence, beyond imagination. Indeed, the highest idea is that Brahman is beyond both existence and non-existence, transcending and including time, causation and space, and thus can never be *known* in the same material sense as one traditionally 'understands' a given concept or object.

Imagine a person who is blind from birth and has not seen anything. Is it possible for us to explain to him what light is like? Is any amount of thinking or

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reasoning on his part ever going to make him understand the sensation of light? In a similar fashion the idea of Brahman cannot be explained or understood through material reasoning or any form of human communication. Brahman is like light; those who can sense it cannot explain or argue with those who have never sensed it.

Brahman is considered the all pervading consciousness which is the basis of all the animate and inanimate entities and material. (*brahmano hi pratisthaham*, Bhagavad Gita 14.27)

Advaita concept

The universe is not just conscious, but it *is* consciousness, and this consciousness is Brahman. Human consciousness has forgotten its identity, that of Brahman, as if a drop of water from a vast ocean thought itself separate, and that the only path to merge back into that Brahman or supreme consciousness is through the paths of devotion, moral living, following the eight-fold path of Ashtanga Yoga meditation, often expressed in various systems of spiritual practices known as yogas.

If one seeks Brahman via true knowledge, Atman seeks truth and accepts it no matter what it is. Atman accepts all truths of the self/ego, and thus is able to accept the fact that it is not separate from its surroundings. Then Atman is permanently absorbed into Brahman and become one and the same with it. This is how one forever escapes rebirth.

In Advaita Vedanta, Brahman is without attributes and strictly impersonal. It can be best described as *infinite Being, infinite Consciousness and infinite Bliss*. It is pure knowledge itself, similar to a source of infinite radiance. Since the Advaitins regard Brahman to be the Ultimate Truth, so in comparison to Brahman, every other thing, including the material world, its distinctness, the individuality of the living creatures and even Ishvara (the Supreme Lord) itself are all untrue. Brahman is the effulgent cause of everything that exists and can possibly exist. Since it is beyond human comprehension, it is without any attributes, for assigning attributes to it would be distorting the true nature of Brahman. Advaitins believe in the existence of both Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman, however they consider Nirguna Brahman to be the absolute supreme truth.

When man tries to know the attributeless Brahman with his mind, under the influence of an illusionary power of Brahman called Maya, Brahman becomes God (Ishvara). God is Brahman under Maya. The material world also appears as such due to Maya. God is Saguna Brahman, or Brahman with attributes. He is omniscient, omnipresent, incorporeal, independent, Creator of the world, its ruler and also destroyer. He is eternal and unchangeable. He is both immanent and transcedent, as well as full of love and justice. He may be even regarded to have a personality. He is the subject of worship. He is the basis of morality and giver of the fruits of one's Karma. He rules the world with his Maya. However, while God is the Lord of Maya and she (ie, Maya) is always under his control, living beings (jīva, in the sense of humans) are the servants of Maya (in the form of ignorance). This ignorance is the cause of all material experiences in the mortal world. While God is Infinite Bliss, humans, under the influence of Maya consider themselves limited by the body and the material, observable world. This misperception of Brahman as the observed Universe results in human emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger and fear. The Ultimate reality remains Brahman and nothing else. The Advaita equation is simple. It is due to Maya that the one single Atman (the individual soul) appears to the people as many Atmans, each in a single body. Once the curtain of maya is lifted, the Atman is **exactly equal** to the Brahman. Thus, due to true knowledge, an individual loses the sense of ego (Aham-kara) and achieves liberation, or Moksha. Also see Advaita Vedanta.

In Bhagavad Gita, the term Iswara is used to explain Nirguna Brahman, and the term Brahma for Saguna Brahman:

paramam aksharam brahma uchyathe [Bhagavad Gita, chapter 8, verse 3]

The great akshara is said to be Brahma.

yasmad ksharamatheethohaksharadapichothama: athohasmi loke vede cha pradhitha: purushothama: [Bhagavad Gita, chapter 15, verse 18]

I (Iswara) am beyond kshara (perishable world), and also greater than the akshara(Brahma). So in the world, I am denoted as purushothama in the Vedas.

brahmano hi prathishtahamamrithasyavyayasya cha sashwathasya cha dharmasya sukhasyaikanthikasya cha [Bhagavad Gita, chapter 14, verse 27]

I (Iswara) am the basis or seat of the imperishable Brahma, the everlasting dharma (course of right action), and definitely of all joy.

bahyasparsheshwasakthathma vindathyathmani yathsukham sa brahmayogayukthathma sukhamakshayamasnuthe [Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 5, verse 21]

Similar to a person who is not attached to outside pleasures but enjoys happiness in the Athma (Soul or God within), the person who perceives Brahma (the Cosmic Body) in and as every body or thing feels everlasting joy.

"Satchidananda Brahma" underlines this concept, meaning pure, true happiness of mind is Brahma.

VisishtAdvaita

The concept of Brahman in VisishtAdvaita consists of an inseparable triad of Ishwara-Chit-Achit. Ishwara, the Supreme Self (ParamAtman)is the indwelling spirit (Antaryami) in all. Both the Chit (sentient objects) and Achit (insentient object) entities are pervaded and permeated by Ishwara.

The key identifier of Brahman in VisishtAdvaita is as the Antaryami (i.e. the In-dwelling spirit in all there is). The relationship between Ishwara-Chit-Achit is understood by two ideas.

1. The Sarira-Sariri Concept

Ishwara has the Chit (JIvAtman) and Achit (Prakriti, Jagat) entities for his body and being the Supreme Self, exercises complete control over it.

2. Substance-Attribute Concept

Ishwara is the substance and the Jiva and Prakriti are his modes (or) attributes. An attribute cannot have an existence independent of an underlying substance. The substance-attribute idea establishes an uninterrupted, non-reciprocal relationship between Ishwara and two modes

Dvaita

Vedanta Sutra 3.2.23 states, "The form of Brahman is unmanifest, so the scriptures say" (*tat avyaktam aha*). The next sutra adds, "But even the form of Brahman becomes directly visible to one who worships devoutly - so teach the scriptures" (*api samradhane pratyaksa anumanabhyam*).

Dvaita schools argue against the Advaita idea that upon attaining liberation one realizes that God is formless since this idea is contradicted by Vedanta Sutra 3.2.16: "The scriptures declare that the form of the Supreme consists of the very essence of His Self" (*aha ca tanmatram*). And furthermore Vedanta Sutra 3.3.36 asserts that within the realm of Brahman the devotees see other divine manifestations which appear even as physical objects in a city (*antara bhuta gramavat svatmanah*).

They identify the personal form of God indicated here as the transcendental form of Vishnu or Krishna (see Vaishnavism). The brahma-pura (city within Brahman) is identified as the divine realm of Vishnu known as Vaikuntha. This conclusion is corroborated by the Bhagavata Purana, written by Vyasa as his own "natural commentary" on Vedanta-sutra. The first verse of Bhagavata Purana begins with the phrase "I offer my respectful obeisances to Bhagavan Vasudeva, the source of everything" (*om namo bhagavate vasudevaya janmadyasya yatah*). Vyasa employs the words "janmadyasya yatah", which comprise the second sutra of the Vedanta Sutra, in the first verse of the Bhagavata Purana to establish that Krishna is Brahman, the Absolute Truth. This is clear testimony of the author's own conclusion about the ultimate goal of all Vedic knowledge.

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Buddhism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Buddhism, a Dharmic faith, is usually considered one of the world's major religions, with between 230 to 500 million followers. Buddhism is divided into two main branches, Mahayana and Theravada, with the former further subdivided into East Asian (including Pure Land, Chan/Zen, Nichiren, Shingon and others) and Tibetan (sometimes grouped with Shingon under the term Vajrayana) branches. These branches are distinguished from each other by a combination of doctrinal differences and regional syncretisms.

Buddhism centers on the teachings of Gautama Buddha, who lived in parts of what is now Nepal and northeast India circa the fifth century BCE. There is some disagreement between denominations over which texts should be attributed to Buddha and be included as part of the buddha-dharma, the doctrine of Buddhism, and further disagreement about the relative importance of generally accepted teachings. This makes any definitive claim about the precepts of Buddhism difficult. Nearly all Buddhists recognize some version of the Tipitaka ("Three Baskets"), though it plays a far more central role in Theravada than in Mahayana. Mahayana Buddhists recognize a set of texts called the Mahayana Sutras which Theravadins do not accept.

Main traditions

The most common way scholars categorize Buddhist schools follows the major languages of the extant Buddhist canons, which exist in Pāli, Tibetan (also found in Mongolian translation) and Chinese collections, along with some texts that still exist in Sanskrit and Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit. This is a useful division for practical purposes, but does not necessarily correspond to philosophical or doctrinal divisions since, despite the differences, there are common threads to almost all Buddhist branches:

- All accept the Buddha as their teacher.
- All accept the Middle Way, Dependent origination, the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path, in theory, though in practice these have little or no importance in some traditions.
- All accept that both the members of the laity and of the Sangha can pursue the path toward enlightenment (bodhi).
- All consider Buddhahood to be the highest attainment; however Theravada consider the Nibbana attained by Arahants as identical to that attained by the Buddha himself, as there is only one type of Nibbana. According to Theravada, a Buddha is someone that had discovered the path all by himself and taught it to others.

History and origins

Image:Beijingmonk.jpg
Chinese Mahayana Buddhist monk lighting incense in a Beijing temple.

The Buddha

Gautama, whose personal name was Siddhartha, was born in the city of Lumbini and was raised in Kapilavastu.

The traditional story of his life is as follows; little of this can be regarded as established historical fact. Born a prince, his father, King Suddhodana, was visited by a wise man shortly after Siddhartha was born. The wise man said that Siddhartha would either become a great king (chakravartin) or a holy man (Sadhu) based on whether or not he ever saw life outside of the palace walls. Determined to make Siddhartha a king, the father tried to shield his son from the unpleasant realities of daily life. However, despite his father's efforts, at the age of 29, he discovered the suffering of his people, first through an encounter with an elderly man, then on subsequent trips outside the palace, he encountered a diseased man, a decaying corpse, and a monk or an ascetic. These are often termed 'The Four Sights.'

Gautama was deeply depressed by these four sights and sought to overcome old age, illness, and death by living the life of an ascetic. Gautama escaped his palace, leaving behind this royal life to become a mendicant. For a time on his spiritual quest, Buddha *"experimented with extreme asceticism, which at that time was seen as a powerful spiritual practice...such as fasting, holding the breath, and exposure of the body to pain...he found, however, that these ascetic practices brought no genuine spiritual benefits and in fact, being based on self-hatred, that they were counterproductive."*

He abandoned asceticism and concentrated instead upon meditation and, according to some sources, Anapanasati (awareness of breathing in and out), Gautama is said to have discovered what Buddhists call the Middle Way—a path of moderation that lies mid-way between the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. He accepted a little milk and rice pudding from a village girl and then, sitting under a pipal tree or Sacred fig (*Ficus religiosa*), also known as the Bodhi tree, in Bodh Gaya, he vowed never to arise until he had found the Truth. His five companions, believing that he had abandoned his search and become undisciplined, left. After 49 days meditating, at the age of 35, he attained bodhi, also known as "Awakening" or "Enlightenment" in the West. After his attainment of bodhi he was known as Buddha or Gautama Buddha and spent the rest of his life teaching his insights (Dharma). According to scholars, he lived around the fifth century BCE, but his more exact birthdate is open to debate. He died at the age of 80 in Kushinagara (Pali Kusinara) (India).

Early Buddhism

The history of Indian Buddhism may be divided into the following five periods:

1. Early Buddhism (also called Pre-sectarian Buddhism); Hajime Nakamura subdivides this into two subperiods:
    1. original Buddhism (other scholars call this earliest Buddhism or precanonical Buddhism)
    2. early Buddhism
2. Period of the Early Buddhist schools (also called Sectarian Buddhism, Nikaya Buddhism)
3. Early Mahayana Buddhism
4. Later Mahayana Buddhism

5. Vajrayana Buddhism (also called Esoteric Buddhism)

These developments were not always consecutive. For example, the early schools continued to exist alongside Mahayana. Some scholars have argued that Mahayana remained marginal for centuries.

The term Early Buddhism can be applied to both Pre-sectarian Buddhism and the Buddhism of the Early Buddhist Schools.

Sutta Pitaka and Vinaya Pitaka

The earliest phase of Buddhism (pre-sectarian Buddhism) recognized by nearly all scholars (the main exception is Dr Gregory Schopen,) is based on a comparison of the Pali Canon with surviving portions of other early canons. Its main scriptures are the Vinaya Pitaka and the four principal Nikayas or Agamas.

Certain basic teachings appear in many places throughout the early texts, so most scholars conclude at least that the Buddha must have taught something of the kind:

- the three characteristics
- the five aggregates
- dependent arising
- karma and rebirth
- the four noble truths
- the eightfold path
- nirvana

Some scholars disagree, and have proposed many other theories.

Rebirth has no discernible beginning, and takes place in a variety of types of life, later formally classified as the Five or Six Realms.

The karma of good and bad deeds produces "rewards" and "punishments" either in this life or in a subsequent one. These may be either rebirths themselves or events therein. The content of bad deeds and the lower types of good deeds belongs to the subject of Sila or conduct. Higher rebirths can be attained by the practice of forms of meditation later classified as samatha or samadhi.

Councils

According to the scriptures, soon after the parinirvāṇa (Pāli: parinibbāna, "complete extinguishment") of the Buddha, the first Buddhist council was held. As with any ancient Indian tradition, transmission of teaching was done orally. The primary purpose of the assembly was to collectively recite the teaching to ensure that no errors occur in oral transmission. In the first council, Ānanda, a cousin of the Buddha and his personal attendant, was called upon to recite the discourses (**sūtra**s, Pāli **sutta**s) of the Buddha, and, according to some sources, the abhidhamma. Upāli, another disciple, recited the monastic rules (Vinaya).

Scholars regard the traditional accounts of the council as greatly exaggerated if not entirely fictitious.

According to most scholars, at some period after the Second Council however, the Sangha began to break into separate factions. (Schopen suggests that Buddhism was very diverse from the beginning and became less so.) The various accounts differ as to when the actual schisms occurred: according to the Dipavamsa of the Pali tradition, they started immediately after the Second Council; the Puggalavada tradition places it in 137 AN; the Sarvastivada tradition of Vasumitra says it was in the time of Asoka; and the Mahasanghika tradition places it much later, nearly 100 BCE.

The Asokan edicts, our only contemporary sources, state that 'the Sangha has been made unified'. This may refer to a dispute such as that described in the account of the Third Buddhist Council at Pataliputta. This concerns the expulsion of non-Buddhist heretics from the Sangha, and does not speak of a schism. However, the late Professor Hirakawa argued that the first schism occurred after the death of Asoka. These schisms occurred *within* the traditions of Early Buddhism, at a time when the Mahāyāna movement either did not exist at all, or only existed as a current of thought not yet identified with a separate school.

The root schism was between the Sthaviras and the Mahāsāṅghikas. The fortunate survival of accounts from both sides of the dispute reveals disparate traditions. The Sthavira group offers two quite distinct reasons for the schism. The Dipavamsa of the Theravāda says that the losing party in the Second Council dispute broke away in protest and formed the Mahasanghika. This contradicts the Mahasanghikas' own vinaya, which shows them as on the same, winning side. On the other hand, the northern lineages, including the Sarvastivada and Puggalavada (both branches of the ancient Sthaviras) attribute the Mahāsāṅghika schism to the '5 points' that erode the status of the arahant. For their part, the Mahāsāṅghikas argued that the Sthaviras were trying to *expand* the Vinaya; they may also have challenged what they perceived to be excessive claims or inhumanly high criteria for Arhatship. Both parties, therefore, appealed to tradition. The Sthaviras gave rise to several schools, one of which was the Theravāda school. Originally, these schisms were caused by disputes over vinaya, and monks following different schools of thought seem to have lived happily together in the same monasteries, but eventually, by about 100 CE if not earlier, schisms were being caused by doctrinal disagreements too.

Further developments

Following (or leading up to) the schisms, each Saṅgha started to accumulate an Abhidharma, a collection of philosophical texts. Early sources for these probably existed in the time of the Buddha as simple lists. However, as time went on and Buddhism spread further, the (perceived) teachings of the Buddha were formalized in a more systematic manner in a new Pitaka: the Abhidhamma Pitaka. Some modern academics refer to it as Abhidhamma Buddhism. Interestingly, in the opinion of some scholars, the Mahasanghika school did not have an Abhidhamma Pitaka, which agrees with their statement that they did not want to add to the Buddha's teachings. But according to Chinese pilgrims Fa-hsien (Fa Xian) (5th century CE) and Hsüan-tsang (Xuanzang, 7th century CE), they had procured a copy of Abhidhamma which belonged to the Mahasanghika School.
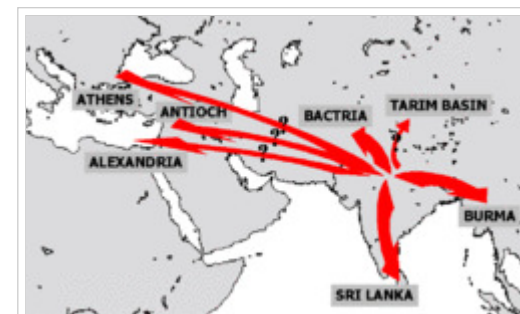
Buddhist proselytism at the time of emperor Aśoka the Great (260–218 BCE).

Buddhism may have spread only slowly in India until the time of the Mauryan emperor Aśoka the Great, who was a public supporter of the religion. The support of Aśoka and his descendants led to the construction of more Buddhist religious memorials (stūpas) and to efforts to spread Buddhism throughout the enlarged Maurya empire and even into neighboring lands – particularly to the Iranian-speaking regions of Afghanistan and Central Asia, beyond the Mauryas' northwest border, and to the island of Sri Lanka south of India. These two missions, in opposite directions, would ultimately lead, in the first case to the spread of Buddhism into China, and in the second case, to the emergence of Theravāda Buddhism and its spread from Sri Lanka to the coastal lands of Southeast Asia.

This period marks the first known spread of Buddhism beyond India. According to the edicts of Aśoka, emissaries were sent to various countries west of India in order to spread "Dhamma", particularly in eastern provinces of the neighboring Seleucid Empire, and even farther to Hellenistic kingdoms of the Mediterranean. This led, a century later, to the emergence of Greek-speaking Buddhist monarchs in the Indo-Greek Kingdom, and to the development of the Greco-Buddhist art of Gandhāra. During this period Buddhism was exposed to a variety of influences, from Persian and Greek civilization, and from changing trends in non-Buddhist Indian religions – themselves influenced by Buddhism. It is a matter of disagreement among scholars whether or not these emissaries were, or were accompanied by Buddhist missionaries.

Buddhist tradition records in the Milinda Panha that the 2nd century BCE Indo-Greek king Menander converted to the Buddhist faith and became an arhat.

Rise of Mahayana Buddhism

The precise geographical origins of Mahayana are unknown. It is likely that various elements of Mahayana developed independently from the 1st century BCE onwards, initially within several small individual communities, in areas to the north-west within the Kushan Empire (within present-day northern Pakistan), and in areas within the Shatavahana Empire, including Amaravati to the south-east (in present-day Andhra Pradesh), to the west around the port of Bharukaccha (present-day Bharuch, a town near Bombay), and around the various cave complexes, such as Ajanta and Karli (in present-day Gujarat and Maharashtra). Some scholars have argued that Mahayana was a movement of lay Buddhists focused around stupa devotion. Pictures within the wall of a stupa representing the story of the Buddha and his previous reincarnation as a bodhisattva were used to preach Buddhism to the masses. Other scholar reject this theory. Monks representing different philosophical orientations could live in the same Sangha as long as they practiced the same Vinaya. Still, in terms of Abhidharma, the Sarvastivada school and the Dharmaguptaka school, both of which were widespread in the Kushan Empire, seem to have had major influence.

Mahayana Buddhism generally regards as its most important teaching the path of the bodhisattva. This already existed as a possibility in earlier Buddhism, as it still does in Theravada today, but the Mahayana gave it an increasing emphasis, eventually saying everyone should follow it.

Chinese Seated Buddha, Tang Dynasty, Hebei province, ca. 650 CE. Chinese Buddhism is of the Mahayana tradition, with popular schools today being Pure Land and Zen.

Expansion of Mahayana Buddhism between the 1st – 10th century CE.

Around the second century CE, the Kushan emperor Kanishka is said to have convened what many western scholars call the fourth Buddhist council. This council is not recognised by the Theravada line of Buddhism. According to Mahayana sources, this council did not simply rely on the original Tripitaka. Instead, a set of new scriptures, mostly notably, the Lotus Sutra, an early version of the Heart Sutra and the Amitabha Sutra were approved, as well as fundamental principles of doctrine based around the concept of salvation for all beings (hence Mahāyāna "great vehicle") and the concept of Buddhas and bodhisattvas who embody the indwelling yet transcendent Buddha-nature who strive to achieve such a goal. However, most western scholars believe this council was purely Sarvastivada, while the late Monseigneur Professor Lamotte considered it entirely fictitious. The new scriptures were first written in Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit or one of the Prakrits. From that point on, and in the space of a few centuries, Mahayana would spread from India to Southeast Asia, and towards the north to Central Asia and then east to China where Mahayana was Sinicized and this Sinicized Mahayana would be passed on to Korea, Vietnam and finally to Japan in 538 CE. The East Asians would go on to write more indigenous sutras and commentaries to the Mahayana Canon.

Mahāyāna Buddhism received significant theoretical grounding from Nāgārjuna (perhaps c.150–250 CE), arguably the most influential scholar within the Mahāyāna tradition. Some of the writings attributed to him made explicit references to Mahāyāna texts, but his philosophy was argued within the parameters set out by the Tripiṭaka sūtras. Nāgārjuna asserted that the nature of the dharmas (hence the enlightenment) to be śūnya (void or empty), bringing together other key Buddhist doctrines, particularly anātman (no-self) and pratītyasamutpāda (dependent origination). His school of thought is known as the Madhyamaka.

After the end of the Kuṣāṇas, Buddhism flourished in India during the dynasty of the Guptas (4th – 6th century). Mahāyāna centres of learning were established, the most important one being the Nālandā University in north-eastern India. Sarvāstivāda teaching, which was criticized by Nāgārjuna, was reformulated by scholars such as Vasubandhu and Asaṅga and were adapted into the Yogācāra (Sanskrit: yoga practice) school. While the Madhyamaka school asserted that there is no ultimately real thing, the Yogācāra school asserts that only the mind is ultimately existent. These two schools of thought, in opposition or synthesis, form the basis of subsequent Mahāyāna theology in the Indo-Tibetan tradition.

Emergence of the Vajrayāna

There are differing views as to just when Vajrayāna and its tantric practice started. In the Tibetan tradition, it is claimed that the historical Śākyamuni Buddha taught tantra, but as these are esoteric teachings, they were written down long after the Buddha's other teachings. Nālandā University became a centre for the development of Vajrayāna theory and continued as the source of leading-edge Vajrayāna practices up through the 11th century. These practices, scriptures and theory were transmitted to China, Tibet, Indochina and Southeast Asia. China generally received Indian transmission up to the 11th century including tantric practice, while a vast amount of what is considered to be Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayāna) stems from the late (9th–12th century) Nālandā tradition.

In one of the first major contemporary academic treatises on the subject, Fairfield University professor Ronald M. Davidson argues that the rise of Vajrayana was in part a reaction to the changing political climate in India at the time. With the fall of the Gupta dynasty, in an increasingly fractious political environment, institutional Buddhism had difficulty attracting patronage, and the folk movement led by siddhas became more prominent. After perhaps two hundred years, it had begun to get integrated into the monastic establishment.

Vajrayana combined and developed a variety of elements, a number of which had already existed for centuries.

Although it continued to in surrounding countries, over the centuries Buddhism gradually declined in India and it was virtually extinct there by the time of the British conquest.

Southern (Theravāda) Buddhism

Theravāda ("Doctrine of the Elders", or "Ancient Doctrine") is the oldest surviving Buddhist school. It is relatively conservative, and *generally* closest to early

One of the Buddhas of Bamyan, Afghanistan as it stood in 1963.

Buddhism. This school is derived from the Vibhajjavāda grouping which emerged amongst the older Sthavira group at the time of the Third Buddhist Council (c. 250 BCE). This school gradually declined on the Indian subcontinent, but its branch in Sri Lanka and South East Asia continues to survive.

The Theravada school bases its practice and doctrine exclusively on the Pāli Canon and its commentaries. After being orally transmitted for a few centuries, its scriptures, the Pali Canon, were finally committed to writing in the last century BCE, in Sri Lanka, at what the Theravada usually reckon as the fourth council. It is also one of the first Buddhist schools to commit the complete set of its canon into writing. The Sutta collections and Vinaya texts of the Pāli Canon (and the corresponding texts in other versions of the Tripitaka), are generally considered by modern scholars to be the earliest Buddhist literature, and they are accepted as authentic in every branch of Buddhism.

Theravāda promotes the concept of Vibhajjavada (Pali), literally "Teaching of Analysis". This doctrine says that insight must come from the aspirant's experience, critical investigation, and reasoning instead of by blind faith.

In Theravāda Buddhism, the cause of human existence and suffering is identified as the craving, which carried with it the various defilements. These various defilements are traditionally summed up as greed, hatred and delusion. These defilements are believed to be parasites that have infested the mind and creates suffering and stress. It is believed that in order to be free from suffering and stress these defilements need to be permanently uprooted through internal investigation, analyzing, experiencing, and understanding the true nature of those defilements by using jhana, a technique which is part of the Noble Eightfold Path. It will then lead the meditator to realize the Four Noble Truths, Enlightenment and Nibbana. Nibbana is the ultimate goals of Theravadin.

Theravāda is primarily practiced today in Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia as well as small portions of China, Vietnam, Malaysia and Bangladesh. It has a growing presence in Europe and America.

Eastern (East Asian) Buddhism

Mahayana ("Great Vehicle") is an inclusive, cosmically-dimensioned faith characterized by the adoption of additional texts. Mahayana Buddhists place emphasis on the Bodhisattva ideal. Mahayana practitioners are less concerned with the traditional early Buddhist emphasis on release from suffering (dukkha) characteristic of the Arahant, and instead vow to remain in the world to liberate all beings, without exception, from suffering. Mahayana is further typified by a pantheon of quasi-divine Bodhisattvas devoting themselves to personal excellence for the sake of rescuing others from suffering and delivering them into the bliss of Nirvana. The quest of the Bodhisattvas is for ultimate Buddhic knowledge so as to be able to effect the salvation of all humanity (and indeed all living beings, including animals, ghosts and gods).

The Mahayana branch emphasizes infinite, universal compassion (maha-karuna) or the selfless, ultra-altruistic quest of the Bodhisattva to attain the "Awakened Mind" (bodhicitta) of Buddhahood so as to have the fullest possible knowledge of how most effectively to lead all sentient beings into Nirvana. Emphasis is also often placed on the notions of Emptiness (shunyata), perfected spiritual insight (prajnaparamita) and Buddha-nature (the deathless tathagatagarbha, or Buddhic Essence, inherent in all beings and creatures). The teaching of the tathagatagarbha is said by the Buddha in the tathagatagarbha sutras to constitute the "absolutely final culmination" of his Dharma—the highest presentation of Truth (other sūtras make similar statements about other teachings). This has traditionally been regarded as the highest teaching in East Asian Buddhism. However, in modern China all doctrines are regarded as equally valid. The Mahayana can also on occasion communicate a vision of the Buddha or Dharma which amounts to mysticism and gives expression to a form of mentalist panentheism (God in Buddhism).

Chinese Ming dynasty porcelain figure of Guanyin, "Goddess of Mercy."

In addition to the Tripitaka scriptures in the narrower sense, which (within Mahayana) are viewed as valid but only provisional or basic, Mahayana schools recognize all or part of a genre of Mahayana scriptures. Some of these sutras became for Mahayanists a manifestation of the Buddha himself, and faith in and veneration of those texts are stated in some sutras (e.g. the Lotus Sutra and the Mahaparinirvana Sutra) to lay the foundations for the later attainment of Buddhahood itself.

Mahayana Buddhism shows a great deal of doctrinal variation and development over time, and even more variation in terms of practice. While there is much agreement on general principles, there is disagreement over which texts are more authoritative.

Native Eastern Buddhism is practiced today in China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, parts of Russia and most of Vietnam. The Buddhism practiced in Tibet, the Himalayan regions, and Mongolia is also Mahayana in origin, but will be discussed below under the heading of Northern Buddhism. There are a variety of strands in Eastern Buddhism, which in most of this area are fused into a single unified form of Buddhism. However, in Japan they form separate denominations. The five major ones are the following.

- Nichiren, peculiar to Japan
- Pure Land
- Shingon, a form of Vajrayana
- Tendai
- Chan/Zen

There are estimated to be around 100 million Chinese Buddhists. Pure Land Buddhism is the most popular form in China, particularly among the laity. In the first half of the twentieth century, most Chinese monks practised Pure Land, some combining it with Chan (Zen); Chan survived into the 20th century in a small number of monasteries, but died out in mainland China after the communist takeover. In Taiwan Chan meditation is popular, but most Buddhists follow Pure Land. Nearly all Chinese Buddhists accept that the chances of attaining sufficient enlightenment by one's own efforts are very slim, so that Pure Land practice is essential as an "insurance policy" even if one practises something else.

There are estimated to be about 40 million Buddhists in Vietnam. The Buddhism of monks and educated lay people is mainly Thien (Zen), with elements of Pure Land and tantra, but that of most ordinary Buddhists has little or no Thien element, being mainly Pure Land. In Korea, nearly all Buddhists belong to the Chogye school, which is officially Son (Zen), but with substantial elements from other traditions. In Japan, the numbers of adherents are estimated as follows:

- Pure Land 17.7m
- mainstream Nichiren 13m (excluding radical groups like Soka Gakkai/Nichiren Shoshu, which are not always counted as Buddhist)
- Zen 13m
- Shingon 11.9m
- Tendai 2.9m

Ch'an (Chinese) or Zen (Japanese) Buddhism (whose name is derived from the Sanskrit term, *dhyana* - "meditation") is a form of Buddhism that became strong in China and Japan and that lays special emphasis on meditation. Charles S. Prebish writes (in his *Historical Dictionary of Buddhism*, Sri Satguru Publications, Delhi, 1993, p. 287): "Although a variety of Zen 'schools' developed in Japan, they all emphasize Zen as a teaching that does not depend on sacred texts, that provides the potential for direct realization, that the realization attained is none other than the Buddha nature possessed by each sentient being ...". Zen places less emphasis on scriptures than some other forms of Buddhism and prefers to focus on direct spiritual breakthroughs to Truth. Zen Buddhism is divided into two main schools: Rinzai and Soto, the former greatly favouring the use in meditation of the koan (meditative riddle or puzzle) as a device for spiritual break-through, and the latter (while certainly employing koans) focussing more on *shikantaza* or "just sitting". Prebish comments (op. cit., p. 244): "It presumes that *sitting in meditation itself* (i.e. *zazen*) is an expression of Buddha nature." The method is to detach the mind from conceptual modes of thinking and perceive Reality directly. Speaking of Zen in general, Buddhist scholar Stephen Hodge writes (*Zen Masterclass*, Godsfield Press, 2002, pp. 12–13): "... practitioners of Zen believe that Enlightenment, the awakening of the Buddha-mind or Buddha-nature, is our natural state, but has been covered over by layers of negative emotions and distorted thoughts. According to this view, Enlightenment is not something that we must acquire a bit at a time, but a state that can occur instantly when we cut through the dense veil of mental and emotional obscurations." Zen Buddhist teaching is often full of paradox, in order to loosen the grip of the ego and to facilitate the penetration into the realm of the True Self or Formless Self, which is equated with the Buddha himself (*Critical Sermons on the Zen Tradition*, Hisamatsu Shin'ichi, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2002, *passim*). Commenting on Rinzai Zen and its Chinese founder, Linji, Hisamatsu states: "Linji indicates our true way of being in such direct expressions as 'True Person' and 'True Self'. It is independent of words or letters and transmitted apart from scriptural teaching. Buddhism doesn't really need scriptures. It is just our direct awakening to Self ..." (Hisamatsu, op. cit., p. 46). Nevertheless, Zen does not neglect the scriptures.

The above method of self-exertion or "self-power" - without reliance on an external force or being - stands in contrast to another major form of Buddhism, "Pure Land", which is characterised by utmost trust in the salvific "other-power" of Amida Buddha. Pure Land Buddhism is a very widespread and perhaps the most faith-orientated manifestation of Buddhism and centres upon the conviction that faith in Amitabha Buddha and/or the chanting of homage to his name will

provide the spiritual energy that will liberate one at death into the "happy land" (*sukhavati*) or "pure land" of Amitabha (called Amida in Japanese) Buddha . This Buddhic realm is variously construed as a foretaste of Nirvana, or as essentially Nirvana itself. The great vow of Amitabha Buddha to rescue all beings from samsaric suffering is viewed within Pure Land Buddhism as universally efficacious, if only people will have faith in the power of that limitless great Vow, or will utter the liberational chant of Amida's name.

Northern (Tibetan) Buddhism

Though thoroughly based upon Mahāyāna, Tibeto-Mongolian Buddhism is sometimes characterized as **Vajrayāna** or "Diamond Vehicle" (also referred to as Mantrayāna, Tantrayāna, Tantric Buddhism, or esoteric Buddhism). It therefore accepts all the basic concepts of Mahāyāna, but also includes a vast array of spiritual and physical techniques designed to enhance Buddhist practice. One component of the Vajrayāna is harnessing psycho-physical energy as a means of developing profoundly powerful states of concentration and awareness. These profound states are in turn to be used as an efficient path to Buddhahood. Using these techniques, it is claimed that a practitioner can achieve Buddhahood in one lifetime, or even as little as three years. In addition to the Mahāyāna scriptures, Vajrayāna Buddhists recognise a large body of Buddhist Tantras, some of which are also included in Chinese and Japanese collections of Buddhist literature, and versions of a few even in the Pali Canon.


Young Tibetan Buddhist monks of Drepung

Buddhism today

Buddhism had become virtually extinct in India, and although it continued to exist in surrounding countries, its influence was no longer expanding. It is now again gaining strength. While estimates of the number of Buddhist followers range from 230 to 500 million worldwide, most estimates are in the region of 350 million. Most scholars classify similar numbers of people under a category they call variously Chinese (folk/traditional) religion, which is an amalgam of various traditions, including Buddhism. Furthermore, estimates are totally uncertain and in dispute:

- because of difficulties in defining who counts as a Buddhist;
- because of adherents of **Eastern religions** such as Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto and traditional religions or Shamanism, animism often have beliefs comprised of a mix of religious ideas;
- because of it was difficult to estimate accurately the number of Buddhists because they did not have congregational memberships and often did not participate in public ceremonies;
- because of uncertainties in the situation for several countries; most notably China, Vietnam and North Korea.

According to one analysis, Buddhism is the fourth-largest religion in the world behind Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. The monks' order (Sangha), which began during the lifetime of the Buddha in India, is among the oldest organizations on earth.

- Theravāda Buddhism, using Pāli as its scriptural language, is the dominant form of Buddhism in Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Burma. Also the Dalit Buddhist movement in India (inspired by B. R. Ambedkar) practices Theravada.
- East Asian forms of Mahayana Buddhism that use scriptures in Chinese are dominant in most of China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam as well as within Chinese and Japanese communities within Indochina, Southeast Asia and the West.
- Tibetan Buddhism, using the Tibetan language, is found in Tibet, and the surrounding areas in India, Bhutan, Mongolia, Nepal, and the Russian Federation.
- Most Buddhist groups in the West are at least nominally affiliated to some eastern tradition listed above. An exception is the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, though they can be considered Mahayanist in a broad sense.
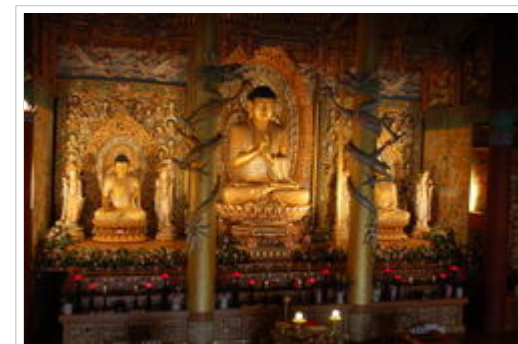
Typical interior of a temple in Korea

According to a website specializing in religious statistics, the numbers of adherents of the three main traditions listed above are about 124, 185 and 20 million, respectively.

At the present time, the teachings of all three branches of Buddhism have spread throughout the world, and Buddhist texts are increasingly translated into local languages. While, in the West, Buddhism is often seen as exotic and progressive, in the East, Buddhism is regarded as familiar and part of the establishment. Buddhists in Asia are frequently well organized and well funded. In a number of countries, it is recognized as an official religion and receives state support. In the West, Buddhism is recognized as one of the growing spiritual influences. (*See also: Buddhism in the West*)

Main Beliefs

Other teachings can be found in the sections above on history of Indian Buddhism and the main traditions, and also in separate articles on Buddhist devotion, Nichiren Buddhism, Shingon. (Also, Falun Gong is classified sometimes as a form of Buddhism, sometimes as a form of Chinese religion).

In Theravada Buddhism, any person who has awakened from the "sleep of ignorance" (by directly realizing the true nature of reality), without instruction, and who has reached the end of the compulsive cycle of rebirths (as human, animal, ghost, etc.) after numerous lifetimes of spiritual striving, and who teaches this Path to Awakening to others is called a Buddha, while those who achieve realisations but do not teach others are called paccekabuddhas. All traditional Buddhists agree that Shakyamuni or Gotama Buddha was not the only Buddha: it is generally taught that there have been many past Buddhas and that there will be future Buddhas too. If a person achieves this awakening, he or she is called an arahant. Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, is thus only one among other buddhas before or after him. His teachings are oriented toward the attainment of this kind of awakening, also called liberation, or Nirvana.

One of the teachings ascribed to the Buddha regarding the holy life and the goal of liberation is constituted by the "The Four Noble Truths", which focus on dukkha, a term that refers to suffering or the unhappiness ultimately characteristic of unawakened, worldly life. According to the interpretation of earlier Western scholars, followed by many modern Theravadins, the Four Noble Truths regarding suffering state what is its nature, its cause, its cessation, and the way leading to its cessation. This way to the cessation of suffering is called "The Noble Eightfold Path". However, according to at least some recent scholars, the

so-called truths are not statements at all, but "things": suffering and the rest.

Numerous distinct groups have developed since the passing of the Buddha, with diverse teachings that vary widely in practice, philosophical emphasis, and culture. Few valid generalizations are possible about all Buddhists.

Bodhi

Bodhi (Pāli and Sanskrit (बोधि), lit. *awakening*) is a term applied in Theravada Buddhism to the experience of Awakening of Arahants, including Buddhas. When used in a generic sense, a buddha is generally considered to be a person who discovers the true nature of reality through (lifetimes of) spiritual cultivation, investigation of the various religious practices of his time, and meditation. This transformational discovery is called Bodhi, which literally means "awakening", but is more commonly called "enlightenment".

In Early Buddhism, Bodhi carries a meaning synonymous to Nirvana, using only some different similies to describe the experience, which implied the extinction of raga (greed), dosa (hate) and moha (delusion). In the later school of Mahayana Buddhism, the status of nirvana was downgraded, coming to refer only to the extinction of greed and hate, implying that delusion was still present in one who attained Nirvana, and that one needed the additional and higher attainment of Bodhi to eradicate delusion. The result is that according to Mahayana Buddhism, the Arahant attains Nirvana but not Bodhi, thus still being subject to delusion, while the Buddha attains Bodhi. In Theravada Buddhism, Bodhi and Nirvana carry the same meaning, that of being freed from craving, hate and delusion. The Arahant, according to Theravada doctrine, has thus overcome greed, hatred, *and* delusion, attaining Bodhi. In Theravada Buddhism, the extinction of only greed (in relation to the sense sphere) and hatred, while a residue of delusion remains, is called Anagami.

Bodhi is attained when the Four Noble Truths are fully grasped, and all karma has reached cessation. Although the earliest sources do not have any mention of Paramitas, the later traditions of Theravada and Mahayana state that one also needs to fulfill the pāramitās. After attainment of Bodhi, it is believed one is freed from the compulsive cycle of saṃsāra: birth, suffering, death and rebirth, and attains the "highest happiness" (Nirvana, as described in the Dhammapada). Belief in self (ātmān, Pāli attā) has also been extinguished as part of the eradication of delusion, and Bodhi thus implies understanding of anattā (Sanskrit: Anatman).

Gautama Buddha, ancient region of Gandhara, northern Pakistan, 1st century CE, Musée Guimet, Paris.

Some Mahayana sources contain the idea that a bodhisattva, which in other Mahayana sources is someone on the path to Buddhahood, deliberately refrains from becoming a Buddha in order to help others.

According to a saying in one of the Mahayana sutras, if a person does not aim for Bodhi, one lives one's life like a preoccupied child playing with toys in a house that is burning to the ground.

Middle Way

An important guiding principle of Buddhist practice is the Middle Way which was said to have been discovered by the Buddha prior to his enlightenment (**bodhi**). The *Middle Way* or *Middle Path* has several definitions:

1. It is often described as the practice of non-extremism; a path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and opposing self-mortification.
2. It also refers to taking a middle ground between certain metaphysical views, e.g. that things ultimately either exist or do not exist.
3. An explanation of the state of nirvana and perfect enlightenment where all dualities fuse and cease to exist as separate entities (see Seongcheol).

Refuge in the Three Jewels

Traditionally, the first step in most forms of Buddhism requires taking refuge, as the foundation of one's religious practice, in Buddhism's Three Jewels (Sanskrit: त्रिरत्न **Triratna** or रत्नत्रय **Ratna-traya**, Pali: **Tiratana**). The practice of taking refuge on behalf of young or even unborn children is mentioned in the Majjhima Nikaya, recognized by most scholars as an early text (cf Infant baptism). Tibetan Buddhism sometimes adds a fourth refuge, in the lama. The person who chooses the bodhisattva path makes a vow/pledge. This is considered the ultimate expression of compassion in Buddhism.

The **Three Jewels** are:

- The **Buddha** (i.e.,*Awakened One*). This is a title for those who attained Awakening similar to the Buddha and helped others to attain it. See also the Tathāgata and Śākyamuni Buddha. The Buddha could also be represented as the wisdom that understands Dharma, and in this regard the Buddha represents the perfect wisdom that sees reality in its true form.
- The **Dharma**: The teachings or law as expounded by the Buddha. Dharma also means the law of nature based on behaviour of a person and its consequences to be experienced (action and reaction). It can also (especially in Mahayana Buddhism) connote the ultimate and sustaining Reality which is inseverable from the Buddha.
- The **Sangha**: This term literally means "group" or "congregation," but when it is used in Buddhist teaching the word refers to one of two very specific kinds of groups: either the community of Buddhist monastics (bhikkhus and bhikkhunis), or the community of people who have attained at least the first stage of Awakening (Sotapanna (pali)—one who has entered the stream to enlightenment). According to some modern Buddhists, it also consists of laymen and laywomen, the caretakers of the monks, those who have accepted parts of the monastic code but who have not been ordained as monks or nuns.

Footprint of the Buddha with Dharmachakra and triratna, 1st century CE, Gandhāra.

According to the scriptures, The Buddha presented himself as a model, however, he did not ask his followers simply to have faith (Sanskrit श्रद्धा **śraddhā**, Pāli **saddhā**) in his example of a human who escaped the pain and danger of existence. In addition, he encouraged them to put his teachings to the test and accept what they could verify on their own, provided that this was also "praised by the wise" (see Kalama Sutta). The Dharma, i.e. the teaching of the Buddha, offers a refuge by providing guidelines for the alleviation of suffering and the attainment of enlightenment. The Saṅgha (Buddhist Order of monks) is considered to provide a refuge by preserving the authentic teachings of the Buddha and providing further examples that the truth of the Buddha's teachings is attainable.

In the Mahayana, the Buddha tends not to be viewed as merely human, but as the earthly projection of a beginningless and endless, omnipresent being (see Dharmakaya) beyond the range and reach of thought. Moreover, in certain Mahayana sutras, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are viewed essentially as One: all three are seen as the eternal Buddha himself.

Many Buddhists believe that there is no otherworldly salvation from one's karma. The suffering caused by the karmic effects of previous thoughts, words and deeds can be alleviated by following the Noble Eightfold Path, although the Buddha of some Mahayana sutras, such as the Lotus Sutra, the Angulimaliya Sutra and the Nirvana Sutra, also teaches that powerful sutras such as the above-named can, through the very act of their being heard or recited, wholly expunge great swathes of negative karma.

The Four Noble Truths

According to the Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (2004), these are

1. "the noble truth that is suffering"
2. "the noble truth that is the arising of suffering"
3. "the noble truth that is the end of suffering"
4. "the noble truth that is the way leading to the end of suffering"

According to the scriptures, the Four Noble Truths were among the topics of the first sermon given by the Buddha after his enlightenment, which was given to the five ascetics with whom he had practised austerities. The Four Noble Truths were originally spoken by the Buddha not in the form of a religious or philosophical text, but in the manner of a medical diagnosis and remedial prescription in a style that was common at that time. The early teaching and the traditional understanding in the Theravada is that these are an advanced teaching for those who are ready for them. The Mahayana position is that they are a preliminary teaching for people not yet ready for the higher and more expansive Mahayana teachings. They are little known in the Far East.

The Noble Eightfold Path

The Noble Eightfold Path is the way to the cessation of suffering, the fourth part of the Four Noble Truths. In the early sources (the four main Nikayas) it is not generally taught to laymen, and it is little known in the Far East. This is divided into three sections: Śīla (which concerns wholesome physical actions), Samadhi (which concerns the meditative concentration of the mind) and Prajñā (which concerns spiritual insight into the true nature of all things).

Śīla is morality—abstaining from unwholesome deeds of body and speech. Within the division of sila are three parts of the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. Right Speech—One speaks in a non hurtful, not exaggerated, truthful way **(samyag-vāc, sammā-vācā)**
2. Right Actions—Wholesome action, avoiding action that would do harm **(samyak-karmānta, sammā-kammanta)**
3. Right Livelihood—One's way of livelihood does not harm in any way oneself or others; directly or indirectly **(samyag-ājīva, sammā-ājīva)**

Samadhi is developing mastery over one's own mind. Within this division are another three parts of the Noble Eightfold Path:

4. Right Effort/Exercise—One makes an effort to improve **(samyag-vyāyāma, sammā-vāyāma)**
5. Right Mindfulness/Awareness—Mental ability to see things for what they are with clear consciousness **(samyak-smṛti, sammā-sati)**
6. Right Concentration/Meditation—Being aware of the present reality within oneself, without any craving or aversion. **(samyak-samādhi, sammā-samādhi)**

Prajñā is the wisdom which purifies the mind. Within this division fall two more parts of the Noble Eightfold Path:
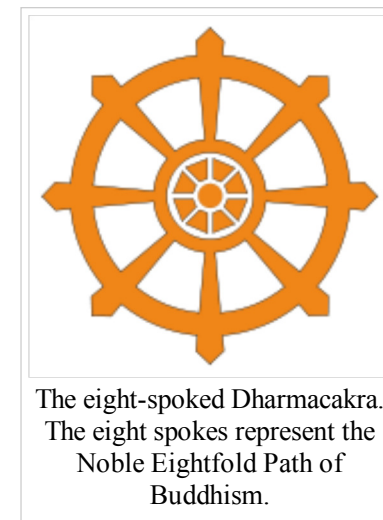
7. Right Understanding—Understanding reality as it is, not just as it appears to be. **(samyag-dṛṣṭi, sammā-diṭṭhi)**
8. Right Thoughts—Change in the pattern of thinking. **(samyak-saṃkalpa, sammā-saṅkappa)**

The word **samyak** means "perfect". There are a number of ways to interpret the Eightfold Path. On one hand, the Eightfold Path is spoken of as being a progressive series of stages through which the practitioner moves, the culmination of one leading to the beginning of another, whereas others see the states of the 'Path' as requiring simultaneous development. It is also common to categorize the Eightfold Path into **prajñā** (Pāli **paññā**, wisdom), **śīla** (Pāli **sīla**, virtuous behaviour) and **samādhi** (concentration).

Śīla: (Moral cultivation and the precepts)

Śīla (Sanskrit) or **sīla** (Pāli) is usually translated into English as "virtuous behaviour", "morality", "ethics" or "precept". It is an action committed through the body, speech, or mind, and involves an intentional effort. It is one of the *three practices* (sila, samadhi, and panya) and the second pāramitā. It refers to moral purity of thought, word, and deed. The four conditions of **śīla** are chastity, calmness, quiet, and extinguishment.

Śīla is the foundation of Samadhi/Bhāvana (Meditative cultivation) or mind cultivation. Keeping the precepts promotes not only the peace of mind of the

The eight-spoked Dharmacakra. The eight spokes represent the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism.

cultivator, which is internally, but also peace in the community, which is externally. According to the Law of Kamma, keeping the precepts are meritorious and it acts as causes which would bring about peaceful and happy effects. Keeping these precepts keeps the cultivator from rebirth in the four woeful realms of existence.

Śīla refers to overall (principles of) ethical behaviour. There are several levels of sila, which correspond to 'basic morality' (five precepts), 'basic morality with asceticism' (eight precepts), 'novice monkhood' (ten precepts) and 'monkhood' (Vinaya or Patimokkha). Lay people generally undertake to live by the five precepts which are common to all Buddhist schools. If they wish, they can choose to undertake the eight precepts, which have some additional precepts of basic asceticism.

The five precepts are not given in the form of commands such as "thou shalt not ...", but are training rules in order to live a better life in which one is happy, without worries, and can meditate well.

1. To refrain from taking life. (non-violence towards sentient life forms)
2. To refrain from taking that which is not given. (not committing theft)
3. To refrain from sensual (sexual) misconduct.
4. To refrain from lying. (speaking truth always)
5. To refrain from intoxicants which lead to loss of mindfulness. (refrain from using drugs or alcohol)

In the eight precepts, the third precept on sexual misconduct is made more strict, and becomes a precept of celibacy.

The three additional rules of the eight precepts are:

6. To refrain from eating at the wrong time. (only eat from sunrise to noon)
7. To refrain from dancing, using jewelry, going to shows, etc.
8. To refrain from using a high, luxurious bed.

Vinaya is the specific moral code for monks and nuns. It includes the Patimokkha, a set of 227 rules for monks in the Theravadin recension. The precise content of the vinayapitaka (scriptures on Vinaya) differ slightly according to different schools, and different schools or subschools set different standards for the degree of adherence to Vinaya. Novice-monks use the ten precepts, which are the basic precepts for monastics.

In Eastern Buddhism, there is also a distinctive Vinaya and ethics contained within the Mahayana Brahmajala Sutra (not to be confused with the Pali text of that name) for Bodhisattvas, where, for example, the eating of meat is frowned upon and vegetarianism is actively encouraged (see *vegetarianism in Buddhism*). In Japan, this has almost completely displaced the monastic vinaya, and allows clergy to marry.

Samādhi/Bhāvanā (Meditative cultivation)

In the language of the Noble Eightfold Path, **samyaksamādhi** is "right concentration". The primary means of cultivating **samādhi** is meditation. According to

Theravada Buddhism the Buddha taught two types of meditation, viz. **samatha** meditation (Sanskrit: **śamatha**) and **vipassanā** meditation (Sanskrit: **vipaśyanā**). In Chinese Buddhism, these exist (translated chih kuan), but Chan (Zen) meditation is more popular. Throughout most of Buddhist history before modern times, serious meditation by lay people has been unusual. Upon development of **samādhi**, one's mind becomes purified of defilement, calm, tranquil, and luminous.

Once the meditator achieves a strong and powerful concentration (**jhāna**, Sanskrit ध्यान **dhyāna**), his mind is ready to penetrate and gain insight (vipassanā) into the ultimate nature of reality, eventually obtaining release from all suffering. The cultivation of mindfulness is essential to mental concentration, which is needed to achieve insight.

Samatha Meditation starts from being mindful of an object or idea, which is expanded to one's body, mind and entire surroundings, leading to a state of total concentration and tranquility (jhāna) There are many variations in the style of meditation, from sitting cross-legged or kneeling to chanting or walking. The most common method of meditation is to concentrate on one's breath, because this practice can lead to both samatha and vipassana.

In Buddhist practice, it is said that while samatha meditation can calm the mind, only vipassanā meditation can reveal how the mind was disturbed to start with, which is what leads to **jñāna** (Pāli **ñāṇa** knowledge), **prajñā** (Pāli **paññā** pure understanding) and thus can lead to **nirvāṇa** (Pāli **nibbāna**). When one is in **jñāna**, all defilements are suppressed temporarily. Only **prajñā** or vipassana eradicates the defilements completely. Jhanas are also resting states which arahants abide in order to rest.

Prajñā (Wisdom)

Prajñā (Sanskrit) or **paññā** (Pāli) means wisdom that is based on a realization of dependent origination, The Four Noble Truths and the three marks of existence. Prajñā is the wisdom that is able to extinguish afflictions and bring about bodhi. It is spoken of as the principal means, by its enlightenment, of attaining nirvāṇa, through its revelation of the true nature of all things as dukkha (unsatisfactory), anicca (impermanence) and anatta (devoid of self). Prajñā is also listed as the sixth of the six pāramitās of the Mahayana.

Initially, prajñā is attained at a conceptual level by means of listening to sermons (dharma talks), reading, studying and sometimes reciting Buddhist texts and engaging in discourse.

Once the conceptual understanding is attained, it is applied to daily life so that each Buddhist can verify the truth of the Buddha's teaching at a practical level. It should be noted that one could theoretically attain nirvana at any point of practice, while listening to a sermon, while conducting business of daily life or while in meditation.

Buddhism and intellectualism

According to the scriptures, in his lifetime, the Buddha refused to answer several metaphysical questions. On issues such as whether the world is eternal or non-eternal, finite or infinite, unity or separation of the body and the self, complete inexistence of a person after nirvana and then death etc, the Buddha had remained silent. One explanation for this is that such questions distract from practical activity for realizing enlightenment. Another is that such questions assume

the reality of world/self/person.

In the Pali Canon and numerous Mahayana sutras and Tantras, the Buddha stresses that Dharma (Truth) cannot truly be understood with the ordinary rational mind or logic: Reality transcends all worldly concepts. The "prajna-paramita" sutras have this as one of their major themes. What is urged is study, mental and moral self-cultivation, faith in and veneration of the sutras, which are as fingers pointing to the moon of Truth, but then to let go of ratiocination and to experience direct entry into Liberation itself.

The Buddha in the self-styled "Uttara-Tantra", the Mahaparinirvana Sutra (a Mahayana scripture), insists that, while pondering upon Dharma is vital, one must then relinquish fixation on words and letters, as these are utterly divorced from Liberation and the Buddha. The Tantra entitled the "All-Creating King" (Kunjed Gyalpo Tantra, a scripture of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism) also emphasises how Buddhist Truth lies beyond the range of thought and is ultimately mysterious. The Supreme Buddha, Samantabhadra, states there: "The mind of perfect purity ... is beyond thinking and inexplicable ...." Also later, the famous Indian Buddhist yogi and teacher mahasiddha Tilopa discouraged any intellectual activity in his 6 words of advice.

Most Buddhists agree that, to a greater or lesser extent, words are inadequate to describe the goal; schools differ radically on the usefulness of words in the path to that goal.

Buddhist scholars have produced a prodigious quantity of intellectual theories, philosophies and world view concepts. See e.g. Abhidharma, Buddhist philosophy and Reality in Buddhism. Some schools of Buddhism discourage doctrinal study, but most regard it as having a place, at least for some people at some stages.

Mahayana often adopts a pragmatic concept of truth: doctrines are "true" in the sense of being spiritually beneficial. In modern Chinese Buddhism, all doctrinal traditions are regarded as equally valid.

Divisions

The most frequently used classification of present-day Buddhism among scholars divides present-day adherents into the following three traditions or geographical or cultural areas: **Theravada**, **East Asian Buddhism** and **Tibetan Buddhism**.

An alternative scheme used by some scholars has two divisions, Theravada and Mahayana. In this classification, Mahayana includes both East Asian and Tibetan Buddhism. This scheme is the one ordinarily used in the English language. Some scholars use other schemes. Buddhists themselves have a variety of other schemes.

Buddhist texts

Buddhist scriptures and other texts exist in great variety. Different schools of Buddhism place varying levels of value on learning the various texts. Some schools venerate certain texts as religious objects in themselves, while others take a more scholastic approach. The Buddhist canons of scripture are known in Sanskrit as the **Tripitaka** and in Pāli as the **Tipitaka**. These terms literally mean "three baskets" and refer to the three main divisions of the canon, which are:
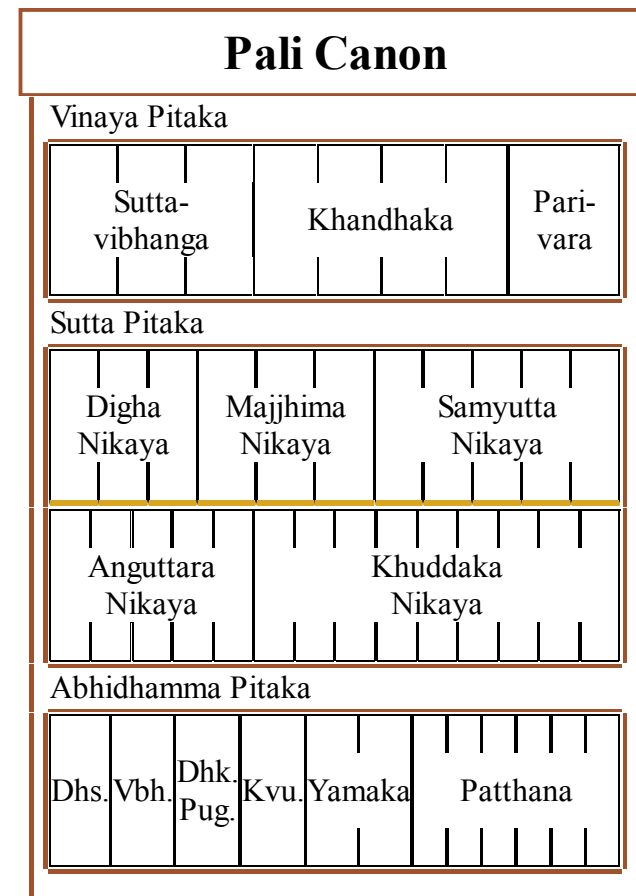
- The **Vinaya Pitaka**, containing disciplinary rules for the Sanghas of Buddhist monks and nuns, as well as a range of other texts including explanations of why and how rules were instituted, supporting material, and doctrinal clarification.
- The **Sūtra Pitaka** (Pāli: Sutta Pitaka), contains discourses ascribed to the Buddha.
- The **Abhidharma Pitaka** (Pāli: Abhidhamma Pitaka) contains material often described as systematic expositions of the Buddha's teachings.

According to the scriptures, soon after the death of the Buddha, the first Buddhist council was held; a monk named Mahākāśyapa (Pāli: Mahākassapa) presided. The goal of the council was to record the Buddha's sayings— sūtras (Sanskrit) or suttas (Pāli)—and codify monastic rules (Vinaya). Ānanda, the Buddha's personal attendant, was called upon to recite the discourses of the Buddha, and according to some sources the abhidhamma, and Upāli, another disciple, recited the rules of the Vinaya. These became the basis of the Tripitaka. However, this record was initially transmitted orally in form of chanting, and was committed to text in a much later period. Both the sūtras and the Vinaya of every Buddhist school contain a wide variety of elements including discourses on the Dharma, commentaries on other teachings, cosmological and cosmogonical texts, stories of the Buddha's previous lives, and lists relating to various subjects.

The Theravāda and other early Buddhist Schools traditionally believe that the texts of their canon contain the actual words of the Buddha. The Theravāda canon, also known as the Pāli Canon after the language it was written in, contains some four million words. Other texts, such as the Mahāyāna sūtras, are also considered by some to be the word of the Buddha, but supposedly were transmitted in secret, or via lineages of mythical beings (such as the nāgas), or came directly from other Buddhas or bodhisattvas. Approximately six hundred Mahāyāna sutras have survived in Sanskrit or in Chinese or Tibetan translations. In addition, East Asian Buddhism recognizes some sutras regarded by scholars as of Chinese origin.

The followers of Theravāda Buddhism take the scriptures known as the Pāli Canon as definitive and authoritative, while the followers of Mahāyāna Buddhism base their faith and philosophy primarily on the Mahāyāna sūtras and their own versions of the Vinaya. The Pāli sutras, along with other, closely-related scriptures, are known to the other schools as the āgamas.

Whereas the Theravādins adhere solely to the Pali canon and its commentaries, the adherents of Mahāyāna accept both the agamas and the Mahāyāna sūtras as authentic, valid teachings of the Buddha, designed for different types of persons and different levels of spiritual penetration. For the Theravādins, however, the Mahayana sūtras are works of poetic fiction, not the words of the Buddha himself. The Theravadins are confident that the Pali canon represents the full and

Pali Canon

Vinaya Pitaka

Sutta-vibhanga	Khandhaka	Pari-vara

Sutta Pitaka

Digha Nikaya	Majjhima Nikaya	Samyutta Nikaya

Anguttara Nikaya	Khuddaka Nikaya

Abhidhamma Pitaka

Dhs.	Vbh.	Dhk. Pug.	Kvu.	Yamaka	Patthana

final statement by the Buddha of his Dhamma—and nothing more is truly needed beyond that. Anything added which claims to be the word of the Buddha and yet is not found in the Canon or its commentaries is treated with extreme caution if not outright rejection by Theravada.

For the Mahāyānists, in contrast, the āgamas do indeed contain basic, foundational, and, therefore, relatively weighty pronouncements of the Buddha. From the Mahayana standpoint the Mahāyāna sutras articulate the Buddha's higher, more advanced and deeper doctrines, reserved for those who follow the bodhisattva path. That path is explained as being built upon the motivation to liberate all living beings from unhappiness. Hence the name *Mahāyāna* (lit., *the Great Vehicle*), which expresses availability both to the general masses of sentient beings and those who are more developed. The theme of greatness can be seen in many elements of Mahayana Buddhism, from the length of some of the Mahayana sutras and the vastness of the Bodhisattva vow, which strives for *all* future time to help free *all* other persons and creatures from pain), to the (in some sutras and Tantras) final attainment of the Buddha's "Great Self" (*mahatman*) in the sphere of "Great Nirvana" (*mahanirvana*). For Theravadins and many scholars, including A.K. Warder, however, the self-proclaimed "greatness" of the Mahayana Sutras does not make them a true account of the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha.

Unlike many religions, Buddhism has no single central text that is universally referred to by all traditions. However, some scholars have referred to the Vinaya Pitaka and the first four Nikayas of the Sutta Pitaka as the common core of all Buddhist traditions. However, this could be considered misleading, as Mahāyāna considers these merely a preliminary, and not a core, teaching, the Tibetan Buddhists have not even translated most of the āgamas, though theoretically they recognize them, and they play no part in the religious life of either clergy or laity in China and Japan. The size and complexity of the Buddhist canons have been seen by some (including Buddhist social reformer Babasaheb Ambedkar) as presenting barriers to the wider understanding of Buddhist philosophy.

Buddhist monk Geshe Konchog Wangdu reads Mahayana sutras from an old woodblock copy of the Tibetan Kanjur.

Over the years, various attempts have been made to synthesize a single Buddhist text that can encompass all of the major principles of Buddhism. In the Theravada tradition, condensed 'study texts' were created that combined popular or influential scriptures into single volumes that could be studied by novice monks. Later in Sri Lanka, the Dhammapada was championed as a unifying scripture.

Dwight Goddard collected a sample of Buddhist scriptures, with the emphasis on Zen, along with other classics of Eastern philosophy, such as the Tao Te Ching, into his ' Buddhist Bible' in the 1920s. More recently, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar attempted to create a single, combined document of Buddhist principles in "The Buddha and His Dhamma". Other such efforts have persisted to present day, but currently there is no single text that represents all Buddhist traditions.

Buddhist symbols

The eight auspicious symbols of Mahayana and Vajrayana are:

- the Conch Shell

- the Dharma wheel
- the Endless Knot
- the Golden Fish
- the Lotus flower
- the Treasure Vase
- the Parasol (Umbrella)
- the Victory Banner

Comparative study

Buddhism is a fertile ground for comparative studies with different beliefs, philosophy, science, history, and various other aspects of Buddhism. In term of doctrine, dependent origination is, according to some, Buddhism's primary contribution to metaphysics. This has wide-ranging implication in terms of theology, philosophy, and science. On the other hand, Buddhist emphasis on the Middle way not only provides a unique guideline for ethics but it has also allowed Buddhism to peacefully coexist with various local beliefs, customs, and institutions in adopted countries for most of its history.

List of Buddhism related topics in comparative studies

- Buddhism and Christianity
- Buddhism and Eastern teaching (Buddhism and East Asian teaching)
- Buddhism and Hinduism
- Buddhism and Jainism* God in Buddhism (Buddhism, mysticism, and monotheism)
- Buddhism and psychology
- Buddhism and science (Buddhism and science)
- Buddhist Ethics (Buddhism and ethics)
- Buddhist philosophy (Buddhism and Western philosophy)

- Buddhism and Thelema

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Celtic mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Celtic mythology is the mythology of Celtic polytheism, apparently the religion of the Iron Age Celts. Like other Iron Age Europeans, the early Celts maintained a polytheistic mythology and religious structure. Among Celtic peoples in close contact with Rome, such as the Gauls and Celtiberians, their mythology did not survive the Roman empire, their subsequent conversion to Christianity, and the loss of their Celtic languages. Ironically, it is mostly through contemporary Roman and Christian sources that their mythology has been preserved. The Celtic peoples who maintained either their political or linguistic identities (such as the Gaels and Brythonic tribes of the British Isles) left vestigial remnants of their forebears' mythologies, put into written form during the Middle Ages.

Overview

Though the Celtic world at its apex covered much of western and central Europe, it was not politically unified nor was there any substantial central source of cultural influence or homogeneity; as a result, there was a great deal of variation in local practices of Celtic religion (although certain motifs—for example, the god Lugh—appear to have diffused throughout the Celtic world). Inscriptions to more than three hundred deities, often equated with their Roman counterparts, have survived, but of these most appear to have been *genii locorum*, local or tribal gods, and few were widely worshipped. However, from what has survived of Celtic mythology, it is possible to discern commonalities which hint at a more unified pantheon than is often given credit.

The nature and functions of these ancient gods can be deduced from their names, the location of their inscriptions, their iconography, the Roman gods they are equated with, and similar figures from later bodies of Celtic mythology.

Celtic mythology is found in a number of distinct, if related, subgroups, largely corresponding to the branches of the Celtic languages:

- Ancient Celtic religion (known primarily through archaeological sources rather than through written mythology; cf. Ancient Gaulish and British deities)
- mythology in Goidelic languages, represented chiefly by Gaelic mythology (cf. also Scottish mythology and Irish mythology)
  - Mythological Cycle
  - Ulster Cycle
  - Fenian cycle

Series on

Celtic mythology

Celtic polytheism
Celtic deities

Ancient Celtic religion

Druids · Bards · *Vates*
British Iron Age religion
Celtic religious patterns
Gallo-Roman religion
Romano-British religion

Brythonic mythology

Welsh mythology
Breton mythology
Mabinogion · Taliesin
Cad Goddeu
Trioedd Ynys Prydein
Matter of Britain · King Arthur

Gaelic mythology

Irish mythology

- Historical Cycle
  - mythology in Brythonic languages, represented chiefly by Welsh mythology (cf. also Breton mythology and folklore)

The mythology of Ireland

The oldest body of myths is found in early medieval manuscripts from Ireland. These were written by Christians, so the formerly divine nature of the characters is obscured. The basic myth appears to be a war between two apparently divine races, the Tuatha Dé Danann and the Fomorians, which forms the basis for the text *Cath Maige Tuireadh* (the Battle of Mag Tuireadh), as well as portions of the history-focused *Lebor Gabála Érenn* (the Book of Invasions). The Tuatha Dé represent the functions of human society such as kingship, crafts and war, while the Fomorians represent chaos and wild nature.

The Dagda

The supreme god of the Irish pantheon appears to have been The Dagda. The name means the 'Good God', not good in a moral sense, but good at everything, or all-powerful. The Dagda is a father-figure, a protector of the tribe and the basic Celtic god of whom other male Celtic deities were variants. Celtic gods were largely unspecialised entities, and perhaps more like a clan rather than as a formal pantheon.

Because the particular character of Dagda is a figure of burlesque lampoonery in Irish mythology, some authors conclude that he was trusted to be benevolent enough to tolerate a joke at his expense.

Irish tales depict the Dagda as a figure of power, armed with a spear and associated with a cauldron. In Dorset there is a famous outline of an ithyphallic giant known as the Cerne Abbas Giant with a club cut into the chalky soil. While this was probably produced in relatively modern times (English Civil War era), it was long thought to be a representation of the Dagda. This has been called into question by recent studies which show that there may have been a representation of what looks like a large drapery hanging from the horizontal arm of the figure, leading to suspicion that this figure actually represents Hercules(Heracles), with the skin of the Nemean Lion over his arm and carrying the club he used to kill it. In Gaul, it is speculated that the Dagda is associated with Sucellos, the striker, equipped with a hammer and cup.

The Morrígan

The Morrígan was a tripartite battle goddess of the ancient Irish Celts. Collectively she was known as the Morrígan, but her divisions were also referred to as Nemhain, Macha, and Badb (among other, less common names), with each representing different aspects of combat. She is most commonly known for her involvement in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*, where she is at various times a helper and a hindrance to the hero Cúchulainn, and in the *Cath Maige Tuireadh* (the Battle of Mag Tuired) where she also plays the role of a poet, magician and sovereignty figure, and gives the victory to the Tuatha Dé Danann. She was most often represented as a crow or raven but could take many different forms, including a cow, wolf or eel. The Morrígan can be compared to other Indo-European

goddesses of death such as Kali in the Hindu pantheon and the Valkyries in Norse Mythology.

Lúgh/Lug

The widespread diffusion of the god Lugus (seemingly related to the mythological figure Lugh in Irish) in Celtic religion is apparent from the number of place names in which his name appears, occurring across the Celtic world from Ireland to Gaul. The most famous of these are the cities of Lugdunum (the modern French city of Lyon) and Lugdunum Batavorum (the modern city of Leiden). Lug is described in the Celtic myths as a latecomer to the list of deities, and is usually described as having the appearance of a young man. He is often associated with light, the sun, and summer. His weapons were the throwing-spear and sling, and in Ireland a festival called the Lughnasa (Modern Irish *lúnasa*) was held in his honour.
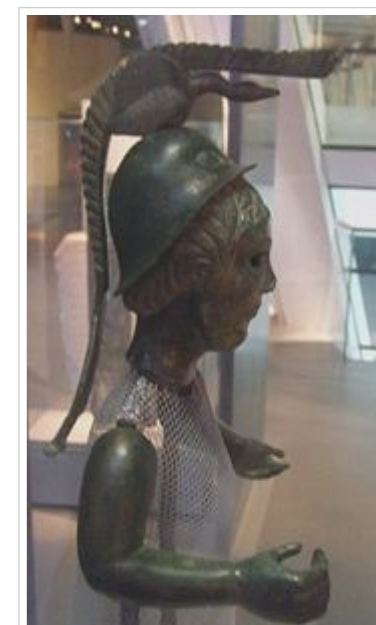
Others

Among these are the goddess Brigid (or Brigit), the Dagda's daughter; nature goddesses like Tailtiu and Macha; Epona, the horse goddess; and Ériu.

Male gods included Goibniu, the smith god and immortal brewer of beer, as well as Angus Og, the god of love.

The mythology of Wales

Less is known about the pre-Christian mythologies of Britain than those of Ireland. Important reflexes of British mythology appear in the Four Branches of The Mabinogi, especially in the names of several characters, such as Rhiannon ('the Divine Queen'), Teyrnon ('the Divine King'), and Bendigeidfran ('Bran [Crow] the Blessed'). Other characters, in all likelihood, derive from mythological sources, and various episodes, such as the appearance of Arawn, a king of the Otherworld seeking the aid of a mortal in his own feuds, and the tale of the hero who cannot be killed except under seemingly contradictory circumstances, can be traced throughout Indo-European myth and legend. The children of Llŷr ('Sea' = Irish Lir) in the Second and Third Branches, and the children of Dôn (Danu in Irish and earlier Indo-European tradition) in the Fourth Branch are major figures, but the tales themselves are not primary mythology.

A statuette in the Museum of Brittany, Rennes, probably depicting Brigantia (Brigid): c2nd century BCE

While further mythological names and references appear elsewhere in Welsh narrative and tradition, especially in the tale of Culhwch and Olwen, where we find, for example, Mabon ap Modron ('the Divine Son of the Divine Mother'), and in the collected Triads of the Island of Britain, not enough is known of the British mythological background to reconstruct either a narrative of creation or a coherent pantheon of British deities. Indeed, though there is much in common with Irish myth, there may have been no unified British mythological tradition per se. Whatever its ultimate origins, the surviving material has been put to good use in the service of literary masterpieces that address the cultural concerns of Wales in the early and later Middle Ages.

Remnants of Gaulish and other mythology

The Celts also worshipped a number of deities of which we know little more than their names. Classical writers preserve a few fragments of legends or myths that may possibly be Celtic.

According to the Syrian rhetorician Lucian, Ogmios was supposed to lead a band of men chained by their ears to his tongue as a symbol of the strength of his eloquence.

The Roman poet Lucan (1st century AD) mentions the gods Taranis, Teutates and Esus, but there is little Celtic evidence that these were important deities.

A number of objets d'art, coins, and altars may depict scenes from lost myths, such as the representations of Tarvos Trigaranus or of an equestrian 'Jupiter' surmounting a snake-legged human-like figure. The Gundestrup cauldron has been also interpreted mythically.

Along with dedications giving us god names, there are also deity representations to which no name has yet been attached. Among these are images of a three headed or three faced god, a squatting god, a god with a snake, a god with a wheel, and a horseman with a kneeling giant. Some of these images can be found in Late Bronze Age peat bogs in Britain, indicating the symbols were both pre-Roman and widely spread across Celtic culture. The distribution of some of the images has been mapped and shows a pattern of central concentration of an image along with a wide scatter indicating these images were most likely attached to specific tribes and were distributed from some central point of tribal concentration outward along lines of trade. The image of the three headed god has a central concentration among the Belgae, between the Oise, Marne and Moselle rivers. The horseman with kneeling giant is centered on either side of the Rhine. These examples seem to indicate regional preferences of a common image stock.

Julius Caesar's comments on Celtic religion and their significance

The classic entry about the Celtic gods of Gaul is the section in Julius Caesar's *Commentarii de bello Gallico* (52–51 BC; The Gallic War). In this he names the five principal gods worshipped in Gaul (according to the practice of his time, he gives the names of the closest equivalent Roman gods) and describes their roles. Mercury was the most venerated of all the deities and numerous representations of him were to be discovered. Mercury was seen as the originator of all the arts (and is often taken to refer to Lugus for this reason), the supporter of adventurers and of traders, and the mightiest power concerning trade and profit. Next the Gauls revered Apollo, Mars, Jupiter, and Minerva. Among these divinities the Celts are described as holding roughly equal views as did other populations: Apollo dispels sickness, Minerva encourages skills, Jupiter governs the skies, and Mars influences warfare. In addition to these five, he mentions that the Gauls traced their ancestry to Dis Pater.

The problem with Caesar's 'equivalent' Roman gods

As typical of himself as a Roman of the day, though, Caesar does not write of these gods by their Celtic names but by the names of the Roman gods with which he equated them, a process that significantly confuses the chore of identifying these Gaulish gods with their native names in the insular mythologies. He also portrays a tidy schema which equates deity and role in a manner that is quite unfamiliar to the colloquial literature handed down. Still, despite the restrictions,

his short list is a helpful and fundamentally precise observation. In balancing his description with the oral tradition, or even with the Gaulish iconography, one is apt to recollect the distinct milieus and roles of these gods. Caesar's remarks and the iconography allude to rather dissimilar phases in the history of Gaulish religion. The iconography of Roman times is part of a setting of great social and political developments, and the religion it depicts may actually have been less obviously ordered than that upheld by the druids (the priestly order) in the era of Gaulish autonomy from Rome. Conversely, the want of order is often more ostensible than factual. It has, for example, been noticed that out of the several hundred names including a Celtic aspect that can be found in Gaul the greater part crop up only once. This has led some scholars to conclude that the Celtic deities and the related cults were local and tribal as opposed to pan-Celtic. Proponents of this opinion quote Lucan's reference to a divinity called Teutates, which they translate as "tribal spirit" (*teuta* is believed to have meant "tribe" in Proto-Celtic). The apparent array of divine names may, nonetheless, be justified differently: many may be mere epithets applied to key gods worshiped in extensive pan-Celtic cults. The concept of the Celtic pantheon as a large number of local deities is gainsaid by certain well-testified gods whose cults seem to have been followed across the Celtic world.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Celtic_mythology"

Christian mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Christian mythology is the body of traditional narrative associated with Christianity. Many Christians believe that these stories are sacred and that they communicate profound truths. These traditional narratives include, but are not necessarily limited to, narrative portions of the Christian scriptures.

> **Note on religion and mythology:**
>
> In its academic sense, the word *myth* simply means "a traditional story", whether true or false. (— *OED*, Princeton Wordnet) Unless otherwise noted, the words *mythology* and *myth* are here used for sacred and traditional narratives, with no implication that any belief so embodied is itself either true or false.

The Christian religion has diverged over the centuries into many denominations, and not all hold the same set of sacred traditional narratives. For example, the Roman Catholic Bible contains a number of narrative books—including the Book of Judith and the Book of Tobit—that the Protestant Bible does not include.

In canonical scripture

Issues of academic terminology

There is a wide range of scholarly definitions of the word "myth". In its broadest academic sense, the word "myth" simply means a traditional story. However, many scholars restrict the term "myth" to sacred stories. Professional folklorists often go farther: by the classic definition used by folklorists, myths are "tales believed as true, usually sacred, set in the distant past or other worlds or parts of the world, and with extra-human, inhuman, or heroic characters".

If "myth", narrowly defined, must be both sacred and "believed as true", then the most clear-cut examples of Christian mythology come from Christian scripture and from the richly-developed hagiographic tradition, with its miraculous wonders. Most Christians consider Biblical stories not just sacred but also true, at least in some sense. (Whether all Biblical stories are *literally* true is a matter of disagreement among Christians. For a discussion of the debate, see Biblical literalism.)

Note that the term "mythology" does not encompass all of the Christian scriptures. Because a myth is a traditional *story*, non-narrative scriptures or portions of scripture (e.g., proverbs, theological writings) are not themselves "myths".

Note also that the term "myth" may not encompass *all* stories in Christian scripture, depending on how strictly one defines the word "myth". One's use of the word "myth" is largely a matter of one's academic discipline. Scholars in religious studies often restrict the term "myth" to stories whose main characters are gods or near-gods: this definition would actually exclude much of the Hebrew Bible, which may *involve* God but often does not feature him as the centre of attention. Some folklorists restrict the word "myth" to only those stories that deal with the creation of the world and of natural phenomena. By this definition, "only the two creation stories (Genesis 1 and 2), the Garden of Eden story (Genesis 3), and the Noah story (Genesis 6-9) would thereby qualify as myths. All the other stories would instead constitute either legends or folk tales."

William-Adolphe Bouguereau (1825-1905) - *Song of the Angels (1881)*. Illustrations showing Christian saints communicating with angels are prevalent throughout Europe.

Types of mythology in Christian scripture

Myths fall into many subcategories. These are a few of the types of myths found in Christian scriptures:

- Cosmogonic myths describe the creation of the world. As noted above, the two creation stories in Genesis, the Garden of Eden story, and the Noah story are seen by some as being cosmogonic myths.
- Origin myths (also called etiological myths) also describe how the world came to have its present form. However, while cosmogonic myths describe only the creation of the universe, origin myths build upon the cosmogonic myths, describing the origin of natural phenomena and human institutions *within* the universe. The Book of Genesis is a major example of what some see as Christian origin mythology.

- Legends are stories that take place relatively recently (relative to the mythological age of origins) and that generally focus on human rather than supernatural characters. Some scholars, particularly folklorists, strictly distinguish legends from "true" myths.
- Eschatological myths describe the afterlife and the end of the world. The *Apocalypse of John* (Book of Revelation) is a popular example of Christian eschatology; other examples of eschatology (inherited from the Old Testament) appear in the Book of Isaiah and the Book of Ezekiel. The last six chapters of the Book of Daniel also involve apocalyptic descriptions.

In the culture of the ancient Semitic and Mediterranean worlds in the context of which early Christianity and its literature arose — even up to the European Middle Ages when further traditions and legends were developed — there often did not exist the separation that exists for many societies in the modern period between fields of history and mythology, or the attempt to discern between objective truth and spiritual truths.

Specific subtopics are discussed below.

In non-canonical tradition

Traditional Christian stories include many that do not come from canonical Christian texts yet still illustrate Christian themes. These stories are considered by some Christian journalists, theologians, and academics (see citations below) to constitute a body of "Christian mythology". Examples include hagiographies such as the tale of Saint George or Saint Valentine.

A case in point is the historical and canonized Brendan of Clonfort, a 6th century Irish churchman and founder of abbeys. Round his authentic figure was woven a tissue that is arguably legendary rather than historical: the *Navigatio* or "Journey of Brendan". The legend discusses mythic events in the sense of supernatural encounters. In this narrative, Brendan and his shipmates encounter sea monsters, a paradisal island and a floating ice islands and a rock island inhabited by a holy hermit: literal-minded devotés still seek to identify "Brendan's islands" in actual geography. This voyage was recreated by Tim Severin, suggesting that whales, icebergs and Rockall were encountered.

In other literature

In literary classics

Some novels and narrative poems centered on Christian themes have come to be regarded as literary classics. In a broad sense, these may also fall within the category of Christian mythology. These classics include *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan and *The Divine Comedy* by Dante.

In "Mythopoeia"

Some works of the Christian authors C. S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien have been described as both Christian and "mythic" or " mythopoeic" ("myth-making") literature. Tolkien described his own fiction writing as an effort to create "myth and fairy-story". Tolkien actually coined the term " mythopoeia" for modern literature that features a mythical tone and/or mythological themes. *The Lord of the Rings* is Tolkien's most famous example of mythopoeia.

Tolkien and Lewis regarded their writing as essentially Christian. Tolkien emphatically denied that his fantasy novels, the *Lord of the Rings* series, were in any sense "allegory", but he admitted that they were "a fundamentally religious and Catholic work; unconsciously so at first, but consciously in the revision". Similarly, many of Lewis's works borrowed extensively from Christian narratives: one of the clearest examples is the *Chronicles of Narnia*, which has been interpreted as an allegory for certain Biblical stories, namely one of the central stories is of a great king who is sacrificed to save his people and is resurrected after three days. In the case of the *Narnia* series, Lewis denied that he was simply representing the Christian story in symbols. These works of Christian "mythopoeia" may, along with other Christian literary classics, be classed as "Christian mythology" in a very broad sense.

Saint Brendan's voyage, from a German manuscript

In popular culture

See the section below regarding the evolution of Christmas stories.

Important examples of Christian mythology

The Christian mythological history

Important events in the mythological history that are accepted (with variations) by many Christians:

The Mythological Age

- Cosmogony
    - The 7-day creation account (Genesis 1-2:3)
    - The Eden narrative (Genesis 2:4-3:24)
    - Satan's alleged revolution against God
- Origins
    - The Fall of Man: Although the Book of Genesis does not explicitly mention original sin, many Christians interpret the Fall as the origin of original sin.
    - Noah's Ark
    - The Tower of Babel: the origin and division of nations and languages

The Legendary Age

- The life of Abraham
- The Exodus of the Hebrews from Egypt
- The Hebrews' conquest of the Promised Land
- The period of the Hebrew prophets. One example is the apocryphal part of the Book of Daniel (14:1-30; excluded from the Protestant canon) that tells the story of Bel and the dragon.
- The Gospel accounts of Jesus Christ, his life and death. Here the narrative is combined by the author with a story of how all Christian theology "came to be". For example the story of Jesus as the "word" or " Logos" (John 1:1), the Incarnation of the Logos or Son of God as the man Jesus (e.g., Luke 1:35), and Christ's atonement for humanity's sins (e.g., Matthew 26:28). Important narratives within the Gospel accounts include:
    - Christ's miraculous conception and birth from the Virgin Mary
    - The baptism of Jesus
    - Satan's temptation of Christ
    - The Transfiguration of Jesus

- Parables of Jesus
- The Last Supper
- The death and resurrection of Jesus
- The Ascension
- The Acts of the Apostles - the story of the Early Christian church, the ministry of the Twelve Apostles and of Paul of Tarsus.
  - The descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus' disciples after the Ascension.

The Future Age and After-life

- The coming of the Antichrist
- The Second Coming
- The resurrection of the dead
- The final and total establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth

Other examples

Examples of (1) Christian myths not mentioned in canon and (2) literary and traditional elaborations on canonical Christian mythology:

- Versions of Christian mythology used by Gnostic Christianity
  - The Valentinian creation myth involving Sophia and the demiurge. For a summary of this myth, see here.
  - The Manichaean creation myth. For a summary, see here and here (the section on "Doctrine").
  - The Gnostic accounts of Jesus, which present a Docetic view of Jesus. See Gnostic Gospels.
- Literary treatments of Christian canon or theology
  - John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, which describes Satan's revolution against God and the Fall of Man, and his *Paradise Regained*, which describes Satan's temptation of Christ
  - Dante Alighieri's *Divine Comedy*, a literary allegory that describes a visit to Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven
  - John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress, a Christian spiritual allegory*
  - C.S. Lewis's *The Pilgrim's Regress*, a more modern Christian spiritual allegory
  - According to some interpretations, C.S. Lewis's *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* allegorically represents Christ's death and resurrection (although Lewis denies that the story is a direct allegory; see section on "Mythopoeia" above).
- Legends about Christians saints and heroes. Examples include Abgarus of Edessa and Saint George. Legends about saints are commonly called hagiographies. Some such stories are heavily miraculous, such as those found in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*; others, less so.

Dante and Beatrice gaze upon the highest Heaven (The Empyrean), illustration for the *Divine Comedy* by Gustave Doré (1832-1883), Paradiso Canto 31.

- Stories about artifacts such as the Holy Grail, Spear of Destiny and Shroud of Turin.
- Names and biographical details supplied for unnamed Biblical characters: see *List of names for the Biblical nameless*
- The legends of King Arthur and Charlemagne as Christian kings, notably the Quest for the Holy Grail.
- Legendary history of the Christian churches, such as the tales from the Crusades or the paladins in medieval romance.
- Legends of the Knights Templar and the Priory of Sion.
- Medieval Christian stories about angels and guardian angels.
- Non-canonical elaborations or amendments to Biblical tales, such as the tales of Salomé, the Three Wise Men, or St. Dismas.

In-depth discussion of representative examples

Academic studies of mythology often define mythology as deeply valued stories that explain a society's existence and world order: those narratives of a society's creation, the society's origins and foundations, their god(s), their original heroes, mankind's connection to the "divine", and their narratives of eschatology (what happens in the "after-life"). This is a very general outline of some of the basic sacred stories with those themes.

Cosmogonic myths

The Christian texts use the same creation story as Jewish mythology as written in the Old Testament. According to this story, the world was created out of a darkness and water in seven days. (Unlike a Jew, a Christian might include the miracle of Jesus' birth as a sort of second cosmogonic event.) Canonical Christian scripture incorporates the two Hebrew cosmogonic myths found in Genesis 1-2:2 and Genesis 2:

Genesis 1-2:3

In the creation myth in Genesis 1-2:3, the Creator is called *Elohim* (translated "God"). He creates the universe over a six-day period, creating a new feature each day: first he creates day and night; then he creates the firmament to separate the "waters above" from the "waters below"; then he separates the dry land from the water; then he creates plants on the land; then he places the sun, moon, and stars in the sky; then he creates swimming and flying animals; then he creates land animals; and finally he creates man and woman together, "in his own image". On the seventh day, God rests, providing the rationale for the custom of resting on the sabbath.

Genesis 2:4-3:24

The second creation myth in Genesis differs from the first in a number of important elements. Here the Creator is called *Yahweh* (commonly translated "Lord" or "LORD") instead of *Elohim*. (In later parts of the Old Testament, *Yahweh* and *Elohim* are used interchangeably.)

This myth begins with the words, "When the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, and no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up ..." (Genesis 2:4). It then proceeds to describe the Lord creating a man called Adam out of dust. The Lord creates the Garden of

Eden as a home for Adam, and tells Adam not to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge in the centre of the Garden (next to the Tree of Life).

The Lord also creates animals, either before or after man (see section on "dual or single account" below), and shows them to man, who names them. The Lord sees that there is no suitable companion for the man among the beasts, and He subsequently puts Adam to sleep and takes out one of Adam's ribs, creating from it a woman whom Adam names Eve.

A serpent tempts Eve to eat from the Tree of Knowledge, and she succumbs, offering the fruit to Adam as well. As a punishment, the Lord banishes the couple from the Garden and "placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden the cherubim with a fiery revolving sword to guard the way to the Tree of Life". The Lord says he must banish humans from the Garden because they have become like him, knowing good and evil (because of eating the forbidden fruit), and now only immortality (which they could get by eating from the Tree of Life) stands between them and godhood:

> "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever" (Genesis 3:22).

The actual text of Genesis does not identify the tempting serpent with Satan. However, Christian tradition identifies the two. This tradition has made its way into non-canonical Christian "myths" such as John Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

Dual or single account?

Scholars disagree about whether these creation myths give a single harmonious account or two contradictory accounts. The first myth says God created plants and animals before man. However, the second myth can be interpreted as putting the creation of man *before* the creation of the plants and animals.

Some scholars (particularly those who support the Documentary hypothesis, which proposes that the Pentateuch had multiple authors), interpret Genesis as clearly containing two contradictory creation myths. This interpretation has become increasingly accepted among Biblical critics, even in some conservative Christian circles. It is especially common among scholars who do not believe in a literal or conservative interpretation of Genesis: one example is *The Skeptic's Annotated Bible*, which argues strongly for two distinct creation myths in Genesis.

Other scholars argue that the two Genesis creation myths fit together to give a single account. For example, some Christian apologists say the second creation myth does not put the creation of plants after the creation of man. (If it did, it would contradict the first creation myth.) According to this view, when Genesis 2:4 states that "no shrub of the field had yet appeared" before the creation of man, the words "shrub" and "field" refer not to plants, but to *cultivated* plants: this would remove the apparent contradiction, because plants could be *cultivated* only after man's creation.

Some Bible translations, such as the King James Version, describe the creation of man and then say, "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air" (Genesis 2:19, KJV). This suggests that the animals were created after man, creating a contradiction with the first creation myth. Other translations, such as the New International Version, describe the creation of man and then say, "Now the LORD God **had** [emphasis added] formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air" (Genesis 2:19, NIV). This suggests that the animals had already been created before man, harmonizing the second creation myth with the first.

Founding myths

Christian mythology of their society's founding would start with Jesus and his many teachings, and include the stories of Christian disciples starting the Christian Church and congregations in the first century. This might be considered the stories in the four canonical gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. The heroes of the first Christian society would start with Jesus and those chosen by Jesus, the twelve apostles including Peter, John, James, as well as Paul and Mary (mother of Jesus).

The central Christian narrative: Christ and the atonement

The theological concept of Jesus being born to atone for " original sin" is central to the Christian narrative. According to Christian theology, by disobeying God in the Garden of Eden, humanity acquired an ingrained flaw that keeps humans in a state of moral imperfection: this is generally called "original sin".

According to Saint Paul, humanity's sinful nature is the cause of all evils, including death: "Through one man, sin entered the world, and through sin, death" (Romans 5:12). According to the orthodox Christian view, Jesus Christ saved humanity from final death and damnation by dying for them. Most Christians believe that Christ's sacrifice supernaturally reversed death's power over humanity, proved when he was resurrected: according to Paul, "if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many" (Romans 5:15). For many Christians, the Christian eschatological myths about heaven and the resurrection of the dead are the conclusion of the doctrine of the atonement: people can enter heaven and rise from the dead because Christ's death and resurrection abolished the power of sin on humanity.

This is not the place to discuss the complex theological theories about how the atonement works; here our concern is mythology. What follows is a brief survey of the myth of humanity's atonement through Christ's death and resurrection.

Note that, by some academic definitions, a traditional story about a historical human character like Jesus would be a "legend", not a "myth".

Atonement in canonical scripture

Saint Paul's theological writings, which make up much of the New Testament, lay out the basic framework of the atonement doctrine. However, Paul's letters contain relatively little mythology (narrative). The majority of narratives in the New Testament are in the Gospels and the Book of Revelation.

Although the Gospel stories do not lay out the atonement doctrine as fully as does Paul, they do have the story of the Last Supper, crucifixtion, death and resurrection, and atonement is suggested in the parables of Jesus in his final days. According to Matthew's gospel, at the Last Supper, Jesus calls his blood "the blood of the new covenant, which will be poured out for the forgiveness of many" (Matthew 26:28). John's gospel is especially rich in references to the atonement doctrine: Jesus speaks of himself as "the living bread that came down from heaven": "and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51). According to John's gospel, at the Last Supper, Jesus tells his disciples that his upcoming execution will be beneficial: "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (John 12:24).

Atonement in non-canonical literature

Due to its theological importance, the sacrifice and atonement narrative appears explicitly in many non-canonical writings. For instance, in Book 3 of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the Son of God offers to become a man and die, thereby paying mankind's debt to God the Father.

The Harrowing of Hell is a non-canonical myth extrapolated from the atonement doctrine. According to this story, Christ descended into the land of the dead after his crucifixion, rescuing the righteous souls that had been cut off from heaven due to the taint of original sin. The story of the harrowing was popular during the Middle Ages. An Old English poem called "The Harrowing of Hell" describes Christ breaking into Hell and rescuing the Old Testament patriarchs. (The Harrowing is not the only explanation that Christians have put forth for the fate of the righteous who died before Christ accomplished the atonement.)

One example of the atonement theme in modern literature is the first of C. S. Lewis's *Narnia* novels, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. In the novel, a boy named Edmund is condemned to death by a White Witch, and the magical lion-king Aslan offers to die in Edmund's place, thereby saving him. Aslan's life is sacrificed on an altar, but returns to life again. Some readers believe that Aslan's self-sacrifice for Edmund is an allegory for the story of Christ's sacrifice for humanity; however, Lewis denied that the novel is a mere allegory.

The End: eschatological myths

Christian eschatological myths include stories of the afterlife: the narratives of Jesus Christ rising from the dead and now acting as a saviour of all generations of Christians, and stories of heaven and hell. Eschatological myths would also include the prophesies of end of the world and a new millennium in the Book of Revelation, and the story that Jesus will return to earth some day.

The major features of Christian eschatological mythology include afterlife beliefs, the Second Coming, the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment.

Second Coming

The Second Coming of Christ holds a central place in Christian mythology. The Second Coming is the return of Christ to earth during the period of transformation preceding the end of this world and the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. According to Matthew's gospel, when Jesus is on trial before the Roman and Jewish authorities, he claims, "In the future you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven."

Resurrection and final judgment

Christian mythology incorporates the Old Testament's prophecies of a future resurrection of the dead. Like the Hebrew prophet Daniel (e.g., Daniel 12:2), the Christian Book of Revelation (among other New Testament scriptures) describes the resurrection: "The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds." The righteous and/or faithful enjoy bliss in the earthly Kingdom of Heaven, but the evil and/or non-Christian are "cast into the lake of fire".

The Kingdom of Heaven on earth

Christian eschatological myths feature a total world renovation after the final judgment. According to the Book of Revelation, God "will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or mourning, wailing or pain, for the old order has passed away". According to Old and New Testament passages, a time of perfect peace and happiness is coming:

> "They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. One nation will not raise the sword against another; nor will they train for war again."

Certain scriptural passages even suggest that God will abolish the current natural laws in favour of immortality and total peace:

- "Then the wolf will be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the kid. The calf and the young lion will browse together, with a little child to guide them. [...] There will be no harm or ruin on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be filled with knowledge of the Lord as water fills the sea."
- "On this mountain, [God] will destroy the veil that veils all peoples, the web that is woven over all nations: he will destroy Death forever."
- "The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."
- "Night will be no more, nor will they need light from lamp or sun, for the Lord God shall give them light, and they shall reign forever and ever."

Millennialism and amillennialism

When Christianity was a new and persecuted religion, many Christians believed the end times were imminent. Scholars debate whether Jesus was an apocalyptic preacher; however, his early followers, "the group of Jews who accepted him as messiah in the years immediately after his death, understood him in primarily apocalyptic terms". Prevalent in the early church and especially during periods of persecution, this Christian belief in an imminent end is called "millennialism". (It takes its name from the thousand-year reign of Christ that, according to the Book of Revelation, will precede the final world renovation; similar beliefs in a coming paradise are found in other religions, and these phenomena are often also called "millennialism".)

Millennialism comforted Christians during times of persecution, for it predicted an imminent deliverance from suffering. From the perspective of millennialism, human action has little significance: millennialism is comforting precisely because it predicts that happiness is coming no matter what humans do: "The seeming triumph of Evil made up the apocalyptic syndrome which was to precede Christ's return and the millennium."

However, as time went on, millennialism lost its appeal. Christ had not returned immediately, as earlier Christians had predicted. Moreover, many Christians no longer needed the comfort that millennialism provided, for they were no longer persecuted: "With the triumph of the Church, the Kingdom of Heaven was already present on earth, and in a certain sense the old world had already been destroyed." (Millennialism has revived during periods of historical stress, and is currently popular among Evangelical Christians.)

In the Roman Church's condemnation of millennialism, Eliade sees "the first manifestation of the doctrine of [human] progress" in Christianity. According to the amillennial view, Christ will indeed come again, ushering in a perfect Kingdom of Heaven on earth, but "the Kingdom of God is [already] present in the world today through the presence of the heavenly reign of Christ, the Bible, the Holy Spirit and Christianity". Amillennialists do not feel "the eschatological tension"

that persecution inspires; therefore, they interpret their eschatological myths either figuratively or as descriptions of far-off events rather than imminent ones. Thus, after taking the amillennial position, the Church not only waited for God to renovate the world (as millennialists had) but also believed itself to be improving the world through human action.

Time in Christian mythology

Linear, historical time

The religious historian Mircea Eliade argues that "Judaeo-Christianity makes an innovation of the first importance" in mythology. In many other religions, all important events happened at the beginning of time: after those initial events, everything was fixed. In contrast, "in Judaeism, and above all in Christianity, divinity had manifested itself in History". The myths and legends in the Bible are not limited to a far-off primordial age: instead, they form a long series of events stretching "out of the far past into an eternal future". According to the Near Eastern specialist William A. Irwin, the Hebrew historians who authored the writings in the Old Testament saw history as "a comprehensive reality" raised "to the highest importance".

In contrast, the myths of many traditional cultures present a cyclic or static view of time. In these cultures, all the "[important] history is limited to a few events that took place in the mythical times". In other words, these cultures place events into two categories, the mythical age and the present, between which there is no continuity. Everything in the present is seen as a direct result of the mythical age:

> "Just as modern man considers himself to be constituted by [all of] History, the man of the archaic societies declares that he is the result of [only] a certain number of mythical events."

Because of this view, Eliade argues, members of many traditional societies see their lives as a constant repetition of mythical events, an " eternal return" to the mythical age:

> "In *imitating* the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythical hero, or simply by recounting their adventures, the man of an archaic society detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time."

According to Eliade, Christianity shares in this cyclic sense of time to an extent. "By the very fact that it is a religion", he argues, Christianity retains at least one "mythical aspect" — the repetition of mythical events through ritual. Eliade gives a typical church service as an example:

> "Just as a church constitutes a break in plane in the profane space of a modern city, [so] the service celebrated inside [the church] marks a break in profane temporal duration. It is no longer today's historical time that is present—the time that is experienced, for example, in the adjacent streets—but the time in which the historical existence of Jesus Christ occurred, the time sanctified by his preaching, by his passion, death, and resurrection."

However, the world-shaping mythical events that Christians celebrate are not limited to a primordial age. This doesn't mean that *all* historical events are significant, but significant events are interspersed throughout the length of history, and they are not simply repetitions of each other: "The fall of Jerusalem does not repeat the fall of Samaria: the ruin of Jerusalem presents a new historic theophany, another 'wrath' of Jahveh." In the Christianity, "time is no longer [only]

the circular Time of the Eternal Return; it has become linear and irreversible Time".

Christian mythology and "progress"

A number of scholars believe that the Bible's sense of linear time promoted the notion of "progress". According to this view, if primordial events haven't permanently determined the world's condition, mankind can be "saved" and progress is possible. According to Irwin, from the perspective of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), "history is a tale of progress". Christianity inherited the Hebrew sense of history through the Old Testament. Thus, although most Christians believe that human nature is inherently "fallen" (see original sin) and cannot become perfected without divine grace, they do believe that the world can and will change for the better, either through human and divine action or through divine action alone.

Controversy on the word "myth"

Although the academic use of the word "myth" is generally not supposed to imply falsehood, many Christians feel uncomfortable with the label "mythology" when it is applied to Christian tradition. This discomfort has its roots in Christian history. Early Christian theologians used the word "myth" to mean "falsehood", and it was with this meaning that the word passed into popular English usage. Hence, some Christians take offense when their own sacred stories are designated as "myths": they believe that such a designation implies that the stories are false.

Some Christians have no problem with the use of the word "myth" to designate the narrative component of religion. For instance, C.S. Lewis used the expression "true myth" to describe the story of Jesus Christ, to emphasize it is perceived as both myth and truth: he wrote,

> "The story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened: and one must be content to accept it in the same way, remembering that it is God's myth where the others are men's myths."

In such cases, Christian writers and theologians use the term "myth" without its popular implication of falsehood. The Catholic priest Father Andrew Greeley commented on this point:

> "Many Christians have objected to my use of this word [myth] even when I define it specifically. They are terrified by a word which may even have a slight suggestion of fantasy. However, my usage is the one that is common among historians of religion, literary critics, and social scientists. It is a valuable and helpful usage; there is no other word which conveys what these scholarly traditions mean when they refer to myth. The Christian would be well advised to get over his fear of the word and appreciate how important a tool it can be for understanding the content of his faith."

Mythology in secular Christmas stories

Christmas-themed popular music, television, and cinema:

Santa Claus is the English name for the Christian Saint Nicholas, secularized in popular culture as an old man with supernatural powers living at the North Pole, much like magic and powerful characters in mythology: Santa Claus has supernatural powers and uses them to magnanimously deliver gifts to children around the world. Santa was based on the legends of Saint Nicholas. Santa was given an amplified mythological identity in the Clement Moore poem *Twas The Night Before Christmas.* Comparative mythologies have also noted the ancient Germanic myths of Thor driving a cart led by goats in the sky (which led to the folklore of the Yule Goat) is like Santa driving a sleigh led by reindeers in the sky, so think Santa may stem from both Christian and pre-Christian Germanic mythology.

In the 1950s, several Christmas cartoons emerged that deliberately adopt elements of Christian stories to convey the "true meaning of Christmas" in allegorical terms.

An early film, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer (TV special)* based on a Gene Autry song, involved a rejected and mocked reindeer that ends up leading the other reindeer through the help of a misfit elf and misfit toys.

Similarly, *Frosty the Snowman* contains several Christian motifs, is the story of a snowman who comes to life for a time, melts (dies) but also reassures his childlike followers that he will "be back again some day." The television special developed from this song invents the concept of Frosty being made from "Christmas snow" which entails that he can never completely melt away and thus has an eternal essence.
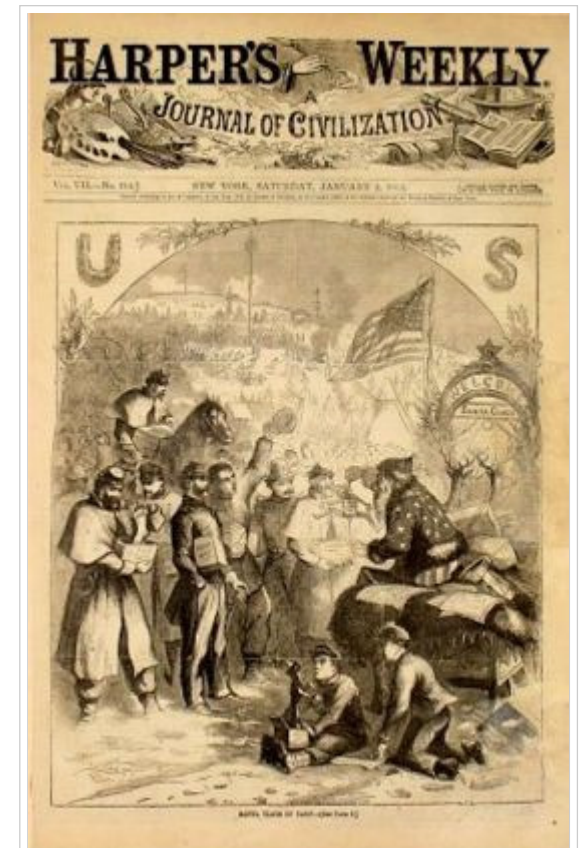
Following these early television Christmas specials, there have been countless other Christmas TV specials and movies produced for the "holiday season" that are not explicitly Christian but seek to describe "true spirit of Christmas" beliefs, such as "togetherness," "being with family," charitable acts, and belief that even bad people or situations can be redeemed. While many sundry examples of Christmas films exist, examples of films with Christian mythical elements include: *How the Grinch Stole Christmas! (film), A Charlie Brown Christmas,* and various adaptations of *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens. With the exception of *A Charlie Brown Christmas,* which features a reading from the Gospels by Linus, they have little to do with the biblical Christmas.

These conceptions of the "true meaning of Christmas" are also sung about in Christmas albums.

Thomas Nast immortalized Santa Claus with an illustration for the January 3, 1863 issue of *Harper's Weekly.* The first Santa Claus appeared as a small part of a large illustration titled "A Christmas Furlough" in which Nast set aside his regular news and political coverage to do a Santa Claus drawing. This Santa was a man dressed up handing out gifts to Union soldiers.

Comparative mythology

Comparative mythology is the study of similarities and connections between the myths of different cultures. For instance, the Judeo-Christian story of Noah and the flood has similarities to flood stories told worldwide. (See Jewish mythology for greater detail.) This section contains a brief survey of some major parallels

between Christian mythology and other mythologies. For the sake of brevity, myths that Christianity shares with Judaism (e.g., Old Testament stories) are not covered here. For comparative mythology related to Judeo-Christian myths, see Jewish mythology.

Christ and the "Dying Gods"

Many world myths feature a god who dies and is resurrected, or who descends to hell and comes back—the mytheme is called the *descent to the underworld*. Such tales are very common in the Near East: "It is simply a fact—deal with it how you will—that the mythology [...] of the dead and resurrected god has been known for millenniums to the neolithic and post-neolithic Levant." For example, the Phrygian god Attis castrates himself and dies, but Zeus either resurrects or eternally preserves the body, and in some versions the resurrected Attis ascends to heaven. Similar myths exist in other parts of the world: a myth from Ceram features a miraculously-conceived girl named Hainuwele who is unjustly killed but is resurrected in the form of tubers, which the Ceramese see as Hainuwele's flesh and eat as their staple food.

Such pagan myths seemed to suggest that the Christ story was simply the latest version of a widespread pagan myth. Some early Christians responded by arguing that Satan had inspired pseudo-Christian myths *before* Christianity had even appeared, to mislead pagans into disbelieving in Christ when he arrived:

> "They admitted, indeed, that in point of time Christ was the junior deity, but they triumphantly demonstrated his real seniority by falling back on the subtlety of Satan, who on so important an occasion had surpassed himself by inverting the usual order of nature."

Justin Martyr, one of the early church Fathers, makes essentially this argument in his *First Apology*.

The more recent writer C. S. Lewis regarded the pagan "dying gods" as premonitions in the human mind of the Christ story that was to come. Pope Benedict XVI expressed a similar opinion in his 2006 homily for Corpus Christi:

> "The Lord mentioned [wheat's] deepest mystery on Palm Sunday, when some Greeks asked to see him. In his answer to this question is the phrase: 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit' (Jn 12: 24). [...]

> Mediterranean culture, in the centuries before Christ, had a profound intuition of this mystery. Based on the experience of this death and rising they created myths of divinity which, dying and rising, gave new life. To them, the cycle of nature seemed like a divine promise in the midst of the darkness of suffering and death that we are faced with.

> In these myths, the soul of the human person, in a certain way, reached out toward that God made man, who, humiliated unto death on a cross, in this way opened the door of life to all of us."

There have been some modern attempts to discredit the notion of a general "dying god" category of which Christ is a member.

Zoroastrianism

Some scholars believe that many elements of Christian mythology, particularly its linear portrayal of time, originated with the Persian religion of Zoroastrianism.

Mary Boyce, an authority on Zoroastrianism, writes:

> "Zoroaster was thus the first to teach the doctrines of an individual judgment, Heaven and Hell, the future resurrection of the body, the general Last Judgment, and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body. These doctrines were to become familiar articles of faith to much of mankind, through borrowings by Judaism, Christianity and Islam."

Mircea Eliade believes the Hebrews had a sense of linear time before Zoroastrianism influenced them. However, he argues, "a number of other [Jewish] religious ideas were discovered, revalorized, of systematized in Iran". These ideas include a dualism between good and evil, belief in a future savior and resurrection, and "an optimistic eschatology, proclaiming the final triumph of Good".

Other connections

In Buddhist mythology, the demon Mara tries to distract the historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, before he can reach enlightenment. Huston Smith, a professor of philosophy and a writer on comparative religion, notes the similarity between Mara's temptation of the Buddha before his ministry and Satan's temptation of Christ before his ministry.

In the Book of Revelation, the author sees a vision of a pregnant woman in the sky being pursued by a huge red dragon. The dragon tries to devour her child when she gives birth, but the child is "caught up to God and his throne". This appears to be an allegory for the triumph of Christianity: the child presumably represents Christ; the woman may represent God's people of the Old and New Testaments (who produced Christ); and the Dragon symbolizes Satan, who opposes Christ. According to Catholic scholars, the images used in this allegory may have been inspired by pagan mythology:

> "This corresponds to a widespread myth throughout the ancient world that a goddess pregnant with a savior was pursued by a horrible monster; by miraculous intervention, she bore a son who then killed the monster."

History

From Roman Empire to Europe

After Christian theology was accepted by the Roman Empire, promoted by St. Augustine in the 5th century, Christian mythology began to predominate the Roman Empire. Later the theology was carried north by Charlemagne and the Frankish people, and Christian themes began to weave into the framework of European mythologies (Eliade 1963:162-181). The pre-Christian (Germanic and Celtic mythology that were native to the tribes of Northern Europe were denounced and submerged, while saint myths, Mary stories, Crusade myths, and other Christian myths took their place. However, pre-Christian myths never went entirely away, they mingled with the (Roman Catholic) Christian framework to form new stories, like myths of the mythological kings and saints and miracles, for example (Eliade 1963:162-181). Stories such as that of Beowulf and Icelandic, Norse, and Germanic sagas were reinterpreted somewhat, and given Christian meanings. The legend of King Arthur and the quest for the Holy Grail is a striking example (Treharne 1971). The thrust of incorporation took on one of two directions. When Christianity was on the advance, pagan myths were Christianized; when it was in retreat, Bible stories and Christian saints lost their

mythological importance to the culture.

Since Enlightenment

Since the end of the eighteenth century, the biblical stories have lost some of their mythological basis to western society, owing to the scepticism of the Enlightenment, nineteenth-century freethinking, and twentieth century modernism. Most westerners no longer found Christianity to be their primary imaginative and mythological framework by which they understand the world. However other scholars believe mythology is in our psyche, and that mythical influences of Christianity are in many of our ideals, for example the Judeo-Christian idea of an after-life and heaven (Eliade 1963:184). The book *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X* by Tom Beaudoin explores the premise that Christian mythology is present in the mythologies of pop-culture, such as Madonna's *Like a Prayer* or Soundgarden's *Black Hole Sun*. Modern myths are strong in comic book stories (as stories of culture heroes) and detective novels as myths of good versus evil (Eliade 1963:185).

Certain groups within Western society still retain a strong element of Christian mythology in their understanding of life. It is also true that Christian myths often inform law and the ideals within different Western societies, but the idea of a Christendom that permeates all aspects of life is no longer applicable.

Influence on Western progressivism

Christian mythology, which presents a linear, progressive view of history, has deeply influenced the West's emphasis on progress. Even supposedly secular or political movements such as Marxism and Nazism "announce the end of this world and the beginning of an age of plenty and bliss". Mircea Eliade believes movements such as Marxism would have been impossible without the conceptual framework Christian mythology provided: "Marx turns to his own account the Judaeo-Christian eschatological hope of an *absolute goal of History*."

Likewise, Joseph Campbell sees Marx's theory of history as a "parody" of Judeo-Christian mythology. According to Campbell, the Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian myth of the final triumph of good over evil appears repeatedly in Western intellectual, political, and spiritual movements:

> "In the end, which is inevitable, the dark and evil power [...] is to be destroyed forever in a crisis of world renovation to which all history tends—and to the realization of which every individual is categorically summoned."

Robert Ellwood, a professor of religion, agrees. According to him, "Western modernism", with its belief in "emancipation through progress", is "to no small degree the secularization of Judaism and Christianity".

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christian_mythology"

Christianity

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Christianity is a monotheistic religion centered on the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as presented in the New Testament. Christians believe Jesus to be the Son of God and the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament. With an estimated 2.1 billion adherents in 2001, Christianity is the world's largest religion. It is the predominant religion in Europe, the Americas, Southern Africa, the Philippine Islands and Oceania. It is also growing rapidly in Asia, particularly in China and South Korea.

Image:Christianity percentage by country.PNG
Christianity percentage by country

Christianity shares its origins and many religious texts with Judaism, specifically the Hebrew Bible, known to Christians as the Old Testament. Like Judaism and Islam, Christianity is classified as an Abrahamic religion (*see also, Judeo-Christian*).

The name "Christian" (Greek *Χριστιανός* Strong's G5546), meaning "belonging to Christ" or "partisan of Christ," was first applied to the disciples in Antioch, as recorded in Acts 11:26. The earliest recorded use of the term "Christianity" (Greek *Χριστιανισμός*) is by Ignatius of Antioch.

Contents

Beliefs

Although Christianity has always had a significant diversity of belief, most Christian branches and denominations share a common set of doctrines that they hold as essential to their faith.
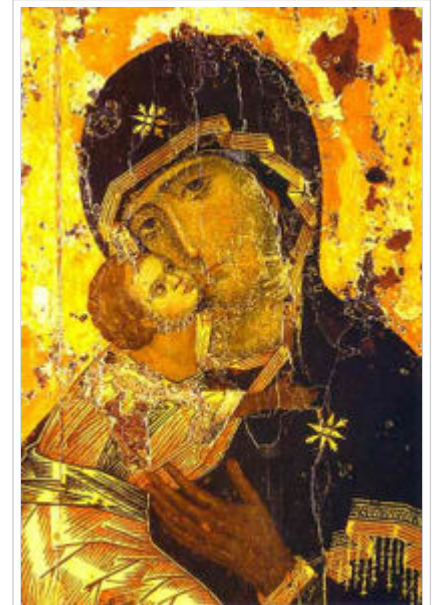
Jesus Christ

As indicated by the name "Christianity", the focus of Christian theology is a belief in Jesus as the *Messiah* or *Christ*. The title "Messiah" comes from the Hebrew word מָשִׁיחַ (*māšiáḥ*) meaning "*the anointed one*" or "*King*." The Greek translation *Χριστός* (*Christos*) is the source of the English word *Christ*.

Christians believe that, as the Messiah, Jesus was anointed as ruler and savior of humanity, and hold that Jesus's coming was the fulfilment of messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. The Christian concept of the Messiah differs significantly from the contemporary Jewish concept. The core Christian belief is that, through the death and resurrection of Jesus, the perfect Son of God, mankind is reconciled to God and thereby attains salvation by grace and the promise of eternal life to all who trust in Christ. The need for salvation was caused by original sin.

While there have been theological disputes over the nature of Jesus, most Christians believe that Jesus is God incarnate and " true God and true man" (or both fully divine and fully human). Jesus, having become fully human in all respects, including the aspect of mortality, suffered the pains and temptations of mortal man, yet he did not sin. As fully God, he defeated death and rose to life again. According to the Bible, "God raised him from the dead", he ascended to heaven, to the "right hand of God", and will return again to fulfil the rest of Messianic prophecy such as the Resurrection of the dead, the Last Judgment and establishment of the Kingdom of God (See also Messianism and Messianic Age).

A depiction of Jesus and Mary, the Theotokos of Vladimir (12th century)

According to the Gospels, Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born from the the virgin Mary. Little of Jesus' childhood is recorded in the Gospels compared to his adulthood, especially the week before his death. The Biblical accounts of Jesus' ministry include his baptism, miracles, teachings and deeds.

Death and Resurrection

The Crucifixion by Diego Velázquez (17th Century)

Most Christians consider the death of Jesus, followed by his resurrection, the cornerstone of their faith and the most important event in history.

According to the Gospels, Jesus and his followers went to Jerusalem the week of the Passover where they were eagerly greeted by a crowd. In Jerusalem, Jesus cleansed the Temple, and predicted its destruction - heightening conflict with the Jewish authorities who were plotting his death.

After sharing his last meal with his disciples, Jesus went to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane where he was betrayed by his disciple Judas Iscariot and arrested by the temple guard on orders from the Sanhedrin and the high priest Caiaphas. Jesus was convicted by the Sanhedrin of blasphemy and transferred to the Roman governor Pilate, who had him crucified for inciting rebellion. Jesus died by late afternoon and was entombed.

Christians believe that God raised Jesus from the dead on the third day, that Jesus appeared to his apostles and other disciples, commissioned his disciples to "make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son (Jesus) and of the Holy Spirit." and ascended to heaven. Christians also believe that God sent the disciples the Holy Spirit (or Paraclete).

Salvation

Christians believe salvation is a gift by unmerited grace of God, who sent Jesus as the savior. Christians believe that through faith in Jesus one can be saved from sin and spiritual death. The crucifixion of Jesus is explained as an atoning sacrifice, which, in the words of the Gospel of John, "takes away the sins of the world". Reception of salvation is related to justification.

The operation and effects of grace are understood differently by different traditions. Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy teach the necessity of the free will to cooperate with grace. Reformed theology places distinctive emphasis on grace by teaching that mankind is completely incapable of self-redemption, but the grace of God overcomes even the unwilling heart.

The Trinity

The Hospitality of Abraham by Andrei Rublev: The three angels represent the three persons of God

Most Christians believe that God is spirit (*John 4:24*), an uncreated, omnipotent and eternal being, the creator and sustainer of all things, who works the redemption of the world through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Against this background, belief in the divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit was expressed as the doctrine of the Holy Trinity,, which describes the single Divine *substance* existing as three distinct and inseparable *persons*: the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ the eternal Word), and the Holy Spirit. According to the doctrine, God is not divided in the sense that each person has a third of the whole; rather, each person is considered to be fully God (*see Perichoresis*). The distinction lies in their relations, the Father being unbegotten, the Son begotten of the Father, and the Holy Spirit proceeding. "Begotten", in these formulae, does not refer to Mary's conceiving Jesus, but to the Son's relationship to the Father, which is described as being "eternally begotten" of the Father.

Trinitarian Christian also conceive of salvation as one work of the triune God, in which "the three divine persons act together as one, and manifest their own proper characteristics."

Trinitarian Christians trace the orthodox formula of the Trinity — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — back to the resurrected Jesus himself, who used this phrase in the Great Commission (Matthew 28:16-20).

Most Christians believe the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures, and that his active participation in a believer's life (even to the extent of "indwelling" within the believer), joining the believer's free actions with his own, is essential to living a Christian life. In Catholic, Orthodox, and some Anglican theology, this indwelling is received through the sacrament called Confirmation or, in the East, Chrismation. Most Protestant traditions teach that the gift of the Holy Spirit is symbolized by baptism; however some (Baptists and comparable groups) do not attribute any sacramental significance to baptism. Pentecostal and Charismatic Protestants believe the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a distinct experience separate from other experiences like conversion or water baptism, and many Pentecostals believe it will always—or at least usually—be evident through glossolalia (speaking in tongues).

Non-Trinitarians

In antiquity, and again following the Reformation, several sects advocated views contrary to the Trinity. These views were rejected by many bishops such as Irenaeus and subsequently by the Ecumenical Councils. During the Reformation, though most Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants accepted the value of many of the Councils, some groups rejected these councils as spiritually tainted. Clement Ziegler, Casper Schwenckfeld, and Melchior Hoffman advanced the view that Christ was only divine and not human. Michael Servetus denied the divinity of Christ, as did others who were tried at Augsburg in 1527.

Modalists, such as Oneness Pentecostals, regard God as a single person, with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit considered modes or roles by which the unipersonal God expresses himself.

Latter-day Saints accept the divinity of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but deny that they are the same being, believing them to be separate beings united only in will and purpose.

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Present day groups who do not consider Jesus to be God include Unitarians, descendants of Reformation era Socinians and Jehovah's Witnesses.

Scriptures

Christianity regards the Bible, a collection of canonical books in two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament, as authoritative: written by human authors under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and therefore inerrant. Protestants believe that the scriptures contain all revealed truth necessary for salvation (See Sola scriptura).

The Old Testament contains the entire Jewish Tanakh, though in the Christian canon the books are ordered differently and some books of the Tanakh are divided into several books by the Christian canon. The Catholic and Orthodox canons include the Hebrew Jewish canon and other books (from the Septuagint Greek Jewish canon) which Catholics call Deuterocanonical, while Protestants consider them Apocrypha.

The first four books of the New Testament are the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), which recount the life and teachings of Jesus. The first three are often called synoptic because of the amount of material they share. The rest of the New Testament consists of a sequel to Luke's Gospel, the Acts of the Apostles, which describes the very early history of the Church, a collection of letters from early Christian leaders to congregations or individuals, the Pauline and General epistles, and the apocalyptic Book of Revelation.

Some traditions maintain other canons. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church maintains two canons, the Narrow Canon, itself larger than any Biblical canon outside Ethiopia, and the Broad Canon, which has even more books. The Latter-day Saints hold the Bible and three additional books to be the inspired word of God: the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price.

Interpretation

Though Christians largely agree on the content of the Bible, there is significant divergence in its interpretation, or exegesis. In antiquity, two schools of exegesis developed in Alexandria and Antioch. Alexandrine interpretation, exemplified by Origen, tended to read Scripture allegorically, while Antiochene interpretation adhered to the literal sense, holding that other meanings (called *theoria*) could only be accepted if based on the literal meaning.

Catholic theology distinguishes two senses of scripture: the literal and the spiritual, the latter being subdivided into the allegorical, moral, and anagogical senses. The literal sense is "the meaning conveyed by the words of Scripture and discovered by exegesis, following the rules of sound interpretation." The allegorical sense includes typology, for example the parting of the Red Sea is seen as a "type" of or sign of baptism; the moral sense contains ethical teaching; the anagogical sense includes eschatology and applies to eternity and the consummation of the world. Catholic theology also adds other rules of interpretation, which include the injunction that all other senses of sacred scripture are based on the literal, that the historicity of the Gospels must be absolutely and constantly held, that scripture must be read within the "living Tradition of the whole Church", and that "the task of interpretation has been entrusted to the bishops in communion with the successor of Peter, the Bishop of Rome."

Many Protestants stress the literal sense or historical-grammatical method, even to the extent of rejecting other senses altogether. Martin Luther advocated "one

definite and simple understanding of Scripture". Other Protestant interpreters make use of typology. Protestants characteristically believe that ordinary believers may reach an adequate understanding of Scripture because Scripture itself is clear (or "perspicuous"), because of the help of the Holy Spirit, or both. Martin Luther believed that without God's help Scripture would be "enveloped in darkness", but John Calvin wrote, "all who refuse not to follow the Holy Spirit as their guide, find in the Scripture a clear light." The Second Helvetic Confession said, "we hold that interpretation of the Scripture to be orthodox and genuine which is gleaned from the Scriptures themselves (from the nature of the language in which they were written, likewise according to the circumstances in which they were set down, and expounded in the light of like and unlike passages and of many and clearer passages)." The writings of the Church Fathers, and decisions of Ecumenical Councils, though "not despise[d]", were not authoritative and could be rejected.

Creeds

Creeds, or concise doctrinal statements, began as baptismal formulas and were later expanded during the Christological controversies of the fourth and fifth centuries. The earliest creeds still in common use are the Apostles' Creed (text in Latin and Greek, with English translations) and Paul's creed of 1 Cor 15:1-9.

The Nicene Creed, largely a response to Arianism, was formulated at the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople in 325 and 381 respectively, and ratified as the universal creed of Christendom by the Council of Ephesus in 431.

The Chalcedonian Creed, developed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451, (though not accepted by the Oriental Orthodox Churches) taught Christ "to be acknowledged in two natures, inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably": one divine and one human, that both natures are perfect but are nevertheless perfectly united into one person.

The Athanasian Creed (English translations), received in the western Church as having the same status as the Nicene and Chalcedonian, says: "We worship one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons not dividing the Substance."

Most Protestants accept the Creeds. Some Protestant traditions believe Trinitarian doctrine without making use of the Creeds themselves, while other Protestants, like the Restoration Movement, oppose the use of creeds.

Eschaton and afterlife

Most Christians believe that upon the death of the body, the individual soul, which is considered to be immortal, experiences the particular judgment and is either rewarded with heaven or condemned to hell. The elect are called "saints" (Latin *sanctus*: "holy") and the process of being made holy is called sanctification. In Catholicism, those who die in a state of grace but with either unforgiven venial sins or incomplete penance undergo purification in purgatory to achieve the holiness necessary for entrance into heaven.

At the last coming of Christ, the *eschaton* or end of time, all who have died will be resurrected bodily from the dead for the Last Judgement, whereupon Jesus will fully establish the Kingdom of God in fulfillment of scriptural prophecies.

Some groups do not distinguish a particular judgment from the general judgment at the end of time, teaching instead that souls remain in stasis until this time

(see Soul sleep). These groups, and others that do not believe in the intercession of saints, generally do not employ the word "saint" to describe those in heaven. Universalists hold that eventually all will experience salvation, thereby rejecting the concept of an eternal hell for those who are not saved.

Worship and practices

Christian life

Christians believe that all people should strive to follow Christ in their everyday actions. For many, this includes obedience to the Ten Commandments This love includes such injunctions as "feed the hungry" and "shelter the homeless", and applies to friend and enemy alike. Though the relationship between charity and religious practice are sometimes taken for granted today, as Martin Goodman has observed, "charity in the Jewish and Christian sense was unknown to the pagan world." Other Christian practices include acts of piety such as prayer and Bible reading.

Christianity teaches that one can only overcome sin through divine grace: moral and spiritual progress can only occur with God's help through the gift of the Holy Spirit dwelling within the believer. Christians believe that by sharing in Christ's life, death, and resurrection, and by believing in Christ, they become dead to sin and are resurrected to a new life with Him.

Christians believe that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant (see Hebrews 8:6)(and 1Timothy2:5). His famous Sermon on the Mount representing Mount Zion is considered by many Christian scholars to be the antitype of the proclamation of the Old Covenant by Moses from Mount Sinai

Liturgical worship

Justin Martyr described second century Christian liturgy in his *First Apology* (*c*. 150) to Emperor Antoninus Pius, and his description remains relevant to the basic structure of Christian liturgical worship:

The Holy Bible, Crucifix, and Rosary

"And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need."

Thus, as Justin described, Christians assemble for communal worship on Sunday, the day of the resurrection, though other liturgical practices often occur outside this setting. Scripture readings are drawn from the Old and New Testaments, but

especially the Gospels. Often these are arranged on an annual cycle, using a book called a lectionary. Instruction is given based on these readings, called a sermon, or homily. There are a variety of congregational prayers, including thanksgiving, confession, and intercession, which occur throughout the service and take a variety of forms including recited, responsive, silent, or sung. The Lord's Prayer, or Our Father, is regularly prayed. The Eucharist (also called Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper) consists of a ritual meal of consecrated bread and wine, discussed in detail below. Lastly, a collection occurs in which the congregation donates money for the support of the Church and for charitable work.

Some groups depart from this traditional liturgical structure. A division is often made between " High" church services, characterized by greater solemnity and ritual, and " Low" services, but even within these two categories there is great diversity in forms of worship. Seventh-day Adventists meet on Saturday (the original Sabbath), while others do not meet on a weekly basis. Charismatic or Pentecostal congregations may spontaneously feel led by the Holy Spirit to action rather than follow a formal order of service, including spontaneous prayer. Quakers sit quietly until moved by the Holy Spirit to speak. Some Evangelical services resemble concerts with rock and pop music, dancing, and use of multimedia. For groups which do not recognize a priesthood distinct from ordinary believers the services are generally lead by a minister, preacher, or pastor. Still others may lack any formal leaders, either in principle or by local necessity. Some churches use only a cappella music, either on principle (e.g. many Churches of Christ object to the use of instruments in worship) or by tradition (as in Orthodoxy).

Worship can be varied for special events like baptisms or weddings in the service or significant feast days. In the early church Christians and those yet to complete initiation would separate for the Eucharistic part of the worship. In many churches today, adults and children will separate for all or some of the service to receive age-appropriate teaching. Such children's worship is often called Sunday school or Sabbath school (Sunday schools are sometimes held before rather than during services).

Sacraments

A sacrament is a Christian rite that is an outward sign of an inward grace, instituted by Christ to sanctify humanity. Catholic, Orthodox, and some Anglican Christians describe Christian worship in terms of seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation or Chrismation, Eucharist (communion), Penance (reconciliation), Anointing of the Sick (last rites), Holy Orders (ordination), and Matrimony. Many Protestant groups, following Martin Luther, recognize the sacramental nature of baptism and Eucharist, but not usually the other five in the same way, while other Protestant groups reject sacramental theology. Latter-day saint worship emphasizes the symbolic role of rites, calling some *ordinances*. Though not sacraments, Pentecostal, Charismatic, and Holiness Churches emphasize " gifts of the Spirit" such as spiritual healing, prophecy, exorcism, glossolalia (speaking in tongues), and laying on of hands where God's grace is mysteriously manifest.

The Eucharist

Eucharist

The Eucharist (also called Holy Communion, or the Lord's Supper) is the part of liturgical worship that consists of a consecrated meal, usually bread and wine. Justin Martyr described the Eucharist as follows:

"And this food is called among us Eukaristia [the Eucharist], of which no one is allowed to partake but the man who believes that the things which we teach are true, and who has been washed with the washing that is for the remission of sins, and unto regeneration, and who is so living as Christ has enjoined. For not as common bread and common drink do we receive these; but in like manner as Jesus Christ our Saviour, having been made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation, so likewise have we been taught that the food which is blessed by the prayer of His word, and from which our blood and flesh by transmutation are nourished, is the flesh and blood of that Jesus who was made flesh."

Orthodox, Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and many Anglicans believe that the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ (the doctrine of the Real Presence). Most other Protestants, especially Reformed, believe the bread and wine *represent* the body and blood of Christ. These Protestants may celebrate it less frequently, while in Catholicism the Eucharist is celebrated daily. Catholic and Orthodox view communion as indicating those who are already united in the church, restricting participation to their members not in a state of mortal sin. In some Protestant churches participation is by prior arrangement with a church leader. Other churches view communion as a means to unity, rather than an end, and invite all Christians or even anyone to participate.

Liturgical Calendar

In the New Testament Paul of Tarsus organised his missionary travels around the celebration of Pentecost. (Acts 20.16 and 1 Corinthians 16.8) This practice draws from Jewish tradition, with such feasts as the Feast of Tabernacles, the Passover, and the Jubilee. Today Catholics, Eastern Christians, and traditional Protestant communities frame worship around a liturgical calendar. This includes holy days, such as solemnities which commemorate an event in the life of Jesus or the saints, periods of fasting such as Lent, and other pious events such as memoria or lesser festivals commemorating saints. Christian groups that do not follow a liturgical tradition often retain certain celebrations, such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost. A few churches make no use of a liturgical calendar.

Symbols

Today the best-known Christian symbol is the cross, which refers to the method of Jesus' execution. Several varieties exist, with some denominations tending to favour distinctive styles: Catholics the crucifix, Orthodox the crux orthodoxa, and Protestants an unadorned cross. An earlier Christian symbol was the ' ichthys' fish (Greek Alpha - α) symbol and anagram. Other text based symbols include ' IHS or ICXC' and ' chi-rho' (the first two letters of the word Christ in Greek). In a modern Roman alphabet, the Chi-Rho appears like an X (Chi - χ) with a large P (Rho - ρ) overlaid and above it. It is said Constantine saw this symbol prior to converting to Christianity (see History and origins section below). Another ancient symbol is an anchor, which denotes faith and can incorporate a cross within its design.

History and origins

In the mid-first century, Christianity spread beyond its Jewish origins under the leadership of the Apostles, especially Peter and Paul. Within a generation an episcopal hierarchy can be seen, and this would form the structure of the Church.Christianity spread east to Asia and throughout the Roman Empire, despite persecution by the Roman Emperors until its legalization by Emperor Constantine in 313. During his reign, questions of orthodoxy lead to the convocation of the first Ecumenical Council, that of Nicaea.

In 391 Theodosius I established Nicene Christianity as the official and, except for Judaism, only legal religion in the Roman Empire. Later, as the political structure of the empire collapsed in the West, the Church assumed political and cultural roles previously held by the Roman aristocracy. Eremitic and Coenobitic monasticism developed, originating with the hermit St Anthony of Egypt around 300. With the avowed purpose of fleeing the world and its evils *in contemptu mundi*, the institution of monasticism would become a central part of the medieval world.

An icon depicting the First Council of Nicaea

Christianity became the established church of the Axumite Kingdom (presently encompassing Eritrea and Northern Ethiopi) under king Ezana in the 4th century through the efforts of a Syrian Greek named Frumentius, known in Ethiopia as Abba Selama, Kesaté Birhan ("Father of Peace, Revealer of Light"), thus making Ethiopia one of the first christian state even before most of Europe. As a youth, Frumentius had been shipwrecked with his brother Aedesius on the Eritrean coast. The brothers managed to be brought to the royal court, where they rose to positions of influence and converted Emperor Ezana to Christianity, causing him to be baptised. Ezana sent Frumentius to Alexandria to ask the Patriarch, St. Athanasius, to appoint a bishop for Ethiopia. Athanasius appointed Frumentius himself, who returned to Ethiopia as Bishop with the name of Abune Selama.

During the Migration Period of Late Antiquity, various Germanic peoples adopted Christianity. Meanwhile, as western political unity dissolved, the linguistic divide of the Empire between Latin-speaking West and the Greek-speaking East intensified. By the Middle Ages distinct forms of Latin and Greek Christianity increasingly separated until cultural differences and disciplinary disputes finally resulted in the Great Schism (conventionally dated to 1054), which formally divided Christendom into the Catholic west and the Orthodox east. Western Christianity in the Middle Ages was characterized by cooperation and conflict between the secular rulers and the Church under the Pope, and by the development of scholastic theology and philosophy.

Beginning in the 7th century, Muslim rulers began a long series of military conquests of Christian areas, and it quickly conquered areas of the Byzantine Empire in Asia Minor, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and North Africa, and even captured southern Spain. Numerous military struggles followed, including the Crusades, the Spanish Reconquista, the Fall of Constantinople and the aggression of the Turks.

In the early sixteenth century, increasing discontent with corruption and immorality among the clergy resulted in attempts to reform the Church and society. The Protestant Reformation began after Martin Luther published his 95 theses in 1517, whilst the Roman Catholic Church experienced internal renewal with the Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent (1545-1563). During the following centuries, competition between Catholicism and Protestantism became deeply entangled with political struggles among European states. Meanwhile, partly from missionary zeal, but also under the impetus of colonial expansion by the European powers, Christianity spread to the Americas, Oceania, East Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa.

In the Modern Era, Christianity was confronted with various forms of skepticism and with certain modern political ideologies such as liberalism, nationalism, and socialism. This included the anti-clericalism of the French Revolution, the Spanish Civil War, and general hostility of Marxist movements, especially the Russian Revolution.

Martin Luther

Persecution

Christians have frequently suffered from persecution. Starting with Jesus, the early Christian church was persecuted by state and religious establishments from its earliest beginnings. Notable early Christians such as Stephen, eleven of the Apostles as well as Paul died as martyrs according to tradition. Systematic Roman persecution of Christians culminated in the Great Persecution of Diocletian and ended with the Edict of Milan. Persecution of Christians persisted or even intensified in other places, such as in Sassanid Persia. Later Christians living in Islamic countries were subjected to various legal restrictions, which included taxation and a ban on building or repairing churches. Christians at times also suffered violent persecution or confiscation of their property

There was persecution of Christians during the French Revolution (see Dechristianisation of France during the French Revolution). State restrictions on Christian practices today are generally associated with those authoritarian governments which either support a majority religion other than Christianity (as in Muslim states), or tolerate only churches under government supervision, sometimes while officially promoting state atheism (as in North Korea). The People's Republic of China allows only government-regulated churches and has regularly suppressed house churches and underground Catholics. The public practice of Christianity is outlawed in Saudi Arabia. Areas of persecution include other parts of the Middle East, the Sudan, and Kosovo.

Christians have also been perpetrators of persecution against other religions and other Christians. Christian mobs, sometimes with government support, destroyed pagan temples and oppressed adherents of paganism (such as the philosopher Hypatia of Alexandria, who was murdered by a Christian mob). Also, Jewish communities have periodically suffered violence at Christian hands. Christian governments have suppressed or persecuted groups seen as heretical, later in cooperation with the Inquisition. Denominational strife escalated into religious wars. Witch hunts, carried out by secular authorities or popular mobs, were a frequent phenomenon in parts of early modern Europe and, to a lesser degree, North America.

Christian divisions

There is a diversity of doctrines and practices among groups calling themselves Christian. These groups are sometimes classified under denominations, though for theological reasons many groups reject this classification system. Christianity may be broadly represented as being divided into three main groupings:
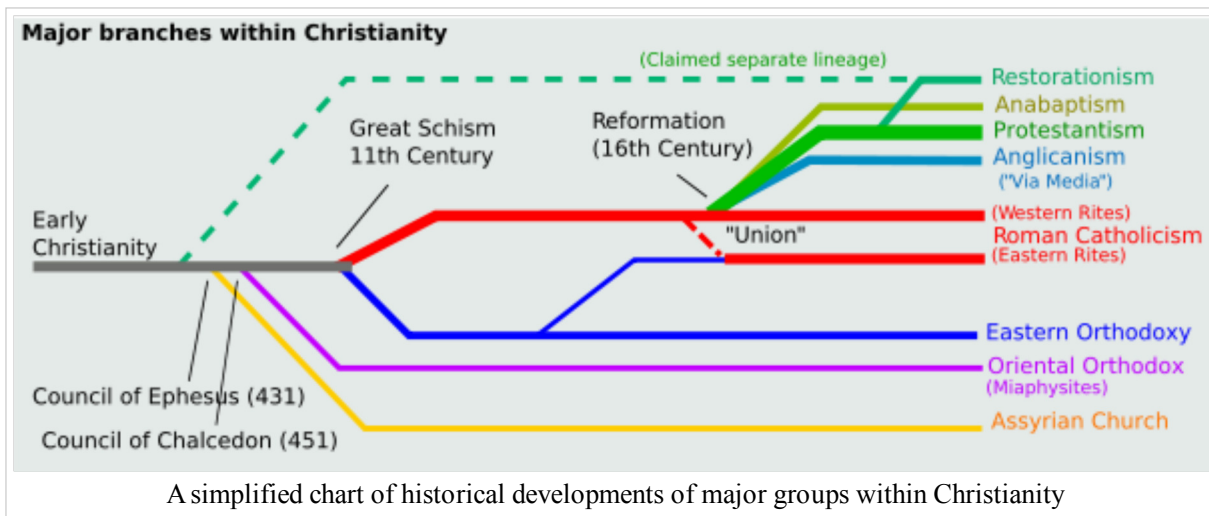
- Roman Catholicism: The Roman Catholic Church, the largest single body, includes the Latin Rite and totals more than 1 billion baptized members.
- Eastern Christianity: Eastern Orthodox Churches, Oriental Orthodox Churches, the 100,000 member Assyrian Church of the East, and others with a combined membership of more than 300 million baptized members.
- Anglicanism: The Anglican Communion is a group of Anglican and Episcopal Churches that are descended from the Church of England. Most Anglicans don't consider themselves Protestant or Catholic but believe that the Church of England always existed and wasn't formed during the Reformation but rather broke away from the Church of Rome.
- Protestantism: Groups such as Lutherans, Reformed/ Presbyterians, Congregational/ United Church of Christ, Evangelical, Charismatic, Baptists, Methodists, Nazarenes, Anabaptists, Seventh-day Adventists and Pentecostals. The oldest of these separated from the Roman Catholic Church in the 16th century Protestant Reformation, followed in many cases by further divisions. Estimates of the total number of Protestants are very uncertain, partly because of the difficulty in determining which denominations should be placed in this category, but it seems to be unquestionable that Protestantism is the second major branch of Christianity (after Roman Catholicism) in number of followers.

Some Protestants identify themselves simply as *Christian,* or *born-again Christian*; they typically distance themselves from the confessionalism of other Protestant communities by calling themselves "non-denominational" — often founded by individual pastors, they have little affiliation with historic denominations. Finally, various small communities, such as the Old Catholic and Independent Catholic Churches, are similar in name to the Roman Catholic Church, but are not in communion with the See of Rome (the Old Catholic church is in communion with the Anglican Church).

Restorationists, are historically connected to the Protestant Reformation, do not usually describe themselves as "reforming" a Christian Church continuously existing from the time of Jesus, but as *restoring* the Church that they believe was lost at some point. Restorationists include Churches of Christ with 2.6 million members, Disciples of Christ with 800,000 members, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints with 12 million members, and Jehovah's Witnesses with 6.6 million members. Though Restorationists have some superficial similarities, their doctrine and practices vary significantly.

A simplified chart of historical developments of major groups within Christianity

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Mainstream Christianity

Mainstream Christianity is a widely used term, used to refer to collectively to the common views of major denominations of Christianity (such as Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Anglicanism, Orthodox Christianity) as against the particular tenets of other sects or Christian denomination. The context is dependent on the particular issues addressed, but usually contrasts the orthodox majority view against heterodox minority views. In the most common sense, "mainstream" refers to Nicene Christianity, or rather the traditions which continue to claim adherence to the Nicene Creed.

Some groups identifying themselves as Christian deviate from the tenets considered basic by most Christian organizations. These groups are often considered heretical, or even non-Christian, by many mainstream Christians. This is particularly true of non-trinitarians.

Ecumenism

Most churches have long expressed ideals of being reconciled with each other, and in the 20th Century Christian ecumenism advanced in two ways. One way was greater cooperation between groups, such as the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of Protestants in 1910, the Justice, Peace and Creation Commission of the World Council of Churches founded in 1948 by Protestant and Orthodox churches, and similar national councils like the National Council of Churches in Australia which also includes Roman Catholics.

The other way was institutional union with new United and uniting churches. Congregationalist, Methodist, and Presbyterian churches united in 1925 to form the United Church of Canada and in 1977 to form the Uniting Church in Australia. The Church of South India was formed in 1947 by the union of Anglican, Methodist, Congregationalist, Presbyterian, and Reformed churches.

Steps towards union on a global level have also been taken in 1965 by the Catholic and Orthodox churches mutually revoking the excommunications that marked their Great Schism in 1054; the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission (ARCIC) working towards full communion between those churches since 1970; and the Lutheran and Catholic churches signing The Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification in 1999 to address conflicts at the root of the Protestant Reformation. In 2006 the Methodist church also adopted the declaration.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity"

Code of Hammurabi

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Ancient History, Classical History and Mythology; Religious texts

The **Code of Hammurabi** (*Codex Hammurabi*), the best preserved ancient law code, was created ca. 1760 BC (middle chronology) in ancient Babylon. It was enacted by the sixth Babylonian king, Hammurabi. Earlier collections of laws include the codex of Ur-Nammu, king of Ur (ca. 2050 BC), the Codex of Eshnunna (ca. 1930 BC) and the codex of Lipit-Ishtar of Isin (ca. 1870 BC).

At the top of the basalt stele is a *bas-relief* image of a Babylonian god (either Marduk or Shamash), with the king of Babylon presenting himself to the god, with his right hand raised to his mouth as a mark of respect. The text covers the bottom portion with the laws written in cuneiform script. It contains a list of crimes and their various punishments, as well as settlements for common disputes and guidelines for citizens' conduct. The Code does not provide for an opportunity for explanation or justification, though it does imply one's right to present evidence. The stele was displayed for all to see; thus, no man could plead ignorance of the law as an excuse. However, in that era few people except scribes could read. For a summary of the laws, see Babylonian law.

An inscription of the Code of Hammurabi.

History

Hammurabi (ruled ca. 1796 BC – 1750 BC) believed that he was chosen by the gods to deliver the law to his people. In the preface to the law code, he states, *"Anu and Bel called by name me, Hammurabi, the exalted prince, who feared God, to bring about the rule of righteousness in the land."*
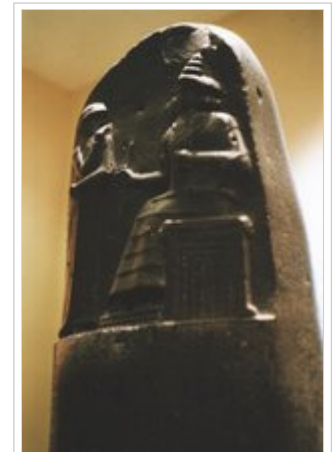
The laws are numbered from 1 to 282 (numbers 13 and 66-99 are missing) and are inscribed in Old Babylonian cuneiform script on the eight-foot tall stele. It was discovered in December 1901 in Susa, Elam, which is now Khuzestan, Iran, where it had been taken as plunder by the Elamite king Shutruk-Nahhunte in the 12th century BC. It is currently on display at the Louvre Museum in Paris.

The code is often pointed to as the first example of the legal concept that some laws are so basic as to be beyond the ability of even a king to change. Hammurabi had the laws inscribed in stone, so they were immutable.

The Code of Hammurabi was one of several sets of laws in the Ancient Near East. Most of these codes come from similar cultures and racial groups in a relatively small geographical area, and they have passages which resemble each other. The earlier Code of Ur-Nammu (21st century BC), the Hittite laws (ca. 1300 BC), and Mosaic Law (traditionally ca. 1400 BC under Moses), all contain statutes that bear at least passing resemblance to those in the Code of Hammurabi and other codices from the same geographic area.

View of the bas-relief image at the top of the stele.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Code_of_Hammurabi"

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View of the back side of the stele.

Confucianism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Confucianism (Chinese: 儒　家; pinyin: Rújiā) is an ancient Chinese ethical and philosophical system originally developed from the teachings of the early Chinese philosopher Confucius (Kong Fuzi/K'ung-fu-tzu, lit. "Master Kung"). It focuses on human morality and good deeds. Confucianism is a complex system of moral, social, political, philosophical, and quasi-religious thought that has had tremendous influence on the culture and history of East Asia. Some consider it to be the state religion of East Asian countries because of governmental promotion of Confucian values.

The cultures most strongly influenced by Confucianism include Mainland China, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Vietnam, as well as various territories settled predominantly by Chinese people.

History

This article contains Chinese text.
Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Chinese characters.

Confucianism was chosen by Han Wudi (141 BCE - 86 BCE) for use as a political system to govern the Chinese state. Despite its loss of influence during the Tang Dynasty, Confucian doctrine remained a mainstream Chinese orthodoxy for two millennia until the 20th century and it was still in most parts of China, when it was attacked by radical Chinese thinkers as a vanguard of a pre-modern system and an obstacle to China's modernization, eventually culminating in its repression during the Cultural Revolution in the People's Republic of China. Since the end of the Cultural Revolution, Confucianism has been revived in mainland China, and both interest in and debate about Confucianism have surged.

Confucianism as passed down to the 19th and 20th centuries derives primarily from the school of the Neo-Confucians, led by Zhu Xi, who gave Confucianism renewed vigor in the Song and later dynasties. Neo-Confucianism combined Taoist and Buddhist ideas with existing Confucian ideas to create a more complete metaphysics than had ever existed before. At the same time, many forms of Confucianism have historically declared themselves opposed to the Buddhist and Taoist belief systems.

Confucius (551 BCE – 479 BCE) was a sage and social philosopher of China whose teachings have deeply influenced East Asia, including China, Korea, and Japan for two thousand five hundred years. The relationship between Confucianism and Confucius himself, however, is tenuous. Confucius' ideas were not accepted during his lifetime and he frequently bemoaned the fact that he remained unemployed by any of the feudal lords.

As with many other prominent figures, such as Jesus, Socrates, and Buddha, Confucius did not leave any writings to put forward his ideas. Instead, only texts with recollections by his disciples and their students are available. This factor is further complicated by the " Burning of the Books and Burying of the Scholars", a massive suppression of dissenting thought during the Qin Dynasty, more than two centuries after Confucius' death.

However, we can sketch out Confucius' ideas from the fragments that remain. Confucius was a man of letters who worried about the troubled times in which he lived. He went from place to place trying to spread his political ideas and influence to the many kings contending for supremacy in China.

In the Eastern Zhou Dynasty (772 BCE–221 BCE), the reigning king of the Zhou gradually became a mere figurehead. In this power vacuum, the rulers of small states began to vie with one another for military and political dominance. Deeply persuaded of the need for his mission — "If right principles prevailed through the empire, there would be no need for me to change its state" *Analects* XVIII, 6 — Confucius tirelessly promoted the virtues of ancient illustrious sages such as the Duke of Zhou. Confucius tried to amass sufficient political power to found a new dynasty, as when he planned to accept an invitation from a rebel to "make a Zhou dynasty in the East" (*Analects* XV, 5). As the common saying that Confucius was a "king without a crown" indicates, however, he never gained the opportunity to apply his ideas. He was expelled from states many times and eventually returned to his homeland to spend the last part of his life teaching. The *Analects of Confucius*, the closest primary source we have for his thoughts, relates his sayings and discussions with rulers and disciples in short passages. There is considerable debate over how to interpret the Analects.

Unlike most European and American philosophers, Confucius did not rely on deductive reasoning to convince his listeners. Instead, he used figures of rhetoric such as analogy and aphorism to explain his ideas. Most of the time these techniques were highly contextualized. For these reasons, European and American readers might find his philosophy muddled or unclear. However, Confucius claimed that he sought "a unity all pervading" (*Analects* XV, 3) and that there was "one single thread binding my way together." ([*op. cit.* IV, 15]). The first occurrences of a real Confucian system may have been created by his disciples or by their disciples. During the philosophically fertile period of the Hundred Schools of Thought, great early figures of Confucianism such as Mencius and Xun Zi (not to be confused with Sun Zi) developed Confucianism into an ethical and political doctrine. Both had to fight contemporary ideas and gain the ruler's confidence through argumentation and reasoning. Mencius gave Confucianism a fuller explanation of human nature, of what is needed for good government, of what morality is, and founded his idealist doctrine on the claim that human nature is good. Xun Zi opposed many of Mencius' ideas, and built a structured system upon the idea that human nature is bad and had to be educated and exposed to the rites, before being able to express their goodness for the people. Some of Xun Zi's disciples, such as Han Feizi and Li Si, became Legalists (a kind of law-based early totalitarianism, quite distant from virtue-based Confucianism) and conceived the state system that allowed Qin Shi Huang to unify China under the strong state control of every human activity. The culmination of Confucius' dream of unification and peace in China can therefore be argued to have come from Legalism, a school of thought almost diametrically opposed to his reliance on rites and virtue.

Rites

> "Lead the people with administrative injunctions and put them in their place with penal law, and they will avoid punishments but will be without a sense of shame. Lead them with excellence and put them in their place through roles and ritual practices, and in addition to developing a sense of shame, they will order themselves harmoniously." (*Analects* II, 3)

The above explains an essential difference between legalism and ritualism and points to a key difference between European / American and East Asian societies, particularly in the realm of an individual's moral compass, when deserving of punishment for breaking penal law.

Of course, as with all translations of literature from ancient sources, excessive literal analysis of one particular translation may lead to unfounded conclusions. An example would be the following passage, the exact same as the one just provided.

The Master said, 'Guide them by edicts, keep them in line with punishments, and the common people will stay out of trouble but will have no sense of shame. Guide them by virtue, keep them in line with the rites, and they will, besides having a sense of shame, reform themselves.

(*Analects* II, 3)

Statue of Confucius on Chongming Island in Shanghai

Varying translations throughout the 18th, 19th, 20th, and now this century have created a large and diverse collection based on the originals. Therefore, only studying all of these translations would allow accurate analysis of the ancient text. The availability of numerous qualified sources for these translations in the modern age can lead to a true "general consensus" of what message Confucius meant to imply.

Confucius argues that under law, *external* authorities administer punishments *after* illegal actions, so people generally behave well without understanding reasons why they should; where as with ritual, patterns of behaviour are *internalized* and exert their influence *before* actions are taken, so people behave properly because they fear shame and want to avoid losing face. In this sense, "rite" (Chinese: 禮; pinyin: lǐ) is an ideal form of social norm.

The Chinese character for "rites" previously had the religious meaning of "sacrifice". Its Confucian meaning ranges from politeness and propriety to the understanding of each person's correct place in society. Externally, ritual is used to distinguish between people; their usage allows people to know at all times who is the younger and who the elder, who is the guest and who the host and so forth. Internally, they indicate to people their duty amongst others and what to expect from them.

Internalization is the main process in ritual. Formalized behavior becomes progressively internalized, desires are channeled and personal cultivation becomes the mark of social correctness. Though this idea conflicts with the common saying that "the cowl does not make the monk", in Confucianism sincerity is what enables behaviour to be absorbed by individuals. Obeying ritual with sincerity makes ritual the most powerful way to cultivate oneself. Thus,

"Respectfulness, without the Rites, becomes laborious bustle; carefulness, without the Rites, become timidity; boldness, without the Rites, becomes insubordination; straightforwardness, without the Rites, becomes rudeness" (*Analects* VIII, 2).

Ritual can be seen as a means to find the balance between opposing qualities that might otherwise lead to conflict.

Ritual divides people into categories and builds hierarchical relationships through protocols and ceremonies, assigning everyone a place in society and a form of behaviour. Music that seems to have played a significant role in Confucius' life is given as an exception as it transcends such boundaries, 'unifying the hearts'.

Although the *Analects* promotes ritual heavily, Confucius himself often behaved otherwise; for example, when he cried at his preferred disciple's death, or when he met a fiendish princess (VI, 28). Later more rigid ritualisms who forgot that ritual is "more than presents of jade and silk" (XVII, 12) strayed from their master's position.

Governance

"To govern by virtue, let us compare it to the North Star: it stays in its place, while the myriad stars wait upon it." (*Analects* II, 1)

Another key Confucian concept is that in order to govern others one must first govern oneself. When developed sufficiently, the king's personal virtue spreads beneficent influence throughout the kingdom. This idea is developed further in the Great Learning and is tightly linked with the Taoist concept of wu wei (traditional Chinese: 無為; simplified Chinese: 无为; pinyin: wú wèi): the less the king does, the more that is done. By being the "calm centre" around which the kingdom turns, the king allows everything to function smoothly and avoids having to tamper with the individual parts of the whole.

Confucian temple in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, Republic of China

This idea may be traced back to early shamanistic beliefs, such as that the king (Chinese: 王; pinyin: wáng) being the axle between the sky, human beings and the Earth. The character itself shows the three levels of the universe, united by a single line. Another complementary view is that this idea may have been used by ministers and counsellors to deter aristocratic whims that would otherwise be to the detriment of the population.

Meritocracy

"In teaching, there should be no distinction of classes."
(*Analects* XV, 39)

Although Confucius claimed that he never invented anything but was only transmitting ancient knowledge (see *Analects* VII, 1), he did produce a number of new ideas. Many European and American admirers such as Voltaire and H. G. Creel point to the (then) revolutionary idea of replacing the nobility of blood with

one of virtue. Jūnzǐ (君子), which had meant "noble man" before Confucius' work, slowly assumed a new connotation in the course of his writings, rather as "gentleman" did in English. A virtuous plebeian who cultivates his qualities can be a "gentleman", while a shameless son of the king is only a "small man". That he allowed students of different classes to be his disciples is a clear demonstration that he fought against the feudal structures in Chinese society.

Another new idea, that of meritocracy, led to the introduction of the Imperial examination system in China. This system allowed anyone who passed an examination to become a government officer, a position which would bring wealth and honour to the whole family. The Chinese examination system seems to have been started in 165 BCE, when certain candidates for public office were called to the Chinese capital for examination of their moral excellence by the emperor. Over the following centuries the system grew until finally almost anyone who wished to become an official had to prove his worth by passing written government examinations.

Confucius praised those kings who left their kingdoms to those apparently most qualified rather than to their elder sons. His achievement was the setting up of a school that produced statesmen with a strong sense of state and duty, known as 儒家 (Chinese: 儒 家; pinyin: Rújiā). During the Warring States Period and the early Han dynasty, China grew greatly and the need for a solid and centralized corporation of government officers able to read and write administrative papers arose. As a result, Confucianism was promoted and the men it produced became an effective counter to the remaining landowner aristocrats otherwise threatening the unity of the state.

Since then Confucianism has been used as a kind of " state religion", with authoritarianism, legitimism, paternalism, and submission to authority used as political tools to rule China. Most emperors used a mix of legalism and Confucianism as their ruling doctrine, often with the latter embellishing the former.

Themes in Confucian thought

A simple way to appreciate Confucian thought is to consider it as being based on varying levels of honesty. In practice, the elements of Confucianism accumulated over time and matured into the following forms:

Ritual

In Confucianism the term " ritual(Chinese 礼, pinyin lǐ)" was soon extended to include secular ceremonial behaviour before being used to refer to the propriety or politeness which colors everyday life. Rituals were codified and treated as a comprehensive system of norms. Confucius himself tried to revive the etiquette of earlier dynasties. After his death, people regarded him as a great authority on ritual behaviors.

It is important to note that "ritual" has a different meaning in the context of Confucianism, especially today, from its context in many religions. In Confucianism, the acts that people tend to carry out in every day life are considered ritual. Rituals are not necessarily regimented or arbitrary practices, but the routines that people often undergo knowingly or unknowingly through out their lives. Shaping the rituals in a way that leads to a content and healthy society, and to content and healthy people, is one purpose of Confucian philosophy.

Relationships

One theme central to Confucianism is that of relationships, and the differing duties arising from the different status one held in relation to others. Individuals are held to simultaneously stand in different degrees of relationship with different people, namely, as a junior in relation to their parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to their younger siblings, students, and others. While juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe strong duties of reverence and service to their seniors, seniors also have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. This theme consistently manifests itself in many aspects of East Asian cultures even to this day, with extensive filial duties on the part of children toward parents and elders, and great concern of parents toward their children.

Social harmony -- the great goal of Confucianism -- thus results partly from every individual knowing his or her place in the social order and playing his or her part well. When Duke Jing of Qi asked about government, by which he meant proper administration so as to bring social harmony, Confucius replied,

> "There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister; when the father is father, and the son is son." (*Analects* XII, 11, tr. Legge).

Filial piety

"Filial piety" (Chinese: 孝; pinyin: xiào) is considered among the greatest of virtues and must be shown towards both the living and the dead (ancestors). The term "filial", meaning "of a child", denotes the respect that a child, originally a son, should show to his parents. This relationship was extended by analogy to a series of *five relationships* (Chinese: 五 倫; pinyin: wǔlún):

1. Sovereign to subject
2. Parent to child
3. Husband to wife
4. Elder to younger sibling
5. Friend to friend (The members of this relationship are equal to one another)

Specific duties were prescribed to each of the participants in these sets of relationships. Such duties were also extended to the dead, where the living stood as sons to their deceased family. This led to the veneration of ancestors.

In time filial piety was also built into the Chinese legal system: a criminal would be punished more harshly if the culprit had committed the crime against a parent, while fathers often exercised enormous power over their children. Much the same was true of other unequal relationships.

The main source of our knowledge of the importance of filial piety is *The Book of Filial Piety*, a work attributed to Confucius and his son but almost certainly written in the third century BCE. Filial piety has continued to play a central role in Confucian thinking to the present day.

Loyalty

Loyalty (Chinese: 忠; pinyin: zhōng) is the equivalent of filial piety on a different plane. It was particularly relevant for the social class to which most of Confucius' students belonged, because the only way for an ambitious young scholar to make his way in the Confucian Chinese world was to enter a ruler's civil

service. Like filial piety, however, loyalty was often subverted by the autocratic regimes of China. Confucius had advocated a sensitivity to the realpolitik of the class relations that existed in his time; he did not propose that "might makes right", but that a superior who had received the " Mandate of Heaven" (see below) should be obeyed because of his moral rectitude.

In later ages, however, emphasis was placed more on the obligations of the ruled to the ruler, and less on the ruler's obligations to the ruled.

Loyalty was also an extension of one's duties to friends, family, and spouse. Loyalty to one's leader came first, then to one's family, then to one's spouse, and lastly to one's friends. Loyalty was considered one of the greater human virtues.

Humanity

Confucius was concerned with people's individual development, which he maintained took place within the context of human relationships. Ritual and filial piety 仁 are the ways in which one should act towards others from an underlying attitude of humaneness. Confucius' concept of humaneness (Chinese: 仁; pinyin: rén) is probably best expressed in the Confucian version of the (Ethic of reciprocity) Golden Rule: "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others;".

Rén also has a political dimension. If the ruler lacks *rén*, Confucianism holds, it will be difficult if not impossible for his subjects to behave humanely. *Rén* is the basis of Confucian political theory: it presupposes an autocratic ruler, exhorted to refrain from acting inhumanely towards his subjects. An inhumane ruler runs the risk of losing the "Mandate of Heaven", the right to rule. Such a mandateless ruler need not be obeyed. But a ruler who reigns humanely and takes care of the people is to be obeyed strictly, for the benevolence of his dominion shows that he has been mandated by heaven. Confucius himself had little to say on the will of the people, but his leading follower Mencius did state on one occasion that the people's opinion on certain weighty matters should be polled.

The gentleman

The term "Jūnzǐ" (Chinese: 君 子; literally "nobleman") is crucial to classical Confucianism. The ideal of a "gentleman" or "perfect man" is that for which Confucianism exhorts all people to strive. A succinct description of the "perfect man" is one who "combines the qualities of saint, scholar, and gentleman" (CE). In modern times the masculine translation in English is also traditional and is still frequently used. Elitism was bound up with the concept, and gentlemen were expected to act as moral guides to the rest of society.

They were to:

- cultivate themselves morally;
- show filial piety and loyalty where these are due;
- cultivate humanity, or benevolence.

The great exemplar of the perfect gentleman is Confucius himself. Perhaps the greatest tragedy of his life was that he was never awarded the high official position which he desired, from which he wished to demonstrate the general well-being that would ensue if humane persons ruled and administered the state.

The opposite of the *Jūnzǐ* was the *Xiǎorén* (Chinese: 小 人; pinyin: xiǎorén; literally "small person"). The character 小 in this context means petty in mind and heart, narrowly self-interested, greedy, superficial, or materialistic.

Debates

Promotion of corruption

Like some other political philosophies, Confucianism is reluctant to employ laws. In a society where relationships are considered more important than the laws themselves, if no other power forces government officers to take the common interest into consideration, corruption and nepotism may arise. As government officers' salary was often far lower than the minimum required to raise a family, Chinese society was frequently affected by those problems. Even if some means to control and reduce corruption and nepotism have been successfully used in China, Confucianism is criticized for not providing such a means itself.

Another new idea, that of meritocracy, led to the introduction of the Imperial examination system in China. This system allowed anyone who passed an examination to become a government officer, a position which would bring wealth and honour to the whole family.

Is Confucianism a "religion?"

Most religions can be defined as having a set God or group of gods, an organized priesthood, a belief in a life after death, and organized traditions, thus it is debatable whether Confucianism should be called a true "religion". While it prescribes a great deal of ritual, little of it could be construed as worship or meditation in a formal sense. However, Tian is sacred to many Confucians. Confucius occasionally made statements about the existence of other-worldly beings that sound distinctly agnostic and humanistic to European and American ears. Thus, Confucianism is often considered a secular ethical tradition and not a "religion." It is best described as a philosophy with special rituals and beliefs.

Its effect on Chinese and other East Asian societies and cultures has been immense and parallels the effects of religious movements, seen in other cultures. Those who follow the teachings of Confucius say that they are comforted by it. It includes a great deal of ritual and, in its Neo-Confucian formulation, gives a comprehensive explanation of the world, of human nature, etc. Moreover, religions in Chinese culture are not mutually exclusive entities — each tradition is free to find its specific niche, its field of specialization. One can practise religions such as Taoism, Christianity, Judaism, Sikhism, the Baha'i Faith, Jainism, Islam, Shinto, Buddhism, or Zoroastrianism and still profess Confucian beliefs.

Although Confucianism may include ancestor worship, sacrifice to ancestral spirits and an abstract celestial deity, and the deification of ancient kings and even Confucius himself, all these features can be traced back to non-Confucian Chinese beliefs established long before Confucius and, in this respect, make it difficult to claim that such rituals make Confucianism a religion.

Generally speaking, Confucianism is not considered a religion by Chinese or other East Asian people. Part of this attitude may be explained by the stigma placed on many "religions" as being superstitious, illogical, or unable to deal with modernity. Many Buddhists state that Buddhism is not a religion, but a philosophy, and this is partially a reaction to negative popular views of religion. Similarly, Confucians maintain that Confucianism is not a religion, but rather a

moral code or philosophic world view. Many "religions" practiced in East Asia such as Buddhism and Taoism can be considered as "not religions." There is a much more blurred line between religion and philosophy in non-Western thought. Most of the Western distinction is in fact a relatively recent phenomenon resulting from the Enlightenment period unique to Western Europe. Therefore, much of the confusion is primarily due to the conventional Western definition of religion centered around Judeo-Christian-Muslim traditions. Most scholarly, comprehensive definitions of religion account for this cultural difference. Therefore, it could be said that while Confucianism is not a religion by Western standards (even according to Asian adherents), it is a religion in the East Asian sense of the word.

The question of whether Confucianism is a religion, or otherwise, is ultimately a definitional problem. If the definition used is worship of supernatural entities, the answer may be that Confucianism is not a religion. If, on the other hand, a religion is defined as (for example) a belief system that includes moral stances, guides for daily life, systematic views of humanity and its place in the universe, etc., then Confucianism most definitely qualifies. As with many such important concepts, the definition of religion is quite contentious. Herbert Fingarette's *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* is a well-known treatment of this issue.

Names for Confucianism

Several names for Confucianism exist in Chinese.

- "School of the scholars" (Chinese: 儒 家; pinyin: Rújiā)
- "Teaching of the scholars" (Chinese: 儒 教; pinyin: Rújiào)
- "Study of the scholars" (traditional Chinese: 儒 學; simplified Chinese: 儒 学; pinyin: Rúxué)
- "Teaching of Confucius" (Chinese: 孔 教; pinyin: Kǒngjiào)

Three of these four use the Chinese character Rú, meaning "scholar". These names do not use the name "Confucius" at all, but instead centre on the figure/ideal of the Confucian scholar. However, the suffixes of jiā, jiào, and xué carry different implications as to the nature of Confucianism itself.

Rújiā contains the character jiā, which literally means "house" or "family". In this context, it is more readily construed as meaning "school of thought", since it is also used to construct the names of philosophical schools contemporary to Confucianism: for example, the Chinese names for Legalism and Mohism end in jiā.

Rújiào and Kǒngjiào contain the Chinese character jiào, the noun "teach", used in such as terms as "education" or "educator". The term, however, is notably used to construct the names of religions in Chinese: the terms for Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Shintō and other religions in Chinese all end with jiào.

Rúxué contains xué, meaning literally "study". The term is parallel to "-ology" in English, being used to construct the names of academic fields: the Chinese names of fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, political science, economics, and sociology all end in xué.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Confucianism"

Dead Sea scrolls

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Dead Sea Scrolls** consist of roughly 1,000 documents, including texts from the Hebrew Bible, discovered between 1947 and 1979 in eleven caves in and around the Wadi Qumran (near the ruins of the ancient settlement of Khirbet Qumran, on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea) in the West Bank. The texts are of great religious and historical significance, as they include practically the only known surviving copies of Biblical documents made before 100 CE, and preserve evidence of considerable diversity of belief and practice within late Second Temple Judaism.

Discovery

The scrolls were found in 11 caves, ranging in distance of 125m (Cave 4) to about 1000m (Cave 1) from the settlement at Qumran, located 1km off the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. None of them were found at the actual settlement. It is generally accepted that a Bedouin goat- or sheep-herder by the name of Mohammed Ahmed el-Hamed (nicknamed edh-Dhib, "the wolf") made the first discovery toward the beginning of 1947.

In the most commonly told story the shepherd threw a rock into a cave in an attempt to drive out a missing animal under his care. The shattering sound of pottery drew him into the cave, where he found several ancient jars containing scrolls wrapped in linen. Another theory was that two young boys were looking for a lost goat and came upon some of them.

Dr. John C. Trever carried out a number of interviews with several men going by the name of Muhammed edh-Dhib, each relating a variation on this tale.

The scrolls were first brought to a Bethlehem antiquities dealer named Ibrahim 'Ijha, who returned them after being warned that they may have been stolen from a synagogue. The scrolls then fell into the hands of Khalil Eskander Shahin, "Kando", a cobbler and antiques dealer. By most accounts the Bedouin removed only three scrolls following their initial find, later revisiting the site to gather more, possibly encouraged by Kando. Alternatively, it is postulated that Kando engaged in his own illegal excavation: Kando himself possessed at least four scrolls.

Arrangements with the Bedouins left the scrolls in the hands of a third party until a sale of them could be negotiated. That third party, George Isha'ya, was a member of the Syrian Orthodox Church, who soon contacted St. Mark's Monastery in the hope of getting an appraisal of the nature of the texts. News of the find then reached Metropolitan Athanasius Yeshue Samuel, more often referred to as Mar Samuel.

After examining the scrolls and suspecting their age, Mar Samuel expressed an interest in purchasing them. Four scrolls found their way into his hands: the now famous Isaiah Scroll (1QIs[a]), the Community Rule, the Habakkuk Peshar (Commentary), and the Genesis Apocryphon. More scrolls soon surfaced in the antiquities market, and Professor Eleazer Sukenik, an Israeli archaeologist and scholar at Hebrew University, found himself in possession of three: The War Scroll, Thanksgiving Hymns, and another more fragmented Isaiah scroll.

Fragments of the scrolls on display at the Archaeological Museum, Amman

The caves in which the scrolls were found

By the end of 1947, Sukenik received word of the scrolls in Mar Samuel's possession and attempted to purchase them. No deal was reached, and instead the scrolls found the attention of Dr. John C. Trever, of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR). Dr. Trever compared the script in the scrolls to the Nash Papyrus, the oldest biblical manuscript at the time, finding similarities between the two.

Dr. Trever, a keen amateur photographer, met with Mar Samuel on February 21, 1948, when he photographed the scrolls. The quality of his photographs often exceeded that of the scrolls themselves over the years, as the texts quickly eroded once removed from their linen wraps.

In March of that year, the 1948 Arab-Israeli War prompted the removal of the scrolls from the country for safekeeping. The scrolls were removed to Beirut.

In early September 1948, Mar Samuel brought Professor Ovid R. Sellers, the new Director of ASOR, some additional scroll fragments that he had acquired. By the end of 1948, nearly two years after the discovery of the scrolls, scholars had yet to locate the cave where the fragments had been found. With the unrest in the country, no large scale search could be undertaken. Sellers attempted to get the Syrians to help locate the cave, but they demanded more money than Sellers could offer. Cave 1 was finally discovered on January 28, 1949 by a United Nations observer.

After some time, the Dead Sea Scrolls went up for sale in a June 1, 1954 advertisement in the Wall Street Journal.

> MISCELLANEOUS FOR SALE
>
> THE Four DEAD SEA SCROLLS
>
> Biblical manuscripts dating back to at least 200 B.C.
> are for sale. This would be and ideal gift to an educational
> or religious institution by an individual or group.
> Box F 206 WALL STREET JOURNAL

On July 1, after some delicate negotiations, the scrolls, accompanied by the Metropolitan and two others, came to the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York. They were purchased for US$250,000. Only some of this Mar Samuel actually got: due to a mix up in paperwork, the US government received most of the money, due to taxes.

Cave 2

Bedouins discovered 300 fragments of other scrolls in Cave 2, including Jubilees & Ben Sirach in the original Hebrew.

Cave 3

One of the most curious scrolls is the Copper Scroll. Discovered in Cave 3, this scroll records a list of 67 underground hiding places throughout the land of Israel. According to the scroll, the deposits contain certain amounts of gold, silver, aromatics, and manuscripts. These are believed to be treasures from the

Temple at Jerusalem that were hidden away for safekeeping. The Copper Scroll is currently being translated and the first two sections reveal the location of gold ingots and silver in the form of Shekels (a coin used in Israel in ancient times). According to Biblical Currency is equal to .364 oz. (troy). In a value of silver, it is equal to $7.28. As for gold, it is equal to $364.

Cave 4

80% of all the scrolls were found here and 90% were published. Cave 4 had 15,000 fragments from 500 different texts.

Caves 5 and 6

Caves 5 and 6 were discovered shortly after cave 4. Caves 5 and 6 yielded a modest find.

Caves 7–10

Archaeologists excavated caves 7 through 10 in 1955, but did not find many fragments. Cave 7 contained seventeen Greek documents (including 7Q5, which would be the subject of controversy in the succeeding decades). Cave 8 only had five fragments and cave 9 held 18. Cave 10 contained nothing but a single ostracon.

Cave 11

The Temple Scroll, so called because more than half of it pertains to the construction of the Temple of Jerusalem, was found in Cave 11, and is the longest scroll. Its present length is 26.7 feet (8.148 metres). The total length of the original scroll may have been over 28 feet (8.75m). The Temple Scroll document, sectarian in nature, was regarded by Yigael Yadin as the Torah according to the Essenes. Hartmann Steggemann, a contemporary and friend of Yadin, believed that the Temple Scroll was not to be considered as the Torah of the Essenes, but that it was just another record or document without any special significance. Steggemann notes that the Temple Scroll is not once mentioned or referred to in other Essene writings found to-date (2008).

Publication

Some of the documents were published in a prompt manner: all of the writings found in Cave 1 appeared in print between 1950 and 1956; the finds from 8 other caves were released in a single volume in 1963; and 1965 saw the publication of the Psalms Scroll from Cave 11. Translation of these materials quickly followed.

The exception to this was the documents from Cave 4, which represent 40% of the total finds. The publication of these had been entrusted to an international team led by Father Roland de Vaux, a member of the Dominican Order in Jerusalem. This group published the first volume of the material entrusted to them in 1968, but spent much of their energies defending their theories regarding the materials, instead of publishing them. Geza Vermes, who had been involved from

the start in the editing and publication of these documents, blamed the delay—and eventual failure—on de Vaux's selection of a team unsuited to the quality of work he had planned, as well as relying on "his personal, quasi-patriarchal authority" to control the completion of the work.

As a result, a large part of the finds from Cave 4 were not made public for many years. Access to the scrolls was governed by a "secrecy rule" that allowed only the original International Team or their designates to view the original materials. After de Vaux's death in 1971, his successors repeatedly refused even to allow the publication of photographs of these materials, preventing other scholars from making their own judgments. This rule was eventually broken: first by Ben Zion Wacholder's publication in the fall of 1991 of 17 documents reconstructed from a concordance that had been made in 1988 and had come into the hands of scholars outside of the International Team; next, in the same month, by the discovery and publication of a complete set of photographs of the Cave 4 materials at the Huntington Library in San Marino, California, that were not covered by the "secrecy rule". After some delays these photographs were published by Robert Eisenman and James Robinson (*A Facsimile Edition of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, two volumes, Washington, D.C., 1991). As a result, the "secrecy rule" was lifted.

Publication accelerated with the appointment of the respected Dutch-Israeli textual scholar Emanuel Tov as editor-in-chief in 1990. Publication of the Cave 4 documents soon commenced, with five volumes in print by 1995. As of 2007 two volumes remain to be completed, with the whole series, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, running to thirty nine volumes in total.

Significance

The significance of the scrolls relates in a large part to the field of textual criticism. Before the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, the oldest Hebrew manuscripts of the Bible were Masoretic texts dating to 9th century. The biblical manuscripts found among the Dead Sea Scrolls push that date back to the 2nd century BC. Before this discovery, the earliest extant manuscripts of the Old Testament were in Greek in manuscripts such as Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. Although a few of the biblical manuscripts found at Qumran differ significantly from the Masoretic text, most do not. The scrolls thus provide new variants and the ability to be more confident of those readings where the Dead Sea manuscripts agree with the Masoretic text or with the early Greek manuscripts.

Further, the sectarian texts among the Dead Sea Scrolls, most of which were previously unknown, offer new light on one form of Judaism practiced during the Second Temple period.

Frequency of books found

Books Ranked According to Number of Manuscripts found (top 16)

Books	No. found
Psalms	39
Deuteronomy	33
1 Enoch	25
Genesis	24

Isaiah	22
Jubilees	21
Exodus	18
Leviticus	17
Numbers	11
Minor Prophets	10
Daniel	8
Jeremiah	6
Ezekiel	6
Job	6
1 & 2 Samuel	4

Conspiracy and other theories

Because they are frequently described as important to the history of the Bible, the scrolls are surrounded by a wide range of conspiracy theories. There is also writing about the Nephilim related to the Book of Enoch. Theories with more support among scholars include Qumran as a military fortress or a winter resort; see above (Abegg et al 2002).

Digital Copies of the Dead Sea Scrolls

High resolution images of *all* discovered material are not available online for public examination. However, they can be purchased in inexpensive multi-volumes (on disc media or in book form) or viewed in certain university libraries.

According to Computer Weekly (16th Nov 2007), a team from King's College London is to advise the Israeli Antiquities Authority, who are planning to digitise the scrolls.

The text of nearly all of the non-biblical scrolls has been recorded and tagged for morphology by Dr. Martin Abegg, Jr., the Ben Zion Wacholder Professor of Dead Sea Scroll Studies at Trinity Western University in Langley, BC, Canada. It is available on handheld devices through Olive Tree Bible Software - BibleReader, on Macs through Accordance, and on Windows through Logos Bible Software and BibleWorks.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Sea_scrolls"

Eastern Orthodox Church

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

The **Eastern Orthodox Church** is the second largest single Christian communion in the world. It is considered by its adherents to be the very same Church established by Christ and his Apostles. It is composed of numerous theologically unified autocephalous ecclesial bodies, each shepherded by a synod of independent bishops whose duty is to preserve the beliefs and practices (Traditions) of the Church. All Orthodox bishops can trace their lineage back to one of the twelve Apostles through the process of apostolic succession.

Eastern Orthodox Christians believe that the Orthodox Church is:

- The authentic and original Christian Church established by Jesus Christ and his Apostles.
- The preserver of the teachings and traditions given to the Early Christians by the Apostles nearly 2000 years ago; and the developer of conciliar interpretations which expand and illuminate the original teachings.
- The preserver of Truth which compares all newer theological ideas to the already established beliefs and practices of the Church; accepting ideas that clarify and correctly teach, while rejecting ideas that are theologically incompatible with the original teachings.
- The preserver and compiler of the New Testament whose texts were written to members of the Church in ancient times and expressed an already established doctrine.

Pentecost: The spread of Christianity begins.

A Note on Nomenclature

Members of the Eastern Orthodox Church usually refer to themselves as simply Orthodox. Eastern is a term often applied in the Western World for the sake of clarity. Members of the Orthodox Church consider themselves to be members of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, as do members of the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Communion, the Assyrian Church, the Coptic Church, and others. As the Orthodox see it the Assyrians and Copts broke from the church after the first few centuries and the Roman Catholics in 1054. Since then the Eastern Church has referred to itself as Orthodox (literally: "Correct Believing"). National pride, local provincialism or frequent use in literature and media outside the Orthodox cultures has led to the addition of national epithets such as "Greek Orthodox", "Russian Orthodox", "Serbian Orthodox", etc. Despite occasional misinformed references to "Russian Orthodox" and "Greek Orthodox" as separate denominations, there are no more differences between these than between terms like "Irish Catholic" or "Italian Catholic". Theologically and spiritually its members believe to be part of only One Church, the Orthodox Church.

Several other ancient Churches in Eastern Europe, Western Asia, and North Africa also use the term *Orthodox*, but are distinct from the Eastern Orthodox Church as described in this article.

Organization and leadership

The Orthodox Church considers Jesus Christ to be the head of the Church and the Church to be His body. Thus, despite widely held popular belief outside the Orthodox cultures, there is no one bishop at the head of the Orthodox Church; references to the Archbishop, or "Patriarch" of Constantinople (essentially an honorary title) as a leader equivalent or comparable to a Pope in the Catholic Church is mistaken. It is believed that authority and the Grace of God is directly passed down to Orthodox bishops and clergy through the laying on of hands—a practice started by the apostles, and that this unbroken historical and physical link is an essential element of the true church (Acts 8:17, 1 Tim 4:14, Heb 6:2). Each bishop has a territory (see) over which he governs. His main duty is to make sure the traditions and practices of the Church remain inviolate. Bishops are equal in authority and cannot interfere in each others' territory. Administratively, these bishops and their territories are organized into various autocephalous groups or synods of bishops who gather together at least twice a year to discuss the state of affairs within their respective sees. While bishops and their autocephalous synods have the ability to administer guidance in individual cases, their actions do not usually set precedents that affect the entire church. There have been, however, a number of times when heretical ideas arose to challenge the Orthodox faith and it was necessary to convene a general or "Great" council of all available bishops. The Church considers the first seven ecumenical councils (held between the 4th and the 8th century) to be the most important; however, there have been more, specifically the Synods of Constantinople, 879– 880, 1341, 1347, 1351, 1583, 1819, and 1872, the Synod of Iaşi (Jassy), 1642, and the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Jerusalem, 1672, all of which helped to define the Orthodox position. These councils did not create the doctrines of the church but rather compared the new ideas to the traditional beliefs of the Church. Ideas that were not supported by the traditions of the church were deemed heresy and expunged from the church. The ecumenical councils followed a democratic form with each bishop having one vote. Though present and allowed to speak before the council, members of the Imperial Roman/Byzantine court, abbots, priests, monks and laymen were not allowed to vote. The bishop of the old Roman capital, the Pope of Rome, though not present at all of the councils, was considered to be president of the council and thus called "First Among Equals" until the great schism of 1054. One of the decisions made by the second council and supported by later councils was that the Patriarch of Constantinople, since Constantinople was the " New Rome", should be given the honor of second in rank. Later, because of the split with Rome, the honour of presiding over these general councils was transferred to the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople who was also given the title, "First Among Equals", reflecting both his administrative leadership and his spiritual equality. He is not, however, considered to be the head or leader of the church and several other bishops of important cities of Eastern Christianity have also been granted the honorary title of Patriarch, i.e. Alexandria, Antioch (for the Arab world east of Jerusalem), Jerusalem, Moscow, Peć (for all of Serbia), Bucharest. The Patriarch of Tbilissi (Georgia) is also called a "Catholicos".

Number of adherents

Based on the numbers of adherents, Eastern Orthodoxy is the second largest Christian communion in the world after the Roman Catholic Church. The most common estimates of the number of Eastern Orthodox Christians worldwide is approximately 225-300 million individuals. Orthodoxy is the largest single religious faith in Belarus (88%), Bulgaria (83%), Republic of Macedonia (80%), Republic of Cyprus (80%), Georgia (89%), Greece (98%), Moldova (98%), Montenegro (84%), Romania (87%), Russia (80%), Serbia (84%), and Ukraine (80%). The number of Eastern Orthodox adherents represents about 39% of the

population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. As the dominant religion in northern Kazakhstan, it represents 44% of the Kazakhstan, and 4% of Lithuania, 9% of Latvia, and 13% of the Estonian population. Large Christian Orthodox communities exist in the middle eastern countries of Israel/ Palestine (including the West Bank and Gaza), Lebanon, Syria and Jordan (some families can trace their ancestry to the earliest Christians of the Holy Land). In addition, there are also significant Orthodox communities in Western Europe (solely the transplanted Romanian, Serbian, Albanian, Greek and Armenian communities), Africa, Asia, Australia, North America, and South America through the pattern of immigration from Eastern Europe and the Middle East in the last 400 or some years.

Beliefs

Trinity

Orthodox Christians believe in a God who is both three and one (triune). The Father is the cause or origin of the Godhead, from whom the Son is begotten eternally and also from whom the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally. The Holy Trinity is three, distinct, divine persons (*hypostases*), without overlap or modality among them, who share one divine essence (*ousia*)—uncreated, immaterial and eternal. Orthodox doctrine regarding the Holy Trinity is summarized in the Symbol of Faith.

In discussing God's relationship to his creation, Orthodoxy used the concept of a distinction between God's eternal essence which is totally transcendent and his *uncreated energies* which is how he reaches us. It is also necessary to understand that this is an artificial distinction, not a real one. The God who is transcendent and the God who touches us are one and the same..

Sin, salvation and the incarnation

Human nature, before the fall of man, was pure and innocent. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, they introduced a new element into human nature (i.e. sin and corruption). This new state prevented man from participation in the Kingdom of Heaven. When God became incarnate on Earth, he changed human nature by uniting the human and the Divine; for this Christ is often called "The New Adam." By his participation in human life, death, and resurrection he sanctified the means whereby we could be restored to our original purity and regain our right relationship with the Father. This is what the Orthodox call salvation from consequences of the sickness of sin. Christ's salvific act worked retroactively back to the beginning of time thus saving all the righteous people from the bonds of sin, including Adam and Eve.

Resurrection
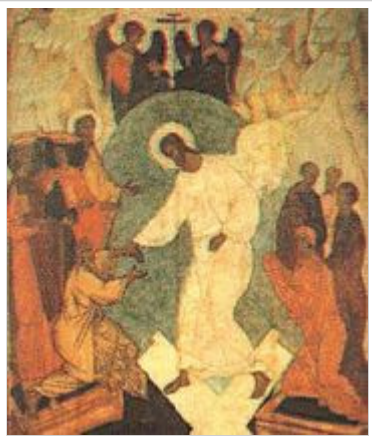
16th century Russian Orthodox icon of the Resurrection

The Resurrection of Christ is the central event in the liturgical year of the Orthodox Church and is understood in literal terms as a real historical event. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was crucified and died, descended into Hell (Hades in Greek), rescued all the souls held there through sin; and then, because Hell could not restrain the infinite God, rose from the dead, thus saving all mankind. Through these events, he released mankind from the bonds of Hell and then came back to the living as man and God. That each individual human may partake of this immortality, which would have been impossible without the Resurrection, is the main promise held out by God in his New Testament with mankind, according to Orthodox Christian tradition.

Every holy day of the Orthodox liturgical year relates to the Resurrection directly or indirectly. Every Sunday of the year is dedicated to celebrating the Resurrection and the triune. In the liturgical commemorations of the Passion of Christ during Holy Week there are frequent allusions to the ultimate victory at its completion.

Bible, holy tradition, and the patristic consensus

The Orthodox Church considers itself to be the historical and organic continuation of the original Church founded by Christ and His apostles. The faith taught by Jesus to the apostles, given life by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and passed down to future generations uncorrupted, is known as *Holy Tradition*. The primary and authoritative witness to Holy Tradition is the Bible, texts written or approved by the apostles to record revealed truth and the early history of the Church. Because of the Bible's inspired origin, it is regarded as central to the life of the Church.

The Bible is always interpreted within the context of Holy Tradition, which gave birth to it and canonized it. Orthodox Christians maintain that belief in a doctrine of *sola scriptura* would be to take the Bible out of the world in which it arose. Orthodox Christians therefore believe that the only way to understand the Bible correctly is within the Orthodox Church.

Other witnesses to Holy Tradition include the liturgy of the Church, its iconography, the rulings of the Ecumenical councils, and the writings of the Church Fathers. From the consensus of the Fathers (*consensus patrum*) one may enter more deeply and understand more fully the Church's life. Individual Fathers are not looked upon as infallible, but rather the whole consensus of them together will give one a proper understanding of the Bible and Christian doctrine.

Growth vs. Change

From the moment Christ was baptized and he began to gather his apostles the "Church" began to grow. There were numerous followers who attached themselves to the Christ and his mission here on Earth. Sometime after Pentecost the Church grew to a point where it was no longer possible for the Apostles alone to minister to her. The Apostles appointed overseers (Bishops) and assistants (Deacons and Deaconesses) to further the administration of the Church. Later still the territories of these Bishops grew too large for them to administer alone and so they created Presbyters who could function in their place as long as they held to the policies created by the Church through the bishops. As the Church grew so did the complexity of this administration. Patriarchs, Metropolitans, Archimandrites, Abbots and Abbesses, all rose up to cover certain points of administration. Synods and Councils were formed to make decisions and to firmly promote the teachings of the Church. Saints arose to clarify and expand the teachings of the Church. God revealed truth through the workings of the Church

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through time. Heresies arose to challenge the Church and were exposed for what they were by comparing them to the Truths sustained by the traditions of the Church. All of this is seen by the Orthodox to represent Growth, but not Change. The Church has never changed from its original state. Truth has been revealed and more complexity has been realized, but change has never occurred.

The Theotokos and the Saints

The Eastern Orthodox Church believes death and the separation of body and soul to be unnatural; a result of man's fall. They also feel that the congregation of the Church comprises both the living and the dead. All persons currently in heaven are considered to be Saints, whether their names are known or not. There are, however, those saints of distinction whom God has revealed to us as particularly good examples for us to learn from either their teachings or their lives. When a Saint is revealed and ultimately recognized by a large portion of the Church a service of official recognition (glorification) is celebrated for the saint. This does not "make" the person a saint, it merely recognizes him and announces it to the rest of the Church. A day is prescribed for the saint's celebration, hymns are composed, and icons are created. Numerous saints are celebrated on each day of the year. They are venerated (shown great respect and love) but not worshiped, for worship is due to God alone. In showing the saints this love and requesting their prayers, it is believed by the Orthodox that they thus assist in the process of salvation for others.

Preeminent among the saints is the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos ("birthgiver of God"). The Theotokos was chosen by God and freely cooperated in that choice to be the mother of Jesus Christ, the God-man. The Orthodox believe that the Christ Child from the moment of conception was both fully God and fully Man. She is thus called Theotokos as an affirmation of the divinity of the one to whom she gave birth. It is also believed that her virginity was not compromised in giving birth to God incarnate, that she was not harmed, that she felt no pain, and that she remained forever a virgin. Because of her unique place in salvation history, she is honored above all other saints and especially venerated for the great work that God accomplished through her.

Because of the holiness of the lives of the saints, their bodies and physical items connected with them are regarded by the Church as also holy. Many miracles have been reported throughout history connected with the saints' relics, often including healing from disease and injury. The veneration and miraculous nature of relics continues from Biblical times.
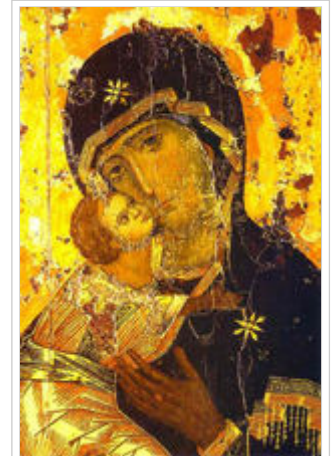
The Theotokos of Vladimir, one of the most venerated of Orthodox Christian icons of the Virgin Mary.

Eschatology

Last Judgment. 12th-century Byzantine mosaic from Torcello Cathedral.

Orthodox Christians believe that when a person dies his soul is "temporarily" separated from his body. Though it may linger for a short period on Earth, it is ultimately escorted either to paradise (Abraham's bosom) or the darkness of Hades, following the Temporary Judgment (Orthodox do not use the term Purgatory). The soul's experience of either of these states is only a "foretaste," being experienced only by the soul, until the Final Judgment, when the soul and body will be reunited. The Orthodox believe that the state of the soul in Hades can be affected by the love and prayers of the righteous up until the Last Judgment. For this reason the church offers special prayer for the dead on the third day, ninth day, fortieth day, and the one-year anniversary after the death of an Orthodox Christian. There are also several days throughout the year that are set aside for general commemoration of the departed. These days usually fall on a Saturday, since it was on a Saturday that Christ lay in the Tomb.

While the Orthodox consider the text of the Apocalypse (Book of Revelation) to be a part of scripture, it is also regarded by them to be a mystery. Speculation on the contents of this text are minimal and it is never read in church as part of the regular order of services. Those theologians who have delved into its pages tend to be amillenniaist in their eschatology, believing that the "thousand years" spoken of in biblical prophecy refers to the present time (from the Crucifixion of Christ until the Second Coming). And while it is not usually taught in church it is often used as a reminder of God's promise to those who love him, and the benefits of avoiding sinful passions. Iconographic depictions of the final judgment are often portrayed on the back wall of the church to remind the faithful as they leave to be vigilant in their struggle against sin. Likewise it is often painted on the walls of the Trapeza (refectory, the room in a monastery where the monastics eat their meals) to inspire sobriety and dis-attachment from worldly things.

The Orthodox believe that after the Final Judgment:

- all souls will be reunited with their resurrected bodies
- that all souls will fully experience their spiritual state
- that having been perfected, mankind will forever progress towards a deeper and fuller love of God, which equates with eternal happiness
- that hell, though often described in metaphor as punishment, is not so much inflicted by God as the soul's inability to participate in God's infinite love which is given freely and abundantly to everyone.

Traditions

## Art and architecture

Church buildings

The church building has many symbolic meanings; perhaps the oldest and most prominent is the concept that the Church is the Ark (as in Noah's) in which the world is saved from the flood of temptations. Because of this, most Orthodox Churches are rectangular in design. Another popular shape, especially for churches with large choirs is cruciform or cross-shaped. Architectural patterns may vary in shape and complexity, with chapels sometimes added around the main church, or triple altars (Liturgy may only be performed once a day on any particular altar), but in general, the symbolic layout of the church remains the same.

The origin of the layout of each Orthodox church is based on Solomon's Temple with the Holy of Holies being separated by the iconostasis or templon.

The Church building is divided into three main parts: the narthex (vestibule), the nave and the sanctuary (also called the *altar* or *holy place*). The narthex is where catechumens and non-Orthodox visitors were traditionally asked to stand during services. It is separated from the nave by "The Royal Gate". On either side of this gate are candle stands (Menalia) representing the pillars of fire that went before the Hebrew people escaping from Egypt. The nave is where most of the congregation stand during services.

An illustration of the traditional interior of an Orthodox Church

Traditionally, men stand on the right and women on the left (This is for a number of reasons, when one considers the family unit the husband dominates the relationship. So, in order to emphasize our relationship is with God and not each other, the family unit is broken up. Men and women stand equally before God, equal distance from the altar, male dominance is de-emphasized). In general, men and women dress modestly with little jewelry or make-up. Women cover their heads as prescribed by St. Paul. Children are considered full members of the Church and stand attentive and quiet during services. There may be a choir area on either side or in a loft in back. There is usually a dome in the ceiling with an icon of Christ depicted as Ruler of the Universe (Pantocrator). At the eastern end of the church is a raised dais with an icon covered screen or wall (iconostasis or templon) separating the nave from the sanctuary. In the center of this wall is the "Beautiful Gate" through which only the clergy may pass. There are access doors on either side usually with icons of the Archangels on them. In the centre of the sanctuary is the Altar. Orthodox priests, when standing at the altar face away from the congregation (They face East). The sanctuary contains all the necessary implements for conducting the various services.
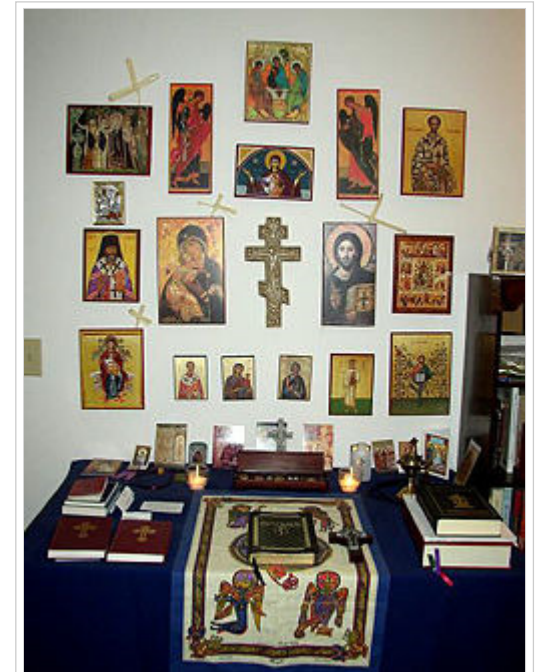
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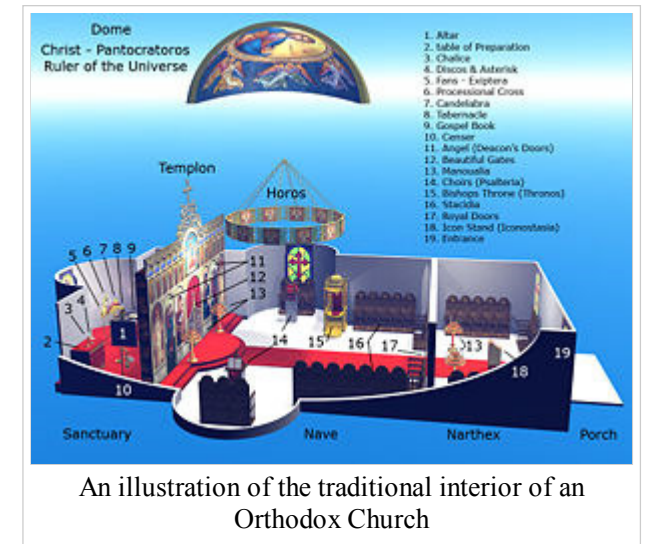
Our Lady of St. Theodore, the protector of Kostroma, following the same Byzantine "Tender Mercy" type.

The term Icon comes from the Greek word *eikona*, which simply means image. The Orthodox believe that the first icons of Christ and the Virgin Mary were painted by Luke the Evangelist. Icons are filled with symbolism designed to convey information about the person or event depicted. For this reason, icons tend to be formulaic, following a prescribed methodology for how a particular person should be depicted, including hair style, body position, clothing worn, and background details. Icon painting, in general, is not an opportunity for artistic expression, though each iconographer brings his own vision to the piece. It is far more common for an icon to be copied from an older model, though with the recognition of a new saint in the church, a new icon must be created and approved. The personal, idiosyncratic and creative traditions of Western European religious art are largely lacking in Orthodox iconography before the 17th century, when Russian iconography was strongly influenced by religious paintings and engravings from both Protestant and Catholic Europe. Greek iconography also began to take on a strong romantic western influence for a period and the difference between some Orthodox icons and western religious art began to vanish. More recently there has been a strong trend of returning to the more traditional and symbolic representations.

Free-standing statues (three dimensional depictions) are almost non-existent within the Orthodox Church. This is partly due to the rejection of the previous pagan Greek age of idol worship and partly because icons are meant to show the spiritual nature of man, not the sensual earthly body. Bas reliefs, however, became common during the Byzantine period and lead to a tradition of covering a painted icon in a silver or gold "Riza" in order to preserve the icon. Such bas relief coverings usually leave the faces and hands of the saints exposed for veneration.

A fairly elaborate Orthodox Christian icon corner as would be found in a private home.

The Inside of an Orthodox Church

Icons are not considered by the Orthodox to be idols or objects of worship. The parameters of their usage was clearly spelled out by the 7th ecumenical council. Justification for their usage utilizes the following logic: Before Christ, God took human form no material depiction was possible and therefore blasphemous even to contemplate. Once Christ became human, he was able to be depicted. And because he is God, it is justified to hold in one's mind the image of God Incarnate. Likewise, when one venerates an icon, it is not the wood or paint that are venerated but rather the individual shown, just as it is not the paper one loves when one might kiss the photograph of a loved one. As Saint Basil famously proclaimed, honour or veneration of the icon always passes to its archetype. Following this reasoning through, the veneration of the glorified human saint made in God's image, is always a veneration of the divine image, and hence God as foundational archetype.

Icons can be found adorning the walls of churches and often cover the inside structure completely. Most Orthodox homes have an area set aside for family prayer, usually an eastern facing wall, where are hung many icons.

Icons are often illuminated with a candle or oil lamp. (Beeswax for candles and olive oil for lamps are preferred because they are natural and burn cleanly.) Besides the practical purpose of making icons visible in an otherwise dark church, both candles and oil lamps symbolize the Light of the World which is Christ.

Tales of miraculous icons that moved, spoke, cried, bled, or gushed fragrant myrrh are not uncommon, though it has always been considered that the message of such an event was for the immediate faithful involved and therefore does not usually attract crowds. Some miraculous icons whose reputations span long periods of time nevertheless become objects of pilgrimage along with the places where they are kept. As several Orthodox theologians and saints have explored in the past, the icons' miraculous nature is found not in the material, but in the glory of the saint who is depicted in the icon. The icon is a window, in the words of St Paul Florensky, that actually participates in the glory of what it represents. This is why several icons are believed to bleed myrrh, which is a physical manifestation of the uncreated holy spirit.

See also Eastern Orthodox icons.

Iconostasis
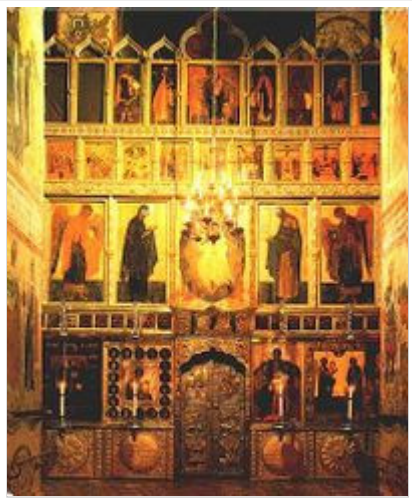
Iconostasis in the Cathedral of the Annunciation in the Moscow Kremlin.

An **iconostasis**, also called the **templon**, is a wall of icons and religious paintings, separating the nave from the sanctuary in a church. *Iconostasis* also refers to a portable icon stand that can be placed anywhere within a church. The modern iconostasis evolved from the Byzantine templon in the eleventh century. The evolution of the iconostasis probably owes a great deal to 14th-century Hesychast mysticism and the wood-carving genius of the Russian Orthodox Church. The first ceiling-high, five-leveled Russian iconostasis was designed by Andrey Rublyov in the cathedral of the Dormition in Vladimir in 1408.

The Cross

Depictions of the Cross within the Orthodox Church are numerous and often highly ornamented. Some carry special significance. The Tri-Bar Cross, as seen to the right, has three bars instead of the single bar normally attached.

The small top crossbar represents the sign that Pontius Pilate nailed above Christ's head. It often is inscribed with an acronym meaning "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews"; however, It is often replaced or amplified by the phrase "The King of Glory" in order to answer Pilate's mocking statement with Christ's affirmation, "My Kingdom is not of this world".
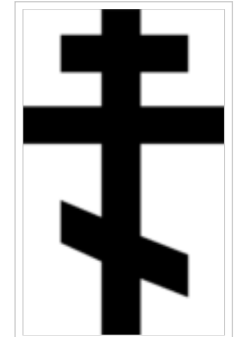
The Three-Bar Orthodox Cross.

There is also a bottom slanting bar. This appears for a number of reasons. Evidence indicates that there was a small wooden platform for the crucified to stand on in order to support his weight; in Jesus' case his feet were nailed side by side to this platform with one nail each in order to prolong the torture of the cross.

Evidence for this comes mainly from two sources within Holy Tradition, the Bible (in order to cause the victim to die faster their legs were broken so they could not support their weight and would suffocate) and iconography (all early depictions of the crucifixion show this arrangement, not the later with feet on top with single nail). It has also been pointed out by some experts that the nailed hands of a body crucified in the manner often shown in modern secular art would not support the weight of the body and would tear through. A platform for the feet would relieve this problem.

The bottom bar is slanted for two reasons, to represent the very real agony which Christ experienced on the cross (a refutation of Docetism) and to signify that the thief on Christ's right chose the right path while the thief on the left did not. Other crosses associated with the Orthodox church are the more traditional single-bar crosses, budded designs, the Jerusalem cross (cross pattée), Celtic crosses, and others.

Services

The services of the church are properly conducted each day following a rigid, but constantly changing annual schedule (i.e., parts of the service remain the same while others change depending on the day of the year). Services are conducted in the church and involve both the clergy and faithful. Services cannot properly be conducted by a single person, but must have at least one other person present (i.e. a Priest cannot celebrate alone, but must have at least a Chanter present

and participating). Usually, all of the services are conducted on a daily basis only in monasteries and cathedrals, while parish churches might only do the services on the weekend and major feast days. On certain Great Feasts (and, according to some traditions, every Sunday) a special All-Night Vigil (*Agrypnia*) will be celebrated from late at night on the eve of the feast until early the next morning. Because of its festal nature it is usually followed by a breakfast feast shared together by the congregation.

Services, especially the Divine Liturgy, can only be performed once a day on a single altar (some churches have multiple altars in order to accommodate large congregations). Each priest may only celebrate the Divine Liturgy once a day. From its Jewish roots, the liturgical day begins at sundown. The traditional daily cycle of services is as follows:

- Vespers – (Greek *Hesperinos*) Sundown, the beginning of the liturgical day.
- Compline (Greek *Apodeipnon*, lit. "After-supper") – After the evening meal prior to bedtime.
- (Midnight Office – Usually served only in monasteries.)
- Matins (Greek *Orthros*) – First service of the morning. Usually starts before sunrise.
- Divine Liturgy – The Eucharist service (see below)
- Hours – First, Third, Sixth, and Ninth – Sung either at their appropriate times, or in aggregate at other customary times of convenience. If the latter, The First Hour is sung immediately following Orthros, the Third and Sixth prior to the Divine Liturgy, and the Ninth prior to Vespers.

The Divine Liturgy is the celebration of the Eucharist. Although it is usually celebrated between the Sixth and Ninth Hours, it is not considered to be part of the daily cycle of services, as it occurs outside the normal time of the world. The Divine Liturgy is not celebrated on weekdays during the preparatory season of Great Lent and in some places during the lesser fasting seasons either. Reserve communion is prepared on Sundays and is distributed during the week at the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

This daily cycle services are conceived of as both the sanctification of time (*chronos*, the specific times during which they are celebrated), and entry into eternity (*kairos*). They consist to a large degree of litanies asking for God's mercy on the living and the dead, readings from the Psalter with introductory prayers, troparia, and other prayers and hymns surrounding them. The Psalms are so arranged that when all the services are celebrated the entire Psalter is read through in their course once a week, and twice a week during Great Lent when the services are celebrated in an extended form.

Chanting

Orthodox services are sung nearly in their entirety. Services consist in part of a dialog between the clergy and the people (often represented by the choir or the Psaltis (Cantor). In each case the prayers are sung or chanted following a prescribed musical form. Almost nothing is read in a normal speaking voice, with the exception of the homily if one is given. Because the human voice is the most perfect instrument of praise and because inanimate objects do not pray, musical instruments (organs, guitars, etc.) are not generally used to accompany the choir (except where traditions have been lost to a heavy western influence). The church has developed eight Modes or Tones, (see Octoechos) within which a chant may be set, depending on the time of year, feast days, or other considerations of the Typikon. There are numerous versions and styles that are traditional and acceptable and these vary a great deal between cultures. It is common, especially in the United States, for a choir to learn many different styles and to mix them, singing one response in Greek, then English, then Russian, etc. It should also be noted that in the Russian tradition there have been some very famous composers of Church music such as Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff;

and many Church tones can likewise be seen influencing their music.

Incense

As part of the legacy handed down from its Judaic roots, incense is used during all services in the Eastern Orthodox Church as an offering of worship to God as it was done in the Jewish First and Second Temples in Jerusalem (Exodus chapter 30). Traditionally, the base of the incense used is the resin of Boswellia thurifera, also known as frankincense, but the resin of fir trees has been used as well. It is usually mixed with various floral essential oils giving it a sweet smell. Incense represents the sweetness of the prayers of the saints rising up to God (Psalm 141:2, Revelation 5:8, 8:4). The incense is burned in an ornate golden censer that hangs at the end of three chains representing the Trinity. In the Greek tradition there are 12 bells hung along these chains representing the 12 apostles (usually no bells in Slavic tradition). The censer is used (swung back and forth) by the priest/deacon to venerate all four sides of the altar, the holy gifts, the clergy, the icons, the congregation, and the church structure itself.

Mysteries

According to Orthodox theology, the purpose of the Christian life is to attain theosis, the mystical union of man with God. This union is understood as both collective and individual. St. Athanasius of Alexandria, wrote concerning the Incarnation that, "He (Jesus) was made man that we might be made god (θεοποιηθῶμεν)". See 2 Peter 1:4, John 10:34–36, Psalm 82:6. The entire life of the church is oriented towards making this possible and facilitating it.

In the Orthodox Church the terms "Mystery" or "The Mysteries" refer to the process of theosis. While it is understood that God theoretically can do anything instantly and invisibly, it is also understood that he generally chooses to use material substance as a medium in order to reach people. The limitations are those of mankind, not God. Matter is not considered to be evil by the Orthodox. Water, oil, bread, wine, etc., all are means by which God reaches out to allow people to draw closer to him. How this process works is a "Mystery", and cannot be defined in human terms. These Mysteries are surrounded by prayer and symbolism so that their true meaning will not be forgotten.

Those things which in the West are often termed Sacraments or sacramentals are known among the Orthodox as the Sacred Mysteries. While the Roman Catholic Church numbers seven Sacraments, and many Protestant groups list two (Baptism and the Eucharist) or even none, the Orthodox do not limit the number. However, for the sake of convenience, catechisms will often speak of the seven Great Mysteries. Among these are Holy Communion (the most direct connection), Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, Unction, Matrimony, and Ordination. But the term also properly applies to other sacred actions such as monastic Tonsure or the blessing of holy water, and involves fasting, almsgiving, or an act as simple as lighting a candle, burning incense, praying or asking God's blessing on food.

Baptism

Baptism is the mystery which transforms the old sinful man into the new, pure man; the old life, the sins, any mistakes made are gone and a clean slate is given. Through baptism one is united to the Body of Christ by becoming a member of the Orthodox Church. During the service water is blessed. The catechumen is

fully immersed in the water three times in the name of the Holy Trinity. This is considered to be a death of the "old man" by participation in the crucifixion and burial of Christ, and a rebirth into new life in Christ by participation in his resurrection. Properly a new name is given, which becomes the person's name.

Children of Orthodox families are normally baptized shortly after birth. Converts to Orthodoxy (even converts from other Christian denominations) are usually formally baptized into the Orthodox Church though exceptions are sometimes made. Those who have left Orthodoxy and adopted a new religion, if they return to their Orthodox roots are usually received back into the church through the mystery of Chrismation.

Properly, the mystery of baptism is administered by bishops and priests; however, in emergencies any Orthodox Christian can baptize. In such cases, should the person survive the emergency, it is likely that the person will be properly baptized by a priest at some later date. This is not considered to be a second baptism, nor is it imagined that the person is not already Orthodox, but rather it is a fulfillment of the proper form.

The service of baptism used in Orthodox churches has remained largely unchanged for over 1500 years. This fact is witnessed to by St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386), who, in his Discourse on the Sacrament of Baptism, describes the service in much the same way as is currently in use.

Chrismation

Chrismation (sometimes called confirmation) is the mystery by which a baptized person is granted the gift of the Holy Spirit through anointing with Holy Chrism. It is normally given immediately after baptism as part of the same service, but is also used to receive lapsed members of the Orthodox Church. As baptism is a person's participation in the death and resurrection of Christ, so Chrismation is a person's participation in the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

A baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christian is a full member of the Church, and may receive the Eucharist regardless of age.

The creation of Chrism may be accomplished by any bishop at any time, but usually is done only once a year, often when a synod of bishops convenes for its annual meeting. (Some autocephalous churches get their chrism from others.) Anointing with it substitutes for the laying-on of hands described in the New Testament, even when an instrument such as a brush is used.

Fasting

The number of fast days varies from year to year, but in general the Orthodox Christian can expect to spend a little over half the year fasting at some level of strictness. There are spiritual, symbolic, and even practical reasons for fasting. In the Fall from Paradise mankind became possessed by a carnal nature; that is to say, he became inclined towards the passions. Through fasting, Orthodox Christians attempt to return to the relationship of love and obedience to God enjoyed by Adam and Eve in Paradise in their own lives, by refraining from carnal practices, by bridling the tongue (James 3:5–6), confession of sins, prayer and almsgiving.

Fasting is seen as purification and the regaining of innocence. Through obedience to the Church and its ascetic practices the Orthodox Christian seeks to rid himself or herself of the *passions* (The desires of our fallen carnal nature). All Orthodox Christians are expected to fast following a prescribed set of guidelines. They do not view fasting as a hardship, but rather as a privilege and joy. The teaching of the Church fixes both the times and the amount of fasting that is

expected as a minimum for every member. For greater ascesis, some may choose to go without food entirely for a short period of time. A complete three-day fast at the beginning and end of a fasting period is not unusual, and some fast for even longer periods, though this is usually practiced only in monasteries.

In general, fasting means abstaining from meat and meat products, dairy (eggs and cheese) and dairy products, fish, olive oil, and wine. Wine and oil — and, less frequently, fish — are allowed on certain feast days when they happen to fall on a day of fasting; but animal products and dairy are forbidden on fast days, with the exception of "Cheese Fare" week which precedes Great Lent, during which dairy products are allowed. Wine and oil are usually also allowed on Saturdays and Sundays during periods of fast. In some Orthodox traditions, caviar is permitted on Lazarus Saturday, the Saturday before Palm Sunday, although the day is otherwise a fast day. Married couples also abstain from sexual relations on fast days, that they may devote themselves to prayer (I Corinthians 7:5).

While it may seem that fasting in the manner set forth by the Church is a strict rule, there are circumstances where a person's spiritual guide may allow a dispensation because of some physical necessity (e.g. those who are pregnant or infirm, the very young and the elderly, or those who have no control over their diet, such as prisoners or soldiers).

The time and type of fast is generally uniform for all Orthodox Christians; the times of fasting are part of the ecclesiastical calendar, and the method of fasting is set by the Holy Canons and Sacred Tradition. There are four major fasting periods during the year:

- The **Nativity Fast** (Advent or "Winter Lent") which is the 40 days preceding the Nativity of Christ (Christmas), beginning on November 15 and running through December 24. This fast becomes more severe after December 20, and Christmas Eve is observed a strict fast day.
- **Great Lent** which consists of the 6 weeks (40 Days) preceding Palm Sunday, and Great Week (Holy Week) which precedes Pascha (Easter).
- The **Apostles' Fast** which varies in length from 8 days to 6 weeks. It begins on the Monday following All Saints Sunday (the first Sunday after Pentecost) and extends to the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29. Since the date of Pentecost depends on that of Pascha, and Pascha is determined on the Julian Calendar, this fast can disappear completely under New Calendar observance (This is one of the objections raised by opponents to the New Calendar).
- The **Dormition Fast**, a two-week long Fast preceding the *Dormition of the Theotokos* (repose of The Virgin Mary), lasting from August 1 through August 14.

In addition to these fasting seasons, Orthodox Christians fast on every **Wednesday** (in commemoration of Christ's betrayal by Judas Iscariot) and **Friday** (in commemoration of his Crucifixion) throughout the year. Monastics often fast on **Mondays** (in imitation of the Angels, who are commemorated on that day in the weekly cycle, since monastics are striving to lead an angelic life on earth, and angels neither eat nor drink).

Orthodox Christians who are preparing to receive the Eucharist do not eat or drink at all from midnight until after taking Holy Communion. A similar total fast is expected to be kept on the Eve of Nativity, the Eve of Theophany (Epiphany), Great Friday and Holy Saturday for those who can do so. There are other individual days observed as fasts (though not as days of total fasting) no matter what day of the week they fall on, such as the Beheading of St. John the Baptist on August 29 and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14.

Strict fasting is canonically forbidden on Saturdays and Sundays due to the festal character of the Sabbath and the Resurrection, respectively. On those days wine and oil are permitted even if abstention from them would be otherwise called for. Holy Saturday is the only Saturday of the year where a strict fast is kept.

There are also four periods in the liturgical year during which no fasting is permitted, even on Wednesday and Friday. These fast-free periods are:

- The week following Pascha (Easter), also known as Bright Week
- The week following Pentecost
- The period from the Nativity of Christ up to (but not including) the Eve of Theophany (Epiphany). The day of Theophany itself is always fast-free, even if it falls on a Wednesday or Friday.
- The week following the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (one of the preparatory Sundays before Great Lent). This is fast-free to remind the faithful not to boast like the Pharisee that he fasts for two days out of the week Luke 18:12).

When certain feast days fall on fast days, the fasting laws are lessened to a certain extent, to allow some consolation in the *trapeza* (refectory) for the longer services, and to provide an element of sober celebration to accompany the spiritual joy of the feast.

It is considered a greater sin to advertise one's fasting than to not participate in the fast. Fasting is a purely personal communication between the Orthodox Christian and God. If one has health concerns, or responsibilities that cannot be fulfilled because of fasting, then it is perfectly permissible not to fast. An individual's observance of the fasting laws is not to be judged by the community (Romans 14:1–4), but is a private matter between him and his Spiritual Father or Confessor.

Almsgiving

" Almsgiving" refers to any charitable giving of material resources to those in need. Along with *prayer* and *fasting*, it is considered a pillar of the personal spiritual practices of the Orthodox Christian tradition. Almsgiving is particularly important during periods of fasting, when the Orthodox believer is expected to share the monetary savings from his or her decreased consumption with those in need. As with fasting, bragging about the amounts given for charity is considered anywhere from extremely rude to sinful.

The congregation lighting their candles from the new flame in Adelaide, at St. George Greek Orthodox Church, just as the priest has retrieved it from the altar - note that the picture is flash-illuminated; all electric lighting is off, and only the oil lamps in front of the Iconostasis remain lit.

Holy Communion

The Eucharist is at the centre of Orthodox Christianity. In practice, it is the partaking of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the midst of the Divine Liturgy with the rest of the church. The bread and wine are believed to become the genuine Body and Blood of the Christ Jesus through the operation of the Holy Spirit. The Eastern Orthodox Church has never described exactly how this occurs, or gone into the detail that the Roman Catholic Church has in the West. The doctrine of transubstantiation was formulated after the Great Schism took place, and the Orthodox churches have never formally affirmed or denied it, preferring to state simply that it is a "Mystery". Communion is given only to baptized, Chrismated Orthodox Christians who have prepared by fasting, prayer, and confession. The priest will administer the Gifts with a spoon directly into the recipient's mouth from the chalice. From baptism young infants and children are carried to the chalice to receive Holy Communion.

Repentance

Orthodox Christians who have committed sins but repent of them, and who wish to reconcile themselves to God and renew the purity of their original baptisms, confess their sins to God before a spiritual guide who offers advice and direction to assist the individual in overcoming their sin. Parish priests commonly function as spiritual guides, but such guides can be any person, male or female, who has been given a blessing to hear confessions. Spiritual guides are chosen very carefully as it is a mandate that once chosen, they must be obeyed. Having confessed, the penitent then has his or her parish priest read the prayer of repentance over them.

Sin is not viewed by the Orthodox as a stain on the soul that needs to be wiped out, or a legal transgression that must be set right by a punitive sentence, but rather as a mistake made by the individual with the opportunity for spiritual growth and development. An act of Penance (*epitemia*), if the spiritual guide requires it, is never formulaic, but rather is directed toward the individual and their particular problem, as a means of establishing a deeper understanding of the mistake made, and how to effect its cure. Though it sounds harsh, temporary excommunication is fairly common (The Orthodox require a fairly high level of purity in order to commune, therefore certain sins make it necessary for the individual to refrain from communing for a period). Confession and repentance are required in order to raise the individual to a level capable of communing (though no one is truly worthy). Because full participatory membership is granted to infants, it is not unusual for even small children to confess; though the scope of their culpability is far less than an older child, still their opportunity for spiritual growth remains the same.

Marriage

Marriage, within the Orthodox Church is seen as an act of God in which He sanctifies the joining of man and woman into one. First and foremost this joining is seen as a dispensation allowed by God for the mutual comfort and support of the individuals involved. While procreation and the perpetuation of the species is seen as important, what is more important is the bond of love between the husband and wife as this is a reflection of our ultimate union with God. Although difficult to accurately measure, the divorce rate in the Orthodox Church seems to be lower than that of the societal averages where its members reside, comprising at least 14% of marriages performed but probably somewhat higher due to civil divorces obtained without an accompanying ecclesiastical divorce. The Church does recognize that there are occasions when it is better that couples do separate. It remains the decision of one's Bishop if they should desire to marry again if they will be permitted to do so. Generally widows may remarry as well as some divorced. A man is not permitted to be a priest if he or his wife have ever been divorced. If a person is undergoing a second marriage because of a divorce the sacrament is different and contains prayers or repentance for the first failed marriage.

The Mystery of Marriage in the Orthodox Church has two distinct parts: The Betrothal and The Crowning. The Betrothal includes: The exchange of the rings, the procession, the declaration of intent, and the lighting of candles. The Crowning includes: The readings from the epistle and gospel, the Blessing of the Common Cup, and the Dance of Isaiah (the bride and groom are led around the table 3 times), and then the Removal of the Crowns. There is no exchange of vows. There is a set expectation of the obligations incumbent on a married couple, and whatever promises they may have privately to each other are their responsibility to keep. The ceremony ends with the reading of Benedictions to and the Greeting of the Couple.

Monasticism

Saint Catherine's Monastery

All Orthodox Christians are expected to participate in at least some ascetic works, in response to the commandment of Christ to "come, take up the cross, and follow me." (Mark 10:21 and elsewhere) They are therefore all called to imitate, in one way or another, Christ himself who denied himself to the extent of literally taking up the cross on the way to his voluntary self-sacrifice. However, laypeople are not expected to live in extreme asceticism since this is close to impossible while undertaking the normal responsibilities of worldly life. Those who wish to do this therefore separate themselves from the world and live as monastics: monks and nuns. As ascetics *par excellence*, using the allegorical weapons of prayer and fasting in spiritual warfare against their passions, monastics hold a very special and important place in the Church. This kind of life is often seen as incompatible with any kind of worldly activity including that which is normally regarded as virtuous. Social work, school teaching, and other such work is therefore usually left to laypeople.

There are three main types of monastics. Those who live in monasteries under a common rule are *coenobitic*. Each monastery may formulate its own rule, and although there are no religious orders in Orthodoxy some respected monastic centers such as Mount Athos are highly influential. *Eremitic* monks, or hermits, are those who live solitary lives. It is the yearning of many who enter the monastic life to eventually become solitary hermits. This most austere life is only granted to the most advanced monastics and only when their superiors feel they are ready for it. Hermits are usually associated with a larger monastery but live in seclusion some distance from the main compound. Their local monastery will see to their physical needs, supplying them with simple foods while disturbing them as little as possible. In between are those in *semi-eremitic* communities, or *sketes*, where one or two monks share each of a group of nearby dwellings under their own rules and only gather together in the central chapel, or *kyriakon*, for liturgical observances.

The spiritual insight gained from their ascetic struggles make monastics preferred for missionary activity. Bishops are almost always chosen from among monks, and those who are not generally receive the monastic tonsure before their consecrations.

Many (but not all) Orthodox seminaries are attached to monasteries, combining academic preparation for ordination with participation in the community's life of prayer. Monks who have been ordained to the priesthood are called *hieromonk* (priest-monk); monks who have been ordained to the diaconate are called *hierodeacon* (deacon-monk). Not all monks live in monasteries, some hieromonks serve as priests in parish churches thus practicing "monasticism in the world".

Cultural practices differ slightly but in general, *Father* is the correct form of address for monks who have been tonsured, while Novices are addressed as *Brother*. Similarly, *Mother* is the correct form of address for nuns who have been tonsured, while Novices are addressed as *Sister*. Nuns live identical ascetic lives to their male counterparts and are therefore also called *monachoi* (monastics) or the feminine plural form in Greek, *monachai*, and their common living space is called a monastery.
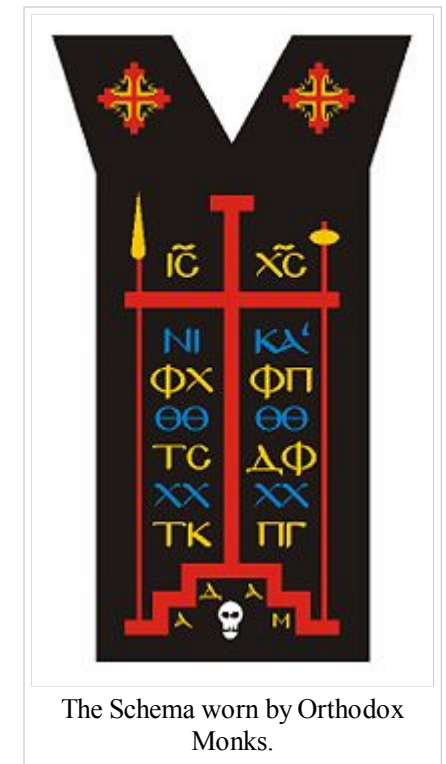
The Schema worn by Orthodox Monks.

Holy Orders

Orthodox clergy at All Saints Antiochian Orthodox Church, Raleigh, NC (L to R): priest, two deacons, bishop

Since its founding, the Church spread to different places, and the leaders of the Church in each place came to be known as *episkopoi* (overseers, plural of *episkopos*, overseer — Gr. ἐπίσκοπος), which became " bishop" in English. The other ordained roles are *presbyter* (Gr. πρεσβύτερος, elder), which became "prester" and then " priest" in English, and *diakonos* (Gr. διάκονος, servant), which became " deacon" in English (see also subdeacon). There are numerous administrative positions in the clergy that carry additional titles. In the Greek tradition, bishops who occupy an ancient See are called Metropolitan, while the lead bishop in Greece is the Archbishop. (In the Russian tradition, however, the usage of the terms "Metropolitan" and "Archbishop" is reversed.) Priests can be archpriests, archimandrites, or protopresbyters. Deacons can be archdeacons or protodeacons, as well. The position of deacon is often occupied for life. The deacon also acts as an assistant to a bishop.

With the exception of Bishops, who remain celibate, the Orthodox Church has always allowed priests and deacons to be married, provided the marriage takes place before ordination. In general it is preferable for parish priests to be married as they often act as council to married couples and thus can draw on their own experience. Unmarried priests usually are monks and live in monasteries, though there are occasions when, because of a lack of married priests, a monk-priest is temporarily assigned to a parish. Widowed priests and deacons may not remarry, and it is common for such a member of the clergy to retire to a monastery (see clerical celibacy). This is also true of widowed wives of clergy, who do not remarry and become nuns when their children are grown. There is serious discussion about reviving the order of (deaconess), which fell into disuse in the first millennium; the deaconesses had both liturgical and pastoral functions within the church. Although it has fallen out of practice (the last deaconess was ordained in the 19th century) there is no reason why deaconesses could not be ordained today.

Unction

Anointing with oil, or Holy Unction, is one of the many mysteries administered by the Orthodox Church. The Mystery is far more common in the Orthodox Church than it had traditionally been in the Roman Catholic Church (until recent years). In both Churches today it is not reserved for the dying or terminally ill, but for all in need of spiritual or bodily healing. In Greece, during the Ottoman occupation, it became the custom to administer this Mystery annually on Great Wednesday to all believers; in recent decades, this custom has spread to many other locations. It is often distributed on major feast days, or any time the clergy feel it necessary for the spiritual welfare of its congregation.

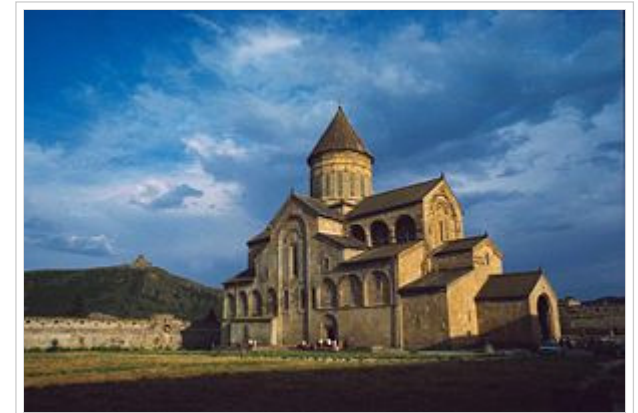According to Orthodox teaching Holy Unction is based on the Epistle of James:

> *Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.*
> *And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven.* — James 5:14–15

History

Early Church

Christianity spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire in part because Greek was the *lingua franca*, and partly because its philosophy of truth was something new and different than the old Roman and Greek social religions. Paul and the Apostles traveled extensively throughout the Empire, including Asia Minor, establishing Churches in major communities, with the first Churches appearing in Jerusalem and the Holy Land, then in Antioch and its surrounding regions, Rome, Alexandria, Athens, Thessalonica, and Byzantium, which, centuries later would become far more prominent as the New Rome. Christianity was met with some resistance as its adherents would not comply with the state (even at the threat of death) in offering sacrifice to the pagan gods. The blood of numerous and often famous martyrs became the mortar binding the structure of the Church together. Despite persecution, or perhaps, because of it, the Church spread and flourished. It was finally released from bondage by the Emperor Constantine the Great in 324 AD.

Svetitskhoveli Cathedral one of the oldest Eastern Orthodox churches in Georgia.

By the 4th century Christianity had spread far and wide with hundreds of bishops in numerous countries. A number of influential schools of thought had arisen, particularly the Alexandrian and Antiochian philosophical approaches. One smaller group, the Arians, had managed to gain some influence which was causing some theological conflicts within the Church. The Emperor Constantine realized the need for a great ecumenical synod to be held in order to better define the Church's position. He made it possible for this council to meet not only by providing a location, but by offering to pay for the transportation of all the existing bishops of the Church.

Ecumenical councils

Several doctrinal disputes from the 4th century onwards led to the calling of Ecumenical councils.

The canons set forth by nine ecumenical councils are considered by Eastern Orthodox Christianity to be the most significant and binding.

1. The First Ecumenical Council was convoked by the Roman Emperor Constantine at Nicaea in 325 and presided over by the Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria, with over 300 bishops condemning the view of Arius that the Son is a created being inferior to the Father.
2. The Second Ecumenical Council was held at Constantinople in 381, presided over by the Patriarchs of Alexandria and Antioch, with 150 bishops, defining the nature of the Holy Spirit against those asserting His inequality with the other persons of the Trinity.
3. The Third Ecumenical Council is that of Ephesus in 431, presided over by the Patriarch of Alexandria, with 250 bishops, which affirmed that Mary is truly "Birthgiver" or "Mother" of God (*Theotokos*), contrary to the teachings of Nestorius.
4. The Fourth Ecumenical Council is that of Chalcedon in 451, Patriarch of Constantinople presiding, 500 bishops, affirmed that Jesus is truly God and truly man, without mixture of the two natures, contrary to Monophysite teaching.
5. The Fifth Ecumenical Council is the second of Constantinople in 553, interpreting the decrees of Chalcedon and further explaining the relationship of the two natures of Jesus; it also condemned the teachings of Origen on the pre-existence of the soul, etc.

6. The Sixth Ecumenical Council is the third of Constantinople in 681; it declared that Christ has two wills of his two natures, human and divine, contrary to the teachings of the Monothelites.
7. The Seventh Ecumenical Council was called under the Empress Regent Irene in 787, known as the second of Nicaea. It supports the **veneration** of icons while forbidding their worship. It is often referred to as "The Triumph of Orthodoxy"
8. The Eight Ecumenical Council also known as The Fourth Council of Constantinople was called in 879. It restored St. Photius to his See in Constantinople and condemned any alteration of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed of 381. The council was accepted as ecumenical by all five patriarchs, including Pope John VIII of Rome.
9. The Ninth Ecumenical Council also known as The Fifth Council of Constantinople was actually a series of councils held between 1341 and 1351. It affirmed the hesychastic theology of St. Gregory Palamas and condemned the philosopher Barlaam of Calabria.

In addition to these councils there have been a number of significant councils meant to further define the Orthodox position. They are the Synods of Constantinople, 1484, 1583, 1755, 1819, and 1872, the Synod of Iaşi (Jassy), 1642, and the Pan-Orthodox Synod of Jerusalem, 1672.

Roman/Byzantine Empire

Orthodox Christian culture reached its golden age during the high point of Byzantine Empire and continued to flourish in Russia, after the fall of Constantinople. Numerous autocephalous churches were established in Eastern Europe and Slavic areas.

In the 530s the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Hagia Sophia) was built in Constantinople under emperor Justinian I.

Early Schisms

The Church in Egypt (Patriarchate of Alexandria) split into two groups following the Council of Chalcedon (451), over a dispute about the relation between the divine and human natures of Jesus. Eventually this led to each group anathematizing the other. Those that remained in communion with the other patriarchs (those who accepted the Council of Chalcedon) were called "Melkites" (the king's men, because Constantinople was the city of the emperors) [not to be confused with the Melkite Catholics of Antioch]. Those who disagreed with the findings of the Council of Chalcedon are today known as the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria, currently led by Pope Shenouda III. There was a similar split in Syria (Patriarchate of Antioch) resulting in the Syriac Orthodox Church.

Those who disagreed with the Council of Chalcedon are sometimes called " Oriental Orthodox" to distinguish them from the Eastern Orthodox, who accepted the Council of Chalcedon. Oriental Orthodox are also sometimes referred to as " monophysites", "non-Chalcedonians", or "anti-Chalcedonians", although today the Oriental Orthodox Church denies that it is monophysite and prefers the term " miaphysite", to denote the "joined" nature of Jesus. Both the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches formally believe themselves to be the continuation of the true church and the other fallen into heresy, although over the last several decades there has been some reconciliation.

As well, there are the " Nestorian" churches, which are Eastern Christian churches that keep the faith of only the first two ecumenical councils, i.e., the First Council of Nicaea and the First Council of Constantinople. "Nestorian" is an outsider's term for a tradition that predated the influence of Nestorius. Thus, "Persian Church" is a more neutral term.

Conversion of East and South Slavs

In the ninth and tenth centuries, Orthodoxy made great inroads into Eastern Europe, including Kievan Rus'. This work was made possible by the work of the Byzantine saints Cyril and Methodius. When Rastislav, the king of Moravia, asked Byzantium for teachers who could minister to the Moravians in their own language, Byzantine emperor Michael III chose these two brothers. As their mother was a Slav from the hinterlands of Thessaloniki, Cyril and Methodius spoke the local Slavonic vernacular and translated the Bible and many of the prayer books. As the translations prepared by them were copied by speakers of other dialects, the hybrid literary language Old Church Slavonic was created. Originally sent to convert the Slavs of Great Moravia, Cyril and Methodius were forced to compete with Frankish missionaries from the Roman diocese. Their disciples were driven out of Great Moravia in AD 886.

Orthodox churches in Vologda, Russia

Some of the disciples, namely Saint Clement of Ohrid, Saint Naum who were of noble Bulgarian descent and St. Angelaruis, returned to Bulgaria where they were welcomed by the Bulgarian Tsar Boris I who viewed the Slavonic liturgy as a way to counteract Greek influence in the country. In a short time the disciples of Cyril and Methodius managed to prepare and instruct the future Slav Bulgarian clergy into the Glagolitic alphabet and the biblical texts and in AD 893, Bulgaria expelled its Greek clergy and proclaimed the Slavonic language as the official language of the church and the state. The success of the conversion of the Bulgarians facilitated the conversion of East Slavic peoples, most notably the Rus', predecessors of Belarusians, Russians, and Ukrainians.

The work of the Thessaloniki brothers Cyril and Methodius and their disciples had a major impact to Serbs as well. However, they accepted Orthodoxy collectively by families and by tribes (in the process between the 7th and the 9th century). In commemoration of their baptisms, each Serbian family or tribe began to celebrate an exclusively Serbian custom called Slava in a special way to honour the Saint on whose day they received the sacrament of Holy Baptism. It is the most solemn day of the year for all Serbs of the Orthodox faith and has played a role of vital importance in the history of the Serbian people. Slava is actually the celebration of the spiritual birthday of the Serbian people which the Church blessed and proclaimed it a Church institution.

The missionaries to the East and South Slavs had great success in part because they used the people's native language rather than Latin as the Roman priests did, or Greek. Today the Russian Orthodox Church is the largest of the Orthodox Churches followed by the Romanian Orthodox Church

Great Schism

In the 11th century the Great Schism took place between Rome and Constantinople, which led to separation of the Church of the West, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Eastern Orthodox Church. There were doctrinal issues like the filioque clause and the authority of the Roman Catholic Pope involved in the split, but these were exacerbated by cultural and linguistic differences between Latins and Greeks. Prior to that, the Eastern and Western halves of the Church had frequently been in conflict, particularly during periods of iconoclasm and the Photian schism.

The final breach is often considered to have arisen after the capture and sacking of Constantinople by the Fourth Crusade in 1204. The sacking of the Church of Holy Wisdom and establishment of the Latin Empire as a seeming attempt to supplant the Orthodox Byzantine Empire in 1204 is viewed with some rancour to

the present day. In 2004, Pope John Paul II extended a formal apology for the sacking of Constantinople in 1204; the apology was formally accepted by Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople. Many things that were stolen during this time— holy relics, riches, and many other items—were not returned and are still held in various Western European cities, particularly Venice.

East and West attempted reunion twice, in 1274 at the Second Council of Lyon, and in 1439 at the Council of Basel. In each case, however, the councils were rejected by the Orthodox people as a whole.

Age of captivity

In 1453, the Byzantine Empire fell to the Ottoman Empire. By this time Egypt had been under Muslim control for some seven centuries, but Orthodoxy was very strong in Russia which had recently acquired an autocephalous status; and thus Moscow called itself the Third Rome, as the cultural heir of Constantinople.

Under Ottoman rule, the Greek Orthodox Church acquired substantial power as an autonomous *millet*. The ecumenical patriarch was the religious and administrative ruler of the entire "Greek Orthodox nation" (Ottoman administrative unit), which encompassed all the Eastern Orthodox subjects of the Empire.

As a result of the Ottoman conquest of the Byzantine Empire in 1453, and the Fall of Constantinople, the entire Orthodox communion of the Balkans and the Near East became suddenly isolated from the West. For the next four hundred years, it would be confined within Islamic world, with which it had little in common religiously or culturally. The Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Churches from Wallachia and Moldavia were the only part of the Orthodox communion which remained outside the control of the Ottoman Empire. It is, in part, due to this geographical and intellectual confinement that the voice of Eastern Orthodoxy was not heard during the Reformation in sixteenth century Europe. It should not be surprising that this important theological debate often seems strange and distorted to the Orthodox; after all, they never took part in it and thus neither Reformation nor Counter-Reformation is part of their theological framework.

Stavronikita monastery, Mount Athos, Greece (South-East view)

Russian Orthodox Church under Tsarist rule

Up until 1666, when Patriarch Nikon was deposed by the tsar, the Russian Orthodox Church had been independent of the State. In 1721 Tsar Peter I abolished completely the patriarchate and so the Church effectively became a department of the government, ruled by a Most Holy Synod composed of senior bishops and lay bureaucrats appointed by the Tsar himself. Since 1721 until the October Revolution of 1917, the Russian Orthodox Church was essentially transformed into a governmental agency, a tool used to various degrees by the tsars in the imperial campaigns of russification. The Church was allowed by the State to levy taxes off on the peasants. Therefore, the Church, along with the Tsarist State to which it belonged, came to be perceived as an enemy of the people by the Bolsheviks and the other Russian revolutionaries, mostly atheists. The revolution brought, however, a brief period of liberation for the Church: an independent patriarchate was reestablished briefly in 1917, until Stalin quashed the Church a few years later, imprisoning or killing many of the clergy and of the faithful. Part of the clergy escaped the Soviet persecutions by fleeing abroad, where they founded an independent church in exile, reunified with the Russian one in 2007.

The Moscow Kremlin, as seen from South-West

Russian Orthodox Church under Communist rule

The Orthodox Church clergy in Russia was seen as sympathetic with the cause of the White Army in the Civil War (see White movement) after the October Revolution, and occasionally collaborated with it; Patriarch Tikhon's declared position was harshly anti-Bolshevik in 1918. This may have further strengthened the Bolshevik animus against the church.

Before and after the October Revolution of November 7, 1917 (October 25 Old Calendar) there was a movement within the Soviet Union to unite all of the people of the world under Communist rule (see Communist International). This included the Eastern European bloc countries as well as the Balkan States. Since some of these Slavic states tied their ethnic heritage to their ethnic churches, both the peoples and their church were targeted by the Soviet.

The Soviets' official interpretation of freedom of conscience was one of "guaranteeing the right to profess any religion, or profess none, to practice religious cults, or conduct atheist propaganda", though in effect atheism was sponsored by state and was taught in all educational establishments. Public criticism of atheism was unofficially forbidden and sometimes led to imprisonment.

The Soviet Union was the first state to have as an ideological objective the elimination of religion. Toward that end, the Communist regime confiscated church property, ridiculed religion, harassed believers, and propagated atheism in the schools. Actions toward particular religions, however, were determined by State interests, and most organized religions were never outlawed. Some actions against Orthodox priests and believers along with execution included torture being sent to prison camps, labour camps or mental hospitals.

The result of this militant atheism was to transform the Church into a persecuted and martyred Church. In the first five years after the Bolshevik revolution, 28 bishops and 1,200 priests were executed.

The main target of the anti-religious campaign in the 1920s and 1930s was the Russian Orthodox Church, which had the largest number of faithful. Nearly all of its clergy, and many of its believers, were shot or sent to labor camps. Theological schools were closed, and church publications were prohibited. In the period

between 1917 and 1940, the number of Orthodox Churches in the Russian Republic fell from 59,584 to less than 500. Between 1917 and 1935, 130,000 Orthodox priests were arrested. Of these, 95,000 were put to death, executed by firing squad.

After Nazi Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, Joseph Stalin revived the Russian Orthodox Church to intensify patriotic support for the war effort. By 1957 about 22,000 Russian Orthodox churches had become active. But in 1959 Nikita Khrushchev initiated his own campaign against the Russian Orthodox Church and forced the closure of about 12,000 churches. By 1985 fewer than 7,000 churches remained active. It is estimated that 50,000 clergy were executed by the end of the Khrushchev era. Members of the church hierarchy were jailed or forced out, their places taken by docile clergy, many of whom had ties with the KGB.

In the Soviet Union, in addition to the methodical closing and destruction of churches, the charitable and social work formerly done by ecclesiastical authorities was taken over by the state. As with all private property, Church owned property was confiscated into public use. The few places of worship left to the Church were legally viewed as state property which the government permitted the church to use. After the advent of state funded universal education, the Church was not permitted to carry on educational, instructional activity of any kind. Outside of sermons during the celebration of the divine liturgy it could not instruct or evangelise to the faithful or its youth. Catechism classes, religious schools, study groups, Sunday schools and religious publications were all illegal and or banned. This persecution continued, even after the death of Stalin until the Fall of Communism in 1991. This caused many religious tracts to be circulated as illegal literature or samizdat.

Among the most damaging aspects of Soviet rule, along with these physical abuses, the Soviet Union frequently manipulated the recruitment and appointment of priests, sometimes planting agents of the KGB within the church to monitor religious persons who were viewed -- simply for not being atheists -- as suspicious and potential threats to Soviet communism. The recovery of religious beliefs in Russia after the fall of communism, part of a significant religious revival, has been made more challenging as a result of those leaders forced involuntarily upon the church by the KGB during Soviet times.

Other Orthodox Churches under communist rule

Albania was the first state to have declared itself officially fully atheist.

In some other communist states such as Romania, the Orthodox Church as an organisation enjoyed relative freedom and even prospered, albeit under strict secret police control. That, however, did not rule out demolishing churches and monasteries as part of broader systematization (urban planning), state persecution of individual believers, and Romania stands out as a country which ran a specialised institution where many Orthodox (along with peoples of other faiths) were subjected to psychological punishment or torture and mind control experimentation in order to force them give up their religious convictions (see Piteşti prison).

Diaspora emigration to the West

One of the most striking developments in modern historical Orthodoxy is the dispersion of Orthodox Christians to the West. Emigration from Greece and the Near East in the last hundred years has created a sizable Orthodox diaspora in Western Europe, North and South America, and Australia. In addition, the Bolshevik Revolution forced thousands of Russian exiles westward. As a result, Orthodoxy's traditional frontiers have been profoundly modified. Millions of Orthodox are no longer geographically "eastern" since they live permanently in their newly adopted countries in the West. Nonetheless, they remain Eastern Orthodox in their faith and practice. Virtually all the Orthodox nationalities – Greek, Arab, Russian, Serbian, Macedonian, Albanian, Ukrainian, Armenian, Romanian, Bulgarian, Assyrian – are represented in the United States. There are also many converts to Orthodoxy of all conceivable ethnic backgrounds. In fact nearly half of the clergy of the Orthodox Church in America and Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America are of a convert background. Orthodox missions are alive and well in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Enei Church, central Bucharest, Romania. It was purposely demolished by the Communist authorities at 10 March 1977, 6 days after the earthquake, although it wasn't affected.

Church today

The various autocephalous and autonomous synods of the Orthodox Church are distinct in terms of administration and local culture, but for the most part exist in full communion with one another. Relations have recently been restored between the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR) and the Moscow Patriarchate (MP), two branches of the Russian Orthodox Church which separated from each other in the 1920s, due to the subjection of the latter to the hostile Soviet regime. (see Act of Canonical Communion)

Tensions exist in the philosophical differences between those who use the Revised Julian Calendar (" New Calendarists") for calculating the feasts of the ecclesiastical year and those who continue to use the traditional Julian Calendar (" Old Calendarists"). The calendar question reflects the dispute between those who wish to synchronize with the modern Gregorian calendar which its opponents consider unnecessary and damaging to continuity, and those who wish to maintain the traditional ecclesiastical calendar which happens to be based on the Julian calendar. The dispute has led to much acrimony, and sometimes even to violence. Following canonical precepts, some adherents to the Old Calendar have chosen to abstain from clerical intercommunion with those synods which have embraced the New Calendar until such a time that the conflict is resolved. The monastic communities on Mount Athos have provided the strongest opposition to the New Calendar, and to modernism in general, while still maintaining communion with their mother church.

Distribution of Eastern Orthodoxy in the world by country
Dominant religion
Important minority religion (over 10%)

Some latent discontent between different national churches exists also in part due to different approach towards ecumenism. While the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, the Orthodox bishops in North America gathered into the Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas (SCOBA), Romanian bishops, and others are fairly open to dialog with the Roman Catholic Church, both conservative and moderate Old Calendarists, many of the monks of Mount Athos, several bishops of Russian, Serbian, and some of Greek and Bulgarian churches regard ecumenism as compromising essential doctrinal stands in order to accommodate other Christians, and object to the emphasis on dialogue leading to inter-communion; believing instead that Orthodox must speak the truth with love, in the hope of leading to the eventual conversion to Orthodoxy of heterodox Christians.

Proponents of ecumenism are currently engaged in discussing key theological differences such as the Filioque, Papal primacy, and a possible agreement on rapprochement and eventually full communion with the Catholic and Anglican Churches.

Orthodox churches in communion

Nowadays, there are 14 (15 by some) autocephalous Orthodox churches, in full communion with each other, with the precise order of seniority of their heads as listed below. Some of them contain autonomous (marked below) and/or semi-autonomous dioceses (listed within the mother churches). The first nine of the autocephalous churches are led by patriarchs.
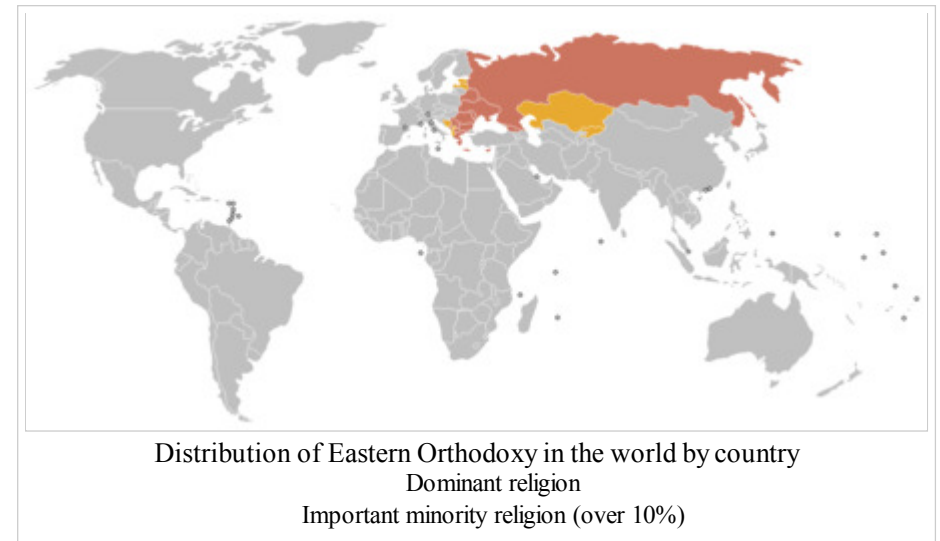
- Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
  - Finnish Orthodox Church (autonomous)
  - Estonian Apostolic Orthodox Church (autonomous)
  - Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese in the USA
  - Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
  - Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA
  - Albanian Orthodox Diocese of America
  - Patriarchal Exarchate for Orthodox Parishes of Russian Tradition in Western Europe
    - Episcopal Vicariate of Great Britain and Ireland
  - Mount Athos
  - Belorussian Council of Orthodox Churches in North America
  - Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
  - Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain (includes Ireland)
  - Archdiocese in Italy and Malta
  - Archdiocese in Australia
  - 13 other small metropolises outside its canonical territory: Austria, Belgium, Argentina, Canada, France, Germany, Hong Kong, the Korean Orthodox Church, Mexico and Central America, New Zealand, Scandinavia, Spain and Portugal, and Switzerland
- Patriarchate of Alexandria
  - African Orthodox groups in the African Continent
- Patriarchate of Antioch
  - Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America (autonomous)
  - Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, New Zealand, and All Oceania
- Patriarchate of Jerusalem
  - Church of Mount Sinai (autonomous)
  - Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem in North and South America
- Russian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Moscow and of all Russia)
  - Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate) (de-facto autonomous)
  - Moldovan Orthodox Church (territorial jurisdiction contested by the Romanian Church)
  - Metropolis of Western Europe (proposed, but not instituted)
  - Japanese Orthodox Church (autonomy not universally recognized)
  - Belarusian exarchate
  - Estonian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
  - Latvian Orthodox Church
  - Hungarian diocese
  - Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (autonomous; union completed on May 17, 2007.)
- Serbian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Peć and of all Serbia)
  - Metropolitanate of Zagreb, Ljubljana and All Italy (Croatia, Slovenia, Italy)

- - Metropolitanate of Montenegro and the Littoral (Montenegro)
    - Metropolitanate of Dabar-Bosna (Bosnia-Herzegovina)
    - Serbian Orthodox Church in the USA and Canada
    - Bishopric in Australia and New Zealand
    - Bishopric in Britain and Scandinavia (Great Britain, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark)
    - Bishopric of Buda (Hungary, Czech Republic, and Slovakia)
    - Bishopric in Central Europe (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland)
    - Bishopric in Timişoara (Romania)
    - Bishopric in Western Europe (France, Belgium, Netherlands, and Spain)
  - Romanian Orthodox Church
    - Metropolis of Bessarabia (autonomous, with the rank of an exarchate, i.e. having the right to have parishes outside its canonical jurisdiction – de facto has in Russia and USA; territorial jurisdiction contested by the Russian Church)
    - Metropolis in France, Western and Southern Europe (British Islands, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy)
    - Metropolis in Germany and Central Europe (Germany, Northern and Central Europe)
    - Romanian Orthodox Archdiocese in America and Canada (USA, Canada, Argentina, Venezuela)
    - Romanian Orthodox Bishopric Dacia Felix (in Serbia)
  - Bulgarian Orthodox Church (Patriarchate of Sofia)
    - Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Church Diocese of America, Canada and Australia
    - Diocese in Central and Western Europe
  - Georgian Orthodox and Apostolic Church (Patriarchate-Catholicate of Tbilisi)
  - Church of Cyprus
  - Church of Greece
  - Polish Orthodox Church
  - Albanian Orthodox Church
  - Czech and Slovak Orthodox Church
  - Orthodox Church in America (recognized as autocephalous only by the Russian, Bulgarian, Georgian, Polish, and Czech-Slovak Churches)
    - Orthodox Church in America Albanian Archdiocese
    - Orthodox Church in America Bulgarian Diocese
    - Romanian Orthodox Episcopate in America
    - Orthodox Church in America Parishes in Australia

Orthodox Churches and communities not in communion with others

- Belarusian Autocephalous Orthodox Church
- Bulgarian Alternative Synod
- Orthodox Church in Italy
- Macedonian Orthodox Church

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- Montenegrin Orthodox Church
- Russian True Orthodox Church
- Turkish Orthodox Church
- Ukrainian Orthodox Church (Kiev Patriarchate)
- Ukrainian Autocephalous Orthodox Church
- Autonomous Ukrainian Orthodox Church in America
- Orthodox Catholic Churches of America

Old Believers

- Russian Orthodox Old-Rite Church (Belokrinitskaya Hierarchy)
- Lipovan Orthodox Old-Rite Church (Belokrinitskaya Hierarchy)
- Russian Old-Orthodox Church (Novozybkovskaya Hierarchy)
- Pomorian Old-Orthodox Church (Pomortsy)

Old Calendarist

- Church of the Genuine Orthodox Christians of Greece
- Orthodox Church of Greece (Holy Synod in Resistance)
- Old Calendar Romanian Orthodox Church
- Old Calendar Bulgarian Orthodox Church
- Russian Orthodox Church in America (Recognized as Autonomous by some)
- Holy Orthodox Church in North America

Defunct churches

- Croatian Orthodox Church
- Chinese Orthodox Church
- Holy Eastern Orthodox Catholic and Apostolic Church in North America (THEOCACNA)

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Existentialism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Existentialism is a philosophical movement which posits that individuals create the meaning and essence of their lives, as opposed to it being created for them by deities or authorities or defined for them by philosophical or theological doctrines.

It emerged as a movement in twentieth-century literature and philosophy, most notably Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, though it had forerunners in earlier centuries. Fyodor Dostoevsky and Franz Kafka also described existential themes in their literary works. It took explicit form as a philosophical current in Continental philosophy, first in the work of Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers in the 1930s in Germany, and then in the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, Albert Camus, and Simone de Beauvoir in the 1940s and 1950s in France. Their work focused on such themes as " dread, boredom, alienation, the absurd, freedom, commitment, and nothingness" as fundamental to human existence. Walter Kaufmann described existentialism as "The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life".
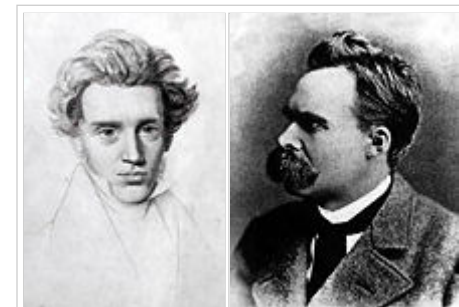
Although there are some common tendencies amongst "existentialist" thinkers, there are major differences and disagreements among them (most notably the divide between atheistic existentialists like Sartre and theistic existentialists like Tillich); not all of them accept the validity of the term.

The philosophers Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche are considered fundamental to the existentialist movement, though neither used the term "existentialism". They predated existentialism by a century.

Major concepts

Existence Precedes Essence

A central proposition of existentialism is that existence precedes essence. This amounts to the assertion that the outer manifestation (existence) of an entity is more determinative than its inner being (essence). Asserting that "existence precedes essence" is a rebellion against the Platonic Ideas, the Forms, which in Plato's philosophy are the true reality behind appearances of things in the world.

When it is said that man defines himself, it is often perceived as stating that man can "wish" to be something - anything, a bird, for instance - and then be it. According to Sartre's own account, however, this would rather be a kind of bad faith. What is meant by the statement is that man is (1) defined only insofar as he acts and (2) that he is responsible for his actions. To clarify, it can be said that a man who acts cruelly towards other people is, by that act, defined as a cruel

man and in that same instance, he (as opposed to his genes, for instance) is defined as being responsible for being this cruel man. Of course, the more positive therapeutic aspect of this is also implied: You can choose to act in a different way, and to be a good person instead of a cruel person. Here it is also clear that since man can choose to be either cruel or good, he is, in fact, neither of these things *essentially*.

To claim, then, that existence precedes essence is to assert that there is no such predetermined essence to be found in man, and that an individual's essence is defined by him or her through how he or she creates and lives his or her life. As Sartre puts it in his Existentialism is a Humanism: "man first of all exists, encounters himself, surges up in the world – and defines himself afterwards."

Existentialism tends to focus on the question of human existence and the conditions of this existence. What is meant by existence is the concrete life of each individual, and his concrete ways of being in the world. Even though this concrete individual existence must be the primary source of information in the study of man, certain conditions are commonly held to be "endemic" to human existence. These conditions are usually in some way related to the inherent meaninglessness or absurdity of the earth and its apparent contrast with our pre-reflexive lived lives which normally present themselves to us as meaningful. A central theme is that since the world "in-itself" is absurd, that is, "not fair," then a meaningful life can at any point suddenly lose all its meaning. The reasons why this happens are many, ranging from a tragedy that "tears a person's world apart," to the results of an honest inquiry into one's own existence. Such an encounter can make a person mentally unstable, and avoiding such instability by making people aware of their condition and ready to handle it is one of the central themes of existentialism. Albert Camus, for instance, famously claimed that "there is only one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide."

Aside from these "psychological" issues, it is also claimed that these encounters with the absurd are where we are most in touch with our condition as humans. Such an encounter cannot be without philosophical significance, and existentialist philosophers derive many metaphysical theories from these encounters. These are often related to the self, consciousness and freedom as well as the nature of meaning.

Dread

Dread, sometimes called angst, anxiety or even anguish is a term that is common to many existentialist thinkers. Although its concrete properties may vary slightly, it is generally held to be the experience of our freedom and responsibility. The archetypal example is the example of the experience one has when standing on a cliff where one not only fears falling off it, but also dreads the possibility of throwing oneself off. In this experience that "nothing is holding me back," one senses the lack of anything that predetermines you to either throw yourself off or to stand still, and one experiences one's own freedom.

It is also claimed, most famously by Sartre, that dread is the fear of nothing (no thing). This relates both to the inherent insecurity about the consequences of one's actions (related to the absurdity of the world), and to the fact that, in experiencing one's freedom, one also realises that one will be fully responsible for these consequences; there is no *thing* in you (your genes, for instance) that acts and that you can "blame" if something goes wrong. Of course, most of us only have short and shallow encounters with this kind of dread, as not every choice is perceived as having dreadful possible consequences (and, it can be claimed, our lives would be unbearable if every choice facilitated dread), but that doesn't change the fact that freedom remains a condition of every action.

It is also worth noting that Søren Kierkegaard, in his The Concept of Dread, maintains that dread, when experienced by the young child in facing the possibility of responsibility for his actions, is one of the main forces in the child's individuation. As such, the very condition of freedom can be said to be a part of any individual's self.

Bad Faith

Bad Faith is seen as any denial of free will by lying to oneself about one's self and freedom. This can take many forms, from convincing oneself that some form of determinism is true, to a sort of "mimicry" where one acts as "*one* should." How "one" should act is often determined by an image one has of how one such as oneself (say, a bank manager) acts. This image usually corresponds to some sort of social norm.

This doesn't mean that all acting in accordance with social norms is bad faith: The main point is the attitude one takes to one's own freedom, and the extent to which one acts in accordance with this freedom. A sign of bad faith can be something like the denial of responsibility for something one has done on the grounds that one just did "as *one* does" or that one's genes determined one to do as one did. Exactly how one lies to oneself is hard to get a hold of. Sartre denies the subconscious the power to do this, and he claims that the person who is lying to him/herself has to be aware that he/she is lying - that he/she *isn't* determined, or this "thing" he/she makes him/herself out to be.

Freedom

The existentialist concept of freedom is often misunderstood as a sort of liberum arbitrium where almost anything is possible and where values are inconsequential to choice and action. This interpretation of the concept is often related to the insistence on the absurdity of the world and that there are no absolutely "good" or "bad" values.

However, that there are no values to be found in the world *in-itself* doesn't mean that there are no values: Each of us usually already has his values before a consideration of their validity is carried through, and it is, after all, upon these values we act. In Kierkegaard's Judge Vilhelm's account in *Either/Or*, making "choices" without allowing one's values to confer differing values to the alternatives, is, in fact, choosing not to make a choice - to "flip a coin," as it were, and to leave everything to chance. This is considered to be a refusal to live in the consequence of one's freedom, meaning it quickly becomes a sort of bad faith. As such, existentialist freedom isn't situated in some kind of abstract space where everything is possible: Since man is free, and since he already exists in this world, it is implied that his freedom is only in this world, and that it, too, is restricted by it.

What *isn't* implied in this account of existential freedom, however, is that one's values are immutable; a consideration of one's values may cause one to reconsider and change them (though this rarely happens). A consequence of this fact is that one is not only responsible for one's actions, but also for the values one holds. This entails that a reference to "common values" doesn't "excuse" the individual's actions, because, even though these are the values of the society he is part of, they are also his own in the sense that he could choose them to be different at any time. Thus, the focus on freedom in existentialism is related to the limits of the responsibility one bears as a result of one's freedom: The relationship between freedom and responsibility is one of interdependency, and a clarification of freedom also clarifies what one is responsible for.

The Other and The Look

The Other (when written with a capitalised o) is a concept more properly belonging to phenomenology and its account of intersubjectivity. However, the concept has seen widespread use in existentialist writings, and the conclusions drawn from it differ slightly from the phenomenological accounts.

The experience of the Other is the experience of another free subject who inhabits the same world as you do. In its most basic form, it is this experience of the Other that constitutes intersubjectivity and objectivity. To clarify, when one experiences someone else, and that this Other person experiences the world (the same world that you experience), only from "over there," the world itself is constituted as objective in that it is something that is "there" as identical for both of the subjects; you experience the other person as experiencing the same as you. This experience of the Other's look is what is termed the Look (sometimes The Gaze).

While this experience, in its basic phenomenological sense, constitutes the world as objective, and yourself as objectively existing subjectivity (you experience yourself as seen in the Other's Look in precisely the same way that you experience the Other as seen by you, as subjectivity), in existentialism, it also acts as a kind of limitation of your freedom. This is because the Look tends to objectify what it sees. As such, when one experiences oneself in the Look, one doesn't experience oneself as nothing (no thing), but as something. Sartre's own example of a man peeping at someone through a keyhole can help clarify this: At first, this man is entirely caught up in the situation he is in; he is in a pre-reflexive state where his entire consciousness is directed at what goes on in the room. Suddenly, he hears a creaking floorboard behind him, and he becomes aware of himself *as seen by the Other*. He is thus filled with shame for he perceives himself as he would perceive someone else doing what he was doing, as a Peeping Tom.

Another characteristic feature of the Look is that no Other *really* needs to have been there: It is quite possible that the creaking floorboard was nothing but the movement of an old house; the Look isn't some kind of mystical telepathic experience of the *actual* way the other sees you (there may also have been someone there, but he could have not noticed that you were there, or he could be another Peeping Tom who just wants to join you).

Reason as a problematic defense against anxiety

Emphasizing action, freedom, and decision as fundamental, existentialists oppose themselves to rationalism and positivism. That is, they argue against definitions of human beings as primarily rational. Rather, existentialists look at where people find meaning. Existentialism asserts that people actually make decisions based on what has meaning to them rather than what is rational.

The rejection of reason as the source of meaning is a common theme of existentialist thought, as is the focus on the feelings of anxiety and dread that we feel in the face of our own radical freedom and our awareness of death. Kierkegaard saw rationality as a mechanism humans use to counter their existential anxiety, their fear of being in the world: "If I can believe that I am rational and everyone else is rational then I have nothing to fear and no reason to feel anxious about being free."

Like Kierkegaard, Sartre saw problems with rationality, calling it a form of "bad faith", an attempt by the self to impose structure on a world of phenomena — "the other" — that is fundamentally irrational and random. According to Sartre, rationality and other forms of bad faith hinder us from finding meaning in freedom. To try to suppress our feelings of anxiety and dread, we confine ourselves within everyday experience, Sartre asserts, thereby relinquishing our freedom and acquiescing to being possessed in one form or another by "the look" of "the other" (i.e. possessed by another person - or at least our idea of that other person).

In a similar vein, Camus believed that society and religion falsely teach humans that "the other" has order and structure. For Camus, when an individual's "consciousness", longing for order, collides with "the other's" lack of order, a third element is born: "absurdity".

The Absurd

The notion of the Absurd contains the idea that there is no meaning to be found in the world beyond what meaning we give to it. This meaninglessness also encompasses the amorality or "unfairness" of the world. This contrasts with "karmic" ways of thinking in which "bad things don't happen to good people"; to the world, metaphorically speaking, there is no such thing as a good person or a bad thing; what happens happens, and it may just as well happen to a good person as to a bad person.

This contrasts our daily experience where most things appear to us as meaningful, and where good people do indeed, on occasion, receive some sort of "reward" for their goodness. Most existentialist thinkers, however, will maintain that this is not a necessary feature of the world, and that it definitely isn't a property of the world in-itself. Because of the world's absurdity, at any point in time, anything can happen to anyone, and a tragic event could plummet someone into direct confrontation with the Absurd.

The notion of the absurd has been prominent in literature throughout history. Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky and many of the literary works of Jean-Paul Sartre contain descriptions of people who encounter the absurdity of the world.

Arguably, the most extensive existentialist study of "the absurd" was done by Albert Camus in his classic essay *The Myth of Sisyphus*.

Types of Existentialism

Atheistic Existentialism

Atheistic Existentialism is the form of existentialism most commonly encountered in today's society. What sets it apart from theistic existentialism is that it rejects the notion of a god and his transcendent will that should in some way dictate how we should live. It rejects the notion that there is any "created" meaning to life and the world, and that a leap of faith is required of man in order for him to live an authentic life.

In this kind of existentialism, belief in god is often considered a form of Bad Faith.

Theistic Existentialism

Theistic existentialism is, for the most part, Christian in its outlook, but there have been existentialists of other theological persuasions (like Judaism). The main thing that sets them apart from atheistic existentialists is that they posit the existence of God, and that He is the source of our being. It is generally held that God has designed the world in such a way that we must define our own lives, and each individual is held accountable for his or her own self-definition. God is incomprehensibly paradoxical (this is exemplified in the incarnation of Christ); theism is not rationally justifiable, and belief in God is the ultimate leap of faith.

Historical background

Generally

Existential themes have been hinted at throughout history. Examples include the Buddha's teachings, the Bible in the Book of Ecclesiastes and Book of Job, Saint Augustine in his *Confessions*, Averroes' school of philosophy, Saint Thomas Aquinas' writings, and Mulla Sadra's transcendent theosophy. Individualist political theories, such as those advanced by John Locke, advocated individual autonomy and self-determination rather than state rule over the individual. This kind of political philosophy, although not existential per se, provided a welcoming climate for existentialism.

In 1670, Blaise Pascal's unfinished notes were published under the title of *Pensées* ("*Thoughts*"). He described many fundamental themes common to what would be known as existentialism two and three centuries later. Pascal argued that without a God, life would be meaningless and miserable. People would only be able to create obstacles and overcome them in an attempt to escape boredom. These token-victories would ultimately become meaningless, since people would eventually die. This was good enough reason not to choose to become an atheist, according to Pascal.

Existentialism, in its currently recognizable 20th century form, was inspired by Søren Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky and the German philosophers Friedrich Nietzsche, Edmund Husserl, and Martin Heidegger. It became popular in the mid-20th century through the works of the French writer-philosophers Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, whose versions of it were set out in a popular form in Sartre's 1946 *Existentialism is a Humanism* and Beauvoir's *The Ethics of Ambiguity*.

The Søren Kierkegaard Statue in Copenhagen.

Gabriel Marcel pursued theological versions of existentialism, most notably Christian existentialism. Other theological existentialists include Paul Tillich, Rudolf Bultmann, Miguel de Unamuno, Thomas Hora and Martin Buber. Moreover, one-time Marxist Nikolai Berdyaev developed a philosophy of Christian existentialism in his native Russia, and later in France, in the decades preceding World War II. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel and Arthur Schopenhauer are also important influences on the development of existentialism (although not precursors), because the philosophies of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were written in response or opposition to Hegel and Schopenhauer, respectively.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche

The first philosophers considered fundamental to the existentialist movement were Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche, though neither used the term "existentialism" and it is unclear whether they would have supported the existentialism of the 20th century. Their focus was on human experience, rather than the objective truths of math and science that are too detached or observational to truly get at human experience. Like Pascal, they were interested in people's concealment of the meaninglessness of life and the use of diversion to escape from boredom. But Pascal did not consider the role of making free choices, particularly regarding fundamental values and beliefs: such choices change the nature and identity of the chooser, in the view of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. Kierkegaard's knight of faith and Nietzsche's Übermensch are examples of those who define the nature of their own existence. Great individuals invent their own values and create the very terms under which they excel.

Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were also precursors to other intellectual movements, including postmodernism, nihilism, and various strands of psychology.

Heidegger and the German existentialists

One of the first German existentialists was Karl Jaspers, who recognized the importance of Kierkegaard and Nietzsche and attempted to build an "Existenz" philosophy around the two. Heidegger, who was influenced by Jaspers and the phenomenologist Edmund Husserl, wrote his most influential work *Being and Time* which postulates *Dasein* (*dah-zine*), translated as, all at once, "being here", "being there", and "being-in-the-world"—a being that is constituted by its temporality, illuminates and interprets the meaning of being in time. *Dasein* is sometimes considered the human subject, but Heidegger denied the Cartesian dualism of subject-object/mind-body. [paragraph needs citations and clarifications]

Although existentialists view Heidegger to be an important philosopher in the movement, he vehemently denied being an existentialist in the Sartrean sense, in his "Letter on Humanism".

Sartre, Camus, and the French existentialists

Jean-Paul Sartre is perhaps the most well-known existentialist and is one of the few to have accepted being called an "existentialist". Sartre developed his version of existentialist philosophy under the influence of Husserl and Heidegger. *Being and Nothingness* is perhaps his most important work about existentialism. Sartre was also talented in his ability to espouse his ideas in different media, including philosophical essays, lectures, novels, plays, and the theatre. *No Exit* and *Nausea* are two of his celebrated works. In the 1960s, he attempted to reconcile existentialism and Marxism in his work *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. A major theme throughout his writings was freedom and responsibility.

Albert Camus was a friend of Sartre, until their falling-out, and wrote several works with existential themes including *The Rebel*, *The Stranger*, *The Myth of Sisyphus*, and *Summer in Algiers*. Camus, like many others, rejected the existentialist label, and considered his works to be concerned with people facing the absurd. In *The Myth of Sisyphus*, Camus uses the analogy of the Greek myth to demonstrate the futility of existence. In the myth, Sisyphus is condemned for eternity to roll a rock up a hill, but when he reaches the summit, the rock will roll to the bottom again. Camus believes that this existence is pointless but that Sisyphus ultimately finds meaning and purpose in his task, simply by continually applying himself to it.

Critic Martin Esslin in his book *Theatre of the Absurd* pointed out how many contemporary playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, Eugene Ionesco, Jean Genet, and Arthur Adamov wove into their plays the existential belief that we are absurd beings loose in a universe empty of real meaning. Esslin noted that many of these playwrights demonstrated the philosophy better than did the plays by Sartre and Camus. Though most of such playwrights, subsequently labeled "Absurdist" (based on Esslin's book), denied affiliations with existentialism and were often staunchly anti-philosophical (for example Ionesco often claimed he identified more with 'Pataphysics or with Surrealism than with existentialism), the playwrights are often linked to existentialism based on Esslin's observation.

Simone de Beauvoir, an important existentialist who spent much of her life alongside Sartre, wrote about feminist and existential ethics in her works, including *The Second Sex* and *The Ethics of Ambiguity*. Although often overlooked due to her relationship with Sartre, de Beauvoir integrated existentialism with other forms of thinking such as feminism, unheard of at the time, resulting in alienation from fellow writers such as Camus.

Frantz Fanon, a Martiniquan-born critic of colonialism, has been considered an important existentialist.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, an often overlooked existentialist, was for a time a companion of Sartre. His understanding of Husserl's phenomenology was far greater than that of Merleau-Ponty's fellow existentialists. It has been said that his work, Humanism and Terror, greatly influenced Sartre. However, in later years they were to disagree irreparably, dividing many existentialists such as de Beauvoir, who sided with Sartre. Michel Foucault would also be considered an existentialist through his use of history to reveal the constant alterations of created meaning, thus proving history's failure to produce a cohesive version of reality.

Dostoevsky, Kafka, and the literary existentialists

Many writers who are not usually considered philosophers have also had a major influence on existentialism. Among them, Czech author Franz Kafka and Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky are most prominent. Kafka created often surreal and alienated characters who struggle with hopelessness and absurdity, notably in his most famous novella, *The Metamorphosis*, or in his master novel, *The Trial*. Dostoevsky's *Notes from Underground* details the story of a man who is unable to fit into society and unhappy with the identities he creates for himself. [paragraph needs citations and clarification.]

Many of Dostoevsky's novels, such as *Crime and Punishment*, covered issues pertinent to existential philosophy while offering story lines divergent from secular existentialism: for example in *Crime and Punishment* one sees the protagonist, Raskolnikov, experience existential crises and move toward a worldview similar to Christian Existentialism, which Dostoevsky had come to advocate.

In the 20th century, existentialism experienced a resurgence in popular art forms. In fiction, Hermann Hesse's 1928 novel *Steppenwolf*, based on an idea in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or* (1843), sold well in the West. Jack Kerouac and the Beat poets adopted existentialist themes. " Arthouse" films began quoting and alluding to existentialist thought and thinkers.

Existentialist novelists were generally seen as a mid-1950s phenomenon that continued until the mid- to late 1970s. Most of the major writers were either French or from French African colonies. Small circles of other Europeans were seen as literary precursors by the existentialists, but literary history increasingly has questioned the accuracy of this perception.

Criticism

Herbert Marcuse criticized existentialism, especially Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, for projecting some features of living in a modern, oppressive society, such as anxiety and meaninglessness, onto the nature of existence itself: "Insofar as Existentialism is a philosophical doctrine, it remains an idealistic doctrine: it hypostatizes specific historical conditions of human existence into ontological and metaphysical characteristics. Existentialism thus becomes part of the very ideology which it attacks, and its radicalism is illusory". Sartre had already responded to some points of the Marxist criticisms of existentialism in his popular lecture *Existentialism is a humanism*, held in 1946.

Theodor Adorno, in his *Jargon of Authenticity*, criticized Heidegger's philosophy, with special attention to Heidegger's use of language, as a mystifying ideology of advanced industrial society and its power structure.

Heidegger criticized Sartre's existentialism, in Heidegger's *Letter on Humanism*:

> *Existentialism says [that] existence precedes essence. In this statement he [Sartre] is taking* existentia *and* essentia *according to their metaphysical meaning, which from Plato's time on has said that* essentia *precedes* existentia. *Sartre reverses this statement. But the reversal of a metaphysical statement remains a metaphysical statement. With it he stays with metaphysics in oblivion of the truth of Being.*

Roger Scruton claimed, in his book *From Descartes to Wittgenstein*, that both Heidegger's concept of inauthenticity and Sartre's concept of bad faith were self-inconsistent; both deny any universal moral creed, yet speak of these concepts as if everyone is bound to abide by them. In chapter 18, he writes, "In what sense Sartre is able to 'recommend' the authenticity which consists in the purely self-made morality is unclear. He does recommend it, but, by his own argument, his recommendation can have no objective force."

Logical positivists, such as Carnap and Ayer, claim that existentialists frequently become confused over the verb "to be" in their analyses of "being". They argued that the verb is transitive and prefixed to a predicate (e.g., An apple *is red*): that the word without any predicate is meaningless. Another claimed source of confusion in the existentialist metaphysical literature is that existentialists try to understand the meaning of the word "nothing" (the negation of existence) by assuming that it must refer to something. Borrowing Kant's argument against the ontological argument for the existence of God, the logical positivists argue that existence is not a property.

Influence outside philosophy

Cultural movement and influence

The term existentialism was first adopted as a self-reference in the 1940s and 1950s by Jean-Paul Sartre, and the widespread use of literature as a means of disseminating their ideas by Sartre and his associates (notably novelist Albert Camus) meant existentialism "was as much a literary phenomenon as a philosophical one." Among existentialist writers were Parisians Jean Genet, André Gide, André Malraux, and playwright Samuel Beckett, the Norwegian Knut Hamsun, and the Romanian friends Eugene Ionesco and Emil Cioran. Prominent artists such as the Abstract Expressionists Jackson Pollock, Arshile Gorky, and Willem de Kooning have been understood in existentialist terms, as have filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard and Ingmar Bergman. Individual films such as the 1952 western *High Noon* and *Fight Club* (1999) have also been cited as existentialist. Also, existential theological influence is apparent in the Angel's Egg.

Literature

Since 1970, much cultural activity in art, cinema, and literature contains postmodernist and existential elements. Books such as *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968) (now republished as *Blade Runner*) by Philip K. Dick, *Toilet: The Novel* by Michael Szymczyk and *Fight Club* by Chuck Palahniuk all distort the line between reality and appearance while simultaneously espousing strong existential themes. Ideas from such thinkers as Dostoevsky, Foucault, Kafka, Nietzsche, Herbert Marcuse, Gilles Deleuze, and Eduard von Hartmann permeate the works of artists such as Chuck Palahniuk, Michael Szymczyk, David Lynch, Crispin Glover, and Charles Bukowski, and one often finds in their works a delicate balance between distastefulness and beauty.

Film

Existential themes have been evident throughout 20th century cinema. Many films portray characters going through the "existential dilemma" or existential problems. Just as there is much controversy about the definition of existentialism, there is a fine line between existential and non-existential films. One might ask how certain movies can be considered existential, while others are not, and the judgment is purely subjective. However, for the sake of discussion, it is beneficial to provide a clear definition of existential movies. The most accurate definition says that existential movies are those which have strong plots that deal with subjects such as dread, boredom, nothingness, anxiety, alienation and the absurd. Furthermore, the definition states that movies *which deal with the themes of existential literature seriously* are also considered as being existential.

A number of 1940s and 1950s-era films explored existential themes, including the US film noir genre, which explored the ambiguous moral dilemmas of people drawn into the gangster underworld. Film noirs tend to revolve around heroes who are more flawed and morally questionable than the norm, often fall guys of one sort or another. The characteristic heroes of noir are described by many critics as "alienated" and "filled with existential bitterness." Film noir is often described as essentially pessimistic. The noir stories that are regarded as most characteristic tell of people trapped in unwanted situations (which, in general, they did not cause but are responsible for exacerbating), striving against random, uncaring fate, and frequently doomed. The movies are seen as depicting a world that is inherently corrupt. Classic film noir has been associated by many critics with the American social landscape of the era—in particular, with a sense of heightened anxiety and alienation that is said to have followed World War II.

Existentialist themes were also present in other genres. The French director Jean Genet's 1950 fantasy-erotic film *Un chant d'amour* shows two inmates in solitary cells whose only contact is through a hole in their cell wall, who are spied on by the prison warden. Reviewer James Travers calls the film a "...visual poem evoking homosexual desire and existentialist suffering" which "... conveys the bleakness of a existence in a godless universe with painful believability"; he calls it "... probably the most effective fusion of existentialist philosophy and cinema."

Stanley Kubrick's 1957 anti-war film *Paths of Glory* "illustrates, and even illuminates...existentialism" by examining the "necessary absurdity of the human condition" and the "horror of war" . The film tells the story of a fictional WWI French army regiment which is ordered to attack an impregnable German stronghold; when the attack fails, three soldiers are chosen at random, court-martialed by a "kangaroo court", and executed by firing squad. The film examines existential ethics, such as the issue of whether objectivity is possible and the "problem of authenticity".

Some contemporary films dealing with existential issues include *Fight Club*, *Waking Life*, and *Ordinary People*. Likewise, films throughout the 20th century such as *Taxi Driver*, *High Noon*, *Easy Rider*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Apocalypse Now*, *The Seventh Seal*, *Ikiru*, and *Blade Runner* also have existential qualities. Notable directors known for their existentialist films include Ingmar Bergman, Francois Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni, Andrei Tarkovsky, and Woody Allen.

Theatre

Jean-Paul Sartre wrote *No Exit* in 1944, an existentialist play originally published in French as *Huis Clos* (meaning *In Camera* or "behind closed doors") which is the source of the popular quote, "Hell is other people." (In French, "l'enfer, c'est les autres"). The play begins with a Valet leading a man into a room that the

audience soon realizes is in hell. Eventually he is joined by two women. After their entry, the Valet leaves and the door is shut and locked. All three expect to be tortured, but no torturer arrives. Instead, they realize they are there to torture each other, which they do effectively, by probing each other's sins, desires, and unpleasant memories.

Existentialist themes have also influenced the Theatre of the Absurd, notably in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, in which two men divert themselves while they wait expectantly for someone named Godot who never arrives. They claim Godot to be an acquaintance but in fact hardly know him, admitting they would not recognize him if they saw him. To occupy themselves they eat, sleep, talk, argue, sing, play games, exercise, swap hats, and contemplate suicide—anything "to hold the terrible silence at bay". The play "exploits several archetypal forms and situations, all of which lend themselves to both comedy and pathos." The play also illustrates an attitude toward man's experience on earth: the poignancy, oppression, camaraderie, hope, corruption, and bewilderment of human experience that can only be reconciled in mind and art of the absurdist. The play examines questions such as death, the meaning of human existence and the place of God in human existence.

Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead* is an absurdist, existentialist tragicomedy first staged at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 1966. The play expands upon the exploits of two minor characters from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Comparisons have also been drawn to Samuel Beckett's *Waiting For Godot*, for the presence of two central characters who almost appear to be two halves of a single character. Many plot features are similar as well: the characters pass time by playing Questions, impersonating other characters, and interrupting each other or remaining silent for long periods of time. The two characters are portrayed as two clowns or fools in a world that is beyond their understanding. They stumble through philosophical arguments while not realizing the implications, and muse on the irrationality and randomness of the world.

Jean Anouilh's *Antigone* also presents arguments founded on existentialist ideas. It is a tragedy inspired by Greek mythology and the play of the same name (Antigone, by Sophocles) from the fifth century B.C. In English, it is often distinguished from its antecedent by being pronounced in its original French form, approximately "Ante-GŌN." The play was first performed in Paris on February 6, 1944, during the Nazi occupation of France. Produced under Nazi censorship, the play is purposefully ambiguous with regards to the rejection of authority (represented by Antigone) and the acceptance of it (represented by Creon). The parallels to the French Resistance and the Nazi occupation have been drawn. Antigone rejects life as desperately meaningless but without affirmatively choosing a noble death. The crux of the play is the lengthy dialogue concerning the nature of power, fate, and choice, during which Antigone says that she is "... disgusted with [the]...promise of a humdrum happiness"; she states that she would rather die than live a mediocre existence.

Theology

Christ's teachings had an indirect style, in which his point is often left unsaid for the purpose of letting the single individual confront the truth on their own. This is evident in his parables, which are a response to a question he is asked. After he tells the parable, he returns the question to the individual. An **existential** reading of the Bible demands that the reader recognize that he is an existing subject studying the words God communicates to him personally. This is in contrast to looking at a collection of "truths" which are outside and unrelated to the reader. Such a reader is not obligated to follow the commandments as if an external agent is forcing them upon him, but as though they are inside him and guiding him from inside. This is the task Kierkegaard takes up when he asks: "Who has the more difficult task: the teacher who lectures on earnest things a meteor's distance from everyday life-or the learner who should put it to use?" Existentially speaking, the Bible doesn't become an authority in a person's life until they authorize the Bible to be their personal authority. Existentialism has had a significant

influence on theology, notably on postmodern Christianity and on theologians and religious thinkers such as Nikolai Berdyaev, Karl Barth, Paul Tillich, and John Macquarrie. It has also surfaced in theologically-themed media, such as the Angel's Egg.

Existential psychoanalysis and psychotherapy

One of the major offshoots of existentialism as a philosophy is existential psychology and psychoanalysis, which first crystallized in the work of Ludwig Binswanger, a clinician who was influenced by both Freud and Heidegger, and Sartre, who was not a clinician but wrote theoretical material about existential psychoanalysis. A later figure was Viktor Frankl, who had studied with Freud and Jung as a young man. His logotherapy can be regarded as a form of existential therapy. An early contributor to existential psychology in the United States was Rollo May, who was influenced by Kierkegaard. One of the most prolific writers on techniques and theory of existential psychology in the USA is Irvin D. Yalom. The person who has contributed most to the development of a European version of existential psychotherapy is the British-based Emmy van Deurzen.

With complete freedom to decide, and complete responsibility for the outcome of decisions, comes anxiety (angst). Anxiety's importance in existentialism makes it a popular topic in psychotherapy. Therapists often use existential philosophy to explain the patient's anxiety. Psychotherapists using an existential approach believe that a patient can harness his anxiety and use it constructively. Instead of suppressing anxiety, patients are advised to use it as grounds for change. By embracing anxiety as inevitable, a person can use it to achieve his or her full potential in life. Humanistic psychology also had major impetus from existential psychology and shares many of the fundamental tenets.

Terror management theory is a developing area of study within the academic study of psychology. It looks at what researchers claim to be the implicit emotional reactions of people that occur when they are confronted with the knowledge they will eventually die.

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First Council of Nicaea

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **First Council of Nicaea**, held in Nicaea in Bithynia (present-day İznik in Turkey), convoked by the Roman Emperor Constantine I in 325, was the first Ecumenical council of the Christian Church, and most significantly resulted in the first uniform Christian doctrine, called the Nicene Creed. With the creation of the creed, a precedent was established for subsequent general (ecumenical) councils of Bishops' (Synods) to create statements of belief and canons of doctrinal orthodoxy— the intent being to define unity of beliefs for the whole of Christendom.

The purpose of the council was to resolve disagreements arising from within the Church of Alexandria over the nature of Jesus in relationship to the Father; in particular, whether Jesus was of the same substance as God the Father or merely of similar substance. St. Alexander of Alexandria and Athanasius took the first position; the popular presbyter Arius, from whom the term Arian controversy comes, took the second. The council decided against the Arians overwhelmingly (of the estimated 250-318 attendees, all but 2 voted against Arius).

Another result of the council was an agreement on when to celebrate the Resurrection, the most important feast of the ecclesiastical calendar. The council decided in favour of celebrating the resurrection on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, independently of the Hebrew Calendar (see also Quartodecimanism and Easter controversy). It authorized the Bishop of Alexandria (presumably using the Alexandrian calendar) to announce annually the exact date to his fellow bishops.

The Council of Nicaea was historically significant because it was the first effort to attain consensus in the church through an assembly representing all of Christendom. "It was the first occasion for the development of technical Christology." Further, "Constantine in convoking and presiding over the council signaled a measure of imperial control over the church." A precedent was set for subsequent general councils to adopt creeds and canons.

Character and purpose

First Council of Nicaea	
Date	325
Accepted by	Eastern Orthodoxy, Oriental Orthodoxy, Assyrian Church of the East, Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, Lutheranism, Calvinism
Previous council	none considered ecumenical
Next council	First Council of Constantinople
Convoked by	Constantine I
Presided by	St. Alexander of Alexandria
Attendance	250-318 (only five from Western Church)
Topics of discussion	Arianism, celebration of Passover (Easter), Miletian schism, validity of baptism by heretics, lapsed Christians
Documents and statements	Original Nicene Creed and about 20 decrees
Chronological list of Ecumenical councils	

The First Council of Nicaea was convened by Constantine I upon the recommendations of a synod led by Hosius of Cordoba in the Eastertide of 325. This synod had been charged with investigation of the trouble brought about by the Arian controversy in the Greek-speaking east. To most bishops, the teachings of Arius were heretical and dangerous to the salvation of souls. In the summer of 325, the bishops of all provinces were summoned to Nicaea (now known as İznik, in modern-day Turkey), a place easily accessible to the majority of them, particularly those of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Thrace.

Approximately 250 to 318 bishops attended, from every region of the Empire except Britain. Of the bishops whose successors would much later be termed Patriarchs (see Pentarchy), Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, and Macarius of Jerusalem attended, and Sylvester I, Bishop of Rome, sent legates. Constantinople had not yet been founded. Another participant was the first church historian, Eusebius of Caesarea. Athanasius of Alexandria, famous for his battles against Arianism, was also present, but was then only a deacon.

This was the first general council in the history of the Church since the Apostolic Council of Jerusalem, which had established the conditions upon which Gentiles could join the Church. In the Council of Nicaea, "the Church had taken her first great step to define doctrine more precisely in response to a challenge from a heretical theology." The resolutions in the council, being ecumenical, were intended for the whole Church.

Constantine the Great summoned the bishops of the Christian Church to Nicaea to address divisions in the Church. (mosaic in Hagia Sophia, Constantinople, c. 1000).

Attendees

Constantine had invited all 1800 bishops of the Christian church (about 1000 in the east and 800 in the west), but a lesser and unknown number attended. Eusebius of Caesarea counted 250, Athanasius of Alexandria counted 318, and Eustathius of Antioch counted 270 (all three were present at the council). Later, Socrates Scholasticus recorded more than 300, and Evagrius, Hilarius, Jerome and Rufinus recorded 318.

The participating bishops were given free travel to and from their episcopal sees to the council, as well as lodging. These bishops did not travel alone; each one had permission to bring with him two priests and three deacons; so the total number of attendees would have been above 1500. Eusebius speaks of an almost innumerable host of accompanying priests, deacons and acolytes.

A special prominence was also attached to this council because the persecution of Christians had just ended with the February 313 Edict of Milan by Emperors Constantine and Licinius.

The Eastern bishops formed the great majority. Of these, the first rank was held by the three patriarchs: Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, and Macarius of Jerusalem. Many of the assembled fathers — for instance, Paphnutius of Thebes, Potamon of Heraclea and Paul of Neocaesarea — had stood forth as confessors of the faith and came to the council with the marks of persecution on their faces. Other remarkable attendees were Eusebius of Nicomedia; Eusebius of Caesarea; Nicholas of Myra; Aristakes of Armenia (son of Saint Gregory the Illuminator); Leontius of Caesarea; Jacob of Nisibis, a former hermit;

Hypatius of Gangra; Protogenes of Sardica; Melitius of Sebastopolis; Achilleus of Larissa; Athanasius of Thessaly and Spyridion of Trimythous, who even while a bishop made his living as a shepherd. From foreign places came a Persian bishop John, a Gothic bishop Theophilus and Stratophilus, bishop of Pitiunt in Egrisi (located at the border of modern-day Russia and Georgia outside of the Roman Empire).

The Latin-speaking provinces sent at least five representatives: Marcus of Calabria from Italia, Cecilian of Carthage from Africa, Hosius of Córdoba from Hispania, Nicasius of Dijon from Gaul, and Domnus of Stridon from the province of the Danube. Pope Silvester I declined to attend, pleading infirmity, but he was represented by two priests.

Athanasius of Alexandria, a young deacon and companion of Bishop Alexander of Alexandria, was among these assistants. Athanasius eventually spent most of his life battling against Arianism. Alexander of Constantinople, then a presbyter, was also present as representative of his aged bishop.

The supporters of Arius included Secundus of Ptolemais, Theonus of Marmarica, Zphyrius, and Dathes, all of whom hailed from Libya and the Pentapolis. Other supporters included Eusebius of Nicomedia, Eusebius of Caesarea, Paulinus of Tyrus, Actius of Lydda, Menophantus of Ephesus, and Theognus of Nicaea.

"Resplendent in purple and gold, Constantine made a ceremonial entrance at the opening of the council, probably in early June, but respectfully seated the bishops ahead of himself." As Eusebius described, Constantine "himself proceeded through the midst of the assembly, like some heavenly messenger of God, clothed in raiment which glittered as it were with rays of light, reflecting the glowing radiance of a purple robe, and adorned with the brilliant splendor of gold and precious stones." He was present as an observer, but he did not vote. Constantine organized the Council along the lines of the Roman Senate. "Ossius [Hosius] presided over its deliberations; he probably, and the two priests of Rome certainly, came as representatives of the Pope." "Eusebius of Nicomedia probably gave the welcoming address."

Agenda and procedure

The agenda of the synod were:

1. The Arian question regarding relationship between Father and Son; i.e. are the Father and Son one in purpose only or in person;
2. The date of celebration of the Paschal observation
3. The Meletian schism;
4. The validity of baptism by heretics;
5. The status of the lapsed in the persecution under Licinius.

The council was formally opened May 20, in the central structure of the imperial palace, with preliminary discussions on the Arian question. In these discussions, some dominant figures were Arius, with several adherents. "Some 22 of the bishops at the council, led by Eusebius of Nicomedia, came as supporters of Arius. But when some of the more shocking passages from his writings were read, they were almost universally seen as blasphemous." Bishops Theognis of Nicaea and Maris of Chalcedon were among the initial supporters of Arius.

Eusebius of Caesarea called to mind the baptismal creed (symbol) of his own diocese at Caesarea in Palestine, as a form of reconciliation. The majority of the bishops agreed. For some time, scholars thought that the original Nicene Creed was based on this statement of Eusebius. Today, most scholars think that this Creed is derived from the baptismal creed of Jerusalem, as Hans Lietzmann proposed. Another possibility is the Apostle's Creed.

Icon depicting the First Council of Nicaea.

In any case, as the council went on, the orthodox bishops won approval of every one of their proposals. After being in session for an entire month, the council promulgated on June 19 the original Nicene Creed. This profession of faith was adopted by all the bishops "but two from Libya who had been closely associated with Arius from the beginning." No historical record of their dissent actually exists; the signatures of these bishops are simply absent from the creed.

Arian controversy

The Arian controversy was a Christological dispute that began in Alexandria between the followers of Arius (the *Arians*) and the followers of St. Alexander of Alexandria (now known as Homoousians). Alexander and his followers believed that the Son was of the *same substance* as the Father, co-eternal with him. The Arians believed that they were different and that the Son, though he may be the most perfect of creations, was only a creation. A third group (now known as Homoiousians) tried to make a compromise position, saying that the Father and the Son were of *similar substance*.

Much of the debate hinged on the difference between being "born" or "created" and being "begotten". Arians saw these as the same; followers of Alexander did not. Indeed, the exact meaning of many of the words used in the debates at Nicaea were still unclear to speakers of other languages. Greek words like "essence" (*ousia*), "substance" (*hypostasis*), "nature" (*physis*), "person" (*prosopon*) bore a variety of meanings drawn from pre-Christian philosophers, which could not but entail misunderstandings until they were cleared up. The word *homoousia*, in particular, was initially disliked by many bishops because of its associations

with Gnostic heretics (who used it in their theology), and because it had been condemned at the 264-268 Synods of Antioch.

Homoousians believed that to follow the Arian view destroyed the unity of the Godhead, and made the Son unequal to the Father, in contravention of the Scriptures ("The Father and I are one", John 10:30). Arians, on the other hand, believed that since God the Father created the Son, he must have emanated from the Father, and thus be lesser than the Father, in that the Father is eternal, but the Son was created afterward and, thus, is not eternal. The Arians likewise appealed to Scripture, quoting verses such as John 14:28: "the Father is greater than I". Homoousians countered the Arians' argument, saying that the Father's fatherhood, like all of his attributes, is eternal. Thus, the Father was always a father, and that the Son, therefore, always existed with him.

The Council declared that the Father and the Son are of the same substance and are co-eternal, basing the declaration in the claim that this was a formulation of traditional Christian belief handed down from the Apostles. This belief was expressed in the Nicene Creed.

The Nicene Creed

Icon depicting the Emperor Constantine and the Fathers of the First Council of Nicaea (325) holding the Nicene Creed in its 385 form.

By and large, many creeds were acceptable to the members of the council. From his perspective, even Arius could cite such a creed.

For Bishop Alexander and others, however, greater clarity was required. Some distinctive elements in the Nicene Creed, perhaps from the hand of Hosius of Cordova, were added.

1. Jesus Christ is described as "God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God," confirming his divinity. When all light sources were natural, the essence of light was considered to be identical, regardless of its form.
2. Jesus Christ is said to be "begotten, not made," asserting his co-eternalness with God, and confirming it by stating his role in the Creation.
3. Finally, he is said to be "from the substance of the Father," in direct opposition to Arianism. Some ascribe the term *Consubstantial*, *i.e.*, "of the **same** substance" (of the Father), to Constantine who, on this particular point, may have chosen to exercise his authority.

Of the third article only the words "and in the Holy Spirit" were left; the original Nicene Creed ended with these words. Then followed immediately the canons of the council. Thus, instead of a baptismal creed acceptable to both the homoousian and Arian parties, as proposed by Eusebius, the council promulgated one which was unambiguous in the aspects touching upon the points of contention between these two positions, and one which was incompatible with the beliefs of Arians. From earliest times, various creeds served as a means of identification for Christians, as a means of inclusion and recognition, especially at baptism. In Rome, for example, the Apostles' Creed was popular, especially for use in Lent and the Easter season. In the Council of Nicaea, one specific creed was used to define the Church's faith clearly, to include those who professed it, and to exclude those who did not.

The text of this profession of faith is preserved in a letter of Eusebius to his congregation, in Athanasius, and elsewhere. Although the most vocal of anti-Arians, the Homoousians (from the Koine Greek word translated as "of same substance" which was condemned at the Council of Antioch in 264-268), were in the minority, the Creed was accepted by the council as an expression of the bishops' common faith and the ancient faith of the whole Church.

Bishop Hosius of Cordova, one of the firm Homoousians, may well have helped bring the council to consensus. At the time of the council, he was the confidant of the emperor in all Church matters. Hosius stands at the head of the lists of bishops, and Athanasius ascribes to him the actual formulation of the creed. Great leaders such as Eustathius of Antioch, Alexander of Alexandria, Athanasius, and Marcellus of Ancyra all adhered to the Homoousian position.

In spite of his sympathy for Arius, Eusebius of Caesarea adhered to the decisions of the council, accepting the entire creed. The initial number of bishops supporting Arius was small. After a month of discussion, on June 19, there were only two left: Theonas of Marmarica in Libya, and Secundus of Ptolemais. Maris of Chalcedon, who initially supported Arianism, agreed to the whole creed. Similarly, Eusebius of Nicomedia and Theognis of Nice also agreed, except for the certain statements.

The emperor carried out his earlier statement: everybody who refuses to endorse the Creed will be exiled. Arius, Theonas, and Secundus refused to adhere to the creed, and were thus exiled, in addition to being excommunicated. The works of Arius were ordered to be confiscated and consigned to the flames. Nevertheless, the controversy, already festering, continued in various parts of the empire.

Separation of Easter from Jewish Passover

After the June 19 settlement of the most important topic, the question of the date of the Christian Passover (Easter) was brought up. This feast is linked to the Jewish Passover, as the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus occurred during that festival. By the year 300, some Churches had adopted a divergent style of celebrating the festival, placing the emphasis on the resurrection which they believed occurred on Sunday. Others however celebrated the festival on the 14th of the Jewish month Nisan, the date of the crucifixion according to the Bible's Hebrew calendar (Leviticus 23:5, John 19:14). Hence this group was called Quartodecimans, which is derived from the Latin for 14. The Eastern Churches of Syria, Cilicia, and Mesopotamia determined the date of Christian Passover in relation to the 14th day of Nisan, in the Bible's Hebrew calendar. Alexandria and Rome, however, followed a different calculation, attributed to Pope Soter, so that Christian Passover would never coincide with the Jewish observance and decided in favour of celebrating on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox, independently of the Bible's Hebrew calendar.

According to Duchesne, who founds his conclusions:

1. on the conciliar letter to the Alexandrians preserved in Theodoret;
2. on the circular letter of Constantine to the bishops after the council;
3. on Athanasius;

Epiphanius of Salamis wrote in the mid-4th century, "… the emperor … convened a council of 318 bishops … in the city of Nicea. … They passed certain ecclesiastical canons at the council besides, and at the same time decreed in regard to the Passover that there must be one unanimous concord on the

celebration of God's holy and supremely excellent day. For it was variously observed by people…"

The council assumed the task of regulating these differences, in part because some dioceses were determined not to have Christian Passover correspond with the Jewish calendar. "The festival of the resurrection was thenceforth required to be celebrated everywhere on a Sunday, and never on the day of the Jewish passover, but always after the fourteenth of Nisan, on the Sunday after the first vernal full moon. The leading motive for this regulation was opposition to Judaism, which had dishonored the passover by the crucifixion of the Lord." Constantine wrote that: "… it appeared an unworthy thing that in the celebration of this most holy festival we should follow the practice of the Jews, who have impiously defiled their hands with enormous sin, and are, therefore, deservedly afflicted with blindness of soul. … Let us then have nothing in common with the detestable Jewish crowd; for we have received from our Saviour a different way." Theodoret recorded the Emperor as saying: "It was, in the first place, declared improper to follow the custom of the Jews in the celebration of this holy festival, because, their hands having been stained with crime, the minds of these wretched men are necessarily blinded. … Let us, then, have nothing in common with the Jews, who are our adversaries. … avoiding all contact with that evil way. … who, after having compassed the death of the Lord, being out of their minds, are guided not by sound reason, but by an unrestrained passion, wherever their innate madness carries them. … a people so utterly depraved. … Therefore, this irregularity must be corrected, in order that we may no more have any thing in common with those parricides and the murderers of our Lord. … no single point in common with the perjury of the Jews."

The Council of Nicaea, however, did not declare the Alexandrian or Roman calculations as normative. Instead, the council gave the Bishop of Alexandria the privilege of announcing annually the date of Christian Passover to the Roman curia. Although the synod undertook the regulation of the dating of Christian Passover, it contented itself with communicating its decision to the different dioceses, instead of establishing a canon. There was subsequent conflict over this very matter. See also Computus and Reform of the date of Easter.

Meletian Schism

The suppression of the Meletian schism was one of the three important matters that came before the Council of Nicaea. Meletius, it was decided, should remain in his own city of Lycopolis, but without exercising authority or the power to ordain new clergy; moreover he was forbidden to go into the environs of the town or to enter another diocese for the purpose of ordaining its subjects. Melitius retained his episcopal title, but the ecclesiastics ordained by him were to receive again the imposition of hands, the ordinations performed by Meletius being therefore regarded as invalid. Clergy ordained by Meletius were ordered to yield precedence to those ordained by Alexander, and they were not to do anything without the consent of Bishop Alexander.

In the event of the death of a non-Meletian bishop or ecclesiastic, the vacant see might be given to a Meletian, provided he were worthy and the popular election were ratified by Alexander. As to Meletius himself, episcopal rights and prerogatives were taken from him. These mild measures, however, were in vain; the Meletians joined the Arians and caused more dissension than ever, being among the worst enemies of Athanasius. The Meletians ultimately died out around the middle of the fifth century.

Other problems

Finally, the council promulgated twenty new church laws, called *canons*, (though the exact number is subject to debate), that is, unchanging rules of discipline. The twenty as listed in the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers are as follows:

1. prohibition of self- castration; (see Origen)
2. establishment of a minimum term for catechumen;
3. prohibition of the presence in the house of a cleric of a younger woman who might bring him under suspicion;
4. ordination of a bishop in the presence of at least three provincial bishops and confirmation by the metropolitan;
5. provision for two provincial synods to be held annually;
6. exceptional authority acknowledged for the patriarchs of Alexandria and Rome, for their respective regions;
7. recognition of the honorary rights of the see of Jerusalem;
8. provision for agreement with the Novatianists;
9–14. provision for mild procedure against the lapsed during the persecution under Licinius;
15–16. prohibition of the removal of priests;
17. prohibition of usury among the clergy;
18. precedence of bishops and presbyters before deacons in receiving Holy Communion, the Eucharist;
19. declaration of the invalidity of baptism by Paulian heretics;
20. prohibition of kneeling during the liturgy, on Sundays and in the fifty days of Eastertide ("the pentecost"). Standing was the normative posture for prayer at this time, as it still is among the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Catholics. (In time, Western Christianity adopted the term Pentecost to refer to the last Sunday of Eastertide, the fiftieth day.)

On July 25, 325, in conclusion, the fathers of the council celebrated the emperor's twentieth anniversary. In his valedictory address, Constantine again informed his hearers how averse he was to dogmatic controversy; he wanted the Church to live in harmony and peace. In a circular letter, he announced the accomplished unity of practice by the whole Church in the date of the celebration of Christian Passover (now called Easter).

Effects of the Council

The long-term effects of the Council of Nicaea were significant. For the first time, representatives of many of the bishops of the Church convened to agree on a doctrinal statement. Also for the first time, the Emperor played a role, by calling together the bishops under his authority, and using the power of the state to give the Council's orders effect.

In the short-term, however, the council did not completely solve the problems it was convened to discuss and a period of conflict and upheaval continued for some time. Constantine himself was succeeded by two Arian Emperors in the Eastern Empire: his son, Constantine II and Valens. Valens could not resolve the outstanding ecclesiastical issues, and unsuccessfully confronted St. Basil over the Nicene Creed. Pagan powers within the Empire sought to maintain and at times re-establish Paganism into the seat of Emperor (see Arbogast and Julian the Apostate). Arians and the Meletians soon regained nearly all of the rights they had lost, and consequently, Arianism continued to spread and to cause division in the Church during the remainder of the fourth century. Almost immediately, Eusebius of Nicomedia, an Arian bishop and cousin to Constantine I, used his influence at court to sway Constantine's favour from the orthodox Nicene bishops

to the Arians. Eustathius of Antioch was deposed and exiled in 330. Athanasius, who had succeeded Alexander as Bishop of Alexandria, was deposed by the First Synod of Tyre in 335 and Marcellus of Ancyra followed him in 336. Arius himself returned to Constantinople to be readmitted into the Church, but died shortly before he could be received. Constantine died the next year, after finally receiving baptism from Arian Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedi , and "with his passing the first round in the battle after the Council of Nicaea was ended."

Five Pillars of Islam

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Five Pillars of Islam (Arabic: أركان الإسلام) is the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim. These duties are:

1) Shahadah (profession of faith)
2) Salat (ritual prayer five times each day)
3) Sawm (fasting during Ramadan)
4) Zakat (charity given to the needy)
5) Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca).

These practices are essential to Sunni Islam. Shi'a Muslims subscribe to eight ritual practices which substantially overlap with the Pillars.

The concept of five pillars is taken from the Hadith collections, notably those of Sahih Al-Bukhari and Sahih Muslim. The Qur'an does not speak of five pillars, although one can find in it scattered references to their associated practices.

The five pillars

Shahadah

The Shahadah (Arabic: شهادة transliteration: Šahādah) is the basic creed or tenet of Islam (Submission): "*ašhadu 'al-lā ilāha illā-llāhu*" (see how is the Shahada in Quran Chapter 3, verse 18), or "I testify that there is no god except God". As the most important pillar, this testament is the foundation of Islam. Ideally, it is the first words children are taught as soon as they are able to understand it. Muslims (which is the arabic word for submitters) must repeat the shahadah in their five daily prayers called Salat (Contact Prayers).

> Allah bears witness that there is no god but He, and (so do) the angels and those possessed of knowledge, maintaining His creation with justice; there is no god but He, the Mighty, the Wise.

Belief in One and Only God, constitutes the very foundation of Islam. There is no deity except God. He is indivisible and absolutely transcendent. God is the Almighty, the Creator and the Sustainer of the universe, Who is similar to nothing and nothing is comparable to Him. The basic message of Islam is that God and His creation are distinctly different entities. Neither is God His creation or a part of it, nor is His creation Him or a part of Him. This might seem obvious, but, man's worship of creation instead of the Creator is to a large degree based on ignorance of this concept. The worship of a so-called earthly representation or any other entity than God is clearly idol worship in the light of Quran's teachings (and the previous scriptures'), shirk (polytheism) is the only unforgivable sin in the Hereafter, while all the other sins may be forgiven.

Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute;He begets not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him. (Surah 112) God is He, than Whom there is no other god;- Who knows(all things) both secret and open; He, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. God is He, than Whom there is no other god;- the Sovereign, the Holy One, the Source of Peace (and Perfection), the Guardian of Faith, the Preserver of Safety, the Exalted in Might, the Irresistible, the Supreme the holy and everlating: Glory to God! (High is He) above the partners they attribute to Him.He is God, the Creator, the Evolver, the Bestower of Forms (or Colors).

Salat

The second pillar of Islam is *Salat*, the requirement to pray five times a day at fixed times. The time of day to pray are at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, and night fall. Each *salat* is performed facing towards the Kaaba (the black stone of a pre-Islamic ritual) in Makkah. Salat is intended to focus the mind on Allah; it is seen as a personal communication with god, expressing gratitude and worship. According to the Qur'an, the benefit of prayer "restrains [one] from shameful and evil deeds".

Salat is compulsory but some flexibility in the specifics is allowed depending on the circumstances. For example, in the case of sickness or a lack of space, a worshipper can offer *salat* while sitting, or even lying down, and the prayer can be shortened when travelling. The *salat* must be performed in the Arabic language to the best of each worshipper's ability. If s/he cannot speak Arabic, then his/her native language can be used. The lines of prayer are to be recited by heart (although beginners may use written aids), and the worshipper's body and clothing, as well as the place of prayer, must be cleansed.

All prayers should be conducted within the prescribed time period (*waqt*) and with the appropriate number of units (*raka'ah*). While the prayers may be made at any point within the waqt, it is considered best to begin them as soon as possible after the call to prayer is heard.

Zakat

Zakat is the practice of charitable giving by Muslims based on accumulated wealth, and is obligatory for all who are able to do so. It is considered to be a personal responsibility for Muslims to ease economic hardship for others and eliminate inequality. Zakat consists of spending a fixed portion of one's wealth for the benefit of the needy, including, debtors and travelers. A muslim may also donate more as an act of voluntary charity, in order to achieve additional divine reward.

Muslims performing salat (prayer)

Zakat covers money made in business, savings, income, and so on. In current usage zakat is treated as a 2.5% levy on most valuables and savings held for a full year, as long as the total value is more than a basic minimum known as three or 87.48g of gold). As of , nisab is

approximately 1,750 or an equivalent amount in any other currency. Many Shi'ites are expected to pay an additional amount in the form of a tax, which they consider to be a separate ritual practice.

Sawm

Three types of fasting (*Sawm*) are recognized by the Qur'an: Ritual fasting,[2:183-187] fasting as compensation or repentance,[2:196] and ascetic fasting.[33:35]

Ritual fasting is an obligatory act during the month of Ramadan as is abstinence from sin. The fast is meant to allow Muslims to seek nearness to Allah, to express their gratitude to and dependence on him, to atone for their past sins, and to remind them of the needy. During Ramadan, Muslims are also expected to put more effort into following the teachings of Islam by refraining from violence, anger, envy, greed, lust, harsh language, gossip and to try to get along with each other better than normal. In addition, all obscene and irreligious sights and sounds are to be avoided.

Fasting during Ramadan is not obligatory for several groups for whom it would be excessively problematic. These include pre-pubescent children, those with a medical condition such as diabetes, elderly people, and pregnant or breastfeeding women. Observing fasts is not permitted for menstruating women. Other individuals for whom it is considered acceptable not to fast are those in combat and travellers. Missing fasts usually must be made up soon afterwards, although the exact requirements vary according to circumstance.

Many Muslims traditionally break their fasts in Ramadan with dates (like those offered by this date seller in Kuwait City), as was the recorded practice (Sunnah) of Muhammad.

Many Muslims break their fast with a date because it is claimed, Muhammed broke *his* fast with a date.

Hajj

The *Hajj* is a pilgrimage that occurs during the Islamic month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the city of Makkah and derives from an ancient Arab practice. Every able-bodied Muslim is obliged to make the pilgrimage to Makkah at least once in their lifetime if they can afford it. When the pilgrim is around ten kilometers from Makkah, he must dress in Ihram clothing, which consists of two white sheets. The main rituals of the Hajj include walking seven times around the Kaaba, touching the Black Stone, traveling seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah, and symbolically stoning the Devil in Mina.

Image:Supplicating Pilgrim at Masjid Al Haram. Makkah, Saudi Arabia.jpg
The hajj to the Kaaba, in Makkah, is an important practice in Islam.

The pilgrim, or the *haji*, is honoured in their community. For some, this is an incentive to perform the Hajj. Islamic teachers say that the Hajj should be an expression of devotion to Allah, not a means to gain social standing. The believer should be self-aware and examine their intentions in performing the pilgrimage. This should lead to constant striving for self-improvement.

Shia viewpoint

According to Shia doctrine, what is referred to as pillars by Sunni Islam are called the practices or secondary principles (Firoo e Din). The additional pillars according to Shia Islam are the following and are considered essential to the religion of Islam. The first is "Khums" which is a tax like Zakat and is for the descendants of Fatima (SA) and Ali (AS), next is jihad, which is also important to the Sunni, but not considered a pillar. The third is *Amr-Bil-Ma'rūf*, the "Enjoining to Do Good", which calls for every Muslim to live a virtuous life and to encourage others to do the same. The fourth is *Nahi-Anil-Munkar*, the "Exhortation to Desist from Evil", which tells Muslims to refrain from vice and from evil actions and to encourage others to do the same.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Five_Pillars_of_Islam"

Ganesha

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Ganesha (Sanskrit: गणेश; Gaṇeśa; listen), also spelled **Ganesa** or **Ganesh** and also known as **Ganapati**, **Vinayaka**, and **Pillaiyar**, is one of the best-known and most worshipped deities in the Hindu pantheon. His image is found throughout India. Hindu sects worship him regardless of other affiliations. Devotion to Ganesha is widely diffused and extends to Jains, Buddhists, and beyond India.

Although he is known by many other attributes, Ganesha's elephant head makes him easy to identify. Ganesha is widely revered as the Remover of Obstacles and more generally as Lord of Beginnings and Lord of Obstacles (**Vighnesha**, **Vighneshvara**), patron of arts and sciences, and the deva of intellect and wisdom. He is honoured at the start of rituals and ceremonies and invoked as Patron of Letters during writing sessions. Several texts relate mythological anecdotes associated with his birth and exploits and explain his distinct iconography.

Ganesha emerged as a distinct deity in clearly recognizable form in the 4th and 5th centuries CE, during the Gupta Period, although he inherited traits from Vedic and pre-Vedic precursors. His popularity rose quickly, and he was formally included among the five primary deities of Smartism (a Hindu denomination) in the 9th century. A sect of devotees called the *Ganapatya*, (Sanskrit: गाणपत्य; gāṇapatya), who identified Ganesha as the supreme deity, arose during this period. The principal scriptures dedicated to Ganesha are the *Ganesha Purana*, the *Mudgala Purana*, and the *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*.

Etymology and other names

Ganesh (Gaṇeśa)
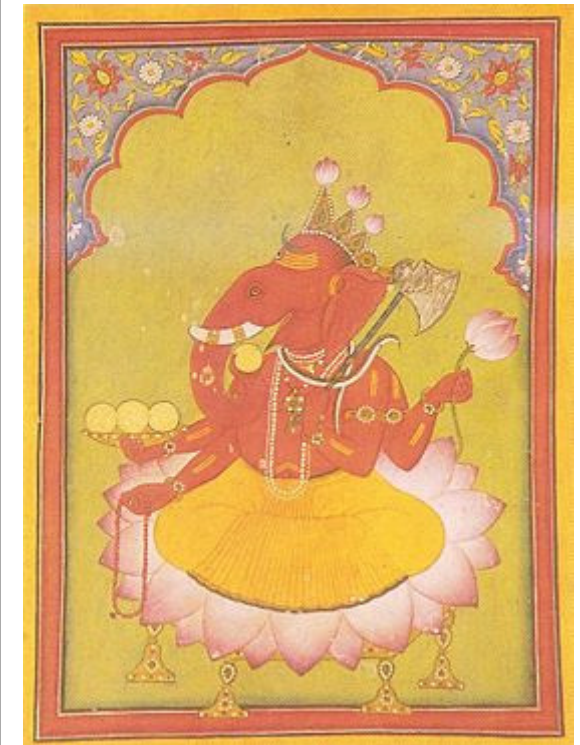
Basohli miniature, circa 1730. National Museum, New Delhi, India.

Devanagari	गणेश
Affiliation	Deva
Mantra	ॐ गणेशाय नमः

Ganesh has many other titles and epithets, including *Ganapati* and *Vigneshvara*. The Hindu title of respect *Shri* (Sanskrit: श्री; śrī, also spelled *Sri* or *Shree*) is often added before his name. One popular way Ganesha is worshipped is by chanting a *Ganesha Sahasranama*, a litany of "a thousand names of Ganesha". Each name in the sahasranama conveys a different meaning and symbolises a different aspect of Ganesha. At least two different versions of the Ganesha Sahasranama exist; one version is drawn from the *Ganesha Purana*, a Hindu scripture venerating Ganesha.

The name *Ganesha* is a Sanskrit compound, joining the words *gana* (Sanskrit: गण; *gaṇa*), meaning a group, multitude, or categorical system and *isha* (Sanskrit: ईश; *īśa*), meaning lord or master. The word *gaṇa* when associated with Ganesha is often taken to refer to the gaṇas, a troop of semi-divine beings that form part of the retinue of Shiva (IAST: Śiva). The term more generally means a category, class, community, association, or corporation. Some commentators interpret the name "Lord of the Gaṇas" to mean "Lord of Hosts" or "Lord of created categories", such as the elements. *Ganapati* (Sanskrit: गणपति; *gaṇapati*), a synonym for *Ganesha*, is a compound composed of *gaṇa*, meaning "group", and *pati*, meaning "ruler" or "lord". The *Amarakośa*, an early Sanskrit lexicon, lists eight synonyms of *Ganesha* : *Vinayaka*, *Vighnarāja* (equivalent to *Vignesha*), *Dvaimātura* (one who has two mothers), *Gaṇādhipa* (equivalent to *Ganapati* and *Ganesha*), *Ekadanta* (one who has one tusk), *Heramba*, *Lambodara* (one who has a pot belly, or, literally, one who has a hanging belly), and *Gajanana* (IAST: gajānana) ; having the face of an elephant).

Vinayaka (Sanskrit: विनायक; *vināyaka*) is a common name for Ganesha that appears in the Purāṇas and in Buddhist Tantras. This name is reflected in the naming of the eight famous Ganesha temples in Maharashtra known as the *aṣṭavināyaka*. The names *Vignesha* (Sanskrit: विघ्नेश; vighneśa) and *Vigneshvara* (Sanskrit: विघ्नेश्वर; vighneśvara) (Lord of Obstacles) refers to his primary function in Hindu mythology as the creator and remover of obstacles (*vighna*).

A prominent name for Ganesha in the Tamil language is *Pille* or *Pillaiyar* (Little Child). A. K. Narain differentiates these terms by saying that *pille* means a "child" while *pillaiyar* means a "noble child". He adds that the words *pallu*, *pella*, and *pell* in the Dravidian family of languages signify "tooth or tusk of an elephant", but more generally "elephant". Anita Raina Thapan notes that the root word *pille* in the name *Pillaiyar* might have originally meant "the young of the elephant", because the Pali word *pillaka* means "a young elephant".

Iconography

	(Oṃ Gaṇeśāya Namaḥ)
Weapon	Paraśu (Axe), Pāśa (Lasso), Aṅkuśa (Hook)
Consort	Buddhi (wisdom), Riddhi (prosperity), Siddhi (attainment)
Mount	mouse
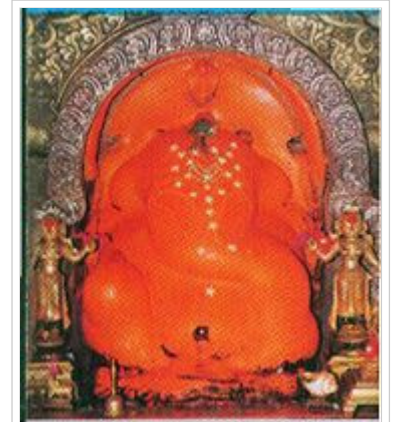
Ganesha as 'Shri Mayureshwar' with consorts Buddhi and Siddhi, Morgaon (the central shrine for the regional aṣṭavināyaka complex)

Ganesha is a popular figure in Indian art. Unlike those of some deities, representations of Ganesha show wide variations and distinct patterns changing over time. He may be portrayed standing, dancing, heroically taking action against demons, playing with his family as a boy, sitting down, or engaging in a range of contemporary situations.

Ganesha images were prevalent in many parts of India by the 6th century. The figure shown to the right is typical of Ganesha statuary from 900–1200, after Ganesha had been well-established as an independent deity with his own sect. This example features some of Ganesha's common iconographic elements. A virtually identical statue has been dated between 973–1200 by Paul Martin-Dubost, and another similar statue is dated c. 12th century by Pratapaditya Pal. Ganesha has the head of an elephant and a big belly. This statue has four arms, which is common in depictions of Ganesha. He holds his own broken tusk in his lower-right hand and holds a delicacy, which he samples with his trunk, in his lower-left hand. The motif of Ganesha turning his trunk sharply to his left to taste a sweet in his lower-left hand is a particularly archaic feature. A more primitive statue in one of the Ellora Caves with this general form has been dated to the 7th century. Details of the other hands are difficult to make out on the statue shown. In the standard configuration, Ganesha typically holds an axe or a goad in one upper arm and a noose in the other upper arm.

The influence of this old constellation of iconographic elements can still be seen in contemporary representations of Ganesha. In one modern form, the only variation from these old elements is that the lower-right hand does not hold the broken tusk but rather is turned toward the viewer in a gesture of protection or fearlessness (abhaya mudra). The same combination of four arms and attributes occurs in statues of Ganesha dancing, which is a very popular theme.

Common attributes

This statue of Ganesha was created in the Mysore District of Karnataka in the 13th century.

A typical four-armed form.
Miniature of Nurpur school
(circa 1810).

Ganesha has been represented with the head of an elephant since the early stages of his appearance in Indian art. Puranic myths provide many explanations for how he got his elephant head. One of his popular forms, *Heramba-Ganapati*, has five elephant heads, and other less-common variations in the number of heads are known. While some texts say that Ganesha was born with an elephant head, in most stories he acquires the head later. The most recurrent motif in these stories is that Ganesha was born with a human head and body and that Shiva beheaded him when Ganesha came between Shiva and Parvati. Shiva then replaced Ganesha's original head with that of an elephant. Details of the battle and where the replacement head came from vary according to different sources. In another story, when Ganesha was born, his mother, Parvati, showed off her new baby to the other gods. Unfortunately, the god Shani (Saturn), who is said to have the evil eye, looked at him, causing the baby's head to be burned to ashes. The god Vishnu came to the rescue and replaced the missing head with that of an elephant. Another story says that Ganesha was created directly by Shiva's laughter. Because Shiva considered Ganesha too alluring, he gave him the head of an elephant and a protruding belly.

Ganesha's earliest name was *Ekadanta* (One Tusk), referring to his single whole tusk, the other having been broken off. Some of the earliest images of Ganesha show him holding his broken tusk. The importance of this distinctive feature is reflected in the *Mudgala Purana*, which states that the name of Ganesha's second incarnation is Ekadanta. Ganesha's protruding belly appears as a distinctive attribute in his earliest statuary, which dates to the Gupta period (fourth to sixth centuries). This feature is so important that, according to the *Mudgala Purana*, two different incarnations of Ganesha use names based on it:

Lambodara (Pot Belly, or, literally, Hanging Belly) and *Mahodara* (Great Belly). Both names are Sanskrit compounds describing his belly (Sanskrit: *udara*). The *Brahmanda Purana* says that Ganesha has the name Lambodara because all the universes (i.e., cosmic eggs; IAST: *brahmāṇḍas*) of the past, present, and future are present in him. The number of Ganesha's arms varies; his best-known forms have between two and sixteen arms. Many depictions of Ganesha feature four arms, which is mentioned in Puranic sources and codified as a standard form in some iconographic texts. His earliest images had two arms. Forms with 14 and 20 arms appeared in central India during the 9th and 10th centuries. The serpent is a common feature in Ganesha iconography and appears in many forms. According to the *Ganesha Purana*, Ganesha wrapped the serpent *Vāsuki* around his neck. Other depictions of snakes include use as a sacred thread (IAST: *yajñyopavīta*) wrapped around the stomach as a belt, held in a hand, coiled at the ankles, or as a throne. Upon Ganesha's forehead there may be a third eye or the Shaivite sectarian mark (Sanskrit: *tilaka*), which consists of three horizontal lines. The *Ganesha Purana* prescribes a *tilaka* mark as well as a crescent moon on the forehead. A distinct form of Ganesha called *Bhalachandra* (IAST: *bhālacandra*; "Moon on the Forehead") includes that iconographic element. Specific colors are associated with certain forms. Many examples of colour associations with specific meditation forms are prescribed in the Sritattvanidhi, a treatise on Hindu iconography. For example, white is associated with his representations as *Heramba-Ganapati* and *Rina-Mochana-Ganapati* (Ganapati Who Releases from Bondage). *Ekadanta-Ganapati* is visualized as blue during meditation on that form.

Vahanas

The earliest Ganesha images are without a vahana (mount). Of the eight incarnations of Ganesha described in the *Mudgala Purana*, Ganesha has a mouse in five of them, uses a lion in his incarnation as *Vakratunda*, a peacock in his incarnation of *Vikata*, and Shesha, the divine serpent, in his incarnation as *Vighnaraja*. Of the four incarnations of Ganesha listed in the *Ganesha Purana*, *Mohotkata* has a lion, *Mayūreśvara* has a peacock, *Dhumraketu* has a horse,

and *Gajanana* has a rat. Jain depictions of Ganesha show his vahana variously as a mouse, elephant, tortoise, ram, or peacock.

Ganesha is often shown riding on or attended by a mouse or rat. Martin-Dubost says that the rat began to appear as the principal vehicle in sculptures of Ganesha in central and western India during the 7th century; the rat was always placed close to his feet. The mouse as a mount first appears in written sources in the *Matsya Purana* and later in the *Brahmananda Purana* and *Ganesha Purana*, where Ganesha uses it as his vehicle only in his last incarnation. The Ganapati Atharvashirsa includes a meditation verse on Ganesha that describes the mouse appearing on his flag. The names *Mūṣakavāhana* (mouse-mount) and *Ākhuketana* (rat-banner) appear in the *Ganesha Sahasranama*.

The mouse is interpreted in several ways. According to Grimes, "Many, if not most of those who interpret Gaṇapati's mouse, do so negatively; it symbolizes *tamoguṇa* as well as desire". Along these lines, Michael Wilcockson says it symbolizes those who wish to overcome desires and be less selfish. Krishan notes that the rat is destructive and a menace to crops. The Sanskrit word *mūṣaka* (mouse) is derived from the root *mūṣ* (stealing, robbing). It was essential to subdue the rat as a destructive pest, a type of *vighna* (impediment) that needed to be overcome. According to this theory, showing Ganesha as master of the rat demonstrates his function as *Vigneshvara* (Lord of Obstacles) and gives evidence of his possible role as a folk *grāmata-devatā* (village deity) who later rose to greater prominence. Martin-Dubost notes a view that the rat is a symbol suggesting that Ganesha, like the rat, penetrates even the most secret places.

Ganesha riding on his mouse. A sculpture at the Vaidyeshwara temple in Talakkadu, Karnataka, India. Note the red flowers offered by devotees.

Associations

Obstacles

Ganesha is *Vighneshvara* or *Vighnaraja*, the Lord of Obstacles, both of a material and spiritual order. He is popularly worshipped as a remover of obstacles, though traditionally he also places obstacles in the path of those who need to be checked. Paul Courtright says that "his task in the divine scheme of things, his *dharma*, is to place and remove obstacles. It is his particular territory, the reason for his creation."

A modern illustration of
Ganesha

Krishan notes that some of Ganesha's names reflect shadings of multiple roles that have evolved over time. Dhavalikar ascribes the quick ascension of Ganesha in the Hindu pantheon, and the emergence of the Ganapatyas, to this shift in emphasis from *vighnakartā* (obstacle-creator) to *vighnahartā* (obstacle-averter). However, both functions continue to be vital to his character, as Robert Brown explains, "even after the Purāṇic Gaṇeśa is well-defined, in art Gaṇeśa remained predominantly important for his dual role as creator and remover of obstacles, thus having both a negative and a positive aspect".

Buddhi

Ganesha is considered to be the Lord of letters and learning. In Sanskrit, the word *buddhi* is a feminine noun that is variously translated as intelligence, wisdom, or intellect. The concept of buddhi is closely associated with the personality of Ganesha, especially in the Puranic period, when many stories stress his cleverness and love of intelligence. One of Ganesha's names in the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Ganesha Sahasranama* is *Buddhipriya*. This name also appears in a list of 21 names at the end of the *Ganesha Sahasranama* that Ganesha says are especially important. The word *priya* can mean "fond of", and in a marital context it can mean "lover" or "husband", so the name may mean either "Fond of Intelligence" or "Buddhi's Husband".

Aum

Ganesha is identified with the Hindu mantra Aum (ॐ, also called *Om*). The term *oṃkārasvarūpa* (Aum is his form), when identified with Ganesha, refers to the notion that he personifies the primal sound. The *Ganapati Atharvashirsa* attests to this association. Chinmayananda translates the relevant passage as follows:

(O Lord Ganapati!) You are (the Trinity) Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesa. You are Indra. You are fire [Agni] and air [Vāyu]. You are the sun [Sūrya] and the moon [Chandrama]. You are Brahman. You are (the three worlds) Bhuloka [earth], Antariksha-loka [space], and Swargaloka [heaven]. You are Om. (That is to say, You are all this).

Some devotees see similarities between the shape of Ganesha's body in iconography and the shape of Aum in the Devanāgarī and Tamil scripts.

First chakra

According to Kundalini yoga, Ganesha resides in the first chakra, called mūlādhāra. *Mula* means "original, main"; *adhara* means "base, foundation". The muladhara chakra is the principle on which the manifestation or outward expansion of primordial Divine Force rests. This association is also attested to in the *Ganapati Atharvashirsa*. Courtright translates this passage as follows: "[O Ganesha,] You continually dwell in the sacral plexus at the base of the spine [mūlādhāra cakra]." Thus, Ganesha has a permanent abode in every being at the Muladhara. Ganesha holds, supports and guides all other chakras, thereby "governing the forces that propel the wheel of life".

Ganesha (Devanagari) Aum jewel

Family and consorts

Though Ganesha is popularly held to be the son of Shiva and Parvati, the Puranic myths disagree about his birth. He may have been created by Shiva, or by Parvati, or by Shiva *and* Parvati, or appeared mysteriously and was discovered by Shiva and Parvati.
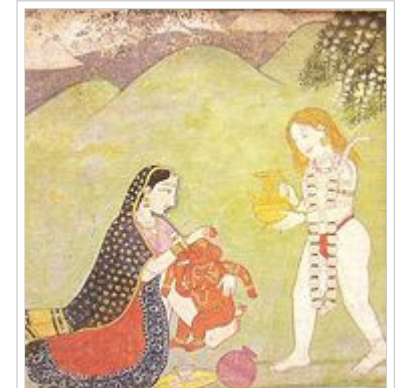
The family includes his brother Skanda, who is also called Karttikeya, Murugan, and other names. Regional differences dictate the order of their births. In northern India, Skanda is generally said to be the elder, while in the south, Ganesha is considered the first born. Skanda was an important martial deity from about 500 BCE to about 600 CE, when worship of him declined significantly in northern India. As Skanda fell, Ganesha rose. Several stories tell of sibling rivalry between the brothers and may reflect sectarian tensions.

Ganesha's marital status, the subject of considerable scholarly review, varies widely in mythological stories. One pattern of myths identifies Ganesha as an unmarried *brahmacārin*. This view is common in southern India and parts of northern India. Another pattern associates him with the concepts of *Buddhi* (intellect), *Siddhi* (spiritual power), and *Riddhi* (prosperity); these qualities are sometimes personified as goddesses, said to be Ganesha's wives. He also may be shown with a single consort or a nameless servant (Sanskrit: daşi). Another pattern connects Ganesha with the goddess of culture and the arts, Sarasvati or Śarda (particularly in Maharashtra). He is also associated with the goddess of luck and prosperity, Lakshmi. Another pattern, mainly prevalent in the Bengal region, links Ganesha with the banana tree, Kala Bo.

Shiva and Pārvatī giving a bath to Gaņeśa. Kangra miniature, 18th century. Allahbad Museum, New Delhi.

The *Shiva Purana* says that Ganesha had two sons: Kşema (prosperity) and Lābha (profit). In northern Indian variants of this story, the sons are often said to be Śubha (auspiciousness) and Lābha. The 1975 Hindi film *Jai Santoshi Maa* shows Ganesha married to Riddhi and Siddhi and having a daughter named Santoshi Ma, the goddess of satisfaction. This story has no Puranic basis, but Anita Raina Thapan and Lawrence Cohen cite Santoshi Ma's cult as evidence of

Ganesha's continuing evolution as a popular deity.

Worship and festivals

Ganesha is worshipped on many religious and secular occasions; especially at the beginning of ventures such as buying a vehicle or starting a business. K.N. Somayaji says, "there can hardly be a [Hindu] home [in India] which does not house an idol of Ganapati. [..] Ganapati, being the most popular deity in India, is worshipped by almost all castes and in all parts of the country". Devotees believe that if Ganesha is propitiated, he grants success, prosperity and protection against adversity.

Ganesha is a non-sectarian deity, and Hindus of all denominations invoke him at the beginning of prayers, important undertakings, and religious ceremonies. Dancers and musicians, particularly in southern India, begin performances of arts such as the Bharatnatyam dance with a prayer to Ganesha. Mantras such as *Om Shri Gaṇeshāya Namah* (Om, salutation to the Illustrious Ganesha) are often used. One of the most famous mantras associated with Ganesha is *Om Gaṃ Ganapataye Namah* (Om, Gaṃ, Salutation to the Lord of Hosts).

Celebrations of Ganesh by the Indian and Sri Lankan Tamil community in Paris, France.

Devotees offer Ganesha sweets such as modaka and small sweet balls (laddus). He is often shown carrying a bowl of sweets, called a *modakapātra*. Because of his identification with the colour red, he is often worshipped with red sandalwood paste (raktacandana) or red flowers. Dūrvā grass (*Cynodon dactylon*) and other materials are also used in his worship.

Festivals associated with Ganesh are "the Vināyaka *caturthī* (Ganesh Chaturthi) in the *śuklapakṣa* (the fourth day of the waxing moon) in the month of *bhādrapada* (August/September) and the Gaṇeśa *jayanti* (Gaṇeśa's birthday) celebrated on the *cathurthī* of the *kṛṣṇapakṣa* (fourth day of the waning moon) in the month of *māgha* (January/February)."

Ganesh Chaturthi

An annual festival honours Ganesha for ten days, starting on Ganesh Chaturthi, which typically falls in late August or early September. The festival culminates on the day of Ananta Chaturdashi, when images (*murtis*) of Ganesha are immersed in the most convenient body of water. In 1893, Lokmanya Tilak transformed this annual Ganesha festival from private family celebrations into a grand public event. He did so "to bridge the gap between the Brahmins and the non-Brahmins and find an appropriate context in which to build a new grassroots unity between them" in his nationalistic strivings against the British in Maharashtra. Because of Ganesha's wide appeal as "the god for Everyman", Tilak chose him as a rallying point for Indian protest against British rule. Tilak was the first to install large public images of Ganesha in pavilions, and he established the practice of submerging all the public images on the tenth day. Today, Hindus across India celebrate the Ganapati festival with great fervour, though it is most popular in the state of Maharashtra. The festival also assumes huge proportions in Mumbai and in the surrounding belt of Ashtavinayaka temples.

A large Ganesha statue at a Chaturthi festival in Mumbai, 2004

Temples

In Hindu temples, Ganesha is depicted in various ways: as an acolyte or subordinate deity (*pãrśva-devatã*); as a deity related to the principal deity (*parivāra-devatã*); or as the principal deity of the temple (pradhāna), treated similarly as the highest gods of the Hindu pantheon. As the god of transitions, he is placed at the doorway of many Hindu temples to keep out the unworthy, which is analogous to his role as Parvati's doorkeeper. In addition, several shrines are dedicated to Ganesha himself, of which the Ashtavinayak (Sanskrit: अष्टविनायक; aṣṭavināyaka; lit. "eight Ganesha (shrines)") in Maharashtra are particularly well known. Located within a 100-kilometer radius of the city of Pune, each of these eight shrines celebrates a particular form of Ganapati, complete with its own lore and legend; together they "form a *mandala*, demarking the sacred cosmos of Ganesha".
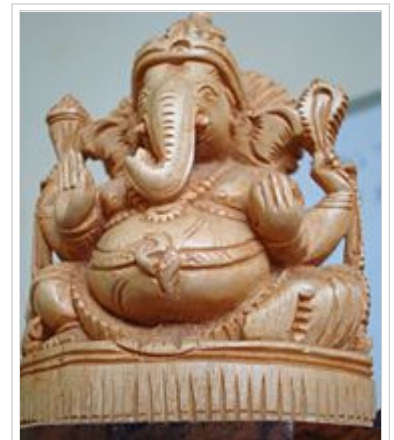
There are many other important Ganesha temples at the following locations: Wai in Maharashtra; Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh; Jodhpur, Nagaur and Raipur (Pali) in Rajasthan; Baidyanath in Bihar; Baroda, Dholaka, and Valsad in Gujarat and Dhundiraj Temple in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Prominent Ganesha temples in southern India include the following: the Jambukeśvara Temple at Tiruchirapalli; at Rameshvaram and Suchindram in TamilNadu; Hampi, Kasargod, and Idagunji in Karnataka; and Bhadrachalam in Andhra Pradesh.

T. A. Gopinatha notes, "Every village however small has its own image of *Vighneśvara* (Vigneshvara) with or without a temple to house it in. At entrances of villages and forts, below *pīpaḷa* trees […], in a niche […] in temples of *Viṣṇu* (Vishnu) as well as *Śiva* (Shiva) and also in separate shrines specially constructed in *Śiva* temples […]; the figure of *Vighneśvara* is invariably seen." Ganesha temples have also been built outside of India, including southeast Asia, Nepal, and in several western countries.

A statue of Ganesha carved in wood

Rise to prominence

First appearance

Ganesha appeared in his classic form as a clearly-recognizable deity with well-defined iconographic attributes in the early 4th to 5th centuries. Shanti Lal Nagar says that the earliest known iconic image of Ganesha is in the niche of the Shiva temple at Bhumra, which has been dated to the Gupta period. His independent cult appeared by about the 10th century. Narain summarizes the controversy between devotees and academics regarding the development of Ganesha as follows:

> [W]hat is inscrutable is the somewhat dramatic appearance of Gaṇeśa on the historical scene. His antecedents are not clear. His wide acceptance and popularity, which transcend sectarian and territorial limits, are indeed amazing. On the one hand there is the pious belief of the orthodox devotees in Gaṇeśa's Vedic origins and in the Purāṇic explanations contained in the confusing, but nonetheless interesting, mythology. On the other hand there are doubts about the existence of the idea and the icon of *this* deity" before the fourth to fifth century A.D. ... [I]n my opinion, indeed there is no convincing evidence of the existence of this divinity prior to the fifth century.

Possible influences

Courtright reviews various speculative theories about the early history of Ganesha, including supposed tribal traditions and animal cults, and dismisses all of them in this way:

> In this search for a historical origin for Gaṇeśa, some have suggested precise locations outside the Brāhmaṇic tradition.... These historical locations are intriguing to be sure, but the fact remains that they are all speculations, variations on the Dravidian hypothesis, which argues that anything not attested to in the Vedic and Indo-European sources must have come into Brāhmaṇic religion from the Dravidian or aboriginal populations of India as part of the process that produced Hinduism out of the interactions of the Aryan and non-Aryan populations. There is no independent evidence for an elephant cult or a totem; nor is there any archaeological data pointing to a tradition prior to what we can already see in place in the Purāṇic literature and the iconography of Gaṇeśa.

Thapaṇ's book on the development of Ganesha devotes a chapter to speculations about the role elephants had in early India but concludes that, "although by the second century AD the elephant-headed *yakṣa* form exists it cannot be presumed to represent Gaṇapati-Vināyaka. There is no evidence of a deity by this name having an elephant or elephant-headed form at this early stage. Gaṇapati-Vināyaka had yet to make his debut."

One theory of the origin of Ganesha is that he gradually came to prominence in connection with the four Vināyakas. In Hindu mythology, the Vināyakas were a group of four troublesome demons who created obstacles and difficulties but who were easily propitiated. The name Vināyaka is a common name for Ganesha both in the Purāṇas and in Buddhist Tantras. Krishan is one of the academics who accepts this view, stating flatly of Ganesha, "He is a non-vedic god. His origin is to be traced to the four Vināyakas, evil spirits, of the *Mānavagṛhyasūtra* (7th–4th century BCE) who cause various types of evil and suffering". Depictions of elephant-headed human figures, which some identify with Ganesha, appear in Indian art and coinage as early as the 2nd century.

Vedic and epic literature

The title "Leader of the group" (Sanskrit: *gaṇapati*) occurs twice in the *Rig Veda*, but in neither case does it refer to the modern Ganesha. The term appears in RV 2.23.1 as a title for Brahmanaspati, according to commentators. While this verse doubtless refers to Brahmanaspati, it was later adopted for worship of Ganesha and is still used today. In rejecting any claim that this passage is evidence of Ganesha in the *Rig Veda*, Ludo Rocher says that it "clearly refers to Bṛhaspati—who is the deity of the hymn—and Bṛhaspati only". Equally clearly, the second passage (RV 10.112.9) refers to Indra, who is given the epithet 'gaṇapati', translated "Lord of the companies (of the *Maruts*)." However, Rocher notes that the more recent Ganapatya literature often quotes the Rigvedic verses to give Vedic respectability to Ganesha .

Two verses in texts belonging to Black Yajurveda, *Maitrāyaṇīya Saṃhitā* (2.9.1) and *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* (10.1), appeal to a deity as "the tusked one" (Dantiḥ), "elephant-faced" (Hastimukha), and "with a curved trunk" (Vakratuṇḍa). These names are suggestive of Ganesha, and the 14th century commentator Sayana explicitly establishes this identification. The description of Dantin, possessing a twisted trunk (vakratuṇḍa) and holding a corn-sheaf, a sugar cane, and a club, is so characteristic of the Puranic Ganapati that Heras says "we cannot resist to accept his full identification with this Vedic Dantin". However, Krishan considers these hymns to be post-Vedic additions. Thapan reports that these passages are "generally considered to have been interpolated". Dhavalikar says, "the references to the elephant-headed deity in the *Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā* have been proven to be very late interpolations, and thus are not very helpful for determining the early formation of the deity".

Ganesha does not appear in Indian epic literature that is dated to the Vedic period. A late interpolation to the epic poem *Mahabharata* says that the sage Vyāsa asked Ganesha to serve as his scribe to transcribe the poem as he dictated it to him. Ganesha agreed but only on condition that Vyasa recite the poem uninterrupted, that is, without pausing. The sage agreed, but found that to get any rest he needed to recite very complex passages so Ganesha would have to ask for clarifications. The story is not accepted as part of the original text by the editors of the critical edition of the *Mahabharata*, in which the twenty-line story is relegated to a footnote in an appendix. The story of Ganesha acting as the scribe occurs in 37 of the 59 manuscripts consulted during preparation of the critical edition. Ganesha's association with mental agility and learning is one reason he is shown as scribe for Vyāsa's dictation of the *Mahabharata* in this interpolation. Richard L. Brown dates the story to the 8th century, and Moriz Winternitz concludes that it was known as early as c. 900, but it was not added to the *Mahabharata* some 150 years later. Winternitz also notes that a distinctive feature in South Indian manuscripts of the *Mahabharata* is their omission of this Ganesha legend. The term *vināyaka* is found in some recensions of the *Śāntiparva* and *Anuśāsanaparva* that are regarded as interpolations. A reference to *Vighnakartṛīṇām* ("Creator of Obstacles") in *Vanaparva* is also believed to be an interpolation and does not appear in the critical edition.

Fifth century marble Ganesha found at Gardez, Afghanistan, now at Dargah Pir Rattan Nath, Kabul. The inscription says that this "great and beautiful image of Mahāvināyaka" was consecrated by the Shahi King Khingala.

Puranic period

Stories about Ganesha often occur in the Puranic corpus. Brown notes while the Puranas "defy precise chronological ordering", the more detailed narratives of Ganesha's life are in the late texts, c. 600–1300. Yuvraj Krishan says that the Puranic myths about the birth of Ganesha and how he acquired an elephant's head

are in the later Puranas, which were composed from c. 600 onwards. He elaborates on the matter to say that references to Ganesha in the earlier Puranas, such as the Vayu and Brahmanda Puranas, are later interpolations made during the 7th to 10th centuries.

In his survey of Ganesha's rise to prominence in Sanskrit literature, Ludo Rocher notes that:

> Above all, one cannot help being struck by the fact that the numerous stories surrounding Gaṇeśa concentrate on an unexpectedly limited number of incidents. These incidents are mainly three: his birth and parenthood, his elephant head, and his single tusk. Other incidents are touched on in the texts, but to a far lesser extent.

Ganesha's rise to prominence was codified in the 9th century, when he was formally included as one of the five primary deities of Smartism. The 9th century philosopher Śaṅkarācārya popularized the "worship of the five forms" (pañcāyatana pūjā) system among orthodox Brahmins of the Smārta tradition. This worship practice invokes the five deities Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Devī, and Sūrya. Śaṅkarācārya instituted the tradition primarily to unite the principal deities of these five major sects on an equal status. This formalized the role of Ganesha as a complementary deity.

Scriptures

Statue of Ganesha with a flower

Once Ganesha was accepted as one of the five principal deities of Brahmanism, some *brāhmaṇas* chose to worship Ganesha as their principal deity. They developed the Ganapatya tradition, as seen in the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Mudgala Purana*.

The date of composition for the *Ganesha Purana* and the *Mudgala Purana*—and their dating relative to one another—has sparked academic debate. Both works were developed over time and contain age-layered strata. Anita Thapan reviews comments about dating and provides her own judgement. "It seems likely that the core of the Ganesha Purana appeared around the twelfth and thirteenth centuries", she says, "but was later interpolated." Lawrence W. Preston considers the most reasonable date for the *Ganesha Purana* to be between 1100 and 1400, which coincides with the apparent age of the sacred sites mentioned by the text.

R.C. Hazra suggests that the *Mudgala Purana* is older than the *Ganesha Purana*, which he dates between 1100 and 1400. However, Phyllis Granoff finds problems with this relative dating and concludes that the *Mudgala Purana* was the last of the philosophical texts concerned with Ganesha. She bases her reasoning on the fact that, among other internal evidence, the *Mudgala Purana* specifically mentions the *Ganesha Purana* as one of the four Puranas (the *Brahma*, the *Brahmanda*, the *Ganesha*, and the *Mudgala* Puranas) which deal at length with Ganesha. While the kernel of the text must be old, it was interpolated until the 17th and 18th centuries as the worship of Ganapati became more important in certain regions. Another

highly regarded scripture, the Ganapati Atharvashirsa, was probably composed during the 16th or 17th centuries.

Beyond India and Hinduism

Commercial and cultural contacts extended India's influence in western and southeast Asia. Ganesha is one of many Hindu deities who reached foreign lands as a result.

Ganesha was particularly worshipped by traders and merchants, who went out of India for commercial ventures. The period from approximately the 10th century onwards was marked by the development of new networks of exchange, the formation of trade guilds, and a resurgence of money circulation. During this time, Ganesha became the principal deity associated with traders. The earliest inscription invoking Ganesha before any other deity is associated with the merchant community.

Hindus migrated to the Malay Archipelago and took their culture, including Ganesha, with them. Statues of Ganesha are found throughout the Malay Archipelago in great numbers, often beside Shiva sanctuaries. The forms of Ganesha found in Hindu art of Java, Bali, and Borneo show specific regional influences. The gradual spread of Hindu culture to southeast Asia established Ganesha in modified forms in Burma, Cambodia, and Thailand. In Indochina, Hinduism and Buddhism were practiced side by side, and mutual influences can be seen in the iconography of Ganesha in the region. In Thailand, Cambodia, and among the Hindu classes of the Chams in Vietnam, Ganesha was mainly thought of as a remover of obstacles. Even today in Buddhist Thailand, Ganesha is regarded as a remover of obstacles, the god of success.

"Dancing Ganesh. Central Tibet. Early fifteenth century. Colours on cotton. Height: 68 centimetres". This form is also known as Maharakta ("The Great Red One").

Before the arrival of Islam, Afghanistan had close cultural ties with India, and the adoration of both Hindu and Buddhist deities was practiced. A few examples of sculptures from the 5th to the 7th centuries have survived, suggesting that the worship of Ganesha was then in vogue in the region.

Ganesha appears in Mahayana Buddhism, not only in the form of the Buddhist god Vināyaka, but also as a Hindu demon form with the same name. His image appears in Buddhist sculptures during the late Gupta period. As the Buddhist god Vināyaka, he is often shown dancing. This form, called Nṛtta Ganapati, was popular in northern India, later adopted in Nepal, and then in Tibet. In Nepal, the Hindu form of Ganesha, known as Heramba, is very popular; he has five heads and rides a lion. Tibetan representations of Ganesha show ambivalent views of him. A Tibetan rendering of Ganapati is *tshogs bdag*. In one Tibetan form, he is shown being trodden under foot by Mahākāla, a popular Tibetan deity. Other depictions show him as the Destroyer of Obstacles, sometimes dancing. Ganesha appears in China and Japan in forms that show distinct regional character. In northern China, the earliest known stone statue of Ganesha carries an inscription dated to 531. In Japan, the Ganesha cult was first mentioned in 806.

The canonical literature of Jainism does not mention the worship of Ganesha. However, Ganesha is worshipped by most Jains, for whom he appears to have taken over certain functions of Kubera. Jain connections with the trading community support the idea that Jainism took up Ganesha worship as a result of commercial connections. The earliest known Jain Ganesha statue dates to about the 9th century. A 15th century Jain text lists procedures for the installation of Ganapati images. Images of Ganesha appear in the Jain temples of Rajasthan and Gujarat.

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Greek mythology

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The bust of Zeus found at Otricoli (Sala Rotonda, Museo Pio-Clementino, Vatican)

Greek mythology is the body of stories belonging to the Ancient Greeks concerning their gods and heroes, the nature of the world and the origins and significance of their own cult and ritual practices. Modern scholars refer to the myths and study them in an attempt to throw light on the religious and political institutions of Ancient Greece and on the Ancient Greek civilization, and to gain understanding of the nature of myth-making itself.

Greek mythology is embodied explicitly in a large collection of narratives and implicitly in representational arts, such as vase-paintings and votive gifts. Greek myth explains the origins of the world and details the lives and adventures of a wide variety of gods, goddesses, heroes, heroines, and other mythological creatures. These accounts were initially disseminated in an oral-poetic tradition; the Greek myths are known today primarily from Greek literature. The oldest known Greek literary sources, the epic poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, focus on events surrounding the Trojan War. Two poems by Homer's near contemporary Hesiod, the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, contain accounts of the genesis of the world, the succession of divine rulers, the succession of human ages, the origin of human woes, and the origin of sacrificial practices. Myths are also preserved in the Homeric Hymns, in fragments of epic poems of the Epic Cycle, in lyric poems, in the works of the tragedians of the 5th century BC, in writings of scholars and poets of the Hellenistic Age and in writers of the time of the Roman Empire, for example, Plutarch and Pausanias.

Archaeological evidence is a principal source of detail about Greek mythology, with Gods and heroes featuring prominently in the decoration of many artifacts. Geometric designs on pottery of the 8th century BCE depict scenes from the Trojan cycle as well as the adventures of Heracles. In the succeeding Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic periods, Homeric and various other mythological scenes appear to supplement the existing literary evidence.

Greek mythology has had extensive influence on the culture, the arts and the literature of Western civilization and remains part of Western heritage and language. Poets and artists from ancient times to the present have derived inspiration from Greek mythology and have discovered contemporary significance and relevance in classical mythological themes.

Survey of mythic history

The Greeks' mythology has changed over time to accommodate the evolution of their own culture, of which mythology both overtly and in its unspoken assumptions, is an index. In the surviving literary forms in which we have them, they are inherently political, as Gilbert Cuthbertson has urged.

The earlier inhabitants of the Balkan Peninsula were an agricultural people who assigned a spirit to every aspect of nature. Eventually, these vague spirits assumed human shape and entered the local mythology as gods and goddesses. When tribes from the north of the Balkan Peninsula invaded, they brought with them a new pantheon of gods, based on conquest, force, prowess in battle, and violent heroism. Other older deities of the agricultural world fused with those of the more powerful invaders or else faded into insignificance.

After the middle of the Archaic period myths about relationships between male gods and male heroes become more and more frequent, indicating the parallel development of pedagogic pederasty *(Eros paidikos, παιδικός ἔρως),* thought to have been introduced around 630 BC. By the end of the 5th century BC, poets had assigned at least one eromenos to every important god except Ares and to many legendary figures. Previously existing myths, such as that of Achilles and Patroclus, were also cast in a pederastic light. Alexandrian poets at first, then more generally literary mythographers in the early Roman Empire, often adapted stories of Greek mythological characters.

The achievement of epic poetry was to create story-cycles, and as a result to develop a sense of mythological chronology. Thus Greek mythology unfolds like a phase in the development of the world and of man. While self-contradictions in the stories make an absolute timeline impossible, an approximate chronology may be discerned. The mythological history of the world can be divided in 3 or 4 broader periods:

1. *The myths of origin* or *age of gods (Theogonies, 'births of gods)'*: myths about the origins of the world, the gods, and the human race.
2. *The age when gods and mortals mingled freely*: stories of the early interactions between gods, demigods, and mortals.
3. *The age of heroes (heroic age)*, where divine activity was more limited. The last and greatest of the heroic legends is the stories of *the Trojan War and after* (regarded by some researchers as a separate fourth period).

While the age of gods has often been of more interest to contemporary students of myth, the Greek authors of the archaic and classical eras had a clear preference for the age of heroes. For example, the heroic *Iliad* and *Odyssey* dwarfed the divine-focused *Theogony* and Homeric Hymns in both size and popularity. Under the influence of Homer the "hero cult" leads to a restructuring in spiritual life, expressed in the separation of the realm of the gods from the realm of the dead (heroes), of the Olympian from the Chthonic. In the *Works and Days*, Hesiod makes use of a scheme of Four Ages of Man (or Races): Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron. These races or ages are separate creations of the gods, the Golden Age belonging to the reign of Cronus, the subsequent races the creation of Zeus. Hesiod intercalates the Age (or Race) of Heroes just after the Bronze Age. The final age was the Iron Age, during which the poet himself lived. The poet regards it as the worst; the presence of evil was explained by Pandora's myth. In *Metamorphoses* Ovid follows Hesiod's concept of the four ages.

Age of gods

Cosmogony and cosmology

Amor vincit omnia (*Love Conquers All*), a depiction of the god of love, Eros. By Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, circa 1601–1602.

"Myths of origin" or "creation myths" represent an attempt to render the universe comprehensible in human terms and explain the origin of the world. The most widely accepted account of beginning of things as reported by Hesiod's *Theogony*, starts with Chaos, a yawning nothingness. Out of the void emerged Ge or Gaia (the Earth) and some other primary divine beings: Eros (Love), the Abyss (the Tartarus), and the Erebus. Without male assistance Gaia gave birth to Uranus (the Sky) who then fertilised her. From that union were born, first, the Titans: six males and six females (Oceanus, Coeus and Crius and Hyperion and Iapetus, Theia and Rhea, Themis and Mnemosyne, Phoebe and Tethys, and Cronus); then the one-eyed Cyclopes and the Hecatonchires or Hundred-Handers. Cronus ("the wily, youngest and most terrible of [Gaia's] children")castrated his father and became the ruler of the gods with his sister-wife Rhea as his consort and the other Titans became his court. This motif of father/son conflict was repeated when Cronus was confronted by his son, Zeus. After Cronus betrayed his father, he feared that his offspring would do the same, and so each time Rhea gave birth, he snatched up the child and ate it. Rhea hated this and tricked him by hiding Zeus and wrapping a stone in a baby's blanket, which Cronus ate. When Zeus was grown, he fed his father a drugged drink which caused Cronus to throw up Zeus' brothers and sisters, and one stone, which had been sitting in Cronus' stomach all along. Then Zeus challenged Cronus to war for the kingship of the gods. At last, with the help of the Cyclopes, (whom Zeus freed from Tarturus), Zeus and his siblings were victorious, while Cronus and the Titans were hurled down to imprisonment in Tartarus.

The earliest Greek thought about poetry considered the theogony to be the prototypical poetic genre — the prototypical *mythos* — and imputed almost magical powers to it. Orpheus, the archetypal poet, was also the archetypal singer of theogonies, which he uses to calm seas and storms in Apollonius' *Argonautica*, and to move the stony hearts of the underworld gods in his descent to Hades. When Hermes invents the lyre in the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, the first thing he does is sing the birth of the gods. Hesiod's *Theogony* is not only the fullest surviving account of the gods, but also the fullest surviving account of the archaic poet's function, with its long preliminary invocation to the Muses. Theogony was also the subject of many lost poems, including those attributed to Orpheus, Musaeus, Epimenides, Abaris and other legendary seers, which were used in private ritual purifications and mystery-rites. There are indications that Plato was familiar with some version of the Orphic theogony. A few fragments of these works survive in quotations by Neoplatonist philosophers and recently unearthed papyrus scraps. One of these scraps, the Derveni Papyrus now proves that at least in the 5th century BC a theogonic-cosmogonic poem of Orpheus was in existence. This poem attempted to outdo Hesiod's *Theogony* and the genealogy of the gods was extended back with Nyx (Night) as an ultimate beginning before Uranus, Cronus and Zeus.

The first philosophical cosmologists reacted against, or sometimes built upon, popular mythical conceptions that had existed in the Greek world for some time. Some of these popular conceptions can be gleaned from the poetry of Homer and Hesiod. In Homer, the Earth was viewed as a flat disk afloat on the river of Oceanus and overlooked by a hemispherical sky with sun, moon and stars. The Sun (Helios) traversed the heavens as a charioteer and sailed around the Earth in a golden bowl at night. Sun, earth, heaven, rivers, and winds could be addressed in prayers and called to witness oaths. Natural fissures were popularly regarded as entrances to the subterranean house of Hades, home of the dead.

Greek gods

According to Classical-era mythology, after the overthrow of the Titans, the new pantheon of gods and goddesses was confirmed. Among the principal Greek deities were the Olympians (The limitation of their number to twelve seems to have been a comparatively modern idea), residing atop Mount Olympus under the eye of Zeus. Besides the Olympians, the Greeks worshiped various gods of the countryside, the goat-god Pan, Nymphs (spirits of rivers), Naiads (who dwelled in springs), Dryads (who were spirits of the trees), Nereids (who inhabited the sea), river gods, Satyrs, and others. In addition, there were the dark powers of the underworld, such as the Erinyes (or Furies), said to pursue those guilty of crimes against blood-relatives. In order to honour the Ancient Greek pantheon, poets composed the Homeric Hymns (a group of thirty-three songs). Gregory Nagy regards "the larger Homeric Hymns as simple preludes (compared with *Theogony*), each of which invokes one god".

In the wide variety of myths and legends that Greek mythology consists of, the deities that were native to the Greek peoples are described as having essentially corporeal but ideal bodies. According to Walter Burkert, the defining characteristic of Greek anthropomorphism is that "the Greek gods are persons, not abstractions, ideas or concepts". Regardless of their underlying forms, the Ancient Greek gods have many fantastic abilities; most significantly, the gods are not affected by disease, and can be wounded only under highly unusual circumstances. The Greeks considered immortality as the distinctive characteristic of their gods; this immortality, as well as unfading youth, was insured by the constant use of nectar and ambrosia, by which the divine blood was renewed in their veins.

The Twelve Olympians by Monsiau, circa late 18th century.

Each god descends from his or her own genealogy, pursues differing interests, has a certain area of expertise, and is governed by a unique personality; however, these descriptions arise from a multiplicity of archaic local variants, which do not always agree with one another. When these gods were called upon in poetry, prayer or cult, they are referred to by a combination of their name and epithets, that identify them by these distinctions from other manifestations of themselves (e.g. *Apollo Musagetes* is "Apollo, [as] leader of the Muses"). Alternatively the epithet may identify a particular and localized aspect of the god, sometimes thought to be already ancient during the classical epoch of Greece.

Most gods were associated with specific aspects of life. For example, Aphrodite was the goddess of love and beauty, Ares was the god of war, Hades the god of the dead, and Athena the goddess of wisdom and courage. Some deities, such as Apollo and Dionysus, revealed complex personalities and mixtures of functions, while others, such as Hestia (literally "hearth") and Helios (literally "sun"), were little more than personifications. The most impressive temples tended to be dedicated to a limited number of gods, who were the focus of large pan-Hellenic cults. It was, however, common for individual regions and villages to devote their own cults to minor gods. Many cities also honored the more well-known gods with unusual local rites and associated strange myths with them that were unknown elsewhere. During the heroic age, the cult of heroes (or demi-gods) supplemented this of the gods.

Zeus, disguised as a swan seduces Leda, the Queen of Sparta. A sixteenth century copy of the lost original by Michelangelo.

Age of gods and humankind

Bridging the age when gods lived alone and the age when divine interference in human affairs was limited was a transitional age in which gods and humankind moved together. These were the early days of the world when the groups mingled more freely than they did later. Most of these tales were later told by Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and they are often divided in two thematic groups: tales of love, and tales of punishment.

Tales of love often involve incest, or the seduction or rape of a mortal woman by a male god, resulting in heroic offspring. The stories generally suggest that relationships between gods and mortals are something to avoid; even consenting relationships rarely have happy endings. In a few cases, a female divinity mates with a mortal man, as in the *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, where the goddess lies with Anchises to produce Aeneas.

The Marriage of Peleus and Thetis, by Hans Rottenhammer

Dionysus with satyrs. Interior of a cup painted by the Brygos Painter, Cabinet des Médailles

The second type (tales of punishment) involves the appropriation or invention of some important cultural artifact, as when Prometheus steals fire from the gods, when Tantalus steals nectar and ambrosia from Zeus' table and gives it to his own subjects—revealing to them the secrets of the gods, when Prometheus or Lycaon invents sacrifice, when Demeter teaches agriculture and the Mysteries to Triptolemus, or when Marsyas invents the aulos and enters into a musical contest with Apollo. Prometheus' adventures mark "a place between the history of the gods and that of man". An anonymous papyrus fragment, dated to the third century, vividly portrays Dionysus' punishment of the king of Thrace, Lycurgus, whose recognition of the new god came too late, resulting in horrific penalties that extended into the afterlife. The story of the arrival of Dionysus to establish his cult in Thrace was also the subject of an Aeschylean trilogy. In another tragedy, Euripides' *The Bacchae*, the king of Thebes, Pentheus, is punished by Dionysus, because he disrespected the god and spied on his Maenads, the female worshippers of the god.

In another story, based on an old folktale-motif, and echoing a similar theme, Demeter was searching for her daughter, Persephone, having taken the form of an old woman called Doso, and received a hospitable welcome from Celeus, the King of Eleusis in Attica. As a gift to Celeus, because of his hospitality, Demeter planned to make Demophon as a god, but she was unable to complete the ritual because his mother Metanira walked in and saw her son in the fire and screamed in fright, which angered Demeter, who lamented that foolish mortals do not understand the concept and ritual.

Heroic age

The age in which the heroes lived is known as the heroic age. The epic and genealogical poetry created cycles of stories clustered around particular heroes or events and established the family relationships between the heroes of different stories; they thus arranged the stories in sequence. According to Ken Dowden, "there is even a saga effect: we can follow the fates of some families in successive generations".

After the rise of the hero cult, gods and heroes constitute the sacral sphere and are invoked together in oaths, and prayers which are addressed to them. In contrast to the age of gods, during the heroic age the roster of heroes is never given fixed and final form; great gods are no longer born, but new heroes can always be raised up from the army of the dead. Another important difference between the hero cult and the cult of gods is that the hero becomes the centre of

local group identity.

The monumental events of Heracles are regarded as the dawn of the age of heroes. To the Heroic Age are also ascribed three great military events, the Argonautic expedition and the Trojan War as well as the Theban War.

Heracles and the Heracleidae

Herakles with his baby Telephos (Louvre Museum, Paris).

Some scholars believe that behind Heracles' complicated mythology there was probably a real man, perhaps a chieftain-vassal of the kingdom of Argos. Some scholars suggest the story of Heracles is an allegory for the sun's yearly passage through the twelve constellations of the zodiac. Others point to earlier myths from other cultures, showing the story of Heracles as a local adaptation of hero myths already well established. Traditionally, Heracles was the son of Zeus and Alcmene, granddaughter of Perseus. His fantastic solitary exploits, with their many folk tale themes, provided much material for popular legend. He is portrayed as a sacrificier, mentioned as a founder of altars, and imagined as a voracious eater himself; it is in this role that he appears in comedy, while his tragic end provided much material for tragedy — *Heracles* is regarded by Thalia Papadopoulou as "a play of great significance in examination of other Euripidean dramas". In art and literature Heracles was represented as an enormously strong man of moderate height; his characteristic weapon was the bow but frequently also the club. The vase paintings demonstrate the unparalleled popularity of Heracles, his fight with the lion being depicted many hundreds of times.

Heracles also entered Etruscan and Roman mythology and cult, and the exclamation "mehercule" became as familiar to the Romans as "Herakleis" was to the Greeks. In Italy he was worshipped as a god of merchants and traders, although others also prayed to him for his characteristic gifts of good luck or rescue from danger.

Heracles attained the highest social prestige through his appointment as official ancestor of the Dorian kings. This probably served as a legitimation for the Dorian migrations into the Peloponnese. Hyllus, the eponymous hero of one Dorian phyle, became the son of Heracles and one of the *Heracleidae* or *Heraclids* (the numerous descendants of Heracles, especially the descendants of Hyllus — other Heracleidae included Macaria, Lamos, Manto, Bianor, Tlepolemus, and Telephus). These Heraclids conquered the Peloponnesian kingdoms of Mycenae, Sparta and Argos, claiming, according to legend, a right to rule it through their ancestor. Their rise to dominance is frequently called the " Dorian invasion". The Lydian and later the Macedonian kings, as rulers of the same rank, also became Heracleidae.

Other members of this earliest generation of heroes, such as Perseus, Deucalion, Theseus and Bellerophon, have many traits in common with Heracles. Like him, their exploits are solitary, fantastic and border on fairy tale, as they slay monsters such as the Chimera and Medusa. Bellerophon's adventures are commonplace types, similar to the adventures of Heracles and Theseus. Sending a hero to his presumed death is also a recurrent theme of this early heroic tradition, used in the cases of Perseus and Bellerophon.

Argonauts

The only surviving Hellenistic epic, the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes (epic poet, scholar, and director of the Library of Alexandria) tells the myth of the voyage of Jason and the Argonauts to retrieve the Golden Fleece from the mythical land of Colchis. In the *Argonautica*, Jason is impelled on his quest by king Pelias, who receives a prophecy that a man with one sandal would be his nemesis. Jason loses a sandal in a river, arrives at the court of Pelias, and the epic is set in motion. Nearly every member of the next generation of heroes, as well as Heracles, went with Jason in the ship *Argo* to fetch the Golden Fleece. This generation also included Theseus, who went to Crete to slay the Minotaur; Atalanta, the female heroine; and Meleager, who once had an epic cycle of his own to rival the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Pindar, Apollonius and Apollodorus endeavor to give full lists of the Argonauts.

Although Apollonius wrote his poem in the 3rd century BC, the composition of the story of the Argonauts is earlier than *Odyssey*, which shows familiarity with the exploits of Jason (the wandering of Odysseus may have been partly founded on it). In ancient times the expedition was regarded as a historical fact, an incident in the opening up of the Black Sea to Greek commerce and colonization. It was also extremely popular, forming a cycle to which a number of local legends became attached. The story of Medea, in particular, caught the imagination of the tragic poets.

House of Atreus and Theban Cycle

Cadmus Sowing the Dragon's teeth, by Maxfield Parrish, 1908

In between the Argo and the Trojan War, there was a generation known chiefly for its horrific crimes. This includes the doings of Atreus and Thyestes at Argos. Behind the myth of the house of Atreus (one of the two principal heroic dynasties with the house of Labdacus) lies the problem of the devolution of power and of the mode of accession to sovereignty. The twins Atreus and Thyestes with their descendants played the leading role in the tragedy of the devolution of power in Mycenae.

The Theban Cycle deals with events associated especially with Cadmus, the city's founder, and later with the doings of Laius and Oedipus at Thebes; a series of stories that lead to the eventual pillage of that city at the hands of the Seven Against Thebes (it is not known whether the Seven against Thebes figured in early epic) and Epigoni. As far as Oedipus is concerned, early epic accounts seem to have followed a different pattern (in which he continued to rule at Thebes after the revelation that Iokaste was his mother and subsequently married a second wife who became the mother of his children) from the one known to us through tragedy (e.g. Sophocles' "Oedipus the King") and later mythological accounts.

Trojan War and aftermath

Greek mythology culminates in the Trojan War, fought between the Greeks and Troy, and its aftermath. In Homer's works the chief stories have already taken shape and substance, and individual themes were elaborated later, especially in Greek drama. The Trojan War acquired also a great interest for the Roman culture because of the story of Aeneas, a Trojan hero, whose journey from Troy led to the founding of the city that would one day become Rome, is recounted in Virgil's *Aeneid* (Book II of Virgil's Aeneid contains the best-known account of the sack of Troy). Finally there are two pseudo-chronicles written in Latin that passed under the names of Dictys Cretensis and Dares Phrygius.

The Trojan War cycle, a collection of epic poems, starts with the events leading up to the war: (Eris and the golden apple of Kallisti, the Judgement of Paris, the abduction of Helen, the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis). To recover Helen, the Greeks launched a great expedition under the overall command of Menelaus' brother, Agamemnon, king of Argos or Mycenae, but The Trojans refused to return Helen. The *Iliad*, which is set in the tenth year of the war, tells of the quarrel between Agamemnon and Achilles, who was the finest Greek warrior, and the consequent deaths in battle of Achilles' friend Patroclus and Priam's eldest son, Hector. After Hector's death the Trojans were joined by two exotic allies, Penthesilea, queen of the Amazons, and Memnon, king of the Ethiopians and son of the dawn-goddess Eos. Achilles killed both of these, but Paris then managed to kill Achilles with an arrow. Before they could take Troy, the Greeks had to steal from the citadel the wooden image of Pallas Athena (the Palladium). Finally, with Athena's help, they built the Trojan Horse. Despite the warnings of Priam's daughter Cassandra, the Trojans were persuaded by Sinon, a Greek who feigned desertion, to take the horse inside the walls of Troy as an offering to Athena; the priest Laocoon, who tried to have the horse destroyed, was killed by sea-serpents. At night the Greek fleet returned, and the Greeks from the horse opened the gates of Troy. In the total sack that followed, Priam and his remaining sons were slaughtered; the Trojan women passed into slavery in various cities of Greece. The adventurous homeward voyages of the Greek leaders (including the wanderings of Odysseus and Aeneas (the *Aeneid*), and the murder of Agamemnon) were told in two epics, the Returns (*Nostoi*; lost) and Homer's *Odyssey*. The Trojan cycle also includes the adventures of the children of the Trojan generation (e.g. Orestes and Telemachus).

In *The Rage of Achilles* by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1757, Fresco, 300 x 300 cm, Villa Valmarana, Vicenza) Achilles is outraged that Agamemnon would threaten to seize his warprize, Briseis, and he draws his sword to kill Agamemnon. The sudden appearance of the goddess Minerva, who, in this fresco, has grabbed Achilles by the hair, prevents the act of violence.

The Trojan War provided a variety of themes and became a main source of inspiration for Ancient Greek artists (e.g. metopes on the Parthenon depicting the sack of Troy); this artistic preference for themes deriving from the Trojan Cycle indicates its importance for the Ancient Greek civilization. The same mythological cycle also inspired a series of posterior European literary writings. For instance, Trojan Medieval European writers, unacquainted with Homer at first hand, found in the Troy legend a rich source of heroic and romantic storytelling and a convenient framework into which to fit their own courtly and chivalric ideals. 12th century authors, such as Benoît de Sainte-Maure (*Roman de Troie* [Romance of Troy, 1154–60]) and Joseph of Exeter (*De Bello Troiano* [On the Trojan War, 1183]) describe the war while rewriting the standard version they found in *Dictys* and *Dares*. They thus follow Horace's advice and Virgil's example: they rewrite a poem of Troy instead of telling something completely new.

Greek and Roman conceptions of myth

Mythology was at the heart of everyday life in Ancient Greece. Greeks regarded mythology as a part of their history. They used myth to explain natural phenomena, cultural variations, traditional enmities and friendships. It was a source of pride to be able to trace one's leaders' descent from a mythological hero or a god. Few ever doubted that there was truth behind the account of the Trojan War in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. According to Victor Davis Hanson, a military historian, columnist, political essayist and former Classics professor, and John Heath, associate professor of Classics at Santa Clara University, the profound knowledge of the Homeric epos was deemed by the Greeks the basis of their acculturation. Homer was the "education of Greece" (Ἑλλάδος παίδευσις), and his poetry "the Book".

Philosophy and myth

El Greco was inspired in his *Laocoon* (1608–1614, oil on canvas, 142 x 193 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington) by the famous myth of the Trojan cycle. Laocoon was a Trojan priest who tried to have the Trojan horse destroyed, but was killed by sea-serpents.

After the rise of philosophy, and history, prose and rationalism in the late 5th century BC the fate of myth became uncertain, and mythological genealogies gave place to a conception of history which tried to exclude the supernatural (such as the Thucydidean history). While poets and dramatists were reworking the myths, Greek historians and philosophers were beginning to criticize them.

A few radical philosophers like Xenophanes of Colophon were already beginning to label the poets' tales as blasphemous lies in the 6th century BC; Xenophanes had complained that Homer and Hesiod attributed to the gods "all that is shameful and disgraceful among men; they steal, commit adultery, and deceive one another". This line of thought found its most sweeping expression in Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. Plato created his own allegorical myths (such as the vision of Er in the *Republic*), attacked the traditional tales of the gods' tricks, thefts and adulteries as immoral, and objected to their central role in literature. Plato's criticism was the first serious challenge to the Homeric mythological tradition, referring to the myths as "old wives' chatter". For his part Aristotle criticized the Pre-socratic quasi-mythical philosophical approach and underscored that "Hesiod and the theological writers were concerned only with what seemed plausible to themselves, and had no respect for us [...] But it is not worth taking seriously writers who show off in the mythical style; as for those who do proceed by proving their assertions, we must cross-examine them".

Nevertheless, even Plato did not manage to wean himself and his society from the influence of myth; his own characterization for Socrates is based on the traditional Homeric and tragic patterns, used by the philosopher to praise the righteous life of his teacher:

> " But perhaps someone might say: "Are you then not ashamed, Socrates, of having followed such a pursuit, that you are now in danger of being put to death as a result?" But I should make to him a just reply: "You do not speak well, Sir, if you think a man in whom there is even a little merit ought to consider danger of life or death, and not rather regard this only, when he does things, whether the things he does are right or wrong and the acts of a good or a bad man. For according to your argument all the demigods would be bad who died at Troy, including the son of Thetis, who so despised danger, in comparison with enduring any disgrace, that when his mother (and she was a goddess) said to him, as he was eager to slay Hector, something like this, I believe,
>
>> My son, if you avenge the death of your friend Patroclus and kill Hector, you yourself shall die;
>> for straightway, after Hector, is death appointed unto you (Hom. Il. 18.96) [...] " "

Hanson and Heath estimate that Plato's rejection of the Homeric tradition was not favorably received by the grassroots Greek civilization. The old myths were kept alive in local cults; they continued to influence poetry, and to form the main subject of painting and sculpture.

More sportingly, the 5th century BC tragedian Euripides often played with the old traditions, mocking them, and through the voice of his characters injecting notes of doubt. Yet the subjects of his plays were taken, without exception, from myth. Many of these plays were written in answer to a predecessor's version of the same or similar myth. Euripides impugns mainly the myths about the gods and begins his critique with an objection similar to the one previously expressed
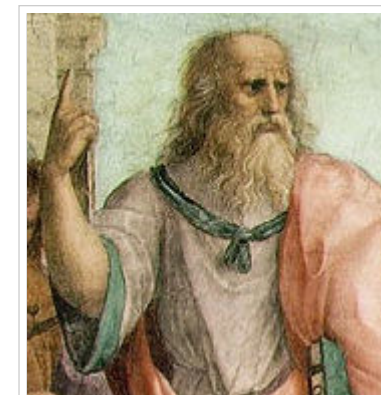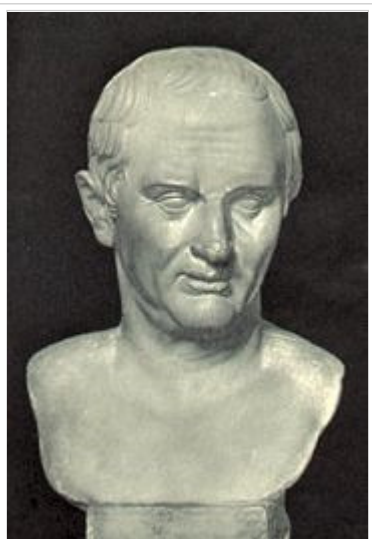
Raphael's Plato in *The School of Athens* fresco (probably in the likeness of Leonardo da Vinci). The philosopher expelled the study of Homer, of the tragedies and of the related mythological traditions from his utopian Republic.

by Xenocrates: the gods, as traditionally represented, are far too crassly anthropomorphic.

Hellenistic and Roman rationalism

During the Hellenistic period, mythology took on the prestige of elite knowledge that marks its possessors as belonging to a certain class. At the same time, the skeptical turn of the Classical age became even more pronounced. Greek mythographer Euhemerus established the tradition of seeking an actual historical basis for mythical beings and events. Although his original work (*Sacred Scriptures*) is lost, much is known about it from what is recorded by Diodorus and Lactantius.

Rationalizing hermeneutics of myth became even more popular under the Roman Empire, thanks to the physicalist theories of Stoic and Epicurean philosophy. Stoics presented explanations of the gods and heroes as physical phenomena, while the euhemerists rationalized them as historical figures. At the same time, the Stoics and the Neoplatonists promoted the moral significations of the mythological tradition, often based on Greek etymologies. Through his Epicurean message, Lucretius had sought to expel superstitious fears from the minds of his fellow-citizens. Livy, too, is sceptical about the mythological tradition and claims that he does not intend to pass judgement on such legends (fabulae). The challenge for Romans with a strong and apologetic sense of religious tradition was to defend that tradition while conceding that it was often a breeding-ground for superstition. The antiquarian Varro, who regarded religion as a human institution with great importance for the preservation of good in society, devoted rigorous study to the origins of religious cults. In his *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum* (which has not survived, but Augustine's *City of God* indicates its general approach) Varro argues that whereas the superstitious man fears the gods, the truly religious person venerates them as parents. In his work he distinguished three kinds of gods:

Cicero saw himself as the defender of the established order, despite his personal scepticism with regard to myth and his inclination towards more philosophical conceptions of divinity.

- The gods of nature: personifications of phenomena like rain and fire.
- The gods of the poets: invented by unscrupulous bards to stir the passions.
- The gods of the city: invented by wise legislators to soothe and enlighten the populace.

Roman Academic Cotta ridicules both literal and allegorical acceptance of myth, declaring roundly that myths have no place in philosophy. Cicero is also generally disdainful of myth, but, like Varro, he is emphatic in his support for the state religion and its institutions. It is difficult to know how far down the social scale this rationalism extended. Cicero asserts that no one (not even old women and boys) is so foolish as to believe in the terrors of Hades or the existence of Scyllas, centaurs or other composite creatures, but, on the other hand, the orator elsewhere complains of the superstitious and credulous character of the people. *De Natura Deorum* is the most comprehensive summary of Cicero's line of thought.

Syncretizing trends

In Ancient Roman times, a new Roman mythology was born through syncretization of numerous Greek and other foreign gods. This occurred because the Romans had little mythology of their own and inheritance of the Greek mythological tradition caused the major Roman gods to adopt characteristics of their Greek equivalents. The gods Zeus and Jupiter are an example of this mythological overlap. In addition to the combination of the two mythological traditions, the association of the Romans with eastern religions led to further syncretizations. For instance, the cult of Sun was introduced in Rome after Aurelian's successful campaigns in Syria. The Asiatic divinities Mithras (that is to say, the Sun) and Ba'al were combined with Apollo and Helios into one Sol Invictus, with conglomerated rites and compound attributes. Apollo might be increasingly identified in religion with Helios or even Dionysus, but texts retelling his myths seldom reflected such developments. The traditional literary mythology was increasingly dissociated from actual religious practice.

The surviving 2nd century collection of Orphic Hymns and Macrobius's *Saturnalia* are influenced by the theories of rationalism and the syncretizing trends as well. The Orphic Hymns are a set of pre-classical poetic compositions, attributed to Orpheus, himself the subject of a renowned myth. In reality, these poems were probably composed by several different poets, and contain a rich set of clues about prehistoric European mythology. The stated purpose of the *Saturnalia* is to transmit the Hellenic culture he has derived from his reading, even though much of his treatment of gods is colored by Egyptian and North African mythology and theology (which also affect the interpretation of Virgil). In Saturnalia reappear mythographical comments influenced by the euhemerists, the Stoics and the Neoplatonists.

Modern interpretations

The genesis of modern understanding of Greek mythology is regarded by some scholars as a double reaction at the end of the eighteenth century against "the traditional attitude of Christian animosity", in which the Christian reinterpretation of myth as a "lie" or fable had been retained. In Germany, by about 1795, there was a growing interest in Homer and Greek mythology. In Göttingen Johann Matthias Gesner began to revive Greek studies, while his successor, Christian Gottlob Heyne, worked with Johann Joachim Winckelmann, and laid the foundations for mythological research both in Germany and elsewhere.

Comparative and psychoanalytic approaches

In Roman religion the worship of the Greek god Apollo (early Imperial Roman copy of a fourth century Greek original, Louvre Museum) was combined with the cult of Sol Invictus. The worship of Sol as special protector of the emperors and of the empire remained the chief imperial religion until it was replaced by Christianity.

Max Müller is regarded as one of the founders of comparative mythology. In his *Comparative Mythology* (1867) Müller analysed the "disturbing" similarity between the mythologies of "savage" races with those of the early European races.

The development of comparative philology in the 19th century, together with ethnological discoveries in the 20th century, established the science of myth. Since the Romantics, all study of myth has been comparative. Wilhelm Mannhardt, Sir James Frazer, and Stith Thompson employed the comparative approach to collect and classify the themes of folklore and mythology. In 1871 Edward Burnett Tylor published his *Primitive Culture*, in which he applied the comparative method and tried to explain the origin and evolution of religion. Tylor's procedure of drawing together material culture, ritual and myth of widely separated cultures influenced both Carl Jung and Joseph Campbell. Max Müller applied the new science of comparative mythology to the study of myth, in which he detected the distorted remains of Aryan nature worship. Bronisław Malinowski emphasized the ways myth fulfills common social functions. Claude Lévi-Strauss and other structuralists have compared the formal relations and patterns in myths throughout the world.

Sigmund Freud introduced a transhistorical and biological conception of man and a view of myth as an expression of repressed ideas. Dream interpretation is the basis of Freudian myth interpretation and Freud's concept of dreamwork recognizes the importance of contextual relationships for the interpretation of any individual element in a dream. This suggestion would find an important point of rapprochement between the structuralist and psychoanalytic approaches to myth in Freud's thought. Carl Jung extended the transhistorical, psychological approach with his theory of the "collective unconscious" and the archetypes (inherited "archaic" patterns), often encoded in myth, that arise out of it. According to Jung, "myth-forming structural elements must be present in the unconscious psyche". Comparing Jung's methodology with Joseph Campbell's theory, Robert A. Segal concludes that "to interpret a myth Campbell simply identifies the archetypes in it. An interpretation of the *Odyssey*, for example, would show how Odysseus's life conforms to a heroic pattern. Jung, by contrast, considers the identification of archetypes merely the first step in the interpretation of a myth". Karl Kerenyi, one of the founders of modern studies in Greek mythology, gave up his early views of myth, in order to apply Jung's theories of archetypes to Greek myth.

Origin theories
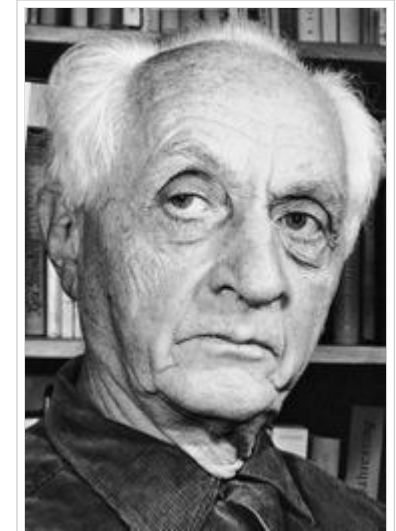
For Karl Kerényi mythology is "a body of material contained in tales about gods and god-like beings, heroic battles and journeys to the Underworld —*mythologem* is the best Greek word for them—tales already well-known but not amenable to further re-shaping".

Jupiter et Thétis by Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres, 1811.

There are various modern theories about the origins of Greek mythology. According to the Scriptural Theory, all mythological legends are derived from the narratives of the Scriptures, although the real facts have been disguised and altered. According to the Historical Theory all the persons mentioned in mythology were once real human beings, and the legends relating to them are merely the additions of later times. Thus the story of Aeolus is supposed to have risen from the fact that Aeolus was the ruler of some islands in the Tyrrhenian Sea. The Allegorical Theory supposes that all the ancient myths were allegorical and symbolical. While the Physical Theory subscribed to the idea that the elements of air, fire, and water were originally the objects of religious adoration, thus the principal deities were personifications of these powers of nature. Max Müller attempted to understand an Indo-European religious form by tracing it back to its Aryan, "original" manifestation. In 1891, he claimed that "the most important discovery which has been made during the nineteenth century with respect to the ancient history of mankind [...] was this sample equation: Sanskrit Dyaus-pitar = Greek Zeus = Latin Jupiter = Old Norse Tyr". In other cases, close parallels in character and function suggest a common heritage, yet lack of linguistic evidence makes it difficult to prove, as in the comparison between Uranus and the Sanskrit Varuna or the Moirae and the Norns.

Archaeology and mythography, on the other hand, has revealed that the Greeks were inspired by some of the civilizations of Asia Minor and the Near East. Adonis seems to be the Greek counterpart — more clearly in cult than in myth — of a Near Eastern "dying god". Cybele is rooted in Anatolian culture while much of Aphrodite's iconography springs from Semitic goddesses. There are also possible parallels between the earliest divine generations (Chaos and its children) and Tiamat in the *Enuma Elish*. According to Meyer Reinhold, "near Eastern theogonic concepts, involving divine succession through violence and generational conflicts for power, found their way [...] into Greek mythology". In addition to Indo-European and Near Eastern origins, some scholars have speculated on the debts of Greek mythology to the pre-Hellenic societies: Crete, Mycenae, Pylos, Thebes and Orchomenus. Historians of religion were fascinated by a number of apparently ancient configurations of myth connencted with Crete (the god as bull, Zeus and Europa, Pasiphaë who yields to the bull and gives birth to the Minotaur etc.) Professor Martin P. Nilsson concluded that all great classical Greek myths were tied to Mycenaen centres and were anchored in prehistoric times. Nevertheless, according to Burkert, the iconography of the Cretan Palace Period has provided almost no confirmation for these theories.

Aphrodite and Adonis, Attic red-figure aryballos-shaped lekythos by Aison (c. 410 BC, Louvre, Paris).

Motifs in Western art and literature

The widespread adoption of Christianity did not curb the popularity of the myths. With the rediscovery of classical antiquity in the Renaissance, the poetry of Ovid became a major influence on the imagination of poets, dramatists, musicians and artists. From the early years of Renaissance, artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Raphael, portrayed the pagan subjects of Greek mythology alongside more conventional Christian themes. Through the medium of Latin and the works of Ovid, Greek myth influenced medieval and Renaissance poets such as Petrarch, Boccaccio and Dante in Italy.

Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus* (c. 1485–1486, oil on canvas, Uffizi, Florence) — a revived *Venus Pudica* for a new view of pagan Antiquity—is often said to epitomize for modern viewers the spirit of the Renaissance.

In Northern Europe, Greek mythology never took the same hold of the visual arts, but its effect was very obvious on literature. The English imagination was fired by Greek mythology starting with Chaucer and John Milton and continuing through Shakespeare to Robert Bridges in the 20th century. Racine in France and Goethe in Germany revived Greek drama, reworking the ancient myths. Although during the Enlightenment of the 18th century reaction against Greek myth spread throughout Europe, the myths continued to provide an important source of raw material for dramatists, including those who wrote the libretti for many of Handel's and Mozart's operas. By the end of the 18th century, Romanticism initiated a surge of enthusiasm for all things Greek, including Greek mythology. In Britain, new translations of Greek tragedies and Homer inspired contemporary poets (such as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Keats, Byron and Shelley) and painters (such as Lord Leighton and Lawrence Alma-Tadema). Christoph Gluck, Richard Strauss, Jacques Offenbach and many others set Greek mythological themes to music. American authors of the 19th century, such as Thomas Bulfinch and Nathaniel Hawthorne, held that the study of the classical myths was essential to the understanding of English and American literature. In more recent times, classical themes have been reinterpreted by dramatists Jean Anouilh, Jean Cocteau, and Jean Giraudoux in France, Eugene O'Neill in America, and T. S. Eliot in Britain and by novelists such as James Joyce and André Gide.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_mythology"

Guru Granth Sahib

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The Guru Granth Sahib (Punjabi: ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, *gurū granth sāhib* or SGGS) is revered as the eternal Guru of Sikhism, the physical form of the living Guru of the Sikhs, and is also their holy book. The term *Guru* represents the position that the Granth holds in Sikhism, and the term *Sahib* is used to give respect and show superiority in India . The highest seat of authority in Sikhism rests with the *Granth* or Guru Granth Sahib. However, the authority of Guru Granth Sahib is restricted to spiritual aspect and not temporal aspect. Any decision, which is likely to affect the Sikhs in any manner whatsoever is taken by *Gurmatta*, in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib. The term "Gurmatta" signifies the process of decision making among the Sikhs, by which a general meeting is held and presided by *Panj Piare*(five beloved of the Guru). No single person occupies or possesses the sole authority regarding decision making. The Guru Granth Sahib is given the honorific prefix *Sri* (Sri)which denotes its holiness for Sikhs. It is also called *Gyan Guru* meaning full of knowledge or wisdom.

The Guru Granth Sahib was made guru of Sikhs by the last of the living Gurus (Guru Gobind Singh) in 1708. While there are no priests in Sikhism, there were *masands* (local community leaders) of the Guru whose duties were abolished by Gobind Singh as he felt they had become full of ego and corrupt. The only position he left was a Granthi to look after the Guru Granth Sahib; any Sikh is free to become Granthi or read from the Guru Granth Sahib.

> Punjabi: "ਸਬ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ"
>
> Transliteration: "Sab sikhan kō hukam hai gurū mānyō granth"
> English: "All Sikhs are commanded to regard the Granth as their Guru".

The role of Guru Granth Sahib is pivotal in worship in Sikhism. It is the source of prayer or worship, and not the object of worship.

> "when the true guru is met with, one meets with the perfect god"

The Guru Granth Sahib also contains hymns of saints from other religions, including Hinduism and Sufi Islam, such as Kabir, Baba Farid, Tulsidas, Ravidas and Namdev. The Sikh Gurus also held the views of past saints of the Bhakti movement in high regard, and considered their

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji

Religion	Sikhism
Other Names:	Punjabi: ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ
	Guru Granth Sahib
	Adi Granth
	The Head of the Sikh religion
	The Eternal Guru of the Sikhs
	Senior posting
Based in	Initially Punjab, India
Title	The eleventh Guru of Sikhism
Period in office	7th October, 1708 - Eternal
Predecessor	Guru Gobind Singh 10th Guru of the Eleven Gurus of Sikhism
Successor	None

teachings sacred, and included them in the Guru Granth Sahib, next to their own. The 15 Bhagats are considered equally holy, revered and sacred by Sikhs as the Gurus.

The Guru Granth Sahib is written in the Gurmukhi script and contains many languages including Braj, Old Punjabi, Khariboli, Sanskrit and Persian.

The Guru Granth Sahib contains over 5000 shabhads or hymns which are poetically constructed and set to classical forms of music ragas. They can be set to predetermined musical talas (rhythmic beats).

Religious career	
Post	Guru
Personal	
Date of birth	n/a
Place of birth	n/a
Date of death	n/a
Place of death	n/a

Below an excerpt from the 15th *Ang* (limb) of the Guru Granth Sahib:

ਨਾਨਕ ਕਾਗਦ ਲਖ ਮਣਾ ਪੜਿ ਪੜਿ ਕੀਚੈ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਮਸੁ ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵਈ ਲੇਖਣਿ ਪਉਣੁ ਚਲਾਉ ॥

ਭੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਨਾ ਪਵੈ ਹਉ ਕੇਵਡੁ ਆਖਾ ਨਾਉ ॥੪॥੨॥

nānak kāgad lakh manā pari pari kīcai bhā'u
masū tōti na āva'ī lēkhani pa'unu calā'u
bhī tērī kīmati nā pavai ha'u kēvadu ākhā nā'u ||4||2||

O Nanak, if I had hundreds of thousands of stacks of paper, and if I were to read and recite and embrace love for the Lord,
and if ink were never to fail me, and if my pen were able to move like the wind
-even so, I could not estimate Your Value. How can I describe the Greatness of Your Name? ||4||2||

History

When Guru Angad became the second Guru of Sikhs, Guru Nanak gave him his collection of hymns and teachings in the form of "pothi" or small volume. Guru Angad made additions to it and subsequently handed it to the third Guru. The fourth Guru also composed hymns and preserved them in a pothi.

The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, with the intention of preserving the hymns of the preceding Gurus, decided to compose a single volume containing them. He also added hymns he had composed and those of some fifteen bhakats or saints of the Bhakti Movement, such as Kabir, Ravidas, Trilochan, Farid and Namdev. Although he added the hymns of other saints, only those hymns which were similar to the teachings of Sikh Gurus or whose message was similar to them were added. He rejected many hymns which were not similar to the teachings of the Gurus or were opposed in their message. The compositions of the bhagats *or saints make up about ten per cent of the Granth.*

The Adi Granth was completed in 1604. It was installed in Harmandir Sahib (the temple of God), popularly known as the Golden Temple, on September 01, 1604. It was written down on paper by a disciple of Guru Arjan known as Bhai Gurdas, under the direct supervision of the fifth Guru. The original volume of this Granth is still in Kartarpur and bears the signature of the Fifth Guru.

The master copy was initially with Guru Hargobind, but was stolen by one of his grandsons, Dhir Mal, who wanted to lay claim to the title of Guru of Sikhs. The Sikhs, about thirty years later, recovered it forcibly and were made to return it on the order of the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur.

Every year on the occasion of Vaisakhi the original Adi Granth is displayed by the descendants of Dhir Mal in Kartarpur. However it does not enjoy the title of Guru of Sikhs, as it is different from the final volume prepared by Guru Gobind Singh at Dam Dama Sahib in 1705, and which was subsequently installed as the final Guru. For instance, it does not contain the hymns composed by the ninth Guru, Tegh Bahadur.

The final composition of Guru Granth Sahib was prepared by Guru Gobind Singh with the scribe Bhai Mani Singh. This final version does not contain any hymns of the sixth, seventh, or eighth Gurus, as they did not compose any. Guru Gobind Singh added the hymns composed by Guru Tegh Bahadur but excluded his own. While at Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh Installed the final version prepared by him as the perpetual Guru of Sikhs on October 20, 1708.

The Guru Granth Sahib is divided into ragas or classical musical notes. The chronological division is on the basis of ragas and not on the order of succession of Gurus. The Sikhs do not lay emphasis on any particular volume of Guru Granth Sahib as a Guru.

Structure
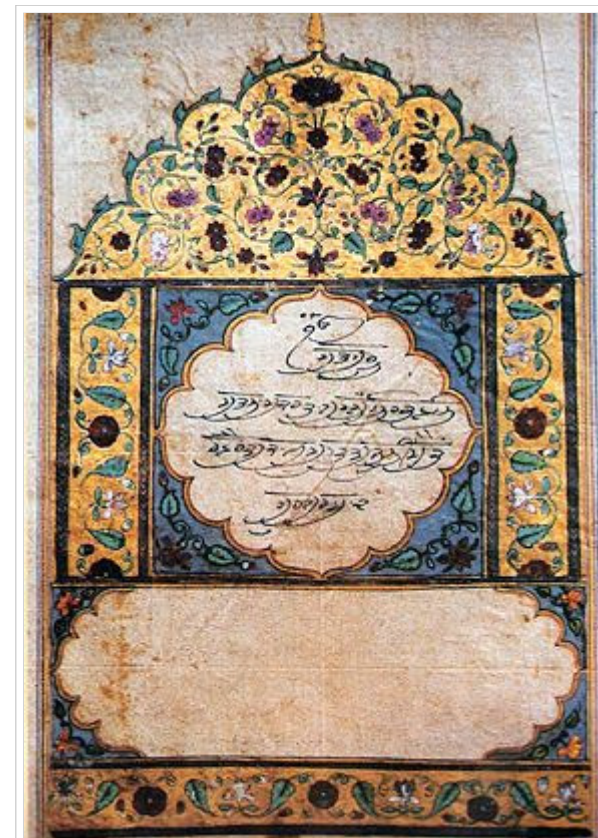
Illuminated Guru Granth folio with nisan (Mool Mantar) of Guru Gobind Singh. Collection of Takht Sri Harimandir Sahib, Patna.

The Guru Granth Sahib is divided into 1430 *Angs* (limbs), the shabads (hymns) are arranged in 31 ragas, the traditional Indian musical measures and scales. Within the ragas, they are arranged by order of the Sikh Gurus, with the shabads of the various saints following. The shabads are written in various meters and rhythms, and are organized accordingly. For instance, Ashtapadi - eight steps, or Panch-padi - five steps.
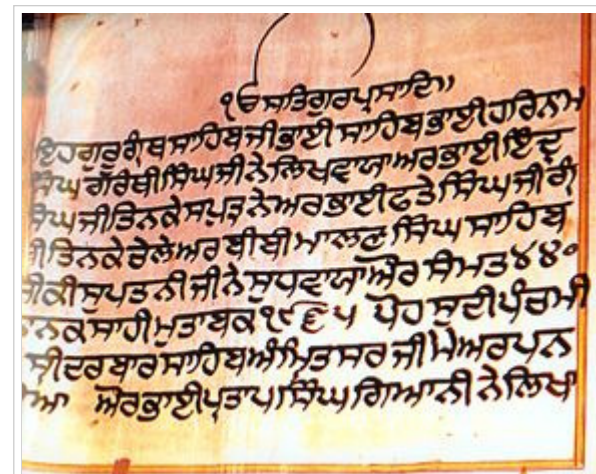
The Adi Granth starts with the a non-raga section with Japji as the first entry. This is followed by thirty-one ragas in the following serial order: Raga Sri, Manjh, Gauri, Asa, Gujri, Devagandhari, Bihagara, Wadahans, Sorath, Dhanasri, Jaitsri, Todi, Bairari, Tilang, Suhi, Bilaval, Gond (Gaund), Ramkali, Nut-Narayan, Mali-Gaura, Maru, Tukhari, Kedara, Bhairav (Bhairo), Basant, Sarang, Malar, Kanra, Kalyan, Prabhati and Jaijawanti. Then come saloks, swayas and the scriptures that could not be indexed in the other raga categories (such as salok vaaraan te vadheek.) The final sections are Mundavani, a salok and Raag Maala.

The last page from the bir of Guru Granth Sahib handwritten by Pratap Singh Giani, located on the first floor of Sri Harimandir Sahib, Amritsar.

English translation

In the West, it has become common to use the English translation of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib in Gurdwara programs and Akhand Paaths, because many of the western Sikhs are not fluent in Gurmukhi. This has served to bring many to the presence of the Guru who otherwise may not have had the opportunity to experience the "Shabad Guru" (literally "Word Guru"). However, only a Granth Sahib that is in in Gurmukhi script is considered to be the Guru. The English translation may also be installed on a separate Palki (throne) on the side and serve to better illuminate the sangat in the meaning of the words of the Guru. The English translation may be used during an Akhand Paath in which the participants are not fluent in Gurmukhi. However, if a special gurdwara program is being planned, the English Akhand Paath days can be accommodated so that the full Gurmukhi Bir of Guru Granth Sahib presides.

A Sikh is encouraged to learn Gurmukhi so as to deepen his or her experience of Gurbani and so that the full body of the Guru may be installed in the gurdwara. Ideally, English and other translations of the Guru Granth Sahib should be considered as just another "style" of talking or praising the guru. While some Sikhs believe that it is necessary to learn Punjabi/Gurmuki to understand and appreciate the Sikh texts, many do not hold this view.

Printing

Guru Arjan dictating the Adi Granth to Bhai Gurdas.

The first printed copy of Guru Granth Sahib was made in 1864. Since the early 20th century Guru Granth Sahib has a standard 1430 limbs; thus a text can be easily referred to by page number.

The printing is done in an authorized printing press in the basement of the Gurdwara Ramsar in Amritsar.

Treatment of damaged copies

Any copies of the **Guru Granth Sahib** which are too badly damaged to be used, and any printer's waste which has any of its text on, are cremated with a similar ceremony as cremating a deceased person. Examples of the care of damaged Granth Sahibs include:

- : A copy damaged in a fire
- A copy damaged in a fire
- : 4 copies damaged in New Orleans by the flood caused by Hurricane Katrina
- : on the Nicobar Islands after the 2004 tsunami (end of page).
- MrSikhNet.com Blog query about an accumulation of download printouts of Sikh sacred text

Comments On Sri Guru Granth Sahib By Non Sikhs

This is what Max Arthur Macauliffe writes about the authenticity of the Guru's teaching.

The Sikh religion differs as regards the authenticity of its dogmas from most other theological systems. Many of the great teachers the world has known, have not left a line of their own composition and we only know what they taught through tradition or second-hand information. If Pythagoras wrote of his tenets, his writings have not descended to us. We know the teachings of Socrates only through the writings of Plato and Xenophon. Buddha has left no written memorial of his teaching. Kungfu-tze, known to Europeans as Confucius, left no documents in which he detailed the principles of his moral and social system. The founder of Christianity did not reduce his doctrines to writing and for them we are obliged to trust to the gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Arabian Prophet did not himself reduce to writing the chapters of the Quran. They were written or compiled by his adherents and followers. But the compositions of Sikh Gurus are preserved and we know at first hand what they taught.

Miss Pearl S. Buck, a Nobel laureate, gives the following comment on receiving the First English translation of the Guru Granth Sahib:

.... I have studied the scriptures of the great religions, but I do not find elsewhere the same power of appeal to the heart and mind as I find here in these volumes. They are compact in spite of their length, and are a revelation of the vast reach of the human heart, varying from the most noble concept of God, to the recognition and indeed the insistence upon the practical needs of the human body. There is something strangely modern about these scriptures and this puzzles me until I learned that they are in fact comparatively modern, compiled as late as the 16th century, when explorers were beginning to discover that the globe upon which we all live is a single entity divided only by arbitrary lines of our own making. Perhaps this sense of unity is the source of power I find

*in these volumes. **They speak to a person of any religion or of none**. They speak for the human heart and the searching mind.*

From the foreword to the English translation of the Guru Granth Sahib by Gopal Singh, 1960)(bold added later)

Message of Guru Granth Sahib

The Guru Granth Sahib is intended to lead the entire human race out of the dark age of Kali Yuga to a life in peace, tranquility and spiritual enlightenment. The main message can be summarized as:

1. Meditate on the name of the Infinite Creator (God)
2. God is the universal Creator of all
3. All peoples of the world are equal
4. Women as equal
5. Speak and live truthfully
6. Control the five vices
7. Live in God's Hukam (universal laws)
8. Practice humility, kindness, Compassion, love, etc

Care and protocol

The Guru Granth Sahib is the eternal Guru of Sikhs and is treated as such by them. It is mainly looked after by the granthi, who fans it during the day and takes it to its bedroom during the night. Sikhs bow before the Guru Granth Sahib and show utmost respect to it. While in the presence of their Guru they seat it on a place higher than where they sit. The Fifth Guru used to sleep in the presence of the Adi Granth to show it reverence.

Personal behaviour

The following care is taken by Sikhs or any person who is in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib in a gurudwara:

- The visitors to a gurudwara keep their heads covered all times and remain barefoot inside the room where Guru Granth Sahib is seated.
- Basic standards of hygiene are observed and the person must ensure that he has bathed, especially if he or she is to recite hymns while reading from it.
- A person must not make small talk or create noise in Guru's presence. He or she should be respectful to the Guru and others.

Environment

The Granth Sahib is placed in a room which is free from foreign elements

. It is covered in a cloth, which is changed daily, and placed on seat higher than normal seating. A canopy is always placed above it, usually hanging from the ceiling. A chaur sahib, used to fan the Guru, is provided beside it with a small platform to house the Karah Parshad or holy offering and other implements.

Transporting

Five initiated Sikhs are to accompany the Guru at all times when traveling, with one Sikh to do Chaur Sahib Seva. The Sikh carrying the Guru must put a clean cloth (rumalla) on his or her head before carefully and with respect placing the Guru on this rumalla. At all times the Guru should be covered with a small rumalla so that the Guru's body (saroop) is always fully covered. There should be recitation of *Waheguru* at all times. A kamarkassa (waist band) is be tied around Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

The Eleven Gurus of Sikhism

#	Name	Date of birth	Guruship on	Date of ascension	Age
1	Nanak Dev	15 April 1469	20 August 1507	22 September 1539	69
2	Angad Dev	31 March 1504	7 September 1539	29 March 1552	48
3	Amar Das	5 May 1479	26 March 1552	1 September 1574	95
4	Ram Das	24 September 1534	1 September 1574	1 September 1581	46
5	Arjan Dev	15 April 1563	1 September 1581	30 May 1606	43
6	Har Gobind	19 June 1595	25 May 1606	28 February 1644	48
7	Har Rai	16 January 1630	3 March 1644	6 October 1661	31
8	Har Krishan	7 July 1656	6 October 1661	30 March 1664	7
9	Tegh Bahadur	1 April 1621	20 March 1665	11 November 1675	54
10	Gobind Singh	22 December 1666	11 November 1675	7 October 1708	41
11	**Guru Granth Sahib**	n/a	7 October 1708	Eternity	n/a

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http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 244 of 735

Hindu mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Hindu mythology is the large body of mythology related to Hinduism, notably as contained in Sanskrit literature, such as the Sanskrit epics and the Puranas. As such, it is a subset of Indian mythology.

<table>
<tr><td align="center">

Articles about Mythology:

In its broadest academic sense, the word "myth" simply means a traditional story, whether true or false. (— *OED*, Princeton Wordnet) Unless otherwise noted, the words "mythology" and "myth" are here used for sacred and traditional narratives, with no implication that any belief so embodied is itself either true or false.
</td></tr>
</table>

Vedic mythology

The roots of mythology that evolved from classical Hinduism come from the times of the Vedic civilization, from the ancient Vedic religion.

The characters, theology, philosophy and stories that make up ancient Vedic myths are indelibly linked with Hindu beliefs. The Vedas are said to be four in number, namely RigVeda, YajurVeda, SamaVeda, and the AtharvaVeda. Some of these texts mention mythological concepts and machines very much similar to modern day scientific theories and machines.

Epics

The two great Hindu Epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* tell the story of two specific incarnations of Vishnu (Rama and Krishna). These two works are known as *Itihasa*. The epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* serve as both religious scriptures and a rich source of philosophy and morality for a Hindu. The epics are divided into chapters and contain various short stories and moral situations, where the character takes a certain course of action in accordance with Hindu laws and codes of righteousness. The most famous of these chapters is the Bhagavad Gita (Sanskrit: *The Lord's Song*) in the Mahabharata, in which Lord Krishna explains the concepts of duty and righteousness to the hero Arjuna before the climactic battle. These stories are deeply embedded in Hindu philosophy and serve as parables and sources of devotion for Hindus. The Mahabharata is the world's longest epic in verse, running to more than 30,000 lines.

Cosmology

Hinduism presents a number of accounts pertaining to cosmology, and several explanations have been given as regards the origin of the universe. The most popular belief is that the universe emerged from Hiranyagarbha, meaning the *golden womb*. Hiranyagarbha floated around in water in the emptiness and the darkness of non-existence. Ultimately, this golden egg split and the cosmos was created. Swarga emerged from the golden upper part of the Hiranyagarbha,

whereas Prithvi came out from the silver coloured lower half part.

The wars

The weapons

Apart from the traditional *human* weapons like swords, daggers, spears, clubs, shields, bows, arrows and maces, and the weapons used by the Gods (such as Indra's thunderbolt *Vajrayudha*), the texts mention the utilization of various divine weapons by various heroes, each associated with a certain God or deity. These weapons are most often gifted to semi-divine beings, human beings or the rakshasas by the Gods, sometimes as a result of penance.

There are several weapons which were believed to be used by the Gods of the Hindu mythology, some of which are Agneyastra, Brahmastra, Chakram, Garudastra, Kaumodaki, Narayanastra, Pashupata, Shiva Dhanush, Sudarshana Chakra, Trishul, Vaishnavastra, Varunastra, and Vayavastra.

Some of these weapons are explicitly classified (for example, the Shiva Dhanush is a bow, the Sudharshan Chakra is a discus and the Trishul is a trident), but many other weapons appear to be weapons specially blessed by the Gods. For example, the Brahmastra, Agneyastra (Sanskrit: Astra = *divine weapon*) and the other astras appear to be single use weapons requiring an intricate knowledge of use, often depicted in art, literature and adapted filmography as divinely blessed arrows.

Sometimes the astra is descriptive of the function, or of the force of nature which it invokes. The Mahabharata cites instances when the Nagastra (Sanskrit: *Nag*=snake) was used, and thousands of snakes came pouring down from the skies on unsuspecting enemies. Similarly, the Agneyastra (Agni) is used for setting the enemy ablaze, as the Varunastra (Varuna) is used for extinguishing flames, or for invoking floods. Some weapons like the Brahmastra can only be used (lethally) against a single individual.

Apart from the astras, other instances of divine or mythological weaponry include armor (Kavacha), crowns and helmets, staffs and jewelery (Kundala).

The Deluge

The story of a great flood is mentioned in ancient Hindu texts, particularly the Satapatha Brahmana. It is compared to the accounts of the Deluge found in several religions and cultures. Manu was informed of the impending flood and was protected by the Matsya Avatara of Lord Vishnu, who had manifested himself in this form to rid the world of morally depraved human beings and protect the pious, as also all animals and plants.

After the flood the Lord inspires the Manusmriti, largely based upon the Vedas, which details the moral code of conduct, of living and the division of society according to the caste system.

The peoples of the epics

Hindu mythology is not only about Gods and men, but classifies a host of different kinds of celestial, ethereal and earthly beings.

Sapta Rishis

Lord Brahma, out of his thought, creates seven sages, or *Sapta Rishis*, to help him in his act of creation. *Sapta Rishis* (*sapta* means seven and *rishis* means sages in Sanskrit). They are *Bhrigu, Angira, Atri, Gautama, Kashyapa, Vashishta*, and *Agastya*. The other meaning of Saptarishis is constellation of Great Bear (Ursa Major).

Pitrs

The Pitrs, or fathers, were the first humans. Pitrs comes from the word Pita(In Hindi and Sanskrit) or Father. So it is about paternity and paternal relations.

Worlds

Hindu mythology defines fourteen worlds (not to be confused with planets) - seven higher worlds (heavens) and seven lower ones (hells). (The earth is considered the lowest of the seven higher worlds.) All the worlds except the earth are used as temporary places of stay as follows: upon one's death on earth, the god of death (officially called 'Yama Dharma Raajaa' - Yama, the lord of justice) tallies the person's good/bad deeds while on earth and decides if the soul goes to heaven and/or hell, for how long, and in what capacity. Some versions of the mythology state that good and bad deeds neutralize each other and the soul therefore spends time in either a heaven or a hell, but not both, whereas according to another school of thought, the good and bad deeds don't cancel out each other. In either case, the soul acquires a body as appropriate to the worlds it enters. At the end of the soul's time in those worlds, it returns to the earth (is reborn as a life form on the earth). It is considered that only from the earth, and only after a human life, can the soul reach supreme salvation, the state free from the cycle of birth and death and the place beyond the fourteen worlds where the eternal god lives.

Gods and goddesses

There are many deities in Hinduism. At the top are the trimurti: Shiva (the destroyer), Vishnu (the protector), and Brahma (the creator), and their wives (goddesses in their own right): Shakti (also known as Paarvathi, Ambicaa) the goddess of courage and power, Lakshmi the goddess of all forms of wealth, and Saraswathi the goddess of learning. The children of the Trimurti are also devas, such as Ganesha and Skanda.

Brahma is considered the ruler of the highest of the heavens (the world called *Sathya*), so in one sense, Brahma is not beyond the fourteen worlds as Shiva and Vishnu are.

Some gods are associated with specific elements or functions: Indra (the god of thunder and lightning; he also rules the world of Swarga), Varuna (the god of the oceans), Agni (the god of fire), Kubera (the treasurer of the gods), Surya (the sun god), Vaayu (the god of wind), and Soma (the moon god).

Swarga also has a set of famous heavenly dancers: Urvasi, Menaka, Rambha, and Tilottama (all female), whose job is to entertain the heavenly court, and upon orders from the heavenly kings, to distract people on the earth from accumulating too much good deeds so as to become a threat to the heavenly kings.

Other notable inhabitants of the heavens include the celestial sages, and Naaradha the messenger of the gods.

Yama (the god of death and justice) is said to live in Kailash along with his master Shiva. He rules the lower world of Naraka with a band of emissaries called the *Yama duta* (messengers of Yama), who bring the souls of dead persons to Yama for evaluation. Chitragupta is one of those lower level celestial beings who functions as the karmic accountant of all the actions of the human beings on earth.

Incarnations

Several gods are believed to have had incarnations (avatars). As the protector of life, one of the duties of Vishnu is to appear on the earth whenever a firm hand is required to set things right. The epic Bhagavatham is the chronology of Vishnu's ten major incarnations (there are totally twenty six incarnations): Matsya (fish), Kurma (turtle), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (lion-faced human), Vamana (an ascetic in the form of a midget), Parasurama (a militant Brahmin), Rama, Krishna,Gautam Buddha(later budhists separated themselves from hindus), Kalki (a predicted warrior on a white horse who would come in this yuga) whose appearance also signals the beginning of the end of the epoch.

House of Ikshvaku

Ikshvaku was the son of Manu,the first mortal man, and founder of the Sun Dynasty.

Bharatavarsha

The first king to conquer all of the world was Bharata, son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. All of this world, Vishwa, is named Bharatavarsha, or *The Land of Bharata*, or *The Cherished Land*.

King Bharata's conquests are described to have stretched over all of modern India, and Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal, as well as the ancient Gandhara region of Afghanistan. No account has been known to exceed these geographical boundaries.

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Hinduism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Hinduism is a religious tradition that originated in the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism is often referred to as **Sanātana Dharma** (सनातन धर्म) by its practitioners, a Sanskrit phrase meaning "the eternal path" or "the eternal law".

Hinduism is the world's oldest major religion that is still practiced. Its earliest origins can be traced to the ancient Vedic civilization. A conglomerate of diverse beliefs and traditions, Hinduism has no single founder. It is the world's third largest religion following Christianity and Islam, with approximately a billion adherents, of whom about 905 million live in India and Nepal. Other countries with large Hindu populations include Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, United Kingdom and Canada.

Hinduism contains a vast body of scriptures. Divided as Śruti (revealed) and Smriti (remembered) and developed over millennia, these scriptures expound on theology, philosophy and mythology, and provide spiritual insights and guidance on the practice of dharma (religious living). In the orthodox view, among such texts, the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* are the foremost in authority, importance and antiquity. Other major scriptures include the *Tantras*, the sectarian *Agamas*, the *Purāṇas* and the epics *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Bhagavad Gītā*, a treatise excerpted from the *Mahābhārata*, is sometimes called a summary of the spiritual teachings of the *Vedas*.

Etymology

The Persian term *Hindū* is derived from *Sindhu*, Sanskrit for the Indus River. The Rig Veda mentions the land of the Indo-Aryans as Sapta Sindhu (the land of the seven rivers in northwestern South Asia, one of them being the Indus). This corresponds to *Hapta Həndu* in the *Avesta* (*Vendidad or Videvdad: Fargard* 1.18)—the sacred scripture of Zoroastrianism. The term was used for those who lived in the Indian subcontinent on or beyond the "Sindhu".

Beliefs

Hinduism is an extremely diverse religion. Although some tenets of the faith are accepted by most Hindus, scholars have found it difficult to identify any doctrines with universal acceptance among all denominations. Prominent themes in Hindu beliefs include *Dharma* (ethics/duties), Sams*āra* (The continuing cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth), *Karma* (action and subsequent reaction), *Moksha* (liberation from *samsara*), and the various Yogas (paths or practices).

Concept of God

Hinduism is a diverse system of thought with beliefs spanning monotheism, polytheism, panentheism, pantheism, monism and atheism. It is sometimes referred to as henotheistic (devotion to a single God while accepting the existence of other gods), but any such term is an oversimplification of the complexities and variations of belief.

Temple carving at Hoysaleswara temple representing the Trimurti: Brahma, Shiva and Vishnu.

Most Hindus believe that the spirit or soul—the true "self" of every person, called the ātman—is eternal. According to the monistic/pantheistic theologies of Hinduism (such as Advaita Vedanta school), this Atman is ultimately indistinct from Brahman, the supreme spirit. Brahman is described as "The One Without a Second;" hence these schools are called "non-dualist." The goal of life according to the Advaita school is to realize that one's ātman is identical to Brahman, the supreme soul. The Upanishads state that whoever becomes fully aware of the ātman as the innermost core of one's own self, realizes their identity with Brahman and thereby reaches Moksha (liberation or freedom).

Other dualistic schools (see Dvaita and Bhakti) understand Brahman as a Supreme Being who possesses personality and worship Him or Her thus, as Vishnu, Brahma, Shiva or Shakti depending on the sect. The ātman is dependent on God while Moksha depends on love towards God and on God's grace. When God is viewed as the supreme personal being (rather than as the infinite principle) God is called *Ishvara* ("The Lord"), *Bhagavan* ("The Auspicious One"), or *Parameshwara* ("The Supreme Lord"). However, interpretations of *Ishvara* vary—ranging from non-belief such as followers of Mimamsakas, in *Ishvara* to identifying *Brahman* and *Ishvara* as one as in Advaita. There are also schools like the Samkhya which have atheistic leanings.

Devas and avatars

The Hindu scriptures refer to celestial entities, called *Devas* (or *devī* in feminine form; *devatā* used synonymously for Deva in Hindi), "the shining ones", which may be translated into English as "gods" or "heavenly beings". The *devas* are an integral part of Hindu culture and are depicted in art, architecture and through icons, and mythological stories about them are related in the scriptures, particularly in the Indian epic poetry and Puranas. They are however often distinguished from Ishvara, a supreme personal God, with many Hindus worshiping Ishvara in a particular form as their *iṣṭa devatā*, or chosen ideal; the choice being based upon their individual preference, and regional and family traditions.

Hindu epics and the Puranas relate several episodes of the descent of God to Earth in corporeal form, in order to restore *dharma* in society and guide humans to *moksha* (liberation from the cycle of rebirth). Such an incarnation is called an *avatar*. The most prominent avatars are of Vishnu, and include Rama (protagonist in Ramayana) and Krishna (a central figure in the epic Mahabharata).

Karma and samsara

Karma translates literally as action, work or deed and can be described as the "moral law of cause and effect". According to the Upanishads, an individual, known as the *jiva-atma*, develops samskaras (impressions) from actions, whether physical or mental. The "linga sharira", a body more subtle than the physical one, but less subtle than the soul, retains impressions, carrying them over into the next life, establishing a unique trajectory for the individual. Thus, the concept of a universal, neutral and never-failing karma intrinsically relates to reincarnation as well as one's personality, characteristics and family. Karma threads together the notions of free will and destiny.

This cycle of *action, reaction, birth, death, and rebirth* is a continuum called samsara. The notion of reincarnation and karma is a strong premise in Hindu thought. The Bhagavad Gita states that:

> " As a person puts on new clothes and discards old and torn clothes,
>
> similarly an embodied soul enters new material bodies, leaving the old bodies.(B.G. 2:22) "

Samsara provides ephemeral pleasures, which lead people to desire rebirth to enjoy the pleasures of a perishable body. However, escaping the world of samsara through moksha (liberation) is believed to ensure lasting happiness and peace. It is thought that after several reincarnations, an *atman* eventually seeks unity with the cosmic spirit (Brahman/Paramatman).

The ultimate goal of life, referred to as *moksha*, *nirvana* or *samadhi*, is understood in several different ways: as the realization of one's union with God; as realization of one's eternal relationship with God; realization of the unity of all existence; perfect unselfishness and knowledge of the Self; attainment of perfect mental peace; or as detachment from worldly desires. Such a realization liberates one from *samsara* and ends the cycle of rebirth. The exact conceptualization of moksha differs among the various Hindu schools of thought. For example, Advaita Vedanta holds that after attaining moksha an atman no longer identifies

Krishna (left), the eighth incarnation (avatar) of Vishnu, with his consort Radha

itself with an individual but as identical with Brahman in all respects. The followers of Dvaita (dualistic) schools identify themselves as part of Brahman and after attaining moksha expect to spend eternity in a loka (heaven), in the company of their chosen form of *Ishvara*. Thus, it is said, the followers of *dvaita* wish to "taste sugar," while the followers of Advaita wish to "become sugar."

The goals of life

Classical Hindu thought accepts two main life-long dharmas: Grihastha Dharma and Sannyasin Dharma.

The Grihastha Dharma recognize four goals known as the *puruṣhārthas*. They are:

1. *kāma*: Sensual pleasure and enjoyment
2. *Artha*: Material prosperity and success
3. *Dharma*: Correct action, in accordance with one's particular duty and scriptural laws
4. *Moksha*: Liberation from the cycle of samsara

Among these, dharma and moksha play a special role: dharma must dominate an individual's pursuit of kama and artha while seeing moksha, at the horizon.

The Sannyasin Dharma recognizes, but renounces Kama, Artha and Dharma, focusing entirely on Moksha. As described below, the Grihastha Dharma eventually enters this stage. However, some enter this stage immediately from whichever stage they may be in.

Yoga

In whatever way a Hindu defines the goal of life, there are several methods (yogas) that sages have taught for reaching that goal. A practitioner of yoga is called a *yogi*. Texts dedicated to Yoga include the Bhagavad Gita, the Yoga Sutras, the Hatha Yoga Pradipika and, as their philosophical and historical basis, the Upanishads. Paths one can follow to achieve the spiritual goal of life (moksha, samadhi, or nirvana) include:

- Bhakti Yoga (the path of love and devotion),
- Karma Yoga (the path of right action),
- Rāja Yoga (the path of meditation) and
- Jñāna Yoga (the path of wisdom).

An individual may prefer one or some yogas over others according to his or her inclination and understanding. For instance some devotional schools teach that bhakti is the only practical path to achieve spiritual perfection for most people, based on their belief that the world is currently in the age of Kali yuga (one of four epochs part of the Yuga cycle). Practice of one yoga does not exclude others. Many schools believe that the different yogas naturally blend into and aid other yogas. For example, the practice of *jnana yoga*, is thought to inevitably lead to pure love (the goal of *bhakti yoga*), and vice versa. Someone practicing deep meditation (such as in *raja yoga*) must embody the core principles of *karma yoga*, *jnana yoga* and *bhakti yoga*, whether directly or indirectly.

Swami Vivekananda, shown here practicing meditation, was a Hindu *guru* (teacher) recognized for his inspiring lectures on topics such as yoga.

History

The earliest evidence for elements of Hinduism date back to the late Neolithic to the early Harappan period (5500–2600BCE). The beliefs and practices of the pre-classical era (1500–500BCE) are called the " historical Vedic religion". Modern Hinduism grew out of the Vedas, the oldest of which is the Rigveda, dated to 1700–1100BCE. The Vedas centre on worship of deities such as *Indra*, *Varuna* and *Agni*, and on the *Soma* ritual. They performed fire-sacrifices, called yajña and chanted Vedic mantras but did not build temples or icons. The oldest Vedic traditions exhibit strong similarities to Zoroastrianism and with other Indo-European religions. During the Epic and Puranic periods, the earliest versions of the epic poems *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were written roughly from 500–100BCE, although these were orally transmitted for centuries prior to this period. The epics contain mythological stories about the rulers and wars of ancient India, and are interspersed with religious and philosophical treatises. The later Puranas recount tales about devas and devis, their interactions with humans and their battles against demons.

Sacred Mount Kailash in Tibet is regarded as the spiritual abode of Shiva.

Three major movements underpinned the naisance of a new epoch of Hindu thought: the advents and spread of Upanishadic, Jaina, and Buddhist philosophico-religious thought throughout the broader Indian landmass. The Upanishads, Mahavira (founder of Jainism) and Buddha (founder of Buddhism) taught that to achieve moksha or nirvana, one did not have to accept the authority of the Vedas or the caste system. Buddha went a step further and claimed that the existence of a Self/soul or God was unnecessary. Buddhism and Jainism adapted elements of Hinduism into their beliefs. Buddhism (or at least Buddhistic Hinduism) peaked during the reign of Asoka the Great of the Mauryan Empire, who unified the Indian subcontinent in the 3rd century BCE. After 200CE, several schools of

thought were formally codified in Indian philosophy, including Samkhya, Yoga, Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Purva-Mimamsa and Vedanta. Charvaka, the founder of an atheistic materialist school, came to the fore in North India in the sixth century BCE. Between 400BCE and 1000CE, Hinduism expanded at the expense of Buddhism.

Though Islam came to India in the early 7th century with the advent of Arab traders and the conquest of Sindh, it started to become a major religion during the later Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent. During this period Buddhism declined rapidly and many Hindus converted to Islam. Some Muslim rulers such as Aurangzeb destroyed Hindu temples and persecuted non-Muslims, while others, such as Akbar, were more tolerant. Hinduism underwent profound changes in large part due to the influence of the prominent teachers Ramanuja, Madhva, and Chaitanya. Followers of the Bhakti movement moved away from the abstract concept of Brahman, which the philosopher Adi Shankara consolidated a few centuries before, with emotional, passionate devotion towards the more accessible avatars, especially Krishna and Rama.

Akshardham Temple in New Delhi.

Indology as an academic discipline of studying Indian culture from a European perspective was established in the 19th century, led by scholars such as Max Müller and John Woodroffe. They brought Vedic, Puranic and Tantric literature and philosophy to Europe and the United States. At the same time, societies such as the Brahmo Samaj and the Theosophical Society attempted to reconcile and fuse Abrahamic and Dharmic philosophies, endeavouring to institute societal reform. This period saw the emergence of movements which, while highly innovative, were rooted in indigenous tradition. They were based on the personalities and teachings of individuals, as with Shri Ramakrishna and Ramana Maharshi. Prominent Hindu philosophers, including Sri Aurobindo and Swami Prabhupada (founder of ISKCON), translated, reformulated and presented Hinduism's foundational texts for contemporary audiences in new iterations, attracting followers and attention in India and abroad. Others such as Swami Vivekananda, Paramahansa Yogananda, B.K.S. Iyengar and Swami Rama have also been instrumental in raising the profiles of Yoga and Vedanta in the West.

Scriptures and theology

Hinduism is based on "the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times." The scriptures were transmitted orally in verse form to aid memorization, for many centuries before they were written down. Over many centuries, sages refined the teachings and expanded the canon. In post-Vedic and current Hindu belief, most Hindu scriptures are not typically interpreted literally. More importance is attached to the ethics and metaphorical meanings derived from them. Most sacred texts are in Sanskrit. The texts are classified into two classes: *Shruti* and *Smriti*.

Shruti (lit: that which is heard) refers to the *Vedas* which form the earliest record of the Hindu scriptures. While many Hindus revere the Vedas as eternal truths revealed to ancient sages (*Ṛṣis*), some devotees do not associate the creation of the Vedas with a God or person. They are thought of as the laws of the spiritual world, which would still exist even if they were not revealed to the sages. Hindus believe that because the spiritual truths of the Vedas are eternal, they continue to be expressed in new ways.

There are four *Vedas* (called *Ṛg-*, *Sāma- Yajus-* and *Atharva-*). The *Rigveda* is the first and most important Veda. Each Veda is divided into four parts: the primary one, the *Veda proper*, being the *Saṃhitā*, which contains sacred *mantras*. The other three parts form a three-tier ensemble of commentaries, usually in prose and are believed to be slightly later in age than the *Saṃhitā*. These are: the *Brāhmaṇas*, *Āraṇyakas*, and the *Upanishads*. The first two parts were subsequently called the *Karmakāṇḍa* (ritualistic portion), while the last two form the *Jñānakāṇḍa* (knowledge portion). While the *Vedas* focus on rituals, the *Upanishads* focus on spiritual insight and philosophical teachings, and discuss Brahman and reincarnation.

Hindu texts other than the *Shrutis* are collectively called the *Smritis* (memory). The most notable of the smritis are the epics, which consist of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is an integral part of the *Mahabharata* and one of the most popular sacred texts of Hinduism. It contains philosophical teachings from *Krishna*, an incarnation of *Vishnu*, told to the prince Arjuna on the eve of a great war. The *Bhagavad Gītā* is described as the essence of the *Vedas*. The Smritis also include the *Purāṇas*, which illustrate Hindu ideas through vivid narratives. There are texts with a sectarian nature such as *Devī Mahātmya*, the *Tantras*, the *Yoga Sutras*, *Tirumantiram*, *Shiva Sutras* and the *Hindu Āgamas*. A more controversial text, the *Manusmriti*, is a prescriptive lawbook which epitomizes the societal codes of the caste system.

The *Rig Veda* is one of the oldest religious texts. This Rig Veda manuscript is in Devanagari

Practices

Hindu practices generally involve seeking awareness of God and sometimes also seeking blessings from Devas. Therefore, Hinduism has developed numerous practices meant to help one think of divinity in the midst of everyday life. Hindus can engage in pūjā (worship or veneration),) either at home or at a temple. At home, Hindus often create a shrine with icons dedicated to the individual's chosen form(s) of God. Temples are usually dedicated to a primary deity along with associated subordinate deities though some commemorate multiple deities. Visiting temples is not obligatory. In fact, many visit temples only during religious festivals. Hindus perform their worship through icons (murtis). The icon serves as a tangible link between the worshiper and God. The image is often considered a manifestation of God, since God is immanent. The Padma Purana states that the *mūrti* is not to be thought of as mere stone or wood but as a manifest form of the Divinity. A few Hindu sects, such as the Ārya Samāj, do not believe in worshiping God through icons.

A large Ganesha murti from a Ganesh Chaturthi festival in Mumbai

Hinduism has a developed system of symbolism and iconography to represent the sacred in art, architecture, literature and worship. These symbols gain their meaning from the scriptures, mythology, or cultural traditions. The syllable Om (which represents the *Parabrahman*) and the Swastika sign (which symbolizes auspiciousness) have grown to represent Hinduism itself, while other markings such as tilaka identify a follower of the faith. Hinduism associates many symbols, which include the lotus, chakra and veena, with particular deities.

Mantras are invocations, praise and prayers that through their meaning, sound, and chanting style help a devotee focus the mind on holy thoughts or express devotion to God/the deities. Many devotees perform morning ablutions at the bank of a sacred river while chanting the Gayatri Mantra or Mahamrityunjaya mantras. The epic Mahabharata extolls Japa (ritualistic chanting) as the greatest duty in the Kali Yuga (what Hindus believe to be the current age). Many adopt Japa as their primary spiritual practice.

Rituals

The vast majority of Hindus engage in religious rituals on a daily basis. Most Hindus observe religious rituals at home. However, observation of rituals greatly vary among regions, villages, and individuals. Devout Hindus perform daily chores such as worshiping at the dawn after bathing (usually at a family shrine, and typically includes lighting a lamp and offering foodstuffs before the images of deities), recitation from religious scripts, singing devotional hymns, meditation, chanting mantras, reciting scriptures etc. A notable feature in religious ritual is the division between purity and pollution. Religious acts presuppose some degree of impurity or defilement for the practitioner, which must be overcome or neutralised before or during ritual procedures. Purification, usually with water, is thus a typical feature of most religious action. Other characteristics include a belief in the efficacy of sacrifice and concept of merit, gained through the performance of charity or good works, that will accumulate over time and reduce sufferings in the next world. Vedic rites of fire-oblation (yajna) are now only occasional practices although they are highly revered in theory. In Hindu wedding and burial ceremonies, however, the *yajña* and chanting of Vedic mantras are still the norm.

Diwali, the festival of lights, is a prime festival of Hinduism. Shown here are traditional Diyas that are often lit during Diwali

Occasions like birth, marriage, and death involve what are often elaborate sets of religious customs. In Hinduism, life-cycle

rituals include Annaprashan (a baby's first intake of solid food), Upanayanam ("sacred thread ceremony" undergone by upper-caste children at their initiation into formal education.), Shraadh (ritual of treating people to feasts in the name of the deceased). For most people in India, the betrothal of the young couple and the exact date and time of the wedding are matters decided by the parents in consultation with astrologers. On death, cremation is considered obligatory for all except sanyasis, hijra, and children under five. Cremation is typically performed by wrapping the corpse in cloth and burning it on a pyre.

Pilgrimage and festivals

Pilgrimage is not mandatory in Hinduism though many adherents undertake them. Hindus recognise several Indian holy cities, including Allahabad, Haridwar, Varanasi, and Vrindavan. Notable temple cities include Puri, which hosts a major Vaishnava Jagannath temple and Rath Yatra celebration; Tirumala - Tirupati, home to the Tirumala Venkateswara Temple; and Katra, home to the Vaishno Devi temple. The four holy sites Puri, Rameswaram, Dwarka, and Badrinath (or alternatively the Himalayan towns of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri) compose the *Char Dham* (*four abodes*) pilgrimage circuit. The Kumbh Mela (the "pitcher festival") is one of the holiest of Hindu pilgrimages that is held every four years; the location is rotated among Allahabad, Haridwar, Nashik, and Ujjain. Another important set of pilgrimages are the Shakti Peethas, where the Mother Goddess is worshipped, the two principal ones being Kalighat and Kamakhya.

Image:Mahakumbh.jpg
The largest religious gathering on Earth. Around 70 million Hindus participated in the Kumbh Mela at Prayag, India.

Hinduism has many festivals throughout the year. The Hindu calendar usually prescribe their dates. The festivals typically celebrate events from Hindu mythology, often coinciding with seasonal changes. There are festivals which are primarily celebrated by specific sects or in certain regions of the Indian subcontinent. Some widely observed Hindu festivals are Maha Shivaratri, Holi, Ram Navami, Krishna Janmastami, Ganesh Chaturthi, Dussera or Durga Puja, Diwali (the festival of lights).

Society

Denominations

Hinduism has no central doctrinal authority and many practising Hindus do not claim to belong to any particular denomination. However, academics categorize contemporary Hinduism into four major denominations: Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism and Smartism. The denominations differ primarily in the God worshipped as the Supreme One and in the traditions that accompany worship of that God.

Vaishnavas worship *Vishnu* as the supreme God; Shaivites worship *Shiva* as the supreme; Shaktas worship *Shakti* (power) personified through a female divinity or Mother Goddess, *Devi*; while Smartists believe in the essential oneness of five deities Shanmata as personifications of the Supreme.

Other denominations like Ganapatya (the cult of *Ganesha*) and Saura (Sun worship) are not so widespread.

There are movements that are not easily placed in any of the above categories, such as Swami Dayananda Saraswati's *Arya Samaj*, which rejects image worship and veneration of multiple deities. It focuses on the *Vedas* and the Vedic fire sacrifices (*yajña*). The Tantric traditions have various sects, as Banerji observes:

> " Tantras are ... also divided as *āstika* or Vedic and *nāstika* or non-Vedic. In accordance with the predominance of the deity the *āstika* works are again divided as Śākta (Shakta), Śaiva (Shaiva), Saura, Gāṇapatya and Vaiṣṇava (Vaishnava). "

Shiva as Nataraja, Freer Gallery, Washington D.C

As in every religion, some view their own denomination as superior to others. However, many Hindus consider other denominations to be legitimate alternatives to their own. Heresy is therefore generally not an issue for Hindus.

Ashramas

Traditionally the life of a Hindu is divided into four *Āshramas* (phases or stages; unrelated meanings include monastery).

The first part of one's life, *Brahmacharya,* the stage as a student, is spent in celibate, controlled, sober and pure contemplation under the guidance of a Guru, building up the mind for spiritual knowledge. *Grihastha* is the householder's stage, in which one marries and satisfies *kāma* and *artha* in one's married and professional life respectively (see the goals of life). The moral obligations of a Hindu householder include supporting one's parents, children, guests and holy figures. *Vānaprastha,* the retirement stage, is gradual detachment from the material world. This may involve giving over duties to one's children, spending more time in religious practices and embarking on holy pilgrimages. Finally, in *Sannyāsa*, the stage of asceticism, one renounces all worldly attachments to secludedly find the Divine through detachment from worldly life and peacefully shed the body for Moksha.

Monasticism

Some Hindus choose to live a monastic life (Sannyāsa) in pursuit of liberation or another form of spiritual perfection. Monastics commit themselves to a life of simplicity, celibacy, detachment from worldly pursuits, and the contemplation of God. A Hindu monk is called a *sanyāsī, sādhu*, or *swāmi*. A female renunciate

is called a *sanyāsini*. Renunciates receive high respect in Hindu society because their outward renunciation of selfishness and worldliness serves as an inspiration to householders who strive for *mental* renunciation. Some monastics live in monasteries, while others wander from place to place, trusting in God alone to provide for their needs. It is considered a highly meritorious act for a householder to provide sādhus with food or other necessaries. Sādhus strive to treat all with respect and compassion, whether a person may be poor or rich, good or wicked, and to be indifferent to praise, blame, pleasure, and pain.

Varnas and the caste system

Hindu society has traditionally been categorized into four classes, called *Varnas* (*Sanskrit*: "colour, form, appearance");

- the *Brahmins*: teachers and priests;
- the *Kshatriyas*: warriors, nobles, and kings;
- the *Vaishyas*: farmers, merchants, and businessmen; and
- the *Shudras*: servants and labourers.

Hindus and scholars debate whether the caste system is an integral part of Hinduism sanctioned by the scriptures or an outdated social custom. Although the scriptures, since the Rigveda (10.90), contain passages that clearly sanction the *Varna* system, they contain indications that the caste system is not an essential part of the religion. Both sides in the debate can find scriptural support for their views. The oldest scriptures, the *Vedas,* strongly sustain the division of society into four classes (varna) but place little emphasis on the caste system, showing that each individual should find his strengths through different ways such as his astrological signs, actions, personality, and appearance, and do his job for the good of that individual as well as society. Being casted into a class because of what parents he was born from was a political problem and not from the actual science of the religion. A verse from the Rig Veda indicates that a person's occupation was not necessarily determined by that of his family:

> "I am a bard, my father is a physician, my mother's job is to grind the corn." (Rig Veda 9.112.3)

In the Vedic Era, there was no prohibition against the *Shudras* listening to the Vedas or participating in any religious rite, as was the case in the later times. Some mobility and flexibility within the varnas challenge allegations of social discrimination in the caste system, as has been pointed out by several sociologists.

Many social reformers, including Mahatma Gandhi and B. R. Ambedkar, criticized caste discrimination. The religious teacher Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886) taught that

> "Lovers of God do not belong to any caste . . . . A brahmin without this love is no longer a brahmin. And a pariah with the love of God is no longer a pariah. Through bhakti (devotion to God) an untouchable becomes pure and elevated."

Ahimsa and vegetarianism

Hindus advocate the practice of *ahiṃsā* (non-violence) and respect for all life because divinity is believed to permeate all beings, including plants and non-human animals. The term *ahiṃsā* appears in the Upanishads, the epic Mahabharata and *Ahiṃsā* is the first of the five *Yamas* (vows of self-restraint) in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras.

In accordance with *ahiṃsā*, many Hindus embrace vegetarianism to respect higher forms of life. While vegetarianism is not a requirement, it is recommended for a *satvic* (purifying) lifestyle. Estimates of the number of lacto vegetarians in India (includes inhabitants of all religions) vary between 20% and 42%. The food habits vary with the community and region, for example some castes having fewer vegetarians and coastal populations relying on seafood. Some Hindus avoid onion and garlic, which are regarded as *rajasic* foods. Some avoid meat on specific holy days.

Observant Hindus who do eat meat almost always abstain from beef. The largely pastoral Vedic people and subsequent generations relied heavily on the cow for protein-rich milk and dairy products, tilling of fields and as a provider of fuel and fertilizer. Thus, it was identified as a caretaker and a maternal figure. Hindu society honours the cow as a symbol of unselfish giving. Cow-slaughter is legally banned in almost all states of India.

Conversion

Concepts of conversion, evangelization, and proselyzation are absent from Hindu literature and in practice have never played a significant role, though acceptance of willing converts is becoming more common. Early in its history, in the absence of other competing religions, Hindus considered everyone they came across as Hindus (Sanathan Dharm) and expected everyone they met to be Hindus. Hence, there was no need to convert into Hinduism. With the advent and rise of hierarchical and heridiatry caste system, conversion into Hinduism became problematic. As a persons position and status in society, under the caste system, was largely determined by birth, the open theory of conversion into Hinduism under Sanathan Dharm became a closed by-birth-only theory under the caste system. Although, the caste system still permitted assimilation of migrating communities into Hinduism over several generations.

The modern view of conversions into Hinduism is influenced by the demise of caste system combined with the persistence of age old ideas of Sanathan Dharm. Hindus today continue to be influenced by historical ideas of acceptability of conversion. Hence, many Hindus continue to believe that Hinduism is an identity that can only be had from birth, while many others continue to believe that anyone who follows Hindu beliefs and practices is a Hindu, and many believe in some form of both theories. However, as a reaction to perceived and actual threat of evangelization, prozelyzation, and conversion activities of other major religions many modern Hindus are opposed to the idea of conversion from (any) one religion to (any) other per se.

Hindus in Western countries generally accept and welcome willing converts; while as, in India acceptance of willing converts is becoming more common. With the rise of Hindu Revivalist movements, reconversions into Hinduism have also picked up pace. Reconversions are well accepted since conversion out of Hinduism is not recognized. Conversion into Hinduism through marriage is well accepted and often expected in order to enable the non-Hindu partner to fully participate in their spiritual, religious, and cultural roles within the larger Hindu family and society.

There is no formal process for converting to Hinduism, although in many traditions a ritual called dīkshā ("initiation") marks the beginning of spiritual life after conversion and a ritual called suddhi ("purification") marks the return to spiritual life after reconversion. Most Hindu sects do not seek converts because they believe that the goals of spiritual life can be attained through any religion, as long as it is practiced sincerely. However, some Hindu sects and affiliates such as

Vedanta Society, Arya Samaj, International Society for Krishna Consciousness, and the Self-Realization Fellowship accept those who have a desire to follow Hinduism.

In general, Hindu view of religious freedom is not based on the freedom to proselytize, but the right to retain one's religion and not be subject to proselyzation. Hindu leaders are advocating for changing the existing formulation of the freedom of religion clause in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights since it favors religions which proselytize.

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History of Buddhism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

The **History of Buddhism** spans the 6th century BCE to the present, starting with the birth of the Buddha Siddhartha Gautama. This makes it one of the oldest religions practiced today. Starting in India, the religion evolved as it spread through Central Asia, East Asia, and Southeast Asia. At one time or another it affected most of the Asian continent. The history of Buddhism is also characterized by the development of numerous movements and schisms, foremost among them the Theravada, Mahāyāna and Vajrayana traditions, with contrasting periods of expansion and retreat.

Life of the Buddha

According to the Buddhist tradition, the historical Buddha Siddhartha Gautama was born to the Shakya clan, at the beginning of the Magadha period (546–324 BCE), in the plains of Lumbini in Ancient India. He is also known as the *Shakyamuni* (literally "The sage of the Shakya clan").

After an early life of luxury under the protection of his father, Śuddhodana, the ruler of Kapilavastu (later to be incorporated into the state of Magadha), Siddhartha entered into contact with the realities of the world and concluded that life was inescapably bound up with suffering and sorrow. Siddhartha renounced his meaningless life of luxury to become an ascetic. He ultimately decided that asceticism couldn't end suffering, and instead chose a middle way, a path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification.

Under a fig tree, now known as the Bodhi tree, he vowed never to leave the position until he found Truth. At the age of 35, he attained Enlightenment. He was then known as Gautama Buddha, or simply "The Buddha", which means "the enlightened one", or "the awakened one".

For the remaining 45 years of his life, he traveled the Gangetic Plain of central India (the region of the Ganges/Ganga river and its tributaries), teaching his doctrine and discipline to an diverse range of people.

The Buddha's reluctance to name a successor or to formalise his doctrine led to the emergence of many movements during the next 400 years: first the schools of Nikaya Buddhism, of which only Theravada remains today, and then the formation of Mahayana and Vajrayana, pan-Buddhist sects based on the acceptance of new scriptures and the revision of older techniques.

Early Buddhism

Before the royal sponsorship of Asoka the Great in the 3rd century BCE, Buddhism remained centered around the Ganges valley, spreading gradually from its ancient heartland. The canonical sources record two Councils, where the monastic Sangha established the textual collections based on the Buddha's teachings,

and settled certain disciplinary problems within the community.

1st Buddhist council (5th c. BCE)

The first Buddhist council was held soon after the death of the Buddha, and presided by Venerable Mahakasyapa, one of the Buddha's most senior disciples, at Rajagriha (today's Rajgir). The objective of the council was to record the Buddha's doctrinal teachings (sutra) and to codify the monastic rules (vinaya): Ananda, one of the Buddha's main disciples and his cousin, was called upon to recite the discourses of the Buddha, and Upali, another disciple, recited the rules of the vinaya. These became the basis of the Tripitaka, which is preserved in Pali, Chinese, and Tibetan, and has been the orthodox text of reference throughout the history of Buddhism.

2nd Buddhist council (4th c. BCE)

The second Buddhist council was held at Vaisali following a dispute that had arisen in the Sangha over the relaxation by some monks of various points of discipline. Eventually it was decided to hold a second Council at which the original Vinaya texts that had been preserved at the first Council were cited to show that these relaxations went against the recorded teachings of the Buddha.

Ashokan proselytism (c. 261 BCE)

The Mauryan Emperor Ashoka the Great (273–232 BCE) converted to Buddhism after his bloody conquest of the territory of Kalinga (modern Orissa) in eastern India during the Kalinga War. Regreting the horrors brought about by the conflict, the king decided to renounce violence, and propagate the faith by building stupas and pillars urging amongst other things respect of all animal life, and enjoining people to follow the Dharma. Perhaps the finest example of these is the Great Stupa in Sanchi, India (near Bhopal). It was constructed in the third century BCE and later enlarged. Its carved gates, called Tohans, are considered among the finest examples of Buddhist art in India. He also built roads, hospitals, resthouses, universities and irrigation systems around the country. He treated his subjects as equals regardless of their religion, politics or caste.

Fragment of the 6th Pillar Edict of Ashoka (238 BCE), in Brahmi, sandstone. British Museum.

This period marks the first spread of Buddhism beyond India. According to the plates and pillars left by Ashoka (the Edicts of Ashoka), emissaries were sent to various countries in order to spread Buddhism, as far South as Sri Lanka, and as far West as the Greek kingdoms, in particular the neighboring Greco-Bactrian Kingdom, and possibly even farther to the Mediterranean.

3rd Buddhist council (c.250 BCE)

King Ashoka convened the third Buddhist council around 250 BCE at Pataliputra (today's Patna). It was held by the monk Moggaliputtatissa. The objective of the council was to purify the Sangha, particularly from non-Buddhist ascetics who had been attracted by the royal patronage. Following the council, Buddhist missionaries were dispatched throughout the known world.

Great Stupa (3rd century BCE), Sanchi, India.

Hellenistic world

Some of the Edicts of Ashoka inscriptions describe the efforts made by Ashoka to propagate the Buddhist faith throughout the Hellenistic world, which at that time formed an uninterrupted continuum from the borders of India to Greece. The Edicts indicate a clear understanding of the political organization in Hellenistic territories: the names and location of the main Greek monarchs of the time are identified, and they are claimed as recipients of Buddhist proselytism: Antiochus II Theos of the Seleucid Kingdom (261–246 BCE), Ptolemy II Philadelphos of Egypt (285–247 BCE), Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia (276–239 BCE), Magas of Cyrene (288–258 BCE) in Cyrenaica (modern Libya), and Alexander II of Epirus (272–255 BCE) in Epirus (modern Northwestern Greece).

"The conquest by Dharma has been won here, on the borders, and even six hundred yojanas (5,400–9,600 km) away, where the Greek king Antiochos rules, beyond there where the four kings named Ptolemy, Antigonos, Magas and Alexander rule, likewise in the south among the Cholas, the Pandyas, and as far as Tamraparni (Sri Lanka)." (Edicts of Ashoka, 13th Rock Edict, S. Dhammika).

Furthermore, according to Pali sources, some of Ashoka's emissaries were Greek Buddhist monks, indicating close religious exchanges between the two cultures:

> "When the thera (elder) Moggaliputta, the illuminator of the religion of the Conqueror (Ashoka), had brought the (third) council to an end (...) he sent forth theras, one here and one there: (...) and to Aparantaka (the "Western countries" corresponding to Gujarat and Sindh) he sent the Greek (Yona) named Dhammarakkhita". (Mahavamsa XII).

Buddhist proselytism at the time of king Ashoka (260–218 BCE), according to the Edicts of Ashoka.

Ashoka also issued Edicts in the Greek language as well as in Aramaic. One of them, found in Kandahar, advocates the adoption of "Piety" (using the Greek term Eusebeia for Dharma) to the Greek community:
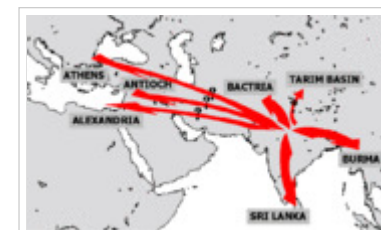
> "Ten years (of reign) having been completed, King Piodasses (Ashoka) made known (the doctrine of) Piety (Greek:εὐσέβεια, Eusebeia) to men; and from this moment he has made men more pious, and everything thrives throughout the whole world."
> (Trans. from the Greek original by G.P. Carratelli)

It is not clear how much these interactions may have been influential, but some authors have commented that some level of syncretism between Hellenist thought and Buddhism may have started in Hellenic lands at that time. They have pointed to the presence of Buddhist communities in the Hellenistic world around that period, in particular in Alexandria (mentioned by Clement of Alexandria), and to the pre-Christian monastic order of the Therapeutae (possibly a deformation of the Pali word " Theravada"), who may have "almost entirely drawn (its) inspiration from the teaching and practices of Buddhist asceticism"., and may even have been descendants of Ashoka's emissaries to the West. The philosopher Hegesias of Cyrene, from the city of Cyrene where Magas of Cyrene ruled, is sometimes thought to have been influenced by the teachings of Ashoka's Buddhist missionnaries.

Bilingual inscription (Greek and Aramaic) by king Ashoka, from Kandahar. Kabul Museum (click image for full translation).

Buddhist gravestones from the Ptolemaic period have also been found in Alexandria, decorated with depictions of the Dharma wheel (Tarn, "The Greeks in Bactria and India"). Commenting on the presence of Buddhists in Alexandria, some scholars have even pointed out that "It was later in this very place that some of the most active centers of Christianity were established" (Robert Linssen "Zen living").

In the 2nd century CE, the Christian dogmatist Clement of Alexandria recognized Bactrian Buddhists (Sramanas) and Indian Gymnosophists for their influence on Greek thought:

> "Thus philosophy, a thing of the highest utility, flourished in antiquity among the barbarians, shedding its light over the nations. And afterwards it came to Greece. First in its ranks were the prophets of the Egyptians; and the Chaldeans among the Assyrians; and the Druids among the Gauls; and the

Sramanas among the Bactrians ("Σαρμαναίοι Βάκτρων"); and the philosophers of the Celts; and the Magi of the Persians, who foretold the Saviour's birth, and came into the land of Judaea guided by a star. The Indian gymnosophists are also in the number, and the other barbarian philosophers. And of these there are two classes, some of them called **Sramanas** ("Σαρμάναι"), and others Brahmins ("Βραφμαναι")." Clement of Alexandria "The Stromata, or Miscellanies" Book I, Chapter XV

According to Donald A. Mackenzie, Saint Origen in the 2nd century CE mentioned Buddhists co-existing with Druids in pre-Christian Britain:

"The island (Britain) has long been predisposed to it (Christianity) through the doctrines of the Druids and Buddhists, who had already inculcated the doctrine of the unity of the Godhead" - Origen, *Commentary on Ezekiel*.

Early Asian expansion

Sri Lanka was proselytized by Ashoka's son Mahinda and six companions during the 2nd century BCE. They converted the king Devanampiya Tissa and many of the nobility. This is when the Mahavihara monastery, a centre of Sinhalese orthodoxy, was built. The Pali Canon was written down in Sri Lanka during the reign of king Vattagamani (29–17 BCE), and the Theravada tradition flourished there. Later some great commentators worked there, such as Buddhaghosa (4th–5th century) and Dhammapala (5th–6th century), and they systemised the traditional commentaries that had been handed down. Although Mahayana Buddhism gained some influence in Sri Lanka at that time, Theravada ultimately prevailed, and Sri Lanka turned out to be the last stronghold of Theravada Buddhism, from where it would expand again to South-East Asia from the 11th century.

In the areas east of the Indian subcontinent (modern Burma and Thailand), Indian culture strongly influenced the Mons. The Mons are said to have been converted to Buddhism from the 3rd century BCE under the proselytizing of the Indian Emperor Ashoka the Great, before the fission between Mahayana and Hinayana Buddhism. Early Mon Buddhist temples, such as Peikthano in central Burma, have been dated between the 1st and the 5th century CE.

The Buddhist art of the Mons was especially influenced by the Indian art of the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, and their mannerist style spread widely in South-East Asia following the expansion of the Mon kingdom between the 5th and 8th centuries. The Theravada faith expanded in the northern parts of Southeast Asia under Mon influence, until it was progressively displaced by Mahayana Buddhism from around the 6th century CE.

According to the *Ashokavadana* (2nd century CE), Ashoka sent a missionary to the north, through the Himalayas, to Khotan in the Tarim Basin, then the land of the Tocharians, speakers of an Indo-European language.

Mons Wheel of the Law (Dharmachakra), art of Dvaravati, c.8th century.

Rise of the Sunga (2nd–1st c. BCE)

The Sunga dynasty (185–73 BCE) was established in 185 BCE, about 50 years after Ashoka's death. After assassinating King Brhadrata (last of the Mauryan rulers), military commander-in-chief Pusyamitra Sunga took the throne. Buddhist religious scriptures such as the Ashokavadana allege that Pusyamitra (an orthodox Brahmin) was hostile towards Buddhists and

persecuted the Buddhist faith. Buddhists wrote that he "destroyed monasteries and killed Monks" : 84,000 Buddhist stupas which had been built by Ashoka were "destroyed" (R. Thaper), and 100 gold coins were offered for the head of each Buddhist monk . In addition, Buddhist sources allege that a large number of Buddhist monasteries (viharas) were converted to Hindu temples, in such places as Nalanda, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, or Mathura.

Following Ashoka's sponsorship of Buddhism, it is possible that Buddhist institutions fell on harder times under the Sungas but no evidence of active persecution has been noted. Etienne Lamotte observes: *To judge from the documents, Pushyamitra must be acquitted through lack of proof.".* Another eminent historian, Romila Thapar, points to archaeological evidence that "suggests the contrary [to the claim that Pusyamitra was a fanatical anti-Buddhist]" and never actually destroyed 84000 stupas as claimed by Buddhist works. Thapar stresses that Buddhist accounts are probably hyperbolic renditions of Pusyamitra's attack of the Mauryas, and merely reflect the frustration of the Buddhist religious figures to the decline in the importance of their religion by the Sungas. .

During the period, Buddhist monks deserted the Ganges valley, following either the Northern road (Uttarapatha) or the Southern road (Daksinapatha). Conversely, Buddhist artistic creation stopped in the old Magadha area, to reposition itself either in Northwest area of Gandhara and Mathura, or in the Southeast around Amaravati. Some artistic activity also occurred in central India, as in Bharhut, to which the Sungas may or may not have contributed.

Greco-Buddhist interaction (2nd c. BCE–1st c. CE)

In the areas west of the Indian subcontinent, neighboring Greek kingdoms had been in place in Bactria (today's northern Afghanistan) since the time of the conquests of Alexander the Great around 326 BCE: first the Seleucids from around 323 BCE, then the Greco-Bactrian kingdom from around 250 BCE.

Silver drachm of Menander I (reigned c. 160–135 BCE).
Obv: Greek legend, BASILEOS SOTEROS MENANDROY lit. "of the Saviour King Menander".

A Greco-Buddhist statue, one of the first representations of the Buddha, 1st-2nd century CE, Gandhara.

The Greco-Bactrian king Demetrius I invaded India in 180 BCE as far as Pataliputra, establishing an Indo-Greek kingdom that was to last in various part of northern India until the end of the 1st century BCE. Buddhism flourished under the Indo-Greek kings, and it has been suggested that their invasion of India was intended to show their support for the Mauryan empire, and to protect the Buddhist faith from the alleged religious persecutions of the Sungas (185–73 BCE).

One of the most famous Indo-Greek kings is Menander (reigned c. 160–135 BCE). He apparently converted to Buddhism and is presented in the Mahayana tradition as one of the great benefactors of the faith, on a par with king Ashoka or the later Kushan king Kanishka. Menander's coins bear the mention "Saviour king" in Greek, and sometimes designs of the eight-spoked wheel. Direct cultural exchange is also suggested by the dialogue of the Milinda Panha between Menander and the monk Nagasena around 160 BCE. Upon his death, the honour of sharing his remains was claimed by the cities under his rule, and they were enshrined in stupas, in a parallel with the historic Buddha (Plutarch, Praec. reip. ger. 28, 6). Several of Menander's Indo-Greek successors inscribed the mention "Follower of the Dharma" in the Kharoshthi script on their coins, and depicted themselves or their divinities forming the *vitarka* mudra.

The interaction between Greek and Buddhist cultures may have had some influence on the evolution of Mahayana, as the faith developed its sophisticated philosophical approach and a man-god treatment of the Buddha somewhat reminiscent of Hellenic gods. It is also around that time that the first anthropomorphic representations of the Buddha are found, often in realistic Greco-Buddhist style: "One might regard the classical influence as including the general idea of representing a man-god in this purely human form, which was of course well familiar in the West, and it is very likely that the example of westerner's treatment of their gods was indeed an important factor in the innovation" (Boardman, "The Diffusion of Classical Art in Antiquity").

A coin of Menander I with an eight-spoked wheel and a palm of victory on the reverse (British Museum).

Central Asian expansion

A Buddhist gold coin from India was found in northern Afghanistan at the archaeological site of Tillia Tepe, and dated to the 1st century CE. On the reverse, it depicts a lion with a nandipada, with the Kharoshthi legend "Sih[o] vigatabhay[o]" ("The lion who dispelled fear"). On the obverse, an almost naked man only wearing an Hellenistic chlamys and a petasus hat (an iconography similar to that of Hermes/ Mercury) rolls a Buddhist wheel. The legend in Kharoshthi reads "Dharmacakrapravata[ko]" ("The one who turned the Wheel of the Law"). It has been suggested that this may be an early representation of the Buddha.

Rise of Mahayana (1st c. BCE–2nd c. CE)

The rise of Mahayana Buddhism from the 1st century BCE was accompanied by complex political changes in northwestern India. The Indo-Greek kingdoms were gradually overwhelmed, and their culture assimilated by the Indo-Scythians, and then the Yuezhi, who founded the Kushan Empire from around 12 BCE.

The Kushans were supportive of Buddhism, and a fourth Buddhist council was convened by the Kushan emperor Kanishka, around 100 CE at Jalandhar or in Kashmir, and is usually associated with the formal rise of Mahayana Buddhism and its secession from Theravada Buddhism. Theravada Buddhism does not recognize the authenticity of this council, and it is sometimes called the "council of heretical monks".

The new form of Buddhism was characterized by an almost God-like treatment of the Buddha, by the idea that all beings have a Buddha-nature and should aspire to Buddhahood, and by a syncretism due to the various cultural influences within northwestern India and the Kushan Empire.

Coin of the Kushan emperor Kanishka, with the Buddha on the reverse, and his name "BODDO" in Greek script, minted circa 120 CE.

The Two Fourth Councils

The Fourth Council is said to have been convened in the reign of the Kushan emperor Kanishka, around 100 CE at Jalandhar or in Kashmir. Theravada Buddhism had its own Fourth Council in Sri Lanka about 200 years earlier in which the Pali Canon was written down *in toto* for the first time. Therefore there are two Fourth Councils: one in Sri Lanka (Theravada), and one in Kashmir (Sarvastivadin).

It is said that for the Fourth Council of Kashmir, Kanishka gathered 500 monks headed by Vasumitra, partly, it seems, to compile extensive commentaries on the Abhidharma, although it is possible that some editorial work was carried out upon the existing canon itself. Allegedly, during the council there were all together three hundred thousand verses and over nine million statements compiled, and it took twelve years to complete. The main fruit of this Council was the compilation of the vast commentary known as the Mahā-Vibhāshā ("Great Exegesis"), an extensive compendium and reference work on a portion of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma.

Extent of Buddhism and trade routes in the 1st century CE.

Scholars believe that it was also around this time that a significant change was made in the language of the Sarvāstivādin canon, by converting an earlier Prakrit version into Sanskrit. Although this change was probably effected without significant loss of integrity to the canon, this event was of particular significance since Sanskrit was the sacred language of Brahmanism in India, and was also being used by other thinkers (regardless of their specific religious or philosophical allegiance), thus enabling a far wider audience to gain access to Buddhist ideas and practices. For this reason, there was a growing tendency among Buddhist scholars in India thereafter to write their commentaries and treatises in Sanskrit. Many of the early schools, however, such as Theravada, never switched to Sanskrit, partly because Buddha explicitly forbade translation of his discourses into Sanskrit because it was an elitist religious language (like Latin was in Europe in earlier times). He wanted his monks to use a local language instead; a language which could be understood by all. Over time however, the language of the Theravadin scriptures (Pali) became a scholarly or elitist language as well.

Mahayana expansion (1st c. CE–10th c. CE)

From that point on, and in the space of a few centuries, Mahayana was to flourish and spread in the East from India to South-East Asia, and towards the north to Central Asia, China, Korea, and finally to Japan in 538 CE.

India

After the end of the Kushans, Buddhism flourished in India during the dynasty of the Guptas (4th-6th century). Mahayana centers of learning were established, especially at Nalanda in north-eastern India, which was to become the largest and most influential Buddhist university for many centuries, with famous teachers such as Nagarjuna. The Gupta style of Buddhist art became very influential from South-East Asia to China as the faith was spreading there.

Expansion of Mahayana Buddhism between the 1st–10th century CE.

Buddha and Bodhisattvas, 11th century, Pala Empire.

Indian Buddhism had weakened in the 6th century following the White Hun invasions and Mihirkulas persecution.

Xuanzang reports in his travels across India during the 7th century of Buddhism being popular in Andhra, Dhanyakataka, and Dravida which today roughly correspond to the modern day Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. While reporting many deserted stupas in the area around modern day Nepal and the persecution of buddhists by Ssanka in the Kingdom of Gouda. (In modern day West Bengal.) Xuanzang compliments the patronage of Harshavardana during the same period. After Harshavardanas kingdom, the rise of many small kingdoms that lead to the rise of the Rajputs across the gangetic plains and marked the end of Buddhist ruling clans along with a sharp decline in royal patronage until a revival under the Pala Empire in the Bengal region. Here Mahayana Buddhism flourished and spread to Bhutan and Sikkim between the 8th and the 12th century before the Palas collapsed under the assault of the Hindu Sena dynasty. The Palas created many temples and a distinctive school of Buddhist art. Xuanzang noted in his travels that in various regions Buddhism was giving way to Jainism and Hinduism. By the 10th century Buddhism had experienced a sharp decline beyond the Pala realms in Bengal under a resurgent Hinduism and the incorporation in Vaishnavite Hinduism of Buddha as the 9th incarnation of Vishnu.

A milestone in the decline of Indian Buddhism in the North occurred in 1193 when Turkic Islamic raiders under Muhammad Khilji burnt Nalanda. By the end of the 12th century, following the Islamic conquest of the Buddhist strongholds in Bihar, and the loss of political support coupled with social and caste pressures, the practice of Buddhism retreated to the Himalayan foothills in the North and Sri Lanka in the south. Additionally, the influence of Buddhism also waned due to Hinduism's revival movements such as Advaita, the rise of the bhakti movement and the missionary work of Sufis.

Central and Northern Asia

Central Asia

Central Asia had been influenced by Buddhism probably almost since the time of the Buddha. According to a legend preserved in Pali, the language of the Theravada canon, two merchant brothers from Bactria, named Tapassu and Bhallika, visited the Buddha and became his disciples. They then returned to Bactria and built temples to the Buddha (Foltz).

Central Asia long played the role of a meeting place between China, India and Persia. During the 2nd century BCE, the expansion of the Former Han to the west brought them into contact with the Hellenistic civilizations of Asia, especially the Greco-Bactrian Kingdoms. Thereafter, the expansion of Buddhism to the north led to the formation of Buddhist communities and even Buddhist kingdoms in the oases of Central Asia. Some Silk Road cities consisted almost entirely of Buddhist stupas and monasteries, and it seems that one of their main objectives was to welcome and service travelers between east and west.

The Theravada traditions first spread among the Turkic tribes before combining with the Mahayana forms during the 2nd and 3rd centuries BCE to cover modern-day Pakistan, Kashmir, Afghanistan, eastern and coastal Iran, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. These were the ancient states of Gandhara, Bactria, Parthia and Sogdia from where it spread to China. Among the first of these Turkic tribes to adopt Buddhism was the Turki- Shahi who adopted Buddhism as early as the 3rd century BCE. It was not, however, the exclusive faith of this region. There were also Zoroastrians, Hindus, Nestorian Christians, Jews, Manichaeans, and followers of shamanism, Tengrism, and other indigenous, nonorganized systems of belief.

Various Nikaya schools persisted in Central Asia and China until around the 7th century CE. Mahayana started to become dominant during the period, but since the faith had not developed a Nikaya approach, Sarvastivadin and Dharmaguptakas remained the Vinayas of choice in Central Asian monasteries.

Various Buddhism kingdoms rose and prospered in both the Central Asian region and downwards into the Indian sub-continent such as Kushan Empire prior to the White Hun invasion in the 5th century where under the King Mihirkula they were heavily persecuted.

Buddhism in Central Asia started to decline with the expansion of Islam and the destruction of many stupas in war from the 7th century. The Muslims accorded them the status of dhimmis as "people of the Book", such as Christianity or Judaism and Al-Biruni wrote of Buddha as prophet "burxan".

Buddhism saw a surge during the reign of Mongols following the invasion of Genghis Khan and the establishment of the Il Khanate and the Chagatai Khanate who brought their Buddhist influence with them during the 13th century, however within a 100 years the Mongols who remained in that region would convert to Islam and spread Islam across all the regions across central Asia. Only the eastern Mongols and the Mongols of the Yuan dynasty would keep Vajrayana Buddhism.

Parthia

Buddhism expanded westward into Arsacid Parthia, at least to the area of Merv, in ancient Margiana, today's territory of Turkmenistan. Soviet archeological teams have excavated in Giaur Kala, near Merv, a Buddhist chapel, a gigantic Buddha statue, as well as a monastery.

Parthians were directly involved in the propagation of Buddhism: An Shigao (c. 148 CE), a Parthian prince, went to China, and is the first known translator of

Buddhist scriptures into Chinese.

Tarim Basin

The eastern part of central Asia (Chinese Turkestan, Tarim Basin, Xinjiang) has revealed extremely rich Buddhist works of art (wall paintings and reliefs in numerous caves, portable paintings on canvas, sculpture, ritual objects), displaying multiple influences from Indian and Hellenistic cultures. Serindian art is highly reminiscent of the Gandharan style, and scriptures in the Gandhari script Kharosthi have been found.

Central Asians seem to have played a key role in the transmission of Buddhism to the East. The first translators of Buddhists scriptures into Chinese were either Parthian (Ch: Anxi) like An Shigao (c. 148 CE) or An Hsuan, Kushan of Yuezhi ethnicity like Lokaksema (c. 178 CE), Zhi Qian and Zhi Yao, or Sogdians (Ch: SuTe/粟特) like Kang Sengkai. Thirty-seven early translators of Buddhist texts are known, and the majority of them have been identified as Central Asians.

Central Asian and East Asian Buddhist monks appear to have maintained strong exchanges until around the 10th century, as shown by frescoes from the Tarim Basin.

These influences were rapidly absorbed however by the vigorous Chinese culture, and a strongly Chinese particularism develops from that point.

Blue-eyed Central Asian and East-Asian Buddhist monks, Bezaklik, Eastern Tarim Basin, China, 9th-10th century.

China

Buddhism probably arrived in China around the 1st century CE from Central Asia (although there are some traditions about a monk visiting China during Ashoka's reign), and through to the 8th century it became an extremely active centre of Buddhism.

The year 67 CE saw Buddhism's official introduction to China with the coming of the two monks Moton and Chufarlan. In 68 CE, under imperial patronage, they established the White Horse Temple (白馬寺), which still exists today, close to the imperial capital at Luoyang. By the end of the second century, a prosperous community had been settled at Pengcheng (modern Xuzhou, Jiangsu).

The first known Mahayana scriptural texts are translations made into Chinese by the Kushan monk Lokaksema in Luoyang, between 178 and 189 CE. Some of the earliest known Buddhist artifacts found in China are small statues on "money trees", dated circa 200 CE, in typical Gandharan style (drawing): "That the imported images accompanying the newly arrived doctrine came from Gandhara is strongly suggested by such early Gandhara characteristics on this "money tree" Buddha as the high ushnisha, vertical arrangement of the hair, moustache, symmetrically looped robe and parallel incisions for the folds of the arms." ("Crossroads of Asia" p209)

Maitreya Buddha, Northern Wei, 443 CE.

Buddhism flourished during the beginning of the Tang Dynasty (618–907). The dynasty was initially characterized by a strong openness to foreign influences, and renewed exchanges with Indian culture due to the numerous travels of Chinese Buddhist monks to India from the 4th to the 11th century. The Tang capital of Chang'an (today's Xi'an) became an important centre for Buddhist thought. From there Buddhism spread to Korea, and Japanese embassies of Kentoshi helped gain footholds in Japan.

However foreign influences came to be negatively perceived towards the end of the Tang Dynasty. In the year 845, the Tang emperor Wuzong outlawed all "foreign" religions (including Christian Nestorianism, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism) in order to support the indigenous Taoism. Throughout his territory, he confiscated Buddhist possessions, destroyed monasteries and temples, and executed Buddhist monks, ending Buddhism's cultural and intellectual dominance.

However , about a hundred years after the Great Anti-Buddhist Persecution , Buddhism revived during the Song Dynasty (1127–1279).

Pure Land and Chan Buddhism, however, continued to prosper for some centuries, the latter giving rise to Japanese Zen. In China, Chan flourished particularly under the Song dynasty (1127–1279), when its monasteries were great centers of culture and learning.

Today, China boasts one of the richest collections of Buddhist arts and heritages in the world. UNESCO World Heritage Sites such as the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang in Gansu province, the Longmen Grottoes near Luoyang in Henan province, the Yungang Grottoes near Datong in Shanxi province, and the Dazu Rock Carvings near Chongqing are among the most important and renowned Buddhist sculptural sites. The Leshan Giant Buddha, carved out of a hillside in the 8th century during Tang Dynasty and looking down on the confluence of three rivers, is still the largest stone Buddha statue in the world.

Korea

Buddhism was introduced around 372 CE, when Chinese ambassadors visited the Korean kingdom of Goguryeo, bringing scriptures and images. Buddhism prospered in Korea, and in particular Seon (Zen) Buddhism from the 7th century onward. However, with the beginning of the Confucean Yi Dynasty of the Joseon period in 1392, Buddhism was strongly discriminated against until it was almost completely eradicated, except for a remaining Seon movement.

Japan

The Buddhism of Japan was introduced from Three Kingdoms of Korea in the sixth century . The Chinese priest Ganjin offered the system of Vinaya to the Buddhism of Japan in 754. As a result, the Buddhism of Japan has developed rapidly. Saichō and Kūkai succeeded to a legitimate Buddhism from China in nine century.

Being geographically at the end of the Silk Road, Japan was able to preserve many aspects of Buddhism at the very time it was disappearing in India, and being suppressed in Central Asia and China.

From 710 CE numerous temples and monasteries were built in the capital city of Nara, such as the five-story pagoda and Golden Hall of the Hōryū-ji, or the Kōfuku-ji temple. Countless paintings and sculptures were made, often under governmental sponsorship. The creation of Japanese Buddhist art was especially rich between the 8th and 13th century during the periods of Nara, Heian, and Kamakura.

From the 12th and 13th, a further development was Zen art, following the introduction of the faith by Dogen and Eisai upon their return from China. Zen art is mainly characterized by original paintings (such as sumi-e and the Enso) and poetry (especially haikus), striving to express the true essence of the world through impressionistic and unadorned "non-dualistic" representations. The search for enlightenment "in the moment" also led to the development of other important derivative arts such as the Chanoyu tea ceremony or the Ikebana art of flower arrangement. This evolution went as far as considering almost any human activity as an art with a strong spiritual and aesthetic content, first and foremost in those activities related to combat techniques (martial arts).

Buddhism remains very active in Japan to this day. Around 80,000 Buddhist temples are preserved and regularly restored.

Southeast Asia

Tile with seated Buddha, Nara Prefecture, Asuka period, 7th century. Tokyo National Museum.

During the 1st century CE, the trade on the overland Silk Road tended to be restricted by the rise in the Middle-East of the Parthian empire, an unvanquished enemy of Rome, just as Romans were becoming extremely wealthy and their demand for Asian luxury was rising. This demand revived the sea connections between the Mediterranean and China, with India as the intermediary of choice. From that time, through trade connection, commercial settlements, and even political interventions, India started to strongly influence Southeast Asian countries. Trade routes linked India with southern Burma, central and southern Siam, lower Cambodia and southern Vietnam, and numerous urbanized coastal settlements were established there.

For more than a thousand years, Indian influence was therefore the major factor that brought a certain level of cultural unity to the various countries of the region. The Pali and Sanskrit languages and the Indian script, together with Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism, Brahmanism, and Hinduism, were transmitted from direct contact and through sacred texts and Indian literature such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata.

From the 5th to the 13th century, South-East Asia had very powerful empires and became extremely active in Buddhist architectural and artistic creation. The main Buddhist influence now came directly by sea from the Indian subcontinent, so that these empires essentially followed the Mahayana faith. The Sri Vijaya Empire to the south and the Khmer Empire to the north competed for influence, and their art expressed the rich Mahayana pantheon of the Bodhisattvas.

Vietnam

Srivijayan Empire (5th–15th century)

Statue of the Bodhisattva Lokesvara, Cambodia, 12th century.

Srivijaya, a maritime empire centered at Palembang on the island of Sumatra in Indonesia, adopted Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism under a line of rulers named the Sailendras. Yijing described Palembang as a great centre of Buddhist learning where the emperor supported over a thousand monks at his court. Atisha studied there before travelling to Tibet as a missionary.

Sriviijaya spread Buddhist art during its expansion in Southeast Asia. Numerous statues of Bodhisattvas from this period are characterized by a very strong refinement and technical sophistication, and are found throughout the region. Extremely rich architectural remains are visible at the temple of Borobudur (the largest Buddhist structure in the world, built from around 780 CE), in Java, which has 505 images of the seated Buddha. Srivijaya declined due to conflicts with the Chola rulers of India, before being destabilized by the Islamic expansion from the 13th century.

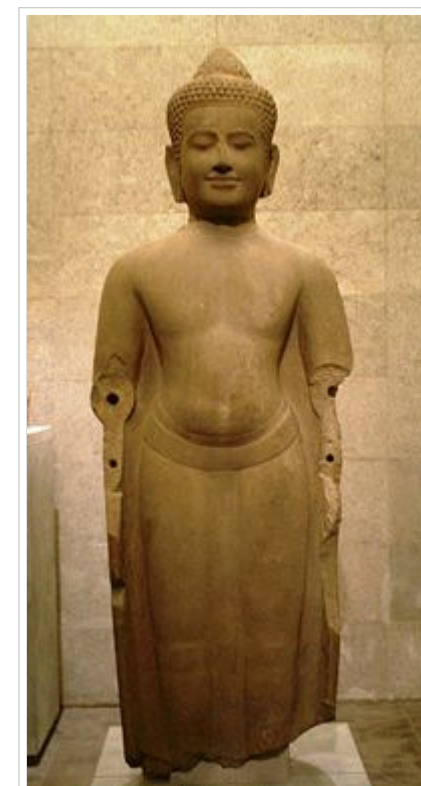**Khmer Empire (9th–13th century)**

Later, from the 9th to the 13th century, the Mahayana Buddhist and Hindu Khmer Empire dominated much of the South-East Asian peninsula. Under the Khmer, more than 900 temples were built in Cambodia and in neighboring Thailand. Angkor was at the centre of this development, with a temple complex and urban organization able to support around one million urban dwellers. One of the greatest Khmer kings, Jayavarman VII (1181–1219), built large Mahayana Buddhist structures at Bayon and Angkor Thom.

Following the destruction of Buddhism in mainland India during the 11th century, Mahayana Buddhism declined in Southeast Asia, to be replaced by the introduction of Theravada Buddhism from Sri Lanka.

Cambodian Buddha, 14th century.

Emergence of the Vajrayana (5th century)

Vajrayāna Buddhism, also called Tantric Buddhism, first emerged in eastern India between the 5th and 7th centuries CE. It is sometimes considered a sub-school of Mahayana and sometimes a third major "vehicle" (*Yana*) of Buddhism in its own right. The Vajrayana is an extension of Mahayana Buddhism in that it does not offer new philosophical perspectives, but rather introduces additional techniques (upaya, or 'skilful means'), including the use of visualizations and other yogic practices. Many of the practices of Tantric Buddhism are common with Hindu tantricism (the usage of mantras, yoga, or the burning of sacrificial offerings). This school of thought was founded by Padmasambhava.

Early Vajrayana practitioners were forest-dwelling mahasiddhas who lived on the margins of society, but by the 9th century Vajrayana had won acceptance at major Mahayana monastic universities such as Nalanda and Vikramashila. Along with much of the rest of Indian Buddhism, the Vajrayana was eclipsed in the wake of the late 12th century Muslim invasions. It has persisted in Tibet, where it was wholly transplanted from the 7th to 12th centuries and became the dominant form of Buddhism to the present day, and on a limited basis in Japan as well where it evolved into Shingon Buddhism.

Theravada Renaissance (11th century CE—)

From the 11th century, the destruction of Buddhism in the Indian mainland by Islamic invasions led to the decline of the Mahayana faith in South-East Asia. Continental routes through the Indian subcontinent being compromised, direct sea routes between the Middle-East through Sri Lanka and to China developed, leading to the adoption of the Theravada Buddhism of the Pali canon, introduced to the region around the 11th century CE from Sri Lanka.
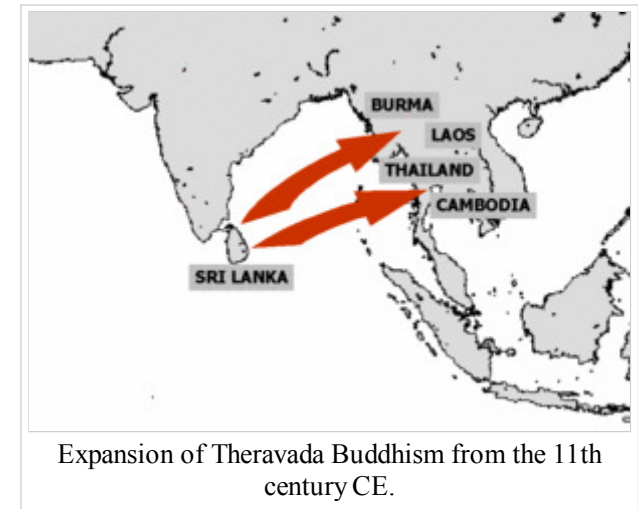
King Anawrahta (1044–1077); the historical founder of the Burmese empire, unified the country and adopted the Theravada Buddhist faith. This initiated the creation of thousands of Buddhist temples at Pagan, the capital, between the 11th and 13th century. Around 2,000 of them are still standing. The power of the Burmese waned with the rise of the Thai, and with the seizure of the capital Pagan by the Mongols in 1287, but Theravada Buddhism remained the main Burmese faith to this day.

The Theravada faith was also adopted by the newly founded ethnic Thai kingdom of Sukhothai around 1260. Theravada Buddhism was further reinforced during the Ayutthaya period (14th–18th century), becoming an integral part of the Thai society.

Expansion of Theravada Buddhism from the 11th century CE.

In the continental areas, Theravada Buddhism continued to expand into Laos and Cambodia in the 13th century. However, from the 14th century, on the coastal fringes and in the islands of South-East Asia, the influence of Islam proved stronger, expanding into Malaysia, Indonesia, and most of the islands as far as the southern Philippines.

However, since 1966 with Soeharto's rise of power in the aftermath of the bloody events after the so called "September 30th, 1965 murders", allegedly executed by the Communists Party, there has been a remarkable renaissance of Buddhism in Indonesia. This is partly due to the Soeharto's New Order's requirements for the people of Indonesia to adopt one of the five official religions: Islam, Protestantism, Catholicism, Hinduism or Buddhism. Today it is estimated there are some 10 millions Buddhists in Indonesia. A large part of them are people of Chinese ancestry.

Expansion of Buddhism to the West

After the Classical encounters between Buddhism and the West recorded in Greco-Buddhist art, information and legends about Buddhism seem to have reached the West sporadically. An account of Buddha's life was translated in to Greek by John of Damascus, and widely circulated to Christians as the story of Barlaam and Josaphat. By the 1300s this story of Josaphat had become so popular that he was made a Catholic saint.

The next direct encounter between Europeans and Buddhism happened in Medieval times when the Franciscan friar William of Rubruck was sent on an embassy to the Mongol court of Mongke by the French king Saint Louis in 1253. The contact happened in Cailac (today's Qayaliq in Kazakhstan), and William originally thought they were wayward Christians (Foltz, "Religions of the Silk Road").

Saint Josaphat preaching Christianity. 12th century Greek manuscript.

Major interest for Buddhism emerged during colonial times, when Western powers were in a position to witness the faith and its artistic manifestations in detail. European philosophy was strongly influenced by the study of oriental religions during that period.

The opening of Japan in 1853 also created a considerable interest for the arts and culture of Japan, and provided access to one of the most thriving Buddhist cultures in the world.

Buddhism started to enjoy a strong interest from the general population in the West following the turbulence of the 20th century.

Buddhism has been displaying a strong power of attraction, due to its tolerance, its lack of deist authority and determinism, and its focus on understanding reality through self inquiry.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_Buddhism"

Humanism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Humanism is a broad category of ethical philosophies that affirm the dignity and worth of all people, based on the ability to determine *right and wrong* by appeal to universal human qualities—particularly rationalism. Humanism is a component of a variety of more specific philosophical systems, and is incorporated into several religious schools of thought. Humanism entails a commitment to the search for truth and morality through human means in support of human interests. In focusing on the capacity for self-determination, humanism rejects the validity of transcendental justifications, such as a dependence on faith, the supernatural, or divinely revealed texts. Humanists endorse universal morality based on the commonality of the human condition, suggesting that solutions to human social and cultural problems cannot be parochial.

Aspects

Religion

Humanism clearly rejects deference to supernatural beliefs in resolving human affairs but not necessarily the beliefs themselves; indeed some strains of humanism are compatible with some religions. It is generally compatible with atheism and agnosticism but doesn't *require* either of these. Agnosticism or atheism on their own do not necessarily entail humanism; many different and incompatible philosophies are atheistic in nature, and there is no one ideology or set of behaviors to which all atheists adhere.

As humanism encompasses intellectual currents running through a wide variety of philosophical and religious thought, several strains of humanism allow it to fulfill, supplement or supplant the role of religions, and in particular to be embraced as a complete life stance. For more on this, see Humanism (life stance). In a number of countries, rights given by laws to 'religions', have required a secular life stance to become legally recognized as a 'religion'.

Renaissance humanism, and its emphasis on returning to the sources, contributed to the Protestant reformation by helping to gain what they believe was a more accurate translation of Biblical texts.

Knowledge

According to humanism, it is up to humans to find the truth, as opposed to seeking it through revelation, mysticism, tradition, or anything else that is incompatible with the application of logic to the evidence. In demanding that humans avoid blindly accepting unsupported beliefs, it supports scientific skepticism and the scientific method, rejecting authoritarianism and extreme skepticism, and rendering faith an unacceptable basis for action. Likewise, humanism asserts that knowledge of right and wrong is based on one's best understanding of one's individual and joint interests, rather than stemming from a

transcendental truth or an arbitrarily local source.

Speciesism

Some have interpreted humanism to be a form of speciesism (regarding one species as being more important than another). The philosopher Peter Singer argues that many humanist's views on the moral interaction of people with other animals remain rooted in the Abrahamic religions' assertion that man has dominion over the animals. Thus he feels that humanists tend to be less supportive of the animal rights movement than they should be, in sharp contrast to their full support of human rights issues.,

Optimism

Humanism features an optimistic attitude about the capacity of people, but it does not involve believing that human nature is purely good or that each and every person is capable of living up to the humanist ideals of rationality and morality. If anything, there is the recognition that living up to one's potential is hard work and requires the help of others. The ultimate goal is human flourishing; making life better for all humans. Even among humanists who do believe in some sort of an afterlife, the focus is on doing good and living well in the here and now, and leaving the world better for those who come after, not on suffering through life to be rewarded afterward.

History

Contemporary humanism can be traced back through the Renaissance to its ancient Greek roots. Though humanism can also be traced back to the Warring Era of Confucious's time (551-479 B.C.E.), it is the Western philosophers that are more widely known.

The term "humanism" is an early 19th century coinage, based on the 15th century Italian term *umanista*, which was used to designate a teacher or student of classic literature. The evolution of the meaning of the word *humanism* is fully explored in Nicolas Walter *Humanism — What's in the Word*.

Greek roots

Sixth century B.C.E. pantheists Thales of Miletus and Xenophanes of Colophon prepared the way for later Greek humanist thought. Thales is credited with creating the maxim "Know thyself", and Xenophanes refused to recognize the gods of his time and reserved the divine for the principle of unity in the universe. Later Anaxagoras, often described as the "first freethinker", contributed to the development of science as a method of understanding the universe. Pericles, a pupil of Anaxagoras, influenced the development of democracy, freedom of thought, and the exposure of superstitions. Although little of their work survives, Protagoras and Democritus both espoused agnosticism and a spiritual morality not based on the supernatural. The historian Thucydides is noted for his scientific and rational approach to history.

Middle Ages

Applying the definition of humanism as a re-discovery of classic texts, there were two movements in the Middle Ages that saw this happen, the Carolingian Renaissance of the 9th century and the Renaissance of the 12th century.

Renaissance

Renaissance humanism was a broad movement that affected the social, cultural, literary and political landscape of Europe. Beginning in Florence in the last decades of the 14th century, Renaissance humanism revived the study of Latin and Greek, with the resultant revival of the study of science, philosophy, art and poetry of classical antiquity. The revival was based on interpretations of Roman and Greek texts, whose emphasis upon art and the senses marked a great change from the contemplation on the Biblical values of humility, introspection, and meekness. Beauty was held to represent a deep inner virtue and value, and an essential element in the path towards God.

The crisis of Renaissance humanism came with the trial of Galileo, which forced the choice between basing the authority of one's beliefs on one's observations, or upon religious teaching. The trial made the contradictions between humanism and traditional religion visibly apparent to all, and humanism was branded a "dangerous doctrine."

Renaissance humanists believed that the liberal arts (music, art, grammar, rhetoric, oratory, history, poetry, using classical texts, and the studies of all of the above) should be practiced by all levels of wealth. They also approved of self, human worth and individual dignity.

Noteworthy humanists scholars from this period include the Dutch theologian Erasmus, the English author Thomas More, the French writer Francois Rabelais, the Italian poet Francesco Petrarch and the Italian scholar Giovanni Pico della Mirandola.

Modern era

One of the earliest forerunners of contemporary chartered humanist organizations was the Humanistic Religious Association formed in 1853 in London. This early group was democratically organized, with male and female members participating in the election of the leadership and promoted knowledge of the sciences, philosophy, and the arts.

Active in the early 1920s, F.C.S. Schiller considered his work to be tied to the humanist movement. Schiller himself was influenced by the pragmatism of William James. In 1929 Charles Francis Potter founded the First Humanist Society of New York whose advisory board included Julian Huxley, John Dewey, Albert Einstein and Thomas Mann. Potter was a minister from the Unitarian tradition and in 1930 he and his wife, Clara Cook Potter, published *Humanism: A New Religion*. Throughout the 1930s Potter was a well-known advocate of women's rights, access to birth control, "civil divorce laws", and an end to capital punishment.

Raymond B. Bragg, the associate editor of *The New Humanist*, sought to consolidate the input of L. M. Birkhead, Charles Francis Potter, and several members of the Western Unitarian Conference. Bragg asked Roy Wood Sellars to draft a document based on this information which resulted in the publication of the *Humanist Manifesto* in 1933. The Manifesto and Potter's book became the cornerstones of modern humanism. Both of these sources envision humanism as a

religion.

In 1941 the American Humanist Association was organized. Noted members of The AHA include Isaac Asimov, who was the president before his death, and writer Kurt Vonnegut, who followed as honorary president until his death in 2007.

Modern humanist philosophies

There are many people who consider themselves humanists, and much variety in the exact type of humanism to which they subscribe. There is some disagreement over terminology and definitions, with some people using narrower or broader interpretations. Not all people who call themselves humanists hold beliefs that are genuinely humanistic, and not all people who do hold humanistic beliefs apply the label of humanism to themselves.

All of this aside, humanism can be divided into secular and religious types.

Secular humanism

Secular humanism is the branch of humanism that rejects theistic religious belief, and the existence of the supernatural. It is often associated with scientists and academics, though it is not at all limited to these groups. Secular humanists generally believe that following humanist principles leads to secularism, on the basis that supernatural beliefs cannot be supported using human-centered rational arguments and therefore all traditionally religiously associated activity must be rejected.

When people speak of humanism in general, they are usually referring to secular humanism, as a default meaning. Some of the secular humanists take this even further by denying that religious humanists qualify as genuine humanists. Others feel that the ethical side of humanism transcends the issue of religion, because being a good person is more important than rejecting supernatural beliefs.

Some secular humanists prefer the term *Humanist* (capital 'H', and no adjective), as unanimously endorsed by General Assembly of the International Humanist and Ethical Union following universal endorsement of the Amsterdam Declaration 2002.

Religious humanism

Religious humanism is the branch of humanism that considers itself religious (based on a functional definition of religion), or embraces some form of theism, deism, or supernaturalism, without necessarily being allied with organized religion; if allied, in the US it is often with Unitarian Universalism, frequently associated with artists, liberal Christians, and scholars in the liberal arts. Also subscribers to a religion who do not hold such a necessary source for their moral values, may be considered religious humanists. The central position of human beings in humanist philosophy goes with a humane morality; the latter alone does not constitute humanism. A humanitarian who derives morality from religious grounds does not make a religious humanist.

A number of religious humanists feel that secular humanism is too coldly logical and rejects the full emotional experience that makes humans human. From this

comes the notion that secular humanism is inadequate in meeting the human need for a socially fulfilling philosophy of life. Disagreements over things of this nature have resulted in friction between secular and religious humanists, despite their similarities.

Other forms of humanism

Humanism is also sometimes used to describe "humanities" scholars, (particularly scholars of the Greco-Roman classics). As mentioned above, it is sometimes used to mean humanitarianism. There is also a school of humanistic psychology, and an educational method.

Educational humanism

Humanism, as a current in education, began to dominate school systems in the 17th century. It held that the studies that develop human intellect are those that make humans "most truly human". The practical basis for this was faculty psychology, or the belief in distinct intellectual faculties, such as the analytical, the mathematical, the linguistic, etc. Strengthening one faculty was believed to benefit other faculties as well (transfer of training). A key player in the late 19th-century educational humanism was U.S. Commissioner of Education W.T. Harris, whose "Five Windows of the Soul" (mathematics, geography, history, grammar, and literature/art) were believed especially appropriate for "development of the faculties". Educational humanists believe that "the best studies, for the best kids" are "the best studies" for all kids. While humanism as an educational current was largely discredited by the innovations of the early 20th century, it still holds out, in some elite preparatory schools and some high school disciplines (especially, in literature).

Liberal Humanism

In modern western societies social practices, such as politics and economics are shaped by humanist ideas. There are many humanist strands such as scientific and religious thinking, but the most dominant form of humanism is liberal humanism. Liberal humanists state that the individual right needs to be protected and society should provide for the differences between people as long as ones individual actions do not result in harm to another. An example of this is when a country is forced to vote on a political or social matter and the voice of the majority is heard. In the liberalist view, each individual has their single individual nature as well as a shared human nature. The centre and essentially the hero of liberal humanism is man and a commitment to man, whose essence is freedom. When researching liberal humanism, it can be found that the subject is not only free but is unconstrained by history, meaning or action. This in turn guarantees freedom of choice, particularly when studying the political system. The following are some of the many beliefs of liberal humanism:

- "Absolute Truth"
- The world is controllable
- "Purpose = humanist enhancement of life"
- "Human-ness is in the work, not the author"
- Literature is timeless and constant in human nature
- Everyone is individual regardless of environmental influences
- Form and content are fused

Barry best sums up liberal humanism in his text "Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and cultural theory" as:

"Politics is pervasive,
Language is constitutive,
Truth is provisional,
Meaning is contingent,
Human nature is a myth."

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I Ching

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The *I Ching* (Wade-Giles), or "Yì Jīng" (Pinyin); also called "Book of Changes" or "Classic of Changes" is one of the oldest of the Chinese classic texts. The book is a symbol system used to identify order in chance events. The text describes an ancient system of cosmology and philosophy that is intrinsic to ancient Chinese cultural beliefs. The cosmology centres on the ideas of *the dynamic balance of opposites*, *the evolution of events as a process,* and *acceptance of the inevitability of change* (see *Philosophy*, below). In Western cultures and modern East Asia, the *I Ching* is sometimes regarded as a system of divination. The classic consists of a series of symbols, rules for manipulating these symbols, poems, and commentary.

Implications of the title

- 易 (*yì*), when used as an adjective, means "easy" or "simple", while as a verb it implies "to change" or 'to exchange/substitute one thing for another'.
- 經 (*jīng*) here means "classic (text)", derived from its original meaning of "regularity" or "persistency", implying that the text describes the Ultimate Way which will not change throughout the flow of time. This same character was later appropriated to translate the Sanskrit word ' sūtra' into Chinese in reference to Buddhist scripture. In this sense the two concepts, in as much as they mean 'treatise,' 'great teaching,' or 'canonical scripture,' are equivalent.

The *I Ching* is a "reflection of the universe in miniature." The word "I" has three meanings: ease and simplicity, change and transformation, and invariability. Thus the three principles underlying the *I Ching* are the following:

1. *Simplicity* - the root of the substance. The fundamental law underlying everything in the universe is utterly plain and simple, no matter how abstruse or complex some things may appear to be.
2. *Variability* - the use of the substance. Everything in the universe is continually changing. By comprehending this one may realize the importance of flexibility in life and may thus cultivate the proper attitude for dealing with a multiplicity of diverse situations.
3. *Persistency* - the essence of the substance. While everything in the universe seems to be changing, among the changing tides there is a persistent principle, a central rule, which does not vary with space and time.

> — 易一名而含三義：易簡一也；變易二也；不易三也。commented on by Zheng Xuan (鄭玄 *zhèng xúan*) in his writings *Critique of I Ching* (易賛 *yì zàn*) and *Commentary on I Ching* (易論 *yì lùn*) of Eastern Han Dynasty.

This article contains Chinese text.
Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Chinese characters.

I Ching	
Traditional Chinese:	易 經
Simplified Chinese:	易 经
Hanyu Pinyin:	Yì Jīng
Literal meaning:	"Classic of Changes"
Transliterations	
Mandarin	
- Hanyu Pinyin:	Yì Jīng
- Wade-Giles:	I⁴ Ching¹
Min	
- Min-nan POJ:	ėk-keng
Yue (Cantonese)	
- Jyutping:	jik6 ging1
- IPA:	jɪk₂₂ kɪŋ₅₅

History

Traditional view

Traditionally it was believed that the principles of the *I Ching* originated with the mythical Fu Xi (伏羲 *Fú Xī*). In this respect he is seen as an early culture hero, one of the earliest legendary rulers of China (traditional dates 2800 BCE-2737 BCE), reputed to have had the 8 trigrams (八卦 *bā gùa*) revealed to him supernaturally. By the time of the legendary Yu (禹 *Yǔ*) 2194 BCE–2149 BCE, the trigrams had supposedly been developed into 64 hexagrams (六十四卦 *lìu shí sì gùa*), which were recorded in the scripture Lian Shan (《連山》 *Lián Shān*; also called *Lian Shan Yi*). *Lian Shan*, meaning "continuous mountains" in Chinese, begins with the hexagram Bound (艮 *gèn*), which depicts a *mountain* (☶) mounting on another and is believed to be the origin of the scripture's name.

After the traditionally recorded Xia Dynasty was overthrown by the Shang Dynasty, the hexagrams are said to have been re-deduced to form Gui Cang (《歸藏》 *Gūi Cáng*; also called *Gui Cang Yi*), and the hexagram Field (坤 *kūn*) became the first hexagram. *Gui Cang* may be literally translated into "return and be contained", which refers to *earth* as the first hexagram itself indicates. At the time of Shang's last king, Zhou Wang, King Wen of Zhou is said to have deduced the hexagram and discovered that the hexagrams beginning with Force (乾 *qián*) revealed the rise of Zhou. He then gave each hexagram a description regarding its own nature, thus Gua Ci (卦辭 *guà cí*, "Explanation of Hexagrams").

When King Wu of Zhou, son of King Wen, toppled the Shang Dynasty, his brother Zhou Gong Dan is said to have created Yao Ci (爻辭 *yáo cí*, "Explanation of Horizontal Lines") to clarify the significance of each horizontal line in each hexagram. It was not until then that the whole context of *I Ching* was understood. Its philosophy heavily influenced the literature and government administration of the Zhou Dynasty (1122 BCE - 256 BCE).

Later, during the time of Spring and Autumn (722 BCE - 481 BCE), Confucius is traditionally said to have written the Shi Yi (十翼 *shí yì*, "Ten Wings"), a group of commentaries on the *I Ching*. By the time of Han Wu Di (漢武帝 *Hàn Wǔ Dì*) of the Western Han Dynasty (circa 200 BCE), *Shi Yi* was often called *Yi Zhuan* (易傳 *yì zhùan*, "Commentary on the I Ching"), and together with the *I Ching* they composed *Zhou Yi* (周易 *zhōu yì*, "Changes of Zhou"). All later texts about *Zhou Yi* were explanations only, due to the classic's deep meaning.

Modernist view

In the past 50 years a "Modernist" history of the *I Ching* has been emerging, based on context criticism and research into Shang and Zhou dynasty oracle bones, as well as Zhou bronze inscriptions and other sources (see below). These reconstructions are dealt with in a growing number of books, such as *The Mandate of Heaven: Hidden History in the I Ching*, by S. J. Marshall, and Richard Rutt's *Zhouyi: The Book of Changes*, (see *References*, below).

Scholarly works dealing with the new view of the Book of Changes include doctoral dissertations by Richard Kunst and Edward Shaughnessy and a 2008 study by Richard J. Smith. These and other scholars have been helped immensely by the discovery, in the 1970s, by Chinese archaeologists, of intact Han dynasty era tombs in Mawangdui near Changsha, Hunan province. One of the tombs contained more or less complete 2nd century BC texts of the *I Ching*, the *Dao De Jing* and other works, which are mostly similar yet in some ways diverge significantly from the "received", or traditional, texts preserved historically.

The tomb texts include additional commentaries on the *I Ching*, previously unknown, and apparently attributed to Confucius. All of the Mawangdui texts are many centuries older than the earliest known attestations of the texts in question. When talking about the evolution of the Book of Changes, therefore, the Modernists contend that it is important to distinguish between the traditional history assigned to texts such as the *I Ching* (felt to be anachronistic by the Modernists), assignations in commentaries which have themselves been canonized over the centuries along with their subjects, and the more recent scholarly history aided by modern linguistic textual criticism and archaeology.

Many hold that these perspectives are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but, for instance, many Modernist scholars doubt the actual existence of Fuxi, or think Confucius had nothing to do with the Book of Changes, and contend that the hexagrams came before the trigrams. Modern scholarship comparing poetic usage and formulaic phrasing in this book with that in ancient bronze inscriptions has shown that the text cannot be attributed to King Wen or Zhou Gong, and that it likely was not compiled until the late Western Zhou, perhaps ca. the late 9th century BC.

Rather than being the work of one or several legendary or historical figures, the core divinatory text is now thought to be an accretion of Western Zhou divinatory concepts. As for the Shi Yi commentaries traditionally attributed to Confucius, scholars from the time of the 11th century A.D. scholar Ouyang Xiu onward have doubted this, based on textual analysis, and modern scholars date most of them to the late Warring States period (403/475 BC-256/221 BC), with some sections perhaps being as late as the Western Han period (206 BC-220 AD).

Structure

The text of the *I Ching* is a set of predictions represented by a set of 64 abstract line arrangements called *hexagrams* (卦 *guà*). Each hexagram is a figure composed of six stacked horizontal lines (爻 *yáo*), where each line is either Yang (an *unbroken*, or *solid* line), or Yin (*broken*, an *open* line with a gap in the centre). With six such lines stacked from bottom to top there are 2^6 or 64 possible combinations, and thus 64 hexagrams represented.

The hexagram diagram is conceptually subdivided into two three-line arrangements called *trigrams* (卦 *guà*). There are 2^3, hence 8, possible trigrams. The traditional view was that the hexagrams were a later development and resulted from combining the two trigrams. However, in the earliest relevant archaeological evidence, groups of numerical symbols on many Western Zhou bronzes and a very few Shang oracle bones, such groups already usually appear in sets of six. A few have been found in sets of three numbers, but these are somewhat later. Note also that these numerical sets greatly predate the groups of broken and unbroken lines, leading modern scholars to doubt the mythical early attributions of the hexagram system (see, e.g., Shaugnessy 1993).

Each hexagram represents a description of a state or process. When a hexagram is cast using one of the traditional processes of divination with *I Ching*, each of the yin or yang lines will be indicated as either *moving* (that is, changing), or *fixed* (that is, unchanging). Moving (also sometimes called "old", or "unstable") lines will change to their opposites, that is "young" lines of the other type -- old yang becoming young yin, and old yin becoming young yang.

The oldest method for casting the hexagrams, using yarrow stalks, is a *biased* random number generator, so the possible answers are not equiprobable. While the probability of getting either yin or yang is equal, the probability of getting old yang is three times greater than old yin. The yarrow stalk method was gradually replaced during the Han Dynasty by the three coins method. Using this method, the imbalance in generating old yin and old yang was eliminated. However, there is no theoretical basis for indicating what should be the optimal probability basis of the old lines versus the young lines. Of course, the whole idea behind

this system of divination is that the oracle will select the appropriate answer anyway, regardless of the probabilities.

There have been several arrangements of the trigrams and hexagrams over the ages. The *bā gùa* is a circular arrangement of the trigrams, traditionally printed on a mirror, or disk. According to legend, Fu Hsi found the bā gùa on the scales of a tortoise's back. They function rather like a magic square, with the four axes summing to the same value (e.g., using 0 and 1 to represent yin and yang, $000 + 111 = 111$, $101 + 010 = 111$, etc.).

The King Wen sequence is the traditional (i.e. "classical") sequence of the hexagrams used in most contemporary editions of the book. The King Wen sequence was explained for the first time in STEDT Monograph #5, where it is shown to contain within it a demonstration of advanced mathematical knowledge.

Trigrams

The solid line represents *yang*, the creative principle. The open line represents *yin*, the receptive principle. These principles are also represented in a common circular symbol (☯), known as taijitu (太極圖), but more commonly known in the west as the *yin-yang* (陰陽) diagram, expressing the idea of complementarity of changes: when Yang is at top, Yin is increasing, and the reverse.

The eight trigrams

In the following lists, the trigrams and hexagrams are represented using a common textual convention, horizontally from left-to-right, using '|' for yang and '¦' for yin, rather than the traditional bottom-to-top. In a more modern usage, the numbers 0 and 1 can also be used to represent yin and yang, being read left-to-right.

There are eight possible trigrams (八卦 *bāguà*):
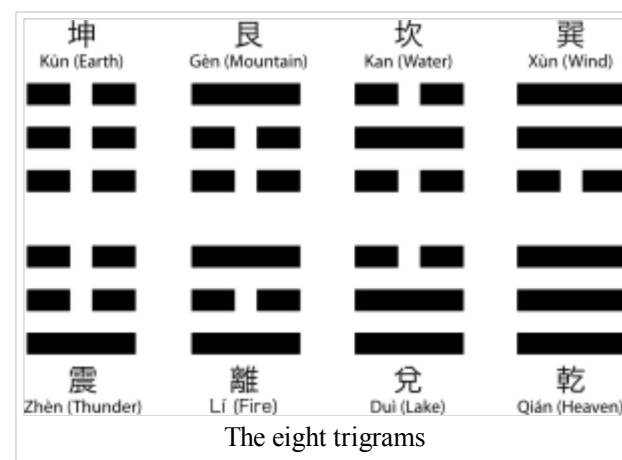
	Trigram Figure	Binary Value	Name	Translation: *Wilhelm*, others	Image in Nature	Direction	Family Relationship	Body Part	Attribute	Stage/ State	Animal
1	☰	111	乾 *qián*	*the Creative*, Force	heaven, aether 天	northwest	father	head	strong	creative	horse
2	☱	110	兌 *duì*	*the Joyous*, Open	swamp, marsh 澤	west	third daughter	mouth	pleasure	tranquil (complete devotion)	sheep
3	☲	101	離 *lí*	*the Clinging*, Radiance	fire 火	south	second daughter	eye	light-giving, dependence	clinging, clarity, adaptable	pheasant

4	☳	100	震 zhèn	*the Arousing*, Shake	thunder 雷	east	first son	foot	inciting movement	initiative	dragon
5	☴	011	巽 xùn	*the Gentle*, Ground	wind 風 wood	southeast	first daughter	thigh	penetrating	gentle entrance	fowl
6	☵	010	坎 kǎn	*the Abysmal*, Gorge	water 水	north	second son	ear	dangerous	in-motion	pig
7	☶	001	艮 gèn	*Keeping Still*, Bound	mountain 山	northeast	third son	hand	resting, stand-still	completion	wolf, dog
8	☷	000	坤 kūn	*the Receptive*, Field	earth 地	southwest	mother	belly	devoted, yielding	receptive	cow

The first three lines of the hexagram, called the *lower trigram*, are seen as the *inner aspect* of the change that is occurring. The *upper trigram* (the last three lines of the hexagram), is the *outer aspect*. The change described is thus the dynamic of the inner (personal) aspect relating to the outer (external) situation. Thus, hexagram 04 ䷃ Enveloping, is composed of the inner trigram ☵ Gorge, relating to the outer trigram ☶ Bound.

Hexagram Lookup Table

Upper → Lower ↓	⚌ (☰) Qian Heaven	⚎ (☳) Zhen Thunder	⚍ (☵) Kan Water	⚍ (☶) Gen Mountain	⚏ (☷) Kun Earth	⚌ (☴) Xun Wind	⚍ (☲) Li Flame	⚎ (☱) Dui Swamp
⚌ (☰) Qian Heaven	1	34	5	26	11	9	14	43
⚎ (☳) Zhen	25	51	3	27	24	42	21	17

Thunder								
䷀ (☵) Kan Water	6	40	29	4	7	59	64	47
䷀ (☶) Gen Mountain	33	62	39	52	15	53	56	31
䷀ (☷) Kun Earth	12	16	8	23	2	20	35	45
䷀ (☴) Xun Wind	44	32	48	18	46	57	50	28
䷀ (☲) Li Flame	13	55	63	22	36	37	30	49
䷀ (☱) Dui Swamp	10	54	60	41	19	61	38	58

The hexagrams

The text of the *I Ching* describes each of the 64 hexagrams, and later scholars added commentaries and analyses of each one; these have been subsumed into the text comprising the *I Ching*.

Each hexagram's common translation is accompanied by the corresponding R. Wilhelm translation, which is the source for the Unicode names.

Hexagram	R. Wilhelm	Modern Interpretation
01. ⚌ Force (乾 qián)	The Creative	Possessing Creative Power & Skill
02. ⚏ Field (坤 kūn)	The Receptive	Needing Knowledge & Skill
03. ䷂ Sprouting (屯 chún)	Difficulty at the Beginning	Sprouting
04. ䷃ Enveloping (蒙 méng)	Youthful Folly	Detained, Enveloped
05. ䷄ Attending (需 xū)	Waiting	Uninvolvement (Wait for now)
06. ䷅ Arguing (訟 sòng)	Conflict	Engagement in Conflict
07. ䷆ Leading (師 shī)	The Army	Bringing Together
08. ䷇ Grouping (比 bǐ)	Holding Together	Union
09. ䷈ Small Accumulating (小畜 xiǎo chù)	Small Taming	Temporary Restraint
10. ䷉ Treading (履 lǔ)	Treading (Conduct)	Continuing with Alertness
11. ䷊ Prevading (泰 tài)	Peace	Pervading
12. ䷋ Obstruction (否 pǐ)	Standstill	Stagnation
13. ䷌ Concording People (同人 tóng rén)	Fellowship	Fellowship, Partnership

Hexagram	R. Wilhelm	Modern Interpretation
33. ䷠ Retiring (遯 dùn)	Retreat	Withdrawing
34. ䷡ Great Invigorating (大壯 dà zhuàng)	Great Power	Resurrecting
35. ䷢ Prospering (晉 jìn)	Progress	Expansion, Promotion
36. ䷣ Brightness Hiding (明夷 míng yí)	Darkening of the Light	Injury, Persecution
37. ䷤ Dwelling People (家人 jiā rén)	The Family	Community
38. ䷥ Polarising (睽 kuí)	Opposition	Division, Divergence
39. ䷦ Limping (蹇 jiǎn)	Obstruction	Halting, Hardship
40. ䷧ Taking-Apart (解 xiè)	Deliverance	Liberation, Solution
41. ䷨ Diminishing (損 sǔn)	Decrease	Decrease
42. ䷩ Augmenting (益 yì)	Increase	Increase
43. ䷪ Parting (夬 guài)	Breakthrough	Separation
44. ䷫ Coupling (姤 gòu)	Coming to Meet	Copulation
45. ䷬ Clustering (萃 cuì)	Gathering Together	Association, Companionship
46. ䷭ Ascending (升 shēng)	Pushing Upward	Alienation, Rift
47. ䷮ Confining (困 kùn)	Oppression	Restriction
48. ䷯ Welling (井 jǐng)	The Well	Replenishing, Renewal

14. ⚏ Great Possessing (大有 dà yǒu)	Great Possession	Independence, Freedom
15. ⚏ Humbling (謙 qiān)	Modesty	Being Reserved, Refraining
16. ⚏ Providing-For (豫 yù)	Enthusiasm	Inducement, New Stimulus
17. ⚏ Following (隨 suí)	Following	Flourishing
18. ⚏ Corrupting (蠱 gǔ)	Work on the Decayed	Decaying
19. ⚏ Nearing (臨 lín)	Approach	Approaching Goal
20. ⚏ Viewing (觀 guān)	Contemplation	The Withholding
21. ⚏ Gnawing Bite (噬嗑 shì kè)	Biting Through	Compensation
22. ⚏ Adorning (賁 bì)	Grace	Entrapping, Deception, Lure
23. ⚏ Stripping (剝 bō)	Splitting Apart	Stripping, Flaying
24. ⚏ Returning (復 fù)	Return	Recovering
25. ⚏ Without Embroiling (無妄 wú wàng)	Innocence	Unanticipated Outcome
26. ⚏ Great Accumulating (大畜 dà chù)	Great Taming	Anticipated Outcome
27. ⚏ Swallowing (頤 yí)	Mouth Corners	Fulfillment
28. ⚏ Great Exceeding (大過 dà guò)	Great Preponderance	Nonfulfillment
29. ⚏ Gorge (坎 kǎn)	The Abysmal Water	Darkness, Gorge
30. ⚏ Radiance (離 lí)	The Clinging	Brightness

49. ⚏ Skinning (革 gé)	Revolution	Abolishing the Old
50. ⚏ Holding (鼎 dǐng)	The Cauldron	Establishing the New
51. ⚏ Shake (震 zhèn)	Arousing	Mobilizing
52. ⚏ Bound (艮 gèn)	The Keeping Still	Immobility
53. ⚏ Infiltrating (漸 jiàn)	Development	Auspicious Outlook, Infiltration
54. ⚏ Converting The Maiden (歸妹 guī mèi)	The Marrying Maiden	Inauspicious Outlook, Caution
55. ⚏ Abounding (豐 fēng)	Abundance	Goal Reached, Ambition Achieved
56. ⚏ Sojourning (旅 lǚ)	The Wanderer	Travel
57. ⚏ Ground (巽 xùn)	The Gentle	Abandoning, Yielding
58. ⚏ Open (兌 duì)	The Joyous	Accessing
59. ⚏ Dispersing (渙 huàn)	Dispersion	Dispersal
60. ⚏ Articulating (節 jié)	Limitation	Regulation
61. ⚏ Centre Confirming (中孚 zhōng fú)	Inner Truth	Staying Focused, Avoid Misrepresentation
62. ⚏ Small Exceeding (小過 xiǎo guò)	Small Preponderance	Transition, Temporary Stage
63. ⚏ Already Fording (既濟 jì jì)	After Completion	Completion
64. ⚏ Not-Yet Fording (未濟 wèi jì)	Before Completion	Incompletion

31. ䷞ Conjoining (咸 xián)	Influence	Attraction
32. ䷟ Persevering (恆 héng)	Duration	Perseverance

The hexagrams, though, are mere mnemonics for the philosophical concepts embodied in each one. The philosophy centres around the ideas of *balance through opposites* and *acceptance of change*.

Unicode

In Unicode, monograms cover code points U+268A to U+268B, digrams cover code points U+268C to U+268F, trigrams cover code points U+2630 to U+2637, hexagram symbols cover code points U+4DC0 to U+4DFF (19904 – 19967).

Tai Xuan Jing(太玄) digrams cover code points U+1D301 to U+1D305, tetragrams cover code points U+1D306 to U+1D356. The monograms cover code points U+1D300 (earth), U+268A (yang), U+268B (yin).

Philosophy

The hexagrams are built from gradations of binary expressions based on yin and yang. They consist of: old yang, old yin, young yang or young yin (see the *divination* paragraph below) Yin and yang, while common expressions associated with many schools of classical Chinese culture, are especially associated with the Taoists.

Another view holds that the *I Ching* is primarily a Confucianist ethical or philosophical document. This view is based upon the following:

- The Wings or Appendices are attributed to Confucius.
- The study of the *I Ching* was required as part of the Civil Service Exams in the period that these exams only studied Confucianist texts.
- It is one of the Five Confucian Classics.
- It does not appear in any surviving editions of the Daozang.
- The major commentaries were written by Confucianists, or Neo-Confucianists.
- Taoist scripture avoids, even mocks, all attempts at categorizing the world's myriad phenomena and forming a static philosophy.
- Taoists venerate the non-useful. The *I Ching* could be used for good or evil purposes.

Both views may be seen to show that the *I Ching* was at the heart of Chinese thought, serving as a common ground for the Confucian and Taoist schools. Partly

forgotten due to the rise of Chinese Buddhism during the Tang dynasty, the *I Ching* returned to the attention of scholars during the Song dynasty. This was concomitant with the reassessment of Confucianism by Confucians in the light of Taoist and Buddhist metaphysics, and is known in the West as Neo-Confucianism. The book, unquestionably an ancient Chinese scripture, helped Song Confucian thinkers to synthesize Buddhist and Taoist cosmologies with Confucian and Mencian ethics. The end product was a new cosmogony that could be linked to the so-called "lost Tao" of Confucius and Mencius.

Binary sequence

In his article *Explication de l'Arithmétique Binaire* (1703) Gottfried Leibniz writes that he has found in the hexagrams a base for claiming the universality of the binary numeral system. He takes the layout of the combinatorial exercise found in the hexagrams to represent binary sequences, so that ⁞⁞⁞⁞⁞⁞ would correspond to the binary sequence 000000 and ⁞⁞⁞⁞⁞| would be 000001, and so forth.

The binary arrangement of hexagrams is associated with the famous Chinese scholar and philosopher Shao Yung (a neo-Confucian and Taoist) in the 11th century. He displayed it in two different formats, a circle, and a rectangular block. Thus, he clearly understood the sequence represented a logical progression of values. However, while it is true that these sequences do represent the values 0 through 63 in a binary display, there is no evidence that Shao understood that the numbers could be used in computations such as addition or subtraction.

It should be noted that Shao Yung had been attributed with the original Segregation Table of the symbols of the book of changes *Fu-Hsi Liu-shih-ssu Kua Tzhu Hsu* from Chu Hsi's Chou I Pen I Thu Shou (reproduced in Hu Wei's I Thu Ming Pien ch.7, pp 2b,3a and elsewhere).

This Segregation Table of yin/yang symbolism was derived from a 12th century document. It sets forth the formulation of the sixty-four hexagrams in a diagrammatic manner. Here the inherent yin/yang symbolism associated with each hexagram is represented by black and white squares, where each row of spaces represents an individual line of the sixty-four hexagrams.

The top row represents Line 6, and consists of 32 yin and yang spaces.

The 2nd row from the top, Line 5 consists of 16 yin and yang spaces.

The 3rd row from the top, Line 4 consists of 8 yin and yang spaces.

The 4th row from the top, Line 3 consists of 4 yin and yang spaces.

The 5th row from the top, Line 2 consists of 2 yin and yang spaces.

The 6th row from the top, Line 1 consist of 1 yin and yang space.

If one considers each hexagram as a column of yin and yang spaces, the individual lines of each hexagram can be easily determined from the diagram.

Recent research *The I Ching Project by John Compton* has indicated that this segregation table by Shou Yung has been derived from the much earlier Fu Hsi's

Diagram of the derivation of the sixty-four hexagrams. This is probably the earliest example of yin/yang symbolism. His in-depth mathematical analysis suggests that the Ma-Wang-Tui(2nd century BC) arrangement of hexagrams identification numbers is the original I Ching hexagram arrangement.

The I Ching and the Binary Code relationship may be deduced from the "Lines" section, incorporated within the Commentaries of the I Ching, where the interpretation and meaning of each hexagram oracle is usually given. Each particular line of the hexagram has a significant meaning. The explanation commences with a sentence, which describes the respective yin or yang component of the hexagram line together with its position within the hexagram symbol, i.e. "Six in the Beginning......." or "Nine at the Top....." etc.(Yin lines are represented by the number 6, and yang lines by the number 9).

In this manner, a unique numerical yin/yang code has been assigned to each individual hexagram symbol.

For Example, consider the "Lines" of hexagram No.1 - Ch'ien / The Creative - this is represented by the following sentences:

Nine in the beginning:

Nine in the second place:

Nine in the third place:

Nine in the fourth place:

Nine in the fifth place:

Nine at the top.

Clearly, these sentences refer to yang(unbroken)line components represented by the number 9.

Similarly, we can consider the "Lines" of hexagram No.2 - K'un - The Receptive - represented by the following sentences:

Six in the beginning:

Six in the second place:

Six in the third place:

Six in the fourth place:

Six in the fifth place:

Six at the top.

These sentences refer to yin(broken)line components represented by the number 6.

This yin/yang code has mystified scholars and researchers for many centuries. However, Gottfried Leibniz realized that this numerical symbolic code represented a binary coded system based on the multiplication "powers" of the number 2. Where number 9 and 6, respectively represent the binary values of 1, and 0 (Zero).

In essence, the modern day binary code consists of a pattern of numbers formed from numbers 1 and 0.

Thus, the I Ching's yin/yang code can therefore be converted into the modern day binary code by assigning the binary value of 0 (Zero) to the YIN hexagram component(represented by the line value of 6), and assigning the binary value of 1 to the YANG hexagram component (represented by the line value of 9).

The binary code devised by Leibniz is based on the "powers" of the number 2.

i.e.,

$$2^0 = 1$$

$$2^1 = 2 \times 1 = 2$$

$$2^2 = 2 \times 2 = 4$$

$$2^3 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$$

$$2^4 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 16$$

$$2^5 = 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2 = 32$$

These binary values are assigned in this particular order:

$$2^5 : 2^4 : 2^3 : 2^2 : 2^1 : 2^0$$

The highest value is assigned to the bottom hexagram line, whilst the lowest value is assigned to the top hexagram line.

In this manner the I Ching's symbolic code can be converted into the binary code. Thus, the numerical denary value for each hexagram may be determined by adding the respective binary numerical values for each YANG hexagram line.

It should be noted, that there is sufficient evidence to show that the ancient Chinese mathematicians knew the mathematical methodology of the binary code, as it is graphically portrayed in the Mt.Meru "Holy Mountain" diagram c.200BC.

Reference - The I Ching Project - The I Ching Key - Volume 1 - The Secret Computer of the Ancient Gods ISBN 978-0-9554482-0-1.

The Symbolic and Numerical Language

The oracular interpretation of the symbolic language based on trigram symbols formed from yang and yin components is well known. However, the inherent numerical language of line change and non-change is relatively unknown.

When the translated text reads "Nine in the beginning means...." this is the equivalent of saying: "When the positive line in the first place is represented by the number 9, it has the following meaning.....". If, on the other hand, the line is represented by the number 7, it is disregarded in interpreting the oracle. The same principle holds for lines represented by the numbers 6 and 8 respectively.

Thus, line transformation (change) or non-transformation (non-change) can be represented numerically, as follows:

A POSITIVE(unbroken line) transforming into a NEGATIVE (broken line) = 9; A POSITIVE (unbroken line) transforming into a POSITIVE (unbroken line) = 7; A NEGATIVE (broken line) transforming into a POSITIVE (unbroken line) = 6; A NEGATIVE (broken line) transforming into a NEGATIVE (broken line) = 8;

This changes the ancient symbolic linear language of the I Ching into a simple numerical language that enables the practitioner to created sixteen numerical codes, which consist of three numbers, from each circular arrangement of eight trigrams.

John C. Compton suggests that these numerical codes represent specific codons of the Genetic Code.

Divination

The *I Ching* has long been used as an oracle and many different ways coexist to "cast" a reading, i.e., a hexagram, with its dynamic relationship to others. In China the *I Ching* had two distinct functions. The first was as a compendium and classic of ancient cosmic principles. The second function was that of divination text. As a divination text the world of the *I Ching* was that of the marketplace fortune teller and roadside oracle. These individuals served the illiterate peasantry. The educated Confucian elite in China were of an entirely different disposition. The future results of our actions were a function of our personal virtues. The Confucian literati actually had little use for the *I Ching* as a work of divination. In the collected works of the countless educated literati of ancient China there are actually few references to the *I Ching* as a divination text. Any eyewitness account of traditional Chinese society, such as S. Wells

Williams *The Middle Kingdom*, and many others, can clarify this very basic distinction. Williams tells us of the *I Ching*, "The hundred of fortune- tellers seen in the streets of Chinese towns, whose answers to their perplexed customers are more or less founded on these cabala, indicate their influence among the illiterate; while among scholars, who have long since conceded all divination to be vain..." (*The Middle Kingdom*, vol. 1, p. 632)

Symbolism

The Flag of South Korea contains the Taijitu symbol, or *tàijítú,* (yin and yang in dynamic balance, called *taegeuk* in Korean), representing the origin of all things in the universe. The *taegeuk* is surrounded by four of the eight trigrams, starting from top left and going clockwise: Heaven, Water, Earth, Fire.

The flag of the Empire of Vietnam used the *Li* (Fire) trigram and was known as *cờ quẻ Ly* (Li trigram flag) because the trigram represents South. Its successor the Republic of Vietnam connected the middle lines, turning it into the Qián (Heaven) trigram. (see Flag of the Republic of Vietnam).

The flag of South Korea, with *Taegeuk* in the centre with four trigrams representing Heaven, Water, Earth, and Fire (beginning top left and proceeding clockwise).

Influence on Western culture

The *I Ching* has influenced countless Chinese philosophers, artists and even businesspeople throughout history. In more recent times, several Western artists and thinkers have used it in fields as diverse as psychoanalysis, music, film, drama, dance, eschatology, and fiction writing.

Commentary

Early Chinese civilization, as with western civilization, accepted various pre-scientific explanations of natural events, and the *I Ching* has been cited as an example of this. As a manual of divination it interpreted natural events through readings based on symbols expressed in the trigrams and hexagrams. Thus any observation in nature could be interpreted as to its significance and cause. This might be compared to the Roman practice of basing decisions on the state of animals' livers. While usually sympathetic to the claims of Chinese culture and science, Joseph Needham, in his second volume of *Science and Civilization in China* (p. 311) stated: "Yet really they [Han dynasty scholars] would have been wiser to tie a millstone about the neck of the *I Ching* and cast it into the sea."

Flag of the Empire of Vietnam used Trigram Li - Fire

Abraham (1999) states that Confucius' ten commentaries, called the Ten Wings, transformed the *I Ching* from a divination text into a "philosophical masterpiece." It was this form of the *I Ching* that inspired the Taoists, Chuang Tzu and Lao Tzu. It has influenced Confucians and other philosophers and scientists ever since. However, Helmut Wilhelm in his *Change/Eight Lectures on the I Ching*, cautions, "It can no longer be said with certainty whether any of the material-and if any, how much-comes from Confucius' own hand" (p. 12).

http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 299 of 735

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Isis

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Isis is a goddess in Ancient Egyptian mythology and is celebrated as the ideal mother and wife, patron of nature and magic; friend of slaves, sinners, artisans, the downtrodden, as well as listening to the prayers of the wealthy, the maiden, the aristocrat and emperor. In union with her husband and brother Osiris she conceived Horus. Isis was instrumental in the resurrection of Osiris when he was murdered by Seth. The goddess Isis was the first daughter of Geb, god of the Earth, and Nut, the goddess of the Overarching Sky, and was born on the fourth intercalary day, correspondence having been made in the modern calendar with July the 17th.

She is also known as the goddess of simplicity, from whom all Beginnings arose, and as the Lady of bread, of beer and of green fields. Ancient Egyptians believed that the Nile flooded every year because of her tears of sorrow for her dead husband, Osiris.

Etymology

Isis
in hieroglyphs
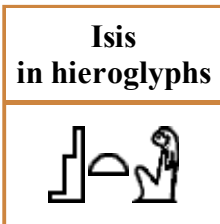
The English pronunciation used for this deity, /ˈaɪ.sɪs/, is an Anglicized pronunciation of the Greek name, Ἶσις, which itself changed the original Egyptian name by the addition of a final "-s" because of the grammatical requirements of Greek noun endings. The Egyptian name was recorded as i̇s.t or ꜣs.t and meant "(She of the) Throne." However, the true Egyptian pronunciation remains uncertain because their writing system did not always feature vowels. Based on recent studies which present us with approximations based on contemporary languages and Coptic evidence, the reconstructed pronunciation of her name is *ʔŪsat (ooh-saht). Later, the name survived into Coptic dialects as "Ēse" or "Ēsi," as well as in compound words surviving in names of later people like " Har-si-Ese," literally "Horus, son of Isis."

Isis

Her name literally means "queen of the throne." Her original headdress was an empty throne chair belonging to her murdered husband, Osiris. As the personification of the throne, she was an important source of the Pharaoh's power. Her cult was popular throughout Egypt, but the most important sanctuaries were at Giza and at Behbeit El-Hagar in the Nile delta.

For convenience and arbitrarily, Egyptologists choose to pronounce the word as "ee-set." Sometimes they may also say "ee-sa" because the final "t" in her name was a feminine suffix, which is known to have been dropped in speech during the last stages of the Egyptian language.

Origins

The Goddess Isis, wall painting, ca. 1360 BCE.

Her origins are uncertain but are believed to have come from the Nile Delta; however, unlike other Egyptian deities, she did not have a centralized cult at any point throughout her worship. First mentions of Isis date back to the Fifth dynasty of Egypt which is when the first literary inscriptions are found, but her cult became prominent late in Egyptian history, when it began to absorb the cults of many other goddesses. It eventually spread outside Egypt.

During the formative centuries of Christianity, the religion of Isis was drawing converts from every corner of the Roman Empire. In Italy itself, the Egyptian faith was a dominant force. At Pompeii, archaeological evidence reveals that Isis played a major role. In Rome, temples were built and obelisks erected in her honour. In Greece, traditional centres of worship in Delos, Delphi and Eleusis were taken over by followers of Isis, and this practice followed suit in northern Greece and in Athens. Harbours of Isis were to be found on the Arabian Sea and the Black Sea. Inscriptions show followers in Gaul and Spain, in Pannonia and Germany, in Arabia and Asia Minor, Portugal, Ireland, and many shrines in Britain.
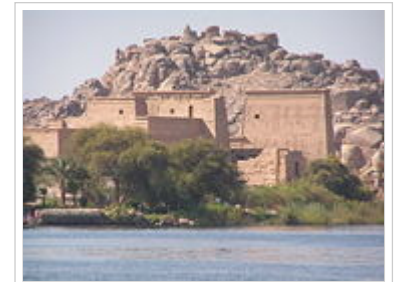
Temples

Most Egyptian deities started as strictly local, and throughout their history retained local centres of worship, with most major cities and towns widely known as the hometowns to their deities. Isis was originally an independent and popular deity established in pre-dynastic times at Sebennytos in the northern delta.

Eventually temples to Isis began to spread outside of Egypt. In many locations, particularly Byblos, her cult took over that of worship to the Semitic goddess Astarte, apparently due to the similarity of names and associations. During the Hellenic era, due to her attributes as a protector, and mother, and the lusty aspect originally from Hathor, she was also made the patron goddess of sailors.

Likewise, the Arabian goddess Al-Ozza or Al-Uzza العُزّى (al ʒozza), whose name is close to that of Isis, is believed to be a manifestation of her. This however is based on similarity in the name.

Throughout the Graeco-Roman world, Isis became one of the most significant of the mystery religions, and many classical writers refer to her temples, cults and rites. Temples to Isis were built in Iraq, Greece, Rome, Pompeii. At Philae her worship persisted until the sixth century, long after the rise of Christianity and the suppression of paganism. Philae was the last of the ancient Egyptian temples to be closed.

Temple of Isis in Philae, Egypt

Temple of Isis in Rome
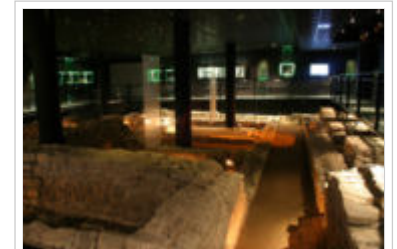
Sanctuary of Isis in Mainz, Germany

Priesthood

Little information on Egyptian priests of Isis survives; however, it is clear there were both priests and priestesses of her cult throughout her history. By the Graeco-Roman era, many of them were healers, and were said to have many other special powers, including dream interpretation and the ability to control the weather by braiding or combing their hair, the latter of which was believed because the Egyptians considered knots to have magical powers.

Iconography

Associations

Priestess of Isis, Roman statue
2nd Century CE

Because of the association between knots and magical power, a symbol of Isis was the *tiet*/ *tyet* (meaning *welfare*/*life*), also called the *Knot of Isis*, *Buckle of Isis*, or the *Blood of Isis*. The *tiet* in many respects resembles an ankh, except that its arms curve down, and in all these cases seems to represent the idea of eternal life/ resurrection. The meaning of *Blood of Isis* is more obscured, but the *tyet* was often used as a funerary amulet made of red wood, stone, or glass, so this may have simply been a description of its appearance.

" tyet"
Knot of Isis
in hieroglyphs

The star Spica (sometimes called *Lute Bearer*), and the constellation which roughly corresponded to the modern Virgo, appeared at a time of year associated with the harvest of wheat and grain, and thus with fertility gods and goddesses. Consequently they were associated with Hathor, and hence with Isis through her later conflation with Hathor. Isis also assimilated Sopdet, the personification of Sirius, since Sopdet, rising just before the flooding of the Nile, was seen as a bringer of fertility, and so had been identified with Hathor. Sopdet retained an element of distinct identity, however, as Sirius was quite visibly a star and not living in the underworld (Isis being the wife of Osiris who was king of the underworld).

In the Roman period, probably due to assimilation with the goddesses Aphrodite and Venus, the rose was used in her worship. The demand for roses throughout the Empire turned rose growing into an important industry.

Titles

In the Book of the Dead Isis was described as:

- *She who gives birth to heaven and earth,*
- *She who knows the orphan,*
- *She who knows the widow spider,*

http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 305 of 735

- *She who seeks justice for the poor people,*
- *She who seeks shelter for the weak people*

Some of Isis's many other titles were:

- *Queen of Heaven,*
- *Mother of the Gods,*
- *The One Who is All,*
- *Lady of Green Crops,*
- *The Brilliant One in the Sky,*
- *Star of the Sea,*
- *Great Lady of Magic,*
- *Mistress of the House of Life,*
- *She Who Knows How To Make Right Use of the Heart,*
- *Light-Giver of Heaven,*
- *Lady of the Words of Power,*
- *Moon Shining Over the Sea.*

Depictions

In art, originally Isis was pictured as a woman wearing a long sheath dress and crowned with the hieroglyphic sign for a *throne*, sometimes holding a lotus, as a Sycamore tree. After her assimilation of Hathor, Isis's headdress is replaced with that of Hathor: the horns of a cow on her head, and the solar disc between them. She was also sometimes symbolised by a cow, or a cow's head. Usually, she was depicted with her young son, the great god Horus, with a crown and a vulture, and sometimes as a kite flying above Osiris's body or with the dead Osiris across her lap.

Isis is most often seen holding only the generic ankh sign and a simple staff, but is sometimes seen with Hathor's attributes, the sacred sistrum rattle and the fertility bearing *menat* necklace. In *The Book of Coming Forth By Day* Isis is depicted standing on the prow of the Solar Bark with arms outstretched.

The star Sept (Sirius) depicts Isis, which is the star of the new year. The appearance of the star signified the advent of a new year and so Isis was considered the goddess of rebirth and reincarnation and as a protector of the dead. The Book of the Dead outlines a particular ritual that would protect the dead so that he can go anywhere in the under world. Most of the names Isis holds signify her as the goddess of protection of the dead.

Isis in literature

Isis is the most important goddess in Egyptian mythology who transferred from a local goddess in the Nile Delta to a cosmic goddess all over the ancient world. The name Isis is still a beloved name among modern Coptic Egyptians, and in Europe the name (Isadora) i.e. Gift of Isis is still common.

Plutarch's *Isis and Osiris* is considered a main source in which he writes of Isis: *"she is both wise, and a lover of wisdom; as her name appears to denote that, more than any other, knowing and knowledge belong to her."* and that the shrine of Isis in Sais carried the inscription *"I am all that hath been, and is, and shall be; and my veil no mortal has hitherto raised."* In The Golden Ass the Roman writer Apuleius' gives us an understanding of Isis in the second century. The following paragraph is particularly significant:

> " You see me here, Lucius, in answer to your prayer. I am nature, the universal Mother, mistress of all the elements, primordial child of time, sovereign of all things spiritual, queen of the dead, queen also of the immortals, the single manifestation of all gods and goddesses that are, my nod governs the shining heights of Heavens, the wholesome sea breezes. Though I am worshipped in many aspects, known by countless names ... some know me as Juno, some as Bellona ... the Egyptians who excel in ancient learning and worship call me by my true name...Queen Isis. "

Mythology

Isis   **in hieroglyphs**
.or
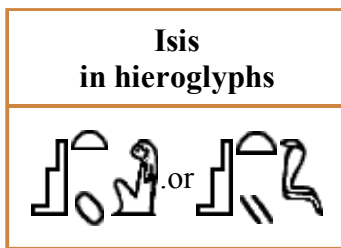
As the deification of the wife of the Pharaoh, the first prominent role of Isis was as the assistant to the deceased king. Thus she gained a funerary association, her name appearing over 80 times in the Pyramid Texts, and was said to be the mother of the four gods who protected the canopic jars - more specifically, Isis was viewed as protector of the liver-jar-god Imsety. This association with the Pharaoh's wife also brought the idea that Isis was considered the spouse of Horus, who was protector, and later the deification, of the Pharaoh himself. By the Middle Kingdom, as the funeral texts spread to be used by non-royals, her role also grows to protect the nobles and even the commoners.

By the New Kingdom, Isis gains prominence as the mother / protector of the Pharaoh. She is said to breastfeed the Pharaoh with her milk, and is often depicted visually as such. The role of her name and her throne-crown is uncertain. Some Egyptologists believe that being the throne-mother was Isis's original function, however a more modern view states that aspects of the role came later by association. In many African tribes, the king's throne is known as the mother of the king, and that fits well with either theory, giving us more insight into the thinking of ancient Egyptians.

Sister-wife to Osiris

In another area of Egypt, Isis became one of the Ennead of Heliopolis, as a daughter of Nut and Geb, and sister to Osiris, Nephthys, and Seth. As a funerary deity, she was associated with Osiris, god of the underworld (*Duat*), and thus was considered his wife. The two females - Isis and Nephthys - were often depicted on coffins, with wings outstretched, as protectors against evil.

A later legend (ultimately a result of the replacement of another god of the underworld when the cult of Osiris gained more authority), tells of the birth of Anubis. The tale describes how Nephthys became sexually frustrated with Set and disguised herself as the much more attractive Isis to try to seduce him. The plot failed, but Osiris now found Nephthys very attractive, as he thought she was Isis. They coupled, resulting in the birth of Anubis. In fear of Set's anger, Nephthys persuaded Isis to adopt Anubis, so that Set would not find out. The tale describes both why Anubis is seen as an underworld deity (he is a son of Osiris), and why he could not inherit Osiris's position (he was not a legitimate heir), neatly preserving Osiris's position as lord of the underworld. However, it should be remembered that this story was only a later creation of the Osirian cult who wanted to depict Set in an evil position, as the enemy of Osiris.

In another myth, Set had a banquet for Osiris in which he brought in a beautiful box and said that whoever could fit in the box perfectly would get to keep it. Set had measured Osiris in his sleep so that he was the only person that could fit in the box. Once it was Osiris's turn to see if he could fit in the box, Set closed the lid on him so that the box was now a coffin for Osiris. Set flung the box in the Nile so that it would float far away; Isis went looking for the box so that Osiris could have a proper burial. She found the box in a tree in Byblos, and brought it back to Egypt, hiding it in a swamp. Set went hunting that night and found the box. To make it so Isis could never find Osiris again, Set chopped Osiris's body into fourteen pieces and scattered them all over Egypt. Isis and her sister Nephthys went looking for his pieces, but could only find thirteen of the fourteen. Fish had swallowed the last piece, his penis, so Isis fashioned one out of gold. Isis used her magic to put Osiris's body back together and managed to bring him back to life, in which they conceived Horus.
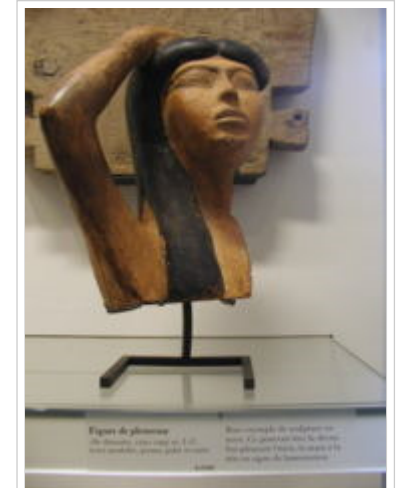
Assimilation of Hathor

Beliefs about Ra himself had been hovering around the identification of Ra, a sun god, with Horus, another sun god (as the compound *Ra-Herakhty*), and so for some time, Isis had intermittently been considered the wife of Ra, since she was the mother of Horus. Consequently, since there was not anything logically troubling by identifying Isis as Ra's wife, Hathor unlike identifying Ra as her own son, she and Hathor became considered the same deity, *Isis-Hathor*. Sometimes the alternative consideration arose, that Isis, in the Ennead, was a child of *Atum-Ra*, and so should have been a child of Ra's wife, Hathor, although this was less favoured as Isis had enough in common with Hathor to be considered one and the same.

Rare terracotta image of Isis lamenting the loss of Osiris - eighteenth dynasty - Musée du Louvre, Paris

Mother of Horus

Isis nursing Horus.

It was this merger with Hathor that proved to be the most significant event in the history of Egyptian mythology. By merging with Hathor, Isis became the mother of Horus, rather than his wife, and thus, when beliefs of Ra absorbed Atum into *Atum-Ra*, it also had to be taken into account that Isis was one of the Ennead, as the wife of Osiris. However, it had to be explained how Osiris, who (as god of the dead) was dead, could be considered a father to Horus, who was not considered dead. This led to the evolution of the idea that Osiris needed to be resurrected, and so to the Legend of Osiris and Isis, of which Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* contains the most extensive account known today, a myth so significant that it is the most famous of all Egyptian myths.

Yet another set of myths detail the adventures of Isis after the birth of Osiris's posthumous son, Horus. Many dangers faced Horus after birth, and Isis fled with the newborn to escape the wrath of Set, the murderer of her husband. In one instance, Isis heals Horus from a lethal scorpion sting; she also performs other miracles in relation to the so-called cippi, or the plaques of Horus. Isis protected and raised Horus until he was old enough to face Set, and subsequently became the king of Egypt.

Magic

In order to resurrect Osiris for the purpose of having the child Horus, it was necessary for Isis to learn magic, and so it was that Isis tricked Ra (i.e. *Amun-Ra*/*Atum-Ra*) into telling her his "secret name," by causing a snake to bite him, to which Isis had the only cure, so that he would use his "secret name" to survive. This aspect becomes central in magic spells, and Isis is often implored to use the true name of Ra while performing rituals. By the late Egyptian history, Isis becomes the most important and most powerful magical deity of the Egyptian pantheon. Magic is central to the entire mythology of Isis, arguably more so than any other Egyptian deity.

In consequence of her deeply magical nature, Isis also became a goddess of magic (though Thoth was always the leading god of magic). The prior goddess to hold the quadruple roles of healer, protector of the canopic jars, protector of marriage, and goddess of magic, Serket, became considered an aspect of her. Thus it is not surprising that Isis had a central role in Egyptian magic spells and ritual, especially those of protection and healing. In many spells, she is also completely merged even with Horus, where invocations of Isis are supposed to automatically involve Horus's powers as well.

A statue of Isis nursing Horus, housed in the Louvre.

Assimilation of Mut

After the authority of Thebes had risen, and made Amun into a much more significant god, it later waned, and Amun was assimilated into Ra. In consequence, Amun's consort, Mut, the doting, infertile, and implicitly virginal mother, who by this point had absorbed other goddesses herself, was assimilated into Ra's wife, Isis-Hathor as *Mut-Isis-Nekhbet*. On occasion, Mut's infertility and implicit virginity was taken into consideration, and so Horus, who was too significant to ignore, had to be explained by saying that Isis became pregnant with magic when she transformed herself into a kite and flew over Osiris' dead body.

Mut's husband was Amun, who had by this time become identified with Min as *Amun-Min* (also known by his epithet - *Kamutef*). Since Mut had become part of Isis, it was natural to try to make Amun, part of Osiris, the husband of Isis, but this was not easily reconcilable, because Amun-Min was a fertility god and Osiris was the god of the dead. Consequently they remained regarded separately, and Isis was sometimes said to be the lover of Min. Subsequently, as at this stage Amun-Min was considered an aspect of Ra (*Amun-Ra*), he was also considered an aspect of Horus, since Horus was identified as Ra, and thus Isis's son was on rare occasions said to be Min instead, which neatly avoided having confusion over Horus's status as was held at being the husband and son of Isis.

Isis outside Egypt

Following the conquest of Egypt by Alexander of Macedon the worship of Isis spread throughout the Graeco-Roman world. Tacitus writes that after Julius Caesar's assassination, a temple in honour of Isis had been decreed; Augustus suspended this, and tried to turn Romans back to the Roman gods who were

closely associated with the state. Eventually the Roman emperor Caligula abandoned the Augustan wariness towards oriental cults, and it was in his reign that the Isiac festival was established in Rome. According to Josephus, Caligula himself donned female garb and took part in the mysteries he instituted, and Isis acquired in the Hellenistic age a "new rank as a leading goddess of the Mediterranean world." Vespasian along with Titus practised incubation in the Roman Iseum. Domitian built another Iseum along with a Serapeum. Trajan appears before Isis and Horus, presenting them with votive offerings of wine, in a bas-relief on his triumphal arch in Rome. Hadrian decorated his villa at Tibur with Isaic scenes. Galerius regarded Isis as his protectress.

Roman perspectives on cult were syncretic, seeing in new deity merely local aspects of a familiar one. For many Romans, Egyptian Isis was an aspect of Phrygian Cybele, whose orgiastic rites were long naturalized at Rome, indeed, she was known as *Isis of Ten Thousand Names*. Among these names of Roman Isis, *Queen of Heaven* is outstanding for its long and continuous history. Herodotus identified Isis with the Greek and Roman goddesses of agriculture, Demeter and Ceres. In later years, Isis also had temples throughout Europe, Africa, and Asia.

Parallels in Catholicism and Orthodoxy

Scholars have drawn comparisons with Isis worship in late Roman times and the cult of the Blessed Virgin Mary. For example, the historian Will Durant has claimed, "Early Christians sometimes worshiped before the statues of Isis suckling the infant Horus, seeing in them another form of the ancient and noble myth by which woman (i.e., the female principle), creating all things, becomes at last the Mother of God." Though the Virgin Mary is not worshiped (only venerated) in Catholicism and Orthodoxy, her role as a merciful mother figure has parallels with the figure of Isis.

Worship of Isis in modern times

Isis is worshiped in modern times, commonly within the context of neo-pagan spiritual movements. Organizations such as the Fellowship of Isis promote the spreading of Goddess worship and attract members from the wider Wiccan, Qabalah, Rosicrucianism, Celtic Mysteries, Zen, Sufi and Tao paths.

On the right is Our Mother of Perpetual Help, a famous medieval icon of Mary and Jesus; on the left is a bronze statue of Isis nursing Horus dating from the Ptolemaic era of Egypt.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isis"

Islam

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Islam (Arabic: الإسلام; *al-'islām* ; pronounced: [ɪsˈlæːm]) is a monotheistic Abrahamic religion originating with the teachings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, a seventh century Arab religious and political figure. The word *Islam* means "submission", or the total surrender of oneself to God (Arabic: الله, Allāh). An adherent of Islam is known as a Muslim, meaning "one who submits [to God]". There are between 1 billion to 1.8 billion Muslims, making Islam the second-largest religion in the world, after Christianity.

Muslims believe that God revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad, God's final prophet, and regard the Qur'an and the Sunnah (words and deeds of Muhammad) as the fundamental sources of Islam. They do not regard Muhammad as the founder of a new religion, but as the restorer of the original monotheistic faith of Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. Islamic tradition holds that Jews and Christians distorted the revelations God gave to these prophets by either altering the text, introducing a false interpretation, or both.

Muslims performing salah (prayer)

Islam includes many religious practices. Adherents are generally required to observe the Five Pillars of Islam, which are five duties that unite Muslims into a community. In addition to the Five Pillars, Islamic law (*sharia*) has developed a tradition of rulings that touch on virtually all aspects of life and society. This tradition encompasses everything from practical matters like dietary laws and banking to warfare and welfare.

Almost all Muslims belong to one of two major denominations, the Sunni (85%) and Shi'a (15%). The schism developed in the late 7th century following disagreements over the religious and political leadership of the Muslim community. Islam is the predominant religion in Africa and the Middle East, as well as in major parts of Asia. Large communities are also found in China, the Balkan Peninsula in Eastern Europe and Russia. There are also large Muslim immigrant communities in other parts of the world, such as Western Europe. About 20% of Muslims live in Arab countries, 30% in the Indian subcontinent and 15.6% in Indonesia, the largest Muslim country by population.

Etymology and meaning

The word *Islam* is a verbal noun originating from the triliteral root *s-l-m*, and is derived from the Arabic verb *Aslama*, which means "to accept, surrender or submit." Thus, Islam means acceptance of and submission to God, and believers must demonstrate this by worshipping him, following his commands, and avoiding polytheism. The word is given a number of meanings in the Qur'an. In some verses (*ayat*), the quality of Islam as an internal conviction is stressed: "Whomsoever God desires to guide, He expands his breast to Islam." Other verses connect *islām* and *dīn* (usually translated as "religion"): "Today, I have perfected your religion (*dīn*) for you; I have completed My blessing upon you; I have approved Islam for your religion." Still others describe Islam as an action

of returning to God—more than just a verbal affirmation of faith. Another technical meaning in Islamic thought is as one part of a triad of *islam*, *imān* (faith), and *ihsān* (excellence); where it represents acts of worship (`*ibādah*) and Islamic law (*sharia*).

Articles of faith

The Qur'an states that all Muslims must believe in God, his revelations, his angels, his messengers, and in the " Day of Judgment". Also, there are other beliefs that differ between particular sects. The Sunni concept of predestination is called divine decree, while the Shi'a version is called divine justice. Unique to the Shi'a is the doctrine of *Imamah*, or the political and spiritual leadership of the Imams.

Muslims believe that God revealed his final message to humanity through the Islamic prophet Muhammad via the angel Gabriel. For them, Muhammad was God's final prophet and the Qur'an is the revelations he received over more than two decades. In Islam, prophets are men selected by God to be his messengers. Muslims believe that prophets are human and not divine, though some are able to perform miracles to prove their claim. Islamic prophets are considered to be the closest to perfection of all humans, and are uniquely the recipients of divine revelation—either directly from God or through angels. The Qur'an mentions the names of numerous figures considered prophets in Islam, including Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus, among others. Islamic theology says that all of God's messengers since Adam preached the message of Islam—submission to the will of God. Islam is described in the Qur'an as "the primordial nature upon which God created mankind", and the Qur'an states that the proper name *Muslim* was given by Abraham.

As a historical phenomenon, Islam originated in Arabia in the early 7th century. Islamic texts depict Judaism and Christianity as prophetic successor traditions to the teachings of Abraham. The Qur'an calls Jews and Christians " People of the Book" (*ahl al-kitāb*), and distinguishes them from polytheists. Muslims believe that parts of the previously revealed scriptures, the *Tawrat* (Torah) and the *Injil* (Gospels), had become distorted—either in interpretation, in text, or both.

God

Islam's fundamental theological concept is *tawhīd*—the belief that there is only one god. The Arabic term for God is *Allāh*; most scholars believe it was derived from a contraction of the words *al-* (the) and *ʾilāh* (deity, masculine form), meaning "the god" (*al-ilāh*), but others trace its origin to the Aramaic *Alāhā*. The first of the Five Pillars of Islam, *tawhīd* is expressed in the *shahadah* (testification), which declares that there is no god but God, and that Muhammad is God's messenger. In traditional Islamic theology, God is beyond all comprehension; Muslims are not expected to visualize God but to worship and adore him as a protector. Although Muslims believe that Jesus was a prophet, they reject the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, comparing it to polytheism. In Islamic theology, Jesus was just a man and not the son of God; God is described in a chapter (*sura*) of the Qur'an as "…God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him."

Qur'an

Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the literal word of God; it is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe that the verses of the Qur'an were revealed to Muhammad by God through the angel Gabriel on many occasions between 610 and his death on June 8, 632. The Qur'an was reportedly written down by Muhammad's companions (*sahabah*) while he was alive, although the prime method of transmission was orally. It was compiled in the time of Abu Bakr, the first caliph, and was standardized under the administration of Uthman, the third caliph. The Qur'an in its present form is often considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants in Western academia has not yielded any differences of great significance and that historically controversy over the content of the Qur'an has never become a main point.

The Qur'an is divided into 114 suras, or chapters, which combined, contain 6,236 *āyāt*, or verses. The chronologically earlier suras, revealed at Mecca, are primarily concerned with ethical and spiritual topics. The later Medinan suras mostly discuss social and moral issues relevant to the Muslim community. The Qur'an is more concerned with moral guidance than legal instruction, and is considered the "sourcebook of Islamic principles and values". Muslim jurists consult the *hadith*, or the written record of Muhammad's life, to both supplement the Qur'an and assist with its interpretation. The science of Qur'anic commentary and exegesis is known as *tafsir*.
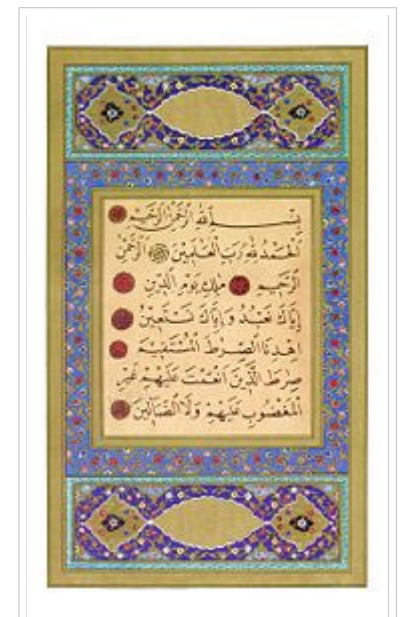
The word *Qur'an* means "recitation". When Muslims speak in the abstract about "the Qur'an", they usually mean the scripture as recited in Arabic rather than the printed work or any translation of it. To Muslims, the Qur'an is perfect only as revealed in the original Arabic; translations are necessarily deficient because of language differences, the fallibility of translators, and the impossibility of preserving the original's inspired style. Translations are therefore regarded only as commentaries on the Qur'an, or "interpretations of its meaning", not as the Qur'an itself.

The first sura in a Qur'anic manuscript by Hattat Aziz Efendi

Angels

Belief in angels is crucial to the faith of Islam. The Arabic word for Angels (*malak*) means "messenger", like its counterparts in Hebrew (*malakh*) and Greek (*angelos*). According to the Qur'an, angels do not possess free will, and worship God in perfect obedience. Angels' duties include communicating revelations from God, glorifying God, recording every person's actions, and taking a person's soul at the time of death. They are also thought to intercede on man's behalf. The Qur'an describes angels as "messengers with wings—two, or three, or four (pairs): He [God] adds to Creation as He pleases…"

Muhammad

Muhammad (c. 570 – June 8, 632) was an Arab religious, political, and military leader who founded the religion of Islam as a historical phenomenon. Muslims view him not as the creator of a new religion, but as the restorer of the original, uncorrupted monotheistic faith of Adam, Abraham and others. In Muslim tradition, Muhammad is viewed as the last and the greatest in a series of prophets—as the man closest to perfection, the possessor of all virtues. For the last 23 years of his life, beginning at age 40, Muhammad reported receiving revelations from God. The content of these revelations, known as the Qur'an, was memorized and recorded by his companions.

During this time, Muhammad preached to the people of Mecca, imploring them to abandon polytheism. Although some converted to Islam, Muhammad and his followers were persecuted by the leading Meccan authorities. After 13 years of preaching, Muhammad and the Muslims performed the *Hijra* ("emigration") to the city of Medina (formerly known as *Yathrib*) in 622. There, with the Medinan converts (*Ansar*) and the Meccan migrants (*Muhajirun*), Muhammad established his political and religious authority. Within years, two battles had been fought against Meccan forces: the Battle of Badr in 624, which was a Muslim victory, and the Battle of Uhud in 625, which ended inconclusively. Conflict with Medinan Jewish clans who opposed the Muslims led to their exile, enslavement or death, and the Jewish enclave of Khaybar was subdued. At the same time, Meccan trade routes were cut off as Muhammad brought surrounding desert tribes under his control. By 629 Muhammad was victorious in the nearly bloodless Conquest of Mecca, and by the time of his death in 632 he ruled over the Arabian peninsula.

The Masjid al-Nabawi ("Mosque of the Prophet") in Medina is the site of Muhammad's tomb.

In Islam, the " normative" example of Muhammad's life is called the *Sunnah* (literally "trodden path"). This example is preserved in traditions known as hadith ("reports"), which recount his words, his actions, and his personal characteristics. The classical Muslim jurist ash-Shafi'i (d. 820) emphasized the importance of the Sunnah in Islamic law, and Muslims are encouraged to emulate Muhammad's actions in their daily lives. The Sunnah is seen as crucial to guiding interpretation of the Qur'an.

Resurrection and judgment

Belief in the "Day of Resurrection", *yawm al-Qiyāmah* (also known as *yawm ad-dīn*, "Day of Judgment" and *as-sā`a*, "the Last Hour") is also crucial for Muslims. They believe that the time of *Qiyāmah* is preordained by God but unknown to man. The trials and tribulations preceding and during the *Qiyāmah* are described in the Qur'an and the hadith, and also in the commentaries of Islamic scholars. The Qur'an emphasizes bodily resurrection, a break from the pre-Islamic Arabian understanding of death. It states that resurrection will be followed by the gathering of mankind, culminating in their judgment by God.

The Qur'an lists several sins that can condemn a person to hell, such as disbelief, usury and dishonesty. Muslims view paradise (*jannah*) as a place of joy and bliss, with Qur'anic references describing its features and the physical pleasures to come. There are also references to a greater joy—acceptance by God (*ridwān*). Mystical traditions in Islam place these heavenly delights in the context of an ecstatic awareness of God.

Predestination

In accordance with the Islamic belief in predestination, or divine preordainment (*al-qadā wa'l-qadar*), God has full knowledge and control over all that occurs. This is explained in Qur'anic verses such as "Say: 'Nothing will happen to us except what Allah has decreed for us: He is our protector'…" For Muslims, everything in the world that occurs, good or evil, has been preordained and nothing can happen unless permitted by God. In Islamic theology, divine preordainment does not suggest an absence of God's indignation against evil, because any evils that do occur are thought to result in future benefits men may not be able to see. According to Muslim theologians, although events are pre-ordained, man possesses free will in that he has the faculty to choose between right and wrong, and is thus responsible for his actions. According to Islamic tradition, all that has been decreed by God is written in *al-Lawh al-Mahfūz*, the "Preserved Tablet".

The Shi'a understanding of predestination is called "divine justice" (*Adalah*). This doctrine, originally developed by the Mu'tazila, stresses the importance of man's responsibility for his own actions. In contrast, the Sunni deemphasize the role of individual free will in the context of God's creation and foreknowledge of all things.

Duties and practices

Five Pillars

The Five Pillars of Islam (Arabic: اركان الدين) are five practices essential to Sunni Islam. Shi'a Muslims subscribe to eight ritual practices which substantially overlap with the Five Pillars. They are:

- The ***shahadah***, which is the basic creed or tenet of Islam: "*'ašhadu 'al-lā ilāha illā-llāhu wa 'ašhadu 'anna muḥammadan rasūlu-llāh*", or "I testify that there is none worthy of worship except God and I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God." This testament is a foundation for all other beliefs and practices in Islam (although technically the Shi'a do not consider the *shahadah* to be a separate pillar, just a belief). Muslims must repeat the *shahadah* in prayer, and non-Muslims wishing to convert to Islam are required to recite the creed.

Islam's basic creed (*shahadah*) written on a plaque in the Great Mosque of Xi'an, China

- ***Salah***, or ritual prayer, which must be performed five times a day. (However, the Shi'a are permitted to run together the noon with the afternoon prayers, and the evening with the night prayers). Each salah is done facing towards the Kaaba in Mecca. Salah is intended to focus the mind on God, and is seen as a personal communication with him that expresses gratitude and worship. Salah is compulsory but flexibility in the specifics is allowed depending on circumstances. In many Muslim countries, reminders called Adhan (call to prayer) are broadcast publicly from local mosques at the appropriate times. The prayers are recited in the Arabic language, and consist of verses from the Qur'an.

- ***Zakat***, or alms-giving. This is the practice of giving based on accumulated wealth, and is obligatory for all Muslims who can afford it. A fixed portion is spent to help the poor or needy, and also to assist the spread of Islam. The zakat is considered a religious obligation (as opposed to voluntary charity) that the well-off owe to the needy because their wealth is seen as a "trust from God's bounty". The Qur'an and the hadith also suggest a Muslim give even more as an act of voluntary alms-giving (*sadaqah*). Many Shi'ites are expected to pay an additional amount in the form of a *khums* tax, which they consider to be a separate ritual practice.

Rituals of the Hajj (pilgrimage) include walking seven times around the Kaaba in Mecca.

- ***Sawm***, or fasting during the month of Ramadan. Muslims must not eat or drink (among other things) from dawn to dusk during this month, and must be mindful of other sins. The fast is to encourage a feeling of nearness to God, and during it Muslims should express their gratitude for and dependence on him, atone for their past sins, and think of the needy. *Sawm* is not obligatory for several groups for whom it would constitute an undue burden. For others, flexibility is allowed depending on circumstances, but missed fasts usually must be made up quickly.

- The **Hajj**, which is the pilgrimage during the Islamic month of *Dhu al-Hijjah* in the city of Mecca. Every able-bodied Muslim who can afford it must make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime. When the pilgrim is about ten kilometers from Mecca, he must dress in *Ihram* clothing, which consists of two white seamless sheets. Rituals of the Hajj include walking seven times around the Kaaba, touching the Black Stone, running seven times between Mount Safa and Mount Marwah, and symbolically stoning the Devil in Mina. The pilgrim, or the *hajji*, is honored in his or her community, although Islamic teachers say that the Hajj should be an expression of devotion to God instead of a means to gain social standing.

In addition to the *khums* tax, Shi'a Muslims consider three additional practices essential to the religion of Islam. The first is jihad, which is also important to the Sunni, but not considered a pillar. The second is *Amr-Bil-Ma'rūf*, the "Enjoining to Do Good", which calls for every Muslim to live a virtuous life and to encourage others to do the same. The third is *Nahi-Anil-Munkar*, the "Exhortation to Desist from Evil", which tells Muslims to refrain from vice and from evil actions and to also encourage others to do the same.

Law

The *Sharia* (literally: "the path leading to the watering place") is Islamic law formed by traditional Islamic scholarship. In Islam, Sharia is the expression of the divine will, and "constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon a Muslim by virtue of his religious belief".

Islamic law covers all aspects of life, from matters of state, like governance and foreign relations, to issues of daily living. The Qur'an defines *hudud* as the punishments for five specific crimes: unlawful intercourse, false accusation of unlawful intercourse, consumption of alcohol, theft, and highway robbery. The Qur'an and Sunnah also contain laws of inheritance, marriage, and restitution for injuries and murder, as well as rules for fasting, charity, and prayer. However, these prescriptions and prohibitions may be broad, so their application in practice varies. Islamic scholars (known as *ulema*) have elaborated systems of law on the basis of these rules and their interpretations.

Fiqh, or "jurisprudence", is defined as the knowledge of the practical rules of the religion. The method Islamic jurists use to derive rulings is known as *usul al-fiqh* ("legal theory", or "principles of jurisprudence"). According to Islamic legal theory, law has four fundamental roots, which are given precedence in this order: the Qur'an, the Sunnah (actions and sayings of Muhammad), the consensus of the Muslim jurists (*ijma*), and analogical reasoning (*qiyas*). For early Islamic jurists, theory was less important than pragmatic application of the law. In the 9th century, the jurist ash-Shafi'i provided a theoretical basis for Islamic law by codifying the principles of jurisprudence (including the four fundamental roots) in his book *ar-Risālah*.

Religion and state

Islamic law does not distinguish between "matters of church" and "matters of state"; the ulema function as both jurists and theologians. In practice, Islamic rulers frequently bypassed the Sharia courts with a parallel system of so-called "Grievance courts" over which they had sole control. As the Muslim world came into contact with Western secular ideals, Muslim societies responded in different ways. Turkey has been governed as a secular state ever since the reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In contrast, the 1979 Iranian Revolution replaced a mostly secular regime with an Islamic republic led by the Ayatollah Ruholla Khomeini.

Etiquette and diet

Many practices fall in the category of *adab*, or Islamic etiquette. This includes greeting others with " *as-salamu `alaykum*" ("peace be unto you"), saying *bismillah* ("in the name of God") before meals, and using only the right hand for eating and drinking. Islamic hygienic practices mainly fall into the category of personal cleanliness and health, such as the circumcision of male offspring. Islamic burial rituals include saying the *Salat al-Janazah* ("funeral prayer") over the bathed and enshrouded dead body, and burying it in a grave. Muslims, like Jews, are restricted in their diet, and prohibited foods include pig products, blood, carrion, and alcohol. All meat must come from a herbivorous animal slaughtered in the name of God by a Muslim, Jew, or Christian, with the exception of game that one has hunted or fished for oneself. Food permissible for Muslims is known as halal food.

Jihad

Jihad means "to strive or struggle" (in the way of God) and is considered the " sixth pillar of Islam" by a minority of Muslim authorities. Jihad, in its broadest sense, is classically defined as "exerting one's utmost power, efforts, endeavors, or ability in contending with an object of disapprobation." Depending on the object being a visible enemy, the devil, and aspects of one's own self, different categories of Jihad are defined. Jihad when used without any qualifier is understood in its military aspect. Jihad also refers to one's striving to attain religious and moral perfection. Some Muslim authorities, especially among the Shi'a and Sufis, distinguish between the "greater jihad", which pertains to spiritual self-perfection, and the "lesser jihad", defined as warfare.

Within Islamic jurisprudence, jihad is usually taken to mean military exertion against non-Muslim combatants in the defense or expansion of the Islamic state, the ultimate purpose of which is to universalize Islam. Jihad, the only form of warfare permissible in Islamic law, may be declared against apostates, rebels, highway robbers, violent groups, unIslamic leaders or states which refuse to submit to the authority of Islam. Most Muslims today interpret Jihad as only a defensive form of warfare: the external Jihad includes a struggle to make the Islamic societies conform to the Islamic norms of justice.

Under most circumstances and for most Muslims, jihad is a collective duty (*fard kifaya*): its performance by some individuals exempts the others. Only for those vested with authority, especially the sovereign (imam), does jihad become an individual duty. For the rest of the populace, this happens only in the case of a general mobilization. For most Shias, offensive jihad can only be declared by a divinely appointed leader of the Muslim community, and as such is suspended since Muhammad al-Mahdi's occultation in 868 AD.

History

Islam's historical development resulted in major political, economic, and military effects inside and outside the Islamic world. Within a century of Muhammad's first recitations of the Qur'an, an Islamic empire stretched from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to Central Asia in the east. This new polity soon broke into civil war, and successor states fought each other and outside forces. However, Islam continued to spread into regions like Africa, the Indian subcontinent, and Southeast Asia. The Islamic civilization was one of the most advanced in the world during the Middle Ages, but was surpassed by Europe with the economic and military growth of the West. During the 18th and 19th centuries, Islamic dynasties such as the Ottomans and Mughals fell under the sway of European imperial powers. In the 20th century new religious and political movements and newfound wealth in the Islamic world led to both rebirth and conflict.

Rise of the caliphate and Islamic civil war (632–750)

Muhammad began preaching Islam at Mecca before migrating to Medina, from where he united the tribes of Arabia into a singular Arab Muslim religious polity. With Muhammad's death in 632, disagreement broke out over who would succeed him as leader of the Muslim community. Umar ibn al-Khattab, a prominent companion of Muhammad, nominated Abu Bakr, who was Muhammad's intimate friend and collaborator. Others added their support and Abu Bakr was made the first caliph. This choice was disputed by some of Muhammad's companions, who held that Ali ibn Abi Talib, his cousin and son-in-law, had been designated his successor. Abu Bakr's immediate task was to avenge a recent defeat by Byzantine (or Eastern Roman Empire) forces, although he first had to put down a rebellion by Arab tribes in an episode known as the Ridda wars, or "Wars of Apostasy".

The territory of the Caliphate in 750
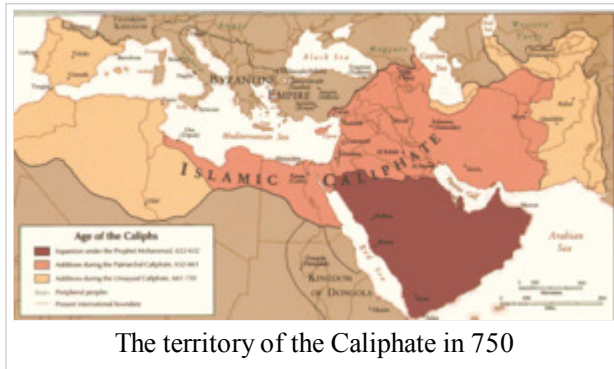
His death in 634 resulted in the succession of Umar as the caliph, followed by Uthman ibn al-Affan and Ali ibn Abi Talib. These four are known as *al-khulafā' ar-rāshidūn* (" Rightly Guided Caliphs"). Under them, the territory under Muslim rule expanded deeply into Persian and Byzantine territories.

When Umar was assassinated in 644, the election of Uthman as successor was met with increasing opposition. In 656, Uthman was also killed, and Ali assumed the position of caliph. After fighting off opposition in the first civil war (the "First Fitna"), Ali was assassinated by Kharijites in 661. Following this, Mu'awiyah, who was governor of Levant, seized power and began the Umayyad dynasty.

These disputes over religious and political leadership would give rise to schism in the Muslim community. The majority accepted the legitimacy of the three rulers prior to Ali, and became known as Sunnis. A minority disagreed, and believed that Ali was the only rightful successor; they became known as the Shi'a.

After Mu'awiyah's death in 680, conflict over succession broke out again in a civil war known as the " Second Fitna". Afterward, the Umayyad dynasty prevailed for seventy years, and was able to conquer the Maghrib and Al-Andalus (the Iberian Peninsula, former Visigothic Hispania) and the Narbonnese Gaul} in the west as well as expand Muslim territory into Sindh and the fringes of Central Asia. While the Muslim-Arab elite engaged in conquest, some devout Muslims began to question the piety of indulgence in a worldly life, emphasizing rather poverty, humility and avoidance of sin based on renunciation of bodily desires. Devout Muslim ascetic exemplars such as Hasan al-Basri would inspire a movement that would evolve into Sufism.

For the Umayyad aristocracy, Islam was viewed as a religion for Arabs only; the economy of the Umayyad empire was based on the assumption that a majority of non-Muslims (Dhimmis) would pay taxes to the minority of Muslim Arabs. A non-Arab who wanted to convert to Islam was supposed to first become a client of an Arab tribe. Even after conversion, these new Muslims (*mawali*) did not achieve social and economic equality with the Arabs. The descendants of Muhammad's uncle Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib rallied discontented *mawali*, poor Arabs, and some Shi'a against the Umayyads and overthrew them with the help of their propagandist and general Abu Muslim, inaugurating the Abbasid dynasty in 750. Under the Abbasids, Islamic civilization flourished in the " Islamic Golden Age", with its capital at the cosmopolitan city of Baghdad.

Golden Age (750–1258)

By the late 9th century, the Abbasid caliphate began to fracture as various regions gained increasing levels of autonomy. Across North Africa, Persia, and Central Asia emirates formed as provinces broke away. The monolithic Arab empire gave way to a more religiously homogenized Muslim world where the Shia Fatimids contested even the religious authority of the caliphate. By 1055 the Seljuq Turks had eliminated the Abbasids as a military power, nevertheless they continued to respect the caliph's titular authority. During this time expansion of the Muslim world continued, by both conquest and peaceful proselytism even as both Islam and Muslim trade networks were extending into sub-Saharan West Africa, Central Asia, Volga Bulgaria and the Malay archipelago.

The Golden Age saw new legal, philosophical, and religious developments. The major hadith collections were compiled and the four modern Sunni Madh'habs were established. Islamic law was advanced greatly by the efforts of the early 9th century jurist al-Shafi'i; he codified a method to establish the reliability of hadith, a topic which had been a locus of dispute among Islamic scholars. Philosophers Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and Al-Farabi sought to incorporate Greek principles into Islamic theology, while others like the 11th century theologian Abu Hamid al-Ghazzali argued against them and ultimately prevailed. Finally, Sufism and Shi'ism both underwent major changes in the 9th century. Sufism became a full-fledged movement that had moved towards mysticism and away from its ascetic roots, while Shi'ism split due to disagreements over the succession of Imams.

The spread of the Islamic dominion induced hostility among medieval ecclesiastical Christian authors who saw Islam as an adversary in the light of the large numbers of new Muslim converts. This opposition resulted in polemical treatises which depicted Islam as the religion of the antichrist and of Muslims as libidinous and subhuman. In the medieval period, a few Arab philosophers like the poet Al-Ma'arri adopted a critical approach to Islam, and the Jewish philosopher Maimonides contrasted Islamic views of morality to Jewish views that he himself elaborated.

Artistic depiction of the Battle of Hattin in 1187, where Jerusalem was recaptured by Saladin's Ayyubid forces

Crusades, Reconquista and Mongol invasion

Starting in the 9th century, Muslim conquests in the West began to be reversed. The Reconquista was launched against Muslim principalities in Iberia, and Muslim Italian possessions were lost to the Normans. From the 11th century onwards alliances of European Christian kingdoms mobilized to launch a series of wars known as the Crusades, bringing the Muslim world into conflict with Christendom. Initially successful in their goal of taking the Holy land, and establishing the Crusader states, Crusader gains in the Holy Land were later reversed by subsequent Muslim generals such as Saladin; who recaptured Jerusalem during the Second Crusade. In the east the Mongol Empire put an end to the Abbassid dynasty at the Battle of Baghdad in 1258, as they overran in Muslim lands in a series of invasions. Meanwhile in Egypt, the slave-soldier Mamluks took control in an uprising in 1250 and in alliance with the Golden Horde were able to halt the Mongol armies at the Battle of Ain Jalut. Mongol rule extended across the breadth of almost all Muslim lands in Asia and Islam was temporarily replaced by Buddhism as the official religion of the land. Over the next century the Mongol Khanates converted to Islam and this religious and cultural absorption ushered in a new age of Mongol-Islamic synthesis that shaped the further spread of Islam in central Asia and the Indian subcontinent.

Turkish, Iranian and Indian empires (1030–1918)

The Seljuk Turks conquered Abbassid lands and adopted Islam and become the *de facto* rulers of the caliphate. They captured Anatolia by defeating the Byzantines at the Battle of Manzikert, thereby precipitating the call for Crusades. They however fell apart rapidly in the second half of the 12th century giving rise to various semi-autonomous Turkic dynasties. In the 13th and 14th centuries the Ottoman empire (named after Osman I) emerged from among these "Ghazi emirates" and established itself after a string of conquests that included the Balkans, parts of Greece, and western Anatolia. In 1453 under Mehmed II the Ottomans laid siege to Constantinople, the capital of Byzantium, which succumbed shortly thereafter, having been overwhelmed by a far greater number of Ottoman troops and to a lesser extent, cannonry.

Beginning in the 13th century, Sufism underwent a transformation, largely as a result of the efforts of al-Ghazzali to legitimize and reorganize the movement. He developed the model of the Sufi order—a community of spiritual teachers and students. Also of importance to Sufism was the creation of the Masnavi, a collection of mystical poetry by the 13th century Persian poet Rumi. The Masnavi had a profound influence on the development of Sufi religious thought; to many Sufis it is second in importance only to the Qur'an.

The Taj Mahal is a mausoleum located in Agra, India, that was built under Mughal rule

In the early 16th century, the Shi'i Safavid dynasty assumed control in Persia and established Shi'a Islam as an official religion there, and despite periodic setbacks, the Safavids remained powerful for two centuries. Meanwhile, Mamluk Egypt fell to the Ottomans in 1517, who then launched a European campaign which reached as far as the gates of Vienna in 1529. After the invasion of Persia, and sack of Baghdad by the Mongols in 1258, Delhi became the most important cultural centre of the Muslim east. Many Islamic dynasties ruled parts of the Indian subcontinent starting from the 12th century. The prominent ones include the Delhi Sultanate (1206–1526) and the Mughal empire (1526–1857). These empires helped in the spread of Islam in South Asia, but by the early-18th century the Maratha empire became the pre-eminent power in the north of India. By the mid-18th century the British empire had formally ended the Mughal dynasty,, and at the end of the 18th century overthrew the Muslim-ruled Kingdom of Mysore. In the 18th century the Wahhabi movement took hold in Saudi Arabia. Founded by the preacher Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Wahhabism is a fundamentalist ideology that condemns practices like Sufism and the veneration of saints as un-Islamic.

By the 17th and 18th centuries, despite attempts at modernization, the Ottoman empire had begun to feel threatened by European economic and military advantages. In the 19th century, the rise of nationalism resulted in Greece declaring and winning independence in 1829, with several Balkan states following suit after the Ottomans suffered defeat in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878. The Ottoman era came to a close at the end of World War I and the Caliphate was abolished in 1924.

In the 19th century, the Salafi, Deobandi and Barelwi movements were initiated.

Modern times (1918–present)

By the early years of the 20th century, most of the Muslim world outside the Ottoman empire had been absorbed into the empires of non-Islamic European powers. After World War I losses, nearly all of the Ottoman empire was also parceled out as European protectorates or spheres of influence. In the course of the 20th century, most of these European-ruled territories became independent, and new issues such as oil wealth and relations with the State of Israel have

assumed prominence. During this time, many Muslims migrated, as indentured servants, from mostly India and Indonesia to the Caribbean, forming the largest Muslim populations by percentage in the Americas. Additionally, the resulting urbanization and increase in trade in Africa brought Muslims to settle in new areas and spread their faith. As a result, Islam in sub-Saharan Africa likely doubled between 1869 and 1914. The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), consisting of Muslim countries, was formally established in September 1969 after the burning of the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The 20th century saw the creation of many new Islamic "revivalist" movements. Groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jamaat-e-Islami in Pakistan advocate a totalistic and theocratic alternative to secular political ideologies. Sometimes called Islamist, they see Western cultural values as a threat, and promote Islam as a comprehensive solution to every public and private question of importance. In countries like Iran and Afghanistan (under the Taliban), revolutionary movements replaced secular regimes with Islamist states, while transnational groups like Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda engage in terrorism to further their goals. In contrast, Liberal Islam is a movement that attempts to reconcile religious tradition with modern norms of secular governance and human rights. Its supporters say that there are multiple ways to read Islam's sacred texts, and stress the need to leave room for "independent thought on religious matters".

Modern critique of Islam includes accusations that Islam is intolerant of criticism and that Islamic law is too hard on apostates. Critics like Ibn Warraq question the morality of the Qu'ran, saying that its contents justify the mistreatment of women and encourage antisemitic remarks by Muslim theologians. Such claims are disputed by Muslim writers like Fazlur Rahman, Syed Ameer Ali, Ahmed Deedat, and Yusuf Estes. Others like Daniel Pipes and Martin Kramer focus more on criticizing the spread of Islamic fundamentalism, a danger they feel has been ignored. Montgomery Watt and Norman Daniel dismiss many of the criticisms as the product of old myths and polemics. The rise of Islamophobia, according to Carl Ernst, had contributed to the negative views about Islam and Muslims in the West.

Community

Demographics

Commonly cited estimates of the Muslim population in 2007 range from 1 billion to 1.8 billion. Approximately 85% are Sunni and 15% are Shi'a, with a small minority belonging to other sects. Some 30–40 countries are Muslim-majority, and Arabs account for around 20% of all Muslims worldwide. South Asia and Southeast Asia contain the most populous Muslim countries, with Indonesia, India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh having more than 100 million adherents each. According to U.S. government figures, in 2006 there were 20 million Muslims in China. In the Middle East, the non-Arab countries of Turkey and Iran are the largest Muslim-majority countries; in Africa, Egypt and Nigeria have the most populous Muslim communities. Islam is the second largest religion after Christianity in many European countries.

Muslim percentage of population by country
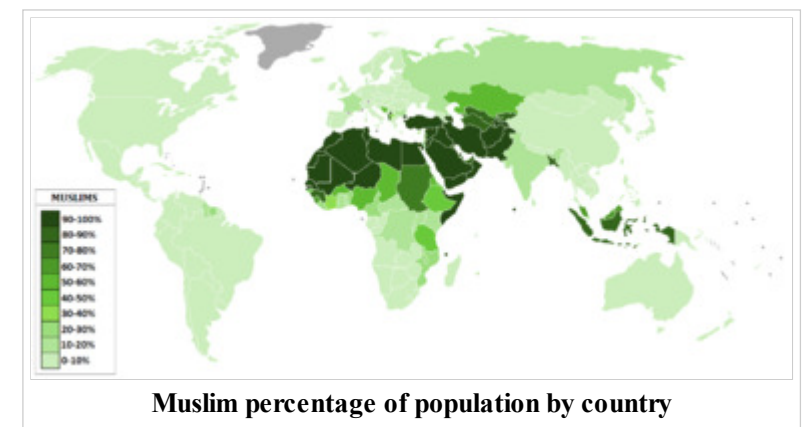
Mosques

A mosque is a place of worship for Muslims, who often refer to it by its Arabic name, *masjid*. The word *mosque* in English refers to all types of buildings dedicated to Islamic worship, although there is a distinction in Arabic between the smaller, privately owned mosque and the larger, "collective" mosque (*masjid jāmiʿ*). Although the primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place of prayer, it is also important to the Muslim community as a place to meet and study. Modern mosques have evolved greatly from the early designs of the 7th century, and contain a variety of architectural elements such as minarets.

Family life

The basic unit of Islamic society is the family, and Islam defines the obligations and legal rights of family members. The father is seen as financially responsible for his family, and is obliged to cater for their well-being. The division of inheritance is specified in the Qur'an, which states that most of it is to pass to the immediate family, while a portion is set aside for the payment of debts and the making of bequests. The woman's share of inheritance is generally half of that of a man with the same rights of succession. Marriage in Islam is a civil contract which consists of an offer and acceptance between two qualified parties in the presence of two witnesses. The groom is required to pay a bridal gift (*mahr*) to the bride, as stipulated in the contract.

Eid prayers on the holiday of Eid al-Fitr at the Badshahi Mosque, Pakistan. The days of Eid are important occasions on the Islamic calendar.
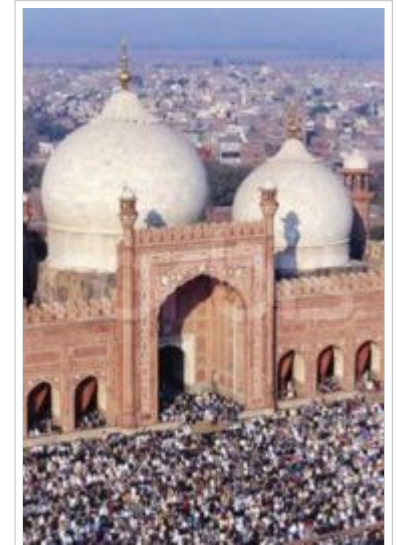
A man may have up to four wives if he believes he can treat them equally, while a woman may have only one husband. In most Muslim countries, the process of divorce in Islam is known as *talaq*, which the husband initiates by pronouncing the word "divorce". Scholars disagree whether Islamic holy texts justify traditional Islamic practices such as veiling and seclusion (*purdah*). Starting in the 20th century, Muslim social reformers argued against these and other practices such as polygamy, with varying success. At the same time, many Muslim women have attempted to reconcile tradition with modernity by combining an active life with outward modesty. Certain Islamist groups like the Taliban have sought to continue traditional law as applied to women.

Canterbury Mosque, New Zealand; June 2006. Built over 1984-85 it was the world's southern-most mosque until 1999.

Calendar

The formal beginning of the Muslim era was chosen to be the Hijra in 622 CE, which was an important turning point in Muhammad's fortunes. The assignment of this year as the year 1 AH (*Anno Hegirae*) in the Islamic calendar was reportedly made by Caliph Umar. It is a lunar calendar, with nineteen ordinary years of 354 days and eleven leap years of 355 days in a thirty-year cycle. Islamic dates cannot be converted to CE/AD dates simply by adding 622 years: allowance must also be made for the fact that each Hijri century corresponds to only 97 years in the Christian calendar.

The year 1428 AH coincides almost completely with 2007 CE.

Islamic holy days fall on fixed dates of the lunar calendar, which means that they occur in different seasons in different years in the Gregorian calendar. The

most important Islamic festivals are *Eid al-Fitr* (Arabic: عيد الفطر) on the 1st of *Shawwal*, marking the end of the fasting month *Ramadan*, and *Eid al-Adha* (Arabic: عيد الأضحى) on the 10th of *Dhu al-Hijjah*, coinciding with the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Other religions

According to Islamic doctrine, Islam was the primordial religion of mankind, professed by Adam. At some point, a religious split occurred, and God began sending prophets to bring his revelations to the people. In this view, Abraham, Moses, Hebrew prophets, and Jesus were all Prophets in Islam, but their message and the texts of the Torah and the Gospels were corrupted by Jews and Christians. Similarly, children of non-Muslim families are born Muslims, but are converted to another faith by their parents. The idea of Islamic supremacy is encapsulated in the formula "Islam is exalted and nothing is exalted above it." Pursuant to this principle, Muslim women may not marry non-Muslim men, defamation of Islam is prohibited, and the testimony of a non-Muslim is inadmissible against a Muslim.

Islamic law divides non-Muslims into several categories, depending on their relation with the Islamic state. Christians and Jews who live under Islamic rule are known as *dhimmis* ("protected peoples"). According to this pact, the personal safety and security of property of the dhimmis were guaranteed in return for paying tribute (*jizya*) to the Islamic state and acknowledging Muslim supremacy. Historically, dhimmis enjoyed a measure of communal autonomy under their own religious leaders, but were subject to legal, social and religious restrictions meant to highlight their inferiority. The status was extended to other groups like Zoroastrians and Hindus, but not to atheists or agnostics. Those who live in non-Muslim lands (*dar al-harb*) are known as *harbis*, and upon entering into an alliance with the Muslim state become known as *ahl al-ahd*. Those who receive a guarantee of safety while residing temporarily in Muslim lands are known as *ahl al-amān*. Their legal position is similar to that of the dhimmi except that they are not required to pay the jizya. The people of armistice (*ahl al-hudna*) are those who live outside of Muslim territory and agree to refrain from attacking the Muslims. Apostasy is prohibited, and is punishable by death.

The Alevi, Yazidi, Druze, Ahmadiyya, Bábí, Bahá'í, Berghouata and Ha-Mim movements either emerged out of Islam or came to share certain beliefs with Islam. Some consider themselves separate while others still sects of Islam though controversial in certain beliefs with mainstream Muslims. Sikhism, founded by Guru Nanak in late fifteenth century Punjab, incorporates aspects of both Islam and Hinduism.

Denominations

A view of the Dome of the Rock on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, a holy site in both Islam and Judaism that has been a source of controversy

The Al-Aqsa Mosque congregation building. Muslims believe that Muhammad ascended to heaven on this site.

Islam consists of a number of religious denominations that are essentially similar in belief but which have significant theological and legal differences. The primary division is between the Sunni and the Shi'a, with Sufism generally considered to be a mystical inflection of Islam rather than a distinct school. According to most sources, approximately 85% of the world's Muslims are Sunni and approximately 15% are Shi'a, with a small minority who are members of other Islamic sects.

Map showing distribution of Shia and Sunni Muslims in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Sunni

Sunni Muslims are the largest group in Islam. In Arabic, *as-Sunnah* literally means "principle" or "path". The Sunnah (the example of Muhammad's life) as recorded in the Qur'an and the hadith is the main pillar of Sunni doctrine. Sunnis believe that the first four caliphs were the rightful successors to Muhammad; since God did not specify any particular leaders to succeed him, those leaders had to be elected. Sunnis recognize four major legal traditions, or madhhabs: Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hanbali. All four accept the validity of the others and a Muslim might choose any one that he or she finds agreeable, but other Islamic sects are believed to have departed from the majority by introducing innovations (*bidah*). There are also several orthodox theological or philosophical traditions within Sunnism. For example, the recent Salafi movement sees itself as restorationist and claims to derive its teachings from the original sources of Islam.

Shi'a

The Shi'a, who constitute the second-largest branch of Islam, believe in the political and religious leadership of infallible Imams from the progeny of Ali ibn Abi Talib. They believe that he, as the cousin and son-in-law of Muhammad, was his rightful successor, and they call him the first *Imam* (leader), rejecting the legitimacy of the previous Muslim caliphs. To them, an Imam rules by right of divine appointment and holds "absolute spiritual authority" among Muslims, having final say in matters of doctrine and revelation. Although the Shi'a share many core practices with the Sunni, the two branches disagree over the proper importance and validity of specific collections of hadith. The Shi'a follow a legal tradition called Ja'fari jurisprudence. Shi'a Islam has several branches, the largest of which is the Twelvers (*iṯnāʿašariyya*), while the others are the Ismaili, the Seveners, and the Zaidiyyah.

Divisions of Islam

Sufism

Not strictly a denomination, Sufism is a mystical-ascetic form of Islam. By focusing on the more spiritual aspects of religion, Sufis strive to obtain direct experience of God by making use of "intuitive and emotional faculties" that one must be trained to use. Sufism and Islamic law are usually considered to be complementary, although Sufism has been criticized by some Muslims for being an unjustified religious innovation. Most Sufi orders, or *tariqas*, can be classified as either Sunni or Shi'a.
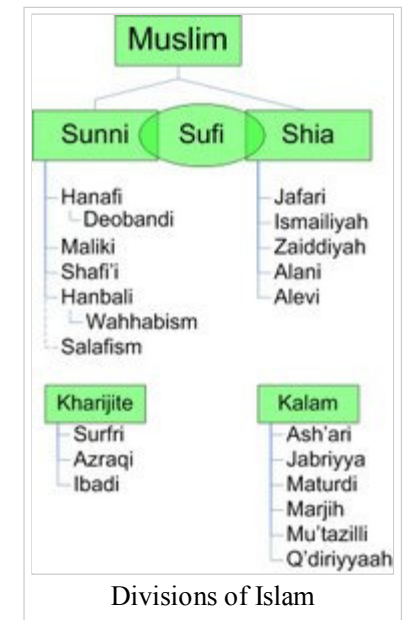
Others

The Kharijites are a sect that dates back to the early days of Islam. The only surviving branch of the Kharijites is Ibadism. Unlike most Kharijite groups, Ibadism does not regard sinful Muslims as unbelievers. The Imamate is an important topic in Ibadi legal literature, which stipulates that the leader should be chosen solely on the basis of his knowledge and piety, and is to be deposed if he acts unjustly. Most Ibadi Muslims live in Oman.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Islam"

Islamic mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

In its current form, Islam is a religion established by Muhammed, who lived in the 6th and 7th centuries A.D. Its sacred book is the Quran. Those who adhere to Islam are called Muslims. Muslims believe that all true prophets (including Moses and Jesus Christ) preached Islamic principles, but that these principles became distorted in the Jewish and Christian traditions; according to this view, Muhammed is the most recent prophet, who restored and completed the principles of Islam. This article discusses some major features of **Islamic mythology**, the body of traditional stories that belongs to Islam.

> **Articles about Mythology:**
>
> In its broadest academic sense, the word "myth" simply means a traditional story, whether true or false. (— *OED*, Princeton Wordnet) Unless otherwise noted, the words "mythology" and "myth" are here used for sacred and traditional narratives, with no implication that any belief so embodied is itself either true or false.

Issues surrounding the term "mythology"

In its broadest academic sense, the word simply means a traditional story. However, many scholars restrict the term "myth" to sacred stories. Folklorists often go farther, defining myths as "tales believed as true, usually sacred, set in the distant past or other worlds or parts of the world, and with extra-human, inhuman, or heroic characters".

If "myth", defined by folklorists, are stories both sacred and "believed as true", then the most clear-cut examples of Islamic mythology come from Islamic scripture. However, note that the term "mythology" does not encompass all scriptures. Because a myth is a traditional *story*, non-narrative scriptures (e.g., proverbs, theological writings) are not themselves "myths".

Note also that the term "myth" may not encompass *all* stories in Islamic scripture, depending on how strictly one defines the word "myth". One's use of the word "myth" is largely a matter of one's academic discipline. For scholars in religious studies, myths are stories whose main characters are gods or demigods: this definition would actually exclude sacred stories that don't feature God as the centre of attention. Some folklorists restrict the word "myth" to stories that describe the creation of the world and of natural phenomena. By this definition, the Judeo-Christo-Islamic creation story would form a part of Islamic mythology, while the Islamic story of Marium (Mary) giving birth to Isa (Jesus) would not.

In the culture of the ancient Mediterranean world in the context of which early Islam and its legend arose, there often did not exist the separation that exists for many societies in the modern period between fields of history and mythology, or the attempt to discern between objective truth and spiritual truths.

Subcategories

The mythology of Islam can be grouped into academic categories:

- Cosmogonic myths are tales that describe the creation of the world. The Judeo-Christo-Islamic six-part creation account is a cosmogonic myth.
- Origin myths (also called etiological myths) explain the origins of natural phenomena and human institutions. While cosmogonic myths describe how the universe itself was created, origin myths build on cosmogonic myths, describing the creation of phenomena *within* the universe. The Quran's isolated creation story of God creating iron is an example of an origin myth.
- Legends are stories that take place recently (relative to the mythological age of origins) and generally focus on human characters rather than divine ones; some scholars (for instance, professional folklorists) strictly distinguish them from "true" myths. The story of Abraham almost sacrificing Ishmael is an example of legend.
- Eschatological myths describe the afterlife and the end of the world. The Islamic story of Qiyamat is an example of eschatological mythology: it describes the Day of Judgment, when God will reward the good and punish the evil.

Central Islam stories

Life of Muhammad

Muhammad was born into late 6th-century Arabia. At that time, the inhabitants practiced a polytheistic religion and lived in tribal groups that frequently feuded. Although married, Muhammad retreated into a cave in Mount Hira, in search of enlightenment. While in the cave, Muhammad experienced a revelation: he received the words of the Quran (dictated to him by the angel Gabriel). He returned to Mecca, a cultural centre of Arabia, to spread his message.

Threatened by the possibility of a religious revolution, the Meccan leaders persecuted Muhammad and his followers. Muhammad and his followers eventually fled to a city called Medina, from which they continued to feud with the Meccans. Eventually Muhammad conquered Mecca, converting its religious centre, the Kaaba stone, into the new centre of Islamic spirituality. By the time he died, he had brought nearly all of Arabia into the religion of Islam.

Note that, by some academic definitions, the traditional story about a historical human character like Muhammed would be a "legend", not a "myth".

The Kaaba

According to Islamic tradition, God told Adam to construct a building to be the earthly counterpart of the House of Heaven. This was the giant black stone cube that Muslims call the Kaaba: it stands in the city of Mecca. Later, Abraham and Ishmael had to rebuild the Kaaba on the old foundations.

The Kaaba was originally intended as a symbolic house for the one monotheistic God. However, after Abraham's death, people started to fill the Kaaba with pagan idols. When Muhammed conquered Mecca, he cleaned out the idols from the Kaaba. It now stands as an important pilgrimage site, which all Muslims are supposed to visit at least once if they are able. Muslims are supposed to pray five times a day while facing in the Kaaba's direction.

A 1315 image of Muhammad lifting the Black Stone into place, when the Kaaba was rebuilt in the early 600s.

Connection with Jewish and Christian mythologies

Biblical stories in the Quran

Like Judaism and Christianity, Islam is a monotheistic religion. It has much in common with the stories and teachings of Judaism and Christianity, but Muslims believe that Muhammed was the final and ultimate prophet in the Judeo-Christo-Islamic revelation. They also believe that the religious texts of the Jews and Christians have been corrupted by the hands of man over the passage of time. Islam incorporates many Biblical events and heroes into its own mythology. Stories about Musa (Moses) and Ibrahim (Abraham) form parts of Islam's scriptures. The Quran retells in detail the Jewish tale of Joseph, who was sold to an Egyptian, and the Christian tale of Mary, the mother of Jesus. In both cases, it adds original details and an Islamic interpretation: for instance, in the Islamic version, Jesus speaks while he is still an infant, and he is merely a miraculously-conceived human prophet, not the incarnation of God.

Linear time

Unlike many other religions, whose sense of time was basically cyclic, Judaism and Christianity labored to preserve a written linear history and mythic timeline, running from the creation to the end of the world. For example, in Aztec mythology the universe is created and destroyed repeatedly, but in Judaism and Christianity, the universe has been created only once and will be destroyed only once, and after its destruction it will be restored to perfection once and for all. Likewise, Islamic mythology has a linear time perspective, running from the creation to the end of the world and the establishment of paradise on earth. Quran 56 describes the end times, the judgment of the dead, and the eternal reward and punishment of saints and sinners -- an *eschatological mythology* similar to the storyline of the Christian Book of Revelation and to some elements in the Jewish Book of Isaiah and Book of Daniel.

Islamic creation myth

Islam shares with Judaism and Christianity the story of a world-creating divine act, spaced out over six days (or periods of time in modern interpretation). The Islamic creation account, like the Hebrew one, involves Adam and Eve as the first parents, living in an earthly paradise. As in the Hebrew story, God warns Adam and Eve not to eat fruit from a certain tree, but they do anyway, earning expulsion from Paradise.

Islam breaks somewhat with Judaism and Christianity in explaining why Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit. In the actual Hebrew account in Genesis, a snake tempts them to eat the fruit. Extra-biblical Christian mythology identifies the snake with Satan, but the actual text of the Biblical story does not explicitly make this identification. In contrast, the Quran states explicitly that Shaitan (Satan) tempted Adam and Eve to eat the fruit. In contrast with Judeo-Christian traditions, which sees Satan as a rebelling angel, Islamic tradition identifies Shaitan with a being called Iblis, who is a *jinni*, a spirit of fire. In Islamic tradition, angels consist of light and lack free will. In contrast, God created *jinn* with free will. He told them to bow before Adam, but Iblis refused, claiming that his fiery nature was superior to Adam's flesh, which consisted of clay. God cast Iblis out of his friendship, and in revenge Iblis vowed to tempt Adam and Eve's generations to corruption and to disobey God.

Contrasts with Jewish and Christian mythologies

Isaac and Ishmael

Like Jewish Hebrews, Muslim Arabs trace their ancestry back to Abraham. Like Jews, Muslims believe that Abraham had two sons, Isaac and Ishmael. While Jews see Isaac as the Hebrews' progenitor, the Muslims trace the Arabs back to Ishmael. However, although agreeing with Jews in terms of ancestry, Muslims shift the emphasis from Isaac to Ishmael. According to Muslim tradition, Ishmael helped Abraham build the Kaaba, and Ishmael's descendants (the Arabs) became the Kaaba's guardians. In addition, while the Bible describes Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice to God (before God stops him), the Quran describes the same story, but with Ishmael as the nearly-sacrificed son.

Mythological beings, places and events

The following are unique to Islam:

- Muhammad - the prophet of Islam.
- Jinn - creatures of fire; along with angels and humans, one of the three intelligent beings created by God
- Kaaba - a large cube of black stone that Muslims visit while on the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca). In Islamic mythology, Abraham and Ishmael built the Kaaba at God's request, to serve as the earthly counterpart of the heavens. Adam built the original earthly Kaaba, but Abraham and his son had to rebuilt it.

The following Islamic subjects have some elements in common with Jewish and Christian traditions:

- Beings
  - Angels - beings of light that serve as God's messengers; in Islam, these lack free will.
  - Jibril - the archangel Gabriel

- Azrael - the angel of death
- Shaitan - the Devil
- Ishmael - the ancestor of the Arab people; brother of Isaac, the ancestor of the Hebrew people
- Places
  - Garden of Eden - the Paradise where Adam and Eve lived before their Fall
  - Barzakh - the state of the souls of the deceased before the Day of Judgment, when they will be assigned to Heaven or to Hell.
  - Jannah - Heaven; the abode of the righteous after the Day of Judgment; at least somewhat identified with the Garden of Paradise
  - Jahannam - Hell; the abode of the wicked after the Day of Judgment
- Events
  - Creation - a six-part creative act by God.
  - Fall of man - the loss of Paradise the resulted from eating the forbidden fruit; like Judaism, and unlike Christianity, Islam does not hold that the Fall made man inherently sinful.
  - Qiyamat - the Day of Judgment (and the reward and punishment of the good and the wicked); a fundamental element of Islamic eschatology that incorporates much from the Jewish and Christian traditions

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Jehovah

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Jehovah is an English transcription of יְהֹוָה, which is a specific vocalized spelling of יהוה (i.e. the Tetragrammaton) that is found in the Masoretic Text. יְהֹוָה has the consonants of the Tetragrammaton, and יְהֹוָה 's vowel points are similar to, but not precisely the same as, the vowel points found in Adonai.
Since the beginning of the 17th century, [or possibly even earlier], scholars have questioned whether the vowel points found in יְהֹוָה are the actual vowel points of God's name. Some scholarly sources teach that יְהֹוָה has the vowel points of אֲדֹנָי [i.e. Adonai], but to be redundant, the vowel points of these two words are not precisely the same, and scholars are not in total agreement as to why יְהֹוָה does not have the precise same vowel points as Adonai has.
The first English translators of יְהֹוָה, believed it had the correct vowel points, and translated it as it was written:

> "Iehouah" in 1530 A.D. English.
> "Iehovah" in 1611 A.D. English.
> "Jehovah" in 1769 A.D. English.

King-James-Only Movement Christians believe that Jehovah is the correct name that English speaking people should use for God.
Jehovah's Witnesses use the name extensively worldwide as the most common version of the Tetragrammaton.

Modern usage

These works, either always or sometimes, transcribe the Tetragrammaton as Jehovah:

- The King James (Authorized) Version, 1611: i.e. four times as the personal name of God, and three times in combination names: Gen 22:14; Exodus 17:15; Judges 6:24
- The American Standard Version, 1901 edition, consistently renders the Tetragrammaton as Je-ho'vah in all 6,823 places where it occurs in the Old Testament.
- The New English Bible, published by Oxford University Press, 1970, e.g. Gen 22:14; Exodus 3:15,16; 6:3; 17:15; Judges 6:24
- The Living Bible, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Illinois 1971, e.g. Gen 22:14, Exodus 4:1-27; 17:15; Lev 19:1-36; Deut 4: 29, 39; 5:5, 6; Judges 6:16, 24; Ps 83:18; 110:1; Isaiah 45:1, 18; Amos 5:8; 6:8; 9:6
- The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., Brooklyn, NY 1961 and last revised in 1984. Renders the Tetragrammaton nearly 7,000 times.

Many religious groups, most notably the Jehovah's Witnesses and the King-James-Only Movement, continue to use the form Jehovah, because it is familiar and became well established in usage among some Christians while the correct pronunciation of יהוה was unknown. Some groups insist that Jehovah is the only

correct pronounciation and that Yahweh is an incorrect and invalid pronunciation.

History

Under the heading "יהוה c. 6823", the editors of the the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon write that יְהֹוָה occurs 6518 times in the Masoretic Text.

The editors of the Brown-Driver-Briggs Lexicon write that the pronunciation "Jehovah" was unknown until 1520 when it was introduced by Galatinus; but it was contested by Le Mercier, J. Drusius, and L. Capellus, as against grammatical and historical propriety.

Early use of forms similar to "Jehovah"

The word "Jehovah" and similar was not at all in general use, but forms already occurred in the 13th century.

> '#' marks forms listed by Sir Godfrey Driver.

- ιεοα: in Hellenistic Greek magical texts #
- 1278: yohoua: in the work *Pugio fidei* by the Spanish monk Raymond Martin (Raymundus Martini).
- 1278 & 1303: Yehova or Jehova, and Johova #
- 1518: Iehoua: in *De Arcanis Catholicæ Veritatis*, 1518, folio xliii by Pope Leo X's confessor Peter Galatin (Galatinus)
- 16th century: Jova, declined as a Latin noun #
- 1567: Genebrardus *Chronographia*, Paris, 1567 (ed. Paris, 1600. p. 79 seq.) suggested the pronunciation *Iahue*, but it was not until the 19th century that it became generally accepted.
- 1604: Drusius (= Van der Driesche, 1550-1616), noting that the reading "Jehovah" is contrary to Jewish tradition, wrote about the 1518 form "*Primus in hunc errorem nos induxit Galatinus ... ante qui sic legerit, neminem novi*" ("Galatinus first led us to this mistake ... I know [of] nobody who read [it] thus earlier.."); but Drusius in earlier publications had referred to earlier uses.
- around 1610: John Buxtorff [1564–1629], *Dissertatio de nomine JHVH* against the form "Jehovah" ,
- Nicholas Fuller [1557?-1626]: in defense of the form "Jehovah"
- 1614 John Drusius published *Tetragrammaton, sive de Nomine Die proprio, quod Tetragrammaton vocant* against the form "Jehovah"
- 1628: Sextinus Amama [1593-1659] published *De nomine tetragrammato* against the form "Jehovah". (see page 8}; ,
- c. 1640: L. Capellus, *De nomine tetragrammato* against the form "Jehovah" . He reached the conclusion that Hebrew vowel points were not part of the original Hebrew language. This view was strongly contested by John Buxtorff. (See also Niqqud#Disputes among Protestant Christians.)
- 1645: Thomas Gataker, *De Nomine Tetragrammato Dissertatio* (1645) in defense of the form "Jehovah"
- around 1660: John Leusden, *Dissertationes tres, de vera lectione nominis Jehova* in defense of the form "Jehovah"
- James Alting [1618-1679], *Exercitatio grammatica de punctis ac pronunciatione tetragrammati* against the form "Jehovah"

God's name at the Roman Catholic Church named St. Martinskirche, Olten, Switzerland, 1521.

- 1657: Genebrardus, in his *Chronologia* (1567) condemns the pronunciation "Iehoua" as "*aliena, irreligiosa, imperita, nova et barbara*", rejects the divine origin of vowel points, and proposes "Iahue" as reading of YHWH.
- 1707: Hadrian Reland collected and published discourses for and against the pronunciation "Jehovah" from 1694 Drusius on : Fuller, Gataker, Leusden and others defended the form "Jehovah" against the criticisms of Drusius, Cappellus and the elder Buxtorf.

- Wilhelm Gesenius [1786-1842] is noted for being one of the greatest Hebrew and biblical scholars . His proposal to read YHWH as "יַהְוֶה" (see image to the right) was based in large part on various various Greek transcriptions, such as ιαβε, dating from the first centuries AD, but also on the forms of theophoric names.

William Gesenius's Hebrew punctuation (i.e. Yahweh)

Use of "Jehovah" in English

- 1395: The Wycliffe Bible translation followed Jewish tradition and wrote 'Adonai', e.g. in Ex. 6:3.
- 1530: "Iehouah" appeared in Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch (Exodus 6.3), from which it passed into other Protestant Bibles.
- 1530 & later: The first early modern English Bible translators to transcribe God's name into English did not contact Jewish scholars, and did not know of the Q're perpetuum custom, but transcribed "יְהֹוָה" into English as they saw it. It therefore became Iehouah in 1530 (Tyndale's translation of the Pentateuch), Iehovah in 1611, and Jehovah in 1769, the spelling gradually settling down as Roman alphabet J and V became distinct letters from I and U. The transcription Iehouah was used in the 16th century by many authors Roman Catholic and Protestant, but not Coverdale's Bible translation in 1535.
- 1611: יְהֹוָה is translated "IEHOVAH" ("JEHOVAH" from the 18th century on) in all uppercase in four places in the King James Bible of 1611 A.D.(Exodus 6:3, Psalm 83:18, Isaiah 12:2, Isaiah 26:4), the three times in placenames (e.g. Jehovah-jireh). Elsewhere in the King James Bible it is rendered as GOD or LORD.

For and against

Arguments against "Jehovah" are:

- יהוה has two systems of vowel pointing: יְהֹוָה when the qere is Adonai, and יֱהֹוִה when the qere is Elohim.
- Sandhi effects (i.e. the vowel of prefixed one-letter words, and sometimes the first vowel of the next word if that vowel is normally a shewa) affecting adjacent words follow the rules for contact with "Adonai", not the rules for contact with "Yehowa".
- The early Greek and Latin forms.

Argument against the form "Yahweh" are:

- That the vocalized Hebrew spelling "Yahweh" is found in no extant Hebrew text.
- That the central "ou" or "o" in some Greek transcriptions point to a pronunciation with a "u" or "o" vowel in the middle, i.e. "Yehowa"; but Greek, since it stopped using the digamma, when transcribing foreign words and names has had to write the "w" consonant sound as a vowel "u" or similar (or in later times as β, after the Greek pronunciation of β changed from "b" to "v").

Image of the divine name as it is written on the wall of a Norwegian church. (Source: The Divine Name in Norway)

William Smith concludes in his 1863 "A Dictionary of the Bible", "Whatever, therefore, be the true pronunciation of the word, there can be little doubt that it is not Jehovah."

The defenders of the form "Jehovah" point at theophoric names [e.g. names starting "Jeho-" or "Jo-" such as Jehoshaphat, Jehoram, &c.] that seem to support a name containing the vowel "o". This is treated in Jehovah#Evidence from theophoric names.

Resulting consensus

Reland agreed with the opponents of "Jehovah", and since his days the majority opinion has been roughly what is expressed in the article JEHOVAH of the Jewish Encyclopedia of 1901-1906 , that the pronunciation was "Yahweh". See also:

- http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Jehovah
- http://en.wikisource.org/wiki/1911_Encyclop%C3%A6dia_Britannica/Tetragrammaton

Critique in the 17th century

As the Roman alphabet letters J and V gradually became distinct letters from I and U, opinion differences arose about the resulting English spelling variants:

- Iehouah: This form was used in the 16th century by many authors, both Catholic and Protestant, and in the 17th was zealously defended by Fuller,

Gataker [1574-1654], Leusden, and others, against the criticisms of such scholars as Drusius, Cappellus and the elder Buxtorf.

- Jehovah: This form did not exist until about 1769 A.D.
- Iehovah: This form was "zealously defended" by some and criticized by others in the 17th century.

In the beginning of the 17th century [or possibly even earlier] scholars rose up to question whether or not the vowel points found in the Hebrew spelling יְהֹוָה were the actual vowel points of God's name; this controversy continues even to this day. Some of the contrary arguments were:

1. That "Jehovah" has the consonants of "Yahweh" with the vowels of "Adonai" due to the q're perpetuum rule, as described elsewhere.
2. That every part of the Hebrew Bible including its vowel points were inspired by God and must be taken as absolutely true.

More recent opinions

The "JEHOVAH" article in the Jewish Encyclopedia of 1901-1906 agrees with (1) . Most modern scholars agree with it.

The editors of the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament write "יַהְוֶה" under the heading "יהוה", and describes "יַהְוֶה" as:

"**n.pr.dei** Yahweh, the proper name of the God of Israel."

Details of vowel pointing

In the table below, Yehovah and Adonay are dissected

Hebrew Word #3068 YEHOVAH יְהֹוָה			Hebrew Word #136 ADONAY אֲדֹנָי		
י	Yod	Y	א	Aleph	glottal stop
ְ	.Simple Shewa	E	ֲ	Hatef Patah	A
ה	Heh	H	ד	Daleth	D
ֹ	Holem	O	ֹ	Holem	O
ו	Vav	V	נ	Nun	N
ָ	Qamets	A	ָ	Qamets	A
ה	Heh	H	י	Yod	Y

Note in the table directly above that the "simple shewa" in Yehovah and the "hatef patah" in Adonay are not the same points. The same information is displayed in the table above and to the right where "YHWH intended to be pronounced as Adonai" and "Adonai, with its slightly different vowel points" are shown to have different vowel points.

The difference between the vowel points of *'ădônây* and YHWH is explained by the rules of Hebrew morphology and phonetics. *Shva* and *hataf-patah* were allophones of the same phoneme used in different situations: *hataf-patah* on glottal consonants including aleph (such as the first letter in "Adonai"), and simple *shva* on other consonants (such as the 'y' in YHWH).

Evidence from theophoric names

"Yahū" or "Y^{e}hū" is a common short form for " Yahweh" in Hebrew theophoric names; as a prefix it sometimes appears as "Y^{e}hō-". This has caused two opinions:

1. In former times (at least from c.1650 AD), that it was abbreviated from the supposed pronunciation "Yehowah", rather than "Yahweh" which contains no 'o'- or 'u'-type vowel sound in the middle.
2. Recently, that, as "Yahweh" is likely an imperfective verb form, "Yahu" is its corresponding preterite or jussive short form: compare *yiŝt^{a}hawe^h* (imperfective), *yiŝtáhû* (preterit or jussive short form) = "do obeisance".

George Wesley Buchanan in *Biblical Archaeology Review* argues for (1), as the prefix "Yehu-" or "Yeho-" always keeps its second vowel.

Spelling of Tetragrammaton and connected forms in the Masoretic Hebrew text (vowel points in red).

YHWH intended to be pronounced as Adonai:

In the best Biblical manuscripts and scholarly editions:

Adonai, with its slightly different vowel points:

Note that when the prefixed prepositions לְ *and* בְ *are attached to* יהוה *the šewa vowel diacritic becomes* patah *, normal when preceding a consonant with* hateph-patah *(rather than becoming* hireq *, normal when preceding a consonant with another šewa) –* בִּיהוה

YHWH intended to be pronounced as Elohim:

In the best Biblical manuscripts and scholarly editions:

Elohim itself:

The spelling of the Tetragrammaton and connected forms in the Hebrew Masoretic text of the Bible, with vowel points shown in red. (Click on image to enlarge.)

Smith's 1863 *A Dictionary of the Bible* Section # 2.1 supports (1) for the same reason.

In his Hebrew Dictionary Gesenius (see image of text) supports the pronunciation "Yahweh" because of the Samaritan pronunciation Ιαβε reported by Theodoret, and that the theophoric name prefixes YHW [Yeho] and YH [Yo] can be esplained from the form "Yahweh".

The Analytical Hebrew & Chaldee Lexicon (1848) in its article הוה supports (1) because of the "Yeho-" name prefixes and the vowel pointing difference described in #Details of vowel pointing.

Smith's 1863 *A Dictionary of the Bible* says that "Yahweh" is possible because shortening to "Yahw" would end up as "Yahu" or similar.

The Jewish Encyclopedia of 1901-1906 in the Article:Names Of God has a very similar discussion, and also gives the form Jo or Yo (יוֹ) contracted from Jeho or Yeho (יְהוֹ).

The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th edition (New York: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1910-11, vol. 15, pp. 312, in its article "JEHOVAH", also says that "Jelo-" or "Jo" can be explained from "Yahweh", and that the suffix "-jah" can be explained fom "Yahweh" better than from "Yehowah".

Chapter 1 of The Tetragrammaton and the Christian Greek Scriptures, under the heading: THE PRONUNCIATION OF GOD'S NAME quotes from Insight on the Scriptures, Volume 2, page 7:

> Hebrew Scholars generally favour "Yahweh" as the most likely pronunciation. They point out that the abbreviated form of the name is Yah (Jah in the Latinized form), as at Psalm 89:8 and in the expression Hallelu-Yah (meaning "Praise Yah, you people!") (Ps 104:35; 150:1,6). Also, the forms Yehoh', Yoh, Yah, and Ya'hu, found in the Hebrew spelling of the names of Jehoshaphat, Joshaphat, Shephatiah, and others, can all be derived from Yahweh. ... Still, there is by no means unanimity among scholars on the subject, some favoring yet other pronunciations, such as "Yahuwa", "Yahuah", or "Yehuah".

Everett Fox in his introduction to his translation of The Five Books of Moses stated: "*Both old and new attempts to recover the 'correct' pronunciation of the Hebrew name [of God] have not succeeded; neither the sometimes-heard 'Jehovah' nor the standard scholarly 'Yahweh' can be conclusively proven.*"
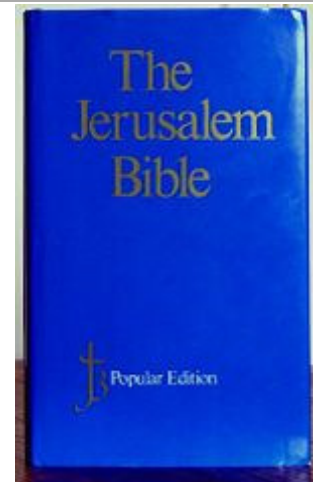
Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jehovah"

Jerusalem Bible

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

'*The Jerusalem Bible*'	
Full name:	The Jerusalem Bible
Abbreviation:	JB
Complete Bible published:	1966
Translation type:	Roman Catholic
Copyright status:	Copyright 1966 Darton, Longman & Todd
Genesis 1:1-3	
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light.	

The **Jerusalem Bible (JB)** is a Catholic translation of the Bible which first was introduced to the English-speaking public in 1966 and published by Darton, Longman & Todd. As a Catholic Bible, it includes the deuterocanonical books along with the sixty-six others included in Protestant Bibles, as well as copious footnotes and introductions.

In 1943 Pope Pius XII issued an encyclical letter, Divino Afflante Spiritu, which encouraged Catholics to translate the Scriptures from the original Hebrew and Greek, rather than from Jerome's Latin Vulgate. As a result, a number of Dominicans and other scholars at the École Biblique in Jerusalem translated the scriptures into French. The product of these efforts was published as *La Bible de Jérusalem*in 1961.

This French translation served as the basis for an English translation in 1966, the *Jerusalem Bible*. For the majority of the books, the English translation was an original translation of the Hebrew and Greek; in passages with more than one interpretation, the French is generally followed. For a small number of Old Testament books, the first draft of the English translation was made directly from the French, and then the General Editor produced a revised draft by comparing this word-for-word to the original Hebrew or Aramaic. The footnotes and book introductions are almost literal translations from the French.

John 3:16
Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life.

The Bible in English
Old English (pre-1066)
Middle English (1066-1500)
Early Modern English (1500-1800)
Modern Christian (1800-)
Modern Jewish (1853-)
Miscellaneous

The translation itself uses a literal approach has been admired for its literary qualities, perhaps in part due to its most famous contributor, J.R.R. Tolkien (his primary contribution was the translation of Jonah).. The introductions, footnotes, and even the translation itself, reflect a modern scholarly approach, reflecting the conclusions of scholars who use historical-critical method. For example, the introduction and notes reject Moses's authorship of the Pentateuch.

The Jerusalem Bible was the first widely accepted Catholic English translation of the Bible since the Douay-Rheims Version of the 17th century. It carries the Church's imprimatur as being correct in all matters of faith and doctrine. This means it is an official Catholic Bible. The Jerusalem Bible was considered such a high quality advanced English translation of the Bible that the Holy See used it in the European liturgy and the Mass. This reference for The Jerusalem Bible can be found in the introduction page of the Roman Catholic Missals as the source reference for the readings. It has also been widely praised for an overall very high level of scholarship, and is widely admired and sometimes used by liberal and moderate Protestants. The overall text seems to have somewhat of a " Mid-Atlantic" nature, neither overwhelmingly British nor particularly American, making it acceptable to both groups in most instances. Overall, it has come to be considered as one of the better English translations of the Bible made in the 20th Century.

In 1973, the French translation received an update. A third French edition was produced in 1998.

In 1985, the English translation was completely updated. This new translation — known as the *New Jerusalem Bible* — was freshly translated from the original languages and not tied to any French translation (except indirectly, as it maintained many of the stylistic and interpretive choices of the French Jerusalem Bible).

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_Bible"

Judaism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Judaism (from the Greek *Ioudaïsmos*, derived from the Hebrew יהודה, *Yehudah*, " Judah"; in Hebrew: יַהֲדוּת, *Yahedut*, the distinctive characteristics of the Judean *eáqnov*) is the religion of the Jewish people. In 2007, the world Jewish population was estimated at 13.2 million people—41% of whom lived in Israel.

Judaism is a monotheistic religion based on principles and ethics embodied in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), as further explored and explained in the Talmud and other texts. Judaism is among the oldest religious traditions still being practiced today. Jewish history and the principles and ethics of Judaism have influenced other religions, such as Christianity, Islam and the Bahá'í Faith.

In modern Judaism, central authority is not vested in any single person or body, but in sacred texts, traditions, and learned Rabbis who interpret those texts and laws. According to Jewish tradition, Judaism begins with the Covenant between God and Abraham (ca. 2000 BCE), the patriarch and progenitor of the Jewish people. Throughout the ages, Judaism has adhered to a number of religious principles, the most important of which is the belief in a single, omniscient, omnipotent, benevolent, transcendent God, who created the universe and continues to govern it. According to Jewish tradition, the God who created the world established a covenant with the Israelites and their descendants, and revealed his laws and commandments to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of both the Written and Oral Torah. Judaism has traditionally valued Torah study and the observance of the commandments recorded in the Torah and as expounded in the Talmud.

Judaica (clockwise from top): Shabbat candlesticks, handwashing cup, Chumash and Tanakh, Torah pointer, shofar, and etrog box

Religious doctrine and principles of faith

Judaism is a monotheistic religion based on principles and ethics embodied in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), as further explored and explained in the Talmud and other texts. According to Jewish tradition, Judaism begins with the Covenant between God and Abraham.

While Judaism has seldom, if ever, been monolithic in practice, it has always been fiercely monotheistic in theology - although the Tanakh records significant periods of apostasy among many Israelites from Judaism's beliefs.

Historically, Judaism has considered belief in the divine revelation and acceptance of the Written and

13 Principles of Faith:

1. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of everything that has been created; He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.

Oral Torah as its fundamental core belief, but Judaism does not have a centralized authority dictating religious dogma. This gave rise to many different formulations as to the specific theological beliefs inherent in the Torah and Talmud. While some rabbis have at times agreed upon a firm formulation, others have disagreed, many criticizing any such attempt as minimizing acceptance of the entire Torah. Notably, in the Talmud some principles of faith (e.g., the Divine origin of the Torah) are considered important enough that rejection of them can put one in the category of "*apikoros*" (heretic).

Over the centuries, a number of formulations of Jewish principles of faith have appeared, and though they differ with respect to certain details, they demonstrate a commonality of core ideology. Of these formulations, the one most widely considered authoritative is Maimonides' thirteen principles of faith.

These principles were controversial when first proposed, evoking criticism by Hasdai Crescas and Joseph Albo. Maimonides thirteen principles were ignored by much of the Jewish community for the next few centuries. Over time two poetic restatements of these principles (" *Ani Ma'amin*" and " *Yigdal*") became canonized in the Jewish prayer book, and eventually became widely held.

Joseph Albo and the Raavad have criticized Maimonides' list as containing too many items that, while true, were not fundamentals of the faith, and thus placed too many Jews in the category of "heretic", rather than those who were simply in error. Many others criticized any such formulation as minimizing acceptance of the entire Torah (see above). As noted however, neither Maimonides nor his contemporaries viewed these principles as encompassing all of Jewish belief, but rather as the core theological underpinnings of the acceptance of Judaism. Along these lines, the ancient historian Josephus emphasized practices and observances rather than religious beliefs, associating apostasy with a failure to observe Jewish law and maintaining that the requirements for conversion to Judaism included circumcision and adherence to traditional customs.

Today most Orthodox authorities hold that Maimonides' 13 principles of faith are obligatory, and that Jews who do not fully accept each one of them are potentially heretical.

Jewish religious texts

Rabbinic literature

Judaism has at all times valued Torah study, as well as other religious texts. The following is a basic, structured list of the central works of Jewish practice and thought. For more detail, see Rabbinic

2. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is One, and that there is no unity in any manner like His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.
3. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, has no body, and that He is free from all the properties of matter, and that there can be no (physical) comparison to Him whatsoever.
4. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the first and the last.
5. I believe with perfect faith that to the Creator, Blessed be His Name, and to Him alone, it is right to pray, and that it is not right to pray to any being besides Him.
6. I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the prophets are true.
7. I believe with perfect faith that the prophecy of Moses our teacher, peace be upon him, was true, and that he was the chief of the prophets, both those who preceded him and those who followed him.
8. I believe with perfect faith that the entire Torah that is now in our possession is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, peace be upon him.
9. I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be exchanged, and that there will never be any other Torah from the Creator, Blessed be His Name.
10. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, knows all the deeds of human beings and all their thoughts, as it is written, "Who fashioned the hearts of them all, Who comprehends all their actions" (Psalms 33:15).
11. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator,

literature.

- Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) and commentaries
  - Mesorah
  - Targum
  - Jewish Biblical exegesis (also see Midrash below)
- Works of the Talmudic Era (classic rabbinic literature)
  - Mishnah and commentaries
  - Tosefta and the minor tractates
  - Talmud:
    - The Babylonian Talmud and commentaries
    - Jerusalem Talmud and commentaries
- Midrashic literature:
  - Halakhic Midrash
  - Aggadic Midrash
- Halakhic literature
  - Major Codes of Jewish Law and Custom
    - Mishneh Torah and commentaries
    - Tur and commentaries
    - Shulchan Aruch and commentaries
  - Responsa literature
- Jewish Thought and Ethics
  - Jewish philosophy
  - Kabbalah
  - Hasidic works
  - Jewish ethics and the Mussar Movement
- Siddur and Jewish liturgy
- *Piyyut* (Classical Jewish poetry)

Blessed be His Name, rewards those who keep His commandments and punishes those that transgress them.

12. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and even though he may tarry, nonetheless, I wait every day for his coming.

13. I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, Blessed be His name, and His mention shall be exalted for ever and ever.

- Maimonides

Jewish legal literature

The basis of Jewish law and tradition ("halakha") is the Torah (also known as the Pentateuch or the Five Books of Moses). According to rabbinic tradition there are 613 commandments in the Torah. Some of these laws are directed only to men or to women, some only to the ancient priestly groups, the Kohanim and Leviyim (members of the tribe of Levi), some only to farmers within the land of Israel. Many laws were only applicable when the Temple in Jerusalem existed, and fewer than 300 of these commandments are still applicable today.

While there have been Jewish groups whose beliefs were claimed to be based on the written text of the Torah alone (e.g., the Sadducees, and the Karaites), most

Jews believed in what they call the oral law. These oral traditions were transmitted by the Pharisee sect of ancient Judaism, and were later recorded in written form and expanded upon by the rabbis.

Rabbinic Judaism has always held that the books of the Torah (called the written law) have always been transmitted in parallel with an oral tradition. To justify this viewpoint, Jews point to the text of the Torah, where many words are left undefined, and many procedures mentioned without explanation or instructions; this, they argue, means that the reader is assumed to be familiar with the details from other, i.e., oral, sources. This parallel set of material was originally transmitted orally, and came to be known as "the oral law".

By the time of Rabbi Judah haNasi (200 CE), after the destruction of Jerusalem, much of this material was edited together into the Mishnah. Over the next four centuries this law underwent discussion and debate in both of the world's major Jewish communities (in Israel and Babylonia), and the commentaries on the Mishnah from each of these communities eventually came to be edited together into compilations known as the two Talmuds. These have been expounded by commentaries of various Torah scholars during the ages.

Halakha, the rabbinic Jewish way of life, then, is based on a combined reading of the Torah, and the oral tradition - the Mishnah, the halakhic Midrash, the Talmud and its commentaries. The Halakha has developed slowly, through a precedent-based system. The literature of questions to rabbis, and their considered answers, is referred to as responsa (in Hebrew, *Sheelot U-Teshuvot*.) Over time, as practices develop, codes of Jewish law are written that are based on the responsa; the most important code, the Shulchan Aruch, largely determines Orthodox religious practice today.

Jewish philosophy

Jewish philosophy refers to the conjunction between serious study of philosophy and Jewish theology. Major Jewish philosophers include Solomon ibn Gabirol, Saadia Gaon, Maimonides, and Gersonides. Major changes occurred in response to the Enlightenment (late 1700s to early 1800s) leading to the post-Enlightenment Jewish philosophers. Modern Jewish philosophy consists of both Orthodox and non-Orthodox oriented philosophy. Notable among Orthodox Jewish philosophers are Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler, Joseph B. Soloveitchik, and Yitzchok Hutner. Well-known non-Orthodox Jewish philosophers include Martin Buber, Franz Rosenzweig, Mordecai Kaplan, Abraham Joshua Heschel, and Emmanuel Lévinas.

Related Topics

- Torah databases (electronic versions of the Traditional Jewish Bookshelf)
- List of Jewish prayers and blessings

Jewish identity

Distinction between Jews and Judaism

According to Daniel Boyarin, the underlying distinction between religion and ethnicity is foreign to Judaism itself, and is one form of the dualism between spirit

and flesh that has its origin in Platonic philosophy and that permeated Hellenistic Judaism. Consequently, in his view, Judaism does not fit easily into conventional Western categories, such as religion, ethnicity, or culture. Boyarin suggests that this in part reflects the fact that most of Judaism's 4,000-year history predates the rise of Western culture and occurred outside the West. During this time, Jews have experienced slavery, anarchic and theocratic self-government, conquest, occupation, and exile; in the Diasporas, they have been in contact with and have been influenced by ancient Egyptian, Babylonian, Persian, and Hellenic cultures, as well as modern movements such as the Enlightenment (see Haskalah) and the rise of nationalism, which would bear fruit in the form of a Jewish state in the Levant. They also saw an elite convert to Judaism (the Khazars), only to disappear as the centers of power in the lands once occupied by that elite fell to the people of Rus and then the Mongols. Thus, Boyarin has argued that "Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity, because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these, in dialectical tension."

In contrast to this point of view, practices such as Humanistic Judaism reject the religious aspects of Judaism, while retaining certain cultural traditions. Jewish law also recognizes converts who are not ethnically Jewish.

What makes a person Jewish?

According to traditional Jewish Law, a Jew is anyone born of a Jewish mother or converted to Judaism in accord with Jewish Law. American Reform Judaism and British Liberal Judaism accept the child of one Jewish parent (father or mother) as Jewish if the parents raise the child with a Jewish identity. All mainstream forms of Judaism today are open to sincere converts. The conversion process is evaluated by an authority, and the convert is examined on his sincerity and knowledge.

Traditional Judaism maintains that a Jew, whether by birth or conversion, is a Jew forever. Thus a Jew who claims to be an atheist or converts to another religion is still considered by traditional Judaism to be Jewish. However, the Reform movement maintains that a Jew who has converted to another religion is no longer a Jew, and the Israeli Government has also taken that stance after Supreme Court cases and statutes.

The question of what determines Jewish identity in the State of Israel was given new impetus when, in the 1950s, David Ben-Gurion requested opinions on *mihu Yehudi* ("who is a Jew") from Jewish religious authorities and intellectuals worldwide in order to settle citizenship questions. This is far from settled, and occasionally resurfaces in Israeli politics.

Jewish demographics

The total number of Jews worldwide is difficult to assess because the definition of "who is a Jew" is problematic as not all Jews identify themselves as Jewish, and some who identify as Jewish are not considered so by other Jews. According to the *Jewish Year Book* (1901), the global Jewish population in 1900 was around 11 million. The latest available data is from the World Jewish Population Survey of 2002 and the Jewish Year Calendar (2005). In 2002, according to the Jewish Population Survey, there were 13.3 million Jews around the world. The Jewish Year Calendar cites 14.6 million. Jewish population growth is currently near zero percent, with 0.3% growth from 2000 to 2001. Intermarriage and the declining birthrate have influenced Jewish population figures, although conversion to Judaism may help to offset this slightly.

It has been noted by some writers that the apparent prominence of Jews is disproportionate to the size of their population. One example, Mark Twain comments:

> If statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world, in all the ages; and had done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed; and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other people have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?

Jewish denominations

In the late Middle Ages, when Europe and western Asia were divided into Christian and Islamic countries, the Jewish people also found themselves divided into two main groups. Jews in Central and Eastern Europe, namely in Germany and Poland, were called Ashkenazi. Sephardic Jews can trace their tradition back to the Mediterranean countries, particularly Spain and Portugal under Muslim rule. When they were expelled in 1492, they settled in North Africa, the eastern Mediterranean, the Far East, and northern Europe. The two traditions differ in a number of ritual and cultural details, but their theology and basic Jewish practice are the same.

Over the past two centuries the Ashkenazi Jewish community has divided into a number of Jewish denominations; each has a different understanding of what principles of belief a Jew should hold, (although belief plays a lesser role than practice and observance in Judaism) and how one should live as a Jew. To some degree, these doctrinal differences have created schisms between the Jewish denominations. Nonetheless, there is some level of Jewish unity. For example, it would not be unusual for a Conservative Jew to attend either an Orthodox or Reform synagogue. The article on Relationships between Jewish religious movements discusses how different Jewish denominations view each other. Many non-Ashkenazi Jews, especially in the United States, are members of congregations affiliated with the various movements, although they may not specifically identify themselves as members of that denomination. They frequently do so out of convenience, and are likely to describe their religious practice as "traditional" or "observant", as opposed to "Orthodox" or "Conservative".

- Orthodox Judaism holds that both the Written and Oral Torah were divinely revealed to Moses, and that the laws within it are binding and unchanging.

Orthodox Jews generally consider commentaries on the *Shulchan Aruch* (a condensed codification of halakha that largely favored Sephardic traditions) such as the Moses Isserlis's *HaMappah* and the *Mishnah Berurah*, to be the definitive codification of Jewish law, and assert a continuity between the Judaism of the Temple in Jerusalem, pre-Enlightenment Rabbinic Judaism, and modern-day Orthodox Judaism. Most of Orthodox Judaism holds to one particular form of Jewish theology, based on Maimonides' 13 principles of Jewish faith. Orthodox Judaism broadly (and informally) shades into two main styles, Modern Orthodox Judaism and Haredi Judaism. The philosophical distinction is generally around accommodation to modernity and weight placed on non-Jewish disciplines, though in practical terms the differences are often reflected in styles of dress and rigor in practice. According to most Orthodox Jews, Jewish people who do not keep the laws of Shabbat and Yom Tov (the holidays), kashrut, and family purity are considered non-religious. Any Jew who keeps at least those laws would be considered observant and religious.

Hasidic Jews wearing black frock coats and fur shtreimels

- Modern Orthodox Judaism emphasizes strict observance of religious laws and commandments but with a broad, liberal approach to modernity and living in a non-Jewish or secular environment. Modern Orthodox women are gradually assuming a greater role in Jewish ritual practice, which is not acceptable in the Haredi community.
- Haredi Judaism (also known as "ultra-Orthodox Judaism," although some find this term offensive) is a very conservative form of Judaism. The Haredi world revolves around study, prayer and meticulous religious observance. Some Haredi Jews are more open to the modern world, perhaps most notably the Lubavitch Hasidim, but their acceptance of modernity is more a tool for enhancing Jewish faith than an end in itself.
  - Hasidic Judaism is a stream of Haredi Judaism based on the teachings of Rabbi Yisroel ben Eliezer (The Ba'al Shem Tov). Hasidic philosophy is rooted in the Kabbalah, and Hasidic Jews accept the Kabbalah as sacred scripture. They are distinguished both by a variety of special customs and practices including reliance on a Rebbe or supreme religious leader, and a special dress code particular to each Hasidic group.

- Conservative Judaism, known as Masorti Judaism outside of the United States and Canada, developed in Europe and the United States in the 1800s as Jews reacted to the changes brought about by the Enlightenment and Jewish emancipation. It is characterized by a comittment to following traditional Jewish laws and customs, including observance of Shabbat and kashrut, a deliberately non-fundamentalist teaching of Jewish principles of faith, a positive attitude toward modern culture, and an acceptance of both traditional rabbinic modes of study along with modern scholarship and critical text study when considering Jewish religious texts. Conservative Judaism teaches that Jewish law is not static, but has always developed in response to changing conditions. It holds that the Torah is a divine document written by prophets inspired by God, but rejects the Orthodox position that it was dictated by God to Moses. Similarly, Conservative Judaism holds that Judaism's Oral Law is divine and normative, but rejects some Orthodox interpretations of the Oral Law. Accordingly, Conservative Judaism holds that both the Written and Oral Law may be interpreted by the rabbis to reflect modern sensibilities and suit modern conditions, although great caution should be exercised in doing so. There is no absolute uniformity within Conservative Judaism and the communities that retain more traditional practices are sometimes called Conservadox.

- Reform Judaism, called Liberal or Progressive in many countries, originally formed in Germany in response to the Enlightenment. (Note that in the United Kingdom, there are two distinct congregational unions, Reform and Liberal. The former is significantly more traditional than the latter, but both hold to similar theoretical positions.) Its defining characteristic with respect to the other movements is its rejection of the binding nature of Jewish ceremonial law as such and belief instead that individual Jews should exercise an informed autonomy about what to observe. Reform Judaism initially defined Judaism as

a religion, rather than as a race or culture, rejected most of the ritual ceremonial laws of the Torah while observing moral laws, and emphasized the ethical call of the Prophets. Reform Judaism developed an egalitarian prayer service in the vernacular (along with Hebrew in many cases) and emphasized personal connection to Jewish tradition over specific forms of observance. Today, many Reform congregations encourage the study of Hebrew and traditional observances, while a smaller number continue to espouse the liberal ethos of the classical reformers of the nineteenth century.

- Reconstructionist Judaism started as a stream of philosophy by Mordechai Kaplan, a Conservative rabbi, and later became an independent movement emphasizing reinterpreting Judaism for modern times. Like Reform Judaism, Reconstructionist Judaism does not hold that Jewish law, as such, requires observance, but unlike Reform, Reconstructionist thought emphasizes the role of the community in deciding what observances to follow.

- Jewish Renewal, a recent North American movement, was begun by Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi, a Hassidic rabbi, in the 1960s. Jewish Renewal focuses on spirtuality and social justice, but does not address issues of Jewish law. Men and women participate equally in prayer.

- Humanistic Judaism. A small nontheistic movement that emphasizes Jewish culture and history as the sources of Jewish identity. Founded by Rabbi Sherwin Wine, it is centered in North America and Israel but also has affiliated groups in Europe and Latin America.

A Reform synagogue with mixed seating and equal participation of men and women

Jewish denominations in Israel

Even though all of these denominations exist in Israel, Israelis tend to classify Jewish identity in ways that are different than diaspora Jewry. Most Jewish Israelis classify themselves as "secular" (*hiloni*), "traditional" (*masorti*), "religious" (*dati*) or *Haredi*. The term "secular" is more popular as a self-description among Israeli families of western (European) origin, whose Jewish identity may be a very powerful force in their lives, but who see it as largely independent of traditional religious belief and practice. This portion of the population largely ignores organized religious life, be it of the official Israeli rabbinate (Orthodox) or of the liberal movements common to diaspora Judaism (Reform, Conservative).

The term "traditional" (*masorti*) is most common as a self-description among Israeli families of "eastern" origin (i.e., the Middle East, Central Asia, and North Africa). This term, as commonly used, has nothing to do with the official Masorti (Conservative) movement.

There is a great deal of ambiguity in the ways "secular" and "traditional" are used in Israel. They often overlap, and they cover an extremely wide range in terms of ideology and religious observance.

The term "Orthodox" is not popular in Israeli discourse, although the percentage of Jews who come under that category in Israel is far greater than in the diaspora. Various methods of measuring this percentage, each with its pros and cons, are the proportion of religiously observant Knesset members, the proportion of Jewish children enrolled in religious schools, and statistical studies on "identity."

What would be called "Orthodox" in the diaspora includes what is commonly called *dati* (religious) or *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) in Israel. The former term includes what is called "Religious Zionism" or the "National Religious" community, as well as what has become known over the past decade or so as *haredi-leumi* (nationalist *haredi*), or "Hardal," which combines a largely *haredi* lifestyle with nationalist ideology.

Haredi applies to a populace that can be roughly divided into three separate groups along both ethnic and ideological lines: (1) "Lithuanian" (non-hasidic) *haredim* of Ashkenazic origin; (2) Hasidic *haredim* of Ashkenazic origin; and (3) Sephardic *haredim*. The third group is the largest, and has been the most politically active since the early 1990s.

Alternative Judaism

Other expressions of Jewish identity fall outside of this conservative-liberal continuum.

Unlike the above denominations, which were ideological reactions that resulted from the exposure of traditional rabbinic Judaism to the radical changes of modern times, Karaite Judaism did not begin as a modern Jewish movement. The followers of Karaism believe they are the remnants of the non-Rabbinic Jewish sects of the Second Temple period, such as the Sadducees, though others contend they are a sect started in the 8th and 9th centuries. The Karaites (or "Scripturalists") accept only the Hebrew Bible and what they view as the Peshat: "Plain or Simple Meaning"; and do not accept non-biblical writings as authoritative. Some European Karaites do not see themselves as part of the Jewish community, while most do. It is interesting to note that the Nazis often did not associate Karaites with Jews, and therefore several Karaite communities were spared in WWII and exist to this day even in places such as Lithuania where Jewish communities were completely devastated. In other areas, such as Greece, the Nazis deemed Karaites as belonging to a greater Jewish tradition and abused them accordingly.

Another historical division among ethnic Jews are the Samaritans, who maintain a distinct cultural and religious identity from mainstream Judaism, and are located entirely around Mount Gerizim in the Nablus/ Shechem region of the West Bank and in Holon, near Tel Aviv in Israel.

Jewish observances

Religious clothing

A *kippah* (Hebrew: כִּפָּה, plural *kippot*; Yiddish: יאַרמלקע, *yarmulke*) is a slightly-rounded brimless skullcap worn by many Jewish men while praying, eating, reciting blessings, or studying Jewish religious texts, and at all times by some Jewish men. In non-Orthodox communities, some women have also begun to wear kippot. *Kippot* range in size from a small round beanie that covers only the back of the head, to a large, snug cap that covers the whole crown.

Tzitzit (Hebrew: צִיצִית) (Ashkenazi pronunciation: *tzitzis*) are special knotted "fringes" or "tassels" found on the four corners of the *tallit* (Hebrew: טַלִּית) (Ashkenazi pronunciation: *tallis*), or prayer shawl. The *tallit* is worn by Jewish men and some Jewish women during the prayer service. Customs vary regarding when a Jew begins wearing a tallit. In the Sephardi community, boys wear a tallit from bar mitzvah age. In some Ashkenazi communities it is customary to wear one only after marriage. A *tallit katan* (small tallit) is a fringed garment worn under the clothing throughout the day. In some Orthodox circles, the fringes are

allowed to hang freely outside the clothing.

Tefillin (Hebrew: תְּפִלִּין), known in English as phylacteries (from the Greek word φιλακτέριον, meaning *fortress* or *protection*), are two square leather boxes containing biblical verses, attached to the forehead and wound around the left arm by leather straps. They are worn during weekday morning prayer by observant Jewish men and some Jewish women.

A *kittel* (Yiddish: קיטל), a white knee-length overgarment, is worn by prayer leaders and some observant traditional Jews on the High Holidays. It is traditional for the head of the household to wear a kittel at the Passover seder, and some grooms wear one under the wedding canopy. Jewish males are buried in a *tallit* and sometimes also a *kittel* which are part of the *tachrichim* (burial garments).

Prayers

Traditionally, Jews recite prayers three times daily, with a fourth prayer added on Shabbat and holidays. At the heart of each service is the *Amidah* or *Shemoneh Esrei*. Another key prayer in many services is the declaration of faith, the *Shema Yisrael* (or *Shema*). The *Shema* is the recitation of a verse from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4): *Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad* — "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God! The Lord is One!"

Most of the prayers in a traditional Jewish service can be said in solitary prayer, although communal prayer is preferred. Communal prayer requires a quorum of ten adult Jews, called a *minyan*. In nearly all Orthodox and a few Conservative circles, only male Jews are counted toward a *minyan*; most Conservative Jews and members of other Jewish denominations count female Jews as well.

In addition to prayer services, observant traditional Jews recite prayers and benedictions throughout the day when performing various acts. Prayers are recited upon waking up in the morning, before eating or drinking different foods, after eating a meal, and so on.

The approach to prayer varies among the Jewish denominations. Differences can include the texts of prayers, the frequency of prayer, the number of prayers recited at various religious events, the use of musical instruments and choral music, and whether prayers are recited in the traditional liturgical languages or the vernacular. In general, Orthodox and Conservative congregations adhere most closely to tradition, and Reform and Reconstructionist synagogues are more likely to incorporate translations and contemporary writings in their services. Also, in most Conservative synagogues, and all Reform and Reconstructionist congregations, women participate in prayer services on an equal basis with men, including roles traditionally filled only by men, such as reading from the Torah. In addition, many Reform temples use musical accompaniment such as organs and mixed choirs.

A Yemenite Jew at morning prayers, wearing a kippah skullcap, prayer shawl and tefillin.

Jewish holidays

Jewish holidays celebrate central themes in the relationship between God and the world, such as creation, revelation, and redemption.

Shabbat

Shabbat, the weekly day of rest lasting from shortly before sundown on Friday night to shortly after sundown Saturday night, commemorates God's day of rest after six days of creation. It plays a pivotal role in Jewish practice and is governed by a large corpus of religious law. At sundown on Friday, the woman of the house welcomes the Shabbat by lighting two or more candles and reciting a blessing. The evening meal begins with the Kiddush, a blessing recited aloud over a cup of wine, and the Mohtzi, a blessing recited over the bread. It is customary to have challah, two braided loaves of bread, on the table. During Shabbat Jews are forbidden to engage in any activity that falls under 39 categories of *melakhah*, translated literally as "work." In fact the activities banned on the Sabbath are not "work" in the usual sense: They include such actions as lighting a fire, writing, using money and carrying in the public domain. The prohibition of lighting a fire has been extended in the modern era to driving a car, which involves burning fuel, and using electricity.

Jews praying in a synagogue on Yom Kippur, from an 1878 painting by Maurice Gottlieb

Three pilgrimage festivals

Jewish holy days (*haggim*), celebrate landmark events in Jewish history, such as the Exodus from Egypt and the giving of the Torah, and sometimes mark the change of seasons and transitions in the agricultural cycle. The three major festivals, Sukkot, Passover and Shavuot, are called "regalim" (derived from the Hebrew word "regel," or foot). On the three regalim, it was customary for the Israelites to make pilgrimages to Jerusalem to offer sacrifices in the Temple.

- Passover (*Pesach*) is a week-long holiday beginning on the evening of the 14th day of Nisan (the first month in the Hebrew calendar), that commemorates the Exodus from Egypt. Outside Israel, Passover is celebrated for eight days. In ancient times, it coincided with the barley harvest. It is the only holiday that centers on home-service, the Seder. Leavened products (chametz) are removed from the house prior to the holiday, and are not consumed throughout the week. Homes are thoroughly cleaned to ensure no bread or bread by-products remain, and a symbolic burning of the last vestiges of chametz is conducted on the morning of the Seder. Matzo is eaten instead of bread.

- Shavuot ("Pentecost" or "Feast of Weeks") celebrates the revelation of the Torah to the Israelites on Mount Sinai. Also known as the Festival of Bikurim, or first fruits, it coincided in biblical times with the wheat harvest. Shavuot customs include all-night study marathons known as Tikkun Leil Shavuot, eating dairy foods (cheesecake and blintzes are special favorites), reading the Book of Ruth, decorating homes and synagogues with greenery, and wearing white clothing, symbolizing purity.

- Sukkot ("Tabernacles" or "The Festival of Booths") commemorates the Israelites' forty years of wandering through the desert on their way to the Promised Land. It is celebrated through the construction of temporary booths called *sukkot* (sing. *sukkah*) that represent the temporary shelters of the Israelites during their wandering. It coincides with the fruit harvest, and marks the end of the agricultural cycle. Jews around the world eat in *sukkot* for seven days and nights. Sukkot concludes with Shemini Atzeret, where Jews begin to pray for rain and Simchat Torah, "Rejoicing of the Torah," a holiday

which marks reaching the end of the Torah reading cycle and beginning all over again. The occasion is celebrated with singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls.

High Holy Days

The High Holidays (*Yamim Noraim* or "Days of Awe") revolve around judgment and forgiveness.

- Rosh Hashanah, (also *Yom Ha-Zikkaron* or "Day of Remembrance," and *Yom Teruah*, or "Day of the Sounding of the Shofar"). Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year (literally, "head of the year"), although it falls on the first day of the seventh month of the Hebrew calendar, Tishri. Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of the 10-day period of atonement leading up to Yom Kippur, during which Jews are commanded to search their souls and make amends for sins committed, intentionally or not, throughout the year. Holiday customs include blowing the shofar, or ram's horn, in the synagogue, eating apples and honey, and saying blessings over a variety of symbolic foods, such as pomegranates.

- Yom Kippur, ("Day of Atonement") is the most solemn day of the Jewish year. It is a day of communal fasting and praying for forgiveness for one's sins. Observant Jews spend the entire day in the synagogue, sometimes with a short break in the afternoon, reciting prayers from a special holiday prayerbook called a "Mahzor." Many non-religious Jews make a point of attending synagogue services and fasting on Yom Kippur. On the eve of Yom Kippur, before candles are lit, a prefast meal, the "seuda mafseket," is eaten. Synagogue services on the eve of Yom Kippur begin with the Kol Nidre prayer. It is customary to wear white on Yom Kippur, especially for Kol Nidre, and leather shoes are not worn. The following day, prayers are held from morning to evening. The final prayer service, called "Ne'ilah," ends with a long blast of the shofar.

Other holidays

Hanukkah

Hanukkah, חנוכה, also known as the Festival of Lights, is an eight day Jewish holiday that starts on the 25th day of Kislev (Hebrew calendar). The festival is observed in Jewish homes by the kindling of lights on each of the festival's eight nights, one on the first night, two on the second night and so on.

The holiday was called Hanukkah meaning "dedication" because it marks the re-dedication of the Temple after its desecration by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. Spiritually, Hanukkah commemorates the "Miracle of the Oil". According to the Talmud, at the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem following the victory of the Maccabees over the Seleucid Empire, there was only enough consecrated oil to fuel the eternal flame in the Temple for one day. Miraculously, the oil burned for eight days - which was the length of time it took to press, prepare and consecrate new oil.

Hanukkah is not mentioned in the Bible and was never considered a major holiday in Judaism, but it has become much more visible and widely celebrated in modern times, mainly because it falls around the same time as Christmas and has national Jewish overtones that have been emphasized since the establishment of the State of Israel.

Purim

Purim (Hebrew: פורים Pûrîm English: "Lots") is a joyous Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Persian Jews from the plot of the evil Haman, who sought to exterminate them, as recorded in the biblical Book of Esther. It is characterized by public recitation of the Book of Esther, mutual gifts of food and drink, charity to the poor, and a celebratory meal (Esther 9:22). Other customs include drinking wine, eating special pastries called hamantashen, dressing up in masks and costumes, and organizing carnivals and parties.

Purim is celebrated annually on the 14th of the Hebrew month of Adar, which comes out in February-March.

Torah readings

The core of festival and Shabbat prayer services is the public reading of the Torah, along with connected readings from the other books of the Tanakh, called Haftarah. Over the course of a year, the whole Torah is read, with the cycle starting over in the autumn, on Simchat Torah.

Synagogues and Religious Buildings

Synagogues are Jewish houses of prayer and study. They usually contain separate rooms for prayer (the main sanctuary), smaller rooms for study, and often an area for community or educational use. There is no set blueprint for synagogues and the architectural shapes and interior designs of synagogues vary greatly. The Reform movement mostly refer to their synagogues as temples. Some traditional features of a synagogue are:

Interior of the Esnoga synagogue in Amsterdam

- The ark (called *aron ha-kodesh* by Ashkenazim and *hekhal* by Sephardim) where the Torah scrolls are kept (the ark is often closed with an ornate curtain (*parochet*) outside or inside the ark doors);
- The elevated reader's platform (called *bimah* by Ashkenazim and *tebah* by Sephardim), where the Torah is read (and services are conducted in Sephardi synagogues);
- The eternal light (*ner tamid*), a continually-lit lamp or lantern used as a reminder of the constantly lit menorah of the Temple in Jerusalem
- The pulpit, or *amud* (Hebrew, a lectern facing the Ark where the hazzan or prayer leader stands while praying.

In addition to synagogues, other buildings of significance in Judaism include yeshivas, or institutions of Jewish learning, and mikvahs, which are ritual baths.

Dietary laws: *Kashrut*

The laws of kashrut ("keeping kosher") are the Jewish dietary laws. Food in accord with Jewish law is termed kosher, and food not in accord with Jewish law is termed *treifah* or *treif*. The Torah cites no reason for the laws of kashrut, but the rabbis have offered various explanations, including ritual purity, teaching people to control their urges, and health benefits. Kashrut involves the abstention from consuming birds and beasts that prey on other animals, and creatures

that roam the sea floor eating the excretions of other animals. Major prohibitions exist on eating pork, which is considered an unclean animal, and seafood. Meat is ritually slaughtered, and meat and milk are not eaten together, based on the biblical injunction against cooking a kid in its mother's milk.

Although hygiene may have been a factor, the deeper purpose of kashrut is to lend a spiritual dimension to the physical act of eating. The idea is that Jews should not put anything into their mouths that involves spiritual "negatives" such as pain, sickness, uncleanliness, or cruelty to animals.

Family purity

The laws of *niddah* ("menstruant", often referred to euphemistically as "family purity") and various other laws regulating the interaction between men and women (e.g., *tzniut*, modesty in dress) are perceived, especially by Orthodox Jews, as vital factors in Jewish life, though they are rarely followed by Reform or Conservative Jews. The laws of *niddah* dictate that sexual intercourse cannot take place while the woman is having a menstrual flow, and she has to count seven "clean" days and immerse in a *mikvah* (ritual bath) following menstruation.

Life-cycle events

Life-cycle events, or rites of passage, occur throughout a Jew's life that serve to strengthen Jewish identity and bind him/her to the entire community.

- Brit milah - Welcoming male babies into the covenant through the rite of circumcision on their eighth day of life. The baby boy is also given his Hebrew name in the ceremony. A naming ceremony intended as a parallel ritual for girls, named *zeved habat*, enjoys limited popularity.
- Bar mitzvah and Bat mitzvah - This passage from childhood to adulthood takes place when a female Jew is twelve and a male Jew is thirteen years old among Orthodox and some Conservative congregations. In the Reform movement, both girls and boys have their bat/bar mitzvah at age thirteen. This is often commemorated by having the new adults, male only in the Orthodox tradition, lead the congregation in prayer and publicly read a "portion" of the Torah.
- Marriage - Marriage is an extremely important lifecycle event. A wedding takes place under a *chupah*, or wedding canopy, which symbolizes a happy house. At the end of the ceremony, the groom breaks a glass with his foot, symbolizing the continuous mourning for the destruction of the Temple, and the scattering of the Jewish people.
- Death and Mourning - Judaism has a multi-staged mourning practice. The first stage is called the shiva (literally "seven", observed for one week) during which it is traditional to sit at home and be comforted by friends and family, the second is the *shloshim* (observed for one month) and for those who have lost one of their parents, there is a third stage, *avelut yud bet chodesh*, which is observed for eleven months.

See also:- Yetzer harah

Community leadership

Classical priesthood

The role of the priesthood in Judaism has significantly diminished since the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, when priests attended to the Temple and sacrifices. The priesthood is an inherited position, and although priests no longer have any but ceremonial duties, they are still honored in many Jewish communities. Many Orthodox Jewish communities believe that they will be needed again for a future Third Temple and need to remain in readiness for future duty.

- Kohen (priest) - patrilineal descendant of Aaron, brother of Moses. In the Temple, the *kohanim* were charged with performing the sacrifices. Today, a Kohen is the first one called up at the reading of the Torah, performs the Priestly Blessing, as well as complying with other unique laws and ceremonies, including the ceremony of redemption of the first-born.
- Levi (Levite) - Patrilineal descendant of Levi the son of Jacob. In the Temple in Jerusalem, the levites sang Psalms, performed construction, maintenance, janitorial, and guard duties, assisted the priests, and sometimes interpreted the law and Temple ritual to the public. Today, a Levite is called up second to the reading of the Torah.

Prayer leaders

From the time of the Mishnah and Talmud to the present, Judaism has required specialists or authorities for the practice of very few rituals or ceremonies. A Jew can fulfill most requirements for prayer by himself. Some activities — reading the Torah and *haftarah* (a supplementary portion from the Prophets or Writings), the prayer for mourners, the blessings for bridegroom and bride, the complete grace after meals — require a *minyan*, the presence of ten adults (Orthodox Jews and some Conservative Jews require ten adult men; some Conservative Jews and Reform Jews include women in the minyan).

The most common professional clergy in a synagogue are:

- Rabbi of a congregation - Jewish scholar who is charged with answering the legal questions of a congregation. This role requires ordination by the congregation's preferred authority (i.e. from a respected Orthodox rabbi or, if the congregation is Conservative or Reform, from academic seminaries). A congregation does not necessarily require a rabbi. Some congregations have a rabbi but also allow members of the congregation to act as *shatz* or *baal kriyah* (see below).
    - Hassidic *Rebbe* - rabbi who is the head of a Hasidic dynasty.
- Hazzan (note: the "h" denotes voiceless pharyngeal fricative) (cantor) - a trained vocalist who acts as *shatz*. Chosen for a good voice, knowledge of traditional tunes, understanding of the meaning of the prayers and sincerity in reciting them. A congregation does not need to have a dedicated hazzan.

Jewish prayer services do involve two specified roles, which are sometimes, but not always, filled by a rabbi and/or hazzan in many congregations. In other congregations these roles are filled on an ad-hoc basis by members of the congregation who lead portions of services on a rotating basis:

- Shaliach tzibur or *Shatz* (leader — literally "agent" or "representative" — of the congregation) leads those assembled in prayer, and sometimes prays on behalf of the community. When a *shatz* recites a prayer on behalf of the congregation, he is *not* acting as an intermediary but rather as a facilitator. The entire congregation participates in the recital of such prayers by saying *amen* at their conclusion; it is with this act that the *shatz's* prayer becomes the prayer of the congregation. Any adult capable of reciting the prayers clearly may act as *shatz*. In Orthodox congregations and some Conservative congregations, only men can be prayer leaders, but the Conservative and Reform movements now allow women to serve in this function.

- The Baal kriyah or *baal koreh* (master of the reading) reads the weekly Torah portion. The requirements for being the *baal kriyah* are the same as those for the *shatz*. These roles are not mutually exclusive. The same person is often qualified to fill more than one role, and often does. Often there are several people capable of filling these roles and different services (or parts of services) will be led by each.

Many congregations, especially larger ones, also rely on a:

- Gabbai (sexton) - Calls people up to the Torah, appoints the *shatz* for each prayer session if there is no standard *shatz*, and makes certain that the synagogue is kept clean and supplied.

The three preceding positions are usually voluntary and considered an honour. Since the Enlightenment large synagogues have often adopted the practice of hiring rabbis and hazzans to act as *shatz* and *baal kriyah*, and this is still typically the case in many Conservative and Reform congregations. However, in most Orthodox synagogues these positions are filled by laypeople on a rotating or ad-hoc basis. Although most congregations hire one or more Rabbis, the use of a professional hazzan is generally declining in American congregations, and the use of professionals for other offices is rarer still.
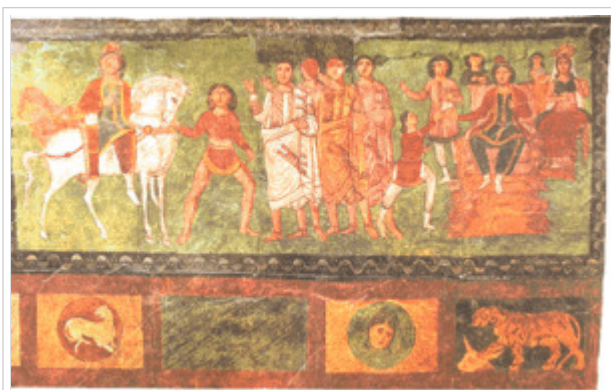
Specialized religious roles

- *Dayan* (judge) - An ordained rabbi with special legal training who belongs to a *beth din* (rabbinical court). In Israel, religious courts handle marriage and divorce cases, conversion and financial disputes in the Jewish community.
- Mohel - Ritual circumciser who performs the *brit milah* (circumcision). An expert in the laws of circumcision who has received training from a qualified *mohel*.
- Shochet (ritual slaughterer) - In order for meat to be kosher, it must be slaughtered by a *shochet* who is an expert in the laws of kashrut and has been trained by another *shochet*.
- Sofer (scribe) - Torah scrolls, *tefillin* (phylacteries), *mezuzot* (scrolls put on doorposts), and *gittin* (bills of divorce) must be written by a *sofer* who is an expert in Hebrew calligraphy and has undergone rigorous training in the laws of writing sacred texts.
- Rosh yeshiva - A Torah scholar who runs a yeshiva.
- Mashgiach of a yeshiva - Supervises the emotional and spiritual welfare of students in a *yeshiva*, and gives lectures on *mussar* (Jewish ethics).
- Mashgiach - Supervises manufacturers of kosher food, importers, caterers and restaurants to ensure that the food is kosher. Must be an expert in the laws of kashrut and trained by a rabbi, if not a rabbi himself.

History

Origins

Traditional view

At its core, the Bible is an account of the Israelites' relationship with God from their earliest history until the building of the Second Temple (c. 350 BCE). This relationship is often a contentious one, as the Israelites struggle with their faith in God and attraction to other gods. Among the larger-than-life figures we meet in the Bible are the Patriarchs — Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who wrestled with their beliefs —- and Moses, who led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Abraham, hailed as the first Hebrew and the father of the Jewish people, rejected the idolatry that he saw around him and embraced monotheism. As a reward for this act of faith in one God, he was promised many offspring: "Look now toward heaven and count the stars/So shall be your progeny." (Genesis 15:5) Abraham's first child was Ishmael and his second son was Isaac, whom God said would continue Abraham's work and inherit the Land of Israel (then called Canaan), after having been exiled and redeemed. God sent the patriarch Jacob and his children to Egypt, where after many generations they became enslaved. God later commanded Moses to redeem the Israelites from slavery, leading to the Exodus from Egypt. The Israelites gathered at Mount Sinai in 1313 BCE (Jewish Year 2448) and received the Torah - the five books of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. These books, together with Nevi'im and Ketuvim are known as *Torah Shebikhtav*: literally the "Written Torah," as opposed to the Oral Torah, which refers to the Mishna and the Talmud. Eventually, God led them to the land of Israel.

Scenes from the Book of Esther decorate the Dura-Europos synagogue dating from 244 CE

God designated the descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother, to be a priestly class within the Israelite community. They first officiated in the tabernacle (a portable house of worship), and later their descendants were in charge of worship in the Temple in Jerusalem.

Once the Israelites had settled in the land of Israel, the tabernacle was planted in the city of Shiloh for over 300 years during which time God provided great men, and occasionally women, to rally the nation against attacking enemies, some of which were sent by God as a punishment for the sins of the people. This is described in the Book of Joshua and the Book of Judges. As time went on, the spiritual level of the nation declined to the point that God allowed the Philistines to capture the tabernacle in Shiloh.

The people of Israel then told Samuel the prophet that they had reached the point where they needed to be governed by a permanent king, as were other nations, as described in the Books of Samuel. Samuel grudgingly acceded to this request and appointed Saul, a great but very humble man, to be their King. When the people pressured Saul into going against a command conveyed to him by Samuel, God told Samuel to appoint David in his stead.

Once King David was established, he told the prophet Nathan that he would like to build a permanent temple, and as a reward for his actions, God promised David that he would allow his son to build the temple and the throne would never depart from his children (David himself was not allowed to build the temple because he had been involved in many wars, making it inappropriate for him to build a temple representing peace). As a result, it was David's son Solomon who built the first permanent temple according to God's will, in Jerusalem, as described in the Books of Kings.

The Western Wall in Jerusalem is a remnant of the wall encircling the Second Temple. The Temple Mount is the holiest site in Judaism.

Rabbinic tradition holds that the details and interpretation of the law, which are called the *Oral Torah* or *oral law*, were originally an unwritten tradition based upon what God told Moses on Mount Sinai. However, as the persecutions of the Jews increased and the details were in danger of being forgotten, these oral laws were recorded by Rabbi Judah haNasi (Judah the Prince) in the Mishnah, redacted *circa* 200 CE. The Talmud was a compilation of both the Mishnah and the Gemara, rabbinic commentaries redacted over the next three centuries. The Gemara originated in two major centers of Jewish scholarship, Palestine and Babylonia. Correspondingly, two bodies of analysis developed, and two works of Talmud were created. The older compilation is called the Jerusalem Talmud. It was compiled sometime during the fourth century in Israel. The Babylonian Talmud was compiled from discussions in the houses of study by the scholars Ravina I, Ravina II, and Rav Ashi by 500 C.E., although it continued to be edited later.

Critical historical view

Critical scholars (who may or may not be observant Jews), reject the claim that sacred texts, including the Hebrew Bible were either dictated by God or divinely inspired. Instead, they see these texts as authored by humans and meaningful in specific historical and cultural contexts. Many of these scholars accept the general principles of the documentary hypothesis and suggest that the Torah consists of a variety of inconsistent texts edited together in a way that calls attention to divergent accounts.

These scholars have various theories concerning the origins of the Israelites and Israelite religion. Most agree that the people who formed the nation of Israel during the First Temple era had origins in Mesopotamia and in Egypt, although some question whether any or all of their ancestors had been slaves in Egypt. Many suggest that during the First Temple period, the people of Israel were henotheists, that is, they believed that each nation had its own god, but that their god was superior to other gods. Some suggest that strict monotheism developed during the Babylonian Exile, perhaps in reaction to Zoroastrian dualism.

A Torah scroll.

In this view, it was only by the Hellenic period that most Jews came to believe that their God was the only God (and thus, the God of everyone), and that the record of His revelation (the Torah) contained within it universal truths. This attitude reflected a growing Gentile interest in Judaism (some Greeks and Romans considered the Jews a most "philosophical" people because of their belief in a God that cannot be represented visually), and growing Jewish interest in Greek philosophy, which sought to establish universal truths, thus leading - potentially - to the idea of monotheism, at least in the sense that "all gods are One." It was also at this time that the notion of a clearly bounded Jewish nation identical with the Jewish religion formed. According to one scholar, the clash between the early Christians and Pharisees that ultimately led to the birth of the Christian religion and Rabbinic Judaism reflected the struggle by Jews to reconcile their claims to national particularism and theological universalism.

According to Prof. Ze'ev Herzog of Tel Aviv University, monotheism, as a state religion, is likely "an innovation of the period of the Kingdom of Judea,

following the destruction of the Kingdom of Israel." Herzog states that "The question about the date at which monotheism was adopted by the kingdoms of Israel and Judea arose with the discovery of inscriptions in ancient Hebrew that mention a pair of gods: Jehovah and his Asherah. At two sites, Kuntiliet Ajrud in the southwestern part of the Negev hill region, and at Khirbet el-Kom in the Judea piedmont, Hebrew inscriptions have been found that mention "Jehovah and his Asherah," "Jehovah Shomron and his Asherah, "Jehovah Teman and his Asherah." The authors were familiar with a pair of gods, Jehovah and his consort Asherah, and send blessings in the couple's name."

Canaanite Religious Heritage

The origins of Yahweh himself may be rooted in earlier Canaanite religion, which was centered on a pantheon of gods much like the Greek pantheon. Ba'al is the most recognized of this pantheon, mentioned over sixty times in the Bible. Ba'al was the storm-god and the god of fertility to who worship is repeatedly forbidden in the Tanakh. In a society focused on survival, fertility represented the ultimate good. He was not, however, the head of the pantheon. That title belonged to El, the Compassionate. According to a theory originally posited by Mendenhall, a group of oppressed and self-marginalized people, the ' apiru (a term for people who stood outside the established order, also possibly the origin of the word Hebrew) began to worship El as their primary deity.

The worship of the god known as Yahweh, not originally a Canaanite god, was probably developed in south of the Levantine region, in Midian and brought to the region of the Levant by a group of nomads from the south (slaves from Egypt, according to biblical tradition). The foreign god Yahweh is believed to have become amalgamated with the native god El and taken on many of his characteristics: an aged god; a wise god; even the creator god. As further evidence for the amalgamation, the Tanakh uses the word "El" for God. Notably, the Priestly source uses the term "El-Shaddai" for God. El-Shaddai most likely means "El, the mountain one," in reference to El's terrestrial dwelling.

Israel as a new, established ethnic group is generally thought to have consolidated in the twelfth century B.C., although some archaeologists, notably Israel Finkelstein, reject the claim that Israel was a coalition of oppressed peoples, arguing that the emergence of the Jewish people as a distinct ethnos did not occur until the ninth or eighth century B.C..

Eventually, Judaism dropped all associations with other gods and goddesses of the Canaanite pantheon and become monotheistic. When exactly this occurred, however, is also debated. Plausible cases have been made for the continued worship, or veneration, of Asherah by the Israelites, as Yahweh's consort, well after the amalgamation of Yahweh and El and the official orthodoxy of that preached Yahweh-alone. Asherah, El's consort in the Canaanite pantheon, is mentioned over forty times in the Tanakh, usually within the context of a condemnation of the worship of her or the use of her cult symbol, believed to be that of a stylized tree. Not quite a graven image, it is believed to have been generally-tolerated (amongst the people if not the official orthodoxy) as a common tool of worship among Israelite women.

Inscriptions from Kuntillet'Ajurd and Khirbet el-Qom refer to "Yahweh and his Asherah". It is debated whether the inscriptions refer to Asherah the goddess or "the Asherah," a symbol of Asherah's cult. In either case, Yahweh is undoubtedly associated with Asherah. Just as Yahweh took up many traits of El's; it is perceived as likely that he also took up El's consort.

A likely influence on the final purge of Asherah and all Canaanite gods from Israelite religion was Josiah's reformation, believed to have taken place in 621 B.C..

Antiquity

The United Monarchy was established under Saul and continued under King David and Solomon with its capital in Jerusalem. After Solomon's reign the nation split into two kingdoms, the Kingdom of Israel (in the north) and the Kingdom of Judah (in the south). The Kingdom of Israel was conquered by the Assyrian ruler Sargon II in the late 8th century BCE with many people from the capital Samaria being taken captive to Media and the Habor valley. The Kingdom of Judah continued as an independent state until it was conquered by a Babylonian army in the early 6th century BCE, destroying the First Temple that was at the centre of ancient Jewish worship. The Judean elite were exiled to Babylonia and this is regarded as the first Jewish Diaspora. During this captivity the Jews in Babylon wrote what is known as the "Babylonian Talmud" while the remaining Jews in Judea wrote what is called the "Palestinian Talmud". These are the first written forms of the Torah and the Babylonian Talmud is the Talmud used to this day. Later many of them returned to their homeland after the subsequent conquest of Babylonia by the Persians seventy years later, a period known as the Babylonian Captivity. A new Second Temple was constructed, and old religious practices were resumed.

During the early years of the Second Temple, the highest religious authority was a council known as the Great Assembly, led by Ezra of the Book of Ezra. Among other accomplishments of the Great Assembly, the last books of the Bible were written at this time and the canon sealed. Hellenistic Judaism spreads to Ptolemaic Egypt from the 3rd century BC, and becomes a notable *religio licita* throughout the Roman Empire, until its decline in the 3rd century parallel to the rise of Gnosticism and Early Christianity.

After a Jewish revolt against Roman rule in 66 CE, the Romans all but destroyed Jerusalem. Following a second revolt, Jews were not allowed to enter the city of Jerusalem and most Jewish worship was forbidden by Rome. Following the destruction of Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews, Jewish worship stopped being centrally organized around the Temple, prayer took the place of sacrifice, and worship was rebuilt around rabbis who acted as teachers and leaders of individual communities (see Jewish diaspora).

Historical Jewish groupings (to 1700)

Around the first century CE there were several small Jewish sects: the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, and Christians. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, these sects vanished. Christianity survived, but by breaking with Judaism and becoming a separate religion; the Pharisees survived but in the form of Rabbinic Judaism (today, known simply as "Judaism"). The Sadducees rejected the divine inspiration of the Prophets and the Writings, relying only on the Torah as divinely inspired. Consequently, a number of other core tenets of the Pharisees' belief system (which became the basis for modern Judaism), were also dismissed by the Sadducees.

Like the Sadducees who relied only on the Torah, some Jews in the 8th and 9th centuries rejected the authority and divine inspiration of the Oral Law as recorded in the Mishnah (and developed by later rabbis in the two Talmuds), relying instead only upon the Tanakh. These included the Isunians, the Yudganites, the Malikites, and others. They soon developed oral traditions of their own, which differed from the rabbinic traditions, and eventually formed the Karaite sect. Karaites exist in small numbers today, mostly living in Israel. Rabbinical and Karaite Jews each hold that the others are Jews, but that the other faith is erroneous.

Over time Jews developed into distinct ethnic groups — amongst others, the Ashkenazi Jews (of central and Eastern Europe), the Sephardi Jews (of Spain, Portugal, and North Africa), the Beta Israel of Ethiopia and the Yemenite Jews, from the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. This split is cultural, and is not based on any doctrinal dispute, although the distance did result in minor differences in practice and prayers.

Persecutions

Antisemitism arose during the Middle Ages, in the form of persecutions, pogroms, forced conversion, expulsions, social restrictions and ghettoization.

This was different in quality to any repressions of Jews in ancient times. Ancient repression was politically motivated and Jews were treated no differently than any other ethnic group would have been. With the rise of the Churches, attacks on Jews became motivated instead by theological considerations specifically deriving from Christian views about Jews and Judaism Langmuir, Gavin (1993). *History, religion, and antisemitism*. University of California Press. ISBN 0520077288..

Hasidism

Hasidic Judaism was founded by Yisroel ben Eliezer (1700-1760), also known as the *Ba'al Shem Tov* (or *Besht*). It originated in a time of persecution of the Jewish people, when European Jews had turned inward to Talmud study; many felt that most expressions of Jewish life had become too "academic", and that they no longer had any emphasis on spirituality or joy. His disciples attracted many followers; they themselves established numerous Hasidic sects across Europe. Hasidic Judaism eventually became the way of life for many Jews in Europe. Waves of Jewish immigration in the 1880s carried it to the United States.

Early on, there was a serious schism between Hasidic and non-Hasidic Jews. European Jews who rejected the Hasidic movement were dubbed by the Hasidim as Misnagdim, (lit. "opponents"). Some of the reasons for the rejection of Hasidic Judaism were the overwhelming exuberance of Hasidic worship, its untraditional ascriptions of infallibility and alleged miracle-working to their leaders, and the concern that it might become a messianic sect. Since then differences between the Hasidim and their opponents have slowly diminished and both groups are now considered part of Haredi Judaism.

The Enlightenment and Reform Judaism

In the late 18th century CE, Europe was swept by a group of intellectual, social and political movements known as the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment led to reductions in the European laws that prohibited Jews to interact with the wider secular world, thus allowing Jews access to secular education and experience. A parallel Jewish movement, Haskalah or the "Jewish Enlightenment," began, especially in Central Europe, in response to both the Enlightenment and these new freedoms. It placed an emphasis on integration with secular society and a pursuit of non-religious knowledge such as reason. The thrust and counter-thrust between supporters of Haskalah and more traditional Jewish concepts eventually led to the formation of a number of different branches of Judaism: Haskalah supporters founded Reform Judaism and Liberal Judaism, while traditionalists founded what is called Orthodox Judaism, and Jews seeking a balance between the two sides founded Masorti and Conservative Judaism. A number of smaller groups came into being as well.

Judaism today

In most industrialized nations with modern economies, such as the United States, Israel, Canada, United Kingdom, Argentina and South Africa, a wide variety of Jewish practices exist, along with a growing plurality of secular and non-practicing Jews. For example, in the world's second largest Jewish community, that of the United States, according to the 2001 edition of the National Jewish Population Survey, 4.3 million out of 5.1 million Jews had some sort of connection to the religion. Of that population of connected Jews, 80% participated in some sort of Jewish religious observance, but only 48% belonged to a synagogue.

Religious (and secular) Jewish movements in the USA and Canada perceive this as a crisis situation, and have grave concern over rising rates of intermarriage and assimilation in the Jewish community. Since American Jews are marrying later in life, and are having fewer children, the birth rate for American Jews has dropped from over 2.0 to 1.7 (the replacement rate is 2.1). (*This is My Beloved, This is My Friend: A Rabbinic Letter on Intimate relations*, p. 27, Elliot N. Dorff, The Rabbinical Assembly, 1996). Intermarriage rates range from 40-50% in the US, and only about a third of children of intermarried couples are raised as Jews. Due to intermarriage and low birth rates, the Jewish population in the US shrank from 5.5 million in 1990 to 5.1 million in 2001. This is indicative of the general population trends among the Jewish community in the Diaspora, but a focus on total population obscures growth trends in some denominations and communities, such as Haredi Judaism.

The Baal teshuva movement is a movement of Jews who have "returned" to religion or become more observant.

Judaism and other religions

Christianity and Judaism

Historians and theologians regularly review the changing relationship between some Christian groups and the Jewish people; the article on Christian-Jewish reconciliation studies one recent issue.

Islam and Judaism

Islam and Judaism have a complex relationship. Traditionally Jews living in Muslim lands, known as dhimmis, were allowed to practice their religion and to administer their internal affairs, but subject to certain conditions. They had to pay the jizya (a per capita tax imposed on free adult non-muslim males) to Muslims. Dhimmis had an inferior status under Islamic rule. They had several social and legal disabilities such as prohibitions against bearing arms or giving testimony in courts in cases involving Muslims. Many of the disabilities were highly symbolic. The most degrading one was the requirement of distinctive clothing, not found in the Qur'an or hadith but invented in early medieval Baghdad; its enforcement was highly erratic. Jews rarely faced martyrdom or exile, or forced compulsion to change their religion, and they were mostly free in their choice of residence and profession. Indeed, the period 712-1066 under the Ummayads and the Abbasids has been called the Golden Age of Jewish culture in Spain. The notable examples of massacre of Jews include the killing or forcibly conversion of them by the rulers of the Almohad dynasty in Al-Andalus in the 12th century. Notable examples of the cases where the choice of residence was taken away from them includes confining Jews to walled quarters (mellahs) in Morocco beginning from the 15th century and especially since the

early 19th century. There were some forced conversions in the 12th century under the Almohad dynasty of North Africa and al-Andalus as well as in Persia. Standard antisemitic themes have become commonplace in the propaganda of Arab Islamic movements such as Hizbullah and Hamas, in the pronouncements of various agencies of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and even in the newspapers and other publications of Refah Partisi."

Judaism and Zoroastrianism

For part of its early history, Jews lived under the Zoroastrian Persian Empire. Some scholars believe Judaism started off as a western branch of Zoroastrianism, as evidenced by the fact that Cyrus the Great, the first king of the Persian empire, and subsequent Iranian kings funded the reconstruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

Alternative views are that this overlooks the enormous importance assigned in antiquity to beliefs in local gods dominant over specific regions, and that Cyrus reportedly funded the reconstruction to gain the approval and blessing of the local "god" over the nation of Israel. Disregarding or angering the regional god was understood to be bad luck, generating curses, conflict, and poverty in the region affected.

Syncretic movements incorporating Judaism

There are some organizations that combine elements of Judaism with those of other religions. The most well-known of these is the Messianic Judaism movement (closely related to Hebrew Christianity), groups of ethnic Jews and gentiles (non-Jews), historically sponsored by Christian organizations, who promote the belief that Jesus is the Messiah. These groups typically combine Christian theology and Christology with a thin veneer of Jewish religious practices. The most controversial of these groups is the American Jews for Jesus which actively proselytizes ethnic Jews through numerous missionary campaigns in major American cities.

Other examples of syncretism include Judeo-Paganists, a loosely-organized set of Jews who incorporate pagan or Wiccan beliefs; Jewish Buddhists, another loosely-organized group that incorporates elements of Asian spirituality in their faith; and some Renewal Jews who borrow freely and openly from Buddhism, Sufism, Native American religion, and other faiths.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Judaism"

Kabbalah

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Kabbalah (Hebrew: קַבָּלָה, Tiberian: qabːɔˈlɔh, *Qabbālāh*, Israeli: *Kabala*) refers to a set of esoteric teachings and mystical practices that form an alternative to traditional Jewish interpretations of the Tanakh and religious observances. It is a set of beliefs followed by some Jews as the true meaning of Judaism, while rejected by other Jews as heretical and contrary to Judaism.

Kabbalah is considered by its followers to be part of the study of Torah -- the study of Torah (the Law of God) being an inherent duty of observant Jews -- specifically the study of the inner meaning of Torah. The Torah is the name commonly given to the first five books of the Hebrew Bible which is also the Christian Old Testament. These first five books are commonly referred to in Christian circles as the Pentateuch.

Torah study is traditionally divided into three levels, while Kabbalah followers add a fourth:

- *Peshat*, the surface meaning of the text;

- *Remez*, allusions or allegories in the text;

- *Derash*, a rabbinic or midrashic way of reading new lessons into the text;

- *Sod*, the hidden mystical reading of the inner secrets of Torah. These hidden meanings are more than just what may be seen by attentive study, but include layer upon layer of codes and meanings intentionally hidden by God, which can only be found through unraveling coded meanings.

The study of the inner secrets of Torah (Sod) is called Kabbalah

The origins of the actual term *Kabbalah* are unknown and disputed to belong either to Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021 - 1058) or else to the 13th century AD Spanish Kabbalist Bahya ben Asher. While other terms have been used in many religious documents from the 2nd century AD up to the present day, the term Kabbalah has become the main descriptive of Jewish esoteric knowledge and practices. Main Kabbalistic literature which served as the basis for most of the development of Kabbalistic thought divides between early works such as Bahir and Heichalot (believed to be dated 1st Century AD) and later works dated to the 13th century AD, of which the main book is the Zohar representing the main source for the Contemplative Kabbalah ("Kabbalah Iyunit").

Because it is by definition esoteric, no popular account (including an encyclopedia) can provide a complete, precise, and accurate explanation of the Kabbalah. However, a number of scholars, most notably Gershom Scholem, Arthur Green, Daniel Matt and Moshe Idel have made Kabbalist texts objects of modern scholarly scrutiny. Some scholars, notably Gershom Scholem and Martin Buber, have argued that modern Hassidic Judaism represents a popularization of the

Kabbalah. According to its adherents, intimate understanding and mastery of the Kabbalah brings one spiritually closer to God and enriches one's experience of Jewish sacred texts and law.

Kabbalah literally means "receiving", and is sometimes transliterated as Cabala, Kabbala, Kabala, Kabalah, Qabalah, or other spellings.

Overview

According to Kabbalistic tradition, Kabbalistic knowledge was transmitted orally by the Jewish Patriarchs, prophets, and sages (Avot in Hebrew), eventually to be "interwoven" into Jewish religious writings and culture. According to this tradition, Kabbalah was, in around the 10th century BCE, an open knowledge practiced by over a million people in ancient Israel, although there is little objective historical evidence to support this thesis.

Foreign conquests drove the Jewish spiritual leadership of the time (the Sanhedrin) to hide the knowledge and make it secret, fearing that it might be misused if it fell into the wrong hands. The Sanhedrin leaders were also concerned that the practice of Kabbalah by Jews deported on conquest to other countries (the Diaspora), unsupervised and unguided by the masters, might lead them into wrong practice and forbidden ways. As a result, the Kabbalah became secretive, forbidden and esoteric to Judaism ("*Torat Ha'Sod*" Hebrew: תורת הסוד) for two and a half millennia.

History

Origins of Judaic Mysticism

According to the traditional understanding, Kabbalah dates from Eden. It came down from a remote past as a revelation to elect Tzadikim (righteous people), and, for the most part, was preserved only by a privileged few. Talmudic Judaism records its view of the proper protocol for teaching this wisdom, as well as many of its concepts, in the *Talmud,* Tractate *Hagigah*, Ch.2.

The Sefirot in Jewish Kabbalah

Contemporary scholarship suggests that various schools of Jewish esotericism arose at different periods of Jewish history, each reflecting not only prior forms of mysticism, but also the intellectual and cultural milieu of that historical period. Answers to questions of transmission, lineage, influence, and innovation vary greatly and cannot be easily summarized.

Origins of terms

Originally, Kabbalistic knowledge was believed to be an integral part of the Judaism's oral law (see also, Aggadah), given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai around 13th century BCE, though there is a view that Kabbalah began with Adam.

When the Israelites arrived at their destination and settled in Canaan, for a few centuries the esoteric knowledge was referred to by its aspect practice - meditation Hitbonenut (Hebrew: התבוננות), Rebbe Nachman of Breslov's Hitbodedut (Hebrew: התבודדות), translated as "being alone" or "isolating oneself", or by a different term describing the actual, desired goal of the practice - prophecy ("*NeVu'a*" Hebrew: נבואה).

During the 5th century BCE, when the works of the Tanakh were edited and canonized and the secret knowledge encrypted within the various writings and scrolls ("MeGilot"), the knowledge was referred to as *Ma'aseh Merkavah* (Hebrew: מעשה מרכבה) and *Ma'aseh B'reshit* (Hebrew: מעשה בראשית) ., respectively "the act of the Chariot" and "the act of Creation". Merkavah mysticism alluded to the encrypted knowledge within the book of the prophet Ezekiel describing his vision of the "Divine Chariot". B'reshit mysticism referred to the first chapter of Genesis (Hebrew: בראשית) in the Torah that is believed to contain secrets of the creation of the universe and forces of nature. These terms are also mentioned in the second chapter of the Talmudic tractate *Haggigah*.

**Mystic elements of the Torah**

According to adherents of Kabbalah, its origin begins with secrets that God revealed to Adam. According to a rabbinic midrash God created the universe through the ten sefirot. When read by later generations of Kabbalists, the *Torah'*s description of the creation in the Book of Genesis reveals mysteries about the godhead itself, the true nature of Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil and the Tree of Life, as well as the interaction of these supernal entities with the Serpent which leads to disaster when they eat the forbidden fruit, as recorded in Genesis 2.

Category:Sephiroth

The Bible provides ample additional material for mythic and mystical speculation. The prophet Ezekiel's visions in particular attracted much mystical speculation, as did Isaiah's Temple vision - *Isaiah*, Ch.6. Jacob's vision of the ladder to heaven provided another example of esoteric experience. Moses' encounters with the Burning bush and God on Mount Sinai are evidence of mystical events in the Tanakh that form the origin of Jewish mystical beliefs.

The 72 letter name of God which is used in Jewish mysticism for meditation purposes is derived from the Hebrew verbal utterance Moses spoke in the presence of an angel, while the Sea of Reeds parted, allowing the Hebrews to escape their approaching attackers. The miracle of the Exodus, which led to Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and the Jewish Orthodox view of the acceptance of the Torah at Mount Sinai, preceded the creation of the first Jewish nation approximately three hundred years before King Saul.

Mystical doctrines in the Talmudic era

In early rabbinic Judaism (the early centuries of the first millennium AD), the terms *Ma'aseh Bereshit* ("Works of Creation") and *Ma'aseh Merkabah* ("Works of the Divine Throne/Chariot") clearly indicate the Midrashic nature of these speculations; they are really based upon Genesis 1 and Book of Ezekiel 1:4-28; while the names *Sitrei Torah* (Hidden aspects of the Torah) (Talmud *Hag.* 13a) and *Razei Torah* (Torah secrets) (*Ab.* vi. 1) indicate their character as secret lore. An
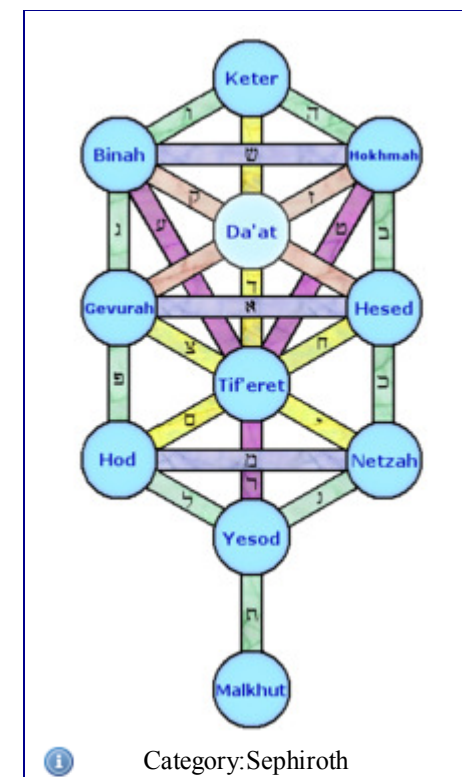
additional term also expanded Jewish esoteric knowledge, namely *Chochmah Nistara* (Hidden wisdom).

Talmudic doctrine forbade the public teaching of esoteric doctrines and warned of their dangers. In the Mishnah (Hagigah 2:1), rabbis were warned to teach the mystical creation doctrines only to one student at a time. To highlight the danger, in one Jewish aggadic ("legendary") anecdote, four prominent rabbis of the Mishnaic period (first century CE) are said to have visited the Orchard (that is, Paradise, *pardes*, Hebrew: פרדס lit., *orchard*):

> Four men entered *pardes* — Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, *Acher* (Elisha ben Abuyah), and Akiba. Ben Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma looked and went mad; Acher destroyed the plants; Akiba entered in peace and departed in peace.

In notable readings of this legend, only Rabbi Akiba was fit to handle the study of mystical doctrines. The *Tosafot*, medieval commentaries on the Talmud, say that the four sages "did not go up literally, but it appeared to them as if they went up." (For further analysis, see The Four Who Entered Paradise.)

Eminent rabbinic teachers in the Land of Israel held the doctrine of the preexistence of matter (Midrash *Genesis Rabbah* i. 5; iv. 6), in spite of the protest of Gamaliel II. (ib. i. 9).

In dwelling upon the nature of God and the universe, the mystics of the Talmudic period asserted, in contrast to the transcendentalism evident in some parts of the Bible, that "God is the dwelling-place of the universe; but the universe is not the dwelling-place of God". Possibly the designation ("place") for God, so frequently found in Talmudic-Midrashic literature, is due to this conception, just as Philo, in commenting on Genesis 28:11 says, "God is called *ha makom* (המקום "the place") because God encloses the universe, but is Himself not enclosed by anything" (*De Somniis,* i. 11). This type of theology, in modern terms, is known as either pantheism or panentheism. Whether a text is truly pantheistic or pan*en*theistic is often hard to understand; mainstream Judaism generally rejects pantheistic interpretations of Kabbalah, and instead accepts panentheistic interpretations.

Even in very early times in the Land of Israel, Jewish, as well as Jewish Alexandrian theology recognized the two attributes of God, *middat hadin*, the *attribute of justice*, and *middat ha-rahamim*, the *attribute of mercy* (see: *Midrash Sifre*, Deuteronomy 27); and so is the contrast between justice and mercy became a fundamental doctrine of the Kabbalah. Other hypostasizations are represented by the ten "agencies", (the Sephiroth) through which God created the world, namely: wisdom, insight, cognition, strength, power, inexorableness, justice, right, love, and mercy.

While the Sefirot are based on these ten creative "potentialities", it is especially the personification of wisdom which, in Philo, represents the totality of these primal ideas; and the Targ. Jerusalem *Talmud* i., agreeing with him, translates the first verse of the Bible as follows: "By wisdom God created the heaven and the earth." Genesis Rabbah equates "Wisdom" with "Torah."

So, also, the figure of the Sar Metatron passed into mystical texts from the *Talmud*. In the *Heichalot* literature Metatron sometimes approximates the role of the *demiurgos* (see Gnosticism), being expressly mentioned as a "lesser" God. One text, however, identifies Metatron as Enoch transubstantiated (see: *Enoch*, III). Mention may also be made of other pre-existent states enumerated in an old *baraita* (an extra- mishnaic teaching); namely, the Torah, repentance, paradise and hell, the throne of God, the Heavenly Temple, and the name of the Messiah (*Talmud Pesahim* 54a). Although the origin of this doctrine must be sought probably in certain mythological ideas, the Platonic doctrine of pre-existence has modified the older, simpler conception, and the pre-existence of the seven must therefore be understood as an "ideal" pre-existence, a conception that was later more fully developed in the Kabbalah.

The attempts of the mystics to bridge the gulf between God and the world are evident in the doctrine of the preexistence of the soul, and of its close relation to God before it enters the human body — a doctrine taught by the Hellenistic sages (*Wisdom* viii. 19) as well as by the Palestinian rabbis. The mystics also employ the phrase from (Isaiah 6:3), as expounded by the Rabbinic Sages, "The whole world is filled with His glory," to justify a panentheistic understanding of the universe.

Middle Ages
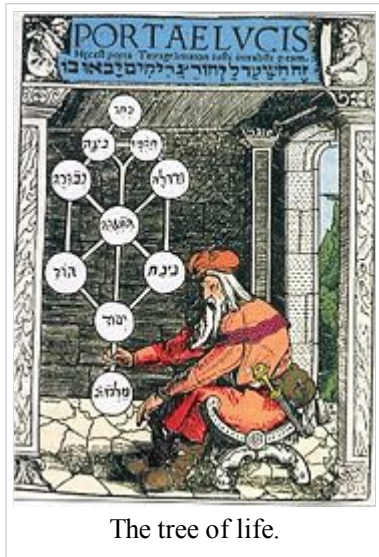
The tree of life.

From the 8th-11th Century Sefer Yetzirah and Hekalot texts made their way into European Jewish circles. Modern scholars have identified several mystical brotherhoods that functioned in Europe starting in the 12th Century. Some, such as the "Iyyun Circle" and the "Unique Cherub Circle," were truly esoteric, remaining largely anonymous.

One well-known group was the "Hasidei Ashkenaz," (חסידי אשכנז) or German Pietists. This 13th Century movement arose mostly among a single scholarly family, the Kalonymus family of the French and German Rhineland.

There were certain rishonim ("Elder Sages") of exoteric Judaism who are known to have been experts in Kabbalah. One of the best known is Nahmanides (the *Ramban*) (1194- 1270) whose commentary on the Torah is considered to be based on Kabbalistic knowledge. Bahya ben Asher (the *Rabbeinu Behaye*) (d. 1340) also combined Torah commentary and Kabbalah. Another was Isaac the Blind (1160- 1235), the teacher of Nahmanides, who is widely argued to have written the first work of classic Kabbalah, the *Bahir*.

Sefer Bahir and another work, the "Treatise of the Left Emanation", probably composed in Spain by Isaac ben Isaac ha-Kohen, laid the groundwork for the composition of *Sefer Zohar*, written by Moses de Leon and his mystical circle at the end of the 13th Century, but credited to the Talmudic sage Shimon bar Yochai, cf. Zohar. The Zohar proved to be the first truly "popular" work of Kabbalah, and the most influential. From the thirteenth century onward, Kabbalah began to be widely disseminated and it branched out into an extensive literature. Historians in the nineteenth century, for example, Heinrich Greatz, argued that the emergence into public view of Jewish esotericism at this time coincides with, and represents a response to, the rising influence of the rationalist philosophy of Maimonides and his followers. Gershom Scholem sought to undermine this view as part of his resistance to seeing kabbalah as merely a response to medieval Jewish rationalism. Arguing for a gnostic influence has to be seen as part of this strategy. More recently, Moshe Idel and Elliot Wolfson have independently argued that the impact of Maimonides can be seen in the change from orality to writing in the thirteenth century. That is, kabbalists committed to writing many of their oral traditions in part as a response to the attempt of Maimonides to explain the older esoteric subjects philosophically.

Most Orthodox Jews reject the idea that Kabbalah underwent significant historical development or change such as has been proposed above. After the composition known as the Zohar was presented to the public in the 13th century, the term "Kabbalah" began to refer more specifically to teachings derived from, or related, to the *Zohar*. At an even later time, the term began to generally be applied to Zoharic teachings as elaborated upon by Isaac Luria Arizal. Historians generally date the start of Kabbalah as a major influence in Jewish thought and practice with the publication of the Zohar and climaxing with the spread of the Arizal's teachings. The majority of Haredi Jews accept the Zohar as the representative of the *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and *Ma'aseh B'reshit* that are

referred to in Talmudic texts.

Early Modern era: Lurianic Kabbalah

Following the upheavals and dislocations in the Jewish world as a result of the Spanish Inquisition, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492, and the trauma of Anti-Semitism during the Middle Ages, Jews began to search for signs of when the long-awaited Jewish Messiah would come to comfort them in their painful exiles. Moses Cordovero and his immediate circle popularized the teachings of the Zohar which had until then been only a modestly influential work. The author of the *Shulkhan Arukh* (the Jewish "Code of Law"), Rabbi Yosef Karo (1488- 1575), was also a great scholar of Kabbalah and spread its teachings during this era.

As part of that "search for meaning" in their lives, Kabbalah received its biggest boost in the Jewish world with the explication of the Kabbalistic teachings of Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534- 1572) by his disciples Rabbi Hayim Vital and Rabbi Israel Sarug, both of whom published Luria's teachings (in variant forms) gaining them wide-spread popularity. Luria's teachings came to rival the influence of the Zohar and Luria stands, alongside Moses de Leon, as the most influential mystic in Jewish history.

Ban against studying Kabbalah

The ban against studying Kabbalah was lifted by the efforts of the sixteenth century Kabbalist Rabbi Avraham Azulai (1570- 1643).

> *I have found it written that all that has been decreed Above forbidding open involvement in the Wisdom of Truth [Kabbalah] was [only meant for] the limited time period until the year 5,250 (1490 C.E). From then on after is called the "Last Generation,"and what was forbidden is [now] allowed. And permission is granted to occupy ourselves in the [study of] Zohar. And from the year 5,300 (1540 C.E.) it is most desirable that the masses both those great and small [in Torah], should occupy themselves [in the study of Kabbalah], as it says in the Raya M'hemna [a section of the Zohar]. And because in this merit King Mashiach will come in the future – and not in any other merit – it is not proper to be discouraged [from the study of Kabbalah].* (Rabbi Avraham Azulai)

Sefardi and Mizrahi

The Kabbalah of the Sefardi (Portuguese or Spanish) and Mizrahi (African/Asian) Torah scholars has a long history. Kabbalah in various forms was widely studied, commented upon, and expanded by North African, Turkish, Yemenite, and Asian scholars from the 16th Century onward. It flourished among Sefardic Jews in Tzfat (Safed), Israel even before the arrival of Isaac Luria, its most famous resident. The great Yosef Karo, author of the *Shulchan Arukh* was part of the Tzfat school of Kabbalah. Shlomo Alkabetz, author of the famous hymn Lekhah Dodi, taught there.

His disciple Moses ben Jacob Cordovero authored *Sefer Pardes Rimonim*, an organized, exhaustive compilation of kabbalistic teachings on a variety of subjects up to that point. Rabbi Cordovero headed the Academy of Tzfat until his death, when Isaac Luria, also known as the Ari, rose to prominence. Rabbi Moshe's disciple Eliyahu De Vidas authored the classic work, *Reishit Chochma*, combining kabbalistic and *mussar* (moral) teachings. Chaim Vital also studied under

Rabbi Cordovero, but with the arrival of Rabbi Luria became his main disciple. Vital claimed to be the only one authorized to transmit the Ari's teachings, though other disciples also published books presenting Luria's teachings.

Among the most famous was the Beit El mystical circle of Jerusalem, originally a brotherhood of twelve, mostly Sefardic, mystics under the leadership of Gedaliyah Chayon and Shalom Sharabi in the mid-18th century. The group endured into the 20th Century and there is still a yeshivah of that name in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Maharal

One of the most important teachers of Kabbalah recognized as an authority by all serious scholars up until the present time, was Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel (1525- 1609) known as the *Maharal of Prague*. Many of his written works survive and are studied for their deep Kabbalistic insights. The Maharal is, perhaps, most famous outside of Jewish mysticism for the legends of the golem of Prague, which he reportedly created. During the twentieth century, Rabbi Isaac Hutner (1906-1980) continued to spread the *Maharal's* teachings indirectly through his own teachings and scholarly publications within the modern yeshiva world.

Failure of Sabbatian Mysticism

The spiritual and mystical yearnings of many Jews remained frustrated after the death of Rabbi Isaac Luria and his disciples and colleagues. No hope was in sight for many following the devastation and mass killings of the pogroms that followed in the wake the Chmielnicki Uprising (1648- 1654), and it was at this time that a controversial scholar of the Kabbalah by the name of Sabbatai Zevi (1626- 1676) captured the hearts and minds of the Jewish masses of that time with the promise of a newly-minted "Messianic" Millennialism in the form of his own personage.

His charisma, mystical teachings that included repeated pronunciations of the holy Tetragrammaton in public, tied to an unstable personality, and with the help of his own "prophet" Nathan of Gaza, convinced the Jewish masses that the " Jewish Messiah" had finally come. It seemed that the esoteric teachings of Kabbalah had found their "champion" and had triumphed, but this era of Jewish history unravelled when Zevi became an apostate to Judaism by converting to Islam after he was arrested by the Ottoman Sultan and threatened with execution for attempting a plan to conquer the world and rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.

Many of his followers, known as Sabbateans, continued to worship him in secret, explaining his conversion not as an effort to save his life but to recover the sparks of the holy in each religion, and most leading rabbis were always on guard to root them out. The Donmeh movement in modern Turkey is a surviving remnant of the Sabbatian schism.

Due to the chaos caused in the Jewish world, the Rabbinic prohibition against studying Kabbalah was well intact again, and established itself firmly within the Jewish religion. One of the conditions allowing a man to study and engage himself in the Kabbalah, was to be of age forty. This age requirement came about during this period and is not Talmudic in origin. Many Jews are familiar with this ruling, but are not aware of its origins. Moreover, the prohibition is not halakhic in nature. According to Moses Cordovero, halakhically, one must be of age twenty to engage in the Kabbalah. Many famous Kabbalists, including the ARI, Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, were younger than twenty when they began.

Frankists

The Sabbatian movement was followed by that of the "Frankists" who were disciples of another pseudo-mystic Jacob Frank (1726-1791) who eventually became an apostate to Judaism by apparently converting to Catholicism. This era of disappointment did not stem the Jewish masses' yearnings for "mystical" leadership.

1700s

The eighteenth century saw an explosion of new efforts in the writing and spread of Kabbalah by four well known rabbis working in different areas of Europe:

1. Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov (1698-1760) in the area of Ukraine spread teachings based on Rabbi Isaac Luria's foundations, simplifying the Kabbalah for the common man. From him sprang the vast ongoing schools of Hasidic Judaism, with each successive rebbe viewed by his "Hasidim" as continuing the role of dispenser of mystical divine blessings and guidance.
2. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov (1772 - 1810), the great-grandson of the Baal Shem Tov, revitalized and further expanded the latter's teachings, amassing a following of thousands in Ukraine, White Russia, Lithuania and Poland. In a unique amalgam of Hasidic and *Mitnagid* approaches, Rebbe Nachman emphasized study of both Kabbalah and serious Torah scholarship to his disciples. His teachings also differed from the way other Hasidic groups were developing, as he rejected the idea of hereditary Hasidic dynasties and taught that each Hasid must "search for the tzaddik ('saintly/righteous person')" for himself—and within himself.
3. Rabbi Elijah of Vilna (Vilna Gaon) (1720-1797), based in Lithuania, had his teachings encoded and publicized by his disciples such as by Rabbi Chaim Volozhin who published the mystical-ethical work *Nefesh HaChaim*. However, he was staunchly opposed to the new Hasidic movement and warned against their public displays of religious fervour inspired by the mystical teachings of their rabbis.

   Although the Vilna Gaon was not in favour of the Hasidic movement, he did not prohibit the study and engagement in the Kabbalah. This is evident from his writings in the *Even Shlema*."He that is able to understand secrets of the Torah and does not try to understand them will be judged harshly, may God have mercy". (The Vilna Gaon, Even Shlema, 8:24). "The Redemption will only come about through learning Torah, and the essence of the Redemption depends upon learning Kabbalah" (The Vilna Gaon, Even Shlema, 11:3).

4. Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzatto (1707- 1746), based in Italy, was a precocious Talmudic scholar who arrived at the startling conclusion that there was a need for the public teaching and study of Kabbalah. He established a yeshiva for Kabbalah study and actively recruited outstanding students and, in addition, wrote copious manuscripts in an appealing clear Hebrew style, all of which gained the attention of both admirers and rabbinical critics who feared another "Zevi (false messiah) in the making".

   He was forced to close his school by his rabbinical opponents, hand over and destroy many of his most precious unpublished kabbalistic writings, and go into exile in the Netherlands. He eventually moved to the Land of Israel. Some of his most important works such as Derekh Hashem survive and are used as a gateway to the world of Jewish mysticism.

Modern era

One of the most influential sources spreading Kabbalistic teachings have come from the massive growth and spread of Hasidic Judaism, a movement begun by Yisroel ben Eliezer (The Baal Shem Tov), but continued in many branches and streams until today. These groups differ greatly in size, but all emphasize the study of mystical Hasidic texts, which now consists of a vast literature devoted to elaborating upon the long chain of Kabbalistic thought and methodology. No group emphasizes in-depth kabbalistic study, though, to the extent of the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, whose Rebbes delivered tens of thousands of discourses, and whose students study these texts for three hours daily.

Rabbi Shmuel Schneersohn of Lubavitch urged the study of kabbala as prerequisite for one's humanity:

> "A person who is capable of comprehending the Seder hishtalshelus (kabbalistic secrets concerning the higher spiritual spheres) - and fails to do so - cannot be considered a human being. At every moment and time one must know where his soul stands. It is a mitzvah (commandment) and an obligation to know the seder hishtalshelus."

The writings of Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook (1864-1935) also stress Kabbalistic themes:

> "Due to the alienation from the "secret of God" [i.e. Kabbalah], the higher qualities of the depths of Godly life are reduced to trivia that do not penetrate the depth of the soul. When this happens, the most mighty force is missing from the soul of nation and individual, and Exile finds favour essentially... We should not negate any conception based on rectitude and awe of Heaven of any form - only the aspect of such an approach that desires to negate the mysteries and their great influence on the spirit of the nation. This is a tragedy that we must combat with counsel and understanding, with holiness and courage." (Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook *Orot 2*)

Another influential and important Kabbalah character is Rabbi Yehuda Leib Ashlag 1884-1954 (also known as the *Baal HaSulam* — a title that he was given after the completion of one of his masterworks, The *Sulam*). Ashlag is considered by many to be one of the greatest Kabbalists of all time.

He developed a study method that he considered most fitting for the future generations of Kabbalists. He is also notable for his other masterwork *Talmud Eser HaSfirot* — The Study of the Ten Emanations — a commentary on all the writings of the ARI. Some today consider this work as the core of the entire teaching of Kabbalah. Baal Hasulam's goal was to make the study of Kabbalah understandable and accessible to every human being with the desire to know the meaning of life. There are several organizations that are actualizing his ideas today.

Renewed interest in Kabbalah has appeared among non-traditional Jews, and even among non-Jews. Neo-Hasidism and Jewish Renewal have been the most influential groups in this trend.

Kabbalah: Diagrams

Sephirot

The Hebrew word *Sephirah* (סְפִירָה) literally means "Emanation". *Sephirot* is the plural, "Emanations". Sometimes, Jewish midrashic interpretations reread the Hebrew letters of this word to mean "Spheres" or "Narrations".

http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 371 of 735

Ten Sephirot as process of Creation

According to Kabbalistic cosmology, Ten Sephiroth (literally, Ten Emanations) correspond to ten levels of creation. These levels of creation must not be understood as ten different "gods" but as ten different ways of revealing God, one per level. It is not God who changes but the ability to perceive God that changes.

While God may seem to exhibit dual natures (masculine-feminine, compassionate-judgmental, creator-creation), all adherents of Kabbalah have consistently stressed the ultimate unity of God, and that all parts of god are the same. For example, in all discussions of Male and Female, the hidden nature of God exists above it all without limit, being called the Infinite or the "No End" (Ain Soph) - neither one nor the other, transcending any definition. The ability of God to become hidden from perception is called "Restriction" (Tzimtzum). Hiddenness makes creation possible because God can then become "revealed" in a diversity of limited ways, which then form the building blocks of creation.

Ten Sephirot as process of ethics

Divine creation by means of the Ten Sefirot is an ethical process. Examples: The Sefirah of "Compassion" (Chesed) being part of the Right Column corresponds to how God reveals more blessings when humans use previous blessings compassionately, whereas the Sephirah of "Overpowering" (Geburah) being part of the Left Column corresponds to how God hides these blessings when humans abuse them selfishly without compassion. Thus human behaviour determines if God seems present or absent.

"Righteous" humans (Tzadikim) ascend these ethical qualities of the Ten Sefirot by doing righteous actions. If there were no "Righteous" humans, the blessings of God would become completely hidden, and creation would cease to exist. While real human actions are the "Foundation" (Yesod) of this universe (Malchut), these actions must accompany the conscious intention of compassion. Compassionate actions are often impossible without "Faith" (Emunah), meaning to trust that God always supports compassionate actions even when God seems hidden. Ultimately, it is necessary to show compassion toward oneself too in order to share compassion toward others. This "selfish" enjoyment of God's blessings but only if in order to empower oneself to assist others, is an important aspect of "Restriction", and is considered a kind of golden mean in Kabbalah, corresponding to the Sefirah of "Adornment" (Tiferet) being part of the "Middle Column".

Ten Sephirot as vowel sounds

The Scholar and Rabbi Solomon Judah Leib Rappaport notes that according to the Masoretes there are ten vowel sounds. He suggests that the passage in Sefer Yetzirah, which discuss the manipulation of letters in the creation of the world, can be better understood if the Sefirot refer to vowel sounds. He posits that the word sefirah in this case is related to the Hebrew word sippur - to retell. His position is based on his belief that most Kabbalistic works written after Sefer Yetzirah (including the Zohar) are forgeries. (Igrot Shir(Heb.) "Letters of Shir) - available on Google Books)

Concepts

Kabbalistic understanding of God

Kabbalah teaches that God is neither matter nor spirit. Rather God is the creator of both.

This question prompted Kabbalists to envision two aspects of God, (a) God himself, who in the end is unknowable, and (b) the revealed aspect of God that created the universe, preserves the universe, and interacts with mankind. Kabbalists speak of the first aspect of God as *Ein Sof* (אין סוף); this is translated as "the infinite", "endless", or "that which has no limits". In this view, nothing can be said about this aspect of God. This aspect of God is impersonal. The second aspect of divine emanations, however, is at least partially accessible to human thought. Kabbalists believe that these two aspects are not contradictory but, through the mechanism of progressive emanation, complement one another. See Divine simplicity; Tzimtzum. The structure of these emanations have been characterized in various ways: Four "worlds" (Azilut, Yitzirah, Beriyah, and Asiyah), Sefirot, or Partzufim ("faces"). Later systems harmonize these models.

Ein Sof(in-finite) and the emanation of angelic hierarchies (Universes or olamot עולמות)

Some Kabbalistic scholars, such as Moses ben Jacob Cordovero, believe that all things are linked to God through these emanations, making us all part of one great chain of being. Others, such as Schneur Zalman of Liadi (founder of Lubavitch [Chabad] Hasidism), hold that God is all that really exists; all else is completely undifferentiated from God's perspective.
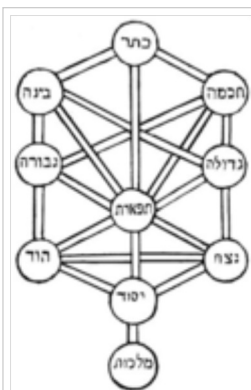
If improperly explained, such views can be interpreted as panentheism or pantheism. In truth, according to this philosophy, God's existence is higher than anything that this world can express, yet he includes all things of this world down to the finest detail in such a perfect unity that his creation of the world effected no change in him whatsoever. This paradox is dealt with at length in the Chabad Chassidic texts.

Theodicy: explanation for the existence of evil

Kabbalistic works offer a theodicy, a philosophical reconciliation of how the existence of a good and powerful God is compatible with the existence of evil in the world. There are mainly two different ways to describe why there is evil in the world, according to the Kabbalah. Both make use of the kabbalistic Tree of Life:

The ten Sephiroth or 'emanations' of God

- The kabbalistic tree, which consists of ten Sephiroth, the ten "enumerations" or "emanations" of God, consists of three "pillars": The left side of the tree, the "female side", is considered to be more destructive than the right side, the "male side". Gevurah (גבורה, "Might"), for example, stands for strength and discipline, while her male counterpart, Chesed (חסד, "Mercy"), stands for love and mercy. Chesed is also known as Gedulah (גדולה, "Glory"), as in the Tree of Life pictured to the right. The "centre pillar" of the tree does not have any polarity, and no gender is given to it. Thus evil is really an emanation of Divinity, a harsh byproduct of the "left side" of creation.
- In the medieval era, this notion took on increasingly gnostic overtones. The Qliphoth (or *Kelippot*) (קליפות, the primeval "husks" of impurity) emanating from the left side were blamed for all the evil in the world. Qliphoth are the Sephiroth out of balance. Sometimes the *qliphoth* are called the "death angels", or "angels of death". References to a word related to "qlipoth" are found in some Babylonian incantations, a fact used as evidence to argue the antiquity of kabbalistic material.
- Not all Kabbalists accepted this notion of evil being in such intimate relationship with God. Moses Cordovero (16th century) and Menasseh ben Israel (17th century) are two examples of Kabbalists who claimed "No evil emanates from God." They located evil as a byproduct of human freedom, an idea also found in mythic form in Rabbinic traditions that claim most demons are either the "dead of the flood" or products of human sexual debauchery.

Human soul in Kabbalah

The Zohar posits that the human soul has three elements, the *nefesh*, *ru'ach*, and *neshamah*. The *nefesh* is found in all humans, and enters the physical body at birth. It is the source of one's physical and psychological nature. The next two parts of the soul are not implanted at birth, but can be developed over time; their development depends on the actions and beliefs of the individual. They are said to only fully exist in people awakened spiritually. A common way of explaining the three parts of the soul is as follows:

- *Nefesh* (נפש) - the lower part, or "animal part", of the soul. It is linked to instincts and bodily cravings.
- *Ruach* (רוח) - the middle soul, the "spirit". It contains the moral virtues and the ability to distinguish between good and evil.
- *Neshamah* (נשמה) - the higher soul, or "super-soul". This separates man from all other lifeforms. It is related to the intellect, and allows man to enjoy and benefit from the afterlife. This part of the soul is provided at birth and allows one to have some awareness of the existence and presence of God.

The Raaya Meheimna, a section of related teachings spread throughout the Zohar, discusses the two other parts of the human soul, the *chayyah* and *yehidah* (first mentioned in the Midrash Rabbah). Gershom Scholem writes that these "were considered to represent the sublimest levels of intuitive cognition, and to be within the grasp of only a few chosen individuals". The Chayyah and the Yechidah do not enter into the body like the other three - thus they received less attention in other sections of the *Zohar*.

- *Chayyah* (חיה) - The part of the soul that allows one to have an awareness of the divine life force itself.
- *Yehidah* (יחידה) - the highest plane of the soul, in which one can achieve as full a union with God as is possible.

Both rabbinic and kabbalistic works posit that there are a few additional, non-permanent states of the soul that people can develop on certain occasions. These extra souls, or extra states of the soul, play no part in any afterlife scheme, but are mentioned for completeness:

- *Ruach HaKodesh* (רוח הקודש) - ("spirit of holiness") a state of the soul that makes prophecy possible. Since the age of classical prophecy passed, no one (outside of Israel) receives the soul of prophesy any longer. See the teachings of Abraham Abulafia for differing views of this matter.
- *Neshamah Yeseira* - The "supplemental soul" that a Jew can experience on Shabbat. It makes possible an enhanced spiritual enjoyment of the day. This exists only when one is observing Shabbat; it can be lost and gained depending on one's observance.
- *Neshamah Kedosha* - Provided to Jews at the age of maturity (13 for boys, 12 for girls), and is related to the study and fulfillment of the Torah commandments. It exists only when one studies and follows Torah; it can be lost and gained depending on one's study and observance.

Tzimtzum

The act whereby God "contracted" his infinite light, leaving a "void" into which the light of existence was poured. The primal emanation became *Azilut*, the World of Light, from which the three lower worlds, Beriah, Yetzirah and Assiyah, descended.

Number-Word mysticism

Among its many pre-occupations, Kabbalah teaches that every Hebrew letter, word, number, even the accent on words of the Hebrew Bible contains a hidden sense; and it teaches the methods of interpretation for ascertaining these meanings. One such method is as follows:

As early as the 1st Century BCE Jews believed that the *Torah* (first five books of the Hebrew Bible) contained encoded message and hidden meanings. *Gematria* is one method for discovering its hidden meanings. Each letter in Hebrew also represents a number; Hebrew, unlike many other languages, never developed a separate numerical alphabet. By converting letters to numbers, Kabbalists were able to find a hidden meaning in each word. This method of interpretation was used extensively by various schools.

There is no one fixed way to "do" gematria. Some say there are up to 70 different methods. One simple procedure is as follows: each syllable and/or letter forming a word has a characteristic numeric value. The sum of these numeric tags is the word's "key", and that word may be replaced in the text by any other word having the same key. Through the application of many such procedures, alternate or hidden meanings of scripture may be derived. Similar procedures are used by Islamic mystics, as described by Idries Shah in his book, "The Sufis".

Primary texts

On texts

Like the rest of the Rabbinic literature, the texts of Kabbalah were once part of an ongoing oral tradition, though, over the centuries, many have been written up. They are mostly meaningless to readers who are unfamiliar with Jewish spirituality and assume extensive knowledge of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible), Midrash (Jewish hermeneutic tradition) and Halakhah (practical Jewish law). Nevertheless, Kabbalistic literature uses powerful paradigms that are elegant, universal and easy for anyone to understand when pointed out.

Jewish forms of esotericism existed over 2,000 years ago. Ben Sira warns against it, saying: "You shall have no business with secret things" (*Sirach* iii. 22; compare Talmud, *Hagigah*, 13a; Midrash *Genesis Rabbah*, viii.). Nonetheless, mystical studies were undertaken and resulted in mystical literature, the first being the Apocalyptic literature of the second and first pre-Christian centuries and which contained elements that carried over to later Kabbalah.

Throughout the centuries since, many texts have been produced, among them the *Heichalot* literature, *Sefer Yetzirah*, *Bahir*, *Sefer Raziel HaMalakh* and the *Zohar*.

See Kabbalah: Primary Texts.

Title page of first edition of the Zohar, Mantua, 1558 (Library of Congress).

Scholarship

Claims for authority

Historians have noted that most claims for the authority of Kabbalah involve an argument of the antiquity of authority (see, e.g., Joseph Dan's discussion in his *Circle of the Unique Cherub*). As a result, virtually all works pseudepigraphically claim, or are ascribed, ancient authorship. For example, *Sefer Raziel HaMalach*, an astro-magical text partly based on a magical manual of late antiquity, *Sefer ha-Razim*, was, according to the kabbalists, transmitted to Adam by the angel Raziel after he was evicted from Eden.

Another famous work, the *Sefer Yetzirah*, supposedly dates back to the patriarch Abraham. This tendency toward pseudepigraphy has its roots in Apocalyptic literature, which claims that esoteric knowledge such as magic, divination and astrology was transmitted to humans in the mythic past by the two angels, Aza and Azaz'el (in other places, Azaz'el and Uzaz'el) who 'fell' from heaven (see Genesis 6:4). In Islam, the angels 'Harut' and 'Marut' were sent to teach magic only as a test to mankind (see Qur'an, Ch. 2: 102).

The appeal to antiquity has also shaped modern theories of influence in reconstructing the history of Jewish mysticism. The oldest versions have been theorized to extend from Assyrian theology and mysticism. Dr. Simo Parpola, professor of Assyriology at the University of Helsinki, remarks on the general similarity between the Sefirot of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life and the Tree of Life of Assyria. He reconstructed what an Assyrian antecedent to the Sephiroth might look like, and noted parallels between the characteristics of En Sof on the nodes of the Sefirot and the gods of Assyria. The Assyrians assigned specific numbers to their gods, similar to the numbering of the Sefirot. However, the Assyrians use a sexagesimal number system, whereas the Sefiroth is decimal. With the Assyrian numbers, additional layers of meaning and mystical relevance appear in the Sefirot. Normally, floating above the Assyrian Tree of Life was the god Assur (god),

corresponding to the Hebrew Ay Sof, which is also, via a series of transformations, derived from the Assyrian word Assur.

Parpola re-interpreted various Assyrian tablets in terms of these primitive Sefirot, such as the Epic Of Gilgamesh. He proposed that the scribes had been writing philosophical-mystical tracts, rather than mere adventure stories, and concluded that traces of this Assyrian mode of thought and philosophy eventually reappeared in Greek Philosophy and the Kabbalah.

Skeptical scholars find attempts to read Kabbalah back into the pre-Israelite Ancient Near East, as Parpola does, to be implausible. They point out that the doctrine of the Sefirot started to seriously develop only in the 12th century CE with the publication of the *Bahir*, and that for this doctrine to have existed undocumented within Judaism from the time of the Assyrian empire (which fell from cultural hegemony in the 7th century BCE) until it "resurfaced" 17–18 centuries later seems far-fetched. A plausible alternative, based in the research of Gershom Scholem, the pre-eminent scholar of Kabbalah in the 20th Century, is to see the Sefirot as a theosophical doctrine that emerged out of Jewish word-mythology of late antiquity, as exemplified in *Sefer Yetzirah*, and the angelic-palace mysticism found in Hekalot literature, and then fused to the Neo-Platonic notion of creation through progressive divine emanations.

Critique

Dualism

Although Kabbalah propounds the Unity of God, one of the most serious and sustained criticisms is that it may lead away from monotheism, and instead promote dualism, the belief that there is a supernatural counterpart to God. The dualistic system holds that there is a good power versus an evil power. There are two primary models of Gnostic-dualistic cosmology: the first, which goes back to Zoroastrianism, believes creation is ontologically divided between good and evil forces; the second, found largely in Greco-Roman ideologies like Neo-Platonism, believes the universe knew a primordial harmony, but that a cosmic disruption yielded a second, evil, dimension to reality. This second model influenced the cosmology of the Kabbalah.

According to Kabbalistic cosmology, the Ten Sefirot correspond to ten levels of creation. These levels of creation must not be understood as ten different "gods" but as ten different ways of revealing God, one per level. It is not God who changes but the ability to perceive God that changes.

While God may seem to exhibit dual natures (masculine-feminine, compassionate-judgmental, creator-creation), all adherents of Kabbalah have consistently stressed the ultimate unity of God. For example, in all discussions of Male and Female, the hidden nature of God exists above it all without limit, being called the Infinite or the "No End" (Ein Sof) - neither one nor the other, transcending any definition. The ability of God to become hidden from perception is called "Restriction" (Tzimtzum). Hiddenness makes creation possible because God can become "revealed" in a diversity of limited ways, which then form the building blocks of creation.

- Later Kabbalistic works, including the *Zohar*, appear to more strongly affirm dualism, as they ascribe all evil to a supernatural force known as the Sitra Achra ("the other side") that emanates from God. The "left side" of divine emanation is a negative mirror image of the "side of holiness" with which it was locked in combat. [*Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Volume 6, "Dualism", p.244]. While this evil aspect exists within the divine structure of the Sefirot, the *Zohar* indicates that the Sitra Ahra has no power over Ein Sof, and only exists as a necessary aspect of the creation of God to give man free choice, and

that evil is the consequence of this choice. It is not a supernatural force opposed to God, but a reflection of the inner moral combat within mankind between the dictates of morality and the surrender to one's basic instincts.

- Rabbi Dr. David Gottlieb notes that many Kabbalists hold that the concepts of, e.g., a Heavenly Court or the Sitra Ahra are only given to humanity by God as a working model to understand His ways within our own epistemological limits. They reject the notion that a Satan or angels actually exist. Others hold that non-divine spiritual entities were indeed created by God as a means for exacting his will.

- According to Kabbalists, humans cannot yet understand the infinity of God. Rather, there is God as revealed to humans (corresponding to Zeir Anpin), and the rest of the infinity of God as remaining hidden from human experience (corresponding to Arich Anpin). One reading of this theology is monotheistic, similar to panentheism; another a reading of the same theology is that it is dualistic. Gershom Scholem writes:

"It is clear that with this postulate of an impersonal basic reality in God, which becomes a person - or appears as a person - only in the process of Creation and Revelation, Kabbalism abandons the personalistic basis of the Biblical conception of God....It will not surprise us to find that speculation has run the whole gamut - from attempts to re-transform the impersonal *En-Sof* into the personal God of the Bible to the downright heretical doctrine of a genuine dualism between the hidden Ein Sof and the personal Demiurge of Scripture." (*Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* Shocken Books p.11-12)

Perception of non-Jews

Another aspect of Kabbalah that Jewish critics object to is its metaphysics of the human soul. Since the *Zohar* was written, most Kabbalistic works assume that Jewish and non-Jewish souls are fundamentally different. While all human souls emanate from God, the *Zohar* posits that at least part of the Gentile soul emanates from the "left side" of the Sefirotic structure and that non-Jews therefore have a dark or demonic aspect to them that is absent in Jews.

Later Kabbalistic works build and elaborate on this idea. The Hasidic work, the Tanya, fuses this idea with Judah ha-Levi's medieval philosophical argument for the uniqueness of the Jewish soul, in order to argue that Jews have an additional level of soul that other humans do not possess.

Theologically framed hostility may be a response to the demonization of Jews which developed in Western and Christian society and thought, starting with the Patristic Fathers. By the Middle Ages, Jews were widely characterized as minions of Satan, or even devilish non-humans in their own right.

The Kabbalistic view concerning non-Jews can be compared with the Christian doctrine that baptized Christians form part of the Body of Christ while (at least according to Augustine of Hippo) all others remain in the *massa perditionis*.

In an article that appears in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth*, David Halperin theorizes that the collapse of Kabbalah's influence among Western European Jews over the course of the 17th and 18th Century was a result of the cognitive dissonance they experienced between Kabbalah's very negative perception of gentiles and their own dealings with non-Jews, which were rapidly expanding and improving during this period due to the influence of the Enlightenment.

For a different perspective, one might consult the first chapter of Elliot R. Wolfson, *Venturing Beyond: Law and Morality in Kabbalistic Mysticism* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Wolfson provides extensive documentation to illustrate the prevalence of the distinction between the souls of Jews and non-Jews in kabbalistic literature. He provides numerous examples from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries, which would challenge the view of Halperin cited above

as well as the notion that "modern Judaism" has rejected or dismissed this "outdated aspect" of the kabbalah. There are still kabbalists today, and many influenced by them, who harbour this view. It is accurate to say that many Jews do and would find this distinction offensive, but it is inaccurate to say that the idea has been totally rejected. As Wolfson has argued, it is an ethical demand on the part of scholars to be vigilant with regard this matter and in this way the tradition can be refined from within.

Orthodox Judaism

The idea that there are ten divine *sefirot* could evolve over time into the idea that "God is One being, yet in that One being there are Ten" which opens up a debate about what the "correct beliefs" in God should be, according to Judaism.

- Rabbi Saadia Gaon teaches in his book Emunot v'Deot that Jews who believe in reincarnation have adopted a non-Jewish belief.
- Nachmanides (12th Century) provides background to many Kabbalistic ideas. His works, especially those in the Five books of Moses (Pentateuch) offer in-depth of various concepts.
- Maimonides (12th Century) did not consider many of the texts of the Hekalot, particularly in the work *Shiur Komah* with its starkly anthropomorphic vision of God.
- Rabbi Avraham ben ha Rambam, in the spirit of his father Maimonides, Rabbi Saadiah Gaon, and other predecessors, explains at length in his book *Milhhamot HaShem* that the Almighty is in no way literally within time or space nor physically outside time or space, since time and space simply do not apply to His Being whatsoever. This is in contrast to certain popular understandings of modern Kabbalah which teach a form of panentheism, that His 'essence' is within everything.
- Around the 1230s, Rabbi Meir ben Simon of Narbonne wrote an epistle (included in his *Milhhemet Mitzvah*) against his contemporaries, the early Kabbalists, characterizing them as blasphemers who even approach heresy. He particularly singled out the Sefer Bahir, rejecting the attribution of its authorship to the *tanna* R. Nehhunya ben ha-Kanah and describing some of its content as truly heretical.
- Rabbi Yitzchak ben Sheshet Perfet, (The *Rivash*), 1326-1408. Although as is evident from his responsa on the topic (157) the Rivash was skeptical of certain interpretations of Kabbalah popular in his time, it is equally evident that overall he did accept Kabbalah as received Jewish wisdom, and attempted to defend it from attackers. To this end he cited and rejected a certain philosopher who claimed that Kabbalah was "worse than Christianity", as it made God into 10, not just into three. Most followers of Kabbalah have never followed this interpretation of Kabbalah, on the grounds that the concept of the Christian Trinity posits that there are three persons existing within the Godhead, one of whom became a human being. In contrast, the mainstream understanding of the Kabbalistic *Sefirot* holds that they have no mind or intelligence; further, they are not addressed in prayer and they cannot become a human being. They are conduits for interaction, not persons or beings. Nonetheless, many important poskim, such as Maimonidies in his work Mishneh Torah, prohibit any use of mediators between oneself and the Creator as a form of idolatry.
- Rabbi Leone di Modena, a 17th century Venetian critic of Kabbalah, wrote that if we were to accept the Kabbalah, then the Christian trinity would indeed be compatible with Judaism, as the Trinity closely resembles the Kabbalistic doctrine of the *Sefirot*. This critique was in response to the knowledge that some European Jews of the period addressed individual *Sefirot* in some of their prayers, although the practise was apparently uncommon. Apologists explain that Jews may have been praying *for* and not necessarily *to* the aspects of Godliness represented by the *Sefirot*.
- Rabbi Yaakov Emden, 1697-1776, wrote the book *Mitpahhath Sfarim* (Veil of the Books), a detailed critique of the *Zohar* in which he concludes that certain parts of the *Zohar* contain heretical teaching and therefore could not have been written by Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai. Opponents of his work claim that he wrote the book in a drunken stupor. Emden's rationalistic approach to this work, however, makes neither intoxication nor stupor seem plausible.

- Rabbi Yihhyah Qafahh, an early 20th century Yemenite Jewish leader and grandfather of Rabbi Yosef Qafih, also wrote a book entitled *Milhhamoth HaShem*, (Wars of the L-RD) against what he perceived as the false teachings of the *Zohar* and the false kabbalah of Isaac Luria. He is credited with spearheading the Dor Daim who continue in R. Yihhyah Qafahh's view of Kabbalah into modern times.
- Yeshayahu Leibowitz 1903-1994, brother of Nechama Leibowitz, though Modern Orthodox in his world view, publicly shared the views expressed in R. Yihhyah Qafahh's book *Milhhamoth HaShem* and elaborated upon these views in his many writings.
- There is dispute among modern Haredim as to the status of Isaac Luria's, the Arizal's kabbalistic teachings. While a portion of Modern Orthodox Rabbis, Dor Daim and many students of the Rambam, Maimonides, completely reject Arizal's kabbalistic teachings, as well as deny that the *Zohar* is authoritative, or from Shimon bar Yohai, all three of these groups completely accept the existence *Ma'aseh Merkavah* and *Ma'aseh B'resheyt* mysticism. Their only disagreement concerns whether the Kabbalistic teachings promulgated today are accurate representations of those esoteric teachings to which the Talmud refers. Within the Haredi Jewish community one can find both rabbis who sympathize with such a view, while not necessarily agreeing with it, as well as rabbis who consider such a view absolute heresy.

Conservative and Reform Judaism

Since all forms of reform or liberal Judaism are rooted in the Enlightenment and tied to the assumptions of European modernity, Kabbalah tended to be rejected by most Jews in the Conservative and Reform movements, though its influences were not completely eliminated. While it was generally not studied as a discipline, the Kabbalistic *Kabbalat Shabbat* service remained part of liberal liturgy, as did the *Yedid Nefesh* prayer. Nevertheless, in the 1960s, Rabbi Saul Lieberman of the Jewish Theological Seminary, is reputed to have introduced a lecture by Scholem on Kabbalah with a statement that Kabbalah itself was "nonsense", but the academic study of Kabbalah was "scholarship". This view became popular among many Jews, who viewed the subject as worthy of study, but who did not accept Kabbalah as teaching literal truths.

According to Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson (Dean of the Conservative Ziegler School of Rabbinical Studies in the University of Judaism), "many western Jews insisted that their future and their freedom required shedding what they perceived as parochial orientalism. They fashioned a Judaism that was decorous and strictly rational (according to 19th-century European standards), denigrating Kabbalah as backward, superstitious, and marginal".

However, in the late 20th and early 21st centuries there has been a revival in interest in Kabbalah in all branches of liberal Judaism. The Kabbalistic 12th century prayer *Ani'im Zemirot* was restored to the new Conservative *Sim Shalom siddur*, as was the *B'rikh Shmeh* passage from the Zohar, and the mystical *Ushpizin* service welcoming to the *Sukkah* the spirits of Jewish forbearers. *Ani'im Zemirot* and the 16th Century mystical poem *Lekhah Dodi* reappeared in the Reform Siddur *Gates of Prayer* in 1975. All Rabbinical seminaries now teach several courses in Kabbalah, and both the Jewish Theological Seminary and the Ziegler School of Rabbinical Studies of the University of Judaism in Los Angeles have fulltime instructors in Kabbalah and *Hasidut,* Eitan Fishbane and Pinchas Geller, respectively. Reform Rabbis like Herbert Weiner and Lawrence Kushner have renewed interest in Kabbalah among Reform Jews.

According to Artson "Ours is an age hungry for meaning, for a sense of belonging, for holiness. In that search, we have returned to the very Kabbalah our predecessors scorned. The stone that the builders rejected has become the head cornerstone (Psalm 118:22)... Kabbalah was the last universal theology adopted by the entire Jewish people, hence faithfulness to our commitment to positive-historical Judaism mandates a reverent receptivity to Kabbalah".

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Last Supper

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The Last Supper in Milan
(1498), by Leonardo da Vinci

According to the Gospels, the **Last Supper** (also called **Lord's Supper**) was the last meal Jesus shared with his Twelve Apostles before his death. The Last Supper has been the subject of many paintings, perhaps the most famous by Leonardo da Vinci. In the course of the Last Supper, and with specific reference to taking the bread and the wine, Jesus told his disciples, "Do this in remembrance of Me", (1 Corinthians 11:23-25). (The vessel which was used to serve the wine, the Holy Chalice, is considered by some to be the " Holy Grail"). Many Christians describe this as the institution of the Eucharist.

According to tradition, the Last Supper took place in what is called today The Room of the Last Supper on Mount Zion, just outside of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem.

In the New Testament

Location

According to tradition, the Last Supper took place in what is called today The Room of the Last Supper on Mount Zion, just outside of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem, and is traditionally known as *The Upper Room*. This is based on the account in the synoptics that states that Jesus had instructed a pair of unnamed disciples to go to *the city* to meet a *man carrying a jar of water*, who would lead them to a house, where they were to ask for the room where *the teacher* has a guest room. This room is specified as being the upper room, and they *prepare the passover* there.

It is not actually specified where *the city* refers to, and it may refer to one of the suburbs of Jerusalem, such as Bethany; the traditional location is not based on anything more specific in the Bible, and may easily be wrong. The traditional location is an area that, according to archaeology, had a large Essene community, adding to the points which make several scholars suspect a link between Jesus and the group (Kilgallen 265).

Bread and Wine

In the course of the Last Supper, according to the synoptics (but not John), Jesus divides up some bread, says grace, and hands the pieces to his disciples, saying *this is my body*. He then takes a cup of wine, says grace, and hands it around, saying *this is my blood of the everlasting 'covenant', which is poured for many* . Finally he tells the disciples *do this in remembrance of me*.

During Jewish Passover meals, the wine was usually consumed during the eating of the bread, but here it occurs after. This may indicate that the event was not the official Passover dinner, and hence more in line with John's chronology (Brown et al. 626), although the meal could easily have been altered during the Last Supper for symbolic/religious purposes, or simply because the Gospel writers did not have complete knowledge of Jewish practice, as suggested by their chronologies.

This institute has been regarded by Christians of different denominations as the first Eucharist or Holy Communion.

The Last Supper by Tintoretto, 1594

Jesus' behaviour may be derived from a passage in the Book of Isaiah, where Isaiah 53:12 refers to a blood sacrifice that Moses is described in Exodus as having made in order to seal a covenant with God Exodus 24:8. Scholars often interpret the description of Jesus' behaviour as him asking his disciples to consider themselves part of a sacrifice, where Jesus is the one due to physically undergo it (Brown et al. 626).

Betrayal

According to the Canonical Gospels, during the meal Jesus revealed that one of his Apostles would betray him. Despite the assertions of each Apostle that it would not be he, Jesus is described as reiterating that it would be one of those who were present, and goes on to say that there shall be *woe to the man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born* (Mark 14:20-21).

As cited above, the Gospel of Mark does not specifically identify the betrayer. The same is true in the Gospel of Luke which is limited to asserting that the betrayer was present at the table with Jesus (Luke 22:21). It is only in the Gospel of Matthew (Matthew 26:23-26:25) and The Gospel of John (John 13:26-13:27) where Judas Iscariot is specifically singled out. This is the very moment poignantly portrayed in Leonardo da Vinci's The Last Supper.

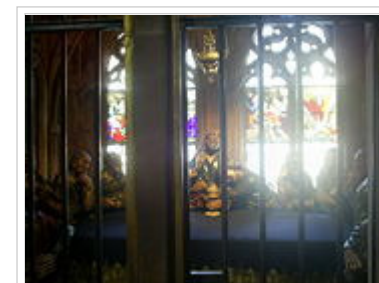Depiction of Last Supper in the Cathedral of Freiburg

Abandonment

As well as the prediction of betrayal, the four canonical gospels recount that Jesus knew the Apostles(desciples) would *fall away*. [Simon Peter] states that he will not abandon Jesus even if the others do, but Jesus tells him that Simon would deny Jesus thrice before the cock had crowed twice. Peter is described as continuing to deny it, stating that he would remain true even if it meant death, and the other apostles are described as stating the same about themselves.

The sermon

After the meal, according to John (but not mentioned at all by the Synoptics), Jesus gave a large sermon to the disciples. The sermon is sometimes referred to as

the **farewell discourse** of Jesus, and has historically been considered a source of Christian teaching, particularly on the subject of Christology. Amongst the Canonical Gospels John is unusual in the complexity of its Christology (which has led to questions about its authenticity), and this sermon portrays one of the most complex Christological descriptions in John.

Although ostensibly addressing his disciples, most scholars conclude the chapter is written with events concerning the later church in mind, particularly that of the 2nd century. Jesus is presented as explaining the relationship between himself and his followers, and seeking to model this relationship on his own relationship with God.

The chapter introduces the extended metaphor of Jesus as the true vine. God is described as the vine tender, and his disciples are said to be branches, which must 'abide' in him if they are to 'bear fruit'. The disciples are warned that barren branches are pruned by the vinedresser. This image has been influential in Christian art and iconography. The disciples are reminded of the love of God for Jesus, and of Jesus for the disciples (especially the beloved disciple), and are then instructed to *love one another* in the same manner. It goes on to speak of the *greatest love* as being the willingness to *lay down* life for one's friends, and this passage has since been widely used to affirm the sacrifice of martyrs and soldiers in war, and is thus often seen on war memorials and graves.

The sermon goes on to talk of Jesus sending a *paraclete* from God, a *Spirit of Truth* that will *testify about* Jesus. Though *paraclete* means *counsellor*, when the concept of a Trinity arose in the 3rd century the *paraclete* became interpreted as the *Holy Ghost*, and the passage became central to the arguments about the *filioque clause* which partly caused the Great Schism. Prior to the development of the idea of a Trinity, the *paraclete* was considered a more human figure, and, in the 2nd century, Montanus claimed to be the *paraclete* that had been promised.

Last Supper Remembrances

The institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper is remembered by Roman Catholics as one of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary, and by most Christians as the "inauguration of the New Covenant", mentioned by the prophet Jeremiah, fulfilled by Jesus at the Last Supper, when He said, "Take, eat; this [bread] is My Body; which is broken for you. Par-take of the cup, drink; this [wine] is My Blood, which is shed for many; for the remission of sins". Other Christian groups consider the Bread and Wine remembrance as a change to the Passover ceremony, as Jesus Christ has become "our Passover, sacrificed for us" (I Corinthians 5:7). Partaking of the Passover Communion (or fellowship) is now the sign of the New Covenant, when properly understood by the practicing believer.

Each major division of Christianity has formed a different theology about the exact meaning and purpose of these remembrance ceremonies, but most of them contain similarities.

Development in the Early Church

Early Christianity has created a remembrance service that took place in the form of meals known as *agape feasts*: perhaps Jude, and the apostle Paul have referred to these as *your love-feasts*, by way of warning (about *who shows up* to these). *Agape* is one of the five main Greek words for love, and refers to the *idealised* love, rather than *lust*, *friendship*, *hospitality*, or *affection* (as in *parental affection*). Though Christians interpret *Agape* as meaning a *divine* form of love beyond *human* forms, in modern Greek the term is used in the sense of *I love you* - i.e. *romantic love*.

These *love feasts* were apparently a full meal, with each participant bringing their own food, and with the meal eaten in a common room. Early Christianity observed a ritual meal known as the " agape feast" held on Sundays which became known as the Day of the Lord, to recall the resurrection, the appearance of Christ to the disciples on the road to Emmaus, the appearance to Thomas and the Pentecost which all took place on Sundays after the Passion. Jude, and the apostle Paul referred to these as "your love-feasts", by way of warning (about "who shows up" to these). *Agape* is one of the Greek words for *love*, and refers to the "divine" type of love, rather than mere human forms of love. Following the meal, as at the Last Supper, the apostle, bishop or priest prayed the words of institution over bread and wine which was shared by all the faithful present. In the later half of the first century, especially after the martyrdom of Peter and Paul, passages from the writings of the apostles were read and preached upon before the blessing of the bread and wine took place.

These meals evolved into more formal worship services and became codified as the Mass in Catholic Church, and as the Divine Liturgy in the Orthodox Churches. At these liturgies, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox celebrate the Sacrament of the Eucharist. The name *Eucharist* is from the Greek word *eucharistos* which means *thanksgiving*.

Name

Within many Christian traditions, the name Holy Communion is used. This name emphasizes the nature of the service, as a "joining in common" between God

The Last Supper from the Heilig-Blut-Altar by Tilman Riemenschneider in St-Jakobskirche, Rothenburg ob der Tauber, Germany

Simon Ushakov's the Last Supper.

Jacopo Bassano's the Last Supper

and humans, which is made possible, or facilitated due to the sacrifice of Jesus. Catholics typically restrict the term 'communion' to the reception of the Body and Blood of Christ by the communicants during the celebration of the Mass.

Another variation of the name of the service is " The Lord's Supper". This name usually is used by the churches of minimalist traditions; such as those strongly influenced by Zwingli. Some echoes of the "agape meal" may remain in *fellowship*, or *potluck* dinners held at some churches.

As well, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints commonly refers to the service as *The Sacrament*.

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Lindisfarne Gospels

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Lindisfarne Gospels** is an illuminated Latin manuscript of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The manuscript was produced on Lindisfarne in Northumbria in the late 7th century or early 8th century, and is generally regarded as the finest example of the kingdom's unique style of religious art, a style that combined Anglo-Saxon and Celtic themes, what is now called Hiberno-Saxon art, or Insular art.

The Lindisfarne Gospels are presumed to be the work of a monk named Eadfrith, who became Bishop of Lindisfarne in 698 and died in 721. Current scholarship indicates a date around 715, and it is believed they were produced in honour of St. Cuthbert. The Gospels are richly illustrated in the insular style, and were originally encased in a fine leather binding covered with jewels and metals made by Billfrith the Anchorite in the 8th century. During the Viking raids on Lindisfarne, however, this cover was lost, and a replacement made in 1852. The text is written in insular script.
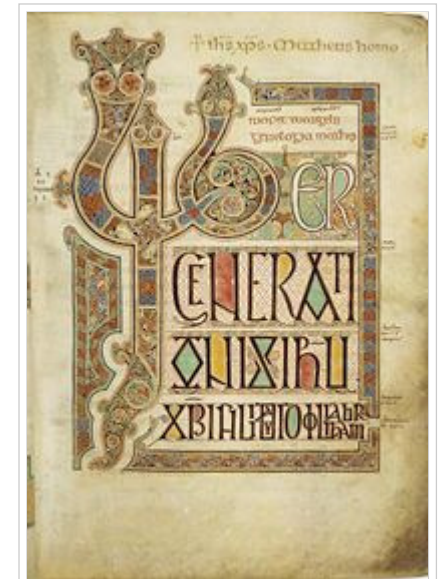
In the 10th century an Old English translation of the Gospels was made: a word-for-word gloss inserted between the lines of the Latin text by Aldred, Provost of Chester-le-Street. This is the first translation of the Gospels into the English language.

The Gospels were taken from Durham Cathedral during the dissolution of the monasteries, ordered by Henry VIII, and were acquired in the early 17th century by Sir Robert Cotton from Robert Bowyer, Clerk of the Parliaments. Cotton's library came to the British Museum in the 18th century, and from there to the British Library in London.

Folio 27r from the Lindisfarne Gospels contains the incipit from the Gospel of Matthew.

A campaign exists to have the gospels brought back to Durham Cathedral in the North East of England, a move vigorously opposed by the British Library. A modern facsimile copy of the Gospels is now housed in the Cathedral Treasury at Durham, which can be seen by visitors.

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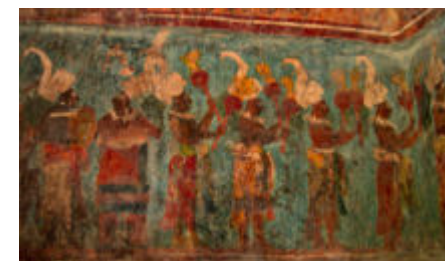
Maya mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Maya mythology refers to the pre-Columbian Maya civilization's extensive polytheistic religious beliefs. These beliefs had most likely been long-established by the time the earliest-known distinctively Maya monuments had been built and inscriptions depicting their deities recorded, considerably pre-dating the 1st millennium BC. Over the succeeding millennia this intricate and multi-faceted system of beliefs was extended, varying to a degree between regions and time periods, but maintaining also an inherited tradition and customary observances. The Maya shared many traditions and rituals with the other civilizations and cultures in the Mesoamerican region, both preceding and contemporary societies, and in general the entire region formed an interrelated mosaic of belief systems and conceptions on the nature of the world and human existence. However, the various Maya peoples over time developed a unique and continuous set of traditions which are particularly associated with their societies, and their achievements.

Despite the ca. early 10th century "Terminal collapse", during which Maya monument construction and inscription recording effectively ceased over large areas and many centers were subsequently abandoned, the Maya peoples themselves endured and continued to maintain their assorted beliefs and traditions. The maintenance of these traditions can be seen in the relics and products of those centers which flourished during the Post-Classic phase, such as in the northern Yucatán Peninsula, occasionally combined with other influences more characteristic of the Gulf coast and central Mexican regions. Although the southern lowland and highland Maya regions of present-day Guatemala saw very little further monument building during this period, the maintenance of traditional beliefs among the local Maya is attested by the accounts and reports of the 16th and 17th century Spanish.

Though the Spanish conquest interrupted the Maya tradition of elite literacy and destroyed the large majority of Maya codices, the stories and traditions of the Maya continued to be handed down to succeeding generations, albeit much influenced and restricted by the influx of European practices and beliefs, Roman Catholicism in particular. Many Maya have experienced considerable persecution for their beliefs and political oppression over the centuries since the first European arrivals; although there can be no doubt that Maya society and tradition has undergone substantial change, many Maya people today maintain an identity which is very much informed by their collective history, traditions and beliefs– a heritage which is distinctively Maya even where substantially combined with the widespread adoption of Christianity. Modern Maya oral traditions are often referred to as Maya folklore to distinguish them from the pre-Columbian literate mythology.

Apart from epigraphy on monuments (which deal primarily with commemorations and dynastic successions), only three complete Maya texts and fragments of a fourth are known to have survived into the present day. The majority of the Maya codices were burned by Europeans like Bishop Diego de Landa during their

Maya civilization

Languages | Peoples
Architecture | Calendar
Human sacrifice | **Mythology**
Peoples | Religion
Society | Textiles
Pre-Columbian Music
Trade | Writing

Maya history

Classic Maya collapse
Spanish conquest of Yucatán

conquest of Mesoamerica and subsequent efforts to convert the Maya peoples to Christianity. Available knowledge of Maya mythology, as such, is rather limited. What is known is drawn largely from 16th - 17th century accounts of post-conquest Maya beliefs and traditions, which do not necessarily correspond with the traditions which were maintained in earlier times.

Overview

In common with other Mesoamerican civilizations, each of the cardinal (or world-) directions were ascribed certain properties and associations. These attributes held a particular significance, and they provided one of the major frameworks which interlinked much of Maya religion and cosmology. The Maya world-view recognized the four primary compass directions, and each of these was consistently associated with a particular colour— east with red, north with white, west with black and south with yellow. These associations and their respective glyphs are attested from at least the Early Classic period, and also figure markedly in the Postclassic Maya codices.

A fifth 'direction', the "center", also formed a part of this scheme. Associated with a blue-green colour, this was most frequently represented by a great ceiba tree, conceptualized as the " world tree" or "tree of life". In Maya cosmology this formed a kind of *axis mundi* which connected the Earth's center with the layers of both the underworld and the heavens. It is believed that living ceiba trees were maintained at the centre of many pre-Columbian Maya settlements in symbolic representation of this connection, and possibly one was placed at each of the four cardinal directions as well.

Maya deities each displayed different aspects based on these five directions as well as a number of other natural and symbolic cycles observed by the Maya.

Maya deities also had dualistic natures associating them with day or night, life or death. There were thirteen gods of the thirteen heavens of the Maya religion and nine gods of the nine underworlds. Between the upperworlds of the heavens and the underworlds of the night and death was the earthly plane which is often shown in Maya art as a two-headed caiman or a turtle lying in a great lake. Natural elements, stars and planets, numbers, crops, days of the calendar and periods of time all had their own gods. The gods' characters, malevolence or benevolence, and associations changed according to the days in the Maya calendar or the positions of the sun, moon, Venus, and the stars.

The Quiché Maya creation story is outlined in the *Popol Vuh*. This has the world created from nothing by the will of the Maya pantheon of gods. Man was made unsuccessfully out of mud and then wood before being made out of maize and being assigned tasks which praised the gods — silversmith, gem cutter, stone carver, potter, etc. Some argue this story adds credence to the belief that the Maya did not believe in art *per se*; all of their works were for the exaltation of the gods.

After the creation story, the Popol Vuh tells of the struggles of the legendary hero twins, Hunahpu and Ixbalanque, in defeating the lords of Xibalba, the underworld. The twins descend into the underworld, perish, and are eventually miraculously reborn. This myth provides a metaphor for the agricultural cycle and the annual rebirth of the crops. These two stories are focal points of Maya mythology and often found depicted in Maya art.

Creation myth

In Maya mythology, Tepeu and Gukumatz (also known as Kukulcan, and as the Aztec's Quetzalcoatl) are referred to as the Creators, the Makers, and the Forefathers. They were two of the first beings to exist and were said to be as wise as sages. Huracan, or the *Heart of Heaven*, also existed and is given less personification. He acts more like a storm, of which he is the god.

Tepeu and Gucumatz hold a conference and decide that, in order to preserve their legacy, they must create a race of beings who can worship them. Huracan does the actual creating while Tepeu and Gucumatz guide the process. Earth is created, but the gods make several false starts in setting humanity upon the earth. Animals were created first; however, with all of their howling and squawking they did not worship their creators and were thus banished forever to the forest. Man is created first of mud, but they just dissolved and crumbled away. Other gods are summoned and man is next created of wood but has no soul, and they soon forgot their makers, so the gods turned all of their possessions against them and bring a black resinous rain down on their heads. Finally man is formed of masa or corn dough by even more gods and their work is complete. As such, the Maya believed that maize was not just the cornerstone of their diet, but they were also made out of it.

Notable Gods

PV=Popol Vuh, L=Landa

- Ah Puch - god of Death
- Bacab - Aged thunder deity carrying the earth and/or sky (L).
- Chaac - god of Rain and Thunder
- Camazotz - Bat god, tries to kill the Hero Twins (PV).
- Gukumatz - Snake god and creator (PV).
- Hunahpu - One of the Maya Hero Twins (PV).
- Huracan - Storm and fire god, one of the creator deities (PV).
- Ixbalanque - One of the Maya Hero Twins (PV).
- Ixchel - Aged jaguar goddess of midwifery (L).
- Ixtab - goddess of suicide (L).
- Zipacna - Underworld demon (PV).

Bacabs

The Bacabs were four brothers, the sons of Itzamnaaj and Chak Chel. A creator god placed these skybearers at the four corners of the universe. Because each stands at one of the four cardinal directions, each is associated with a colour, and also with a specific segment in the Maya calendar.

- **Hobnil** - bacab of the east, is assigned the colour red and the Kan years.
- **Can Tzicnal** - bacab of the north, is assigned the colour white, and the Muluc years.
- **Zac Cimi** - bacab of the west, is assigned the colour black and the Ix years.

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- **Hozanek** - bacab of the south, is assigned the colour yellow and the Cauac years.

References to the Bacabs are found in the 'Relación de las Cosas de Yucatán', of the sixteenth-century bishop, Diego de Landa, and in various Yucatec 'Books of Chilam Balam'. The four brothers were intimately associated with the four Chaacs, or rain deities. In the Yucatán, the Maya of Chan Kom referred to the four skybearers as the four Chacs. Like many other deities, the Bakabs were important in divination ceremonies, being approached with questions about crops, weather, or the health of bees. Their counterparts among the Huaxtecs (the Mamlab) were also thunder gods.

The First Humans

According to the Quiche tradition of the Popol Vuh, the names of the first ancestors were as follows.

The Men

B'alam Agab
> Meaning "night jaguar," he was the second of the men created from maize after the Great Flood sent by Hurakan. He married Choimha.

B'alam Quitze
> Meaning "jaguar with the sweet smile," was the first of the men created from maize after the Great Flood sent by Hurakan. The gods created Caha-Paluma specifically for him to marry. Alternative names: Balam Quitze, Balam Quitzé

Iqi B'alam
> Meaning "moon jaguar," he was the third of the men created from maize after the Great Flood sent by Hurakan. The gods created Cakixia specifically to be his wife.

Mahucatah
> Meaning "distinguished name," he was the fourth of the men created from maize after the Great Flood sent by Hurakan. The woman Tzununiha was created just for him.

Their Wives

Caha-Paluma
> Meaning "falling water," she was a woman created specifically to be the wife of Balam-Quitzé.

Cakixia
> Meaning "water of parrots," she was a woman created specifically to be the wife of Iqi-Balam.

Choimha
> Meaning "beautiful water", she was a woman created by the gods specifically to marry B'alam Agab.

Tzununiha
> Meaning "house of the water," she was a woman created specifically to be the wife of one of the first men, Mahucatah.

Locations

Metnal
> The lowest and most horrible of the nine hells of the underworld. It was ruled by Ah Puch. Ritual healers would intone healing prayers banishing diseases to Metnal.

Xibalba
> Also known as Xibalbá or Xibalbay, is a dangerous underworld ruled by the demons Vucub Caquix and Hun Came. The road to it is said to be steep, thorny and very forbidding. Much of the Popol Vuh describes the adventures of the Maya Hero Twins in their struggle with the evil lords of Xibalba.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_mythology"

Mecca

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Coordinates:

Mecca IPA: /ˈmɛkə/, also spelled **Makkah** IPA: [ˈmækə] (in full: **Makkah Al-Mukarramah** IPA: [(Arabic) mækːæ(t) ælmʊkarˑamæ]; Arabic: مَكَّة المكرمة) is Islam's holiest city home to the Kaaba shrine and the Grand mosque. The city is known for the annual Hajj pilgrimage, which being one of the five pillars of Islam, attracts close to 2 million pilgrims.

Islamic tradition attributes the beginning of Mecca to Ishmael's descendants. In the 7th century, the Islamic prophet Muhammad proclaimed Islam in the city, by now an important trading centre, and the city played an important role in the early history of Islam. After 966, Mecca was led by local sharifs, until 1924, when it came under the rule of the Saudis. In its modern period, Mecca has seen a great expansion in size and infrastructure.

The modern day city is located in and the capital of Saudi Arabia's Makkah Province, in the historic Hejaz region. With a population of 1,700,000 (2008), the city is located 73 kilometres (45 miles) inland from Jeddah, in a narrow valley, and 277 metres (910 ft) above sea level.

Etymology

Mecca is the original English transliteration of the Arabic name. Historically, the city has also been called *Becca*.

In the 1980s, the Saudi Arabian government and others began promoting the transliteration *Makkah* (in full, *Makkah al-Mukarramah*), which more closely resembles the actual Arabic pronunciation. This spelling is starting to be taken up by many organizations, including the United Nations, United States Department of State, and the British Foreign Office, but the spelling *Mecca* remains in common use.

Another alternative is *Meccah*.

City of Mecca / Makkah Al Mukarrammah
Masjid al-Haram, the centre of Mecca, and the source of its prominence
Flag   **Coat of arms**
Nickname(s): Umm Al Qura (*Mother of Villages*)

Derived from the importance of the city in Islam is the English word *mecca*, meaning "A place that is regarded as the centre of an activity or interest" or "A goal to which adherents of a religious faith or practice fervently aspire."

Government

Mecca is governed by the Municipality of Mecca, headed by a mayor (Also known as *Amin*) appointed by the Saudi Government. The current mayor of the city is Osama Al-Bar. A municipal council of fourteen locally elected members is responsible for the functioning of the municipality.

Mecca is the capital of Makkah Province, which includes neighboring Jeddah. The governor was Prince Abdul Majeed bin Abdul Aziz from 2000 until his death in 2007. On May 16, 2007, Prince Khalid al Faisal was appointed as the new governor.

History

1787 Turkish artwork of the Holy Mosque and related religious sites (Jabal al-Nur)

Early history

According to Islamic tradition, the history of Mecca goes back to Ibrahim (ابراهيم, Abraham) when he built the Kaaba with the help of his son Ismā'īl (اسماعيل, Ishmael), around 2000 BC. The inhabitants were stated to have fallen away from monotheism through the influence of the Amelkites. Historians state that the Kaaba later became the repository of 360 idols and tribal gods of all of Arabia's nomadic tribes. Until the 7th century, Mecca's most important god would remain to be Hubal, having been placed there by the ruling Quraysh tribe.

The city was also known to Ptolemy as "Macoraba". In the 5th century, the Quraysh tribe took control of Mecca, and became skilled merchants and traders. In the 6th century they joined the lucrative spice trade as well, since battles in other parts of the world were causing trade routes to divert from the dangerous sea routes to the relatively more secure overland routes. The Byzantine Empire had previously controlled the Red Sea, but piracy had been on the

Location of Mecca

Country	🇸🇦 Saudi Arabia
Province	**Makkah Province**
Construction of Kaaba	+2000 BC
Established	Unknown
Joined Saudi Arabia	1924

Government	
- Mayor	Osama Al-Bar
- Provincial Governor	Khalid al Faisal

Area Mecca Municipality	
- Urban	850 km² (328.2 sq mi)
- Metro	1,200 km² (463.3 sq mi)

Population (2007)	
- City	1,700,000
- Density	4,200/km² (2,625/sq mi)
- Urban	2,053,912
- Metro	2,500,000
	Makkah Municipality estimate

Time zone	EAT (UTC+3)

increase. Another previous route, that from the Persian Gulf via the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, was also being threatened by exploitation from the Sassanid Empire, as well as being disrupted by the Lakhmids, the Ghassanids, and the Roman-Persian Wars. Mecca's prominence as a trading centre surpassed the cities of Petra and Palmyra.

- Summer (DST)	EAT (UTC+3)
Postal Code	(5 digits)
Area code(s)	+966-2
Website: Mecca Municipality	

By the middle of the 6th century, there were three major settlements in northern Arabia, all along the southwestern coast that borders the Red Sea, in a habitable region between the sea and the great desert to the east. This area, known as the Hejaz, featured three settlements that had grown around oasis, where water was available. In the centre of the Hejaz was Yathrib, later renamed as Medina. 250 miles (400 km) south of Yathrib was Taif, a mountain town, and northwest of Taif was Mecca. Though the area around Mecca was completely barren, Mecca was the wealthiest and most important of the three settlements. Islamic histories state that it had abundant water via the Zamzam Well, which was the site of the holiest shrine in Arabia, the Kaaba, and was also at the crossroads of major caravan routes.. Actually the well of Zamzam was barely sufficient to support the small community there, the Kaaba was but one of many such Arabian Polytheistic temple found in the peninsula, and the city was the terminus for a single caravan route which ran from Mecca to Syria.

The harsh conditions of the Arabian peninsula usually meant a constant state of conflict between the tribes, but once a year they would declare a truce and converge upon Mecca in an annual pilgrimage. This journey was intended for religious reasons, to pay homage to the shrine, and to drink from the Well of Zamzam. However, it was also the time each year that disputes would be arbitrated, debts would be resolved, and trading would occur at Meccan fairs. These annual events gave the tribes a sense of common identity and made Mecca extremely important throughout the peninsula.

Muhammad's great-grandfather had been the first to equip a camel caravan, and they became a regular part of the town's economy. Alliances were struck between the merchants in Mecca, and the local nomadic tribes, who would bring leather, livestock, and metals which were mined in the local mountains. Caravans would then be loaded up in Mecca, and would take the goods to the cities in Syria and Iraq. Islamic tradition claims that goods from other continents also flowed through Mecca. From Africa and the Far East towards Syria supposedly flowed spices, leather, drugs, cloth, and slaves; and in return Mecca was to have received money, weapons, cereals, and wine, which were distributed throughout Arabia. The Meccans signed treaties with both the Byzantines and the Bedouins, and negotiated safe passage for caravans, which included such things as water and pasture rights. These further increased Mecca's political power as well as economic, and Mecca became the centre of a loose confederation of client tribes, which included those of the Banu Tamim. Other forces such as the Abyssinian, Ghassan, and Lakhm were in decline, and Meccan influence was the primary binding force in Arabia in the late 6th century.

Muhammad

Muhammad was born in Mecca in 570, and thus Islam has been inextricably linked with Mecca ever since. Muhammad was born in a minor faction, the Hashemites, of the ruling Quraysh tribe. Islamic tradition states that he began receiving divine revelations here in 610 AD, and began to preach monotheism against Meccan paganism. After enduring persecution for 13 years, Muhammad emigrated (see Hijra) in 622 with his followers to Medina. The conflict between the Quraysh and the Muslims, however, continued: the two fought Battle of Badr, where Muslims defeated the Quraysh outside Medina; whilst the Meccans overcame the Muslims at the Battle of Uhud. Overall, however, Meccan efforts to annihilate Islam were unsuccessful, and during the Battle of the Trench in 627, the combined armies of Arabia were unable to defeat Muhammad.

In 628, Muhammad and his followers peacefully marched to Mecca, attempting to enter the city for pilgrimage. Instead, however, both Muslims and Meccans entered into the Treaty of Hudaybiyyah, whereby Muslims and Quraysh would cease fighting and Muslims would be allowed into the city the following year. Two years later the Quraysh violated the truce, but instead of continuing their fight, the city of Mecca shortly surrendered to Muhammad. The prophet declared amnesty for the inhabitants, gave generous gifts to the leading Quraysh. Mecca was cleansed of all its idols and cult images in the Kaaba. Muhammad declared Mecca as the holiest site in Islam ordaining the it as the centre of Muslim pilgrimage, one of the faith's five pillars. Despite his conquest, however, Muhammad chose to return to Medina, leaving behind Attab bin Usaid to govern the city. Muhammad's other activities in Arabia led to the unification of the peninsula, putting an end to the wars that had disrupted life in the city for so long.

The Ottoman Empire, Including Mecca

Muhammad died in 632, but with the sense of unity that he'd passed on to the Arabians, Islam began a rapid expansion, and within the next few hundred years stretched from North Africa well into Asia. As the Islamic Empire grew, Mecca continued to attract pilgrims not just from Arabia, but now from all across the Empire, as Muslims sought to perform the annual Hajj.

Mecca also attracted a year-round population of scholars, pious Muslims who wished to live close to the Kaaba, and local inhabitants who served the pilgrims. Due to the difficulty and expense of the Hajj, pilgrims arrived by boat at Jeddah, and came overland, or joined the annual caravans from Syria or Iraq.

Political history

Mecca was never the capital of any of the Caliphates including the Ottoman Empire. Muslim rulers did, however, contribute to its upkeep. During the reign of Umar and Uthman, concerns of flooding caused the caliphs to bring in Christian engineers to build barrages in the high-lying quarters, and also to construct dykes and embankments to protect the area round the Kaʿba.

In Islamic history, Muhammad's emigration to Medina established the city as the first capital of the nation. When the Umayyad dynasty took power they moved the capital to Damascus, Syria, and then the Abbasid Caliphate moved the capital to Baghdad, Iraq. The center of the Islamic Empire remained at Baghdad for nearly 500 years, and flourished into a centre of research and commerce. In the 13th century, the Mongols invaded Baghdad and sacked the city. This event was one of the most detested events in Islamic history. Soon after the Battle of Baghdad, the Mongols rampaged west and conquered Syria. The next city to quickly emerge as the centre of power in the Islamic state was Cairo, in Egypt. When the Ottoman Empire came into prominence the capital was moved to Constantinople. Mecca still remained as a prominent trading centre though. When pilgrims arrived for the Hajj they often financed their journey by bringing goods which they could sell in the Meccan markets, and acquiring goods there which they could sell when they returned home.

The First Saudi State, Including Mecca

Mecca re-entered Islamic political history briefly when it was held by Abd-Allah ibn al-Zubayr, an early Muslim who opposed the Umayyad caliphs. The caliph

Yazid I besieged Mecca in 683.

Thereafter the city figured little in politics, it was a city of devotion and scholarship. For centuries it was governed by the Hashemite Sharifs of Mecca.

In 930, Mecca was attacked and sacked by Qarmatians, a millenarian Ismaili Muslim sect led by Abu Tahir Al-Jannabi and centered in eastern Arabia. The Black Death pandemic hit Mecca in 1349. In 1517, the Sharif of Mecca, Barakat bin Muhammed, acknowledged the supremacy of the Ottoman Caliph, but maintained a great degree of local autonomy.

Mecca in 1850

The city was captured in 1802 by the First Saudi State (Also known as *Wahhabis*), The Saudis held Mecca until 1813. This was a massive blow to the prestige of the Ottoman Empire, who had exercised sovereignty over the holy cities since 1517, and the lethargic Ottomans were finally moved to action. The task of bringing Mecca back under Ottoman control was assigned to their powerful viceroy of Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, who successfully returned Mecca following the victory at Mecca in 1813. In 1818, the Wahhabis were again defeated, but some of Al Saud clan lived on to found the Second Saudi State that lasted until 1891, and later the present Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia

In June 1916, During the Arab Revolt, the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali revolted against the Ottoman Empire from Mecca and it was the first city captured by his forces following Battle of Mecca (1916). Sharif Hussien declared a new state, Kingdom of Hejaz, and declared Mecca as the capital of the new kingdom. In 1924, the Sharif of Mecca were overthrown by the Saudis, and Mecca was incorporated into Saudi Arabia. Following the Battle of Mecca (1924), The city joint Saudi Arabia until the present days.

On November 20, 1979 two hundred armed Islamist dissidents led by Saudi preacher Juhayman al-Otaibi seized the Grand Mosque. They claimed that the Saudi royal family no longer represented pure Islam and that the mosque, and the Kaaba, must be held by those of the true faith. The rebels seized tens of thousands of pilgrims as hostages and barricaded themselves in the mosque. The siege lasted two weeks, and resulted in several hundred deaths and significant damage to the shrine, especially the Safa-Marwa gallery. While it is the Pakistani forces that carried out the bloodless assault, they were assisted with weapons and planning by a small team of advisors from The French GIGN commando unit.

On July 31, 1987, during an anti-US demonstration by pilgrims, 402 people were killed (275 Iranian pilgrims, 85 Saudis [including policemen], and 45 pilgrims from other countries) and 649 wounded (303 Iranian pilgrims, 145 Saudis [including policemen] and 201 pilgrims from other countries) after the Saudi police opened fire against the unarmed demonstrators.

View of Mecca 1910

Geography

Mecca is at an elevation of 277 m (910 ft) above sea level, and approximately 50 miles (80 km) inland from the Red Sea. The city is situated between mountains, which has defined the contemporary expansion of the city. The city centers around the Grand Mosque area, whose altitude is lower than most of the city. The area around the mosque comprises the old city. The main avenues are *Al-Mudda'ah* and *Sūq al-Layl* to the north of the mosque, and *As-Sūg Assaghīr* to the south. As the Saudis expanded The Grand Mosque in the centre of the city, where there were once hundreds of houses are now replaced with wide avenues and city squares. Traditional homes are built of local rock and are generally two to three stories. The total area of Mecca metro today stands over 1,200 km² (463.3 sq mi)

Mecca's skyline, 2008

Mecca centre lies in a corridor between mountains, which is often called the "hollow of Mecca." Mecca's location was also important for trade, and it was the stop for important trade routes.

In pre-modern Mecca, the city exploited a few chief sources of water. The first were local wells, such as zamzam, that produced generally brackish water. The second source was the spring of Ayn Zubayda. The sources of this spring are the mountains of J̲abal Saʿd and Jabal Kabkāb, which lie a few kilometers east of D̲jabal ʿArafa or about 20 km east southeast of Mecca. Water was transported from it using underground channels. A very sporadic third source was rainfall which was stored by the people in small reservoirs or cisterns. The rainfall, as scant as it is, also presents the threat of flooding and have been a danger since earliest times. According to Al-Kurdī, there had been 89 historic floods by 1965, including several in the Saudi period. In the last century the most severe one occurred in 1942. Since then, dams have been constructed to ameliorate the problem.

Climate

Unlike other Saudi Arabian cities, Mecca retains its warm temperature in winter, which can range from +17 °C (63 °F) at midnight to +25 °C (77 °F) in the afternoon. Summer temperatures are considered very hot and break the +40 °C (104 °F) mark in the afternoon dropping to +30 °C (86 °F) in the evening. Rain usually falls in Mecca in small amounts in December and January.

Some unusual events often happen during the year, such as dust storms in summer, coming from the Arabian Peninsula's deserts or from North Africa. Snow does not fall in Mecca.

Mecca Climatological Data												
Month	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Year**
Record high °C (°F)	33 (91)	35 (95)	38 (100)	40 (104)	42 (108)	47 (117)	42 (108)	42 (108)	42 (108)	41 (106)	41 (106)	34 (93)	
Average high °C (°F)	29 (84)	29 (84)	29 (84)	33 (91)	35 (95)	37 (99)	40 (104)	37 (99)	36 (97)	35 (95)	33 (91)	32 (88)	33 (91)
Average low °C (°F)	19 (66)	18 (64)	19 (66)	21 (70)	23 (73)	24 (75)	26 (79)	27 (81)	25 (77)	23 (73)	22 (72)	19 (66)	22 (72)

| Record low °C (°F) | 13 (55) | 13 (55) | 13 (55) | 13 (55) | 16 (61) | 19 (66) | 21 (70) | 23 (73) | 21 (70) | 20 (68) | 17 (63) | 12 (53) | |
| Rainfall mm (in) | 5 (0.2) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 0 (0) | 25 (1.0) | 31 (1.2) | 61 (2.4) |

Cityspaces

Mecca houses the Masjid al-Haram, the largest mosque in the world. The mosque surrounds the Kaaba, the place which Muslims turn towards while offering daily prayer and considered by Muslims to be the holiest place on Earth. The mosque is also commonly known as the *Haram* or *Grand Mosque*.

The current structure covers an area of 356,800 square meters including the outdoor and indoor praying spaces and can accommodate up to 4 million worshippers during the Hajj period.

The recent expansion of the city provided many modern landmarks such as the huge towers of Abraj Al-Bait, with height of 577 m (1,893 ft). The construction of the towers will be completed in 2009, being one of the world's tallest buildings. The site of the towers is located across the street from the entrance to the Grand Mosque.

As a historic city, Mecca owns hundreds of historical landmarks such as the Kaaba, Muslims believe it was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael. The Zamzam Well is a further example.

The Qishla of Mecca used to be one of the most notable structures for Mecca, The Qishla was an Ottoman castle facing the Grand Mosque and defending the city from any possible attack. However, the Saudi government removed the structure, giving free space for new hotels and business buildings around the Mosque.

The Mecca archway, shaped like an open Qur'an, marks the point beyond which only Muslims may enter.

Economy

The Meccan economy has been heavily dependent on the annual pilgrimage. As one scholar put it, "[Meccans] have no means of earning a living but by serving the hajjis." Economy generated from hajj, in fact, not only powers the Meccan economy but has historically had far reaching effects on the economy of the Hejaz and Najd regions. The income was generated in a number of ways. One method was taxing the pilgrims. Taxes especially increased during the Great Depression, and many of these taxes existed as late as 1972. With rise of oil income, however, all unnecessary charges have been abolished. Another way the Hajj generates income is through services to pilgrims. For example, the Saudi national airline, Saudia, generates 12% of its income from the pilgrimage. Fares paid by pilgrims to reach Mecca by land also generate income; as do the hotels and lodging companies that house them.

The city takes in more than $100 million during the Hajj. The Saudi government spends about $50 million on services for the Hajj. There are some industries and factories in the city, but Mecca no longer plays a major role in Saudi Arabia's economy, which is mainly based on oil exports. The few industries operating in Mecca include textiles, furniture, and utensils. The majority of the economy is service oriented. Water is scarce and food must be imported via *Shu'eyba* water

plant and Jeddah.

Nevertheless, many industries have been set up in Mecca. Various types of enterprises that have existed since 1970: corrugated iron manufacturing, copper smithies, carpentry shops, upholstering establishments, vegetable oil extraction plants, sweets manufacturies, flour mills, bakeries, poultry farms, frozen food importing, photography processing, secretarial establishments, ice factories, bottling plants for soft drinks, barber shops, book shops, travel agencies and banks.

The city has grown substantially in the 20th and 21st centuries, as the convenience and affordability of jet travel has increased the number of pilgrims participating in the Hajj. Thousands of Saudis are employed year-round to oversee the Hajj and staff the hotels and shops that cater to pilgrims; these workers in turn have increased the demand for housing and services. The city is now ringed by freeways, and contains shopping malls and skyscrapers.

Demographics

Population density in Mecca is very high. Most long-term residents of Mecca live in the Old City, and many work in the industry known locally as the *Hajj Industry*. As Iyad Madani, Saudi Arabia's minister for Hajj was quoted as saying, "We never stop preparing for the Hajj." Year-round, pilgrims stream into the city to perform the rites of Umrah, and during the last weeks of Dhu al-Hijjah, on average 4 million Muslims arrive in the city to take part in the rites known as Hajj.

Pilgrims are of different ethnicities and backgrounds, from Africa, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, Europe and the Middle East, of whom many have remained and become residents of the city. As a result, Mecca is much more ethnically diverse than most Saudi cities and its culture more eclectic in nature. Added to the traditional diversity, the oil-boom of the past 50 years has brought hundreds of thousands of working immigrants.

Culture

Mecca's culture has been impacted by the large number of pilgrims that arrive annually, and thus boasts a rich cultural heritage.

The first press was brought to Mecca in 1885 by Othman Nūrī Pasha, an Ottoman wālī. During the Hashimite period, it was used to print the city's official gazette, *al-Ḳibla*. The Saudi regime expanded this press into a larger operation, introducing the new Saudi official gazette *Umm al-Ḳurā*. Henceforth presses and printing techniques were introduced in the city from around the Middle East, mostly via Jeddah.

Jeddah is served by one major Arabic-language newspaper, *Shams*. However, other Saudi and international newspapers are also provided in Mecca such as the *Saudi Gazette*, *Medina*, *Okaz* and *Al-Bilad*. The first three are Mecca's (and other Saudi cities') primary newspapers focusing mainly on issues that affect the city, with over a million readers.

Many television stations serving the city area include *Saudi TV1*, *Saudi TV2*, *Saudi TV Sports*, *Al-Ekhbariya*, *ART channels network* and hundreds of cable, satellite and other speciality television providers.

In pre-modern Mecca the most common sports were impromptu wrestling and foot races. Football is the most popular sport in Mecca, the city hosting some of the oldest sport clubs in Saudi Arabia such as, Al-Wehda FC (established in 1945). King Abdulaziz Stadium is the largest stadium in Mecca with capacity of 33,500.

Religious significance

The vast majority of Meccans are Sunni Muslims, with a minority of Shiite Pilgrims. The city has over 9000 Mosques.

The Qur'an enjoins Muslims to face the sacred precincts of Mecca during the Salat. Initially though, the direction of the Qiblah was toward Masjid al-Aqsa, Jerusalem (the First of the Two Qiblahs). This tradition has roots in Muhammad's adoption of the Kaʿba as a physical focus of the new Muslim community, and the direction of prayer, *qibla* , from the 7th century until the present day. The determination of this sacred direction gave rise to an important study in medieval Islam, distinct and separate from mainstream Islamic tradition of mathematical geography and cartography.

The cultural environment of today's Mecca has been influenced by a religious movement that began in central Arabia in the mid-eighteenth century. This movement is commonly known as the Wahhabi movement. It has been also influenced by the Shafi`i school. Also, the conflict between liberals and religious scholars made a major impact on the Society of Mecca.

Since the 7th Century , Mecca has hosted millions of Muslim pilgrims from all over the world in their way to Hajj. This merge with pilgrims has also a major impact on the society and the religion of Meccans.

Non-Muslims are not permitted to enter Mecca by Saudi law. According to CNN,

> Many religious scholars say this "discrimination" exists because Mecca was once a city where Muslims - including the prophet Mohammed - were persecuted and driven out. When Mohammed and his followers reclaimed the city, it was declared a sanctuary ... a place where every Muslim should feel safe.

"Non-Muslim Bypass:" Non-Muslims are not permitted to enter Mecca.
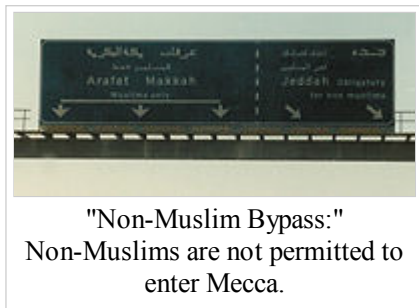
Those who use fake certificates of Muslim identity (to enter) may be arrested and prosecuted by Saudi authorities

The Saudi government uses the following verse as a Koranic confirmation for this law, however there are other interpretations to this verse (in particular, People of the Book would usually not be regarded as pagans)):

"O ye who believe! Truly the Pagans are unpure; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque. And if ye fear poverty, soon will God enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty, for God is All-knowing, All-wise." -- Koran, 9:28

As one might expect, the existence of cities closed to non-Muslims and the mystery of the Hajj aroused intense curiosity in people from around the world. Some have disguised themselves as Muslims and entered the city of Mecca and then the

Grand Mosque to experience the Hajj for themselves. The most famous account of a foreigner's journey to Mecca is *A Personal Narrative of a Pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina,* written by Sir Richard Francis Burton. Burton traveled as a Qadiriyyah Sufi from Afghanistan; his name, as he signed it in Arabic below his frontispiece portrait for "The Jew, The Gypsy and al-Islam," was *al-Hajj 'Abdullah*.

The primary industry in Mecca in modern times is to support the annual pilgrimage of the Hajj, as well as to support the pilgrims who visit the city at all other times of the year. Major stops in their visit include:

The Kaaba is the ancient stone building towards which all Muslims pray. It was originally one of multiple such buildings in Arabia, but was the only one made of stone, and therefore is the only one still standing. Many Muslims believe that it dates back to the time of Abraham in 2000 BC. All pilgrims are required to walk counter-clockwise around the Kaaba seven times starting at the Black Stone, in a ritual called the Tawaf.

Muslims believe that the Zamzam Well was revealed to Hagar (هاجر), mother of Ishmael. She was desperately seeking water for her infant son, but could find none. Mecca is located in a hot dry valley with few other sources of water. According to tradition, the water of the Zamzam well is divinely blessed. It is believed to satisfy both hunger and thirst, and cure illness. The water is served to the public through coolers stationed throughout the Masjid al-Haram and the Al-Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina. All pilgrims make every effort to drink of this water during their pilgrimage, and some dip their ihram clothing into it, so that the cloth can be used as their own burial shroud when they die.

Cuisine

Meccan residents are a mix of several different ethnicities and nationalities. This mixture of races has impacted significantly on Mecca's traditional cuisine.

Like other Saudi cities, The Nejdi Kabsa is the most traditional lunch for Meccans. The Yemeni Mandi is also popular as a lunch meal.

Grilled meats such as shawarma, kofta and kebab have a good market in Mecca. During Ramadan, sambousak and ful are the most popular meals during dusk. These meals are almost always found in Lebanese, Syrian, and Turkish restaurants. During Ramadan also but long years ago, a slave man called *Sagga* used to provide mineral water for people during dusk. The Saggas also used to provide grape juice. Today, Saggas are rich businesspeople, providing sweets such as *baklawa* and *basbosa*, along with juice.

International food is also popular in the city. American chains such as McDonald's, Burger King, Domino's Pizza and KFC.

Language

The Mecca City area has a distinctive regional speech pattern called the Hejazi dialect, alternatively known as Meccan or Makkawi. It is often considered to be one of the most recognizable accents within the Arabic language.

The Sagga

Pronunciations in Hejazi differ from other Gulf dialects in some respects. The Classical Arabic qaaf (ق) is pronounced as /g/ sound, as in "get". Hijazi Arabic is also conservative with respect to the sound of the pronunciation of the letter ğim (ج), which is very close to the two sounds considered, by specialists, to be the best candidates for the way it was pronounced in Classical Arabic, namely, the voiced palatal plosive /ɟ/ and the palatalized velar stop /gʲ/.[citation needed] This stands in contrast with many dialects in the region which use /g/ or /ʒ/ for ğim instead. Some speakers replace the interdental /θ/ with /t/ or /s/.

The Hejazi dialect also contains fairly recent borrowings from other Arabic dialects, including Levantine and Egyptian Arabic.

Education

Formal education started to be developed in late Ottoman period continuing slowly into and Hāshimite times. The first major attempt to improve the situation was made by a Jeddah merchant, Muhammad ʿAlī Zaynal Riḍā, who founded the Madrasat al-Falāḥ in Makka in 1911-12 that cost £400,000.

The school system in Mecca has many public and private schools for both males and females. As of 2005, there were 532 public and private schools for males and another 681 public and private schools for female students. The medium of instruction in both public and private schools is Arabic with emphasis on English as a second language, but some private schools which are by foreign entities such as (International schools) use the English language for medium of instruction. They also allow the mixing between males and females while other schools do not.

For higher education, the city has only one university, Umm Al-Qura University, which was established in 1949 as a college and became a public university in 1979.

Communications

Telecommunications in the city were emphasized early under the Saudi reign. King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz pressed them forward as he saw them as a means of convenience and better governance. While in King Husayn's time there were about 20 telephones in the entire city; in 1936 the number jumped to 450, totalling about half the telephones in the country. During that time telephone lines were extended to Jeddah and Taif, but not to the capital Riyadh. By 1985 Mecca, like other Saudi cities, possessed the most modern telephone, telex, radio and TV communications.

Limited radio communication was established within the Hejaz region under the Hashimites. In 1929, wireless stations were set up in various towns of the region, crating a network that would become fully functional by 1932. Soon after World War II, the existing network was greatly expanded and improved. Since then radio communication has been used extensively in directing the pilgrimage and addressing the pilgrims. This practice started in 1950, with the initiation of broadcasts the day of Arafat, and increased until 1957, at which time Radio Makka became the most powerful station in the Middle East at 50 kw. Later, power was increased to 450 kw. Music was not immediately broadcast, but gradually introduced.

Transportation

Transportation facilities related to the Hajj or Umrah are the main services available. Mecca has only the small Mecca East Airport with no airline service, so most pilgrims access the city through the Hajj terminal of King Abdulaziz International Airport (JED) or the Jeddah Seaport, both of which are in Jeddah.

The city lacks any public transportation options for residents and visitors, both during and outside of the pilgrimage season. The main tranportation options available for travel within and around the city are either personal vehicles or private taxis.

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Mithraic Mysteries

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

The **Mithraic Mysteries** or **Mysteries of Mithras** (also **Mithraism**) was a mystery religion practised in the Roman Empire (1st to 4th centuries CE), best attested in Rome and Ostia, Mauretania, Britain and in the provinces along the Rhine and Danube frontier.

Rituals and worship

Double-faced Mithraic relief. Rome, second to third century CE. Louvre Museum.
Front:Mithras killing the bull, being looked over by the Sun god and the Moon god.
Back: Mithras banquetting with the Sun god.

Mithraism was an initiatory order, passed from initiate to initiate, like the Eleusinian Mysteries. It was not based on a body of scripture, and hence very little written documentary evidence survives. Soldiers and the lower nobility appeared to be the most plentiful followers of Mithraism. Until recently, women were generally thought to not have been allowed to join, but it has now been suggested that "women were involved with Mithraic groups in at least some locations of the empire." Recently revealed discrepancies such as these suggest that Mithraic beliefs were (contra the older supposition) not internally consistent and monolithic,*cf.* but rather, varied from location to location.

No Mithraic scripture or first-hand account of its highly secret rituals survives, with the possible exception of a liturgy recorded in a 4th century papyrus, thought to be an atypical representation of the cult at best. Current knowledge of the mysteries is almost entirely limited to what can be deduced from the iconography in the mithraea that have survived.

The mithraeum

Religious practice was centered around the *mithraeum* (Latin, from Greek *mithraion*), either an adapted natural cave or cavern or an artificial building imitating a cavern. Mithraea were dark and windowless, even if they were not actually in a subterranean space or in a natural cave. When possible, the mithraeum was constructed within or below an existing building. The site of a mithraeum may also be identified by its separate entrance or vestibule, its "cave", called the *spelaeum* or *spelunca*, with raised benches along the side walls for the ritual meal, and its sanctuary at the far end, often in a recess, before which the pedestal-like altar stood. Many mithraea that follow this basic plan are scattered over much of the Empire's former area, particularly where the legions were stationed along the frontiers (such as Britain). Others may be recognized by their characteristic layout, even though converted as crypts beneath Christian churches.

A mithraeum found in the ruins of Ostia Antica, Italy.

From the structure of the mithraea it is possible to surmise that worshippers would have gathered for a common meal along the reclining couches lining the walls. Most temples could hold only thirty or forty individuals.

The mithraeum itself was arranged as an "image of the universe". It is noticed by some researchers that this movement, especially in the context of mithraic iconography (see below), seems to stem from the neoplatonic concept that the "running" of the sun from solstice to solstice is a parallel for the movement of the soul through the universe, from pre-existence, into the body, and then beyond the physical body into an afterlife.

Mithraic ranks

The members of a mithraeum were divided into seven ranks. All members were expected to progress through the first four ranks, while only a few would go on to the three higher ranks. The first four ranks represent spiritual progress—the new initiate became a *Corax*, while the *Leo* was an adept—the other three have been specialized offices. The seven ranks were:

- *Corax* (raven)
- *Nymphus* (bridegroom)
- *Miles* (soldier)
- *Leo* (lion)
- *Perses* (Persian)
- *Heliodromus* (sun-courier)
- *Pater* (father)

The titles of the first four ranks suggest the possibility that advancement through the ranks was based on introspection and spiritual growth.

The *tauroctony*

Tauroctony of Mithras at the British Museum
London

In every Mithraic temple, the place of honour was occupied by a tauroctony, a representation of Mithras killing a sacred bull which was associated with spring. Mithras is depicted as an energetic young man, wearing a Phrygian cap, a short tunic that flares at the hem, pants and a cloak which furls out behind him. Mithras grasps the bull so as to force it into submission, with his knee on its back and one hand forcing back its head while he stabs it in the neck with a short sword. The figure of Mithras is usually shown at a diagonal angle and with the face turned forward. The representations occur as both reliefs, and as three-dimensional sculpture; however the three dimensional images have a strongly frontal aspect.

A serpent and a dog seem to drink from the bull's open wound which is sometimes depicted as spilling grain rather than blood, and a scorpion (usually interpreted as a sign for autumn) attacks the bull's testicles sapping the bull for strength. Sometimes, a raven or crow is also present, and sometimes also a goblet and small lion. Cautes and Cautopates, the celestial twins of light and darkness, are torch-bearers, standing on either side with their legs crossed, Cautes with his brand pointing up and Cautopates with his turned down. Above Mithras, the symbols for Sol and Luna are present in the starry night sky.

The Platonic writer Porphyry, recorded, in the 3rd century CE that the cave-like temple Mithraims depicted "an image of the cosmos" or "great cave" of the sky. This interpretation was supported by research by K. B. Stark in 1869, with astronomical support by Roger Beck (1984 and 1988), David Ulansey (1989) and Noel Swerdlow (1991).

It has been proposed by David Ulansey that, rather than being derived from Iranian animal sacrifice scene with Iranian precedents, the tauroctony is a symbolic representation of the constellations. The bull is thus interpreted as representing the constellation Taurus, the snake the constellation Hydra, the dog Canis Major or Minor, the crow or raven Corvus, the goblet Crater, the lion Leo, and the wheat-blood for the star Spica, the name of which means "spike of wheat". The torch-bearers may represent the constellation of Gemini which seasonally follows that of Taurus, or possibly the two equinoxes. Mithras is associated by many writers with the constellation of Orion because of the proximity to Taurus, and the consistent nature of the depiction of the figure as having wide shoulders, a garment flared at the hem, and narrowed at the waist with a belt, thus taking on the form of the constellation. It is also possible that could also be associated with Perseus, whose constellation is above that of the Taurus in the sky.

Image:BritMusMithrasScorpio
Detail of sculpture (left) showing scorpion attacking the bull's testicles

Cumont hypothesized (since then discredited) that this imagery was a Greco-Roman representation of an event in Zoroastrian cosmogony, in which Angra Mainyu (not Mithra) slays the primordial creature Gayomaretan (which in Zoroastrian tradition is represented as a bull).

Other iconography

Depictions show Mithras (or who is thought to represent Mithras) wearing a cape, that in some examples, has the starry sky as its inside lining. (See image below)

A bronze image of Mithras emerging from an egg-shaped zodiac ring was found associated with a mithraeum along Hadrian's Wall (now at the University of Newcastle). An inscription from the city of Rome suggests that Mithras may have been seen as the Orphic creator-god Phanes who emerged from the world egg at the beginning of time, bringing the universe into existence. This view is reinforced by a bas-relief at the Estense Museum in Modena, Italy, which shows Phanes coming from an egg, surrounded by the twelve signs of the zodiac, in an image very similar to that at Newcastle.

Reliefs on a cup found in Mainz, appear to depict a Mithraic initiation. On the cup, the initiate is depicted as led into a location where a *Pater* (see Mithraic ranks) would be seated in the guise of Mithras with a drawn bow. Accompanying the initiate is a mystagogue, who explains the symbolism and theology to the initiate. The Rite is thought to re-enact what has come to be called the 'Water Miracle', in which Mithras fires a bolt into a rock, and from the rock now spouts water.

History and development

In antiquity, texts refer to "the mysteries of Mithras", and to its adherents, as "the mysteries of the Persians." This latter epithet is significant, not only for whether the Mithraists considered the object of their devotion a Persian divinity (i.e. Mithra), but for whether the devotees considered their religion to have been founded by Zoroaster.

It is not possible to state with certainty when "the mysteries of Mithras" developed. Clauss asserts "the mysteries" were not practiced until the 1st century CE. Mithraism reached the apogee of its popularity around the 3rd through 4th centuries, when it was particularly popular among the soldiers of the Roman Empire. Mithraism disappeared from overt practice after the Theodosian decree of 391 banned all pagan rites, and it apparently became extinct thereafter.

Although scholars are in agreement with the classical sources that state that the Romans borrowed the name of Mithras from Avestan Mithra, the origins of the Roman religion itself remain unclear and there is yet no scholarly consensus concerning this issue (for a summary of the various theories, see history, below). Further compounding the problem is the non-academic understanding of what "Persian" means, which, in a classical context is not a specific reference to the Iranian province Pars, but to the Persian (i.e. Achaemenid) Empire and speakers of Iranian languages in general.

Mithras and the Bull: This fresco from the mithraeum at Marino, Italy (third century) shows the *tauroctony* and the celestial lining of Mithras' cape. (See above)

Origin theories

Cumont's hypothesis

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'Mithras' was little more than a name until the massive documentation of Franz Cumont's *Texts and Illustrated Monuments Relating to the Mysteries of Mithra* was published in 1894-1900, with the first English translation in 1903. Cumont's hypothesis, as the author summarizes it in the first 32 pages of his book, was that the Roman religion was a development of a Zoroastrian *cult* of Mithra (which Cumont supposes is a development from an Indo-Iranian one of **mitra*), that through state sponsorship and syncretic influences was disseminated throughout the Near- and Middle East, ultimately being absorbed by the Greeks, and through them eventually by the Romans.

Cumont's theory was a hit in its day, particularly since it was addressed to a general, non-academic readership that was at the time fascinated by the orient and its hitherto (relatively) uncharted culture. This was the age when great steps were being taken in Egyptology and Indology, preceded as it was by Max Müller's "Sacred Books of the East" series that for the first time demonstrated that civilization did not begin and end with Rome and Greece, or even with Assyria and Babylon, which until then were widely considered to be the cradle of humanity. Cumont's book was a product of its time, and influenced generations of academics such that the effect of Cumont's syncretism theories are felt even a century later.

Cumont's ideas, though in many respects valid, had however one serious problem with respect to the author's theory on the origins of Mithraism: If the Roman religion was an outgrowth of an Iranian one, there would have to be evidence of Mithraic-like practices attested in Greater Iran. However, that is not the case: No mithraea have been found there, and the Mithraic myth of the *tauroctony* does not conclusively match the Zoroastrian legend of the slaying of Gayomart, in which Mithra does not play any role at all. The historians of antiquity, otherwise expansive in their descriptions of Iranian religious practices, hardly mention Mithra at all (one notable exception is Herodotus i.131, which associates Mithra with other divinities of the morning star).

Further, no distinct religion *of* Mithra or **mitra* had ever (and has not since) been established. As Boyce put it, "no satisfactory evidence has yet been adduced to show that, before Zoroaster, the concept of a supreme god existed among the Iranians, or that among them Mithra - or any other divinity - ever enjoyed a separate cult of his or her own outside either their ancient or their Zoroastrian pantheons."

It should however be noted that while it is "generally agreed that Cumont's master narrative of east-west transfer is unsustainable," a syncretic Zoroastrian (whatever that might have entailed at the time) influence is a viable supposition. This does not however imply that the religion practiced by the Romans was the same as that practiced elsewhere; syncretism was a feature of Roman religion, and the syncretic religion known as the Mysteries of Mithras is a product of Roman culture itself. "Apart from the name of the god himself, in other words, Mithraism seems to have developed largely in and is, therefore, best understood from the context of Roman culture."

Other theories

Other theories propose that Mithraism originated in Asia Minor, which though once within the sphere of Zoroastrian influence, by the second century BCE were more influenced by Hellenism than by Zoroastrianism. It was there, at Pergamum on the Aegean Sea, in the second century BCE, that Greek sculptors started to produce the highly standardized bas-relief imagery of *Mithra Tauroctonos* "Mithra the bull-slayer."

The Greek historiographer Plutarch (46 - 127) was convinced that the pirates of Cilicia, the coastal province in the southeast of Anatolia, were the origin of the Mithraic rituals that were being practiced in the Rome of his day: "They likewise offered strange sacrifices; those of Olympus I mean; and they celebrated

certain secret mysteries, among which those of Mithras continue to this day, being originally instituted by them." (*Life of Pompey* 24)

Beck suggests a connection through the Hellenistic kingdoms (as Cumont had already intimated) was quite possible: "Mithras — moreover, a Mithras who was identified with the Greek Sun god, Helios, which was one of the deities of the syncretic Graeco-Iranian royal cult founded by Antiochus I, king of the small, but prosperous "buffer" state of Commagene, in the mid first century BCE."

Another possible connection between a Mithra and Mithras, though one not proposed by Cumont, is from a Manichean context. According to Sundermann, the Manicheans adopted the name Mithra to designate one of their own deities. Sundermann determined that the Zoroastrian Mithra, which in Middle Persian is *Mihr*, is not a variant of the Parthian and Sogdian *Mytr* or *Mytrg*; though a homonym of Mithra, those names denote Maitreya. In Parthian and Sogdian however Mihr was taken as the sun and consequently identified as the Third Messenger. This Third Messenger was the helper and redeemer of mankind, and identified with another Zoroastrian divinity *Narisaf*. Citing Boyce, Sundermann remarks, "It was among the Parthian Manicheans that Mithra as a sun god surpassed the importance of Narisaf as the common Iranian image of the Third Messenger; among the Parthians the dominance of Mithra was such that his identification with the Third Messenger led to cultic emphasis on the Mithraic traits in the Manichaean god."

Some commentators surmise that the Mithraists worshipped Mithras as the mediator between Man and the supreme God of the upper and nether world. Other commentators, inspired by James Frazer's theories, have additionally labeled Mithraism as a mystery religion with a life-death-rebirth deity, comparable to Isis, or Persephone/ Demeter, the cult of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The early period

Mithraism began to attract attention in Rome around the end of the first century. Statius mentions the typical Mithraic relief in his *Thebaid* (Book i. 719,720), around 80 CE. The earliest material evidence for the Roman worship of Mithras dates from that period, in a record of Roman soldiers who came from the military garrison at Carnuntum in the Roman province of Upper Pannonia (near the Danube River in modern Austria, near the Hungarian border). Other legionaries fought the Parthians and were involved in the suppression of the revolts in Jerusalem from 60 CE to about 70 CE When they returned home, they made Mithraic dedications, probably in the year 71 or 72.

By the year 200, Mithraism had spread widely through the army, and also among traders and slaves. During festivals all initiates were equals including slaves. The German frontiers have yielded most of the archaeological evidence of its prosperity: small cult objects connected with Mithras turn up in archaeological digs from Romania to Hadrian's Wall.

Expansion throughout the empire

By the third century, Mithraism was officially sanctioned by the Roman emperors. According to the fourth century *Historia Augusta*, Commodus participated in its mysteries: *Sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat* "He desecrated the rites of Mithras with actual murder, although it was customary in them merely to say or pretend something that would produce an impression of terror".

Concentrations of Mithraic temples are found on the outskirts of the Roman empire: along Hadrian's wall in northern England three mithraea have been identified, at Housesteads, Carrawburgh and Rudchester. The discoveries are in the University of Newcastle's Museum of Antiquities, where a mithraeum has been recreated. Recent excavations in London have uncovered the remains of a Mithraic temple near to the centre of the once walled Roman settlement, on the bank of the Walbrook stream. Mithraea have also been found along the Danube and Rhine river frontier, in the province of Dacia (where in 2003 a temple was found in Alba-Iulia) and as far afield as Numidia in North Africa.

Sol Invictus on the reverse of this coin by usurper Victorinus. Mithras (as well as Elagabalus and Sol) was at times referred to as Sol Invictus.

As would be expected, Mithraic ruins are also found in the port city of Ostia, and in Rome the capital, where as many as seven hundred mithraea may have existed (a dozen have been identified). Its importance at Rome may be judged from the abundance of monumental remains: more than 75 pieces of sculpture, 100 Mithraic inscriptions, and ruins of temples and shrines in all parts of the city and its suburbs. A well-preserved late second-century mithraeum, with its altar and built-in stone benches, originally built beneath a Roman house (as was a common practice), survives in the crypt over which has been built the Basilica of San Clemente, Rome.

Decline and demise

There is very little information about the decline of the religion. The edict of Theodosius I in 394 made paganism illegal. Official recognition of Mithras in the army stopped at this time, but we have no information on what other effect the edict had. Mithraism may have survived in certain remote cantons of the Alps and Vosges into the fifth century.

Legacy

Sites of interest relating to the Mystery of Mithras include:

- Italy: The Basilica of San Clemente in Rome has a preserved mithraeum with the altarpiece still intact in the excavations under the modern church.
- Italy: The Castra Peregrinorum mithraeum in Rome, under the basilica of Santo Stefano Rotondo was excavated in the 20th century.
- Italy: Ostia Antica, the port of Rome, where the remains of 17 mithraea have been found so far; one of them is substantial.
- Germany: The museum of Dieburg displays finds from a mithraeum, including ceramics used in the service.
- Germany: The museum of Hanau displays a reconstruction of a mithraeum.
- England: The museum at the University of Newcastle displays findings from the three sites along Hadrian's Wall and recreates a mithraeum.

- Switzerland: The city of Martigny (ancient *Octodurus*), in the Alps, displays a reconstructed Mithraeum
- Slovenia: The museum of Ptuj and town Hajdina near Ptuj.
- United States: The Cincinnati Art Museum displays a relief from a mithraeum in Rome itself depicting Mithras slaying a bull.

Mithraism and Christianity

Evaluation of the relationship of early Christianity with Mithraism has traditionally been based on the polemical testimonies of the 2nd century Church fathers, such as Justin's accusations that the Mithraists were diabolically imitating the Christians. This led to a picture of rivalry between the two religions, which Ernest Renan summarized in his 1882 *The Origins of Christianity* by saying "if the growth of Christianity had been arrested by some mortal malady, the world would have been Mithraic." This characterization of Mithraism and Christianity as "deadly rivals" became mainstream in the early 20th century with Cumont's endorsement, but was later criticized as too sweeping. Martin (1989) characterizes the rivalry between 3rd century Mithraism and Christianity in Rome as primarily one for real estate in the public areas of urban Rome.

Iconographical similarities with Early Christian art

Franz Cumont was the first scholar to suggest that Early Christian art had borrowed iconographic themes from Mithraism, pointing out that Mithraic images of the Heavens, the Earth, the Ocean, the Sun, the Moon, the Planets, signs of the Zodiac, the Winds, the Seasons, and the Elements are found on Christian sarcophagi, mosaics, and miniatures from the third to the fifth centuries. According to Cumont the Church was opposed to the pagan practice of worshipping the cosmic cycle, but these images were nevertheless incorporated into Christian artworks, in which "a few alterations in costume and attitude transformed a pagan scene into a Christian picture".

The Jewish faith provided no precedent of pictorial representation on which the Early Christians could base their imagery. According to Cumont, Early Christian imagery drew upon Mithraic traditions. Depictions of the biblical story of Moses striking Mount Horeb with his staff to release drinking water were, according to Cumont, inspired by Mithraic representation of Mithras shooting arrows at rocks causing fountains to spring up.

M. J. Vermaseren claimed that the scene of Mithras ascending into the heavens was similarly incorporated into Christian art: after Mithras had accomplished a series of miraculous deeds, he ascended into the heavens in a chariot, which in various depictions is drawn by horses being controlled by by Helios-Sol, the pagan sun god. In other depictions a chariot of fire belonging to Helios is led into the water, surrounded by the god Oceanus and sea nymphs. Vermaseren argues that Christian portrayals on sarcophagi of the soul's ascension into heaven, though ostensibly referencing the biblical scene of Elijah being led into heaven by fiery chariots and horses, were in fact inspired by representations of Mithras' ascent into the heavens in Helios' chariot. The sun god, Vermaseren claims, provided inspiration for the flames on Elijah's chariot and the Jordan River is personified by a figure resembling the god Oceanus. Some scholars have also used similar language to describe the circumstances of Mithras' and Jesus' birth: Joseph Campbell described it as a virgin birth, and Martin A. Larson noted that Mithras was said to have been born on December 25th, or winter solstice.

A. Deman suggests that rather than attempting to find individual references from Mithraic art in Christian iconography, as Cumont does with the sun and moon, for instance, it is better to look for larger patterns of comparison: "with this method, pure coincidences can no longer be used and so the recognition of Mithras

as the privileged pagan inspirer of medieval Christian iconography is forced upon us." For example Deman compares what he calls the "creative sacrifice" of Mithras with the creative sacrifice of Christ. In representations of both iconographic scenes the vernal sacrifice is central to the image, with sun and the moon symmetrically arranged above. Beneath the sacrifice two other figures are symmetrically arranged. In mithraic scenes these are Cautes and Cautopates, and in the Christian scenes, which date from the 4th century onwards, the figures are typically Mary and John. In other Christian instances however, these two attendants are other figures, and carry a raised and lowered object reminiscent of the raised and lowered torches of Cautes and Cautopates. Such figures may be two Roman soldiers armed with lances, or Longinus holding a spear and Stephaton offering Jesus vinegar from a sponge. In some instances the clothes of these figures resemble those of Cautes and Cautopates in the earlier Mithraic depictions. Derman also compares the twelve apostles shown in Christian crucifixion scenes with the twelve signs of the zodiac common in Mithraic scenes, as well as identifying a cross-legged posture commonly found in figures in both sets of iconography.

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Mosque

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Architecture; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

A **mosque** is a place of worship for followers of Islam. Muslims often refer to the mosque by its Arabic name, *masjid*, Arabic: مسجد — pronounced [ˈmæsdʒɪd] (pl. *masājid*, Arabic: مساجد — /mæˈsæːdʒɪd/). The word "mosque" in English refers to all types of buildings dedicated for Islamic worship, although there is a distinction in Arabic between the smaller, privately owned mosque and the larger, "collective" mosque (Arabic: جامع, *masjid jāmiʕ*), which has more community and social amenities.

The primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer and some other activities of their life (i.e, a centre for information, education, and dispute settlement). The Imam leads the prayer. Nevertheless, mosques are known around the world nowadays for their general importance to the Muslim community as well as their demonstration of Islamic architecture. They have developed significantly from the open-air spaces that were the Quba Mosque and Masjid al-Nabawi in the seventh century. Today, most mosques have elaborate domes, minarets, and prayer halls. Mosques originated on the Arabian Peninsula, but now exist on all the world's inhabited continents. They are not only places for worship and prayer, but also places to learn about Islam and meet fellow believers.

The Masjid al-Haram in Mecca as it exists today.

Etymology

The Arabic word *masjid* means *place of worship* and is a noun of place from the verb *sajada* (root "s-j-d," meaning "to bow" or "to kneel") in reference to the prostrations performed during Islamic prayers. Either the word *masjid* itself or at least the verb from which it is derived was borrowed from Aramaic. The word "m-s-g-d" is attested in Aramaic as early as the 5th century BCE, and the same word is later found in Nabataean inscriptions with the meaning "place of worship"; apparently, this Aramaic word originally meant " stele" or "sacred pillar".. The same root exists also in Hebrew,(ס-ג-ד), meaning "to worship".

The modern-day English word "mosque", just like its equivalents in many other European languages, derives from the word *masjid* via Spanish *mezquita*. The pre-cursors of the word "mosque" appeared during the 15th, 16th, and 17th centuries and "Moseak", "muskey", "moschy", and "mos'keh" were just some of the variations that came into use until it was decided that "mosquee", imitating Middle French, Italian, and Old Spanish, would become the standard. In the early 18th century, the modern spelling became the most popular and standard spelling of the word.

Mosque in Islamic texts

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The word "masjid" is found throughout the Qur'an, most frequently with the reference to the sanctuary of Kaaba in the city of Mecca. The Qur'an applies the term "masjid" to places of worship of different religions, including Judaism and Christianity; in the same general meaning of a place of worship, the word is used in the hadith (collections of Muslim traditions about the deeds and saying of their prophet Muhammad and his companions).

History

Grand entryways and tall towers, or minarets, have long been and continue to be closely associated with mosques. However, the first three mosques were very simple open spaces on the Arabian Peninsula. Mosques evolved significantly over the next 1,000 years, acquiring their now-distinctive features and adapting to cultures around the world.

The First Mosques

According to Islamic beliefs, the first mosque in the world was the Kaaba, whose existing foundation was raised up by Prophet Ibrahim, assisted by his son Prophet Ismail, upon an order from God. The site of the Kaaba is also believed to be the place where a tent was erected by angels for Adam and Eve to use for worship. The oldest mosque built by Muslims is the Quba Mosque in Medina. When Muhammad lived in Makkah, he viewed Kaaba as his first and principal mosque and performed prayers there together with his followers.

The Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina as it exists today.

Even during times when the pagan Arabs performed their rituals inside the Kaaba, Muhammad always held the Kaaba in very high esteem. The Makkan tribe of Quraish, which was responsible for guarding Kaaba, attempted to exclude Muhammad's followers from the sanctuary, which became a subject of Muslim complaints recorded in the Qur'an. When Muhammad conquered Makkah in 630, he converted Kaaba to a mosque, which has since become known as the Masjid al-Haram, or Sacred Mosque. The Masjid al-Haram was significantly expanded and improved in the early centuries of Islam in order to accommodate the increasing number of Muslims who either lived in the area or made the annual Hajj, or pilgrimage, to Makkah, before it acquired its present shape in 1577 in the reign of the Ottoman sultan Selim II.

The first thing Muhammad did upon arriving with his followers near Medina (then named *Yathrib*) after the emigration from Makkah in 622 was build the Quba Mosque in a village outside Medina. Muslims believe he stayed at the Quba Masjid for three days before moving on to Medina.

Just days after beginning work on the Quba Mosque, Muhammad went on to establish another masjid in Medina, known today as the Masjid al-Nabawi, or the "prophet's" Masjid. The location of the mosque was declared as such after it hosted Muhammad's first Friday prayer. Following its establishment, the Masjid al-Nabawi continued to introduce some of the practices now considered common in today's mosques. For example, the adhan, or call to prayer, was developed in the form still used in masjids today. The Masjid al-Nabawi was built with a large courtyard, a motif common among mosques built since then. Muhammad would stand up at one end of the arcade to preach. Later on, he would develop a three-step pulpit as a platform from which he would give sermons. The pulpit, now known as a minbar, is still a common feature of masjids.

Al-Aqsa Mosque, built on top of the Temple Mount, is the third holiest mosque in Islam.

Muhammad lived beside the masjid in Medina, which doubled as both a religious and political centre for the early Muslim community. Negotiations were conducted, military actions planned, prisoners of war held, disputes settled, religious information disseminated, gifts received and distributed among his companions. His followers treated the wounded there and some people even lived in the mosque permanently in tents and huts.

Today, the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca, the Masjid al-Nabawi in Medina and Al Aqsa in Jerusalem are considered the three holiest sites in Islam.

Diffusion and evolution

Mosques were built outside the Arabian Peninsula as Muslims moved to other parts of the world. Egypt became occupied by Muslim Arabs as early as 640, and since then so many mosques have appeared throughout the country that its capital city, Cairo, has acquired the nickname of *city of a thousand minarets*. Egyptian mosques vary in amenities, as some have Islamic schools (*madrassas*) while others have hospitals or tombs. Mosques in Sicily and Spain do not primarily reflect the architecture of Visigothic predecessors, but instead reflect the architecture introduced by the Muslim Moors. It is hypothesized, however, that there were some elements of pre-Islamic architecture which were Islamicized into Andalusi and Maghribi architecture, for example, the distinctive horseshoe arch.

The first Chinese mosque was established in the eighth century in Xi'an. The Great Mosque of Xi'an, whose current building dates from the eighteenth century, does not replicate many of the features often associated with traditional mosques. Instead, it follows traditional Chinese architecture. It is distinguished from other building by its green roof (Buddhist temples are often built with a yellow roof). Mosques in western China incorporate more of the elements seen in mosques in other parts of the world. Western Chinese mosques were more likely to incorporate minarets and domes while eastern Chinese mosques were more likely to look like pagodas.

By the fifteenth century, Islam had become the dominant religion in Java and Sumatra, Indonesia's two most populous islands. As with Hinduism and Buddhism before it, the new religion, and the foreign influences that accompanied it, were absorbed and reinterpreted, with mosques given a unique Indonesian/Javanese interpretation. At the time, Javanese mosques took many design cues from Hindu, Buddhist, and even Chinese architectural influences. They lacked, for example, the ubiquitous Islamic dome which did not appear in Indonesia until the 19th century, but had tall timber, multi-level roofs not that dissimilar to the pagodas of Balinese Hindu temples still common today. A number of significant early mosques survive, particularly along the north coast of Java. These include the *Mesjid Agung* in Demak, built in 1474, also Grand Mosque of Yogyakarta that feature multi-level roofs. Javanese styles in turn had influenced the architectural styles of mosques among Indonesia's Austronesian neighbors: Malaysia, Brunei and the southern Philippines.

The minaret at the Great Mosque of Xi'an, China

The Great Mosque of Paris.

Mosques diffused into India during the reign of the Mughal empire in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The Mughals brought their own form of architecture that included pointed, onion-shaped domes, as seen in Delhi's Jama Masjid.

Mosques first arrived in the Ottoman Empire (mostly present-day Turkey) during the eleventh century, when many of the Turks in the region began to convert to Islam. Several of the first mosques in the Ottoman Empire, such as the Hagia Sophia in present-day Istanbul, were originally churches or cathedrals in the Byzantine Empire. The Ottomans created their own design of mosques, which included large central domes, multiple minarets, and open façades. The Ottoman style of mosques usually included elaborate columns, aisles, and high ceilings in the interior, while incorporating traditional elements, such as the mihrab. Today, Turkey is still home to many mosques that display this Ottoman style of architecture.

Mosques gradually diffused to different parts of Europe, but the most rapid growth in the number of mosques has occurred within the past century as more Muslims have migrated to the continent. Major European cities, such as Rome, London, and Munich, are home to mosques that feature traditional domes and minarets. These large mosques in urban centers are supposed to serve as community and social centers for a large group of Muslims that occupy the region. However, one can still find smaller mosques in more suburban and rural regions throughout Europe where Muslims populate. There are 40,000 to 50,000 mosques in the United States and Islam is the fastest growing religion there. Mosques first appeared in the United States in the early twentieth century, the first of which was built in the late 1920s in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. However, as more immigrants continue to arrive in the country, especially from South Asia, the number of American mosques is increasing faster than ever before. Whereas only two percent of the country's mosques appeared in the United States before 1950, eighty-seven percent of American mosques were founded after 1970 and fifty percent of American mosques founded after 1980.

Conversion of places of worship

According to early Muslim historians, towns that surrendered without resistance and made treaties with the Muslims received permission to retain their churches and synagogues, One of the earliest examples of these kinds of conversions was in Damascus, Syria, where in 705 Umayyad caliph Abd al-Malik took the church of St. John from the Christians and had it rebuilt as a mosque, which is now known as Umayyad Mosque; overall, Abd al-Malik is said to have transformed 10 churches in Damascus into mosques. The process of turning churches into mosques was especially intensive in the villages. The Abbasid caliph al-Ma'mun turned many churches into mosques. Ottoman Turks converted into mosques nearly all churches, monasteries, and chapels in Constantinople, including the famous Hagia Sophia, immediately after capturing the city in 1453. In some instances mosques have been established on the places of Jewish or Christian sanctuaries associated with Biblical personalities who were also recognized by Islam. Muslim rulers in India built mosques seeing their actions as fulfillment of religious duty.

On the other hand, mosques have also been converted for use by other religions, notably in southern Spain, following the conquest of the Moors in 1492. The most prominent of them is the Great Mosque of Cordoba. The Iberian Peninsula, Southeast Europe, and India (the Babri Masjid incident) are other regions in the world where such instances occurred once no longer under Muslim rule.

The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, Syria was a Byzantine church before the Islamic conquest of the Levant. Some ecclesiastical elements are still evident.

Religious functions

Prayers

All adult Muslims are required to offer prayer, or *Salat*, compulsorily five times each day. (Those suffering from diseases, and women who have just given birth, may omit this obligation. (See *Sharia*)). Although some smaller mosques with smaller congregations will offer only a few prayers, most mosques offer all five required prayers daily: before sunrise (*fajr*), at midday (*Zuhr*), in the afternoon (*Asr*), after sunset (*Maghrib*), and in the evening (*isha'a*). It is obligatory for Muslims to offer prayer inside a mosque along with Friday Prayer, according to hadith; offering prayer in a congregation at a mosque is considered more virtuous than offering prayer alone.The mosque is the centre of the islamic community, it illustrates the idea of brotherhood and iman.

Muslims performing salat (prayer) at the Umayyad Mosque.

In addition to holding the five obligatory daily prayers, mosques hold *jumuah* prayers, or Friday prayers, which replace the midday prayer as the second required prayer on Fridays. While the ordinary daily prayers can be performed at any location that is clean, it is required that all adult men attend Friday prayers at the mosque.

A funeral prayer, or salat ul-janazah, is held for a deceased Muslim at the mosque, with all congregants present, including the imam, participating. Unlike with the daily prayers, the funeral prayers are normally held outdoors in a courtyard or square close to the mosque. During solar eclipses, mosques will host another special prayer called salat ul-kusuf.

There are two large holidays, or *eids*, in the Islamic calendar: Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha. On both of these days, there are special prayers held at mosques in the morning. The eid prayers are supposed to be offered in large groups, and so larger mosques will normally host eid prayers for their congregants as well as the congregants of smaller local mosques. Some mosques will even rent convention centers or other large public buildings to hold the large number of Muslims who attend the eid prayers. Mosques, especially those in countries where Muslims are the majority, will also host eid prayers outside in courtyards or town squares.

Ramadan events

Islam's holiest month, Ramadan, is observed through many events. As Muslims must fast during the day during Ramadan, mosques will host *iftar* dinners after sunset and the fourth required prayer of the day, maghrib. Food is provided, at least in part, by members of the community, thereby creating nightly potluck dinners. Because of the community contribution necessary to serve iftar dinners, mosques with smaller congregations may not be able to host the *iftar* dinners daily. Some mosques will also hold *suhoor* meals before dawn to congregants attending the first required prayer of the day, fajr. As with iftar dinners, congregants usually provide the food for suhoor, although able mosques may provide food instead. Mosques will often invite poorer members of the Muslim community to share in beginning and breaking the fasts as providing charity during Ramadan in Islam is seen as especially honorable.

The Sabancı Mosque is the largest mosque in Turkey.

Following the fifth and final required prayer of the day, isha, special, optional tarawih prayers are offered in larger mosques. During each night of prayers, which can last for up to two hours each night, a member of the community who has memorized the entire Qur'an will recite a segment of the book. During the last ten days of Ramadan, larger mosques will host all-night programs to observe Laylat al-Qadr, the night Muslims believe the Islamic prophet Muhammad first began to receive the Qur'an. On that night, between sunset and sunrise, mosques will employ speakers to educate congregants in attendance about Islam. Mosques or the community usually provide meals periodically throughout the night.

During the last ten days of Ramadan, larger mosques within the Muslim community will host i'tikaf, a practice in which at least one Muslim man from the community must participate. Muslims performing i'tikaf are required to stay within the mosque for ten consecutive days, often in worship or learning about Islam. As a result, the rest of the Muslim community is responsible for providing the participants with food, drinks, and whatever else they need during their stay.

Charity

The third of the Five Pillars of Islam states that Muslims are required to give approximately one-fortieth of their wealth to charity as *zakat*. Since mosques form the centre of Muslim communities, they are where Muslims go to both give zakat and, if necessary, collect zakat. Prior to the holiday of Eid ul-Fitr, mosques also collect a special zakat that is supposed to assist in helping poor Muslims attend the prayers and celebrations associated with the holiday.

Social functions

Centre of Muslim community

Many Muslim rulers after the death of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, emulating him, established their domains by first building a mosque. In the same way Mecca and Medina are built around the Masjid Al-Haram and the Masjid Al-Nabawi, Karbala, in present-day Iraq, was built around the Imam Hussain Shrine. Isfahan, Iran is especially notable for its use of mosques to form the centre of the city. In the eighth century, a mosque was established within the city which three centuries later was described by theologian and philosopher Naser Khosrow as "a magnificent Friday Mosque built in the city centre." At the dawn of the seventeenth century, Shah Abbas I of the Safavid Dynasty led an effort to establish Isfahan as one of the largest and most beautiful cities in the world. As part of his plan, he ordered the building of Shah Mosque and Sheikh Lotf Allah Mosque which border Isfahan's Naghsh-i Jahan Square, which, as one of the largest city squares in the world, hosted sports and trade.

Imam Mosque, formerly Shah Mosque along Naghsh-i Jahan Square in Isfahan, Iran

Mosques built more recently, especially in countries where Muslims are not the majority, tend to be away from the center of major cities. Nevertheless, even a mosque in a less densely populated area often influences Muslims to relocate their homes and businesses so they are close to the mosque. Thus, mosques form the focal points of Muslim communities, even if they do not form the centre of the entire community as a whole. In the United States, the growth in the number of mosques and congregants in suburbs is much greater than that in densely urban areas.

Education

Another primary function of a mosque is to house educational facilities. Some mosques, especially those in countries where state-funded Islamic schools are not present, will have full-time schools that teach both Islamic and general knowledge. These full-time schools normally have students in elementary school and middle school, although there are also a few full-time schools available to high school students. Most mosques will also have part-time schools, either on the weekends or in the evenings. Whereas full-time schools are meant for children who depend on the mosque to provide an Islamic education as well as a general education, weekend and nightly schools are meant to provide only Islamic education for students of all ages, young and old. Some mosques, however, will also provide general educational help to Muslim students as a way of bringing young Muslims closer to the mosque. The subjects at the Islamic evening and weekend classes vary. Qur'an reading and Arabic are commonly found at mosques that are located in countries where Arabic is not widely spoken. Classes for new Muslims about the basics of Islam are also common, especially in Europe and the United States, where it is the fastest-growing religion. Mosques will also go into more depth about Islam by providing congregants with classes on Islamic jurisprudence. Madrassas are also available for Muslims to study *'alim* to become Islamic scholars or imams. However, as their primary purpose is not to serve as a place of worship or community centre, madrassas are normally separate from neighbourhood mosques.

The Ulugh Beg Madrassa, which includes a mosque, in Samarkand, Uzbekistan

Events and fundraising

Mosques host events and dinners either for raising money for mosque activities or simply to bring the community together and bazaars where community members can shop for Islamic merchandise are common among mosques. Mosques also host weddings, much like other places of worship.

One particularly interesting illustration of this community involvement is that of the mosque in Djenné, Mali where, during an annual festival, the community takes part in the re-applying of plaster to the exterior of the mud brick building (the largest of its kind in the world).

Contemporary political roles

The Great Mosque of Djenné is host to an annual festival.

The late twentieth century saw an increase in the number of mosques used for political purposes. Today, civic participation is commonly promoted in mosques in the Western world. Because of the importance in the community, Masajid (Mosques) are used for preaching peaceful co-existence with non-believers, even in times of adversity.

Advocacy

Countries where Muslims comprise only a minority of the population are more likely than the Muslim-majority countries of the Greater Middle East to use mosques as a way to promote civic participation. American mosques host voter registration and civic participation drives that promote involving Muslims, who are often first- or second-generation immigrants, in the political process. As a result of these efforts as well as attempts at mosques to keep Muslims informed about the issues facing the Muslim community, regular mosque attendants are more likely to participate in protests, sign petitions, and otherwise be involved in politics.

Nevertheless, a link between political views and mosque attendance can still be seen in other parts of the world. Following the al-Askari Mosque bombing in February 2006, imams and other Islamic leaders used mosques and Friday prayers as vehicles to call for calm and peace in the midst of widespread violence.

Beginning in the late twentieth century and continuing into the early twenty-first century, a small number of mosques have also become the platforms of some extremist imams to advocate terrorism and extreme Islamic ideals. Finsbury Park Mosque in London is exemplary of a mosque that has been used in this manner.

Mosque in Cuiabá, Brazil.

Social conflict

As they are considered important to the Muslim community, mosques, like other places of worship, can be at the heart of social conflicts.

Babri Mosque was the subject of such a conflict up until the early 1990s when it was demolished. Before a mutual solution could be devised, the mosque was destroyed by approximately 200,000 Hindus on December 6, 1992 as the mosque was built by Babur allegedly on the site of a previous Hindu temple marking the birthplace of Ram. The controversy surrounded the mosque was directly linked to rioting in Bombay (present-day Mumbai) as well as bombings in 1993 that killed 257 people.

A February 2006 bombing that seriously damaged Iraq's al-Askari Mosque, exacerbated tensions that had already existed. Other mosque bombings in Iraq, both before and after the February 2006 bombing, have been part of the conflict between the country's groups of Muslims. However, mosque bombings have not been exclusive to Iraq; in June 2005, a suicide bomber killed at least 19 people at an Afghan mosque. In April 2006, two explosions occurred at India's Jama Masjid.

The 16th Century Babri Mosque in India was destroyed by right-wing Hindu extremists in 1992.

Following the September 11 attacks, several American mosques were targeted in attacks ranging from simple vandalism to arson. Furthermore, the Jewish Defense League was suspected of plotting to bomb the King Fahd Mosque in Culver City, California. Similar attacks occurred throughout the United Kingdom following the 7 July 2005 London bombings. Outside the Western world, in June 2001, the Hassan Bek Mosque was the target of attacks involving hundreds of Israelis angry at Arabs for a previous attack.

Saudi influence

Although the Saudi involvement in mosques around the world can be traced back to the 1960s, it was not until later in the twentieth century that the government of Saudi Arabia began to become a large influence in foreign mosques. Beginning in the 1980s, the Saudi Arabian government began to finance the construction of mosques in countries around the world. An estimated US$45 billion has been spent by the Saudi Arabian government financing mosques and Islamic schools in foreign countries. *Ain al-Yaqeen*, a Saudi newspaper, reported in 2002 that Saudi funds may have contributed to building as many as 1,500 mosques and 2,000 other Islamic centers Saudi citizens have also contributed significantly to mosques in the Islamic world, especially in countries where they see Muslims as poor and oppressed. Following the fall of the Soviet Union, in 1992, mosques in impoverished Afghanistan saw many contributions from Saudi citizens. The King Fahd Mosque in Culver City, California and the Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy in Rome represent two of Saudi Arabia's largest investments in foreign mosques as former Saudi king Fahd bin Abdul Aziz al-Saud contributed US$8 million and US$50 million to the two mosques, respectively.

Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, Pakistan, by Turkish architect Vedat Dalokay, was financed by approximately 1976 SAR130 million (2006 US$120 million) from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
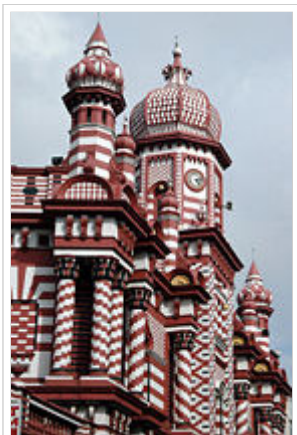
Architecture

Styles

The *Mosquée Ennasr* mosque in Ariana has a futurist architecture

The architecture of mosques are a continuation of pre-Islamic architecture of palaces built during the Parthian and Sassanian dynasties of Persia. The Sarvestan palace from the Sassanian era is a great example of this. For example, the idea of having an arched entrance and a central dome is clearly one borrowed from pre-Islamic, Persian architecture. After the Arab invasion of Persia, this architecture, as well as elements of Sassanian culture, were used for the new Islamic world. Many forms of mosques have evolved in different regions of the Islamic world. Notable mosque types include the early Abbasid mosques, T-type mosques, and the central-dome mosques of Anatolia. The oil-wealth of the twentieth century drove a great deal of mosque construction using designs from leading non-Muslim modern architects and promoting the careers of important contemporary Muslim architects.

Arab-plan or *hypostyle* mosques are the earliest type of mosques, pioneered under the Umayyad Dynasty. These mosques are a square or rectangular in plan with an enclosed courtyard and a covered prayer hall. Historically, in the warm Mediterranean and Middle Eastern climates, the courtyard served to accommodate the large number of worshippers during Friday prayers. Most early hypostyle mosques have flat roofs on top of prayer halls, which resulted in the need to use numerous columns and supports. One of the most notable hypostyle mosques is the Mezquita in Córdoba, Spain, as the building is supported by over 850 columns. Frequently, hypostyle mosques have outer arcades so that visitors could enjoy some shade. Arab-plan mosques were constructed mostly under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties; subsequently, however, the simplicity of the Arab plan limited the opportunities for further development, and as a result, these mosques gradually fell out of popularity.

Abuja National Mosque, Nigeria

The *Jami Ul Alfar* mosque in Colombo Sri Lanka has striking Moorish and Colonial architecture with a candy-striped facade

The *Jamiah Masjid* in Tamilnadu, South India has Dravidian style of architecture

The Ottomans introduced *central dome mosques* in the fifteenth century and have a large dome centered over the prayer hall. In addition to having one large dome at the center, a common feature are smaller domes that exist off-centre over the prayer hall or throughout the rest of the mosque, where prayer is not performed. This style was heavily influenced by the Byzantine religious architecture with its use of large central domes.

Iwan mosques are most notable for their domed chambers and *iwans*, which are vaulted spaces open out on one end. In *iwan* mosques, one or more iwans face a central courtyard that serves as the prayer hall. The style represents a borrowing from pre-Islamic Iranian architecture and has been used almost exclusively for mosques in Iran.

Hajja Soad's mosque took a pyramid shape which is a creative style in the islamic architecture.

Minarets

Hajja Soad mosque in Khartoum land terminal. Designed by arch. *Hussein Kinani* at 2006, Sudan.

A common feature in mosques is the minaret, the tall, slender tower that usually is situated at one of the corners of the mosque structure. The top of the minaret is always the highest point in mosques that have one, and often the highest point in the immediate area. The tallest minaret in the world is located at the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca, Morocco.

The first mosques had no minarets, and even nowadays the most conservative Islamic movements, like Wahhabis, avoid building minarets, seeing them as ostentatious and unnecessary. The first minaret was constructed in 665 in Basra during the reign of the Umayyad caliph Muawiyah I. Muawiyah encouraged the construction of minarets, as they were supposed to bring mosques on par with Christian churches with their bell towers. Consequently, mosque architects borrowed the shape of the bell tower for their minarets, which were used for essentially the same purpose — calling the faithful to prayer.

Before the five required daily prayers, a muezzin calls the worshippers to prayer from the minaret. In many countries like Singapore where Muslims are not the majority, mosques are prohibited from loudly broadcasting the call to prayer (*adhan*), although it is supposed to be said loudly to the surrounding community. The adhan is required before every prayer. However, nearly every mosque assigns a muezzin for each prayer to say the adhan as it is a recommended practice or sunnah of the Islamic prophet Muhammad. At mosques that do not have minarets, the adhan is called instead from inside the mosque or somewhere else on the ground. The iqama, which is similar to the adhan and said immediately before the start of prayer, is usually not said from the minaret even if a mosque has one.

The Islamic Solidarity Mosque in Mogadishu with a tall minaret.

Domes

The domes, which often are placed directly above the main prayer hall, may signify the vaults of heaven and the sky. As time progressed, the sizes of mosque domes grew, from occupying only a small part of the roof near the mihrab to encompassing all of the roof above the prayer hall. Although domes normally took on the shape of a hemisphere, the Mughals in India popularized onion-shaped domes in South Asia and Persia. Some mosques will have multiple, often smaller, domes in addition to the main large dome that resides at the centre. Also the domes in traditional mosques would be used to help the imam to project his voice as the sound waves would bounce in and then out of the dome making the voice louder.

Prayer hall

The domes of the Khatem Al Anbiyaa Mosque in Beirut, Lebanon.

The prayer hall, or musalla, in a Turkish mosque, with a Minibar.

The prayer hall, also known as the musalla, has no furniture; chairs and pews are absent from the prayer hall so as to allow as many worshippers as possible to line the room. Mosques will have Arabic calligraphy and verses from the Qur'an on the walls to assist worshippers in focusing on the beauty of Islam and its holiest book, the Qur'an, as well as for decoration.

Usually opposite the entrance to the prayer hall is the *qiblah wall*, which is the visually emphasized area inside the prayer hall. The *qiblah* wall should, in a properly oriented mosque, be set perpendicular to a line leading to Mecca, the location of the Ka'bah. Congregants pray in rows parallel to the *qiblah* wall and thus arrange themselves so they face Mecca. In the *qiblah* wall, usually at its centre, is the mihrab, a niche or depression indicating the direction of Mecca. Usually the *mihrab* is not occupied by furniture either. Sometimes, especially during Friday prayers, a raised minbar or pulpit is located to the side of the *mihrab* for a khatib or some other speaker to offer a sermon (khutbah). The mihrab serves as the location where the imam leads the five daily prayers on a regular basis.

Ablution facilities

As ritual purification precedes all prayers, mosques often have ablution fountains or other facilities for washing in their entryways or courtyards. However, worshippers at much smaller mosques often have to use restrooms to perform their ablutions. In traditional mosques, this function is often elaborated into a freestanding building in the centre of a courtyard. This desire for cleanliness extends to the prayer halls where shoes are disallowed to be worn anywhere other than the cloakroom. Thus, foyers with shelves to put shoes and racks to hold coats are commonplace among mosques.

Contemporary features

Modern mosques have a variety of amenities available to their congregants. As mosques are supposed to appeal to the community, they may also have additional facilities, from health clinics to libraries to gymnasiums, to serve the community.

Primitive heritage mosque in Australian outback contrasts with the grand designs of established Islamic communities. Bourke cemetery, New South Wales

Rules and etiquette

Baitul Mukarram (Dhaka), the National Mosque of Bangladesh. The structure resembles the Kaaba in Mecca.

Mosques, in accordance with Islamic practices, institute a number of rules intended to keep Muslims focused on worshipping Allah. While there are several rules, such as those regarding not allowing shoes in the prayer hall, that are universal, there are many other rules that are dealt with and enforced in a variety of ways from mosque to mosque.

Prayer leader

Appointment of a prayer leader is considered desirable, but not always obligatory. The permanent prayer leader (imam) must be a free honest man and is authoritative in religious matters. In mosques constructed and maintained by the government, the prayer leader is appointed by the ruler; in private mosques, however, the appointment is done by the members of the congregation through majority voting. According to the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, the man who built the mosque has a stronger claim to the title of imam, but this view is not shared by the other schools.

Leadership at prayer falls into three categories, depending on the type of prayer: five daily prayers, Friday prayer, or optional prayers. According to the Hanafi and Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence, appointment of a prayer leader for Friday service is mandatory because otherwise the prayer is invalid. The Shafi'i and Hanbali schools, however, argue that the appointment is not necessary and the prayer is valid as long as it is performed in a congregation. A slave may lead a Friday prayer, but Muslim authorities disagree over whether the job can be done by a minor. An imam appointed to lead Friday prayers may also lead at the five daily prayers; Muslim scholars agree to the leader appointed for five daily services may lead the Friday service as well.

All Muslim authorities hold the consensus opinion that only men may lead prayer for men. Nevertheless women prayer leaders are allowed to lead prayer in front all-female congregations.

Cleanliness

All mosques have rules regarding cleanliness, as it is an essential part of the worshipper's experience. Muslims before prayer are required to cleanse themselves in an ablution process known as *wudu*. However, even to those who enter the prayer hall of a mosque without the intention of praying, there are still rules that apply. Shoes must not be worn inside the carpeted prayer hall. Some mosques will also extend that rule to include other parts of the facility even if those other locations are not devoted to prayer. Congregants and visitors to mosques are supposed to be clean themselves. It is also undesirable to come to the mosque after eating something that smells, such as garlic.

Interior of the Mezquita, a hypostyle former mosque with columns arranged in grid pattern, in Córdoba, Spain.

Dress

Islam requires that its adherents wear clothes that portray modesty. As a result, although many mosques will not enforce violations, both men and women when attending a mosque must adhere to these guidelines. Men are supposed to come to the mosque wearing loose and clean clothes that do not reveal the shape of the body. Likewise, it is recommended that women at a mosque wear loose clothing, shirts, pants that cover to the wrists and ankles and cover their heads such as with a hijab. Many Muslims, regardless of their ethnic

background, wear Middle eastern clothing associated with Arabic Islam to special occasions and prayers at mosques.

Concentration

As mosques are places of worship, those within the mosque are required to remain respectful to those in prayer. Loud talking within the mosque, as well as discussion of topics deemed disrespectful, is forbidden in areas where people are praying. In addition, it is disrespectful to walk in front of or otherwise disturb Muslims in prayer. The walls within the mosque have few items, except for possibly Arabic calligraphy, so Muslims in prayer are not distracted. Muslims are also discouraged from wearing clothing with distracting images and symbols so as not to divert the attention of those standing behind them during prayer.

Gender separation

Islamic law requires men and women to be separated in the prayer hall; ideally, the women must occupy the rows behind the men. Muhammad preferred women to pray at home rather than at a mosque, and according to the hadith Muhammad said: "The best mosques for women are the inner parts of their houses", although Muhammad told Muslims not to forbid women from entering mosques. The second caliph Umar at one time prohibited women from attending mosques especially at night because he feared they may be teased by males, so he required them to pray at home. Sometimes a special part of the mosque was railed off for women; for example, the governor of Mecca in 870 had ropes tied between the columns to make a separate place for women. Many mosques today will put the women behind a barrier or partition or in another room. Mosques in South and Southeast Asia put men and women in separate rooms, as the divisions were built into them centuries ago. In nearly two-thirds of American mosques, women pray behind partitions or in separate areas, not in the main prayer hall; some mosques do not admit women at all. Although there are sections exclusively for women and children, the Grand Mosque in Mecca is desegregated.

Muslims praying in the male section of a mosque in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir.

Non-Muslims in mosques

Under most interpretations of Islamic law, non-Muslims may be allowed into mosques, as long as they do not sleep or eat there; the dissenting opinion is presented by the followers of the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence, who argue that non-Muslims may not be allowed into mosques under any circumstances.

The Qur'an addresses the subject of non-Muslims, and particularly polytheists, in mosques in two verses in its ninth chapter, Sura At-Tawba. The seventeenth verse of the chapter prohibits those who *join gods with Allah* — polytheists — from entering mosques:

> *It is not for such as join gods with Allah, to visit or maintain the mosques of Allah while they witness against their own souls to infidelity. The works of such bear no fruit: In Fire shall they dwell.* (Yusuf Ali [Qur'an 9:17])

The twenty-eighth verse of the same chapter is more specific as it only considers polytheists in the Sacred Mosque, the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca:

> *O ye who believe! Truly the Pagans are unclean; so let them not, after this year of theirs, approach the Sacred Mosque. And if ye fear poverty, soon will Allah enrich you, if He wills, out of His bounty, for Allah is All-knowing, All-wise.* (Yusuf Ali [Qur'an 9:28])

The Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca is one of two mosques in Morocco open to non-Muslims.

According to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, these verses were followed to the letter at the times of Muhammad, when Jews and Christians, considered monotheists, were still allowed to the Masjid al-Haram. However, the Umayyad caliph Umar II later forbade non-Muslims from entering mosques, and his ruling remained in practice in Saudi Arabia. Today, the decision on whether non-Muslims should be allowed to enter mosques varies. With few exceptions, mosques in the Arabian peninsula as well as Morocco do not allow entry to non-Muslims. For example, the Hassan II Mosque in Casablanca is one of only two mosques in Morocco currently open to non-Muslims. However, there are also many other places in the west as well as the Islamic world where non-Muslims are welcome to enter mosques. Most mosques in the United States, for example, report receiving non-Muslim visitors every month. Many Mosques throughout the United States welcome non-Muslims as a sign of openness to the rest of the community as well as to encourage conversions to Islam.

In modern-day Saudi Arabia, the Masjid al-Haram and all of Mecca are open only to Muslims. Likewise, the Masjid al-Nabawi and the city of Medina that surrounds it are also off-limits to those who do not practice Islam. For mosques in other areas, it has most commonly been taken that non-Muslims may only enter mosques if granted permission to do so by Muslims and if they have a legitimate reason. All entrants regardless of religious affiliation are expected to respect the rules and decorum for mosques.

At different times and places, non-Muslims living under Muslim rule were required to demonstrate deference to mosques. In most cities of Morocco, Jews were required to remove their shoes when passing by a mosque Danish traveler Carsten Niebuhr wrote that in 18th century Egypt Jews and Christians had to dismount before several mosques in veneration of their sanctity.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosque"

New Testament

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **New Testament** (Greek: Καινή Διαθήκη, *Kainē Diathēkē*) is the name given to the final portion of the Christian Bible, written after the Hebrew Bible (also called by Jews Tanakh), known to Christians as the Old Testament. It is sometimes called the **Greek Testament** or **Greek Scriptures**, or the New Covenant – which is the literal translation of the original Greek. The original texts were written in Koine Greek by various unknown authors after c. AD 45 and before c. AD 140. Its 27 books were gradually collected into a single volume over a period of several centuries. The New Testament is a central element of Christianity, and has played a major role in shaping modern Western culture. Although certain Christian sects differ as to which works are included in the New Testament, the vast majority of denominations have settled on the same twenty-seven book canon (see also, Biblical canon): it consists of the four narratives of Jesus Christ's ministry, called " Gospels"; a narrative of the Apostles' ministries in the early church, which is also a sequel to the third Gospel; twenty-one early letters, commonly called " epistles" in Biblical context, written by various authors and consisted mostly of Christian counsel and instruction; and an Apocalyptic prophecy, which is technically the twenty-second epistle. Although the traditional timeline of composition may have been taken into account by the shapers of the current New Testament format, it is not nor was it meant to be in strictly chronological order. Though Jesus spoke Aramaic, the New Testament (including the Gospels) was written in Greek because that was the lingua franca of the Roman Empire.

Gospels

Each of the Gospels narrates the ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The traditional author is listed after each entry. Modern scholarship differs on precisely by whom, when, or in what original form the various gospels were written.

- The Gospel of Matthew, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle Matthew, son of Alphaeus.
- The Gospel of Mark, traditionally ascribed to Mark the Evangelist, who wrote down the recollections of the Apostle Simon Peter.
- The Gospel of Luke, traditionally ascribed to Luke, a physician and companion of Paul of Tarsus.
- The Gospel of John, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee

The first three are commonly classified as the Synoptic Gospels. They contain very similar accounts of events in Jesus' life. The Gospel of John stands apart for its unique records of several miracles and sayings of Jesus, not found elsewhere.

Acts

The book of Acts, also termed Acts of the Apostles or Acts of the Holy Spirit, is a narrative of the Apostles' ministry after Christ's death, which is also a sequel to the third Gospel. Examining style, phraseology, and other evidence, modern scholarship generally

New Testament
- Matthew
- Mark
- Luke
- John
- Acts
- Romans
- 1 Corinthians
- 2 Corinthians
- Galatians
- Ephesians
- Philippians
- Colossians
- 1 Thessalonians
- 2 Thessalonians
- 1 Timothy
- 2 Timothy

concludes that Acts and Luke share the same author.

- Acts, traditionally Luke.

Pauline epistles

The Pauline epistles (or *Corpus Paulinum*) constitute those epistles traditionally attributed to Paul, though his authorship is disputed, and in one case (Hebrews) nearly universally rejected *(see section on authorship below)*. Paul appears to have dictated his epistles to scribes, and some specifically mention his habit of appending a salutation in his own handwriting. These are marked with an * below.

- Epistle to the Romans*
- First Epistle to the Corinthians*
- Second Epistle to the Corinthians
- Epistle to the Galatians
- Epistle to the Ephesians
- Epistle to the Philippians
- Epistle to the Colossians*
- First Epistle to the Thessalonians
- Second Epistle to the Thessalonians*
- First Epistle to Timothy
- Second Epistle to Timothy
- Epistle to Titus
- Epistle to Philemon*
- Epistle to the Hebrews

General or Catholic epistles

Includes those Epistles written to the church at large (*Catholic* in this sense simply means *universal*).

- Epistle of James, traditionally by James, brother of Jesus and Jude Thomas.
- First Epistle of Peter, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle Simon, called Peter.
- Second Epistle of Peter, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle Simon, called Peter.
- First Epistle of John, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee.
- Second Epistle of John, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee.
- Third Epistle of John, traditionally ascribed to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee.
- Epistle of Jude, traditionally ascribed to Jude Thomas, brother of Jesus and James.

Sidebar list:

- Titus
- Philemon
- Hebrews
- James
- 1 Peter
- 2 Peter
- 1 John
- 2 John
- 3 John
- Jude
- Revelation

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The Apocalypse

The final book of the New Testament has had a profound impact on Christian theology of the whole work.

- Revelation. The authorship is attributed either to the Apostle John, son of Zebedee or by John of Patmos. For a discussion of authorship see the authorship article.

It is worth noting Revelation is sometimes called The Apocalypse of John. It is also not read or used during church services by the Orthodox church.

See also: Bible prophecy

Order

The New Testament books are ordered differently in different Church Traditions. For example the normal Protestant order follows the Roman Catholic order, but the traditional Lutheran order is different. Outside the Catholic/Protestant world there are different orders in the Slavonic, Syriac and Ethiopian Bibles.

Apocrypha

In ancient times there were dozens of Christian writings claiming Apostolic authorship, or for some other reason considered to have authority by some ancient churches, but which were not ultimately included in the 27-book New Testament canon. These works are considered "apocryphal", and are therefore referred to as the New Testament Apocrypha. It includes not only writing favourable to the position of the orthodoxy, but also a large amount of Gnostic writing, and non-canonical books. These apocryphal works are nevertheless important insofar as they provide an ancient context and setting for the composition of the canonical books. They also can help establish linguistic conventions common in the canonical texts. Examples of early apocryphal works are the Gospel of Thomas, the Epistle of Barnabas and the Epistle to the Laodiceans.

Language

The common languages spoken by both Jews and Gentiles in the holy land at the time of Jesus were Aramaic, Koine Greek, and to a limited extent a colloquial dialect of Mishnaic Hebrew. However, the original text of the New Testament was most likely written in Koine Greek, the vernacular dialect in 1st century Roman provinces of the Eastern Mediterranean, and has since been widely translated into other languages, most notably, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. However, some of the Church Fathers seem to imply that Matthew was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic, and there is another contention that the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews wrote in Hebrew, which was translated into Greek by Luke. Neither view holds much support among contemporary scholars, who argue that the literary facets of Matthew and Hebrews suggest that they were composed directly in Greek, rather than being translated.

A very small minority of scholars consider the Aramaic version of the New Testament to be the original and believe the Greek is a translation (see Aramaic primacy).

Etymology

Some believe the English term *New Testament* ultimately comes from the Hebrew language. *New Testament* is taken from the Latin *Novum Testamentum* first coined by Tertullian. Some believe this in turn is a translation of the earlier Koine Greek *Καινή Διαθήκη* (pronounced in postclassical Greek as *Keni Dhiathiki*). This Greek term is found in the original Greek language of the New Testament, though commonly translated as new covenant, and found even earlier in the Greek translation of the Old Testament that is called the Septuagint. At Jeremiah 31:31, the Septuagint translated this term into Greek from the original Hebrew ברית חדשה (brit chadashah). The Hebrew term is usually also translated into English as *new covenant*.

As a result, some claim the term was first used by Early Christians to refer to the *new covenant* that was the basis for their relationship with God. About two centuries later at the time of Tertullian and Lactantius, the phrase was being used to designate a particular collection of books that some believed embodied this *new covenant*.

Tertullian, in the 2nd century, is the first currently known to use the terms *novum testamentum/new testament* and *vetus testamentum/old testament*. For example, in *Against Marcion* book 3 , chapter 14, he wrote:

> This may be understood to be the Divine Word, who is doubly edged with the two testaments of the law and the gospel

And in book 4 , chapter 6, he wrote:

> For it is certain that the whole aim at which he has strenuously laboured even in the drawing up of his Antitheses, centres in this, that he may establish a diversity between the Old and the New Testaments, so that his own Christ may be separate from the Creator, as belonging to this rival god, and as alien from the law and the prophets.

Lactantius, also in Latin, in the 3rd century, in his *Divine Institutes*, book 4, chapter 20 , wrote:

> But all Scripture is divided into two Testaments. That which preceded the advent and passion of Christ—that is, the law and the prophets—is called the Old; but those things which were written after His resurrection are named the New Testament. The Jews make use of the Old, we of the New: but yet they are not discordant, for the New is the fulfilling of the Old, and in both there is the same testator, even Christ, who, having suffered death for us, made us heirs of His everlasting kingdom, the people of the Jews being deprived and disinherited. As the prophet Jeremiah testifies when he speaks such things: [Jer 31:31–32] "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new testament to the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not according to the testament which I made to their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; for they continued not in my testament, and I disregarded them, saith the Lord." ... For that which He said above, that He would make a new testament to the house of Judah, shows that the old testament which was given by Moses was not perfect; but that which was to be given by Christ would be complete.

The Vulgate translation, in the 5th century, used *testamentum* in 2nd Corinthians 3 :

> (6) Who also hath made us fit ministers of the new testament, not in the letter but in the spirit. For the letter killeth: but the spirit quickeneth. (Douay-Rheims)

(14) But their senses were made dull. For, until this present day, the selfsame veil, in the reading of the old testament, remaineth not taken away (because in Christ it is made void). (Douay-Rheims)

However, the more modern NRSV translates these verses from the Koine Greek as such:

(6) Who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant, not of letter but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.
(14) But their minds were hardened. Indeed, to this very day, when they hear the reading of the old covenant, that same veil is still there, since only in Christ is it set aside.

Thus, it is common to translate using either of two English terms, testament and covenant, even though they are not synonymous.

Authorship

The New Testament is a collection of works, and as such was written by multiple authors. The traditional view--that is, the authors according to most early orthodox Christians--is that all the books were written by Apostles (e.g. Matthew and Paul) or disciples working under their direction (e.g. Mark and Luke). However, since the second century or perhaps even the second half of the first century, these traditional ascriptions have been rejected by some. In modern times, with the rise of rigorous historical inquiry and textual criticism, the authenticity of orthodox authorship beliefs have been rejected in large part. While the traditional authors have been listed above, the modern critical view is discussed herein.

Seven of the epistles of Paul are now generally accepted by most modern scholars as authentic; these undisputed letters include Romans, First Corinthians, Second Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, First Thessalonians, and Philemon. Raymond E. Brown has this to say about Colossians: "At the present moment about 60 percent of critical scholarship holds that Paul did not write the letter" (An Introduction, p. 610; cited by earlychristianwritings.com). Liberal scholars usually question Pauline authorship for any other epistle, although there are conservative Christian scholars who accept the traditional ascriptions. Almost no current mainstream scholars, however, Christian or otherwise, hold that Paul wrote Hebrews. In fact, questions about the authorship of Hebrews go back at least to the 3rd century ecclesiastical writer Caius, who attributed only thirteen epistles to Paul (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.*, 6.20.3ff.). A small minority of scholars hypothesize Hebrews may have been written by one of Paul's close associates, such as Barnabas, Silas, or Luke, given that the themes therein seemed to them as largely Pauline.

The authorship of all non-Pauline books have been disputed in recent times. Ascriptions are largely polarized between Christian and non-Christian experts, making any sort of scholarly consensus all but impossible. Even majority views are unclear.

The Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, unlike the other New Testament works, have a unique documentary relationship. The dominant view among critical scholars, the Two-Source Hypothesis, is that both Matthew and Luke drew significantly upon the Gospel of Mark and another common source, known as the "Q Source", from *Quelle*, the German word for "source". However, the nature and even existence of Q is speculative, and thus scholars have proposed variants on the hypothesis which redefine or exclude it. Most Q scholars believe that it was a single written document, while a few contest that "Q" was actually

a number of documents or oral traditions. If it was a documentary source, no information about its author or authors can be obtained from the resources currently available. The traditional view supposes that Matthew was written first, and Mark and Luke drew from it and the second chronological work; although not founded in textual criticism, some scholars have attempted to use their modern methods to confirm the idea. An even smaller group of scholars espouse Lukan priority. Despite the lack of a unanimous consensus, however, the majority view certainly agrees with the two-source hypothesis.

Modern scholars are also skeptical about authorship claims for noncanonical books, such as the Nag Hammadi corpus discovered in Egypt in 1945. This corpus of fifty-two Coptic books, dated to about 350–400, includes gospels in the names of Thomas, Philip, James, John, and many others. Like almost all ancient works, they represent copies rather than original texts. None of the original texts has been discovered, and scholars argue about the dating of the originals. Suggested dates vary from as early as 50 to as late as the late second century. (See Gospel of Thomas and New Testament Apocrypha.)

To summarize, the only books for which there are solid authorship consensuses among modern critical scholars are the seven Pauline epistiles mentioned above, which are universally regarded as authentic, and Hebrews, which is nearly always rejected. The remaining nineteen books remain in dispute, some holding to the traditional view, and others regarding them as anonymous or pseudonymic.

Date of composition

According to tradition, the earliest of the books were the letters of Paul, and the last books to be written are those attributed to John, who is traditionally said to have lived to a very old age, perhaps dying as late as 100, although this is often disputed. Irenaeus of Lyons, c. 185, stated that the Gospels of Matthew and Mark were written while Peter and Paul were preaching in Rome, which would be in the 60s, and Luke was written some time later. Evangelical and Traditionalist scholars continue to support this dating.

Most critical scholars agree on the dating of the majority of the New Testament, except for the epistles and books that they consider to be pseudepigraphical (i.e., those thought not to be written by their traditional authors). For the Gospels they tend to date Mark no earlier than 65 and no later than 75. Matthew is dated between 70 and 85. Luke is usually placed within 80 to 95. The earliest of the books of the New Testament was First Thessalonians, an epistle of Paul, written probably in 51, or possibly Galatians in 49 according to one of two theories of its writing. Of the pseudepigraphical epistles, Christian scholars tend to place them somewhere between 70 and 150, with Second Peter usually being the latest.

In the 1830s German scholars of the Tübingen school dated the books as late as the third century, but the discovery of some New Testament manuscripts and fragments, not including some of the later writings, dating as far back as 125 (notably Papyrus 52) has called such late dating into question. Additionally, a letter to the church at Corinth in the name of Clement of Rome in 95 quotes from 10 of the 27 books of the New Testament, and a letter to the church at Philippi in the name of Polycarp in 120 quotes from 16 books. Therefore, some of the books of the New Testament were at least in a first-draft stage, though there is negligible evidence in these quotes or among biblical manuscripts for the existence of different early drafts. Other books were probably not completed until later, if we assume they must have been quoted by Clement or Polycarp. There are many minor discrepancies between manuscripts (largely spelling or grammatical differences).

Canonization

The process of canonization was complex and lengthy. It was characterized by a compilation of books that Christians found inspiring in worship and teaching, relevant to the historical situations in which they lived, and consonant with the Old Testament.

Contrary to popular misconception, the New Testament canon was not summarily decided in large, bureaucratic Church council meetings, but rather developed very slowly over many centuries. This is not to say that formal councils and declarations were not involved, however. Some of these include the Council of Trent of 1546 for Roman Catholicism (by vote: 24 yea, 15 nay, 16 abstain), the Thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 for the Church of England, the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 for Calvinism, and the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 for Greek Orthodoxy.

According to the Catholic Encyclopedia article on the Canon of the New Testament: "The idea of a complete and clear-cut canon of the New Testament existing from the beginning, that is from Apostolic times, has no foundation in history. The Canon of the New Testament, like that of the Old, is the result of a development, of a process at once stimulated by disputes with doubters, both within and without the Church, and retarded by certain obscurities and natural hesitations, and which did not reach its final term until the dogmatic definition of the Tridentine Council."

In the first three centuries of the Christian Church, Early Christianity, there seems not to have been a New Testament canon that was complete and universally recognized.

One of the earliest attempts at solidifying a canon was made by Marcion, c. 140 AD, who accepted only a modified version of Luke (Gospel of Marcion) and ten of Paul's letters, while rejecting the Old Testament entirely. His unorthodox canon was rejected by a majority of Christians, as was he and his theology, Marcionism. Adolf Harnack in *Origin of the New Testament* (1914) argued that the orthodox Church at this time was largely an Old Testament Church (one that "follows the Testament of the Creator-God") without a New Testament canon and that it gradually formulated its New Testament canon in response to the challenge posed by Marcion.

The Muratorian fragment, dated at between 170 (based on an internal reference to Pope Pius I and arguments put forth by Bruce Metzger) and as late as the end of the 4th century (according to the Anchor Bible Dictionary), provides the earliest known New Testament canon attributed to mainstream (that is, not Marcionite) Christianity. It is similar, but not identical, to the modern New Testament canon.

The oldest clear endorsement of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John being the only legitimate gospels was written c. 180 C.E. It was a claim made by Bishop Irenaeus in his polemic *Against the Heresies*, for example III.XI.8: "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For, since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the Church is scattered throughout all the world, and the "pillar and ground" of the Church is the Gospel and the spirit of life; it is fitting that she should have four pillars, breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh."

At least, then, the books considered to be authoritative included the four gospels and many of the letters of Paul. Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, and Tertullian (all 2nd century) held the letters of Paul to be on par with the Hebrew Scriptures as being divinely inspired, yet others rejected him. Other books were held in high

esteem but were gradually relegated to the status of New Testament Apocrypha.

Eusebius, c. 300, gave a detailed list of New Testament writings in his *Ecclesiastical History* Book 3, Chapter XXV:

> "1... First then must be put the holy quaternion of the Gospels; following them the Acts of the Apostles... the epistles of Paul... the epistle of John... the epistle of Peter... After them is to be placed, if it really seem proper, the Apocalypse of John, concerning which we shall give the different opinions at the proper time. These then belong among the **accepted writings**."

> "3 Among the **disputed writings** [Antilegomena], which are nevertheless recognized by many, are extant the so-called epistle of James and that of Jude, also the second epistle of Peter, and those that are called the second and third of John, whether they belong to the evangelist or to another person of the same name. Among the rejected [Kirsopp Lake translation: "not genuine"] writings must be reckoned also the Acts of Paul, and the so-called Shepherd, and the Apocalypse of Peter, and in addition to these the extant epistle of Barnabas, and the so-called Teachings of the Apostles; and besides, as I said, the Apocalypse of John, if it seem proper, which some, as I said, reject, but which others class with the accepted books. And among these some have placed also the Gospel according to the Hebrews... And all these may be reckoned among the **disputed books**."

> "6... such books as the Gospels of Peter, of Thomas, of Matthias, or of any others besides them, and the Acts of Andrew and John and the other apostles... they clearly show themselves to be the fictions of heretics. Wherefore they are not to be placed even among the rejected writings, but are all of them to be cast aside as absurd and impious."

Revelation is counted as both **accepted** (Kirsopp Lake translation: "Recognized") and **disputed**, which has caused some confusion over what exactly Eusebius meant by doing so. From other writings of the Church Fathers, we know that it was disputed with several canon lists rejecting its canonicity. EH 3.3.5 adds further detail on Paul: "Paul's fourteen epistles are well known and undisputed. It is not indeed right to overlook the fact that some have rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews, saying that it is disputed by the church of Rome, on the ground that it was not written by Paul." EH 4.29.6 mentions the Diatessaron: "But their original founder, Tatian, formed a certain combination and collection of the Gospels, I know not how, to which he gave the title Diatessaron, and which is still in the hands of some. But they say that he ventured to paraphrase certain words of the apostle [Paul], in order to improve their style."

The New Testament canon as it is now was first listed by St. Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, in 367, in a letter written to his churches in Egypt, Festal Letter 39. Also cited is the Council of Rome, but not without controversy. That canon gained wider and wider recognition until it was accepted at the Third Council of Carthage in 397. Even this council did not settle the matter, however. Certain books continued to be questioned, especially James and Revelation. Even as late as the 16th century, theologian and reformer Martin Luther questioned (but in the end did not reject) the Epistle of James, the Epistle of Jude, the Epistle to the Hebrews and the Book of Revelation. Even today, German-language Luther Bibles are printed with these four books at the end of the canon, rather than their traditional order for other Christians. Due to the fact that some of the recognized Books of the Holy Scripture were having their canonicity questioned by Protestants in the 16th century, the Council of Trent reaffirmed the *traditional canon* (that is for Catholics the canon of the Council of Rome) of the Scripture as a dogma of the Catholic Church.

Early manuscripts

The early New Testament manuscripts can be classified into certain major families or types of text. A "text-type" is the name given to a family of texts with a common ancestor. It must be noted that many early manuscripts can be composed of several different text-types. For example, Codex Washingtonianus consists of only the four gospels, and yet, different parts are written in different text-types. Four distinctive New Testament text-types have been defined:

The Alexandrian text-type is usually considered the best and most faithful at preserving the original; it is usually brief and austere. The main examples are the Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus and Bodmer Papyri.

The Western text-type has a fondness for paraphrase and is generally the longest. Most significant is the Western version of Acts, which is 10% longer. The main examples are the Codex Bezae, Codex Claromontanus, Codex Washingtonianus, Old Latin versions (prior to the Vulgate), and quotes by Marcion, Tatian, Irenaeus, Tertullian and Cyprian.

The Caesarean text-type is a mixture of Western and Alexandrian types and is found in the Chester Beatty Papyri and is quoted by Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem and Armenians.

The Byzantine text-type is the textform that is contained in a majority of the extant manuscripts and thus is often called the "Majority Text." The origin of this text is debated among scholars. Some scholars, observing that few Byzantine readings exist among early uncial manuscript witnesses, contend that the text formed late and contains conflated readings. Other scholars look to the shear number of consistent witnesses to the Byzantine textform, and the existence of readings which parallel the Byzantine textform in very early translations, as evidence that the Byzantine textform is probably the closest text to that originally penned by the New Testament authors. The Byzantine textform can be found in the Gospels of Codex Alexandrinus, later uncial texts and most minuscule texts. A variant of the Byzantine text, called the Textus Receptus, is the basis of Erasmus's printed Greek New Testament of 1516, which became the basis of the 1611 King James Version of the English New Testament.

Most modern English versions of the New Testament are based on critical reconstructions of the Greek text, such as the United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament or Nestle-Alands' Novum Testamentum Graece, which have a pronounced Alexandrian character.

Additions

Over the years, there have been a number of possible additions to the original text, such as:

- Mark 16:9-20
- Luke 22:19b-20,43-44
- John 7:53-8:11
- 1 John 5:7b–8a

In addition, there are a large number of variant readings, see Bruce Metzger's *Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament (1994)* for details.

Authority

All Christian groups respect the New Testament, but they differ in their understanding of the nature, extent, and relevance of its authority. Views of the authoritativeness of the New Testament often depend on the concept of *inspiration*, which relates to the role of God in the formation of the New Testament. Generally, the greater the role of God in one's doctrine of inspiration, the more one accepts the doctrine of Biblical inerrancy and/or authoritativeness of the Bible. One possible source of confusion is that these terms are difficult to define, because many people use them interchangeably or with very different meanings. This article will use the terms in the following manner:

- *Infallibility* relates to the absolute correctness of the Bible in matters of doctrine.
- *Inerrancy* relates to the absolute correctness of the Bible in factual assertions (including historical and scientific assertions).
- *Authoritativeness* relates to the correctness of the Bible in questions of practice in morality.

Christian scholars such as Professor Peter Stoner see the Bible having compelling and detailed fulfilled Bible prophecy and argue for the Bible's inspiration. This is argued to show that the Bible is authoritative, since it is argued that only God knows the future. A common objection in the West regarding this matter is that the burden of proof is on miracles, which, by Occam's Razor, should only be considered when all ordinary explanations fail. C.S. Lewis, Norman Geisler, William Lane Craig, and Christians who engage in Christian apologetics have argued that miracles are reasonable and plausible. PDF (133 KiB) . On the other hand, in the West those who do not believe in miracles often use the arguments of David Hume, Benedict de Spinoza, or the arguments of Deism. .

All of these concepts depend for their meaning on the supposition that the text of Bible has been properly interpreted, with consideration for the intention of the text, whether literal history, allegory or poetry, etc. Especially the doctrine of inerrancy is variously understood according to the weight given by the interpreter to scientific investigations of the world.

Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy

For the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, there are two strands of revelation, the Bible, and the (rest of the) Apostolic Tradition. Both of them are interpreted by the teachings of the Church. In Catholic terminology the Teaching Office is called the Magisterium; in Orthodox terminology the authentic interpretation of scripture and tradition is limited, in the final analysis, to the Canon Law of the Ecumenical councils. Both sources of revelation are considered necessary for proper understanding of the tenets of the faith. The Roman Catholic view is expressed clearly in the Catechism of the Catholic Church (1992):

> § 83: As a result the Church, to whom the transmission and interpretation of Revelation is entrusted, does not derive her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal sentiments of devotion and reverence.
> § 107: The inspired books teach the truth. Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures.

Protestantism

Following the doctrine of sola scriptura, Protestants believe that their traditions of faith, practice and interpretations carry forward what the scriptures teach, and so tradition is not a source of authority in itself. Their traditions derive authority from the Bible, and are therefore always open to reevaluation. This openness to doctrinal revision has extended in Liberal Protestant traditions even to the reevaluation of the doctrine of Scripture upon which the Reformation was founded, and members of these traditions may even question whether the Bible is infallible in doctrine, inerrant in historical and other factual statements, and whether it has uniquely divine authority. However, the adjustments made by modern Protestants to their doctrine of Scripture vary widely.

American Evangelical and fundamentalist Protestantism

Certain American conservatives, fundamentalists and evangelicals believe that the Scriptures are both human and divine in origin: human in their manner of composition, but divine in that their source is God, the Holy Spirit, who governed the writers of scripture in such a way that they recorded nothing at all contrary to the truth. Fundamentalists accept the enduring authority and impugnity of a prescientific interpretation of the Bible. In the United States this particularly applies to issues such as the ordination of women, abortion, and homosexuality. However, although American evangelicals are overwhelmingly opposed to such things, other evangelicals are increasingly willing to consider that the views of the biblical authors may have been culturally conditioned, and they may even argue that there is room for change along with cultural norms and scientific advancements. Both fundamentalists and evangelicals profess belief in the inerrancy of the Bible. In the US the fundamentalists' stronger emphasis on literal interpretation has led to the rejection of evolution, which contradicts the doctrine of Creationism.

Evangelicals, on the other hand, tend to avoid interpretations of the Bible that would directly contradict generally accepted scientific assertions of fact. They do not impute error to biblical authors, but rather entertain various theories of literary intent which might give credibility to human progress in knowledge of the world, while still accepting the divine inspiration of the scriptures.

Within the US, the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978) is an influential statement, articulating evangelical views on this issue. Paragraph four of its summary states: "Being wholly and verbally God-given, Scripture is without error or fault in all its teaching, no less in what it states about God's acts in creation, about the events of world history, and about its own literary origins under God, than in its witness to God's saving grace in individual lives."

Critics of such a position point out that there are many statements that Jesus makes in the Gospels or that Paul makes in his epistles, even to the point of making them commands, which are not taken as commands by most advocates of Biblical inerrancy. Examples of this are Jesus' command to the disciples to sell all they have and give the money to the poor so as to gain treasure in the Kingdom of Heaven (Mark 10:21), or Paul's calls to imitate him in celibacy (1 Cor 7:8). Other sections of the Bible, such as the second half of John chapter six, where Jesus commands that the disciples eat his flesh and drink his blood, are interpreted by most adherents of Biblical Inerrancy as symbolic language rather than literally, as might be expected from the statements of the doctrine. Supporters of Biblical Inerrancy generally argue that these passages are intended to be symbolic, and that their symbolic nature can be seen directly in the text, thus preserving the doctrine.

American Mainline and liberal Protestantism

Mainline American Protestant denominations, including the United Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church USA, The Episcopal Church, and Evangelical

Lutheran Church in America, do not teach the doctrine of inerrancy as set forth in the Chicago Statement. All of these churches have more ancient doctrinal statements asserting the authority of scripture, but may interpret these statements in such a way as to allow for a very broad range of teaching—from evangelicalism to skepticism. It is not an impediment to ordination in these denominations to teach that the Scriptures contain errors, or that the authors follow a more or less unenlightened ethics that, however appropriate it may have seemed in the authors' time, moderns would be very wrong to follow blindly. For example, ordination of women is universally accepted in the mainline churches, abortion is condemned as a grievous social tragedy but not always a personal sin or a crime against an unborn person, and homosexuality is increasingly regarded as a genetic propensity or morally neutral preference that should be neither encouraged nor condemned. In North America, the most contentious of these issues among these churches at the present time is how far the ordination of gay men and lesbians should be accepted.

Officials of the Presbyterian Church USA report: "We acknowledge the role of scriptural authority in the Presbyterian Church, but Presbyterians generally do not believe in biblical inerrancy. Presbyterians do not insist that every detail of chronology or sequence or prescientific description in scripture be true in literal form. Our confessions do teach biblical infallibility. Infallibility affirms the entire truthfulness of scripture without depending on every exact detail."

Those who hold a more liberal view of the Bible as a human witness to the glory of God, the work of fallible humans who wrote from a limited experience unusual only for the insight they have gained through their inspired struggle to know God in the midst of a troubled world. Therefore, they tend not to accept such doctrines as inerrancy. These churches also tend to retain the social activism of their Evangelical forebears of the 19th century, placing particular emphasis on those teachings of Scripture that teach compassion for the poor and concern for social justice. The message of personal salvation is, generally speaking, of the good that comes to oneself and the world through following the New Testament's Golden Rule admonition to love others without hypocrisy or prejudice. Toward these ends, the "spirit" of the New Testament, more than the letter, is infallible and authoritative.

There are some movements that believe the Bible contains the teachings of Jesus but who reject the churches that were formed following its publication. These people believe all individuals can communicate directly with God and therefore do not need guidance or doctrines from a church. These people are known as Christian anarchists.

Messianic Judaism

Messianic Judaism generally holds the same view of New Testament authority as evangelical Protestants.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Testament"

Norse mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Norse, **Viking** or **Scandinavian mythology** comprises the indigenous pre-Christian religion, beliefs and legends of the Scandinavian peoples, including those who settled on Iceland, where most of the written sources for Norse mythology were assembled. Norse mythology is the best-preserved version of the older common Germanic paganism, which also includes the closely related Anglo-Saxon mythology. Germanic mythology, in its turn, developed from an earlier Indo-European mythology.

Norse mythology is a collection of beliefs and stories shared by Northern Germanic tribes. It had no one set of doctrinal beliefs. The mythology was orally transmitted in the form of poetry and modern knowledge about it is mainly based on the Eddas and other medieval texts written down during and after Christianization.

Some aspects of Norse mythology passed into Scandinavian folklore and have survived to modern day. Others have recently been reinvented or reconstructed as Germanic neopaganism. The mythology also remains as an inspiration in literature (see Norse mythological influences on later literature) as well as on stage productions and movies.

The Norse gods were mortal, and they had to eat Iðunn's golden apples in order not to age until Ragnarök when most of them would die. Image by J. Penrose, 1890.

Cosmology

Scandinavians believed there are ' nine worlds' (*níu heimar*), that many scholars summarize as follows:

- Ásgarðr, world of the Æsir.
- Vanaheimr, world of the Vanir.
- Miðgarðr, world of humans.
- Muspellheim, world of the primordial element of fire.
- Niflheimr, world of the primordial element of ice
- Hel, underworld, world of the dead.
- Álfheimr, world of the Álfar (elves).
- Svartalfheim or Nidavellir, world of the Dvergar (Norse dwarves).
- Jötunheimr, world of the Jötnar (giants).

Note the boundaries between Niflheim, Jötunheimr, Hel, Niðavellir, Svartálfaheimr, and several other

Topics in Norse mythology

Æsir (gods)	Andhrímnir, Baldr, Borr, Bragi, Búri, Dagr, Delling, Forseti, Heimdall, Hermóðr, Höðr, Hœnir, Kvasir, Lóðurr, Loki, Móði and Magni, Óðr, Odin, Ríg, Thor, Tyr, Váli, Vé, Vidar, Vili
Ásynjur (goddesses)	Bil, Eir, Frigg, Gná, Hlín, Iðunn, Jord, Lofn, Nanna, Nótt, Saga, Sif, Sigyn, Sjöfn, Snotra, Sól, Syn, Var, Vör, Þrúðr
Vanir (gods and goddesses)	Freyr (Yngvi), Freyja, Gullveig, Nerthus, Njord, Ullr
Norns (fates)	Urd, Verdandi, Skuld
Valkyries	Brynhildr, Göndul, Gunnr, Hildr, Hlaðgunnr, Róta, Skuld, Sigrdrífa, Sigrún, Skögul, Sváva, Þrúðr

significant places like Utgarðr remain uncertain.

Each world also had significant places within. Valhalla was Odin's hall located in Asgard. It was also home of the Einherjar, who were the souls of the greatest warriors. These warriors were selected by the Valkyries, Odin's mounted female messengers whose sparkling armor supposedly created the famed Aurora Borealis, or the northern lights. The Einherjar would help defend the gods during Ragnarok, when everyone would die in a great battle between the gods and their iniquitous enemies. A battle, incidentally, emphasising an order-versus-chaos duality common to many ancient mythologies and no less present in Norse mythology. Niflhel was a hellish place in Hel, where oathbreakers and other criminals suffered torments (compare Greek Tartarus).

These worlds were connected by Yggdrasil, or the world ash root, a giant tree with Asgard at its top. Chewing at its roots in Niflheim was Nidhogg, a ferocious serpent or dragon. Asgard can also be reached by Bifrost, the magical rainbow bridge guarded by Heimdall, the mute god of vigilance who could see and hear a thousand miles.

The cosmology of Norse mythology also involves a strong element of duality; for example the night and the day have their own mythological counterparts-- Dagr/ Skinfaxi and Nótt/ Hrímfaxi, the sun Sól and the chasing wolf Skoll, the moon Mani and its chasing wolf Hati, and the total opposites of Niflheim and Muspell in the origin of the world. This might have reflected a deeper metaphysical belief in opposites as the foundation of the world.

Supernatural beings

There are several "clans" of Vættir or animistic nature spirits: the Æsir and Vanir, understood as gods, plus the Jötnar, the Álfar and Dvergar. To this list can be added the dead in the Underworld. The distinction between Æsir and Vanir is relative, for the two are said to have made peace, exchanged hostages, intermarried and reigned together after a prolonged war, which the Æsir had finally won. Some gods belong in both camps. Some authorities (compare Mircea Eliade and J.P. Mallory) consider the Æsir/Vanir division to be simply the Norse expression of a general Indo-European division of divinities, parallel to that of Olympians and Titans in Greek mythology and to a similar structure in parts of the Mahabharata.

Elves (Álfar)	Beyla, Byggvir, Dökkálfar, Svartálfar, Volund
Jotuns (giants)	Ægir, Angrboda, Baugi, Beli, Bergelmir, Bestla, Billing, Bolthorn, Byleist, Elli, Fárbauti, Fenja, Fjalar, Fornjót, Geirrod, Gerd, Gjálp and Greip, Gilling, Grid, Gunnlod, Gymir, Hel, Hrym, Hræsvelgr, Hrod, Hrungnir, Hymir, Hyndla, Hyrrokkin, Járnsaxa, Kari, Laufey, Loki, Mani (moon), Menja, Modgunn, Mundilfari, Muspel, Mökkurkálfi, Narfi, Olvaldi, Ragnhild, Rán, Rind, Skaði, Snær, Suttung, Surtr, Thokk, Þjazi, Þrívaldi, Þrúðgelmir, Þrymr, Utgardaloki, Vafþrúðnir, Ymir
Dwarves	Alvíss, Andvari, Berling, Brokkr, Durin, Dvalinn, Eitri, Fafnir, Fjalar and Galar, Gandalf, Hjuki, Hreidmar, Litr, Nordri, Sudri, Austri and Vestri, Nyi and Nidi, Otr, Regin, Sindri
Humans	Adils, Agne, Ask, Aslaug (Kraka), Björn Ironside, Bödvar Bjarki, Berserkers, Dag the Wise, Domalde, Draugr, Dyggve, Egil, Einherjar, Embla, Erik and Alrik, Fjölnir, Frodi, Glam, Grimhild, Gylfi, Haddingjar, Hagbard and Signy, Haki, Halfdan, Halfdan the Old, Harald Hildetand, Hedin, Helgi Hundingsbane, Hjalmar, Hrólf Kraki, Hugleik, Hvitserk, Ingeborg, Ingjald, Jorund, Karl, Krimhild, Lif and Lifthrasir, Marmennill, Nór, Ottar, Raum the Old, Röskva, Sigar, Siggeir, Sigmund, Signy, Sigurd, Sigurd Ring, Sinfjötli, Skagul Toste, Skirnir, Sveigder, Svipdag, Þjálfi, Vanlade, Völva, Yngvi and Alf, Yrsa
Beasts	Arvak and Alsvid, Auðumbla, Blóðughófi, Eikþyrnir, Fenrisulfr, Garm, Geri and Freki, Grani, Gullinbursti, Gullinkambi, Gulltopp, Hati, Heiðrún, Hildisvíni, Hófvarpnir, Hræsvelgr, Hrímfaxi, Hugin and Munin, Jörmungandr, Lindorm, Mánagarmr, Níðhöggr, Ratatosk, Skinfaxi, Skoll, Sleipnir, Svadilfari, Sæhrímnir, Tanngrisnir and Tanngnjóstr, Varulf, Veðrfölnir

Thor often fought the giants.

Generally, despite ambiguity, the Æsir and their allies represent the natural forces of cosmic order, whereas the Jötnar represent the natural forces of destructive chaos. The Jötnar compare to the Titans and Gigantes of Greek mythology and generally translated as "giants", although " trolls" and " demons" have been suggested as suitable alternatives. Notably, a foreboding figure like Loki was the child of two giants, and likewise Hel his daughter. Even so, the Æsir frequently intermarry the Jötnar, and themselves for the most part descend from them. Loki himself is thought to be the blood brother of Óðinn and thus counted as one of the Æsir. Some of the giants are mentioned by name in the *Eddas*, and they seem to be representations of natural forces. There are two general types of giant: Thurses and the normal thuggish giant, but there was also a giant made of stone and a giant made of fire. There were also elves and dwarfs, whose role is shadowy but who are generally thought to side with the gods.

In addition, there are many other supernatural beings: Fenrir the gigantic wolf, and Jörmungandr the sea-serpent (or "worm") that is coiled around Midgard. These two monsters are described as the progeny of Loki. More benevolent creatures are Hugin and Munin (thought and memory, respectively), the two ravens who keep Odin, the chief god, apprised of what is happening on earth, since he gave his eye to the Well of Mimir in his quest for wisdom, Sleipnir, Loki's eight legged horse son belonging to Odin and Ratatosk, the squirrel which scampers in the branches of Yggdrasil.

Locations	Álfheim, Andlang, Ásgard, Barri, Bifröst, Bilskirnir, Breidablik, Élivágar, Eliudnir, Fensalir, Fólkvangr, Gimlé, Ginnungagap, Gjallar Bridge, Gjöll, Gladsheim, Glasir, Glitnir, Gnipahellir, Helgrindr, Helveg, Himinbjörg, Hindarfjall, Hörgr, Körmt and Örmt, Idavoll, Jötunheimr, Ironwood, Hlidskjalf, Midgard, Muspelheim, Mirkwood, Náströnd, Niflheim, Noatun, Sessrúmnir, Singasteinn, Slidr River, Sökkvabekkr, Þrúðvangr, Þrymheimr, Utgard, Valhalla, Vanaheim, Hvergelmir, Vigrid, Vimur, Vingólf, Ýdalir, Yggdrasil
Artifacts	Andvarinaut, Brisingamen, Draupnir, Eldhrímnir, Gand, Gjallarhorn, Gleipnir, Gram, Grotte, Gungnir, Helskór, Megingjord, Well of Mimir, Mistilteinn, Mjölnir, Naglfar, Óðrerir, Reginnaglar, Hringhorni, Skíðblaðnir, Tyrfing, Well of Urd
Worship	Blót, Hörgr, Human sacrifice, Seid, Sumbel, Temple at Uppsala, Thor's Hammer, Völva, Yule

Along with many other polytheistic religions, this mythology lacks the *good-evil dualism* of the Middle Eastern tradition. Thus, Loki is not primarily an adversary of the gods, though he is often portrayed in the stories as the nemesis to the protagonist Thor, and the giants are not so much fundamentally evil, as rude, boisterous, and uncivilized (except in the case of the Thurses who were not quite so uncivilized). The dualism that exists is not good vs. evil, but order vs. chaos. The gods represent order and structure whereas the giants and the monsters represent chaos and disorder.

Völuspá: the origin and end of the world

The origin and eventual fate of the world are described in *Völuspá* ("Prophecy [*spá*] of the völva"), one of the most striking poems in the *Poetic Edda*. These haunting verses contain one of the most vivid creation accounts in all of religious history and a representation of the eventual destruction of the world that is unique in its attention to detail.

In the *Völuspá*, Odin, the chief god of the Norse pantheon, has conjured up the spirit of a dead völva and commanded this spirit to reveal the past and the future. She is reluctant: "What do you ask of me? Why tempt me?"; but since she is already dead, she shows no fear of Odin, and continually taunts him: "Well, would you know more?" But Odin insists: if he is to fulfill his function as king of the gods, he must possess all knowledge. Once the völva has revealed the

secrets of past and future, she falls back into oblivion: "I sink now".

The beginning

According to Norse myth, the beginning of life was fire and ice, with the existence of only two worlds: Muspelheim and Niflheim. When the warm air of Muspelheim hit the cold ice of Niflheim, the giant Ymir and the icy cow Audhumla were created. Ymir's foot bred a son and a man and a woman emerged from his armpits, making Ymir the progenitor of the Jotun, or giants. Whilst Ymir slept, the intense heat from Muspelheim made him sweat, and he sweated out Surtr, a giant of fire. Later Ymir woke and drank Audhumbla's milk. Whilst he drank, the cow Audhumbla licked on a salt stone. On the first day after this a man's hair appeared on the stone, on the second day a head and on the third day an entire man emerged from the stone. His name was Búri and with an unknown giantess he fathered Bor, the father of the three gods Odin, Vili and Ve.

When the gods felt strong enough they killed Ymir. His blood flooded the world and drowned all of the giants, except two. But giants grew again in numbers and soon there were as many as before Ymir's death. Then the gods created seven more worlds using Ymir's flesh for dirt, his blood for the Oceans, rivers and lakes, his bones for stone, his brain as the clouds, his skull for the heaven. Sparks from Muspelheim flew up and became stars.
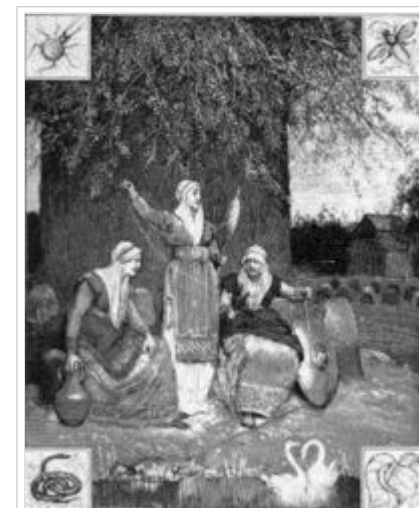

The Norns spin the threads of fate at the foot of Yggdrasil, the tree of the world.

One day when the gods were walking they found two tree trunks. They transformed them into the shape of humans. Odin gave them life, Vili gave them mind and Ve gave them the ability to hear, see, and speak. The gods named them Ask and Embla and built the kingdom of Middle-earth for them and to keep the giants out the gods placed a gigantic fence made of Ymir's eyelashes around Middle-earth.

The völva goes on to describe Yggdrasil and the three norns (female symbols of inexorable fate; their names - Urðr (Urd), Verðandandi (Verdandi), and Skuld - indicate the past, present, and obligatory actions to occur), who spin the threads of fate beneath it. She then describes the war between the Æsir and Vanir and the murder of Baldr, Odin's handsome son whom everyone but Loki loved. (The story is that everything in existence promised not to hurt him except mistletoe. Taking advantage of this weakness, Loki made a mistletoe spear and tricked Höðr, Odin's blind son and Baldr's brother, into using it to kill Baldr. Hel said she would revive him if everyone in the nine worlds wept. A giantess - Thokk, who may have been Loki in shape-shifted form - did not weep. After that she turns her attention to the future.

Creation of Ask and Embla, on a Faroese stamp

The end times (Eschatological beliefs)

The Old Norse vision of the future is bleak. Norse mythology's vision of the end times is stark and pessimistic: not only are the Norse gods capable of being defeated by residents of Yggdrasil's other branches, but in fact are destined to be defeated, and have always lived with this knowledge. In the end, it was believed, the forces of chaos will outnumber and overcome the divine and human guardians of order.

Loki and his monstrous children will burst their bonds; the dead will sail from Niflheim to attack the living. Heimdall, the watchman of the gods, will summon the heavenly host with a blast on his horn. Then a final battle will ensue between order and chaos (Ragnarök), which the gods will lose, as is their fate. The gods, aware of this, will gather the finest warriors, the Einherjar, to fight on their side when the day comes, but in the end they will be powerless to prevent the world from descending into the chaos out of which it has once emerged; the gods and their world will be destroyed. There are two optimistic facts, however: Not only will chaos also be defeated, but a new, better world will emerge from the ashes of the old one. Odin will be swallowed by Fenrir. Thor will kill Jörmungandr, but will drown in its venom. Loki will be the last to die, having taken a wound from Heimdall that, although was taken at the same time as Loki's wound on Heimdall, did not kill the god of chaos and fire in that instance.

And although the gods were destined to be defeated and killed, Baldr and Hodr, along with the new world, will be born again.

Kings and heroes

The mythological literature relates the legends of heroes and kings, as well as supernatural creatures. These clan and kingdom founding figures possessed great importance as illustrations of proper action or national origins. The heroic literature may have fulfilled the same function as the national epic in other European literatures, or it may have been more nearly related to tribal identity. Many of the legendary figures probably existed, and generations of Scandinavian scholars have tried to extract history from myth in the sagas.

Sometimes the same hero resurfaces in several forms depending on which part of the Germanic world the epics survived such as Weyland/ Völund and Siegfried/ Sigurd, and probably Beowulf/ Bödvar Bjarki. Other notable heroes are Hagbard, Starkad, Ragnar Lodbrok, Sigurd Ring, Ivar Vidfamne and Harald Hildetand. Notable are also the shieldmaidens who were ordinary women who had chosen the path of the warrior. These women function both as heroines and as obstacles to the heroic journey.
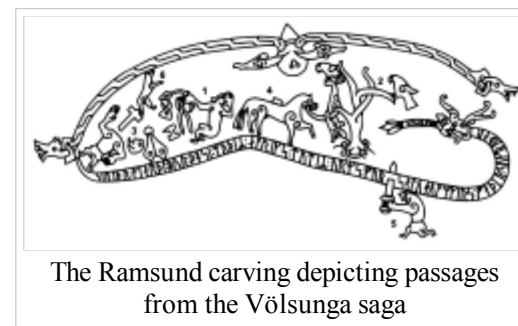
The Ramsund carving depicting passages from the Völsunga saga

Norse worship

Centres of faith

The Germanic tribes rarely or never had temples in a modern sense. The Blót, the form of worship practiced by the ancient Germanic and Scandinavian people, resembled that of the Celts and Balts. It occurred either in sacred groves, at home, or at a simple altar of piled stones known as a " horgr". However, there seem to have been a few more important centres, such as Skiringssal, Lejre and Uppsala. Adam of Bremen claims that there was a temple in Uppsala (see Temple at Uppsala) with three wooden statues of Thor, Odin, Idoki and Freyr.

Priests

While a kind of priesthood seems to have existed, it never took on the professional and semi-hereditary character of the Celtic druidical class. This was because the shamanistic tradition was maintained by women, the Völvas. It is often said that the Germanic kingship evolved out of a priestly office. This priestly role of the king was in line with the general role of godi, who was the head of a kindred group of families (for this social structure, see norse clans), and who administered the sacrifices.

Despite the shamanistic Völvas, this religion was not a form of shamanism.

Human sacrifice

A unique eye-witness account of Germanic human sacrifice survives in Ibn Fadlan's account of a Rus ship burial, where a slave-girl had volunteered to accompany her lord to the next world. More indirect accounts are given by Tacitus, Saxo Grammaticus and Adam von Bremen.

However, the Ibn Fadlan account is actually a burial ritual. Current understanding of Norse mythology suggests an ulterior motive to the slave-girl's 'sacrifice'. It is believed that in Norse mythology a woman who joined the corpse of a man on the funeral pyre would be that man's wife in the next world. For a slave girl to become the wife of a lord was an obvious increase in status. Although both religions are of the Indo-European tradition, the sacrifice described in the Ibn Fadlan account is not to be confused with the practice of Sati.

The *Heimskringla* tells of Swedish King Aun who sacrificed nine of his sons in an effort to prolong his life until his subjects stopped him from killing his last son Egil. According to Adam of Bremen, the Swedish kings sacrificed male slaves every ninth year during the Yule sacrifices at the Temple at Uppsala. The Swedes had the right not only to elect kings but also to depose them, and both king Domalde and king Olof Trätälja are said to have been sacrificed after years of famine.

Odin was associated with death by hanging, and a possible practice of Odinic sacrifice by strangling has some archeological support in the existence of bodies such as Tollund Man that perfectly preserved by the acid of the Jutland peatbogs, into which they were cast after having been strangled. However, scholars possess no written accounts that explicitly interpret the cause of these stranglings, which could obviously have other explanations.

Interactions with Christianity

Gamla Uppsala, the centre of worship in Sweden until the temple was destroyed in the late 11th century.

An important note in interpreting this mythology is that often the closest accounts that scholars have to "pre-contact" times were written by Christians. The *Younger Edda* and the *Heimskringla* were written by Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century, over two hundred years after Iceland became Christianized. This results in Snorri's works carrying a large amount of Euhemerism.

Virtually all of the saga literature came out of Iceland, a relatively small and remote island, and even in the climate of religious tolerance there, Snorri was guided by an essentially Christian viewpoint. The *Heimskringla* provides some interesting insights into this issue. Snorri introduces Odin as a mortal warlord in Asia who acquires magical powers, settles in Sweden, and becomes a demi-god following his death. Having undercut Odin's divinity, Snorri then provides the story of a pact of Swedish King Aun with Odin to prolong his life by sacrificing his sons. Later in the Heimskringla, Snorri records in detail how converts to Christianity such as Saint Olaf Haraldsson brutally converted Scandinavians to Christianity.

An 1830 portrayal of Ansgar, a Christian missionary invited to Sweden by its king Björn at Hauge in 829.

One gruesome form of execution occurred during the Christianization of Norway. King Olaf Tryggvason had male völvas (sejdmen) tied and left on a skerry at ebb. (1897 illustration by Halfdan Egedius)

Trying to avert civil war, the Icelandic parliament voted in Christianity, but for some years tolerated heathenry in the privacy of one's home. Sweden, on the other hand, had a series of civil wars in the 11th century, which ended with the burning of the Temple at Uppsala. In England, Christianization occurred earlier and sporadically, rarely by force. Conversion by coercion was sporadic throughout the areas where Norse gods had been worshipped. However, the conversion did not happen overnight. Christian clergy did their utmost to teach the populace that the Norse gods were demons, but their success was limited and the gods never became *evil* in the popular mind in most of Scandinavia.

The length of time Christianization took is illustrated by two centrally located examples of Lovön and Bergen. Archaeological studies of graves at the Swedish island of Lovön have shown that the Christianisation took 150-200 years, and this was a location close to the kings and bishops. Likewise in the bustling trading town of Bergen, many runic inscriptions have been found from the 13th century, among the Bryggen inscriptions. One of them says *may Thor receive you, may Odin own you*, and a second one is a galdra which says *I carve curing runes, I carve salvaging runes, once against the elves, twice against the trolls, thrice against the thurs*. The second one also mentions the dangerous Valkyrie Skögul.

There are few accounts from the 14th to the 18th century, but the clergy, such as Olaus Magnus (1555) wrote about the difficulties of extinguishing the old beliefs. The story related in *Þrymskviða* appears to have been unusually resilient, like the romantic story of Hagbard and Signy, and versions of both were recorded in the 17th century and as late as the 19th century. In the 19th and early 20th century Swedish folklorists documented what commoners believed, and what surfaced were many surviving traditions of the gods of Norse mythology. However, the traditions were by then far from the cohesive system of Snorri's accounts. Most gods had been forgotten and only the hunting Odin and the giant-slaying Thor figure in numerous legends. Freyja is mentioned a few times and Baldr only survives in legends about place names.

Other elements of Norse mythology survived without being perceived as such, especially concerning supernatural beings in Scandinavian folklore. Moreover, the Norse belief in destiny has been very firm until modern times. Since the Christian hell resembled the abode of the dead in Norse mythology one of the names was borrowed from the old faith, *Helvíti* i.e. *Hel's punishment*. Many elements of the Yule traditions persevered, such as the Swedish tradition of slaughtering the pig at Christmas (Christmas ham), which originally was part of the sacrifice to Freyr.

Modern influences

The Germanic gods have left numerous traces in modern vocabulary and elements of every day western life in most Germanic language speaking countries. An example of this is some of the names of the days of the week: modelled after the names of the days of the week in Latin (named after Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, and Saturn), the names for Tuesday through to Friday were replaced with Germanic equivalents of the Roman gods and the names for Monday and Sunday after the Sun and Moon. In English, Saturn was not replaced, while Saturday is named after the sabbath in German.

Day (Old Norse)	Meaning
Mánadagr	Moon's day
Týsdagr	Tyr's day
Óðinsdagr	Odin's day
Þórsdagr	Thor's day
Frjádagr	Day of Freyr/Freyja
Laugardagr	Washing day
Sunnudagr/Dróttinsdagr	Sun's day/The Lord's day

Viking revival

Early modern editions of Old Norse literature begins in the 16th century, e.g. *Historia de gentibus septentrionalibus* (Olaus Magnus, 1555) and the first edition of the 13th century *Gesta Danorum* (Saxo Grammaticus), in 1514. The pace of publication increased during the 17th century with Latin translations of the Edda (notably Peder Resen's *Edda Islandorum* of 1665). The renewed interest of Romanticism in the Old North had political implications. Myths about a glorious and brave past is said to have given the Swedes the courage to retake Finland, which had been lost in 1809 during the war between Sweden and Russia. The Geatish Society, of which Geijer was a member, popularized this myth to a great extent.

A focus for early British enthusiasts was George Hicke, who published a *Linguarum vett. septentrionalium thesaurus* in 1703–5. In the 1780s, Denmark offered to cede Iceland to Britain in exchange for Crab Island (West Indies), and in the 1860s Iceland was considered as a compensation for British support of Denmark in the Slesvig-Holstein conflicts. During this time, British interest and enthusiasm for Iceland and Nordic culture grew dramatically.

Germanic neopaganism

Romanticist interest in the Old North gave rise to Germanic mysticism involving various schemes of occultist "Runology", notably following Guido von List and his *Das Geheimnis der Runen* (1908) in the early 20th century.

Since the 1970s, there have been revivals of the old Germanic religion as Germanic neopaganism (Ásatrú) in both Europe and the United States.

Music

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"Fate of the Gods" by Steven Reineke (http://www.barnhouse.com/product.php?id=012-3165-00)

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Odin

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Odin (Old Norse *Óðinn*) is considered the chief god in Norse mythology and Norse paganism, like the Anglo-Saxon *Woden* it is descended from Proto-Germanic ** Wōdinaz* or **Wōdanaz*.

His name is related to *óðr*, meaning "mind", "excitation," "fury" or "poetry," and his role, like many of the Norse pantheon, is complex: he is a god of wisdom, war, battle and death. He is also attested as being a god of magic, poetry, prophecy, victory and the hunt.

Characteristics

Odin is an ambivalent deity. Old Norse (Viking Age) connotations of Odin lie with "poetry, inspiration" as well as with "fury, madness and the wonderer," Odin sacrificed one of his eyes at Mímir's spring in order to gain the wisdom of the ages. Odin gives to worthy poets the mead of inspiration, made by the dwarves, from the vessel *Óð-rœrir*.

Odin is associated with the concept of the Wild Hunt, a noisy, bellowing movement across the sky, leading a host of slain warriors.
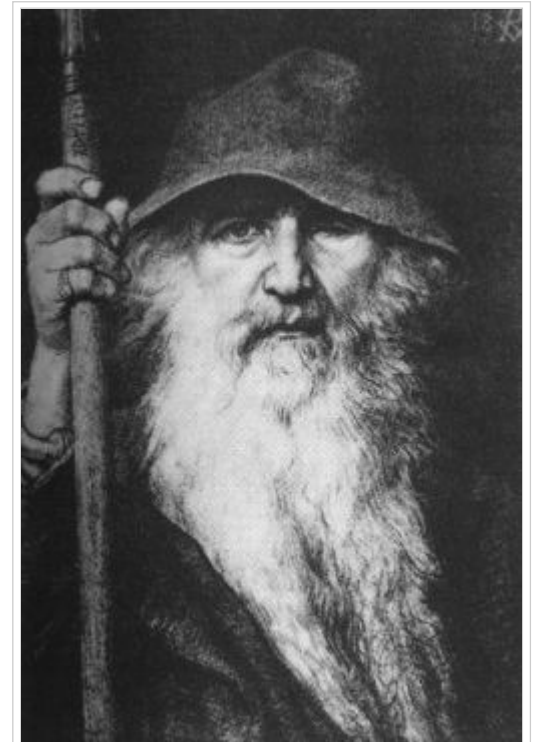
An 1886 depiction of Odin by Georg von Rosen.

Consistent with this, Snorri Sturluson's Prose Edda depicts Odin as welcoming the great dead warriors who have died in battle into his hall, Valhall, which when literally interpreted, signifies the hall of the slain. These fallen, the *einherjar*, are assembled and entertained by Odin in order that they in return might fight for and support the gods in the final battle of the end of Earth, Ragnarök.

He is also a god of war, appearing throughout Norse myth as the bringer of victory. In the Norse sagas, Odin sometimes acts as the instigator of wars, and is said to have been able to start wars by simply throwing down his javelin Gungnir, and/or sending his valkyries, to influence the battle toward the end that he desires. Valkyries are Odin's beautiful battle maidens that went out to the fields of war to select and collect the worthy men who died in battle to come and sit at *Odin's table* in Valhalla, feasting and battling until they had to fight in the final battle, Ragnarök. Odin would also appear on the battle-field, sitting upon the leader of the Norse as two ravens on each shoulder, Hugin (Thought) and Munin (Memory), and two wolves on each side.

An 1893 depiction of Odin taking the dead Sinfjötli to Valhalla by Fredrik Sander.

Origins

Worship of Odin dates to Proto-Germanic paganism. The Roman historian Tacitus may refer to Odin when he talks of Mercury. The reason is that, like Mercury, Odin was regarded as Psychopompos,"the leader of souls."

Parallels between Odin and Celtic Lugus have often been pointed out: both are intellectual gods, commanding magic and poetry. Both have ravens and a spear as their attributes, and both are one-eyed. Julius Caesar (*de bello Gallico*, 6.17.1) mentions Mercury as the chief god of Celtic religion. A likely context of the diffusion of elements of Celtic ritual into Germanic culture is that of the Chatti, who lived at the Celtic-Germanic boundary in Hesse during the final centuries before the Common Era. (It must be remembered that Odin in his Proto-Germanic form was not the chief god, but that he only gradually replaced Tyr during the Migration period.)

Scandinavian *Óðinn* emerged from Proto-Norse *Wōdin* during the Migration period, Vendel artwork (bracteates, image stones) depicting the earliest scenes that can be aligned with the High Medieval Norse mythological texts. The context of the new elites emerging in this period aligns with Snorri's tale of the indigenous Vanir who were eventually replaced by the Aesir, intruders from the Continent.

Some scholars have linked Odin with the "Death God" template. A few of them, such as Jan de Vries and Thor Templin, link Loki and Odin as being one-in-the-same until the early Norse Period.

Blót

It is attested in primary sources that sacrifices were made to Odin during blóts. Adam of Bremen relates that every ninth year, people assembled from all over Sweden to sacrifice at the Temple at Uppsala. Male slaves and males of each species were sacrificed and hung from the branches of the trees.

As the Swedes had the right not only to elect their king but also to depose him, the sagas relate that both King Domalde and King Olof Trätälja were sacrificed to Odin after years of famine. It has been argued that the killing of a combatant in battle was to give a sacrificial offering to Odin. The fickleness of Odin in battle was well-documented, and in Lokasenna, Loki taunts Odin for his inconsistency.

Sometimes sacrifices were made to Odin to bring about changes in circumstance. A notable example is the sacrifice of King Víkar that is detailed in Gautrek's Saga and in Saxo Grammaticus' account of the same event. Sailors in a fleet being blown off course drew lots to sacrifice to Odin that he might abate the winds. The king himself drew the lot and was hung.

Sacrifices were probably also made to Odin at the beginning of summer (mid April, actually--summer being reckoned essentially the same as did the Celt, at Beltene, Calan Mai [Welsh], which is Mayday--hence as summer's "herald"), since Ynglinga saga states one of the great festivals of the calendar is *at sumri, þat var sigrblót* "in summer, for victory"; Odin is consistently referred to throughout the Norse mythos as the bringer of victory. The Ynglinga saga also details the

7th century depiction of Odin on a Vendel helmet plate, found in Uppland.

The 7th century Tängelgarda stone shows Odin leading a troop of warriors all bearing rings. Valknut symbols are drawn beneath his horse, which at this time still has the normal number of legs.

sacrifices made by the Swedish king Aun, who, it was revealed to him, would lengthen his life by sacrificing one of his sons every ten years; nine of his ten sons died this way. When he was about to sacrifice his last son Egil, the Swedes stopped him.

Edda

According to the Prose Edda, Odin, the first and most powerful of the Aesir, was a son of Bestla and Borr and brother of Ve and Vili and together with these brothers he cast down the frost giant Ymir and made Earth from Ymir's body. The three brothers are often mentioned together. "Wille" is the German word for "will" (English), "Weh" is the German word (Gothic wai) for "woe" (English: great sorrow, grief, misery) but is more likely related to the archaic German "Wei" meaning 'sacred'.

Odin had several wives with whom he fathered many children. With his first wife, Frigg, he fathered his most gentle son Balder, who stood for happiness, goodness, wisdom and beauty. He also fathered the blind god Hod, who was representative of darkness (in contrast to Balder's light). Frigg is best known for her love of her son Balder, as well as the story of how she travelled Earth in order to protect him from fated death. By the Earth Goddess Jord (Fjorgin) Odin was the father of his most famous son, Thor the Thunderer. By the giantess Grid, Odin was the father of Vídar, and by Rinda he was father of Váli. Also, many royal families claimed descent from Odin through other sons. For traditions about Odin's offspring, see *Sons of Odin*.

According to the Hávamál Edda, Odin was also the creator of the Runic alphabet. It is possible that the legends and genealogies mentioning Odin originated in a real, prehistoric Germanic chieftain who was subsequently deified, but this is impossible to prove or disprove.

A depiction of Odin riding Sleipnir from an eighteenth century Icelandic manuscript.

Exploits

Odin and his brothers, Vili and Ve, are attributed with slaying Ymir, the Ancient Giant, to form Midgard. From Ymir's flesh, the brothers made the earth, and from his shattered bones and teeth they made the rocks and stones. From Ymir's blood, they made the rivers and lakes. Ymir's skull was made into the sky, secured at four points by four dwarfs named East, West, North, and South. And from Ymir's brains, they shaped the clouds and Ymir's eye-brows became a barrier between Jotunheim (giant's home) and Midgard, the place where men now dwell. Odin and his brothers are also attributed with making humans.

After having made earth from Ymir's flesh, the three brothers came across two logs (or an ash and an elm tree). Odin gave them breath and life; Vili gave them brains and feelings; and Ve gave them hearing and sight. The first man was Ask and the first woman was Embla and from them all human families are descended. Many kings and royal houses claim to trace their lineage back to Odin through Ask and Embla.

Odin ventured to Mímir's Well, near Jötunheim, the land of the giants, not as Odin, but as Vegtam the Wanderer, clothed in a dark blue cloak and carrying a traveller's staff. To drink from the Well of Wisdom Odin had to sacrifice his left eye, symbolizing his willingness to gain the knowledge of the past, present and future. As he drank, he saw all the sorrows and troubles that would fall upon men and the gods. But he also saw why the sorrow and troubles had to come to men.

Odin with his ravens and weapons
(MS SÁM 66, eighteenth century)

Mímir accepted Odin's eye and it sits today at the bottom of the Well of Wisdom as a sign that the father of the gods had paid the price for wisdom. Sacrifice for the greater good is a recurring theme in Norse mythology. Tyr sacrificed his hand to fetter Fenrisulfr.

Odin was said to have learned the mysteries of seid from the Vanic goddess and völva Freyja, despite the unwarriorly connotations of using magic. In *Lokasenna*, Loki derides Odin for practicing seid, implying it was woman's work. (Another example of this may be found in the *Ynglinga saga* where Snorri opines that men who used seid were *ergi* or *unmanly*.)

Odin's quest for wisdom can also be seen in his work as a farmhand for a summer, for Baugi, and his seduction of Gunnlod in order to obtain the mead of poetry. (See Fjalar and Galar for more details.)

In the Rúnatal, a section of the Hávamál, Odin is attributed with discovering runes. He was hung from the tree called Yggdrasill while pierced by his own javelin. He hung for nine days and nights, in order to learn the wisdom that would give him power in the nine worlds. Nine is a significant number in Norse magical practice (there were, for example, nine realms of existence), thereby learning nine (later eighteen) magical songs and eighteen magical runes.

Some scholars state that this story has influenced the story of Christ's crucifixion; and others note the similarity to the story of Buddha's enlightenment. In Shamanism, the traversal of the axis mundi by the shaman to bring back knowledge is a common pattern. We know that sacrifices, human or otherwise, to the gods were commonly hung in or from trees, often transfixed by spears. (See also: Peijainen) Additionally, one of Odin's names is *Ygg*, and the Norse name for the World Ash — Yggdrasill—therefore means "Ygg's (Odin's) horse". Another of Odin's names is *Hangatýr*, the god of the hanged.

Attributes

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Odin had three residences in Asgard. First, was Gladsheim, a vast hall where he presided over the twelve Diar or Judges, whom he had appointed to regulate the affairs of Asgard. Second, Valaskialf, built of solid silver, in which there was an elevated place, Hlidskialf, from his throne on which he could perceive all that passed throughout the whole earth. Third, was Valhalla, where Odin received the souls of the warriors killed in battle, called the Einheriar. The souls of warrioresses, and those strong and beautiful women whom Odin favored, became Valkyries,who gather the souls of warriors fallen in battle (the Einheriar), as these would be needed to fight for him in the battle of Ragnarök. They took the souls of the warriors to Valhalla (the hall of the fallen), Odin's reception hall in Asgard Valhalla has six hundred and forty gates, and a vast hall of gold, hung around with golden shields, and spears and coats of mail.

Odin has a number of magical artifacts associated with him: the dwarven javelin Gungnir, which never misses its target, a magical gold ring (Draupnir), from which every ninth night eight new rings appear, two ravens Huginn and Muninn (Thought and Memory), who fly around Earth daily and report the happenings of the world to Odin in Valhalla at night. He also owned Sleipnir, an octopedal horse, who was given to Odin by Loki, and the severed head of Mímir, which foretold the future. He also commands a pair of wolves named Geri and Freki, to whom he gives his food in Valhalla since he consumes nothing but mead or wine. From his throne, Hlidskjalf (located in Valaskjalf), Odin could see everything that occurred in the universe.

The Valknut is a symbol associated with Odin.

A depiction of Odin entering Valhalla riding on Sleipnir from the Tängvide image stone.

Names

The Norsemen gave Odin many nick-names; this was in the Norse skaldic tradition of kennings, a poetic method of indirect reference, as in a riddle. See List of names of Odin. The name Alföðr ("Allfather", "father of all") appears in Snorri Sturluson's Younger Edda. (It probably originally denoted Tiwaz, as it fits the pattern of referring to Sky Fathers as "father".) According to Bernhard Severin Ingemann, Odin is known in Wendish mythology as *Woda* or *Waidawut*.

Persisting beliefs in Odin

Snorri Sturluson feels compelled to give a rational account of the Aesir in his preface. In this scenario, Snorri speculates that Odin and his peers were originally refugees from the Anatolian city of Troy, etymologizing *Aesir* as derived from the word Asia. Some scholars believe that Snorri's version of Norse mythology is an attempt to mould a more shamanistic tradition into a Greek mythological cast. In any case, Snorri's writing (particularly in Heimskringla) tries to maintain an essentially scholastic neutrality. That Snorri was correct was one of the last of Thor Heyerdahl's archeoanthropological theories (see The search for Odin).

The spread of Christianity was slow in Scandinavia, and it worked its way downwards from the nobility. Among common humans, beliefs in Odin may have lingered for some time, and legends would be told until modern times.

The last battle where Scandinavians attributed a victory to Odin was the Battle of Lena in 1208 . The former Swedish king Sverker had arrived with a large Danish army, and the Swedes discovered that the Danish army was more than twice the size of their own. Naturally, the Danes got the upper hand and they

should have won. However, the Swedes claimed that they suddenly saw Odin riding on Sleipnir. Accounts vary on how Odin gave the Swedes victory, but in one version, he rode in front of their battle formation.

The *bagler-saga*, written in the thirteenth century concerning events in the first two decades of the thirteenth century, tells a story of a one-eyed rider with a broad-brimmed hat and a blue coat who asks a smith to shoe his horse. The suspicious smith asks where the stranger stayed during the previous night. The stranger mentions places so distant that the smith does not believe him. The stranger says that he has stayed for a long time in the north and taken part in many battles, but now he is going to Sweden. When the horse is shod, the rider mounts his horse and says "I am Odin" to the stunned smith, and rides away. The next day, the battle of Lena took place. The context of this tale in the saga is that a peace-treaty has been signed in Norway, and Odin, a god of war, no longer has a place there. *Håkon Håkonssons saga*, written in the 1260s, describes how, at some point in the 1230s, Skule Baardsson has the skald Snorri Sturluson compose a poem comparing one of Skule's enemies to Odin, describing them both as bringers of strife and disagreement. These episodes do not necessary imply a continued belief in Odin as a god, but show clearly that his name was still widely known at this time.

Scandinavian folklore also maintained a belief in Odin as the leader of the Wild Hunt (*Åsgårdsreia* in Norwegian). His main objective seems to have been to track down and kill the forest dweller *huldran* or *skogsrået*. In these accounts, Odin was typically a lone hunter, save for his two wolves. Originally, he was armed with a javelin, but in later accounts this was sometimes changed to a rifle.

Toponyms with the name of Odin

On the sea-side, in northern France, successively occupied by germano-celtic populations, Romans, Saxons, Danes, Flemish, English humans around Audresselles (Oderzell) district of Marquise:

- Audinghen (Odingham), close to Raventhun (Raventown), Tardinghen (Thordingham),
- Loquinghen (Lokingham) and Audembert (Odinberg)

In central France (Berry):

- Vatan same as Wotan

In Denmark:

- Odense: Odins Vi, i.e. Odin's Sanctuary
- Odinshøj: Odin's Hill
- Onsbjerg: Odin's Hill

In Finland

- Udensö ("Uden's island", called alternatively at 1785 "Odin island")

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In Norway:

- Onsøy (Norse *Óđinsøy* - Odins island), name of a peninsula (and also name of a parish and a former municipality) in the county of Østfold.
- *Óđinsakr* (Odins field/acre), name of three farms (in the parishes Svinndal, Gran and Hole).
- *Óđinsvin* (Odins meadow/pasture), name of three farms (in the parishes Buvik, Byneset and Meldal).
- *Óđinsland* (Odins land), name of two farms (in the parishes Bru and Kyrkjebø).
- *Óđinssalr* (Odins hall), name of two farms (in the parishes Onsøy and Melhus).
- *Óđinshof* (Odins temple), name of a farm in the parish of Ullensaker. (The names of the farms are given in the Norse form.)

In Sweden:

- Odensåker (Västergötland): Odin's Field
- Odensvi (Småland), Odensvi (Västmanland): Odin's Sanctuary
- Onslunda (Skåne): Odin's Grove.

[indirectly, but similar to wednesday:]

- In the Netherlands, Westfriesland has "Wijdenes", Viking settlement founded by Rolf Wodansson a.k.a. Roelof van Wienesse.

Modern age

Germanic neopaganism

Odin, along with the other Germanic Gods and Goddesses, is recognized by Germanic neopagans. His Norse form is particularly acknowledged in Ásatrú, the "faith in the Aesir", an officially recognized religion in Iceland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden.

Modern popular culture

With the Romantic Viking revival of the early-to-mid nineteenth century, Odin's popularity increased again. Odin (Wotan) is one of the main protagonists of Richard Wagner's opera cycle, Der Ring des Nibelungen. This depiction in particular has had influence on many subsequent fiction writers and has since resulted in varying references and allusions in multiple types of media.

Image:Odintegnefim.jpg
Odin in the cartoon Valhalla

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Old Testament

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

Template:Collapsible Christ

The **Old Testament** (sometimes abbreviated as **OT**) is the first section of the two-part Christian Biblical canon.

Most scholars agree that the Old Testament was composed and compiled between the 12th and the 2nd century BC. The books of the Old Testament were therefore completed before Jesus' birth. Jesus and his disciples based their teachings on them, referring to them as "the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms ... the scriptures". (The accounts of Jesus and his disciples are recorded in the Christian New Testament.)

Books of the Old Testament

The exact canon of the Old Testament differs between the various branches of Christianity. All include the books of the Hebrew Bible, while most traditions also recognise several deuterocanonical books. The Protestant Old Testament is, for the most part, identical with the Hebrew Bible; the differences are minor, dealing only with the arrangement and number of the books. For example, while the Hebrew Bible considers Kings to be a unified text, and Ezra and Nehemiah as a single book, the Protestant Old Testament divides each of these into two books.

The differences between the Hebrew Bible and other versions of the Old Testament such as the Samaritan Pentateuch, the Syriac, Latin, Greek and other canons, are greater. Many of these canons include whole books and additional sections of books that the others do not. The translations of various words from the original Hebrew may also give rise to significant differences of interpretation.

Christian view of the Law

Traditional Christianity affirms that the Mosaic Law of the Old Testament (known as *Torah* in Judaism) is fully inspired by God. However, much of Christian tradition has historically denied that all of the laws of the Pentateuch apply directly to Christians. There are several different explanations within Christianity that endeavor to explain if and how the laws given by God through Moses apply to Christians.

The New Testament indicates that Jesus Christ established a new covenant relationship between God and his people (Jeremiah

Books of the **Old Testament**
(For details see Biblical canon)

Hebrew Bible or Tanakh
Common to Judaism and Christianity

- Genesis
- Exodus
- Leviticus
- Numbers
- Deuteronomy
- Joshua
- Judges
- Ruth
- 1–2 Samuel
- 1–2 Kings
- 1–2 Chronicles
- Ezra (see Esdras for other names)
- Nehemiah
- Esther
- Job
- Psalms
- Proverbs
- Ecclesiastes

31:31–31:34; Luke 22:20; 2Cor 2-3; Heb 8-9). Christianity, almost without exception, understands this new covenant to be the instrument through which God offers mercy and atonement to mankind. However, the various views of the Old Testament Law in Christianity result from very different interpretations of what exactly this new covenant is and how it affects the validity of the Mosaic Law. These differences mainly result from attempts to harmonize Biblical statements that say that the Law is eternal with New Testament statements that suggest that it does not now apply at all, or at least does not fully apply. Most Biblical scholars admit the issue of the Law can be confusing and the topic of Paul and the Law is still frequently debated among New Testament scholars (for example, see New Perspective on Paul, Pauline Christianity); hence the various views.

Some conclude that none is applicable, some conclude that only parts are applicable, and some conclude that all is still applicable to believers in Jesus.

The Roman Catholic view

Roman Catholic theologian Thomas Aquinas explained that there is a threefold division in the Law: moral, ceremonial, and judicial. God's commands were "ordained for a double purpose; the worship of God, and the foreshadowing of Christ." Upon the advent of Christ, the purpose of all the ceremonial and judicial commands, which was to pre-figure Christ, was fulfilled, causing them to be "annulled" and "dead." The moral commands remain for the worship of God, summed up in the Ten Commandments. *The Catechism of the Catholic Church: Part 3, Life in Christ: Section 2, The Ten Commandments: Teacher, what must I do ...?"* states:

> "2068 The Council of Trent teaches that the Ten Commandments are obligatory for Christians and that the justified man is still bound to keep them; the Second Vatican Council confirms: 'The bishops, successors of the apostles, receive from the Lord ... the mission of teaching all peoples, and of preaching the Gospel to every creature, so that all men may attain salvation through faith, Baptism and the observance of the Commandments.'"
> "2076 By his life and by his preaching Jesus attested to the permanent validity of the Decalogue."

While upholding the Ten Commandments, the Roman Catholic Church teaches that the Apostles' instituted the observance of Sunday instead of the Saturday, and applies the Third Commandment to Sunday as the day to be kept holy as the Lord's Day. It also numbers the commandments according to the numbering preferred by St. Augustine, which is different from the traditional Protestant numbering, derived from Origen. The Commandments are often abbreviated for easy catechetical use.

According to Aquinas, not only do the ceremonial portions of the Law not apply now, but it is actually a "mortal sin" to keep these observances after the events of Christ's Passion. Ceremonial laws, in this view, include the regulations pertaining to ceremonial cleanliness, festivals, diet, and the Levitical priesthood.

The Lutheran view

- Song of Songs
- Isaiah
- Jeremiah
- Lamentations
- Ezekiel
- Daniel
- Minor prophets

Included by Orthodox and Roman Catholics, but excluded by Jews and Protestants:

- Tobit
- Judith
- 1 Maccabees
- 2 Maccabees
- Wisdom (of Solomon)
- Sirach
- Baruch,
- Letter of Jeremiah (included as Baruch chapter 6 by Roman Catholics)
- Additions to Daniel
- Additions to Esther

Included by Greek & Slavonic Orthodox:

- 1 Esdras (see Esdras for other names)
- 3 Maccabees
- Prayer of Manasseh (included in the Book of Odes)
- Psalm 151 (included as an appendix to the

The 1577 Lutheran Formula of Concord in Article V states: "We believe, teach, and confess that the distinction between the Law and the Gospel is to be maintained in the Church with great diligence..." Martin Luther wrote: "Hence, whoever knows well this art of distinguishing between Law and Gospel, him place at the head and call him a doctor of Holy Scripture." Throughout the Lutheran Age of Orthodoxy (1580-1713) this hermeneutical discipline was considered foundational and important by Lutheran theologians. Carl Ferdinand Wilhelm Walther (1811-1887), who was the first (and third) president of the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod, renewed interest in and attention to this theological skill in his evening lectures at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis 1884-85.

The Reformed/Covenant Theology view

The Reformed, or Covenant Theology view is similar to the Roman Catholic view. It holds that under the new covenant, the Mosaic Law fundamentally continues, but that parts of it have "expired" and are no longer applicable. The Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) divides the Mosaic laws into three categories: moral, civil, and ceremonial. In the view of the Westminster divines, only the moral laws of the Mosaic Law, which include the Ten Commandments and the commands repeated in the New Testament, directly apply to Christians today. Ceremonial laws, in this view, include the regulations pertaining to ceremonial cleanliness, festivals, diet, and the Levitical priesthood.

While the view affirms the Sabbath like the Roman Catholic view, some advocates hold that the Commandment concerning the Sabbath was redefined by Jesus (Matthew 12:1–13, Luke 13:10–17).

Psalter)

Included by Georgian Orthodox:

- 4 Maccabees
- 2 Esdras (also included in the Latin Vulgate Appendix)

Included by Ethiopian Orthodox:

- Apocalypse of Ezra (also in the Armenian Appendix)
- Jubilees
- Enoch
- 1–3 Meqabyan
- 4 Baruch

Included in Syriac Peshitta Bible:

- Psalms 152–155
- 2 Baruch (Apocalypse of Baruch)
- Letter of Baruch (sometimes part of 2 Baruch)

In a revival of ideas established in the Puritan period, starting in the 1970s and 1980s, a branch of Reformed theology known as Christian Reconstructionism argued that the civil laws as well as the moral laws should be applied in today's society (a position called Theonomy) as part of establishing a modern theonomic state.

Christians believe that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant. Depicted is his famous Sermon on the Mount in which he commented on the Law.

Advocates of this Reformed view hold that, while not always easy to do and overlap between categories does occur, the divisions they make are possible and supported based on information contained in the commands themselves; specifically to whom they are addressed, whom or what they speak about, and their content. For example, a ceremonial law might be addressed to the Levites, speak of purification or holiness and have content which could be considered as a foreshadowing of some aspect of Christ's life or ministry. In keeping with this, most advocates also hold that when the Law is spoken of as everlasting, it is in reference to certain divisions of the Law. Some advocates, usually Theonomists, go further and embrace that idea that the whole Law continues to function, contending that the way in which Christians observe some commands has changed but not the content or meaning of the commands. (For example, they would say that the commands regarding Passover were looking forward to Christ's sacrificial death and the Communion mandate is looking back on it, the former is given to the Levitical priesthood and the latter is given to the priesthood of all believers, but both have the same content and meaning.)

Those in disagreement with this view claim that nowhere is a division of the Law mentioned in the Bible, but rather there is evidence that it is indivisible, and it would be practically impossible to sort commands by these types. Others in disagreement claim that the Law is described in various places as "everlasting" and none of it can terminate or expire.

The Dispensational view

The Dispensational view holds that under the new covenant, the Mosaic Law has fundamentally been terminated, or abolished, because, in this view, Scripture never describes the Law as divisible — it is one unit (James 2:10–11). Therefore, because portions of New Testament Scripture (such as Heb. 8:13) are understood in this view to annul at least parts of the Law, then the whole Law must be terminated.

Furthermore, this view holds that the Mosaic laws and the penalties attached to the laws were limited to the particular historical and theological setting of the Old Testament, described in this view as a different "dispensation;" a stage of time in which God dealt with humanity in a fundamentally different way than he does now. We are now living in the "dispensation" of the church/grace, which is a "parenthesis" or "intercalation" in history that is outside of God's over-arching plan for Israel, and thus the Law given to Israel doesn't now apply.

Replacing the Mosaic Law is the "Law of Christ" (1 Cor 9:21), which holds definite similarities with the Mosaic Law in moral concerns, but is new and different, replacing the first Law. Despite this difference, Dispensationalists may seek to find moral and religious principles applicable for today in all parts of the Mosaic Law.

Those in disagreement with the Dispensational view point out that nowhere does the Bible define a series of "dispensations" that this theology propones, and point out that God said that he does not change. Furthermore, opponents point out that the Mosaic Law is described in various places as "everlasting" and must

fundamentally continue in some form. Others hold that, for this same reason, none at all can terminate or expire.

The New Covenant Theology view

New Covenant Theology refers to a Christian theological view of redemptive history primarily found in Baptist circles and contrasted with Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism.

New Covenant Theology believes that God has maintained one eternal purpose in Christ which has been expressed through a multiplicity of distinct historical covenants; that prominent among these are those designated the Old Covenant (also known as the Mosaic or First Covenant) and the New Covenant; that the former, confined to the people of Israel alone, was established while that nation was assembled before Mt. Sinai and was later made obsolete through its fulfillment by the life and death of Jesus the Messiah; that it was comprised largely of shadows pointing ultimately to Jesus and His body, the Church; and that, therefore, the age in which it remained operative was at all times a period of immaturity as compared to the age of fulfillment which was inaugurated with Christ's first advent.

The Old Covenant, containing a single, unified law code, was a legal, conditional covenant requiring perfect and complete obedience of all those under it; that, on the one hand, it promised life to all who obeyed it, and, on the other hand, it pronounced a curse upon all its transgressors; that it, therefore, inescapably brought death to all who sought to be justified by it-- not because of a deficiency in the law (itself "holy, just, and good"), but because of the sinful inability of those under its charge; and that, for this reason, it is variously described as a "killing letter," a "ministry of death," and a "ministry of condemnation" -- its distinct purpose being to illumine sin so as to make manifest the Israelites' and, by implication, all men's need for a redeemer.

In contrast to the Old Covenant, the New Covenant (by virtue of Christ's perfect obedience to the law, as well as His bearing of its curse) promises only blessing to all those who belong to it; and that this second covenant, the "everlasting covenant" enacted upon better promises, has thus brought to realization all that was anticipated in the covenants made with Abraham, Moses, and David.

Under the New Covenant, God's people, having entered the age of fulfillment, now stand as mature sons; that having been set free from the tutelage and bondage of the law code written upon tablets of stone, they have subsequently been placed under the Spirit's management -- having the new and greater Lawgiver's own law now written upon their hearts.

As a result, though many of the individual commandments given in the decalogue and the eternal principles upon which the Mosaic Covenant was founded still apply to those under the New Covenant, God's people are now totally free from the Old Covenant as a covenant; that the usefulness of the Mosaic commands is not therefore to be denied, only that these are now understood to come to us through Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant; and that, in particular, with the obsolescence of the Old Covenant, the fourth commandment, the seventh day Sabbath observance, is no longer obligatory --- its relevance now pointing to that rest enjoyed by all those in Christ.

The Torah-submissive view

The Torah-submissive view, (a view held and proposed by both Jews and non-Jews), holds that the entire Torah is an indivisible whole and fundamentally continues to apply to all followers of God under the new covenant. Proponents emphasize the Biblical passages in both Old and New Testaments describing God's entire Law as both "everlasting" and "good". In addition, this view holds that, rather than negating the Torah, part of the new covenant is to have this same Torah written upon the hearts of believers by the Holy Spirit. In this view, Jesus, as the sinless son of God and Messiah, could not possibly have transgressed or taught anyone to transgress this God-given Law, but rather Jesus and the New Testament writers reaffirmed all the commands of the Law as a whole (interpreting Matthew 5:17–20, Matthew 23:1–3, Matthew 23:23, etc. to support this stance). In light of these contexts and other Biblical evidence such as prophecy, this view holds different interpretations of the New Testament passages that have traditionally been understood to invalidate parts of the Law. These interpretations are also considered to be based on literary and historical context and examination of the original languages.

Because of the belief that the Torah is applicable, commands such as dietary laws (not necessarily " kashrut" standards), seventh day Sabbath, and Biblical festival days such as Passover are honored in some way within such segments of Christianity. Not only are they seen as valid commands, but also as valuable teaching tools about Jesus himself and God's prophetic plan. As with Orthodox Judaism, capital punishment and sacrifice are not practiced because there are strict Biblical conditions on how these are to be properly practiced that are not in place today (although they are supported in principle).

This view affirms that spiritual salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus. It does not hold that any works are a way to achieve justification and hence salvation, but are rather a way of more fully obeying and imitating God as He intended; the same reason for obeying other, traditionally accepted, commands.

Those in disagreement with this view point out the various New Testament scripture passages that seem to negate some or all of the Mosaic Law, suggesting that its "everlasting" nature is subject to modification in some way under the new covenant and that portions of the Mosaic Law were only applicable in a given time and place, for a specific people, or for a limited purpose.

Other views

As far as the Ten Commandments, some believe Jesus rejected four of the Ten Commandments and endorsed only Six , citing Mark 10:17–22 and the parallels Matthew 19:16–22 and Luke 18:18–23. (cf. Cafeteria Christianity)

While some Christians from time to time have deduced from statements about the law in the writings of the Apostle Paul that Christians are under grace *to the exclusion of all law* (see antinomianism, hyperdispensationalism, Christian anarchism), this is not the usual viewpoint of Christians.

Law-related passages with disputed interpretation

The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament describes a conflict among the first Christians as to the necessity of following all the laws of the Torah to the letter, see Council of Jerusalem.

Some have interpreted Mark's statement: "Thus he declared all foods clean" (Mark 7:19 NRSV) to mean that Jesus taught that the pentateuchal food laws were no longer applicable to his followers, see also Antinomianism in the New Testament. However, the statement is not found in the Matthean parallel Matthew

15:15–20 and is also a disputed translation: the *Scholars Version* has: "This is how everything we eat is purified", Gaus' Unvarnished New Testament has: "purging all that is eaten." See also Strong's G2511.

Others note that Peter had never eaten anything that was not kosher many years after Acts 2 (Pentecost). To the heavenly vision he announced: "Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean." (Acts 10:14) Therefore, Peter was unaware that Jesus had changed the Mosaic food laws. In Mark 7, Jesus may have been just referring to a tradition of the Pharisees about eating with unwashed hands. For example, the insertion found in many translations concerning his declaration that all foods were clean is not found in the King James Version: Mark 7:19. The expression "purging all meats" may have meant the digestion and elimination of food from the body rather than the declaration that all foods were kosher. The confusion primarily centers around the participle used in the original Greek for "purging". Some scholars believe it agrees with the word for Jesus, which is nearly 40 words away from the participle. If this is the case, then it would mean that Jesus himself is the one doing the purifying. In New Testament Greek, however, the participle is rarely that far away from the noun it modifies, and many scholars agree that it is far more likely that the participle is modifying the digestive process (literally: the latrine), which is only two words away. The writer of Hebrews indicates that the sacrifices and the Levitical priesthood foreshadowed Jesus Christ's offering of himself as the sacrifice for sin on the Cross, and many have interpreted this to mean that once the reality of Christ has come, the shadows of the ritual laws cease to be obligatory (Heb 8:5; 9:23–26; 10:1). On the other hand, the New Testament repeats and applies to Christians a number of Old Testament laws, including "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Lev 19:18; cf. Golden Rule, Mark 12:31), "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul and strength" (Deut 6:4–5, the Shema, Mark 12:29–30).

The Ten Commandments on a monument on the grounds of the Texas State Capitol

Still others believe a partial list of the commandments was merely an abbreviation that stood for all the commandments because Jesus prefaced his statement to the rich young ruler with the statement: "If you want to enter life, obey the commandments". Some people claim that since Jesus did not qualify his pronouncement, that he meant all the commandments. The rich young ruler asked "which" commandments. Jesus gave him a partial list from the second table. The first set of commandments deal with a relationship to God. The second set of commandments deal with a relationship to men. No doubt Jesus considered the relationship to God important, but Jesus may have considered that the young man was perhaps lacking in this second set, which made him obligated to men. (This is inferred by his statement that to be perfect he should sell his goods, give them to the poor and come and follow Jesus — thereby opening to him a place in the coming Kingdom.)

Several times Paul mentioned adhering to "the Law", such as Romans 2:12–16, 3:31, 7:12, 8:7–8, Gal 5:3, Acts 24:14, 25:8 and preached about Ten Commandment topics such as idolatry (1 Cor 5:11, 6:9–10, 10:7, 10:14, Gal 5:19–21, Eph 5:5, Col 3:5, Acts 17:16–21, 19:23–41). Many Christians believe that the Sermon on the Mount is a form of commentary on the Ten Commandments. In the Expounding of the Law, Jesus said that he did not come to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it; while in Marcion's version of Luke 23:2 we find the extension: "We found this fellow perverting the nation *and destroying the law and the prophets*". See also Adherence to the Law and Antithesis of the Law.

Historicity of the Old Testament narratives

Current debate concerning the historicity of the various Old Testament narratives can be divided into several camps.

- One group has been labeled "biblical minimalists" by its critics. Minimalists (e.g., Philip Davies, Thomas L. Thompson, John Van Seters) see very little reliable history in any of the Old Testament.
- Conservative Old Testament scholars, "biblical maximalists," generally accept the historicity of most Old Testament narratives (save the accounts in Gen 1–11) on confessional grounds, and some Egyptologists (e.g., Kenneth Kitchen) admit that such a belief is not incompatible with the external evidence.
- Other scholars (e.g., William Dever) are somewhere in between: they see clear signs of evidence for the monarchy and much of Israel's later history, though they doubt the Exodus and Conquest.

The vast majority of scholars at American universities are somewhere between biblical minimalism and maximalism; Notably, both Kitchen and archaeologist Israel Finkelstein of Tel Aviv University are not the only scholars from the maximalist and minimalist camps who are sufficiently trained to address these questions with the necessary sophistication but both are experts in their fields — and both come to different conclusions.

Some contemporary Israeli archaeologists have now rejected much of the Deuteronomistic history of the Old Testament. Notably, Finkelstein and Neal Asher Silberman have written popular books detailing their view that many of the best-known Biblical stories are incompatible with the archaeology of the region. Conversely, in 2003 Kenneth A. Kitchen published the 662 page book *On the Reliability of the Old Testament*, which defended the Bible's reliability throughout. Although some archaeologists have argued that many Biblical accounts should be rejected due to a lack of corroborating archaeological evidence, opponents point out that this is a return to the 19th century idea that anything not confirmed by current archaeology should be dismissed, a methodology that had once led some to question the existence of major empires such as Assyria.

Because the composition of the Pentateuch according to Wellhausen was so much later than the events it described, some who accept Wellhausen's documentary hypothesis tend to regard the narratives of the Pentateuch as largely fictional, while others argue that Wellhausen's method is not valid given that so many of our surviving copies of historical documents date from a much later time period: e.g., the earliest extant copies of Julius Caesar's famous "Commentaries on the Gallic War" are medieval copies dating from the 9th century, nearly a thousand years after Caesar wrote the original.

The most important issue would seem to be the length of the period between the actual events and the setting of them down in writing. Internal evidence in the books themselves suggests that events of the Hebrew monarchies period were set down by royal scribes soon after they happened, and the writer(s) of the Book of Kings had direct access to these writings and quoted extensively from them — whereas earlier events, such as the Exodus and the Conquest, might have spent centuries as oral traditions before a written account of them was set down, which might make the written account considerably different from any actual events that gave the original basis to the tradition.

Umberto Cassuto wrote The Documentary Hypothesis, challenging Wellhausen's theory.

For various archaeological finds dating from the relevant era which purportedly confirm the accuracy of Biblical accounts, see Cyrus Cylinder and Nebo-Sarsekim Tablet.

See also Dead Sea scrolls in which a copy of the book of Isaiah has been radiocarbon dated by the University of Arizona Department of Physics to between 335

BCE and 122 BCE.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Testament"

Pali Canon

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Pali Canon** is the standard scripture collection of the Theravada Buddhist tradition, as preserved in the Pali language. The Canon was written down from oral tradition at the occasion of the Fourth Buddhist Council (in the usual Theravada numbering), 1st century BCE, in Sri Lanka on ola (palm) leaves. Passed down in writing and to other Theravadin countries, this originally largely North Indian Canon is the most complete surviving early Buddhist canon and one of the first to be written down.

The Canon was not printed until the nineteenth century, and is now also available in electronic form.

The Pali Canon falls into three general categories, called *pitaka* (piṭaka, basket) in Pali. Because of this, the canon is traditionally known as the **Tipitaka** (Tipiṭaka; *three baskets*).The three pitakas are as follows.

1. Vinaya Pitaka, dealing with rules for monks and nuns
2. Sutta Pitaka, discourses, mostly ascribed to the Buddha, but some to disciples
3. Abhidhamma Pitaka, variously described as philosophy, psychology, metaphysics etc.

The Canon in the tradition

Dr Rupert Gethin says that the whole of Buddhist history may be regarded as a working out of the implications of the early scriptures. The Canon is traditionally described by the Theravada as the Word of the Buddha (Buddhavacana), though this is obviously not intended in a literal sense, since it includes teachings by disciples.

The traditional Theravadin (Mahaviharin) interpretation is given in a series of commentaries covering nearly the whole Canon, compiled by Buddhaghosa (fourth or fifth century CE) and later monks, mainly on the basis of earlier materials now lost. Subcommentaries have been written, commenting further on the Canon and its commentaries. The traditional Theravadin interpretation is summarized in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga.
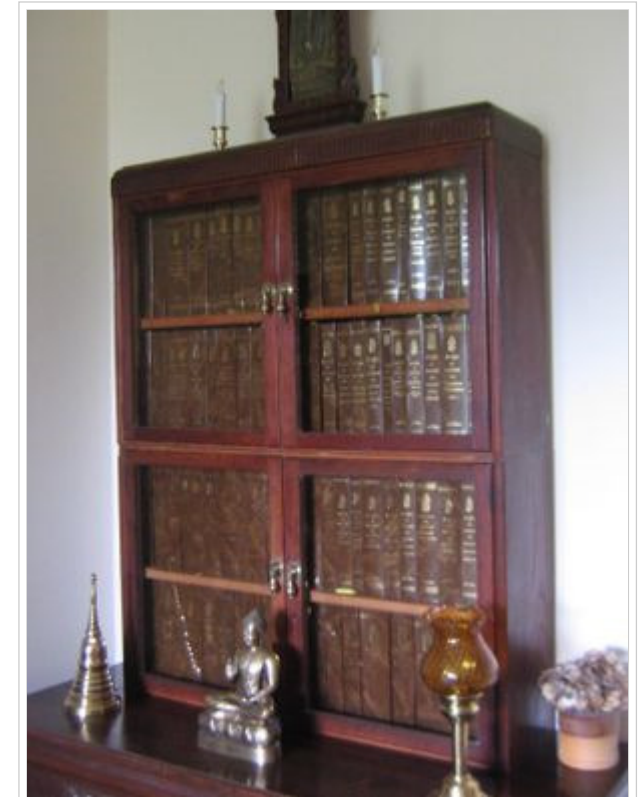
Standard edition of the Thai Pali Canon

Theravada

An official view is given by a spokesman for the Buddha Sasana Council of Burma: the Canon contains everything needed to show the path to nirvana; the commentaries and subcommentaries sometimes include much speculative matter, but are faithful to its teachings and often give very illuminating illustrations. In Sri Lanka and Thailand, "official" Buddhism has in large part adopted the interpretations of Western scholars.

Although the Canon has existed in written form for two millennia, its oral nature has not been forgotten in actual Buddhist practice within the tradition: memorization and recitation remain common. Among frequently recited texts are the Paritta. Even lay people usually know at least a few short texts by heart and recite them regularly; this is considered a form of meditation, at least if one understands the meaning. Monks are of course expected to know quite a bit more (see Dhammapada below for an example). A Burmese monk named Vicittasara even learnt the entire Canon by heart for the Sixth Council (again according to the usual Theravada numbering). Recitation is in Pali as the ritual language.

The relation of the scriptures to Buddhism as it actually exists among ordinary monks and lay people is, as with other major religious traditions, problematical: the evidence suggests that only parts of the Canon ever enjoyed wide currency, and that non-canonical works were sometimes very much more widely used; the details varied from place to place.

Origins

According to the scriptures a council was held shortly after the Buddha's passing to collect and preserve his teachings. It is traditionally believed by Theravadins that most of the Pali Canon was recited orally from this time, with only a few later additions. Most scholars hold that much of the Pali Canon, being shared with other schools, goes back to the period before the early schools separated in about the fourth or third century BCE.

Attribution to the Buddha

Concerning the attribution of the Pali Canon to the Buddha, three views are current amongst scholars:

1. parts of the Pali Canon can (probably) be attributed to the Buddha.
2. parts of the Pali Canon can be attributed to the period before the various Buddhist sects came into being (pre-sectarian Buddhism).
3. not until the fifth to sixth centuries CE can we know anything definite about the contents of the Pali Canon.

Various scholars have voiced that some of the contents of the Pali Canon can (probably) be attributed to Gautama Buddha. Dr Richard Gombrich thinks that the teachings (of the Vinaya and Sutta Pitakas) probably go back to the Buddha individually. Peter Harvey thinks much of the Pali Canon must derive from the Buddha himself.

Countries

Nepal • Sri Lanka
Cambodia • Laos
Burma • Thailand

Texts

Pali Canon
Commentaries
Subcommentaries

History

Pre-sectarian Buddhism
Early schools • Sthavira
Asoka • Third Council
Vibhajjavada
Mahinda • Sanghamitta
Dipavamsa • Mahavamsa
Buddhaghosa

Doctrine

Saṃsāra • Nibbāṇa
Middle Way
Noble Eightfold Path
Four Noble Truths
Enlightenment Stages
Precepts • 3 Jewels

J.W. de Jong has stated that parts of the Pali Canon could very well have been proclaimed by the Buddha, and subsequently transmitted and developed by his disciples and, finally, codified in fixed formulas. A.K. Warder has stated that there is no evidence to suggest that the shared teaching of the early schools was formulated by anyone else than the Buddha and his immediate followers. A. Wynne has said that the Pali Canon includes texts which go back to the very beginning of Buddhism, which perhaps include the substance of the Buddha's teaching, and in some cases, maybe even his words. Peter Harvey states that there is an overall harmony to the Canon, suggesting 'authorship' of its system of thought by one mind.

Dr Gregory Schopen, argues that it is not until the fifth to sixth centuries CE that we can know anything definite about the contents of the Canon. This position did not attract much support, and was criticized by A. Wynne.

The Earliest books of the Pali Canon

Different positions have been taken on what are the earliest books of the Canon. The majority of Western scholars consider the earliest identifiable stratum to be mainly prose works, the Vinaya (excluding the Parivara) and the first four nikayas of the Sutta Pitaka, and perhaps also some short verse works such as the Suttanipata.However, some scholars, paricularly in Japan, maintain that the Suttanipata is the earliest of all Buddhist scriptures, followed by the Itivuttaka and Udana.. However, some of the developments in teachings may only reflect changes in teaching that the Buddha himself adopted, during the 45 years that the Buddha was teaching.

Most of the above scholars would probably agree that their early books include some later additions. On the other hand, some scholars have claimed that central aspects of late works are or may be much earlier.

According to the Sinhalese chronicles, the Pali Canon was written down in the reign of King Vattagamini (Vaṭṭagāmiṇi) (1st century B.C.E.) in Sri Lanka, at the Fourth Buddhist council. Most scholars hold that little if anything was added to the Canon after this, though Schopen questions this.

Texts and translations

The climate of Theravada countries is not conducive to the survival of manuscripts. Apart from brief quotations in inscriptions and a two-page fragment from the eighth or ninth century found in Nepal, the oldest manuscripts known are from late in the fifteenth century, and there is not very much from before the eighteenth.

The first complete printed edition of the Canon was published in Burma in 1900, in 38 volumes. The following editions of the Pali text of the Canon are readily available in the West.

- Pali Text Society edition, 1877–1927 (a few volumes subsequently replaced by new editions), 57 volumes including indexes, individual volumes also available separately (website)
- Thai edition, 1925–8, 45 volumes; more accurate than the PTS edition, but with fewer variant readings; electronic transcript by budsir: Buddhist scriptures information retrieval, CD-ROM and online, both requiring payment

- Sixth Council edition, Rangoon, 1954–6, 40 volumes; more accurate than the Thai edition, but with fewer variant readings; electronic transcript by Vipassana Research Institute available online in searchable database free of charge, or on CD-ROM (p&p only) from the Institute; another transcript of this edition, produced by the Dhamma Society Fund under the patronage of the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, is expected online soon
- Sinhalese (Buddha Jayanti) edition, 1957–?1993, 58 volumes including parallel Sinhalese translations, transcript in Pali Canon Online Database, searchable, free of charge (not yet fully proofread)

No one edition has all the best readings, and scholars must compare different editions.

Translation: *Pali Canon in English Translation*, 1895- , in progress, 43 volumes so far, Pali Text Society, Bristol; for details of these and other translations of individual books see the separate articles.

Contents of the Canon

As noted above, the Canon consists of three pitakas.

- Vinaya Pitaka (vinayapiṭaka)
- Sutta Pitaka or Suttanta Pitaka
- Abhidhamma Pitaka

Details are given below. For fuller information, see standard references on Pali literature.

Vinaya Pitaka

The first category, the Vinaya Pitaka, is mostly concerned with the rules of the *sangha*, both monks and nuns. The rules are preceded by stories telling how the Buddha came to lay them down, and followed by explanations and analysis. According to the stories, the rules were devised on an ad hoc basis as the Buddha encountered various behavioural problems or disputes among his followers. This pitaka can be divided into three parts.

- Suttavibhanga (-vibhaṅga) Commentary on the Patimokkha, a basic code of rules for monks and nuns that is not as such included in the Canon. The monks' rules are dealt with first, followed by those of the nuns' rules not already covered.
- Khandhaka Other rules grouped by topic in 22 chapters.
- Parivara (parivāra) Analysis of the rules from various points of view.

Pali Canon		
Vinaya Pitaka		
Sutta-vibhanga	Khandhaka	Pari-vara
Sutta Pitaka		
Digha Nikaya	Majjhima Nikaya	Samyutta Nikaya
Anguttara Nikaya	Khuddaka Nikaya	
Abhidhamma Pitaka		
Dhs. Vbh. Dhk. Pug. Kvu. Yamaka	Patthana	

Sutta Pitaka

The second category is the *Sutta Pitaka* (literally "basket of threads", or of "the well spoken"; Sanskrit: *Sutra Pitaka*, following the former meaning) which consists primarily of accounts of the Buddha's teachings. The Sutta Pitaka has five subdivisions or nikayas.

- Digha Nikaya (dīghanikāya) 34 long discourses. Joy Manné argues that this book was particularly intended to make converts, with its high proportion of debates and devotional material.
- Majjhima Nikaya 152 medium-length discourses. Manné argues that this book was particularly intended to give a solid grounding in the teaching to converts, with a high proportion of sermons and consultations.
- Samyutta Nikaya (saṃyutta-) Thousands of short discourses in fifty-odd groups by subject, person etc. Bhikkhu Bodhi, in his translation, says this nikaya has the most detailed explanations of doctrine.
- Anguttara Nikaya (aṅguttara-) Thousands of short discourses arranged numerically from ones to elevens. It contains more elementary teaching for ordinary people than the preceding three.
- Khuddaka Nikaya A miscellaneous collection of works in prose or verse. See below.

Khuddaka Nikaya

The contents of this nikaya vary somewhat between different editions of the Canon. The "standard" list, given in most western sources, contains the following.

- Khuddakapatha (-pāṭha) Nine short texts in prose or verse. This seems to have been intended as an introductory handbook for novices. Most of its contents are found elsewhere in the Canon.
- Dhammapada 423 verses ascribed by tradition to the Buddha in 26 chapters by topic. About half the Pali verses are found elsewhere in the canon. In the Sinhalese tradition, monks have been required to know this book by heart before they can be ordained. In the Burmese examination system, this is one of the texts to be studied in the first stage of the syllabus.
- Udana (udāna) 80 short passages, mostly verse, ascribed to the Buddha, with introductory stories.
- Itivuttaka 112 short prose teachings ascribed to the Buddha followed by verse paraphrases or complements. These are arranged numerically, from ones to fours.
- Suttanipata(-nipāta) Poems, some in prose frameworks. In five parts, of which the first four contain 54 poems. The fifth part is a single poem in 16 sections, plus an introduction and a conclusion, which last includes a little prose.
- Vimanavatthu (vimāna-) 85 poems telling of celestial mansions resulting from good karma.
- Petavatthu 51 poems telling of the suffering of ghosts resulting from bad karma. It gives prominence to the idea that gifts to monks can benefit one's deceased relatives' ghosts.
- Theragatha(-gāthā) 264 poems ascribed to early monks, arranged roughly by increasing number of verses.
- Therigatha (therī-) 73 poems ascribed to early nuns, arranged by increasing number of verses.
- Jataka (jātaka) 547 poems said to relate to the Buddha's previous lives, arranged roughly by increasing number of verses. Professor Oskar von Hinüber

says only the last 50 were intended to be intelligible on their own without the Commentary. As a result of the arrangement, these make up the greater part of the book.

- Niddesa Commentary on parts of Suttanipata: the last two parts and one other sutta. Traditionally ascribed to the Buddha's disciple Sariputta.

- Patisambhidamagga (paṭisambhidā-) 30 treatises on various topics. Traditionally ascribed to Sariputta. Gethin says this book presents the awakening experience as having many different dimensions and aspects, related to the whole of the teaching, and yet as a simple, coherent whole.

- Apadana (apadāna) About 600 poems, most telling how their authors performed a meritorious act in a distant past life, resulting in favourable rebirths and eventual nirvana. There are 589 in the Pali Text Society's edition, 603 in the Sixth Council edition and 592 in a number of others.

- Buddhavamsa (-vaṃsa) Short verse book, mainly telling of the previous 24 Buddhas and the current Buddha's meritorious acts towards them in his previous lives.

- Cariyapitaka (cariyā-) 35 poems telling of Gotama Buddha's practice of 7 of the perfections in his previous lives.

However, some editions contain in addition some works that have been described by western scholars as paracanonical or semicanonical.

Paracanonical or semicanonical works

The following works are included in the Sixth Council edition of the Canon, including the new transcript from Thailand.

- Nettipakarana (nettipakaraṇa, nettippakaraṇa or just netti) This book presents methods of interpretation. The colophon ascribes it to the Buddha's disciple Kaccana.

- Petakopadesa (peṭakopadesa) Presents the same methods as the preceding book. They have a large amount of overlap. The text of this book is very corrupt. The colophon ascribes it to the Buddha's disciple Kaccana.

- Milindapanha (-pañha or -pañhā) A dialogue between King Menander of Bactria (second century B.C.E.) and the monk Nagasena. Rhys Davids describes this as the greatest work of classical Indian prose literature.

The first two of these, but not the third, are included in the Sinhalese (printed) edition. All are omitted from the Thai edition. Inclusion in printed editions is not the same as canonicity (cf. Apocrypha). Professor George Bond of Northwestern University says of the first of these books that some Theravadins regard it as quasi-canonical, others as canonical, especially in Burma. About 1800, the head of the Burmese sangha regarded at least the first two of these books as canonical. On the other hand, at least one recent Burmese teacher has not.

Abhidhamma Pitaka

The third category, the *Abhidhamma Pitaka* (literally "beyond the dhamma", "higher dhamma" or "special dhamma", Sanskrit: *Abhidharma Pitaka*), is a collection of texts which give a systematic philosophical description of the nature of mind, matter and time. There are seven books in the Abhidhamma Pitaka.

Ancient style of scripture used for the Pali Canon

- Dhammasangani (-saṅgaṇi or -saṅgaṇī) Enumeration, definition and classification of dhammas

- Vibhanga (vibhaṅga) Analysis of 18 topics by various methods, including those of the Dhammasangani
- Dhatukatha (dhātukathā) Deals with interrelations between ideas from the previous two books
- Puggalapannatti (-paññatti) Explanations of types of person, arranged numerically in lists from ones to tens
- Kathavatthu (kathā-) Over 200 debates on points of doctrine
- Yamaka Applies to 10 topics a procedure involving converse questions (e.g. Is X Y? Is Y X?)
- Patthana (paṭṭhāna) Analysis of 24 types of condition

The traditional position is that the Abhidhamma is the absolute teaching, while the suttas are adapted to the hearer. Most scholars describe the abhidhamma as an attempt to systematize the teachings of the suttas: Harvey, Gethin. Cousins says that where the suttas think in terms of sequences or processes the abhidhamma thinks in terms of specific events or occasions.

Comparison with other Buddhist canons

The other two main canons in use at the present day are the Tibetan Kangyur and the Chinese Buddhist Canon. The former is in about a hundred volumes and includes versions of the Vinaya Pitaka and the Dhammapada (the latter confusingly called Udanavarga) and of parts of some other books. The standard modern edition of the latter is the Taisho published in Japan, which is in a hundred much larger volumes. It includes both canonical and non-canonical (including Chinese and Japanese) literature and its arrangement does not clearly distinguish the two. It includes versions of the Vinaya Pitaka, the first four nikayas, the Dhammapada, the Itivuttaka and the Milindapanha and of parts of some other books. These Chinese and Tibetan versions are not usually translations of the Pali and differ from it to varying extents, but are recognizably the "same" works. On the other hand, the Chinese abhidharma books are different works from the Pali Abhidhamma Pitaka, though they follow a common methodology.

Looking at things from the other side, the bulk of the Chinese and Tibetan canons consists of Mahayana sutras and tantras, which, apart from a few tantras, have no equivalent in the Pali Canon.

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Pentateuch

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

Pentateuch (Πεντετεύχως) ("five rolls or cases") is the Greek name for the first 5 books of the Hebrew Bible: the name is derived from two Greek words: *pente*, meaning "five", and *teuxos* which roughly means "case", a reference to the cases containing the five scrolls of the Laws of Moses.

1. Genesis
2. Exodus
3. Leviticus
4. Numbers
5. Deuteronomy

In Christianity, these books are found in the Old Testament.

Contents

This is a brief summary of the contents of the books of the Pentateuch. For details see the individual books.

Genesis begins with the primeval history: the story of creation and the garden of Eden (Genesis 1-3), the account of the descendants of Adam to the rise of Noah who survives a great flood (Genesis 3-9), and the account of the descendants of Noah through the tower of Babel to the rise of Abram (Abraham) (Genesis 10-11). Next follows the story of the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the life of Joseph (Genesis 12-50). God gives to the patriarchs a promise of the land of Canaan, but at the end of Genesis the clan of Jacob ends up leaving Canaan for Egypt because of a famine.

Exodus describes the rise of Moses who leads Israelites out of Pharaoh's Egypt (Exodus 1-18) to Mount Sinai/Horeb where he mediates to them God's covenant and laws (Exodus 19-24), deals with the violation of the law when Israel makes the Golden Calf (Exodus 32-34) and instructs them on building the tabernacle (Exodus 25-31; 35-40).

Leviticus begins with instructions about how to use the tabernacle that they had just built. (Leviticus 1-10) This is followed by rules of clean and unclean (Leviticus 11-15), the Day of Atonement (Leviticus 16), and various moral and ritual laws sometimes called the Holiness Code (Leviticus 17-26).

Numbers takes two censuses where the number of Israelites are counted (Numbers 1-3, 26), and has many laws mixed among the narratives. The narratives tell how Israel consolidated itself as a community at Sinai (Numbers 1-9), set out from Sinai to move towards Canaan and spied out the land (Numbers 10-13). Because of unbelief at various points, but especially at Kadesh Barnea (Numbers 14), the Israelites were condemned to wander for forty years in the desert in

the vicinity of Kadesh instead of immediately entering the land of promise. Even Moses sins and is told he would not live to enter the land (Numbers 20). At the end of Numbers (Numbers 26-35) Israel moves from the area of Kadesh towards the promised land. They leave the Sinai desert and go around Edom and through Moab where Balak and Balaam oppose them (Numbers 22-24; 31:8, 15-16). They defeat two Transjordan kings, Og and Sihon (Numbers 21), and so come to occupy some territory outside of Canaan. At the end of the book they are on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho ready to enter the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy consists primarily of a series of speeches by Moses on the plains of Moab opposite Jericho exhorting Israel to obey God and giving further instruction on the laws. At the end of the book (Deuteronomy 34) Moses is allowed to see the promised land from a mountain, but dies and is buried by God before Israel begins the conquest of Canaan.

Composition

The Pentateuch was traditionally believed to have been written down by Moses. Hence Genesis is sometimes called the first book of Moses, Exodus the second book of Moses, and so forth. In its current form, each successive book of the Pentateuch picks up and continues the story of the previous book to form a continuous story. Hence Genesis tells how the Israelites went to Egypt while Exodus tells how they came to leave Egypt. Exodus describes the building of the tabernacle at Sinai while in Leviticus Moses is given rules while at Sinai for offering sacrifice and worship at that tabernacle. In Numbers the Israelites leave Sinai and travel eventually to the plains of Moab, while in Deuteronomy Moses gives speeches about the law on the plains of Moab.

The *Pentateuch* can be contrasted with the Hexateuch, a term for the first six books of the Bible. The traditional view is that Joshua wrote the sixth book of the Hexateuch, namely the Book of Joshua and so it was separated from the five books of the Pentateuch ascribed to Moses. But as a story the Pentateuch seems incomplete without Joshua's account of the conquest of the promised land. The Book of Joshua completes the story, continuing directly from the events of Deuteronomy, and documents the conquest of Canaan predicted in the Pentateuch. This has led some scholars to propose that the proper literary unit is that of the Hexateuch rather than the Pentateuch. Still others think that Deuteronomy stands apart from the first four books of the Pentateuch, and so speak of the first four as the Tetrateuch (Genesis through Numbers). This view sees Deuteronomy as the book that introduces a series of books influenced by Deuteronomy called the Deteronomistic History consisting of the books of Joshua, Judges, 1 & 2 Samuel, and 1 & 2 Kings. This view was expounded by Martin Noth.

Documentary Hypothesis

In classical Documentary Hypothesis, as most popularly proposed by Julius Wellhausen (1844-1918), the Pentateuch is composed of four separate and identifiable texts, dating roughly from the period of Solomon up until exilic priests and scribes. These various texts were brought together as one document (the Pentateuch, or Torah) by scribes after the exile. The traditional names are:

- **The Jahwist (or J)** - written circa 850 BCE. The southern kingdom's (i.e. Judah) interpretation. It is named according to the prolific use of the name "Yahweh" (or Jaweh, in German, the divine name or Tetragrammaton) in its text.
- **The Elohist (or E)** - written circa 750 BCE. The northern kingdom's (i.e. Israel) interpretation. As above, it is named because of its preferred use of "Elohim" (Generic name for "god" in Hebrew).
- **The Deuteronomist (or D)** - written circa 621 BCE. Dating specifically from the time of King Josiah of Judah and responsible for the book of

Deuteronomy as well as Joshua and most of the subsequent books up to 2 Kings.

- **The Priestly source (or P)** - written during or after the exile. So named because of its focus on levitical laws.

There is debate amongst scholars as to exactly how many different documents compose the corpus of the Pentateuch, and as to what sections of text are included in the different documents.

A number of smaller independent texts have also been identified, including the Song of the Sea and other works, mainly in verse, most of them older than the four main texts. The individual books were edited and combined into their present form by the Redactor, frequently identified with the scribe Ezra, in the post-Babylonian exile period.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentateuch"

Philosophy

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, truth, justice, beauty, validity, mind and language. Philosophy is distinguished from other ways of addressing these questions (such as mysticism or mythology) by its critical, generally systematic approach and its reliance on reasoned argument. The word *philosophy* is of Ancient Greek origin: φιλοσοφία (*philosophía*), meaning "love of knowledge", "love of wisdom".

Branches of philosophy

To give an exhaustive list of the main branches of philosophy is difficult, because there have been different, equally acceptable divisions at different times, and the divisions are often relative to the concerns of a particular period. However, the following branches are usually accepted as the main ones.

The philosopher Socrates about to take poison hemlock.

- **Metaphysics** investigates the nature of being and the world. Traditional branches are cosmology and ontology.
- **Epistemology** is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge, and whether knowledge is possible. Among its central concerns has been the challenge posed by skepticism and the relationships between truth, belief and justification.
- **Ethics**, or 'moral philosophy', is concerned with questions of how persons ought to act or if such questions are answerable. The main branches of ethics are meta-ethics (sometimes called "analytic ethics"), normative ethics and applied ethics. Metaethics concerns the nature of ethical thought, comparison of various ethical systems, whether there are absolute ethical truths, and how such truths could be known. Ethics is also associated with the idea of morality. Plato's early dialogues include a search for definitions of virtue.
- **Political Philosophy** is the study of government and the relationship of individuals and communities to the state. It includes questions about law, property, and the rights and obligations of the citizen.
- **Aesthetics** deals with beauty, art, enjoyment, sensory-emotional values, perception, and matters of taste and sentiment.
- **Logic** deals with patterns of thinking that lead from true premises to true conclusions. Beginning in the late 19th century, mathematicians such as Frege began a mathematical treatment of logic, and today the subject of logic has two broad divisions: mathematical logic (formal symbolic logic) and what is now called philosophical logic.
- **Philosophy of Mind** deals with the nature of the mind and its relationship to the body, and is typified by disputes between dualism and materialism. In recent years there is an increasing connection between this branch of philosophy and cognitive science
- **Philosophy of language**: is the reasoned inquiry into the nature, origins, and usage of language.

Most academic subjects have a philosophy, for example the philosophy of science, the philosophy of mathematics, and the philosophy of history. In addition, a

range of academic subjects have emerged to deal with areas which would have historically been the subject of philosophy. These include Psychology, Anthropology and Science.

Western philosophy

History

The introduction of the terms "philosopher" and "philosophy" has been ascribed to the Greek thinker Pythagoras (see Diogenes Laertius: "De vita et moribus philosophorum", I, 12; Cicero: "Tusculanae disputationes", V, 8-9). The ascription is based on a passage in a lost work of Herakleides Pontikos, a disciple of Aristotle. It is considered to be part of the widespread legends of Pythagoras of this time. "Philosopher" replaced the word " sophist" (from *sophoi*), which was used to describe "wise men," teachers of rhetoric, who were important in Athenian democracy.

The history of philosophy is customarily divided into three periods: Ancient philosophy, Medieval philosophy, and Modern philosophy. For a map with the dates and places of birth of most western philosophers see here.

Ancient philosophy
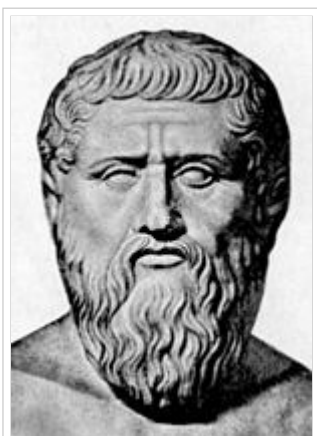
Plato

Ancient philosophy is the philosophy of the Graeco-Roman world from the sixth century [circa 585] B.C. to the fourth century A.D. It is usually divided into four periods: the pre-Socratic period, the periods of Plato and Aristotle, and the post-Aristotelian (or Hellenistic) period. Sometimes a fifth period is added that includes the Christian and Neo-Platonist philosophers. The most important of the ancient philosophers (in terms of subsequent influence) are Plato and Aristotle.

The themes of ancient philosophy are: understanding the fundamental causes and principles of the universe; explaining it in an economical and uniform way; the epistemological problem of reconciling the diversity and change of the natural universe, with the possibility of obtaining fixed and certain knowledge about it; questions about things which cannot be perceived by the senses, such as numbers, elements, universals, and gods; the analysis of patterns of reasoning and argument; the nature of the good life and the importance of understanding and knowledge in order to pursue it; the explication of the concept of justice, and its relation to various political systems.

In this period the crucial features of the philosophical method were established: a critical approach to received or established views, and the appeal to reason and argumentation.
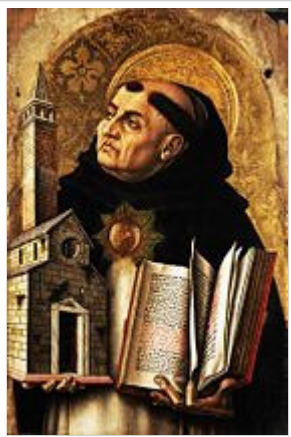
St. Thomas Aquinas

Medieval philosophy

Medieval philosophy is the philosophy of Western Europe and the Middle East during what is now known as the medieval era or the Middle Ages, roughly extending from the fall of the Roman Empire to the Renaissance. Medieval philosophy is defined partly by the rediscovery and further development of classical Greek and Hellenistic philosophy, and partly by the need to address theological problems and to integrate sacred doctrine (in Islam, Judaism and Christianity) with secular learning.

Some problems discussed throughout this period are the relation of faith to reason, the existence and unity of God, the object of theology and metaphysics, the problems of knowledge, of universals, and of individuation.

Philosophers from the Middle Ages include the Muslim philosophers Alkindus, Alfarabi, Alhacen, Avicenna, Algazel, Avempace, Abubacer and Averroes; the Jewish philosophers Maimonides and Gersonides; and the Christian philosophers Anselm, Peter Abelard, Roger Bacon, Thomas Aquinas, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham and Jean Buridan.

Early modern philosophy (c. 1600 – c. 1800)

John Locke

The early modern period begins with the revival of skepticism and with the growth of modern physical science. The main themes of this era are: the problem of how we can know anything about the world outside our own minds; the dispute between rationalists and empiricists, rationalists holding that the ultimate source of knowledge is reason, empiricists, that any genuine knowledge must be justified by experience; the nature of the mind or self, and its relation to the body, and the closely related problem of reconciling our belief in free will with the emerging scientific picture of the physical universe as deterministic; attempts to explain the relationship between God and science, and the rebirth of political philosophy.

Canonical figures include Montaigne, Descartes, Francis Bacon, Locke, Spinoza, Leibniz, Berkeley, Hume, and Kant. Chronologically, this era spans the 17th and 18th centuries, and is generally considered to end with Kant's systematic attempt to reconcile Newtonian physics with traditional metaphysical topics.

Nineteenth century philosophy

Later modern philosophy is usually considered to begin after the philosophy of Immanuel Kant at the beginning of the 19th-century. German idealists, such as Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling, expanded on the work of Kant by maintaining that the world is constituted by a rational mind-like process, and as such is entirely knowable.

Rejecting idealism, other philosophers, many working from outside the university, initiated lines of thought that would occupy academic philosophy in the early and mid-20th century:

- Peirce and William James initiated the school of pragmatism
- Husserl initiated the school of phenomenology
- Kierkegaard and Nietzsche laid the groundwork for existentialism
- Frege's work in logic and Sidgwick's work in ethics provided the tools for early analytic philosophy

Contemporary philosophy (c. 1900 – present)

In the last hundred years, philosophy has increasingly become an activity practiced within the university, and accordingly it has grown more specialized and more distinct from the natural sciences. Much of philosophy in this period concerns itself with explaining the relation between the theories of the natural sciences and the ideas of the humanities or common sense.

In the Anglophone world, analytic philosophy became the dominant school. In the first half of the century, it was a cohesive school, more or less identical to logical positivism, united by the notion that philosophical problems could and should be solved by attention to logic and language. In the latter half of the twentieth century, analytic philosophy diffused into a wide variety of disparate philosophical views, only loosely united by historical lines of influence and a self-identified commitment to clarity and rigor. Since roughly 1960, analytic philosophy has shown a revival of interest in the history of philosophy, as well as attempts to integrate philosophical work with scientific results, especially in psychology and cognitive science.

On continental Europe, no single school or temperament enjoyed dominance. The flight of the logical positivists from central Europe during the 1930s and 1940s, however, diminished philosophical interest in natural science, and an emphasis on the humanities, broadly construed, figures prominently in what is usually called " continental philosophy". Twentieth century movements such as phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, structuralism, and poststructuralism are included within this loose category.

Main Doctrines

Realism and nominalism

Realism sometimes means the position opposed to the 18th-century Idealism, namely that some things have real existence outside the mind. Classically, however, realism is the doctrine that abstract entities corresponding to universal terms like 'man' have a real existence. It is opposed to nominalism, the view that abstract or universal terms are words only, or denote mental states such as ideas, beliefs, or intentions. The latter position, famously held by William of Ockham, is conceptualism.

Rationalism and empiricism

René Descartes

Rationalism is any view emphasizing the role or importance of human reason. Extreme rationalism tries to base all knowledge on reason alone. Rationalism typically starts from premises that cannot coherently be denied, then attempts by logical steps to deduce every possible object of knowledge.

The first rationalist, in this broad sense, is often held to be Parmenides (fl. 480 BCE), who argued that it is impossible to doubt that thinking actually occurs. But thinking must have an object, therefore something *beyond* thinking really exists. Parmenides deduced that what really exists must have certain properties – for example, that it cannot come into existence or cease to exist, that it is a coherent whole, that it remains the same eternally (in fact, exists altogether outside time). Zeno of Elea (born c. 489 BCE) was a disciple of Parmenides, and argued that motion is impossible, since the assertion that it exists implies a contradiction.

Plato (427–347 BCE) was also influenced by Parmenides, but combined rationalism with a form of realism. The philosopher's work is to consider being, and the essence of things. But the characteristic of essences is that they are universal. The nature of a man, a triangle, a tree, applies to all men, all triangles, all trees. Plato argued that these essences are mind-independent 'forms', that humans (but particularly philosophers) can come to know by reason, and by ignoring the distractions of sense-perception.

Modern rationalism begins with Descartes. Reflection on the nature of perceptual experience, as well as scientific discoveries in physiology and optics, led Descartes (and also Locke) to the view that we are directly aware of ideas, rather than objects. This view gave rise to three questions:

1. Is an idea a true copy of the real thing that it represents? Sensation is not a direct interaction between bodily objects and our sense, but is a physiological process involving representation (for example, an image on the retina). Locke thought that a 'secondary quality' such as a sensation of green could in no way resemble the arrangement of particles in matter that go to produce this sensation, although he thought that 'primary qualities' such as shape, size, number, were really in objects.
2. How can physical objects such as chairs and tables, or even physiological processes in the brain, give rise to mental items such as ideas? This is part of what became known as the mind-body problem.
3. If all the contents of awareness are ideas, how can we know that anything exists apart from ideas?

Descartes tried to address the last problem by reason. He began, echoing Parmenides, with a principle that he thought could not coherently be denied: I *think*, therefore I *am* (often given in his original Latin: *Cogito ergo sum*). From this principle, Descartes went on to construct a complete system of knowledge (which involves proving the existence of God, using, among other means, a version of the ontological argument). His view that reason alone could yield substantial truths about reality strongly influenced those philosophers usually considered modern rationalists (such as Baruch Spinoza, Gottfried Leibniz, and Christian Wolff), while provoking criticism from other philosophers who have retrospectively come to be grouped together as empiricists.

Empiricism, in contrast to rationalism, downplays or dismisses the ability of reason alone to yield knowledge of the world, preferring to base any knowledge we have on our senses. John Locke propounded the classic empiricist view in *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* in 1689, developing a form of naturalism and empiricism on roughly scientific (and Newtonian) principles.

During this era, religious ideas played a mixed role in the struggles that preoccupied secular philosophy. Bishop Berkeley's famous idealist refutation of key tenets of Isaac Newton is a case of an Enlightenment philosopher who drew substantially from religious ideas. Other influential religious thinkers of the time include Blaise Pascal, Joseph Butler, and Jonathan Edwards. Other major writers, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Edmund Burke, took a rather different path. The restricted interests of many of the philosophers of the time foreshadow the separation and specialization of different areas of philosophy that would occur in the 20th century.

Skepticism

Skepticism is a philosophical attitude that questions the possibility of obtaining *any* sort of knowledge. It was first articulated by Pyrrho, who believed that everything could be doubted except *appearances*. Sextus Empiricus (2nd century CE) describes skepticism as an "ability to place in antithesis, in any manner whatever, appearances and judgments, and thus […] to come first of all to a suspension of judgment and then to mental tranquility." Skepticism so conceived is not merely the use of doubt, but is the use of doubt for a particular end: a calmness of the soul, or *ataraxia*. Skepticism poses itself as a challenge to dogmatism, whose adherents think they have found the truth.

Sextus noted that the reliability of perception may be questioned, because it is idiosyncratic to the perceiver. The appearance of individual things changes depending on whether they are in a group: for example, the shavings of a goat's horn are white when taken alone, yet the intact horn is black. A pencil, when viewed lengthwise, looks like a stick; but when examined at the tip, it looks merely like a circle.

Skepticism was revived in the early modern period by Michel de Montaigne and Blaise Pascal. Its most extreme exponent, however, was David Hume. Hume argued that there are only two kinds of reasoning: what he called *probable* and *demonstrative* (cf Hume's fork). Neither of these two forms of reasoning can lead us to a reasonable belief in the continued existence of an external world. Demonstrative reasoning cannot do this, because demonstration (that is, deductive reasoning from well-founded premises) alone cannot establish the uniformity of nature (as captured by scientific laws and principles, for example). Such reason alone cannot establish that the future will resemble the past. We have certain beliefs about the world (that the sun will rise tomorrow, for example), but these beliefs are the product of habit and custom, and do not depend on any sort of logical inferences from what is already given *certain*. But *probable* reasoning (inductive reasoning), which aims to take us from the observed to the unobserved, cannot do this either: it *also* depends on the uniformity of nature, and this supposed uniformity cannot be proved, without circularity, by any appeal to uniformity. The best that either sort of reasoning can accomplish is conditional truth: *if* certain assumptions are true, *then* certain conclusions follow. So nothing about the world can be established with certainty. Hume concludes that there is no solution to the skeptical argument – except, in effect, to ignore it.

Even if these matters were resolved in every case, we would have in turn to justify our standard of justification, leading to an infinite regress (hence the term *regress skepticism*).

Many philosophers have questioned the value of such skeptical arguments. The question of whether we can achieve knowledge of the external world is based on how high a standard we set for the justification of such knowledge. If our standard is absolute certainty, then we cannot progress beyond the existence of mental sensations. We cannot even deduce the existence of a coherent or continuing "I" that experiences these sensations, much less the existence of an external world. On the other hand, if our standard is too low, then we admit follies and illusions into our body of knowledge. This argument against absolute

skepticism asserts that the practical philosopher must move beyond solipsism, and accept a standard for knowledge that is high but not absolute.

Idealism

Idealism is the epistemological doctrine that nothing can be directly known outside of the minds of thinking beings. Or in an alternative stronger form, it is the metaphysical doctrine that nothing exists apart from minds and the "contents" of minds. In modern Western philosophy, the epistemological doctrine begins as a core tenet of Descartes – that what is in the mind is known more reliably than what is known through the senses. The first prominent modern Western idealist in the metaphysical sense was George Berkeley. Berkeley argued that there is no deep distinction between mental states, such as feeling pain, and the ideas about so-called "external" things, that appear to us through the senses. There is no real distinction, in this view, between certain sensations of heat and light that we experience, which lead us to believe in the external existence of a fire, and the fire itself. Those sensations are all there is to fire. Berkeley expressed this with the Latin formula *esse est percipi*: to be is to be perceived. In this view the opinion, "strangely prevailing upon men", that houses, mountains, and rivers have an existence independent of their perception by a thinking being is false.
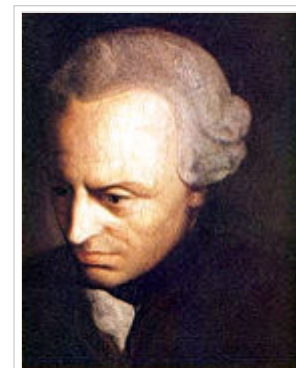

Immanuel Kant

Forms of idealism were prevalent in philosophy from the 18th century to the early 20th century. Transcendental idealism, advocated by Immanuel Kant, is the view that there are limits on what can be understood, since there is much that cannot be brought under the conditions of objective judgment. Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781–1787) in an attempt to reconcile the conflicting approaches of rationalism and empiricism, and to establish a new groundwork for studying metaphysics. Kant's intention with this work was to look at what we know and then consider what must be true about it, as a logical consequence of, the *way* we know it. One major theme was that there are fundamental features of reality that escape our direct knowledge because of the natural limits of the human faculties. Although Kant held that objective knowledge of the world required the mind to impose a conceptual or categorical framework on the stream of pure sensory data – a framework including space and time themselves – he maintained that *things-in-themselves* existed independently of our perceptions and judgments; he was therefore not an idealist in any simple sense. Indeed, Kant's account of *things-in-themselves* is both controversial and highly complex. Continuing his work, Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Schelling dispensed with belief in the independent existence of the world, and created a thoroughgoing idealist philosophy.

The most notable work of this German idealism was G.W.F. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, of 1807. Hegel admitted his ideas weren't new, but that all the previous philosophies had been incomplete. His goal was to correctly finish their job. Hegel asserts that the twin aims of philosophy are to account for the contradictions apparent in human experience (which arise, for instance, out of the supposed contradictions between "being" and "not being"), and also simultaneously to resolve and preserve these contradictions by showing their compatibility at a higher level of examination ("being" and "not being" are resolved with "becoming") . This program of acceptance and reconciliation of contradictions is known as the "Hegelian dialectic". Philosophers in the Hegelian tradition include Ludwig Andreas Feuerbach, who coined the term projection as pertaining to our inability to recognize anything in the external world without projecting qualities of ourselves upon those things, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, and the British idealists, notably T.H. Green, J.M.E. McTaggart, and F.H. Bradley.

Few 20th century philosophers have embraced idealism. However, quite a few have embraced Hegelian dialectic. Immanuel Kant's "Copernican Turn" also

remains an important philosophical concept today.

Pragmatism
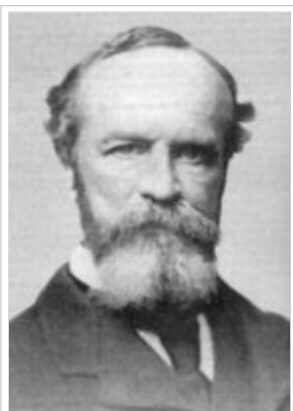
Pragmatism was founded in the spirit of finding a scientific concept of truth, which is not dependent on either personal insight (or revelation) or reference to some metaphysical realm. The truth of a statement should be judged by the effect it has on our actions and truth should be seen as that which the whole of scientific enquiry will ultimately agree on. This should probably be seen as a guiding principle more than a definition of what it means for something to be true, though the details of how this principle should be interpreted have been subject to discussion since Peirce first conceived it. Like Rorty many seem convinced that Pragmatism holds that the truth of beliefs does not consist in their correspondence with reality, but in their usefulness and efficacy.

The late 19th-century American philosophers Charles Peirce and William James were its co-founders, and it was later developed by John Dewey as instrumentalism. Since the usefulness of any belief at any time might be contingent on circumstance, Peirce and James conceptualised final truth as that which would be established only by the future, final settlement of all opinion. Critics have accused pragmatism of falling victim to a simple fallacy: because something that is true proves useful, that usefulness is the basis for its truth. Thinkers in the pragmatist tradition have included John Dewey, George Santayana, W.V.O. Quine and C.I. Lewis. Pragmatism has more recently been taken in new directions by Richard Rorty, John Lachs, Donald Davidson and Hilary Putnam.

William James

Phenomenology

Edmund Husserl's phenomenology was an ambitious attempt to lay the foundations for an account of the structure of conscious experience in general. An important part of Husserl's phenomenological project was to show that all conscious acts are directed at or about objective content, a feature that Husserl called *intentionality*.

In the first part of his two-volume work, the *Logical Investigations* (1901), he launched an extended attack on psychologism. In the second part, he began to develop the technique of *descriptive phenomenology*, with the aim of showing how objective judgments are indeed grounded in conscious experience – not, however, in the first-person experience of particular individuals, but in the properties essential to any experiences of the kind in question.

He also attempted to identify the essential properties of any act of meaning. He developed the method further in *Ideas* (1913) as *transcendental phenomenology*, proposing to ground actual experience, and thus all fields of human knowledge, in the structure of consciousness of an ideal, or transcendental, ego. Later, he attempted to reconcile his transcendental standpoint with an acknowledgement of the intersubjective life-world in which real individual subjects interact. Husserl published only a few works in his lifetime, which treat phenomenology mainly in abstract methodological terms; but he left an enormous quantity of unpublished concrete analyses.

Edmund Husserl

Husserl's work was immediately influential in Germany, with the foundation of phenomenological schools in Munich and Göttingen. Phenomenology later achieved international fame through the work of such philosophers as Martin Heidegger (formerly Husserl's research assistant), Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Jean-Paul Sartre. Indeed, through the work of Heidegger and Sartre, Husserl's focus on subjective experience influenced aspects of existentialism.

Existentialism

Although they didn't use the term, the nineteenth century philosophers Søren Kierkegaard and Friedrich Nietzsche are widely regarded as the fathers of existentialism. Their influence, however, has extended beyond existentialist thought.

The main target of Kierkegaard's writings was the idealist philosophical system of Hegel which, he thought, ignored or excluded the inner subjective life of living human beings. Kierkegaard, conversely, held that "truth is subjectivity", arguing that what is most important to an actual human being are questions dealing with an individual's inner relationship to existence. In particular, Kierkegaard, a Christian, believed that the truth of religious faith was a subjective question, and one to be wrestled with passionately.

Although Kierkegaard and Nietzsche were among his influences, the extent to which the German philosopher Martin Heidegger should be considered an existentialist is debatable. In *Being and Time* he presented a method of rooting philosophical explanations in human existence (*Dasein*) to be analysed in terms of existential categories (*existentiale*); and this has led many commentators to treat him as an important figure in the existentialist movement. However, in *The Letter on Humanism*, Heidegger explicitly rejected the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre.

Søren Kierkegaard

Sartre became the best-known proponent of existentialism, exploring it not only in theoretical works such as *Being and Nothingness* , but also in plays and novels. Sartre, along with Albert Camus and Simone de Beauvoir, represented an avowedly atheistic branch of existentialism, which is now more closely associated with their ideas of nausea, contingency, bad faith, and the absurd than with Kierkegaard's spiritual angst. Nevertheless, the focus on the individual human being, responsible before the universe for the authenticity of his or her existence, is common to all these thinkers.

Structuralism and post-structuralism

Inaugurated by the linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, structuralism sought to ferret out the underlying systems through analysing the discourses they both limit and make possible. Saussure conceived of the sign as being delimited by all the other signs in the system, and ideas as being incapable of existence prior to linguistic structure, which articulates thought. This led continental thought away from humanism, and toward what was termed the decentering of man: language is no longer spoken by man to express a true inner self, but language speaks man.

Structuralism sought the province of a hard science, but its positivism soon came under fire by poststructuralism, a wide field of thinkers, some of whom were once themselves structuralists, but later came to criticize it. Structuralists believed they could analyse systems from an external, objective standing, for example, but the poststructuralists argued that this is incorrect, that one cannot transcend structures and thus analysis is itself determined by what it examines, that systems are ultimately self-referential. Furthermore, while the distinction between the signifier and signified was treated as crystalline by structuralists, poststructuralists asserted that every attempt to grasp the signified would simply result in the proliferation of more signifiers, so meaning is always in a state of being deferred, making an ultimate interpretation impossible.

Structuralism came to dominate continental philosophy from the 1960s onward, encompassing thinkers as diverse as Michel Foucault and Jacques Lacan.

Ferdinand de Saussure

The analytic tradition
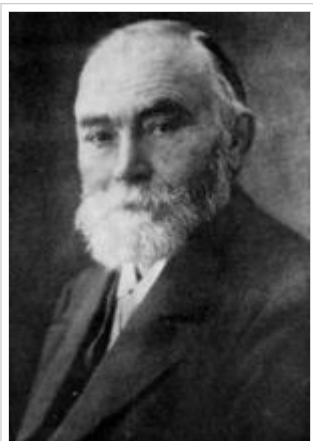
Gottlob Frege

The term *analytic philosophy* roughly designates a group of philosophical methods that stress detailed argumentation, attention to semantics, use of classical logic and non-classical logics and clarity of meaning above all other criteria. Michael Dummett in his *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* makes the case for counting Gottlob Frege *The Foundations of Arithmetic* as the first analytic work, on the grounds that in that book Frege took the linguistic turn, analysing philosophical problems through language. Bertrand Russell and G.E. Moore are also often counted as founders of analytic philosophy, beginning with their rejection of British idealism, their defense of realism and the emphasis they laid on the legitimacy of analysis. Russell's classic works *The Principles of Mathematics*, On Denoting and Principia Mathematica, aside from greatly promoting the use of classical first order logic in philosophy, set the ground for much of the research program in the early stages of the analytic tradition, emphasising such problems as: the reference of proper names, whether existence is a property, the meaning of propositions, the analysis of definite descriptions, the discussions on the foundations of mathematics; as well as exploring issues of metaphysical commitment and even metaphysical problems regarding time, the nature of matter, mind, persistence and change, which Russell tackled often with the aid of mathematical logic. The philosophy developed as a critique of Hegel and his followers in particular, and of grand systems of speculative philosophy in general, though by no means all analytic philosophers reject the philosophy of Hegel (see Charles Taylor) nor speculative philosophy. Some schools in the group include logical atomism, logical positivism, and ordinary language. The motivation behind the work of analytic philosophers has been varied. Some have held that philosophical problems arise through misuse of language or because of misunderstandings of the logic of our language, while some maintain that there are genuine philosophical problems and that philosophy is continuous with science.

In 1921, Ludwig Wittgenstein published his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, which gave a rigidly "logical" account of linguistic and philosophical issues. At the time, he understood most of the problems of philosophy as mere puzzles of language, which could be solved by investigating and then minding the logical structure of language. Years later he would reverse a number of the positions he had set out in the *Tractatus*, in for example his second major work, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). *Investigations* was influential in the development of "ordinary language philosophy", which was promoted by Gilbert Ryle, J.L. Austin, and a few others. In the United States, meanwhile, the philosophy of W. V. O. Quine was having a major influence, with such classics as Two Dogmas of Empiricism. In that paper Quine criticizes the distinction between analytic and synthetic statements, arguing that a clear conception of analyticity is unattainable. He argued for holism, the thesis that language, including scientific language, is a set of interconnected sentences, none of which can be verified on its own, rather, the sentences in the language depend on each other for their meaning and truth conditions. A consequence of Quine's approach is that language as a whole has only a very thin relation to experience, some sentences which refer directly to experience might be somewhat modified by sense impressions, but as the whole of language is theory-laden, for the whole language to be modified, more than this is required. However, most of the linguistic structure can in principle be revised, even logic, in order to better model the world. Notable students of Quine include Donald Davidson and Daniel Dennett. The former devised a program for giving a semantics to natural language and thereby answer the philosophical conundrum 'what is meaning?'. A crucial part of the program was the use of Alfred Tarski's semantic theory of truth. Dummett, among others, argued that truth conditions should be dispensed with in the theory of meaning, and replaced by assertibility conditions. Some propositions, on this view, are neither true nor false, and thus such a theory of meaning entails a rejection of the law of the excluded middle. This, for Dummett, entails antirealism, as Russell himself pointed out in *An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*.

By the 1970s there was a renewed interest in many traditional philosophical problems by the younger generations of analytic philosophers. David Lewis, Saul Kripke, Derek Parfit and others took an interest in traditional metaphysical problems, which they began exploring by the use of logic and philosophy of language. Among those problems some distinguished ones were: free will, essentialism, the nature of personal identity, identity over time, the nature of the mind, the nature of causal laws, space-time, the properties of material beings, modality, etc. In those universities where analytic philosophy has spread, these problems are still being discussed passionately. Analytic philosophers are also interested in the methodology of analytic philosophy itself, with Timothy Williamson, Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford, publishing recently a book entitled *The Philosophy of Philosophy*. Some notable figures in contemporary analytic philosophy are: Timothy Williamson, Theodore Sider, John Hawthorne, Alvin Goldman, Peter van Inwagen, Graham Priest, John Searle, Scott Soames, Nathan Salmon and Saul Kripke. Analytic philosophy has sometimes being accused of not contributing to the political debate or to traditional questions in aesthetics, however, with the appearance of A Theory of Justice by John Rawls and Anarchy, State and Utopia by Robert Nozick, analytic political philosophy acquired respectability. Analytic philosophers have also showed depth in their investigations of aesthetics, with Roger Scruton, Richard Wollheim, Jerome Levinson and others developing the subject to its current shape.

Moral and political philosophy

Human nature and political legitimacy

From ancient times, and well beyond them, the roots of justification for political authority were inescapably tied to outlooks on human nature. In *The Republic*, Plato declared that the ideal society would be run by a council of philosopher-kings, since those best at philosophy are best able to realize the good. Even Plato, however, required philosophers to make their way in the world for many years before beginning their rule at the age of fifty. For Aristotle, humans are political animals (i.e. social animals), and governments are set up in order to pursue good for the community. Aristotle reasoned that, since the state (polis) was the highest form of community, it has the purpose of pursuing the highest good. Aristotle viewed political power as the result of natural inequalities in skill and virtue. Because of these differences, he favored an aristocracy of the able and virtuous. For Aristotle, the person cannot be complete unless he or she lives in a community. His *The Nicomachean Ethics* and *The Politics* are meant to be read in that order. The first book addresses virtues (or "excellences") in the person as a citizen; the second addresses the proper form of government to ensure that citizens will be virtuous, and therefore complete. Both books deal with the essential role of justice in civic life.
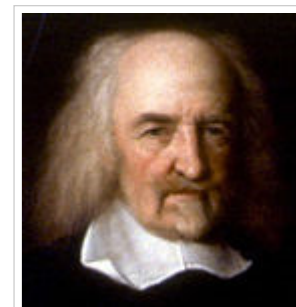
Thomas Hobbes

Nicolas of Cusa rekindled Platonic thought in the early 15th century. He promoted democracy in Medieval Europe, both in his writings and in his organization of the Council of Florence. Unlike Aristotle and the Hobbesian tradition to follow, Cusa saw human beings as equal and divine (that is, made in God's image), so democracy would be the only just form of government. Cusa's views are credited by some as sparking the Italian Renaissance, which gave rise to the notion of "Nation-States".

Later, Niccolò Machiavelli rejected the views of Aristotle and Thomas Aquinas as unrealistic. The ideal sovereign is not the embodiment of the moral virtues; rather the sovereign does whatever is successful and necessary, rather than what is morally praiseworthy. Thomas Hobbes also contested many elements of Aristotle's views. For Hobbes, human nature is essentially anti-social: people are essentially egoistic, and this egoism makes life difficult in the natural state of things. Moreover, Hobbes argued, though people may have natural inequalities, these are trivial, since no particular talents or virtues that people may have will make them safe from harm inflicted by others. For these reasons, Hobbes concluded that the state arises from a common agreement to raise the community out of the state of nature. This can only be done by the establishment of a sovereign, in which (or whom) is vested complete control over the community, and which is able to inspire awe and terror in its subjects.

Many in the Enlightenment were unsatisfied with existing doctrines in political philosophy, which seemed to marginalize or neglect the possibility of a democratic state. David Hume was among the first philosophers to question the existence of God. Jean-Jacques Rousseau was among those who attempted to overturn these doctrines: he responded to Hobbes by claiming that a human is by nature a kind of " noble savage", and that society and social contracts corrupt this nature. Another critic was John Locke. In *Second Treatise on Government* he agreed with Hobbes that the nation-state was an efficient tool for raising humanity out of a deplorable state, but he argued that the sovereign might become an abominable institution compared to the relatively benign unmodulated state of nature.

Following the doctrine of the fact-value distinction, due in part to the influence of David Hume and his student Adam Smith, appeals to human nature for political justification were weakened. Nevertheless, many political philosophers, especially moral realists, still make use of some essential human nature as a basis for their arguments.

Consequentialism, deontology, and the aretaic turn

Jeremy Bentham

One debate that has commanded the attention of ethicists in the modern era has been between consequentialism (actions are to be morally evaluated solely by their *consequences*) and deontology (actions are to be morally evaluated solely by consideration of agents' *duties*, the *rights* of those whom the action concerns, or both).

Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill are famous for propagating utilitarianism, which is the idea that the fundamental moral rule is to strive toward the "greatest happiness for the greatest number". However, in promoting this idea they also necessarily promoted the broader doctrine of consequentialism.

Adopting a position opposed to consequentialism, Immanuel Kant argued that moral principles were simply products of reason. Kant believed that the incorporation of consequences into moral deliberation was a deep mistake, since it would deny the necessity of practical maxims in governing the working of the will. According to Kant, reason requires that we conform our actions to the categorical imperative, which is an absolute duty. An important 20th-century deontologist, W.D. Ross, has argued for weaker forms of duties called *prima facie* duties.

More recent works have emphasized the role of character in ethics, a movement known as the *aretaic turn* (that is, the *turn towards virtues*). One strain of this movement followed the work of Bernard Williams. Williams noted that rigid forms of both consequentialism and deontology demanded that people behave impartially. This, Williams argued, requires that people abandon their personal projects, and hence their personal integrity, in order to be considered moral.

G.E.M. Anscombe, in an influential paper, "Modern Moral Philosophy" (1958), revived virtue ethics as an alternative to what was seen as the entrenched positions of Kantianism and consequentialism. Aretaic perspectives have been inspired in part by research of ancient conceptions of virtue. For example, Aristotle's ethics demands that people follow the *Aristotelian mean*, or balance between two vices; and Confucian ethics argues that virtue consists largely in striving for harmony with other people. Virtue ethics in general has since gained many adherents, and has been defended by such philosophers as Philippa Foot, Alasdair MacIntyre, and Rosalind Hursthouse.

Applied philosophy

The thoughts a society thinks have profound repercussions on what it does. The applied study of philosophy yields applications such as those in ethics – applied ethics in particular – and political philosophy. The political and economic philosophies of Confucius, Sun Zi, Ibn Khaldun, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Taimiyyah, Niccolò Machiavelli, Gottfried Leibniz, John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Karl Marx, John Stuart Mill, Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and others – all of these have been used to shape and justify governments and their actions.

In the field of philosophy of education, progressive education as championed by John Dewey has had a profound impact on educational practices in the United States in the 20th century. Descendants of this movement include the current efforts in *philosophy for children*. Carl von Clausewitz's political philosophy of war has had a profound effect on statecraft, international politics, and military strategy in the 20th century, especially in the years around World War II. Logic has become crucially important in mathematics, linguistics, psychology, computer science, and computer engineering.

Other important applications can be found in epistemology, which aid in understanding the requisites for knowledge, sound evidence, and justified belief

(important in law, economics, decision theory, and a number of other disciplines). The philosophy of science discusses the underpinnings of the scientific method and has affected the nature of scientific investigation and argumentation. This has profound impacts. For example, the strictly empirical approach of Skinner's behaviourism affected for decades the approach of the American psychological establishment. Deep ecology and animal rights examine the moral situation of humans as occupants of a world that has non-human occupants to consider also. Aesthetics can help to interpret discussions of music, literature, the plastic arts, and the whole artistic dimension of life. In general, the various philosophies strive to provide practical activities with a deeper understanding of the theoretical or conceptual underpinnings of their fields.

Often philosophy is seen as an investigation into an area not sufficiently well understood to be its own branch of knowledge. What were once philosophical pursuits have evolved into the modern day fields such as psychology, sociology, linguistics, and economics, for example. But as such areas of intellectual endeavour proliferate and expand, so will the broader philosophical questions that they generate.

The New York Times reported an increase in philosophy majors at United States universities in 2008.

Eastern philosophy

Many societies have considered philosophical questions and built philosophical traditions based upon each other's works. Eastern and Middle Eastern philosophical traditions have influenced Western philosophers. Russian (which to many people still counts as Western), Jewish, Islamic, African, and recently Latin American philosophical traditions have contributed to, or been influenced by, Western philosophy: yet each has retained a distinctive identity.

The differences between traditions are often well captured by consideration of their favored historical philosophers, and varying stress on ideas, procedural styles, or written language. The subject matter and dialogues of each can be studied using methods derived from the others, and there are significant commonalities and exchanges between them.

Eastern philosophy refers to the broad traditions that originated or were popular in India, Persia, China, Korea, Japan, and to an extent, the Middle East (which overlaps with Western philosophy due to the spread of the Abrahamic religions and the continuing intellectual traffic between these societies and Europe.)

Chinese philosophy

Philosophy has had a tremendous effect on Chinese civilization, and East Asia as a whole. Many of the great philosophical schools were formulated during the Spring and Autumn Period and Warring States Period, and came to be known as the Hundred Schools of Thought. The four most influential of these were Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, and Legalism. Later on, during the Tang Dynasty, Buddhism from India also became a prominent philosophical and religious discipline. (It should be noted that Eastern thought, unlike Western philosophy, did not express a clear distinction between philosophy and religion.) Like Western philosophy, Chinese philosophy covers a broad and complex range of thought, possessing a multitude of schools that address every branch and subject area of philosophy.

Related Topics: Korean philosophy, Bushido, Zen, The Art of War, Asian Values

Indian philosophy

In the history of the Indian subcontinent, following the establishment of an Aryan– Vedic culture, the development of philosophical and religious thought over a period of two millennia gave rise to what came to be called the six schools of *astika*, or orthodox, Indian or Hindu philosophy. These schools have come to be synonymous with the greater religion of Hinduism, which was a development of the early Vedic religion.

Hindu philosophy constitutes an integral part of the culture of Southern Asia, and is the first of the Dharmic philosophies which were influential throughout the Far East. The great diversity in thought and practice of Hinduism is nurtured by its liberal universalism.

Persian philosophy

Persian philosophy can be traced back as far as Old Iranian philosophical traditions and thoughts, with their ancient Indo-Iranian roots. These were considerably influenced by Zarathustra's teachings. Throughout Iranian history and due to remarkable political and social influences such as the Macedonian, the Arab, and the Mongol invasions of Persia, a wide spectrum of schools of thought arose. These espoused a variety of views on philosophical questions, extending from Old Iranian and mainly Zoroastrianism-influenced traditions to schools appearing in the late pre-Islamic era, such as Manicheism and Mazdakism, as well as various post-Islamic schools. Iranian philosophy after Arab invasion of Persia is characterized by different interactions with the Old Iranian philosophy, the Greek philosophy and with the development of Islamic philosophy. The Illumination school and the Transcendent theosophy are regarded as two of the main philosophical traditions of that era in Persia. Zorasterianism has been identified as one of the key early events in the development of philosophy

African philosophy

Philosophical traditions such as African philosophy, are rarely studied by foreign academia. Since emphasis is mainly placed on Western philosophy as a reference point, the study, preservation and dissemination of valuable, but lesser known, non-Western philosophical works face many obstacles. Key African philosophers include the Fulani Usman Dan Fodio, founder of the Sokoto Caliphate of Northern Nigeria and Umar Tall of Senegal; both were prolific Islamic

Confucius, illustrated in *Myths & Legends of China*, 1922, by E.T.C. Werner.

scholars. Other African philosophers worthy of note in the pre-colonial period were Anton Wilhelm Amo and Zera Yacob (1599–1692). In the post-colonial period, different images of what could be argued as "African" Philosophy from the level of epistemology have risen. These could include the thoughts and enquiries of such individuals as Cheik Anta Diop, Francis Ohanyido, CL Momoh, and Chinweizu.

The philosophy of the modern and contemporary African world, including the diaspora, is often known as Africana Philosophy. Key philosophers include Frantz Fanon, Kwasi Wiredu, Paget Henry, Lewis Gordon, Mabogo Percy More and many others.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philosophy"

Political philosophy

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy

Political philosophy is the study of fundamental questions about the state, government, politics, liberty, justice, property, rights, law and the enforcement of a legal code by authority: what they are, why (or even if) they are needed, what makes a government legitimate, what rights and freedoms it should protect and why, what form it should take and why, what the law is, and what duties citizens owe to a legitimate government, if any, and when it may be legitimately overthrown—if ever. In a vernacular sense, the term "political philosophy" often refers to a general view, or specific ethic, belief or attitude, about politics that does not necessarily belong to the technical discipline of philosophy.

Three central concerns of political philosophy have been the political economy by which property rights are defined and access to capital is regulated, the demands of justice in distribution and punishment, and the rules of truth and evidence that determine judgments in the law. Sometimes though, the law determines judgments, creating a Catch-22.

History of political philosophy

Antiquity

As an academic discipline, Western political philosophy has its origins in ancient Greek society, when city-states were experimenting with various forms of political organization including monarchy, tyranny, aristocracy, oligarchy, and democracy. One of the first, extremely important classical works of political philosophy is Plato's The Republic, which was followed by Aristotle's Politics. Roman political philosophy was influenced by the Stoics, and the Roman statesman Cicero wrote on political philosophy.

Independently, Confucius, Mencius, Mozi and the Legalist school in China, and the *Laws of Manu* and Chanakya in India, all sought to find means of restoring political unity and stability; in the case of the former three through the cultivation of virtue, in the last by imposition of discipline. In India, Chanakya, in his *Arthashastra*, developed a viewpoint which recalls both the Legalists and Niccolò Machiavelli. Ancient Chinese and Indian civilization resembled Greek in that there was a unified culture divided into rival states. In the case of China, philosophers found themselves obliged to confront social and political breakdown, and seek solutions to the crisis that confronted their entire civilization.

The early Christian philosophy of Augustine of Hippo was by and large a rewrite of Plato in a Christian context. The main change that Christian thought brought was to moderate the Stoicism and theory of justice of the Roman world, and emphasize the role of the state in applying mercy as a moral example. Augustine also preached that one was not a member of his or her city, but was either a citizen of the City of God (Civitas Dei) or the City of Man (Civitas Terrena). Augustine's *The City of God* is an influential work of this period that refuted the thesis, after the First Sack of Rome, that the Christian view could be realized on Earth at all - a view many Christian Romans held.

Plato (left) and Aristotle (right), from a detail of *The School of Athens*, a fresco by Raphael. Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics secured the two Greek philosophers as two of the most influential political philosophers.

Medieval Islam

The rise of Islam, based on both the Qur'an and Muhammad strongly altered the power balances and perceptions of origin of power in the Mediterranean region. Early Muslim philosophy emphasized an inexorable link between science and religion, and the process of ijtihad to find truth - in effect *all* philosophy was "political" as it had real implications for governance. This view was challenged by the Mutazilite philosophers, who held a more Greek view and were supported by secular aristocracy who sought freedom of action independent of the mosque. By the medieval period, however, the Asharite view of Islam had in general triumphed.

Islamic political philosophy, was, indeed, rooted in the very sources of Islam, i.e. the Qur'an and the Sunnah, the words and practices of Muhammad. However, in the Western thought, it is generally supposed that it was a specific area peculiar merely to the great philosophers of Islam: al-Kindi (Alkindus), al-Farabi (Abunaser), İbn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Bajjah (Avempace), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), and Ibn Khaldun. The political conceptions of Islam such as kudrah, sultan, ummah, cemaa -and even the "core" terms of the Qur'an, i.e. ibada, din, rab and ilah- is taken as the basis of an analysis. Hence, not only the ideas of the Muslim political philosophers but also many other jurists and ulama posed political ideas and theories. For example, the ideas of the Khawarij in the very early years of Islamic history on Khilafa and Ummah, or that of Shia Islam on the concept of Imamah are considered proofs of political thought. The clashes between the Ehl-i Sunna and Shia in the 7th and 8th centuries had a genuine political character.

The 14th century Arab scholar Ibn Khaldun is considered one of the greatest political theorists. The British philosopher-anthropologist Ernest Gellner considered Ibn Khaldun's definition of government, "an institution which prevents injustice other than such as it commits itself", the best in the history of political theory.

Muslim political philosophy did not cease in the classical period. Despite the fluctuations in its original character during the medieval period, it has lasted even in the modern era. Especially with the emergence of Islamic radicalism as a political movement, political thought has revived in the Muslim world. The political ideas of Abduh, Afgani, Kutub, Mawdudi, Shariati and Khomeini has caught on an ethusiasm especially in Muslim youth in the 20th century.

Medieval Europe

Medieval political philosophy in Europe was heavily influenced by Christian thinking. It had much in common with the Islamic thinking in that the Roman Catholics also subordinated philosophy to theology. Perhaps the most influential political philosopher of the medieval period was St. Thomas Aquinas who helped reintroduce Aristotle's works, which had only been preserved by the Muslims, along with the commentaries of Averroes. Aquinas's use of them set the agenda for scholastic political philosophy, and dominated European thought for centuries.

European Renaissance

During the Renaissance secular political philosophy began to emerge after about a century of theological political thought in Europe. While the Middle Ages did see secular politics in practice under the rule of the Holy Roman Empire, the academic field was wholly scholastic and therefore Christian in nature. One of the most influential works during this burgeoning period was Niccolò Machiavelli's *The Prince*, written between 1511-12 and published in 1532, after Machiavelli's death. That work, as well as *The Discourses*, a rigorous analysis of the classical period, did much to influence modern political thought in the West. A minority (including Jean-Jacques Rousseau) could interpret The Prince as a satire meant to give the Medici after their recapture of Florence and their subsequent expulsion of Machiavelli from Florence. Though the work was written for the di Medici family in order to perhaps influence them to free him from exile, Machiavelli supported the Republic of Florence rather than the oligarchy of the di Medici family. At any rate, Machiavelli presents a pragmatic and somewhat consequentialist view of politics, whereby good and evil are mere means used to bring about an end, i.e. the secure and powerful state. Thomas Hobbes, well known for his theory of the social contract, goes on to expand this view at the start of the 17th century during the English Renaissance.

European Age of Enlightenment

During the Enlightenment period, new theories about what the human was and is and about the definition of reality and the way it was perceived, along with the discovery of other societies in the Americas, and the changing needs of political societies (especially in the wake of the English Civil War, the American Revolution and the French Revolution) led to new questions and insights by such thinkers as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu and John Locke.

These theorists were driven by two basic questions: one, by what right or need do people form states; and two, what the best form for a state could be. These fundamental questions involved a conceptual distinction between the concepts of "state" and "government." It was decided that "state" would refer to a set of enduring institutions through which power would be distributed and its use justified. The term "government" would refer to a specific group of people who occupied, and indeed still occupy the institutions of the state, and create the laws and ordinances by which the people, themselves included, would be bound. This conceptual distinction continues to operate in political science, although some political scientists, philosophers, historians and cultural anthropologists have argued that most political action in any given society occurs outside of its state, and that there are societies that are not organized into states which nevertheless must be considered in political terms.

Eugene Delacroix's *Liberty Leading the People* (1830, Louvre), a painting created at a time where old and modern political philosophies came into violent conflict.

Political and economic relations were drastically influenced by these theories as the concept of the guild was subordinated to the theory of free trade, and Roman Catholic dominance of theology was increasingly challenged by Protestant churches subordinate to each nation-state, which also (in a fashion the Roman Catholic church often decried angrily) preached in the vulgar or native language of each region.

In the Ottoman Empire, these ideological reforms did not take place and these views did not integrate into common thought until much later. As well, there was no spread of this doctrine within the New World and the advanced civilizations of the Aztec, Maya, Inca, Mohican, Delaware, Huron and especially the Iroquois. The Iroquois philosophy in particular gave much to Christian thought of the time and in many cases actually inspired some of the institutions adopted in the United States: for example, Benjamin Franklin was a great admirer of some of the methods of the Iroquois Confederacy, and much of early American literature emphasized the political philosophy of the natives.

Industrialization and the Modern Era

The industrial revolution produced a parallel revolution in political thought. Urbanization and capitalism greatly reshaped society. During this same period, the socialist movement began to form. In the mid-19th century, Marxism was developed, and socialism in general gained increasing popular support, mostly from the urban working class. By the late 19th century, socialism and trade unions were established members of the political landscape. In addition, the various branches of anarchism and syndicalism also gained some prominence. In the Anglo-American world, anti-imperialism and pluralism began gaining currency at the turn of the century.

World War I was a watershed event in human history. The Russian Revolution of 1917 (and similar, albeit less successful, revolutions in many other European countries) brought communism - and in particular the political theory of Leninism, but also on a smaller level Luxemburgism (gradually) - on the world stage. At the same time, social democratic parties won elections and formed governments for the first time, often as a result of the introduction of universal suffrage.
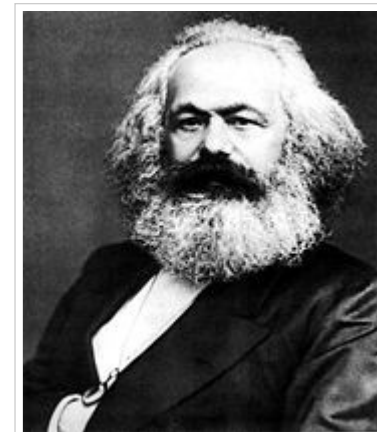
Contemporary political philosophy

Karl Marx and his theory of Communism developed along with Friedrich Engels proved to be one of the most influential political ideologies of the 20th century.

After World War II political philosophy moved into a temporary eclipse in the Anglo-American academic world, as analytic philosophers expressed skepticism about the possibility that normative judgments had cognitive content, and political science turned toward statistical methods and behavioralism. The 1950s saw pronouncements of the 'death' of the discipline, followed by debates about that thesis. A handful of continental European emigres to Britain and the United States—including Hannah Arendt, Karl Popper, Friedrich Hayek, Leo Strauss, Isaiah Berlin, Eric Voegelin and Judith Shklar—encouraged continued study in the field, but in the 1950s and 60s they and their students remained somewhat marginal in their disciplines.

Communism remained an important focus especially during the 1950s and 60s. Zionism, racism and colonialism were important issues that arose. In general, there was a marked trend towards a pragmatic approach to political issues, rather than a philosophical one. Much academic debate regarded one or both of two pragmatic topics: how (or whether) to apply utilitarianism to problems of political policy, or how (or whether) to apply economic models (such as rational choice theory) to political issues. The rise of feminism and the end of colonial rule and of the political exclusion of such minorities as African Americans in the developed world has led to feminist, postcolonial, and multicultural thought becoming significant.

In Anglo-American academic political philosophy the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 is considered a milestone. Rawls used a thought experiment, the original position, in which representative parties choose principles of justice for the basic structure of society from behind a veil of ignorance. Rawls also offered a criticism of utilitarian approaches to questions of political justice. Robert Nozick's book *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974) responded to Rawls from a libertarian perspective.

Contemporaneously with the rise of analytic ethics in Anglo-American thought, in Europe several new lines of philosophy directed at critique of existing societies arose between the 1950s and 1980s. Many of these took elements of Marxist economic analysis, but combined them with a more cultural or ideological emphasis. Out of the Frankfurt School, thinkers like Herbert Marcuse, Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Jürgen Habermas combined Marxian and Freudian perspectives. Along somewhat different lines, a number of other continental thinkers—still largely influenced by Marxism—put new emphases on

structuralism and on a "return to Hegel". Within the (post-) structuralist line (though mostly not taking that label) are thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze, Michel Foucault, Claude Lefort, and Jean Baudrillard. The Situationists were more influenced by Hegel; Guy Debord, in particular, moved a Marxist analysis of commodity fetishism to the realm of consumption, and looked at the relation between consumerism and dominant ideology formation.

Another debate developed around the (distinct) criticisms of liberal political theory made by Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor. The liberalism-communitarianism debate is often considered valuable for generating a new set of philosophical problems, rather than a profound and illuminating clash of perspectives.

Today some debates regarding punishment and law centre on the question of natural law and the degree to which human constraints on action are determined by nature, as revealed by science in particular. Other debates focus on questions of cultural and gender identity as central to politics.

Influential political philosophers

A larger list of political philosophers is intended to be closer to exhaustive. Listed below are a few of the most canonical or important thinkers, and especially philosophers whose central focus was in political philosophy and/or who are good representatives of a particular school of thought.

- Confucius : The first thinker to relate ethics to the political order.
- Chanakya : Founder of an independent political thought in India, laid down rules and guidelines for social, law and political order in society.
- Mozi : Eponymous founder of the Mohist school, advocated a strict utilitarianism.
- Socrates/Plato: Named their practice of inquiry "philosophy", and thereby stand at the head of a prominent (often called "Western") tradition of systematic intellectual analysis. Set as a partial basis to that tradition the relation between knowledge on the one hand, and a just and good society on the other. Socrates is widely considered founder of Western political philosophy, via his spoken influence on Athenian contemporaries; since Socrates never wrote anything, much of what we know about him and his teachings comes through his most famous student, Plato.
- Aristotle: Wrote his Politics as an extension of his Nicomachean Ethics. Notable for the theories that humans are social animals, and that the polis (Ancient Greek city state) existed to bring about the good life appropriate to such animals. His political theory is based upon an ethics of perfectionism (as is Marx's, on some readings).
- Mencius : One of the most important thinkers in the Confucian school, he is the first theorist to make a coherent argument for an obligation of rulers to the ruled.
- Han Feizi : The major figure of the Chinese Fajia (Legalist) school, advocated government that adhered to laws and a strict method of administration.
- Thomas Aquinas : In synthesizing Christian theology and Peripatetic teaching, Aquinas contends that God's gift of higher reason, coupled with divine virtues and human law, provides the foundation for righteous government.
- Niccolò Machiavelli: First systematic analyses of: (1) how consent of a populace is negotiated between and among rulers rather than simply a naturalistic (or theological) given of the structure of society; (2) precursor to the concept of ideology in articulating the epistemological structure of commands and law.
- Thomas Hobbes: Generally considered to have first articulated how the concept of a social contract that justifies the actions of rulers (even where contrary to the individual desires of governed citizens), can be reconciled with a conception of sovereignty.

- Baruch Spinoza: Set forth the first analysis of " rational egoism", in which the rational interest of self is conformance with pure reason. To Spinoza's thinking, in a society in which each individual is guided of reason, political authority would be superfluous.
- John Locke: Like Hobbes, described a social contract theory based on citizens' fundamental rights in the state of nature. He departed from Hobbes in that, based on the assumption of a society in which moral values are independent of governmental authority and widely shared, he argued for a government with power limited to the protection of personal property. His arguments may have been deeply influential to the formation of the United States Constitution.
- Baron de Montesquieu: Analyzed protection of liberty by a "balance of powers" in the divisions of a state.
- David Hume: Hume criticized the social contract theory of John Locke and others as resting on a myth of some actual agreement. Hume was a realist in recognizing the role of force to forge the existence of states and that consent of the governed was merely hypothetical. He also introduced the concept of utility, later picked up on and developed by Jeremy Bentham.
- Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Analyzed the social contract as an expression of the general will, and controversially argued in favour of absolute democracy where the people at large would act as sovereign.
- Immanuel Kant: Argued that participation in civil society is undertaken not for self-preservation, as per Thomas Hobbes, but as a moral duty. First modern thinker who fully analyzed structure and meaning of obligation. Argued that an international organization was needed to preserve world peace.
- Adam Smith: Often said to have founded modern economics; explained emergence of economic benefits from the self-interested behaviour ("the invisible hand") of artisans and traders. While praising its efficiency, Smith also expressed concern about the effects of industrial labor (e.g. repetitive activity) on workers. His work on moral sentiments sought to explain social bonds outside the economic sphere.
- Edmund Burke: Irish member of the British parliament, Burke is credited with the creation of conservative thought. Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France is the most popular of his writings where he denounced the French revolution. Burke was one of the biggest supporters of the American Revolution.
- John Adams: Enlightenment writer who defended the American cause for independence. Adams was a Lockean thinker, who was appalled by the French revolution. Adams is known for his outspoken commentary in favour of the American revolution. He defended the American form of republicanism over the French liberal democracy. Adams is considered the founder of American conservative thought.
- Thomas Paine: Enlightenment writer who defended liberal democracy, the American Revolution, and French Revolution in Common Sense and The Rights of Man.
- Jeremy Bentham: The first thinker to analyze social justice in terms of maximization of aggregate individual benefits. Founded the philosophical/ethical school of thought known as utilitarianism.
- John Stuart Mill: A utilitarian, and the person who named the system; he goes further than Bentham by laying the foundation for liberal democratic thought in general and modern, as opposed to classical, liberalism in particular. Articulated the place of individual liberty in an otherwise utilitarian framework.
- Thomas Hill Green: modern liberal thinker and early supporter of positive freedom.
- Karl Marx: In large part, added the historical dimension to an understanding of society, culture and economics. Created the concept of *ideology* in the sense of (true or false) beliefs that shape and control social actions. Analyzed the fundamental nature of class as a mechanism of governance and social interaction.
- Giovanni Gentile: Known as the 'Philosopher of Fascism' and ghostwrote the Doctrine of Fascism with Mussolini and argued that the Fascist State is an ethical and educational state and that the individual should put the interests of the State first.
- John Dewey: Co-founder of pragmatism and analyzed the essential role of education in the maintenance of democratic government.

- Antonio Gramsci: Instigated the concepts *hegemony* and *social formation*. Fused the ideas of Marx, Engels, Spinoza and others within the so-called *dominant ideology thesis* (the ruling ideas of society are the ideas of its rulers).
- Herbert Marcuse: One of the principal thinkers within the Frankfurt School, and generally important in efforts to fuse the thought of Freud and Marx. Introduced the concept of *repressive desublimation*, in which social control can operate not only by direct control, but also by manipulation of desire. Analyzed the role of advertising and propaganda in societal consensus.
- Friedrich Hayek: He argued that central planning was impossible because members of central bodies could not know enough to match the preferences of consumers with the existing supply of goods and materials. He further argued that attempts to create economic egalitarianism would lead to a central government with totalitarian powers. For him, the social democratic welfare state is leading us down the 'road to serfdom.' He advocated free-market capitalism in which the sole role of the state is to maintain the rule of law.
- Hannah Arendt: Analyzed the roots of totalitarianism and introduced the concept of the "banality of evil" (how ordinary technocratic rationality comes to deplorable fruition). Brought distinctive elements of and revisions to the philosophy of Martin Heidegger into political thought.
- Georg Hegel: Emphasized history and continuity, influenced Marx and Oakeschott.
- Leo Strauss: Strauss is known for his writings on the classical and modernity philosophers and denouncement of the modern politics.
- John Rawls: Revitalised the study of normative political philosophy in Anglo-American universities with his 1971 book A Theory of Justice, which uses a version of social contract theory to answer fundamental questions about justice and to criticise utilitarianism.
- Robert Nozick: Criticized Rawls, and argued for Libertarianism, by appeal to a hypothetical history of the state and the real history of property.
- Michael Oakeshott: Provided a conservative philosophy anchored in history and Hegelianism.
- Philippe Van Parijs: Further developed the notion of positive freedom and ignited discussion on the provision of a basic universal income.

Some notable contemporary political philosophers are Amy Gutmann, Seyla Benhabib, George Kateb, Wendy Brown, Stephen Macedo, Martha Nussbaum, Thomas Pogge

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Portal:Hinduism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Portals; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

The Hinduism Portal

Hinduism (Sanskrit *Hindū Dharma*—हिन्दू धर्म, also known as **Sanātana Dharma** सनातन धर्म, and **Vaidika Dharma** वैदिक धर्म) is a religion originating in the Indian subcontinent, based on the Vedas, and the oldest religious traditions still practiced today. The term, "Hinduism," is heterogeneous, as Hinduism consists of several schools of thought. It encompasses many religious rituals that widely vary in practice, as well as many diverse sects and philosophies. Most Hindus believe in a Supreme Cosmic Spirit, which may be understood in abstract terms as Brahman or which may be worshipped in personal forms such as Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti. The religion is classified by many different forms of theism such as *monotheism*, *monism*, *pantheism*, *polytheism* and even *atheism*. Hinduism is the third largest religion in the world with approximately 970 million adherents, (2006), approximately 900 million of whom are in India.

Selected article

The **Upanishads** (Devanagari: उपनिषद्, IAST: *upaniṣad*) are part of the Vedas and form the Hindu scriptures which primarily discuss philosophy, meditation and nature of God; they form the core spiritual thought of Vedantic Hinduism. The Upanishads are mystic or spiritual contemplations of the Vedas, their putative end and essence, and thus known as *Vedānta* ("the end/culmination of the Vedas"). The Upanishads were composed over several centuries. The oldest, such as the Brhadaranyaka and Chandogya Upanishads, have been dated to around the eighth century BCE. The philosophical edifice of Indian religions viz., Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism is built on the foundation laid by the Upanishads.

Selected picture

Selected biography

Adi Shankara (Malayalam: ആദി ശങ്കരൻ, Devanāgarī: आदि शङ्कर, *Ādi Śaṅkara*, IPA: [aːd̪i ɕəŋkərə]). *Adi* means "the first"; the heads of a few Hindu mathas are also given the title *Shankaracharya*; *Acharya* which means "teacher". Shankara was the first philosopher to consolidate the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta, a sub-school of Vedanta. His teachings are based on the unity of the soul and Brahman, in which Brahman is viewed as without attributes. In the Smārta tradition, Adi Shankara is regarded as an incarnation of Shiva. Adi Shankara toured India with the purpose of propagating his teachings through discourses and debates with other philosophers. He founded four mathas ("abbeys") which played a key role in the historical development, revival and spread of post-Buddhist Hinduism and Advaita Vedanta. Adi Shankara was the founder of the Dashanami monastic order and the Shanmata tradition of worship.

Did you know...

Depiction of the *Tridevi*, featuring the conjoined forms of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati.

- ...that **Nepal**, the only Hindu country, is in the process of becoming a secular republic?
- ...that **Krishna** (*pictured*) literally means "black" or "dark one" in Sanskrit?

- ...that the **Mahabharata** is one of the longest literary epic poems in the world?
- ...that the **River Ganga** (**Ganges** in English languages) is personified in Hinduism as a goddess?
- ...that **Varanasi** is the most holy city in Hinduism irrespective of denomination?
- ...that **Shantidas Adhikari** converted the Meitei people to Hinduism in the early 18th century?

Festivals

- 3 September: **Krishna Janmaashtami**
- 15 September: **Ganesh Chaturthi**
- 27 September: **Saradhas** begins

Selected quote

The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which the time scales correspond, to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long. Longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang. And there are much longer time scales still.

— **Carl Sagan** (1934-1996) famous astrophysicist.

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Portal:Islam

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Portals; Religion; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

ISLAM PORTAL

Islam (Arabic: الإسلام *al- islām*) "the submission to God" is a monotheistic faith, one of the Abrahamic religions and the world's second largest religion.

Followers of Islam, known as **Muslims** (from the Arabic word, *muslimeen*, meaning "those who submit to God's will"), believe that God (or, in Arabic, *Allāh*; also in Aramaic *Alaha*) revealed his direct word for mankind to the prophet Muhammad (c. 570– 632 CE). Revelation and Dawa started when he was at age 40.

The Qur'an

These revelations are recorded in the Injeel (Gospel) [as revealed to Isa (Jesus)], the Zabur (Psalms) and the Qur'an ("Recitation") which Muslims believe to be the final revelation from God to humanity.

Muslims believe that Muhammad, is the last or the *seal* of the prophets and that his preachings for humankind will last until *qiyamah* ("The Day of Resurrection", also known as " The Day of Judgement"). Five Pillars of Islam (Arabic: أركان الإسلام) is the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim. Shirk (Islam) is considered to be the Unpardonable Sin.

Selected Article

A **mosque** is a place of worship for followers of the Islamic faith. Muslims all over the world often refer to the mosque by its name in Arabic, **masjid** (pl. *masajid*) (Arabic: مسجد — pronounced: /masˈɡʲid/ or /masˈdʒid/). The Arabic word *masjid* means *temple* or *place of worship* and comes from the Arabic root *sajada* (root "s-j-d," meaning to bow or kneel) which means *he worshipped* in reference to the prostrations performed during Islamic prayers. The word mosque in English is used to represent all types of buildings dedicated for Islamic worship, although there is a distinction in Arabic between the smaller, privately-owned mosque and the larger, "collective" mosque (*masjid jami*) (Arabic: جامع), which has more community and social amenities.

The primary purpose of the mosque is to serve as a place where Muslims can come together for prayer. Nevertheless, mosques are known around the world nowadays for their general importance to the Muslim community as well as their demonstration of Islamic architecture. They have evolved significantly from the open-air spaces that were

Selected Muslim

Muhammad ibn 'Abdullāh (ca. 570 Mecca – 8 June 632 Medina), is the central human figure of the religion of Islam and is regarded by Muslims as the messenger and prophet of God (Arabic: الله *Allāh*), the last and the greatest in a series of prophets of Islam. Muslims consider him the restorer of the uncorrupted original monotheistic faith (*islām*) of Adam, Abraham, Moses, Noah and other prophets of Islam. He was also active as a diplomat, merchant, philosopher, orator, legislator, reformer, military general, and, for Muslims and followers of several other religions, an agent of divine action.

Born in 570 CE in the Arabian city of Mecca, he was orphaned at a young age and was brought up under the care of his uncle. He later worked mostly as a

The Masjid al-Haram in Mecca

Masjid al-Haram (المسجد الحرام "The Sacred Mosque"), is the oldest and largest mosque and religious building in the world. It is located in the city of Mecca. It surrounds the Ka'aba, the place which all Muslims turn towards each day in prayer and considered to be the holiest place in Islam. The mosque is also commonly known as the **Haram** or **Haram ash-Sharif**.

The current structure covers an area of 356,800 square meters including the outdoor and indoor praying spaces and can accommodate up to 820,000 worshipers during the *hajj* period.

Selected Location

Al-Aqsa Mosque ("The Farthest Mosque") (Arabic: المسجد الاقصى, *al-Masjid al-Aqsa*}}),

merchant, and was first married by age 26. Discontented with life in Mecca, he retreated to a cave in the surrounding mountains for meditation and reflection. According to Islamic beliefs it was here, at age 40, in the month of Ramadan, where he received his first revelation from God. Three years after this event Muhammad started preaching these revelations publicly, proclaiming that " God is One", that complete "surrender" to Him (lit. *islām*) is the only way (*dīn*) acceptable to God, and that he himself was a prophet and messenger of God, in the same vein as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Jesus and other prophets in Islam.

Muhammad gained few followers early on, and was met with hostility from some tribes of Mecca; he was treated harshly and so were his followers. To escape persecution Muhammad and his followers migrated to Medina (then known as Yathrib) in the year 622. This event, the Hijra, marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar. In Medina Muhammad managed to unite the conflicting tribes, and after eight years of fighting with the Meccan tribes, his followers, who by then had grown to ten thousand, conquered Mecca. In 632 a few months after returning to Medina from his Farewell pilgrimage, Muhammad fell ill and died. By the time of his death most of the Arabian Peninsula had converted to Islam and he united the tribes of Arabia into a singular Muslim religious polity.

The revelations (or *Ayats*, lit. "Signs of God"), which Muhammad reported receiving until his death, form the verses of the Qur'an, regarded by Muslims as the "word of God", around which his religion is based. Besides the Qur'an, Muhammad's life (*sira*) and traditions (

is a mosque located in what Arabs and Muslims refer to as **al-Haram ash-Sharif** ("the Noble Sanctuary"), although the whole area of the Noble Sanctuary is considered al-Aqsa Mosque according to Islamic law. It is known as the Temple Mount to Jews and Christians. It is located in the Old City of eastern Jerusalem, a disputed territory governed as part of Israel since its annexation in 1967 but claimed by the Palestinian National Authority as part of a future State of Palestine. The oldest mosque in Palestine, its congregation building can accommodate about 5,000 worshipers, while its precincts could accommodate 400,000. The Israeli government has granted an Islamic council, the *Waqf*, full administration of the mosque and has barred Jews from visiting the site.

The historical significance of al-Aqsa Mosque is further emphasized by the fact that the Jews used to turn towards the Temple Mount when they prayed. As it was the place at which Muhammad performed the first commanded prayer after Isra and Mi'raj, it became the *qibla* (direction) that Muslims faced during prayer and continued to be so for sixteen or seventeen months. After a revelation was recorded in the Qur'an, the *qibla* was then turned towards Mecca. Originally, the Rashidun caliph Umar built a small prayer house on the site, but the Ummayad caliphs Abd al-Malik and al-Walid I built a larger mosque on the site in 705 CE. Nothing remains of the Ummayad mosque, and the present-day mosque dates back to the renovated version commissioned by the Fatimid caliph Ali az-Zahir in 1033 CE. The Crusaders, Mamluks and Ayyubids added a facade, porch, a *mihrab* and four minarets to al-Aqsa Mosque throughout the later centuries and the mosque's last major renovation took place in 1983 with the restoration of a lead-plated dome.

sunnah) are also upheld by Muslims. They discuss Muhammad and other prophets of Islam with reverence, adding the phrase *peace be upon him* whenever their names are mentioned.

Did you know...

- ... *It is estimated that the world population of Muslims today ranges between 1.2 billion and 1.5 billion people, and that only 18% of them live in Arab countries?*

- ... *Indonesia is currently the most populous Islamic country with 213 million followers?*

- ... *the Islamic calendar is based on sightings of the crescent moon (hilāl), with a year being approximately 11 days shorter than the 365 days of solar calendars?*

- ... *Muslims believe Muhammad was the last prophet sent by God to mankind and Isa bin Maryam (Jesus Christ) will come as a Messiah and Prophet in the latter days?*

- ... *that the Qur'an has been completely memorized by a percentage of Muslims (hafiz) all around the world for nearly 14 centuries?*

- ... *that the disagreement over religious and political Succession to Muhammad is the main cause of division of Muslim community into Sunni and Shia denominations?*

Quetzalcoatl

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Quetzalcoatl (Classical Nahuatl: *Quetzalcōhuātl* pronounced [ke.tsal.ˈkoː.wa:tɬ]) is an Aztec sky and creator god. The name is a combination of quetzalli, a brightly colored Mesoamerican bird, and coatl, meaning serpent. The name was also taken on by various ancient leaders. Due to their cyclical view of time and the tendency of leaders to revise histories to support their rule, many events and attributes attributed to Quetzalcoatl are exceedingly difficult to separate from the political leaders that took this name on themselves. Quetzalcoatl is often referred to as The Feathered Serpent and was connected to the planet Venus. He was also the patron god of the Aztec priesthood, of learning and knowledge. Today Quetzalcoatl is arguably the best known Aztec deity, and is often thought to have been the principal Aztec god. However, Quetzalcoatl was one of several important gods in the Aztec pantheon along with the gods Tlaloc, Tezcatlipoca and Huitzilopochtli.

Several other Mesoamerican cultures are known to have worshipped a feathered serpent god: At Teotihuacan the several monumental structures are adorned with images of a feathered serpent (Notably the so-called "Citadel and Temple of Quetzalcoatl"). Such imagery is also prominent at such sites as Chichén Itza and Tula. This has led scholars to conclude that the deity called Quetzalcoatl in the Nahuatl language was among the most important deities of Mesoamerica.

The god Quetzalcoatl was sometimes conflated with Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl, a semi-legendary 10th century Toltec ruler.

Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis.

Antecedents and origins

The Feathered Serpent deity was important in art and religion in most of Mesoamerica for close to 2,000 years, from the Pre-Classic era until the Spanish conquest. Civilizations worshiping the Feathered Serpent included the Mixtec, Toltec, Aztec, who adopted it from the people of Teotihuacan, and the Maya.

The cult of the serpent in Mesoamerica is very old; there are representations of snakes with bird-like characteristics as old as the Olmec preclassic (1150-500 BC). The snake represents the earth and vegetation, but it was in Teotihuacan (around 150 BC) where the snake got the precious feathers of the quetzal, as seen in the Murals of the city. The most elaborate representations come from the old Quetzalcoatl Temple around 200 BC, which shows a rattlesnake with the long

green feathers of the quetzal.

Teotihuacan was dedicated to Tlaloc, the water god, at the same time Quetzalcoatl, as a snake, was a representation of the fertility of the earth, and it was subordinate to Tlaloc. As the cult evolved, it became independent.

In time Quetzalcoatl was mixed with other gods and acquired their attributes. Quetzalcoatl is often associated with Ehecatl, the wind god, and represents the forces of nature, and is also associated with the morning star (Venus). Quetzalcoatl became a representation of the rain, the celestial water and their associated winds, while Tlaloc would be the god of earthly water, the water in lakes, caverns and rivers, and also of vegetation. Eventually Quetzalcoatl was transformed into one of the gods of the creation (Ipalnemohuani).

The Teotihuacan influence took the god to the Mayas, who adopted him as *Kukulkán*. The Maya regarded him as a being who would transport the gods.

In Xochicalco (700-900 CE), the political class began to claim that they ruled in the name of Quetzalcoatl, and representations of the god became more human. They influenced the Toltec, and the Toltec rulers began to use the name of Quetzalcoatl. The Toltec represented Quetzalcoatl as man, with god-like attributes, and these attributes were also associated with their rulers.

Quetzalcoatl depicted as a snake devouring a man, from the Codex Telleriano-Remensis.

The most famous of those rulers was Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl. Ce Acatl means "one reed" and is the calendaric name of the ruler (923 - 947), whose legends became almost inseparable from accounts of the god. The Toltecs would associate Quetzalcoatl with their own god, Tezcatlipoca, and make them equal and enemies.

The Nahuas would take the legends of Quetzalcoatl and mix them with their own. Quetzalcoatl would be considered the originator of the arts, poetry and all knowledge. The figure of Ce Acatl would become inseparable from the image of the god.

Speculative literature has also associated Quetzalcoatl with Votan, a culture hero mentioned in a 1702 account of Tzeltal beliefs and practices in Chiapas by Bishop Nuñez de la Vega.

Religion and ritual
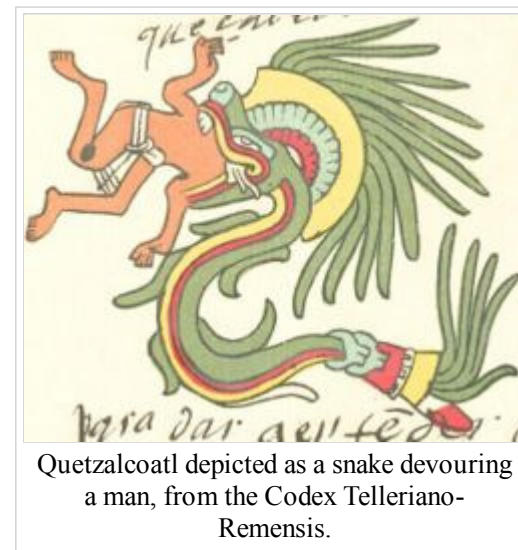
The worship of Quetzalcoatl sometimes included animal sacrifices, and in most traditions Quetzalcoatl was said to oppose human sacrifice.

Mesoamerican priests and kings would sometimes take the name of a deity they were associated with, so *Quetzalcoatl* and *Kukulcan* are also the names of historical persons.

One noted Post-Classic Toltec ruler was named Quetzalcoatl; he may be the same individual as the Kukulcan who invaded Yucatán at about the same time. The Mixtec also recorded a ruler named for the Feathered Serpent. In the 10th century a ruler closely associated with Quetzalcoatl ruled the Toltecs; his name was Topiltzin Ce Acatl Quetzalcoatl. This ruler was said to be the son of either the great Chichimeca warrior, Mixcoatl and the Culhuacano woman Chimalman, or of their descent.

It is believed that the Toltecs had a dualistic belief system. Quetzalcoatl's opposite was Tezcatlipoca, who, in one legend, sent Quetzalcoatl into exile. Alternatively, he left willingly on a raft of snakes, promising to return.

The Aztecs turned him into a symbol of dying and resurrection and a patron of priests. When the Aztecs adopted the culture of the Toltecs, they made twin gods of Tezcatlipoca and Quetzalcoatl, opposite and equal; Quetzalcoatl was also called White Tezcatlipoca, to contrast him to the black Tezcatlipoca. Together, they created the world; Tezcatlipoca lost his foot in that process.

Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Borbonicus.

Along with other gods, such as Tezcatlipoca and Tlaloc, Quetzalcoatl was called "Ipalnemohuani", a title reserved for the gods directly involved in the creation, which means "by whom we live". Because the name Ipalnemohuani is singular, this led to speculations that the Aztec were becoming monotheistic and all the main gods were only one. While this interpretation cannot be ruled out, it is probably an oversimplification of the Aztec religion.

Attributes

The exact significance and attributes of Quetzalcoatl varied somewhat between civilizations and through history. Quetzalcoatl was often considered the god of the morning star, and his twin brother Xolotl was the evening star (Venus). As the morning star he was known by the title *Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli*, meaning "lord of the star of the dawn." He was known as the inventor of books and the calendar, the giver of maize (corn) to mankind, and sometimes as a symbol of death and resurrection. Quetzalcoatl was also the patron of the priests and the title of the Aztec high priest.

Most Mesoamerican beliefs included cycles of suns. Usually, our current time was considered the fifth sun, the previous four having been destroyed by flood, fire and the like. Quetzalcoatl allegedly went to Mictlan, the underworld, and created fifth-world mankind from the bones of the previous races (with the help of Chihuacoatl), using his own blood, from a wound in his penis, to imbue the bones with new life.

His birth, along with his twin Xolotl, was unusual; it was a virgin birth, to the goddess Coatlicue. Alternatively, he was a son of Xochiquetzal and Mixcoatl.

One Aztec story claims that Quetzalcoatl was seduced by Tezcatlipoca into becoming drunk and sleeping with a celibate priestess, and then burned himself to death out of remorse. His heart became the morning star (see Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli).

Quetzalcoatl as depicted in the Codex Magliabechiano.

Moctezuma controversy

It has been widely believed that the Aztec Emperor Moctezuma II initially believed the landing of Hernán Cortés in 1519 to be Quetzalcoatl's return. This has been questioned by many ethnohistorians (e.g. Matthew Restall 2001) who argue that the Quetzalcoatl-Cortés connection is asserted in no documents created independently of post-Conquest Spanish influence, and that there is little proof of a pre-Hispanic belief in Quetzalcoatl's return. Most documents expounding this theory are of entirely Spanish origin, such as Cortés's letters to Charles V of Spain, in which Cortés goes to great pains to present the naïve gullibility of the Mexicans in general as a great aid in his conquest of Mexico.

Much of the idea of Cortés being seen as a deity can be traced back to the Florentine Codex written down some 50 years after the conquest. In the codex's description of the first meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés, the Aztec ruler is described as giving a prepared speech in classical oratorial Nahuatl, a speech which, as described verbatim in the codex (written by Sahagún's, Tlatelolcan informants who were probably not eyewitnesses of the meeting), included such prostrate declarations of divine or near-divine admiration as,

Quetzalcoatl in human form, using the symbols of Ehecatl, from the Codex Borgia.

> "You have graciously come on earth, you have graciously approached your water, your high place of Mexico, you have come down to your mat, your throne, which I have briefly kept for you, I who used to keep it for you,"

and,

> "You have graciously arrived, you have known pain, you have known weariness, now come on earth, take your rest, enter into your palace, rest your limbs; may our lords come on earth."

Subtleties in, and an imperfect scholarly understanding of, high Nahuatl rhetorical style make the exact intent of these comments tricky to ascertain, but Restall argues that Moctezuma politely offering his throne to Cortés (if indeed he did ever give the speech as reported) may well have been meant as the exact opposite of what it was taken to mean: politeness in Aztec culture was a way to assert dominance and show superiority. This speech, which has been widely referred to, has been a factor in the widespread belief that Moctezuma was addressing Cortés as the returning god Quetzalcoatl.

Other parties have also propagated the idea that the Native Americans believed the conquistadors to be gods: most notably the historians of the Franciscan order such as Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta. Some Franciscans at this time held millennarian beliefs (Phelan 1956) and the natives taking the Spanish conquerors for gods was an idea that went well with this theology. Bernardino de Sahagún, who compiled the Florentine Codex, was also a Franciscan.

Some scholars still hold the view that the fall of the Aztec empire can in part be attributed to Moctezuma's belief in Cortés as the returning Quetzalcoatl, but most modern scholars see the "Quetzalcoatl/Cortés myth" as one of many myths about the Spanish conquest which have risen in the early post-conquest period.
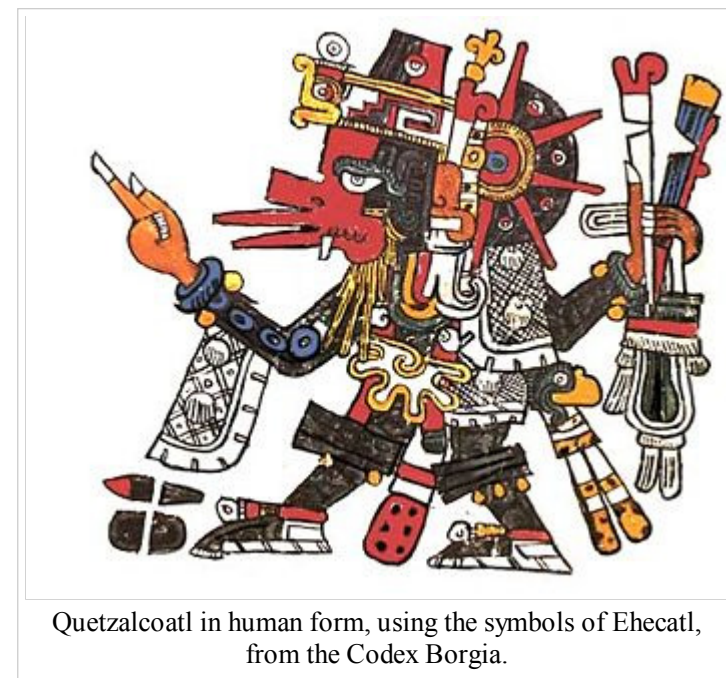
However, it is interesting to note the resemblance of the Quetzacoatl legend with that of the myth of the Pahana held by the Hopis of northern Arizona. Scholars have described many similarities between the myths of the Aztecs and those of the American Southwest, and posit a common root. The Hopi describe the Pahana as the "Lost White Brother," and they expected his eventual return from the east during which he would destroy the wicked and begin a new era of peace and prosperity. Hopi tradition maintains that they at first mistook the Spanish conquistadors as the Pahana when they arrived on the Hopi mesas in the 16th century.

Alternative interpretations

Modern esoteric groups, called " Mexicanistas", have mixed the cult of Quetzalcoatl with modern esoteric practices.

Creationists, in a effort to present ancient myths as literal truth, have suggested that the Quetzalcoatl is a definition or description of a pterodactyl. They believe their idea to have merit due to supposed (unconfirmed) sightings of pterodactyls throughout the Americas, from early European colonization to modern times.

Some believers in The Book of Mormon assert some references to Quetzalcoatl are a corruption of the story of Jesus Christ, of whom The Book of Mormon states visited the Mesoamerican natives after his resurrection.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quetzalcoatl"

Lee Lawrie, *Quetzalcoatl* (1939). Library of Congress John Adams Building, Washington, D.C.

Qur'an

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The **Qur'an** (Arabic: القرآن *al-qur'ān*, literally "the recitation"; also sometimes transliterated as **Qur'ān**, **Koran**, **Alcoran** or **Al-Qur'ān**) is the central religious text of Islam. Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind, and consider the original Arabic text to be the final revelation of God. Islam holds that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad by the angel Jibrīl (Gabriel) over a period of 23 years. Muslims regard the Qur'an as the culmination of a series of divine messages that started with those revealed to Adam, regarded in Islam as the first prophet, and continued with the *Suhuf-i-Ibrahim* (Scrolls of Abraham), the *Tawrat* (Torah), the *Zabur* (Psalms), and the *Injeel* (Gospel). The aforementioned books are not explicitly included in the Qur'an, but are recognized therein. The Qur'an also refers to many events from Jewish and Christian scriptures, some of which are retold in comparatively distinctive ways from the Bible and the Torah, while obliquely referring to other events described explicitly in those texts.

The Qur'an itself expresses that it is the book of guidance. Therefore it rarely offers detailed accounts of historical events; the text instead typically placing emphasis on the moral significance of an event rather than its narrative sequence. It does not describe natural facts in a scientific manner but teaches that natural and supernatural events are signs of God.

The Qur'an was written down by Muhammad's companions while he was alive, although the prime method of transmission was oral. It was compiled in the time of Abu Bakr, the first caliph, and was standardized in the time of Uthman, the third caliph. The Qur'an in its actual form is generally considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants in Western academia has not yielded any differences of great significance and that historically controversy over the content of the Qur'an has never become a main point. Therefore all Muslims, Sunni or Shia use the same Qur'an.

Etymology and meaning

The original usage of the word *qur`ān* is in the Qur'an itself, where it occurs about 70 times assuming various meanings. It is a verbal noun ( *maṣdar*) of the Arabic verb *qara`a* (Arabic: قرأ), meaning "he read" or "he recited", and represents the Syriac equivalent *qeryānā* which refers to "scripture reading" or "lesson". While most Western scholars consider the word to be derived from the Syriac, the majority of Muslim authorities hold the origin of the word is *qara`a* itself. In any case, it had become an Arabic term by Muhammad's lifetime. Among the earliest meanings of the word Qur'an is the "act of reciting", for example in a Qur'anic passage: *Ours is it to put it together and [Ours is] its* qur`ān."In other verses it refers to "an individual passage recited [by Muhammad]". In the large majority of contexts, usually with a definite article (*al-*), the word is referred to as the "revelation" (*wahy*), that which has been "sent down" (*tanzīl*) at intervals. Its liturgical context is seen in a number of passages, for example: *So when* al-qur`ān *is recited , listen to it and keep silent."*The word may also assume the meaning of a codified scripture when mentioned with other scriptures such as the Torah and Gospel.

The term also has closely related synonyms which are employed throughout the Qur'an. Each of the synonyms possess their own distinct meaning, but their use

may converge with that of *qur`ān* in certain contexts. Such terms include *kitāb* ("book"); *āyah* ("sign"); and *sūrah* ("scripture"). The latter two terms also denote units of revelation. Other related words are: *dhikr*, meaning "remembrance," used to refer to the Qur'an in the sense of a reminder and warning; and *hikma*, meaning "wisdom," sometimes referring to the revelation or part of it.

The Qur'an has many other names. Among those found in the text itself are *al-furqan* ("discernment" or "criterion"), *al-huda* ("the guide"), *dhikrallah* ("the remembrance of God"), *al-hikmah* ("the wisdom"), and *kalamallah* ("the word of God"). Another term is *al-kitāb* ("the book"), though it is also used in the Arabic language for other scriptures, such as the Torah and the Gospels. The term *mus'haf* ("written work") is often used to refer to particular Qur'anic manuscripts but is also used in the Qur'an to identify earlier revealed books.

Structure

The Qur'an consists of 114 chapters of varying lengths, each known as a *sura*. Chapters are classed as Meccan or Medinan, depending on where the verses were revealed. Chapter titles are derived from a name or quality discussed in the text, or from the first letters or words of the *sura*. Muslims believe that Muhammad, on God's command, gave the chapters their names. Generally, longer chapters appear earlier in the Qur'an, while the shorter ones appear later. The chapter arrangement is thus not connected to the sequence of revelation. Each *sura* with the exception of one, commences with the *Basmala*.

Each *sura* is formed from several *ayat* (verses), which originally means a sign or portent sent by God. The number of *ayat* differ from *sura* to *sura*. An individual *ayah* may be just a few letters or several lines. The *ayat* are unlike the highly refined poetry of the pre-Islamic Arabs in their content and distinctive rhymes and rhythms, being more akin to the prophetic utterances marked by inspired discontinuities found in the sacred scriptures of Judaism and Christianity. The actual number of *ayat* has been a controversial issue among Muslim scholars since Islam's inception, some recognizing 6,000, some 6,204, some 6,219, and some 6,236, although the words in all cases are the same. The most popular edition of the Qur'an, which is based on the Kufa school tradition, contains 6,236 *ayat*.

There is a crosscutting division into 30 parts, *ajza*, each containing two units called *ahzab*, each of which is divided into four parts (*rub 'al-ahzab*). The Qur'an is also divided into seven stations (*manazil*)

The Qur'anic text seems to have no beginning, middle, or end, its nonlinear structure being akin to a web or net. Critics have commented on the textual arrangement pointing out lack of continuity, absence of any chronological or thematic order, and presence of repetition.

Literary structure

The Qur'an's message is conveyed through the use of various literary structures and devices. In the original Arabic, the chapters and verses employ phonetic and thematic structures that assist the audience's efforts to recall the message of the text. There is consensus among Arab scholars to use the Qur'an as a standard by which other Arabic literature should be measured. Muslims assert (in accordance with the Qur'an itself) that the Qur'anic content and style is inimitable.

Richard Gottheil and Siegmund Fränkel in the *Jewish Encyclopedia* write that the oldest portions of the Qur'an reflect significant excitement in their language, through short and abrupt sentences and sudden transitions. The Qur'an nonetheless carefully maintains the rhymed form, like the oracles. Some later portions also preserve this form but also in a style where the movement is calm and the style expository.

Michael Sells, citing the work of the critic Norman O. Brown, acknowledges Brown's observation that the seeming "disorganization" of Qur'anic literary expression — its "scattered or fragmented mode of composition," in Sells's phrase — is in fact a literary device capable of delivering "profound effects — as if the intensity of the prophetic message were shattering the vehicle of human language in which it was being communicated." Sells also addresses the much-discussed "repetitiveness" of the Qur'an, seeing this, too, as a literary device.

> "The values presented in the very early Meccan revelations are repeated throughout the hymnic Suras. There is a sense of directness, of intimacy, as if the hearer were being asked repeatedly a simple question: what will be of value at the end of a human life?"
>
> - Sells

Qur'an as a religious text

Muslims believe the Qur'an to be the book of divine guidance and direction for mankind and consider the text in its original Arabic to be the literal word of God, revealed to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over a period of twenty-three years and view the Qur'an as God's final revelation to humanity.

The Christian concept of revelation which means God incarnating and unveiling himself and become visible and audible for mankind is foreign to Islam. Wahy in Islamic and Qur'anic concept means the act of God addressing an individual, conveying a message for a greater number of recipients. The process by which the divine message comes to the heart of a messenger of God is *tanzil* (to send down) or *nuzul* (to come down). As the Qur'an says, "With the truth we (God) have sent it down and with the truth it has come down." It designates positive religion, the letter of the revelation dictated by the angel to the prophet. It means to cause this revelation to descend from the higher world. According to hadith, the verses were sent down in special circumstances known as *asbab al-nuzul*. However, in this view God himself is never the subject of coming down.

The Qur'an frequently asserts in its text that it is divinely ordained, an assertion that Muslims believe. The Qur'an — often referring to its own textual nature and reflecting constantly on its divine origin — is the most meta-textual, self-referential religious text amongst all religious texts. The Qur'an refers to a written pre-text which records God's speech even before it was sent down.

The issue of whether the Qur'an is eternal or created was one of the crucial controversies among early Muslim theologians. Mu'tazilis believe it is created while the most widespread varieties of Muslim theologians consider the Qur'an to be eternal and uncreated. Sufi philosophers view the question as artificial or wrongly framed.

Muslims maintain the present wording of the Qur'anic text corresponds exactly to that revealed to Muhammad himself: as the words of God, said to be delivered to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel. Muslims consider the Qur'an to be a guide, a sign of the prophethood of Muhammad and the

" And if ye are in doubt as to what We have revealed from time to time to Our servant, then produce a Sura like thereunto; and call your witnesses or helpers (If there are any) besides God, if your (doubts) are true. But if ye cannot — and of a surety ye cannot — then fear the Fire whose fuel is men and stones, which is prepared for those who reject "

truth of the religion. They argue it is not possible for a human to produce a book like the Qur'an, as the Qur'an itself maintains.

Faith.

Therefore an Islamic philosopher introduces a prophetology to explain how the divine word passes into human expression. This leads to a kind of esoteric hermeneutics which seeks to comprehend the position of the prophet by mediating on the modality of his relationship not with his own time, but with the eternal source from which his message emanates. This view contrasts with historical critique of western scholars who attempt to understand the prophet through his circumstances, education and type of genius.

—**Qur'an** 2:23–4 [Yusuf Ali]

History of Qur'an

The Prophet era

According to hadith and Muslim history, after Muhammad emigrated to Medina and formed an independent Muslim community, he ordered a considerable number of the companions (*sahaba*) to recite the Qur'an and to learn and teach the laws which were being revealed daily. Companions who engaged in the recitation of the Qur'an were called *qurra'*. Since most *sahaba* were unable to read or write, they were ordered to learn from the prisoners-of-war the simple writing of the time. Thus a group of *sahaba* gradually became literate. As it was initially spoken, the Qur'an was recorded on tablets, bones and the wide flat end of date palm fronds. Most chapters were in use amongst early Muslims since they are mentioned in numerous sayings by both Sunni and Shia sources, relating Muhammad's use of the Qur'an as a call to Islam, the making of prayer and the manner of recitation. However, the Qur'an did not exist in book form at the time of Muhammad's death in 632.

9th century Qur'an

Welch, a scholar of Islamic studies, states in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* that he believes the graphic descriptions of Muhammad's condition at these moments may be regarded as genuine, seeing as he was severely disturbed after these revelations. According to Welch, these seizures would have been seen as convincing evidence for the superhuman origin of Muhammad's inspirations by the people around him. Muhammad's critics, however, accused him of being a possessed man, or of being a soothsayer or magician since his claimed experiences were similar to those made by such figures well known in ancient Arabia. Additionally, Welch states that it remains uncertain whether these experiences occurred before or after Muhammad began to see himself as a prophet.

The Qur'an states that Muhammad was *ummi*, interpreted as illiterate in Muslim tradition. According to Watt, the meaning of the Qur'anic term *ummi* is unscriptured rather than illiterate. Watt argues that a certain amount of writing was necessary for Muhammad to perform his commercial duties though it seems certain that he had not read any scriptures.

Making Mus'haf

According to Shia and some Sunni scholars, Ali compiled a complete version of the Qur'an *mus'haf* immediately after death of Muhammad. The order of this *mus'haf* differed from that gathered later during Uthman's era. Despite this, Ali made no objection or resistance against standardized *mus'haf*, but kept his own book.

http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 522 of 735

After seventy reciters were killed in the Battle of Yamama, the caliph Abu Bakr decided to collect the different chapters and verses into one volume. Thus, a group of reciters, including Zayd ibn Thabit, collected the chapters and verses and produced several hand-written copies of the complete book.

In about 650, as Islam expanded beyond the Arabian peninsula into Persia, the Levant and North Africa, the third caliph Uthman ibn Affan ordered the preparation of an official, standardized version, in order to preserve the sanctity of the text (and perhaps to keep the Rashidun Empire united, see Uthman Qur'an). Five of the reciters from amongst the companions produced a unique text from the first volume which had been prepared on the orders of Abu Bakr and which was kept with Hafsa bint Umar. The other copies already in the hands of Muslims in other areas were collected and sent to Medina where, on orders of the Caliph, they were destroyed by burning or boiling. This remains the authoritative text of the Qur'an to this day.

The Qur'an in its present form is generally considered by academic scholars to record the words spoken by Muhammad because the search for variants in Western academia has not yielded any differences of great significance and that historically controversy over the content of the Qur'an has never become a main point.

11th Century North African Qur'an in the British Museum

Literary usage

In addition to and largely independent of the division into *suras*, there are various ways of dividing the Qur'an into parts of approximately equal length for convenience in reading, recitation and memorization. The thirty *ajza* can be used to read through the entire Qur'an in a week or a month. Some of these parts are known by names and these names are the first few words by which the *juz'* starts. A *juz'* is sometimes further divided into two *ahzab*, and each *hizb* subdivided into four *rub 'al-ahzab*. A different structure is provided by the *ruku'at*, semantical units resembling paragraphs and comprising roughly ten *ayat* each. Some also divide the Qur'an into seven *manazil* to facilitate complete recitation in a week.

Recitation

One meaning of *Qur'an* is "recitation", the Qur'an itself outlining the general method of how it is to be recited: slowly and in rhythmic tones. *Tajwid* is the term for techniques of recitation, and assessed in terms of how accessible the recitation is to those intent on concentrating on the words.

66 ...and recite the Qur'an in slow, measured rhythmic tones. 99

—**Qur'an** 73:4 (Yusuf Ali)

To perform salat (prayer), a mandatory obligation in Islam, a Muslim is required to learn at least some *suar* of the Qur'an (typically starting with the first one, al-Fatiha, known as the "seven oft-repeated verses," and then moving on to the shorter ones at the end). Until one has learned al-Fatiha, a Muslim can only say phrases like "praise be to God" during the salat.

A person whose recital repertoire encompasses the whole Qur'an is called a *qari'*, whereas a memoriser of the Qur'an is called a *hafiz* (*fem. Hafaz*) (which translate as "reciter" or "protector," respectively). Muhammad is regarded as the first *qari'* since he was the first to recite it. Recitation (*tilawa* تلاوة) of the

Qurʾan is a fine art in the Muslim world.

Schools of recitation

There are several schools of Qurʾanic recitation, all of which are possible pronunciations of the Uthmanic *rasm*: Seven reliable, three permissible and (at least) four uncanonical - in 8 sub-traditions each - making for 80 recitation variants altogether. A canonical recitation must satisfy three conditions:

1. It must match the rasm, letter for letter.
2. It must conform with the syntactic rules of the Arabic language.
3. It must have a continuous isnad to Muhammad through *tawatur*, meaning that it has to be related by a large group of people to another down the isnad chain.

These recitations differ in the vocalization (*tashkil*) of a few words, which in turn gives a complementary meaning to the word in question according to the rules of Arabic grammar. For example, the vocalization of a verb can change its active and passive voice. It can also change its stem formation, implying intensity for example. Vowels may be elongated or shortened, and glottal stops (hamzas) may be added or dropped, according to the respective rules of the particular recitation. For example, the name of archangel Gabriel is pronounced differently in different recitations: Jibrīl, Jabrīl, Jibraʾīl, and Jibra'il. The name "Qurʾan" is pronounced without the glottal stop (as "Qurʾan") in one recitation, and prophet Abraham's name is pronounced Ibrāhām in another. The more widely used narrations are those of Hafss (حفص عن عاصم), Warsh (ورش عن نافع), Qaloon (قالون عن نافع) and Al-Duri according to Abu ʿAmr (الدوري عن أبي عمرو). Muslims firmly believe that all canonical recitations were recited by Muhammad himself, citing the respective isnad chain of narration, and accept them as valid for worshipping and as a reference for rules of Sharia. The uncanonical recitations are called "explanatory" for their role in giving a different perspective for a given verse or *ayah*. Today several dozen persons hold the title "Memorizer of the Ten Recitations." This is considered a great accomplishment amongst Muslims.

Page of a 13th century Qurʾan, showing Sura 33: 73

The presence of these different recitations is attributed to many hadith. Malik Ibn Anas has reported:

> *Abd al-Rahman Ibn Abd al-Qari* narrated: " Umar Ibn Khattab said before me: I heard *Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam* reading Surah Furqan in a different way from the one I used to read it, and the Prophet (sws) himself had read out this surah to me. Consequently, as soon as I heard him, I wanted to get hold of him. However, I gave him respite until he had finished the prayer. Then I got hold of his cloak and dragged him to the Prophet (sws). I said to him: "I have heard this person [Hisham Ibn Hakim Ibn Hizam] reading Surah Furqan in a different way from the one you had read it out to me." The Prophet (sws) said: "Leave him alone [O 'Umar]." Then he said to Hisham: "Read [it]." [Umar said:] "He read it out in the same way as he had done before me." [At this,] the Prophet (sws) said: "It was revealed thus." Then the Prophet (sws) asked me to read it out. So I read it out. [At this], he said: "It was revealed thus; this Qurʾan has been revealed in Seven *Ahruf*. You can read it in any of them you find easy from among them.

Suyuti, a famous 15th century Islamic theologian, writes after interpreting above hadith in 40 different ways:

> " And to me the best opinion in this regard is that of the people who say that this hadith is from among matters of *mutashabihat*, the meaning of which cannot be understood. "

Many reports contradict the presence of variant readings:

- *Abu Abd al-Rahman al-Sulami* reports, "the reading of Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman and Zayd ibn Thabit and that of all the Muhajirun and the Ansar was the same. They would read the Qur'an according to the *Qira'at al-'ammah*. This is the same reading which was read out twice by the Prophet (sws) to Gabriel in the year of his death. Zayd ibn Thabit was also present in this reading [called] the '*Ardah-i akhirah*. It was this very reading that he taught the Qur'an to people till his death".
- Ibn Sirin writes, "the reading on which the Qur'an was read out to the prophet in the year of his death is the same according to which people are reading the Qur'an today".

Javed Ahmad Ghamidi also purports that there is only one recitation of Qur'an, which is called *Qira'at of Hafss* or in classical scholarship, it is called *Qira'at al-'ammah*. The Qur'an has also specified that it was revealed in the language of the prophet's tribe: the Quraysh.[**Qur'an** 19:97][**Qur'an** 44:58])

However, the identification of the recitation of Hafss as the *Qira'at al-'ammah* is somewhat problematic when that was the recitation of the people of Kufa in Iraq, and there is better reason to identify the recitation of the reciters of Madinah as the dominant recitation. The reciter of Madinah was Nafi' and Imam Malik remarked "The recitation of Nafi' is Sunnah." Moreover, the dialect of Arabic spoken by Quraysh and the Arabs of the Hijaz was known to have less use of the letter hamzah, as is the case in the recitation of Nafi', whereas in the Hafs recitation the hamzah is one of the very dominant features.

> AZ [however] says that the people of El-Hijaz and Hudhayl, and the people of Makkah and Al-Madinah, to not pronounce hamzah [at all]: and 'Isa Ibn-'Omar says, Tamim pronounce hamzah, and the people of Al-Hijaz, in cases of necessity, [in poetry,] do so.

So the hamzah is of the dialect of the Najd whose people came to comprise the dominant Arabic element in Kufa giving some features of their dialect to their recitation, whereas the recitation of Nafi' and the people of Madinah maintained some features of the dialect of Hijaz and the Quraysh.

However, the discussion of the priority of one or the other recitation is unnecessary since it is a consensus of knowledgable people that all of the seven recitations of the Qur'an are acceptable and valid for recitation in the prayer.

Moreover, the so-called "un-canonical" recitations such as are narrated from some of the Companions and which do not conform to the Uthmani copy of the Qur'an are not legitimate for recitation in the prayer, but knowledge of them can legitimately be used in the tafsir of the Qur'an, not as a proof but as a valid argument for an explanation of an ayah.

Writing and printing

Most Muslims today use printed editions of the Qur'an. There are many editions, large and small, elaborate or plain, expensive or inexpensive. Bilingual forms with the Arabic on one side and a gloss into a more familiar language on the other are very popular.

Qur'ans are produced in many different sizes. Most are of a reasonable book size, but there exist extremely large Qur'ans (usually for display purposes) and very small Qur'ans (sometimes given as gifts).

Qur'ans were first printed from carved wooden blocks, one block per page. There are existing specimen of pages and blocks dating from the 10th century AD. Mass-produced less expensive versions of the Qur'an were later produced by lithography, a technique for printing illustrations. Qur'ans so printed could reproduce the fine calligraphy of hand-made versions.

The oldest surviving Qur'an for which movable type was used was printed in Venice in 1537/1538. It seems to have been prepared for sale in the Ottoman empire. Catherine the Great of Russia sponsored a printing of the Qur'an in 1787. This was followed by editions from Kazan (1828), Persia (1833) and Istanbul (1877).

It is extremely difficult to render the full Qur'an, with all the points, in computer code, such as Unicode. The Internet Sacred Text Archive makes computer files of the Qur'an freely available both as images and in a temporary Unicode version. Various designers and software firms have attempted to develop computer fonts that can adequately render the Qur'an.

Before printing was widely adopted, the Qur'an was transmitted by copyists and calligraphers. Since Muslim tradition felt that directly portraying sacred figures and events might lead to idolatry, it was considered wrong to decorate the Qur'an with pictures (as was often done for Christian texts, for example). Muslims instead lavished love and care upon the sacred text itself. Arabic is written in many scripts, some of which are both complex and beautiful. Arabic calligraphy is a highly honored art, much like Chinese calligraphy. Muslims also decorated their Qur'ans with abstract figures (arabesques), colored inks, and gold leaf. Pages from some of these antique Qur'ans are displayed throughout this article.

Page from a Qur'an ('Umar-i Aqta'). Iran, present-day Afghanistan, Timurid dynasty, circa 1400. Opaque watercolor, ink and gold on paper Muqaqqaq script. 170 x 109cm (66 15/16 x 42 15/16in). Historical region: Uzbekistan.

Translations

Translation of the Qur'an has always been a problematic and difficult issue. Since Muslims revere the Qur'an as miraculous and inimitable (*i'jaz al-Qur'an*), they argue that the Qur'anic text can not be reproduced in another language or form. Furthermore, an Arabic word may have a range of meanings depending on the context, making an accurate translation even more difficult.

Nevertheless, the Qur'an has been translated into most African, Asian and European languages. The first translator of the Qur'an was Salman the Persian, who translated Fatihah into Persian during the 7th century. The first complete translation of Quran was into Persian during the reign of Samanids in the 9th century. Islamic tradition holds that translations were made for Emperor Negus of Abyssinia and Byzantine Emperor Heraclius, as both received letters by Muhammad

containing verses from the Qur'an. In early centuries, the permissibility of translations was not an issue, but whether one could use translations in prayer.

In 1936, translations in 102 languages were known.

Robert of Ketton was the first person to translate the Qur'an into a Western language, Latin, in 1143. Alexander Ross offered the first English version in 1649. In 1734, George Sale produced the first scholarly translation of the Qur'an into English; another was produced by Richard Bell in 1937, and yet another by Arthur John Arberry in 1955. All these translators were non-Muslims. There have been numerous translations by Muslims; the most popular of these are by Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan and Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din al Hilali, Maulana Muhammad Ali, Abdullah Yusuf Ali, M. H. Shakir, Muhammad Asad and Marmaduke Pickthall.

The English translators have sometimes favored archaic English words and constructions over their more modern or conventional equivalents; for example, two widely-read translators, A. Yusuf Ali and M. Marmaduke Pickthall, use the plural and singular "ye" and "thou" instead of the more common " you." Another common stylistic decision has been to refrain from translating "Allah" — in Arabic, literally, "The God" — into the common English word "God." These choices may differ in more recent translations.

Levels of meaning

Shias and Sufis as well as some Muslim philosophers believe the meaning of the Qur'an to be not restricted to the literal aspect. The Qur'an also has inward aspects. Henry Corbin narrates a hadith that goes back to Muhammad:

> "The Qur'an possesses an external appearance and a hidden depth, an exoteric meaning and an esoteric meaning. This esoteric meaning in turn conceals an esoteric meaning (this depth possesses a depth, after the image of the celestial Spheres which are enclosed within each other). So it goes on for seven esoteric meanings (seven depths of hidden depth)."

Commentaries dealing with the *zahir* (outward aspects) of the text are called *tafsir*, and hermeneutic and esoteric commentaries dealing with the *batin* are called *ta'wil* ("interpretation" or "explanation"), which involves taking the text back to its beginning. Esoteric commentators believe that the ultimate meaning of the Qur'an is known only to God.

In contrast, Qur'anic literalism which follows by Salafis and Zahiris is the belief that the Qur'an should be taken at its apparent meaning, rather than employing any sort of interpretation. This includes, for example, the belief that Allah has appendages such as hands as stated in the Qur'an; this is generally explained by the concept of *bi-la kaifa*, the claim that the literal meanings should be accepted without asking how or why.

Tafsir

The Qur'an has sparked a huge body of commentary and explication, known as *tafsir*. This commentary is aimed at explaining the "meanings of the Qur'anic verses, clarifying their import and finding out their significance." and best tafseer is done by Allah himself.

http://cd3wd.com wikipedia-for-schools http://gutenberg.org page: 527 of 735

Tafsir is one of the earliest academic activities of Muslims. According to the Qur'an, Muhammad was the first person who described the meanings of verses for early Muslims. Other early exegetes included a few Companions of Muhammad, like Ali ibn Abi Talib, Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Umar and Ubayy ibn Kab. Exegesis in those days was confined to the explanation of literary aspects of the verse, the background of its revelation and, occasionally, interpretation of one verse with the help of the other. If the verse was about a historical event, then sometimes a few traditions (hadith) of Muhammad were narrated to make its meaning clear.

Because the Qur'an is spoken in classical Arabic, many of the later converts to Islam (mostly non-Arabs) did not always understand the Qur'anic Arabic, they did not catch allusions that were clear to early Muslims fluent in Arabic and they were concerned with reconciling apparent conflict of themes in the Qur'an. Commentators erudite in Arabic explained the allusions, and perhaps most importantly, explained which Qur'anic verses had been revealed early in Muhammad's prophetic career, as being appropriate to the very earliest Muslim community, and which had been revealed later, canceling out or " abrogating" (*nāsikh*) the earlier text (*mansukh*). Memories of the *occasions of revelation (asbāb al-nuzūl)*, the circumstances under which Muhammad had spoken as he did, were also collected, as they were believed to explain some apparent obscurities.

Inward Aspects of the Qur'an

It is an essential idea for Shia as well as Sufi Muslims that the Qur'an has inward aspects too. They refer to several hadith of Muhammad such as

> "The Qur'an possesses an external appearance and a hidden depth, an exoteric meaning and an esoteric meaning. This esoteric meaning in turn conceals an esoteric meaning (this depth possesses a depth, after the image of the celestial Spheres which are enclosed within each other). So it goes on for seven esoteric meanings (seven depths of hidden depth)."

According to this view, it has also become evident that the inner meaning of the Qur'an does not eradicate or invalidate its outward meaning. Rather, it is like the soul, which gives life to the body.

On the base of this viewpoint, Henry Corbin considers the Qur'an to have a part to play in Islamic philosophy, because gnosiology itself goes hand in hand with prophetology. However, it is clear that those who don't believe in the divine origin of the Qur'an or any kind of sacred or spiritual existence completely oppose any inward aspect of the Qur'an.

Ta'wil

As Ja'far Kashfi has defined *ta'wil* means to lead back or to bring back something to its origin or archetype is a science whose pivot is a spiritual direction and a divine inspiration, while the *tafsir* is the literal exegesis of the letter; its pivot is the canonical Islamic sciences. Allameh Tabatabaei says according to popular explanation among the later exegetes *ta'wil* indicates that particular meaning towards which the verse is directed. The meaning of revelation (*tanzil*), as opposed to *ta'wil*, is clear or according to the obvious meaning of the words as they were revealed. But this explanation has become so wide spread that, at present, it has become the real meaning of *ta'wil*, while originally this word meant "to return" or "the returning place". In his view what has been rightly called ta'wil, or hermeneutic interpretation, of the Qur'an is not concerned simply with the denotation of words. Rather, it is concerned with certain truths and realities

that transcend the comprehension of the common run of men; yet it is from these truths and realities that the principles of doctrine and the practical injunctions of the Qur'an issue forth. Interpretation is not the meaning of the verse; rather it transpires through that meaning - a special sort of transpiration. There is a spiritual reality which is the main objective of ordaining a law, or basic aim of describing a divine attribute; there is an actual significance to which a Qur'anic story refers.

However Shia and Sufism on one hand and Sunni on the other hand have completely different positions on its legitimacy. A verse in the Qur'an points out this issue, but Shia and Sunni disagree on how it should be read. According to Shia, those who are firmly rooted in knowledge like the Prophet and imams, know the secrets of Qur'an, while Sunnis believe just God knows it. According to Allameh Tabatabaei "none knows its interpretation except Allah", remains valid, without any opposing or qualifying clause. Therefore, so far as this verse is concerned, the knowledge of the Qur'an's interpretation is reserved for Allah. But he uses another verses and concludes those who are purified by God know the interpretation of the Qur'an to a certain extent.

The most ancient spiritual commentary on the Qur'an consists of the teachings which the Shia Imams propounded in the course of their conversations with their disciples. It was the principles of their spiritual hermeneutics that were subsequently to be brought together by the Sufis. These texts are narrated from Imam Ali and Ja'far al-Sadiq by Shia and Sunni Sufis.

As Corbin narrates from Shia sources, Ali himself gives this testimony:

> Not a single verse of the Qur'an descended upon (was revealed to) the Messenger of God which he did not proceed to dictate to me and make me recite. I would write it with my own hand, and he would instruct me as to its *tafsir* (the literal explanation) and the *ta'wil* (the spiritual exegesis), the *nasikh* (the verse which abrogates) and the *mansukh* (the abrogated verse), the *muhkam* (without ambiguity) and the *mutashabih* (ambiguous), the particular and the general...

According to Allameh Tabatabaei, there are acceptable and unacceptable esoteric interpretations. Acceptable *ta'wil* refers to the meaning of a verse beyond its literal meaning; rather only the implicit, whose ultimate meaning is known only to God and can't be comprehended directly through human thought alone. The verses in question here are those which refer to the human qualities of coming, going, sitting, satisfaction, anger and sorrow apparently attributed to God. Ta'wil that is unacceptable means "to transfer" the apparent meaning of a verse to a different meaning by means of a proof; this method is not without obvious inconsistencies. Although this view has gained considerable acceptance, it is incorrect and cannot be applied to the Qur'anic verses. The correct interpretation is that reality to which a verse refers; it is found in all verses, the decisive and the ambiguous alike; it is not a sort of a meaning of the word; it is a real fact that is too sublime for words; Allah has dressed them with words so as to bring them a bit nearer to our minds; in this respect they are like proverbs that are used to create a picture in the mind and thus help the hearer to clearly grasp the intended idea.

Therefore Sufi spiritual interpretations usually are accepted by Islamic scholars as authentic interpretations as long as certain conditions were met. In Sufi history, these interpretations were sometimes considered religious innovations (*bid'ah*), as Salafis today believe. However, even among Shia, *ta'wil* is extremely controversial. For example, when Ayatollah Ruhallah Khomeini, the leader of Islamic revolution, gave some lectures about Surat al-Fatiha in December 1979 and January 1980, some protests forced him to suspend it before he could proceed beyond the first two verses of the surah.

Relationship with other literature

The Torah and the Bible

The Qur'an speaks well of the relationship it has with former books (the Torah and the Gospel) and attributes their similarities to their unique origin and saying all of them have been revealed by the one God.

The Qur'an retells stories of many of the people and events recounted in Jewish and Christian sacred books (Tanakh, Bible) and devotional literature (Apocrypha, Midrash), although it differs in many details. Adam, Enoch, Noah, Heber, Shelah, Abraham, Lot, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Jethro, David, Solomon, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, Aaron, Moses, Ezra, Zechariah, Jesus, and John the Baptist are mentioned in the Qur'an as prophets of God (see Prophets of Islam). Muslims believe the common elements or resemblances between the Bible and other Jewish and Christian writings and Islamic dispensations is due to their common divine source, and that the original Christian or Jewish texts were authentic divine revelations given to prophets.

> " It is He Who sent down to thee (step by step), in truth, the Book, confirming what went before it; and He sent down the Law (of Moses) and the Gospel (of Jesus) before this, as a guide to mankind, and He sent down the criterion (of judgment between right and wrong). "
>
> —**Qur'an** 3:3 (Yusuf Ali)

Muslims believe that those texts were neglected, corrupted (*tahrif*) or altered in time by the Jews and Christians and have been replaced by God's final and perfect revelation, which is the Qur'an. However, many Jews and Christians believe that the historical biblical archaeological record refutes this assertion, because the Dead Sea Scrolls (the Tanakh and other Jewish writings which predate the origin of the Qur'an) have been fully translated, validating the authenticity of the Greek Septuagint.

Influence of Christian apocrypha

The Diatessaron, Protoevangelium of James, Infancy Gospel of Thomas, Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew and the Arabic Infancy Gospel are all alleged to have been sources that the author/authors drew on when creating the Qur'an. The Diatessaron especially may have led to the misconception in the Qur'an that the Christian Gospel is one text. However this is strongly refuted by Muslim scholars, who maintain that the Qur'an is the divine word of God without any interpolation, and the similarities exist only due to the one source.

Arab writing

After the Qur'an, and the general rise of Islam, the Arabic alphabet developed rapidly into a beautiful and complex form of art.

Wadad Kadi, Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at University of Chicago and Mustansir Mir, Professor of Islamic studies at Youngstown State University state that:

Although Arabic, as a language and a literary tradition, was quite well developed by the time of Muhammad's prophetic activity, it was only after the emergence of Islam, with its founding scripture in Arabic, that the language reached its utmost capacity of expression, and the literature its highest point of complexity and sophistication. Indeed, it probably is no exaggeration to say that the Qur'an was one of the most conspicuous forces in the making of classical and post-classical Arabic literature.

The main areas in which the Qur'an exerted noticeable influence on Arabic literature are diction and themes; other areas are related to the literary aspects of the Qur'an particularly oaths (q.v.), metaphors, motifs, and symbols. As far as diction is concerned, one could say that Qur'anic words, idioms, and expressions, especially "loaded" and formulaic phrases, appear in practically all genres of literature and in such abundance that it is simply impossible to compile a full record of them. For not only did the Qur'an create an entirely new linguistic corpus to express its message, it also endowed old, pre-Islamic words with new meanings and it is these meanings that took root in the language and subsequently in the literature...

Qur'an miracles

Islamic scholars believe that the Qur'an is miraculous by its very nature in being a revealed text and that similar texts cannot be written by human endeavor. Its miraculous nature is claimed to be evidenced by its literary style, suggested similarities between Qur'anic verses and scientific facts discovered much later, and various prophecies. The Qur'an itself challenges those who deny its claimed divine origin to produce a text like it. [**Qur'an** 17:88][**Qur'an** 2:23][**Qur'an** 10:38]. These claims originate directly from Islamic belief in its revealed nature, and are widely disputed by non-muslim scholars of Islamic history.

Qur'anic Initials

14 different Arabic letters form 14 different sets of "Qur'anic Initials" (the "Muqatta'at", such as A.L.M. of 2:1) and prefix 29 suras in the Qur'an. The meaning and interpretation of these initials is considered unknown to most Muslims. In 1974, Egyptian biochemist Rashad Khalifa claimed to have discovered a mathematical code based on the number 19, which is mentioned in Sura 74:30 of the Qur'an.

In culture

Most Muslims treat paper copies of the Qur'an with veneration, ritually washing before reading the Qur'an. Worn out, torn, or errant (for example, pages out of order) Qur'ans are not discarded as wastepaper, but rather are left free to flow in a river, kept somewhere safe, burnt, or buried in a remote location. Many Muslims memorize at least some portion of the Qur'an in the original Arabic, usually at least the verses needed to perform the prayers. Those who have memorized the entire Qur'an earn the right to the title of *Hafiz*.

Based on tradition and a literal interpretation of sura 56:77-79: *That this is indeed a Qur'an Most Honourable, In a Book well-guarded, Which none shall touch but those who are clean.*"many scholars opine that a Muslim perform wudu (ablution or a ritual cleansing with water) before touching a copy of the Qur'an, or *mus'haf*. This view has been contended by other scholars on the fact that, according to Arabic linguistic rules, this verse alludes to a fact and does not comprise

an order. The literal translation thus reads as *That (this) is indeed a noble Qur'ān, In a Book kept hidden, Which none toucheth save the purified,* (translated by Mohamed Marmaduke Pickthall). It is suggested based on this translation that performing ablution is not required.

Qur'an desecration means insulting the Qur'an by defiling or dismembering it. Muslims must always treat the book with reverence, and are forbidden, for instance, to pulp, recycle, or simply discard worn-out copies of the text. Respect for the written text of the Qur'an is an important element of religious faith by many Muslims. They believe that intentionally insulting the Qur'an is a form of blasphemy.

Criticism

The Qur'an's teachings on matters of war and peace have become topics of heated discussion in recent years. On the one hand, some critics interpret that certain verses of the Qur'an sanction military action against unbelievers as a whole both during the lifetime of Muhammad and after. On the other hand, other scholars argue that such verses of the Qur'an are interpreted out of context, and argue that when the verses are read in context it clearly appears that the Qur'an prohibits aggression, and allows fighting only in self defense.

Some scholars, such as Patricia Crone, Michael Cook, and Gerd R. Puin, are skeptical of traditional religious accounts of the Qur'an's creation and history.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qur%27an"

Rama

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Rama (IAST: rāma, Devanāgarī: राम, Thai: Phra Ram, Lao: Phra Lam) or **Ramachandra** was a legendary king of Ayodhya in ancient India. In Hinduism, he is considered to be an avatar of Vishnu and a lila-avatara as described in the Bhagavata Purana.

Rama is one of the most popular figures and deities in Vaishnavism and Vaishnava religious scriptures in South and Southeast Asia. The majority of details concerning Rama come from the Ramayana, one of the two great epics of India. Born as the eldest son of Kaushalya and Dasharatha, king of Ayodhya, Rama is referred to within Hinduism as *Maryada Purushottama*, literally *the Perfect Man* or *Lord of Restrictions*. Rama is the husband of Sita, who Hindus consider to be an Avatar of Lakshmi and the embodiment of perfect womanhood.

Rama's life and journey is one of perfect adherence to dharma despite harsh tests of life and time. For the sake of his father's honour, Rama abandons his claim to Kosala's throne to serve an exile of fourteen years in the forest. His wife, Sita and brother, Lakshmana being unable to live without Rama decide to join him, and all three spend the fourteen years in exile together. This leads to the kidnapping of Sita by Ravana, the Rakshasa monarch of Lanka. After a long and arduous search that tests his personal strength and virtue, Rama fights a colossal war against Ravana's armies. In a war of powerful and magical beings, greatly destructive weaponry and battles, Rama slays Ravana in battle and liberates his wife. Having completed his exile, Rama returns to be crowned King in Ayodhya (the capital of his Kingdom) and eventually becomes Emperor of the World, after which he reigns for eleven thousand years - an era of perfect happiness, peace, prosperity and justice known as *Rama Rajya*.

Rama's courage in searching for Sita and fighting a terrible war to rescue his wife and their honour is complemented by Sita's absolute devotion to her husband's love, and perfect chastity despite being Ravana's captive. Rama's younger brothers, namely Lakshmana, Shatrughna and Bharata strongly complement his piety, virtue and strength, and they are believed by many to belong to the *Mariyada Purshottama* and the Seventh Avatara, mainly embodied by Rama. Rama's piety and virtue attract powerful and devoted allies such as Hanuman and the Vanaras of Kishkindha, with whose help he rescues Sita. The legend of Rama is deeply influential and popular in the societies of the Indian subcontinent and across South East Asia. Rama is revered for his unending compassion, courage and devotion to religious values and duty.

Rama	
Lord Rama (centre) with wife Sita, brother Lakshmana (with fan) and devotee, Hanuman (far left).	
Devanagari	राम
Affiliation	Avatar of Vishnu
Abode	Ayodhya
Weapon	The Bow Kodanda
Consort	Sita
Siblings	Bharat, Laxman, Shatrughna

Etymology

Rāmá in the Rigveda and the Atharvaveda is an adjective meaning "dark, black", or a noun meaning "darkness", e.g. RV 10.3.3 (trans. Griffith):

> 10.3.3cd *Agni, far-spreading with conspicuous lustre, hath compassed Night [Rama] with whitely shining garments.*

Rama made up of 'Ra' + 'ama' which means light coming from within.

As a personal name it appears in RV 10.93.14:

> 10.93.14ab *This to Duhsima Prthavana have I sung, to Vena, Rama, to the nobles [Asuras], and the King.*

The feminine form of the adjective, *rāmī´* is an epitheton of the night (Ratri), as is *kṛṣṇī´*, the feminine of *kṛṣṇa*, viz. "the dark one; the black one". Mayrhofer (1996) suggests a derivation from PIE *(H)reh₁-mo-*, cognate to OHG *rāmac* "dirty".

Two Ramas are mentioned in the Vedas, with the patronymics *Mārgaveya* and *Aupatasvini*; another Rama with the patronymic *Jāmadagnya* is the supposed author of a Rigvedic hymn. According to Monier-Williams, three Ramas were celebrated in post-Vedic times,

1. *Rāma-chandra* ("Rama-moon"), son of Dasaratha, believed to have descended from Raghu. (The Rama of this article).
2. *Parashu-rāma* ("Rama of the Battle-axe"), the Sixth Avatara of Vishnu, sometimes also referred to as *Jāmadagnya*, or as *Bhārgava Rāma* (descended from Bhrigu), a "Chiranjeevi" or Immortal.
3. *Bala-rāma* ("the strong Rama"), also called *Halāyudha* (Wielder of the Plough in Battle), the older brother and close companion of Krishna, the Eighth Avatara of Vishnu.

In the Vishnu sahasranama, Rama is the 394th name of Vishnu. In the interpretation of Adi Sankara's commentary, translated by Swami Tapasyananda of the Ramakrishna Mission, Rama has two meanings: the supreme Brahman who is the eternally blissful spiritual Self in whom yogis delight or the One (i.e., Vishnu) who out of his own will assumed the enchanting form of Rama, the son of Dasaratha.

Avatara

The *Ramayana* speaks of how the Goddess Earth, Bhumidevi, came to the Lord Creator, Brahma begging to be rescued from evil kings who were plundering her resources and destroying life through bloody wars and evil conduct. The Devas also came to Brahma fearful of the rule of Ravana, the ten-headed rakshasa emperor of Lanka. Ravana had overpowered the Devas and now ruled the heavens, the earth and the netherworlds. Although a powerful and noble monarch, he was also arrogant, destructive and a patron of evil doers. He had boons that gave him immense strength and was invulnerable to all living and celestial beings, except man and animals.

Brahma, Bhumidevi and the Devas worshipped Vishnu, the Preserver, for deliverance from Ravana's tyrannical rule. Vishnu promised to kill Ravana by incarnating as a man - the eldest son of Kosala's king Dasaratha. His eternal consort, Lakshmi took birth as Sita and was found by king Janaka of Mithila while he was ploughing a field. Vishnu's eternal companion, the Ananta Sesha is said to have incarnated as Lakshmana to stay at his Lord's side on earth. Throughout his life, no one, except himself and a few select sages (among which are included Vasishta, Sharabhanga, Agastya and Vishwamitra) know of his destiny. Rama is continually revered by the many sages he encounters through his life, but only the most learned and exalted know of his true identity. At the end of the war between Rama and Ravana, just as Sita passes her *Agni pariskha*, Lord Brahma, Indra and the Devas, the celestial sages and Lord Shiva appear out of the sky. They affirm Sita's purity and ask him to end this terrible test. Thanking the Avatara for delivering the universe from the grips of evil, they reveal Rama's divine identity upon the culmination of his mission.

Prince of Ayodhya

King Dasaratha performs a *putrakameṣṭi yajña*, a sacrifice to obtain offspring by pleasing the gods. He gives the sacred, sacrificial nectar to his three wives according to their seniority: Kousalya, Sumitra and Kaikeyi. On the night of the ninth day after *Amavasya*, under the asterism of *Punarvasu* and the cardinal sign of the Crab, Rama was born in the city of Ayodhya, which is the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kosala. The city and the area are located in the central region of the modern state of Uttar Pradesh in India. Rama was the prince of the *Suryavamsha* (Sun Dynasty) House of Ikshvaku, descendant of great monarchs like Ikshvaku, Raghu and Bhagiratha. He is the eldest brother to Bharata, son of Kaikeyi, and the twin sons of Sumitra, Lakshmana and Shatrughna. Rama is dark-complexioned, mainly bluish - a symbol of divinity.

The *Ramayana* describes the relationship between the brothers as intensely loving and devotional, although Rama and Lakshmana share a special, inseparable bond, while Bharata is especially close to Shatrughna. The four brothers enjoy an undiscriminating love from Dasaratha and his three queens, but Dasaratha's main affections are affixed upon Rama. Rama and his brothers are trained by Rishi Vasishta in the Vedas, religion, philosophy and the sciences. They are described as taller than the tallest men of modern times, possessive of exceptional acumen and prowess in the military sciences and arts.

Initiation of the Avatara
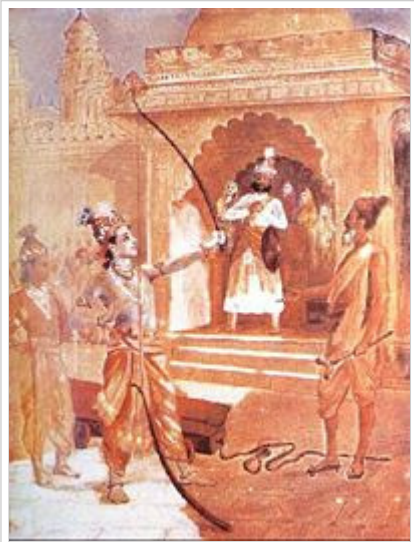
Rama breaking the bow, Raja Ravi
Varma (1848-1906)

Sage Vishwamitra takes the two princes, Rama and Lakshmana, to the *Swayamvara* ceremony for Sita. The challenge is to string the bow of Shiva, and shoot an arrow with it. This task is considered impossible for any ordinary king or living being, as this is the personal weapon of Shiva, more powerful, holy and of divine creation than conceivable. While attempting to string the bow, Rama *breaks* it into two. This feat of unbelievable strength, to have broken the bow of Shiva, spreads his fame across the worlds and seals his marriage to Sita.

After Rama weds Sita and the entire royal family and the Ayodhya army begin their journey back, the great rishi Parashurama Bhargava appears before them, having descended from his mountainous hermitage. Parashurama is an extremely powerful rishi, responsible for killing all of the world's warriors and kings 21 times. He was the sixth Avatara of Vishnu, and finds it unbelievable that anybody could break the bow of Shiva. Considering himself to still be the most powerful warrior-rishi on earth, he brings with them the bow of Vishnu, and intends to challenge Rama to prove his strength by stringing it, and then fighting a battle with him to prove superiority. Although the entire Ayodhya army is forestalled by his mystical power, Rama is himself angered. He respectfully bows to Parashurama, and within a twinkling of an eyelid snatches the bow of Vishnu, strings it, places an arrow and points it straight at the challenger's heart. Rama asks Parashurama what he will give as a target to the arrow in return for his life? At this point, Parashurama feels himself devoid of the tremendous mystical energy he possessed for so long. He realizes that Rama is Vishnu incarnate, his successor and definitely his superior. He accepts Rama's superiority, devotes his tapasya to him, pays homage to Rama and promises to return to his hermitage and leave the world of men.

Rama then fired the arrow up into the sky with Vishnu's bow, performing a feat true to his Supreme, divine nature with his natural weapon. His overpowering of Parashurama and using the supreme weapon with incredible ease and perfection dazzle the spectators and his relatives, but no one save Parashurama and Vasishta associate this with his true identity. It is said that the Rama's arrow is still flying across space, across time and across all of the universe. The day it will return to earth, it is said, it will bring the end of the world. Others say that the flying arrow destroys all evil on earth to uphold dharma and righteousness.

Another version

Another version of the story is, that Sage Vishvamitra along with Prince Rama and Lakshmana attended the Swayamvara of Princess Sita. To find the best match for his daughter Sita, King Janaka held a test in which the successful contestant was able to lift the bow of Lord Shiva and string it, would be able to wed Sita. However, none of the Kings were able to achieve this task, and disappointed, King Janaka pours out his dilemma and misery. Upon hearing this Lakshmana is enraged and offended that King Janaka did not offer Rama the same test. Upon the invitation of King Janaka, Lord Rama proceeded to the bow of Lord Shiva. Paying reverence to the bow, Rama was able lift the bow, string it and in the same process broke the bow in two. This event sent a loud thundering sound throughout the whole planet and the noise reached the ears of Parasurama who was at that time meditating and knew that the sound made was the bow of Lord Shiva's being broken. When Parasurama arrived at the court of King Janaka, he confronted the prince and issued a challenge. This led to a confrontation between Lakshmana and Parusurama, who's rage was increasing at Lakshmana's impetuous backtalk. However, Lord Rama without any physical confrontation was able to pacify Parasurama. After calming down Parasurama realised that Rama was Lord Vishnu Incarnate and granted Lord Rama all the weapons he had obtained from his tapas.

Dharma of exile

King Dasaratha announces to Ayodhya that he plans to crown Rama, his eldest child the *Yuvaraja* (*crown prince*). While the news is welcomed by everyone in the kingdom, the mind of queen Kaikeyi is poisoned by her wicked maid-servant, Manthara. Kaikeyi, who is initially pleased for Rama, is made to fear for the safety and future of her son Bharata. Fearing that Rama would ignore or possibly victimize his youngest brother for the sake of power, Kaikeyi demands that Dasaratha banish Rama to a forest exile for fourteen years, and that Bharata be crowned in Rama's place. She had been granted two boons by the king when she had saved his life a long time ago, and the queen now used them to serve her purpose. The king's court and the people are outraged at this turn of events. Dasaratha loved and cherished Rama dearly, and was in personal turmoil. Completely estranged now from his younger wife, he abhors the prospect of separation from Rama. But Rama realizes that the king must not break a solemn promise at any time, and neither should a son disobey his father's command. Sita joins her husband in exile despite his discouraging her, as it is her duty and out of love for Rama that she must be at his side at all times. His younger brother Lakshmana also immediately decides to join Rama rather than remain in the city.

As he leaves for exile, the people of Ayodhya are deeply saddened and angered at Dasaratha and Kaikeyi. Dasaratha's heart is broken and he collapses and dies by the next day, unable to bear the agony of separation from Rama. Despite the reasoning of Vasishtha and the pleas of his brothers, Rama refuses to return. Although horrified at the news of his father's death, Rama finds it impossible that he should break his dead father's word. Rama does not bear any anger towards Kaikeyi, believing firmly in the power of destiny. According to the explanation of the classic, this exile actually presents Rama the opportunity to confront Ravana and his evil empire.

Rama and Sita

Rama and Sita are the protagonists in one of the most famous love stories of all time. Described as being deeply in love, Sita and Rama are theologically understood as avatars of Lakshmi and Vishnu respectively. When Rama is banished from the kingdom, he attempts to convince Sita not to join him in a potentially dangerous and certainly arduous existence in the jungle, but Sita rejects this. When Rama orders her in his capacity as husband, Sita rejects it, asserting that it was an essential duty of a wife to be at her husband's side come good or ill. Rama in turn is assiduously protective and caring for Sita throughout the exile.

When Sita is kidnapped by Ravana, both Sita and Rama undergo great personal hardships during their separation. Sita protects her chastity assiduously, and survives over a year in captivity on the strength of her love and attention to religious values and duty. She is completely unfettered in her resolve despite Ravana's courting, cajoling and threats. Meanwhile Rama, not knowing who had kidnapped Sita or where was she taken, often succumbs to despair and tears, denouncing himself for failing to defend her and agonizing over her safety and pain. Sita knows that it is in Rama's destiny to fight to rescue her (she refuses to be rescued thus by Hanuman, who discovers her), but is deeply anxious for his safety and fearful of Ravana's power.

A modern depiction of Sita and Rama

Agni pariksha

After Rama slays Ravana and wins the war, Sita wants to come before him in the state which over a year's imprisonment had reduced her to, Rama arranges for Sita to be bathed and given beautiful garments before they are re-united. But even as Sita comes before him in great excitement and happiness, Rama does not look at her, staring fixedly at the ground. He tells her that he had fought the war only to avenge the dishonour that Ravana had inflicted on Rama, and now Sita was free to go where she pleased. At this sudden turn of events, all the vanaras, rakshasas, Sugriva, Hanuman and Lakshmana are deeply shocked.

Sita begs Lakshmana to build her a pyre upon which she could end her life, as she could not live without Rama. At this point, Lakshmana is angered at Rama for the first time in his life, but following Rama's nod, he builds a pyre for Sita. At the great shock and sorrow of the watchers, Sita walks into the flames. But to their greater shock and wonder, she is completely unharmed. Instead, she glows radiantly from the centre of the pyre. Immediately Rama runs to Sita and embraces her. He had never doubted her purity for a second, but, as he explains to a dazzled Sita, the people of the world would not have accepted or honoured her as a queen or a woman if she had not passed this *Agni pariksha* before the eyes of millions, where Agni would destroy the impure and sinful, but not touch the pure and innocent.

Another version of this, used in Ramanand Sagar's RAMAYAN, was that Rama had known Sita was going to be abducted by Ravana ahead of time. So, he entrusted her to Agni Dev, or the God of Fire. Rama did this so that he, who in reality was Vishnu, could kill Ravana. Sita, in turn, left behind a "shadow", or twin-like version of herself behind. The "shadow" Sita had been abducted by Ravana. Therefore, the lila of Agni Pariksha was to retrieve the genuine Sita from the temporary care of Agni Dev. Rama explains this to Lakshmana before the so-called "Pariksha" is done. This version has also been written in the Ram Charit Manas.

Sita's banishment

In the *Uttara Kanda*, Rama banishes his wife Sita, even as she is pregnant, asking Lakshmana to deliver her safely to Rishi Valmiki's ashram. He does so when it is reported to him that some subjects of his in Ayodhya believe that Sita is unchaste due to her long captivity in Ravana's city. The *Agni pariksha* fails to convince these few critics, but Rama, by his understanding of the dharma of a king, decides to banish Sita. Rama adhered strictly to his duty both as a king and a husband. These conflicted when society thought that Sita was unfit to become queen. But Rama had to send away Sita since his duty of king came first. A legend by Rishi Agastya in the epic states that Vishnu in a previous age had been cursed by a rishi, whose wife had been killed by Vishnu for sheltering his enemies escaping from battle. The Rishi condemns Vishnu to be denied for a long age, the companionship of his soul mate, just as Vishnu, by an inadvertent display of anger, had deprived the rishi of his loving wife. Thus Rama, Vishnu's incarnation, must live the rest of his life without Sita.

Maryada Purushottama

As a person, Rama personifies the characteristics of an ideal person (purushottama) who is to be emulated. He had within him all the desirable virtues that any individual would seek to aspire, and he fulfils all his moral obligations (maryada). Rama's purity and piety in his intentions and actions inspires affection and devotion for him from a variety of characters from different backgrounds. For example, he gave up his rightful claim to the throne, and agreed to go into exile for fourteen years, to fulfill the vow that his father had given to Kaikeyi, one of King Dashratha's wives. This is in spite of the fact that Kaikeyi's son, Bharat,

begged him to return back to Ayodhya and said that he did not want to rule in place of Rama. But Rama considered his dharma as a son above that of his own birthright and his life's ambition. For such supreme sacrifices, and many other qualities, Shri Rama is considered a *maryada purushottam*. Some of his ideals are as follows:

1. At the time when it was normal for kings to have more than one wife, Rama gave ideal of having a single wife. After Sita was banished, he was doing penance with a gold statue of Sita. In Balakanda of Valmiki Ramayana it is written that Rama and Sita resided in each others heart.

2. Rama always followed his promise at any cost. In fact, he went to forest to make his father's promise to Kaikeyi true. There are many examples of Rama's promises which he kept. Most important are the promise to sages to save their lives from Rakshasas, getting back Sugreeva's kingdom, making Vibhishana the king of Lanka.

3. Excellent friend: Rama had very touching relations with his friends irrespective of their status. Some of his friends are Nishad-raj Guh, King of Nishaads (a caste whose profession was hunting the birds), Sugreeva (the Vanar king) and Vibhishana a Rakshasa.

Rama and non-violence

Rama is always shown with a bow (called *Kodanda*) on his shoulder. As per Valmiki Ramayana, Sita once enquired as to why her Lord, Rama always carried a bow with him. Sita was upset with Rama's promise to sages that he offer protection while they performed their sacrificial rituals and therefore petitioned Rama that 'We are in the forest and we should live life of sages so why wield this weapon?'. Sita then narrated a story about an ancient sage who became violent simply by having a weapon in his possession (in this case a sword). Rama smiled and promised to Sita that he would never attack anybody unless the other person provokes him to do so, a promise that he kept throughout his life. In fact he had always given two chances to his enemies Tataka, Maarich, Vali and even Ravana. He even offered a peace treaty to Ravana before starting the war. Angada took his peace message to Ravana which was declined.

Companions

Even as Rama is the ideal conception of manhood, he is often aided and complemented in different situations by the characteristics by those who accompany him. They serve Rama devotedly, at great personal risk and sacrifice.

Bharata and Lakshmana

Absent when Rama is exiled, upon his return Bharata is appalled to learn of the events. And even though Kaikeyi had done all this for his benefit, Bharata is angered at the suggestion that he should take Ayodhya's throne. Denouncing his mother, Bharata proclaims to the city that he would go to the forest to fetch Rama back, and would serve out his term of exile himself. Although initially resentful and suspicious, the people of Ayodhya hail Bharata's selfless nature and courageous act. Despite his fervent pleas to return, Rama asserts that he must stay in the forest to keep his father's word. He orders Bharata to perform his duty as king of Ayodhya, especially important after Dasaratha's death, and orders Shatrughna to support and serve him. Returning saddened to the city, Bharata

refuses to wear the crown or sit on the throne. Instead, he places the slippers of Rama that he had taken back with him on the throne, and rules Ayodhya assiduously keeping Rama's beliefs and values in mind. When Rama finally returns, Bharata runs personally to welcome him back.

Bharata is hailed for his devotion to his elder brother and dharma, distinguished from Lakshmana as he is left on his own for fourteen years. But he unfailingly denies self-interest throughout this time, ruling the kingdom only in Rama's image. Vasishtha proclaims that no one had better learnt dharma than Bharata, and for this piety he forms an essential part of the conception of perfect manhood, of the Seventh Avatara of Vishnu. Shatrughna's role to Bharata is akin to that of Lakshmana to Rama. Believed to be one-quarter of Vishnu incarnated, or as the incarnation of his eternal companion, Ananta Sesha, Lakshmana is always at Rama's side. Although unconstrained by Dasaratha's promise to Kaikeyi, Lakshmana resists Rama's arguments and accompanies him and Sita into the forest. During the years of exile, Lakshmana constantly serves Rama and Sita - building huts, standing guard and finding new routes. When Sita is kidnapped, Rama blazes with his divine power and in his immense rage, expresses the desire to destroy all creation. Lakshmana prays and pleads for Rama to calm himself, and despite the shock of the moment and the promise of travails to come, begin an arduous but systematic search for Sita. During times when the search is proving fruitless and Rama fears for Sita, and expresses despair in his grief and loneliness, Lakshmana encourages him, providing hope and solace.

When Rama in his despair fears that Sugriva has forgotten his promise to help him trace Sita, Lakshmana goes to Kishkindha where he reminds the complacent monarch of his promise to help. But Lakshmana also threatens Sugriva with destruction with his own divine, personal power, unable to tolerate the scene where Sugriva is enjoying material and sensual pleasures while Rama suffers alone. In the war, Lakshmana is uniquely responsible for slaying Indrajit, the invincible son of Ravana who had humiliated Indra and the Devas, and outwitted the brothers and the Vanaras on several occasions. Rishi Agastya later points out that this victory was the turning point of the conflict. Rama is often overcome with emotion and deep affection for Lakshmana, acknowledging how important and crucial Lakshmana's love and support was for him. He also trusts Lakshmana to carry out difficult orders - Lakshmana was asked to take Sita to the ashrama of Valmiki, where she was to spend her exile. Lakshmana's deep love for Rama, his unconditional service and sacrifice, as well as qualities of practical judgment and clear-headedness make him Rama's superior in certain situations and perspectives. Lakshmana symbolizes a man's duty to his family, brothers and friends, and forms an essential part of the conception of ideal manhood, that Rama primarily embodies.

Jatayu, Hanuman and Vibheeshana

When Rama and Lakshmana begin the desperate search to discover where Sita had been taken. After traversing a distance in many directions, they come across the magical eagle Jatayu, who is dying. They discover from Jatayu that a rakshasa was flying away with a crying, struggling Sita towards the south. Jatayu had flown to the rescue of Sita, but owing to his age and the rakshasa's power, had been defeated. With this, Jatayu dies in Rama's arms. Rama is overcome with love and affection for the bird which sacrificed its own life for Sita, and the rage of his death returns to him in the climactic battle with Ravana.

Rama's only allies in the struggle to find Sita are the Vanaras of Kishkindha. Finding a terrified Sugriva being hunted by his own brother, king Vali, Rama promises to kill Vali and free Sugriva of the terror and the unjust charge of plotting to murder Vali. The two swear everlasting friendship over sacred fire. Rama's natural piety and compassion, his sense of justice and duty, as well as his courage despite great personal suffering after Sita's kidnapping inspire devotion from the Vanaras and Sugriva, but especially Hanuman, Sugriva's minister. Devoted to Rama, Hanuman exerts himself greatly over the search for Sita. He is the first to discover that Sita was taken to Lanka, and volunteers to use his divine gifts in a dangerous reconnaissance of Lanka, where he is to verify Sita's presence. Hanuman hands Rama's ring to Sita, as a mark of Rama's love and his imminent intention of rescuing her. Though captured, he candidly delivers Rama's

message to Ravana to immediately release Sita, and when his tail is burned, he flees and sets Lanka on fire. When Lakshmana is struck down and near death and Rama overcome with love and concern for his brother, Hanuman flies to the Himalayas on the urgent mission to fetch the *sanjeevani* medicinal herbs, bringing the entire mountain to Lanka so that no time is lost in saving Lakshmana. The Vanaras fight the rakshasas, completely devoted to Rama's cause. They angrily dismiss Ravana's efforts to create divisions by suggesting that Rama considered them, monkeys, as mere animals. At the end of the war, Rama worships Brahma, who restores life to the millions of fallen Vanaras.

Before the onset of war, rakshasa prince Vibheeshana, Ravana's youngest brother comes to join Rama. Although he loves his brother and Lanka, he fails in repeated efforts to make Ravana follow religious values and return Sita. Vibheeshana believes that Ravana's arrogance and callousness will cause the destruction of Lanka, which is a gross violation of a king's duty, and that Ravana's actions have only propagated evil. Vibheeshana refuses to defend the evil of Ravana's ways and inspired by Rama's compassion and piety, leaves Lanka to join the Vanara Army. His knowledge of rakshasa ways and Ravana's mind help Rama and the Vanaras overcome black magic and mystical weapons. At the end of the war, Rama crowns Vibheeshana as the king of Lanka. Vibheeshana, and to a greater extent Hanuman, embody the perfect devotee in the wider conception of perfect manhood.

Rama in war

The epic story of Ramayana was adopted by several cultures across Asia. Shown here is a Thai historic artwork depicting the battle which took place between Rama and Ravana.

When Rama is sixteen years old, he and his brother Lakshmana are taken by Vishwamitra to the forests, with the purpose of killing rakshasas who are wrecking the tapasya and sacrifices of brahmins. Rama and Lakshmana are taught the advanced military arts and given the knowledge of all celestial weapons by Vishwamitra. Rama proceeds to slay Thatakhi, a cursed demoness. When asked to slay the yaksha demon, Rama demurs, considering it sinful to kill a woman. But Vishwamitra explains that evil has no gender. The killing of Taraka liberates the yaksha soul who was cursed for a sin, and had to adopt a rakshasi's body. It restores the purity of the sacrifices of the brahmins who live nearby, and protects the animals who live in the forest, and travelers. The main purpose of Vishwamitra's exursion is to conduct his yagna without interruption from two evil demons, Maricha and Subahu. Rama and Lakshmana guard the sacrifice, and when the two demons appear, Rama shoots an arrow that carries Maricha across the lands and into the ocean, but does not kill him. Rama and his brother then proceed to kill Subahu and accompanying demons. Rama explains to Lakshmana that leaving Maricha alive was an act of compassion, but the others did not heed the point and chose to attack. During the forest exile, sages plead for protection and help against evil rakshasas who spoil their sacrifices and religious activities and terrorize them. Many rakshasas had even killed and eaten sages and innocent people. At Janasthana, Rama uses his exceptional prowess to single-handedly kill over fourteen thousand demon hordes led by the powerful Khara, who is a cousin of Ravana.

Sagara

Faced with the dilemma of how to cross the ocean, Rama performs a penance tapasya, fasting and meditating in perfect dhyana for three days and three nights to sagara, the Lord of Oceans. The ocean god does not respond out of arrogance , and Rama on the fourth morning,pointed the brahmastra towards the ocean . The Vanaras are dazzled and fearful at witnessing the enraged Rama demolish the oceans, and Lakshmana prays to calm Rama's mind. Just as Rama invokes the brahmastra, considered the most powerful weapon capable of destroying all creation, Saagara arises out of the oceans. He bows to Rama, and begs for pardon. Since lord Rama had to use the weapon , he suggests Rama re-direct the weapon at a demonic race that lives in the heart of the ocean. Rama's arrows destroys the demons, and establishes a purer, liberated environment there. Saagara promises that he would keep the oceans still for all of Rama's army to pass, and Nala constructs a bridge (Rama's Bridge) across to Lanka. Rama justifies his angry assault on the oceans as he followed the correct process of petitioning and worshipping Saagara, but obtaining the result by force for the greater good.

In another version of the story, Lord Rama redirected his missile to the barren Island, and as a result huge volcanic eruption resulted. This volcano is the one which is found till today at the southern part of Indian peninsula .

Facing Ravana

Rama asserts his dedication to dharma when he undertakes to offer Ravana a final chance to make peace, despite his heinous actions and patronage of evil, by immediately returning Sita and apologizing to both Rama and Sita, but Ravana refuses. In the war, Rama slays the most powerful rakshasa commanders, including Prahasta, Atikaya and with Ravana's brother, Kumbhakarna along with hundreds of thousands of rakshasa soldiers. He outfights Ravana in their first battle, destroying his chariot and weapons, and severely injuring him, but due to this, he allows him to live and return to fight another day. But as a human being, Rama also proves vulnerable on occasion to his enemies. He is put to a deep sleep with Lakshmana by the *nagapoosas* of Indrajit, but they recover when Hanuman obtains the magical medicine according to Vibheesana's advice.

In the grand finale of the battle, Rama engages Ravana, who through the devastation of losing his sons, his brothers and friends and millions of his warriors, arouses his awesome and magical powers and makes full use of the boons of Siva and Brahma, and the magical knowledge of warfare possessed by the greatest of rakshasas. Rama and Ravana compete fiercely, inflicting severe injuries on one another with the most powerful weapons that could destroy the universe. After a long and arduous battle, Rama successfully decapitates Ravana's central head, but an ugly head, symbolic of all of Ravana's evil powers arises in its place. After another long battle, Rama decapitates it, only to find another growing in its place. This cycle continues, and as darkness approaches, Ravana's magical powers increase in force. Vibheeshana, seeing this then tells Rama something vital. Ravana had obtained amrita, the nectar of immortality, from the gods. Though he could not consume it, he nevertheless stored a vessel of it in his stomach. This amrit was causing his heads to regenerate as soon as they were cut off. Upon the advice of Agastya, Rama worships Lord Aditya, the Sun, with the famous *Aditya Hridayam* prayer and then invokes the most powerful weapon, the *Brahmastra*. Rama fires the great arrow that enters Ravana's chest/stomach and
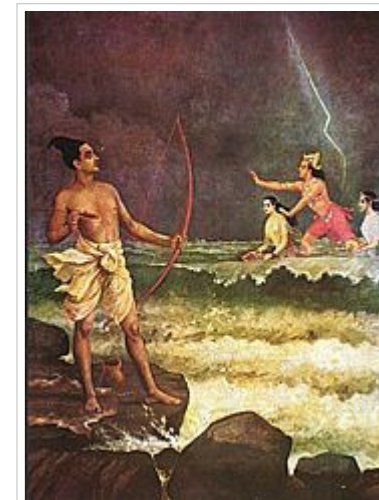
Raja Ravi Varma Painting - 'Rama Conquers Varuna'

Ravana, Hindu Demon King of Lanka

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destroys the store of amrit, killing him finally. Following Ravana's death, Rama is immediately compassionate. After investing Vibheeshana as the next king of Lanka, he asks the new king and the surviving rakshasas to properly cremate their dead king, who he acknowledges was a great being worthy of respect and admiration, despite his patronage of evil.

Rama Rajya

The end of the war coincides with the end of Rama's tenure of exile. Flying home on the *Pushpaka Vimana*, Rama returns to a joyous Ayodhya. His mothers, brothers and the people joyously welcome him. Kaikeyi is repentant of her deeds, and Rama forgives her. The next day, Rama is invested as the King of Ayodhya, and Emperor of the World. Although he first asks Lakshmana to become the *yuvaraja*, upon the advice of Lakshmana he invests the position to Bharata, who has had fourteen years of experience as the ruler of Ayodhya. Rama performs the holy *Ashwamedha* sacrifice, purifying and establishing religion across earth.

Beyond the *Ramayana*, the eleven thousand years of Rama's rule over the earth represent to millions of modern Indians a time and age when God as a man ruled the world. There was perfect justice and freedom, peace and prosperity. There are no natural disasters, diseases, ailments or ill-fortune of any nature for any living being. There are no sins committed in the world by any of his people. Always attentive and accessible to his people, Rama is worshipped and hailed by all - the very symbol of moksha, the ultimate goal and destination of all life, and the best example of perfect character and human conduct, inspiring human beings for countless succeeding ages.

Rama like other Indian kings went undercover every night to hear the pleas of his subjects and have a common man's perspective of his rule. During Rama's tenure as King, the people apparently had no locks on their doors as they feared no burglaries or other such misfortunes.

Rama and the world

Deities of Sri Sri Sita (far right), Rama (centre), Lakshmana (far left) and Hanuman (below seated) at Bhaktivedanta Manor, Hare Krishna temple in Watford England

Be it as a manifestation of God or simply as a legendary hero of myths and folktales, Rama is an immensely revered and inspirational figure to people across the Indian subcontinent and South East Asia, as well as increasingly across Western civilization, where the Hindu epics and values are gaining recognition and popularity. In Jainism, Rama is enumerated among the nine white *Balas*. He is revered in Sikhism,(in the Guru Granth Sahib)

Rama is a great hero to the adherents of Agama Hindu Dharma and to the Muslims who practice Abangan, a syncretic form of Islam and Hinduism, in Indonesia. He is revered by the people of Thailand, Malaysia, Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam, who otherwise adhere to different forms of Buddhism, Islam and Hinduism. The *Rama Leela* is performed across South East Asia in numerous local languages and the story has been the subject of art, architecture, music, folk dance and sculpture. The ancient city of Ayutthaya stands in Thailand, as the tribute of an ancient Thai kingdom to the great legend. Many ancient and medieval era kings of South East Asia have adopted *Rama* as their name.

A Buddhist version of the tale is found in the Jataka stories, in the Dasharatha Jataka (Jataka Atthakatha 461) in the Pali vernacular. Here Rama is represented as a former life of the Buddha as a Bodhisatva and supreme Dharma King of great wisdom. In the Buddhist tale, he is the king of Varanasi and not Ayodhya, which is traditionally the capital of Kosala.

Festivals of Lord Rama

Rama's day and time of birth, as well as marriage to Sita are celebrated by Hindus across the world as *Rama Navami*. It falls on the ninth day of a Hindu lunar year, or *Chaitra Masa Suklapaksha Navami*. This day is observed as the marriage day of Rama and Sita as well as the birthday of Rama. People normally perform *Kalyanotsavam* (*marriage celebration*) for small statues of Rama and Sita in their houses and at the end of the day the idols are taken in a procession on the streets. This day also marks the end of nine day utsavam called Vasanthothsavam (*Festival of Spring*), that starts with Ugadi. Some highlights of this day are:

1. *Kalyanam* (Ceremonial wedding performed by temple priests) at Bhadrachalam on the banks of the river Godavari in Khammam district of Andhra Pradesh.
2. *Panakam*, a sweet drink prepared on this day with jaggery and pepper.
3. Procession of idols in the evening that is accompanied with play of water and colours.
4. For the occasion, Hindus are supposed to fast (or restrict themselves to a specific diet).
5. Temples are decorated and readings of the Ramayana take place. Along with Rama, people also pray to Sita, Lakshmana and Hanumana.

The occasion of victory over Ravana and the rakshasas is celebrated as the 10-day *Vijayadashami*, also known as *Dussehra*. The *Ram Leela* is publicly performed in many villages, towns and cities in India. Rama's return to Ayodhya and his coronation are celebrated as *Diwali*, also known as the *Festival of Lights*. The latter two are the most important and popular festivals in India and for Hindus across the world. In Malaysia, Diwali is known as *Hari Deepavali*,

and is celebrated during the seventh month of the Hindu solar calendar. It is a federal public holiday. In many respects it resembles the traditions followed in the Indian subcontinent. In Nepal, Diwali is known as *Tihar* and celebrated during the October/November period. Here, though the festival is celebrated for five days, the traditions vary from those followed in India. On the first day, cows are worshipped and given offerings. On the second day, dogs are revered and offered special food. On the third day, celebrations follow the same pattern as in India, with lights and lamps and much social activity. On the fourth day Yama, the Lord of Death, is worshipped and appeased. On the fifth and final day, brothers sisters meet and exchange pleasantries. In Trinidad and Tobago, Diwali is marked as a special occasion and celebrated with a lot of fanfare. It is observed as a national holiday in this part of the world and some ministers of the Government also take part in the celebrations publicly.

Inspiration

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the Indian spiritual and political leader was deeply inspired by Rama's strict adherence of satya (truth) and dharma despite hardship and personal travails. Gandhi was encouraged by Rama's example when he faced personal crises and crucial difficulties. A chapter in his autobiography is titled the same: *Nirbal ke Bal Ram* (*Rama is the strength for the weak*). When Gandhi was shot three times in the chest on January 30, 1948, his dying words were *He Ram, He Ram*. On religious occasions, Hindus often chant the name of Rama to express their devotion to God and invoke the holy. *Ram Naam Japo* (*Chant the name of Rama*) is a popular bhajan, devotional song and a meditative mantra. In the ceremony of cremating the dead, Hindus often chant *Ram Nam Satya Hai* (*Rama's name is Truth*).

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Religion

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

A **religion** is a set of beliefs and practices, often centered upon specific supernatural and moral claims about reality, the cosmos, and human nature, and often codified as prayer, ritual, or religious law. Religion also encompasses ancestral or cultural traditions, writings, history, and mythology, as well as personal faith and religious experience. The term "religion" refers to both the personal practices related to communal faith and to group rituals and communication stemming from shared conviction.

In the frame of European religious thought, religions present a common quality, the "hallmark of patriarchal religious thought": the division of the world in two comprehensive domains, one sacred, the other profane. Religion is often described as a communal system for the coherence of belief focusing on a system of thought, unseen being, person, or object, that is considered to be supernatural, sacred, divine, or of the highest truth. Moral codes, practices, values, institutions, tradition, rituals, and scriptures are often traditionally associated with the core belief, and these may have some overlap with concepts in secular philosophy. Religion is also often described as a " way of life" or a Life stance.

The development of religion has taken many forms in various cultures. "Organized religion" generally refers to an organization of people supporting the exercise of some religion with a prescribed set of beliefs, often taking the form of a legal entity (see religion-supporting organization). Other religions believe in personal revelation. "Religion" is sometimes used interchangeably with " faith" or " belief system," but is more socially defined than that of personal convictions.

Symbols of some of the more common religions.
Top to bottom, left to right:
Row 1. Christian, Jewish, Hindu
Row 2. Muslim, Buddhist, Shintoist
Row 3. Sikh, Baha'i, Jain.

Etymology

The English word *religion* is in use since the 13th century, loaned from Anglo-French *religiun* (11th century), ultimately from the Latin *religio*, "reverence for God or the gods, careful pondering of divine things, piety, the *res divinae*".

The ultimate origins of Latin *religio* are obscure. It is usually accepted to derive from *ligare* "bind, connect"; likely from a prefixed *re-ligare*, i.e. *re* (again) + *ligare* or "to reconnect." This interpretation is favoured by modern scholars such as Tom Harpur and Joseph Campbell, but was made prominent by St. Augustine, following the interpretation of Lactantius. Another possibility is derivation from a reduplicated **le-ligare*. A historical interpretation due to Cicero on the other hand connects *lego* "read", i.e. *re* (again) + *lego* in the sense of "choose", "go over again" or "consider carefully".

Religion by country	
North America	[Show]
South America	[Show]
Europe	[Show]
Middle East	[Show]

Definitions of religion

Religion has been defined in a wide variety of ways. Most definitions attempt to find a balance somewhere between overly sharp definition and meaningless generalities. Some sources have tried to use formalistic, doctrinal definitions while others have emphasized experiential, emotive, intuitive, valuational and ethical factors. Definitions mostly include:

- a notion of the transcendent or numinous, often, but not always, in the form of theism
- a cultural or behavioural aspect of ritual, liturgy and organized worship, often involving a priesthood, and societal norms of morality (*ethos*) and virtue (*arete*)
- a set of myths or sacred truths held in reverence or believed by adherents

Africa	[Show]
Asia	[Show]
Oceania	[Show]

Demography of religions by country
Full list of articles on religion by country

Religion Portal

Sociologists and anthropologists tend to see religion as an abstract set of ideas, values, or experiences developed as part of a cultural matrix. For example, in Lindbeck's *Nature of Doctrine,* religion does not refer to belief in "God" or a transcendent Absolute. Instead, Lindbeck defines religion as, "a kind of cultural and/or linguistic framework or medium that shapes the entirety of life and thought… it is similar to an idiom that makes possible the description of realities, the formulation of beliefs, and the experiencing of inner attitudes, feelings, and sentiments." According to this definition, religion refers to one's primary worldview and how this dictates one's thoughts and actions.

Other religious scholars have put forward a definition of religion that avoids the reductionism of the various sociological and psychological disciplines that reduce religion to its component factors. Religion may be defined as the presence of a belief in the sacred or the holy. For example Rudolf Otto's "The Idea of the Holy," formulated in 1917, defines the essence of religious awareness as awe, a unique blend of fear and fascination before the divine. Friedrich Schleiermacher in the late 18th century defined religion as a "feeling of absolute dependence."

The *Encyclopedia of Religion* defines religion this way:

> In summary, it may be said that almost every known culture involves the religious in the above sense of a depth dimension in cultural experiences at all levels — a push, whether ill-defined or conscious, toward some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life. When more or less distinct patterns of behaviour are built around this depth dimension in a culture, this structure constitutes religion in its historically recognizable form. Religion is the organization of life around the depth dimensions of experience — varied in form, completeness, and clarity in accordance with the environing culture."

Other encyclopedic definitions include: "A general term used... to designate all concepts concerning the belief in god(s) and goddess(es) as well as other spiritual beings or transcendental ultimate concerns" and "human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, spiritual, or divine."

Religion and superstition

In keeping with the Latin etymology of the word, religious believers have often seen other religions as superstition. Likewise, some atheists, agnostics, deists, and skeptics regard religious belief as superstition.

Religious practices are most likely to be labeled "superstitious" by outsiders when they include belief in extraordinary events (miracles), an afterlife, supernatural interventions, apparitions or the efficacy of prayer, charms, incantations, the meaningfulness of omens, and prognostications.

Greek and Roman pagans, who modeled their relations with the gods on political and social terms scorned the man who constantly trembled with fear at the thought of the gods, as a slave feared a cruel and capricious master. "Such fear of the gods (deisidaimonia) was what the Romans meant by 'superstition' (Veyne 1987, p 211). Early Christianity was outlawed as a *superstitio Iudaica*, a "Jewish superstition", by Domitianin the 80s AD, and by AD 425, Theodosius II outlawed pagan traditions as superstitious.

The Roman Catholic Church considers superstition to be sinful in the sense that it denotes a lack of trust in the divine providence of God and, as such, is a violation of the first of the Ten Commandments. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states superstition "in some sense represents a perverse excess of religion" (para. #2110).

The Catechism clearly dispels commonly held preconceptions or misunderstandings about Catholic doctrine relating to superstitious practices:

> Superstition is a deviation of religious feeling and of the practices this feeling imposes. It can even affect the worship we offer the true God, e.g., when one attributes an importance in some way magical to certain practices otherwise lawful or necessary. To attribute the efficacy of prayers or of sacramental signs to their mere external performance, apart from the interior dispositions that they demand is to fall into superstition. Cf. Matthew 23:16-22 (para. #2111)

History

Development of religion

There are a number of models regarding the ways in which religions come into being and develop. Broadly speaking, these models fall into three categories:

- Models which see religions as social constructions;
- Models which see religions as progressing toward higher, objective truth;
- Models which see a particular religion as absolutely true.

In pre-modern (pre-urban) societies, religion is one defining factor of ethnicity, along with language, regional customs, national costume, etc. As Xenophanes famously comments:

> *Men make gods in their own image; those of the Ethiopians are black and snub-nosed, those of the Thracians have blue eyes and red hair.*

Detail from *Religion*, Charles Sprague Pearce (1896). Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building, Washington, D.C.

Ethnic religions may include officially sanctioned and organized civil religions with an organized clergy, but they are characterized in that adherents generally are defined by their ethnicity, and conversion essentially equates to cultural assimilation to the people in question. The notion of *gentiles* ("nations") in Judaism reflect this state of affairs, the implicit assumption that each nation will have its own religion. Historical examples include Germanic polytheism, Celtic polytheism, Slavic polytheism and pre-Hellenistic Greek religion.

The "Axial Age"

Karl Jaspers, in his *Vom Ursprung und Ziel der Geschichte* (*The Origin and Goal of History*), identified a number of key Axial Age thinkers as having had a profound influence on future philosophy and religion, and identified characteristics common to each area from which those thinkers emerged. Jaspers saw in these developments in religion and philosophy a striking parallel without any obvious direct transmission of ideas from one region to the other, having found very little recorded proof of extensive inter-communication between the ancient Near East, Greece, India and China. Jaspers held up this age as unique, and one which to compare the rest of the history of human thought to. Jaspers' approach to the culture of the middle of the first millennium BCE has been adopted by other scholars and academics, and has become a point of discussion in the history of religion.

In its later part, the "Axial Age" culminated in the development of monism and monotheism, notably of Platonic realism and Neoplatonism in Hellenistic philosophy, the notion of atman in Vedanta Hindu philosophy, and the notion of Tao in Taoism.

Middle Ages

The present-day world religions established themselves throughout Eurasia during the Middle Ages by: Christianization of the Western world; Buddhist missions to East Asia; the decline of Buddhism and rise of Hinduism in the Indian subcontinent; and the spread of Islam throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, North Africa and parts of Europe and India.

During the Middle Ages, Muslims were in conflict with Zoroastrians during the Islamic conquest of Persia; Christians were in conflict with Muslims during the Byzantine-Arab Wars, Crusades, Reconquista and Ottoman wars in Europe; Christians were in conflict with Jews during the Crusades, Reconquista and Inquisition; Shamans were in conflict with Buddhists, Taoists, Muslims and Christians during the Mongol invasions; and Muslims were in conflict with Hindus and Sikhs during Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent.

Many medieval religious movements emphasized mysticism, such as the Cathars and related movements in the West, the Bhakti movement in India and Sufism in Islam. Monotheism reached definite forms in Christian Christology and in Islamic Tawhid. Hindu monotheist notions of Brahman likewise reached their classical form with the teaching of Adi Shankara.

Central Asian (Tocharian?) and East-Asian Buddhist monks, Bezeklik, Eastern Tarim Basin, 9th-10th century.

Modern period

European colonisation during the 15th to 19th centuries resulted in the spread of Christianity to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Australia and the Philippines. The 18th century saw the beginning of secularisation in Europe, rising to notability in the wake of the French Revolution.

In the 20th century, the regimes of Communist Eastern Europe and Communist China were explicitly anti-religious. A great variety of new religious movements originated in the 20th century, many proposing syncretism of elements of established religions. Adherence to such new movements is limited, however, remaining below 2% worldwide in the 2000s. Adherents of the classical world religions account for more than 75% of the world's population, while adherence to indigenous tribal religions has fallen to 4%. As of 2005, an estimated 14% of the world's population identifies as nonreligious.
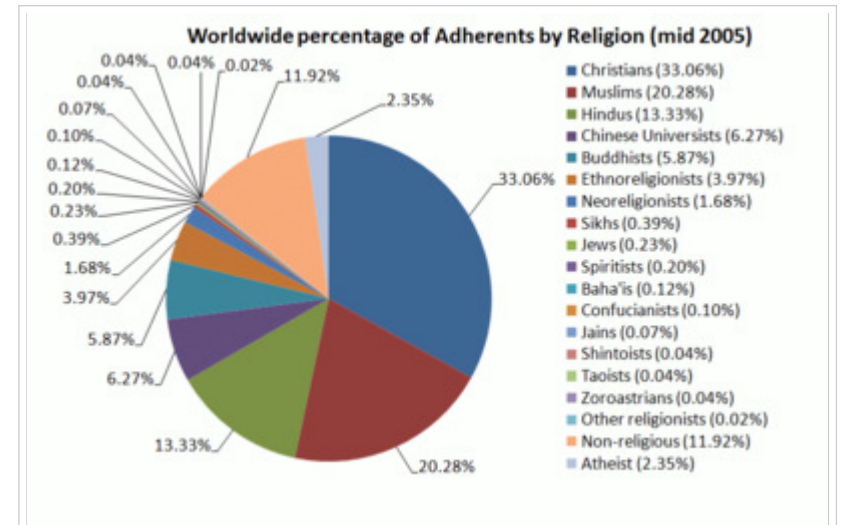
Classification

Religious traditions fall into super-groups in comparative religion, arranged by historical origin and mutual influence. Abrahamic religions originate in the Middle East, Indian religions in India and Far Eastern religions in East Asia. Another group with supra-regional influence are African diasporic religions, which have their origins in Central and West Africa.
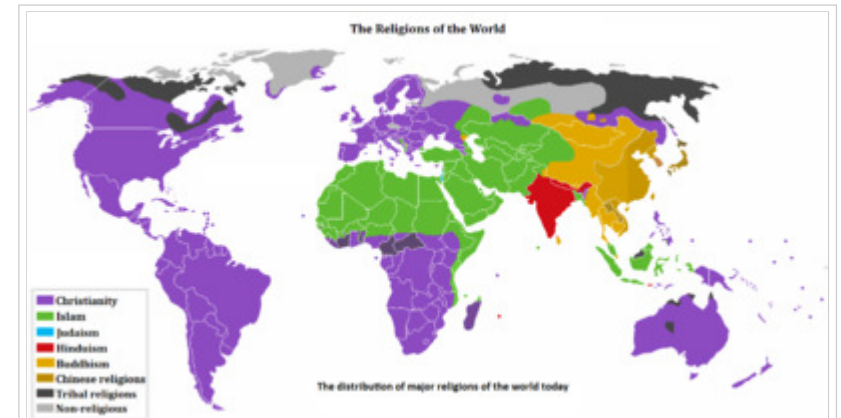
Major religious groups as a percentage of the world population in 2005 (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*). In summary, religious adherence of the world's population is as follows: " Abrahamic": 53.5%, " Indian": 19.7%, irreligious: 14.3%, " Far Eastern": 6.5%, tribal religions: 4.0%, new religious movements: 2.0%.

- Abrahamic religions are by far the largest group, and these consist primarily of Christianity, Islam and Judaism (sometimes Bahá'í is also included). They are named for the patriarch Abraham, and are unified by their strict monotheism. Today, around 3.4 billion people are followers of Abrahamic religions and are spread widely around the world apart from the regions around South-East Asia. Several Abrahamic organizations are vigorous proselytizers.

- Indian religions originated in Greater India and tend to share a number of key concepts, such as dharma and karma. They are of the most influence across the Indian subcontinent, East Asia, South East Asia, as well as isolated parts of Russia. The main Indian religions are Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Indian religions mutually influenced each other. Sikhism was also influenced by the Abrahamic tradition of Sufism.

- Far Eastern religions consist of several East Asian religions which make use of the concept of *Tao* (in Chinese) or *Do* (in Japanese or Korean). They include Taoism, Shinto, Chondogyo, Caodaism, and Yiguandao. Far Eastern Buddhism (in which the group overlaps with the "Indian" group) and Confucianism (which by some categorizations is not a religion) are also included.

- Iranic religions originated in Iran and include Zoroastrianism, Yazdanism and historical traditions of Gnosticism (Mandaeanism, Manichaeism). It has significant overlaps with Abrahamic traditions, e.g. in Sufism and in recent movements such as Bábísm and Bahá'í.

- African diasporic religions practiced in the Americas, imported as a result of the Atlantic slave trade of the 16th to 18th centuries, building of traditional religions of Central and West Africa.

- Indigenous tribal religions, formerly found on every continent, now marginalized by the major organized faiths, but persisting as undercurrents of folk religion. Includes African traditional religions, Asian Shamanism, Native American religions, Austronesian and Australian Aboriginal traditions and arguably Chinese folk religion

The main Religions of the World, mapped without denominations.

(overlaps with Far Eastern religions). Under more traditional listings, this has been referred to as " Paganism" along with historical polytheism.

- New religious movements, a heterogeneous group of religious faiths emerging since the 19th century, often syncretizing, re-interpreting or reviving aspects of older traditions (Bahá'í, Hindu revivalism, Ayyavazhi, Pentecostalism, polytheistic reconstructionism), some inspired by science-fiction (UFO religions). See List of new religious movements, list of groups referred to as cults.

Demographic distribution of the major super-groupings mentioned is shown in the table below:

Name of Group	Name of Religion	Number of followers	Date of Origin	Main regions covered
Abrahamic religions 3.6 billion	Christianity	2.1 billion	1st c.	Worldwide except Northwest Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of Central, East, and Southeast Asia.
	Islam	1.5 billion	7th c.	Middle East, Northern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Western Africa, Indian subcontinent, Malay Archipelago with large population centers existing in Eastern Africa, Balkan Peninsula, Russia, Europe and China.
	Judaism	14 million	1300 BCE	>Israel and among Jewish diaspora (live mostly in USA and Europe)
	Bahá'í Faith	5 million	19th c.	Dispersed worldwide with no major population centers
Indian religions 1.4 billion	Hinduism	900 million	no founder	Indian subcontinent, Fiji, Guyana and Mauritius
	Buddhism	376 million	Iron Age (1200–300 BCE)	Indian subcontinent, East Asia, Indochina, regions of Russia.
	Sikhism	25.8 million	15th c.	India, Pakistan, Africa, Canada, USA, United Kingdom
	Jainism	4.2 million	Iron Age (1200–300 BCE)	India, and East Africa
Far Eastern religions 500 million	Taoism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period (722 BC-481 BC)	China and the Chinese diaspora
	Confucianism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period (722 BC-481 BC)	China, Korea, Vietnam and the Chinese and Vietnamese diasporas
	Shinto	4 million	no founder	Japan
	Caodaism	1-2 million	1925	Vietnam
	Chondogyo	1.13 million	1812	Korea
	Yiguandao	1-2 million	c. 1900	Taiwan
	Chinese folk religion	394 million	no founder, a combination of Taoism, Confucianism and	China

			Buddhism	
Ethnic/tribal 400 million	Primal indigenous	300 million	no founder	India, Asia
	African traditional and diasporic	100 million	no known founder	Africa, Americas
Other each over 500 thousand	Juche	19 million		North Korea
	Spiritism	15 million		
	Neopaganism	1 million		
	Unitarian-Universalism	800,000		
	Rastafarianism	600,000		
	Scientology	500,000		

Religious belief

Kumbh Mela, a Hindu religious festival is the Largest religious gathering on earth. Around 75 million Hindus from around the world gathered in Varanasi, a Hindu holy city. Geoeye.com

Religious belief usually relates to the existence, nature and worship of a deity or deities and divine involvement in the universe and human life. Alternately, it may also relate to values and practices transmitted by a spiritual leader. Unlike other belief systems, which may be passed on orally, religious belief tends to be codified in literate societies (religion in non-literate societies is still largely passed on orally). In some religions, like the Abrahamic religions, it is held that most of the core beliefs have been divinely revealed.

Related forms of thought

Religion and science

Religious knowledge, according to religious practitioners, may be gained from religious leaders, sacred texts (scriptures), and/or personal revelation. Some religions view such knowledge as unlimited in scope and suitable to answer any question; others see religious knowledge as playing a more restricted role, often as a complement to knowledge gained through physical observation. Some religious people maintain that religious knowledge obtained in this way is absolute and infallible (religious cosmology).

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are one, a painting in the *litang style* portraying three men laughing by a river stream, 12th century, Song Dynasty.

The scientific method gains knowledge by testing hypotheses to develop theories through elucidation of facts or evaluation by experiments and thus only answers cosmological questions about the physical universe. It develops theories of the world which best fit physically observed evidence. All scientific knowledge is subject to later refinement in the face of additional evidence. Scientific theories that have an overwhelming preponderance of favorable evidence are often treated as facts (such as the theories of gravity or evolution).

Many scientists held strong religious beliefs (see List of Christian thinkers in science) and worked to harmonize science and religion. Isaac Newton, for example, believed that gravity caused the planets to revolve about the Sun, and credited God with the design. In the concluding General Scholium to the Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica, he wrote: "This most beautiful System of the Sun, Planets and Comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being." Nevertheless, conflict arose between religious organizations and individuals who propagated scientific theories which were deemed unacceptable by the organizations. The Roman Catholic Church, for example, has in the past reserved to itself the right to decide which scientific theories were acceptable and which were unacceptable. In the 17th century, Galileo was tried and forced to recant the heliocentric theory based on the medieval church's stance that the Greek Hellenistic system of astronomy was the correct one.

Early science such as geometry and astronomy was connected to the divine for most medieval scholars. The compass in this 13th century manuscript is a symbol of God's act of creation.

Many theories exist as to why religions sometimes seem to conflict with scientific knowledge. In the case of Christianity, a relevant factor may be that it was among Christians that science in the modern sense was developed. Unlike other religious groups, as early as the 17th century the Christian churches had to deal directly with this new way to investigate nature and seek truth.

The perceived conflict between science and Christianity may also be partially explained by a literal interpretation of the Bible adhered to by many Christians, both currently and historically. The Catholic Church has always held with Augustine of Hippo who explicitly opposed a literal interpretation of the Bible whenever the Bible conflicted with Science. The literal way to read the sacred texts became especially prevalent after the rise of the Protestant reformation, with its emphasis on the Bible as the only authoritative source concerning the ultimate reality. This view is often shunned by both religious leaders (who regard literally believing it as petty and look for greater meaning instead) and scientists who regard it as an impossibility.

Some Christians have disagreed or are still disagreeing with scientists in areas such as the validity of Keplerian astronomy, the theory of evolution, the method of creation of the universe and the Earth, and the origins of life. On the other hand, scholars such as Stanley Jaki have suggested that Christianity and its particular worldview was a crucial factor for the emergence of modern science. In fact, most of today's historians are moving away from the view of the relationship between Christianity and science as one of "conflict" - a perspective commonly called the conflict thesis. Gary Ferngren in his historical volume about Science & Religion states:

> While some historians had always regarded the [conflict] thesis as oversimplifying and distorting a complex relationship, in the late twentieth century it underwent a more systematic reevaluation. The result is the growing recognition among historians of science that the relationship of religion and science has been much more positive than is sometimes thought. Although popular images of controversy continue to exemplify the supposed hostility of Christianity to new scientific theories, studies have shown that Christianity has often nurtured and encouraged scientific endeavour, while at other times the two have co-existed without either tension or attempts at harmonization. If Galileo and the Scopes trial come to mind as examples of conflict, they were the exceptions rather than the rule.

In the Bahá'í Faith, the harmony of science and religion is a central tenet. The principle states that that truth is one, and therefore true science and true religion must be in harmony, thus rejecting the view that science and religion are in conflict. `Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of the founder of the religion, asserted that science and religion cannot be opposed because they are aspects of the same truth; he also affirmed that reasoning powers are required to understand the truths of religion and that religious teachings which are at variance with science should not be accepted; he explained that religion has to be reasonable since God endowed humankind with reason so that they can discover truth. Shoghi Effendi, the Guardian of the Bahá'í Faith, described science and religion as "the two most potent forces in human life."

Proponents of Hinduism claim that Hinduism is not afraid of scientific explorations, nor of the technological progress of mankind. According to them, there is a comprehensive scope and opportunity for Hinduism to mold itself according to the demands and aspirations of the modern world; it has the ability to align itself with both science and spiritualism. This religion uses some modern examples to explain its ancient theories and reinforce its own beliefs. For example, some Hindu thinkers have used the terminology of quantum physics to explain some basic concepts of Hinduism such as Maya or the illusory and impermanent nature of our existence.

The philosophical approach known as pragmatism, as propounded by the American philosopher William James, has been used to reconcile scientific with religious knowledge. Pragmatism, simplistically, holds that the truth of a set of beliefs can be indicated by its usefulness in helping people cope with a particular context of life. Thus, the fact that scientific beliefs are useful in predicting observations in the physical world can indicate a certain truth for scientific theories; the fact that religious beliefs can be useful in helping people cope with difficult emotions or moral decisions can indicate a certain truth for those beliefs. (For a similar postmodern view, see grand narrative).

## Religion, metaphysics, and cosmology

Being both forms of belief system, religion and philosophy meet in several areas - notably in the study of metaphysics and cosmology. In particular, a distinct set of religious beliefs will often entail a specific metaphysics and cosmology. That is, a religion will generally have answers to metaphysical and cosmological questions about the nature of being, of the universe, humanity, and the divine.

Mysticism and esotericism

Mysticism focuses on methods other than logic, but (in the case of esoteric mysticism) not necessarily excluding it, for gaining enlightenment. Rather, meditative and contemplative practices such as Vipassanā and yoga, physical disciplines such as stringent fasting and whirling (in the case of the Sufi dervishes), or the use of psychoactive drugs such as LSD, lead to altered states of consciousness that logic can never hope to grasp. However, regarding the latter topic, mysticism prevalent in the 'great' religions (monotheisms, henotheisms, which are perhaps relatively recent, and which the word 'mysticism' is more recent than,) includes systems of discipline that forbid drugs that damage the body, including the nervous system.

Mysticism (to initiate) is the pursuit of communion with, or conscious awareness of ultimate reality, the divine, spiritual truth, or Deity through direct, personal experience (intuition or insight) rather than rational thought. Mystics speak of the existence of realities behind external perception or intellectual apprehension that are central to being and directly accessible through personal experience. They say that such experience is a genuine and important source of knowledge.

Esotericism is often spiritual (thus religious) but can be non-religious/-spiritual, and it uses intellectual understanding and reasoning, intuition and inspiration (higher noetic and spiritual reasoning,) but not necessarily faith (except often as a virtue,) and it is philosophical in its emphasis on techniques of psycho-spiritual transformation (esoteric cosmology). Esotericism refers to "hidden" knowledge available only to the advanced, privileged, or initiated, as opposed to exoteric knowledge, which is public. All religions are probably somewhat exoteric, but most ones of ancient civilizations such as Yoga of India, and the mystery religions of ancient Egypt, Israel (Kabbalah,) and Greece are examples of ones that are also esoteric.
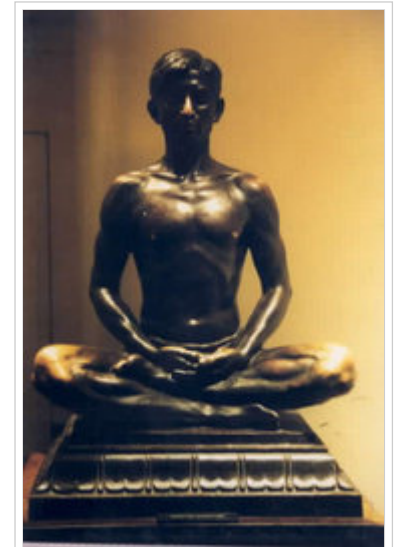
Man meditating

Spirituality

Members of an organized religion may not see any significant difference between religion and spirituality. Or they may see a distinction between the mundane, earthly aspects of their religion and its spiritual dimension.

Some individuals draw a strong distinction between religion and spirituality. They may see spirituality as a belief in ideas of religious significance (such as God, the Soul, or Heaven), but not feel bound to the bureaucratic structure and creeds of a particular organized religion. They choose the term *spirituality* rather than religion to describe their form of belief, perhaps reflecting a disillusionment with organized religion (see Major religious groups), and a movement towards a more "modern" — more tolerant, and more intuitive — form of religion. These individuals may reject organized religion because of historical acts by religious organizations, such as Christian Crusades and Islamic Jihad, the marginalisation and persecution of various minorities or the Spanish Inquisition. The basic precept of the ancient spiritual tradition of India, the Vedas, is the *inner reality* of existence, which is essentially a spiritual approach to being.

A sadhu performing namaste in Madurai, India.

Myth

The word *myth* has several meanings.

1. A traditional story of ostensibly historical events that serves to unfold part of the world view of a people or explain a practice, belief, or natural phenomenon;
2. A person or thing having only an imaginary or unverifiable existence; or
3. A metaphor for the spiritual potentiality in the human being.

Ancient polytheistic religions, such as those of Greece, Rome, and Scandinavia, are usually categorized under the heading of mythology. Religions of pre-industrial peoples, or cultures in development, are similarly called "myths" in the anthropology of religion. The term "myth" can be used pejoratively by both religious and non-religious people. By defining another person's religious stories and beliefs as mythology, one implies that they are less real or true than one's own religious stories and beliefs. Joseph Campbell remarked, "Mythology is often thought of as *other people's* religions, and religion can be defined as mis-interpreted mythology."

In sociology, however, the term *myth* has a non-pejorative meaning. There, *myth* is defined as a story that is important for the group whether or not it is objectively or provably true. Examples include the death and resurrection of Jesus, which, to Christians, explains the means by which they are freed from sin and is also ostensibly a historical event. But from a mythological outlook, whether or not the event actually occurred is unimportant. Instead, the symbolism of the death of an old "life" and the start of a new "life" is what is most significant.

Cosmology

Humans have many different methods which attempt to answer fundamental questions about the nature of the universe and our place in it (cosmology). Religion is only one of the methods for trying to answer one or more of these questions. Other methods include science, philosophy, metaphysics, astrology, esotericism, mysticism, and forms of shamanism, such as the sacred consumption of ayahuasca among Peruvian Amazonia's Urarina. The Urarina have an elaborate animistic cosmological system, which informs their mythology, religious orientation and daily existence. In many cases, the distinction between these means are not clear. For example, Buddhism and Taoism have been regarded as schools of philosophies as well as religions.

Given the generalized discontents with modernity, consumerism, over- consumption, violence and anomie, many people in the so-called *industrial* or *post-industrial West* rely on a number of distinctive religious worldviews. This in turn has given rise to increased religious pluralism, as well as to what are commonly known in the academic literature as new religious movements, which are gaining ground across the globe.

Urarina shaman, 1988

Criticism

The Canadian scholar of comparative religion, Wilfred Cantwell Smith argued that religion, rather than being a universally valid category as is generally supposed, is a peculiarly European concept of comparatively recent origin.

Most Western criticism of religious constructs and their social consequences has come, however, from atheists and agnostics. Anti-religious sentiment first gathered force during the 18th century European Enlightenment, although pioneering critics such as Voltaire and his fellow Encyclopedists were for the most part deists. The French Revolution then instituted what later became known as secularism, a constitutional declaration of the separation of church and state. As well as being adopted by the new French and U.S. republics, secularism soon came to be adopted by a number of nation states, both revolutionary and post-colonial. Marx famously declared religion to be the "opium of the people," a statement the implications of which were applied with an iron fist in social systems inspired by his writings, most notably in the Soviet Union and China and, most notoriously, in Cambodia. The possible implications of the rest of Marx's celebrated sentence - that religion is "the heart of a heartless world" - were left stubbornly unconsidered. Systematic criticism of the philosophical underpinnings of religion had paralleled the upsurge of scientific discourse within industrial society: T.H. Huxley had in 1869 coined the term "agnostic," a baton taken up with alacrity by such figures as Robert Ingersoll and, later, Bertrand Russell, who told the world *Why I am not a Christian*.

Many contemporary critics consider religion irrational by definition. Some assert that dogmatic religions are in effect morally deficient, elevating to moral status ancient, arbitrary, and ill-informed rules - taboos on eating pork, for example, as well as dress codes and sexual practices - possibly designed for reasons of hygiene or even mere politics in a bygone era.

In North America and Western Europe the social fallout of the 9/11 attacks has fertilized a flurry of secularist tracts with titles such as *The God Delusion*, *The End of Faith* and *God is not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. This criticism is mostly focused on the monotheistic Abrahamic traditions.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion"

Revised Standard Version

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Revised Standard Version (RSV)** is an English translation of the Bible published in the mid-20th century. It traces its history all the way back to William Tyndale's New Testament translation of 1525 and the King James Version of 1611. The RSV is a comprehensive revision of the King James Version (KJV), the Revised Version (RV) of 1881-85, and the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901, with the ASV being the primary basis for the revision.

The RSV posed the first serious challenge to the popularity of the KJV, aiming to be a readable and literally accurate modern English translation of the Bible. The intention was not only to create a clearer version of the Bible for the English-speaking church, but also to "preserve all that is best in the English Bible as it has been known and used through the centuries" and "to put the message of the Bible in simple, enduring words that are worthy to stand in the great Tyndale-King James tradition."

The RSV was published in the following stages:

- New Testament, First Edition (1946; originally copyrighted to the International Council of Religious Education)
- Old Testament (and thus the full Protestant Bible) (1952)
- Apocrypha (1957)
- Modified Edition (only a few changes) (1962)
- Catholic Edition (NT 1965, Full RSV-CE 1966)
- New Testament, Second Edition (1971)
- Common Bible (1973)
- Apocrypha, Expanded Edition (1977)
- Second Catholic Edition (2006)

Making of the RSV

In 1928, the copyright to the ASV was acquired by the International Council of Religious Education (ICRE), which renewed the copyright the next year. From 1930-32, a study of the ASV text was undertaken to decide the question of a new revision, but due to the Great Depression, it was not until 1937 that the ICRE voted in favour
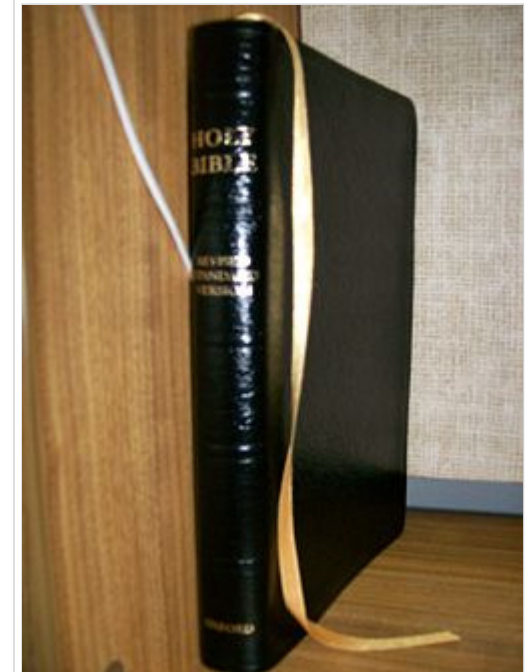
Revised Standard Version	
Oxford's 50th Anniversary Edition of the Revised Standard Version Bible	
Full name:	Revised Standard Version
Abbreviation:	RSV
NT published:	1946
OT published:	1952
Derived from:	American Standard Version
Textual Basis:	**NT:** Medium Correspondence to older

of revising the ASV text. A panel of 32 scholars was put together for that task. Also, the Council hoped to set up a corresponding translation committee in Great Britain, as had been the case with the RV and ASV, but this plan was canceled because of World War II.

Funding for the revision was assured in 1936 by a deal that was made with Thomas Nelson & Sons. The deal gave Thomas Nelson & Sons the exclusive rights to print the new version for ten years. The translators were to be paid by advance royalties.

The Committee determined that, since the work would be a revision of the "Standard Bible" (as the ASV was sometimes called because of its standard use in seminaries in those days), the name of the work would be the "Revised Standard Version".

The translation panel used the 17th edition of the Nestle-Aland Greek text for the New Testament, and the traditional Hebrew Masoretic Text for the Old Testament. However, they amended the Hebrew in a number of places. In the Book of Isaiah, they sometimes followed readings found in the newly discovered Dead Sea Scrolls.

The RSV New Testament was published on February 11, 1946. In his presentation speech to the ICRE, Luther Weigle, dean of the translation committee, explained that he wanted the RSV to supplement and not supplant the KJV and ASV.

In 1950, the ICRE merged with the Federal Council of Churches to form the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA. The former ICRE became the new Council's Division of Christian Education, and the NCC became the official sponsor of the RSV.

After a thorough examination and about eighty changes to the New Testament text, the NCC authorized the RSV Bible for publication in 1951. St. Jerome's Day, September 30, 1952, was selected as the day of publication, and on that day, the NCC sponsored a celebratory rally in Washington D.C., with representatives of the churches affiliated with it present. The very first copy of the RSV Bible to come off the press was presented by Weigle to President Harry S. Truman.

Features

There were three key differences between the RSV (on the one hand) and the KJV, RV and ASV:

- First, the translators reverted to the practice of the KJV and RV in the translation of the Tetragrammaton, or the Divine Name, YHWH. According to the practice of the versions of 1611 and 1885, the RSV

	editions of Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece. **OT:** Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia with limited Dead Sea Scrolls and Septuagint influence. **Apocrypha:** Septuagint with Vulgate influence.
Translation type:	Borderline of Formal Equivalence and Dynamic equivalence.
Reading Level:	Middle School
Version Revised:	1971 (NT only)
Copyright status:	The RSV Bible is copyrighted 1946, 1952, 1971 (the Apocrypha is copyrighted 1957, 1977) by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
Religious Affiliation:	Protestant (usually mainline)
Genesis 1:1-3	
In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.	
John 3:16	

translated the name "LORD" or "GOD", whereas the ASV had translated it "Jehovah".

- Second, a change was made in the usage of archaic English for second-person pronouns, " thou", "thee", "thy", and verb forms "art, hast, hadst, didst" etc. The KJV, RV and ASV used these terms for both God and humans. The RSV used archaic English pronouns and verbs only for God, a fairly common practice for Bible translations until the mid-1970s.
- Third, for the New Testament, the RSV followed the latest available version of Nestle's Greek text, whereas the RV and ASV had used an earlier version of this text (though the differences were slight) and the KJV had used the *Textus receptus*.

> For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

Reception and controversy

The Isaiah 7:14 dispute

The RSV New Testament was well received, but reaction to the Old Testament varied. Many accepted it as well, but many others denounced it. It was claimed that the RSV translators had translated the Old Testament from an odd viewpoint. Some specifically referred to a Jewish viewpoint, pointing to agreements with the 1917 Jewish Publication Society of America Version Tanakh and the presence on the editorial board of a Jewish scholar, Harry Orlinsky, and claimed that other views, including those of the New Testament, were not considered. The focus of the controversy was the translation of the Hebrew word עלמה (*ʿalmāh*) in Isaiah 7:14 as "young woman" rather than the traditional Christian translation of "virgin", agreeing with the Greek word παρθένος (*parthenos*) found in the Septuagint's translation of this passage as well as the New Testament at Matthew 1:23.

Of the seven appearances of *ʿalmāh*, the Septuagint translates only two of them as *parthenos* ("virgin"), including this passage. By contrast, the word בְּתוּלָה (*baṯūlāh*) appears some fifty times, and the Septuagint and English translations agree in understanding the word to mean "virgin" in almost every case. In the end, disputes continue over what *ʿalmāh* does mean; the RSV translators chose to reconcile it with other passages where it does not necessarily mean "virgin".

Attacks on the RSV

Fundamentalists and evangelicals, in particular, accused the translators of deliberately tampering with the Scriptures to deny the doctrine of the Virgin Birth of Jesus, and they cited other traditionally Messianic prophecies that were allegedly obscured in the RSV (i.e., Psalm 16:10, Genesis 22:18) . Some opponents of the RSV took their anger to extremes. For example, a pastor in the Southern USA burned a copy of the RSV with a blowlamp in his pulpit, saying that it was like the devil because it was hard to burn, and sent the ashes as a protest to Weigle. (However, F.F. Bruce dismissed it as a publicity stunt and wrote that it had the opposite effect of causing nearly every family in that congregation to acquire a copy!) These accusations are interesting in light of what happened to William Tyndale, an inspiration to the RSV translators, as they explained in their preface: "He met bitter opposition. He was accused of willfully perverting the meaning of the Scriptures, and his New Testaments were ordered to be burned as 'untrue translations.'" But where Tyndale was burned at the stake for his work, Bruce Metzger, referring to the pastor who burned the RSV and sent the ashes to Weigle, commented in his book *The Bible In Translation* "...today it is happily only a copy of the translation that meets such a fate."

Results of the controversy

The controversy stemming from the RSV helped reignite the King-James-Only Movement within the Independent Baptist and Pentecostal churches (which had begun with the publication of the RV and ASV but had been dormant due to those versions' lack of popularity). Furthermore, many Christians have adopted what has come to be known as the "Isaiah 7.14 litmus test"; that is, whenever a new translation arrives, that verse is the one they will check to determine whether or not they can trust the new version as a legitimate translation. This controversy also served as a major factor in the translation of the New American Standard Bible (1963-71) and the New International Version of the Bible (1973-78).

The 2006 Second Catholic Edition of the RSV resolved the controversy by replacing "young woman" with "virgin" (see Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition#The RSV-CE Today).

Later editions

1962 printings

Minor modifications to the RSV text were authorized in 1959 and completed for the 1962 printings. At the same time, other publishing companies besides Thomas Nelson were allowed to print it, including Zondervan, Holman, Melton, Oxford, and the American Bible Society. Some of the changes included (but were not limited to) reverting to the Greek phrase "the husband of one wife" in 1 Timothy 3.2, 12 and Titus 1.6 (in the 1946-52 printing it was paraphrased as "married only once"), quoting the Roman centurion who witnessed Jesus' death as calling him "the Son of God" in Matthew 27.54 and Mark 15.39 (in 1946-52 he was quoted as calling Jesus "a son of God"), and changing "without" in Job 19.26 to "from" (and adjusting the associated footnote accordingly).

1971 Second Edition of the New Testament

In 1971, the RSV Bible was rereleased with the Second Edition of the Translation of the New Testament. Whereas in 1962 the translation panel had merely authorized a handful of changes, in 1971 they gave the New Testament text a thorough editing. The most obvious changes were the restoration of Mark 16.9-20 (the long ending) and John 7.53-8.11 (in which Jesus forgives an adultress) to the text (in 1946, they were put in footnotes). Also restored was Luke 22.19b-20, containing the bulk of Jesus' institution of the Lord's Supper. In the 1946-52 text, this had been cut off at the phrase "This is my body", and the rest had only been footnoted, since this verse did not appear in the original Codex Bezae manuscript used by the translation committee. Luke 22.43-44, which had been part of the text in 1946-52, was relegated to the footnote section because of its questionable authenticity; in these verses an angel appears to Jesus in Gethsemane to strengthen and encourage Him before His arrest and crucifixion. Many other verses were rephrased or rewritten for greater clarity and accuracy. Moreover, the footnotes concerning monetary values were no longer expressed in terms of dollars and cents but in terms of how long it took to earn each coin (the denarius was no longer defined as twenty cents but as a day's wage). The book of Revelation, called "The Revelation to John" in the previous editions, was retitled "The Revelation to John (The Apocalypse)". Some of these changes to the RSV New Testament had already been introduced in the 1965-66 Catholic Edition, and their introduction into the Protestant edition was done to pave the way for the publication of the RSV Common Bible in 1973.

The Apocrypha and the Catholic Edition

Apocrypha

In 1957, at the request of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America, the Deuterocanonical books (called the Apocrypha by most Protestant Christians) were added to the RSV. Since there was no American Standard Version of the Apocrypha, the RSV Apocrypha was a revision of the Revised Version Apocrypha of 1894, as well as the King James Version. To make the RSV acceptable to Eastern Orthodox congregations, an expanded edition of the Apocrypha containing 3 and 4 Maccabees and Psalm 151 was released in 1977.

Most editions of the RSV that contain the Apocrypha place those books after the New Testament, arranged in the order of the King James Version (the Eastern Orthodox books in post-1977 editions are added at the end). The exception, of course, is the Common Bible, where the Apocryphal books were placed between the Testaments and rearranged in an order pleasing to Protestants, Catholics, and Orthodox alike (see below for more information about the Common Bible).

Catholic Edition

In 1965, the Catholic Biblical Association adapted—under the editorship of Bernard Orchard OSB and Reginald C. Fuller—the RSV for Catholic use with the release of the Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition. The RSV-Catholic New Testament was published in 1965 and the full RSV-Catholic Bible in 1966. This included revisions up through 1962, along with a small number of new revisions in the New Testament, mostly to return to familiar phrases. In addition, a few footnotes were changed. This edition is currently published and licensed by Ignatius Press. It contains the deuterocanonical books of the Old Testament placed in the traditional order of the Vulgate.

The Catholic RSV was also used as the English text for the Navarre Bible commentary.

In 2006, Ignatius Press released the Revised Standard Version-Second Catholic Edition, which updated the archaic language in the 1966 printing and exchanged some footnotes and texts to reflect a more traditional understanding of certain passages, such as replacing "young woman" with "virgin" in Isaiah 7.14, as previously mentioned. (See also *Ignatius Catholic Study Bible series*)

Adaptations

There have been many adaptations of the RSV over the years.

Common Bible

The *Common Bible* of 1973 ordered the books in a way that pleased both Catholics and Protestants. It was divided into four sections:

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- **The Old Testament** (39 Books)
- **The Deuterocanonical Books** (12 Books)
- **The Non-Deuterocanonical Books** (three Books; six Books after 1977)
- **The New Testament** (27 Books)

The non-deuterocanonicals gave the *Common Bible* a total of 81 books: it included 1 Esdras (also known as 3 Ezra), 2 Esdras (4 Ezra), and the Prayer of Manasseh, books that have appeared in the Vulgate's appendix since Jerome's time "lest they perish entirely", but are not considered canonical by Roman Catholics and are thus not included in most modern Catholic Bibles. In 1977, the RSV Apocrypha was expanded to include 3 Maccabees, 4 Maccabees, and Psalm 151, three additional sections accepted in the Eastern Orthodox canon (4 Maccabees again forming an appendix in that tradition). This action increased the *Common Bible* to 84 Books, making it the most comprehensive English bible translation to date in its inclusion of books not accepted by all denominations. The goal of the *Common Bible* was to help ecumenical relations between the churches.

Reader's Digest Bible

In 1982, Reader's Digest published a special edition of the RSV that was billed as a condensed edition of the text. The Reader's Digest edition of the RSV was intended for those who did not read the Bible or who read it infrequently. It was not intended as a replacement of the full RSV text. In this version, 55% of the Old Testament and 25% of the New Testament were cut. Familiar passages such as the Lord's Prayer, Psalm 23 and the Ten Commandments were retained. For those who wanted the full RSV, Reader's Digest provided a list of publishers that sold the complete RSV at that time.

Revisions

New Revised Standard Version

In 1989, the National Council of Churches released a full-scale revision to the RSV called the New Revised Standard Version. It was the first major version to use gender-neutral language, and thus drew more criticism and ire from conservative Christians than did its 1952 predecessor.

The RSV today

The RSV remains a favorite translation for many Christians. However, RSV Bibles are hard to find, except in second-hand shops and churches that used it, because the NCC prefers to print the New Revised Standard Version.

The year 2002 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of the RSV Bible. Oxford University Press commemorated it by releasing two different Anniversary editions: one with the Old and New Testaments only (the NT text being from 1971), and one including the Apocryphal books as seen in the 1977 expanded edition. Because these editions contain some of the readings and footnotes found in the RSV-Catholic New Testament (as in Matthew 1.19; 19.9; Mark 16.9-20; Luke 8.43 24.5, 12, 36, 40; John 7.53-8.11; Romans 5.5; 8.11; 1 Corinthians 9.5; Hebrews 13.13, to name only a few), and because of the order

of the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical books and their placement between the Testaments, it is apparent that these editions are revivals of the 1977 Expanded Edition Common Bible.

Two years before, Oxford's rival, Cambridge University Press, reprinted the RSV in two editions which are still available: a Brevier centre-column reference Bible, and a *New Testament with Psalms*.

Oxford continues to make the RSV Oxford Annotated Bible available, in a 1973 edition with Old and New Testaments (the NT text being from the 1971 update) and a 1977 edition featuring both Testaments and the 1977 Expanded Apocrypha.

Scepter Publishers, Ignatius Press, and Oxford continue to print the 1966 edition of the RSV-Catholic Bible, and Ignatius, as mentioned, has made the Second Catholic Edition of the full Bible and a New Testament/Psalms available.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Revised_Standard_Version"

Rigveda

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Rigveda** (Sanskrit ऋग्वेद *ṛgveda*, a compound of *ṛc* "praise, verse" and *veda* "knowledge") is an ancient Indian sacred collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns dedicated to the gods (devas). It is counted among the four canonical sacred texts (*śruti*) of Hinduism known as the Vedas, and is revered by Hindus around the world. Its verses are recited at prayers, religious functions and other auspicious occasions, putting it among the world's oldest religious texts in continued use.

Philological and linguistic evidence indicate that the Rigveda was composed in the Sapta Sindhu (a land of seven great rivers), which is the region around present-day Punjab, roughly between 1700–1100 BCE (the early Vedic period). This makes it one of the oldest texts of any Indo-European language. There are strong linguistic and cultural similarities with the early Iranian Avesta, deriving from the Proto-Indo-Iranian times, often associated with the early Andronovo culture of ca. 2000 BCE.

Text

The Rigveda is organized in 10 books, known as Mandalas. Each mandala consists of hymns intended for various sacrificial rituals, called *sūkta* (*su- ukta*, literally, "well recited, eulogy"), which in turn consist of individual stanzas called *ṛc* ("praise"), plural *ṛcas*, which are further analysed into units of verse called *pada* (" foot").

The Mandalas are not of equal length or age. The "family books", mandalas 2-7, are the oldest part of the Rigveda and the shortest books; they are arranged by length and account for 38% of the text. RV 8 and RV 9, comprising hymns of mixed age, account for 15% and 9%, respectively. RV 1 and RV 10 are both the latest and the longest books, accounting for 37% of the text.

Preservation

The text in its surviving form was redacted, many centuries after the composition of the earliest hymns, in the Iron Age (c. 9th to 7th century BC), about co-evally with the redaction of the other Vedas. This compilation or redaction included orthoepic changes to the Vedic Sanskrit, such as regularization of sandhi (called by Oldenberg *orthoepische Diaskeunase*). From the time of its redaction, the text has been handed down in two versions: The *Samhitapatha* has all Sanskrit rules of sandhi applied and is the text used for recitation. The Padapatha has each word isolated in its pausa form and is used for memorization. The Padapatha is, as it were, a commentary on the *Samhitapatha*. The original text as reconstructed on metrical grounds (viz. "original" in the sense that it aims to recover the hymns as recorded by the Rishis) lies somewhere between the two, but closer to the Samhitapatha.

This fixed text was preserved with unparalleled fidelity for more than a millennium by oral tradition alone and was probably not put in writing until the Gupta period.

Recensions

Two major shakhas ("branches", i. e. schools or recensions), *Śākala* and *Bāṣkala* have survived, which are practically identical.

The Śākala recension has 1,017 regular hymns, and an appendix of 11 *valakhīlya* hymns which are now customarily included in the 8th mandala (as 8.49–8.59), for a total of 1028 hymns. The Bāṣakala recension includes 8 of these *vālakhilya* hymns among its regular hymns, making a total of 1025 regular hymns for this śākhā. In addition, the Bāṣakala has its own appendix of 98 hymns, the Khilani.

The Aitareya-Brahmana and the Kausitaki-Brahmana are associated with the Śākala and the *Bāṣkala* recensions respectively.

Organization

The most common numbering scheme is by book, hymn and stanza (and *pada a*, *b*, *c* ..., if required). E. g. the first *pada* is

- 1.1.1a *agním īḷe puróhitaṃ* "Agni I laud, the high priest"

and the final *pada* is

- 10.191.4d *yáthāḥ vaḥ súsahā́sati* "for your being in good company"

Each Book (Maṇḍala) is divided into Anuvākas which some modern publishers often omit (each Anuvākas contains many hymns or suktas).An alternative scheme is into Aṣṭaka (eighths), Adhāyaya (chapter) and Varga (class). Some publishers give both classifications in a single edition.

The entire 1028 hymns of the *Rigveda*, in the 1877 edition of Aufrecht, contain a total of 10,552 ṛcas, or 39,831 padas. The Shatapatha Brahmana gives the number of syllables to be 432,000, while the metrical text of van Nooten and Holland (1994) has a total of 395,563 syllables (or an average of 9.93 syllables per pada); counting the number of syllables is not straightforward because of issues with sandhi. Most ṛcas are jagati (padas of 12 syllables), trishtubh (padas of 11 syllables), viraj (padas of 10 syllables) or gayatri or anushtubh (padas of 8 syllables).
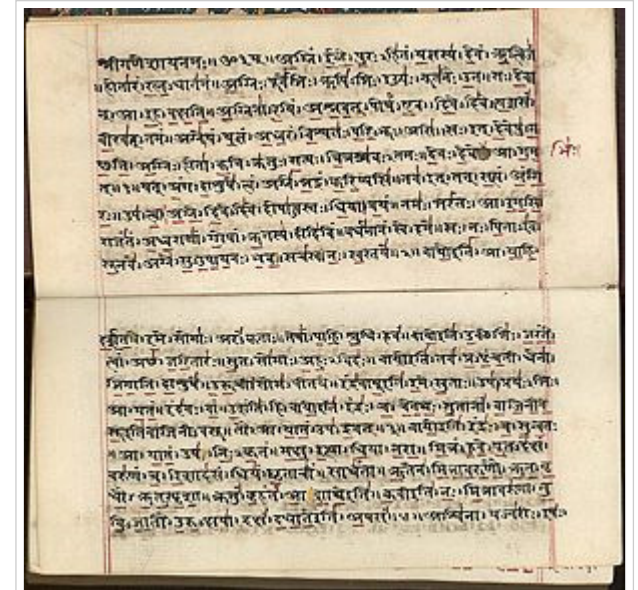
Rishis

Each hymn of the Rigveda is traditionally attributed to a specific rishi, and the "family books" (2-7) are said to have been composed ("heard") by one family of rishis each. The main families, listed by the number of verses ascribed to them are:

- Angirasas: 3619 (especially Mandala 6)
- Kanvas: 1315 (especially Mandala 8)
- Vasishthas: 1267 (Mandala 7)
- Vaishvamitras: 983 (Mandala 3)
- Atris: 885 (Mandala 5)
- Bhrgus: 473
- Kashyapas: 415 (part of Mandala 9)
- Grtsamadas: 401 (Mandala 2)
- Agastyas: 316
- Bharatas: 170

Contents

The chief gods of the *Rigveda* are Indra, a heroic god who is praised for having slain his enemy Vrtra, Agni, the sacrificial fire, and Soma, the sacred potion, or the plant it is made from. Other prominent gods are Mitra- Varuna and Ushas (the dawn). Also invoked are Savitr, Vishnu, Rudra, Pushan, Brihaspati, Brahmanaspati, as well as deified natural phenomena such as Dyaus Pita (the sky), Prithivi (the earth), Surya (the sun), Vayu (the wind), Apas (the waters), Parjanya (the rain), Vac (the word), many rivers (notably the Sapta Sindhu, and the Sarasvati River). Groups of deities are the Ashvins, the Maruts, the Adityas, the Rbhus, the Vishvadevas (the all-gods). It contains various further minor gods, persons, concepts, phenomena and items, and fragmentary references to possible historical events, notably the struggle between the early Vedic people (known as Vedic Aryans, a subgroup of the Indo-Aryans) and their enemies, the Dasa.

- Mandala 1 comprises 191 hymns. Hymn 1.1 is addressed to Agni, and his name is the first word of the *Rigveda*. The remaining hymns are mainly addressed to Agni and Indra. Hymns 1.154 to 1.156 are addressed to Vishnu.
- Mandala 2 comprises 43 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra. It is chiefly attributed to the Rishi *gṛtsamda śaunohotra*.
- Mandala 3 comprises 62 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra. The verse 3.62.10 has great importance in Hinduism as the Gayatri Mantra. Most hymns in this book are attributed to *viśvāmitra gāthinaḥ*.
- Mandala 4 consists of 58 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra. Most hymns in this book are attributed to *vāmadeva gautama*.
- Mandala 5 comprises 87 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra, the Visvadevas (gods of the world), the Maruts, the twin-deity Mitra-Varuna and the Asvins. Two hymns each are dedicated to Ushas (the dawn) and to Savitr. Most hymns in this book are attributed to the *atri* family.
- Mandala 6 comprises 75 hymns, mainly to Agni and Indra. Most hymns in this book are attributed to the *bārhaspatya* family of Angirasas.
- Mandala 7 comprises 104 hymns, to Agni, Indra, the Visvadevas, the Maruts, Mitra-Varuna, the Asvins, Ushas, Indra-Varuna, Varuna, Vayu (the wind), two each to Sarasvati (ancient river/goddess of learning) and Vishnu, and to others. Most hymns in this book are attributed to *vasiṣṭha maitravauṃi*.

Rigveda (padapatha) manuscript in Devanagari, early 19th century

- Mandala 8 comprises 103 hymns to different gods. Hymns 8.49 to 8.59 are the apocryphal *valakhīlya*. Most hymns in this book are attributed to the *kāṇva* family.
- Mandala 9 comprises 114 hymns, entirely devoted to *Soma Pavamana*, the plant of the sacred potion of the Vedic religion.
- Mandala 10 comprises 191 hymns, to Agni and other gods. It contains the Nadistuti sukta which is in praise of rivers and is important for the reconstruction of the geography of the Vedic civilization and the Purusha sukta which has significance in Hindu tradition. It also contains the Nasadiya sukta (10.129), probably the most celebrated hymns in the west, which deals with creation.

Dating and historical context

The *Rigveda* is far more archaic than any other Indo-Aryan text. For this reason, it was in the centre of attention of western scholarship from the times of Max Müller. The *Rigveda* records an early stage of Vedic religion. There are strong linguistic and cultural similarities with the early Iranian Avesta, deriving from the Proto-Indo-Iranian times, often associated with the early Andronovo culture of ca. 2000 BCE. The Rigveda's core is accepted to date to the late Bronze Age, making it the only example of Bronze Age literature with an unbroken tradition. Its composition is usually dated to roughly between 1700–1100 BC. The text in the following centuries underwent pronunciation revisions and standardization (samhitapatha, padapatha). This redaction would have been completed around the 7th century BC.

Writing appears in India around the 5th century BC in the form of the Brahmi script, but texts of the length of the Rigveda were likely not written down until much later, the oldest surviving manuscript dating to the 11th century. While written manuscripts were used for teaching in medieval times, they were written on bark or palm leaves, which decomposed quicker in the tropical climate, until the advent of the printing press from the 16th century. The hymns were thus preserved by oral tradition for up to a millennium from the time of their composition until the redaction of the Rigveda, and the entire Rigveda was preserved in shakhas for another 2,500 years from the time of its redaction until the *editio princeps* by Müller.

Geography of the Rigveda, with river names; the extent of the Swat and Cemetery H cultures are also indicated.

After their composition, the texts were preserved and codified by a vast body of Vedic priesthood as the central philosophy of the Iron Age Vedic civilization. The Brahma Purana and the Vayu Purana name one *Vidagdha* as the author of the Padapatha. The Rk-pratishakhya names *Sthavira Shakalya* of the Aitareya Aranyaka as its author.

The *Rigveda* describes a mobile, nomadic culture, with horse-drawn chariots and metal (bronze) weapons. The geography described is consistent with that of the Punjab: Rivers flow north to south, the mountains are relatively remote but still reachable (Soma is a plant found in the mountains, and it has to be purchased, imported by merchants). Nevertheless, the hymns were certainly composed over a long period, with the oldest elements possibly reaching back to times close to the split of Proto-Indo-Iranian (around 2000 BC) Thus there is some debate over whether the boasts of the destruction of stone forts by the Vedic Aryans and particularly by Indra refer to cities of the Indus Valley civilization or whether they hark back to clashes between the early Indo-Aryans with the BMAC in what is now northern Afghanistan and southern Turkmenistan (separated from the upper Indus by the Hindu Kush mountain range, and some 400 km distant). In any case, while it is highly likely that the bulk of the Rigvedic hymns were composed in the Punjab, even if based on earlier poetic traditions, there is no mention of either tigers or rice in the *Rigveda* (as opposed to the later Vedas), suggesting that Vedic culture only penetrated into the plains of India after its completion. Similarly, it is assumed that there is no mention of iron although the term ayas (metal) occurs in the Rig Veda. The Iron Age in northern India begins in the 12th century BC with the *Black and Red Ware* (BRW) culture. This is a widely accepted timeframe for the beginning codification of the *Rigveda* (i.e. the arrangement of the individual hymns in books, and the fixing of the samhitapatha (by applying Sandhi) and the padapatha (by dissolving Sandhi) out of the earlier metrical text), and the composition of the younger Vedas. This time probably coincides with the early Kuru kingdom, shifting the centre of Vedic culture east from the Punjab into what is now Uttar Pradesh.
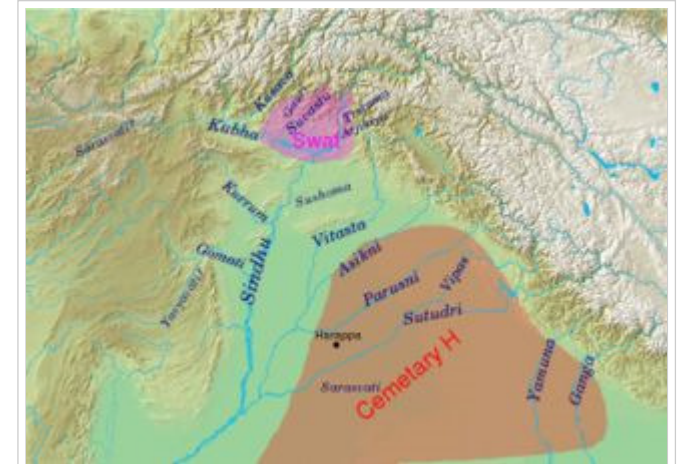
Some of the names of gods and goddesses found in the *Rigveda* are found amongst other belief systems based on Proto-Indo-European religion as well: Dyaus-Pita is cognate with Greek Zeus, Latin Jupiter (from deus-pater), and Germanic Tyr; while Mitra is cognate with Persian *Mithra*; also, Ushas with Greek Eos and Latin Aurora; and, less certainly, Varuna with Greek Uranos. Finally, both Latin *ignis* and Russian *ogon*, are cognate with Agni - meaning "fire" .

N. Kazanas in a polemic against the " Aryan Invasion Theory" suggests a date as early as 3100 BC, based on an identification of the early Rigvedic Sarasvati River as the Ghaggar-Hakra and on glottochronological arguments. Being a polemic against mainstream scholarship, this is in diametrical opposition to views in mainstream historical linguistics, and supports the controversial Out of India theory, which assumes a date as late as 3000 BC for the age of late Proto-Indo-European itself. Some writers based on astronomical calculations even claim dates as early as 4000 BC, a date well within the Indian Neolithic..

The horse (ashva) and cattle play an important role in the Rigveda. There are also references to the elephant (Hastin, Varana), camel (Ustra, especially in Mandala 8), buffalo (Mahisa), lion (Simha) and to the gaur in the Rigveda. The peafowl (mayura) and the chakravaka (Anas casarca) are birds mentioned in the Rigveda.

Hindu tradition

According to Indian tradition, the Rigvedic hymns were collected by Paila under the guidance of Vyāsa, who formed the Rigveda Samhita as we know it. According to the Śatapatha Brāhmana, the number of syllables in the *Rigveda* is 432,000, equalling the number of muhurtas (1 day = 30 muhurtas) in forty years. This statement stresses the underlying philosophy of the Vedic books that there is a connection (bandhu) between the astronomical, the physiological, and the spiritual.

The authors of the Brāhmana literature described and interpreted the Rigvedic ritual. Yaska was an early commentator of the *Rigveda*. In the 14th century, Sāyana wrote an exhaustive commentary on it. Other *Bhāṣyas* (commentaries) that have been preserved up to present times are those by Mādhava, Skaṃdasvāmin and Veṃkatamādhava.

Vedantic and Hindu reformist views

Since the 19th and 20th centuries, some reformers like Swami Dayananda, founder of the " Arya Samaj" and Sri Aurobindo have attempted to re-interpret the Vedas to conform to modern and established moral and spiritual norms. They moved the Vedantic perception of the *Rigveda* from the original ritualistic content to a more symbolic or mystical interpretation. For example, instances of animal sacrifice were not seen by them as literal slaughtering, but as transcendental processes.

The Sarasvati river, lauded in RV 7.95 as the greatest river flowing from the mountain to the sea is sometimes equated with the Ghaggar-Hakra river, which went dry perhaps before 2600 BC or certainly before 1900 BC. Others argue that the Sarasvati was originally the Helmand in Afghanistan. These questions are tied to the debate about the Indo-Aryan migration (termed " Aryan Invasion Theory") vs. the claim that Vedic culture together with Vedic Sanskrit originated in the Indus Valley Civilisation (termed " Out of India theory"), a topic of great significance in Hindu nationalism, addressed for example by Amal Kiran and

Shrikant G. Talageri. Subhash Kak has claimed that there is an astronomical code in the organization of the hymns. Bal Gangadhar Tilak, also based on astronomical alignments in the Rigveda, in his "The Orion" (1893) claimed presence of the Rigvedic culture in India in the 4th millennium BC, and in his "Arctic Home in the Vedas" (1903) even argued that the Aryans originated near the North Pole and came south during the Ice Age.

Ancillary Texts

Rigveda Brahmanas

Of the Brahmanas that were handed down in the schools of the *Bahvṛcas* (i.e. "possessed of many verses"), as the followers of the Rigveda are called, two have come down to us, viz. those of the Aitareyins and the Kaushitakins. The *Aitareya-brahmana* and the *Kaushitaki-* (or *Sankhayana-*) *brahmana* evidently have for their groundwork the same stock of traditional exegetic matter. They differ, however, considerably as regards both the arrangement of this matter and their stylistic handling of it, with the exception of the numerous legends common to both, in which the discrepancy is comparatively slight. There is also a certain amount of material peculiar to each of them. The Kaushitaka is, upon the whole, far more concise in its style and more systematic in its arrangementfeatures which would lead one to infer that it is probably the more modern work of the two. It consists of thirty chapters (*adhyaya*); while the Aitareya has forty, divided into eight books (or pentads, *pancaka*), of five chapters each. The last ten adhyayas of the latter work are, however, clearly a later addition though they must have already formed part of it at the time of Panini (ca. 5th c. BC), if, as seems probable, one of his grammatical sutras, regulating the formation of the names of Brahmanas, consisting of thirty and forty adhyayas, refers to these two works. In this last portion occurs the well-known legend (also found in the Shankhayana-sutra, but not in the Kaushitaki-brahmana) of Shunahshepa, whom his father Ajigarta sells and offers to slay, the recital of which formed part of the inauguration of kings. While the Aitareya deals almost exclusively with the Soma sacrifice, the Kaushitaka, in its first six chapters, treats of the several kinds of *haviryajna*, or offerings of rice, milk, ghee, &c., whereupon follows the Soma sacrifice in this way, that chapters 7-10 contain the practical ceremonial and 11-30 the recitations (*shastra*) of the hotar. Sayana, in the introduction to his commentary on the work, ascribes the Aitareya to the sage Mahidasa Aitareya (i.e. son of Itara), also mentioned elsewhere as a philosopher; and it seems likely enough that this person arranged the Brahmana and founded the schcol of the Aitareyins. Regarding the authorship of the sister work we have no information, except that the opinion of the sage Kaushitaki is frequently referred to in it as authoritative, and generally in opposition to the Paingya — the Brahmana, it would seem, of a rival school, the Paingins. Probably, therefore, it is just what one of the manuscripts calls it — the Brahmana of Sankhayana (composed) in accordance with the views of Kaushitaki.

Rigveda Aranyakas

Each of these two Brahmanas is supplemented by a "forest book", or Aranyaka. The *Aitareyaranyaka* is not a uniform production. It consists of five books (*aranyaka*), three of which, the first and the last two, are of a liturgical nature, treating of the ceremony called *mahavrata*, or great vow. The last of these books, composed in sutra form, is, however, doubtless of later origin, and is, indeed, ascribed by Hindu authorities either to Shaunaka or to Ashvalayana. The second and third books, on the other hand, are purely speculative, and are also styled the *Bahvrca-brahmana-upanishad*. Again, the last four chapters of the second book are usually singled out as the *Aitareyopanishad*, ascribed, like its Brahmana (and the first book), to Mahidasa Aitareya; and the third book is also referred to as the *Samhita-upanishad*. As regards the *Kaushitaki-aranyaka*, this work consists of 15 adhyayas, the first two (treating of the mahavrata ceremony) and the 7th and 8th of which correspond to the 1st, 5th, and 3rd books of the Aitareyaranyaka, respectively, whilst the four adhyayas usually inserted between them

constitute the highly interesting *Kaushitaki (brahmana-) upanishad*, of which we possess two different recensions. The remaining portions (9-15) of the Aranyaka treat of the vital airs, the internal Agnihotra, etc., ending with the *vamsha*, or succession of teachers.

Manuscripts

There are 30 manuscripts of Rigveda at the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, collected in the 19th century by Georg Bühler, Franz Kielhorn and others, originating from different parts of India, including Kashmir, Gujarat, the then Rajaputana, Central Provinces etc. They were transferred to Deccan College, Pune, in the late 19th century. They are in the Sharada and Devanagari scripts, written on birch bark and paper. The oldest of them is dated to 1464.

Of these 30 manuscripts, 9 contain the samhita text, 5 have the padapatha in addition. 13 contain Sayana's commentary. At least 5 manuscripts (MS. no. 1/A1879-80, 1/A1881-82, 331/1883-84 and 5/Viś I) have preserved the complete text of the Rigveda. MS no. 5/1875-76, written on birch bark in bold Sharada, was used by Max Müller for his edition of the Rigveda with Sayana's commentary.

Max Müller used 24 manuscripts, while the Pune Edition used over five dozen manuscripts, but the editors of Pune Edition could not procure many manuscripts used by Max Müller and by Bombay Edition, as well as from some other sources ; hence the total number of extant manuscripts must surpass perhaps eighty at least

Editions

- editio princeps: Friedrich Max Müller, *The Hymns of the Rigveda, with Sayana's commentary*, London, 1849-75, 6 vols., 2nd ed. 4 vols., Oxford, 1890-92.
- Theodor Aufrecht, 2nd ed., Bonn, 1877.
- Sontakke, N. S., ed. (1933-46,Reprint 1972-1983.), *Rgveda-Samhitā: Śrimat-Sāyanāchārya virachita-bhāṣya-sametā* (First ed.), Pune: Vaidika Samśodhana Maṇḍala. The Editorial Board for the First Edition included N. S. Sontakke (Managing Editor), V. K. Rājvade, M. M. Vāsudevaśāstri, and T. S. Varadarājaśarmā.
- B. van Nooten und G. Holland, *Rig Veda, a metrically restored text*, Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies, Harvard University, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England, 1994.

Translations

The first published translation of any portion of the Rigveda in any Western language was into Latin, by Friedrich August Rosen (*Rigvedae specimen*, London 1830). Predating Müller's *editio princeps* of the text, Rosen was working from manuscripts brought back from India by Colebrooke.

H. H. Wilson was the first to make a complete translation of the Rig Veda into English, published in six volumes during the period 1850-88. Wilson's version was based on the commentary of Sāyaṇa. In 1977, Wilson's edition was enlarged by Nag Sharan Singh (Nag Publishers, Delhi, 2nd ed. 1990).

In 1889, Ralph T.H. Griffith published his translation as *The Hymns of the Rig Veda*, published in London (1889).

A German translation was published by Karl Friedrich Geldner, *Der Rig-Veda: aus dem Sanskrit ins Deutsche Übersetzt*, Harvard Oriental Studies, vols. 33–37 (Cambridge, Mass.: 1951-7).

Geldner's tranlsation was the philologically best-informed to date, and a Russian translation based on Geldner's by Tatyana Yakovlena Elizarenkova was published by Nauka 1989-1999

A 2001 revised edition of Wilson's translation was published by Ravi Prakash Arya and K. L. Joshi. The revised edition updates Wilson's translation by replacing obsolete English forms with more modern equivalents, giving the English translation along with the original Sanskrit text in Devanagari script, along with a critical apparatus.

In 2004 the United States' National Endowment for the Humanities funded Joel Brereton and Stephanie W. Jamison as project directors for a new original translation to be issued by Oxford University Press.

Numerous partial translations exist into various languages. Notable examples include:

- A. A. Macdonell. *Hymns from the Rigveda* (Calcutta, London, 1922); *A Vedic Reader for Students* (Oxford, 1917).
- French: A. Langlois, Paris 1948-51 ISBN 2-7200-1029-4
- Hungarian: Laszlo Forizs, *Rigvéda - Teremtéshimnuszok (Creation Hymns of the Rig-Veda)*, Budapest, 1995 ISBN 963-85349-1-5 Hymns of the Rig-Veda

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty issued a modern selection with a translation of 108 hymns, along with critical apparatus. A bibliography of translations of the Rig Veda appears as an Appendix that work.

A new German translations of books 1 and 2 was presented in 2007 by Michael Witzel and Toshifumi Goto (ISBN 978-3-458-70001-2 / ISBN 978-3-458-70001-3).

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigveda"

Roman Catholic Church

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

The **Roman Catholic Church**, officially known as the **Catholic Church**, is the world's largest Christian church and represents over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population. It is made up of one Western church (the Latin Rite) and 22 Eastern Catholic churches, divided into 2,782 jurisdictional areas around the world. The Church looks to the Pope, currently Benedict XVI, as its highest human authority in matters of faith, morality and Church governance. The Church community is composed of an ordained ministry and the laity. Either may be members of religious communities like the Dominicans, Carmelites, Jesuits and Salesians.

The Catholic Church defines its mission as spreading the message of Jesus Christ, found in the four Gospels, administering sacraments that aid the spiritual growth of its members and exercising charity. To further its mission, the Church operates programs and institutions throughout the world. They include schools, universities, hospitals, missions and shelters, as well as Catholic Relief Services, Caritas Internationalis and Catholic Charities that help the poor, families, the elderly and the sick.

Through Apostolic succession, the Church believes itself to be the continuation of the Christian community founded by Jesus in his consecration of Saint Peter. The Church has defined its doctrines through various ecumenical councils, following the example set by the first Apostles in the Council of Jerusalem. Catholic faith is summarized in the Nicene Creed and detailed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Catholic worship is ordered by the liturgy, which is regulated by Church authority. The Eucharist, one of seven Church sacraments and a key part of every Catholic Mass, is the centre of Catholic worship.

With a two thousand year history, the Church is the world's oldest and largest Christian institution. From at least the 4th century, it has played a prominent role in the history of Western civilization. In the 11th century, the Eastern, Orthodox Church and the Western, Catholic Church split, largely over disagreements regarding papal primacy. Eastern churches, which maintained or later re-established communion with Rome, form the Eastern Catholic Churches. In the 16th century, partly in response to the Protestant Reformation, the Church engaged in a substantial process of reform and renewal, known as the Counter-Reformation.

The Catholic Church maintains that it is the " one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" founded by Jesus, but acknowledges that the Holy Spirit can make use of Christian communities separated from itself to bring people to salvation. The Church teaches that it is called by the Holy Spirit to work for unity among all Christians—a movement known as ecumenism. Modern challenges facing the Church include the rise of secularism and opposition to its pro-life stance on abortion, contraception and euthanasia.

Origin and mission

The Catholic Church traces its foundation to Jesus and the Twelve Apostles. It sees the bishops of the Church as the successors of the apostles and the pope in particular as the successors of Peter, the leader of the apostles. Catholics cite Jesus' words in the Gospel of Matthew to support this view: "... you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ... I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." According to Catholic belief, the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles in an event known by Christians as Pentecost brought this promised "church" fully into the world.

Scholars like Edward Norman note that the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus and that the historical record confirms that it was considered a Christian doctrinal authority from its beginning. John McManners, among other leading scholars, cites a letter from Pope Clement I to the church in Corinth (c. 95) as evidence of a presiding Roman cleric who exercised authority over other churches. Others, like Eamon Duffy, acknowledge the existence of a Christian community in Rome and that Peter and Paul "lived, preached and died" there but doubt that there was a ruling bishop in the Roman church in the first century, and question the concept of apostolic succession. Duffy described the second-century list of popes by Irenaeus as "suspiciously tidy", and stated that "There is no sure way to settle on a date by which the office of ruling bishop had emerged in Rome, and so to name the first pope, but the process was certainly complete by the time of Anicetus in the mid-150s, when Polycarp, the aged bishop of Smyrna, visited Rome, and he and Anicetus debated amicably the question of the date of Easter".

This detail of a fresco (1481–82) by Pietro Perugino in the Sistine chapel shows Jesus giving the keys of heaven to Saint Peter.

The Church believes that its mission is founded upon Jesus' command to his followers to spread the faith across the world: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you: and Lo, I am with you always, until the close of the age". Pope Benedict XVI summarized the Church's mission as a threefold responsibility to proclaim the word of God, celebrate the sacraments, and exercise the ministry of charity. He has stated that these duties presuppose each other and are thus inseparable. As part of its ministry of charity the Church runs Catholic Relief Services, Catholic Charities, Caritas Internationalis, Catholic schools, universities, hospitals, shelters and ministries to the poor, as well as ministries to families, the elderly and the marginalized. Through these programs the Church applies the tenets of Catholic social teaching and tends to the corporal and spiritual needs of human beings.

Beliefs

The Catholic Church's beliefs are detailed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Catholic Church is trinitarian since it believes that there is one eternal God who exists as a mutual indwelling of three persons: the Father, the Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Catholic teachings have been refined and clarified over the centuries by councils of the Church convened by Church leaders at important points throughout history. The first such council, the Council of Jerusalem, was convened by the apostles around the year 50. The most recent was the Second Vatican Council, which closed in 1965. The Nicene Creed dating back to the First Council of Nicaea (325), is the core statement of Catholic Christian belief. This creed is recited at Sunday Masses and is also the central statement of belief of many other Christian denominations. Eastern Orthodox Christians do not accept the filioque clause. Protestant churches vary in their beliefs, but generally accept the Nicene Creed with reservations regarding the term "Catholic". They generally differ from the Catholic Church regarding the authority of the pope, church tradition, and on issues pertaining to divine grace, good works and salvation.

Teaching authority

A 19th-century painting by Carl Heinrich Bloch depicts Jesus preaching the Sermon on the Mount.

The Catholic Church believes that it is guided by the Holy Spirit and so protected from falling into doctrinal error. It bases this belief on biblical promises that Jesus made to his apostles. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells Peter, "the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against [the church]", and in the Gospel of John, Jesus says, "... when He comes, the Spirit of truth, He will guide you to all truth".

The Church teaches that the Holy Spirit reveals God's truth through Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition and the Magisterium. The sacred scriptures consist of the 73 books of the Catholic Bible. These are made up of those contained in the Greek version of the Old Testament—known as the Septuagint—and the 27 New Testament writings found in the Codex Vaticanus and listed in Athanasius' Thirty-Ninth Festal Letter. Sacred Tradition consists of those teachings believed by the Church to have been handed down since the time of the Apostles. Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition are collectively known as the "deposit of faith". These are in turn interpreted by the Magisterium, or the teaching authority of the Church. The Magisterium includes infallible pronouncements of the pope, pronouncements of ecumenical councils, and those of the college of bishops acting in union with the pope to define truths or to condemn interpretations of scripture believed to be false.

According to the *Catechism*, Jesus instituted seven sacraments and entrusted them to the Church. These are Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders and Holy Matrimony. Sacraments are visible rituals which Catholics see as providing God's grace to all those who receive them with the proper mindset or disposition (ex opere operato). Differing liturgical traditions, or rites, exist throughout the worldwide Church. These reflect historical and cultural diversity rather than a diversity in beliefs. The most commonly used is the Western or Latin rite. Others are the Byzantine rite, the Alexandrian or Coptic rite, the Syriac, Armenian, Maronite and Chaldean rites.

God the Father, original sin and Baptism

Catholic belief holds that God is the source and creator of nature and all that exists. as expressed in the opening statement of the Nicene Creed, "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen ...". The Church perceives him as a loving and caring God who is involved in the world and in people's lives and who desires his creatures to love him and to love each other. Before the creation of mankind, however, the scriptures teach that God made spiritual beings called angels. In an event known as the "fall of the angels", a number of them chose to rebel against God and his reign. The leader of this rebellion has been called "Lucifer", "Satan" and the devil among other names. The sin of pride, considered one of seven deadly sins, is attributed to Satan for wishing to be equal to God. One of these fallen angels is believed to have tempted the first humans, Adam and Eve, whose act of original sin brought suffering and death into the world.

This event is known as the Fall of Man and according to Catholic belief, left humanity isolated from their original state of intimacy with God. The *Catechism* states that the description of the fall described in Genesis 3 uses figurative language, but affirms "... a deed that took place at the beginning of the history of man" and resulted in "a deprivation of original holiness and justice" that makes each person "subject to ignorance, suffering, and the dominion of death: and inclined to sin". The Church believes that people can be cleansed of original sin and all personal sins through Baptism. This sacramental act of cleansing admits one as a full member of the natural and supernatural Church and is only conferred once in a person's lifetime.

Guido Reni's *Archangel Michael* (1636) shows Michael—one of three archangels—defeating Lucifer.

Jesus, sin and Penance

In the messianic texts of the Jewish Tanakh which make up much of the Christian Old Testament, Christians believe God promises to send his people a savior. The Church believes that this savior was Jesus who is described in the Nicene Creed as "... the only begotten son of God, ... one in being with the Father. Through him all things were made ...". In an event known as the Incarnation, the Church teaches that God descended from heaven for the salvation of humanity, and became man through the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of a virgin Jewish girl named Mary. Jesus' mission on earth is believed to have included giving people his word and example to follow, as recorded in the four Gospels. The Church teaches that following the example of Jesus helps believers to become closer to him, and therefore to grow in true love, freedom, and the fullness of life. Sinning is considered to be the opposite to following Jesus, robbing people of their resemblance to God and turning their souls away from his love. Per Catholic teaching, people can sin by failing to obey the Ten Commandments, failing to love God, or failing to love other people. Some sins are held to be more serious than others. Sins range from lesser or venial sins, to grave or mortal sins which end a person's relationship with God. Through the passion of Jesus and his crucifixion, the Church teaches that all people have an opportunity for forgiveness and freedom from sin, and so can be reconciled to God. John the Baptist, respected by the Church as a prophet, called Jesus "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" in reference to the ancient Jewish practice of offering sacrificial lambs to God to obtain some greater good. By reconciling with God and following Jesus' words and deeds, the Church believes one can enter the Kingdom of God which is not a place but a state of being defined by the Church as "... the reign of God over people's hearts and lives."

Since Baptism can be received only once, the sacrament of Penance (informally known as Confession) is the principal means by which Catholics can obtain forgiveness for subsequent sin and receive God's grace and assistance not to sin again. Catholics believe Jesus gave the apostles special authority to forgive sins in God's name based on Jesus' words to his disciples in the Gospel of John 20:21–23. A penitent confesses his sins to the priest, who may then offer advice. After the priest has imposed a particular penance to be performed, the penitent then prays an act of contrition and the priest administers absolution, formally

forgiving the person of his sins. A priest is forbidden under penalty of excommunication to reveal any sin or disclosure heard under the seal of confession. Penance helps prepare Catholics before they can licitly receive the sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Holy Spirit and Confirmation

Jesus told his apostles that after his death and resurrection he would send them the "Advocate", the " Holy Spirit", who " ...will teach you everything and remind you of all that (I) told you". In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus told his disciples "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

The Nicene Creed states that the Holy Spirit is one with God the Father and God the Son. Thus the Church teaches that receiving the Holy Spirit is an act of receiving God. Through the sacrament of Confirmation, Catholics ask for and are taught by the Church to receive the Holy Spirit. Confirmation is sometimes called the "sacrament of Christian maturity" and is believed to increase and deepen the grace received at Baptism. Spiritual graces or gifts of the Holy Spirit may include the wisdom to see and follow God's plan, as well as judgment, love, courage, knowledge, reverence and rejoicing in the presence of God. The corresponding fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.

To be licitly confirmed, Catholics must be in a state of grace, in that they cannot be conscious of having committed a mortal sin. They must also have prepared spiritually for the sacrament, chosen a sponsor or godparent for spiritual support, and selected a saint to be their special patron and intercessor. Baptism in the Eastern rites, including infant baptism, is immediately followed by the reception of Confirmation and the Eucharist.

Bernini's stained glass window in St. Peter's Basilica depicts the Holy Spirit as a dove, a common motif in Christian art, referencing John the Baptist's proclamation that he saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Jesus at his baptism "like a dove".

Nature of the Church and social teaching
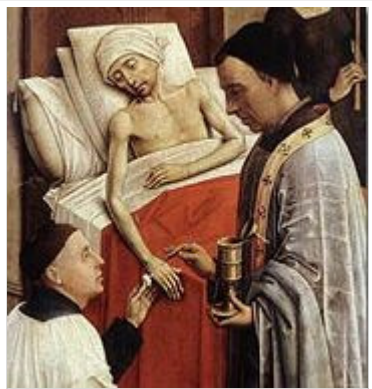
Extreme Unction (Anointing of the Sick) by Rogier Van der Weyden, a detail of his work *The Seven Sacraments* (1445)

Catholic belief holds that the Church " ...is the continuing presence of Jesus on earth." Jesus told his disciples to "Remain in me, as I remain in you ... I am the vine, you are the branches." In Catholic interpretation, the term "Church" refers to the people of God, who abide in Jesus and who, " ...nourished with the Body of Christ, become the Body of Christ." Catholic teaching maintains that the Church exists simultaneously on earth, in purgatory (Church suffering), and in heaven (Church triumphant). Thus the Virgin Mary assumed into heaven and the saints are alive and part of the living Church. This unity of the Church in heaven and on earth is the " Communion of Saints".

While the Catholic Church believes and teaches that it is the " one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church" founded by Jesus, it also holds that the Holy Spirit can work through other churches to bring people to salvation. In its apostolic constitution Lumen Gentium, the Church acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is active in diverse Christian churches and communities, and that Catholics are called to work for unity among all Christians.

The Church operates numerous social ministries throughout the world but teaches that individual Catholics are required to practice spiritual and corporal works of mercy as well. Corporal works of mercy include feeding the hungry, welcoming strangers, immigrants or refugees, clothing the naked, taking care of the sick and visiting those in prison. Spiritual works require the Catholic to share their knowledge with others, to give advice to those who need it, comfort those who suffer, have patience, forgive those who hurt them, give correction to those who need it and pray for the living and the dead. In conjunction with the work of mercy to visit the sick, the Church offers the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, performed only by a priest who will anoint with oil the head and hands of the ill person and pray a special prayer for them while laying on hands.

Church teaching on works of mercy and the new social problems of the industrial era led to the development of Catholic social teaching. Emphasizing human dignity, it criticizes elements of both capitalism and socialism and commits Catholics to the welfare of others. The seven main themes are respect for human life and the dignity of each person, the strengthening of the family unit, respect for the rights and responsibilities of each person, the care for the poor, the rights and dignity of the worker, and, the subsidiarity and solidarity of all humans as one family. Modern application of Catholic social teaching has resulted in significant Church efforts to fight what it sees as violations of immigrant, worker, and family rights. In addition, the Church is known for its staunch opposition to abortion and euthanasia. Further matters of concern have included capital punishment and environmental issues.

Final judgment and afterlife

Catholic teaching includes belief in an afterlife as described in the final statement of the Nicene Creed, "We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come." The Church teaches that each soul will be judged by Jesus immediately after death and receive a particular judgment based on the deeds of their earthly life. Chapter 25:35–46 of the Gospel of Matthew underpins the Catholic belief that a day will also come when Jesus will sit in a universal judgment of all mankind. The Church teaches that this final judgment will bring an end to human history and mark the beginning of a new and better heaven and earth ruled by God in righteousness.

There are three states of afterlife in Catholic belief. Purgatory is a temporary condition for the purification of souls who, although saved, are not free enough from sin to enter directly into heaven. It is a state requiring penance and purgation of sin through God's mercy aided by the prayers of others. Heaven is a time of glorious union with God and a life of unspeakable joy that lasts forever. Finally, those who chose to live a sinful and selfish life, did not repent, and fully intended to persist in their ways are sent to hell, an everlasting separation from God. The Church teaches that no one is condemned to hell without having freely decided to reject God and his love. He predestines no one to hell and no one can determine whether anyone else has been condemned. Catholicism teaches that through God's mercy a person can repent at any point before death and be saved "like the good thief who was crucified next to Jesus".

The Last Judgement, by Hieronymus Francken II (c. 1610)

Prayer and worship

In the Catholic Church, a distinction is made between the formal, public liturgy and other prayers or devotions. The liturgy is regulated by Church authority and consists of the Eucharist and Mass, the other sacraments, and the Liturgy of the Hours. All Catholics are expected to participate in the liturgical life of the Church but individual or communal prayer and devotions, while encouraged, are a matter of personal preference. The Church provides a set of precepts that every Catholic is expected to follow. These set a minimum standard for personal prayer and require the Catholic to attend Mass on Sundays, confess sins at least once a year, receive the Eucharist at least during Easter season, observe days of fasting and of abstinence as established by the Church, and help provide for the Church's needs.

Eucharist

The Eucharist, also known as *Holy Communion,* or *the Lord's Supper*, is celebrated at each Mass. This sacrament is considered to be the centre of Catholic worship. The Church believes that at the Last Supper, Jesus ratified a New Covenant with humanity by instituting the Eucharist and that the bread and wine brought to the altar at each Mass are changed through the power of the Holy Spirit into the true body and the true blood of Christ through transubstantiation. The Eucharist is distributed to worshippers through the eating of the consecrated unleavened bread, or bread-like wafer, or the drinking of consecrated wine from a common cup. Catholicism teaches that just as God's first covenant or solemn agreement with Moses and the Hebrew people was sealed with the blood of sacrificial animals, his new covenant with humanity was sealed with the blood of Jesus. The words of institution for this sacrament are found in the three synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, as well as in I Corinthians; "Then he took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of me.' " "Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you, for

this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.' " The New Covenant is, according to Catholic teaching, celebrated and renewed in the Eucharist.

Pope Benedict XVI celebrates Holy Mass at the canonization of Frei Galvão in São Paulo, Brazil on May 11, 2007.

The celebration of the Eucharist in the Eastern Catholic Churches is termed Divine Liturgy. Variations in this liturgy between the different Eastern Churches reflect different cultural traditions. The ordinary form of the Eucharist in the Latin rite, the Mass of Paul VI, is most often celebrated in the vernacular. It is separated into two parts. The first, called Liturgy of the Word, consists of readings from the Old and New Testaments, a Gospel passage and the priest's homily or explanation of one of those passages. The second part, called Liturgy of the Eucharist is the celebration of the Eucharist. According to professor Alan Schreck, in its main elements and prayers, the Catholic Mass celebrated today "bears striking resemblance" to the form of the Mass described in the Didache and First Apology of Justin Martyr in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries.

An alternate or extraordinary form of Mass, celebrated primarily in Latin, is that used prior to the Second Vatican Council. Called the Tridentine Mass, it derives from the missal promulgated by Pope Pius V after the Council of Trent. It was intended to reaffirm, in opposition to Protestant belief, that the Mass is the same sacrifice of Jesus' death as the one he suffered on Calvary. Although this form was superseded by the vernacular as the primary form after the Second Vatican Council, it was not forbidden; it was offered by an indult since Pope John Paul II's 1988 motu proprio, *Ecclesia Dei* and can now be said by any Roman rite priest according to Pope Benedict XVI's 2007 motu proprio, *Summorum Pontificum*.

Because the Church teaches that Christ is present in the Eucharist, there are strict rules about its celebration and reception. The ingredients of the bread and wine used in the Mass are specified and Catholics must abstain from eating for one hour before receiving Communion. Those who are conscious of being in a state of mortal sin are forbidden from this sacrament unless they have received absolution through the sacrament of Penance. According to Church belief, receiving the Eucharist forgives venial sins. Because the Church respects their celebration of the Mass as a true sacrament, intercommunion with the Eastern Orthodox in "suitable circumstances and with Church authority" is both possible and encouraged. Although the same is not true for Protestant churches, in circumstances of grave necessity, Catholic ministers may give the sacraments of Eucharist, Penance and Anointing of the Sick to Protestants if they freely ask for them, truly believe what the Catholic Church teaches regarding the sacraments, and have the proper disposition to receive them. Catholics may not receive communion in Protestant churches because of their different beliefs and practices regarding Holy Orders and the Eucharist.

Liturgy of the Hours and the liturgical year

In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus instructs his disciples to "pray always". The Liturgy of the Hours, or Divine Office, is the Church's effort to respond to this request. It is considered to be an extension of the celebration of the Mass and is the official daily liturgical prayer of the Church. It makes particular use of the Psalms as well as readings from the New and Old Testament, and various prayers. It is an adaptation of the ancient Jewish practice of praying the Psalms at certain hours of the day or night. Catholics who pray the Liturgy of the Hours use a set of books issued by the Church that has been called a breviary. By canon law, priests and deacons are required to pray the Liturgy of the Hours each day. Religious orders often make praying the Liturgy of the Hours a part of their rule of life; the Second Vatican Council encouraged the Christian laity to take up the practice.

The liturgical year is the annual calendar of the Catholic Church. The Church sets aside certain days and seasons of each year to recall and celebrate various events in the life of Christ. The Byzantine liturgical year, like the former imperial calendar, starts on 1 September, while in the Western Church the liturgical year begins with Advent, the time of preparation for both the celebration of Jesus' birth, and his expected second coming at the end of time. Christmastide follows, beginning on the night of 24 December (Christmas Eve), and ending with the feast of the baptism of Jesus. Lent is the period of purification and penance that in the Latin church begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Thursday. (In the Byzantine Catholic churches, "Great Lent" begins on Clean Monday and, counting the Sundays as part of the forty days of Lent, ends on Lazarus Saturday, being followed immediately by Great and Holy Week.) The Holy Thursday evening Mass of the Lord's Supper marks the beginning of the Easter Triduum which includes Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. These days recall Jesus' last supper with his disciples, death on the cross, burial and resurrection. The seven-week liturgical season of Easter immediately follows the Triduum climaxing at Pentecost. This recalls the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples after the Ascension of Jesus. The rest of the liturgical year is known as Ordinary Time.

Devotional life, prayer, Mary and the saints

In addition to the Mass, the Catholic Church considers prayer to be one of the most important elements of Christian life. The Church considers personal prayer a Christian duty, one of the spiritual works of mercy and one of the principal ways its members nourish a relationship with God. The *Catechism* identifies three types of prayer: vocal prayer (sung or spoken), meditation and contemplative prayer. Quoting from the early church father John Chrysostom regarding vocal prayer, the *Catechism* states, "Whether or not our prayer is heard depends not on the number of words, but on the fervor of our souls." Meditation is prayer in which the "mind seeks to understand the why and how of Christian life, in order to adhere and respond to what the Lord is asking." Contemplative prayer is being with God, taking time to be close to and alone with him. Three of the most common devotional prayers of the Catholic Church are The Lord's Prayer, the Rosary and Stations of the Cross. These prayers are most often vocal, yet always meditative and contemplative. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a common form of contemplative prayer, whereas Benediction is a common vocal method of prayer. *Lectio divina*, which means "sacred reading", is a form of meditative prayer. The Church encourages patterns of prayer intended to develop into habitual prayer. This includes such daily prayers as grace at meals, the Rosary, or the Liturgy of the Hours, as well as the weekly rhythm of Sunday Eucharist and the observation of the year-long liturgical cycle.

Prayers and devotions to the Virgin Mary and the saints are a common part of Catholic life but are distinct from the worship of God. Explaining the intercession of saints, the *Catechism* states that the saints "... do not cease to intercede with the Father for us ... so by their fraternal concern is our weakness greatly helped." The Church holds Mary, as ever Virgin and Mother of God". in special regard. She is believed to have been conceived without original sin, and was assumed into heaven. These dogmas, focus of Roman Catholic Mariology, are considered infallible. She is honored with many titles such as Queen of Heaven. Pope Paul VI called her Mother of the Church, because by giving birth to Christ, she is considered to be the spiritual mother to each member of the Body of Christ. Because of her influential role in the life of Jesus, prayers and devotions, such as the Rosary, the Hail Mary, the Salve Regina and the Memorare are old Catholic practices. Pilgrimages to Marian shrines such as Lourdes and Fátima are popular devotions. The Church celebrates several liturgical Marian feasts throughout the Church Year.

Mary, Joseph, and the child Jesus during the flight into Egypt are depicted in a panel from Albrecht Dürer's *Seven Sorrows of the Virgin* (c. 1494–97).

Church organization and community

Although the Church considers Jesus to be its ultimate spiritual head, as an earthly organization its spiritual head and leader is the pope. The pope governs from Vatican City in Rome, a sovereign state of which he is also the civil head of state. Each pope is elected for life by the College of Cardinals, a body composed of bishops and priests who have been granted the status of Cardinal by previous popes. The cardinals, who also serve as papal advisors, may select any male member of the Church to reign as pope, but if not already ordained as a bishop, such ordination must occur before the candidate can take papal office. The pope is assisted in the administration of the Church by the Roman Curia, or civil service. The Church community is governed according to formal regulations set out in the Code of Canon Law. The official language of the Church is Latin, however Italian is the working language of the Vatican administration.

Worldwide, the Catholic Church comprises a Western or Latin and 22 Eastern Catholic autonomous particular churches. The Latin Church divides into jurisdictional areas known as dioceses, or eparchies in the Eastern Church. Each is headed by a bishop, patriarch or eparch, appointed by the pope. By 2007, including both dioceses and eparchies, there were 2,782 sees. Each diocese is divided into individual communities called parishes, which are staffed by one or more priests. The community is made up of ordained members and the laity. Members of religious orders such as nuns, friars and monks are considered lay members unless individually ordained as priests.

Ordained members and Holy Orders

Lay men become ordained through the sacrament of Holy Orders, and form a three-part hierarchy of bishops, priests and deacons. As a body the College of Bishops are considered to be the successors of the apostles. Along with the pope, the College includes all the cardinals, patriarchs, primates, archbishops and metropolitans of the Church. Only bishops are able to perform the sacrament of Holy Orders, and Confirmation is ordinarily reserved to them as well (though priests may do it under special circumstances). While bishops are responsible for teaching, governing and sanctifying the faithful of their diocese, priests and deacons have these same responsibilities at a more local level, the parish, subordinate to the ministry of the bishop. Priests, bishops and deacons preach, teach, baptize, witness marriages and conduct wake and funeral services, but only priests and bishops may celebrate the Eucharist or administer the sacraments of Penance and Anointing of the Sick.

Although married men may become deacons, only celibate men are ordained as priests in the Latin Rite. Clergy who have converted from other denominations are sometimes excepted from this rule. The Eastern Catholic Churches ordain both celibate and married men. All rites of the Catholic Church maintain the ancient tradition that, after ordination, marriage is not allowed. Men with transitory homosexual leanings may be ordained deacons following three years of prayer and chastity, but homosexual men who are sexually active, or those who have deeply rooted homosexual tendencies cannot be knowingly ordained.

All programs for the formation of men to the Catholic priesthood are governed by Canon Law. They are designed by national bishops' conferences such as the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and vary slightly from country to country. The conferences consult Vatican documents such as Pastores Dabo Vobis, Novo Millennio Ineunte, Optatam Totius and others to create these programs. In some countries, priests are required to have a college degree plus another four years of full time theological study in a seminary. In other countries a degree is not strictly required, but seminary education is longer. Candidates for the priesthood are also evaluated in terms of human, spiritual and pastoral formation. The sacrament of Holy Orders is always conferred by a bishop through the laying-on of hands, following which the newly ordained priest is formally clothed in his priestly vestments.

A priestly ordination at the abbey of Fontgombault in France

Because the Twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus were all male, only men may be ordained in the Catholic Church. While this position on an all male priesthood has been criticized as evidence of a discriminatory attitude toward women, the Church believes that Jesus called women to different yet equally important vocations in Church ministry. Pope John Paul II, in his apostolic letter Christifideles Laici, states that women have specific vocations reserved only for the female sex, and are equally called to be disciples of Jesus. This belief in different and complementary roles between men and women is exemplified in Pope Paul VI's statement "If the witness of the Apostles founds the Church, the witness of women contributes greatly towards nourishing the faith of Christian communities".

Lay members, Marriage

The laity consists of those Catholics who are not ordained clergy. Saint Paul compared the diversity of roles in the Church to the different parts of a body—all being important to enable the body to function. The Church therefore considers that lay members are equally called to live according to Christian principles, to work to spread the message of Jesus, and to effect change in the world for the good of others. The Church calls these actions participation in Christ's priestly, prophetic and royal offices. Marriage, the single life and the consecrated life are lay vocations. The sacrament of Holy Matrimony in the Latin rite is the one sacrament not conferred by a priest or bishop. The couple desiring marriage act as the ministers of the sacrament while the priest or deacon serves as witness. In Eastern rites, the priest or bishop administers the sacrament after the spouses grant mutual consent. Church law makes no provision for divorce, however annulment may be granted in strictly defined circumstances. Since the Church condemns all forms of artificial birth control, married persons are expected to be open to new life in their sexual relations. Natural family planning is approved.

Lay ecclesial movements consist of lay Catholics organized for purposes of teaching the faith, cultural work, mutual support or missionary work. Such groups include: Communion and Liberation, Neocatechumenal Way, Regnum Christi, Opus Dei, Life Teen and many others. Some non-ordained Catholics practice

formal, public ministries within the Church. These are called lay ecclesial ministers, a broad category which may include pastoral life coordinators, pastoral assistants, youth ministers and campus ministers.

Religious orders

Both the ordained and the laity may enter the religious or consecrated life—either as monks or nuns if cloistered, or friars and sisters if not. A candidate takes vows confirming their desire to follow the three evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty and obedience.

The majority of those wishing to enter the consecrated life join one of the religious institutes which are also referred to as monastic or religious orders. They follow a common rule such as the Rule of St Benedict and agree to live under the leadership of a superior. They usually live together in groups of various sizes as a community although occasionally an individual is given permission to live as a hermit, or to reside elsewhere, for example as a serving priest or chaplain. Examples of religious institutes include the Sisters of Charity, Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, Cistercians, Marist Brothers, Paulist Fathers and the Society of Jesus, but there are many others. Tertiaries are laypersons who live according to the third rule of orders such as the Franciscans or Carmelites, either within a religious community or outside. Although all tertiaries make a public profession, participate in the good works of their order and can wear the habit, they are not bound by public vows unless they live in a religious community. The Church recognizes several other forms of consecrated life, including secular institutes, societies of apostolic life and consecrated widows and widowers. It also makes provision for the approval of new forms.

Teresa of Ávila, shown in a 1615 painting by Peter Paul Rubens, was a Carmelite nun honored as a Doctor of the Church.

Membership

According to canon law, membership of the Catholic Church is attained through Baptism. For those baptized as children, First Communion is a particular rite of passage, when, following instruction, they are allowed to receive the sacrament of the Eucharist for the first time. Christians baptized outside of the Catholic Church or those never baptized may be received by participating in a formation program such as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults. In all rites, after going through formation and making a profession of faith, candidates receive the sacraments of initiation at the Easter vigil on Holy Saturday.

A person can excommunicate themselves or be excommunicated by committing particularly grave sins. Examples include violating the seal of confession (committed when a priest discloses the sins heard in the sacrament of Penance), persisting in heresy, creating schism, becoming an apostate or having an abortion. Throwing away or retaining for a sacrilegious purpose consecrated sacramental bread or wine received during the Eucharist is considered an excommunicable offense. Excommunication is the most severe ecclesiastical penalty because it prevents a person from validly receiving any Church sacrament. It can only be forgiven by the pope, the bishop of the diocese where the person resides, or priests authorized by him.

Catholic institutions, personnel and demographics

In 2000, worldwide Catholic institutions totalled 408,637 parishes and missions, 125,016 primary and secondary schools, 1,046 universities, 5,853 hospitals, 8,695 orphanages, 13,933 homes for the elderly and handicapped and 74,936 dispensaries, leprosaries, nurseries and other institutions. Many of these institutions are at least partially staffed by religious sisters who comprise over two thirds of all Church personnel. As of 2000, there were 769,142 religious sisters and 194,454 religious priests and brothers in Africa, the America's, Asia, Europe and Oceania. In addition, there were 3,475 bishops, 914 archbishops, 183 cardinals, 405,178 diocesan and religious priests, 27,824 permanent deacons and 110,583 diocesan and religious seminarians (men studying for the priesthood).

Church membership in 2007 exceeded 1.131 billion people; a substantial increase over the 1970 figure of 654 million. It is the largest Christian church encompassing over half of all Christians, one sixth of the world's population and is the largest organized body of any world religion, as such, it is known for its ability to use its transnational ties and organizational strength to bring significant resources to needy situations. Although the number of practicing Catholics worldwide is not reliably known, membership is growing particularly in Africa and Asia.

St. Theresa School in Coral Gables, FL is one of over 125,000 worldwide Catholic schools.

Some parts of Europe and the Americas have experienced a priest shortage in recent years as the number of priests has not increased in proportion to the number of Catholics.

The Latin American Church, known for its large parishes where the parishioner to priest ratio is the highest in the world, considers this to be a contributing factor in the rise of pentecostal and evangelical Christian denominations in the region. Secularism has seen a steady rise in Europe yet the Catholic presence there remains strong as evidenced by a large presence of Catholic institutions and personnel.

With an unusually high number of adult baptisms, the Church is growing faster in Africa than anywhere else even though the continent is a centre of strife between Islam and Christianity and suffers the world's highest rate of AIDS.

The Church in Asia is a significant minority among other religions yet its vibrance is evidenced by the large proportion of women religious, priests and parishes to total Catholic population.

Oceania is overwhelmingly Christian with Catholic the majority denomination. There, the Church faces challenges in reaching indigenous populations where over 715 different languages are spoken. Of the 1.5 billion worldwide Catholics, 12% reside in Africa, 50% in the American continent, 10% are in Asia, 27% in Europe and 1% live in Oceania.

Cultural influence

The cultural influence of the Catholic Church has been vast, particularly upon western society. Many historians credit the Catholic Church for the brilliance and magnificence of Western art, citing the Church's consistent opposition to Byzantine iconoclasm, the development of Romanesque, Gothic and Renaissance art and the patronage of the Church for the great works of artists such as Giotto, Michelangelo, Raphael, Bernini and Leonardo da Vinci. Catholic monks developed

the first forms of musical notation, and consequently an enormous body of religious music has been composed for the Catholic Church through the ages. This led directly to the emergence and development of the European tradition of classical music, and all its derivatives.

The church has been responsible for the development of several major orders of architecture. Early medieval Romanesque architecture combined massive walls, rounded arches and ceilings of masonry. To compensate for the absence of large windows, interiors were brightly painted with scenes from the Bible and the lives of the saints. Gothic architecture with its large windows and high, pointed arches, improved lighting and geometric harmony in a manner that was intended to direct the worshiper's mind to God who "orders all things". The Baroque style in art, music and architecture developed as a means of religious expression that was stirring and emotional, intended to stimulate religious fervor.

Historians of science, including non-Catholics such as J.L. Heilbron, A.C. Crombie, David Lindberg, and Thomas Goldstein, have argued that the Church had a significant, positive influence on the development of civilization. They hold that, not only did monks save and cultivate the remnants of ancient civilization during the barbarian invasions, but that the Church promoted learning and science through its sponsorship of universities in the 11th and 12th centuries. St. Thomas Aquinas, the Church's "model theologian," not only argued that reason is in harmony with faith, he recognized that reason can contribute to understanding revelation, and so encouraged intellectual development. Catholic scientists such as Grosseteste,Copernicus and Mendel were responsible for significant advances in scientific knowledge.
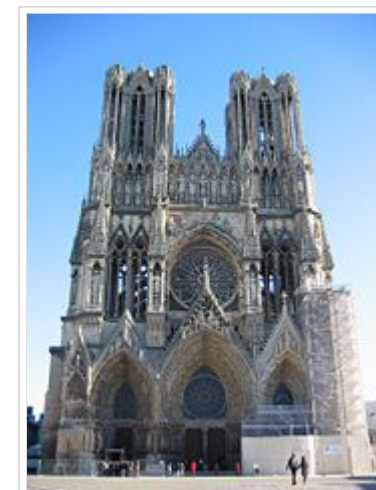
The gothic cathedral of
Notre-Dame de Reims, France

History

Roman Empire

The Catholic Church believes it came fully into being on the day of Pentecost when, according to scriptural accounts, the apostles emerged from hiding following the death of Jesus to preach and spread his message. According to church tradition, the apostles traveled to northern Africa, Asia Minor, Arabia, Greece, and Rome to found the first Christian communities. Historians believe that over 40 such communities were established by the year 100. From the first century, the Church of Rome was recognized as a doctrinal authority because it was believed that the Apostles Peter and Paul had led the Church there.
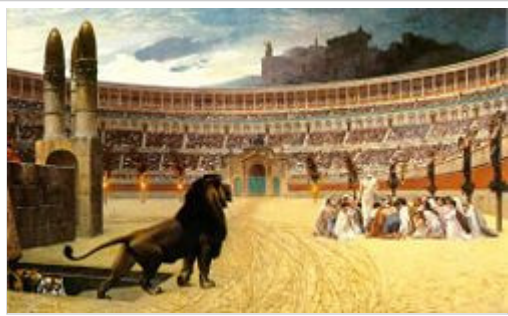
Early Christians were martyred as entertainment in the Colosseum in Rome, a short distance from the Vatican Hill. Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1883.

The apostles had already convened the first Church council, the Council of Jerusalem, in or around the year 50 to reconcile differences concerning the Gentile mission. Although competing forms of Christianity emerged early and persisted into the fifth century, the Roman Church retained the practice of meeting in ecumenical councils to ensure that any internal doctrinal differences were quickly resolved. In the first few centuries of its existence, the Church formed its teachings and traditions into a systematic whole under the influence of theological apologists such as Pope Clement I, Ignatius of Antioch, Justin Martyr and Augustine of Hippo.

Because early Christians refused to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods or to defer to Roman rulers as gods, they were frequently subject to persecution. Beginning under Nero in the first century, peresecution, at first intermittent, became more extensive by the mid-third century, culminating in the great persecution of Diocletian and Galerius, which was seen as a final attempt to wipe out Christianity. In spite of these persecutions Christianity continued to spread. The Edict of Milan of the Emperor Constantine I finally legalized Christianity in 313.

In 325, the First Council of Nicaea was convened in response to the Arian challenge concerning the trinitarian nature of God. The council formulated the Nicene Creed as a basic statement of Christian belief. Emperor Constantine I commissioned the first Basilica of St. Peter and several other sites of lasting importance to Christianity. The observation of Sunday as the official day of worship, the use of the altar as the focal point of each church, the sign of the cross, and the liturgical calendar had been established by this time. By 380, Christianity had become the official religion of the Empire. In subsequent decades a series of ecumenical christological councils codified critical elements of the Church's theology. The Council of Rome in 382 set the Biblical canon, listing the accepted books of the *Old* and *New Testament*, and in 391 the Vulgate Latin translation of the Bible was made. The Councils of Ephesus in 431, and Chalcedon two decades later, clarified the nature of Jesus' incarnation. These definitions sparked Monophysite disagreements which led to the first of the Oriental Orthodox Churches breaking away from the Catholic Church.

Early Middle Ages

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476, the Catholic faith competed with Arian Christianity for the conversion of the barbarian tribes. The 496 conversion of Clovis I, pagan king of the Franks, marked the beginning of a steady rise of the Catholic faith in the West.

Saint Benedict, father of Western monasticism and author of *Rule of St Benedict*. Detail from fresco by Fra Angelico, c. 1437–46.

In 530, Saint Benedict wrote his *monastic Rule*, which became a blueprint for the organization of monasteries throughout Europe. The new monasteries preserved classical craft and artistic skills while maintaining intellectual culture within their schools, scriptoria and libraries. As well as providing a focus for spiritual life, they functioned as agricultural, economic and production centers, particularly in remote regions, becoming major conduits of civilization. From 590 Pope Gregory the Great dramatically reformed church practice and administration, launching renewed missionary efforts. As the Visigoths and Lombards moved from Arianism toward Catholicism, missionaries such as Augustine of Canterbury, Saint Boniface, Willibrord and Ansgar took Catholic Christianity to the Germanic, Irish and Slavic peoples of northern Europe. Later missions reached the Vikings and other Scandinavians.

In the early 700s, iconoclasm became a major source of conflict between the Eastern and Western churches. Under the direction of the Byzantine emperors, iconoclasts ordered the destruction of all religious images. Iconodules supported by the pope and the Western Church strongly opposed this. The dispute was resolved in 787 when the Second Council of Nicaea ruled in favour of icons. In 800, continuing disagreements with the east culminated when the pope crowned Charlemagne Holy Roman Emperor in the west. Charlemagne attempted to unify Western Europe through the common bond of Christianity, creating an improved system of education and establishing unified laws. However imperial interest created a problem for the church as succeeding emperors sought to impose increasingly tight control over the popes. Disagreements between the Eastern and Western churches arose again in 858, when Patriarch Ignatius of Constantinople, favored by the pope, was deposed for the more extreme Photios. The pope declared the election of Photios invalid and excommunicated him. The consequent long-running dispute added to the growing alienation between the churches.

After a particularly acrimonious dispute over whether Constantinople or Rome held jurisdiction over the church in Sicily, the two Churches mutually excommunicated each other in 1054, resulting in the East-West Schism. The Western (Latin) branch of Christianity has since become known as the Catholic Church, while the Eastern (Greek) branch became known as the Eastern Orthodox Church. The Second Council of Lyon (1274) and the Council of Florence (1439) both failed to heal the schism. Some Eastern churches have subsequently reunited with the Catholic Church. Officially, the two churches remain in schism, although excommunications were mutually lifted in 1965.

High Middle Ages

The Cluniac reform of monasteries that had begun in 910 sparked a great monastic renewal. Monasteries introduced new crops, developed technologies such as metallurgy, and fostered the creation and preservation of literature. They could also function as credit establishments promoting economic growth. Monasteries, convents and cathedrals still operated virtually all schools and libraries. After 1100, some cathedral schools split into lower, grammar, schools and higher schools for advanced learning. First in Bologna, then at Paris and Oxford, some of these higher schools developed into universities, the direct ancestors of the modern Western institutions. Notable theologians such as Thomas Aquinas worked to explain the connection between human experience and faith. His *Summa Theologica* was a key intellectual achievement in its synthesis of Aristotelian thought and Christianity.

Pope Urban II at the Council of Clermont (1095), where he preached the First Crusade; later manuscript illumination of c. 1490

In 1095, Byzantine emperor Alexius I appealed to Pope Urban II for help in warding off a Turkish invasion. Urban launched a military campaign known as the First Crusade, believing that it might help to bring about reconciliation with Eastern Christianity. Fueled by reports of Muslim atrocities against Christians, the series of military campaigns that followed were intended to return the Holy Land to Christian control. The goal was not permanently realized, and episodes of brutality committed by the armies of both sides left a legacy of mutual distrust between Muslims and Western and Eastern Christians. The sack of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade left Eastern Christians embittered, despite the fact that Pope Innocent III had expressly forbidden any such attack. In 2001, Pope John Paul II apologized to the Orthodox Christians for the sins of Catholics including the sacking of Constantinople in 1204.

Cistercian monk Bernard of Clairvaux exerted great influence over the eight new monastic orders founded in the 12th century, including the Military Knights of the Crusades. His influence led Pope Alexander III to begin reforms that would lead to the establishment of canon law. In the following century, new mendicant orders were founded by Francis of Assisi and Dominic de Guzmán which brought consecrated religious life into urban settings.

In the 12th century, members of the Dominican order attempted to convert the Cathars, a powerful heretical movement centered in southern France. Cathars held a dualistic belief in extreme asceticism, taught that all matter was evil, accepted suicide and denied the value of Church sacraments. After a papal legate was murdered by them in 1208, Pope Innocent III declared the Albigensian Crusade. Concern that matters had grown so out of hand prompted Innocent III to informally institute the first papal inquisition to to bring people considered heretics to trial. Formalized under Gregory IX, this Medieval inquisition executed an average of three people per year for heresy at its height. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella formed an inquisition in 1480, originally to deal with distrusted ex-Jewish and ex-Muslim converts. Over a 350-year period, this Spanish Inquisition executed between 3,000 and 4,000 people, representing around two percent of those accused. In 1482, Pope Sixtus IV condemned its excesses but Ferdinand ignored his protests. Despite their severities many historians consider that for centuries popular literature and Protestant propaganda have exaggerated the horrors of these inquisitions. Over all, one percent of those tried by the inquisitions received death penalties, leading many scholars to consider them rather lenient when compared to the secular courts of the period.

A growing sense of church-state conflicts marked the 14th century. Clement V in 1309 became the first of seven popes to reside under French influence in the fortified city of Avignon. What became known as the Avignon Papacy ended in 1378 when, at the urging of Catherine of Siena and others, the papacy finally returned to Rome. With the death of Pope Gregory XI later that year, the papal election was strongly disputed. Supporters of Italian and French-backed candidates were unable to come to agreement, resulting in the Western schism in which for 38 years, separate claimants to the papal throne sat in Rome and Avignon. Efforts at resolution further complicated the issue when a third, compromise, pope was elected in 1409. The matter was finally resolved in 1417 at the Council of Constance where the cardinals called upon all three claimants to the papal throne to resign, and held a new election naming Martin V pope.

Late Medieval and Renaissance

In the late 15th and early 16th centuries, European explorers and missionaries spread Catholicism to the Americas, Asia, Africa and Oceania. Pope Alexander VI, had awarded colonial rights over most of the newly discovered lands to Spain and Portugal. Under the *patronato* system, however, state authorities, not the

Vatican, controlled all clerical appointments. In December 1511, Antonio de Montesinos, a Dominican friar, openly rebuked the Spanish rulers of Hispaniola for their mistreatment of the American natives, telling them "... you are in mortal sin ... for the cruelty and tyranny you use in dealing with these innocent people". King Ferdinand enacted the *Laws of Burgos* and *Valladolid* in response. However enforcement was lax, and while some blame the Church for not doing enough to liberate the Indians, others point to the Church as the only voice raised on behalf of indigenous peoples. The issue resulted in a crisis of conscience in 16th-century Spain. The reaction of Catholic theologians, such as Bartolome de Las Casas and Francisco de Vitoria, led to debate on the nature of human rights and the birth of modern international law.

In 1521 Spanish explorer Ferdinand Magellan made the first Catholic converts in the Philippines. The following year, the first Franciscan missionaries arrived in Mexico, establishing schools, model farms and hospitals. When some Europeans questioned whether the Indians were truly human and worthy of baptism, Pope Paul III in the 1537 bull Sublimis Deus confirmed that "the souls of the Indians were as immortal as those of Europeans". Over the next 150 years, missions expanded into southwestern North America. Native people were often legally defined as children, and priests took on a paternalistic role, sometimes enforced with corporal punishment. Elsewhere, Portuguese missionaries under the Spanish Jesuit Francis Xavier evangelized in India and Japan. By the end of the 16th century tens of thousands of Japanese followed Roman Catholicism. Church growth came to a halt in 1597 under the Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu who, in an effort to isolate the country from foreign influences, launched a severe persecution of Christians. Despite enforced isolation, a minority Christian population survived into the 19th century.

Whitby Abbey England, one of hundreds of European monasteries destroyed during the Reformation.

In Europe, the Renaissance marked a period of renewed interest in ancient and classical learning. It also brought a re-examination of accepted beliefs. Cathedrals and churches had long served as picture books and art galleries for millions of the uneducated. The stained glass windows, frescoes, statues and paintings retold the stories of the saints and of biblical characters. The Church sponsored great Renaissance artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci. In 1509, however, the most famous scholar of the age, Erasmus, wrote *The Praise of Folly,* a work which captured a widely held unease about corruption in the Church. In this period, powerful and worldly men like Roderigo Borgia, (Pope Alexander VI) had been able to win election to the papacy. Simony, nepotism, clerical wealth and hypocrisy all contributed to a general feeling among educated people that reform of some sort was necessary. In 1517, Martin Luther included his *Ninety-Five Theses* in a letter to several bishops. His theses protested key points of Catholic doctrine as well as the sale of indulgences. Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin, and others further criticized Catholic teachings. These challenges developed into the Protestant Reformation. In Germany, the reformation led to a nine-year war between the Protestant Schmalkaldic League and the Catholic Emperor Charles V. In 1618 a far graver conflict, the Thirty Years' War, followed. In France, a series of conflicts termed the French Wars of Religion were fought from 1562 to 1598 between the Huguenots and the forces of the French Catholic League. King Henry IV's 1598 Edict of Nantes, which granted civil and religious toleration to Protestants was hesitantly accepted by Pope Clement VIII.

The English Reformation was ostensibly based on Henry VIII's desire for annulment of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. The Acts of Supremacy made the English monarch head of the new Church of England. Beginning in 1536, some 825 monasteries throughout England, Wales and Ireland were dissolved and Catholic churches were confiscated. Henry VIII executed those like Thomas More who opposed him, but reaffirmed Catholic doctrines such as transubstantiation and the celibacy of the clergy in the Six

Articles of 1539. This affirmation did not extend to papal authority or the dissolution of monasteries, and when he died in 1547 all monasteries, convents and shrines were gone. Mary I of England reunited the Church of England with Rome and, against much advice, persecuted Protestants. The following monarch, Elizabeth I re-imposed the Act of Supremacy, preventing Catholics from becoming members of professions, holding public office, voting or educating their children. Executions of Catholics under Elizabeth I eventually surpassed those of the Marian persecutions and persisted under subsequent English monarchs. Penal laws were also enacted in Ireland.

The Catholic Church responded to doctrinal challenges and abuses highlighted by the Reformation at the Council of Trent (1545–1563), which became the driving-force of the Counter-Reformation. Doctrinally, it reaffirmed central Catholic doctrines such as transubstantiation, and the requirement for love and hope as well as faith to attain salvation. It also made important structural reforms, most importantly by improving the education of the clergy and laity, and consolidating the central jurisdiction of the Roman Curia. New religious orders were founded, including the Theatines, Barnabites and Jesuits some of which became the great missionary orders of later years. The writings of figures such as Teresa of Avila, Francis de Sales and Philip Neri spawned new schools of spirituality within the Church. To popularize Counter-Reformation teachings, the Church encouraged the Baroque style in art, music and architecture. Baroque religious expression was deliberately stirring and emotional, intended to stimulate religious fervor.

Melk Abbey—adjoining Wachau Valley, Lower Austria—exemplifies the Baroque style.

In 1582 Pope Gregory XII introduced the Gregorian Calendar to replace the increasingly inaccurate Julian Calendar, however the reform was resisted for centuries in many protestant countries.

Enlightenment

Toward the latter part of the 17th century, Pope Innocent XI attempted to reform abuses by the Church, including simony, nepotism and the lavish papal expenditures that had caused him to inherit a papal debt of 50,000,000 scudi. He promoted missionary activity across the world, tried to unite Europe against Turkish invasion, and condemned religious persecution of all kinds. In 1685 King Louis XIV of France issued the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, ending a century-long experiment in religious toleration. However, the religious conflicts of the Reformation era had provoked a backlash against Christianity. Secular powers gained control of virtually all major Church appointments as well as many of the Church's properties. In France, Louis XIV endorsed Gallicanism as a means to weaken and control the church. Jansenism and the attacks of thinkers such as Denis Diderot challenged fundamental doctrines of the Church. Matters grew still worse with the violent anti-clericalism of the French Revolution. When large numbers of priests refused to take an oath of obedience to the National Assembly, the Church was outlawed, to be replaced by a new religion of the worship of "Reason". All monasteries were shut down or destroyed, 30,000 priests were exiled and hundreds more were killed.

Pope Pius VI joined the First Coalition against the revolutionaries, but was imprisoned by French troops when Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Italy, dying in 1799 after six weeks of captivity. To win popular support for his rule, however, Napoleon re-established the Catholic Church in France through the Concordat of 1801. All over Europe, the end of the Napoleonic wars brought Catholic revival, renewed enthusiasm, and new respect for the papacy following the depredations of the previous era.

In the Americas, Franciscan priest Junípero Serra founded a series of new missions in cooperation with the Spanish government and military. These missions brought grain, cattle and a new way of living to the Indian tribes of California. San Francisco was founded in 1776 and Los Angeles in 1781. However, in bringing Western civilization to the area, the missions have been held responsible for the loss of nearly a third of the native population, primarily through disease.

In South America, Jesuits missionaries protected native peoples from enslavement by establishing semi-independent settlements called reductions. Pope Gregory XVI, challenging Spanish and Portuguese sovereignty, appointed his own candidates as bishops in the colonies, condemned slavery and the slave trade in 1839 (papal bull In Supremo Apostolatus), and approved the ordination of native clergy in spite of government racism.

In China, however, the Chinese Rites controversy led the Kangxi Emperor to outlaw Christian missions in 1721. This controversy added fuel to growing criticism of the Jesuits who were seen to symbolize the independent power of the Church, and in 1773, European rulers united to force Pope Clement XIV to dissolve the order. The Jesuits were eventually restored in the 1814 papal bull Sollicitudo omnium ecclesiarum.

Church from the Indian settlement of San Ignacio Miní

Industrial age

In Latin America, anti-clerical regimes came to power from the 1830s onward. One such regime emerged in Mexico in 1860. Church properties were confiscated and basic civil and political rights were denied to religious orders and the clergy. Harsh enforcement of these measures in later decades led to an uprising known as the Cristero War. Between 1926 and 1934, over 3,000 priests were exiled or assassinated. Despite persecution, the Church in Mexico continued to grow, and a 2000 census reported that 88 percent of Mexicans identify as Catholic. In 1954, under General Juan Perón, Argentina saw destruction of churches, denunciations of clergy and confiscation of Catholic schools.

In 1870, the First Vatican Council affirmed the doctrine of papal infallibility when exercised in specifically defined pronouncements. Controversy over this and other issues resulted in a small breakaway movement called the Old Catholic Church.

The Industrial Revolution brought growing concern about the deteriorating working and living conditions of urban workers. In 1891, influenced by the German Catholic industrialist Lucien Harmel, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. This set out Catholic social teaching in terms that rejected socialism but advocated the regulation of working conditions, the establishment of a living wage and the right of workers to form trade unions.

By the close of the 19th century European powers had gained control of most of the African continent, introducing massive change. Catholic missionaries followed colonial governments into Africa, building schools, monasteries and churches.

In the 1937 encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge*, drafted by the future Pope Pius XII, Pope Pius XI warned Catholics that antisemitism is incompatible with Christianity. After World War II historians such as David Kertzer accused the Church of encouraging centuries of anti–semitism, and Pope Pius XII of not doing enough to stop Nazi atrocities. Prominent members of the Jewish community, including Golda Meir, Albert Einstein, Moshe Sharett and Rabbi Isaac Herzog

contradicted the criticisms and spoke highly of Pius' efforts to protect Jews, while others such as rabbi David G. Dalin noted that "hundreds of thousands" of Jews were saved by the Church. Even so, Pope John Paul II acknowledged past sins of the Church against Jews, and in 2000 formally apologized to the Jewish people by inserting a prayer at Jerusalem's Western Wall."

In the aftermath of World War II communist governments in Eastern Europe severely restricted religious freedoms. The Church's resistance and the leadership of Pope John Paul II have been credited with hastening the downfall of communist governments across Europe in 1991, even though some priests collaborated with the regime.

Vatican II

The Catholic Church engaged in a comprehensive process of reform following the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). Intended as a continuation of Vatican I, under Pope John XXIII the council developed into an engine of modernisation. As well as making pronouncements on religious freedom, the nature of the church and the mission of the laity and, the council approved a revision of formal worship, permitting the Latin liturgical rites to use vernacular languages as well as Latin during mass and other sacraments. Christian unity became a greater priority. In addition to finding more common ground with Protestant churches, the Catholic Church has discussed the possibility of unity with the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Changes to old rites and ceremonies following Vatican II stunned many Catholics and produced a variety of responses. Some stopped going to church, while others tried to preserve the old liturgy with the help of sympathetic priests. The latter formed the basis of today's Traditionalist Catholic groups, which believe that the reforms of Vatican II have gone too far in departing from traditional church norms. According to Professor Thomas Bokenkotter, however, most catholics "accepted the changes more or less gracefully but with little enthusiasm and have learned to take in stride the continuing series of changes that have modified not only the Mass but the other sacraments as well." Liberal Catholics form another dissenting group. They typically take a less literal view of the Bible and of divine revelation, and sometimes disagree with official Church views on social and political issues. The most famous liberal theologian of recent times has been Hans Küng, whose unorthodox views of the incarnation, and his denials of infallibility led to Church withdrawal of his authorization to teach as a Catholic in 1979.

In the 1960s, growing social awareness and politicization in the Latin American Church gave birth to liberation theology. Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutiérrez, became one of the movement's most influential scholars. The 1979 bishops' conference in Mexico officially declared the Latin American Church's "preferential option for the poor". Salvadoran Archbishop Óscar Romero became the region's most famous contemporary martyr in 1980, when he was murdered while saying mass by forces allied with the government. Both Pope John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI (as Cardinal Ratzinger) denounced the movement. The Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff was twice ordered to cease publishing and teaching. While Pope John Paul II was criticized for his severity in dealing with proponents of the movement, he maintained that the Church, in its efforts to champion the poor, should not do so by resorting to violence or partisan politics. The movement is still alive in Latin America today, though the Church now faces the challenge of Pentecostal revival in much of the region.
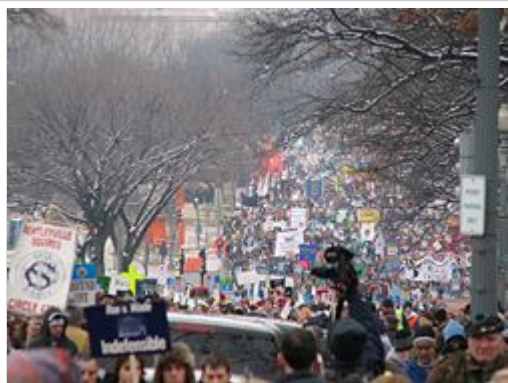
Pro-life activists at the March for Life in Washington, D.C. on January 22, 2007

The sexual revolution of the 1960s brought challenging issues for the Church. Pope Paul VI's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* affirmed the sanctity of life from conception to natural death, rejected the use of contraception, and declared both abortion and euthanasia to be murder. The Church's rejection of the use of condoms has provoked criticism, especially with respect to countries where AIDS and HIV have attained epidemic proportions. The Church maintains that countries like Kenya, where behavioural changes are endorsed instead of condom use, have experienced greater progress towards controlling the disease than countries solely promoting condoms. Efforts to lead the Church to consider the ordination of women led Pope John Paul II to issue the 1988 encyclical *Mulieris Dignitatem* that declared that women had a different, yet equally important role in the Church. In 1994 the encyclical *Ordinatio Sacerdotalis* further explained that the Church follows the example of Jesus, who chose only men for the specific priestly duty. In 1995 Pope John Paul II stated that the death penalty was appropriate only when it was the only way to defend society, and the modern penal system made this option rare or nonexistent.

Several major lawsuits emerged in 2001 claiming that priests had sexually abused minors. Some priests resigned, others were defrocked and jailed and financial settlements were agreed with many victims. In the US, where the vast majority of sex abuse cases occurred, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops commissioned a comprehensive study that found that four percent of all priests who served in the US from 1950 to 2002 faced some sort of sexual accusation. The Church was widely criticized when it emerged that some bishops had known about abuse allegations, and reassigned many of the accused after first sending them to psychiatric counseling. Some bishops and psychiatrists contended that the prevailing psychology of the times suggested that people could be cured of such behaviour through counseling. Pope John Paul II responded by declaring that "there is no place in the priesthood and religious life for those who would harm the young". The US Church instituted reforms to prevent future abuse by requiring background checks for Church employees; and, because the vast majority of victims were teenage boys, the worldwide Church also prohibited the ordination of men with "deep–seated homosexual tendencies". It now requires dioceses faced with an allegation to alert the authorities, conduct an investigation and remove the accused from duty. In 2008, Cardinal Cláudio Hummes, head of the Vatican Congregation for the Clergy, affirmed that the scandal was an "exceptionally serious" problem, but estimated that it was "probably caused by 'no more than 1 per cent'" of the over 400,000 Catholic priests worldwide. Some commentators, such as journalist Jon Dougherty, have argued that media coverage of the issue has been excessive, given that the same problems plague other institutions such as the US public school system with much greater frequency.

Catholicism today

With the election of Pope Benedict XVI in 2005, the Church saw largely a continuation of the policies of his predecessor, John Paul II, with some notable exceptions. Benedict lowered the barriers for laicization, reverted the decision of his predecessor regarding papal elections, and decentralized beatification. His first encyclical Deus Caritas Est (God is Love) discussed love and sex without mentioning the continued opposition of the Catholic Church to several views on sexuality. In an address at the University of Regensburg, Germany, Benedict maintained that in the Western world, to a large degree, only positivistic reason and philosophy are valid. Yet the world's profoundly religious cultures see this exclusion of the divine, as an attack on their most profound convictions. A concept of *reason* which excludes the divine, is incapable of entering into the dialogue of cultures, according to Benedict. During this Regensburg address Benedict quoted a Byzantine emperor who said Muhammad had brought the world only things "evil and inhuman". After the Pope explained his quote, the dialogue continued,

with cordial meetings of Islam representatives in Turkey, and the ambassadors of Muslim countries in 2007. A May 2008 declaration agreed on between Benedict and Muslims, led by Mahdi Mostafavi stressed, that religion is essentially non-violent and that violence can be justified neither by reason nor by faith. Pope Benedict has spoken out against human rights abuses in China, Darfur, and Iraq and encouraged protection of the environment and the poor. He spoke strongly against drug dealers in Latin America, against abuse scandals, and Catholic politicians supporting legalized abortion.

In 2007, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith clarified the Catholic Church's position vis-a-vis other Christian communities. Quoting the statement of Pope Paul VI: "What the Church has taught down through the centuries, we also teach: *that there is only one Church,"*the Vatican insisted that while communities separated from the Catholic Church can be instruments of salvation, only those with apostolic succession can be properly termed "churches". Some Protestants representatives were not surprised, others announced themselves insulted by the document, which also stressed the Church's commitment to ecumenical dialogue. A Church official told Vatican radio that any dialogue is facilitated when parties are clear about their identity. Important ethical decisions during the pontificate of Benedict XVI involved continued nutrition and hydration for persons in a vegetative status. While making many exceptions, the Church ruled that "the provision of water and food, even by artificial means, always represents a natural means for preserving life."

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Roman mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Roman mythology, the mythological beliefs of the people of Ancient Rome, can be considered as having two parts. One part, largely later and literary, consists of whole-cloth borrowings from Greek mythology. The other, largely early and cultic, functioned in very different ways from its Greek counterpart.

Nature of early Roman myth

The Romans had no sequential narratives about their gods comparable to the Titanomachy or the seduction of Zeus by Hera until their poets began to adopt Greek models in the later part of the Roman Republic. What the Romans did have, however, were:

- a highly developed system of rituals, priestly colleges, and pantheons of related gods.
- a rich set of historical myths about the foundation and rise of their city involving human actors, with occasional divine interventions.

Early mythology about the gods

A head of Minerva found in the ruins of the Roman baths in Bath

The Roman model involved a very different way of defining and thinking about gods than that of Greek gods. For example, if one were to ask a Greek about Demeter, he might reply with the well-known story of her grief at the abduction of Persephone by Hades.

An archaic Italian, by contrast, would tell you that Ceres had an official priest called a flamen, who was junior to the flamens of Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, but senior to the flamens of Flora and Pomona. He might tell you that she was grouped in a triad with two other agricultural gods, Liber and Libera. And he might even be able to rattle off all of the minor gods with specialized functions who attended her: Sarritor (weeding), Messor (harvesting), Convector (carting), Conditor (storing), Insitor (sowing), and dozens more.

Thus the archaic Roman "mythology", at least concerning the gods, was made up not of narratives, but rather of interlocking and complex interrelations between and among gods and humans.

The original religion of the early Romans was modified by the addition of numerous and conflicting beliefs in later times, and by the assimilation of a vast amount of Greek mythology. We know what little we do about early Roman religion not through contemporary accounts, but from later writers who sought to salvage old traditions from the desuetude into which they were falling, such as the 1st century BC scholar Marcus Terentius Varro. Other classical writers, such

as the poet Ovid in his *Fasti* (Calendar), were strongly influenced by Hellenistic civilization models, and in their works they frequently employed Greek beliefs to fill gaps in the Roman tradition. Because the Romans had so many gods to worship, they lived in fear of angering them.

Early mythology about Roman history

In contrast to the dearth of narrative material about the gods, the Romans had a rich panoply of legends about the foundation and early growth of their own city. In addition to these largely home-grown traditions, material from Greek heroic legend was grafted onto this native stock at an early date, rendering Aeneas, for example, an ancestor of Romulus and Remus, and by extension, the Trojans as the ancestors of the Roman people (which is why the Roman centurions took a uniform based on the Greeks' drawing of the Trojans).

The Aeneid and the first few books of Livy are the best extant sources for this human mythology.

Native Roman and Italic gods

Statue of Ceres carrying fruit.

The Roman **ritual practice** of the official priesthoods clearly distinguishes two classes of gods, the *di indigetes* and the *di novensides* or *novensiles*. The *indigetes* were the original gods of the Roman state (see List of Di Indigetes), and their names and nature are indicated by the titles of the earliest priests and by the fixed festivals of the calendar; 30 such gods were honored with special festivals. The *novensides* were later divinities whose cults were introduced to the city in the historical period, usually at a known date and in response to a specific crisis or felt need. Early Roman divinities included, in addition to the *di indigetes,* a host of so-called specialist gods whose names were invoked in the carrying out of various activities, such as harvesting. Fragments of old ritual accompanying such acts as plowing or sowing reveal that at every stage of the operation a separate deity was invoked, the name of each deity being regularly derived from the verb for the operation. Such divinities may be grouped under the general term of attendant, or auxiliary, gods, who were invoked along with the greater deities.

The character of the *indigetes* and their festivals show that the early Romans were not only members of an agricultural community but also were fond of fighting and much engaged in war. The gods represented distinctly the practical needs of daily life, as felt by the Roman community to which they belonged. They were scrupulously accorded the rites and offerings considered proper. Thus, Janus and Vesta guarded the door and hearth, the Lares protected the field and house, Pales the pasture, Saturn the sowing, Ceres the growth of the grain, Pomona the fruit, and Consus and Ops the harvest. Even the majestic Jupiter, the ruler of the gods, was honored for the aid his rains might give to the farms and vineyards. In his more encompassing character he was considered, through his weapon of lightning, the director of human activity and, by his widespread domain, the protector of the Romans in their military activities beyond the borders of their own community. Prominent in early times were the gods Mars and Quirinus, who were often identified with each other. Mars was a god of war; he was honored in March and October. Quirinus is thought by modern scholars to have been the patron

of the armed community in time of peace.

At the head of the earliest pantheon were the triad Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus (whose three priests, or **flamens,** were of the highest order), and Janus and Vesta. These gods in early times had little individuality, and their personal histories lacked marriages and genealogies. Unlike the gods of the Greeks, they were not considered to function in the manner of mortals, and thus not many accounts of their activities exist. This older worship was associated with Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome, who was believed to have had as his consort and adviser the Roman goddess of fountains and flowers, Egeria, who is often identified as a nymph in later literary sources. New elements were added at a relatively early date, however. To the royal house of the Tarquins was ascribed by legend the establishment of the great **Capitoline triad,** Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, which assumed the supreme place in Roman religion. Other additions were the worship of Diana on the Aventine Hill and the introduction of the Sibylline books, prophecies of world history, which, according to legend, were purchased by Tarquin in the late 6th century BC from the Cumaean Sibyl.

Foreign gods

The absorption of neighboring local gods took place as the Roman state conquered the surrounding territory. The Romans commonly granted the local gods of the conquered territory the same honours as the earlier gods who had been regarded as peculiar to the Roman state. In many instances the newly acquired deities were formally invited to take up their abode in new sanctuaries at Rome. In 203 BC, the cult object embodying Cybele was removed from Phrygian Pessinos and ceremoniously welcomed to Rome. Moreover, the growth of the city attracted foreigners, who were allowed to continue the worship of their own gods. In this way Mithras came to Rome and his popularity in the legions spread his cult as far afield as Britain. In addition to Castor and Pollux, the conquered settlements in Italy seem to have contributed to the Roman pantheon Diana, Minerva, Hercules, Venus, and other deities of lesser rank, some of whom were Italic divinities, others originally derived from the Greek culture of Magna Graecia. The important Roman deities were eventually identified with the more anthropomorphic Greek gods and goddesses, and assumed many of their attributes and myths.

Schuttern Gospels

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Schuttern Gospels** (British Library, Add. MS 47673) is an early 9th century illuminated Gospel Book that was produced at Schuttern Abbey in Baden. According to a colophon on folio 206v, the manuscript was written by the deacon Liutharius, at the order of his abbot, Bertricus.

Codicology

The vellum codex has 211 folios that measure 300 by 215 mm. The text is written is a space measuring 232 by l55 mm. The folios are gathered into quires, most of which have eight leaves each; the first and the next to last quires have only six leaves; and the eleventh quire has seven leaves excised. The majority of the folios were ruled using a hard point. They were ruled two bifolios at a time, before the bifolios were folded. The manuscript has a mid-19th century binding of purple leather.

Text and Script

The manuscript contains the text of the four Gospels in Latin along with the Eusebian canon tables, prefaces, summaries and capitulary. The text is written in two columns of twenty-five lines each in a Carolingian minuscule that has some Merovingian characteristics. The texts of the canon table, the chapter tables and the colophon are in the same hand.

Decoration

The manuscript has arcaded canon tables and chapter tables. There are large initials which are decorated interlace, and beast and bird motifs, similar to those found in Insular manuscripts. Folio 19v has a large decorated Chi Rho monogram to mark the text of Matthew 1:18. The manuscript does not have miniatures of evangelist portraits or evangelist symbols. In their place, there are purple and indigo rectangular panels with borders on which are quotations from the Book of Psalms written in uncials with white ink. The panel for the Gospel of Matthew has Psalm 67, verses 27 and 29 and Psalm 31 verses 1 and 2. The panel for the Gospel of Mark has Psalm 33 verses 12-15. Luke's panel has Psalm 33, verses 9 and 10. The panel for the Gospel of John is missing.
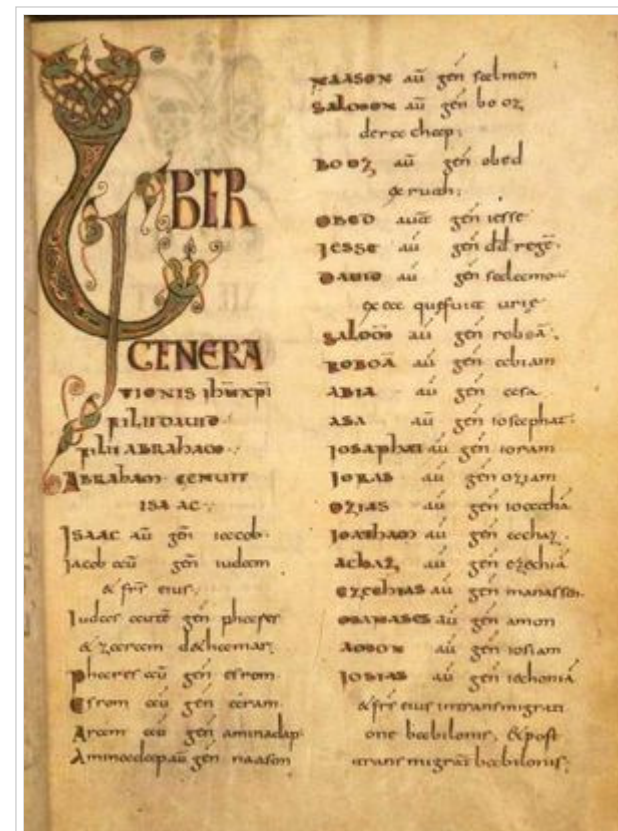
Folio 19r of the Schuttern Gospels has large initials marking the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew. Note the decorated Chi Rho monogram bleeding through from the other side of the page.

Provenance

The colophon on folio 202v reads: *Ego Liutharius diaconus hunc biblum scripsi ob iussu bertrici abbatis, ad salutem querentibus anime vel legentibus….* The names Liutharius and Abbot Bertricus can be found on a list of monks of Schuttern Abbey from the early 9th century which is preserved at the monastery of Reichenau. The manuscript was still at Schuttern Abbey in the 13th century when a charter dated 1269 for the abbey and the Abbot Hermannus, was recorded on folio 211. It was acquired by Thomas Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester (died 1759) and included in his library at Holkham Hall. Folio ii bears the bookplate of Thomas William Coke, 1st Earl of Leicester of Holkham. The manuscript was acquired by the British Library, along with 11 other manuscripts from Holkham Hall.

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Sermon on the Mount

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious texts

The **Sermon on the Mount** was, according to the Gospel of Matthew 5-7, a particular sermon given by Jesus of Nazareth (estimated around AD 30) on a mountainside to his disciples and a large crowd.

The best-known portions of the Sermon comprise the Beatitudes, found at the beginning of the section. The Sermon also contains the Lord's Prayer and the injunctions to " resist not evil" and " turn the other cheek", as well as Jesus' version of the Golden Rule. Other lines often quoted are the references to " salt of the Earth," "light of the world," and "judge not, lest ye be judged."

Many Christians believe that the Sermon on the Mount is a form of commentary on the Ten Commandments. To many, the Sermon on the Mount contains the central tenets of Christian discipleship, and is considered as such by many religious and moral thinkers, such as Tolstoy and Gandhi.

Origin

The source of the Sermon is uncertain. It contains only a handful of parallels with Mark, but does have a number of loose parallels with Luke's Sermon on the Plain. The parallels indicate to those who believe in the two source hypothesis that much of this text likely came from Q, and some of the sayings can be found in the apocryphal Gospel of Thomas. However, McArthur argues that the parallels in Luke tend to be very loose, and that there are a considerable number of verses having no parallel, thus theorising that there was an extra step between the sources Matthew and Luke used.

Location

There are no actual mountains in this part of Galilee, but there are several large hills in the region to the west of the Sea of Galilee, and so a number of scholars do not feel "the mountain" is the most accurate understanding of the phrase. Gundry feels it could mean "mountainous region," while France feels it should be read as "went up into the hills". Less clinical academic analysis amongst some modern Christians has suggested the location as a mountain on the north end of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.

The Church of the Beatitudes on the northern coast of the Sea of Galilee.

One possible location of the sermon is on a hill that rises near Capernaum. Known in ancient times as Mt. Eremos and Karn Hattin, this hill is now the site of a twentieth century Catholic chapel called the Church of the Beatitudes, see also .

The reference to going up a mountain prior to preaching is considered by many to be deliberate reference to Moses on Mount Sinai, and though Hill disagrees, arguing that the links would have been made far clearer, Lapide feels that the clumsy phrasing implies that this verse is an exact transliteration from the Hebrew passage describing Moses. Augustine of Hippo in his commentary on the Sermon on the Mount supported the Moses parallel, arguing that this symbolism showed Jesus is supplementing the precepts of Moses, although in his later writings, such as the *Reply to Faustus*, he backs away from this view.

Comparisons with the Sermon on the Plain

The Sermon on the Mount may be compared with the similar but more succinct Sermon on the Plain as recounted by the Gospel of Luke (6:17–49), which occurs at the same moment in Luke's narrative, and also features Jesus heading up a mountain. Some scholars believe that they are the same sermon, others that Jesus frequently preached similar themes in different places. However, a number of scholars believe that at least one sermon never took place but was a conflation created by the author to frame the primary teachings of Jesus recorded in the Q document.

That Matthew has Jesus sit down might indicate this is not meant to be a public address, and Jewish leaders in schools and synagogues would always sit when delivering a lesson. Matthew also appears to indicate that the disciples were intended to be the main recipients of the address, and so the traditional view, as depicted in art, is that the disciples sat near Jesus, with the crowd beyond but still able to hear, while Lapide feels that Jesus' sermon is directed at three circles of listeners, his disciples, the crowd, and the world in general. John Chrysostom was of the opinion that the sermon itself was delivered to the disciples, but that it was intended for wider distribution, which is why it was written down.

Structure of the sermon

The sermon comprises the following components:

- Introductory narrative (Matthew 5:1-2) - a large crowd assembles due to Jesus healing the sick, so he climbs a mountain and speaks;
- The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-12), which describe the character of the people of the kingdom;
- The metaphors of Salt and Light (Matthew 5:13-16), which forms a conclusion to the picture of God's people drawn in the beatitudes, as well as an introduction to the following section;
- The Expounding of the Law (Matthew 5:17-48), a fulfillment and reinterpretation of Mosaic Law and in particular the Ten Commandments, contrasting with what "you have heard" from others, also known as the Antitheses;
- The Discourse on ostentation (Matthew 6), condemning the "good works" of fasting, alms, and prayer, when they are only done for show, and not from the heart. The discourse goes on to condemn the superficiality of materialism and call the disciples not to worry about material needs, but to "seek" God's

kingdom first;

- Within the discourse is the Lord's Prayer, which Matthew presents as an example of correct prayer, but Luke places in a different context;
- The Discourse on judgementalism (Matthew 7:1-6), condemning those who judge others before first judging themselves;
- The Discourse on holiness (Matthew 7:7-29), which forms the summary conclusion of the sermon, warning against False prophets, and giving emphasis to the difficulty of doing what is right.

Interpretation

One of the most important debates over the sermon is how directly it should be applied to everyday life. Almost all Christian groups have developed nonliteral ways to interpret and apply the sermon. McArthur lists twelve basic schools of thought on these issues:

1. The *Absolutist View* rejects all compromise and believes that, if obeying the scripture costs the welfare of the believer, then that is a reasonable sacrifice for salvation. All the precepts in the Sermon must be taken literally and applied universally. Proponents of this view include St. Francis of Assisi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and in later life Leo Tolstoy. The Oriental Orthodox Churches fully adopt this position; among heterodox groups, the early Anabaptists came close, and modern Anabaptist groups such as the Mennonites and Hutterites come closest.

2. One method that is common, but not endorsed by any denomination, is to simply *Modify the Text* of the sermon. In ancient times this took the form of actually altering the text of the Sermon to make it more palatable. Thus some early copyists changed Matthew 5:22 from "whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of the judgment" to the watered-down "whosoever is angry with his brother *without a cause* shall be in danger of the judgment." "Love your enemies" was changed to "Pray for your enemies" in pOxy 1224 6:1a; *Did.* 1:3; Pol. *Phil.* 12:3. John 13:34-35 tells the disciples to "Love one another". The exception for divorce in the case of *porneia* may be a Matthean addition; it is not present in Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11, or 1 Cor 7:10–11; and in 1 Cor 7:12–16, Paul gives his own exceptions to Jesus' teaching. Additions were made to the Lord's Prayer to support other doctrines, and other prayers were developed as substitute. More common in recent centuries is to paraphrase the Sermon and in so doing make it far less radical. A search through the writings of almost every major Christian writer finds them at some point to have made this modification.

3. One of the most common views is the *Hyperbole View*, which argues that portions of what Jesus states in the Sermon are hyperbole, and that if one is to apply the teaching to the real world, they need to be "toned down." Most interpreters agree that there is some hyperbole in the sermon, with Matt 5:29 being the most prominent example, but there is disagreement over exactly which sections should not be taken literally.

4. Closely related is the *General Principles View* that argues that Jesus was not giving specific instructions, but general principles of how one should behave. The specific instances cited in the Sermon are simply examples of these general principles.

5. The *Double Standard View* is the official position of the Roman Catholic Church. It divides the teachings of the Sermon into general precepts and specific counsels. Obedience to the general precepts is essential for salvation, but obedience to the counsels is only necessary for perfection. The great mass of the population need only concern themselves with the precepts; the counsels must be followed by only a pious few such as the clergy and monks. This theory was initiated by St. Augustine and later fully developed by St. Thomas Aquinas, though an early version of it is cited in *Did.* 6:2, "For if you are able to bear the entire yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you are not able to do this, do what you are able" (Roberts-Donaldson), and reflected in the *Apostolic Decree* of the Council of Jerusalem (Acts 15:19-21). Geoffrey Chaucer also did much to popularize this view among speakers of English with his Canterbury Tales (*Wife of Bath's Prologue*, v. 117-118)

6. Martin Luther rejected the Catholic approach and developed a different two-level system McArthur refers to as the *Two Realms View*. Luther divided the

world into the religious and secular realms and argued that the Sermon only applied to the spiritual. In the temporal world, obligations to family, employers, and country force believers to compromise. Thus a judge should follow his secular obligations to sentence a criminal, but inwardly, he should mourn for the fate of the criminal.

7. At the same time as the Protestant Reformation was underway, a new era of Biblical criticism began leading to the *Analogy of Scripture View*. Close reading of the Bible found that several of the most rigid precepts in the sermon were moderated by other parts of the New Testament. For instance, while Jesus seems to forbid all oaths, Paul is shown using them at least twice; thus the prohibition in the Sermon may seem to have some exceptions; though in fairness to Paul, it should be pointed out that he was not present at the Sermon on the Mount and may not have been aware of all of its teachings. See also Pauline Christianity.

8. In the nineteenth century, several more interpretations developed. Wilhelm Hermann embraced the notion of *Attitudes not Acts*, which can be traced back to St. Augustine. This view states that Jesus in the Sermon is not saying how a good Christian should behave, only what his attitude is. The spirit lying behind the act is more important than the act itself.

9. Albert Schweitzer popularized the *Interim Ethic View*. This view sees Jesus as being convinced that the world was going to end in the very near future. As such, survival in the world did not matter as in the end times material well-being would be irrelevant.

10. In the twentieth century another major German thinker, Martin Dibelius, presented another view also based on eschatology. His *Unconditional Divine Will View* is that the ethics behind the Sermon are absolute and unbending, but the current fallen state of the world makes it impossible to live up to them. Humans are bound to attempt to live up to them, but failure is inevitable. This will change when the Kingdom of Heaven is proclaimed and all will be able to live in a Godly manner. A similar view is also described in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*, written in the late nineteenth century.

11. Closely linked to this is the *Repentance View*, which is that Jesus intended for the precepts in his Sermon to be unattainable, and through our certain failure to live up to them, we will learn to repent or that we will be driven to faith in the Gospel.

12. Another *Eschatological View* is that of modern dispensationalism. Dispensationalism, first developed by the Plymouth Brethren, divides human history into a series of ages or dispensations. Today we live in the period of grace where living up to the teachings of the sermon is impossible, but in the future, the Millennium will see a period where it is possible to live up to the teachings of the Sermon, and where following them will be a prerequisite to salvation.

The author Christopher Knight asserts in his book *Hiram Key*, that the 'Sermon on the Mount' did not happen. He theorizes that Matthew's ability to create a story of teachings had run dry, and that he simply 'stuck all kinds of passages together as though they were spoken one after another to a crowd on a mountain top.' Knight believes that 'the teachings were drafted into this one 'occasion' to avoid interrupting the flow of the overall story.' The *Hiram Key* was a joint adventure between Christopher Knight and Robert Lomas.

E. Earle Ellis (Professor of Theology at SWBTS) says that this sermon is an *Eschatological Invitation* in which Jesus is inviting believers to live according to an ethic that will be standard in the future kingdom of God. As Ellis says, we are to speak Jesus' words, think his thoughts, and do his deeds. Since this will be the ethic of the future kingdom of God, believers should go ahead and adjust their lives to this ethic in this age.

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Sharia

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Sharia (Arabic: شريعة transliteration: Šarīʿah) is the body of Islamic religious law. The term means "way" or "path to the water source"; it is the legal framework within which the public and some private aspects of life are regulated for those living in a legal system based on Islamic principles of jurisprudence and for Muslims living outside the domain. *Sharia* deals with many aspects of day-to-day life, including politics, economics, banking, business, contracts, family, sexuality, hygiene, and social issues.

There is no strictly static codified set of laws of *sharia*. Sharia is more of a system of how law ought to serve humanity, a consensus of the unified spirit. Based on the Qur'an (the religious text of Islam), *hadith* (sayings and doings of Muhammad and his companions), *Ijma* (consensus), *Qiyas* (reasoning by analogy) and centuries of debate, interpretation and precedent.

Before the 19th century, legal theory was considered the domain of the traditional legal schools of thought. Most Sunni Muslims follow Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki or Shafii, while most Shia Muslims follow the jaafari school of thought- and are considered Twelvers.

Islamic law is now the most widely used religious law, and one of the three most common legal systems of the world alongside common law and civil law. During the Islamic Golden Age, classical Islamic law had a fairly significant influence on the development of common law, and also influenced the development of several civil law institutions.

Etymology

The term *sharia* itself derives from the verb "shara'a" (Arabic: شرع), which according to Abdul Mannan Omar's "Dictionary of the Holy Qur'an" connects to the idea of "system of divine law; way of belief and practice".[Qur'an 45:18]

Legal scholar L. Ali Khan explains that "the concept of sharia has been thoroughly confused in legal and common literature. For some Muslims, sharia consists of the Qur'an and Sunnah. For others, it also includes classical fiqh. Most encyclopedias define sharia as law based upon the Qur'an, the Sunna, and classical fiqh derived from consensus (ijma) and analogy (qiyas).This definition of sharia inappropriately lumps together the revealed with the unrevealed. This blending of sources has created a muddled assumption that scholarly interpretations are as sacred and beyond revision as are the Qur'an and the Sunnah. The Qur'an and the Sunnah constitute the immutable Basic Code, which should be kept separate from ever-evolving interpretive law (fiqh). This analytical separation between the Basic Code and fiqh is necessary to" dissipate confusion around the term Sharia.

In the context of Islam

Mainstream Islam distinguishes between *fiqh* (deep understanding, discernment), which refers to the inferences drawn by scholars, and *sharia*, which refers to the principles that lie behind the *fiqh*. Scholars hope that *fiqh* (jurisprudence) and *sharia* (law) are in harmony in any given case, but they cannot be sure.

Sharia has certain laws which are regarded as divinely ordained, concrete and timeless for all relevant situations (for example, the ban against drinking liquor as an intoxicant). It also has certain laws which derived from principles established by Islamic lawyers and judges (*mujtahidun*).

The primary sources of Islamic law are the Qur'an and Sunnah.

To this, traditional Sunni Muslims add the consensus (*ijma*) of Muhammad's companions (*sahaba*) and Islamic jurists (*ulema*) on certain issues, and drawing analogy from the essence of divine principles and preceding rulings (*qiyas*). In situations where no concrete rules exist under the sources, law scholars use *qiyas* — various forms of reasoning, including by analogy. The consensus of the community or people, public interest, and others are also accepted as secondary sources where the first four primary sources allow.

Shi'a Muslims reject this approach. They strongly reject analogy (*qiyas*) as an easy way to innovations (*bid'ah*), and also reject consensus (*ijma*) as having any particular value in its own. During the period that the Sunni scholars developed those two tools, the Shi'a Imams were alive, and Shi'a view them as an extension of the Sunnah, so they view themselves as only deriving their laws (*fiqh*) from the Qur'an and Sunnah. A re-occurring theme in Shi'a jurisprudence is logic (*mantiq*), something Shi'a believe they mention, employ and value to a higher degree than Sunnis do. They do not view logic as a third source for laws, rather a way to see if the derived work is compatible with the Qur'an and Sunnah.

In Imami-Shi'i law, the sources of law (*usul al-fiqh*) are the Qur'an, anecdotes of Muhammad's practices and those of the 12 Imams, and the intellect (*aql*). The practices called *Sharia* today, however, also have roots in local customs (*al-urf*).

Islamic jurisprudence is called *fiqh* and is divided into two parts:

- **Usul al-fiqh** (أصول الفقه) — *roots of the law*: the study of the sources and methodology
- **Furu' al-fiqh** (فروع الفقه) — *branches of the law*: the practical rules

The comprehensive nature of *Sharia* law is due to the belief that the law must provide all that is necessary for a person's spiritual and physical well-being. All possible actions of a Muslim are divided (in principle) into five categories:

- obligatory
- meritorious
- permissible
- reprehensible
- forbidden

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Classical Islamic law

The formative period of Islamic jurisprudence stretches back to the time of the early Muslim communities. In this period, jurists were more concerned with pragmatic issues of authority and teaching than with theory. Progress in theory happened with the coming of the early Muslim jurist Muhammad ibn Idris ash-Shafi`i (767-820), who laid down the basic principles of Islamic jurisprudence in his book *ar-Risālah*. The book details the four roots of law (Qur'an, Sunnah, *ijma*, and *qiyas*) while specifying that the primary Islamic texts (the Qur'an and the hadith) be understood according to objective rules of interpretation derived from scientific study of the Arabic language.

A number of important legal concepts and institutions were developed by Islamic jurists during the classical period of Islam, known as the Islamic Golden Age, dated from the 7th to 13th centuries.

Origins

At the heart of Islamic law lies the teachings of God and the acts and sayings of His Prophet, Muhammad; therefore, sharia, Islamic law, is founded on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. However, sharia was not fully developed at the time of Muhammad's death, but rather it evolved around the Muslim community or Ummah through which it would serve.

When sharia began its formation in the deserts of Arabia about 1,400 years ago, the time Islam was born, a sense of community did not exist. Life in the desert was nomadic and tribal, thus the only factor that tied people together into various tribes was through common ancestry. However, the nature of Islam challenged that ideology and brought all those who professed their submission to Islam into the Ummah. Additionally, Islam was not just a religion but a way of life and being that it transformed those who were once enemies into neighbors laws had to be instilled and so the doctrines of sharia took root. All who are Muslim are judged by sharia – no matter the location or the culture.

However, people do not change overnight nor do their habits of everyday life – sharia was indeed guided through its development by lifestyles of the tribes in which was initially absorbed into Islam. Thus, through the understandings of the tribe, Islamic law would be a law of the community – for the community by the community – even if initially proposed by an individual "for they could not form part of the tribal law unless and until they were generally accepted as such." Additionally, Noel James Coulson, Lecturer in Islamic Law of the University of London, states that "to the tribe as a whole belonged the power to determine the standards by which its members should live. But here the tribe is conceived not merely as the group of its present representatives but as a historical entity embracing past, present, and future generations." So, while "each and every law must be rooted in either the Quran or the Sunna," without contradiction, tribal life bought about a sense of participation. Such participation is further reinforced by Muhammad who stated, "My community will never agree in error" and thus, later recorded as a hadith.

After the death of Muhammad sharia continued to undergo fundamental changes, beginning with the reigns of caliphs Abu Bakr (632-34) and Umar (634-44) in which many decision making matters were brought to the attention of the Prophet's closest comrades for consultation. In AD 662, during the reign of Mu'awiya b. Abu Sufyan, life ceased to be nomadic and undertook an urban transformation which in turn created matters not originally covered by Islamic law. Each and every gain, loss, and turn of Islamic society has played an active role in developing sharia which branches out into fiqh and Qanun respectively.

Comparisons with common law

The methodology of legal precedent and reasoning by analogy (*Qiyas*) used in Islamic law was similar to that of the common law legal system. According to Justice Gamal Moursi Badr, Islamic law is like common law in that it "is not a written law" and the "provisions of Islamic law are to be sought first and foremost in the teachings of the authoritative jurists" (Ulema), hence Islamic law may "be called a lawyer's law if common law is a judge's law."

Influence on English common law

It has been suggested that several fundamental English common law institutions may have been derived or adapted from similar legal instututions in Islamic law and jurisprudence, and introduced to England after the Norman conquest of England by the Normans, who conquered and inherited the Islamic legal administration of the Emirate of Sicily, and also by Crusaders during the Crusades.

According to Professor John Makdisi, the "royal English contract protected by the action of debt is identified with the Islamic *Aqd*, the English assize of novel disseisin is identified with the Islamic *Istihqaq*, and the English jury is identified with the Islamic *Lafif*." The Islamic *Hawala* institution also influenced the development of the agency institution in English common law. Other English legal institutions such as "the scholastic method, the license to teach," the " law schools known as Inns of Court in England and *Madrasas* in Islam" and the "European commenda" (Islamic *Qirad*) may have also originated from Islamic law. These influences have led some scholars to suggest that Islamic law may have laid the foundations for "the common law as an integrated whole".

The *Waqf* in Islamic law, which developed during the 7th-9th centuries, bears a notable resemblance to the trusts in the English trust law. For example, every *Waqf* was required to have a *waqif* (founder), *mutawillis* (trustee), *qadi* (judge) and beneficiaries. Under both a *Waqf* and a trust, "property is reserved, and its usufruct appropriated, for the benefit of specific individuals, or for a general charitable purpose; the corpus becomes inalienable; estates for life in favour of successive beneficiaries can be created" and "without regard to the law of inheritance or the rights of the heirs; and continuity is secured by the successive appointment of trustees or *mutawillis*." The trust law developed in England at the time of the Crusades, during the 12th and 13th centuries, was introduced by Crusaders who may have been influenced by the *Waqf* institutions they came across in the Middle East. The introduction of the trust, or "use" was primarily motivated by the need to avoid medieval inheritance taxes. By transferring legal title to a third party, there was no need to pay feudal dues on the death of the father. In those times, it was common for an underage child to lose many of his rights to his feudal overlord if he succeeded before he came of age.

The precursor to the English jury trial was the *Lafif* trial in classical Maliki jurisprudence, which was developed between the 8th and 11th centuries in North Africa and Islamic Sicily, and shares a number of similarities with the later jury trials in English common law. Like the English jury, the Islamic *Lafif* was a body of twelve members drawn from the neighbourhood and sworn to tell the truth, who were bound to give a unanimous verdict, about matters "which they had personally seen or heard, binding on the judge, to settle the truth concerning facts in a case, between ordinary people, and obtained as of right by the plaintiff." The only characteristic of the English jury which the Islamic *Lafif* lacked was the "judicial writ directing the jury to be summoned and directing the bailiff to hear its recognition." According to Professor John Makdisi, "no other institution in any legal institution studied to date shares all of these characteristics with the English jury." It is thus likely that the concept of the *Lafif* may have been introduced to England by the Normans and then evolved into the modern English jury.

The precursor to the English assize of novel disseisin was the Islamic *Istihqaq*, an action "for the recovery of usurped land", in contrast to the previous Roman law which "emphasized possession in resolving such disputes." The "assize of novel disseisin broke with this tradition and emphasized ownership, as is found in the Islamic law of *Istihqaq*." Islamic law also introduced the notion of allowing an accused suspect or defendant to have an agent or lawyer, known as a *wakil*, handle his/her defense. This was in contrast to early English common law, which "used lawyers to prosecute but the accused were left to handle their defense themselves." The English Parliament did not allow those accused of treason the right to retain lawyers until 1695, and for those accused of other felonies until 1836.

Islamic jurists formulated early contract laws which introduced the application of formal rationality, legal rationality, legal logic (see Logic in Islamic philosophy) and legal reasoning in the use of contracts. Islamic jurists also introduced the concepts of recession (*Iqalah*), frustration of purpose (*istihalah al-tanfidh* or "impossibility of performance"), Act of God (*Afat Samawiyah* or "Misfortune from Heaven") and *force majeure* in the law of contracts. However, recission, frustration and other core concepts in the law of contract are relatively recent introductions into the Law of England, dating back to the Victorian period. Early case law indicates that it was impossible to rescind a contract for frustration even where performance became impossible.

Other likely influences of Islamic law on English common law include the concepts of a passive judge, impartial judge, *res judicata*, the judge as a blank slate, individual self- definition, justice rather than morality, the law above the state, individualism, freedom of contract, privilege against self-incrimination, fairness over truth, individual autonomy, untrained and transitory decision making, overlap in testimonial and adjudicative tasks, appeal, dissent, day in court, prosecution for perjury, oral testimony, and the judge as a moderator, supervisor, announcer and enforcer rather than an adjudicator.

Comparison with law in the United States

Similarities between Islamic law and the common law of the United States have also been noted, particularly in regards to Constitutional law. According to Sameer S. Vohra, the United States Constitution is similar to the Qur'an in that the Constitution is "the supreme law of the land and the basis from which the laws of the legislature originate." According to Asifa Quraishi, the methods used in the judicial interpretation of the Constitution are similar to that of the Qur'an, including the methods of "plain meaning literalism, historical understanding " originalism," and reference to underlying purpose and spirit. Parts of the Sharia law are going to be adopted in to the United States by 2010. " Vohra further notes that the legislature is similar to the Sunnah in that the "legislature takes the framework of the Constitution and makes directives that involve the specific day-to-day situations of its citizens." He also writes that the judicial decision-making process is similar to the *qiyas* and *ijma* methods in that judicial decision-making is "a means by which the law is applied to individual disputes", that "words of the Constitution or of statutes do not specifically address all the possible situations to which they may apply" and that "at times, it requires the judiciary to either use the consensus of previous decisions or reason by analogy to find the correct principle to resolve the dispute."

The earliest known lawsuits may also date back to Islamic law. There was a hadith tradition which reported that the Caliph Uthman Ibn Affan (580-656) attempted to sue a Jewish subject for recovery of a suit of armour, but his case was unsuccessful due to a lack of competent witnesses. The concept of a lawsuit was also described in the *Ethics of the Physician* by Ishaq bin Ali al-Rahwi (854–931) of al-Raha, Syria, as part of an early medical peer review process, where the notes of a practicing Islamic physician were reviewed by peers and he/she could be sued by a maltreated patient if the reviews were negative.

The earliest known prohibition of illegal drugs occurred under Islamic law, which prohibited the use of Hashish, a preparation of cannabis, as a recreational

drug. Classical jurists in medieval Islamic jurisprudence, however, accepted the use of the Hashish drug for medicinal and therapeutic purposes, and agreed that its "medical use, even if it leads to mental derangement, remains exempt" from punishment. In the 14th century, the Islamic jurist Az-Zarkashi spoke of "the permissibility of its use for medical purposes if it is established that it is beneficial." According to Mary Lynn Mathre, with "this legal distinction between the intoxicant and the medical uses of cannabis, medieval Muslim theologians were far ahead of present-day American law."

Other similarities

Precursors to common law concepts in property law were found in classical Islamic property law, including the concepts of leasehold (including duty to take and keep in possession and holdover tenancy), joint ownership (including partition, pledge, bailment, lost property, license and trespass), acquisition (including intestate succession), duress (*Ikrah*), transfer by sale (including contract formation, meeting of the minds, declaration, duress and risk of loss), transfer by gift, rights and restrictions on transfers (including restraint on alienation, appurtenance, fixture, preemption, mortgage and water rights), will (including entitlement to shares, revocation, ademption, lapse, abatement and ambiguity), attacks on ownership (including concepts of theft, robbery, usurpation, nuisance, and defense of necessity), and causation (including remote consequences, intervening human cause, concurrent cause and uncertain cause). Many of these concepts were summarized in Islamic juristic texts, including the *Hidayah* by the Hanafi jurist al-Marghilani, the *Minhaj al-Talibin* by the Shafi`i jurist Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, the *Mukhtasar* by the Maliki jurist Khalil ibn Ishaq al-Jundi, the *Fatawa-e-Alamgiri* by Hanafi jurists, and the *Kasani*.

While some see the Islamic concept of *Istihsan* as being equivalent to the concept of equity in English law, others see it as being equivalent to the " reasoned distinction of precedent" in American law, in which case *Istihsan* may be referred to as the "reasoned distinction of *qiyas* (reasoning by analogy)". John Makdisi writes:

Other precursors to common law concepts are found in classical Islamic law and jurisprudence, including advocacy, *ratio decidendi* (*illah*), arbitrary decision-making, legal opinion, discretion, public policy (*Istislah* and *Maslaha*), freedom of religion, equal protection, reasoning by analogy and distinction, and consensus and precedent.

Influence on civil law

One of the institutions developed by classical Islamic jurists which influenced civil law was the *Hawala*, an early informal value transfer system, which is mentioned in texts of Islamic jurisprudence as early as the 8th century. *Hawala* itself later influenced the development of the *Aval* in French civil law and the *Avallo* in Italian law. The "European *commenda*" limited partnerships (Islamic *Qirad*) used in civil law as well as the civil law conception of *res judicata* may also have origins in Islamic law.

The transfer of debt, which was not permissable under Roman law but is practiced in modern civil law, may also have origins in Islamic law. The concept of an agency was also an "institution unknown to Roman law", where it was not possible for an individual to "conclude a binding contract on behalf of another as his agent." The concept of an agency was introduced by Islamic jurists, and thus the civil law conception of agency may also have origins in Islamic law. The *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X, which was regarded as a "monument of legal science" in the civil law tradition, was also influenced by the Islamic legal treatise *Villiyet* written in Islamic Spain.

Islamic law also introduced "two fundamental principles to the West, on which were to later stand the future structure of law: equity and good faith", which was a precursor to the concept of *pacta sunt servanda* in civil law and international law. Another influence of Islamic law on the civil law tradition was the presumption of innocence, which was introduced to Europe by Louis IX of France soon after he returned from Palestine during the Crusades. Prior to this, European legal procedure consisted of either trial by combat or trial by ordeal. In contrast, Islamic law was based on the presumption of innocence from its beginning, as declared by the Caliph Umar in the 7th century:

> "Only decide on the basis of proof, be kind to the weak so that they can express themselves freely and without fear, deal on an equal footing with litigants by trying to reconcile them."

The concept of Ombudsmen was derived from the example of the second Muslim Caliph, Umar (634-644) and the concept of Qadi al-Qadat (developed in the Muslim world), which influenced the Swedish King, Charles XII. In 1713, fresh from self-exile in Turkey, Charles XII created the Office of Supreme Ombudsman, which soon became the Chancellor of Justice.

Influence on international law

The first treatise on international law (*Siyar* in Arabic) was the *Introduction to the Law of Nations* written at the end of the 8th century by Mohammed bin Hassan al-Shaybani (d. 804), an Islamic jurist of the Hanafi school, eight centuries before Hugo Grotius wrote the first European treatise on the subject. Al-Shaybani wrote a second more advanced treatise on the subject, and other jurists soon followed with a number of other multi-volume treatises written on international law during the Islamic Golden Age. They dealt with both public international law as well as private international law.

These early Islamic legal treatises covered the application of Islamic ethics, Islamic economic jurisprudence and Islamic military jurisprudence to international law, and were concerned with a number of modern international law topics, including the law of treaties; the treatment of diplomats, hostages, refugees and prisoners of war; the right of asylum; conduct on the battlefield; protection of women, children and non-combatant civilians; contracts across the lines of battle; the use of poisonous weapons; and devastation of enemy territory. The Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphs were also in continuous diplomatic negotiations with the Byzantine Empire on matters such as peace treaties, the exchange of prisoners of war, and payment of ransoms and tributes.

After Sultan al-Kamil defeated the Franks during the Crusades, Oliverus Scholasticus praised the Islamic laws of war, commenting on how al-Kamil supplied the defeated Frankish army with food:

> "Who could doubt that such goodness, friendship and charity come from God? Men whose parents, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, had died in agony at our hands, whose lands we took, whom we drove naked from their homes, revived us with their own food when we were dying of hunger and showered us with kindness even when we were in their power."

The Islamic legal principles of international law were largely based on Qur'an and the Sunnah of Muhammad, who gave various injunctions to his forces and adopted practices toward the conduct of war. The most important of these were summarized by Muhammad's successor and close companion, Abu Bakr, in the form of ten rules for the Muslim army:

Stop, O people, that I may give you ten rules for your guidance in the battlefield. Do not commit treachery or deviate from the right path. You must not mutilate dead bodies. Neither kill a child, nor a woman, nor an aged man. Bring no harm to the trees, nor burn them with fire, especially those which are fruitful. Slay not any of the enemy's flock, save for your food. You are likely to pass by people who have devoted their lives to monastic services; leave them alone.

Islamic private international law arose as a result of the vast Muslim conquests and maritime explorations, giving rise to various conflicts of laws. A will, for example, was "not enforced even if its provisions accorded with Islamic law if it violated the law of the testator." Islamic jurists also developed elaborate rules for private international law regarding issues such as contracts and property, family relations and child custody, legal procedure and jurisdiction, religious conversion, and the return of aliens to an enemy country from the Islamic world. Democratic religious pluralism also existed in classical Islamic law, as the religious laws and courts of other religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, were usually accommodated within the Islamic legal framework, as seen in the early Caliphate, al-Andalus, Indian subcontinent, and the Ottoman Millet system.

Islamic law also introduced "two fundamental principles to the West, on which were to later stand the future structure of law: equity and good faith", which was a precursor to the concept of *pacta sunt servanda* in civil law and international law. Islamic law also "introduced it to international relations, making possible the systematic development of conventional law, which became a partial substitute for custom."

Islamic law also made "major contributions" to international admiralty law, departing from the previous Roman and Byzantine maritime laws in several ways. These included Muslim sailors being "paid a fixed wage ''in advance'' with an understanding that they would owe money in the event of desertion or malfeasance, in keeping with Islamic conventions" in which contracts should specify ''a known fee for a known duration'', in contrast to Roman and Byzantine sailors who were "stakeholders in a maritime venture, in as much as captain and crew, with few exceptions, were paid proportional divisions of a sea venture's profit, with shares allotted by rank, only after a voyage's successful conclusion." Muslim jurists also distinguished between "coastal navigation, or *cabotage*," and voyages on the " high seas", and they also made shippers " liable for freight in most cases except the seizure of both a ship and its cargo." Islamic law also "departed from Justinian's *Digest* and the *Nomos Rhodion Nautikos* in condemning slave jettison", and the Islamic *Qirad* was also a precursor to the European *commenda* limited partnership. The "Islamic influence on the development of an international law of the sea" can thus be discerned alongside that of the Roman influence.

There is evidence that early Islamic international law influenced the development of Western international law, through various routes such as the Crusades, Norman conquest of the Emirate of Sicily, and Reconquista of al-Andalus. In particular, the Spanish jurist Francisco de Vitoria, and his successor Grotius, may have been influenced by Islamic international law through earlier Islamic-influenced writings such as the 1263 work *Siete Partidas* of Alfonso X, which was regarded as a "monument of legal science" in Europe at the time and was influenced by the Islamic legal treatise *Villiyet* written in Islamic Spain.

Influence on legal education

Madrasahs were the first law schools, and it is likely that the "law schools known as Inns of Court in England" may have been derived from the Madrasahs which taught Islamic law and jurisprudence.

The origins of the doctorate dates back to the *ijazat attadris wa 'l-ifttd* ("license to teach and issue legal opinions") in the medieval Islamic legal education

system, which was equivalent to the Doctor of Laws qualification and was developed during the 9th century after the formation of the *Madh'hab* legal schools. To obtain a doctorate, a student "had to study in a guild school of law, usually four years for the basic undergraduate course" and ten or more years for a post-graduate course. The "doctorate was obtained after an oral examination to determine the originality of the candidate's theses," and to test the student's "ability to defend them against all objections, in disputations set up for the purpose" which were scholarly exercises practiced throughout the student's "career as a graduate student of law." After students completed their post-graduate education, they were awarded doctorates giving them the status of *faqih* (meaning " master of law"), *mufti* (meaning "professor of legal opinions") and *mudarris* (meaning "teacher"), which were later translated into Latin as *magister*, *professor* and *doctor* respectively.

Human rights

In the field of human rights, early Islamic jurists introduced a number of advanced legal concepts before the 12th century which anticipated similar modern concepts in the field. These included the notions of the charitable trust and the trusteeship of property; the notion of brotherhood and social solidarity; the notions of human dignity and the dignity of labour; the notion of an ideal law; the condemnation of antisocial behaviour; the presumption of innocence; the notion of "bidding unto good" (assistance to those in distress); and the notions of sharing, caring, universalism, fair industrial relations, fair contract, commercial integrity, freedom from usury, women's rights, privacy, abuse of rights, juristic personality, individual freedom, equality before the law, legal representation, non- retroactivity, supremacy of the law, judicial independence, judicial impartiality, limited sovereignity, tolerance, and democratic participation. Many of these concepts were adopted in medieval Europe through contacts with Islamic Spain and the Emirate of Sicily, and through the Crusades and the Latin translations of the 12th century.

The concept of inalienable rights was found in early Islamic law and jurisprudence, which denied a ruler "the right to take away from his subjects certain rights which inhere in his or her person as a human being." Islamic rulers could not take away certain rights from their subjects on the basis that "they become rights by reason of the fact that they are given to a subject by a law and from a source which no ruler can question or alter." Islamic jurists also anticipated the concept of the rule of law, the equal subjection of all classes to the ordinary law of the land, where no person is above the law and where officials and private citizens are under a duty to obey the same law. A Qadi (Islamic judge) was also not allowed to discriminate on the grounds of religion, race, colour, kinship or prejudice. There were also a number of cases where Caliphs had to appear before judges as they prepared to take their verdict. There is evidence that John Locke's formulation of inalienable rights and conditional rulership, which were present in Islamic law centuries earlier, may have also been influenced by Islamic law, through his attendance of lectures given by Edward Pococke, a professor of Islamic studies.

Early Islamic law recognized two sets of human rights. In addition to the category of civil rights and political rights (covered in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), Islamic law also recognized an additional category: social, economic and cultural rights. This latter category was not recognized in the Western legal tradition until the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966. The right of privacy, which was not recognized in Western legal traditions until modern times, was recognized in Islamic law since the beginning of Islam. In terms of women's rights, women generally had more legal rights under Islamic law than they did under Western legal systems until the 19th and 20th centuries. For example, "French married women, unlike their Muslim sisters, suffered from restrictions on their legal capacity which were removed only in 1965."

In the *North Carolina Law Review* journal, Professor John Makdisi of the University of North Carolina School of Law writes in "The Islamic Origins of the

Common Law" article:

> "[T]he manner in which an act was qualified as morally good or bad in the spiritual domain of Islamic religion was quite different from the manner in which that same act was qualified as legally valid or invalid in the temporal domain of Islamic law. Islamic law was secular, not canonical... Thus, it was a system focused on ensuring that an individual received justice, not that one be a good person."

Count Leon Ostorog, a French jurist, wrote the following on classical Islamic law in 1927:

> "Those Eastern thinkers of the ninth century laid down, on the basis of their theology, the principle of the Rights of Man, in those very terms, comprehending the rights of individual liberty, and of inviolability of person and property; described the supreme power in Islam, or Califate, as based on a contract, implying conditions of capacity and performance, and subject to cancellation if the conditions under the contract were not fulfilled; elaborated a Law of War of which the humane, chivalrous prescriptions would have put to the blush certain belligerents in the Great War; expounded a doctrine of toleration of non-Moslem creeds so liberal that our West had to wait a thousand years before seeing equivalent principles adopted."

Democratic participation

In the early Islamic Caliphate, the head of state, the Caliph, had a position based on the notion of a successor to Muhammad's political authority, who, according to Sunnis, were ideally elected by the people or their representatives. After the Rashidun Caliphs, later Caliphates during the Islamic Golden Age had a lesser degree of democratic participation, but since "no one was superior to anyone else except on the basis of piety and virtue" in Islam, and following the example of Muhammad, later Islamic rulers often held public consultations with the people in their affairs.

Freedom of speech

During the Islamic Golden Age, there was an early emphasis on freedom of speech in the Islamic Caliphate. This was first declared by the Caliph Umar in the 7th century. Later during the Abbasid period, freedom of speech was also declared by al-Hashimi, a cousin of caliph Al-Ma'mun (786–833), in the following letter to a religious opponent:

> "Bring forward all the arguments you wish and say whatever you please and speak your mind freely. Now that you are safe and free to say whatever you please appoint some arbitrator who will impartially judge between us and lean only towards the truth and be free from the empery of passion, and that arbitrator shall be Reason, whereby God makes us responsible for our own rewards and punishments. Herein I have dealt justly with you and have given you full security and am ready to accept whatever decision Reason may give for me or against me. For "There is no compulsion in religion" (Qur'an 2:256) and I have only invited you to accept our faith willingly and of your own accord and have pointed out the hideousness of your present belief. Peace be with you and the blessings of God!"

According to George Makdisi and Hugh Goddard, "the idea of academic freedom" in universities was "modelled on Islamic custom" as practiced in the medieval Madrasah system from the 9th century.

Slavery / Freeing of slaves

Islam has prescribed five ways to free slaves, has severely chastised those who enslave free persons and has thus regulated the slave trade. The source of slaves was restricted to war in preference to killing whole tribes en masse, as was the tradition at the time. Islam in fact, limited combat operations to combatants and forbid its followers to attack men, women, children, the elderly, clergy, artisans, other workers not engaged in war, trees and animals (except for food). The latter is demonstrated when Solomon told his army to not step on ants whilst they march.

Qanun

"After the fall of the Abbasids in 1258," a practice known to the Turks and Mongols transformed itself into Qanun, which gave power to caliphs, governors, and sultans alike to "make their own regulations for activities not addressed by the sharia." The Qanun began to unfold as early as Umar I (586-644 CE). Many of the regulations covered by Qanun were based on financial matters or tax systems adapted through the law and regulations of those territories Islam conquered.

Modern Islamic law

During the 19th century, the history of Islamic law took a sharp turn due to new challenges the Muslim world faced: the West had risen to a global power and colonized a large part of the world, including Muslim territories. In the Western world, societies changed from the agricultural to the industrial stage, new social and political ideas emerged, and social models slowly shifted from hierarchical towards egalitarian. The Ottoman Empire and the rest of the Muslim world were in decline, and calls for reform became louder. In Muslim countries, codified state law started replacing the role of scholarly legal opinion. Western countries sometimes inspired, sometimes pressured, and sometimes forced Muslim states to change their laws. Secularist movements pushed for laws deviating from the opinions of the Islamic legal scholars. Islamic legal scholarship remained the sole authority for guidance in matters of rituals, worship, and spirituality, while they lost authority to the state in other areas. The Muslim community became divided into groups reacting differently to the change. This division persists until the present day (Brown 1996, Hallaq 2001, Ramadan 2005, Aslan 2006, Safi 2003, Nenezich 2006).

- **Secularists** believe that the law of the state should be based on secular principles, not on Islamic legal theory.
- **Traditionalists** believe that the law of the state should be based on the traditional legal schools. However, traditional legal views are considered unacceptable by some modern Muslims, especially in areas like women's rights or slavery.
- **Reformers** believe that new Islamic legal theories can produce modernized Islamic law and lead to acceptable opinions in areas such as women's rights.
- **Salafis** believe that all conduct should be based simply on the example of Muhammad, his companions, and the first three generations of followers, and reject secular, reformist, and sometimes even some traditional jurisprudence on this basis.

Contemporary practice

There is tremendous variety in the interpretation and implementation of Islamic Law in Muslim societies today. Liberal movements within Islam have questioned the relevance and applicability of *sharia* from a variety of perspectives; Islamic feminism brings multiple points of view to the discussion. Several of

the countries with the largest Muslim populations, including Indonesia, Bangladesh and Pakistan, have largely secular constitutions and laws, with only a few Islamic provisions in family law. Turkey has a constitution that is officially strongly secular. India and the Philippines are the only countries in the world which have separate Muslim civil laws, framed by the Muslim Personal Law board in India, and wholly based on Sharia and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws in the Philippines. However, the criminal laws are uniform. Some controversial sharia laws favour Muslim men, including polygamy and rejection of alimony.

Most countries of the Middle East and North Africa maintain a dual system of secular courts and religious courts, in which the religious courts mainly regulate marriage and inheritance. Saudi Arabia and Iran maintain religious courts for all aspects of jurisprudence, and religious police assert social compliance. Laws derived from *sharia* are also applied in Afghanistan, Libya and Sudan. Some states in northern Nigeria have reintroduced *Sharia* courts. In practice the new Sharia courts in Nigeria have most often meant the re-introduction of harsh punishments without respecting the much tougher rules of evidence and testimony. The punishments include amputation of one/both hands for theft, stoning for adultery and apostasy.

Many, including the European Court of Human Rights, consider the punishments prescribed by Sharia as being barbaric and cruel. Islamic scholars argue that, if implemented properly, the punishments serve as a deterrent to crime. In international media, practices by countries applying Islamic law have fallen under considerable criticism at times. This is particularly the case when the sentence carried out is seen to greatly tilt away from established standards of international human rights. This is true for the application of the death penalty for the crimes of adultery and homosexuality, amputations for the crime of theft, and flogging for fornication or public intoxication.

Though Islamic law is interpreted differently across times, places and scholars, some Muslim fundamentalists following the literal and traditional interpretations believe it should legally be binding on all people of the Muslim faith and even on all people who come under their control.

A bill proposed by lawmakers in the Indonesian province of Aceh would impose Sharia law on all non-Muslims, the armed forces and law enforcement officers, a local police official has announced. The news comes two months after the Deutsche Presse-Agentur warned of " Taliban-style Islamic police terrorizing Indonesia's Aceh".

The interpretation of Islamic jurisprudence varies in different modern nations. In the Anglosphere and in Islamic countries with a history of British rule, for example, Islamic finance has been relatively successful due to the common-law nature of Islamic jurisprudence being compatible with English common law, which was itself significantly influenced by Islamic law. On the other hand, Islamic finance has been relatively unsuccessful in certain regimes such as Iran, Pakistan and Sudan which have diverged from the common-law nature of Islamic jurisprudence and instead interpret "a common-law variant as if it were a civil law system." For example, modern Iranian law is based on an "Islamic civil code" influenced by the Napoleonic code and German civil code. According to the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, "In some of the ways it has been codified and practised across the world, it has been appalling and applied to women in places like Saudi Arabia, it is grim."

A prominent Islamic jurist explains the common-law nature of Islamic jurisprudence:

"It must be understood that when we claim that Islam has a satisfactory solution for every problem in any situation in all times to come, we do not mean that the Holy Quran and Sunna of the Holy Prophet or the rulings of Islamic scholars provide a specific answer to each and every minute detail of our socioeconomic life. What we mean is that the Holy Quran and the Holy Sunna of the Prophet have laid down the broad principles in the light of which the

scholars of every time have deduced specific answers to the new situations arising in their age. Therefore, in order to reach a definite answer about a new situation the scholars of Shariah have to play a very important role. They have to analyze every question in light of the principles laid down by the Holy Quran and Sunna as well as in the light of the standards set by earlier jurists enumerated in the books of Islamic jurisprudence. This exercise is called *Istinbat* or *Ijtihad*. ... [T]he ongoing process of *Istinbat* keeps injecting new ideas, concepts and rulings into the heritage of Islamic jurisprudence."

Another significant difference between the classical and modern systems of Islamic law is that classical Islamic law was "independent of any state mechanism", while modern Islamic law is "controlled by the state because the state often controls the legal scholars." According to Sameer S. Vohra, "This control mechanism results in a lack of the sort of pluralism that once made the Islamic legal system as innovative and fluid as its United States counterpart."

Contemporary issues

Democracy and human rights

Some democrats and several official institutions in democratic countries (as the European Court for Human Rights) argue that Sharia is incompatible with a democratic state. These incompatibilities have been clarified in several legal disputes.

In 1998 the Turkish Constitutional Court banned and dissolved Turkey's Refah Party on the grounds that the "rules of sharia", which Refah sought to introduce, "were incompatible with the democratic regime," stating that "Democracy is the antithesis of sharia." On appeal by Refah the European Court of Human Rights determined that "sharia is incompatible with the fundamental principles of democracy" Refah's sharia based notion of a "plurality of legal systems, grounded on religion" was ruled to contravene the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. It was determined that it would "do away with the State's role as the guarantor of individual rights and freedoms" and "infringe the principle of non-discrimination between individuals as regards their enjoyment of public freedoms, which is one of the fundamental principles of democracy". It was further ruled that, according to Christian Moe:

> "[T]he Court considers that sharia, which faithfully reflects the dogmas and divine rules laid down by religion, is stable and invariable. Principles such as pluralism in the political sphere or the constant evolution of public freedoms have no place in it. […] It is difficult to declare one's respect for democracy and human rights while at the same time supporting a regime based on sharia, which clearly diverges from Convention values, particularly with regard to its criminal law and criminal procedure, its rules on the legal status of women and the way it intervenes in all spheres of private and public life in accordance with religious precepts."

On the other side, legal scholar L. Ali Khan concludes "that constitutional orders founded on the principles of Sharia are fully compatible with democracy, provided that religious minorities are protected and the incumbent Islamic leadership remains committed to the right to recall". However, Christian Pippan argues, that this contradicts the political reality in most Islamic states. "While constitutional arrangements to ensure that political authority is exercised within the boundaries of Sharia vary greatly among those nations", most existing models of political Islam have so far grossly failed to accept any meaningful political competition of the kind that Khan himself has identified as essential for even a limited conception of democracy. Khan, writes Pippan, dismisses verdicts as from the European Court of Human Rights or the Turkish Constitutional Court "as an expression of purely national or regional preferences."

Several major, predominantly Muslim countries criticized the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) for its perceived failure to take into account the

cultural and religious context of non- Western countries. Iran claimed that the UDHR was a "a secular understanding of the Judeo-Christian tradition", which could not be implemented by Muslims without trespassing the Islamic law. Therefore the Organization of the Islamic Conference, a group representing all Muslim majority nations, adopted the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, which diverges from the UDHR substantially, affirming Sharia as the sole source of human rights. This Declaration was severely criticized by the International Commission of Jurists for allegedly gravely threatening the inter-cultural consensus, introducing intolerable discrimination against non-Muslims and women, restricting fundamental rights and freedoms, and attacking the integrity and dignity of the human being.

Freedom of speech

Qadi 'Iyad ibn Musa al-Yahsubi argues that Sharia does not allow freedom of speech on such matters as criticism of Muhammad and that such criticism is considered blasphemy against Muhammad. He writes:

> "The Qur'an says that Allah curses the one who harms the Prophet in this world and He connected harm of Himself to harm of the Prophet. There is no dispute that anyone who curses Allah is killed and that his curse demands that he be categorized as an unbeliever. The Judgment of the unbeliever is that he is killed. [...] There is a difference between ... harming Allah and His Messenger and harming the believers. Injuring the believers, short of murder, incurs beating and exemplary punishment. The judgment against those who harm Allah and His Prophet is more severe -- the death penalty."

In Egypt, public authorities annulled, without his consent, the marriage of Prof. Nasr Abu Zayd when he got in conflict with an orthodox Islamic cleric from the Al-Azhar University in Cairo. The cleric had condemned Abu Zayd's reading of the Qur'an as being against the orthodox interpretation and labeled him an apostate (seen as a non-believer and consequently not permitted to marry or stay married to a Muslim woman). Abu Zayd fled to the Netherlands, where he is now a professor at the University of Leiden.

Gay rights

Sharia law may be considered as the world's most homophobic legal system with regards to the complete lack of decriminalisation laws (with executions and punishments), non existent anti-discrimination laws, neither does it have provision for same-sex civil unions or same-sex marriage. It does not recognise human rights based on sexual-orientation.

Women

In terms of religious obligations, such as certain elements of prayer, payment of *zakat*, observance of the Ramadan fast .and pilgrimage, women are treated no differently from men. There are, however, some exceptions made in the case of prayers and fasting. They are also forbidden to perform salat(prayer) during menstruation.

Islam has no clergy, but women do not traditionally become Imams or lead prayer. In practice, it is much more common for men to be scholars than women. Early Muslim scholars such as Abu-Hanifa and Al-Tabary held that there is nothing wrong with women holding a post as responsible as that of judge. Many

interpretations of Islamic law hold that women may not have prominent jobs, and thus are forbidden from working in the government. This has been a mainstream view in many Muslim nations in the last century, despite the example of Muhammad's wife Aisha, who both took part in politics and was a major authority on *hadith*. Islam does not prohibit women from working, as it says "Treat your women well and be kind to them for they are your partners and committed helpers." Married women may seek employment although it is often thought in patriarchal societies that the woman's role as a wife and mother should have first priority.

Islam unequivocally allows both single and married women to own property in their own right. Islam grants to women the right to inherit property, in contrast with some cultures where women themselves are considered chattels that can be inherited. (See widow inheritance.) However, a woman's inheritance is different from a man's, both in quantity and attached obligations. For instance, a daughter's inheritance is half that of her brothers, while a woman's share of inheritance is completely hers and no one, including her father or husband, can make any claim on it. In contrast, a son is required to use his inheritance to support his sister, as needed.

According to Islamic law, a post-pubescent female cannot be forced to marry anyone without their consent. Besides all other provisions for her protection at the time of marriage, it was specifically decreed that a woman has the full right to her *mahr*, a marriage gift, which is presented to her by her husband and is included in the nuptial contract. Some muslims believe that a woman can divorce her husband without resorting to the courts if the nuptial contract allows that. A Muslim may not marry or remain married to an unbeliever of either sex [Qur'an 2:221][60:10].

Islamic jurists have traditionally held that Muslim women may only enter into marriage with Muslim men, although some contemporary jurists question the basis of this restriction. On the other hand, the Qur'an explicitly allows Muslim men to marry any woman of the People of the Book, a term which includes Jews, Sabians, and Christians. However, fiqh law has held that it is mukrah (reprehensible) for a Muslim man to marry a non-Muslim woman in a non-Muslim country.

Sunni Islamic law allows husbands to divorce their wives by just saying *talaq* ("I divorce you") three times. In 2003 a Malaysian court ruled that, under Sharia law, a man may divorce his wife via text messaging as long as the message was clear and unequivocal. Such a divorce, known as the "triple talaq" is not allowed in most Muslim states. The divorced wife always keeps her dowry from when she was married, and is given child support until the age of weaning, at which point the father gains automatic custody of the child. The divorced wife also receives spousal support for three months after the divorce until it can be determined whether she is pregnant.

Sharia Index

On December 2007, the Tokyo Stock Exchange launched a new *sharia index* that includes shares of companies that comply with the Islamic law. The index of 79 stocks traded in Japan includes companies that are screened on a daily basis to ensure that they maintain strict Sharia compliance. The index excludes businesses that offer products and services considered unacceptable under Islamic law including alcohol, financial services, gambling, pork, pornography and tobacco.

Topics of Islamic law

Shari'ah may be divided into five main branches:

- 'ibadah (ritual worship)
- mu'amalat (transactions and contracts)
- adaab (morals and manners)
- i'tiqadat (beliefs)
- 'uqubat (punishments)

- The acts of worship, or al-ibadat includes:
    - Ritual Purification (*wudu*)
    - Prayers (*salah*)
    - Fasts (*sawm* and Ramadan)
    - Charities (*zakat*)
    - Pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*)

- Human interaction, or *al-mu'amalat* includes:
    - Financial transactions
    - Endowments
    - Laws of inheritance
    - Marriage, divorce, and child care
    - Foods and drinks (including ritual slaughtering and hunting)
    - Penal punishments
    - Warfare and peace
    - Judicial matters (including witnesses and forms of evidence)

See *mu`amalat* laws according to five major schools of jurisprudence and The Majallah.

Dietary

Islamic law does not present a comprehensive list of pure foods and drinks. However, it sanctions:

- Prohibition of swine, blood, meat of dead animals and animals slaughtered in the name of someone other than Allah.
- Prohibition of slaughtering an animal in any other way except in the prescribed manner of *tazkiyah* (cleansing) by taking Allah's name which involves cutting the throat of the animal and draining the blood. Causing the animal needless pain, slaughtering with a blunt blade or physically ripping out the esophagus is strictly forbidden. Modern contemporary 'painless' methods of slaughter like the captive bolt stunning are also prohibited.
- Prohibition of intoxicants

The prohibition of dead meat is not applicable to fish and locusts. Also hadith literature prohibits beasts having sharp canine teeth, birds having claws and tentacles in their feet, *Jallalah* (animals whose meat carries a stink in it because they feed on filth), tamed donkeys, and any piece cut from a living animal.

Marriage and divorce

There are two types of marriage mentioned in the Qur'an: *nikah* and *nikah mut'ah*. The first is more common; it aims to be permanent, but can be terminated by the husband in the *talaq* process or by the wife seeking divorce. In *nikah* the couples inherit from each other. A legal contract is signed when entering the marriage. The husband must pay for the wife's expenses. In Sunni jurisprudence, the contract is void if there is a determined divorce date in the *nikah*, whereas, in Shia jurisprudence, *nikah* contracts with determined divorce dates are transformed in *nikah mut'ah*. For the contract to be valid there must be two witnesses under Sunni jurisprudence. There is no witness requirement for Shia contracts.

Nikah mut'ah is considered *haraam* (forbidden) by Sunni Muslims. It means "marriage for pleasure". Under Shia jurisprudence a *nikah mut'ah* is the second form of marriage recognized by the Shia. It is a *fixed term marriage*, which is a marriage with a preset duration, after which the marriage is automatically dissolved. There is controversy about the Islamic legality of this type of marriage, since Sunnis believe it was abrogated by Prophet Muhammad, while Shias believe it was forbidden by Umar and hence that ban may be ignored since Umar had no authority to do so. The Qur'an itself doesn't mention any cancellation of the institution. *Nikah mut'ah* sometimes has a preset time period to the marriage, traditionally the couple do not inherit from each other, the man usually is not responsible for the economic welfare of the women, and she usually may leave her home at her own discretion. *Nikah mut'ah* also does not count towards a maximum of wives (four according to the Qur'an). The woman still is given her *mahr*, and the woman must still observe the *iddah*, a period of four months at the end of the marriage where she is not permitted to remarry in the case she may have become pregnant before the divorce took place. This maintains the proper lineage of children.

Requirements for Islamic Marriages:

- The man who is not currently a fornicator can only marry a woman who is not currently a fornicatress or a chaste woman from the people of the Book.
- The Muslim woman can only marry a Muslim man.
- The woman who is not currently a fornicatress can only marry a man who is not currently a fornicator.
- The fornicator can only marry a fornicatress -- and vice versa.
- The guardian may choose a suitable partner for a virgin girl, but the girl is free to contest and has the right to say 'no'.
- The guardian cannot marry the divorced woman or the widow if she didn't ask to be married.
- It is obligatory for a man to give bride wealth (gifts) to the woman he marries -- "Do not marry unless you give your wife something that is her right."

- A woman who wishes to be divorced usually needs the consent of her husband. However, most schools allow her to obtain a divorce without her husband's consent if she can show the judge that her husband is impotent. If the husband consents she does not have to pay back the dower.
- Men have the right of unilateral divorce. A divorce is effective when the man tells his wife that he is divorcing her. At this point the husband must pay the wife the "delayed" component of the dower.
- A divorced woman of reproductive age must wait four months and ten days before marrying again to ensure that she is not pregnant. Her ex-husband should support her financially during this period.

- If a man divorces his wife three times, he can no longer marry her again unless she marries another man, and if they got divorced (only in a way that this divorce is not intended for the woman to re-marry her first husband) the woman could re-marry her first husband.
- These are guidelines; Islamic law on divorce is different depending on the school of thought.

Penalties

In accordance with the Qur'an and several hadith, theft is punished by imprisonment or amputation of hands or feet, depending on the number of times it was committed and depending on the item of theft. However, before the punishment is executed two eyewitnesses under oath must say that they saw the person stealing. If these witnesses cannot be produced then the punishment cannot be executed. Witnesses must be either two men, or, if only one man can be found, one man and two women. Several requirements are in place for the amputation of hands, so the actual instances of this are relatively few; they are:

- The thief must be adult and sane.
- There must have been criminal intent to take private (not common) property.
- The theft must not have been the product of hunger, necessity, or duress.
- The goods stolen must: be over a minimum value, not haraam, and not owned by the thief's family.
- Goods must have been taken from custody (i.e. not in a public place).
- There must be reliable witnesses (mentioned above).
- The punishment is not imposed if the thief repents.

All of these must be met under the scrutiny of judicial authority. [Qur'an 5:38]

In accordance with hadith, stoning to death is the penalty for married men and women who commit adultery. In addition, there are several conditions related to the person who commits it that must be met. One of the difficult ones is that the punishment cannot be enforced unless there is a confession of the person, or four male eyewitnesses who each saw the act being committed. All of these must be met under the scrutiny of judicial authority For unmarried men and women, the punishment prescribed in the Qur'an and hadith is 100 lashes.

Similarly, under Sharia a woman who is accused of adultery cannot be punished unless there are four male eyewitnesses to prove she did commit adultery. The "four witness" standard comes from the Qur'an itself, a revelation Muhammad announced in response to accusations of adultery leveled at his wife, Aisha: "Why did they not produce four witnesses? Since they produce not witnesses, they verily are liars in the sight of Allah."[Qur'an 24:13]

The word in the Quran used for "beat" is *idreb*.[4:34] It is a conjugate of the word *daraba* which primarily means "to beat, strike, to hit". The Arabic word *idreb* is used in two primary ways. 1) to strike up a poem, and 2) to physically "beat", or "strike" someone.

Some consider "hit" to be a misinterpretation, and believe it should be translated as "admonish them, and leave them alone in the sleeping-places and separate from them." Certain modern translations of the Qur'an in the English language accept the commoner translation of "beat" but tone down the wording with bracketed additions. Whatever *idribu̅hunna* is meant to convey in the Qur'an -- and ambiguities are common in Islam's holy book -- the verb is directed, not at

a single husband, but to the community as a whole.

The word "idrib" is used 12 times in the Quran. Eight times it is used in the physical action of striking, and three times it is used in the context of speaking or applying a proverb. Clearly then, the most frequent use of the word is in physically striking. Here is a Quranic verse in which "idreb" is used:

""Strike" off their heads, "strike" off the very tips of their fingers!"[Qur'an 8:12]

Several *hadith* urge strongly against beating one's wife, such as: "How does anyone of you beat his wife as he beats the stallion camel and then embrace (sleep with) her? (Al- Bukhari, English Translation, vol. 8, Hadith 68, pp. 42-43), "I went to the Apostle of Allah (peace be upon him) and asked him: What do you say (command) about our wives? He replied: Give them food what you have for yourself, and clothe them by which you clothe yourself, and do not beat them, and do not revile them. (Sunan Abu-Dawud, Book 11, Marriage (Kitab Al-Nikah), Number 2139)". Others hadiths do indicate that husbands have a right to discipline their wives in a civilized manner to a certain extent:

> Fear Allah concerning women! Verily you have taken them on the security of Allah, and intercourse with them has been made lawful unto you by words of Allah. You too have right over them, and that they should not allow anyone to sit on your bed whom you do not like. But if they do that, you can chastise them but not severely. Their rights upon you are that you should provide them with food and clothing in a fitting manner. (Narrated in Sahih Muslim, on the authority of Jabir.)
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According to Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the European Council for Fatwa and Research:

> If the husband senses that feelings of disobedience and rebelliousness are rising against him in his wife, he should try his best to rectify her attitude by kind words, gentle persuasion and reasoning with her. If this is not helpful, he should sleep apart from her, trying to awaken her agreeable feminine nature so that serenity may be restored, and she may respond to him in a harmonious fashion. If this approach fails, it is permissible for him to smack her lightly with his hands, avoiding her face and other sensitive parts. In no case should he resort to using a stick or any other instrument that might cause pain and injury.

Punishments are authorized by other passages in the Quran and *hadiths* for certain crimes (e.g., extramarital sex, adultery), and are employed by some as

rationale for extra-legal punitive action while others disagree (quotations provided by Syed Kamran Mirza):

"The woman and the man guilty of adultery or fornication—flog each of them with hundred stripes: Let no compassion move you in their case, in a matter prescribed by God, if ye believe in God and the last day."[Qur'an 24:2] *"Nor come nigh to adultery: for it is a shameful (deed) and an evil, opening the road (to other evils)."*[Qur'an 17:32]

In most interpretations of Sharia, conversion by Muslims to other religions, is strictly forbidden and is termed apostasy. Muslim theology equates apostasy to treason, and in most interpretations of sharia, the penalty for apostasy is death.

In many Muslim countries, the accusation of apostasy is even used against non-conventional interpretations of the Quran. The severe persecution of the famous expert in Arabic literature, Prof. Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, is an example of this. In some countries, Sunni and Shia Muslims often accuse each other of apostasy. The current civil strife in Iraq is explained by many in terms of the extremely harsh religious opposition between Sunnis and Shias in Iraq.

Customs and behaviour

Practitioners of Islam are generally taught to follow some specific customs in their daily lives. Most of these customs can be traced back to Abrahamic traditions in Pre-Islamic Arabian society. Due to Muhammad's sanction or tacit approval of such practices, these customs are considered to be Sunnah (practices of Muhammad as part of the religion) by the Ummah (Muslim nation). It includes customs like:

- Saying Bismillah (in the name of God) before eating and drinking.
- Using the right hand for drinking and eating.
- Saying As-Salamu Alaykum (peace be upon you) when meeting someone and answering with *Wa alaykumus-Salam* (and peace be upon you).
- Saying Alhamdulillah (all gratitude is for only God) when sneezing and responding with *Yarhamukallah* (God have mercy on you).
- Saying the Adhan (prayer call) in the right ear of a newborn and the Iqama in its left.
- In the sphere of hygiene, it includes:
    - Clipping the moustache
    - Shaving the pubic hair
    - Removing underarm hair
    - Cutting nails
    - Circumcising the male offspring
    - Cleaning the nostrils, the mouth, and the teeth and
    - Cleaning the body after urination and defecation
- Abstention from sexual relations during the menstrual cycle and the puerperal discharge,[Qur'an 2:222] and ceremonial bath after the menstrual cycle, puerperal discharge, and *Janabah* (seminal/ ovular discharge or sexual intercourse).[Qur'an 4:43][Qur'an 5:6]
- Burial rituals include funeral prayer of bathed and enshrouded body in coffin cloth and burying it in a grave.

Rituals

There are two festivals that are considered Sunnah.

- Eid ul-Fitr
- Eid ul-Adha

Rituals associated with these festivals are:

- Sadaqah (charity) before Eid ul-Fitr prayer.
- The Prayer and the Sermon on Eid day.
- Takbirs (glorifying God) after every prayer in the days of *Tashriq* ^{definition--}
- Sacrifice of unflawed, four legged grazing animal of appropriate age after the prayer of Eid ul-Adha in the days of *Tashriq*.

Dress codes

The Qur'an also places a dress code upon its followers. The rule for men has been ordained before the women: "say to the believing men to lower their gaze and preserve their modesty, it will make for greater purity for them and Allah is well aware of all that they do."[Qur'an 24:30] Allah then says in the Qur'an, "And say to the believing women that they cast down their looks and guard their private parts and do not display their ornaments except what appears thereof, and let them wear their *khumūr* over their bosoms, and not display their ornaments except to their husbands..."[24:31] All those men in whose presence a woman is not obliged to practise the dress code are known as her *mahrams*. Men have a more relaxed dress code: the body must be covered from knee to waist. However under (strict interpretation of) Sharia Law, women are required to cover all of their bodies except hands and face. The rationale given for these rules is that men and women are not to be viewed as sexual objects. Men are required to keep their guard up and women to protect themselves. In theory, should either one fail, the other prevents the society from falling into *fitna* (temptation or discord).

However, whether the veil or headscarf is a real Quranic obligation, there are many different opinions. Fundamentalists as Yusuf Al-Qaradawi claim it is. However, many other sources (as Mohammed Arkoun, Soheib Bencheikh, Abdoldjavad Falaturi, Jamal al Banna claim it isn't. However, the first group appears dominant: *Jamal al Banna has been for a number of years one of the few mainstream Muslim scholars to argue that the Muslim headscarf, or hijab, is not an Islamic obligation.'*(, p. 75).

Turkey, a secular Muslim-majority country, had controversial laws against these dress codes in schools and work places. After the declaration of the Republic in 1923, as part of revolutions brought by Atatürk, a modern dress code was encouraged. The law changed early in 2008, with much debate, to allow a hijab while attending public school in Turkey. | url= http://www.library.cornell.edu/colldev/mideast/hdscrft.htm }}</ref> as well as France, where the recently enacted rule caused huge public controversy.

It is a common concern in the west that Muslim women are oppressed and forced to wear the Hijab or headscarf by their male counterparts. Muslim males

contend that the majority of women choose to wear the garment of their own free will. The main principle reason for the hijab is modesty, which is not wishing to receive unnecessary attention from people, such as admiration and flattery, envy, or, most importantly, sexual attraction from those other than her husband. Great care is taken to keep sexual thoughts, feelings and interactions to within the boundaries of the marital relationship.

One of the garments women wear is the *hijāb* (of which the headscarf is one component). The word *hijab* is derived from the Arabic word *hajaba* which means 'to hide from sight or view', 'to conceal'. *Hijāb* means to cover the head as well as the body.

Non-Muslims

Under Sharia law non-Muslims may be subjected to Sharia Laws however it codifies the treatment of *dhimmis* in relation to the Muslim state and in cases of over-lapping jurisdiction. Dhimmis are distinctly second-class citizens in that they cannot serve in public office, cannot testify in court and must follow certain rules meant for living on Muslim land and under Muslim protection (such as paying the jizya). The jizya or tax is enforced on those who broke a treaty or attacked Muslim with no right (as a punishment) or required from those who ask for protection without enrolling in the army. The rules include privilege to practice their own religion, except for public demonstration of non-Muslim religious practices and the right to convert Muslims.

The core component of treatment is the jizya, or tax specifically upon non-Muslims. The jizya originates in the Qur'an which says "Fight against those who believe not in Allah, nor in the Last Day, nor forbid that which has been forbidden by Allah and His Messenger and those who acknowledge not the religion of the truth among the people of the Scripture (Jews and Christians), until they pay the Jizyah with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued."[Qur'an 9:29] The "Book" refers to the People of the Book, Jews and Christians, who don't follow their religion righteously, but the jizya was extended to all conquered non-Muslims. The jizya ultimately is less than the Zakah (money given to the poor and needy) and Sadaqah (charity) that Muslims give.

However, verse 2:190 states: "Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors."

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sharia"

Shinto

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Shinto (神道 *Shintō* [?]) is the native religion of Japan and was once its state religion. It is a type of polytheism, and involves the worship of *kami* (神 [?]), or spirits. Some *kami* are local and can be regarded as the spiritual being/spirit or genius of a particular place, but others represent major natural objects and processes: for example, Amaterasu, the Sun goddess, or Mount Fuji. Shinto is an animistic belief system. The word *Shinto*, from the original Chinese *Shendao* (神道), combines two *kanji*: "*shin*" (神 [?]) (loanwords usually retain their Chinese pronunciation, hence shin not kami), meaning gods or spirits; and "*tō*" (道 [?]), meaning a philosophical way or path (originally from the Chinese word *dao*). As such, Shinto is commonly translated as "The Way of the Gods." Some differences exist between koshinto (the ancient Shintō) and the many types of Shinto taught and practiced today, showing the influences of Buddhism when it was introduced into Japan in the sixth century.

A *torii* at Itsukushima Shrine

After World War II, Shinto ceased to be Japan's state religion, although it continued to be considered the native religion of Japan. Some Shinto practices and teachings, once given a great deal of prominence during the war, are no longer taught or practiced today, while others still exist as commonplace activities such as *omikuji* (a form of fortune-telling) and the Japanese New Year to which few people give religious connotations. Important national ceremonies such as coronations and imperial marriages are conducted at the Three Palace Sanctuaries in Tokyo.

Shinto and Buddhism

Typical Shinto shrine with paper streamers made out of unprocessed hemp fibre

Prince Shotoku brought Buddhism to Japan. The introductions of writing in the 5th century and Buddhism in the 6th century from the Korean Peninsula had a profound impact on the development of a unified system of Shinto beliefs. In the early Nara period the *Kojiki* and the *Nihon Shoki* were written by compiling existing myths and legends into a unified account of Japanese mythology. These accounts were written with two purposes in mind: the introduction of Daoist, Confucian, and Buddhist themes into Japanese religion; and garnering support for the legitimacy of the Imperial house, based on its lineage from the sun goddess, Amaterasu. Much of modern Japan was under only fragmentary control by the Imperial family, and rival ethnic groups (including, perhaps, the ancestors of the Ainu people) continued to war against the encroachment of the Japanese. The mythological anthologies, along with other poetry anthologies like the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves* (*Man'yōshū*) and others, were intended to impress others with the worthiness of the Imperial family and their divine mandate to rule.

With the introduction of Buddhism and its rapid adoption by the court, it was necessary to explain the apparent differences between native Japanese beliefs and Buddhist teachings. Indeed, Shinto did not have a name until it became necessary to distinguish it from Buddhism. One explanation saw the *kami* as

supernatural beings still caught in the cycle of birth and rebirth (reincarnation). The *kami* are born, live, die, and are reborn like all other beings in the karmic cycle. However, the *kami* played a special role in protecting Buddhism and allowing its teachings of compassion to flourish. This explanation was later challenged by Kūkai (空海, 774–835), who saw the kami as different embodiments of the Buddhas themselves. For example, he famously linked Amaterasu (the sun goddess and ancestor of the Imperial family) with Dainichi Nyorai, a central manifestation of the Buddhists, whose name means literally "Great Sun Buddha." In his view, the *kami* were just Buddhas by another name.

Buddhism and Shinto coexisted and were amalgamated in the *shinbutsu shūgō* and Kūkai's syncretic view held wide sway up until the end of the Edo period. At that time, there was a renewed interest in "Japanese studies" (*kokugaku*), perhaps as a result of the closed country policy. In the 18th century, various Japanese scholars, in particular Motoori Norinaga (本居 宣長, 1730–1801), tried to tease apart the "real" Shinto from various foreign influences. The attempt was largely unsuccessful, since as early as the *Nihon Shoki* parts of the mythology were explicitly borrowed from Chinese doctrines. For example, the co-creator deities Izanami and Izanagi are linked to yin and yang. However, the attempt did set the stage for the arrival of state Shinto, following the Meiji Restoration (c.1868), when Shinto and Buddhism were separated (*shinbutsu bunri*).

State Shinto

Following the Meiji Restoration, Shinto was made the state religion of the Empire of Japan, and in 1868 its combination with Buddhism was outlawed, in an attempt to purify Shinto by abolishing many Buddhist and Confucian ideals. During this period, numerous scholars of *kokugaku* believed that State Shinto could be the unifying agent of the country around the Emperor while the process of modernization was undertaken with all possible speed. The psychological shock of the Western " Black Ships" and the subsequent collapse of the shogunate convinced many that the nation needed to unify in order to resist being colonized by outside forces.

In 1871, a Ministry of Divinities was formed and Shinto shrines were divided into twelve levels with the Ise Shrine (dedicated to Amaterasu, and thus symbolic of the legitimacy of the Imperial family) at the peak and small sanctuaries of humble towns at the base. The following year, the ministry was replaced with a new Ministry of Religion, charged with leading instruction in "*shushin*" (moral courses). This was a major reversal from the Edo period, in which families were registered with Buddhist temples, rather than Shinto shrines. Priests were officially nominated and organized by the state, and they instructed the youth in a form of Shinto theology based on the official dogma of the divinity of Japan's national origins and its Emperor.

As time went on, Shinto was increasingly used in the advertising of nationalist popular sentiments. In 1890, the Imperial Rescript on Education was issued, and students were required to ritually recite its oath to "offer yourselves courageously to the State" as well as to protect the Imperial family. The practice of Emperor worship was further spread by distributing imperial portraits for esoteric veneration. All of these practices were used to fortify national solidarity through patriotic observance at shrines. This use of Shinto gave Japanese patriotism a special tint of mysticism and cultural introversion, which became more pronounced as time went on.

Such processes continued to deepen throughout the early Shōwa period, when State Shinto became a main force of militarism, finally coming to an abrupt end in August 1945 when Japan lost the war in the Pacific. On 1 January 1946, Emperor Shōwa issued the Ningen-sengen, in which he quoted the Five Charter Oath of Emperor Meiji and declared that he was not an *akitsumikami*.

Types of Shinto

To distinguish between these different focuses of emphasis within Shinto, many feel it is important to separate Shinto into different types of Shinto expression.

- **Ko Shinto** (古神道 *ko-shintō* [?]) is the oldest line of Shinto branches, a tradition that values the systematic methods of exercise and training.
- **Shrine Shinto** (神社神道 *jinja-shintō* [?]) is the oldest and most prevalent of the Shinto types. It has always been a part of Japan's history and constitutes the main current of Shinto tradition. The Association of Shinto Shrines oversees about 80,000 shrines nationwide.
- **Sect Shinto** (宗派神道 *shūha-shintō* [?]) comprises 13 groups formed during the 19th century. They do not have shrines, but conduct religious activities in meeting halls. Shinto sects include the mountain-worship sects, who focus on worshipping mountains like Mount Fuji, faith-healing sects, purification sects, Confucian sects, and Revival Shinto sects. Konkōkyō, Tenrikyō, and Kurozumikyō, although operating separately from modern Shinto, are considered to be forms of Sect Shinto.
- **Folk Shinto** (民俗神道 *minzoku-shintō* [?]) includes the numerous but fragmented folk beliefs in deities and spirits. Practices include divination, spirit possession, and shamanic healing. Some of their practices come from Taoism, Buddhism, or Confucianism, but most come from ancient local traditions.

All these main types of Shinto and some subtypes have given birth to many and diverse schools and sects since medieval times to the present days. A list of the most relevant can be found at the article Shinto sects and schools.

Post-war

As the era of State Shinto came to a close with the end of World War II, most Japanese came to believe that the hubris of Empire had led to their downfall. Lust for foreign territory blinded their leaders to the importance of their homeland. In the post-war period, numerous " New Religions" cropped up, many of them ostensibly based on Shinto, but on the whole, Japanese religiosity may have decreased. However, the concept of religion in Japan is a complex one. A survey conducted in the mid 1970s indicated that of those participants who claimed not to believe in religion, one-third had a Buddhist or Shinto altar in their home, and about one quarter carried an *omamori* (an amulet to gain protection by *kami*) on their person. Following the war, Shinto has, for the most part, persisted with less importance placed on mythology or the divine mandate of the Imperial family. Instead, shrines tend to focus on helping ordinary people gain better fortunes for themselves through maintaining good relations with their ancestors and other *kami*. Shinto has largely reverted to its pre-imperial family state. Post-war, the number of Japanese citizens identifying their religious beliefs as Shinto has declined a great deal, yet the general practice of Shinto rituals has not decreased accordingly, and many practices have persisted as general cultural beliefs (such as ancestor worship, which is still very popular), superstitions, and community festivals (*matsuri*) — focusing more on religious practices and items than principles. The explanation generally given for this anomaly is that, following the demise of State Shinto, modern Shinto has reverted to its more traditional position as a folk religion which is culturally ingrained, rather than enforced. In any case, Shinto and its values continue to be an important component of the Japanese cultural mindset.

A modern shrine in Osaka

Shinto has also spread abroad to a limited extent, and a few non-Japanese Shinto priests have been ordained. A relatively small number of people practice Shinto in America. There are, however, several Shinto shrines in Hawaii, which has a large number of people of Japanese descent. Outside the US, there are also

Shinto shrines in Brazil, Canada and the Netherlands. Shrines were also established in Taiwan and Korea during the Japanese occupation of those areas, but following the war, they were either repurposed or destroyed.

Definition

Shinto can be seen as a form of animism and may be regarded as a variant of shamanist religion. Shinto beliefs and ways of thinking are deep in the subconscious fabric of modern Japanese society. The afterlife is not a primary concern in Shinto; much more emphasis is placed on fitting into this world, instead of preparing for the next.

Shinto has no binding set of dogma, no holiest place for worshippers, no person or *kami* deemed holiest, and no defined set of prayers. Instead, Shinto is a collection of rituals and methods meant to mediate the relations of living humans and *kami*. These practices have originated organically in Japan over many centuries and have been influenced by Japan's contact with the religions of other nations, especially China. Notice, for example, that the word *Shinto* is itself of Chinese origin and that much of the codification of Shinto mythology was done with the explicit aim of answering Chinese cultural influence. Conversely, Shinto had and continues to have an impact on the practice of other religions within Japan. In particular, one could even make a case for discussing it under the heading of Japanese Buddhism, since these two religions have exercised a profound influence on each other throughout Japanese history. Further, the Japanese "New Religions" that have emerged since the end of the Second World War have also shown a clear Shinto influence.

Some feel Shinto was used as an ideology during the militaristic beginning of the Shōwa period, following the Meiji Restoration. Because Shinto has no absolute authority, some feel what was a natural expression of the beliefs of the people was hijacked by radical nationalists, who desired to unify the Japanese people against the "inferior" people in other nations. Others wonder if the emphasis Shinto places on Japanese exceptionalism made such developments inevitable. Even today, some far right factions within Japanese society want to see a greater emphasis placed on Shinto and increased reverence shown to the Emperor as part of a project to restore Japan to its "rightful place" as the leading nation of the world.

Characteristics

The most immediately striking theme in the Shinto religion is a great love and reverence for Nature in all its forms and for natural artifacts and processes. Thus, a waterfall, the moon, or just an oddly shaped rock might come to be regarded as a *kami*; so might charismatic persons or more abstract entities like growth and fertility. As time went by, the original nature-worshipping roots of the religion, while never lost entirely, became attenuated and the kami took on more reified and anthropomorphic forms, with a formidable body of myth attached to them. (*See also: Japanese mythology*.) The *kami*, however, are not transcendent deities in the usual Western and Indian sense of the word. Although divine, they are close to humanity; they inhabit the same world as we do, make the same mistakes as we do, and feel and think the same way as we do. Those who died will usually become *kami*, with their power and main characteristics given by their doings in life. Those believing other religions may be also venerated as *kami* after death, if there are Shinto believers who wish them to be.

A woman tying her fortune (*omikuji*) at Kasuga Shrine

Practices and teachings

Afterlife

Unlike many religions, one does not need to publicly profess belief in Shinto to be a Shintoist. Whenever a child is born in Japan, a local Shinto shrine adds the child's name to a list kept at the shrine and declares him or her a "family child" (氏子 *ujiko* [?]). After death an *ujiko* becomes a "family spirit", or "family *kami*" (氏神 *ujigami* [?]). One may choose to have one's name added to another list when moving and then be listed at both places. Names can be added to the list without consent and regardless of the beliefs of the person added to the list. However, this is not considered an imposition of belief, but a sign of being welcomed by the local *kami*, with the promise of addition to the pantheon of *kami* after death. Those children who die before addition to the list are called "water children" (水子 *mizuko* [?]), and are believed to cause troubles and plagues. This is especially the case when the death was the result of an abortion. *Mizuko* are often worshipped in a Shinto shrine dedicated to stilling their anger and sadness.

Because Shinto has co-existed with Buddhism for well over a millennium, it is very difficult to untangle Shinto and Buddhist beliefs about the world. Though Buddhism and Shinto have very different perspectives on the world, most Japanese do not see any challenge in reconciling these two very different religions, and practice both. Thus it is common for people to practice Shinto in life yet have a Buddhist funeral. Their different perspectives on the afterlife are seen as complementing each other, and frequently the ritual practice of one will have an origin in the other.

Four affirmations

Though Shinto has no absolute commandments for its adherents outside of living "a simple and harmonious life with nature and people", there are said to be "Four Affirmations" of the Shinto spirit:

A man praying at a Shinto shrine

- Tradition and the family: The family is seen as the main mechanism by which traditions are preserved. Their main celebrations relate to birth and marriage.
- Love of nature: Nature is sacred; to be in contact with nature is to be close to the kami. Natural objects are worshipped as containing sacred spirits.
- Physical cleanliness: Followers of Shinto take baths, wash their hands, and rinse out their mouths often.
- " Matsuri": Any festival dedicated to the Kami, of which there are many each year.

Impurity

Shinto teaches that certain deeds create a kind of ritual impurity that one should want cleansed for one's own peace of mind and good fortune, not because impurity is wrong in and of itself. Wrong deeds are called "dirtiness" (穢れ *kegare* [?]), opposed to "purity" (清め *kiyome* [?]). Normal days are called "day" (*ke*), and festive days are called "sunny", or simply, "good" (*hare*). Killing living beings should be done with reverence for taking a life to continue one's own, and should be kept to a minimum. Modern Japanese continue to place great emphasis on the importance of ritual phrases and greetings (挨拶 *aisatsu* [?]). Before eating, many (though not all) Japanese say, "I will humbly receive [this food]" (戴きます *itadakimasu* [?]), in order to show proper thankfulness to the preparer of the meal in particular and more generally to all those living things that lost their lives to make the meal. Failure to show proper respect can be seen as a lack of concern for others, looked down on because it is believed to create problems for all. Those who fail to take into account the feelings of other people and *kami* will only bring ruin on themselves. The worst expression of such an attitude is the taking of another's life for personal advancement or enjoyment. Those killed without being shown gratitude for their sacrifice will hold a grudge (怨み *urami* [?]) and become a powerful and evil kami that seeks revenge (*aragami*). This same emphasis on the need for cooperation and collaboration can be seen throughout Japanese culture today. Additionally, if anyone is injured on the grounds of a shrine, the area affected must be ritually purified.

A bride at a Shinto wedding in Kamakura

Purification

Purification rites are a vital part of Shinto. These may serve to placate any restive kami, for instance when their shrine had to be relocated. Such ceremonies have also been adapted to modern life. For example, a ceremony was held in 1969 to hallow the *Apollo 11* mission to the moon, new buildings made in Japan are frequently blessed by a Shinto priest during the groundbreaking ceremony, and many cars made in Japan have been blessed as part of the assembly process. Moreover, every Japanese car factory built in the United States or away from Japan has had a groundbreaking ceremony performed by a Shinto priest, with occasionally an annual visitation by the priest to re-purify. A more personal purification rite is the purification by water. This may involve standing beneath a waterfall or performing ritual ablutions in a river-mouth or in the sea (misogi)

This practice comes from Shinto history, when the kami Izanagi-no-Mikoto first performed misogi after returning from the land of Yomi, where he was made impure by Izanami-no-mikoto after her death. These two forms of purification are often referred to as harae (祓). A third form of purification is avoidance, that is, the taboo placed on certain persons or acts. To illustrate, women were not allowed to climb Mount Fuji until 1868, in the era of the Meiji Restoration. Although this aspect has decreased in recent years, religious Japanese will not use an inauspicious word like "cut" at a wedding, nor will they attend a wedding if they have recently been bereaved.

Shrines

Gateway to Shinto shrine with torii gate

The principal worship of kami is done at public shrines, although home worship at small private shrines (*kamidana*) (sometimes only a high shelf with a few ritual objects) is also common. It is also possible to worship objects or people while they are still living. While a few of the public shrines are elaborate structures, most are small buildings in the characteristic Japanese architectural style. Shrines are commonly fronted by a distinctive Japanese gate (*torii*) made of two uprights and two crossbars. These gates are there as a part of the barrier to separate our living world and the world the kami live in. There are often two guardian animals placed at each side of the gate and they serve to protect the entrance. There are well over 100,000 of these shrines in operation today, each with its retinue of Shinto priests. Shinto priests often wear a ceremonial robe called a jo-e. Kami are invoked at such important ceremonies as weddings and entry into university. The kami are commonly petitioned for earthly benefits: a child, a promotion, a happier life. While one may wish for ill fortune on others, this is believed to be possible only if the target has committed wrongs first, or if one is willing to offer one's life. Though Shinto is popular for these occasions, when it comes to funerals most Japanese turn to Buddhist ceremonies, since the emphasis in Shinto is on this life and not the next. Almost all festivals in Japan are hosted by local Shinto shrines and these festivals are open to all those that wish to attend. While these could be said to be religious events, Japanese do not regard these events as religious since everyone can attend, regardless of personal beliefs.

Kami

Shinto teaches that everything contains a kami ("spiritual essence" which is sometimes translated into "god", though perhaps soul or spirit would be more accurate; an even better translation would actually be "The Sacred"). Every rock, every squirrel, every living and nonliving thing contains a kami. There is also a main kami for groups of things: for example, there is a kami within a rhino, and there is also a main kami residing over all the rhinos of the world.

Shinto's kami are collectively called *yaoyorozu no kami* (八百万の神 [?]), an expression literally meaning "eight million kami," but interpreted as meaning "myriad".

The most widely worshiped of all kami is the sun-goddess Amaterasu. However, Japanese do not specifically worship her or invoke her name to ask for help. Her main shrine is the Ise Shrine, but many lesser shrines are dedicated to her. Within the shrine, she is often symbolized by a mirror. Alternatively, the inner sanctum may be empty. This emptiness does not mean non-existence; rather, it symbolizes that everything that one sees through the mirror is the embodiment of Amaterasu and every other kami.

Shinto shrine in Fujiyoshida

Until the end of World War II, the Tenno (Emperor) was believed to have been descended from Amaterasu and father of all Japanese, and was therefore a kami on earth (an *ikigami* or "living kami"); this divine status was popularized during the Meiji Restoration. This did not prevent military governors (*Shogun*) from usurping power, but the emperor was always seen as the true ruler of Japan, even when his rule was only nominal. Although Emperor Hirohito renounced his divine status in 1946 under American pressure (*Ningen-sengen*), the imperial family remains deeply involved in the Shinto ritual that unifies the Japanese nation symbolically. Because Shinto does not require a declaration or an enforcement to be worshiped (considered "unharmonious,") this declaration, while serving political reasons, is religiously meaningless and merely means that the state enforcement has ended.

Ema

In medieval times, wealthy people would donate horses to shrines, especially when making a request of the god of the shrine (for example, when praying for victory in battle). For smaller favors, giving a picture of a horse became a custom, and these are popular today. The visitor to a shrine purchases a wooden tablet with a likeness of a horse, or nowadays, something else (kanji, an arrow, a snake, or a number of other animals), writes a wish or prayer on the tablet, and hangs it at the shrine. In some cases, if the wish comes true, the person hangs another ema at the shrine in gratitude.

Kagura

Kagura is the ancient Shinto ritual dance of Shamanic origin. The word "Kagura" is thought to be a contracted form of *kami no kura* or *seat of the kami* or the *site where the kami is received*.(Kobayashi, Kazushige p.3) There is a mythological tale of how Kagura dance came into existence. The sun goddess Amaterasu became very upset at her brother so she hid in a cave. All of the other gods and goddesses were concerned and wanted her to come outside. Ame-no-uzeme began to dance and create a noisy commotion in order to entice Amaterasu to come out. The kami (gods) tricked Amaterasu by telling her there was a better sun goddess in the heavens. Amaterasu came out and light returned to the universe.

Ema at Meiji Jingu, a Shinto shrine in Tokyo

Music plays a very important role in the kagura performance. Everything from the setup of the instruments to the most subtle sounds and the arrangement of the music is crucial to encouraging the kami to come down and dance. The songs are used as magical devices to summon the gods and as prayers for blessings. Rhythm patterns of five and seven are common, possibly relating to the Shinto belief of the twelve generations of heavenly and earthly deities. There is also vocal accompaniment called *kami uta* in which the drummer sings sacred songs to the gods. Often the vocal accompaniment is overshadowed by the drumming and instruments, reinforcing that the vocal aspect of the music is more for incantation rather than aesthetics.(Averbuch, Irit pp.83-87)

In both ancient Japanese collections, the Nihongi and Kojiki, Ame-no-uzeme's dance is described as *asobi*, which in old Japanese language means a ceremony that is designed to appease the spirits of the departed, and which was conducted at funeral ceremonies. Therefore, kagura is a rite of *tama shizume*, of pacifying the spirits of the departed. In the Heian period (8th-12th centuries) this was one of the important rites at the Imperial Court and had found its fixed place in the tama shizume festival on the eleventh month. At this festival people sing as accompaniment to the dance: "Depart! Depart! Be cleansed and go! Be purified and leave!" (Kobayashi, Kazushige pp.4-5)

This rite of purification is also known as *chinkon*. It was used for securing and strengthening the soul of a dying person. It was closely related to the ritual of *tama furi* (shaking the spirit), to call back the departed soul of the dead or to energize a weakened spirit. Spirit pacification and rejuvenation were usually achieved by songs and dances, also called *asobi*. The ritual of *chinkon* continued to be performed on the emperors of Japan, thought to be descendents of Amaterasu. It is possible that this ritual is connected with the ritual to revive the sun goddess during the low point of the winter solstice. (Averbuch, Irit p.12)

There is a division between the kagura that is performed at the Imperial palace and the shrines related to it, and the kagura that is performed in the countryside.

Folk kagura, or kagura from the countryside is divided according to region. The following descriptions relate to sato kagura, kagura that is from the countryside. The main types are: *miko kagura*, *Ise kagura*, *Izumo kagura*, and *shishi kagura*.

Miko kagura is the oldest type of kagura and is danced by women in Shinto shrines and during folk festivals. The ancient miko were Shamanesses, but are now considered priestesses in the service of the Shinto Shrines. *Miko kagura* originally was a shamanic trance dance, but later, it became an art and was interpreted as a prayer dance. It is performed in many of the larger Shinto shrines and is characterized by slow, elegant, circular movements, by emphasis on the four directions and by the central use of torimono (objects dancers carry in their hands), especially the fan and bells.(Averbuch, Irit p.15)

Ise kagura is a collective name for rituals that are based upon the *yudate* (boiling water rites of Shugendo origin) ritual. It includes *miko* dances as well as dancing of the *torimono* type. The *kami* are believed to be present in the pot of boiling water, so the dancers dip their *torimono* in the water and sprinkle it in the four directions and on the observers for purification and blessing. (Averbuch, Irit, p. 16)

Izumo kagura is centered in the Sada shrine of Izumo, Shimane prefecture. It has two types: *torimono ma*, unmasked dances that include held objects, and *shinno* (sacred No), dramatic masked dances based on myths. *Izumo kagura* appears to be the most popular type of kagura. (Averbuch, Irit, p.16)

Shishi kagura also known as the Shugen-No tradition, uses the dance of a *shishi* (lion or mountain animal) mask as the image and presence of the deity. It includes the *Ise daikagura* group and the *yamabushi kagura* and *bangaku* groups of the Tohoku area (Northeastern Japan). *Ise daikagura* employs a large red Chinese type of lion head which can move its ears. The lion head of the *yamabushi kagura* schools is black and can click its teeth. Unlike other kagura types in which the *kami* appear only temporarily, during the *shishi kagura* the *kami* is constantly present in the shishi head mask. During the Edo period, the lion dances became showy and acrobatic losing its touch with spirituality. However, the *yamabushi kagura* tradtion has retained its ritualistic and religious nature. (Averbuch, p.16)

Originally, the practice of kagura involved authentic possession by the *kami* invoked. In modern day Japan it appears to be difficult to find authentic ritual possession, called *kamigakari*, in kagura dance. However, it is common to see choreographed possession in the dances. Actual possession is not taking place but elements of possession such as losing control and high jumps are applied in the dance.

Cultural effects

Shinto has been called "the religion of Japan", and the customs and values of Shinto are inseparable from those of Japanese culture. Many famously Japanese practices have origins either directly or indirectly rooted in Shinto. For example, it is clear that the Shinto ideal of harmony with nature underlies such typically Japanese arts as flower-arranging (生け花 *ikebana*), traditional Japanese architecture, and garden design. A more explicit link to Shinto is seen in sumo wrestling, where, even in the modern version of the sport, many Shinto-inspired ceremonies must be performed before a bout, such as purifying the wrestling arena by sprinkling it with salt. The Japanese emphasis on proper greetings and respectful phrasings can be seen as a continuation of the ancient Shinto belief in *kotodama* (words with a magical effect on the world). Many Japanese cultural customs, like using wooden chopsticks and removing shoes before entering a building, have their origin in Shinto beliefs and practices. A number of other Japanese religions have originated from or been influenced by Shinto. Also, much Japanese pop culture, especially anime, draw from Shinto for inspiration and stories (e.g. Spirited Away, InuYasha).

Shinto Texts

- The Kojiki (Record of Ancient Matters)
- The Rikkokushi (Six National Histories)
- The Shoku Nihongi and its Nihon Shoki (Continuing Chronicles of Japan)
- The Jinnō Shōtōki (a study of Shinto and Japanese politics and history) written in the 14th century

Well known shrines

Of the many and diverse Shinto shrines in existence, some are well known:

Atsuta Shrine, a shrine to the Imperial sword Kusanagi.

- Atsuta Shrine, Nagoya, shrine to the Imperial sword Kusanagi
- Heian Jingū, Kyoto, dedicated to Emperor Kammu and Emperor Kōmei
- Hikawa Shrine, Omiya district
- The Grand Shrine of Ise, Ise, Mie, dedicated to Amaterasu
- Itsukushima Shrine, Hiroshima Prefecture
- Iwashimizu Shrine, Yawata, Kyoto
- Izumo Shrine, Izumo
- Kasuga Shrine, Nara
- Katori Shrine, Chiba Prefecture
- Kumano Shrines, Wakayama Prefecture
- Meiji Shrine, Tokyo, the shrine of Emperor Meiji
- Nikkō Tōshō-gū, Nikkō, Tochigi Prefecture
- Ōsaki Hachiman Shrine, Miyagi Prefecture
- Sendai Tōshō-gū, Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture
- Shiogama Shrine, Miyagi Prefecture
- Three Palace Sanctuaries, Kōkyo Imperial Palace, Tokyo
- Tsurugaoka Hachiman Shrine, Kamakura, Kanagawa
- Usa Hachiman Shrine, Ōita Prefecture, dedicated to Hachiman
- Yasukuni Shrine (Tokyo), shrine dedicated to Japanese, mostly soldiers, who died for the Emperor.

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Shiva

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Shiva (IAST: **Śiva**; Hindi, शिव **Shiv** , Bengali শিব, **Shib**, Telugu: శివుడు) is one of the principal deities of Hinduism. Often called "the Destroyer", Shiva is one of the Trimurti, along with Brahma the Creator and Vishnu the Preserver. Within Shaivism he is viewed as the supreme deity, where as in other branches of Hinduism such as the Smarta tradition he is worshipped as one of five manifestations of the divine. Followers of Hinduism who focus their worship upon Shiva are called *Shaivites* or *Shaivas* (Sanskrit Śaiva). His role as the primary deity of Shaivism is reflected in his epithets *Mahādeva* ("great god"; *mahā* = great + *deva* = god), *Maheśvara* ("great lord"; *mahā* = great + *īśvara* = lord), and *Parameśvara* ("Supreme Lord"). Shaivism, along with Vaiṣṇava traditions that focus on Vishnu, and Śākta traditions that focus on the goddess (Devī) are three of the most influential denominations in Hinduism.

Shiva is one of the five primary forms of the Divine in Smartism, a denomination of Hinduism that puts particular emphasis on five deities, the other four being Vishnu, Devi, Ganesha, and Surya. Another way of thinking about the divinities in Hinduism identifies Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva as each representing one of the three primary aspects of the divine in Hinduism, known collectively as the Trimurti. In the Trimurti system, Brahma is the creator, Vishnu is the maintainer or preserver, and Shiva is the destroyer or transformer.

Shiva is usually represented by the *Shiva linga*. In images, he is generally represented as immersed in deep meditation.

Etymology

The Sanskrit word **śiva** (Devanagari शिव) is an adjective meaning kind, friendly, gracious, or auspicious. As a proper name it means "The Auspicious One", used as a euphemistic name for Rudra. In simple English transliteration it is written either as *Shiva* or *Siva*. Pronunciation is written in the International Phonetic Alphabet as IPA: [ɕivə]. The adjective **śiva** meaning "auspicious" is used as an attributive epithet not particularly of Rudra, but of several other Vedic deities. In the Rig Veda, Indra uses this word to describe himself several times. (2:20:3, 6:45:17, 8:93:3)

Adi Sankara in his interpretation of the name **Shiva**, the 27th and 600th name of Vishnu sahasranama interprets

Shiva

A statue in Bangalore depicting Shiva meditating

Devanagari	शिव
Abode	Mount Kailāsa
Mantra	Aum Namah Sivaya
Weapon	Trident (Trishul)
Consort	Parvati or Sati or Shakti or Durga

Shiva to mean either "Pure One," i.e., the One who is not affected by three Gunas of Prakrti, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. or "the One who purifies everyone by the very utterance of His name." Swami Chinmayananda, in his translation of Vishnu sahasranama further elaborates on that verse: Shiva means the One who is eternally pure, or the One who can never have any contamination of the imperfection of Rajas and Tamas

Mount	Nandi (bull)

The Sanskrit word **śaiva** means "relating to the god Shiva", and this term is the Sanskrit name both for one of the principal sects of Hinduism, and for a member of one of those sects. It is used as an adjective to characterize certain beliefs and practices, such as Shaivism.

The name Shiva, in one interpretation, is also said to have derived from the Dravidian word "Siva" meaning "to be red". It is the equivalent of Rudra, "the red" RigVeda.

Historical development

The worship of Shiva is a pan-Hindu tradition, practiced widely across all of India and Nepal. Modern historians believe that the figure of Shiva as we know him today was built-up over time, with the ideas of many regional sects being amalgamated into a single figure. How the *persona* of Shiva converged as a composite deity is not well-documented. Axel Michaels explains the composite nature of Shaivism as follows:

> Like Viṣṇu, Śiva is also a high god, who gives his name to a collection of theistic trends and sects: Śaivism. Like Vaiṣṇavism, the term also implies a unity which cannot be clearly found either in religious practice or in philosophical and esoteric doctrine. Furthermore, practice and doctrine must be kept separate.

An example of assimilation took place in Maharashtra, where a regional deity named Khandoba is a patron deity of farming and herding castes. The foremost centre of worship of Khandoba in Maharashtra is in Jejuri. Khandoba has been assimilated both as a name for Karttikya and also as a form of Shiva himself in which case he is worshipped in the form of a lingam. Shakti M. Gupta clarifies the possible confusion between these two identifications by explaining that one of Kartikeya's functions is as the patron deity of thieves, and it is in this capacity that the tribe called Ramoshis, who are thieves by profession, worship Khandoba. Khandoba's varied associations also include an indentification with Surya. The derivation of the name Khandoba has been variously interpreted, and M. S. Mate says that the most commonly-held belief is that it was a distorted form of Skanda, but also notes alternate theories.

The Pashupati seal

A seal discovered during excavation of the Mohenjo-daro archaeological site in the Indus Valley has drawn attention as a possible representation of a "proto-Shiva" figure. This " Pashupati" (Lord of Animals,or Lord of Beings Sanskrit *paśupati*) seal shows a seated figure, possibly ithyphallic, surrounded by animals. Sir John Marshall and others have claimed that this figure is a prototype of Shiva, and have described the figure as having three faces, seated in a "yoga posture" with the knees out and feet joined.

This claim has not fared well with some modern academics. Gavin Flood characterizes these views as "speculative", saying that while it is not clear from the seal that the figure has three faces, is seated in a yoga posture, or even that the shape is intended to represent a human figure, it is nevertheless possible that there are echoes of Shaiva iconographic themes, such as half-moon shapes resembling the horns of a bull. Historian John Keay is more specifically dismissive, saying:

An Indus Valley seal with the seated figure termed *pashupati*.

> ...there is little evidence for the currency of this myth. Rudra, a Vedic deity later identified with Shiva, is indeed referred to as *pasupati* because of his association with cattle; but asceticism and meditation were not Rudra's specialties, nor is he usually credited with an empathy for animals other than kine. More plausibly, it has been suggested that the Harappan figure's heavily horned headgear bespeaks a bull sect, to which numerous other representations of bulls lend substance.

Rudra

Shiva as we know him today shares many features with the Vedic god Rudra and both Shiva and Rudra are viewed as the same personality in a number of Hindu traditions. Rudra, the god of the roaring storm, is usually portrayed in accordance with the element he represents as a fierce, destructive deity.

The oldest surviving text of Hinduism is the Rig Veda, which is dated to between 1700–1100 BCE based on linguistic and philological evidence. A god named Rudra is mentioned in the Rig Veda. The name Rudra is still used as a name for Shiva. In RV 2.33 he is described as the "Father of the Maruts", a group of storm gods.

The identification of Shiva with the older god Rudra is not universally accepted, as Axel Michaels explains:

> To what extent Śiva's origins are in fact to be sought in Rudra is extremely unclear. The tendency to consider Śiva an ancient god is based on this identification, even though the facts that justify such a far-reaching assumption are meager.

Three-headed Shiva, Gandhara, 2nd century CE.

Rudra is called "The Archer" (Sanskrit: *Śarva*) and the arrow is an essential attribute of Rudra. This name appears in the Shiva Sahasranama, and R. K. Sharma notes that it is used as a name of Shiva often in later languages. The word is derived from the Sanskrit root *śarv-* which means "to injure" or "to kill" and Sharma uses that general sense in his interpretive translation of the name Śarva as "One who can kill the forces of darkness". The names Dhanvin ("Bowman") and Bāṇahasta ("Archer", literally "Armed with arrows in his hands") also refer to archery.

Identification with Vedic Deities

Shiva's rise to a major position in the pantheon was facilitated by his identification with a host of Vedic deities, including Agni, Indra, Prajāpati, Vāyu, and others.

Agni

Rudra and Agni have a close relationship. The identification between Agni and Rudra in the Vedic literature was an important factor in the process of Rudra's gradual development into the later character as Rudra-Shiva. The identification of Agni with Rudra is explicitly noted in the *Nirukta*, an important early text on etymology, which says "Agni is called Rudra also". The interconnections between the two deities are complex, and according to Stella Kramrisch:

> The fire myth of Rudra-Śiva plays on the whole gamut of fire, valuing all its potentialities and phases, from conflagration to illumination.

In the *Śatarudrīa*, some epithets of Rudra such as Sasipañjara ("Of golden red hue as of flame") and Tivaṣīmati ("Flaming bright") suggest a fusing of the two deities. Agni is said to be a bull and Lord Shiva possesses a bull as his vehicle, Nandi. The horns of Agni, who is sometimes characterized as a bull, are mentioned. In medieval sculpture both Agni and the form of Shiva known as Bhairava have flaming hair as a special feature.

Indra

The Indologist, Koenraad Elst proposes that Shiva of Puranic Hinduism is a continuation of the Vedic Indra. He gives several reasons for his hypothesis. Both Shiva and Indra are known for having a thirst for Soma. Both are associated with mountains, rivers, male fertility, fierceness, fearlessness, warfare, transgression of established mores, the Aum sound, the Supreme Self. In the Rig Veda the term *śiva* is used to refer to Indra. (2.20.3, 6.45.17, and 8.93.3.)

Indra, like Shiva, is likened to a bull.

In the Rig Veda, Rudra is the father of the Maruts, but he is never associated with their warlike exploits as is Indra.

Attributes of Shiva
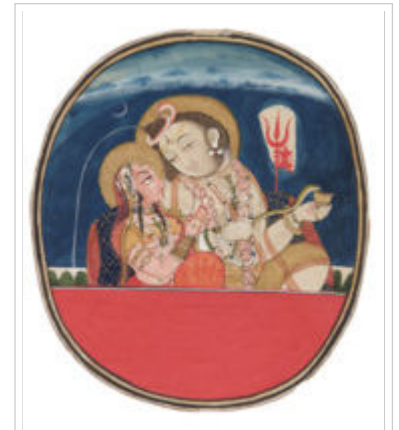
Shiva with Parvati. Shiva is depicted three-eyed, with crescent moon on his head, the Ganga flowing through his matted hair, wearing ornaments of serpents and a skull necklace, covered in ashes and Trisula and Damaru are seen in the background.

- **Third Eye:** Shiva is often depicted with a third eye with which he burned Desire (Kāma) to ashes. There has been controversy regarding the original meaning of Shiva's name *Tryambakam* (*Sanskrit*: त्र्यम्बकम्), which occurs in many scriptural sources. In classical Sanskrit the word *ambaka* denotes "an eye", and in the *Mahabharata* Shiva is depicted as three-eyed, so this name is sometimes translated as "Having Three Eyes". However, in Vedic Sanskrit the word *ambā* or *ambikā* means "mother", and this early meaning of the word is the basis for the translation "Having Three Mothers" that was used by Max Müller and Arthur Macdonell. Since no story is known in which Shiva had three mothers, E. Washburn Hopkins suggested that the name refers not to three mothers, but to three Mother-goddesses who are collectively called the Ambikās. Other related translations have been "having three wives or sisters", or based on the idea that the name actually refers to the oblations given to Rudra, which according to some traditions were shared with the goddess Ambikā.

Shiva Bearing the Descent of the Ganges River as Parvati and Bhagiratha, and the bull Nandi look, folio from a Hindi manuscript by the saint Narayan, circa 1740

- **Blue Throat:** The epithet *Nīlakaṇtha* (*Sanskrit* नीलकण्ठ; *nīla* = blue, *kaṇtha* = throat) refers to a story in which Shiva drank the poison churned up from the world ocean. (see: Halāhala)

- **Crescent Moon:** Shiva bears on his head the crescent of the moon. The epithet *Chandraśekhara* (*Sanskrit*: चन्द्रशेखर "Having the moon as his crest" - *chandra* = Moon, *śekhara* = crest, crown) refers to this feature. The placement of the moon on his head as a standard iconographic feature dates to the period when Rudra rose to prominence and became the major deity Rudra-Shiva. The origin of this linkage may be due to the identification of the moon with Soma, and there is a hymn in the Rig Veda where Soma and Rudra are jointly emplored, and in later literature Soma and Rudra came to be identified with one another, as were Soma and the Moon.

- **Matted Hair:** Shiva's distinctive hair style is noted in the epithets *Jaṭin*, "The One with matted hair" and *Kapardin*, "Endowed with matted hair" or "wearing his hair wound in a braid in a shell-like (kaparda) fashion". A *kaparda* is a cowrie shell, or a braid of hair in the form of a shell, or more generally hair that is shaggy or curly.

- **Sacred Ganga:** The Ganga river flows from the matted hair of Shiva. The epithet *Gaṅgādhara* ("Bearer of the river Gaṅgā") refers to this feature. The Ganga (Ganges), one of the major rivers of the country, is said to have made her abode in Shiva's hair.

- **Ashes:** Shiva smears his body with ashes (bhasma). Some forms of Shiva, such as Bhairava, are associated with a very old Indian tradition of cremation-ground asceticism that was practiced by some groups who were outside the fold of brahmanic orthodoxy. These practices associated with cremation grounds are also mentioned in the Pali canon of Theravada Buddhism. One epithet for Shiva is "Inhabitant of the cremation ground" (*Sanskrit*: śmaśānavāsin, also spelled Shmashanavasin) referring to this connection.

- **Tiger skin:** He is often shown seated upon a tiger skin.

- **Serpents:** Shiva is often shown garlanded with a snake.

- **Trident:** (Sanskrit: Trishula) Shiva's particular weapon is the trident.

- **Drum:** A small drum shaped like an hourglass is known as a " damaru" (Sanskrit: *ḍamaru*). This is one of the attributes of Shiva in his famous dancing representation known as Nataraja. A specific hand gesture (mudra) called *ḍamaru-hasta* (Sanskrit for "ḍamaru-hand") is used to hold the drum. This drum is particularly used as an emblem by members of the Kāpālika sect.

- **Nandī**, also known as *Nandin*, is the name of the bull that serves as Shiva's mount (Sanskrit: *vāhana*). Shiva's association with cattle is reflected in his name *Paśupati* or Pashupati (*Sanskrit* पशुपति), translated by Sharma as "Lord of cattle" and by Kramrisch as "Lord of Animals", who notes that it is particularly used as an epithet of Rudra.

- **Gaṇa** : In Hinduism, the **Gaṇa**s (Devanagari: गण) are attendants of **Shiva** and live in Kailasa. **Ganesha** was chosen as their leader by Shiva, hence Ganesha's title *gaṇa-īśa* or *gaṇa-pati*, "lord of the gaṇas".

- **Mount Kailāsa** in the Himalayas is his traditional abode. In Hindu mythology, Mount Kailāsa is conceived as resembling a *linga*, representing the centre of the universe.

- **Varanasi** (Benares) is considered as the city specially-loved by Shiva, and is one of the holiest places of pilgrimage in India.

Forms and depictions

According to Gavin Flood, "Śiva is a god of ambiguity and paradox", whose attributes include opposing themes. The ambivalent nature of this deity is apparent in some of his names and the stories told about him.

Destroyer versus benefactor

In the Yajurveda two contrary sets of attributes for both malignant or terriffic (Sanskrit: *rudra*) and benign or auspicious (Sanskrit: *śiva*) forms can be found, leading Chakravarti to conclude that "all the basic elements which created the complex Rudra-Śiva sect of later ages are to be found here." In the Mahabharata, Shiva is depicted as "the standard of invincibility, might, and terror", as well as a figure of honour, delight, and brilliance. The duality of Shiva's fearful and auspicious attributes appears in contrasted names.

In Shaivism, Shiva is the God of all and is worshipped by all, from Devas (gods) such as Brahma, Indra, by Asuras(demons) like Bana, Ravana, by humans like Adi Shankara, Nayanars, by creatures such as Jatayu, an eagle, Vali, an ape, and the list goes on and on. Furthermore, people of different backgrounds and qualities worship the Good Lord with many temples having histories of even cranes, bees, elephants, (see Kalahasti), spiders, snakes, worshipping Shiva and getting blessed. It concludes that the Good Lord blesses anyone who worships him with sincere devotion as there is no discrimination based on the seeker. Although Lord Shiva loves His devotees equally as He does not ignore the tapasya of rakshasas, asuras or anybody, even those with bad intentions, He always finds ways to protect dharma and not allow any evil to triumph over good.

The name *Rudra* (*Sanskrit* रुद्र) reflects his fearsome aspects. According to traditional etymologies, the Sanskrit name *Rudra* is derived from the root *rud-* which means "to cry, howl." Stella Kramrisch notes a different etymology connected with the adjectival form *raudra*, which means wild, of *rudra* nature, and translates the name *Rudra* as "the Wild One" or "the Fierce God". R. K. Sharma follows this alternate etymology and translates the name as "Terrible". *Hara* (*Sanskrit* हर) is an important name that occurs three times in the Anushasanaparvan version of the Shiva sahasranama, where it is translated in different ways each time it occurs, following a commentorial tradition of not repeating an interpretation. Sharma translates the three as "One who captivates", "One who consolidates", and "One who destroys." Kramrisch translates it as "The Ravisher". Another of Shiva's fearsome forms is as *Kāla* (*Sanskrit*: काल), "Time", and as *Mahākāla* (*Sanskrit*: महाकाल), "Great Time", which ultimately destroys all things. Bhairava (Sanskrit: भैरव), "Terrible" or "Frightful" is a fierce form associated with annihilation.

In contrast, the name Śaṇkara (*Sanskrit* शङ्कर), "Beneficent" or "Conferring Happiness" reflects his benign form. This name was adopted by the great Vedanta philosopher Śaṇkara (c. 788-820 CE), who is also known as Shankaracharya. The name *Śambhu* (*Sanskrit*: शम्भु), "Causing Happiness", also reflects this benign aspect.

Ascetic versus householder

He is depicted as both an ascetic yogin and as a householder, roles which are mutually exclusive in Hindu society. When depicted as a yogin he may be shown sitting and meditating. His epithet *Mahāyogin* (The Great Yogi: Mahā = great, Yogin = one who practices Yoga) refers to his association with yoga. While Vedic religion was conceived mainly in terms of sacrifice, it was during the Epic period that concepts of tapas, yoga, and asceticism, became more important, and the depiction of Shiva as an ascetic sitting in philosophical isolation reflects these later concepts.

As a family man and householder he has a wife, Parvati (also known as Umā), and two sons, Ganesha and Skanda. His epithet *Umāpati* ("The husband of Umā") refers to this idea, and Sharma notes that two other variants of this name that mean the same thing, Umākānta and Umādhava, also appear in the sahasranama. Umā in epic literature is known by many names, including Pārvatī. She is identified with Devi, the Divine Mother, and with Shakti (divine energy).

Shiva and Parvati are the parents of Karthikeya and Ganesha. Karttikeya is popular in southern India (especially in Tamil Nadu as a Tamil God) by the names Subrahmanya and Murugan, and in northern India he is more popular by the name Skanda, Kumara, or Karttikeya.

An illustration of the family of Shiva, consisting of Shiva, Parvati, Ganesha and Skanda (Kartikeya)

Nataraja

Bronze Chola Statue depicting Shiva dancing as *Nataraja*. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.

The depiction of Shiva as Nataraja (Tamil: நடராஜா, Sanskrit: *naṭarāja*, "Lord of Dance") is popular. The names *Nartaka* ("Dancer") and *Nityanarta* ("Eternal Dancer") appear in the Shiva Sahasranama. His association with dance and also with music is prominent in the Puranic period. In addition to the specific iconographic form known as Nataraja, various other types of dancing forms (Sanskrit: *nṛtyamūrti*) are found in all parts of India, with many well-defined varieties in Tamil Nadu (in southern India) in particular.

Dakṣiṇāmūrti

Dakṣiṇāmūrti (*Sanskrit*: दक्षिणामूर्ति) literally describes a form (*mūrti*) of Shiva facing south (*dakṣiṇa*). This form represents Shiva in his aspect as a teacher of yoga, music, and wisdom, and giving exposition on the shastras. This iconographic form for depicting Shiva in Indian art is mostly from Tamil Nadu. Elements of this *motif* can include Shiva seated upon a deer-throne and surrounded by sages who are receiving his instruction.

Ardhanarishvara

An iconographic representation of Shiva called Ardhanarishvara shows him with one half of the body as male, and the other half as female. According to Ellen Goldberg, the traditional Sanskrit name for this form, (*Ardhanārīśvara*) is best translated as "the lord who is half woman", and not as "half-man, half-woman".

Tripurāntaka

Shiva is often depicted in the act of destroying the triple fortresses, *Tripura*, of the Asuras. Shiva's name Tripurāntaka (*Sanskrit*: त्रिपुरान्तक), "Ender of Tripura", refers to this important story.

Lingam

Apart from antropomorphic images of Shiva, the worship of Shiva in the form of a *lingam* is also important. These are depicted in various forms. One common form is the shape of a vertical rounded column.

The five mantras
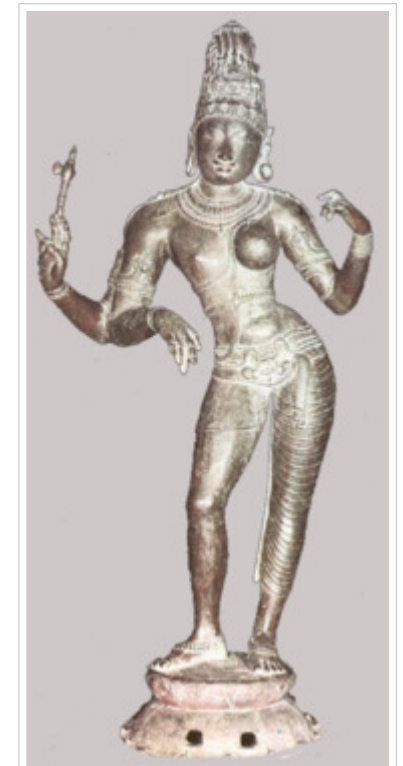
Chola bronze from the 11th century. Shiva in the form of Ardhanarisvara

Five is a sacred number for Shiva. One of his most important mantras has five syllables (*namaḥ śivāya*).

Shiva's body is said to consist of five mantras, called the *pañcabrahmans*. As forms of god, each of these have their own names and distinct iconography:

Adoration of Five-headed Shiva by Vishnu (blue figure, to left of Shiva), Brahma (four headed figure to the right of Shiva), Ganesha (elephant-headed son of Shiva, bottom left) and other deities. Painting from LACMA

- Sadyojāta
- Vāmadeva
- Aghora
- Tatpuruṣa
- Īsāna

These are represented as the five faces of Shiva, and are associated in various texts with the five elements, the five senses, the five organs of perception, and the five organs of action. Doctrinal differences and possibly errors in transmission have resulted in some differences between texts in details of how these five forms are linked with various attributes. But the overall meaning of these associations is summarized by Stella Kramrisch:

> Through these transcendent categories, Śiva, the ultimate reality, becomes the efficient and material cause of all that exists.

According to the *Pañcabrahma Upanishad*:

> One should know all things of the phenomenal world as of a fivefold character, for the reason that the eternal verity of Śiva is of the character of the fivefold Brahman. (*Pañcabrahma Upanishad* 31)

Relationship to Vishnu

During the Vedic period, both Vishnu and Shiva (as identified with Rudra) played relatively minor roles, but by the time of the Brahmanas (c. 1000-700 BCE) both were gaining ascendance. By the Puranic period both deities had major sects that competed with one another for devotees. Many stories developed showing different types of relationships between these two important deities.

Sectarian forces each presented their own preferred deity as supreme. Vishnu in his myths "becomes" Shiva. The *Vishnu Purana* (4th c. CE) shows Vishnu awakening and becoming both Brahmā to create the world, and Shiva to destroy it. Shiva also is viewed as a manifestation of Vishnu in the *Bhagavata Purana*. In Shaivite myths, on the other hand, Shiva comes to the fore and acts independently and alone to create, preserve, and destroy the world. In one Shaivite myth of the origin of the lingam, both Vishnu and Brahmā are revealed as emanations from Shiva's manifestation as a towering pillar of flame. The *Śatarudrīya*, a Shaivite hymn, says that Shiva is "of the form of Vishnu". Rivalry between the two sects is apparent in the story of Śarabha (also spelled "Sharabha"), the name of Shiva's incarnation in the composite form of man, bird, and beast. Shiva assumed that unusual form to chastise Vishnu in his hybrid form as Narasimha, the man-lion, who killed Hiranyakashipu, an ardent devotee of Shiva.
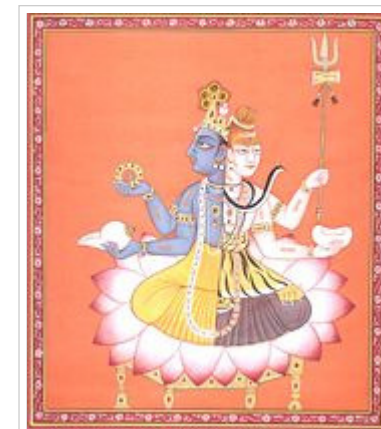
Vishnu (left half - blue) and **Shiva** (right half - white)

Syncretic forces produced stories in which the two deities were shown in cooperative relationships and combined forms. Harihara is a the name of a combined deity form of both Vishnu (Hari) and Shiva (Hara). This dual form, which is also called Harirudra, is mentioned in the Mahabharata. An example of a collaboration story is one given to explain Shiva's epithet Mahābaleśvara, "Lord of Great Strength" (Maha = great, Bala = strength, Īśvara = Lord). This name refers to story in which Rāvaṇa was given a *linga* as a boon by Shiva on the condition that he carry it always. During his travels, he stopped near the present Deoghar in Bihar to purify himself and asked Narada a devotee of Vishnu in the guise of a Brahmin to hold the *linga* for him, but after some time Narada put it down on the ground and vanished. When Ravana returned, he could not move the *linga*, and it is said to remain there ever since.

Avatars

Shiva, like some other Hindu deities, is said to have several incarnations, known as Avatars. Adi Shankara, the 8th-century philosopher of non-dualist Vedanta was named "Shankara" after Lord Shiva and is considered to have been an incarnation of Shiva. In the *Hanuman Chalisa* Hanuman is identified as the eleventh avatar of Shiva.

Worship

In Shaivism, Shiva is the God of all and is worshipped by all, from Devas (gods) such as Brahma, Indra, by Asuras(demons) like Bana, Ravana, by humans like Adi Shankara, Nayanars, by creatures such as Jatayu, an eagle, Vali, an ape, and the list goes on and on. Furthermore, people of different backgrounds and qualities worship the Good Lord with many temples having histories of even cranes, bees, elephants, (see Kalahasti), spiders, snakes, worshipping Shiva and getting blessed. It concludes that the Good Lord blesses anyone who worships him with sincere devotion as there is no discrimination based on the seeker. Although Lord Shiva loves His devotees equally as He does not ignore the tapasya of rakshasas, asuras or anybody, even those with bad intentions, He always finds ways to protect dharma and not allow any evil to triumph over good.

108 shiva lingas carved on the rock at the banks of river Tungabhadra, Hampi

Major deities, rishis, planets, worshipped Shiva and established Shivalingas in various places.

1. Pashupatinath Lord of all living beings, located at Kathmandu, Nepal.
2. Somnath located at Prabhas Patan in Saurashtra in Gujarat.
3. Dwarka in Gujarat is home to the Nageshwar Jyotirlinga temple.
4. Mahakal, Ujjain (or Avanti) in Madhya Pradesh is home to the Mahakaleshwar Jyotirlinga temple.
5. Srisailam - Srisailam near Kurnool enshrines Mallikarjuna in an ancient temple architecturally and sculpturally rich.
6. Bhimashankar, in the Sahyadri range of Maharashtra, contains a Jyotirlinga shrine associated with Shiva destroying the demon Tripurasura.
7. Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh is an island in the Narmada river, home to a Jyotirlinga shrine and the Amareshwar temple.
8. Sukreswar Temple located on Sukreswar hill in Guwahati on the southern bank of Brahmaputra, with the ghat leading down to the river.
9. Uma Nanda Temple located on the Peacock island in middle of River Brahmaputra in Guwahati.
10. Kedarnath in Uttarakhand is the northernmost of the Jyotirlingas.
11. Varanasi (Benares) in Uttar Pradesh is home to the Vishwanath Jyotirling temple.
12. Trimbakeshwar, near Nashik in Maharashtra, has a Jyotirlinga shrine located associated with the origin of the Godavari river.
13. Grishneshwar Jyotirlinga shrine, in Maharashtra, is located near the rock-cut temples of Ellora.
14. Deoghar, in the Santhal Parganas region of Jharkhand, is home to the Vaidyanath Jyotirlinga temple.
15. Ganesha worshipped Shiva at Pillayar patti (100 km from Madurai, India)
16. The four Vedas worshipped Shiva at Thirumaraikaadu (i.e., Vedaaranyam near Tanjore)
17. Skanda worshipped Shiva at Thiruchendur (200 km from Madurai, India)
18. Rama (avatar of Vishnu) worshipped Shiva in Rameswaram(India)
19. Vishnu worshipped Shiva at Kanchipuram (Kachiswarar Temple)
20. Parasurama (avatar of Vishnu) worshipped Shiva at Sreesailam, Karnataka and also at Chennai (Parasurama at Lingeshwara Temple, Iyanavaram)
21. Goddess Lakshmi (wife of Vishnu) worshipped Shiva at Tirupachethi (50 km from Madurai).
22. Surya worshipped Shiva at Srivilliputhur (Vaidhyanathaar Temple 100 km from Madurai)
23. Brahma and Vishnu at Tiruvannamalai (180 km from Chennai)
24. Brahma at Vrinchipuram (155 km from Chennai, 15 km from Vellore)
25. Rahu and Ketu at Kaalahasthi (50 km from Tirupathi, Andhra Pradesh, India)
26. Indra at Madurai (Soma Sundareeswar Temple)

27. The Rishi Agastya at Papanasam (100 km from Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu, India)
28. Goddess Parvati at Kancheepuram (Ekambeeswarar Temple, 70 km from Chennai, India)
29. Shani at Thirnallar (near Kaaraikal, Pondicherry)
30. Moongod at Thingalur (near Tanjore)
31. Shiva and Sani at Thirvidaimaruthoor (near Kumbakonam)
32. Brahma at Kumbakoonam (Kumbeeswarar, near Tanjore)
33. Ujjain Jyotirlinga shrine, in Madhya Pradesh.
34. Lord Shiva at Trilochan, is famous with name of Trilochan Mhadev Temple, 30 km from varanasi , india
35. Manjunatha-Lord of mist at Dharmasthala this one famous pilgrim of Dakshina Kannada, Karnataka.
36. Nanjundeshwara -One who has gulped nanju-pain or Halahala in his throat or SriKanteshwara at Nanjangud near Mysore, Karnataka
37. Atma Linga at Gokarna , Karnataka.
38. Panchalingeshwara-5 Linga all of which is covered with sand but opens up at specific dates at Talakad ,Karnataka.
39. Shivagange-Believed to be patalaGanga flowing by rishi Agastya worship. Bengalooru,Karnataka.
40. Murudeshwara in Uttara Kannada,Karnataka.
41. Kudalasangama in Basavakalyana,Karnataka.
42. By Lava kucha (sons of Rama)in Kurungaleeswar temple at Koyambedu Chennai.
43. Bakreshwar and Tarakeshwar in West Bengal

Names of Shiva

In Hinduism, deities are called by many names, which describe them in different ways. These names often refer to specific stories about the deities, functions they perform, or ways of thinking about them. Study of these names is helpful to understanding deities from multiple points of view. Some names are used by more than one deity, so looking for names that *uniquely* describe a deity is one way to pinpoint their functions.

Sahasranamas

There are at least eight different versions of the *Shiva Sahasranama*, devotional hymns (stotras) listing many names of Shiva. The version appearing in Book 13 (Anuśāsanaparvan) of the Mahabharata is considered the kernel of this tradion.

The nine versions of Shiva sahasranamas are

1. *Mahabharata* 13.17.30-150 (Anuśāsanaparvan Version)
2. 'Rudrayamala
3. *Linga Purana* (version 1, LP 1.65.54-168) is close to the Mahabharata Anuśāsanaparvan version.

A statue of Shiva near Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi

4. *Linga Purana* (version 2, LP 1.98.27-159) has some passages in common with LP version 1, but also with other sources

5. *Shivapurana* 4.35.1-131.

6. *Mahabharata* (Śāntiparvan version). The critical edition of the Mahabharata does not include this version, relegating it to Appendix 28 to

Śāntiparvan. It does appear in the text of the Gita Press edition as 12.284.68-180.

7. *Vayu Purana* (1.30.179-284) is almost the same as the Mahabharata Śāntiparvan version.

8. *Brahmanda Purana* (38.1.1-100) is almost the same as the Vayu Purana version.

9. *Mahābhāgavata Upapurana* (67.1-125) appears to be of comparatively recent origin.

Lord Shiva also has DashaSahasranamas (10,000 names) that are found in the Mahanyasa.

Chamakam

The Shri Rudram Chamakam, also known as the *Śatarudriya*, is a devotional hymn to Shiva hailing him by many names.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shiva"

Sikhism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Sikhism (IPA: /ˈsiːkɪzəm/ or /ˈsɪk-/ ; Punjabi: ਸਿੱਖੀ, *sikkhī*, IPA: [ˈsɪkkʰiː]), founded on the teachings of Nanak and nine successive gurus in fifteenth century Northern India, is the fifth-largest religion in the world. This system of religious philosophy and expression has been traditionally known as the Gurmat (literally *the counsel of the gurus*) or the Sikh Dharma. *Sikhism* originated from the word *Sikh*, which in turn comes from the Sanskrit root *śiṣya* meaning "disciple" or "learner", or *śikṣa* meaning "instruction."

The principal belief of Sikhism is faith in *Vāhigurū*—represented using the sacred symbol of *ēk ōaṅkār*, the Universal God. Sikhism advocates the pursuit of salvation through disciplined, personal meditation on the name and message of God. A key distinctive feature of Sikhism is a non- anthropomorphic concept of God, to the extent that one can interpret God as the Universe itself. The followers of Sikhism are ordained to follow the teachings of the ten Sikh gurus, or enlightened leaders, as well as the holy scripture entitled the *Gurū Granth Sāhib*, which includes selected works of many philosophers from diverse socio-economic and religious backgrounds. The text was decreed by Gobind Singh, the tenth guru, as the final guru of the Khalsa Panth. Sikhism's traditions and teachings are distinctively associated with the history, society and culture of the Punjab. Adherents of Sikhism are known as Sikhs (*students* or *disciples*) and number over 23 million across the world. Most Sikhs live in the state of Punjab in India and, prior to the country's partition, millions of Sikhs lived in what is now known as the Punjab province of Pakistan.

Philosophy and teachings

The origins of Sikhism lie in the teachings of Nanak and his successors. His life and teachings challenged many of the religious beliefs and practices of his time. The essence of Sikh teaching is summed up by Nanak in these words: "Realisation of Truth is higher than all else. Higher still is truthful living". Sikhism believes in equality of all humans and reject caste system. The living of life while carrying on the responsibilities of worldly life, and not withdrawing from it, is encouraged. For Sikhs, initiation into the *Khalsa* strengthens their identity and also signifies the Sikh teaching of equality. The Sikhs are required to follow the teachings of their Guru and serve him, with weapons if necessary.

According to Sikhism, the goal of life for a person is to progress on a spiritual scale from *Manmukh*, or "self-centered", to *Gurmukh*, or "God-centered". *Gurmukh* implies the qualities of humility, selfless service, adhering to the teachings of Guru and not being a recluse.

God

The Harimandir Sahib, known popularly as the Golden Temple, is a sacred shrine for Sikhs.

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion. In Sikhism, God—termed *Vāhigurū*—is formless, eternal, and unobserved: *nirankār*, *akāl*, and *alakh*. The beginning of the first composition of Sikh scripture is the figure "1"—signifying the universality of God. It states that God is omnipresent and infinite, and is signified by the term *ēk ōankār*. Sikhs believe that prior to creation, all that existed was God and his *hukam* (will or order). When God willed, the entire cosmos was created. From these beginnings, God nurtured "enticement and attachment" to *māyā*, or the human perception of reality.

While a full understanding of God is beyond human beings, Nanak described God as not wholly unknowable. God is omnipresent (*sarav viāpak*) in all creation and visible everywhere to the spiritually awakened. Nanak stressed that God must be seen from "the inward eye", or the "heart", of a human being: devotees must meditate to progress towards enlightenment. Guru Nanak Dev emphasized the revelation through meditation, as its rigorous application permits the existence of communication between God and human beings. God has no gender in Sikhism, though translations may incorrectly present a masculine God. In addition, Nanak wrote that there are many worlds on which God has created life.

Pursuing salvation

Nanak's teachings are founded not on a final destination of heaven or hell, but on a spiritual union with God which results in salvation. The chief obstacles to the attainment of salvation are social conflicts and an attachment to worldly pursuits, which commit men and women to an endless cycle of birth — a concept known as *reincarnation*.

Māyā—defined as illusion or "unreality"—is one of the core deviations from the pursuit of God and salvation: people are distracted from devotion by worldly attractions which give only illusive satisfaction. However, Nanak emphasised māyā as not a reference to the unreality of the world, but of its values. In Sikhism, the influences of ego, anger, greed, attachment and lust—known as the *Five Evils*—are believed to be particularly pernicious. The fate of people vulnerable to the Five Evils is separation from God, and the situation may be remedied only after intensive and relentless devotion.

A Sikh man at the Harimandir Sahib.

Nanak described God's revelation—the path to salvation—with terms such as *nām* (the divine *Name*) and *śabad* (the divine Word) to emphasise the totality of the revelation. Nanak designated the word *guru* (meaning *teacher*) as the voice of God and the source and guide for knowledge and salvation. Salvation can be reached only through rigorous and disciplined devotion to God. Nanak distinctly emphasised the irrelevance of outwardly observations such as rites, pilgrimages or asceticism. He stressed that devotion must take place through the heart, with the spirit and the soul.

A key practice to be pursued is *nām simraṇ*: remembrance of the divine Name. The verbal repetition of the name of God or a sacred syllable is an established practice in religious traditions in India, but Nanak's interpretation emphasised inward, personal observance. Nanak's ideal is the total exposure of one's being to the divine Name and a total conforming to Dharma or the "Divine Order". Nanak described the result of the disciplined application of *nām simraṇ* as a "growing towards and into God" through a gradual process of five stages. The last of these is *sac khaṇḍ* (*The Realm of Truth*)—the final union of the spirit with God.

Nanak stressed *kirat karō*: that a Sikh should balance work, worship, and charity, and should defend the rights of all creatures, and in particular, fellow human beings. They are encouraged to have a *caṛdī kalā*, or *optimistic*, view of life. Sikh teachings also stress the concept of sharing— *vaṇḍ chakkō*—through the distribution of free food at Sikh gurdwaras (*langar*), giving charitable donations, and working for the good of the community and others (*sēvā*).
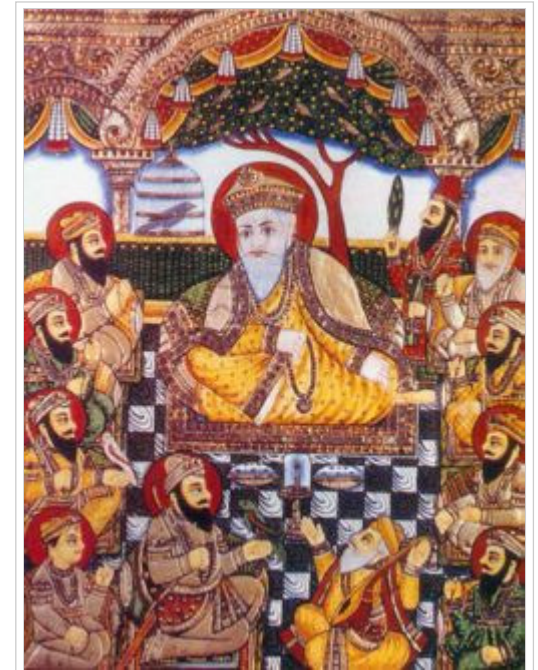
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The ten gurus and religious authority

The term guru comes from the Sanskrit *gurū*, meaning teacher, guide or mentor. The traditions and philosophy of Sikhism were established by ten specific gurus from 1507 to 1708. Each guru added to and reinforced the message taught by the previous, resulting in the creation of the Sikh religion. Nanak was the first guru and appointed a disciple as successor. Gobind Singh was the final guru in human form. Before his death, Gobind Singh decreed that the Gurū Granth Sāhib would be the final and perpetual guru of the Sikhs. The Sikhs believe that the spirit of Nanak was passed from one guru to the next, " just as the light of one lamp, which lights another and does not diminish ", and is also mentioned in their holy book.

#	Name	Date of birth	Guruship on	Date of ascension	Age
1	Nanak Dev	15 April 1469	20 August 1507	22 September 1539	69
2	Angad Dev	31 March 1504	7 September 1539	29 March 1552	48
3	Amar Das	5 May 1479	26 March 1552	1 September 1574	95
4	Ram Das	24 September 1534	1 September 1574	1 September 1581	46
5	Arjan Dev	15 April 1563	1 September 1581	30 May 1606	43
6	Har Gobind	19 June 1595	25 May 1606	28 February 1644	48
7	Har Rai	16 January 1630	3 March 1644	6 October 1661	31
8	Har Krishan	7 July 1656	6 October 1661	30 March 1664	7
9	Tegh Bahadur	1 April 1621	20 March 1665	11 November 1675	54
10	Gobind Singh	22 December 1666	11 November 1675	7 October 1708	41
11	Guru Granth Sahib	n/a	7 October 1708	Eternity	n/a

A rare Tanjore style painting from the late 19th century depicting the ten Sikh Gurus with Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana.

After Nanak's passing, the most important phase in the development of Sikhism came with the third successor, Amar Das. Nanak's teachings emphasised the pursuit of salvation; Amar Das began building a cohesive community of followers with initiatives such as sanctioning distinctive ceremonies for birth, marriage and death. Amar Das also established the *manji* (comparable to a diocese) system of clerical supervision.

Amar Das's successor and son-in-law Ram Das founded the city of Amritsar, which is home of the Harimandir Sahib and regarded widely as the holiest city for all Sikhs. When Ram Das's youngest son Arjan Dev succeeded him, the line of male gurus from the *Sodhi Khatri* family was established: all succeeding gurus were direct descendants of this line. Arjan Dev was responsible for compiling the Sikh scriptures. Arjan Dev was captured by Mughal authorities who were suspicious and hostile to the religious order he was developing. His persecution and death inspired his successors to promote a military and political organization of Sikh communities to defend themselves against the attacks of Mughal forces.

The interior of the Akal Takht.

The Sikh gurus established a mechanism which allowed the Sikh religion to react as a community to changing circumstances. The sixth guru, Har Gobind, was responsible for the creation of the Akal Takht (*throne of the timeless one*) which serves as the supreme decision-making centre of Sikhdom and sits opposite the Harimandir Sahib. The *Sarbat Ḵẖālsā* (a representative portion of the Khalsa Panth) historically gathers at the Akal Takht on special festivals such as Vaisakhi or Diwali and when there is a need to discuss matters that affect the entire Sikh nation. A *gurmatā* (literally, *guru's intention*) is an order passed by the Sarbat Ḵẖālsā in the presence of the Gurū Granth Sāhib. A gurmatā may only be passed on a subject that affects the fundamental principles of Sikh religion; it is binding upon all Sikhs. The term *hukamnāmā* (literally, *edict* or *royal order*) is often used interchangeably with the term gurmatā. However, a hukamnāmā formally refers to a hymn from the Gurū Granth Sāhib which is given as an order to Sikhs.

History

Nanak (1469–1538), the founder of Sikhism, was born in the village of *Rāi Bhōi dī Talvaṇḍī*, now called Nankana Sahib, near Lahore (in what is present-day Pakistan). His father, Mehta Kalu was a *Patwari* (an accountant of land revenue in the government). Nanak's mother was Tripta Devi and he had one older sister, Nanaki. His parents were Khatri Hindus of the Bedi clan. As a boy, Nanak was fascinated by religion, and his desire to explore the mysteries of life eventually led him to leave home.

Sikh tradition states that at the age of thirty, Nanak went missing and was presumed to have drowned after going for one of his morning baths to a local stream called the *Kali Bein*. Three days later he reappeared and would give the same answer to any question posed to him: "There is no Hindu, there is no Muslim" (in Punjabi, "*nā kōi hindū nā kōi musalmān*"). It was from this moment that Nanak would begin to spread the teachings of what was then the beginning of Sikhism. Although the exact account of his itinerary is disputed, he is widely acknowledged to have made four major journeys, spanning thousands of kilometres. The first tour being east towards Bengal and Assam, the second south towards Tamil Nadu, the third north towards Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet, and the final tour west towards Baghdad and Mecca.

Nanak was married to Sulakhni, the daughter of Moolchand Chona, a rice trader from the town of Batala. They had two sons. The elder son, Sri Chand, was an ascetic, and he came to have a considerable following of his own, known as the Udasis. The younger son, Lakshmi Das, on the other hand, was totally immersed in worldly life. To Nanak, who believed in the ideal of *rāj maiṁ jōg* (detachment in civic life), both his sons were unfit to carry on the Guruship.

Growth of the Sikh community

In 1538, Nanak chose his disciple *Lahiṇā*, a Khatri of the Trehan clan, as a successor to the guruship rather than either of his sons. Lahiṇā was named Angad Dev and became the second guru of the Sikhs. Nanak conferred his choice at the town of Kartarpur on the banks of the river Ravi, where Nanak had finally settled down after his travels. Though Sri Chand was not an ambitious man, the Udasis believed that the Guruship should have gone to him, since he was a man of pious habits in addition to being Nanak's son. They refused to accept Angad's succession. On Nanak's advice, Angad shifted from Kartarpur to Khadur, where his wife Khivi and children were living, until he was able to bridge the divide between his followers and the Udasis. Angad continued the work started by Nanak and is widely credited for standardising the Gurmukhī script as used in the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.

Amar Das, a Khatri of the Bhalla clan, became the third Sikh guru in 1552 at the age of 73. Goindval became an important centre for Sikhism during the guruship of Amar Das. He preached the principle of equality for women by prohibiting purdah and sati. Amar Das also encouraged the practice of langar and made all those who visited him attend laṅgar before they could speak to him. In 1567, Emperor Akbar sat with the ordinary and poor people of Punjab to have laṅgar. Amar Das also trained 146 apostles of which 52 were women, to manage the rapid expansion of the religion. Before he died in 1574 aged 95, he appointed his son-in-law Jēṭhā, a Khatri of the Sodhi clan, as the fourth Sikh guru.

Jēṭhā became Ram Das and vigorously undertook his duties as the new guru. He is responsible for the establishment of the city of Ramdaspur later to be named Amritsar. In 1581, Arjan Dev—youngest son of the fourth guru—became the fifth guru of the Sikhs. In addition to being responsible for building the Harimandir Sahib (often called the Golden Temple), he prepared the Sikh sacred text known as the Ādi Granth (literally *the first book*) and included the writings of the first five gurus. In 1606, for refusing to make changes to the Granth and for supporting an unsuccessful contender to the throne, he was tortured and killed by the Mughal ruler, Jahangir.

Political advancement

Har Gobind, became the sixth guru of the Sikhs. He carried two swords—one for spiritual and the other for temporal reasons (known as *mīrī* and *pīrī* in Sikhism). Sikhs grew as an organised community and always had a trained fighting force to defend their independence. In 1644, Har Rai became guru followed by Har Krishan, the boy guru, in 1661. No hymns composed by these three gurus are included in the Sikh holy book.

Tegh Bahadur became guru in 1665 and led the Sikhs until 1675. Teg Bahadur was executed by Aurangzeb for helping to protect Hindus, after a delegation of Kashmiri Pandits came to him for help when the Emperor condemned them to death for failing to convert to Islam. He was succeeded by his son, Gobind Rai who was just nine years old at the time of his father's death. Gobind Rai further militarised his followers, and was baptised by the *Pañj Piārē* when he formed the Khalsa in 1699. From here on in he was known as Gobind Singh.

From the time of Nanak, when it was a loose collection of followers who focused entirely on the attainment of salvation and God, the Sikh community had significantly transformed. Even though the core Sikh religious philosophy was never affected, the followers now began to develop a political identity. Conflict with Mughal authorities escalated during the lifetime of Teg Bahadur and Gobind Singh. The latter founded the Khalsa in 1699. The Khalsa is a disciplined community that combines its religious purpose and goals with political and military duties. After Aurangzeb killed four of his sons, Gobind Singh sent Aurangzeb the Zafarnāmā (*Notification/Epistle of Victory*).

Shortly before his death, Gobind Singh ordered that the Gurū Granth Sāhib (the Sikh Holy Scripture), would be the ultimate spiritual authority for the Sikhs and

temporal authority would be vested in the Khalsa Panth – The Sikh Nation/Community. The first scripture was compiled and edited by the fifth guru, Arjan Dev, in 1604. a former ascetic, was charged by Gobind Singh with the duty of punishing those who had persecuted the Sikhs. After the guru's death, Banda Bahadur became the leader of the Sikh army and was responsible for several attacks on the Mughal empire. He was executed by the emperor Jahandar Shah after refusing the offer of a pardon if he converted to Islam.

The Sikh community's embrace of military and political organisation made it a considerable regional force in medieval India and it continued to evolve after the demise of the gurus. After the death of Banda Bahadur, a loose confederation of Sikh warrior bands known as *misls* formed. With the decline of the Mughal empire, a Sikh empire arose in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, with its capital in Lahore and limits reaching the Khyber Pass and the borders of China. The order, traditions and discipline developed over centuries culminated at the time of Ranjit Singh to give rise to the common religious and social identity that the term "Sikhism" describes.

After the death of Ranjit Singh, the Sikh kingdom fell into disorder and was eventually annexed by Britain after the hard fought Anglo-Sikh Wars. This brought the Punjab under British rule. Sikhs formed the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee and the Shiromani Akali Dal to preserve Sikhs religious and political organisation. With the partition of India in 1947, thousands of Sikhs were killed in violence and millions were forced to leave their ancestral homes in West Punjab. Sikhs faced initial opposition from the Government in forming a linguistic state that other states in India were afforded. The Akali Dal started a non-violence movement for Sikh and Punjabi rights. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale emerged as a leader of a faction which did not agree with the Akali Dal's approach on the matter. In June 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered the Indian army to launch Operation Blue Star to remove Bhindranwale and his armed followers from the Golden Temple. Hundreds of militants, including Bhindranwale, and a number of innocent civilians were killed during the army's successful operation. In October, Indira Gandhi was assassinated by two of her Sikh bodyguards. The assassination was followed by the 1984 Anti-Sikh riots massacre and Hindu-Sikh conflicts in Punjab, as a reaction to the assassination and Operation Blue Star.

Scripture

There are two primary sources of scripture for the Sikhs: the Gurū Granth Sāhib and the Dasam Granth. The Gurū Granth Sāhib may be referred to as the Ādi Granth—literally, *The First Volume*—and the two terms are often used synonymously. Here, however, the Ādi Granth refers to the version of the scripture created by Arjan Dev in 1604. The Gurū Granth Sāhib refers to the final version of the scripture created by Gobind Singh.

Adi Granth

It is believed that the Ādi Granth was compiled primarily by Bhai Gurdas under the supervision of Arjan Dev between the years 1603 and 1604. It is written in the Gurmukhī script, which is a descendant of the Laṇḍā script used in the Punjab at that time. The Gurmukhī script was standardised by Arjan Dev for use in the Sikh scriptures and is thought to have been influenced by the Śāradā and Devanāgarī scripts. An authoritative scripture was created to protect the integrity of hymns and teachings of the Sikh gurus and selected bhagats. At the time, Arjan Dev tried to prevent undue influence from the followers of Prithi Chand, the guru's older brother and rival.

The original version of the Ādi Granth is known as the *kartārpur bīṛ* and is currently held by the Sodhi family of Kartarpur.

Guru Granth Sahib

The final version of the Gurū Granth Sāhib was compiled by Gobind Singh. It consists of the original Ādi Granth with the addition of Teg Bahadur's hymns. It was decreed by Gobind Singh that the Granth was to be considered the eternal, living guru of all Sikhs, however, this belief finds no mention either in 'Guru Granth Sahib' or in 'Dasam Granth' compiled by Guru Gobind Singh.

Punjabi: ਸੱਬ ਸਿੱਖਣ ਕੋ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਯੋ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ।

(This statement finds no mention either in 'Guru Granth Sahib' or in 'Dasam Granth' compiled by Guru Gobind Singh.)

Transliteration: Sabb sikkhaṇ kō hukam hai gurū mānyō granth.
English: All Sikhs are commanded to take the Granth as Guru.

It contains compositions by the first five gurus, Teg Bahadur and just one *śalōk* (*couplet*) from Gobind Singh. It also contains the traditions and teachings of *sants* (*saints*) such as Kabir, Namdev, Ravidas and Sheikh Farid along with several others.

Gurū Granth Sāhib folio with Mūl Mantra.

The bulk of the scripture is classified into *rāgs*, with each rāg subdivided according to length and author. There are 31 main rāgs within the Gurū Granth Sāhib. In addition to the rāgs, there are clear references to the folk music of Punjab. The main language used in the scripture is known as *Sant Bhāṣā*, a language related to both Punjabi and Hindi and used extensively across medieval northern India by proponents of popular devotional religion. The text further comprises over 5000 *śabads*, or hymns, which are poetically constructed and set to classical form of music rendition, can be set to predetermined musical *tāl*, or rhythmic beats.

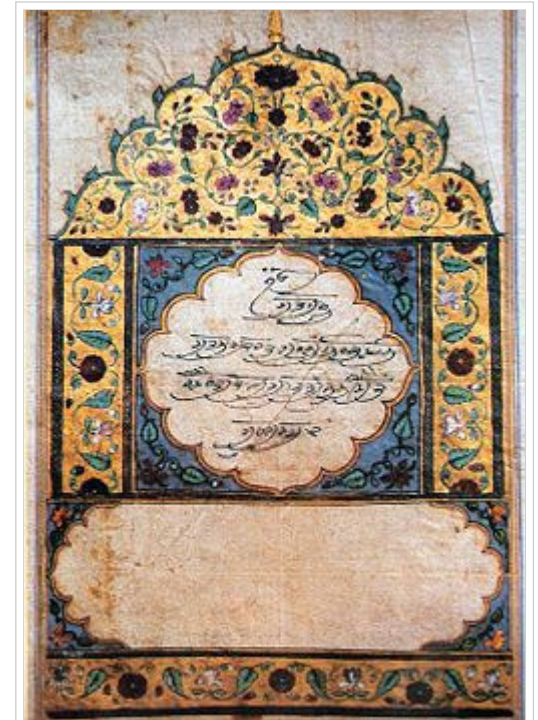The Granth begins with the *Mūl Mantra*, an iconic verse created by Nanak:

Punjabi: ੧ਓ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ISO 15919 transliteration: *Ika ōaṅkāra sati nāmu karatā purakhu nirabha'u niravairu akāla mūrati ajūnī saibhaṅ gura prasādi.*
Simplified transliteration: Ik ōaṅkār sat nām kartā purkh nirbha'u nirvair akāl mūrat ajūnī saibhaṅ gur prasād.
English: One Universal Creator God, The Name Is Truth, Creative Being Personified, No Fear, No Hatred, Image Of The Timeless One, Beyond Birth, Self Existent, By Guru's Grace.

A group of Sikh musicians at the Golden Temple complex.

All text within the Granth is known as *gurbānī*. Gurbānī, according to Nanak, was revealed by God directly, and the authors wrote it down for the followers. The status accorded to the scripture is defined by the evolving interpretation of the concept of *gurū*. In the *Sant* tradition of Nanak, the guru was literally the word of God. The Sikh community soon transferred the role to a line of men who gave authoritative and practical expression to religious teachings and traditions, in addition to taking socio-political leadership of Sikh adherents. Gobind Singh declared an end of the line of human gurus, and now the Gurū Granth Sāhib serves as the eternal guru, with its interpretation vested with the community.

Dasam Granth

The Dasam Granth (formally *dasvēṁ pātśāh kī granth* or *The Book of the Tenth Master*) is an eighteenth-century collection of miscellaneous works generally attributed to Gobind Singh. The teachings of Gobind Singh were not included in Gurū Granth Sāhib, the holy book of the Sikhs, and instead were collected in the Dasam Granth. Unlike the Gurū Granth Sāhib, the Dasam Granth was never declared to hold guruship. The authenticity of some portions of the Granth has been questioned and the appropriateness of the Granth's content still causes much debate.

The entire Granth is written in the Gurmukhī script, although most of the language is Braj and not Punjabi. Sikh tradition states that Mani Singh collected the writings of Gobind Singh after his death to create the Granth.

From 1892 to 1897, scholars assembled at the Akal Takht, Amritsar, to study the various printed Dasam Granths and prepare the authoritative version. They concluded that the Dasam Granth was entirely the work of Gobind Singh. Further re-examinations and reviews took place in 1931, under the Darbar Sahib Committee of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee they too vindicated the earlier conclusion.

A frontispiece to the Dasam Granth.

Janamsakhis

The Janamsākhīs (literally *birth stories*), are writings which profess to be biographies of Nanak. Although not scripture in the strictest sense, they provide an interesting look at Nanak's life and the early start of Sikhism. There are several—often contradictory and sometimes unreliable—Janamsākhīs and they are not held in the same regard as other sources of scriptural knowledge.

Observances and ceremonies

Observant Sikhs adhere to long-standing practices and traditions to strengthen and express their faith. The daily recitation from memory of specific passages from the Gurū Granth Sāhib, especially the *Japu* (or *Japjī*, literally *chant*) hymns is recommended immediately after rising and bathing. Family customs include both reading passages from the scripture and attending the gurdwara (also *gurduārā*, meaning *the doorway to God*). There are many gurdwaras prominently constructed and maintained across India, as well as in almost every nation where Sikhs reside. Gurdwaras are open to all, regardless of religion, background, caste or race.

Worship in a gurdwara consists chiefly of singing of passages from the scripture. Sikhs will commonly enter the temple, touch the ground before the holy scripture with their foreheads, and make an offering. The recitation of the eighteenth century *ardās* is also customary for attending Sikhs. The ardās recalls past sufferings and glories of the community, invoking divine grace for all humanity.

The most sacred shrine is the Harimandir Sahib in Amritsar, famously known as the *Golden Temple*. Groups of Sikhs regularly visit and congregate at the Harimandir Sahib. On specific occasions, groups of Sikhs are permitted to undertake a pilgrimage to Sikh shrines in the province of Punjab in Pakistan, especially at Nankana Sahib and the *samādhī* (place of cremation) of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore.

Festivals in Sikhism mostly centre around the lives of the Gurus and Sikh martyrs. The SGPC, the Sikh organisation in charge of upkeep of the gurdwaras, organises celebrations based on the new Nanakshahi calendar. This calendar is highly controversial among Sikhs and is not universally accepted. Several festivals (Hola Mohalla, Diwali and Nanak's birthday) continue to be celebrated using the Hindu calendar. Sikh festivals include the following:

- Gurpurabs are celebrations or commemorations based on the lives of the Sikh gurus. They tend to be either birthdays or celebrations of Sikh martyrdom.
- Vaisakhi normally occurs on 13 April and marks the beginning of the new spring year and the end of the harvest. Sikhs celebrate it because on Vaisakhi in 1699, the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, began the Khalsa baptismal tradition.
- Diwali (also known as *bandī chōḍ divas*) celebrates Hargobind's release from the Gwalior Fort, where he was imprisoned by Jahangir, on 26 October 1619.
- Hola Mohalla occurs the day after Holi and is when the Khalsa Panth gather at Anandpur and display their fighting skills.

Ceremonies and customs

Nanak taught that rituals, religious ceremonies or empty worship is of little use and Sikhs are discouraged from fasting or going on pilgrimages. However, during the period of the later gurus, and due to increased institutionalisation of the religion, some ceremonies and rites did arise. Sikhism is not a proselytizing religion and most Sikhs do not make active attempts to gain converts. However, converts to Sikhism are welcomed, although there is no formal conversion ceremony.

The *anand kāraj* (Sikh marriage) ceremony.

Upon a child's birth, the Guru Granth Sāhib is opened at a random point and the child is named using the first letter on the top left-hand corner of the left page. All boys are given the middle name or surname Singh, and all girls are given the middle name or surname Kaur. Sikhs are joined in wedlock through the *anand kāraj* ceremony. Sikhs marry when they are of a sufficient age (child marriage is taboo), and without regard for the future spouse's caste or descent. The marriage ceremony is performed in the company of the Guru Granth Sāhib; around which the couple circles four times. After the ceremony is complete, the husband and wife are considered "a single soul in two bodies."

According to Sikh religious rites, neither husband nor wife are permitted to divorce. A Sikh couple that wishes to divorce may be able to do so in a civil court – but this is not condoned. Upon death, the body of a Sikh is usually cremated. If this is not possible, any means of disposing the body may be employed. The

kīrtan sōhilā and *ardās* prayers are performed during the funeral ceremony (known as *antim sanskār*).

Baptism and the Khalsa

Khalsa (meaning *pure*) is the name given by Gobind Singh to all Sikhs who have been baptised or initiated by taking *ammrit* in a ceremony called *ammrit sañcār*. The first time that this ceremony took place was on Vaisakhi, which fell on 30 March 1699 at Anandpur Sahib in India. It was on that occasion that Gobind Singh baptised the Pañj Piārē who in turn baptised Gobind Singh himself.

Baptised Sikhs are bound to wear the Five Ks (in Punjabi known as *pañj kakkē* or *pañj kakār*), or articles of faith, at all times. The tenth guru, Gobind Singh, ordered these Five Ks to be worn so that a Sikh could actively use them to make a difference to their own and to others' spirituality. The 5 items are: *kēs* (uncut hair), *kaṅghā* (small comb), *kaṛā* (circular heavy metal bracelet), *kirpān* (ceremonial short sword), and *kacchā* (special undergarment). The Five Ks have both practical and symbolic purposes.

A *kaṛā*, *kaṅghā* and *kirpān*.

Sikh people

Worldwide, there are 25,800,000 (25.8 million) Sikhs, but around 75% of Sikhs live in the Indian state of Punjab, where they are close to 59.9% of the population. Large communities of Sikhs live in the neighboring states, and large communities of Sikhs can be found across India. However, Sikhs are only about 2% of the Indian population. Migration beginning from the 19th century led to the creation of significant communities in Canada (Brampton & Malton, Ontario; Surrey, British Columbia), the United Kingdom, the Middle East, East Africa, Southeast Asia and more recently, the United States, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand.

Smaller populations of Sikhs are found in Mauritius, Pakistan, Nepal, Fiji and other countries.

Like the Hindus, many Sikhs are also divided along caste lines, although these divisions exist contrary to the teachings of Sikh Gurus. In addition to social divisions, there are a number of Sikh sectarian groups, such as Namdharis, Ravidasis, and Nirankaris. These groups differ from orthodox Sikhism, and have their own religious and social organisations. Nihangs, and Udasis tend to have little difference in practice, and are considered Sikhs proper by mainstream Sikhism.

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Slavic mythology

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Myths

Slavic mythology is the mythological aspect of the religion that was practised by the ancient Slavs. It evolved over more than 3,000 years. It is conjectured that some parts of it are from Neolithic or possibly even Mesolithic times. The religion possesses numerous common traits with other religions descended from the Proto-Indo-European religion.

Calendar and festivals

Slavic myths were cyclical, repeating every year over a series of festivities that followed changes of nature and seasons. Thus, to understand their mythology, it is important to understand their concept of calendar. On the basis of archeological and folklore remains, it is possible to reconstruct some elements of pre-Christian calendar, particularly major feastivals.

- The year was apparently lunar, and began on the first day of March, similar to other Indo-European cultures whose old calendar systems are better known to us. The names for the last night of old year and the first day of new year are reconstructed as *Velja Noc(*Velja Notj)/Velik Dan(Velikŭ dĭnĭ)* (Great Night/Great Day). After Christianization, these names were probably passed onto Easter. In Slavic countries belonging to Orthodox Churches, Easter is known as Velik Dan/Great Day, whilst amongst Catholic Slavs, it is known as Velika Noc/Great Night. The names blend nicely with the translation of the Greek *Megale Hemera*, Great Week, the Christian term for the week in which Easter falls. In pagan times, however, this was a holiday probably quite like Halloween. Certain people (shamans) donned grotesque masks and coats of sheep wool, roaming around the villages, as during the Great Night, it was believed, spirits of dead ancestors travelled across the land, entering villages and houses to celebrate the new year with their living relatives. Consequently, the deity of the last day of the year was probably Veles, god of Underworld.

Many generations of Slavic artists were inspired by their national folklore. Illustrated above is Ilya Yefimovich Repin's *Sadko in the Underwater Kingdom* (1876).

- There was a large spring festival dedicated to Jarilo, god of vegetation and fertility. Processions of young men or girls used to go round villages on this day, carrying green branches or flowers as symbols of new life. They would travel from home to home, reciting certain songs and bless each household with traditional fertility rites. The leader of procession, usually riding on horse, would be identified with Jarilo. The custom of creation of pisanki or decorated eggs, also symbols of new life, was another tradition associated with this feast, which was later passed on Christian Easter.

- The summer solstice festival is known today variously as Ivanje, Kupala or Kries. It was celebrated pretty much as a huge wedding, and, according to some indications from historical sources, in pagan times likely followed by a general orgy. There was a lot of eating and drinking on the night before, large bonfires (in Slavic - *Kres*) were lit, and youngsters were coupling and dancing in circles, or jumped across fires. Young girls made wreaths from flowers and fern (which apparently was a sacred plant for this celebration), tossed them into rivers, and on the basis of how and where they floated, foretold each other how they would get married. Ritual bathing on this night was also very important; hence the name of *Kupala* (from *kupati* = to bathe), which probably fit nicely with folk translation of the future patron saint the Church installed for this festival, John the Baptist (Ivan Kupala Day). Overall, the whole festivity probably celebrated a divine wedding of fertility god, associated with growth of plants for harvest.

The spring fertility festival of Maslenitsa, rooted in pagan times and involving the burning of a straw effigy is still celebrated by Slavs all over the world, as seen here in Melbourne, Australia.

- In the middle of summer, there was a festival associated with thunder-god Perun, in post-Christian times transformed into a very important festival of Saint Elijah. It was considered the holiest time of the year, and there are some indications from historic sources that it involved human sacrifices. The harvest probably began afterwards.

- It is unclear when exactly the end of harvest was celebrated, but historic records mention interesting tradition associated with it that was celebrated at Svantevit temple on the island of Ruyana (present-day Rugen), a survived through later folklore. People would gather in front of the temple, where priests would place a huge wheat cake, almost the size of a man. The high priest would stand behind the cake and ask the masses if they saw him. Whatever their answer was, the priest would then plead that the next year, people could not see him behind the ritual cake; i.e., he alluded that the next year's harvest would be even more bountiful.

- There probably also was an important festival around winter solstice, which later became associated with Christmas. Consequently, in many Slavic countries, Christmas is called *Bozhich*, which simply means *little god*. While this name fits very nicely with the Christian idea of Christmas, the name is likely of pagan origin; it indicated the birth of a young and new god of Sun to the old and weakened solar deity during the longest night of the year. The old Sun god was identified as Svarog, and his son, the young and new Sun, as Dazhbog. An alternative (or perhaps the original) name for this festival was Korochun.

Cosmology

A fairly typical cosmological concept among speakers of Indo-European languages, that of the World Tree, is also present in Slavic mythology. It is either an oak tree, or some sort of pine tree. The mythological symbol of the World Tree was a very strong one, and survived throughout the Slavic folklore for many centuries after Christianisation. Three levels of the universe were located on the tree. Its crown represented the sky, the realm of heavenly deities and celestial bodies, whilst the trunk was the realm of mortals. They were sometimes combined together in opposition to the roots of the tree, which represented the underworld, the realm of the dead. Contrary to the popular ideas, it seems the world of the dead in Slavic mythology was actually quite a lovely place, a green and wet world of grassy plains and eternal spring. In folklore, this land is sometimes referred to as *Virey* or *Iriy*.

The pattern of three realms situated vertically on the axis mundi of the World Tree parallels the horizontal, geographical organisation of the world. The world of gods and mortals was situated in the centre of the earth (considered to be flat, of course), encircled by a sea, across which lay the land of the dead, where birds would fly to every winter and return from in spring. In many folklore accounts, the concepts of *going across the sea versus coming from across the sea* are equated with dying versus returning to life. This echoes an ancient mythological concept that the afterlife is reached by crossing over a body of water. Additionally, on the horizontal axis, the world was also split; in this case by four cardinal points, representing the four wind directions (north, east, south, west). These two divisions of the world, into three realms on the vertical axis and into four points on the horizontal, were quite important in mythology; they can be interpreted in statues of Slavic gods, particularly those of the three-headed Triglav and the four-headed Svantevit.

Pantheon

As noted in the description of historical sources, a very wide range of deities was worshipped by Slavs, on a huge geographical area from the shores of the Baltic to the shores of the Black Sea, in a time span of over 600 years. Historic sources also show that each Slavic tribe worshipped its own gods, and thus probably had its own pantheon. Overall, ancient Slavic religion seems to be fairly local and cultic in nature, with gods and beliefs varying from tribe to tribe. However, just as in the case of the various Slavic languages - it can be shown that they originate from a single, Proto-Slavic language - it is also possible to establish some sort of Proto-Slavic Olympus, and through careful study of folklore, reconstruct some elements of this original pantheon, from which the various gods of the various Slavic tribes originated.

Supreme god

There are various modern theories about a supreme Slavic god being Rod or Svarog, and historic sources show that gods such as Svarogich, Svantevit or Triglav were worshipped as supreme by certain tribes. But overall by far the best candidate for the position of supreme god is Perun. His name is the most common in all historic records of Slavic religion; in fact, he is the first Slavic god mentioned in written history (Procopius in his short note mentions that the god of thunder and lightning is the only god of Slavs, lord of all). The Primary Chronicle identifies him as chief god of Kievan Rus prior to Christianisation. A short note in Helmold's Chronica Slavorum states that West Slavs believe in a single god in heaven who rules over all the other gods on earth; the name of this god is not mentioned, but nevertheless it seems quite possible this was a reference to Perun. And even though we do not find the name of Perun in any of the extensive records of West Slavic religion, he was known by all branches of Slavs, as shown by a vast number of toponyms that still bear his name in all Slavic countries today. Finally, by analysing the folklore texts, one will notice that Perun is the only Slavic deity who was equated with the Christian God. These are very strong indications that Perun was indeed the supreme god of the original Proto-Slavic pantheon.

Perun, however, had a match. As Roman Jakobson pointed out, whenever Perun is mentioned in historic texts, he is always "accompanied" by another god, Veles. This relationship can be observed in toponyms as well. Wherever we find a hill or a mountain peak whose name can be associated with Perun, below it, in the lowlands, usually near a river, there will be a place with a name reminiscent of Veles. Consequently, as Perun was sometimes identified with God in folklore accounts, Veles was identified with the Devil.

Deities

Perun and Veles

Ivanov and Toporov reconstructed the ancient myth involving the two major gods of the Proto-Slavic pantheon, Perun and Veles. The two of them stand in opposition in almost every way. Perun is a heavenly god of thunder and lightning, fiery and *dry*, who rules the living world from his citadel high *above*, located on the top of the highest branch of the World Tree. Veles is a chthonic god associated with waters, earthly and *wet*, lord of the underworld, who rules the realm of the dead from *down* in the roots of the World Tree. Perun is a giver of rain to farmers, god of war and weapons, invoked by fighters. Veles is a god of cattle, protector of shepherds, associated with magic and commerce.

Gromoviti znaci or thunder marks such as these were often engraved upon roof beams of houses to protect them from lightning bolts. Identical symbols were discovered on Proto-Slavic pottery of 4th century Chernyakhov culture. They are thought to be symbols of the supreme Slavic god of thunder, Perun.

A cosmic battle fought between two of them echoes the ancient Indo-European myth of a fight between a storm god and a dragon. Attacking with his lightning bolts from sky, Perun pursues his serpentine enemy Veles who slithers down over earth. Veles taunts Perun and flees, transforming himself into various animals, hiding behind trees, houses, or people. In the end, he is killed by Perun, or he flees into the water, into the underworld. This is basically the same thing; by killing Veles, Perun does not actually destroy him, but simply returns him to his place in the world of the dead. Thus the order of the world, disrupted by Veles's mischief, is established once again by Perun. The idea that storms and thunder are actually a divine battle between the supreme god and his arch-enemy was extremely important to Slavs, and continued to thrive long after Perun and Veles were replaced by God and Devil. A lightning bolt striking down a tree or burning down a peasant's house was always explained through the belief of a raging heavenly deity bashing down on his earthly, underworldly, enemy.

The enmity of the two gods was explained by Veles' theft of Perun's cattle, or by Perun's theft of Veles' cattle (since Veles was the god of cattle, the matter of ownership here is not clear). The motif of stealing divine cattle is also a common one in Indo-European mythology; the cattle in fact may be understood simply as a metaphor for heavenly water or rain. Thus, Veles steals rain water from Perun, or Perun steals water for rain from Veles (again, since Veles is associated with waters, and Perun with sky and clouds, it is unclear to whom rain should belong). An additional reason for this enmity may be wife-theft. From folklore accounts it seems that the Sun was sometimes considered to be Perun's wife (an odd idea, as all Slavic sun-gods, like Hors and Dazbog, are male). However, since the Sun, in the mythic view of the world, dies every evening, as it descends beyond the horizon and into the underworld where it spends the night, this was understood by Slavs as Veles' theft of Perun's wife (but again, the rebirth of the Sun in the morning could also be understood as Perun's theft of Veles' wife).
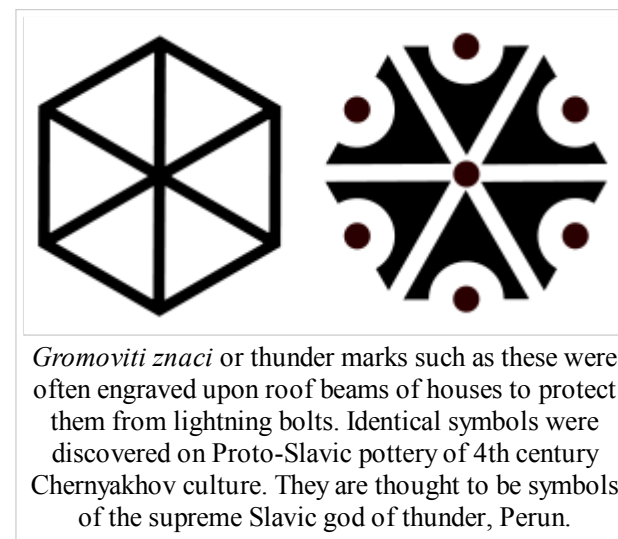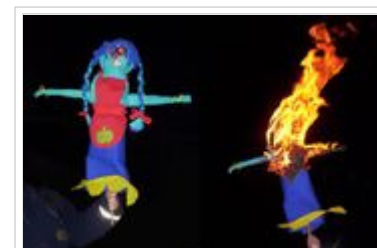
Jarilo and Morana

Katicic and Belaj continued down the path laid by Ivanov and Toporov and reconstructed the myth revolving around the fertility and vegetation god, Jarilo, and his sister and wife, Morana, goddess of nature and death. Jarilo is associated with the Moon and Morana is considered a daughter of the Sun. Both of them are children of Perun, born on the night of the new year (Great Night). However, on the same night, Jarilo is snatched from the cradle and taken to the underworld, where Veles raises him as his own. At the Spring festival of Jare/Jurjevo, Jarilo returns from the world of the dead (*from across the sea*), bringing spring from the ever-green underworld into the realm of the living. He meets his sister Morana and courts her. At the beginning of summer, the festival later known as Ivanje/Ivan, Kupala celebrated their divine wedding. The sacred union between brother and sister, children of the supreme god, brings fertility and abundance to earth, ensuring a bountiful harvest. Also, since Jarilo is a (step)son of Veles, and his wife daughter of Perun, their marriage brings peace between two great gods; in other words, it ensures there will be no storms which could damage the harvest.

Burning of Marzanna as a symbol of winter during the spring equinox is one of remains of prechristian beliefs in Polish culture

After the harvest, however, Jarilo is unfaitfhul to his wife, and she vengfully slays him (returns him into the underworld), renewing the enmity between Perun and Veles. Without her husband, god of fertility and vegetation, Morana - and all of nature with her - withers and freezes in the upcoming winter; she turns into a terrible, old, and dangerous goddess of darkness and frost, and eventually dies by the end of year. The whole myth would repeat itself anew each following year, and retelling of its key parts was accompanied by major yearly festivals of the Slavic calendar. The story also shows numerous parallels to similar myths of Baltic and Hittite mythology.

Svarog, Svarogich, Dazhbog

The name of Svarog is found only in East Slavic manuscripts, where it is usually equated with the Greek smith god Hephaestus. However, the name is very ancient, indicating that Svarog was a deity of Proto-Slavic pantheon. The root *svar* means bright, clear, and the suffix *-og* denotes a place. Comparison with Vedic Svarga indicates that Svarog simply meant (daylight) sky. It is possible he was the original sky god of the pantheon, perhaps a Slavic version of Proto-Indo-European *Dyēus Ph₂ter*. Svarog can be also understood as meaning a shining, fiery place; a forge. This, and identification with Hephaestus from historic sources, indicates he was also a god of fire and blacksmithing. According to the interpretation by Ivanov and Toporov, Svarog had two sons: Svarogich, who represented fire on earth, and Dazhbog, who represented fire in the sky and was associated with Sun. Svarog was believed to have forged the Sun and have given it to his son Dazhbog to carry it across the sky.

In Russian manuscripts he is equated with Sun, and folklore remembers him as a benevolent deity of light and sky. Serbian folklore, however, presents a far darker picture of him; he is remembered as Dabog, a frightful and lame deity guarding the doors of the underworld, associated with mining and precious metals. Veselin Čajkanović pointed out that these two aspects fit quite nicely into a symbolism of Slavic solar deity; a benevolent side represents the Dazhbog during day, when he carries the Sun across the sky. The malevolent and ugly Dabog carries the Sun through the underworld at night. This pattern can also be applied to Sun's yearly cycle; a benevolent aspect is associated with young, summer Sun, and a malevolent one with old, winter Sun.

Svarogic was worshipped as a fire spirit by Russian peasants well after Christianisation. He was also known amongst Western Slavs, but there he was worshipped as a supreme deity in the holy city of Radegast. Svarogich is a simply diminutive of Svarog's name, and thus it may simply be another aspect (a surname, so to speak) of Dazhbog. There is also a point of view that Svarog was the ancestor of all other Slavic gods, and thus Svarogich could simply be an epithet of any other deity, so that Dazhbog, Perun, Veles, and so on, were possibly all Svarogichs.

Svantevit and Triglav

Nicholas Roerich. *Slavic Idols* (1901).

It is somewhat ironic that for now we cannot clearly determine the position of these two gods in Proto-Slavic pantheon, yet we have the most extensive historic accounts written about them. That they were important to all pagan Slavs is indicated by a significant number of toponyms whose names can be associated with them and by discoveries of multi-headed statues in various Slavic lands. Both of these gods were considered supreme in various locations; they were associated with divination and symbolized by the horse. A possibly significant difference is that Svantevit had a white horse whilst Triglav a black one, and Svantevit was represented with four heads whilst Triglav (whose name simply means *Three-headed*) with three. Svantevit was also associated with victory in war, harvest, and commerce.

Various hypotheses about them were proposed: that they are in fact one and the same deity, being somewhat similar; that they are not gods at all but compounds of three or four gods, a kind of mini-pantheons. Slavic neopagans tend to think of Triglav in particular as a concept of Trinity. Svantevit has also been proclaimed as a late West Slavic alternation of Perun or Jarilo, or compared with Svarogich and deemed a solar deity. None of these hypotheses is quite satisfactory, and mostly they are just wild speculation, another attempt to reconstruct Slavic mythology as it should be, rather than discovering what it was really like. Further research is necessary before more can be said of these deities.

It is claimed that Slovenian highest mountain Triglav is named after god Triglav.

Zorya and Danica

Svantevit

These names mean simply Dawn and Daystar, but in folklore accounts of all Slavic nations, they are often described as persons, or associated with persons, in pretty much the same way as Sun and Moon. Danica is often called Sun's younger sister or daughter, and was probably associated with Morana. Consequently, Zorya was either Sun's mother or older sister. It is quite possible this was a Slavic relic of the Proto-Indo-European dawn goddess Hausos, but further research into the matter will be necessary before more can be said of these deities.

Gods other than these cannot, at the moment, be established as Proto-Slavic deities. It should be noted, however, that it is very likely many of these gods were known by different names even in the same language. Religious taboos of using true names of deities certainly existed amongst Slavs, and thus gods were often called by additional names or adjectives, describing their qualities. Over time, these adjectives took on lives of their own.
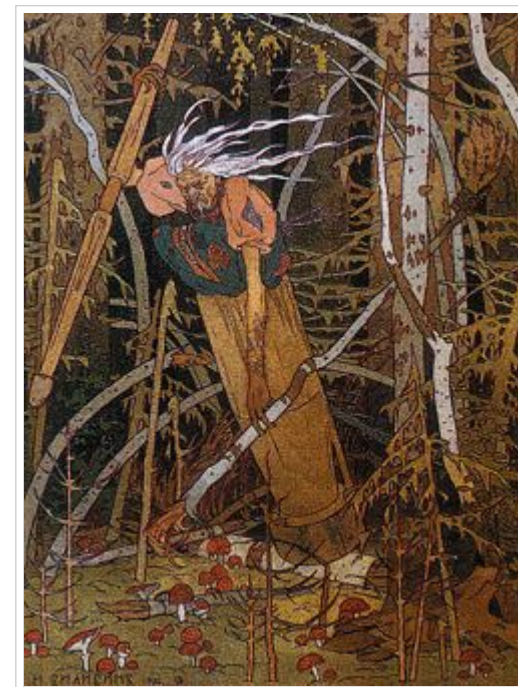
Further developments

Ivanov and Toporov also schematically periodised various stages of development of Slavic mythology, attempting to show how it evolved from the original pantheon:

- The first subsequent development occurred after the Proto-Slavs had split into East, West, and South Slavs. Each branch of the Slavic family devised disparate deities associated with crafts, agriculture, and fertility, such as Rod and Chur, and various feminine deities of household such as Mokosh. Deities such as Hors and Simargl are sometimes interpreted as the East Slavic borrowings from their Iranian neighbours.

- At the level of abstract personification of divine functions, we have such concepts as **Pravda**/**Krivda** (Right/Wrong), **Dobra Kob**/**Zla Kob** (Good Fortune/Evil Fortune). These concepts, found in many Slavic fairy tales, are presumed to have originated at a time when old myths were already being downgraded to the level of legends and stories. Loius Leger pointed out that various Slavic words describing success, destiny, or fortune are all connected with the ancient Slavic word for God - "bog". Although used to denote the God of Christianity, the word is of pagan origin and quite ancient. It originates from the Proto-Indo-European root *bhag* (meaning fortune), being cognate to Avestic *baga* and Sanskrit *bhagah* (epithets of deities).

- The next level of development is a mythologisation of historical traditions. Beginning in pagan times, it continued well after the advent of Christianity. It is characterised by tales and songs of legendary heroes, ranging from purely legendary founders of certain tribes, such as the stories about Lech, Czech, and Rus, to quite historical persons such as the 15th century Croatian-Hungarian king Matthias Corvinus or the Serbian Prince Marko, who were both immortalised in folk legend or poetry. Russian bylinas about bogatyrs, Polish legends of Krak the Dragonslayer, Czech legends about Libuše, and the foundation of Prague all fall into this category. Various elements of these tales will still reveal elements of old myths (such as a hero slaying a dragon, a faint echo of an ancient concept of a cosmic battle between Perun the Thunderer and the serpentine Veles).

- On an even lower level, certain mythical archetypes evolved into fairy-tale characters. These include Baba Yaga, Koschei the Immortal, Nightingale the Robber, Vodyanoy, Zmey Gorynych, and so on. At this point of development, one can hardly speak of mythology anymore. Rather, these are legends and stories which contain some fragments of old myths, but their structure and meaning are not so clear.

Baba Yaga, by Ivan Bilibin.

- The lowest level of development of Slavic mythology includes various groups of home or nature spirits and magical creatures, which vary greatly amongst different Slavic nations. Mythic structure on this level is practically incomprehensible, but some of the beliefs nevertheless have a great antiquity. As early as the 5th century, Procopius mentioned that Slavs worshipped river and nature spirits, and traces of such beliefs can still be recognised in the tales about vilas, vampires, witches, and werewolves.

Retrieved from " http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavic_mythology"

Tao Te Ching

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy; Religious texts

The **Tao Te Ching** or **Dao De Jing** (traditional Chinese: 道德經; simplified Chinese: 道德经; pinyin: Dàodéjīng), originally known as the eponymous **Laozi** or **Lao tzu** (Chinese: 老子; pinyin: Lǎozǐ), is a Chinese classic text. Its name comes from the opening words of its two sections: 道 *dào* "way," Chapter 1, and 德 *dé* "virtue," Chapter 38, plus 經 *jīng* "classic." According to tradition, it was written around the 6th century BCE by the Taoist sage Laozi (or Lao Tzu, "Old Master"), a record-keeper at the Zhou Dynasty court, by whose name the text is known in China. The text's true authorship and date of composition or compilation are still debated.

The *Tao Te Ching* is fundamental to the Taoist school (*Dàojiā* 道 家) of Chinese philosophy and strongly influenced other schools, such as Legalism and Neo-Confucianism. This ancient book is also central in Chinese religion, not only for Taoism (*Dàojiāo* 道 教) but Chinese Buddhism, which when first introduced into China was largely interpreted through the use of Taoist words and concepts. Many Chinese artists, including poets, painters, calligraphers, and even gardeners have used the *Tao Te Ching* as a source of inspiration. Its influence has also spread widely outside East Asia, aided by hundreds of translations into Western languages.

The Wade-Giles romanization *Tao Te Ching* dates back to early English transliterations in the late 19th century, and many people continue using it, especially for words and phrases that have become well-established in English. The pinyin romanization *Daodejing* originated in the late 20th century, and this romanization is becoming increasingly popular, having been adopted as the official system by the Chinese government. *See discussion at Daoism-Taoism romanization issue.*

This article contains Chinese text.
Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Chinese characters.

Tao Te Ching	
Traditional Chinese:	道德經
Simplified Chinese:	道德经
Hanyu Pinyin:	dàodéjīng
Transliterations	
Mandarin	
- Hanyu Pinyin:	dàodéjīng
- Wade-Giles:	*Dao De Jing*
	[Listen]
Yue (Cantonese)	
- Jyutping:	dou6 dak1 ging1

The text

The *Tao Te Ching* has a long and complex textual history. On one hand, there are transmitted versions and commentaries that date back two millennia; on the other, there are ancient bamboo, silk, and paper manuscripts that archeologists discovered in the last century.

Title

There are many possible translations of the book's title, owing to the polysemy of the component Chinese words:

- *Dào/Tao* 道 literally means "way", "road", "path", or "route," but was extended to mean "path ahead", "way forward", "method", "principle", "doctrine", or simply "the Way". This term, which was variously used by other Chinese philosophers (including Confucius, Mencius, Mozi, and Hanfeizi), has special meaning within the context of Taoism, where it implies the essential, unnamable process of the universe.
- *Dé/Te* 德 basically means "virtue" in the sense of "personal character", "inner strength", or "integrity", but was used differently by Confucianists to mean "morality". The semantics of this Chinese word resemble English *virtue*, which developed from a (now archaic) sense of "inner potency" or "divine power" (as in "healing virtue of a drug") to the modern meaning of "moral excellence" or "goodness". Compare the compound word *dàodé* (道德 "ethics", "ethical principles", "morals," or "morality").
- *Jīng/Ching* 經 originally meant "norm", "rule", "plan", "warp" (vs. "woof") and was semantically extended to mean "scripture", "canon", "great book", or "classic".

Thus, *Tao Te Ching* can be translated as "The Scripture/Classic/Canon of the Way/Path and the Power/Virtue", etc.

Note that there is in fact no "its" in the title, either explicitly or implicitly. Therefore, commonly accepted translations of the title such as "The Book of the Way and Its Power" are in fact adding an extra element that takes away from the accuracy.

The title **Tao Te Ching** is a honorific given by posterity, other titles include the amalgam *Lǎozǐ Dàodé Jīng* (老子道德經), the honorific *Daode Zhen Jing* (道德真經 "True Classic of the Way and the Power"), and the *Wuqian wen* (五千文 "Five thousand character [classic]"; see next).

Internal structure

The received *Tao Te Ching* is a short text of around 5,000 Chinese characters in 81 brief chapters or sections (章). There is some evidence that the chapter divisions were later additions - for commentary, or as aids to rote memorization - and that the original text was more fluidly organized. It has two parts, the *Tao Ching* (道經; chaps. 1–37) and the *Te Ching* (德經; chaps. 38–81), which may have been edited together into the received text, possibly reversed from an original "Te Tao Ching" (see Mawangdui texts below). The written style is laconic, with few grammatical particles, frequently ambiguous, occasionally rhymed, and expressing often difficult ideas poetically.

The Chinese characters in the original versions were probably written in *zhuànshū* (篆書 seal script), while later versions were written in *lìshū* (隸書 clerical script) and *kǎishū* (楷書 regular script) styles. Daoist Chinese Characters contains a good summary of these different calligraphies.

Historical authenticity

The *Tao Te Ching* is universally ascribed to Laozi, whose historical existence has been a matter of scholastic debate. His name, which means "Old Master", or "old masters" has only fueled controversy on this issue. (Kaltenmark 1969:10).

Laozi

The first reliable reference to Laozi is his "biography," *Shiji* (63, tr. Chan 1963:35-37), by Chinese historian Sima Qian (ca. 145–86 BC), which combines three stories. First, Laozi was a contemporary of Confucius (551-479 BC). His surname was Li (李 "plum"), and his personal name was Er (耳 "ear") or Dan (聃 "long ear"). He was an official in the imperial archives, and wrote a book in two parts before departing to the West. Second, Laozi was Lao Laizi (老來子 "Old Come Master"), also a contemporary of Confucius, who wrote a book in 15 parts. Third, Laozi was the Grand Historian and astrologer Lao Dan (老聃 "Old Long-ears"), who lived during the reign (384-362 BC) of Duke Xian (獻公) of Qin).

Generations of scholars have debated the historicity of Laozi and the dating of the *Tao Te Ching*. Linguistic studies of the text's vocabulary and rhyme scheme point to a date of composition after the Shi Jing yet before the Zhuangzi — around the late 4th or early 3rd centuries BC. Legends claim variously that Laozi was "born old"; that he lived for 996 years, with twelve previous incarnations starting around the time of the Three Sovereigns before the thirteen as Laozi. Some Western scholars have expressed doubts over Laozi's historical existence, claiming that the Tao Te Ching is actually a collection of the work of various authors. By contrast, Chinese scholars hold that it would be inconceivable within the context of ancient Chinese culture for Sima Qian the historian to have engaged in confabulation. Chinese scholars by and large accept Laozi as a historical figure, while dismissing exaggerated folkloric claims as superstitious legend.

Taoists venerate Laozi as *Daotsu* the founder of the school of Dao, the *Daode Tianjun* in the Three Pure Ones, one of the eight elders transformed from Taiji in the Chinese creation myth.

Principal versions

Among the many transmitted editions of the *Tao Te Ching* text, the three primary ones are named after early commentaries. The "Yan Zun Version," which is only extant for the *Te Ching*, derives from a commentary attributed to Han Dynasty scholar Yan Zun (巖尊, fl. 80 BC-10 AD). The "Heshang Gong Version" is named after the legendary Heshang Gong (河上公 "Riverside Sage") who supposedly lived during the reign (202-157 BC) of Emperor Wen of Han. This commentary (tr. Erkes 1950) has a preface written by Ge Xuan (葛玄, 164-244 AD), grand-uncle of Ge Hong, and scholarship dates this version to around the 3rd century AD. The "Wang Bi Version" has more verifiable origins than either of the above. Wang Bi (王弼, 226 – 249 AD) was a famous Three Kingdoms period philosopher and commentator on the *Tao Te Ching* (tr. Lin 1977, Rump and Chan 1979) and the *I Ching*.

Tao Te Ching scholarship has lately advanced from archeological discoveries of manuscripts, some of which are older than any of the received texts. Beginning in the 1920s and 1930s, Marc Aurel Stein and others found thousands of scrolls in the Mogao Caves near Dunhuang. They included more than 50 partial and complete *Tao Te Ching* manuscripts. One written by the scribe So/Su Dan (素統) is dated 270 AD and corresponds closely with the Heshang Gong version. Another partial manuscript has the Xiang'er (想爾) commentary, which had previously been lost.

Mawangdui and Guodian texts

In 1973, archeologists discovered copies of early Chinese books, known as the Mawangdui Silk Texts, in a tomb dating from 168 BC. They included two nearly

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complete copies of the *Laozi*, referred to as Text A (甲) and Text B (乙), both of which reverse the traditional ordering and put the *Te Ching* section before the *Tao Ching*. Based on calligraphic styles and imperial naming taboo avoidances, scholars believe that A and B can be dated, respectively, to about the first and third decades of the 2nd century BC (Boltz 1993:284).

In 1993, the oldest known version of the text, written on bamboo tablets, was found in a tomb near the town of Guodian (郭店) in Jingmen, Hubei, and dated prior to 300 BC. The Guodian Chu Slips comprise about 800 slips of bamboo with a total of over 13,000 characters, about 2,000 of which correspond with the *Tao Te Ching*, including 14 previously unknown verses.

Both the Mawangdui and Guodian versions are generally consistent with the received texts, excepting differences in chapter sequence and graphic variants. Several recent *Tao Te Ching* translations (e.g., Lau 1989, Henricks 1989, Mair 1990, Henricks 2000, Allan and Williams 2000, and Roberts 2004) utilize these two versions, sometimes with the verses reordered to synthesize the new finds.

Interpretation and themes

Depending on how the *Tao Te Ching* is interpreted, some ambiguous passages have multiple readings, ranging from political advice for rulers to practical wisdom for people. The following themes and concepts are central to interpreting the text.

Ineffability or Genesis

> The Way that can be told of is not an unvarying way;
> The names that can be named are not unvarying names.
> It was from the Nameless that Heaven and Earth sprang;
> The named is but the mother that rears the ten thousand creatures, each after its kind. (chap. 1, tr. Waley)

These famous first lines of the *Tao Te Ching* state that the Tao is ineffable i.e. Tao is nameless, goes beyond distinctions, and transcends language. In Laozi's Qingjing Jing (verse 1-8) he clarified the term Tao was nominated as he was trying to describe a state of existence before it happened and before time or space. *Way* or *path* happened to be the side meaning of Tao, ineffability would be just poetic. This is the Chinese creation myth from the primordial Tao. In the first twenty-four words in Chapter one, the author articulated an abstract cosmogony, in what would be the world outside of the cave before it took shape by Plato in his allegory of the cave.

The Mysterious Female

> The Valley Spirit never dies
> It is named the Mysterious Female.
> And the doorway of the Mysterious Female
> Is the base from which Heaven and Earth sprang.

It is there within us all the while;
Draw upon it as you will, it never runs dry. (chap. 6, tr. Waley)

Like the above description of the ineffable Tao as "the mother that rears the ten thousand creatures", the *Tao Te Ching* advocates "female" (or *Yin*) values, emphasizing the passive, solid, and quiescent qualities of nature (which is opposed to the active and energetic), and "having without possessing". Waley's translation can also be understood as the *Esoteric Feminine* in that it can be known intuitively, that must be complemented by the masculine, "male" (or *Yang*), again amplified in Qingjing Jing (verse 9-13). Yin and Yang should be balanced, "Know masculinity, Maintain femininity, and be a ravine for all under heaven." (chap. 28, tr. Mair)

Returning (Union with the Primordial)

In Tao the only motion is returning;
The only useful quality, weakness.
For though all creatures under heaven are the products of Being,
Being itself is the product of Not-being. " (chap. 40, tr. Waley)

Another theme is the eternal return, or what Mair (1990:139) calls "the continual return of the myriad creatures to the cosmic principle from which they arose."

There is a contrast between the rigidity of death and the weakness of life: "When he is born, man is soft and weak; in death he becomes stiff and hard. The ten thousand creatures and all plants and trees while they are alive are supple and soft, but when dead they become brittle and dry." (chap. 76, tr. Waley). This is returning to the beginning of things, or to one's own childhood.

The *Tao Te Ching* focuses upon the beginnings of society, and describes a golden age in the past, comparable with the ideas of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Human problems arose from the "invention" of culture and civilization. In this idealized past, "the people should have no use for any form of writing save knotted ropes, should be contented with their food, pleased with their clothing, satisfied with their homes, should take pleasure in their rustic tasks." (chap. 80, tr. Waley)

If the same chapter is understood in the Taoist cosmogony, the last two verses re-state the creation of beings from *you* (有) as in *youji* or Taiji which came from *wu* as in Wuji, a state of union with the primordial. This concept is also outlined in two other texts Xishen Jing and Qingjing Jing attributable to Laozi.

Emptiness

We put thirty spokes together and call it a wheel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the wheel depends.
We turn clay to make a vessel;
But it is on the space where there is nothing that the usefulness of the vessel depends.
We pierce doors and windows to make a house;
And it is on these spaces where there is nothing that the usefulness of the house depends.

Therefore just as we take advantage of what is, we should recognize the usefulness of what is not. (chap. 11, tr. Waley)

Philosophical vacuity is a common theme among Asian wisdom traditions including Taoism (especially *Wu wei* "effortless action"), Buddhism, and some aspects of Confucianism. One could interpret the *Tao Te Ching* as a suite of variations on the "Powers of Nothingness". This resonates with the Buddhist Shunyata philosophy of "form is emptiness, emptiness is form."

Looking at a traditional Chinese landscape, one can understand how emptiness (the unpainted) has the power of animating the trees, mountains, and rivers it surrounds. Emptiness can mean having no fixed preconceptions, preferences, intentions, or agenda. Since "The Sage has no heart of his own; He uses the heart of the people as his heart." (chap. 49, tr. Waley). From a ruler's point of view, it is a *laissez-faire* approach:

So a wise leader may say:
"I practice inaction, and the people look after themselves."
But from the Sage it is so hard at any price to get a single word
That when his task is accomplished, his work done,
Throughout the country every one says: "It happened of its own accord". (chap. 17, tr. Waley)

Knowledge and Humility

Knowing others is wisdom;
Knowing the self is enlightenment.
Mastering others requires force;
Mastering the self requires strength;
He who knows he has enough is rich.
Perseverance is a sign of will power.
He who stays where he is endures.
To die but not to perish is to be eternally present. (chap. 33, tr. Feng and English)

The *Tao Te Ching* praises self knowledge with emphasis on that knowledge coming with humility, to the extent of dis-acknowledging this knowledge. An interpretation on this knowledge being irrational in connection with Chapter 19 of Waley's translation on "Banish wisdom, discard knowledge, And the people will be benefited a hundredfold." seem to be inaccurate stemming from *Feisheng qizi* which is a reverse phrase meaning the truly exalted (sheng) and intellectual (zi) never claimed they are, which might as well be abolishing the notions of exaltation and intellectuality, meaning humbleness and humility of one's enlightenment is crucial. Knowledge, like desire, should be diminished. "It was when intelligence and knowledge appeared that the Great Artifice began." (chap. 18, tr. Waley), similarly another examplar on lost in translation by a sinologist, the third and fourth stanzas reads *Zihui zu You Dawei*, which should be read in reverse as the first and second stanzas, that when the world is full deceit and falsehoods (Dawei), wisdom and intellectuality shall arise.

Other themes

Here are some other themes inferred from the "Tao Te Ching" (with examples of instances):

- Force begets force.
- One whose needs are simple can fulfill them easily.
- Material wealth does not enrich the spirit.
- Self-absorption and self-importance are vain and self-destructive. (22, 24)
- Victory in war is not glorious and not to be celebrated, but stems from devastation, and is to be mourned.
- The harder one tries, the more resistance one creates for oneself.
- The more one acts in harmony with the universe (the Mother of the ten thousand things), the more one will achieve, with less effort.
- The truly wise make little of their own wisdom for the more they know, the more they realize how little they know.
- When we lose the fundamentals, we supplant them with increasingly inferior values which we pretend are the true values. (18)
- Glorification of wealth, power and beauty beget crime, envy and shame.
- The qualities of flexibility and suppleness, especially as exemplified by water, are superior to rigidity and strength. (8, 40, 55, 78)
- Everything is in its own time and place.
- Duality of nature that complements each other instead of competing with each other — the two faces of the same coin — one cannot exist without the other.
- The differences of opposite polarities — e.g., the differences between male and female, light and dark, strong and weak, etc. — help us to understand and appreciate the universe.
- Humility is the highest virtue.
- Knowing oneself is a virtue. (33)
- Envy is our calamity; overindulgence is our plight.
- The more you go in search of an answer, the less you will understand.
- Know when it's time to stop. If you don't know then stop when you are done. (9)

Interpretations in relation to religious traditions

The relation between Taoism and Buddhism and Chan Buddhism is complex and fertile. Similarly, the relationship between Taoism and Confucianism is richly interwoven, historically.

Since Christian missionaries were among the first Westerners to study the *Tao Te Ching*, it is not surprising that they connected Taoism with Christianity. Assimilation of local religions often helped missionary efforts to convert the populace to Christianity. They drew many parallels between the New Testament and the *Tao Te Ching*, for instance, "Do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27, tr. NASB) and "Requite injuries with good deeds" (chap. 63, tr. Waley). Note that the Chinese Bible translates *logos* ("the Word") as *Tao* ("the Way").

Two particular *Tao Te Ching* chapters are perceived as exemplifying Christian themes. Chapter 42 bears a resemblance to the Trinity doctrine: "The Way gave birth to unity, Unity gave birth to duality, Duality gave birth to trinity, Trinity gave birth to the myriad creatures." (tr. Mair 1990:9).

Zhuangzi once stated in a passage from his famous work *Inner Chapters*, that a great sage would come who would bring knowledge and peace to all men; though he didn't know if it would be in a thousand years or in a day. Naturally, this was interpreted by missionaries as a prediction or foreshadowing of Christ.

Going even further, in 1823 the French sinologist Jean-Pierre-Abel Rémusat suggested that Yahweh was signified by three words in Chapter 14; *yi* (夷 "calm; level; barbarian"), *xi* (希 "rare; indiscernible; hope"), and *wei* (微 "tiny, small; obscure").

> We look for it but do not see it; we name it "subtle." We listen for it but do not hear it; we name it "rare." We grope for it but do not grasp it; we name it "serene." These three cannot be fully fathomed, Therefore, They are bound together to make unity." (chap. 14, tr. Mair 1990:74)

James Legge (1891:57-58) dismissed this hypothetical *yi-xi-wei* and *Yahweh* connection as "a mere fancy or dream". According to Holmes Welch:

> It is not hard to understand the readiness of early scholars to assert that the doctrine of the Trinity was revealed in the *Tao Te Ching* and that its fourteenth chapter contains the syllables of "Yahveh." Even today, though these errors have been recognized for more than a century, the general notion that Lao Tzu was Christ's forerunner has lost none of its romantic appeal. (1965:7)

Present day researchers, such as Damascene et al. (1999), continue to explore the similarities between Taoist and Christian teachings. A newer book that explores the relationship is "A Tao te Ching for Christians" by Paul Brennan.

Critics point out that these "similarities" consist of taking select passages out of context of the text as a whole, and out of the history of Chinese textual interpretation and religious practice. Passages that are incompatible with Christian doctrines, such as Chapter 5 "Heaven and Earth are not Humane (ren)"(Wing-tsit Chan trans.) are ignored. This approach was started by Christian missionaries, who were actively working to supplant Chinese religions.

Related concepts

- Dialectical monism
- Dialectics
- Dualism

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Taoism

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Philosophy; Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Taoism (pronounced /ˈdaʊ.ɪ.zəm/ or /ˈtaʊ.ɪ.zəm/; also spelled **Daoism**) refers to a variety of related philosophical and religious traditions and concepts. These traditions have influenced East Asia for over two thousand years and some have spread internationally. The Chinese character *Tao* 道 (or *Dao*, depending on the romanisation scheme) means "path" or "way", although in Chinese religion and philosophy it has taken on more abstract meanings. Taoist propriety and ethics emphasize the Three Jewels of the Tao: compassion, moderation, and humility. Taoist thought focuses on wu wei (non-action), spontaneity, transformation and emptiness. An emphasis is placed on the link between people and nature, and that this link lessens the need for rules and order, leading one to a better understanding of the world and one's surroundings.

> **This article contains Chinese text.**
> Without proper rendering support, you may see question marks, boxes, or other symbols instead of Chinese characters.

Nature and ancestor spirits are common in popular Taoism. Organized Taoism distinguishes its ritual activity from that of the folk religion, which some professional Taoists (*Daoshi*) view as debased. This sort of shamanism is eschewed for an emphasis on internal alchemy among the "elite" Taoists.

Chinese alchemy, astrology, cuisine, several Chinese martial arts, Chinese traditional medicine, fengshui, and many styles of qigong breath training disciplines are intertwined with Taoism throughout history.

Categorization

There is debate over how, and whether, Taoism should be subdivided. Some scholars have divided it into the following three categories:

1. "Philosophical Taoism". (*Daojia*). A philosophical school based on the texts *Tao Te Ching* and *Zhuangzi*;
2. "Religious Taoism". (*Daojiao*). A family of organized Chinese religious movements originating from the Celestial Masters movement during the late Han Dynasty and later including the "Orthodox" (*Zhengyi*) and "Complete Reality" (*Quanzhen*) sects, which trace back to Lao Zi or Zhang Daoling in the late Han Dynasty;
3. "Folk Taoism". The Chinese folk religion.

This distinction is complicated by hermeneutic difficulty. The categorization of Taoist sects and movements is very controversial. Many scholars believe that there is no distinction between Daojia and Daojiao. Taoism's start is traced back to Lao-Tzu (or Laozi)

Beliefs

Taoism has never been a unified religion, but has rather consisted of numerous teachings based on various revelations. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have very distinct beliefs. Nevertheless, there are certain core beliefs that nearly all the schools share.

Principles

Taoism theology emphasizes various themes found in the *Tao Te Ching* and *Zhuangzi*, such as naturalness, vitality, peace, "non-action" (*wu wei*), emptiness (refinement), detachment, the strength of softness (or flexibility), receptiveness, spontaneity, the relativism of human ways of life, ways of speaking and guiding behaviour.

Tao

Tao can be roughly stated to be the flow of the universe, or the force behind the natural order. Tao is believed to be the influence that keeps the universe balanced and ordered. Tao is associated with nature, due to a belief that nature demonstrates the Tao. The flow of qi, as the essential energy of action and existence, is compared to the universal order of Tao. Tao is compared to what it is not, like the negative theology of Western scholars. It is often considered to be the source of both existence and non-existence.

Tao is rarely an object of worship, being treated more like the Indian concepts of atman and dharma. The word "Taoism" is used to translate different Chinese terms. *Daojiao/Taochiao* (道教 "teachings/religion of the Dao") refers to Daoism as a religion. *Daojia/Taochia* (道家 "school of the Dao") refers to the studies of scholars, or "philosophical" Taoism. However, most scholars have abandoned the dichotomy of "religious" and "philosophical" Taoism.

A Taoist Temple in Taiwan. The religious practice of Jingxiang, note images of the Fu Dog and Dragon can be seen.
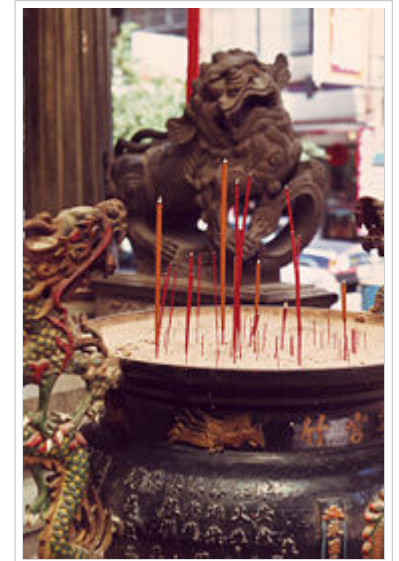
De

Tao is also associated with the complex concept of *De* (德) "power; virtue", which is the active expression of Tao. *De* is the active living, or cultivation, of that "way".

Wu wei

Wu wei (simplified Chinese: 无为; traditional Chinese: 無為; pinyin: wúwéi) is a central concept in Taoism. The literal meaning of *wu wei* is "without action". It is often expressed by the paradox *wei wu wei*, meaning "action without action" or "effortless doing". The practice and efficacy of wu wei are fundamental in Taoist thought, most prominently emphasized in Taoism. The goal of wu wei is alignment with Tao, revealing the soft and invisible power within all things. It is believed by Taoists that masters of wu wei can control this invisible potential, the innate yin-action of the Way.

In ancient Taoist texts, wu wei is associated with water through its yielding nature. Water is soft and weak, but it can move earth and carve stone. Taoist

philosophy proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts his will against the world, he disrupts that harmony. Taoism does not identify man's will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that man must place his will in harmony with the natural universe.

Pu

Pu (simplified Chinese: 朴; traditional Chinese: 樸; pinyin: pǔ, pú; Wade-Giles: p'u; lit. "uncut wood") is translated "uncarved block", "unhewn log", or "simplicity". It is a metaphor for the state of *wu wei* (無為) and the principle of *jian* (儉). It represents a passive state of receptiveness. *Pu* is a symbol for a state of pure potential and perception without prejudice. In this state, Taoists believe everything is seen as it is, without preconceptions or illusion.

Pu is seen as keeping oneself in the primordial state of *tao*. It is believed to be the true nature of the mind, unburdened by knowledge or experiences. In the state of *pu*, there is no right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. There is only pure experience, or awareness, free from learned labels and definitions. It is this state of being that is the goal of following *wu wei*.

Spirituality

Taoists believe that human is a microcosm for the universe. The body ties directly into the Chinese five elements. The five organs correlate with the five elements, the five directions and the seasons. Akin to the " hermetic maxim" of "as above, so below", Taoism posits that by understanding himself, man may gain knowledge of the universe, and vice versa.

In Taoism, even beyond Chinese folk religion, various rituals, exercises, and substances are said to positively affect one's physical and mental health. They are also intended to align oneself spiritually with cosmic forces, or enable ecstatic spiritual journeys. These concepts seem basic to Taoism in its elite forms. Internal alchemy and various spiritual practices are used by some Taoists to extend life, theoretically even to the point of immortality.

Ethics

The Three Jewels, or Three Treasures (Chinese: 三寶; pinyin: sānbǎo; Wade-Giles: san-pao), are basic virtues in Taoism. The Three Jewels are compassion, moderation and humility. They are also translated as kindness, simplicity and modesty. Arthur Waley describes them as "[t]he three rules that formed the practical, political side of the author's teaching". He correlated the Three Treasures with "abstention from aggressive war and capital punishment", "absolute simplicity of living", and "refusal to assert active authority".

The first of the Three Jewels is ci (Chinese: 慈; pinyin: cí; Wade-Giles: tz'u; literally "compassion, love, kindness"), which the Tao Te Ching parallels with familial and brotherly love. It is compared to loving others and the world as a person loves their own existence. The second is jian (Chinese: 儉; pinyin: jiǎn; Wade-Giles: chien; literally "moderation, economy, restraint"), which the Tao Te Ching praises. Jian is connected with the Taoist metaphor *pu*. (樸 "uncarved wood; simplicity"). It represents perfect efficiency and simplicity of desire. The third treasure is the phrase *bugan wei tianxia xian* (不敢為天下先), meaning "not dare to be first in the world". It is connected to a fear of death, out of a love for life. Taoism posits that to be first is to expose oneself to the world's

destructive forces. Remaining behind and embracing humility allows time for one to bear fruit.

Pantheon

The traditional Chinese religion is polytheistic. Its many deities are part of a heavenly hierarchy that mirrors the bureaucracy of Imperial China. According to their beliefs, Chinese deities may be promoted or demoted for their actions. Some deities are also simply exalted humans, such as Guan Yu, the god of honour and piety. The particular deities worshiped vary according to geographical regions and historical periods in China, though the general pattern of worship is more constant.

There are disagreements regarding the proper composition of this pantheon. Popular Taoism typically presents the Jade Emperor as the official head deity. Intellectual ("elite") Taoists, such as the Celestial Masters sect, usually present Laozi (*Laojun*, "Lord Lao") and the Three Pure Ones at the top of the pantheon of deities.

While a number of immortals or other mysterious figures appear in the *Zhuangzi*, and to a lesser extent in the *Tao Te Ching*, these have generally not become the objects of worship. Traditional conceptions of Tao are not to be confused with the Western concepts of theism and monotheism. Being one with the Tao does not indicate a union with an eternal spirit in the Hindu sense, but rather living in accordance with nature.

Scripture

Chinese glazed stoneware statue of a Taoist deity, Ming Dynasty, 16th century.

Tao Te Ching

The *Tao Te Ching*, or *Daodejing*, is widely considered to be the most influential Taoist text. It is a foundational scripture of central importance in Taoism. It has been used as a ritual text throughout the history of religious Taoism. However, the precise date that it was written is the subject of debate: there are those who put it anywhere from the 6th century BC to the 3rd century BC.

Taoist commentators have deeply considered the opening lines of the *Tao Te Ching*. They are widely discussed in both academic and mainstream literature. A common interpretation is similar to Korzybski's observation that " the map is not the territory". The opening lines, with literal and common translation, are:

道可道，非常道。(Tao (way or path) can be said, not usual way)
"The Way that can be described is not the true Way."
名可名，非常名。(names can be named, not usual names)
"The Name that can be named is not the constant Name."

Tao literally means "path" or "way"(and also means "say" or "be said"), and can figuratively mean "essential nature", "destiny", "principle", or "true path". The philosophical and religious "Tao" is infinite, without limitation. One view states that the paradoxical opening is intended to prepare the reader for teachings about the unteachable Tao. Tao is believed to be transcendent, indistinct and without form. Hence, it cannot be named or categorized. Even the word "Tao" can be considered a dangerous temptation to make *Tao* a limiting "name".

Taoist Priest in Macau, February 2006

The Tao Te Ching is not thematically ordered. However, the main themes of the text are repeatedly expressed using variant formulations, often with only a slight difference. The leading themes revolve around the nature of Tao and how to attain it. Tao is said to be unnameable and accomplishing great things through small means. There is significant debate regarding which English translation of the Tao Te Ching is preferred, and which particular translation methodology is best. Discussions and disputes about various translations of the Tao Te Ching can become acrimonious, involving deeply entrenched views.

Ancient commentaries on the Tao Te Ching are important texts in their own right. The *Heshang Gong* commentary was most likely written in the second century AD, and as perhaps the oldest commentary, contains the edition of the Tao Te Ching that was transmitted to the present day. Other important commentaries include the Xiang'er, one of the most important texts from the Celestial Master movement, and Wang Bi's commentary.

Daozang

The Daozang (道藏, *Treasury of Tao*) is sometimes referred to as the Taoist canon. It was originally compiled during the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties. The version surviving today was published during the Ming dynasty. The Ming *Daozang* includes almost 1500 texts. Following the example of the Buddhist Tripitaka, it is divided into three *dong* (洞, "caves", "grottoes"). They are arranged from "highest" to "lowest":

1. The *Zhen* ("real" or "truth"真) grotto. Includes the Shangqing texts.
2. The *Xuan* ("mystery"玄) grotto. Includes the Lingbao scriptures.
3. The *Shen* ("divine"神) grotto. Includes texts predating the Maoshan（茅山）revelations.

Daoshi generally do not consult published versions of the Daozang, but individually choose, or inherit, texts included in the Daozang. These texts have been passed down for generations from teacher to student.

The Shangqing school has a tradition of approaching Taoism through scriptural study. It is believed that reciting certain texts often enough will be rewarded with immortality. In Taiwan, one often finds Buddhist texts being chanted in Taoist temples.

Other texts

While the Tao Te Ching is most famous, there are other important texts in traditional Taoism. *Taishang Ganying Pian* ("Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution") discusses sin and ethics, and has become a popular morality tract in the last few centuries. It asserts that those in harmony with Tao will live long and fruitful lives. The wicked, and their descendents, will suffer and have shortened lives. Both the *Taipingjing* ("Scripture on Great Peace") and the *Baopuzi* ("Book of the Master Who Keeps to Simplicity") contain early alchemical formulas that early Taoists believed could lead to immortality. A book titled "The Wisdom Of Laotse" offers a translation of "The Book of Tao" while comparing Laotse's philosophies against Kǒng Fūzǐ's (Confucius)

Zhuangzi

The *Zhuangzi* (莊子) was named after its author, who also appears as a character in the book's narrative. It is more in the form of a collection of stories than the short aphorisms and maxims of the Tao Te Ching. Also among the cast of characters in the Zhuangzi's stories is Laozi of the Tao Te Ching, as well as Confucius.

History

Taoism's origins may be traced to prehistoric Chinese religions in China. They are found in the composition of the *Tao Te Ching* (3rd or 4th century BC). Laozi received imperial recognition as a divinity in the mid second century AD., Several Song emperors, most notably Huizong, were active in promoting Taoism, collecting Taoist texts and publishing editions of the *Daozang*. Aspects of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were consciously synthesized in the Neo-Confucian school, which eventually became Imperial orthodoxy for state bureaucratic purposes. During the eighteenth century, the imperial library was constituted, but excluded virtually all Taoist books. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Taoism had fallen so much from favour, that only one complete copy of the *Daozang*still remained, at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. Taoism is one of five religions recognised by the PRC, which insists on controlling its activities through a state bureaucracy (the China Taoist Association).

White Cloud Monastery, Beijing

Adherents

The number of Taoists is difficult to estimate, partly for definitional reasons (who counts as a Taoist?), and partly for practical ones (it is illegal for private parties to conduct surveys in China). The number of people practicing some aspect of the Chinese folk religion might number in the hundreds of millions. (Adherents.com estimates "Traditional Chinese religion" at nearly four hundred million). The number of people patronising *Daoshi* (Taoist priests or masters) would be smaller by several orders of magnitude, while the number of literary *Daojia* would be smaller yet. At the same time, most Chinese people and many others have been influenced in some way by Taoist tradition. Most estimates for the amount of Taoists (either worldwide or simply outside of mainland China) are 20–30 million.

Geographically, Taoism flourishes best in regions populated by Chinese people: mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and various Chinese diaspora communities. Taoist literature and art has influenced the cultures of Korea, Japan and Vietnam, and these countries' folk religions have many common elements. Organized Taoism seems not to have attracted a non-Chinese following until modern times. In Taiwan, 4.5–7.5 million people (33% of the population) are Taoists. In Singapore, 8.5% of the population is Taoist. There are also small numbers of Taoists in the Western world, and Japan, Vietnam and Korea are culturally influenced by Taoism even though the organized religion has mostly died out.

Practices

Detail of circa 1700 painting of a Taoist ritual for the dead, illustrating a scene from *The Plum in the Golden Vase*. Note the plaques at the back of the altar of the Three Purities, and the various ritual implements including incense burner and ritual sword on the right. (According to the novel the sword is engraved with the seven stars of the big dipper.) Bowls hold food offerings for the deceased woman, Li Ping'er.

Taoist priests at Beijing's White Cloud Monastery

At certain dates, food may be set out as a sacrifice to the gods and/or spirits of the departed. (See, for example, Qingming Festival.) This may include slaughtered pigs and ducks, or fruit. Another form of sacrifice involves the burning of Joss paper or Hell Bank Notes, on the assumption that images thus consumed by the fire will reappear—not as a mere image, but as the actual item—in the spirit world, and be available for the departed spirit to use.

Secular Activities

Also at certain dates, street parades take place. These are lively affairs which invariably involve firecrackers and flower-covered floats broadcasting traditional music. Street parades may also include lion dances and dragon dances; human-occupied puppets (often of the "Seventh Lord" and "Eighth Lord"); *jitong* (乩童 male "Mediums") who mutilate their skin with knives; *Bajiajiang*, which are gongfu-practicing honour guards in demonic makeup; and palanquins carrying god-images. The various participants are not considered performers, but rather possessed by the god in question.

Chinese Taoist priests celebrating a ritual at the Wudangshan monastery

Fortune-telling—including astrology, I Ching, and other forms of divination—has long been considered a traditional Taoist pursuit. Mediumship is also widely encountered. We may distinguish between martial forms of mediumship (like the aforementioned *jitong*) and X spirit-writing, typically through the practice of fuji (planchette writing).

Many Taoists also participated in the reading and writing of books. Taoists of this type tend to be civil servants, elderly retirees, or in modern times, university faculty. While there is considerable overlap with religious Taoism, there are often important divergences in interpretation. Wang Bi, one of the most influential philosophical commentators on the Laozi (and Yijing) was in fact a Confucian.

For many educated Chinese people (the Literati), life was divided into a social aspect, where Confucian doctrine prevailed, and a private aspect, with Taoist aspirations. Night-time, exile, or retirement provided the opportunity to cultivate Taoism and reread Laozi and Zhuangzi. The Literati often dedicated this period of life to arts such as calligraphy, painting, and poetry, or personal researches into antiquities, medicine, folklore, and so on.

A number of martial arts traditions, particularly T'ai Chi Ch'uan, Bagua Zhang, Won Yuen Yat Hey Jueng, Bak Mei Pai, Bok Fou Pai, Yaw Gong Moon and Xing Yi Quan, embody Taoist principles to a greater or lesser extent, and some practitioners consider their art to be a means of practicing Taoism. The accuracy of these claims varies greatly depending on the particular art and/or practitioner.

It should be noted that while many Japanese and Korean martial and cultural traditions (i.e. judo, kendo, cha-do, kyu-do, shinto, Hapkido, Taekwondo, Tangsudo) have developed a distinctly zen character over the years, the "do" or "to" is in fact one of the Japanese / Korean pronunciations of the Chinese "tao" (alternatedly rendered as "dao" by some translators), and it is written with the same character. Again, the extent to which these practices reflect taoist principles varies depending on the specific school and practitioner.

Taoist symbols and images

There are many symbols and images that are associated with Taoism. Like the " cross" in Christianity, and the " wheel" in Buddhism, Taoism has Laozi, actual Chinese characters, and many other symbols that are often represented or associated with it.

The *Taijitu* (" yin and yang") symbol 太極圖 as well as the *Bagua* 八卦 ("Eight Trigrams") are associated with Taoist symbolism. While almost all Taoist organizations make use of the yin and yang symbol, one could also call it Confucian, Neo-Confucian or pan-Chinese. The yin and yang make a backwards "S" shape, with yin (black or red) on bottom. One is likely to see this symbol as decorations on Taoist organization flags and logos, temple floors, or stitched into clerical robes. According to Song Dynasty sources, it originated around the 10th century. Previously, yin and yang were symbolized by a tiger and dragon. (This is one of the places where the surface Dao and the hidden dao is shown. On the surface the picture of the Dao with a Tiger and a dragon is no more than just a picture. But beneath is the one of the way to immortality called "The White Tigress and The Jade Dragon" and it is the pure Female-male energy.)

Taijitu
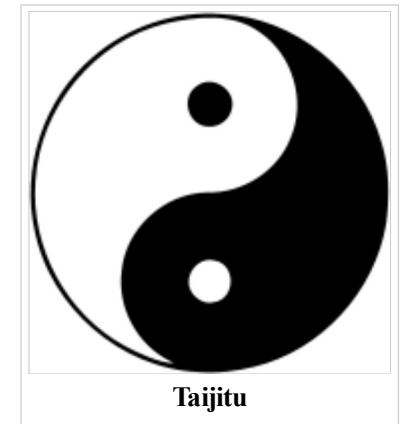
The two major way that are used today are white on top / black at bottom or reverse black on top / white at the bottom. White on top is called Early Heaven and symbolize going back to the basic or keeping the mind and the body young like a child. When it is black on top, it is called Later Heaven and is the way the world normally moves and normally means going to the grave.

The five directions as conceived by the ancient Chinese (east, south, west, north, centre) each have their own attributes, as follows in the chart below.

Direction	Element / Phase	/ Symbol	Season	Force
East	Wood	Azure Dragon	Spring	*Yang*
South	Fire	Vermilion Bird	Summer	*Yang*
West	Metal	White Tiger	Autumn	*Yin*
North	Water	Black Tortoise	Winter	*Yin*
Centre	Earth	Yellow Dragon	Changing of the seasons	*Yin/Yang balance*

Taoist temples may fly square or triangular flags. They typically feature mystical writing or diagrams and are intended to fulfill various functions including providing guidance for the spirits of the dead, to bring good fortune, increase life span, etc. Other flags and banners may be those of the gods or immortals themselves.

One sometimes sees a zigzag with seven stars, representing the Big Dipper (or the "Bushel", the Chinese equivalent). In the Shang dynasty the Big Dipper was considered a deity, while during the Han dynasty, it was considered a *qi* path of the circumpolar god, *Taiyi*.

Taoist temples in southern China and Taiwan may often be identified by their roofs, which feature Chinese dragons and phoenixes made from multi-colored ceramic tiles. They also stand for the harmony of yin and yang (with the phoenix being yin). A related symbol is the flaming pearl which may be seen on such roofs between two dragons, as well as on the hairpin of a Celestial Master. But in general, Chinese Taoist architecture has no universal features that distinguish it particularly from other structures.

Paper lanterns outside of Taoist Benevolence Temple (Cíhuì Gōng) in Banqiao, Taipei.

Relations with other religions and philosophies

*Confucianism, **Taoism**, and Buddhism are one*, a painting in the *litang style* portraying three men laughing by a river stream, 12th century, Song Dynasty.

The origins of Taoism and other philosophical schools are intimately related. The authorship of the *Daodejing* is assigned to Laozi, traditionally thought to be a teacher of Confucius, yet appears to be reacting against Confucian doctrine (suggesting the text comes after Confucianism). Zhuangzi (Chuang Tzu), the other defining philosopher of Taoism, reacted both to the Confucian-Mohist ethical disputes and to related developments in theory of names (language). There is little evidence of a link between Laozi and Zhuangzi—whose most frequent interactions are with Hui Shi (of the school of names). However, the chapters of the Zhuangzi written after his death include dialogues between Laozi and Confucius that mimic (or inspire?) the style of the *Daodejing*, suggesting the first association of the two texts dates from around that time. The "history of thought" contained in the Zhuangzi cites Laozi as a prior step (and demotes Hui Shi to a postscript). It includes the Mohists by name and the Confucians by implication and a cluster of other less well known thinkers.

These early Taoist texts reject numerous basic assumptions of Confucianism, embracing instead values based on nature, perspectivalism, and spontaneity. They express skepticism of conventional moralities and Mozi's Utilitarian or Mencius' benevolence based revisions. Since politics was conceived by these traditional schools as a scheme for unifying all "under the sky" in their favored *dao*, Taoists tend toward anarchism, mistrustful of hierarchical social structures and particularly, governments. (Zhuangzi argues that the proponents of benevolence and morality are usually found at the gates of feudal lords who have stolen their kingdoms.)

Taoist thought partly inspired Legalist philosophers, whose theories were used by Qin Shi Huang, founder of the Chinese Empire. The junction point can be found in the work of Hanfeizi, a prominent Legalist thinker who commented on the Tao Te Ching. Hanfeizi used some chapters of the book to justify a structured society based on law and punishment and on the undiscussed power of the Emperor.

The entry of Buddhism into China was via its dialectic with later Taoism which transformed them both. Over the centuries of Chinese interactions, Buddhism

gradually found itself transformed from a competitor of Taoism, to a fellow inhabitant of the Chinese cultural ecosystem. Originally seen as a kind of foreign Taoism, its scriptures were translated into Chinese with Taoist vocabulary. Chan Buddhism in particular is inspired by crucial elements of philosophical Taoism, ranging from distrust of scripture, text and language to its more positive view of "this life", practice, skill and the absorption in "every-moment". In the Tang period some Taoist schools incorporated such Buddhist elements as monasteries, vegetarianism, prohibition of alcohol, the celibacy of the clergy, the doctrine of emptiness, and the amassing of a vast collection of scripture into tripartite organisation. However, there are some who argue that Taoism had vegetarianism first. Some Buddhist schools incorporated it later. Also during Tang Dynasty, some Taoist practices and books spread to Tibet and became incorporated in Tibetan Buddhism.

Ideological and political rivals in ancient times, Taoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism have inevitably deeply influenced one another, and eventually achieved a kind of *modus vivendi* in which each has its own particular ecological niche within Chinese society. With time, most Chinese people likewise came to identify to some extent with all three traditions simultaneously. This became institutionalised by the time of the Song Dynasty, when aspects of the three schools were consciously synthesised in the Neo-Confucian school, which eventually became Imperial orthodoxy for state bureaucratic purposes.

The Vinegar Tasters (sometimes called Three Vinegar Tasters) is a popular painting (usually in scroll format) that explained Taoist ideals in relation to the Neo-Confucian school which began in the 10th century and gained prominence in the 12th century. The image depicts Laozi together with The Buddha, and Confucius. In these paintings the three are gathered around a vat of vinegar and the motto associated with the grouping is "the three teachings are one." (However, see The Vinegar Tasters for an alternate interpretation.)

Taoism does not fall strictly under an umbrella or a definition of an organized religion like the Abrahamic traditions, nor could it be studied as the originator or variants of Chinese folk religion, for the simple reason that these were not the tenets or core teachings of Taoism or those in Tao te Ching. Robinet further asserted that the nature of Taoism can be better understood as a psyche, and a way of life rather than a *religion*, as the adherents do not view Taoism in the manner analysed by historians who were neither Taoist and who did not understand the subject.

Many scholarly works conclude that Taoism is a school of thought with a quest for Immortality. Viewed in this light,Taoism is dissimilar to most other religions who, though they may involve immortality of the soul such as in Hinduism where one's soul joins Brahman, or the spiritual immortality of an Enlightened Buddhist, but physical immortality is present only in Taoism and Christianity. In the latter, when God resurrects the dead, everyone judged to have had faith will live eternally.

Tao in the West

The west has recently embraced aspects of Taoism: the name and concept of Tao, the names and concepts of yin and yang; an appreciation for Laozi and Zhuangzi, and a respect for other aspects of Chinese tradition such as qigong. At the same time, Western appropriations differ in subtle (or not so subtle) ways from their Asian sources. For example, the word Tao is used in numerous book titles which are connected to Chinese culture only tangentially. Examples would include Fritjof Capra's *The Tao of Physics*, or Benjamin Hoff's *The Tao of Pooh*. These uses of Tao are more as a token of exoticism or esotericness (similar to "The Zen of...") rather than referring to Taoism itself.

Taoism has also been a resource for those in environmental philosophy, who see the non-anthropocentric nature of Taoism as a guide for new ways of thinking about nature and environmental ethics. Some consider Taoism to fit naturally with the radical environmental philosophy of deep ecology. *Taoism and Ecology: Ways Within A Cosmic Landscape* edited by N. J. Girardot, James Miller, and Liu Xiaogan is currently the most thorough introduction to studies done on concepts of nature and ecology within Taoism.

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Thor

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

Thor (Old Norse: **Þórr**) is the red-haired and bearded god of thunder in Germanic paganism and its subset Norse paganism. The god is also recorded in Old English as **Þunor**, Old Saxon as **Thunaer**, as Old Dutch and Old High German: **Donar**, all of which are names deriving from the Proto-Germanic *Þunraz*.

Most surviving stories relating to Germanic paganism either mention Thor or centre on Thor's exploits. Thor was a much revered god of the ancient Germanic peoples from at least the earliest surviving written accounts of the indigenous Germanic tribes to over a thousand years later during the last bastions of Germanic paganism in the late Viking Age.

Thor was appealed to for protection on numerous objects found from various Germanic tribes and Miniature replicas of Mjolnir, the weapon of Thor, became a defiant symbol of Norse paganism during the Christianization of Scandinavia.

During and after the process of Christianization was complete, Thor was demonized by the growing influence of Christian missionaries. After Christian influence was cemented in law, traces of belief went increasingly underground into mainly rural areas, surviving until modern times into Germanic folklore and most recently reconstructed to varying degrees in Germanic neopaganism.

Etymology

The name *Thor* has the same origin as the word *thunder*, just as German *Donner*, Dutch *donder*, Swedish *tordön*, and Danish and Norwegian *torden* (with the suffix -dön/-den originally meaning "rumble" or "din").

Thor's Oak

"Thor's battle against the giants" by Mårten Eskil Winge, 1872

Thor's Oak was an ancient tree sacred to the Germanic tribe of the Chatti, ancestors of the Hessians, and one of the most important sacred sites of the pagan Germanic peoples. Its felling in 723 marked the beginning of the Christianization of the non-Frankish tribes of northern Germany.

The tree stood at a location near the village of Geismar, today part of the town of Fritzlar in northern Hessen, and was the main point of veneration of the Germanic deity Thor (known among the West Germanic tribes as *Donar*) by the Chatti and most other Germanic tribes.

A depiction of Boniface destroying Thor's oak from *The Little Lives of the Saints*, illustrated by Charles Robinson in 1904.

Old Saxon Baptismal Vow

Thor, as Donar, is mentioned in a Old Saxon Baptismal vow in Vatican Codex pal. 577 along with Woden and Saxnot. The 8th or 9th century vow, intended for Christianizing pagans, is recorded as:

> *ec forsacho allum dioboles uuercum and uuordum, Thunaer ende Uuöden ende Saxnote ende allum them unholdum the hira genötas sint*

Which translates to:

> *I renounce all the words and works of the devil, Thunear, Woden and Saxnôt, and all those fiends that are their associates.*

Temple at Uppsala

Between 1072 and 1076, Adam of Bremen recorded in his *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum* that a statue of Thor existed in the Temple at Uppsala and relates that:

> *Thor takes the central position, with Wotan and Frey on either side. Thor, according to their beliefs, governs the air with its thunder, lightning, wind, rain, and fair weather. He is depicted carrying a scepter, much as our people depict Jove.*

Eddic and skaldic depictions

The two sources largest in information regarding Thor are the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda.

Thor appears as the central figure in the following works of Norse literature:

- Þórsdrápa (summarized by Snorri Sturlason in Skáldskaparmál)
- Hárbarðsljóð which details a contest between Thor and Odin in the guise of Harbarth as to who is the most accomplished.

Thor also appears in:

- Gylfaginning
- Grímnismál
- Hymiskviða
- Þrymskviða
- Alvíssmál
- Lokasenna
- Völuspá
- Eiríksmál
- Ragnarsdrápa
- Húsdrápa
- Haustlöng

Sagas and Danish chronicles

Thor is also mentioned in 12th-15th century sources consisting of the sagas and Danish chronicles. They were sources which made use of skaldic poetry and oral traditions.

- Eyrbyggja saga
- Kjalnesinga saga
- Fóstbrœðra saga
- Fljótsdæla saga
- Hallfreðar saga
- Heimskringla
- Landnámabók
- Flateyjarbók
- Gesta Danorum
- Njáls saga
- Gautreks saga

Characteristics

Family

In the Poetic Edda and Prose Edda, Thor is the son of Odin and the giantess Jörd (Jord, the Earth). His wife is called Sif, and little is known of her except that

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she has golden hair. With his mistress, the giantess Járnsaxa, Thor had a son Magni and with Sif he had his daughter Thrud. There is nothing in the myths that states the identity of the mother of his son Modi.

The euhemeristic prologue of the Prose Edda also indicates he has a son by Sif named Lóriði, along with an additional 17 generations of descendants but the prologue is apocryphal and was meant to give a plausible explanation on how the Aesir came to be worshiped even though they were not gods in order to appease the Christian church. Thor also has a stepson called Ullr who is a son of Sif. *Skáldskaparmál* mentions a figure named Hlóra who was Thor's foster mother, corresponding to Lora or Glora from Snorre's prologue, although no additional information concerning her is provided in the book.

Mjolnir

Thor owns a short-handled hammer, Mjolnir, which, when thrown at a target, returns magically to the owner. His Mjolnir also has the power to throw lightning bolts. To wield Mjolnir, Thor wears the belt Megingjord, which boosts the wearer's strength and a pair of special iron gloves, Jarn Griepr, to lift the hammer. Mjolnir is also his main weapon when fighting giants. The uniquely shaped symbol subsequently became a very popular ornament during the Viking Age and has since become an iconic symbol of Germanic paganism.

Chariot

Thor travels in a chariot drawn by the goats Tanngrisnir and Tanngnjóstr and with his servant and messenger Þjálfi and with Þjálfi's sister Röskva. The skaldic poem *Haustlöng* relates that the earth was scorched and the mountains cracked as Thor traveled in his wagon. According to the Prose Edda, when Thor is hungry he can roast the goats for a meal. When he wants to continue his travels, Thor only needs to touch the remains of the goats and they will be instantly restored to full health to resume their duties, assuming that the bones have not been broken.

Drawing of an archaeological find from Öland, Sweden of a gold plated depiction of Mjolnir in silver.

Bilskirnir

Thor lives in the palace Bilskirnir in the kingdom Þrúðheimr or Þrúðvangr.

Stories and myths

According to one myth in the Prose Edda, Loki was flying as a hawk one day and was captured by Geirrod. Geirrod, who hated Thor, demanded that Loki bring his enemy (who did not yet have his magic belt and hammer) to Geirrod's castle. Loki agreed to lead Thor to the trap. Grid was a giantess at whose home they stopped on the way to Geirrod's. She waited until Loki left the room then told Thor what was happening and gave him her iron gloves and magical belt and staff. Thor killed Geirrod and all other frost giants he could find (including Geirrod's daughters, Gjálp and Greip).

According to Alvíssmál, Thor's daughter was promised to Alvis, a dwarf. Thor devised a plan to stop Alvis from marrying his daughter. He told Alvis that,

because of his small height, he had to prove his wisdom. Alvis agreed and Thor made the tests last until after the sun had risen--all dwarves turned to stone when exposed to sunlight, so Alvis was petrified.

Thor was once outwitted by a giant king, Útgarða-Loki. The king, using his magic, tricked Thor. The king raced Thought itself against Thor's fast servant, Þjálfi (nothing being faster than thought, which can leap from land to land, and from time to time, in an instant). Then, Loki (who was with Thor) was challenged by Útgarða-Loki to an eating contest with one of his servants, Logi. Loki lost, eventually. The servant even ate up the trough containing the food. The servant was an illusion of "Wild-Fire", no living thing being able to equal the consumption rate of fire. He called Thor weak when he only lifted the paw of a cat, the cat being the illusion of the Midgard Serpent. Thor was challenged to a drinking contest, and could not empty a horn which was filled not with mead but was connected to the ocean. This action started tidal changes. And here, Thor wrestled an old woman, who was Old Age, something no one could beat, to one knee. It was only later that Thor was told that he had in fact performed impressively doing as well as he did with those challenges.

Another noted story of Thor was the time when Þrymr, King of the Thurse (Giants), stole his hammer, Mjölnir. Thor went to Loki in hopes to find the culprit responsible for the theft. Loki and Thor went to Freyja for council. She gave Loki the Feather-robe so he could travel to the land of the giants to speak to their king. The king admitted to stealing the hammer and would not give it back unless Freyja gave her hand in marriage.

Freyja refused when she heard the plan so the gods decided to think of a way to trick the King. Heimdall, the fairest of the gods (and possibly one of the prophetic Vanir), suggested dressing up Thor in a bridal gown so he can take Freyja's place. Thor at first refused to do such a thing as it would portray him as a coward and womanish, but Loki insisted that he do so or the Giants would attack Asgard and win it over if he were not to retrieve the hammer in time. Thor reluctantly agreed in the end and took Freyja's place.

Odin rode Thor to the land of the Giants and a celebration ensued. The king noticed a few odd things that his bride was committing. He noted that she ate and drank more than what he would expect from a bride. Loki, who was in disguise as the false Freyja's servant, commented that she rode for 8 full nights without food eager to take his hand. He then asked why his bride's eyes are so terrifying, they seemed to be aglow with fire, again Loki responded with the fact that she did not sleep for 8 full nights eager for his hand. Then the giant commanded that the hammer be brought to his wife and placed on her lap. Once it was in Thor's possession he threw off his disguise and attacked all the giants in the room. Due to this ruse the giants were careful not to make the same mistake again.

Archaeological record

Thor was a very popular deity to the Germanic people and a number of surviving depictions of not only himself but also his exploits have survived many years of natural and intentional destruction.

Nordendorf fibula

Dating from the 7th century AD, the Nordendorf fibula, a human (Alamannic) fibula found in Nordendorf near Augsburg (Bavaria) bears an Elder Futhark inscription mentioning *Donar*, the Western Germanic tribes name for Thor.

Emblematic Mjolnir replicas

Widely popular in Scandinavia, Mjolnir replicas were used in Blóts and other sacral ceremonies, such as weddings. Many of these replicas were also found in graves and tended to be furnished with a loop, allowing them to be worn. They were most widely discovered in areas with a strong Christian influence including southern Norway, south-eastern Sweden, and Denmark. By the late 10th century, increased uniformity in Mjolnir's design over previous centuries suggest it functioned as a popular accessory worn in defiance of the Christian cross.

Icelandic statue

A seated bronze statue of Thor (about 2.5 in, 6.4 cm) from about AD 1000 was recovered at a farm near Akureyri, Iceland and is a featured display at the National Museum of Iceland. Thor is holding Mjolnir, sculpted in the typically Icelandic cross-like shape.

Rune and image stones

A reproduction of a statue of Thor from the 10th century found in Iceland.

Most Rune stones were raised during the 11th century and so they coincided with the Christianization of Scandinavia. Except for the Altuna Runestone which depicts a myth concerning Thor, there are only six runic inscriptions that appear to refer to him and five of them do so in invocations to consecrate the stones. Three of the inscriptions are found in Sweden (the Rök Runestone, Sö 140 and the Velanda Runestone) and three in Denmark (Dr 110, Dr 220 and the Glavendrup stone).

Thor's struggle with the Midgard Serpent as recorded in *Hymiskviða* can be found depicted on a number of image stones and Rune stones located in England, Denmark and Sweden respectively.

In the English village of Gosforth, Cumbria, the remains of a 10th century stone depicting Thor and Hymir fishing can be found along side numerous other Norse carvings.

In Denmark, a church in the small Northern Jutlandic town of Hørdum houses the remains of a stone featuring Thor and Hymir's fishing trip for the Midgard Serpent. Thor is wearing the distinct pointed helmet he is portrayed with in other found depictions and has caught the Midgard serpent while Hymir sits before him.

Sweden has two stones depicting this legend. Created sometime between the 8th and 11th centuries, the bottom left corner of the Ardre VIII stone in Gotland has often been interpreted as depicting not only the fishing trip but also references to the slaughter of the ox prior to using it as bait, potentially as part of an earlier version of the tale. The Altuna Runestone in Uppland depicts Thor fishing for the Midgard serpent. Though lacking Hymir, it notably displays Thor's foot breaching the floor of the boat during the intense struggle.

The Altuna Runestone depicts Thor's foot breaching his boat while struggling with the Midgard Serpent..

Kvinneby amulet

The Kvinneby amulet is an amulet that includes a runic inscription. There are competing theories about the exact wording of the inscription but all agree that Thor is invoked to protect with his hammer. According to Rundata, this inscription reads:

> *Here I carve(d) protection for you, Bófi, with/... ... ... to you is certain. And may the lightning hold all evil away from Bófi. May Þórr protect him with that hammer which came from out of the sea. Flee from evilness! You/it get/gets nothing from Bófi. The gods are under him and over him.*

The amulet was found in the mid-1950's in the soil of the village Södra Kvinneby in Öland, Sweden. The amulet is a square copper object measuring approximately 5 cm on each side. Near one edge there is a small hole, presumably used for hanging it around the neck.

Skog Church Tapestry

A part of the Swedish 12th century Skog Church Tapestry depicts three figures often interpreted as allusions to Odin, Thor and Freyr. The figures coincide with 11th century descriptions of statue arrangements recorded by Adam of Bremen at the Temple at Uppsala and written accounts of the gods during the late Viking Age. The tapestry is originally from Hälsingland, Sweden but is now housed at the Swedish Museum of National Antiquities.

This part of the Skog Church Tapestry, a Viking Age Swedish tapestry, is interpreted to show, from left to right, the one-eyed and tree flanked Odin, the hammer-wielding Thor and Freyr holding up an ear of corn.

Thursday

Þunor gave his name to the Old English day *Þunresdæg*, meaning the day of Þunor, known in Modern English as Thursday. Þunor is also the source of the modern word thunder.

"Thor's Day" is *Þórsdagr* in Old Norse, *Hósdagur* in Faroese, *Thursday* in English, *Donnerstag* in German (meaning "Thunder's Day"), *Donderdag* in Dutch (meaning Thunder day), *Torstai* in Finnish, and *Torsdag* in Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian.

The day was considered such an important day of the week that as late as the seventh century Saint Eligius reproached his congregation in Flanders for continuing their native practice of recognizing Thursday as a holy day after their Christianization.

Personal names

The name "Thor", deriving from the deity, is the first element in many names:

- American female name: Donara (from the Old High German spelling)
- Norwegian masculine male names: Tor, Toralv, Torbjørn, Tore, Torfinn, Torgeir, Torgils, Torgny, Torgrim, Torkjell, Torlak, Torleif, Tormod, Torodd, Torolv, Torstein and Torvald.
- Norwegian female names: Torbjørg, Tordis, Torfrid (Turid), Torgerd, Torgunn, Torhild (Toril), Torlaug, Torunn and Torveig.
- Icelandic male names: Þór, Þórhallur, Þorbergur, Þorbjörn, Þorfinnur, Þorgeir, Þorgils, Þorgrímur, Þorkell, Þorlákur, Þorleifur, Þorsteinn, Þorvaldur, Þórarinn, Þórður and Þórólfur
- Icelandic female names: Þorbjörg, Þorgerður, Þóra, Þórdís, Þórhildur, Þórunn and Þórgunnur
- Faroese male names: Tór, Thór, Tórur, Thórur, Tórleif, Tórólvur
- Faroese female names: Tóra, Thóra
- Danish male names: Tor, Torben, Torbjørn, Torkil/Terkel, Torleif, Torsten, Torvald
- Danish female names: Tora, Tove
- Swedish male names: Tor, Torbjörn, Tord, Tore, Torgny, Torkel, Torleif, Torsten, Torvald
- Swedish female names: Tora, Torunn, Tove
- Scottish name: Torquil
- English surname: Thurkettle

- German male names: Thorsten/Torsten, Toralf

Toponyms

As a very popular god amongst the Germanic tribes, many locations have been named after Thor:

- Thorsberg moor, Germany (*Thor's Hill*) is an ancient location bearing a large deposit of numerous ritually deposited artifacts between the 1 and 4 BC by the Angles.
- Tórshavn, Faroe Islands (*Thor's Harbour*) is the capital city of the Faroe Islands.
- Thor's name appears in connection with groves (*Lundr*) in place names in Sweden, West Norway and Denmark.
- There are a number of Anglo-Saxon place names associated with Thor in England named *Þunre leah* (meaning "Grove or forest clearing of thunder") such as Thundersley in Essex, England.
- A "Forest of Thor" existed on the north bank of Liffey, Ireland outside of Dublin in the year 1,000 where it was destroyed over the course a month by Brian Boru, who took particular note of the oaks.

Parallels

Many writers (Saxo, Adam of Bremen, Snorre Sturlason, Ælfric of Eynsham) identified Thor with Jupiter. The comparison can be borne: both are gods of the sky that control thunder and lightning, are children of the mother Earth and were at some time considered the most powerful of the gods. The oak tree was sacred to both gods and they had mysterious powers. Thor is to kill Jörmungandr and Jupiter, the dragon Typhon. Tacitus identified Thor with the Greco-Roman hero-god Hercules because of his force, aspect, weapon and his role as protector of the world.

Parallels with varying degrees of closeness can be found in other northern mythologies, such as Taranis (Celtic), Perkunas (Baltic), and Perun (Slavic), connected either to thunder, to oaks or to both. Additionally parallel either to Thor or Tyr are Finno-Ugric gods Torum, Thurms, Tere, etc. - see Tharapita.

Modern popular culture

Thor, under the German form of his name, "Donner", appears in Richard Wagner's opera cycle, *Der Ring des Nibelungen*. This has led to many portrayals based on Wagner's interpretation, although some are closer to pre-Wagner models. Since Wagner's time, Thor has appeared, either as himself or as the namesake of characters, in comic books, on television, in literature and in song lyrics.

Thor is the patron god of Uhtred Ragnarson in The Saxon Stories by historical novelist Bernard Cornwell.

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Donner calls upon the storm clouds in this illustration by Arthur Rackham to Wagner's *Das Rheingold*.

Trimurti

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

The **Trimurti** (English: 'three forms'; Sanskrit: *trimūrti*) is a concept in Hinduism "in which the cosmic functions of creation, maintenance, and destruction are personified by the forms of Brahmā the creator, Viṣṇu the maintainer or preserver, and Śiva the destroyer or transformer." These three deities have been called "the Hindu triad" or the "Great Trinity". They are often looked at as the creator, preserver and destroyer respectively. Freda Matchett characterizes the Trimurti system as one of "several frameworks into which various divine figures can be fitted at different levels."

One type of depiction for the Trimurti shows three heads on one neck, and often even three faces on one head, each looking in a different direction.

The Trimurti (literally indicating three forms or trinity), is the representation of the three projections of the Supreme Reality, each with a specific cosmic function. These manifestations are that of Brahma (serving the cosmic function of creation), Vishnu (serving the cosmic function of renewal and preservation), and Shiva (serving the cosmic function of dissolution or destruction that precedes re-creation) – the three popular Hindu gods. Our daily existence reflects these three cosmic functions as birth, life and death. A somewhat similar symbolization exists in the Christian trinity of God as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. However the interpretation and philosophy behind the Christian and Hindu concepts of the trinity differ.

The trinity is interpreted in various forms in Hindu philosophy. A widely accepted belief is that it represents earth, water, and fire. The earth, or Brahma, is seen as the originator of all life and hence is regarded as the Creator. Water is the sustainer of life and hence is the Preserver and is represented as Vishnu. Fire destructs life and hence is the Destroyer and is represented as Shiva.

The Trimurti of the three Hindu Gods: Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva

Evolution of the concept

The Puranic period (c. CE 300-1200) saw the rise of post-Vedic religion and the evolution of what R. C. Majumdar calls "synthetic Hinduism." This period had no homogeneity, and included orthodox Brahmanism in the form of remnants of older Vedic cults, along with different sectarian religions, notably Shaivism, Vaishnavism, and Shaktism that were within the orthodox fold yet still formed distinct entities. One of the important traits of this period is a spirit of harmony between orthodox and sectarian forms. Regarding this spirit of reconciliation, R. C. Majumdar says that:

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva seated on lotuses with their consorts: Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Paravati respectively. ca 1770.

Its most notable expression is to be found in the theological conception of the Trimūrti, i.e., the manifestation of

the supreme God in three forms of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva.... But the attempt cannot be regarded as a great success, for Brahmā never gained an ascendancy comparable to that of Śiva or Viṣṇu, and the different sects often conceived the Trimūrti as really the three manifestations of their own sectarian god, whom they regarded as Brahman or Absolute.

Maurice Winternitz notes that there are very few places in Indian literature where the Trimurti is mentioned. The identification of Vishnu, Shiva, and Brahma as one being is strongly emphasized in the *Kūrma Purana*, where in 1.6 Brahman is worshipped as Trimurti; 1.9 especially inculcates the unity of the three gods, and 1.26 relates to the same theme.

Historian A. L. Basham explains the background of the trimurti as follows, noting Western interest in the idea of trinity:

Early western students of Hinduism were impressed by the parallel between the Hindu trinity and that of Christianity. In fact the parallel is not very close, and the Hindu trinity, unlike the Holy Trinity of Christianity, never really "caught on". All Hindu trinitarianism tended to favour one god of the three; thus, from the context it is clear that Kālidāsa's hymn to the Trimūrti is really addressed to Brahmā, here looked on as the high god. The Trimūrti was in fact an artificial growth, and had little real influence.

Views within Hinduism

Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism generally does not accept the Trimurti concept. For example, the Dvaita school holds Vishnu alone to be the supreme God, with Shiva subordinate, and interprets the Puranas differently. For example, Vijayindra Tîrtha, a Dvaita scholar interprets the 18 puranas differently. He interprets that the Vaishnavite puranas as satvic and Shaivite puranas as tamasic and that only satvic puranas are considered to be authoritative.

Trimurti, Painting from Andhra Pradesh

In Gaudiya Vaishnavism, Shiva is considered the best of devotee of Vishnu (*vaisnavanam yatha sambhu*) and also an aspect of Vishnu but not the same as Vishnu. In this view, Shiva is also viewed as subservient to Lord Vishnu, although it is still understood that he is above the category of an ordinary jiva (living entity). In one interpretation, Brahma is considered by Gaudiya Vaishnavites to be the highest of the jivas.

An analogy of the differences between milk and yogurt can be used to describe the differences in Brahma Samhita. Prabhupada commented that Shiva is not like a living entity, but is not Vishnu, with his position somewhere between Vishnu and Brahma. The analogy continues to hold Shiva to be like unto yogurt and Vishnu like unto milk: milk transforms into yogurt, but no one would consider yogurt to be milk.

However, other Vaishnavite followers, such as Swaminarayan, founder of the Hindu Swaminarayan sects (including BAPS), differ and hold that Vishnu and Shiva are different aspects of the same God. ; see also, verses 47, and 84 of Shikshapatri ; Notably, the Swaminarayan view is a minority view among Vaishnavites.

Saivism

Saivites, similarly hold a similar view with Shiva. Shiva performs four acts of creation, sustenance, reduction and blessing. Of these the latter three are nothing but the forms of the Supreme Shiva called Parasiva. Saivites thus believe that Lord Shiva is the Supreme, who assumes various critical roles and assumes appropriate names and forms, and also stands transcending all these.

Smartism

Smartism is a denomination of Hinduism that places emphasis on a group of five deities rather than just a single deity. The "worship of the five forms" (pañcāyatana pūjā) system, which was popularized by the ninth-century philosopher Śaṅkarācārya among orthodox Brahmins of the Smārta tradition, invokes the five deities Ganesha, Vishnu, Shiva, Devī, and Sūrya. This system was instituted by Śaṅkarācārya primarily to unite the principal deities of the five major sects on an equal status. The monistic philosophy preached by Śaṅkarācārya made it possible to choose one of these as a preferred principal deity and at the same time worship the other four deities as different forms of the same all-pervading Brahman.

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An art depiction of the Trimurti in Hoysaleswara temple

Trinity

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Divinities

The **Trinity** is a Christian doctrine, stating that God exists as three ***persons***, or in the Greek *hypostases*, but is one being. The *persons* are understood to exist as God the Father, God the Son (incarnate as Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. Since the beginning of the third century the doctrine of the Trinity has been stated as "that the one God exists in three Persons and one substance, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit". **Trinitarianism**, belief in the Trinity, is a mark of Oriental and Eastern Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism and all the mainstream traditions arising from the Protestant Reformation, such as Anglicanism, Lutheranism and Presbyterianism; and the Trinity has been described as "the central dogma of Christian theology".

Opposing nontrinitarian positions held by some groups include Binitarianism (two deities/persons/aspects), Unitarianism (one deity/person/aspect), the Oneness belief held by certain Pentecostal groups, Modalism, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' view of the Godhead as three separate beings who are one in purpose rather than essence.

The doctrine of the Trinity was of particular importance historically. The conflict with Arianism and other competing theological concepts during the fourth century became the first major doctrinal confrontation in Church history. It had a particularly lasting effect within the Western Roman Empire where the Germanic Arians and the Nicene Christians formed segregated social orders.

Etymology

| Conceptions of God |
| :---: |
| Bahá'í |
| Buddhist |
| Christian (**Trinitarian**) |
| Islamic |
| Jewish |
| Hindu |
| Latter-day Saints |
| Sikh |

For the concept the word "Trinity" (in Latin, *Trinitas*) began to be used around the year 200. This Latin word means "the number three, a triad", an abstract noun formed from the adjective *trinus* (three each, threefold, triple), as the word *unitas* is the abstract noun formed from *unus* (one). The Greek term used for the Christian Trinity, "Τριάς" ("Trias", gen. "Triados") means "a set of three" or "the number three", and has given the English word *triad*.

The first recorded use of the word "Trinity" in Christian theology was in about AD 180 by Theophilus of Antioch who used the corresponding word in Greek (Τριάς) to refer to "the Trinity, of God, and His Word, and His wisdom", of which he considered the first three days of creation to be types. He did not apply the word to the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Tertullian, a Latin theologian who wrote in the early third century, is credited with using the words "Trinity", "person" and "substance" to explain that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were "one in essence – not one in Person".

About a century later, the First Council of Nicaea (325) established the doctrine of the Trinity as orthodoxy and adopted the Nicene Creed that described Christ as "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance (*homoousios*) with the Father".
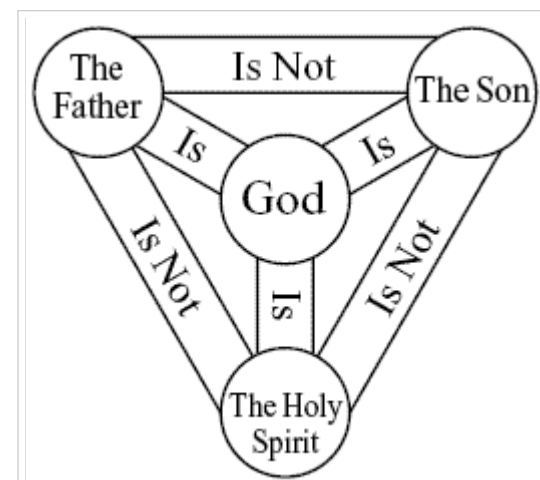
The "Shield of the Trinity" or "Scutum Fidei" diagram of traditional Western Christian symbolism.

Trinity in Scripture

Sculptural group from the Holy Trinity Column in Olomouc, Czech Republic, 18th century

Neither of the words "Trinity" nor "Triunity" appear in the Old Testament or New Testament, but the concept has its basis in an understanding of scriptural teaching. The doctrine of the Trinity is the result of "later theological interpretations of Christ's nature and function" (Harris 427-28) argued in debate and treatises. The concept was expressed in early writings from the beginning of the second century forward. Various passages from both the Christian and Hebrew scriptures have been cited as supporting this doctrine, while other passages are cited as opposing it.

The Old Testament refers to God's Word, his Spirit, and Wisdom. These have been interpreted as adumbrations of the doctrine of the Trinity, as have been also narratives such as the appearance of the three men to Abraham in Genesis 18. Some Church Fathers believed that a knowledge of the mystery was granted to the Prophets and saints of the Old Dispensation, and they identified the divine messenger of Genesis 16:7, 21:17, 31:11, Exodus 3:2, and Wisdom of the sapiential books with the Son, and "the spirit of the Lord" with the Holy Spirit. However, it is generally agreed that it would go beyond the intention and spirit of the Old Testament to correlate these notions directly with later Trinitarian doctrine.

The New Testament does not use the word "Τριάς" (Trinity) nor explicitly teach it, but provided the material on which the doctrine of the Trinity is based. It required reflection by the earliest Christians on the coming of Jesus Christ and of what they believed to be the presence and power of God among them, which they called the Holy Spirit; and it associated the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in such passages as the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and Paul the Apostle"s blessing: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14), while at the same time not contradicting the Jewish Shema Yisrael: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The diverse references to God, Jesus, and the Spirit found in the New Testament were later systematized into the idea of a Trinity – one God subsisting in three persons and one substance – in order to combat heretical tendencies of how the three are related and to defend the church against charges of worshipping two or three gods. The doctrine itself was not explicitly stated in the New Testament and no New Testament writer expounds on the relationship among the three in the detail of that later writers do. Thus, while Matthew records a special connection between God the Father and Jesus the Son (e.g. 11:27), he falls short of claiming that Jesus is equal with God. (cf. 24:36).

The most influential New Testament text was the reference to the three Persons in the baptismal formula in 28:19); other passages also were seen as having Trinitarian overtones, such as the Pauline benediction of 2 Corinthians 13:14.

The Gospel of John starts with "the affirmation that in the beginning Jesus as Word "was with God and ...was God" (John 1:1) and ends with Thomas's confession of faith to Jesus, "My Lord and my God!" (John 20:28). There is no significant tendency among modern scholars to deny that these two verses identify Jesus with God. The same Gospel suggests the equality and unity of Father and Son. But it also suggests a hierarchy ("The Father is greater than I"),, a statement appealed to by Marcionism, Valentinianism, Arianism and others who denied the Trinity.

The fourth Gospel also elaborates on the role of Holy Spirit, sent as an advocate for believers. The immediate context of these verses was providing "assurance of the presence and power of God both in the ministry of Jesus and the ongoing life of the community"; but, beyond this immediate context, these verses raised

questions of relationship between Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, especially as concerns their distinction and their unity. These questions were hotly debated over the ensuing centuries, and mainstream Christianity resolved the issues by drawing up creeds.

Summarizing the role of scripture in the formation of Trinitarian belief, Gregory Nazianzen argues in his *Orations* that the revelation was intentionally gradual:

> The Old Testament proclaimed the Father openly, and the Son more obscurely. The New manifested the Son, and suggested the deity of the Spirit. Now the Spirit himself dwells among us, and supplies us with a clearer demonstration of himself. For it was not safe, when the Godhead of the Father was not yet acknowledged, plainly to proclaim the Son; nor when that of the Son was not yet received to burden us further.

Scriptural texts cited as implying support

To support Trinitarianism, Bible exegetes cite references to the Trinity, to Jesus as God, and both to God alone and to Jesus as the Savior.

Jesus as God

Many verses in John, the epistles, and Revelation imply support for the doctrine that Jesus Christ is God and the closely related concept of the Trinity. The Gospel of John in particular supports Jesus' divinity. This is a partial list of supporting Bible verses:

- John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." together with John 1:14 "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." and John 1:18 "No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known."The Bible says "God the One and Only" in NIV.
- John 5:21 "For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it."
- John 8:23–24: "But he continued,'You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am [the one I claim to be], you will indeed die in your sins.'"
- John 8:58 "I tell you the truth", Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I *am*!"
- John 10:30: "I and the Father are one."
- John 10:38: "But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."
- John 12:41: "Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him."—As the context shows, this implied the Tetragrammaton in Isaiah 6:10 refers to Jesus.
- John 20:28: "Thomas said to him, 'My Lord and my God!'"
- Philippians 2:5–8: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"
- Colossians 1:15: "He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God"
- Colossians 1:16: "For by him [Jesus] all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him."

- Colossians 1:17: "He [Jesus] *is* before all things, and in him all things hold together."
- Colossians 2:9: "For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form"
- Titus 2:13: "while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ."
- 1 Timothy 3:16: "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."
- Hebrews 1:8: "But about the Son he [God] says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom."
- 1 John 5:20: "We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true—even in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life."
- Revelation 1:17–18: "When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and behold I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades." This is seen as significant when viewed with Isaiah 44:6: "This is what the LORD says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God."

The Bible also refers to Jesus as a man, which is in line with the Trinitarian concept that Jesus was fully human as well as fully divine which is expressed through the theological concept of kenosis.

God alone is the Savior and the Savior is Jesus

The Old Testament identifies the LORD as the only savior, and the New Testament identifies Jesus Christ as God and Savior. These verses are consistent with Trinitarianism, as well as various nontrinitarian beliefs (binitarianism, modalism, the Latter-Day Saints' Godhead, Arianism, etc.)

- Isaiah 43:11: "'I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior.'"
- Titus 2:10: "and not to steal from them, but to show that they can be fully trusted, so that in every way they will make the teaching about God our Savior attractive."
- Titus 3:4: "But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared", in regard with:
- Luke 2:11: "'Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.'"
- Acts 20:28: "'the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.'"
- Titus 2:13: "while we wait for the blessed hope-the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ"
- John 4:42: "They said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man [Jesus] really is the Savior of the world.'"
- Titus 3:6: "whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior"

History

The Origin of the Formula

The basis for the doctrine of the Trinity is found in New Testament passages that associate the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Two such passages are Matthew's Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19) and St Paul's: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14).

In 325, the Council of Nicaea adopted a term for the relationship between the Son and the Father that from then on was seen as the hallmark of orthodoxy; it declared that the Son is "of the same substance" (ὁμοούσιος) as the Father. This was further developed into the formula "three persons, one substance". The answer to the question "*What* is God?" indicates the one-ness of the divine nature, while the answer to the question "*Who* is God?" indicates the three-ness of "Father, Son and Holy Spirit".

Saint Athanasius, who was a participant in the Council, stated that the bishops were forced to use this terminology, which is not found in Scripture, because the Biblical phrases that they would have preferred to use were claimed by the Arians to be capable of being interpreted in what the bishops considered to be a heretical sense. They therefore "commandeered the non-scriptural term *homoousios* ('of one substance') in order to safeguard the essential relation of the Son to the Father that had been denied by Arius."

The Confession of the Council of Nicaea said little about the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit was developed by Athanasius (*c* 293 - 373) in the last decades of his life. He both defended and refined the Nicene formula. By the end of the 4th century, under the leadership of Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory of Nazianzus (the Cappadocian Fathers), the doctrine had reached substantially its current form.

Pope Clement I prays to the Trinity, in a typical post-Renaissance depiction by Gianbattista Tiepolo.

Comma Johanneum

One explicit Trinitarian passage, called the *Comma Johanneum*, which is often quoted from the King James Version of 1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." is believed to be a later addition. It is commonly found in Latin manuscripts, but is absent from the Greek manuscripts, except for a few late examples, where the passage appears to have been back-translated from the Latin. Erasmus, the compiler of the *Textus Receptus*, on which the King James Version was based, noticed that the passage was not found in any of the Greek manuscripts at his disposal and refused to include it until presented with an example containing it, which he rightly suspected was concocted after the fact. Although the Latin Church Father, Saint Cyprian, is thought to have referred to the passage, it is now considered not to have been part of the original text, and is omitted from modern translations of the Bible, even from the revision of the Vulgate that is now the official Latin text of the Roman Catholic Church.

Formulation of the Doctrine

The most significant developments in articulating the doctrine of the Trinity took place in the 4th century, with a group of men known as the Theologians.

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Although the earliest Church Fathers had affirmed the teachings of the Apostles, their focus was on their pastoral duties to the Church under the persecution of the Roman Empire. Thus the early Fathers were largely unable to compose doctrinal treatises and theological expositions. With the relaxing of the persecution of the church during the rise of Constantine, the stage was set for ecumenical dialogue.

Trinitarians believe that the resultant councils and creeds did not discover or create doctrine, but rather, responding to serious heresies such as Arianism, articulated in the creeds the truths that the orthodox church had believed since the time of the apostles.

Depiction of Trinity from Saint Denis Basilica in Paris.

The Trinitarian view has been affirmed as an article of faith by the Nicene (325/381) and Athanasian creeds (circa 500), which attempted to standardize belief in the face of disagreements on the subject. These creeds were formulated and ratified by the Church of the third and fourth centuries in reaction to heterodox theologies concerning the Trinity and/or Christ. The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, revised in 381 by the second of these councils, is professed by the Eastern Orthodox Church and, with one addition (Filioque clause), the Roman Catholic Church, and has been retained in some form in the Anglican Communion and most Protestant denominations.

The Nicene Creed, which is a classic formulation of the doctrine of the Trinity, uses " homoousios" (Greek: of *the same* essence) of the relation of the Son's relationship with the Father. This word differs from that used by non-Trinitarians of the time, "homoiousios" (Greek: of *similar* essence), by a single Greek letter, "one iota", a fact proverbially used to speak of deep divisions, especially in theology, expressed by seemingly small verbal differences.

One of the (probably three) Church councils that in 264–266 condemned Paul of Samosata for his Adoptionist theology also condemned the term "homoousios" in the sense he used it. Fourth-century Christians who objected to the Nicene trinity made copious use of this condemnation by a reputable council.

Moreover, the meanings of "ousia" and " hypostasis" overlapped at the time, so that the latter term for some meant *essence* and for others *person*. Athanasius of Alexandria (293–373) helped to clarify the terms.

Because Christianity converts cultures from within, the doctrinal formulas as they have developed bear the marks of the ages through which the church has passed. The rhetorical tools of Greek philosophy, especially of Neoplatonism, are evident in the language adopted to explain the church's rejection of Arianism and Adoptionism on one hand (teaching that Christ is inferior to the Father, or even that he was merely human), and Docetism and Sabellianism on the other hand (teaching that Christ was an illusion, or that he was identical to God the Father). Augustine of Hippo has been noted at the forefront of these formulations; and he contributed much to the speculative development of the doctrine of the Trinity as it is known today, in the West; the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus) are more prominent in the East. The imprint of Augustinianism is found, for example, in the western Athanasian Creed, which, although it bears the name and reproduces the views of the fourth century opponent of Arianism, was probably written much later.

These controversies were for most purposes settled at the Ecumenical councils, whose creeds affirm the doctrine of the Trinity.

According to the Athanasian Creed, each of these three divine persons is said to be eternal, each almighty, none greater or less than another, each God, and yet together being but one God, *So are we forbidden by the Catholic religion to say; There are three Gods or three Lords.*—Athanasian Creed, line 20.

Modalists attempted to resolve the mystery of the Trinity by holding that the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are merely modes, or roles, of God. This anti-Trinitarian view contends that the three "persons" are not distinct persons, but titles which describe how humanity has interacted with or had experiences with God. In the role of the Father, God is the provider and creator of all. In the mode of the Son, man experiences God in the flesh, as a human, fully man and fully God. God manifests himself as the Holy Spirit by his actions on Earth and within the lives of Christians. This view is known as Sabellianism, and was rejected as heresy by the Ecumenical Councils although it is still prevalent today among those denominations known as " Oneness" and "Apostolic" Pentecostal Christians, the largest of which is the United Pentecostal Church International (see below, under "Nontrinitarianism"). Trinitarianism, on the other hand, insists that the Father, Son and Spirit simultaneously exist as three persons in one essence, each fully the same God.

The doctrine developed into its present form precisely through this kind of confrontation with alternatives; and the process of refinement continues in the same way. Even now, ecumenical dialogue between Eastern Orthodox, Oriental Orthodox, Roman Catholic, the Assyrian Church of the East, Anglican and Trinitarian Protestants, seeks an expression of Trinitarian and Christological doctrine which will overcome the extremely subtle differences that have largely contributed to dividing them into separate communities. The doctrine of the Trinity is therefore symbolic, somewhat paradoxically, of both division and unity.

Trinitarian Theology

Baptism as the beginning lesson

Baptism itself is generally conferred with the Trinitarian formula, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Trinitarians identify this name with the Christian faith into which baptism is an initiation, as seen for example in the statement of Basil the Great (330–379): "We are bound to be baptized in the terms we have received, and to profess faith in the terms in which we have been baptized." "This is the Faith of our baptism", the First Council of Constantinople also says (382), "that teaches us to believe in the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. According to this Faith there is one Godhead, Power, and Being of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19 may be taken to indicate that baptism was associated with this Trinitarian formula from the earliest decades of the Church's existence.

Some groups, such as Oneness Pentecostals, demur from the Trinitarian view on baptism. For them, the fact that Acts does not mention the formula outweighs all other considerations, and is a liturgical guide for their own practice. For this reason, they often focus on the baptisms in Acts, citing many authoritative theological works. For example, Kittel is cited where he is speaking of the phrase "in the name" (Greek: εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) as used in the baptisms recorded in Acts:

> The distinctive feature of Christian baptism is that it is administered in Christ (εἰς Χριστόν), or in the name of Christ (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Χριστοῦ). (Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977), 1:539.)
>
> The formula (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) seems rather to have been a tech. term in Hellenistic commerce ("to the account"). In both cases the use of the phrase is understandable, since the account bears the name of the one who owns it, and in baptism the name of Christ is pronounced, invoked and confessed by the one who baptises or the one baptised (Acts 22:16) or both. (Kittel, 1:540.)

Baptism of Christ, by Piero della Francesca, 15th century

Those who place great emphasis on the baptisms in Acts often likewise question the authenticity of Matthew 28:19 in its present form. A. Ploughman, apparently following F. C. Conybeare, has questioned the authenticity of Matthew 28:19, but the majority of scholars of New Testament textual criticism accept the authenticity of the passage, since there are no variant manuscripts regarding the formula, and the extant form of the passage is attested in the Didache and other patristic works of the first and second centuries: Ignatius, Tertullian, Hippolytus, Cyprian, and Gregory Thaumaturgus. The Acts of the Apostles only mentions believers being baptized "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts 2:38, 10:48) and "in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 8:16, Acts 19:5). There are no biblical references to baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit outside of Matthew 28:19, nor references, biblical or patristic, to baptism in the name of (the Lord) Jesus (Christ) outside the Acts of the Apostles.

Commenting on Matthew 28:19, Gerhard Kittel states:

> This threefold relation [of Father, Son and Spirit] soon found fixed expression in the triadic formulae in 2 C. 13:13, and in 1 Corinthians 12:4–6. The form is first found in the baptismal formula in Matthew 28:19; Did., 7. 1 and 3....[I]t is self-evident that Father, Son and Spirit are here linked in an indissoluble threefold relationship.

In the synoptic Gospels the baptism of Jesus himself is often interpreted as a manifestation of all three persons of the Trinity: "And when Jesus was baptized, he went up immediately from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and alighting on him; and lo, a

voice from heaven, saying, *This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased*" (Matthew 3:16–17).

One God

God is one, and the Godhead a single being: The Hebrew Scriptures lift this one article of faith above others, and surround it with stern warnings against departure from this central issue of faith, and of faithfulness to the covenant God had made with them. "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4) (the Shema), "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Deuteronomy 5:7) and, "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel and his redeemer the LORD of hosts: I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God." (Isaiah 44:6). Any formulation of an article of faith which does not insist that God is solitary, that divides worship between God and any other, or that imagines God coming into existence rather than being God eternally, is not capable of directing people toward the knowledge of God, according to the Trinitarian understanding of the Old Testament. The same insistence is found in the New Testament: "Why do you call me good? Jesus answered. No one is good—except God alone" (Mark 10:18), and, as other so-called gods are merely mythological, "there is no God but one" (1 Corinthians 8:4-6).

In the Trinitarian view, the Father and Christ share the one essence, substance or being. The central and crucial affirmation of Christian faith is that there is one savior, God, and one salvation, manifest in Jesus Christ, to which there is access only because of the Holy Spirit. The God of the Old Testament is still the same as the God of the New. In Christianity, it is understood that statements about a solitary God are intended to distinguish the Hebraic understanding from the polytheistic view, which see divine power as shared by several beings, beings which can, and do, disagree and have conflicts with each other.

God in three persons

According to the Trinity doctrine, God exists as three **persons**, or in the Greek *hypostases*, but is one being. God has but a single divine nature. Chalcedonians —Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Anglicans and Protestants—hold that, in addition, the second person of the Trinity—God the Son, Jesus—assumed human nature, so that he has two natures (and hence two wills), and is really and fully both true God and true human. In the Oriental Orthodox theology, the Chalcedonian formulation is rejected in favour of the position that the union of the two natures, though unconfused, births a third nature: redeemed humanity, the new creation.

The members of the Trinity are said to be co-equal and co-eternal, one in essence, nature, power, action, and will. As stated in the Athanasian Creed, the Father is uncreated, the Son is uncreated, and the Holy Spirit is uncreated, and all three are eternal with no beginning. The Roman Catholic Church teaches that, in the sense of the Latin verb *procedere*, but not in that of the Greek verb ἐκπορεύεσθαι, the Spirit "proceeds" from the Father and the Son (see Filioque).

It has been stated that because three persons exist in God as one unity, "The Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit" are not three different names for different parts of God but one name for God, because the Father can not be divided from the Son or the Holy Spirit from the Son. God has always loved, and there has always existed perfectly harmonious communion between the three persons of the Trinity. One consequence of this teaching is that God could not have created man in order to have *someone to talk to* or *to love*: God "already" enjoyed personal communion; being perfect, he did not create man because of any lack or inadequacy he had. Another consequence, according to Rev. Fr. Thomas Hopko, an Eastern Orthodox theologian, is that if God were not a Trinity, he could not have loved prior to creating other beings on whom to bestow his love. Thus we find God saying in Genesis 1:26-27, "Let *us* make man in *our* image, in our

likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." For Trinitarians, emphasis in Genesis 1:26 is on the plurality in the Deity, and in 1:27 on the unity of the divine Essence. A possible interpretation of Genesis 1:26 is that God's relationships in the Trinity are mirrored in man by the ideal relationship between husband and wife, two persons becoming one flesh, as described in Eve's creation later in the next chapter. Genesis 2:22 Some Trinitarian Christians support their position with the *Comma Johanneum* described above, even though it is widely regarded as inauthentic.

Mutually indwelling

A useful explanation of the relationship of the distinct divine persons is called " perichoresis", from Greek *going around, envelopment* (written with a long O, omega—some mistakenly associate it with the Greek word for dance, which however is spelled with a short O, omicron). This concept refers for its basis to John 14–17, where Jesus is instructing the disciples concerning the meaning of his departure. His going to the Father, he says, is for their sake; so that he might come to them when the "other comforter" is given to them. At that time, he says, his disciples will dwell in him, as he dwells in the Father, and the Father dwells in him, and the Father will dwell in them. This is so, according to the theory of perichoresis, because the persons of the Trinity "reciprocally contain one another, so that one permanently envelopes and is permanently enveloped by, the other whom he yet envelopes". (Hilary of Poitiers, *Concerning the Trinity* 3:1).

This co-indwelling may also be helpful in illustrating the Trinitarian conception of salvation. The first doctrinal benefit is that it effectively excludes the idea that God has parts. Trinitarians affirm that God is a simple, not an aggregate, being. The second doctrinal benefit is that it harmonizes well with the doctrine that the Christian's union with the Son in his humanity brings him into union with one who contains in himself, in St. Paul's words, "all the fullness of deity" and not a part. (*See also: Theosis*). Perichoresis provides an intuitive figure of what this might mean. The Son, the eternal Word, is from all eternity the dwelling place of God; he is, himself, the "Father's house", just as the Son dwells in the Father and the Spirit; so that, when the Spirit is "given", then it happens as Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans; for I will come to you" (John 14:18)

Trinity from a Book of Hours, an untypical depiction, with symbols of the Four Evangelists)

Some forms of human union are considered to be not identical but analogous to the Trinitarian concept, as found for example in Jesus' words about marriage: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh" (Mark 10:7–8). According to the words of Jesus, married persons are in some sense no longer two, but joined into one. Therefore, Orthodox theologians also see the marriage relationship as an image, or " icon" of the Trinity, relationships of communion in which, in the words of St. Paul, participants are "members one of another". As with marriage, the unity of the church with Christ is similarly considered in some sense analogous to the unity of the Trinity, following the prayer of Jesus to the Father, for the church, that "they may be one, even as we are one". John 17:22

Eternal generation and procession

Trinitarianism affirms that the Son is "begotten" (or "generated") of the Father and that the Spirit "proceeds" from the Father, but the Father is "neither begotten nor proceeds". The argument over whether the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone, or from the Father and the Son, was one of the catalysts of the Great Schism, in this case concerning the Western addition of the Filioque clause to the Nicene Creed.

This language is often considered difficult because, if used regarding humans or other created things, it would necessarily imply time and change; when used here, no beginning, change in being, or process within time is intended and is in fact excluded. The Son is generated ("born" or "begotten"), and the Spirit proceeds, eternally. Augustine of Hippo explains, "Thy years are one day, and Thy day is not daily, but today; because Thy today yields not to tomorrow, for neither does it follow yesterday. Thy today is eternity; therefore Thou begat the Co-eternal, to whom Thou saidst, 'This day have I begotten Thee." {Psalm 2:7}

Son begotten, not created

Because the Son is begotten, not made, the substance of his persona is that of Yahweh, of deity. The creation is brought into being through the Son, but the Son himself is not part of it except through his incarnation.

The church fathers used a number of analogies to express this thought. St. Irenaeus of Lyons was the final major theologian of the second century. He writes "the Father is God, and the Son is God, for whatever is begotten of God is God."

Extending the analogy, it might be said, similarly, that whatever is generated (procreated) of humans is human. Thus, given that humanity is, in the words of the Bible, "created in the image and likeness of God", an analogy can be drawn between the Divine Essence and human nature, between the Divine Persons and human persons. However, given the fall, this analogy is far from perfect, even though, like the Divine Persons, human persons are characterized by being "loci of relationship". For Trinitarian Christians, this analogy is particularly important with regard to the Church, which St. Paul calls "the body of Christ" and whose members are, because they are "members of Christ", also "members one of another".

However, any attempt to explain the mystery to some extent must break down, and has limited usefulness, being designed, not so much to fully explain the Trinity, but to point to the experience of communion with the Triune God within the Church as the Body of Christ. The difference between those who believe in the Trinity and those who do not, is not an issue of understanding the mystery. Rather, the difference is primarily one of belief concerning the personal identity of Christ. It is a difference in conception of the salvation connected with Christ that drives all reactions, either favorable or unfavorable, to the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. As it is, the doctrine of the Trinity is directly tied up with Christology.

Economic and Ontological Trinity

- Economic Trinity: This refers to the acts of the triune God with respect to the creation, history, salvation, the formation of the Church, the daily lives of believers, etc. and describes how the Trinity operates within history in terms of the roles or functions performed by each of the Persons of the Trinity —God's relationship with creation.
- Ontological (or essential or immanent) Trinity: This speaks of the interior life of the Trinity (John 1:1–2, note John 1:1)—the reciprocal relationships of Father, Son and Spirit to each other without reference to God's relationship with creation.

Or more simply—the ontological Trinity (who God is) and the economic Trinity (what God does). Most Christians believe the economic reflects and reveals the ontological. Catholic theologian Karl Rahner went so far as to say "The 'economic' Trinity *is* the 'immanent' Trinity, and vice versa."

The ancient Nicene theologians argued that everything the Trinity does is done by Father, Son, and Spirit working together with one will. The three persons of the Trinity always work inseparable, for their work is always the work of the one God. Because of this unity of will, the Trinity cannot involve the eternal subordination of the Son to the Father. Eternal subordination can only exist if the Son's will is at least conceivably different from the Father's. But Nicene orthodoxy says it is not. The Son's will cannot be different from the Father's because it is the Father's. They have but one will as they have but one being. Otherwise they would not be one God. If there were relations of command and obedience between the Father and the Son, there would be no Trinity at all but rather three gods.

In explaining why the Bible speaks of the Son as being subordinate to the Father, the great theologian Athanasius argued that scripture gives a "double account" of the son of God – one of his temporal and voluntary subordination in the incarnation, and the other of his eternal divine status. For Athanasius, the Son is eternally one in being with the Father, temporally and voluntarily subordinate in his incarnate ministry. Such human traits, he argued, were not to be read back into the eternal Trinity.

Like Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers also insisted there was no economic inequality present within the Trinity. As Basil wrote: "We perceive the operation of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to be one and the same, in no respect showing differences or variation; from this identity of operation we necessarily infer the unity of nature."

Augustine also rejected the idea of an economic hierarchy within the Trinity. He claimed that the three persons of the Trinity "share the inseparable equality one substance present in divine unity". Because the three persons are one in their inner life, this means that for Augustine their works in the world are one. For this reason, it is an impossibility for Augustine to speak of the Father commanding and the Son obeying as if there could be a conflict of wills within the eternal Trinity.

John Calvin also spoke at length about the doctrine of the Trinity. Like Athanasius and Augustine before him, he concluded that Philippians 2:4-11 prescribed how scripture was to be read correctly. For him the Son's obedience is limited to the incarnation. It is indicative of his true humanity assumed for our salvation.

Much of this work is summed up in the Athanasian Creed. This creed stresses the unity of the Trinity and the equality of the persons. It ascribes equal divinity, majesty, and authority to all three persons. All three are said to be "almighty" and "Lord" (no subordination in authority; "none is before or after another" (no hierarchical ordering); and "none is greater, or less than another" (no subordination in being or nature). Thus, since the divine persons of the Trinity act with one will, there is no possibility of hierarchy-inequality in the Trinity.

Since the 1980s, some evangelical theologians have come to the conclusion that the members of the Trinity may be economically unequal while remaining ontologically equal. This theory was put forward by George W. Knight III in his 1977 book The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women, states that the Son of God is eternally subordinated in authority to God the Father. This conclusion was used as a means of supporting the main thesis of his book: that women are permanently subordinated in authority to their husbands in the home and to male leaders in the church, despite being ontologically equal. Subscribers to this theory insist that the Father has the role of giving commands and the Son has the role of obeying them.

Old Testament evidence

Old Testament theophanies

In the Old Testament, several theophanies are recorded in which "God appeared" to one or more human beings in a physical manifestation that could be seen and heard. Jews will reply that "God appearing" does not signify his being in human form since the Jewish bible states in Numbers 23:19 that "God is not a man that He should lie" and that "none is like Him".

- Genesis 12:7,18:1 — God appeared to Abraham
- Genesis 26:2,24 — God appeared to Isaac
- Genesis 35:1,9,48:3 — God appeared to Jacob
- Exodus 3:16,4:5 — God appeared to Moses
- Exodus 6:3 — God appeared to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
- Leviticus 9:4,16:2 — God appeared to Aaron
- Deuteronomy 31:15 — God appeared to Moses and Joshua
- 1Samuel 3:21 — God appeared to Samuel
- 1Kings 3:5,9:2,11:9 — God appeared to Solomon
- 2Chronicles 1 — God appeared to David
- 2Chronicles 7:12 — God appeared to Solomon

The Angel (Messenger) of the Lord

- Genesis 16:7–14
- Genesis 22:9–14
- Exodus 3:2
- Exodus 23:20,21
- Numbers 22:21–35
- Judges 2:1–5
- Judges 6:11–22
- Judges 13:3

God identified as "the Father" in the Old Testament

- Deuteronomy 32:6 (Moses' time)
- Isaiah 63:16,64:8 (pre-exile)
- Malachi 2:10 (post-exile)

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God identified as "the Son" in the Old Testament

God is not directly identified as "the Son" in the Old Testament. Israel (and, poetically Ephraim) are called God's first born son, representing an aspect of the Jewish nation's relationship with God. There are, however, what many Christians believe are foreshadowings of Jesus as God the Son.

Psalm 2 is widely considered a Messianic psalm (Jewish Messianic Interpretations of Psalm 2) prophetically describing the Lord's "Anointed One" (verse 2). It contains in verse 7 the divine decree: "You are my Son, today I have become your Father." Verse 12 contains the words "Kiss the Son". While in verse 7 the Hebrew word for son is used, in verse 12 a Chaldean word is used. Support for the translation of the Chaldean word as "Son" is found in its other appearances, such as Ezra 5:2 . This psalm denotes a Father Son relationship between God and the Messiah, who as the Son would be the heir (verse 8). Isaiah 9, also considered a Messianic prophecy, describes the coming Messiah as "Mighty God" (verse 6). Psalm 110 describes the LORD (understood as God the Father) sharing his eternal glory with the psalmist's Lord (understood to be the Son, the Messiah).

In Daniel chapter 7 the prophet records his vision of "one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven" (Daniel 7:13), who "was given authority, glory and sovereign power; all peoples, nations and men of every language worshipped him." (v14) Christians believe worship is only properly given to God, and that in the light of other Bible passages this "son of man" can be identified as the second person of the Trinity. Parallels may be drawn between Daniel's vision and Jesus' words to the Jewish high priest that in the future those assembled would see "the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven". (Matthew 26:64-65). Jesus was immediately accused of blasphemy, as at other times when he had identified his oneness with God . Christians also believe that John saw the resurrected, gloried Jesus and described him as "One like the Son of Man" (Revelation 1:13) .

God in the form of Jesus confronts Adam and Eve

God the Spirit in the Old Testament

- 1Samuel 10:10,19:20,23
- 2Samuel 23:2
- 1Kings 22:24
- Nehemiah 9:30
- Psalms 51:11
- Isaiah 63:10-11
- Micah 2:7

Deity of the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament:

- Job 33:4

- Psalms 104:30
- Psalms 139:7

Words of the Holy Spirit called the words of God:

- 1Samuel 10:10
- 2Samuel 23:2
- Zechariah 7:12,12:10

Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant distinctions

The Western (Roman Catholic) tradition is more prone to make positive statements concerning the relationship of persons in the Trinity. Explanations of the Trinity are not the same thing as the doctrine itself; nevertheless the Augustinian West is inclined to think in philosophical terms concerning the rationality of God's being, and is prone on this basis to be more open than the East to seek philosophical formulations which make the doctrine more intelligible.

Eastern Christianity, for its part, correlates ecclesiology and Trinitarian doctrine, and seeks to understand the doctrine of the Trinity via the experience of the Church, which it understands to be "an icon of the Trinity". Therefore, when St. Paul writes concerning Christians that all are "members one of another", Eastern Christians in turn understand this as also applying to the Divine Persons.

The principal disagreement between Western and Eastern Christianity on the Trinity has been the relationship of the Holy Spirit with the other two hypostases. The original credal formulation of the Council of Constantinople was that the Holy Spirit proceeds "from the Father". While this phrase is still used unaltered both in the Eastern Churches, including the Eastern Catholic Churches, and, when the Nicene Creed is recited in Greek, in the Latin Church, it became customary in the Latin-speaking Church, beginning with the provincial Third Council of Toledo in 589, to add "and the Son" (Latin *Filioque*). Although this insertion into the Creed was explicitly rejected by Pope Leo III, who equally explicitly approved the doctrine it expressed, it was finally used in a Papal Mass by Pope Benedict VIII in 1014, thus completing its spread throughout Western Christianity. The Eastern Orthodox Churches object to it on both ecclesiological and theological grounds.

Anglicans have made a commitment in their Lambeth Conference, to provide for the use of the creed without the Filioque clause in future revisions of their liturgies, in deference to the issues of Conciliar authority raised by the Orthodox. Most Protestant groups that use the creed also include the Filioque clause. However, the issue is usually not controversial among them because their conception is often less exact than is discussed above (exceptions being the Presbyterian Westminster Confession 2:3, the London Baptist Confession 2:3, and the Lutheran Augsburg Confession 1:1–6, which specifically address those issues). The clause is often understood by Protestants to mean that the Spirit is sent from the Father, by the Son, a conception which is not controversial in either Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy. A representative view of Protestant Trinitarian theology is more difficult to provide, given the diverse and decentralized nature of the various Protestant churches.

Naming the Persons

Some feminist theologians refer to the persons of the Holy Trinity with gender-neutral language, such as "Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer (or Sanctifier)". This is a recent formulation, which seeks to redefine the Trinity in terms of three roles in salvation or relationships with us, not eternal identities or relationships with each other. Since, however, each of the three divine persons participates in the acts of creation, redemption, and sustaining, traditionalist Christians reject this formulation as suggesting a new variety of Modalism. Some theologians prefer the alternate terminology of "Source, and Word, and Holy Spirit".

Responding to feminist concerns, orthodox theology has noted the following: a) the names "Father" and "Son" are clearly analogical, since all Trinitarians would agree that God is *beyond* all gender; b) that, in translating the Creed, for example, "born" and "begotten" are equally valid translations of the Greek word "gennao", which refers to the eternal generation of the Son by the Father: hence, one may refer to God "the Father who gives birth"; this is further supported by patristic writings which compare the "birth" of the Divine Word "before all ages" (i.e., eternally) from the Father with his birth in time from the Virgin Mary; c) Using "Son" to refer to the Second Divine Person is most proper only when referring to the Incarnate Word, Jesus, who is clearly male; d) in Semitic languages, such as Hebrew and Aramaic, the noun translated "spirit" is grammatically feminine. Images of God's Spirit in scripture are also often feminine, as with the Spirit "brooding" over the primordial chaos in Genesis 1, or grammatically feminine, such as a dove.

Logical Coherency

On the face of it, the doctrine of the Trinity seems to be logically incoherent as it appears to imply that identity is not transitive—"for the Father is identical with God, the Son is identical with God, and the Father is not identical with the Son." Recently, there have been two philosophical attempts to defend the logical coherency of Trinity, one by Richard Swinburne and the other by Peter Geach et al. The formulation suggested by Swinburne is free from logical incoherency, but it is debatable whether this formulation is consistent with historical orthodoxy. Regarding the formulation suggested by Geach, not all philosophers would agree with its logical coherency. Swinburne has suggested that "the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be thought of as numerically distinct Gods". Geach suggested that "a coherent statement of the doctrine is possible on the assumption that identity is "always relative to a sortal term".

Some Messianic groups, the Branch Davidian Seventh Day Adventists, and even some scholars within (but not necessarily representing) denominations such as Southern Baptist Convention view the Trinity as being comparable to the concept of a family, hence the familial terms of Father, Son, and the implied role of Mother for the Holy Spirit. The Hebrew word for "God", Elohim, which has an inherent plurality, has the function as a surname as in "Yahweh Elohim". The seeming contradiction of Elohim being "one" is solved by the fact that the Hebrew word for "one", "*echad*", can describe a compound unity, harmonious in direction and purpose; unlike "*yachid*" which means singularity.

If God has compositional parts, they are either finite or infinite parts. If finite, then God is finite. If infinite, then there are multiple infinities. Each case becomes a denial of monotheism. By definition, therefore, the belief in compositional parts has been regarded as a heresy since the establishment of the Nicene Creed, and reaffirmed in Protestant Creeds such as the Westminster Confession of Faith and 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith which state "God has no parts". Louis Berkhof describes the doctrine of the Trinity requiring belief in a "simplex unity" and not a complex (or composite) being. "There is in the Divine Being but one indivisible essence" and "The whole undivided essence of God belongs equally to each of the three persons."

The Trinity in art

The Trinity is most commonly seen in Christian art with the Spirit represented by a dove, as specified in the Gospel accounts of the Baptism of Christ; it is nearly always shown with wings outspread. However depictions using three human figures appear occasionally in most periods of art.

Holy Trinity, fresco by Luca Rossetti da Orta, 1738-9 (St. Gaudenzio Church at Ivrea, Torino).

The Father and the Son are usually differentiated by age, and later by dress, but this too is not always the case. The usual depiction of the Father as an older man with a white beard may derive from the biblical Ancient of Days, which is often cited in defense of this sometimes controversial representation. However, in Eastern Orthodoxy the Ancient of Days is understood to be God the Son, not God the Father. When the Father is depicted in art, he is sometimes shown with a halo shaped like an equilateral triangle, instead of a circle. The Son is often shown at the Father's right hand (Acts 7:56). He may be represented by a symbol—typically the Lamb or a cross—or on a crucifix, so that the Father is the only human figure shown at full size. In early medieval art, the Father may be represented by a hand appearing from a cloud in a blessing gesture, for example in scenes of the Baptism of Christ. Later, in the West, the "Throne of Mercy" (or "Throne of Grace") became a common depiction. In this style, the Father (sometimes seated on a throne) is shown supporting either a crucifix or, later, a slumped crucified Son, similar to the Pieta (this type is distinguished in German as the *Not Gottes*) in his outstretched arms, whilst the Dove hovers above or in between them. This subject continued to be popular until the eighteenth century at least.

By the end of the fifteenth century, larger representations, other than the Throne of Mercy, became effectively standardised, showing an older figure in plain robes for the Father, Christ with his torso partly bare to display the wounds of his Passion, and the dove above or around them. In earlier representations both Father, especially, and Son often wear elaborate robes and crowns. Sometimes the Father alone wears a crown, or even a papal tiara.

Eastern Orthodox tradition

Old Testament Trinity icon by Andrey Rublev, c. 1400 (Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow)

Direct representations of the Trinity are much rarer in Eastern Orthodox art of any period -reservations about depicting the Father remain fairly strong, as they were in the West until the high Middle Ages. The Second Council of Nicea in 787 confirmed that the depiction of Christ was allowed because he became man; the situation regarding the Father was less clear. The usual Orthodox representation of the Trinity was through the "Old Testament Trinity" of the three angels visiting Abraham - said in the text to be "the Lord" (Genesis:18.1-15). However post-Byzantine representations similar to those in the West are not uncommon in the Greek world. The subject long remained sensitive, and the Russian Orthodox Church at the Great Synod of Moscow in 1667 finally forbade depictions of the Father in human form. The canon is quoted in full here because it explains the Russian Orthodox theology on the subject:

Chapter 2, §44: It is most absurd and improper to depict in icons the Lord Sabaoth (that is to say, God the Father) with a grey beard and the Only-Begotten Son in His bosom with a dove between them, because no-one has seen the Father according to His Divinity, and the Father has no flesh, nor was the Son born in the flesh from the Father before the ages. And though David the prophet says, "From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee" (Ps.109:3), that birth was not fleshly, but unspeakable and incomprehensible. For Christ Himself says in the holy Gospel, "No man hath seen the Father, save the Son" (cf. John 6:46). And Isaiah the prophet says in his fortieth chapter: "To whom have ye likened the Lord? and with what likeness have ye made a similitude of Him? Has not the artificier of wood made an image, or the goldsmiths, having melted gold, gilt it over, and made it a similitude?"(40:18-19). In like manner the Apostle Paul says in the Acts (17:29), "Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art of man's imagination". And John Damascene says: "But furthermore, who can make a similitude of the invisible, incorporeal, uncircumscribed and undepictable God? It is, then, uttermost insanity and impiety to give a form to the Godhead" (*Orthodox Faith*, 4:16). In like manner St. Gregory the Dialogist prohibits this. For this reason we should only form an understanding in the mind of Sabaoth, which is the Godhead, and of that birth before the ages of the Only-Begotten-Son from the Father, but we should never, in any wise depict these in icons, for this, indeed, is impossible. And the Holy Spirit is not in essence a dove, but in essence He is God, and "No man hath seen God," as John the Theologian and Evangelist bears witness (1:18) and this is so even though, at the Jordan at Christ's holy Baptism the Holy Spirit appeared in the likeness of a dove. For this reason, it is fitting on this occasion only to depict the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove. But in any other place those who have intelligence will not depict the Holy Spirit in the likeness of a dove. For on Mount Tabor, He appeared as a cloud and, at another time, in other ways. Furthermore, Sabaoth is the name not only of the Father, but of the Holy Trinity. According to Dionysios the Areopagite, Lord Sabaoth, translated from the Jewish tongue, means "Lord of Hosts". This Lord of Hosts is the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And although Daniel the prophet says that he beheld the Ancient of Days sitting on a throne, this should not be understood to refer to the Father, but to the Son, Who at His second coming will judge every nation at the dreadful Judgment.

Scenes that depict the Trinity

Only a few of the standard scenes in Christian art normally included a representation of the Trinity. The accounts in the Gospels of the Baptism of Christ were considered to show all three persons as present with a separate role. Sometimes the other two persons are shown at the top of a crucifixion. The Coronation of the Virgin, a popular subject in the West, often included the whole Trinity. But many subjects, such as Christ in Majesty or the Last Judgement, which might be thought to require depiction of the deity in the most amplified form, only show Christ. There is a rare subject where the persons of the Trinity make the decision to incarnate Christ, or *God sending out the Son*. Even more rarely, the Angel of the Annunciation is shown being given the mission.

Less common types of depiction

The depiction of the Trinity as three *identical* persons is rare, because each Person of the Trinity is considered to have distinct attributes. Even rarer is the depiction of the Trinity as a single anthropoid fiugre with three faces, because the Trinity is defined as three persons in one Godhead, not one Person with three attributes (this would imply Modalism, which is defined as heresy in traditional Christian orthodoxy).

Trefoil and triangle interlaced.

The Trinity may also be represented abstractly by symbols, such as the triangle (or three triangles joined together), trefoil or the triquetra—or a combination of these. Sometimes a halo in incorporated into these symbols. The use of such symbols are often found not only in painting but also in needlework on tapestries, vestments and antependia, in metalwork and in architectural details.

Ambivalence to Trinitarian doctrine

Some Protestant Christians, particularly some members of the restoration movement, are ambivalent about the doctrine of the Trinity. While not specifically rejecting Trinitarianism or presenting an alternative doctrine of the Godhead and God's relationship with humanity, they are neither dogmatic about the Trinity nor hold it as a test of true Christian faith. Some, like the Society of Friends (Quakers) and Christian Unitarians, may reject all doctrinal or creedal tests of true faith, though not necessarily rejecting Trinitarian language. Others, like some members of the restorationist Churches of Christ, in keeping with a distinctive understanding of "Scripture alone", say that since the doctrine of the Trinity is not clearly articulated in the Bible, it cannot be required for salvation. Still others may look to church tradition and say that there has always been a Christian tradition that faithfully followed Jesus without such a doctrine.

Non-orthodox Trinitarianism

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) identify the Trinity (or Godhead) as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, but with a different intention than the Nicene faith. They regard these three as individual members of a heavenly triumvirate, completely united with one another in purpose - each member of the Godhead being a distinct being of physical form (God the Father, Jesus Christ) or spiritual form (The Holy Ghost.)

The Trinity in Christian Science is found in the unity of God, the Christ, and the Holy Ghost or—"God the Father-Mother; Christ the spiritual idea of sonship;
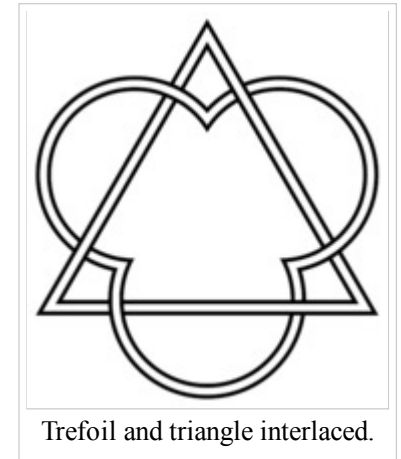
divine Science or the Holy Comforter". The same in essence, the Trinity indicates "the intelligent relation of God to man and the universe".

Nontrinitarianism

Some Christian traditions either reject the doctrine of the Trinity, or consider it unimportant. Persons and groups espousing this position generally do not refer to themselves as "Nontrinitarians". They can vary in both their reasons for rejecting traditional teaching on the Trinity, and in the way they describe God.

Nontrinitarian groups

Since Trinitarianism is central to so much of church doctrine, nontrinitarians were mostly groups that existed before the Nicene Creed was codified in 325 or are groups that developed after the Reformation, when many church doctrines came into question

In the early centuries of Christian history Adoptionists, Arians, Ebionites, some Gnostics, Marcionites, and others held nontrinitarian beliefs. The Nicene Creed raised the issue of the relationship between Jesus' divine and human natures. Monophysitism ("one nature") and monothelitism ("one will") were early attempts, considered heretical by trinitarians, to explain this relationship.

During more than a thousand years of Trinitarian orthodoxy, formal nontrinitarianism, i.e., a doctrine held by a church, group, or movement, was rare, but it did appear. For example, among the Cathars of the 13th century. The Protestant Reformation of the 1500s also brought tradition into question. At first, nontrinitarians were executed (such as Servetus), or forced to keep their beliefs secret (such as Isaac Newton). The eventual establishment of religious freedom, however, allowed nontrinitarians to more easily preach their beliefs, and the 19th century saw the establishment of several nontrinitarian groups in North America and elsewhere. These include Christadelphians, Jehovah's Witnesses, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Unitarians. Some groups espousing Binitarianism such as the Living Church of God claim that Binitarianism was the majority view of those that professed Christ in the second century.

Twentieth-century nontrinitarian movements include Iglesia ni Cristo and the Unification Church. Nontrinitarian groups differ from one another in their views of Jesus Christ, depicting him variously as a divine being second only to God the Father (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses), Yahweh of the Old Testament in human form, God (but not eternally God), Son of God but inferior to the Father (versus co-equal), prophet, or simply a holy man.

Oneness Pentecostals deny traditional Trinitarian doctrine, while affirming their belief that God took on flesh in the man Jesus Christ. Like Trinitarians, Oneness adherents believe that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man. However, whereas Trinitarians believe that "God the Son" (a being whose existence is denied by Oneness believers), the eternal second person of the Trinity, became man, Oneness adherents hold that the Father (who is also the Holy Ghost in their theology) *Himself*--the one and only true God--became man. Oneness believers view "Father", "Son" and "Holy Spirit" as *titles*, reflecting different manifestations of the one true God in the universe. Oneness Pentecostals are regarded by all orthodox Christian groups as subscribing to the heresy of Modalism, teaching that God displayed himself in the Old Testament as Father, in the Gospels as the Son, and after the Ascension as the Holy Spirit, which is not the traditional orthodox doctrine of three distinct and eternal Persons in one divine essence. Rather, Oneness Pentecostalism teaches there is only one Person displaying himself in different ways.

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Vaisakhi

2008/9 Schools Wikipedia Selection. Related subjects: Religious movements, traditions and organizations

Vaisakhi (Punjabi: ਵਸਾਖੀ, *vaisākhī*, also known as **Baisakhi**) is an ancient harvest festival in Punjab, which also marks beginning of a new solar year, and new harvest season. Vaisakhi also has religious significance for Sikhs. It falls on the first day of the *Vaisakh* month in the solar Nanakshahi calendar, which corresponds to 13 April or 14 April in the Gregorian calendar.

Vaisakhi is one of the most significant holidays in Sikh calendar, commemorating the establishment of the Khalsa in 1699. Vaisakhi is celebrated by the Khalsa as their birthday every year, the day corresponding to the event when they were created by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

This day is also observed as the beginning of the new year celebrated by the people of Nepal and Indians in West Bengal, Tamilnadu and Kerala and some other regions of India. The particular significance attached to the occasion shows regional variation outside of Punjab too. In Himachal Pradesh, Hindu Goddess Jwalamukhi is worshipped on Vaisakhi, while in Bihar, Sun-god Surya is honoured. The festival is celebrated as *Rongali Bihu* in Assam, *Naba Barsha* in Bengal, *Puthandu* in Tamil Nadu, *Vishu* (or Vaishakhi) in Kerala, and the Sinhalese/Tamil new year festival in Sri Lanka. Besides Punjab, Vaisakhi is widely celebrated as traditional harvest festival in many northern states of India, such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal.

Celebrations

To mark the celebrations, devotees, irrespective of their religion, throng at gurdwaras, the Sikh place of worship. The celebrations start early as devotees, with flowers and offerings in their hands, proceed towards the gurdwaras and temples before dawn. Processions through towns are also common. Vaisakhi is the day on which the Khalsa (The Pure Ones) was born and Sikhs were given a clear identity and a code of conduct to live by. The event was led by the last living Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who baptised the first Sikhs using sweet nectar called Amrit. Around the world at Vaisakhi time, Sikhs and Punjabis reflect on the values taught to them by their Gurus and celebrate the birth of the Khalsa.

Vaisakhi ਵਸਾਖੀ	
Vaisakhi parade in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada, on 15 April 2006	
Also called	Baisakhi
Observed by	Sikhs around the world.
Type	Religious
Significance	The birth of the Khalsa, the beginning of the harvest season.
Date	1 Vaisakh (**13 April** or **14 April** in the Gregorian calendar)
Celebrations	Parades
Observances	Prayers, Processions, raising of the Nishan Sahib flag

On top of this usually on this day in India, there is a huge parade/celebration. In the United States, there is usually a parade a few days after Vaisakhi, the actually day. In Manhattan, New York City there is a huge parade where many people come out to do seva (religious work) such as giving out free food, and completing any other labor needed to be done. The local Sikh community in Surrey, British Columbia, Canada holds its annual Vaisakhi celebrations in the April long weekend, which often includes a nagar kirtan, or parade, in which an estimated 200,000 people attend.

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