Online Study Materials on
RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

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RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS: AN OVERVIEW

RELIGION

A religion is a set of common beliefs and practices generally held by a group of people, often codified as prayer, ritual, and religious law. Religion also encompasses ancestral or cultural traditions, writings, history, and mythology, as well as personal faith and mystic 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".

The development of religion has taken many forms in various cultures. "Organised religion" generally refers to an organisation 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 organisation). 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.

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".

DEFINITION 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 emphasised 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 organised 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

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 religions 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 organisation 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. (Edmund Burke, the Irish orator, once said, "Superstition is the religion of feeble minds.")

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.

The models are not mutually exclusive. Multiple models may be seen to apply simultaneously, or different models may be seen as applying to different religions.

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:

Ethnic religions may include officially sanctioned and organised civil religions with an organised clergy, but they are characterised 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 no recorded proof of any extensive inter-communication between Ancient Greece, the Middle East, 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 in Hellenistic philosophy, the notion of atman in Vedanta and the notion of Tao in Taoism.

Middle Ages

The present-day world religions established themselves throughout Eurasia during the Middle Ages by: Christianisation of the West, Buddhist missions to East Asia, the decline of Buddhism and rise of Hinduism in India, and the spread of Islam throughout the Near East and much of Central Asia. In the High Middle Ages, Islam was in conflict with Christianity during the Crusades and with Hinduism in the Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent.

Many medieval religious movements emphasised 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.

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 per cent worldwide in the 2000s. Adherents of the classical world religions account for more than 75 per cent of the world's population, while adherence to indigenous tribal religions has fallen to 4 per cent. As of 2005, an estimated 14 per cent of the world's population identifies as non-religious.

DEMOGRAPHICS

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.

- 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.

- 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.

- 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, Confucianism, Shinto,

Chondogyo, Caodaism, and Yiguandao as well as Far Eastern Buddhism (in which the group overlaps with the "Indian" group).

- Iranic religions 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 marginalised by the major organised 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 (overlaps with Far Eastern religions).

- 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 recons-tructionism), some inspired by science-fiction (UFO religions, Scientology). 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
	Christianity	2.1 billion	1st c.	Worldwide except Northwest Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of Central, East, and Southeast Asia.
Abrahamic religions 3.4 billion	Islam	1.5 billion	7th c.	Middle East, Northern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Indian subcontinent, Russia, China, Balkans, Malay Archipelago
	Judaism	14 million	Iron Age	Israel, USA, Europe Dispersed
	Bahá'í Faith	7 million	19th c.	worldwide with no major population centers
	Hinduism	900 million	no founder	Indian subcontinent, Fiji, Guyana and Mauritius
Indian religions 1.4 billion	Buddhism	376 million	Iron Age	Indian subcontinent, East Asia, Indochina, regions of Russia.
	Sikhism	23 million	16th c.	India, Pakistan, Africa, Canada, USA, United Kingdom

Name of Group	Name of Religion	Number of Followers	Date of Origin	Main Regions Covered
	Jainism	4.2 million	Iron Age	India, and East Africa
	Taoism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period	China and the Chinese diaspora
	Confucianism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period	China, Korea, Vietnam and the Chinese and Vietnamese diasporas
	Shint	4 million	no founder	Japan
Far Eastern religions 500 million	Caodaism	1-2 million	1925	Vietnam
	Chondogy	1.13 million	1812	Korea
	Yiguanda Chinese folk religion	1-2 million	c. 1900	Taiwan
	Primal	394 million	no founder	China
	indigenous	300 million	no founder	India, Asia
Ethnic/tribal 400 million	African traditional and diasporic	100 million	no founder	Africa, Americas

Groups estimated to exceed 5,00,000 adherents which are not listed under any of the categories above are the following (adherents.com):

- Juche (North Korea): 19 million
- Spiritism (not an organised religion): 15 million
- Zoroastrianism: 2.6 million
- Neopaganism: 1 million
- Unitarian-Universalism: 8,00,000
- Rastafarianism: 6,00,000
- Scientology: 5,00,000

RELIGIOUS BELIEF

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).

Religious beliefs are found in virtually every society throughout human history. Many native traditions held clowns and tricksters as essential to any contact with the sacred. People could not pray until they had laughed, because laughter opens and frees from rigid preconception. Humans had to have tricksters within the most sacred ceremonies for fear that they forget the sacred comes through upset,

reversal, surprise. The trickster in most native traditions is essential to creation, to birth.

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).

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 probabilistic and subject to later improvement or revision in the face of better 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 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 organisations and individuals who propagated scientific theories which were deemed unacceptable by the organisations. 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.

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. This 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 harmonisation. 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

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, in contrast with philosophy, denies that logic is the most important method of gaining enlightenment. Rather, physical disciplines such as yoga, stringent fasting, 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.

Mysticism (to initiate) is the pursuit of communion with, or conscious awareness of ultimate reality, the divine, spiritual truth, or God 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 claims to be more sophisticated than religion, to rely on intellectual understanding rather than faith, and to improve on philosophy 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. It applies especially to spiritual practices. The mystery religions of ancient Greece are examples of Esotericism.

Spirituality

Members of an organised 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 organised religion. They choose the term *spirituality* rather than religion to describe their form of belief, perhaps reflecting a disillusionment with organised religion (see Major religious groups), and a movement towards a more "modern"—more tolerant, and more intuitive—form of religion. These individuals may reject organised religion because of historical acts by religious organisations, 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.

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 categorised 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.

Given the generalised 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.

CRITICISM

Most western criticism of religion focuses on the Abrahamic religions—particularly Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—with titles such as *Why I am not a Christian*, *The God Delusion* and *The End of Faith*

representing some popular published books. Not all the criticisms would apply to all religions: criticism regarding the existence of god(s), for example, has very little relevance to some forms of Buddhism.

Critics consider all religious faith essentially irrational.

Many critics claim dogmatic religions are typically morally deficient, elevating to moral status ancient, arbitrary, and ill-informed rules that may have been designed for reasons of hygiene, politics, or other reasons in a bygone era.

MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS

The world's principal religions and spiritual traditions may be classified into a small number of major groups or world religions: the vast majority of religious and spiritual adherents follow one of Christianity (33 per cent of world population), Islam (20%), Hinduism (13%), Chinese folk religion (6%) or Buddhism (5%).

These spiritual traditions may be either combined into larger super-groups, or into smaller sub-denominations. Christianity, Islam and Judaism (and sometimes the Bahá'í Faith) are sometimes summarised as Abrahamic religions. Hinduism, Buddhism (including Vajrayana, East Asian Buddhism and Zen), Sikhism and Jainism are classified as Dharmic religions. Chinese folk religion, Taoism, Shintô, are classified as Far Eastern religions.

Conversely, the major spiritual traditions may be parsed into denominations:

- Christianity into Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Oriental Orthodoxy and Nestorianism (see Christian denominations)
- Islam into Sunnism, Shi'ism, Sufism and Kharijites (see divisions of Islam)
- Hinduism into Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Smartha and others (see Hindu denominations)
- Buddhism into Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana (see Schools of Buddhism).

About 4 per cent of world population follow indigenous tribal religions. About 12 per cent of world population are irreligious.

For a more comprehensive list of religions and an outline of some of their basic relationships, please see the article list of religions.

WORLD RELIGIONS

Historical Notions

The concept of "world religion" is historically based on a subjective perception of temporal or theological importance, usually from a Western, Christian or at least "Abrahamic" perspective.

Early Christian scholars, the earliest known classifiers of major religions, recognised two "proper" religions, Christianity and Judaism, besides heretical deviations from Christianity, and idolatrous relapse or paganism. Islamic theology recognises Christians and Jews as "People of the Book" besides idolaters. The Christian view long classified Islam as one heresy among others.

Views evolved during the Enlightenment, however, and, by the 19th century, Western scholars considered the five "world religions" to be Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. These remain the classic "world religions."

Modern Listings

Modern classifications typically list major religious groups by number of adherents, not by historical or theological notability. Most dramatically, this affects Judaism, which holds the position of "world religion" as the foundational tradition of the "Abrahamic" group, but which in terms of adherents ranks below 0.25 per cent of world population, behind Sikhism.

The remaining four classic world religions, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism are also the largest contemporary religions by far. They all have more than 300 million adherents, more than ten times the number of the next largest organised religion.

An example of a modern listing of "world" religions is that of the Ontario Consultants on Religious Tolerance, listing twelve "long established, major world religions, each with over three million followers", alphabetically:

Bahá'í Faith, Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, Jainism, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Taoism, Vodou.

The adherents.com list of "classical twelve world religion" is nearly identical, but replaces Vodou with Zoroastrianism.

The "World's Major Religions" list published in the *New York Public Library Student's Desk Reference* omits both Vodou and Zoroastrianism, as well as Jainism and Sikhism, but lists the Eastern Orthodox Church, Protestantism and Roman Catholicism as separate religions.

The Christian Science Monitor newspaper in a 1998 article "Top 10 Organised Religions in the World" provides a further example, listing the largest "organised religions":

#	Religion	Number of Adherents	Remarks
1.	Christianity	1.9 billion	Has the most followers and most widespread presence of all well-recognised religions. Predominant religion in Europe, the Americas, Southern Africa, Oceania, and the Philippines.
2.	Islam	1.1 billion	A widespread religion with many countries majority Muslim, particularly in the Middle East, South Asia, Maritime Southeast Asia, Central Asia, North Africa, West Africa and some parts of Eastern Europe.
3.	Hinduism	781 million	Umbrella term for various Hindu denominations forming the majority in India, Nepal, North Eastern province of Sri Lanka, and the Bali & Java sub-province of Indonesia, parts of Latin America, Eastern Africa, Australia, USA and UK.
4.	Buddhism	324 million	Largely in East Asia and the Mainland Southeast Asia, and small parts of South Asia and Russia.
5.	Sikhism	19 million	Mostly in the Indian Punjab; also large numbers in other parts of India and the United Kingdom, the USA, Canada, Malaysia and Southeast Asia, Germany and East Africa.
6.	Judaism	14 million	A widespread religion with a majority in Israel; large populations in North America, Western Europe, and South America.
7.	Bahá'í Faith	6.1 million	Youngest of the group of 10, second most widely dispersed religion after Christianity; fastest growing (percentage) of top 10.
8.	Confucianism	5.3 million	Mostly in China proper; and in Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam.
9.	Jainism	4.9 million	Mostly in India.
10.	Shint	2.8 million	Mostly in (and formerly the state religion of) Japan.

In comparison with the Ontario Consultants list above, The Christian Science Monitor omits Taoism and Vodou as "non-organised".

Other "major religions" listed by Adherents.com (2007), not found on the above lists, are:

- tribal religions (Shamanism, Animism): roughly 300 million
- African traditional and diasporic (including Vodou): roughly 100 million
- Chinese traditional (including Taoism and Confucianism): 394 million
- Juche (North Korean state ideology): 19 million
- Spiritism (new religious movements such as Umbanda): roughly 15 million
- Cao Dai: 4 million
- Tenrikyo: 2 million
- Neopaganism: 1 million
- Unitarian-Universalism: 8,00,000
- Rastafarianism: 6,00,000

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.

- 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 and China.
- 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 religion are Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Jainism. Indian religions mutually influenced each other.

- 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, Confucianism, Shinto, Chondogyo, Caodaism, and Yiguandao as well as Far Eastern Buddhism (in which the group overlaps with the "Indian" group).

- Iranian religions include Zoroastrianism, Yazdanism and historical traditions of Gnosticism (Mandaeanism, Manichaeism). It has significant overlaps with Abrahamic traditions, *e.g.* in Sufism and in recent syncretic 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 marginalised by the major organised 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 (overlaps with Far Eastern religions).

- 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, Scientology). 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 3.4 billion	Christianity	2.1 billion	1st c.	Worldwide except Northwest Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and parts of Central, East, and Southeast Asia and China
	Islam	1.5 billion	7th c.	Middle East, Northern Africa, Central Asia, South Asia, Western Africa, Eastern Africa, Indian subcontinent, Russia, China, Balkan Peninsula, Malay Archipelago
	Judaism	14 million	Iron Age	Israel, USA, Europe
	Bahá'í Faith	7 million	19th c.	Dispersed worldwide with no major population centers

Name of Group	Name of Religion	Number of Followers	Date of Origin	Main Regions Covered
Indian religions 1.4 billion	Hinduism	900 million	no founder	Indian subcontinent, Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, USA, UK, parts of Indonesia and Sri Lanka
	Buddhism	376 million	Iron Age	Indian subcontinent, East Asia, Indochina, regions of Russia.
	Sikhism	23 million	16th c.	India, Pakistan, Africa, Canada, USA, United Kingdom
	Jainism	4.2 million	Iron Age	India, and East Africa
	Taoism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period	China and the Chinese diaspora
Far Eastern religions 500 million	Confucianism	unknown	Spring and Autumn Period	China, Korea, Vietnam and the Chinese and Vietnamese diasporas
	Shinto	4 million	no founder	Japan
	Caodaism	4 million	1925	Vietnam
	Chinese folk religion	394 million	no founder	China
Ethnic/tribal 400 million	Primal indigenous	300 million	no founder	India, Asia
	African traditional and diasporic	100 million	no founder	Africa, Americas

It has been suggested that this section be split into a new article entitled *Religious demographics*.

One way to define a major religion is by the number of current adherents. The population numbers by religion are computed by combination of census reports and population surveys (in countries where religion data is not collected in census, for example USA or France), but results can vary widely depending on the way questions are phrased, the definitions of religion used, and the bias of the agencies or organisations conducting the survey. Informal or unorganised religions are especially difficult to count.

There is no consensus among researchers as to the best methodology for determining the religiosity profile of the world's population. A number of fundamental aspects are unresolved:

- Whether to count "historically predominant religious culture[s]"
- Whether to count only those who actively "practice" a particular religion
- Whether to count based on a concept of "adherence"
- Whether to count only those who expressly self-identify with a particular denomination

- Whether to count only adults, or to include children as well.
- Whether to rely only on official government-provided statistics
- Whether to use multiple sources and ranges or single "best source(s)".

Largest Religions or Belief Systems by Number of Adherents

This listing includes both organised religions, which have unified belief codes and religious hierarchies, and informal religions, such as Chinese folk religions. For completeness, it also contains a category for the non-religious, although their views would not ordinarily be considered a religion.

1. Christianity: 2.1 billion with major branches as follows:
   - *See also the List of Christian denominations by number of members and List of Christian denominations pages* (Non-denominational statistics are not shown.)
   - Roman Catholic Church: 1.05 billion
   - Eastern Orthodox Church: 240 million
   - African Initiated Church: 110 million
   - Pentecostalism: 105 million
   - Reformed/Presbyterian/Congregational/United: 75 million
   - Anglicanism/Episcopal Church: 73 million
   - Baptist: 70 million
   - Methodism: 70 million
   - Lutheran: 64 million
   - Jehovah's Witnesses: 14.8 million
   - Latter-day Saints: 12.5 million
   - Adventists: 12 million
   - Apostolic/New Apostolic: 10 million
   - Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement: 5.4 million
   - New Thought (Unity, Christian Science, etc.): 1.5 million
   - Brethren (incl. Plymouth): 1.5 million
   - Mennonite: 1.25 million
   - Friends/Quakers: 3,00,000
2. Islam: 1.5 billion, with major branches as follows:[d]
   - Sunni: 940 million
   - Shia: 120 million

- Ahmadi: 10 million
- Druze: 4,50,000

3. Secular/irreligious/agnostic/atheist/anti-theistic/anti-religious: 1.1 billion

    - Category includes a wide range of beliefs, without specifically adhering to a religion or sometimes specifically against dogmatic religions. The category includes humanism, deism, pantheism, rationalism, freethought, agnosticism, and atheism. Broadly labeled humanism, this group of non-religious people are third largest in the world. For more information, see the Adherents.com discussion of this category and the note below.

4. Hinduism: 900 million, with major branches as follows:

    - Vaishnavism: 580 million
    - Shaivism: 220 million
    - Neo-Hindus and Reform Hindus: 22 million
    - Veerashaivas/Lingayats: 10 million

5. Chinese folk religion: 394 million

    - Not a single organised religion, includes elements of Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism and traditional non-scriptural religious observance (also called "Chinese traditional religion").

6. Buddhism: 376 million, with major branches as follows:

    - Mahayana: 185 million
    - Theravada: 124 million
    - Vajrayana/Tibetan: 20 million

7. Primal indigenous (tribal religions): 300 million

    - Not a single organised religion, includes a wide range of traditional or tribal religions, including animism, shamanism and paganism. Since African traditional and diasporic religions are counted separately in this list, most of the remaining people counted in this group are in Asia.

8. African traditional and diasporic: 100 million

    - Not a single organised religion, this includes several traditional African beliefs and philosophies such as those of the Yoruba, Ewe (Vodou) and the Bakongo. These three religious traditions (especially that of the Yoruba) have been very influential to the diasporic beliefs of the Americas such as condomble, santeria and voodoo. The religious capital of the Yoruba religion is at Ile Ife.

9. Sikhism: 23 million
10. Spiritism: 15 million
    - Not a single organised religion, includes a variety of beliefs including some forms of Umbanda.
11. Judaism: 14 million, with major branches as follows:
    - Conservative: 4.5 million
    - Unaffiliated and Secular: 4.5 million
    - Reform: 3.75 million
    - Orthodox: 2 million
    - Reconstructionist: 1,50,000
12. Bahá'í Faith: 7 million
13. Jainism: 4.2 million, with major branches as follows:
    - Svetambara: 4 million
    - Sthanakvasi: 7,50,000
    - Digambar: 1,55,000
14. Shinto: 4 million
    - This number states the number of actual self-identifying practising primary followers of Shinto; if everyone were included who is considered Shinto by some people due to ethnic or historical categorisations, the number would be considerably higher—as high as 100 million (according to the adherents.com source used for the statistics in this section).
15. Cao Dai: 4 million
16. Falun Gong: official post-crackdown figure as stated by Chinese Communist Party: 2.1 million; Chinese government pre-crackdown figure as reported by New York Times: 70-100 million; practitioners and founder of Falun Gong, Li Hongzhi, often refer to 100 million[b] (Founded: 1992 AD/CE)
    - Not necessarily considered a religion by adherents or outside observers. No membership or rosters, thus the actual figure of practitioners is impossible to confirm.
17. Tenrikyo: 2 million
18. Neopaganism: 1 million
    - A blanket term for several religions like Wicca, Asatru, Neo-druidism, and polytheistic reconstructionist religions
19. Unitarian Universalism: 8,00,000

20. Rastafari: 6,00,000

21. Scientology: 5,00,000

22. Zoroastrianism: "at most 2,00,000" with major communities as follows:

    • In India (the Parsis): est. 65,000 (2001 India Census: 69,601); Estimate of Zoroastrians of Indian origin: 1,00,000-1,10,000.

    • In Iran: est. 20,000 (1974 Iran Census: 21,400)

By Region

   • Religion in Africa

   • Religion in Asia

       ◆ Religion in India

       ◆ Religion in China

       ◆ Muslim world (SW Asia and N Africa)

   • Religion in North America

       ◆ Religion in the United States

   • Religion in South America

   • Religion in Australia

   • Religion in Europe

       ◆ Religion in the European Union

Trends in Adherence

Since the late 19th century, the demographics of religion have changed a great deal. Some countries with a historically large Christian population have experienced a significant decline in the numbers of professed active Christians. Symptoms of the decline in active participation in Christian religious life include declining recruitment for the priesthood and monastic life, as well as diminishing attendance at church. At the same time, there has been an increase in the number of people who identify themselves as secular humanists. In many countries, such as the People's Republic of China, communist governments have discouraged religion, making it difficult to count the actual number of believers. However, after the collapse of communism in numerous countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, religious life has been experiencing resurgence there, particularly in the forms of Neopaganism and Far Eastern religions.

Within the world's four largest religions Christianity currently has the greatest growth by numbers and Islam has the fastest growth

by percentage. Hinduism is undergoing a revival and a globalisation, and many temples are being built, both in India and in other countries. Analysing percentage growth is a difficult matter—see this article for a discussion. However, the *World Christian Encyclopedia* and *World Christian Trends* reported these numbers from growth from 1990-2000:

1990-2000

- 2.65 per cent—Zoroastrianism
- 2.28 per cent—Bahá'í Faith
- 2.13 per cent—Islam
- 1.87 per cent—Sikhism
- 1.69 per cent—Hinduism
- 1.36 per cent—Christianity
- 1.09 per cent—Buddhism

(The annual growth in the world population over the same period is 1.41 per cent).

A 2002 Pew Research Center study found that, generally, poorer nations had a larger proportion of citizens who found religion to be very important than richer nations, with the exception of the United States.

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9

FIDEISM, COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND FAMILIES OF RELIGION

FIDEISM

Fideism is the view that religious belief depends on faith or revelation, rather than reason, intellect or natural theology. The word *fideism* comes from *fides*, the Latin word for faith, and literally means faith-ism.

Throughout history, several philosophers and theologians have articulated the idea that faith is more important, or valid, or virtuous, than reason in theology. One can use different criteria for judging statements belonging to the sphere of religion than other areas. As a result, theology may include logical contradictions without apology.

According to some versions of fideism, reason is the anti-thesis of faith; according to others, faith is prior to or beyond reason, and therefore ought not to be influenced by it.

Religions have responded differently to fideism. Support of fideism is most commonly associated with four philosophers: Pascal, Kierkegaard, William James, and Wittgenstein. Others, like Socrates and St Augustine have spent their lives stressing the importance of thinking critically with no exceptions.

OVERVIEW

Alvin Plantinga defines "fideism" as "the exclusive or basic reliance upon faith alone, accompanied by a consequent disparagement of reason and utilised especially in the pursuit of philosophical or religious truth." The fideist therefore "urges reliance on faith rather than reason, in matters philosophical and religious," and therefore may go on to disparage the claims of reason. The fideist seeks truth, above all: and

affirms that reason cannot achieve certain kinds of truth, which must instead be accepted only by faith. Plantinga's definition might be revised to say that what the fideist objects to is not so much "reason" *per se*— it seems excessive to call Blaise Pascal anti-rational—but *evidentialism*: the notion that no belief should be held unless it is supported by evidence.

The fideist notes that religions that are founded on revelation call their faithful to believe in a transcendent deity even if believers cannot fully understand the object of their faith. Some fideists also observe that human rational faculties are themselves untrustworthy, because the entire human nature has been corrupted by sin, and as such the conclusions reached by human reason are therefore untrustworthy: the truths affirmed by divine revelation must be believed even if they find no support in human reason. Fideism, of a sort which has been called *naive fideism*, is frequently found in response to anti-religious arguments; the fideist resolves to hold to what has been revealed as true in his faith, in the face of contrary lines of reasoning.

Specifically, fideism teaches that rational or scientific arguments for the existence of God are fallacious and irrelevant, and have nothing to do with the truth of Christian theology. Its argument in essence goes:

- Christian theology teaches that people are saved by faith in the Christian God (*i.e.* trust in the empirically unprovable).
- But, if the Christian God's existence can be *proven*, either empirically or logically, to that extent faith becomes unnecessary or irrelevant.
- Therefore, if Christian theology is true, no immediate proof of the Christian God's existence is possible.

HISTORY

Theories of Truth

The doctrine of fideism is consistent with some, and radically contrary to other theories of truth:

- Correspondence theory of truth
- Pragmatic theory of truth
- Constructivist epistemology
- Consensus theory of truth
- Coherence theory of truth
- Subjectivism

Some forms of fideism outright reject the correspondence theory of truth, which has major philosophical implications. Some only claim a few religious details to be axiomatic.

FIDEISM IN CHRISTIANITY

Fideism has a long history in Christianity. It can plausibly be argued as an interpretation of 1 Corinthians, wherein Paul says:

> For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe... For the foolishness of God is wiser than (the wisdom of) men. (1 Cor. 1:21, 25)

Paul's contrast of the folly of the Gospel with earthly wisdom may relate to a statement Jesus made in Luke 10:21:

> I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. (ESV)

Tertullian—"I Believe Because it is Absurd"

The statement *"Credo quia absurdum"* ("I believe because it is absurd"), often attributed to Tertullian, is sometimes cited as an example of such a view in the Church Fathers, but this appears to be a misquotation from Tertullian's *De Carne Christi* (External Link: On the Flesh of Christ). What he actually says in DCC 5 is "... the Son of God died; it is by all means to be believed, because it is absurd."

This may be a statement of a fideist position, but it is also possible— and rendered somewhat plausible by the context—that Tertullian was simply engaging in ironic overstatement. As a matter of fact, this work used an argument from Aristotle's rhetoric saying that if a man in whom you have trust tells you about a miraculous event he witnessed, you can allow yourself to consider that he may be saying the truth despite the fact that the event is very unlikely.

Blaise Pascal and Fideism

A more sophisticated form of fideism is assumed by Pascal's Wager. Blaise Pascal invites the skeptic to see faith in God as a cost-free choice that carries a potential reward. He does not attempt to argue that God indeed exists, only that it might be valuable to assume that it is true. In his *Pensées*, Pascal writes:

> Who then will blame Christians for not being able to give reasons for their beliefs, since they profess belief in a religion which they cannot

explain? They declare, when they expound it to the world, that it is foolishness, *stultitiam*; and then you complain because they do not prove it! If they proved it, they would not keep their word; it is through their lack of proofs that they show they are not lacking in sense.

Pensées, no, 233).

Pascal moreover contests the various proposed proofs of the existence of God as irrelevant. Even if the proofs were valid, the beings they propose to demonstrate are not congruent with the deity worshiped by historical faiths, and can easily lead to deism instead of revealed religion: "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — not the god of the philosophers!"

Hamann and Fideism

Considered to be the father of modern irrationalism, Johann Georg Hamann promoted a view that elevated faith alone was the only guide to human conduct. Using the work of David Hume he argued that everything people do is ultimately based on faith. Without faith (for it can never be proven) in the existence of an external world, human affairs could not continue; therefore, he argued, all reasoning comes from this faith: it is fundamental to the human condition. Thus, all attempts to base belief in God using Reason are in vain. He virulently attacks systems like Spinozism that try to confine what he feels is the infinite majesty of God into a finite human creation. There is only one path to God, that of a childlike faith not Reason.

Kierkegaard—"Truth is Subjectivity"

A fideist position of this general sort—that God's existence cannot be certainly known, and that the decision to accept faith is neither founded on, nor needs, rational justification—may be found in the writings of Søren Kierkegaard and his followers in Christian existentialism. Many of Kierkegaard's works, including *Fear and Trembling*, are under pseudonyms; they may represent the work of fictional authors whose views correspond to hypothetical positions, not necessarily those held by Kierkegaard himself.

In *Fear and Trembling*, Kierkegaard focused on Abraham's willingness to sacrifice Isaac. The New Testament apostles repeatedly argued that Abraham's act was an admirable display of faith. To the eyes of a non-believer, however, it must necessarily have appeared to be an unjustifiable attempted murder, perhaps the fruit of an insane delusion. Kierkegaard used this example to focus attention on the problem of faith in general. He ultimately affirmed that to believe in the incarnation

of Christ, in God made flesh, was to believe in the "absolute paradox", since it implies that an eternal, perfect being would become a simple human. Reason cannot possibly comprehend such a phenomenon; therefore, one can only believe in it by taking a "leap of faith".

Wittgenstein and Fideism

According to the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, religion is a self-contained—and primarily expressive—enterprise, governed by its own internal logic or "grammar." This view—commonly called Wittgensteinian Fideism—states: (1) that religion is logically cut off from other aspects of life; (2) that religious discourse is essentially self-referential and does not allow us to talk about reality; (3) that religious beliefs can be understood only by religious believers; and (4) that religion cannot be criticised.

Fideism and Pre-suppositional Apologetics

Pre-suppositional apologetics is a Christian system of apologetics associated with Calvinism; it attempts to distinguish itself from fideism, although some may find the difference elusive. It holds that all human thought must begin with the proposition that the revelation contained in the Bible is axiomatic, rather transcendentally necessary, else one would not be able to make sense of any human experience. To a non-believer who rejects the notion that the truth about God, the world and themselves can be found within the Bible, Christian theology literally has nothing to say; however, Pre-suppositional apologists believe that such a condition is impossible, claiming that all people actually believe in God, whether they admit or deny it.

This sort of reasoning is similar to the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein, who taught that language was like a game, in that different sorts of discourse must be judged under their own proper set of rules and not those of other types, though they may have significant overlap due to the cognitive inconsistencies in the users of disparate language games. It also has similarities with Thomas Kuhn's paradigmatic analysis (not to be confused with paradigmatic analysis in semantic theory or music theory). According to the Pre-suppositional apologist, the determination of the truth of religious statements cannot be directly determined by resorting to the rules governing logical or scientific statements, only indirectly, by transcendental argument, where the truth of the statements are seen as the necessary condition of the truth of those very rules (and all other proof and reasoning). Immanuel Kant, P. F. Strawson, Moltke Gram, T. E. Wilkerson, A. C. Grayling,

Michael Dummett, and Jaakko Hintikka, among others, have discussed transcendental forms of thought in recent philosophical literature. Pre-suppositional apologetics could be seen as being more closely allied with Foundationalism than Fideism, though critical of both.

Protestantism

Martin Luther taught that faith and reason were anti-thetical, and that man must reject reason and accept faith. He wrote, "All the articles of our Christian faith, which God has revealed to us in His Word, are in presence of reason sheerly impossible, absurd, and false." and "Reason is the greatest enemy that faith has."

FIDEISM IN ISLAM

While the centrality of issues of faith and its role in salvation make fideism of this sort an important issue for Christianity, it can exist in other revealed religions as well. In Islam, the theologian Al-Ghazali strikes a position similar to Tertullian's fideism in his *Tahafut al-falasafa*, the "Incoherence of the Philosophers," where the claims of reason come into conflict with revelation, reason must yield to revelation. This position drew a rejoinder from Averroes, whose position was more influential in Thomist and other medieval Christian thinking than it was in the Islamic world itself. Ghazali's position of the absolute authority and finality of divine revelation became the standard of orthodox Muslim exegesis.

THEOLOGIES OPPOSED TO FIDEISM

Fideism Rejected by the Roman Catholic Church

Some theologies strongly reject fideism. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, representing Roman Catholicism's great regard for Thomism, the teachings of St Thomas Aquinas, affirms that it is a doctrine of Roman Catholicism that God's existence can indeed be demonstrated by reason. Aquinas's rationalism has deep roots in Western Christianity; it goes back to St Augustine's observation that the role of reason was to explain faith more fully: *fides quaerens intellectum*, "faith seeking understanding," is his formula.

The official position of Roman Catholicism is that while the existence of the one God can in fact be demonstrated by reason, men can nevertheless be deluded by their sinful natures to deny the claims of reason that demonstrate God's existence. The Anti-Modernist oath promulgated by Pope Pius X required Roman Catholics to affirm that:

... God, the origin and end of all things, can be known with certainty by the natural light of reason from the created world (cf. Rom. 1:20), that is, from the visible works of creation, as a cause from its effects, and that, therefore, his existence can also be demonstrated...

Similarly, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* teaches that:

Though human reason is, strictly speaking, truly capable by its own natural power and light of attaining to a true and certain knowledge of the one personal God, who watches over and controls the world by his providence, and of the natural law written in our hearts by the Creator; yet there are many obstacles which prevent reason from the effective and fruitful use of this inborn faculty. For the truths that concern the relations between God and man wholly transcend the visible order of things, and, if they are translated into human action and influence it, they call for self-surrender and abnegation. The human mind, in its turn, is hampered in the attaining of such truths, not only by the impact of the senses and the imagination, but also by disordered appetites which are the consequences of original sin. So it happens that men in such matters easily persuade themselves that what they would not like to be true is false or at least doubtful.

— *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, ss. 37

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Fides et Ratio* also affirms that God's existence is in fact demonstrable by reason, and that attempts to reason otherwise are the results of sin. In the encyclical, John Paul II warned against "a resurgence of fideism, which fails to recognise the importance of rational knowledge and philosophical discourse for the understanding of faith, indeed for the very possibility of belief in God."

Fideist Currents in Roman Catholic Thought

Historically, there have been a number of fideist strains within the Roman Catholic orbit. Catholic traditionalism, exemplified in the nineteenth century by Joseph de Maistre, emphasised faith in tradition as the means of divine revelation. The claims of reason are multiple, and various people have argued rationally for several contradictory things: in this environment, the safest course is to hold true to the faith that has been preserved through tradition, and to resolve to accept what the Church has historically taught. In his essay *Du pape* ("On the Pope"), de Maistre argued that it was historically inevitable that all of the Protestant churches would eventually seek reunification and refuge in the Roman Catholic Church: science was the greater threat, it threatened all religious faith, and "no religion can resist science, except one."

Another refuge of fideist thinking within the Roman Catholic Church is the concept of "signs of contradiction". According to this belief, the holiness of certain people and institutions is confirmed by the fact that other people contest their claims: this opposition is held to be worthy of comparison to the opposition met by Jesus Christ himself. The fact that the authenticity of the Shroud of Turin is widely disbelieved, for example, is thought to confirm its authenticity under this belief; the same has been claimed for the doctrine of the real presence of the Eucharist, or the spiritual merits of the Opus Dei organisation and its discipline.

The Christological Argument

Likewise, a tradition of argument found among some Protestants and Catholics alike argues that respect for Jesus as a teacher and a wise man is logically contradictory if one does not accept him as God as well, also known as the 'Lord, Liar, or Lunatic' argument: either He was insane, or a charlatan, or he was in fact the Messiah and Son of God. *Cf. Christological argument*. This argument was popularised by the Christian apologist C.S. Lewis in his book *Mere Christianity* (p. 52).

Critics of this argument assert that it presents a false trichotomy. Jesus may well have important things to teach and have wisdom to give even if he is wrong, ironic, misunderstood, or misquoted about his own relation to God. One need not be right about everything to be right about something. In this line of thinking, the teaching can be true independently of the conduct of the teacher. However, proponents of this argument deny that it is a false trichotomy by appealing to personhood, claiming that Christ as a person could not have died for teachings he knew to be false. Furthermore, he would not have made ridiculous claims of his own divinity alongside otherwise sound teachings if these claims (cf. Mark 14:61-62) were not true. He would not have died for all these things if he had not himself truly believed them, as the argument goes. But if he was so sincerely self-deceived on such a grand level, then he would be among the most lunatic, unworthy of the label of "Rabbi."

Another argument against the 'Lord, Liar, or Lunatic' argument is that fideism simply applies to those who never met Jesus (*i.e.* all of His subsequent followers). We have no proof of His actions, only accounts of them (in the same way we only have accounts of God's actions from the Old Testament). As such, followers must take what God has shown them (the bringing of his son, Jesus, into our mortal

sphere) as enough to inspire them to believe, even if they feel they have no personal proof for themselves. The Christian counter-argument is that there is a great weight of evidence to support the historical authenticity of the Gospels. The point of fideism is to pull followers away from asking God to prove his existence (which would be laying the burden of proof on God). This is based on the faith that God knows best, regardless of the evidence which God could provide.

CRITICISM

As Sin

Fideism has received criticism not just from atheists, but also from theologians who argue that fideism is not a proper way to worship God. According to this position, if one does not attempt to understand what one believes, one is not really believing. "Blind faith" is not true faith. Notable articulations of this position include:

- Abelard
- Al-Ghazali—Tahafut al-falasafa
- Lord Herbert. De Veritate

As Dangerous

Fideism can be responded to with an appeal to morality. Another criticism of fideism is that it is often the foundation of destructive or disruptive belief systems (*e.g.* Under fideism, cults and violent religious extremism are legitimate. Individuals who unquestioningly obey irrational personal beliefs can be dangerous.

As Relativism

Relativism is the position where two opposing positions are both true. The existence of other religions puts a fundamental question to fideists — if faith is the only way to know the truth of God, how are we to know which God to have faith in? Fideism alone is not considered an adequate guide to distinguish true or morally valuable revelations from false ones. An apparent consequence of fideism is that all religious thinking becomes equal. The major monotheistic religions become on par with obscure fringe religions, as neither can be advocated or disputed.

A Case for Reason

These critics note that people successfully use reason in their daily lives to solve problems and that reason has led to progressive increase

of knowledge in the sphere of science. This gives credibility to reason and argumentative thinking as a proper method for seeking truth. On the other hand, according to these critics, there is no evidence that a religious faith that rejects reason would also serve us while seeking truth. In situations in which our reason is not sufficient to find the truth (for example, when trying to answer a difficult mathematical question) fideism also fails.

IN CULTURE

Douglas Adams, in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, uses his Babel fish to demonstrate a rationalist/fideist paradox:

"I refuse to prove that I exist," says God, "for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing."

"But," says Man, "the Babel fish is a dead giveaway isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves that You exist, and so therefore, by Your own arguments, You don't. Q.E.D."

"Oh dear," says God, "I hadn't thought of that," and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic.

"Oh, that was easy," says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that black is white and gets himself killed on the next zebra crossing.

World Religions: Diversity and Dialogue

This course is an introduction to five of the world's religious traditions—the Hindu, Buddhist, Jewish, Christian and Muslim traditions. We will focus on the writings of twentieth century adherents of each tradition, asking the following questions: How do people in each tradition articulate the central symbols, tenets, and practices of their faith in the context of the questions and challenges of the modern world? How do people in each tradition think about their own faith in the light of the diversity of other religious traditions? Is religious diversity and difference a problem? What is the spectrum of religious perspectives within each tradition? In addition to providing an introduction to the challenges of religious diversity today, the course will investigate some of the critical problems of interpretation in the academic study of religion.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Comparative religion is a field of religious study that analyses the similarities and differences of themes, myths, rituals and concepts among the world's religions. Religion can be defined as "Human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, spiritual, or divine".

In the field of comparative religion, the main world religions are generally classified as either Abrahamic, Indian or Taoic. Areas of study include Origin belief and Humanism.

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

In the study of comparative religion, the category of Abrahamic religions consists of the three monotheistic religions, Christianity, Islam and Judaism, which claim Abraham (Hebrew *Avraham* àÇáÀøÈäÈí ; Arabic *Ibrahim* ÇÈÑÇåíã) as a part of their sacred history. Other religions (such as the Bahá'í Faith) that fit this description are sometimes included but also often omitted.

The original belief in the One God of Abraham eventually became present-day Judaism. Christians believe that Christianity is the fulfillment and continuation of the Jewish Old Testament, with Jesus as the Son of God. Islam believes the present Christian and Jewish scriptures have been modified over time and are no longer the original divine revelations as given to Moses, Jesus, and other prophets. For Muslims the *Qur'an* is the final revelation from God, with Muhammad as his messenger for its transmission.

Comparing Abrahamic Religions

Christianity and Judaism are two closely related Abrahamic religions that in some ways parallel each other and in other ways fundamentally diverge in theology and practice. The article on Judeo-Christian tradition emphasises continuities and convergences between the two religions. The article on Christianity and Judaism compares the different views held by both religions.

The historical interaction of Islam and Judaism started in the 7th century CE with the origin and spread of Islam. There are many common aspects between Islam and Judaism, and as Islam developed it gradually became the major religion closest to Judaism. As opposed to Christianity which originated from interaction between ancient Greek and Hebrew cultures, Judaism is very similar to Islam in its fundamental religious outlook, structure, jurisprudence and practice. There are many traditions within Islam originating from traditions within the Hebrew Bible or from postbiblical Jewish traditions. These practices are known collectively as the Isra'iliyat.

The historical interaction between Christianity and Islam connects fundamental ideas in Christianity with similar ones in Islam. Islam and Christianity share their origins in the Abrahamic tradition, although

Christianity predates Islam by centuries. Islam accepts many aspects of Christianity as part of its faith—with some differences in interpretation—and rejects other aspects. Islam believes the *Qur'an* is the final revelation from God and a completion of all previous revelations, including the *Bible*.

INDIAN RELIGIONS

There are a number of religions that have originated on the Indian subcontinent. They encompass Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

The religion of the Vedic period is the historical predecessor of the Hindu religion. The Vedic and the Sramana tradition co-existed and influenced each other since pre-historic times. Jainism and Buddhism are continuation of the Sramana tradition. Buddhism further diversified, into Chinese and Japanese schools.

Comparing "Dharmic" Religions

Buddhism and Hinduism are both post-Vedic religions. Gautama Buddha is mentioned as an Avatar of Vishnu in the Puranic texts of Hinduism. Some Hindus believe the Buddha accepted and incorporated many tenets of Hinduism in his doctrine, however, Buddhists disagree and state there was no such thing as Hinduism at the time of Buddha and in fact, "Indeed, it absorbed so many Buddhist traits that it is virtually impossible to distinguish the latter in medieval and later Hinduism." Prominent Hindu reformers such as Gandhi and Vivekananda acknowledge Buddhist influence.

Buddhism and Jainism are the two branches of the Shramana tradition that still exist today. Until recently Jainism was largely confined to India, while Buddhism has largely flourished outside of India. However the two traditions share remarkable similarities. In his life, the Buddha undertook many fasts, penances and austerities, the descriptions of which are elsewhere found only in the Jain tradition. Ultimately Buddha abandoned these methods on his discovery of the Middle Way or Magga. To this day, many Buddhist teachings, principles, and terms used in Buddhism are identical to those of Jainism, but they may hold very different meanings for each.

Hinduism and Sikhism have had a long and complex relationship. Views range from Sikhism being a distinct faith in itself to Sikhism being a sect of Hinduism. A vast majority of Sikhs oppose the notion

that Sikhism is a sect of Hinduism, while others stress the similarities, but recognise that the religions are distinct.

Jainism and Sikhism have both originated in South Asia and are Eastern philosophical faiths. Jainism, like Buddhism, rejected the authority of the Vedas and created independent textual traditions based on the words and examples of their early teachers.

TAOIC RELIGIONS

A Taoic religion is a religion, or religious philosophy, that focuses on the East Asian concept of *Tao* ("The Way"). This forms a large group of religions including Taoism, Confucianism, Jeung San Do, Shinto, Yiguandao, Chondogyo, Chen Tao and Caodaism. In large parts of East Asia, Buddhism has taken on some taoic features.

Tao can be roughly stated to be the flow of the universe, or the force behind the natural order. It is believed to be the influence that keeps the universe balanced and ordered and is associated with nature, due to a belief that nature demonstrates the *Tao*. The flow of *Chi*, as the essential energy of action and existence, is compared to the universal order of *Tao*. Following the *Tao* is also associated with a "proper" attitude, morality and lifestyle. This is intimately tied to the complex concept of *De*, or literally "virtue". *De* is the active expression of *Tao*.

Taoism and Ch'an Buddhism during centuries had mutal influence to each other in China, Korea and Vietnam. This influence was inherited by Zen-Buddhism when Ch'an Buddhism arrived to Japan and adopted as Zen-Buddhism.

Comparing Taoic Religions

- Taoism and other religions

COMPARING BETWEEN TRADITIONS

Comparing Eastern and Western religious traditions is closely related to the comparison of, and distinction between, Eastern and Western philosophy. Western tradition refers to prominent faiths in Europe and the Anglosphere, generally focusing on Abrahamic faiths. Eastern tradition refers to important faiths in the Sinosphere and Indosphere, usually focused on Dharmic and Taoic faiths.

Buddhism

- Buddhism and Taoic religions
- Buddhism and Christianity

Christianity
- Christianity and other religions
- Buddhism and Christianity

Confucianism
- Confucianism and Hinduism

Hinduism
- Hinduism and other religions
- Hinduism and Confucianism

Islam
- Islam and other religions
- Islam and Jainism

Jainism
- Jainism and Islam

Taoism
- Taoism and other religions

Zoroastrianism
- Zoroastrianism and other religions

MYSTICISM AND ESOTERICISM

- Kabbala (Judaism)
- Gnosticism (Christianity)
- Sufism (Islam)
- Magi (Zoroastrianism)
- Yoga, Chakra (Hinduism)
- Vajrayana (Buddhism)
- Tantra (Hinduism, Buddhism)
- Ideal perfection: "Baqa" (Sufism), 'Najat' (Islam), 'Nirvana' (Buddhism), 'Salvation' (Christianity), and 'Mukti' (Hinduism).

FAMILIES OF RELIGIONS

The term "family" describes one approach to the relationship between religions of the world..

A family is always changing and yet has a continuing identity. Families know good times and hard times, victories and tragedies. Families have names of persons, dates of births and deaths, and events that reveal how the family deals with others and with outside events.

Families differ radically across cultures. Family of one kind or another is a universal reality. Then comes taxonomy. This is the placing of groups into orderly categories. In the field of religion taxonomy is not well developed because of the complexity involved. The approach here is to try out the system and see how taxonomy can be applied to religions.

This site will display the code being developed to cover every character of every known language and assign it a number. Unicode is developed by a non-profit organisation representing a "broad spectrum of corporations and organisations in the computer and information processing industry". I believe that their efforts have significant implications for the religions of the world.

WHAT IS UNICODE?

Fundamentally, computers just deal with numbers. They store letters and other characters by assigning a number for each one. Before Unicode was invented, there were hundreds of different encoding systems for assigning these numbers. No single encoding could contain enough characters: for example, the European Union alone requires several different encodings to cover all its languages. Even for a single language like English no single encoding was adequate for all the letters, punctuation, and technical symbols in common use.

These encoding systems also conflict with one another. That is, two encodings can use the same number for two *different* characters, or use different numbers for the *same* character. Any given computer (especially servers) needs to support many different encodings; yet whenever data is passed between different encodings or platforms, that data always runs the risk of corruption.

Unicode is Changing All That!

Unicode provides a unique number for every character, no matter what the platform, no matter what the programme, no matter what the language. The Unicode Standard has been adopted by such industry leaders as Apple, HP, IBM, JustSystem, Microsoft, Oracle, SAP, Sun, Sybase, Unisys and many others. Unicode is required by modern standards such as XML, Java, ECMAScript (JavaScript), LDAP, CORBA 3.0, WML, etc., and is the official way to implement ISO/IEC 10646. It is supported in many operating systems, all modern browsers, and many other products. The emergence of the Unicode Standard, and the availability of tools supporting it, are among the most significant recent global software technology trends.

Incorporating Unicode into client-server or multi-tiered applications and websites offers significant cost savings over the use of legacy character sets. Unicode enables a single software product or a single website to be targeted across multiple platforms, languages and countries without re-engineering. It allows data to be transported through many different systems without corruption.

About the Unicode Consortium

The Unicode Consortium is a non-profit organisation founded to develop, extend and promote use of the Unicode Standard, which specifies the representation of text in modern software products and standards. The membership of the consortium represents a broad spectrum of corporations and organisations in the computer and information processing industry. The consortium is supported financially solely through membership dues. Membership in the Unicode Consortium is open to organisations and individuals anywhere in the world who support the Unicode Standard and wish to assist in its extension and implementation.

FAMILIES OF RELIGIONS: ONE DEITY

- Among terms commonly used are God, Allah, Jahweh ,G_d, Lord. Some members of this family prefer to use no spoken or written name for the deity.
- In these religions ongoing debate deals with the nature of the oneness and singular identity of the deity.
- Each of these religions has its own unique authority system. It may a person, a document, an organisation, personal experience, or mystical visitation.
- Authority has a special importance for single deity religions. The singleness and unity of the deity results in a strong desire for loyalty and faithfulness.
- The Hebrew Scriptures, the Christian Bible, and the Islamic Qu'ran are the most well-known sacred texts in these religions.
- Some believe their text to have come directly from the deity with little or no human influence. Others believe their texts have a history of human inspiration and participation that continues today.
- The definition of "one deity" is made by religions themselves. For example, Hindu spokespersons will say that their religion involves a single elemental power or life force with a multitude of expresses called gods and goddesses.

- Muslims respond with the argument that no human likeness of the ultimate deity is allowed. In Muslim thought it appears that the Hindu religion is polytheistic—a religion of many gods over against their concept of a singular deity.

- Resolution of this matter is a long term project. Really long term.

FAMILIES OF RELIGIONS: COMBINATIONS

- The blending of traditions produces an endless variety of expressions. Keeping any one tradition in focus becomes a challenge for the believer.

- An example is justice for all ethnic groups/individuals. Christians and Jews in the US are now including Muslims, Buddhists, Baha'is, Hindus and others in efforts to raise justice to a higher level on the national priority scale.

- Texts are explored by an increasing number of interested people. New combinations of texts are presented, incorporated, reshaped.

Zoroastrianism: A Religion that Combines Monotheism and Dualism

The influence of this tradition on Judaism, Christianity and Islam was significant. The religion continues today in Iran and India as well as other parts of the world including the US. Zoroastrianism brings ancient root sources.

Hinduism—Debate Over One Deity or Multiple Deities

A recent email challenged placing Hinduism in the Multiple Deities category. Here is the rationale for the decision to go with Multiple Deities.

Nearly all religions have the idea of a great single force or reality that stands behind everything. One teacher has called this reality "the ground of being". In order to get at how religions organise themselves for daily life one has to observe the generally accepted practices. It is in this realm that we move beyond the background mysterious reality.

Some religions have deities. The deity may be remote or nearby. The deity may be one or many. Names are given to whatever form of deity is commonly accepted in the religion. In Hinduism there are a vast number of gods or deities that express the various insights of the religion.

This style is in contrast to the Jewish-Christian-Muslim traditions where there is one single deity called by various names. The purpose

in this Families of Religions writing is to use broad stroke definition of religions in order to assist curious people to enter the complicated subject of world religions.

Wicca, Neo Pagan, Asatru—Examples of pagan nature oriented religious groups

Places and events in nature are given sacred meaning. Rituals are developed to observe events such as the change of seasons. There are eight major solar holidays in the pagan calendar. The cycle of the natural year is symbolic of the balance evident in the yearly trip around the sun.

Geographic sites are chosen for their natural beauty or historic significance and become the location for ritual observances or sites for meditation. Some sites have been used for apparently sacred observance since early in unrecorded human history. An example is Stonehenge in Great Britain.

The following summary of basic principles comes from Dr. Michael Farrell:

1. The Credo (Basic Belief): All things are part of Nature; All is One.

   Nature is Deity

2. The Code or Moral Ethics: One may do what he feels is right so long as no one, including the active person, suffers harm of any kind, mental, physical or spiritual

3. The Focus of Worship: The Divine in any and all aspects (Goddesses and Gods).

Native American Religions—North and South American indigenous peoples beliefs and practices.

Traditional ways that go beyond the usual definition of religion make these traditions difficult to put into the western way of logical ordering. A connection with the preliterate past is found in these beliefs and sacramental practices.

Characteristics of these traditions include: Local places are where detailed knowledge is built and maintained; Participation is more important than belief; Generosity is a religious and social act; Oral narratives are basic.

Present revival of some of these traditions begins to make the rich store of information available to the wider society. Out of respect,

only that information which can be understood as "public" will be on this page. Websites from native traditions will be listed here in the near future. If native peoples feel that we include inappropriate information here, send an email.

Unitarian Universalist—Membership ranges from Christian to Atheist

Rooted in an early Christian context, this tradition looks to the free use of reason in religion as well as the salvation of all souls. In the 20 century the inclusion of certain pagan traditions marked a broadening of the faith group.

▶▶▶

10

FREEDOM OF RELIGION
AND RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Freedom of religion is a guarantee by a government for *freedom of belief* for individuals and *freedom of worship* for individuals and groups. It is generally recognised to also include the freedom not to follow any religion. Freedom of religion is considered by many in many nations and people to be a fundamental human right.

In a country with a state religion, freedom of religion is generally considered to mean that the government permits religious practices of other sects besides the state religion, and does not persecute believers in other faiths. In the Middle Ages, toleration of Judaism was a contentious issue throughout Christendom. Today, there are concerns about the persecution of religious minorities in Islamic states (for example the persecution of Bahá'ís and the status of religious freedom in Iran) and in some Communist states such as China and North Korea, as well as other forms of intolerance in other countries (for example banning the wearing of prominent religious articles in Turkey or banning the Qur'an in United States courts where a Bible is allowed) Freedom of religion as a legal concept is related to but not identical with religious toleration, separation of church and state, or *laïcité* (a secular state).

Where individuals and not governments are concerned, religious toleration is generally taken to refer to an attitude of acceptance towards other people's religions. Such toleration does not require that one view other religions as equally true; rather, the assumption is that each citizen will grant that others have the right to hold and practice their own beliefs. Against this backdrop, proselytism can be a contentious

issue, as it could be regarded as an offense against the validity of others' religious beliefs, including the belief in no religion at all.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the 58 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France defines freedom of religion and belief as follows: *Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.*

HISTORY OF FREEDOM OF RELIGION

Historically *freedom of religion* has been used to refer to the tolerance of different theological systems of belief, while *freedom of worship* was defined as freedom of individual action. Each of these have existed to varying degrees. While many countries have accepted some form of religious freedom, this has also often been limited in practice through punitive taxation, repressive social legislation, and political disenfranchisement. Compare examples of individual freedom in Italy or the Muslim tradition of dhimmis, literally "protected individuals" professing an officially tolerated non-Muslim religion.

Antiquity

In Antiquity a syncretic point-of-view often allowed communities of traders to operate under their own customs. When street mobs of separate quarters clashed in a Hellenistic or Roman city, the issue was generally perceived to be an infringement of community rights. The Greek-Jewish clashes at Cyrene provided one example of cosmopolitan cities as scenes of tumult.

Some of the historical exceptions have been in regions where one of the revealed religions has been in a position of power: Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity and Islam. Others have been where the established order has felt threatened, as shown in the trial of Socrates or where the ruler has been deified, as in Rome, and refusal to offer token sacrifice was similar to refusing to take an oath of allegiance. This was the core for resentment and the persecution of early Christian communities.

The first mother of religious freedom was established in the ancient Persian Empire by its founder Cyrus the Great in the 6th century BC, as stated in his Cyrus cylinder.

Freedom of religious worship was established in the Maurya Empire of ancient India by Ashoka the Great in the 3rd century BC, which was encapsulated in the Edicts of Ashoka.

Europe

The Norman Kingdom of Sicily under Roger II was characterised by its multi-ethnic nature and religious tolerance. Normans, Jews, Muslim Arabs, Byzantine Greeks, Longobards and "native" Sicilians lived in harmony. Rather than exterminate the Muslims of Sicily, the Roger II's grandson Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen (1215—1250) allowed them to settle on the mainland and build mosques. Not least, he enlisted them in his—Christian—army and even into his personal bodyguards.

After the fall of the city of Granada in 1492, the Muslim population was promised religious freedom by the Treaty of Granada, but that promise was short-lived. In 1501, Granada's Muslims were given an ultimatum to either convert to Christianity or to emigrate. The majority converted, but only superficially, continuing to dress and speak as they had before and to secretly practice Islam. The Moriscos (converts to Christianity) were ultimately expelled from Spain between 1609 (Castile) and 1614 (rest of Spain), by Philip III.

The Roman Catholic Church kept a tight rein on religious expression throughout the Middle Ages. Jews were alternately tolerated and persecuted, the most notable examples of the latter being the expulsion of all Jews from Spain in 1492. Some of those who remained and converted were tried as heretics in the Inquisition for allegedly practicing Judaism in secret. Despite the persecution of Jews, they were the most tolerated non-Catholic faith in Europe.

However, the latter was in part a reaction to the growing movement that became the Reformation. As early as 1380, John Wycliffe in England denied transubstantiation and began his translation of the Bible into English. He was condemned in a Papal Bull in 1410, and all his books were burned.

In 1414, Jan Hus, a Bohemian preacher of reformation, was given a safe conduct by the Holy Roman Emperor to attend the Council of Constance. Not entirely trusting in his safety, he made his will before he left. His forebodings proved accurate, and he was burned at the stake on July 6, 1415. The Council also decreed that Wycliffe's remains be disinterred and cast out. This decree was not carried out until 1428.

Martin Luther published his famous 95 Theses in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. His aim was to stop the sale of indulgences and reform the Church from within, but this was not the result. In 1521, he was given the chance to recant at the Diet of Worms before Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, then only 19. After he refused to recant, he was declared heretic. Partly for his own protection, he was sequestered on the Wartburg in the possessions of Frederick III, Elector of Saxony, where he translated the New Testament into German. He was excommunicated by Papal Bull in 1521.

The Protestant movement, however, continued to gain ground in his absence and spread to Switzerland. Ulrich Zwingli preached reform in Zürich from 1520 to 1523. He opposed the sale of indulgences, celibacy, pilgrimages, pictures, statues, relics, altars, and organs. This culminated in outright war between the Swiss cantons that accepted Protestantism and the Catholics. The Catholics were victorious, and Zwingli was killed in battle in 1531. The Catholic cantons were magnanimous in victory.

In the meantime, in Germany Philip Melanchthon drafted the Augsburg Confession as a common confession for the Lutherans and the free territories. It was presented to Charles V in 1530.

The defiance of Papal authority proved contagious, and in 1533, when Henry VIII of England was excommunicated for his divorce and remarriage to Anne Boleyn, he promptly established a state church with bishops appointed by the crown. This was not without internal opposition, and Thomas More, who had been his prime minister, was executed in 1535 for opposition to Henry.

In 1535, the Swiss canton of Geneva became Protestant, but the Protestants often proved as intolerant of differences of opinion as the Catholics. In 1536, the Bernese imposed the reformation on the canton of Vaud by conquest. They sacked the cathedral in Lausanne and destroyed all its art and statuary. John Calvin, who had been active in Geneva was expelled in 1538 in a power struggle, but he was invited back in 1540.

The same kind of seesaw back and forth between Protestantism and Catholicism was evident in England when Mary I of England returned that country briefly to the Catholic fold in 1553. However, her half-sister, Elizabeth I of England was to restore the Church of England in 1558, this time permanently. The King James Bible commissioned by King James I of England and published in 1611 proved a landmark for Protestant worship.

However, intolerance of dissident forms of Protestantism continued, as evidenced by the exodus of the Pilgrims who sought refuge, first in the Netherlands, and ultimately in America, founding the Plymouth Colony in Massachusetts in 1620. William Penn, the founder of Philadelphia was involved in a case which had a profound effect upon future American law and those of England. In a classic case of jury nullification the jury refused to convict William Penn of preaching a Quaker sermon, which was illegal. Even though the jury was imprisoned for their acquittal, they stood by their decision and helped establish the freedom of religion.

In the Holy Roman Empire, Charles V agreed to tolerate Lutheranism in 1555 at the Peace of Augsburg. Each state was to take the religion of its prince, but within those states, there was not necessarily religious tolerance. Citizens of other faiths could relocate to a more hospitable environment.

In 1558, the Transylvanian Diet of Turda declared free practice of both the Catholic and Lutheran religions, but prohibited Calvinism. Ten years later, in 1568 the Diet extended the freedom to all religions, declaring that "It is not allowed to anybody to intimidate anybody with captivity or expelling for his religion". The Edict of Turda is considered by mostly Hungarian historians as the first legal guarantee of religious freedom in the Christian Europe.

In France, although peace was made between Protestants and Catholics at the Treaty of Saint Germain in 1570, persecution continued, most notably in the Massacre of Saint Bartholomew's Day on August 24, 1572, in which many Protestants throughout France were killed. It was not until the converted Protestant prince Henry IV of France came to the throne that religious tolerance was formalised in the Edict of Nantes in 1598. It would remain in force for over 80 years until its revocation in 1685 by Louis XIV of France. Intolerance remained the norm until the French Revolution, when state religion was abolished and all Church property confiscated.

In 1573, the Warsaw Confederation formalised in the newly formed Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth the freedom of religion that had a long tradition in the Kingdom of Poland. The first extensive Jewish emigration from Western Europe to Poland occurred at the time of the First Crusade in 1098. Under Boleslaus III (1102–1139), the Jews, encouraged by the tolerant régime of this ruler, settled throughout Poland, including over the border into Lithuanian territory as far as Kiev. The Tatars who settled in Lithuania, Ruthenia and modern-day

eastern Poland were allowed to preserve their Islamic religion in exchange for military service.

Bohemia (present-day Czech Republic) enjoyed religious freedom between 1436 and 1620, and became one of the most liberal countries of the Christian world during that period of time. The so-called Basel Compacts of 1436 declared the freedom of religion and peace between Catholics and Utraquists. In 1609, Emperor Rudolf II granted Bohemia greater religious liberty with his Letter of Majesty. The privileged position of the Catholic Church in the Czech kingdom was firmly established after the Battle of White Mountain in 1620. Gradually freedom of religion in Bohemian lands came to an end and Protestants fled or were expelled from the country. A devout Catholic, Emperor Ferdinand II forcibly converted Austrian and Bohemian Protestants.

United States

Some of the early colonies, although many of them were founded as a result of religious persecution, were not tolerant of dissident forms of worship. For example, Roger Williams found it necessary to find a new colony in Rhode Island to escape persecution in the theocratically dominated colony of Massachusetts.

It was not until the 18th century that Enlightenment concepts of freedom of individual worship gained ground both in Europe and America.

The modern legal concept of religious freedom as the union of *freedom of belief* and *freedom of worship* with the absence of any state-sponsored religion, originated in the United States of America.

This issue was addressed by Thomas Paine in his pamphlet, *Common Sense* (1776):

"As to religion, I hold it to be the indispensable duty of all government, to protect all conscientious professors thereof, and I know of no other business which government hath to do therewith…

The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom was written in 1779 by Thomas Jefferson. It proclaimed:

"[N]o man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship, place, or ministry whatsoever, nor shall be enforced, restrained, molested, or burthened in his body or goods, nor shall otherwise suffer, on account of his religious opinions or belief; but that all men shall be free to profess, and by argument to maintain, their opinions in matters of religion, and that the same shall in no wise diminish, enlarge, or affect their civil capacities."

Asia

Freedom of religion in the Indian subcontinent is exemplified by the reign of King Piyadasi (304 B.C to 232 B.C) (Asoka). One of King Asoka's main concern was to reform governmental institutes and exercise moral principles in his attempt to create a just and humane society. Later, he promoted the principles of Buddhism and the creation of a just, understanding and fair society was held as an important principle for many ancient rulers of this time in the East.

The importance of freedom of worship in India was encapsulated in an inscription of Asoka:

> King Piyadasi (Ashok) dear to the Gods, honours all sects, the ascetics (hermits) or those who dwell at home, he honours them with charity and in other ways. But the King, dear to the Gods, attributes less importance to this charity and these honours than to the vow of seeing the reign of virtues, which constitutes the essential part of them. For all these virtues there is a common source, modesty of speech. That is to say, One must not exalt one's creed discrediting all others, nor must one degrade these others Without legitimate reasons. One must, on the contrary, render to other creeds the honour befitting them.

Religious freedom and the right to worship freely was a practice that had been appreciated and promoted by most ancient India dynasties. This had been the underlying attitude of most rulers of India since this period from before 300 B.C. until 1200 AD. The initial entry of Islam into South Asia came in the first century after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. When around 1210 AD the Islamic Sultanates invaded India from the north-east, gradually the principle of freedom of religion deteriorated in this part of the world. They were subsequently replaced by another Islamic invader in the form of Babur. The Mughal empire was founded by the Mongol leader Babur in 1526, when he defeated Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the Delhi Sultans at the First Battle of Panipat. The word "Mughal" is the Indo-Iranian version of Mongol.

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES

The contemporary idea of religious freedom as a human right remains a contested topic. The major areas of debate are listed below.

Islam

Some Islamic theologians quote the Qur'an ("There is no compulsion in religion," Sura 2:257) to show scriptural support for religious freedom. However, other verses and the Hadith mandate severe treatment for

unbelievers, which is reflected in the high levels of intolerance shown in many past and contemporary Islamic societies.

In Iran, the constitution recognises four religions whose status is formally protected: Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The constitution, however, also set the groundwork for the institutionalised persecution of Bahá'ís, who have been subjected to arrests, beatings, executions, confiscation and destruction of property, and the denial of civil rights and liberties, and the denial of access to higher education. In Egypt, a 16 December 2006 judgment of the Supreme Administrative Council created a clear demarcation between recognised religions—Islam, Christianity and Judaism—and all other religious beliefs; no other religious affiliation is officially admissible. The ruling leaves members of other religious communities, including Bahá'ís, without the ability to obtain the necessary government documents to have rights in their country, essentially denying them of all rights of citizenship. They cannot obtain ID cards, birth certificates, death certificates, marriage or divorce certificates, and passports; they also cannot be employed, educated, treated in public hospitals or vote among other things.

Christianity

The Roman Catholic Church affirmed religious freedom for all in the Second Vatican Council Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*. This was itself inspired by the work of the Jesuit theologian John Courtney Murray. Some Orthodox Christians, especially those living in democratic countries, support religious freedom for all, as evidenced by the position of the Ecumenical Patriarchate. Many Protestant Christian churches, including some Baptists, Churches of Christ and the Seventh-day Adventist Church and main line churches have a commitment to religious freedoms. The Mormons (Latter-Day Saints) also affirm religious freedom.

However others such as African scholar Makau Mutua have argued that Christian insistence on the propagation of their faith to native cultures as an element of religious freedom has resulted in a corresponding denial of religious freedom to native traditions and led to their destruction. As he states in the book produced by the Oslo Coalition on Freedom of Religion or Belief—"Imperial religions have necessarily violated individual conscience and the communal expressions of Africans and their communities by subverting African religions."

Changing Religion

Among the most contentious areas of religious freedom is the "Right to Change" one's religion.

Other debates have centered around restricting certain kinds of missionary activity by religions. Many Islamic states, and others such as China, severely restrict missionary activities of other religions. Greece, among European countries, has generally looked unfavorably on missionary activities of denominations others than the majority church and proselytizing is constitutionally prohibited.

A different kind of critique of the freedom to propagate religion has come from non-Abrahamic traditions such as the African and Indian. African scholar Makau Mutua criticises religious evangelism on the ground of cultural annihilation by what he calls "proselytizing universalist faiths."

> the (human) rights regime incorrectly assumes a level playing field by requiring that African religions compete in the marketplace of ideas. The rights corpus not only forcibly imposes on African religions the obligation to compete—a task for which as non-proselytizing, non-competitive creeds they are not historically fashioned—but also protects the evangelising religions in their march towards universalisation… it seems inconceivable that the human rights regime would have intended to protect the right of certain religions to destroy others.

Some Indian scholars have similarly argued that the right to propagate religion is not culturally or religiously neutral.

In Sri Lanka there have been debates regarding a bill on religious freedom that seeks to protect indigenous religious traditions from certain kinds of missionary activities. Debates have also occurred in various states of India regarding similar laws, particularly those that restrict conversions using force, fraud or allurement.

Religious Practice Versus Secular Law

Religious practice may also conflict with secular law creating debates on religious freedom. For instance, even though polygamy is permitted in Islam it is prohibited in secular law in many Western countries. Does prohibiting polygamy then curtail the religious freedom of Muslims? The USA and India, for instance, have taken two different views of this. In India, polygamy is permitted, but only for Muslims, under Muslim Personal Law. In the USA, polygamy is prohibited for all. This was a major source of conflict between the early Mormon

Church and the United States until the Church finally amended its position on polygamy.

Similar issues have also arisen in the context of the religious use of psychedelic substances by Native American tribes in the United States as well as other Native practices.

International Law

In international law the freedom of religion and belief is protected by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR). This protection extends to specifically non-religious beliefs, such as Humanism.

US FOREIGN RELATIONS

The United States formally considers religious freedom in its foreign relations. The International Religious Freedom Act of 1998 established the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom which investigates the records of over 200 other nations with respect to religious freedom, and makes recommendations to submit nations with egregious records to ongoing scrutiny and possible economic sanctions. Many human rights organisations have urged the United States to be still more vigorous in imposing sanctions on countries that do not permit or tolerate religious freedom.

Some critics charge that the United States policy on religious freedom is largely directed towards the rights of Christians, particularly the ability for Christian missionaries to evangelize, in other countries.

TIMELINE

- 313—Constantine I becomes the first Christian Emperor and ends persecution of Christians in the Roman Empire
- 1549—first English Act of Uniformity
- 1571 January 11—religious toleration was granted to Austrian nobles;
- 1573 January 28—Warsaw Confederation granting religious toleration;
- 1598 April 13—King Henry IV of France issued the Edict of Nantes, allowing religious toleration of the Huguenots;
- 1609 July 6—Bohemia was granted religious toleration;
- 1657 April 20—New Amsterdam granted religious toleration to Jews;

- 1685, October—the Edict of Fontainebleau was issued, revoking the Edict of Nantes and making Protestantism illegal in France.
- 1689, Act of Toleration—England
- 1786, The Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom passed. Drafted by Thomas Jefferson this law prevented any religion from being established in Virginia.
- 1791, 1st amendment to US Constitution instituted separation of church and state in the US;
- 1829 April 13—British Parliament granted Catholic Emancipation in the spirit of religious toleration;
- 1864—In the *Syllabus of Errors*, Pope Pius IX condemned as an error the belief that "[e]very man is free to embrace and profess that religion which, guided by the light of reason, he shall consider true." (Pope Pius IX. (1864). Allocution "Maxima quidem," June 9, 1862; Damnatio "Multiplices inter," June 10, 1851.
- 1965 December 7—*Dignitatis Humanae*: "This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom (…) the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself"
- 1988 April 29—in the spirit of Glasnost, Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev promised increased religious toleration.

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RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Religious pluralism is a loosely defined term concerning peaceful relations between different religions, and is also used in a number of related ways:

- Religious Pluralism may describe the worldview that one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus recognises that some level of truth and value exists in at least some other religions.
- Religious pluralism often is used as a synonym for ecumenism. At a minimum, ecumenism is the promotion of unity, co-operation, or improved understanding between different religions, or denominations within the same religion
- As a synonym for religious tolerance, which is a condition of harmonious co-existence between adherents of different religions or religious denominations.

Adherents of religious pluralism recognise that different religions make different truth claims. For example, most Christians believe that Jesus was God incarnate and that he died for the salvation of humanity while Buddhists believe that enlightenment liberates the soul from the cycle of rebirth so that it may enter into Nirvana. Christians do not claim that Christ leads to Nirvana nor are Buddhists claiming that Buddha is the son of God.

THE BELIEF THAT ALL RELIGIONS CAN TEACH TRUTHS

In its strongest sense, religious pluralism holds that no single religion can claim absolute authority to teach absolute truth. The word of God is not literal religion. On the contrary, religion attempts to describe God's utterances. Given the finite and fallible nature of human beings, no religious text written by Man can absolutely describe God, God's will, or God's counsel, since it is God apart from Man who reveals the divine thoughts, intentions and volition perfectly.

Religious pluralists point out that nearly all religious texts are a combination of an assortment of human observations documented, for example, as historical narratives, poetry, lections, and morality plays. Accordingly, a distinction exists between what may be claimed as literal in a religious text and what may be metaphorical. The text, therefore, is open to interpretation. In this light, no religion is able to comprehensively capture and communicate all truth. Although all religions attempt to capture reality, their attempts occur within particular cultural and historical contexts that affect the writer's viewpoint.

Adherents of religious pluralism, in this sense, hold that their faith is "true". That is, their religion is the most complete and accurate revelation of the divine available, yet they also accept that other religions teach many truths about the nature of God and man, and which establish a significant amount of common ground.

Just as scientists acknowledge that their theories may be incomplete or inaccurate, religious pluralists claim that members of other faiths are searching for the same truths in different ways, and that all religious knowledge is limited by human fallibility. This level of pluralism does not preclude holding one's own ideas or participating in the rituals or spiritual life of one particular religion or community; rather, such worshipers practice according to their own traditions, ideas, and community norms while recognising the validity of a host of other practices or interpretations. Many people hold that it is both permissible and imperative for people of all faiths to develop some form of religious

pluralism. Liberal Christians believe that it is intellectually valid to do so because since Biblical times, humanity's understanding of man's place in the natural world has changed radically, due to advances in science; and advances in travel and communications are thought to rule out isolationism.

In the last century, liberal forms of some religions (Reconstructionist Judaism and Reform Judaism, Unitarian Universalism, etc.) have modified some of their religious positions. As opposed to orthodox believers, religious liberals no longer claim that their religion is complete and of absolute accuracy, and in fact view many claims made within their scriptures as questionable or incorrect.

Some religions hold a retrospective form of religious pluralism. A religion can tolerate and sometimes endorse religions that were created before its own beginning, but will not accept any new religion which has arisen later. For example, Christianity accepts some aspects of Judaism, but generally rejects Islam. Islam accepts some aspects of Christianity, but does not tolerate the Bahá'í Faith. Most adherents of Bahá'í Faith partially accept Christianity, Islam and Judaism, but do not accept theological innovations that have been created in their own community.

PLURALISM AS INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

Religious pluralism is sometimes used as a synonym for Interfaith dialogue. Interfaith dialogue refers to dialogue between members of different religions for the goal of reducing conflicts between their religions and to achieve agreed upon mutually desirable goals.

Inter-religious dialogue is difficult if the partners adopt a position of particularism, *i.e.* if they only care about the concerns of their own group, but is favored by the opposite attitude of universalism, where care is taken for the concerns of others. Interfaith dialogue is easier if a religion's adherents have some form of inclusivism, the belief that people in other religions may also have a way to salvation, even though the fullness of salvation can be achieved only in one's own religion. Conversely, believers with an exclusivist mindset will rather tend to proselytize followers of other religions, rather than seek an open-ended dialogue with them.

CONDITIONS FOR THE EXISTENCE OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Freedom of religion encompasses all religions acting within the law in a particular region, whether or not an individual religion accepts

that other religions are legitimate or that freedom of religious choice and religious plurality in general are good things. Exclusivist religions teach that theirs is the only way to salvation and to religious truth, and some of them would even argue that it is necessary to suppress the falsehoods taught by other religions. Some Protestant sects argue fiercely against Roman Catholicism, and fundamentalist Christians of all kinds teach that religious practices like those of paganism and witchcraft are pernicious. This was a common historical attitude prior to the Enlightenment, and has appeared as governmental policy into the present-day under systems like Afghanistan's Taliban regime, which destroyed the ancient Buddhas of Bamyan.

Many religious believers believe that religious pluralism should entail not competition but cooperation, and argue that societal and theological change is necessary to overcome religious differences between different religions, and denominational conflicts within the same religion. For most religious traditions, this attitude is essentially based on a non-literal view of one's religious traditions, hence allowing for respect to be engendered between different traditions on fundamental principles rather than more marginal issues. It is perhaps summarised as an attitude which rejects focus on immaterial differences, and instead gives respect to those beliefs held in common.

Giving one religion or denomination special rights that are denied to others can weaken religious pluralism. This situation obtains in certain European countries, where Roman Catholicism or regional forms of Protestantism have special status. For example see the entries on the Lateran Treaty and Church of England

Relativism, the belief that all religions are equal in their value and that none of the religions gives access to absolute truth, is an extreme form of inclusivism. Likewise, syncretism, the attempt to take over creeds of practices from other religions or even to blend practices or creeds from different religions into one new faith is an extreme form of inter-religious dialogue. Syncretism must not be confused with ecumenism, the attempt to bring closer and eventually reunite different denominations of one religion that have a common origin but were separated by a schism.

The existence of religious pluralism depends on the existence of freedom of religion. Freedom of religion exists when different religions of a particular region possess the same rights of worship and public expression. Freedom of religion is restrained in many Islamic countries, such as in Saudi Arabia, where the public practice of religions other

than Islam is forbidden, and in the Palestinian Authority, where Arab Christians report they are frequent victims of religious persecution by Muslims.

Religious freedom did not exist at all in many Communist countries such as Albania and the Stalinist Soviet Union, where the state prevented the public expression of religious belief and even persecuted some or all religions. This situation persists still today in North Korea, and to some extent in China and Vietnam.

HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Religious Pluralism in Asia

Some forms of religious pluralism have existed in the Indian subcontinent since the establishment of the Hindu Vedas around 2500 BC, followed by the rise of Buddhism around 500 BC and subsequently during the course of several Muslim settlements (Delhi Sultanate 1276-1526 AD and the Mughal Empire 1526-1857 AD). In the 8th century, Zoroastrianism established in India as Zoroastrians fled from Persia to India in large numbers, where they were given refuge. The colonial phase ushered in by the British lasted until 1947 and furthered conversions to Christianity among low caste Hindus. In 1948 as many as 20,000 Jews Bene Jews and Cochin Jews lived in India, though most of them have since emigrated to Israel.

Although in Japan Buddhism and Shinto have more or less co-existed for centuries, the arrival of Christianity through Francis Xavier led to widespread persecution of Christians and the eventual exclusion of Christianity for hundreds of years until the Meiji era, as the rulers of Japan saw it as a threat

Religious Pluralism in Europe

Antiquity

The polytheistic Roman empire saw the traditional Roman religion as one fundamentals of the Roman republic. They saw Roman virtues as an important link in their multi-ethnic empire. Being polytheistic, Romans did not mind if conquered nations went on worshiping their traditional gods, as long as they also presented token offerings to the Roman gods. In many cases this compromise was easily reached by identifying the traditional gods with similar Roman gods. Failure to offer up this token worship was seen as disloyal to Rome, and an act of political rebellion against the Emperor.

There was, though, a problem with people whose religion excluded the veneration of other gods—especially the Jews and the Christians. The Romans tended to view this as rebellion, and so it resulted in many conflicts arising from often unintended offenses, like putting a statue of an emperor in a prominent place in Jerusalem which resulted in a public revolt. Similarly difficult to understand for the Roman mindset was the attitude of Christians who rather chose torture or death instead of offering a incense to the Roman emperor. From the Roman view, the refusal to venerate the Roman emperor was political treason.

The edict of Milan which decreed tolerance of Christianity was followed by a time of parallel existence of Christianity and paganism which was, though, far from an actual religious pluralism—the religion of the emperor was always at an advantage, and the Arian, trinitarian and pagan emperors in the fourth century saw it as perfectly legitimate to take measures against religious leaders who did not share their belief. By the fifth century, the western Roman Empire had crumbled, but the same patterns of behaviour continued in the Gaul, Celtic, and Germanic kingdoms that replaced it.

Medieval Times in Europe

After the breakdown of the Roman Empire in the West, in western Europe the population was a huge, diverse mix of Latin peoples, Germanic peoples who had been absorbed into the Empire and its Legions over the course of hundreds of years, and newly arriving Germanic tribes that were migrating into western Europe. In each of these vaguely defined categories were some Christians, some pagans, and some who subscribed to some elements of both. In the German tradition, the chief of the tribe was also religious leader, so conversion of the leaders (even if for political reasons) was followed in many cases by Christianisation of the tribe—with the chief of the tribe being now the *de facto* head of the Christian church. There were very frequent instances of parallel pagan and Christian religion, but tolerance of old or new religion was up to the personal preference of the local lord.

The tradition of the head of the tribe as head of the church was continued by the Kings which these chieftains eventually evolved into, with the king and/or emperor holding by virtue of office the right of investiture of bishops and also of deciding in religious matters—Charlemagne, *e.g.*, took the Pope to task for not using the filioque in the Nicene Creed. The religion of the ruler was the official religion of

the people and, again, any tolerance of foreigners or remnants of pagans was up to the present ruler. The unity of religion was generally seen as a prerequisite for any worldly state—a divergent religion was in the consequence not regarded just as a religious problem but also an action against state and ruler punishable by criminal law.

In the high Middle Ages, the worldly powers clashed with the power of the pope on the matter of deciding about religious questions—while the details varied by country, the overall result was that the Roman Catholic Church was able to, for a short time, exercise control over the religious practices of countries, even against that Ruler's will.

The Protestant Reformation

The Protestant Reformation broke the over-riding power of the Catholic Church over religious policy and belief in Europe and touched off the 30-years War which involved virtually every nation on the European continent. Much of the fighting occurred between German and Swiss nobility who had sided with Martin Luther and John Calvin's Protestant movement, and French and Spanish forces under the command of the then-French Papacy. After the religious wars, the general rule was "cuius regio, eius religio"—the countries and principalities had to adopt the religion of their respective ruler, while divergent people were left with the choice between submission or emigration.

Restrictions on smaller Protestant sects who disagreed with the national churches in these countries prompted such groups as the Pilgrim Fathers to seek freedom in North America, although when these became the majority they sometimes sought to deny this freedom to Jews and Roman Catholics.

Enlightenment

In the second half of the seventeenth century, partially out of being tired with the religious wars, partially influenced by early enlightenment, several countries adopted some sort of tolerance for other denominations, *e.g.* the Peace of Westphalia 1653 or the Edict of Tolerance in England in 1689.

Protestant and freethinking philosophers like John Locke and Thomas Paine, who argued for tolerance and moderation in religion, were strongly influential on the Founding Fathers, and the modern religious freedom and equality underlying religious pluralism in the

United States are guaranteed by First Amendment to the United States Constitution, which states:

> "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof..."

In the United States religious pluralism can be said to be overseen by the secular state, which guarantees equality under law between different religions, whether these religions have a handful of adherents or many millions. The state also guarantees the freedom of those who choose not to belong to any religion.

While the United States had to begin with no dominant religion or denomination, this was very different in European countries who have, without exception, a history with one dominant Christian denomination whose influence on their culture is felt until present times. Enlightenment in Europe did not so much promote the rights of minority religions but the rights of individuals to express beliefs diverging from the mainstream religion of the country, while belonging to that religion or being outside of it. While European countries generally went the way of gradually increasing the rights for minority denominations and religions, until today the stress is more on the freedom of belief of the individual and the rights of religious organisations are often limited by the state to prevent them intruding upon the individual religious freedom.

CLASSICAL GREEK AND ROMAN PAGAN RELIGIOUS VIEWS

The ancient Greeks were polytheists; pluralism in that historical era meant accepting the existence of and validity of other faiths, and the gods of other faiths. The Romans easily accomplished this task by subsuming the entire set of gods from other faiths into their own religion; this was done on rare occasion by adding a new god to their own pantheon; on most occasions they identified another religion's gods with their own, see syncretism a form of Inclusivism.

INTER-RELIGIOUS PLURALISM (BETWEEN DIFFERENT RELIGIONS)

Jewish Views

There is a separate entry on Jewish views of religious pluralism, which discusses both classical and modern views of Judaism's relationship to other religions, and the permissibility and purpose of inter-faith theological dialogue.

Christian Views

Classical Christian Views: Christianity teaches that humankind's nature is corrupted and damaged, and that the result of such damage, known as Sin, is damnation. (see the Epistle to the Romans) To avoid such a fate, Christianity teaches that Jesus was God made flesh in a literal manner, and that he suffered, died, and rose again so that the divine punishment intended for those who did not have a relationship with God would instead fall upon Jesus himself, and that by accepting Jesus as savior and God and repenting, a person could then have a meaningful relationship with God and avoid damnation, and be given gift of eternal life in Heaven, as well as have their spiritual natures repaired and renewed so that they were no longer inherently corrupted by sin.

Christians hold that the consequence of self-separation from the triune God, (caused by Sin), who they view as the ultimate source of all life, is eternal death. Some view Christianity as a form of egalitarianism, because it teaches that all humanity potentially has equal access to salvation: a person simply has to renounce their sins and sincerely believe in the death and resurrection of Christ.

Christians have traditionally argued that religious pluralism is an invalid or self-contradictory concept. Maximal forms of religious pluralism claim that all religions are equally true, or that one religion can be true for some and another for others. This Christians hold to be logically impossible. (Most Jews and Muslims similarly reject this maximal form of pluralism.) Christianity insists it is the fullest and most complete revelation of God to Man. (Gospel of John 14:6, "Jesus answered him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one goes to the Father except through me.'" God's Word Translation)

One image of the Church that was often used by the Church fathers was that of a hospital. In this analogy the doctor does not always care for a patient in the way the patient would like, but in the way best suited to bring about healing to the patient. (Entry into the hospital should of course be voluntary.) Doing what pluralists ask would be somewhat akin to accommodating the false prophet of the Old Testament who prophesied to the king what he wanted to hear, predictions of victory, rather than God's words of certain defeat that could only be avoided through thorough repentance.

To these Christians, it appears to be a contradiction for non-Christians to acknowledge the validity of Christian prayers or

sacraments, but continue to deny the beliefs which underlie those prayers and sacraments.

Calvinist Christian Views: Calvinist Christianity, unlike other Christian traditions which generally hold that conversion is a voluntary act of the will, holds to the doctrine of Total Depravity, according to which no sinner can convert to Christianity of their own initiative. Rather, God must take the first step by sovereignly opening that person's heart and turning their mind toward Himself. They also believe in Irresistible grace, which holds that once this is done the sinner in question cannot help becoming a believer.

Many Calvinists also hold to the Augustinian idea of "Two cities", of God and of Man; the realms of "special" and "common" grace. The world is lost, but not abandoned by God. Although Calvinists believe God and the truth of God cannot be plural, they also believe that those civil ordinances of man which restrain man from evil and encourage toward good, are ordinances of God (regardless of the religion, or lack of it, of those who wield that power). Christians are obligated to be at peace with all men, as far as it is up to them, and to submit to governments for the Lord's sake, and to pray for enemies.

Calvinism is not pacifistic and Calvinists have been involved in religious wars, notably the French Wars of Religion and the English Civil War. Some of the first parts of modern Europe to practice religious tolerance had Calvinistic populations, notably the Netherlands, although other Calvinists practiced religious persecution as the other factions did.

Modern (Post-Enlightenment Era) Christian Views: In recent years, some Christian groups have become more open to religious pluralism; this has led to many cases of reconciliation between Christians and people of other faiths. The liberalisation of many Seminaries and theological institutions, particularly in regards to the rejection of the notion that the Bible is a divinely authored document, has facilitated a much more human-centered and secular movement within mainstream Christian denominations, particularly in the United States. Some mainstream churches no longer hold to exclusivist views on salvation.

The most prominent event in the way of dialogue between religions has arguably been the 1986 Peace Prayer in Assisi to which Pope John Paul II, against considerable resistance also from within the Roman Catholic church, invited representatives of all world religions. This initiative was taken up by the Community of Sant'Egidio, who, with

the support of John Paul II, organised yearly peace meetings of religious representatives. These meetings, consisting of round tables on different issues and of a common time of prayer has done much to further understanding and friendship between religious leaders and to further concrete peace initiatives. In order to avoid the reproaches of syncretism that were levelled at the 1986 Assisi meeting where the representatives of all religions held one common prayer, the follow-up meetings saw the representatives of the different religions pray in different places according to their respective traditions.

In recent years there has been much to note in the way of reconciliation between some Christian groups and the Jewish people. Many modern day Christians, including many Catholics and some liberal Protestants, have developed a view of the New Testament as an extended covenant; They believe that Jews are still in a valid relationship with God, and that Jews can avoid damnation and earn a heavenly reward. For these Christians, the New Testament extended God's original covenant to cover non-Jews. The article Christian-Jewish reconciliation deals with this issue in detail.

Many smaller Christian groups in the US and Canada have come into being over the last 40 years, such as "Christians for Israel". Their website says that they exist in order to "expand Christian-Jewish dialogue in the broadest sense in order to improve the relationship between Christians and Jews, but also between Church and Synagogue, emphasising Christian repentance, the purging of anti-Jewish attitudes and the false 'Replacement' theology rampant throughout Christian teachings."

A number of large Christian groups, including the Catholic Church and several large Protestant churches, have publicly declared that they will no longer proselytize Jews.

Other Modern Christian views, including most conservative Protestants, reject the idea of the New Testament as an extended covenant, and retain the classical Christian view as described above.

Roman Catholic Views Regarding Confucianism: The question of whether Confucianism, and Chinese folk religion, consists of worshipping a God or veneration of a saint was important to the Roman Catholic church during the Chinese Rites controversy of the early 18th century. This dispute was between the Dominicans who argued that Confucianism and Chinese folk religion was worship, and therefore incompatible with Catholicism, and the Jesuit who argued

the reverse. The pope ultimately ruled in favor of the Dominicans, a decision which greatly reduced the role of Catholic missionaries in China.

Eastern Orthodox Views: The Eastern Orthodox Church teaches that it is the only path that one should choose for salvation. On the other hand, the Church also teaches that no human being, by statement nor by omission of a statement, may place a limit upon God's will, who may save whomsoever it pleases Him to save.

Some compare the Church to Noah's Ark. It is not impossible for someone to "survive the flood" of sin by clinging to whatever driftwood is around or by trying to cobble together a raft from bits and pieces of whatever floats, but the Ark is a far safer choice to make. Likewise, the heterodox and even non-Christians might be saved simply through God's own choice, made for His own reasons, but it is far safer for any individual person to turn to the Orthodox Church. Thus, it behooves Orthodox Christians to exhort others to take this safer path. Likewise, the Orthodox remembers that Christ mentions one, and only one thing that unfailingly leads to perdition—blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. No other path is explicitly and universally excluded by Christ's words.

Orthodox Christianity has a long history of religious tolerance that has evolved towards some degree of religious pluralism. Advocation of justice and peace towards members of other faiths is seen in a 16th century encyclical written by Ecumenical Patriarch Metrophanes III (1520-1580).

This document was written to the Greek Orthodox in Crete (1568) following reports that Jews were being mistreated. The Patriarch states, "Injustice… regardless to whomever acted upon or performed against, is still injustice. The unjust person is never relieved of the responsibility of these acts under the pretext that the injustice is done against a heterodox and not to a believer. As our Lord Jesus Christ in the Gospels said do not oppress or accuse anyone falsely; do not make any distinction or give room to the believers to injure those of another belief."

Rev. Protopresbyter George C. Papademetriou, *An Orthodox Christian View of Non-Christian Religions* writes:

The Fifth Academic Meeting between Judaism And Orthodox Christianity was held in Thessaloniki, Greece, on May 27-29, 2003. In his opening remarks, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew denounced religious fanaticism and rejected attempts by any faith to denigrate others. The following principles were adopted at the meeting:

- Judaism and Christianity while hearkening to common sources inviolably maintain their internal individuality and particularity.

- The purpose of our dialogue is to remove prejudice and to promote a spirit of mutual understanding and constructive cooperation in order to confront common problems.

- Specific proposals will be developed to educate the faithful of both religions to promote healthy relationships based on mutual respect and understanding to confront bigotry and fanaticism.

- Being conscious of the crises of ethical and spiritual values in the contemporary world, we will endeavor to identify historical models of peaceful coexistence, which can be applied to minority Jewish and Orthodox communities in the Diaspora.

- We will draw from our spiritual sources to develop programmes to promote and enhance our common values such as peace, social justice and human rights, specifically addressing the concerns of religious minorities.

Writing for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, Rev. Protopresbyter George C. Papademetriou has written a summary of classical Christian and Greek Orthodox Christian views on the subject of the salvation of non-Christians. In his paper *An Orthodox Christian View of Non-Christian Religions* writes:

> In our times. Professor John N. Karmiris, University of Athens, based on his studies of the Church Fathers, concludes that the salvation of non-Christians, non-Orthodox and heretics depends on the all-good, all-wise and all-powerful God, who acts in the Church but also through other "ways." God's saving grace is also channelled outside the Church. It cannot be assumed that salvation is denied non-Christians living in true piety and according to natural law by the God who "is love" (1 John 4:8). In his justice and mercy God will judge them worthy even though they are outside the true Church. This position is shared by many Orthodox who agree that God's salvation extends to all who live according to His "image" and "participate in the Logos." The Holy Spirit acted through the prophets of the Old Testament and in the nations. Salvation is also open outside the Church.

As is common in many other faiths, the question of salvation for those outside of Orthodox Christianity is understandably secondary to what the Church expects of its own adherents. As St. Theophan the Recluse put the matter: "You ask, will the heterodox be saved... Why do you worry about them? They have a Saviour Who desires the salvation of every human being. He will take care of them. You and I

should not be burdened with such a concern. Study yourself and your own sins... I will tell you one thing, however: should you, being Orthodox and possessing the Truth in its fullness, betray Orthodoxy, and enter a different faith, you will lose your soul forever."

Latter-Day Saint Views: The churches of the Latter Day Saint movement, because of the nature of their beliefs about the apostasy of the early Christian church that Christ established on the earth, feel they, individually, hold the restored doctrines and priesthood authority necessary to provide the means of the fullness of eternal salvation, also called exaltation. The term salvation is used to describe the resurrection and eternal life which is a gift of grace given to all people through the atonement of Jesus Christ. Although all people achieve salvation in this sense, only those who accept Jesus' teachings, strive to become Christlike in their personal and public life, and receive the necessary ordinances performed by the priesthood authority will be exalted, and become one with God and Jesus Christ and eventually, through a principle of progression throughout eternities, become like God and Jesus. This belief is one reason for the missionary activity of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the performance of ordinances by proxy for the dead. The fact that saving ordinances can be performed for those who have died without accepting Jesus Christ and his gospel, entails an inherent belief that people of other religious traditions may indeed achieve the fullness of eternal salvation and exaltation after this life, although this is only through later acceptance of the Christian teachings and priesthood ordinances found in the LDS church. The church works closely with other religious and faith based groups, often in post-disaster areas. The second largest Latter Day Saint denomination, the Community of Christ is slightly more ecunemical, and follows doctrines closer to mainstream Christianity, and does not practice Baptism for the Dead.

Muslim Views

The Qur'an views tolerance of other religions as a necessary prequisiste for a peaceful coexistence. It assumes that social, cultural and religious differences require tolerance even if parties fail to agree upon these differences. Islam, like most popular monotheistic faiths, views itself as the only true path for following the will of Allah (God) and going to Jannah (Paradise, Heaven). Muslims consider the monotheistic faiths that precededed it, Judaism and Christianity, to have been evolved since inception but valid in its original form.

The Qur'an recognises diversity of beliefs as created by Allah.

"We have ordained a law and assigned a path for each of you. And if Allah had pleased He would have made you (all) a single nation, but that He might try you in what He gave you, therefore strive with one another to hasten to virtuous deeds; to Allah is your return, of all (of you), so He will let you know that in which you differed."

Nevertheless, Muslims hold that for someone to worship other any other gods or deities (*Shirk* (polytheism)) is a sin that will lead to eternal separation from Allah (God). This particularly applies to Christians believing in the Trinity.

Muslims believe that Allah sent the Qur'an to bring peace and harmony to humanity through Islam (submission to Allah). Muhammad's worldwide mission was to establish universal peace under the Khilafat. The Khilafat ensured security of the lives and property of non-Muslims under the dhimmi system. This status was originally only made available to non-Muslims who were "People of the Book" (*i.e.* Christians), but was later extended to include Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Mandeans, and, in some areas, Hindus and Buddhists. Dhimmi had more rights than other non-Muslim religious subjects, but fewer legal and social rights than Muslims. Some Muslims, however, disagree, and hold that adherents of these faiths cannot be dhimmi.

Dhimmi enjoyed full freedom under that welfare state founded by Muhammad and could practice their religious rituals according to their faith and beliefs. They had tolerance, justice, brotherhood and peace. The Khilafat always extended its support and justice to any minority of creed, colour or caste. The Khilafat poured its blessings in different human habitations in the world from 'Granada to Delhi.' The best example of brotherhood is the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca prescribed by Islam. Each year close to three million people from every corner of the globe assemble in Mecca to perform Hajj and worship Allah. No individual can be identified as a king or pauper because every man is dressed in imrah (two pieces of unsown cloth—preferably white).

Muslim rule spread through conquest and this indirectly coerced many to convert to Islam. In other words, war was waged to put lands under Muslim rule, but the subjects were theoretically free to continue practice whatever religion they chose. However, the non-Muslim Dhimmis were subject to taxation jizyah at a different rate of the Muslim zakat. Dhimmis also faced economic impediments, restrictions on political participation and/or social advancement based

on their non-Muslim status.

Religious persecution is also not sanctioned by Islam, but is partly due to cruel rulers, or general economic hardships in the societies they are in. To that effect, most pre-Islamic religious minorities continue to exist in their native countries.

Over the centuries, several known religious debates, and polemical works did exist in various Muslim countries between various Muslim sects, as well as between Muslims and non-Muslims. Many of these works survive today, and make for some very interesting reading in the apologetics genre. Only when such debates spilled over to the unlearned masses, and thus causing scandals, and civil strife did rulers intervene to restore order and pacify the public outcry on the perceived attack on their beliefs.

As for sects within Islam, history shows a variable pattern. Various sects became intolerant when gaining favour with the rulers, and often work to oppress or eliminate rival sects (*e.g.* Mu'tazili persecution of Salafis, Safavid imposing Shia on the population of Iran, ...etc.). Sectarian strife between Shia and Sunni inhabitants of Baghdad is well-known through history.

Bahá'í Views

Bahá'u'lláh, founder of Bahá'í Faith, urged the elimination of religious intolerance. He taught that God is one, and has manifested himself to us through several historic Messengers. Bahá'u'lláh taught, therefore, that Bahá'ís must associate with peoples of all religions, showing the love of God in relations with them, whether this is reciprocated or not.

Bahá'í's refer to the concept of Progressive Revelation, which means that God's will is revealed to mankind progressively as mankind matures and is better able to comprehend the purpose of God in creating humanity. In this view, God's word is revealed through a series of messengers: Abraham, Krishna, Moses, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, and Bahá'u'lláh (the founder of the Bahá'í Faith) among them. In the *Kitáb-i-Íqán* (*Book of Certitude*), Bahá'u'lláh explains that messengers of God have a twofold station, one of divinity and one of an individual. According to Bahá'í writings, there will not be another messenger for many hundreds of years. There is also a respect for the religious traditions of the native peoples of the planet who may have little other than oral traditions as a record of their religious figures.

Hindu Views

The Hindu religion is naturally pluralistic. A well-known Rig Vedic hymn stemming from Hinduism claims that "Truth is One, though the sages know it variously." (Ékam sat vipra bahudâ vadanti) As such the Hindu religion has no theological difficulties in accepting degrees of truth in other religions. Just as Hindus worshipping Ganesh is seen as valid by those worshipping Vishnu, so someone worshipping Jesus or Allah is accepted. Indeed many *foreign* deities become assimilated into Hinduism, and some Hindus may sometimes offer prayers to Jesus along with their traditional forms of God. For this reason, Hinduism usually has good relations with other religious groups accepting pluralism. In particular, Hinduism and Buddhism coexist peacefully in many parts of the world.

Sikh Views

The Sikh Gurus (religious leaders) have propagated the message of "many paths" leading to the one God and ultimate salvation for all souls who treading on the path of righteousness. They have supported the view that proponents of all faiths can, by doing good and virtuous deeds and by remembering the Lord can certainly achieve salvation. The students of the Sikh faith are told to accept all leading faiths as possible vehicle for attaining spiritual enlightenment provided the faithful study, ponder and practice the teachings of their prophets and leaders. The holy book of the Sikhs called the *Sri Guru Granth Sahib* says: "Do not say that the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran are false. Those who do not contemplate them are false." Guru Granth Sahib page 1350, and " The seconds, minutes, and hours, days, weeks and months and various seasons originate from One Sun;O nanak,in just the same way, the many forms originate from the Creator." Guru Granth Sahib page 12,13.

The Guru Granth Sahib also says that Bhagat Namdev and Bhagat Kabir who were both believed to be Hindus, both attained salvation though they were born before Sikhism took root and were clearly not Sikhs. This highlight and reinforces the Guru's saying that "peoples of other faiths" can join with God as true and also at the same time signify that Sikhism is not the exclusive path for liberation. Again, the Guru Granth Sahib provides this verse: "Naam Dayv the printer, and Kabeer the weaver, obtained salvation through the Perfect Guru. Those who know God and recognise His Shabad ("word") lose their ego and class consciousness." Guru Granth Sahib page 67. Most of the 15 Sikh

Bhagats who are mentioned in their holy book were non-Sikhs and belonged to Hindu and Muslim faiths, which were the most prevalent religions of this region.

Sikhs have always being eager exponents of interfaith dialogue and will not only accept the right of other to practise their faith but have in the past fought and laid down their lives to protect this right for others. See the sacrifice of the ninth Sikh Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadar who on the final desperate and heart-rending pleas of the Kashmiri Pandit, agreed to put up a fight for their right to practise their religion. In this regard, Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru writes in the Dasam Granth:

> He protected the forehead mark and sacred thread (of the Hindus) which marked a great event in the Iron age.
>
> For the sake of saints, he laid down his head without even a sign.13.
>
> For the sake of Dharma, he sacrificed himself. He laid down his head but not his creed.
>
> The saints of the Lord abhor the performance of miracles and mal-practices. 14.
>
> *– Dasam Granth, Bachitar Nanak, www.sridasam.org p. 131*

For these reasons, the Sikhs have promoted their faith as an Interfaith religion and have taken a lead in uniting all the different religions of the world so that together peace and prosperity can be found for all the peoples of this Globe and the suffering of the poor of the Third world can be properly addressed together. The message of unity of the faiths is summed up in this quotation from the Guru Granth Sahib: "One who recognises that all spiritual paths lead to the One shall be emancipated. One who speaks lies shall fall into hell and burn. In all the world, the most blessed and sanctified are those who remain absorbed in Truth."

Jain Views

One of the fundamental features of Jainism is *Anekantavada*, or the doctorine of non-onesidedness. Jain philosophy accepts the relativistic view of looking at things from all points of view. Anekantavada requires that one should not reject a view or a belief simply because it uses a different perspective. One should consider the fact there may be truth in other's views too, and no one should insist that their philosophy, sect or religion, or their perspective is the only true one.

Buddhist Views

The wisdom tradition of Buddhism necessarily entails a plural position since it is a "middle way" tradition which ideally eschews extremism of any sort, but fundamentally does not adhere to ideas of religious syncretism. The earliest reference to Buddhist views on religious pluralism in a political sense is found in the Edicts of Emperor Ashoka:

"All religions should reside everywhere, for all of them desire self-control and purity of heart." Rock Edict Nb7 (S. Dhammika)

"Contact (between religions) is good. One should listen to and respect the doctrines professed by others. Beloved-of-the-Gods, King Piyadasi, desires that all should be well-learned in the good doctrines of other religions." Rock Edict Nb12 (S. Dhammika)

Ethnocentrism of any sort (including the idea of belonging to a 'school of Buddhism' as well as evangelism and religious supremacism) is in Buddhist thought, rooted in self-grasping and reified thought—the cause of Samsara itself. However, that is the official view of traditional Buddhism, Buddhists understand that "ignorance" or "avidya", which is akin to "original sin" in Buddhism, is the source of all misunderstandings, war and turmoil. The removal of that ignorance takes time and effort on the part of everyone, Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike.

The current Dalai Lama has repeatedly pointed out that any attempt to convert individuals from their beliefs is not only non-Buddhist, but abusive: the identification of evangelism as an expression of compassion he considers to be false, and indeed the idea that Buddhism is the *one true path* is likewise false. What Buddhists *are* encouraged to do is to act as sensitively and appropriately to each situation as they can, and in the process not allow any reifying views obscure their capability to do so. Buddhists are supposed to use their understanding of the shortfalls of the world as the basis for compassion, and then focus this compassion on their own development: as enlightened beings, they will be able to deal more adequately with the sufferings of the world.

In brief then, the expression of compassion is done so in the languages and beliefs that Buddhists find around them. For instance, when Buddhists talk with Christians, it is an abuse to deny Christ, God or the immortal soul- what they can hope to do is to help people *within their own belief structure* to greater insight and greater kindness. Indeed what Buddhists philosophers such as Nagarjuna and Candrakirti demonstrated so well is that Buddhists *can* use language to defeat language. Buddhists *can* use the conventions of the world to reveal

them for what they are, within the contexts that they find them. If Buddhists wish to help those around them, they are admonished to continually demonstrate exemplary behaviour, displaying a way of being that inspires everyone to better themselves, which is contextual, sensitive, and everyone-centred. These positions hold for both inter-religious and intra-religious pluralism.

The Buddha also related to issues of "religion" using the parable of a man wounded by an arrow asking who shot the arrow, what the arrow was made of, and so forth, until he finally died. This parable is meant to show how it is not Buddhism's domain to focus on the supernatural.

INTRA-RELIGIOUS PLURALISM (BETWEEN DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS WITHIN THE SAME RELIGION)

Jewish Views

Jewish views on relations between different Jewish denominations is covered in the entry on Jewish views of religious pluralism.

Christian Views

Classical Christian Views

Before the Great Schism, mainstream Christianity confessed "one holy catholic and apostolic church", in the words of the Nicene Creed. Roman Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Episcopalians and most Protestant Christian denominations still maintain this belief.

Church unity was something very visible and tangible, and schism was just as serious an offense as heresy. Following the Great Schism, Roman Catholicism sees and recognises the Orthodox Sacraments as valid. Eastern Orthodoxy does not have the concept of "validity" when applied to Sacraments, but it considers the *form* of Roman Catholic Sacraments to be acceptable, if still devoid of actual spiritual content. Both generally regard each other as "heterodox" and "schismatic", while continuing to recognise each other as Christian. Attitudes of both towards different Protestant groups vary, primarily based upon how strongly Trinitarian the Protestant group in question might be.

Most Christians hold that the Christian church is not just an institution, which can be broken into many denominations. They hold that each instituted church is able to worship God in a way that conforms to Scripture, which allows for many different styles and customs. They hold that all true Christians are united in belief in

Jesus Christ, which can be judged against such documents as the Apostles' Creed.

Modern Christian Views

Many Protestant Christian groups hold that only churches which cling to certain fundamentals provide the pathway to salvation. They continue to believe in "one" church, believing in fundamental issues there is unity and non-fundamental issues there is liberty. Some Protestants are doubtful if the Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodoxy are still valid manifestations of the Church, or if newer denominations including Mormonism, Christian Science, or Jehovah's Witnesses should be counted as Christian.

Modern Christian ideas on intra-religious pluralism (between different denominations of Christianity) are discussed in the article on Ecumenism.

Muslim Views

Classical Muslim Views

Like Christianity, Islam originally did not have ideas of religious pluralism for different Islamic denominations. Early on, Islam developed into several mutually antagonistic streams, including Shiite Islam and Sunni Islam. In some periods believers in these two communities went to war with each other over religious differences.

Modern (Post-Enlightenment Era) Muslim Views

The concept of pluralism was introduced to Islamic philosophy by Abdolkarim Soroush. He got the idea from Rumi the famous Persian poet and philosopher. Soroush tried to expand his theory and put it on a solid foundation. His views have been criticised extensively in traditional religious circles.

Some Shiite, Suni and Sufi Islamic leaders are willing to recognise each other's denomination as a valid form of Islam. However, many other Islamic leaders are unwilling to accept this; they view other forms of Islam as outside the Islamic religion. Violence between different forms of Islam continues to the present day.

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11

ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY AND INTER-RELIGIOUS VIEWS

ISSUES IN CONTEMPORARY THEOLOGY: HYBRIDITY, SYNCRETISM AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY

A. INTRODUCTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course provides an opportunity to explore a variety of forms of "religious mixing" and thereby to reflect on the nature of religious identity. When the Buddha moves from India to China, when Jesus moves from Jerusalem to Athens, something new arises. When a people are forced to "convert" to the religion of their conquerors, something of the old endures in new forms. When someone today says, "My spirituality is drawn from Hinduism, Buddhism, Christian and Muslim mysticism, and Native American religions," some amalgam, some product of a process of mixing, is being constructed. What can we learn from these phenomena?

While we will consider historical, sociological and anthropological approaches, among others, our primary emphasis, as our course title suggests, will be through a study of theology—*i.e.* the attempt to reflect on the meaning of religious beliefs and practices.

Some would warn against the dangers of religious mixing out of a concern to preserve the essential core of religious identity in a pure, unadulterated form. Others would see religious mixing as a necessary survival tactic given inequalities in power. Still others would see religious mixing as inevitable and intrinsic though usually unrecognised. We will consider these and other viewpoints as we examine this phenomenon in both breadth and depth.

Our readings and discussions will take us through an analysis of contemporary American "Generation X" experience; a personal

testimony of one who claims to be "both Buddhist and Christian"; an analysis of a panoply of issues surrounding contemporary "global culture" and related issues informing our understanding of religious identity; a proposal regarding the inherently "translatable" nature of the Christian tradition; and an investigation of the amalgam of African, Caribbean and Catholic influences in Haiti. The five books we will read and discuss together form *one* key component of the course. *The other* component involves your own personal intellectual project.

Early on, you will be asked to identify a question/issue/problem/domain that you would like to investigate throughout the quarter–one that will be enhanced by our books and discussions, but one you'd like to read a bit more about on your own. The course thereby provides you with an opportunity to investigate the phenomenon of religious mixing and to reflect on religious identity in terms of both *breadth*–the five books we'll read and discuss–and *depth*–as you carry out your own particular inquiry.

In this course, you need to work on developing a sense of "structured empathy," appreciating how people could believe and do things you may not, and also a critical and historical consciousness. One of my old teachers wrote a book describing the gaining of knowledge and the making of meaning as a kind of "conversation." Here's how he put it:

> *Conversation is a game with some hard rules: say only what you mean; say it as accurately as you can; listen to and respect what the other says, however different or other; be willing to correct or defend your opinions if challenged by the conversation partner; be willing to argue if necessary, to confront if demanded, to endure necessary conflict, to change your mind if the evidence suggests it.* [David Tracy, *Plurality and Ambiguity*, 1987, p. 19]

So, let's go with the metaphor and imagine that our course is an opportunity for *conversation* between text and reader, and between the many interpreters in our class.

Our overall and ongoing learning goals can be summarised as follows:

1. To gain accurate knowledge about the important themes, figures, texts, and other materials under consideration, so that you are able to present and support significant facts correctly, clearly and thoroughly.

2. To develop accurate analyses of the various interpretations and positions proposed and considered, explaining how complex arguments and interpretations are constructed.

3. To propose plausible comparisons between the different perspectives considered, suggesting viable connections, applications and patterns.

4. To construct your own articulate and respectful assessment of the materials under consideration, and of the viewpoints of others, developing and supporting your own reasoned evaluations and creative responses based on clearly formulated criteria.

5. To develop your capacity for clear and effective writing.

6. To develop your capacity for clear and effective verbal communication.

B. STUDENT REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

Throughout the quarter, you'll be able to demonstrate, to yourself and others, that you are achieving these learning goals. Here are the major ways you'll do it:

1. Assignment preparation. Please come to each class session having done the assigned readings, taken careful notes, and having tried your best to find out the meanings of terms and concepts in the readings that are unfamiliar to you.

2. Class discussions. Asking questions, raising concerns, offering your own ideas during class discussions is a crucial component of the learning process. You will be expected to be an active participant in classroom conversations.

3. Conversation Starters. "Conversation Starters" are one-page, single-spaced, typed papers that summarise the *key* themes from the assigned reading for a particular class session, suggest connections between the current reading and other readings and discussions from our course, and set forth several questions for discussion. For most class sessions, two previously selected students will write Conversation Starters and bring copies to be distributed at the start of class. You will have several opportunities to do this during the quarter.

   35 per cent of your final grade will be based on an assessment of your overall course preparedness and involvement, including regular and prompt attendance, informed participation in discussions, and high quality Conversation Starters. *Students arriving late for class, missing class, not completing the assigned readings, or failing to prepare good Conversation Starters will receive a lower grade in this area.*

4. Paper. You will write a Paper (12-15 pages, typed and double-spaced) on a particular question/issue/problem/domain of interest to you. *The Paper will investigate this topic in more depth, and relate it to significant aspects of the discussions and books read in common in the course. To complete your Paper, you'll need to read a bit more on you own during the quarter–somewhere in the vicinity of 100 pages.* The finished Paper is due by 10:00 a.m. on Friday, March 19 in my office (SAC 430), but there will be several stages leading toward its completion:

- On Wednesday, January 13 you will bring to class a one-page, single-spaced Paper Proposal (with copies to distribute) –a statement of what you plan to work on for the Paper. Here, you will propose the question/issue/problem/domain you plan to investigate, explain why it is an important topic, list at least two things you know about it already and at least two things you think you need to learn more about. You will write this in ink not blood, so your focus and approach can change a bit as the quarter develops.

- Throughout the quarter, you'll call, e-mail and/or meet with me to seek advice on the paper or just to talk about how it's going.

- On Friday, February 5 (by 10:00 a.m.) you'll turn in (at my office) a First Progress Report (2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced) in which you describe in detail what you've done and learned regarding your paper thus far.

- On Friday, March 5 (by 10:00 a.m.) you'll turn in (at my office) a Second Progress Report (2-3 pages, typed and double-spaced) in which you describe in detail what you've done and learned regarding your paper thus far.

Each Progress Report will be worth 15 per cent of your final grade. The finished Paper will be worth 35 per cent of your final grade.

C. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Please read the Academic Integrity Policy in the current *Student Handbook*. It describes violations of academic integrity, including plagiarism, noting that students who present the work of another as their own are subject to receiving a failing grade for that assignment, or for the entire course, or perhaps even being suspended or dismissed from the university. Please cite the work of others properly.

D. REQUIRED TEXTS

1. Tom Beaudoin, *Virtual Faith: The Irreverent Spiritual Quest of Generation X*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998.

2. Thich Nhat Hanh, *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.

3. Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997.

4. Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1989.

5. Leslie G. Desmangles, *The Faces of the Gods: Vodou and Roman Catholicism in Haiti*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992.

These books are available at DePaul's Lincoln Park Campus Bookstore and on Reserve in the Richardson Library.

E. SCHEDULE OF TOPICS, READINGS AND DUE DATES

1. Overview and Foci

WED January 6

Introduction and Syllabus.

MON January 11

Read: Beaudoin pp. ix-xxiii, Nhat Hanh pp. 1-12, Schreiter pp. ix-xii, Sanneh pp. 1-8, Desmangles pp. xi-16.

WED January 13

Paper topic proposals (single page). Bring copies to share and discuss.

2. A Theology of Culture in the Context of "Generation X"

MON January 18

Read: Beaudoin pp. 1-72.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED January 20

Read: Beaudoin pp. 73-120.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

MON January 25

Read: Beaudoin pp. 121-191.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

3. Multiple Roots: Explorations in "Buddhist-Christian" Identity

WED January 27

Read: Nhat Hanh pp. 1-59.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

MON February 1

Read: Nhat Hanh pp. 60-130.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED February 3

Read: Nhat Hanh pp. 131-198.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

FRIDAY February 5

First Progress Report due by 10:00 a.m. in my office – SAC 430.

4. Theology and "Global Culture": Implications for Religious Identity

MON February 8

Read: Schreiter pp. ix-45.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED February 10

Read: Schreiter pp. 46-83.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

MON February 15

Read: Schreiter pp. 84-133.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

5. "Translatability" and the Development of a Pluralistic Tradition

WED February 17

Read: Sanneh pp. 1-49.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

MON February 22

Read: Sanneh pp. 50-129.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED February 24

Read: Sanneh pp. 157-210.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

6. "Vodou" and "Catholicism" in Haiti

MON March 1

Read: Desmangles pp. xi-59.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED March 3

Field trip to the exhibit, *Domino/Dominó* by Bibiana Suárez. We leave from SAC 430 at 2:30 and return to campus by 5:00. The exhibit is at the Illinois Art Gallery, James R. Thompson Center, 100 W. Randolf, Suite 2-100.

FRIDAY March 5

Second Progress Report due by 10:00 a.m. in my office – SAC 430.

MON March 8

Read: Desmangles pp. 60-130.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

WED March 10

Read: Desmangles pp. 131-181.

Conversation Starters: _____ and _____

FRIDAY March 19

Paper due by 10:00 a.m. in my office – SAC 430.

JEWISH VIEWS OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Religious pluralism is a set of religious world views that hold that one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus recognises that some level of truth and value exists in other religions. As such, religious pluralism goes beyond religious tolerance, which is the condition of peaceful existence between adherents of different religions or religious denominations.

Within the Jewish community there lies a common history, a shared language of prayer, a shared Bible and a shared set of rabbinic literature, thus allowing for Jews of significantly different world views to share some common values and goals.

CLASSICAL JEWISH VIEWS

General Classical Views on Other Religions

Traditionally, Jews believe that God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant with God, described by the Torah itself, with particular obligations and responsibilities elucidated in the Oral Torah.

Sometimes this choice is seen as charging the Jewish people with a specific mission—to be a light unto the nations, and to exemplify the covenant with God as described in the Torah. This view, however, did not preclude a belief that God has a relationship with other peoples —rather, Judaism held that God had entered into a covenant with all mankind, and that Jews and non-Jews alike have a relationship with God.

Biblical references as well as rabbinic literature support this view: Moses refers to the "God of the spirits of all flesh" (Numbers 27:16), and the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) also identifies prophets outside the community of Israel. Based on these statements, some rabbis theorised that, in the words of Nethanel ibn Fayyumi, a Yemenite Jewish theologian of the 12th century, "God permitted to every people something he forbade to others...[and] God sends a prophet to every people according to their own language."(Levine, 1907/1966) The Mishnah states that "Humanity was produced from one man, Adam, to show God's greatness. When a man mints a coin in a press, each coin is identical. But when the King of Kings, the Holy One, blessed be He, creates people in the form of Adam not one is similar to any other." (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5) The Mishnah continues, and states that anyone who kills or saves a single human, not Jewish, life, has done the same (save or kill) to an entire world. The Talmud also states: "Righteous people of all nations have a share in the world to come" (Sanhedrin 105a).

A traditional Jewish view is that rather than being obligated to obey the 613 mitzvot of the Jews, non-Jews should adhere to a list of commandments under seven categories that God required of the children of Noah, (*i.e.* all humanity, ten generations prior to the birth of Abraham and the origin of Judaism). According to Jewish law, to be considered morally good, gentiles need follow only these laws, and are discouraged from converting to Judaism.

According to the Talmud, the seven Noahide Laws are:

1. to refrain from bloodshed and murder *Shefichat damim*
2. to establish laws, and courts of justice *Dinim*
3. to refrain from idolatry, *Avodah zarah*
4. to refrain from blasphemy, *Birkat Hashem*
5. to refrain from sexual immorality, *Gilui arayot* (traditionally, incest, sodomy between males, bestiality, adultery)

6. to refrain from theft, *Gezel* and

7. to refrain from eating a limb torn from a still living animal, *Ever min ha-chai*

Any person who lives according to these laws is known as "the righteous among the gentiles". Maimonides states that this refers to those who have acquired knowledge of God and act in accordance with the Noahide laws. In the 2nd century a sage in the Tosefta declared "the righteous of all nations have a share in the world to come." (Tosefta, Sanhedrin 13)

Prophets of the Bible, while they repeatedly denounced the evils of the idolatrous nations (in addition to their denouncing the Jews' sins), they never call the nations to account for their idolatrous *beliefs* (*i.e.* worshipping multiple deities), but only for their evil *actions* (such as human sacrifice, murder, and miscarriages of justice).

Classical Views on Christianity

Some rabbis in the Talmud view Christianity as a form of idolatry prohibited not only to Jews, but to gentiles as well. Rabbis with these views did not claim that it was idolatry in the same sense as pagan idolatry in Biblical times, but that it relied on idolatrous forms of worship (*i.e.* to a Trinity of gods and to statues and saints) (see Hullin, 13b). Other rabbis disagreed, and did not hold it to be idolatry. The dispute continues to this day. (Jacob Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, Oxford Univ. Press, 1961, Ch.10)

Maimonides, one of Judaism's most important theologians and legal experts, explained in detail why Jesus was wrong to create Christianity and why Muhammad was wrong to create Islam; he laments the pains Jews have suffered in persecution from followers of these new faiths as they attempted to supplant Judaism. However, Maimonides then goes on to say that both faiths can be considered a positive part of God's plan to redeem the world.

> *Jesus was instrumental* [or, "was an instrument"] *in changing the Torah and causing the world to err and serve another beside God. But it is beyond the human mind to fathom the designs of our Creator, for our ways are not God's ways, neither are our thoughts His. All these matters relating to Jesus of Nazareth, and the Ishmaelite* [i.e., Muhammad] *who came after him, only served to clear the way for the Jewish Messiah to prepare the whole world to worship God with one accord, as it is written 'For then will I turn to the peoples a pure language, that they all call upon the name of the Lord to serve Him with one consent.' (Zephaniah 3:9). Thus, the Jewish hope, and the Torah,*

and the commandments have become familiar topics of conversation among those even on far isles, and among many people, uncircumcised of flesh and heart. (Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, XI.4.)

The above paragraph was often censored from many printed versions where Christian censorship was felt.

MODERN (POST-ENLIGHTENMENT ERA) JEWISH VIEWS

Views on Dialogue with non-Jews in General

Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist rabbis engage in interfaith religious dialogue, and while most Orthodox rabbis do not participate in it, a small number of Modern Orthodox do.

Rabbi Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, former Chief Rabbi of the United Synagogue of Great Britain, describes a commonly held Jewish view on this issue:

"Yes, I do believe in the Chosen people concept as affirmed by Judaism in its holy writ, its prayers, and its milennial tradition. In fact, I believe that every people—and indeed, in a more limited way, every individual—is "chosen" or destined for some distinct purpose in advancing the designs of Providence. Only, some fulfill their mission and others do not. Maybe the Greeks were chosen for their unique contributions to art and philosophy, the Romans for their pioneering services in law and government, the British for bringing parliamentary rule into the world, and the Americans for piloting democracy in a pluralistic society. The Jews were chosen by God to be 'peculiar unto Me' as the pioneers of religion and morality; that was and is their national purpose."

The German-Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) taught that "According to the basic principles of my religion I am not to seek to convert anyone not born into our laws....We believe that the other nations of the Earth are directed by God to observe only the law of nature and the religion of the Patriarchs...I fancy that whosoever leads men to virtue in this life cannot be damned in the next."

Views on Jewish-Christian Dialogue

In practice, the predominant position of Modern Orthodoxy on this issue is based on the position of Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik in an essay entitled *Confrontation*. He held that Judaism and Christianity are "two faith communities (which are) intrinsically antithetic". In his view "the language of faith of a particular community is totally incomprehensible to the man of a different faith community. Hence the confrontation should occur not at a theological, but at a mundane human level... the great encounter between man and God is a holy,

personal and private affair, incomprehensible to the outsider..." As such, he ruled that theological dialogue between Judaism and Christianity was not possible.

However, Soloveitchik advocated closer ties between the Jewish and Christian communities. He held that communication between Jews and Christians was not merely permissible, but "desirable and even essential" on non-theological issues such as war and peace, the war on poverty, the struggle for people to gain freedom, issues of morality and civil rights, and to work together against the perceived threat of secularism.

As a result of his ruling, Orthodox Jewish groups did not operate in interfaith discussions between the Roman Catholic Church and Jews about Vatican II, a strictly theological endeavour. However, the Rabbinical Council of America (RCA), with Soloveitchik's approval, then engaged in a number of interfaith dialogues with both Catholic and Protestant Christian groups.

Soloveitchik understood his ruling as advising against purely theological interfaith dialogue, but as allowing for theological dialogue to exist if it was part of a greater context. Bernard Rosensweig (former President of the RCA) writes "The RCA remained loyal to the guidelines which the Rav had set down [concerning interfaith dialogue] and distinguished between theological discussions and ethical-secular concerns, which have universal validity. Every programme involving either Catholic or Protestant churches in which we participated was carefully scrutinised.... Every topic which had possible theological nuances or implications was vetoed, and only when the Rav pronounced it to be satisfactory did we proceed to the dialogue."

> An RCA committee was once reviewing possible topics for an inter-faith dialogue. One of the suggested topics was "Man in the Image of God." Several members of the committee felt that the topic had too theological a ring, and wished to veto it. When the Rav [Soloveitch] was consulted he approved the topic and quipped, "What should the topic have been? Man as a Naturalistic Creature!"
>
> (*Lawrence Kaplan, Revisionism and the Rav: The Struggle for the Soul of Modern Orthodoxy Judaism*, Summer, 1999)

The basis for Soloveitchik's ruling was not strictly legal, but sociological and historical. He described the traditional Jewish-Chistian relationship as one of "the few and weak vis-à-vis the many and the strong", one in which the Christian community historically denied the right of the Jewish community to believe and live in their own way.

His response was written in the light of past Jewish-Christian religious disputations, which traditionally had been forced upon the Jewish community. Those had as their express goal the conversion of Jews to Christianity. As recently as the 1960s many traditional Jews still looked upon all interfaith dialogue with suspicion, fearing that conversion may be an ulterior motive. This was a reasonable belief, given that many Catholics and most Protestants at the time in fact held this position. Reflecting this stance, Rabbi Soloveitchik asked the Christian community to respect "the right of the community of the few to live, create and worship in its own way, in freedom and with dignity."

Many traditional rabbis agree; they hold that while cooperation with the Christian community is of importance, theological dialogue is unnecessary, or even misguided. Rabbi Eliezer Berkovits writes that "Judaism is Judaism because it rejects Christianity, and Christianity is Christianity because it rejects Judaism." (Disputation and Dialogue: Readings in the Jewish Christian Encounter, Ed. F.E. Talmage, Ktav, 1975, p. 291.)

In later years, Solovetichik's qualified permission was interpreted in a progressively more restrictive fashion. (Tradition: *A Journal of Orthodox Thought*, Vol. 6, 1964) Today, many Orthodox rabbis use Soloveitchik's letter to justify having no discussion or joint efforts with Christians at all.

In contrast, some Modern Orthodox rabbis such as Eugene Korn and David Hartman hold that in some cases, the primary issue in *Confrontation* no longer is valid; some Christian groups no longer attempt to use interfaith dialogue to convert Jews to Christianity. They believe that the relationship between Judaism and Christianity has reached a point where Jews can trust Christian groups to respect them as equals. Further, in most nations it is not possible for Jews to be forced or pressured to convert, and many major Christian groups no longer teach that the Jews who refuse to convert are damned to hell.

In non-Orthodox denominations of Judaism, most rabbis hold that Jews have nothing to fear from engaging in theological dialogue, and in fact may have much to gain. Some hold that in practice Soloveitchik's distinctions are not viable, for any group that has sustained discussion and participation on moral issues will implicitly involve theological discourse. Thus, since informal implicit theological dialogue will occur, one might as well admit it and publicly work on formal theological dialogue.

Ground Rules for a Christian Jewish Dialogue

Conservative Rabbi Robert Gordis wrote an essay on "Ground Rules for a Christian Jewish Dialogue"; in all Jewish denominations, one form or another of these rules eventually became more or less accepted by parties engaging in Jewish-Christian theological dialogue.

Robert Gordis held that "a rational dialogue conducted on the basis of knowledge and mutual respect between the two components of the religio-ethical tradition of the Western world can prove a blessing to our age." His proposed groundrules for fair discussion are these:

(1) People should not label Jews as worshipping an inferior "the Old Testament God of Justice" while saying that Christians worship a superior "God of Love of the New Testament." Gordis brings forth quotes from the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) which in his view prove that this view is a misleading caricature of both religions that was created by selective quotation.

(2) He holds that Christians should stop "the widespread practice of contrasting the primitivism, tribalism and formalism of the Old Testament with the spirituality, universalism, and freedom of the New, to the manifest disadvantage of the former." Gordis again brings forth quotes from the Tanakh which in his view prove that this view is a misleading caricature of both religions, created by selective quotation.

(3) "Another practice which should be surrendered is that of referring to Old Testament verses quoted in the New as original New Testament passages. Many years ago, Bertrand Russell, whose religious orthodoxy is something less than total, described the Golden Rule 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself' as New Testament teaching. When the Old Testament source (Leviticus 19:18) was called to his attention, he blandly refused to recognise his error."

(4) Christians need to understand that while Judaism is based in the Hebrew Bible, it is not identical to the religion described in it. Rather, Judaism is based on the Bible as understood through the classical works of rabbinic literature, such as the Mishnah and Talmud. Gordis writes "To describe Judaism within the framework of the Old Testament is as misleading as constructing a picture of American life in terms of the Constitution, which is, to be sure, the basic law of the land but far from coextensive with our present legal and social system."

(5) Jews must "rise above the heavy burden of historical memories which have made it difficult for them to achieve any real understanding, let alone an appreciation, of Christianity. It is not easy to wipe out the memories of centuries of persecution and massacre, all too often dedicated to the advancement of the cause of the Prince of Peace.....[It is] no easy task for Jews to divest themselves of the heavy burden of group memories from the past, which are unfortunately reinforced all too often by personal experiences in the present. Nevertheless, the effort must be made, if men are to emerge from the dark heritage of religious hatred which has embittered their mutual relationships for twenty centuries. There is need for Jews to surrender the stereotype of Christianity as being monolithic and unchanging and to recognise the ramifications of viewpoint and emphasis that constitute the multicolored spectrum of contemporary Christianity."

Gordis calls on Jews to "see in Christian doctrine an effort to apprehend the nature of the divine that is worthy of respect and understanding" and that "the dogmas of the Christian church have expressed this vision of God in terms that have proved meaningful to Christian believers through the centuries." Gordis calls on Jews to understand with tolerance and respect the historical and religious context which led Christians to develop the concepts of the Virgin Birth, the Incarnation, the Passion, and the Resurrection, even if Jews themselves do not accept these ideas as correct. Similarly, Gordis calls on Christians to understand with tolerance and respect that Jews do not accept these beliefs, since they are in contradiction to the Jewish understanding of the unity of God. ("The Root and the Branch", Chapter 4, Robert Gordis, Univ. of Chicago Press, 1962)

Recently, over 120 rabbis have signed the Dabru Emet ("Speak the Truth"), a document concerning the relationship between Judaism and Christianity. While affirming that there are substantial theological differences between these two religions, the purpose of Dabru Emet is to point out common ground. It is not an official document of any of the Jewish denominations *per se*, but it is representative of what many Jews feel. Dabru Emet sparked a controversy in segments of the Jewish community. Many Jews disagree with parts of it for a variety of reasons.

Views on Jewish-Muslim Dialogue

Many Muslim and Jewish groups and individuals have together created projects working for peace among Israelis and Arabs, most of which have as one of their goals overcoming religious prejudice.

The viewpoint of Conservative Judaism is summarised in *Emet Ve-Emunah: Statement of Principles of Conservative Judaism*. This official statement holds that:

> "As Conservative Jews, we acknowledge without apology the many debts which Jewish religion and civilisation owe to the nations of the world. We eschew triumphalism with respect to other ways of serving God. Maimonides believed that other monotheistic faiths, Christianity and Islam, serve to spread knowledge of, and devotion to, the God and the Torah of Israel throughout the world. Many modern thinkers, both Jewish and gentile, have noted that God may well have seen fit to enter covenants with many nations. Either outlook, when relating to others, is perfectly compatible with a commitment to one's own faith and pattern of religious life. If we criticise triumphalism in our own community, then real dialogue with other faith groups requires that we criticise triumphalism and other failings in those quarters as well. In the second half of the twentieth century, no relationship between Jews and Christians can be dignified or honest without facing up frankly to the centuries of prejudice, theological anathema, and persecution that have been thrust upon Jewish communities, culminating in the horrors of the Shoah (Holocaust). No relationship can be nurtured between Jews and Muslims unless it acknowledges explicitly and seeks to combat the terrible social and political effects of Muslim hostility, as well as the disturbing but growing reaction of Jewish anti-Arabism in the Land of Israel. But all of these relationships, properly pursued, can bring great blessing to the Jewish community and to the world. As the late Professor Abraham Joshua Heschel put it, "no religion is an island.""

Views on Dialogue with Non-Monotheists

A small number of modern Jewish theologians such as Yehezkel Kaufman and Rabbi Joseph H. Hertz have suggested that perhaps only the Israelites were forbidden to worship idols, but perhaps such worship was permissible for members of other religions. (Yehezkel Kaufman, "The Religion of Israel", Univ. of Chicago Press, 1960; J. H. Hertz, "Pentateuch and Haftorahs" Soncino Press, 1960, p.759). Most Jewish theologians disagree, saying that the original meaning of the text was to condemn idolatry in total. However, a growing number of Jewish theologians question whether Hindus and Buddhists today should be considered idolaters in the Biblical sense of the term. Their reasons are that modern day Buddhists, Hindus and others (a) do not literally worship "sticks and stones", as the idolaters in the Tanakh were described doing. Their beliefs have far more theological depth than ancient pagans, and they are well aware that icons they worship are only symbols of a deeper level of reality (though the same can be

said of modern day pagans, (b) they do not practice child sacrifice, (c) they are of high moral character, and (d) they are not anti-Semitic. As such, some Jews argue that not only does God have a relationship with all gentile monotheists, but that God also maintains a relationship with Hindus and other polytheists, as well as with members of other non-monotheistic religions such as Buddhism.

INTRA-RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

The article on Relationships between Jewish religious movements describes how the different Jewish denominations view each other and interact with each other.

CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM

Although Christianity has its roots in Second Temple Judaism, the modern forms of these two religions fundamentally diverge in theology and practice. *Judaism* places greater emphasis on practice, focusing primary questions on how to respond to the eternal Covenant *their nation* received at Mount Sinai. *Christianity* places greater emphasis on theology, focusing primary questions on how *each person* receives the Covenant offered by Jesus. Their theological and practical differences continue to diverge from these starting points.

The article on Judeo-Christian tradition emphasises continuities and convergences between the two religions, this article emphasises the widely diverging views held by *Christianity* and *Judaism*.

NEITHER RELIGION IS MONOLITHIC

As with the article on the Judeo-Christian tradition, this article makes generalisations about Jewish and Christian beliefs and practices. Nevertheless, neither religion is monolithic. There are also individual variations in belief and practice among members of both Jewish and Christian communities.

RAISON D'ÊTRE OF THE RELIGION

Each religion has an ethos, that is, an internal description of its *raison d'être*. The ethos of Christianity is to provide all human beings with what it holds to be the only valid path to salvation (John 14:6, Great Commission, Extra Ecclesiam nulla salus, Solus Christus). Christians believe people are, in their current state, sinful. Christians believe that Jesus was both the Son of God and God the Son, God made incarnate; that Jesus' death by crucifixion was a sacrifice to atone for all humanity's sins, and that acceptance of Jesus as the Christ

saves one from judgement (John 5:24) and gives one Eternal life (John 3:16). Christians believe that Jesus is the mediator of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8:6). His famous sermon from a hill representing Mount Zion is considered by many Christian scholars to be the anti-type of the proclamation of the Old Covenant by Moses from Mount Sinai. See also Catechism.

Judaism's *raison d'être* is to carry out the Covenant between God and the Jewish people. The Torah (lit. "teaching"), both written and oral, both tells the story of this covenant, and provides Jews with the terms of the covenant. The Torah thus guides Jews to walk in God's ways (Deut 30:16), to help them learn how to live a holy life on earth, and to bring holiness into the world and into every part of life, so that life may be elevated to a high level of sanctity (Lev 19:2, Imitatio dei). This will allow the Jewish people as a community to be a "light unto the nations" (Isa 42:6, 49:6, 60:3) (*i.e.*, a role model) over the course of history and a part of the divine intent of bringing about an age of peace and sanctity where ideally a faithful life and good deeds should be ends in themselves, not means. See also Jewish principles of faith.

THE NATURE OF RELIGION: NATIONAL VERSUS UNIVERSAL

Judaism does not characterise itself as a religion so much as a way of life (although one can speak of the Jewish religion and religious Jews). The subject of the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible) is the history of the Children of Israel (also called Hebrews), especially in terms of their relationship with God. Thus, Judaism has also been characterised as a culture or as a civilisation. Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan defines Judaism as an evolving religious civilisation. One crucial sign of this is that one need not believe, or even do, anything to be Jewish; the historic definition of 'Jewishness' requires only that one be born of a Jewish mother, or that one convert to Judaism in accord with Jewish law. (Today, Reform and Reconstructionist Jews also include those born of Jewish fathers and Gentile mothers if the children are raised as Jews.)

To religious Jews, Jewish peoplehood is closely tied to their relationship with God, and thus has a strong theological component. This relationship is encapsulated in the notion that Jews are a chosen people. Although many non-Jews have taken this as a sign of arrogance or exclusivity, Jewish scholars and theologians have emphasised that a special relationship between Jews and God does not in any way preclude other nations having their own relationship with God, and does not mean Jews are superior to members of other nations. In this sense, "chosen" means chosen to undertake a duty, a responsibility or

a role, rather than chosen as higher status or more deserving. For strictly observant Jews, being "chosen" fundamentally means that it was God's wish that a group of people would exist in a covenant with Him, and would be bound to obey a certain set of laws (see *Torah* and *halakha*) as a duty of their covenant. They view their divine purpose as being ideally a "light upon the nations" and a "holy people" (*i.e.*, a people who live their lives fully in accordance with Divine will), not "the one path to God".

Jews hold that other nations and peoples are not required (or expected) to obey Jewish law. The only laws Judaism believes are automatically binding on other nations are known as the Seven Laws of Noah (which are mainly humanitarian). Thus, as a national religion, Judaism holds that others may have their own, different, paths to God (or holiness, or "salvation"). Nevertheless, all people must recognise God's existence. Authorities disagree as to whether non-Jews must also recognise God's unity.

Christianity, on the other hand, is characterised by its claim to universality, which marks a significant break from Jewish identity and thought. Christians believe that Christianity represents the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham and the nation of Israel, that Israel would be a blessing to all nations. Although Christians generally believe their religion to be very inclusive (since not only Jews but all gentiles can be Christian), Jews see Christianity as highly exclusive, because it views non-Christians (such as Jews) as having an incomplete or imperfect relationship with God, and therefore excluded from grace, salvation, or heaven.

This crucial difference between the two religions has other implications. For example, while in a conversion to Judaism a convert must accept Jewish principles of faith, the process is more like a form of adoption, or changing national citizenship (*i.e.* becoming a formal member of the people, or tribe), whereas conversion to Christianity is generally a declaration of faith (although some denominations view it specifically as adoption into a community of Christ, and orthodox Christian tradition views it as being a literal joining together of the members of Christ's body).

Both Christianity and Judaism have been affected by the diverse cultures of their respective members. For example, what Jews from Eastern Europe and from North Africa consider "Jewish food" has more in common with the cuisines of non-Jewish Eastern Europeans and North Africans than with each other, although for religious Jews

all food-preparation must conform to the same laws of Kashrut. According to non-Orthodox Jews and critical historians, Jewish law too has been affected by surrounding cultures (for example, some scholars argue that the establishment of absolute monotheism in Judaism was a reaction against the dualism of Zoroastrianism that Jews encountered when living under Persian rule; Jews rejected polygamy during the Middle Ages, influenced by their Christian neighbors). According to Orthodox Jews too there are variations in Jewish custom from one part of the world to another. It was for this reason that Joseph Karo's Shulchan Aruch did not become established as the authoritative code of Jewish law until after Moshe Isserlis added his commentary, which documented variations in local custom.

UNDERSTANDING OF THE BIBLE

Jews and Christians seek authority from many of the same basic books, but they conceive of these books in significantly different ways.

The Hebrew Bible is comprised three parts:

• Torah—the five books of Moses
• Nevi'im—the writings of the Prophets, and
• Ketuvim—other writings canonised over time, such as the Books of Esther, Ruth or Job.

Collectively, these are known as the Tanakh, a Hebrew acronym for the first letters of each.

According to Rabbinic Judaism, the Torah was revealed by God to Moses; within it, Jews find 613 Mitzvot (commandments), of which some are prescriptive and others of which are proscriptive. Moreover, Rabbinic tradition asserts that God revealed two Torahs to Moses, one that was written down, and one that was transmitted orally. Wheras the Written Torah has a fixed form, the Oral Torah is a living tradition which includes not only specific supplements to the Written Torah (for instance, What is the proper manner of shechita and what is meant by "Frontlets" in the Shema), but also procedures for understanding and talking about the Written Torah (thus, the Oral Torah revealed at Sinai includes debates among rabbis who lived long after Moses). The Oral Law elaborations of narratives in the Bible and stories about the rabbis referred to as aggadah ("lore"). It also includes elaboration of the 613 commandments in the form of laws referred to as halachah ("the way"). Elements of the Oral Torah were committed to writing and edited by Judah HaNasi in the Mishnah in 200 C.E.;

much more of the Oral Torah were committed to writing in the Babylonian and a Jerusalem Talmuds, which were edited around 600 C.E. and 450 C.E., respectively. The Talmuds are notable for the way they combine law and lore, for their explication of the midrashic method of interpreting tests, and for their accounts of debates among rabbis, which preserve divergent and conflicting interpretations of the Bible and legal rulings.

Since the transcription of the Talmud, notable rabbis have compiled law codes that are generally held in high regard: the Mishnah Torah, the Tur, and the Shulchan Aruch. The latter, which was based on earlier codes and supplemented by a commentary that notes other practices and customs practiced by Jews in different communities, is generally held to be authoritative by Orthodox Jews. The Zohar, which was written in the thirteenth century, is generally held as the most important mystical treatise of the Jews.

All contemporary Jewish movements consider the Tanakh, including the Written Torah, and the Oral Torah in the form of the Mishnah and Talmuds as sacred, although movements are divided as to claims concerning their divine revelation, and also their authority. For Jews, the Torah—written and oral—is one's primary guide to the relationship between God and man, a living document that has unfolded and will continue to unfold whole new insights over the generations and millennia. A saying that captures this goes, "Turn it [the Torah's words] over and over again, for everything is in it."

Christians accept the Written Torah and other books of the Hebrew Bible, although they occasionally give readings from the Koine Greek Septuagint translation or the Dead Sea Scrolls instead of the Biblical Hebrew/Biblical Aramaic Masoretic Text. Two notable examples are:

• Isaiah 7:14—"virgin" instead of "young woman"
• Psalm 22—"they have pierced my hands and feet" instead of "like a lion, they are at my hands and feet"

In the second example, the Dead Sea Scrolls support the reading of the Septuagint.

Also, instead of the traditional Jewish order and names for the books, Christians organise and name the books closer to that found in the Septuagint. Some Christian denominations (such as Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox), include a number of books that are not in the Hebrew Bible—called the biblical apocrypha or deutero-canonical books in their canon that are not in today's Jewish canon,

although they were included in the Septuagint (see biblical canon and table of books of Judeo-Christian Scripture). However, Christians reject the Jewish Oral Torah (Matt 15:6), which was still in oral, and therefore unwritten, form in the time of Jesus.

Christians believe that God has established a New Covenant with people through Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Epistles, and other books collectively called the New Testament (the word *testament* is commonly confused with the word *covenant*). For some Christians, such as Roman Catholics and Orthodox Christians, this New Covenant includes authoritative Sacred Traditions and Canon law. Others, especially Protestants, reject the authority of such traditions and instead hold to the principle of *sola scriptura* which accepts only the Bible itself as the final rule of faith and practice. Additionally, some denominations include the oral teachings of Jesus to the Apostles which have been handed down to this day, such as by Apostolic Succession.

Since Christians refer to the Biblical books about Jesus as the New Testament, they also refer to the canon of Hebrew books as the Old Testament, where *old* is a reference to time not obsolescence (see Meaning of *old* in Old Testament). Judaism, however, does not accept the retronymic labeling of its sacred texts as the "Old Testament," and likewise some Jews refer to the New Testament as the Christian Testament or Christian Bible. Judaism rejects all claims that Christian New Covenant ideas supersedes, fulfills, or is the unfolding or consummation of the covenant expressed in the Written and Oral Torahs. It therefore does not accept that the New Testament has any religious authority over Jews.

Many Jews view Christians as having quite an ambivalent view of the Torah, or Mosaic law: on one hand Christians treat it as God's absolute word, but on the other, they apply its commandments with an alleged selectively (compare Biblical law in Christianity). As it seems to some Jews, Christians cite commandments from the Old Testament to support one point of view but then ignore other commandments of a similar class which are also of equal weight. Examples of this are certain commandments where God states explicitly they shall abide "for ever" (for example Exo 31:16-17, Exo 12:14-15), or where God states a particular thing is an "abomination", but which are not undertaken by most Christians.

Christians explain that such selectivity is based on rulings made by early Jewish Christians in the Book of Acts, in that while believing

Gentiles did not need to fully convert to Judaism, they should follow some aspects of Torah like avoiding idolatry and fornication including, of particular note in modern times, homosexuality. This view is also reflected by modern Judaism, in that Righteous Gentiles needn't convert to Judaism and observe all of Torah, but only certain Noahide Laws which also contain prohibitions against idolatry and fornication.

Some Christians agree that Jews who accept Jesus should still observe all of Torah, based on warnings by Jesus to Jews not to use him as an excuse to disregard it, and they support efforts of those like Messianic Jews to do that, but other forms of Christianity oppose all observance to the Mosaic law, even by Jews, which is sometimes known as Antinomianism. A minority view in Christianity, known as Christian Torah-submission, holds that the Mosaic law as it is written is binding on all followers of God under the New Covenant, even for Gentiles, because it views God's commands as "everlasting" (Ps 119:152, 119:160; Ex 12:24, 29:9; Lev 16:29) and "good" (Neh 9:13; Ps 119:39; Rom 7:7-12).

CONCEPTS OF GOD

Traditionally, both Judaism and Christianity believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, for Jews the God of the Tanakh, for Christians the God of the Old Testament, the creator of the universe. Both religions reject the view that God is entirely immanent, and within the world as a physical presence, (although Christians believe in the incarnation of God). Both religions reject the view that God is entirely transcendent, and thus separate from the world, as the pre-Christian Greek Unknown God. Both religions reject atheism on one hand and polytheism on the other.

Both religions agree that God shares both transcendent and immanent qualities. How these religions resolve this issue is where the religions differ. Christianity posits that God exists as a Trinity; in this view God exists as three distinct persons who share a single divine essence, or substance. In those three there is one, and in that one there are three; the one God is indivisible, while the three persons are distinct and unconfused, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. It teaches that God became especially immanent in physical form through the Incarnation of God the Son who was born as Jesus of Nazareth, who is believed to be at once fully God and fully human. There are "Christian" sects that deny one or more of these doctrines, however. See also Nontrinitarianism. By contrast, Judaism sees God as a single entity, and views trinitarianism as both

incomprehensible and a violation of the Bible's teaching that God is one. It rejects the notion that Jesus or any other object or living being could be 'God', that God could have a literal 'son' in physical form or is divisible in any way, or that God could be made to be joined to the material world in such fashion. Although Judaism provides Jews with a word to label God's transcendence (*Ein Sof*, without end) and immanence (*Shekhinah*, in-dwelling), these are merely human words to describe two ways of experiencing God; God is one and indivisible.

Some Jewish and Christian philosophers hold that due to these differences, it may well be that Jews and Christians don't believe in the same god at all.

Shituf

The majority Jewish view, codified in Jewish law, is that Christians do worship the same God that Jews, along with "extra" gods (*i.e.*, the other two sections of the trinity). This theology is referred to in Hebrew as 'Shituf' (literally "partnership"; in this context, that both the other gods and God work together). Although this theology is strictly forbidden to Jews, it may be an acceptable belief for non-Jews (according to the ruling of some Rabbinic authorities).

Accordingly, some Messianic congregations uphold a similar view with the description of God as a "compound unity." Christian theology, however, describes such a concept as Tri-theism, and holds that any partnership of extra "gods" is strictly heretical. Thus, the very concept that Jewish theology describes as allowable for Christianity, Christians forbid as a denial of monotheism.

RIGHT ACTION

Faith Versus Good Deeds

Judaism teaches that the purpose of the Torah is to teach us how to act correctly. God's existence is a given in Judaism, and not something that most authorities see as a matter of required belief. Although some authorities see the Torah as commanding Jews to believe in God, Jews see belief in God as a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for a Jewish life. The quintessential verbal expression of Judaism is the Shema Yisrael, the statement that the God of the Bible is their God, and that this God is unique and one. The quintessential physical expression of Judaism is behaving in accordance with the 613 Mitzvot (the commandments specified in the Torah), and thus live one's life in God's ways.

Thus, fundamentally in Judaism, one is enjoined to bring holiness into life (with the guidance of Gods laws), rather than removing oneself from life to be holy.

Much of Christianity also teaches that God wants people to perform good works, but all branches hold that good works alone will not lead to salvation, which is called Legalism. The exception is Dual-covenant theology. Some Christian denominations hold that salvation depends upon transformational faith in Jesus which expresses itself in good works as a testament (or witness) to ones faith for others to see (primarily Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism), while others (including most Protestants) hold that faith alone is necessary for salvation. However, the difference is not as great as it seems, because it really hinges on the definition of "faith" used. The first group generally uses the term "faith" to mean "intellectual and heartfelt assent and submission." Such a faith will not be salvific until a person has allowed it to effect a life transforming conversion (turning towards God) in their being (see ontological faith). The Christians that hold to "salvation by faith alone" (also called by its Latin name "sola fide") define faith as being implicitly ontological—mere intellectual assent is not termed "faith" by these groups. Faith, then, is life-transforming by definition. See also Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification and Christian View of the Law.

Sin and Original Sin

In both religions, one's offenses against the will of God are called sin. These sins can be thoughts, words, or deeds.

Catholicism categorises sins into various groups. A wounding of the relationship with God is often called venial sin; a complete rupture of the relationship with God is often called mortal sin. Without salvation from sin (see below), a person's separation from God is permanent, causing such a person to enter Hell in the afterlife. Both the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church define sin more or less as a "macula," a spiritual stain or uncleanliness which constitutes damage to man's image and likeness of God.

Original Sin refers to the idea that the sin of Adam and Eve's disobedience (sin "at the origin") has passed on a spiritual heritage, so to speak. Christians teach that human beings inherit a corrupted or damaged human nature in which the tendency to do bad is greater than it would have been otherwise, so much so that human nature would not be capable now of participating in the afterlife with God.

This is not a matter of being "guilty" of anything; each person is only personally guilty of their own actual sins. However, this understanding of original sin is what lies behind the Christian emphasis on the need for spiritual salvation from a spiritual Saviour, who can forgive and set aside sin even though humans are not inherently pure and worthy of such salvation. St. Paul in Romans and I Corinthians placed special emphasis on this doctrine, and stressed that belief in Jesus would allow Christians to overcome death and attain salvation in the hereafter.

Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox Christians, and some Protestants teach the Sacrament of Baptism is the means by which each person's damaged human nature is healed and Sanctifying Grace (capacity to enjoy and participate in the spiritual life of God) is restored. This is referred to as "being born of water and the Spirit," following the terminology in the Gospel of St. John. Most Protestants believe this salvific grace comes about at the moment of personal decision to follow Jesus, and that Baptism is a symbol of the grace already received.

Hebrew has several words for sin, each with its own specific meaning. The word *pesha*, or "trespass", means a sin done out of rebelliousness. The word *aveira* means "transgression". And the word *avone*, or "iniquity", means a sin done out of moral failing. The word most commonly translated simply as "sin", *het*, literally means "to go astray." Just as Jewish law, *halachah* provides the proper "way" (or path) to live, sin involves straying from that path. Judaism teaches that humans are born with freewill, and morally neutral, with both a *yetzer hatov*, (literally, "the good inclination", in some views, a tendency towards goodness, in others, a tendency towards having a productive life and a tendency to be concerned with others) and a *yetzer hara*, (literally "the evil inclination", in some views, a tendency towards evil, and in others, a tendency towards base or animal behaviour and a tendency to be selfish). In Judaism all human beings are believed to have free will and can choose the path in life that they will take. It does not teach that choosing good is impossible—only at times more difficult. There is almost always a "way back" if a person wills it. (Although texts mention certain categories for whom the way back will be exceedingly hard, such as the slanderer, the habitual gossip, and the malicious person)

The rabbis recognise a positive value to the *yetzer hara*: one tradition identifies it with God's observation on the last day of creation that His accomplishment was "very good" (God's work on the preceding days was just described as "good") and explain that without the *yetzer*

hara there would be no marriage, children, commerce or other fruits of human labour; the implication is that *yetzer hatov* and *yetzer hara* are best understood not as moral categories of good and evil but as selfless versus selfish orientations, either of which used rightly can serve God's will.

Or as Hillel the Elder famously summarised the Jewish philosophy:

"If I am not for myself, who will be for me?
"And when I am for myself, what am 'I'?
"And if not now, [then] when?

Another explanation is, without the existence of the yetzer ha'ra, there would be no merit earned in following God's commandments; choice is only meaningful if there has indeed been a choice made. So whereas creation was "good" before, it became "very good" when the evil inclination was added, for then it became possible to truly say that man could make a true choice to obey God's "mitzvot" (wishes or commandments). This is because Judaism views the following of God's ways as a desirable end in and of itself rather than a means to an end.

Jews recognise two kinds of "sin," offenses against other people, and offenses against God. Offenses against God may be understood as violation of a contract (the covenant between God and the Children of Israel). Since the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem, Jews have believed that right action (as opposed to right belief) is the way for a person to atone for one's sins. Midrash *Avot de Rabbi Natan* states the following:

One time, when Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai was walking in Jerusalem with Rabbi Yehosua, they arrived at where the Temple now stood in ruins. "Woe to us" cried Rabbi Yehosua, "for this house where atonement was made for Israel's sins now lies in ruins!" Answered Rabban Yochanan, "We have another, equally important source of atonement, the practice of *gemilut hasadim* ("loving kindness"), as it is stated "I desire loving kindness and not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6).

The Babylonian Talmud states:

Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Eleazar both explain that as long as the Temple stood, the altar atoned for Israel, but now, one's table atones [when the poor are invited as guests]. (Tractate Berachot, 55a.)

The liturgy of the Days of Awe (the High Holy Days; *i.e.* Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) states that prayer, repentance and tzedakah (the dutiful giving of charity) atone for sin. But prayer cannot atone

for wrongs done, without an honest sincere attempt to rectify any wrong done to the best of one's ability, and the sincere intention to avoid repetition. Atonement to Jews means to repent and set aside, and the word "T'shuvah" used for atonement actually means "to return". Judaism is optimistic in that it always sees a way that a determined person may return to what is good, and that God waits for that day too.

Love

Although love is central to both Christianity and Judaism, literary critic Harold Bloom (in his *Jesus and Yahweh: The Names Divine*) argues that their notions of love are fundamentally different. Specifically, he links the Jewish conception of love to justice, and the Christian conception of love to charity.

As in English, the Hebrew word for "love," ahavah àäáä, is used to describe intimate or romantic feelings or relationships, such as the love between parent and child in Genesis 22:2; 25: 28; 37:3; the love between close friends in I Samuel 18:2, 20:17; or the love between a young man and young woman in Song of Songs.

Like many Jewish scholars and theologians, Bloom understands Judaism as fundamentally a religion of love. But he argues that one can understand the Hebrew conception of love only by looking at one of the core commandments of Judaism, Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as yourself." Talmudic sages Hillel and Rabbi Akiva commented that this is a major element of the Jewish religion. Also, this commandment is arguably at the center of the Jewish faith. As the third book of the Torah, Leviticus is literally the central book. Historically, Jews have considered it of central importance: traditionally, children began their study of the Torah with Leviticus, and the midrashic literature on Leviticus is among the longest and most detailed of midrashic literature (see Bamberger 1981: 737). Bernard Bamberger considers Leviticus 19, beginning with God's commandment in verse 3 – "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God, am holy" – to be "the climactic chapter of the book, the one most often read and quoted" (1981:889). Leviticus 19:18 is itself the climax of this chapter.

As theologian Franz Rosenzweig has pointed out, "love" in this context is remarkably different from the more common examples of love in that it constitutes an impersonal relationship:

> ...the neighbor is only a representative. He is not loved for his own sake, nor for his beautiful eyes, but only because he just happens to be

standing there, because he happens to be nighest to me. Another could easily stand in his place — precisely at this place nearest me. The neighbor is the other...

(This point is underscored by another verse in the same chapter, Leviticus 19: 34, commanding the Children of Israel to love strangers.)

According to Franz Rosenzweig, the commandment to love one's neighbor itself arises out of another unique love: the relationship between God and the Children of Israel. That the relationship between God and the Children of Israel is a romantic relationship and comparable to the marital bond is made clear in Hosea 2:19 (see also Ezekiel 16:8, 60; Isaiah 54:5; Jeremiah 3:14; 31:32). The centrality of love to the relationship between God and Israel is epitomised in Deuteronomy 6: 4-5: "Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God; the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." Arguably, this commandment is as central to Judaism as Leviticus 19: 18, as it was recited twice daily in the Temple in Jerusalem, and in the prayers of all observant Jews. Moreover, the Rabbis dictated that all Jews should recite this verse at the moment of their death (this custom contrasts with Mathew 27: 46, "About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' — which means, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" see also Mark 15: 33; Luke 23: 46, however, is closer to the spirit of Jewish practice: "Jesus called out with a loud voice, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.' When he had said this, he breathed his last.")

Apparently by the Hellenistic period these two commandments were understood to be central to Jewish faith (see Mark 12: 28-32). Rosenzweig believes that these two commandments to love are inextricably connected, but in a complex way. He finds it remarkable that throughout the Pentateuch God demands that Israel love Him, yet never professes love for Israel (except in the future; that if Israel loves God He will bless them in return). But he does not see this as evidence that God does not love Israel; on the contrary. Rosenzweig asks, how can someone command love? The only answer, he argues, is that only a lover can do so; only one who loves can demand, "love me!' in return (Rosenzweig 1970: 176-177). The consequences of this demand, according to Rosenzweig, provide the foundation for Judaism.

The first consequence of being loved, according to Rosenzweig, is a feeling of shame:

In the admission of love, the soul bares itself. To admit that one requites love and in the future wants nothing but to be loved — this is sweet.

But it is hard to admit that one was without love in the past. And yet — love would not be the moving, the gripping, the searing experience that it is if the moved, gripped, seared soul were not conscious of the fact that up to this moment it had not been moved or gripped. Thus, a shock was necessary before the self could become the beloved soul. And the soul is ashamed of its former self, and that it did not, under its own power, break this spell in which it was confined. This is the shame that blocks the beloved mouth that wishes to make acknowledgment. The mouth has to acknowledge its past and still present weakness by wishing to acknowledge its already present and future bliss. (Rosenzweig 1970: 179)

Thus, the immediate response to God's commandment to love is to confess, "I have sinned." For Rosenzweig this confession is not a source of shame; on the contrary, by speaking a truth about the past, it makes love in the present possible and thus "abolishes shame."

Consequently, Rosenzweig does not believe that this confession requires absolution:

It is not God that need cleanse it [the soul of the beloved, *i.e.* Israel] of its sin. Rather it cleanses itself in the presence of his love. It is certain of God's love in the very moment that shame withdraws from it and it surrenders itself in free, present admission—as certain as if God had spoken into its ear that "I forgive" which is longed for earlier when it confessed to him its sins of the past. It no longer needs this formal absolution. It is freed of its burden at the very moment of daring to assume all of it on its shoulders. So too the beloved no longer needs the acknowledgment of the lover which she longed for before she admitted her love. At the very moment when she herself dares to admit it, she is as certain of his love as if he were whispering his acknowledgment into her ear. (Rosenzweig 1970: 180-181)

In other words, Rosenzweig sees in the Hebrew Bible a "grammar of love" in which God can communicate "I love you" only by demanding "You must love me," and Israel can communicate "I love you" only by confessing "I have sinned." Therefore, this confession does not lead God to offer an unnecessary absolution; it merely expresses Israel's love for God.

But "What then is God's answer to this 'I am thine' by which the beloved soul acknowledges him" if it is not "absolution?" Rosenzweig's answer is: revelation: "He cannot make himself known to the soul before the soul has acknowledged him. But now he must do so. For this it is by which revelation first reaches completion. In its groundless presentness, revelation must now permanently touch the ground."

(Rosenzweig 1970: 182) Revelation, epitomised by Sinai, is God's response to Israel's love. Contrary to Paul, who argued that "through the law comes knowledge of sin" (Romans 3: 20), Rosenzweig argues that it is because of and after a confession of sin that God reveals to Israel knowledge of the law.

For Rosenzweig as for the Rabbis, Song of Songs provides a paradigm for understanding the love between God and Israel, a love that "is strong as death" (Song of Songs 8:6; Rosenzweig 1970: 202). God's love is as strong as death because it is love for the People Israel, and it is as a collective that Israel returns God's love. Thus, although one may die, God and Israel, and the love between them, lives on. In other words, Song of Songs is "the focal book of revelation" (Rosenzweig 1970: 202) where the "grammar of love" is most clearly expressed. But, Rosenzweig argues, this love that is as strong as death ultimately transcends itself, as it takes the form of God's law — for it is the law that binds Israel as a people, and through observance of the law that each Jew relives the moment of revelation at Mt. Sinai. Ultimately, Song of Songs points back to Leviticus and the rest of the Torah.

Song of Songs largely describes a clandestine love affair, forbidden by the woman's brothers (Song of Songs 8: 8-9), and scorned by her friends (Song of Songs 5:9). For Rosenzweig, the concealed nature of this romance is emblematic of the way lovers lose themselves in one another. Yet the book itself struggles against this private love. "O that you were like a brother to me," the woman cries, "that nursed at my mother's breast! If I met you outside, I would kiss you, and none would despise me" (Song of Songs 8:1). The point, for Rosenzweig, is that love neither can nor should remain private.

> Now she is his. Is she? Does not something ultimate still separate them at the pinnacle of love — beyond even that "Thou art mine" of the lover, beyond even that peace which the beloved found in his eyes, this last word of her overflowing heart? Does there not still remain one last separation? The lover has explained his love for her.... But will this explanation do? Does not life demand more than explanation, more than the calling by name? Does it not demand reality? And a sob escapes the blissfully overflowing heart of the beloved and forms into words, words which haltingly point to something unfulfilled, something which cannot be fulfilled in the immediate revelation of love: "O that you were like a brother to me!" Not enough that the beloved lover calls his bride by the name of sister in the flickering twilight of allusion. The name ought to be the truth. It should be heard in the bright light of "the street," not whispered into the beloved ear in the dusk of intimate duo-

solitude, but in the eyes of the multitude, officially — "who would grant" that! Yes, who would grant that? Love no longer grants it. In truth, this "who would grant" is no longer directed to the beloved lover. Love after all always remains between two people; it knows only of I and Thou, not the street. This longing cannot be fulfilled in love... (Rosenzweig 1970: 203-204)

It cannot be fulfilled in love. For Rosenzweig, as for the Rabbis, it can be fulfilled only in law. This is the meaning of revelation: Israel's love for God provides Him with the means to enter the world, and through His commandments to Israel their love enters "the street." It is through the revelation of God's commandments, according to Rosenzweig, that the love portrayed in Song of Songs becomes the love commanded in Leviticus. Just as God's love for the Children of Israel is one of the ways that he extends Himself into the world, the necessary response by the Jews—the *way* to love God in return—is to extend their own love out towards their fellow human beings.

This extension of God's love into the world, through the People Israel, is the point of Leviticus 19:18. According to Bloom, however, this love has a different character than the romantic love celebrated in Song of Songs. He argues that to understand the commandment to love one's neighbor one must look at the other commandments that form its context, beginning with verse 9:

When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap all the way to the edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not pick your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I the Lord am your God.

You shall not steal; you shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with one another. You shall not swear falsely by My name, profaning the name of your God: I am the Lord.

You shall not defraud your neighbor. You shall not commit robbery. The wages of a laborer shall not remain with you until morning. You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind. You shall fear your God: I am the Lord.

You shall not render an unfair decision: do not favor the poor or show deference to the rich; judge your neighbor fairly. Do not deal basely with your fellows. Do not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.

You shall not hate your kinsman in your heart. Reprove your neighbor, but incur no guilt because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear

a grudge against your kinsfolk. Love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

According to Bloom these accompanying commandments reveal that for Israel, love "in the street" takes the form of "just dealing." Similarly, theologian William Herberg argued that "justice" is at the heart of the Jewish notion of love, and the foundation for Jewish law:

> The ultimate criterion of justice, as of everything else in human life, is the divine imperative — the law of love.... Justice is the institutionalisation of love in society.... This law of love requires that every man be treated as a Thou, a person, an end in himself, never merely as a thing or a means to another's end. When this demand is translated into laws and institutions under the conditions of human life in history, justice arises. (1951: 148)

The arguments of Rosenzweig, Herberg, and Bloom echo the teachings of the the Rabbis, who taught that the written and oral Torahs provide the way to express this love-as-just-dealing. This view is encapsulated in one of the most famous rabbinic stories, that of the time a man once challenged Hillel the Elder, an important Pharisee who lived at the end of the 1st century BCE, to explain the entire law (Torah) while standing on one foot. Hillel replied, "That which is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. That is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary. Go and study it." Rosenzweig suggests that Hillel presented the commandment from Leviticus in the negative form (do not do it) as a way of setting up his own, affirmative, commandment: to go and study the law—in other words, the only way to fulfil Leviticus 19:18 is to observe all the laws of the Torah, the practical embodiment of the commandment to love. Similarly, Maimonides wrote that it should only be out of love for God, rather than fear of punishment or hope for reward, that Jews should obey the law: "When man loves God with a love that is fitting he automatically carries out all the precepts of love" (Maimonides *Yad* Chapter 10, quoted in Jacobs 1973: 159).

Whereas Jews believe that law is the ultimate fulfillment of love, Christians believe that love is "the fulfillment of the Law" (Romans 13:8-10). Nevertheless, Jesus shared Hillel's—and presumably many Jews'—notion of love and the law, when he echoed the Pharisaic position that

> "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40)

When asked in reference to the latter commandment "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29), Jesus told the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37), in which the answer to the question is ultimately a foreigner (perhaps echoing Leviticus 19: 34).

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus extended the commandment to include not only "your neighbor" but "your enemy" as well:

"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' But I say to you, do not resist an evil person; but whoever strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, let him have your cloak also. Whoever forces you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks of you, and do not turn away from him who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the pagans do the same? Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect. (Matthew 5:38-48)

Jesus lived out this teaching at the end of his life. During his arrest, trial, scourging, and crucifixion, Jesus offered no resistance, totally submitting to his persecutors, however unjust. During Jesus' arrest, one of his disciples struck with a sword the ear of a man coming to seize Jesus, but Jesus commanded him to put away the sword, and healed the ear. (Luke 22:50-51) Jesus even prayed for his persecutors from the cross, calling out "Forgive them Father, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34)

Because of this, Jesus' selfless life of service, and the belief that Jesus died for the salvation of His people, Christian love is personified by Jesus, the supreme example being his martyrdom on the cross. Jesus commanded his disciples to follow his example: "My command is this: Love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12-13) Furthermore, this same love is believed to be shared between the Father, the Son, and all Christians: "Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love" (John 15:9-10). Finally, Jesus proclaimed love to be the defining characteristic of all Christians: "By

this all men will know you are my disciples, if you love one another" (John 13:35).

Still, even more remarkable statements about love are made in the New Testament by the apostle John and by Paul. The most famous, and widely considered one of the earliest and most succinct summaries of the Christian faith, runs "For God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but shall have eternal life" (John 3:16). Adding to this is "God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

In the first epistle of John, he makes the bold statement "God is Love" (1 John 4:8,16). So love is not merely *a* characteristic of God, but *the* characteristic, which alone sums up God's complete essence.

Bloom argues that the Hebrew word for love, *ahavah*, is fundamentally understood as "just dealing." In the classic characterisation of Christian love, Paul's discourse in *First Epistle to the Corinthians*, sometimes called the "love chapter," rather than using either of the two other Greek words that loosely translate to English as "love" (meaning erotic love, or *philos*, meaning familial love), Paul used the word agápç áãáðç, which is probably more literally translated as "charity," and was first translated as "love" by *William Tyndale:*

> If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. (1 Corinthians 13:1-8)... And now these three remain: Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love. (1 Corinthians 13:13)

Taking all this into account, Christian love can generally be described as: unconditional, self-sacrificing, charitable, altruistic, selfless, service-oriented, obedient, humble, peaceful, and compassionate.

The Corinthians passage is not only remarkable for the quality of love it describes. The intent of the passage is clearly to elevate love above other things traditionally considered good, including wisdom, faith, and charitable giving. It also explicitly makes love more important

than the things mentioned in the previous passage: supernatural gifts, spiritual strength and positions of leadership. Many assert that this, combined with Jesus' teachings and John's claims, expands Christian love beyond that in Leviticus. Bloom maintains that the difference is in the character of love.

Abortion

Both Jews and Christians regard pregnancy as a gift from God, and hold children to be miracles. The only statements in the Tanakh (Hebrew Bible, Christian Old Testament) about the status of a fetus state that killing an unborn infant does not have the same status as killing a born human being, and mandates a much lesser penalty (a fine); it should be added that the instance cited in the Tanakh contemplates the accidental, rather than the deliberate, causing of an abortion.

The Oral Law states that the fetus is not yet a full human being until it has been born (either the head or the body is mostly outside of the mother), therefore killing a fetus is not murder, and abortion—in restricted circumstances—has always been legal under Jewish law. Rashi, the great 12th century commentator on the Bible and Talmud, states clearly of the fetus 'lav nefesh hu—it is not a person.' The Talmud contains the expression 'ubar yerech imo—the fetus is as the thigh of its mother,' *i.e.*, the fetus is deemed to be part and parcel of the pregnant woman's body. Judaism prefers that such abortions, when necessary, take place before the first 40 days where the Babylonian Talmud Yevamot 69b states that: "the embryo is considered to be mere water until the fortieth day." Afterwards, it is considered subhuman until it is born. Christians who agree with these views may refer to this idea as abortion before the "quickening" of the soul by God in the fetus.

There are two additional passages in the Talmud which shed some light on the Jewish belief about abortion. They imply that the fetus is considered part of the mother, and not a separate entity:

- One section states that if a man purchases a cow that is found to be pregnant, then he is the owner both of the cow and the fetus.
- Another section states that if a pregnant woman converts to Judaism, that her conversion applies also to her fetus.

Judaism unilaterally supports, in fact mandates, abortion if doctors believe that it is necessary to save the life of the mother. Many rabbinic

authorities allow abortions on the grounds of gross genetic imperfections of the fetus, such as Tay-Sachs disease. They also allow abortion if the mother were suicidal because of such defects. However, Judaism holds that abortion is impermissible for family planning or convenience reasons. Each case must be decided individually, however, and the decision should lie with the mother, father, and Rabbi.

Most branches of Christianity have historically held abortion to be generally wrong, referring to Old Testament passages such as Psalm 139 and Jeremiah 1, as well as New Testament passages concerning both Jesus and John the Baptist while they were *in utero*. Also, the Didache, an early Church document, explicitly forbids abortion along with infanticide, both common practices in the Roman Empire, as murder. The view that abortion is 'equivalent to murder' is not actually widely held outside fundamentalist Protestantism in the United States. The Roman Catholic church, for example, permits medical procedures to be carried out on a mother for the purpose of saving her life, even if doing so would put the foetus at risk. Many Protestant Christians claim that the Ten Commandments prohibit abortion under the heading of "Do not murder". Others reject this view, as they hold that the context of the entire set of Biblical laws includes those laws which restrict them to already born human beings.

War, Violence and Pacifism

Jews and Christians accept as valid and binding many of the same moral principles taught in the Torah. There is a great deal of overlap between the ethical systems of these two faiths. Nonetheless, there are some highly significant doctrinal differences.

Judaism has a great many teachings about peace and compromise, and its teachings make physical violence the last possible option. Nonetheless, the Talmud teaches that "If someone comes with the intention to murder you, then one is obligated to kill in self-defense [rather than be killed]". The clear implication is that to bare one's throat would be tantamount to suicide (which Jewish law forbids) and it would also be considered helping a murderer kill someone and thus would "place an obstacle in front of a blind man" (*i.e.*, makes it easier for another person to falter in their ways). The tension between the laws dealing with peace, and the obligation to self-defense, has led to a set of Jewish teachings that have been described as tactical-pacifism. This is the avoidance of force and violence whenever possible, but the use of force when necessary to save the lives of one's self and one's people.

Although killing oneself is forbidden under normal Jewish law as being a denial of God's goodness in the world, under extreme circumstances when there has seemed no choice but to either be killed or forced to betray their religion, Jews have committed suicide or mass suicide (see Masada First French persecution of the Jews, and York Castle for examples). As a grim reminder of those times, there is even a prayer in the Jewish liturgy for "when the knife is at the throat", for those dying "to sanctify God's Name". (See: *Martyrdom*). These acts have received mixed responses by Jewish authorities. Where some Jews regard them as examples of heroic martyrdom, but others saying that while Jews should always be willing to face martyrdom if necessary, it was wrong for them to take their own lives.

Because Judaism focuses on this life, many questions to do with survival and conflict (such as the classic moral dilemma of two people in a desert with only enough water for one to survive) were analysed in great depth by the rabbis within the Talmud, in the attempt to understand the principles a godly person should draw upon in such a circumstance.

The Sermon on the Mount records that Jesus taught that if someone comes to harm you, then one must turn the other cheek. This has led four fairly sizable Protestant Christian denominations to develop a theology of pacifism, the avoidance of force and violence at all times. They are known historically as the *peace churches*, and have incorporated Christ's teachings on non-violence into their theology so as to apply it to participation in the use of violent force; those denominations are the Quakers, Mennonites, Amish, and the Church of the Brethren. Many other churches have people who hold to the doctrine without making it a part of their doctrines, or who apply it to individuals but not to governments, see also Evangelical counsels. The vast majority of Christian nations and groups have not adopted this theology, nor have they followed it in practice.

Capital Punishment

Although the Hebrew Bible has many references to capital punishment, the Jewish sages used their authority, and the demands for justice emphasised in the Bible, to make it nearly impossible for a Jewish court to impose a death sentence. Even when such a sentence might have been imposed, the Cities of Refuge and other sanctuaries, were at hand for those unintentionally guilty of capital offences. It was said in the Talmud about the death penalty in Judaism, that if a

court killed more than one person in seventy years, it was a barbarous (or "bloody") court and should be condemned as such.

This subject is discussed in more detail in Jewish views of capital punishment. Christianity usually reserved the death penalty for heresy, the denial of the Orthodox view of God's view, and witchcraft or similar non-Christian practices, which struck at the roots of Christianity as practiced. For example, in Spain, unrepentant Jews were exiled, and it was only those crypto-Jews who had accepted baptism under pressure but retained Jewish customs in private, who were punished in this way. It is presently acknowledged by most of Christianity that these uses of capital punishment were deeply immoral.

This subject is discussed in more detail in Christian views of capital punishment.

Food

Jews, unlike most Christians, still practice a restrictive diet which has many rules. Most Christians believe that the kosher food laws do not apply to them as they are no longer under the Law of Moses, although Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy have their own set of dietary observances. In addition, some Christian denominations observe some Biblical food law, for example see Ital.

SALVATION

Judaism does not see human beings as inherently flawed or sinful and needful of being saved from it, and unlike Christianity does not closely associate ideas of "salvation" with a New Covenant delivered by a Jewish Messiah.

Judaism holds instead that proper living is accomplished through good works and heartfelt prayer, as well as a strong faith in God. Judaism also teaches that Gentiles can receive a share in "the world to come". This is codified in the Mishna Avot 4:29, the Babylonian Talmud in tractates Avodah Zarah 10b, and Ketubot 111b, and in Maimonides's 12th century law code, the *Mishneh Torah*, in *Hilkhot Melachim* (Laws of Kings) 8.11.

The Christian view is that every human is a sinner, and being saved by God's grace, not simply by the merit of ones own actions, pardons a damnatory sentence to Hell.

Judgment

Both Christianity and Judaism believe in some form of judgment.

In Christianity there is a judgment after death, and Christ will return to judge the living and dead. Those positively judged will be saved and live in God's presence in Heaven, those who are negatively judged will be cast to eternal Hell or simply annihilated.

In Jewish liturgy there is significant prayer and talk of a "book of life" that one is written into, indicating that God judges each person each year even after death. This annual judgment occurs on Rosh Hashanah. Additionally, God sits daily in judgment concerning a person's daily activities. Upon the anticipated arrival of the Messiah, God will judge the nations for their persecution of Israel during the exile. Later, He will also judge the Jews over their observance of the Torah.

Heaven and Hell

There is little Jewish literature on heaven or hell as actual places, and there are few references to the afterlife in the Hebrew Bible. One is the ghostly apparition of Samuel, called up by the Witch of Endor at King Saul's command. Another is mention by the Prophet Daniel of those who sleep in the earth rising to either everlasting life or everlasting abhorrence.

Early Hebrew views were more concerned with the fate of the nation of Israel as a whole, rather than with individual immortality. A stronger belief in an afterlife for each person developed during the Second Temple period but was contested by various Jewish sects. Pharisees believed that in death, people rest in their graves until they are physically resurrected with the coming of the Messiah, and within that resurrected body the soul would exist eternally. Maimonides also included the concept of resurrection in his Thirteen Principles of Faith.

Judaism's view is summed up by a biblical observation about the Torah: in the beginning God clothes the naked (Adam), and at the end God buries the dead (Moses). The Children of Israel mourned for 40 days, then got on with their lives.

In Judaism, "Heaven" is sometimes described as a place where God debates Talmudic laws with the angels, and where Jews spend eternity studying the Written and Oral Torah. "Hell" as Gehenna is a place or condition of purgatory where Jews spend up to twelve months purifying to get into heaven, depending on how sinful they have been, although some suggest that certain types of sinners can never be purified enough to go to heaven and rather than facing eternal torment, simply cease to exist. Therefore, some violations like suicide

would be punished by separation from the community, such as not being buried in a Jewish cemetery, rather than with eternal torment. Judaism also does not have a notion of hell as a place ruled by Satan since God's dominion is total and Satan is only one of God's angels.

Catholics also believe in a purgatory for those who are going to heaven, but Christians in general believe that Hell is a fiery place of torment that never ceases, called the Lake of Fire. A small minority believe this is not permanent, and that those who go there will eventually either be saved or cease to exist. Heaven for Christians is depicted in various ways. As the Kingdom of God described in the New Testament and particularly the Book of Revelation, Heaven is a new or restored earth free of sin and death, with a New Jerusalem led by God, Jesus, and the most righteous of believers starting with 1,44,000 Jews from every tribe, and all others who received salvation living peacefully and making pilgrimages to give glory to the city.

In Christianity, promises of Heaven and Hell as rewards and punishments are often used to motivate good and bad behaviour, as threats of disaster were also used by prophets like Jeremiah to motivate Israelites. Modern Judaism generally rejects this form of motivation, instead teaching to do the right thing because it's the right thing to do. As Maimonides wrote:

> A man should not say: I shall carry out the precepts of the Torah and study her wisdom in order to receive all the blessings written therein or in order to merit the life of the World to Come and I shall keep away from the sins forbidden by the Torah in order to be spared the curses mentioned in the Torah or in order not to be cut off from the life of the World to Come. It is not proper to serve God in this fashion. For one who serves thus serves out of fear. Such as way is not that of the prophets and sages. Only the ignorant, and the women and children serve God in this way. These are trained to serve out of fear until they obtain sufficient knowledge to serve out of love. One who serves God out of love studies the Torah and practices the precepts and walks in the way of wisdom for no ulterior motive at all, neither out of fear of evil nor in order to acquire the good, but follows the truth because it is true and the good will follow the merit of attaining to it. It is the stage of Abraham our father whom the Holy One, blessed be He, called "My friend" (Isaiah 41:8 – *ohavi* = the one who loves me) because he served out of love alone. It is regarding this stage that the Holy One, Blessed be He, commanded us through Moses, as it is said: "You shall love the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:5). When man loves God with a love that is fitting he automatically carries out all the precepts of love.

> (Maimonides *Yad* Chapter 10, quoted in Jacobs 1973: 159)

The Messiah

Jews believe that a descendant of King David will one day appear to restore the Kingdom of Israel and usher in an era of peace, prosperity, and spiritual understanding for Israel and all the nations of the world. Jews refer to this person as Moshiach or 'anointed one', translated as Messiah in English and Christos in Greek. The traditional Jewish understanding of the messiah is that he is fully human and born of human parents without any supernatural element. The messiah is expected to have a relationship with God similar to that of the prophets of the Tanakh. In his commentary on the Talmud, Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon) wrote:

> All of the people Israel will come back to Torah; The people of Israel will be gathered back to the land of Israel; The Temple in Jerusalem will be rebuilt; Israel will live among the nations as an equal, and will be strong enough to defend herself; Eventually, war, hatred and famine will end, and an era of peace and prosperity will come upon the Earth.

He adds:

> "And if a king shall stand up from among the House of David, studying Torah and indulging in commandments like his father David, according to the written and oral Torah, and he will coerce all Israel to follow it and to strengthen its weak points, and will fight The Lord's wars, this one is to be treated as if he were the anointed one. If he succeeded [and won all nations surrounding him. Old prints and mss.] and built a Holy Temple in its proper place and gathered the strayed ones of Israel together, this is indeed the anointed one for certain, and he will mend the entire world to worship the Lord together... But if he did not succeed until now, or if he was killed, it becomes known that he is not this one of whom the Torah had promised us, and he is indeed like all [other] proper and wholesome kings of the House of David who died."

He also clarified the nature of the Messiah:

> "Do not imagine that the anointed King must perform miracles and signs and create new things in the world or resurrect the dead and so on. The matter is not so: For Rabbi Akiba was a great scholar of the sages of the Mishnah, and he was the assistant-warrior of the King Ben Coziba [Simon bar Kokhba]... He and all the Sages of his generation deemed him the anointed king, until he was killed by sins; only since he was killed, they knew that he was not. The Sages asked him neither a miracle nor a sign..." (Main article: *Moshiach*)

The Christian view of Jesus as Messiah goes beyond such claims and is the fulfillment and union of three anointed offices:

- A Prophet like Moses who delivers God's commands and covenant and frees people from bondage.
- A High Priest in the order of Melchizedek overshadowing the Levite priesthood.
- A King like King David ruling over Jews, and like God Himself ruling over the whole world.

For Christians, Jesus is also fully human and fully divine as the Word of God who sacrifices himself so that humans can receive salvation. Jesus sits in Heaven at the right hand of God and will judge humanity in the end times.

Christian readings of the Hebrew Bible find many references to Jesus. This takes the form in some cases of specific prophesy, but in most cases of foreshadowing by types or forerunners. Traditionally, most Christian readings of the Bible maintained that almost every prophecy was actually about the coming of Jesus, and that the entire Old Testament of the Bible is a prophecy about the coming of Jesus.

Catholic Views

Catholicism traditionally taught that "there is no salvation outside the Church", which some like Fr. Leonard Feeney—at one point excommunicated by Pope Pius XII—interpreted as saying only Catholics can be saved. However, the Catholic Church's position is a bit more nuanced than that. The Catholic Church teaches that God's intended way of saving the human race is through the Catholic Church, and there is no source of saving grace which is not already contained within the Church. It should be noted that in this sense, *any* church founded on Peter's rock, may properly be called a "Catholic" Church— Roman Catholic is but one of these though the largest. At the same time, it does not deny the possibility that those not visibly members of the Church may attain salvation as well. Jesus is the path of salvation, and whilst some know they are on that path others can travel the same way without knowing the name of the street they are on. In recent times, its teaching has been most notably expressed in the Vatican II council documents Unitatis Redintegratio (1964), Lumen Gentium (1964), Nostra aetate (1965), an encyclical issued by Pope John Paul II: Ut Unum Sint (1995), and in a document issued by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Dominus Iesus in (2000). The latter document has taken criticism for claiming that non-Christians are in a "gravely deficient situation" as compared to Catholics but also adds that "for those who are not formally and visibly members of the Church,

salvation in Christ is accessible by virtue of a grace which, while having a mysterious relationship to the Church, does not make them formally part of the Church, but enlightens them in a way which is accommodated to their spiritual and material situation."

Pope John Paul II on October 2 of 2000 emphasised that this document did not say that non-Christians were actively denied salvation: "...this confession does not deny salvation to non-Christians, but points to its ultimate source in Christ, in whom man and God are united". The Pope then, on December 6, issued a statement to further emphasise that the Church continued to support its traditional stance that salvation was available to believers of other faiths: "The gospel teaches us that those who live in accordance with the Beatitudes—the poor in spirit, the pure of heart, those who bear lovingly the sufferings of life—will enter God's kingdom." He further added, "All who seek God with a sincere heart, including those who do not know Christ and his church, contribute under the influence of Grace to the building of this Kingdom." On August 13, 2002, American Catholic bishops issued a joint statement with leaders of Reform and Conservative Judaism, called "Reflections on Covenant and Mission", which affirmed that Christians should not target Jews for conversion. The document stated: "Jews already dwell in a saving covenant with God" and "Jews are also called by God to prepare the world for God's Kingdom." However, some U.S.-led Baptist and other fundamentalist denominations still believe it is their duty to engage in what they refer to as outreach to "unbelieving" Jews.

The Vatican II Council declaration Nostra Aetate recalls the bond that spiritually ties Christians to Abraham's stock and that the salvation of the Church is mysteriously foreshadowed by the Exodus of God's chosen people from the land of bondage. Nor does she forget how she is grafted onto the well cultivated olive tree and her belief that by the cross of Christ Jews and Gentiles are reconciled and one in Himself.

Eastern Orthodox Views

Eastern Orthodox Christianity emphasises a continuing life of repentance or *metanoia*, which includes an increasing improvement in thought, belief and action. Regarding the salvation of Jews, Muslims, and other non-Christians, the Orthodox have traditionally taught the same as the Catholic Church: that there is no salvation outside the church. People of all genders, races, economic and social positions, and so forth are welcome in the church. People of any religion are welcome to convert. Orthodoxy recognises that other religions may

contain truth, to the extent that they are in agreement with Christianity. (Some of the early church fathers pointed to Socrates' belief in one God; a few more modern Orthodox Christian theologians have found traces of trinitarianism in the writings of Laozi.)

Many Orthodox theologians believe that all people will have an opportunity to embrace union with God, including Jesus, after their death, and so become part of the Church at that time. God is thought to be good, just, and merciful; it would not seem just to condemn someone because they never heard the Gospel message, or were taught a distorted version of the Gospel by heretics. Therefore, the reasoning goes, they must at some point have an opportunity to make a genuine informed decision. Ultimately, those who persist in rejecting God condemn themselves, by cutting themselves off from the ultimate source of all Life, and from the God who is Love embodied. Jews, Muslims, and members of other faiths, then, are expected to convert to Christianity in the afterlife. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints also holds this belief, and holds baptismal services in which righteous people are baptized in behalf of their ancestors who, it is believed, are given the opportunity to accept the ordinance.

Proselytizing

Judaism is not a proselytizing religion. Orthodox Judaism deliberately makes it very difficult to convert and become a Jew, and requires a significant and full-time effort in living, study, righteousness, and conduct over several years. The final decision is by no means a foregone conclusion. A person cannot become Jewish by marrying a Jew, or by joining a synagogue, nor by any degree of involvement in the community or religion, but only by explicitly undertaking intense, formal, and supervised work over years aimed towards that goal. Some less strict versions of Judaism have made this process somewhat easier but it is still far from common.

In the distant past Judaism was more evangelistic, but this was often more akin just to "greater openness to converts" (c.f. Ruth) rather than active soliciting of conversions. Since Jews believe that one need not be a Jew to approach God, there is no religious pressure to convert non-Jews to their faith, see also proselyte.

However the Chabad-Lubavitch branch of Hasidic Judaism, whose various beliefs and practices have caused controversy with other Jewish denominations, has been an exception to this non-proselytizing standard since in recent decades it has been actively promoting Noahide Laws

for Gentiles as an alternative to Christianity. By contrast, Christianity is an explicitly evangelical religion. Christians are commanded by Jesus to "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations". At some times and in certain places joyful evangelism has veered into high-pressure coercion, in those instances causing at best significant ill-will and at worst forced conversion under threat of death. See also Inquisition.

MUTUAL VIEWS

In addition to each having varied views on the other as a religion, there has also been a long and often painful history of conflict, persecution and at times, reconciliation, between the two religions, which have influenced their mutual views of their relationship over time.

Persecution, genocide and forcible conversion of Jews (*i.e.* hate crimes) were common for many centuries, with occasional gestures to reconciliation from time to time. Pogroms were common throughout Christian Europe, including organised violence, restrictive land ownership and professional lives, forcible relocation and ghettoisation, mandatory dress codes, and at times humiliating actions and torture. All had major effects on Jewish cultures.

More recently, even within the last century alone, some Jews see the current wave of evangelism as yet more reasons to doubt goodwill, while others look to the many peaceful gestures towards harmony since that time, likewise some Christians are at peace and others suspicious of Jews.

What is clear is that formally, there is mostly peaceful living side by side, with strong inter-dialogue at many levels to reconcile past differences between the two groups, and many Christians emphasise common historical heritage and religious continuity with the ancient spiritual lineage of the Jews. What is also likely is that for a long time to come, some within each will continue to consider the other with varying degrees of suspicion and hostility.

Common Jewish Views of Christianity

Jesus plays no role whatsoever in Judaism. Jews are familiar with Jesus primarily by the western world being a relatively Christian-oriented society. Most Jews believe that Jesus was a real person. Many view him as just one in a long list of failed Jewish claimants to be the messiah, none of whom fulfilled the tests of a prophet specified in the

Five Books of Moses. Others see Jesus as a teacher who worked with the gentiles and ascribe the messianic claims they find objectionable to his later followers. Because much physical and spiritual violence was done to Jews in the name of Jesus and his followers, and because evangelism is still an active aspect of many church's activities, many religious Jews are uncomfortable with discussing Jesus and treat him as a non-person. Finally, to still others, perhaps to most Jews, Jesus is simply irrelevant, a central figure in a religion that isn't theirs, much as Muhammad might seem to most Christians.

On a religious level, Judaism does not believe that God requires the sacrifice of any human. This is emphasised in Jewish traditions concerning the story of the Akedah, the binding of Isaac. In the Jewish explanation, this is a story in the Torah whereby God wanted to test Abraham's faith and willingness, and Isaac was never going to be actually sacrificed. Thus, Judaism rejects the notion that anyone can or should die for anyone else's sin (see Spiegel, 1993). As a religion, Judaism is far more focused on the practicalities of understanding how one may live a sacred life in this world according to God's will, rather than hope of spiritual salvation in a future one. Judaism does not believe in the Christian concept of Hell, nor that only those following one specific faith can be "saved". Judaism does have a punishment stage in the afterlife (*i.e.* Gehenna) as well as a Heaven (Gan Eden), but the religion does not intend it as a focus.

Christmas and other Christian festivals have no religious significance in Judaism and are not celebrated. Celebration of non-Jewish holy days is considered Avodah Zarah or "Foreign Worship" and is forbidden; however some secular Jews in the West treat Christmas as a secular (but not religious) holiday.

Common Christian Views of Judaism

Christians believe that Christianity is the fulfillment and successor of Judaism, retaining much of its doctrine and many of its practices including monotheism, the belief in a Messiah, and certain forms of worship like prayer and reading from religious texts. Other beliefs like sacrifice of a demigod for original sin and Trinity are essential differences introduced in Christianity that have no counterpart in Judaism.

Most Christians consider that the Law was necessary as an intermediate stage, but once the crucifixion of Jesus occurred, then adherence to civil and ceremonial Law was superseded by the New

Covenant since the purpose of these laws was to dictate a proper relationship to God through the tabernacles and the temples in Jerusalem.

Some Christians adhere to Replacement theology which states that Jews who reject Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God have ceased being the Chosen People. This position has been softened by some adherents, or completely rejected by other churches where Jews are recognised to have a special status due to their covenant with God through Abraham, so this continues to be an area of ongoing dispute among Christians.

Some Christians who view the Jewish people as close to God seek to understand and incorporate elements of Jewish understanding or perspective into their beliefs as a means to respect their "parent" religion of Judaism, or to more fully seek out and return to their Christian roots. Adherents of Messianic Judaism are Gentile Christians turned to such Jewish beliefs and practices, as well as ethnic Jews who have found faith in Jesus as their Messiah.

Christians embracing aspects of Judaism are sometimes criticised as Biblical Judaizers by fundamentalist Christians when they pressure Gentile Christians to observe Torah. Since they often believe they have a special obligation to vigorously evangelize Jews, they are also criticised when they pressure members of Judaism to adopt faith in Jesus.

JUDAISM AND ISLAM

The historical interaction of Judaism and Islam started in the 7th century CE with the origin and spread of Islam in the Arabian peninsula. Because Judaism and Islam share a common origin in the Middle East through Abraham, both are considered Abrahamic religions. There are many shared aspects between Judaism and Islam: Islam is similar to Judaism in its fundamental religious outlook, structure, jurisprudence and practice. Because of this, as well as through the influence of Muslim culture and philosophy on practitioners of Judaism within the Islamic world, there has been considerable and continued physical, theological, and political overlap between the two faiths in the subsequent 1,400 years.

Ancient Hebrew and Arab people are generally classified as Semitic peoples, a concept derived from Biblical accounts of the origins of the cultures known to the ancient Hebrews. Those closest to them in culture and language were generally deemed to be descended from their forefather Shem, one of the sons of Noah. Enemies were often said to

be descendants of his cursed brother Ham. Modern historians confirm the affinity of ancient Hebrews and Arabs based on characteristics that are usually transmitted from parent to child such as physical characteristics, mental characteristics, habits. The most well-studied criterion is that of language. Similarities between Semitic languages (including Hebrew and Arabic) and their differences with those spoken by other adjacent races confirm the common origin of Hebrews and Arabs and other Semitic nations.

Around the 16th century BC, Judaism developed as the first major monotheistic religion. According to Jewish tradition, the history of Judaism begins with the Covenant between God and Abraham, who is considered the first Hebrew. The Hebrew Bible occasionally refers to *Arvi* peoples (or variants thereof), translated as "Arab" or "Arabian". The Arabs of the Arabian Peninsula are considered descendants of Ismael, the first son of Abraham. While the commonly-held view among most Westerners and some lay Muslims is that Islam originated in Arabia with Muhammad's first recitations of the Qur'an in the 7th century CE, the Qur'an itself asserts that it was Abraham who is the first Muslim (in the sense of believing in God and surrendering to God and God's commands). Islam also shares many traits with Judaism (as well as with Christianity), like the belief in and reverence for common prophets, such as Moses and Abraham, who are recognised in both faiths.

Abraham

Judaism, Christianity and Islam are known as "Abrahamic religions". The first Abrahamic religion was Judaism as practiced in ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah prior to the Babylonian Exile, at the beginning of the 1st millennium CE. The firstborn son of Abraham, Ishmael, Muslims consider *Father of the Arabs*. Abraham's second son Isaac is called *Father of the Hebrews*. In the Jewish tradition Abraham is called *Avraham Avinu* or "Our Father Abraham". For Muslims, he is considered an important prophet of Islam (see *Ibrahim*) and the ancestor of Muhammad through Ishmael.

Moses

Islam affirms that Moses (*Musa*) was given a revelation, the *Torah*, which Muslims call *Tawrat* in Arabic, and believed to be the word of God (*Allah*). However, they also believe that this original revelation was modified over time by Jewish (and Christian) scribes and preachers. According to Islamic belief, the present Jewish scriptures were no

longer the original divine revelations given to Moses. Muslims believe the Qur'an is the final revelation from God and a completion of the previous revelations.

Muhammad

In the course of Muhammad's proselytizing in Mecca, he viewed Christians and Jews (both of whom he referred to as "People of the Book") as natural allies, sharing the core principles of his teachings, and anticipated their acceptance and support. Muslims, like Jews, were at that time praying towards Jerusalem. Muhammad was very excited to move to Medina, where the Jewish community there had long worshipped the one God.

Many Medinans converted to the faith of the Meccan immigrants, but the Jewish tribes did not. Much to Muhammad's disappointment, they rejected his status as a prophet. Their opposition "may well have been for political as well as religious reasons". According to Watt, "Jews would normally be unwilling to admit that a non-Jew could be a prophet." However according to one sage in Judaism the whole story attributed to Job was a fable and Job never existed. Rashi, a Jewish commentator on the Hebrew Scriptures quotes a text dating to 160CE, which is also quoted in the Talmud on his commentary on Genesis 10 to show that Eber was a prophet.

HISTORICAL INTERACTION

Jews have often lived in predominantly Islamic nations. Since many national borders have changed over the fourteen centuries of Islamic history, a single community, such as the Jewish community in Cairo, may have been contained in a number of different nations over different periods.

As the Islamic state expanded out of the Arabian peninsula, large numbers of Jews came under Muslim rule. There was general improvement in the conditions of Jews as Islamic law commands that Jews should be judged by Jewish laws, and that synagogues are to be protected; others point to the second-class status of Jews and Christians in Muslim-controlled countries.

Middle Ages

In the Iberian Peninsula, under Muslim rule, Jews were able to make great advances in mathematics, astronomy, philosophy, chemistry and philology. This era is sometimes referred to as the Golden age of Jewish culture in the Iberian Peninsula.

Traditionally Jews living in Muslim lands, known as dhimmis, were allowed to practice their religion and to administor 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. 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. Most conversions were voluntary and happened for various reasons. However, there were some forced conversions in the 12th century under the Almohad dynasty of North Africa and al-Andalus as well as in Persia.

The medieval Volga state of Khazaria converted Judaism, whereas its subject Volga Bulgaria converted to Islam, possibly an only case when the Muslims were under the Jewish rule.

Conversion of Jews to Islam

In the past groups of Jews and individual Jews have converted to Islam. A number of groups who converted from Judaism to Islam have remained Muslim, while maintaining a connection to and interest in their Jewish heritage. These groups include the *anusim* or Daggataun of Timbuktu who converted in 1492, when Askia Muhammed came to power in Timbuktu and decreed that Jews must convert to Islam or leave, and the *Chala*, a portion of the Bukharan Jewish community who converted voluntarily.

In Persia, during the Safavid dynasty of the 16th and 17th centuries, Jews were forced to proclaim publicly that they had converted to Islam, and were given the name *Jadid-al-Islam* (New Muslims). In 1661 an edict was issued overturning these forced conversions, and the Jews returned to practicing Judaism openly. Similarly, to end a pogrom in 1839, the Jews of Mashhad were forced to convert *en masse* to

Islam. They practiced Judaism secretly for over a century before openly returning to their faith. At the turn of the 21st century, around 10,000 lived in Israel, another 4,000 in New York City, and 1,000 elsewhere.

In Turkey, the claimed messiah Sabbatai Zevi was imprisoned until he was presented with the choice to convert to Islam or be put to death, whereupon he converted to Islam in 1666. A number of his followers converted as well, becoming known as the Donmeh (a Turkish word for a religious convert). While outwardly Muslim, they retained a belief that Zevi was the Messiah, some believing him to be an incarnation of God. The Donmeh secretly remained Jews by most definitions, observed certain Jewish rituals, prayed in Hebrew and Aramaic, and celebrated Jewish festivals and fasts. Some Donmeh remain today, primarily in Turkey.

Present Day

Iran contains the most number of Jews among Muslim countries and Uzbekistan and Turkey have the next ranks. Iran's Jewish community is officially recognised as a religious minority group by the government, and, like the Zoroastrians, they were allocated one seat in the Iranian Parliament. In 2000 it was estimated that at that time there were still 30–35,000 Jews in Iran, other sources put the figure as low as 20–25,000.

In present times, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a defining event in the relationship between Muslims and Jews. The State of Israel was proclaimed on May 14, 1948, one day before the expiry of the British Mandate of Palestine. Not long after, five Arab countries – Egypt, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq – attacked Israel, launching the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. After almost a year of fighting, a ceasefire was declared and temporary borders, known as the Green Line, were instituted. Jordan annexed what became known as the West Bank and Egypt took control of the Gaza Strip. Israel was admitted as a member of the United Nations on May 11, 1949. During the course of the hostilities, 7,11,000 persecuted Arabs, according to UN estimates, fled from Israel. Arab persecution of Jewish communities precipitated a similar Jewish exodus from Arab lands. In 2006 Khaleel Mohammed said that 95 per cent of contemporary Muslims are exposed to anti-semitic teachings, beginning between the ages of 5 and 8.

Since the start of the Twentieth century conversion of Jews to Islam has generally been voluntary, and a small number of Jews have converted to Islam. The most notable of these include:

- Muhammad Asad (formerly Leopold Weiss), a Galician Jew who converted to Islam in 1926.
- Leila Mourad (former Leelee Murdakhai), an Egyptian Jew, who converted to Islam in the 1940s.
- Lev Nussimbaum, an Azerbaijani Jew, who converted to Islam in 1922.

Approximately 35 of Israel's 6 million Jews convert to Islam each year, mostly Jewish and Christian women who convert after choosing to marry Muslim men.

COMMON ASPECTS

There are many common aspects between Islam and Judaism. As Islam developed it gradually became the major religion closest to Judaism. As opposed to Christianity, which originated from interaction between ancient Greek and Hebrew cultures, Judaism is similar to Islam in its fundamental religious outlook, structure, jurisprudence and practice. There are many traditions within Islam originating from traditions within the Hebrew Bible or from post-biblical Jewish traditions. These practices are known collectively as the Isra'iliyat.

Holy Scripture

Islam and Judaism share the idea of a revealed Scripture. Even though they differ over the precise text and its interpretations, the Hebrew *Torah* and the Muslim *Qur'an* share a lot of narrative as well as injunctions. From this, they share many other fundamental religious concepts such as the belief in a day of Divine Judgment.

Muslims commonly refer to Jews (and Christians) as fellow "People of the Book": people who follow the same general teachings in relation to the worship of the one God worshipped by Abraham. The *Qur'an* distinguishes between "People of the Book" (Jews and Christians), who should be tolerated even if they hold to their faiths, and idolators (polytheists) who are not given that same degree of tolerance (See Al-Baqara, 256). Some restrictions for Muslims are relaxed, such as Muslim males being allowed to marry a woman from the "People of the Book" (Qur'an, 5:5), or Muslims being allowed to eat Kosher meat.

Religious Law

Judaism and Islam are unique in having systems of religious law based on oral tradition that can override the written laws and that does not distinguish between holy and secular spheres. In Islam the

laws are called Sharia, In Judaism they are known as Halakha. Both Judaism and Islam consider the study of religious law to be a form of worship and an end in itself.

Rules of Conduct

The most obvious common practice is the statement of the absolute unity of God, which Muslims observe in their five times daily prayers (Salah), and Jews state at least twice (Shema Yisrael). The two Faiths also share the central practices of fasting and almsgiving, as well as dietary laws and other aspects of ritual purity. Under the strict dietary laws, lawful food is called *Kosher* in Judaism and *Halal* in Islam. Both religions prohibit the consumption of pork. Halal restrictions can be seen as a subset of the Kashrut dietary laws, so many kosher foods are considered halal; especially in the case of meat, which Islam prescribes must be slaughtered in the name of Allah.

Both Judaism and Islam have a generally negative stance on homosexuality and on human sexuality outside of marriage. Both prescribe circumcision for males as a symbol of dedication to the religion.

Other Similarities

Islam and Judaism both consider the Christian doctrine of the trinity and the belief of Jesus being God as explicitly against the tenets of Monotheism. Idolatry, worshipping graven images, is likewise forbidden in both religions. Both believe in angels and demons (jinn in Islam) and many angels possess similar names and roles in both religions. Both do not believe in original sin. Many narrative similarities between the *Midrash* and the *Qur'an* (and also the *Hadith*) have been noted. Both state Potiphar's wife was named Zuleika (though in Islam's case, this could be a result of isra'ilyat influence). Both teach King Solomon knew the language of the birds and had control over demons (djinn) and several other similarities.

INTERPLAY BETWEEN JEWISH AND ISLAMIC THOUGHT

There was a great deal of intellectual cultural diffusion between Muslim and Jewish rationalist philosophers of the medieval era, especially in Muslim Spain.

Saadia Gaon

One of the most important early Jewish philosophers influenced by Islamic philosophy is Rav Saadia Gaon (892–942). His most important

work is *Emunoth ve-Deoth* (*Book of Beliefs and Opinions*). In this work Saadia treats of the questions that interested the *Mutakallimun* so deeply —such as the creation of matter, the unity of God, the divine attributes, the soul, etc.—and he criticises the philosophers severely.

The 12th century saw the apotheosis of pure philosophy. This supreme exaltation of philosophy was due, in great measure, to Ghazali (1058–1111) among the Arabs, and to Judah ha-Levi (1140) among the Jews. Like Ghazali, Judah ha-Levi took upon himself to free religion from the shackles of speculative philosophy, and to this end wrote the *Kuzari*, in which he sought to discredit all schools of philosophy alike.

Maimonides

Maimonides endeavored to harmonise the philosophy of Aristotle with Judaism; and to this end he composed his immortal work, *Dalalat al-$airin* (*Guide for the Perplexed*) — known better under its Hebrew title *Moreh Nevuchim* — which served for many centuries as the subject of discussion and comment by Jewish thinkers. In this work, Maimonides considers Creation, the unity of God, the attributes of God, the soul, etc., and treats them in accordance with the theories of Aristotle to the extent in which these latter do not conflict with religion. For example, while accepting the teachings of Aristotle upon matter and form, he pronounces against the eternity of matter. Nor does he accept Aristotle's theory that God can have a knowledge of universals only, and not of particulars. If He had no knowledge of particulars, He would be subject to constant change. Maimonides argues: "God perceives future events before they happen, and this perception never fails Him. Therefore there are no new ideas to present themselves to Him. He knows that such and such an individual does not yet exist, but that he will be born at such a time, exist for such a period, and then return into non-existence. When then this individual comes into being, God does not learn any new fact; nothing has happened that He knew not of, for He knew this individual, such as he is now, before his birth" (*Moreh*, i.20). While seeking thus to avoid the troublesome consequences certain Aristotelian theories would entail upon religion, Maimonides could not altogether escape those involved in Aristotle's idea of the unity of souls; and herein he laid himself open to the attacks of the orthodox.

Ibn Roshd (Averroes), the contemporary and tutor of Maimonides, closes the philosophical era of the Arabs. The boldness of this great commentator of Aristotle aroused the full fury of the orthodox, who, in their zeal, attacked all philosophers indiscriminately, and had all philosophical writings committed to the flames.

Driven from the Arabian schools, Arabic philosophy found a refuge with the Jews, to whom belongs the honour of having transmitted it to the Christian world. A series of eminent men—such as the Tibbons, Narboni, and Gersonides—joined in translating the Arabic philosophical works into Hebrew and commenting upon them. The works of Ibn Roshd especially became the subject of their study, due in great measure to Maimonides, who, in a letter addressed to his pupil Joseph ben Judah, spoke in the highest terms of Ibn Roshd's commentary.

In a responsa, Maimonides discusses the relationship between Judaism and Islam:

The Ishmaelites are not at all idolaters; [idolatry] has long been severed from their mouths and hearts; and they attribute to God a proper unity, a unity concerning which there is no doubt. And because they lie about us, and falsely attribute to us the statement that God has a son, is no reason for us to lie about them and say that they are idolaters... And should anyone say that the house that they honour [the Kaaba] is a house of idolatry and an idol is hidden within it, which their ancestors used to worship, then what of it? The hearts of those who bow down toward it today are [directed] only toward Heaven... [Regarding] the Ishmaelites today—idolatry has been severed from the mouths of all of them [including] women and children. Their error and foolishness is in other things which cannot be put into writing because of the renegades and wicked among Israel [*i.e.*, apostates]. But as regards the unity of God they have no error at all.

Influence on Exegesis

Saadia Gaon's commentary on the Bible bears the stamp of the Mutazilites; and its author, while not admitting any positive attributes of God, except these of essence, endeavors to interpret Biblical passages in such a way as to rid them of anthropomorphism. The Jewish commentator, Abraham ibn Ezra, explains the Biblical account of Creation and other Scriptural passages in a philosophical sense. Nahmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Nahman), too, and other commentators, show the influence of the philosophical ideas current in their respective epochs. This salutary inspiration, which lasted for five consecutive centuries, yielded to that other influence alone that came from the neglected depths of Jewish and of Neoplatonic mysticism, and which took the name of *Kabbalah*. Islamic commentary on the Qur'an, or tafsir, also draws heavily on Jewish sources. This is called *Isra'iliyat*.

ABRAHAMIC RELIGION

Abrahamic religion is a term commonly used to designate the three prevalent monotheistic religions–Judaism, Christianity, and Islam –which claim Abraham (Hebrew: *Avraham*; Arabic: *Ibrahim*) as a part of their sacred history. Other, smaller religions that identify with this tradition–such as the Bahá'í Faith and Druze faith—are sometimes included. Abrahamic religions account for more than half of the world's total population. Today, there are around 3.8 billion followers of various Abrahamic religions. Eastern religions form the other major religious group, encompassing the "Dharmic" religions of India and the "Taoic" East Asian religions—both terms being parallels of the 'Abrahamic' category.

ORIGIN OF THE EXPRESSION

Abrahamic religions is a term of Islamic origin. The view of Judaism, Christianity and Islam as three traditions with a single origin also has a tradition in the West, beginning with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Nathan the Wise* (1779). The English expression "Abrahamic religions" arises in the 20th century, in ca. the 1960s (*e.g.* James Kritzeck, *Sons of Abraham*, 1965).

It is the choice of Abraham as a common label that makes them Abrahamic. It stems from his reputation as the "Father of many" (which is the literal meaning of his name). Since he is claimed by Jewish tradition as the ancestor of the Israelites, and his son Ishmael (Isma'il) by Muslim tradition as the ancestor of the Arabs, and by Christians as a "father in faith" the phrase may be meant to suggest that all three religions come from one source.

Adam, Noah, and Moses are also common to all three religions. As for why we do not speak of an "Adamic," "Noachian," or "Mosaic" family, this may be for fear of confusion. Adam and Noah are said to be the ancestors of all humanity (though as named characters they are specific to the Biblical/Qur'anic tradition). Moses is closely associated with Judaism and, through Judaism, continuing into Christianity; Moses is regarded as a Prophet in Islam, but the term "Mosaic" may imply a genealogical lineage which the first Muslims—being Arab—did not share (*e.g.*, descending from Ishmael). Thus, the scope suggested by the first two terms is larger than intended, while the third is too small.

Conversely, there are religions that share characteristics of Abrahamisms, but have different origins. The separate origins are

generally accepted to preclude them from Abrahamic classification. For example, Zoroastrianism has monotheistic, prophetic, ethical, revelatory, historical orientation, desert-origin attributes. However, it is Indo-Iranian rather than Semitic, and does not identify with the characters and events of the Bible and Qur'an. Similarly Sikhism has monotheistic, ethical, revelatory, and arguably prophetic attributes, though its origins are Indic rather than Middle Eastern.

COMMON ASPECTS

A number of commonalities between Judaism, Christianity, and Islam exist:

- Monotheism. All three religions are monotheistic, although Jews and Muslims sometimes claim the Christian doctrine of the Holy Trinity constitutes polytheism. Many if not most of their followers believe that they worship the same one god.

- A prophetic tradition. All three religions recognise figures called "prophets," though their lists differ, as do their interpretations of the prophetic role.

- Semitic origins. Judaism and Islam originated among Semitic peoples – namely the Jews and Arabs, respectively – while Christianity arose out of Judaism and the Hellenistic culture.

- A basis in divine revelation rather than, for example, philosophical speculation or custom.

- An ethical orientation. All three religions speak of a choice between good and evil, which is conflated with obedience or disobedience to God.

- A linear concept of history, sometimes coined as eschatology, beginning with the Creation and the concept that God works through history.

- Association with the desert, which some commentators believe has imbued these religions with a particular ethos.

- Devotion to the traditions found in the Bible and the Qur'an, such as the stories of Adam, Noah, Abraham, and Moses.

OVERVIEW

All the Abrahamic religions are related to (or even derived from) Judaism as practiced in ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah prior to the Babylonian Exile, at the beginning of the 1st millennium BC.

- Many believe that Judaism in Biblical Israel was renovated and reformed to some extent in the 6th century BC by Ezra and other priests returning to Israel from the exile.

- According to The Oxford Companion To World Mythology (David Leeming, Oxford University Press, 2005, page 118), "It seems almost certain that the God of the Jews evolved gradually from the Canaanite El, who was in all likelihood the 'God of Abraham'...If El was the high god of Abraham—Elohim, the prototype of Yahveh—Asherah was his wife, and there are archeological indications that she was perceived as such before she was in effect 'divorced' in the context of emerging Judaism of the seventh century B.C.E. (See 2 Kings 23:15)".

- Samaritanism separated from Judaism in the next few centuries.

- The Noachide faith—see also Noahide Law—is also based upon the faith of Abraham as revealed in the Torah and Bible, yet Noachides are not necessarily descendants of Abraham, although a Noachide might be of Abrahamic lineage through any of the children of Abraham. Because there is no way of tracing this accurately, the Noachides are determined by their ancestral connection to Noah, who was Abraham's ancestor. It is taught that Noah, and his son, Shem, who was Abraham's grandfather and also taught Abraham's son Yitzhak (Isaac), was also monotheistic, but there is no evidence to show that they attempted to influence any one other than family members regarding the elements of their faith.

- Some Christian religions teach that Christianity began with Adam, but that its teachings were rejected and were temporarily replaced with what we now call Judaism, to be restored at the coming of the Messiah. Others believe that Christianity actually originated in Judea, at the end of the 1st century A.D., as a radically reformed branch of Judaism (see Early Christianity). Regardless, the Christianity of the common era spread to ancient Greece and Rome, and from there to most of Europe, Asia, the Americas, and many other parts of the world. Over the centuries, Christianity split into many separate churches and denominations. A major split in the 5th century separated various Oriental Churches from the Catholic church centered in Rome. Other major splits were the East-West Schism in the 11th century, separating the Roman Catholic Church from the Eastern Orthodox Churches; and the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century, that gave birth to hundreds of independent Protestant denominations.

- Islam originated in the 7th century, in the Arabian cities of Mecca and Medina. Although not a dissident branch of either Judaism or Christianity, Muslims believe it to be a continuation of and replacement for them. The Qur'an, the holy book of Islam, held itself to be the final word of God and its message was that of all the prophets. As an example of the similarities between the faiths, Muslims believe in a version of the story of Genesis and in the lineal descent of the Arabs from Abraham through Ishmael, who was conceived through Abraham's servant Hagar.

- The Druze of northern Israel and southern Lebanon hold to an Abrahamic faith of the Noachide covenant through their ancestor Yitro (Jethro), the father-in-law of Moshe (Moses) (Judaism's greatest prophet). However, its origins are Islamic, developing out of the belief of some Ismaili Shi'a Arab tribes that the Fatimid Caliph Al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah was an incarnation of God.

- Mormonism developed in the United States in the 19th century, and comes from an indisputably Abrahamic religious lineage, developing out of the various Protestant Christian denominations of the time. However, its position in the tradition is disputed by some: many Christians argue that Mormonism has departed from the true Abrahamic roots, while some argue that Mormonism is merely an unusually radical sect of Christianity.

The Significance of Abraham

- For Jews he is primarily a revered ancestor or Patriarch (referred to as "Our Father Abraham") to whom God made several promises: that he would have numberless descendants, and that they would receive the land of Canaan (the "Promised Land"). Somewhat less divisively, according to Jewish tradition, Abraham was the first post-flood person to reject idolatry through rational analysis. (Shem and Eber carried on the Tradition from Noah), hence he symbolically appears as a fundamental figure for monotheistic religion.

- For Christians, Abraham is a spiritual forebear rather than a direct ancestor. For example, Christian iconography depicts him as an early witness to the Trinity in the form of three "angels" who visited him (the Hospitality of Abraham). In Christian belief, Abraham is a model of faith, and his intention to obey God by offering up Isaac is seen as a foreshadowing of God's offering of his son, Jesus. A longstanding tendency of Christian

commentators is to interpret God's promises to Abraham, as applying to Christianity (the "True Israel") rather than Judaism (whose representatives rejected Christ). See also New Covenant.

- In Islam, Ibrahim is considered one of a line of prophets beginning with Adam (Genesis 20:7 also calls him a "prophet") and extending down to Muhammad, as well as the "first Muslim" – *i.e.*, the first monotheist in a world where monotheism was lost. He is also referred to in Islam as ÇÈæäÇ ÇÈÑåíã or "Our Father Abraham", as well as *Ibrahim al-Hanif* or Abraham the Monotheist. Islam holds that it was Ishmael (Isma'il) (Muhammad's ancestor) rather than Isaac whom Ibrahim was instructed to sacrifice. In addition to this spiritual lineage, the northern Adnani Arab tribes trace their lineage to Isma'il (and thus to Abraham).

ORIGINS

Judaism had its origins in the Canaanite/Israelite culture of the late 2nd and early 1st millenia BC. Israelite culture was Canaanite in origin, sharing with other West Semitic cultures a common pantheon made up of gods including El, Asherah and Baal, as well as the worship of solar and lunar deities and ancestors and common practices including necromancy and child sacrifice. Yahweh originated as a war-god in Edom/Midian, and was gradually assimilated into the highland Canaanite pantheon. This process was marked by two major phases: In the period of the Judges and the early monarchy, convergence saw the coalescence of the qualities of other deities, and even the deities themselves, into Yahweh: Thus, El became identified as a name of Yahweh, Asherah ceased to be a distinct goddess, and qualities of El, Asherah and Baal (notably, for Baal, his identification as a storm-god) were assimilated into Yahweh. In the period from the 9th century BC through to the Exile certain features of the Israelite religion were differentiated from the Yahweh cult, identified as Canaanite, and rejected: examples include Baal, child sacrifice, the Asherah, worship of the sun and moon, and the cults of the "high places". The driving forces in this process were the royal household of Judah, which identified Yaweh as their tutelary deity, and the prophetic schools of the north. The religious reforms of Josiah, dated by the Bible to around 622 BC, and apparently a reaction to the political crisis through which Judah was then passing, marked the decisive step from henotheism to Yahweh-centred monolatry (the insistence on the exclusive worship of one patron god for Israel, without denying the existence of other gods); the development of full-blown monotheism, the concept that Yahweh

was god not just of Israel but of the world, is more difficult to date, but seems to have developed during the Exilic and post-Exilic periods, in the hands of the Yahwist priesthood.

Judaism's origins—along with those of the ancestral Abrahamic religion—are still obscure. The only source generally agreed by all to be canonical that bears on that question is the Genesis book of the Hebrew Bible, which according to Rabbinic tradition was written by God and received by Moses after the Exodus from Egypt, sometime in the 2nd millennium BC. (Other, newer movements—such as Reform Judaism and Secular Humanism—believe perhaps Moses and certainly others wrote the Bible over a period of time themselves.) According to Genesis, the principles of Judaism were revealed gradually to a line of patriarchs from Adam to Jacob (also called Israel); however the Judaic religion was only established when Moses received the Commandments on Mount Sinai, and with the organisation of its priesthood and institution of its temple services.

Archaeologists so far have found no direct evidence to support or refute the Genesis story on the origins of Judaism; in fact, there are no surviving texts of the Hebrew Bible older than the Dead Sea Scrolls (2nd century BC or later). However, archaeology has shown that peoples speaking various Semitic languages and with similar polytheistic religions were living in Canaan and surrounding areas by the 3rd millennium BC. Some of their gods (such as Baal) are mentioned in the Bible, and the supreme god of the Semitic pantheon, El, is believed by some scholars to be the God of the Biblical patriarchs. For example, El is a common segment in Hebrew names, such as Daniel, Ezekiel, Elijah, etc. (See also, *List of names referring to El*.) There exist a number of inscriptions that some scholars believe to confirm the Biblical record, such as the Tel Dan Stele.

One school of thought, Sigmund Freud and Ahmed Osman being among the proponents, asserts that historically, Abrahamic monotheism began with Akhenaten, the "heretical" pharaoh of Egypt who, in the fourteenth century BCE, founded the world's first (quasi-)monotheistic religions devoted to the sun disk, or Aten. Egyptologist Jan Assmann has argued that monotheism entered Abrahamic thought through a process of traumatic memory of this episode of Egyptian religious history.

There is also a school of thought that credits the religion known as Zoroastrianism for its influence of Abrahamic religions in the concepts of individual judgment (free will), Heaven and Hell, the future

resurrection of the body, the general Last Judgment, and life everlasting for the reunited soul and body (Mary Boyce, Zoroastrians: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1979).

PATRIARCHS

There are six notable figures in the Bible prior to Abraham: Adam and Eve, their two sons Cain and Abel, Enoch, and his great-grandson, Noah, who, according to the story, saved his own family and all animal life in Noah's Ark. It is uncertain whether any of them (assuming they existed) left any recorded moral code: some Christian churches maintain faith in ancient books like the Book of Enoch — and Genesis mentions the Noahide Laws given by God to the family of Noah. For the most part, these 'patriarchs' serve as good (or bad, in the case of Cain) role models of behaviour, without a more specific indication of how one interprets their actions in any religion.

In the Book of Genesis, Abraham is specifically instructed to leave *Ur of the Chaldees* so that God will "make of you a great nation". Burton Visotzky, an ethicist, wrote *Genesis of Ethics* to explore the detailed implications of these adventures for a modern ethics.

According to the Bible, the patriarch Abraham (or *Ibrahim*, in Arabic) had eight sons by three wives: one (Ishmael) by his wife's servant Hagar, one (Isaac) by his wife Sarah, and six by another wife Keturah. Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Bahá'u'lláh and other prominent figures are all claimed to be descendants of Abraham through one of these sons.

Jews see Abraham as the progenitor of the people of Israel, through his descendants Isaac and Jacob. Christians view Abraham as an important exemplar of faith, and a spiritual, as well as a physical, ancestor of Jesus — a Jew considered the Son of God through whom God promised to bless all the families of the earth. In addition, Muslims refer to Sabians, Christians and Jews as People of the Book ("the Book" referring to the Tanakh, the New Testament, and the Qur'an). They see Abraham as one of the most important of the many prophets sent by God. Thus, Abraham represents for some, a point of commonality whom they seek to emphasise by means of this terminology.

So, rather than being the sole "founding figure", Abraham is described as the first figure in Genesis who (a) is clearly not of direct divine origin, such as Adam and Eve are claimed to be; (b) is accepted

by three major monotheistic faiths as playing some major role in the founding of their common civilisation; and (c) is not claimed as the male genetic forebear of all humans on the Earth (as Noah is, in more literal interpretations).

Judaism treats Adam and Noah as minor prophets, while, along with Islam, it recognises that there were possibly other prophets who are unknown today.

THE SUPREME DEITY

Judaism and Islam worship a Supreme Deity which they conceive strictly monotheistically as one being; Christianity agrees, but the Christian god is at the same time (according to most of mainstream Christianity) an indivisible Trinity, a view not shared by the other religions. A sizable minority of Christians and Christian denominations do not support the belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, and sometimes suggest that the Trinity idea was founded in Roman religious culture, specifically suggesting that it was formulated due to Rome's absorption of some Zoroastrian and some Pagan ideology as part of their homogenised culture, and was not part of the original, primitive Christianity.

Judaism

Jewish theology is based on the Hebrew Bible, where the nature and commandments of God are revealed through the writings of Moses, the *Torah*, and the writings of the prophets, psalmists and other ancient canonised scriptures, together with the Torah known as the Tanakh. Additionally, it usually has a basis in its Oral Law, as recorded in the Mishnah and Gemora which form the Talmud.

This Supreme Being is referred to in the Hebrew Bible in several ways, such as *Elohim*, *Adonai* or by the four Hebrew letters "Y-H-V (or W) -H" (the tetragrammaton), which observant Jews do not pronounce as a word. The Hebrew words *Eloheynu* (Our God) and HaShem (The Name), as well as the English names "Lord" and "God", are also used in modern day Judaism. The latter is sometimes written "G-d" in reference to the taboo against pronouncing the tetragrammaton.

The word "Elohim" has the Hebrew plural ending "-îm", which some Biblical scholars have taken as support for the general notion that the ancient Hebrews were polytheists in the time of the patriarchs; however, as the word itself is used with singular verbs, this hypothesis is not accepted by most Jews. Jews point out other words in Hebrew

that are used in the same manner according to the rule of Hebrew Grammar, and denotes respect, majesty and deliberation, similar to the royal plural in English and ancient Egyptian, and the use of the plural form *"vous"* for individuals of higher standing in modern French. Jewish Biblical scholars and historical commentary on the passage also suggest that Elohim in the plural form points to God in conjunction with the heavenly court, *i.e.* the angels. The pre-Christian era and early CE period Kabbalistic and later in the European Chasidic movements after the Baal Shem Tov, such as Breslov and Chabad, all point to the use of Elokim as denoting the multi-dimensional existence of God on, in, and through every possible dimension of the created existence. See Likutei Moharan and the Tanya, as well as the Zohar, Bahir, and the Kabbalistic texts of Sefer Yitzirah, Sefer Refayim, and Sefer Malachim, to name a few, including the writings of the Ramchal (R. Moshe Chaim Luzzatto), Drech HaShem and others such as the Rashbi (R. Shimon bar Yochai, author of the Zohar) all explain the use of the Elokim as a pluralistic singularity, one essence sustaining all levels of creation from the mundane physical to the sublime and Holy spiritual.

Christianity

Christians believe that the god worshipped by the faithful Hebrew people of the pre-Christian era has always revealed himself as he did through Jesus; but this was never obvious until the Word of the Lord, the revelation of God, became flesh and dwelt among us (see John 1). Also, despite the fact that the Angel of the Lord spoke to the Patriarchs, revealing God to them, it has always been only by the Spirit of God granting them understanding, that men have been able to perceive afterward that they had been visited by God himself. After Jesus was raised from the dead—according to Christian scriptures—this ancient Hebrew witness of how God reveals himself as *Messiah* came to be seen in a very different light. It was then that Jesus' followers began to speak widely of him as God himself (see John 20:28), although this had already been revealed to certain individuals during his Ministry, for example, the Samaritan woman in Shechem, and his closest apostles.

This belief was gradually developed into the modern formulation of the Trinity, which is the doctrine that God is a single entity (YHWH), but that there is a real threeness in God's single being that has always been evident but not understood. This mysterious threeness has been described as, for want of better terms, *hypostases* in the Greek language (*subsistences*), and as "persons" in English. In the traditional Christian

conception, God the Father has only ever been revealed through his eternal Word (who was born as Jesus, of the Virgin Mary), and his Spirit (who after the resurrection was given to men, establishing the Christian church).

Trinitarian theology is developed from the Christian Bible (comprised by the Old and New Testaments). As it was further elaborated by the early Church fathers, it was later codified by the Ecumenical councils at Nicaea and Chalcedon. Another famous formulation is called the Athanasian Creed. Some Trinitarian churches, however, do not accept the Chalcedon council at all, in part because it claimed to have excommunicated them. These are known as 'non-Chalcedonian', or Oriental Orthodox Churches.

This "trinitarian monotheism" has been rejected by several Christian denominations and Christian-based religions, such as Arianism and Unitarianism. Strict unitarian Christians believe that God the Father is the only divine being, but the others believe that Jesus is a created deity. Another minority viewpoint is that the personality expressed in earthly manifestation as Jesus is in fact that of God; this belief system is usually described as Oneness Pentecostal and is largely found in North America.

Islam

Allah is the standard Arabic translation for the word "God." Islamic tradition also describes the 99 names of God. These 99 names describe attributes of God, including Most Merciful, Most Just, and The Peace and Blessing, and the Guardian. Islamic belief in God is distinct in that it accepts no partners or progeny of God. This belief is summed up in the Qur'anic chapter of Al-Ikhlas, which states "God is One, He is the Eternal, the Absolute. He does not beget nor was he begotten. And there is none like Him." *See also:* Islamic concept of God.

Muslims believe that the Jewish god is the same as their god and that Jesus is a divinely inspired prophet, but not God. Thus, both the Torah and the Gospels are believed to be based upon divine revelation, but Muslims believe them to have been corrupted (both accidentally through errors in transmission and intentionally by Jews and Christians over the centuries). Muslims revere the Qur'an as the final uncorrupted word of God or the last testament brought through the last Prophet, Muhammad. Muhammad is regarded as the "Seal of the Prophets" and Islam is viewed as the final monotheist faith for all of humanity.

Bahá'í Faith

The belief in the Oneness of God is central to the Bahá'í Faith. According to Bahá'í doctrine, God is one being, and has created all the creatures and forces in the universe. He is also imagined by Bahá'ís as omnipotent and omniscient. Bahá'ís believe that God sends his messengers to educate humanity. These messengers are known in Bahá'í literature as "Manifestations of God," the most recent of whom Bahá'ís believe was Bahá'u'lláh. According to Bahá'í doctrine, these Manifestations reveal the nature and will of God in their teachings and through sacred texts, which (for Bahá'ís) include the Torah, the Bible, the Qur'án, the Bayan, the Kitáb-i-Aqdas and the Book of Certitude, Hindu, Zoroastrian and Buddhist scriptures. Bahá'ís maintain that the older texts contain allegories that should be interpreted in view of the most recent (and most perfect) revelations. However, Bahá'í doctrine teaches that the Supreme Deity is too great to be fully understood by humans.

RELIGIOUS SCRIPTURES

All these religions rely on a body of scriptures, some of which are considered to be the word of God—hence sacred and unquestionable —and some the work of religious men, revered mainly by tradition and to the extent that they are considered to have been divinely inspired, if not dictated, by the divine being.

Judaism

The sacred scriptures of Judaism are the Tanakh, a Hebrew acronym that stands for *Torah* (Law or Teachings), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings). These are complemented by and supplemented with various originally oral traditions: *Midrash*, the *Mishnah*, the *Talmud*, and collected rabbinical writings. The Hebrew text of the Tanakh, and the Torah in particular, is considered holy, down to the last letter: transcribing is done with painstaking care. An error in a single letter, ornamentation or symbol of the over 3,00,000 stylised letters which make up the Hebrew Torah text renders a Torah scroll unfit for use, hence a Torah scribe is a specialist skill and takes considerable time to write and check.

Christianity

The sacred scriptures of most Christian groups are the Old Testament, which is largely the same as the Hebrew Bible, and the New Testament, which comprises four accounts of the life and teachings

of Jesus (the Four Gospels, traditionally attributed to his apostles Matthew and John and to Mark the Evangelist and Luke the Evangelist) and several writings by the apostles and early Fathers such as Paul. They are usually considered to be divinely inspired in some sense and together comprise the Christian Bible. Thus, Christians consider the fundamental teachings of the Old Testament, in particular the Ten Commandments, as valid. However, they believe that the coming of Jesus as the messiah and savior of mankind as predicted in the Old Testament would shed light on the true relationship between God and mankind by restoring the emphasis of universal love and compassion (as mentioned in the Shema) above the other commandments, also de-emphasising the more "legalistic" and material precepts of Mosaic Law (such as the dietary constraints and temple rites). Some Christians believe that the link between Old and New Testaments in the Bible means that Judaism has been superseded by Christianity as the "new Israel," and that Jesus' teachings described Israel not as a geographic place but as an association with God and promise of salvation in heaven.

The vast majority of Christian faiths (generally including Catholicism, Orthodox Christianity, Anglicans and most forms of Protestantism, but not Restorationism) derive their beliefs from the conclusions reached by the First Council of Nicaea in 325, in a document known as the Nicene Creed. This describes the beliefs that God (as a Trinity of distinct persons with one substance) became human on earth, born as Jesus pursuant to the Old Testament scriptures, was crucified by humanity, died and was buried, only to be resurrected on the third day to rise and enter the Kingdom of Heaven and "sit at the right hand of" God. Christians generally believe that faith in Jesus is the only way to achieve salvation and to enter into heaven, and that salvation is a gift given by the grace of God.

Christians recognise that the Gospels were passed on by oral tradition only to be set to paper decades after the death of Jesus, and that the extant versions are copies of those originals. Indeed, the version of the Bible considered to be most valid (in the sense of best conveying the true meaning of the word of God) has varied considerably: the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate, the English King James Version, and the Russian Synodal Bible have been authoritative to different communities at different times. In particular, Christians usually consult the Hebrew version of the Old Testament when preparing new translations, although some believe that the Septuagint should be

preferred, as it was the Bible of the Early Christian Church, and because they believe its translators used a different Hebrew bible to the ones that make up the current Masoretic Hebrew text as there are some variant readings of the Dead Sea Scrolls that are confirmed by the Septuagint. In the same sense that the Jewish mystics viewed the Torah as something living and existing prior to any written text, so too do Christians view the Bible and Jesus himself as God's "Word" (or *logos* in Greek), that transcends written documents.

The sacred scriptures of the Christian Bible are complemented by a large body of writings by individual Christians and councils of Christian leaders. Some Christian churches and denominations consider certain additional writings to be binding; other Christian groups consider only the Bible to be binding.

Islam

Islam's holiest book is the Qur'an, comprising 114 suras ("chapters of the Qur'an."). However, Muslims also believe in the religious texts of Judaism and Christianity in their original forms and not the current versions which they believe to be corrupted. According to the Qur'an (and mainstream Muslim belief) the verses of the Qur'an were revealed from God through the Archangel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad on separate occasions. These revelations were written down during Muhammad's lifetime and collected into one official copy in 633 AD, one year after his death. Finally the Qur'an was given its present order in 653 AD by the third Caliph.

The Qur'an mentions and reveres several of the Israelite Prophets, including Jesus, among others (see also: Prophets of Islam). The stories of these Prophets are very similar to those in the Bible. However the detailed precepts of the Tanakh and the New Testament are not adopted outright; they are replaced by the new commandments revealed directly by God (through Gabriel) to Muhammad and codified in the Qur'an.

Like the Jews with the Torah, Muslims consider the original Arabic text of the Qur'an as uncorrupted and holy to the last letter, and any translations are considered to be interpretations of the meaning of the Qur'an, as only the original Arabic text is considered to be the divine scripture.

Like the Rabbinic Oral Law to the Hebrew Bible, the Qur'an is complemented by the *Hadith*, a set of books by later authors that record the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. The Hadith interpret and elaborate Qur'anic precepts. There is no consensus within Islam

on the authority of the Hadith collections, but Islamic scholars have categorised each Hadith at one of the following levels of authenticity or isnad: genuine (*sahih*), fair (*hasan*), or weak (*da'if*). Amongst Shia Muslims, no hadith is regarded as Sahih, and hadith in general are only accepted if there is no disagreement with the Qur'an.

By the ninth century, six collections of Hadiths were accepted as reliable to Sunni Muslims. Shia Muslims however, refer to an alternate tradition of authenticated Hadiths.

The Sunni Collections:

- al-Bukhari (d. 870)
- Muslim b. al-Hajjaj (d. 875)
- Abu Da'ud (d. 888)
- al-Tirmidhi (d. 892)
- al-Nasa'i (d. 915)
- Ibn Maja (d. 886).

The Hadith and the life story of Muhammad (sira) form the Sunnah, a scriptural supplement to the Qur'an. The legal opinions of Islamic jurists (fiqh) provides another source for the daily practice and interpretation of Islamic tradition.

The Qur'an has repeated references to the 'religion of Abraham' (see Suras 2:130,135; 3:95; 6:123,161; 12:38; 16:123; 22:78). In the Qur'an this expression refers specifically to Islam, sometimes in contrast to Christianity and Judaism, as for example in Sura 2:135: "They say: "Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided (To salvation)." Say thou: "Nay! (I would rather) the Religion of Abraham the True, and he joined not gods with God." In the Qur'an Abraham is declared to have been a Muslim (a *hanif*), 'not a Jew nor a Christian' (Sura 3:67).

Rastafari Movement

Some Rastafarians use the King James Version of the Bible as their main scripture, while many others disdain it. A great many nowadays make special efforts to study the Orthodox Amharic version. Rastas often claim that the Bible only has half of God's Word, and that the other half is written in the heart of mankind. The teachings of Marcus Garvey and the Holy Piby are among other important documents, as are the writings and speeches of Emperor Haile Selassie I.

THE COMING

In the major Abrahamic religions, there exists the expectation of an individual who will herald the time of the end, and/or bring about the Kingdom of God on Earth, in other words the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy. Judaism awaits the coming of the Jewish Messiah (the Jewish concept of Messiah differs from the Christian concept in several significant ways despite the same term being applied to both). The Jewish Messiah is not a "god" but a mortal man who by his holiness is worthy of that description, he will make his appearance only during an era of peace and holiness and his coming may not end history. Christianity awaits the Second Coming of Christ. Islam awaits both the second coming of Jesus (in order to complete his life and die, since he is said to have been risen alive and not crucified) and the coming of Mahdi (Sunnis in his first incarnation, Shi'as the return of Muhammad al-Mahdi). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community believes that both Mahdi and Second Coming of Christ were fulfilled in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad. Conversely, members of the Bahá'í Faith believe that these were fulfilled in the persons of Báb and Bahá'u'lláh. Rastafari awaits the return of Haile Selassie.

Afterlife

Most Abrahamic religions agree that a human being comprises the body, which dies, and the soul, which need not do so. The soul, capable of remaining alive beyond human death, carries the essence of that person with it, and God will judge that person's life accordingly after they die. The importance of this, the focus on it, and the precise criteria and end result differs between religions.

Reincarnation and transmigration tend not to feature prominently in Abrahamic religions. Although as a rule they all look to some form of afterlife, Christianity and Islam support a continuation of life, usually viewed as eternal, rather than reincarnation and transmigration which are a return (or repeated returns) to this Earth or some other plane to live a complete new life cycle over again. Kabbalic Judaism, however, accepts the concept of returning in new births through a process called gilgul neshamot, but this is not Torah-derived, and is usually studied only among scholars and mystics within the faith. It is a mainstream belief of Hassidic Jews and many Orthodox Jews.

Judaism

Judaism's views on the afterlife ("the World to Come") are quite diverse and its discussion is not encouraged. This can be attributed to

the fact that even though there clearly are traditions in the Hebrew Bible of an afterlife (see Naboth and the Witch of Endor), Judaism focuses on this life and how to lead a holy life to please God, rather than future reward, and its attitude can be mostly summed up by the rabbinical observation that at the start of Genesis God clothed the naked (Adam and Eve), at the end of Deuteronomy he buried the dead (Moses), the Children of Israel mourned for 40 days, then got on with their lives.

Many feel that there is some sort of afterlife, maybe a return of the soul to God, some say that there is some sort of reward for the righteous in Gan 'Edhen (the Garden of Eden) and (less agreed upon) punishment in Ge-Hinnom. Popularly it is claimed that the maximum time of punishment for all but the most evil is one year. The mystically inclined also claim the souls (or sparks of souls) may be reincarnated, through Gilgul. If there is an afterlife all agree in Judaism that the good of all the nations will get to heaven and this is one of the reasons Judaism does not normally proselytize.

Islam

In Islam, God is said to be "Most Compassionate and Most Merciful" (Qur'an 1:1). However, God is also "Most Just"; Islam prescribes a literal Hell for those who disobey God and commit gross sin. Those who obey God and submit to God will be rewarded with their own place in Paradise. While sinners are punished with fire, there are also many other forms of punishment described, depending on the sin committed; Hell is divided into numerous levels, an idea that found its way into Christian literature through Dante's borrowing of Muslim themes and tropes for his Inferno.

Those who worship and remember God are promised eternal abode in a physical and spiritual Paradise. In Islam, Heaven is divided into numerous levels, with the higher levels of Paradise being the reward of those who have been more virtuous, For example, the highest levels might contain the Prophets, those killed for believing, those who help orphans, and those who never tell a lie (among numerous other categories cited in the Qur'an and Hadith).

Upon repentance to God, many sins can be forgiven as God is said to be supremely merciful. Additionally, those who ultimately believe in God, but have led sinful lives, may be punished for a time, and then ultimately released into Paradise. If anyone dies in a state of Shirk (the association God in any way, such as claiming that he is

equal with anything or worshiping other than him), then it is possible he will stay forever in Hell; however, it is said that anyone with "one atom of faith" will eventually reach Heaven, and Muslim literature also records reference to even the greatly sinful, Muslim and otherwise, eventually being pardoned and released into Paradise. Once a person is admitted to Paradise, this person will abide there for eternity.

Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í Faith regards as symbolic the conventional description of the afterlife (heaven and hell) as a specific place. Instead the Bahá'í writings describe heaven as a "spiritual condition" where closeness to God is defined as heaven; conversely hell is seen as a state of remoteness from God. Bahá'u'lláh, the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, has stated that the nature of the life of the soul in the afterlife is beyond comprehension in the physical plane, but has stated that the soul will retain its consciousness and individuality and remember its physical life; the soul will be able to recognise other souls and communicate with them.

For Bahá'ís, entry into the next life has the potential to bring great joy. Bahá'u'lláh likened death to the process of birth. He explains: "The world beyond is as different from this world as this world is different from that of the child while still in the womb of its mother." The analogy to the womb in many ways summarises the Bahá'í view of earthly existence: just as the womb constitutes an important place for a person's initial physical development, the physical world provides for the development of the individual soul. Accordingly, Bahá'ís view life as a preparatory stage, where one can develop and perfect those qualities which will be needed in the next life. The key to spiritual progress is to follow the path outlined by the current Manifestations of God, which Bahá'ís believe is currently Bahá'u'lláh.

The Bahá'í teachings state that there exists a hierarchy of souls in the afterlife, where the merits of each soul determines their place in the hierarchy, and that souls lower in the hierarchy cannot completely understand the station of those above. Each soul can continue to progress in the afterlife, however the soul's development is not dependent on its own conscious efforts, but instead on the grace of God, the prayers of others, and good deeds performed by others on Earth in the name of the person.

WORSHIP

Worship, ceremonies, and religion-related customs differ substantially between the various Abrahamic religions. Among the few

similarities are a seven-day cycle in which one day is nominally reserved for worship, prayer, or other religious activities; this custom is related to the biblical story of Genesis, where God created the universe in six days, and rested in the seventh. Islam, which has Friday as a day for special congregational prayers, does not subscribe to the 'resting day' concept.

Jewish men are required to pray three times daily and four times daily on the Sabbath and most Jewish holidays, and five times on Yom Kippur. Before the destruction of the Temple, Jewish priests offered sacrifices there; afterwards, the practice was stopped. Jewish women's prayer obligations vary by sect; traditionally (according to Torah Judaism), women do not read from the Torah and are only required to say certain parts of these services twice daily. Conservative Judaism, Reform Judaism, and the Reconstructionist movement have different views.

Christianity does not have any sacrificial rites as such, but its entire theology is based upon the concept of the sacrifice by God of his son Jesus so that his blood might atone for mankind's sins. However, offerings to Christian Churches and charity to poor are highly encouraged and take the place of sacrifice. Additionally, self-sacrifice in the form of lent, penitence and humbleness, in the name of Christ and according to his commandments (cf. Sermon on the Mount), is considered a form of sacrifice that appeals God.

The followers of Islam, Muslims, are to observe the Five Pillars of Islam. The first pillar is the belief in the oneness of God and in Muhammad as his final prophet. The second is to pray five times daily (salat) towards the direction (qibla) of the Kaaba in Mecca. The third pillar is Zakah, is a portion of one's wealth that must be given to the poor or to other specified causes, which means the giving of a specific share of one's wealth and savings to persons or causes that God mentions in the Qur'an. The normal share to be paid is two and a half per cent of one's saved earnings. Fasting during the Muslim month of Ramadan is the fourth pillar of Islam, to which only able-bodied Muslims are required to fast. Finally, Muslims are also urged to undertake a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in one's life. Only individuals whose financial position and health are insufficient are exempt from making Hajj. During this pilgrimage, the Muslims spend several days in worship, repenting and most notably, circumambulating the Kaaba among millions of other Muslims. At the end of the Hajj, sheep and other permissible animals are slaughtered to commemorate

the moment when God replaced Abraham's son, Ishmael with a sheep preventing his sacrifice. The meat from these animals is then distributed around the world to needy Muslims, neighbors and relatives.

Baha'is do not have a strict worship regimen but do, however, follow guidelines for prayer passed on by Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá. Baha'is are to perform ablutions before prayer and to recite at least one of three obligatory prayers (written by Bahá'u'lláh) daily. Prayer often takes the form of a a private activity during which Baha'is may choose to face the Qiblih (the Shrine of Bahá'u'lláh). Many Baha'is also host devotional meetings in their homes where prayers and holy writings are read, sung, chanted or recited. Baha'i Devotional meetings are commonly open to people of any faith. A Bahá'í pilgrimage was laid out by Bahá'u'lláh, but political conditions in Iraq and Iran prevent most Baha'is from visiting these locations. Originally, Baha'is were to visit either the House of Bahá'u'lláh in Baghdad or the House of the Bab in Shiraz, Iran. Currently, Baha'i references to 'pilgrimage' generally apply to a nine-day journey that visits Baha'i holy places in Haifa, Bahji, and Akka, Israel. It should also be noted that aside from prayer and pilgrimage, Baha'is put emphasis on grounding worship in daily life. Work is considered a form of honouring God as is scriptural study.

CIRCUMCISION

Both Judaism and Islam prescribe circumcision for males as a token symbol of dedication to the religion. Islam also recommends this practice as a form of cleanliness. Western Christianity replaced that custom by a baptism ceremony that varies according to the denomination, but generally includes immersion, aspersion or anointment with water. Because of the decision of the Early Church (Acts 15, the Council of Jerusalem) that circumcision is not mandatory, it continues to be optional, though the Council of Florence prohibited it and paragraph #2297 of the Catholic Catechism calls non-medical amputation or mutilation immoral. Many countries with majorities of Christian adherents have low circumcision rates (with the notable exception of the United States, and the Philippines). Coptic Christianity and Ethiopian Orthodoxy still observe circumcision. See also Aposthia.

FOOD RESTRICTIONS

Judaism and Islam have strict dietary laws, with lawful food being called kosher in Judaism and halaal in Islam. Both religions prohibit the consumption of pork; Islam also prohibits the consumption of

alcoholic beverages of any kind. Halaal restrictions can be seen as a subset of the kashrut dietary laws, so many kosher foods are considered halaal; especially in the case of meat, which Islam prescribes must be slaughtered in the name of God, hence in Morocco Muslims used to consume kosher food. Protestants have no set food laws. Catholic Christianity however developed ritual prohibitions against the consumption of meat (but not fish) on Fridays, and the Christian calendars prescribe abstinence from some foods at various times of the year; but these customs vary from place to place, and have changed over time, and some sects have nothing comparable. Some Christians oppose the consumption of alcoholic beverages, while a few Christians also follow a kosher diet, sometimes identified as a "What Would Jesus Eat?" diet. Some approaches to practice have developed in Protestant denominations, such as the Seventh-day Adventist Church, which strongly advise against certain foods and in some cases encourage vegetarianism or veganism. Adherents to the Bahá'í Faith are prohibited from drinking alcohol. They are also prohibited from using opiates and other recreational drugs, unless prescribed by a competent physician.

SEXUALITY IN ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

It may be that a distinguishing characteristic of the Abrahamic religions is their generally negative stance on homosexuality and, in some cases, human sexuality in general, notably outside of marriage and in non-procreative contexts. This contrasts the Abrahamic traditions strongly against the backdrop of the views of their immediate neighbors. In the regions surrounding the geographical homelands of Abrahamic religions (*i.e.* the Near east and Aegean), sexuality was considered in a more positive light (positive in the sense that it was not recommended by their Non-Abrahamic religions to legislate death punishments for the practices of homosexuality or prostitution.)

It seems to be a mark among some versions of the rise of Abrahamic traditions that all sexuality was eliminated from the concept of the divine. Notable exceptions include Judaism (*i.e.* Song of Songs, Kabbalah, Hassidism), and within Islam.

By the time of the triumph of Christianity, in the late 4th century AD this was generally true throughout the realms of the declining Roman Empire. For example, within territories where Christianity and Judaism held political power the presence of femininity in local deities as well as the Godhead was eliminated. Contrastingly, the Non-Abrahamic religions accepted female high-priestesses. They also believed

in the existence of many powerful female divinities like Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom, and Isis, who was worshipped as the archetypal wife and mother. In general Abrahamic Religions negate the possibility of sexual openness with respect to the divine nature.

Homosexuality

Many of the sacred texts of the Abrahamic Religions refer to homosexual behaviour as an abomination, deriving from the Holiness Code of the book of Leviticus and an interpretation of the legend of Sodom and Gomorrah. By the first century, the writings of Philo Judaeus and Flavius Josephus evolved it into a fully developed form. Thus, the condemnation of homosexuality in all Abrahamic religions has a single Old Testament source in addition to any separate reference in other holy books. While the Abrahamic religions unequivocally condemn male homosexuality, lesbianism is nowhere explicitly mentioned in the Old Testament or the Qur'an. However some scholars have argued the passage in Romans 1:26-27, "...God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly," is a New Testament reference to it.

The enforcement of this prohibition took different forms in each religion. Early Judaism referenced Leviticus and later Talmudic law in prescribing the death penalty. However, high legal hurdles, such as requiring two witnesses of the act following a previous warning by at least two people, made executions extremely rare. Early Christian emperors also advocated the death penalty: Theodosius I ordained death by the sword, and the Byzantine emperor Justinian, in his summary on Roman law, prescribed burning at the stake. Islamic jurists prescribe a death by stoning or crushing with a wall; however, this specific form of punishment has almost never been enforced.

PROSELYTISM

Christianity encourages evangelism, as Jesus did—convincing others to convert to the religion; many Christian organisations, especially Protestant churches, send missionaries to non-Christian communities throughout the world. See also Great Commission.

Forced conversions to Catholicism have been documented at various points throughout history. The most prominently cited allegations are the conversions of the pagans after Constantine; of Muslims, Jews and

Eastern Orthodox during the Crusades; of Jews and Muslims during the time of the Spanish Inquisition where they were offered the choice exile, conversion or death; and of the Aztecs by Hernan Cortes. Many Hindutva organisations in India allege that some Christian missionaries in India are converting the illiterate Dalits (the so-called low castes of the Hindus) by "fraudulent means" (sic). Forced conversions are condemned as sinful by major denominations such as the Roman Catholic Church, which officially state that forced conversions pollute the Christian religion and offend human dignity, so that past or present offenses are regarded as a scandal (a cause of unbelief).

W. Heffening states that in Qur'an "the apostate is threatened with punishment in the next world only" however "in traditions, there is little echo of these punishments in the next world... and instead, we have in many traditions a new element, the death penalty." Heffening states that Shafi'is interpret verse 2:217 as adducing the main evidence for the death penalty in Qur'an. The *Qur'an* has a chapter (*Sura*) dealing with non-believers (called "*Al-Kafiroon*") (Q 109). In the chapter there is also an often quoted verse (*ayat*) which reads, "There is no compulsion in religion, the path of guidance stands out clear from error" [2:256] and [60:8]. This means that no one is to be compelled into Islam and that the righteous path is distinct from the rest. According to this verse, converts to Islam are ones that see this path. The Muslim expansion during the Ummayad dynasty held true to this teaching, imposing Jizya (defense tax) and affording second-class citizenship to People of the Book instead of forced conversion. Nevertheless, it should be noted that pagan Arab tribes were given the choice of "Islam or the sword." Another notable exception is the en masse forced conversion of the Jews of Mashhad in 1839. In the present day, Islam does not have missionaries comparable to Christianity, though it does encourage its followers to learn about other religions and to teach others about Islam.

While Judaism accepts converts, it does not encourage them, and has no missionaries as such. However Judaism states that non-Jews can achieve righteousness by following Noahide Laws, a set of seven universal commandments that non-Jews are expected to follow. In this context the Rambam (Rabbi Moses Maimonides, one of the major Jewish teachers) commented, "Quoting from our sages, the righteous people from other nations have a place in the world to come, if they have acquired what they should learn about the Creator." Because the commandments applicable to the Jews are much more detailed and

onerous than Noahide laws, Jewish scholars have traditionally maintained that it is better to be a good non-Jew than a bad Jew, thus discouraging conversion. Most often, converts to Judaism are those who marry Jews; in the United States, the number of such converts is estimated at 10,000-15,000 per year. See also Conversion to Judaism.

The Bahá'í Faith puts special emphasis on not proselytizing. It is actually prohibited. Baha'is do accept converts from all religious and ethnic backgrounds and actively support personal investigation into faith. Baha'is have special "pioneers" and "travelling teachers" that will move to areas where Baha'i communities are small to help strengthen and expand them. Believers of other faiths are held in high regard and seen in many ways as spiritual equals. While Baha'is view the Baha'i laws and revelation as unique, they do not discourage believers of other faiths in their spiritual endeavors and are leaders of interfaith efforts.

ISLAM AND PEACE

Modernisation is a composite and also an ideological concept. The models of modernisation covary with the choice of ideologies. The composite nature of this concept renders it pervasive in the vocabulary of social sciences and evokes its kinship with concepts like 'development', 'growth', 'evolution, and 'progress'. Its ideological moorings, however, suffuse it with value loads that render social scientists and the public equally ambivalent to its notion as modernisation becomes an issue for rejection or approval, prejudice or pride. Ideology also serves as a canopy under which the similarities and differences of contra-distinct models of modernisation of societies, the changes in their material and technological conditions, modes of production, distribution of wealth and power and relative deprivation of classes and sections of people in a society—all these processes tend to have a fit on a calculus of meaning that is ideological. The basic problem of modernisation in the third world nations is ideological. The process of economic growth, expansion of science and technology and changes in the social structure commensurate with demands for social and economic growth are its essential components, but what looms large over these processes is the principle of valuation and symbolisation of these instrumentalities of change in conformity with the national ethos. Modernisation thus becomes a value loaded term, because its main challenge lies in the discovery of relevant ideology. The relevance is determined not merely by the gross national output

or the material indicators of modernisation, *i.e.*, standard of living, the rate of economic growth and the rate of expansion of science and technology in various modes of activities, the armed forces and other formal structures, but by the manner in which these harmonise with the past history and cultural tradition and are evocative of its symbols. The urge for modernity is co-mingled with the urge for identity. This problem becomes central when we examine the modernisation ideology in Indian Muslims.

The basic theme around which these basic issues could be woven together is whether Indian Muslims have been able to evolve an ideology of modernisation commensurate with its search for identity. In descriptive terms modernisation covers a large number of hetrogenous trends: organisation of societies at the national level, industrialisation, commercialisation, increasing participation and mobilisation of population at large, secularisation, and rationalisation of political, cultural and lifeways etc. The process of modernisation involves a diffusion of world culture—based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for justice in public affairs and on the acceptance that to be modern means to see life as alternatives, preferences and choices.

Lerner has advocated the use of modernisation to refer to a "disquieting positive spirit" diffused among a wider population and touching public institutions and private aspirations based upon his study of six different societies. According to Michael M. Ames "Modernisation refers to a set of related processes and changes involving such things as mechanisation, industrialisation, urbanisation, and bureaucratisation etc. and the impact of these forces on social, political and religious life. Modernisation is a broad concept compared to Westernisation, secularisation, and mobilisation. Besides there are divergent views about the scope that is to be covered by the concept of modernisation. Sutton limits modernisation to agriculture, industry, technology and ecology. Apter Confines it to political realm. The psychological meaning is subscribed by Lerner and Primary of science and secular life-ways are advocated by Horowitz.

Srinivas prefers westernisation and secularisation to modernisation, because the value of 'humanitarianism' is implicit in westernisation and this includes two other values; viz., 'equalitarianism' and 'secularism'. The latter of these two includes "rationalism," Srinivas's analysis of westernisation and secularisation categorically implies the

dichotomy of tradition and modernity as absolute and separate polarities in Indian society. Expression such as, western technology, technology and education replace traditional patterns and secularisation roots out 'sacred' or religious element form society.

Similarly, modernisation has been equated with mobilisation. Deutsch explains that social mobilisation denotes most of the socio-demographic aspects of modernisation. He defines it as a process-through which old commitments are eroded and broken and new patterns of socialisation and behaviour are made available. The dichotomy between tradition and modernity is quite explicit in the view of Deutsch too. There are some who regard the advent of modernisation as it consequence of the adoption of a new ideology. And there are others who hold the view that factors responsible for modernisation may be both the internal inconsistencies of the value-system of a society and the external or structural forces of charge.

Gusfield has exposed some of the 'fallacies' related to the twin concepts of tradition and modernity. They are: (1) developing societies have been static, (2) traditional culture is a consistent body of norms and values, (3) traditional society is a homogeneous social structure, (4) modernisation replaces traditional culture, (5) the two cultures (tradition and modern) are always in conflict, (6) modernisation weakens tradition, and (7) the two are exclusive in nature and character.

The concept of modernisation, however, still remains to be adequately defined. A four-fold classification of the divergent views on modernisation has been made by Yogendra Singh.

Thus, the basic conceptual instrument of the modernisation theory is the tradition—modernity dichotomy used in a classical form of two polar types or a modified version of a definite or infinite continuum. To quote him theoristis as representatives of the prevailing definitions of modernisation.

"The patterns of the relatively modernised societies, one developed, have shown a tendency to penetrate any social context whose particulars have come in contact with them. The patterns always penetrate; once the penetration began—the previous patterns always change in the direction of some of the patterns of relatively modernised society. "Traditional settings can be utilised where appropriate conditions prevail—there is then, the possibility of gradual transformation of the traditional institutions through incorporation in the modern institutional frame work. The analysis of change within this dichotomous frame

work rests on several directional and typological assumptions. Change is conceptualised as a transformation from traditional to modern society, usually with a provision for a transitional stage or as a linear movement along the tradition modernity continuum. However, the break with this form of analysis has been only reluctant and the notion of the possibility of the co-existence of the traditional and the modern patterns has not made a significant dent in the basic tenet of the theory. The directional assumptions obscure theoretical alternatives, there may be no inherent incompatibility between the two systems. Tradition and modernity may be mutually reinforcing rather than conflicting forces, their relationship may be of the interaction rather than unidirectional character, resulting in multiplicity of possible outcomes. More important however, is the methodological implication of these assumptions. They tend to focus the analysis around the modern end of continuum, with the model of traditional society built with a set of contrasting concepts. Western societies provide the explicit standards for conceptualising the direction of historical (and implicitly desirable) change.

The inadequacies of the "modernisation" approach are reinforced by a general tendency of the modernisation theorists to present modernisation in neutral, natural law terms, schools spread, consumption patterns spread, political institution spread. But it is not a natural law, operating in socio-political vacuum. Technology, presumably, a neutral force, is a two edged instrument, it can be used for opposing purposes. School itself is an important and influential phenomenon but it cannot be separated from the content of education determined by macro social conditions. Conspicuously missing from the modernisation analysis is the fact that modernisation is taking place under specific circumstances and that they are processes highly selective at both the modernising and the modernised end.

There is an alternative mode of analysis of the process of change in the contemporary world developed by social scientists of the third world, and a few scholars in the west. It employs Marxian categories of analysis-mode of production, classes etc. and is associated with the Marxist theory of imperialism. The world, not the separate national system, should be a unit of analysis. The international system provides the framework, within which change occurs, but it also penetrates each society.

"The International, historical and structural reality of the developed and under developed countries is the product of this worldwide system.

The critical questions are—what are the causes and nature of under development? The questions avoided by the theory of modernisation or answered unsatisfactorily without the critical inquiry into the international historical situation.

The world is of one piece and of one history. The rich and the poor countries do not have two separate courses of development explainable by historical accident or by some psychological and cultural characteristics of the inhabitants. The development of one and the under development of another are closely interconnected one is a result of the other, one is the cause of another. History is not the initiative process of repetition, some countries developed somehow first and other countries follow up but it is a specific dialectical historical process and should be examined as such.

Any society has possibilities of development. These possibilities are limited by a given historical situation. ''Man makes his own history but he does not make it under circumstances chosen by himself, but under circumstances directly encountered given and transmitted from the past. Given conditions of today are an internationally stratified world dominated by few developed nations, and in terms of the reality of the third world, which continue to be dominated by colonialism and imperialism.

MODERNISATION: ITS MODELS AND APPROACHES

There is still no unanimity on concepts and evaluative standards of modernisation among social scientists, and each approach can be charged with having latent ideological bias. Sociologists having a Marxist approach to modernisation might deny the very 'concept of breakdown as employed by sociologists from the "free world" block, for Marxist "breakdown" maybe a vulgarised conceptual substitute for 'revolution' which is a pre-requisite for modernisation in all developing as well as developed capitalist socities. It is, therefore, necessary to evaluate some important theoretical pre-suppositions of modernisation which may have a bearing upon modernisation in the analysis of Muslim community.

Most approaches to modernisation could be grouped under two broad categories: structural and evolutionary. The structural approach is rather preponderant in social sciences. It sees to analyse modernisation with the help of selected variables—such variables as "social mobility" growth of "communication" 'media exposure' democratic political institutions and values. Morals and norms conductive to modernisation,

technological and economic resources of society; and initial conditions of society with respect to the presence of cultural and structural autonomy of parts within the social system, have been taken into consideration. Modernisation is supposed to follow as a result of the presence of these variables in the social system; their intensity and proportion would determine the nature and extent of modernisation in specific situations.

"Evolutionary approach to modernisation treats modernisation as an evolutionary stage in the life of human society. There are however differences in formation of the process of evolution and its direction. Its methodological formulation may either be structural functional, or dialectical, similarly direction of evolution may also be either unilinear or multi-linear A major difference between dialectical (Marxist) and structural functional, evolutionary approaches to modernisation is that the former treats "break-down" in the established political, economic and structural framework of a society as a necessary and inevitable condition for development towards modernisation, "Class struggle and its international from of struggle between the rich and poorer nations are here assumed as a necessary process for such evolutionary achievements. Even modernisation as a concept is understood differently, its focus is upon changes in stratification system, of property ownership, and ownership of productive resources in a nation, and not on psychological normative variables like 'achievement-orientation', 'psychic mobility' and 'national hedonism' etc., common among the treatments of many social scientists. Individual characteristics are here treated as 'by products of major aggregates of changes in institutional structure of society and its structure of power and property relationships. The structural functional evolutionary treatment of modernisation is drawn primarily from an organismic analogy where evolution is treated as a continuity from the sub-human to human phase and beyond. In an essay on modernisation as an 'evolutionary universal' of human society, Talcott Parsons writes that such evolutionary changes would engulf all human groups despite their typicalities in other facts of social and cultural organisation. His view assumes that the watershed between sub-human and human does not mark a cessation of the developmental change; but rather a stage in a long process that begins with many pre-human phases and continues through that watershed into our own time and beyond. Modernisation follows a succession of 'evolutionary universals', which are defined as "any organisational development sufficiently important to further evolution that, rather than emerging only once, is likely to be 'hit upon' by various systems

operating under different conditions. An important 'evolutionary universal' in the sub-human organic world as a whole, is that of vision, and in case of man it is development of hand and brain. In the social realm the sequence of its evolution is set by four pre-requisite universals; these are: communication with language, religion, social organisation with kinship and technology. These integrated together constitute a set for elemental social organisation. On this foundation universals like 'stratification', 'cultural legitimation', bureaucratic organisation, 'money and market complex', (generalised universalistic norms', and finally, the democratic associations develop in a sequential order. Of these, the last four (bureaucratic organisation, money and market complex, the generalised universalistic norms and democratic associations) constitute the structural normative conditions of a modern society."

FORMS OF MODERNISATION

The process called modernisation is not restricted to one domain of social reality but envelops all the basic aspects of social life. An attempt is made here to discuss the type of processes which are subsumed under the rubric of modernisation without the definitional restrictions imposed by social scientists.

SOCIAL MODERNISATION

Modernisation is high differentiation and specialisation with respect to individual activities and institutional structure. It refers to the separation of different roles held by the individuals—especially among the occupational and political roles, and between them and the family and kinship roles, "specificity" and not "diffuseness" is implied in the separation of roles, and recruitment to the roles is not determined by ascription based on any fixed kinship, territorial, caste or estate basis but is free-floating based on achievement.

Modernisation in political spheres implied four major features:

1. The legitimacy of the sovereign authority of the state is derived not from super-natural sanctions, but from secular sanctions inhering in the people and based on accountability of citizens.

2. The continual diffusion of political power to wider groups of society ultimately to all adult citizens, and their incorporation into a consensual moral order.

3. A growing extension of the territorial scope and especially by the intensification of power of the central legal, administrative and political agencies of the society.

4. Unlike the rulers of traditional societies, the rulers of modern societies, whatever may be their nature totalitarian, bureaucratic, oligarchic or democratic- "accept the relevance of their subjects as the objects, beneficiaries and legitimisers of policy" The differences between the modern democratic or semi-democratic forms of government lies in the extent to which they permit institutional expression in political institutions, public liberties and in the welfare and cultural policies.

ECONOMIC MODERNISATION

Modernisation manifests itself in the following features: (a) substitution of inanimate power such as steam, electricity or atomic energy for human and animal power as the basis of productions distribution, transport and communication, (b) separation of economic activities from the traditional setting, increasing replacement of tools by machine and technology, (e) as corollary to this high level of technology growth of an extensive sector of secondary (industrial commercial) and tertiary (service) occupations, over-shadowing the primary (extractive) ones in quantitative and qualitative significance growing specialisation of economic roles and units of economic activity—production, consumption and marketing and (d) a degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy—atleast growth sufficient to increase both production and consumption regularly; and (e) finally growing industrialisation the key characteristic of economic modernisation.

The shift—from the use of human and animal power to inanimate power, from tools to the machine as the basis of production and its implications in terms of the growth of wealth, technical diversification, differentiation and specialisation leading to a noval type of division of labour, industrialisation and urbanisation are accepted to all scholars as features of modernisation.

EDUCATIONAL MODERNISATION

In traditional societies the position, statuses and roles are generally based on the hereditary principle and are ascribed. On the other hand, it is generally assumed that in modern societies statuses and roles are based on achievement, merit, qualification and training rather than on ascription. In this simplified conceptual dichotomy of traditional and modern societies the achievement orientation of the latter against the ascriptive basis of the former, we can logically discuss an increasing role of education and training for acquiring skill, knowledge and demonstrate merit. This necessarily implies that recruitment to various

roles and statuses will be more and more open based on tested merit and the recruitment would not be foreclosed on the basis of heredity. This also implies that classes and groups which were formerly denied access to educational facilities would be allowed to avail of them to provide a broader base for recruitment. Does this simple logical dichotomy work? Does modernisation mean a unlinear broadening of the educational reach and an all-round diversification of educational opportunities for all irrespective of ascription due to birth? Does the demand for scientific and technological personnel generated by. modernised economy seek out recruits from all sectors and areas? These are some of the questions that demand concrete answers.

Social change in the form of modernisation was introduced in India by the British rulers. The traditional social structure of Indian society was changed and the process of modernisation were initiated by the British rulers. The new social context had its impact on the education system which was rendered more open. The British rulers elaborated a bureaucratic administrative machinery which required a rational system of education.

This recruitment was in consonance with the British aim of establishing a colonial social order. Subservient and dependent on them in every way they desired an education system that would provide the necessary training and skills for personnel to fill up the subordinate bureaucratic structure and to be loyal to the British at all time. Exigencies of the colonial expansion demanded a system of education that would fulfill this limited objective and it was not intended to satisfy the aspirations of the mass of people for modern learning.

British trained Indians, with a view to staff the vast politico-administrative machinery, and to imbue the personnel with the underlying principles and producers governing it. British trained and educated people to acquire skills and assimilate values arising out of the new capitalist economic system which the British were creating in India, and which had different laws of operation based on a money economy, contractual relations, and production for profit and for the market. The aim of the colonial rulers was to win over the confidence of the upper classes of society who had lost their political influence through the British conquest and make them allies of the. British government, in short to create a class Indian. by birth, but English in taste, manners and outlook who could be relied upon as strong supporters of the British rule. For example, according to Desai the policy of "downward filtration theory'" was formulated in order to

prevent the mass of people from taking advantage of modern education. Changes in the politico administrative set up after independence have created a new 'demand for education.' The Government of India, in contrast to the British rulers took a more positive interest in shaping of the educational policy. An important requirement after independence was the extension and diversification of educational opportunities and educational institutions necessary to provide the diverse skills and techniques required for the new economy and polity. The conscious and deliberate process of planning introduced with the first five-year plan and the universal adult franchise introduced in the constitution both required participation by the mass of people.

Education is necessary to enable citizens to participate intelligently in the economic and political processes. The right to work and right to vote, logically and inevitably demands for its effective use, the right to education. The constitution and the planning mechanism initiated, by it have neglected the right to work and right to education, which are and should be concomitants of the right to vote. The right to work and right to education do not find a place in the chapter on Fundamental Rights guaranteed by the Indian Constitution. Instead they have been included in the directive principles, mere resolutions to be fulfilled rather than rights to be guaranteed, denying the people work and education as fundamental rights is to deny them their potential power to create the kind of society they wish. So far modernisation on capitalists line has precluded the possibility of providing those rights to the citizens and consequently the possibilities of creating a different social order.

A COUNTER VIEW WORSLEY'S CRITIQUE

Modernisation's ideological context is made explicit in the two types of development seen in developing societies. As Peter Worsley rightly pointed out, there is nothing like modernisations *per se*. There is either modernisation on capitalist's lines or on socialists line. Either it takes place on axis of private property in the means of production and the capitalist and land owning classes eliminated as driving forces. Modernisation on capitalists lines assume profits accrue to the free enterpreneurs. Modernisation on non-capitalists, socialist lines assumes the meeting of the assessed needs of the society as central objectives of production. It also assumes mass production based on machine power, but not producing for an anonymous market but production according to a central plan based on assessed needs.

Modernisation on capitalists lines elaborates a social stratification wherein the fundamental distinction between classes owning means of production and classes who live by selling their labour power skilled or unskilled, persists and its perpetuated "private means of production remains a crucial and 'ingrained feature of stratification' shaping distribution of wealth, consumption patterns, styles of life, and leisure activities". Modernisation on non-capitalist socialist line is based on elimination of the propertied class which owns the means of production and elaborates a new principle of stratification based on public ownership of the means of production, transforming into various strata of skilled and unskilled categories differing from one another in diversities of skills. This principle of stratification is qualitatively different from the principle of stratification in capitalist societies. This crucial difference is very often forgotten, leading to tremendous amount of confusion in the proper study of modernisation. In my opinion this classification of modernisation on the basis of the two paths will help us to distinguish the nature of the core processes going on in various third world countries.

BRITISH ROLE IN MODERNISATION IN INDIA

Modernisation in India started mainly with the western contact, especially through establishment of the British Raj. This contact had a special historicity which brought about many far reaching changes in culture and social structure of the Indian society. Not all of them, however, could be called modernising. The basic direction of this contact was towards modernisation, but in the process a variety of traditional institutions also got reinforcement. This demonstrates the weakness of assuming a clear-dichotomy between tradition and modernity. "This polarity may be more heuristic than real." However, only after the establishment of British rule in India, modern culture institutions and forms of social structure were introduced. Both Yogendra Singh and M.N Srinivas have pointed out that the British rule produced radical and lasting changes in Indian society and culture. "It was unlike any previous period in Indian history as the British brought with them new technology, institutions, knowledge, beliefs and values." The new technology and the revolution in communications which this brought about, enabled the British to integrate the country as never before in its history.

But basic intention of the colonial rulers was not to modernise the traditional society. Modernisation of Indian society was merely an

unintended consequence of colonial exploitation. Whenever they needed modern institutions to fulfil their aims they introduced them.

The role of railways and similarly of foreign trade is a good example of a prospective agent of capitalism and development—turning into an agent of the colonisation of the economy and its under-development. While Railways heralded a new advanced stage of the development of capitalism and production forces in England and they helped develop Germany and U.S.A. into major industrial economies and rivals of Britain. In India, they enabled British manufacturers to penetrate in land and thus to destroy handicrafts on a larger scale and to prevent the rise of rival modern industries. Instead of initiating in India new industries based on the direct needs of railways for steel, wagons, engines etc., they created demand for these materials in Britain, Bipan Chandra points out that Marx had expected the railways to at least link the Indian villages with each other thus end their mutual isolation. In reality, the railways and the limited road, system failed to do so. The colonial pattern of their construction was concentrated on linking each village with the world capitalist market through its satellite Indian towns and cities.

An efficient and modern administrative structure and institutions only enabled the structuring of colonialism and colonial exploitation of the peasantry by the non-capitalist landlords, usurers, merchants and the lower bureaucracy. Modern education was first sought to be used to create a colonised intelligentsia, and a free press. Thus, modern means of communication and modern system of education were introduced to support colonial domination. About the introduction of modern technology, it is true that technology is an agent of modernisation but it can be an agent of exploitation in a colonial situation. It is double-edged weapon which can be used for both liberating as well as exploiting.

THE HURDLES IN MODERNISATION—THE PROBLEM OF INSTITUTIONALISATION AND BREAKDOWN IN MODERNISATION

Modernisation is not just superficial acquisition of some isolated traits and elements characteristic of the more advanced societies. Their selection in a logical order and sequence and integration into the cultural pattern in a widely ramifying manner is essential. Thus, modernisation of any community depends upon two basic characteristics of society viz: institutionalisation of modern values and the adaptability

of the society concerned. So logically the next question under consi-deration is under what structural-cultural conditions does modernisation lead to integrative transformation of society? What are the structural prequisites for institutionalisation of modernising changes without breakdown?

Structural break down in modernisation according to parson's theory, emerges when, due to historical or other cultural factors, the sequence of evolution is reversed or made uneven or when some of the universals become far too rigid and offer more than normal resistance to further evolution. Such conditions according to a later study by Buck and Jacobson prevail in the Asian nations, These nations being ex-colonies, have many evolutionary structures like bureaucracy, democratic associations and generalised universalistic norms introduced into their social structure without adequate development of other basic founding universals like communication, technology, stratification and principles of legitimation.

The major potential source of break-down in the Indian process of modernisation which is to be taken as the frame of reference for the analysis of the Muslim community may be in one form or another, be attributed to structural in consistencies, such as, democratisation without Spread of civic culture (education) bureaucratisation without commitment to universalistic norms, rise in media participation (communication) and aspiration without proportionate increase in resources and distributive justices, verbalisation of a welfare ideology without its diffusion in social structure and its implementation as a social policy over urbanisation without industrialisations and finally modernisation without meaningful changes in the stratification system.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO MODERNISATION

Modernisation is rooted in the scientific world view, it has a deeper and positive association with levels of diffusion of scientific knowledge, technological skill and technological resources in a particular society.

The distinction modern values and traditional values may be maintained on the ground that modern values, like science, being evolutionary universal, might not be typical to any one particular cultural tradition, whereas traditional cultural values may be particularistic and typical. Modernisation in its essential attributes or in ideal-typical forms is a universal-cultural phenomenon. Like science, modernity is not an exclusive possession of any one ethnic or cultural group, but belongs to the humanity as a whole. This, however, should

not mean that in all substantive details all modernised societies or cultures will be alike. On the contrary, the existential adaptations to modernisation in every society, as evidence suggests, take a historical and distinctive forms. But the substantive adaption to modernisation should be distinguished from modernisation *per se* since in all likelihood, not for a long time to come (perhaps never) anywhere in the world shall we have a fully modern society.

Thus, following Singh, a paradigm for an 'integrated approach' may be formulated to study the modernisation process in Muslim community keeping in view the advantages of the various approaches referred above.

Without being involved in the definitional wrangle as there is a paucity of empirically verified statements about the relationships involved, we corroborate the views of some others (Gusfield, Singh etc.) that tradition and modernity constitute a single simultaneously ongoing process. A society may have modern values in certain respects and traditional values may prevail in other respects. The modern may become traditional in course of time and vice-versa. This logic applies to individual human beings as well. The same man in one situation may behave in a traditional, dogmatic and religious way, and in another he may behave differently, as a secular, rational and democratic being.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION

Following the views advanced by Gusfield, that modernisation does not stand as an opposite polar to tradition, nor does it follow that tradition and modernity are found in a form of a synthesis. These are continually generating, reviewing and renovating parts of the same process of change. Modernisation denotes change not only in the sacred or non-sacred existing components of social organisation, but also the adoption of new forms of social, economic, cultural and political values, means and relationships based on rationality. As such, modernisation becomes both an instrumental value and an articulate device for change in the existing economic, social, political and cultural structures. The existing values, however, old they might be, could be even more pragmatic and utilitarian than newer values. The newer values are taken up not necessarily by discarding the existing ones; they may be adopted for reasons of grieater efficiency, economy of means, and rewards. The new values may be innovations of the "moderns" or they may be borrowed from certain sections of the same society or that of aliens.

Thus, following Singhs, the process of modernisation in Muslim community can be evaluated at two levels (a) as a system of values (b) in terms of role structures. Modernisation requires 'infrastructures' and a scientific world view; This has support of the two universals examined by Parsons viz , that of stratification system and cultural-legitimation.

We propose to analyse the process of modernisation in terms of adoption of new values and emergent role structures and in terms of "distributive justice'.

OBJECTS OF STUDY

Broadly speaking, the main objects of the present study are:

(i) To study, the nature or existing traditions in the Muslim community.

(ii) To assess the degree of modernisation in values prevailing in respect of institutional structure and to assess how far they are pro-modern.

(iii) To find out the sections of the Muslim community that have a greater proneness to modernisation.

(iv) To identify the barriers to modernisation.

UNIVERSE AND THE SAMPLE

The present study is confined to the Muslims in Jaipur city. Muslims constitute 21.4 per cent (1,66,313) of the total population of Jaipur city (total population of Jaipur city being 7,76,278. Although Muslims are scattered in different parts of the city, but for the present study, we have chosen those 'wards' which have the Muslim population of 10,000 or more. Thus, the total number of wards studied are only four. These are: (i) Ward No. 2, *i.e.*, Chokri Topkhana Desh, (ii) Ward No. 5; *i.e.*, Chokri Ramchanderji, (iii) Ward No. 8, *i.e.*, Chokri Topkhana Hajuri and (iv) Ward No. 10; i. e., Hawali Sahar Garbi. From these four wards the sample has been selected on the basis of 'random sampling'. The important variables which we have taken into consideration for analysis of the data are occupational status, income, educational level and age of the respondents. Household has been taken as the unit variable for selecting the sample 3 per cent (three per cent) households were taken from each of the four wards. For this purpose, the total population of these four wards was converted into the total number of households on the basis of the following formula. The total population of each ward was divided by the aggregate number of members in

each household (*i.e.* 5.21) and thus the total number of households in each ward was obtained.

Thus, to say that so far as the selection of the total number of cases to be studied from each ward is concerned, it is based on random sampling, but taking into consideration the major hypotheses of the study, we have further selected the head of the family household as the respondent from each ward; keeping in view the variables such as occupational status, income and education level. Thus, forming a stratified random sampling. Besides, the head of the family household, women head from each household was also being contacted, in order to analyse the position of women in the Muslim community in Jaipur city. The present study is confined to Sunni religious sect.

THE COLLECTION OF DATA

Any study in order to arrive at reliable results must proceed on the basis of a set of scientific techniques to collect data. For this purpose an 'interview-schedule' was designed in which the previous studies and inquired have been taken as a basis. Some direct and indirect questions forming a scale have been asked, to measure the media-exposure aspirations, values and their political participation and ideology etc. At the same time a set of interview-schedule was also administered (in order to study the position of women in the community studied) to the head of the women in each household. Apart from this, non-participant observation technique is also being extensively used to cross-examine the validity of the responses. By observing the style of their life, standard of living, the number of modern equipments being used in their household etc. The schedule was pre-tested on 40 respondents (*i.e.*, head of the family household).

THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

When the data is collected, it is to be tabulated and analysed. In the process of classification and tabulation some of the statistical methods were being used, as they enabled us to study and to describe precisely averages differences and relationship.

For tabulation of questions forming a scale, the 'Mean' value of the score was calculated. On the basis of the 'Mean' score the respondents were classified as 'high' and 'low'.

To make the study more analytical rather than descriptive, certain variables were taken into consideration for the tabulation of the data. The basic variables which were taken into account were the occupational

status, income educational level, age and the degree of exposure to the media of communication.

HYPOTHESES

The formulation and verification of hypothesis is a goal of scientific inquiry. The importance of hypothesis has been emphasised by Cohen and Nagel, who say "We cannot take a single step forward in any inquiry unless we begin with a suggested explanation or solution of the difficulty, which originated it. Such tentative explanations are suggested to us by something in the subjectmatter and by our previous knowledge; when they are formulated as proposition's, they are called as hypothesis". Some of the hypothese formulated for the present study are as follows:

1. The degree of modernisation is proportionately related to educational achievements and economic roles.

2. The more a person is exposed to various media of communication, the more likely he is to adopt the new ideals of life.

3. There is a direct relationship between the high level of aspiration and the high degree of confidence for achieving various aspirations.

SOCIO-CULTURAL BACKGROUND

Before analysing the collected data, it will be worthwhile to mention some of the general background characteristics of the respondents.

Age has been considered as an important factor in modifying and reconstructing the structure and organisation of any community. On the basis of the chronological age, the respondents were classified in to three groups, viz., young, middle-aged, and old. The young group consisted of those respondents who were between the age of 25-35 years. The middle-aged group comprised those respondents who were between 36-50 years of age and all those respondents who were above 51 years of age were put in the old-age group.

The figures reveal that the majority of the respondents *i.e.*, 54-6 per cent were in the middle-aged group, 28-6 per cent were in the young group and only 16-8 per cent belonged to the old group. The marital status of the majority of the respondents was that of married ones. (*i.e.*, 86 7%), only 10-7 per cent respondents were unmarried and 2-6 per cent were widowers.

In terms of the traditional and modern occupations figures show that the majority of the respondents (*i.e.*, 75-2%) were engaged in

their traditional occupations, where only 24-8 per cent respondents had modern occupations to their credit. This shows that there is some change in the traditional occupational structure of the Muslim community. Detailed analysis of the data for occupation of the respondents reveals that of the 375 respondents studied, only 6.7 per cent respondents were in the category of administrative, technical, professional jobs, 18.1 per cent were engaged it government or semi-government or private petty jobs, including industrial workers. The majority of them *i.e.*, 48.0 per cent were those who owned and worked in some or the other abovementioned home industry including a small-scale self-owned business and a very few in large-scale business enterprises *e.g.'* of tyres, tobaccos and poultry farms etc., 24.5 per cent respondents were labourers, *e.g.* manual workers and mere wage earners like, rickshaw pullers, cart pullers and other manual works which required more physical labour (Palladars etc.) 2.7 per cent respondents were the religious heads (*i.e.*, Maulvis).

Thus, it is clear from the above figures that in modern industry and business except for isolated instances, respondents did not own large scale industry or business and they had been traditionally aloof from banking and finance. No doubt there were some medium- and small scale consumer goods enterprises which had been started and owned specially by the Muslims but by and large they had not demonstrated high enterpreneurial traits. They seemed to be much less investment oriented than several other communities.

To analyse the effect of income on the degree of modernisation of the respondents, we had taken the economic classes under consideration. On the basis of the monthly income of the respondents, we had divided the respondents into four groups, viz , upper income, upper middle, lower middle and low income group. All those respondents who earned Rs. 200 or below were put in the low income category, all those respondents who earned Rs. 201-600 were put in the lower middle income category, all those respondents who earned Rs. 601-1000 were put in the upper middle income group and finally those respondents who earned Rs. 1001 and above per month were put in the category of upper income group.

The analysis of the data reveals that only 3.2 per cent respondents belonged to the upper income group, 12.5 per cent belonged to the upper middle income group, 40.0 per cent belonged to the lower middle income group and the rest of 44.3 per cent belonged to the lower income group.

The correlation of the variables, occupation and income supports the pre-assumption that the prestigeous secular occupations were virtually monopolised by the upper income groups. It is clear from the data collected that out of 3.2 per cent respondents from upper income category 2.4 per cent were engaged in administrative technical professional jobs and only 0.8 per cent were engaged in business. In upper middle income category, out of the total 12.5 per cent respondents 4.3 per cent were in the category of administrative technical professional jobs and 3.7 per cent were in service, also the same percentage was of those who were in the category of business 0.5 per cent respondents were in the category of labourers and only 0.3 per cent *i.e.*, only one respondent was a religious head. In the lower middle income groups out of the total 40.0 per cent respondents 11.2 per cent were in service, 18.2 per cent were engaged in some or the other home industry business, 10.1 per cent were labourers and only two respondents i. e., 0.5 per cent were the religious heads. In the low income category 3.2 per cent respondents were those who were either working in some private shops etc., 25.3 per cent were those who were engaged in home industry business. 13.8 per cent were labourers and 1.9 per cent were religious heads.

Education has also been considered to mould and shape the views of an individual which determines his growth and governs his attitudes. It cannot be omitted as insignificant factor since it includes the communication of knowledge and shapes the values. Hence, due importance has been given to education while studying the change in the Muslim community. The level of education has been judged on the basis of the respondents educational attainments. For the purpose of the present study, we had defined the 'liberates' as those persons who did not know how to read and write. All those respondents who had some knowledge of their "religious texts" or else who could read or write Arabic or Urdu or Hindi or English, were put in the category of 'home educated'. All those respondents who had some formal education to their credit (i. e., from middle to secondary) were put in the category of school educated respondents and finally all those respondents who were having a university degree or diploma were put in the category of "college educated" respondents.

Traditionally, education was imparted to the Muslims through schools (Madarsas which varied in respect of size and grades upto which education was imparted on traditional lines. The situation, however, changed with the arrival of the British. Many universities

were established although the traditional institutions continued along with these modern centers of education, but gradually even they came under the influence of the, former. At present although many traditional institutions of education continue to impart instruction on traditional lines, the trend is towards modern education. This view is supdorted by A, Yusuf Ali.

Since independence, the aspiration for Modern education has increased in all communities, so Muslim community is no exception to it. Many states including Rajasthan have also taken policy measures to curtail the element of communalism in education for reinforcing the policy of secularism. This has not always succeeded or been accepted without resentment However, the emphasis on modern education will in the long run produce results in conformity with the culture of modernisation.

Yet in the fields of professional, vocational and university education, the number of Muslim respondents appear to be far lower than their relative percentage in the total population. The data collected from this study supports this statement. We find that only 10.7 per cent respondents, out of the total (375 No.) were "highly educated" (*i.e.,* who had the university degree or diploma) 33.1 per cent were "school educated", 35.4 per cent were "home educated" (*i.e.* who could read or write either Arabic or Urdu or Hindi or English etc.) and the rest of the 20.8 per cent respondents were completely "illiterate", *i.e.,* who could not even read and write.

Although Islam proclaims equality of all believers and claims to lay the basis of an equalitarian society, yet, caste among Muslims is wide-spread in some or the other form. Many historians and sociologists have explained the rise of caste among the Muslims in terms of Hindu influence, others though not denying the influence of Hindus also find elements in Islam which legitimise social stratification.

The respondents were divided into castes, class, professions and their styles of life and localities were also designated accordingly. As a reflection of "Varna-cum-jati" divisions of the Hindus, aspects of caste system or endogamous social formations were also found among them.

For purposes of social stratification a distinction was made between 'Ashraf and 'Ajlaf, the former including Sayyad, Shaikh, Mughals and Pathans and the latter professional groups like weavers, butchers, carpenters, oilmen, barbers, washermen, leather-workers etc.

However, due to the explicit emphasis on the "brotherhood" of the faithful (momineed) in Islam and the Prophets' firm refutation of race, colour, and tribal origin as a valid basis of distinctions between man and man, rigid caste formations were non-existent among the members of the fraternity, but it was only observed at the times of prayer in the mosque and pilgrimage at 'Mecca' and 'Medina', otherwise the class divisions and caste distinctions between the elite and the mass were as rampant among them as among other religious communities.

The analysis of the figures reveal that the respondents were divided into various groups which were referred to by them as (jats) castes; nevertheless the precise referent to this local term often varies according to the context, as also the level of general information, the respondents assumed about the social composition and structure of their community. Depending on the context, the term was used to refer to broad religious communities as well as smaller social groupings. When first inquired from the respondents, we were told that there were no castes (jats). Again, we were told the same thing by others, however, after they assumed a general understanding of the broad communal divisions of the community, the term 'jat' was invariably used to refer to smaller social groupings whom we designate here as castes.

The castes (jats) were broadly similar groups, possessing a set of attributes which were closely identical to the ones commonly associated with caste in India. The first characteristic of these groups was that they bear distinct names which were used to identify all those belonging to the group. The castes were in other words, named groupings. These names were either derived from the occupations, which their members were traditionally associated with or denote their source of origin. Thus, names like Julaha, Teli and Faquir, which refer respectively to the caste of weavers, oil pressors and religious mendicants and beggars, were derivations from traditional occupations which members of these group either persued in the past or were engaged in today on the other hand, names like Sayyad, Shaikh, Pathan, Qureshi etc., indicated the source from which the members of these castes claimed their origin and descent. The Sayyads and 'Shaikhs' belonged to the nobility of Islam. They were considered the descendants of early Islamic nobility and thus they were regarded as sacred almost like the Brahmins in the Hindu tradition. The Mughals and Pathans on the other hand had been by tradition warriors, feudal aristocrates and rulers. The Shaikhs claimed to be descendants of those who followed the Prophet Muhammed during his historic flight from Mecca to Medina.

The second important attribute of castes, (jats) in the community studied was their association with a traditional occupation which, as we indicated above, was implied by the name of some of the castes. This association applied in the case of all Ajlaf caste in this sample. Like Weaver (Julaha), Iron workers (Luhar) Bangle maker (Manihar) Tie and Dye worker (Rangrez), Cotton carders (Pinara) labourers or Majdoors, *i.e.* manual-workers who work in grain uplifting work etc. (Palledar), Butchers, (Kassaban), water suppliers (Bhisti), Jewellers, (Negina Ghisai worker), Faqir (Devotee) etc.

For the purpose of the present analysis of the caste composition of Muslims in the sample, the figures are as given below. The caste distribution of the population reveals that only 22.7 per cent of the total respondents belonged to the "Ashraf" (*i.e.*, higher caste), the majority of the respondents (*i.e.*, 77.3 per cent respondents) were of the 'Ajlaf caste viz., caste like Julaha, Luhar, Manihar, Rangrez, Pinara, Palledar, Kassaban, Bhishti, Faqir, etc. Though there existed a rather important distinction in the nature and exclusiveness of the occupations associated with those castes whose traditional calling was implied by their caste name and those whose caste names were indicative of origin or descent. The occupations of the former group of (jats) castes were closed in the sense that those belonging to other castes would not like to take them up. The occupations traditionally associated with the latter group of castes whose names generally reflected their origin were concentrated in them; but these occupations were not specifically reserved for them. As a matter of fact, wherever, the circumstances of a person belonging to a caste whose callings was a closed occupation, in the sense indicated above, allowed his taking to what have been called open occupations, he did often engage in them even if his involvement was only marginal or supplementary. Such involvement usually resulted in raising the persons economic and social status among his caste fellows.

It should not be thought from the above that everyone in the Muslim community was engaged in his traditional calling only and that no occupational change had taken place in the community. Several weavers and butchers etc., who bad succeeded in accumulating some capital, had taken to trading. Some of them had also invested in small scale industries, like carpet or woolen carpet (Namada) factories. At the same time, those respondents who were engaged in closed occupations in the sense indicated above, could get some job in modern factories or else in shops etc. had preferred that job. Many of them

had sent their young children to work in some Suvegamoped repairing shops, Cycle shops or else in factories like carpet weaving etc. It is worthnoting here that attitudes and ideas about occupation changed with the changed in the context and place. No luhar (Iron worker) would have thought of engaging in weaving within the community. If he did, his status would have suffered greatly. On the other hand their young children (hardly of the age of 10-15) who were being sent to work in some carpet factory etc., or in textile mills, they would not mind.

This was largely because working as a weaver or as a craftsmen etc. in some good concern was not considered as leading to any lowering of their status in the community. The essential point worth remembering in this connection is that each caste in the community, and especially the castes, whose names themselves implied association with a traditional occupation, were deemed to have special occupation associated with them. Further more, while occupational changes did occur, a person casts as a whole was identified with the occupation which was considered traditional for that caste. To sum up it can be said that age, income, occupation, education and caste are the variables which may play a considerable role in moulding the personality of an individual and in shaping his values. These variables are considered, to assess as to how far they determine the degree of modernisation of the respondents in the Muslim community.

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12

IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAM AND WORLD PEACE: A CASE STUDY

IDEOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF ISLAM

A CRITICAL PARADIGM

Despite the pioneering leads by Marx (1867), Weber (1904) and Durkheim [1964 (1912)], the sociology of religion has been until recently one of the least developed areas in sociology. Even at the college level, especially in American sociology, courses in religion are poorly attended and only rarely offered. When it comes to Islam, sociological literature is very limited. This deficiency in sociology did not go unnoticed. Writing over twenty-five years ago. Turner (1974: 1-2) noted that—An examination of any sociology of religion textbook published in the last fifty years will show... that sociologists are either not interested in Islam or have nothing to contribute to Islamic scholarship.... There is consequently a need for studies of Islam which will raise important issues in Islamic history and social structure within a broad sociological framework which is relevant to contemporary theoretical issues.

Even when they did focus on Islam, western sociologists were often inconsistent in their approach. This is true of no less a sociologist than Max Weber:... Weber also made a massive contribution to contemporary sociology by outlining a special philosophy of social science and a related methodology which attempts to present the social actor's constitution of social reality by subjective interpretations. In Weberian sociology, we must start any research inquiry with an adequate account or description of the actor's subjective world... my argument will be that in his observation on Islam and Muhammed Weber was one of the first sociologists to abandon his own philosophical guidelines. (Turner 1974: 3)

Weber is not alone in being inconsistent. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) points out a widespread flaw in western scholarship when it comes to the study of non-western cultures in general and Islam and Muslims in particular. Said argues that the representation of Islam in western scholarly writings is deeply implicated in the power relations between researcher and researched, and is partly constructed not so much by independent observation and evidence as by the pre-existing biases of the scholars themselves. Whatever their flaws in studying 'other' cultures, sociologists of religions and the Orientalists have had a rare attraction in the 'five pillars' of Islam.

Their interest in this specific aspect of Islam does not seem to be altogether out of place. Afterall, these are the five pillars that bring Islam closer to other religions in function if not in form. Religion is often defined as communion with and commitment to the supernatural, with the accompanying acts that promote piety, a sense of selflessness and a degree of empathy with others, qualities that have the effect of promoting internal social solidarity (Durkheim 1964 [1912]). No wonder that religion has been considered to be a crucial social institution, especially, in the Parsonian model (Parsons 1951; Wuthnow 1988). Inasmuch as this is the case, a focus on the five pillars fits neatly into a functional analysis, especially into a structural-functional model.

However, in this chapter I depart from rather than support this approach in its entirety. Much of the literature on Islam, by Muslim and western scholars alike, points out that Islam does not distinguish between religion and politics (Kedouri 1992; Martin 1982); and that, far from being just a formula for worship, Islam, in fact, provides an overall societal ideology (Arjomand 1992; Esposito 1984). Sensitivity to similar concerns has prompted some (Kessler 1972) to assert that either Islam is not a religion or that, as a religion, it is in a category all by itself. Following the ideological approach, it is possible, as we shall see, to reject the treatment of Islam as a social institution and yet retain the integrity of the Parsonian model. We may treat Islam as a social system.

DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC ECONOMY

An Islamic economy has three features: it respects private property, it promotes a free market of exchange of goods and services, and it aims at minimizing the differential between the rich and the poor. Three strategies are used progressively in order to achieve these objectives. First, Islam emphasises the work ethic, dedication to one's

calling and enjoying the fruits of one's labour. Like Weber's 'Protestant ethic' (1904), Islam calls for hard work in order to cam a living and to take care of one's family, rather than forsaking the world or surviving on handouts, donations and charity; but unlike the Protestant ethic, Islam does not necessarily take material success in this world as a sign of God's approval of what one is doing. Material success in this world might just as well be a test—a trial from God—of one's conviction and faith in the Almighty. Consequently, the more successful one is in this world, the more God-fearing one ought to be. Moreover, much as Islam emphasises hard work in order to make a living, it is averse to materialism, opportunistic profiteering and seemingly unending pursuit of wealth—a bottomless abyss, as Durkheim (1966 [1897]) put it—and an obsession with this worldly pleasures (Qur'an 87:16).

Second, at the same time as Islam favours acquisition of property and a market economy, it institutes a prohibition on the sources of 'making a fast buck' or excessive accumulation such as gambling, hoarding and dealing in interest (taking as well as giving). The Islamic economy must not deal in *riba* or interest. This does not mean that banking is prohibited. Indeed, Muslim economists (for instance, Siddiqui 1975) recommend banks as highly efficient machines that make large amounts of capital available to the investor. Islamic banks deal in profit- and loss-sharing rather than interest, something thought to be quite feasible (Anderson et al. 1990), and in which there is a growing interest among Muslim and non-Muslim economists alike.

Third, inasmuch as sources of excessive accumulation of wealth are denied by Qur'anic prohibition, dispersion of property is facilitated by Islamic folkways (through various forms of voluntary acts of charity, generosity and hospitality), as well as through explicit Qur'anic commandments of inheritence or *wiratha* (4:7, 11) and the poor tax or the *zakat*. In the case *of wiratha*, the property of the deceased should be distributed not only among the nearest surviving relatives (wife, sons and daughters), but also among other near relatives such as surviving parents, and brothers and sisters of the deceased, as well as among other less prosperous relatives, and even among needy neighbours and the chronic poor in the community (Qur'an 4:7, 8). The idea is to distribute the property of the deceased widely, rather than allowing it to remain in a few hands.

Zakat, on the other hand, which is not to be confused with a state-levied tax, is the requirement among Muslims to set aside (or contribute to a fund with a similar objective), for the exclusive use of the poor

and the needy, 2.5 per cent of one's property left unused for one whole year. *Zakat* should also not be confused with voluntary acts of charity. It is supposed to be the exclusive *right* of the poor, who deserve a share in one's success. If property is invested, then no *zakat* is payable. In other words, property must not be kept lying idle. It should either be kept in circulation *or zakat* should be paid on it. When property is in circulation, it helps the overall community, including the poor. When not in circulation, *zakat* ensures that it still helps the economy.

When Muslims abide by these requirements, they are free to use their property as they like for the benefit of their family. No human system, whether economic or otherwise, is without restrictions that regulate it. Non-Islamic economic systems have their own regulations. An Islamic economy has its own. Islam encourages worldly success while recommending a redistribution of property far in excess of what modern capitalism would accept, yet far below the level that socialism would tolerate. Briefly, Islam allows capitalism minus material obsessions. While defying any socialist solutions, however, it also restricts accumulation of resources in a limited number of hands.

SOCIOLOGICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

All human beings have two fundamental needs. First, they must have food, clothing and shelter, as well as a means of energy, transportation and communication. These are economic needs that must be satisfied one way or another. Second, human sexual and reproductive needs can only be satisfied by interacting with others.

However, pursuit of these needs can potentially disrupt social relationships unless people are subjected to some sort of normative controls. Polity or the collective exercise of power, then, is a third major element that humans require while living a social life. Exercise of power itself may vary from arbitrary and coercive to responsive and responsible, yet this need for normative controls in society (even to control arbitrary exercise of power) cannot be denied. Humans have also shown a need for the supernatural and for some way of communicating with the being or beings beyond the mortal.

All societies see to it that these four human needs are satisfied through highly regulated patterns of interaction. Parsons (1951) called these patterns of interaction "social institutions" of economy, family, polity and worship. Without the first three of these, human society is unthinkable. Without all four of them, society has not existed historically.

Taken together, norms governing these social institutions describe most essential ingredients of the culture of human society universally. As dissimilar as these institutional patterns of social interaction are, ideally they must be interdependent and mutually reinforcing. This is the American version of the so-called 'organic metaphor' that has been handed down to us from the beginning of classical sociology through Comte, Spencer and Durkheim via Parsons. However, with the possible exception of very simple preliterate societies, this harmonious functioning of societal institutions is rarely the case in reality. In fact, as a society becomes more complex, indeed with every new development, its institutions tend to exert centrifugal pressure upon one another.

Last in a long chain of major religions of the world, Islam came at the threshold of accelerating societal complexity. Human population, with few exceptions, had already become sedantary. As horticulture was widely replaced by irrigation-based agricultural civilisations, nomadism and animal husbandry gave way to urbanisation and international commercial settlements, while the barter system was slowly replaced by the gold and monetary standards.

At this juncture in human history, Islam came with a full compliment of social institutions (the Qur'an calls it *deen)* essential to human society. We do not know of any other 'ism', religion, philosophy of life or ideology that deals with these four indispensable aspects of human life at once, as a manifestation of the same source that provides them with organic unity. A common ideological root in Islam, obviously, is meant to keep the complex society of human beings from coming apart at its institutional seams. This claim stands in defiance of all other ideologies of the past and the present that have failed to provide a singular design of institutional unity for human society.

When practised in its totality, the *deen* of Islam aims at creating what the Qur'an calls the 'Middle Nation' (2:143). This centralizing tendency in Islam has the potential of negotiating ideological extremes and providing them with a common ground by seeking a median course between, say, ascetic spiritualism and obsessive materialism, between selfishness and altruism, between complete freedom and restriction in mate selection, between monogamy and polygamy; and, in a more modern context, between capitalism and socialism, and between democracy and authoritarianism. From the Qura'nic point of view, humans are prone to taking extreme positions. The Qur'an presents Islam as a *deen* in order to guard against such extremes.

DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC FAMILY

Although a Muslim does not have to get married, celibacy is not considered to be especially virtuous in Islam. The Prophet Muhammad is quoted as saying that marriage what makes a man perfect, that one must marry as soon as circumstances allow. Islamic institutions of marriage and the family neither wholly restrict choice of marriage partner, nor permit complete freedom. Marriage in Islam is a social contract, not a sacrament. It is a contract exclusively between the groom and the bride, with full and explicit knowledge and consent of the two, and in the stark contrast to those practices in which a bride has no say in her own marriage or is sold to the highest bidder.

However, this freedom of choice in mate selection in Islam does not permit premarital courting, dating, intimacy or sexual intercourse. In fact, according to the established tradition *(sunnah)* of the Prophet, unrelated men and women cannot so much as even touch one another. Consequently, men and women are supposed to distance themselves from each other through the practice of *hijab* or 'modesty', often manifest in the veil, a practice that divides many Muslim societies into two gender-specific subcultures. In such circumstances, a 'love marriage' is extremely uncommon. As Lipskey (1961: 53) put it, "the general attitude is that love should grow out of marriage, not precede it. Not romantic love but proper social arrangements and satisfactory material circumstances are regarded as essential foundations for a successful marriage". In this situation, it is generally left up to the parents and other relatives, even to friends and neighbours, to find a suitable mate for marriageable offspring. Because marriage is a contract, there is generally a protracted period of time during which the two sides are supposed to discuss and finalise the prenuptial conditions. However, in no circumstances should the right of the bride or the groom to say 'no' be denied.

After the bride and groom have agreed to the prenuptial conditions, they proclaim their consent to the marriage contract in the presence of at least two adult and sane Muslim witnesses. The marriage is then solemnised. Marriage in Islam thus brings together two families as well as uniting two individuals. Islam creates a system in which differentiation between the family of orientation and the family of procreation appears to diminish. Indeed, the family of orientation (parental family) necessarily plays a significant role in shaping the family of procreation.

No Islamic marriage is solemnised unless the groom has agreed at the time of the wedding itself to give the bride on demand *(mua'jjal)* or later *(mowajjal)* a piece of property as *mehr*. A number of historians and Orientalists have translated *mehr* as dowry. However, *mehr* must not be confused with dowry, which is generally given to the bride's parents or her family before the wedding takes place. *Mehr*, on the other hand, is the exclusive right of the wife and wife alone. No one else—not her parents, her guardian, nor even her husband—can claim a right to the property that is premised to her in her marriage contract. As its sole beneficiary, she has the legal right to dispose of this property as she wishes.

According to Levy (1962: 5), *mehr* reflects a stage in the emancipation of woman from concubinage and slavery through bride-price to the Islamic stage, where a gift is paid to the bride alone. Evidently, the practice of *mehr* has been instituted in Islam to support women in the event of marital conflict. No wonder that the amount of *mehr* is often much disputed in prenuptial negotiations. Thus, when entering marriage, a Muslim woman not only becomes a wife, she also becomes a propertied person, perhaps for the first time in her life. It is perhaps because of this that even most modern and educated Muslim women seem to favour the practice *of mehr* in their marriage (Ba-Yunus 1990).

Islam opens the door for polygamy, and yet puts it under severe restriction. Although permitting up to four wives, it all but forbids this in practice:

> If you are afraid that you shall not do justice among them then [marry] only one. (Qur'an 4:3)

> But you will not be able to do justice among them. (Qur'an 4:129)

Muslims thus do not have a free licence to practise polygamy. Because the Qur'an does not oblige believers to practise it, polygamy may actually on occasion be legally prohibited (for example, by civil court justices or by judge or *qadi).* Some circumstances, however, may make polygamy desirable; for instance, in times of war when children are orphaned or left homeless (which are, in fact, the kinds of circumstance specified by the Qur'an in the verses cited above). The sex ratio may also change to favour females in the reproductive age, owing, for instance, to an epidemic that takes a heavier toll of men than of women. Cultural conditions may evolve so that eligible men are more at risk due, for example, to increasing mobility, highway accidents, juvenile delinquency and violent crime. Or a Muslim

community may have to accommodate large numbers of female converts to Islam, as in contemporary North America (Shaft 1990).

In modern industrial democratic societies, a falling sex ratio is a well-known demographic phenomenon. After its initial advantage at birth, the male population, especially in developed societies, seems to decline faster than the female population. While the lowest sex ratio is generally in the post-retirement age bracket, it is present among those of marriageable age as well. However, in modern western societies that have adopted a 'new morality' or 'alternative lifestyles' (such as postponement of marriage, cohabitation and greater freedom in sexual practices), a gradual decrease in the male population may not necessarily pose an immediate social problem. Evidently, Islam would not favour this 'new morality' as a 'solution' to the problem of eligible females remaining unmarried.

In defence of polygamy in Islam, the typical male response, occasionally supported by some jurists, has been to assert that men are sexually more aggressive than women. Thus, as the argument goes, those whose sexual urges are not satisfied by their wives alone are allowed to take additional wives, rather than engage in such disdainful acts as prostitution. As chauvinistic as this explanation may sound, it stresses the fact that in Islam the foremost function of marriage is to regulate the sexual act.

Islam thus does not commit the male believer to monogamy. But it does not commit him to polygamy either. In Islam neither monogamy nor polygamy is supposed to be ideal. Monogamy may remain an ideal form of marriage, with husband and wife, as the Qur'an (2:187) puts it, living like beautiful attire as adornment for another, with mutual love masking one another's defects. However, at other times this ideal may not be so ideal any more. What is supposed to be ideal in all marriages, whether monogamous, or polygamous is justice; and in the broadest terms justice in marriage means that it has the function (in addition to regulating sexual behaviour) of providing homes and family life fall of love and mutual care for women who otherwise may remain unmarried (Qur'an 30:21).

Lastly, it may be pointed out that because of her right to say 'no', a Muslim woman cannot be forced to enter into a polygamous union. Consequently, although polygamy is permitted, Islamic society has with few exceptions remained monogamous and mostly chaste throughout history.

DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC POLITY

> Obey Allah, and obey the Prophet and those of authority among you. (Qur'an 54:24)

Unlike the Shia minority view, which is explicitly dynastic and authoritarian, the majority Sunni view on Islamic polity fails midway between authoritarianism and democratic ideals. Afterall, Islam functions by virtue of the authority of none other than God, because He is the creator, the sustainer and the law-giver. Policy in Islam, like all other things, derives from His will. Because He is the law-giver, in Islam He is the head of state. Man is only His vicegerent who rules on His behalf according to His directives (as laid down in the Qur'an and as put into practice by the *sunnah).* His directives cannot but result in a form of polity that involves public participation and the right to dissent and criticise. This is how the first Islamic system emerged soon after the death of the Prophet. The system introduced by the Prophet's immediate successors, the *khalifah,* remains the main source of inspiration for today's Islamic ideologues and activists, in essence if not in detail. It is considered to be the embodiment, however rudimentary, of the Qur'anic verse quoted above.

This verse identifies the three parameters of the Islamic polity quite clearly. First is God, who put down the law; second is the Prophet, who put God's commandments into practice; and third are those who rule the community of believers in obedience to the commandments of God and the *sunnah of* the Prophet. But, then, who are these rulers, what are their qualifications, and how do they assume power? These questions are not clearly answered in the Qur'an. The Shia point of view is that those with authority are the descendants of the Prophet through his cousin, the fourth khalifah, Ali. The Sunni point of view is that after the Prophet, the men of authority in the Islamic policy come only through a process of *Shura* or mutual consultation as ordained in the Qur'an: 'And Shura is the decision [maker] among them' (42:38). This is one of the most encompassing verses from the Qur'an. It describes in the broadest terms a problem-solving technique for use in daily life as well as for solving issues in society as a whole.

It is unfortunate that the real meanings of *Shura* as reflected in the *sunnah* of the Prophet seem to have been lost during the centuries-long monarchical rule in the Muslim world. Roughly translated into English as 'mutual consultation', this concept was rarely invoked in Islamic juristic discourse for obvious reasons (the dynastic rulers and the sultans would not allow any talk of public participation in politics).

It is only lately that the full implications of *Shura* have been explored by Muslim scholars and activists (for instance, Ba-Yunus and Ahmed 1985; El-Awa-1980).

No sociological approach to the understanding of Islam can afford to ignore the meanings and implications of *Shura* which seems to be a dynamic process of seeking solutions to the problems of living in a plural society. In the political arena, *Shura* is the process through which political authority emerges. This process is further specified by a saying *(hadith)* of the Prophet, emphasizing that after his death the believers should install *arbab alhal wa alaqd* ('men of solution and resolution') as their rulers. Combining the two Qur'anic verses cited above with the saying of the Prophet, a basis for a democratic polity in Islam seems to take shape: believers should elect as their leaders through mutual consultation people capable of making wise decisions, and obey them as long as they obey God and His Prophet. This is how *Khalifah al Rashidun,* or the pious Caliphate, emerged following the Prophet's death.

Does this mean that Islam preaches democracy in its political programme? Although democracy is the only political system that seems to approximate Islam, Islam is Islam. It emerged long before the term 'democracy' came into existence. Hence, Islam must not be confused with democracy as practised in contemporary western capitalist polities. Islam does not preach a 'government of the people, by the people, for the people.' In its political form *Shura* stems from the will of God, by the authority of God and for the pleasure of God. The election in the process of *Shura* is not an election so much as it is an emergence of political *taqwa,* or piety, among the believers. Hence, in *Shura* Muslims do not seek power. They are actively brought forward for the sake of 'stopping what is evil and promoting what is good' (Qur'an 3:101, 110).

Those who come to power in an Islamic polity thus cannot supersede or negate what is ordained in the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. In short, the Qur'an and the *sunnah* describe the constitutional limits or the outer parameters of Islamic democracy. They cannot be amended by public pressure or demand. But who, then, decides whether or not those in authority have acted in accordance with the Qur'an and the *sunnah* of the Prophet? The answer is the *qadi* or the judge. An independent judiciary specializing in *shariah* (law) and fiqah (jurisprudence) is a necessary condition of Islamic democracy.

Evidently, an Islamic polity must not be confused with theocracy. Nor does it accommodate monarchy either.

DIMENSIONS OF ISLAMIC WORSHIP

Worship in Islam has both broad and specific meanings. In its broad sense, worship *(ibadah)* in Islam literally means obedience to all the commandments laid down in the Qur'an, including all institutional and extra-institutional rules of conduct. Thus, when a person avoids involvement in interest transactions, pays *zakat* regularly, refrains from extramarital indulgence, or participates in and promotes Islamic polity, then he or she is worshipping God. Likewise person tries to develop his or her personal character in accordance with Qur'anic injunctions, he or she is worshipping God. In a general sense, then, worship Islam means obedience to the divine directives.

In a more limited sense, as in its dictionary meanings, worship in Islam means observation of the 'five pillars': the proclamation of faith *(shahada)*; observation of the five prescribed daily prayers *(salat)*, regular payment *of zakat*; fasting from dawn to dusk in Ramadan; and, lastly, *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in a lifetime for those who can afford to undertake it.

These micro-dimensions of Islamic worship are not mere supplications. They are not left up to the believer's convenience. They are duties imposed upon the believer by the Creator. These are the duties that must be performed conscientiously at their proper times and in their proper manner as practised and instructed by the Prophet. Not that God needs the believer's worship or sacrifice; on the contrary, what is emphasised is that it is the believer who needs to worship Him in order to strengthen his or her own moral fibre and personal commitment *(taqwa)* to divine injunction and to the Islamic institutional order.

Because both aspects of worship in Islam—the institutional and the personal—belong to the same generic root, that is, the Qur'an, the relationship between the two ought to be close and reciprocal. There is little doubt that wither personal commitment or *taqwa*, the institutional order of Islam would not endure. It is equally true that without an emergent Islamic institutional order, *taqwa* would soon be rendered useless and meaningless.

Ritualistic worship at the individual level has the same function in Islam as in other religions: inculcation of personal commitment, piety

and altruism. However, where other religions stop at ritualistic worship, they do not provide personal piety with an appropriate environment within which to promote and nourish itself. Consequently, in many contemporary societies personal piety has a short lifespan. In fact, it may even be irrelevant, because the contemporary social institutions of modernised and modernizing societies have no generic relationship with, and often go against, the very spirit of personal piety.

In Islam personal worship and obedience to the rules of other institutions are the two sides of the same coin. One cannot exist without the other. This broadening of the meaning of worship seems to be unique to Islam. Above all means that for a Muslim to be pious, altruistic and peaceful within and without not only is a personal and ritualistic devotion to God a requirement, but also an Islamic institutional environment in which to live as a Muslim.

Islam is perhaps one of the most misunderstood religions in the world. Many non-Muslims do not even seem to know it by its real name. It has been called Mohammedanism, Mohammadism Islamism, Moslemism or the Muslim religion Likewise, Islam has become all things to all people. Many equate Islam with esoteric Sufi thought. For others, Islam has meant mobs in the streets or terrorists trying to blow up public buildings. For many others, it invokes images of harems and the exploitation of women. Even in the academia, as Said (1978) and others have pointed out, Islam has sufferred from cultural and political biases. In order to avoid this confusing array of perceptions, a more holistic approach has been adopted in this chapter: if there was a living Islamic society today, what would it look like?

However, the functional theoretical analysis of Islam as presented in this chapter must not be confused with the reality of the Muslim world. In fact, in its totality Islam survived only a few decades after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). In the centuries that followed, Muslims saw the rise and fall of their civilisation, the colonisation and domination of their lands by western powers, and the emergence of a dismembered and dispirited Muslim world as it exists today. Although Muslim countries are now mostly free of foreign occupation, they are afflicted with extensive poverty, political instability, inefficient and corrupt bureaucracies, sexist chauvinism, widespread illiteracy and technological underdevelopment. Hence, Ahmed's (1988) argument about the sociology of Islam requiring the juxtaposition of the 'Islamic ideal' with contemporay Muslim realities.

For a long time it was hoped that as colonialism receded, the situation in the Muslim world would improve. However, with few exceptions, it looks like the underdevelopment of the Muslim world will continue well into the twenty-first century. As Avineri (1992) points out, the Muslim world has tried just about every recipe in the book but to no avail. Now there seems to be a growing demand for a return to Islam, especially among the educated and restive youth: where everything else has failed, Islam deserves a chance.

The model of Islam presented in this chapter only represents a sociological readition of the vision of Islam as reflected in hundreds of Muslim publications often not easily accessible to a western readership. I do not claim that the model of Islam presented here is the last word. There may be a number of unintended omissions. However, in its broadest outlines, this model comes close to capturing the *verestehen* of contemporary Islamic movements. Insofar as this is the case, this model may be used to measure the relative departure of Muslim society—and, for that Matter, any society—from Islam.

RELIGION, PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE

COMPREHENSIVE CONCEPTUALISATION OF PEACE

It is necessary to conceptualise the issue of peace beyond the analysts of the arms race and militarisation and to think of approaches to peace beyond measures like arms control, disarmament and demilitarisation. While the latter are legitimate and indeed urgent and burning concerns, there are two large and basic *caveats* that they by themselves cannot deal with. One of them pertains to the instability of peace settlements: what surety is there that nations will not start once again on the armaments course? Lacking a deeper and widely accepted culture of peace, which in turn is made an instrument of global transformation towards freedom and justice, there can be no durable peace.

The second *caveat* concerns non-military threats to peace arising out of the socio-economic and political processes within and between societies that lead to oppression and human suffering instead of alleviating them, and persisting sources of tension and violence at personal, communal and international levels. Reduction or the threat of war, including nuclear war, would remove the most important barrier to the achievement of peace. But the achievement of peace involves much more than that. Indeed the chances are that without attending to these factors the spectre of war will only re-emerge.

From these considerations arises the need for a more comprehensive conceptualisation of peace, and on that basis for a much broader identification of issues and policy areas than the current discussion on 'peace and security' (with some rare exceptions) have by and large provided. We need to ask: What constitutes peace? Is it merely absence of war? If not, and if it is to be a more positive concept, how is it to be related to that other great concern of our time, namely development? Does development, more rapid development, more resources being devoted to development, necessarily enhance peace? Aren't there modes and trajectories of development which themselves constitute a threat to peace? If this is agreed, what is to be our broader frame of reference? The identification of the theme 'preparation for life in peace' by the United Nations clearly provides us with a clue to this. We need to think of peace as a condition of life itself. And we need to do this by identifying the many dimensions that affect its course and its momentum and maintain its inner balance and harmony.

On the other hand, we cannot afford to think of peace in a passive, even a pacifist way. We live in a world of deep dualism. Acute deprivation in some regions and some classes co-exists with great wealth and ostentation in others. It is a world characterised by growing economic and political domination by a few centres in a supposedly 'interdependent' world; it is also characterised by accumulating frustration and despair, insecurity and fear among the vast peripheries of the same interdependent world. It is because or these conditions that until recently peace appeared to be more in the interest of the 'establishment' than of the oppressed, more to maintain the *status quo* than to provide a basis for transformation. Indeed the case for a 'just war' and for 'wars of liberation' was so clear under such conditions that peace appeared to be almost inherently unjust. What is new and dramatic in recent years is the interest of the world peripheries and of the poor and the oppressed in peace. But their interest is in a very different kind of peace and not in what passes off as peace which is actually a silent and invisible war kiting millions quietly through hunger, disease and oppression. So, we need to conceive of 'another peace' (like 'another development'), one which is a multi-dimensional process to be pursued in multi-dimensional space and along arenas of inter-relationship between various dimensions.

It is only when the global peripheries and the poor of the world acquire a stake in peace—that will be the rest or a just peace—and when major centres of the world and the elites everywhere become willing to share their wealth, power and prosperity that a real and

enduring basis for peace will be laid. Until then we will only be going round and round the circles of disarmament and arms control negotiations with continuing growth of new strategic doctrines for providing national and bloc security. The same applies to technical exercises of releasing resources for development without the will to simultaneously question the present model of development that has induced injustice and dualism, prevented structural transformation, promoted strife and violence, given rise to widespread alienation and erosion of solidarities, and has led to systems of management and governance that ignore popular urges and movements and often rely on coercion and manipulation.

PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

How does one move towards a models of development that is also a model of peace, a model of life that is based on shared compassion and empathy within and across societies—and yet one that takes full account of the vast range of conflicts in the present world and of potential for still more accelerating conflicts in the future, of injustices and indignities that are so grotesque that they are bound to generate violence and war unless the model of development and the model of peace; that one has in mind emanate from fundamental transformation in the structure of reality (both global and domestic)?

This is by no means to deny that the senseless arms race that is rampant and is by now affecting all types of societies, both distorting and eroding the resource base of the mass of the people, is somewhat independent of the structural issues highlighted above. There is a lot of evidence to suggest that the arms race—and global militarisation its wake—has acquired a logic and momentum of its own, that it is based on notions of security and insecurity that are somewhat independent of socio-economic causes, that it is also becoming independent or ideological struggles for global supremacy. There is indeed taking place a rapid polarisation of the world between the two superpowers (despite the inevitable growth of multi-polarity), but it is a polarisation that is not predominantly ideological; it is predominantly military and political. My approach to peace is not to deny any of this. It is rather to simply say that in making any attempt to move closer towards a more peaceful world, whether through phased disarmament and de-escalation of the arms race, to start with between the superpowers, or through some global concord between major centres of world power, or even through some radical institutional innovations, such as a major move towards supra-national structures of decision-

making, it is essential to think of what the ensuing 'peace' will mean for the people of the world, and to think of this *now*, prior to such a prospect in fact taking shape. In turn such thinking can contribute to the quality of whatever concord that takes place, insisting that it be a package of strategic, political, economic and cultural dimensions. Failing this, we will only have dealt with the symptoms of the arms race and not its causes and we will have given birth to a 'peace' that will of necessity be short-lived.

In short, there is need to integrate the *problematique* of peace and of development and to see the twain as aspects of a single comprehensive vision of the world that is life-sustaining in a basic sense: sustaining nature and natural resources; sustaining values that protect and nurture diversities of culture and personality yet promote coherence and interrelatedness; sustaining a just social order as a pre-requisite for a peaceful one and a democratic process of decision-making that promotes freedom of each as a condition of the freedom of all, and thus as a basic characteristic of 'peace'. Only thus can the concept of peace provide the basis of Life rather than its absence, which is the essence of a world based on instruments of coercion and war-machines. And the same with the concept of development. Not development that divides and generates tension and violence arising from widening chasms between acute suffering and vulgar opulence—one degrading and the other dehumanising—but development that produces a basic consensus on the nature of the human enterprise and the values that should inform it, and thus development that leads to a basic unity.

If development is to produce unity in the midst of so much strife, it will have to be freshly conceived. It will need to be a function not of centralised governance and projects of welfare administered by an alien class of technocrats, but of a plural and decentralised process of decision-making, leading to a harmony born out of respect for diversity, a balance born our of multiple human interactions and an organised interplay with nature, and a lifestyle that is sustainable for all and thus making tolerable demands on natural resources.

There will be no enduring peace without redirecting the whole development enterprise, without reconceptualising its various component dimensions and inter-relating them all in a common and coherent framework. For let this be clear: it is not possible to have peace under the present regime of development.

Disarmament, even if it were to take place and be far-reaching, cannot by itself produce peace or even the sufficient condition for

peace. It may be a necessary condition but cot a sufficient one. And peace is one area where unless the necessary is backed by the sufficient, the 'solution' will sooner or later backfire.

It is now possible to reformulate the proposition about peace not being absence of war. Not only is absence of war not a sufficient condition of peace; it is not a necessary condition either. Indeed given the grim dynamic of a deeply divided and intensely unjust and oppressive world, with highly unsettled geo-politics and ethno-politics, it is not possible totally to rule out recourse to modes of resolution of conflict that lead to local and limited civil wars, at times even involving the military and spilling over 'national' boundaries. To wish that this should never happen is to be naive. It is necessary to ensure that societies do not continuously prepare for war, do not remain in a permanent state of 'combat alert' and that when wars do break out, such episodes are shortlived, self-correcting and in the end give rise to greater amity between contending parties. This will depend on the availability of institutional mechanisms and early warning systems based on information processes that, without curbing local spontaneity and modes of revolutionary change, ensure that these become mere episodes in the long-term march towards a just peace. The growth of such mechanisms should be thought of as inherent to the process of development, not just of peace.

THE ETHICAL PRE-REQUISITE

Basic to the above discussion is a notion of limits. Only in a Utopian world will there be no war of any kind. Or it could be in a Hobbesian world, in which all nations and social classes-surrender their liberties to a supra-State in return for total security. Even this will not ensure an absence of war and violence, only a monopoly thereof in that it will freeze inequities and disparities in conditions of livings, and thus call for a perpetual state of coercion and oppression of the State versus the people. To return to the main point, however, as we do not seem to be ready to move to a benign Utopia nor are nations as they are constituted likely to surrender their respective freedoms, we need to circumscribe the incidence of war and violence in ways that promote peace. It is a conception of peace based not on any absolute standard of behaviour for all states and classes, and for all interests and movements that occupy different vantage points in the larger process of global transformation, but rather on one that prescribes limits that are accepted by all.

Peace, then, is to be thought of not as absence of any war (or war-like conflicts) but of an all-out or total war, of wars waged for domination or for an abstract cause or ideology or some other *telos*, be it secular or spiritual. The problem of peace in the contemporary period is that the preparation for wars goes on continuously and on an escalating scale; and the purpose for which the military machine is being continuously updated is for total wars. It is this absence of moderation, of any sense of limits, that also informs the process of perpetual 'modernisation' and sophistication of the armaments industry and armaments culture in so many regions of the world, fuelled by the perpetually growing global arms trade and arms transfers. It is this that lies behind the almost total absence of peace (be it the totalistic cold war between superpowers with rising temperature, or endless warfare as in the Middle East and the Gulf).

The notion of limits is also crucial to the concept of development if the latter is to be in symbiotic relationship with peace. It is precisely the absence of a notion of limits that lies at the heart of a conception of 'progress' that has known no bounds, put societies on a path of perpetual morion, produced a rapacious technology, ravaged nature destabilised cultures and community lifestyles and has led to a course of human evolution that undermined the autonomy and dignity of diverse peoples outside the metropolitan mainstream. It is necessary to put a brake on this mindless race into the future, restore ideas of austerity in the management of resources and self-control in translating needs into wants, reject artificially stimulated wants, contain psychic drives that disrupt community bonds, ecological prudence and care for the coming generations. In short, there is need to develop an overall ethic of restraint and prudence in the extension of the self into space and time. It is the violation of this basic precept of traditional wisdom that has led to a quality of development which has undermined human harmony and solidarity.

DEVELOPMENT AND TRANSFORMATION

Such an ethic will entail fundamental rethinking on the whole perspective and paradigm of development. The prevailing paradigm has grown out of (a) the European Enlightenment and the theory of progress, (b) the innate faith in the scientific and technological revolutions originating in and spreading from Europe for the deliverance of entire societies from their diverse traditions, (c) the global impact of the Industrial Revolution and modern capitalism through its colonial outreach and (d) the concept of modernisation of traditional societies

under the onslaught of universal theories of economic development be they of capitalist or socialist vintage. The paradigm has led to a massive undermining of traditional restraints, inhibitions and ambiguities in the relationship between war and power and to an aggressive pursuit of domination and control over one and all—over nature over society, over other societies, over cuter spaces and the deep seas, over the mystery of life itself. It is in the pursuit of this paradigm that the roots of modern imperialism and the intense competition for control over territories and natural resources are to be found. Its more recent manifestation has been control over the environment, technological 'fixes' and, above all, colonisation of outer space for strategic and military ascendancy.

It is incumbent upon those who wish to work for peace to understand the nexus between the modern paradigm of development and the global reality of the struggle for domination and, in pursuit thereof, a relentless? Piling up of armaments. The battle for peace will have to be fought not just at East-West or North-South negotiations but also, and perhaps primarily, in the board rooms of the modern State (of whatever political persuasion) and its planning and implementation agencies, the global economic enterprises and their local collaborators (be they governments or private capitalists), the large networks of United Nations development agencies, the World Bank and the IMF and, above all, the vast array of Research and Development (R&D) establishments from which, incidentally, a lot of military R&D draws its impetus.

It is a serious mistake to think of development as something that began after the Second World War with the dawn of independence for so many ex-colonial countries, followed, by a succession of U.N. development decades, and the proliferation of a great many national and international networks of aid, trade, technology transfer and research. Inundated by the mammoth outflow of communications and policy debates from this Jungle of institutions we are likely to forget that the basic value presumptions and power orientation of the entire effort were already laid long before 'development' began and that it is continuously being conditioned by global forces immanent in the historical epoch that began with the rise of modern science.

It follows that the struggle for peace is closely intertwined with the various efforts that have been under way towards transforming both the paradigm and the politics of development, moving towards alternatives in various spheres, as also towards a more integrated

epistemology of transformation in place of the highly specialised fragmented and disjointed one that is inherent in prevailing models of social change. Hence the need to move beyond conceiving peace as negation of war and towards peace as a new conception of life itself— of 'preparation for life in peace' in the words of the present Secretary General of the United Nations.

In fact, such formulation of the problem of peace by the United Nations signifies more than mere articulation of yet another dimension in the definition of the problem. It signifies a much clearer definition of what the organisation stands and works for. For with it the United Nations has moved closer to the great movements of thought and action in our times that are taking place outside the state system. We are witness to a powerful upsurge of human consciousness. There is growing awareness that old ways will not do, that something has gone wrong and this may have to do with the very essence of the modern understanding of the human condition, that as a result we are sliding towards an extremely fragile and perilous course—and that we ought to change before it is too late. As the late Aurelio Peccei of the Club of Rome is reputed to have said, "every indicator in the world has worsened, except for one—human awareness".

It is this profound combination of deep reflection on the causes of the crisis we are in and the conviction that something has to be done about it on the part of ordinary men and women that has spurred the large array of 'grassroots' movements around some of the most crucial dimensions of the human predicament. Among these is the peace movement that is challenging age-old notions of national security and defence, the environment movement against the destruction and pillage of natural resources, the powerful women's movement across all continents that is raising entirely new issues in the relationship between human bonds and human bondage, the new and more radical forms that movements for democracy and democratisation (including redemocratisation in some societies) are taking, in the process providing new orientation to earlier causes like human rights, the related struggles of tribes, minorities and ethnic groups for their very survival against the onslaught of metropolitan cultures and a mindless technology and, above all, the movements waged by the young and the caring against violence to other species and forms of life, against creation as such.

For a long time these various movements appeared fragmented and isolated, suffering from sectarianism of various kinds and made

ineffective by their being microscopic and so varied in space and context. It is with the emergence and spread of the peace movement and its gradual opening up to other dimensions in the larger search for alternatives that the various movements have now begun to draw closer, forge coalitions across regions and continents and even across ideological schools, and develop a sense of common cause. There is also a tendency—though this is very recent—for them to relate to more traditional class-based movement groups like radical trade unions, peasant organisations of the landless and new organisations of other exploited strata, often lumped together as the 'unorganised sector'.

Over and beyond these movements—some spontaneous, others highly organised—are other spurts in human consciousness. They are found in the politicisation of men of learning, of scientists, of intellectuals, of poets. They are found in the sensitive transformation of deep anguish into a search for being somehow relevant on the part of literary and artistic people who are otherwise supposed to portray reality and leave the rest to the practical wisdom of men of affairs. In the telling words of Nirmal Verma, a highly sensitive Indian author,

> The frightful aspect of the whole affair is that there is hardly any country in the world, where all this drain of resources on military expenditure is not justified in terms of reason and realism. "We have ceased to be the bearers of consciousness; instead we have become whores of reason."

> So a writer has no choice but to reject the historical exigencies of reason and be the bearer of consciousness, the total human consciousness, in which all the hunger and longing for life are inherent. Not merely human life, but life *as such,* of all that is throbbing with life on this earth: plants, animals, trees swaying in the wind and the rivers. Man cannot stop war against himself unless he makes peace with the universe around him. To enhance the significance of life, even though he may be writing about the horror of death, has been the primary and perennial cask of the writer. He may be ineffective to prevent war, bur he can surely make people sensitive and concerned to all the values which go to make a human life. By increasing this awareness inch by inch, we can also force the war to recede inch by inch. Here is a direct testimony on the yearning for peace and its profound relevance to the process of human creativity, and to life itself and all that it stands for.

The same concern and spirit were voiced at the forty-seventh Congress of P.E.N., the association of poets, playwrights, editors, essayists and novelists. Reaffirming the need for peace in a dangerous world that is also becoming increasingly helpless and cynical, and sensing that the root cause of the world's tensions is human fear—

fear among all—the writers assembled at the Congress resolved to do all they could to defuse fear. In the words of the P.E.N. President, the need was to counteract fear among different groups of people "as a step towards abolishing nuclear weapons".

It is this transformation in both the nature of the problem of pace and in the nature of the response to it that we need to gauge the deep vulnerability in which all of us and all our societies and cultures seem to be enveloped. We live in a period of deep deprivation and suffering of such a high order—hunger, disease and destitution, atrocities and oppression, desertion and deep isolation, destruction of each other and of nature—that it is difficult to see how the planet can survive its full impact. The final nemesis need not necessarily be the work or some superpower or some arrogant upstart. It could well be and perhaps will be the end result of the normal play of the forces of evil and immorality of drift and decadence, of a rudderless and leaderless world. This may be more at the heart of the human condition than the triumph of this or that strategic force or doctrine.

By the same token the saviours of peace—if they succeed—will have to come not from statesmen or experts in armament and disarmament not from economists who will prepare for us conversion plans and profiles of new balances between development and defence. All this will be necessary and relevant. But the future of peace lies in the hands of ordinary men and women, in their consciousness, in their comprehension of the multi-dimensional and inter-related nature of the problem, in their courage; their capacity to overcome fear and insecurity, their willingness to come out of their various closets and to collectively create the conditions and the compulsions for peace. For affirmation of life. That is what peace means. Or ought to mean.

ORGANISED CHARITY IN
THE ARAB-ISLAMIC WORLD

A VIEW FROM THE NGOS

'Nobody's ever come to ask about *zakat* before (the Islamic doctrine of obligatory alms), said the public relations officer in the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Amman when I was beginning my research. And there was practically nothing published anywhere about any of the twenty-eight Red Crescent national societies. Organised charity in general—so it seems to have been taken for granted except by a few punctilious anthropologists—was a speciality of the Judaeo-Christian West: with the corollary that the non-West was one of charity's objects.

This chapter is written from the perspective of 'NGO studies', which is not an academic discipline in itself, but a problem area to which a number of disciplines have contributed insights. Though non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are far from constituting a homogeneous category, the frequency of use of this term today reflects an increasing attention to the significance of the non-profit sector—sometimes known as the 'third sector'—which itself is part of a wider and indeed somewhat ill-defined field known as 'civil society'. My own interest has developed partly from efforts on behalf of the Royal Anthropological Institute to promote social anthropology in its more applied modes; partly from practical participation in the management of a large international NGO, Save the Children (UK), and more recently the NGO support organisation INTRAC (International NGO Training and Research Centre); and partly from studying the interactions between the international humanitarian NGOs and the mass media (Benthall 1993).

Self-criticism within the aid profession has followed a trajectory that parallels post-colonial self-criticism within academic anthropology—where the challenges advanced in the 1970s by Talal Asad, Dell Hymes and Edward Said appeared subversive to the establishment of the day but have now been absorbed as part of received wisdom. I remember a conversation in about 1972 with one of the founders of the London Technical Group, then an influential ginger group in the world of aid agencies. He criticised aid agencies for having so many retired military officers in management posts. At that time, save the Children's overseas committee was chaired by the redoubtable daughter of a Viceroy of India, whose connections used to enable her to have a problem solved by getting straight through on the telephone to a government minister in Whitehall. In the aid agencies as in the academic world, work was done, however effectively, with less reflection and soul-searching than today. One of the achievements of the last quarter-century, in both the aid agencies and anthropology, has been to disturb the self-satisfaction of the expeditionary from a white metropolis confronting a feminised and unsophisticated Third World, assisted by unobtrusive local ancillary workers.

One major change in the NGOs has been to appreciate and examine the role of non-western or local voluntary organisations in providing welfare and other services to vulnerable populations. It is clear that all societies, rich and poor, have developed systems of mutual aid to mitigate social suffering. These can of course be eroded, whether as

an incidental result of prolonged conflict, or by the intentional policies of governments whose ideologies seek either to stamp out spontaneous grass-roots activities, or to discourage what they see as passive dependency on welfare provision. However, voluntary associations can show surprising resilience. The most thoughtful western relief and development agencies now seek to encourage and support local-level organisations in the non-West with judicious subsidy and also by providing such services as training. Religious organisations are often among the most effective in mitigating social suffering. This has enabled the London-based Christian Aid to become one of the most effective in its campaigning—with its emphasis on troubling the conscience of the affluent West—while becoming entirely 'non-operational', that is, confining its field activities to selecting locally inspired projects for grant-aid and then monitoring and auditing them. Many of these local initiatives are run by church organisations, especially in highly Christianised regions such as Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa. Western agencies are now developing similar links with Christian associations in the former Eastern Bloc. An important current trend is for western governments to give serious consideration to direct funding of local initiatives in developing countries, thus making less pivotal the traditional intermediary function of the metropolitan relief and development agency, though also introducing a number of new problems such as the rise of a new class of local NGO organisers more or less dependent on foreign aid (INTRAC 1998).

Many countries that have only small Christian minorities, such as India and Indonesia, are nonetheless richer than is usually recognised in voluntary associations of every kind, including ones with religious affiliations other than Christian. An injunction to help the socially disadvantaged is one of the hallmarks of all the world religions. Up-to-date research on this topic is sparse, but Roger A. Lohmann (1994) has attempted to assemble evidence from Buddhist traditions in China, Japan and Korea in order to refute the hypothesis that a 'third sector' did not exist in Asia before the introduction of western-style not-for-profit organisations after the Second World War.

My own interest in Islamic organised charity arose from researching the International Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, a structurally complex organisation much of whose work is tightly controlled from Geneva but which also seeks to foster grass-roots efforts through the Red Cross and Red Crescent national societies. I was interested in exploring how it came to be that some twenty-eight national societies

in Muslim countries use the red crescent rather than the red cross as their emblem, and this led me to explore how organised charity in some of these countries, principally in the Middle East, relates to its western equivalents (Benthall 1997). To understand this I had to investigate Islamic doctrine and law: especially the Our'an's extensive teaching on alms (Benthall 1999) and the history of Islamic charitable trusts.

WAQFS

'Waqf' in Arabic means 'standing' or 'stopping', hence 'perpetuity'. Property is passed under Islamic law by gift or will to the state for pious works, such is the building of mosques and schools, providing the public with drinking water, facilitating pilgrimages to Mecca, or the relief of poverty and other needs. *Waqfs* (Arabic plural: *awqaf* have their historical origins in the earliest days of Islam, perhaps deriving from the 'pious causes' of the Byzantine church (Schacht 1964: 19), It would be naive to assume that the economic function of the *waqfs* has ever been purely altruistic. As far back as the tenth and eleventh centuries, *waqfs* were beginning to be used in the Arab-Muslim world to build up the *ulema* or religious leaders as a hereditary rentier class (Lapidus 1988: 165, 360), and the institution has also been used by large landholders to prevent the division of family property (Ruthven 1991: 171-2).

Islamic law does not recognise juristic persons. *Waqf* (or *habs* in North Africa) is seen as the withdrawal from circulation of the substance of a property owned by the founder and the spending of the proceeds for a charitable purpose. There is no unanimous doctrine as to who becomes the owner of the substance. The beneficiaries may be descendants of the donor, but the poor or some other permanent purpose must be appointed as subsidiary beneficiaries in case the original beneficiaries die out. The private or family *waqf* is distinguished from the so-called 'public' or charitable *waqf,* which is immediately destined for some public or charitable purpose. But in strict Islamic law, the private *waqf is* a charity too (Schacht 1964:125-6).

The survival of *waqf* varies from one Muslim country to another with the wide variety of legal traditions. In the Sultanate of Oman, for example, which has only been a modern state for some thirty years, hundreds of *waqfs* are administered by the Ministry of Awqaf. As well as the purposes outlined above, *waqfs* exist for such purposes as funerals for poor people and washing of the deceased. People give

property such as farms as well as money, and some *waqf* holdings have been converted into prime commercial property in order to improve the income. The Ministry owns two buildings in Mecca, one for the accommodation of pilgrims and the other rented to bring in money.

So many citizens in Oman wish to fund the building of mosques that (when I visited in 1996) the Ministry was trying to make a law that there must be a distance of one kilometre between each mosque, or two kilometres between mosques. The religious authorities believe that regular meetings of Muslims a vicinity for prayers enable them to know one another and so facilitate the solving of problems and the reduction of potential conflict. However, there is no voluntary sector whatsoever in Oman, though during my visit, some notables were asking the Sultan's permission for a charitable society to be formed for the relief of poverty.

Owing to the absence of written records until recently in Oman, almost all *waqf property* is held on trust by word-of-mouth tradition. According to my informants (who admittedly I must assume were intent on conveying a favourable impression to the visiting researcher), the whole society is based on trust, and this tradition continues even in the modern state, though gradually the legal status of *waqf* property is being formalised. Disputes over such matters are apparently very rare.

By contrast, extensive written archives on *waqfs* survive in some countries that were formerly part of the Ottoman Empire. In the Old City of Jerusalem, the Tikiyat Khaski Sultan is a 550-year-old waqf soup-kitchen that still serves vegetables to about a hundred people a day, and meat to about a thousand people a day during Ramadan. According to my Arab informants, some 70 per cent of the Old City is *waqf*—including many of the Christian monasteries and churches—and this will clearly be a bargaining point during any final status negotiations with Israel (for a scholarly analysis see Dumper 1994).

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN JORDAN

The above examples from Oman and east Jerusalem have an 'Orientalist' appeal deriving from their historical depth, which gives the western observer the impression of walking into the premodern past. We must here leave on one side the question of whether this appeal is spurious or an essential component of anthropology. In any case, *waqfs* are on the whole marginal to contemporary Middle Eastern

states, some of which, such as Egypt, have absorbed them completely into government ministries as nationalised assets.

Though given little publicity in the West, humanitarian agencies in the Islamic world are many and various. As many as 168 organisations are members of the Islamic Council for Da'wa (call to Islam) and Relief, which was founded in Cairo in 1988 (Bellion-Jourdan 1997: 73; 2000).

Jordan, which I will take as a case study, is the site of a rich variety of voluntary agencies, new and old, indigenous and international. Over 650 voluntary societies are registered there, serving a population of about 4.5 million. (In Egypt, with a population of some 60 million, the number of voluntary societies is between 12,000 and 14,000.) Islam is enshrined in Article 2 of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan's Constitution ('Islam is the religion of the State and Arabic is its official language') and some 90 to 95 per cent of the population are Sunni Muslim. Whereas in some other Muslim states the Islamist revivalists have been excluded from legal recognition, the Muslim Brothers have for political reasons been accepted for many years as part of the social fabric, albeit with a perhaps increasing reserve on the part of the government authorities. This 'policy of inclusion,' as it is called, has resulted in the Muslim Brothers adopting pragmatic and moderate policies in Jordan. Charitable work plays an important part in their blend of social, religious and political activity.

Jordan is a kind of seismograph of the political convulsions of the Middle East. Its prominence in regional politics has given it a salience exceeding its economic power, through a deliberate strategy adopted by the Hashemite leadership. Also, Amman has become a centre for numerous regional offices of international agencies. Some of these moved from Beirut during the Lebanese civil war, and have stayed.

The country has considerable domestic and humanitarian needs. Some 37 per cent of the population is estimated to live below the accepted poverty line, and public health is declining in the poorer areas, especially in the southern governorates. Jordan is a host to a number of so-called 'camps' for Palestinian refugees that are still in part the responsibility of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). In fact, these are strictly regulated townships that only in theory are regarded as temporary. The country is poor in natural resources, except for phosphate and potash, and in rainfall and water supplies. Its economy was severely hurt by the outcome of the 1991 Gulf War,

since it had become dependent both on trade with Iraq and on aid from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, aid that was to be withdrawn for some years as a punishment for its non-alignment during the Gulf War. Jordan succeeded in absorbing some 3,00,000 Palestinian 'returnees' from Kuwait (or nearly 10 per cent of the previous population of Jordan) after the Gulf War, but at considerable economic cost. In common with many other Arab countries, the birth-rate is high: some 41 per cent of the population are under the age of fifteen. It imports 70 per cent of its food, some of this from the World Food Programme under an aid scheme whereby the country pays only 10 to 15 per cent of the market price for grain. Urbanisation is taking place rapidly, with only 6 per cent of the working population still employed in the agricultural sector; but political tribalism is only slowly declining in importance (Freij and Robinson 1996: 14,29).

Just how important a part does Islam play, in the life of contemporary Jordan, and specifically in its voluntary sector? The answer must depend to some extent on the observer's own biases. Some researchers tend to see religion as a hazy background presence or as an ideological screen, in either case a by-product of the real tensions in a society, which are political and economic. Ernest Gellner's masterly interpretations of the functioning of Islamic societies acknowledged no interest in the content of their belief systems. One variant of this point of view, deriving from the influential work of Gilsenan (*e.g.* 1982) among others, is that there is no such thing as 'Islam'—the famous *umma* (community) of Muslims being exposed as a myth—only innumerable Islams. Hence the entry for Islam in the Routledge *Encyclopedia of Social and Cultural Anthropology* (1996) fails to mention Muhammad, Mecca or Medina. The view has even been advanced by one prominent Jordanian anthropologist that militant Islamism is being sustained to some extent by western scholarly interest in Islam as an entity.

It is possible and reasonable, without becoming an apologist for any religion, to ascribe more autonomy to religious determinants. The similarity of mosques and other Islamic institutions from Morocco to Malaysia is perhaps more remarkable—given the lack of any overarching bureaucracy—than the differences. Again, consider the way many western intellectuals can claim 'I am not a Christian, but a humanist' (the latter term being replaceable by synonyms according to current fashion). The equivalent statement is not normally made by Jews, because Jewishness is an ascribed ethnic identity that seems to survive the loss of religious conviction. In the eyes of many Muslims, Christianity

permeates western culture much more extensively than we are aware, especially if a ritual institution such as the family Christmas, when kinship as an inclusive and exclusive force comes into its own once a year, is seen (*pace* most Christian theologians) as an integral part of the religion. A session at the American Anthropological Association's annual meeting a few years ago broke new ground in examining Protestantism as a major unexamined element in western worldviews. To look no farther afield than the voluntary sector, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, though entirely non-confessional in intention and policy, is pervaded by an unintended semiotics with resonances of the Crusades; Britain's leading relief and development agency, Oxfam, was founded by a group of Quakers and other Christians; the principle of universal human rights, as formulated in the eighteenth century and developed in the twentieth may be interpreted as a codification of Judaeo-Christian convictions about the sanctity of the individual human soul.

There can be no simple answer to the question I have posed. If one were asked to point to the dominant tensions in Jordanian society today, one would mention first the acute divisions between rich and poor (with the relative lack of a middle class); the uneasy balance of power between the Palestinian majority and the Transjordanians; not forgetting gender inequality and population pressures. Yet to spend Ramadan in Amman is to become aware of the strength of religious observance. Every afternoon, the traffic becomes frantic as drivers hasten home for *iftar* (breaking of the fast), many of them irritable after fasting, and at six o'clock a great roar of relief goes up all over the city, then for an hour the streets are almost empty. It is more likely than not that this strength of Islamic culture has a bearing on the way the society addresses problems of welfare.

Many elements in the voluntary sector in Jordan today would appear, admittedly, to have little if anything to do with Islam. The national lottery is a clear example. In the early 1970s, leaders of the voluntary movement in Jordan looked around for alternative sources of revenue to government funding, on which they were at that time dependent. Some 80,000 tickets at JD 2 (£1 = 1 JD approx.) are now sold twice a month. Of these proceeds, 40 per cent goes to the General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS), 20 per cent in commission to the sellers, and 40 per cent to the winners—the maximum prize being about JD 1,00,000. With the proceeds inflated by periodic special lotteries with higher ticket prices, the gross proceeds are JD 5 million per year,

yielding JD 2 million for GUVS to distribute. The government takes nothing of this, aware that GUVS is satisfying needs that would otherwise fall on the public exchequer. Only rarely is there an article in the press attacking the lottery on the grounds that it is forbidden by Islamic law *(haram)*. However, as many as 85 per cent of the tickets at present are sold in Amman, which has about 33 per cent of the population; one reason being that in some governorates, such as Ma'an in the south, the selling of lottery tickets is looked down on as an undignified occupation, and a second being that people in rural areas are more prone to consider the lottery *haram.*

GUVS is an entirely secular organisation. Voluntary associations began in Jordan (then Transjordan) in the 1930s, when immigrant groups such as the Syrians set up societies to help their own members in need. The Christian churches were also active. The Circassian Charitable Association has the distinction of being the oldest association (it was founded in 1932) that is still active. It has eight branches with some 3,000 volunteer members, and runs a kindergarten and youth centres as well as helping poor families. Its policy is to try to breed new leaden for this influential Muslim minority.

Government institutions began to grow during the 1930s, and by 1948, with the influx of refugees from Israel, new concepts of social work, and a minimum standard of subsistence for all refugees irrespective of ethnic origin, began to be introduced. The government introduced laws on voluntary associations in the 1950s, and in 1958 GUVS was set up as an umbrella organisation to coordinate and control the voluntary movement. It is an elected body, but the Ministry of Social Development ultimately controls the whole voluntary movement through its right (subject to judicial appeal) to veto appointments to the governing committees of all voluntary societies.

Government subsidies began in the 1960s. In 1970, the country was deeply shaken by what was in effect a civil war, settled in 'Black September', when some 7,000 Palestinians were killed by King Hussain's troops. This disaster resulted indirectly in expansion of the voluntary sector as the government tried to heal the country's wounds. Expansion has also followed on from economic belt tightening in the early 1990s and from the influx of returnees after the Gulf War.

A report by the President of GUVS (Khatib 1994) claimed credit for the voluntary sector's effective management of resources, but also underlined Jordan's pressing social needs and the limited funds available to meet them. The most favoured forms of activity for NGOs within

the framework of GUVS are kindergartens, vocational training, health centres and clinics, scholarships and loans for students, care for the handicapped, and care of orphans. Recent work has focused also on the role of women in development, income-generating projects and child care. With regard to women, it is recognised that though traditional training in sewing and knitting gives women a potential source of income that can be combined with domestic duties, this does nothing to challenge gender stereotypes and can actually widen the gap between educated and 'traditional' Jordanian women.

GUVS' biggest contribution to Jordan is a much-needed cancer treatment centre in Amman. Substantial funds (I was told the equivalent of US$10 million) have been raised for this through a telethon. This, like the lottery, is an example of western fund-raising techniques successfully transplanted.

All but a handful of privileged associations are legally required to be members of GUVS. Two of these are characteristic of Jordan in that they are patronised by prominent women members of the Royal Family: the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development, founded in 1977, named after one of the late King Hussain's earlier wives who was killed in a helicopter accident in 1977 while travelling home from a visit to a hospital, and now presided over by Princess Basma the late King only sister; and the Noor-al-Hussain Foundation, founded in 1985 and named after the King's last wife. These are sophisticated operations, attracting extensive sponsorship from governments and international agencies. The formers is perhaps best known for its network of community centres, the latter for its projects to encourage and develop traditional crafts in rural areas of Jordan.

Though no doubt modelled on the practices of contemporary British royalty, the involvement of the Royal Palace in charitable works is far more active than one could find in a western monarchy. An Arab monarchy does not stand back from the political fray, but is typically engaged in face-to-face interaction with the various interest-groups on whose support it depends Critics of the *status quo* maintain that the Palace's participation in charity goes further than energetic benevolence and is actually a means of controlling and limiting the growth of grass-roots organisations, and this argument has been voiced especially on behalf of the women's movement, for Princess Basma chairs the Jordanian National Committee for Women and makes frequent speeches in support of women's groups. Certainly the fact that royal activities are immune from public criticism means that there is little

unfettered debate about the effectiveness of the leading charitable organisations in Jordan. Unflattering critics call these royal foundations 'parallel organisations' rather than voluntary organisations in the proper sense. It is an open question whether they contribute more in professionalism, influence and eclat than they take away by smothering grass-roots initiatives with official control.

By comparison with other countries in the region and given the harsh political and economic shocks it has had to endure, it is remarkable that Jordan enjoys reasonable internal stability, and in particular that Transjordanian ethno-nationalism has not already taken a more virulent form. Much of the credit is generally given to the political charisma of the late King and the preaching of humanistic tolerance and inclusiveness—for instance, with regard to the small Christian minority. But it should be noted that the Palace has also taken every opportunity to support a humane and tolerant interpretation of Islam. Islam frequently becomes co-opted by patriotic states, of which Jordan is one and in this case fused with a concept of enlightened monarchy borrowed from the West. But its universalistic message—within the confines of fellow-Muslims and 'people of the Book'—is a powerful counterbalance against ethno-nationalism, when skilfully adapted. The Hashemite leadership even speaks of the possibility one day of a federation of Abrahamic states that would include Israel.

I have heard it argued that the whole of Jordan's voluntary sector is informed by Arab-Islamic values of social solidarity. This claim must obviously be qualified given that the society is deeply stratified, but a niggling element of truth seems to remain in such an assertion—to do with the strength of face-to-face relationships, family ties and other bonds of reciprocal obligation that anthropologists generally regard as analytically prior to indicators based on money. It is related to the fact that the idea of communism, which depends on the workers subsuming their personal identities in a common solidarity of economic class, has never found favour in Arab states. Rather than try to resolve these difficult interpretative issues, we will consider Jordan's explicitly Islamic voluntary associations, and the special characteristics that seem to distinguish these.

SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATIONS

One of the most favoured objects for Muslim charitable works is the care of orphans. Perhaps the most important reason is that the Prophet Muhammad himself was an orphan: his father died either

just before or just after he was born, and his mother died when he was only six and he was taken into the family of his paternal uncle. If one speaks of orphans 10 a pious Muslim, he or she is likely to make a gesture of crossing two fingers, which alludes to a saying of the Prophet that whoever looks after an orphan will be 'like this' with him in Paradise. The Prophet also said, 'I am he who takes care of the orphan.' Several passages in the Qur'an condemn those who misappropriate the property of orphans (*e.g.* 93:9, 107:2). The result is that there can be few Islamic welfare organisations that do not include orphans among their beneficiaries, and emotive appeals on orphans are distributed to the public. For instance, the British-based charity Islamic Relief' supports 4,000 orphans in over ten countries. 'Orphan' is generally defined as a child who has lost his or her father, that is, the family breadwinner; the loss of a mother is not seen as so disastrous. The term 'orphan' also sometimes appears to be used as a euphemism for any child born out of wedlock who is rejected by a family.

I visited a small residential girls' orphanage in Salt, 30 kilometres north-west of Amman, one of the oldest towns in Jordan. It was administered by the local branch of the Red Crescent society, which is secular and non-denominational, though its day-to-day operation was overseen by a devout Muslim, Hajja N., a full-time volunteer, an affectionate and cordial lady in late middle age. It has space for twenty girls, whose ages range from eighteen months to seventeen years. The original aim when the orphanage was started in 1965 was to accept children from four years up, but they cannot refuse younger children. I had coffee in the Hajja's office, and she led in a little girl called Sana, only eighteen months old and clinging to her. An even younger boy was brought in, but he had been accepted just for a short time and would soon go to an orphanage in Amman. The older girls help to look after the younger ones, and some of them go on to higher education. The small size of the orphanage made it relatively easy to take care of, I was told, especially because the Hajja and her husband have no children themselves and treat the orphanage like a large family. Though most of the bigger children were out at school during my visit, I could see that the living spaces were rigorously ordered: the children silting in bare side-rooms with all the toys in a cupboard in the Hajja's office (possibly tidied up for my visit); a communal cupboard of children's clothes in the dormitory.

I also visited an orphans' day centre in Amman, run by the Saudi-based International Islamic Relief Organisation (IIRO). This is just outside the Jabal Al Husayn refugee camp, the oldest of the Palestinian

refugee camps. Two hundred children up to the age of fifteen are looked after here, just over half of them boys. Most of them come from the refugee camp, but some from up to 5 kilometres away. The primary aim of the centre is to enable the families to become economically self-sufficient, and there are courses for the mothers in straw hand-crafts, ceramics, knitting and other productive activities that can be carried on in the home.

Boys and girls, on alternate days, attend Qur'anic instruction and extra classes. On the morning when I visited, it was the girls' day. The women teachers were all wearing the veil like a European nun's, the girls had their heads veiled. On request, one of the girls recited some verses from the Qur'an, with only a little prompting from a teacher. The class then rose to their feet, I was invited to sit down together with the Saudi manager, and the girls chanted some verses in Arabic, accompanied by one of the teachers with a tambourine. The meaning of the two rhymes was 'Welcome to guests of the IIRO' and 'Don't forget the rules for reciting the Holy Qur'an.'

I was then invited to the office of the head of the day centre, Basma Sharif, and asked her some questions. She graduated from Jordan University in 1985 after studying Shari'a, then did a postgraduate course in school administration. She had worked with (UNRWA as a teacher, the UN body with responsibility for Palestinian refugees, and subsequently as a supervisor in an orphan centre like this one.

She is in favour of non-residential orphan centres, and of the sponsorship of orphans within their extended families rather than building up institutions; and she contends that this tendency is envisaged by Islamic principles. She plays an active role in community work outside her paid employment, and is clearly a strong personality of some influence. Basma Sharif is strongly in favour of local initiatives rather than big international agencies, and stresses the importance of Islamic volunteering without reward. She stressed the principle in Islam that poor people have the *right* to assistance, quoting a well-known Qur'anic passage: '[They will be blessed] in whose wealth is a recognised right for the [needy] who asks and him who is prevented [for some reason from asking]' (70:24-5). Therefore, there should be no loss of dignity in receiving assistance.

According to traditional Islamic education, children would memorise the Qur'an before going on to formal schooling. The emphasis is still on memory, until the children start reading at the age of eight or nine.

A few children of this age in Amman, as in many other places in the Muslim world, are still trained to memorise the whole of the Qur'an.

The Jabal Al-Husayn orphan centre represents an approach to the care of children that accords with current expert western thinking in seeking to strengthen family bonds through day centres, rather than board children in institutions. The apparent imposition of rigid gender roles by means of dress is harder to reconcile with the policies of progressive NGOs, though the issue is more subtle than is often realised, and women's clothing is not necessarily a reliable indicator of psychological or economic independence.

After my discussion with Basma Sharif, it was a little dispiriting a few months later to find that the active and energetic *zakat* committee in Nablus, the historic town in the West Bank—which has built up an effective complex of medical services, income-generating projects and the like, nearly all from Muslims' contributions—had set its heart on building a huge residential orphanage in a walled compound, an architect's vision of which appears as the frontispiece of the committee's glossy annual report. As in the West, large-scale prestige projects have a great appeal for many heads of charities.

Another feature of traditional Islamic organised charity seems to have been a strong emphasis on giving preference to Muslims rather than non-Muslims. This has been challenged in recent years by the more liberal theologians' interpretations of Islamic doctrine (cf. Benthall 1999), and also no doubt by the desire of the more internationally minded voluntary agencies to harmonise with the worldwide humanitarian network with its manifold opportunities for funding. Hence the IIRO has provided relief aid to non-Muslims in, for instance, Rwanda. The issue has not arisen as a critical one in a country like Jordan with a very large Muslim majority and minorities such as Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians who each have that strong sense of group identity that is characteristic of the history of the whole region. There is no shortage of urgent humanitarian needs among Muslims in many countries to be attended to, so the issue is rather a theoretical one except as it relates to countries with non-Abrahamic indigenous minorities such as the Nilotic peoples of the Sudan or the inhabitants of outlying Indonesian islands who do not even adhere to Hinduism or Buddhism. In such contexts, it would seem that even the most tolerant interpretations of Islam cannot easily overcome the traditional, almost visceral dread of paganism and polytheism that is deeply rooted in the Qur'an. This may be a principal reason why

charitable and humanitarian institutions in Sudan have been so ruthlessly manipulated by the Islamist government in Khartoum in the context of civil war (Bellion-Jourdan 1997; de Waal 1997a).

Many Islamic charities are concerned with furthering the Muslim cause as well as benefiting already committed Muslims. This is consistent with a major element in much traditional Islamic doctrine: the refusal to acknowledge a distinction between aspects of life that other religions tend to separate; the contention that Islam is a seamless whole in which religion, politics, economics and morality are interfused. To what extent this corresponds to lived reality is debatable.

The Christian churches often adopted a similar position before the Enlightenment, but since then the principles of separation of church and state, and of freedom of conscience, have gradually won wide, if still not complete, acceptance within the Christian world. One outcome is that the mainstream Christian philanthropic agencies are today strongly opposed to the combining of humanitarian aims with proselytizing. It is now condemned as unethical—by churches that belong to the World Council of Churches—to try to effect religious conversion of someone who is hungry, sick or otherwise disadvantaged. This was not always so from the early centuries of Christianity up to the colonial period when many Christian organisations, such as the Mission to Lepers and the Salvation Army, sought to combine evangelical and humanitarian aims, and some such as World Vision still do. There are signs that some Islamic charities are moving towards a similar approach to that of the modern Christian agencies, but the doctrine of what I have called Islamic 'seamlessness' still provides resistance.

A related characteristic of the Middle Eastern voluntary sector is that conventional western distinctions between charitable or humanitarian operations and politics do not fit easily into everyday life, notwithstanding what the law may say. The reluctance of the Sultan of Oman, noted above, to permit charities to be set up is understandable in the Middle Eastern context. We need only look at the history of the Society of Muslim Brothers in Egypt. This is now denied registration either as a political party or as an NGO, but continues to enjoy success, popularity and leadership, pursuing its dual goal of socio-economic development and political influence. Founded in 1928, the organisation was concerned among other things with public health. In 1945 it was required by the government to split into two: a section concerned with politics and a section concerned with welfare. The latter had 500 branches all over Egypt by 1948 (Mitchell 1969: 36, 289-

91). Similarly, both Hamas in Palestine and the Shi'ite Hizbollah (Party of God) in Lebanon are composed of a militant faction prepared to use violence and a broadly based faction that prefers negotiation. Each has built up a formidable network of welfare services to support their respective causes. Documentation of Hamas shows that these networks are not merely devices to gain political support, but also the result of a conscious policy to build up Islam as the basis for a sense of community to replace the sense of nation shattered by the occupation, which is seen as a new Crusade against the *umma* or community of Muslims (Legrain 1991, 1996; see also Milton-Edwards. Thus, the religious rhetoric of political Ziomism is turned against the Israelis. Palestine is conceived by Hamas as a religious foundation or *waqf* until the end of days. Jewish zealots in Israel have achieved their present position of political influence by means of strategies analogous to those of Islamists elsewhere in the Middle East.

So the Islamic voluntary sector covers a wide political spectrum, from official quasi-governmental bodies, pejoratively described as 'parallel organisations', to popular movements of a radical and even politically violent tinge. The privileges of charities are manipulated on all sides. For instance, a Jordanian *zakat* committee for Palestinian relief that I visited seems on all the evidence to raise funds successfully for a variety of projects in the West Bank for sponsorship of orphans, income generation, medical care and the like. They use a picture of the Dome of the Rock—that potent symbol of Islamic claims to Jerusalem—superimposed on a map of the whole of Israel/Palestine, as a logo, and a plastic model of it as a collecting-box. Thus, they adapt western fund-raising techniques to the local context. However, when their fund-raising leaflets routinely savage the 'Satanic' Israelis—at a time when the Jordanian government is trying to support the Peace Process—it becomes clear that charitable operations just will not fit into a segregated, politics-proof container. Rather than merely note the permeability of charity and politics in the Middle East, we should also ask how intellectually sustainable is the sharp distinction between the two that the Euro-American law of charities strives so hard to enforce.

THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN ALGERIA

Algeria is exceptional among Islamic countries in the savagery of the 'black years' of civil war since the 1990s (or in Arabic *sinawat ul-fitna,* years of discord) and in the extremism of its armed Islamist movement, which has had less in common with traditional Islam than

with millenarian cults, the Cultural Revolution in China or European fascism. The current Bouteflika government may, however, be leading the way among its neighbours in its active encouragement of the country's 'associative movement' or voluntary sector, which the government sees as a major ingredient in relieving poverty and social exclusion and reinforcing the policy of *concords civile.* Admittedly, actual achievements do not yet measure up to government rhetoric, and it has been argued by critics of Bouteflika that the apparent freedom of the press and civil pluralism are illusions fabricated by the army to disguise its dominance over the civilian authorities (Addi 2001).

Well before the colonial period, the region that was to become Algeria was marked by immemorial Arab-Islamic traditions of mutual aid, in particular by *touiza,* the rural practice of local cooperation. Shortly after the Second World War, Algerians created new forms of association directed towards cultural, associational and sporting objectives, under the French law of 1 July 1901. These were few in number and largely urban, but they played their part in safeguarding the sense of national identity.

Two very different associations that were both influential in the national movement were the Association des Oulemas (religious scholars), founded by Sheikh den Badis in the 1920s, and the Scouts Musulmans Algeriens, founded in 1936 by another national hero, Mohamed Bouras. However, according to new research (Arous 2000) there were about a hundred other active associations. The first Islamic charity was the Jam'iyat al-iqbal ('society for concern'), founded in 1940.

Algerian associations crumbled during the war of independence against the French, but shortly after the Algerian victory in 1962 they revived in the fields of culture, sport, youth and social action, in a very brief flowering for one year only, comparable to the rather longer period at the beginning of Soviet rule in Russia. The ruling FLN (Front de Liberation Nationale) policy of 'unity of action and thought' led to their replacement by 'mass organisations' following the Eastern European model. The Islamic movement went underground, making use of the national associations set up by the government and also using mosques to pursue their aims, in a way comparable to the Catholic church in Communist Poland. According to Arous, Muslims drew on the Shi'ite tradition of *taqiya,* that is, dissimulation of one's religion under duress. This situation prevailed until new legislation in 1987 and 1990, which encouraged a rapid growth in the foundation of

associations. The number of national non-profit associations, which have to be approved by the Ministry of the Interior, now stands at 823 in a population of some 30 million, and there are said to be as many as 53,000 local associations, regulated at the level of the forty-eight provinces.

The large quantity of associations registered in Algeria is by no means yet matched by a proportionate contribution to national life. Despite its keenness a encourage the voluntary sector, the government is also keen to control it both from unwelcome international infiltration and from the militant Islamist facticism Zoubir Arus's sociological research on Islamist voluntary associations conclude from his participant observation, that some of them are performing good works with deep roots in the communities they serve. His view contrasts with the establishment position in Algeria that all the Islamic voluntary associations are highly politicised, and in some cases morally compromised, so that they should be approached, if at all, only with great caution. During a visit to Algiers in April 2000 I met with Mr. Aissa Benlakhdar, head of the Jami's al-Irshid wal-Satar (Society for Guidance and Reconstruction) founded in 1989, now a large association with branches in all forty-eight provinces. Its programmes include social development, education and health. It plans to start a new centre for helping children who have suffered psychologically from the 'years of discord,' and Mr. Benlakhdar is critical of projects to impose European models of psychotherapy of Algerian patients. He holds that a society in transition needs to build on its own associative traditions. His view is persuasive for, though many mainstream Algerians have drifted away from religious institutions, disgusted by the excesses of the armed Islamist factions, the population remains almost 100 per cent Muslim. My own conclusion is that the country will eventually benefit from the efforts of religious leaders such as Abdelmadjid Mesiane (President of the Haut Conseil Islamique) or Soheib Benchekh (the Algrian Mufti of Marseilles to formulate interpretations of Islam more consistent with modern life than those currently dominant, yet still offering an alternative to collective self-abasement before the economic victories of the West and the Far East. However, these leaders seem to be under appreciated and they are rather isolated voices. A more widely held view among the francophone intellectual elite, that Islamism is an indivisible movement and even its moderate adherents are not to be trusted, was expressed in the editorial in the Algiers newspaper, *La Liberte*, on 27 April 2000. 'Current developments give one the impression that Algeria is in the same situation as a person who is not quite

convinced that AIDS is lethal, and who is order to be convinced asks to be injected with the virus.'

One of the positive factors in Algeria is that, though television is totally government controlled the press is probably the freest in the Arab world and there is a tradition of outspoken criticism and polemic (albeit with limits set by the military authorities). However, the liberalising tendency in the government seems unable at present to follow through its declared intentions of allowing more freedom to voluntary associations, and their development is likely to be slow.

It would be a mistake to idealise the voluntary sector in the Islamic world, for a serious lack of accountability is widespread. It would seem that in some cases Islamic charities in Arab countries have been used simply as fronts for organising political violence. Another extreme example is the huge charitable foundations, set up in Iran under the direction of religious leaders after the revolution, on the orders of Khomeini. The biggest is the Foundation for the Oppressed and the Disabled, which was created in March 1979 with a view to taking over the wealth of the Shah and those connected with the court. It is private but exempted from both taxes and reporting requirements. By 1992, it had become a huge-conglomerate employing more than 65,000 people and running an annual budget of $10 billion, nearly 10 per cent of the government's own budget with interests in manufacturing, importing, hotels and even real estate in Manhattan (Waldman 1992). Some published reports concerning these foundations are extremely damning, likening them to the Philippines under Marcos or to the Communist Party under Soviet apparatchiks. Moreover, between two and four million refugees (Afghans, Iraqi Shi'ites and Kurds) are looked after in Iran, for which the country receives little recognition from the outside world. But with no public accountability, it is impossible to know the truth. Genuine accountability in the Middle East voluntary sector is aimed at by some of the more progressive established organisations in their published annual reports, but the kind that is accepted by the general population is more likely to be the personal trust built up by small face-to-face groups.

Some political theorists in the Middle East and North Africa still look forward to a future where the region's economic potential will be realised at nation-state level and there will be social justice for all; and it is a corollary of this point of view that private charity is no more than a palliative that may actually impede or retard progress towards radical political change. This used to be the classic socialist

or Marxist perspective on private charity. Faced with objective political realities and the growing power of globalising capitalism, many nowadays take a more positive view of the voluntary sector. Anthropologists are well placed to extend their discipline's already valuable contribution to NGO studies, towards a cross-cultural comparison of different traditions of aims giving and organised charity. One particularly promising approach is suggested by the American anthropologist James Ferguson, who argues that the lately fashionable school of 'critical' anthropology, which characteristically seeks to demystify religious and moralistic ideological discourse, is ultimately unsatisfying in that it is driven by a desire to distinguish goodies from baddies. He suggests instead a more modest approach, which he calls 'political analysis', modelled on Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy and starting from the proposition that even institutions that appear to be morally impeccable have a 'dangerous' aspect.

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13

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND CHRISTIANITY: AN OVERVIEW

WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is an international Christian ecumenical organisation. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, it has a membership of over 340 churches and denominations and those churches and denominations claim about 550 million Christian members throughout more than 120 countries.

The council has been involved in several activities that have caused controversy and criticism, including the funding of groups engaged in violent struggle during the 1970s. The World Council of Churches describes itself as "deeply involved in efforts for peace in the Holy Land since 1948 when the state of Israel was created".

HISTORY

After the initial successes of the Ecumenical Movement in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the Edinburgh Missionary Conference of 1910 (chaired by future WCC Honorary President John R. Mott), church leaders (in 1937) agreed to establish a World Council of Churches, based on a merger of the *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement* organisations. Its official establishment was deferred with the outbreak of World War II until August 23, 1948. Delegates of 147 churches assembled in Amsterdam to merge the *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement*. Subsequent mergers were with the *International Missionary Council* in 1961 and the *World Council of Christian Education*, with its roots in the 18th century Sunday School movement, in 1971.

WCC member churches include most of the Orthodox Churches; numerous Protestant churches, including the Anglican Communion, some Baptists, many Lutheran, Methodist, and Reformed, a broad sampling of united and independent churches, and some Pentecostal churches; and some Old Catholic churches.

The largest Christian body, the Roman Catholic Church, is not a member of the WCC, but has worked closely with the Council for more than three decades and sends observers to all major WCC conferences as well as to its Central Committee meetings and the Assemblies. The Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity also nominates 12 members to the WCC's *Faith and Order Commission* as full members. While not a member of the WCC, the Roman Catholic Church is a member of some other ecumenical bodies at regional and national levels, for example, the National Council of Churches in Australia and the National Council of Christian Churches in Brazil (CONIC).

Delegates sent from the member churches meet every seven or eight years in an Assembly, which elects a Central Committee that governs between Assemblies. A variety of other committees and commissions answer to the Central Committee and its staff.

These Assemblies have been held since 1948, and last met in Porto Alegre, Brazil in February 2006, under the theme "God, in your grace, transform the world".

Previous Assemblies

- Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 22 August—4 September 1948
- Evanston, Illinois, U.S., 15 August—31 August 1954
- New Delhi, India, 19 November—5 December 1961
- Uppsala, Sweden, 4 July—20 July 1968
- Nairobi, Kenya, 23 November—10 December 1975
- Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada 24 July—10 August 1983
- Canberra, Australia, 7 February—21 February 1992
- Harare, Zimbabwe, 3 December—14 December 1998
- Porto Alegre, Brazil, 14 February—23 February 2006

Archbishop Anastasios of Tirana and All Albania was unanimously elected World Council of Churches President in the 9th general assembly meeting held at the University of Porto Alegre in Brazil in February

of 2006. A former president of the WCC was Rev. Martin Niemöller, the famous Lutheran anti-Nazi theologian.

General Secretaries

Years	Name	Churches	Nationality
1948–1966	W.A. Visser	Reformed Churches in the Netherlands/ Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches, Geneva	Netherlands
1966– 1972	Eugene Carson Blake	United Presbyterian Church (USA)	U.S.
1972–1984	Philip A. Potter	Methodist Church	Dominica
1985–1992	Emilio Castro	Evangelical Methodist Church of Uruguay	Uruguay
1993–2003	Konrad Raiser	Evangelical Church in Germany (EKD)	Germany
2004 -	Samuel Kobia	Methodist Church in Kenya	Kenya

COMMISSIONS AND TEAMS

There are two complementary approaches to ecumenism: dialogue and action. The *Faith and Order Movement* and *Life and Work Movement* represent these approaches. These approaches are reflected in the work of the WCC in its commissions, these being:

- Commission of the Churches on Diakonia and Development
- Commission on Education and Ecumenical Formation
- Commission of the Churches on International Affairs
- Commission on Justice, Peace and Creation
- Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
- Faith and Order Plenary Commission and the Faith and Order Standing Commission
- Joint Consultative Group with Pentecostals
- Joint Working Group WCC – Roman Catholic Church (Vatican)
- Reference Group on the Decade to Overcome Violence
- Reference Group on Inter-Religious Relations
- Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC

Diakonia and Development and International Relations Commissions

The WCC acts through both its member churches and other religious and social organisations to coordinate ecumenical, evangelical, and social action.

Current WCC programmes include a Decade to Overcome Violence, an international campaign to combat AIDS/HIV in Africa and the *Justice, Peace and Creation* initiative.

Faith and Order Commission

WCC's *Faith and Order Commission* has been successful in working toward consensus on Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry, on the date of Easter, on the nature and purpose of the church (ecclesiology), and on ecumenical hermeneutics.

The 1952 meeting of the Faith and Order Commission, held in Lund, Sweden, produced the Lund Principle for ecumenical co-operation.

The Commission has 120 members, including representation of churches who are not members of the World Council of Churches, among them the Roman Catholic Church. Members are men and women from around the world—pastors, laypersons, academics, church leaders nominated by their church.

Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry (BEM) was published in 1982. It attempted to express the convergences that had been found over the years. It was sent to all member churches and six volumes of responses compiled. As a result, some churches have changed their liturgical practices, and some have entered into discussions, which in turn led to further agreements and steps towards unity.

A major study on the church (ecclesiology) is being undertaken examining the question 'What it means to be a church, or the Church?'

In particular with a focus on ecclesiology and ethics focusing on the churches/Church's 'prophetic witness and its service to those in need'..

Faith and Order is collaborating with *Justice, Peace and Creation* to answer the questions:

- 'How can the search for unity be a source of renewal for both the Church and the world?
- 'What does our increasing cooperation on issues of justice, peace and the creation teach us about the nature of the Church?
- 'What is the relationship between ethnicity, nationalism, and church unity?

Material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is prepared annually with the Roman Catholic Church.

Other work of the Commission includes facilitating the coordination of:

- results from international bilateral dialogues (the Bilateral Forum),
- movements towards local church unions.

Important Texts

- *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* (Faith and Order Paper No. 111, the "Lima Text"; 1982)
- *The Nature and Mission of the Church – A Stage on the Way to a Common Statement* (Faith and Order Paper no. 198; 2005) after *The Nature and Purpose of the Church* (Faith and Order Paper no. 181; 1998)
- *Towards a Common Date of Easter*

Justice, Peace and Creation Commission

Justice, Peace and Creation has drawn many elements together with an environmental focus. Its mandate is:

To analyse and reflect on justice, peace and creation *in their inter-relatedness*, to promote values and practices that make for a culture of peace, and to work towards a culture of solidarity with young people, women, Indigenous Peoples and racially and ethnically oppressed people.

Focal issues have been *globalisation* and the emergence of new social movements (in terms of people *bonding together* in the struggle for justice, peace and the protection of creation).

Attention has been given to issues around:

- economy
- ecology
- Indigenous Peoples
- peace
- people with disabilities
- racism
- women
- youth

Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC

A *Special Commission* was set up by the eighth Harare Assembly in December 1998 to address Orthodox concerns about WCC membership

and the Council's decision-making style, public statements, worship practices and other issues.

The Special Commission on Orthodox Participation in the WCC represents the potential for fresh and creative high-level discussion about the structure and life of the Council, a discussion which is explicitly seen as continuing the foundations laid by the process and the policy document "Towards and Common Understanding and Vision of the WCC".

CONTROVERSY

There has been controversy within the WCC about its programmes and actions. Orthodox and Evangelical member churches have sought to make clear the nature of their involvement and limits on the authority of the WCC to speak on their behalf. Many churches have opted to stay out of the WCC, accusing it of being dominated by liberals and (or) leftists. Through the Programme to Combat Racism, the council was involved in several activities that caused controversy and criticism, including the funding for humanitarian purposes of groups engaged in liberation struggles during the 1970s, as in South Africa.

As a member based organisation, the WCC has needed to address the concerns raised by member churches and has done so. The Programme to Combat Racism has been changed and Orthodox concerns have been and are being addressed through the *Special Commission*.

Accusations of Anti-Semitism

The council has been described by some as taking anti-Semitic positions in connection with its criticisms of Israeli policy. They believe the council has focused more on activities and publications criticizing Israel than on other human rights issues. The council members have been characterised by Israel's former Justice minister Amnon Rubinstein as anti-Semitic, saying "they just hate Israel."

The World Council of Churches has rejected this accusation. In 2005, the General Secretary of the WCC, Samuel Kobia, stated that anti-Semitism is a "sin against God and man" and "absolutely irreconcilable with the profession and practice of the Christian faith," quoting from the first assembly of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948.

Programme to Combat Racism during the 1970s

There was controversy over the WCC's *Programme to Combat Racism* (PCR) during the 1970s. It funded a number of humanitarian

programmes of liberation movements while those groups were involved in violent struggle, examples include:

- In 1970, *Reader's Digest* suggested that the PCR was contributing to fourteen groups involved in revolutionary guerrilla activities, some of which were Communist in ideology and receiving arms from the Soviet Union (Reader's Digest, October 1971).

- In 1977 "The Fraudulent Gospel" by Bernard Smith ISBN 0-89601-007-4 was published in the USA and Britain and carried a graphic photo on the front cover of 27 Black Rhodesians it said were "massacred by WCC-financed terrorists in Eastern Rhodesia in December 1976".

- Donating $85,000 to the Patriotic Front of Zimbabwe (ZANU) in 1978, months after the group shot down an airliner, killing 38 of the 56 passengers on board. Members are reported to have killed 10 survivors (this was denied by the Front).

This caused much controversy in the past among member churches. In a *Time Magazine* article entitled "Going Beyond Charity: Should Christian cash be given to terrorists?" (October 2, 1978). Further examination of WCC's political programme appeared in *Amsterdam to Nairobi—The World Council of Churches and the Third World* by Ernest W. Lefever (1979, Georgetown University. Further criticism has also been cited by the Christian right, for example in March 1983 issue of Jerry Falwell related *Fundamentalist Journal*:

> There has been an 'enormous disturbance' in British churches, says one Executive Committee member. As for West Germany—which now provides 42 per cent of the budget for the financially pressed WCC—official protests are muted, but one top churchman reports 'bitter reaction in our churches.'… In the U.S., important elements in such WCC member groups as the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ and the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese are upset.

SUCCESSES

Some of the notable successes of the World Council of Churches are in the area of increased understanding and acceptance between Christian groups and denominations. Mutual understanding has developed through the *Faith and Order* related activities; the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* process has been positive.

The WCC has not sought the organic union of different Christian denominations—it has however facilitated dialogue and supported local, national, and regional dialogue and cooperation.

REGIONAL/NATIONAL COUNCILS

It should be noted that membership in a regional or national council does not mean that the particular group is also a member of the WCC.

- Africa—All Africa Conference of Churches
- Asia (including Australia and New Zealand)—Christian Conference of Asia [24], Hong Kong
  - National Council of Churches in Australia
- Caribbean—Caribbean Conference of Churches
- Europe—Conference of European Churches, Geneva, Switzerland
- Latin America—Latin American Council of Churches
- Middle East—Middle East Council of Churches
- North America
  - Canadian Council of Churches
  - National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA
- Pacific—Pacific Conference of Churches, Suva, Fiji

MEMBERS

- African Methodist Episcopal Church
- American Baptist Churches in the USA
- Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia
- Anglican Church of Australia
- Anglican Church of Canada
- Anglican Church of Kenya
- Anglican Church of Korea
- Anglican Church of Tanzania
- Anglican Communion in Japan
- Anglican Episcopal Church of Brazil
- Anglican Province for the Southern Cone of America
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Cilicia)
- Armenian Apostolic Church (Echmiadzin)
- Associated Churches of Christ in New Zealand
- Baptist Union of Denmark
- Baptist Union of Great Britain
- Baptist Union of Hungary

- Catholic Diocese of Old Catholics in Germany
- Christian Catholic Church of Switzerland
- Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA
- Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt
- Christian Methodist Episcopal Church
- Church in Wales
- Church of Bangladesh
- Church of Ceylon
- Church of Christ in Congo
- Church of Christ in Madagascar
- Church of Christ in Thailand
- Church of Cyprus
- Church of England
- Church of Greece
- Church of Ireland
- Church of North India
- Church of Norway
- Church of Scotland
- Church of South India
- Church of Sweden
- Church of the Brethren
- Church of the Confession of Augsburg, of Alsace and Lorraine
- Church of the Province of Southern Africa
- Church of the Province of the Indian Ocean
- Church of the Province of Uganda
- Communion of Baptist Churches in Bangladesh
- Coptic Orthodox Church
- Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople
- Episcopal Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East
- Episcopal Church in the Philippines
- Episcopal Church of Rwanda
- Episcopal Church (USA)
- Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church
- Ethiopian Evangelical Church

- Evangelical Church in Austria
- Evangelical Church in Germany
- Evangelical Church of Cameroon
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland
- Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Slovak Republic
- Evangelical Church of the Rio de la Plata
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Chile
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Congo
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in the Republic of Namibia
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Iceland
- Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia
- Evangelical Methodist Church in the Philippines
- Evangelical Methodist Church in Uruguay
- Evangelical Methodist Church of Argentina
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Egypt
- Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Portugal
- Federation of Protestant Churches in Italy
- Federation of Protestant Churches of Switzerland
- Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga
- Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
- Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem
- Iglesia Christiana Biblica
- Indonesian Christian Church
- International Council of Community Churches
- International Evangelical Church
- Jamaica Baptist Church

- Korean Christian Church in Japan
- Lusitanian Church of Portugal
- Lutheran Church in Hungary
- Malagasy Lutheran Church
- Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church
- Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar
- Mennonite Church in Germany
- Mennonite Church in the Netherlands
- Methodist Church in Ireland
- Methodist Church in Zimbabwe
- Methodist Church Nigeria
- Methodist Church of Chile
- Methodist Church of Great Britain
- Methodist Church of New Zealand
- Methodist Church of Peru
- Methodist Church of Sri Lanka
- Mission Covenant Church of Sweden
- Moravian Church
- Myanmar Baptist Convention
- Old Catholic Church of Austria
- Old Catholic Church of the Netherlands
- Old Catholic Mariavite Church in Poland
- Orthodox Autocephalous Church of Albania
- Orthodox Church in America
- Orthodox Church in Finland
- Orthodox Church in Japan
- Orthodox Church of the Czech Lands and Slovakia
- Polish National Catholic Church in America
- Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)
- Presbyterian Church in Canada
- Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
- Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea
- Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand
- Presbyterian Church of Ghana

- Presbyterian Church of Korea
- Presbyterian-Reformed Church in Cuba
- Protestant Church in the Netherlands
- Reformed Church in America
- Reformed Church in Hungary
- Reformed Church in Romania, Cluj
- Reformed Church in Romania, Oradea
- Reformed Church in Zambia
- Reformed Church of France
- Religious Society of Friends
- Remonstrant Brotherhood of the Netherlands
- Romanian Orthodox Church
- Russian Orthodox Church
- Salvadorean Lutheran Synod
- Scottish Congregational Church
- Serbian Orthodox Church
- Silesian Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in the Czech Republic
- Spanish Evangelical Church
- Swiss Evangelical Church Federation
- Syrian Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
- The Church of the Lord (Aladura) Worldwide
- United Church of Canada
- United Church of Christ
- United Church of Christ in Zimbabwe
- United Congregational Church of Southern Africa
- United Evangelical Lutheran Church
- United Evangelical Lutheran Churches of India
- United Methodist Church
- United Protestant Church in Belgium
- United Reformed Church
- Uniting Church in Australia
- Waldensian Church
- Waldensian Evangelical Church

AN OVERVIEW OF CHRISTIANITY

EARLY HISTORY

The disciples originally called themselves "Christian Jews" but soon this changed to be just Christians or 'little Christs'. The number of Christians grew very quickly during the 50 years after the death of Jesus. St.Peter went to Rome and preached about Jesus. St. Paul travelled widely and converted many people to the new religion. The other disciples also travelled all over the Middle East and further afield. Some people believe that one of the disciples reached India! When Roman soldiers became Christians they took the new religion all over the Roman Empire as far north as the borders of Scotland, south to North Africa, West to Wales and East to modern day Russia.

After the Roman Empire was defeated in 410 Christianity suffered but soon it was on the way up again. In 625 St.Augustine came to Britain and established Canterbury as an important cathedral. However, Christianity in the Middle East and North Africa was challenged by the spread of the new religion of Islam. By the year 1000 all of Europe was Christian, and the majority of Europeans Christians. In 1054 the church in the East split away from the church in the West. This was known as the great Schism and Rome became the "capital" of the Western (or Roman Catholic) church, and Constantinople (now called Istanbul) the capital of the Eastern (or Orthodox Catholic) church.

In 1517 Martin Luther nailed a list of 95 "protests" on the door of a church in Wittenberg and this was the start of the Protestant movement. One of the main groups to split away from the Roman Catholic church was the Church of England (or Anglican) church. Over the next 300 years many other groups split away from either the Roman Catholic or Church of England.

In the 1700s and 1800s the major European nations were expanding and creating empires around the world. They took their religion with them. The "flavour" of Christianity depended on the country that was colonising. Soon Christianity was established and growing in Africa (mainly Protestant) and South America (mainly Roman Catholic). By the end of the 1800s Christianity was established all over the world. In the 1900s Christianity has continued to grow in Africa, South America and in the last few decades in South East Asia, only in Europe are the number of Christians diminishing.

Today there are over 2,000,000,000 Christians in the world. All this from a handful of disciples following a man called Jesus of Nazareth in a small country 2,000 years ago.

Sacred Texts

While some of the associated sects have their own texts the vast majority of Christians have only one sacred text known as the Bible (from Greek Bibles for book or record). The Bible is divided into two major and one minor section.

- Old or Hebrew Scriptures: These are shared with Jews and are used as the history of the world before the coming of Jesus
- The New or Christian Scriptures: These tell the story of the life of Jesus, the development and the writings of the Early Church and the prophecies about the end of the world
- The Apocropha: A collection of prophets and writings which are not commonly agreed by the major sects.

Belief and Practice

There is an enormous range of belief among Christians. However, the majority of Christians would, probably, agree on three main areas:

- God is a montheistic deity, revealed in the works of creation, in the person of Jesus and in the presence of the spirit. God is the judge of all and the supreme authority.
- Jesus. Most Christians give a place of authority to Jesus Christ. They acknowledge his special relationship with God and his teachings form the basis of much of Christian belief and lifestyle.
- The Bible has an important place as the written authority on the commandments (laws) of God, on the life of Jesus and on the life of the early church. Most Christians would regard the bible as an important part of their understanding of God and as a special part of their understanding of the way they should live.

The Christian year starts at Advent and runs through the year in a series of seasons. The seasons of Advent and Lent are seasons of preparation for the two most important festivals, both linked to events in the life of Jesus.

- Christmas—celebrating the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem to Mary and Joseph
- Easter—celebrating the death, resurrection and eventual rising of Jesus to heaven.

Most Christians will have three elements at the centre of their worship:

- Eucharist: The recreation of the last supper when Jesus ate with his disciples before his crucifixion. The elements of bread and wine are used to represent Jesus' body and blood.

- Exposition: Using the message of the Bible, the teachings of Jesus and those of other Christians to explain the workings of the world and to formulate responses to situations in the world today.

- Prayer: Communication with God in supplication, confession, adoration and thanksgiving both corporate and private.

Sects and Divisions

In Europe alone there are over a 1000 formal Christian organisations ranging from extreme conservative to extreme liberal. They agree on little. A committee consisting of one member from each of: Anglican, Baptist, Episcopal, Greek Orthodox, Jehovah's Witness, Methodist, Mormon, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox and Unity Church would probably fail to reach a consensus on almost any basic Christian belief or practice. In fact, some committee members would probably refuse to recognise some of the others as fellow Christians. It is possible to divide the world's Christians in 5 main groups

- Roman Catholics, based in Rome under the authority of the Pope

- Orthodox, split into two main groups Russian and Greek

- Protestants, split into many differing factions, but with a priestly/ministerial structure

- "Free Church" individual self governing church groups

- Associated sects, which have some common ground with mainstream Christianity

With thanks to the Religious Tolerance Organisation of Ontario for the Information on this page

Holy Days in Christianity

1. Lent, a period of fasting and prayer begins on Ash Wednesday, 40 days before Easter Sunday.

2. Palm Sunday is recognised 7 days before Easter Sunday; it is the beginning of Holy Week.

3. Holy Thursday, (also called Maundy Thursday), remembers the Last Supper. The term "Maundy" was derived from the old

Latin name for the day, "Dies Mandatum,"—"the day of the new commandment."

4. Good Friday, (also called Holy Friday), commemorates the execution of Jesus by the Roman army of occupation.

5. Easter Sunday celebrates the resurrection of Jesus.

6. Ascension Thursday, (also called Ascension Day), occurs 40 days after Easter Sunday; it commemorates the ascension of Jesus into heaven.

7. Pentecost, (also known as Whit Sunday), is the 7th Sunday after Easter, the day when the Holy Spirit is reported as having descended upon the Apostles.

8. The first day of Advent is the Sunday which is closest to November 30; it foretells the coming of Christmas.

9. Epiphany, on Jan-6 celebrates the visitation of the 3 wise men to Jesus after his birth.

10. Christmas is the day associated with Jesus' birth. It is celebrated on Dec-25 by Western churches and on Jan-7 the following year by Eastern Orthodox churches.

11. Advent Sunday (also called the First Sunday of Advent) is the first day of an approximately 40 day period of preparation for Christmas.

FETHULLAH GÜLEN

Fethullah Gülen (born 27 April 1941) is an Islamic scholar, writer, and leader of the *Gülen's movement*. He is the author of over 60 books. Gülen has been the subject of several academic studies. A recent conference is held at House of Lords, by sponsorship of London School of Economics, and University of London in England to study Mr. Gulen and his movement.

BIOGRAPHY

Gülen was born in Erzurum, Turkey in 1941. He started primary education at his home village, but did not continue after his family moved, and instead focused on informal Islamic education. He gave his first sermon when he was 14. He became a follower of Said-i Nursi, an Islamic leader, before he was 18. In 1959 he was awarded a state preacher's license in Edirne. In 1966 he was transferred to a post in Ýzmir. It was here that Gülen's recurring themes began to crystallise and his audience base began to expand. He also travelled around the provinces in Anatolia and gave sermons in mosques, town meetings

and coffee houses among other places. From Ýzmir on, he placed a special emphasis on promulgating his ideas to high school and college students and recruiting them for his movement.

The range of his speeches was more versatile than that of other Islamic preachers; he talked about education, science, Darwinism, the economy and social justice. More broadly, adopting a theme that was previous explored by Said-i Nursi, he envisioned a society of devout Muslims who nevertheless would adopt methods and technical knowledge that led to West's superiority over the Muslim world. As such, he succeeded in recruiting large sections of the society who were alienated by Kemalist elite of the country. His popularity was aided by the emotional intensity of his sermons; at the climax he would display great emotion, often burst into tears. His sermons were taped and distributed by a network of followers at a time when Islamic activities were viewed with suspicion and proved instrumental in raising money for the movement.

In 1971 he was convicted to 3 years for his pro-Islamic activities. By the end of the 1970s he broke ranks with the mainstream Nur (light) movement which was governed by a council of elders and instituted his own where he was the sole leader. Gülen retired from formal preaching duties in 1981. From 1988 to 1991 he gave a series of sermons in popular mosques of major cities. His long career had made him a well-known figure in Islamic circles, and in particular, within the Nurcu movement, however, it was the Islamic political activism and his courtship with the center-right political parties in the 90s that made him a public figure. In 1994, he helped in the founding of "Journalists and Writers Foundation". and was given the title "Honorary Leader" by the foundation.

In 1998 a scandal developed in which Gülen was believed to have urged his followers in the judiciary and public service to "work patiently to take control of the state." Several months before this scandal broke, Gülen had moved to the United States, apparently to receive better treatment for his severe health problems (he suffers from diabetes and a range of its side effects) though some allege that this move was made to avoid his standing trial in person. In 2000 Gülen was prosecuted for inciting his followers to plot the overthrow of Turkey's secular government. He was acquitted in 2006.

PHILOSOPHY AND ACTIVITIES

Gülen's published works in the 1990s advocated dialogue among communities and faiths, tolerance, and acceptance of others. He

personally met with religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos, and Israeli Sephardic Head Rabbi Eliyahu Bakshi-Doron.

According to Gülen his theological views lie solidly within the Turkish Sunni mainstream while being more responsive to modern world than other Islamic movements. It should be noted, however, he has also adopted the views and mystical tradition of founder of the Nur (light) movement, Said Nursi, as evident in his highly emotional sermons.

Gülen claims the modern world is plagued by individuals' lack of faith, and in particular, the failure adopt scientific methods while preserving moral values and belief in God. Gülen argues that faith can be scientifically proven, and science benefits from or requires a moral foundation from religion. He has guided his supporters to open about 500 educational institutions in more than 90 countries in Eurasia, Africa and North America.

Gülen Movement

Gülen movement consists of legally autonomous units, personally and ideologically connected into a network by the leadership of Gülen. Most parts of the movement are run by volunteers, who were in turn educated or received support from previous members of the group. The movement runs more than a thousand schools all over the world. There is a school almost in every country of the world. In these schools children from different ethnicities and cultural backgrounds are educated by mainly Turkish educators. It has founded universities of its own, an employers' association, unions, and hundreds of sub-organisations, lobby groups, and student bodies. The movement as a whole counts several hundred thousand of members, making it one of the largest Islamic movements in Turkey.

Interfaith Dialogue

Gülen supports "Dialogue and Tolerance". He has met with several religious leaders, such as Pope John Paul II, Ecumenical Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomeos, Chief Rabbi David Aseo, the Armenian Patriarch and the New York Cardinal John O'Connor. Under his article "Dialogue is a must," he describes how to reach world peace and interfaith dialogue:

Interfaith dialogue is a must today, and the first step in establishing it is forgetting the past, ignoring polemical arguments, and giving precedence to common points, which far outnumber polemical ones.

WORKS

Gülen has authored over 60 books and many articles on a variety of topics: social, political and religious issues, art, science and sports, and recorded thousands of audio and video cassettes. He contributes to a number of journals and magazines owned by his followers. He writes the lead article for the *Fountain*, *Yeni Ümit*, *Sýzýntý*, and *Yaðmur*, Islamic and philosophical magazines in Turkey. Some of his books are available in English, German, Russian, Albanian, Japanese, Indonesian, Korean and Spanish.

Bibliography in English

Pearls of Wisdom, Emerald Hills of the Heart, Prophet Muhammed as Commander, Questions and Answers, Essentials of the Islamic Faith, The Infinite Light vol 1–2, Towards the Lost Paradise, Truth Through Colors, Muhammad: The Messenger of God, Questions and Answers about Faith, Towarda Global Civilisation of Love and Tolerance, Key Concepts in the Practice of Sufism (3 vols),The Statues of Our Souls, etc. His Books

CONTROVERSIES

In 1999, a number of videocassetes with Gulen's sermons were broadcast on TV. While he was always viewed with suspicion among certain secular groups, it was the accessible nature of the tapes that made the controversy reach the general public. In them, he allegedly urged his supporters in the state bureaucracy to lie low and continue to undermine the government from within:

> Posts in the home and justice ministries that we managed to capture, have to be expanded. These entities are a safeguard of our future. Our members should not be content with being county judges or mayors, but aim for the highest offices. You must proceed without being detected and find the system's decisive positions. To a certain degree you must not enter into open dialogue with our political opponents, but you must not fight them openly either. If our friends came out prematurely the world would crush our heads and Muslims will suffer the same fate as in Algeria. The world is very frightened of Islamic development. We must tread carefully. Those among us who are involved in this mission must still behave like diplomats, like they were caretakers of the whole world—until you have collected enough power, and fill all those positions in the framework of the constitutional Turkish apparatus with our own. Any other step would be premature.

Shortly before the tapes surfaced, Gülen left Turkey and settled in the U.S., allegedly for health reasons. Within weeks a judicial

investigation against him was launched. A year later he was charged with conspiring against the republic. He did not attend the trials but his testimony was taken by the U.S. Attorney's Office in Newark, New Jersey in 2001. In 2003 the trial was postponed, subject to reprocessing if he is indicted with a similar crime in the following five years. On May 5, 2006 the AKP government modified the criminal code against acts of terror, based on which Gulen was promptly acquitted on the charges. Gülen has since lived in the U.S., but his popularity has not waned.

The authenticity of the tapes are debated. Gülen himself explained that the footage in question was completely taken out of context (he was giving advice to a group of official employees who felt marginalised by other groups within the state system that wanted them gone), and that he can't be judged for intents, only deeds. Accordingly, he advised them that they should not relinquish their careers out of religious fervour but that they should remain in order to do good for the people, even if this meant not practicing their religion in the open. However, critics of Gülen argue, Gülen's own writings, some of which is quoted below, are in accordance with the ideas mentioned in the tapes; he pushes to make Islam the guiding principle in society while at the same time advising his followers caution and an embracing attitude until the conditions are ripe.

Gülen's appeal to various ideological strands in Turkey differs. His supporters probably constitute the most influential Islamic movement in Turkey both for its human and financial capital. Various other shades of the Islamic movement and conservative segments of society are generally sympathetic to him. His detractors are mostly in the nationalistic wing of the secularists, critical of his alleged affinity for a theocratic society and his ties to the US. For the elites, the ranks are broken by certain liberals, who point out that Gülen's group, at least in its public representation, has proven to be most willing to evolve and most open to international influence.

Specifically worthy of mention is the ongoing tension between the Turkish army and Gülen's supporters. Due to its spearheading westernisation and secularisation since the late Ottoman era, and later founding the secular republic under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the army has always viewed Islamic movements with suspicion and since the 1980s has identified Gülen's group as a threat to the republic. In 1986, a military court revealed Gülen's supporters had infiltrated the military academy and the group was purged. From

then on, the Turkish army has repeatedly alleged that Gülen tries to infitrate its ranks and pressured politicians to take action against Gülen. In response, Gülen has praised the army publicly various times and attempted to allay its fears about the group's intentions, but the tension remained. Recently, in the controversy surrounding the promotion of Yaþar Büyükanýt to army's chief of staff, a hawk on preservation of the secular nature of the state, Gülen's group was listed as a possible participant in the campaign against him. Similar accusations followed after military's internal memos were leaked to the press immediately preceding the presedential elections.

Gülen was widely criticised in 2004 when he, in contrast with his public calls for tolerance, commented that he considered terrorism to be equally despicable as atheism. In a follow-up interview he declared he did not intent to equate athesists and murderers; rather, he wanted to highlight the fact that according to Islam both were destined to suffer eternal punishment in hell. Gülen does not deny the idea that there is Islamist terrorism, that is, he agrees that such terrorism exists but argues that Islamist (a violent deviation from the true path) is not Islamic or Muslim, and has written an article in response to the September 11 attacks saying:

We condemn in the strongest of terms the latest terrorist attack on the United States of America, and feel the pain of the American people at the bottom of our hearts.

ALTA VENDITA

Originally published in Italian in the 19th century, the *Alta Vendita* (or, in full: *The permanent instruction of the Alta Vendita*) is a document purportedly produced by the highest lodge of the Italian Carbonari.

The document details an alleged Masonic plan to infiltrate the Roman Catholic church and spread liberal ideas within it. The Carbonari had strong similarities to Freemasonry, and so the document is seen by some as a Masonic document. In the nineteenth century Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII both asked for it to be published.

It is still propagated by many traditionalist and sedevacantist Catholics, who believe it accurately describes the evolution of the church in the post-Vatican II era.

SILVIO PELLICO

Silvio Pellico (June 24, 1788–January 31, 1854) was an Italian writer, poet, dramatist and patriot.

BIOGRAPHY

Silvio Pellico was born at Saluzzo (Piedmont).

He spent the earlier portion of his life at Pinerolo and Turin, under the tuition of a priest named Manavella. At the age of ten he composed a tragedy inspired by a translation of the Ossianic poems. On the marriage of his twin sister Rosina with a maternal cousin at Lyon, he went to reside in that city, devoting himself during four years to the study of French literature. He returned in 1810 to Milan, where he became professor of French in the Collegio degli Orfani Militari.

His tragedy *Francesca da Rimini* was brought out with success by Carlotta Marchionni at Milan in 1818. Its publication was followed by that of the tragedy *Euphemio da Messina*, but the representation of the latter was forbidden.

Pellico had in the meantime continued his work as tutor, first to the unfortunate son of Count Briche, and then to the two sons of Count Porro Lambertenghi. He threw himself heartily into an attempt to weaken the hold of the Austrian despotism by indirect educational means.

Of the powerful literary executive which gathered about Counts Porro and Confalonieri, Pellico was the able secretary the management of the *Conciliatore*, a review which appeared in 1818 as the organ of the association, resting largely upon him. But the paper, under the censorship of the Austrian officials, ran for a year only, and the society itself was broken up by the government. In October 1820 Pellico was arrested on the charge of carbonarism and conveyed to the Santa Margherita prison. After his removal to the Piombi at Venice in February 1821, he composed several Cantiche and the tragedies. *Ester d'Engaddi* and *Iginici d'Asti*.

The Arrest of Silvio Pellico and Piero Maroncelli, Saluzzo, civi museum.

The sentence of death pronounced on him in February 1822 was finally commuted to fifteen years of carcere duro, and in the following April he was placed in the Spielberg, at Brünn (today's Brno). His chief work during this part of his imprisonment was the tragedy *Leoniero da Dertona*, for the preservation of which he was compelled to rely on his memory. After his release in 1830 he commenced the publication of his prison compositions, of which the Ester was played at Turin in 1831, but immediately suppressed. In 1832 appeared his *Gismonda da Mendrizio*, *Erodiade* and the *Leoniero*, under the title of *Tre nuove tragedie*, and in the same year the work which gave him his European fame, *Le*

mie prigioni, an account of his sufferings in prison. The last gained him the friendship of the Marchesa di Barolo, the reformer of the Turin prisons, and in 1834 he accepted from her a yearly pension of 1200 francs. His tragedy *Tommaso Moro* had been published in 1833, his most important subsequent publication being the *Opere inedite* in 1837.

On the decease of his parents in 1838 he was received into the Casa Barolo, where he remained till his death, assisting the marchesa in her charities, and writing chiefly upon religious themes. Of these works the best known is the *Dei doveri degli uomini*, a series of trite maxims which do honour to his piety rather than to his critical judgment. A fragmentary biography of the marchesa by Pellico was published in Italian and English after her death.

He died in 1854, and was buried in the Camposanto at Turin.

While Pellico's tragedies are generally considered mediocre, the simple narrative and naive egotism of *Le mie prigioni* has established his strongest claim to remembrance, winning fame by his misfortunes rather than by his genius. Genius or not, "My prisons" most certainly led to the political genius that was the Italian Risorgimento and Unification. The pamphlet was translated into virtually every European language during Pellico's lifetime. In our own day, the central theme—to combat the Austria invader not by hate, but by a higher form of patriotic love—finds an echo in the struggle of leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King or Nelson Mandela.

POPULAR CULTURE

Silvio Pellico gave his name to a little community (1,500 inhabitants) founded in Argentina by Italian immigrants from Saluzzo.

ROLAND DE CORNEILLE

Reverend Roland de Corneille (born May 19, 1927) is a Canadian Anglican priest, human rights activist and former politician.

Born in Switzerland, de Corneille spent his childhood in France and moved to the United States where he worked and received much of his formal education. He received his B.A.-cum-laude from Amherst College, where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa honorary society. He worked for Time Inc. as a statistician, and with Procter and Gamble. He studied at General Theological Seminary in New York and then transferred to Canada and graduated from the University of Toronto's

Trinty College in 1953 as an ordained Anglican priest. He served as a curate and as a rector of a number of Anglican parish churches, while earning his degrees of Licentiate of Theology, Bachelor of Sacred Theology and Master of Theology in studies at McGill, Yale and Trinity College, Toronto.

In 1960, de Corneille was the secretary of the Nathaneal Institute, an Anglican missionary institute dedicated to coverting Jews to Christianity. De Corneille initiated an interfaith dialogue between the Christian and Jewish communities that led to the institute transforming itself into "the Christian-Jewish Dialogue of the Anglican Church of Canada" with de Corneille as director. The Dialogue sought better understanding between the two faith groups rather than religious conversion. In 1966, his book, *Christians and Jews; the Tragic Past and the Hopeful Future* was published by Harper and Row.

He is credited as the first Canadian clergyman to urge the Christian community to re-evaluate its attitude towards Jews.

As a result of de Corneille's efforts, the Anglican Church re-evaluated its attitude towards the Jewish community and renounce proselytisation in favour of understanding, dialogue and reconciliation.

The process was continued by de Corneille by introducing the programme into other Canadian denominations, the Episcopal Church U.S.A., and through his membership in the World Council of Churches in Geneva. He worked with the National Conference of Christians and Jews U.S.A. and the Canadian Conference of Christians and Jews as organizer of a major International Conference on Christian-Jewish relations. The Christian-Jewish dialogue programme initiated by de Corneille ultimately spread to the United States and Europe and helped lead to a change of attitude within mainstream Christian churches, particularly towards anti-Semitism.

De Corneille's activity earned him the respect of the Jewish community. In 1971 he was appointed national director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith Canada where he worked until 1979. In the 1979 federal election he was elected to the Canadian House of Commons as the Liberal Member of Parliament for Eglinton—Lawrence, serving in the House until 1988.

In parliament, he was the founding chairman of the Canada-Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group, and a chairman of the Canada-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Group. From 1980 to 1981 he was national chairman of the National Committee for a Human Rights Charter

which lobbied parliament for the creation of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

He served for three terms in the House of Commons until he was challenged for the Liberal nomination by Joe Volpe and defeated in a bitter nomination meeting prior to the 1988 federal election.

WORKS

- De Corneille, Roland. *Christians and Jews; the tragic past and the hopeful future*. New York : Harper & Row, 1966.

SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST INTERFAITH RELATIONS

This study describes the relations between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and other Christian denominations and movements, and also other religions. According to one church document,

> "The ecumenical movement as an agency of cooperation has acceptable aspects; as an agency for organic unity of churches, it is much more suspect."

HISTORY

Adventists have often been skeptical of other faiths. The Millerite movement, which gave birth to Seventh-day Adventism, experienced rejection and hostility from the majority of North American Christian churches of the time. Early Adventists experienced similar hostility because of their unique views about the Sabbath. They consequently came to see themselves as an obedient remnant which was encountering the wrath of the dragon, as prophesied in Revelation 12:17. Subsequent developments in Adventist eschatology saw the Sunday-keeping churches identified with Babylon the Great (Revelation 17-18). A central aspect of the Adventist mission was to call people out of Babylon, and into the remnant church, as signified by the second of the three angels' messages.

The *Review and Herald* (now *Adventist Review*) Oct. 12, 1876, p. 116 contains an "amazing" article on cordiality between the Adventist pioneers and the Seventh-day Baptists.

While the Adventist church matured and institutionalised in the twentieth century, opposition from other churches also declined. By the 1950s, Adventists and American conservative Christians were ready to dialogue. A series of discussions between Adventist and conservative leaders led to greater understanding and acceptance on both sides. Even after these milestone events, however, Adventists continued to

resist full ecumenical cooperation with other churches, believing that such cooperation would endanger its distinctive message.

On January 22, 2007 church leaders voted to rename the Council on Inter-church/Interfaith relations to the Council on Inter-church/Inter-religion affairs. This involved more than a change of name, representing a desire for increased dialogue with other religions.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

"Seventh-day Adventists believe that freedom of religion is a basic human right." The Adventist church has been active for over 100 years advocating for freedom of religion for all people, regardless of faith. In 1893 its leaders founded the International Religious Liberty Association, which is universal and non-sectarian. The *Seventh-day Adventist Church State Council* serves to protect religious groups from legislation that may affect their religious practices.

The church publishes the magazine *Liberty*.

THEOLOGICAL CONFERENCES

The church has two professional organisations for Adventist theologians who are affiliated with the denomination. The Adventist Society for Religious Studies (ASRS) was formed to foster community among Adventist theologians who attend the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) and the American Academy of Religion. In 2006 ASRS voted to continue their meetings in the future in conjunction with SBL. During the 1980s the Adventist Theological Society was formed by Jack Blanco to provide a forum for more conservative theologians to meet and is held in conjunction with the Evangelical Theological Society.

ADVENTISTS AND ECUMENISM

The Adventist church generally opposes the ecumenical movement, although it supports some of the goals of ecumenism. The General Conference has released an official statement concerning the Adventist position with respect to the ecumenical movement, which contains the following paragraph:

"Should Adventists cooperate ecumenically? Adventists should cooperate insofar as the authentic gospel is proclaimed and crying human needs are being met. The Seventh-day Adventist Church wants no entangling memberships and refuses any compromising relationships that might tend to water down her distinct witness. However, Adventists wish to be "conscientious cooperators." The ecumenical movement as an agency

of cooperation has acceptable aspects; as an agency for organic unity of churches, it is much more suspect."

While not being a member church of the World Council of Churches, the Adventist church has participated in its assemblies in an observer capacity.

Relations with Roman Catholicism

The official beliefs of the church (28 Fundamentals) do not mention the papacy or Roman Catholicism. An official statement How Seventh-day Adventists View Roman Catholicism was released in 1997.

Adventist scholars have varying opinions on the Roman Catholic Church. Woodrow Whidden wrote, "we must forthrightly affirm that many positive things have taken place in Roman Catholicism". According to him, the papacy "is a mixed bag morally and ethically... All human organisations (including our own 'enfeebled and defective' denomination) are sadly sinful." He concludes, "the Roman Catholic religious system" or "papal Rome is still the great power envisioned in Daniel 7 and 8; 2 Thessalonians 2; and Revelation 13." See the companion article By Grace Alone? by Clifford Goldstein.

More moderate scholars... Progressive Adventists typically reject these traditional identifications. See *Spectrum* 27, issue 3 (Summer 1999): 30-52.

Relations with Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

There was a meeting between delegates from Seventh-day Adventist Church and Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) at the Presbyterian Church's national headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky August 22 to 24 (2007) to affirm common beliefs and dispel stereotypes.

"The Adventist church has a responsibility to clear up misconceptions other Christian denominations might have of us, and meetings such as this one give us an opportunity to do so," said Ángel Manuel Rodríguez, director of the Biblical Research Institute.

Relations with World Evangelical Alliance

The first meeting with the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) was in 2006. "Although we come from different religious traditions, there was much that we shared in common and was useful to both parties," said Angel Rodriguez. "The meetings were designed to gain a clearer understanding of the theological positions of each body; clarify matters of misunderstanding; discuss frankly areas of agreement and

disagreement on a Biblical basis; and explore possible areas of cooperation. The group also enjoyed a visit to several sites in Prague related to Protestant reformer Jan Hus."

Representatives from the WEA and the Adventist church met at Andrews University from August 5-10, 2007. While the Adventist participants agreed with the WEA Statement of Faith and the discussions were described as warm and cordial, there was disagreement over certain distinctive Adventist beliefs (see: Seventh-day Adventist theology). The "Joint Statement..." was released in September.

Relations with World Alliance of Reformed Churches

There is active theological dialogue between the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches. In 2001 report on dialogue has been published as well, among other statements it declared that:

> "We are happy to conclude that our conversation has been productive in a number of directions. We have affirmed the common doctrinal ground on which we stand, and we have specified some of the ways in which our teachings have developed over time. We have sought to dispel mutual misunderstandings concerning doctrine. We have eschewed the sectarian spirit, and have not questioned one another's status as Christians."

There were also informal meetings between Setri Nyomi, general secretary of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and Adventist leaders, Nyomi told them that he has experienced the positive witness of the Adventist Church.

Relations with French Protestant Federation (FPF)

Seventh-day Adventist church is a member of French Protestant Federation, now representing over 9,00,000 French Protestants and consisting of 17 churches.

"Now we can enjoy the same rights as traditional Protestant churches and we are considered theologically equal with other religious movements in our country," said Jean-Paul Barquon, secretary of the Seventh-day Adventist Church in France.

Relation to Other Groups

Adventist theology is distinctly Protestant, and holds much in common with Evangelicalism in particular. However, in common with many restorationist groups, Adventists have traditionally taught that

the majority of Protestant churches have failed to "complete" the Reformation by overturning the errors of Roman Catholicism (see also Great Apostasy) and "restoring" the beliefs and practices of the primitive church—including Sabbath keeping, adult baptism and conditional immortality. The Adventist church is thus classified as a Restorationist sect by some religion scholars. On the same basis it may be associated with the Anabaptists and other movements of the Radical Reformation.

Adventists typically do not associate themselves with Fundamentalist Christianity:

> "Theologically, Seventh-day Adventists have a number of beliefs in common with Fundamentalists, but for various reasons have never been identified with the movement... On their part, Adventists reject as unbiblical a number of teachings held by many (though not all) Fundamentalists..."

Others such as progressive Adventist Ervin Taylor, executive editor of *Adventist Today* as of 2007, and presumably many other authors on religion believe there are fundamentalist tendencies in certain Adventist subcultures or traditional beliefs.

Progressive Adventists display an inclusive attitude towards other Christians and other people. Other Christians have often had positive experiences interacting with more progressive Adventists. Tony Campolo has had positive experiences speaking on numerous Adventist university campuses. Clark Pinnock gave very favourable reviews of Alden Thompson's *Inspiration*, despite the significant attention given to Ellen White in the content, and Richard Rice's theology textbook *Reign of God*. Pinnock was also impressed by Richard Rice's book *The Openness of God*, and later was the editor for another work of the same name, contributed by authors Rice, John E. Sanders and others.

OTHER RELIGIONS

This section describes the interaction between the Adventist church and other religions besides Christianity.

The General Conference body Global Mission started in 1990 after a decision at the General Conference Session. The [Office of] Adventist Mission was formed in 2005, as a merger of Global Mission and the Office of Mission Awareness.

Global Mission has centers specializing in the study of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, secularism/post-modernism and Islam.

Islam

See "New Directions in Adventist—Muslim Relations", a *Spectrum* interview with Global Center for Adventist-Muslim Relations director Jerald Whitehouse.

Samir Selmanovic, the pastor of Church of the Advent Hope in New York City, was honoured by the group Muslims Against Terrorism for his assistance following the September 11, 2001 attacks, including holding a Christian-Muslim discussion at the peak of tensions.

CRITICISM

The Adventist church has received criticism along several lines, including its allegedly heterodox doctrines, in relation to Ellen G. White and her status within the church, and in relation to alleged exclusivist attitudes and behaviour. Many high profile critics of the church are former Adventists, such as D. M. Canright, Walter Rea and Dale Ratzlaff.

Several distinctive Adventist doctrines have been identified as heterodox by critics. Teachings which have come under repeated scrutiny are the annihilationist view of hell, the investigative judgment (and related view of the atonement), and certain eschatological views. Adventists have often been accused of legalism, because of their emphasis on law-keeping and strict Sabbath-observance.

While some Christians are inclined to classify Adventism as a sectarian group on the basis of its atypical doctrines, others (such as Walter Martin and Donald Barnhouse) have considered it a truly Christian church. Notably, Billy Graham invited Adventists to be part of his crusades after *Eternity*, a conservative Christian magazine edited by Barnhouse, asserted that Adventists are Christians in 1956. Martin's *The Truth about Seventh-day Adventists* (1960) marked a turning point in the way Adventism was viewed.

> "...it is perfectly possible to be a Seventh-day Adventist and be a true follower of Jesus Christ despite heterodox concepts..."
>
> *– Walter Martin, Kingdom of the Cults*

Ellen G. White's status as a modern-day prophet has often been criticised. It is argued that the authority attached to her writings by the church contradicts the Protestant *sola scriptura* principle. In response, Adventists have asserted that the concept of a contemporary prophet is not prohibited by Scripture, and that Scripture remains the ultimate authority to which White's writings are also subject. Walter T. Rea

and other critics have accused White of plagiarism. After a ten-year study of White's book *Desire of Ages*, Adventist scholar Fred Veltman found that for the chapters he studied, there was content which derived from other sources without citation. The nature of the literary dependence must however be taken in the context of what was accepted at the time. It has also been argued that the sources she borrowed from were known to her readers, eliminating the likelihood of an intention to deceive.

Finally, it is alleged that certain Adventist beliefs and practices are exclusivist in nature. Specifically, concern has been raised about the Adventist claim to be the "remnant church", and the traditional characterisation of other Christian churches (Roman Catholicism in particular) as "Antichrist" and "Babylon". These apparently sectarian attitudes are said to legitimize the proselytizing of Christians from other denominations. In response to such criticisms, Adventist theologians have stated that the doctrine of the remnant does not preclude the existence of genuine Christians in other denominations.

> "We fully recognise the heartening fact that a host of true followers of Christ are scattered all through the various churches of Christendom, including the Roman Catholic communion. These God clearly recognises as His own. Such do not form a part of the "Babylon" portrayed in the Apocalypse."
>
> – *Questions on Doctrine*, p. 197.

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DIALOGUE BETWEEN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM: NEW EMERGING QUESTIONS

CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM IN DIALOGUE

It can be said that dialogue between Christianity and Islam springs from the essence of Christianity, which is the foremost religion of dialogue. God Himself in the Old Testament, as the God Creator, speaks with man (cf. Gen. 1:28; 17:1-2, Exod. 3:4-6) and reveals the uniqueness of His divine existence (cf. Deut. 6:4); and the same God, in the New Testament, in the person of the incarnated Logos of God, reveals Himself to the world (cf. John 1:14) and calls everyone to repentance (cf. Mark 1:15) and salvation (cf. John 1:13-19).

There are basic and essential differences between the religions of Christianity and Islam, which cannot be ignored, but there are also common elements which can be discussed. Subjects concerning man and the world, especially matters which deal with everyday problems, can lead in this dialogue. The existence since the 7th century A.D., of both religions in the same geographical locality, for example, in the Middle East and North Africa, can inspire mutual respect and the peaceful acceptance of the beliefs of both religions.

Christianity, through and within dialogue, aims to learn more about Islam, its teachings, its history and traditions, always in the spirit of truth, pure love and respect. Today, more than ever before, each religion feels the need to proclaim its existence and authenticity in the contemporary world. Communication and co-operation between religions make an essential contribution to the abolition of religious fanaticism, an intellectual sickness of the religious person; to friendship between nations, and towards the encouragement of the rule of the ideals of freedom and peace in the world. Our co-operation in finding

solutions to the contemporary problems of mankind, will assist in our peaceful coexistence and common understanding.

The religions of Christianity and Islam are two individual fountains, from which their faithful receive the inner strength to follow their faith and grow spiritually. According to this principle, each religion claims its autonomy when confronting any theoretical or practical problems faced by their flocks.

Unfortunately, racial and religious discrimination often aggravate the minds of men and bring back the painful past. As a result, Christian and Muslim communities often have reservations about approaching one another and about the feasibility of peaceful coexistence.

Religious fanaticism can bring only new social and religious problems upon the people who are ruled by it. Religious confrontations and clashes are the result of this sick religious phenomenon. Christians and Muslims alike are obliged to turn their attention towards the future, so that they can bring about the vision of God's peace upon Earth.

But why, although these two religions have coexisted for such a long time, does the smallest political disturbance inflame religious intolerance? It is here that dialogue between Christianity and Islam can offer a great deal to mankind. Productive dialogue can help realise heavenly peace on Earth, and protect the holiness of life and man's dignity. Religions do not enforce peace, but can mark out the man of peace, and adapt his mission to the needs of his time.

Dialogue which is based, not only on theological matters, but on worldly issues, can be both hopeful and fruitful. The secularity, coldness and anonymity of society, the destruction of the environment, the lack of world justice and peace, hunger, poverty, nuclear threat etc., are issues which touch the soul of the unfortunate man of our time. The world is tired of religious wars and conflicts.

Let us not forget, that many local Churches, such as the three ancient Greek Orthodox Patriarchates of the East (Constantinople, Alexandria and Antioch), live today in the Islamic world. Orthodoxy coexists and seeks dialogue with Islam; dialogue which presupposes freedom of speech and equality between the two parties.

In Eastern Christianity one sees respect towards the religious experience of others, forbearance and mutual understanding. Basic theological faith held that the "calling" and the "desire for God" guide

all men. Man, even after his Fall, had the ability to receive the divine presence. St. Paul emphasised this by saying: "And had made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and had determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17:26-27). Religious experiences do not represent only an insistent inner movement of man towards a higher reality, but an acceptance of the divine radiance within this world.

For the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria, which for thirteen centuries has lived in the friendly country of Egypt, dialogue with the Islamic world has special and vital meaning. Islam is our close neighbour and the Patriarchate is not alien to it. Alexandria, where the ancient Patriarchate was founded by St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist, is alien neither to the West nor to the East, because it is a Greek environment from where Greek civilisation and the theological thoughts of the Fathers of the Church have been channelled. The meeting and coexistence of the second-ranking Patriarchate of Orthodox Christianity with the eastern civilisations has its roots deep in history.

For centuries, a large part of Orthodoxy lived in the Islamic world, although not always as an equal member of its society. Despite difficult times, confrontations and misunderstandings, the bonds between them were never broken. This productive spiritual communion between the Greek and Arabic world, between the Christian and Islamic civilisations, is in itself a dialogue of centuries which has enlightened and benefited the people of both East and West.

In conclusion, we must say that dialogue is necessary, and indeed, is the only acceptable way to bring our two religions closer. It is our common desire that all misunderstandings and preconceptions be put aside. We must cultivate mutual trust in order to achieve a better understanding. Dialogue is necessary if we are to overcome the past and the present of alienation, confrontation, enmity and hatred. Those who are responsible for this dialogue must make every effort to solve the prevailing problems of our world, to build a more human society characterised by justice and fraternal love.

While being fully aware of our common responsibility, Christians and Muslims are duty bound to respect absolutely each others religious beliefs and overcome antagonistic feelings. We must strive for solidarity if we are to resolve the problems facing the world, for the Earth is the

common home of all nations wherein we are called to worship the One True God.

Address of His Beatitude to the 12th International Meeting "People and Religion, 31st August, 1998".

PROJECTS WORKING FOR PEACE AMONG ARABS AND ISRAELIS

Projects that work to foster peaceful and productive co-existence between Israelis and Arabs (including Palestinians) fall into various categories.

ISRAELI-ARAB CO-EXISTENCE PROJECTS

Community Advocate Mentor Programme—Middle East

Initiated in the Spring of 2007, the Community Advocate Mentor Programme—Middle East is a five-year project of the International women's democracy center dedicated to facilitating dialogue and bolstering the diplomatic skills of Israeli and Palestinian women leaders in the community and government. The programme is based off of the successful CAMP-Northern Ireland programme, which ran from 2000-2006. CAMP-NI witnessed 100 Northern Ireland women leaders, 50 from each side of the conflict, come to Washington, DC to learn from Congressional Members, lobbyists, media experts, and special interest experts how to better promote their agendas and make their voices heard in the Northern Ireland Peace Process. Several participants of that CAMP programme went on to win elected office.

CAMP-ME targets women leaders with demonstrated backgrounds in peace and co-existence initiatives and brings them to Washington, DC where they share hotel rooms for their two-week programme on Capitol Hill. There are several objectives of the programme. Most importantly, CAMP-ME creates an environment removed from the conflict zone to foster dialogue and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians. CAMP-ME also provides valuable training for the women leaders to promote their agendas at home as well as giving US Congressional Members first-hand access to those who live in the conflict. The bi-partisan Congressional team for both CAMP-NI and CAMP-ME has been led by Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy.

Peace Settlers

Founded in 1993, Peace Settlers focused on promoting a real, pragmatic dialogue between Jewish and Arab residents of The Land.

With the understanding that a political solution to the problem was not possible, the organisation strives to make people understand that we are still obligated to act as human beings towards one another and seek civil accommodations which will enable people of all religions and nations live together in peace and respect towards the others' inalienable rights. The movement was not as active after the Second Intifada made meetings between Israelis and Palestinians all but impossible. With Hamas now taking a position of leadership among the Palestinians, Chairman Cohen sees a possible breakthrough possible should Hamas repent and embrace the will of G-d.

Many Israelis[*Who?*] are very suspicious of the peace movements due to the heavy funding they receive from non-Jewish sources such as the EU and their willingness to cede to the Arabs what many[*Who?*] believe is the cradle of Jewish civilisation.

Hand in Hand Bilingual Arab-Jewish Schools

Hand in Hand runs a network of four bilingual (Arabic and Hebrew) schools that serve more than 800 students. Half the students are Palestinian citizens of Israel, and the other half are Jewish citizens of Israel. Students study in both languages simultaneously, and plans call for an eventual expansion to the 12th grade. To Hand in Hand's Website in English

Ta'ayush Arab-Jewish Partnership

Formed in the fall of 2000, *Ta'ayush* (Arabic for "coexistence") is a grassroots movement of Arabs and Jews working to break down the walls of racism and segregation. It engages in daily actions of solidarity to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories and to achieve full civil equality for all Israeli citizens. Ta'ayush

Neve Shalom-Wahat Al-Salam (Oasis of Peace)

The Israeli Jewish-Israeli Muslim Village of Neve Shalom-Wahat Al Salam (NSWAS) means "Oasis of Peace" in Hebrew and Arabic. NSWAS provides a remarkable model of long-term coexistence. Formed in 1970 on land donated by the Roman Catholic Church, NSWAS sits between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. They organise humanitarian projects, including providing medical assistance for Palestinians.

They are also home to three schools, two for village and other area children, and they have a wonderful training facility called the School for Peace. The children's classes run from pre-school through

Middle School and are all taught by both Muslims and Jews in their native languages. The School for Peace however is designed for adult Arabs and Jews from all over the area to learn about each other in controlled seminars run by trained Peace Facilitators.

NSWAS has had many notable visitors over the years. Jimmy Carter, Hillary Clinton, and many others including Roger Waters (aka Pink Floyd) who has preformed several benefit concerts in the small village urging Israel to "Tear Down the WALL!"

An American branch recently incorporated under the name "American Friends of Neve Shalom" they are a non-profit 501(c)3 organisation that raises funds in the US for NSWAS programmes (similar support groups also exist in the EU, and elsewhere).

Hewar Center for Peace and Development

The Hewar Center for Peace and Development is a secular Palestinian non-profit, NGO. They were formerly known as the "Palestinian Peace Movement" (however, the name was recently changed due to confusion between their non-profit organisation and other Arab peace groups who have no ties to them). The Arabic word "Hewar" means "dialogue", and the organisation strongly believes that Peace can only be brought about through discussion.

Hewar is headquartered in the Qalqilia/Azzun/Jayyus region of the West Bank (all three cities are surrounded and severely affected by the Wall). Hewar's very dedicated board of directors has gone to great lengths to become certified Peace Facilitators, learn Hebrew, and organise discussions between Palestinians and Israelis in neutral countries. They have an excellent track record of success with their Israeli-Palestinian dialogues, work closely with the Israeli group Neve Shalom-Wahat Al Salam (NSWAS), they also receive grant money through US-AID.

Hewar has been working diligently on creating an English website to increase their exposure, but due to difficulty with communication (they've devoted their time to perfecting their Hebrew, not English), so the site is still in its beginning stages. However, an American counterpart is in the process of incorporating, and expects to receive tax exempt 501(c)3 status before the New Year. They also hope to complete an English website on the US group, which will of course include the successes of their Palestinian counterpart. (I will update as more info becomes available.)

Hamidrasha Jewish-Arab Beit Midrash

Hamidrasha, a center for study and fellowship, works to address alienation, estrangement, and mutual ignorance between Jews and Arabs. Hamidrasha is establishing an inter-cultural *Beit Midrash* (Hebrew, "House of study"), which will serve as a basis for mutual personal and communal encounters, and for the study of cultural narratives and modern texts of both peoples. Jewish, Muslim and Christian men and women will engage in a true inter-cultural learning experience, with the goal of making a significant contribution to the ongoing dialogue between Jews and Arabs, and strengthening their reciprocal ties.

Ir Shalem Co-existence Programme

In many ways the city of Jerusalem has been at the center of the conflict. The Israeli political movement Peace Now in 1994 has created an initiative called *Ir Shalem*, the goal of which is to build a peaceful equitable and inspiring future for this city, with Jewish and Arab citizens working together to find solutions based on equity and justice. This programme brings together volunteer architects, planners, lawyers and other professionals to analyse problems, and offer solutions. Among other efforts, *Ir Shalem* is developing the first-ever planning model for East Jerusalem that will equitably meet the needs of the Palestinian community.

The West-Eastern Divan

Founded in 1998 by Israeli-Argentinian pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian-American author Edward Said, the West-Eastern Divan (named after an anthology of poems by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe) promotes a cultural dialogue between Israelis and Arabs. A principal activity is an orchestra comprised mostly young Israeli and Arab musicians, who are demonstrating the potential for collaboration between the two cultures on the universal ideas that are communicated by great classical music. They have performed throughout the world. Barenboim has also made this point by going into Palestinian areas and giving piano recitals and master classes.

Seeds of Peace

Seeds of Peace was founded in 1993 by John Wallach after the first terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York City. He created the *Seeds of Peace International Camp* in Otisfield, Maine, USA, and brought together several dozen Israeli, Palestinian and Egyptian

teens. The goal of his organisation was to create a new generation of leadership in the Middle-East, one in which both Arabs and Israelis would no longer accept outdated and harmful stereotypes about each other; this would occur by bringing together people to literally put a human face on those who were previously perceived as an enemy. Since that time Arab children from Morocco, Qatar, Yemen, Jordan, Tunisia and several others have joined. Seeds of Peace camps now operate programmes in the Middle East as well. Seeds of Peace has also branched out into bringing teenagers together to help solve the Balkans conflict, the dispute over Cyprus, racial conflict in Maine and the Indian-Pakistani dispute. Seeds of Peace

Givat Haviva's Jewish-Arab Center for Peace

Givat Haviva is an education, research and documentation center, founded in 1949 by Ha'Kibbutz Ha'Arzi Federation; it is located in the northern Sharon Valley of Israel. According to its website " The mission of Givat Haviva today is to cope with the major issues that are on the agenda of Israeli society, and to foster educational initiatives, research and community work in the fields of peace, democracy, coexistence, tolerance and social solidarity."

Givat Haviva sponsors the Jewish-Arab Center for Peace. "Established in 1963, the Jewish-Arab Center for Peace is one of the oldest and most prominent institutions in its field. The common bond of the dozens of projects conducted in the Center is the struggle for better relations between Arabs and Jews, better understanding of the essence of democracy and citizens' rights in Israel, and building bridges with our Arab neighbors." One of the Center's leading dialogue projects is Face to Face. Givat HavivaHa'Kibbutz Ha'ArziJewish-Arab Center for PeaceGivat Haviva peace projectsFace to Face

One Voice, a Project of the Peaceworks Foundation

According to their website "OneVoice is a global undertaking to: "Amplify the voice of moderates; Empower Palestinians and Israelis at the grass-roots level to seize back the agenda away from violent extremists; Achieve broad-based consensus on core issues, configuring a roadmap for conflict resolutions. OneVoice...was developed by over two hundred Palestinian, Israeli and international community leaders...dedicated to strengthen the voice of reason."

This group rejects what they see as left-wing appeasement of Palestinian terrorism by leftist groups; they reach out to moderate

liberal and centrist Israelis who want to advance the peace process; they reach out to Palestinian moderates who reject terrorism and suicide-bombings; they work to cultivate a moderate political leadership on both sides of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and are trying to pressure both the Israeli government and Palestinian Authority into reaching a just peace. One Voice: Silent No Longer One Voice FAQ.

"Seeking Peace, Pursuing Justice"

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the congregational arm of American Reform Judaism, has created a project called *Seeking Peace, Pursuing Justice*. According to their website, their goal is: "to educate and mobilize North American Jewry to support peace efforts and social justice causes in Israel.... This campaign will encourage the North American Jewish community to examine the risks and rewards of peace for Israel and the Palestinians, and to undertake critical, constructive public dialogue on the most pressing social issues facing Israel today—including the status of Arab citizens of Israel and other minorities, as well as other issues of inequality and discrimination." Seeking peace, Pursuing Justice

The Abraham Fund

According to their website, "*The Abraham Fund Initiatives* is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to promoting coexistence between the Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel. Through advocacy and awareness campaigns, and by sponsoring coexistence projects, The Abraham Fund Initiatives fosters increased dialogue, tolerance and understanding between Arabs and Jews...." The Abraham Fund

Comedy for Peace

Comedy for Peace is a non-political effort to use humor to build trust, understanding and a vision for peace between Palestinians and Israelis.

Comedy for Peace was conceived and is being organised by Ray Hanania, a Palestinian-American stand-up comedian – who is married to a Jewish woman. It is Ray's hope that the power of comedy combined with the power of two peoples coming together on one stage will help Palestinians and Israelis find the courage to look past the pain and the suffering of the conflict and see each other as human beings, as partners and as people who have no other choice but to struggle together to achieve a lasting peace.

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, "is a national organisation of American Jews committed to Israel's well-being through the achievement of a negotiated settlement to the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It believes the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians long for an enduring peace and that security for Israel can only be achieved through the establishment of an economically and politically viable Palestinian state, necessitating an end to Israel's occupation of land acquired during the 1967 war and an end to Palestinian terrorism. Brit Tzedek believes that many American Jews share this perspective, but are reluctant to express themselves for fear they may bring harm to Israel and the Jewish people. Through education, advocacy, local chapter activities, and work with the media, it seeks to generate greater dialogue within the American Jewish community in order to direct U.S. foreign policy toward the realisation of a just peace." Brit Tzedek v'Shalom

Brit Shalom/Tahalof Essalam

The Jewish-Palestinian Peace Alliance consists of both Jewish and Palestinian peace activists working for reconciliation. It generally favors binational confederation or two-state coexistence, drawing upon fringe historical and contemporary movements as varied as Uri Avneri's pan-Semitism, Buberian Zionism, and even aspects of rightist Canaanism for inspiration. Contributors to its website include Gideon Levy, Doron Rosenblum, Avraham Burg, Batya Gur, Meron Benvenisti, Shahar Smooha, Yossi Sarid, David Grossman, Yitzhak Frankenthal, Tony Judt, Rabbi Arik Ascherman of Rabbis for Human Rights, Gilad Atzmon, and Baruch Kimmerling. Brit Shalom/Tahalof Essalam

Israeli-Palestinian Confederation

The Israeli-Palestinian Confederation Committee is a group of volunteers who joined together to create a mechanism for peace between the Israelis and Palestinians. Our members include Muslims, Jews and Christians from all walks of life. Our purpose is to facilitate a mechanism for Israelis and Palestinians to resolve conflicts in a fair and equitable manner. We take into consideration the existing reality. We do not aim to benefit one side over the other. We have a detailed plan to create a confederate government between the Israelis and Palestinians that would deal with the issues important to both sides. Furthermore, we believe that a confederate government can help both sides grow into the future without mutual destruction." Israeli-

Palestinian Confederation Articles have been published in the *The Jewish Journal, the Daily Bruin*, and *The Acorn*. Audio of a January 22, 2007 radio interview by Sonali Kolhatkar with Josef Avesar can be heard at KPFK Archives.

Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace

Jews for Israeli-Palestinian Peace (JIPF) is a group founded in Stockholm, Sweden, in 1982, for Swedish Jews who want to actively work towards a peaceful solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Jews for Justice for Palestinians

Jews for Justice for Palestinians is a United Kingdom-based organisation of Jewish people who wish to support the rights of Palestinian people.

ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE DIPLOMACY AND TREATIES

- Paris Peace Conference, 1919
- Faisal-Weizmann Agreement (1919)
- 1949 Armistice Agreements
- Camp David Accords (1978)
- Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty (1979)
- Madrid Conference of 1991
- Oslo Accords (1993)
- Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace (1994)
- Camp David 2000 Summit
- Peace process in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Projects working for peace among Israelis and Arabs
- List of Middle East peace proposals
- International law and the Arab-Israeli conflict

JEWISH-MUSLIM DIALOGUE

The American Jewish Committee

While forcefully speaking out against Islamic anti-Semitism and anti-Israeli rhetoric, the American Jewish Committee (AJC) has worked since 1985 to enhancing relations between Jews and Muslims. The AJC encourages and engages in dialogue on many levels with like-minded groups committed to fostering tolerance and cooperation.

Their website states that "The American Jewish Committee has demonstrated a profound commitment to enhancing relations between

Jews and Muslims, a vital part of its fundamental dedication to the promotion of interreligious understanding in the United States and around the world. Rejecting the inevitability of a "clash of civilisations," AJC has instead insisted on the possibility of a "community of civilisations" by encouraging dialogue on the highest levels with like-minded groups committed to fostering tolerance and cooperation. In so doing, we have achieved a number of breakthroughs in this vital arena. For well over a decade, AJC has dedicated itself to forging significant relationships with Arab and Muslim leaders around the world. AJC has traveled extensively in the Muslim world—from Morocco to Mauritania, through the Middle East and the Gulf states, to Indonesia. We have met with scores of Muslim leaders, including top officials of Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, Tunisia, Bosnia, Kuwait, Qatar, Malaysia, and Indonesia, to discuss topics ranging from relations with Israel and the United States to the promotion of international Muslim-Jewish dialogue."

In 1986 the AJC publicly condemned the murder by bomb attack of Alex Odeh (in Oct. 1985), a leader of American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee in Santa Ana, California. The AJC had a meeting with the Federal Bureau of Investigation director William Webster about this incident; they urged action to identify and punish those responsible for anti-Arab bigotry. In 1986 the AJC submitted testimony to the United States House of Representatives, Subcommittee on Criminal Justice, on the topic of violence and discrimination towards Arab-Americans.

In 1991, on the brink of the Allied war against Iraq, the AJC issues a statement warning the public not to engage in discrimination towards American Arabs or Muslims. In part, they state "We are ever mindful of what happened to Japanese-Americans as a result of war hysteria shortly after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941. Some 1,20,000 Japanese-Americans, two-thirds of whom were American citizens, were evacuated and incarcerated in internment camps... without any evidence whatsoever that they were a threat to U.S. security. This must not happen again." (AJC statement by executive director David Harris)

From 1992 to 1995 the AJC worked to lobby the United States government to intervene on behalf on Muslims in Bosnia.

In 1993 the AJC sponsored the first national conference on "Muslims and Jews in North America: Past, Present and Future" with the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies at the University of Denver in October. In 1994 they sponsored the second such conference. The third conference had to be canceled, when the AJC could not found Muslim partners

who were willing to publicly condemn the current wave of terrorist attacks on Israel.

In 1999 the AJC helped aid Muslims in Kosovo.

In 2001 the AJC initiated a new project designed to advance understanding between Muslims and Jews by publishing two books: *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Judaism for Muslims*, by Professor Reuven Firestone, a scholar of Islam at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles, was written to describe Judaism to Muslims; *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Islam for Jews*, by Professor Khalid Duran, was written to describe Islam for Jews.

Children of Abraham

Children of Abraham seeks to build an international community of Muslim and Jewish youth that celebrates their religious identities. Through an engaging project involving a photographic exploration of Jewish and Muslim communities around the world, and honest, unflinching online dialogue, participants form a network of advocates and ambassadors for ground-breaking Muslim-Jewish relations in six continents.

Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations

In July 2007 a new Centre for the Study of Muslim-Jewish Relations was opened in Cambridge, United Kingdom. It is partly financed by a £1 million contribution from Richard Stone, a Jewish philanthropist. In the first instance its students they will study common areas between the two religions. Eventually work will extend into more controversial areas, including the Israel-Palestine question.

ISLAM-ISRAEL FELLOWSHIP

Shaykh Abdul Hadi Palazzi, a leader of the Italian Muslim Association and a co-founder and a co-chairman of the Islam-Israel Fellowship (another co-founder and co-chairman is Dr. Asher Eder), believes that the authentic teachings of Muhammad as expressed in the Qur'an and the Hadith, were misinterpreted by those who attempt to transform Islam from a religion into a secularised ideology. "Such a false transformation of Islam was in fact made by the late Mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni." Palazzi insists that "The Qur'an says that Allah Gave the Land of Israel to the Jews and Will Restore Them to It at the End of Days" and cites the Qur'an to support this view:

"Pharaoh sought to scare them [the Israelites] out of the land [of Israel]: but We [Allah] drowned him [Pharaoh] together with all who were with him. Then We [Allah] said to the Israelites: 'Dwell in this land [the Land of Israel]. When the promise of the hereafter [End of Days] comes to be fulfilled, We [Allah] shall assemble you [the Israelites] all together [in the Land of Israel]." (Qur'an, "Night Journey," chapter 17:100-104)

"And [remember] when Moses said to his people: 'O my people, call in remembrance the favour of God unto you, when he produced prophets among you, made you kings, and gave to you what He had not given to any other among the peoples. O my people, enter the Holy Land which God has assigned unto you, and turn not back ignominiously, for then will ye be overthrown, to your own ruin.'" (Qur'an 5:20-21)

NON-VIOLENT STRUGGLE

Albert Einstein Institution

Gene Sharp, senior scholar of the Albert Einstein Institution has written several books on the use of non-violent struggle as a means for fighting dictatorship, war, occupation and invasion. In particular, his books on the use of non-violent tactics as applied to the Arab-Israeli conflict offer a means for Palestinians to organise a non-violent intifada that could be more effective in ending the Israeli occupation.

Publications

- Arabic Publications of the Albert Einstein Institution, including
- There Are Realistic Alternatives (English, Arabic)
- From Dictatorship to Democracy (English, Arabic)
- The Intifada and Non-violent Struggle (Arabic)
- The Role of Power in Non-violent Struggle (Arabic)

THE UNIFICATION MOVEMENT

Reverend Sun Myung Moon has initiated several peace projects attempting to defuse hostilities between Muslims, Jews and Christians. In 2003 28 clergy from the United States toured Gaza in September 2003, despite the American Consulate's warnings of rocket attacks. They were warmly welcomed by local Muslim clerics.

AMERICAN MUSLIM LEADERS

- Feisal Abdul Rauf, Imam of Masjid al-Farah in New York City and founder of the American Sufi Muslim Association (ASMA) Society.

- Khalid Abou El Fadl, UCLA law professor, works with Jewish and Christian groups to promote interfaith cooperation and dialogue.

ISLAM AND TERRORISM

"In true Islam, terror does not exist." No person should kill another human being. No one can touch an innocent person, even in time of war. No one can give a *fatwa* (a legal pronouncement) commending this matter. No one should be a suicide bomber. No one can rush into crowds with bombs tied to his or her body. Regardless of the religion of these crowds, this is not religiously permissible. Even in the event of war—during which it is difficult to maintain balances—this is not permitted in Islam. Islam states; "Do not touch children or people who worship in churches."

On the way to attaining faith one can never use untrue methods. In Islam, just as a goal must be legitimate, so must be all the means employed to reach that goal. From this perspective, one cannot achieve Heaven by murdering another person. A Muslim cannot say, "I will kill a person and then go to Heaven." God's approval cannot be won by killing people. One of the most important goals for a Muslim is to win the pleasure of God, another is making the name of Almighty God known to the universe.

Dissatisfied youth has lost its spirituality. Some people take advantage of such people, giving them a couple of dollars, or turning them into robots. These young people were abused to an extent that they could be manipulated. They have been used as murderers on the pretext of some crazy ideals or goals and they have been made to kill people. Some evil-minded people have wanted to achieve certain goals by exploiting these young people. Yes, killing a human is a truly awful thing. The Qur'an says that killing one person is the same as killing all people. Ibn 'Abbas who is one of the most important scholar in Islamic History said that a murderer will stay in Hell for eternity. This is the same punishment that is assigned to deniers of God. This means that a murderer is subjected to the same punishment as a disbeliever. If this is a fundamental principle of religion, then it should be taught in education.

On the other hand, there are many conflicting interests in the Islamic regions, as well as many competing and clashing groups. Problems such as anti-democratic practices and human rights violations have resulted in the foundation of various disaffected and disen-

franchised groups. Being ignorant and inexperienced, many of these groups can easily be manipulated and used by some. This brings us to the point that we need to educate our youth true meaning of Islam – that is peace loving people devoted themselves to the unity of God.

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. Can you please explain the meaning of 'aqiqa *and when is it necessary?*

- The term *'aqiqa* in Islam refers to the practice of sacrificing an ewe for every male or female child born to a Muslim family on the seventh, fourteen, or twenty-first day after its birth, or, in some cases, two ewes for a male child and one for a female. The *'aqiqa* is not enjoined by the Sfet, and Muslim jurists disagree as to whether or not it is an authentic *sunna* enjoined by the Prophet Muhammad. All, however, consider the practice acceptable, if not also recommendable, at least for families that can afford it. Half of the *'aqiqa* is normally distributed to the poor, but this practice, through common, remains optional.

2. My question is that who was the first child to accept Islam?

- According to Islamic tradition, the first adult female convert to Islam was the Prophet's wife, Khadija bint Khuwaylid, and the first adult male convert was Abu Bakr al-Siddiq, who became the first caliph of Islam after the Prophet's death. The same tradition considers 'Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Prophet's first cousin (who later became the fourth caliph), to have been the first child convert. Some sources say he was converted at the age of seven; others at the age of eight, nine, or ten. It is said that 'Ali, as a child, lived in the Prophet's home and learnt to perform the Muslim prayer from the Prophet and his wife Khadija, whose daughter Fatima he was to marry.

3. I am wondering if you could describe any Muslim birth practices. Specifically, I am wondering about a practice of whispering a prayer into a baby's ear at the moment of birth. Any information would be very helpful.

- In accordance with the *sunna* (or tradition) set by the Prophet Muhammad, the *adhan* must be recited in a low voice or whisper in the right ear of a baby as soon as it is born to a Muslim family, after which the *iqama* is recited in the same manner in the baby's left ear. (The *adhan* is the regular Muslim call to prayer, and the *iqama* is a shortened form of the *adhan* recited before the actual performance of the prayer.)

Thus, it is believed, the essential tenets of Islam, as abridged in the words of the *adhan* and the *iqama*, are inculcated into the baby's heart and soul from the moment of birth, to spare it the influence and wiles of Satan.

In addition, several other customs are commonly—though not universally—practised by Muslim families in connection with childbirth.

One, called the *tahnik* (literally, "jawing"), involves chewing a date, then rubbing the new-born baby's gum with the chewed pulp. Another is to shave the baby's hair on the seventh day after birth and donate the hair's weight in gold or silver to charity. By this time, the baby would have been named, as it is preferred not to delay the naming of a baby for more than a week. In some Muslim countries, the naming of the baby on the "seventh day" (*usbu'*) is an occasion for celebration, the related rituals differing from one Muslim subculture to another. Yet another common practice, called the *'aqiqa*, involves the slaughtering of a sacrificial she-goat for the baby on the seventh day after birth, or shortly after, in thanksgiving.

Muslims believe a child is entitled to nurse at its mother's breast for a full two years.

The circumcision of boys is a practice enjoined by the *sunna* (not the Koran), and it is common today for baby boys born in hospitals to be circumcised shortly after birth. Traditionally, however, the circumcision of boys was normally delayed for a few years, although it was normally expected to take place before the onset of puberty.

4. I was wondering if you could explain what the role and function of an Imam *in a* Sunni *mosque is exactly and also the role and function of the mosque in the Muslim community. Also do you need to go to the mosque to be a good Muslim?*

- To Sunni Muslims, the mosque is the house of God where they perform the Friday communal prayer, and where it is recommended that they perform the five prescribed daily prayers in congregation whenever possible. The mosque is furthermore a sanctuary where Muslims can retire at will by day or night, and for any length of time, for private spiritual contemplation.

  Historically, however, the mosque has not only served as a house for prayer and contemplation, but also as a center of learning

and teaching, from which students graduated. As well, it has served as a forum for the open discussions of religious, political and social issues, and for the arbitration of disputes. The Koran recommends the building and endowment of mosques as a meritorious act. Sunni tradition considers regular mosque attendance also meritorious, though not compulsory, particularly for the dawn prayer.

Communal prayer in the Sunni tradition requires a leader, and the *imam* in a Sunni mosque is the person who leads the prayers. An *imam* is required to be pious, knowledgeable of the Koran and of Muslim religious ritual, of good repute, and acceptable to the majority of the mosque congregation. A woman cannot lead men in prayer, and hence cannot serve as an *imam* in a mosque. It is permissible, however, that women join communal prayers in mosques, provided they range themselves in special lines behind the men.

The congregation, in mosque prayer, must follow the lead of the *imam* in performing every movement of the ritual. Should he, for any reason, commit a ritual error any member of the congregation can correct him.

In principle, the *imam* in a mosque need not be a religious functionary, as any knowledgeable man of good repute is acceptable as a leader of communal prayer. In practice, however, mosque *imams* have come to hold their positions by appointment, receiving payments for their services from the pious endowments on which the maintenance of mosques depends. As appointees, they are supposed to commune with their mosque congregations, arbitrate disputes among them, provide them with religious advice, visit them in their homes, and attend to their needs generally.

5. I'm hoping you can help me understand the context of the following passages. Were they intended as general instructions or where they specific to a particular campaign?

Qur'an [9.14]: Fight them, Allah will punish them by your hands and bring them to disgrace, and assist you against them and heal the hearts of a believing people.

Qur'an [9.5]: So when the sacred months have passed away, then slay the idolaters wherever you find them, and take them captives and besiege them and lie in wait for them in every

ambush, then if they repent and keep up prayer and pay the poor-rate, leave their way free to them; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful.

Qur'an (2:191): "And slay them wherever ye catch them, and turn them out from where they have turned you out; for tumult and oppression are worse than slaughter; but fight them not at the Sacred Mosque, unless they (first) fight you there; but if they fight you, slay them. Such is the reward of those who suppress faith."

- According to standard Koranic interpretations, all three of the Koranic passages you cite refer to a particular historical context, which was the conquest of Mecca in AH 8 /AD 629. In the preceding year, the Prophet Muhammad had concluded a peace between the Muslim community in Medina and the pagan Quraysh of Mecca. Shortly after, fighting broke out between the Khuza'a and Bakr clans in the vicinity of Mecca, and the more belligerent party among the Quraysh decided to support the Bakr, who were their clients, against the Khuza'a, who were the clients of the Prophet. Considering this to be a breach of the recently concluded peace, the Prophet decided to attack and conquer Mecca, expecting strong resistance by the Meccans. Hence the military instructions in the Koranic passages you cite. As it turned out, however, he was able to enter the city practically without struggle, whereupon almost all of its inhabitants accepted Islam.

  With respect to the first passage you cite (Koran 9:14), some scholars suggest that it might have referred to the battle of Badr between the Muslims of Medina and the Meccans, which was won by the Muslims (AH 2/AD 623). Others take it to refer to the action taken by the Prophet against a Medinan Jewish clan (the Banu al-Nadir), which, in some way, had broken faith with him; this resulted in the forced expulsion of the offending clan from Medina. (The date of this event is difficult to determine.)

6. What do the ISMAILI pray for. Are they same as Sunni or different?

- Of the two Ismaili Muslim sects, the Bohra Ismailis perform the regular five daily prayers, as the Sunnis do, except that they follow the Twelver Shia practice of performing the noon and mid-afternoon prayers as well as the sunset and dinnertime

prayers together. Hence, they actually perform three rather than five times a day.

The Nizari Ismailis do not perform the five daily prayers, although they are not forbidden their performance. Normally, however, they do not perform them. However, they do perform a communal *du'a*, or invocation, twice a day, which non-Ismailis may not attend.

7. My question is, the so-called fundamentalists or those who seem to live on hatred and violence and causing horror and grief around the world – what sect do they belong, as far as theological school of thought? It seems they have splintered off and from their quotations, do not reflect the true teaching Muhammad who respected the "People of the Book." Are these individuals/ organisations aforementioned – Sunni or Shiite or something else?

- The norm among Muslims is not to "live on hatred and violence and causing horror and grief around the world" (as you put it in your question). The overwhelming majority among Muslims as among non-Muslims are people who value goodwill and peace and accord among individuals and nations, and who recoil in horror from acts of hatred, violence and ill will. Among Muslims as among non-Muslims, however, there are the normal and the paranoid, the sane and the insane. And no paranoid individual, no matter the faith to which he or she may belong, can be reasonably taken to be the typical representative of a community.

  The "so-called [Muslim] fundamentalists" about whom you inquire act upon interpretations of Islam that are idiosyncratic, not canonical. They are the followers of self-appointed preachers of an Islam which ordinary Muslims do not accept. What you describe in your question is not the case of Islam against the world, but of instances of insane group behaviour which can be Muslim as well as non-Muslim threatening the sane of the world.

8. I have a question about Mohammed's teachings. To limit promiscuity Mohammed said only four wives yet as many concubines as you want. How can this limit promiscuity or is that the wrong interpretation of that passage?

- The Muslim ruling legalizing the marriage of a man to more than one wife, in addition to concubines, does not come from the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad, but from the text of the Koran where it says (4:2-3, rendered in free English paraphrase for maximum clarity):

Give orphans [under your care] what belongs to them… Do not absorb their wealth into your own; that would be a great sin. And if you fear that you will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry two or three or four of the ones who please you; and should you fear that you cannot treat [that many] on an equitable basis, then [marry only] one, or the [women slaves] you possess….

This Koranic passage has been traditionally interpreted to mean that a man may take as many as four wives in legal marriage at the same time, along with any number of concubines he may possess (this, at a time when slavery was universally accepted). Socially, however, the norm is for a Muslim to have only one wife, and not to take another unless his wife cannot bear children, in which case she may actually urge her husband to take another wife, and sometimes help him find one. In some instances, a man whose wife is disabled by, say, incurable insanity, may take another wife to care for his children and household. Muslim law, however, permits a man to have as many as four wives at a time, and some Muslim men do avail themselves of the opportunity to maintain polygamous households by choice, provided they can afford it.

It must be noted, in this connection, that the Hebrew Bible (or Old Testament) takes the existence of polygamy among the ancient Israelites for granted, although monogamy among them was clearly the norm (as it is among Muslims today). The Christian scriptures (or New Testament) nowhere rules on monogamy or condemns polygamy. The explanation here may be that monogamy was so much the norm among the Israelites of the time of Jesus that the question of single or multiple marriages was not one to elicit comment.

9. We have been looking at the Koran and trying to understand it and I was wondering if you would be able to help me. I am wondering how does the Koran view Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Mary?

- The Koran presents the message of Islam as having been revealed to mankind by a succession of "prophets" (*anbiya'* , singular *nabi*) or "messengers" (*rusul*, singular *rasul*), the last of whom was Muhammad. The most pre-eminent among the earlier prophets, according to the Koran, were Abraham, Moses and Jesus. Abraham was distinguished by having arrived at the idea of monotheism, of which he is revered as the founder, through logical deduction; Jesus by having been virgin-born and endowed

with the "spirit of holiness" (*ruh al-qudus*, as distinguished from the Christian concept of the Holy Spirit, which in Arabic would be *al-ruh al-qudus*). The Koran also calls him "the Christ" (*al-Masih*). His divinity, however, which forms the doctrinal basis of Christianity, is denied.

The revelations received by Moses are the *Torah*, and those received by Jesus are the *Injil* (Arabic form of the Greek *evangelion*, meaning "good news", or "gospel"). According to the Koran, however, Abraham also received revelations that were recorded in "tablets" (*suhuf*, singular *sahifa*), much like the "tablets" revealed to Moses (obviously, a reference to the tablets of the Ten Commandments).

As the virgin mother of Jesus, Mary is presented in the Koran as a particularly holy and pure person of miraculous birth—a presentation of her that long antedates the Roman Catholic doctrine of her birth by immaculate conception. Mary is the only woman mentioned in the Koran by name, and the Koran has much more to say about her than do the Gospels.

10. What exactly does the veil mean? Is a Muslim woman required by her religion to wear a veil, or is that a decision she may make as she chooses? Is there a cultural influence on whether a woman makes that choice, i.e.: peer pressure? Can her husband make that choice for her and enforce it?

- The Koranic authority from which the veiling of women in Islam derives is the verse that says: "Tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest… and to draw their head covers (Arabic *khumur*, singular *khimar*) over their bosoms" (Koran 24:31). This verse has been variously interpreted to mean that Muslim women are required to veil either the head along with the whole body, leaving only the face uncovered, or to veil head, body and face as well.

Historically, the veiling of women in the lands of the Eastern Mediterranean basin and beyond antedates Islam, as it was common practice among urban women of high social status in the Byzantine as well as the pre-Islamic Persian empire. The practice then continued under Islam, Muslim jurisprudence justifying it on the basis of the Koranic verse quoted above and urging that the veiling of women protects them from unwelcome advances by males, preserves their social respectability and prevents them from becoming mere sex objects over which men may contend. The fact remains, however, that Christian urban

women in the Arab world also wore the veil until certainly the middle decades of the nineteenth century, as did Jewish urban women, judging by the historical evidence available. On the other hand, rural women in the area—Muslim and non-Muslim— were never known to have veiled. They simply wore headscarves—and normally colourful ones—as did peasant women in all the lands of the Mediterranean basin.

Men and women feminists began to wage strong attacks on the veil in Egypt and the lands of the Ottoman empire starting with the onset of the twentieth century. In the years following the end of World War I and the destruction of the Ottoman empire, the veil was banned in the Turkish Republic established by Mustapha Kemal Pasha (or Kemal Ataturk). It next went rapidly out of fashion in Egypt following the succession of the young and handsome King Farouk in 1936 and his marriage to the beautiful and unveiled Queen Farida, with whom he regularly appeared in public. By the middle decades of the century, the veil had all but totally vanished elsewhere in the Arab world, except for the Arabian peninsula. But in due course a number of upper and middle class women in the Gulf countries began, partially or totally, to unveil. Few women remained veiled in South Yemen under the Marxist-oriented regime established in Aden between 1967 and 1989. When this regime collapsed, and South Yemen was united with North Yemen, the veiling of women in the region was enforced again.

The large-scale return to the veil—this time in the standardised form known as *Shar'i* (or "canonical") dress—began with the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. This *Shar'i* dress is believed to have been devised in Lebanon in the early 1970's by the Shiite Muslim religious leader Musa al-Sadr. It consists of a plain, long-sleeved garment made of opaque fabrics in austere colours covering the body down to the ankles, and of a head cover much like a nun's wimple concealing the head and the upper part of the forehead, hugging the chin from below, covering the neck, and falling down over the chest and back. In the Arab world, the extent of the use of this new *Shar'i* dress— or other forms of veiling—varies from country to country; and while it may be on the increase in some, it may be on the decrease in others. Normally, it is the woman—married or unmarried— who individually takes the decision to return to the veil although, in some cases, husbands ask their wives to veil if they were

unveiled at the time of engagement or marriage. On the other hand, the traditional headscarf—as distinct from the standardised *Shar'i* head cover—does naturally survive as part of the conservative apparel worn by women in provincial Arab communities as yet untouched by Western ways.

Why many Muslim women today choose to veil, when not compelled to do so by custom or law, would vary with the individual case. A Muslim woman may be convinced that her religion requires her to do so, or that veiling is the proper thing for her to do. If still unmarried, she may believe it advances her chances of a respectable marriage. Or she may opt for the veil to assert her Muslim identity (as may well be the case among women in transnational Muslim communities), or to signal her rejection of the impact or imposition of Western values on Muslim society and tradition. It has further been suggested that a Muslim woman who is basically liberal and fully attuned to the modern world may take on the veil to desexualise the public social space of which she forms part, and so gain her freedom to become a fully independent and rational human being rather than remaining a mere sex object.

The recent return of women to the veil is a subject of controversy among Muslims today, rather than being one that meets with general approval. This is the case most of all in Turkey and the more modernised Arab countries. However, except in Muslim countries where the veiling of women is compulsory by law, even Muslims most opposed to the veil do not challenge the right of a woman to opt for wearing it if she so chooses by her own free will.

11. Do you think in what sense is Islam basically Arabic? and thus is Islam universal?

- The text of the Koran which is the sacred book of Islam is Arabic just as the original text of the Christian Bible is Hebrew and Aramaic in the Old Testament and Greek in the New Testament. This does not make Islam an Arab or Arabic religion any more than it makes Christianity a Greek religion with Hebrew and Aramaic antecedents, as the theological and ethical issues addressed in the Koran, as in both parts of the Bible, are universal, not parochial ones.

  Christianity originated among Jews and related communities in Roman Syria (the "Hebrews" as opposed to the "Hellenes" or

"Hellenists", see Acts 6:1) who spoke Aramaic and communicated with the peoples of the Mediterranean world in Greek, which was then commonly spoken among the literate classes throughout the area. To preach their new faith to communities of non-Syrian origin, or to migrant Syrian communities living in different parts of the Roman world, who had ceased to be familiar with the Aramaic language of their ancestors, the Christian apostles had no recourse but to use Greek. Islam, on the other hand, originated in Arabia, where Arabic was used almost exclusively. This explains why the text of the Koran is Arabic.

When the Arab conquests of the seventh and eighth centuries carried Islam to non-Arab lands as far west as the shores of the Atlantic, and as for east as the borders of China, the faith began to gain converts among non-Arab peoples. And the Arab sea trade in the Indian Ocean subsequently carried the faith to other parts of East Africa and Asia which the Arabs never conquered. As Muslims held the Arabic text of the Koran to be sacred, the literate non-Arab converts to Islam had to learn to read the Koranic text in Arabic and paraphrase or explain it to others. Had the preaching of the Koran been addressed to Arabs alone and not to all mankind, non-Arab conversions to Islam would not have occurred, nor would Muslim Arabs have cared to spread their faith outside their own world.

12. I attended a remembrance for September 11 and an Islamic "preacher" spoke and led prayer. Would this person correctly be called a KHATIB?

- The person who leads Muslims in communal prayer, on any occasion and anywhere, is called an *IMAM* (literal meaning, the 'one in front'). The one who delivers the oration (Arabic, KHUTBA) before the prescribed Friday prayer, normally in a mosque, is the KHATIB (meaning 'orator'), who would preferably though not necessarily proceed to lead the prayer as *IMAM*. In the absence of a person appointed for the function, any competent Muslim can serve as KHATIB and/or *IMAM* in a Friday prayer, or as *IMAM* in any communal prayer.

  Unless the remembrance you attended for September 11 was a Friday prayer, the person who spoke and led prayer on the occasion would correctly be called an *IMAM*, as it is not uncommon for an *IMAM* to deliver an informal sermon or religious talk (called DARS) before or after leading any communal prayer.

13. I am trying to understand what it means to care, and what the Koran says about caring? caring for others and one's expression of that concern: care.

- There is no text in the Koran elaborating on the abstract concept of charity in the sense of love or selfless care for others, as in I Corinthians 13:1-13. On the other hand, the Koran repeatedly connects charity or care for others (Arabic *al-ma'ruf*, *al-'amal al-salih*, *al-khayr*) with faith in God and the Latter Day (or Day of Judgement), the implication being that faith does not suffice unless accompanied by care for others.

  Passages of the Koran commanding care for the needy and helpless, such as orphans, widow, or strangers are too numerous to enumerate. So are the passages condemning greed, avarice and pride, and selfish attitudes and behaviour in general. Moreover, the Koran institutionalises care for others in the *zakat* (the tithe for the care of the needy), placing the *zakat* second only to prayer (*salat*) among the duties incumbent on the faithful.

14. When Muhammad was a small boy living at home, what was the religion of his parents?

- Muslim tradition maintains that the Prophet Muhammad came from a pagan background. His father, however, was called 'Abdallah ('*Abd Allah*, the "servant of God"), which suggests that his background was not entirely alien to monotheism. While Mecca, where the Prophet Muhammad was born and raised, was a center of pagan worship, its main sanctuary, the Kaaba, not only housed idols, but also Christian and Jewish icons—among them, reportedly, one representing Abraham, and another representing the Virgin Mary and the baby Jesus. And in Mecca, as elsewhere in Arabia, there were large communities of Christians and Jews, the Arabian Christians belonging to different denominations. While some followed Apostolic Christianity, conceiving of God as a Trinity and believing in the divinity of Jesus as the Son of God, others were Nazarenes who honoured Jesus as a prophet pre-eminent for his holiness but otherwise followed strictly the Law of Moses, or Torah. (What made them different from the Jews is that they rejected the authority of the Oral Torah, which subsequently came to form the substance of the Jewish Talmud). One of the Nazarene Christians of Mecca was the bishop, Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who was a kinsman of Muhammad's wife Khadija; he reportedly testified to the validity of the first Koranic revelations received by Muhammad.

  Alongside Christianity and Judaism, there appears to have existed in pre-Islamic Arabia a diffuse from of folk monotheism combined

with traditional pagan beliefs and practices. This could have been the monotheism of those whom the Koran refers to as the *Ummiyyun* (possibly the Arabic equivalent of the Biblical Hebrew Goyim, traditionally translated into English as Gentiles). The Koran depicts Muhammad as the Prophet of the *Ummiyyum* (Koran 62:2), who—unlike the Christians and Jews—had no *Kitab*, or scriptures (Koran 2:78, 3:20), before the Koran was revealed.

Accordingly, one may assume that the Prophet Muhammad was born and raised in accordance with the monotheistic tradition of the *Ummiyyun*, which honoured the One God of Christianity and Judaism within the context of traditional Arabian paganism.

15. In their Friday mosque prayer, Muslims say: 'God, give victory to Islam and the Muslims and destroy the enemies of the faith'. Who are the enemies of the faith?

- The passage you quote often features in the invocations (Arabic *du'a'*) following the oration (*khutba*) and immediately preceding the Friday communal prayer. These invocations are the Muslim equivalent of the ritual intercessions in a Christian church service, where God may be invoked to bless the community, nation, or rulers, and give them victory over their enemies in times of war. In churches today following the Greek rite established under the Byzantine emperors of Constantinople, one passage of the intercessions continues to invoke God to 'give victory to our faithful kings over the barbarians'—*i.e.*, to help them prevail over the Avars, Slavs, Bulgars and other non-Greek (and originally non-Christian) peoples with whom the Christian Byzantine state was perennially in conflict.

  The authority for the wording of the Muslim invocation in question derives neither from the Koran nor from the Prophet's sayings (Arabic *hadith*), and its antiquity cannot be determined. Its use in the Friday mosque service, though common, is not mandatory, and a mosque orator (Arabic *khatib*) may choose to omit it or satisfy himself by saying: 'God, give victory to Islam and the Muslims'. In circumstances when Muslims perceive their community to be threatened, the invocation may be elaborated by the *khatib* to name the 'enemies of the faith', identify their transgressions, and specify the manner in which God might avenge the Muslim faithful against them. Such detailed forms of the invocation gained popularity during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as Western powers began to encroach on Muslim lands and control their destinies.

16. What does it mean that anyone who is killed for the cause of God enters paradise? Does this apply to suicide bombers and terrorists? How does Islam define who is killed for the cause of God?

- Speaking of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad who were killed in the first two battles fought between the Muslims in Medina and the unbelievers of Mecca, the Koranic verse you have in mind says: "Think not that those who were killed for the cause of God are dead, for they are alive and prospering with their Lord" (3:169). The reference, accordingly, is to warriors fighting to defend their religious community against an enemy seeking its destruction. Islam considers such action justified, and its victims as martyrs for the cause of God. Whether or not the principle in question could be interpreted to apply to terrorists or suicide bombers is a matter on which Muslims may disagree. Yet, while Islam clearly commends rising valiantly in defence of faith and community, it just as clearly rules against acts of war that victimize the innocent and defenceless or involve wanton destruction. Hence, conscientious Muslim opinion cannot justify terrorism on religious grounds any more than it can accept moral justification for any form of warfare in which innocent civilians are the chief sufferers.

17. What keeps a Muslim always a Muslim, no matter how Westernised, reasserting his identity as a Muslim whenever push comes to shove?

- Islam conceives of the Muslim faithful as a community (Arabic *umma* or *jama'a*), with the Koran enjoining solidarity and mutual support among its members, especially in the face of external threats or dangers. Hence, according to the tenets of Islam, Muslims are expected to place allegiance to faith and community above other social or political considerations. (The same applies to Judaism, though less certainly to Christianity.) In practice, not all Muslims give their prime allegiance to Islam, but those among them who do naturally attract more external attention than those who do not. In the absence of the necessary statistics, the ratio between the two categories cannot be established. Admittedly, however, the first of these would account for a substantial majority.

  Among Muslims in the Arab countries, real or professed allegiance to Islam normally comes first, though not to the exclusion of other allegiances that are equally real, to country, for example, or to the sense of Arab community. Judging by social and political behaviour, and no matter the theory, Muslim Arabs seem

distinctly to identify and sympathise more with Christian Arabs and compatriots than with non-Arab Muslims. Likewise, Christian Arabs normally identify more with Muslim Arabs than they do with Christians elsewhere, their sympathy for Islam often going beyond the Arab world.

What needs to be established is the extent to which Muslims living in the US and other Western countries have come to be politically and culturally integrated into Western society, regardless of the degree to which they continue to practice Islam or remain conscious of being Muslim. Most studies, so far, have been focused upon Muslims in the West who have had problems with integration. Faced with such problems, or with real or imagined discrimination (*i.e.*, "when push comes to shove"), minority groups in any society, no matter how integrated, tend to react by reasserting their sense of ethnic or communal identity. In this respect, Muslims are no exception.

18. Why does Islam preach war, fighting and killing?

- Islam does not preach random violence or unjustified aggression. Where the Koran speaks of war, it is usually in reference to the struggle between the Prophet Muhammad and the unbelievers of Mecca who opposed his religious mission. Notable exceptions are the following:

    1. One Koranic verse urges the Muslim faithful to wage war against any Muslim group that attacks another Muslim group if the former cannot be persuaded to cease its aggression by peaceful means.

    2. Some Koranic verses justify war against non-Muslims who enter into truce with the Muslim community then break the truce. These verses are sometimes interpreted to refer to the Jews of Medina and its vicinity in the Prophet's time.

    3. The Koran justifies war against those who persecute Muslims and evict them from their homes.

    4. One Koranic verse justifies war against Christians or Jews who do not follow the teachings of their respective scriptures. Jurists give different interpretations of this ambiguous verse.

- One Koranic verse rules unequivocally against wars of aggression and condemns aggressors. Another recommends that Muslims should only fight in self-defence, in which case they should come to terms with parties waging war against them as soon as such parties sue for peace.

19. What about Jihad?

- *JIHAD*, in Arabic, signifies any 'effort' exerted toward the achievement of a definite goal. As used in the Koran, it has been interpreted to indicate military service in addition to other efforts. The term occurs in four verses of the Koran, and derivatives of it (verbs or nouns) appear in 27 others, but in no case is it specified what is actually involved in *jihad*, apart from its being a meritorious act serving the good of Islam and the Muslims. Two verses indicate its being a voluntary effort; six others suggest that it can involve material sacrifice as well as personal effort. In three verses, the Prophet Muhammad is urged to undertake and press *jihad* against his opponents, again without specifying the nature of the action.

- Historically, the consensus of Muslim learned opinion has defined *jihad* as the exertion of every possible effort to (a) defend Islam against aggression; (b) suppress religious or political sedition among Muslims; (c) maintain peace, security and justice in the community; (d) fight corruption; and (d) strengthen one's personal integrity to attain moral perfection (what has been called 'the greater *jihad*'). Some jurists have gone so far as to consider *jihad* as one of the PILLARS of Islam, but the Sharia does not generally uphold this view.

- Where it entails military action, *jihad*, according to the SHARIA consensus, has to be waged and led by the legitimate leader of the community, who must then be obeyed. Before undertaking military *jihad*, Muslims must make certain of the purity of their intentions, as all actions are judged by the intent in Islam. They must also seek permission of their parents, if alive, and be adequately prepared for the undertaking. Seen in this perspective, *jihad*, as a war effort, is no more than voluntary military service to the community when it is in danger.

- *Jihad* has sometimes been interpreted to include military action aiming at the expansion of Islam. Today, however, the prevailing view is that Islam can only expand by persuasion and peaceful means, and that *jihad* is only authorised in self-defence.

- In the accepted forms of the Sharia, justified *jihad* does not include acts of terrorism or random violence against innocent parties. Hence, the distinction in Islam between *jihad* and *irhab*, the latter being the modern Arabic rendering for 'terrorism', and a new term in Arabic usage.

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