

A TEXTBOOK FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS



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INTRODUCTION TO THE
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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMPARATIVE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Gather some information about the subject matter of comparative history of religions.
2. Research the place of comparative history of religions among the religious sciences.
3. Analyze the relationship between comparative history of religions and the basic Islamic sciences.
4. Research the importance of being knowledgeable about other religions in order to understand Islam.

LET'S DISCUSS

Discuss the importance of knowing other religions.

1. Definition, Subject and Method

The comparative history of religions is a science that deals objectively and comparatively with the relationships, similarities and differences that have existed among religions throughout history.¹ This science examines its subject matter, i.e. religion, by using the method of historical comparison.

All religions that have existed on the earth, in the past and present, constitute the subject matter of comparative history of religions. Moreover, this discipline analyzes the birth of religions, their interaction with each other, their comparative history, their system of belief, their systems of acts of worship and morality, religious institutions, cultures and sects without differentiating between them as divine or false religions.²

The history of religions does not advocate any particular religion, thus it differs from other theological sciences. It does not evaluate any religion in

LET'S NOTE

The history of religions examines religions by making use of data from sciences such as history, philology, anthropology and sociology.

(Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler tarihine Giriş*, p.5)

¹ Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p.19; Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p.4

² Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p.5; Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p.3

BRAINSTORMING

“Lack of methodology is the reason for not being able to reach conclusions.”

Brainstorm about the meaning of the statement quoted above.

terms of superiority, degree of development, veracity, or falsehood. On the contrary, it evaluates all of them according to the same category, and as they are. The subject matter of comparative history of religions is all religions; therefore it differs from other sciences that analyze one particular religion such as Islam and Christianity.³ The object of the history of religions is to collect the truest information about religions and come to a conclusion by comparing this information when necessary.⁴

Every science has its own specific method, and a method is the means by which we attain truth.⁵ Sciences analyze the subject matters of their fields with their own methodologies. The history of religions also has a “descriptive” method specific to itself, it introduces the events as they are and describes them in detail. In addition to the descriptive method, history of religions also uses the “comparative” method. In this respect, the history of religions is also called “the comparative history of religions”. It applies the historical method to the subjects of birth, development and extinction of religions. Meanwhile it always gets its data from history and real life. It sometimes analyzes its data using the comparative method, which is called the historical-comparative method. By using this method, history of religions determines how a religion, or specific features of a religion, emerged and developed. For example, it presents the historical process of belief in a god based on the trinity in Christianity by comparing it to the understanding of god in other religions with which Christianity has been in contact.⁶

2. Its Place Among the Other Religious Sciences

The religious sciences are a group of sciences that make all religions their subject of research. They cover a field investigating all of the religions that existed in the past and all living religions from their birth to their death. Comparative history of religions is also a branch of the religious sciences. This large field is divided into sub-branches from the more general to the more specific. Branches, such as the history of religions, sociology, psychology, phenomenology, and philosophy of religion are included under the title of sciences of religion. These sciences do not evaluate religions as being divine, false, right or wrong. In other words, the sciences of religion deal with religions

³ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 2

⁴ Osman Cilacı, *Dinler ve İnsanlar*, p. 59

⁵ Zeki Arslantürk, *Araştırma Metod ve Teknikleri*, p. 47

⁶ Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 20; Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 3

objectively, and these sciences also have sub-branches, such as the history of Islam and Christianity. They constitute the particular fields of the sciences of religion.

INFORMATION BOX

Phenomenology of religion is a science systematically investigating apparent and outward aspects of religion. It deals religious facts with apparent sides without taking the historical development of religion into consideration. It analyzes worship, rite, place, time, article, character and divinities of different religions, and tries to establish common points between them.

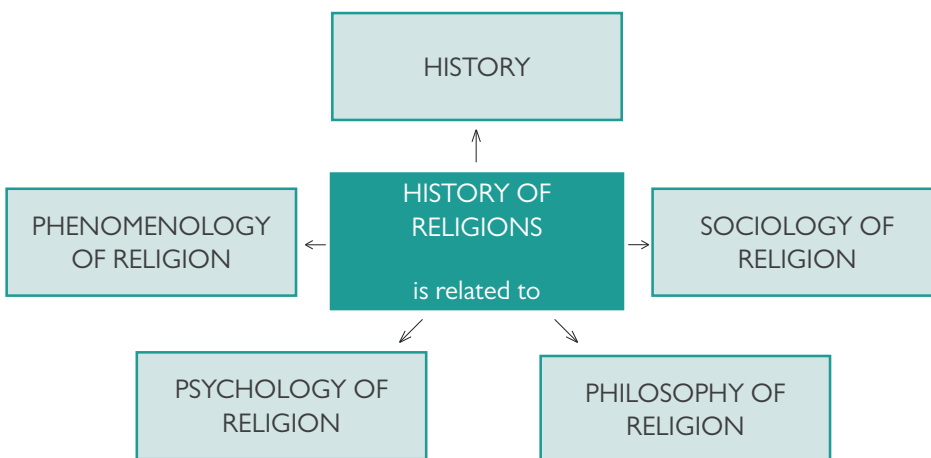
(Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 21)

LET'S DISCUSS

How does a person benefit from learning about the history of religions?

Discuss.

The research area of the sciences of religion contains subjects such as belief, acts of worship, and moral systems of religions and the formative process of their institutions. In addition, religious values, experiences, ideals, expectations, feelings, attitudes, and all relationships between life and religion constitute topics of research for these sciences.⁷ For example, while the psychology of religion deals with the religious experiences of a person and with different manifestations of these experiences, the philosophy of religion deals with the essence of religion and a person's connection with religious realities.



⁷ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 4

Religion constitutes the common point between sociology, psychology, phenomenology, philosophy of religion, and the comparative history of religion, which are the sciences encompassed by the sciences of religion. Therefore, the history of religions is closely related to these disciplines. Moreover, history provides the tools for the history of religions because of its being a science that deals with past events by indicating place and time. Researchers in the field of history of religions additionally benefit from the disciplines of philology, mythology, archeology, history of art, folklore and other similar sciences.⁸

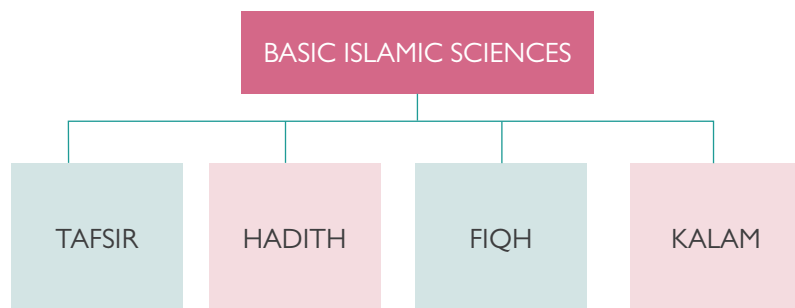
LET'S NOTE

The sociology of religion is a science investigating the connection between religion and society, and the events arising out of these sciences. This science deals with social religious institutions, religion's approach towards state, nation and family, sociological events taking place in the field of religion, and different religious communities' relationship with society.

(Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 21)

3. Its Relation to the Basic Islamic Sciences

The sciences of religion analyze religion as a fact. Due to its being one of the sciences of religion, the history of religions is objective, both in terms of its structure and method. The basic Islamic sciences are sciences of theology that contain and defend different branches of Islam. Although the comparative history of religions is different from the basic Islamic sciences in terms of subject and method, it is closely associated with it from the material aspect.⁹ The basic Islamic sciences benefit from the comparative history of religions' data in many fields. Therefore, there is a close relationship between comparative history of religions and the basic Islamic sciences.



⁸ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 22, 23

⁹ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 7

One of the basic Islamic sciences is *tafsir* (exegesis), which deals with the correct understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an. The explanation of verses benefits from the history of religions' data as it benefits from the data of many other sciences. For example, the Qur'an mentions ancient tribes and their beliefs, but does not locate them in place and time. If people who are engaged in *tafsir* did not benefit from the data of comparative history of religions while interpreting verses, they could fall into the error of interpreting these verses by using mythological stories known as "*Israiliyyat*" in the methodology of *tafsir*. In this respect, by benefitting from the data of the history of religions it is possible to find out elements from the stories of *Israiliyyat* that found their way into the books of *tafsir*. Thus, via the history of religions' materials, some stories in the Qur'an can be interpreted according to historical truths. Moreover, there are non-Arabic words in the Qur'an referred to as "*Gharib al-Qur'an*". *Mufasssirs* (commentators), with the aid of history of religions, can discern which languages these words come from, such as Akkadian, Assyrian, and Ugaritic, which are in the family of the Semitic languages.¹⁰ Thus, they can interpret these words more accurately. On the other hand, the history of religions derives benefit from information in the Qur'an as well. For example, while there are no historical documents about the first religion, the Qur'an provides information about this. History of religions scholars benefit from this information.

One of the basic Islamic sciences, *hadith*, analyzes words, actions and tacit approvals attributed to Prophet Muhammad (saw)*. As in the Qur'an, ancient tribes and their experiences are also mentioned in the *hadiths*. The data obtained from comparative history of religions helps to achieve a more accurate understanding and interpretation of such *hadiths*. The field of comparative history of religions makes a great contribution to determining the authenticity of *hadiths*. With data obtained from comparative history of religions, it is possible to determine the sources of *hadiths* that are contrary to the essence of the Qur'an and the core of Islam, in general.¹¹ For example, the *hadith* indicating that 'a child born as the result of an illegitimate relationship cannot enter paradise'¹² is contrary to the essence of the Qur'an and Islam. According to the data of the history of religions, this saying probably originates from the

¹⁰ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 8

* Sallallahu alayhi wa sallam: Peace be upon him (from now on it will be abbreviated as saw).

¹¹ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 9

¹² Aliyyu'l-Qari, *al-Mawzuatu'l-Kubra*, p. 268; Ajluni, *Kashfu'l-Hafa*, vol. 2, p. 372

Israiliyyat. According to Judaism, an illegitimate child cannot be accepted as a normal person. This child loses the right of being a Jew and is excommunicated from the congregation. Thus, this application takes its source from the Torah. In the Torah it is stated that: “An illegitimate child shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation shall none of his enter into the assembly of the Lord.”¹³ As demonstrated, history of religions data makes a great contribution to determining the authenticity of *hadiths*.

LET'S MAKE A LIST

Discuss in class the relationship between comparative history of religions and basic Islamic sciences. Then list your conclusions.

-
-

Fiqh is another branch of the basic Islamic sciences. It organizes and analyzes judgments derived from the Qur'an and *sunnah*. While doing this, it tries to find out the purpose of the “Rule Maker”.

As stated in the Qur'an, Allah put forth a messenger from each nation,¹⁴ and sent some rules through these messengers. People living in that era tried to understand these rules and develop methods. Jews and Christians in this field in particular can be a source of data for jurists. This data can only be put forth by the history of religions. Comparative history of religions gives jurists the chance to make comparisons with similar rules by giving information about divine rules, which were sent to ancient communities. As a result of this comparison, jurists can learn the purpose of the Rule Maker and rules that were changed in time.¹⁵ For example, in the Torah it is stated, “If there is a son, daughters cannot inherit. If there is no son or daughter inheritance passes to the brethren according to the degree of affinity.”¹⁶ By contrast, the Qur'an states, “**For women is a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, be it**

¹³ Holy Torah, Deuteronomy, 23/2

¹⁴ Nahl 16: 36

¹⁵ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 12,13

¹⁶ Holy Torah, Numbers, 27/8-11; Hayrettin Karaman, *İslam Hukuk Tarihi*, p. 42

little or much- an obligatory share.”¹⁷ As it is seen, women were also entitled to the right to inheritance, as well as men, by the great change stated in the Qur’an. Jurists can make comparisons between information in relation to time and place by considering the history of religions’ data. They can also benefit from information presented by history of religions about the application of the acts of worship in the first Islamic community such as pilgrimage, sacrifice, prayer and fasting.

LET’S FIND EXAMPLES

Find examples that are used as data in the history of religions from the Qur’an.

- Exodus of Prophet Moses and children of Israel from Egypt.

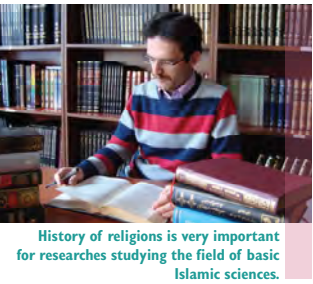
(Ta-Ha 20: 77)

-

One of the basic Islamic sciences, *kalam* (theology), is a science that attempts to create a strong basis for the theological principles of Islam. The main subjects of *kalam* are attributes of Allah, prophethood, revelation, the hereafter and faith. The comparative history of religions gives many materials to theologians during the processing of theological subjects. Additionally, history of religions provides information about the origins of beliefs derived from other religions and cultures that are at odds with Islam. From the point of materials provided by history of religions, theologians can put forward a strong and functional creed. They can improve ideas corresponding to the necessities of the age regarding important issues such as Allah’s attributes, prophethood, revelation, and the relationship between Allah and people.¹⁸

¹⁷ Nisa, 4: 7

¹⁸ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 9,10.



4. The Importance of Learning about Other Religions for Islam

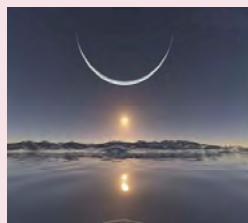
LET'S EVALUATE

“Similar situations (as yours) have passed on before you, so proceed throughout the earth and observe how was the end of those who denied.”

(Al-i Imran, 3: 137)

Evaluate the above mentioned verse in terms of the importance of learning about other religions.

The revelation began with the word “**Recite.**”¹⁹ in the form of a command. The Qur’an indicates that those who know are not equal to those who do not know,²⁰ and it recommends us to learn what we do not know from those who know.²¹ The Qur’an encourages people to learn all kinds of information except that which can harm them. While it expresses that religion in Allah’s view is Islam,²² it also recognizes the existence of other religions as a phenomena. For example, the verse “**Whoever desires other than Islam as a religion, never will it be accepted from him...**”²³ points to the existence of religions other than Islam. Therefore, gaining information about other religions, and knowing and understanding their followers is important in order to be able to make comparisons with our own beliefs.



Indicate which sign above belongs to which religion and research their individual meanings.

¹⁹ Alaq, 96: 1

²⁰ Zumar, 39: 9

²¹ Nahl, 16: 43

²² Al-i Imran, 3: 19

²³ Al-i Imran, 3: 85

Learning about other religions does not constitute a problem for Islam; on the contrary, it has many benefits. “When we have information about other religions, we can see how our religion differs and so appreciate its value. We can also understand whether we have the same features that our religion criticizes about the followers of other religions.”²⁴

Another advantage of learning about other religions in terms of Islam is identifying issues known as “*Israiliyyat*” in Islamic literature. Islam encountered different religions and cultures from its emergence until today. People embracing Islam brought many elements of their previous cultures into it. In time, these foreign elements started to be considered a part of Islam’s original form. Therefore, knowing information about other religions is important in order to identify these elements.

Another advantage of acquiring information about other religions is related to the missionary activities (Christians, Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Bahais, etc.). In order to respond to the propaganda of missionaries, it is necessary to have prior knowledge about those religions.

In recent years, several meetings of interreligious dialogue have been organized in various countries around the world. In order to know the meaning of interreligious dialogue and present an effective argument in these meetings, it is important to gain information about the other religions in advance.

It is also important in terms of religious services. In a sense, those who serve in religious arena are society’s leaders and intellectuals. This way, people can ask questions both about other religions and about several subjects that they are curious about to those who are engaged in religious service. In order to give satisfactory and consistent answers to such questions, the importance of having information about religions other than Islam automatically increases. Moreover, religious functionaries should know the difference between Islam and other religions in order to be able to better explain Islam to society.

LET’S DISCUSS

How do the subjects of “*Israiliyyat*” affect Islamic culture?

Discuss.

BRAINSTORMING

What is the role of religious functionaries in establishing dialogue between the followers of different religions?

Brainstorm, then share your thoughts with your friends.

²⁴ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 6

LET'S INTERPRET

Umar said that, "A person who grows up in an Islamic environment and does not know the customs of the age of ignorance, gradually contradicts Islam ..."

(Ali al-Hasen an-Nadwi, *Müslümanların Gerilemesiyle Dünya Neler Kaybetti*, p. 162)

Interpret Umar's above-mentioned statement in relation to the significance of learning about other religions and customs.

Knowing about other religions and their followers has turned into a necessity in a contemporary world of increased globalization and communication, where people have to live with others from various cultures and religions. Thus, knowing about different religions and their members is the sociological reality of the world we live in.²⁵

LET'S MAKE A LIST

Make a list about the benefits of learning about other religions in order to understand Islam.

- Learning about the concept of the trinity in Christianity helps us understand the concept of *tawhid* (oneness of Allah) in Islam.
-
-

Consequently, it is important to know about other religions for the following reasons: in order to have general knowledge about religions and to ensure healthy communication with the members of other religions, in order to know and recognize missionary activities and take precautions, and to explain Islam in a better manner to the members of other religions. It is also important in order to be able to distinguish Islam from superstitions, to recognize our deficiencies and mistakes and thus to interpret Islam better in the light of the conditions of the modern world, and make religious services more productive.²⁶

²⁵ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 6

²⁶ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 6, 7

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the benefits of learning about other religions.
2. How does a scholar of tafsir (Qur'anic exegesis) benefit from history of religions' data?
3. Why is it important to know about the history of religions in today's globalized world?
4. Why is it important for religious officials to know information about other religions? Explain.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following statements is not one of the advantages of learning about other religions?
 - A) Our general knowledge increases.
 - B) We can distinguish Islam from non-Islamic beliefs and practices.
 - C) We can communicate more easily with the adherents of other beliefs.
 - D) We can become more religious.
 - E) We can understand Islam better.
2. Which of the following scientific disciplines is not related to the history of religions?

A) Sociology of religion	B) Psychology of religion	C) Philosophy of religion
D) History	E) Human physiology	

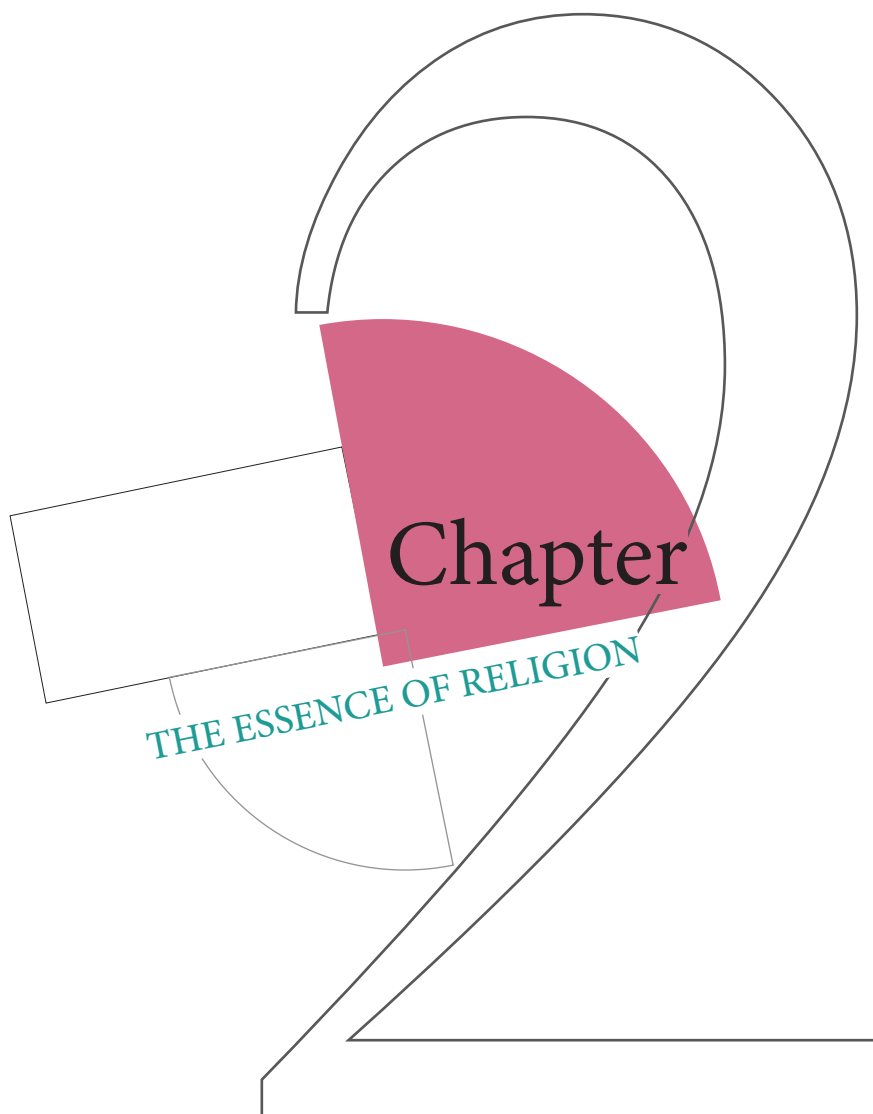
C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(advocate, never be, straight path, the Ottoman Empire, a phenomenon, which shows)

1. The existence of other religions is accepted as in Islam.
2. History of religions does not..... any particular religion.
3. The Qur'an states that those who know can equal to those who do not know.
4. A method is the way that guides us to the.....

D. Write “T” for true and “F” for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) There is no harm in learning about other religions in relation to Islamic principles.
2. (...) Other religions are mentioned in the Qur’an and in the sayings of the Prophet.
3. (...) Israiliyyat are just the remainders of pre-Islamic divine religions.
4. (...) History is a scientific discipline that examines the past by indicating place and time.
5. (...) History of religions is a scientific discipline that investigates the same subject matters as the history of Islam.



THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Search for the meaning of the word “mythos” in the dictionary.
2. Read the verse 213 of Surah *al-Baqarah* (2) and think about its meaning.

1. Views About the Definition of Religion

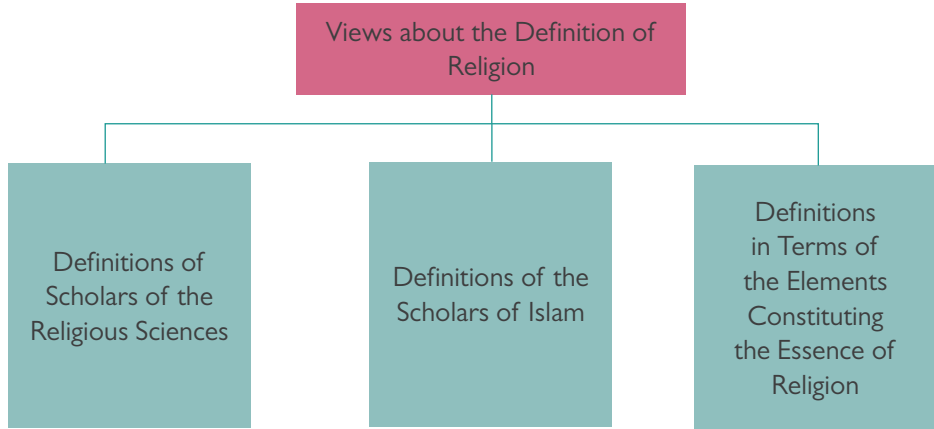
In the Qur'an, the term “deen” (religion) is used with various meanings such as a path, a way of life, the day of reckoning, law, and judgment. Accordingly, religion generally means a person's way of life or the path that people follow throughout their lives.¹ “Religion has existed in people's lives throughout history and has affected the views, attitudes, and human behavior toward other people and the environment.”² Since people have found the reason and aim of their existence in religion, any coercion and oppression could never separate religion from their lives. Moreover, religion is a source of life that feeds people's veins. While many philosophical systems and treatises that were sincerely held have disappeared from social life, religion has always maintained its place in the human soul.³ So, what is religion?

What does religion mean to you?

¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinler*, p. 19

² Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinler*, p. 14

³ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 16



Elmalılı Muhammad Hamdi Yazır
(1877-1942)

Although there are many definitions about religion given by scholars of the religious sciences, there is no unanimous definition, because everyone defines religion according to their own perspective.⁴ For instance, while those who follow a religion define it based on their own belief, those who deal with religion as a phenomenon define it according to the data that they have obtained. Therefore, scholars who have engaged in disciplines such as sociology, psychology, and the philosophy of religion bring forth different definitions about religion. The reason behind the differences in definitions is due to the complex structure of religion and subjective attitudes of the owners of the definition.⁵ “In fact, every single discipline that took religion as its subject of investigation and research started out with a definition that serves its own interests better.”⁶

Some of the definitions given by the scholars of the religious sciences are as follows: approaching the subject in accordance with the sociology of religion, Emile Durkheim takes the social function of religion in society into consideration in his definition, “Religion is a system of rituals and beliefs that keep a community together.” Approaching the issue according to the psychology of religion, Feurbach relates religion with human psychology by emphasizing that religion is a desire revealing itself through prayer, sacrifice and belief.⁷ Hegel assumed religion to be a system that consists of constant, independent activities of the mind and soul and placed humans at the peak of the universe instead of Allah. So he interpreted religion in accordance with

⁴ Ekrem Özbay, *Ergenlerde Allah ve Din İnancı*, p. 30

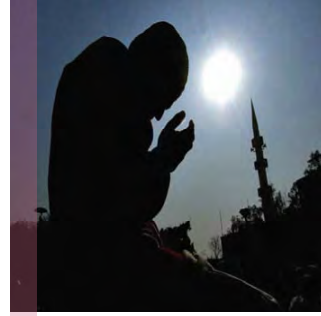
⁵ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 17

⁶ Mehmet Aydın, *Din Felsefesi*, p. 4

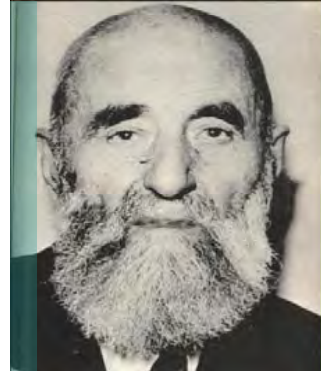
⁷ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 17

this philosophical mentality.⁸ As is evident in these and other similar examples, every scholar looked into religion from his own perspective.

Compared to the definitions of scholars of the religious sciences, definitions of Muslim scholars are closer to one another and they correspond more with the structure of religion. For instance, Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani defined religion as follows: “Religion is a divine law that calls able-minded people to accept things reported by the Prophet.”⁹ Elmalılı Muhammad Hamdi Yazir, on the other hand, said, “Religion is a divine law which directs able-minded people to goodness, which they accept with their own free will.”¹⁰ Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen clarified the subject with the following definition: “Religion is Allah’s law and corpus of some judgments, realities that He bestowed upon people through His prophets. This law guides people to goodness. As long as they respect judgments of this divine law with their own will, people can find the right path and reach safety and happiness both in this world and the hereafter.”¹¹ The definitions of the scholars of Islam convey approximately the same meaning. When these definitions are summarized, religion according to Islam is a divine law that guides able-minded, conscious people to good things with their own free will and desires.¹² One of the common points in these definitions is the emphasis on the divine origins of religion. Accordingly, the true religion cannot be man-made, and besides, the relationship between religion and free will and reason is emphasized. It has shown that religion is a matter of knowledge and preference. Finally, identifying religion as a system of law that guides people to goodness in terms of its essence indicates that religion is also connected with practice at the same time.¹³



Examine the photograph above and interpret the importance of religion in people's lives.



Ömer Nasuhi Bilmen (1883-1971)

LET'S NOTE

The following words were used in order to express religion: in Hebrew “*dat*”, meaning law and judgment, in Sanskrit “*sanatana dharma*”, meaning eternal and everlasting, in pre-Islamic Turkish “*darm*” or “*nom*”, in the majority of European languages and Latin “*religion*” in the meaning of “respect and accurateness”.

(Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 17; Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihinin Giriş*, p. 2)

⁸ Yünni Sezen, *Sosyoloji Açısından Din*, p. 25, 26; A. Adnan Adivar, *Tarih Boyunca İlim ve Din*, p. 329, 330

⁹ Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani, *Tarifat*, p. 72

¹⁰ Elmalılı Muhammad Hamdi Yazir, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 1, p. 83

¹¹ Omer Nasuhi Bilmen, *Büyük İslam İlmihali*, p. 5

¹² Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 18

¹³ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 9, p. 314

LET'S
COMPARE

Compare the definitions of religion of Muslim and Western scholars by considering their similarities and differences.

“The Qur’an basically mentions the existence of two religions for people. The first one of these is the religion of Islam, or, the religion of Allah, which was chosen and accepted by Allah for humankind. The second one is religion or religions other than Islam.”¹⁴ The Qur’anic approach to religion is more comprehensive than the above-mentioned definitions. For instance, in the Qur’an religions other than Islam were pointed out in the following verse: **“And whoever desires other than Islam as a religion - never will it be accepted from him, and he, in the Hereafter, will be among the losers.”**¹⁵

In this context, belief systems other than Islam can also be called “religions”. The sixth verse of *Surah al-Kafirun* (109) states that belief systems other than Islam even the polytheistic beliefs are called religion. When all these are considered, it is understood that the above-mentioned definitions are not comprehensive, but, rather, narrow-scope definitions of religion made by keeping the true religion in mind.

Definitions of religion made by the scholars of the religious sciences and by Muslim scholars do not seem to comprehend all religions in terms of their scope. Making a definition that includes all religions can only be possible by taking the essence of religion into account.

In order to make a definition of religion in terms of the elements constituting its essence, it is necessary to consider its structure and historical development. In that case, the necessity that becomes apparent is to pay attention to the stages of it being based on a holy book and its institutionalization. When the stage of basing it on a holy book is taken into consideration, religion is composed of the words of God or the founders of a religion (like Buddha) existing in holy texts. As can be seen by use of this definition, the orders and the holy texts that are the original source of religion are expressed. This definition is unique to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Hinduism. When the stage of institutionalization is taken into consideration, religion is a system of institutions constituted according to certain conditions of belief, behavior and social life. If it is closely examined, it can be seen that this definition describes the developmental period after the establishment of religion. Religion is not an unchanging, static phenomenon. Religion has a dynamic structure that generates solutions to every kind of problem with reference to core values; therefore, it constantly develops. If a general definition of religion with reference

¹⁴ Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 96

¹⁵ Al-i Imran, 3: 85

to those based on “the stages of the holy books and institutionalization” is made, then it can be along the following lines: “Religion is a system which aims to provide people with a happy life and is constituted from the words of God or the religion’s founder compiled in holy books, human behavior, and institutions developed in order to realize this aim.”¹⁶

LET’S CLASSIFY

Examine the elements constituting the essence of religions based on revelation (Judaism, Christianity and Islam).

- Belief in Allah
-
-

2. Views about the Origins of Religion

There are no historical documents other than holy books about the origins of religion or about when and how religion was born. So it is not possible to reach a definite conclusion about the beginnings and origin of religion through scientific methods.



Some social scientists in an effort to determine the origins of religion, however, have emerged and suggested several theories according to the data that they obtained. These theories were accepted for a period of time in the Western world and welcomed in the scientific world with joy. Nevertheless, they were then criticized and have been proven invalid. The views about the

¹⁶ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 18,19; Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 21

origins of religion can be evaluated by dividing them into two groups: the evolutionist view and the revelation-based view.¹⁷

2.1. The Evolutionist View

LET'S DISCUSS

1. Naturism (Max Müller, 1823-1900)
2. Animism (Edward Tylor, 1832-1917)
3. Ancestor Cult (Herbert Spencer, 1820-1903)
4. Totemism (Emile Durkheim, 1881-1917)
5. Monotheism (Wilhelm Schmidt, 1868-1954)

Find the meanings of the above-mentioned concepts and discuss them in the class.

Evolution refers to slowly occurring and succeeding change and development. The view that claims religions to have emerged in the process of time and developed based on various reasons (not on revelation) is called the evolutionist view.

Research about the origin of religion was intensified in the nineteenth century. Did religions evolve? Which religion was the first? These and other similar questions were posed and attempts were made at their answers. Five different schools emerged as a result of this research.¹⁸ Views other than the monotheist one defend the evolutionary development. According to many of these views, people turned to religion because of reasons such as fear, guilt, and respect for their ancestors.

The results of the research and observations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were interpreted in favor of the evolutionary theory. Evolutionists claimed that the mysteries of the human, life, nature, and living creatures could now be solved. Accordingly, religion was going to disappear from the scenes of human life and leave its place to science. But how was this going to happen? In order to prove that, in addition to biological evolution, human beings also evolve culturally, some anthropologists, ethnographers, sociologists and psychologists suggested different theories about the origin of

¹⁷ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 19; Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p. 15; Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 29

¹⁸ Kürşat Demirci, *Dinler Tarihinin Meseleleri*, p. 52

religion with reference to the beliefs of primitive tribes. This is due to the fact that they thought that the origin of religion could be found after investigating the religion and culture of tribes living a primitive life.¹⁹ For instance, in studies carried out within this scope, Edward Tylor claims that the beginning of religion was “animism”, for James George Frazer it was “magic”, for Marett it was “the concept of mana”, for Spencer it was the “cult of the ancestors”, and for Durkheim it was “totemism”.²⁰

In time, this excitement about evolutionist theory turned into disappointment, because evolutionary theories about the origins of religion began to be criticized. None of the evolutionary theorists had made observations or conducted research by going into the primitive tribes. They had grounded their theories on the memoirs of travelers and reports of missionaries. As a result, recent research made about primitive communities has shown that these theories are not consistent.

Lang and Schmidt are the leading supporters of monotheistic belief against evolutionary opinion regarding the origins of religion. According to their thesis the earliest human belief is monotheist creed.²¹

The first serious objection to the animistic theory of the evolutionist Tylor came from his student Andrew Lang. Lang, in light of recently gained information about the primitive tribes of South-East Australia, had shown that animism did not exist in primitive tribes. On the contrary, there existed the concept of an Almighty God existing in heaven that controls whether or not people obeyed moral principles. Wilhelm Schmidt defended another similar thesis. After his ethnological research among primitive tribes, Schmidt suggested that there was monotheistic understanding in the initial form of the religion. He argued his views in his book “*The origin and growth of religion: Facts and theories*.”²²

Prophets who led the tradition of *tawhid* (oneness of God) with their words and actions were sent to various regions and environments. While the ancient Indian and Chinese in the East and Greek thinkers in the West were presenting their thoughts with specific patterns, it is obvious that they were directly or indirectly affected by the tradition of *tawhid* with respect to concept and

¹⁹ Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 31, 32; Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 19,20

²⁰ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 20

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

²² Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 31; Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 18

principles.²³ Although the sources of their thoughts were based on the oneness of God, they brought forward several explanations about humans, nature, the universe, and God outside the limits of the principle of God's oneness. In order to redirect them back to the line of *tawhid*, Allah the Almighty sent His prophets in different periods of history. These messengers conveyed the general concept and principles, which were compatible with the nature of their societies through both verbal and practical means.²⁴

LET'S EVALUATE

"Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed. And none differed over the Scripture except those who were given it - after the clear proofs came to them - out of jealous animosity among themselves..."

(Baqarah, 2: 213)

Evaluate the conclusions of Wilhelm Schmidt and Lang in the light of the verse quoted above.

2.2. The Revelation-Based View

According to the revelation-based view about the source of religion, **religion** is the body of divine rules which was sent to the prophets chosen by Allah by means of revelation. According to the scholars of Islam, revelation is the absolute source of religion. Religion started with Prophet Adam and was sealed with the prophethood of Muhammad. Islam is the general name given to this religion.

LET'S THINK

"...And there was no nation but that there had passed within it a warner."

(Fatir, 35: 24)

"...You are only a warner, and for every people is a guide."

(Ra'd, 13: 7)

Think about the meaning of the above-mentioned verses by taking other religions into consideration.

²³ Hacı Mustafa Açıköz, *Tevhidi Kozmik Holizm Şüphe ve Eski Uygarlıklar*, p. 287

²⁴ Ibid., p. 169

In terms of their sources, Muslim scholars have classified religions into two groups as divine and human. Divine religions consist of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Although Judaism and Christianity are divine religions in terms of their sources, according to Muslims, people have altered them. Religions other than these three are accepted as having originated from people.²⁵

The Holy Qur'an explains that revelation is the source of religion. Allah explains in the Qur'an that He chose and charged Adam, Noah and Abraham as His messengers and they were descended from each other in the following way: **"Indeed, Allah chose Adam and Noah and the family of Abraham and the family of 'Imran over the worlds - Descendants, some of them from others. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."**²⁶ Moreover, in the one hundred and sixty third verse of *Surah al-Nisa* (4), Allah mentions that He revealed to Prophet Muhammad the same message that He sent to other prophets: **"Indeed, We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him. And we revealed to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, the Descendants, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David we gave the book [of Psalms]."**

The Qur'an encourages research about religion from a broader perspective. In the following verse, Allah states that He sent prophets to every nation: **"And we certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid Taghut (all false deities)...'"**²⁷

Verses of this kind indicate that religions that were not mentioned in the Qur'an, but are centuries old and have hundreds of thousands of members today, may be of divine origin. Although some religions that had existed throughout history for thousands of years and survived until today are based on revelation, some of them might have changed and become corrupted throughout history. Even if religions that were not based on revelation had been accepted for a certain period of time, most of them disappeared in the process of time.²⁸

Therefore, Allah is the source of religion. No human being can establish a religion, including the prophets. Allah sent many messengers to humanity as guides and exemplars. The last one of them is our Prophet Muhammad who is the last ring of the chain of *tawhid* (oneness of Allah). Since the prophets

²⁵ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 22

²⁶ Al-i Imran, 3: 33-34

²⁷ Nahl, 16: 36

²⁸ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 22

were sent to a certain region or society from the time of Adam, divine messages conveyed by the messengers were restricted to the people of that specific region and society, whereas Prophet Muhammad was sent to the whole of humanity. Therefore, the religion that was conveyed by him has universal characteristics.

3. Religion and Mythology

INFORMATION BOX

Myths are different from legends, sagas, stories and fables. In myths there is a sacred story. Their subjects were taken from the events which were lived and experienced in history. Myths relate stories in the style that people can understand, but metaphoric language and symbols are used to relate them.

(Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 23)



The Cave of Ashab al-Kahf (Tarsus)

Religion is a phenomenon that has come into being and existed side by side with human beings. It is both an individual and a social reality. It consists of divine rules, and has dominated individuals and societies in every period of history and in every corner of the world. It came into existence before all kinds of philosophical and scholarly ideas, and directed people's lives.²⁹ Allah, who created people, made religion in order for man to live according to the aim of creation. However, religion was beneficial to people as long as it was preserved in its original form. When it moved away from its structure and deviated from its aim, it prevented man from living in accordance with the aim of his creation.³⁰

The most important of the major factors that cause religion to distance itself from its main structure and aim are "myths". So what are myths? The word "myth", which was borrowed from the Greek word "*mythos*", means story and fable. Mythologies are the stories of the formation of the universe, gods and heroes. Mythology is a discipline that includes all legends and examines them in a certain way. Mythology deals with the subjects of legends: first death, original sin, the flood, how gods punish people, how hunting and stockbreeding started, how the first fire was lit, and how the first family was formed. The ones reflecting religious dimensions are considered sacred.³¹

²⁹ Osman Pazarlı, *Din Psikolojisi*, p. 31

³⁰ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 22, 23

³¹ Günay Tümer and Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 46; Bahaddin Ögel, *Türk Mitolojisi*, vol. 1, p. 7

According to the assessments of psychologists and anthropologists, myths will always continue to exist even if people are not conscious of them. Some myths carry meaningful messages for humans. By their nature, human beings are curious about everything. Most of the time, they try to understand the events they could not explain with myths.³²

On the other hand, members of religious groups can transfer some religious issues into *mythos*. For instance Allah tells the story of *Ashab al-Kahf* (The Companions of Cave) in the Qur'an, but there is no detail in the story about the place, time and number. The verse **"They will say there were three, the fourth of them being their dog; and they will say there were five, the sixth of them being their dog - guessing at the unseen; and they will say there were seven, and the eighth of them was their dog. Say, [O Muhammad], "My Lord is most knowing of their number. None knows them except a few..."**³³ informs that different numbers regarding the *Ashab al-Kahf* will be debated about, but the real number is known only by Allah. Despite this, people produced stories about the *Ashab al-Kahf* in relation to the numbers of individuals, even their names, which religion they belonged to, the name of the dog with them, its color, type and to whom it belonged.³⁴ These stories were explained in the books of *tafsir* in detail, and as a result of those interpretations, sacred visiting places attributed to the *Ashab al-Kahf* appeared in many places, like Tarsus and Afshin. People make vows and wishes when visiting such places. Nevertheless, this is the most dangerous side of myths. When mythology turns into faith and acts of worship, corruption in religion starts. Mythology that remains as sacred stories and does not become religious belief and worship is harmless, and may even sometimes become beneficial.³⁵



Examine the symbols and the pictures above and indicate which belief system they each represent.

³² Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 23

³³ Kahf, 18: 22

³⁴ Abdullah Aydemir, *Tefsirde İsrailiyat*, p. 177, 178

³⁵ Baki Adam and Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 24

Myths are derived from religion. They are both absorbed into it and survive by means of it. This is why people gain spiritual satisfaction from myths. When religion weakens, myths predominate, and, if no precaution is taken, in time they can take the place of religion, which is a serious problem for the latter.³⁶

As a result, religion and mythology have similarities and differences. The different aspects can be mentioned as follows: myths are products based on human imagination with reference to some historical events and derived from religion. Religion, on the other hand, is based on the revelations of God. The concepts of *Tawhid* (the oneness of God), *nubuwwah* (prophethood) and the hereafter constitute the essence of religion. There is no such essence in myths however. Gods are described in concrete ways in myths, but, in religion, god is an abstract being. Religion comes to prophets through revelation and prophets convey religion to the people. At the same time, religion brings legal regulations and responsibilities by which people must abide. There is no legal regulatory side in myths. Moreover, there are many gods in myths, and from time to time these gods fight and annihilate each other.

Aspects of similarity between religion and myths are as follows: people believe in myths (belief); both religion and myths have some practical sides (worship); they both provide psychological satisfaction (inner peace) and people attribute sanctity (majesty) to them.

LET'S MAKE A LIST

Make a list about the differences between religion and mythology.

- God is the source of religion, whereas humans are the source of mythology.

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-

4. The Place and Importance of Religion in Human Life

Religion is a discipline seen in every period and in every society, enveloping

³⁶ Baki Adam, İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi, p. 23

man both inside and outside, revealing itself through his thoughts and behavior. People have always thought that they should turn towards a power that transcends them.³⁷ Although people create an authoritative structure around their environment by means of reason and skills, when they face a problem beyond their power they become helpless. They seek being saved by a powerful hand, and to be under its protection. On the other hand, they would like to have a power that lightens the feeling of guilt caused by their mistakes and forgives them. It is not possible for human beings to satisfy all their desires within the limits of the material universe. Every person may be confronted with problems or emotional burdens, which no material power can help with. All these circumstances compel people to believe and turn to an absolute and omnipotent transcendent being. When the Qur'an mentions the people who do not believe in *tawhid* in the following verse, it emphasizes how they turn to Allah and ask for His help when they are helpless: **"It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a stormy wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating Allah, sincere to Him in religion, "If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful."**³⁸ Thus, the Qur'an emphasizes that all people, believer or unbeliever, have the need to seek refuge and ask for help from an omnipotent being.³⁹

People's affiliation with a supreme power makes them more powerful. Praying, saying supplications, and turning towards a supreme being give them dignity. "People reach maturity with their love for Allah and their respect for Him which arises from this love. This love gives them a strong will and character. The amount of virtuous behavior increases in societies where such people live."⁴⁰ Religion inculcates in people the belief that they are the slaves of neither their instincts nor the material world surrounding them. It reminds people that they do not enjoy an infinite freedom. People submit themselves only to Allah, who is the Owner of everything, and do not become enslaved by selfish emotions and their baser natures. This inculcation of religion bestows upon human beings their real freedom and independence.⁴¹

LET'S INTERPRET

"Neither Wisdom nor conscience is the thing that gives highness to morality,

From the fear of God comes Man's sense of grace."

Mehmet Akif Ersoy

Interpret the main idea of the poem above.

³⁷ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 36

³⁸ Yunus, 10: 22

³⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 31

⁴⁰ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 37

⁴¹ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 9, p. 317

LET'S MAKE A LIST

What kind of important contributions does religion have on human life? Make a list.

-
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As religion is a factor that gathers people around a sacred emotion, common consciousness, and conscience, it is also an institution that elevates societies and provides them with the means to develop. Religion, as a discipline surrounding, embracing, and leading people inwardly, is stronger than the most perfect laws and regulations. The weakening of religion can cause an increase in moral and legal crimes, because morality's sanctioning power cannot exist without religion.

In addition to being a social being, human beings also have an inner world. "Religion is the only source of consolation for people against loneliness, desperation, fear, suffering, illnesses, problems and disasters."⁴² Moreover, it is known that religious activities take people away from unnecessary and harmful anxieties, and thus protect them from psychological depression. Obeying Allah develops moral emotions such as respect to one's parents and elders, loyalty to the state and nation, and treating children with love and compassion.

Religion's presentation of the hereafter makes people realize their earthly and otherworldly responsibilities. It contributes to their moral development and decreases the negative influences of fear of death on human psychology, because belief in the hereafter responds to the existing sense of eternity. The idea of reaching eternal peace by redeeming oneself from problems as well as gaining Allah's pleasure leads people to feel the joy of living and gives them the strength to confront the miseries of this world. Since temporary worldly desires do not satisfy the soul of man, religion brings him the highest spiritual delights.⁴³ No matter how much someone fulfills his material needs, it is very

⁴² Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 37

⁴³ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 9, p. 317

difficult for a person to acquire inner peace if he does not satisfy his spiritual needs through religion. The high levels of depression seen in societies that only fulfill their members' material needs demonstrate this situation.⁴⁴

When the history of civilization is analyzed, it immediately attracts attention to what a deep and broad effect religion has had on the spiritual and intellectual development of humanity. When the divine revelation was conveyed and inculcated by the prophets, people gained nobler and loftier thoughts by putting an end to their bad habits. The ideal life commanded by religion should be lived in this world and gained under the conditions of this world.

Religion has an important place in the spiritual and moral development of human beings. Religion saves people from not having principles, irregularities, and idleness. In fact, religion forbids the holding of grudges and hate, taking revenge and the shedding of blood. On the other hand, religion inspires love, respect and kindness. Nevertheless, the existence of negative feelings and tendencies in some faithful people originate from misunderstanding their religion.⁴⁵

Religion reveals itself in every field of social life. Religious motives and idioms are always attractive features in architecture, aesthetics, art, literature, and for the names of people and places, as well as being used in traditions, customs and manners, in the political, juridical, social, cultural, financial and touristic fields. This indicates that religion takes a part in every aspect of our life.

LET'S BRAINSTORM

Brainstorm about the importance of religion with regards to human life. Make a list of your ideas.

LET'S DISCUSS

People are always in search of meaning. They ask themselves questions such as "Who am I, why was I created, where will I go, what is good and right, what is fair and good, what will come after this life?" Here religion helps people find answers and enlightens them about these and other similarly important questions, for which human reason and science looks for an answer.

How does religion make people's lives meaningful? Discuss it.

⁴⁴ Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p. 20

⁴⁵ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 9, p. 318

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What are the different aspects of religion and mythology? Explain.
2. What is the evolutionist view about the sources of religion?
3. Why could a common definition about religion not be made?
4. Under which circumstances do myths harm religion? Explain.
5. Describe the importance of religion in our lives.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following people attributed the source of religion to magic?

- A) Wilhelm Schmidt
- B) Max Müller
- C) Andrew Lang
- D) Emile Durkheim
- E) James George Frazer

2. Which one of the following words defines legends being investigated by using a certain method?

- A) Myth
- B) Mythos
- C) Mythology
- D) Story
- E) Fable

3. According to the revelation-based view, which one of the following choices is the source of religion?

- A) Totem
- B) Sense
- C) Animism
- D) God
- E) Magic

4. Which one of the following theologians defended monotheism?

- A) A. Lang
- B) E. Durkheim
- C) Max Müller
- D) J.G. Frazer
- E) S. Freud

5. Which one of the following choices was not mentioned in the definitions of religion offered by Muslim scholars?

- A) It is a divine law.
- B) People choose it with their free will.
- C) Humans should be intellectual.
- D) It should guide people to the good, right and beautiful.
- E) Every person should believe.

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(spiritual, philological, own will and desires, eternity, evolution, belief systems)

1. Belief in the hereafter is also important in terms of responding to the sense of..... in the human.
2. Religion is a divine law which guides intelligent and conscious people to good things with their.....
3. Max Müller tried to base the source of religion on the first heavenly revelation with..... methods.
4. In the Qur'an it is stated that..... in which even polytheists believed were called religion.
5. The..... emptiness in people can only be filled by religion.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) No matter how long we go back in history, we cannot find a society without religious beliefs.
2. (...) Every discipline that takes religion as a subject of investigation and research starts with a definition of religion that serves its objects best.
3. (...) According to Islamic scholars, revelation is the absolute source of religion.
4. (...) Evolutionist theoreticians made observations and investigations about primitive tribes.
5. (...) Religion is a phenomenon that affects people internally.



Chapter

RELIGIONS BASED ON REVELATION

RELIGIONS BASED ON REVELATION

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Find information about the locations of Egypt, the Red Sea and Israel by examining a map of the Middle East.
2. Obtain information about the importance of Anatolia in the history of Christianity.
3. Research the differing aspects of Islamic belief as compared to Judaism and Christianity.
4. By looking at an atlas, find the geographical expansion of Islam and research religions that existed in this geography.
5. If there are places of worship of different religions in your neighborhood, write down your observations about these places.

1. The Tradition of Revelation

The concept of *wahy* (revelation) has an important place in Judaism. The sacred book of Judaism, i.e. the Torah, was revealed to Prophet Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of tablets. God sent Prophet Moses to the pharaoh in order to save the children of Israel from Egypt. Therefore, He enabled several miracles to be performed through Prophet Moses.¹ The revelation of God to Prophet Moses continued throughout his desert journey until his death. After the death of Prophet Moses, the tradition of revelation continued with the prophets who were sent to the children of Israel.² This tradition demonstrates that Allah had actually sent only one religion.

¹ *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Exodus, 4: 1-31

² *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Joshua, 1: 1-17

LET'S
INTERPRET

“...Allah named you “Muslims” before [in former scriptures] and in this [revelation]...”

(Hajj 22: 78)

Interpret the verse above in relation to the process of revelatory tradition.

It is believed that the chapters of the sacred book of Christianity, i.e. the New Testament, were written down as a result of the inspiration given to its writers by Jesus. The Catholic denomination of Christianity propounds that the tradition of revelation is still on going in the institution of the Church.³

According to Islamic understanding, information sent by Allah to the prophets to be conveyed to people is called *wahy* (revelation).⁴ Prophets received this information from Allah in different ways. This is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: “**And it is not for any human being that Allah should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a partition or that He sends a messenger to reveal, by His permission, what He wills. Indeed, He is Most High and Wise.**”⁵

The Qur'an calls the religious tradition based on revelation to the prophets, starting with Prophet Adam until Prophet Muhammad, Islam.⁶ According to Islam, Allah does not leave people untethered, but, rather, He ordained Adam, the first human being, as the first prophet so that he would inform people how to behave. It is informed in the following verses that in every period the message of Allah was conveyed to the people: “**And We certainly sent to every nation a messenger**”⁷ and “**Mankind was [of] one religion [before their deviation]; then Allah sent the prophets as bringers of good tidings and warners and sent down with them the Scripture in truth to judge between the people concerning that in which they differed.**”⁸

Islam is the essence of these religions, which were sent by Allah through the prophets to the people, and all of them are based on revelation. As Judaism and Christianity are religions based on revelation, the Qur'an considers them falsified religions.⁹ It is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: “**.... They distort words from their [proper] usages and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded....**”¹⁰

³ Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 381

⁴ Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 380

⁵ Shura, 42: 51

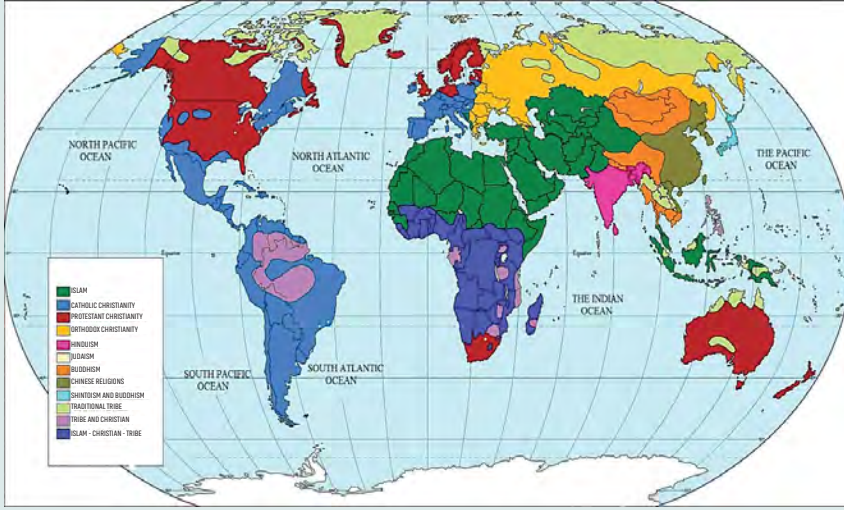
⁶ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 203

⁷ Nahl, 16: 36

⁸ Baqarah, 2: 213

⁹ Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p. 64

¹⁰ Ma'idah, 5: 13



The map shows the regions in which different religions spread across the globe.

2. Judaism

Judaism is a religion that started with the revelation that descended upon Prophet Moses in 15 BCE and then spread. Jews are frequently mentioned in the Qur'an. Judaism is comprised of the history of a nation identified with the Promised Land, a common belief, language and literature. The basic precondition of being a Jew is to be born from Jewish parents, or at least to be born from a Jewish mother. In this respect, the concept of Judaism contains a wide range of meanings which express belonging to a certain race, culture and religion. Jews particularly live in Israel and besides, in America and other regions of the world.

2.1. The Terms Jew, Hebrew and Israel

Throughout history, Jews have been known by various names. Hebrew, Israel and Jew are the most prominent ones.

Jew: This term appeared when the Children of Israel were in exile in Babylon. The native population of Babylon called the Children of Israel "Jews", which meant the "people of Judah" after the name of their land Judah. The Children of Israel themselves adopted and generally used this name.¹¹

¹¹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 29

LET'S DISCUSS

In the year 586 BCE, Jews were exiled to Babylon after the fall of the Jewish Kingdom. In the year 539 BCE, the Persian Emperor Cyrus allowed them to return to Palestine. Some of the Jews agreed to return to Palestine, while others preferred to stay in Babylon. The Jews experienced the first setback in their history with this exile. This process, which lasted about half a century, is called the Babylonian Exile.

(Mehmet Aydın, *Ansiklopedik Dinler Tarihi*, p. 80)

What kind of changes did the Babylonian Exile cause in Judaism? Discuss with your friends.

Hebrew: This is the term used for a tribe living a nomadic lifestyle in Palestine in the fifteenth century BCE. It means “people of the other side”¹², which refers to the nomads that come from beyond the rivers of Euphrates and Jordan. The native population of Palestine gave this name to the Jews.¹³

Israel: This is the nickname of Prophet Jacob. According to the Torah, one night Prophet Jacob encountered a man and wrestled with him until daybreak. At daybreak the man blessed Jacob and gave him the name “Israel” which means “he who struggles with God”.¹⁴ After the appellation of the Prophet Jacob, the Jews were named the “Children of Israel”.¹⁵ After Prophet Solomon, this nickname became the name of the state established in the north. And the state founded in Palestine in 1948 was also called by the very same name.¹⁶

In the Qur'an, the appellation of *Bani Isra'il* (Children of Israel) is mentioned in several verses. In these verses, the favors that Allah bestowed upon the Children of Israel are mentioned. And it is also narrated in the Qur'an how the Children of Israel were betrayed in spite of all of Allah's blessings.

2.2. The Birth and the Development of Judaism

The history of Judaism started with Prophet Abraham. According to Jewish belief, Prophet Abraham was the first Jew. According to the Torah, Prophet Abraham was born in the city of Ur, where Chaldeans lived. His father Terah

¹² *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Genesis, 14/73

¹³ Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p. 66

¹⁴ *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Genesis, 32/22

¹⁵ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 29

¹⁶ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 224

(according to the Islamic source Azar) migrated to Harran and took his family along. Later, God commanded Prophet Abraham to go to the land of Canaan. Therefore, taking his family along, Abraham travelled there. After the appearance of a drought in Canaan, Abraham went to Egypt and then returned to the land of Canaan.¹⁷



The map that shows Prophet Abraham's journey with his family.

Abraham and Sarah, who had aged, still did not have any children. Sarah, feeling uncomfortable about the situation, suggested to Abraham that he marry his bondswoman, Hajar. From the marriage of Abraham and Hajar, Ishmael was born. The birth of Ishmael made Sarah jealous. Then Sarah also had a child by the name of Isaac. Having Isaac increased Sarah's jealousy towards Hajar and her son Ishmael. Thereupon, Abraham took Hajar and their son Ishmael to the Desert of Paran, located in the Arabian Peninsula, in order to defuse tension. Prophet Ishmael settled there and became the ancestor of the Arabs.¹⁸

According to the Torah, Prophet Isaac who was the other son of Prophet Abraham also had two sons. One of them, Prophet Jacob, became prominent in the history of Judaism by using the name Israel.¹⁹

Prophet Jacob revered Joseph the most among his children. This situation made Joseph's brothers jealous of him. As a result, they threw him into a well.

¹⁷ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 30

¹⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 210

¹⁹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 30

Then a camel caravan passing by took him to Egypt and sold him to Potiphar who was an officer of the Pharaoh. Potiphar's wife fell in love with Joseph but he refused her and she slandered him and sent him to prison.²⁰ While he was in prison, he interpreted one of Pharaoh's dreams and then the Pharaoh released him from prison and put him in charge of an important responsibility. Later, he brought his father and brothers from Palestine to Egypt. That is how the Children of Israel settled in Egypt. However, after Joseph's death, the situation changed in Egypt. The new Pharaoh began to enslave the Children of Israel. Thus, the Children of Israel stayed there as slaves for four hundred years.²¹

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Torah, the lineage of Jews continued through the twelve sons of Prophet Jacob.

While the Children of Israel were living in Egypt as slaves, the Pharaoh had a dream. Soothsayers who interpreted the dream said that a boy was going to be born among the Children of Israel and seize the Pharaoh's throne. This news concerned the Pharaoh and so he ordered all the newborn boys from the Children of Israel to be killed. Moses was born in that year and his mother placed him in a basket and left it on the Nile River. The Pharaoh's daughter then found the basket in the river. They could not kill him out of compassion and decided to raise him as an adopted child in the palace.²² Thus, Moses grew up in the Pharaoh's palace, one of the most powerful emperors in the world at that time.²³

INFORMATION BOX

Pharaoh is a title given to the rulers of ancient Egypt. According to ancient Egyptian belief, only the Pharaoh provided the rising of the sun and the Nile. He was the sole representative of the people in the presence of the gods. He was regarded as the son of the god Re. In addition, he was accepted as the head of state enjoying great power.

The struggle of Moses and the Pharaoh is mentioned in the Qur'an in detail. It was claimed that Ramses II was the Pharaoh during the time of Moses. According to the Qur'an, the Pharaoh was a perverse person who had declared himself a god, but he later perished due to Allah's wrath. He embraced Islam with his last breath but his faith was not accepted.

(Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihi Sözlüğü*, p. 236; Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 131)

Why do you think the pyramids for pharaohs in Egypt were built so magnificently? Discuss with your friends.



²⁰ *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Genesis, 39/20

²¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 211

²² *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Exodus, 2/ 5-10

²³ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 225

One day, Moses, who grew up in the Pharaoh's palace, went into the city. While he was walking around, he saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew. Moses interfered in order to help the Hebrew man. He hit and accidentally killed the Egyptian. Fearing Pharaoh's punishment, he fled from Egypt and went to the land of Midian. There he started to work with Jethro, and, after a while, he married Jethro's daughter.²⁴

One day when Moses was grazing Jethro's sheep, God spoke to him from inside a burning bush in Mount Horeb. God gave him the mission of saving the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt.²⁵ And God appointed his brother Aaron as his helper. This is also the beginning of prophethood mission of Moses.²⁶

After accepting this mission from God, Prophet Moses returned to Egypt in order to lead the Children of Israel to the homeland of their ancestors. He asked the Pharaoh to set his people free and let them leave Egypt. But the Pharaoh would not agree. After this, Egypt faced many disasters.²⁷ The native population of Egypt, believing that these disasters originated from refusing to allow the Children of Israel to leave Egypt, asked the Pharaoh to relent. Prophet Moses then left Egypt with the Children of Israel and they arrived in Sinai after three months. There, God revealed the Ten Commandments to Moses, which constitute the basic principles of Judaism and which were written on two tablets on Mount Sinai. After receiving this revelation, Prophet Moses set out with the Children of Israel to go to the land that was promised to their ancestors.²⁸

Over the course of the journey, the Children of Israel gave Moses a difficult time by frequently rebelling against him.²⁹ God punished them many times because of these rebellions. The greatest punishment they received was having to wander in the desert for forty years. During his prophethood, Moses collected the revelation sent by God into a book and this book, together with the two tablets, into the Ark of the Covenant. The Children of Israel always took the Ark of the Covenant with them during their migrations. When Prophet Moses

LET'S RESEARCH

Research the reasons the Pharaoh did not let Prophet Moses and his people, the Children of Israel, leave Egypt.

²⁴ *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Exodus, 2/25, 26

²⁵ *The Hebrew Bible*, Book of Exodus, 3/1

²⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 211

²⁷ *The Hebrew Bible*, Exodus, 8/16

²⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 212

²⁹ *The Hebrew Bible*, Exodus, 32/1-6

was one hundred and twenty, he died in Moab (the part of the Desert of Sinai near Palestine) and was buried there.³⁰

To a great extent, Judaism was formed during the prophethood of Moses. Rules about creed, acts of worship, morality and law were established.³¹

After the death of Moses, Joshua became the leader of the Israelite tribes. During the migration to the Holy Land, Joshua became not only the leader of the Israelites but also their prophet.³² After Joshua, the Children of Israel lived without a leader for a while. Then Samuel was sent to them as a prophet. Upon the insistence of the Children of Israel, Samuel appointed Saul (Talut) as their king. During the reign of Saul, the Children of Israel fought fierce wars with nearby tribes. David showed great successes in these wars and helped the Children of Israel gain victories.³³

David conquered Jerusalem, made it the capital and wanted to build a large temple there. But God revealed to David that the temple was going to be built by his son Solomon.³⁴

After David died, his son Solomon took his place. As was promised by God, Solomon built the temple on mount Moriah in Jerusalem. With the construction of this temple, the period of the First Temple began in the history of Judaism. This temple, which was called Beit Hamikdash, is known as *Bait al-Maqdis* (Sacred House) in the Islamic tradition.³⁵

LET'S DISCUSS

The Promised Land is the land promised by God to the ancestors of the Jews. They are mentioned in the Torah as follows: "When the Lord brings you into the land of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Hivites and Jebusites the land he swore to your ancestors to give you, a land flowing with milk and honey, you are to observe this ceremony in this month. For seven days eat bread made without yeast and on the seventh day hold a festival to the Lord."

(The Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 13: 5-6)

How did the idea of the Promised Land affect the religious perception of Jews?
Discuss with your friends.

³⁰ The Hebrew Bible, Deuteronomy, 34/6

³¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 213

³² The Hebrew Bible, Numbers, 28/15

³³ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 213

³⁴ The Hebrew Bible, Samuel I, 17/50

³⁵ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 214

After the death of Solomon, the Children of Israel split into two kingdoms, with Israel in the north and Judah in the south. The northern kingdom converted to paganism. The king of Israel, Jeroboam, made two golden calves and encouraged the Jews to worship them.³⁶ Jeroboam announced that these idols were the gods who helped the Children of Israel to escape from Egypt and he abolished the Torah. This kingdom whose people turned to idolatry was destroyed, and the Assyrians sent its people into in 722 BCE.³⁷ From there emerged the legend of the Lost Ten Tribes.

LET'S COMPARE

According to the Jewish Holy Book, Prophet David is considered a great king. He is considered a virtuous and wise person but not accepted as a prophet. During his reign, the Children of Israel lived their most magnificent period. Throughout history, the Jews have waited for a Messiah who would be descended from the line of Prophet David, and who would come and save them and reestablish that magnificent kingdom in the Holy Land. Despite the establishment of an independent State of Israel in 1948, religiously observant Jews are still waiting for the arrival of the Messiah.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 214)

Compare the Islamic and Jewish points of view regarding Prophet David.

The Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BCE demolished the Kingdom of Judah and the temple in Jerusalem was destroyed. Thus, the First Temple period which had started under the reign of Solomon ended.³⁸

The Children of Israel returned to Jerusalem after seventy years of Babylonian Exile. Under the leadership of Ezra they rebuilt the temple and started to practice the laws they could not during the exile. Thus began the Second Temple period of Judaism.

The Second Temple period continued until the year 70 CE. In this period, Judaism entered the process of its development as a religion.

³⁶ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 233

³⁷ Baki Adam, *Yahudi Kaynaklarına Göre Tevrat*, p. 108

³⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 214

LET'S DISCUSS

Ezra, who is an important figure in the history and tradition of Judaism, was not a prophet. But he had a more important place than that of prophethood. Jewish religious scholars, or rabbis, compared him to Moses and claimed that he deserved to receive the Torah just like Moses did. According to the rabbis, if Moses had not lived before Ezra, the Torah would have been given to Ezra.

Ezra became a prominent figure in the history of Judaism after the Babylonian Exile. Ezra, known as the master writer of the Torah, led the process of the reconstruction of the temple. These revolutionary activities by Ezra re-systematized Judaism. After returning from Babylon nearly eight centuries after Moses, Ezra rewrote the Torah together with its oral interpretation, which had been completely forgotten among the Jews living in the lands of Israel.

Apart from the regulations regarding the Torah, Ezra carried out other important projects. He changed the first month of the year to the month of Tishri as a reminder of the exodus from Babylon instead of the month of Nisan, which was a reminder of the exodus from Egypt. Another one of Ezra's important reforms was to forbid marriage between a Jew and non-Jew. He also asked the Jews married to non-Jews to divorce their foreign spouses. Thus, Ezra reorganized the Children of Israel in terms of ethnic priorities and played an essential role in the historical development of Judaism which is an ethnic religion centered on the Children of Israel. Moreover he re-implemented Jewish customs and ceremonies. Through these reforms, Ezra played a crucial role in the formation of the current structure of Judaism.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 215, 216)

Discuss Ezra's contributions to Judaism with your friends.

DID YOU KNOW?

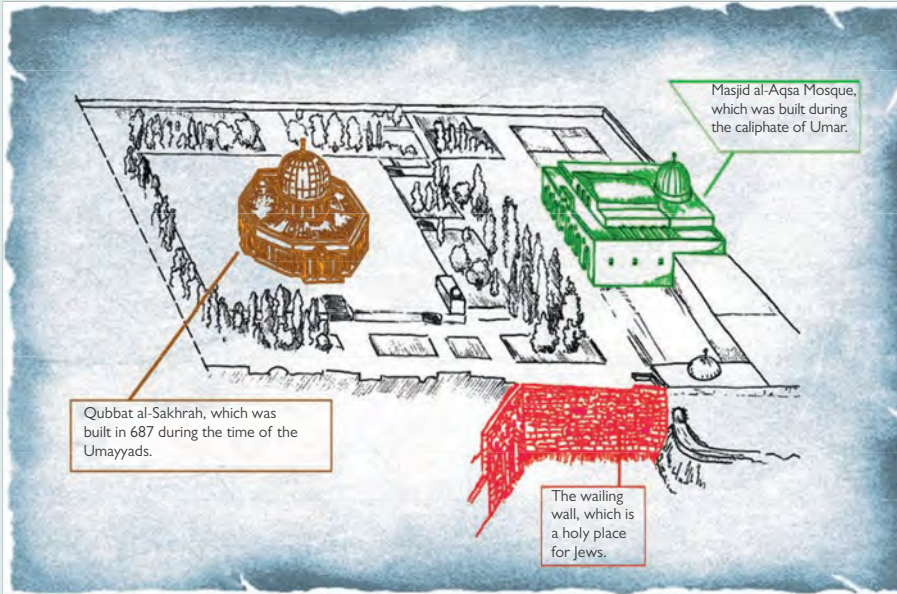
Jews did not have an independent state from 587 BCE until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

In the early days of Christianity, there was disorder in Palestine, where the Jews lived. Jews who lived under Roman rule were under political and religious pressure. Due to Jewish rebellions, the Romans occupied Jerusalem in the year 70 CE and demolished the temple which had been built after the Babylonian Exile, and some Jews were sent into exile.³⁹

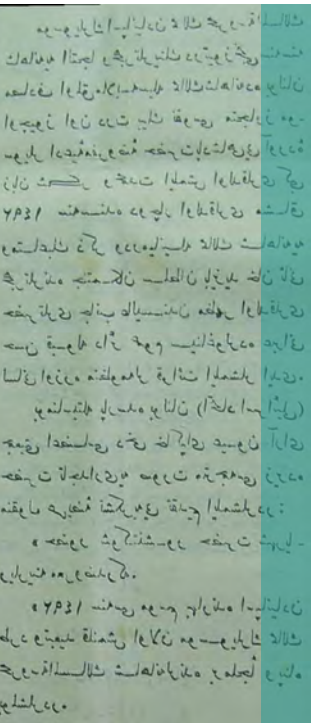
Even after the destruction of the temple, Jews could not save themselves from Roman persecution. This situation continued until the arrival of the Muslims to the region in 636 during the caliphate of Umar (634-644 CE). During this period, under the protection of the Muslims, Jews lived in relative safety in the region of Palestine. Although they faced persecution from Christians during the Crusades, after the Salahuddin Ayyubi's re-conquest of the region they had a comfortable life in Jerusalem.

³⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 221

The state of the Jews in Europe in the Middle Ages differed from country to country. They experienced the most peaceful period in Europe during the Cordoba Caliphate, under the protection of Muslims. However, after the end of the Muslims' control over this region, they had to confront persecution from Christians and were subjected to forceful evangelization. The Ottoman Sultan Bayezid II offered refuge to the Jews who faced persecution and allowed them to settle in Istanbul in 1492. Special laws were enacted regarding Jews in Europe who were accused of stealing the Eucharist, which represents the body of Jesus, poisoning water fountains, and killing Christian children for purposes of worship. In almost every period of their history, Jews have faced persecution and were forced into exile by countries such as Germany and Russia.⁴⁰



⁴⁰ Ekrem Sarıncıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 240



LET'S EVALUATE

Because it coincided with the 400th year of migration of Jews from Spain to the Ottoman Empire, more than 314,000 Jews living in the Ottoman Empire extend their thanks to the Sultan. At the same time they read poems in Hebrew in all the synagogues in thanks for the kind reception which they received from Sultan Bayezid II in 1492.

In this respect members of the Israeli Union Organization in Paris expressed their thanks to Sultan Abdulhamid II, the translation of which appears below:

"This is presented to his esteemed highness. Jews who were exiled from Spain in the spring of 1492 took refuge in the Ottoman Empire.

During those days Jews were honored with the protection of the Ottoman Empire while they were under persecution in other parts of the world and they continued to benefit from this protection until today and continued to improve their lives. Despite the fact that the Jews were unable to give thanks for all of these favors, they will try to show that they are worthy of this protection."

Beyazit State Library, Periodicals Section, Sabah Newspaper, 24 April 1892 (26 Ramadan 1309)

Evaluate the tolerance and patronage that was offered by the Ottomans to the Jews in the light of the text given above. The original document is shown on the left.

2.3. Basic Characteristics of Judaism

There are some characteristics of Judaism that distinguish it from Islam, Christianity, and other world religions such as the idea of being God's chosen people, the Holy Land, temple, and the notion of the messiah.

The idea of being God's chosen people: According to Jewish beliefs, God made a covenant with their ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and chose their lineage as a special nation for Himself. That is why God always helped them throughout history. He charged Moses to lead the Jews out of their captivity in Egypt and also intervened with their emancipation. He did not give the holy book the Torah to other nations but sent it to the Jews whom He accepted as His chosen nation. Throughout history, the notion of being the chosen people has distinguished the Jews from other nations. Jews have protected their national and religious identities against all kinds of pressure and coercion with the help of this belief. Because of this, they founded an independent Jewish State in 1948 after the exile, which took place nearly two thousand years ago.⁴¹

⁴¹ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 48

The Holy Land: Unlike other religions, Judaism has become integrated with a certain land. The most basic institutions and rules of Judaism have been identified and shaped in accordance with these lands. Judaism cannot be observed independently of the lands that were chosen and promised by God. Except for those who are imposed forceful exile, Jews who are observant of the commandments of the Torah have an obligation to live in that land. Jewish religious scholars regard Jews who have the means but do not live in the Holy Land as rebels who disobey the commandments of the Torah.

According to Jewish religious tradition, Jerusalem, located in the Holy Land, is the center of the world. Resurrection after death will take place there. On the day of resurrection, Jews buried in different parts of the world will come to the Holy Land through underground tunnels and will be resurrected there.

The Temple: Judaism is at the same time a temple-centered religion. Most worships in Judaism must be performed in the temple. And this temple is not an ordinary Jewish temple built in countries around the world but the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem. God determined its location, and King Solomon built it upon God's command.⁴² According to the Jews, the name of this temple is *Beit-Hamikdash*. The only remaining part of the Temple of Solomon, which was demolished many times throughout history and finally totally destroyed in 70 CE, is the Western Wall, which is important for Jews today. They wail in front of this wall because of the destruction of the temple and invoke God for the reconstruction of the temple.

DID YOU KNOW?

Sacrifice, which is a religious duty in Judaism, is not performed today. Because according to Judaism, sacrifice can only be fulfilled in the Holy Temple. Because the only remaining part of the Holy Temple of Solomon is the Western Wall, which is seen in the picture, this form of worship has been suspended.

The Notion of the Messiah: In the Jewish religious texts, the term Messiah is used for people or kings who were appointed to a specific mission.⁴³ The Jewish people's expectations for the arrival of the Messiah became apparent after the invasion of Jerusalem and destruction of the Holy Temple by the

LET'S DISCUSS

Why are the Palestinian territories important in terms of Judaism?

Discuss with your friends.



⁴² The Hebrew Bible, Kings I, 5/5

⁴³ The Hebrew Bible, Leviticus, 3/4; Samuel I, 24/6

INFORMATION BOX

In Hebrew, which is the language of the Jewish people, Messiah means anointed and blessed one.

Romans in 70 CE. In addition to destroying the Temple, the Romans oppressed the Jewish people by destroying their religious institutions. Jews who could not recover after the destruction of the Temple lived in other countries until 1948. This situation led to the emergence of the belief in a Messiah who will be a descendant of David, have supernatural powers, and rescue the Jewish people.⁴⁴

2.4. Ten Basic Principles of Judaism: The Ten Commandments

Three months after fleeing the persecution of the Pharaoh and their exodus from Egypt, Moses and the Children of Israel arrived in Sinai. Then Moses left his tribe and went to Mount Sinai, which was shown to him by God. He fasted and prayed there for forty days. Later he was given the Ten Commandments consisting of the principles of belief and behavior that should be obeyed by his people.⁴⁵

According to Jewish belief, the Ten Commandments are the basic principles of Judaism. The first four commandments state the foundations on which man's relationship with God will be based.⁴⁶

LET'S RESEARCH

The Ten Commandments in Judaism consist of the following:

- I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
- You shall have no other gods before Me.
- You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.
- You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
- Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor the stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

⁴⁴ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 37

⁴⁵ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 227

⁴⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 212

- Honor your father and your mother.
- You shall not murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's.

Read the principles of Ten Commandments above and research the similar and different aspects of them in Islam and Christianity.

2.5. Judaism in the Contemporary World

The Jewish world has also been affected by changes brought about by the French Revolution (1789). After the revolution, attitudes against the Jews changed in Europe and they attained some level of well being, which, on the one hand, affected the religious understanding of Jews, and, on the other, the non-arrival of the Messiah who they had expected for so many years dashed their hopes. Therefore, European Jews decided to live by the requirements of the countries in which they lived, which led them to reconsider their traditional understanding of Judaism. Because the traditional understanding of Judaism was not compatible with the modern challenges, Orthodox, Conservative, and Liberal Judaism emerged in order to adapt Judaism to the circumstances of the period.⁴⁷

Today, the most common denominations within Judaism are Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Orthodox Judaism is a traditional understanding of Judaism originating from the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem (70 CE) up until today. In the opinion of Orthodox Jews, the Torah is the divine book dictated by God to Moses. According to them, the interpretations of the Torah, i.e. Mishnah and Talmud, are also books based on revelation. Orthodox Jews accept the absolute authority of the rules determined by the Torah and the religious scholars and no change is allowed to the rules.

According to Orthodox Jewish belief, the Messiah will someday come, ending the exile of the Jews; the Jews will return to their homes and the temple will



⁴⁷ Abdurrahman Küçük- Günay Tümer, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 241

be rebuilt. Given these reasons, no modifications are made in Jewish religious law, called Halacha. They try however, to adapt to present conditions through innovation. For instance, according to Halacha, making fire on Saturdays is prohibited. Orthodox Jews are now benefitting from the use of automatic electrical appliances that are set to be turned on, on Saturdays, without touching an electrical tool. They claim that this is not contrary to Halacha. They do not use cars on Saturdays and they strictly follow the Kosher (religiously permissible food) rule. They do not eat foods that do not meet kosher criteria. In addition to this, due to kosher rules, they do not eat a combination of meat and milk; they do not drink milk from a utensil in which meat is cooked, and do not eat meat from a utensil in which milk is cooked. Today Orthodox Judaism is the dominant group in Israel.

Reformist Judaism emerged among German Jews in the early nineteenth century. Moses Mendelssohn is the founding father of Reform Judaism.

This reformist movement, which calls on the Jews who live in Central Europe to integrate with the culture of their current countries, has made real progress among Jews living in the US. Reformist Jews today constitute forty percent of American Jews.

DID YOU KNOW?

The most important factors for the emergence of Reformist Judaism were the 1789 French Revolution and the non-arrival of the expected Messiah.

Today, Reform Judaism has adopted a secular character. They look at Judaism as a cultural phenomenon and they do not follow the rules of Sabbath and *kosher* food. In the synagogue women and men can sit side by side, and women can even work as rabbis. There is no obligation to wear a *kippah* in the synagogue.⁴⁸

The reformists do not accept many of the principles of traditional Judaism, in particular the concept of a Messiah. They also do not believe in the idea of a holy "Promised Land." According to reformists, everywhere one lives is sacred.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 243

⁴⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 247

2.6. Overview of Judaism Regarding Other Religions and Races

According to Jewish law, non-Jews are divided into two groups: “Noahides” and “pagans”. Noahides are the people who adopt the seven basic laws of Noah, which are based on the principle of the oneness of God.

People who fulfill the principles of Noahide are considered to be semi-apostates. They can reach salvation both in this world and the hereafter. They gain holiness according to their works.

LET'S DISCUSS

The principles of the Noahides are:

- To not worship idols.
- To avoid blasphemy.
- To avoid adultery, especially with close relatives.
- To comply with justice.
- To not shed blood.
- To not steal.
- To not eat meat with its blood.

Why does Judaism consider Islam and Christianity as Noahide religions? Discuss.

Islam and Christianity are considered Noahide religions. However, conversion of Jews to Islam or Christianity is considered a great sin, because a person who abandons Judaism would break the covenant that connects him to God and his nation.

Although Judaism considers Muslims as Noahide, it does not accept Muhammad as a prophet. Not allowing images in places of worship, not eating pork, and being circumcised are among the points in common between these two religions. Jews see the followers of Islam as resembling themselves more closely than Christians in terms of belief.

Judaism assumes no hope of salvation for pagans and polytheists who constitute the other group.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Türkiye Dinler Tarihi Sempozyumu, p. 115

2.7. Judaism and Jews from the Perspective of the Holy Qur'an

Of the people of the scripture, the Jews are mentioned the most in the Qur'an. The reason for this is related to problems regarding Jews during the rise of Islam. Many Jewish tribes had been living around Madinah. These Jewish tribes were Children of Nadir, Children of Qurayza, Children of Qaynuqa, and Khaybar. The Jews reacted violently against Prophet Muhammad and Muslims, and this is why they are mentioned in the Qur'an more than others.

The following topics are generally mentioned regarding the Jews in the Qur'an:

- Favors bestowed by Allah on the Jews and their rejection of them. (*Baqarah*, 2: 47)
- At one time they were endowed with fertile soils. (*A'raf*, 7: 138)
- Religious judgments that should have been obeyed by the Jews and their violation of these rules. (*A'raf*, 7: 163)
- Their disobedience to their prophets and the killing of some of them. (*Nisa*, 4: 155)
- Not keeping their promise to Allah and breaking the covenant. (*Nisa*, 4: 47)
- Their distortion of the statements of the revelation, which they heard. (*Ma'idah*, 5: 13)
- Their acceptance of themselves as the chosen nation of Allah and the despising the other nations. (*Ma'idah*, 5: 18)
- Their being faced with harsh penalties because of their transgression of the limits. (*Al-i Imran*, 3: 112)

As mentioned in these articles, criticisms directed at the Jews in the Qur'an are mostly related to morality rather than belief. These criticisms highlighted by the Qur'an are not directed at all Jews. There are also trustworthy and entrusted people among the Jews who are from the people of the scripture. Therefore, verses about Jews in the Qur'an should be interpreted according to the historical context of the Qur'an. The nature of the problems with the Jews should be evaluated from religious, political and economic aspects.⁵¹

⁵¹ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 187

LET'S INTERPRET

“And among the People of Scripture is he who, if you entrust him with a great amount (of wealth), he will return it to you. And among them is he who, if you entrust him with a (single) silver coin, he will not return it to you unless you are constantly standing over him (demanding it).”

(*Al-i Imran*, 3: 75)

“Indeed, those who believed and those who were Jews or Christians or Sabeans (before Prophet Muhammad) - those (among them) who believed in Allah and the Last Day and did righteous (deeds) – will have their reward with their Lord and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.”

(*Baqarah*, 2: 62)

“O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you and fulfill My covenant (upon you) that I will fulfill your covenant (from me) and be afraid of (only) me. And believe in what I have sent down confirming that which is (already) with you and be not the first to disbelieve in it. And do not exchange My signs for a small price and fear (only) Me.”

(*Baqarah*, 2: 40-41)

“We had already taken the covenant of the Children of Israel and had sent to them messengers. Whenever there came to them a messenger which their souls did not desire, a party (of messengers) they denied and another party they killed.”

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 70)

Interpret the Qur'anic view of Judaism in light of the verses given above.

3. Christianity

LET'S INTERPRET

Christians agree that Jesus was crucified. The crucifixion of Jesus is a very important incident in Christianity, in terms of it being an atonement for the sins of mankind since the time of Adam.

Find the opinion of Islam about this issue from *Surah al-Nisa* (4), verses 157, 158 in the Qur'an and interpret the mission ascribed to Jesus by Islam and Christianity.

Christianity, which is a world religion, was born in Palestine. However, Europe is the region with the largest Christian population. The vast majority

of North America, South America and a larger part of Australia also consist of Christian populations. This religion has more than one billion seven hundred and fifty million adherents.

3.1. Definition and a Short History of Christianity

LET'S RESEARCH

Why were churches in Cappadocia built in caves and underground? Research.



Christian means “follower of Christ”. This word comes from the Greek word “*Christos*”. In Hebrew it is “*Mashiah*” meaning “the anointed one”. Terms like Christian and Christianity do not exist in the Bible.⁵² These terms were used for the first time in Antioch twenty to thirty years after Jesus.⁵³

Christianity started with the message delivered by Jesus and later evolved to its present form. In the years when Jesus was born, Palestine was under Roman rule. Jews were divided into various sects and religious issues had been turned into matters of political interest. The temple in Jerusalem had become a trading place and conformity had replaced sincerity. The Jews who believed in one God were looking for salvation from the pagan Romans and were awaiting a savior.⁵⁴ Jesus came at such a time. He warned the community as the prophets before him had and formed a community around himself.⁵⁵

The first followers of Jesus were a group of Jews. His criticism of the Jewish understanding of piety at the time disturbed other Jews who did not believe in him. The Roman administrators feared that Jesus would pose a threat to them, which led to his crucifixion.⁵⁶ According to Christian belief, Jesus was resurrected three days after being crucified and lived with his disciples for a while. This increased the number of people who believed in him.⁵⁷

⁵² Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 261

⁵³ Bible, *The Work of the Prophets*, 11: 26

⁵⁴ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 268

⁵⁵ Bible, Marcus, 12: 38-39

⁵⁶ Bible, Marcus, 15: 21-26

⁵⁷ Bible, Matthew, 15: 23-25

The beliefs that were taught by Jesus began to spread among nations other than the Jews. These people were expected to observe Jewish worship and traditions as well as believe in Jesus but they, who were originally pagans, did not want to observe some of the Jewish rites. This situation caused conflicts between the Christians who were supporters of Jewish traditions and the Christians who objected to these traditions, most of whom had been pagans. Paul, who exerted his authority, said that people embracing Christianity did not need to observe Jewish traditions and this caused the deterioration in relations between him and the disciples, especially Saint Peter and Jacob who were the leading disciples. This mutual opposition led to the parting of the ways between Christians who came from Jewish origins and Christians who were originally pagans. Jewish Christians whose center was Jerusalem suffered a severe blow with the murder of Jacob and then the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE. This reduced their power, compared to Paul and his supporters, and they eventually weakened and disappeared in the fourth century.⁵⁸

LET'S INTERPRET

Paul the Apostle (5 BC / 67 AD): Paul, who was called the disciple of the foreigners, was born in Tarsus. His other name was Saul. He grew up according to the beliefs of the Pharisee sect of Judaism. When he was in his thirties he went to Jerusalem and fought against the adherents of Jesus.

According to the gospels, Paul, who was an enemy of Jesus, was warned by God after the crucifixion of Jesus and asked not to persecute the followers of Jesus. Paul regretted what he had done and joined the followers whom he had opposed and became the greatest defender of their belief.

In order to spread the word brought by Jesus, Paul travelled with the disciple Barnabas to Anatolia, Cyprus and Antioch. During these journeys, in the beginning he was Barnabas' helper, then he became his leader. He confronted communities that had pagan beliefs wherever he went. Because the religion brought by Jesus consists of many principles of Judaism, the pagan community did not want to observe it. The Pagans found them difficult to accept, especially circumcision which was one of the most important principles of Judaism. Therefore, Paul said that observing the Jewish religious law was not necessary. This idea caused a reaction in the core community, which was affiliated with Jesus in Jerusalem. In order to eliminate these discussions, the Council of Jerusalem was held in 50 CE. The result of the Council came out in Paul's favor. It gave rise to two groups: one of them was the core community around Jesus and the others were the supporters of Paul.



⁵⁸ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 69

After the Council, Paul organized religious journeys to Anatolia, Greece, Macedonia and many other places. Here he spoke to people about the path to salvation and his views about Jesus Christ. He returned to Jerusalem in 58 CE. However, he was accused of changing the message of Jesus and was attacked. Since he was a Roman citizen, Roman soldiers saved him. He then went to Rome because he decided that he would not struggle in Jerusalem anymore. He was killed in Rome in 67. Paul has played an important role in shaping Christianity in terms of the development of concepts such as the trinity, the Eucharist, and the concept of original sin. Paul was not one of Jesus' disciples but he said that he became a disciple by way of inspiration (revelation).

(Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 303)

Think about the reason for Paul being called the disciple of foreigners with reference to the text above. Interpret the role of Paul in the development of today's Christianity.

Christianity then entered a different phase under the influence of Paul and began to spread rapidly through the Roman Empire. This influence disturbed the Roman administrators who were pagans. This led to Christians being oppressed and persecuted. During the same period Christians suffered great losses. Because of fear, people mostly worshipped in underground communities and caves. This persecution continued until the Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan, which declared the freedom of Christians in 313 CE. With this freedom there was much discussion on topics such as the holy book, and the principles of faith and practice. The Emperor Constantine, desiring to bring these discussions to an end, organized a Council in Nicaea in 325 CE. The opinion of the defenders of the godhood of Jesus was adopted in this Council. Four gospels among many were selected as authentic. The nature of the father and son was discussed in this, and, finally, both were accepted as gods. In the First Council of Constantinople, which was organized in 381 CE during the reign of Theodosius the Great, the godhood of the Holy Spirit was recognized. Thus, after the father God and son Jesus, the elements of the trinity (triple concept of god) were completed with the addition of the Holy Spirit.

Emperor Theodosius the Great made Christianity the official religion of Rome and forbade paganism in the Empire. Thus, Roman Emperors who had been enemies of the church became its protector and started to play an active role in Christianity in order to protect the political order.⁵⁹ As a result, on

⁵⁹ Mehmet Aydın, *Hristiyan Kaynaklarına Göre Hristiyanlık*, p. 24

the one hand Christianity gained the protection of state and, on the other, it began to come under the supervision of the state. By this means, the church evangelized Roman society by assimilating their ancient beliefs and practices. In this process of mutual interaction, the church took the administrative structure of the Roman Empire as an organizational model for itself. People given administrative positions were given titles from Roman political literature. In this context, the title of pagan Roman pontiff “*pontifex maximus*” was used for the Bishop of Rome in later periods.⁶⁰

After the division of the Roman Empire into two parts as Eastern and Western Rome in 395, the relationship between Constantinople and the Roman Church took yet another turn. Due to the weakening of Western Rome the Pope became the religious and political leader of not only the church but also of all of Western world. However, the Eastern churches in Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople did not accept the leadership of the Roman church over them. Especially the Church of Constantinople, which saw itself as the representative of Greek culture did not accept Rome’s authority, which was considered the representative of Latin thought.

The Trinity, whose elements were completed in the First Council of Constantinople, led to further discussions later. The Archbishop of Constantinople, Nestorius, said that Jesus had two natures: one of them human and the other divine. However, Nestorius’ idea was rejected and he was excommunicated. The groups that spread in Syria, Iran and India embraced the opinions of Nestorius and were called Nestorians. Once again, as a result of discussions regarding the trinity, division occurred at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 CE. In the end, the Antioch Assyrian, Coptic, Abyssinian, and Armenian Gregorian churches, called Monophysite Churches, emerged. The divisions that occurred in Christianity with the emergence of the Monophysite Churches were followed by the separation of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, which was founded in 1054, from Rome. The Latin Roman Church and Greek Byzantine Church, which were, fundamentally, representatives of two different cultures, were arguing with each other over political influence. The Roman Church claimed superiority by saying that it was established by Saint Peter, and the Byzantine Church said that they were equal to Rome. And when discussions regarding belief in the trinity were added to this situation, the two churches split decisively in 1054. While Christians in the Western world adhered to the

⁶⁰ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 105

Catholic Church, people in regions dominated by Greek culture followed the Orthodox teachings. During the Crusades, persecution and injustices carried out by Catholics in Constantinople (Byzantine) in 1204 increased the hostility between the Eastern and Western churches.⁶¹

After this division between the East and West, Catholic and Orthodox churches began to develop their own unique church life. The Catholic Church's opposition to scientific developments and its desire to dominate everywhere, especially in politics, caused various problems. Turning the church's authority of absolution into a source of financial gain took dissent much further.

The reform movement in Christianity started with Martin Luther who was a German monk. As a consequence, another division took place in the Catholic Church, and Protestantism emerged in the sixteenth century. The Catholic Church reacted to these reform movements by starting a contra-reform movement to justify itself. This process continued until the Second Vatican Council organized between the years of 1962-65. At this council some decisions were taken such as the papacy and entering into the process of dialogue with non-Catholic churches. This process is still ongoing.

LET'S THINK

How did Christianity become the official religion of the Roman Empire?

Reflect.

3.2. Christian Denominations

Due to different reasons in the historical process, many denominations have emerged in Christianity. These are primarily Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism.

Catholicism: After the separation of the Eastern and Western churches, the church in Rome was named Catholic, meaning universal. The vast majority of Christians today are Catholics. Most of the Catholic population lives in South and Central America and in European countries such as Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Poland and Hungary. There are also Catholics in Germany, Austria and the United States, but to a lesser extent.⁶²

The center of the Catholic Church is in Vatican. The Pope is the head of this church, and is the successor of Saint Peter as bishop of Rome. Thus, the Pope as the spiritual head of the Vatican State is the vicegerent of Jesus and is the representative of God on earth. Popes are elected by cardinals, and their mission continues until death.⁶³

⁶¹ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 74

⁶² Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 110

⁶³ Mehmet Aydın, *Hristiyan Kaynaklarına Göre Hristiyanlık*, p. 114

The main characteristics of Catholicism are:

- The Pope is the religious leader. The Pope is the representative of Jesus and the successor of Saint Peter.
- The Pope is the infallible authority.
- Rome is the center of Catholicism and is morally superior to other churches.
- Universal salvation is possible only by adopting the teachings of the Catholic Church because the Catholic Church is under the rule of the Holy Spirit.
- The Catholic Church attaches great importance to Holy Scripture and tradition as a source of revelation. Because Holy Scripture and tradition originate from the same source.
- The Catholic Church attaches great importance to Mary who is believed to have ascended into heaven and sees her as the mother of both the Son of God and the church.
- The Catholic Church considers the celibacy of priests as necessary.
- Divorce is forbidden.
- It accepts the decisions of the Council of Twenty One who were organized from the beginning until now.
- They celebrate Christmas on December 25th.
- They accept seven of the Christian sacraments.

Orthodoxy: Orthodox means the one that has “the right belief”. After the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches, the Eastern Church began to use this name in order to show that it follows the right belief. This denomination emerged as a result of the political debates and religious controversies of the Constantinople and Roman Churches. As the Turks advanced in Anatolia and the Balkans, Byzantine asked for help from the Papacy and the idea of a merger between the two churches was considered. However, the clergy did not get the support of the community and these attempts were futile. With the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror in 1453, a new era started in the history of the Church of Constantinople. Sultan Mehmed II bestowed a wide range of rights to the Patriarch by giving him the title of the head of the Orthodox nation. Thus, the Orthodox Church maintained its existence under Ottoman rule.

After the Orthodox Patriarchate’s survival under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Church, which was under the rule of this patriarchate,

became independent by becoming a patriarchate in 1589. This national church was followed by other national churches in the Balkans, which declared their independences in the process of the regression of the Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century. In this way, the contemporary structure of the Orthodox churches emerged.

The Orthodox Church, unlike the Catholic Church, was composed of a combination of churches based on the concept of equality rather than a hierarchical structure. In this equality, the Church in Istanbul has the honor of priority. However, this does not give it the power of intervention in the work of other churches. Because of this concept of equality, Orthodox Christians do not accept the infallibility of the Patriarch or other Bishops as the Catholics do.⁶⁴

LET'S RESEARCH

What were the reasons for the division of Christianity into different denominations?

Research.

The main characteristics of Orthodoxy are:

- The spiritual leader of Orthodoxy is the Patriarch who is not the sole authority as is the Pope.
- They believe that the Holy Spirit originated only from the Father.
- They do not accept the infallibility of the Pope.
- They only accept the decisions of the first Seven Councils.
- Icons composed of the paintings and sculptures of Jesus, Mary and Christian saints are important for them.
- Priests may marry if they wish. However, bishops and patriarchs cannot marry.
- Divorce is permitted but depends on certain conditions.
- The horizontal and vertical arms of the cross, which is the symbol of Christianity, are equal.
- Worship is performed in the own language of each country.
- They celebrate Christmas on January 6th.
- They accept seven of the Christian sacraments.

Protestantism: Protestant means one who is insubordinate, protesting. Reformist communities that emerged against the religious practices of Catholicism in the sixteenth century were named Protestant. Protestantism refers to a wide range of Christian denominations composed of many groups other than the Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches. The roots of Protestantism are different from these two churches because its practices

⁶⁴ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 118

are based on the religious reform movements in the sixteenth century. The German monk Martin Luther (1483-1546) was the first to denounce the Catholic Church by objecting to issues such as the forgiving of sins being turned into a financial source, of having the monopoly on the interpretation of the Holy Scripture and of church rites being held only in Latin.

He hung the document, which consisted of ninety-five articles of criticism, on the door of All Saints' Church in Wittenberg.⁶⁵ This movement, led by Luther, spread throughout Europe by many Protestants such as Zwingli and Calvin.⁶⁶

LET'S DISCUSS

Martin Luther (1483-1546): A famous German reformist, Martin Luther grew up in a Catholic family. He entered the Augustinian order to lead a monastic life in 1505. He was ordained as a monk and attained a professorship in theology by rising rapidly in the church hierarchy. Luther, giving lessons of the Holy Scripture, criticized the God of wrath as taught by the Catholic Church saying that the perception of a compassionate God was being ignored. He based his beliefs on two principles. These were the commandments of the Bible that explain that the "purifying of man by God and salvation will be by faith alone." In addition to these ideas, Luther criticized the opinion of the Catholic Church regarding indulgences, the infallibility of the Pope, and the idea that the only language of Holy Scripture and worship should be Latin. Luther's ideas attracted supporters among intellectuals who had reformist ideas. The Papacy tried to find a way to dissuade Luther from his ideas. However, Luther did not retract his beliefs and was excommunicated by the Pope. Luther became the first person to burn the edict of the Pope in front of the community. This movement, initiated by Luther, spread to many European countries and spread especially in Germany and schism then occurred in the Catholic Church.

(Şinasi Gündüz, *Din ve İnanç Sözlüğü*, p. 240)

What are the underlying reasons of Luther's perception of a "Merciful God" and "salvation by faith"? Discuss with your friends.

LET'S RESEARCH

Why did Lucas, one of the worthies of Byzantine, say, "Rather than see the hat of the Latin (Cardinal) in the middle of the city (Istanbul) I prefer to see the Muslim turban."

Research.

⁶⁵ Mircea Eliade, *Dinler Tarihi Sözlüğü*, p. 133

⁶⁶ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 92

LET'S NOTE

The main characteristics of Protestantism are as follows:

- Rejection of the infallibility and authority of the Pope.
- Based on the interpretation of the Holy Book and the understanding of religion rather than the authority of the church.
- Accepts only the sacraments of baptism and Eucharist, the rest of the sacraments are not important.
- Based on faith in salvation rather than deeds.
- They have religious leaders but they do not accept the priesthood.
- Does not value the Saints and Mary.
- Does not have pictures and statutes in the church.
- Confession is not accepted.
- Their clergy can get married.
- Worship and rites are performed in the local language of each country.

3.3. The Second Vatican Council and Its Effects on the Christian World

Reform efforts in Christianity starting with Martin Luther caused great turmoil in the Catholic Church. The Church, while reacting strongly to the supporters of reform, nevertheless, began to review the criticisms addressed to it. This initiative led to the start of reform movements against the Catholic Church. For that reason councils were organized in order to solve the problem.

In the twentieth century other problems faced the Catholic Church because political and economic developments that took place from the beginning of the century affected Christian churches as well. This effect was especially felt in the Catholic Church. In this period, regimes opposed to the Church started to restrict its power, both politically and socially. The Catholic Church remained silent for a long time.⁶⁷ In the second half of the twentieth century, however, the Catholic Church started to make important attempts to adapt to the conditions of the period. In this context, in 1962, the Second Vatican Council was organized under the leadership of Pope John XXIII and continued until 1965.

While Catholic bishops from all over the world attended this Council, the

⁶⁷ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 108

Orthodox and Protestants only sent official observers. This Council had broad repercussions in the Christian world, in terms of starting dialogue in order to strengthen Christian unity and the place of Christianity in the modern world.⁶⁸

A series of decisions were made in the Second Vatican Council that facilitated modern life styles and decreased opposition to Catholicism. In this context, worship and rituals were reformed. The Christian community was accorded the right to worship in languages other than Latin and the laity (non-clergy) were permitted to officiate in religious affairs.

In the same council, the importance of dialogue for promoting the unity of Christian groups was pointed out. To that purpose, the Pope made unity-aimed visits to Christian groups in different countries. Pope Benedict XVI made a visit to Turkey between November 28 and December 1, 2006. In his November 29, 2006 speech in the Patriarchate of Istanbul, he said he was upset because of the events that had caused the separation of the two churches in 1054. Also, in the Council it was decided to initiate dialogue in an attempt to build good relationships with the members of other religions and to promote the solidarity of religions against the modern age's problem of unbelief and to introduce Christianity to members of other religions. For that purpose, "The Secretariat for Non-Christians" was founded in 1964. In this Secretariat, which undertakes dialogue with members of different religions in the modern world, a table was constituted for Islam as well.⁶⁹

3.4. Basic Characteristics of Christianity

As in every religion, Christianity has specific characteristics among which are the concepts and issues of the Messianism, the church and sacraments.

3.4.1. The Messianism

Messianism is a concept Christianity has taken from Judaism. Jews believed that a savior, the Messiah, from the lineage of David would come. Christians claimed that Jesus was the Messiah expected by the Jews. According to Christian belief, Jesus the Messiah sacrificed himself on the cross in order to save people from their sins and ascended to heaven. He will descend at a time near the Day

⁶⁸ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 75

⁶⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 108

of Judgment and establish the Kingdom of Heaven where Christians will live in peace and happiness eternally.

Most of the Christians who are adherents of Protestantism (especially Evangelists) believe that the coming of Jesus is near. Catholics say that the exact time of the arrival of the Messiah cannot be known, therefore it is not appropriate to organize daily life according to this belief.⁷⁰ Catholics define Jesus as follows: “Jesus the Messiah is a real human being and a real god. He is the eternal and everlasting divine word. He is the sole Son of God. From all eternity he is with the Father. He is the God coming from God. He has the same essence as the Father.”⁷¹

LET'S THINK

What kind of changes did the Second Vatican Council cause to the perspective of Catholicism to other Christian sects and religions?

Reflect.



Vatican Saint Pierre Square, Italy

3.4.2. The Church and Sacraments

In the early days of Christianity, just like the creedal principles, the acts of worship were not specified because the disciples worshipped in accordance with Jewish religious law. The first Christians, who in time abandoned the Jewish religious law, only worshiped by performing the Eucharist which they celebrated in memory of the last supper of Jesus. Therefore, until Constantine gave them recognition, the sacraments that are the systematic form of Christian worship and the Christian religious institution, i.e. church, had not yet established.

Church: The word church comes from the Greek word “*ecclesia*” and means assembly or congregation. According to Christianity it represents those who adopted the way of Jesus.

The first Christians could not build churches for a long time due to Roman persecution and could not openly perform their religion. This was why the word church at the time referred to an assembly rather than a place, until permission to worship was given by Constantine the Emperor through the Edict of Milan in 313 CE.

The Middle Age was the period during which the church developed most rapidly. The very first churches were built according to models of temples of the ancient polytheistic religions. When the Roman Empire officially accepted Christianity (381 CE), ancient temples were turned into churches. In later periods, magnificent churches were built and turned into cathedrals.

⁷⁰ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 45

⁷¹ Ekrem Sarıkoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 299

The common feature of the churches, the forms of which changed with the changing centuries, is that they consist of two sections. One of them is the Holy of Holies and the other is the place where the congregation sits.⁷²

The approach to the church of different Christian denominations differs. The Catholics consider the church as the mystical embodiment of Jesus and the believers as the organs of this body. Moreover, Catholics stipulate the presence of a priest for the formation of the church. Protestants believe that as long as there is a community the church can function and the presence of a priest is not required. The Orthodox consider the church in the first degree as the body of Jesus, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and the congregation of God.⁷³

Sacraments: Sacrament lexically means ritual, religious ritual, which is performed as a symbolic religious ceremony in order to manifest the belief. There are two sacraments accepted by all Christian denominations. These are baptism and Eucharist. In addition to these two sacraments the Orthodox and Catholics accept five other sacraments, which are confirmation, marriage, Holy Orders, penance, and anointing of the sick.

According to Christians, the divine Jesus is still living. His unseen actions (curing, acceptance of prayers) can be seen by means of fulfilling the mysteries of the church (sacraments). If one participates in these sacraments, they accompany Jesus who bestows the blessings of God.

Baptism: Baptism, which is fulfilled by being immersed in water or sprinkling water on certain parts of the body, is considered the first step of Christian faith. Baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit is a command of the Bible.

Baptism washes away people's original sin and the sins they have committed. In a sense, baptism is a rebirth. Through Baptism, a Christian becomes part of the Christian community by being purified of his sins.⁷⁴

Confirmation: It is the anointment of certain parts of a baptized person's body with holy oil. Confirmation confirms and strengthens baptism. In Eastern churches, this sacrament is performed immediately after baptism, while in Western churches it is performed later.

Eucharist (Communion): The Eucharist, which means giving thanks to God, is one of the most important sacraments underlining Christian belief

LET'S COMPARE

Compare the Christians' view of Jesus (the Messiah) and the Muslims' view of Jesus by reading *Surah Al-i Imran* (3) verse 59.

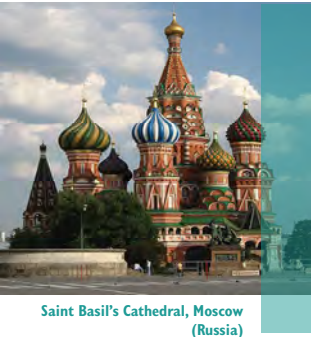


The ritual of baptism, which is very important for Christianity.

⁷² Galip Atasagun, *İlahî Dinlerde Dinî Semboller*, p. 200

⁷³ Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihi Sözlüğü*, p. 388

⁷⁴ Mehmet Aydın, *Dinler Tarihine Giriş*, p. 116



Saint Basil's Cathedral, Moscow
(Russia)

LET'S RESEARCH

Why must Christians worship under the authority of a religious leader in a church?

Research.

and worship. The Eucharist is the remembrance of the last supper of Jesus with his disciples before his crucifixion. According to the Bible, at the last supper, Jesus broke bread in pieces and gave it to his disciples saying, “This bread is my flesh.”⁷⁵ Then he had them drink some wine in a chalice saying, and “This is my blood.” Later, Saint Paul made it into a church ritual.

Christians consider the Eucharist a type of sacrifice. Today, the bread and wine given in church rituals also resemble a sacrifice because Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross, wine represents his blood and the bread represents his body. By fulfilling this ritual, in some way Christians become integrated with the body of the sacrificed Jesus.

The Eucharist is a ritual held in church on Sundays. While at first it was held once a year, it became a ritual that is performed weekly.⁷⁶

Marriage (Matrimony): For Christians, marriage symbolizes God's love for humanity and Jesus' love for the church and for his disciples.⁷⁷

The sacrament of marriage is the joining of two people by sacred bonds. Marriages generally take place in the church to which the bride is affiliated. While Catholics absolutely do not allow divorce, the Orthodox allow it depending on the circumstances.

Holy Orders: This is the sacrament of giving certain titles to those who voluntarily dedicate their lives to religious service. It is compulsory for priests and bishops to be ordained in a special ceremony. A bishop is the minister of this sacrament.

In Christianity, apart from the priesthood who are ordained for work in the church, there are also monastic orders. The monks who live in monasteries live an ascetic life by abandoning the world and devoting themselves to God.

The Orthodox and Catholic churches are the Christian denominations that have priests, whereas the Protestants do not.⁷⁸

Reconciliation (Penance): It is the sacrament that Christians perform in order to cleanse themselves of their sins. No matter how much one has sinned, if a person confesses his sins to the priest by entering a special booth

⁷⁵ The Holy Bible, Mark, 14/22

⁷⁶ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 297

⁷⁷ The Holy Bible, Mark, 10/5-9

⁷⁸ Mehmet Aydın, *Ansiklopedik Dinler Sözlüğü*, p. 648

in the church, the priest has the authority to forgive them in the name of the church. In some cases, the priest can impose a penalty as expiation for the sin.⁷⁹

Anointing of the Sick: It is a ritual for relieving the suffering of a person in sickness and especially for those who are about to die. In this sacrament, a sick person is anointed with blessed oil for healing or to die in peace. The purpose of this sacrament is to remind the sick person that he is not alone but is with Jesus and that God has not abandoned him.

LET'S RESEARCH

Christians believe that Adam and Eve committed the original sin by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden and that this sin has been inherited by their descendants. To save humanity from this original sin, God first revealed the law of the Old Testament. However, no one could precisely practice this religious law and be cleansed from original sin.

Thus, God sent His word, which is eternal and divine, through Jesus. Jesus preached the message of God throughout his life, however he was crucified because of what he preached. Jesus sacrificed himself on the cross as atonement for people's past and future sins. With this sacrifice of atonement, the entire Jewish religious law and original sin have been abolished. For that reason, people who believe in Jesus can be saved through their belief and love alone.

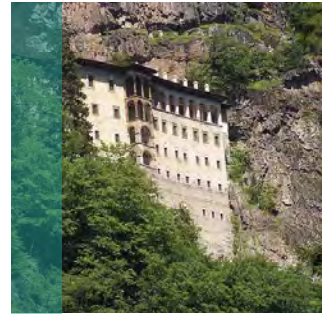
Christians believe that Jesus was resurrected after crucifixion by the grace of God. By means of this resurrection, God approved the mission of Jesus. The death and resurrection of Jesus is a victory over sin and death. It is believed that in this way Jesus destroyed the path to sin and death. This is why in the homes and schools of Christians there are images of the cross carrying the body of Jesus. For all Christians, the cross is the symbol of belief.

The death of Jesus is considered the beginning of a new covenant (New Testament) not only God's covenant with the Jews but also with all humanity.

(Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, s. 302)

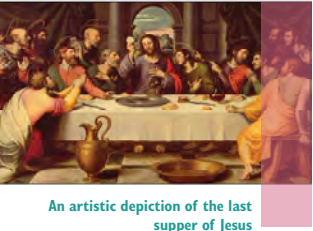
Answer the following questions with reference to the information given above.

- 1) According to Christian understanding, what resulted when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit? Discuss with your friends.
- 2) How is Adam and Eve's eating of the forbidden fruit perceived in Islamic understanding? Research.



Why was Sumela Monastery built high on the slope of the mountain? Think about it.

⁷⁹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 48



An artistic depiction of the last supper of Jesus

LET'S COMPARE

Compare the Christian and Muslim understanding of marriage and divorce.

3.5. The View of Christianity regarding Other Religions

Historically, the view that Christianity has taken in regard to other religions has been inflexible. In Christian holy books there has been mention of different religious beliefs, however, the church, which is regarded as an important authority in Christianity, did not consider dealing with these religions necessary until the middle of fifteenth century. The reason was that the church did not acknowledge any religion other than Christianity. Although the church gives Judaism some place in the religious history of humankind, it considered no religion, including Judaism, as valid after the emergence of Christianity. Consequently, the notion of “there is no salvation outside of the church” became the dominant understanding. The church started questioning itself in the twentieth century. In this context, the Second Vatican Council was organized between the years 1962-65. The views of the Catholic Church with respect to other religions were softened and it was determined to cooperate with members of other religions.⁸⁰

The View of Christianity regarding Judaism

Judaism has an important place in the eyes of Christians, this stems from Jesus’ descent from Jewish lineage. Add to this the fact that the first Christians were of Jewish origin; there is a relationship between the roots of Christianity and Judaism. As such, Christians consider Jewish holy texts as their own holy texts.

On the other hand, Christians claimed that with the emergence of Christianity, Judaism has been superseded and Jews must embrace Christianity. They based their claims on the following principles:

- The crucified Jesus Christ is the Messiah who was mentioned in the Old Testament.
- The Jews being a chosen people was passed to Christians because of their sins.
- The Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem was demolished as a punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus.
- Jewish religious law has been abolished with the legal interpretation of Saint Paul.

⁸⁰ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 181

Due to the crucifixion, Christians have oppressed Jews throughout history. This oppression continued until World War II. After the Second Vatican Council, substantial alterations occurred in Christians' views of the Jews. The historical connection between Christians and Jews and their common heritage were spoken about in this council. They stated that the Jews did not accept the Gospels but they were the beloved servants of God. Moreover, in this council the passages of the Gospel of John regarding the role of Jewish leaders in Jesus' crucifixion were highlighted and were reinterpreted. There, it was emphasized that all Jews were not responsible for the death of Jesus and today's Jews were not responsible whatsoever and therefore they should not be cursed.⁸¹

The Views of Christianity about Islam

The views of Christians regarding Islam differ from their views about Judaism. The reason is that there is no historical relationship between Christianity and Islam. Islam was born in a different geographical and cultural atmosphere and developed separately from Judaism and Christianity. Therefore, there were no religious problems such as being a chosen people or Messianism between Christians and Muslims, as there was with Judaism. In other words, Islam did not cause a direct threat to the religious structure of Christianity. Therefore, until the Second Vatican Council, Islam was not mentioned in the documents of any Catholic council. However, there had been polemics especially in the style of *raddiyyah* (refutation) which took place between Muslims and Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant Christians.

Serious discussions between Christians and Muslims started with the confrontation between Christians and Muslims in the early centuries of Islam. When Greek-speaking Eastern Christian theologians first encountered Islam, they considered it a heretical movement that had separated from Christianity. However, when they became closely acquainted with Islam, they understood that it had a different belief system from that which they had supposed it to have, and they tried to defend Christianity against Islam by criticizing Islam.⁸² The primary criticism is the claim that Islam spread by force of arms. Scholars of Islam wrote books to refute the Christian theologians' criticisms as unsubstantiated.⁸³

⁸¹ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 184

⁸² Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 184

⁸³ Hidayet Işık, *Âmiri'ye Göre İslam ve Öteki Dinler*, p. 176

During the Crusades, Western Christian scholars had the opportunity to become closely acquainted with Islam. However, instead of introducing Islam to Europe as it is, they chose to present a distorted image of Islam and Muslims.

After the Second Vatican Council, slight changes occurred in the Catholic Christian perception of Muslims. At this council, for the first time, Muslims and their beliefs and form of worship were mentioned in official documents. In the records of this council, the following statements were given about Muslims: “The Church has a high regard for Muslims. They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth and appealing to human beings. They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God’s plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own. Although not acknowledging him as God, they venerate Jesus as a prophet. His virgin mother they also honor and even at times devoutly invoke her. Further, they await the Day of Judgment and the reward of God following the resurrection of the dead. For this reason they highly esteem an upright life and worship God especially by way of prayer, alms-giving and fasting. Over the centuries many quarrels and dissensions have arisen between Christians and Muslims. The sacred council now pleads with all to forget the past and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding; for the benefit of all people, let them together preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.”⁸⁴

At the Second Vatican council, studies were organized in order to establish dialogue with Muslims especially in the Catholic world. Today, the dialogue process is still continuing although it has been affected by negative words from the papacy about Prophet Muhammad and Islam.

LET'S THINK

Why do Christians call the Jewish holy book “The Old Testament”? Reflect on this question with your friends.

LET'S RESEARCH

In which aspects do the views of Christianity regarding Islam and Judaism differ from each other?

⁸⁴ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 185

LET'S INTERPRET

“... and you will find the nearest of them in affection to the believers those who say, “We are Christians.”...”

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 82)

“... Yet they are not alike; some of the People of the Book are a nation upstanding, that recite God's signs in the watches of the night, bowing themselves, believing in God and in the Last Day, bidding to honor and forbidding dishonor, vying one with the other in good works; those are of the righteous.”

(*Al-i Imran*, 3: 113-114)

“And We sent, following in their footsteps, Jesus son of Mary, confirming the Torah before him and We gave to him the Gospel, wherein is guidance and light, and confirming the Torah before it, as guidance and an admonition unto the god fearing.”

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 46)

“Say: ‘People of the Book! Come now to a word common between us and you, that we serve none but God, and that we associate not aught with Him, and do not some of us take others as Lords, apart from God.’ And if they turn their backs, say: ‘Bear witness that we are Muslims.’”

(*Al-i Imran*, 3: 64)

“The Messiah, son of Mary, was only a Messenger; Messengers before him passed away; his mother was a just woman; they both ate food...”

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 75)

“And We have sent down to thee the Book with the truth, confirming the Book that was before it, and assuring it. So judge between them according to what God has sent down, and do not follow their caprices...”

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 48)

Interpret the views of the Qur'an regarding Christianity in light of the verses given above.

3.6. Christianity and Christians from the Perspective of the Holy Qur'an

In the Qur'an, Christians are praised for some of their moral behavior and for being the closest to the Muslims in affection.⁸⁵ However, in terms of belief,

⁸⁵ *Ma'idah*, 5: 82

Christians were criticized more than Jews. The Christians who were mentioned in the Quran were the ones who were not yet divided as Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestants. The main Qur'anic criticism leveled against Christianity is the belief in the Trinity. The Qur'an mentions that Jesus is a servant and prophet of Allah and in no way can he be a god.⁸⁶ This issue is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows:

لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ ط وَقَالَ الْمَسِيحُ يَا بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ رَبِّي وَرَبَّكُمْ ط...

“They have certainly disbelieved who say, “Allah is the Messiah, the son of Mary.” while the Messiah has said, “O Children of Israel, worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord.”⁸⁷

The Qur'an states in the following verse that God will ask Jesus the following question and Jesus will respond, in order to warn Christians who deified those other than Allah: **“O Jesus, Son of Mary, did you say to the people, “Take me and my mother as deities besides Allah?” He will say, “Exalted are You! It was not for me to say that to which I have no right. If I had said it, You would have known it.”⁸⁸**

LET'S COMPARE

“These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, He will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

(Gospel of John, 14/26)

“... “O Children of Israel, indeed I am the messenger of Allah to you confirming what came before me of the Torah and bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.”

(Saff, 61: 6)

Compare the Qur'anic verse and the verse given from the Gospel above.

⁸⁶ Mehmet Aydın, *Müslümanların Hristiyanlara Karşı Yazdığı Reddiyeler ve Tartışma Konuları*, p. 10

⁸⁷ Ma'idah, 5: 72

⁸⁸ Ma'idah, 5: 116



Saint Pierre Church was built in Antioch in the first century. It is the first church built in Antioch and the word “Christian” was used there for the first time.

LET'S DISCUSS

The first four councils of great importance in the history of Christianity are:
 The First Council of Nicaea (325 CE): It was the council in which basic Christian doctrines were shaped. As a result of this council, the godhood of the Father and the Son were decided upon. Arius was excommunicated for his claim that Jesus was just a human being and had no divine characteristics.

The Council of Constantinople (381 CE): The godhood of the Holy Spirit, which is the third element of the Trinity, was decided.

The Council of Ephesus (431 CE): Nestorius, who emphasized the disunity between Christ's human and divine natures, was excommunicated and thus Nestorianism was born.

The Council of Chalcedon (451 CE): The monophysite view was not accepted stating that Christ has one nature and this is the divine nature, not human nature. Communities adhering to this view split from the main church and established the Jacobite, Coptic and Armenian churches.

In the light of the information given above, discuss the role of the councils held in Anatolia during the formation of Christianity.

4. Islam

Islam is the last of the divine religions. Islam was completed with the revelation that was sent to Prophet Muhammad over the span of twenty-three years. Today, nearly one and a half billion Muslims live around the world.

ISLAM		
According to Islam, all prophets are the prophets of Islam and all divine messages revealed to them are divine commands teaching people Islam.	Islam is a universal religion that was born in the Arabian Peninsula at the beginning of seventh century.	The most basic principle separating Islam from other religions is the expression of the belief in the oneness of Allah, according to which Allah is accepted as One in all of His names and attributes.

4.1. The Literal and Terminological Meanings of Islam

LET'S INTERPRET

“Indeed I have been sent to complete the best of character (akhlaq).”
(Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Musnad, vol. 2, p. 381)

Interpret the *hadith* above in relation to the purpose of the coming of prophets.

The word Islam lexically means obedience, submission, adhering to something and being in peace. Terminologically it means voluntary submission to God's Will, following His commands, adopting everything which was conveyed by Muhammad with one's body and soul, and applying this in one's life. The person who is a member of this religion and practices the judgments of this religion is called Muslim.⁸⁹

⁸⁹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 51

LET'S THINK

"Whoso desires another religion than Islam, it shall not be accepted of him; in the next world he shall be among the losers."

(*Al-i Imran*, 3:85)

"...Today I have perfected your religion for you, and I have completed My blessing upon you, and I have approved Islam for you as religion..."

(*Ma'idah*, 5: 3)

"No; Abraham in truth was not a Jew, neither a Christian; but he was a Muslim and one pure of faith; certainly he was never of the idolaters."

(*Al-i Imran*, 3: 67)

"My signs were recited to you, but upon your heels you withdrew"

(*Mu'minun*, 23: 66)

"Say: 'It is revealed unto me only that your God is One God; do you then surrender?'"

(*Anbiya*, 21: 108)

"Turn unto your Lord and surrender to Him, ere the chastisement comes upon you, then you will not be helped."

(*Zumar*, 39: 54)

Which meanings involving Islam are expressed by the Qur'an? Reflect.

4.2. The Birth of Islam

Islam is a universal religion that emerged in Arabia at the beginning of the seventh century. There were many religions on earth during the emergence of Islam. Taoism, Confucianism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Sabians, Judaism and Christianity were the most widely-known religions of that period. In the same period traditional religions of idolatry, which have no specific names, were also common.

At that time, Arabia was situated at an important crossroad of trade routes. The Ka'bah, which was built by Prophet Abraham, had played an important role in both the religious and commercial life of the Arabian Peninsula.

The Arab community was in complete moral decline before the emergence of Islam. Girls would sometimes be buried alive. The community worshipped idols and believed in many myths and superstitions. In the Ka'bah, there were as many idols as there were Arab tribes. The most important of them was *Hubal*. People could not change their idols unless they left their tribe and

LET'S THINK

Although they believed in a creator god, why did Meccan polytheists need an idol to get them closer to Him?

they had idols they worshipped in their homes. Besides being idolaters, pre-Islamic Arabs believed in Allah but they considered the idols intermediaries between Allah and themselves. Although few in number, there were also people who rejected the idols and adhered to the idea of one god. They were called *Hanifs*.

While idolatry was dominant in the Arabian Peninsula, there were also neighboring nations that adopted different religions. Among them was Christianity, which was the religion of Byzantine and Abyssinia, and Zoroastrianism, which was the religion of the Persians. There was a substantial Jewish population in cities like Yemen, Taif and Madinah, besides Christians who also lived in Najran, a province of Yemen.

RESEARCH

Why is the Istanbul Greek Orthodox Patriarchate also named “Fener Patriarchate”?

Research.

During the formative period of Islam, there were wars, injustice, sectarian violence, tribalism and similar events in and around Arabia. The religion conveyed from earlier prophets, namely the religion based on the belief in *tawhid* (the oneness of God) that was corrupted due to wrong interpretations and implementations needed to be revived. For this, Allah chose a prophet from the Arab community and charged him with a mission. This last prophet was Prophet Muhammad. Before his prophetic mission, Muhammad was a person who had been loved and trusted. This was why the Meccans had given him the title of the “Trustworthy”. From time to time he would go to the cave of Hira in Mecca to meditate. One day, in the year 610 CE, when he was mediating in this cave, he received the first revelation beginning with the command of “**Recite**”. With these first revelations brought by Jibreel, the prophethood started. Prophet Muhammad told his wife Khadijah what had happened. She consoled him and took him to his uncle Waraqa ibn Nawfal. Waraqa listened to Muhammad and said that the one who had come to him was angel Jibreel. Thereupon, Khadijah believed in Muhammad and became the first Muslim. Then Ali, Abu Bakr and Muhammad’s emancipated slave, Zayd ibn Harithah, embraced Islam. In time, Islam rapidly spread around the world.⁹⁰

4.3. The Basic Characteristics and Differences of Islam

Islam is a religion that was completed and shaped with the prophethood of Muhammad. The basic characteristics of Islam in the Qur’an can be listed as follows:

⁹⁰ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 333

- There is no priesthood in Islam. Islam repudiates the existence of a religious functionary class that monopolizes the religion and dominates the people. In this respect, Christians were criticized in the Qur'an. Priests were accused of taking others as lords instead of Allah.⁹¹ Islam does not accept an intermediary between humans and Allah. Anyone can reach Allah directly. Through their true faith and good deeds, people gain the blessings of Allah and salvation.

LET'S COMPARE

The main feature that distinguishes Islam from other religions is that it is based on the belief in *tawhid* (the oneness of Allah). This feature was best summarized in the *Surah al-Ikhlās*.

Search for the meaning of the *Surah al-Ikhlās* and compare Islam and other religions in terms of the belief of *tawhid*.

- There is no belief in a Messiah in the creed of Islam. Messianic belief is not mentioned in the Qur'an. However, from time to time an understanding of the Messiah-Mahdi has emerged in Muslim societies.

- The religion of Islam considers all human beings free and innocent at birth. The Christian belief in the original sin at birth is not accepted in Islam. Sins and good deeds depend on people's own acts and behavior, which they carry out through their free will from the age of puberty.⁹²

- In Islam nobody has extraordinary divine abilities including prophets. Therefore, according to Islam no human being can be perfect. There is nothing perfect but Allah. While Jesus is a prophet in Islam, Christians have deified him by attributing extraordinary powers to him.

- The principles of belief and worship in Islam have been mentioned in the Qur'an. Because Prophet Muhammad was a conveyer and implementer of religion, the tradition consisting of his words and teachings became an important source for Islam.

Believing in Allah is the primary principle of belief in Islam. Islam emphasizes the oneness not only in terms of the existence of Allah but also in terms of all His names and attributes.

⁹¹ Al-i Imran, 3: 64

⁹² Zumar, 39: 7

In accordance with the belief of *tawhid*, the Qur'an criticizes and emphasizes the falsity of the belief in Allah among the Arabs of the pre-Islamic period, or the Age of Ignorance. It states that they did not appraise Allah with true accuracy.⁹³ In a similar way it criticizes certain groups such as the Jews and Christians and invites them to the belief of *tawhid*. This is mentioned in Qur'an as follows: **"Say, 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word is equitable between us and you that we will not worship except Allah and do not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, 'Bear witness that we are Muslims.'"**⁹⁴ In addition to the creator god, other gods sharing his attributes appeared in Christianity whose belief of *tawhid* was corrupted. This was systematized in the belief of Christianity in the Father-Son-Holy Spirit. Although the belief of *tawhid* was preserved in Judaism, some human attributes such as resting were attributed to God.⁹⁵

The concept of worship in Islam is a fact encompassing people's whole life. Therefore, working, sleeping, eating, walking are considered acts of worship in Islam. For instance, Prophet Muhammad pointed out that behavior such as moving an object that disturbs people out of the way and giving *salaam* is considered to be an act of worship.

It is generally accepted in Islam that in terms of importance, acts of worship come after faith. *Amal al-salih* (good deeds) are generally cited along with faith. Therefore, worship without faith is composed of showing off, which stems from hypocrisy and factiousness. This is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **"O believers void not your freewill offerings with reproach and injury, as one who expends of his substance to show off to men and believes not in God and the Last Day. The likeness of him is as the likeness of a smooth rock on which is soil, and a torrent smites it, and leaves it barren. They have no power over anything that they have earned. God guides not the people of the unbelievers."**⁹⁶ As understood from the above-quoted verse, what really matters in acts of worship is sincerity along with concepts such as intention, faith and piety.⁹⁷

⁹³ Hajj, 22: 74; Zumar, 39: 67; An'am, 6: 91

⁹⁴ Al-i Imran, 3: 64

⁹⁵ The Holy Bible, Genesis, 2/1

⁹⁶ Baqarah, 2: 264

⁹⁷ Heyet, Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri, p. 65

LET'S MAKE A LIST

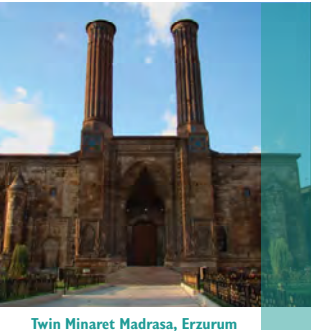
List the main characteristics of Islam that distinguish it from other religions.

- There is no priesthood in Islam.
-
-

In Islam, rules regarding acts of worship and morality have developed and taken their final form. Except for pilgrimage, acts of worship do not have to be performed in certain places but may be practiced anywhere. According to the situation, they may be practiced either in congregation or on one's own. There are no rules of a social nature in Islam such as never marrying or never getting divorced.

- Islam respects women and gives them their rights.
- There is a balance between this world and the hereafter in Islam.
- The world is the field of testing for the afterlife.
- Islam accepts the prophets and holy books of other religions. However, it states that they were corrupted. Islam does not differentiate prophets.
- There is no being, a chosen people, or understanding of superiority in Islam. Every believer has equal rights and status in Islam.
- Penitence and being forgiven is a relationship between the servant and Allah. A person who wants to repent can repent without going through any person or institution.
- Islam attaches importance to reason and science.
- Islam rejects all kinds of idolatry and polytheism and does not worship pictures or statues of religious persons or beings, nor does it place these into the places of worship.
- These features of Islam have been preserved from the beginning until today.⁹⁸

⁹⁸ Baki Adam-Mehmet Katar, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 54



Twin Minaret Madrasa, Erzurum

READING TEXT

The view of Islam Regarding Other Religions and Traditions

The Qur'an does not claim that it brought something totally new to humanity. The principles brought by the Qur'an are a reminder of the message of Allah that He has sent to humanity through His messengers beginning with Adam. The message that Allah expected humanity to accept is Islam, expressing the tawhid and the perception of life through it. The Qur'an invites people to Islam by reminding them of the principles of previous prophets. The Qur'an is the last revelation reminding people the truth, and Prophet Muhammad is the last messenger. Therefore, the Qur'an is a holy book, which does not reject the previous revelations but approves them. This is mentioned in the Qur'an in the chapter of Al-i Imran (3) verses 3 and 4 as follows: "He has sent down upon you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming what was before it. And He revealed the Torah and the Gospel. Before, as guidance for the people. And He revealed the Qur'an. Indeed, those who disbelieve in the verses of Allah will have a severe punishment, and Allah is exalted in Might, the Owner of Retribution."

The Qur'an has completed the historical development of the divine message as the last circle of the tradition of revelation and the first and the last revelation came together in the Qur'an. Besides approving the previous revelations, the Qur'an points out that the previous books were changed and corrupted. In many parts of the Qur'an several examples are given about the previous books and their corruption and the errors of the people of the book (Jews and Christians) regarding similar matters are corrected.

The Qur'an invites both Jews and Christians to the religion of Allah, which they corrupted and changed although they have the same belief about Allah.

(Heyet, Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri, p. 59)

AN OVERVIEW TO THE MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGIONS BASED ON REVELATION						
Name of the Religion	Its Deity	Its Prophet	Its Holy Scripture	Belief in Life after Death (the Hereafter)	Where do most of its members live?	Is it possible to convert to it from other religions?
Islam	Allah	Muhammad	The Holy Qur'an	Belief in hereafter is accepted.	Asia, Africa, Europe and other continents.	It wants all people to be Muslims. It is a universal religion.
Judaism	Judah-Yahweh	Abraham Moses	The Torah in the Old Testament	Except for some Jewish sects, the majority believes in the hereafter.	Israel, USA and many countries of the world.	Only the Jewish nation can be a member of this religion. It is a national religion.
Christianity	Father - Son (Jesus) - Holy Spirit	Jesus	The Old Testament The New Testament (Gospels)	Belief in the hereafter is accepted.	All over the world, mainly in the continents of Europe and America.	Its aim is to convert all nations to Christianity. It is universal.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Why is the Messianic belief in Christianity and Judaism so important? Explain.
2. How was Jesus' descent from Jewish lineage deified in Christianity?
3. Why is there no concept of priesthood in Islam? Explain.
4. Why is the Temple of Solomon so important for Jews?
5. Explain the reasons for the emergence of the following denominations in Christianity: Catholicism, Orthodoxy, and Protestantism.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following prophets has the title of Israel?

A. Moses	B. Solomon	C. Abraham
D. Jacob	E. David	

2. Which one of the following is the birthplace of Christianity?

A. Rome	B. Antioch	C. Ephesus
D. Palestine	E. Constantinople	

3. Which one of the following is true in terms of the chronology of the history of prophets?

A. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph.
B. Isaac, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph.
C. Abraham, Ishmael, Joseph, Isaac.
D. Abraham, Isaac, Solomon, David.
E. Moses, Joseph, Abraham, Ishmael.

4. Who built the Temple in Jerusalem, which is sacred for the Jews?

A. Moses	B. Solomon	C. David
D. Abraham	E. Jacob	

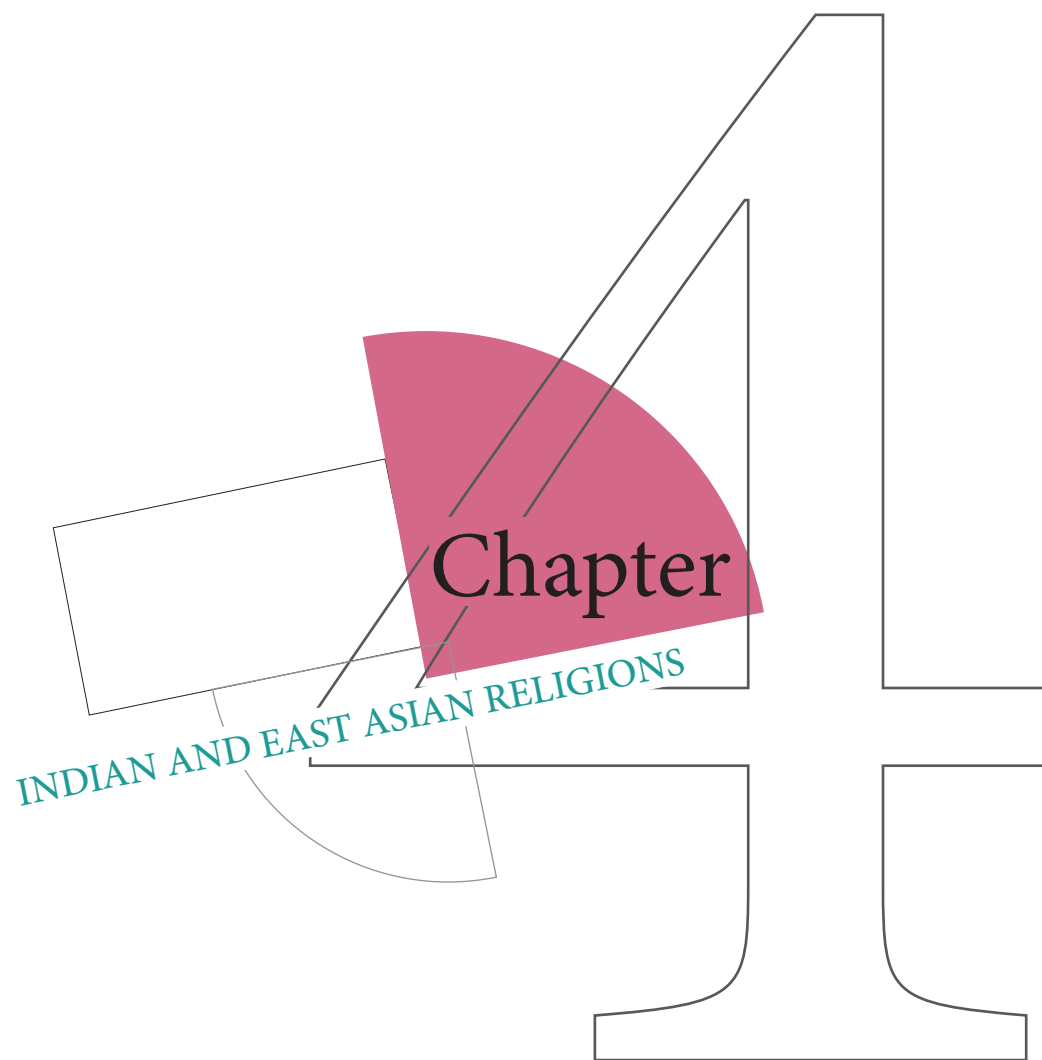
C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(Councils, Babylonia, the Promised Land, Nicaea, the Armenians, the Rums)

1. The Temple of Solomon was demolished by the king of for the first time.
2. Meetings in which Christianity was shaped are called
3. Holy territories which are believed to have been promised by God to Moses and his descendants are called
4. The first council of Christianity was held in the city of which is on the border of Turkey.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) Islam is the general name of the religion coming from Adam until Prophet Muhammad.
2. (...) Messianism is one of the basic belief principles of Islam.
3. (...) Saint Paul had the most important role in the form that Christianity now takes.
4. (...) The ideology of Zionism was shaped by Theodor Herzl.



INDIAN AND EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Search for the meanings of the following words “Reincarnation, incarnation, nirvana, om, taboo and totem”.
2. Gather information about the religions that exist today in the Indian sub-continent.
3. What are the common features of the belief systems in China and Japan? Research.
4. Find information about the main features of primitive religions.

1. Indian Religions

Religions that were born and developed in the Indian sub-continent are called Indian Religions. Although their philosophies are generally similar, they have some specific features in terms of their founders and historical development.¹

INDIAN RELIGIONS

Hinduism

Buddhism

Sikhism

Jainism

1.1. The Emergence and Main Features of Hinduism

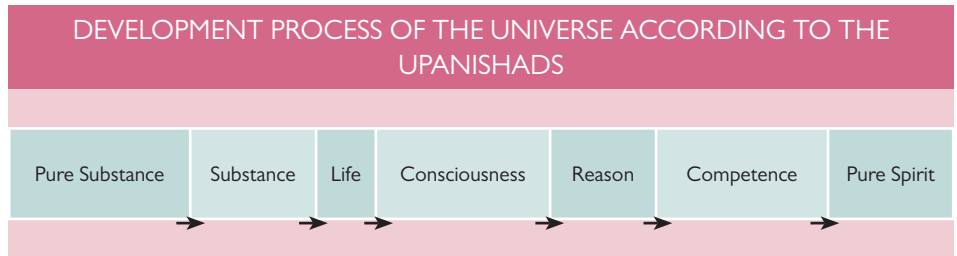
Among the belief systems that emerged in the Indian sub-continent, historically Hinduism is the oldest one. The term Hindu, which is the Persian form of the name given by the Muslims to the society living around the Indus

¹ Ekrem Sarıncıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 155

River, is a geographic term.² In some sources Hinduism was also named Brahmanism. Hindus use the term *Sanatana Dharma* (The Eternal Order) for their religion meaning the way which was offered and constituted by God to people in order to ensure that they live peacefully during the process of the creation of the world.³

Hinduism is the most colorful representative of today's polytheist religions. Sometimes there are hundreds of idols in rural temples. Hindus, who live side by side with Indian Muslims, constitute twelve percent of the population of the world.⁴

Since it is a religion restricted to the Indian sub-continent, Hinduism is of ethnic origins. It is distinguished from other national religions in terms of having no founder or belief system. The known history of Hinduism comprises a period of time of more than thirty-five centuries. Its historical development can be investigated under three titles as "Classical, Medieval and Modern Hinduism." The classical period continued until the ninth century CE. Medieval Hinduism is a period in which Islam played an important role in the change and alteration of this religion. The most prominent feature of this period is the belief that a person can only reach salvation by dedicating himself to God with love and sincerity. Christianity effected the change and alteration in this religion in the modern period.⁵



In Hinduism, the formation of beings is expressed through a process of pure substance to pure spirit. Between these two extremes, there are entities consisting of substance and spirit. Accordingly, there was only Brahman in the beginning. Others came into existence by emerging from it. However, the time and the reason for the occurrence of this formation are unclear, because it is outside the span of time.

² Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 156

³ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 277

⁴ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 47

⁵ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 277

Beings in this world are divided into four categories as non-living objects, plants, animals and human beings. The rate of resemblance to *Brahman* (the Absolute Spirit) gradually decreases from the category of human to lower categories. However, entities in this category do not have the same features.⁶

One of the most prominent features of Hinduism is the caste system. According to Hindus, the cast system is a religious belief and based on the *Rig Veda*. **Caste** means, a unity constituted by people who engage in the same work and are related to each other through their duties and traditions.⁷

Caste System
<p>Brahmans (Priests)</p> <p>Their Mission: Learning and teaching sacred texts and practicing sacrificial ceremonies.</p>
<p>Kshatriyas (Warriors and Rulers)</p> <p>Protecting the community against enemies and threats.</p>
<p>Vaisyas (Farmers, Merchants, Craftspeople)</p> <p>Raising animals for sacrificing; trading; crafting; sharing their properties.</p>
<p>Sudras (Farms Workers, Servants, Laborers)</p> <p>Serving the other groups.</p>
<p>Pariahs</p> <p>People considered to be outside of the caste, with no rights.</p>

Castes have been created from the different parts of the body of the god Brahma who was depicted in human form. Therefore, human beings have different characters and they incline to different works with different skills. In this context, first of all, every person should fulfill what his caste requires. A person has no possibility to change his caste in his current life. However, rebirth (reincarnation), as a person from a higher caste is possible with complete fulfillment of the requirements of the person's current caste.

LET'S RESEARCH

Is there a relationship between the caste system and Hinduism?

Research.

⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 287

⁷ Osman Cilacı, *Dünya Dinleri*, p. 152

LET'S DISCUSS



Discuss the place of cow in the Hindu culture.



Om, the sacred symbol in Hinduism

Belief in the hereafter in Indian religions is related to beliefs in *karma*, transmigration of the soul and the continuous cycle of birth (reincarnation). This concept is called “*samsara*” in Hinduism. According to this belief system, people who did not reach perfection upon their death continue to live another life after death.

The *karma* belief in Hinduism refers to the moral principles organizing worldly relationships. According to these principles, worldly deeds influence the destiny of person and play a role in the coming into existence. Death is not a cause of fear or extinction but it is a transition from one entity to another. Souls are immortal and eternal. In accordance with the *karma* law, a person becomes reincarnated in the body of something divine, human, animal, or even as a plant.⁸

Yoga and meditation are among the important religious practices in Hinduism. Yoga is a type of exercise where people bring their body, mind and inner power together. Meditation refers to a method of relaxation and purification of the mind from negative thoughts. Incarnation also means the god Vishnu’s embodiment in human form.

Although Hinduism does not have a known founder, it is quite rich in terms of sacred texts. These sacred texts are mostly in the “Sanskrit” language.⁹

“Om” is the common symbol of worship among Indians. The word “Om” is said before starting to read the Vedas, saying prayers, eating or starting to do any work.

Except for the ceremonies of chanting hymns performed in congregations under the leadership of religious functionaries in temples, worship in Hinduism is fundamentally an individual activity. Hindu worship is divided into three groups as daily worship at home, worship being practiced on special days, and periodic worship according to the lunar calendar on certain days of the year.

INFORMATION BOX

The term Moksha (Nirvana) literally means absolute quietness, enlightenment, liberty and the highest happiness. Terminologically, it means to go beyond the cycle of birth-death and their pains and to attain a transcendental state. (Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 282)

⁸ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 160

⁹ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 98

There are some other rituals comprising every field of life in Hinduism. One of them is the funeral ceremony. Because they believe in the immortality of souls, Hindus do not bury their dead. They cremate dead bodies and the ashes of the body are poured into the Ganges River, which is sacred for Hindus. The aim of funeral ceremonies and the treats given to the participants of the funeral is to help the transition of the dead to a new spiritual form.

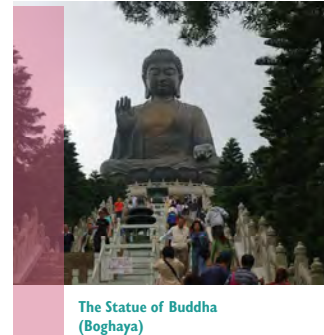
1.2. The Emergence and Main Features of Buddhism

Buddhism is a religion founded by Buddha in India in the sixth century BCE. Although Buddhism, which is one of the major religions in the world, was born in India, most of its followers live in other countries. Buddhism, which is common in Southern Asian and the Far Eastern countries, has attracted the attention of the people in some Western countries especially the newly developed sect of Zen Buddhism. Today, there are between three hundred and fifty and four hundred million Buddhists living around the world.

Buddhism was born as a reaction to Brahman formalism and caste fanaticism of Hinduism. The real name of Buddha, who was born in the Himalayan foothills as the son of the sovereign of a small district, was “Siddhartha Gautama”. The word “*Buddha*” is a title given to him later, and means “enlightened one” or “awakened one”. His original name Siddhartha means the one who has accomplished his goal.¹⁰

The doctrine of Buddha is called “*dhamma*” in the Pali language. When he announced the law of life, which he achieved, he explained his first sermon as “to set the wheel of law in motion”. Therefore the wheel has become a symbol of Buddhism. Buddha taught to follow the middle path between the two extremes. Knowledge, salvation and happiness are the middle path, whereas the two extremes are painful. This middle path guides people to nirvana. In order to reach nirvana, it is necessary to annihilate the bad habits of the self, desire and ambition, and acquire the wisdom of maturity. A person can defy the transmigration of the soul only by reaching nirvana.

The Noble Eightfold Path, which is practiced to annihilate desire and ambitions which are the source of pain, constitutes the basis of Buddhism. These eight elements are the improved forms of the principles of *sila* (morality), *samadhi* (meditation) and *panna* (wisdom).



The Statue of Buddha
(Boghaya)

¹⁰ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 159

THE NOBLE EIGHTFOLD PATH							
Right Understanding, Absolute Faith	Right Intention, Proper Thought	Right Speech	Right Conduct	Right Occupation	Right Effort	Right Mindfulness	Right Concentration

The confession of faith in Buddhism is called *tri-ranta* (three jewels). This confession is expressed as follows: “I go to the Buddha for my refuge, I go to the *dharmma* (doctrin) for my refuge, and I go to the *sangha* (congregation) for my refuge.”

In his final sermon, Buddha stated that everything was temporal; therefore striving was necessary to achieve real salvation. Buddha died a while after his last sermon, his body was burned and his bones and remnants have been protected in stupas. The teachings of Buddha were compiled after his death.

Buddhism lived its most vigorous period after it was embraced by Asoka the King of Magadha. Becoming the religion of a state, Buddhism started to spread outside India as well. Asoka made Buddhist thoughts and principles to be written down on stones, rocks and tablets in different parts of India in order for them not to be forgotten.¹¹

When Buddha died, he left neither a book nor a representative behind him. He wanted everyone to light their own way. However, the *sangha* organization established by him took the responsibility of recording his teachings and keeping them alive. Buddhism spread out of India to China, Burma, Ceylon, Nepal, Thailand and Japan.



The Statue of Buddha and stupas in which the remnants of his body are kept.

¹¹ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 167

INFORMATION BOX

Four main noble truths of Buddhism are:

- The truth of dukkha (suffering): All life is suffering and this is the main feature of worldly existence.
- The truth of samudaya (the cause of suffering): Desire is the cause of pain and suffering.
- The truth of nirhodha (the end of suffering): Suffering will end when we are free from desire.
- The truth of magga (the path that frees us from suffering): Overcoming desires and suffering can be realized by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 321)

1.3. The Emergence and Main Features of Sikhism

Sikhism emerged in sixteenth-century in India. This religion is a combination of Islam and Hinduism. The founder of Sikhism, which has a national character, was Guru Nanak (1469-1539). Sikhism, which occupies an important place in India, also has members in different parts of the world.

With the spread of Islam in India, some Hindus embraced Islam and some of them tried to combine Hinduism with Islam. One of them was Nanak who was influenced by Islamic ideas. He did not claim that he would bring a new religion. He wanted to abolish certain customs, traditions and culture of Hinduism, abolish polytheism, idolatry and the caste system, and find a middle path between Islam and Hinduism.

This movement, which began as a political one, later turned into a religious movement. Nanak, who had been influenced by Muslim sufis, preached in Northern India and established the *Syncretist* (reconciliatory) Sikh movement. He was affected by some principles of Islam such as the belief in one God. In his opinion, God is one, eternal, invisible, unspeakable and ubiquitous. Nanak also adopted some concepts from Indian philosophy, such as *maya* and nirvana, and accepted the idea of the transmigration of the soul. He however rejected the belief in avatars (the embodied vision of god).¹²

This religious understanding can be summarized as follows: the belief in the oneness of God, the recitation of the divine name many times during



Sikhs attract attention with their specific attire.

¹² Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 113

acts of worship, equality amongst people of different castes, the evilness of worshipping idols, the importance of love, and the necessity of a guru as a guide. Nanak taught all of this in a simple language which could be understood by everybody, and organized as a system of life.

LET'S MAKE A LIST

What are the effects of Islam and Hinduism on Sikhism?

- The effect of the monotheistic belief of Islam.
-
-

Just before he died, Nanak named the most faithful one of his followers to succeed him as guru and leader of the Sikhs. In accordance with the belief of transmigration of the soul, which was inculcated by him, the idea that his soul was going to transmigrate to the next guru after him was developed. This is why all of the gurus have been seen as the reappearance of Nanak. This succession ended with the death of the tenth guru, Gobind Singh, in 1708.

Gobind strengthened the Sikhs militarily and bound his followers together as a community. The main principles of this community called *Khalsa* are:

- Keeping the hair and beard uncut.
- Using a comb and turban to keep the hair in place.
- Wearing short pants tied under the knees.
- Wearing an iron bracelet on the right wrist.
- Carrying a dagger.

Those who are accepted into this community have been strictly disciplined. They cannot drink alcohol, use tobacco, or eat meat, which was slaughtered in the Islamic way.¹³ Today, Sikhs in India, despite being a minority group, have influence in the fields of military service, transportation, politics, sports, education and economy.

¹³ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 115

1.4. The Emergence and Main Features of Jainism

Jainism is one of the religions born in the sixth century BCE, in India. Jainism, which was considered as a sect by some scholars and as a religious order by others, has a national character. Today, Jainism has nearly three million followers.

The roots of Jainism go back to the eighth century BCE. Parshva who was from the Kshatriyas class had secluded himself and then he started to preach sermons when he was enlightened. The enlightenment doctrine put forward by Parshva was improved and systematized by Mahavira Vardhamana Jina (d. 599 BCE) who came after him. Therefore, the doctrine of Jina was named as Jainism and its followers were named Jainist.

The similarity between the life, beliefs, and practices of Buddha and Jina are notable. Although both of them are against the Brahman class and their rituals and methods, they have been influenced by the transmigration of the soul theory of Hinduism. Both of the movements emerged as reactions to polytheism, the caste system and sacrifices. Jainists resemble Buddhists in many aspects, but give importance to a pious life more than Buddhists. Buddhism is more tolerant regarding this issue.

Jainism accepts some features of Hinduism and the role of religious functionaries in temple rituals. They accept *Ahimsa* (non-violence) as a principle and forbid killing any living beings. This is why they prefer engaging in business life rather than agriculture. They are content eating vegetables and fruits. A good Jainist must filter his drinking water and his air. This is why they wear a piece of cloth over their mouths. And in order to avoid killing small insects, they carry a small brush to sweep the paths as they walk.

During the third century CE, a major split took place within Jainism due to questions of attire. People following Mahavira were going around naked and were named *Digambaras* (sky-clad ascetics), then, with the influence of Muslims, they adopted a cloth covering certain parts of their bodies. The other group became the *Shvetambaras* and their distinguishing feature is to dress in white. There are no great differences between them in terms of belief. They practice yoga and believe in the existence of Jina, *Tirthankara* (spiritual guide) and saints.

The ultimate goal of Jainism, which has no missionary aim, is to be released from *karma* and reach nirvana. And this can be achieved by abiding by the five prohibitions of Jainism. According to Jainists, followers of this religion are immortal and eternal.

LET'S COMPARE

Moral principles in Jainism are very strict even for those who are not in the Brahman class. These principles are classified under five titles:

- To not kill.
- To not lie.
- To not steal under any circumstances.
- To avoid sexual intercourse as much as possible.
- To be content with minimum goods.

Compare the moral principles of Jainism with divine religions.



A Jainist Temple

2. Chinese and Japanese Religions

Except for Judaism, Christianity and Islam, there are three official religions in China. These religions are Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism. Shintoism, which emerged and developed outside of China, in Japan, is accepted as the fourth one. Moreover, Zen Buddhism emerged in Japan under the influence of Buddhism.

2.1. The Emergence and Main Features of Confucianism

Confucius (Kung Fu-Tzu 551-478 BCE), who is one of the greatest philosophers of China is the founder of Confucianism. Although he spent his early years in poverty, he received a good education due to his interest in learning. He started teaching students when he was twenty. His method was to interpret the wisdom of previous people. His belief system is based on believing that human nature is good and that one should act in accordance with this nature.



A Temple of Confucianism

Confucius spent his last five years writing his famous works, training students and teaching his doctrine. His fame spread after his death and his grave has been turned into a place of pilgrimage.

In Confucianism, the relationship among family members and relatives is extremely important in order to form a social order and a strong society. In Confucianism morality is more prominent than other features and this occurs in the art of administration among managers, political morality among noblemen, and loyalty to traditions among the public.

The moral system of Confucianism is for the community and the nation, and its aim is to guide the nation to happiness through political discipline. Confucius dictates that to be able to apply five things, i.e. gravity, generosity, sincerity, earnestness and kindness everywhere under heaven is perfect virtue.

LET'S INTERPRET

"If you are grave, you will not be treated with disrespect. If you are generous, you will win all. If you are sincere, people will put their trust in you. If you are earnest, you will accomplish much. If you are kind, this will enable you to employ the services of others."

Interpret these moral principles that were defined as perfect virtues by Confucius.

Confucius states that in order to live a comfortable life, people should follow the middle path at every point of their lives, avoid extremism, respond by good to the goodness and treat bad behavior fairly. The realization of justice prevents self-interest.

The basic principle that rulers should follow is winning their community's affection and confidence. The ruler who governs his country by goodness resembles the North Star. He leads his community on the right path. If the community follows the right path, no one will dare to step out of line.

Until 1912, Confucianism was the official religion of China. The vast majority of its followers live in China and others live in Japan, Burma and Thailand.

LET'S MAKE A LIST

People who have power should observe five excellent things and avoid four bad things. The five excellent things are:

- To be beneficial without making great expenditures.
- To give people tasks without making them regretful.
- To get whatever is deserved without being covetous.
- To gain dignity without being proud.
- To be majestic without being scary.

And the four bad things are:

- To lead people to death without having instructed them; this is called "cruelty".
- To suddenly require them to do some work without having given them warning; this is called "oppression".
- To issue orders that are not urgent and require them to be fulfilled immediately this is called "brutality".

- To act stingily when giving things to people; this is called “to act inappropriately”.

(Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, Dinler Tarihi, p. 66)

List the moral principles recommended by Confucius in the form of terms.

- Being economical.
-

2.2. The Emergence and Main Features of Taoism

The founder of Taoism is Lao-Tzu. Lao-Tzu lived in the same century as Confucius. In the latter period of the Chu dynasty, a student of his asked him to write a book and he wrote “*Tao Te Jing*”. *Tao* means creative principle, *Te* means personal virtue, and *Jing* means great book (the book leading to wisdom). This book is the source of all Taoist ideas and explains what the “*Tao*” is.

Lao-Tzu pointed out the moral values in his teachings. According to him, what makes a human being a human is just spiritual virtues. An exemplary human being should be good, merciful, faithful, trustworthy and humble. Man should follow the laws of *Tao* by paying attention to the sound of nature because the more prohibition in the country means more poverty in the nation. The more precautions are taken against people, the more deceitful they become. The more law and order that is enforced the more bandits and thieves appear. He rejected arrogance and pride, and did not want people to be enslaved by their ambitions.

These moral principles in *Taoism* are valid not just among individuals but also in international relations. He defended the idea that everything can be achieved with respect and obedience, even enemies can be defeated with love, therefore, he was opposed to war.

According to Lao-Tzu, a person's self-control depends upon knowing one's self. He states that the person who knows others is intelligent; those who know themselves are clever; those who gain victory against others are powerful; those who gain victory against themselves are mighty.

Although death and the afterlife are expressed in Taoism, there is no clarity about the concepts of heaven and hell. On the other hand, it can be seen that views such as the immortality of the soul and those who pursue a good life in this world will be together with *Tao*.

2.3. The Emergence and Main Features of Shintoism

In Chinese “*Shin*” means god and “*to (tao)*” means path. *Shinto*, which is a combination of these two words, means “the way of the gods”. The term *Shinto*, in Japanese “*Kami-no-michi*,” was used to distinguish the ancient religious beliefs of Japan from Buddhism.

Shintoism is a religion that does not have any relation to other religions and has no founder. Worshipping natural forces and spirits are the beliefs of Shintoism. According to Shintoism everything has a spirit. The word “*kami*” (superior, high) is used for expressing the entities beyond human perception. It is believed that souls continue to live after death and the souls of ancestors protect their descendants. Followers of Shintoism believe that all who die become a *kami*, however not all *kami* become a god. Emperors who are believed to be the descendants of the sun god are accepted as gods.

In Shintoism there are chronicles called *Kojiki* and *Nihongi* which are regarded as sacred. Events taking place before the acceptance of Chinese scripture were orally reported.

In Shintoism there is no idol in the normal sense. They worship gods through objects symbolizing them in temples. Worship is practiced in temples or at home.

A follower of Shintoism can also be the follower of another religion but what is essential is to be Japanese. In Japanese, the words religion and nationality are synonymous. Japanese people are under the influence of common public beliefs more than in any other religion. Marriage ceremonies are performed in Shinto temples in the presence of a Shinto priest. Buddhist priests hold funerals.



A Shinto Temple in Japan

3. Other Religions

3.1. Zoroastrianism

Zarathustra is the founder of Zoroastrianism and was born in the sixth century BCE. Zarathustra who came from a noble family, was born in Persia and influenced Persian religions. Because he taught a monotheistic religion, some people considered him a prophet who received divine revelation. Sacred texts called *Gathas* are attributed to him.¹⁴

Zarathustra brought the belief of one god to ancient Persia. The religion that was brought by him is based on monotheistic belief. Before him, Persians prayed to some gods and maintained the culture of *haoma* (i.e. god of life

¹⁴ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 116

that was believed to fill the entire universe in the form of liquid) practiced by drinking a sacred fluid, which had intoxicating effects and was prepared by the priests.

When Zarathustra attempted to save the world, he made certain subjects the basis of his teachings, such as worshipping Ahura Mazda, respecting *fravashis* (angels), cursing evil forces, and competing in favor.

According to Zoroastrians the purpose of the universe is the annihilation of lies and evil by truth. Zarathustra said that he had a close relationship with Ahura Mazda who he considered a god. In his opinion, there are two spirits competing with each other in the universe. Ahura Mazda sides with the good one of these two spirits. Humans must choose one of these two spirits. Their choice will determine their destiny.

While Ahura Mazda had been accepted as a spiritual light at first, after Zarathustra, this spiritual light was considered to be fire and thus Magianism, which is a fire cult, developed.

There are six great angels beside Ahura Mazda. These angels, who are also called *Amesha Spentas* (Sacred Immortals), are considered to be Ahura Mazda's attributes and functions in the form of right-mindedness, justice, the abode of the divine will, humbleness, perfectness, and immortality.

According to Zarathustra, on the one hand there is "*asha*" (order of the universe) consisting of goodness and light, and on the other there is "*drug*" (lies, anarchy) consisting of evil and darkness. Killing human beings and animals is a great sin in Zoroastrianism and committing adultery is forbidden.

3.2. Tribal Religions

Small communities with no modern lifestyle that earn their livelihood by hunting, fishing and gathering are called tribes. Today, tribes generally exist in regions such as Africa, Australia, the Pacific Ocean, Java and Brazil.

There are various concepts in tribal religions. Even if each religion is expressed in different terms, they are similar in essence. Members of primitive tribes believe that they are surrounded by invisible powers. Among them "*mana*" is a word which is used for expressing a secret power, a hidden energy source.

LET'S NOTE

Zoroaster is the Greek translation of Zarathustra. (Zarath means beautiful, right; ustra means camels. Thus Zarathustra means someone who has beautiful camels.)

RESEARCH

Why is Zoroastrianism also called Magianism?

Research.



A symbolic depiction of Zarathustra.

INFORMATION BOX

Various stones, chains, amulets, mascots and large images, which are believed to have *mana* and give power to the person who carries them, are called “fetish”. Fetish literally means “something done.” Amulets, talismans and lucky objects are claimed to be the objects derived from fetishism.

The belief in a supreme god and creator is among the common beliefs of the tribes. However, their image of a supreme being differs according to the tribe. This supreme god dominates or rules over souls and gods that are of a lower status than him. He is the creator of human beings and every other being. They pray only to this supreme being in the case of disaster.

“Taboo” is a word which means forbidden. It expresses that holding them is dangerous and forbidden. As a natural result of the belief in *mana*, a person, a place, and an object that has “*mana*” are considered taboo.

“Totem” literally means a sign and manifestation. Terminologically it is a word used by members of primitive tribes to name the animals, plants, and non-living beings, which they consider to be their relatives. Totems are believed to be the great ancestors of tribes. People adhering to the same totem cannot get married. Totems are untouchable and cannot be eaten, as this is considered to be a taboo.

“Shaman” is a name given to people who engage in religious rituals and ceremonies, in addition to those who practice sorcery, foretell the future, and have communion with the spiritual world through trances.

People who are considered to have secret powers through being in contact with supernatural forces in order to reach a certain goal and make something real, practice “Sorcery”.¹⁵ While religion and sorcery used to be combined in early tribes, they have taken a scientific form after the urbanization of societies.

The words of “legend” and “myth” come from the Greek word “*mythos*” (story, tale). In these, stories about gods, heroes, and the formation of the universe are told.

“Rite” is the body of rules and ceremonies related to the practice of a religion. There are traditional ceremonies in tribes, which are practiced for many



Tribal Totems

RESEARCH

What do the terms
Totemism and
Mythology mean?

Research.

¹⁵ Heyet, *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, p. 76

different purposes; dancing also takes part in these ceremonies. Members of tribes manifest their psychological states through dances.

LET'S COMPARE

Investigate the features of contemporary tribal religions from the diagram below and compare them with other religions.

SOME CONTEMPORARY TRIBAL RELIGIONS				
DINKA RELIGION South Sudan	AINU RELIGION Japan Islands	MAORI RELIGION South Pacific Islands (Polynesians)	GA RELIGION Ghana	NAMBAS RELIGION South Pacific Malekula Island

FEATURES OF CONTEMPORARY TRIBAL RELIGIONS

1. They have no holy books or written sources.
2. Great interest is shown in sorcery and sorcerers.
3. They have no founder.
4. They belong to certain tribes and are called by the name of their tribes.
5. As well as believing that souls live after death, there is no belief in the hereafter.
6. They have local characteristics.
7. They have the understanding of a supreme god, which is expressed in different ways.
8. Members of the tribes have no choice of choosing other religions.

3.3. Ancient Turkish Beliefs

DID YOU KNOW?

Turkish sultans and rulers described in Orkhon inscriptions were mentioned as being grateful to Gok Tengri (Sky God) for protecting them and their nations. When they talked about their achievements, they would not forget to say "with the blessing of God".

(Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 105)

Before Islam some Turkish clans had adopted certain religions such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism and Christianity. Tengrism was the dominant element in the traditional religions

of the pre-Islamic Turks. Under the influence of Western ethnographers, when traditional Turkish beliefs and practices were mentioned they used to be called “Shamanism”. In fact, this term does not reflect ancient Turkish beliefs.¹⁶ The belief in a god to ancient Turks was, however, “Henotheism,” which refers to the acceptance of the existence of many gods but the worshipping of only one of them. God is omnipotent and likes just goodness. The word “god” in Turkish societies was used in the meanings of both “sky” and “deity”. In different regions, various terms were used to refer to god, such as Ulgen, Ulgon, Kuday, Tanara, Tura, Idi, Calap and Bayat.

In ancient Turkish beliefs, the “mountain cult” was related to Tengrism. It was believed that mountains were the abode of Tengri. Therefore, according to Turks, mountains, lakes and rivers are living beings with souls.

The water cult has an important place in ancient Turkish beliefs as well. Water is the means of cultivation. It is pure and clean. It symbolizes knowledge, reason and power.¹⁷

Among the ancient Turks, religious functionaries who managed religious and sacrificial ceremonies and intermediated between spirits and people were called “*kam*”.¹⁸ They would strive to maintain the beneficial influences of good spirits upon human beings and they would also try to prevent the harmful effects of evil spirits by using various methods.

Ancient Turks considered death an effect of evil spirits just like illness. According to the Altay Turks, Erlik, who was the ruler of the underworld, sent Aldachis to the earth and had them capture the people’s spirits and end their lives. Yakut Turks explain death as the capture of people’s souls by evil spirits.

In ancient Turkish beliefs, sorrow for death was expressed in different ways and through certain ceremonies. For instance, the widowed wives and the daughters of the Kyrgyz Turks would cut their hair on the very same day that their husbands and fathers were buried, whereas the Huns would bury their tribal leaders in brocaded clothes.¹⁹



For ancient Turks the mountain cult was one of their important beliefs.

¹⁶ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 104

¹⁷ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 87

¹⁸ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 93

¹⁹ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 110-113

LET'S COMPLETE – COMPARE						
Name of the religion	Its Belief in God	Its Prophet or Founder	Its Holy Book	Its Belief in the Hereafter	Where do the majority of its members live?	Does it allow conversion from other religions?
Taoism						
Confucianism						
Shintoism						
Hinduism						
Jainism						
Buddhism						
Sikhism						

Complete the diagram above about Indian and East Asian religions and compare them in light of the information you have gathered.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What are the similar features demonstrated by the religions in the Indian sub-continent? Explain.
2. What are the reasons for the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism? Make a list.
3. What are the main features of primitive tribal religions? Explain.
4. Did the ancient beliefs of the Turks have any effects on their embracing Islam? Explain.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following is not from the religions of the Indian sub-continent?
A. Hinduism B. Buddhism C. Zoroastrianism
D. Jainism E. Sikhism
2. Which one of the following religions has a cast system?
A. Confucianism B. Buddhism C. Hinduism
D. Zoroastrianism E. Taoism
3. Which one of the following religions did Islam influence?
A. Buddhism B. Sikhism C. Zoroastrianism
D. Shintoism E. Jainism
4. Which one of the followings is not among the common religions of China and Japan?
A. Confucianism B. Jainism C. Zoroastrianism
D. Shintoism E. Buddhism

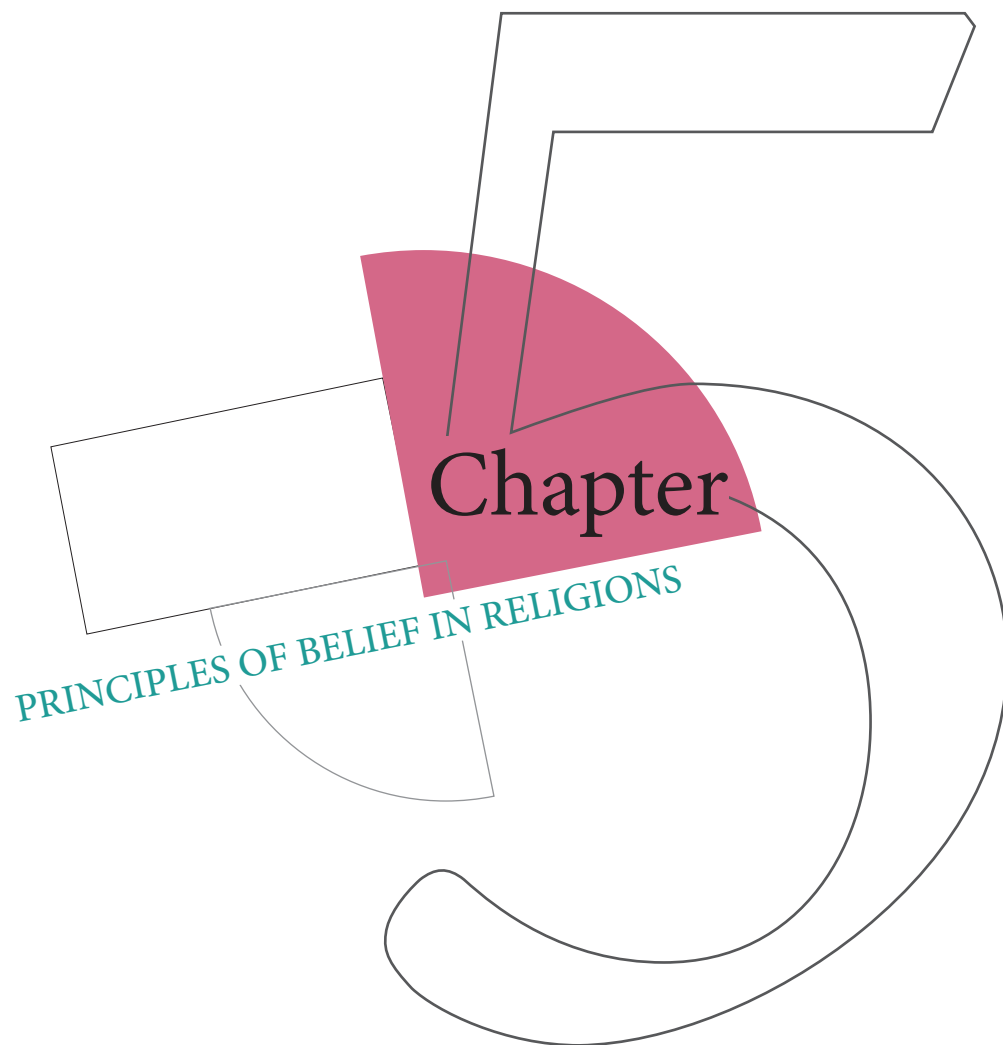
C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(Totem, Om, yoga, meditation, nirvana)

1. The word used for the names generally given by members of primitive tribes to animals, plants, and non-living creatures that they considered to be their ancestors is
2. The exercise in which humans concentrate their body, mind, and inner power is called and the method of relaxation and purifying the mind from negative thoughts is called
3. The word which is a common symbol of worship and is said before starting to read the Vedas, before praying, eating, or starting any work is called..... among Indians.

D. Write “T” for true and “F” for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) Among the ancient Turks, religious functionaries who managed religious and sacrificial ceremonies and intermediated between spirits and people were called “kam”.
2. (...) Totem can be beaten. It is not considered a taboo and it can be domesticated.
3. (...) According to Zarathustra, on the one hand there was “asha” (order of the universe) consisting of goodness and light and on the other hand there was “drug” (lies, anarchy) consisting of badness and darkness.
4. (...) A follower of Shintoism can also be a member of another religion at the same time. An essential condition of Shintoism is to be Japanese.



Chapter

PRINCIPLES OF BELIEF IN RELIGIONS

PRINCIPLES OF BELIEF IN RELIGIONS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Gather information about the belief of tawhid (oneness of God), which is the basis of Islamic beliefs.
2. Search for the meanings of the following terms from a dictionary: prophet, founder of religion, the hereafter, and Messiah.
3. How was the Holy Qur'an protected in the period of Prophet Muhammad and how was it transmitted to the following periods without being corrupted? Talk with your friends.

1. Belief in God

LET'S DISCUSS

According to Islam, religion started with Prophet Adam. He was the first prophet and taught people the belief in *tawhid* (one god). In time, with the corruption of the understanding of religion, the belief and worship of multiple deities (polytheism) emerged.

According to positivists, who adapted the theory of Darwin's theory of evolution to religion, the origins of man's belief in god is found in his powerlessness in the face of nature. In the beginning, people who believed in more than one god started to believe in only one god as a consequence of the increase in their knowledge and power. This process will continue until the time that human beings do not need any god.

Compare these two approaches with reference to the text above.

Written sources and archeological findings indicate that throughout history there was no society that did not have some sort of belief in god. Since the

beginning of creation until today, some people believed in one god and others believed in more than one. The former is called monotheism and the latter is called polytheism. One god has usually been accepted as the greatest god in polytheistic belief systems. In fact, even in primitive tribal religions there is a concept of a supreme god along with totemic and animist beliefs, sorcery, and ancestor cults.¹

In monotheistic religions, god is a timeless and omnipresent being. He is the creator of everything. There is no created being that resembles him. He has neither a partner nor a likeness. Islam and Judaism are the most concrete examples of monotheistic religions. In polytheistic religions the number of gods may reach thousands even millions. In fact, there are millions of gods in Shintoism.²

1.1. Belief in God in Judaism, Christianity and Islam

Judaism is the oldest of the Abrahamic religions, which derive from the same source. The lack of certain information about the principles of creed in Jewish sacred books has been regarded as a problem in relation to Jews. Religious scholars carried out studies regarding Jewish principles of faith, however, not until the Jewish scholar Maimonides (1135-1204) did these studies bear any results. Maimonides specified thirteen principles of faith resembling “the creed” in Islam to counter Muslims and Christians and in order to defend Judaism.³

LET'S COMPARE

Among the thirteen principles of faith which were specified by Maimonides, the principles related to god are as follows:

- God is one and there is no god but Him.
- God is the creator of everything and dominates them.
- God is not an object and He cannot be described.
- God is eternal and everlasting.
- Worship is performed only to God; nothing can be associated as partners to Him.
- God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
- God rewards those who fulfill His commands and punishes those who violate them.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 237)

Read the text above and compare it with belief in Allah in Islam.

¹ Günay Tümer, Abdurrahim Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 462

² Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 69

³ Ekrem Sarıçioğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 256

Judaism attaches importance to belief in one god. In the Torah it states: “**Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.**”⁴ According to Judaism, God does not resemble any creature. This is why he cannot be depicted in either statues or pictures. His name cannot be mentioned in vain. Prayer is performed to God only. God has two names Elohim and Yahweh. Elohim expresses his side of anger and Yahweh expresses his merciful side. In the absence of the Temple, Jews are not allowed to mention the name of God and, because of this, they call Him “Ha-shem and Adonai”. According to Jews, God Yahweh created them superior to other nations.⁵

Although Christianity evolved out of Judaism, it has quite a different belief in god compared to Judaism. Even though Christians say that they believe in one god, they accept Jesus and the Holy Spirit as gods as well. According to them, there are three gods of the same essence. This is called the Trinity (tripling), which is composed of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Christians define the Trinity as the “existence of one god in three personalities”. Interpreting three different beings as one is not logically possible. This is why Christians say that this issue can be comprehended by faith alone.⁶ Some Christian theologians accept deities other than God the Father as metaphorical and defend the understanding of belief in one god. However, this approach is contrary to Christian holy books and has not been commonly accepted.

God the Father, which is the first element of the Trinity in Christianity is eternal, everlasting, omnipotent, omniscience, the creator of everything, and merciful.

The second element of the Trinity is His Son, Jesus. He is the word of God the Father that manifests itself in the body of a man. Thus, Jesus his Son is God who comes from the same essence as God the Father. According to the vast majority of today’s Christians, God the father presented himself among people by embodying (incarnation) himself in Jesus as a result of his love and mercy to human beings. Jesus is the sole intermediary between God and people. He has two natures. He is human, due to his birth from a human mother and he is a god due to being the Son of God the Father. Jesus sacrificed himself for the atonement of the original sin of humanity originating from Adam. Thus,

⁴ Hebrew Bible, Deuteronomy, 6/4

⁵ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 69

⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 95

his human nature ended on the cross while his divine nature still continues. Serving him means serving God the Father.

INFORMATION BOX

Jesus is a prophet who was sent to the Jewish people. In the beginning, people who believed in Jesus defended the belief in one god. Jesus was not considered different from other people but after the conversion of Paul, some concepts such as the godhood of Jesus, and sinfulness of all people because of the original sin committed by Adam were introduced into the religion. There were, however, some people who rejected this understanding. Arius the Bishop of Alexandria (280-336) defended the belief in one god and rejected the godhood of Jesus. For a while, the official understanding of the Byzantine Empire had been based on monotheism. In time, the view of Arius became the minority opinion. At the Council of Nicaea, organized in 325, Arius' opinions were not accepted and he was excommunicated.

(Muhammed Ataurrahim, *Bir İslam Peygamberi Olarak Hz. İsa*, p. 112- 113)

The third element of the Trinity is the Holy Spirit. In the Council of Constantinople, organized in 381, the godhood of the Holy Spirit was accepted. Thus, the Trinity, constituting the basis of Christian belief was completed. Although the Holy Spirit derives from the same essence as God the Father, its nature is different. It is eternal like the other two gods and lives in the hearts of people and the universe. God the Father preforms all his works and shows his power through it. Moreover, it leads people to goodness and keeps them from evil.

The principles of faith in Islam are explained in many verses of the Holy Qur'an and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad. The principles of faith, which are mentioned all together in one of the *hadiths* of Prophet Muhammad, were called the creed of Muslims. When he was asked about faith, the Prophet answered as follows: **"Faith is believing in Allah, in his angels, in his books, in his prophets, in the last day, in predestination and in the fact that everything good or bad is decided by Allah."**⁷ The principles of faith in Islam have simple and understandable characteristics and are universal.

Islam attaches great importance to the belief in one God and this belief is called *tawhid*. According to Islam, Allah, who does not resemble any of His

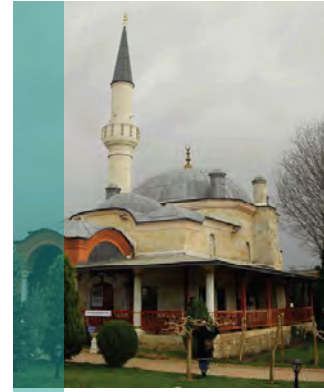
⁷ Muslim, Iman, 1

creations, is the Cause and Creator of everything. He has no partner. Nothing happens without his knowledge and power. He is not in need of anything (self-sufficient). Allah is the special name given to the Creator in the Qur'an and He has other names indicating His different attributes. These are called "*Asma al-Husna*" (the Beautiful Names).

The closest religion to Islam's belief in one God is Judaism. However, from time to time anthropomorphist (human-like) descriptions of god are seen in Judaism. In Jewish sacred texts sometimes phrases are used for god such as resting,⁸ walking in a garden,⁹ repenting,¹⁰ and appearing.¹¹ Islam never acknowledges such views. Allah, who is beyond time and place, is also beyond the features that exist in other beings. Moreover, the concept of a creator in Judaism has a national characteristic.¹² He protects the Jews from other people, whereas, according to Islamic understanding, Allah is the deity of everyone and never discriminates based on race or color among His servants.

Just as Islam is distinguished from Judaism, it also differs from Christianity regarding its perception of God. By accepting the Trinity, Christianity has moved away from monotheistic understanding and moved closer to polytheism. Apart from some denominations, some Christian denominations have and show respect to icons of the Son in churches. Judaism or Islam does not accept this perception. The Qur'an also denies the incarnation of God in the body of Jesus, which is accepted in Christianity. According to Islamic belief, Allah is a transcendental being, and is beyond time and place.

The perception of God in Islam does not accord with that of the deists, either. According to the deist understanding, a supreme god created the universe. However, this creator does not intervene in the works of human beings. He has given them reason and has left them to distinguish between good and bad. The creator in Islam is dynamic.¹³ Nothing in the universe can be explained without His creativeness. He has sent prophets to His servants from among them and enlightened them about the world and the hereafter. He is always with his servants.



Daru'l Hadith Mosque, Edirne

⁸ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 2 / 2

⁹ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 2 / 8

¹⁰ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 6 / 7

¹¹ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 12 / 7

¹² Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 17 / 9

¹³ Rahman, 55: 29

LET'S MAKE A LIST

Make a list of the features of Judaism, Christianity and Islam regarding the perception of God.

Judaism	Christianity	Islam <i>Tawhid</i>
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Islam also does not agree with the pantheist perception of god. According to pantheism, the natural universe is pervaded with divinity. Nature is identical with divinity and there is no divinity out of nature. According to Islam, everything in nature is the creation of Allah but He is not a part of the universe. He is beyond every being. Even though everything in this universe is a sign of His existence and Oneness, His nature cannot be known. Because it is impossible for a mortal being to precisely comprehend an Eternal and Everlasting Being.¹⁴

1.2. Belief in God in Indian and East Asian Religions

The concept of god in Hinduism is not very clear. In the sacred books of Hinduism the names and missions of many gods are mentioned, this is why Hinduism has been defined as a polytheistic religion. The top hierarchy of gods consists of the creator god Brahma, the protector god Vishnu and the punishing god Shiva.

INFORMATION BOX

Some important Hindu gods and their missions apart from the three main gods are:

Surya, Savitar: Gods of the sun.

Soma: God of Moon.

Vayu: God of Wind.

Yama: God of death.

Agni: God of Fire.

Varuna and Mitra: Gods of the cosmic order.

Indra: God of War.

(Mircea Eliade, *Dinler Tarihi Sözlüğü*, s. 154)

¹⁴ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 15

There are many gods other than these but belief in one god is mentioned in the Vedas, which are the sacred books of Hinduism. For instance, the following statement in the *Rigveda*, “They called him Indra, Mitra, Varuna and Agni. Even though the wise men call him by different names, the truth is one.” points to the belief in one god. Additionally, in the Vedas, it is mentioned that the god Brahma is a being who is eternal and everlasting, beyond time and place, not begotten, and cannot be comprehended by people.¹⁵

According to the Muslim scholar Biruni, the understanding of religion in Hinduism differs among the intellectuals and regular public. Brahmins have the perception of one god. In their opinion god does not resemble any other being and is omnipotent. The people however, believe in many gods and make images of them. According to Biruni, while in the beginning a monotheistic religion was dominant in the Indian Peninsula, a polytheistic belief developed as a result of changes that took place over time.¹⁶

Buddhism was born as a reaction to Hinduism and is not interested in the concept of god. There is however, no information indicating that Buddha rejected the belief in god. Buddhism concentrates on the issue of man’s reaching nirvana by ridding himself of pain and misery. Buddha objected to the anthropomorphic belief in god that was accepted in Hinduism and the making of statues of god,¹⁷ and wanted such sculptures to be destroyed. However, some Buddhists in the following centuries made statues of Buddha and accepted them as representations of god. This is seen in Mahayana Buddhism in particular. There are various descriptions of god in the countries where this branch of Buddhism is prevalent. According to them, Buddha is the greatest god. Another branch of Buddhism, Theravada is not concerned with god. Due to this uncertainty about god, it is also claimed that Buddhism is a godless religion.¹⁸

¹⁵ Swami Nikhilananda, *Hinduizm*, p. 27- 33

¹⁶ Günay Tümer, *Biruni’ye Göre Dinler ve İslam Dini*, p. 175-178

¹⁷ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 6, p. 353

¹⁸ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p.71

INFORMATION BOX

Confucianism is one of the most common religions in China. Confucius, the founder of this religion, was not interested in metaphysical matters. His real interest was to create a virtuous community. He strived for the creation of a society consisting of good people by putting an end to the divisions among the society of that period. It is however known that he had a perception of god. In traditional Chinese understanding people believe in gods and holy spirits. Although he was mostly a follower of the tradition, he rejected these beings. Previously, the words “Shang-ti” and “Tien” were used to refer to the almighty god. Confucius also used the word “Tien” which means “the god dominating everything”. According to him, Tien is the source of all kinds of goodness, death and life. He sees everything and he is with human beings in all their works and deeds. He is the law-maker. Tien prolongs the life of those who behave virtuously and he also rewards virtuous acts. According to Confucius, people living on earth must live in accordance with the order of heaven, because a person offending heaven will not have anywhere else to pray.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 388, 389; Konfüçyüs, *Konuşmalar*, p. 27)

Jainism is another religion that originated from Hinduism. Although this religion does not accept that there is a creator of the universe, it adopts the belief of the existence of gods. Divine beings reside in different spheres of heaven in accordance with their powers. Some gods have long life spans, but they are not immortal. There is another place above the world of heavens where those who have reached salvation reside. This place is reserved for those who do not have to bear the burden of the cycle of rebirth.¹⁹

Sikhism, which is a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam in the Indian sub-continent, is a monotheistic religion. According to Sikhs, Allah exists and He is one, but God cannot be totally comprehended by mortal human beings. In order for His existence to be recognized, Allah has given human beings reason and comprehension. Allah is omnipresent. Everything indicates his existence. Sikhs call God “Nam”, “Rama” and “Allah”.²⁰

The basis of Lao-Tzu’s thoughts is a mystic pantheism. Taoist morality is based on asceticism. *Tao* is the cause ruling the world and human beings should be aware of him. *Tao* is the creating principle that precedes the universe. He is invisible, un-hearable and incomprehensible. He is eternal and everlasting; he exists by himself. He is the one who creates and nourishes everything. He

¹⁹ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 178

²⁰ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 183; Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 463

is not in need of anything. He does not compete with other forces. Therefore, if people avoid competition and greed like *Tao*, they have a good life. *Tao* is sometimes called “mother” because everything comes from him. One comes from *Tao*, two (*Yin* and *Yang*) comes from one, and three (*Yin*, *Yang*, and *Breath*) comes from two. And from three, the universe is created. Besides *Tao*, there is the concept of “*Te*” in Taoism. *Te* is the power of *Tao* that changes everything in the universe. *Tao* is the creator of all beings. *Te* feeds them, raises them, forms them as matter, and so completes its power. This is why all beings praise *Tao* and appreciate *Te*.

In the years after Lao-Tzu, radical changes occurred in the perception of god in Taoism. This religion started to compete with Buddhism, which existed in China concurrently with the spread of Taoism. However, in their relationship with Buddhism, the followers of Taoism were influenced by Buddhism’s polytheist understanding of religion and concluded that the universe is full of gods.²¹

INFORMATION BOX

Ancient Turks had mostly used the word “Tengri” to mean the supreme god. In time, this word has taken the form Tanrı (God).

However, in different Turkish clans, words such as Ulgen (supreme), Bay Ulgen (Substantial Supreme), Kuday, Tanara, Idi, Ugan, Calap and Bayat are used all of which mean god.

(Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 105)

Shintoism, which is the national religion of the Japanese, is one of the religions in which polytheism is prevalent. In addition to the polytheistic belief of god, there also exists the animist belief of god. Beings such as deities and spirits have been defined by the word “*Kami*”. According to Shintoists, the world is composed of three layers situated above one another. These strata are heaven, earth and the underground. Deities reside in each of them. However, in the underground there also exist the deceased and giants. According to Shintoists, many Japanese islands were born from the marriages of deities.²² In Japan, the number of the deities is expressed in the millions. Just as there are

LET'S EVALUATE

Evaluate Lao-Tzu’s perception of god and Islam’s perception of Allah.

²¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 407

²² Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 222, 223

deities of the mountains, rivers, trees, the crash of thunder, wind and fire, there are also deities of all types of occupations. Almost all objects are associated with a deity however, Amaterasu (Sun Goddess) is the greatest god and it is believed that the emperor descends from her.²³

Ancient Turkish religions are among the East Asian religions. Turks, who cover a wide geographical area, have embraced various religious beliefs. Uighurs embraced the Mani religion, the Huns on the coast of the Caspian Sea have embraced Judaism, and some Bulgars have embraced the Orthodox denomination of Christianity.²⁴

There is no clear information about traditional Turkish religions. Traces of monotheism are found in Orkhun inscriptions, which are the written sources of a late period. In fact, god had a central importance in the lives of Turks throughout history. Turks always put forward the belief of a “supreme god”.

Another East Asian religion is Zoroastrianism. The ancient Persians who were Aryans shared the same belief with Indians, who are from the same race, before embracing Zoroastrianism. Zarathustra taught a monotheistic religion to the Persians. According to the belief that was brought by Zarathustra, god the almighty is one and does not have a physical entity. Ahura Mazdah is merciful, omniscience, omnipresent and unchangeable.²⁵ In the later writings of Avesta, it is expressed that good things were created from Ahura Mazdah and evil things were created from the evil force Ehrimen, which is also called Angra-Mainyu and who on his orders covered the universe with evil forces. In this sense there is a merciless fight between the gods of good and evil. At the end of this struggle Ahura Mazdah will overcome the god of evil and universe will be filled with light.²⁶ This dual perception of god is called dualism.²⁷

²³ Ahmet Kahraman, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 65; Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 463

²⁴ Ahmet Kahraman, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 57; Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 103

²⁵ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 2, p. 472

²⁶ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p.121- 123

²⁷ Ahmet Kahraman, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 81

LET'S ANALYZE										
Analyze the diagram below.										
	Hinduism	Buddhism	Sikhism	Jainism	Confucianism	Taoism	Shintoism	Zoroastrianism	Tribal Religions	Ancient Turkish Beliefs
Monotheism			X							
Polytheism										
Pantheism										

2. Belief in Prophets and Founders of Religion

The source of religions is based on either revelation or human thought. In religions based on revelation, Allah has conveyed religion to people through His messengers whom He has chosen. Some people’s beliefs have inclined in time to a religious understanding through reason and other people have adopted these beliefs. Such religions, which are based on human reason, are called “human religions” and are named after their founders. Human religions have been established through the ideas of their founders. The founders of the vast majority of these religions are known, however, the founders of Hinduism, Shintoism, and tribal religions are not known. The source of religions based on revelation is Allah. The Prophets convey the messages of Allah to people without making any changes to them. They have become exemplary characters

for people regarding how the religion they brought should be practiced. In this respect, the circumstances of the founders of human religions and prophets differ from each other.

The belief in prophets is one of the basic principles of Islamic faith. It is clearly emphasized in the Qur'an that Muslims believe in all the prophets. In *Surah al-Baqarah* (2), verse 285, this is expressed as follows: **"The Messenger has believed in what was revealed to him from his Lord and the believers. All of them have believed in Allah and His angels and His books and His messengers (saying), 'We make no distinction between any of His messengers.' And they say, 'We hear and we obey. (We seek) Your forgiveness, our Lord and to you is the (final) destination.'"**

Muslims do not make distinction among the prophets as the Jews and Christians do. They believe that every prophet is superior to other people in the presence of Allah. Muslims accept neither attributing sins to the prophets, as the Jews do,²⁸ nor the deification of Jesus, as the Christians do.²⁹ Jesus was a servant of Allah just like the other people and was also a messenger of Allah like other prophets. In fact, this is explained in the Qur'an as follows: **"(Jesus) said, 'Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet.'"**³⁰

There are no principles of faith stated in the Jewish sacred books. Although they believe in the prophets, they do not accept Jesus and Muhammad as prophets.

There is no clear statement about belief in prophets in the Christian holy books either. This is why, to be a Christian, the belief in prophets is not obligatory, although they do believe in the Jewish prophets but they do not accept Muhammad as a prophet. According to Christian beliefs, Jesus is not a prophet but the Son of God who is one of the elements forming the Trinity.

Apart from these three Abrahamic religions, Zoroastrianism, which emerged in Persia in the sixth century BCE, has principles regarding belief in prophets as well. Zarathustra is accepted as a prophet and the God Ehrimen revealed to him the book called Avesta.

²⁸ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 19/30-36

²⁹ Yuhanna, 10/30-38; 13/3

³⁰ Maryam, 19: 30

2.1. Prophet Moses

According to Jewish belief, Moses is the greatest prophet. Because of his place in Jewish belief, Judaism is called Musevilik (followers of Moses) in Turkish. According to common understanding Moses lived in the 1250s BCE and was a member of the Levite tribe. According to the Torah, Moses was born during the years of slavery of the Children of Israel in Egypt. A prophecy, that a boy was going to be born among the Children of Israel who was going to end the Pharaoh's reign spread in the very year that Moses was born. Thus, all the male children of the Hebrews born in those years were killed by order of the Pharaoh. By inspiration from Allah, Moses' mother put him in a basket and set him adrift on the River Nile. The daughter of Pharaoh Ramses II, found the boy and took him to the palace. Moses' sister went to the palace and asked the Pharaoh's daughter whether she would like a woman to nurse the baby. The Pharaoh's daughter accepted the offer and the birth mother of Moses went to the palace and nursed her son.³¹

LET'S DISCUSS

In addition to the terms of Hinduism and Buddhism, the term Muhammadanism has also been used in some books written in Western countries. In your opinion, is this a correct usage?

Discuss.

LET'S COMPARE

According to Jewish belief, Moses is superior to all the prophets. Prophets other than him are only educators and guides, whereas Moses is an ideal ruler and a prophet who has all the characteristics of a ruler and prophet. In their opinion other prophets receive revelation only when Allah wishes. Moses had the quality of being able to communicate with his Lord whenever he wanted. Since many people saw his miracles, Jews believe that Moses is superior to other prophets in this matter.

Compare the perception of prophethood given above to that of Islam.

Moses spent his childhood and part of his youth in the palace. Over the course of this time, the Egyptians were oppressing the Children of Israel. One day, Moses saw an Egyptian and a Jew fighting each other. When the Israelite asked for his help, he joined the fight and unintentionally killed the Copt. He then fled from Egypt and sought refuge with a soothsayer (who was the prophet Shu'ayb (Jethro) according to the Qur'an),³² in Midian (according to the Qur'an, Madyan).³³ He stayed with him for a long time and married one

³¹ Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 1/8-22; 2/1-7

³² Qasas, 28: 25

³³ Ta-Ha, 20: 40

of his daughters.³⁴ While he was grazing his herd at Mount Horeb, God chose him as a prophet and wanted him to lead the Children of Israel out of Egypt; God appointed Aaron as his assistant. Moses and Aaron went to the Pharaoh and told him that they wanted to take the Children of Israel to the land of Canaan, saying that it was the command of Allah. The Pharaoh and people around him refused their request and accused them of disrupting the social order. The Pharaoh wanted to humiliate Moses and Aaron in the eyes of the people and this was why he asked them to demonstrate a miracle. Then Aaron, (according to the Qur'an, it was Moses), threw his staff down and thereupon it turned into a snake. Then the Pharaoh called his famous magicians and they also threw their staffs down and they turned into snakes as well. However, Aaron's snake swallowed all of them. Thus, the magicians and the Pharaoh suffered a heavy defeat. The Pharaoh and the people around him persisted in their stubbornness and did not let them go. Afterwards, with the occurrence of some plagues, which had been foretold by Moses, the Pharaoh let Moses take the Children of Israel out of Egypt. While the Children of Israel were leaving under the leadership of Moses, the Pharaoh changed his mind and followed them. They miraculously crossed the Red Sea and when the Pharaoh and the Egyptian army attempted to follow them, God made the receding waters return and drowned them.³⁵

Moses led the Children of Israel to the land of Palestine (Canaan) by rescuing them from the Pharaoh's persecution. There he provided them with an environment to follow their religion as a free society. However, according to the Qur'an, Moses frequently faced difficult situations with his people. When he received the revelation from his Lord at Mount Sinai, his people started to worship an idol made by someone named Samiri.³⁶

According to Jewish belief, the religion brought by Moses has not been abrogated. The prophets of the Children of Israel after Moses adopted his religion without adding or removing anything from it. According to them, Allah did not send any religion other than the religion of Moses. Consequently, according to the Jews, Allah has taught the religion to humanity through Moses. While his predecessors foretold the good news of his coming, his successors taught his religion.³⁷

³⁴ Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 2/11-17

³⁵ Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 7/9-12; 12/12-14; 14/21-31

³⁶ Ta-Ha, 20: 85, 86

³⁷ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 237-238; Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p.71,72

MOSES ACCORDING TO DIVINE RELIGIONS		
JUDAISM <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He was a prophet.- He was given a holy book.- The essence of the religion revealed to him was not corrupted.	CHRISTIANITY <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He was a prophet.- He was given a holy book.- The religion revealed to him has been abrogated.	ISLAM <ul style="list-style-type: none">- He was a prophet.- He was given a holy book.- The essence of the religion revealed to him has been abrogated by being altered.

2.2. Prophet Jesus

Jesus was born around the beginning of the Common Era in Nazareth, in Palestine, and he descended from Jewish lineage. According to the Qur'an and the Gospels, Jesus was born fatherless and while Mary was engaged to Joseph, he was informed about the miraculous birth of Jesus, so he protected his wife.³⁸

Jews did not accept the fatherless birth of Jesus and accused Mary of being unchaste. Even the miracles of Jesus, such as his talking while in the cradle, did not convince them.³⁹ There is not much information about the childhood and youth of Jesus in the Qur'an and the Bible. Christians accept that his relative, John the Baptist, baptized Jesus. They also accept that Jesus started preaching the message when he was about thirty years old.

The missionary activities of Jesus made the authorities of the time upset; especially Jewish religious functionaries were annoyed at his religious understanding and criticisms of Judaism. In order to stop him, they complained about him to the Roman administration. In those days, Jesus and his disciples were preaching God's message. One of the disciples, Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and informed the Roman administration. Judas took some Jewish religious functionaries to the place where Jesus and his friends were hiding and made the Roman soldiers arrest Jesus. He was put on trial and, at the insistence of the Jewish elders, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, condemned Jesus. According to Christian belief, Jesus was crucified and buried in the evening. With God's will, he was resurrected on the Sunday morning and lived among his disciples for forty days. Then he ascended to heaven and sat at the right



The depiction of Jesus and Mary (Hagia Sophia/ Istanbul)

³⁸ Luke, 1/26-38; Luke, 2/21-40

³⁹ Maryam, 19: 27-29

hand of God and sent the Holy Spirit to Christians in order to protect the Christian community.⁴⁰

LET'S READ AND THINK

Prophet Muhammad warned his followers about not attributing supernatural qualities to him. He said upon the self-appraisal of his companions that: "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a slave. So, call me the slave of Allah and His messenger."

(Bukhari, Anbiya, 50)

What did Prophet Muhammad mean by this warning? Think.

According to Christians, Jesus is different from other people because of his birth and miraculous events in his life. He is the Son of Allah but he is not a prophet. Paul played the leading role in the formation of Christianity and it is believed that he received revelation from Jesus.⁴¹

Islam does not accept the Christian views regarding the birth and nature of Jesus. According to Islamic belief, his fatherless birth resembles Adam's who came into the world without a father and a mother. This is explained in the Qur'an as follows:

إِنَّ مَثَلَ عِيسَىٰ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ كَمَثَلِ آدَمَ خَلَقَهُ مِنْ تُرَابٍ ثُمَّ قَالَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ^ط

"Indeed, the example of Jesus to Allah is like that of Adam. He created Him from dust; then He said to him, "Be!" and he was."⁴²

Muslims agree with Christians about the birth of Jesus by the Virgin Mary. However, Muslims do not believe that Jesus was a god. Islam does not accept any other being as god other than Allah and considers this understanding to be "*shirk*" (polytheism), which is the greatest sin. Prophet Muhammad warned Muslims about the dangers of this Christian belief.

⁴⁰ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p.3

⁴¹ Acts of the Apostles, 26/13-18

⁴² Al-i Imran, 3: 59

JESUS ACCORDING TO DIVINE RELIGIONS

JUDAISM

- He is the child of a woman who sinned.
- He was not a prophet.

CHRISTIANITY

- He was born to the Virgin Mary.
- He was not a prophet.
- Allah gave him divinity.
- He sent revelations to the authors of the Gospels.

ISLAM

- He was born to Mary without a father.
- He was a servant and prophet of Allah.
- The holy book, the Bible, was revealed to him, however it has been corrupted.

2.3. Prophet Muhammad

LET'S NOTE

The prophethood and servanthood of our Prophet is best expressed in *kalimah al-shahadah* (the confession of faith) as follows:

“I bear witness that there is no God but Allah, He is one and has no partner and I also bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and Messenger.”

Prophet Muhammad is the last prophet sent by Allah. Muhammad was born in 571 CE in Mecca and was orphaned at a young age. First, his grandfather Abdul Muttalib took care of him, and with the death of his grandfather, he came under the care of his uncle Abu Talib. In his youth, he engaged in trade together with his uncle.

He received the approval of his society from childhood due to his good morals. Due to his upright character, Meccans called him “**Muhammad al-Amin**”, meaning “Trustworthy Muhammad”. Prophet Muhammad avoided certain behavior such as lying, deceiving, and mistreating people, and he never worshipped idols.

When he was twenty-five years old, he married Khadijah and was engaging in trade. Polytheistic beliefs and the erred ways of Meccan society disturbed him. When he reached the age of forty, he received the first revelation and started to invite the people to Islam. Meccan leaders reacted to him harshly and strived to dissuade him from his mission but their efforts did not stop him from delivering his message. They decided to kill him because of the increase

in the number of his followers. Due to this, Prophet Muhammad migrated to Madinah together with his followers in 622 where Islam spread rapidly. When the Prophet died, the vast majority of the Arabian Peninsula had already embraced Islam. The Qur'an states that Prophet Muhammad is not a supernatural being. The most important aspect which distinguishes him from other people is that he was chosen by Allah to deliver the revelation, which is stated in a verse as follows: **"Say, 'I am only a man like you, to whom has been revealed that your god is one God.'"**⁴³

Muhammad is a prophet who was sent to all of humanity. This is why he brought a universal message. It is expressed in the Qur'an that he is the prophet of all humanity: **"And We have not sent you except comprehensively to mankind as a bringer of good tidings and a warner. But most of the people do not know."**⁴⁴ He is the last chain of the lineage of prophets beginning with Adam. In verse 40 of *Surah Al-Ahzab* (33), Allah the Almighty has clearly emphasized that he is the last prophet: **"Muhammad is not the father of (any) one of your men, but (he is) the Messenger of Allah and last of prophets."** There will be no prophet after him and no book after the Qur'an, which is the only book in the history of mankind that remained unchanged.

MUHAMMAD ACCORDING TO DIVINE RELIGIONS		
JUDAISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM
- He is not accepted as a prophet.	- He is not accepted as a prophet.	- He is the last prophet of mankind. - The Qur'an, which was revealed to him, is the only book today without any alterations. - He is an exemplary person for all mankind.

2.4. Buddha, Nanak, Parshva and Mahavira

Buddha, who is the founder of Buddhism, lived in an area which is located today between the borders of North India and Nepal, in the years 563-483 BCE.

⁴³ Kahf, 18:110

⁴⁴ Saba, 34: 28

Buddha means “enlightened one”. The original name of Buddha who belonged to a noble family was Siddhartha (accomplished goal) and his family name was Gautama. Information about his life appeared after his death. According to the narrations, Buddha’s mother Maya had a dream before the birth of Buddha and in that dream she was told that the boy who was going to be born to her would become a famous guru.⁴⁵ The moment he was born he took seven steps and smiled all around. All beings on earth and in heaven knew about his birth.⁴⁶ The years of his youth passed happily in a palace, far from society. However, one day he went out of the palace and four events that he experienced caused a radical change in his life. When he saw an old man whose back was hunched, a patient writhing in pain, a beggar, and a dying person, he became unhappy and thought that life was in vain. First, he went to Brahmins who were Indian religious leaders in order to learn the meaning of life. However, he was not satisfied with what he learnt from them and he retreated to a forest. In the forest he took off his jewels, gave them to his servant and sent him back with his horse. He cut off his hair and threw it into the water. He strived to learn the meaning of life for six years and lived a strict ascetic life. Then he decided that such a life was not the true way and he searched for other ways to find the purpose and meaning of life. He started to meditate and contemplated under a fig tree called “*Bodhi*” for a long time. In the end, he was enlightened there and the title “*Buddha*”, which means, “enlightened one” was given to him. Buddha reached the truth after searching for seven years. Buddha passed on the truths he had reached as a result of his enlightenment to other people. He died in 483 BCE after missionary activities, which lasted for forty-five years.



A Buddhist Priest

INFORMATION BOX

Parshva lived in the eighth century BCE but we do not have much information about him. He was born in Varanasi, India. His life story resembles that of Buddha’s and Mahavira’s. The three of them were from the Kshatriyas (princes and warriors) class of the caste system. Parshva, who adopted an ascetic life, was enlightened and as a result of this life preached his knowledge to people. There are twenty-four *Tirthankara* (guide) in Jainism. Parshva is the twenty-third.

(Günay Tümer, Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 107)

⁴⁵ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 160

⁴⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 309

Mahavira, who lived in the same century as Buddha, has been accepted as the founder of Jainism. His original name was Vardhamana (happy) and he was born in Bihar, India in the sixth century BCE. After the death of his parents, he left his family when he was thirty-five and devoted himself to asceticism and abstinence. He was enlightened through a strict ascetic life for a period of thirteen years. Then he was given the titles of *Jina* (victor) or *Mahavira* (great hero). He spent the rest of his life preaching the truths he reached and his interpretation of the teachings of the previous twenty-three *Tirthankaras*. As he lived in accordance with the religious rules of Parshva, he also developed his teachings by renewing them.⁴⁷ Mahavira made asceticism a part of his life and died around 470 BCE due to uninterrupted fasting.



A symbolic depiction of Guru Nanak

Nanak is also a founder of a religion and lived in India like Buddha and Mahavira. Nanak was born in Talvandi near Lahore in Pakistan in 1469. He was from an Indian family and from a high caste. His childhood and part of his youth was spent in this town. He received a traditional Indian education in his childhood. He got married in his town and had two children. After a while he left the town and went to the city of Sultanpur where he worked with a Muslim manager. Nanak lived in India where the majority of people were Indians and in a period when Islam was influential. Thus, he was influenced by both the Indian and Islamic traditions. Nanak secluded himself and meditated in his spare time. According to accounts, one day he comprehended God who is the creator, free from fear and enmity, not begotten, who exists by Himself. He felt the need to tell this truth to people and left his home city. He preached his views about “God who is one and real” and gained fame through his teachings. Nanak brought the ideas of Hinduism and Islam together, which constituted a new religion called Sikhism.

Nanak visited religious holy places including Mecca and debated with Hindus and Muslims. He was disturbed by the religious-based clashes and wars that he saw in the places he visited and spoke of the importance of peace and brotherhood among people. Nanak died in a town called Kartapur in 1539.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 358, 359; Mircea Eliade, *Dinler Tarihi Sözcüğü*, p. 74

⁴⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 373, 374; Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 181

2.5. Confucius, Lao-Tzu, Zarathustra

Confucius, the founder of Confucianism, was born in the city of Tsou, in the state of Lu, China, in 551 BCE. He was called *Fu-Tzu* (master or philosopher Kung).

There were internal conflicts in society in the period that Confucius lived. He attached great importance to peace among people and believed that building a peaceful society was based on education. This was why he devoted himself to education from his youth. Confucius believed that the words of the wise from the past were very important in establishing social peace. Thus, he taught traditional knowledge to his pupils. He believed that in order to prevent social disorder, state rulers should have this knowledge. This was why Confucius travelled from place to place to inform rulers in various cities of his ideas.

As an educator, Confucius was very successful. He prepared his pupils for politics by encouraging them to receive an education in literature, history, philosophy and morality. His ideal was to establish a virtuous society composed of virtuous people. However, throughout his life he did not have the opportunity of establishing such a community. According to him, an ideal human being is a person who is intelligent, brave, polite, obedient to the principles of the community, unambitious and humble. Confucius died in 478 BCE.⁴⁹



Statute of Confucius

LET'S NOTE

Confucius gave the following information about himself:

- At 15, I set my heart on learning;
- At 30, I was firmly established;
- At 40, I no longer had doubts;
- At 50, I knew the will of the heavens;
- At 60, I was ready to listen to it;
- At 70, I follow all the desires of my heart without breaking any rule.

(Konfüçyüs, *Konuşmalar*, p. 21)

Another Chinese philosopher, Lao-Tzu was born in a small town in Honan state in 604 BCE. His real name was Li Tan. "*La-Tzu*" was a title given to him later, and means old scholar, philosopher or old master. He worked in

⁴⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 383, 38

the imperial palace as an archivist and historian. Lao, who had children and grandchildren, left the affairs of state and palace life and lived an ascetic life. To that purpose, he lived in a cottage on a mountainside for years and there he wrote his book *Tao-Te Ching* (Book of the Right Way). He left the cottage when he was eighty, went to the western side and died in a place called Hotan.

INFORMATION BOX

According to Lao-Tzu the nature of human beings is goodness. Evil develops in people later. According to him, the reasons for evil are factors such as desire, ambition and power. Lao draws attention to the inner life with a mystic approach. In his opinion, the more we live motionless the more we avoid evil. “*Tao*” is at the center of his system of thought. People should feel *Tao*, which is the source of everything, and live in accordance with it.

Lao also attached importance to information transmitted from previous wise people. However, their opinions about society differ from each other. Confucius strives for establishing a virtuous society and educating rulers in this direction. According to Lao, the more motionless a ruler lives the more perfect his administration becomes. By means of staying motionless a ruler can excel in governing his state.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 401- 403)

Zarathustra is considered the prophet of Zoroastrianism and was born in the sixth century BCE, although the years he lived are not known exactly. From the information that exists in the Avesta and Greek sources, it is understood that he lived in Persia. He was the third child of a noble family. At the time that Zarathustra lived the society was polytheistic. According to Zoroastrian sources, Zarathustra was in search of truth from his childhood and from the age of twenty he meditated in secluded and mountainous places. According to Zoroastrianism, when Zarathustra was thirty, an angel of revelation, Behmen, manifested itself to him. In that encounter, Zarathustra received the first revelation and Behmen took his soul to Ahura Mazdah. During this spiritual ascension, angels showed him respect. Zarathustra, who was taken into the presence of Ahura Mazdah, learned the principles of “The Religion of Goodness”. Ahura Mazdah talked about the movements in the universe and showed him heaven and hell. Zarathustra, whose chest was opened and cleansed, was commanded to spread these truths.

After the spiritual ascension, Zarathustra started his missionary activities, but failed because his community rejected him. As he was not successful in his invitation to believe in one god, he immigrated to the northern parts of the country. King Vishtaspa who was the sovereign of these regions accepted this new religion. Thereafter Zarathustra could tell people the truth of what he believed in. However, one of the neighboring countries defeated Vishtaspa in a war in which Zarathustra died.⁵⁰ The principles taught by Zarathustra have been corrupted by his followers over time.

3. Belief in the Hereafter

Beginning with the first humans, people have always believed in the idea of eternity. The vast majority of people accept the concept of immortality.⁵¹ The concept that identifies immortality best is the concept of the hereafter, which means an infinite life after this world. Most religions believe that people will be held accountable because of their deeds in this world and they will receive their punishment in the next.

Research conducted so far has shown that almost every culture and religion believes in the hereafter, but the nature of belief in the hereafter is not same in all cultures and religions. First of all, the hereafter does not have a quality that can be perceived through the senses. There are many opinions regarding this issue. According to philosophers such as Aristotle, Plato, Avicenna, Farabi and Descartes, people's souls will reach eternity after death. The human body will be destroyed, however the eternal soul will continue to live.⁵²

INFORMATION BOX

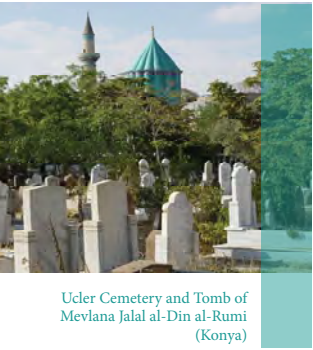
Akhirah (the hereafter) literally means “end, the thing that happens later, and the last day.” As a term, it is the name of eternal life that will start with the blowing of the last trumpet by the angel Israfil to herald the coming of the last day, as commanded by Allah.

(Heyet, *İlmihal*, vol. 1, p. 117)

⁵⁰ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 508, 509; Ekrem Sarıçioğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 119, 120

⁵¹ Turan Koç, *Ölümsüzlük Düşüncesi*, p. 3

⁵² Turan Koç, *Ölümsüzlük Düşüncesi*, p. 27



Uçler Cemetery and Tomb of
Mevlana Jalal al-Din al-Rumi
(Konya)

In the Abrahamic religions, belief in the hereafter is understood as bodily resurrection in another world. In the holy book of Judaism there is information, though very little, about the hereafter however, there is no clear information about belief in the hereafter. In a later period, the Jewish scholar Maimonides, who was influenced by Islam and Christianity, established principles of faith composed of thirteen articles. The last one of these articles is “I believe with perfect faith that there will be a revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, Blessed be His name, and His mention shall be exalted for ever and ever.” While this principle of faith about the hereafter is accepted by Orthodox Jews, the Sadducees who do not accept any source other than the holy book refuse to believe in the hereafter. According to Jewish religious scholars or rabbis, people who do not believe in the hereafter are infidels.⁵³

INFORMATION BOX

According to Christianity, the existence of the hereafter is one of the principles of faith. According to Christians the world will come to an end after the return of Jesus, the expected Messiah, to the world for a second time and then the dead will be resurrected. Only the Father (God) knows the exact time of the last day. After the resurrection, the Father will give the ruling authority to Jesus, his Son. (Gospel of Matthew 28/18) After dispensing justice among people the mission of Jesus will end and be given back to the Father. Good people will enter heaven and the bad will enter hell. The reward and the punishment will be eternal.

(Osman Cilacı, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 101)

Islam believes in the hereafter more than Judaism and Christianity. The word *akhirah* (hereafter) is mentioned many times in the Qur'an.⁵⁴ Believing in the Day of Judgment is one of the principles of faith in Islam. Because believing in the hereafter is considered important, it is mentioned in many verses. In one of these verses it is said that: “... **whosoever believes in God and the Last Day, and works righteousness – will have their reward with their Lord and no fear will there be concerning them, nor will they grieve.**”⁵⁵ There are also many sayings of the Prophet regarding this.

The world in the hereafter is composed of the Day of Judgment, heaven and

⁵³ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 236, 237

⁵⁴ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 1, p. 543,544

⁵⁵ Baqarah, 2: 62

hell. The *mahshar* (gathering place) is the place where people will gather after the last day. Heaven is the place where rewards will be bestowed and hell is the place where punishments will be given.

Unlike Judaism and Christianity, Islam maintains a balance between this world and the hereafter. Thus, this issue is expressed in the Qur'an in the following verse: **"But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the hereafter; and do not forget your share of the world...."**⁵⁶ Whereas emphasis of Judaism is upon this world, Christianity describes this world as a place of exile.

In Indian religions, eternal life will not occur in any place other than this universe. According to those religions, nature will live forever. They also believe in the transmigration of the souls after death.

Buddhism accepts Hinduism's law of *karma* and the belief in the transmigration of souls. According to this law, the current life of humans is a result of their previous deeds and their future lives will be formed according to their current deeds. Thus, according to Buddhism, people's destiny is determined by their own deeds. The cycle of transmigration of the soul continues until nirvana is reached. This is why reaching nirvana is accepted as the ultimate salvation, rather than gaining the hereafter.⁵⁷

According to Hinduism, this cycle of transmigration of the soul will end by reaching *Brahma*. Thus, according to Hinduism, the soul reaches its highest level or ultimate peace, by perceiving *Brahma* (the Supreme Truth).

Zoroastrianism is a religion that believes in the hereafter. In his sermons, Zarathustra often mentioned the approaching Day of Judgment. According to Zoroastrianism, before the general questioning on judgment day, personal questioning takes place. If people's good deeds exceed their bad deeds, they cross the Chinvat Bridge and reach a heaven called "the house of praise", however, if their bad deeds exceed their good deeds, they will fall from that bridge to the hell called "the house of lies" which is under the bridge. Those who have an equal amount of good and bad deeds will remain between those two places and will wait there until the last day.⁵⁸

LET'S DISCUSS

How can the counterpart of nirvana in Indian religions be expressed in other religions?

Discuss.

⁵⁶ Qasas, 28: 77

⁵⁷ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 324; Walter Ruben, *Eski Metinlere Göre Budizm*, p. 139

⁵⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 517, 518

There is no belief in the hereafter in Confucianism. In Chinese religions, concepts such as the Day of Judgment, the last day and resurrection are not found. However, with the spread of Buddhism to China, some beliefs such as the transmigration of souls were absorbed into Taoism.

According to Jainism the world that we live in is eternal and everlasting. Thus, the belief in the hereafter followed by most religions does not exist in this religion. However, this universe has its heavens and hells. The heavens are places where the gods reside, while the hells are deep under the earth. People who are released from the cycle of reincarnation will reside in another realm above the realm of the heavens.⁵⁹

Sikhs believe in the concept of *karma*, which means that the actions of a person will influence his circumstances in the next life, and the concept of transmigration of souls. Their understanding of heaven and hell differs from the belief in many other religions. According to them, heaven means being annihilated in the absolute truth and love of God. And hell means being deprived of this value.⁶⁰

In Shintoism, it is believed that the soul continues to live after death. According to them, the human soul turns into a god after death. There is no belief in the hereafter in this religion.

3.1. Being Held Accountable

According to Islamic belief, Allah is aware of people's every deed and He will question them after the last day. As a result of this questioning, the good will be rewarded and the bad will be punished. It is said in a verse relating to this that: **"Indeed, to us is their return. Then indeed, upon us is their account."**⁶¹ In another verse this issue is expressed as follows: **"And we place the scales of justice for the Day of Resurrection, so no soul will be treated unjustly at all. And if there is (even) the weight of a mustard seed, we will bring it forth. And sufficient are we as accountant."**⁶²

Because there is no clear information in the Torah, some Jewish denominations do not believe in the hereafter. The third principle of belief in Christianity is about Jesus' questioning people. The concept of being held accountable is slightly different in Christianity, according to which, God the Father will give Jesus the authority to question people.⁶³

⁵⁹ Günay Tümer - Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p.110

⁶⁰ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 377, 378

⁶¹ Ghashiyah, 88: 25-26

⁶² Anbiya, 21: 47

⁶³ Letter to Ephesians, 1/21-22

The belief of being questioned exists in Hinduism and Buddhism. In one of the Hindu holy books it is said that the deeds of people will be measured, people who have performed good deeds will be rewarded and people who carried out bad deeds will be punished. However, these rewards and punishments are temporal. In Buddhism, people who do not reach maturity and those who were enslaved by their ambitions will be questioned after death by the Hindu god of death, Yama.

According to Zoroastrianism, after the last day, people will be resurrected in their worldly bodies. God, Ahura Mazdah, will establish a divine court by appointing Messiah Saoshyant to it. Good and bad people will be separated fairly and the good will enter heaven and the bad will enter hell. However, punishment in hell will be for purification and after a while they will also enter heaven and there life will be eternal.⁶⁴

3.2. Reward and Punishment

In Islam, people will be questioned in the next world in accordance with their deeds in this world. After the last day, *mahshar* (life of judgment) will start and after a just questioning Allah will send people to heaven or hell in accordance with their faith and deeds. In verses 102 and 103 of the chapter *Surah al-Mu'minun* (23), it is said regarding this issue that: **“And those whose scales are heavy (with good deeds) – it is they who are the successful. But those whose scales are light- those are the ones who have lost their souls, (being) in Hell, abiding eternally.”**

There is no definite command regarding belief in the hereafter in the Torah, the holy book of Judaism. According to Jewish religious scholars, a person who does not believe in the hereafter is an infidel and will abide in hell and a person who practices good deeds will enter paradise. A person who died a sinner although he did not deny the principles of faith will enter hell and stay there for a maximum of twelve months. This belief is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **“...Never will the fire touch us except for (a few) numbered days...”**⁶⁵

According to Christian belief in the hereafter, they will get their just return for their deeds in this world.⁶⁶ After the last day, good people will abide in heaven forever.⁶⁷ People who desire the greatest reward will see the vision of

⁶⁴ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dinler Tarihi*, p. 126

⁶⁵ Al-i Imran, 3: 24

⁶⁶ Luke, 16/19-31

⁶⁷ Matthew, 25/46

God in heaven.⁶⁸ Bad people will abide in hell, which has been prepared by the devil and his adherents.⁶⁹

INFORMATION BOX

The understanding of the hereafter that Islam and Christianity have in common are shown in the following points:

- Coming of the last day.
- Resurrection with the sound of a trumpet.
- Bodily resurrection.
- Being held accountable for worldly deeds.
- Life in the grave.
- Conceptions of Heaven and Hell.

(Suat Yıldırım, *Mevcut Kaynaklara Göre Hristiyanlık*, p. 142)

In Hinduism and Buddhism the understanding of punishment and reward are different from other religions. When bad people die, they are reborn in the bodies of evil beings (reincarnation) and good people continue their existence in the bodies of good people and this cycle continues until nirvana is reached.

The belief in reward and punishment in Zoroastrianism is similar to the divine religions. According to them, after resurrection, people will be questioned and the good will ascend to heaven and the bad will go to hell. While people in heaven will be happy with many divine gifts, people in hell will be tortured.⁷⁰

3.3. Sanctioning Power of the Belief in the Hereafter

LET'S INTERPRET

"Indeed, for those who do not believe in the hereafter, we have made pleasing to them their deeds, so they wander blindly."

(Naml, 27: 4)

Interpret the verse above in relation to the sanctioning power of belief in the hereafter over human acts.

In most religions the realm of the hereafter represents eternity. Happiness and sadness in the eternal life is connected with people's actions in this world.

⁶⁸ Matthew, 5/8

⁶⁹ Mark, 3/29

⁷⁰ Ekrem Sarıkoğlu, *Başlangıçtan Günümüze Dünya Dinleri*, p. 125, 126

According to religious beliefs, people acting virtuously in accordance with the values that they believed in will be rewarded. Those who do not believe or people who violate the rules will suffer everlasting torment and pain. All religions want people to live good lives with high moral standards. Religions, especially Islam, establish a close relationship between believing in Allah and the hereafter. In a verse, our Lord says that people who believe in Allah and the hereafter do good deeds and avoid bad ones: **“They believe in Allah and the Last Day and they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and hasten to good deeds. And those are among the righteous.”**⁷¹ Another similar verse reads as follows: **“But whoever desires the hereafter and exerts the effort due to it while he is a believer – it is those whose effort is ever appreciated (by Allah).”**⁷²

Those who believe in the hereafter adopt the idea that their behavior in this life will affect their place in the hereafter. Thus, adherents of all religions attach great importance to behaving well by adhering to the principles of their religions. Belief in the hereafter makes them refrain from behavior and actions such as lying, stealing, adultery and oppression. The reflections of the religion can be seen on the believers. Those who do not believe in the hereafter or have a weak belief behave incorrectly because they think that they will not face any punishment. In fact, those who believe in the hereafter do not do wrong, even when they are not being observed, because they always keep in their minds and hearts that their creator sees everything and will question them in accordance with their acts.

4. Belief in Mahdi-Messiah

The concepts of *Mahdi* and *Messiah* are about saviors who will come at the end of time and save people or correct corrupted religions. The belief in the *Mahdi* and *Messiah* exists in almost every religion. Research conducted thus far shows that there are psychological, sociological, religious and political factors lying behind peoples' belief in and expectation of a savior.

⁷¹ Al-i Imran, 3: 114

⁷² Isra, 17: 19

INFORMATION BOX

The word *Mahdi* comes from the Arabic root “*heda*” which literally means “guiding someone, leading someone on the right path or belief.” And it technically refers to a person who it is believed will be sent by Allah at the end of this world and will establish a Muslim state around the world. This person will return the corrupted religion to its original form and will save Muslims from persecution.

(Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Dinlerde Mehdi Tasavvurları*, p. 15, 16)

From very ancient times human beings hoped for guidance from supernatural powers who would save them. In most religions, it is accepted that this savior would descend from heaven and would be the cause of many changes. In all of the religions *Mahdi* is a ruler with supernatural powers, is a prophet or is a god, such as in Hindu beliefs.

Ancient Egyptians were also expecting a savior to arrive. According to them, their savior was going to be a ruler called Ameni who would be sent by the god Re.⁷³ The expected savior of the Aztecs, who were a native people of ancient America, was a divine ruler. The name of the expected savior of the Mayan people was Kukulkan. Both nations believed that their expected saviors would show up at the end of time and establish divine justice by rescuing them from their enemies. In Hinduism, which is the oldest religion on earth today, the expected savior is called Kalki. According to Hindu belief the savior Kalki will come in a period when the world is overcome with persecution. In another Indian religion, Buddhism, a savior is also expected. They named this savior Maitreya. Maitreya will come as a savior and the world will be filled with mercy. At the same time, Maitreya will complete Buddhism, which is incomplete.⁷⁴

In Zoroastrianism the name of the expected *Mahdi* is Saoshyant; he will be born fatherless from the lineage of Zarathustra. Saoshyant will come at the end of the world and overcome evil as a result of one thousand years of work and make Ahura Mazdah prevail.

⁷³ Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Dinlerde Mehdi Tasavvurları*, p. 13, 14

⁷⁴ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 78

LET'S NOTE

In Judaism and Christianity, the savior of the end of the time, in other words the *Mahdi*, is called the *Messiah*. In Hebrew the word *Messiah* is *Mashiah*, in Aramaic it is *Meshia* and in Arabic, the word *Mesih* is used. The counterpart of this word in European languages is “*Christos*” which is the Greek counterpart of *Mashiah*, which means “anointed, clarified”. Although this word was first used for the kings of the Children of Israel, later it encompassed the priests. The reason for that usage was that when the kings came to the throne and when the priests were appointed to their positions, they would be anointed with sacred oil. It was believed that through this sacred anointment people would receive sacred power.

(Ekrem Sarıkçıoğlu, *Dinlerde Mehdi Tasavvurları*, p. 15)



A creative depiction illustrating the coming of Jesus the Messiah

Abyssinian Christians believed that their king Theodor would return as a savior. Mongols also believed that before his death Genghis Khan promised his people that he would return to the world. According to them, Genghis Khan would return and liberate his people from Chinese oppression. According to ancient Chinese sources there is a theme of “savior” resembling the *Mahdi*.⁷⁵

Jews named their expected savior *Messiah*. The arrival of the *Messiah* is one of the principles of Jewish faith. Jews, who lived their heyday during the time of David, longed for those days. According to them, the *Messiah*, who will come from the lineage of David as a king, will gather the Jews, who are scattered around the world, in the Promised Land. The expected *Messiah* will establish a divine empire in this land. During the period of the expected *Messiah*, the Temple of Solomon will be rebuilt, the Promised Land will turn into the gardens of heaven; acacias, cypresses and fruits will grow in the desert and trees will always bear fruit.

Christianity is also a religion based on the belief in a *Messiah*. Christians believe that the expected *Messiah* of the Jews is Jesus. According to Christianity Jesus died for the universal salvation of humanity by being crucified and then ascended to heaven. He will return to earth at the end of time and establish a divine state. Those who believe in Jesus will live a happy life.

There is no belief in the *Mahdi* or the *Messiah* among the principles of faith in Islam. There is no verse in the Qur'an related to the coming of the *Mahdi* or *Messiah*. Although the word *Mahdi* is mentioned in some sayings of the

⁷⁵ Avni Doğan, *Mehdilik*, p. 45, 46

LET'S
INTERPRET

Why did the understanding of *Mahdi* emerge in the period of the Umayyads among Muslims?

Prophet, Bukhari and Muslim who are among the most prominent scholars of *hadith* do not include narrations about *Mahdi* in their books.

The concept of *Mahdi* among Muslims emerged for the first time during the time of the Umayyads after the death of Abu Sufyan. Muslims, like the adherents of other religions, also had the expectation of a *Mahdi*. In the Muslim view a *Mahdi* would come and reunite Muslims, revive the corrupted understanding of religion, and destroy the enemies of Islam. According to supporters of this belief, the *Mahdi* will descend from the lineage of Prophet Muhammad and will be named after him. This is why over time many people in Muslim lands have claimed to be the *Mahdi*. In Shii understanding, the concept of *Mahdi* is very important. According to their belief, the twelfth imam, who is the *Mahdi*, did not die. He will return someday and become the head of the Muslims. Some Muslims believe that Jesus will descend to earth before the last day, rule people according to the religion brought by Prophet Muhammad, and then the last day will come.

5. Belief in a Holy Book

The belief in a holy book exists in every religion other than tribal ones. Holy books, which are some of the most important elements in religions, constitute the starting point of all kinds of religious belief and practices. In the vast majority of religions, holy books are considered the word of god and are a divine inspiration for their believers. People believe in these books and benefit from them while shaping their lives. The belief in a holy book is not the same in all religions. Jews accept only their books and the Christians adopt the holy books of the Jews in addition to their own scriptures. Even though they believe the abrogation of the books of the Jews, they do not accept the Qur'an. In addition to the Qur'an, Muslims accept the books of both Christians and Jews. However, they believe that those books were later altered.⁷⁶

LET'S
INTERPRET

Which Islamic disciplines do Mishna and Talmud resemble?

Interpret.

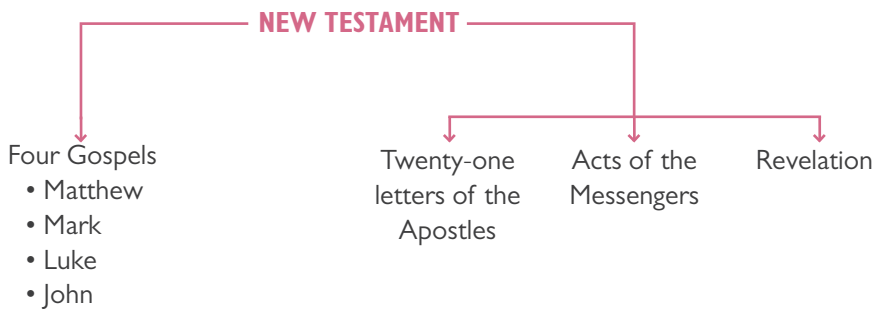
5.1. Holy Books of Religions and Their Sources

Jewish sacred books are divided into two groups as the written and oral. The written holy books are the Tanakh known as the Old Testament and composed of three parts: the Torah (Five books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Books). Among them, the Torah is believed to have been revealed

⁷⁶ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p.79

to Moses. In the Torah there exist the events beginning with the creation of the universe until the death of Moses, and the divine rules, which were sent to Moses by Allah. The other two parts of the Tanakh, i.e. *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and the *Ketuvim* (Books), the events which took place after Moses and revelations, which were revealed to other Children of Israel, are recorded.⁷⁷ The Psalms, attributed to David, are part of the *Ketuvim* (Books).

Traditional Jews and today's Orthodox Jews believe that the Torah has been preserved in the exact form that it was revealed to Moses, although many other Jewish groups accept that in time some changes occurred in the Torah.⁷⁸



All oral traditions passed down by Jewish rabbis from generation to generation were put in writing after the second century BCE through the fourth century CE and are called Talmud. The reason for that was to prevent their loss. The Talmud is composed of two books, which are the *Mishnah* and its interpretation, the *Gemara*. The Talmud composing of all these books in a word is the interpretation of Tanakh.⁷⁹

According to Orthodox Jews God revealed these two books to the prophets. According to their belief, denying these books renders one an unbeliever.

The Christian holy book is composed of the Old and New Testament. These two books are called the Holy Scripture (the Bible). The Old Testament is the Jewish holy book, the Tanakh. Christians accept the Tanakh as a holy book. They believe that its rulings have been abrogated with the revelation of the New Testament; however, they still use the Old Testament in their rites and rituals.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 80

⁷⁸ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 222, 223

⁷⁹ Mehmet Aydın, *Ansiklopedik Dinler Sözlüğü*, p. 799

⁸⁰ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p.81

Chapters of the New Testament began to be put into writing thirty years after Jesus and the process was completed over a long period of time. The first three gospels are called the “Synoptic Gospels” because of the similarity in their content.⁸¹

According to Christian belief, Jesus is the corporeal form of the word of god and is not a prophet. At first, the acts and words of Jesus were remembered by his disciples and were passed down orally to the following generations. Then they were put in writing and during this process hundreds of gospel copies were produced. The community of religious functionaries under the guidance of the Holy Spirit accepted twenty-seven gospels including the four gospels and adopted the opinion that they were based on revelation not literally but figuratively. They destroyed the rest of the gospel copies.

According to Christians the existence of contradictory statements between the gospels is normal, because the statements in these gospels were not revealed to Jesus. People under the supervision of the Holy Spirit wrote them down. Gospel authors wrote what they saw and heard. Thus, the existence of contradictory statements in the gospels is natural.

According to Islam, the only divine book whose originality has not been corrupted is the Qur'an. It was revealed to Prophet Muhammad between the years 610 and 632 CE. The verses of the Qur'an were protected in written and oral forms during the time of the Prophet and Abu Bakr collected these verses into a book after the time of the Prophet. They were copied during the period of Uthman and have survived until today without any change. Any book other than the Qur'an could not come to this day by protecting its originality. The Qur'an is the last divine book affirming and completing previous books.⁸² Allah spoke of the subjects that people need in the Holy Qur'an and accepted it as the sole book to be obeyed by people. Therefore, the Qur'an has been sent to everyone without being limited by time or place.

In Hinduism, there are numerous and voluminous holy texts in the Sanskrit language. These texts are divided into two parts: 1) *Sruti* texts: which are based on revelation and inspiration. The Vedas are the most important texts among them. It is believed that they were revealed to sacred people called “*rishi*”. The Vedas are the basic source of Hinduism. Besides the Vedas; *Brahmanas*, *Aranakyas*, and *Upanishads* *Sruti* are *Sruti* texts as well. 2) *Smriti* texts that are composed of the interpretation of the Vedas and legends. They have been orally transmitted from generation to generation.⁸³

⁸¹ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 466

⁸² Baqarah, 2: 97

⁸³ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 82

Although the origin of religious belief is based on sacred texts called *Sruti*, the texts of *Smitri* are more common among the public. Especially the epic books of the *Mahabbarata* and the *Ramayana* are widely accepted by the Hindu community.⁸⁴

The sacred texts of Buddhism are the Tripitaka (Three Baskets), which are written in the Pali language. Tripitaka is composed of *Vinaya-Pitaka*, *Sutta-Pitaka* and *Abhidharma-Pitaka*. These texts were written long after Buddha.⁸⁵

The sacred texts of Jainism are named Agama or Siddhanta, and are made up of eleven chapters. It was written after a long period from Mahavira.

The sacred text of Sikhism is “*Adi-Grant*”. The text was not only written by Nanak, it also includes the poems of Farid and Kabir.

TRIPITAKA

Vinaya-Pitaka (Basket of Discipline)
Includes rules and principles about sanghas and priests.

Sutta-Pitaka (Basket of Sermon)
Includes sermons and preaches of Buddha and some priests.

Abhidharma-Pitaka (Basket of Interpretations)
Includes the defending of Buddhist philosophy.

In Zoroastrianism, the holy book is the Avesta, which has three chapters called *Yasna*, *Yasht* and *Videvdat*. “*Gathas*” which are attributed to Zarathustra himself are part of *Yasna*.

In Confucianism, the sacred books are composed of five classics and four books. The five classics are *Poem*, *History*, *Rite*, *Changes* and *Spring-Autumn*. And the four books are the *Analects of Confucius*, the *Doctrine of the Middle Path*, *Mencius* and the *Great Learning*.

The sacred book of Taoism is called “*Tao Te Ching*” (Book of the Right Path). It is a complex and mystical book. This book is the source of inspiration of the later books.

⁸⁴ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 82-83

⁸⁵ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 315, 316

In Shintoism, there are two books in the form of chronicles, which are called “*Kojiki*” and “*Nihongi*”. The *Kojiki* was written in 712 and its interpretation, *Nihongi*, was written in 720. Topics such as the source of gods, creation of humanity, the divine origin of the family of the emperor and state are dealt with in these books.⁸⁶

5.2. The Place and Authority of the Holy Books in Religions

The place and authority of the holy books in religions are not the same in every religion. In some religions, holy books are used as prayer books in worship and ritual. The Tanakh of the Jews, the Holy Bible of the Christians and the Holy Qur’an of the Muslims are some examples. Books in the form of exegesis are usually referred to in the interpretation and practice of religious principles because according to traditional understanding not everyone can understand and interpret the holy books.

According to Jewish tradition, reading and interpreting the Tanakh, the written holy book, cannot be achieved by everyone but by special commentators. This is why the *Talmud*, one of the oral holy texts, became prominent and those who want to learn the religious rules were recommended to consult it. For this reason Jews who accept the authority of the *Talmud* consult it as an essential source of their religion. Those who do not accept the authority of the *Talmud* are considered to have apostated. Today’s Orthodox Jews hold this belief. All adherents of other Jewish denominations however, do not adopt this view.

The place and importance of the Bible in Christianity varies according to the Christian denomination. Catholics do not accept the Bible as the sole authority. They base their belief on the interpretations of religious scholars whom they call Fathers of the Church. They understand the Bible in light of these interpretations. In this regard, according to Catholics, religious tradition or the tradition of the Church has priority over the Bible but, in contrast, Protestantism regards the Bible as the sole authority. The interpretations of the Fathers of the Church and the traditions of the church are not considered to be a sacred source.

In Islam, the Holy Qur’an is the main source. Islamic principles of faith, worship and ethics are based on the Qur’an. Islam wants every Muslim to read and understand it. However, according to Islamic scholars, understanding and

LET'S BRAINSTORM

The opinions of religious scholars in Islam are not considered sacred. Reflect on the importance of this issue.

⁸⁶ Günay Tümer-Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 75-77

interpreting the Holy Qur'an is not always easy due to the unique style of its composition. In interpreting and practicing the principles of the Qur'an, sayings of the Prophet guide Muslims. In this regard *hadiths* constitute the second source of Islam. Additionally, the comprehension and practice the Qur'an has benefited from *tafsir*, which are the studies of the scholars of Qur'anic exegesis and methodology of Islamic law. The Qur'an is the only sacred source in Islam. Even though the works of Muslim scholars are enlightening, they are not considered as being holy as they are in Judaism and, especially, in Christianity.

RELIGIONS	HOLY BOOKS	SOURCES
JUDAISM	The Torah	Originally based on revelation.
CHRISTIANITY	The Gospels	Originally based on revelation.
ISLAM	The Holy Qur'an	Based on revelation and maintained its originality.
HINDUISM	The Vedas, Upanishads, and Bhagavat Gita	Sources of holy books based on two main sources: Shruti (Revelation) and Smriti (Tradition).
BUDDHISM	The Tripitaka (Three Baskets)	Based on the views of Gautama Buddha
SIKHISM	The Adi-Grant	Based on the views of Kabir, Akbar and Nanak.
JAINISM	The Agama and Siddhanta (Ganipidaka)	Based on the sermons of Mahavira.
CONFUCIANISM	The Five Classics (Wou-King) and Four Books (Se chou)	Based on the views of Confucius.
TAOISM	The Tao Te Ching	Based on the teachings of Lao-Tzu.
SHINTOISM	The Historical texts, namely Kojiki and Nihongi	Kojiki was written by the order of the emperor, and Nihongi is the interpretation of this book.
ZOROASTRIANISM	The Gathas-Avesta	Based on the views of Zarathustra.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Explain the belief in god in Christianity.
2. Compare the belief in Allah in Islam and other religions of divine origin.
3. Evaluate the importance of belief in the hereafter in terms of the individual and society.
4. Mention the views regarding the origin of belief in the Mahdi and Messiah.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. Which one of the following religions constituted the syntheses of Hinduism and Buddhism?

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| A. Zoroastrianism | B. Shintoism | C. Taoism |
| D. Sikhism | E. Confucianism | |

2. Which one of the following religions does not have belief in the hereafter?

- | | | |
|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| A. Judaism | B. Christianity | C. Zoroastrianism |
| D. Buddhism | E. Islam | |

3. To which religion does the holy book Avesta belongs?

- | | | |
|-------------------|--------------|------------|
| A. Zoroastrianism | B. Shintoism | C. Sikhism |
| D. Taoism | E. Shamanism | |

4. When did the understanding of the Mahdi emerge among Muslims for the first time?

- A. During the period of the Four Great Caliphs.
- B. During the period of the Umayyads.
- C. During the Period of the Abbasids.
- D. During the Period of the Seljuks.
- E. During the Period of the Ottomans.

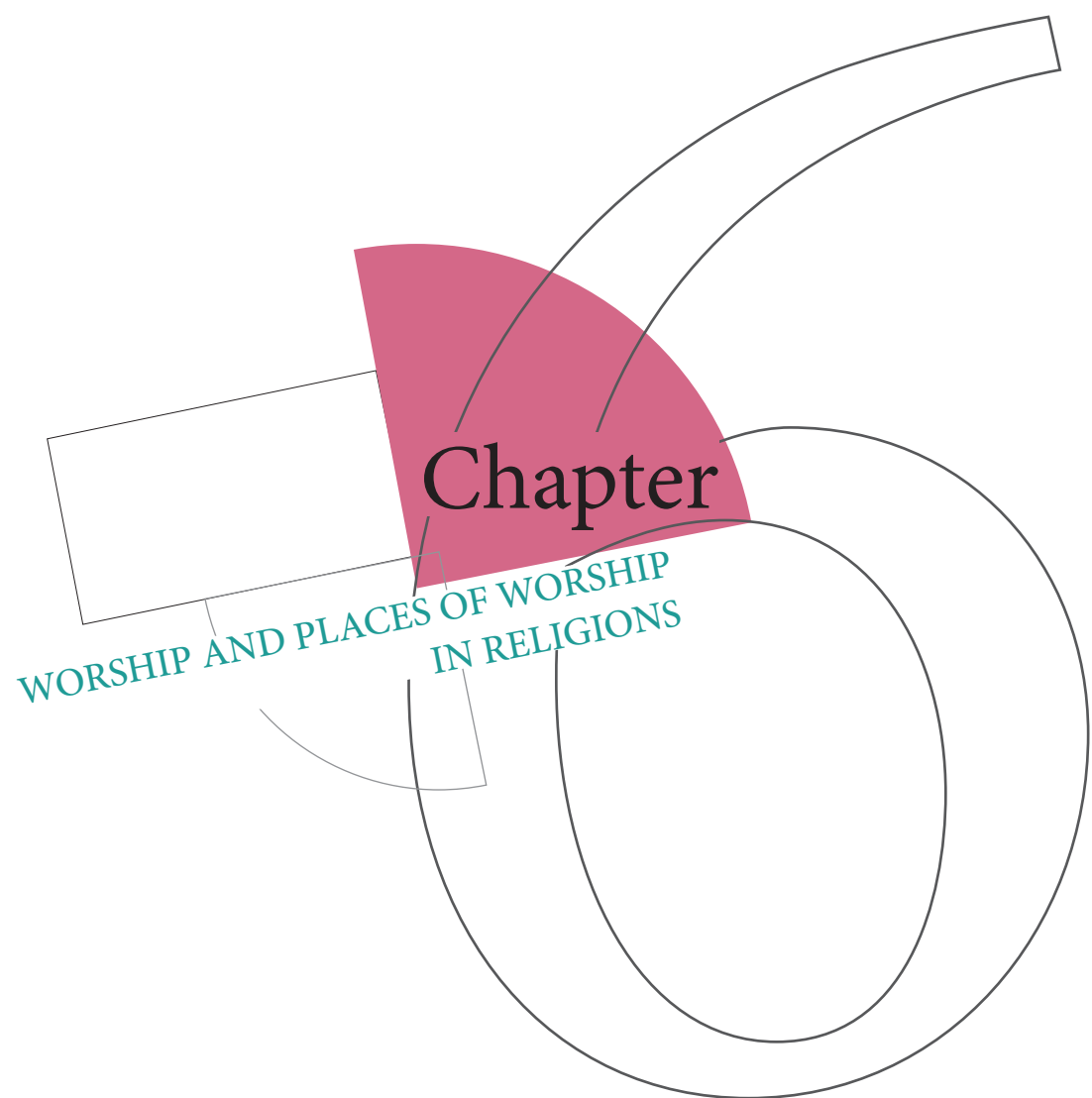
C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(Maimonides, Christian, Taoism, Buddhism, Nirvana, Islam)

1. The principles of faith in Judaism were established by
2. According to the..... belief, Jesus will descend to earth upon God's command and judge human beings for the hereafter.
3. is the only religion that provides balance between this world and the hereafter.
4. The ultimate goal in Hinduism and Buddhism is to reach by getting rid of the cycle of transmigration of the soul.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) According to Judaism, Moses is the greatest prophet.
2. (...) Christian sacred books were written during Jesus' time.
3. (...) Shintoism does not have a belief in the hereafter.
4. (...) Islam does not accept the transmigration of soul.



Chapter

WORSHIP AND PLACES OF WORSHIP
IN RELIGIONS

WORSHIP AND PLACES OF WORSHIP IN RELIGIONS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

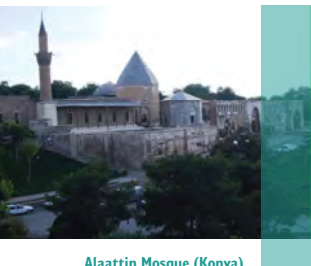
1. Research the importance of worship in religions.
2. Visit places of worship belonging to different religions in your neighborhood and gather some information.
3. Investigate the effects of “fasting as an act of worship” on people’s souls.
4. Explore the effect of almsgiving and charity on social solidarity.
5. Investigate the scope of the concept of worship in Islam.
6. To what end does the existence of the concept of worship in divine and human religions lead us? Research.

1. Worship in Religions

Religion is a set of values that leads rational people to salvation of their own free will. The concept of religion is a whole, consisting of faith and practice. Acts of worship are the dimension of religion that is reflected in practice. Today, there are many living religions. Although acts of worship in these religions are different in terms of their forms, they are similar to each other in terms of their purpose and meaning.

SIMILAR ACTS OF WORSHIP IN RELIGIONS

Supplication and Prayer	Fasting	Pilgrimage	Charity	Sacrifice	Holy Days and Nights
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Alaattin Mosque (Konya)

Every religion has the dimension of worship, thus, the concepts of religion and worship are as old as human history. *Ibadah* (worship) literally means to act modestly, to obey and to serve. Terminologically it means “servants’ acts which please Allah.” According to another definition, “it is the highest degree of respect.”¹

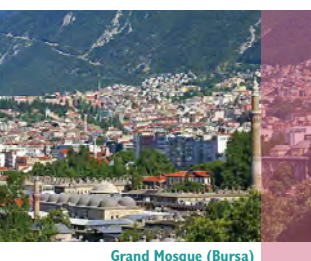
In Islam, every good and right deed done in order to gain the approval of Allah is considered an act of worship. Allah the Almighty stated in the following verse, that the purpose of the creation of human beings was to serve: **“I have not created jinn and mankind except to worship Me.”**² In Judaism, the counterpart of the word *ibadah* (worship) is “*avodah*”. *Avodah Elohim*, in other words, serving the Lord Jehovah, has been commanded in the Torah as follows: “It is the LORD your God you must follow, and him you must revere. Keep his commands and obey him; serve him...”³

In Christianity, acts of worship are called “sacraments”. Other religions also have their own particular ways of worshipping, serving and respecting the Supreme Being.

1.1. Supplication and Prayer

The word *dua* (supplication) in Arabic, which literally means, “to call, to evocate, to want and to ask for help” is man’s turning towards the sacred with his body and soul, and mastering his physical and spiritual desires. Supplication, in a way, means a dialogue between the servant and sacred being. In supplication, respect and desire unite. Supplication is an act of worship not only practiced in times of hardship but also in good times. Supplications should be sincerely said from the heart, in a low voice or silently, and should be made in regret of a sin and as repentance.

According to Islam, supplication is done directly to Allah without any mediators. It is stated in a verse of the Holy Qur’an that Allah is very close to His servants: **“And when My servants ask you, concerning Me – indeed I am near to answer the call of the caller, when he calls to Me; so let them respond to Me and let them believe in Me; that they may be (rightly) guided.”**⁴



Grand Mosque (Bursa)

¹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 19, p. 233

² Dhariyat, 51: 56

³ The Hebrew Bible, Deuteronomy, 13/4

⁴ Baqarah, 2: 186

The Prophet also expressed the importance of supplication by saying: “The supplication is the essence of worship.”⁵

In Judaism, acts of worship performed in the synagogue are solely supplications, while in Christianity prayer is performed by remembering the Father and Holy Spirit centered around Jesus.⁶

Salat (prayer) literally means supplication, repentance and praise. As a religious term, *salat* (prayer) is one of the five principles of Islam. In prayer, there are many kinds of invocations and glorification. Prayer performed with the body, reason and heart protects man from evil. The Qur’an mentions it as follows:

أَتْلُ مَا أُوحِيَ إِلَيْكَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَأَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ
وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ وَاللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَصْنَعُونَ

“Recite, [O Muhammad], what has been revealed to you of the Book and establish prayer. Indeed, prayer prohibits immorality and wrongdoing, and the remembrance of Allah is greater. And Allah knows that which you do.”⁷

INFORMATION BOX

“...Our Lord, give us in this world (that which is) good and in the Hereafter (that which is) good and protect us from the punishment of the Fire.”

(Baqarah, 2: 201)

“...We hear and we obey. [We seek] Your forgiveness, our Lord, and to You is the [final] destination.” “...Our Lord, do not impose blame upon us if we have forgotten or erred. Our Lord, and lay not upon us a burden like that which You laid upon those before us. Our Lord, and burden us not with that which we have no ability to bear. And pardon us; and forgive us; and have mercy upon us. You are our protector, so give us victory over the disbelieving people.”

(Baqarah, 2: 285-286)

⁵ Tirmidhi, Daawat, 1

⁶ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 479-481

⁷ Ankabut, 29: 45

"My Lord, make me an establisher of prayer, and [many] from my descendants. Our Lord, and accept my supplication. Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established."

(Ibrahim, 14: 40-41)

"And your Lord says, "Call upon Me; I will respond to you..."

(Mu'min, 40: 60)

"Say, "What would my Lord care for you if not for your supplication?"

(Furqan, 25: 77)

"O My Lord, You are the Forgiver, You love to forgive, forgive me too."

(Tirmidhi, Daawat, 84)

INFORMATION BOX

"...Indeed, prayer has been decreed upon the believers a decree of specified times."

(Nisa, 4:103)

"The first inquiry will be start with prayer."

(Abu Dawud, Salat, 145)

In many verses of the Qur'an, it is stated that Allah commanded other prophets and their communities to perform prayer. It is clearly stated that prayer was demanded of the prophets Adam, Noah, Idris, Abraham, Lut, Luqman, Zechariah, Jacob, Isaac, Moses and Jesus.⁸ For instance Allah the Almighty said to Moses: **"Indeed I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance."**⁹ And in his miraculous speech in the cradle, Jesus revealed that Allah bid him to perform prayer as follows: **"And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive."**¹⁰

As is understood from this verse, prayer was required of the Children of Israel. However, there is no clear commandment of prayer in present Jewish

⁸ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 32, p. 350

⁹ Ta-Ha, 20: 14

¹⁰ Maryam, 19: 31

and Christian sources. Their worship is in the form of supplication and sacraments.

Although in Judaism there is an act of worship which is performed while standing (*amida*) and is similar to the standing in prayer in Islam, and a movement resembling *ruku*, it cannot be compared to the ritual prayer in Islam.

In Judaism there are daily prayers, which are performed in the morning, noon and evening. There are also weekly prayers, which are performed on Saturdays in synagogues, and yearly prayers, which are performed at *Yom Kippur* (repentance days).

In Judaism, acts of worship are performed both individually in houses and as a congregation in synagogues. Congregational prayer is performed in synagogues with *minyan* (ten male adults), at least. Women just observe the prayer, separately from the men and cover their heads. Before the acts of worship, ablution (washing the hands up to the wrists by immersing them in sacred water) is performed. On the day of *Kippur*, the whole body is washed and beautiful clothes are worn. They also perform *tayammum* (dry ablution) with clean soil.¹¹

In Judaism, houses are like temples. In a house, there are rolls of Torah texts, which are kept in a cylinder called “*mezuzah*”. The rolls are put in cases in which the first two paragraphs of the supplication of “*shema*”¹² are written down and are hung in a high place behind the entrance door of the house.¹³

Weekly *Sabbath* (alternatively spelled *Shabbat*) prayer can be performed at home. In this ritual, the lady of the house initiates the worship by reciting the following prayer over candles placed in special candelabrams: “Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle of the Holy Shabbat.” During the ceremony, the father and children gather around the mother. The father has a cup of a special drink and everybody has a sip after a benediction is said over it.¹⁴ After worship, the supplication ends with a meal.

In Judaism the language of worship is usually Hebrew. In addition to Hebrew, Aramaic is also used. The essence of worship is composed of reciting the Torah

LET'S RESEARCH

Search for the verses that mention the times of prayer in the Qur'an.

¹¹ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 479

¹² *Hebrew Bible*, Deuteronomy, 6/4

¹³ Ahmet Güç, *Dinlerde Mabet ve İbadet*, p. 147

¹⁴ Ahmet Güç, *Dinlerde Mabet ve İbadet*, p. 150

scrolls. They stand up during the recitation of the supplication of *shema*, which comprises the principles of belief.

Sabbath (Saturday) means God's day of rest after He created the universe, which is mentioned in the Torah as follows: "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done."¹⁵ Contemporary Orthodox Jews do not light fire but instead use electrical devices on that day. They spent the day resting and only perform acts of worship.¹⁶

In Christianity, sacraments and supplication were inculcated by Jesus, however, certain forms of worship were added in 325 CE at the Council of Nicaea but those rituals and prayers have since been changed by Protestantism. They nevertheless have the following similarities in their rituals:

- God is the sole source of worship (Being baptized and turning to God).
- The purpose of worship is to unite in God.
- Worship should be life-changing. The soul should turn to the spiritual world.
- Salvation can only be realized under the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

INFORMATION BOX

"This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

(Matthew, 6/9-13)

In Christianity, daily supplication and worship is generally performed in church and under the leadership of a priest, because the priest is the mediator for the acceptance of supplication and worship. During the service, parts of the Old Testament and New Testament, especially the book of *psalms*, are recited and hymns are sung. In Christianity, the weekly ritual and worship

¹⁵ Hebrew Bible, Genesis, 2/2-3

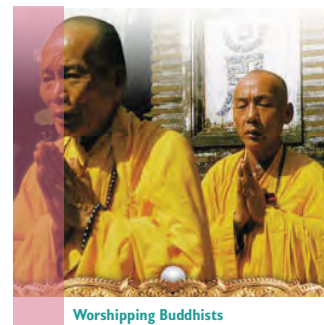
¹⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 240

is performed on Sundays. It is very important to go to church on Sundays because weekly worship should be performed in a congregation. On that day, the Eucharist, which is considered the most important part of worship in Christianity, is performed. During this ceremony, which is observed in remembrance of the last supper shared by Jesus and his disciples, some parts from the Holy Scripture are read and hymns are sung, a sermon is delivered, and prayers are said. Rituals, such as confession, confirmation, matrimony, and the anointing of the sick are fundamental religious rites of Christianity. Additionally, there are some celebrations performed annually in church, such as Christmas, Easter, and the Feast of the Cross.¹⁷

In Hinduism, worship is performed before the images of god. Since everyone worships the image of their own god, there is no fixed time for worship in Hinduism. In Hindu houses there is a corner where sculptures of gods are placed. In these shrines the sculptures are respected, maintained, and cleaned.¹⁸ Hindus wake up in the early morning before sunrise and praise the name of their god after saying the word of “Om” which is a form of the *basmala* in Hinduism. They tie their hair in a bun on their heads and turn towards the East, the upper part of their body and feet being naked whilst sitting cross-legged. They control their breath by meditating. During meditation they read some sections from the *Vedas*, which is the sacred Hindu book. They sprinkle water on their idols and offer them various sacrifices. They repeat a shorter version of the same ceremony in the evening.¹⁹

In Buddhism, they worship idols of the Buddha. Buddhists go down on their knees before the statue of Buddha put their hands together and raise them to their face. They initiate the prayer with words of respect to Buddha and say, “I seek refuge in Buddha, Drahama, and Sangha.” This worship sometimes ends with a prostration.²⁰

Priests and nuns carry everything out in Jainist worship. Devotee priests, who had previously been travelers, built monasteries and settled there where they discipline their souls and bodies by reciting sacred texts and hymns. Jainists bless statues in monasteries and read hymns before them. They put lamps and incense in front of the statues and decorate them with flowers and



Worshipping Buddhists

¹⁷ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 85

¹⁸ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 19, p. 236

¹⁹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 87

²⁰ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 19, p. 236

also make an offering of fruit.²¹ Jainists meditate, especially at sunrise in front of the Tirthankara statues in their temples, prostrate themselves before the statues, and circumambulate around them.²²

LET'S INTERPRET

A Zoroastrian believing in one god recites the following supplication every day: "O the owner of absolute power, help me! I profess myself a worshipper of God. I am a Zoroastrian worshipping God. I praise and believe in the religion of Zoroastrian."

(*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, p. 238)

Interpret the text that is the creed of Zoroastrians.

Sikhs worship one god. They read supplications from their holy book, namely Guru Granth Sahib. Their worship is very simple; they take a bath in the pool of the Golden Temple and read sections from their holy book. The most respected person holds the congregational prayers. They take their shoes off before entering the temples and both women and men cover their heads.²³

In Confucianism, they worship the supreme god named Tien by Confucius, and also other spiritual beings. They pray to them and offer sacrifices. Respecting one's elders, which is common across China, is considered a form of worship. Respect, sincerity and simplicity are the basic principles of worship, because the essence of religion is composed of moral values and virtuous behavior.²⁴

Worship in Taoism is performed to Shang-Ti who is the supreme god. In Taoism, it is believed that the soul is immortal and good people will unite with *Tao* and reach happiness in this world. The concepts of the monastery and priesthood were adopted in later periods.

²¹ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 484

²² Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 370

²³ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p.484

²⁴ *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, p. 237, 238

LET'S NOTE

Since Shintoism is a polytheistic religion, worship is performed to various gods. It is performed by praying to the gods and offering them wine. Before going to the temple, Shintoists wash their hands and face, rinse their mouth, and carry out personal hygiene. While entering the temple, they clap their hands and after attracting the attention of the gods they start to worship. They kneel down and pray by inclining their heads. There is a sacred cell that only priests are allowed to enter and there is a prayer hall, which is reserved for worshippers called “*miya*” or “*cinca*”.

Acts of worship in Shintoism consists of supplication and sacrifice. In the past, animals were sacrificed. Today, foods are usually offered as a sacrifice to the god. The very same day that Emperor Meiji was buried, General Nogi and his wife sacrificed themselves by committing “*hara-kiri*” and ended the custom of human sacrifice. In the simplest way, supplication is performed silently after washing the face and clapping the hands. The most difficult act of worship is bathing with cold water and circumambulating around the temple a hundred times in wet clothes. Priests who are educated in private schools and colleges carry out affairs of the temple.

(*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 19, p. 238)

In Zoroastrianism worship is performed to one god. Adherents of Zoroastrianism wash their hands and feet before entering the temple. When entering the temple, they take their shoes off and ask forgiveness for their sins. In the temple, the priests take the ashes of the sacred fire, holy texts are read, and believers pray and leave the temple walking backwards so as not to turn their backs to the fire. The worship in the temple is individual. Priests always keep the fire burning which represents the majesty of the temple. Moreover, they practice the ceremony of purification and protection of fire five times a day. They read parts from the holy book Avesta. The fire is protected from solar rays and human breath. When boys and girls reach the age at which they can distinguish good from evil, they become responsible for religious teachings through a ceremony which is called “*naujotei*”. In Zoroastrianism, there is no specified time or day of worship for people except priests.

The ancient Turks believed in one god. There is no specific information whether or not there was regular daily worship or places of worship in ancient Turkish religion. However, Chinese sources say that the Turks had a temple or place of worship, which they called *uyun-se*. Ancestor's caves, holy mountains, rivers, the chief's tent, nomadic camping sites, monumental graves, houses, or

Turkish tents were places where important acts of worship were performed. They prayed bareheaded with their face and hands up turned to the sky. Worshipping God was practiced by turning towards the East and kneeling down.

In Turkish beliefs, official ceremonies were performed under the leadership of the chief. *Kams*, who were sorcerers, sang special hymns, called the spirits and ancestors, and represented rising to heaven and descending from heaven by playing their magical drums.

In the Dinka religion, which was an ancient tribal religion, worship was performed by continuously reciting sentences of supplications for Nhialic, who was considered to be the highest supernatural force and creator. Through worship and supplication good health and rain were prayed for from the supreme power Nhialic.

In the religion of the Ainu, great respect is paid towards gods and spirits. In the Maori religion, people perform their ceremonies with hymns in the company of priests. The religion of Ga does not have any holy places or priests.²⁵

LET'S NOTE

When we compare *salat* (prayer), which is one of the basic devotional acts of Islam with worship in other religions, we see that there are many differences among them. Other religions do not have the order and discipline of prayer found in Islam.

Except for Judaism, there is no act of worship in accordance with the belief in *tawhid* (the oneness of God) in other religions. According to Islamic sources, although the prophets of the Jews and Christians were also responsible for prayer, modern Judaism and Christianity worships by prayer, the reading of holy texts, and several ceremonies.

Although in all religions there are similarities in forms of worship, their meanings differ from each other. For instance, in Judaism and Christianity a congregation worships in temples. In Assyrian Orthodox churches they prostrate when worshipping. However, worshipping Jesus the Messiah is the essence of worship in Christianity.

In Hinduism, Buddhism and Chinese religions, there is no obligation of congregational prayer and idols are worshipped. There is no worship exactly the same, with the same conditions and elements, as Islamic prayer.

(Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 485)

²⁵ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 19, p. 238

1.2. Fasting

Fasting literally means “to avoid something, to restrain oneself from something”. The Arabic counterpart of the word is “*sawm*”.²⁶

As we learn from the Holy Qur’an, fasting is an act of worship commanded to all nations.²⁷ This is why today it exists in many religions, especially in Islam. Islam made fasting a discipline and rule. The concept of fasting in Islam is suitable to human nature. The fasting in other religions is performed on the same days of the year, because it is performed according to solar calendar. In Islam, however, fasting is performed according to the lunar calendar in the month of *Ramadan*. Because every year this month falls on different days, Muslims get the opportunity to fast in every season of the year.

In religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism, there are fasting practices such as avoiding certain foods and drinks.²⁸ In Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, fasting today is an act of worship that is only practiced by the class of religious functionaries.

Some forms of fasting in Hinduism are:

- Votive fasting: People fast fifteen days continuously in order to have certain desires realized.
- Annual periodical fasting: It is the fasting performed on the first and fifteenth days of each month. Brahmans who believe in the God Shiva fast on the thirteenth day of their local month for twenty-four hours.

Worship in Jainism is performed by religious functionaries. These priests eat vegetarian food throughout their lives. However, they do not eat onion or garlic. They are allowed to eat once a day and this should only be mid-morning or in the afternoon. Begging is considered a means of spiritual purification. Jainist priests who live in monasteries keep this tradition alive.²⁹ Jainists fast for forty days continuously.³⁰

In Sikhism, there are no acts of worship similar to fasting, yoga or atonement. According to Sikhs, it is enough to think and remember God’s name as an act of worship.

²⁶ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 33, p. 414

²⁷ Baqarah, 2: 183

²⁸ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Dinler Tarihi*, p. 89

²⁹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 33, p. 415

³⁰ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p.489

In Zoroastrianism there is no fasting, instead, their practice is based on avoiding wrong actions, thoughts and words.³¹

FASTING IN JUDAISM	FASTING IN CHRISTIANITY	FASTING IN ISLAM
<p>In accordance with the command “You shall deny yourselves.” mentioned in the Old Testament, fasting is accepted as a means of cleansing the soul. There are different types of fasting that Jews practice for different purposes and intentions. In Judaism, Jews fast for the purpose of atonement of sins or remembering the bad days of the past or to wail. The most important fasts are as follows:</p> <p><i>Yom Kippur</i> (the Day of Repentance and Atonement) is a fast of compensation performed on the ninth day of the month <i>Tishrei</i>. It is believed that errors and sins committed during the year will be forgiven through fasting on those days. This fast starts with the setting of the sun the day before and lasts for twenty-five hours. Within the prescribed time, adherents of Judaism avoid food, drink and sexual intercourse completely. Bathing, cleaning the house, wearing leather clothes or shoes are strictly forbidden on that day.</p> <p>During the fast of <i>Tisha B’av</i>, which commemorates the destruction of the First and Second Temples and is performed in the ninth month <i>Tisha B’ab</i> (August), the rules of <i>Yom Kippur</i> fasting are applied.</p>	<p>In Christianity, the concept of fasting is different. Generally the period of Lent, which is about forty days before Easter, is accepted as the time for fasting. However fasting in this period is not in the form of avoiding food and drink. Christians fast by eating only one meal during those days and it is possible to take some kinds of refreshments. Apart from that, Catholics do not eat meat on Friday and people belonging to the Eastern churches do not eat meat on neither Wednesdays nor Fridays. The fasting for forty days is not obligatory. Obligatory fasting is only one day during these days. With the exception of some groups, Protestants do not fast. In the Assyrian Church, which is made up of Monophysite Christians, types of fasting are:</p> <p>1. The Great Fasting: It is performed by adding seven days of fasting to the forty days of fasting before Easter.</p> <p>2. <i>Ninova</i> Fasting: is the fast performed for three days in February.</p> <p>3. The Diet of Early June: is fasting for three days and accepted as the fast of the Apostles.</p>	<p>As an Islamic term <i>sawm</i> (fasting) means “refraining from food, drink and sexual intercourse in the period from the breaking of dawn till the setting of the sun.” A person who fasts strives to avoid wrong actions during the period of fasting, this is called “<i>imsak</i>” (lit. holding oneself) and breaking the fast is called “<i>iftar</i>”. These prohibitions are eating, drinking or having sexual intercourse without having a valid excuse. Violation of the prohibition is punishable. Having a pre-fast meal, which is called “<i>suhoor</i>” was also recommended by Prophet Muhammad. Performing the <i>Ramadan</i> fast is one of the five basic principles of Islam and is obligatory for every Muslim who is sane and has reached the age of puberty. Fasting is a way of training the will power. It protects humans from evil, develops their sense of mercy.</p>

³¹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 33, p. 415

Fasting, apart from these two, starts in the early morning and continues until sunset. In Judaism, apart from these two, there are other types of fasts that are performed for different reasons. For instance, according to the Jewish lunar calendar on July 17th, a fast is performed to commemorate the capture of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (fasting in the fourth month).

4. The Diet of August: It is known as the Virgin Mary fast.
5. The Diet of December: is performed between December 5th and 25th in preparation for Christmas. While the age of starting to fast is twenty in the Catholic Church, it is fourteen or fifteen in Orthodox and Assyrian Churches.

Fasting teaches the value of understanding the blessings of Allah and being patient. There are three kinds of fasting, which are the obligatory, compulsory and supererogatory. The sick, the old and travelers are allowed to postpone it. Old people who cannot fast and sick people who have no hope of recovery pay a *fidyah* (monetary compensation) for each day they cannot fast. (*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 37, p. 414-425)

LET'S EVALUATE

“O you who believe! Decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous.”

(Baqarah, 2: 183)

“Whoever fasts in the month of Ramadan out of sincere faith, and hoping for a reward from Allah, then all his previous sins will be forgiven.”

(Bukhari, Sawm, 7)

“Fasting is a shield.”

(Bukhari, Sawm, 2)

“When you fast, do not look somber as the hypocrites do, for they disfigure their faces to show others they are fasting.”

(Matthew, 6/16)

“Is this not the fast that I have chosen: To loosen the bonds of wickedness, To undo the heavy burdens, To let the oppressed go free, And that you break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, And that you bring to your house the poor who are cast out; When you see the naked, that you cover him, And not hide yourself from your own flesh?”

(Isaiah, 58/7-8)

Evaluate the approach of different religions to fasting in the light of the verses, hadiths and texts of the Holy Bible above.

1.3. Pilgrimage (Hajj)

Hajj (major pilgrimage) is one of the five principles of Islam and was commanded in the ninth year of *Hijrah*. Pilgrimage is an obligation for every Muslim who has the means, at least once in their lifetime. Pilgrimages performed at other times are called “*umrah*” (the minor pilgrimage).

The concept of holy places and visiting those places has existed in all belief systems throughout history. The purpose of visiting holy places is to gain spiritual, physical and moral benefits, which can be bestowed by the holiness of that place. Pilgrimage is an important act of worship that has been passed down from the past to the present by all religions, even if it varies in form. Holy places are visited with the purpose of worship in all tribal, national and universal religions.³²

1.3.1. Centers of Pilgrimage



LET'S EVALUATE

“...And (due) to Allah from the people is a pilgrimage to the House-for whoever is able to find thereto a way.”

(Al-i Imran, 3: 97)

“Whoever performs Hajj to this House (Ka'bah) and does not commit sins (while performing Hajj), he will come out as sinless as a newly-born child. (Just delivered by his mother.)”

(Bukhari, Iman, 2)

Evaluate the importance of pilgrimage in the light of the verse and *hadith* quoted above.

In Islam, Mecca is the center for pilgrimage. The holiness of the Ka'bah is emphasized in the Qur'an as follows: **“Indeed, the first House (of worship) established for mankind was that at Mecca-blessed and guidance for the worlds.”**³³ Muslims perform pilgrimage by *tawaf* (circumambulating) around the Ka'bah and the ritual standing at Arafat. Moreover, it is understood from the following Qur'anic verse: **“And proclaim to the people the Hajj [pilgrimage]; they will come to you on foot and on every lean camel; they will come from every distant pass - That they may witness benefits for themselves and**

³² Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi vol. 14, p. 382

³³ Al-i Imran, 3:96

mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable and poor. Then let them end their untidiness and fulfill their vows and perform tawaf around the ancient House.”³⁴ that Abraham was the first prophet who invited people to perform pilgrimage in Mecca. Prophet Abraham established the rules of pilgrimage, enabled the Ka’bah to become a center of pilgrimage, and returned to Palestine leaving his son Ishmael in Mecca. The prophets and their communities that came after him visited the Ka’bah as well. In the Age of Ignorance, Arabs circumambulated the Ka’bah in the nude, clapping their hands and whistling.

The Torah has commanded all Jewish men to be present in Jerusalem and in the presence of Jahveh three times a year. These are the festivals of Passover (Easter), *Shavuot* (Pentecost) and *Sukkoth* (Pergolas).³⁵

It is possible to classify the places of pilgrimage in Judaism under three groups:

1. Places in and around Jerusalem, having historical characteristics, and places emerged throughout the history of the Hebrew Bible, such as the Wailing Wall.
2. The graves of scholars, which are generally located in Galilee and are mentioned in the *Talmud* and *Kabala*.
3. The diaspora (places where Jewish people live outside of Palestine).

Places mentioned in the Old Testament about events experienced by important people who lived before the Law of Moses became important places for Judaism in later periods.³⁶

In the New Testament, the importance and meaning of pilgrimage is not quite clear. While the Synoptic Gospels say that Jesus went to Jerusalem once for pilgrimage during the Passover Festival, it is understood from statements in the Gospel of John that Jesus regularly attended pilgrimage ceremonies.³⁷ In Christianity, it is believed that Jesus initiated the Kingdom of God by performing his eschatological pilgrimage to the city of God during his last visit to Jerusalem. The first Christians used to visit the Holy Temple, as did the Jews.³⁸



The Wailing Wall (Jerusalem)

³⁴ Hajj, 22: 27-29

³⁵ Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 23/17, 34/23; Hebrew Bible, Exodus, 23/14

³⁶ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 14, p. 383

³⁷ Holy Bible, John, 2/13, 6/4, 7/2, 10/22, 11/54, 55

³⁸ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 14, p. 383

In later periods, the cave where Jesus was born in Bethlehem and Golgotha where Jesus was crucified became places of pilgrimage. This included pilgrimage to Jerusalem, visiting the tombs, and even visiting priests living in monasteries. Another form of pilgrimage was to visit churches built on the graves of saints and martyrs.

Rome came to the forefront because of the presence of the graves of two great disciples (i.e. Peter and Paul) and of the martyrs who had been persecuted in European lands as a result of the oppression of the empire against Christians. The grave attributed to the disciple James the Great in Santiago de Compostela, Spain is an important place of pilgrimage.

People are given indulgences by the Catholic Church for visit the three places of pilgrimage in the world, i.e. Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago de Compostela, in the “year of faith”. This is why the number of pilgrims increases in the years announced as “the year of faith”. For instance, in Santiago, if 24 July, which is the day attributed to James the Great in the Christian calendar, coincides with a Sunday, that year is considered “a year of faith.” According to Christianity, the second type of place of pilgrimage are holy places attributed to Mary in different parts of the world.



Santiago de Compostela (Spain)

Christianity has some places of pilgrimage in Anatolia as well. These places are connected with the history of Christianity and important personalities. Some Christians today go on pilgrimage to the places visited by Paul during his missionary activities. Antioch is one of them. Paul, Peter and Barnabas spread Christianity in Antioch and the Church of Antioch is considered one of the five great churches. Another holy place is Ephesus where Paul stayed to spread Christianity. John also lived and was buried in Ephesus.³⁹

INFORMATION BOX

In the Bible, during the pilgrimage of Jesus, his mission is narrated as follows: “Jesus entered the temple courts and drove out all who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money-changers and the benches of those selling doves. “It is written” he said to them, “My house will be called a house of prayer, but you are making it a den of robbers.” The blind and the lame came to him at the temple, and he healed them.”

(Holy Bible, Matthew, 21 / 12-14)

³⁹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 14, p. 383

In Hinduism places of pilgrimage are Benares and the River Ganges. Temples consecrated to the god Vishnu and to Shiva are also considered places of pilgrimage. Hindus go to these places many times a year depending on their circumstances.⁴⁰

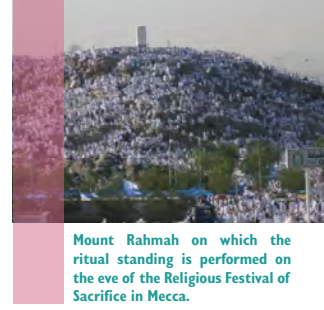
In Buddhism, pilgrimage is performed to places where Buddha lived, or to places where things that were left from Buddha exist. Bodh Gaya is the most important place of pilgrimage for Buddhists. Other places of pilgrimage are: Lumbini, the place of birth of Buddha in Nepal; Deer Park, the place of his first sermon in Benares; and Kushinagar, the place where he died. In Taoism and Confucianism places of pilgrimage are the ancient temples that were built on high mountains. Members of these religions also visit places of Buddhist pilgrimage.

According to Japanese belief, mountains are the houses of the gods. Therefore hills and mountains became places of pilgrimage for many centuries. In Japanese tradition, there are several places of pilgrimage belonging to both the Shintoism and Buddhism. The Grand Shrine in Ise, which was devoted to the supreme god of Shinto, is the place of pilgrimage of Shintoism.

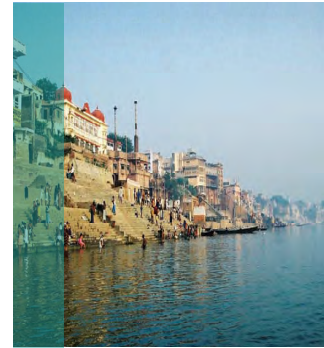
Although Sikhs are against pilgrimage, the holy Golden Temple in their religious center Amritsar is visited by Sikhs from all over the world.⁴¹

1.3.2. Types of Pilgrimage

Worship through pilgrimage in Islam is performed by circumambulating the Ka'bah, the ritual standing at Arafat, and visiting holy places around the Ka'bah during the days of the Festival of Sacrifice. Before setting off for the pilgrimage, Muslims pay their debts, if they have any, and repent for their sins. When pilgrims arrive at places called *Miqat* (the specific places where pilgrims or people intending to perform the Hajj or *Umrah* must declare their intention to do so and enter the state of *ihram*), they clean their bodies and perform minor or major ablution. After that, men take their clothes off and wear a white garment consisting of two pieces, which are called *ihram*. They do not cover their heads or wear shoes. The *ihram* attire for women is their daily dress. Then pilgrims make the intention to perform pilgrimage by saying, "O God! I intend to perform pilgrimage for your contentedness, make



Mount Rahmah on which the ritual standing is performed on the eve of the Religious Festival of Sacrifice in Mecca.



Hindus Performing Pilgrimage in the Ganges River

⁴⁰ Mehmet Aydın, *Ansiklopedik Dinler Sözlüğü*, p. 271

⁴¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 381



Sa'y performing between Safa and Marwah (Mecca)

it easy for me and accept my pilgrimage.” And then they recite the invocation of *talbiyah* (*Labbayk Allahumma labbayk, Labbayka la sharika laka labbayk. Inna'l hamda, wa'n-ni'mata laka wa'l-mulk. La sharika lak.*). After entering the borders of *Haram* around Mecca, they obey the prohibitions of *ihram*.

When they arrive at Mecca, they immediately go to the Ka'bah in order to perform *tawaf al-qudum* (the first circumambulation). They salute *Hajar al-Aswad* (the Black Stone) before starting the *tawaf*. Various supplications are recited during the *tawaf*. Circumambulating the Ka'bah seven times – keeping on the left – completes the first *tawaf*. After *tawaf*, a two cycle prayer is performed in front of the Sacred Station of Prophet Abraham.

After the first *tawaf*, pilgrims return to the Black Stone again and salute it. Then they go to the Hill of Safa to perform *sa'y* (ritual walking). They begin to climb it until they can see the Ka'bah. They recite some invocations and start to perform *sa'y* by walking towards the Hill of Marwa. The *sa'y* is completed with seven circuits between Safa and Marwah and finishes at the Hill of Marwah. Some supplications are read during the *sa'y* as in *tawaf*.

In order to perform *waqfa* (ritual standing), which is one of the obligations of pilgrimage, pilgrims leave Mecca for the Plain of Arafat on the eve of the Religious Festival of Sacrifice. When they arrive at Arafat and stay for some time on the Plain of Arafat, the obligation of *waqfa* of (standing) is fulfilled. During the *waqfa*, pilgrims recite supplications and repent of their sins. Then, the very same day, they set off to Muzdalifah. They stay there for the night and in the morning of the first day of the Festival of Sacrifice, the *waqfa* (ritual standing) in Muzdalifah is fulfilled. After that, pilgrims leave for Mina before the sun rises. After completing the obligation of stoning the devil in Mina, male pilgrims get shaved and change from their *ihram* clothes into their regular clothes. Women end the state of *ihram* by cutting a little piece of their hair. Then all of the prohibitions of *ihram* end, except for one (sexual intercourse). On the first, second, or the third day of the Festival, pilgrims go to Mecca and perform obligatory visiting *tawaf*. And thus the pilgrimage is completed.⁴²

Jews do not always give due importance to the pilgrimage, which was commanded in the Torah and should be performed three times in a year. They are required to perform pilgrimage in the Festivals of Passover, *Sukkoth* and *Shavuot*. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, pilgrimage to

⁴² Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 92

the Temple could not be performed, however, visits of Jews to holy places continued. Memories of the past, the longing to return to those lands and the graves of the Jewish elders again attracted the Jewish people to that region. The Wailing Wall, which is believed to be a remnant of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, was turned into an important visiting place and they began to perform pilgrimage by visiting this place.

LET'S NOTE

In Christianity there is no specified time to go on pilgrimage. However, people generally visit Jerusalem in their old age. The person who arrives at Jerusalem feels that they have accomplished an important task in their life. When they look at the places where Jesus died and arose from the dead, they also wish to die in Jerusalem. The Armenian word of “*mahdesi*” literally means “one who has seen death and the holy fire of Easter in Jerusalem.” The person who returns from pilgrimage to Jerusalem is given the title of “*mahdesi*”. Russian pilgrims take white shrouds with them to Jerusalem and wash themselves in the River Jordan by wrapping themselves in these shrouds.

Other Eastern Christians put white shrouds on the grave of Jesus on Friday, the day when he was crucified. Pilgrims, who generally go to and return from Jerusalem in groups, pray in the church to thank God for the completion of their pilgrimage and they distribute the presents which they brought from there.

As in Judaism, Christians would first visit the Temple in Jerusalem. The Christians' tradition of pilgrimage is almost the same as each other. Pilgrims immerse themselves in the water of the River Jordan in order to wash their sins away. Then they visit important places in the life of Jesus, in order. They read passages from the Gospels, repent of their sins and contemplate death.

(Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 91; *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı, İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 14, p. 384)

Today, Jews visit such places on certain days, they believe that these places bring good luck and protect them from bad luck. At pilgrimage sites, prayers are recited, vows are made and sometimes wishes are written down on paper and left there. In the places of pilgrimage outside the Wailing Wall or the Eastern Wall of the Temple of Solomon, Jews beg the saints for their intercession.

Pilgrimage in Hinduism consists of visiting Benares and washing oneself in the River Ganges. These acts give the pilgrims hope of a better life after resurrection. After performing the rituals of pilgrimage and ablutions, circling around the holy places is also considered one of the elements of pilgrimage.

In Taoism and Confucianism, pilgrims wear red or yellow clothes during the pilgrimage, which is performed in autumn. They meditate silently in groups of fifteen people and carry incense sticks and bowls. They eat only vegetables and plants and repent for their sins during the long journey. When they arrive at the place of pilgrimage, they purify themselves and perform acts of worship and continue to worship and perform ascetic exercises until they return home.

1.4. Charity

Sadaqah (charity) means to give something to the poor and helpless people or help them without expecting anything in return, but just for the sake of Allah.⁴³ Islam encourages Muslims to give charity through the many Qur'anic verses and sayings of the Prophet. Muslims take care of the poor and needy through certain acts of worship such as charity and almsgiving. According to the Qur'an, charity is an act of worship, which was also expected of the Jews and Christians. For instance, Allah the Almighty addressed the Children of Israel saying, **"And establish prayer and give zakah and bow with those who bow [in worship and obedience]."**⁴⁴ And Jesus stated in his miraculous speech in the cradle that Allah commanded the prayer to him as follows: **"And He has made me blessed wherever I am and has enjoined upon me prayer and zakah as long as I remain alive."**⁴⁵

Charity was also commanded in the Torah and the *Gospels*. For instance, the Torah states, **"If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you."**⁴⁶ It is written in the Bible in the following verse, **"But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing."**⁴⁷

In the early period of Judaism, charity had been regularly paid to the charity chest of *Bayt al-Maqdis*. This charity, the amount of which was *ushr* (a tithe) – ten percent – used to be given to certain places. Afterwards this practice was abandoned. However, this commandment takes the individual into consideration. In Christianity, the practice was also changed and became a support by sharing food with others on days of fasting.⁴⁸ Christians believe that charity and almsgiving are compensation for sins.

⁴³ Heyet, *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, p. 568

⁴⁴ Baqarah, 2: 43

⁴⁵ Maryam, 19: 31

⁴⁶ *Holy Bible*, Leviticus, 25/35

⁴⁷ *Holy Bible*, Matthew, 6/3

⁴⁸ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 496

LET'S EVALUATE

“And from their properties was [given] the right of the [needy] petitioner and the deprived.”

(Dhariyat, 51: 19)

“...But whatever thing you spend [in His cause] He will compensate it...”

(Saba, 34: 39)

“Those who give to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to them will receive many curses.”

(Holy Bible, Proverbs, 28/27)

“But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

(Holy Bible, Matthew, 6/3-4)

Evaluate the verses of the Holy Qur'an and texts of the Holy Bible above.

1.5. Sacrifice

Sacrifice means to offer some being or object to a supernatural being or beings who are worshipped with the intention of getting closer to them or to express gratitude to them, or to ask for something, or as a penance for sins. These objects being offered to a supernatural power are generally called “*taqdimah*” and the word *qurban* (sacrifice) is especially used for beings offered by killing or slaughtering.

According to Islamic belief, sacrifice is offered by slaughtering an animal under certain conditions at a certain time and with the intention of offering it as an act of worship. The animal slaughtered in this way is called “*udhiya*”. The animal can be offered as a sacrifice on one of the first three days of the Festival of Sacrifice. There are other types of sacrifice in Islam, such as sacrifices offered to fulfill a vow and the sacrifice offered in celebration and thanks to Allah for a newborn child (*aqiqa*).

LET'S INTERPRET

"Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you. Thus have We subjected them to you that you may glorify Allah for that [to] which He has guided you; and give good tidings to the doers of good."

(Hajj, 22: 37)

"So pray to your Lord and sacrifice [to Him alone]."

(Kawthar, 108: 2)

"Whoever can afford it, but does not offer a sacrifice, let him not come near to our place of worship."

(Sunan Ibn Majah, Adahi, 2)

Interpret the verses and *hadith* above.

Sacrifice in Islam is not performed in order to satisfy a moral or spiritual need of Allah, for He does not need the offerings of human beings. In this respect, Allah the Almighty says in the Qur'an:

لَنْ يَنَالَ اللَّهَ لُحُومُهَا وَلَا دِمَاؤُهَا وَلَكِنْ يَنَالُهُ التَّقْوَىٰ مِنْكُمْ ط...

"Their meat will not reach Allah, nor will their blood, but what reaches Him is piety from you..."⁴⁹ As indicated in this verse, only the person who worships by offering sacrifice reaches Allah.

There are rulings about sacrifice in both the Torah and the *Gospels*. The practice of sacrifice in Judaism is performed in two ways. One is the offering of blood sacrifices through slaughtering animals of certain traits according to the Law of Moses, and the other is bloodless sacrifices, such as the offerings of food and drink, like water and wine.

⁴⁹ Hajj, 22: 37

LET'S NOTE

“You must present a male without defect from the cattle, sheep, or goats in order that it may be accepted on your behalf.”

(Holy Bible, Leviticus, 22/19)

Sacrifice in Judaism was composed of total or partial destruction of some animals and foods by burning them in a slaughter-house as a sign of loyalty to God in order to obtain his grace and forgiveness. The history of sacrifice, which goes back to Prophet Abraham, was the most important act of worship in Judaism. The sacrifices were offered daily, weekly, monthly, and yearly for different reasons such as atonement, votive offering, and the anniversary of emancipation from enslavement.⁵⁰ However, after the destruction of the temple in 70 CE by the Romans, Jews no longer sacrificed in their worship. Today, they sacrifice poultry and distribute the meat to the poor in order to be purified.⁵¹

The practices of sacrifices during the time of Jesus were based on the Old Testament.⁵² After Jesus, a different understanding of sacrifice, which focused on Jesus, evolved. Despite these practices, Christianity began to take on its own character separate from Judaism after the establishment of the belief in the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection. Thus, in Christian tradition it is believed that the blood of Jesus, which was symbolically shared at the last supper with his disciples, united people with God.⁵³ Some words of the *Gospels*, such as “... and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin”⁵⁴ and those in the letters of Paul “a sacrifice for sin” and “sacrifice to God” constitute the basis of the belief which introduces Jesus as a sacrifice who saved humanity from original sin.⁵⁵

Thus, in Christian theology, the belief that the death of Jesus on the crucifix was sacrifice enough and invalidates any other sacrifices is accepted. In Christian understanding Jesus himself as the first and last sacrifice cancelled the sacrifice system of the Old Testament.⁵⁶ Thus, offering sacrifice became unnecessary. The Eucharist, which is performed on Sundays and Easter, has taken the place of sacrifice.

⁵⁰ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 26, p. 435

⁵¹ Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 95

⁵² Holy Bible, Matthew, 8/4

⁵³ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 26, p. 435

⁵⁴ Holy Bible, John, 1/7

⁵⁵ Holy Bible, Ephesians, 5/2

⁵⁶ Holy Bible, Hebrews, 10/5-10

The ancient Persians offered their gods sacrifices of various plants and the *haoma* drink. Although Zarathustra prohibited offering animal sacrifices and encouraged his followers to offer votive and offerings of thanks to Ahura Mazda, after his death people returned to animal sacrifice. Persians used to offer votive sacrifices to Ormuz and other sacrifices to Ahriman in order for her to prevent evil.

INFORMATION BOX

The tradition of honoring deceased ancestors and offering sacrifices to them is important in traditional Turkish belief. The underworld is a place where evil spirits live and which is frightening. It is believed that there are spirits of the deceased underground. These spirits under the leadership of Erlik Kaan try to capture the spirits of living creatures and spread disease. In some regions a dark colored animal would be sacrificed in order to save a person who was being pursued by evil spirits.

Historical sources mention regular annual religious ceremonies where offering a sacrifice constituted the basis of worship. The most acceptable sacrifice was the horse. The rising sun and moon in the night were honored and in bloodless sacrifices food products were offered.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 535)

In ancient Chinese religions, domestic or wild animals were sacrificed to the gods and spirits of their ancestors in order to please them and gain their grace. Grain, fermented drinks, various food products, and silk would be offered.

Sacrifice in Hinduism is one of the ways of leading human beings to salvation. In the period of Brahmins, the ceremony of sacrifice, which is believed to have created the cosmic force and is accepted as the secret of creation and the key to the continuation of the universe, was performed under the leadership of priests. Daily ceremonies during the period of the *Vedas* comprised of burnt offerings, pouring the sacred *soma* drink, and offerings of food and drink to their ancestors and to the gods of the underworld. The monthly offering of cakes and foods were to various gods, especially to the storm god Indra during the crescent and full moon. Priests would offer seasonal sacrifices three times a year with the intention of atonement and with the expectation of abundance at the beginning of spring and with the hope of a rainy and cool winter.

Because of the principle of “*Ahimsa*” (not to kill any living creature) and the belief in the reincarnation of the soul, there is no sacrifice of living creatures in Buddhism and Jainism. However, the adherents of both religions offer incense, candles, food and drink in their temples.

In the Japanese religion Shintoism, sacrifices and offerings were offered to gods and the dead in order to placate them and to gain their grace and favor or expiation for sins. Animal sacrifices took the place of human sacrifices, which were performed in the early period. Today, everything that corresponds to three essential needs including clothing, dwelling, and food, like rice and wine are offered as a sacrifice.⁵⁷

1.6. Holy Days, Nights and Festivals

Every religion has its holy days, nights and festivals. In divine religions, this holiness comes either from a religious duty or from important events in the life of the prophets such as their birth, migration or death. For believers, these holy times are considered important and they worship, celebrate, and commemorate during these holy times. Likewise, in the non-divine religions important episodes in the life of the founder of the religion led to the emergence of days, nights and festivals of celebration.

The most distinctive examples of holy days and nights are seen in Islam. Friday, *Mawlid* (celebration of the birth of Prophet Muhammad), the nights of *Raghaib* (the Night of Hopes), *Baraat* (the Night of Salvation), and the Night of *Qadr* are the most important ones. Apart for the Night of *Baraat*, they are all related to the life of Prophet Muhammad. The Night of *Baraat* is accepted as the night of repentance and forgiveness. It is believed that sincere worship and repentance on this night will be accepted. The Day of *Ashura* is one of the days remembered with various activities. Only Friday and the Night of *Qadr* are mentioned in the Qur'an. The Night of *Qadr* is especially mentioned, and is clearly expressed as the night in which the Qur'an was revealed, which is considered to be better than a thousand months: **"We have indeed revealed this (Message) in the Night of Qadr: And what will explain to you what the night of qadr is? The Night of Power is better than a thousand months."**⁵⁸

In Islam, there are two festivals that are commonly celebrated. These are the festivals of *Ramadan* and Sacrifice. Muslims fasting during the month of *Ramadan* celebrate a three-day festival because of their joy at having completed this worship. They congratulate each other after the congregational festival prayer.



During holy nights the mawlid is read in the mosques.

⁵⁷ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 26, p. 434

⁵⁸ Qadr, 97: 1-3

The Festival of Sacrifice is celebrated two months and ten days after the Festival of *Ramadan* and lasts for four days. Pilgrimage is performed during this festival.

Festivals in Islam are meant to be for socializing, showing solidarity, and sharing with others. During festivals, offended people make peace, the needs of the poor are fulfilled, and happiness is shared. In this respect, festivals have an important place in Muslim societies.

Rosh Hashanah and *Yom Kippur* are the most important holy days in Judaism. According to the Jewish calendar, *Rosh Hashanah* is the religious beginning of the year. A yearly destiny is recorded on this day. It starts in the months of September-October and is celebrated for two days. *Yom Kippur* is the Day of Atonement, which lasts about ten days after the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*; a yearly destiny that was recorded during *Rosh Hashanah* is sealed and completed. Saturday is also a holy day for Jews. On that day, weekly worship is performed in the synagogue.

LET'S NOTE

In Christianity, there are two important festivals celebrated to commemorate the birth, death and ascension of Jesus. These are called Christmas and Easter. Their holy day is Sunday when the Eucharist is performed in churches.

Christmas: It is celebrated to commemorate the birth of Jesus who is accepted as the Son of God. Catholics and Protestants celebrate Christmas on December 25th and Orthodox Christians celebrate on January 6th.

At Christmas, Christians conduct religious rites, sing hymns, and give presents to each other. They also visit hospitals and orphanages during this festival. The Christmas tree and Santa Claus are important features of these celebrations. Christians decorate their houses with Christmas trees.

Easter: It is the festival in which Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. Before this festival there is repentance and fasting for a period for forty days. The last Friday of this forty-day period is remembered as the day of Jesus' crucifixion and Christians spend this day engaged in acts of worship. The following Sunday, two days after Friday is celebrated, is Easter Sunday, in other words, the resurrection of Jesus. Because of the date of Easter, which is celebrated in spring, is changeable, the exact date is determined each year by church authorities. In addition to these, Mother Mary Day and the Feast of the Cross are other festivals celebrated by Christians.

(*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, vol. 5, p. 258)

In Judaism there are three religious festivals commanded in the Torah to be celebrated. These are the Passover, *Sukkoth* and *Shavuot* festivals.

Passover: It is a pilgrimage festival that is celebrated to commemorate the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt. It is a major eight-day festival between March and April. Unleavened bread is eaten throughout the festival.

Shavuot: It is the festival to celebrate the giving of the Torah to the Jews by God. It is also known as the festival of weeks and is celebrated during the months of June-July.

Sukkoth: It commemorates the forty years that Jews spent in the desert after the exodus from Egypt and is an eight-day festival. It is a festival of entertainment. In the *Sukkoth* Festival, Jews pitch a tent in their garden and decorate it with tree branches and play national games in them.⁵⁹

There are many festivals in Hinduism. The way and time of the celebration of these festivals varies from region to region. Today, there are sixteen festivals announced as official holidays by the Indian government.⁶⁰ Because they are based on the lunar calendar, the days of the festival change every year. For instance *Chaitra* is the New Year festival, which is celebrated in the months of March and April. It is a festival of entertainment and of exchanging presents.

There are many festivals in Buddhism. Some of them are religious festivals.⁶¹ For instance, in December the enlightenment of Buddha, and in February his reaching nirvana are celebrated as festivals. During this festival, Buddhists go into temples and holy places with their children and perform acts of worship. They also decorate the streets.

Sikhism also has some holy days, such as the days of the birth and death of Nanak. Various Hindu festivals are also celebrated by Sikhs.⁶²

In Shintoism, the time and place of all actions are fixed by certain rules. These binding rules are called “custom.” Customs ensure the transmission of Japanese culture from one generation to the next. The greatest festival is “*Matsuri*” which means to call the god and serve him. Generally three days of fasting is performed before this festival.

⁵⁹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 241

⁶⁰ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 301

⁶¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 333

⁶² Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 380

2. The Places of Worship in Religions

When a place of worship is mentioned, generally a structure particular to worship, a building, or a temple comes to mind. These places are called “sanctuary”, which describes the places of worship of all religions, in general. The words “mosque” and “*masjid*” are used for the sanctuaries of Muslims in particular.

Because acts of worship are one of the basic elements of religion and are generally performed in a place, sanctuaries were needed. Every religion has their special terms and concepts expressing the nature of the sanctuary and they also have their own perception of a sanctuary. Sanctuaries show a development over time from open lands in early periods to simple and small structures to large closed buildings.⁶³

According to the Qur’an, the first place of worship on earth was the Ka’bah in Mecca.⁶⁴ At the same time, the Ka’bah is the first *qiblah* of Muslims. After the Ka’bah, “*masjid*” is the word used for places of worship in Islam. Apart from that, the words *musalla*, *namazgah* and mosque are used to name places of worship.

Musalla was a place used for the performance of festival and funeral prayers during the time of the Prophet. In Persia, roofless *masjids* on the roadsides are called *namazgah*, which is a wide field where the townspeople gather. In many *namazgahs*, there are *minbars* (pulpits) and *mihirabs* (prayer niches) built for leading the prayer and reading the sermon.⁶⁵

There are some areas of *masjids* and mosques that were named according to certain functions. These are the prayer niche, pulpit, and the preaching chair. The niche where the *imam* stands while he is leading the prayer is called the *mihrab*; the place where the sermon is read is called the *minbar* (pulpit), and the place for preaching is called *kursi* (the preaching chair). In some mosques there is a special section for the *muezzin* called *muezzin mahfili*; a special place for people who are late for the congregational prayer, and, in the mosques of the sultans, there is a special section for the sultan called the *hunkar mahfili* reserved for them to pray. The minarets for the recitation of the *adhan* and the *shadirwan* (fountain of waters for ablution) are structures that complete the mosques.



The Blue Mosque (Istanbul)

⁶³ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 27, p. 276

⁶⁴ Al-i Imran, 3:97

⁶⁵ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 27, p. 279

In Hinduism, the practice of constructing sanctuaries and placing images of gods in them coincides with the Upanishad period. The sanctuaries that began to be built intensely after the seventh century are places of the gods' residence; at the same time they are the meeting places between people and the gods, and, also, places of offering. In Hinduism, the worship is individual and in many houses there is a special corner or room assigned for worship. The main part of the sanctuaries is the holy place called "*vimona*" in which god's images or signs are placed. Indian sanctuaries are places of pilgrimage and purification from sins, and for religious cleansing.

In Shintoism, the residence of the gods, which is at the same time the center of ceremony, is called "*jinja*" or "*jinsa*" (the house of god), the name "*miya*" is also used. The sanctuaries, which sometimes number in the hundreds of thousands, are simple and small tree structures that are generally located by the roadsides, in the corners of factory buildings, or at the top of blocks of buildings. In Shintoism, the oldest and the most famous sanctuary is the national temple, built in the fourth century BCE in the name of the Sun Goddess Amaterasu.

In Buddhism, the place of worship is the *vihara*. These temples have turned into revered *stupas* where the memories of Buddha and Buddhist elders are kept. Sculptures of Buddha are present in some places called "*pagoda*". In many *pagodas* the congregational prayer is not performed. The main element keeping the relationship between the community and temples alive is not only worship, but also the memories of Buddha and other Buddhist saints.⁶⁶

The general architectural design of Jainist temples is in the form of a main door, columns, a wide place in the middle of the temple or courtyard, and a holy place that is assigned for the images. Rather than being places of worship, Jainist temples are places to show respect to *Tirthankaras*.

In Sikhism, temples called "*gurdvara*" emerged as a result of the daily gatherings of the community to sing hymns. Since the time of Guru Nanak these temples have had an important place in the life of the community. The greatest *gurdvara* is the Golden Temple in Amritsar, which became the center of Sikh belief and worship. Amritsar is the religious center of the Sikhs and the Golden Temple is the center of religious and social activities. In the temple resides Adi-Grant, the holy book of the Sikhs and a sword as a symbol. This place is also a social institution. Every *gurdvara* has a soup kitchen, which has been serving food since the time of Guru Nanak.⁶⁷ There are no pictures or



Buddhist Temple (Pagoda)



Pilgrimage place of Sikhs, The Golden Temple

⁶⁶ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 27, p. 277

⁶⁷ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 27, p. 277



Empire Temple (Peking)



A place of worship in China

sculptures in these temples. Every Sikh can benefit from the enormous variety of food in the temples.

The courtyards of Tao temples, which are a combination of complex structures, consist of multipurpose halls. Chinese terminology for Taoist religious buildings or group of buildings uses the words “*kung*” (monastery or palace), “*kuan*” (temple of monastery), and “*miao*” (temple). Many of the Taoist temples, which contained images of numerous gods and deified heroes, were destroyed after the 1911 Revolution.

The emperor of Lu had a temple built for Confucius. In later periods emperors considered Confucius “the teacher of ten thousand generations” and conducted ceremonies in temples in his name. In 59 CE, the emperor ordered that sacrifices be offered in the name of Confucius and he himself offered sacrifices. The most important Chinese places of worship are empire temples and altars.

INFORMATION BOX



Jews' place of worship, the Wailing Wall (Jerusalem)

PLACES OF WORSHIP IN JUDAISM

The ancestors of the Jews living a simple and nomadic life built altars wherever they stopped or places they considered important in order to fulfill their religious duties.

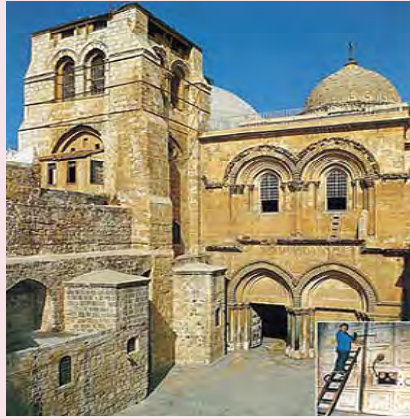
After leading the exodus from Egypt, Moses spent his life together with his people in the desert for forty years. With God's command, a “gathering tent” was set up as God's house and for the fulfillment of worship. (Hebrew Bible, *Exodus*, 33/7-11. *Numbers*, 12/4-12)

The holiest place in Judaism is Jerusalem, where the Temple of Solomon was built. Prophet Solomon built the Temple of Solomon, which is the common place of worship of the Children of Israel.

During the Jewish rebellion against the Romans and their defeat by Romans, the temple was destroyed. The only structure that survived from this temple is the

West Wall, which is also called the Wailing Wall. After the destruction of the temple, synagogues took its place. There is no definite architectural feature of synagogues. The form of structure differs from region to region.

Synagogues are sacred places like mosques. There are no pictures or sculptures in synagogues because worship is prohibited in places where they are present. One enters a synagogue in suitable dress and with head coverings. Entering synagogues bareheaded is considered disrespectful to God. This is why Jewish males wear a “*kippah*” like a prayer cap. Orthodox women also cover their heads.



Christians' place of worship, The Church of Nativity (Palestine)

PLACES OF WORSHIP IN CHRISTIANITY

In the beginning, Christianity had no place for worship. Due to persecution, Christians performed their worship in secret places. When the Romans made Christianity free to be practiced in the fourth century, places of worship began to be built.

The Church is the main place of worship in Christianity. The word “chapel” expresses a prison out of local church or cathedral and also expresses places of worship in castles or ostentatious buildings. The place of worship in a large church is also called a chapel. Buildings bigger than ordinary churches and built in a diocese and employ many people are called “cathedrals”.

Churches and cathedrals have many things in common. The main entrance is on the East side. At the opposite side of the entrance, there is an altar where baptism, confession, and marriage ceremonies are performed. The pulpit of the priest is in the same section. Altar and walls are decorated with pictures and sculptures of Jesus and the Saints. At the entry of Catholic churches there is a bowl with holy water and there are special places for a choir on both sides of the altar. In Christian places of worship, women, men and children sit together. There is now no obligation to cover the head in the places of worship.

(Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 99)

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What does worship mean? Define.
2. How is confession performed in Christianity? Explain.
3. How is supplication and worship performed in Shintoism? Explain briefly.
4. What are the social advantages of almsgiving in Islam? List.

B. Choose the correct answers to the following multiple-choice questions.

1. In which one of the following religions is showing respect to ancestors and supreme spirits considered an act of worship?

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-----------------|
| A. Hinduism | B. Sikhism | C. Confucianism |
| D. Christianity | E. Buddhism | |

2. To which religion does the understanding of the original sin, which is believed to have been committed by the first human and then spread to the whole humanity, belong?

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|
| A. Jainism | B. Buddhism | C. Judaism |
| D. Christianity | E. Hinduism | |

3. Where should the ritual standing which is one of the obligations of pilgrimage in Islam be performed?

- | | | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|
| A. Madinah | B. Jerusalem | C. Arafat |
| D. Uhud | E. Badr | |

4. In which of the following religions is one god worshipped?

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-------------------|
| A. Taoism | B. Buddhism | C. Zoroastrianism |
| D. Jainism | E. Hinduism | |

5. Which one of the following founders of religions attached importance mostly to morality and political unity?

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| A. Buddha | B. Guru Nanak | C. Confucius |
| D. Zarathustra | E. Dalai Lama | |

C. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(Ascension, Om, apostle, Avesta)

1. Each one of the twelve helpers and pupils of Jesus who were charged with the spreading the teachings of Jesus are called.....
2. In Islam, the spiritual journey to heaven of Muhammad after Isra is called
3. In Hinduism, the holy syllable recited in the beginning of every action is called

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) In the Japanese religion of Shintoism, sacrifices and offerings were offered to the gods and the dead in order to placate them and to gain their grace and favor or for the expiation of sins.
2. (...) Baptism is a meditation technique in Hindu religious traditions.
3. (...) The sa'y (ritual walking) is an act of worship which is performed with seven circuits between Safa and Marwah during the pilgrimage in Islam.

An abstract geometric composition featuring a large, light gray, irregular polygonal shape. Overlaid on this is a solid pink sector of a circle. A teal-colored text label is positioned diagonally across the lower part of the pink sector and the gray shape.

Chapter

BASIC ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RELIGIONS

BASIC ETHICAL PRINCIPLES IN RELIGIONS

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Gather information about the relationship between ethics and religion.
2. Find verses on goodness and helping each other from the translations of the Qur'an and examine them.
3. Research the reasons why it is prohibited to harm other people.
4. Find verses about righteousness and false testimony from a translation of the Qur'an and examine them.

1. Righteousness

Akhlaq (ethics) is the plural form of the word *khulq* or *khuluq*, which lexically means temper, character and nature. Both the characteristics that distinguish people as being good or bad, and the words and behavior that are the result of those characteristics as a whole are called *akhlaq*.¹ In all religions since Adam, *akhlaq* has occupied an important place. It is possible to observe these ethical values in most religions today. The codes of ethics have achieved their most noble form with the last religion: Islam.

Ethics is a universal phenomenon. This is why every nation, community and religion has its own understanding of ethics. There are certain common ethical principles within divinely revealed religions and religions of human-origin which are: righteousness, cleanliness, goodness and helpfulness, respecting elders, to not harm others, to not kill, to not fornicate and to not bear false witness.

¹ Heyet, *Dini Kavramlar Sözlüğü*, p. 13

Righteousness means one's being consistent in words and behavior. As one of the basic ethical principles that identify one's relations with others, righteousness also means to behave in accordance with human nature. So, righteousness is the opposite of lying, cheating, hypocrisy and deceitfulness. All religions attach great importance to righteousness, which for their adherents is the core of the message delivered by religions.

Islam places great importance on righteousness. Hence, the following verse commands the Prophet and, through him, every believer, to be righteous all the time: **"...Continue then in the right way as you are commanded..."**²

According to Islamic belief, not only truthfulness but also being with righteous people is a requirement of righteousness. This case is remarked in the Qur'an as follows:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

"O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are true."³

LET'S INTERPRET

Prophet Muhammad (saw) said:

"(Don't go astray!) Truthfulness leads to goodness, and goodness leads to Paradise. And a person who continues to be truthful and strive to be truthful will be written down with Allah as a truthful person.

(Avoid lying!) Lying leads to wickedness. And, wickedness leads to Hell. And a person who continues to tell lies will be written down by Allah as a liar."

(Bukhari, Adab, 69)

Interpret the hadith given above.

Christianity also attaches importance to righteousness. It is commanded in the Bible to always be righteous and it is stated as follows: **"Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much."**⁴

As is the case with Islam and Christianity, righteousness is a highly regarded

² Hud, 11: 112

³ Tawbah, 9: 119

⁴ Luke 16: 10

value in Judaism too. It is written in the Torah as follows: “Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Do not swear falsely by my name...”⁵

LET’S COMPARE

“O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak the right word”
(Ahzab, 33: 70)

“...Walk on the way of righteousness, on the paths of justice. For the ones who will live in the country are those who are righteous. It is the honest ones who will live there.”
(Proverbs, 3: 20-21)

“Whoever would love life and see good days must keep their tongue from evil and their lips from deceitful speech... For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous.”
(Peter, 3: 10-12)

Read the warnings above and compare the views of the divinely revealed religions regarding the concept of righteousness.

INFORMATION BOX

To become a good person, every Buddhist must comply with five conditions and avoid five prohibitions. These principles are as follows: to not kill a living being, to not take anything which does not belong to them, to not touch the wife of others, to not speak of false things, to not use intoxicating drinks.
(Asaf Halet Çelebi, *Pali Metinlerine Göre Gotama Buddha*, p. 55)

In Buddhism and Hinduism, righteousness is also considered one of the basic ethical virtues. The belief of karma in Hinduism is based on the principle that man will be held accountable for whatever he or she did in the past. This is why righteousness is the most important ethical principle in determining the karma of a person.

As for Confucianism, righteousness is one of the perfect virtues of man. Accordingly, a righteous person can achieve many things.⁶

⁵ Leviticus 19: 11-12

⁶ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 395

Righteousness is an ethical virtue that has positive effects on an individual and in social life, for correct behavior both exalts the individual ethically and establishes peace, order and tranquility in social life. That's why in all religions they command righteousness with the aim of establishing peace within the lives of individuals and societies.

2. Cleanliness

Cleanliness is one of the common ethical principles of every religion. All religions that have emerged throughout history were concerned with cleanliness, which is for the welfare of the individuals and the community. Generally, religions dealt with cleanliness in two categories: spiritual and material. While in some religions spiritual cleanliness is emphasized more, in others both are regarded as important.

Islam gives great importance to cleanliness. Both material and spiritual cleanliness are considered to be one of the essentials of the religion and they are both associated with religious service. One of the very first verses revealed to Prophet Muhammad emphasizes cleanliness as follows: **"O you who covers himself (with a garment)! Arise and warn (people). And glorify your Lord. And purify your clothing. And avoid uncleanness."**⁷

Regarding spiritual and material cleanliness as a whole, Islam stipulates material cleanliness as the first prerequisite for many worships. To perform minor ablution or major ablution before prayers or when necessary is an example of this matter. Cleanliness of clothing, food, place and environment are also types of cleanliness that is required by Islam.

Bad feelings, thoughts and behavior constitute spiritual impurity. Islam instructs people to avoid evil and to be spiritually pure. It is written in the Qur'an as follows: **"Allah loves those who are constantly repentant and loves those who purify themselves."**⁸ So, prayer, religious services, and repentance purify people from spiritual uncleanness.

In Christianity, there is more emphasis on spiritual cleanliness than the material. Hence, there is a comparison in the Bible about those who place more importance on external purity: "You are like whitewashed tombs-beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people's bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts

LET'S NOTE

"...Verily Allah loves those who purify themselves."

(Tawbah, 9: 108)

"Cleanliness is from *iman* (faith)."

(Bukhari, *Iman*, 45)

⁷ Muddaththir, 74: 1-5

⁸ Baqarah, 2: 222

are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.”⁹ According to Christianity, bad words and behavior make people more impure than any material things. This understanding is mentioned in the Bible as follows: “Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them but what comes out of their mouth. That is what defiles them.”¹⁰

In Judaism, while cleanliness is dealt with both materially and spiritually, material cleanliness comes to the forefront. It is written in the Torah: “Wash and make yourselves clean. Take your evil deeds out of my sight; stop doing wrong. Learn to do right...”¹¹ It is commanded in Judaism to avoid all kinds of impurity. Similarly in Judaism, it is important to perform ablution before worshipping. While the ones who will perform the worship wash their hands and feet, the ones who lead the service wash their entire body.

In Buddhism and Hinduism, internal cleanliness is more important than external cleanliness. It is instructed in Hinduism to purify the heart from all kinds of bad thoughts. A Hindu wakes up before sunrise, remembers the name of God, and takes a bath. Thus, he or she becomes cleansed before the morning worship.¹²

For people, spiritual cleanliness is as important as material cleanliness. Those who purify their heart from every kind of evil thought are also pure materially. Therefore, all religions aspire for both the spiritual and material cleanliness of people.

LET'S THINK

Discuss with your friends why religions pay great attention to cleanliness.

3. Goodness and Benevolence

LET'S INTERPRET

No goodness will remain unrewarded according to Islam. Allah will surely give compensation for any goodness and help. With regards to this fact Allah said: “And whoever does righteous deeds, whether male or female, while being a believer - those will enter paradise and will not be wronged, (even as much as) the speck on a date seed.”

(Nisa, 4: 124)

Interpret the above-quoted verse in terms of the importance of doing good deeds.

⁹ Matthew 23: 27-28

¹⁰ Matthew 15: 10-11

¹¹ Isaiah 1: 16-17

¹² Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 299



Examine the photo above and talk about the importance of helping each other and its significance for social unity and integrity.

Goodness and benevolence are among the common features of all religions. Religions command their adherents to be good, do good things, and help others. For goodness and benevolence are the requirements of religiosity.

Islam considers being good and helpful a requirement of being a morally strong Muslim. Therefore, Islam always preached goodness and benevolence. In the Qur'an, it is stated that a Muslim who does good things gains favor: **"Whoever does what is just and right, does so for his own good..."**¹³ Again in the Qur'an, Muslims are commanded to help each other to do good deeds as follows: **"...Help one another in goodness and in piety. Do not help one another in sin and transgression. Fear God!..."**¹⁴

LET'S COMPARE

"If one of your fellow Israelites falls into poverty and cannot support himself, support him..."

(Leviticus, 25: 35)

"Whoever gives to the poor will lack nothing, but those who close their eyes to poverty will be cursed."

(Proverbs, 28: 27)

Find the second verse of *Surah al-Ma'idah* from a translation of the Qur'an and compare it with the above verses from the Bible.

Islam commands people to do good and help each other for the sake of Allah without harming anyone. It is stated in the Qur'an: **"O you who believe! do not make your charity worthless by reproach and injury, like him who spends his property to be seen of men..."**¹⁵ On this matter, the Prophet also said: **"Whoever fulfilled the needs of his (Muslim) brother, Allah will fulfill his needs; whoever brought his (Muslim) brother out of a discomfort, Allah will bring him out of the discomforts of the Day of Resurrection, and whoever covered the defects of a Muslim, Allah will cover his defects on the Day of Resurrection."**¹⁶

¹³ Jathiyah, 45: 15

¹⁴ Ma'idah, 5: 2

¹⁵ Baqarah 2: 264

¹⁶ Bukhari, Adab, 27

According to Islam, doing good deeds is a multidimensional behavior. Various types of actions ranging from giving directions to someone who is lost, to visiting people who are sick, or caressing the head of an orphan, to smiling at a person, or helping a needy person, to showing affection to animals can be defined as good deeds. Prophet Muhammad said in this respect: **“Don’t consider anything insignificant out of good things even if it is meeting your brother with a cheerful countenance.”**¹⁷

Goodness and benevolence are also among the ethical principles considered important by Judaism. In the Torah, the holy scripture of Judaism, it is stated that every Jewish person should do good deeds as much as they are able to. This is commanded in the Torah as follows: “Do not withhold good from those who deserve it when it is in your power to help them.”¹⁸

In Christianity, goodness and benevolence are considered among the ways leading to happiness. However, it is advised that the help should be done secretly and unpretentiously. In the Bible it is said: “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets... But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing. So that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”¹⁹

LET’S INTERPRET

“Good and evil deeds are not equal. Repel evil with what is better; then you will see that the one who was once your enemy has become your dearest friend.”

(Fussilat, 41: 34)

“If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the Lord will reward you.”

(Proverbs, 25: 21-22)

“And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.”

(Matthew, 5: 40-42)

Read the texts above and interpret the understandings of goodness in divine religions.

¹⁷ Muslim, Birr, 144

¹⁸ Proverbs 3: 27

¹⁹ Matthew 2: 4-6

In Eastern religions, such as Buddhism and Hinduism, goodness and benevolence are also commanded and are regarded as the way to salvation. For instance, according to Buddhism, to approach all living beings without discrimination with affection and sympathy, to show mercy to them, and to be happy for others' success are among the ways that lead one to happiness. Therefore, a Buddhist should be kind to all creatures, especially to other people.²⁰ As for Confucianism, benevolence, which is to empathize with others and to treat them with affection, is considered one of the basic ethical principles as well.²¹

LET'S INTERPET

A Buddhist needs to have the following characteristics in order to achieve happiness:

1. To be generous.
2. To forgive those who did evil, to head off anger with gentleness.
3. To avoid worldly passions.
4. To contemplate deeply in order to reach the everlasting world.
5. To meditate by means of thinking about the consequences of knowledge, good manners and works.
6. To reach the ability to do the selfless act with lofty aims.
7. To be softhearted and pleasant towards everybody.
8. To get on with friends and to give their preferences priority over yours.
9. To be alienated from the public and be focused on the Lord.
10. To elevate the soul in the cause of longing for the Lord and meeting him.

(Summarized from: Şehristani, *Milel ve Nihal*, p. 455, 456)

Read the text above and interpret Buddhism's understanding of ethics.

Goodness and benevolence are feelings of decency that are the core of religious belief. To believe in a religion necessitates being nice to all creatures, doing good deeds and treating everyone with affection. That's why all religions commanded their adherents to do good and to act with benevolence.

4. Respect for Elders

One should respect elders and treat them well because of their age and life-long experience. The period of old-age as an inevitable stage of human life is a

²⁰ Cengiz Erengil, *Budizm*, p. 54

²¹ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 397

period in which people need more affection and respect. That's why all religions consider respecting elders among the ethical virtues. Respect for elders begins with respecting parents. In every religion, people are commanded to respect their parents and to treat them kindly.²²

Islam regards respecting elders as a moral injunction and also commands one to treat parents well. A verse regarding this reads: **“Your Lord has commanded that you should worship none but Him, and show kindness to your parents. If either or both of them attain old age with you, say no word of contempt to them and do not rebuke them, but always speak gently to them”**²³ Another one reads: **“We have enjoined man to show kindness to his parents, for his mother bears him, in hardship upon hardship, and his weaning takes two years. (Therefore) Give thanks to Me and to your parents; all will return to Me.”**²⁴

LET'S EVALUATE

The religion of Islam instructs to respect elders. In this regard, the Prophet said: “He is not one of us who does not have mercy on our young and does not respect our elders.”

(Tirmidhi, Birr, 15)

Read the *hadith* given above and evaluate the contributions of Islam to social cohesion.

Prophet Muhammad also encouraged Muslims to respect their parents and treat them well. When he was asked about the best deed, he answered: **“...To be good and dutiful to one's parents...”**²⁵ In another *hadith*, he is asked: **“To whom should I be most kind?”** Thereupon he responded: **“Your mother.”** The man asked for the second time: **“Then whom?”** he said: **“Your mother.”** When the man asked for the fourth time: **“Then whom?”** the Prophet replied: **“Your father.”**²⁶

²² Baki Adam, *İmam-Hatip Liseleri Karşılaştırmalı Dinler Tarihi*, p. 105

²³ Isra 17: 23

²⁴ Luqman 31: 14

²⁵ Bukhari, Adab, 1

²⁶ Seçme Hadisler, p.147

In the Bible, which is the divine book of Christians, it is crucial to respect one's elders and to treat parents well. It is stated in the Bible: "...Obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. Honor your father and mother... If you honor your father and mother, things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth."

It is one of the signs of being a wise person in Confucianism to treat elders well and respectfully and to serve one's family.²⁷ In Buddhism and Hinduism, too, respecting elders is considered among the ethical virtues.

INFORMATION BOX

To be respectful to elders is an important moral principle in Judaism. This is stated in the Torah, the divine book of Judaism, as follows: "Stand up in the presence of the aged, show respect for the elderly..."

(Leviticus, 19: 32)

To be reverent towards parents and treat them kindly is one of the Ten Commandments given to Prophet Moses. There are also commandments in the Torah:

"Each of you must respect your mother and father..."

(Leviticus, 19: 3)

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long..."

(Deuteronomy, 5: 16)

"My son, obey your father's commands, and don't neglect your mother's instruction."

(Proverbs, 6: 20)

5. Not to Harm Others

All human beings are born with certain rights. The right to live, to have property, to believe, to think, to have honor and chastity are the prominent ones. All religions guarantee the inherent rights of people and prohibit all kinds of attacks against them because the aim of religions is to provide peace and happiness for people. Every kind of threat towards one's life, property, personality and honor are against religiosity and good manners.

Islam instructs us to treat all creatures with affection and mercy and considers oppression as one of the major sins. To hurt others and respond unkindly to

²⁷ Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 396

those who are hurt is also prohibited in Islam. Regarding this issue Prophet Muhammad said: **“The Muslim is the one from whose tongue and hands other Muslims are safe.”**²⁸

Religions such as Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Confucianism all disapprove of any kind of behavior that harms people and other creatures. These religions consider not harming others as a requisite of piety and ethics.

According to Buddhist teachings, all creatures are deemed to be relatives of each other, so it is not proper to hurt any creature. That's why it is vital for a Buddhist not to shed blood or harm living beings.²⁹ In reference to Buddhist texts, “all creatures are afraid in the face of danger and life is valuable for all of them. One who accepts this principle does not kill them or cause them to die.”³⁰

At the heart of religious belief lies the sense of affection and mercy. No adherent of any religion should oppress or hurt any living being.

LET'S INTERPRET

“None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself.” (Islam)

“Treat people the way you want to be treated.” (Christianity)

“Do not do to your friends what you would take ill from him. This is the essence of the Torah.” (Judaism)

“One should treat all creatures the way he or she wants to be treated.” (Jainism)

“Life is precious for all. Neither debate with others by comparing yourself with them nor cause a debate.” (Buddhism)

“Do not do things to others that you would not like them to do to you.” (Confucianism)

“A good person is the one who regards the gain of others as his or her own gain and the loss of others as his or her own loss.” (Taoism)

(Mahmut Aydın, “Paradigmanın Yeni Adı: Dinsel Çoğulculuk”, *Akademik Araştırmalar Dergisi*, No: 14, p. 108)

Why is the principle “not to do things to others that one would not like to be done to him or her” considered as one of the common ethical principles in all religions? Interpret with your friends.

²⁸ Tirmidhi, Iman, 12

²⁹ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 6, p. 357

³⁰ Dhammapada, p. 129, 130

LET'S NOTE

Murder is one of the major sins in Judaism. One of the Ten Commandments is: “*You shall not murder.*” (Exodus, 20: 13)

6. Not to Kill

To kill a person comes at the top of the list of evil actions that are prohibited by all religions because the first and the most important fundamental right of a person is the right to live. To kill someone deliberately and unjustly is a great crime against humanity. Therefore, murder is counted among the major sins and is prohibited.

Islam prohibits killing and considers it a major sin. According to the Islamic faith, every person is born sinless, free, and with the right to life. That's why Islam regards the person who kills someone with no reasonable ground as killing all of humanity. On the other hand, according to Islam to save a person is like saving humanity. This fact is stated in the Qur'an as follows: “**...whoever killed a human being, except as a punishment for murder or for spreading corruption in the land, shall be regarded as having killed all mankind, and that whoever saved a human life shall be regarded as having saved all mankind...**”³¹ Another verse about this matter reads: “**And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is ever a great sin.**”³²

In Christianity, one of the conditions for attaining eternal life and being happy is not to kill. In Eastern religions also, killing is ranked among the great sins. According to Buddha, one of the ways that lead one to nirvana is not to kill any creature.³³ This is written in Buddhist sacred texts as follows: “All humans tremble while they are being punished, all humans fear death; remember that you are like them, so neither kill, nor cause a death.”³⁴

INFORMATION BOX

In Jainism, according to the *ahimsa* doctrine, one should hurt no living being. That is why some Jainists sweep the floor where they walk so that they do not step on any living creature and they also cover their mouth with a mask in order to prevent breathing in any living creature.

(Heyet, *Yaşayan Dünya Dinleri*, p. 364)

³¹ Ma'idah 5: 32

³² Isra 17: 31

³³ Cengiz Erengil, *Budizm*, p. 46

³⁴ Dhammapada, p. 246-247

7. Not to Steal

One of the common ethical principles of all religions is not to steal. Stealing is to take away the property of others through cheating, fraud, pickpocketing, bribery, and false testimony. All religions take the preservation of property as well as life seriously and therefore prohibit stealing.

Islam counts stealing among the great sins, because stealing means showing disrespect for human labor and the rights of people. In the Qur'an, to desecrate the property of others is prohibited: **"O you who have believed, do not consume one another's wealth unjustly but only (in lawful) business by mutual consent."**³⁵

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

"O Prophet! When believing women come to you and pledge themselves not to associate in worship any other thing with Allah, not to steal or commit adultery or kill their children or indulge in slander, intentionally inventing falsehoods, and not to disobey you in that which is right, then accept their pledge of allegiance and pray to God to forgive them their sins, for God is forgiving and merciful."

(*Mumtahinah*, 60: 12)

Read the verse above and find some ethical principles.

Islam commands Muslims to work in order to gain *halal* (religiously lawful) provision. According to Islam, a Muslim should feed his wife and children with *halal* provisions that he earned with his labor. One should beware of the rights of others. To violate the rights of people is one of the sins that are unforgiven by Allah. The importance of the rights of people is expressed by the Prophet in the following *hadith*: **"Whoever has oppressed another person concerning his reputation or anything else, he should beg him to forgive him before the Day of Resurrection when there will be no money (to compensate for wrong deeds), but if he has good deeds, those good deeds will be taken from him according to his oppression which he has done, and if he has no good deeds, the sins of the oppressed person will be loaded on him."**³⁶

Not to steal is one of the commands of God that a Christian must obey in order to reach eternal happiness.³⁷ In regards to the Bible, to steal is unacceptable behavior and is prohibited.

³⁵ Nisa, 4: 29

³⁶ Bukhari, Mazalim, 23

³⁷ Matthew 19: 18- 19

INFORMATION BOX

“Do not steal. Do not deceive or cheat one another.”

(Leviticus, 19: 11)

“A thief who is caught must pay in full for everything he stole. If he cannot pay, he must be sold as a slave to pay for his theft.”

(Exodus, 22: 4)

Stealing is also prohibited in Judaism. One of the Ten Commandments is to not steal.³⁸ Coveting the property of others and taking them without any lawful reason are considered unlawful in the Torah and severe punishments are prescribed for those who commit these crimes.³⁹

Hinduism and Buddhism also prohibit stealing. One of the five principles of Buddhism is to not steal anything belonging to others. In these religions, stealing is seen as conduct that prevents one from reaching goodness and righteousness. Tempted by their desires, those who long for the property of others are regarded as spiritually impure.

Stealing shows disrespect for the labor and property of people, which has a negative impact on the life of individuals and societies. It blunts ethical senses of people and damages social peace.

8. Avoiding Adultery

The sexual relationship of people who are not married is called adultery. Threatening the healthy continuation of human generations and eliminating individuals' chastity and honor, adultery has been seen as a harmful action throughout history. Judicial, ethical and political systems have taken deterrent measures against it.

Adultery is one of the major sins in Islam. It leads persons to immorality and causes the violation of people's rights. Therefore, in the Qur'an, thoughts, words and behavior that can lead to fornication are prohibited. The commandment in the Qur'an about this matter reads:

وَلَا تَقْرَبُوا الرِّئْيَ إِنَّهُ كَانَ فَاحِشَةً وَسَاءَ سَبِيلًا^ط

“And approach not fornication; surely it is an indecency, and evil as a way.”⁴⁰

LET'S TALK

What do you think are the reasons why stealing is prohibited in all religions?

Talk with your friends about it.

³⁸ Exodus 20: 15

³⁹ Exodus 22: 1-9

⁴⁰ Isra 17: 32

According to Judaism, fornication is an evil and a prohibited act. The command that reads: “Do not commit adultery.”⁴¹ is one of the Ten Commandments and is an essential principle every Jew must follow. In the Torah, adultery is strictly forbidden and severe punishments are prescribed for those who engage in illegal intercourse.⁴² Again in the Torah, it is ordained that one should avoid any behavior that can lead to fornication.⁴³

In Christianity, fornication is a great sin as well. Apart from the fact that it is unlawful to fornicate, to leer at any woman is as if one has committed illegal intercourse with her. According to the Bible, it is not acceptable to divorce a spouse for a reason other than adultery.⁴⁴

In Indian religions as well, fornication is prohibited. According to Hinduism, in which marriage is important both religiously and socially, sexual needs must be met in legitimate ways and one must avoid fornication. In Buddhism, to not fornicate is one of the five basic principles that must be adhered to. Buddhists should control their body and soul, protect themselves from all kinds of lust and bad habits, for sexual satisfaction is the source of all kinds of evil.⁴⁵

9. Not to Bear False Witness

LET'S INTERPRET

One day, Prophet Muhammad asked his Companions: “Shall I inform you about the worst of the major sins?” The Companions replied: “Yes, O Allah’s Messenger.” Thereupon the Prophet said: “To join others in worship with Allah and to be undutiful to one’s parents.” Then he sat up after he had been reclining and said: “And I warn you against lying and giving false witness.”

(Bukhari, Shahadah, 10)

Interpret the above hadith.

To not lie and to not bear false witness are among the common ethical principles in religions. Lying is to make a false statement in order to deceive others. Religions that command people to be righteous have forbidden lying or bearing false witness because lying damages trust among members of society. As to bearing false witness, it both prevents the realization of justice and causes people to be aggrieved.

⁴¹ Deuteronomy 5: 18

⁴² Leviticus 18: 1,30

⁴³ Leviticus 19: 29

⁴⁴ Matthew 5: 27, 32

⁴⁵ Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi, vol. 6, p. 357

Islam prohibits lying and bearing false witness and regards such behavior to be among the major sins. In the Qur'an, it is stated: **"...and shun all falsehood."**⁴⁶ The fact that it is forbidden to bear false witness is mentioned in the Qur'an as follows: **"Believers, be steadfast in the cause of God and bear witness with justice. Do not let your enmity for others turn you away from justice. Deal justly; that is nearer to being God-fearing. Fear God. God is aware of all that you do."**⁴⁷

False testimony is also prohibited in Judaism. The following order is one of the Ten Commandments in Judaism: "Do not testify falsely against your neighbor."⁴⁸ In regards to this matter, the following is also a command in the Torah: "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a guilty person by being a malicious witness."⁴⁹

In Christianity, to bear false witness is also prohibited. One of the ways leading to happiness is to follow the order: "You must not testify falsely."⁵⁰

Bearing false witness is forbidden in Indian religions as well. One of the five principles in Buddhism is not to lie. According to Buddhism, speaking the truth at all times and behaving properly contributes to people's happiness.⁵¹

LET'S FIND SOME PRINCIPLES

"Indeed, Allah orders justice, good conduct and giving to relatives and forbids immorality, bad conduct and oppression. He admonishes you that perhaps you will be reminded."

(Nahl, 16: 90)

"... Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also... And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that."

(Luke, 6: 27-33)

Read the texts above and find the ethical principles.

to be a just person,

.....

⁴⁶ Hajj 22: 30

⁴⁷ Ma'idah, 5: 8

⁴⁸ Exodus 20: 16

⁴⁹ Exodus 23: 1

⁵⁰ Matthew 19: 18

⁵¹ Asaf Halet Çelebi, *Pali Metinlerine Göre Gotama Buddha*, p. 55

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. Give information about the views of religions regarding righteousness.
2. Explain the importance that religions attach to cleanliness.
3. Explain the fact that righteousness and benevolence are among the common ethical principles in all religions.
4. Compare the rulings of religions about killing.

B. Choose the correct answers in the multiple-choice questions below.

1. Which one of the following is *not* one of the common ethical principles in religions?

- | | | |
|----------------|------------------|----------------------------|
| A) Not to kill | B) Cleanliness | C) Not to consume interest |
| D) Goodness | E) Righteousness | |

2. Which of the following religions considers people's cleanliness for iman?

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|
| A) Christianity | B) Judaism | C) Buddhism |
| D) Islam | E) Zoroastrianism | |

3. For which religion given below, is nirvana a principle of salvation?

- | | | |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| A) Islam | B) Buddhism | C) Hinduism |
| D) Shintoism | E) Judaism | |

4. In which one of the religions below do the principles of the Ten Commandments exist?

- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|
| A) Confucianism | B) Buddhism | C) Hinduism |
| D) Shintoism | E) Judaism | |

C. Fill in the blanks in the sentences with the most suitable expression from those given below.

(Jainists, stealing, righteousness, bribery)

1..... is one's being consistent inside, in words and behavior.

2..... is showing disrespect to people's effort and labor and is a sin as well.

3..... sweep up the path where they walk so that they do not step on any living being and cover their mouths with a mask in order to prevent any living creature to enter their mouth.

D. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) In Christianity, there is more emphasis on spiritual cleanliness than material cleanliness.

2. (...) Islam prohibits all words and behavior that might lead one to fornicate.

3. (...) According to Jewish sacred texts, to kill a person is like killing all of humanity.

4. (...) A common principle among religions is to not do things to others that you would not like to be done to you.



Chapter

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, DIALOGUE AND
MISSIONARY WORK

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM, DIALOGUE AND MISSIONARY

LET'S GET READY FOR THE CHAPTER

1. Explore the meanings of the terms pluralism, dialogue, missionary, and *tabligh* from a dictionary.
2. Think about the meaning of the following saying: “My opinions are truths which carry the possibility being wrong. The opinions of others are the untruths which carry the possibility to be true.”
3. Gather information about missionary activities.

1. Religious Pluralism

LET'S NOTE

In a philosophical sense, pluralism is based on the idea that all religions are equal in terms of leading people to salvation. According to this view, which has been defended by thinkers such as Arnold Toynbee, John Hick and Wilfred Cantwell Smith, all religions are equal paths guiding man to God.

(Kürşat Demirci, *Yahudilik ve Dinî Çoğulculuk*, p. 18)

Religious pluralism is a term used for the harmonious co-existence and mutual respect between people from different religions. Pluralism promotes an atmosphere of tolerance in which diversity is considered to be richness and the rights of others are under the protection of law. In such an environment no one should oppress others because of their faith, way of life or culture; no one should be criticized or censured for their differences.

Today's world is multi-cultural and people from various religions, cultures and ethnic origins live together. Thanks to new developments in science and

technology and the ease of communication, the world has turned into a global village. This is why it has become inevitable for individuals belonging to different religions and cultures to live together. Thus, there arose the need to live in harmony with people whose form of eating, drinking, dressing, language and beliefs are different from one another. This is defined in a general sense as religious pluralism.

LET'S INTERPRET

“For you is your religion, and for me is my religion.”

(Kafirun, 109: 6)

“And do not insult those who invoke other than Allah, lest they insult Allah in enmity without knowledge.”

(An'am, 6: 108)

In light of the above-mentioned verses interpret the Islamic view of religious pluralism.

Religious pluralism requires a respectful and tolerant approach to all faiths. It is a fact that every person believes that their religion is the truest and most perfect; however this natural tendency should not be an obstacle to approaching people from other religions with tolerance; because faiths are man's own choices based on their rational effort and free will. That's why it is both a humanistic and religious obligation to look at people from different faiths within a framework of tolerance.

Religious pluralism is not a new or unknown concept for Muslims who have a rich historical experience, because, since very early times, Islam has had a pluralist structure providing religious freedom to various faiths and protecting their rights. The Constitution of Madinah, which was signed by the Arabs, Jews and Christians in Madinah, is one of the earliest examples of this attitude. Throughout history, different religious groups such as the Jews, Christians and Buddhists practiced their religions freely under the lands of Islam.

2. Interreligious Dialogue

LET'S NOTE

The origin of interreligious dialogue goes back to the Second Vatican Council, which lasted three years between 1962 and 1965. In the council, Catholics agreed on entering into a dialogue with the adherents of other religions, such as Jews and Muslims in particular. Furthermore, they advised Christians to approach other religions and their adherents respectfully and engage in dialogue with them. Catholics established various associations and trained experts in order to carry out this project.

Pope Paul VI stated in his proclamation in 1964 that the church is to enter into dialogue with anyone inside or outside, and this is for all humanity. The Pope said that interreligious dialogue aims to lead all humanity to salvation. Today, Catholic Christians try to promote dialogue through various institutions and experts from all over the world. However, adherents of other religions who have not forgotten the previous missionary activities of Christians approach these attempts with suspicion. They have suspicions and concerns that these attempts might be yet another one to convert people to Christianity.

(Baki Adam, *Dinler Arası Diyalog, Din Öğretiminde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, p. 193-195)

Interreligious dialogue is one of the most prominent issues among contemporary adherents of various religions. The word dialogue literally means conversation between two or more people. As to interreligious dialogue, it is the ability to cooperate, talk about problems, and have an exchange of ideas by adherents of different religions, without imposing their faith and ideas on each other.¹ The point referred to with the statement of interreligious dialogue is dialogue among the adherents of different religions not the religions themselves. Therefore, it is both a humanistic activity and an ethical relationship.

In the world in which we live today, developments in science and technology, the spread of communication and the blurring of borders between countries have led people from different religions and cultures to come closer. In our globalizing world, people encounter diversity more frequently than ever before. The increasing significance of interreligious dialogue in the present day is due to the necessity of living together in peace and harmony; people should respect each other's faith, thoughts and life styles. To this end, it is imperative for people to understand each other; interreligious dialogue can

¹ Günay Tümer, Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 396

make important contributions to the formation of an atmosphere of peace and harmony in the world.

Accepting the religious practices of others of all religions enables adherents of different religions to live together respecting each other's faith and acts of worship. In such an environment no individual is censured; believers can live their religion freely and advocate the same for others. In order to promote such an environment, there is a need for a culture of living together free from prejudices, and the environment of dialogue. Accordingly, the aim of interreligious dialogue as a humanistic activity is to make contributions to the culture of living together.

LET'S EVALUATE

"There is no compulsion in religion; truly the right way has become clearly distinct from error..."

(Baqarah, 2: 256)

"And say: 'The truth is from your Lord, so whoever wills, let him believe; and whoever wills, let him disbelieve'..."

(Kahf, 18: 29)

"Say (O Prophet): 'O People of the Scripture, come to a word that is equitable between us and you that we will not worship except Allah and not associate anything with Him and not take one another as lords instead of Allah.' But if they turn away, then say, "Bear witness that we are Muslims [submitting to Him]."

(Al-i Imran, 3: 64)

"Be humble, gentle and patient in every respect. Treat one another with affection and lenience."

(Ephesians, 4:1)

"They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone.

(Titus, 3:2)

"Respect everyone. Love your believer brothers, fear God and respect the King."

(Ephesians, 2:17)

Read the texts given above and evaluate the religions' views about tolerance and interreligious dialogue.

LET'S INTERPRET

After the conquest of Istanbul, Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror sent the following letter to the Jewish communities in other parts of the Ottoman Empire:

“Mehmed, the Ottoman Sultan, says: God bestowed on me many countries and ordered me to protect, feed and guard the family of Abraham and Jacob. So, whoever amongst you desires to settle in the capital, Istanbul, with God’s help and live peacefully in the shade of fig trees and vineyards, and be a man of property through free trading?”

(Baki Adam, *Dinler Arası Diyalog, Din Öğretiminde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı, p. 205)

Read the above-quoted and interpret the tolerance Muslims showed to adherents of other religions.

Muslims have engaged in positive dialogue with adherents of other religions throughout history. The Constitution of Madinah in the time of the Prophet, his negotiation with the Najran Christians, Muslims living in harmony with Jews and Christians in Andalusia, and Sultan Mehmed’s tolerance towards adherents of these religions after the conquest of Istanbul are some of the historical examples of good relations of Muslims with non-Muslims.²

The Qur’an distinguished the Jews and Christians from members of other religions by calling them “*Ahl al-Kitab*” (People of the Book). Despite criticizing their wrong beliefs and actions, the Qur’an also mentions their positive behavior.

The Prophet being in continuous communication with the *ahl al-kitab* made it easy for Muslims to establish dialogue with them. However, missionary activities and imperialist movements seen in history towards Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus led them to develop mistrust in religious dialogue. Nevertheless, apprehensions, prejudices and enmities should not become an impediment to the environment of dialogue. On the contrary, for solutions to the problems and the common peace of humanity, the way of dialogue should be kept open, because Muslims are not afraid of facing other religions and engaging in dialogue.³

The activities of dialogue that aspire for peace and a culture of living together must first of all reject prejudice and malicious intentions. It should be based

LET'S DISCUSS

Discuss with your friends the contributions and importance of interreligious dialogue in terms of individuals and society.

² Baki Adam, *Din Öğretiminde Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, p. 204

³ Ömer Faruk Harman, *Türkiye’de Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, p. 35



Examine the photo above and discuss the role of reverends in religious dialogue.

on the principle of sincerity without being used as a means of insidious and concealed purposes. According to following principle set forth by the Qur'an, **"To you be your religion, and to me mine."**⁴ every person should be upon their religion in order to establish dialogue. Any missionary intention which would harm the atmosphere of dialogue should be abandoned and every individual should be allowed to express their own faith within the framework of freedom of faith and thought. Dialogue studies aspiring to produce solutions for the common problems of humanity and establishing an environment of peace and tolerance must be done under equal terms by people specialized in this field.⁵

3. Missionary

The word missionary is derived from the Latin root "*missio*" which stands for authority, ministry and the mission given to someone to carry it out. Mission means the organization of people responsible for propagating a religion. The person who does this work is called missionary and the activity done is called missionary.

Even though the term missionary is used for spreading religions, it mostly refers to Christian expansionism. Christians used this word with this meaning for the first time,⁶ because Christianity is the religion that conducts missionary activities in an organized and systematical way and at an institutional level since its inception.

Every religion wants its message to be conveyed to other people. In this sense, it is one of the basic human rights of Muslims, Christians, Buddhists, Hindus or any other religion to proclaim their own views to others. But Christian missionary activities are somewhat different from other religions, since the missionaries try to convert others by exploiting their social and economic weaknesses. Activities such as discrediting other religious views by distorting their message are also misuseage of the right to spread a religion.

⁴ Kafirun 109: 6

⁵ Günay Tümer- Abdurrahman Küçük, *Dinler Tarihi*, p. 416

⁶ Ömer Faruk Harman, *Türkiye'de Misyonerlik Faaliyetleri*, p. 25

LET'S INTERPRET

"...We are closer to him than (his) jugular vein."

(Qaf, 50: 16)

"Surely We have revealed the Qur'an and We will most surely be its guardian."

(Hijr, 15: 9)

"...He shall love them (believers) and they shall love Him..."

(Ma'idah, 5: 54)

Interpret the verses above in terms of the claims of missionaries about Islam.

LET'S EVALUATE THE CHAPTER

A. Answer the following open-ended questions.

1. What is religious pluralism? Explain.
2. Why is it important to respect others' religions? Explain.
3. What do you understand from interreligious dialogue? Explain.
4. What are the contributions of interreligious dialogue? Explain.

B. Fill in the blanks in the following sentences with the most suitable word from those given below.

(interreligious dialogue, Bahais, religious pluralism, missionary, secularism)

1. The case that people from different religions live together in harmony by respecting each other is called.....
- 2..... is the faculty to cooperate, talk about problems, and have an exchange of ideas by adherents of different religions without imposing their faith and ideas on each other.

C. Write "T" for true and "F" for false for the following sentences.

1. (...) Interreligious dialogue is a relation between adherents of religions not between religions themselves.

ANSWER KEY

CHAPTER 1:

B.1. D

B.2. E

C.1. A Fact

C.2. Plead

C.3. Never Be

C.4. Right Path

D.1. T

D.2. T

D.3. F

D.4. T

D.5. F

CHAPTER 2:

B.1. E

B.2. C

B.3. D

B.4. A

B.5. E

C.1. Eternity

C.2. With Their Own Will And Desires

C.3. Philological

C.4. Belief Systems

C.5. Spiritual

D.1. T

D.2. T

D.3. T

D.4. F

D.5. F

CHAPTER 3:

B.1. D

B.2. D

B.3. A

B.4. B

B.5. E

C.1. Babylonian

C.2. Council

C.3. Promised Land

C.4. Nicaea

D.1. F

D.2. F

D.3. T

D.4. T

CHAPTER 4:

B.1. C

B.2. C

B.3. B

B.4. E

C.1. Totem

C.2. Yoga-Meditation

C.3. Om

D.1. T

D.2. F

D.3. T

D.4. T

CHAPTER 5:

B.1. D

B.2. C

B.3. A

B.4. B

C.1. Maimonides

C.2. Christian

C.3. Islam

C.4. Nirvana

D.1. T

D.2. F

D.3. F

D.4. T

CHAPTER 6:

B.1. C

B.2. D

B.3. C

B.4. C

B.5. C

C.1. Apostle

C.2. Ascension

C.3. Om

D.1. T

D.2. F

D.3. T

CHAPTER 7:

B.1. C

B.2. D

B.3. B

B.4. E

C.1. Righteousness

C.2. Stealing

C.3. Jainists

D.1. T

D.2. T

D.3. F

D.4. T

CHAPTER 8:

B.1. Religious Pluralism

C.1. T

GLOSSARY

A

Adi-Granth	:Literally means “the first book”; this is the early compilation of the Sikh scriptures.
Adventist	:The one who believes in the Second Coming (or Second Advent) of Jesus Christ.
Agama	:The sacred text of Jainism.
Ahimsa	:Non-violence; principle of not to injure; not to kill any living creature according to many Indian religions.
Ahl al-Kitab	:People of the Book; any people who have been given a divine book. Qur’an tends to use this term particularly for the Jews and Christians.
Ahriman	:Angra Mainyu; the evil and destructive spirit in Zoroastrianism.
Ahura Mazda	:The highest spirit in Zoroastrianism.
Akhirah	:Hereafter.
Akhlaq	:Principles of good conduct and morality.
Amal al-Salih	:Good actions.
Amesha Spentas	:Sacred immortals; a class of divine entities in Zoroastrianism.
Amidah	:Central prayer of Judaism.
Amritsar	:The holy city of Sikhs.

Ancestor Cult	:A ritualistic system of veneration, honor, and propitiation of spirits of dead ancestors.
Animism	:The religion of worshipping natural events and inanimate objects.
Anointment	:To put oil on during a religious ceremony as a sign of sanctification or consecration.
Anthropologist	:Expert on the study of humankind.
Anthropomorphism	:The attribution of human characteristics to something other than a human being; particularly, ascribing human shape and form to a deity.
Apostle	:Disciple, follower; a member of the group of twelve disciples chosen by Jesus to preach and spread his teachings.
Aqiqa	:Gratitude sacrificing for a newborn child in order to provide a celebration meal the family slaughter one or two sheep or goats. One third of the meat is given to the poor and the rest is served in the meal.
Archbishop	:A senior bishop who is in charge of an archdiocese.
Ard Mawud	:Promised Land.
Ark of Covenant	:The chest containing the tablets on which divine revelation revealed to Moses was inscribed.
Armageddon War	:In the New Testament, the place where the final battle will be fought between the forces of good and evil.
Ascetic	:The person who is devoted oneself to the practice of self-denial, either through seclusion or strict abstinence.
Asha	:Order of the universe; goodness and light; connected with the sacred element fire in Zoroastrianism.
Ashab al-Kahf	:The companions of cave; seven sleepers.
Asma al-Husna	:Beautiful names of Allah.

Avatara	:The reincarnation of God or his embodiment as several beings in Hindu tradition.
Avesta	:The sacred book of the Zoroastrianism.
B-C	
Babylonian Exile	:The forced detention of Jews in Babylonia following the latter's conquest of the kingdom of Judah in 598/7 and 587/6 BC.
Bani Isra'il	:Children of Israel.
Baptism	:A Christian rite of admission and adoption; the first step in a lifelong journey of commitment and discipleship.
Baptist	:A Protestant denomination of Christianity and adherent of this denomination; a member of Christian group who believes that baptism should be performed only for people old enough to understand what it means.
Behmen	:The angel of revelation in Zoroastrianism.
Bet Hamikdash	:The First Temple of the Jews.
Bishop	:Archpriest, the priest coming after the archbishop in a diocese.
Bodhi	:The tree under which the Siddhartha Gautama achieved enlightenment.
Bodh Gaya	:The most important Buddhist place of pilgrimage.
Brahman	:Absolute spirit; the creator principle in Indian tradition.
Brahmana	:Holy text which were written in the form of prose in Indian tradition.
Brahmins	:The highest class composed of priests among Indian casts.

Cardinal	:The Catholic priest with high echelon, each one of the priests choosing the pope and consulting him.
Caste System	:A system of social inequality in which people's status is permanently determined with their parents' situation.
Chosenness	:The belief that Jews are the chosen people by God.
Chronicle	:A written records of events and when they happened in chronological order, historical work.
Confucius	:Chinese teacher, philosopher, politician; founder of Confucianism.
Council	:An assembly organized by senior Christian religious functionaries (theologians, bishops and other representative of different churches) in order to regulate the problems of Christianity about the belief, worship and administration.
Covenant	:Agreement, contract, taking something on and promising.
Cult	:A group or doctrine with religious, philosophical or cultural identity sometimes viewed as a sect, a system of religious beliefs and rituals.
D-E	
Day of Ashura	:The tenth day of Muharram, day of mourning in Shi'a Islam.
Degeneration	:To be corrupted, to lose its originality.
Diaspora	:The dispersion (e.g. of Jews from the region of Palestine) generally due to reasons like captivity, exile, and sometimes due to travel and their settlement in other regions.
Digambara	:The practice of sky-clad ascetics.

Diocese	:A geographical area in which a group of priests are under the rule of a single archbishop.
Discipline	:A specific branch of knowledge or learning.
Doomsday	:Day of Judgment; overall destruction of the world and the subsequent resurrection and rebuilding of the world.
Drug	:Represents evil and deceit and the disorder connected with them in Zoroastrianism.
Dualism	:Every system in which the belief of two principles or substances cannot be degraded into one another.
Ethnology	:The branch of anthropology that deals with the division of humankind into races and with their origins and distribution and distinctive characteristics.
Eucharist	:The Christian sacrament of Holy Communion.
Evolution	:The continuous process of development in terms of quality and quantity in time.
Exodus	:The departure of the Israelites from Egypt led by Moses.
F-G-H	
Fetish	:Idols and amulets made by hand and supposed to possess magic power.
Fidyah	:Monetary compensation for elderly people who cannot observe fasting because of old age equivalent to feed a poor person for each day which was missed.
Fiqh	:The science of Islamic jurisprudence.
Fitrah	:Creation, natural disposition.
Fravashis	:Angels in Zoroastrianism.
Gemara	:Rabbinical analysis and the commentary on the Mishnah.

Gharib al-Qur'an	:Non-Arabic words in the Quran.
Gobind Singh	:The tenth guru of the Sikhism.
Golden Temple	:Harmandir Sahib; the holy temple of Sikhs which was built by the fifth Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan in the 16 th century, in Amritsar.
Grand Shrine	:Shintoist place of pilgrimage consecrated to the most supreme god of Shinto.
Guru	:Personal spiritual master or guide who has himself attained spiritual insight especially in Indian religions.
Guru Nanak	:Founder of the religion of Sikhism.
Hadith	:One of the basic Islamic sciences analyzing the words, actions, and proposals attributed to the Prophet Muhammad.
Halakha	:Jewish religious law.
Haoma	:God of life in Zoroastrianism.
Henotheism	:Believing in one god without denying the existence of other deities.
Hierarchy	:Rank or order of groups, order of degree, rank.
Holy Bible	:The holy text composed of the Old and New Testaments.
Holy Land	:A Jewish religious concept for the region of Palestine.
Holy Spirit	:The third part of the Holy Trinity in Christian theology.
Husn	:Beauty, goodness.
I-J	
Ibadah	:Worship.
Ideology	:Body of political, legal, scientific, philosophical, religious, moral, aesthetic thoughts, which dominate the behaviors of a government or party.

Iftar	:Breaking the fast at sunset when the adhan for evening prayer is recited. The time of breaking the fast is called the time of iftar and the meal is called the meal of iftar.
Imsaq	:The time that suhoor ends and fasting begins. The time of imsaq begins with daybreak.
Incarnation	:Embodying of various deific beings in the form of material beings.
Independent	:Opinion, judgment, interpretation.
Reasoning	
Indulgence	:A pardon or release given by the church based on the confession.
Interreligious Dialogue	:It is the faculty to cooperate, talk about problems and have an exchange of ideas by adherents of different religions without imposing their faith and ideas on each other.
Israiliyyat	:Narrative borrowings from related material in the Israelite sources; references from Israelite sources.
Jehovah's Witnesses	:A messianic and missionary movement which is a mixture of Judaism and Christianity and is emerged in the 19 th century.
Jethro	:Father-in-law of Moses.
Jinja	:The residence of gods, which is at the same time the center of ceremony in Shintoism.
Judah	:The name of the Southern Israelite Kingdom.
K-L	
Kalām	:One of the basic Islamic sciences; Islamic theology.
Kami	:Spirits or phenomena that are worshipped in the religion of Shinto.

Karma	:The theory that all past actions and thoughts of people will produce effect in their future life in Hinduism.
Kippah	:Also known as yarmulke, the cloth skullcap traditionally worn by male Jews.
Kojiki	:One of the two chronicles of Shintoism.
Kosher	:Foods permitted to be eaten according to Jewish Dietary Laws.
Kshatriyas	:Warriors and rulers in caste system of the Hinduism.
Lao-Tzu	:Author of Tao Te Jing; founder of the Taoism.
Last Supper	: According to Christianity the final meal that Jesus shared with his Disciples in Jerusalem before his crucifixion.
Li Tan	:The original name of the Lao-Tzu.
M	
Madhhab	:Denomination; juridical schools of religions.
Mahavira	:The title given to the founder of Jainism in the meaning of great hero.
Mahavira Vardhamana	:The founder of the Jainism.
Jina	
Mahayana Buddhism	:One of the denominations of Buddhism.
Mahdesi	:Term used exclusively for pilgrims to the Holy Land in Judaism.
Mana	:One of the invisible and potentially dangerous powers according to belief of tribal traditions.
Mawlid	:A eulogy recited to celebrate the birth of the Messenger of God.
Meditation	:The practice of quiet contemplation, the situation of deliberation and ecstatic contemplation in East religious traditions.

Messianism	:The belief in a person who will redeem the people of Israel and usher in better. In Christianity it is Jesus.
Metropolit	:A spiritual rank in Christian Orthodox denomination, below the patriarch and above the archbishops.
Mezuzah	:A piece of parchment inscribed with Pentateuchal texts and attached in a case to the doorpost of a house.
Mihrab	:An architectural feature found in every mosque to indicate the direction Muslims must turn to when praying.
Minbar	:A pulpit in the mosque where the imam stands to deliver sermons.
Minyan	:A necessary group of ten male adults to perform a prayer in Judaism.
Mishnah	:First and oldest part of Talmud, contains 63 chapters within six categorizations.
Missionary	:Someone who is in charge of spreading a religion, especially Christianity.
Monastery	:The residence of monks in religious traditions like Christianity and Buddhism, living in seclusion from secular society with strict rules.
Monk	:A man who retires from the ordinary temporal concerns of the world and devotes himself to religion; one of a religious community of men inhabiting a monastery and bound by vows to a life of chastity, obedience and poverty.
Monophysite	:The association of human and divine natures which are believed to exist in Jesus in one nature and transition to one nature.
Monophysite Churches	:Armenian Gregorian churches.
Monotheism	:The belief in a single god.

Mount Horeb	:According to book of Deuteronomy in the Hebrew Bible it is the mountain on which God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Although Sinai and Horeb are often considered as different names for the same place, there is a body of opinion that they may have been different locations.
Mount Sinai	:The mount on which Moses received Ten Commandments from God.
Muazzin	:Caller to prayer.
Muazzin's Pew	:A special raised platform in a mosque, opposite the minbar, where a muazzin kneels and chants prayers.
Mufassir	:Commentator of the Qur'an.
N-O	
New Testament	:The second major part of the Christian biblical canon that deals with the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and with Christianity in the early Church; collection of 27 books.
Nihongi	:One of the two chronicles of Shintoism.
Nirvana	:Moksha; literally means absolute quietness, enlightenment, liberty and the highest happiness. The goals of Buddhism like freedom from karma, extinction of all craving and the realization of the nature of the mind.
Noahidism	:A system of monotheistic belief based on the Seven Laws of Noah.
Noble Eightfold Path	:One of the principal teachings of Buddha; fourth of the Four Noble Truths.
Nubuwwah	:Prophethood.
Old Testament	:A collection of 39 canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures edited by members of the Hebrew-Jewish community between the twelfth century B.C. and the beginning of the Christian era.

P-Q

Panna	:Wisdom; one of the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path.
Pantheism	:The theological movement identifying the universe with God, the belief that everything is God.
Papacy	:The office of the Pope.
Pariahs	:People who are accepted as out of the caste, having no mission and right.
Passover	:Pilgrimage festival that is celebrated to commemorate the exodus of the Children of Israel from Egypt.
Patriarch	:The highest rank of priesthood in the Orthodox Church, the head of religious hierarchy.
Peter	:The Disciple named as the “Prince of Disciples” in Christian religious tradition.
Pharaoh	:The title given to the rulers of ancient Egypt.
Phenomenology	:The study of conscious experience.
Philologist	:The scientist who examines the culture of a society through the way of language.
Polytheism	:The belief in more than one god.
Polytheist	:A believer of polytheism.
Pontifex Maximus	:The title of archpriest in ancient Rome, member of the supreme college of priests in ancient Rome.
Pope	:The bishop of Rome and the head of the worldwide Catholic Church.
Positivism	:A philosophical doctrine which states that the authentic knowledge can only come from positive affirmation and observation.
Qiblah	:The direction in which a Muslim turns to when praying.

R

Rabbi	:The name given to the religious scholars in Judaism.
Raddiyyah	:Refutation.
Reconciliation	:A Roman Catholic sacrament involving contrition, confession, punishment and absolution; penance.
Reincarnation	:Rebirth, the transmigration of the soul, continues cycle of birth.
Religion	:Body of divine rules sent to prophets who were chosen by Allah through the way of revelation.
Religious Pluralism	:The case that people from different religions live together in harmony by respecting each other.
Rishi	:Saints regulating the holy texts based on revelation in Hindu tradition.
Ritual	:Religious ceremony, worship.
Rosh Hashana	:Jewish New Year, Jewish religious holiday.

S

Sabbath	:The holy day of rest and religious observance in Judaism.
Sacrament	:A sacred Christian act or ceremony recognized as of particular importance and significance.
Suhoor	:The time before imsaq when Muslims get up and eat until the time of imsaq.
Sa'y	:Ritual walking; A compulsory part of Muslim pilgrimage performed by coming and going between the hills of Safa and Marwah seven times to commemorate Hajar's running between Safa and Marwah in order to find water for her son.
Saint	:The holy person who has an important place in the history of church in Christian tradition.

Salat	:Prayer; showing servitude to God by means of definite acts.
Samadhi	:Meditation, one of the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path.
Samsara	:The concept of reincarnation in Hinduism.
Sanatana Dharma	:Eternal and everlasting, the eternal law.
Sanctification	:Considering sacred, the act of sanctifying.
Sanskrit	:The primary liturgical language of Hinduism.
Sawm	:To avoid, to keep away and to prevent something; keeping away from some material desires such as eating, drinking and sexual relations with the intention of worship from dawn to sunset.
Semitic Languages	:Afro-Asiatic language family of languages spoken by Semitic people (includes Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Akkadian, Ethiopic and Phoenician).
Shavuot	:The festival of celebration commemorates the day God gave the Torah to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai.
Shema	:An affirmation of Judaism; declaration of faith in one God.
Shiva	:The punisher God in Hinduism.
Siddhartha Gautama	:The original name of Buddha.
Sila	:Morality, one of the three divisions of the Noble Eightfold Path.
Smriti Texts	:Body of texts composing of commentaries; codified component of Hindu customary law.
Sorcery	:Secret rituals that attempt to gain results against nature, to control the supernatural for evil purposes.
Sruti Texts	:Holy texts which are believed to be based on revelation and inspiration in Hinduism.
Successor	:The one who follows, comes after another.

Sudras	:Farms workers, servants, laborers in Hindu caste system.
Sudur	:To issue; issued from divine existence, or to appear.
Sukkoth	:Commemoration the years that the Jews spent in the desert for forty years after exodus from Egypt.
Supreme	:Transcendent, the one who has unique characteristics.
Svetambara	:The practice of wearing white clothes in Jainism.
Synagogue	:The place of worship in Judaism.
Synoptic Gospels	:The gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke.
T-U	
Tabligh	:Literally means to bear, to take away, to transmit and to proclaim. As a term, it is the announcement of the message of Islam to people.
Taboo	:Prohibited; expresses the immunity of dangerous things.
Tafsir	:Exegesis; an Islamic science that deals with the correct understanding and interpretation of Qur'an.
Taghut	:The power or powers of evil who institute patterns of belief and rule in defiance of God; false gods; idols.
Talmud	:The name given to the commentary of Jewish sacred book Torah.
Tanakh	:The body of Jewish scripture comprising the Torah, the Neviim (prophets) and the Ketuvim (books).
Tao-Te-Jing	:Book of the right way; the ancient Chinese text written by Lao-Tzu.

Tawaf	:The act of circumambulation around the Ka'bah by keeping the Ka'bah on the left. Tawaf is formed from seven circumambulations around the Ka'bah beginning from the corner of the Ka'bah where the Hajar al-Aswad (The Black Stone) is placed.
Tawaf al-quḍum	:The first circumambulation around Ka'bah in Muslim pilgrimage.
Tawhid	:Oneness of Allah.
Tayammum	:Performing ablution with clean soil during the absence of water.
Ten Commandments	:A list of religious and moral imperatives that, according to the Hebrew Bible, were written by God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of two stone tablets.
Theism	:Believing in the existence of god or gods.
Theravada	:A Buddhist denomination.
Tirthankara	:The leaders who tell the eternal mystery to the people in different periods of time in Jainism.
Tishrei	:The first month of the civil year in Judaism.
Totem	:A natural object, in primitive societies whose kinship is defined in reference to such an object or creature.
Trinity	:Christianian belief of the union of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in one God.
Tripitaka	:Three baskets; holy texts of Buddhism written in the Pali language.
Tri-ranta	:Three jewels, faith confession in Buddhism.
Upanayana	:The ceremony of religious responsibility for boys in Hinduism.
V-W	
Vaisyas	:Farmers, merchants, craftspeople in the Hindu caste system.

Vardhamana	:The original name of the Mahavira.
Vedas	:The sacred texts of Hinduism.
Virtue	:The general name of the characteristics like; goodness, humbleness, bravery, faithfulness, righteousness, excellence in morals.
Votive Fasting	:Fasting to fulfill a vow; <i>Nadhr</i>
Wahy	:Revelation.
Wailing Wall	:The wall locating in the city of Jerusalem; Western Wall; the only remaining part of the ancient temple of Jerusalem, the pilgrimage place of Jews.
Waqfa	:An obligation of pilgrimage performed as staying somewhere in the plain of Arafat on the day of Arafa (the day before the sacrificial festival) from noon until the morning of day of the festival and performing acts of worship.
Y-Z	
Yama	:Indian god of death.
Yin-Yang Principle	:Two complementary forces or principles in Chinese tradition. Passive and active cosmic forces that exist in the essence of beings.
Yom Kippur	:Repentance days.
Zarathustra	:The founder of the Zoroastrianism.
Zuhd	:Asceticism.

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