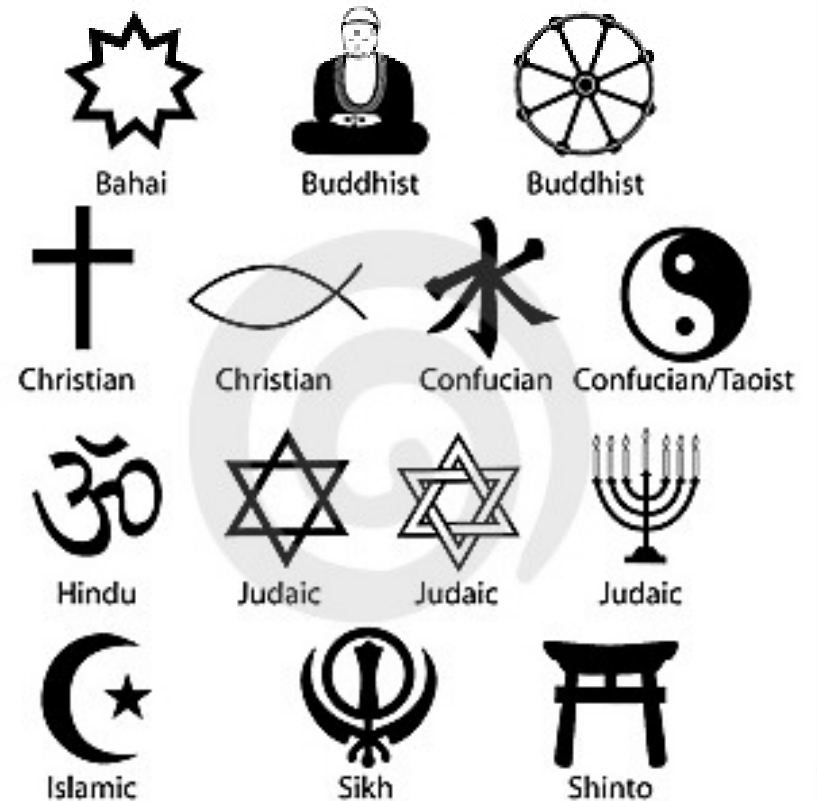
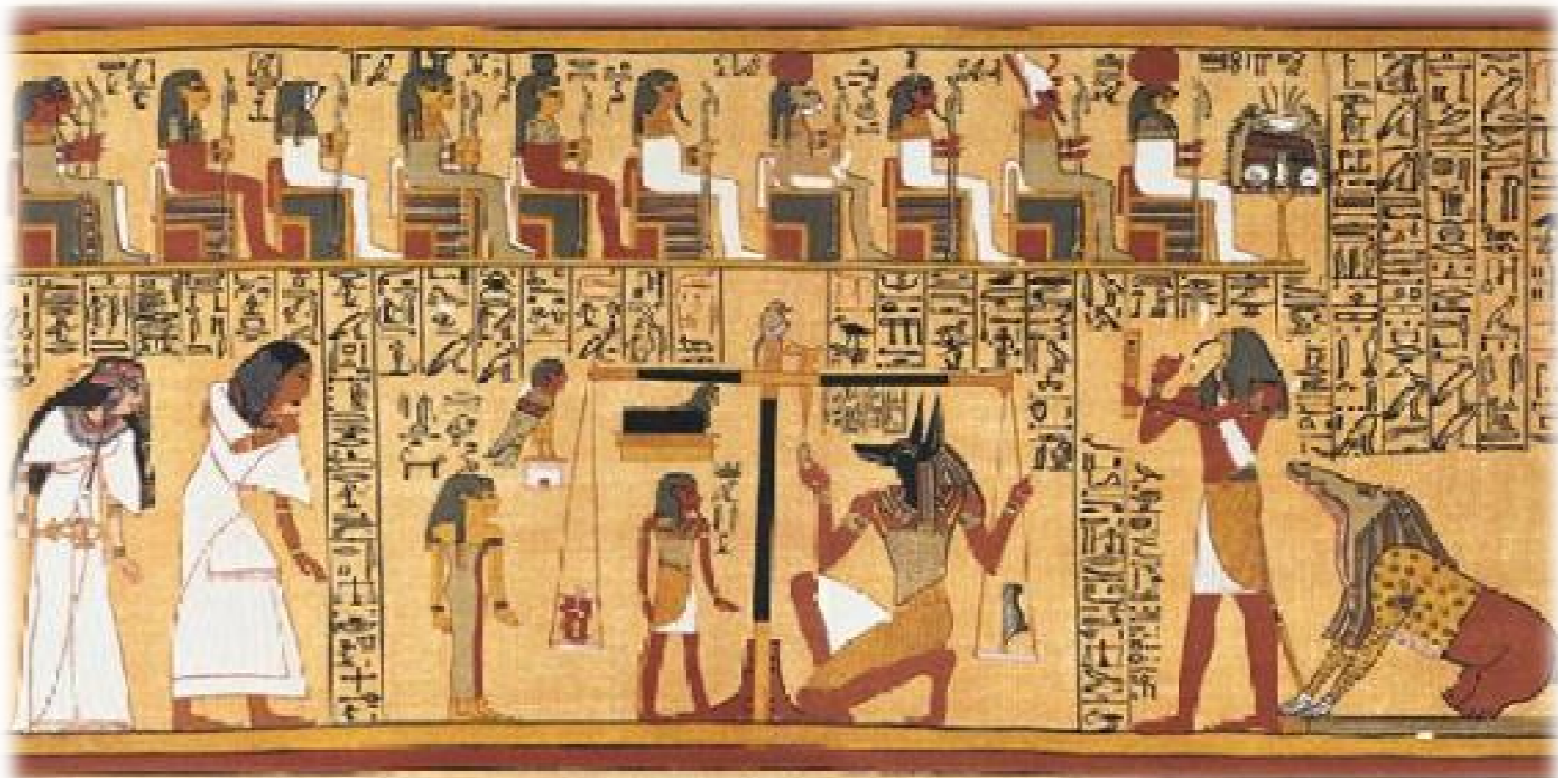


# Belief Systems



# POLYTHEISTIC

- ***BELIEF IN OR WORSHIP OF MULTIPLE GODS***
- ***THE WORD COMES FROM AN ANCIENT GREEK WORD***
- ***MOST ANCIENT RELIGIONS WERE POLYTHEISTIC***
- ***OFTEN PRACTICED RITUALS AND SACRIFICES TO THE MANY GODS***



# Monotheistic



**Definition:** a belief in a single god

Greek words “mono” meaning “one” and “theism” meaning “god-worship”

- The Hebrews (Jews) were the first religions to become monotheistic. They believed in one god for protection who they called Yahweh. Yahweh had power over everyone, not just the Jews and Hebrews.
- God was not a physical being, and no physical images were to be made of him.
- According to the Torah the reason Yahweh looked after the Hebrews was because Abraham promised to obey him, not because of ceremonies or sacrifices as seen in polytheism.

# Judaism



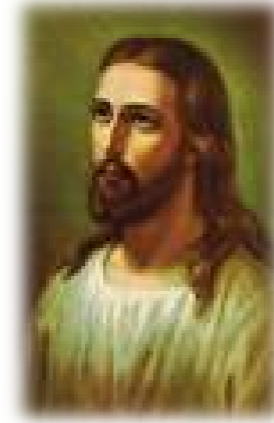
- Monotheistic – belief in one God who is present everywhere, all-knowing, all-powerful
- Holy book – Torah
- Writings are a sacred recording of the laws and events in Jewish history
- Also writings of the prophets (spiritual leaders)
- Believe that God made a covenant (agreement) with Abraham and the Hebrews to protect them
- Ten Commandments from God given to Moses – laws that describe how people should behave towards God and each other
- Believe that God chose the Hebrews as His people
- Prophets were people who God talked to, they taught a standards and justice
- Judaism later had a strong influence on Christianity and Islam



- Major city
- Other city
- Major Jewish Cultural Center
- Dense Jewish Settlement

**The Jewish Diaspora**  
in the 1st Cent. CE

# Christianity



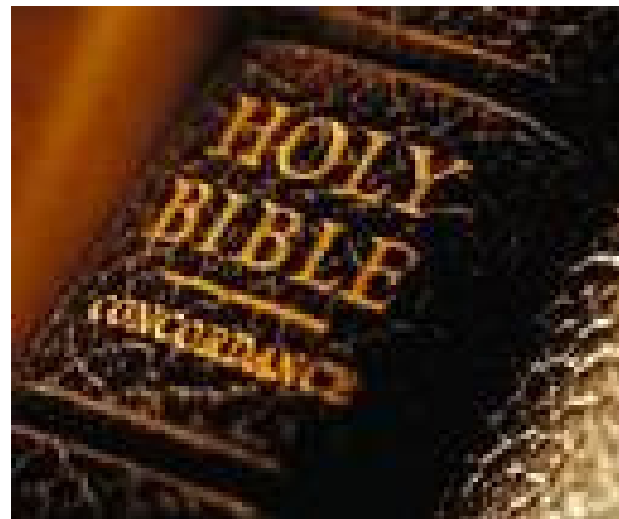
- ❖ Jesus was the founder of Christianity.
- ❖ He was born around 6 to 4 B.C.
- ❖ He began his ministry at age 30.
- ❖ Jesus' teachings included many Jewish beliefs, such as monotheism and the Ten Commandments. He stressed God's personal relationship with each person.
- ❖ Jesus' followers were called 'disciples' and later 'apostles'.
- ❖ Jesus was crucified around A.D. 29 for 'challenging the authority of the Roman government'. Jesus' disciples believed that his crucifixion was a triumph over death and that he was the Messiah. The Jewish priests of the time did not believe he was the Messiah and call his ministry blasphemy.
- ❖ Jesus' disciples continued to spread Jesus' teachings and Christianity later became a prominent religion throughout the world.



# Bible

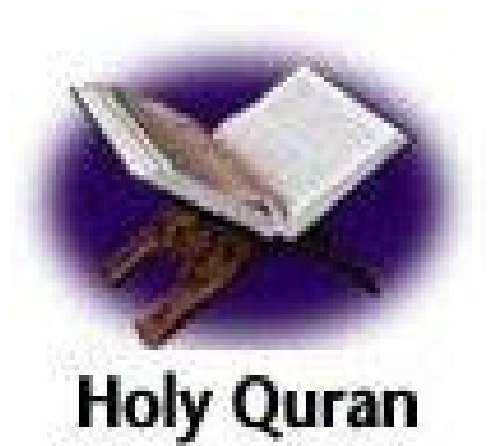


- Christians used the book as a way to follow their god.
- The book consisted of the old and new testament.
- The bible contains stories and messages about their god.
- The New Testament is about Jesus' life as it was on earth and how it came to be.



# Islam(600s – Present)

- Islam is a religion that came about in the early 600s.
- The founder was a merchant named **Muhammad Ali**.
- He claimed that one night the voice of **Allah** (God) spoke to him, and thus he began the religion.
- To be a Muslim (a submitted one) or a follower of Islam, followers must obey the **five pillars** or five duties to Allah.



**Holy Quran**



# Allah

- **IS THE MUSLIM GOD**
- **HE IS THE ONE GOD OF ISLAM**
- **WORSHIPED MOSTLY THE MIDDLE EAST, AFRICA, and ASIA**



# Muhammad

- \* Muhammad was born into a clan of a powerful Mecca Family. He was a merchant, in his travels he came into contact with Jews and Christians.
- \* Muhammad took great interest in religion. When he was alone he mostly prayed and meditated.
- \* When he was 40 a voice called to him while he was meditating. The voice was believed to say that Muhammad was a messenger of god.
- \* In 622 Muhammad left Mecca. He went 200 miles north of Mecca to a town called Yathrib. This journey by Muhammad was known as the Hijrah.
- \* Muhammad returned to Mecca in 630 with his 10,000 followers.
- \* Mecca surrendered and Muhammad became leader. Most people in Mecca converted to Islam to pledge their loyalty to Muhammad.
- \* Muhammad dies two years later at the age of 62.

# Five Pillars

- **This applies to the Islamic religion.**
- **Faith**
  - To become muslim, you need to testify to the statement of faith: “there is no god but allah, Muhammad is the messenger of Allah.
- **Prayer**
  - Muslims must face Mecca and pray five times a day.
- **Alms**
  - Muslims have been taught to support the less fortunate.
- **Fasting**
  - During the Muslim month of Ramadan, Muslims fast. Fasting is eating and drinking nothing from sun up to sun down.
- **Pilgrimage**
  - Muslims must go on a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime.



ISLAM: MECCA

# What are the three (3) faiths of Jerusalem?

- Judaism
- Christianity
  - Islam

# Animism

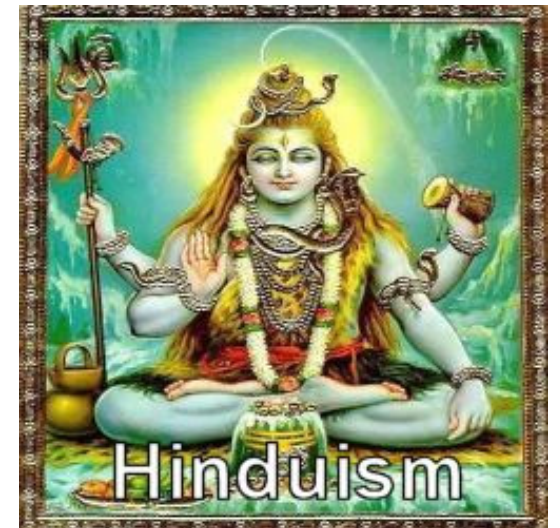
- An ancient religion that centralizes its beliefs around the belief that human-like spirits are present in animals, plants, and all other natural objects.
- The spirits are believed to be the souls of dead ancestors.
- Spirits possess living and non-living things
- Often combined with other religions to extend beliefs.



# HINDUISM

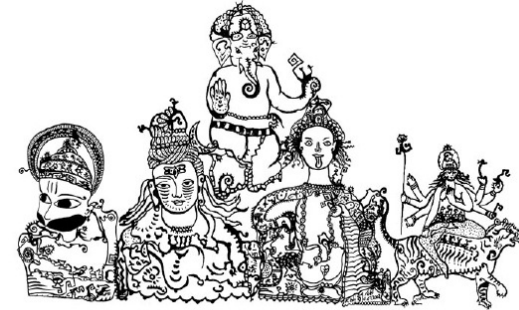


- Started with Nomads in the Indus Valley in 1500 B.C.
- **Brahmah** – one unifying spirit
  - Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Preserver, Shiva the Destroyer
- Goal of life is to unite with Brahman (through reincarnation)
- **Reincarnation** – rebirth of the soul in a new body, get closer to Brahman with every rebirth
- **Karma** – deeds of ones life that effect his or her next life
- **Dharma** – moral and religious duties that are expected from an individual
- **Caste system** – social class system
- **Vedas** – one of the books of Hinduism, filled with sacred teachings



# Karma (750 B.C.)

- Hindus share a common world-view.
- They see religion as a way of liberating the soul from the illusions, disappointments, and mistakes of everyday existence.
- Sometime between 750 B.C. and 550 B.C., Hindu teachers tried to interpret and explain the hidden meaning of the Vedic hymns.
- As they meditated on the Vedas, they asked:
  - What is the nature of reality?
  - What is morality?
  - Is there eternal life?
  - What is the soul?
- A belief in reincarnation, or rebirth of the soul in another body after death, forms the basis of Hinduism and underlies the entire cast system.
  - A person's cast is their reward or punishment for karma, deeds committed in a previous life.
  - Karma influences specific life circumstances, such as the cast one is born into, one's state of health, wealth or poverty, and so on.



# Reincarnation

- Reincarnation is a central teaching of the Hindu Religion.
- When one is born they are given life by Brahma, as they pass through life they are preserved by Vishnu, until Shiva claims you in death.
- Than the cycle is repeated over and over again until one finally achieves Moksha.
- Rivers are used to symbolize reincarnation because they have a constant flow, yet follow the same course.





# Buddhism



- Originated in India, by Siddhartha Guatama
- **Four Noble truths-**
  - All life is suffering
  - Suffering is caused by desire for material things that are illusions
  - The way to eliminate suffering is to eliminate desire
  - Following the Eightfold Path will help people overcome desire
- **Sacred text-**
  - Tripitaka- Three baskets of wisdom
  - **Ultimate goal: Nirvana- union with the universe and release from the cycle of death and rebirth**



# Four Noble Truths

- The Four Noble Truths were a part of Siddhartha Gautama's Buddhism.
- These truths were what was understood by Siddhartha in his enlightenment.
- They were ideas that were supposed to be followed to seek enlightenment, or wisdom.
- **The First Noble Truth-** Everything in life is suffering and sorrow.
- **The Second Noble Truth-** The cause of all suffering is people's selfish desire for the temporary pleasures of this world.
- **The Third Noble Truth-** The way to end all suffering is to end all desires.
- **The Fourth Noble Truth-** The way to overcome such desires and to attain enlightenment is to follow the Eightfold Path, which is called the Middle Way between desires and self-denial.



# Nirvana- 250 B.C.



- Belief of the Buddhist religion.
- **Defined as union with the universe. It is also a release from the cycle of death and rebirth.**
- It is also a release from selfishness and pain.
- **Buddha stressed that each individual person could reach a peace state called nirvana.**
- **You have to follow the Eightfold Path in order to reach nirvana.**
- To achieve Nirvana, you would have to reject the sensory world and embracing spiritual discipline.

# Confucianism

- Confucianism started in China during the Zhou Dynasty
- Confucianism was the guide to the nature of government and the structure to society
- Men were thought to be superior to women
- Confucius wrote The Analects
- Confucius believed in order to establish social order, harmony and a good government he needed to use the
- **Five key relationships** 1. friend to friend, 2. father to son, 3. ruler to subject, 4. husband to wife, 5. older brother to younger brother
- Confucius stressed that children should practice filial piety or respect for their elders
- There was also an influence on the Japanese



# Taoism (or Daoism) c. 500 B.C.

- Founder= Laozi



Live in harmony with nature

Contemplate Tao, or the 'way'

Yielding and acceptance are important virtues

- Followers rejected the world and human government, they often became hermits, mystics or poets.

道

Taoism  
road, way



- Balance of yin and yang
- Yin= earth, darkness, female forces
- Yang= heaven, light, and male forces
- Collected works: *The Way of Virtue* and *zhuang-zi*