

# History of Religions

As a humanity we have many differences. Sadly, because of these differences, we experience harsh criticism and often violence. However, this need not be the case. Each religion has a person or people that were sparked to create and carry forth a wisdom and knowledge. For thousands of years people have searched for the meaning and truth of their own unique nature. Hopefully, at some point, we come to realize that instead of judging one another, we have so much to learn from one another. For example, in nature there are different kinds of flowers and trees. With humans, it is the same, but instead there are different religions which embody unique belief systems.

If every flower did not like and reacted negatively to other flowers, there would be no gardens. If every tree did not like and reacted negatively to other trees, there would be no forests. It is time for respect instead of prejudice towards our human brothers and sisters. We are supposed to be uniquely united, whereby we grow, develop and become enlightened by the potpourri of our human experience. We came here to see one another through, not see through one another.

Every religion is sacred and this sacredness is meant to endow honor on all living beings. Religion is a wondrous, divine intervention infused into our human spirit. Each has a mission that was formulated as a heavenly kinship to bring values, principles, grace, love, virtue and comfort. The Hopi Indians believe that each religion is a thread and all these threads are supposed to come together in one tapestry in peace. The understanding of one another is the key to peace, and peace comes from the mutual recognition and respect of differences.

To know more, there are many books and in-depth information concerning this subject. This was a simple way to bring awareness and honor the nobility of each religion.

The Religions are in alphabetical order.



## Bahá'í

**History:** Founded in 1860 AD by Baha u llah, claiming to be the promised one of all religions.

**Wisdom:** A new ten commandments stating the oneness of humanity, equality of the sexes, no prejudice, truth, education for all, a spiritual solution to economic problems and a world union governed by representative of all people.

**Gift:** The belief in the unity of all humanity.

**Sacred Text:** Aqdas



## Buddhism

**History:** Founded in approximately 500 BCE by Siddhartha Gautama, in North India. He became the first Buddha, which means enlightenment.

**Wisdom:** Buddhism is based on the essential teaching that our ignorance causes us to have desires based on illusion, not reality. This results in suffering. Meditation is one of the methods for breaking the pattern of illusion and suffering.

**Gift:** Anyone willing can become an enlightened Buddha and be free of suffering and karma. The keys are the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

### The Four Noble Truths

1. All existence is filled with suffering
2. All suffering comes from attachments and desires
3. All suffering can cease and Nirvana can be experienced
4. By just following the Eightfold Path

### The Eightfold Path

1. Right Understanding
2. Right thought
3. Right Speech
4. Right Action
5. Right Livelihood
6. Right Effort
7. Right Mindfulness
8. Right Concentration

**Sacred Text** – Pali Canon



## Christianity

**History:** Founded over 2000 years ago by Jesus Christ in Palestine. He was said to be the Son of God, the Creator in human form.

**Wisdom:** Christ's teachings were of forgiveness, compassion and love. The Christian belief is that all will be forgiven of their sins and have salvation and eternal life through their faith in Jesus.

**Gift:** Unconditional love the manifestation of God's miracles.

**Sacred Text:** The Old and New Testament Bible



## Hinduism

**History:** Founded in 2500 BCE by a group of people in India.

**Wisdom:** Hinduism is based on the spiritual practice to liberate the soul from its bondage to the temporal cycle of death and rebirth. The path to achieve this is a devotion to God. The sacred texts are in Sanskrit and are known as the Vedas.

**Gift:** Karma, the concept meaning that one reaps what one sows. The soul may need to reincarnate many lifetimes to complete their Karma.

**Sacred Text:** The Bhagavad Gita



## Islam

**History** – Founded in 610 AD by Muhammad, in Saudi Arabia. He had a vision of the Archangel Gabriel, whose voice said: “You are the messenger of God.”

**Wisdom** – The Koran is regarded as the work of God delivered to Muhammad. The doctrine claims that God is one and unique and that He has no partner or equal.

**Gift** – Submission to the will of God.

**Sacred Text** – The Quran



## Jainism

**History:** Founded in the sixth century BCE by Jina Vardhamana Mahavira. The Jain religion teaches salvation by perfection through successive lives, and non-injury to all living creatures.

**Wisdom:** Their belief is that one will attain a path of victory in the stream of re-birth through an ethical and spiritual life. Jains, like Buddhist do not believe in a Supreme God.

**Gift:** The Jains believe that everyone is potentially divine and can reach their true goal by being pure, moral and disciplined.

**Sacred Texts:** There are many texts, not just one and they are known as Agams.



## Judaism

**History:** Founded in 3000 BCE by Abraham in Palestine. In 2000 BCE. Moses brought down the Ten Commandments from Mount Sinai.

**Wisdom:** Judaism is based on the belief that the love of God is the first duty of man and that the soul of man is our gift from God. The Ten Commandments are believed to be the way to keep the soul pure.

**Gift:** The great ability to survive in exile and a charitable devotion to those of their race less fortunate.

**Sacred Text:** The Torah



## Native American

**History:** Founded in 18,000 BCE. In 1492 there were 20 million native Indians settled in North America. Today, there are only 2 million remaining.

**Wisdom:** Honor Mother Earth, respecting her as the main source that nurtures us all. To the Indian, man is not the highest being. He is just the brother of all life forms, not the master of them.

**Gift:** The ability to contact the spirit world. A belief in the supernatural powers, especially connected to the animals and plant world.

**Sacred Messenger:** Mother Earth and Father Sky

*List of North America Tribes in Information.*



## Shinto

**History:** Shinto cannot be accurately traced, as it goes back to the period of prehistory. It emerged from the traditions and practices of Japanese folk religions.

**Wisdom:** It is viewed in the way in which society is bound together in common value and attitudes. The prayers are simple and direct, with no fixed doctrine.

**Gift:** The giving of praise to another from abundant offerings.

**Sacred Texts:** The Kojiki and the Nihon-gi



## Sikhism

**History:** Founded in 1500 AD by Guru Nanak in Punjab, India. He was the first of the ten Sikh Gurus.

**Wisdom:** Devotion and determination to defend the truth of God. Sikhs believe that God likes the manifestation of moral strength through good work. Sikhs believe that men and women are equal before God.

**Gift:** Kindness to all living beings.

**Sacred Text:** The Guru Granth Sahib Collection



## Taoism

**History:** Founded in 500 BCE by Lao Tzu, meaning old master, in China. It is said he lived to be 160 years old.

**Wisdom:** Tao means “The Way”. Taoists base much of their teaching on the careful observance of nature. One such teaching is “water is soft and yielding, yet it can wear away huge rock.”

**Gift:** By observing nature, we can learn to live blessed lives, ultimately achieving mastery and even immortality.

**Sacred Text:** Tao Te Ching



## Zoroastrianism

**History:** Founded in 1200 BCE by Zoroaster in Persia. He was presumed to be the founder of astrology as well. He was known to be the only baby born laughing.

**Wisdom:** Zoroastrianism believes that the world will end shortly and only the followers of goodness will share in its second existence. Their ethics are based on preserving purity. Interestingly enough, the three Magi who came for Mary, were from Persia.

**Gift:** Optimism in the belief that there will be triumph of good over evil.

**Sacred Text** – Zend-Avesta

## Indigenous Tribes

There are 370 million indigenous people in the world, belonging to 5,000 different groups, in 90 countries. Though indigenous people live in every region of the world, about 70% live in Asia.

The Great Andamanese Tribe from the Andaman Islands are a group of tribes that were the first descendants of early humans who migrated from Africa about 70,000 years ago. The Andaman Islands are located half way between Myanmar and India in the Bay of Bengal.

## Other Religions

### Celtic Religion

The Celts spread over much of Europe from 3000 BCE, eventually being absorbed into the Roman World. Only on the edges of the Roman Empire, in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and Cornwall, did they persist. The religion of the tribes was quite localized, with each clan having its own deities, and only a few Gods worshipped over wide areas. Central to their beliefs were the warrior-heroes with supernatural powers, the sacredness of the earth and the dominance of Mother Earth. She is revered as the Goddess of protection and the bringer of life.

The Celts pay great attention and homage to trees. They believe them to be messengers. The Mistletoe is thought to have been part of the Druid rites. Druids were the ritual and cult experts, acting as judges and teachers.

In the fifth century, when St. Patrick and others brought Christianity to Ireland, a form of Christianity different from that of the Roman Empire was established. The Goddesses were of great importance as the source of life and fertility, especially the triad Danu, Mach and Brigit, who survives in Christianity as St. Brigit.

Much has been lost and little written down until the 7th century AD. The Celts had no written history until the Christian periods because the Druids passed down everything orally.

## **Egyptian Religion**

Ancient Egyptian religion consisted of vast beliefs and practices, linked by the interaction between the world of humans and the world of the Divine. Because of their belief in the afterlife they made great efforts to ensure the survival of their souls after death. In life, rituals were done to make contact with many deities believed to be present and in control of the world. Prayers and offerings were done to gain their favor.

Egyptians believed that humans possessed a ka, which was a life force that left the body at the time of death. As well, every human had a ba, which was the set of spiritual characteristics, that stayed with the body after death. They also believed that the concepts of the universe were truth, justice and order.

Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire in 30 BCE and the empire weakened. The biggest gift left to the modern world of today are the Pyramids, which were created for the departed souls. The first, and largest pyramid at Giza was built by Pharaoh Khufu in 2551 BCE as his tomb. It took 20 years to build.

# Greek Religion

Greek Religion meant the worship of 12 Olympian deities, whose king, Zeus resided at the peak of Mount Olympus. Each deity had several unique attributes and they could be male or female. However, there were over 2000 names of God and many thousands of local deities also existed. To mention some - in red are the twelve Olympians who were the main deities. They were called Olympians because they resided on Mt. Olympus.

**Amon:** was the God of air

**Anubis:** was the God of the dead

**Aphrodite:** was the Goddess of love

**Apollo:** was the God of light

**Ares:** was the God of war

**Artemis:** was the God of the hunt

**Athena:** was the Goddess of war and wisdom

**Cronos:** was the father of Zeus

**Demeter:** was the God of harvest

**Dionysus:** was the God of grape-harvest

**Eos:** was the Goddess of the dawn

**Eros:** was the God of love

**Gaia:** was the Goddess of earth

**Hades:** was the God of the underworld

**Hathor:** was the Cow Goddess

**Helios:** was the God of the sun

**Hephaestus:** was the God of the casting and molding

**Hera:** was the Goddess of marriage

**Heracles:** was the son of Zeus

**Hermes:** was the messenger of the Gods

**Hestia:** was the Goddess of family

**Horus:** was the God of vengeance

**Hypnos:** was the God of sleep

**Isis:** was the Goddess of magic

**Kratos:** was the God of strength

**Maat:** was the Goddess of order

**Mut:** was the Mother Goddess

**Nike:** was the God of victory



**Nun:** was the Primeval God  
**Odysseus:** was a Greek hero  
**Osiris:** was the King of death and resurrection  
**Pan:** was the God of shepherds  
**Persephon:** was the Goddess of the underworld  
**Poseidon:** was the God of the sea  
**Ptah:** was the Creator God  
**Ra:** was the God of radiance  
**Rhea:** was the mother of Zeus  
**Selene:** was the Goddess of the moon  
**Seth:** was the God of storms and chaos  
**Typhon:** was the Father of all Monsters  
**Zeus:** was the God of sky and thunder

## Norse Religion

Norse or Scandinavian Religion is often thought of as the religion of the Vikings. Its origins are in the Bronze Age, 450 BCE – 100 AD. This is when the first recognizable figure of Gods and Goddesses can be discerned. Scandinavian mythology saw the universe as being divided into nine worlds. They believe that the World Tree, Yggdrasil, which was commonly represented as a gigantic ash tree could bridge the gap between heaven and earth and these worlds. In time, the Christian and Viking world blended, whereby God almighty would be worshipped.

One of the sacred tools that have been developed in the modern world is the Runes. They are widely used through North America and Europe. *See Runes in Sacred Information.*

## Roman Religion

The Romans, like the Greeks had no word for religion. The nearest equivalent is the worshiping of Gods and Goddesses. The central feature of the Roman religions was the importance of making rituals, festivals and sacrifices. It was closely associated with public life. The Gods were not remote but were deeply concerned with Rome's affairs. The link between religion and public life is seen clearly in the reign of Augustus, 27 BCE. – 14 AD.

The Greek Pantheons were adapted by the Romans  
To mention some:

- Aurora:** was the Goddess of the dawn – like Eos
- Bacchus:** was the God of grape-harvest – like Dionysus
- Ceres:** was the Goddess of harvest – like Demeter
- Cupid:** was the God of love – like Eros
- Diana:** was the Goddess of the hunt – like Artemis
- Faunus:** was the God of shepherds – like Pan
- Hercules:** was the son of Zeus – like Heracles
- Juno:** was the Goddess of marriage – like Hera
- Jupiter:** was the King of Gods – like Zeus
- Luna:** was the Goddess of the moon – like Selene
- Mars:** was the God of war – like Aries
- Mercury:** was Messengers of the Gods – like Hermes
- Minerva:** was the Goddess of wisdom – like Athena
- Neptune:** was the God of the sea – like Poseidon
- Ops:** was the mother of Zeus – like Rhea
- Pluto:** was the God of the underworld – like Hades
- Proserpine:** was the Goddess of the underworld – like Persephone
- Saturn:** was the Father of Zeus – like Cronus
- Somnus:** was the God of sleep – like Hypnos
- Terra:** was the Goddess of earth – like Gaia
- Thoth:** was the God of Knowledge
- Vesta:** was the Goddess of family – like Hestia
- Vulcan:** was the God of the forge – like Hephaestus
- Venus:** was the Goddess of love – like Aphrodite
- Victoria:** was the Goddess of victory – like Nike