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## World Religions

### Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



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## RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

### CHAPTER ONE--HINDUISM

Hinduism is not only one of the oldest of all Religious Systems, it is also one of the most complex. During its history, Hinduism has spawned a variety of Sects, holding diverse beliefs; therefore, it is difficult to get an accurate picture of Hinduism without considering a vast array of history and commentary. John B. Noss states:

It is not one Religion, but rather a family of Religions...Hinduism is fluid and changing...Hinduism is the whole complex of beliefs and Institutions that have appeared from the time when their ancient {and most Sacred} Scriptures, the Vedas, were composed until now...Hindu's have an extraordinarily wide selection of beliefs and practices to choose from: they can (to use Western terms) be Pantheists, Polytheists, Monotheists, Agnostics, or even Atheists (John B. Noss, "Man's Religions." New York: MacMillan Company, 1969, p. 88).

Joseph Gaer lists some of the complexities of Hinduism:

Just as the attributes of the Hindu Triad multiplied until there were millions of them, and the castes divided and subdivided from the original four to a very large number, so also has this extremely old Religion given rise to many sects. There are Sects, who Worship Vishnu, as the God of space and time. There are Sects, who Worship Shiva (or Lord Siva) as a God of song and healing. There are Sects who Worship Durga, the Divine Mother (Goddess of motherhood). And there are many others, but all the various sects believe in: Brahman, the Eternal Trimutri, or Three-in-One God. Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Shiva, the Destroyer; submission to Fate, since man is not outside, but part of Brahman; the Caste System, determined by the Laws of Manu; the Law of Karma, that from good must come good

and from evil must come evil. Reincarnation, as a chain of rebirths in which each soul, through virtuous living, can rise to a higher state; Nirvana, the final stage reached upon the Emancipation of the soul from the chain of rebirths; Yoga's, the disciplines which enable the individual to control the body and the emotions; and Dharma, the Law of Moral Order, which each individual must find and follow to reach Nirvana (Joseph Gaer, "What the Great Religions Believe," New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1963, p. 35).

Because of its many complexities, Hinduism, seemingly is impossible to summarize, as John Bowker observes:

To summarize the thought of any Religion is difficult, but in the case of Hinduism, it is impossible. It is the essence of Hinduism, that there are many different ways of looking at a single object, none of which will give the whole view, but each of which is entirely valid in its own right. A statue may be viewed from many angles. Each aspect helps to convey what the statue is like, but no single aspect is able to comprehend the statue as a whole, still less, does the act of viewing it from one particular angle or another, constitute "the statue itself" (John Bowker, "Problems of Suffering in Religions of the World," London: Cambridge University Press, 1970, p. 193).

**HINDUISM AS A UNIVERSAL RELIGION.** Hinduism is tolerant of other Religions because Hindu's see a sameness in all of them:

The truth, which is the kernel of every Religion, is one and the same; doctrines, however, differ considerably, since they are the applications of the truth to the human situation...Rites, ceremonies, systems, and dogmas lead beyond themselves to a region of utter clarity and so have only relative truth...Every work, every concept, is a pointer, which points beyond itself. The sign should not be mistaken for the thing signified. The

sign-post is not destination (S. Radhakrishnan, "East and West, The End of Their Separation." New York: Alen & Uniwin, Humanities Press, 1954, p. 164).

Different Religious leaders have belonged to different schools, and most Hindu's are rather proud of the fact that there have not been any violent conflicts or persecution, thanks to mutual tolerance. This is a field where no one theory can claim to explain all the mysteries and tolerance that may well be the path to wisdom, rather than to confusion (K. M. Sen, "Hinduism" London: Gannon Publ.,1963, pp. 84 ff).

**HINDU SCRIPTURES.** The Hindu Scriptures, written over a period of 2,000 years (1400 B.C. - 500 A.D.) are voluminous. They reflect the practices and beliefs which arose during the different long periods of Hindu History. Bruce Nichols explains:

The Hindu Scriptures are divided into two classes - Sruti and Smriti. Sruti, or "what is heard," refers to the Eternal Truths of Religion, which the Rishi's or Seers saw or heard. They are independent of any God or man to whom they are communicated. They are the primary and final authority of Religious Truth. Using the analogy of the reflection of an image in a mirror or on the surface of a lake, the intellect of the ancient Rishi's was so pure and calm that it perfectly reflected the entirety of Eternal Truth. Their Disciples records this Truth and the record of it is known as the Vedas. Smriti, or "what is remembered," possess a secondary authority, deriving their authority from the Sruti, whose principles they seek to expand. As recollections, they contain all the Sacred Texts other than the Vedas. These are generally understood to include the Law Books, the two great Epics, the "Ramayana" and the "Mahabaharata," and the "Puranas," which are largely collections of myths, stories, legends and Chronicles of great events. Also included are the "Aqamas," which are Theological Treatises and Manuals of Worship, and the "Sultras," or Aphorisms, of the Six Systems of

Philosophy. There is also a vast treasury of vernacular literature, largely of a “Bhakti” or devotional type, which continues to inspire the masses of Religious Hindu’s and which different Sects accept as “Smriti” ( Bruce Nichols in “The World’s Religions,” Sir Norman Anderson, ed., Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdman’s Publishing Company, 1976, pp. 137, 138).

**THE VEDAS.** The word “Veda” literally means wisdom or knowledge. It is the term applied to the oldest of the Hindu Scriptures, originally transmitted orally and then subsequently preserved in written form. The Vedas contain Hymns, Prayers, and Ritual Texts, composed over a period of one thousand years, beginning about 1400 B.C.

The term Vedas (plural) refers to the entire collection of these Wisdom Books, also known as the “Samhitas,” which include the Rig-Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Yajur-Veda, and the Athara-Veda. Each of these Texts consists of three parts: (1) the Mantras, hymns of praise to the Gods; (2) the Brahmanas, a guide for practicing ritual rights, and (3) the Upanishads, the most important part of which deals with teaching of Religious truth or doctrine.

The Samhitas are the basis of Vedic Hinduism, the most significant of the group, being the Rig-Veda. This collection of hymns, originally composed in Sanskrit, praises the various Hindu deities, including Indra, Soma, Varuna, and Mitra.

The Yajur-Veda consists of a collection of Mantras, borrowed from the Rig-Veda and applied to specific ritual situations, carried out by the Executive Priest and his assistants.

The Sama-Veda, in the same manner, borrows Mantras from the Rig-Veda. These hymns are chanted.

The Athara-Veda consists of magical spells and incantations, carried out by the Priests.

**THE UPANISHADS.** The Upanishads are a collection of speculative Treatises. They were composed during the period 800 to 600 B.C., and 108 of them are still in existence. The word, Upanishad, conveys the idea of secret teaching. Its Treatises mark a definite change in emphasis from the Sacrificial hymns and magic formulas in the Vedas to the mystical ideas about man and the Universe, specifically the Eternal Brahman, which is the basis of all reality, and the Atman, which is the self or the soul. The Upanishads reportedly had an influence upon Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, as can be observed in some basic similarities between the Upanishads and the teachings of Mahayana Buddhism.

**RAMAYANA.** The Ramayana is one of the two major Epic tales of India, the other being, the Mahabharatha. Authorship is ascribed to the Sage-Poet, Valmiki. The work consists of 24,000 couplets, based upon the life of Rama, a righteous King, who was supposedly an incarnation of the God, Vishnu.

Although the story has some basis in fact, much of it is layered folklore, added throughout the Centuries. Besides Valmiki, other poets and writers have contributed to the complexities of the story. Edward Rice, gives a brief synopsis of the account:

Rama, a warrior and wanderer, in the great tradition (one might equate him to Gilgamesh and Odysseus), is faced with a series of challenges and tests, some of which involve battles with other Kings, or with demons; his wife, Sita, is kidnapped by a demon King and carried off in an air chariot to Ceylon; his chastity and faithfulness are tested; great battles ensue; the ending is a happy one, with Rama restored to the Throne of Ayodha, and eventually, he and Sita, after more trials, are united, not on Earth, but in the Celestial abodes. By the time the innovators have finished the story, Rama and Sita are not only avatars of Vishnu, but also exemplars of all the mundane and Spiritual qualities with which the Cosmos is endowed. The work has special interest to Historians and Ethnologists, for many elements depict the social conditions of the Peninsula during that period. It is involved in the conflict

of the Aryans with the Aborigines and the Aryanization of the latter; the monkeys and bears, who were allies of Rama, were actually Aborigines, who bore animal names as totems, as they still do today (Edward Rice, "Eastern Definitions," Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1980, p. 296).

**THE MAHABHARATA.** The Mahabharata is the second Epic, immense story of the deeds of Aryan Clans. It consists of some 100,000 verses and was composed over an 800-year period beginning about 400 years B.C., contained within this work is a great Classic, the "Bhagavad Gita," or the "Song of the Blessed Lord."

**BHAGAVAD GITA.** This work is not only the most Sacred Book of the Hindu's, it is also the best known and most read of all Indian works in the entire World, despite the fact it was added late to the Mahabharata, sometime in the first Century A.D. The story, in short, consists of a dialogue between Krishna, the eighth Avator of Vishnu, and the warrior Arjuna, who is about to fight his cousins. The question Arjuna asks Krishna is: How can he kill his blood relatives?

Krishna! As I behold, come here to shed  
Their common blood, yon concourse of our kin,  
My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth,  
A shudder thrills my body, and my hair  
Bristles with horror; hardly may I stand.  
...What rich spoils  
Could profit; what rule recompense; what span  
Of life seem sweet, bought with such blood?  
Seeing that these stand here, ready to die,  
For whose sake life was fair, and pleasure pleased,  
And Power grew precious: - grandsires, sires, and sons,  
Brothers, and fathers-in-law, and sons-in-law,  
Elders and friends!  
So speaking, in the face of those two hosts,

Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,  
And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart  
(The Bhagavad Gita, 1:28-47).

The story revolves around man's duty, which if carried out, will bring nothing, but sorrow. The significance this story has on Hindu belief, is its endorsement of Bhakti, or devotion to a particular God, as a means of salvation, since Arjuna decides to put his devotion to Vishnu, above his own personal desires. The Gita ends with Arjuna devoted to Vishnu and ready to kill his relatives in battle.

This poem has inspired millions of Hindu's, who have identified Arjuna's dilemma with their own situation. The poem offers hope, through the way of devotion, to all people, no matter what their caste or sex. The poor and downtrodden, who could not achieve salvation through the way of works or the way of knowledge, can now achieve it through the way of devotion.

These two Epic stories, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, depict characters, who have become ideals for the people of India, in terms of moral and social behavior.

**THE PURANAS.** The Puranas are a very important source for the understanding of Hinduism. They include legends of Gods, Goddesses, demons, and ancestors. They describe pilgrimages and rituals to demonstrate the importance of Bhakti, Caste and Dharma. This collection of myths and legends, in which the heroes display all the desirable virtues, has made a significant contribution to the formation of Hindu moral codes.

**HINDU TEACHINGS (DOCTRINE).** To achieve a proper understanding of the World view, held by the Hindu's, it is necessary to present some of the basic concepts they hold to be true.

**BRAHMAN.** Brahman, the ultimate reality for the Hindu, is a term difficult, if not impossible to define completely, for its meaning has changed over a period of time. Edward Rice explains it in the following manner:

The Supreme Reality conceived of as one and undifferentiated, static and dynamic, yet above all definitions; the ultimate principle underlying the World, ultimate reality: "Without cause and without effect, without anything inside or outside," according to the Sage Yajnavalkya. "Brahman is, he whom speech cannot express, and from whom the mind, unable to reach him, comes away baffled," states the "Taitinya Upanishad." Brahman is now of interest more as a philosophic concept of past ages than as an active principle - to be meditated upon, but not adored or worshipped (Ibid, p. 71).

The enigmatic concept of Brahman is illustrated in this famous passage from the Bhagavad-Gita:

"Place this salt in water and come to me tomorrow morning." Swetaketu did as he was commanded, and in the morning his father said to him: "Bring me the salt you put into the water last night." Swetaketue looked into the water, but could not find it, for it had dissolved. His father then said: "Taste the water from this side. How is it? "It is salt." "Taste it from that side. How is it?" "It is salt." "Look for the salt again, and come again to me." The son did so, saying: "I cannot see the salt. I only see water." His father then said: "In the same way, O my son, you cannot see the Spirit. But in truth, He is there. An invisible and subtle essence is the Spirit of the whole Universe. That is Reality. That is Truth. THOU ARE THAT!"

**MOKSHA.** Moksha, also known as Mukti, is the Hindu term, used for the liberation of the soul from the wheel of Karma. For the Hindu, the chief aim of his existence is to be freed from Samsara (the binding life cycle) and the wheel of Karma with its endless cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths. When one achieves this liberation, he enters into a state of fullness or completion. This state can be attained through death, or preferably, while one is still living.

Moksha can be achieved through three paths: (1) knowledge, or Jnana; (2) devotion

or Bhakti or (3) ritual works, or Karma. One who achieves Moksha before death, is known as Jivanmukta.

**ATMAN.** Atman is another Hindu term which is difficult to define. It refers to the soul or true self, the part of each living thing that is Eternal. The "Taittiriya Upanishad" says, Atman is "that from which speech, along with the mind, turns away - not able to comprehend." Oftentimes, it is used synonymously with Brahman, the Universal Soul, seeking mystical union together, or Moksha.

**MAYA.** A central concept in Hindu thought; is that of Maya. Huston Smith expands upon the meaning of this key concept as follows:

This word is often translated "illusion," but this is misleading. For one thing, it suggests that the world need not be taken seriously. This is Hindu, would deny, pointing out that as long as it appears real and demanding to us, we must accept it as such. Moreover, it does have a kind of qualified reality; reality on a provisional level. Were we to be asked if dreams are real, our answer would have to be qualified. They are real in the sense that we have them, but they are not real in the sense that the things they depict necessarily exist in their own right. Strictly speaking, a dream is a psychological construct, something created by the mind out of its particular state. When the Hindu say the world is Maya, this too, is what they mean. Given the human mind, in its normal condition, the world appears as we see it. But we have no right to infer from this, that reality is in itself, the way it so appears. A child, seeing a motion picture for the first time, will assume that the objects he sees - lions, kings, canyons - are objectively before him; he does not suspect that they are being projected from a booth in the rear of the theater. It is the same with us; we assume the world we see to be in itself, as we see it, whereas in actuality, it is a correlate of the particular psycho-physical condition our minds are currently in (Huston Smith, "The Religions of Man," New York: Harper and Row, 1958, pp. 82, 83).

**KARMA.** The word Karma literally means action and has reference to a person's actions and the consequences thereof. In Hinduism, one's present state of existence is determined by his performance in previous lifetimes. The Law of Karma is the law of moral consequence, or the effect of any action upon the performer in a past, a present, or even a future existence. As one performs righteous acts, he moves towards liberation from the cycle of successive births and deaths.

Contrariwise, if one's deeds are evil, he will move further from liberation. The determining factor is one's Karma. The cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths could be endless. The goal of the Hindu, is to achieve enough good Karma to remove himself from the cycle of rebirths and achieve Eternal bliss.

**SAMSARA.** Samsara refers to transmigration or rebirth. It is the passing through a succession of lives, based upon the direct reward or penalty of one's Karma. This continuous chain consists of suffering from the results of acts of ignorance or sin in past lives. During each successive rebirth, the soul, which the Hindu's consider to be Eternal, moves from one body to another and carries with it, the Karma from its previous existence.

The rebirth may be to a higher form; i.e., a member of a higher Caste or God, or down the social ladder to a lower Caste, or as an animal, since the wheel of Karma applies to both man and animals. Accordingly, all creatures, both man and beast, are in their current situations because of the actions (Karma) of previous lives.

**THE CASTE SYSTEM.** The Caste System is a unique feature of the Hindu Religion. The account of its origin is an interesting story. Brahma created Manu, the first man. From Manu's head came the Brahmins, the best and most Holy people. Out of Manu's hands came the Kshatras, the rulers and warriors. The craftsmen came from his thighs and are called Vaisyas. The remainder of the people came from Manu's feet and are known as Sudras. Therefore, the structure of the Caste System is divinely inspired.

The Brahmins are honored by all the people, including the Royal Family. Their jobs as Priests and Philosophers are subsidized by the State and involve the study of their Sacred Books.

The Kshatriyas are the upper middle class, involved in the Government and professional life, but they are lower in status than the Brahmins.

The Vaisya are the merchants and farmers below the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, but above the rest of the population in their status and Religious privileges.

The Sudras are the lowest Caste, whose duty is to serve the upper Castes as laborers and servants. They are excluded from many of the Religious rituals and are not allowed to study the Vedas.

The Caste System became more complicated as time went on, with literally thousands of subcastes coming into existence. Today the Caste System is still an integral part of the social order of India, even though it has been outlawed by the Indian Government.

Swami Vivekananda gives the rationale for the Caste System:

Caste is a natural order. I can perform one duty in social life, and you another; you can govern a Country, and I can mend a pair of old shoes, but there is no reason why you are greater than I, for can you mend my shoes? Can't I govern the Country? I am clever in mending shoes, you are clever in reading Vedas, but there is no reason why you should trample on my head...Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving life. Men must form themselves into groups, and you cannot get rid of that. Wherever you go there will be Caste. But that does not mean that there should be these privileges. They should be knocked on the head. If you teach Vedanta to the fisherman, he will say, I am as good a man as you, I am a fisherman, you are a philosopher, but I have the same God in me as you have in you. And that is what we want, no privileges for anyone, equal chances for all; let everyone be taught that the Divine is within, and everyone will work out his own salvation... (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda Almora, Hollywood, CA: Vendanta Press, 1924-32, III: 245f., 460).

**SALVATION.** Salvation, for the Hindu, can be achieved in one of three ways: the way of works, the way of knowledge, or the way of devotion.

1. **The Way of Works.** The way of works, Karma Marga, is the path to salvation through Religious duty. It consists of carrying out the prescribed ceremonies, duties and Religious Rites. The Hindu believes that by doing these things, he can add favorable Karma to his merit. Moreover, if he does them Religiously, he believes it is possible to be reborn as a Brahmin on his way toward liberation from the wheel of Karma. The performance of these practices is something non-intellectual and emotionally detached, since it is the mechanical carrying out of prescribed laws and rituals. A basic concept in Hinduism is that one's actions, done in sincerity, must not be done for gain, but must be done unselfishly.
2. **The Way of Knowledge.** Another way of achieving salvation - in the Hindu sense - is the way of knowledge. The basic premise behind the way of knowledge is the cause of human suffering based upon ignorance. This mental error, concerning our way of nature, is at the root of mankind's problems. The error in man's thinking is this: man sees himself as a separate and real entity. The truth of the matter, Hindu's say, is this: the only reality is Brahman, there is no other. Therefore, man, rather than being a separate entity, is part of the whole, Brahman. Selfhood is an illusion. As long as man continues seeing himself as a separate reality, he will be chained to the wheel of birth, death, and rebirth. He must be saved from this wrong belief by the proper understanding that he has no independent self. This knowledge is not merely intellectual, but experiential, for the individual reaches a state of consciousness, where the Law of Karma is of no effect. This experience comes after much self-discipline and meditation. The way of knowledge does not appeal to the masses, but rather to an intellectual few, who are willing to go through the prescribed steps.
3. **The Way of Devotion.** The way of devotion; Bhakti, is chronologically, the last of the three ways of salvation. It is that devotion to a deity, which may be reflected in acts of Worship, both public and private. This devotion, based upon love for the deity, will also be carried out in human relationships;

i.e., love of family, love of master, etc. This devotion can lead one to ultimate salvation. The “Bhagavad Gita,” is the work which has devoted special attention to this way of salvation. This path to salvation is characterized by commitment and action.

**THE SACRED COW.** From early times, the Hindu's revered the cow and considered it a possessor of great power. The following verses from the Atharva Veda, praise the cow, identifying it with the entire visible Universe:

Worship to thee, springing to life, and Worship to thee when born! Worship, O Cow, to thy tail-hair, and to thy hooves, and to thy form! Hitherward, we invite with prayer, the Cow who pours a thousand streams, by whom the Heaven, by whom the earth, by whom those waters are preserved.....Forth from thy mouth, the songs came, from thy neck's nape sprang strength, O Cow. Sacrifice from thy flanks was born, and rays of sunlight from thy teats. From thy fore-quarters and thy thighs, motion was generated, Cow! Food from thine entrails was produced, and from thy belly came the plants.....They call the Cow immortal life, pay homage to the Cow as Death. She hath become this Universe, Fathers, and Rishis, hath become the Gods, and men, and Spirits. The man who hath this knowledge may receive the Cow with welcoming. So for the giver, willingly, doth perfect sacrifice pour milk.....The Cow is Heaven, the Cow is Earth, the Cow is Vishnu, Lord of Life. The Heavenly beings have drunk the out-pourings of the Cow. When these Heavenly beings have drunk the out-pourings of the Cow, they, in the bright One's dwelling-place, pay adoration to her milk. For some have milked her; some Worship the fatness she hath poured. They who have given a Cow to Him, who hath this knowledge, have gone up to the third region of the sky. He who hath given a Cow unto the Brahmans, winneth all the worlds. For Right is firmly set in her, devotion, and Religious zeal. Both Gods and mortal men depend, for life and being, on the Cow. She hath become this Universe: all that the Sun surveys is she (Atharva Veda X:10).

## CHAPTER TWO--JAINISM

Hinduism gave birth to three Religious factions: Jainism, Buddhism, and Sikhism. Jainism was its first offspring and though, like any child, it appears in a certain light to be somewhat like its mother, it eventually established itself as a new Religion. Within the Hindu Religion, Jainism started as a Reformation Movement, but soon found itself as an Independent Religion, based upon the teachings of its Founder, Mahavira. Although relatively small in its number of adherents, (3 million Indian followers) compared to other Religions, Jainism has had an influence disproportionate to its size.

**FOUNDER MAHAVIRA.** Jainism, in contrast to Hinduism, is based upon a Founder and Leader, known as Mahavira. This name actually is an Honorific Title, signifying “great man.” Tradition places the birth of Mahavira at 599 B.C., in northeastern India, which would make him a contemporary of Buddha. Tradition also relates that Mahavira was the second son of a Rajah, living in luxurious surroundings. He married and had one daughter.

When his parents died, Mahavira decided, at the age of 30, to a life of self-denial, pleading to deny himself the care of his body, and not to speak for 12 years. After a short time, Mahavira put off the robe he wore, and wandered naked through India, receiving injuries from both man and beast. He wandered for 12 years, until he reached enlightenment at the age of 42.

“The Sacred Books of the East” record, “During the thirteenth year, in a squatting position...exposing himself to the heat of the sun...with knees high and the head low, in deep meditation, in the midst of abstract meditation, he reached Nirvana, the complete and full, the unobstructed, infinite absolute” (F. M. Mueller, ed., “Sacred Books of the East,” Vol. 22, Oxford: Krishna Press, 1879-1910, p. 201).

After reaching enlightenment, Mahavira stopped living by himself and took on Disciples, preaching his new-found belief. So, he continued to live until the end of his life, at which said time, he was said to have over 14,000 Monks in his brotherhood (Maurice Rawlings, “Life-Wish: Reincarnation: Reality or Hoax,” Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.,

1981, p. 63).

**JAINISM'S DEBT TO HINDUISM.** It must be stressed that Jainism did not appear in Religious vacuum. Jainism began as a heretical movement within Hinduism, but now can only be viewed as a distinct Religion with reference to Hinduism. Mahavira held firmly to such Hindu beliefs as the Law of Moral Retribution or Karma and the transmigration of souls, after death. There were, however, many points of disagreement between the two Religions at the inception of Jainism. Herbert Stroup lists some of the differences between Hinduism and Jainism:

1. The doctrine of Karma, the Law of Causation, as applied to the moral sphere, seemed to him, too rigid and restrictive, for within Hinduism, its rule is absolute. He sought to lessen this rigidity and to find a practical measure of release from it.
2. The Hindu conception of rebirth came to mean, especially in the Upanishadic Period, that individual souls do not possess real individuality. According to Hindu doctrine, souls do not remain individualized in Eternity, but become absorbed in Brahma. Mahavira strongly asserted the independence or autonomy of the individual soul.
3. Hinduism taught Caste. In Mahavira's time, these lines of social organization, were still in the making and he benefited to a considerable extent personally from the System. But he was strongly Democratic, believing in the worth of all individuals. He taught the importance of a Casteless Society.
4. The Priestly Caste, as a result of the solidifying Caste System, was clearly becoming the most influential group in Indian life. Mahavira was a member of the second or warrior Caste. This, had much to lose as the Priesthood became dominant in the Society, and a good deal of the impact of early Jainism was in opposition to the prominence of the Priestly Caste.
5. Particularly in the Vedic and Brahmanic periods, Hinduism was Polytheistic. One hymn in the Vedic Literature suggests that, the Gods

may number as many as 3,333. Mahavira, in the simplicity of his character, was repelled by the extremes of Vedic Polytheism. In fact, he did not teach the existence of a God at all.

6. Hinduism in the Vedic and Brahmanic Period, also taught the importance of animal sacrifices. These ceremonial occasions became complex affairs with large numbers of animals slaughtered. Mahavira may well have developed his emphasis upon harmlessness (Ahimsa) to all living things in response to the excesses of animal sacrifice in his time (Herbert Stroup, "Four Religions of Asia," New York: Harper and Row, 1968, p. 99).

**JAINISM AND BELIEF IN GOD.** Mahavira was vehemently opposed to the idea of acknowledging or worshipping a Supreme Being. He once said:

A Monk or a Nun should not say, "The God of the Sky!" "The God of the Thunderstorm!" "The God who begins to Rain!" "May rain fall!" "May the crops grow!" "May the King conquer!" They should not use such speech. But, knowing the nature of things, he should say, "The air." "A cloud is gathered, or come down" "The cloud has rained." This is the whole duty (F.M. Mueller, ed., op.cit., Vol. 22, p.152).

Later Jainism, however, did acknowledge and Worship a deity: Mahavira, himself, became their object of Worship.

**DEIFICATION OF MAHAVIRA.** Although Mahavira denied that any God or Gods existed to be worshipped, he, like other Religious Leaders, was defied by his later followers. He was given the designation as the 24<sup>th</sup> Tirthankara, the last and greatest of the Saviour beings. Mahavira was regarded as having descended from Heaven without sin and with all knowledge.

He descended from Heaven....The venerable ascetic Mahavira descended the Great Vimana (Palace of the Gods) (Ibid., pp. 189.190).

Having wisdom, Mahavira committed no sin himself....He meditated, free from sin and desire (Ibid., p. 86. 87).

He possessed Supreme, unlimited, unimpeded knowledge and intuition (Ibid., p. 257).

**SELF-DENIAL.** Jainism is a Religion of Asceticism, involving rigid self-denial. Salvation or liberation could be achieved only by ascetic practices. These practices for the Monks are listed in the “Five Great Vows” and include the Renunciation of : (1) killing living things, (2) lying, (3) greed, (4) sexual pleasure, and (5) worldly attachments.

The Monks, according to Mahavira, were to avoid women entirely, because he believed they were the cause of all types of evil:

Women are the greatest temptation in the world. This has been declared by the Sage. He should not speak of women, nor look at them, nor converse with them, nor claim them as his own, nor do their work (Ibid., p. 48).

These “Five Great Vows” could be fulfilled completely only by those Jains who were living the Monastic life. Consequently, the Laymen, who practiced Jainism, were given a more modified code to follow.

**NON-VIOLENCE.** Central to Jainism, is the practice of non-violence or Ahimsa. The dedicated, Jain, is constrained to reverence life and is forbidden to take life even at the lowest level. The obvious consequence of this belief, is strict vegetarianism. Farming is frowned upon, since the process would inevitably involve killing of lower forms of life. Ahimsa has been summed up in the following statement:

This is the quintessence of wisdom: not to kill anything (Ibid., Vol. 45, p. 247).

**THE PRINCIPLES OF JAINISM.** Among the Sacred Books of Jainism, the 12 Angas, hold the foremost position. In the second Anga, called Sutra-Keit-Anga, the following sayings are contained, which give insight into the nature of Jainism.

Know what causes the bondage of the soul; and knowing, try to remove it. All things are Eternal by their very nature. As imprisoned birds do not get out of their cage, so those ignorant of right or wrong, do not get out of their misery. There are three ways of committing sins: by our actions; by authorizing others, and by approval. A Sage leads a life as far removed from love as from hate. All living beings hate pain: therefore, do not injure them or kill them. This is the essence of wisdom: not to kill anything.

Leave off pride, anger, deceit, and greed. Men suffer individually for the deeds they themselves have done. The wise men should consider that not he alone suffers; all creatures in the world suffer. Conceit is a very thin thorn; it is difficult to pull out. No man should seek fame and respect by his austerities. A man should treat all creatures in the world as he himself would like to be treated. He who is purified by meditation, is like a ship in the water that avoids all dangers until it reaches the shore. Do not maintain that there is no such thing as good or evil, but that there is good and evil.

The reason most Jains are wealthy is that their devotion to Ahimsa precludes their assuming most manual jobs. They were left to run such non-life-threatening occupations as finance, commerce, and banking.

## CHAPTER THREE—BUDDHISM

Buddhism began in India about 500 years before the birth of Christ. The people living, at that time, had become disillusioned with certain beliefs of Gubsyuan, including the Caste System, which had grown extremely complex. The number of outcasts (those who did not belong to any particular Caste) was continuing to grow.

Moreover, the Hindu belief of an endless cycle of births, deaths, and rebirths was viewed with dread. Consequently, the people turned to a variety of beliefs, including the worship of animals, to satisfy this Spiritual vacuum. Many different sects of Hinduism arose, the most successful, being that of Buddhism, which denies the authority of the Vedas.

**THE BUDDHA.** Buddhism, unlike Hinduism, can point to a specific Founder. However, in Buddhism, like so many other Religions, fanciful stories arose concerning events in the life of the Founder, Siddhartha Gautama (Fifth Century B.C.):

Works devoted to the exposition of philosophical doctrines or Religions, usually begin with the biography of the Founder. Most of these biographies are, however, largely or not, wholly mythical. The piety of the average Disciples has never failed to make the Sages, whom they celebrate, perform such impossible deeds as are calculated to increase their renown in the eyes of the people, so that often enough within a few years of their death, many of these Masters are already seen to be transformed into mythological figures. The Buddha was no exception. Archaeological discoveries have proved, beyond a doubt, his historical character, but apart from the legends, we know very little about the circumstances of his life (Alexandra David-Neel, "Buddhism: Its Doctrines and Its Methods," New York: St. Martin's Press, 1977, p. 15).

Though Buddha, as well as other Religious Leaders, was deified by later Disciples, this was not the case with Jesus of Nazareth. The accounts of His miracles and His

claims as to being God in human flesh, were recorded from eyewitnesses testimony, rather than having been developed over a long period of time. (See 1 John 1:3 and 2 Peter 1:16).

**EARLY BIOGRAPHY.** The Buddha, or “enlightened one,” was born about 560 B.C., in northeastern India. His family name was Gautama, his given name Siddhartha. Siddhartha was the son of Rajah, or Ruler. His mother died when he was just a week old and Siddhartha was cared for by his mother’s sister, who was also the Rajah’s second wife. There was supposedly a Prophecy given at the time of his birth by a Sage at his father’s Court.

The Prophecy said, that the child would be a great King, if he stayed at home, but if he decided to leave home, he would become a Saviour for mankind. This bothered his father, for he wanted his son to succeed him as King. Therefore, to keep him at home, his father surrounded him with wealth and pleasures and kept all painful and ugly things out of his sight.

Siddhartha eventually married and had a son, but was still confined to the Palace and its pleasures. One day, he informed his father, that he wished to see the world. This excursion would forever change his life, for it was during this journey that he saw “the four passing sights.”

Although his father ordered the streets to be cleansed and decorated and all elderly or infirmed people to stay inside, there were those who did not get the message. The first troubling sight Siddhartha saw was that of a decrepit old man. When Saddhartha asked what happened to this man, he was told that the man was old, as everyone someday would become.

Later, he met a sick man and was told that all people were liable to be sick and suffer pain like that individual.

He then saw a funeral procession with a corpse on its way to cremation, the followers weeping bitterly. When asked what that meant, the Prince was informed that it was the way of life, for sooner or later, both Prince and Pauper would have to die.

The last sight, was that of a Monk, begging for his food. The tranquil look on the beggar’s face convinced Siddhartha, that this type of life was for him. Immediately, he

left the Palace and his family, in search of enlightenment. The night that he left his home to seek enlightenment, became known as the Great Renunciation.

The former Prince, now a beggar, spent his time wandering from place to place, seeking wisdom. Unsatisfied by the truths taught in the Hindu Scriptures, he became discouraged, but continued on his quest. He tried Asceticism, but this gave him no peace. The fateful day in his life came while he was meditating beneath a fig tree.

**BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT.** Deep in meditation, he reached the highest degree of God consciousness, known as Nirvana. He supposedly stayed under the fig tree for seven days, after that, the fig tree was called the Bodhi, or the Bo Tree, the Tree of Wisdom. The truths he learned he would now impart to the world, no longer as Siddhartha Gautama, but as the Buddha, “ the enlightened one.”

When Buddha emerged from his experience under the Bo Tree, he met with five Monks, who had been his companions. It was to these Monks, that the Buddha began his Teaching Ministry with the Sermon at Benares. The Sermon contained the following:

These two extremes, Monks, are not to be practiced by one who has gone forth from the world. What are the two? That, conjoined with the passions and luxury, which is low, vulgar, common, ignoble, and useless; and that conjoined with self-torture, which is painful, ignoble, and useless. Avoiding these two extremes, the Blessed One has gained, the enlightenment of the Middle Path, which produces insight and knowledge, and leads to calm, to higher knowledge, enlightenment, Nirvana. And what, Monks, is the Middle Path....? It is the Noble Eightfold Path: namely, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration....Now this, Monks, is the Noble Truth of Pain (Dukkha): birth is painful, old age is painful, sickness is painful, death is painful, sorrow, lamentation, dejection, and despair are painful. Contact with unpleasant things is painful, not getting what one wishes is painful. In short, the five components of existence are painful. Now this, Monks, is the Noble Truth of the cause of Pain: the

craving, which tends to rebirth, combined with pleasure and lust, finding pleasure here and there; namely, the craving for passion, the craving for existence, the craving for non-existence. Now this, Monks, is the Noble Truth of the cessation of Pain, the cessation without a reminder of craving, the abandonment, forsaking, release, non-attachment. Now this, Monks, is the Noble Truth of the Pain that leads to the cessation of pain: this is the Noble Eightfold Path (E.A. Burt, ed., "The Teachings of the Compassionate Buddha," New York: New American Library, 1955, pp. 29, 30).

After the Sermon at Benares, the Buddha started to spread his teachings to the people of India. The Indian people, disillusioned with Hinduism, listened intently to this new doctrine. By the time of Buddha's death, at age 80, his teachings had become a strong force in India.

**THE DEATH OF BUDDHA.** The following discourse is from the Tripitaka. The dying Buddha is instructing a young Monk against craving, one of the major doctrines of Theravada Buddhism:

I am old now, Ananda, and full of years: my Journey nears its end, and I have reached my sum of days, for I am nearly eighty years old. Just as a worn out cart can only be kept going if it is tied up with thongs, so the body of the Tathagata can only be kept going by bandaging it. Only when the Tathagata no longer attends to any outward object, when all separate sensations stops and he is deep in inner concentration, is his body at ease. So, Ananda, you must be your own lamps, be your own refuges. Take refuge in nothing outside yourselves. Hold firm to the truth as a lamp and a refuge, and do not look for refuge to anything besides yourselves. A Monk becomes his own lamp and refuge by continually looking on his body, feelings, perceptions, moods, and ideas in such a manner that he conquers the cravings and depressions of ordinary man and is always strenuous, self-possessed, and collected in mind. Whoever among my Monks does this,

either now or when I am dead, if he is anxious to learn, will teach the Summit.

**THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS AND THE EIGHTFOLD PATH.** “The First Noble Truth” is the existence of suffering. Birth is painful, and death is painful; disease and old age are painful. Not having what we desire is painful, and having what we do not desire is also painful.

“The Second Noble Truth” is the cause of suffering. It is the craving desire for the pleasures of the senses, which seeks satisfaction now here, now there; the craving for happiness and prosperity in this life and in future lives.

“The Third Noble Truth” is the ending of suffering. To be free of suffering, one must give up, get ride of, extinguish this very craving, so that no passion and no desire remain.

“The “Fourth Noble Truth” leads to the ending of all pain, by way of the Eightfold Path.

The first step on that path is Right Views: You must accept the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

The second step is Right Resolve: You must renounce the pleasures of the senses; you must harbor no ill will toward anyone and harm no living creature.

The third step is Right Speech: Do not lie, do not slander, or abuse anyone. Do not indulge in idle talk.

The fourth step is Right Behavior: Do not destroy any living creature; take only what is given to you; do not commit any unlawful sexual act.

The fifth step is Right Occupation: You must earn your livelihood in a way that will harm no one.

The sixth step is Right Effort: You must resolve and strive, heroically, to prevent any evil qualities from arising in you and to abandon any evil qualities from arising in you and to abandon any evil qualities that you may possess. Strive to acquire good qualities and encourage those, you do possess, to grow, increase, and be perfected.

The seventh step is Right Contemplation: Be observant, strenuous, alert, contemplative, free of desire and of sorrow.

The eighth step is Right Meditation: When you have abandoned all sensuous pleasures, all evil qualities, both joy and sorrow, you must then enter the four degrees of

meditation, which are produced by concentration.

**THERAVADA AND MAHAYANA BUDDHISM.** Early Buddhism was confined largely, to India, and is usually referred to as Theravada Buddhism. Later Buddhism, which became very popular outside of India (notably in China and Japan), became known as Mahayana Buddhism:

By the time of King Asoka (c. 236-232 B.C.), Indian Buddhism had split into a number of groups, generally referred to as, Theravada Schools. Again, around the beginning of the Christian Era, Mahayana Buddhism arose, being distinguished from Theravada Buddhism, primarily by its enlargement of the Bodhisattva Ideal, according to which, certain compassionate beings or Bodhisattva's defer their own Emancipation, in order to save others, and by its consequent enlargement of the offer of salvation, making it available not only to those who enter Monastic Orders, but to all who trust in a Bodhisattva. For several Centuries, Buddhism continued to evolve in India, developing in interaction with the various Indian Religions and Philosophies, but due to the Islamic Invasion of the Thirteenth Century, it ceased to exist in the land of its birth (Agency for Cultural Affairs, "Japanese Religion: A Survey," Tokyo, New York and San Francisco: Kodansha International, Ltd., 1972, 1981, p. 48).

As we can see from the comparative chart, below, Mahayana Buddhism had many qualities, which differed from Theravada Buddhism, but which were very attractive to new converts:

<b>THERAVADA</b>	<b>MAHAYANA</b>
Man as an individual	Man as involved with others
Man on his own in the Universe (Emancipation by self-effort)	Man not alone (salvation by grace)
Key virtue: wisdom	Key virtue: Karuna, compassion

Religion: a full-time job (primarily for Monks)	Religion: relevant to life in the world (for Laymen as well)
Ideal: the Arhat	Ideal: the Bodhisattva
Buddha: a Saint	Buddha: a Saviour
Eschews metaphysics	Elaborates metaphysics
Eschews ritual	Includes ritual
Confines prayer to meditation	Includes petitionary prayer
Conservative	Liberal

(Huston Smith, "The Religions of Man," New York: Harper and Row, 1958, p. 138).

**NIRVANA.** A key concept in Buddhism is Nirvana, the final goal for the Buddhists. Donald K. Swearer gives insight to this important concept:

Nirvana has been a troublesome idea for students of Buddhism. Just what is it? The term itself does not offer much help. Like not-self (An-Atta), Nirvana is a negative term. Literally, it means the "blowing out" of the flame of desire, the negation of suffering (Dukkha). This implies that Nirvana is not to be thought of as a place, but as a total re-orientation or state of being, realized as a consequence of the extinction of blinding and binding attachment. Thus, at least, Nirvana implies that the kind of existence one has achieved is inconceivable in the ordinary terms of the world (Donald K. Swearer, "Buddhism," Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1977, p. 44).

The following texts mention Nirvana:

Dispassion is called the Way. It is said: "Through dispassion, is one freed." Yet, in meaning, all these (words: stopping, renunciation, surrender, release, lack of clinging) are synonyms for Nirvana. For, according to its ultimate meaning, Nirvana is the Aryan Truth of the stopping of suffering (Edward Conze, et. al, "Buddhist Texts Through the Ages," New York: Philosophical Library, 1954, "Path of Purity 507" p.100).

"Venerable Nagasena, things produced of Karma are seen in the world,

things, produced of cause are seen, things produced of nature are seen. Tell me, what in the world is born, not of Karma, not of cause, not of nature?" (Ibid., "The Questions of King Milinda" p. 97).

There is, Monks, that plane where there is neither extension nor....motion nor the plane of infinite space...nor that of neither perception, nor non-perception, neither this world, nor another, neither the moon, nor the sun. Here, Monks, I say, that there is no coming or going or remaining or decreasing or uprising, for this is itself, without any support....

There is, Monks, an unborn, not become, not made, uncompounded, and..... because there is.....an escape can be shown for what is born, has become, is made, is compounded (Ibid., "Udana 81" pp. 94, 95).

Swearer comments on these passages:

These three passages point to different aspects of the concept of Nirvana. The first passage illustrates our initial claim about Nirvana, namely, that it is the negation of attachment and suffering (Dukkha). The second, a question from King Milinda, is answered, as you probably guessed, by Nirvana. Nirvana, then, is the one thing that is not caused by anything else. The third quotation pushes the idea even further. Nirvana, as the Absolute Truth, cannot be adequately expressed in words. Nonetheless, the term implies that there is a goal to be reached and that this goal surpasses anything experienced in this world of conventional understanding (Swearer, op. cit., p. 45).

**THE LAITY.** Conze explains how the Laity can gain Religious merit:

The Layman's one and only Religious task, at present, can be to increase his store of merit. The Buddhist Religion offers him four avenues for doing so:

1. He must observe the five precepts, or at least some of them. On Feast Days, every fortnight, he may add to them another three, i.e., he fasts, avoids worldly amusements, and uses neither unguents nor ornaments. A few

observed still two more precepts, i.e., they did not sleep on a high, big bed and they accepted no gold or silver.

2. He must have devotion for the Three Treasures and Faith, is the virtue opposite to a householder's state of life. But this faith is not an exclusive one and does not entail a rejection of his ancestral beliefs and of the Brahmanic Religious usages of his social environment. The Triple Jewel is not a jealous God and is not displeased by the Worship of the deities of a man's Country or Caste.
3. He must be generous, especially to the Monks, and give as much as possible to them, not for their upkeep, but also for Religious buildings, inhabited by no one. To some extent, the merit produced by gifts, depends on the Spiritual endowments of the recipient, and therefore, the sons of Sakyamuni, and in particular, The Arhats, are the best possible "field for planting merit,"
4. He may worship the relics of the Buddha. The actual attitude of the Buddhist to these teeth and bones is difficult to describe in terms readily understood in the West. It is obviously impossible for them to "pray" to the Buddha, for the reason that, He is no longer there, being (Edward Conze, "A Short History of Buddhism," London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1980, p. 39).

**BUDDHIST PRECEPTS.** There are five precepts taught by Buddhism that all Buddhist's should follow:

1. Kill no living thing (including insects).
2. Do not steal.
3. Do not commit adultery.
4. Tell no lies.
5. Do not drink intoxicants or take drugs.

There are other precepts that apply only to Monks and Nuns. These include:

6. Eat moderately and only at the appointed time.
7. Avoid that which excites the senses.

8. Do not wear adornments (including perfume).
9. Do not sleep in luxurious beds.
10. Accept no silver or gold.

**A BUDDHIST CREED.** In 1981, Colonel H. S. Olcott, one of the founding President's of the Theosophical Society, proposed a common platform for all Buddhist Schools of Thought. Various representatives of different Buddhist persuasions, reviewed his work, and found it to be satisfactory. It was published as an appendix to his "Buddhist Catechism." The fundamental Buddhistic beliefs are:

1. Buddhists are taught to show the same tolerance, forbearance, and brotherly love to all men, without distinction; and an unswerving kindness towards the members of the animal kingdom.
2. The Universe was evolved, not created; and it functions according to law, not according to the caprice of any God.
3. The truths upon which Buddhism is founded are natural. They have, we believe, been taught in successive Kalpas, or worldly periods, by certain illuminated beings, called "Buddha's," the name Buddha, meaning "enlightened."
4. The fourth teacher in the present Kalpa, was Sakya Muni, or Guatama Buddha, who was born in a Royal family in India about 2,500 years ago. He is a Historical Personage, and his name was Siddhartha Gautama.
5. Sakya Muni taught, that ignorance produces desire; unsatisfied desire is the cause of rebirth, and rebirth, the cause of sorrow. To get rid of sorrow; therefore, it is necessary to escape rebirth; to escape rebirth, it is necessary to extinguish desire; and to extinguish desire, it is necessary to destroy ignorance.
6. Ignorance fosters the belief that rebirth is a necessary thing. When ignorance is destroyed, the worthlessness of every such rebirth, considered as an end in itself, is perceived, as well as the paramount need of adopting a course of life, by which the necessity for such repeated births, can be

abolished. Ignorance also begets the illusive and illogical idea that there is only one existence for man, and the other illusion; that this one life is followed by states of unchangeable pleasure or torment.

7. The dispersion of all this ignorance can be attained by the preserving practice of an all-embracing altruism in conduct, development of intelligence, wisdom in thought, and destruction of desire for the lower personal pleasures.
8. The desire to live being the cause of rebirth, when that is extinguished rebirths cease and the perfected individual attains by meditation that highest state of peace, called Nirvana.
9. Sakya Muni taught that ignorance can be dispelled and sorrow removed by the knowledge of the four Noble Truths, viz:
  1. The miseries of existence;
  2. The cause productive of misery, which is the desire ever renewed of satisfying oneself without being able ever to secure that end;
  3. The destruction of that desire, or the estranging of oneself from it;
  4. The means of obtaining this destruction of desire. The means which he pointed out is called the Noble Eightfold Path, viz: Right Belief; Right Thought; Right Speech; Right Action; Right Means of Livelihood; Right Exertion; Right Remembrance; Right Meditation.
10. Right Meditation leads to Spiritual enlightenment, or the development of that Buddha-like faculty which is latent in every man.
11. The essence of Buddhism as summed up by the Tathagata (Buddha) himself is:
 

To cease from all sin,  
To get virtue,  
To purify the heart.
12. The Universe is subject to a natural causation, known as, "Karma." The

merits and demerits of a being in past existences determine his condition in the present one. Each man, therefore, has prepared the causes of the effects which he now experiences.

13. The obstacles to the attainment of good Karma may be removed by the observance of the following precepts, which are embraced in the moral code of Buddhism, viz: (1) kill not; (2) steal not; (3) indulge in no forbidden sexual pleasure; (4) lie not; (5) take no intoxicating or stupefying drug or liquor. Five other precepts, which need not here be enumerated, should be observed by those, who would attain more quickly than the average Layman, the release from misery and rebirth.
14. Buddhism discourages superstitious credulity, Gautama Buddha taught it to be the duty of a parent to have his child educated in Science and Literature. He also taught that no one should believe what is spoken by any Sage, written in any Book, or affirmed by a tradition, unless it accords, with reason.

Drafted as a common platform upon which all Buddhists can agree (Cited by Christmas Humphreys, "Buddhism," London: Penguin Books, 1951, pp. 71-73).

**MISSIONARY EMPHASIS.** Nichiren Shoshu's recent accelerated growth (1970 figures by the Japanese Office of Cultural Affairs put membership at over 16 million) can be attributed directly to its Missionary emphasis. Their members practice a proselytizing method called "Shakubuku," their goal being to convert the world to the one true faith:

Soka Gakkai regards itself as not only the one true Buddhist Religion, but the one true Religion on earth. Its principal aims are the propagation of its Gospel throughout the world, by forced conversion, if necessary, and the denunciation and destruction of all other faiths as "false" Religions.....Soka Gakkai is unmistakably a Church militant in Japan geared for a determined march abroad. Its significance to America and all Nations cannot be ignored. Its target is World Domination (Richard Okamoto, "Japan," "Look,"

September 19, 1963, p. 16).

**ZEN BUDDHISM.** Zen is a branch of Mahayana Buddhism that has become widely known in the West.

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The Chinese added to the many schools of Buddhism a new school, whose name reveals its history. Dhyana is the Indian word for meditation; it was changed in China to Chan and in Japan to Zen, which is now the best-known title of this sect (Elizabeth Seeger, "Eastern Religions," New York: Crowell, 1973, p. 145).

The exact origin of Zen is unknown. Legend has it that Zen's teaching was derived from Bodhidharma, a wandering Buddhist Master living in India, 600 years before Christ. Bodhidharma supposedly told a Chinese Emperor that the basic tenets of Buddhism are not dependent upon the Scriptures; its teachings were directly transmitted from mind to mind and do not need to be explained in words. This sums up Zen's Unorthodox approach to its teaching, for they have no Sacred literature which they use for their instruction, but employ many writings; Buddhistic or not, they deem necessary to further their Religion. Bodhidharma summed up the Zen viewpoint with this famous saying:

A special tradition outside the Scriptures,  
No dependence on words,  
A direct pointing at man,  
Seeing into one's own nature and the attainment of wisdom.

**DEVELOPMENT.** Zen actually developed about one thousand years after the death of the Buddha; however, it contains Buddha's emphasis on meditation, which led to his enlightenment. One statement, attributed to the Buddha, has become a frequent reference by Zen Teachers: "Look within, you are the Buddha."

This goes along with Buddha's deathbed statement, that his Disciples must find their own ways, through self-effort. This self-effort is the foundation of Zen practice, for only

through disciplined individual work can one attain enlightenment, known in Zen as “Kensho” or “Satori.”

Zen has found great popularity in the West, with a large selection of literature available on the subject, including such titles as “Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance,” “The Zen of Seeing,” and “Zen and Creative Management.” The list of titles is long and varied.

One famous story tells about a man who desired to be a Zen Master. He asked to be taught Zen. The Zen Master did not speak, but began to pour a cup of tea for his visitor, using a cup that was already filled. The extra tea overflowed and ran across the table to drip to the rice-mat-covered floor. Still, the Zen Master kept pouring, until the pot was empty. He finally spoke: “You are like this cup,” he said, “You are full. How can I pour Zen into you? Empty yourself and come back.”

**ZAZEN.** Central to Zen practice is “Zazen.” Zazen is the method of sitting in Zen meditation, which is done daily at specific times, with occasional periods of intense meditation lasting one week. The goal is final enlightenment. The practice of Zazen is done under the guiding hand of a Master (Roshi). Nancy Wilson-Ross elucidates:

The very heart of Zen practice lies in Zazen, or sitting meditation done at specific times daily, with longer and more intensive periods on occasions of Sesshin, in which concentrated “sitting” may endure for as long as a week. Zazen is a formalized procedure, which consists of active meditation, interspersed with the chanting of Sutras. In this daily Zen, chanting the Sutra, known as the “Prajna Paramita,” is always included. The actual sitting itself, is preceded by prescribed use of bells, wooden clappers and the exchange of formal bows. People who practice this sit, facing a wall or the center of the Zendo, depending on the tradition of the specific sect to which the group belongs or the preference of the presiding Zen Roshi. The usual Zazen posture is the full lotus or half-lotus, cross-legged sitting position on a specific type of round cushion. The position of the hands is strictly specified: they are held in front of the abdomen, the back of the left,

in the palm of the right, the thumbs lightly touching. The eyes are not closed, although the gaze is directed downward and is fixed a little in advance of the sitter. Zazen is terminated by the sound of wooden clappers, the ringing of a bell three times and the chanting of the "Four Great Vows." Periods of formal sitting may be interspersed by walking meditation, known as "Kinhin." This is essentially a method for giving the body relief from the prolonged sitting posture, but it serves also as a way of practicing concentration, whether during a slow circling of the Zendo, or in a brisk walk outside (Nancy Wilson-Ross, "Buddhism: A Way of Thought," New York, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1980, p. 143).

**THE KOAN.** The Master, in attempting to aid his pupil toward enlightenment, gives him a verbal puzzle known as a "Koan." Solving the Koan supposedly leads the pupil into greater self-awareness. Commonly used Koans by Zen Masters number about 1,700, each of which, may have hundreds of "answers," depending upon the exact circumstances of the students' training. Knowing the answer is not nearly as important as experiencing or realizing the answer. The following are some examples of Koans:

A Master, Wu Tsu, says, "Let me take an illustration from a fable. A cow passes by a window. Its head, horns, and the four legs all pass by. Why did not the tail pass by?" What was the appearance of your face before your ancestors were born?

We are all familiar with the sound of two hands clapping. What is the sound of one hand? (If you protest that one hand can't clap, you go back to the foot of the class. Such a remark simply shows you haven't even begun to get the point). Li-ku, a high Government Officer of the T'ang Dynasty, asked a famous Ch'an Master: "A long time ago, a man kept a goose in a bottle. It grew larger and larger, until it could not get out of the bottle anymore. He did not want to break the bottle, nor did he wish to hurt the goose; how would you get it out?" The Master called out, "O Officer!" "Yes," was the response. "There, its out!"

A Monk asked Chao-chou, "What is the meaning of Bodhidharma's visit to China?" "The cypress tree in the courtyard," replied Bodhidharma. A Monk asked Thich Cam Thanh, "What is Buddha?" "Everything." The Monk then asked, "What is the mind of Buddha?" "Nothing has been Hidden." The Monk said again, "I don't understand." Cam Thanh replied, "You missed!"

**SATORI.** In Zen, the sudden illumination or enlightenment is known as Satori. Satori is an experience beyond analyzation and communication, bringing the practitioner into a state of maturity. The experience of Satori comes abruptly and momentarily, but it can be repeated. It cannot be willed into existence.

## CHAPTER FOUR--CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism, a religion of optimistic humanism, has had a monumental impact upon the life, social structure, and political philosophy of China. The founding of the Religion goes back to one man, known as Confucius, born a half-millennium before Christ.

### HISTORY

**THE LIFE OF CONFUCIUS.** Although Confucius occupies a hallowed place in Chinese tradition, little is verifiable about his life. The best source available is “The Analects,” the collection of his sayings made by his followers. Long after his death, much biographical detail on his life surfaced, but most of this material is of questionable historical value. However, there are some basic facts that can be accepted reasonably to give an outline of his life.

Confucius was born Chiu King, the youngest of 11 children, about 550 B.C., in the principality of Lu, which is located in present-day Shantung. He was a contemporary of the Buddha (although they probably never met) and lived immediately before Socrates and Plato. Nothing is known for certain concerning his ancestors, except the fact, that his surroundings were humble.

As he himself revealed: “When I was young, I was without rank and in humble circumstances.” His father died soon after his birth, leaving his upbringing to his mother. During his youth, Confucius participated in a variety of activities, including hunting and fishing; but, “On reaching the age of 15, I bent my mind to learning.”

He held a minor Government Post as a collector of taxes before he reached the age of 20. It was at this time, that Confucius married. However, his marriage was short-lived, ending in divorce; but, he did produce a son and a daughter from his unsuccessful marriage. He became a teacher in his early twenties, and that proved to be his calling in life.

His ability as a teacher became apparent and his fame spread rapidly, attracting a strong core of Disciples. Many were attracted by his wisdom. He believed that society would not be changed unless he occupied a Public Office where he could put his theories

into practice.

Confucius held minor Posts until age 50, when he became a High Official in Lu. His moral reforms achieved an immediate success, but he soon had a falling out with his Superiors and subsequently resigned his Post. Confucius spent the next 13 years wandering from State to State, attempting to implement his political and social reforms. He devoted the last five years of his life to writing and editing what have become Confucian Classics.

He died in Chufou, Shantung, in 479 B.C., having established himself as the most important teacher in Chinese culture. His Disciples referred to him as King Fu-tzu or Kung the Master, which has been Latinized into Confucius.

**CHINA BEFORE CONFUCIUS.** It is important to understand life in China at the time of Confucius in order to develop a better appreciation of the reforms he was attempting to institute. The age in which Confucius lived was characterized by Social Anarchy. Huston Smith gives insight into the condition of China during this difficult period:

By Confucius' day, however, the interminable warfare had degenerated a long way from this code of chivalrous honor toward the undiluted horror of The Period of the Warring States. The horror reached its height in the Century following Confucius' death. The chariot, arm of the tournament, gave way to the Calvary with its surprise attacks and sudden raids. Instead of nobly holding their prisoners for ransom, conquerors put them to death in mass executions. Soldiers were paid upon presenting the severed heads of their enemies. Whole populations, unlucky enough to be captured were beheaded, including women, children, and the aged. We read of mass slaughters of 60,000, 80,000, 82,000, and even 400,000. There are accounts of the conquered being thrown into boiling caldrons and their relatives forced to drink the human soup (Huston Smith, "The Religions of Man," New York: Harper and Row, 1965, p. 166).

It is easy to see how the need arose for someone like Confucius to provide answers

for how the people could live together harmoniously. Although the conduct of Chinese Officials was exceedingly corrupt, Confucius believed the situation was not hopeless, for the general population had not reached the point of total corruption.

Confucius believed China could be saved if the people would seek for the good of others, a practice of their ancestors. The role Confucius would play was not as a Saviour or Messiah, but as one who would put the people back in touch with the Ancients: “I transmit, but do not create. I believe in and love the Ancients. I venture to compare myself to our old “eng (an Ancient Official, who liked to tell stories).”

**THE VENERATION OF CONFUCIUS.** Like many great Religious Leaders, Confucius was eventually deified by his followers. The following chart traces the progress, which led to his ultimate deification:

B.C.

195                    The Emperor of China offered animal sacrifice at the tomb of Confucius.

A.D.

1                        He was given the Imperial Title, “Duke Ni, All-Complete and Illustrious.

57                      Regular sacrifice to Confucius was ordered at The Imperial and Provincial Colleges.

89                      He was raised to the higher Imperial rank of “Earl.”

267                    More elaborate animal sacrifices to Confucius were decreed four times yearly.

492                    He was canonized as “The Venerable, The Accomplished Sage.”

555                    Separate Temples for the Worship of Confucius were ordered at the Capital of every prefecture in China.

- 740 The Statue of Confucius was moved from the side to the center of the Imperial College, to stand with the Historical Kings of China.
- 1068-1086 Confucius was raised to the full rank of Emperor  
1906 December 31. An Imperial Rescript raised him to the rank of Co-assessor with the Deities, Heaven and Earth.
- 1914 The Worship of Confucius was continued by the First President of the Republic of China, Yuan Shi Kai (Robert E. Hume, "The World's Living Religions," New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, rev. ed., 1959, pp. 117, 118).

**THE LIFE OF MENCIUS.** One of the central figures in Confucianism is Meng-tsu (Latinized into Mencius) who became second only to Confucius in the History of Confucian thought. Mencius, born in the State of Chi'i, in 371 B.C., studied with a Disciple of Confucius' grandson, Tzu-ssu.

Like his Master, Mencius spent most of his life traveling from State to State, seeking those in Leadership, who would adopt the teachings of Confucius. The Feudal Order in China had become worse than in the Days of Confucius and the attempts of Mencius to reverse this trend were of no avail.

Mencius, rejected by the Politicians of his day, turned to teaching and developing Confucian thought. Among his accomplishments was the clarification of a question that Confucius left ambiguous: the basic nature of man. Mencius taught that man is basically good. This is still a basic pre-supposition of Confucian thought.

In his classic example, Mencius compared the potentiality of the goodness of man to the natural flow of water. Though water naturally flows downward, it can be made to flow uphill or splashed above one's head, but only as a result of external force. Likewise, man's nature is basically good, but can be forced into bad ways through external pressure.

This teaching, which is diametrically opposed to the Biblical doctrine of original and

Universal sin, has made the proclamation of the Gospel that much more difficult among the people in China who accept the ideas of Mencius, concerning the nature of man.

**CONFUCIUS AND LAO-TZU.** There are reports, perhaps untrue, that Confucius met with Lao-tzu (var. sp. Lao-tze), the Founder of Taoism. Confucius had heard about the old Archivist with strange philosophical beliefs and decided to investigate. The meeting was anything but amiable, however. Confucius, still a young man, had become famous because of his teachings and wisdom, and Lao-tzu was annoyed with him.

Joseph Gaer records what is believed to have taken place:

Confucius had prepared a number of questions he wished to ask of Lao-tze concerning his doctrines. But before he could even begin on the topic, Lao-tze questioned Confucius about his interests.

Confucius replied that he was interested in the History of the Ancients, especially as recorded in "The Book of Annals" (Shu K'ing).

"The men of whom you speak, are long since dead and their bones are turned to ashes in their graves." Lao-tze interrupted.

Their talk continued, with Lao-tze asking the questions and Confucius answering them deferentially and politely. It was his belief, Confucius explained, that man is by nature good, and that knowledge can keep him good.

"But why study the Ancients?" Lao-tze asked impatiently.

Confucius tried to explain his belief that new knowledge must be based upon old knowledge.

Lao-tze interrupted him, saying: "Put away your polite airs and your vain display of fine robes.

The wise man does not display his treasure to those he does not know. And he cannot learn justice from the Ancients."

"Why not?" asked Confucius.

"It is not bathing that makes the pigeon white," was Lao-tze's reply. And he abruptly ended the interview (Joseph Gaer, "What the Great Religions Believe," New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1963, p. 76).

Whether or not this meeting occurred, the account amply illustrates the difference between the two men and the Religions which proceeded from them.

**THE SOURCES OF CONFUCIANISM.** During his teaching career, Confucius collected Ancient Manuscripts, which he edited and on which he wrote commentaries. He arranged these Manuscripts into four Books to which he also added a fifth Book of his own. These works are known as the “Five Classics.”

**THE FIVE CLASSICS.** The “Five Classics,” as we have them today, have gone through much editing and alteration by Confucius’ Disciples, yet there is much in them that can be considered the work of Confucius. “The Five Classics” are:

1. The Book of Changes (I Ching) The I Ching is a collection to eight trian-grams and 64 hexagrams which consist solely of broken and unbroken lines. These lines were supposed to have great meaning if the key were discovered.
2. The Book of Annals (Shu K’ing). This is a work of the history of the five preceding dynastics. The example of the Ancients was crucial to Confucius’ understanding of how the superior man should behave.
3. The Book of Poetry (Shih Ching ). The Book of Ancient Poetry was assembled by Confucius because he believed the reading of poetry would aid in making a man virtuous.
4. The Book of Ceremonies (li Chi). This work taught the superior man to act in the right or traditional way. Again Confucius stressed doing things in the same way as the Ancients.
5. The Annals of Spring and Autumn (Chu’ un Ch’ iu). This Book, supposedly written by Confucius, gave a commentary on the events of the state of Lu at Confucius’ time.

**THE TEACHINGS OF CONFUCIUS.** None of these works contain the unique teachings of Confucius, but are rather, an anthology of works he collected, and from

which, he taught. Confucius' own teachings have come down to us from four Books written by his Disciples. They include:

1. The Analects. This is the most important source we have on Confucius. The Analects are sayings of both Confucius and his Disciples.
2. The Great Learning. This work, which deals with the education and training of a gentleman, comes not from the hand of Confucius, but rather from a later period (about 250 B.C.).
3. The Doctrine of the Mean. This work deals with the relationship of human nature to the order of the Universe. Authorship is uncertain (part of it may be attributed to Confucius' grandson (Tzu-ssu), but it does not come from Confucius.
4. The Book of Mencius. Mencius wrote the first exposition of Confucian thought about 300 B.C., by collecting earlier teachings and attempting to put them down systematically. This work, which has had great influence and gives an idealistic view of life, stresses the goodness of human nature.

**THE DOCTRINES OF CONFUCIANISM.** Ancestor Worship. A common feature of Chinese Religion prevalent at Confucius' time, was the veneration of the Spirits of the dead by their living relatives. Supposedly, the continued existence of the ancestors in Spirit, is dependent upon the attention given them by their living relatives. It is also believed that the ancestors can control the fortunes of their families.

If the family provides for the ancestors' needs, then the ancestors will, in turn, cause good things to happen to their relatives. However, if the ancestors are neglected, it is believed that all sorts of evil can fall upon the living. Consequently, the living, sometimes live in fear of the dead. Richard C. Bush expands upon this thought:

The veneration of ancestors by Royal families and common people alike reveals several reasons for ancestor worship. People wanted their ancestors to be able to live beyond the grave in a manner similar to their lifestyle on Earth; hence, the living attempted to provide whatever would be

necessary. A secondary motive lurks in the background: if not provided with the food and weapons and utensils needed to survive in the life beyond, those ancestors might return as ghosts and cause trouble for the living. To this day, people celebrate a Festival of the Hungry Ghosts, placing food and wine in front of their homes to satisfy those ancestral Spirits or ghosts whose descendants have not cared for them and who, therefore, may wander back to old haunts. A third motive, is to inform the ancestors of what is going on at the present time, hopefully in such a way, that the ancestral Spirits may be assured that all is well and therefore, may rest in peace. Finally, ancestor worship, expresses the hope that ancestors will bless the living with children, prosperity, and harmony, and all that is most worthwhile (Richard C. Bush, "The Story of Religion in China," IL: Argus Communications, 1977 p. 2).

**FILIAL PEITY.** A concept that was entrenched in China long before the time of Confucius is that of Filial Piety (Hsaio), which can be described as devotion and obedience by the younger members of the family to the Elders. This was particularly the case of son to father. This loyalty and devotion to the family was the top priority in Chinese life. Such duty to the family, particularly devotion to the Elders, was continued throughout one's life.

This was expressed in "The Classic of Filial Peity": "The services of love and reverence to parents when alive, and those of grief and sorrow to them when dead - these completely discharge the fundamental duty of living men" (Max Mueller, ed., "Sacred Books of the East," Krishna Press, 1879-1910, Vol. III, p. 448).

Confucius stressed this concept in his teachings, and it was well received by the Chinese people, both then and now. In "The Analects," Confucius said:

The Master said, "A young man should be a good son at home and an obedient young man abroad, sparing of speech, but trustworthy in what he says, and should love the multitude at large, but cultivate the friendship of his fellow men" (1:6)..

Meng Wu Po, asked about being Filial. The Master said, “Give your father and mother no other cause for anxiety, than illness” (II:6).

Tzu-yu, asked about being Filial. The Master said, “Now-a-days, for a man to be Filial, means no more than that he is able to provide his parents with food. Even hounds and horses are in some way provided with food. If a man shows no reverence, where is the difference?” (II:2).

**DOCTRINAL PRINCIPLES.** Confucianism’s doctrines can be summarized by six key terms or ways. Jen, is the golden rule; Chun-tzu, the gentleman; Cheng-ming, is the role-player; Te, is virtuous power; Li, is the standard of conduct; and Wen, encompasses the arts of peace. A brief discussion of the six principles, reveals the basic doctrinal structure of Confucianism.

1. Jen. Jen has the idea of humaneness, goodness, benevolence, or man-to-manness. Jen is the golden rule, the rule of reciprocity; that is to say, do not do anything to others that you would not have them do to you.

“Tzu-Kung asked, “Is there a single word which can be a guide to conduct throughout one’s life?”

The Master said, “It is perhaps the word,” “Shu.”

Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire” (Confucius, “The Analects,” XV:24).

This is the highest virtue according to the Confucian way of life; if this principle could be put into practice, then mankind would achieve peace and harmony.

2. Chun-tzu. Chun-tzu can be translated variously as the gentleman, true manhood, the superior man, and man-at-his-best. The teachings of Confucius were aimed toward the gentleman, the man of virtue. Huston Smith observes, “If Jen is the ideal relationship between human beings, Chun-tzu refers to the ideal term of such relations” (Smith, op. cit., p. 180). Confucius had this to say about the gentlemen:

(Confucius:) He who in this world can practice five things, may indeed, be considered man-at-his-best.

What are they?

Humility, magnanimity, sincerity, diligence, and graciousness.

If you are humble, you will not be laughed at. If you are magnanimous, you will attract many to your side. If you are sincere, people will trust you. If you are gracious, you will get along well with your subordinates (James R. Ware, trans., "The Sayings of Confucius," New York: New American Library, 1955, p.110).

It is this type of man, who can transform society into the peaceful state it was meant to be.

3. Cheng-ming. Another important concept, according to Confucius, was Cheng-ming, or the rectification of names. For a society to be properly ordered, Confucius believed everyone must act his proper part. Consequently, a King should act like a King, a gentleman like a gentleman, etc. Confucius said, "Duke Ching of Ch'i, asked Confucius about Government. Confucius answered, "Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son...." ("The Analects." XII:11). He said elsewhere, "Tzu-lu said, "If the Lord of Wei, left the Administration (Cheng) of his State to you, what would you put first?" The Master said, "If something has to be put first, it is perhaps, the rectification of names" ("The Analects," XIII:3).
4. Te. The word te, literally means "power," but, the concept has a far wider meaning. The power, needed to rule, according to Confucius, consists of more than mere physical might. It is necessary that the leaders be men of virtue, who can inspire their subjects to obedience, through example. This concept, had been lost during Confucius' time, with the prevailing attitude being, that physical might, was the only proper way to order a society.

Confucius looked back at History to the Sages of the past, Yao and Shun, along with the Founders of the Chiu Dynasty, as examples of such virtuous rule. If the rulers would follow the example of the past, then the people would rally around the virtuous example.

5. Li. One of the key words used by Confucius is, Li. The term has a variety of meanings, depending upon the context. It can mean propriety, reverence, courtesy, ritual, or the ideal standard of conduct. In the Book of Ceremonies (The Li Chu), the concept of Li, is discussed:

Duke Ai, asked Confucius, “What is this great Li? Why is it that you talk about Li, as though it were such an important thing?”

Confucius replied, “Your humble Servant is really not worthy to understand Li.”

“But you constantly speak about it,” said Duke Ai.

Confucius: “What I have learned is this, that of all the things that people live by, Li is the greatest. Without Li, we do not know how to conduct a proper Worship of the Spirits of the Universe; or how to establish the proper status of the King and the Ministers, the Ruler and the ruled, and the Elders and the juniors; or how to establish the moral relationships between the sexes; between parents and children, and between brothers; or how to distinguish the different degrees of relationships in the family. That is why a gentleman holds Li, in such high regard” (Lin Yutang, “The Wisdom of Confucius,” New York: Random House, 1938, Li Chi XXVII, p. 216).

6. Wen. The concept of Wen refers to the arts of peace, which Confucius held in high esteem. These include music, poetry, and art. Confucius felt that these arts of peace, which came from the earlier Chiu period, were symbols of virtue that should be manifest throughout society. Confucius

condemned the culture of his day because he believed it lacked any inherent virtue. He had this to say:

The Master said, “Surely when one says, “The rites, the rites,” it is not enough merely to mean, presents of jade and silk. Surely when one says, “music, music,” it is not enough merely to mean, bells and drums....” The Master said, “What can a man do with the rites who is not benevolent? What can a man do with music who is not benevolent?” (“The Analects,” XVII:11, III:3).

Therefore, he who rejected the arts of peace was rejecting the virtuous ways of man and Heaven.

**ETHICAL DOCTRINES.** The “Book of Analects” (Lun Yu) contains the sayings of Confucius, which present his ethical principles. The following excerpts are from “The Analects,” and give an example of the teachings of Confucius:

Men of superior minds busy themselves first getting at the root of things; when they succeed, the right course is open to them.

One excellent way to practice the rules of propriety is to be natural. When truth and right go hand in hand, a statement will bear repetition. Sorrow, not because men do not know you; but worry, that you do not know men.

To govern simply by statute and to maintain order by means of penalties, is to render the people, evasive and devoid, of a sense of shame.

If you observe what people take into their hands, observe the motives, note what gives them satisfaction; then will they be able to conceal from you what they are?

When you know a thing, maintain you know it; when you do not, acknowledge it. This is the characteristic of knowledge.

Let the Leader of Men promote those who have ability and instruct those who have it not, and they will be willing to be led.

To see what is right and not to do it, that is cowardice.

The superior man is not contentious. He contends only as in competitions of archery; and when he wins, he will present his cup to his competitor.

A man without charity in his heart, what has he to do with ceremonies?

A man without charity in his heart, what has he to do with music?

He who has sinned against Heaven, has none other to whom his prayer may be addressed.

Tell me, is there anyone who is able for one whole day to apply the energy of his mind to virtue? It may be that there are such, but I have never met with one.

If we may learn what is right in the morning, we should be content to die in the evening.

The Scholar who is intent upon learning the truth, yet is ashamed of his poor clothes and food, is not worthy to be discoursed with.

The superior man thinks of his character; the inferior man thinks of his position; the former thinks of the penalties for error, and the latter, of favors.

One should not be greatly concerned at being in Office, but rather about the requirements in one's self for that Office. Nor should one be greatly concerned at being unknown, but rather with being worthy to be known.

The superior man seeks what is right, the inferior one, what is profitable.

The superior man is slow to promise, prompt to fulfill.

Virtue dwells not in solitude; she must have neighbors.

In my first dealings with a man, I listen to his avowals and watch his conduct.

These are the four essential qualities of the superior man: he is humble, he is deferential to Superiors, he is generously kind, and he is always just.

Those who are willing to forget old grievances, will gradually do away with resentment.

I have not yet seen the man who can see his errors so as in a day to accuse himself.

Where plain naturalness is more in evidence than fine manners, we have country man; where fine manners are more in evidence than plain naturalness, we have the townsman; where the two are equally blended, we have the ideal man.

Better than the one who knows what is right, is he who loves what is right.

To prize the effort above the prize, that is virtue.

What you find in me, is a quiet brooder and memorizer, a student never satiated with learning, an unwearied monitor to others.

These things weigh heavily upon my mind: failure to improve in the virtues, failure in discussion of what is learned, inability to walk always according to the knowledge of what is right and just, inability to reform what has been amiss.

Fix your mind on truth; hold firm to virtue, rely upon loving-kindness; and find your recreation in the arts.

With course food to eat, water to drink, and a bent arm for a pillow, happiness may still be found

Let there be three men walking together, and in them, I will be sure to find my instructions.

For what is good in them, I will follow; and what is not good, I will try to modify.

Sift out the good from the many things you hear, and follow them; sift out the good from the many things you see and remember them.

Without a sense of proportion, courtesy becomes oppressive; calmness becomes disorderliness; and candor becomes rudeness.

Even if a person were adorned with the gift of the Duke of Chiu, if he is proud and avaricious, all his other qualities are not really worth looking at.

Learn as if you could never overtake your subject, yet as if apprehensive of losing it.

When you have erred, be not afraid to correct yourself.

It is easier to carry off the Chief Commander of an Army, than to rob one poor fellow of his will.

We know so little about life, how can we then know about death?

If a man can subdue his selfishness for one full day, everyone will call him good.

When you leave your house, go out as if to meet an important guest.

Do not set before others what you yourself do not like.

The essentials of good Government are: a sufficiency of food, a sufficiency of arms, and the confidence of the people. If forced to give up one of these, give up arms; and if forced to give up two, give up food. Death has been the portion of all men from of old; but without the people's trust, nothing can endure.

A tiger's or a leopard's skin might be a dog's or a sheep's, when stripped of its hair.

Hold fast to what is good and the people will be good. The virtue of the good man is as the wind; and that of the bad man, as the grass. When the wind blows, the grass must bend.

Knowledge of man, that is wisdom.

The superior man feels reserved in matters which he does not understand. Let the Leader show rectitude in his personal character, and things will go well, even without directions from him.

Do not wish for speedy results nor trivial advantages; speedy results will not be far-reaching; trivial advantages will matter only in trivial affairs.

The superior man will be agreeable even when he disagrees; the inferior man will be disagreeable even when he agrees.

Confucius was asked, "Is a good man, one who is liked by everybody?" He answered, "No. He is liked by all the good people and disliked by the bad."

In a country of good Government, the people speak out and act boldly. Good men speak good words, but not all who speak good words are good. Good men are courageous, but not all courageous men are good.

**THE SUPERNATURAL.** Confucianism is not a Religion in the sense of man relating to the Almighty, but is rather an ethical system, teaching man how to get along with his fellow man. However, Confucius did make some comments on the supernatural, which gives insight into how he viewed life, death, Heaven, etc. He once said, “Absorption in the study of the supernatural is most harmful” (Lionel Giles, “Sayings of Confucius, Wisdom of the East Series,” London: John Murray Publ., 1917, II:16, 94). When asked about the subject of death, he had this to say, “Chi-lu asked how the Spirits of the dead and the Gods should be served.” The Master said, “You are not able to serve man. How can you serve the Spirits?” “May I ask about death?” “You do not understand even life. How can you understand death?” (Confucius, “The Analects,” D.C. Lau, trans., London: Penguin Books, 1979, Book XI, 12).

John B. Noss comments, “His position in matters of faith was this: whatever seemed contrary to common sense in popular tradition, and whatever did not serve any discoverable social purpose, he regarded coldly” (John B. Noss, “Man’s Religions,” New York: MacMillan Company, 1969, p. 291).

Confucius did; however, feel that Heaven was on his side in the ethical teachings that he espoused, as can be observed by the following comment:

“The Master said, “At fifteen, I set my heart on learning; at thirty, I took my stand; at forty, I came to be free from doubts; at fifty, I understood the decree of Heaven; at sixty, my ear was attuned; at seventy, I followed my heart’s desire without over-stepping the line” (“The Analects,” II:5).

**IS CONFUCIANISM A RELIGION?** Since Confucianism deals primarily with moral conduct and the ordering of society, it is often categorized as an ethical system, rather than a Religion. Although Confucianism deals solely with life here on Earth, rather than the after life, it does take into consideration mankind’s ultimate concerns.

One must remember the outlook of the people during the time of Confucius. Deceased ancestors were thought to exercise power over the living, sacrifice to Heaven was a common occurrence, and the practice of augury, or observing the signs from Heaven (thunder, lightning, the flight of birds, etc.), all were prevalent. Huston Smith makes an appropriate comment:

In each of these three great features of early Chinese Religion - its sense of continuity with the ancestors, its sacrifice, and its augury - there was a common emphasis. The emphasis was on Heaven, instead of Earth. To understand the total dimensions of Confucianism as a Religion, it is important to see Confucius (a) shifting the emphasis from Heaven to Earth (b) without dropping Heaven out of the picture entirely (Huston Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 189).

The emphasis in Confucianism was on the Earthly, not the Heavenly; but Heaven and its doings were assumed to be real, rather than imaginary. Since Confucianism gradually assumed control over all of one's life, and it was the pre-supposition from which all action was decided, it necessarily permeated Chinese Religious thought, belief, and practice as well.

## CHAPTER FIVE--TAOISM

At the same time Confucius' teachings were spreading through China, another Religion was also having its beginning. In contrast to the humanistic, ethical teachings of Confucius, the mystical, enigmatic beliefs of Taoism (pronounced "Dowism") appeared. Behind this enigmatic Religion is itself an enigmatic figure named Lao-tzu.

**HISTORY. LAO-TZU, THE FOUNDER.** Taoism has its roots in a shadowy figure named, Lao-tzu, of whom, little or nothing is verifiable. Many Scholars feel that Lao-tzu never existed at all. His date of birth is uncertain, being put variously between 604 and 570 B.C. One legend said, that he was never young, but rather was born old with white hair, a long white beard, and wrinkled skin.

Another story has him named Plum-Tree-Ears by his mother, because he was born under the shadow of a plum tree and his ears were unusually long. However, he was known to the people as Lao-tzu, meaning "the old philosopher." He supposedly held an important Post as Curator of the Imperial Archives at Loyang, the Capital City in the State of Chu'u.

His Government Position became tiresome, for Lao-tzu disapproved of the Tyranny of the Rulers and the idea of Government itself. Lao-tzu came to believe that men were meant to live simply without honors and without a fruitless search for knowledge. Consequently, he resigned his Post and returned home.

Since his opinions had gathered unwanted students and Disciples, Lao-tzu left his house to seek privacy from curiosity seekers. He bought a cart and a black ox and set out toward the Border of the Province, leaving corrupt society behind. However, at the crossing of the Borders, the Guard, his friend Yin-hsi, recognized him and would not allow him to pass.

Yin-hsi exhorted Lao-tzu, "You have always kept to yourself like a hermit and have never written down your teachings. Yet, many know them. Now you wish to leave and retire beyond our Borders. I will not let you cross until you have written down the essentials of your teachings."

Lao-tzu returned after three days, with a small Treatise entitled, "The Tao Te King," or

“The Way and Its Power” (sometimes translated as “The Way and Moral Principle”). Then he mounted a water buffalo and rode off into the sunset, never to be heard of again. Another version of the story, has the gatekeeper Yin-hsi, begging Lao-tzu to take him with him after he read, “The Tao Te King.” Whatever the case may be, the little Book was left behind and became the basis for a new Religion.

**LAO-TZU, THE BOOK.** “The Tao Te King,” also known as the Lao-tzu, is a small Book of approximately 5,500 words, instructing Rulers in the Art of Government. It teaches that the less Government, the better, and that a Ruler should lead by non-action.

Needless to say, no Ruler in the History of China, has taken the Political Section seriously. However, there is a philosophical side to “The Tao Te King,” that has had enormous impact. The work teaches individuals how to endure life against the terrible calamities that were common in China. It advocates a low-key approach of non-ambition and staying in the background, which will help one’s odds of survival.

There is an on-going debate as to when “The Tao Te King” was composed. The Traditionalists point of view has the work composed by Lao-tzu, a contemporary of Confucius, in the sixth Century B.C. The basis for holding this traditional date, is the Biography of Lao-tzu, in the “Shih-chi” (“Records of the Historian”) about 100 B.C.

The Modernists view the work as having been formally compiled about 300 B.C., because of the similarity of style to works composed in that period. The Historical setting, they argue, fits more with this turbulent era, than with the earlier one, claimed by the Traditionalists, although the Modernists do believe many of the sayings actually come from a much earlier time.

**CHUANG-TZU.** Apart from Lao-tzu, the most important figure in Taoism, is Chuang-tzu, a Disciple of the famous Lao-tzu. Chuang-tzu was a Prolific Author, living during the fourth Century B.C., who wrote some 33 Books. Chuang-tzu was a clever writer, popularizing the teachings of Lao-tzu, as Mencius did with his Master, Confucius.

The following excerpts from the writings of Chuang-tzu give insight into the philosophical side of Taoism, which he helped popularize:

Once I, Chuang Chiu, dreamed that I was a butterfly and was happy as a butterfly....Suddenly I awoke, and there I was, visibly Chiu. I do not know whether it was Chiu dreaming that he was a butterfly or the butterfly, dreaming, it was Chiu. Between Chiu and the butterfly, there must be some distinction. This is called the transformation of things (Wing-Tsit Chan, ed., "A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy," Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963, p. 190).

Upon hearing the news of the death of his wife, Chuang-tzu responded:

When she died, how could I help being affected?

But as I think the matter over, I realize that, originally she had no life; and not only no life, she had no form; not only no form, she had no material force. In the limbo of existence and non-existence, there was transformation and the material force was evolved. The material force was transformed to become form, form was transformed to become life, and now birth has transformed, to become death. This is like the rotation of the four seasons, spring, summer, fall, and winter. Now she lies asleep in the great house (the Universe). For me to go about weeping and wailing, would be, to show my ignorance of destiny. Therefore, I desist (Ibid., p. 209).

**TAOIST HISTORY REVIEW.** Robert E. Hume, charts some of the highlights in the History of Taoism:

B.C.

212 Emperor Shi Huang Ti burned Confucian Books, and established Taoism; sent Naval expeditions to Fairy Islands to discover the herb of immortality.

A.D.

1 The leading Taoist in China endeavored to compound a pill of immortality.

- 156 Emperor Hwan of China first sacrificed to Lao-tzu.
- 574-581 Emperor Wu arranged order of precedence, viz., Confucianism, first; Taoism, second; and Buddhism, third; but soon became disgusted with Taoism and Buddhism and ordered their abolition. The next Emperor, Tsing, re-established both non-Confucian Religions.
- 650-684 Lao-tzu, canonized as an Emperor; his writings included among subjects for Government examinations.
- 713-742 Emperor Kai Yuen distributed copies of the Tao-Te-King throughout the Empire; took a dose of Taoist “gold-stone” medicine; magicry increased.
- 825-827 Emperor Pao-li banished all Taoist Doctors on account of their intrigues and pretensions, away to the two southernmost Provinces of China.
- 841-847 Emperor Wu Tsung ordered all Taoist and Buddhist Monasteries and Nunneries closed. Later he restored Taoism to Imperial favor, and stigmatized Buddhism as “a foreign Religion.” Took Taoist medicine to eternalize his bones, so as to fly through the air like the fairies.
- 1661-1721 Emperor Kang Hsi ordered punishment, not only of the Taoist quacks, but also of the patients; forbade Taoist assemblies and processions; endeavored to suppress the various Taoist sects.
- 1900 The Boxer Uprising originated in a sect of specially ardent Taoists who believed their bodies would be immune against foreigners’ bullets, trusting the exact words of the Founder: When coming among Soldiers, he need not fear arms and weapons.... ” (Robert E. Hume, “The World’s Living Religions,” New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, rev. ed., 1959, pp. 147, 148).

**THE TEACHINGS OF TAOISM. THE TAO.** In “The Tao Te King,” the central concept is that of the Tao. Finding the proper definition of the term is no easy task, for while the word “Tao” literally means “way or path,” the concept goes far beyond that. The opening words of “The Tao Te King” express the thought that the Tao that can be understood is

not the real Tao. The name that can be named is not the real name.

A famous Taoist saying is, "Those who know, don't say and those who say, don't know." It is a mysterious term beyond all our understanding, imagination, and senses. Yet, it is the way of ultimate reality, the ground of all existence. It is the way of the Universe, the way, by which, one should order his life.

The cosmic Tao is invisible, inaudible, unnamable, un-discussable, inexpressible (Max Mueller, ed., "Sacred Books of the East," London: Krishna Press, 1879-1910, 40:68,69).

The perfect man is peaceful like the Tao (Ibid., 39:192-193).

The ideal condition is a by-gone Utopian simplicity in a state of nature (Ibid., 39:278).

Vacancy, stillness, placidity, tastelessness, quietude, silence, non-action - this is the level of Heaven and Earth, and the perfection of the Tao (Ibid., 39:331).

The question arises, how does one get his life in harmony with the Tao? If mankind's chief aim is to conform his existence to the way of the Tao, what must he do to accomplish this? The Tao Te King teaches, this can be done, by practicing the basic attitude of Wu Wei, which literally means, inaction.

This principle calls for the avoidance of all aggressiveness, by doing that which is natural and spontaneous. Mankind should live passively, avoiding all forms of stress and violence, to properly commune with nature. In doing this, his life will flow with the Tao.

**YIN AND YANG.** A concept that has been accepted in Confucianism, as well as philosophical and Religious Taoism, is that of the Yin and Yang. Although all things emanate from the Tao, there are those elements that are contrary to each other, such as good and evil and life and death. The positive side, is known as the "Yang" and the negative side, the "Yin." These opposites can be expressed in the following manner:

<b>YANG</b>	<b>YIN</b>
Male	Female
Positive	Negative
Good	Evil
Light	Darkness
Life	Death
Summer	Winter
Active	Passive

These concepts are interdependent and find themselves as expressions of the Tao. The concept of Yin and Yang is used to explain the ebb and flow in both man and nature. According to Taoism, “to blend with the cycle (of the Universe) without effort, is to become one with the Tao, and so, find fulfillment” (Maurice Rawlings, “Life-Wish: Reincarnation: Reality or Hoax,” Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1981).

A broader Chinese concept regarding Yin and Yang, is that the harmonious life can be achieved with the proper interaction of these forces. Richard C. Bush expands this idea:

An understanding of the World had emerged: there were powers from above associated with Heaven, such as rain and sun, and powers of the Earth below, such as the fertility of the soil. It follows naturally, that the forces of Heaven and Earth, should be a state of interaction. All people have observed this process in nature, have planned and harvested their crops accordingly, and therefore, developed a rhythm of life. The ancient Chinese sensed beneath this rhythm, the movement of two basic forces, called Yang and Yin. Yang is above, male, light, warm, and aggressive; Yin is below, female, dark, cold, and passive. Harmonious life is a complementary interaction of male and female, darkness and light. Rain and sun (Yang), fall on the Earth (Yin), and crops grow. The passive yields to the aggressive but, by yielding, absorbs and overcomes. The result is a philosophy of continual change, which is believed to explain the rise and fall of Dynasties, as well as the

change from day to night and back to day again. The goal of this process is a harmony between Ruler and Subject, among the members of the family, and in Society, as a whole, becomes the goal of life, both in ancient China and among many Chinese today. (Richard C. Bush, "The Story of Religion in China," Niles, IL: Argus Communications, 1977, pp. 6, 7).

**EXCERPTS FROM THE TAO TE KING: PRINCIPLES OF TAOISM.** The following excerpts from The Tao Te King demonstrate the basic thought of Taoism (translation by James Legge):

Chapter 1: The Tao That Can Be Trodden. The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name.

Conceived of as having no name, it is the Originator of Heaven and Earth; conceived of as having a name, it is the Mother of all things.

Always without desire we must be found,  
In its deep mystery we would sound;  
But if desire always within us be,  
Its outer fringe is all that we shall see.

Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together, we call them, the Mystery. Where the Mystery is, the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

Chapter LVI: He Who Knows the Tao.

He who knows the Tao does not care to speak about it; he who is ever ready to speak about it does not know it. He who knows it, will keep his mouth shut and close the portals of his nostrils. He will blunt his sharp points and unravel the complications of things; he will temper his bright-

ness and bring himself into agreement with the obscurity of others. This is called "The Mysterious Agreement."

Such a one, cannot be treated familiarly or distantly; he is beyond all consideration of profit or injury; of nobility or meanness - he is the noblest man under Heaven.

#### Chapter LXIII: It Is The Way

It is the way of the Tao to act without thinking of acting;

To conduct affairs without feeling the trouble of them;

To taste without discerning any flavor;

To consider what is small as great, and a few as many; and

To recompense injury with kindness.

The Master of it anticipates things that are difficult, while they are easy, and does things that would become great while they are small.

All difficult things in the World are sure to arise from a previous state, in which, they were easy, and all great things from one, in which, they were small. Therefore, the Sage, while he never does what is great, is able on that, to accomplish the greatest things.

He who lightly promises, is sure to keep, but little faith; he who is continually thinking things easy, is sure to find them difficult.

Therefore, the Sage sees difficulty, even in what seems easy, and so, never has any difficulties.

#### Chapter XXV: There Was Something

There was something undefined and complete, coming into existence before Heaven and Earth.

How still it was and formless, standing alone, and undergoing no change, reaching everywhere and in no danger of being exhausted! It may be regarded as the Mother of all things.

I do not know its name, and I give it the designation of the Tao (the Way or Course). Making an effort further, to give it a name I call it, "The Great."

Great, it passes on in constant flow. Passing on, it becomes remote. Having become remote, it returns. Therefore, the Tao is great; Heaven is great; Earth is great; and the Sage King is also great. In the Universe, there are four that are Great, and the Sage King is one of them.

Man takes his law from the Earth; the Earth takes its law from Heaven; Heaven takes its law from the Tao. The law of the Tao is its being what it is.

So, in their beautiful array,

Things form and never know decay.

How know I that it is so with all the beauties of existing things? By this nature of the Tao.

Chapter LI: All things

All things are produced by the Tao, and nourished by its outflowing operation.

They receive their forms, according to the nature of each, and are completed according to the circumstances of their condition.

Therefore, all things, without exception, honor the Tao, and exalt its outflowing operation.

This honoring of the Tao and exalting of its operation, are not the result of any ordination, but always a spontaneous tribute.

Thus, it is that the Tao produces all things, nourishes them, brings them to their full growth, nurses them, completes them, matures them, maintains them, and over-spreads them.

It produces them and makes no claim to the possession of

them;

It carries them through their processes and does not vaunt its ability in doing so;

It brings them to maturity and exercises no control over them;

This is called its mysterious operation.

The Way is like an empty vessel, which is the ancestry from which come all things in the World.

The value of an act is judged by its timing.

Thirty spokes unite in the hub, but the worth of the wheel will depend on the on the void where the axle turns.

What gives a clay cup value, is the empty space its walls create.

Usefulness is to be found in non-existence.

If you know righteousness, though you die, you shall not perish.

If you trust people not enough, they may trust you not at all. Get rid of your Preachers and discard your teachers, and the people will benefit a hundredfold. Root out your schemers and renounce your profiteers, and thieving will disappear. Between “yes” and “no” how small the difference; between “good” and “evil” how great the difference.

He who is not a competitor, no one in the whole world can compete with him.

If you work by the Way, you will be of the Way.

Little faith is put in those who have little faith.

There is something that existed before the Earth and the sky Began, and its name is, the Way.

Man conforms to the Earth; the Earth conforms to the sky; the sky conforms to the Way; the Way conforms to its own nature.

As for those who would take the whole World to tinker with

as they see fit, observe that they never succeed.

The wise reject all extremes.

Those who are on the Way might be compared to rivulets flowing into the sea.

He who understands others is wise; he who understands himself is enlightened.

He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers his own will is mighty.

If you would take, you must first give, this is the beginning of intelligence.

Absence of desires brings tranquility.

A cart is more than the sum of its parts.

The Way is nameless and hidden, yet all things gain their fulfillment in it.

To the good, I would be good, and to the bad, I would be good; in that way all might become good.

Wars are best waged by stratagem; but people are best governed by forthrightness.

The more prohibitions, the more poverty; the more laws, the more crimes; the more skills, the more luxuries, the more weapons, the more chaos.

In serving Heaven and in ruling men, use moderation.

Everything difficult must be dealt with while it is still easy.

A thousand-mile journey can be made one step at a time.

Three things prize above all: gentleness, frugality, and humility. For the gentle can be bold, the frugal can be liberal, and the humble can become leaders of men.

If you cannot advance an inch, retreat a foot.

## PHILOSOPHICAL AND RELIGIOUS TAOISM

**PHILOSOPHICAL.** Taoism has historically taken two different roads. Taoism as a philosophy, or philosophical Taoism, began around 300 B.C. Emphasizing the Tao as the source of ultimate reality, philosophical Taoism attempted to put man in touch with the harmony of nature by allowing him to exercise freely his instincts and imaginations.

Religious Taoism began forming around the second Century A.D., when the Emperor, Huan, ordered a Temple built in honor of Lao-Tzu, with offerings also being made to him. However, as a formal Religion, Taoism did not actually make an appearance until the seventh Century. John B. Noss explains why this occurred:

By this time Buddhism had made its appearance as a great and significant factor in Chinese Religious life. Neither Confucianism, the rather stiff and formal mode of thought and behavior, known chiefly to the literati and officials, nor Taoism, still the pre-occupation, either of intellectuals on the one hand or of students of the esoteric and the unlearned and lowly masses. Hinayana Buddhism was no better in the eyes of these unlettered, but Spiritually hungry souls, but the Mahayana was another matter. The beneficent Bodhisattvas, who gave aid in daily life and the Dhyani Buddha's who admitted one to Paradise, were soon being plied with gifts and prayers by millions.

As Buddhism swept across China and into Korea, the Taoists struck with amazement, and yet, sure that China had her own resources, so to speak, in the way of Gods and Spirits, began to look into their own Heritage, and finding much to value, they began to ape the powerful faith brought in from India (John B. Noss, "Man's Religions," New York: MacMillan Company, 1969, p. 272).

**RELIGIOUS.** Religious Taoism had Sacred Scripture, a Priesthood, Temples, and Disciples. There was also an Eschatological belief that a New Age would come about, overthrowing the old established order. As time went on, Gods were brought into the Religious System, along with belief in Heaven and Hell, and eventually the deification of

Lao-tzu.

Noss reports on the present state of Taoism:

Taoism has for many years been in decline. According to the latest reports, as a Religion, it is now dead. The Government frowns upon it and is determined to suppress it. But many still cling to it as magic, no matter how secret they must be about it, nor how carefully they must try to elude the vigilant eye of the Communist District Leaders (Ibid., p. 274).

## CHAPTER SIX--SHINTOISM

Shinto, the National Religion of Japan, is one of the oldest of all the World's Religions. It is unlike other Religions inasmuch as it is basically not a system of beliefs. It has been variously defined. John B. Noss' definition states:

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It is basically a reverent loyalty to familiar ways of life and familiar places... it is true to say that for the masses in Japan's love of Country, as in other lands, is a matter of the heart first, and of doctrinal substance, second (John B. Noss, "Man's Religions," New York: MacMillan Company, 1969, p.316).

Clark B. Offner defines Shinto in the following manner:

Shinto denotes "the traditional Religious practices, which originated in Japan and developed mainly among the Japanese people along with the underlying life attitudes and ideology, which support such practices." Various implications can immediately be derived from this statement of a modern Shinto scholar. First, Shinto does not refer to an organized clearly-defined body of doctrine nor to a unified, systematized code of behavior. The origins of Shinto are lost in the hazy mists enshrouding the ancient period of Japanese history; but from the time the Japanese people became conscious of their own cultural character and traditions, the practices, attitudes and ideology that eventually developed into the Shinto of today were already included within them (Clark B. Offner, in "The World's Religions," Sir Norman Anderson, ed., Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1976, p. 190).

**SHINTO HISTORY.** Shinto is purely a Japanese Religion, the origins of which are buried in antiquity. The Japanese, are a people, who love their land and believe the Islands of Japan were the first Divine Creation. His idea of the Divine origin of their land

is very old and goes hand-in-hand with the beliefs of Shinto. This National Idealism, the love of their Country, is basically why Shinto has been limited to Japan. John B. Noss comments:

The Japanese came early to the belief that their land was Divine, but late to the nationalistic dogma that no other land is Divine, that the Divinity of Japan is so special and unique, so absent elsewhere, as to make Japan “center of this phenomenal World” (John B. Noss, op. cit., p. 316).

The Japanese name for their Country is “Nippon,” which means “sun origin,” Until the end of World War II, Japanese children were taught at school, that the Emperors were descendants of the Sun-Goddess, Amaterasu. Amaterasu had allegedly given the Imperial House, the Divine Right to rule. In 1946, in a radio broadcast to the Japanese people, Emperor Hirohito, repudiated his Divine Right to rule.

**EARLY DEVELOPMENT.** Shinto’s history can be divided into a number of stages. The first period was from prehistoric times to 552 A.D., when Shinto reigned Supreme among the people of Japan without any serious competition.

In 552 A.D., Buddhism started gaining in popularity among the Japanese people. In the year, 645 A.D., the Emperor Kotoku, embraced Buddhism and rejected Shinto.

From A.D. 800 to 1700, Shinto became combined with other Religions, mixing with both Buddhism and Confucianism and forming, what is called, Ryobu Shinto, or dual-aspect Shinto. Shinto by itself, experienced a considerable decline during this period.

**RIVAL.** Around 1700, Shinto experienced a revival, when the study of Archaic Japanese texts was reinstated. One of the most learned Shinto scholars of the period was Hirata, who wrote:

The two fundamental doctrines are: that Japan is the Country of the Gods, and her inhabitants are the descendants of the Gods. Between the Japanese people and the Chinese, Hindus, Russians, Dutch, Siamese, Cambodians,

and other Nations of the World, there is a difference of kind, rather than of degree.

The Mikado is the true Son of Heaven, who is entitled to reign over the four Seas and the ten-thousand Countries.

From the fact of the Divine descent of the Japanese people, proceed their immeasurable superiority to the natives of other Countries, in courage and intelligence. They “are honest and upright of heart, and not given to useless theorizing and falsehoods, like other Nations.” (Cited by Robert E. Hume, “The World’s Living Religions,” New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, rev. ed., 1959, p. 172).

These ideas revitalized Shinto among the Japanese people, since it re-established the Divine origin of the land and the people of Japan.

**STATE RELIGION.** Japanese Emperor Meiji, established Shinto as the Official Religion of Japan in place of Buddhism. However, since the people continued to embrace both Religions, in 1877, Buddhism was allowed to be practiced by the people, with total Religious liberty granted two years afterward.

State Shinto, which is to be regarded as a Patriotic Ritual by the citizens, irrespective of their Religion, paid homage to the Emperor, and was established in 1882. This soon became, for all intents and purposes, the State Religion. After the Military victories of Japan in World War I, the idea of the Divinity of the Emperor became solidly entrenched again in the people. It was not until the defeat of World War II, that State Shinto was abolished as the Religion of the Japanese people. With the fall of State Shinto, the Shrines no longer came under Government Control and are now supported by private means.

**MEANING OF SHINTO.** The word Shinto, comes from the Chinese word, Shentao, which means, “The Way of the Gods.” This term was not applied to the Religion, until the sixth Century A.D., in order to distinguish it from Buddhism. A major feature of Shinto, is the notion of Kami. Kami is a difficult term to define precisely, but it refers basically to the

concept of Sacred Power in both animate and inanimate objects. Ninian Smart elaborates upon the idea of Kami, in the following manner:

Shintoism displayed, and still displays, a powerful sense of the presence of Gods and Spirits in nature. These Spirits are called Kami, literally “superior beings,” and it is appropriate to venerate them. The Kami are too numerous to lend themselves to a systematic ordering or stable Hierarchy, but among the many, the Sun-Goddess, Amaterasu has long held a central place in Shinto belief.

According to the myth found at the beginning of the Kojiki, the earliest of the Celestial Gods, who came into being, instructed Izanagi and Izanami, male and female Deities of the second generation of Gods, to create the World, and in particular, the Islands of Japan (the two were in effect, identified).

Through the process of sexual generation, they produced the land, and the Kami of the mountains, trees, and streams, the God of the Wind and the God of Fire, and so on. Eventually....the Goddess, Amaterasu, the Great Kami of the Sun, came into being. Possibly, prior to the mythological account of her origin, she was the Mother Goddess of the Yamato Clans; the mythology may reflect the way in which the other Deities were successively replaced in the earliest period, and then were put under the dominance of the Chief Kami of the Yamato. But the line between Kami and human, is not a sharp one, however exalted some of the Deities may be.

The Japanese people themselves, according to the traditional myths, are descended from the Kami; while the line of Emperors traces its descent back to Amaterasu. Amaterasu sent her son, Ni-ni-gi, down to rule Japan for her; and thence, the Imperial Line took its origin (this tradition, in recent times, was given exaggerated emphasis in order to make Shinto into an ideology justifying a Nationalistic Expansionist Policy). The line, too, between the personal and impersonal, in the Kami, is fluid. Some of the Spirits associated with particular places or things, are not stringly personalized, though the

mythology concerned with the Great Gods and Goddesses, is fully anthropomorphic ( Ninian Smart, "The Religious Experience of Mankind," New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969, pp. 192, 193).

**SACRED BOOKS.** Although Shinto does not consider any one volume as the wholly inspired revelation on which its Religion is based, two Books are considered Sacred and have done much to influence the beliefs of the Japanese people. These works are Ko-ji-ki, the "records of ancient matters," and Nihon-gi, the "chronicles of Japan." They were both composed around 720 A.D., and in that, they report events occurring some 1300 years earlier in the history of Japan; they are to be considered late works.

The Ko-ji-ki, is the oldest, existing, written record in Japanese. The work contains myth, legend, and historical narrative, in relating the story of Japan, the Imperial Ancestors and the Imperial Court. The work was compiled around 712 A.D.

The Nihon-gi, compiled around 720 A.D., chronicles the origin of Japan up until 700 A.D.

**TYPES OF SHINTO.** Since Shinto has neither a founder, sacred writings, nor any authoritative set of beliefs, there are great diversities in the two types of Shinto practiced and the beliefs held. Some Shinto groups do claim a founder, authoritative Scriptures, and specific doctrine. These groups are designated sects of Shinto. However, the majority of practitioners have no such set beliefs, but worship freely at various Shrines, located throughout Japan. This practice of Shrine Shinto is usually identified with the term, Shinto.

**WORSHIP.** The basic place for worship in Shinto is at one of the numerous Shrines covering the Country of Japan. Although many Shintoists have built altars in their homes, the center of worship is the local Shrine. Since Shinto has a large number of Deities, a systematic worship of all such Deities is impossible. The Shinto Religious Books acknowledge that only a few Deities are consistently worshipped, the Chief, being the Sun-Goddess, Amaterasu.

There is a Grand Imperial Shrine dedicated to the worship of Amaterasu at Ise, some

200 miles southwest of Tokyo. This centralized place of worship is the most Sacred spot in all of Japan. The practice of worshipping at this particular spot, has its roots, before the time of Christ. It is here that the Shintoists make a pilgrimage to worship at the Outer Court, while the Inner Court, is reserved for the Priests and Government Officials.

Amaterasu is the Chief Deity of Shinto and is feminine, rather than masculine. That the highest object of worship, from whom the Divine Ancestors arose, is a female, rather than a male Deity, is unique among the larger World Religions.

## CHAPTER SEVEN--ZOROASTRIANISM

Zoroastrianism, a unique Religion, which stresses the Eternal battle of good versus evil, has had a larger impact than its small number of followers (100,000) would suggest. It is the Religion of one man, who lived some 600 years, before the birth of Christ. His name was, Zoroaster. The Religiously fertile area of Babylonia (modern Iraq and Iran), was his home.

### HISTORY.

**ZOROASTER.** The Founder of Zoroastrianism was the man, Zoroaster, (a Greek corruption of the old Iranian word, Zarathushtra). His time and place of birth are unknown, but it is generally believed that he was born around 650 B.C., in Persia, (present-day Iran). However, as Richard Cavendish observed, there is much doubt as to when and where Zoroaster was born:

The early history of Zoroastrianism is much in dispute. The Religion was founded by Zoroaster, ( the Greek form of his name, which is Zarathushtra in Persian), but it is not certain when he lived, where he lived, or how much of later Zoroastrianism came from him. Tradition puts him in western Iran in the sixth Century B.C., a little earlier than the Buddha in India, but it is now thought that he lived in northeastern Iran, in the area on the borders of modern Afghanistan and Turkmenistan. An alternative theory dates him much earlier, somewhere in the period from 1700 to 1500 B.C., and places him in the Plains of Central Asia, perhaps before the first groups of Aryans moved south from the Plains into Iran and India (Richard Cavendish, "The Great Religions," New York: Arco Publishing Company, 1980, p. 125).

Tradition says, that Zoroaster was the son of a camel merchant and grew up at a time when his fellow Persians worshipped many Gods. While growing up, he had a keen interest in Religion, pondering the mysteries of life. At an early age, he became known

for his compassionate nature, especially toward the elderly.

Zoroaster had an excellent education, studying with some of the best teachers in Persia. Yet, he became restless, and at age 20, he left his father and mother in a search for answers to life's deepest questions. He would seek, from all those whom he met, answers to his Religious questions.

During this time of Zoroaster's Religious quest, it is said, he used his medical ability to help heal those ravaged by the on-going Wars. It was at age 30, that Zoroaster received enlightenment. As the account goes, Zoroaster received a vision on the banks of the Daitya River, when a large figure appeared to him. This personage identified himself as Vohu Manah, or "good thought." This figure took Zoroaster into the presence of the wise Lord, Ahura Mazda, who instructed Zoroaster in the true Religion.

Zoroaster spent the next ten years proclaiming his newly discovered truth, but had little success. The movement began to grow after Zoroaster converted a Prince, named Vishtaspa, who helped propagate his new-found faith. During the ensuing years, the faith spread rapidly. Zoroastrian tradition records two Holy Wars, which were fought over the faith, the second of which, took the life of Zoroaster at age 77. However, though the Prophet died, the faith remained alive. Zoroastrianism quickly destroyed the magic and idol Worship, prevalent then, and established its own belief in one God, a Heaven, and a Hell, (see Maurice Rawlings, "Life-Wish: Re-incarnation: Reality or Hoax," Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1981, p. 63).

**THE DEIFICATION OF ZOROASTER.** As is true with many Religious Leaders, the later Disciples of Zoroaster, far removed in time from their Master, made him an object of veneration. Thus, Zoroaster became an object of Worship, along with the Diety, Ahura-Mazda. He is lauded in the following terms:

Head of the two-footed race; the wisest of all, being in the perfection of His Holiness; the only one who can daunt evil (Max Mueller, ed., "Secret Books of the East," Oxford: Krishna Press, 1897-1910, 23:190, 229, 275).  
The Chieftainship of all things was from Zoroaster; the completely good,  
The Righteous Zoroaster (Ibid., 5:88; 18:90).

Incomparable among mankind through his desire for righteousness, and his understanding, the means of defeating the destroyer, and teaching creatures (Ibid., 37:241).

A Heavenly Radiance, “came down from the endless light” to the grandmother of Zoroaster, for his birth from a radiantly wonderful virgin mother (Ibid., 47:18-20, 138-139).

He was pre-existent 3,000 years before his physical birth, and during the interval, he remained with the Archangels, equal to the Archangels (Ibid., 22, 122).

**PRESENT-DAY STATUS.** Richard Cavendish sums up the present-day status of Zoroastrianism:

The principal Religions of the World count their adherents in the millions, and on this scale, it almost needs a microscope, to see Zoroastrianism at all. There are about 100,000 Zoroastrians in India and Pakistan, where they are called Parsis. They do not accept converts and their numbers are steadily diminishing. There are also a few - thousand Zoroastrians in Iran and smaller communities in North America, Britain, East Africa, and Hong Kong. Despite its comparative poverty in numbers; however, Zoroastrianism is enormously rich in ideas, which have had an influence far beyond its own ranks (Richard Cavendish, op. cit., p. 125).

Because of the influence it exerts, Zoroastrianism is still a Religion to be reckoned with.

**THE AVESTA.** The Sacred Scripture of the Zoroastrians is known as the Avesta, originally written in an old Iranian language, called Avestan. Of the original work, only a small fraction has survived, with the total size about one-tenth, that of the Bible. The Avesta contains hymns, prayers, and ritual instruction. It is divided into three major sections, the oldest of which, is called Yasna.

Within the Yasna, there is a group of five hymns, known as the Gathas, which are composed in a more Archaic dialect, than the remainder of the Avesta. These hymns are generally assumed to be the closest account we have of the very words of Zoroaster.

The Gathas stress the Lordship of Ahura-Mazda, as the only Supreme God, along with an exhortation to righteous living. The Gathas also reveal that the righteous will receive a reward at the end of this present age.

The second major section is called the Yashts and contains hymns to various Deities. The third section is known as the Videvdat (or Vendidad) and is a section written much later, containing the law against the demons along with other codes and regulations.

The Priests of Zoroastrianism are called Magi and use magic in their Communion with God. This is the source for our English word, "magic."

**AHURA-MAZDA.** According to Zoroaster, there is one true Deity to be worshipped. His name is Ahura-Mazda (wise Lord). The opening lines of the Avesta exalt this Deity:

Ahura-Mazda, the creator, radiant, glorious, greatest and best, most beautiful, most firm, wisest, most perfect, the most bounteous Spirit! (Max Mueller, ed., op. cit., 31:195-196).

The Gathas attribute the following characteristics to Ahura-Mazda:

Creator: (Yasna, 31:7; 11; 44:7; 50:11; 51:7.)

All-seeing: (Yasna, 31:13; 44:2.)

All-knowing: (Yasna, 31:13; 45:3; 48:2-3.)

Most mighty, greatest: (Yasna, 28:5; 33:11; 45:6.)

Friendly: (Yasna, 31:21; 44:2; 4:2.)

Father of Justice or Right, Asha: (Yasna, 44:3; 47:2.)

Father of good Mind, Vohu Manah: (Yasna, 31:8; 45:4.)

Beneficent, hudaē: (Yasna, 45:6; 48:3.)

Bountiful, spenta: (Yasha, 43:4, 5, 7, 9, 11, 14, 15; 44:2; 45:5; 46:9; 48:3; 51:10.)

Most bountiful Spirit, spenishta mainyu: (Yasna, 30:5.)

**ANGRA MAINYU.** Although Ahura-Mazda is the Supreme Deity, he is opposed by another powerful force, known as Angra Mainyu, or Ahriman, “the bad Spirit.” From the beginning of existence, these two antagonistic Spirits have been at odds with each other:

Now the two primal Spirits, who revealed themselves in vision as Twins, are the Better and the Bad, in thought, and word, and action. And between these two, the wise once chose aright, the foolish not so. And when these twain Spirits came together in the beginning, they established Life and Not-Life, and that at the last, the Worst Existence (Hell) shall be to the followers of the lie, but the Best Thought (Paradise) to him that follows Right. Of these twain Spirits, he that followed the Lie, chose doing the worst things; the Holiest Spirit chose Right (ames Hope Moulton, “Early Zoroastrianism,” London: Constable and Company, 1913, Yasna 30:3-5, p. 349).

These two powers have been co-equal from the beginning of time and will continue to battle each other until the end of the World. As Zoroastrian doctrine developed, both Asura-Mazda and Angra Mainyu were given seven attributes (known as the Ameshas-stentas) which were corresponding opposites:

Ahura-Mazda	Angra Mainyu
Ahura-Mazda (God of light, wisdom)	Angra Mainyu (Prince of darkness)
Ahsa right, justice)	Druj (falsehood)
Vohu monah (good mind)	Akem (evil mind)
Kshathra (power)	Dush-kshathra (cowardice)
Armaiti (love)	Taromaiti (false pretense)
Haurvatat (health)	Avetat (misery)
Ameretat (immortality)	Merethyn (annihilation)

**FUTURE JUDGMENT.** Zoroastrianism was one of the earliest Religions to teach an ultimate triumph of good over evil. There would be punishment in the end for the wicked and reward for the righteous. The following portions of the Gathas present this doctrine:

Yasna 30:2, 4, 9-11; 31:8, 19; 32:6, 15; 33:3, 5;  
43:12; 45:7; 46:12; 48:4; 51:6; 53:7-9

**INFLUENCE UPON OTHER RELIGIONS.** One of the claims made by some Religious scholars is that Zoroastrianism has had a profound effect in shaping the doctrines of three major Religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Consider the following assertions:

The importance of Zoroastrianism has always been qualitative rather than quantitative. Its highest significance lies in the influence it has exercised on the development of at least three other great Religions. First, it made contributions to Judaism, for between 538 B.C., (when the Persians, under Cyrus, captured Babylonia and set free the Jews, exiled in that land) and 330 B. C., (when the Persian Empire was destroyed by Alexander), the Jews were directly under the suzerainty of the Zoroastrians. And it was from the Suzerains that the Jews first learned to believe in an Ahriman, a personal devil, whom they called Hebrew, Satan. Possibly from them, too, the Jews first learned to believe in a Heaven and Hell, and in a Judgment Day for each individual (Lewis Browne, "This Believing World," New York: MacMillan Company, 1926 pp. 216, 217).

#### Influence on the Bible

Of all the other nine extra-Biblical living Religions, Zoroastrianism is the only one from which a definite Religious belief has been borrowed and included in the Bible. Consistently throughout the Old Testament, down to and including, the Isaiah of the

Exile, the ultimate source of everything, including evil, is represented as the God, Jehovah. But a distinct change took place after the Exile. A comparison of two parallel accounts of a certain experience of King David will show that a post-exilic Document (1 Chronicles 21:1) substitutes “Satan” for “Jehovah” in the pre-exilic account (2 Samuel 24:1). Thus, Satan is not an original feature of the Bible, but was introduced from Zoroastrianism.

Perhaps, certain other innovations besides the idea of a Satan were adopted from Zoroastrianism by the Hebrews after they had come into direct contact with that Religion in the Babylonian Exile: for example, the ideas of an elaborate Angelology and Demonology, of a great Saviour or Deliverer to come, of a final resurrection and Divine Judgment, and a definitely picturable future life. Certainly Jesus’ word, “Paradise” (Greek, paradeisos, Luke 23:43) was, at least etymologically, derived from Persian origin (Avestan, pairidaeza) (Robert E. Hume, “The World’s Living Religions,” New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, rev. ed., 1959, p. 200).

Although many teach that Zoroastrianism has had a profound influence upon the teachings of the Bible, we believe this is not the case at all.

In other works (“Answers, Reasons”), we have demonstrated that Christianity is not a man-made Religion, as many assume, but it is rather the one true faith supernaturally revealed by the true and living God. The Bible claims to be God’s unique revelation of Himself, and we have shown the evidence that leads one in that direction. If this be true, then the practices of other Religions, including Zoroastrianism, could not have affected Biblical doctrine as is claimed.

Those who claim Zoroastrianism has had an effect on the Bible, begin with the inherent assumption, that the Old Testament was written later than the traditional evidence shows. Many Books, such as the Pentateuch (Genesis-Deuteronomy), Job and Isaiah, Chapters

40-66, are wrongly dated, during or after the Exile (ca 536 B.C.), instead of as early as 1300 B.C. Consequently, when these concepts appear in certain Biblical Books, they are given a later date, because they are already assumed to have been influenced by other Religions.

In "More Evidence That Demands a Verdict," (written by Josh McDowell), we see that these assumptions of the later dating of the Old Testament, are anything, but assured. If one accepts the traditional dating of the Old Testament, then the proverbial shoe is on the other foot. It is not Zoroasterianism that influenced Biblical doctrine when the Jews were in Exile under Persian rule; it is the Bible that influenced Zoroastrianism!

Moreover, the ideas that are supposed to have influenced New Testament doctrine (resurrection, final judgment, a Messiah), were either taught in the Old Testament before the rise of Zoroastrianism or come from later Zoroastrian teachings, which first appeared after the birth of Christ. Therefore, we strongly believe, if there was any influencing on one by the other, it is Zoroastrianism that has been influenced by the Bible, not the opposite.

## CHAPTER EIGHT--JUDAISM

To Christians, Judaism is unique among World Religions. It is to historic Judaism, the Judaism of the Old Testament, that Christianity traces its roots. Christianity does not supplant Old Testament Judaism; it is the fruition of Old Testament Judaism.

One cannot hold to the Bible, Old and New Testaments, as God's one Divine Revelation without also recognizing and honoring the place God has given historic Judaism. As the Apostle Paul recited, these are some of the blessings God has given to the Jewish people:

....to whom belongs the adoption as sons and the Glory and the Covenants and the giving of the Law and the Temple Service and the Promises, whose are the Fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen (Romans 9: 4, 5, NASB).

Judaism has undergone many changes throughout its long history. At times, it has been very close to the true God, serving Him in Spirit and in deed. At other times, it has ranged far from the Will of God, forsaking its Promises to Him, while He has remained faithful to Israel.

The true God, the Yeshua of the Old Testament, the God of Christianity, is the God of historic Judaism, the same Master the people of Israel have long occupied a special place in God's Divine Plan, and Christians should not overlook this rive Spiritual Heritage.

Although Judaism, as a whole, has rejected God's greatest Revelation and Gift in the person of Jesus Christ our Lord, Christians cannot deny Judaism's vital contributions to our faith. We should earnestly pray that the physical descendants of Abraham will recognize that their Spiritual Heritage is also in Abraham and will return to it (see Romans 11:17-24).

**HISTORY OF JUDAISM.** Judaism had its origin when a man named Abram received a Divine call from the one true' God to leave his idolatrous people in "Ur of the Chaldees"

and go to the land of Canaan. This call is recorded in Genesis 12:1-3 (NASB)

Now the Lord said to Abram,  
Go forth from your Country,  
And from you relatives  
And from your father's house,  
To the land which I will show you;  
And I will make you a great Nation,  
And I will bless You,  
And make your Name great;  
And so you shall be a blessing;  
And I will bless those who bless you,  
And the one who curses you, I will curse,  
And in you, all the families of the Earth, shall be blessed.

The Promise made to Abram, whose name was later changed to Abraham, included the fact that his descendants would inherit a land which would belong forever to them. This Covenant was repeated to Abraham's son, Isaac, and likewise, to Isaac's son, Jacob. The family of Jacob, whose name was changed to Israel, migrated to Egypt to escape a severe famine. They were soon enslaved and forced to build mighty cities for the Pharaoh. During the years of bondage, they continually cried out for a deliverer.

**MOSES.** God eventually raised up a man from among His people to deliver them out of the bondage of Egypt; his name was Moses. Moses led the Children of Israel in the Exodus from Egypt through the miraculous Power of God, which included parting the Red Sea, to allow them to escape from the Egyptians. Because of unbelief, the people did not immediately enter into the land, but wandered in the desert for 40 years. It was during this time of wandering, that God gave the Law, including the Ten Commandments, to Moses.

**THE PROMISED LAND.** Under the leadership of Moses' successor, Joshua, the Jews

entered into the Promised Land, but had to conquer the inhabitants before settling down. After Joshua, the Nation of Israel was Governed by Judges for 350 years. During this time, they were engaged in numerous battles with the neighboring Nations, falling in and out of subjugation to those Nations.

After the time of the Judges, the Israelites pleaded with God (through the Prophet, Samuel), for a King to rule them. Although it was not God's desire, He gave them their first King, Saul. Saul did not follow the Lord, but almost ruined the Nation of Israel. When he died, he had been abandoned by the people and by God.

David, called a man after God's own heart, and divinely appointed to lead the Nation, was the second King. He conquered Jerusalem and established it as Israel's Capital. David's son, Solomon, upon becoming King, built a magnificent Temple to the Lord.

During the reign of Solomon, Israel prospered greatly, becoming a leader of Nations. Upon the death of Solomon, the Nation was divided into two Kingdoms, the Southern, known as Judea, with Jerusalem as its Capital, and the Northern Kingdom of Israel, of which Samaria, became the Capital.

**THE CAPTIVITY.** Both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms were constantly threatened by other Nations and each eventually was overcome. The Assyrians conquered the Northern Kingdom in 721 B.C., and the Babylonians defeated the Southern Kingdom in 606 B.C. When the Southern Kingdom was captured, Solomon's Temple was destroyed.

During the years, the Southern Kingdom was in exile (606 B.C., to 536 B.C.), changes took place, with regard to Jewish Worship. Since the Temple could not be used as a central place of Worship, Houses of Prayer, called Synagogues, were established. The teacher of the Synagogue, known as the Rabbi, grew in importance to the Jewish people and simultaneously, the Priests lost importance. By the time the Jews returned to their land, the Synagogue had become firmly established as the place of Worship, (but not sacrifice).

**THE RESTORATION.** During the period of the Restoration, the Jews became exposed to Greek culture (Hellenism), when Alexander the Great conquered the World

(336-323 B.C.). Upon Alexander's death, the land fell under the Rule of the Ptolemies of Egypt. The Hellenic influence was so strong during this time that many Jews no longer understood Biblical Hebrew. Aramitic and Greek became the dominant languages in Palestine. During this period, the Old Testament was translated into Greek (this text is commonly called the Septuagint, abbreviated as LXX), for the benefit of those Jews who did not read Hebrew.

**THE REVOLT.** The people soon became part of the Syrian Kingdom, and when one of the Kings, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, tried to suppress the Jewish Religion, the people revolted. In 167 B.C., a rebellion, led by Judas Maccabee, resulted in the independence of the Jewish Nation, celebrated to this day by the Festival of Hanukkah.

**THE ROMAN RULE.** The independence was short-lived because the Roman General, Pompey made Israel a Vassal State of Rome in 63 B.C., placing puppet leaders over the people. Rome dominated the people and the land, causing unrest and rebellion among the people. The Roman General, Titus destroyed the city of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., scattering the inhabitants. Several rebellions arose after that in an effort to reconquer the land, the last being the Bar Kokhba Rebellion (A.D. 132-135).

When Christianity became the State Religion of the Roman Empire (325 A.D.), the Jews were seen as an accursed race and the center of Jewish life soon moved to Babylonia, a non-Christian Country. The Jews did not regain an independent homeland in Israel until 1948, after a long history of persecution, which reached its height in the Holocaust of World War II.

**THE LAND.** The land of Israel has a very special place in the history of the Jewish people. Leo Trepp comments:

From the very beginning of history, Jewish destiny had remained inextricably linked to that of the land of Israel. To the Jew, his history starts as Abraham in Bidden to migrate to the Promised Land, for only there can he fulfill himself as the Servant and Herald of God. The land of Israel always remained

the Promised Land. Only there, could Torah be translated freely into the life of an independent Nation (Leo Trepp, "Judaism: Development and Life," Belmont, CA: Dickerson Publishing Company, 1966, pp. 4, 5).

**STATEMENT OF FAITH.** One of the great figures in Jewish history was Moses Maimonides, a Spanish Jew, who lived in the 12<sup>th</sup> Century A.D. Maimonides, a systematic thinker, tried to condense basic Jewish beliefs into the form of a Creed. Although criticized afterward by some, his Creed is still followed by the traditional forms of Judaism. The Creed is expressed in these 13 basic beliefs:

1. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the Creator and Guide of everything that has been Created; and He alone has made, does make, and will make all things.
2. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed by His Name, is One, and that there is no unity in any manner like unto His, and that He alone is our God, who was, and is, and will be.
3. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is not a body, and that He is free from all the properties of matter, and that He has not any form whatever.
4. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, is the first and the last.
5. I believe with perfect faith that to the Creator, Blessed be His Name, and to Him alone, it is right to pray and that it is not right to pray to any being besides Him.
6. I believe with perfect faith that all the words of the Prophets are true.
7. I believe with perfect faith that the Prophecy of Moses, our teacher, peace be unto him, was true, and that he was Chief of the Prophets, both of those who preceded and of those who followed him.
8. I believe with perfect faith that the whole Torah, now in our possession, is the same that was given to Moses our teacher, peace be unto him.
9. I believe with perfect faith that this Torah will not be changed, and that there

will never be any other Law from the Creator, Blessed be His Name.

10. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, knows every deed of the children of men, and all their thoughts, as it is said, "It is He that fashioned the hearts of them all, that gives heed to all their works."
11. I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, Blessed be His Name, rewards those that keep His Commandments and punishes those that transgress them.
12. I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah; and, though He tarry, I will wait daily for his coming.
13. I believe with perfect faith that there will be a Revival of the dead at the time when it shall please the Creator, Blessed be His Name, and exalted be His Fame for ever and ever.

For Thy Salvation I hope, O Lord.

**JEWISH HOLY DAYS.** The cycle of Jewish Holy Days is called the Sacred Round.

Based on the ancient Jewish calendar, these Holy days serve to remind Jews regularly of

Significant Historical Events in which God displayed his Covenant with them and to give them regular opportunity to display their commitment to God.

**THE SABBATH.** This is a Holy Day of Rest, in commemoration of God's completed work of Creation and in His later liberation of the Israelites from the bondage in Egypt. It is a day of joy and thanksgiving to God for His many blessings.

**PASSOVER.** Passover (Pessah), the Festival of Spring is celebrated one month after Purim. It constitutes the beginning of the Time of Harvest; therefore, it is a time of celebration. However, there is a deeper reason for the people to observe this Holiday, as the Scriptures plainly reveal. This Feast celebrates the deliverance of the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

The story of the Passover is given in Exodus 12: God sent the final plague on the Egyptians; the death of the firstborn. However, those who put blood on their doorposts

were passed over by the Angel of Death. This plague was instrumental in convincing the Pharaoh to allow the Children of Israel to leave. Consequently, it is to be celebrated as a permanent Memorial by the Jewish people. Deuteronomy 16:1-4 (NASB) tells how it is to be observed:

Observe the month of Abib and celebrate the Passover to the Lord your God, for in the month of Abib, the Lord your God, brought you out of Egypt, by night.

And you shall sacrifice the Passover to the Lord your God, from the flock and the herd, in the place where the Lord chooses to establish His Name. You shall not eat leavened bread with it; seven days you shall eat with unleavened bread, the bread of affliction (for you came out of the land of Egypt in haste), in order that you may remember all the days of your life, the day when you came out of the land of Egypt.

For seven days no leaven shall be seen with you in all your territory, and none of the flesh which you sacrifice on the evening of the first day shall remain overnight until morning.

**SHABUOT.** Shabuot, the Feast of Weeks, comes seven weeks after the Passover. Shabuot commemorates the giving of the Ten Commandments. During ancient times, the farmer would bring his first fruits to the Temple on Shabuot and offer them to God. The day is also celebrated by the reading of the Ten Commandments and the recitation of the Book of Ruth.

**ROSH HASHANAH.** Rosh Hashanah literally means, "Head of the Year." It is the Jewish New Year, celebrated on the first two days of the month of Tishai (September-October). It is a solemn day of reflection on both the deeds of the past year and the hopes of the upcoming one.

The ram's horn (shofar) is sounded in daily Worship for an entire month before Rosh Hashanah, calling the people to repentance. Moses Maimonides, the great Jewish Theologian and Philosopher, explained the message of the day:

Wake up, ye sleepers, from your sleep; and ye that are in a daze, arouse yourselves from your stupor. Reflect on your actions and return in repentance. Remember your Creator. Be not as those who forget truth in their chase after shadows, wasting their year wholly in vanities, which neither help, nor bring deliverance. Look into your soul, and mend your ways and deeds. Let everyone forsake his evil ways and worthless thoughts ("Teshubah" 3, 4).

**YOM KIPPUR.** Yom Kippur is the Holiest Day of the Year, the Day of Atonement. It is celebrated ten days after Rosh Hashanah and is devoted to confession of sins and reconciliation with God. Problems with enemies must be reconciled before one can be right with God, and forgiving and forgetting is the order of the day. The day is spent without touching food or drink, the mind being devoted to God on this Holiest of Days. During this day of confession of sin and fasting, the following passage from Isaiah is read:

It is a fast like this which I choose, a day for a man to humble himself. Is it for bowing one's head like a reed, and for spreading out sackcloth and ashes as a bed? Will you call this a fast, even an acceptable day to the Lord? Is this not the fast which I chose, to loosen the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and break every yoke? Is it not to divide your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into the house, when you see the naked, to cover him; and not to hide yourself from your own flesh? (Isaiah 58:5-7 NASB).

Yom Kippur has a long Jewish and Biblical tradition and is the most important Jewish Holy Day. Usually even liberal or non-practicing Jews consider the day Holy and devote themselves to contrite contemplation and prayer on this day.

Milton Steinberg effectively summarizes the Jewish concept of Yom Kippur:

...Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, a solemn white fast, during which from dusk to dusk, the faithful partake of neither food nor drink in token of peni-

tence, but through prayer and confession scrutinize their lives, abjure their evil-doing, and seek regeneration, a returning to God and goodness (Milton Steinberg, "Basic Judaism," New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1947, 1975, pp. 130, 131).

**SUKKOTH.** Sukkoth is the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths. This Festival which commemorates the ingathering of the Harvest, is one of the Three Pilgrim Feasts in ancient times, where early trips were made to the Temple of Jerusalem. It is known as the Feast of Booths, because the people lived in Tabernacles, or temporary shelters, during its duration (Exodus 34:18-26). In modern times, the people, for the most part, only take their meals in these Tabernacles, rather than living in them for the duration of the Feast.

**HANUKKAH.** Hanukkah, observed for eight days in midwinter, is the only Major Feast that does not have its source in the Bible. The Feast is based upon the story of the Maccabees, recorded in the Apocrypha. When Antiochus IV Epiphanes in 167 B.C., introduced the Worship of the Greek Gods as the State Religion, a small group of Jews, led by Judas Maccabee, staged a revolt.

Antiochus, who among other things, desecrated the Temple by slaughtering a pig in the Holy of Holies, was finally overthrown and Freedom of Religion returned to the land. Hanukkah is celebrated in observance of the heroic acts of the Maccabees.

The eight-branched candlestick, the Menorah, is integral to Hanukkah Worship and commemorates a Miracle that took place when the Temple was cleansed from the idolatrous acts of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. The tradition states that only enough Holy oil was found in the Temple to light the lamp for one night. However, because of the providence of God and as a sign that He blessed the Jewish cleansing and rededication of the Temple, God miraculously kept the lamp burning for eight days and nights.

Since Hanukkah is celebrated near the Christian Christmas Holiday, it has borrowed some ideas from Christmas, including the giving of gifts (traditionally one to each child each of the eight nights), and family gatherings. Especially among non-practicing and reform (Liberal) Jews; Hanukkah is a very important Holiday.

**THE THREE BRANCHES OF JUDAISM.** Very simply stated, modern-day Judaism can be divided into three groups: Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform.

**ORTHODOX.** Orthodox Judaism designates the traditionalists who are united in their upholding of the Law. The “Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion” says:

Though Orthodoxy is widely diversified among its many Religious groupings and nuances of belief and practice, all Orthodox Jews are united in their belief in the historical event of Revelation at Sinai, as described in the Torah; in their acceptance of the Divine Law, in its Written and Oral forms, as immutable and binding for all times; in their acknowledgment of the authority of duly qualified Rabbi’s - who themselves recognize the validity of the Talmud and all other traditional sources of the Halakhah - to interpret and administer Jewish Law (“Encyclopedia of Jewish Religion,” New York: Holt, Rhinehart, and Winston, 1966, p. 293).

Orthodox Judaism observes most of the traditional dietary and ceremonial Laws of Judaism. It adheres to the inspiration of the Old Testament (although greater authority is given the Torah (Law), the first five Books, than to the rest).

**CONSERVATIVE.** Conservative Judaism is sort of a happy medium between Orthodox and Reform Judaism. Founded in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the Conservative Movement quickly gained strength in both Germany and the United States.

In 1918, six months after the Balfour Declaration, the Conservative Movement announced:

We hold that Jewish people are, and of right, ought to be at home in all lands. Israel, like every other Religious communion, has the right to live and assert its message in any part of the World. We are opposed to the idea that Palestine should be considered the home-land of the Jews.

Jews in America are part of the American Nation.

The ideal of the Jew is not the establishment of a Jewish State - not the re-assertion of Jewish nationality, which has long been out-grown. We believe that our survival as a people, is dependent upon the assertion and the maintenance of our historic, Religious role and not upon the acceptance of Palestine as a home-land of the Jewish people. The mission of the Jew, is to witness to God all over the World.

**REFORM.** Reform Judaism is the Liberal Wing of Judaism. Leo Trepp traces its development:

Abraham Geiger (1810-1874) stands out as the towering genius of Reform Judaism, and is essentially its founder. To him, the scientific man cannot accept Revelation, for science offers no proof of any Revelation. Mendelssohn had seen Judaism as Revealed Law; Geiger rejected this idea, as he equally rejected any revealed doctrines. He refuted the hope for a return to The Land, for The Land of Citizenship is the Land of the Jew. This was an attack on the validity of Torah, of Mitzvot, and of the Land. What remained then, was the deep-seated sense of kinship with the Jewish people (a feeling of which, Geiger himself, may have been unaware, but which kept him from suggesting the dissolution of Judaism, in favor of a general Religion of ethical conduct).

Thus, Torah to him, becomes a source of ethics, performance of Mitzvot becomes a matter of individual decision, but not binding, the "Talmud" and "Shulhan Arukh" have no power of commitment, and the Messianic hope has been fulfilled in Jewish Emancipation. However, the genius of the Jewish people as teachers of ethics was strongly emphasized. The Hebrew language of prayer was to be retained in part, at least, for its emotional appeal. Education, Sermon, and Worship now were to form Torah in this new interpretation, and Mitzvot were to be understood as the Missionary ideal of spreading ethics throughout the World. For these, the

Jew must live. The effect of Geiger's Reform Judaism was to be strongly felt, especially in America (Leo Trepp, op. cit., pp. 50, 50).

Reform Judaism is so culture-and race-oriented, that it easily can neglect the Spiritual and Religious side of Jewish life. Rather than assuming that the Religious life produces and molds the culture, Reform Judaism assumes that the cultural and racial heritage of the Jews, produced and molded the Religious life. While belief and doctrine may be changeable or even dispensable, the cultural history of the race is vital to any continuation of Jewishness. There is little consensus on doctrinal or Religious belief in Reform Judaism.

## **DOCTRINE.**

**JUDAISM AND THE MESSIAH.** While Christianity recognized that the promise of a personal, Spiritual Saviour is the core of Biblical Revelation, Judaism has long vacillated in its concept of Messiahship. That Jesus Christ, the true Messiah predicted in God's Word, would be rejected by the Jews of the first Century, shows that even at that time, there was divergence of opinion on the meaning and authority of Messianic passages in Scripture.

In the course of Jewish history, the meaning of the Messiah had undergone changes. Originally it was believed, that God would send His Special Messenger, delivering Israel from her oppressors and instituting peace and freedom. However, today, any idea of a personal Messiah has been substituted with the hope of a Messianic Age, characterized by truth and justice.

Within the history of Judaism, from the time of Jesus of Nazareth, until Moses Hayyim Luzatto (died A.D. 1747), there have been at least 34 different prominent Jews, who have claimed to be the Messiah (James Hastings, "Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics," Vol. 8, New York and London: Scribner's and T.& T. Clark, 1919, pp. 581-588).

Carrying on one Jewish tradition, most of these self-proclaimed Messiah's promised salvation from political, economic, and cultural oppression, rather than Spiritual Salvation. Only Jesus of Nazareth perfectly fulfilled the Old Testament passages, concerning the

Messiah and only He validated His claims by His Victory over Death, displayed in His Glorious Resurrection from the Dead (Acts 2:22-36).

**GOD.** The Orthodox Jewish concept of God, is based upon the Old Testament. The Hebrew Scholar, Samuel Sandmel, summarizes the Biblical teaching:

The heritage from the Bible included a number of significant components about the Deity. God was not a physical being: He was intangible and invisible. He was the Creator and Ruler, indeed, the Judge of the World. He and He alone was truly God; the Deities worshipped by people, other than, Israel, were not God. Idols were powerless and futile; they were unworthy of Worship; and indeed, to Worship what was not God was a gross and sinful disrespect of Him.

Scripture contains an abundance of divine terms: Elohim, El, El Elyon, Shaddai. Insofar as God might be thought of as having a Name, that Name was Yahve. But so Holy and awesome was He that His Name, Yahve itself, had force and power, and it was unbecoming or even sinful for men to pronounce it, as was expressed in the words, "You shall not take the Name of Yahve, your God in vain" (Exod. 20:7, Deut. 5:11). Only the High Priest might pronounce it, and only on one day in the year, that on the Day of Atonement.

God was, as it were, above and over the World.

His dwelling was in Heaven. At high moments, such as at Sinai, He had descended to reveal Himself.

Accordingly, He was both in the World and also over and above it. He had very early revealed Himself to the Patriarchs; He had later revealed Himself to the Prophets. To some of these Prophets, such as Zechariah, He had disclosed His Divine will and intention, by sending an Angel to bring His Deities from the distance to Earth. Apart from sending an Angel, He could, and did, pour His "Holy" Spirit onto selected men. In Heaven, there were a Host of beings, subordinate to Him, who constituted His Heavenly Council.

Among these was Satan, who could, with divine consent, test a man such as Job; a lying Spirit, who could, on occasion, delude a presumptuous King or Prophet (Samuel Sandmel. "Judaism and Christian Beginnings," London: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 168, 169).

The Sacred Scriptures of Judaism consist of documents arranged in three groups, known as the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings. These Books were originally written in Hebrew, except for parts of Daniel and Ezra and a Verse in Jeremiah, which were composed in Aramaic. These Books are synonymous with the 39 Books of Christianity's Old Testament. Their composition was over a period of some one thousand years, from 1400-400 B.C.

The Jews do not hold each part of their writings in equal importance. "The Law," the Torah, is the most authoritative, followed by the "Prophets," which have lesser authority, and lastly the "Writings."

**SALVATION IN JUDAISM.** Judaism, while admitting the existence of sin, its abhorrence by God, and the necessity for atonement, has not developed a system of Salvation teaching as found in Christianity. Atonement is accomplished by sacrifices, penitence, and good deeds and a little of God's grace. No concept of substitution atonement (as in Christianity in the Person of Jesus Christ) exists.

Scholar Michael Wyschogrod explains the difference:

A Jew who believes that man is justified by Works of the Law would hold the belief that man can demand only strict justice from God, nothing more. Such a man would say to God: "Give me what I deserve, neither more nor less; I do not need your mercy, only your strict justice."

If there are Jews who approach God in this Spirit, I have never met nor heard of them.

In the morning liturgy that Jews recite daily, we find the following: "Master of all Worlds: It is not on account of our own righteousness that we offer our supplications before thee, but on account of thy great compassion. What

are we? What is our life? What is our goodness? What is our virtue? What is our help? What is our strength? What is our might?

The believing Jew is fully aware that if he were to be judged strictly according to his deeds by the standards of justice and without mercy, he would be doomed. He realizes that without the Mercy of God, there is no hope for him and that he is therefore, justified - if by "justified," we mean that he avoids the direst of divine punishments - not by the merit of his works as commanded in the Torah, but by the gratuitous Mercy of God, who saves man in spite of the fact that man does not deserve it (Tanenbaum, Wilson, and Rudin, eds., "Evangelicals and Jews in Conversation on Scripture, Theology, and History," Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1978, pp. 47, 48).

So then Jews do believe in the Mercy of God, but they do not believe in any substitution atonement, that once and for all time, cleanses them from all sin. Contrast this with the great passage of assurance in Hebrew 7:22-28 (NASB):

So much the more also, Jesus has become the guarantee of a better Covenant. And the former Priests, on the one hand, existed in greater numbers, because they were prevented, by death, from continuing, but He, on the other hand, because He abides forever, holds His Priesthood permanently. Hence, also, He is able to, save forever, those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. For it was fitting that we should have such a High Priest, Holy, Innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the Heavens; who does not need daily, like those High Priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins, and then for the sins of the people, because this, He did once for all, when He offered up Himself. For the Law appoints men as High Priests, who are weak, but the work of the Oath, which came after the Law, appoints a Son, made perfect forever.

**ORIGINAL SIN.** Judaism holds no concept of original sin. According to Christian belief, all human beings are born into the World with a sinful nature, because of the

transgression of Adam (Romans 5:12-21). Judaism's emphasis is not on original sin, but original virtue and righteousness. Although Judaism acknowledges that man does commit acts of sin, there is not a sense of man being totally depraved or unworthy, as is found in Christian theology.

Atonement for sin is achieved by works of righteousness, which include repentance, prayer, and the performing of good deeds. There is no need for a Saviour, as is emphasized in Christianity.

J. H. Hertz writes:

Note that the initiative in atonement is with the sinner (Ezekiel 18:31). He cleanses himself on the Day of Atonement by fearless self-examination, open confession, and the resolve not to repeat the transgressions of the past year. When our Heavenly Father sees the abasement of the penitent sinner, He sprinkles, as it were, the clean waters of pardon and forgiveness upon him. Again: ON the Day of Atonement, the Israelites resemble the Angels, without human wants, without sins, linked together in love and peace. It is the only day of the year, on which, the accuser Satan is silenced before the Throne of Glory, and even becomes the defender of Israel...The closing prayer (on the Day of Atonement) begins: "Thou givest a hand to transgressors, and Thy right hand is stretched out to receive the penitent. Thou hast taught us to make confession unto Thee of all our sins, in order that we may cease from the violence of our hands and may return unto Thee, who delightest in the repentance of the wicked." These words contain what has been called "the Jewish Doctrine of Salvation" (J. H. Hertz, "The Pentateuch and the Haftorahs," London: Socine Press, 1958, p. 523f).

## CHAPTER NINE--ISLAM

In recent years, Islam has been in the spotlight because of the heightened tension in the Middle East. This has served to put its Culture under the microscope of World attention. Islam, is indeed, a major part of Middle Eastern Culture, but it is much more.

The Muslim (var. sp.: Moslem) faith is a major driving force in the lives of many of the Nations in the Middle East, West Asia, and North Africa. The impact of this faith on the World has been increasing steadily. Today, Islam is the fastest-growing Religion in the World. In large part, the Arab-Israel tension can be traced back to the Islam-Judaism conflict.

Not only does Islam collectively wield a strong sword in World conflict, as Muslims threaten war with Israel, but Islamic Sects also threaten even greater unrest in the fragile Middle East and could be catalysts for greater conflict. Right-Wing Islamic Fundamentalists were responsible for both the takeover of Iran and the assassination of Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat.

The vast majority of Muslims, however, are not of this militant variety. The contrast between the Moderate and Progressive Islam of Egypt and the Fundamentalistic and Reactionary Islam of Iran is marked. Islam has had a great deal of positive impact on many Countries where it is a strong force. But positive influence is no reason to follow any Religion with one's life-commitment. One must examine the teachings of Islam along with one's faith and ascertain what is true and why.

The very impact of Islam in History also makes it worthy of study. Sir Norman Anderson capsulizes it this way:

The Religion of Islam is one of the outstanding phenomena of history. Within a Century of the death of its founder, the Muslim Empire stretched from Southern France through Spain, North Africa, the Levant, and Central Asia to the confines of China; and, although Islam has since been virtually expelled from Western Europe and has lost much of its Political Power elsewhere, it has from, time to time, made notable advances in Eastern Europe, in Africa, in India, and in Southeast Asia. Today, it extends from the Atlantic to the

Philippines and numbers some three hundred million adherents, drawn from races as different as the European from the Bantu, and the Aryan Indian, from the primitive Philippine Tribesmen; yet it is still possible to speak of the "World of Islam" (Sir Norman Anderson, ed., "The World's Religions," Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976, p. 52).

Today, there are an estimated 450 million members of Islam, which dominate more than three dozen Countries on three Continents. The word Islam is a noun, which is formed from the Arabic verb, meaning "to submit, surrender, or commit oneself." Islam means submission or surrender, and with the translation comes the idea of action, not simple stagnation. The very act of submissive commitment is at the heart of Islam, not simply a passive acceptance and surrender to doctrine. Muslim, another noun form of the same verb, means, "the one who submits."

**HISTORY OF ISLAM.** The early History of Islam revolves around one central figure, Muhammad (var. sp.: Muhammad, Hohammed). Although the teaching of Islam is an interesting mixture of different Religions, the origin of the faith is found Historically in the one person of Muhammad.

**MUHAMMED.** Born around 570 A.D., in the City of Mecca in Arabia, Muham-mad's father died before his birth. His mother died when he was six. He was raised first by his Grandfather and later by his Uncle. Muhammad's early background is not well-known. Some scholars believe he came from a well-respected family, but this is not certain. What is clear is that he was of the Hashimite Clan of the Al Qu'raysh Tribe. At the age of 25, he married a wealthy 40-year-old widow, named Khadijah. Of his life, Anderson relates:

There is evidence, in a tradition which can scarcely have been fabricated, that Muhammad suffered in early life from fits. Be that as it may, the adult Muhammad soon showed signs of a markedly Religious disposition. He would retire to caves for seclusion and meditation; he frequently practiced

fasting; and he was prone to dreams. Profoundly dissatisfied with the Polytheism and crude superstitions of his native Mecca, he appears to have become passionately convinced of the existence of one true God. How much of this conviction he owed to Christianity or Judaism, it seems impossible to determine. Monophysite Christianity, was at that time, widely spread in the Arab Kingdom of Ghassan; the Byzantine Church was represented by Hermits dotted about the Hijaz with whom he may well have come into contact; the Nestorians were established at, Al Hira and in Persia; and the Jews were strongly represented in Al Madina, the Yemen, and elsewhere. There can be no manner of doubt, moreover, that at some period of his life, he absorbed much teaching from Talmudic sources and had contact with some form of Christianity; and it seems overwhelmingly probable that his early adoption of Monotheism can be traced to one or both of these influences (Ibid., p. 54).

The character of Muhammad was quite a Mosaic, as Anderson summarizes:

For the rest, his character seems, like that of many another, to have been a strange mixture. He was a poet, rather than a systematic thinker. That he was in the main, simple in his tastes, and kindly in his disposition, there can be no doubt; he was generous, resolute, genial, and astute: a shrewd Judge and a born leader of men. He could, however, be cruel and vindictive to his enemies; he could stoop to assassination; and he was undeniably sensual (Ibid., p. 60).

Robert Payne also brings this out in his Book, "The Holy Sword:"

It is worthwhile to pause for a moment before the quite astonishing polarity of Muhammad's mind. Violence and gentleness were at war within him. Sometimes he gives the appearance of living simultaneously in two Worlds, at one and the same moment, seeing the World about to be destroyed by the flames of God and in a state of Divine peace; and he seems to hold these opposing

visions only at the cost of an overwhelming sense of strain. Sometimes the spring snaps, and we see him gazing with a look of bafflement at the World around him, which is neither the World in flames, nor the World in a state of blessedness, but the ordinary day-to-day World, in which he was rarely at home (Robert Payne, "The Holy Sword," New York: Collier Books, 1962, p. 84).

**THE CALL.** As Muhammad grew, his views changed. He came to believe in only one God, Allah, a Monotheistic faith. He rejected the idolatrous Polytheism of those around him. By the age of 40, the now Religious Muhammad, had his first vision. These Revelations, are what are recorded in the "Qur'an (Koran).

Muhammad, was a first, unsure of the source of these visions, whether Divine or demonic. His wife, Khadijah, encouraged him to believe they had come from God. Later, she became his first convert. However, his most important early convert, was a wealthy merchant named, Abu Bakr, who eventually became one of his successors.

"The Cambridge History of Islam" comments on Muhammad's Revelation:

Either in the course of the visions, or shortly afterwards, Muhammad began to receive "Messages" or "Revelations" from God. Sometimes, he may have heard the words being spoken to him, but for the most part, he seems simply to have "found them in his heart." Whatever the precise "manner of Revelation" - and several different "manners" were listed by Muslim scholars - the important point is that the message was not the product of Muhammad's conscious mind. He believed that he could easily distinguish between his own thinking and these Revelations. The messages which thus came to Muhammad from beyond his conscious mind, were at first fairly short, and consisted of short verses ending in a common rhyme or assonance. They were committed to memory by Muhammad and his followers, and recited as part of their common Worship. Muhammad continued to receive the messages at intervals until his death. In his closing years, the Revelations tended to be longer, to have much longer verses and to deal with the affairs of the community of Mus-

lims at Medina. All, or at least many, of the Revelations were probably written down during Muhammad's lifetime by his secretaries (P .M. Holt, ed., "The Cambridge History of Islam," Vol. II., London: Cambridge University Press 1970, pp. 31, 32).

Alfred Guillaume states:

Now if we look at the accounts of his call, as recorded by the early Biographers some very interesting parallels with Hebrew Prophets come to light. They say that it was his habit to leave the haunts of men and retire to the mountains to give himself up to prayer and meditation. One night as he was asleep, the Angel, Gabriel, came to him with a piece of silk brocade, whereon words were written, and said "Recite!" He answered, "What shall I recite?" The order was repeated three times, while he felt continually increasing physical pressure until the Angel said:

Recite in the Name of thy Lord, who created  
Man from blood coagulated.  
Recite! Thy Lord is wondrous, kind  
Who, by the pen, has taught mankind  
Things they knew not (being blind).

When he woke, these words seemed to be written on his heart (or, as we say, impressed indelibly on his mind). Then the thought came to him that he must be a Sha'ir or possessed, he who had so hated such people, that he could not bear the sight of them; and he could not tolerate the thought that his Tribesmen would regard him as one of them - as in fact, they afterward did. Thereupon, he left the place with the intention of throwing himself over a precipice. But while on his way, he heard a voice from Heaven, hailing him as the Apostle of God, and lifting up his eyes, he saw a figure astride the horizon, which turned him from his purpose and kept him rooted to the spot. And there he remained long after his anxious wife's messengers had returned to re-

port that they could not find him (Alfred Guillaume, "Islam" London: Penguin Books, 1954, pp. 28, 29).

Sir Norman Anderson discusses how Muhammad, at first, thought he was possessed by the demons, or Jinn, as they were called, but later, dismissed the idea:

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It seems however, that Muhammad himself was at first doubtful of the source of these Revelations, fearing that he was possessed by one of the Jinn, or Sprites, as was commonly believed to be the case with Arab poets and sooth-sayers. But Khadijah and others reassured him, and he soon began to propound Divine Revelations with increasing frequency (Anderson, op., cit., p. 55).

These visions mark the start of Muhammad's Prophetic call by Allah. Muhammad received these visions during the following 22 years, until his death in 632 A.D.

**RHW HIJIRA.** The new faith encountered opposition in Muhammad's hometown of Mecca. Because of his rejection in Mecca and the ostracism of his views, Muhammad and followers withdrew to the City, now known as Medina, which means in full, "City of the Prophet," renamed from its original Yathrib.

The Hijira, which means "flight," marks the turning point in Islamic calendars - mark this date, July 16, 622, as their beginning. Thus, 630 A.D., would be 8 A.H. (in the year of the Hijira).

In his early years in Medina, Muhammad was sympathetic to both the Jews and Christians as well. But they rejected him and his teaching. Upon that rejection, Muhammad turned from Jerusalem as the center of Worship of Islam, to Mecca, where the famous Black Stone, Ka'aba, was enshrined. Muhammad denounced all the idols, which surrounded the Ka'aba, and declared it was a Shrine for the one true God, Allah.

With this new emphasis on Mecca, Muhammad realized he must soon return to his home. The rejected Prophet did return in triumph, conquering the City.

John B. Noss details some of Muhammad's actions upon his return to Mecca:

One of his first acts was to go reverently to the Ka'aba; yet , he showed no signs of yielding to the ancient Meccan Polytheism. After honoring the Black Stone and riding seven times around the Shrine, he ordered the destruction of the idols within it and the scraping of the paintings of Abraham and the Angels from the walls. He Sanctioned the use of the well, Zamzam, and restored the boundary pillars defining the Sacred territory around Mecca. Thenceforth, no Muslim would have cause to hesitate about going on a pilgrimage to the Ancient Holy City.

Muhammad now made sure of his Political and Prophetic ascendancy in Arabia. Active opponents, near at hand, were conquered by the sword, and Tribes far away were invited sternly to send Delegations offering their allegiance. Before his sudden death, in 632, he knew he was well on the way to unifying the Arab under a Theocracy, governed by the Will of God (John B. Noss, "Man's Religions," New York: MacMillan Publishing Company INC., 1974, p. 517).

Between the return to Mecca and Muhammad's death, the Prophet zealously and militantly propagated Islam, and the new faith quickly spread throughout the area.

**AFTER MUHAMMAD'S DEATH.** When Muhammad died, he had not written a Will, instructing the leadership in Islam about determining his successor. Sir Norman Anderson comments:

Muhammad died, according to the best-supported view, without having designated a successor (Khalifa or Caliph). As the last and greatest of the Prophets he could not, of course, be replaced. But the community he had founded was a Theocracy, with no distinction between Church and State, and someone must clearly succeed, not to give, but to enforce the Law, to lead in war and to guide in peace. It was common ground; therefore, that a Caliph must be appointed: and in the event 'Umar ibn al Khattat

(himself the second Caliph) succeeded in rushing the election of the aged Abu Bakr, one of the first believers. But the question of the Caliphate was to cause more divisions and bloodshed than any other issue in Islam, and almost from the first three rival parties, in embryo at least, can be discerned. There were the Companions of the Prophet, who believed in the eligibility of any suitable "Early Believer" of the Tribe of Quaraysh; there was the Aristocracy of Mecca, who wished to capture the Caliphate for the family of Umayya; and there were the "Legitimists," who believed that no election was needed, but that 'Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, had been divinely designated as his successor (Anderson, op., cit., p. 64).

Abu Bakr died less than two years after his designation as Caliph. Upon his death, 'Umar became successor, and under him, the borders of the Islamic Empire were considerably expanded.

Eventually a power struggle developed as different factions believed their own methods of establishing a successor were better than their rivals. The major eruption came between those who believed the Caliph should be elected by the Islamic leadership and those who believed the successor should be hereditary, through 'Ali, Muhammad's son-in-law, married to his only daughter, Fatima. This struggle, along with others, produced the main body of Islam, known as the Sunnis (followers of the Prophet's way) as well as numerous Sects.

**THE SUNNIS.** Along with the Caliphate controversy, conflict raged on another front, that of Law and theology. Through this conflict, eventually four recognized, Orthodox schools of Islamic thought, emerged. All four schools accepted the Qur'an (Koran), the Sunna, or the practice of the Prophet, as expressed in the Hadith (traditions) and the four bases of Islamic Law (Shari'a): the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Ij'ma' (consensus of the Muslim community) and the Q'yas (use of analogical reason). These four groups came to be called the Sunnis.

Noss explains:

The rapid expansion of Islam confronted Muslims with other crucial, and even more complex, decisions concerning Muslim behavior. Situations early, appeared in areas outside of Arabia, where the injunctions of the Qur'an proved either, insufficient or inapplicable. The natural first step in these cases was to appeal to the Sunna (the behavior or practice) of Muhammad in Medina or to the Hadith that reported his spoken decisions or judgments. In the event that this proved inconclusive, the next step was to ask what the Sunna and/or consensus of opinion (Ijma) of the Medina community was, in or shortly after the time, of Muhammad. If no light was yet obtainable, the only recourse was either to draw an Analogy (Qiyas) from the principles embodied in Qur'an or in Medinan precedents and then apply it, or to follow the consensus of opinion of the local Muslim community, as crystallized and expressed by its Qur'anic authorities. The Muslims who took this way of solving their behavioral problems were, and are to this day, called Sunnites (Noss, op., cit., p. 530). The Majority of Islam today is Sunni.

**THE SHI'A.** The fourth Caliph to follow Muhammad was an early convert and also his son-in-law, 'Ali. He was eventually murdered by Mu'awiya, who claimed the Caliphate for himself.

The tragedy that befell the House of 'Ali, beginning with the murder of 'Ali himself and including the deaths of his two sons, grandsons of Muhammad, has haunted the lives of "the party (Shi'a) of 'Ali." They have brooded upon these dark happenings down the years, as Christians do, upon the death of Jesus. A major heretical group, they have drawn the censure and yet, also have had the sympathy of the Sunnis and Sufis. They were among the Sects, whose racial elements, Iqbal, attacked as guilty of resting their claims on false grounds and sinfully dividing Islam. And yet, although agreeing with this indictment, the Muslims World, at large, has suppressed its annoyance at them,

because their movement goes back to the very beginnings of Islam and has a kind of perverse justification, even in Orthodox eyes. Their critics agree, that there is little sense in it, yet it has an appeal of its own.

The Partisans of 'Ali only gradually worked out the final claims made by the various Shi'ite Sects; in the beginning, there was simply the assertion - which as events unfolded became more and more heated - that only Muhammad's direct descendants, no others, could be legitimate Caliphs; only they should have been given first place in the leadership of Islam. This "legitimism" could be called their Political and dynastic claim, and at first, this seems to have been all that they were interested in claiming. But this was not enough for adherents of their cause in Iraq, who over the years, developed the Religious theory, perhaps as an effect of Christian theories about God, being in Christ, that every legitimate leader of the "Alids," beginning with "Ali," was an Imam Mahdi, a Divinely appointed and supernaturally guided Spiritual Leader, endowed by Allah with special knowledge and insight - an assertion that the main body of Muslims, significantly enough called Ghuluw, "exaggeration," rather than heresy (Noss, op., cit., p. 540).

Today, the Shi'ites completely dominate Iran; their most prominent popular leader was Ayatollah Khoumeni.

In any strong, legalistic, Religious system, Worship can become mechanical and be exercised by rote, and God can become transcendent. Such an impersonal Religion often motivates people to react. Such is the case with Islam, as the Sufis, the most well-known Islamic mystics, have arisen in response to Orthodox Islam and to the often loose and secularist view of Islamic leadership during some of its early days under the Umayyad and Abbasid dynasties.

Despite the claims of the Law, another aspect of Islam has been almost equally important for the rank and file of the faithful - this is Sufism: Mysticism, as it is usually translated.

The Sufis are those Muslims, who have most sought for direct personal experi-

ence of the Divine.

While some of them have been Legalists of the most fundamentalist stamp, their emphasis on direct Religious experience has more often led the Sufis into tension with the Legalists, and their attitude toward the Law has ranged from patronizing irony to outright hostility (John Alden Williams "Islam," New York: George Braziller, 1962, p. 136).

Describing the emergence of the Sufis, Noss states:

Millions of Muslims had within themselves, the natural human need to feel their Religion as a personal and emotional experience. Islam had no Priests, then or now, Ordained and set apart for a life dedicated to the Worship of God and the pursuit of Holiness, and yet everyone knew that Muhammad had been a true man of God, wholly dedicated to his mission, who in the period before the Revelations came, had retired at times from the World to meditate in a cave. It was thus, that he had become an instrument of God's truth.

It was the popular yearning for the presence among them of unworldly men dedicated to God, Asceticism, and Holiness, that encouraged the eventual emergence of Islamic Mysticism (Noss, op., cit., p. 535).

The Sufis exist today and probably are best known through their Dervish Orders (e.g.. "the whirling Dervish" .

There are many other Sects and divergent groups among Islam, too numerous to detail here. One might mention that the Baha'i Faith, although significantly different from Islam today, had its roots in Islam.

**CONTEMPORARY ISLAM.** The rise of Israel as a Prominent Power has brought renewal to a once-anemic Islamic faith. Nationalism, coupled with the Islamic faith, has served as a *raison d'etat* for many in the Arab World, as they stand against Israel, their enemy. At various times in the recent past, Arab Alliances have been conceived, discussed, and then, have died. There was the United Arab Republic and later an

Alliance discussed between Egypt, Libya, and Syria.

Grunebaum comments:

The spectacular success of the Arab Muslims in establishing an Empire by means of a small number of campaigns against the great powers of the day has never ceased to stimulate the wonderment and the admiration of the Muslim World and Western Scholarship ( G. E. von Grunebaum, "Modern Islam," Berkeley: Univeristy of California Press, 1962, p. 1).

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Neill amplifies:

It is not surprising that the Islamic World has caught the fever of Nationalism that is raging everywhere among the people of Asia and Africa. The special intensity and vigor of Islamic, and especially Arab, Nationalism springs from a complex of causes - memories of past splendor, resentment over Muslim weakness and Christian strength, above all that obscure sense of malaise, the feeling that in some way, History has gone awry, that somehow the purposes of God are not being fulfilled as the Muslim has a right to expect. The achievements of the Post-War Period have been considerable. Egyptian self-assertion has made the Middle East one of the chief problem areas in the World. Libya became independent after the War. Morocco and Tunis have since won their independence. In Algeria, the story of detachment from France was long and painful. But here too, in 1962, the goal of total independence was attained. and so the story goes on (Stephen Neill "Christian Faith and Other Faiths," London: Oxford University Press, 1970, pp. 43, 44).

However, much of this discussion has been quelled with the Camp David accords which saw peace rise out of the Middle East between Israel and Egypt. Yet on another front, committed Islamic Fundamentalists have drawn World attention to Iran, and also in Egypt, where they allegedly assassinated President Anwar Sadat.

Nationalism is a strong sweeping movement in Nations with majority Muslim

populations.

In addition, Secularism has increased as the practices of the West infiltrate Nations. Some of these Western transfusions have been sudden - many Arab Countries are accumulating new and previously unknown wealth in the form of Petro-dollars. However, the Secularism has also had a backlash effect as many of the Muslim Countries, in an attempt to preserve their identity, are holding the line on imported Western customs.

Since Islam embraces, not only Religion, but also culture, the future of the faith will be very much dependent on the State of the Nations it thrives in today. With Arab Nations prospering, this could turn out to be both, a curse and a blessing, to the Islamic faith. It may be food for its culture, but its faith could be seriously compromised.

Islam is a rapidly spreading Religion for several reasons. It is the State Religion of Moslem Countries and this gives it a strong cultural and Political base. It has the appeal of a Universal message because of its simple creed and tenets. Anyone can enter the Ummah, the community of faithful Muslims. There are no racial barriers and thus, it spreads quickly among the black communities of Africa, and more recently, of America. Its five doctrines and five pillars can be easily communicated. In the West, it is making appeals to the Universal Brotherhood of Man, World Peace, Temperance, and the Uplifting of Women (Kenneth Boa, "Cults, World Religions, and You," Wheaton, IL; Victor Books, 1977, p. 56).

The Supremacy of Islam in the Political and Social (as well as Religious) arenas is exemplified by the following quote from the Koran:

Believers have fear of Allah and stand with those who uphold the cause of truth. No cause have the people of Medina and the desert Arabs, who dwell around them, to forsake Allah's Apostle or to jeopardize his life so as to safeguard their own; for they do not expose themselves to thirst or hunger or to any ordeal on account of the cause of Allah, nor do they stir a step, which may provoke the unbelievers. Each loss they suffer at the enemy's hands shall be counted as a

good deed in the sight of Allah: He will not deny the righteous of their recompense. Each sum they give, be it small or large, and each journey they undertake, shall be noted down, so that Allah may requite them for their noblest deed.

It is not right that all the faithful should go to war at once. A band from each community should stay behind to instruct themselves in Religion and admonish their men when they return, so that they may take heed.

Believers, make War on the infidels who dwell around you. Deal courteously with them. Know that Allah is with the Righteous (N. J. Dawood, trans. "The Koran," London: Penguin Books, 1956, p. 333).

**THE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM.** Faith and Duty. The teachings of Islam are comprised both of faith (Imam) and practice or duty (Din). Sir Norman Anderson explains:

The faith and practice of Islam are governed by the two great branches of Muslim learning, theology, and jurisprudence, to both of which some reference has already been made. Muslim theology (usually called "Tawhid" from its central doctrine of the Unity of the Godhead) defines all that a man should believe, while the Law (Shari'a) prescribes everything that he should do. There is no Priesthood and no Sacraments. Except among the Sufis, Islam knows only exhortation and instruction from those who consider themselves, or are considered by others, adequately learned in theology or Law.

Unlike any other system in the World today, the Shari'a embraces every detail of human life, from the prohibition of crime to the use of the toothpick, and from the Organization of the State to the most Sacred intimacies - or unsavory aberrations of family life. It is "the Science of all things, human and Divine" and divides all actions into what is obligatory or enjoined, what is praiseworthy or recommended, what is permitted or legally indifferent, what is disliked or deprecated, and what is forbidden (Anderson, op., cit., p. 78).

These practices are mainly true of Sunni Islam, not of the divergent Sects.

**THE LAW: SHARI'A.** Islamic Law (Shari'a) plays a central role in all Islamic culture. The structure of the Law is that Civil Law rather than Common Law is generally practiced in England and the United States.

It must be emphasized that the Shari'a has been Central to Islamic Doctrine:

The most important and fundamental Religious concept of Islam is that of the Shari'a which literally means, a "path to the watering place," but in its Religious application means, the total way of life as explicitly or implicitly commanded by God. The word has been used in the Koran, which sometimes suggests that different Religions have different Shari'as, but at other times, that all Religions, have fundamentally, one Shari'a.

The concept as formulated by Muslim Religious teachers, includes both the doctrine or belief, and practice of the Law. But historically, the formulation and systemization of the Law took place earlier than the crystallization of the formal theology. This, as shown below, had far-reaching consequences for the future development of Islam ("Encyclopedia Britannica," s v. "Islam," Chicago: William Benton Publishing Company, 1967, p. 664).

The controversy surrounding the Law and theology and the fourfold division of the Shari'a, led to the formulation and distinction of the Sunni and Shi'ite Sects in Islam. Guillaume explains:

In Chapter 5, a sketch of the sources of Muslim Law and of the formation of the four main schools has been given. In certain Countries certain matters have been taken out of the purview of the Shari'a and now come within the scope of Secular Courts; but, broadly speaking, no change comparable with that which has taken and is taking place in Islamic Countries today has been seen within Islam for a thousand years or more. Turkey, as everyone knows, has abolished the Shari'a altogether. Officially it is a Secular State, though actually the influence of Islam on the population, especially in Asia, is very considerable, and

shows signs of becoming stronger under the new Democratic Government. In a series of articles in "The Moslem World" and elsewhere, my colleague, Mr. J.N.D. Anderson, has shown how in the Arab Countries, too, the Shari'a is undergoing revision. Egypt, the Sudan, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq are all on the move. The changes which are being made, illustrate how a definite attempt to relate the Shari'a to the conditions of modern life and to a more liberal view of human relations is being realized in positive Legislation (Guillaume, op., cit., pp. 166, 167).

He then comments on one of the differences of the Shi'ites and the Sunnis.

In theory, the Shi'ite conception of the Supreme Authority in Law is utterly different from that of the Sunnis, though in practice, the difference does not amount to very much. They reject the four schools and the doctrine of Ijma because their Hidden Imam has the sole right of determining what the believer shall do and believe. Therefore, their duly accredited Doctors can still exercise the power of Ijtihad or personal opinion. This Power, the Sunnis lost a thousand years ago or more (Guillaume, op., cit., p. 103).

**QUR'AN.** The basis for Islamic doctrine is found in the Qur'an (Koran). Boa describes the central place of the Qur'an in the Islamic faith as well as the supplementary works:

The Koran is the authoritative Scripture of Islam. About four-fifths the length of the New Testament. It is divided into 114 Surahs (Chapters). Parts were written by Muhammad, and the rest, based on his oral teaching, was written from memory by his Disciples after Muhammad's death.

Over the years, a number of additional sayings of Muhammad and his early Disciples were compiled. These comprise the Hadith ("tradition"), the sayings of which are called Sunna ("custom"). The Hadith supplements the Koran much as The Talmud Supplements the Law in Judaism (Kenneth Boa, op., cit., p. 52).

The Qur'an is the Word of God in Islam, the Holy Scriptures. As the authoritative Scripture, it is the main guide for all matters of faith and practice. The Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad as the Word of God for mankind.

Other Revelations include the Torat (of Moses), the Suhuf (Books of the Prophets), Zabur (Psalms of David), Injil (Gospel of Jesus). The Qur'an supercedes all other Revelations and is the only one of which we still have the original text. All of the others have been corrupted, almost beyond recognition.

Islam, for example, would not consider our New Testament to be the Injil (Gospel of Jesus). It is not the Words of Jesus, it is others Words about Jesus. His original Words have been corrupted and many have been lost. Only the Qur'an is infallible. Muhammad and the Qur'an are that which Islam is to follow.

Neill comments:

It is well known that at many points, the Qur'an does not agree with the Jewish, The Christian Scriptures. Therefore, from the Muslim point of view, it follows of necessity, that these Scriptures must have been corrupted. Historical evidence makes no impression on the crushing force of the syllogism. So it is, and it can be no other way. The Muslim controversialist feels no need to study evidence in detail. The only valid picture of Jesus Christ is that which is to be found in the pages of the Qur'an (Stephen Neill op., cit., p. 64).

The Qur'an is comprised of 114 Surahs, or Chapters, all attributed to Muhammad. The Surahs are arranged in the Qur'an by length - the longer in front, the shorter in back.

For the Muslims, the Koran (q. v.) is the Word of God, confirming and consummating earlier revealed Books, and thereby, replacing them; its instrument or agent of Revelation is the Prophet, Muhammad, the last and most perfect of a series of messengers of God to mankind - from Adam through Abraham to Moses and Jesus, the Christian claims, for whose Divinity are strongly rejected. Indeed, there is no people to whom a Prophet has not come. Although Muhammad is only a human creature of God, he has nevertheless, an un-

equaled importance in the Koran itself, which sets him only next to God, as deserving of Moral and Legal obedience. Hence, his sayings and deeds (Sunna) served as a second basis, besides the Koran, of the belief and practice of Islam.

The Koran, (which for the Muslim is the miracle par excellence of Muhammad, unsurpassable in form, as well as in content) is a forceful Document basically expressing an Elan of Religious and Social Justice. The early Chapters (Suras) of the Koran, reflecting Muhammad's grim struggle against the Meccans, are characterized by grave warnings of the imminent judgment, while the later Suras, of the Medina Period, are chiefly directed to regulating the internal and external affairs of the young Muslim Community - State, besides narrating the stories of the earlier Prophets.

The Koranic theology is rigorously Monotheistic: God is absolutely unique - "there is nothing like Him" - omnipotent, omniscient, merciful. Men are exhorted to obey His Will (i. e., to be Muslim) as is necessarily done by all inorganic objects.

Special responsibility is laid on man, who willingly, although with His characteristically foolish pride, accepted "the trust," refused by all Creation.

Besides human beings and Angels, the Koran speaks of the Jinn, both good and evil, to whom sometimes, the Devil is represented as belonging ("Encyclopedia Britannica," op., cit., p. 663).

In modern times, the Qur'an has faced many of the same dilemmas as the Bible. A major issue is the inspiration of the Qur'an. Islam scholars do not agree as a whole on how the Qur'an came to be true or how much is true, although conservative Islamic scholars accept it all as literally true.

John Alden Williams comments:

The Qur'an, then, is the Word of God, for Muslims. While controversies have raged among them as to the sense in which this is true - whether it is the created or uncreated Word, whether it is true of every Arabic letter or only of the

message as a whole, that it is true, has never been questioned by them (John Alden Williams, op., cit., p. 15).

The Qur'an was revealed and written in the Arabic language. Because of this, and the fact it was revealed by God, Muslims deplore translations of the Qur'an into other languages. There is, then, no authoritative translation for the Qur'an. Anyone familiar with the reading of translations of any work would be sympathetic to this demand. However, as rich as Arabic is, the translations still provide a close original which can and must be evaluated for its validity, not simply its reliability.

The Qur'an came into written form shortly after Muhammad's death.

All the Surahs of the Koran had been recorded in writing before the Prophet's death, and many Muslims had committed the whole Koran to memory. But the written Surahs were dispersed among the people; and when, in a battle which took place during the Caliphate of Abu Bakr - that is to say, within two years of the Prophet's death - a large number of those who knew the whole Koran by heart were killed, a collection of the whole Koran was made and put in writing. In the Caliphate of Othman, all existing copies of Surahs were called in, and an authoritative version, based on Abu Bakr's collection and the testimony of those who had the whole Koran by heart, was compiled exactly in the present form and order, which is regarded as traditional and as the arrangement of the Prophet himself, the Caliph Othman and his helpers being Comrades of the Prophet and the most devout students of the Revelation. The Koran has thus been very carefully preserved (Muhammad Marmaduke Pickthall, trans., "The Meaning of the Glorious Koran," New York: Mentor Books, n.d.p. xxviii).

On the origin of the Qur'an, Guillaume comments:

From the Books of tradition, we learn that the Prophet was subject to ecstatic seizures. He is reported to have said that when inspiration came to him, he felt

as if it were the painful sounding of a bell. Even in cold weather his forehead was bathed in sweat. On one occasion, he called to his wife to wrap him in a veil. At other times, visions came to him in sleep. Religious ecstasy is a world-wide phenomenon in one stage of human society, and in its early stages, Muhammad's verses were couched in the Semitic form of mantic oracular utterance.

The veiling of the head and the use of rhymed prose were marks of the Arabian soothsayer, while the feeling of physical violence and compulsion, and the outward appearance of "possession" which seemed to the onlookers to indicate madness or demonic possession were sometimes recorded by, or observed in, the Hebrew Prophets.

The Qur'an as we have it now is a record of what Muhammad said while in the state or states just mentioned. It is beyond doubt that his hearers recognized the symptoms of Revelations, otherwise his obiter dicta, which the literature of tradition purports to record, would be included in the Qur'an (Guillaume, op., cit., p. 56).

**FIVE ARTICLES OF FAITH.** The five articles of faith are the main doctrines of Islam. All Muslims are expected to believe these tenets.

1. God. There is only one true God and his Name is Allah. Allah is all-knowing, all-Powerful and the sovereign Judge. Yet Allah is not a personal God, for he is so far above man in every way that he is not personally knowable. Noss states:

In the famous Muslim Creedal Formula, the first part reads: *la ilaha illa Allah*, " (There is) no God, but God." This is the most important article in Muslim theology. No statement about God seemed to Muhammad more fundamental than the declaration that God is one, and no sin seemed to him so unpardonable as associating another being with God on terms of equality. God stands alone and Supreme. He existed before any other being or thing, is self-subsis-

tent, omniscient, omnipotent (“all-seeing, all-hearing, all-willing”). He is the Creator, and in the awful Day of Judgment, He is the sole arbiter, who shall save the believer out of the dissolution of the World and place him in Paradise (Noss, op., cit., p. 517).

This doctrine, which makes God different from His creatures, is strong in Islam. Allah is so different, that it makes it (1) difficult to really know very much about Him, and (2) unlikely that he is affected by His creatures’ attitudes or actions. Although Allah is said to be loving, this aspect of his nature is almost ignored, and His Supreme attribute of justice is thought to overrule love (Anderson, op., cit., p. 79).

The emphasis of the God of Islam is on Judgment, not Grace; on Power, not Mercy. He is the source of both good and evil and His Will is Supreme.

2. Angels. The existence of Angels is fundamental to Islamic teaching. Gabriel, the leading Angel, appeared to Muhammad and was instrumental in delivering the Revelations in the Qur’an to Muhammad. Al Shaytan, is the Devil and most likely a fallen Angel or Jinn. Jinn are those creatures between Angels and men, which can be either good or evil.

Angels do not perform any bodily functions (sexual, eating, etc.) as they are created of light. All Angels have different purposes, such as Gabriel, or Jibril, who is the messenger of inspiration. Each man or woman also has two recording Angels - one who records his good deeds, the other, his bad deeds.

3. Scripture. There are four inspired Books in the Islamic faith. They are the Torah of Moses, the Psalms (Zabin) of David, the Gospel of Jesus Christ, (Injil), and the Qur’an. Muslims believe the former three Books have been corrupted by Jews and Christians. Also, since the Qur’an is God’s most recent and final Word to man, it supersedes all the other works.

4. Prophets. In Islam, God has spoken through numerous Prophets down through the Centuries. The six greatest are: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses,

Jesus and Muhammad. Muhammad is the last and greatest of all Allah's messengers.

5. Last Days. The last day will be a time of Resurrection and Judgment. Those who follow and obey Allah and Muhammad, will go to Islamic Heaven, called Paradise, a place of pleasure. Those who oppose them will be tormented in Hell.

The last day (the Resurrection and the Judgment) figures prominently in Muslim thought. The day and hour is a secret to all, but there are to be twenty-five signs of its approach. All men, will then be raised; the Books kept by the recording Angels will be opened; and God as Judge, will weigh each man's deeds in the balances. Some will be admitted to Paradise, where they will recline on soft couches, quaffing cups of wine handed them by the Huris, or maidens of Paradise, of whom, each man may marry as many as he pleases;

others will be consigned to the torments of Hell. Almost all, it would seem, will have to enter the fire temporarily, but no true Muslim will remain there forever (Anderson, op., cit., p. 81).

Finally, there is a sixth article of faith, which is considered by many to belong to the five doctrines. Whether this is one of the articles or not, it is a central teaching of Islam - the belief in God's decrees or Kismet, the doctrine of fate. This is a very rigid view of predestination, that states all good or evil proceeds from Divine Will.

This strong fatalism has played a central role in Muslim culture. "To this, the lethargy and lack of progress which, until recently at least, has for Centuries characterized Muslim Countries, can be partially attributed" (Anderson, op., cit., p. 82). From this concept, comes the most common Islamic phrase, roughly translated, "It is Allah's Will."

**FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH.** Besides the five major beliefs or doctrines in Islam, there

are also “five pillars of faith.” These are observances in Islam, which are foundational practices or duties every Muslim must observe. The five are : The Creed, Prayers, Alms-giving, Fasting, and the Pilgrimage to Mecca.

1. The Creed. (Kalima). “There is no God, but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of Allah,” is the bedrock of Muslim belief. One must state this aloud, publicly, in order to become a Muslim. It is repeated constantly by the faithful.

2. Prayer (Salat). Prayer as Ritual, is central to a devout Muslim. Boa comments:

The practice of prayer (Salat), five times a day (upon rising, at noon, in mid-afternoon, after sunset, and before retiring). The Worshipper must recite the prescribed prayers (the first Surah and other selections from the Koran) in Arabic, while facing the Ka’aba in Mecca. The Hadith (Book of Tradition), turned these prayers into a mechanical procedure of standing, kneeling, hands and face on the ground, and so forth. The call to prayer is sounded by the Muezzin (a Muslim crier) from a tower called, a Minaret, which is part of the Mosque, (the place of public Worship) (Boa , op., cit., p. 53).

3. Alms-giving (Zakat). Muhammad, himself an orphan, had a strong desire to help the needy. The Alms originally were voluntary, but all Muslims are legally required to give one-fourtieth of their income for the destitute. There are other rules and regulations for produce, cattle, etc. Freewill offerings also can be exercised.

Since those to whom Alms are given are helping the giver to salvation, they feel no sense of debt to the giver. On the contrary, it is the giver’s responsibility and duty to give and he should consider himself lucky he has someone to give to.

4. Fasting ( Ramadan ). Faithful Muslims fast from sun-up to sun-down each day during this Holy month. The fast develops self-control, devotion to God and

identity with the destitute. No food or drink may be consumed during the daylight hours; no smoking or sexual pleasures may be enjoyed, either. Many Muslims eat two meals a day during Ramadan, one before sunrise and one shortly after sunset.

5. The Pilgrimage (Haji). The pilgrimage is expected of all Muslims at least once in their lifetimes. It can be extremely arduous on the old or infirm, so in their cases, they may send someone in their places. The trip is an essential part in Muslims' gaining salvation. It involves a set of ceremonies and Rituals, many of which, the pilgrimage is directed. Of the Ka'aba, Muhammad M. Pickthall comments in "The Meaning of the Glorious Koran:

The Meccans claimed descent from Abraham through Ishmael, and tradition stated that their Temple, the Ka'aba, had been built by Abraham for the Worship of the One God. It was still called the House of Allah, but the chief objects of Worship were a number of idols, which were called daughters of Allah and intercessors (Pickthall, op., cit., p. ix).

The idols were destroyed by Muhammad on his return to Mecca in power following the Hijira (exile).

When the pilgrim is about six miles from the Holy City, he enters upon the state of Ihram: he casts off, after prayers, his ordinary clothes and puts on two seamless garments; he walks almost barefoot and neither shaves, cuts his hair, nor cuts his nails. The principle activity consists of a visit to the Sacred Mosque (al-Masjid al-Haram); the kissing of the Black Stone (al-Hajar al-Aswad); seven circumambulation of the Ka'aba, three times running and four times slowly; the visit to the Sacred Stone called, Maqam Ibrahim; the ascent of and running between Mt. Safa and Mt. Marwa, seven times; the visit to Mt. Arafat; the hearing of a Sermon there and spending the night at Muzdalifa; the throwing of

stones at the three pillars at Mina and offering sacrifice on the last day of Ihram, which is the 'id of sacrifice ("Id al-Adha") (Encyclopedia Britannica, op., cit., p. 664).

This Muslim pilgrimage serves to heighten and solidify Islamic faith.

There is a sixth religious duty associated with the five pillars. This is Jihad, the Holy War. This duty requires that when the situation warrants, men are required to go to War to spread Islam or defend it against infidels. One who dies in a Jihad is guaranteed eternal life in Paradise (Heaven).

**CULTURAL EXPRESSION.** Islam, like Judaism, is both a Religion and a cultural identity which cannot be separated from the people. In many Countries, the Islamic faith, though not strictly practiced, is woven into the web of society at every facet.

"The Cambridge History of Islam" comments on this phenomenon:

Islam is a Religion. It is also, inseparably from this, a community, a civilization and a culture. It is true that many of the Countries through which the Quar'anic faith spread, already possessed ancient and important cultures. Islam absorbed these cultures, and assimilated itself to them in various ways, to a far greater extent than it attempted to supplant them. But in doing this, it provided them with attributes in common, with a common attitude toward God, to men and to the World, and thus ensured, through the diversities of language, of History and of race, the complex unity of the dar al-Islam, the "House" or "World" of Islam. The history of the Muslim people and Countries, is thus, a unique example of a culture with a Religious foundation, uniting the Spiritual and the temporal, sometimes existing side by side with "Secular" cultures, but most often absorbing them by becoming very closely interlinked with them (P.M. Holdt, op., cit., Vol. I, p. 569).

**LANGUAGE AND THE ARTS.** To doctrine, which serves as both a Religious and Social Foundation, the Arabic language can be added as another unifying factor, which

helps weld Islamic people together.

There is an abundance of Arabic poetry and prose in which the Islamic faith is placed in high regard. Muslim art and architecture also have a highly developed style. Many of the Mosques and Minarets are tremendous works of art decorated with intricate arabesque ornamentation.

**THE FAMILY.** The family is very important in the social economy of Islam. Marriage is required for every Muslim, even the ascetics. Muhammad commanded men to marry and propagate the race. Men may not have more than four wives, yet many cohabit with as many concubines as they choose.

Although the act of marriage is important, the sanctity of the union is not as highly regarded. A Muslim may divorce his wife at any time and for any reason. On the whole, women in Islamic culture do not enjoy the status or the privileges of the men and are very dependent on their husbands. While this sounds cruel and sexist to Westerners, it was a humane innovation in Muhammad's time. Islamic law requires what was then unheard of: each wife must be treated equally.

Other practices include the veiling of women, circumcision, abstention from alcohol, gambling, and certain foods. Many of the above, such as alcohol and gambling, are seen as vices of the West.

## CHAPTER TEN--SIKHISM

Sikhism is a Religion all but unknown to Western civilization. Its adherents are to be found for the most part in the Punjab Province of India. A fairly recent Religion, Sikhism is an attempt to harmonize two of the World's greater Religions, Hinduism and Islam. Sikhism is the third major branch of Hinduism and was founded by a man named Nanak. It also owes much to Islam.

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### HISTORY OF SIKHISM.

**NANAK: THE FOUNDER.** Nanak was born in the Indian Village of Talwandi, some 30 miles Southwest of Lahore, Capital of Punjab. The date of his birth is given as 1469 A.D. His parents were common people who embraced the Hindu Religion. There are folk stories of Nanak's youth which depict him charging a Hindu teacher to know the true Name of God.

At an early age, Nanak supposedly gave religious instruction to certain Brahman Priests concerning the material Sacrament. Whether these stories are true or not, his life was devoted more to meditation and Religion than to work. The occupations chosen for him by his parents were not satisfying and caused him to be somewhat of a black sheep within his family. He eventually took a Government position which was offered him by his brother-in-law in another town. However, Nanak remained unhappy and continued his constant search for Religious truth.

At the age of 33, he was said to have received his Divine call.

One day after bathing, Nanak disappeared into the forest and was taken in a vision to God's presence. He was offered a cup of nectar, which he gratefully accepted. God said to him: "I am with thee. I have made thee happy, and also those who shall take thy Name. Go, and repeat Mine, and cause others to do likewise. Abide uncontaminated, by the World. Practice the repetition of My Name, charity, ablutions, Worship, and meditation....My Name is God, the primal Brahma. And

thou are the Divine Guru” (M.A. MC Auliffe, “Sikh Religion: Its Gurus, Sacred Writings, and Authors” London: Oxford University Press, 1909, pp. 33-35).

Three days later, Nanak returned from the forest and after remaining silent for one day, he pronounced, “There is no Hindu and no Musalman” (Ibid. p. 37). In India, Muslims are known as “Musalmans.”

Nanak, along with his Minstrel friend, Mardana, proceeded to proclaim his new-found message with relatively little success, until they returned to Punjab. Disciples were now gathered around him and the newly found faith continued to grow throughout his life. Around age 70, Nanak died, but not without first appointing a successor to continue his mission. The choice was his trusted Disciple, Angad. According to tradition, even in death, Nanak appeased both Hindu and Muslim.

The Musalmans, who had received God’s Name from the Guru, said they would bury him after his death. His Hindu followers, on the contrary, said they would cremate him. When the Guru was invited to decide the discussion, he said: “Let the Hindu’s place flowers on my right, and the Musalman’s, on my left. They, whose flowers are found fresh in the morning, may have the disposal of my body.” Guru Nanak then ordered the crowd to sing: “O, my friends, pray for me that I may meet my Lord.” The Guru drew a sheet over him, made obeisance to God, and blended his light with Guru Angad’s {his successor}.....

When the sheet was removed the next morning, there was nothing found beneath it. The flowers on both sides were in bloom. All the Sikhs reverently saluted the spot on which the Guru had lain.....at Kartepur in the Punjab. The Sikhs erected a Shrine and the Muhammadan’s, a tomb in his honor on the margin of the Ravi. Both have since been washed away by the river. (Ibid., pp. 190, 191).

**DEVELOPMENT OF SIKHISM.** Prior to his death, Nanak appointed a rope-maker, named Lahina, as his successor. It was Lahina, who thereafter, changed his name to Angad (bodyguard), and who introduced the doctrine of Nanak's equality with God. A series of different Guru's followed Angad, one of whom was Guru Arjan, who compiled the Granth Sahib during his leadership.

After the tenth Guru in the line of succession died in 1708, the loyalty of the Sikhs was transferred from the personal authority of the Guru to the Sacred Book, the Granth Sahib, and so it remains today.

**THE TEACHINGS OF SIKHISM.** The teachings of Sikhism are a syncretism of the doctrines of Islam and Hinduism. Rather than borrowing from the Hindu and Islamic Scriptures, the Sikhs wrote their own Scripture based upon their interpretation of certain ideas taught in Hinduism and Islam. Sikhism actually rejects some of the teachings of Hinduism and Islam. The result is an interesting combination of both Hindu and Moslem theology.

**SCRIPTURE.** The Sacred Scriptures of Sikhism are known as the Granth Sahib or "Lord's Book. This work was composed by several dozen authors, some living prior to Nanak and having only a distant relationship to Sikhism. It contains a collection of poems of various lengths and totals some 29,480 rhymed verses. The contents center on extolling the Name of God and exhortations on daily living.

A unique feature of this work is the number of languages utilized in its composition. The Granth Sahib is written in six different languages and several dialects. It is therefore, nearly impossible for even the learned Sikh to study these Scriptures in their entirety, much less so, for the unlearned.

Undoubtedly, there are only a handful of people in the entire World capable of reading the Volume in its totality. There has never been any extensive system of Scriptural study made by the Sikhs. The average Sikh devotee knows very little about the Granth Sahib, and it is for this reason, non-essential to Sikh Religious training. Although most Sikhs do not know the contents of their Sacred Book, they do treat it with

reverence, almost to the point of idolatry.

**GOD.** According to Sikh belief, there is One God, who is Absolute and Sovereign over all things. Nanak's first statement, after receiving his call, became the opening sentences of the Granth Sahib:

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There is but One God, whose Name is true, Creator, devoid of fear and enmity, immortal, unborn, self-existent, great, and bountiful. the True One was in the beginning (Ibid., p. 35).

The usual name given to the Sikh deity is "sat nam," which means "true name," although God may be called many different Names since He takes on various manifestations. The Granth Sahib records:

Thou, O Lord, art One. But many are thy manifestations (Ibid., p. 310 ).

Although God is basically a Unity, according to Sikh doctrine, He is not considered personal, but rather is equated with truth and reality. K. Singh observes:

In equating God with the abstract principle of truth or reality, Nanak avoided the difficulty encountered by Religious teachers, who describe God only as the Creator of the Father....but Nanak's system has its own problems. If God is truth, what is truth? Nanak's answer, was that in situations when you cannot decide for yourself, let the Guru be your guide (K. Singh in "Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religions," Keith Grim, General Editor, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1981, p. 691).

**SALVATION.** Robert E. Hume comments upon the Sikh idea of salvation:

The Sikh Religion teaches that salvation consists in knowing God, or in obtaining God, or being absorbed into God. The general method of salvation is fairly consistent with the Supremacy of an inscrutable God, and with the accompanying doctrines of the worthlessness of the World and the helplessness of man....This method of obtaining salvation by a pantheistic merging of the individual self, with the mystical World, soul is identical with the method of salvation, which had been taught in the Hindu Upanishads" (Robert E. Hume, "The World's Living Religions," New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, rev. ed., 1959, pp .102, 103).

Hume lists the points of agreement and disagreement between Sikhism and the Hinduism and Islamic doctrines:

### **A COMPARISON OF SIKHISM WITH HINDUISM**

#### **(1) Points of Agreement**

Theoretically, belief is a mystical Supreme Unity.

Practically, great variety of designation for deity.

A certain theistic application of Pantheism, even as in some of the Hindu Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita.

Salvation by faith in the Grace of God.

The doctrine of Karma.

Transmigration of souls.

#### **(2) Points of Disagreement**

Hindu Polytheism repudiated, in favor of a Monistic Pantheism.

Hindu pilgrimages, Ritualism, and hermit asceticism repudiated, in favor of Pure Worship of the Pure One.

Hindu Scriptures repudiated, in favor of the Sikh Scriptures.

Hindu degradation of women repudiated, in favor of a higher re-

gard for women.

Hindu infanticide repudiated, in favor of a more vigorous population.

Hindu vegetarianism repudiated, in favor of a more vigorous meat-eating.

## **A COMPARISON OF SIKHISM WITH ISLAM**

### **(1) Points of Agreement**

Unity of the Supreme Personal Being.

Sovereignty of the Supreme Absolute Ruler.

A certain mercifulness attributed to the inscrutable deity, along with an uncomplaining arbitrariness.

Salvation through submission to God.

Worship through repetition of the Name of the deity.

Great importance in repeating prescribed prayers.

Devotion to the founder as God's Prophet.

Extreme reverence for Sacred Scripture.

The first section in the Sacred Scripture, a kind of Lord's Prayer, composed by the founder at a crisis in his early life when seeking for God, and subsequently prescribed for daily repetition by all His followers.

A series of subsequent leaders after the original founder.

A long, Powerful, Militaristic Church State.

Unity among believers, despite subsequent Sects.

A very important Central Shrine - Mecca and Amritsar.

Vehement denunciation of idolatry.

### **(2) Points of Disagreement**

Sikhism's founder not so ruthless or violent as Islam's.

Sikhism's deity not so ruthless or violent as Islam's.

Sikhism's Sacred Scriptures ascribed to many teachers, at least thirty-seven; not to one, as in Islam.

No fasting prescribed to Sikhs, as to Muslims in month of Ramadan.

No decisive Judgment-Day in Sikhism, as in Islam. (Ibid., pp. 108-110).

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