

## Religious Terms (revised 2/14)

Adi Granth (Sikhism): The Original collection of the primary scripture of the Sikhs

Advent (Christian): Four week celebration for Christmas, period before Christ; approach

Agnosticism: Not know; the existence of God cannot be proven

Ahimsa (Hindu): Nonviolence

Ajiva (Jainism, Sikhism): Matter without soul or life

Alpha (Α) and Omega (Ω) (Christianity): First and last letters of Greek alphabet to symbolize God as the beginning and end

Amaterasu (Shinto): Shining in heaven; goddess of the sun

Amitabha Buddha (Buddhism): Buddha of the Western Paradise, a bliss-body Buddha in Mahayana

Analects (Confucianism): Book of the sayings of Confucius

Anatta (Buddhism): Doctrine that there is no soul or permanent essence in people and things

Anichcha (Buddhism): Constant change

Animism: Spirit, soul, life force; all elements of nature filled with spirit or spirits

Anointing of the sick (Christian): Sacrament when a priest anoints a sick person with oil (health) and offers prayers

Apocalypticism (Christianity): The belief that the world will soon come to an end; often in a great battle, final judgment, and a reward for the good

Apostle (Christianity): One of Jesus' twelve disciples or any early preacher of Christianity

Arhat (Buddhism): A person who has practiced monastic disciplines and reached nirvana, the ideal

Ascension (Christianity): Celebration for forty days after Easter commemorating Jesus' ascension into heaven

Ashes on forehead (Christianity): At the beginning of Lent (preparation for Easter), stresses the inevitability of death and sorrow for wrongdoing

Ashkenazim (Judaism): Jews from central Europe

Ashram (Hindu): Spiritual community

Ash Wednesday (Christian): Beginning of Lent. Also see ashes on forehead

Atheism: Not God; there is no God or gods

Avatar (Hindu): An earthly embodiment of a deity

Baptism (Christianity): Christian rite of initiation, by immersion or sprinkling with water; cleansing with water

Bar Mitzvah (Judaism): Son (age 13) and sometimes daughters (age 12-18) of the commandment; the coming-of-age ceremony when a young person is

considered a legal adult within the Jewish community

Bhagavad Gita (Hindu): Religious literary work about Krishna

Bhakti (Hindu): Devotion to a deity or guru

Bhakti Yoga (Hindu): The spiritual discipline of devotion to a deity or guru

Bible (Christianity): Scriptures containing the books of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament

Biblical Judaism (Judaism): Before the destruction of the Second Temple (70 A.D.)

Bishop (Christianity): Overseer; a priest and church leader in charge of a large geographical area (diocese)

Blessed Water or Holy Water (Christianity): Reminds one of baptism, used to bless objects and people

Bodhi (Buddhism): Enlightenment

Bodhisattva (Buddhism): Person of deep compassion; one who does not enter nirvana but is constantly reborn to help others; a heavenly being of compassion

Bodi Day (Mahayana Buddhist): Festivals of Buddha enlightenment, eight day of 12<sup>th</sup> month

Brahma (Hindu): God of creation

Brahman (Hindu): Spiritual essence of the universe

Brahmin (Hindu): Member of one of the four major social classes; the priestly caste

Bushido (Shinto): Warrior knight way; military devotion to a ruler demanding loyalty duty and self-sacrifice

Caliph (Islam): Successor; which is a religious and political leader

Calumet: A long-stemmed sacred pipe smoked as a token of peace

Canaan (Judaism): An ancient name for Israel

Candles, Lighted (Christianity): New Understanding

Canon (Christianity): Measure, rule; a list of authoritative books or documents

Circumcised (Judaism): Eight days after birth, the foreskin of the penis is cut off

Chants: Stories and words of a tradition used in sacred ceremonies

Cherye (Confucianism): Ceremony on the first Sunday in May

Chinese Buddhist festivals: Lunar calendar. New Year in February

Christianity Dominations

Branches of Christianity

Eastern Orthodox

Greek

Russian

Serbian

Romanian

Other

Western Christianity

Roman Catholic

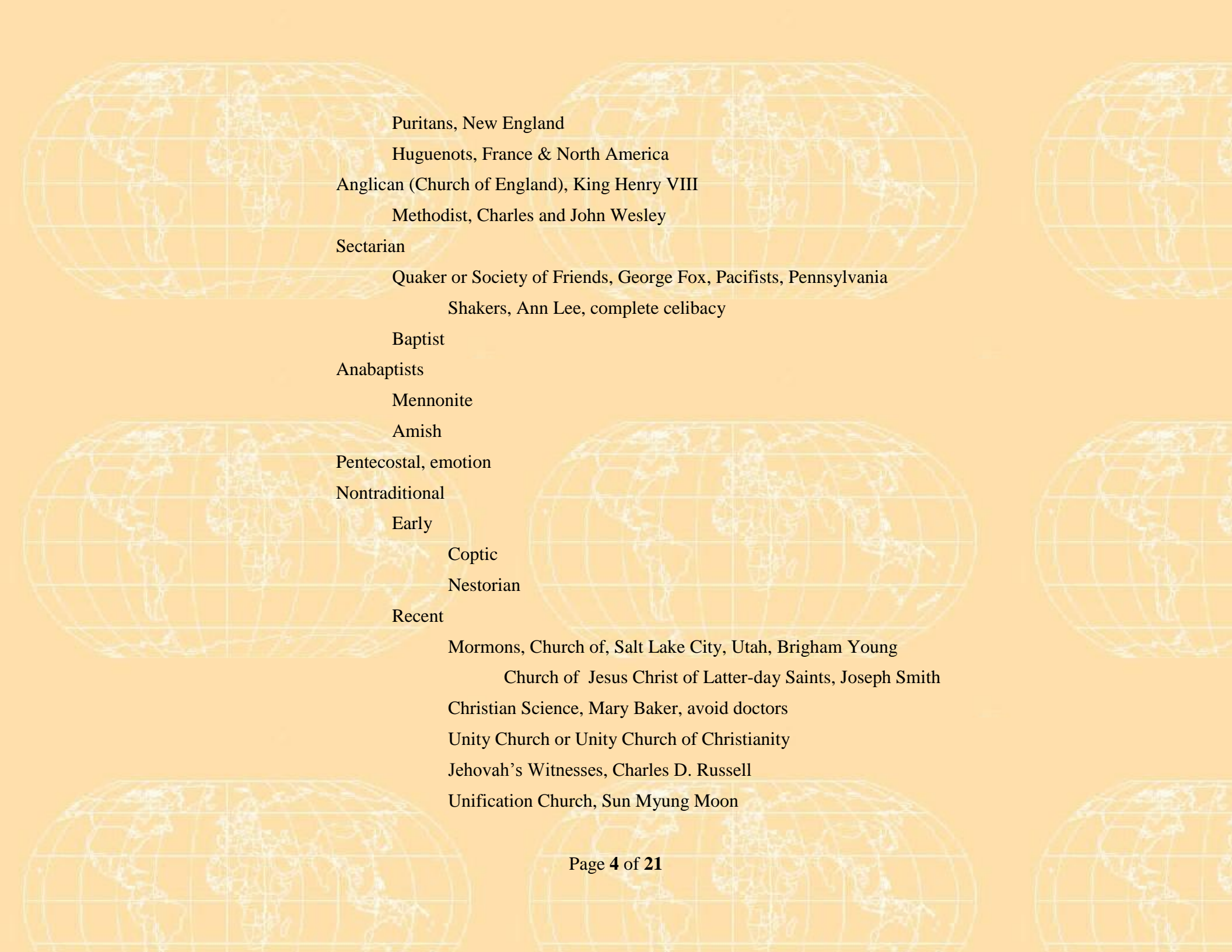
Society of Jesuits or Jesuits, Ignatius of Loyola

Protestant or Sectarianism

Lutheran, Martin Luther

Calvinist, John Calvin, Holland, Scotland, United States

Presbyterian



Puritans, New England  
Huguenots, France & North America  
Anglican (Church of England), King Henry VIII  
Methodist, Charles and John Wesley  
Sectarian  
Quaker or Society of Friends, George Fox, Pacifists, Pennsylvania  
Shakers, Ann Lee, complete celibacy  
Baptist  
Anabaptists  
Mennonite  
Amish  
Pentecostal, emotion  
Nontraditional  
Early  
Coptic  
Nestorian  
Recent  
Mormons, Church of, Salt Lake City, Utah, Brigham Young  
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith  
Christian Science, Mary Baker, avoid doctors  
Unity Church or Unity Church of Christianity  
Jehovah's Witnesses, Charles D. Russell  
Unification Church, Sun Myung Moon

Christmas (Christianity): Jesus birth, December 25, Christian Saint Nicholas to Santa Clause, gifts to Children around the world

Church Decorations and Robes Color (Western Christianity);

Black – death, Good Friday

Green – growth, agricultural summer months, between Pentecost and Advent

Red – blood, feast of martyrs (witnesses), Pentecost

Violet (sometimes Blue - Advent and Lent

White – Adult funerals

White and Gold – joy, Christmas and Easter

Communism: Nontheistic religion, primarily atheistic

Confirmation (Christianity): Sacrament of confirmation or strengthening

Confucian birthday (Confucianism): Rituals in September or October, often September 28

Conservative Judaism (Judaism): Branch that tries to blend the best of old and new

Covenant (Judaism): Contract between the Hebrews and their God, Yahweh.

Cross (Christianity): Recall of Jesus death

Crucifix (Christianity): Jesus hanging on a cross

Crusades (Christianity): Attempts to take back the Holy Land (Israel and adjacent territories) with military expeditions

Day of Breaking of the Fast (Islam): Observed after Ramadan is marked by parties and visiting of graves

Day of Sacrifice (Islam): Tenth day of Ramadan in Mina the pilgrims throw small stones at three square pillars. Each family sacrifices a sheep, goat, cow or camel

and shears the food with the poor

Death of Husayn (Islam): Assassination of Muhammad's son-in-law. Sometimes the devotees cut themselves and cry during street processions

Devi (Hindu): "Feminine Goddess"; Divine; Great Mother

Dharma (Buddhism): Totality of Buddhist teaching

Dhikr (Islam): Devotional remembrance of Allah by the recitation of his ninety-nine names and other devotional practices

Dhyana (Buddhism): Focusing of mind; stages of trance

Dhyana (Hindu): Meditation

Diaspora (Judaism): Dispersion of Jews beyond Israel, such as Persia, Egypt, and the Mediterranean region

Digambara: Clothed in sky; Jain sect monks do not wear clothing

Diwali (Hindu): Return of Rama and Sita, honor for Ganesha and Lakshmi, after monsoon season, clean houses and illuminate outside with candles and lights

Divination: A foretelling of the future

Door Pine (Shinto): Decorated arrangement for door made up of pine, bamboo and plum to celebrate the new year

Dualism: Belief that reality is made of two different principles (spirit and matter); the belief in the conflict of two gods (good and evil)

Dukkha (Buddhism): Sorrow, misery

Durga (Hindu): Awe-inspiring; a goddess; a form of Devi

Durga Puja (Hindu): December, celebrates goddess Durga's ability to overcome dangerous powers, people dance in front of their statues and in Calcutta with the

immersion of her statues in the river

Easter (Christian): Spring festival of celebration of the resurrection of Jesus, fertility and new life, Western Church – first Sunday after the full moon that follows the

spring equinox, Eastern Orthodox Church – later

Ecumenism (Christianity): Dialogue between denominations

Essenes (Judaism): Semimonastic Jewish community that flourished from 150 B.C. to 68 A.D

Eucharist (Christianity): Good gift; Lord's Last Supper of bread and wine (body and blood of Jesus)

Evangelical (Christianity): Emphasizing the authority of scripture; used to identify certain Protestant groups

Evangelist (Christianity): Good news person; one of the four (Matthew Mark, Luke, and John) authors of the Gospel

Extreme unction or anointing of the sick (Christian): Sacrament when a priest anoints a sick person with oil (health) and offers prayers

Fana (Islam): Extinction; the loss of self in mystical experiences

Fat Tuesday (Christianity): Pre-Lenten celebration, meat and butter were used up in preparation for Lent

Fethers: Play a large part in many oral religions, associated with flight and contact with the world above and beyond

Filioque (Christianity): And from the Son; in Western Church indicating that the Holy Spirit arises from both Father and Son. Was not accepted by Orthodox

Christianity, and helped cause a separation of Western and Eastern Churches

Fish (Christianity): Ancient symbol of Christian belief., fishers of men

Five Classics (Confucianism): Classical literature prior to Confucius time, including poetry, history, and divination

Four Books (Confucianism): The major Confucian books, which include the sayings of Confucius and Mencius

Gagaku (Shinto): The stately ceremonial music

Genuflection (Christianity): Bending of the right knee on entering and leaving a church

Golden Temple (Sikh): Spiritual center of Sikh faith

Good Friday (Christianity): Friday before Easter, death of Jesus, 12 PM to 3 PM time Jesus suffered on the cross

Gospel (Christianity): Good news; an account of the life of Jesus

Guanyin (Buddhism): A bodhisattva of compassion in Mahayana

Gurdwara (Sikhism): Sikh temple

Guru (Hindu): Spiritual teacher

Guru (Sikhism): Teacher and his nine successors, who are the mouthpiece of God; the fundamental Guru

Hadith (Islam): Recollection of an act or saying of Muhammad

Hajj (Islam): Pilgrimage to Mecca

Halloween (US folk): Evening before All Saints day (November 1), theme of death and rebirth, ancestors need to be fed, has led to children receiving food (mostly

candy)

Hanukkah (Judaism): Early-winter festival, the feast of Dedication celebrated with the lighting of candles for eight days, in memory of the rededication of the Second

Temple

Hatha yoga (Hindu): Spiritual discipline of postures and bodily exercises

Hinduism: Many Gods, has many religious images, promotes vegetarianism

Hijra (Islam): Flight; Muhammad's escape from Mecca to Yathrib (Medina)

HIS (Christianity): Greek letters Iota, eta, and sigma, first 3 letter of the name of Jesus

Holi (Hindu): Spring is celebrated, boys and girls playfully through colored water on each other

Holistic: Culture who's various elements (art, music, social behavior) may all have religious meaning

Holocaust or Shoah (Judaism): Destruction of European Judaism by the Nazis; Hebrew: extermination, memorialized on Yom Hashoah in April or May

Holy Water or Blessed Water (Christianity): Reminds one of baptism, used to bless objects and people

Holly Week (Christianity): Week before Easter

Hula (Hawaiian): Key element of Hawaiian religion and culture

Hylozoism (Jainism, Sikhism): The belief that all physical matter has life and feeling

Icon or Ikon (Christianity): Image; religious painting on wood, used in the Orthodox Church

Id al-Adha (Islam): Day of Sacrifice during the month of the Hajj, when an animal is sacrificed to remember the submission of Abraham

Ikon or Icon (Christianity): Image; religious painting on wood, used in the Orthodox Church

Imam (Islam): Religious leader; one of the hereditary successors of Muhammad, venerated in Shiite Islam

Immanent: Existing and operating within nature

Incarnation (Christianity): In flesh; a belief that God is visible in Jesus

Incense (Christianity): Burned to symbolize prayer and reverence

Indulgence (Christianity, Catholic): Kindness-toward; remission of time spent in purgatory



Ise (Shinto): In eastern Honshu of a major shrine to Amaterasu

Islam (Islam): Submission; community of believers who have submitted themselves to Allah

#### Five Pillars

Creed; There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the messenger

Prayer; Five times a day, before dawn, midday, midafternoon, sunset, and at nighttime

Charity to the Poor; Usually 2.5% on all that one owns

Fasting during Ramadan; avoid all food, liquid, tobacco and sex from dawn until dusk

Pilgrimage to Mecca; All Muslims, men and women, unless prevented by poverty or sickness are expected to visit Mecca once in their life

#### Religious Practices

Dietary; forbids pork and wine (some interpret as all alcohol)

Usury and Gambling; charging interest on loans not allowed, gambling is forbidden

Circumcision; common at 7 or 8 years of age (in some areas both male and female)

Marriage; a civil contract, in traditional Muslim societies is arranged, annulment and divorce and can be initiated by either wife

or husband but neither is frequent

Female Roles; different than males but complementary, circumscribed in public, in some societies veiled in public, no job outside

the home, socialize only with female friends and relatives

Death Rituals; buried in a plain white shroud and faced toward Mecca, headstone is undecorated stone marker

Scripture; Qur'an

Law (Sharia); traditionally does not separate religious and secular spheres

Philosophy; liberal, values reason and can be examined intellectually; conservative is suspicious of reason and that everything is determined by God

## Islam Dominations

### Islam

Sunnis (tradition, centered in Saudi Arabia and Egypt) (~85%); based on traditional teaching of Muhammad as given in the Qur'an and authoritative hadiths

Shittes (faction, Iran is the center) (~15%); believe that legitimate succession was hereditary from the immediate family of Muhammad, they think that Ali, the son-in-law and cousin of Muhammad was the first legitimate iman.

Twelvers (Ithna Ashariya); believe that there were 12 imams

Sevens (Ismailis); believe there were 7 imams

Nizari

Mustali Ismaillis

### Others

Sufism (wool, heart of Islam); sought the involvement of emotions in Islam by mysticism and a direct experience of God

Mesnevi (Whirling Dervish); circular dance

Qadiri

Suhrawardi

Naqshbandi

Islam Art (Islam): Prohibits images.

Islam Diet (Islam): Forbids pork and wine (sometimes all alcohol)

Islam Rules (Islam): Charging interest on loans and gambling is prohibited, circumcision for males is required, usually done at 7 or 8 years of age, in some countries it is also carried out on females, usually at puberty. Marriages are arranged and divorce is possible although not frequent. Females are often veiled in public. At death prayers from the Qu'an are recited and the body is buried facing Mecca in a plain white shroud. The headstone is an undecorated stone marker

Izanagi (Shinto): Male who invites; primordial male parent God

Izanami (Shinto): Female who invites; primordial female parent God

Jainism: Religion that is glorified in austerity

Jainism Denominations:

Digambaras – Monks wear no clothing

Jan – Ability to purify themselves and perfect their own character, pilgrimage is important

Shvetambares – Clothed in white

Sthanakavasis – do not use temples or images; focus on meditation and individual austerities

Japanese Buddhist Festivals: Western calendar. New year, Visit to a temple and sharing a vegetarian meal; dead (O- Bon) in mid summer, lighted candles drift downstream or out to sea

Japji (Sikhism): Poem recited daily by pious Sikhs

Jihad (Islam): Struggle; spreading Islamic belief and practice

Jina (Jainism, Sikhism): Perfected person who will not be reborn

Jinja (Shinto): Shrine

Jiva (Jainism, Sikhism): Spirit, soul, which enlivens matter; a perfect person who will not be reborn

Jiva (Jains): Believes in gentle methods of ending one life

Jnana Yoga (Hindu): Spiritual discipline of knowledge and insight

Judaism Denominations:

Ashkenazic – originally centered in Central Europe, virtually ended by the Holocaust, now in the US, Canada and Israel.

Conservative – modern changes with protection of traditions, use of Hebrew in service, women can be rabbis, large congregation in US.

Ethiopian (Falashas)– accepts only five books of the Torah

Orthodox – retaining traditional practices and beliefs, synagogues separate males and females,

service requires a quorum of 10 males, services conducted in Hebrew, only males have bar mitzvah, males use talit and tefillin for prayer, males cover head with skullcap, prayer shawl, or hat, men are breadwinners and women run household, hair and beard in front of ears is not cut, some wear black hat and coat, women cover their heads, keep traditional laws concerning diet, no manual labor on Sabbath such as cooking, driving, walking long distance, dialing of telephone, turning on electric light

Reconstructionist: Individual interpretation of Judaism, it never stands still but evolves

Reform – enter mainstream of life, in synagogue men and women can sit together, service in native language and Hebrew, choirs organ music are used, talit and tefillin is optional, traditional dress disappeared, equality of men and women, women may be rabbis, girls have bar mitzvah

Sephardic – originally centered in Southern Spain, expulsion occurred in 1492, most live in Israel today

Junzi (Confucianism): Noble person; refined human ideal of Confucianism

Justification or Righteousness (Christianity): Being sinless in the sight of God

Kabah (Islam): Cube; the square shrine in the center of the mosque of Mecca

Kabbalah (Judaism): Received, handed down; whole body of Jewish mystical literature

Kali (Hindu): A form of Devi; a goddess of destruction and rebirth

Kami (Shinto): A spirit, god, or goddess

Kamidari (Shinto): Shell or home altar for the veneration of Kami

Kamikaze (Shinto): Spirit wind; suicide fighter pilots of World War II

Karma (Hindu): Moral law of cause and effect; determines the direction of rebirth

Kara (Sikhism): A steel Sikh bracelet

Karma Yoga (Hindu): Spiritual discipline of selfless action

Karuna (Buddhism): Compassion, empathy

Kethuvim (Judaism): Writings; the third section of the Hebrew scriptures, consisting of poetry, proverbs, and literary works

Kippah (Judaism): Skull cap

Koan (Chan and Zen Buddhism): Question that cannot be answered logically; used to test consciousness and bring awakening

Kojiki (Shinto): Earliest chronicle of Japanese history

Koran (Islam): See Qur'an

Korean Buddhist festivals: Lunar calendar

Kosher (Judaism): Ritually correct; said particularly about food preparation and consumption. All blood must be drained from meat, can not consume animals that have died in the field or are killed by larger animals, there are also specific methods of slaughter, inspection and preservation, pork and shellfish are forbidden, meat and dairy products can not be mixed or eaten together at the same meal, separate cooking and serving implements

Krishna (Hindu): God associated with divine playfulness; a form of Vishnu

Lama (Buddhism): Tibetan Buddhist teacher

Laozi (Taoism): Founder of Taoism

Last Supper (Christianity): Thursday before Easter, washing of feet of 12 people

Legalists (Chinese): Strictest Chinese philosophical schools, which advocated strong laws and punishments

Lei (Hawaiian): Wreaths of flowers around the head, wrists and ankles are used in the hula and are religious objects

Lent (Christianity): Lengthening day, spring; the preparatory period (forty days represents the period Jesus spent in the desert before public life) before Easter, starts on Ash Wednesday, some attend church services daily, restrict intake of food and pleasures and music and marriages are sometimes forbidden

Li (Confucianism, Taoism): Appropriate action, ritual, propriety, and etiquette

Libation: Pouring a liquid as an offering to a God

Mahayana Buddhist Festivals:

Buddha birth, eight day of fourth month

Buddha enlightenment (Bodi Day), eighth day of 12<sup>th</sup> month

Buddha death, 15<sup>th</sup> of second month

Maitreya (Buddhism): A Buddha (or bodhisattva) expected to appear on earth in the future

Mandala (Buddhism): A circular design containing deities, geometrical forms, symbols, that represent totality, the self, or the universe.

Mantra (Hindu): Short sacred phrase, often chanted

Marriage (Christian): Two people commit, after administering the sacraments to each other, for life

Masks: Play an important role in several oral religions and often are used with a dance

Maya (Hindu): Illusion that keeps us from seeing reality correctly

Mecca pilgrimage (Islam): All male (hajji) and female (hajjiyah) Muslims are expected to visit Mecca or Hajj (black meteorite) at least once in their lifetime (Only Muslims may visit)

Menorah (Judaism): A candelabrum usually containing seven or sometimes nine branches, and used for religious celebrations

Messiah (Christianity): Anointed; a special messenger sent by God, and believed to be Jesus

Messiah (Judaism): Savior figure to be sent by God, awaited by the Jews

Mezuzah (Judaism): Placed on the door step at the entrance of a home, containing words from the Torah, it is reverently touched upon entering.

Midrash (Judaism): Search; rabbinical commentary on concerning the scriptures and oral law

Mihrab (Islam): Niche inside a mosque that indicates the direction of Mecca

Minaret (Islam): Tower used to call people to prayer

Misogi (Shinto): Purification ritual of standing under a waterfall

Mohists (Chinese): Chinese school that taught universal love

Moksha (Hindu): Liberation from personal limitation, egotism, and rebirth

Monotheism: Belief in one God

Mosque: (Islam); Muslim place of worship

Mother (Hindu): French women who in India became a Hindu guru

Mudra (Buddhism): Symbolic hand gesture

Muezzin (Islam): Chanter who calls people to prayer

Muhammad's birthday (Islam): Twelfth day of the third month, celebrating and reading religious text

Muslim (Islam): Person who submits to Allah

Nevi'im (Judaism): Prophets; second section of the Hebrew scriptures, containing historical and prophetic books

Nihongi (Shinto): Second chronicle of Japanese history

Nirvana (Buddhism): Release from suffering and rebirth that brings inner peace

Noh (Shinto): Dramas performed in mask and costume

Nontheistic: Not asserting or denying the existence of any deity; unconcerned with the supernatural

Oil and Salt (Christianity): Blessing as a symbol of health

Omoto (Shinto): New Religion, stressing art and beauty

Ordination (Christianity): Sacrament of official empowerment of a ministry

Original sin (Christianity): Human inclination toward evil, inherited from Adam

Orthodox (Christianity): Straight opinion; correct belief

Orthodox (Judaism): The most traditional branch

Orthodoxy (Christianity): The Eastern branch

Palms and Palm Sunday (Christianity): Used in the Sunday before Easter to recall Jesus' procession into Jerusalem

Pantheism: Belief that everything in the universe is divine

Passover (Judaism): A spring (first lunar month) festival that celebrates the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt and freedom from oppression

Patriarch (Christianity): Bishop of one of the major ancient sites (Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Moscow) of Christianity

Pentecost feast (Christianity): Ten days after Ascension, the first preaching of early Christians

Pharisees (Judaism): Faction during the Second-Temple period that emphasized the creation and support of the nation of Israel

Polytheism: Belief in many gods

Pope (Christianity): Father; bishop of Rome and head of the Roman Catholic Church

Pray (Christianity): On both knees as a sign of denotation

Predestination (Christianity, Calvinism): Belief that God is all- powerful and all-knowing, a human being's ultimate reward or punishment is already decreed by God

Prophet (Judaism): Person inspired by God to speak for him

Protestant Principle (Christianity): Ability of each believer to rethink and interpret the ideas and values of Christianity

Puja (Hindu): Offerings and ritual for a Deity

Puja (Jainism, Sikhism): Ritual in honor of a tirthankara

Purim (Judaism): Early spring festival in that celebrates (Book of Esther) Jews' being saved from destruction in Mesopotamia

Qi (Confucianism, Taoism): Life force

Qiblah (Islam): Direction toward Mecca; toward which Muslims pray

Qur'an (Islam): Recitation; God's words in Arabic as revealed to and recited by Muhammad; authorized edition of the written words that appeared after Muhammad's death

Rabbi (Judaism): Religious teacher, Jewish minister

Rabbinical Judaism (Judaism): Developed after the destruction of the Second Temple (70 A.D.)

Raja Yoga (Hindu): Discipline of meditation

Rama (Hindu): God and mythical king; a form of Vishnu

Ramadan (Islam): Month of fasting, avoiding all food, liquid, tobacco and sex from sun up to sun down; the ninth month of the Muslim calendar, 11 days earlier than the previous year

Reconciliation (Christian): The sacrament of reconciliation or penance, a repentant person admits sins to a priest and is absolved

Reconstructionism (Judaism): Liberal branch that emphasizes cultural aspects

Redemption (Christianity): Buy again, buy back; the belief that the death of Jesus has paid the price of justice for all humans



Reform (Judaism): Liberal branch

Rejoicing of the Torah (Judaism): Eight day of Sukkot ends the festival with the reading from the end of the Torah

Ren (Confucianism): Empathy, consideration for others, humaneness

Righteousness or Justification (Christianity): Being sinless in the sight of God

Robe of Abraham (Islam): Male robe worn when visiting Mecca. Two piece white seamless cloth. One piece is worn around the waist and lower body and the other covers the upper body and the left arm.

Rosary (Christianity, Islamic): A string of beads used in counting prayers

Rosh Hashanah (Judaism): Beginning of the year (seventh lunar month); celebration of the New Year, consider obligations and pay off debts

Sabbath (Christianity): Sunday

Sabbath (Judaism): Rest; the seventh day (Saturday) of the week, for prayer and rest from work

Sacrament (Christianity): Sacred action; one of the essential rituals

Sadducees (Judaism): Priestly faction, during the Second-Temple

Saint Patrick's Day (Christianity): Celebrated on March 17

Sallekhana (Jainism): Holy death; death by self-starvation, valued as a noble end of a long life of virtue and detachment

Salt and Oil (Christianity): Blessing as a symbol of health

Samadhi (Buddhism): State of deep awareness, the result of intensive meditation

Samadhi (Hindu): State of complete inner peace due to meditation

Samsara (Buddhism): Constant rebirth and the attendant suffering; the everyday world of change

Samurai (Shinto): Feudal soldier

Sangha (Buddhism): Community of monks and nuns; lowercased; also refers to an individual monastic community

Sannyasin (Hindu): A wandering holy man

Satori (Zen Buddhism): Enlightened awareness

Secular Government: Separation of church and state

Seder (Judaism): Order; ritual meal (thin, flat bread, shank bone of lamb, nuts, fruits, parsley in salt water, bitter herbs) at Passover, celebrating the Hebrews' exodus from Egypt

Sephardim (Judaism): Jews of Spain, Morocco, and the Mediterranean area

Shaman: One who contacts and attempts to manipulate the power of spirits

Sharia (Islam): Path; the whole body of Islamic law

Shavuot (Judaism): Feast of weeks, 50 days after Passover, originally summer grain harvest festival, now celebrates God giving Moses the Ten Commandments

Shiite (Islam): Minority branch of Islam, which holds that Muhammad's genuine successors descended from his son-in-law Ali

Shimenawa (Shinto): Twisted rope, marking a sacred spot

Shiva (Hindu): God of destruction and rebirth

Shoat or Holocaust (Judaism): Destruction of European Judaism by the Nazis; Hebrew: extermination

Shofar (Judaism): Blowing of the ram's horn, to remind people that they stand before God

Shu (Confucianism): Reciprocity

Shunyata (Mahayana Buddhism): Emptiness; the universe is empty of permanent reality

Shvetambara (Jain sect): Clothed in white; Jain sect monks and nuns wear white clothing

Sign of the cross (Christianity): Fingers of the right hand touch the forehead, the chest, and the two shoulders

Sikh (Sikhism): Disciple; a follower of the Sikh religion

Sin (Christianity): Wrong doing; disobedience to God

Statues and Pictures of Jesus, Mary, Angels, Saints (Christianity): Symbols used in Christianity

Sthanakavasi (Jam sect): Building person; youngest Jam sect, which rejects the use of statues and temples

Stupa (Buddhism): A shrine, usually a dome, used to mark Buddhist relics or sacred sites

Sufism (Islam): Group of devotional movements in Islam

Sukkot (Judaism): Shelters for people to sleep during harvest; booths; late autumn festival celebrating the Jews' period of wandering in the desert after their exodus from Egypt

Sunni (Islam): Majority branch of Islam, which holds that genuine succession from Muhammad did not depend on hereditary descent from his son-in-law Ali

Suras (Islam): Chapter (114) in the Qur'an

Sutra (Buddhism): A sacred text, one records the words of the Buddha

Taboo (Tongan: tabu; Hawaiian: kapu): A social prohibition

Talmud (Judaism): An encyclopedic commentary on the Hebrew scriptures

Tanakh (Judaism): Complete Hebrew scriptures, containing the Torah, Prophets (Nevi'im), and Writings (Kethuvim)

Tao (Taoism): Origin of the universe which is present and visible in everything

Tao Te Ching (Taoism): Scripture of Taoism

Tasha Be-Av (Judaism): Nine weeks after Shavuot, a day of fasting recalls the destruction of the two temples

Tathata (Buddhism): Uniqueness of each changing reality

Taut (Judaism): Prayer shawl for devout males

Tefilhin (Judaism): Phylacteries; two small boxes containing biblical passages worn by Orthodox males on their head and left arm at Morning Prayer

Ten Commandments (Christianity):

1. You shall have no other God
2. You shall make or worship no carved images
3. You shall not misuse his name
4. Keep the Sabbath holy
5. Honor your Father and Mother
6. You shall not commit murder
7. You shall not commit adultery

8. You shall not steal

9. You shall not give false evidence

10. You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor

Tenrikyo (Heavenly reasoning teaching, Shinto): New Religion stressing human betterment

Testament (Christianity): A contract; Old and New Testament constitute the scriptures

Thanksgiving (American): Holiday of harvest festival

Theophany (Judaism): Revelation or appearance of God

Tilit (Judaism): Prayer shawl usually white with dark stripes, covers man's head and body during prayer

Tirthankara (Jainism): Crossing maker; one of the twenty-four ideal human beings of the past

Torah (Judaism): Teaching, instruction; the first five books of Hebrew Scriptures; also, additional instructions of God, believed to have been transmitted orally from Moses by a succession of teachers and rabbis

Torii (Shinto): A gate like structure that marks a sacred place

Totem: An animal (or image) related by blood to a family as a guardian or symbol

Totem pole: Wood carving on a pole usually of animals stacked one on top of the other memorialize ancestors or represent kinship

Transcendent: Not limited by the physical world

Trikaya (Buddhism): Three "bodies" of the Buddha

A) Dharmakaya (cosmic Buddha),

B) Sambhogakaya (celestial Buddhas), and

C) Nirmanakaya (historical Buddhas)

Trimurti (Hindu): Three gods; Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva

Trinity (Christianity): The three persons in God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

Tripitaka (Buddhism): Three "baskets," or collections, of Buddhist texts

Upanishads (Hindu): Written meditations of the universe and the self

Vajra (Tibetan Buddhism): Diamond scepter used to symbolize compassion

Valentine's Day (Christianity): Saint Valentine day, in the West, February 14

Vedas (Hindu): Collections of four ancient prayers and rituals

Vesak (Theravada Buddhist): Festival celebration of Buddha birth, enlightenment and death; full moon in May

Vishnu (Hindu): God of preservation and love

Wen (Confucianism): Cultural refinement

Western Wall (Judaism): The foundation stones of the western wall of the last temple of Jerusalem, a place of prayer

Wu Wei (Taoism, Confucianism): No action, no strain, effortless; only doing what comes spontaneously and naturally

Xiao (Confucianism): Family devotion, filial piety

XP (Christianity): First two letters of the name of Christ, basis for Xmas being the abbreviation for Christmas

Yang (Taoism, Confucianism): Active aspect of reality; expresses itself in speech, light, and heat

Yarmulke (Judaism): Skullcap worn by devout males

Yiddish (Judaism): Jewish language

Yi Jing (Confucianism): An ancient but still in use today, Confucian book of divination, one of the Five Classics

Yin (Taoism, Confucianism): Receptive aspect of the universe that expresses itself in silence, darkness, coolness, and rest. See also Yang

Yoga: Method for perfecting one's union with the divine

Yom Kippur (Judaism): Day of Atonement, to make up for one's faults, prayer and fasting

Zealots (Judaism): Anti-Roman, nationalistic Jews, active during the Roman period of control over Israel

Zhuangzi (Taoism): Author of Zhuangzi, that express themes of early Taoist thought

Zionism (Judaism): Movement that encouraged the creation, and the nation of Israel

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