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Religion: Contexts and Expressions

Study of Religion for QLD

Peta Goldburg



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INTRODUCTION

Religion: Contexts and Expressions is designed to address the requirements for *Study of Religion* for senior secondary students in Queensland. The material presented is also relevant for a variety of religion programs in other Australian states and beyond. The book provides students with opportunities to investigate and study a variety of religious traditions and how religion influences the lives of people.

The opening section of *Religion: Contexts and Expressions* focuses on five major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religion. The material in the opening section is foundational to a broad understanding of religion and should be cross-referenced when engaging with the key concepts in each of the four units. The four units are sequential with each unit building on the previous unit.

Religion: Contexts and Expressions is based on an inquiry and investigative approach to learning whereby a range of instructional practices are used to stimulate student learning through structured, guided and open learning approaches. The inquiry approach used consists of four broad components: Forming, Finding, Analysing and Evaluating. Forming requires students to describe the task and its components, to develop questions about the task and to write the methodology; Finding involves exploring sources, informing, locating and gathering data from a variety of sources; Analysing involves matching, comparing and interpreting relationships, patterns and trends; Evaluating requires students to make decisions and judgements, draw conclusions, synthesise findings and verify findings. Central to this metacognitive activity is reflection, which connects the four inquiry components.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Peta Goldburg



Peta Goldburg, RSM FACE, a leading educator in the field of Religious Education and Study of Religion, is Professor of Religious Education at Australian Catholic University. Peta has extensive experience in curriculum development and has chaired the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Syllabus Committee for Study of Religion in 2001 and 2008. She was invited to be a member of the writing team for the new QCAA *Study of Religion* syllabus implemented in 2019. Peta works with teachers across Australia and she has published religion textbooks for students from Years 7 to 10, as well as students in Years 11 and 12 completing Religion and Ethics and Study of Religion. Her expertise in religious education has been recognised nationally through various awards including a Carrick Australian Award for Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning and her appointment as a Fellow of the Australian College of Education.

The activities provided throughout the book have been designed by Peta and a small team of respected educators: Ellen Bow, Anne Browning, Kathryn Dore, Kate Hall and Judy Harris.

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www.cambridge.edu.au/religioncontexts

As you work through the book, you will come across a range of icons indicating that an additional resource is available in the Interactive Textbook. Some of these resources are linked to activities while others are there for enrichment only.

Interactive test
Interactive widget
Video clip
Audio clip
Gallery of images
Weblink

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HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Religion: Contexts and Expressions begins with a general introduction to the five major world religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism; Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religion are also addressed. The material in the opening section provides a foundation for the four formal units of study. Students are then introduced to the four units of study, each of which is divided into two topics.

Unit 1: Sacred texts and religious writings consists of two topics: Sacred texts, and Abrahamic traditions. In this unit, students study various sacred texts and religious writings, identifying how these texts offer insight into life, provide guidance for living and express a relationship between people and a higher being.

Unit 2: Religion and ritual consists of two topics: Lifecycle rituals, and Calendrical rituals. In this unit, students expand their understandings of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religion by investigating religious rituals that mark significant times and events in the religion itself as well as in the lives of adherents. Assessment in Units 1 and 2 is formative.

Unit 3: Religious ethics has two topics: Social ethics, and Ethical relationships. Social ethics considers how ethical principles and theories in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are understood and applied to social-ethical issues. The assessment for Topic 1 is a summative internal examination which requires students to respond to a provided question, scenario and/or problem. Ethical relationships requires students to use and apply their understandings of religious ethics and ethical teachings studied in Topic 1 to one contemporary ethical issue from the perspective of one of the five major world religions. The assessment for Topic 2 is a summative internal assessment requiring students to investigate one contemporary ethical issue selected from the list provided in Unit 3 Topic 2. The response is written in the form of an analytical essay. The issue is to be analysed from the perspective of one of the five major world religions and students are required to devise a hypothesis that is the focus of their enquiry.

Unit 4: Religions, rights and the nation-state is divided into two topics, Religion and the nation-state, and Religion and human rights. In this unit, students investigate how religion affects and influences people's understanding of culture, history, politics and social interaction with a particular focus on rights and religion–state relationships. The assessment for Unit 4 is summative. For Topic 1, a summative internal assessment requires students, in the form of an analytical essay, to investigate the ways in which religion has interacted with nation-states through one example selected from the list provided in the syllabus for Unit 4 Topic 1. The summative assessment for Unit 4 Topic 2 is an external examination contributing to 25 per cent of the student's overall subject result.



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This external examination is common to all schools and administered under the same conditions, at the same time, on the same day. Students will be required to respond to unseen stimulus materials related to Unit 4 Topic 2: Religion and human rights. The items will allow students to use their understanding of the five major world religions in order to explain the ways religious traditions have formed and informed perspectives on human rights. The examination has three parts: Part A requires students to respond to two or three short items requiring sentence responses and/or short paragraph responses of no more than 50–100 words; Part B consists of two short items each requiring paragraph responses of 100–150 words; and Part C consists of two short items requiring responses of 200–250 words.

As you work through the book, you will be asked to complete a range of activities. Worksheets for all activities are provided with the *Interactive Textbook* at Cambridge GO (www.cambridge.edu.au/GO). The worksheets can be printed out and completed by hand, or you could complete and submit them electronically. As part of your learning, you will also be expected to access a number of resources online.

In order to provide a varied learning experience, this book uses a wide range of activities. Some of them you will have heard of before, whereas others will be completely new to you. The learning activities and strategies used in this book include:

- 5Ws & H
- Alphabet list
- Annotated bibliography
- Annotated timeline
- Blog entry
- Character map
- Collage
- Comic strip
- Compare and contrast chart
- Consequences wheel
- Fishbone diagram
- Flowchart
- Frayer model
- Graffiti wall
- Histogram graph
- Hot seat
- Info break
- Jigsaw
- KWHL
- K-W-L
- Mind Map
- PMI
- Six Thinking Hats
- Storyboard
- SWOT
- T-chart
- Venn diagram
- Y-chart.

Your teacher will share more information and examples of each of these strategies and learning activities.

The Study of Religion syllabus advocates and promotes an educational approach to the teaching of religion and is designed to be available to all students in all schools, irrespective of the existence or absence of individual religious beliefs. Educational approaches to the teaching of religion encourage rigorous and critical study rather than confessional interest. Good education about religion should inform, be based on sound education theory, and take account of educational research to inform its practice.

Inquiry learning is focused on the learner rather than the teacher and describes a process where students formulate investigative questions, obtain information that builds knowledge and then critique that knowledge in the light of the information gathered.

The Study of Religion Syllabus is grounded in an inquiry approach to learning and teaching and provides a process of inquiry which should act as a guide for you and the students. With your leadership, students will, over time, develop skills to enable them to formulate investigative questions, obtain information which builds knowledge and then critique that knowledge in the light of the information gathered. The inquiry process encourages students to move beyond the mere acquisition of facts to metacognition. It also encourages teaching and learning approaches which will develop critical religious literacy.

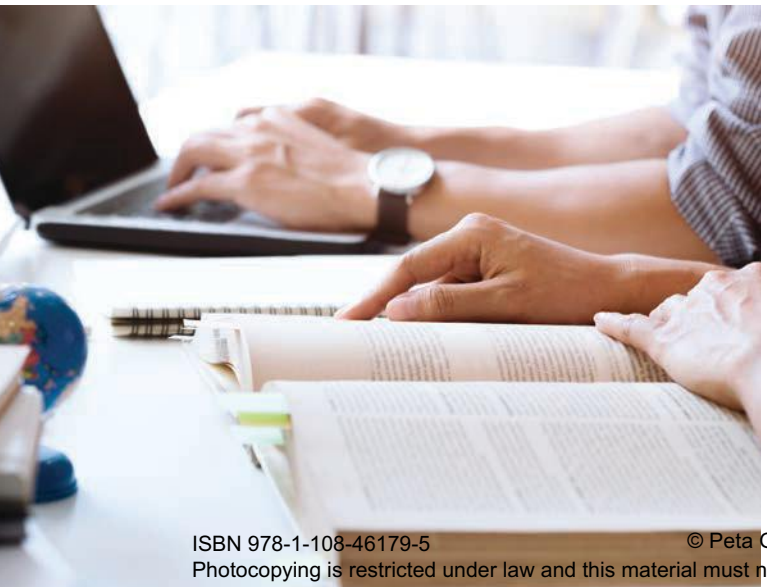
To be critical is to employ self-critical scholarship. It does not refer 'to one's attitude toward the content . . . , but to ways of thinking that enable us to recognise the assumptions and bias that we … might impose' (Boys, 2004, p. 150). Unsworth (2001) describes the steps in the process towards critical literacy as moving through three phases: recognition, reproduction and reflection.

Recognition literacy involves learning to recognise and produce the verbal, visual and electronic codes that are used to construct and communicate meaning as well as cultural practices present and central to common experience of everyday life. Reproduction

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literacy involves understanding and producing the conventional visual and verbal text forms that construct and communicate the established systematic knowledge of cultural institutions. Reflection literacy necessitates an understanding that all social practices and literacies are socially constructed. Reflection literacy involves learning how to read inclusion and exclusion, analysing and interrogating verbal and visual codes to expose how choice of language and image privilege certain viewpoints and how other choices of visual and verbal resources could construct alternative views.

Critical literacy challenges the status quo in an effort to discover alternative paths; it connects the political and the personal, the public and private, the global and local, the economic and pedagogical. It is not only concerned with identifying and deconstructing the conditions of production but also with the conditions of interpretation, including other standpoints and positions. There are several interpretations of critical literacy underpinned by different theoretical approaches, but the one element they have in common is that they involve analysis and critique of the relationship among texts, language, power, social groups and social practices. A critical literacy approach challenges us to examine how we read the world, to examine what we take for granted and to critique the particular culture in which texts are constructed. It enables us to look at written, visual, spoken and multimodal texts to question and challenge attitudes, values and beliefs that lie beneath the surface.



Classrooms are places where students learn about worlds through socially constructed texts. In religion, as in all subject areas, teachers select, distil and organise information on behalf of students. One challenge teachers of religion face is providing students with a variety of materials, including contestable materials, so that students can engage in critical analysis.

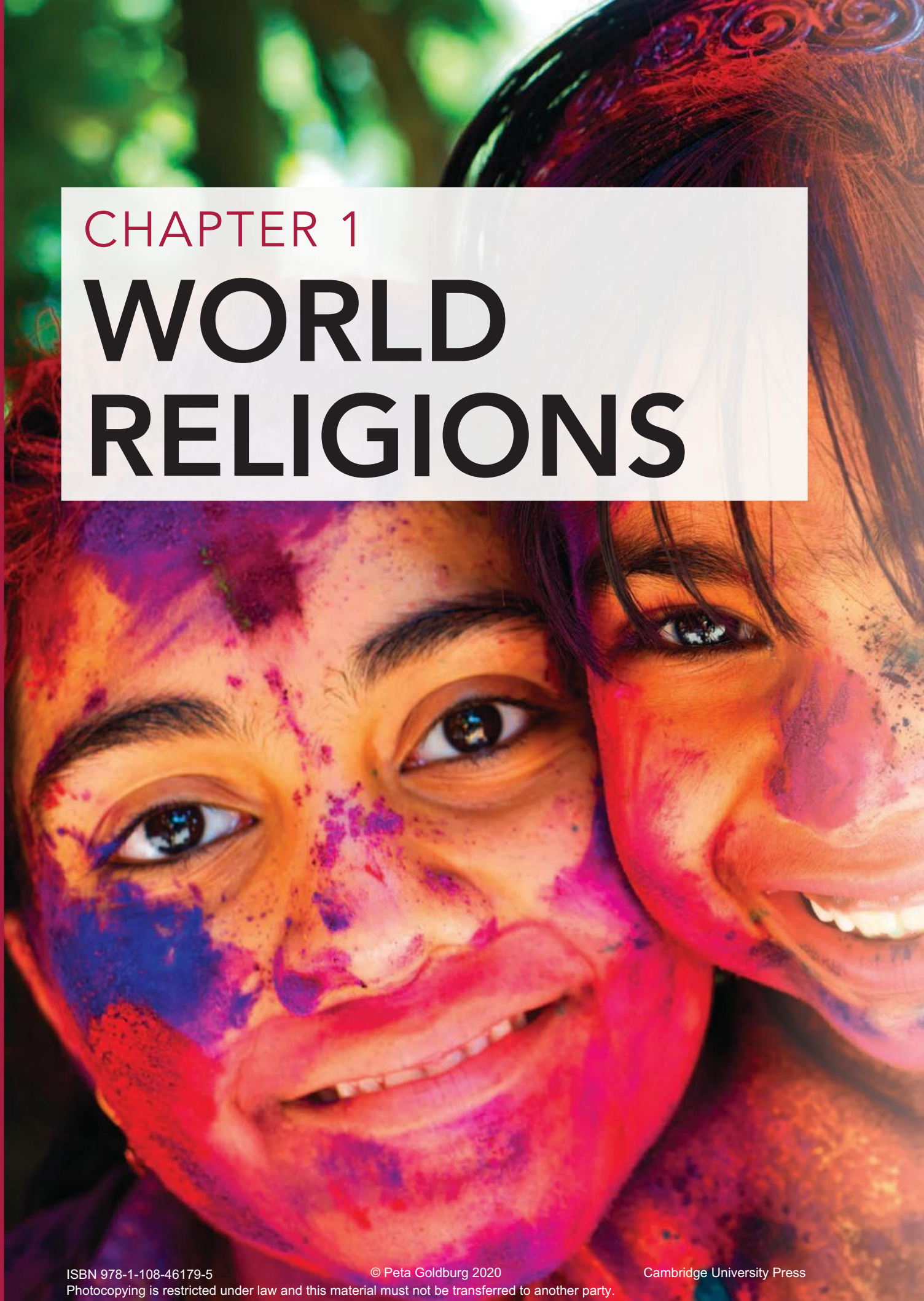
It might begin by inviting students to ask:

- What or whose view of religion is presented as normal by the text?
- Why is the text written this way? How else could it have been written?
- What assumptions does the text make?
- Who is silenced or heard in the text?
- Whose interest might be served by the text?
- What are the possible readings of this situation/event/character?
- What moral, political or religious position does the reading promote?
- How might it be challenged?

A critical literacy approach assists students to question information presented in the text, and reinforces the idea that there are multiple readings and realities. Through such an approach students are encouraged and enabled to identify, examine and critique problematic, contradictory and multiple ways of viewing the world. Reading texts from different positions could also open doors to issues of plurality and religious diversity, to critiquing the home religious tradition as well as the religious traditions of others.

Study of Religion invites an understanding and appreciation of the meaning and significance of religion. In a world in which we are now more likely to encounter the religious other, learning about beliefs, religious traditions, and the ways in which these shape people's lives, enables and enriches our own functioning religiously and politically in contemporary society. Since religions are dynamic and living entities, which are transformative for their adherents, understanding something of the vital role religious practices play in the lives of their communities helps us to engage intelligently in a world characterised by religious pluralism.

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CHAPTER 1

WORLD RELIGIONS

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Study of Religion is the investigation and study of religious traditions and how religion has influenced, and continues to influence, people's lives. Learning about beliefs, religious traditions and the ways that these shape peoples' lives enables and enriches our own functioning, religiously and politically, in contemporary society. Since religions are dynamic and living entities that are transformative for their adherents, understanding something of the vital role religions play in the lives of their communities helps us to engage intelligently in Australian society, which is now characterised by religious pluralism.

This chapter provides a brief introduction to the five major world religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and to Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religion. The Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA) syllabus for Study of Religion consists of four units: Sacred texts and religious writings; Religion and ritual; Religious ethics; and Religion, rights and the nation-state. Prior to and during the study of the four units, information contained in this chapter will complement and supplement material in the units and topics. When studying Sacred texts and religious writings or Religion, rights and the nation-state, for example, cross-referencing this material with key concepts from this chapter on World religions may assist the investigation, as might something from Chapter 3 on Religion and ritual. In other words, moving from one section to another will be more beneficial than beginning at the introduction and working through to the conclusion. To study a topic in depth, you might find it useful to consider sections of three or four chapters, as well as drawing on other resources.

G-d
When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses 'Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh' [I am who I am, YHWH] (Exodus 3:14). Traditionally, rather than uttering the sacred name YHWH, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect or prohibition is expressed in English as G-d.

religion
a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs and practices, which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

1.1 Judaism

'You shall love the Lord your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.'
(Deuteronomy 6:5)

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.'
(Leviticus 19:17)

Judaism: the facts

Number of adherents
Approximately 10 million (worldwide)
97 335 (Australia)

Sacred text
The Torah

Place of worship
Synagogue

Symbol
Magen David (Star of David)



Introduction

Judaism, one of the oldest world religions, dates back approximately 4000 years. What sets Judaism apart from other religions of that time is its belief in only one **G-d**, who is personal and intervenes in human history. Jews trace their beginnings to a group of people called Hebrews, later known as the Israelites, who lived in the Middle East. Judaism is often associated with the land of Israel, but there are Jewish people across the world in almost every nation.

The Jewish **religion** is based on revelation, which begins when G-d called Abraham and Sarah to leave their home and journey forth in faith. In her old age (and through a miracle from G-d), Sarah gave birth to a son, Isaac, and in turn his 12 sons become the leaders of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. In the covenant made between G-d and Abram (later Abraham), G-d promises Abraham, 'To your offspring I will assign this land' (Genesis 15:18). For Jews, Abraham is considered the 'father' of Judaism and Moses is regarded as their greatest prophet.

The belief that G-d intervenes in history on behalf of the Jews is illustrated in the Book

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of Exodus. It tells the story of Moses leading the Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt, the receiving of the Ten Commandments at Mt Sinai and the eventual arrival at the Promised Land. G-d's covenant continues with the Jewish people, as is shown by Exodus 19:4–6:

> 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. [5]Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine, [6]but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites.'

ACTIVITY 1.1

Forming and finding

1 What do you know about Judaism?
2 What do you know about Israel?
3 What are some distinctive customs of Judaism?
4 What enabled a relatively small religion to have such an impact on Western culture?
5 How has Judaism changed over time?
6 Who are some key people associated with Judaism?
7 Using online research answer the question, what is the Shoah?
8 Where are there Jewish communities in Australia, your state or your local area?
9 How do the media present Judaism?
10 Use the Activity Worksheet to complete a KWHL chart related to Judaism.

Judaism is intimately bound with the history of a people and culture marked by exile and suffering over many centuries. One way to understand Judaism is through the lens of memory, which forms the core of many rituals. Central to memory is the suffering of Jews, from slavery in Egypt, to exile under Nebuchadnezzar, through the Roman period, the Crusades, the Inquisition and ultimately to Hitler's 'Final Solution', the Shoah, during World War II.

Judaism, the religion of more than 97 000 people in Australia and of many more in Israel, North America, Europe, Latin America and South Africa, is defined by Jewishness, the ethnic identity of people who are descendants of Jewish parents.

Terminology

Religion scholars make the distinction between Judaism and the religion of the ancient Hebrews or Israelites. The latter is sometimes referred to as biblical Judaism and the former as rabbinical Judaism. When we study Judaism today, we are focusing on forms of Jewish belief and practice that emerged after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE.

The history of Judaism

From the time of the Babylonian exile in 586 BCE until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Jews have lived under foreign rule, except for a short period under the Maccabean kings (163–140 BCE). The history of Judaism can be roughly divided into four periods:

1 500 BCE to 70 CE
2 70 CE to 640 CE
3 640 CE to 1800 CE
4 1800 CE to the present.

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Timeline (dates are approximate)

BCE	
1800	Abraham enters the Promised Land
1250	Moses, Exodus
1200	Re-entry into the Promised Land
1050	Saul, David and Solomon
950	Construction of First Temple in Jerusalem
922	Northern Kingdom separated from South after Solomon
725	Isaiah
722	Assyrians conquer Northern Kingdom
586	Babylonians conquer Jerusalem, destruction of First Temple, deportation of Jews
500	Return from Babylonian exile
331	Jerusalem conquered by Alexander the Great
165	Maccabean revolt, rededication of Temple
63	Romans, under Pompey, take Jerusalem Age of Rabbis
CE	
70	Destruction of Second Temple by the Romans
200	Mishnah completed
600	Talmud completed
1000	Golden Age of Judaism in Spain
1290	Jews expelled from England and France
1492	Jews expelled from Spain
1648	Widespread massacres of Jews in Poland
1657	Jewish rights guaranteed in Holland
1700s	Rise of Hassidic movement
1791	Emancipation of Jews in France
1808	Napoleon grants Jews European citizenship
1810	First Reform Temple built in Germany
1817	Chevra Kadisha established in Sydney
1819	Birth of Modern Jewish Scholarship led by Wissenschaft group
1881	Persecution of Jews in Russia, migration to United States
1938	Kristallnacht

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1942–45	The **Shoah**
1945	Postwar migration of Jews
1948	Establishment of State of Israel
1950	Israeli Parliament passes Law of Return
1967	Six-Day War
1972	Ordination of the first female rabbi
1973	Yom Kippur War
1983	**Reform Judaism** accepts **patrilineal** Jewish descent
1993	Oslo Peace Accords
1995	Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin assassinated
2012	Spain welcomes descendants of Sephardic Jews who fled during the Inquisition

Shoah
a Hebrew word meaning destruction and catastrophe. Used by Jews in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to G-d given in the Temple and, therefore, something sacred.

Reform Judaism
adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society – also referred to as Progressive or Liberal Judaism

patrilineal
involving the inheritance of names, titles, property or religion through the male line

The first period begins with the writing of the five books of Moses, the **Torah**, which drew together oral tradition and other writings of ancient Israel that existed prior to the destruction of the First Temple of Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The priests and the surviving leadership of the Temple produced the Hebrew scriptures.

The destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE resulted in a crisis of faith for some Jewish people, who presumed that the god of the conquerors had conquered the G-d of Israel. The Prophets of Israel (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel) had an alternative interpretation: G-d was punishing the people of Israel for their sins. Throughout this period several groups of Jews existed in Israel and each group interpreted the Five Books of Law and the Prophets differently.

By the time of the Second Temple in 450 BCE, the Torah was central to Judaism and the history of the Jews. The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE merged the Judaism of previous times into a single form, Rabbinic Judaism. Rabbinic Judaism was marked by the doctrine of the dual Torah: the written Torah and the oral Torah. The written Torah consists of the five books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy and the oral Torah includes the writings of sages. Maimonides lists five categories of teaching and laws which the oral Torah

Torah
the first five books of the Jewish scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)



FIGURE 1.1 A Torah scroll of the seventeenth to eighteenth century, written on leather. It is on display at the Museum of the Synagogue of Casale Monferrato in Piedmont, Italy.

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includes: the traditional meaning of the Torah taught by Moses and handed down through the generations; laws and principles taught by Moses as part of the tradition; interpretations of the text from sages; ordinances enacted by the sages of each generation as safeguards for the laws of the Torah; and other ordinances enacted by the sages of each generation for the common good or in response to the specific needs and circumstances of the time.

During the third period, 640 to 1800 CE, philosophy and mysticism emerged. The Judaism of this period is characterised by its principal authorities, the rabbis and the Talmud, and has been described by some as Classical Judaism.

Terminology

The Talmud is a collection of writings used by Jewish scholars to assist them in interpreting Jewish law and tradition. There are two Talmuds – the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. When people speak of the Talmud they are generally referring to the more comprehensive of the two, the Babylonian Talmud.

The fourth period is marked by diversity within Judaism. The rise of Reform Judaism and the response to many political changes in Europe as well as migration to North America have all impacted on Judaism. The most significant impact was caused by the National Socialist Party (Nazi Party) in Germany from 1933. Under their extreme racist doctrine, the Nazi Party systematically organised the murder of six million European Jews between 1939 and 1945.

In the aftermath of World War II, Jews who survived the Shoah, supported by Jewish people in all parts of the world, petitioned the United Nations to create a Jewish state in what was then called Palestine. The establishment of the State of Israel on 15 May 1948 began a new chapter in the history of Judaism.

ACTIVITY **1.2**

Forming and finding

Create an annotated timeline by providing facts related to dates and events to increase your basic understanding of the key events in the history of Judaism.

FIGURE 1.2 Child survivors after the liberation of the Auschwitz concentration camp in 1945



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Belief

While there is no official creed of Judaism, there is a set of central beliefs formulated by the medieval scholar Maimonides. The beliefs include:

- Belief in G-d who is one, formless, all knowing and eternal. G-d is the master of the universe, its creator and judge. G-d is loving and just.
- Belief in the words of the prophets.
- Belief that G-d gave the law to Moses.
- Belief that the Messiah, sent by G-d, will come one day.
- Belief that there will be a resurrection of the good 'in the world to come'.

The key declaration of faith for Jews is contained in the *Shema*, a passage from the Torah (Deuteronomy 6:4–9) which begins: 'Hear, O Israel, the LORD is our G-d, the LORD alone'.

Shema

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is
our G-d, the LORD alone. [5]You
shall love the LORD your G-d
with all your heart, and
with all your soul, and with
all your might. [6]Keep these
words that I am commanding
you today in your heart.
[7]Recite them to your children
and talk about them when you
are at home and when you are
away, when you lie down and
when you rise. [8]Bind them
as a sign on your hand, fix
them as an emblem on your
forehead, [9]and write them on
the doorposts of your house
and on your gates.

This text is also a **prayer**, prayed daily by observant Jews to remind them of the uniqueness of G-d and how Judaism's monotheism is distinguished from the polytheistic religions of their neighbours.



FIGURE 1.3 A section of a Torah scroll with a gold *yad*

In Exodus 34:6–7, Jews refer to the 13 attributes of G-d, such as mercy, forgiveness, steadfast love and faithfulness; but the most fundamental one is the mercy of G-d.

In Judaism, humankind has a special role to play because people are created in the image and likeness of G-d. Since people have the ability to think, to will, to speak, to create and to care, people have the responsibility to show these divine characteristics in the world. Therefore, Jews believe they have a special role to witness to G-d and do G-d's will in the world.

prayer
an address to God or to a god in word or thought

Divine transcendence and immanence

For Jews, G-d is the transcendent creator of the universe. In Genesis 1:1–2 G-d is described as forming heaven and earth:

In the beginning when God
created the heavens and
the earth, [2]the earth was a
formless void and darkness
covered the face of the deep,
while a wind from God swept
over the face of the waters.

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Throughout the scriptures, the theme of divine transcendence is affirmed. The prophet Isaiah proclaims:

> Have you not known? Have you
> not heard?
> Has it not been told you from
> the beginning?
> Have you not understood from
> the foundations of the earth?
> [22]It is he who sits above the
> circle of the earth,
> and its inhabitants are like
> grasshoppers;
> who stretches out the heavens
> like a curtain,
> and spreads them like a tent
> to live in. (Isaiah 40:21–22)

Later in Isaiah 55:8–9, G-d is described as being beyond human comprehension:

> For my thoughts are not your
> thoughts,
> nor are your ways my ways,
> says the LORD.
> [9]For as the heavens are higher
> than the earth,
> so are my ways higher than
> your ways
> and my thoughts than your
> thoughts.

G-d is also viewed as omnipresent, actively involved in the cosmos. The Psalmist asks:

> Where can I go from your spirit?
> Or where can I flee from your presence?
> [8]If I ascend to heaven, you are there;
> if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there.
> [9]If I take the wings of the morning
> and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
> [10]even there your hand shall lead me,
> and your right hand shall hold me fast. (Psalm 139:7–10)

During the Rabbinic period Jewish scholars developed the doctrine of *Shekhinah* to denote the divine presence. *Shekhinah*, the in-dwelling presence of G-d, is compared to light, as can be seen in Numbers 6:25: 'The LORD make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you'. During the Middle Ages, the doctrine of *Shekhinah* was further elaborated by Jewish scholars. Saadiah Gaon says that *Shekhinah* is identical with the glory of G-d. Maimonides associates *Shekhinah* with prophecy. For the rabbis G-d's presence in the universe was represented by *Shekhinah*. Based on passages such as 'let them make me be a sanctuary that I may dwell among them (Exodus 15:18), rabbinic sages maintained that the divine Spirit is continually in the midst of Israel. The Mishnah explains:

> Rabbi Halafta, the son of Dos, of the village of Hananya said, 'When ten people sit together and occupy themselves with the Torah, the Shekhinah abides among them, as it is said, "G-d stands in the congregation of the godly" (Pslam 82:1). And whence can it be shown that the same applies to five? Because it is said, "He has founded his band up the earth" (Amos 9:6). And whence can it be shown that the same applies to three? Because it is said, "He judges among the judges" (Psalm 82:1). And whence can it be shown that the same applies to two? Because it is said, "Then they that feared the LORD spake one with the other; and the LORD hearkened, and heard" (Malachi 3:16). And whence can it be shown that the same applies even to one? Because it is said, "In every place where I cause my name to be remembered, I will come unto you and I will bless you" (Exodus 20:24)'. (Mishnah, 3:6 in JM, p. 60)

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Groups within Judaism

When studying Judaism, it is important to pay close attention to the various groups of Jews within Judaism.

Reform Judaism

Reform Judaism, or Progressive or Liberal Judaism, adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society. Reform Judaism, which emerged with the emancipation of the Jews late in eighteenth-century Europe, believes in the legitimacy of change and accepts that ideas of the divine are expressed in human terms and therefore belief and practice may change and evolve. This group is influenced by social, scientific, ethical and other human developments.

The first Reform Jews were Germans, who hoped that making worship services more attractive to apathetic Jews would encourage them to practise. The changed worship services included males and females singing together accompanied by the organ, and while some Hebrew prayers were maintained, prayers in German (the **vernacular**) were introduced. Israel Jacobson, considered to be the founder of Reform Judaism, initiated many of the changes in his school chapel in Seesen in 1810.



FIGURE 1.4 Ukrainian rabbi Alina Treiger at the synagogue of the Abraham Geiger Institute in Berlin in 2010. She was the first female rabbi to be ordained in Germany after World War II.

By 1818, the Hamburg Temple had a full-service calendar in the Reform tradition. In the United States, German-Jewish emigrants saw the influence that liberal religion had on Protestants and they wanted to develop a form of Judaism that, in this sense, would be equivalent to Presbyterianism or Episcopalianism. As a result, Reform Judaism developed an Americanised form of worship and religion. Classical Reform emphasised equality – Jews no longer needed to live in ghettos and, working beside and with Christians, they could make the world a better place. Reform Jews were encouraged to work for the disadvantaged and to promote ethical monotheism throughout the world.

After World War I, significant numbers of American Jews left the city centres and moved to the suburbs. By the 1960s, many Reform Jews were involved in civil rights struggles including protests against the war in Vietnam. The Israeli Six-Day War in 1967 increased the loyalty of American Jews to the State of Israel, as did the **Yom Kippur** War in 1973. In 1972, the first female rabbi, Sally J. Priesand, was ordained in the Reform tradition. Since this time, women have made up half the population in Reform rabbinical classes.

vernacular
a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured or foreign language

Yom Kippur
the most solemn and important of the Jewish holy days – also known in English as the Day of Atonement

Orthodox Judaism
the most traditionally observant stream of Judaism

Orthodox Judaism

Orthodox Judaism advocates the full observance of Jewish religious law (*halakhah*), interpreted in traditional ways. Orthodoxy in Jewish society emerged towards the end of the eighteenth century as a reaction to the rise of Reform Judaism, assimilation in western and central Europe and secularisation. Within the Jewish population at the time, some promoted the preservation and protection of their tradition while others advocated reform and change.

Orthodoxy sees the law recorded in the Torah as a direct expression of G-d's will and of an unchanging nature. While Orthodox Jews accept changes in the *halakhah*, the changes must be based on specific Talmudic texts, and *halakhic* codes and commentaries, and be recognised

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by rabbinical authority. The changes cannot be based solely on historical, sociological or psychological considerations. The word orthodox means 'right belief' but for Jews it is also very much about 'right practice', so Orthodox Jews often refer to themselves as 'observant' Jews.

Orthodox Judaism is considered to have three main stages of development. The first, from 1790–1890, was marked by the emancipation of Jews in Hungary, Germany and Eastern Europe. As the gates of Jewish ghettos opened in Europe, Jews took advantage of new professional, social and intellectual opportunities. Many Jews converted to Christianity, while others assimilated or joined Reformed Judaism. Because the changes were so rapid, rabbinic authorities felt they were losing their communities and, in an effort to halt the changes, the Rabbis focused on tradition, particularly observance of *halakhah*.

Unfortunately, there was no united approach, and religious leaders of each geographical region adopted their own strategies to preserve the *halakhah*. Hungarian Jews adopted militant adherence, while German Jewish responses were more moderate and open to change. It was not until the end of the nineteenth century, with the challenge of **Zionism**, that Orthodox groups united on several important matters.

The second stage, 1890–1945, was marked by suffering and crisis. Orthodox Judaism was abandoned by many young Jews who opted for a secular way of life or joined secular political movements. These people saw Orthodox Judaism as something belonging to the past. By the end of World War II and in the aftermath of the Shoah, Orthodox Judaism in Europe was almost completely destroyed.

During the third stage, beginning in 1948, Zionism became a political issue, causing a deep division, especially in Israel. Two groups emerged – the Religious-Zionist, or Modern Orthodox, and the Orthodox anti-Zionist Jews, or Haredi. Some within the Haredim indirectly blamed assimilation and the actions of Reform and secular Jews for the Shoah. They concentrated all their efforts into rebuilding the world of the Torah in the land of Israel.



FIGURE 1.5 Hasidic Jewish family in New York

The most obvious difference between the Religious-Zionists and anti-Zionist Jews lies in their distinct attitudes towards ritual observance. This difference is most apparent in their dress. Haredim and Hasidic Jews preserve the traditional dress of their European ancestors (long black coats, hats and beards for males), while Zionist-Religious Jews dress the same as secular Israelis with the addition of a ***yamulkah*** (skull cap). The dress code is also distinctive for women. Haredi women wear modest dresses and usually refrain from wearing long pants. After marriage, they cover their head with a cloth, hat or sometimes a wig.

Orthodox Jews are mainly concentrated in Israel and America but every large Jewish centre in the world has a significant Orthodox population.

Conservative Judaism

Conservative Judaism occupies a middle position within Jewish society: its synagogues are perceived to be more traditional than

Zionism
the international Jewish political movement that originally supported the re-establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine, it concentrated on secular components such as land, language and culture

yamulkah
thin, slightly rounded skullcap worn by Jewish males during prayer

Conservative Judaism
a modern stream of Judaism that arose out of intellectual currents in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and took institutional form in the United States in the early twentieth century

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those of Reform Judaism but less traditional than the Orthodox synagogues. Conservative Judaism shares with Orthodoxy the ongoing authority of *halakhah*, but stresses the historical development of Judaism and believes that Jewish law can be changed. Conservative Judaism is uniquely American, although its roots can be traced to nineteenth-century Germany. It is the largest and most popular form of Judaism in America and there are smaller groups of Conservative Jews throughout the world.

As far as religious behaviour is concerned, Conservative Jews expect that the rabbi and the cantor will be more traditional than their counterparts in the Reform community. Conservative Jews usually maintain traditional Jewish practices such as lighting Sabbath candles and attending Passover Seder. Very few Conservative Jews intermarry.

What distinguishes Conservative Jews from Orthodox Jews is their acceptance that change is permissible and necessary. This is most evident with regard to the role of women. Most traditional Jewish texts restrict women from reading the Torah in public, from reciting the worship service on behalf of the congregation and from being counted as part of a ***minyan***. Conservative Judaism has made modifications to all these rules: women read from the Torah in Conservative synagogues, women lead services in most, but not all, synagogues, and women are counted in the *minyan*. For many, Conservative Judaism is attractive because it is traditional without being rigorous and stresses communal standards without compromising personal autonomy.

minyan
quorum of 10 adult Jewish men over the age of 13

ACTIVITY 1.3

Forming and finding

1. How are different groups of Jews portrayed in media, film and television?
2. What Jewish communities exist in Australia, your state and your local area?
3. What do you know about American Jews?
4. What do you know about Israeli Jews?

FIGURE 1.6 The celebrant often begins the Bat Mitzvah event by reading from the Torah in Hebrew.



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ACTIVITY **1.4**

Finding and analysing

Read the extract from the novel *The Chosen* by Chaim Potok that is supplied on the Activity Worksheet. As you read the extract, look for examples of how groups of Jews are portrayed in the story. Answer the following questions.

1. How are the groups differentiated?
2. What seems to be their attitude to each other?
3. How do they see themselves fitting into society? How do they see themselves fitting into wartime American society? How do they think Americans view Jews?
4. How many types of Orthodox Jews are presented in *The Chosen*? Provide evidence to support your statement.
5. Complete a character analysis for a member of each group using the following headings:
   - a dress
   - b history
   - c language
   - d cultural lineage/descent
   - e attitudes to life and religion
   - f sense of identity.

Analysing and evaluating

1. Complete a Venn diagram on the Activity Worksheet to show the relationship between Orthodox and Hasidic Judaism. Using the information gathered, construct a hypothesis about similarities and differences between these two groups.
2. Assume the persona of a player from one of the two teams mentioned in the extract from *The Chosen*. Construct a statement expressing their perception of themselves and their place within their Jewish community and American society at that time.

Jewish prayer and worship

Jews believe that people should try to develop a relationship with G-d through prayer. At the heart of Jewish prayer is the idea that G-d listens to prayer and that prayer is a conversation between people and the Creator G-d. This relationship with G-d is implicit in the statement from Genesis 1:27: 'G-d created humankind in G-d's image … male and female, G-d created them'.

Throughout the Torah, G-d engaged in dialogue with the forefathers, foremothers and prophets. These people even argued with G-d, and Sarah laughed at G-d when told she was going to have a child in her old age. There are a variety of prayers in the Jewish liturgy that express the relationship G-d has with humanity. While it is possible for a Jew to pray alone, Judaism encourages communal worship and prayer. Some key prayers may only be recited in the presence of a *minyan*.

Praying in community serves many functions. It can sometimes represent humankind's attempt to create meaning in a chaotic world. Jewish prayer rituals are designed to reinforce a sense of community, and to link the individual into a history that began with the covenant between G-d and Abraham and still exists today, four thousand years later. The complex web of relationships between the individual Jew, the community of worship and the Jewish people past and present is an essential part of the Jewish experience of communal prayer.

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FIGURE 1.7 The *tallit* and *tefillin* are donned before prayers begin.

Observant Jews pray three times a day in formal worship and, in addition, many blessings and prayers are also uttered throughout the day. All Jewish prayers are in Hebrew.

A fundamental Jewish prayer and statement of faith is the *Shema*, which means 'hear' and is the first word of the Hebrew in Deuteronomy 6:4–9.

The next most important prayer is the *Amidah*, which means 'standing' and, as the name suggests, the worshipper recites this prayer standing and facing the old city of Jerusalem. In Jerusalem, they face the Temple Mount. The *Amidah* originally contained 18 blessings but now has 19, all of which are said on weekdays. On Shabbat only the first and last three are said.

No movements or gestures are prescribed in the Torah, but some have developed that provide an emphasis to prayer. These may include bowing, covering the eyes and swaying.

Jewish males wear special clothing when they pray, to remind them of G-d and their obligations to G-d. The ***tallit***, prayer shawl, is a white rectangular garment usually made of wool or silk and has a ***tzitzit*** in each of its four corners. The tassels consist of a series of knots that act as a constant reminder of the ***mitzvot*** (commandments). The biblical basis for wearing a *tallit* is found in Numbers 15:37–41. During prayer, the *tallit* is worn around the shoulders and sometimes over the head.

Another garment called a *tallit katan* (small *tallit*) is worn by some men under their usual clothes throughout the day. Its tassels hang down the side and constantly brush against the hands, as a reminder of the *mitzvot*.

The second item of clothing worn for prayer is the ***tefillin*** or phylacteries, two small black boxes that hold four passages from the Torah instructing Jews to 'bind the Torah to their hand and between their eyes' (Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; Exodus 13:1–16). The *tefillin*, always treated with great respect, is bound to the right arm opposite the heart and the other is bound to the forehead as a reminder to worship G-d with their whole body, heart and head.

The third item worn for prayer, the *yamulkah* or *kippah*, is a skull cap worn by most Jewish males when praying. Some Jews wear the *yamulkah* all the time as an expression of respect before G-d.

Any 10 adult male Jews can form a *minyan* and hold a service in a reasonably appropriate place. In fact, any Jewish male over the age of 13 can lead a service, read from the Torah and give a sermon. In a women's *tefilah* (prayer group), any girl over

tallit
Jewish prayer shawl

tzitzit
fringes or tassels hanging from the four corners of prayer shawls

mitzvot
commandments

tefillin
a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with Torah verses; the hand-*tefillin* is wrapped around the arm, hand and fingers and the head-*tefillin* is placed on the forehead

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the age of 12 can perform these tasks. In Reform congregations, women are counted in a *minyan* and can perform any of the functions allotted in a worship service. For the vast majority of practising Jews, except for Hasidic communities, Judaism is still non-hierarchical in worship and does not require a rabbi to lead the service. The only thing a rabbi can do that cannot be done by an ordinary Jew is sign a marriage licence.

A rabbi is a person who has completed study at a *yeshiva*, or seminary, and is learned in Jewish law and texts. The ordination is usually performed by the Chief Rabbinate. In Reform synagogues, the rabbi leads services, while in other congregations the rabbi, as a teacher, also rules on Jewish law, including liturgical questions.

ACTIVITY **1.5**

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

The previous information provides an overview of the key prayers and clothing items used to express faith during worship and prayer. Use this information to inform your responses to the following:

1 Complete this table on the Activity Worksheet.

Item	Explanation and description	Draw or locate an image
Tallit and *tzitzit*		
Tefillin or phylacteries		
Yamulkah or *kippah*		

2 Having completed the table, what questions do you have about the similarities and differences between the requirements for clothing during prayer for men and women? In small groups, devise at least four questions and set out to discover the answers.

3 What conclusions can you draw about the similarities and differences of religious dress for Jewish men and women? Justify your response with evidence.

4 In many Reform Jewish communities, the interpretation and use of traditional clothing diverges from the more Orthodox communities. Create a Venn diagram to identify the similarities and differences between the communities.

5 Consider the hypothesis: 'Jewish ritual clothing is symbolic of one's connection with people of faith and with G-d, enabling the believer to fully participate in prayer.' To what extent is this an accurate statement about the role and relationship between clothing and spiritual life in Judaism? Write an extended paragraph of 200 words in response to this, using evidence based on further research.

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FIGURE 1.8 Brisbane Synagogue in Margaret Street, Brisbane

Synagogue

Jews can pray anywhere but group prayer often occurs in the synagogue. Synagogue, from the Greek meaning 'to gather together', designates a place of worship. Synagogues differ depending on when and where they were built and whether they are for Orthodox or Reform Jews. While it is not known when synagogues were first built, they have been used as meeting places from as early as 6 CE. Synagogues probably became more prominent after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. Today, over 50 synagogues from the first century have been excavated in Israel.

Jews come together to share their joys and sorrows and the various names for synagogues reflect this purpose: *Bet Haknesset* (house of assembly), *Bet Hatephilah* (house of prayer) and *shul*, a Yiddish word meaning 'school'.

There are very few set requirements for the architecture of synagogues and frequently they mirror the style of the period in which

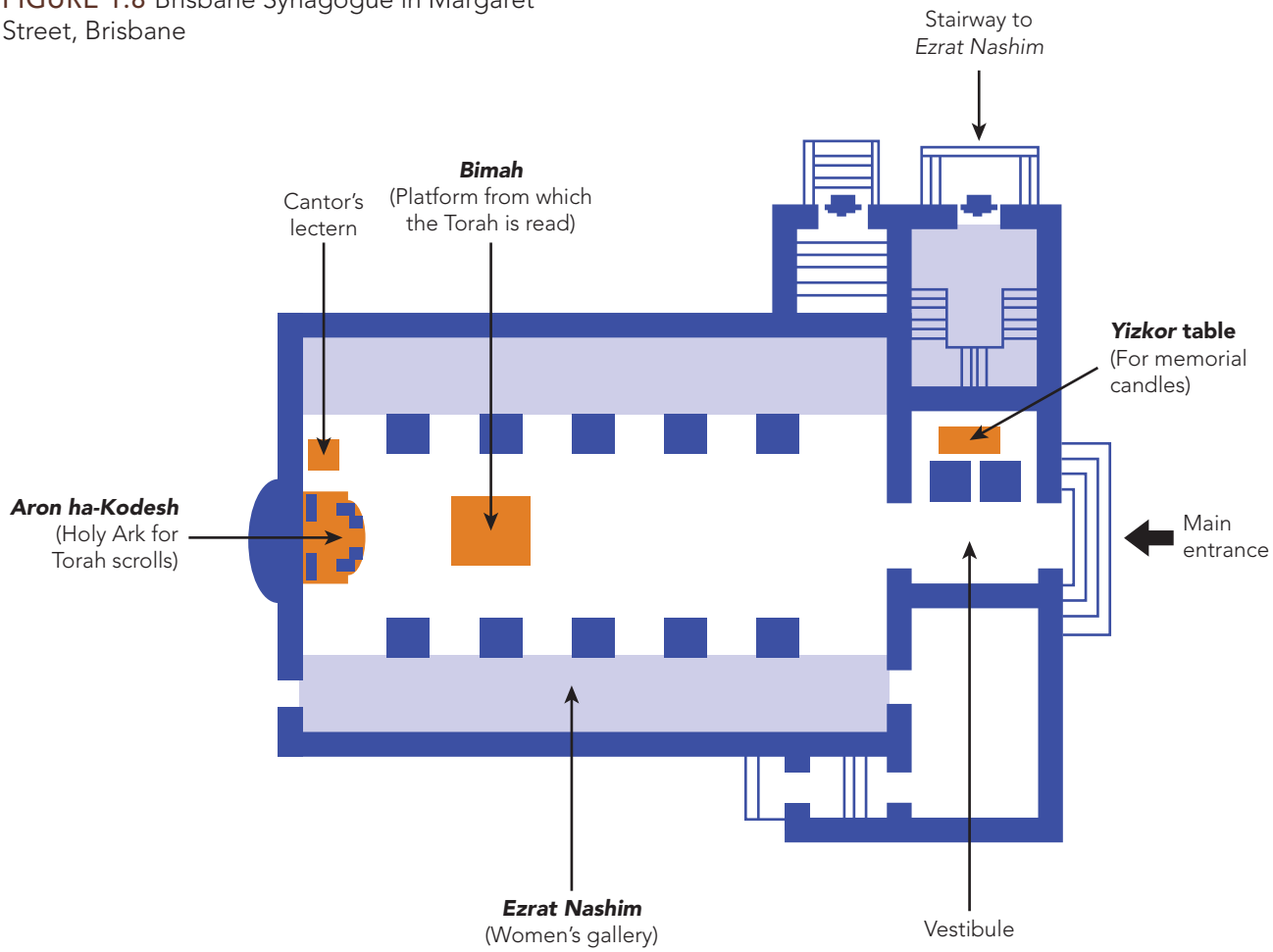


FIGURE 1.9 Floor plan of an Orthodox synagogue

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they were built and the cultures to which they belong. Usually synagogues have windows for letting in light, as light is a sign of the strength and guidance of G-d. Orthodox synagogues have a separate section, often a gallery, for women. Progressive Jews do not separate men from women in the synagogue.

bimah raised platform in a Jewish synagogue from which the Torah is read

An important feature of the synagogue is the ***bimah***. It is normally in the middle of the synagogue, but during the nineteenth century some Reform synagogues placed it directly in front of the Ark. The Ark, *Aron Hakodesh*, was originally the wooden box in which the two stone tablets were kept in the Tabernacle (Exodus 25:10–16). It disappeared during the destruction of the First Temple. During the Middle Ages, a cupboard fixed against the east wall of each synagogue was referred to as an Ark and one or more copies of the Torah kept there. The Ark thus became the focal point in the synagogue.



FIGURE 1.10 *Bimah* of the Great Synagogue in Sydney

ACTIVITY **1.6**

Finding and analysing

1 Using the table provided on the Activity Worksheet, conduct research on the synagogues listed on the worksheet and populate the table with as much information as you can find, using the headings as a guide. Where possible, source images that show the synagogue's features and prominence in the streetscape.
2 Create a hypothesis that offers an explanation for the changing styles in synagogues over time. Identify three key arguments you would select to support your hypothesis.
3 What conclusions can you draw about the common and consistent aspects of synagogues over time and the relationship they have with Jewish life and worship? Justify your ideas with evidence.

Dietary requirements

From the earliest times Jews have taken great care about the choice and preparation of food. At the core of their thinking is that the preparation and consumption of food should be done according to religious laws referred to as 'kosher', meaning ritually correct. For Orthodox Jews, meat and dairy must not be eaten together in the same meal. A house that keeps kosher will have separate cooking utensils, crockery and fridges for dairy and meat. The practice derives from a rule that forbids the cooking of a baby goat or lamb in its mother's milk (Exodus 34:26). Depending on which group of Judaism people belong to, they observe kosher rules to a greater or lesser degree.

The main laws related to kosher food are contained in Leviticus 11.

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ACTIVITY **1.7**

Analysing – jigsaw activity

1 Divide the class into five expert groups, one for each Leviticus reference on the Activity Worksheet.
2 Each group is to read the allocated Leviticus reference and complete their section of the table using the Activity Worksheet, listing what is permitted or forbidden. Then, within each group, analyse the information and provide reason/s for the inclusion or exclusion of that particular animal or food.
3 Rearrange the groups into mixed groups of five (one member from group one, one member from group two, etc.).
4 The member from group one explains their Leviticus reference to the rest of the group and shares the information s/he has recorded on the worksheet.
5 Each group member repeats this process until the five areas have been covered. After completing the Activity Worksheet, respond to the following: Imagine that you are instructing caterers to provide food for a Jewish function you are responsible for. Based on what you have previously learnt, devise a three-course dinner menu for the function. Write a further note to the caterers explaining all the kitchen requirements they will need to meet.



FIGURE 1.11 Kosher McDonald's restaurant in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Modern Jewish thought

Throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, Jewish thinkers such as Martin Buber, Abraham Joshua Heschel and Rabbi Rachel Adler have made significant contributions to Jewish theology.

Martin Buber (1878–1965) was born in Vienna and grew up in Lemberg; he later studied at the universities of Vienna, Leipzig, Zurich and Berlin before emigrating to Israel. He made a significant impact on Jewish thought with the publication of his book *I and Thou*. In this book, Buber explored what he saw as the two ways people relate to the world. The *I – It* relationship detaches the self from others and knowledge is objectified. The *I – Thou* relationship is an encounter where the person dialogues with the world. This is explained by Buber:

> Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou: by means of every particular Thou the primary word addresses the eternal Thou. Through this mediation of the Thou of all beings fulfilment and non-fulfilment, of relations come to them: the inborn. Thou is realized in each relation and consummated in none. It is consummated only in the direct relation with the Thou that by its nature cannot become it.
>
> Source: Buber, 1923.

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He also said:

> When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them.
>
> To look away from the world, or to stare at it, does not help a person to reach God; but he [sic] who sees the world in God stands in God's presence.
>
> Source: Buber, 1923.

Buber explored aspects of Jewish–Christian relationships and encouraged people to find common ground between the two traditions.

> It behoves both you (Christians) and us (Jews) to hold inviolably fast to our own true faith, that is to our deepest relationship to truth. It behoves both of us to show a religious respect of the true faith of others. This is not what is called 'tolerance'; our task is not to tolerate each other's waywardness but to acknowledge the real relationship in which both stand to the truth. Whenever we both, Christian and Jew, care more for God than for our images of God, we are united in the feeling that our Father's house is differently constructed than our human models take it to be.
>
> Source: Buber, 1921–43.

Another Jewish theologian of importance is Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972), who was concerned with how experiences, insights, emotions, attitudes and actions give rise to faith. Heschel explored ideas of how G-d is revealed to people through nature and tradition. Born in Poland, he moved to the United States for the second half of his life. As a theologian, philosopher and rabbi he worked tirelessly for the civil rights movement.

He wrote:

> It is not enough for me to ask questions; I want to know how to answer the one question that seems to encompass everything I face: What am I here for?
>
> Self-respect is the fruit of discipline; the sense of dignity grows with the ability to say no to oneself.
>
> Source: Heschel, 1965, p. 53.
>
> God is not an hypothesis derived from logical assumptions, but an immediate insight, self-evident as light. God is not something to be sought in the darkness with light of reason. God is the light.
>
> Source: Heschel, 1976, p. 75.
>
> Wonder rather than doubt is the root of all knowledge.
>
> Source: Heschel

Rabbi Rachel Adler (1943–), a feminist theologian of the Reform tradition, integrates feminist perspectives and concerns into Jewish texts and has worked for the renewal of Jewish law and ethics. In her book, *Engendering Judaism* (1971), she proposes a new Jewish legal model of Jewish marriage established in partnership law rather than property law. Her other writings explore themes of suffering and lament. She is particularly interested in tradition and says:

> When we talk about a tradition, we are talking about the speech acts and the other acts of a web of transmitters. Teachers to students, students to their students … A tradition is a conversation … A tradition is fluid if it's alive. The conversation twists and turns, but all the participants share basic vocabulary and the sense of participating in shared narratives.
>
> Source: Adler, 2013.

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Conclusion

In the modern world, Judaism has undergone a profound transformation. Modern Judaism consists of a variety of subgroups ranging from ultra-Orthodox Hasidism to progressive Reform Judaism. The events of the past one hundred years, the Shoah, the establishment of the State of Israel, the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union and Arab lands, and continuing conflict in the Middle East have intensified the complications regarding Judaism and the Jewish people. The constant for Judaism is that it is a living faith of a people who believe in one G-d and the early history of their relationship with G-d is recorded in the **TaNaK**. Their ritual actions acknowledge and remember G-d's intervention in their history. While Judaism is difficult to define, some have said that Judaism is a religion that grows out of what Jewish people do as a result of their beliefs and practices.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions on Judaism.

1.2 Christianity

'Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you.'
(Matthew 7:7)

Christianity: the facts

Number of adherents
Approximately 2.3 billion (worldwide)
13 150 673 (Australia)

Sacred text
The Bible

Place of worship
Church or cathedral

Symbol
Cross



Introduction

Christianity emerged in the Roman Empire during the first century CE. Christians are followers of Jesus of Nazareth. The name Christianity came not from Jesus, but rather from a title bestowed on him, 'the Christ'. The earliest adherents of Christianity were Jews from Galilee who followed 'The Way'. Within approximately one hundred years of the death of Jesus, Christianity was predominantly composed of Gentiles (non-Jews) and the religion had spread rapidly throughout the Roman Empire. Subsequently, Christianity has influenced the history, culture and thinking of Western civilisation. Today, Christianity is a diverse religious movement that is characterised by a commitment to the person and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, and to tradition and a search for truth. Christians believe in one God but also believe that within God there is a community of persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – addressed in more inclusive terms as God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the world.

TaNaK
an acronym used by Jews for the Hebrew Bible. T = Torah (Law); N = *Nev'im* (Prophets); K = *Ketuvim* (Writings)

Terminology

The title 'the Christ' comes from the Greek for the Hebrew word 'Messiah' or 'anointed one'.

ACTIVITY 1.8

Forming

1 What do you know about Christianity?
2 What are some distinctive beliefs and customs of Christianity?
3 What enabled a relatively small religion to spread so rapidly?
4 How has Christianity changed over time?
5 Who are some key people associated with Christianity?
6 What Christian communities/ denominations exist in Australia, your state and your local area?
7 What groups exist within Christianity?
8 What contributions do Christian groups make to society?
9 How do the media present Christianity?
10 What is a symbol of Christianity?
11 Use the Activity Worksheet to complete a KWHL chart related to Christianity.

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Timeline

BCE	
6	Birth of Jesus
CE	
30	Death of Jesus
50–120	Writing of the New Testament
65	Deaths of Peter and Paul
70	Destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
65–312	Periodic persecution of Christians
270	Christian monasticism begins
313	*Edict of Milan* makes Christianity legal
325	Council of Nicaea
354–430	Life of Augustine
380	Christianity official religion of Roman Empire
400	Jerome produces Latin Bible (Vulgate)
451	Council of Chalcedon
476	Collapse of the Roman Empire of the West
480–547	Life of Benedict
525	Christian calendar introduced
638	Muslim conquest of Jerusalem
787	Second Council of Nicaea
1054	Great **Schism** between Eastern and Western Christianity
1095–1291	Crusades
1099	Conquest of Jerusalem during the First Crusade
1163	Construction starts on Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris
1274	Thomas Aquinas writes *Summa Theologica*
1237–1351	The Black Death affects Europe
1453	Conquest of Constantinople by Muslims
1455	First printed Bible by Gutenberg
1483–1546	Life of Martin Luther
1478	Spanish Inquisition begins
1492	Jews and Muslims expelled from Spain

schism
a split or a division, usually in an organisation or a movement

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1508–12	Michelangelo paints the Sistine Chapel
1509–64	Life of John Calvin
1517	Beginning of **Protestant Reformation**
1534	Foundation of Church of England by King Henry VIII
1545–63	Council of Trent
1729	John and Charles Wesley begin Methodist movement
1869–70	First **Vatican Council**
1947	Dead Sea Scrolls discovered
1948	**World Council of Churches** formed
1962–64	Second Vatican Council

Protestant Reformation
a Christian reform movement that eventually led to the formation of the Protestant churches that moved away from the Catholic Church in Rome

Vatican Council
a conference of the bishops of the whole Roman Catholic Church convened to discuss and settle matters of Church doctrine and practice

World Council of Churches
an international Christian ecumenical organisation

ACTIVITY 1.9

Finding
Annotate the timeline by providing facts related to dates and events to increase your basic understanding of the key events.

Beginning of Christianity

The story of Jesus of Nazareth, who later became known as Jesus the Christ, is recorded in the **gospels**.

According to Luke (1:26–2:20), Jesus was born to a virgin, Mary, who was betrothed to Joseph. Mary was visited by an angel, Jibra'ail (Gabriel), who asked her to bear a son. Mary replied: 'Be it unto me according to your word' (Luke 1:38). According to the traditional story, Mary and Joseph travel to Bethlehem to be registered for a Roman census. When there, she delivered her child.

Matthew (1:18–2:18) recounts the story from the point of view of Joseph. Matthew's gospel is intended for Jewish audiences and therefore events in the life of Jesus parallel the life of Moses. For instance, Matthew (2:13–23) says that Jesus was taken to Egypt to escape Herod, the appointed Roman ruler in Judaea, and was then brought out of Egypt.

Jesus was raised in Nazareth in the Galilee area in northern Israel, which was, at the time, ruled by Rome. For most of his life, Jesus appeared to have lived an unremarkable existence. Only two milestones of his early life are recorded in the gospels, and both concern religious observance. On the eighth day after his birth, Jesus was taken to the Temple in Jerusalem to fulfil the Jewish requirement of dedication (Luke 2:21). Around the age of 12, he travelled with his parents to Jerusalem for the pilgrimage of Pesach and, according to Luke 2:41–9, remained behind in the Temple precincts talking to Jewish religious leaders.

Jesus's public life began when he approached John the Baptist to be baptised in the River Jordan. Jesus began to preach throughout Galilee to large crowds, and gathered disciples including women and the 12 followers who became known as the Apostles. The gospels record stories of Jesus healing the sick, raising the dead and performing miracles throughout his ministry. Some followers even thought he was the **Messiah**. Although he spoke out against injustice, the emphasis of his teachings was more a message of love, forgiveness and peace.

Jesus was not the kind of Messiah that Jews were expecting and some of his teachings upset Jewish religious authorities. Finally, Jesus was arrested

gospels
the story of Jesus's life and teachings, especially as in the first four books of the New Testament

Messiah
from the Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'

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ACTIVITY **1.10**

Finding and analysing

1 Read the two accounts of the birth of Jesus in Luke (1:26–2:20) and Matthew (1:18–2:18) on the Activity Worksheet.
2 Complete the summary sheet. Why might the two accounts differ?
3 Analyse the two images of the birth of Jesus in Figures 1.12 and 1.13.
4 Which image reflects the account in the Gospel of Luke? Provide evidence to support your claims.
5 Which image reflects the account in the Gospel of Matthew? Provide evidence to support your claims.



FIGURE 1.12 Adoration of the shepherds – nativity



FIGURE 1.13 Holy family with the magi

by the High Priests and taken before the Roman Tribune for trial. He was executed as a common criminal by Roman crucifixion and, according to the four Canonical Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John), three days later he rose from the dead and after appearing to his disciples on a number of occasions, ascended into Heaven.

In addition to the gospels, which are statements of faith for people of faith and should be interpreted within that context, other sources verify that Jesus existed. Tacitus, a Roman historian, mentions Christians (followers of Jesus Christ) at the end of the first century.

epistles letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to Christians

Josephus, a Jewish historian from the first century, also mentions Jesus. The Roman writers Pliny and Suetonius referred to Jesus in the second century CE. Even the Talmud mentions him. The four gospel accounts of the life of Jesus were written 30 or more years after his death. Although based on earlier written sources, they have their origins in oral retellings of the life and teachings of Jesus.

Sacred text

The Bible

Christians are referred to as 'people of the book' (along with Jews and Muslims). The Christian scriptures, commonly known as the New Testament, contain 27 books, consisting of four gospels about the life of Jesus. In addition, there are 21 **epistles**, the 'Acts of the Apostles', which tell the story of the life of the early Christians, and finally the Book of Revelation.

In addition to the Christian scriptures, the Bible includes the Hebrew scriptures, commonly referred to in Christian Bibles as the Old Testament. The Old Testament incorporates 39 books. Some Christians also include the Apocrypha (seven books written in Greek about Jewish events). Christians read and interpret the Hebrew scriptures differently from Jews, and

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some read retrospectively and see references to Jesus in the Hebrew texts.

Christians believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Some Christians read biblical texts literally and perceive them to be historically and scientifically accurate, while many others interpret biblical texts by applying techniques of biblical criticism, recognising that the Word of God has been transmitted through the words of people. Biblical texts reflect an understanding of the time in which they were written and were intended to convey religious rather than scientific truth.

The Christian calendar is centred on the birth of Jesus. The years before the birth of Jesus are recorded by counting backwards from his birth and are labelled as BC (Before Christ). After the birth of Jesus, the years move forward from 1 AD (Anno Domini or Year of the Lord) to the present day. In recent times, as an acknowledgement that the calendar is used more widely in the world by people of many religions, some have replaced BC with BCE (Before the Common Era) and AD with CE (Common Era). BCE and CE are used in this book.

Key beliefs

Trinity

Christians believe in one God, but they also believe in the **Trinity**, a concept that refers to communication within God or the self-communication of God in the person of Christ and the activity of the Holy Spirit.

Although Christians believe that God is neither male nor female, God is often referred to as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The first title, God the Father, refers to God as creator, omnipotent, omnipresent, eternal and unchanging. The second title, the Son, is central to Christian belief in the idea that God became incarnate in Jesus – that is, that Jesus is both human and divine. In Jesus, God became human flesh. In the gospels, Jesus is referred to as Son of God. This expression also occurs in the Hebrew scriptures and may refer to one favoured by God or even missioned by God, an especially beloved son or servant. The Holy Spirit, once referred to as the Holy Ghost, more properly refers to wind or breath. Belief in the Holy Spirit arises from the promise of Jesus that, when he left earth, the Holy Spirit would be with people, inspiring, guiding, and sustaining creation and humankind.

Although the Trinity is not fully explained in the gospels, Mark's gospel, for instance, speaks of the spirit and the voice of God:

> … and straightaway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened and the spirit like a dove descending upon him. [11]And there came a voice from heaven, saying, 'thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased'. (1:10–11)

Trinity
the concept in Christianity that states that there are three persons in one God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)



FIGURE 1.14 Trinity symbol with three hypostases as one God: Crown for the Creator, Cross for the Son Jesus the Christ, and the Holy Spirit as a dove

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monotheism a belief in only one god

creed a statement of religious belief

In the conclusion to Matthew's gospel (28:19–20), Jesus commissions his disciples to go out baptising in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The Christian belief in both **monotheism** *and* the Trinity presents a challenge for many. Some theologians speak of three minds, spirits or energy, but it is difficult to convey the dynamic nature of the communication within the oneness of God. Belief in the Trinity is referred to by Christians as 'a mystery of faith'.

ACTIVITY 1.11

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1. Use an online search engine to find five different ways in which the Trinity has been represented visually.
2. How does each image reflect beliefs about the unity of the three persons of God?
3. How does each image distinguish between the three persons of God?
4. Choose one image that you think is most effective and provide reasons for your choice.

Resurrection

Christians believe that Jesus was crucified, buried and after three days rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. All four gospels confirm the truth of the **resurrection**, even though no one witnessed it actually happen.

resurrection a central doctrine of Christianity in which Jesus is raised from the dead

In the Bible, the resurrection is confirmed when Mary Magdalene discovers Jesus's tomb is empty and, subsequently, Jesus appears to his disciples. The early Christians experienced Christ's continuing presence. In light of these experiences, the disciples reinterpreted the life and death of Jesus in terms of the resurrection.

Creed

The central beliefs of Christianity are articulated in a concisely formulated statement called a **creed**, which comes from the Latin word *credo*, meaning 'I believe'. While the creed was not formulated in its present form until about the second century, there are, nevertheless, brief statements in the Christian scriptures such as 'Jesus is the Son of God' (Acts 9:21) and fuller statements in 1 Corinthians 15:3–5 that 'Christ died for our sins ... he was buried ... was raised to life on the third day ... and he first appeared to Cephas'.

The creeds that exist today are the result of many years of theological development. Later versions show the complex nature of their formulation and how theological concepts were refined and developed.

Symbols

The cross is the most recognised Christian symbol. Jesus was crucified by the Romans, along with two other men regarded as criminals, in what was a common form of execution at the time. Death on a cross was considered shameful and many people find it a scandal that Jesus died in such a manner. On the other hand, Christians see the cross as a powerful symbol of Christ having overcome death and sin and atoning for the shortcomings of the world.

ACTIVITY 1.12

Finding

1. Create a list of the symbols used in Christianity.
2. Draw and write a brief explanation of the origin and meaning of each symbol.
3. Research the origins of the following symbols, which are also associated with Christianity: icthus, chi-rho.
4. Prepare an information leaflet on the symbols of Christianity.

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Mary, the mother of God

Most Christians honour Mary as the mother of Jesus. **Protestants** may feel uncomfortable with the emphasis that the **Roman Catholic Church** and the **Orthodox Churches** have given to Mary as able to 'intercede' on behalf of people who pray through her. It is Mary's title as 'Mother of God', or *Theotokos* in Greek, that Protestants find most challenging.

The Gospel of Luke gives an account of the Annunciation, where an angel visited Mary and asked her to be the mother of a child. Mary's first response was that she was too young, pointing out the physical difficulty involved. Yet the power of the Holy Spirit overshadowed her and she became pregnant.

Given that Mary was the mother of Jesus, the Catholic Church developed the doctrine of the 'Immaculate Conception' where Mary herself was considered to have been born free from original sin. Mary is scarcely mentioned in the gospels. Only a few incidences of her interactions with Jesus are recorded. She is mentioned after he begins his public ministry, although she is named as being in the upper room at Pentecost.

ACTIVITY 1.13

Analysing

1 In groups, design a series of questions for a 'hotseat interview' with Mary. Your questions should focus on the role she played in the life of Jesus and her subsequent place in Christian history and tradition.
2 Write a structured paragraph explaining why Protestants might be uncomfortable with the way the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches honour Mary.

Sacraments

Christians believe that God is revealed to humankind through creation, scripture, people and, in particular, Jesus. Christians also experience God's **grace** through the **sacraments**. The Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches have seven sacraments: baptism, Eucharist, confirmation, reconciliation, marriage, ordination or holy orders, and anointing of the sick. Most Protestant traditions have two sacraments, baptism and Eucharist; and some Christian groups, such as the Salvation Army, do not have sacraments at all.

Sacraments have physical elements, such as bread and wine, which represent spiritual aspects such as the body and blood of Jesus. The spiritual element is meant to effect a change in those who participate in the sacrament.

Baptism

Baptism is a ceremonial immersion in water, or application of water, as an initiatory rite or sacrament. Water signifies the washing away of sin and entering into a new life. Other elements that may be included in this ceremony are the lighting of a special candle and anointing with oil, as a sign of preserving the life that has been given. In some denominations of Christianity, such as Roman Catholicism, infant baptism is common, while in other denominations adult baptism is the accepted norm.

Eucharist

The Eucharist (derived from the Greek 'to give thanks'), or Holy Communion, re-enacts or reminds Christians of the Last Supper and the death and resurrection of Jesus (see Mark 14:17–25). There are differences in how the denominations of Christianity perceive the meaning of Eucharist. The Eucharist involves recalling the Lord's supper, breaking of bread and communion or sharing of the bread and wine.

Protestants literally one who protests; the churches that split from the Catholic Church during the sixteenth-century Reformation

Roman Catholic Church the world's largest Christian church, representing over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population

Orthodox Church the body of modern churches that is derived from the church of the Byzantine Empire, adheres to the Byzantine rite, and acknowledges the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople

grace self-communication of the presence of God

sacrament an official Christian ritual that uses symbols such as water, clothing, light, oil and actions to symbolise being washed clean, clothed with new life and strengthened for a life which should be committed to God

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FIGURE 1.15 Symbols of the Eucharist – the bread and the wine

The Roman Catholic Church holds a doctrine of transubstantiation, which says that the substances of bread and wine are changed into the body and blood of Jesus at Mass without changing the appearance of the bread and wine. While Protestants accept that Christ is present in some way, they do not believe in transubstantiation but rather in consubstantiation, which says that the bread and wine remain bread and wine and are a symbol of the body and blood of Jesus.



FIGURE 1.16 An adherent receives the Eucharist

Confirmation

For many denominations of Christianity, this sacrament is a rite of passage. It is administered at about 12 or 13 years of age, when a young person is set to become a young adult. However, because it is a confirming of the sacraments begun in baptism, it is now sometimes given to children as they receive communion for the first time. Some Christian churches only confirm people once they reach adulthood. Oil is used to anoint the candidate who promises to be a committed member of the church community.

Reconciliation

This sacrament was once called penance or confession and each of these names reveal an aspect of it. People confess their sins, express sorrow and promise to try not to sin again. In granting forgiveness in the name of God, the priest asks a penance of the person. This may take the form of saying an extra prayer or of doing something that would make up for any wrongdoing. The more modern name of *reconciliation* emphasises making right one's relationship with God and other people, although the elements of confession and penance are still retained.

Ordination

In this sacrament some people are raised to the position of a deacon, priest or bishop. Through the laying on of hands (seen as passing on spiritual power and authority) and the other symbolic gestures during the service, the person is raised to a particular level of ministry or service for the church. For the Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican churches, ordination comes after a long period of training. However, some Christian denominations do not have ordination as a sacrament at all.

Anointing of the sick

This sacrament, once reserved for the time of death to prepare a person to move on from this life, has in more recent times been extended to a special anointing of those who are ill or elderly although not immediately in danger of death. The sacrament involves anointing with oil and praying for the wellbeing of the person.

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Marriage

In Christian marriage services, the couple promise to take the marriage seriously and to undertake it as a lifelong commitment. The Roman Catholic Church regards it as a sacrament and requires both parties to be baptised and asks both parties to honour each other. Although divorce is frowned upon by many Christians, some churches recognise that marriages break down. The Catholic Church allows for a civil divorce, but does not accept a second marriage unless an annulment of the first marriage has been granted. The Anglican Church allows remarriage after divorce, although the issue continues to be debated.



FIGURE 1.17 Christians take marriage seriously and undertake it as a lifelong commitment.

Prayer, liturgy and worship

Prayer plays an important role in Christian life. In a particular kind of prayer called **meditation**, a person prays while concentrating on an incident in the life of Jesus, a text of scripture or some inspirational writing, and attempts to still the mind from other thoughts in order to be at one with God.

A higher form of meditation is contemplation, where mystics who have become adept at meditative prayer may become so at one with God that they experience prayer in a particularly intense and emotional way. Some have described this as being taken over and possessed by Christ. Famous Christian mystics include Meister Eckhart, John of the Cross, Julian of Norwich and Teresa of Avila.

Christian prayer can be classified into different types:

- *Prayers of adoration*: when the believer contemplates the wonder, greatness, love and wisdom of God.
- *Prayers of petition*: when the believer asks for God's help.
- *Prayers of intercession*: when the believer prays for the needs of others, for example, the poor or the sick.
- *Prayers of thanksgiving*: when the believer prays to thank God for a specific event or for God's goodness and care.

Meditation and some forms of contemplation are available to all Christians who take the time, find a quiet space and practise the skills of meditation. Some Christians have a teacher or guide to assist them in the spiritual journey.

meditation
silent prayer that may focus on a word, person or sacred text

Common Christian prayers

One of the most common Christian prayers is 'The Lord's Prayer'.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin
against us.
Lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours.
Now and for ever. Amen

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Rosary

Early Christians used various means of counting their shorter prayers. St Paul of Thebes used pebbles. In Ethiopia, prayer sticks with 41 notches were used as supports for people standing during long services. Elsewhere, pieces of wood were attached to strings and then knotted cords were devised.

Roman Catholic rosary

Christian prayer beads, commonly known as rosary beads, have been used predominately by Roman Catholics as an aid for prayer since the twelfth century. The string of 150 *Pater Noster* (Lord's Prayer) beads became the 'poor man's' **breviary** and for the uneducated person was a way of replicating the **liturgy** of the Divine Office in which 150 Psalms were recited by clerics. As devotion to Mary gained popularity, people began to repeat the angel's greeting, 'Hail! full of grace. The Lord is with you' (Luke 1:28). The words of Elizabeth were soon added, 'Blessed are you among women' (Luke 1:42). Jesus' name did not appear in descriptions of the rosary until the thirteenth century.

breviary a book of prayers, hymns, Psalms and other scripture texts

liturgy the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to their particular traditions; the official public worship of the Church

The string of beads (in the shape of a circle or rosary) used for counting allows the believer to concentrate on words of the prayer being said while at the same time thinking of the event in the life of Jesus. There are five sets of 10 beads referred to as a 'decade', from the Latin for 'ten'. Each decade is separated by a single bead. For each of the 10 beads, the 'Hail Mary' is recited and on the single bead 'The Lord's Prayer' is said.

worship acts of religious devotion to a god or gods

The rosary assists the believer to meditate on events such as the birth of Jesus, the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, finding the child Jesus in the temple, the agony in the garden, the scourging at the pillar and the crucifixion.

Orthodox rosary

Eastern Orthodox traditions, particularly Greek Orthodox, use prayer ropes, which are knotted ropes made up of 33, 50 or 100 knots. This prayer rope is also known as a *chotki*. The woollen prayer rope is worn on the left wrist as part of monastic and episcopal dress. Larger beads separate the knots into groups of 25 or 33. On each bead or knot the following mantra is said: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God have mercy on me, a sinner'.

A modern *chotki* uses a slightly different mantra: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner'. The *chotki* has been used as a silent 'breath prayer', with, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the Living God' prayed on inhalation and 'have mercy on me, a sinner' prayed on exhalation.

Anglican rosary

Anglican use of the rosary is relatively new and blends the Roman Catholic rosary with the Orthodox prayer rope. The circle of the Anglican rosary symbolises the wheel of time. Prayer, which moves around the wheel of the rosary, represents the Christian's spiritual pilgrimage through time following Christ as Lord.

The prayer beads are made up of 33 beads divided into four groups of seven, called weeks. Between each week is a single bead called a cruciform. The seven weeks represent the seven days of creation, seven seasons of the church's year, and are divided by the four large 'cruciform' beads representing the centrality of the cross. The prayer sequence begins with the cross on a pendant, followed by a large bead or invitatory bead – the invitation to praise and **worship**. It is suggested that people pray around the circle of beads three times, which signifies the Trinity. There is no set prayer that accompanies the Anglican rosary.

ACTIVITY **1.14**

Finding and evaluating

List the mysteries of the rosary. Why might certain mysteries be chosen to reflect concerns at different times?

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FIGURE 1.18 A Roman Catholic rosary (top), Anglican prayer beads (middle) and Eastern Orthodox prayer rope (bottom)

Places of worship

As well as individual prayer, Christians gather for communal worship or prayer in buildings called churches, chapels or cathedrals. This is an important aspect of Christianity.

The early Christians met in houses to pray and to offer Eucharist. It was not until the third century, with the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine to Christianity, that the religion became tolerated. After this time, churches were built and the religion became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

Many churches are built in the shape of a cross (cruciform) although a few are round in shape. Churches vary from elaborate cathedrals, which hold the *cathedra* or chair of the bishop, and basilicas to very simple buildings that allow people to meet. A central feature of all Christian churches is the altar, or table, and the lectern, from which the scriptures are proclaimed.

Before people used loudspeaker systems, many churches had a place from which the minister preached, known as a pulpit. This raised and highly decorated small platform was positioned at the front or middle of the church so that the priest or minister could be heard by the whole congregation. Another feature of Christian churches is the baptismal font or pool. In some churches, this font is situated near the entrance, while in others it is close to the altar area. In Baptist churches, it is a large pool that allows adults to be fully immersed in the water.

Most cathedrals have tall spires and a belltower. In the Middle Ages and beyond, churches were the centre of the village and bells were rung to remind people of prayer times. They functioned somewhat as clocks do today. The Roman Catholic Church, for instance, used one pattern of bell ringing to tell people that it was time for 'The Angelus', the prayer that commemorates the angel asking Mary to be the mother of Jesus, Mary's response and Jesus becoming flesh. These were rung at 6 am, noon and 6 pm, using a ring pattern of three tolls repeated three times followed by nine

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single tolls and concluding with three tolls. An ordinary chiming of the bells reminded people that it was time for Mass. Some churches, in fact, rang a warning bell a half-hour before Mass, a five-minute bell and a bell as Mass began. A slow tolling of bells indicated a funeral. A number of Anglican churches have retained the art of 'change ringing' where people ring sets of bells following a numeric pattern.

Two churches in France stand out for their beauty – the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris and Chartres Cathedral, southwest of Paris. Many pilgrims visit these churches and are moved by the way the story of Christ is carved in stone and told in the stained-glass windows.

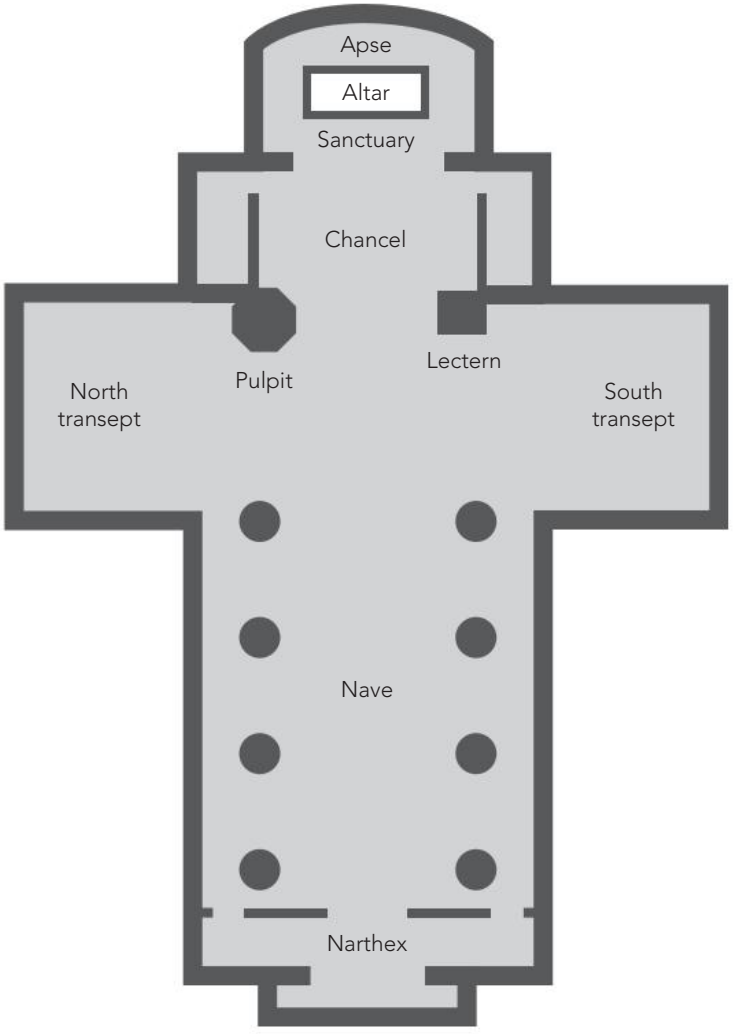


FIGURE 1.19 A floor plan of a cathedral

These depictions encourage worshippers to follow the example of such a virtuous person. The rose window in Notre Dame is particularly beautiful and raises the vision of the pilgrim to the heavens. On 15 April 2019, a fire broke out in the roof of Notre Dame. The spire and most of the roof was destroyed and the upper walls severely damaged. Luckily, however, many of the artworks and religious relics were saved: the thirteenth-century rose window suffered little to no damage.

ACTIVITY **1.15**

Finding

Go online to locate the homepages of the following churches and cathedrals in order to complete the table on the Activity Worksheet:

1 Notre Dame, Paris
2 Marienkirche, Berlin
3 St Michael's, Coventry
4 La Sagrada Familia, Barcelona
5 St Andrew's, Mahtomedi, Minnesota.

ACTIVITY **1.16**

Evaluating

1 Why do you think churches from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century were highly decorated? What function did the stained-glass windows and religious imagery serve?
2 Why do you think many Christian churches are dramatically simpler in scale than these large and ornate churches?
3 Examine the physical layout of two or three local churches. What traditional features are included? What has been added or removed?

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Pilgrimage

Pilgrimage is a journey undertaken for religious reasons, usually to a place regarded as holy or sacred or to where a holy event is taking place. Through the spiritual experience, pilgrims may learn more about themselves and feel closer to God. Pilgrimage may also be a ritual of purification and penitence.

Pilgrimage has been a part of Christianity from early times: St Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, is said to have undertaken a pilgrimage to the Holy Lands (Israel). Many of the places in Jerusalem and its surrounding countryside are associated with the life of Jesus and, in particular, the locations of his final week are reported to have been rediscovered by St Helena.

In the Middle Ages, some places in Europe became centres of pilgrimage. One such famous pilgrimage that continues today is to Santiago de Compostela in Spain, where pilgrims walk across mountainous country to the tomb of St James.

Rome is also a place of pilgrimage as it contains many sites associated with the early Christian Church; in particular, the catacombs, where Christians persecuted by the Romans were buried. In some European cities and villages, local shrines commemorating a saint have become places of pilgrimage. In England during the Middle Ages, a pilgrimage to Canterbury was very popular and is commemorated in the *Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Other pilgrimages may be occasional occurrences, where people come together at a particular time and for a particular Christian purpose – for example, for World Youth Day.



FIGURE 1.20 A pilgrim arrives at the Santiago de Compostela Church in Spain

The history of Christianity

Early Christianity

The Acts of the Apostles records the early years of the followers of Jesus after his death and resurrection. It is said to have been written by Luke, who wrote one of the gospels, and is a continuation of that story. Acts 2:1–4 recounts the first Pentecost, when the disciples began to preach and experience the coming of the Holy Spirit. Peter, one of the Apostles of Christ, preached about Jesus of Nazareth and told the assembled people to repent and be baptised for the forgiveness of sins and to receive the Holy Spirit. Many believed him and were baptised.

Thus the Church began, in about the year 30 CE. This story illustrates the first Christians' belief that they were inspired by God to continue the message of Jesus. It also illustrates the early progress in their preaching. Many of these Aramaic-speaking Jews continued living the life of a pious Jew. They went to the Temple, kept the food laws and practised circumcision. What distinguished them from other Jews was being baptised in the name of Jesus, learning his teaching from the Apostles and meeting together to break bread and give thanks (Eucharist).

Gradually they developed a custom of holding things in common and sharing their goods with the poor (Acts 2:31–7; 4:32–5). Over the next 200 years, Christianity began to spread, largely due to missionary efforts, from Jews to Greeks, or Hellenists as they were known at the time. Arguments developed over different practices, and as 12 Apostles had been appointed to look after the Hebrew community, so too seven men were chosen to take care of the Hellenists. The Hellenists became missionaries throughout the Mediterranean world.

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When disputes arose over the conditions for the acceptance of Gentiles (non-Jews) as followers, the First Council was called in Jerusalem in 70 CE. After a vision, Peter agreed that Christians did not have to become Jews before accepting the faith. Other difficulties developed with the meal at the end of the Eucharist, particularly about eating with people who did not keep Jewish dietary laws. Peter was somewhat reluctant to change these rules, but Paul and Barnabas, also disciples, thought they should be changed. James, the head of the community in Jerusalem, argued against Paul and Barnabas, but Peter accepted Paul's position. James insisted that when eating with Jewish Christians, Gentile Christians should abstain from eating blood (Acts 15:29).

In the first missionary journey recorded, Paul, accompanied by Barnabas, preached in synagogues and then other gathering places without imposing Jewish practices on new Christians. Tradition says that Peter and Paul journeyed to Rome and were martyred there. Evidence for this is scant but it probably did occur, around the time of Nero in 64 CE.

The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem in 70 CE, while a devastating event for Judaism, also had a marked effect upon Christianity. The Christian community fled from Jerusalem and were under pressure to separate themselves from Judaism. Because of the ease of travel on good Roman roads, the Church expanded West into the Roman Empire, where new philosophical ideas were added and the message of Christianity was expressed in a way that enabled Hellenists and Roman citizens to understand it.

The Roman Empire was organised as a strictly hierarchical structure but the Christian community welcomed everyone as equal in the

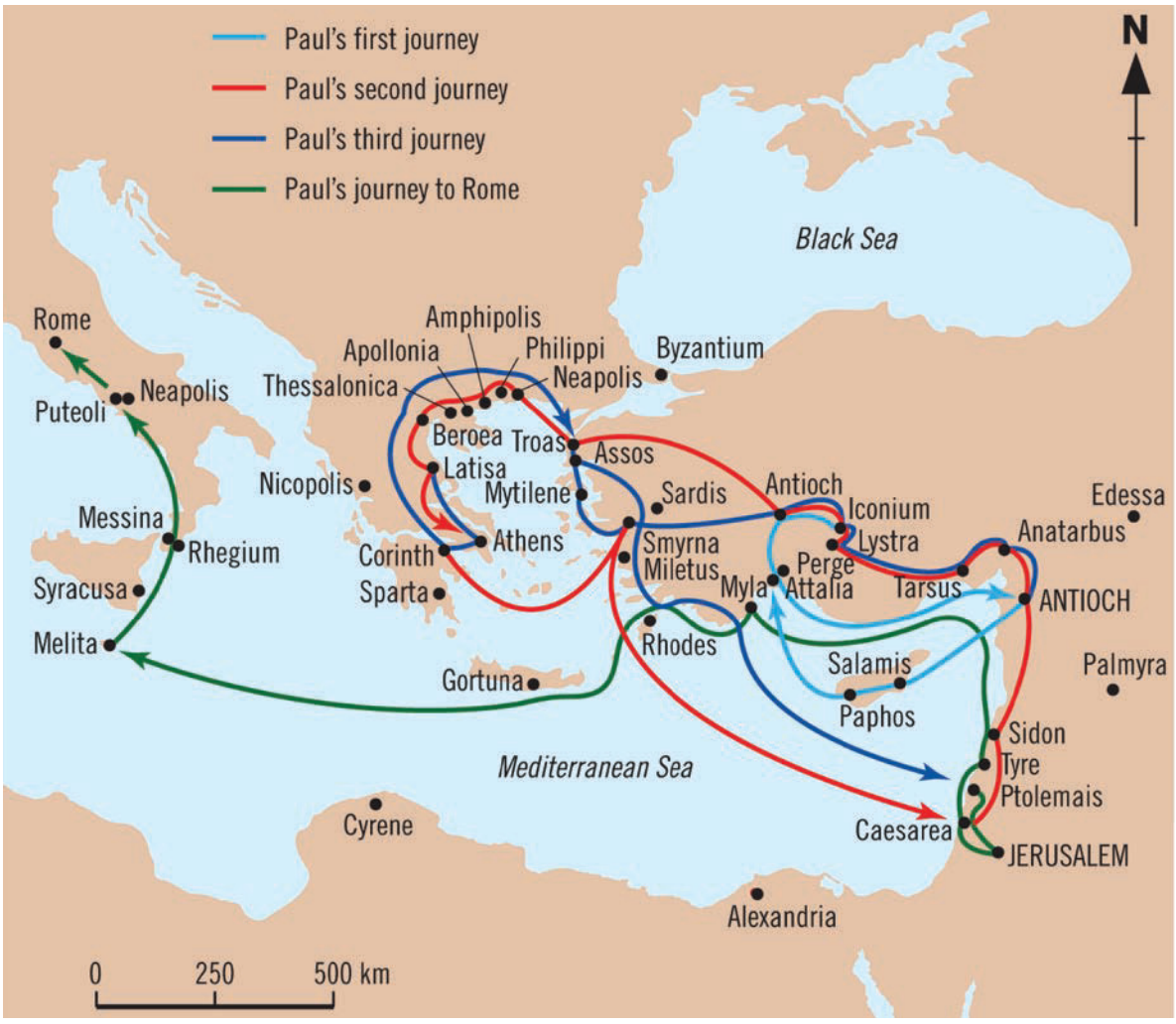


FIGURE 1.21 Paul's journeys

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sight of God, regardless of their wealth or gender. The poor, especially slaves and women, were attracted to the new religion. Romans regarded Christians as atheists because they did not take part in worshipping the emperor. Romans were also curious about Christians gathering together for evening meals and some even accused them of indulging in orgies; others considered them cannibals because of confusion over Eucharist and the body of Christ.

In answer to these and other accusations, Christians wrote texts explaining their beliefs. In doing so, they defended Christianity to the Gentiles and Jews. Some of these writings survived, such as the *Apology of Tertullian* of Carthage, written about 197 CE. Tertullian, a prolific early Christian author, links Christian belief with Hebrew scriptures to show that the foundation of Christianity is ancient. He also demonstrates that Christianity is a reasonable religion.

ACTIVITY 1.17

Response to stimulus – analysing and evaluating

***Apology of Tertullian* (Chapters 37 and 42)**

Read the extracts from the *Apology of Tertullian* on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. What does Tertullian say most clearly distinguishes Christians from others around them?
2. Who are 'brethren', according to Tertullian?
3. Why do Christians 'exercise restraint' upon themselves according to this text?
4. Why, according to Tertullian, should Christians not withdraw from society?
5. List the factors in this text that led to Christians being marginalised.

However, the apologists' writings were not convincing, and soon after Christians began to be persecuted. This persecution led to torture and martyrdom for many Christians.

During the second century, there were disagreements in the young church about interpretation and teaching. Christians of Jewish descent were anxious to maintain the laws of Judaism, particularly belief in one God, so they saw Jesus as a teacher marked by God at his baptism. However, they came to be regarded as heretics (someone who rejects or challenges the doctrines of the church) by their fellow Christians.

Another group considered knowledge (*gnosis*) to be a gift given only to a select few. They may have been Christian heretics, or people who drew on a number of religions including Christianity. Many of these ideas came from deep religious searching, and they won some acceptance because they engaged with deep questions within human beings. Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, wrote *Against Heresies* in which he pointed out the errors involved in these teachings and pleaded with Christians to refer to the tradition of the Apostles. He also began the habit of listing bishops who had succeeded one another in Rome back to Peter and Paul to establish apostolic succession.

ACTIVITY 1.18

Response to stimulus – analysing and evaluating

Extract from *Against Heresies* by Irenaeus of Lyons, Book 1, Chapter 27, paragraphs 2–3

Read the extract on the Activity Worksheet and complete the following activities.

1. Summarise the errors attributed by Irenaeus to Marcion of Pontus.
2. List the emotive language choices employed by Irenaeus in this text. What does this suggest about his purpose?
3. What is suggested by Irenaeus's final point regarding those who err in their beliefs about Jesus?
4. Irenaeus refers to several sources of authority in this passage. Who are they, and why has he done this?

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heresies the rejection of one or more established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs'

Docetists those who believed that Jesus's physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion

Sabellians those who believed the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God, as perceived by the believer, rather than three distinct persons in God

During the first two centuries, many **heresies** emerged as people tried to explain adequately the central concepts of Christianity. **Docetists** believed in the divinity of Christ but said that he only appeared to be human. The **Sabellians** said that Jesus was not of the same substance as the Father; and Arius denied that Christ was divine. As each heresy was declared, Christians had to seek new ways of responding to these challenges. In the second century, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, defended the Incarnation, saying that Jesus was truly human, not merely one who had taken on the likeness of humanity. Irenaeus saw humanity as striving towards union with God.

Another early Christian scholar, Origen, preached on the meaning of the Christian scriptures, but was later accused of heresy. Yet it was Origen who used the term 'Trinity' and 'person' in regard to God.



FIGURE 1.22 Illustration of a bust of Roman Emperor Constantine I

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, tried to preserve the unity of the church.

In approximately 312 CE, Constantine became emperor in the west. He was 'converted' to Christianity before a battle (although he was only baptised on his deathbed). In the *Edict of Milan* (313 CE), Constantine and Licinius, emperors of the West and East respectively, allowed for religious freedom and particularly for Christians to worship as they chose. Initially, Christianity was made equal to other religions, but gradually Christianity came to be favoured in the Empire.

Because the Roman State considered itself Christian, a new relationship between church and state developed. While the Emperor Constantine supported the church, he also intervened in church affairs. As the heretic arguments grew, Constantine called the first council of bishops, the Council of Nicaea. The Council of Nicaea was the first ecumenical, or worldwide, council and was held in 325 CE. Its purpose was to settle arguments about the nature of Jesus, such as: 'Was he truly God? Was he truly human?'

Only after Constantine threatened to imprison all bishops, unless they agreed upon a statement, did the assembly accept what became known as the *Nicene Creed*. In developing the *Nicene Creed*, the council accepted the original creed by Eusebius, an early Christian historian and polemicist, but added the adjective *homoousios* to describe the Son as being of the 'same substance' as the Father. However, many in the East rejected this formula – the exception being Athanasius, the Bishop of Alexandria.

In 381 CE, the Council of Constantinople reaffirmed the *Nicene Creed* but added a clause about the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father. This formula reflected Eastern theology. The Catholic bishop Augustine argued that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father and the Son (double procession) and the 'Filoque' (from the Son) clause was accepted in the West with the support of Charlemagne. However, the papacy did not endorse this clause until the eleventh century.

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ACTIVITY 1.19

Response to stimulus – analysing and evaluating

The *Apostles' Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*

Read the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Nicene Creed* on the Activity Worksheet.

1. List, in two columns, the articles of belief in the *Apostles' Creed* and then the *Nicene Creed*.
2. Identify differences between the *Apostles' Creed* and the *Nicene Creed*.
3. Write a statement about the nature of the differences in the creeds.
4. Write a structured paragraph of 250 words about the changes that occurred with the formulation of the *Nicene Creed* in 325 CE. Your paragraph should have a topic sentence, evidence sentences and a concluding sentence.
5. Extension activity: complete a similar exercise in three columns and include the *Athanasian Creed*.



FIGURE 1.23 Pope Leo IX (left), and Patriarch of Constantinople and Michael I Cerularius (right). Differences between the Eastern and Western church saw the Greek Christian church split from the church in Rome.

In 451 CE, the Council of Chalcedon decreed that Jesus was both human and divine. However, this decree caused Egypt and Syria to split from the Catholic Church and form the Coptic and Syrian Orthodox Churches, respectively.

By 1054 CE, differences between the Eastern and Western church had grown significantly and a Great Schism occurred, where the Greek Christian Church split from the church in Rome. The Greek Church was headed by the patriarch or bishop in Constantinople, while the church in Rome was led by the pope. The church in Rome came to be called the Catholic, or universal, Church. The Orthodox Church adopted the name of the 'right-thinking' church.

Middle Ages

In 1095 CE, the First Crusade began as an attempt to recapture the Christian holy places in Israel that had been conquered by Muslims. At the Council of Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II called for a crusade to help Christians in the East and to win back the holy places. The pope granted **plenary indulgences** to crusaders.

plenary indulgence teaching of the Roman Catholic Church where temporal punishment for sin is reduced

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The crusaders captured Jerusalem in 1099 and massacred the inhabitants of the city. In 1187 CE, Jerusalem was captured by the Turks. By 1292, after a number of crusades, most of which were unsuccessful, there were no crusaders left in Palestine.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, individuals in the Church became increasingly concerned about safeguarding the unity of faith. In 1233 CE, the Inquisition was set up by the Catholic Church to search out heretics, attempt to persuade them to change their views and to punish the recalcitrant. While the fear, violence and hysteria of the Inquisition led to great suffering for those individuals accused of heresy, reportedly the purpose of the Inquisition was to save people from suffering eternal torture in hell.

The Renaissance

The Renaissance was a time of improved education and new thinking, when works from antiquity in literature, arts and science were reintroduced to society. By the end of the fifteenth century, modern nation-states began gradually to emerge from a struggle between the princes and the popes. In addition, many Christians wanted reform in the Church. The invention of the printing press revolutionised communication – ideas began to circulate that indicated a need for reform. For instance, in his book *Utopia*, Thomas More, an English lawyer and social philosopher who is venerated in the Catholic Church as a Saint, included a criticism of the Church and society of his day, although he remained steadfastly loyal to the Church. Another instance is Erasmus's book, *In Praise of Folly*, in which he criticised much of society, and particularly the world of the Church (Erasmus was a Dutch philosopher and Christian humanist). He wanted to improve theology by making original documents available to people.

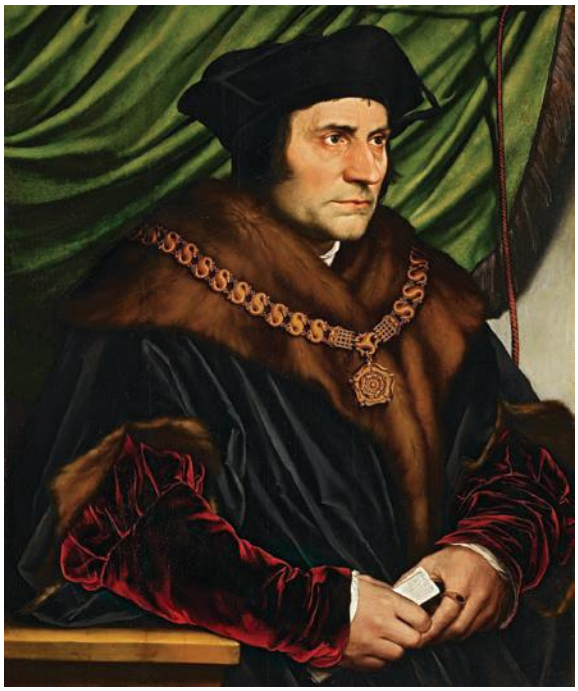


FIGURE 1.24 *Sir Thomas More* by Hans Holbein the Younger, 1527

Reformation

In 1517 CE, an event began that was as significant to the Church as the Schism of 1054 CE. A German Catholic priest, Martin Luther, nailed a protest about practices in the Church, called the *95 Theses* or *Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*, to a church door. This began a widespread movement that split the Western world violently and eventually led to the formation of the Protestant churches, which moved away from the Church of Rome.

Martin Luther

While the *95 Theses* may have been an invitation to debate, they nevertheless led to bitter arguments. In 1520, Luther was given two months to retract 41 of his propositions, and in 1521 he was excommunicated for refusing to do so. He was summoned to the Diet of Worms



FIGURE 1.25 A statue of sixteenth-century theologian Martin Luther in Wittenberg, Germany

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(an assembly in the town of Worms) and after his appearance there had to go into hiding.

Germany was divided between those for and against Martin Luther. There were different reasons for supporting him. Some nobles saw possibilities to gain church land and some princes sought political power and freedom. However, the vast majority of people supported him because of their convictions. Luther was concerned at the way some peasants were rebelling in his name, and after they burned convents and churches, he called on nobles to massacre the rebels. He also broke with Erasmus, who did not like the pessimistic way Luther thought about human beings and freedom.

Luther may well have had no intention of beginning a new church, as he thought that a church that returned to the gospel would reform itself. In 1529, he published a **Catechism** in which he emphasised that salvation comes from God through faith alone. According to him, good works do not make people good, but people justified by God do good works. Scripture and faith would lead to salvation. He reduced the seven sacraments to two: baptism and Eucharist, because of their scriptural basis. He maintained the 'real presence' is contained in the Eucharist and celebrated Eucharist in the vernacular.

He used force, particularly against Anabaptists (a radical religious group that developed from the teachings of Ulrich Zwingli and Martin Luther), and disagreed with Luther in that he saw only a symbolic presence of Christ in the Eucharist. He also removed all music from church services.

John Calvin

John Calvin (1509–1564), a French theologian, pastor and reformer, published the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* in Latin to provide the French with a good understanding of Reformation doctrine. He fled France and worked largely in the city of Geneva, where the work of Ulrich Zwingli (another Protestant reformer) had prepared the way. His doctrine was more systematic than that of Luther, but he gave equal emphasis to scripture and faith. While Luther allowed some flexibility in preserving elements of the Mass, Calvin took a more austere approach to worship. He was energised by the idea of the sovereignty of God and was concerned about the effect of original sin. He believed in **predestination** – that is, God saved those whom he chose.

Calvin defended infant baptism and believed that Christ gave himself

Catechism
a book that outlines the faith in the form of questions and answers

predestination
the Calvinist doctrine that God decides who will be saved and who will be damned irrespective of a person's exercise of free will

ACTIVITY **1.20**

Analysing and evaluating

Read the extracts from Luther's *95 Theses* on the Activity Worksheet.

1 Explain in simple language what each statement means.
2 How does each statement relate to the central teaching of Luther that scripture and faith lead to salvation?

Huldrych Zwingli

Other reformers include Huldrych Zwingli (1484–1531), a disciple of Erasmus, who secularised convents, conducted liturgy in German and destroyed statues. He wanted a church based on the gospels and free from foreign interference.



FIGURE 1.26 Engraving of French theologian and church reformer John Calvin

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to people when they received the bread and wine in Eucharist. He divided ministry into four areas of pastors, doctors, elders and deacons. He established a model of church life that is governed by 12 elders with the pastor. He allowed usury (lending of money at interest) and this, coupled with his belief in predestination, led many to associate his ideas with capitalism.

ACTIVITY **1.21**

Analysing and evaluating

Calvin wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (1536) in Latin. The work was later expanded and translated into French in 1541 and was enlarged to four volumes in 1559. It became known as the *theological summa* of Reformed Protestantism.

1. Read the two extracts from the *Institutes of the Christian Religion* on the Activity Worksheet.
2. Explain their main points in simple language.

The central tenets of the Reformation include:

- *Centrality of the Bible* – believers should read the Bible regularly.
- *Return to simple Christianity* – Christians should follow the early traditions and avoid later alterations.
- *Centrality of Jesus* – Jesus is the one way to God.
- *Direct relation to God* – eliminate all that is not necessary to this relationship.
- *Salvation by grace alone* – people are saved by the grace and mercy of God, not by personal action or the actions of others.
- *Nature and reason are corrupt* – no human action can help a person achieve salvation because all are corrupted by Adam's sin.
- *The grace of God comes only through Jesus Christ* – God forgives the sin of those destined for salvation.
- *Salvation by faith alone* – the grace of God is given through faith only.
- *Certainty of salvation* – people cannot reject God's grace once it is given.
- *Reduction of sacramental system* – only baptism and Eucharist were retained as sacraments.
- *Different understanding of the church* – the church is an association of believers and does not mediate between God and humankind.
- *Virtue the consequence of being saved* – if a person leads a good life that is a sign that God has granted salvation.
- *Elimination of prayers for the dead* – a person is either saved or not saved.

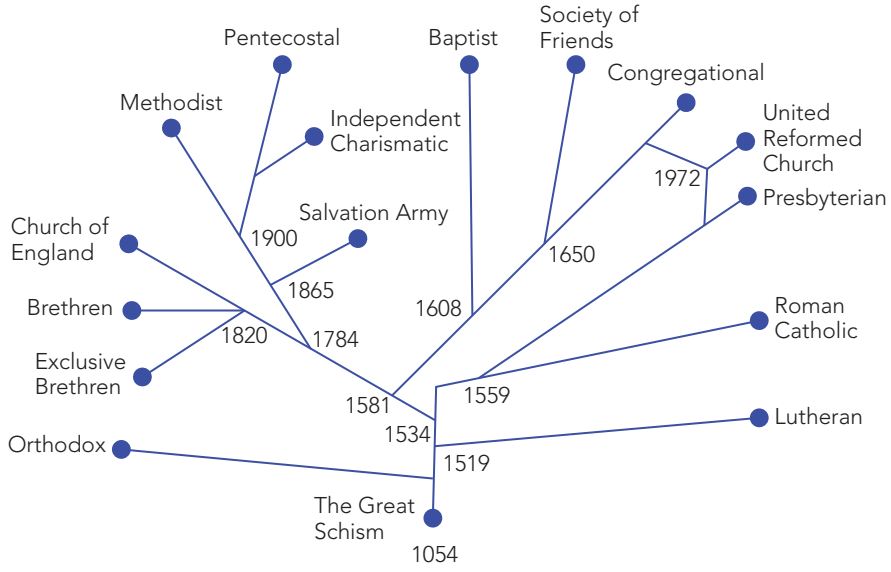
The Diet of Speyer in 1526 allowed German princes freedom to reform in their lands, but in 1529 the Diet withdrew this concession. The princes who wished to introduce the Reformation protested at this and this protest gave the name Protestant to the movement. In 1555, the religious peace of Augsburg allowed the princes of Germany to choose their religion and that of all their subjects.

Reformation in England

The Reformation in England came about because King Henry VIII clashed with Pope Leo X over the question of the king's divorce. Henry wanted to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon because Catherine had not given him a son and heir. Henry declared himself head of the Church of England (Act of Supremacy, 1534) and instituted an entire break with Rome. Persecutions of Catholics followed. He suppressed monasteries and used their wealth, accrued over many years, to support his regime.

Henry VIII retained the essence of the Catholic faith in the *Six Articles of 1539*. After his death he was succeeded by his son Edward VI (a minor), during whose reign *The Book of Common Prayer* (1559) was developed. Henry's daughter Mary Tudor gained the throne in 1553 and restored Catholicism. The real founder of Anglicanism is Elizabeth I, who succeeded Mary in 1558 and promulgated the *Thirty-Nine Articles* (1563) that outlined Anglican belief.

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▲Tree showing the dates and breakaway points of Christian denominations.

FIGURE 1.27 The various Christian denominations

Counter-Reformation

Attempts were also made to reform the Roman Catholic Church from the inside, and this became known as the Counter-Reformation. Some of the reformers belonged to religious orders, and new orders were formed, such as the Jesuits, who follow the spiritual exercises of Ignatius of Loyola. The Jesuits attempted to improve understanding by educating people.

Council of Trent

The Council of Trent (1545–63) was a gathering of bishops to formulate the Roman Catholic Church's response to the Reformation. The Reformation had torn Europe apart through wars and violence, as princes declared themselves for one side or the other. The Catholic Church was defensive and met to consider its position. The council met three times in Trent, Bologna and Trent again, finally concluding in 1563. The council defined dogma (doctrine) concerning the justification and collaboration of God and humanity in salvation, and asked for reforms, particularly for the education of priests, founding seminaries for their training.

Consequently, the pope published the Roman Catechism, Roman Breviary and Roman Missal. Pope Gregory XIII reformed the calendar, founded a number of colleges and set up central government for the Church. Pope Paul V published the Roman Ritual, which set out rules for celebrating the sacraments. This period in the life of the Roman Catholic Church is also referred to as the Catholic Reformation.

FIGURE 1.28 Pope Gregory VIII



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ACTIVITY **1.22**

Response to stimulus – analysing and evaluating

Extracts from the decisions of the Council of Trent

Read the extracts on the Activity Worksheet and answer the questions below.

1. In the *Decree Concerning the Canonical Scriptures*, what two sources of Catholic authority are affirmed? Why is each granted such affirmation?
2. In the *Decree On Justification*, what do you think 'anathema' means, based on its context here?
3. In your own words, write the meaning of each Canon provided in the extracts.
4. In *On the Sacraments in General* and *On the Most Holy Sacrament, the Eucharist* what reason is provided to justify the assertion that there are seven sacraments? What is the current name for 'extreme unction'?
5. In the *Method of Establishing Seminaries for Clerics and of Educating the Same Therein* what reasons are given for ideally training youths in seminaries?
6. In the *Decree on the Reformation of Marriage* what is the status of civil marriages, according to this statement of the Council?
7. Find four extracts from the texts provided that rebut particular Protestant beliefs. Explain your choice for each extract.

Mission

The discoveries of the 'New World' in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries led to a new era of evangelisation that was dependent on commercial and national expeditions. From a religion that was predominantly based in Europe, Christianity spread as far as South America and Japan. Jesuit missionaries travelled to Goa in India and Macau in China, and Francis Xavier attempted to convert people in Japan. European Catholic missionaries were successful in the Philippines and Guam and French Catholics converted many in South-East Asia and the Pacific. Protestants evangelised in the United States, Canada and South Africa.

mission a group of persons sent by a church to carry out religious work, especially evangelisation in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, etc.

Missionaries were ill prepared to confront new civilisations and cultures. They were often shocked by local practices and in preaching Christianity they were unable to distinguish cultural practice in their own religion from essential beliefs. They tended to destroy native religions and replace them with their enculturated version of Christianity.

Today, most mainstream missionary activity is more conscious of the value of local customs and of not imposing Western values on Indigenous peoples. However, there are still instances where evangelical and fundamentalist Christian minorities are so focused on **mission** that they



FIGURE 1.29 Engraving of Father Jacques Marquett's reception by Native Americans in North America

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do not pay adequate attention to the language and customs of the people among whom they minister.

The modern period

One of the features of the modern period was the development of ecumenism. Initially, ecumenism began as small movements within the same denomination of Christianity, as people wanted to retain a degree of unity among members across the world. In 1846, a Universal Evangelical Alliance of different Protestant denominations began and in 1867 the first Anglican Lambeth Conference gathered. The Lambeth Conference now meets every 10 years in Canterbury Cathedral in England. Later the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, the World Baptist Alliance, the World Lutheran Federation and the YMCA and YWCA (Young Men's/Women's Christian Association) formed.

During World War I, a Lutheran Archbishop of Uppsala, Nathan Söderblom, appealed to Christians to pray for world peace. When the war ended he founded the Life and Work Movement, also known as Practical Christianity, and it met for the first time in 1925 with over 600 delegates from 27 countries. A second meeting was held in Oxford in 1937, at which 124 churches and 44 countries were represented. Later in Edinburgh, people called for a mutual understanding of all believers to be developed, which ultimately resulted in the formation of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948. In 1964, the Roman Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council released its Decree on Ecumenism, *Unitatis redintegratio*, which was a monumental step forward for the Catholic faithful.



FIGURE 1.30 World Council of Churches Ecumenical Centre in Switzerland

World Council of Churches

The WCC is an umbrella organisation for Christians and represents 400 million Christians in 330 churches, denominations and fellowships. The WCC provides a space where member churches can reflect, act, worship and work together; challenge and support each other; and share and debate with each other. Although the Roman Catholic Church is not a member, it has sent official observers to general assemblies and cooperates in a number of commissions. Some evangelical churches are also not members. The WCC has three main areas of interest: faith and witness; justice and service; and communication through the promotion of tolerance and knowledge globally.

As members of WCC fellowship, member churches:

- are called to the goal of visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship
- promote their common witness in work for mission and evangelism
- engage in Christian service by serving human need, breaking down barriers between people, seeking justice and peace and upholding the integrity of creation
- foster renewal in unity, worship, mission and service.

Source: World Council of Churches, 2019.

Ecumenism is a movement that seeks to achieve unity of Christians; from the Greek, *oikumene*, meaning the inhabited world.

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Vatican II

For the Roman Catholic Church, the Second Vatican Council was the result of more than 20 years of theological and pastoral research. Pope John XXIII, elected on 28 October 1958, 77 years old and considered a 'caretaker pope', was concerned that the Church no longer played a role in many areas of life. On 25 January 1959, he announced a synod for the diocese of Rome; a reforming of Canon law; and a council of the universal church. He asked the Church to throw open its windows and to get in touch with the modern world.

During the council, the Catholic Church listened not only to other Christian churches but also to other religions. Many changes occurred as a result, not least of which was developing a more tolerant attitude towards people of other faiths.

Inter-religious dialogue

More recently, Christians have recognised the importance of interfaith relations and have involved themselves actively in **inter-religious dialogue**. For over 40 years, the Catholic Church has developed directives that encourage and assist Christians to engage with people of other faith traditions, declaring such interaction as integral to the Church's life and mission. The WCC has also issued statements regarding other faiths and has participated in gatherings of religious leaders of various traditions. Leadership in inter-faith relations has led to general church members also becoming involved in local and national dialogues and inter-faith relations. A prerequisite for engagement in inter-faith dialogue is a sound and educated understanding of the 'home tradition' and a mutual agreement to accept the differences that exist between traditions.

inter-religious dialogue cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

Conclusion

Christianity, the most populous of the world's religions, has influenced much of the foundations of the Western world. Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism profess that there is one God and hold that Jesus Christ is their saviour. As followers of Jesus, Christians engage actively in the service of society and many are involved in social welfare and action programs aimed at assisting the less fortunate and educating people to reach their potential.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions on Christianity.

1.3 Islam

'Call upon the Lord in humility and in private.'
(Qur'an 7:55)

Islam: the facts

Number of adherents
Approximately 1.8 billion (worldwide)
604 000 (Australia)

Sacred text
The Qur'an

Place of worship
Mosque

Symbol
Star and crescent



Introduction

Islam, the religion of the people who follow the teachings of Muhammad, has existed since 610 CE when Muhammad is reported to have received his first revelation from Allah in a cave at Hira. The word 'Islam' means submission, submitting or committing oneself to Allah. The term Islam also covers a system of beliefs and practices followed by Muslims, the adherents of Islam. Islam also refers to several cultures and civilisations created by Muslims over time. Early Islamic civilisations existed in Greece, Iran and India, but today Islam stretches from the Middle East to Indonesia, from Central Asia to sub-Saharan Africa, and there are more than 1.8 billion Muslims throughout the world.

Central to Islam and all Muslims is the absolute supremacy of God, also called Allah, *PBUH*.

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Terminology

PBUH is an abbreviated version of 'Peace be upon Him' that Muslims say at any mention of Allah or the Prophet Muhammad.

God is believed to be the Creator and Judge, deserving of total submission. In turn, submission will bring salvation to the believer. In many ways, the belief system of Islam offers Muslims certainty. However, it would be wrong to suggest that aspects of the belief system are not open to interpretation and that the global Muslim community is a totally homogeneous entity. While, on the one hand, there is general agreement among Muslims of the oneness of God, the authority of the **Qur'an** and the Prophet Muhammad (that is, *PBUH*), there are different interpretations of some laws, including those regarding the role of women.

Qur'an
the central sacred text of Islam

As with all religious traditions, one of the challenges involved in studying Islam is that it manifests itself in different ways in different contexts and locations. The challenge is to describe and analyse how the universalistic principles of Islam have been realised in various social and historical contexts without representing Islam as monolithic or monocultural.

FIGURE 1.31 An adherent reads from the Qur'an



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Terminology

The foundational language of Islam is Arabic and this can present some challenges for translation. *Salah* or *salat* is translated as 'prayer' or 'worship', but neither of the two English words provide an exact explanation of what really occurs. Even translation of Islam as 'submission' can be problematic. Some people interpret 'submission' as being negative, but Muslims do not, so 'commitment' may be a more accurate term. Traditionally, those who pursued the academic study of Islam in the West were called 'Orientalists', but today they are referred to as 'Islamicists'. This is not the same as 'Islamists', whose aim is to bring about an Islamic state and society.

ACTIVITY 1.23

Forming and finding

1 What do you know about Islam?
2 What are some distinctive customs of Islam?
3 What enabled a relatively small religion to spread so rapidly?
4 How has Islam changed over time?
5 Who are some key people associated with Islam?
6 Where are there Muslim communities in Australia, your state and local area?
7 How is Islam represented in the media?
8 What is a symbol of Islam?
9 Use the Activity Worksheet to complete a KWHL chart related to Islam.

Timeline

CE	
c. 570	Birth of **Muhammad** Conquest of Yemen by the Persians
610	Muhammad's first visions
612–22	First Muslim community in **Mecca**
622	*Hijra*: Muhammad's flight from Mecca to **Medina** [Muslim year 1]
622–32	Muslim community in Medina Muslim raids and battle within Arabia
630	Muslims take Mecca
632	Death of Muhammad, Caliphate of Abu Bakr
634	Death of Caliph Abu Bakr, Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab
644	Death of Caliph Umar, Caliphate of Uthman ibn al-Affan
655–56	Promulgation of Qur'an
680	Death of Husayn, grandson of Muhammad
922	Execution of mystic al-Hallaj
1099	Conquest of Jerusalem by crusaders
1187	Saladin defeats crusaders at Hattin
1207–73	**Sufi** poet Jalal-ud Din Rumi

Muhammad
the founder of the religion of Islam, regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God

Mecca
the holiest city in Islam, located in Saudi Arabia

Medina
the second holiest city in Islam, and the burial place of Muhammad

Sufi
a member of a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love

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1258	Baghdad invaded by Mongols
1291	Muslim expulsion of crusaders from Israel
1299	Osman founds Ottoman Empire
1400s	Islam spreads through Asia
1453	Ottomans capture Constantinople
1492	Expulsion of Muslims from Spain
1582	Mughal expansion into India
1744	Muhammad Abd al-Wahhab and Muhammad bin Saud found the kingdom of Saudi Arabia
1804	Shehu Usman Dan Fodio spreads Islam in West Africa
1885–98	Mahdi establishes Muslim state in Sudan
1918	End of Ottoman Empire
1924	Ottoman Caliphate abolished 1945–60s Islam spreads via mass imgrations from Asia, Africa and India
1928	Muslim Brotherhood founded
1941	Jama'at-I Ilsami founded in Lahore
1947	Independence of Pakistan
1948	Arab-Israeli War
1950s	Muslims settle in Europe
1966	War between Arabs and Israelis
1971	East Pakistan becomes the separate Islamic state of Bangladesh
1979	Ayatollah Khomeini leads fundamentalist Islamic revolution in Iran
1990	Muslim republic of former Soviet Union including Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan attained self-government
1996	Taliban regime gains power in Afghanistan
2001	Muslim extremists attack United States
2001–08	War on Terror
2003	Shirin Ebadi, an Iranian lawyer, becomes the first Muslim woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize
2004	Saddam Hussein ousted by Western forces The Amman Message: formal document agreeing to a single, tolerant definition of what it means to be Muslim
2009	President Obama's Cairo Speech
2010	Rise of ISIS and Boko Haram
2011	The Arab Spring

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FIGURE 1.32 Pilgrims gathered at the Ka'bah in the court of the Great Mosque at Mecca

History and development of Islam

Allah
a combination of the word *Al*, meaning the definite article 'the' and *ilah*, the Arabic word for 'God'; thus Allah means 'the God'

Ka'bah
a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the most sacred site in Islam

The Arab people before Muhammad worshipped many gods, venerated sacred stones, trees and springs and believed that spirits inhabited the desert. The people of Mecca worshipped a number of deities, one called **Allah** and three goddesses – the Daughters of Allah. An important focus of the worship of the people of Mecca was a structure called the **Ka'bah** that contains a sacred black stone. This ancient site of worship became the centre of pilgrimage in Islam.

Muhammad

We know very little about the early life of the Prophet Muhammad, but it is believed he was born around 570 CE and died in 632 CE. He belonged to one of the clans of Quraish, a tribe that controlled commerce in Mecca. Muhammad had a difficult early life. His father, Abdullah, died before Muhammad was born and his mother died when he was very young. Before being adopted by an uncle, Abu Talib, he was cared for by his grandfather who made a modest living providing pilgrims with water from a well sacred to Allah. Some scholars think that growing up as an orphan made Muhammad sensitive to the poor and vulnerable. As a young adult, he worked as a caravan driver. In his mid-20s he married the wealthy widow Khadija, who was probably about 40 years of age. Together they had at least six children, but no male child survived into adulthood. After Khadija's death Muhammad remarried a number of times.

Muhammad was a religious person and spent time meditating. When he was about 40 years old,

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he began to experience religious trances. At times during these trances, he would speak out in verse. While on retreat in a cave in Mount Hira, he received his first revelation, which is recorded in the Qur'an – a bright presence came to him, held a cloth covered in writing before his eyes and commanded three times that he recite what was written:

> Recite in the name of the Lord who created – created man from clots of blood.
> Recite! Your Lord is the Most Bountiful One, who by the pen taught man what he did not know.
> Indeed, man transgresses in thinking himself his own master; for to your Lord all things return …
> Prostrate yourself and come nearer.

At first Muhammad doubted the revelations but Khadija encouraged him to accept the experience as a true communication from God. Muhammad became convinced that the bright presence was the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel) and he began to share his revelations with Khadija, his cousin Ali and friend Abu Bakr. These became the first Muslims, people who submit to God (Allah).

Initially, Muhammad's message was not well received because it insisted that only one God, Allah, should be worshipped. Muhammad also denounced usury (lending money at unreasonably high rates of interest) and the failure to keep fair contracts. Business people, particularly those trading images of tribal gods, were threatened by Muhammad's statements. Muhammad was protected by the tribe's obligation to his uncle. When his wife and uncle died, Muhammad was at the mercy of his powerful enemies in Mecca. During this time he experienced himself being carried to Jerusalem and ascending from there into paradise. Throughout this vision, called his Night Journey or Night of Ascent, he was guided by the angel Jibra'ail. As he ascended to the heavens he encountered angels and great prophets of the past and then finally entered into the presence of God. Muslims disagree whether this event was a personal vision or actual ascension to the heavens.

umma
an Arabic word meaning 'community' or 'nation'

mosque
a place of worship for followers of Islam

In 622, he left Mecca for the safety of Yathrib. The migration, called the *Hijra* (flight or migration), is a central event in Islam, as it marks not only the point when Muhammad's message began to be favourably received, but also the start of the Islamic community (***umma***). When tribes in the area began to clash, Muhammad was invited to arbitrate as a neutral outsider. His arbitration was successful and Muhammad became a key player in the politics of the area. He banished or executed his enemies and, over time, gained control of the city. Eventually he organised Yathrib around the principles of what he considered a model Islamic society. He set up the first **mosque** (*masjid*) in Yathrib and established many of Islam's rules about worship and social regulation. Yathrib, now called Medina (city of the prophet), along with Mecca and Jerusalem, is a sacred Islamic site.

Muhammad's goal was to return to Mecca, and in 624 Muslim soldiers from Medina triumphed over the citizens of Mecca. Skirmishes followed until 630 when Muhammad took control of Mecca. He destroyed all the images in the Ka'bah and marketplace and began to impose his religious ideals. When he died in 632, he had control of territory in Arabia and was planning to expand into Syria. His final sermon preached the brotherhood of all believers over and against tribal loyalties.

Muslims do not regard Muhammad as divine, but consider him free of sin and a model for all Muslims. According to Islam, he is the final and decisive Prophet through whom God made his final revelation to humankind; there are no more prophets after him; and there are no more revelations from God after the Qur'an.

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ACTIVITY 1.24

Finding

Annotate the timeline by providing facts related to dates and events to increase your basic understanding of the key events.

Groups within Islam

Sunni and Shi'ite

Muhammad appears not to have made any provision for a successor, so after he died a dispute arose that centred on whether a close relative of Muhammad or an early convert to Islam, who had worked with Muhammad, should lead the believers. The latter group, companions of the Prophet, was supported by the main community, the **Sunni**, who chose to elect a pious member of Muhammad's tribe, Abu Bakr, as successor or caliph. He was followed by three successors and all four were known as the 'rightly guided caliphs'. In Sunni Islam, the ultimate source of authority is the Muslim community. Sunni is the most widespread form of Islam.

Sunni
a majority subdivision of Islam that accepts the legitimacy of the first four caliphs and their successors

Shi'ite
a minority subdivision of Islam that claims that the true successors to Muhammad were Ali and his descendants

monism
the notion that everything (including religion) is one; that there are no divisions

A smaller group, the **Shi'ite**, insisted that leadership should run through Muhammad's family and since he had no surviving son, succession moved to Ali, Muhammad's cousin who had married Muhammad's daughter, Fatima. In Shi'ite Islam, authority resides in the divinely appointed leader, the *imam*, rather than the community. The Shi'ites also held the view that the caliphs would be empowered with the same spirit that had empowered Muhammad and so could speak authoritatively to new situations. In Sunni Islam, the caliph had no power to innovate. Shi'ite Islam is the predominant religion in Iran and has major communities in Lebanon and Iraq.

Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims agree on broad principles of Islam, but Shi'ite Islam has distinctive practices. One of these, the celebration on the 10th day of Muharram, commemorates the death of Ali's son Husayn, who died in a battle against other Muslims. Husayn's suffering is regarded as redemptive and is often celebrated in dramatic form where participants flagellate themselves with chains and smear themselves with blood to symbolise sharing Husayn's fate.

Sufis

Another strand in Islam is Sufism (from the Arabic for wool robe, *suf*, worn by early Sufis). Sufism is a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love, and therefore is often indifferent to political concerns. It holds that an individual, while on Earth, can experience God 'face to face'.

Orthodox Sufism views God and man as separate realities but some Sufis see the individual as only an appearance of God or a reflection of God. Some Sufis say that they are identical with God, a concept called **monism**, which has led to persecution by orthodox Muslims who view such a statement as blasphemy.

The Maulawiya order of Sufis, founded by Jalal-ud Din Rumi (1207–1273), used circular dancing to assist mystical experience. Such dances are known as *whirling dervish* and people still practise them today.

In some Muslim countries, the value of Sufism is disputed: many see it as the highest achievement of Islam, while others are opposed to it because it appears to be too liberal.



FIGURE 1.33 Whirling dervishes

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ACTIVITY **1.25**

Analysing and evaluating

1 Read the following poems by Sufi poets on the Activity Worksheet.
- 'Suspended Blue Ocean' by Hafiz
- 'Would You Think it Odd' by Hafiz
- 'One Whisper of the Beloved' by Rumi.

2 As you read them look for:
- **a** images of God
- **b** experiences of God in creation
- **c** the relationship between the divine and creation, especially humanity.

3 Select phrases and images that describe:
- **a** the divine
- **b** creation
- **c** experiences (joy, love, fun)
- **d** people.

ACTIVITY **1.26**

Analysing

1 How does the poet Hafiz experience God?
2 What does this show about Sufism?
3 How is Sufism different from or similar to other expressions of Islam?
4 What contribution might an exploration of Sufism make to perceptions and understandings of Islam?
5 How might Sufism be seen by some Muslims as too liberal? Provide an example to support your ideas.

ACTIVITY **1.27**

Analysing

1 Using the Sufi poems from the previous Activity Worksheet, write a statement about the images of God in Islam.
2 Complete an 'Actitude analysis' on Sufism using the Activity Worksheet. This strategy combines words, acts and attitudes and makes connections between attitudes and actions.
3 Analyse a given idea, doctrine or position held by a person or group.
4 Summarise the meaning of the idea, doctrine or position.
5 Identify and record the attitudes and values embedded in the idea, doctrine or position.
6 Find examples of actions or practices in the text of the poetry that match the attitudes and values.

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Key teachings of Islam

There are five teachings at the core of Islam:

1. one God
2. angels
3. prophets and scriptures
4. resurrection and the last judgement
5. the divine decree of predestination.

One God

Shahadah the first pillar of Islam; the statement of belief that 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'

Muslims are monotheists, meaning they believe in one God who is eternal, omnipotent and all-knowing, who forgives those who ask and punishes the wicked. Devout Muslims proclaim the oneness of God in the ***Shahadah***, which is spoken every day in Arabic.

There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.
La Ilaha illa Allah; Muhammad rasul Allah.

jinn invisible beings in Islam

This proclamation asserts that all other deities are either myths or figments of the imagination. For Muslims, the belief in one God is not an abstract idea, because Allah, through the angel Jibra'ail, revealed the Qur'an to Muhammad. Allah is above all things and is in control of the universe. To place any created thing on the same level as God is to commit the sin *shirk*, or blasphemy.

The following extract from the Qur'an outlines some 'aspects' of Allah:

God, there is no God but Him,
The Living, the Eternal One.
Neither slumber nor sleep overtakes Him.
His is what the heaven and the earth contain.
Who can intercede with Him except by His permission?
He knows what is before and behind men.
They can grasp only that part of His knowledge which He wills.
His Throne is as vast as the heaven and the Earth,
And the preservation of them both does not weary him.
He is the Exalted, the Immense One. (Qur'an 2:255)

Other characteristics of Allah are expressed in the 99 beautiful names of Allah.

ACTIVITY 1.28

Finding

Use the Activity Worksheet to identify the 99 names of Allah in transliterated Arabic and English.

Angels

Islam believes in spiritual beings such as angels, who are messengers of God. The angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel) spoke to Muhammad during the revelation of the Qur'an. The Qur'an also mentions the angel Michael.

Other invisible beings, called ***jinn*** (plural *jinni*), are created by God from fire and eventually die. *Jinni* can be male or female and are either good or evil.

Prophets and scriptures

Islam sees itself as the first revelation of God to humankind. The Qur'an mentions 25 people – prophets – to whom God gave the message of the Qur'an in earlier times. They include Adam, Noah, Ibrahim (Abraham), Yusuf (Joseph), Musa (Moses), Harun (Aaron), Dawud (David), Yahya (John the Baptist) and Isa (Jesus), and all, according to Islam, are Muslim.

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God gave each prophet the same message of the Qur'an: submission to God; to Moses, he gave the Torah; to David, the Psalms; to Jesus, the gospels; but in each case the scriptures were misinterpreted or corrupted. As a result, none of these texts have authority for Muslims: the Qur'an corrects all the distortions and therefore supersedes all earlier texts.

Resurrection and the last judgement

Throughout the Qur'an there are constant reminders of the end of time, when all the dead will be raised to life and God will pass an eternal sentence on every human being. Those who believe the revelation, given through Muhammad, and who do good works will be rewarded with heaven; those who do not will be relegated to hell. It is interesting to note that Islam, like earlier forms of Christianity, has a doctrine of purgatory, a place of temporary suffering where those who do not deserve hell will undergo some suffering to prepare them for heaven.

The torments of hell (*Ghenna*) are described in the Qur'an but it is not clear whether hell involves eternal punishment or temporary punishment, and there is disagreement among Muslim scholars because of the ambiguity of the Qur'anic text.

The divine decree of predestination

All Muslims have free will. Their actions and choices result in punishment or reward. But this does not mean that human actions lie outside the reach of God's help. God predestines some to heaven and some to hell but this does not abolish humankind's responsibility for their own actions.

This doctrine may imply a contradiction, but Muslims view it as a mystery and emphasise that what matters in Islam is action.

Principal practices of Islam

The Five Pillars of Islam

All Muslims must accept and practise the **Five Pillars of Islam**, which are an expression of their faith.

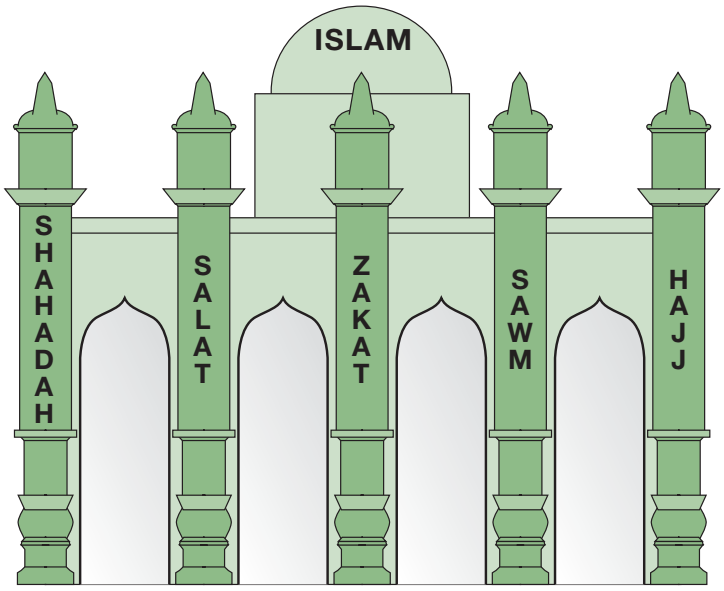


FIGURE 1.34 The Five Pillars of Islam

1 Shahadah – creed

'There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.' This single sentence, when recited with belief, makes a person a Muslim. It is also the first sentence whispered into the ear of a newborn child and the last phrase uttered to a dying Muslim. It is a constant reminder to Muslims that they should not allow anything to get in the way of their worship of God.

It is a very simple creed that emphasises the unity of God, rejects the idea that Jesus is divine and emphatically names Muhammad as a prophet and messenger.

2 Salat – prayer

Muslims are required to pray five times a day: before dawn, at midday, mid-afternoon, sunset and night-time. Times for prayer were traditionally announced by a ***muezzin*** (or *mu'adhdhin*) from the minaret, but today they are broadcast over loudspeakers. The call to prayer, in Arabic, begins with *Allahu akbar* (God is great) and continues with 'I witness that there is no God but Allah; I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah; hasten to prayer'.

Five Pillars of Islam the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim

muezzin the one who calls the faithful to daily prayer in Islam

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FIGURE 1.35 Communal prayers in a mosque

The call to prayer differs slightly between the different schools of Islam but it is always in Arabic. The call for Sunni Muslims is shown in Table 1.1.

rak'at one unit or cycle of Islamic prayer

zakat the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one's income to charity

For *Salat al-Fajr*, the early morning prayer, most schools include the line: *Al-salat khayrun min al-naum* (Prayer is better than sleep).

Each *salat* is made up of a number of cycles, called ***rak'at***. The *rak'at* begins when the prayer raises their hand in a gesture of submission, concentration and separation from the world and is accompanied by the words *Allahu akbar* (God is most great).

TABLE 1.1 Sunni call to prayer

Allahu akbar	God is most great
Ashhadu an la ilaha illa allah	I bear witness that there is no god but God
Ashhadu anna muhammadan rasul allah	I bear witness that Muhammad is the messenger of God
Hayya 'ala al-salat	Hurry to prayer
Hayya 'ala al-falah	Hurry to success
Allahuy akbar	God is great
La ilaha illa ahal	There is no god but God

3 Zakat – charity to the poor

Islamic practice requires that believers donate a percentage of their total income and produce to the poor, as a tax on all that a person owns (usually 2.5 per cent). ***Zakat*** comes from an understanding that God is the creator of everything and whatever Muslims appear to own is really only entrusted to them by God. The underlying principle is *sadaqa*, which means 'bearing one another's burdens'.

Additionally, a good Muslim is expected to act generously and in charity to the poor when called for in everyday life. Hospitality is also a hallmark of Islamic society – a Muslim should share their food and drink when someone visits.

Zakat is calculated annually and it is each Muslim's duty to calculate it justly. The Qur'an explains the purpose and benefit of *zakat* (Qur'an 9:60).

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ACTIVITY 1.29

Finding and analysing

1 Calculate the approximate value of all that you own. Consider clothing, electronics, furniture, car (if applicable), etc.
2 What is 2.5 per cent of the value of your possessions?
3 If everyone in your class contributed the same amount as you, how much *zakat* would be collected?
4 If everyone in your school contributed the same amount as you, how much *zakat* would be collected?
5 *Zakat* must be distributed within the community in which it is collected. List five examples of those who could receive your hypothetical *zakat*. You could look online at the Muslim Aid Australia website to help you.

4 Sawm – fasting during Ramadan

Ramadan represents the time when Muhammad received his revelation. Muslims fast during Ramadan to commemorate this event. Believers must avoid all food, liquid, tobacco and sex from dawn until dusk. Exceptions are made for travellers, pregnant women and the sick, but they are expected to make up the days of fasting at a later time. Even those Muslims who do not pray regularly will make a special effort to observe the fast during Ramadan.

Ramadan
the ninth month of the Islamic year, observed as sacred, with fasting practised daily from dawn to dusk

sawm
an Arabic word meaning 'fasting'; observed during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan

The fast is commanded in the Qur'an (2:183–7). Islam teaches that if people can control their instincts during Ramadan then they will learn self-discipline for the rest of the year. Often in Muslim societies the pattern of the day changes for Ramadan and some people begin work earlier and rest during the afternoon. Because of the lunar calendar, Ramadan falls at a slightly different time each year. When it falls in winter, the days are short and cool so that it involves the least discomfort, but when it falls in summer, fasting can be a great hardship.

Sawm is not meant to be a negative experience but is instead an experience that Muslims look forward to each year. They see it as a time of spiritual renewal, a time to forgive others and a time not to engage in gossip.

The fast of Ramadan is broken when the next new moon appears and Id al-Fitr (the festival of fast breaking) is held.

FIGURE 1.36 A group of Iraqi Muslims use binoculars and telescopes to observe the new crescent moon that marks the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan and heralds the coming of the Id al-Fitr holiday.



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5 Hajj – pilgrimage to Mecca

All Muslims, men and women, unless prevented by illness or poverty, are expected to visit Mecca at least once in their lifetime. Pilgrimage to Mecca was practised before Muhammad was born, possibly because people wanted to visit the black meteorite that had fallen in the area. Muhammad continued the pilgrimage, including the veneration of the black meteorite, which was thought to be a gift from God. People who have completed the Hajj are known as *hajji* (male pilgrims) and *hajjiyah* (females).



FIGURE 1.37 Muslims gather atop the mountain during the Day of Arafat as part of the rites of the Hajj pilgrimage

salat
five daily ritual prayers in Islam

Hajj
a pilgrimage to Mecca; an obligation that must be carried out at least once by every able-bodied Muslim in their lifetime

Shi'ite Islam: the Ten Pillars

In Shi'ite Islam there are 10 pillars that rest on the five foundations of Islam. The final two pillars focus on the attitude of the believer towards the family of Muhammad (*Ahl al-Bayt*, comprising Muhammad, Fatima and the 12 *imams*).

The Ten Pillars of Shi'ite Islam

1 ***Salat***: five daily ritual prayers.
2 *Sawm*: fasting during Ramadan.
3 **Hajj**: pilgrimage to Mecca.

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4 *Zakat*: payment to the poor and needy.
5 ***Khums***: 20 per cent (or one fifth) surplus wealth to be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community (Qur'an 8:41).
6 ***Jihad***: struggle and striving in the way of God (Qur'an 2:190).
7 *Amr bil Maruf*: commanding the good (Qur'an 3:104).
8 *Nahy anil Munkar*: forbidding evil (Qur'an 3:104).
9 *Tawalla*: love and respect *Ahl al-Bayt*.
10 *Tabarra*: turn away from those who are unjust to the *Ahl al-Bayt*.

Through the *Shahadah*, Muslims re-examine their lives to ensure that they are always obedient to God.

khums
an Arabic word meaning 'one fifth'; meaning that one fifth surplus wealth must be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community

jihad
an Arabic word for 'struggle'; meaning 'striving in the way of God'

ACTIVITY **1.30**

Finding

Search online for the following websites, and using information from them, complete the Y-chart on the Activity Worksheet related to Hajj:

- Ministry of Hajj, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Islamweb.net.

ACTIVITY **1.31**

Analysing and evaluating

1 Using information gathered from the websites listed in Activity 1.30, create the following:
   a a travel brochure/itinerary for Hajj pilgrims
   b an annotated map of each sacred site, describing rituals performed at each location.
2 Complete a Venn diagram comparing the requirements and expectations for men and women participating in the Hajj.
3 How might male and female participation in the Hajj maintain or suspend the gender divide commonly associated with Muslim societies?

Sharia law

The Qur'an, the source of Islamic law, reveals the will of God to all Muslims. Islamic law is called ***sharia* law**. *Sharia* includes all laws, religious and secular, personal and communal, and covers offences ranging from the seriously immoral to matters of etiquette and personal hygiene. Muslims believe *sharia* is divine and, therefore, cannot be questioned, but because it concerns matters of everyday life, it is also a matter of human interpretation. Most Muslims who accept Sharia notionally do not consider it a substitute for civil law.

There are four legal schools that have gained orthodox status in Sunni Islam and each is considered as offering valid interpretations of *sharia*. The four schools do not compete with each

***sharia* law**
meaning 'the path', a legal framework that includes faith and the Muslim way of life

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Wahhabi a conservative Islamic movement that is predominant in Saudi Arabia and follows the Hanbali school of law

other but act as valid interpretations within specific geographical areas. The most serious challenge to this type of tolerance comes from the **Wahhabi** movement, which dismisses as heresy all interpretations except its own.

ACTIVITY **1.32**

Evaluating

Complete two SWOT analyses for *sharia* law – the first from the perspective of a Muslim, and the second from the perspective of a non-Muslim.

Prayer in Islam

Ritual prayer is one of the most visible expressions of Islam. Islam means submission and Muslims demonstrate their submission to Allah by making at least two full prostrations (touching their foreheads to the ground) while praying. Prayer in Islam is carefully choreographed as each body movement is specified. Each prayer begins with a public call, even if the believer is alone. The times of prayer are also set. A Muslim may pray anywhere: at home, at work or in the street.

Prayer is so important that one Islamic legal handbook has 12 chapters devoted to prayer. It includes the times of prayer, the call to prayer, the description of the actions required in prayer, leading prayer, prostrating during Qur'an recitation, prayer while travelling, Friday communal prayer, the fear prayer, prayer on the two festivals, prayer at the lunar eclipse and prayer for rain. Prayer is a physical symbol of a Muslim's absolute submission to Allah and there is no room for innovation.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an does not specify the number of daily prayers nor the movements required for prayer. To eliminate confusion about the correct time for prayer and differences in ritual movements, Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (d. 996) provided one of the four accepted interpretations for prayer time.

FIGURE 1.38 Often Muslims carry prayer beads with 33 or 99 beads for counting.



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As for the *subh* or morning prayer … it is the prayer of dawn. The time at which it may be first performed is at the breaking of the dawn on the horizon with light at the easternmost point … The end of the prayer time is when the clear yellow of the tip of the sun is seen by those who are completing their prayer.

The time for midday prayer, *zuhr*, begins when the sun has reached the centre of the sky and shadows just start to lengthen. … The end of midday prayer is when the length of shadow equals the height of things beyond the normal midday shadow.

The beginning of the *asr*, or afternoon prayer, is the end of the *zuhr* prayer; the end of the afternoon prayer is when the length of shadows is twice the height of things beyond the normal midday shadow.

The time of the evening prayer, *maghrib* … is from the setting of the sun … It is required that this prayer not be delayed, as there is only one time for it which may not be deferred.

The time of the evening prayer – also called *atama*, but the preferred name is *isha'* – is at the disappearance of twilight, that is the redness remaining in the west from the last rays of the sun … but do not wait for all light to disappear from the west.

Ritual prayer is the same every day, except for Friday when Muslims gather in mosques (from the Arabic word *masjid*, the place of prostration) for midday prayer. The Friday prayer includes a sermon by the prayer leader as well as the normal midday prayer.

Muslim mystics invoke a special from of prayer, *dhikr*, involving repetition of a phrase or word. *Dhikr* means repetition and remembrance and many mystics repeat the 99 names for Allah or 'there is no god but God' (*lka ilaha illa Allah*) and in doing so remember God's goodness and mercy according to the command of the Qur'an. Often Muslims carry prayer beads with 33 or 99 beads for counting.

Prayer in Islam has two main components. The first requires the Muslim to submit to God and the actions of the prayer movements are a symbol of this submission. The second component, communal prayer, represents the submission of the individual to the community, as submission to God, and God's interaction with that community.

Jihad

Often translated in English as 'holy war', *jihad* has a much broader meaning in Islam and encompasses the idea of 'struggle' and 'exertion'. It signifies the daily effort every Muslim exerts to be a good Muslim as well as to advance the cause of Islam. Muhammad spoke of a twofold *jihad*: the first, an internal war within the individual's heart and the second, an external fight against the enemies of Islam. The **Hadith** states: 'The most excellent *jihad* is the uttering of truth in the presence of an unjust ruler'.

While Islam prohibits wars fought solely for territorial gain, it nevertheless allows war for the purpose of extending the domain of Islam and for self-defence: 'Fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you, but begin not hostilities. Lo! Allah loveth not aggressors' (Qur'an 2:190).

The inner struggle, or 'greater *jihad*', must occupy every Muslim at all times. The 'lesser *jihad*' concerns the legitimate use of force against those who would 'do evil upon the earth' (Qur'an 2:190–3). Women and children, the elderly or sick are not to be attacked and the basic means of survival must not be taken from the enemy.

Hadith
collection of sayings of Muhammad and reports of actions as observed by his companions and compiled by scholars and theologians approximately two centuries after the death of Muhammad. There are six different collections that are recognised as authoritative.

Cleanliness and purification in Islam

In order to take part in ritual prayer and many other observances, Muslims must be ritually clean. Ablution (or washing) has a special place in Islam, and in legal books is situated before prayer.

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The idea of washing before prayer is not about cleanliness. Rather it is about commencing prayer in the right state of mind. Pure water is required for washing and in countries where water is scarce, allowances are made for symbolic washing with pure sand or pebbles.

The Qur'an says little about ritual ablution and does not refer to the technical term ***wudu***.

wudu
Muslim ritual washing

Some schools of Islam recommend that a visit to the toilet is made before *wudu* so that there is no build-up of waste and no one is distracted during prayers. If someone has had contact with a dead body then a *ghusl*, or a full shower, is required. Both people require *ghusl* after sexual activity and women must perform *ghusl* after childbirth or at the completion of menstruation. In preparation for *jum'ah* prayers, Muslims shower and put on clean clothes and perfume.

For Muslims, the left hand is always regarded as unclean and is never used to greet people, give gifts or to touch another; rather it is used for toilet activities. Likewise, the left foot is considered to be unfavourable and is not used to make the first step into the mosque or on a journey.

Circumcision is considered a form of purification and is obligatory for all Muslim boys, but the age at which it is administered varies from region to region from infancy to the age of 10 or 11. Circumcision is not mentioned in the Qur'an but is recommended in the Hadith.

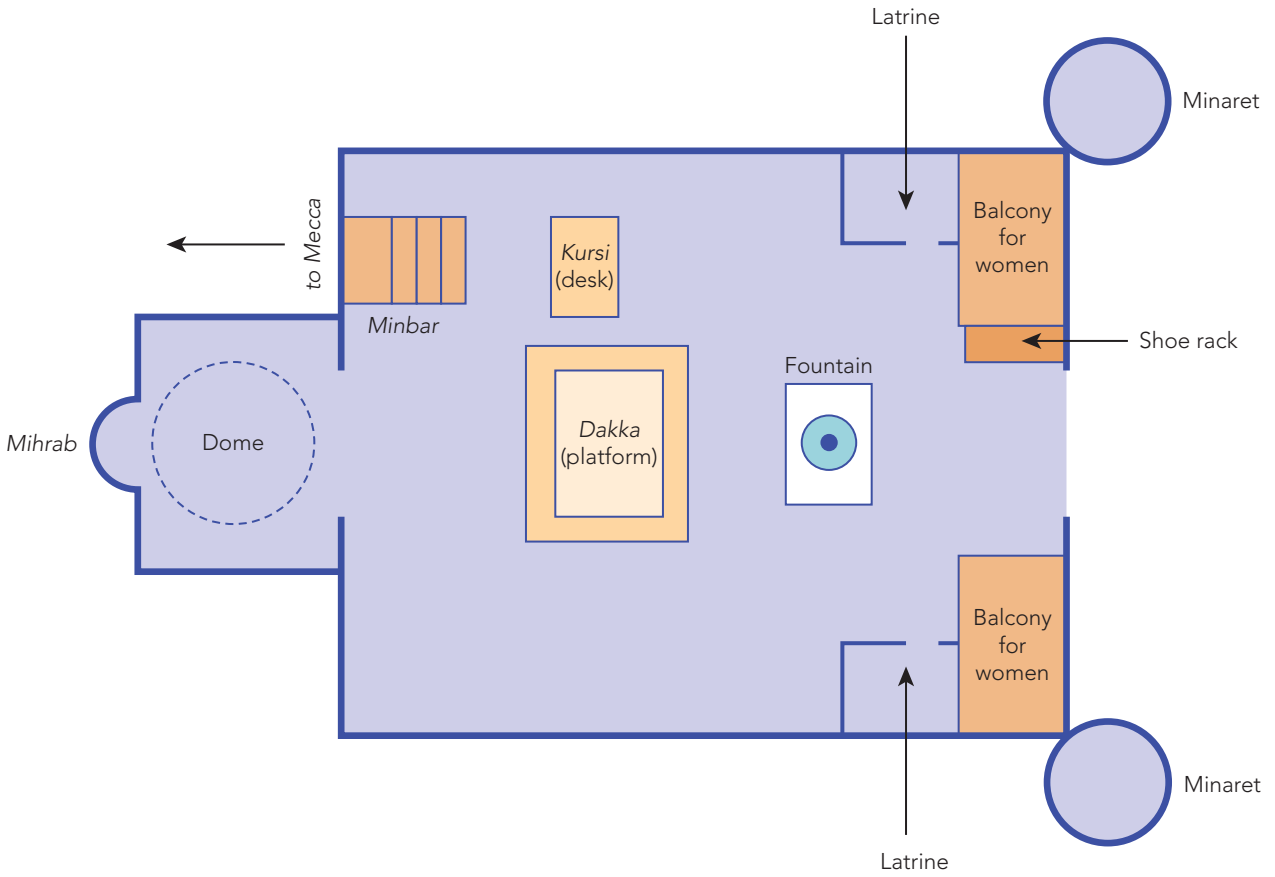


FIGURE 1.39 Floor plan of a mosque

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Mosque

The mosque (*masjid* – place of prostration) can be any building or room where Islamic prayer is offered. Mosque designs can range from quite simple buildings to grand expressions of complex architecture. A mosque is usually rectangular with one wall, the *qibla*, which contains a niche (*mihrab*) facing the direction of the Ka'bah in Mecca, thus indicating the direction to be faced for prayer. Every mosque has one formal entry to the compound where shoes are to be removed and left outside. Because purification is required before prayer, there are facilities for *wudu*, to allow for washing of hands, face, neck and feet. Inside there is a high pulpit (*minbar*), with three or five steps, but as an act of humility, the speaker does not stand on the very top. The worshippers **prostrate** themselves in rows, facing the *mihrab*. The floor is usually carpeted and there are no statues or visual representations on the walls. The ceilings and walls are sometimes decorated with tiles of calligraphy.

Other areas of the building are often used for classrooms and libraries. Outside the mosque there is usually a minaret, a tall tower from which people are called to prayer. In grand mosques there may be more than one minaret: the Blue Mosque in Turkey has six minarets.

prostrate to lie stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission

ACTIVITY 1.33

Finding and analysing

Use an online search engine to find a virtual mosque tour to help you complete this activity. Select two options and do the following:

1. Draw a floor plan of the mosque.
2. Identify all of the features listed in the text above (minaret/s, dome, ablution facilities, calligraphy, *mihrab*, *minbar*, *qibla*, women's area).
3. After drawing and annotating the two mosques, describe how they are similar or different.



FIGURE 1.40 At the mosque, Muslim women are separated from men either by a curtain or a specifically gated area.

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Dietary laws

Halal in its broadest sense refers to a range of items and activities that are appropriate such as certain behaviour, speech or dress. In a more specific way, halal refers to the food laws of Islam. Halal food laws are said to be provided by God and obeying these laws is an important aspect of religious practice. The Qur'an states:

> O you who believe! Eat of the good things that We have provided you with, and give thanks to Allah if Him it is that you serve. (Qur'an 2:172)

Islam divides edible food into three basic categories:

- halal – fitting
- *mushbooh* – uncertain
- *haram* – forbidden.

The basic assumption is that all food is halal except for those particularly named as *haram*. Islam teaches that all sea animals are halal provided that they live in the water all the time. Unlike kosher requirements of Judaism, Muslims are allowed to eat camel, horse and rabbit following the Qur'an statement:

> He has only forbidden you what dies of itself, and blood, and flesh of swine, and that over which any other (name) than (that of) Allah has been invoked; but whoever is driven to necessity, not desiring, nor exceeding the limit, no sin shall be upon him; surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Qur'an 2:173, also 16:115; 5:3)

The Hadith adds animals with fangs, birds of prey, pests and poisonous animals. The foods that are forbidden are pork, blood and carrion (dead putrefied flesh). Animals that have died of natural causes or have been killed by other animals are *haram*. For an animal to be classified as halal, it must be slaughtered in the proper way known as *zabihah*. According to *zabihah*, the slaughterer must be a mature committed Muslim who understands the method and is approved by religious authorities. Prior to the killing, the animal's eyes and ears should be checked to ensure that it is fit for consumption. The animal should be given a drink before slaughter to quench its thirst and the knife should not be sharpened in front of the animal because it increases the animal's distress. The animal, while still alive, should be cut across the throat with one swift cut. It should not be drugged or stunned in any way. A blessing, or the name of Allah, must be uttered before or during the slaughtering as an acknowledgement that God is the one who gives and takes life.



FIGURE 1.41 A halal shop in Bordeaux, France

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ACTIVITY 1.34

Finding and analysing

You are the menu planner for a catering and hospitality company that has been asked to plan a dinner function for a group of Muslim students visiting your school.

- All food served at the function needs to be halal.
- Your client has asked for a three-course meal (entrée, main and dessert) with alternating drop. This means that you must plan two options for each course, as well as beverages, remembering that alcohol is *haram*.
- Create a menu card showing your halal meal choices.

Women in Islam

Examining the role of women in Islam is difficult because there are so many different perspectives involved. Films such as *Not Without My Daughter* and *Kandahar* have informed the way in which Western people see the treatment of women in Islam. These movies imply that all women in Islam are treated in a similar way and can be said to present a one-dimensional portrayal of Islam.

Commentators often discuss the custom of Muslim women wearing the veil. Historians have argued that Muslim women only gradually wore veils after the death of Muhammad and that, originally, only wealthy women veiled. The practice was related to elevated social status. Many Western thinkers, in particular feminists (Muslim and non-Muslim), see the wearing of a veil as demeaning to Muslim women. The perspective of some Muslim women is that it is an expression of religious identity and modesty. There is a wide range of views from those who believe that covering the face as well as the head is a religious obligation for all women, to those who believe such covering is un-Islamic. The various viewpoints stem mainly from different interpretations of Islamic texts such as the Qur'an and the *Sunnah*, which are somewhat unclear on this issue.

Zakaria Basher, a Muslim scholar, says traditionalists who believe that women should cover their heads and face base their reasons on *Surah* (a chapter of the Qur'an) 33:59 and *Surah* 24:31.

> O Prophet! Say to your wives and your daughters and the women of the believers to draw their cloaks close around them (when they go abroad). That will be better, so that they may be recognised and not annoyed. Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (*Surah* 33:59)
>
> And tell the believing women to lower their gaze and be modest and to display of their adornment only that which is apparent and to draw their veils over their bosoms and not to reveal their adornment save to their own husbands or fathers or husbands' fathers, or their sons or their husbands' sons, or their brothers, or their brothers' sons or sisters' sons, or their women, or their slaves, or male attendants who lack vigour, or children who know naught of women's nakedness. And let them not stamp their feet so as to reveal what they hide of their adornment. And turn unto Allah together, O believers, in order that ye may succeed. (*Surah* 24:31)

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Moderate Muslims believe that *Surah* 33:59 does not explicitly prescribe that women should cover their faces and that *Surah* 24:31 only refers to the covering of the breasts (in pre-Islamic times women used to leave their breasts uncovered).

Liberals argue against the veiling of women, basing their position on a translation of *hijab* as 'curtain' in *Surah* 33:53.

> O ye who believe! Enter not the dwellings of the Prophet for a meal without waiting for the proper time … And when ye ask of them (the wives of the Prophet) anything, ask it of them from behind a curtain. That is purer for your hearts and for their hearts. And it is not for you to cause annoyance to the messenger of Allah, nor that ye should ever marry his wives after him. Lo! That in Allah's sight would be an enormity. (*Surah* 33:53)

They suggest that the verse was not meant to segregate women from men or hide women under veils but was rather a social response to intrusions from guests. There is no unified position related to veiling because of the multiple interpretations of texts and differing cultural expectations.

The central issue for both men and women is what Islamic scholars call the *arawh*: those parts of the body that should be covered in public. For men, this requires covering from the navel to below the knees, although in the Maliki School knees can be uncovered. Men are forbidden to wear silk and gold or silver ornaments. Women too must dress modestly, although they can wear fine clothes and even jewellery to attract their husband (but only for their husband, not for others). The dress code applies only after puberty.

ACTIVITY **1.35**

Response to stimulus – analysing

***My Journey Behind the Veil: Conversations with Muslim Women* by Kay Rasool**

Read the extracts taken from the book *My Journey Behind the Veil: Conversations with Muslim Women* by Kay Rasool available on the Activity Worksheet. Complete the questions below.

1. According to the extract, what is the difference between *hijab*, *chador* and a *burqa*?
2. In your own words, list two positive and two negative interpretations of wearing veils that cover the face. Provide quotes to support your response.
3. Explain, in one or two sentences, at least two values that may motivate young women who veil in Australia today.
4. Find one piece of evidence in the extracts to support the position of veiling and one piece of evidence that indicates that veiling is not necessary.



FIGURE 1.42 Different forms of veils for Muslim women

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Radical or fundamentalist Islam

Since the **Enlightenment**, Western society moved rapidly forward through industrialisation. During this same period, the Islamic world did not change. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, many Muslim lands were colonised by the West. While colonisation brought modern medicine, communication and economic organisation, it altered their place in the world.

Some Muslims argue that Islam should change to embrace modernity, including capitalism, democracy and recognition of human rights, while others believe that the decline of the Muslim world results from a failure to implement Qur'anic law – if Qur'anic law was followed, then the Muslim world would return to its former position of power.

Wahhabism, founded by Muhammad al-Wahhab in Saudi Arabia, rejects contemporary developments and promotes a return to the rules of early Islam. Followers of Wahhabism are hostile to everything that they consider idolatry (*shirk*) and this has led to attacks on Sufism and Shi'ism because both of these groups venerate saints. Wahhabism demands simplicity, and therefore highly ornamented architecture is also frowned upon and sometimes even destroyed. Muslims who follow this form of Islam are known as *salaf* and the movement is called *salafiyya*. In order to restore Islam, they believe that they should fight against Western colonial powers, including the State of Israel, and they also fight 'secularised' Muslim rulers who reject the *salafiyya*. This movement is one of a number referred to as radical, or fundamentalist, Islam.

Enlightenment
a phase in Western philosophy and cultural life during which reason was promoted as the primary source and legitimacy for authority

Fundamentalism is not solely a Muslim phenomenon. In every faith within the modern period, fundamentalism has emerged in some form or other. Fundamentalists share a general disappointment and disillusionment with modernity. In this way, Muslim fundamentalists look back to a 'golden age' and often express their discontent by overstressing the elements in Islam that militate against modernity and rail against secularism and democracy.

Although one of the hallmarks of modern culture has been the emancipation of women, Muslim fundamentalists tend to emphasise conventional gender roles, the veiling of women and restricting women to the home environment. They often oppose other Muslims who take a more positive view of modernity and frequently withdraw from mainstream culture to create an enclave of pure faith. Sometimes they conduct aggressive campaigns designed to bring the mainstream back to the 'right path'. Extreme versions of these campaigns may even lead to acts of terrorism.

FIGURE 1.43 Islamic State fighter waving a flag while standing on a captured government fighter jet in Syria in 2015



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Islamic liberalism

The Qur'an repeatedly insists that 'there is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an 2:256; 10:99; 18:29) and this phrase has become the mantra of Muslims who argue that Islam supports tolerance and that Muslims can fully embrace pluralism. Muslims who promote such a position are classified as 'liberals' or 'moderates'. Those who position themselves as Islamic liberals present two fundamental arguments. The first argument is that the Qur'an is open to religious diversity and that according to *Surah* 5:48, religious diversity is not evil but a positive value:

> If God had so willed, He would have made all of you one community, but [He has not done so] that He may test you in what He has given you; so complete in goodness. To God shall you return and He will tell you [the Truth] about what you have been disputing.

Other Qur'anic verses also support this argument:

> O humankind, God has created you from male and female and made you into diverse nations and tribes so that you may come to know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is he [sic] who is the most righteous. (Qur'an 49:13)

> Had your Lord so willed, He would have made humankind into a single nation but they will not cease to be diverse… And for this God created them. (Qur'an 11:118–19)

> To each of you God has prescribed a Law and a Way. If God would have willed he would have made you a single people. But God's purpose is to test you in what He has given each of you, so strive in the pursuit of virtue, and know that you will all return to God [in the Hereafter], and He will resolve all the matters in which you disagree. (Qur'an 5:49)

When the Qur'an is approached in this manner, the Islamic message is compatible with the central values of other monotheistic traditions. *Jihad*, then, need not be warfare, but it may be taken to represent a commitment to the ongoing human struggle for justice in the world.

The second argument goes beyond a liberal interpretation of the Qur'an to the wider Islamic intellectual tradition, which it is argued encourages diversity. Liberals believe that the Islamic legal tradition fosters diversity because it accepts four schools of law as equally valid and even tolerates a range of disagreement between each of the four schools. They also note that within Islamic philosophy and mysticism, models of diversity abound.

Islamic feminism

On 18 March 2005, a group of 125 Muslim women and men met in New York and performed Friday prayers under the leadership of Amina Wadud, Professor of Islamic Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University. According to organisers, this was the first time in the modern era when a woman had led men in public performance of *salat*. This prayer service began a campaign for women to participate in public prayer.

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FIGURE 1.44 Professor Amina Wadud leads both men and women in prayer in 2005

The foundation on which Islamic feminists operate is that Islam does not and cannot support gender inequality. Therefore, any practices that appear to discriminate against women are un-Islamic. The feminist movement within Islam criticises the forced veiling of women, exclusion of women from prayer, exclusion of women from leadership positions, polygamy, unequal inheritance for women, and discrimination in laws of marriage or divorce, along with texts that are used to support such practices. The Moroccan sociologist Fatima Mernissi identifies Hadith literature as a problem, blaming the single misogynistic transmission by Abu Hurayra. In order to counter the misogny of the text, she encourages Hadith criticism and historical contextualisation.

While Mernissi focuses on Hadith literature, Amina Wadud in *Qur'an and Women* (1999) focuses exclusively on the Qur'an where she establishes a foundation for gender equality in the Qur'an's creation narratives. Khaled Abou El Fadl's book, *Speaking in God's Name: Islamic Law, Authority and Women* (2001), encourages a hermeneutical approach that allows for change and asks fundamental questions about who determines meaning in texts – authors, the text itself or readers? Such an approach attempts to establish a foundation on which feminist interpretation might be built.

Feminism raises foundational questions about interpretations of the Qur'an, the reliability of Hadith and the nature of Islamic law as well as pluralism, both in general and within Muslim communities in particular.

Conclusion

Islam is a faith, a way of life and a social movement that provides guidelines and a community in which to remain faithful. Although there are many strands within Islam, what is common is the belief in one God, submission to the will of Allah and belief in the revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad as recorded in the Qur'an. All Muslims believe that the revelation is final and fixed, although they may disagree over some interpretations of secondary literature, such as the Hadith. Muslim life is regulated by prayer five times a day and recitation of the Qur'an.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions about Islam.

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1.4 Hinduism

'Sacrifice, charity, penance and action should never be abandoned; They must be performed. For sacrifice, charity, penance and action cleanse even the wise.'
(*Bhagavad Gita* 18:5)

Hinduism: the facts

Number of adherents
Approximately 1.1 billion (worldwide)
275 534 (Australia)

Sacred texts
Vedas, Upanishads

Place of worship
Mandir or temple

Symbol
Aum



Introduction

Hinduism describes a broad range of beliefs and practices belonging to the majority of people in India and Nepal. There exists a wide diversity of beliefs and practices within Hinduism and some scholars describe it as Hinduisms rather than Hinduism. Its complexity extends to its social structure, rituals, mythology, sacred texts, enormous number of deities and philosophy.

Hinduism cannot be described as one unified entity; it is not only a complex combination of traditional practices, but it also has a history spanning thousands of years. Hinduism is often described by how it differs from other religions. For example, Hinduism has no founder and no official canon of scripture. Scholars generally agree that Hinduism's main feature is its diversity.

Worldwide, Hindus number around 1.1 billion. Large communities of Hindus are located in India, Fiji, the United Kingdom, the United States and Canada. Hindus did not attempt to define the fundamentals of Hinduism until they were challenged by Buddhism in approximately 600 CE, and confronted by Islam and Christianity. For traditional Hindus there is no separation between religious and secular activity and no significant distinction between religion and culture.

Terminology

Hinduism, a relatively recent word that covers many ancient practices, is derived from the Sanskrit word *Sindhu*, which means ocean or great river and refers to the Indus River which flows from the Himalayas in Tibet, through Pakistan and into the Arabian Sea. The Indus Valley civilisation flourished from approximately 2500 BCE to 1500 BCE. The term 'Hindu' developed when Islam spread into India. Muslims from Persia used 'Hindu' to refer to the people of Sind/India and eventually 'Hindu' was used to differentiate non-Muslims from Muslims. The British referred to the religion of the Indian people as 'Hinduism' and so the term gained widespread usage from the eighteenth century.

ACTIVITY **1.36**

Forming

1 What do you know about Hinduism?
2 What words and images are associated with Hinduism?
3 Where did Hinduism originate? Where can it be found in the world?
4 On a map of the world, indicate where there are significant Hindu populations.
5 Where are there Hindu communities in Australia, your state or your local area?
6 How is Hinduism presented in the media?
7 Use the Activity Worksheet to complete a KWHL chart related to Hinduism.

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Timeline

BCE	
Before 2000	Existence of Harappa culture in Indus River valley
2000	Aryan migration into India from northwest
1500	Beginning of the **Vedas**
800–500	Beginning of the **Upanishads**; Axis Age
c. 200–200 CE	Creation of ***Bhagavad Gita***
CE	
c. 788–820	Life of philosopher Shankara
c. 1200	Muslim entry into India
1200–1600	Spread of ***Bhakti*** movements
1498	Vasco da Gama arrives in India
1526	Mughal Empire commences
c. 1750–1947	British domination of India
1757	British protectorate in Bengal
1829	*Sati* (widow burning) banned by the British
1850	First English translation of the *Rig Veda*
1869–1948	Mohandas Gandhi
1885	Foundation of Indian National Congress Party
1893	Vivekananda, Hindu representative at World Parliament of Religions
1947	Indian political independence
1948	Gandhi assassinated United Nations *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
1950	Constitution of the Republic of India
1964	Vishwa Hindu Parishad – world Hindu organisation formed
1980	Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) founded
1984	Indira Gandhi assassinated
1991	Rajiv Gandhi assassinated
1992	Babari Masjid demolished
1998	BJP Hindu Nationalist Party gains government in India
2001	Kumbha Mela Festival becomes the largest religious gathering in history
2004	Congress Party forms government
2007	Debate on Yoga in Indian Public Schools
2012	World Hindu Economic Forum held in Hong Kong

Vedas
a large body of texts originating in ancient India that form the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism

Upanishads
collections of Hindu philosophical writing that are attached to the Vedas but move beyond their emphasis on ritual by seeking the meaning of human existence

Bhagavad Gita
'The Lord's Song', one of the most popular texts in Hinduism, which describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna

Bhakti
a special form of worship and deep, personal devotion that expresses love to one's god

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ACTIVITY 1.37

Finding

Annotate the timeline on the previous page by providing facts related to the dates and events to increase your basic understanding of key events.

History

The origins of Hinduism date to approximately 2000 BCE, when a civilisation developed in northwest India in the area of the Indus River, now Pakistan. This isolated area of the Indian subcontinent was the home to an advanced civilisation, the Harappa culture, whose two major cities, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro, were laid out geometrically and contained brick houses with running water for toilets and baths. The water and sanitary system has been described as equal to that of the Romans. The Harappa culture was significant and much larger than the other three great cultures of the time, namely, China, Egypt and Mesopotamia.

Shiva the Hindu god of destruction and transformation

Aryans early Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent

Our knowledge of the religious beliefs and practices of the Harappa culture comes from figurines and engraved seals found by archaeologists in the 1920s. While no one has yet deciphered the writing on the seals, much has been learnt from the images engraved on them, which reveal a rich mythological life focused on fertility through the worship of a mother goddess. There is also evidence of a god with a close resemblance to the Hindu god **Shiva**, who some call proto-Shiva: the figure has a fierce-looking face, wears a large horned headdress and sits in the yogi position.

In approximately 1700 BCE, the Harappan civilisation ended abruptly when the people abandoned their cities. Scholars have no indication of the cause – some speculate about a prolonged drought, others think there may have been an invasion. Some of the Harappan people may have moved south into India and possibly merged with the Dravidian people, a southern population. Until the Harappan script is deciphered, only tentative links can be made between the religious lives of the Indus Valley people and contemporary Hinduism.



FIGURE 1.45 Sherd painted with stylised humped bull, from Harappa culture, eighteenth century BCE

Sometime between 2000 BCE and 1500 BCE Indo-Europeans, called **Aryans**, or noble ones, migrated into the Indian subcontinent. They too possessed superior technology and spoke an early version of Sanskrit. Other branches of the same race migrated into Iran and westward into Europe. The dominant Aryans colonised the non-Aryans, developing a class system with three upper classes: the *Brahmins*, or priestly class, the *Kshatriyas*, or ruling class, and the *Vaishyas*, or mercantile class.

The Aryans worshipped mainly male gods, who were thought to control nature. Dyaüs Pitr, shining father, was the father of the gods; Indra, the god of storm and war, was considered to give strength to followers; Agni was the god of fire, who carried sacrifices to the world of the gods; and Yama ruled the afterlife.

Worship was generally undertaken outside at altars and specialist priests performed services at three low altars, offering sacrifices of milk, ghee, grains and sometimes animals. The priests chanted mantras, handed on from father to son, which they believed would protect them. Eventually these sacred chants were written down and formed the core of the Aryans' sacred texts, the Vedas.

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ACTIVITY 1.38

Finding and analysing

1 On the map of India provided on the Activity Worksheet mark the Indus River, Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. In no more than four sentences, indicate why these places are significant for Hinduism.
2 Graphically represent the origins of Hinduism showing aspects of Indus Valley civilisation and culture and Aryan culture.
3 Using a six-frame storyboard, illustrate the history of Hinduism.
4 Use the T-chart on the Activity Worksheet to show the benefits and challenges that Hinduism's long history might pose for adherents.

Sacred texts

Vedas

The name Vedas, which means 'knowledge' or 'sacred lore', is related to the English words 'vision' and 'wisdom'. The Vedas are the oldest Hindu sacred texts and are a collection of oral traditions.

While the earliest version of the Vedas has been dated at 1500 BCE, pious Hindus consider them to be much older. The Vedas consist of four works: the *Rig Veda*, the oldest; the *Sama Veda* (hymns); the *Yajur Veda* (sacrificial formulas); and the *Atharva Veda* (magical spells and incantations). The *Rig Veda* is largely an anthology of poems addressed to various gods. The anthology constantly mentions a mysterious power, called *Brahman*, which gives a sacrifice its efficacy. While some modern scholars see these hymns as essentially polytheistic, traditional Hindu scholars see them as manifestations of the different aspects of *Brahman*.

The Vedic period lasted until approximately 600 BCE, and while the hymns are still used today, the gods of the Vedic period are no longer part of the religious life of the Indian people. A later addition to the Vedas, the Upanishads, contains philosophical and religious ideas from the meditative traditions.

Upanishads

The Upanishads are a collection of more than one hundred written works, which record insights into reality. It is generally understood that the term '*upanishad*' means 'sitting near' or 'a session' and that the Upanishads emerged from the spiritual experience of the student sitting near their master, learning techniques for achieving a religious experience. The Upanishads, unlike the Vedas, are for anyone who has the necessary experience to be a spiritual master. They are written in dialogue form, including prose and poetry, and recount the beliefs of the Aryan peoples as they spread further east and south into Indian territory. By the end of the seventh century BCE, a group of hermits or *munis* who lived in the forest and practised asceticism and meditation emerged. Over time, these hermits came to play an important role as priests and developed elaborate techniques, including mystical ecstasy.

Important ideas that developed in the Upanishads and are core concepts in Hindu spirituality include ***Brahman***, ***Atman***, ***maya***, ***karma*** and ***moksha***. In the Upanishads, the term *Brahman* is extended to include a supreme, infinite, impersonal reality that is pure being, pure consciousness and pure bliss. *Brahman* is absolute reality. The Upanishads insist that *Brahman* is something that can be known, not just believed in, but that it cannot be fully put into words. *Brahman* is not a god, but exists above them, and the gods derive their power from *Brahman*. The Upanishads say that experiencing the timelessness of *Brahman* can bring an end to everyday suffering and fear of death.

The Upanishads ask: 'What is the real self?' In Sanskrit, the word for inner self is *Atman*, which is a larger concept than the notion of the individual self or soul. While each Hindu has an individual soul (*jiva* or *jivatman*) the Upanishads teach that all people share the same *Atman*

Brahman
the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality that is the divine ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being and everything beyond in this universe

Atman
a divine spirit that all people share

maya
the Hindu belief that the everyday world is an illusion and that the distinction between the self and the universe is a false dichotomy

karma
the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural consequences of actions

moksha
means 'freedom' and, according to the Upanishads, is the ultimate goal of human life

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(divine spirit), which, when experienced fully, is identical with *Brahman*.

The Upanishads refer to the everyday world as *maya* (illusion), which should be interpreted as meaning both 'magic' and 'matter'. The model of the world presented in the Upanishads is like a great consciousness rather than a machine with moving parts. Death, therefore, is not a tragedy because, when one life form is lost, it is reborn into another. This is the beginning of the development of the concept of reincarnation.

The idea of rebirth recognises that people can be reborn either as humans or as animals depending how a person behaves. What determines a person's rebirth is *karma* (to do), which includes the moral consequences of actions performed. *Karma* also explains why some people are born with great advantages in life while others have relatively little.

Moksha means freedom and according to the Upanishads is the ultimate goal of human life. *Moksha* also includes liberation from the limitations of the self. One means of attaining *moksha* is through ascetic practice, which enables one to know the sacred reality.

Brahma the Hindu god of creation

Vishnu the Hindu god of preservation

avatar the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape; the incarnation of a god

Other sacred texts of Hinduism are the great Hindu epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These are known well by all Hindus, and belong to *smriti* scriptures because they are teachings that are remembered rather than revealed to the listener. The epics provide examples of the values and ideals that are important to Hinduism, and today many of the epics are presented on television and in the cinema.

ACTIVITY 1.39

Finding and analysing

1 Represent the cycle of rebirth in a diagram or picture.

2 Use the Freyer concept model on the Activity Worksheet to describe each of the following: *Brahman*, *Atman*, *maya*, *karma* and *moksha*.

Beliefs

Classical Hinduism is polytheistic, but Hindus do not see polytheism as incompatible with monotheism. They believe that god is one being that can be worshipped in many different forms. There are three major gods associated with creation, preservation and destruction: **Brahma** (not to be confused with *Brahman*), **Vishnu** and Shiva.

Brahma, the creative force of the universe, is often the object of collective worship. This god is represented in art as an old, thoughtful king with four arms and four faces that look in all four directions. The images of Hindu gods are very highly decorated and colour is used to highlight their nature. Often the gods are accompanied by animals or birds that assist them to move around the cosmos: Brahma is accompanied by a white goose.

Vishnu, thought of as light and warmth, functions within the triad of gods as the preserver of order and harmony. He is often depicted lying on a many headed cobra, which symbolises cosmic energy and time. Because he is associated with loving kindness, he appears in various physical forms to help people in need. The 10 common **avatars** through which Vishnu offers



FIGURE 1.46 'The Cosmic Ocean Reveals Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva' – a Mandi-style miniature, c. 1835

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help are: Matsya, a man/fish; Kurma, a man/tortoise; Varaha, a man/boar; Narasimha, a man/lion; Vamana, a dwarf; Parasurama (Rama with an axe, the first human avatar); Rama; Krishna; Buddha; and Kalki. Two avatars that are very popular are Rama and Krishna. Rama appears in the epic *Ramayana*, one of the most widely told stories of Hinduism. In brief, the story describes when Rama's wife Sita is abducted by Ravana, the demon king of Sri Lanka. With the help of Hanuman, the leader of the monkeys, Rama kills Ravana and brings Sita home. Krishna first appears in the epic *Mahabharata* as a mature and solemn god but, in later works, he is younger and plays the flute. He is frequently depicted painted blue, the colour of the sky, indicating his otherworldly nature.

Shiva is the aspect of *Brahman* that destroys and recreates the universe. He appears in different forms, most frequently in bronze statues as Shiva Nataraja, known as ruler of the dance. In this representation, Shiva stands on the dwarf demon Apasamara Purusha, which represents human pride, and as he dances he has four arms, his long hair flies in the air and he is surrounded by a ring of fire, symbolic of his destructive powers. In one hand he holds an hourglass drum, which symbolises the pulse of time, in his second hand he holds fire, which symbolises his destructive powers, in his third hand there is often a deer, symbolising an unsteady mind that darts around, and the gesture of the fourth hand is a **mudra**, which often points to the crushed demon underfoot.

The mother goddess has many forms and is sometimes depicted on her own as Durga or as one of the *shaktis*, who are the consorts, or wives, of the male gods Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. While the *shakti* have little power, they nevertheless play an important part in the devotional life of Hindus.

As Durga, the mother goddess appears as a brave heroine riding a tiger. This shows that she can control wild beasts and she carries assorted weapons in her many arms to kill the demon buffalo, which symbolises ignorance and selfishness.



FIGURE 1.47 This image of the Hindu goddess Durga on her tiger appears on the wall of small temple at Ramakrishna beach, in Andhra Pradesh.

mudra
a symbolic or ritual gesture in Hinduism

As Kali she represents the malevolent form of the mother goddess and is presented in her most terrifying form – dark or black, with a red face, her tongue hanging out, with a garland of skulls around her neck and a severed head in her hand to frighten her enemies.



FIGURE 1.48 A statue of Kali crafted out of clay

Lakshmi
the Hindu goddess of beauty, prosperity and goodness

Another goddess, **Lakshmi**, the consort of Vishnu, represents beauty, prosperity and goodness. She is often depicted standing on a lotus with her hands holding gifts or using hand positions indicating protection.

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FIGURE 1.49 Lakshmi

Sarasvati, the wife of Brahma, patroness of music and the arts, is often depicted playing an Indian lute and holding *mala* or prayer beads and scripture in the other hand. She is said to have invented the Sanskrit language and her vehicle, the swan, is appropriately graceful.

Ganesha
a popular Hindu god revered as the Lord of Obstacles



FIGURE 1.50 Statue of goddess Sarasvati at Peace Park, Mount Abu, Rajasthan, India



FIGURE 1.51 A reclining statue of Ganesha in Thailand

Another very popular god, **Ganesha**, the Lord of Obstacles, is a benevolent deity depicted as a human, with the head of an elephant. He has one broken tusk and his representations often show a rat sitting at his foot. His large ears and head indicate the great wisdom he has acquired listening to the Vedic texts. The elephant's trunk is a symbol of intellect, which can discriminate between truth and falsehoods. His large stomach suggests that he can digest all experience and not suffer from success. The folded leg and the grounded leg represent two aspects of his personality in balance: one grounded in the world, the other in meditation. The food at his feet denotes wealth and prosperity, which he has at his command but which does not rule his life, and the rat represents greed. The rat, Ganesha's vehicle, symbolises that overcoming desire provides enough strength to transport even an elephant.

ACTIVITY **1.40**

Analysing and evaluating

Examine the images of Durga and Ganesha in Figures 1.47 and 1.51. Identify symbols in the images that represent:

- power to fight evil
- strength
- power to remove obstacles
- beauty
- power to reassure people.

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ACTIVITY 1.41

Analysing and evaluating

Read the statement: 'Hindus worship various gods depending on the characteristics they wish to emulate and according to their needs.'

1 For each Hindu god described on the previous pages, suggest why people might wish to express their devotion to him or her particularly.
2 Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

Place of worship

Mandir

A ***mandir*** or 'house of god' is a Hindu temple. It is often the most prominent building in a village or town and is decorated with the images of gods. Larger *mandirs* are associated with pilgrimage points and are served by priests. Great care is taken in choosing the site for a *mandir*, including checking the soil colour, which can indicate which caste, or class gets to have a temple built there. *Mandirs* are a refuge from the busy world and are symbols of the universe, designed to draw the individual in to engage with their god in a special way.

The outside of the temple is covered in many elaborate images of deities, representing the infinity of being. As adherents enter the temple and come closer to the centre, the images become less elaborate. At the centre is the *garbhagrha* or 'womb house' where the image of the deity is installed. The path to the *garbhagrha* is spiral, moving in a clockwise direction so that the left side of the body, which is thought to be impure, is facing away from the image of the divine. Directly above the *garbhagrha* is the *shikhara*, or tower, which symbolises the sacredness of the place and represents the leading of the mind towards liberation. In some temples entry to the *garbhagrha* is restricted to priests.

mandir
Hindu temple or house of worship

Devotees remove their shoes and prostrate themselves before the deity. Others circle the temple three times, with the temple on their right side as a mark of respect. Women who are menstruating and members of some of the lower classes are banned from entering temples.

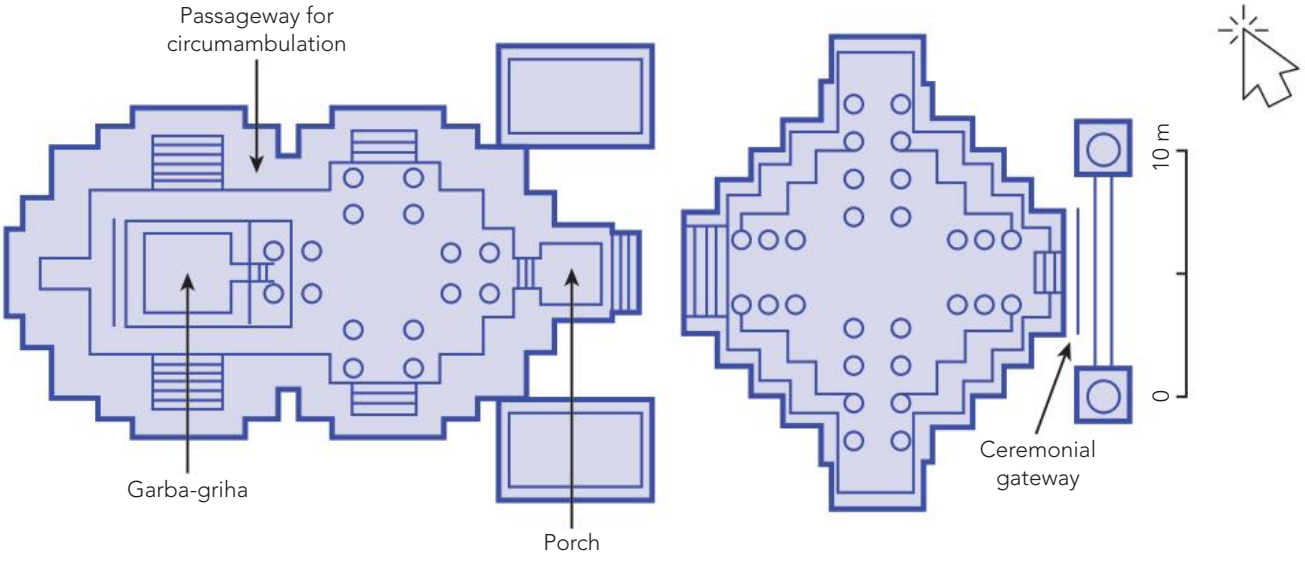


FIGURE 1.52 Floor plan of a Hindu temple

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ACTIVITY **1.42**

Finding and analysing

1 Design a Hindu temple. Use your knowledge of Hinduism to ensure that it contains all the necessary elements. Explain your design in a structured paragraph of 150 words.

2 Prepare a five-minute information video on Hindu *mandirs* for tourists. Your presentation should include the communal, cultural and religious aspects of the *mandir*.



FIGURE 1.53 Sri Siva Subramaniya Temple, Nadi, Fiji



FIGURE 1.54 Family at a temple

The yogas

The word **yoga** means 'union' and is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine. Because there are many ways of reaching the divine, yogas suggest a variety of paths, or *margas*, which meet the needs of individuals and different personality types.

yoga refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines in Hinduism; it is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine

Raja Yoga

Raja Yoga, or royal yoga, promotes meditation. This yoga was compiled by the Hindu sage Patajali in the second century. Patajali defined yoga as the ceasing of all mental activity so that the true self can be known.

Living a moral life and not stealing, lying or harming any living thing, as well as completing physical exercises, are important practices in developing strength for the yogic quest. Some forms of meditation involve emptying the mind of thought while others involve focusing on an object. Often a word or phrase is repeated as a mantra. The *Aum*, the sound of creation, is often used.

Jnana Yoga

Jnana Yoga, or knowledge yoga, is the Path of Transcendental Knowledge and emphasises a mental and meditative approach to self-realisation. Belonging to the *Vedanta* school and promoted by the eighth-century philosopher Shankara, *Jnana Yoga* is a useful path in penetrating ignorance (*maya*), which separates people from *Brahman*.

Shankara thought that spiritual liberation was achieved when the individual personally

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came to understand the unity of all things and that devotion to a god thought to be different from the worshipper is mistaken. His rejection of devotion posed a problem and later members of the *Vedanta* school modified his ultimate monism, quoting passages from the Upanishads to prove that *Brahman* was separate from the world – so making room for religious devotion.

Karma Yoga

Karma, or action, *Yoga* reconciles tension between Vedic ritual religion and meditative renunciation. The *Bhagavad Gita*'s teachings on *Karma Yoga* brought a new perspective to how *karma* may be used to attain liberation, insisting that actions should be performed without a connection to the end result: 'Desire for the fruits of work must never be your motive in working' (*Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 2). Mohandas Gandhi used the principles of *Karma Yoga* in his active but non-violent opposition to British rule.

Bhakti Yoga

Bhakti Yoga, the path of loving devotion, is one of the most widely applied approaches in contemporary Hinduism and is held in the highest regard in the *Bhagavad Gita*. *Bhakti Yoga* involves chants, songs, food offerings and the anointing of statues. It is available to everyone in Hinduism, including women. The intention behind *bhakti* is expressing a selfless love of the divine without expecting anything in return.

Many Hindus use a mixture of yoga approaches, which is one of the hallmarks of Hinduism. But whatever method is used, sincerity in one's quest is necessary for salvation.

ACTIVITY 1.43

Finding and analysing

Create an infographic to explain the yogas.

Pilgrimage

For Hindus, pilgrimage (*Tirthayatra* or *Yatra*) is a religious act, performed to gain a blessing or spiritual benefit. *Yatra* is both a personal expression of faith and an act of thanksgiving and, while not a compulsory practice, it is nevertheless considered highly desirable.

The motivation behind embarking on a pilgrimage varies considerably from person to person, but such journeys often take the form of petitionary prayer: people address the gods for something, such as success in their goals or to find a marriage partner. Others make the pilgrimage in thanksgiving for something already given. Like most pilgrims, Hindus believe that holy sites are special and that sacrifices offered there will be more effective.

Because water is seen as purifying, many Hindus travel to one of the seven sacred rivers in India to wash away bad *karma* or – one of the strongest motivations to go on a pilgrimage – to seek *moksha*. Some of the most popular rivers to visit are the Ganges, the Yamuna and the Narmada. Pilgrims also often visit the city of Varanasi. Many pilgrims travel to Varanasi to die and to have their ashes scattered in the Ganges, as they believe death in Varanasi circumvents the cycle of *samsara* (or the cycle of death and rebirth to which life in the material world is bound) and enables the person to gain access to liberation.



FIGURE 1.55 Indian pilgrims in the river Ganges in Varanasi

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ACTIVITY **1.44**

Finding and analysing

Design a travel brochure appropriate for Hindu pilgrims. Your brochure should include a map and all the major places of pilgrimage.

The four classes of Hinduism

For centuries Indian society has been divided into four classes, or *varnas*, according to people's occupations:

1. *Brahmins*, the priestly class
2. *Kshatriyas*, the warriors
3. *Vaishyas*, the peasants, merchants and craftsmen
4. *Shudras*, the labourers.

Each class must maintain its own rules and perform certain duties.

Some scholars think that an ancient Vedic hymn presents an explanation for the class divisions:

> When they divided Purusa how
> many portions did they make?
> What do they call his mouth,
> his arms? What do they call
> his thighs and feet?
> The Brahman was his mouth,
> of both his arms was the
> Rajanya made.
> His thighs became the Vaisya,
> from his feet the Sudra
> was produced. (*Rig Veda* X,
> XC:11–12)

ACTIVITY **1.45**

Analysing

What evidence does this Vedic hymn provide that might support the class system?

The *Bhagavad Gita* teaches people that it is better to carry out the duties of their class badly than to perform the duties of another class well. According to the *Laws of Manu*, the class system exists for the good of the people and if it does not support people then it should be abolished.

The *Brahmins* maintain ritual purity by not eating meat or drinking alcohol, as this is seen as ritually unclean. They perform Vedic rituals, study the scriptures, teach, sacrifice and give and receive gifts. In contemporary times, they are in demand as cooks because of their relationship with fire and sacrifice and because they may prepare food for their own class as well as other classes.

It is the duty of the *Kshatriyas*, or warriors, to protect others. This class was traditionally considered part of the aristocracy.

The *Vaishyas*, or merchant class, includes landowners, moneylenders and some artisans. It is their duty to breed cattle, till the earth and trade. The males of these upper three classes are called 'twice born' and during their youth they are entitled to receive a sacred thread given in a special rite-of-passage ceremony; in practice, however, the *Kshatriyas* and *Vaishyas* classes largely ignore the sacred thread ceremony.

The fourth class, the *Shudra*, or peasants, perform manual labour and are expected to serve the higher classes. They may eat meat and consume alcohol but are considered ritually unclean and therefore cannot study the scriptures. The *Shudra* are considered 'once born'.

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Untouchables

Outside these four classes are the *mlechcha* ('untouchables' or 'outcasts') who are considered so low that they do not even rank within the class system and are separated from pure-caste Hindus in order not to pollute them.

Offences listed against untouchables include: living in a village; coming too close to or casting a shadow on a caste Hindu; acquiring wealth such as land or cattle; wearing clean clothes, shoes, a watch, silver or gold ornaments; sitting on a chair in the presence of a caste Hindu; and taking water from the village well or tank.

Jobs that untouchables have to perform, without pay, for caste Hindus include: carrying messages of death or marriage to relatives living in other villages and working at a caste house when a marriage is taking place.

Because untouchables are unable to buy land, they are unable to practise agriculture except as labourers and must accept what wages Hindu farmers choose to pay. They are paid in cash or privy corn – that is, corn that the bullocks consume while working with corn threshers but which is undigested and is later sieved from the dung. Untouchables have no rights and their position is established on an hereditary basis and justified by the law of *karma*. According to *karma*, the position one is born into is the direct result of actions of one's previous life. In many ways, modernisation has made the touchable/untouchable divide even more rigid than in its earlier village setting. Mohandas Gandhi referred to them as *Harijan* – 'children of God' – and urged society to include rather than exclude them.

Many people believe that Gandhi ultimately changed the law related to untouchables. However, Gandhi believed that moral persuasion was the best means of social change and therefore opposed legal measures that would mandate change. Shortly after Gandhi's death in 1948, untouchability was made illegal in India. Dr Ambedkar, himself an untouchable, believed that untouchables should fight for their own freedom to become educated and he embedded these ideas into the draft of the Indian constitution. However, today the situation for untouchables remains unchanged in many ways.

The four *varnas* are subdivided into several thousand smaller divisions, called castes or *jatis* based on occupation, geographical regions and various religious and ethnic groupings within Hinduism. As society developed and occupations became more specialised, *jati* or caste divisions became more obvious. Potters, weavers, shoemakers and carpenters initially formed guilds to protect the interests of their members, but these guilds eventually became exclusive and hierarchical. The hierarchy became more rigid when rules regarding eating and intermarriage were introduced. While the four *varnas* may intermarry, *jatis* rule out intermarriage.

As part of traditional Hinduism, the caste system is considered part of the cosmic order and sacred. If a person lives a good life then he or she will be reborn into a higher caste. A Hindu has greater purity higher up the caste system, so marrying a person from a lower caste is considered degrading.

While the caste system was officially banned when India gained independence in 1947, it nevertheless remains a factor in Hindu life today. Discrimination on the basis of caste is forbidden by the Indian constitution and there are now special places in education reserved for untouchables.

One area where caste distinctions are particularly noticeable is in temple worship, where people from lower castes are often banned from the temple. Many argue that the caste system has kept an extremely diverse people stable and peaceful for thousands of years, while others would argue that it is oppressive and dangerous.

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The religious origin of caste is presented differently in the *Bhagavad Gita*:

> Those who have serenity, self control, austerity,
> Purity, patience, honesty, knowledge, Self-realisation,
> And belief in God are labelled as *Brahmanas*, the intellectuals.
> Those having the qualities of heroism, vigour,
> Firmness, dexterity, not fleeing from battle,
> Charity and administrative skills
> Are called *Kshatriyas*, the protectors.
> Those who are good in cultivation, cattle rearing,
> Business, trade and industry are known as *Vaishyas*.
> Those who do service and labour type work are classed as *Shudras*. (*Bhagavad Gita* 18:42–44)

Ashramas
four stages of life in Hinduism, laid out in classical Sanskrit texts

ACTIVITY 1.46

Analysing and evaluating

1. Design a diagram to represent the four *varnas*.
2. What is the difference between *varna* and *jati*?
3. Provide three reasons why some people think the caste system is unfair. Use evidence to support your claims.
4. What benefits might exist in the caste system?
5. Speculate why the caste system is still a prominent feature of Hindu life.
6. Examine the two theories of the caste system and explain why one theory is more convincing than the other.

Stages of life in Hinduism

Ashramas: four stages of life

Ashramas, or the four stages of life, follow the natural process of maturing within society as well as recognising the spiritual needs of each phase of the life journey. The ancient *Laws of Manu* describe four stages: *Brahmacharyi*, or student; *Grihasta*, or householders; *Vanaprastha*, or retirement; and *Sannyasin*, or renunciation.

Brahmacharyi

The *Brahmacharyi* begins with the sacred thread ceremony and is only available to the three upper classes. Interestingly, in ancient times, girls were part of this rite of passage but this is no longer the case. The student phase involves young males leaving home to study the Vedic texts under the guidance of a guru and living a life of self-discipline and celibacy. Today young males attend a school in the neighbourhood rather than leave home.

Grihasta

The householder stage begins when the student returns home from his studies and marries. This is an important stage for Hindus because they must continue the family line as well as adhere to religious duties. No man can perform a religious duty without his wife and no man's or woman's life is seen as complete without marriage. Householders are expected to:

- give to charity
- offer hospitality to guests
- provide a well-organised house
- care for aged parents.

Married women are expected to:

- organise the celebration of religious rites and festivals
- bring up the children
- manage the household expenses
- prepare food
- clean.

Married men are expected to:

- provide for their wife and children
- educate and arrange marriages for their children

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- earn money honestly
- spend their money in a way that is beneficial to family and others.

Vanaprastha

The retirement stage begins when the children are old enough to look after themselves and when the first grandson of the first son is born: at this point in time the father hands over his responsibilities to the eldest son.

In ancient times, *Vanaprastha* was marked by becoming a forest dweller. The duties of this stage include:

- becoming detached from the world and material concerns
- devoting time to solitude
- studying the scriptures
- practising meditation.

Not all Hindus take part in this stage but those who do are highly respected and called upon for advice.

Sannyasin

This final stage involves renouncing all worldly possessions and devoting one's life to liberation or *moksha*. Some elderly men follow this path, which should not be confused with the class of ascetics called *sadhus*, or holy men, who are of any age or class.

Four ends of life

There are four basic aims or motives that are expressed in the *Laws of Manu*. A Hindu can do something because it is a right or duty, which is ***dharma***; they should earn material wealth honestly, *artha*; they may enjoy the pleasure and beauty of life, *karma*; and they aim for release from rebirth to attain liberation, *moksha*. Hindus are true to their *dharma* if they carry out their religious and moral duties according to their stage in life, caste, occupation and within their financial means.

dharma
from the word meaning to uphold – righteousness, duty, morality, law, social obligations, particular religious teachings, the deity who embodies righteousness

Dietary requirements

Hinduism places a special emphasis on food, so much so that a common greeting 'Have you eaten?' is like asking 'How are you?' The link between food and spiritual purity is a common feature across the diversity of Hinduisms exhibited throughout the world. There is a relationship between the food consumed and the quest for liberation from the cycle of reincarnation. Eating and drinking are related to the *Atman*'s search for *moksha* since it has the potential to generate good or bad *karma*. The Upanishads state: 'Of curd when it is churned, that which is its subtle part rises upward and that becomes clarified butter. In this very way, of food when it is eaten, that which is the subtle part, that rises upward, and that becomes mind' (6.6.1–2). Many food customs are concerned with whether the food is raw or cooked; boiled or fried; grown above ground or below ground; prepared at home or elsewhere. People generally abstain from strong food such as onions and garlic, which are thought to stimulate improper desires and therefore hamper moral behaviour. Some Hindus abstain from alcohol, but there is no ban on the consumption of alcohol as in Islam.

Hindu food taboos are focused on protecting the believer from spiritual pollution and so it is important that a devout Hindu eats the correct food, prepared in the correct manner, and consumed in appropriate company. The complex caste laws of Hinduism apply in a particular way to food and eating. The cooking must take place in an unpolluted environment; and the kitchen is generally considered the purest room in the house and often household *mutris* (images or idols of

ACTIVITY 1.47

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1. What effect might the Hindu sense of duty have on social and family life?
2. What differences exist between the Hindu student stage of life and a Western view of this stage of adolescence?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Hindu attitude to old age?

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a deity) are stored there. Strangers, lower caste people and animals are not permitted to enter the kitchen. The kitchen, generally located on the first floor of the house, is cleaned and purified daily and the person cooking must bathe before cooking and wear clean clothes.

The caste of the cook is also important: upper caste cooks and waiters are in high demand in temples and restaurants because members of upper castes cannot accept food cooked for them by members of lower castes. Caste laws require people of the same caste to eat together and so devout Hindus are cautious about eating communally.

Some foods are considered pure, particularly those from cows: these include milk, yoghurt and clarified butter or ghee. Food that is fried in ghee is considered more pure than food that is prepared in water, because of the potential for pollution. Fried foods are classified as *pukka* and can be eaten outside the home and sometimes across caste boundaries. Boiled foods, classified as *katcha* (poor quality), must be prepared in one's own kitchen for the sake of purity.

Vaishnavism, a sect of Hinduism, has a highly categorised idea of food and places food into three categories based on the *gunas* or fundamental qualities that shape the universe and all within it. The categories are listed in Table 1.2 from highest to lowest.

Meat is sometimes classified as *tamas*, so many Hindus, especially those of the *Brahmin* class, are vegetarians. For those who eat meat, beef is forbidden and pork is restricted. The *Laws of Manu* warn of the karmic consequences of eating meat: 'Meat can never be obtained without injury to living creatures, and injury to sentient beings is detrimental to the attainment of heavenly bliss; let him therefore shun meat' (*Laws of Manu* 48).

ACTIVITY **1.48**

Analysing

Use the Activity Worksheet to categorise each food as pure, strong, superior or poor quality.

1 

2 

3 

4 

5 

6 

7 

8 

9 

10 

11 

12 

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TABLE 1.2 Categories of food within Hinduism

Category	Purpose or function of food	Food types
Sattva: superior quality which reflects wisdom, compassion and tranquillity	Facilitates meditation and generates energy	Vegetables; fruits; nuts and dairy products
Rajas: reflects personal qualities like courage, passion and strength	Excites emotions and generates actions and passions but they can also distract the mind from higher spiritual things	Meat; fish; eggs; spices; onions; tea; coffee; tobacco
Tamas: reflects negative qualities such as ignorance, lethargy and dullness	These goods are stale, tasteless, juiceless and impure	Leftovers; half-cooked food; over-cooked food

Modern Hinduism

From the eighteenth century until 1947, the British ruled India and during this time Christian values were applied to Indian culture. Ram Mohan Roy (1772–1833), a Bengali *Brahmin*, created the Brahmo Samaj society, which promoted the monotheistic values he saw in both the Upanishads and Christianity. The society fought to abolish practices such as



FIGURE 1.56 Ram Mohan Roy, founder of the Brahmo Samaj society

ACTIVITY 1.49

Analysing

1 Create a poster or fridge magnet promoting good eating according to Hinduism. You might choose to devise a diagram like the 'food pyramid'.
2 Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet to show:
   a who can cook for members of each caste
   b who can eat with members of each caste.
3 List two foods that can be eaten across caste boundaries.
4 List two foods that must be prepared in a Hindu's own kitchen.

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sati, the expectation that a devoted Hindu wife would throw herself on the funeral pyre of her husband and be cremated. Roy also established three guidelines for developing modernity:

1. Faith in rationalism and the human capacity to reason in issues such as religion, economics, science or social issues.
2. The dignity of humankind, which emerged from religious beliefs that he used to critique the treatment of women and lower castes in Hindu society.
3. For Indian and Hindu society to modernise using a strategy called 'cultural grafting' that involved blending Hindu and Western teachings and ways of living.

Roy attacked the attitudes within Hinduism that resulted in the disempowerment of women and the teachings that specifically said that women possessed inferior understanding, were untrustworthy and void of virtuous knowledge.

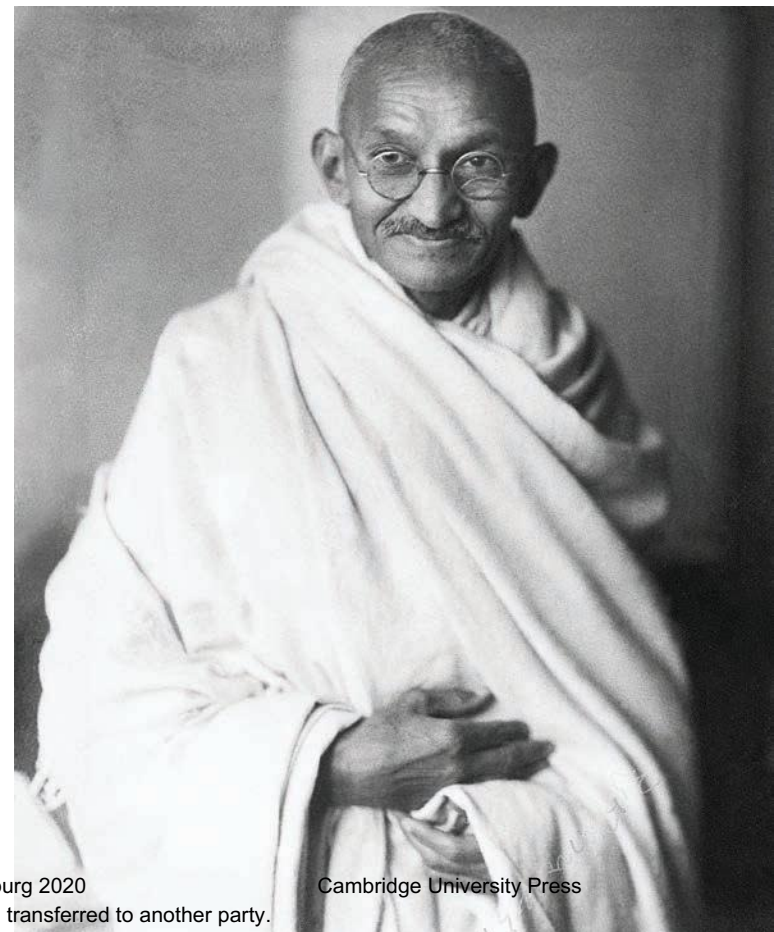
Dayananda Saraswati (1824–1883), unlike Roy, based his reforms on interpretations of the Vedas and has been called the 'Luther of India' after his call for reform grounded in Hindu scripture. He established the *Arya Samaj*, a simplified Vedic worship using only a ritual flame, with offerings of flower petals and without images. Every Hindu could be involved in this worship, no matter what class, age or gender. He also argued against the traditional view of Hindu castes and untouchability and promoted the cause of illiterate families to educate their children. He believed that education was the key to greater equality and he worked to reform the inequalities in Hindu society.

Swami Vivekananda's (1863–1902) reform was more radical, and advocated equality on the basis of the *Vedanta* contention that the essence of all humans is Divine, and therefore they are all equal. However, despite his emphasis on equality for all, Vivekananda was not willing to give up the caste system. He believed that equality in social status could never be achieved but he aimed at eliminating privileges. Vivekananda made a strong impression at the first Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893.

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869–1948) dominated the drive for Indian independence from 1920 through to 1947. The ideals of a simple and ascetic life led Gandhi to oppose many aspects of modernity that had been adopted by Hindus. During his life, he focused attention on sanitation practices at pilgrimage sites, the acceptance of untouchables and the promotion of spinning wheels, so village Hindus could produce their own cotton as a way to recover self-sufficiency.

More recently, religious tolerance, which was once the hallmark of Hinduism, has been reduced. Fundamentalist Hindu groups have promoted Hindu values over democracy and in some places these views are gathering support. The Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), the right wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), is working to restore Hindu temples that were destroyed and replaced by Muslim mosques hundreds of years ago. In 1992, Babari Masjid mosque, which was built in the sixteenth

FIGURE 1.57 Indian statesman and activist Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi



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century, was destroyed by members of the VHP because they believed it stood on the birthplace of Rama.

Hiduism and the West

In 1833, the House of Commons and the House of Lords abolished slavery and with other European nations developed a system of bonded labour that involved people working in various colonial outposts for a fixed duration of time. North Indian Hindus, along with Sikhs and Muslims, went to work on sugar cane, rubber and cocoa plantations in places such as the Caribbean, Fiji, South and East Africa and northeastern South America. Many Indians went to Myanmar (Burma) and Malaysia. When their contracts ended, most of the labourers stayed and sizable Hindu populations formed in these countries. Following World War II, many Hindus emigrated to Britain to fill job vacancies. In the early 1970s, when nationalist regimes drove non-native Africans from countries such as Uganda, thousands of Hindus left for Canada and Britain. More recently, significant number of Hindus emigrated to Australia, and between 2011 and 2016 the Hindu population in Australia increased by 60 per cent, making Hinduism the fastest-growing religion in Australia.

Conclusion

Hinduism is difficult to define because it has no common creed and is comprised of many different worship traditions. From a complex collection of sacred texts and rituals, beliefs have developed that are located within a caste system. Hindu practices have spread throughout the world, partly through migration, the popularity of yoga practices, the music of the Beatles and the public chant and dance of the Hare Krishna movement, yet these convey only some of the rich amalgam of ideas that make up Hinduism. Hinduism allows for pluralism within the tradition as it encompasses many different approaches to ritual, practice and spirituality.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions about Hinduism.

1.5 Buddhism

'Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive.'
(Dalai Lama)

Buddhism: the facts

Number of adherents
Approximately 0.5 billion (worldwide)
528 977 (Australia)

Sacred text
The Pali Canon

Place of worship
Temple

Symbol
Dharma wheel



Introduction

enlightenment gaining insight or wisdom which informs or instructs the individual

The Buddhist tradition is based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, a man born in northern India. Little information is available about the historical Buddha, even though his personality dominates the tradition. Early sources provide us with some images of the life of Buddha. He has been described as a child prodigy, a student of yoga, a teacher, a preacher and a miracle worker, but there is no one narrative source that links all of these phases together. The early texts focus on certain elements of his life such as his **enlightenment** and death. They are highly embellished and contain hagiographic elements which obscure historical reality. The exact dates of his life are debated with his birth dated as late as 563 BCE and as recent as 267 BCE, so there is little independent evidence or artefacts outside the writings of Buddhism to provide concrete information. Recent research suggests that Gautama may have lived from 490 to 410 BCE or from 480 to 400 BCE.

Buddhists believe that, after a time of searching, Siddhartha Gautama reached enlightenment and became the Buddha. In some lineages of Buddhism, people believe that everyone has the same potential to attain enlightenment. Although Buddhism has adapted to different cultures and accrued slightly different practices, the essential beliefs of Buddhism remain similar across traditions.

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ACTIVITY **1.50**

Forming

1 What do you know about Buddhism?
2 What words and images do you associate with Buddhism?
3 Where did Buddhism originate? Where is it now in the world?
4 Where are there Buddhist communities in Australia, your state or your local area? Which lineage are they?
5 On a map of the world, indicate where there are significant Buddhist populations.
6 How is Buddhism presented in the media?
7 Use the Activity Worksheet to complete a KWHL chart related to Buddhism.

Timeline

BCE	
563–483	Life of Siddhartha Gautama
c. 525	Siddhartha gains enlightenment and becomes the Buddha
c. 480	Death of Siddhartha; first Buddhist Council at Rajagriha
c. 350	Second Buddhist Council resulting in first schism in the *Sangha* between **Theravada** and the Mahasanghika
c. 272–232	King Ashoka, Indian king, spreads Buddhist values
c. 200	Emergence of Mahayana Buddhism from Hinayana
CE	
1–100	*Lotus Sutra* and **Mahayana** texts composed
50	***Tipitaka*** completed in Sri Lanka
50–100	Buddhism enters China
300	Buddhism spreads in South-East Asia
400	Buddhism enters Korea Pure Land Buddhism emerges in China
402	Sacred tooth relic of Siddhartha brought to Sri Lanka Pure Land Buddhism established in China
552	Buddhism enters Japan from Korea
618–917	Golden Age of Buddhism in China under the Tang Dynasty
630	Buddhism enters Tibet
800	Construction of Borobudur Temple in Java, Indonesia
c. 820	Tendai and Shingon Buddhism in Japan
845	Third persecution of Buddhism in China

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1000	Revival of Theravada Buddhism in South-East Asia and Sri Lanka
1100	Buddhism almost extinct in India
1203	Rinzai School of Zen Buddhism established in Japan
1279–1360	Destruction of Buddhist centres in India Theravada Buddhism established in South-East Asia
1357–1419	Life of Tsong Kha-pa, Tibetan Buddhist reformer
1587	Sonam Gyatso given title Dalai Lama
1800–1900	Buddhist writings translated
1881	Founding of Pali Text Society
1930	Soka Gakkai established in Japan
1949	Buddhist *Sangha* flees mainland China
1950s	Communist government in China Invasion of Tibet by Chinese
1952	World fellowship of Buddhists founded
1956	Buddhism returns to India
1958	Buddhist nationalist policies ignite civil war in Sri Lanka
1959	Dalai Lama flees Tibet after failed uprising
1965–80	Buddhist monks protest against Burmese government
1966–67	Buddhism suppressed in China and Tibet
1975	Devastation of Buddhism in Cambodia
1989	Dalai Lama wins the Nobel Peace Prize
2010	Founding of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists Western Buddhist teachers call for US Commission of Inquiry into Burma for crimes against humanity

Theravada Buddhism
the oldest surviving Buddhist lineage; literally, 'the Teaching of the Elders'

Mahayana Buddhism
one of the two main lineages of Buddhism and a term for classification of Buddhist philosophies and practice; literally 'Great Vehicle'

Tipitaka
the sacred writings that contain the teaching of the Buddha; also known as the Pali Canon; literally 'three baskets'

ACTIVITY **1.51**

Finding
Annotate the timeline by supplying facts related to the key dates and events that you have discovered to increase your understanding.

The history of Buddhism

The life stories of Siddhartha Gautama are debated by scholars, but most Buddhists generally believe that he was the son of a Hindu prince of the Shakya tribe, in what is today known as Nepal.

Legend says that his mother dreamt that a white elephant, with six tusks and a ruby-coloured head, entered her womb through her right side. Eight *Brahmins* told the king that this dream was a good omen and that the child would be holy. When he was born, Siddhartha emerged

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Four Noble Truths fundamental Buddhist teachings relating to the nature, origin and cessation of suffering, and the path leading to this cessation

Eightfold Path one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the end of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening

Sangha a Pali word meaning 'assembly' and more generally understood as a group of people who follow the Buddha and his teachings. It also refers to a community of Buddhist monks.

Pali historical middle Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism

from her side, took seven steps and at each step a lotus flower bloomed. He then declared that he would have no more births and that this was his last body. A week later, his mother died, and he was raised by an aunt, who married his father.

At his naming ceremony, Vedic priests predicted that he would either inherit his father's role, or if he was exposed to suffering, become a spiritual leader. Siddhartha was born into the *Kshatriya* warrior caste and was allowed to read the scriptures but not teach them. Many stories of his youth describe him as a talented young man who enjoyed a luxurious lifestyle. At an early age, he married a woman chosen by his father and they had a son, Rahula. Anxious that Siddhartha would become the next king, his father kept him within the palace surrounds.

One day, Siddhartha disobeyed his father and left the grounds to go to a town close by. In the town he saw old age, suffering and disease, and a corpse. He then came across a *sannyasin* (holy man) who appeared to be at peace even though he had no possessions. At age 29, Siddhartha left palace life, his wife and family to ponder the meaning of life: this event is called the Great Going Forth. He went to two Hindu holy men, learnt meditation, but was dissatisfied with their teachings. After approximately six years of following this way of life, he undertook severe physical work and nearly starved himself to death in the hope of gaining spiritual powers.

Eventually, he rested under a sacred tree. Some versions of the legend say he had been there for a night, while others say a week and some even say 49 days. A kind woman offered him food and he realised that his austere way of life had not given him the answers he sought. Various traditions tell different versions but they all tell of his struggle with weakness, hunger and doubt. Some speak of Mara, an evil spirit, whose daughters tempted Siddhartha but he did not succumb. After meditating under the tree in the full moon, he entered a state of consciousness where he reached *bodhi* (a state of awakening or enlightenment). From that time on he was known as the Buddha, the Awakened One.

Under the guidance of Brahma, the Buddha travelled to the Deer Park near Varanasi to join his five former companions. There he preached his first sermon on the **Four Noble Truths** and the **Eightfold Path**. The five companions abandoned their ascetic habits, reconciled with him and became his first disciples. He spent the next 40 years preaching his message of the 'middle way' – neither severe austerity nor of absolute luxury – throughout northeast India, where many people from the warrior-noble caste gave land to this new movement. The Buddha began the first ***Sangha*** for monks because he believed that his disciples should be willing to give up family, social life and all dependence on wealth. Men were admitted to the *Sangha* by reciting the following formula, known as the *Tisarana* (**Pali**) that is still used today:

> *Buddham saranam gacchami* (I take refuge in the Buddha).
> *Dhammam saranam gacchami* (I take refuge in the *Dharma*).
> *Snagham saranam gacchami* (I take refuge in the *Sangha*).



FIGURE 1.58 Giant Buddha statue in Hong Kong

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Later, after much consideration, when asked by his cousin Ananda, the Buddha allowed women to join the *Sangha*. The women, or nuns known as *bhikkhunis*, follow the **Ten Precepts** the Buddha gave to the monks.

When the Buddha was about 80 years of age, he became ill after a meal. Knowing that his life was near its end, he gathered his followers and reminded them that everything must die. Legend records his last teaching as:

> Be lamps unto yourselves. Rely on yourselves and do not rely on external help. Decay is inherent in all compounded things: work out your salvation with diligence.

He died and his body was cremated according to Indian custom but his bones remained unburned and eventually the bones were distributed among the rulers of the various tribes, who built ***stupas*** over them.

ACTIVITY 1.52

Finding and analysing

1 Locate three different versions of the early life of Siddhartha. What do they have in common? What is different? What appears to be the central message of the story?

2 View a short segment from a DVD or YouTube clip on the life of the Buddha. In visual form, summarise the main events of the life of the Buddha in no more than six storyboard frames.

Ten Precepts fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

stupas bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead

FIGURE 1.59 Prayer flags flutter from a Buddhist *stupa* in Kathmandu, Nepal.



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Buddhist councils

Not long after the Buddha's death, followers began to dispute the exact nature of the Buddha's teachings. One common source of disagreement was the application and interpretation of monastic rules. Some members favoured a strict reading, while others were more relaxed in their interpretation. According to tradition, in the first wet season after the death of the Buddha, the First Council was held in Rajagriha to collect and categorise the Buddha's teachings.

Approximately five hundred monks gathered to recite the teachings of the Buddha and two *Pitakas* (collections or baskets) were recorded:

1. the *Sutra Pitaka* (discourses)
2. the *Vinaya Pitaka* (monastic discipline teachings).

Sanskrit
historical Indo-Aryan language used in sacred texts of Buddhism

anicca
a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'impermanence'

anatta
a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'the absence of self or soul'

khandhas
five aggregates (or groups) that categorise all individual experience

The third *Pitaka*, *Abhidharma Pitaka* (philosophical teachings), was recorded later.

One hundred years after the First Council, another dispute emerged related to monastic discipline. A Second Council was convened but it did not resolve the tension and the *Sangha* split into two groups: the Theravada, or Doctrine of the Elders, and the Mahasanghika, or Great Community. Over time, others split off from the Theravada and the Mahayana or Great Vehicle movement was formed.

When the Third Council was called in around 250 BCE by the Emperor Ashoka, the *Abhidharma Pitaka* reached its final form. Emperor Ashoka committed himself to Buddhism after recognising the harm he had caused to people when he suppressed an uprising in the Kalingas. After he accepted the *Dharma* his reign was characterised by tolerance, non-violence and respect and he began to call himself Priyadashin, the Humane One.

While he allowed his subjects to practise any religion they chose, Buddhism became the religion of the empire. He is said to have opened 10 of the original *stupas*, which, according to legend, hold the cremated remains of the Buddha. He also inscribed stones and pillars with edicts such as 'King Priyadashin wishes members of all faiths to live everywhere in his kingdom' and 'Everywhere provision has been made for two kinds of medical treatment, treatment for men [sic] and for animals'. At the end of the Third Council, the Pali Canon was established, even though it was not written down until about 100 BCE.

Buddhist teachings

None of the teachings of the Buddha were written down when the Buddha was alive and the texts we have today were recorded hundreds of years later. Even at the time of the Buddha, there were multiple interpretations of the stories as well as translations in different languages. Two of the most common languages used are Pali and **Sanskrit**. Core to the teachings of the Buddha are the Three Jewels:

1. The Buddha – considered as the ideal that every Buddhist should follow and as existing in a dimension beyond this world.
2. The *Dharma* – the totality of Buddhist teachings about the world and how to live in it.
3. The *Sangha* – the community of monks and nuns.

Three interrelated concepts are central to Buddhism: *impermanence*, *no self* and the *five aggregates*. Impermanence is called ***anicca*** in the Pali language, and *anitya* in Sanskrit. It is the doctrine that all things will pass away and that decay is inherent in all things.

The 'no self' doctrine, expressed as ***anatta*** in Pali and *anatman* in Sanskrit, is the doctrine that there is no 'being' only 'becoming'. Human beings are transient: there are no souls, no ego, and after death people are reincarnated into another body. There is no God, no *Brahman* and no *Atman*. These two doctrines explain why all desire causes suffering.

Khandhas in Pali, and *skandhas* in Sanskrit, means 'the five aggregates'. It explains that a human being consists of five aggregates – matter, sensations, perception, mental formations and consciousness.

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The five aggregates:

1. *Matter:* What we call matter is not a substance but a bundle of energies.
2. *Sensations:* Every sensation is a type of craving. The mind is just another organ of sensation and there is no distinction between spirit and matter.
3. *Perception:* Every perception is craving.
4. *Mental formations:* This is paying attention, having confidence, which is also a form of craving.
5. *Consciousness:* Every instance of consciousness is a type of craving.

The five *khandhas* never remain the same, and they are constantly changing. They come together when a person is born and fall apart when they die. Buddhists accept the Hindu concept of rebirth but understand it differently in Buddhism. They believe that when life ends, a person's desires and attachments ignite a new round of desires and attachments in a new body. This differs from the Hindu concept of the soul being reborn in another body.

ACTIVITY 1.53

Finding and analysing

Represent impermanence, no self and the five aggregates in visual form.

Buddhist beliefs

Three Marks of Existence

The Three Marks of Existence or Three Eternal Truths of Buddhism are *anicca*, *anatta* and ***dukkha***.

1. *Anicca* – impermanence, nothing is fixed, everything is changing.
2. *Anatta* (no permanent identity or no self) – all existence is interdependent so when conditions change, people also change.
3. *Dukkha* (suffering) – all life is suffering, because the world is unable to satisfy people's desires.

The Four Noble Truths

Legend holds that the Buddha announced the Four Noble Truths to his five disciples in his first sermon. While each truth can be named in a single word, the concepts need elaboration.

Dukkha: *all life involves suffering*

This refers to the idea that human life is permeated by suffering, which includes pain, sickness, old age and death. *Dukkha* does not mean that people never experience pleasure, nor that they are in constant pain, but that people need to realise that all life experiences are transient. Therefore we never really enjoy anything fully because we know that it will not last.

Tanha: *the origin of suffering is craving*

Craving, or desiring power, wealth and self-image, is one of the drivers of suffering. It is grasping for things that we do not possess that creates an inner emptiness, which the Buddha says leads to suffering.

Niroda: *the cessation or end of suffering*

The Buddha taught that the only way to end suffering was for desire to be extinguished and for a person to gain inner satisfaction. If people are able to end their suffering (*dukkha*) then nirvana (*Nibbana*) or peace is achieved. People who have achieved nirvana may still continue living, as the Buddha did, but their actions are motivated by selflessness. Nirvana is not the same as extinction and does not mean that people feel nothing; rather, it is a state of happiness where people still experience pain and pleasure, but do not respond to them as in an unenlightened way.

dukkha
a central concept of Buddhism; the basic element of the human condition, translated as 'suffering', 'desire' or 'anguish'

Magga: *the middle path or way*

This is called the Eightfold Path and is set out as eight steps, or features, of Buddhist life. These are not eight separate steps but simultaneous dimensions to be cultivated.

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ACTIVITY 1.54

Analysing and evaluating

1 List 20 life experiences that could be used to provide evidence of *dukkha*.
2 How could it be argued that craving gives rise to *dukkha* in each case?
3 Devise a system with which to categorise the experiences you have listed.

The Eightfold Path

The first two dimensions of the Eightfold Path are classified as *prajna* (wisdom).

1 *Darshana*, or right understanding, involves developing a philosophical understanding of life and comprehending the first three Noble Truths.
2 Right thought involves developing thought or intention to follow the Buddhist path to liberation with diligence. Because thoughts lead to actions, people need to change how they think to change how they behave.

The third, fourth and fifth dimensions concern *sila* (ethical conduct).

3 Right speech involves Buddhists abstaining from using speech that adds to suffering in the world. They should avoid:
   – telling lies
   – spreading gossip
   – speaking harshly
   – time-wasting chatter.
4 Right conduct or action involves taking action that does not cause harm and tries to lead a person to liberation. Buddhists should refrain from:
   – harming or killing
   – stealing
   – using intoxicants
   – sexual misconduct.
5 Right livelihood for Buddhists means their work should benefit others rather than harm them – for example, arms dealing and selling intoxicating drinks should be avoided.

The final three dimensions are concerned with meditation or mental discipline (*samadhi*, *samatha*).

6 Right effort involves the effort to prevent negative thoughts, or cravings, to create a healthy state of mind.
7 Right mindfulness is the deepening of mindfulness, which leads to a focused state of consciousness, such as being aware of emotions, motives and actions. It begins by paying close attention to breathing, with the aim of focusing the mind on what one is doing.
8 Right concentration is the practice of deep concentration and meditation, which enables a person to develop loving kindness and gain insight into the truths of life. The ultimate goal of this practice is nirvana.

ACTIVITY 1.55

Analysing and evaluating

With reference to the Three Marks of Existence and the Four Noble Truths, provide justification as to why each part of the Eightfold Path is useful in Buddhists' pursuit of liberation.

Right conduct is guided by the Ten Precepts, which are given to the disciples as a guide for everyday living:

1 Do not destroy life.
2 Do not steal.
3 Do not commit adultery.
4 Do not tell lies.
5 Do not take intoxicants.
6 Do not eat after midday.
7 Do not dance, sing, or act on a stage.
8 Do not use perfumes.
9 Do not use a high or broad bed.
10 Do not receive gold or silver (do not handle money).

Members of the *Sangha* are expected to follow all Ten Precepts, while lay Buddhists need only follow the first five precepts.

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The Wheel of Life

The Wheel of Life, found particularly in Tibetan Buddhism, illustrates *samsara* – the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. Buddhists examine the wheel to see what parts of it are reflected in their own lives, as each feature on the wheel represents a part of life and each component is connected to the next. In the centre of the wheel are three animals, called the three mental poisons: a snake, a pig and a rooster, which represent greed and ignorance. Each animal is depicted as biting the other's tail, suggesting that they feed on each other. Around the inner hub is a circle, divided in half. Inside the first half are people in various states of unhappiness, falling downwards. The other half depicts happy people, facing upwards. The images in this divided circle are symbolic of the changes that can occur in life.

The next circle is divided into six segments representing six realms:

1. the realm of the gods, or superior beings, where everything is provided
2. the realm of *asuras*, angry beings
3. the realm of *pretas*, hungry ghosts, beings who want more but are never satisfied
4. the realm of hell, symbolic of human suffering
5. the realm of animals, concerned with food and comfort
6. the realm of humankind.

According to tradition, people do not remain permanently in any of these realms, but move from one to the other. The realms are not seen as separate entities but as different states of mind. The outermost circle consists of 12 scenes depicting 12 *nidanas* (links). These illustrate the way in which one thing happens because of another: the wheel of *samsara* keeps moving. The 12 images are described in Table 1.3.



FIGURE 1.60 Wheel of Life showing the rooster, snake and pig in the Kopan monastery in Kathmandu, Nepal

TABLE 1.3 Images from the Wheel of Life

Image	Explanation
Blind man	Ignorance
Potter working	Because of ignorance people make choices and create *karma*
Monkey climbing a tree	Start of consciousness of a new life
Four passengers in a boat	The new body with perceptions and acts of will
Empty house with five windows and door	Five senses and the mind
Couple embracing	People form relationships with others and objects
Man with an arrow in his eye	Contact with objects can lead to good, bad or neutral feelings
Woman offering a drink to a man	Feelings lead to cravings
Man gathering fruit	People become attached to things and crave them
Pregnant woman	Attachment leads to more life, *bhava* or 'becoming'
Childbirth	'Becoming' leads to new life
Corpse	Everything eventually dies and the cycle is completed

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Around the outside of the whole wheel is a monster, representing death. The Wheel of Life includes the idea of escape, which can occur between the seventh and eighth links of the outer wheel: the point between pleasure, pain and craving. If a person stops craving, then the outer circle ceases revolving and people can escape the consequences. The Wheel of Life is not a literal view of life but more like a mind map, which guides Buddhists through their choices and the consequences.

ACTIVITY **1.56**

Analysing and evaluating

Write a structured paragraph (150 words) explaining which images in the Wheel of Life a Buddhist might draw on to account for population growth and how this phenomenon might be explained by a Buddhist.

ACTIVITY **1.57**

Evaluating

In your opinion, how effective is the Wheel of Life's visual representation of the philosophical ideas it exemplifies? Explain why you think this.

Karma

Karma is the consequences of a person's actions. It is not generated by every action, but only by ethical actions that reflect personal attitudes. *Karma* is not a punishment or a reward; rather, it reflects the extent to which a Buddhist overcomes or fails to overcome ignorance and greed.

***kathina* ceremony** the largest alms-giving ceremony of the Buddhist year

It is described in this extract from the *Dhammapada*:

> What we are today comes from our thoughts of yesterday and our present thoughts build our life of tomorrow: our life is the creation of our mind … If a person speaks or acts with an impure mind, suffering follows them as the wheel of the cart follows the beast that draws the cart … if a person speaks and acts with a pure mind, joy follows them as their own shadow. (*Dhammapada* 1, 2)

Good *karma* is highly valued by Buddhists and is often describe as 'merit' (*punya*). The purpose of acquiring merit is to enjoy happiness in this life and to secure a good rebirth, ideally as a god in one of the heavens. Merit is not a commodity which can be built up like money in a bank account. Merit is produced as a by-product of doing what is right and should not be sought as an end in itself.

A common way to earn merit for the laity is by supporting and making donations and offerings to the *Sangha*. This could be done on a daily basis by giving food or by providing robes for monks at the annual ***kathina* ceremony**, by listening to sermons and attending religious services and by donating money for the upkeep of monasteries and temples.

Rebirth

For Buddhists, life is a series of births and rebirths, in different forms and into different realms. What a person 'becomes' is the result of their actions and deeds. Most schools of Buddhism believe that the transition from one realm to another at death is instantaneous. Some Buddhist schools,

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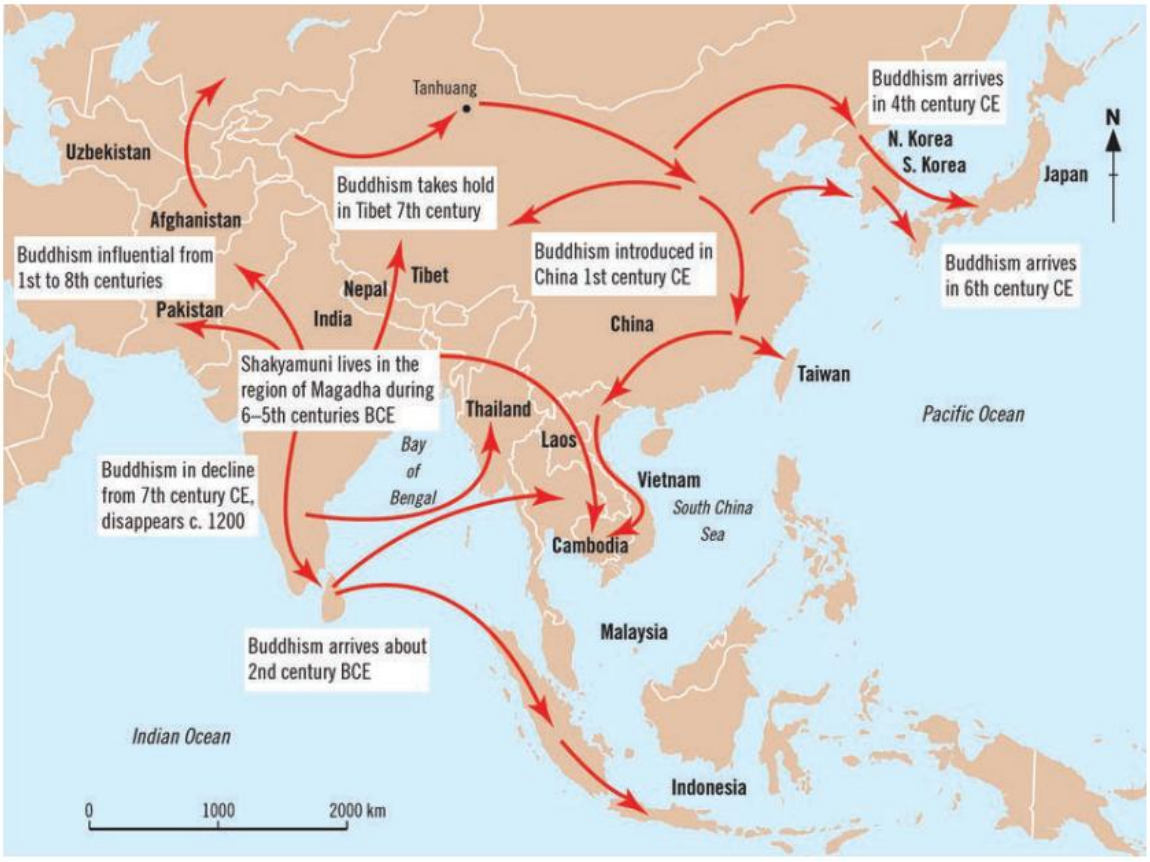


FIGURE 1.61 The heart of Buddhism lies in South-East Asia, East Asia and the mountain regions around Tibet. More recently, Buddhism has been reintroduced in its homeland of India.

particularly those in Tibet, believe that there is an intermediate state known as the *bardo* which acts as a buffer between lives and in which the spirit of the deceased person remains for up to 49 days before being reborn. During this time the spirit glimpses all six realms of rebirth before being attracted to the one most in keeping with its karmic state.

ACTIVITY 1.58

Analysing and evaluating

Draw a diagram that shows the interrelationship between the Three Marks of Existence, the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path.

Theravada Buddhism

Theravada Buddhism is practised in Sri Lanka, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos and Thailand. It reflects the culture and traditions of its host country and is practised differently in each location. Its name comes from *vada* (the way) and *thera* (elders) and in this conservative lineage Buddhists believe that they pass on the Buddha's teachings unchanged.

Monks are at the heart of Theravada Buddhism and there is a significant difference between monks and lay people. In fact, Theravada Buddhism does not believe that lay people can attain nirvana and so the life of a monk, focused on detachment and meditation, is the sure path. Lay people should provide for the needs of monks, particularly by providing food. By providing for the monks, people receive good *karma*. The monasteries often run meditation centres and, in some cases, schools or aged care centres.

The teaching of Theravada Buddhism is contained in the Pali Canon. The *Tipitaka* (Pali) or *Pripitaka* (Sanskrit) is a collection of three sacred texts sometimes referred to as the Three Baskets.

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ACTIVITY 1.59

Finding

Using the map of Asia on the Activity Worksheet, indicate which countries predominantly practise Theravada Buddhism.

Mahayana Buddhism

Mahayana means 'great vehicle'. The term 'great or large vehicle' is not used in a way that degrades Theravada Buddhism. Instead, the term describes the more comprehensive outlook taken by Mahayana Buddhists. Mahayana Buddhists believe that all people, regardless of their gender and social status, have the capacity to become enlightened and that enlightenment is a call to compassion. While Mahayana Buddhists agree that the Buddha was an enlightened man, they are not overly concerned about the history and life of the Buddha – what is important to them is the Buddha's enlightenment.

bodhisattva enlightened being; an ordinary person who takes up a course in his or her life that moves in the direction of Buddha

The pairing of wisdom and compassion (*karuna*) is important in Mahayana Buddhism because to care for someone else is to care for oneself. The idea of *karuna* plays such a central role in Mahayana Buddhism that a person of deep compassion, a ***bodhisattva***, is said to delay entering nirvana in order to help others. There are four stages on the *bodhisattva* path: intention, vow, the course of the *bodhisattva* and Buddhahood.

1. Intention – the *bodhisattva* must be sincere in their search for enlightenment because sincerity provides the determination to reach enlightenment.
2. Vow – this stage is known in Sanskrit as *pranidhana* (vow or fixation) and the *bodhisattva* makes two vows: to become a Buddha and to lead others to enlightenment.
3. Course of the *bodhisattva* – this is when the *bodhisattva* sets out on the path of the six perfections:
   - a *dana* (charity) – giving without expecting anything in return
   - b *sila* (morality) – perfecting goodness through thoughts, words, actions and respect for life
   - c *kshanti* (patience) – perfecting composure to accept things as they are
   - d *virya* (vigour) – perfecting energy for the benefit of all beings
   - e *dhyana* (meditation) – perfecting concentration and perception to see all things clearly
   - f *prajna* (wisdom) – perfecting wise understanding and insight into the nature of all *dharmas* and realising that everything is empty.
4. Buddhahood – this final stage is when the *bodhisattva* becomes enlightened. It is when they realise that actions taken in the service of others are the actions of the Buddha.

The nirvana attained by the *bodhisattva* is understood differently from nirvana in Theravada Buddhism. In Theravada Buddhism, nirvana is the absence of self-centredness and therefore the absence of suffering. While Mahayana holds this interpretation, it adds the state of spiritual perfection of total compassion and concern for others. In Mahayana Buddhism, nirvana has a more altruistic character than in Theravada Buddhism because there is no gap between nirvana and *samsara*: nirvana is *samsara* and *samsara* is nirvana.

Heavenly bodhisattvas

As well as earthly *bodhisattvas*, Mahayana Buddhism believes that there are many other *bodhisattvas* in other realms. These



FIGURE 1.62 Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama during a press conference in 2019

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bodhisattvas once lived on earth and are now reborn beyond this world. They nevertheless retain an interest in this world and can appear on earth when needed or to help others to be reborn. One of the most popular is Avalokiteshvara, whose name means 'looking down with compassion'. In India, Avalokiteshvara is portrayed as male, but in China she is considered female because of her association with mercy and compassion. In Japan, she is known as Kannon (the Canon photographic company is named after her). There are many stories about Avalokiteshvara and the *Lotus Sutra* says that she has 33 different forms that come to save people. In Chinese art, she is sometimes represented as a bull warning butchers away from killing. The Dalai Lama is considered an incarnation of Avalokiteshvara (known in Tibet as Chenrezig).

Another *bodhisattva* is Maitreya, the Kindly One, who is also mentioned in Theravada writings. In China, Maitreya is known as Mi-lo-fo and is represented by a large pot-bellied man with a sack of presents for children. In the West he is known as the 'Laughing Buddha'.

The *Sukhavati-vyjha Sutra* tells the story of a king who heard a sermon of the Buddha and was so impressed that he left his home and decided to become a Buddha. He heard that Buddhas presided over pure lands and so he decided that when he became a Buddha his Pure Land would have outstanding qualities. The 18th of his 46 *bodhisattva* vows says:

> If, after my attaining Buddhahood, all beings should not sincerely desire to be born into my Pure Land and if they should not be born by reciting my name ten times may I not attain the highest Enlightenment.

The king obtained enlightenment and as a Buddha is known as Amitabha ('Infinite Light').

In order to be reborn into the Pure Land, people must fulfil certain conditions: they must really desire it, they must gain merit and dedicate it towards rebirth and they must recite the Buddha's name in the Sanskrit form 'Namo Amitabhaya Buddhaya'. By reciting the **mantra**, Buddhists believe that they can draw out their own Buddha nature and achieve happiness. The Pure Land school has had significant influence in Japan since World War II.

mantra
a devotional prayer or incantation used for meditation and worship

Mahayana Buddhism seeks enlightenment through meditation so that adherents can



FIGURE 1.63 Laughing Buddha in the Tanzhe Temple in Beijing, China



FIGURE 1.64 Buddhist monk meditating

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achieve the realisation that true nature is no less than Buddha nature. For monks and nuns, meditation can take up to eight hours a day. While they maintain their central focus, the Eightfold Path and the Ten Precepts are less important in Mahayana Buddhism than in Theravada Buddhism.

Major schools of Mahayana Buddhism

The schools within Mahayana Buddhism display great variety, particularly towards the use of art, ritual and worldly success. These differences are made obvious in the major groups that exist in Japan. The Shingon ('true word') school uses sacred chants or mantras accompanied by ritual objects in the hope of experiencing union with the cosmic Buddha nature. Shingon was brought to Japan from China in the late 700s CE. One Shingon ritual is the *Goma*, or fire ritual, in which the priest builds a fire within a sacred square enclosed by coloured cords. Leaves and wood are thrown onto the fire as a symbol of destroying all traces of ego that might hinder the mystical union. Shingon also uses two ***mandalas***. One, the *Kongo-dai* (diamond world), shows the universe from the point of view of wisdom and the other *Tai-so* (womb), shows the universe from the view of compassion.

mandala
a diagram used in Buddhism and Hinduism, usually concentric in design and used during meditation and ritual

Tendai, named after Mt Tiantai in China, was brought to Japan by a Japanese monk, Saicho (767–822), and focuses on rituals similar to those in Shingon. Tendai was favoured by the emperor and his court because it was considered to bring protection to the country.

Nichiren was founded in Japan by Nichiren (1222–1282), who wanted to simplify the many sutras and practices used in Tendai. Nichiren decided that the *Lotus Sutra* held all the essentials of the teachings. This group repeats the mantra Numu Myoho Renge Kyo ('Praise to the mystic law of the Lotus Sutra') many times a day, in the hope that they will connect with the power of the universe. Nichiren is materially oriented. A secular organisation of Nichiren Shoshu, Soka Gakki, works to reform society through political means. Some of its members have even been elected to the Japanese parliament. Nichiren only became well-known after World War II when American soldiers married Nichiren Buddhists who brought the beliefs and practices to America.

ACTIVITY **1.60**

Finding

Using the map of Asia on the Activity Worksheet, indicate which countries predominantly practise Mahayana Buddhism.

ACTIVITY **1.61**

Analysing and evaluating

Create a list comparing the similarities and differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism. Use evidence to support your statements.

Zen Buddhism

Zen Buddhism takes its name from the seventh step of the Eightfold Path, *dhyana* (meditation), and says that it is useless to rely on vows, rituals or scripture to reveal enlightenment because even our brains can misinterpret information. The solution, according to Zen, is to abandon traditional ways of thinking to get to enlightenment. The actions used by Zen Buddhists to free the mind of traditional thinking patterns are *mondo* and *koan*. *Mondo* is a form of rapid question and answer to speed up the thought process. A *koan* is a question that defies conventional logic – like a riddle or joke, it requires pondering.

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ACTIVITY 1.62

Analysing and evaluating

Examine the following *koans*. What insights can be gained from them?

1 A famous soldier came to the master Hakuin and asked: 'Master, tell me: is there really a heaven and a hell?'

'Who are you?' asked Hakuin.

'I am a soldier of the great Emperor's personal guard.'

'Nonsense!' said Hakuin. 'What kind of emperor would have you around him? To me you look like a beggar!' At this, the soldier started to rattle his big sword in anger. 'Oho!' said Hakuin. 'So you have a sword! I'll wager it's much too dull to cut my head off!'

At this the soldier could not hold himself back. He drew his sword and threatened the master, who said: 'Now you know half the answer! You are opening the gates of hell!'

The soldier drew back, sheathed his sword and bowed. 'Now you know the other half,' said the master. 'You have opened the gates of heaven.'

2 A great official came to the master Takuan asking for help in passing his days more eventfully. All day long, he explained, he sat receiving supplications and reports and he found it all very dull. Takuan took brush and paper and wrote eight Chinese characters. Translated, they said: 'No day comes back again: one inch of time is worth a foot of jade'.

Tibetan Buddhism

For thousands of years, Vajrayana Buddhism has been practised in Tibet. It involves the emotions as well as the mind and includes chanting, hand movements, highly decorated robes and images.

In pre-Buddhist Tibet, people worshipped the powers of nature, which involved animal sacrifice, bones, dances and incantations to control demonic powers. As Tantric Buddhism spread from northeast India, it opposed the original idea of detachment from the world and taught that the body could be used to reach enlightenment. Tantric Buddhism first entered Tibet in the seventh century, when it was already over one thousand years old, and it blended with traditional shamanistic practices. According to tradition, the king became its patron and made it the national religion.

In the fourteenth century, a monk called Tsong Kha-pa reformed the Tibetan Buddhist practices and demanded that monks remain celibate. He reintroduced strict monastic practice and his reform movement became known as Gelug-pa ('party of virtue'), the leader of which is called the Dalai Lama ('great ocean superior one'). Each Dalai Lama is considered to be an embodiment of Avalokiteshvara. When a lama dies, it is thought that he has been reincarnated as another person, who is sought and trained to be the next Dalai Lama.

Vajrayana Buddhism recognises the Three Jewels and the Ten Precepts but also includes distinctive teachings such as tantric ritual, *mudras*, mantras, the *vajra* (a short, metal weapon that symbolises the determination needed to cut through illusion to achieve enlightenment), visualisations, prayer wheels and flags. Tibetan Buddhism employs a variety of images of the Buddha and *bodhisattvas* to express various aspects of enlightenment.

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FIGURE 1.65 Tibetan brass and stone statue of Tara



FIGURE 1.66 A *vajra* at the Three Pagodas Temple in Yunnan, China

Avalokiteshvara, one of the most popular *bodhisattvas* in Tibetan Buddhism, represents compassion and is often depicted with one leg in the meditation position and the other touching the ground. Other images show him with many arms, indicating that he will assist in any situation.

Another popular image is Tara, who is often shown in green and white, and expresses compassion. Many people find her easier to relate to because she is female.

Tibetan Buddhist shrines often include images of teachers from the past. Famous examples include Padmasambhava, who is regarded as bringing Tantric Buddhism to Tibet, and Milarepa, a guru who lived in the Himalayas and is believed to have kept warm by participating in a special kind of meditation that generated body heat.

Worship in Tibetan Buddhism has features similar to other lineages of Buddhism and also includes the blowing of horns that produce long, low notes. Another important symbol of Tibetan Buddhism is the ritual object, the *vajra*, which means 'diamond' or 'thunderbolt'. The *vajra* is held in the right hand, which suggests kind action. At its centre is a sphere, from which two lotus flowers emerge. One faces up and the other faces down, representing growth, which can be either positive or negative. From each of the flowers, five spokes emerge, one at the centre and four at each compass point. The five spokes at the top represent five special Buddhas, each with a particular form of wisdom; the five spokes at the bottom represent the five *skandhas* and five poisons of infatuation, hatred, conceit, passion and envy. The *vajra* is used with a bell, which is held in the left hand, and together they represent the union of wisdom and compassion. Both objects are central to Tibetan Vajrayana ritual.

Chanting a mantra is also common in Tibetan Buddhism, and the syllables used are called 'seed syllables' because they are said to contain the whole of the Buddhist path. The three seed syllables are '*om*', which stands for reality itself and includes the idea of freedom; '*ah*', which represents communication; and '*hum*' (pronounced 'hoong'), which is wisdom. All three seed syllables are used at the beginning of Buddhist worship. Mantras such as *om mani padme hum* are written on paper and placed in prayer wheels. People turn the large prayer wheels as they pass by. Hand-held prayer wheels are also common. Sometimes mantras and seed syllables are painted on prayer flags to remind people of the Buddha's teaching.

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The *mandala*, used in Mahayana Buddhism, becomes more complex in Tibetan Buddhism. In some ceremonies monks create a *mandala* in sand and at the end of the ritual they immediately destroy it, as a sign that nothing is permanent. Cloth paintings called *thangka* are also common. These often include images of the Buddha and *bodhisattvas* painted in both friendly and frightening forms to discipline the believer.

ACTIVITY 1.63

Analysing and evaluating

How might chanting, prayer wheels, images and elaborate costumes assist an adherent to enter into Buddhist practices?

Buddhist temples and shrines

Temples and temple complexes vary from country to country and according to the particular lineage of Buddhism. Some resemble palaces; others are more like a simple house. While Buddhist temples vary in design, they tend to have the following common features: a study hall, a library and a guest area. They can also include:

- a shrine hall or room for worship. This is the most publicly accessible section of the temple complex. The shrine room usually contains images of the Buddha and is often highly decorated. In Mahayana Buddhism, the Buddha is often accompanied or even replaced by a variety of celestial Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* such as Amitabha or Manjusri.
- a meditation room that is also used for *Vinaya* ritual
- spartan living quarters for the monks
- *dagoba*, a relic mound
- a bo-tree, symbolising the Buddha's enlightenment.

As a sign of respect, visitors to Buddhist temples are asked to remove their shoes and to ensure that the soles of their feet do not face the Buddha.

Shrines

Many Buddhists have a Buddha *rupa*, or image of the Buddha, on a high shelf in their home. They often use the image as a focus for meditation. When standing before a *rupa*, Buddhists join their hands and bow before the image and, with their hands pressed together, touch their forehead, mouth and chest as a reminder that mind, speech and body are all involved in devotion. All shrines are highly decorated. At the centre of the shrine is a statue of the Buddha. Mahayana shrines include a variety of Buddha images. Common features across the various traditions include:

- a statue of the Buddha
- flowers – symbols that life is short (some traditions use green vegetation)
- water – a symbol of respect and reverence
- candles – symbols of enlightenment
- incense – to purify the air and to symbolise the *Dharma* being spread throughout the world
- a bell – to separate the sections of the ceremony and as a symbol of *karma*
- food – some traditions offer food.

Shrines are prepared and treated with great care and respect, cleaned daily, with food and flowers replaced, and the water offered may even be recycled into tea water. The objects presented on the shrine stimulate the senses and attempt to involve the whole of the person in ritual.



FIGURE 1.67 Buddhist temple altar in Hanoi, Vietnam

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Prayer beads

Some Buddhists use *mala* (prayer beads) to count the mantra. Monks usually have 108 beads representing the 108 passions. Monks sometimes wear the beads around their necks. Lay people generally have fewer beads, usually a number divisible by three, and wear the beads as a bracelet. The beads are usually strung on silk thread and drawn together with three beads symbolising the Three Jewels. In Japanese Buddhism, prayer beads are called *juzu* and have two tassels at each end to represent the Buddha and the *Dharma*.

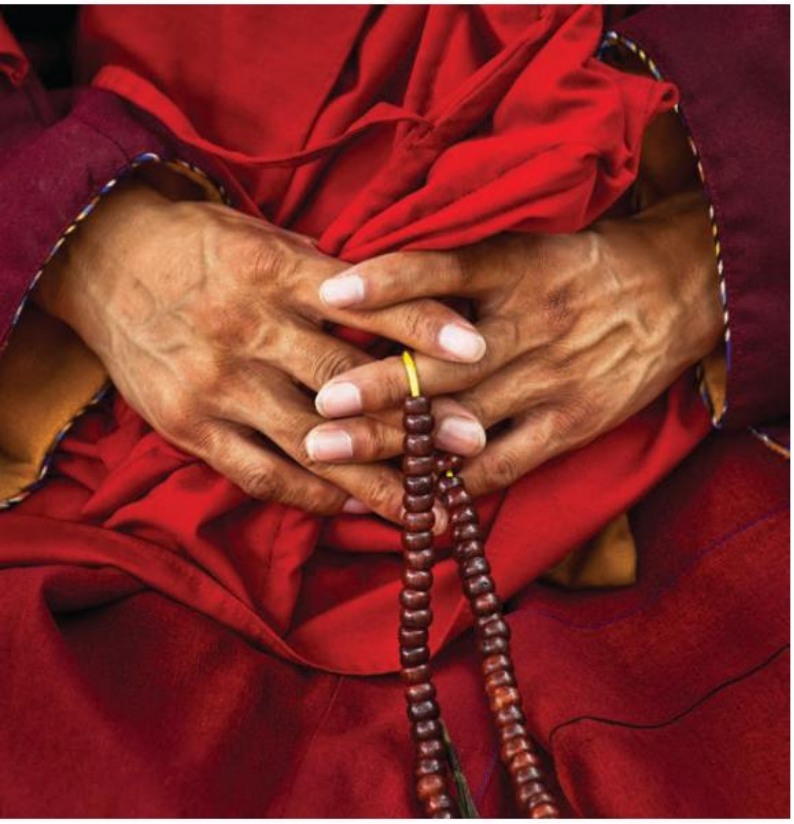


FIGURE 1.68 Tibetan Buddhist monk with his prayer beads

Stupas

A *stupa* is a bell-shaped construction that stores relics or the ashes of the dead. They are made in five sections, each representing the elements of earth, water, fire, air and spirit (from the base to the top). Traditionally, each side of the *stupa* represents a moment in the life of the Buddha:



FIGURE 1.69 A *stupa* and its symbolism

east is his birth; south his enlightenment; west his teachings; and north his death. Buddhists walk around *stupas* in a clockwise direction following the life of the Buddha from birth to death. The *stupas* provide visible monuments to the Buddha and his teachings.

In East Asia, *stupas* evolved into pagodas, which are more pyramid shaped with six levels representing six cosmic realms.

ACTIVITY **1.64**

Finding and analysing

Relics of the Buddha are kept in *stupas*.

1 What other religions keep relics?
2 Why do believers consider relics important?

Images of the Buddha

For hundreds of years, Theravada Buddhism did not have any images of the Buddha. Adherents wanted to emphasise that he was an ordinary man. Today there are thousands of images of the Buddha but, interestingly, the Buddha is shown in only three positions: sitting, standing or lying down – and each posture has a particular meaning. When the Buddha is sitting, the position of his hands indicate either

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TABLE 1.4 The Five Wisdom Buddhas

	North	South	East	West	Centre
Name	Amoghasiddhi	Ratnasambhava	Akshobhya	Amitabha	Vairocana
Colour	Green	Yellow	Blue	Red	White
Element	Air	Earth	Water	Fire	Ether
***Mudra* (hand position)**	Protection	Giving	Touching the earth	Meditation	Teaching

enlightenment, teaching or meditation; standing with one hand raised indicates protection; and lying down usually reminds people of his death and entry to nirvana.

The *mudras* of the Buddha are also significant. One hand placed on top of the other with the palms facing upwards indicates concentration and meditation; a hand in front of the chest indicates instruction; and a hand touching the ground indicates resistance to temptation. According to tradition, the Buddha has 32 major and 80 minor marks of a superior being. One of these is the *ushinisha*, a lump on his head either in the form of fire, representing spiritual energy, or in the shape of stubble, left from cutting his hair on the night he renounced his former life. Another is the *urna*, which is the mark in the centre of his forehead symbolising the third eye of wisdom.

Tibetan Buddhism has Five Wisdom Buddhas who inhabit pure lands at north, south, east, west and centre, and each Buddha has a particular colour, *mudra*, symbol, cosmic element and vehicle, as shown in Table 1.4.

Each of the five Buddhas is accompanied by a *bodhisattva*.

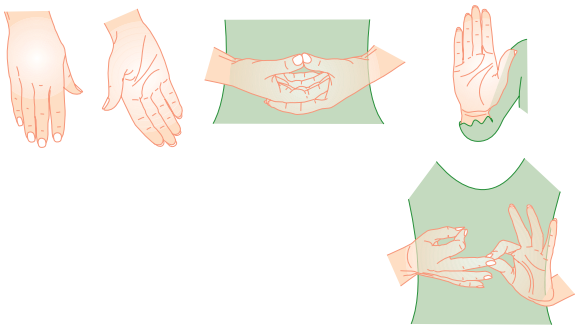


FIGURE 1.70 Hand *mudras*

Meditation

The Buddha became enlightened after meditating under the *bodhi* tree, and during his life he is said to have practised seated meditation lasting from a few days to three months. His followers also practised meditation and their day was divided into six periods of four hours in the following pattern:

1. seated meditation
2. sleeping
3. seated meditation
4. washing, working, meditating, receiving food
5. eating food, meditating while allowing for digestion
6. meditation, listening to the Buddha and discussing the *Dharma*.

Buddhist meditation originates in the Hindu yoga exercises that consist of eight stages:

- Stages 1 and 2 involve not harming others and creating good relations.
- Stages 3 and 4 focus on posture and breath control.
- Stage 5 aims at focusing on the inner self and disassociating oneself from outer distractions.
- Stage 6 involves focusing the mind on a single object.
- Stages 7 and 8 involve meditating to rise above ordinary thought. While congregational worship is not common in Buddhism, chanting within a group is common in some lineages of Buddhism.

Pilgrimage

According to legend, the Buddha indicated that followers should visit four places: Lumbini, his place of birth; Bodhgaya, where he attained enlightenment; Sarnath, where he began the

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wheel of *Dharma*; and Kusinegara, where he entered nirvana. Many of the practices of Buddhist pilgrimage are drawn from Hinduism. Buddhist pilgrims mainly stay in monasteries and donate food and clothing to the monks in the hope that they will earn *karma* and rebirth in a higher realm. Buddhist pilgrimages began relatively early, as the Emperor Ashoka, a convert to Buddhism, is believed to have completed a pilgrimage to all four sites in 249 BCE. He is also credited with building a monument at each site. Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha, was declared a World Heritage Site in 1997.

For Buddhists, Bodhgaya – 240 kilometres east of Varanasi – is considered more significant than Lumbini because it is here that Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha. The original shrine was destroyed by Muslims in the twelfth century and later became a place of Hindu worship. It was returned to the Buddhists eight hundred years later and declared a World Heritage Site in 2002. When pilgrims visit the temple, they circle around it to show their devotion.

At Sarnath, pilgrims visit the Dharmarajika Stupa, which once held the relics of the Buddha before well-meaning Hindus returned them to the Ganges. Pilgrims travel to Kusinegara, 160 kilometres south of Lumbini, not only to visit the place of the Buddha's death but also to see a 7-metre-long statue of the Buddha surrounded by three disciples. While these are the four main sites of pilgrimage for Buddhists, many other shrines and temples also attract pilgrims.



FIGURE 1.71 The World Peace Pagoda on the territory of the Monastic Zone, Lumbini, Nepal

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ACTIVITY 1.65

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Design a travel brochure appropriate for Buddhist pilgrims. Your brochure should include a map and the major places of pilgrimage.

ACTIVITY 1.66

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Locate the Mahabodhi Temple complex on the UNESCO World Heritage List at the UNESCO website. Use the information provided to write a 300-word synopsis of the purpose, role and function of temples within Buddhism.

Dietary requirements

According to Buddhism, the body should neither be pampered nor neglected. Buddhist monks and nuns therefore eat responsibly. They fast or do not eat after midday. The *Pancasila* or Five Precepts guide the lives of Buddhists. The first and the fifth precepts are particularly significant when it comes to dietary requirements. The first precept, to refrain from killing living creatures, covers more than human beings and extends to all forms of life. Violence is to be avoided and the killing of animals is prohibited. This raises the issue of whether all Buddhists should be vegetarian. There are a variety of positions held. Tibetan Buddhists are not total vegetarians because to grow vegetables in a cold climate is difficult. Red meat is sometimes consumed but it is preferred to kill a large animal so that many people are fed, therefore minimising the contravention of the *ahimsa* principle of not harming. Some Japanese Buddhist groups such as Shingon and Tendai also eat meat but Vietnamese and Chinese monks usually refrain from all meat as well as spices such as onion, garlic and leek because they are thought to stimulate sexual desire if cooked and to provoke anger if eaten raw.

The *Mahaparinirvana Sutra* states:

> '... son of my lineage, even those who keep close company with me, must not eat meat. Even if, in a gesture of faith, almsgivers provide them with meat, they must shrink from it as they would shrink from the flesh of their own children ... eating meat destroys the attitude of great compassion'.
> 'But in the past, O Lord' asked Kashyapa 'did you not allow the eating of meat found suitable after it has been examined in three ways?'
> 'Yes,' the Buddha said. 'I allowed the eating of meat found suitable after threefold examination in order to assist those who were striving to overcome their habit of eating meat.'

Theravada Buddhism makes the distinction between 'blameful' and 'blameless' meat. Blameless meat is when the monk has not witnessed the killing of the animal; the monk has not been told that the meat has been prepared specially for him; and the monk does not suspect that such a meal was being prepared. Direct involvement in the killing of the animal is bad *karma*, so butchering is an inappropriate occupation for Buddhists. The strict position of Mahayana texts probably reflects Mahayana monasteries, which had their own fields and therefore did not have to rely on donated food.

The fifth precept, to refrain from intoxicants, implies abstinence from alcohol and other drugs. Monks and nuns are expected to abstain from alcohol but lay Buddhists may partake of alcohol as long as they do not overindulge so as to cloud their judgement and reduce self-control. Buddhist concerns over meat and alcohol arise from the potential to bind the person to the wheel of *samsara* and thereby delay nirvana.

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ACTIVITY **1.67**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Use the internet to help you research and answer the following questions on dietary considerations in Buddhism.

1. Investigate the different views on vegetarianism in Theravada, Mahayana, Tibetan and Zen Buddhism. Summarise your findings in a table. Where possible, find examples from Buddhist texts that support/explain each position.
2. How is vegetarianism related to the First Precept?
3. Formulate an argument which defends eating meat as a Buddhist. Is there a difference for the laity and for monks? What should a monk do who has received meat in daily alms?
4. How would you personally answer the following question: 'If there was a very strict vegetarian who was selfish, dishonest and mean, and another person who was not a vegetarian but who was thoughtful to others, honest, generous and kind, which of these two would be the better Buddhist?'

Socially engaged Buddhism

A relatively recent addition to Buddhism is a movement called 'socially engaged Buddhism'. It has become so popular that one scholar has argued that it is the 'new vehicle' complementing the existing vehicles of Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Socially engaged Buddhism, increasingly called 'engaged Buddhism', owes its visibility to the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh, who emphasises three Vietnamese ideas: awareness in daily life; social service; and social activism. These three ideas form the basis of socially engaged Buddhism in terms of its involvement with social, political, economic and ecological issues as well as being involved in the lives of ordinary families and communities.

Buddhism was always socially active throughout history, but at a more individual level. During the later part of the twentieth century, Western

Fourteen Precepts of the Order of Interbeing

1. Do not be idolatrous about or bound to any doctrine, theory or ideology, even a Buddhist one.
2. Do not think the knowledge you presently possess is changeless, absolute truth.
3. Do not force others, including children, by any means whatsoever, to adopt your views, whether by authority, threat, money, propaganda or even education.
4. Do not avoid contact with suffering or close your eyes before suffering.
5. Do not accumulate wealth while millions are hungry.
6. Do not maintain anger or hatred.
7. Do not lose yourself in dispersion and in your surroundings.
8. Do not utter words that can create discord and cause the community to break.
9. Do not say untruthful things for the sake of personal interest or to impress people.
10. Do not use the Buddhist community for personal gain or profit, or transform your community into a political party.
11. Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans and nature.
12. Do not kill. Do not let others kill.
13. Possess nothing that should belong to others.
14. Do not mistreat your body.

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Buddhists became involved in forms of social protest and eventually socially engaged Buddhists began to publicly boycott what they considered as unjust practices, and to establish hospices, work in ecological programs and engage in letter writing campaigns related to Buddhist moral values.

Some socially engaged Buddhists have extended the traditional five vows of the laity to 14 precepts. These precepts are followed by the Order of Interbeing, a community of activist-practitioners founded in 1964.

Opinion is divided as to whether engaged Buddhism is a 'new' form of Buddhism or whether it is a continuation of traditional Buddhism. Those in favour of engaged Buddhism portray the Buddha as a social activist rather than someone who renounced the world. In Queensland, for instance, Buddha Light and monks of the Fo Guang Shan donate funds to research, community groups, hospitals and relief efforts.

ACTIVITY 1.68

Finding and analysing

Research the above-mentioned agencies on the internet and then create a FAQ for each organisation. You could begin with who, what, where, when and why questions.

Conclusion

Buddhism originated in the East but over the past one hundred years or so has increased its presence in the West. Many Buddhist ideas have been made available to people who are not themselves practising Buddhists. Some of this influence occurs implicitly through statues of the Buddha available in garden and homewares shops. Also, practices of meditation have been made available through self-help books. Engaged Buddhism reaches out to the community to assist through acts of compassion and has a slightly more missionary edge than other forms of Buddhism.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions on Buddhism.

1.6 Australian Aboriginal spiritualities

Introduction

Aboriginal peoples have lived in Australia for over 40 000 years. At the time of European contact, there were over 300 000 Indigenous Australians. Aboriginal peoples are separated into over 600 language groups, comprising more than 250 Indigenous languages, which, while belonging to the same linguistic family, are quite distinct.

Aboriginal cultures vary, as each Aboriginal group is virtually an independent socio-cultural group belonging to a certain area. It is not possible to speak of a single Aboriginal culture. Nor is it possible to speak about Aboriginal spiritualities as a single idea. There are, however, some basic similarities related to ritual expression, even though there may be differences in practice, meaning and interpretation.

ACTIVITY 1.69

Forming and finding

1. What is the name of the Aboriginal peoples in your local area?
2. What are Aboriginal spiritualities?
3. Name 10 famous Indigenous Australians.
4. What government policies were specifically directed at Indigenous Australians?
5. What role does religion play in the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Australia?
6. What role has Christianity played in the past history of Indigenous people in Australia? What role does it play now?
7. Generate a class list of sites that are sacred and/or significant to Aboriginal peoples.
8. Generate a class list of spiritual beings to which Aboriginal spiritualities refer.

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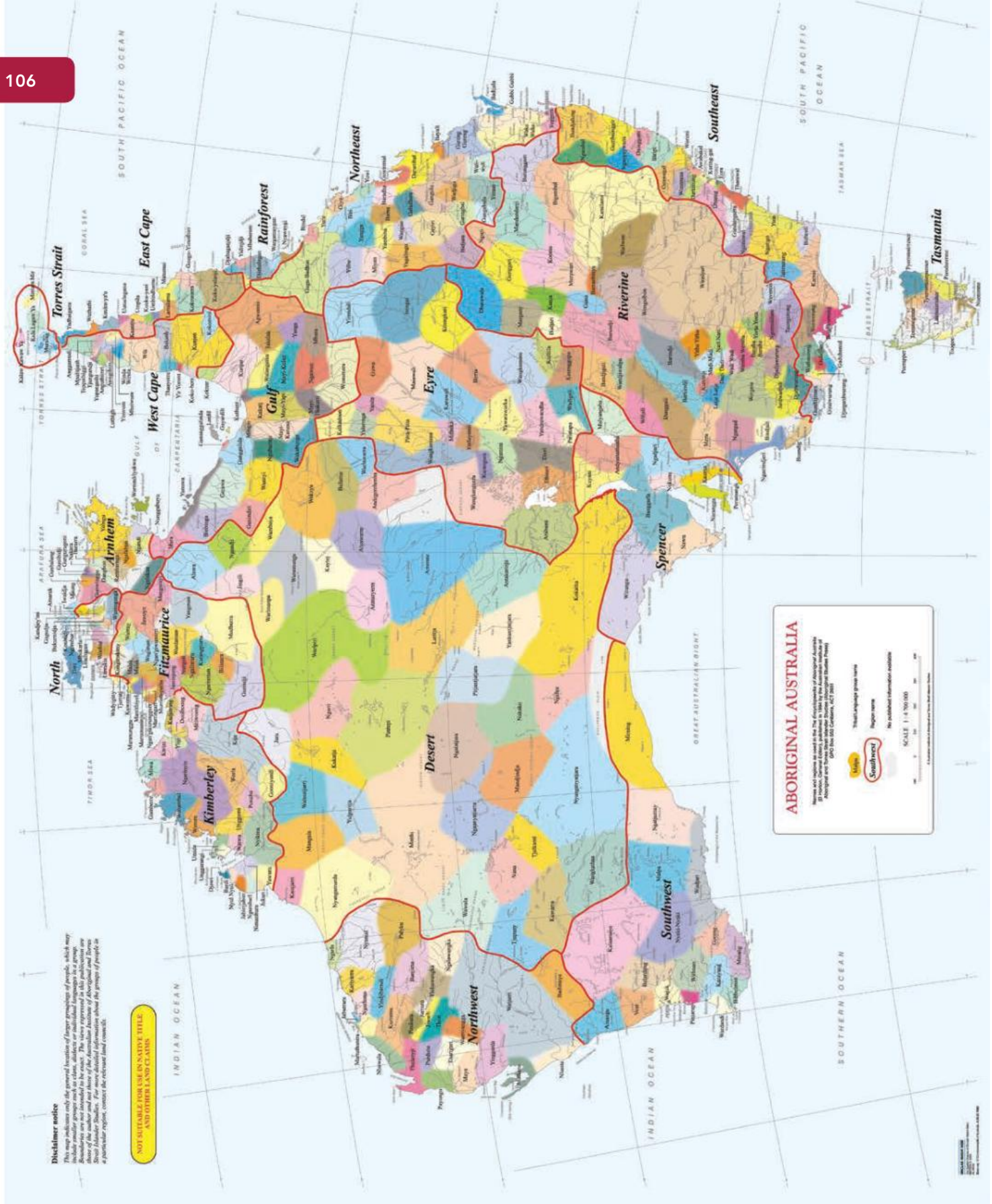


FIGURE 1.72 This map is just one representation of many map sources that are available for Aboriginal Australia. Using published resources available between 1988–94, the map attempts to represent all the language or nation groups of the Indigenous people of Australia. It indicates only the general location of larger groupings of people which may include smaller groups such as clans, dialects or individual languages in a group. Boundaries are not intended to be exact. This map is NOT SUITABLE FOR USE IN NATIVE TITLE AND OTHER LAND CLAIMS. David R. Horton, creator, © Aboriginal Studies Press and Auslig/Sinclair, Knight, Merz, 1996. To purchase a print version visit: www.aiatsis.ashop.com.au.

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It is inappropriate to label Aboriginal groups as 'tribes' because there were no tribal leaders. It is also inappropriate to describe them as nomads, as this term suggests a lack of connection to the land. Aboriginal people moved from place to place on a cyclical timetable to look after their country physically and spiritually and to access seasonally available food. Relationships with other Aboriginal groups were governed by a complex web of structures. At the base was the family but, for hunting purposes, the family was part of a larger group of up to 50 people. Relationships are also organised according to totemic association, descent and relationship to the land and particular sites within it. Marriage was governed by a series of rules and for some groups a complex plan developed so that family intermarriage was avoided.

Culture

Aboriginal **culture** is characterised by a fusion of the spiritual and the material. The daily tasks of life are imbued with religious meaning. Rituals sustain and reaffirm the community's relationship with the land. For Indigenous people, the land is a text that they learn to read, and their paintings, rock carvings and sculptures express and maintain their spiritual beliefs in the same way that scriptures do for other religions.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have various understandings of country, some of which might be based on traditional or generational knowledge; other understandings may be the result of colonisation. The natural environment is significant to Indigenous people not only because it provides food, medicine and shelter, but also because tools, weapons and ceremonial objects are made from the natural environment. Certain features of the landscape are invested with spiritual meaning.

culture
the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group

FIGURE 1.73 Aboriginal rock art at Carnarvon Gorge in Queensland



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ACTIVITY **1.70**

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Search the internet to investigate the diversity of Aboriginal seasons and weather knowledge. A general background can be found using the Australian Bureau of Meteorology website.
2 Read about the seasons of the Bininj/Mungguy people of Kakadu in more detail. A useful place to start is the Parks Australia website, where you can search 'Kakadu'.
3 In a T-chart, show how the Bininj/Mungguy seasons are similar to, and different from, the seasons in your local area.
4 Create a circular chart, like the one from Kakadu, showing some weather patterns and environmental events that occur in your local area. Indicate on the chart how some of these might provide significant and useful information to those living a traditional Aboriginal lifestyle there.
5 To what extent is the European seasonal calendar adequate to describe and predict weather in your local area? Provide reasons for your answer.
6 Suggest ways in which knowledge of the weather and country might be significant in Aboriginal spiritualities.

Terminology

- 'Country' is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe the place of family origins and links to particular parts of the Australian landscape. Knowledge of country is localised and one reason that Aboriginal people may feel uncomfortable in a strange environment is that they cannot read and respond to the environment as well as they would in their home country.
- *Altjiranga*: *The Dreaming* in the language of the Arrernte people from central Australia.
- *Wongar*: *The Dreaming* in the language of the people of northeast Australia and Arnhem land.
- *Ungud*: *The Dreaming* in the language of the Ngarinyin people, from the north of Western Australia.
- *Tjukurpa*: *The Dreaming* in the language of the Pitjantjatjara people, from the northwest of South Australia.
- *Bugari*: *The Dreaming* in the language of the people from Broome, in the north of Western Australia.

The Dreaming
a term used to describe a time of ancestral creation and the origins of all things for Indigenous Australians

The Dreaming

One significant feature of Aboriginal spiritualities is ***The Dreaming***, a non-Aboriginal term coined by anthropologists and now used by some Indigenous people. *The Dreaming* is sometimes expressed in local language as *altjiranga*, *wongar*, *ungud*, *tjukurpa* and *bugari*. The difficulty with the term 'The Dreaming' is that the single term does not acknowledge the diversity of Aboriginal groups.

The term 'The Dreamtime' was first used in the early twentieth century to describe how the ancestor spirits shaped the world and established

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the 'law', or way of life, to be followed by the Arrernte-speaking people. The Karadjiri people of the Kimberleys use *bugari* to refer to the period when the ancestor spirits formed the earth's features and instituted the 'law'.

The Dreaming has a number of meanings, including:

- the narrative myths of creation and ancestor beings
- the embodiment of spiritual power of the ancestor beings in the land, places or flora and fauna
- a way of life or 'law' that includes moral and social teachings, as well as ritual practices
- the personal life of Aboriginal people that connects them to their land.

The Dreaming sets out the structure of society, the rules for social behaviour and the ceremonies performed to maintain the life of the land. *The Dreaming* also relates to the Aboriginal concept of time, which is governed by phases of the moon, the sun and the seasons. Ancestor beings of *The Dreaming* are beings who are born and die, yet remain eternally present. Their spirits are passed on to their descendants, such as Snake, Kangaroo, Crocodile, Bird and Fish, which have become totems for various groups.

While *The Dreaming* may refer to times in the past, it is also ever-present and connects people, past and present. *The Dreaming* is a real and concrete part of Aboriginal life and has nothing to do with Western concepts of dreams, imagination or illusion. Some commentators argue that it is not valid to confine the term *The Dreaming* to 'religion' in the Western sense, as *The Dreaming* informs every aspect of Indigenous culture, society and spirituality.



FIGURE 1.74 The Wandjina are creator spirits from *The Dreaming*. Tradition holds that these marks were made by the Wandjina when they left the world and entered the spirit world. The Mowanjum Community keeps the images fresh at Raft Point, in the Kimberley region.

ACTIVITY 1.71

Finding

Locate two or three stories of *The Dreaming* from different Aboriginal groups and places.

1. What does the story tell you about the people and their relationship with the land, ancestor beings and each other?
2. Use evidence from the stories to support your claims. A useful source for this search is the website Dust Echoes. This site contains 12 chapters, each with a video of a story and a link to a PDF with more information and questions. Search for 'Dust Echoes' online.

ACTIVITY 1.72

Evaluating

Is *The Dreaming* a more useful English-language term to describe this reality than 'The Dreamtime'? Write a well-structured paragraph of 150 words (employing a topic sentence, elaboration and evidence sentences, and a concluding sentence) to express your answer and the reasons for your viewpoint.

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Totemic identity

Some Aboriginal people's relationship with *The Dreaming* is expressed through their **totemic identity** – an alter ego that orients the person. People are born into a totem, which may be an animal, plant or part of the natural environment. A person belongs to that totemic group for life.

totemic identity a feature of Indigenous Australian spiritualities, which orients the person to a particular totem (e.g. snake, crocodile)

lores traditional knowledge or beliefs

People who share the same totem have a special relationship with each other. Knowing and preserving one's totem ensures that a person's social identity is conserved and the person exercises responsibility related to their totem. A totem not only grounds a person spiritually, but also locates them physically in their country and imposes ritual responsibilities related to their totem area. Totemic identity includes knowing the country's songs, knowing how it was created during *The Dreaming* and knowing the symbols of body painting related to the totem. There are also certain taboos related to a totem – for instance, people are rarely allowed to eat their totem, because in doing so they consume part of themselves.

There are many **lores** and rules related to totems that differ from one language group to another. These include:



FIGURE 1.75 Tiwi people in body paint for a ceremony

- In some language groups men and women eat meals separately.
- In some areas men do all the cooking, while in other areas women must do it.
- Some foods have spiritual significance. These animals and plants need to be protected and are often not eaten or only eaten during ceremonies.
- Pregnant women, boys before initiation and girls before puberty are denied some food for sacred reasons.
- Certain foods are prepared by women, others by men. Generally, yams, roots, nuts, fruit and shellfish are prepared by women, while men prepare flesh foods such as kangaroo and emu. This rule is not the same in all language groups.
- In some language groups, during mourning, or *sorry business*, or during some ceremonies, only certain people can feed other particular people. For example, in some areas a person who is mourning may not touch food until ceremonies for the deceased are finished ('Birth ceremonies, totems and rights in Aboriginal society,' QSA Resource Indigenous Perspectives website, April 2008).

Anthropological investigations and classifications

A 1974 investigation by R.M. Berndt, a non-Indigenous Australian, suggested that there were four main groups of Aboriginal religions. The first group included people from Arnhem Land to the Kimberleys in northern Australia; the second from desert areas in central Australia; the third from southeastern Australia in New South Wales and Victoria; and the fourth from Cape York. Another anthropologist, A.P. Elkin argued that there were three waves of religious influence: the northwest wave with circumcision as the central rite; the northeast wave from Cape York to the Murray Valley with an emphasis on 'sky-gods'; and the wave from Arnhem Land with a focus on fertility.

Nicholas Peterson, an anthropologist, identifies two religious groups: the inland desert

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peoples and the woodland/coastal peoples. Each group had, according to Peterson, a different religious focus: desert peoples were concerned with fertility, and woodland/coastal people were concerned with death and the safe passage of spirits back to the land.

Other scholars have noted that coastal groups tend not to employ male initiation rites such as circumcision, while these are present in the Arrernte, Pitjantjatjara and Walbiri communities. Unfortunately, many of the early anthropologists and ethnographers had little interest in religion and merely noted actions and rituals of Aboriginal peoples as evidence of their 'primal religion'. The use of the descriptor 'primal' implies that Aboriginal religions are inferior to major world religions. This type of comparison does not acknowledge the important role religion plays in the lives of Indigenous people nor does it recognise the complexities of examining a religion as an outsider.

ACTIVITY 1.73

Analysing

This section has described the findings of three particular anthropologists and 'other scholars'. Compare and contrast the information yielded by these four sources. Devise a chart, map or diagram to show the points of similarity and difference between them. In your chart, map or diagram, highlight ideas that reference the sacred.

Government policy

The creation of Aboriginal Reserves between the 1860s and 1890s led to much dislocation of Aboriginal people from their country. Indigenous people see this as a loss of agency because colonisers 'rounded them up' and placed them in compounds under the authority of protection boards. This was a period that interrupted Aboriginal ceremony and maintenance of country.

Government policies related to Aboriginal people can be categorised into three general areas:

1. control and protectionism
2. assimilation and integration
3. self-determination and self-management.

Policies of control and protectionism existed between 1788 and the early 1930s and gave governments the power to control all aspects of Indigenous peoples' lives, including employment, education and social interaction. The Chief Protector could move people from town to town and indiscriminately place people on missions or reserves. Before an Aboriginal person could be employed, they had to be issued with a permit from the Chief Protector and employers did not have to pay wages if they fed the Aboriginal person and their dependants. If a person was paid a wage, the money was kept in the care of the Chief Protector and Aboriginal people had to request money to purchase anything, including personal items.

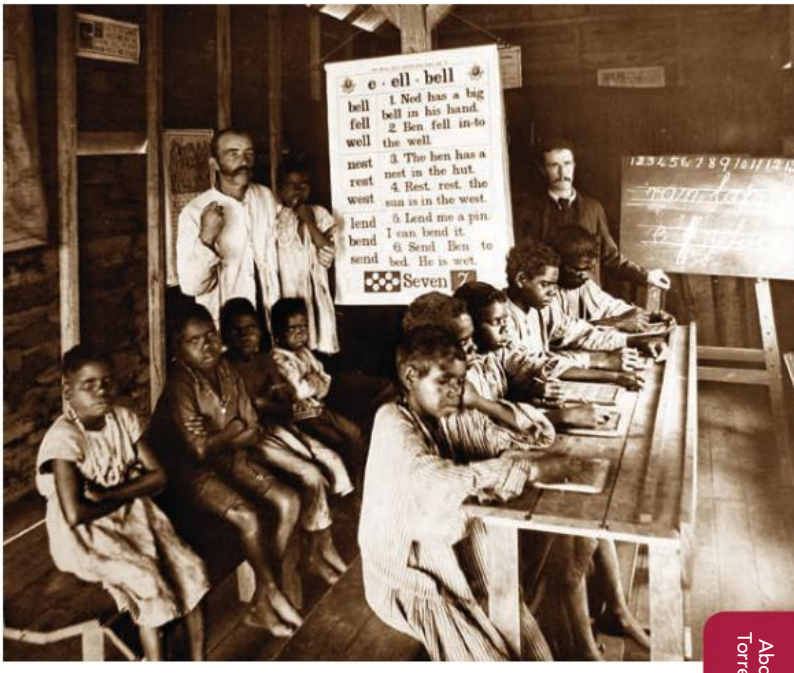


FIGURE 1.76 Aboriginal children were taken from their parents and sent to mission schools like this one in Queensland.

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Also covered under the Protectionist Act was the state and territory governments' power to remove Aboriginal children from their parents. Children with light coloured skin were removed from 'uncivilised' parents and placed with either white families or on Christian missions to be educated and 'made white'.

From 1934 to 1972, assimilation and integration policies were introduced, with the stated aim of enabling Aboriginal peoples to attain similar standards as white people. These policies were really aimed at eradicating 'full-blood' Aboriginal people, being a form of cultural genocide. While assimilation policies appeared to relax the rules and provide freedom of movement, they did not provide the basis for self-sufficiency within the wider community. They were also problematic for people who wished to maintain their own culture and for those who had spent decades separated from mainstream society under the Chief Protector's control.

The fight for citizenship rights for Aboriginal peoples came to a head during this period. When the Australian Constitution was adopted in 1901 Aboriginal people had no political power. Section 51 stated:

> The Parliament shall subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws for the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth with respect to … (xxvi) The people of any race, other than the Aboriginal race in any State, for whom it is deemed necessary to make special laws.

Section 127 stated:

> In reckoning the number of people of the Commonwealth, or of a State or other part of the Commonwealth, Aboriginal natives shall not be counted.



FIGURE 1.77 Bill Onus, President of the Victorian Aborigines' Advancement League, taking part in a march for the Aboriginal Rights referendum in 1967

In 1967, a referendum was held asking Australians to vote either 'yes' or 'no' to change the Constitution to include Aboriginal people in the Census and to give the Commonwealth the power to make laws with regard to them. The result of the 1967 Referendum remains the largest affirmative vote in all 44 constitutional referenda held in Australia, with 90 per cent of voters approving the changes to the Constitution.

In 1972, the Whitlam Labor Government introduced wide-ranging social reforms for Aboriginal peoples, which opened up their access to traditional lands. The government provided money for large-scale programs to promote self-determination and improve education for Indigenous peoples. It also introduced a reconciliation policy that marked a shift away from the paternalism of the past.

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ACTIVITY 1.74

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Locate at least two of the following movies, including one recent release and one more than 20 years old. These could be on DVD, or movies/trailers found on the internet:

- *Jedda* (1955)
- *The Fringe Dwellers* (1986)
- *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002)
- *The Tracker* (2002)
- *Ten Canoes* (2006)
- *Samson and Delilah* (2009)
- *Sweet Country* (2017).

1. View a short segment (no more than 10 minutes) of the films you have chosen.
2. What view of Aboriginal people is presented in the films?
3. What view of Aboriginal spiritualities is presented?
4. Has the view of spirituality changed over time? What evidence can you identify to support your response?

Christian missions

The Christian churches' involvement in Aboriginal missions has been both criticised and praised. Some argue that the missions obstructed culture, kept Indigenous groups at a distance from their country and created generations of people who did not belong within either Indigenous or white society. Others argue that without the missions the future of Aboriginal people would have been made worse, as the government and settlers appropriated their land and they were raped and murdered.

Although Roman Catholic involvement in Aboriginal history is not large there are a number of examples, including a few we will mention here. Bishop Polding, the first Catholic Bishop in Australia, spoke out against the mistreatment of Aboriginal people at a parliamentary committee on Aborigines in 1845. He criticised the way in which Aboriginal people were denied rights and dispossessed from their land.



FIGURE 1.78 Bishop John Bede Polding

In 1846, two Spanish Benedictine monks came to Western Australia and established a monastery at New Norcia, which operated as a school and farm for Aboriginal children. In Queensland, four Italian Passionist order priests began a mission at Stradbroke Island in 1843, where they attempted to learn the language and convert people to Christianity. Despite much work, the mission failed. Another mission was established on Bribie Island in the 1870s.

Lutheran missions were established in South Australia in the early 1860s, and in 1866 a mission was started at Killapaninna with the Dieri people. Hermannsburg mission was established in central Australia in 1877 and existed until 1982. The Lutheran missionaries attempted to mediate conflict between the pastoralists, the police and the Aboriginal people and opposed violence against Indigenous people.

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FIGURE 1.79 Abbey Church in New Norcia



FIGURE 1.80 The mission chapel in Hermannsburg Aboriginal community in Alice Springs, Northern Territory

In Queensland, the mission station Elim, later known as Hope Vale, outside Cooktown, was established in 1885 by the German missionary Johann Flierl. In 1887 he was replaced by George Schwartz, who remained at Hope Vale for over 50 years.

During World War II, Schwartz was put into an internment camp because he was German and in May 1942, 254 Aboriginal people were evacuated without notice and removed to Woorabinda, west of Rockhampton. The mission area was occupied by the Australian and United States Army and Airforce. Hundreds of Hope Vale people died while at Woorabinda from an outbreak of influenza, as they were not used to the colder conditions. The survivors were not allowed to return to Hope Vale until 1949.

Missionaries had a different goal from government and settlers. While they were motivated primarily by the concern to 'save souls', they were also driven by compassion for Aboriginal people and how they were treated. As a result of Christian missionary activity, some Indigenous peoples' religious practice has strong Christian overtones while still drawing on Indigenous religious and cultural beliefs and practice.

ACTIVITY **1.75**

Finding and analysing

1 Generate a list of missions that existed in your state.
2 Locate them on a map of your state.
3 Choose one mission to investigate and find out as much as you can about:
   a significant events in its history
   b everyday occurrences and the routines of those who lived there.

Conclusion

Land is central to Aboriginal people. It has taken nearly two hundred years for colonial Australians to begin to understand the spiritual connection Aboriginal people have with land and country. *The Dreaming* provides Aboriginal people with a sense of self and identity. It offers them a spiritual connection between past and present and sustains them in their daily life.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions on Aboriginal Australian spiritualities.

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CASE STUDY

Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal



FIGURE 1.81 Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal

Oodgeroo of the Noonuccal (1920–1993) was born Kathleen Jean Mary Ruska on Minjerribah (Stradbroke Island), and belongs to the Noonuccal Aboriginal group, who are custodians for part of the land of Stradbroke Island. She shared with her father *The Dreaming* totem of the carpet snake (Kabul). She was known as a writer and political activist by her married name, Kath Walker, and resumed her traditional name, Oodgeroo, in 1988. She returned her MBE in protest at the condition of her people in 1988, the year of Australia's Bicentenary celebrations.

Oodgeroo left school at 13 and worked as a domestic servant until 1939, when she volunteered for service in the Australian Women's Army Service. Between 1961 and 1970, Oodgeroo achieved national prominence, not only as the Queensland State Secretary of the Council for the Advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders (CAATSI), but also through her highly popular poetry and writing. In 1964, she released *We Are Going*, a collection of verse, and in the process she became the first Aboriginal woman to have her work published. *We Are Going* sold out in three days.

She was also involved with many Aboriginal rights organisations such as the National Tribal Council, the Aboriginal Arts Board, the Aboriginal Housing Committee and the Queensland Aboriginal Advancement League. Oodgeroo spent her last years on Stradbroke Island where she established a cultural and environmental education centre known as Moongalba (resting-place).

'Son of Mine', a poem written during the 1970s, graphically tells the history of Aboriginal people in Australia from an Indigenous perspective.

Son of Mine

To Denis
My son, your troubled eyes search mine,
Puzzled and hurt by colour line.
Your black skin as soft as velvet shine;
What can I tell you, son of mine?

I could tell you of heartbreak, hatred blind,
I could tell you of crimes that shame mankind,
Of brutal wrong and deeds malign,
Of rape and murder, son of mine;

But I'll tell you instead of brave and fine
When lives of black and white entwine,
And men in brotherhood combine—
This would I tell you, son of mine.

Oodgeroo Noonuccal – from *The Dawn Is at Hand*, Australian Poetry Library.

ACTIVITY 1.76

Analysing

Read Oodgeroo's poem 'Son of Mine' and answer these questions.

1. In your own words, explain the meaning of 'puzzled and hurt by colour line'.
2. Conduct a PMI analysis of the poem and the ideas it communicates.
3. Why do you think the poet would choose to tell her son of positive, rather than destructive, race relations in Australia?
4. In the five decades since the poem was written, to what extent has Oodgeroo's vision of 'when lives of black and white entwine / and men in brotherhood combine' been affirmed? Give reasons for your answer.

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1.7 Torres Strait Islander religion

Of the 649 200 people who identified as being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander in the 2016 Australian census, 91 per cent (590 772) were Aboriginal, 5.0 per cent (32 460) were Torres Strait Islander and 4.1 per cent (26 617) identified as being of both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander descent.

ACTIVITY **1.77**

Forming and finding

Refer to the TSRA (Torres Strait Regional Authority) website via the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8578, and view the map on the Australian National Museum website via the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8579.

Identify the countries that directly surround the Torres Strait Islands. What constitutes the Torres Strait Island communities and how many are there?

Geography and history

Located north of Cape York, the Torres Strait Islands are sprinkled across the strait between Australia and Papua New Guinea. The islands are the remaining peaks of a land bridge which originally connected Australia and Papua New Guinea. One of the islands in the western group is only four kilometres from the shores of Papua New Guinea.

The Torres Strait Islands are geographically diverse and can be divided into four sections: an eastern section of volcanic islands; a central section of low sandy islands; a western group of high islands of volcanic rocks; and a northern section of low mangrove islands. Such environmental diversity encouraged Islanders to practise a variety of subsistence lifestyles prior to European contact in the mid-nineteenth century. Currently, there are 17 inhabited islands and two communities located off the tip of Cape York. The islands and communities are shown in Table 1.5.

In 1606, Luis Vaz de Torres, a Portuguese (Galician) sailor captaining a Spanish expedition from South America to Manila, sailed along the

TABLE 1.5 Torres Strait Islands and communities

Eastern islands	Central islands	Western islands	Northern islands	Cape York communities
Mer (Murray Island) Erub (Darnley Island) Ugar (Stephen or Stephens Island)	Iama (Yam or Turtle-backed Island) Masig (Yorke Island) Warraber (Sue Island) Puruma (or Poruma) (Coconut Island)	Badu (Mulgrave Island) Moa (Banks Island) Mabuiag (Jervis Island) Waiben (or Wayben) (Thursday Island) Kiriri (Hammond Island) Nurupai (or Ngurupai) (Horn Island) Muralag (Prince of Wales Island)	Saibai (Saibai Island) Boigu (Talbot Island) Dauan (Mt Cornwallis Island)	Bamaga

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FIGURE 1.82 Map of the Torres Strait Islands

north coast of New Guinea and then around the southern coast into the strait of water which now bears his name. However, it was not until the 1860s when the islands became the centre of commercial pearling and bêche-de-mer fishing that contact between the Indigenous peoples and Europeans intensified. Within 20 years, Torres Strait Island communities were a mixture of Pacific Islanders, Australian Aboriginals, Europeans as well as Torres Strait Islanders. Later, Filipinos, Malays and Japanese were employed. In 1868 the Queensland Government moved to have the region under its jurisdiction, as employing Pacific Islanders was outside the Queensland *Polynesian Labourers Act*. In 1877, the islands of Mer, Erub, Ugar, Saibai, Dauan and Boigu were under the jurisdiction of the Governor of Fiji and the Western Pacific High Commission. But in 1879, Queensland annexed all of the Torres Strait Islands with the passing of the *Queensland Coast Island Act*.

In 1897, the Queensland Government introduced the *Aboriginal Protection and Restriction of the Sale of Opium Act*, which

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was extended to include the Torres Strait Islands in 1904. From that time until the mid 1960s, Islanders lived under the control of the Government Protector; they had no access to their own lands and lost all civil rights. Many islands were declared 'Aboriginal Reserves', which meant that people had to seek permits for travel to other islands and the mainland. The Protector took the wages of the Torres Strait Islanders and these laws ensured they had to seek his permission for all manner of things including marriages and other personal arrangements.

In the late 1960s, when Torres Strait Islanders regained freedom of movement, many settled on mainland Australia. Today the total population of Torres Strait Islanders is about 32 460 people.

Land rights

In 1982, the people of Mer Island, led by Eddie Mabo, lodged a claim with the High Court of Australia seeking restoration of the sovereignty of their land and waterways. Ten years later, the landmark decision recognising the Islanders' legal rights to 'native' or 'traditional title' led to the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993*. The anniversary of the Mabo case, as it is known, is celebrated annually by Torres Strait Islanders throughout Australia on 3 June.

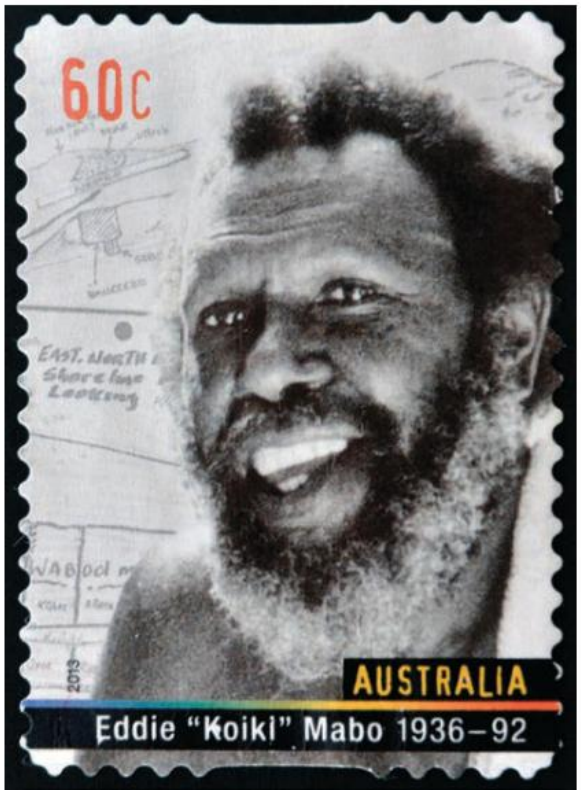


FIGURE 1.83 A stamp printed in Australia shows Eddie Koiki Mabo, c. 2013

ACTIVITY **1.78**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Search the internet for information on Eddie Mabo and his quest for Indigenous land rights.

Use the information to create a short presentation to the class that analyses and evaluates the most important influences of Mabo's efforts on the success of the overturning of the idea of terra nullius (that the land was unoccupied before the arrival of Europeans).

ACTIVITY **1.79**

Finding and analysing

Search online for Eddie Mabo's address to the Land Rights Conference in 1981.

1. Read the explanation of the Torres Strait culture of land rights. Create a paragraph (150 words) that explains the main points of land ownership for Torres Strait Islanders. Include how this differs from a contemporary Australian culture of land ownership.
2. List the reasons Mabo presents for change. What changes does he suggest?

The pre-Christian belief system

According to Torres Strait Elders, traditional Torres Strait belief was similar to that of the neighbouring Papuan peoples and Melanesian beliefs in general. It has been described as

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FIGURE 1.84 Totem pole at the Gab Titui Cultural Centre on Thursday Island, Torres Strait Islands

a network of totemism, **animism**, god/spirit worship, ancestor worship and cult worship. Political, social and religious power was more or less inseparable and so the important people in the *buwai* (clan) were also political, social and religious leaders. For Torres Strait Islanders, one of the most important part of the belief system is *augadh* (totems). The totems are usually animals, although in rare cases there are some plant totems, with sub-totems relating to the stars or constellations and the weather, particularly the wind. The totems form part of the identity of each person within his or her *buwai* as well as his or her place in society, the world and the universe. Torres Strait Islanders learn that the totem is an ancestral place of origin and that their whole being, thoughts, actions and worldview is of the *augadh* and when they die they return to that place of origin. Children, especially those from the *Dhoeibaw Buwai* (Yam Clan) and *Samu Buwai* (Cassowary Clan) learnt about *Zugub*, gods, who are also sub-*augadh* who manage the weather, especially rain, and are associated with constellations.

They learnt about souls and spirits, the former being associated with humans and the latter with non-human gods. The 'soul', called *mari*, lives within a person and leaves the body on death. *Mari* are black in colour. Sometimes it is possible for the soul to leave the body while the person is sleeping – a journey that may be remembered in dreams. Therefore, it is important not to wake up a sleeping person in case the *mari* has temporarily left the body; if it cannot get back into that person's body then that person will be 'soulless' and the *mari* lost and dangerous. After a person's death, the soul stays for a time with the deceased in the grave – the *mari*'s temporary home until the grave is opened. Then the *mari* journeys to Boigu, a large island in the northwest corner of the Torres Strait, where it becomes a *markai*, or ancestral spirit, and travels to *Kibukuth* (literally meaning 'source-origin-end') over the western horizon (in Meriam Mir the name is *Beg*, which is related to the name Boigu). At Boigu, the *mari* explains to the Boigu spirit talker how it died, and the spirit talker passes this information on to the *mari*'s relatives.

animism
a belief that spirits inhabit nature and have influence over people and natural events

Traditional knowledge was, and continues to be, passed on through song, dance, ceremonies, important stories (*adhi*) and general discussions within the *buwai*. The totems and other beings, because they govern the universe, continue to be important in everyday life. Their assistance may be requested through prayer (*thoeithupoegai*) and/or magic (*puy*), spell or medicine. It is also important to praise them through song (*na*) and dance (*girel*).

Missionisation

In July 1871, Samuel MacFarlane and A.W. Murray from the London Missionary Society (LMS) brought Christian missionaries to Erub Island in the eastern Torres Strait. The LMS employed various Pacific Islanders as pastors and as a result Melanesian cultures and

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FIGURE 1.85 Church and mission house in Yorke Island, Torres Strait Islands

Polynesian cultures had a profound impact on the traditional practices of the Torres Strait people in the second half of the nineteenth century. Today these influences are seen in music, dance and religious practices in the islands. The missionaries assisted the colonial administration by offering protection against illegal raiding of the Torres Strait by men from the pearl-shelling stations.

By the end of the nineteenth century most Torres Strait Islander communities were nominally Christian and these communities were formed around the nucleus of the Christian church. The only exception to the Protestant influence on the islands was at Waiben, where the Catholic Congregation of the Sacred Heart fathers established a mission in 1884.

All aspects of Islander life, including education, were controlled by the LMS. The LMS maintained its influence in the Torres Strait until the end of 1914 when it handed over its activities to the Church of England (Anglicans). In 1915, school education passed to the Queensland Government and the Church of England took responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Islanders until the mid 1960s.

The LMS objected to the traditional dance of the Islanders called *prapa dans*, particularly if it was linked to warfare or initiation rituals, and it not only tried to prevent performance of *prapa dans* but also tried to replace it with South Sea Island dancing as well as aligning the dance performances with feasts in the Christian calendar. In 1912, the British anthropologist Alfred Haddon, noted that:

> … dancing has been greatly discouraged by the missionaries … the teachers, who are South-Sea men, do not discourage the dances of the Polynesians and Melanesians who reside on or visit the islands, consequently one finds at the present day natives dancing alien dances.
>
> Source: Haddon, 1912, cited in Davis, 2004, p. 290.

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After the withdrawal of the LMS in 1914, the mission in the Torres Strait was passed to the Anglican diocese of Carpentaria. On the whole, the Anglican hierarchy were more accepting of aspects of Torres Strait Islander practices than the LMS. The Australian anthropologist Jeremy Beckett described the Anglican policy as adapting to local conditions:

> The LMS had at times teachers who were rather narrow and rigid in outlook … the Calvinist-Pentecostal teaching enforced by some did not make appeal… when the Anglican Church took over … the use of native drums (which had been banned under the LMS in connection with dances) were brought back into use again and they were introduced into church services to accompany the singing.
>
> Source: Lahn, 2004, in Davis, 2004, p. 78.

The Anglicans also incorporated dancing in Christian celebrations and hymns were translated into local languages rather than sung in English.

Ailan dans (island dance)

One of the major forms of dance performed in the Torres Strait is *ailan dans* (island dance), which is a prominent part of feasting-dancing enacted for birthdays, weddings, wedding anniversaries, farewell feasts, house openings, tombstone openings and Christian feastdays including Easter, Christmas, New Year and the annual Coming of the Light celebrations.

Usually performed by all-male and all-female groups in rows, the dancers wear matching costumes of the same fabric design or colour. Women wear *ailan dres* (island dress), *zazi* (coconut fronds over skirts tied around their waists), *makamak* (white cotton fabric strips tied

FIGURE 1.86 Saibai warriors from the Torres Strait Islands perform a war dance



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around their ankles), and other additions such as Christmas tinsel or strings of plastic flowers around the head. Men wear white singlets (*sasi*) worn over *kaliko* (a cotton sarong with locally crocheted edging), *makamak* and sometimes *sweta* (towelling fabric tied around the head). A headdress known as *dari* is often worn by men for dancing. *Dari* consists of white seabird feathers fastened to a painted cane framework. The feathers have trimmed ends which reflect the stylistic preferences of the person who made the headdress. The visual effect of the *dari* is to frame the face elliptically. When dancing at night, sharp head movements from side-to-side create a striking effect of the *dari* appearing and disappearing as the dancer alternately faces the audience and turns his head to one side. Often the dancers, especially those from the eastern islands, use *kulap* (rattle); sometimes women hold a small bow and arrow with rattling seeds attached. Women and men sing accompanied by an hourglass-shaped drum (*warup*), which probably originated in Papua New Guinea. The *warup* is usually painted in a single colour and decorated with flowers and the names of children or other close female relatives.

glossolalia
speaking in tongues

Pentecostalism

After World War II, many Torres Strait Islanders moved to mainland Australia where they encountered Pentecostalism. During the 1950s, the Assemblies of God (AOG) arrived in the Torres Strait and while the Pentecostalist church welcomed Torres Strait Islanders, it made no attempt to cater for their cultural traditions. Pentecostalism was not readily accepted by the majority of people and it received strong opposition from church officials on the islands. Local Islander-run courts had the power to detain, prosecute and fine Torres Strait Islanders for a number of mostly moral offences. There was also a decree that pastors would not be allowed onto reserves and that Pentecostalists could not hold public office.

Today, the division between Anglican and AOG congregations is evident in age, gender and kinship networks. Pentecostals tend to be younger, under 50, single women and more educated while Anglicans are generally over 50 years of age. The energetic, animated preaching style, singing in English and the absence of island drums as well as contemporary Western church-going dress of the AOG congregations is a visual and aural contrast with the local Anglican Church.

The AOG emphasises the practice of the three gifts of the Spirit: **glossolalia** (speaking with tongues); the ability to heal by laying on of hands; and the idea of personal holiness. In order to achieve personal holiness, a person must abstain from a range of behaviours, which includes dancing, smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol. Within AOG congregations, the practice of ailan *dans* is considered unchristian and even linked to the devil and, consequently, members of the AOG do not participate in traditional dancing and it is left out of feasting and Christian celebrations.

A common theme throughout both AOG and Anglican religiosity is a concern to break with the pre-Christian past and its associations with sorcery, polygamy and violence. On some islands, dance from the pre-Christian time is referred to as *prapa dans* (darkness) while ailan *dans* is post-Christian and linked to light. The pre-colonial metaphors of light and darkness are linked to the arrival of Christianity associating light with Christian power.

Coming of the Light

In 1919, Anglicanism instituted the annual 1 July celebration of the 1871 landing of the LMS as the Coming of the Light. At this religious festival, hymns are sung and dances performed and often a re-enactment is staged of the landing of LMS at Kemus on Erub Island. George Mye, a leader from Darnley Island, said that 'it was easy for the people to adapt to Christianity because of the spirituality that had already existed in the island … *zogo* is what spirituality is all about' (Davis, 2004, p. 78).

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FIGURE 1.87 Re-enactment during the Coming of the Light festival on the Torres Strait Islands

ACTIVITY 1.80

Finding and analysing

1 In a search engine enter NITV YouTube (National Indigenous Television). Select the NITV site and search on it for *Celebrating 'Coming of the Light' in the Torres Strait*.
2 Select two of the video clips and watch them.
3 After watching the clips, complete the 5Ws + H (what, when, where, why, who plus how) chart located on the Activity Worksheet related to the celebration of the Coming of the Light. Compare your 5Ws + H chart with another student. Using the information in the 5Ws + H chart as evidence, together write a 50-word statement about the Coming of the Light in the Torres Strait.

In accepting Christianity, the local people had to give up some of their traditional beliefs and practices such as headhunting and ritualistic cannibalism. Some Christian beliefs were incorporated into traditional life. For instance, the Holy Spirit (*maigi mari* – the untouchable Spirit) was called upon to not only help people but also to curse them. Traditional practices such as *wum* (mourning), grave preparation and initiation continue to be carried out albeit in a Christianised format.

Within the Islander belief system, the role of women is significant. Women had a major influence on the decision to incorporate Christianity into the island world and held important positions in the *buwai* as home-makers, gardeners, food-gatherers, child-bearers and comforters, as well as playing an important role in maintaining social harmony. To the women of the Torres Strait, Christianity promised peace and prosperity in an uncertain world of traditional male feuding.

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Catholic mission in the Torres Strait

In the late 1800s at the request of Pope Leo XIII, the Sacred Heart Fathers established a mission in Papua New Guinea. The priests decided that it would be beneficial to establish a mission in a location that could service both Australia and Papua New Guinea. Thursday Island was deemed to be appropriate because it could be used as a stop-over station between the mainland and Papua New Guinea. On 24 October 1884, Fathers Andre Navaree, Ferdinand Hartzer and Brother Giuseppe de Santis arrived on Thursday Island. The church, which still stands today, was built soon after their arrival and the brothers ran the mission until 1886 when the first Sisters of the Daughters of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart (OLSH) took charge of the mission. Sisters Madeleine Masselin, Claire Dessailly and Margaret Sweeny, the first Australian woman to join the order, taught at the school. Later the Sisters of Mercy from Cairns taught in the school.

Until 1908, Thursday Island, noted for its poly-ethnicity, was counted as one of the islands in the vicariate of British New Guinea. The Catholic mission spread, and in 1929 the Church established a mission on Hammond Island (Keriri) and in 1935 it established a mission church on Naghir Island. When Father Gsell MSC became bishop of Darwin in 1938, the Torres Strait mission was transferred to the Diocese of Darwin and became part of the Australian MSC province. Today, Thursday Island is part of the diocese of Cairns and is ministered to by local diocesan clergy, the MSC Sisters, the Sisters of Mercy and the wider Catholic community. The parish comprises Thursday Island (Waibene), Hammons Island (Keriri), Horn Island (Nurupai) and Bamaga.

Conclusion

Although not the intention of successive missionaries, the introduction of Christianity hastened the process of colonisation. Islanders accepted Christianity through proactively pragmatic and symbolic choices, enabling the missionaries to spread their word in the communities. Within the Torres Strait, religion has been and is an integral part of island society. It binds society and the universe together and helps maintain the harmony of the household, world and universe. Modern-day Torres Strait Islanders are, on the whole, a highly religious people for whom Christian belief is an important part of their culture.

Refer to the end of this chapter for review questions on Torres Strait Islander religion.

FIGURE 1.88 Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Church is a Queensland heritage-listed Roman Catholic church on Thursday Island, Australia, in the Torres Strait Archipelago.



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END-OF-CHAPTER QUESTIONS

JUDAISM

Forming: round robin placemats

Divide the class into groups of five or six. Each group has an A3 sheet with one of the following topics printed in the centre of each page. Each group devises one question related to the topic and records it on the sheet before passing it to the next group. Repeat the process until each group has devised a question for each page.

1. History: when did Judaism start?
2. Sacred texts: what are the names of the books in the Torah?
3. Groups: why do some male Jews wear tassels hanging below their shirt?
4. Ritual celebrations: what are the names of some Jewish rituals?
5. Judaism today: is Judaism maintaining levels of adherence?
6. Ultimate questions: what do Jews believe about the afterlife?
7. Religion–state relationships: what is the place and function of religious law in the State of Israel?
8. Religion and human rights: how many Jewish survivors of the Shoah are there in Australia?

Finding

Locate the following countries on the map of the world on the Activity Worksheet:

- Australia
- Israel
- United States
- Poland
- Spain
- United Kingdom.

1. Use the table on the same Activity Worksheet to record the percentage of Jews as a part of each country's population for the years shown.
2. Using Microsoft Excel or a similar program, translate the information from Question 1 into pie or column graphs showing the changes in population across time.
3. Choose a country and, using the information gathered, develop a possible hypothesis regarding the changing levels of population.

Analysing

1. Jigsaw activity: begin in three specialist groups: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism.
2. Research what each group believes, how, when and where they worship and interact with each other, and their relationships with the broader society. Collate the information and agree as an expert group on what information to report back to the mixed group.
3. Move into a mixed group of three with one representative from each of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism. Report your findings to the group. As a group, construct a three-way Venn diagram which compares and contrasts the similarities and differences across the three groups.

Evaluating

Search for the Jewish Australia website.

1. Explore the list of sites detailed on the website and from the information provided discern where the largest population of Jews are in Australia. Examine the types of support offered to Jewish communities.
2. You have been commissioned to write an introductory paragraph for the website for the section on 'Community Organisations'. After examining the list and exploring some of the various sites, construct the paragraph so that it provides both Jews and non-Jews with relevant information.

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3 What conclusions can you draw about the Jewish population in Australia? If you had a young Jewish friend immigrating to Australia, where would you advise them to live? Give reasons for your recommendation. Would your recommendation be the same for an elderly Orthodox Jewish man? Provide reasons for your response.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Judaism?
2 What have I learnt from Judaism?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Judaism?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Judaism is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Judaism and Jewish practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different forms of Judaism?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Judaism to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Judaism?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Judaism for adherents and the ways Judaism influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Judaism using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Judaism been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Judaism and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Judaism and Jews have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Judaism?

CHRISTIANITY

Forming and finding

1 List ways in which Christianity is evident in Australian culture.
2 Devise a list of 10 questions, the answers to each of which is 'Christianity'.

Finding and analysing

1 On a map, locate the key places mentioned in this chapter related to the founding and history of Christianity.
2 Choose three of the places you have identified and, for each, write a paragraph (100 words) describing the significance of this place for Christianity and Christians.

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Create a directory of charities or care services administered by Christian denominations in your local area. For each, provide its name, denomination, the services it provides and the teachings/principles of Christianity reflected in its work.
2 Consider the 'Central tenets of the Reformation' provided in this chapter. Identify any of these in the branding, language and priorities of the Protestant services and charities.
3 Generate a list of 10 Christian religious groups that operate in Australia. What is the particular charism, or spirituality, of each? How do they contribute to Australian society?

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Finding, analysing and evaluating

In his article 'As Australia becomes less religious, our parliament becomes more so', published in *The Conversation*, 21 August 2017 (available on The Conversation website, although the full article is not necessary to complete this activity), Jonathan D. James argues that Christianity's influence on Australian politics is not diminishing despite wider social trends. He explains that Christian politicians negotiate their religious values in four ways:

- A strong parliamentary Christian fellowship
- Faith-based delivery of social services
- Selective faith-keeping
- Invoking the conscience vote on controversial moral issues.

1. Given the profile of Australia's religious communities (see census data) and James's finding that 40 per cent of the Liberal–National Coalition Government and 30 per cent of the Australian Labor Party opposition identify as Christian, to what extent do you think the variety of religions in Australia are fairly represented in parliament?
2. Australian parliamentary sessions open with prayers, including the Protestant version of 'The Lord's Prayer'; the Australian Constitution invokes the blessing of 'Almighty God'; and Australia's Head of State is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England. In a table, list reasons for and against the continuation of these explicitly Christian traditions.
3. State and federal governments rely on agencies of the Catholic Church for a significant portion of the delivery of education, healthcare and social services (see James's second point). Conduct a risk-benefit analysis of this situation.
4. Identify one controversial moral issue on which Australian political parties have allowed Members of Parliament a conscience vote (see James's fourth point). Find out how this differs from regular votes in Parliament and suggest reasons as to why they might have done this.

Framing, investigating and reasoning

1. Interview three friends or family members about their ideas or experiences with Christianity. Categorise their responses in a PMI chart.
2. Write 500 words outlining and explaining the ways in which Christianity has influenced their lives and evaluating the significance of Christianity in their lives.

Finding and analysing

1. List the public holidays in three Australian states/territories.
2. What percentage of the state/territory's public holidays are Christian festivals? Name them.
3. Browse the catalogue of a Christian store. Choose one product to analyse and explain how it reflects the teachings of Christianity about God and/or humanity.

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1. Visit the websites of these Ecumenical Colleges in Queensland:
   - Jubilee Primary School, Gaven
   - Emmaus College, Jimboomba
   - Unity College, Caloundra West.
2. Collect evidence from the websites of their ecumenical Christian identity.
3. What do they have in common and in what ways are they different from each other? What features make them distinctive from denominational schools with which you may be familiar?

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Go online to the Australian Bureau of Statistics website to access data relating to religious affiliation in Australia.

1. Use a histogram to show the number of Australians identifying as Christian in the past three censuses. Hypothesise as to what factors might account for this trend. Write a sentence that expresses this histogram in words.
2. Use a pie chart to show the distribution of Christians between the denominations

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named in the latest census data. Write a sentence that expresses this pie chart in words.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Christianity?
2 What have I learnt from Christianity?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Christianity?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Christianity is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Christianity and Christian practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different denominations of Christianity?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Christianity to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Christianity?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Christianity for adherents and the ways Christianity influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Christianity using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Christianity been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Christianity and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Christianity and Christians have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Christianity?

ISLAM

Forming

Generate an alphabet list of terms associated with Islam and their meaning.

Forming, finding and analysing

Snowball activity:

1 On a piece of paper, complete this statement (or a similar statement, as directed by your teacher): Islam is represented in the media as …
2 Scrunch your paper into a ball and throw it randomly across the room.
3 Collect a paper ball that lands near you, unfold it and share its contents with the class.
4 Collate classmates' responses.
5 Draw general conclusions about representations of Islam.

Analysing and evaluating

Refer to the list of the 99 Names of Allah provided on the Activity Worksheet.

1 Identify six that appeal to you. Why do you find them appealing?
2 List three pairs of titles that seem to be opposites. What does this suggest about Allah?
3 What effect do you think the 99 Names of Allah are intended to have?

Analysing and evaluating

1 Complete a Venn diagram on the Activity Worksheet showing unique and common attributes of Sunni and Shi'ite Islam.
2 What are some of the factors that encourage misinterpretations of *jihad* by some Muslim groups?

Analysing and evaluating

1 Create a list of 10 facts that you believe every Australian should know about Islam.
2 Propose a scheme for educating Australians about Islam.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Islam?
2 What have I learnt from Islam?

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3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Islam?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Islam is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Islam and Muslim practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different groups within Islam?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Islam to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Islam?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Islam for adherents and the ways Islam influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Islam using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Islam been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Islam and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Islam and Muslims have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Islam?

HINDUISM

Forming

There are Hindus all over the world but the religion is most closely associated with India.

1 Suggest two reasons why this might be so.
2 Interview five friends and/or family members to see how many Hindu gods and goddesses they can name.
3 Generate 10 questions, each of which could be answered with the word 'Hinduism'.

Finding

1 Find out where Hindus in your state could go to join in community celebration of two different festivals and how the festivals are celebrated in these locations.
2 Find out how many Hindus there are in Australia. What proportion of the world population of Hindus does this represent? What proportion of the Australian population does this represent? What proportion of Australian Hindus live in your state?

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 The partition of India occurred in 1947. How did religion contribute to this event?
2 Mohandas Gandhi shunned many aspects of modernity and favoured a return to traditional practices for many – village Hindus in particular. Script two opposing sides of a discussion about the merits of Gandhi's approach to modernity.
3 Prepare an information leaflet on 'The Hindu home', which could be given to teachers and social workers with no knowledge or understanding of Hinduism.
4 How could the resources of Hinduism be brought to bear on an approach to global issues and challenges, such as environmental degradation or violence?

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 In an online search engine, look for the Hindu Council of Australia. Review the information provided.
2 Shape a hypothesis about the aims, interests and concerns of the Hindu Council of Australia and then, in dot-point form, provide evidence from the website to support your hypothesis.

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3 To what extent are popular ideas about Hinduism in Australia (or ideas about Hinduism held by members of your community) accurate?

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Hinduism?
2 What have I learnt from Hinduism?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Hinduism?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Hinduism is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Hinduism and Hindu practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different groups within Hinduism?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Hinduism to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Hinduism?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Hinduism for adherents and the ways Hinduism influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Hinduism using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Hinduism been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Hinduism and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Hinduism and Hindus have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Hinduism?

BUDDHISM

Forming

1 Engage in a whole-class brainstorm to generate information and ideas about Buddhism.
2 Generate a list of references to Buddhism in contemporary popular culture such as film, music, fashion, design, television, language and so on.
3 Sketch your impression of a likeness of the Buddha. Where have your ideas about the Buddha's appearance come from?

Finding and analysing

1 Trace the history and development of Mahayana Buddhism in China, Japan and Korea. Present your investigation in multimodal form.
2 Design a series of questions you could ask a Buddhist about their meditation practices.
3 Produce an information leaflet about Buddhist shrines.
4 Create a glossary of Pali and Sanskrit terms associated with Buddhism.
5 Teach a classmate or friend the *mudras* explained on the Buddhanet website (search the site for 'mudras'). Afterwards, quiz them to see how effective the teaching and learning has been.

Analysing and evaluating

1 Locate an internet site that contains images of the Buddha – a useful starting place is the Buddhanet website. Choose two images of the Buddha and print the images. Annotate the image, indicating Buddhist beliefs.
2 Share the images you selected in a group of four. As a group, complete the PMI chart on the Activity Worksheet about the existence of variety within Buddhism.

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Finding, analysing and evaluating

Enter 'Top Ten Celebrity Buddhists' into an online search engine. Select three people and read their story. List the reasons these celebrities give for practising Buddhism. Compare your list of celebrities and the reasons with two other classmates. Collate the information and identify key evidence that could be used in a structured paragraph of 200 words which presents a case for the popularity of Buddhism in the West. Use evidence to support your claims.

Analysing and evaluating

1 What impact might the doctrines of Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism have on society, politics and the economy?
2 After investigating the spread of Buddhism to the West, construct a hierarchy showing what the most important factors in the spread of Buddhism to the West (and Australia in particular) have been.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Buddhism?
2 What have I learnt from Buddhism?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Buddhism?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Buddhism is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Buddhism and Buddhist practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different groups within Buddhism?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Buddhism to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Buddhism?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Buddhism for adherents and the ways Buddhism influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Buddhism using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Buddhism been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Buddhism and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Buddhism and Buddhists have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Buddhism?

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL SPIRITUALITIES

Finding and analysing

1 Investigate ways in which Indigenous spiritualities are evident and recognised in Australia today. This could be through the use of news media, connection with local Indigenous groups, or use of internet sources such as the Education ABC website using these search terms:
   - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures
   - Why is Welcome to Country important?
   - Connecting with country and each other
   - Indigenous Australia today.
2 Use your findings to create a feature article about the evidence and importance of Indigenous spirituality in contemporary Australian society. Your analysis and evaluation needs to be clearly evident in the article title, images, quotes and organisation of your material.

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Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Complete a 5Ws + H chart on a contemporary Australian Indigenous activist whose work can be seen as a voice for Indigenous spirituality in society. This can include the areas of politics, journalism, music, literature, film, or other ways their voices are heard. (Current suggestions could be Stan Grant, Lynda Burney, Noel Pearson, Hetti Perkins or another Indigenous artist, Archie Roach, Geoffrey Gurrumul Yunupingu, Jessica Mauboy, Wesley Enoch and Warwick Thornton.)
2 Using the 5Ws + H, create a paragraph that demonstrates and analyses the person's work, evaluating its message and influence as a voice for Indigenous spiritualities in Australia. Include a clear topic sentence, evidence to support your analysis and a clear conclusion.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
2 What have I learnt from Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Australian Aboriginal spiritualities are expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and its practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different groups within Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities for adherents and the ways Australian Aboriginal spiritualities influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Australian Aboriginal spiritualities been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Australian Aboriginal spiritualities have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RELIGION

Forming

Generate an alphabetical list of terms associated with Torres Strait Islander religion.

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Refer to the TSRA (Torres Strait Regional Authority) website via the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8578, and view the map on the Australian National Museum website via the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8579.

1 Using the information from the websites, classify the islands into their traditional groupings.

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2 What categorisations are used to determine these groupings? What important features does this classification system acknowledge? Discuss any possible limitations of using this as a means of classification.
3 Locate Thursday (Waiben) Island on the map and describe its geographic location in relation to the key mainland countries and to the other islands. Explain what role Thursday (Waiben) Island plays in the region and what services it provides, identifying the need to have such services within the community. What might limit the effectiveness of such services being located at Thursday (Waiben) Island?
4 Read through the 'Embracing Culture' tab on the Australian National Museum website; create an infographic that showcases the rich and diverse nature of the islands and celebrates the importance of the waters of the region.
5 Imagine you and some friends are undertaking a journey through this area and plan on visiting some of the Torres Strait Islands on your trip. Create a checklist of activities and protocols you will need to consider prior to and during your journey. Why is it important that such protocols are enforced in this region?
6 Read through the history of the Torres Strait Island region on the website. Select four interesting facts justifying and explaining how these have had an impact or been significant in the region.

Analysing and evaluating

Create a list of five significant features of Torres Strait Islander religion. From the list, formulate a hypothesis focused on Torres Strait Islander religion.

Reflecting

1 What have I learnt about Torres Strait Island religion?
2 What have I learnt from Torres Strait Island religion?
3 How well can I describe the characteristics of Torres Strait Island religion?
4 How well can I explain the ways in which Torres Strait Island religion is expressed in the lives of adherents?
5 How well can I determine the way that Torres Strait Island religion and its practices are distinct from those of other religions?
6 How well can I determine distinctive beliefs and practices associated with different groups within Torres Strait Island religion?
7 To what extent have I been able to identify, examine and consider characteristics of Torres Strait Island religion to ascertain a range of views?
8 To what extent can I effectively provide reasons for these different views within Torres Strait Island religion?
9 To what extent can I interpret information from sources and decide how valid the sources are?
10 To what extent can I make judgements about the importance of Torres Strait Island religion for adherents and the ways Torres Strait Island religion influences people, society and culture?
11 To what extent can I convey ideas or arguments about my understandings of Torres Strait Island religion using clear and correct language and referencing conventions?
12 How have my ideas and understandings about Torres Strait Island religion been confirmed and challenged?
13 To what extent might my attitude or behaviour with regard to Torres Strait Island religion and its adherents have been modified by this inquiry?
14 How could this inquiry into Torres Strait Island religion have been enhanced?
15 How has this study developed my understanding of religion?
16 What questions do I have regarding Torres Strait Island religion?

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UNIT 1
Sacred texts and religious writings



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Unit description

In Unit 1, students are introduced to the five major world religions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism, and Australian Aboriginal spiritualities, as a foundation to the course of study. Through a study of sacred texts and religious writings, students explore how these texts offer insights into life, provide guidance for living, and may express a relationship between a people and a higher being. As Unit 1 progresses, there is a particular focus on the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

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Unit objectives

Students will:

1. describe the characteristics of religion and religious traditions through identifying sacred texts and religious writings in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Australian Aboriginal spiritualities
2. demonstrate an understanding of religious traditions by explaining beliefs that emanate from sacred texts and religious writings
3. differentiate between religious traditions by recognising different methods of interpretation of sacred texts and religious writings
4. analyse perspectives within religious traditions that relate to ways sacred texts and religious writings are interpreted
5. consider and organise information about sacred texts and religious writings through interpreting sources and deciding on their validity
6. evaluate and draw conclusions about the influence and significance of sacred texts and religious writings on religion and religious individuals
7. create responses that communicate ideas or arguments, using understandings of sacred texts and religious writings.

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Chapters in this Unit

Chapter 2 Sacred texts

In this topic, students are introduced to Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Australian Aboriginal spiritualities. Students identify sacred texts belonging to each religious tradition, recognise features of sacred texts and consider the influence of sacred texts on people, society and culture.

Chapter 3 Abrahamic traditions

In this topic, students specifically focus on the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, i.e. the Abrahamic traditions. They investigate how sacred texts become authoritative, the ways texts are interpreted, and the influence these texts have on people, society and culture.

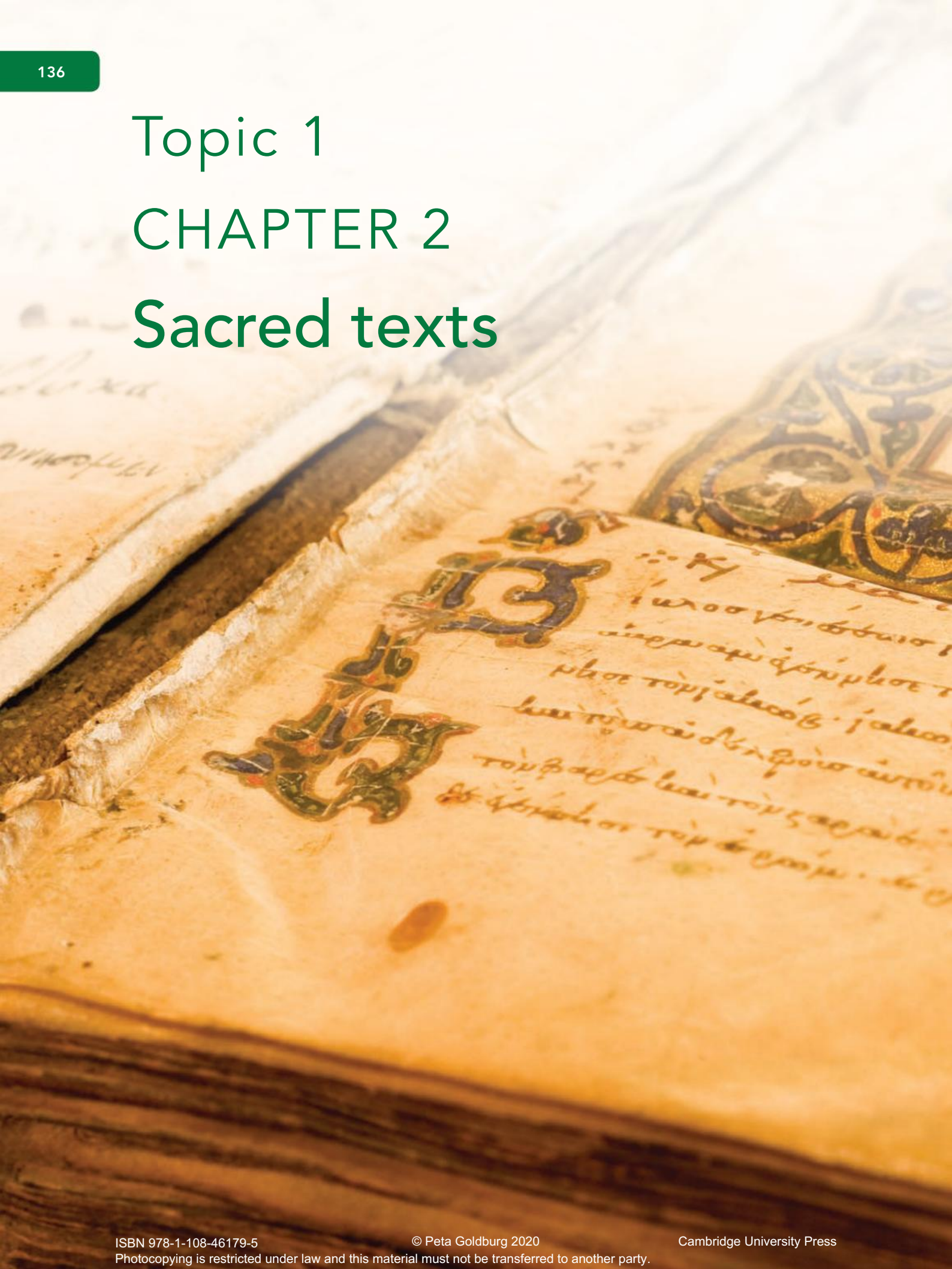
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Topic 1

CHAPTER 2

Sacred texts



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In Topic 1, students will identify sacred texts and religious writings belonging to each religious tradition and explain the origin and meaning of sacred texts for the tradition, community and individuals. Students will explore how and why some texts are recognised as sacred as well as how sacred texts inform ritual, moral codes and relationships. A variety of literary styles will be studied and the ways in which people reverence, interpret and respond to sacred texts. Students will also investigate how sacred texts ask and respond to the 'big' questions of life and even influence society and culture.

2.1 Introduction

All religions have some way of recording and retelling stories that are significant for the believers within their tradition. Usually these stories are recorded in special books which are given great authority and considered holy or sacred. In some religious traditions, sacred texts are also believed to be divinely inspired. Muslims, for example, believe that God spoke to Muhammad and that the words of God are recorded in the Qur'an.

Christianity's sacred text is the Bible, which literally means 'book', although it is a collection of books. Sometimes the Bible is referred to as 'scripture' (writing) and this general term 'scripture' is often used to describe the sacred texts of all religions. Religions that depend on oral traditions often express and transfer their sacred stories through body painting, masks, tattoos, carvings, rock paintings, ritual objects and even sand paintings.

Sacred texts are important for a number of reasons. They may:

1. preserve the communal and individual identity of people within the tradition
2. nurture the beliefs and ritual practices of a tradition
3. provide meaning, motivation and hope for people within the tradition
4. build community by uniting people in belief and values
5. offer guidelines for behaviour and ethical decision making
6. provide sources of healing for people by enabling people to experience life analogously.

2.2 Identifying sacred texts

Sacred texts are common to many religions, but not to all. Religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and early Hinduism place sacred texts at the centre of their worldviews. Sacred texts may include any type of content, including myths, philosophical statements, rules for conduct, poetry, genealogies, letters or historical narratives. The sacred texts of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities are not traditional written texts but instead include oral traditions, art, dance and body painting.

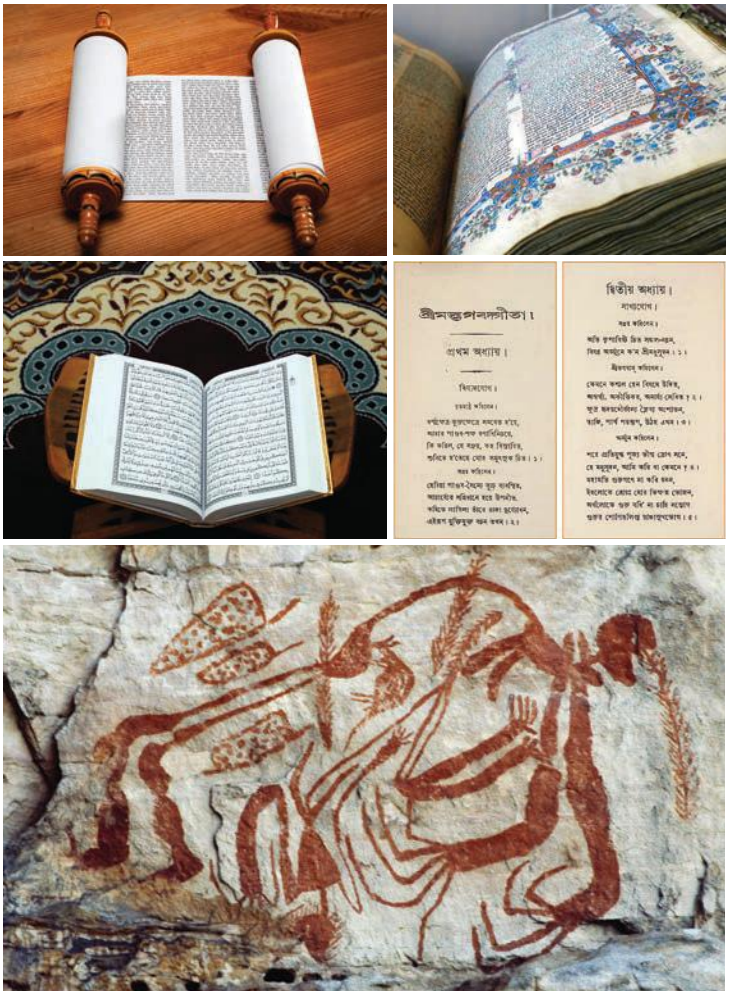


FIGURE 2.1 Selection of sacred texts and writings which hold great significance for believers of that faith. From top: Jewish Torah scroll, a 'Tyndale' Christian Bible, the Islamic Holy Qur'an, the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita* and Aboriginal rock painting in the Northern Territory

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One way to identify a sacred text is to examine how people behave towards the text. In many religious traditions, sacred texts are often physically distinguished from ordinary texts. Sometimes sacred texts are written on expensive material or adorned with ornamental bindings and illustrated artistically. In Judaism, for instance, sacred texts are written in ancient Hebrew on parchments using special ink; the pages are sewn together and rolled into a double scroll. The scrolls are placed in ornamental casings and dressed in an elaborate cloth cover, on the outside of which hangs a metal breastplate, and a crown of silver is placed on the top of the scroll. A *yad* or pointer is used to keep the reader's place in the text and it also preserves the parchment by avoiding direct contact with the reader's hands. The Hebrew text is written with no vowels or punctuation and the reader must vocalise the text precisely. A detailed written vocalisation and punctuation system exists. Some texts are written using unique formations such as Exodus 15, the text celebrating the crossing of the Sea of Reeds, which is written with spaces between phrases in a way that looks like the layering of bricks; and in Deuteronomy 6:4, in the Shema, the statement of faith of Judaism, the letters *'ayin* and *dalet* are written larger than other letters. In a synagogue, when the Torah is taken out of the Ark, the congregation stands in honour of it. At the conclusion of Sukkot (the Festival of Tabernacles) and Simhat Torah (the Rejoicing of the Torah) members of the congregation carry scrolls in a procession around the synagogue and some people even dance while holding the scrolls.

In some religions, it is customary for people to kiss a sacred text before putting it down or before using it liturgically. A Muslim should only touch the Qur'an when in a state of ritual purity after a ritual washing. The Qur'an is written in Arabic and considered to be the perfect revelation of Allah when in Arabic (other versions are referred to as translations of the Qur'an).

Many sacred texts require oral proclamation, and very specific directions for singing the text according to predetermined melodic tones and phrasing is required. In several religious traditions, sacred texts are memorised and in Islam someone who has memorised the entire Qur'an is given special status and said to be favoured by Allah. The revelation of Allah in the Qur'an is said to have been transmitted orally to Muhammad and then transferred to the written text after Muhammad's death. For Muslims, the written and oral form of the Qur'an is the word of Allah.



FIGURE 2.2 Dressed Torah scrolls



FIGURE 2.3 Ancient copy of the Qur'an

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In Hinduism, even though Vedic texts have been written down since the fifth century BCE, the traditions are transmitted orally by the *Brahman* priesthood where exact memorisation of the Vedas is aided by complex techniques that include mathematical combinations of syllables, physical movements and association of syllables with specific positions and parts of the body as well as sounds and tones. The sounds and their proper order are reinforced kinetically, allowing students to learn lengthy texts without having previously learnt their meaning. The oral dimension of texts such as the Torah, Qur'an and Vedas is an essential part of their origins.

Martin Buber (1878–1965) says that for many people a sacred text does not have an 'I – It' relationship but an 'I – Thou' relationship. An 'I – It' relationship is one where someone is interested in obtaining something useful from the object of the relationship; whereas an 'I – Thou' relationship is dialogical where a person encounters the other as deeply as possible. A person may simply use a sacred text impersonally as a source of information but when a person has a dialogical relationship with a sacred text, the adherent interacts with the inspired voice and physical presence of the text. All of the major world religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism) have texts that their followers regard as sacred and/or authoritative. The claim of 'sacredness' distinguishes these religious texts from all other writings.

Canon

Modern Western understandings of sacred texts are largely based on how Judaism, Christianity and Islam have used **canon** as a way of identifying whether a text is considered 'sacred'. A canon is simply a list of texts that religious traditions assign as having the highest sacred authority within their tradition. The Abrahamic traditions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam – consider their individual canons to have been divinely inspired. The idea of canon, however, does not exhaust the range of forms, content and functions of sacred texts. For some religious traditions, the canon of scripture is closed at some specific point in history; for other religious traditions, the canon is open and allows for new writing to develop and gain acceptance as canonical texts within the tradition.

canon
'list' or 'measuring rod'; canon of scripture is the title given to the official list of writings that constitute the sacred texts of a tradition



FIGURE 2.4 Buddhist monks studying at the Kyat Khat Wine Monastery in Bago, Myanmar

ACTIVITY 2.1

Forming

1 Recall a really good story or book you have read. Why was it good? What made it interesting?
2 What types of texts exist?
3 Create a mind map of the different kinds of texts found on the internet.
4 Create a mind map of the different kinds of texts that make up sacred texts.
5 What are sacred texts?
6 In what way/s is sacred text similar to or different from other texts?
7 What constitutes 'truth' in sacred texts?

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2.3 Investigating sacred texts

To study the sacred texts of a religion, we need to find out how the texts are composed, regarded, experienced, used and interpreted within that tradition. The following questions are one way of discovering some of the answers:

- ☑ To whom or for which group of people is the text sacred?
- ☑ Are the sacred texts in an ancient language? Is only the original language version considered sacred?
  - ☑ If a sacred text is translated into the vernacular, is the translation still regarded as sacred text?
  - ☑ Is the original language still taught?
- ☑ What is taught and said about the origins of the sacred texts?
- ☑ What role does sacred text play in the public face of the religion?
- ☑ How do adherents encounter the sacred text?
- ☑ What role does sacred text play in followers' public lives?
- ☑ What role does sacred text play in followers' private lives?
- ☑ What role does sacred text play in forming the identity of followers of the tradition?
- ☑ Do followers view the sacred text as the 'final word' or can it be changed or altered?
- ☑ How is sacred text used in contemporary culture?
- ☑ How does sacred text present past life and cultures?

Think about these questions as you consider various sacred texts. While they will apply strongly to some religious traditions, they may appear less relevant when applied to others.

2.4 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Judaism

Jews are often described as 'the people of the book' because sacred texts are core to Jewish law, belief, worship, ritual and behaviour. The sacred texts of Judaism are traditionally divided into the Torah (Law), *Nev'im* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings), collectively known by the acronym TaNaK. There are 39 books in the Jewish Canon.

TABLE 2.1 The 39 books in the Jewish Canon

Torah (Law)	*Nev'im* (Prophets)	*Ketuvim* (Writings)
Genesis (*Bereshit*)	Joshua (*Yehosua*)	Psalms (*Tehillim*)
Exodus (*Shemot*)	Judges (*Shofetim*)	Proverbs (*Mishle*)
Leviticus (*Vayiqra*)	Samuel (*Shemuel*)	Job (*Iyyov*)
Numbers (*Bemidbar*)	Kings I & II (*Melakhim*)	Song of Songs (*Shir Hashirim*)
Deuteronomy (*Davarim*)	Isaiah (*Yeshayahu*)	Ruth (*Ruth*)
	Jeremiah (*Yirmeyahu*)	Lamentations (*Ekhah*)
	Ezekiel (*Yehezaqel*)	Ecclesiastes (*Qoheleth*)
	Twelve Minor Prophets (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zachariah, Malachi)	Esther (*Ester*)
		Daniel (*Daniel*)
		Ezra-Nehemiah (*Esra-Nehemyah*)
		Chronicles I & II (*Divre Hayamim*)

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The Jewish scriptures are written almost entirely in Hebrew, except for a few passages that are in Aramaic, an ancient language common at the time the scriptures were written. Within the Jewish scriptures we can find a variety of genres, including **genealogies**, histories, folktales, poetry, proverbs, prayers and narratives. The covenant between G-d and the Jewish people is at the heart of these scriptures and they emphasise the two facets of G-d: mercy and justice.



FIGURE 2.5 Kabbalistic text written in Aramaic at the Isaac Synagogue in Kraków, Poland

Terminology

'When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses 'Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh' (I am who I am, YHWH)' (Exodus 3:14).

Traditionally rather than uttering the sacred name, YHWH, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect, or prohibition, is expressed in English as G-d.

Torah

The Torah is the cornerstone of Judaism and for Jews is the source of all wisdom, offering guidance for everyday life. The Torah contains both the written law and the oral law of the Jews. The written Torah (*Torah Shebichtav*), the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy), was according to tradition written by Moses. The narrative in the five books of the Torah begins with creation and continues to the death of Moses, just before the people reach the Promised Land. The oral law, *Torah Sehb'al Peh*, provides details on the written

genealogies history or accounts of the descent of a person, family or group

The Mishnah is a large work written by 200 CE, which is divided into six sections and covers a range of topics discussed by the rabbis: sacrifice, Shabbat, festivals, civil and criminal matters, agriculture and issues such as marriage and divorce.

ACTIVITY 2.2

Forming and finding

1 How do the Mishnah and Talmud support the Torah?
2 How do the Mishnah and Talmud assist the believer in daily life?

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law and is found in the Talmud, a combination of *halakhah* (law) and *aggadah* (story). The Talmud has two parts, Mishnah and Gemara.

The Gemara developed as a body of commentary around the Mishnah, which eventually became included in manuscripts of the Mishnah, creating a very large collection called the Talmud.

The Torah is written in Hebrew, which is read from right to left. Below is an extract from Genesis 1 showing the Hebrew with an English translation:

Genesis Chapter 1

א בְּרֵאשִׁית, בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים, אֵת הַשָּׁמַיִם, וְאֵת הָאָרֶץ.	**1** In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
ב וְהָאָרֶץ, הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ, וְחֹשֶׁךְ, עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים, מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם.	**2** Now the earth was unformed and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.
ג וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים, יְהִי אוֹר; וַיְהִי-אוֹר.	**3** And God said: 'Let there be light.' And there was light.
ד וַיַּרְא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאוֹר, כִּי-טוֹב; וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים, בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ.	**4** And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness.
ה וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לָאוֹר יוֹם, וְלַחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לָיְלָה; וַיְהִי-עֶרֶב וַיְהִי-בֹקֶר, יוֹם אֶחָד. {פ}	**5** And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. {P}

Genesis (*Bereshit*) consists of 50 chapters and when read in synagogues today is divided into 12 *parashiyot* or sections. While it begins with the stories of creation, the main part of the book is devoted to the story of the patriarchs and matriarchs who founded the Hebrew people: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, Leah and Rachel, Joseph and his brothers. In some instances, central figures are given new names by G-d – for example, Abram becomes Abraham, Sarai becomes Sarah.

The second book, Exodus (*Shemot* or Names), which begins 'These are the names of …', consists of 40 chapters divided into 11 *sidrot* or portions. The events cover from the death of Joseph to the building of the Ark of the Covenant (130 years). Exodus introduces the story of Moses, who liberates the Jews from slavery in Egypt and leads them to the Promised Land. The 613 commandments of Judaism are recounted in Exodus.

The laws of Judaism are found in the three books following Exodus. Leviticus (*Vayikra*, And He Called), the third book of the Torah, contains 27 chapters divided into 10 *sidrot*. The bulk of this book is made up the 613 *mitzvot* (commandments) and continues the laws that Moses began in Exodus. The focus of Leviticus is mainly on ritual and ethics, the observation of Yom Kippur and the system of vows and tithes.

Numbers (*Bemidbar*, In the Wilderness), the fourth book, contains 36 chapters divided into 10 *sidrot*. Numbers begins with Moses taking a census of the Israelites. G-d then divides the people into tribes with the Levites becoming the servants of G-d. The book contains stories of the struggles of the people and even their rebellion. In the second half of the book, G-d informs Moses that he will not be allowed to go into the Promised Land.

Deuteronomy (*Davarim*, Words), the final book in the Torah, consists of 34 chapters divided into 11 *sidrot*. Almost the entire book of Deuteronomy describes Moses giving an address to the Hebrew people: he reminds them of the foundations of their faith, the covenant with G-d, the Ten Commandments and other fundamentals of Judaism such as the *Shema*.

Followers are not meant to read the Torah silently – the scripture is meant to be chanted and sung. The Torah takes precedence over the other two sections of the Hebrew scriptures because it contains the very foundations of Judaism.

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FIGURE 2.6 Adherents using sacred texts during prayers

ACTIVITY 2.3

Finding and analysing

Create an infographic which outlines the books of the Torah and its centrality as a sacred text in Judaism. You may like to use one of the many infographic templates provided on the internet. Make sure you use appropriate symbols and visuals to accompany your information.

Nev'im (Prophets)

The first books of the Prophets continue the history begun in the Torah. The Book of Joshua begins with the death of Moses, when Joshua assumes command and leads the Twelve Tribes into the land of Canaan. Judges, the second book, recounts part of the history of ancient Israel and includes the stories of Deborah, Eli and Samuel. It also recalls the people's temptation to wickedness. Samuel I and II, which includes the story of David and Goliath, was once a single volume but was divided into two books in the sixteenth century. First and Second Kings, once a single book, begins with the last days of David's reign and concludes with the story of Solomon and the building of the Temple in Jerusalem. After Solomon's death, the kingdom is divided into Judah in the south and Israel in the north. The northern kingdom fails and only the tribe of Judah is left.

The first book of the Latter Prophets, Isaiah, is reported to be the work of Isaiah, son of Amoz, but contemporary scholars believe it to be the work of three authors, each with a slightly different style. Isaiah's prophecies include the prediction of the coming Messianic Age. The book of Jeremiah includes the biography and prophecies of Jeremiah.

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Ezekiel begins his prophecies by denouncing Judah and Jerusalem for their wickedness. This book, while difficult to understand because of its apocalyptic images, contains the prophecy of the restoration of the Temple. The remainder of the *Nev'im* is devoted to the 12 minor prophets (only considered minor because of the length of the books).

ACTIVITY **2.4**

Finding and analysing

The books of the *Nev'im* span a long time period for the people of Israel, beginning as they enter the Promised Land under Joshua's leadership following Moses's death (c. 1200 BCE) and concluding in approximately 515 BCE after the people have returned from Babylonian exile.

Part A: *Nev'im Rishonim* or Former Prophets traces the history of the Israelites

1 Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet by looking up specific parts of the book of Joshua 1–12 that outlines how the Israelites conquered the land.

Verse/s	Questions and explanation
1:1–7	Who is speaking? To whom? What is being promised?
6:1–7, 15–21	What city was captured? How was this achieved and who assisted the Israelites? What were the people warned not to covet, and why?
8:24–9	What was the second city to fall? What happened to the city and its king?
10:1–16, 26–7, 40–3	Who had made peace with the Israelites and who joined forces against them? What was the fate of the five kings? What did Joshua accomplish?
11:16–23	What did Joshua achieve? Under whose command? What did he do with the land at the conclusion?
12:1–24	This section concludes with two lists. What do they identify? Why are they divided into two lists?

2 Joshua 13–22 explores how the land was divided after it was conquered. On the internet, locate a map that shows the territorial divisions of the Promised Land in Canaan.
- **a** Use Joshua 13–22 to reconcile the names of the cities with the names on the map.
- **b** What important allocation occurs in Joshua 20? Why do you think this is included and what does it say about the G-d of the Israelites?

3 Towards the end of his life, Joshua calls together the leaders of the Israelites and blesses them.
- **a** What does he require from them as addressed in Joshua 23:7?
- **b** What does this imply about the way they are living or have lived in the past?
- **c** How does Joshua warn them to remain true to G-d?

4 The final chapter of Joshua, Joshua 24, gives an account of the history of the people. Why does Joshua include this recount prior to making a new covenant with the people? What promise does he elicit from them?

continued …

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… continued

5 The Book of Judges follows Joshua and recaps the story of the arrival and success in the Promised Land. Read Judges 2:11–23 and explain why this is an important prelude to the remaining Book of Judges. What does it prepare the reader for?

6 There are 12 biblical judges introduced in the Book of Judges. With a partner, complete the table on the Activity Worksheet to identify who they are and what they did.

7 Read Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1 and 21:25.
   - **a** What do we learn about Israel at this time?
   - **b** How does this prepare the reader for the Book of Samuel? What hopes does Israel have for Samuel? Why does Israel wish to transition from a theocracy to a monarchy?

8 Read the following:
   - **a** 1 Samuel 8–10:1 and explain how Saul came to be anointed as king. Why might he have been chosen?
   - **b** 1 Samuel 15:24–8 and 16:11–13 and 2 Samuel 5:1–10 and explain how David became powerful and what he achieved.

9 Samuel acts as God's envoy and works tirelessly to keep the people loyal. Consider the issues in transitioning from a theocracy to a more political style of leadership with a monarchy. What are the key differences between the two?

10 While the books of Samuel trace the shift towards monarchical rule, their underlying warning to the people of Israel is to be mindful of turning away from G-d. The books of Kings trace the corruption and downfall of Israel, with the division of the kingdoms and ultimate exile from the Promised Land, showing G-d's displeasure at the actions of the people. 1 Kings begins with the appointment of King Solomon and the building of the Temple and 2 Kings concludes with King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon defeating Jerusalem.
   - **a** Using a hard-copy Bible, identify and plot the key events in 1 and 2 Kings (include biblical references).
   - **b** Research to find links between the outcomes in 1 and 2 Kings and the warnings set out in Deuteronomy.

Part B: *Nev'im Aharonim* or Latter Prophets includes the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel

11 Explore by flipping through the pages of the 66 chapters of Isaiah and note the changes between verse and prose. Why do you think this occurs?

12 Conduct some research to discover the historical period of Isaiah's commentary.

13 Jeremiah and Ezekiel are also long texts. In pairs, research one of these prophets to discover what message they had for the Israelites and what consequences they foresaw for them if they digressed. After you have completed this, work with a pair who researched the other prophet and compare and contrast your findings. Provide a summary of the key similarities and differences.

Part C: *Trei Asar* or the 12 'Minor' Prophets

14 Divide the class into 12 groups and allocate each one of the Minor Prophets. Conduct some research to complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

15 What conclusions can you draw about the significance of the Minor Prophets in the *Nev'im*?

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Ketuvim (Writings)

The final 14 books of the Torah include wisdom literature, proverbs, psalms, a love song and historical writing. Some of these books have liturgical significance: the five *Megillot* (scrolls) (Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes and Esther) are read in the synagogue on specific holidays. The Psalms are read frequently and found through the *siddur* (prayer book).

For Orthodox Jews, the words of the TaNaK are revealed truth dictated by G-d to Moses at Mt Sinai. Liberal forms of Judaism interpret the scriptures as being written by human beings but divinely inspired. Either way, sacred texts are at the heart of Judaism.

ACTIVITY **2.5**

Finding and analysing

1 The first book of the *Ketuvim* is the Book of Psalms, known in Hebrew as *Tehillim* (Songs of Praise), containing 150 Psalms. They contain various religious poems of different types, including hymns of praise, trust in God, thanksgiving, etc. They play a significant part in Jewish liturgy and many devout Jews recite them on a weekly or monthly basis.

2 Consider the recommended monthly dates for recitation listed in the table on the Activity Worksheet. Allocate one of the portions to each student, read it, summarise its content and take note of any significant quotes. Create a platform to enable the class to share their work.



FIGURE 2.7 Hasidic Orthodox Jews studying in their *yeshiva*

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ACTIVITY **2.6**

Finding

1 The texts of Leviticus 16 and the Book of Jonah are read during the solemn ritual of Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), the holiest day of the Jewish year.
2 Read the texts and complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.
3 Identify three reasons why the reading of Leviticus 16 precedes the reading of Jonah.
4 Why are these two readings paired in this way on Yom Kippur?

Forming and finding

1 The sacred texts of Judaism reveal a deep relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. Provide three reasons why it is important for Jewish people to recite, know and acknowledge the Torah within their everyday lives.
2 Consider: if the Torah did not exist would the religion of Judaism still exist? Use examples from the sacred texts mentioned in this section to formulate your response.
3 The Book of Lamentations and the Book of Psalms portray great sadness for the Jewish people at that time in their history. When both texts are examined, they reveal similar examples of the people's sadness and feelings about G-d. Find textual examples in both texts to complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

Analysing

The Hebrew Bible highlights the people's relationship with G-d by exploring the cycle of their transgression, exile and redemption.

1 Select two of the characters listed below and locate the appropriate biblical passages that explore their relationship with G-d.
2 Read the passages and identify key events that demonstrate the cycle.
3 Compare and contrast how the cycle is applied in their story.
4 Provide a written explanation, incorporating direct evidence from the Bible, of how your chosen characters' stories provide the basis for understanding G-d's relationship with the Jewish people.
Characters: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Moses and David.

Evaluating

A traditional Jewish saying, in reference to the Torah and attributed to Rabbi Ben Bag-Bag is, '… turn it and turn it again, for all is in it; see through it; grow old and worn in it; do not budge from it, for there is nothing that works better than it.'

1 To what extent do you agree with this statement? Is the Torah sufficient on its own?
2 What conclusion can you draw about the significance of the Torah to the Jewish people?

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about the sacred texts of Judaism?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 What impact do the sacred texts of Judaism have on people, society and culture?
4 What further questions do I have?

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2.5 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Christianity

The Bible, from the Greek phrase *ta biblia* meaning 'the books', contains the sacred texts of Christianity. It is a library of books written by different people and collected into two large groupings consisting of Hebrew scriptures (also known as the Old Testament or First Testament) and the Christian scriptures (also known as the New Testament or Second Testament).

The first part of the Bible appears to be common to Jews and Christians, although some of the stories are read and interpreted differently. Some Christians include seven extra books from the inter-testamental period as part of the canon. Jews and Protestants recognise 39 books written in Hebrew while Catholics include seven books that were written in Greek, sometimes called 'apocryphal' or Deutero-Canonicals. The Christian scriptures contain 27 books.

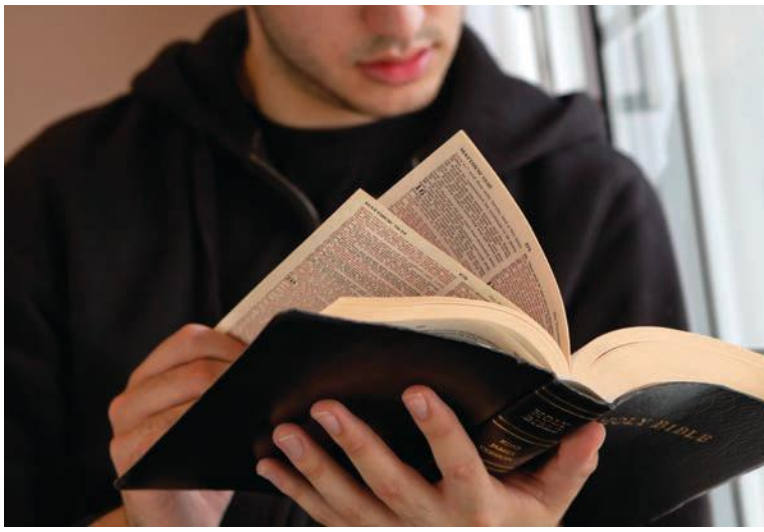


FIGURE 2.8 A Christian studying the Bible

TABLE 2.2 Protestant and Catholic collations of scriptures compared

Old Testament Protestant Canon: 39 books	Old Testament Catholic Canon: 46 books	New Testament Protestant and Catholic: 27 books
Pentateuch Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	**Pentateuch** Genesis Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy	**Gospels (4)** Matthew Mark Luke John
Prophetic Books Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Ezekiel Daniel Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	**Prophetic Books** Isaiah Jeremiah Lamentations Baruch Ezekiel Daniel (with additions) Hosea Joel Amos Obadiah Jonah Micah Nahum Habakkuk Zephaniah Haggai Zechariah Malachi	**Acts of the Apostles** Is like a history and written by the same author as the Gospel of Luke (cf Luke 1:1–4 and Acts 1:1–5)

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TABLE 2.2 *Continued*

Old Testament Protestant Canon: 39 books	Old Testament Catholic Canon: 46 books	New Testament Protestant and Catholic: 27 books
Historical Books Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Esther	**Historical Books** Joshua Judges Ruth 1 Samuel 2 Samuel 1 Kings 2 Kings 1 Chronicles 2 Chronicles Ezra Nehemiah Tobit Judith Esther (with additions) 1 Maccabees 2 Maccabees	**Epistles or Letters (21)** Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 and 2 Thessalonians 1 and 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews
Poetic and Wisdom Books Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs	**Poetic and Wisdom Books** Job Psalms Proverbs Ecclesiastes Song of Songs Wisdom of Solomon Ecclesiasticus	**James** 1 and 2 Peter 1, 2 and 3 John Jude
		The Book of Revelation Written using apocalyptic language

Although Christians use the Hebrew scriptures as part of their Bible, they classify the books differently into the following four groups:

1. The Pentateuch (or Books of Law)
2. Books of History
3. Books of Poetry and Wisdom
4. Books of the Prophets.

The Pentateuch (*penta* equals five, five scrolls) contains the first five books of the Bible. The Books of History cover about six hundred years: from the time of the Judges to Kings. The last 18 books, the Prophets, are books named after people who spoke out and encouraged the people to turn back to God. The Christian scriptures were written down approximately 70 years after the death of Jesus and include the gospels, or good news, of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles; and 21 letters largely ascribed to St Paul. The final book, Revelation, uses apocalyptic language.

The canon of the Christian scriptures was first declared in 367 CE when Athanasius, the bishop of Alexandria, wrote in his Easter letter that these 27 books were not only authoritative for Christians but were also inspired by God.

Gospels

The gospels provide four versions of the life and teachings of Jesus the Christ. These scriptures evolved from an oral tradition, written sources and an edited final version. The diversity of the four different gospels adds richness to the 'truth'

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TABLE 2.3 Gospel content

	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Approximate date composed	65–70 CE	85–90 CE	80–90 CE	90–150 CE
Sources	• Early passion narratives • Popular and controversial stories • Accounts of the Last Supper • Parables • Apocalyptic writings	Mark (all) + *Quelle* (Q) + Matthew (only)	Mark (all) + *Quelle* (Q) + Luke (only)	• Oral tradition • Knowledge of synoptics (Matthew, Mark and Luke)
Style	• Quick-moving account • Not familiar with Palestinian geography • Storyteller	• Writes using good Greek • Interested in teaching rather than action • More reflective style than Mark	• Polished Greek • Observant of people's mannerisms	• Theological document • Use of allegories and symbolism • Emphasises community

presented, rather than distorting it. Table 2.3 offers a perspective on the content of the four gospels.

The gospels are statements of faith, for people of faith and should be interpreted within that context, rather than as an historical document. The gospels hold a high status within Christianity, as can be seen during rituals and services.

The gospel writers had access to a range of sources: a variety of oral and written traditions as well as prayers, songs and short creedal statements about Jesus. As a member of a community existing in a specific time and place, each of the evangelists was influenced to some extent by their living situation, their own background, points of view and education. Each evangelist shaped the message they proclaimed to suit their specific faith community. Originally the gospels were unnamed, and it was not until the second century that the names of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were added.

quelle
a German word for 'source', probably referring to a collection of the sayings of Jesus

The Synoptic Gospels: Mark, Matthew, Luke

Much of what is written in the gospels is common to all four, while some material remains unique to a particular gospel. Scholars have for many years identified the similarities in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke and they use the Greek word 'synoptic', which means 'seen together' to describe these three gospels. The Gospel of John is quite different and is not included in the Synoptic Gospels. In order to account for the similarities and differences, scholars developed the synoptic hypothesis. The synoptic hypothesis says that Mark is the earliest of the gospels and that nearly Mark's entire gospel is found in Matthew and Luke. In addition to Mark, there is another source called 'Q' from the German word ***quelle***, which means source. Scholars believe that this source, which no longer exists, contained sayings and teaching of Jesus. In addition to Mark and Q, Matthew and Luke added material of their own which is labelled 'specifically Matthew' and 'specifically Luke'. The synoptic hypothesis is represented diagrammatically in Figure 2.9.

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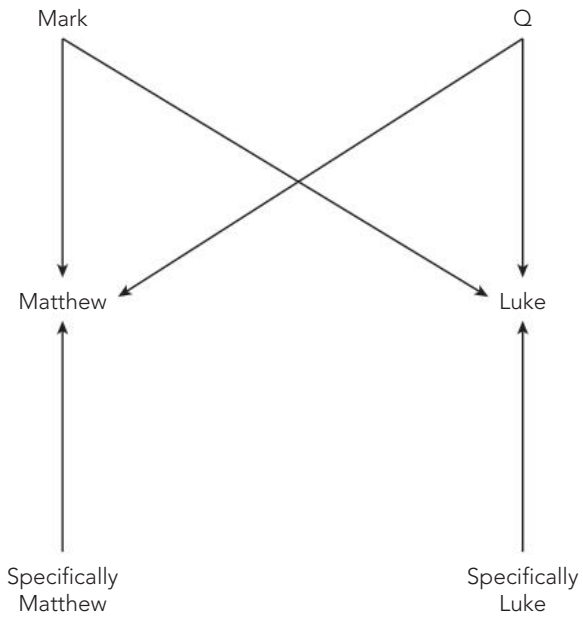


FIGURE 2.9 The synoptic hypothesis



FIGURE 2.10 Hand-drawn illumination showing a scene from the birth of Jesus in the capital letter P

ACTIVITY 2.7

Forming

Design your own graphic that explains the synoptic hypothesis.

ACTIVITY 2.8

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Read the three accounts of the feeding of the five thousand provided on the Activity Worksheet. Use a highlighter to identify the sections of the texts that are identical; use a different colour highlighter to identify elements that are unique to each text. Summarise the result of your analysis using a three-way Venn diagram. Use the information gathered to complete the following sentence: The Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke …

Epistles

The Christian scriptures also contain epistles. Epistles are letters written to communities that the disciples of Jesus visited. These were intended to strengthen the communities' spirituality after the disciples had left.

Each of the letters provides an insight into the beliefs and practices of the early Christians. The majority of the epistles carry the name of Paul, who converted to Christianity from Judaism. Exactly how many of the letters were written by Paul is debated by scholars: some may have been written by his followers and supporters even after he had died, but 13 are said to be by Paul. Scholars now generally attribute seven letters to Paul himself: Philemon, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Romans and Philippians. While 2 Corinthians and Philippians are generally thought to be a composite collection of works from two or more letters, the authorship of the remaining six letters is a matter of scholarly debate.

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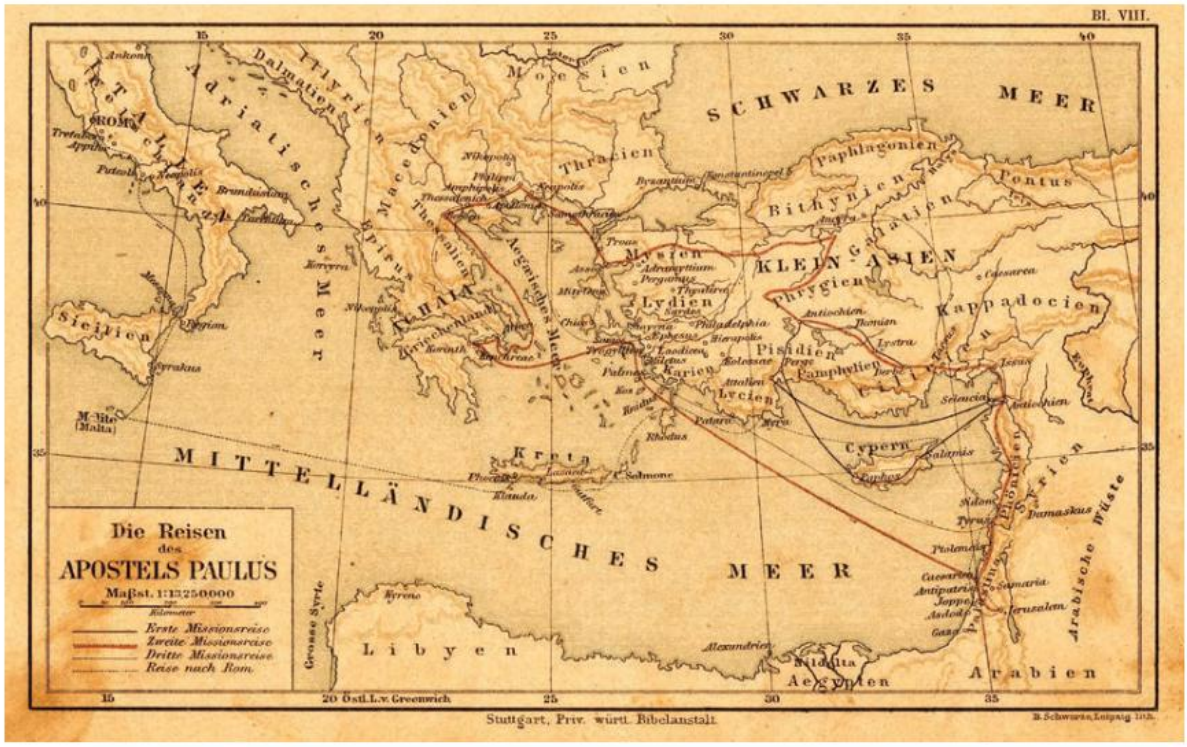


FIGURE 2.11 Old map of St Paul's journeys, taken from a German Bible

The letters, written in Greek over approximately a 10-year period from the 40s–50s CE, were meant to encourage people in their faith. Paul's letters follow a particular literary style including the name of the sender and the recipient, greetings to the recipient, the body of the letter, a prayer for the recipient and a closing greeting.

ACTIVITY **2.9**

Finding and analysing

Locate the Letter to Philemon. As you read the letter, examine the literary form of the text. In the table, list the verses which contain the literary examples listed in the left-hand column.

Literary example	Verse number
Name of the sender	
Name of the recipient	
Greetings to the recipient	
The body of the letter	
A prayer for the recipient	
Closing greeting	

Apocalyptic literature is used in both the Hebrew and Christian scriptures and refers to a style of writing that focuses on the end times and uses graphic images.

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Book of Revelation

The Book of Revelation, sometimes called The Apocalypse (from the Greek word *apokalypsis* meaning unveiling), was probably written towards the end of the first century. It has an apocalyptic style featuring dreams or visions, conversations between the revealer and the author and an emphasis on the end of the world. The apocalyptic nature of the book should be taken into account when reading Revelation, to avoid a literal interpretation.

The Book of Revelation gets its name from the first words of the book: 'This is the revelation …'. The writing should be understood in terms of two important aspects: its language is highly symbolic and it was written during periods of severe crisis.

Since the Reformation, Christians have been able to read the Bible in the vernacular. Most Christians consider these translations to be true, only referring to Greek or early versions to clarify or improve their understanding. Many Christian denominations encourage the use of biblical commentaries and contemporary exegesis as aids to interpreting scripture and value the continuing contribution of scholarship.

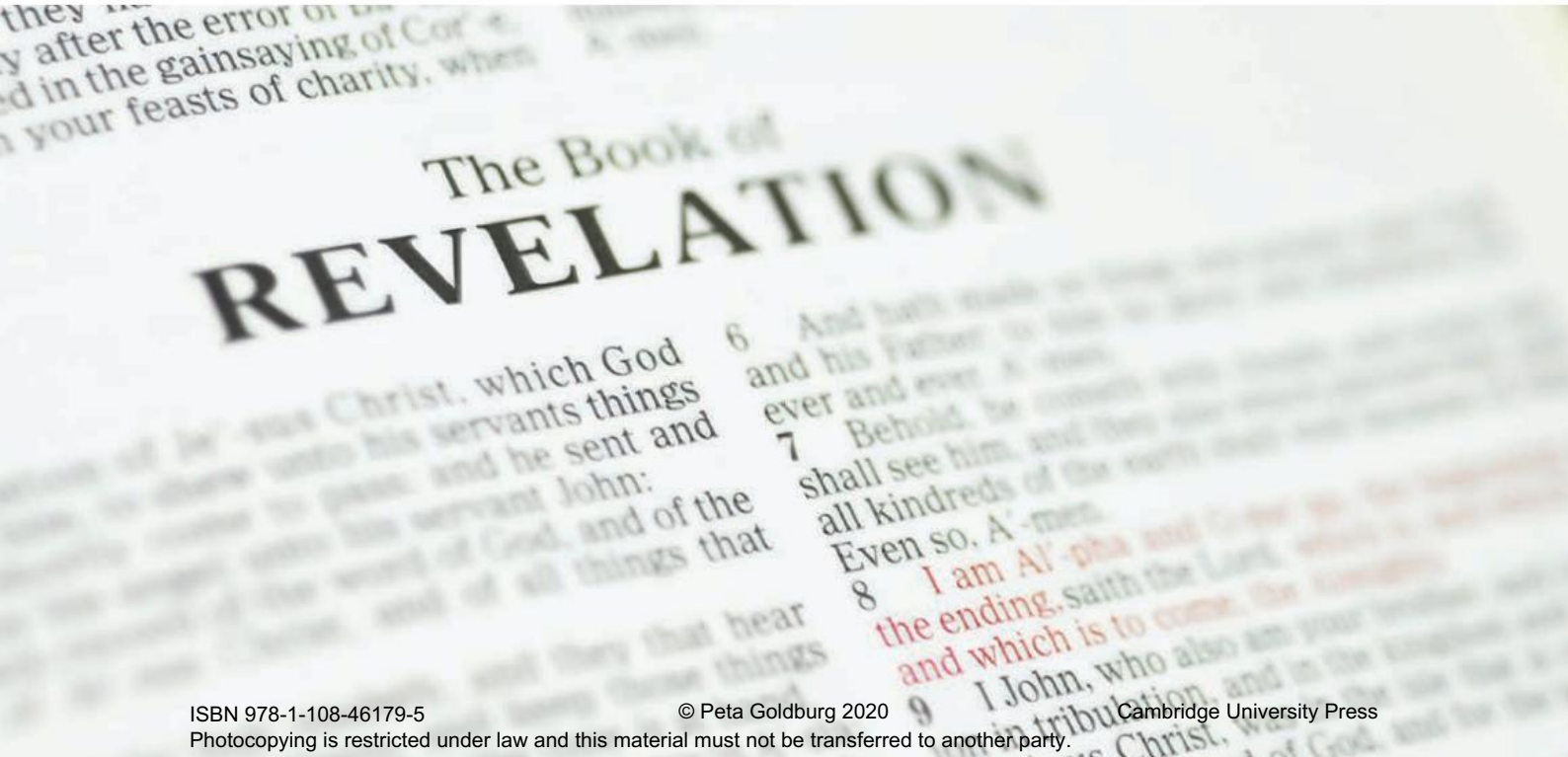
ACTIVITY **2.10**

Finding and analysing

Read chapter 1 in the Book of Revelation and answer the following questions.

1. In two or three sentences explain the substance of the chapter.
2. Verse 8 contains an expression commonly used in Christian theology. Locate the verse. What does the expression mean?
3. The same idea is applied to Jesus in verse 17. What might this tell us about the theology of Jesus in the early church? Why would this expression be important in the light of what was happening in the Roman Empire at this time?
4. List the verses of chapter 1 that contain symbolic language. Provide reasons for assigning them as being symbolic.

FIGURE 2.12 The Book of Revelation uses symbolic language and features dreams and visions, so a literal interpretation of its contents should be avoided.



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ACTIVITY **2.11**

Forming

1 The similarities of the narrative accounts of Jesus's life, death and resurrection are easily identified in the gospels. Provide reasons for and against the inclusion of four separate versions of the same story.
2 What justification can you provide for the gospels being known as the 'good news'?

Finding

Select one of the passages below and find the references in Matthew's, Mark's and Luke's gospels. Use a three-way Venn diagram to identify the similarities and differences:

- the healing of a leper
- the healing of a paralytic
- the parable of the sower
- the rich young man
- Judas agrees to betray Jesus.

Analysing

Matthew 1:1–17 and Luke 3:23–34 outline the genealogy of Jesus.

1 Highlight the names that are common to both versions.
2 Select five key characters and identify what they have achieved in their own stories. This will require you to look them up in other parts of the Bible.
3 Explain the significance of these characters' relationship with Jesus. Why have the authors of Matthew and Luke included these details and why might the author of Mark have left them out?

Evaluating

Select one gospel version from the passages from the 'Finding' section above.

1 Research online to find two different sources that offer an explanation of the passage.
2 Note the key ideas from each source and write a brief summary of each interpretation.
3 What conclusions can you draw about the two interpretations? How do they corroborate each other's views or challenge them?
4 Does either source have a more credible account? What standards or benchmarks enable you to make such judgements?
5 Consider the credibility and credentials of each source. What conclusions can you reach about their authenticity, reliability, accuracy and objectivity? Explain, citing evidence from the sources.

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about the sacred texts of Christianity?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 What impact do the sacred texts of Christianity have on people, society and culture?
4 What further questions do I have?



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2.6 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Islam

The Qur'an

The sacred book of Islam, the Qur'an, is looked upon by Muslims as the final word of guidance, given by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad through the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel). The Qur'an is absolutely central to Islam, and Muslims believe the words of the Qur'an are the literal, verbal revelation of God. Only by living according to the revealed will of God can Muslims find true happiness and fulfilment in this life and later in heaven.

For Muslims, it is important that the sacred text was revealed only to one person and preserved over a short time in oral form before it was written down. They contrast this with the Jewish and Christian scriptures, which they believe became corrupted through being transmitted over a long period of time. The Qur'an, recorded in Arabic, is regarded as unalterable and Muslims believe it cannot be translated into other languages without some loss. The word Qur'an means 'recitation', which emphasises the oral character of the text. It is intended to be read aloud and listened to.

The Qur'an (translation) begins:

> In the name of Allah, the
> Beneficent, the Merciful.
> All praise is due to Allah,
> the Lord of the Worlds
> The Beneficent, the Merciful.
> Master of the Day of Judgement.
> Thee do we serve and Thee do
> we beseech for help.
> Keep us on the right path.
> The path of those upon whom
> Thou has bestowed favours.
> Not (the path) of those upon
> whom Thy wrath is brought
> down, nor of those who go
> astray.



FIGURE 2.13 Illustrated text from the Qur'an

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The Qur'an contains 114 *surahs* (chapters) and 6616 *ayahs* (verses), beginning with the longest *surahs* and finishing with the shortest. The Prophet was unable to read or write and so he dictated the revealed *ayahs* to a scribe who recorded them on any available material. Of the 114 *surahs*, 87 were received during the 13 years the Prophet lived in Mecca. The remaining 27 *surahs* were received at Medina following Muhammad's migration from Mecca.

Each *surah* opens with the phrase 'In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful', reminding the reader that the sacred words they are about to hear are directly from God. In addition, each *surah* has a name that is derived from a striking word or incident described in the chapter. This word is used as a popular means of referencing. For example, *Surah* 2: The Cow; *Surah* 4: Women; *Surah* 96: The Clot.

exegesis
critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

The Qur'anic term for the process of revelation is *wahy* and together with the term *tanzil* it means 'sending down' from God. The scripture should be experienced aurally in Arabic to achieve its fullest effect. So important is the sound of the text that scholars have developed a special science for it, called *tajwid* (perfection of recitation). Only around 15 per cent of Muslims worldwide speak Arabic. For the rest, the Qur'an is memorised phonetically so that it can be recited, even though they may not fully understand its meaning.

Shi'ite Muslims maintain that the Qur'an has two levels of meaning: one open to all and one safeguarded by God. The second meaning is only made known to those whom Allah has specially chosen, the *imams*, who had a familiar relationship with him, such as Ali (cousin and son-in-law) and the 11 *imams* who followed him.

The Sunnis approach the Qur'an differently, through the *Sunnah* (customs of Muhammad) recorded in many volumes. Six of these works were compiled around the tenth century and are considered authoritative sources concerning all aspects of the Prophet's life through stories, anecdotes and personal observations called the Hadith (tradition). According to the Sunnis, the only true interpreter of the Qur'an was the Prophet Muhammad. Special attention is therefore paid to the ways in which he put Qur'anic principles into practice in his life and teachings. The collections of the Hadith help to clarify and extend Muslims' understandings of the Qur'an. They also keep alive the memory of God's messenger as an example for all Muslims to follow.

Early *tafsir* (commentaries) written by learned Muslims such as al-Tabari (d. 923), al-Zamakhshari (d. 1144), al-Razi (d. 1209) and al-Baydawi (d. c. 1291) contain biographical information. They discuss the origins and grammatical structure and shades of meaning of Arabic words, give cross-references and offer general help in clarifying the teachings of the Qur'an. *Tafsir* takes two forms: **exegesis** based on tradition and exegesis based on reason.

Scholars have different understandings of the Qur'anic text. Some treat the text literally and belong to the *zahiri* or literalist school. Others stress the symbolic meaning of Qur'anic verses and develop commentaries that belong to the

FIGURE 2.14 *Madrasa* students in Dehradun, India



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ta'wil or allegorical school of interpretation. Sufis place emphasis on hidden meanings in the text and hence belong to the *batini* or hidden school of interpretation.

The Qur'an is not a narrative like the Bible and so it is not easy to follow a theme all in one place. Often a theme occurs in many different chapters so, for the teaching to be fully understood, all related verses need to be drawn together.

The Qur'an is treated with deep respect and it should never be put on the floor or any unclean surface. Many Muslims cover their heads when the Qur'an is read aloud or when they study the text and they often wash before handling a copy of the Qur'an.

Every Muslim has committed some verses of the Qur'an to memory for use during prayers and some memorise the whole of the Qur'an. When it is memorised, the person is given the title *hafiz* (feminine *hafizah*), which means 'guardian' because they 'carry the Qur'an in their heart'.

Islam is unique among the religions because it has only one text in its canon. The Qur'an is tightly woven into Islamic life and practice.

ACTIVITY **2.12**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Why do Muslims consider it important to learn the Qur'an in Arabic?
2 Locate two translations of the Qur'an. Compare the same *surahs* from different translations. Explain what happens to the original words of any piece of writing when someone translates them into another language.

Forming and finding

1 You are interested in reading the Qur'an, but do not know where to begin and which English translation to select. Create a series of questions you should ask to assist you in your task.
2 Conduct some online research to see what answers you find for your questions. You may receive conflicting information and will need to use your analytical decision-making skills to assist you in deciding which approach is most appropriate for your needs.
3 Create a suggested reading guide to support a beginner engaging with the Qur'an.

Analysing and evaluating

1 Locate and read *Surah* 19.
2 Highlight the names of the characters mentioned in this *surah*. You may need to find the Judeo-Christian equivalent of the Arabic name. What do you know about these characters from other traditions?
3 This *surah* is unique as it is the only *surah* named after a woman. Explore the focus of this woman. Who is she and what has she done? What conclusions can you reach about the importance of this character?
4 Most Muslim scholars suggest this *surah* is divided into three distinct sections. After the *basmala* in 19:1, the sections are 2–40, 41–65 and 66–98. After reading these sections, provide reasons why you think they are generally divided in this way. What is the overall message of this *surah* and what key ideas bind each section to the other?

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about the sacred text of Islam?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 What impact do the sacred texts of Islam have on people, society and culture?
4 What further questions do I have?

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2.7 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Hinduism

Vedas

The oldest sacred texts in Hinduism are the Vedas. The Sanskrit word '*veda*' means 'knowledge' and usually refers to knowledge that transcends the ordinary and gives power to the knower. Sometimes, the Veda is spoken of in the singular and at other times it is called the 'three Vedas' or the 'four Vedas' and some additional texts are called the 'fifth Veda'. The Vedic texts are referred to as '*sruti*', which means 'hearing; what is heard' and is reflective of the way in which the text is transmitted orally from teacher to pupil without the use of writing. Many Hindus believe the Vedas are eternal, but historians usually date the text around 2000 BCE.

There are a number of traditions associated with the origins of the Vedas. One tradition says that the texts originated from poets with supra-normal insight; another tradition from the *Rig Veda* (10.90.9) says that the hymns emerged from the primordial sacrifice performed by the gods; and later literature considers the Vedas to be eternal and without a personal author – they were considered to be breathed out by the original being. The concept of *veda* is linked with Hindu notions of hierarchy. In the hierarchy of textual authorities, the Vedas rank above texts such as the *Mahabharata*, the *Puranas* and the *Dharmasastras*. These texts are only consulted when the Vedas do not give an answer and they are not considered eternal but derive their authority from their authors' knowledge of the Vedas.

The Vedas are not available to everyone in Hinduism. They are only accessible to those who have learnt them; to those in the three upper *varnas* (classes) who have been initiated with the sacred thread; and they can only be taught by *Brahmins*. In practice, this is restricted to male *Brahmins*, although the Vedas indicate that in ancient times women could learn them. Today, Vedic texts are available in printed editions and even on the World Wide Web, but the writing of



FIGURE 2.15 Reciting from a modern, printed edition of the four Vedas

the Vedas is traditionally condemned: 'Those who sell the Veda, those who harm the Veda, and those who write the Veda, go to hell' (*Mahabharata* 13.24.70). The Vedas are considered too precious to circulate, but serve as a measure and guarantee of the worth of what is current.

The Vedas consist of four collections of works, which are divided into four sections. Beginning with the oldest, the Vedas are the *Rig*, *Sama*, *Yajur* and *Atharva Vedas*. The four sections of each of the Vedas are:

1. *Samhitas*: hymns of praise to various deities
2. *Brahmanas*: texts describing methods of performing ritual animal sacrifices
3. *Aranyakas*: texts addressing meditative visualisations
4. *Upanishads*: philosophical texts on the nature of ultimate reality.

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The *Rig Veda Samhita* contains over one thousand hymns to the gods. The *Rig Veda* frequently mentions a mysterious power called *Brahman*. While the Vedas are still recited in rituals today, the Vedic gods no longer form part of the religious life of Indian people and the Upanishads, a later addition to the Vedas, are more valued in Hinduism.

The authority of the Vedas is inextricably linked to the authority of the *Brahmins* who preserve and recite it, and to the power of Vedic ritual. The validity of the performance depends on the correct utterance of the words, while the prestige and sanctity of the performers depend on their mastery of the words and also of the other parts of the performance.

The origin of the four classes within Hinduism is found in the Vedic creation hymn in which Purusha, a **primordial deity**, was sacrificially dismembered by the gods. The priestly class was created from his mouth. The ruling class was created from his arms, the merchant class from his legs and the servant class from his feet. Because of the authority given to these sacred texts, it is difficult to make changes to the Hindu class system.

Vedic texts have been printed since the nineteenth century but there has never been a single edition of the whole, so it is difficult to see what texts would appear in what order. The written form of the Vedas is considered to be greatly inferior to oral transmission. The Vedic texts speak of recitation, not reading. Unlike many oral traditions, however, the oral transmission of the Vedas ensured that text remained unchanged through centuries. The transmission of the Vedas without the use of writing is an incredible feat. It also requires the task of memorising to be separated from the use of the texts in ritual. This is achieved by self-study, which is the recitation of the words outside the ritual contexts, reinforcing the reciter's knowledge. This practice of recitation became a ritual itself, which like other rituals brings benefits to the performer.

Upanishads

The Upanishads are one of the most significant sacred texts of India and are central to the philosophy of Hinduism. '*Upanishad*' means 'to sit down close to' and refers to the act of a student sitting at the feet of the master, who teaches the student secret doctrine. The composition of the Upanishads is traditionally attributed to the ancient sages whose teachings are counted within the texts themselves. They recount the beliefs of the Aryan peoples, which developed as they moved east and south into Indian territory. The Upanishads consist of several hundred works composed in Sanskrit over a number of centuries. The traditional number is 108 but not all lists include the same 108. About 10 to 14 of the texts are considered major and accepted by Hindus as having the status of *shruti*.

primordial deity
ancient god or goddess

The date of the Upanishads is debatable but generally they are dated to between 1500 and 1000 BCE. The *Bryadaranyaka* and *Chandogya* are generally agreed to be the oldest followed by the *Taittiriya*, *Aitareya* and *Kausitaki*. Most of the texts are prose with verses used for summary passages or to heighten teaching points.

The Upanishads do not teach using statements of dogma but teach through stories, riddles and puns as can be seen in 'the gods seem to love the mysterious, and hate the obvious' (*Bryadaranyaka* 4.2.2). Many of the teachings take the form of dialogue and sometimes there is formal instruction and even debate between rival sages. The heart of the *Chandogya Upanishad* is a dialogue between Uddalaka Aruni and his son Svetaketu who, while educated, is nevertheless naïve. Uddalaka teaches him the nature of *Atman* by asking Svetaketu to bring him a banyan fruit, to break it open and then to break one of the tiny seeds he finds inside it.

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> 'What do you see there?' he asks.
> 'Nothing.'
> 'On this subtle part – the subtle part which you do not see – rests the great banyan tree. This subtle part is what all this has as self. It is truth: it is the self. You are that, Svetaketu.'
> (*Chandogya* 6:12)

The primary concern of the Upanishads is the nature of Absolute Reality (*Brahman*), the true nature of the individual self (*Atman*) and the relationship between *Brahman* and *Atman*.

The religion presented in the early Upanishads is a form of monism, but later the conception of *Brahman* is more personal and changes from 'it' to 'he', 'the Lord'. This significant change makes it possible to pray to *Brahman* and to hope for an answer to one's prayers.

A second element relates to the understanding of the universe as deceptive because it conceals its true nature from us (called *maya*, which means 'conjuror's trick'). To achieve salvation, the believer must pierce the veil of *maya* to reach the truth and reality of the essential nature of the **godhead** concealed within. When salvation is achieved, the illusory world of *maya* disappears and *Brahman* alone exists. In the later Upanishads, the concept of *yoga* appears, which means 'setting to work' or 'pursuing a goal'. It is defined as a movement towards spiritual liberation and the termination of the individual ego. The *Katha Upanishad* is a dialogue between Nachiketa and Yama, the King of Death. The text explores whether there is life after death.

godhead the unknowable aspect of a god, deity or divinity

For thousands of years, the Upanishads were passed verbally from teacher to student because it was believed that writing the text down would compromise its sacredness. Orthodox Hindu belief in the divinely inspired origin of the Vedas gives these texts levels of 'truth', which for many is unquestionable. The Upanishads have significant influence across all traditions within Hinduism and because they teach through symbolism and suggestion, different interpretations are often possible.

ACTIVITY 2.13

Finding and analysing

Read the extracts from the *Katha Upanishad* 1.3.3–11 on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. What is the literal meaning of the word '*upanishad*' in Sanskrit? How is this meaning evident in this particular text?
2. What is the purpose of the text? How are the Upanishads a tool for instruction and contemplation?
3. Explain how the imagery of the chariot in the *Katha Upanishad* provides instruction to Hindus on how to live their lives. Use examples from the text to support your answer.
4. How does the text support the fundamental teachings of Hinduism on issues such as life, death and reincarnation?
5. Provide three examples of 'instructional texts' from other religions that function similarly to the Upanishads.

Shruti and *smriti*

Hindu texts that are considered to come direct from the divine are called *shruti*. All other scripture is called *smriti*, 'that which is remembered'. *Smriti* holds less authority than *shruti*.

Shruti literature is restricted to a specific audience. According to the *Law of Manu* only adult males from the upper three classes are worthy enough to read these sacred texts. The men who belong to this group are known as 'twice-born' because they participate in a ceremony at the end of childhood that is like a second, spiritual birth. Since women, children and all people in the fourth class are excluded, the majority of believers do not have access to the holiest set of writings in Hinduism.

The two epics poems, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, are important *smriti* texts. The *Ramayana*, which tells the story of prince Rama

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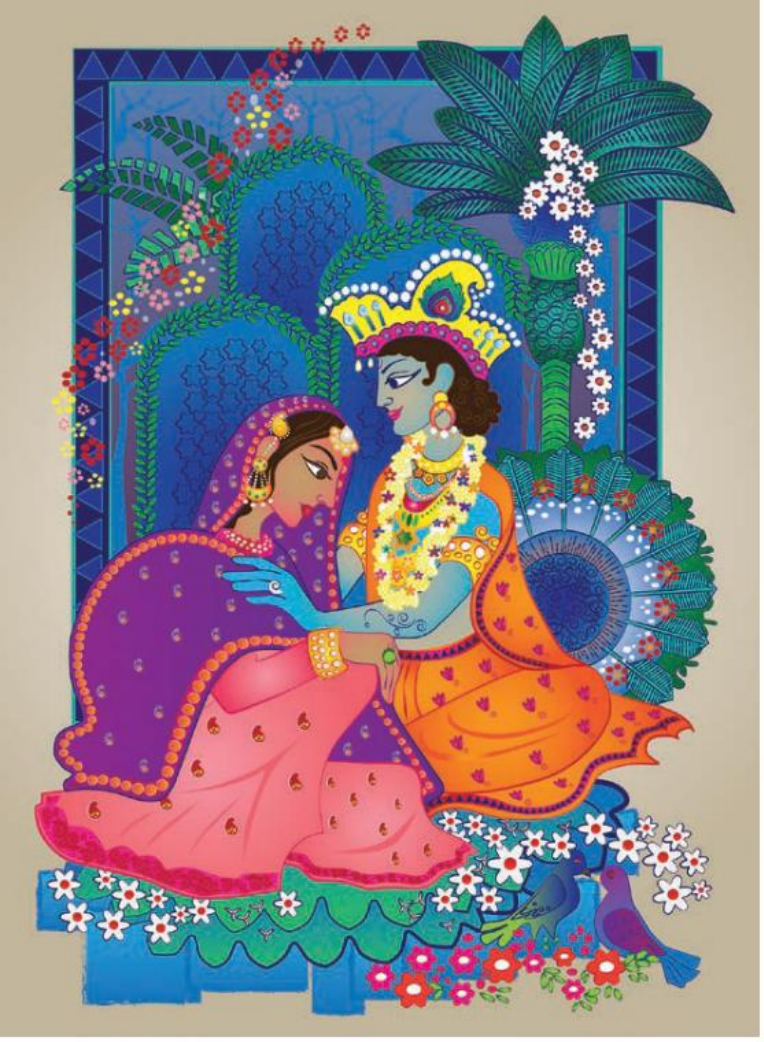


FIGURE 2.16 Prince Rama with his beloved Princess Sita from the epic poem *Ramayana*

from the northern Indian kingdom, is written in Sanskrit. The *Ramayana* consists of 24 000 verses over six books. The story is summarised as follows.

Prince Rama wins the hand of the princess Sita but is exiled for 14 years before his coronation. His wife, Sita, and his half-brother, Lakshmana, go with him out of loyalty. Sita is kidnapped by the demon Ravana and taken to Lanka. Rama and Lakshmana search for her with the aid of Hanuman, the leader of the monkey kingdom. Rama kills Ravana and Sita proves that she has remained faithful to Rama. They return to Ayodhya where Rama becomes king.

Many of the characters in the *Ramayana* are regarded as gods and serve as models for Hindus. Rama is seen as the ideal husband and ruler and is understood to be the incarnation of the god Vishnu. Sita is viewed as the ideal wife who supports her husband even when confronted with danger. She is associated with the goddess Lakshmi, Vishnu's consort. Hanuman is the ideal follower who serves Rama devotedly.

The *Ramayana* is one of the most popular sacred stories of Hinduism and has been retold by famous writers over many generations. It is also frequently used for various dramatic performances including dance-dramas, shadow puppets and in Northern India it is performed at the autumn festival of Dassehra to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness.

ACTIVITY 2.14

Finding and analysing

1 In groups of three or four locate at least two contrasting online video summary versions of the *Ramayana* of less than 10 minutes' duration. Use the story analysis template provided on the Activity Worksheet to summarise the key elements of the story.
2 Compare the information recorded in your summary template with another group. From the information gathered, identify the main teaching points of this epic poem. Create a hypothesis as to why the *Ramayana* is so popular within Hinduism.

Bhagavad Gita

Another classical Hindu text is the *Mahabharata*. In approximately 100 000 verses it tells of the clash between the princes of the northern kingdom, the Pandavas, and their cousins, the Kauravas. It is a story of good versus evil. The conversation that takes place between them is known as the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Lord), located in the sixth *parvan* of the *Mahabharata*. The *Bhagavad Gita* is sometimes called the *Bhagavad Gita Upanishad* because it is based around a series of teachings imparted by Krishna to Arjuna. The *Bhagavad Gita* draws together concepts of *dharma*, *bhakti* and yogic ideals.

Scholars debated whether the *Bhagavad Gita* was in circulation as an independent text prior to its insertion into the *Mahabharata*. Its location within the epic is pivotal, book-ended by the story that leads to the onset of a terrible conflict and

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dreadful events of the ensuing battles. Arjuna faces significant existential challenges: to fight or surrender; to renounce his kingly inheritance for the sake of peace but in doing so allow unrighteousness to prevail. Krishna's teaching to Arjuna offers him a resolution to his indecision. The *Bhagavad Gita*'s teachings offer paths that reconcile the quandary between choosing life in society or away from its demands. Krishna teaches Arjuna three paths to self-realisation: *Jnana Marga* (the path of transcendental knowledge), *Karma Marga* (the path of action) and *Bhakti Marga* (the path of loving devotion). The three paths are also known as yogas, or methods of leading to a unitive condition. The *Bhagavad Gita* is one of the earliest texts to introduce the *bhakti* approach and it identifies Krishna as the ideal and supreme object of devotion. The *Bhagavad* Gita marks the rise in what is called Classical Hinduism, characterised by the deities of Shiva, Vishnu and Devi, who are celebrated in the Puranic scriptures.

Commentators vary considerably in their analysis of the *Bhagavad Gita*. Mohandas Gandhi interpreted it as a text which encouraged activism as well as emphasising selfless action, but he disagreed over whether violence could ever by justified. Swami Vivekananda and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan praised it for its emphasis on inclusivity exemplified through tolerance; while Bhaktivedanta Swami Prebhupada said that it stressed the personal nature of the divine and the primacy of devotion.



FIGURE 2.17 Children recite from the *Bhagavad Gita* during a festival in 2016

Over the past one hundred years, the *Bhagavad Gita* has gained extraordinary popularity within and outside of India. It has become so popular that some people refer to it as *the* Hindu scripture. The *Bhagavad Gita* is retold in children's comics and story books as well as television serials and stage adaptations.

ACTIVITY **2.15**

Finding and analysing

Read the extract from the *Bhagavad Gita* (Chapter 9:1–3, 27–34) on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. What is the genre of this text?
2. Identify the characters of the text and complete the character map on the worksheet which briefly describes their relationship/s to other characters.
3. Using examples from the text, describe the nature of the relationship with the divine.
4. From your knowledge of Hindu teachings and beliefs, identify and list the main themes in this sacred text.
5. How does interaction with this sacred text provide followers of Hinduism with guidance for living?
6. Locate and investigate some contemporary retellings of the *Bhagavad Gita*. These could include videos, images or comic illustrations for different age groups. Complete a Venn diagram on the similarities and differences of the contemporary retellings.
7. List the ways that these compare/contrast with the original text.
8. Use the evidence gathered above to construct an expository paragraph that evaluates the message of the text for contemporary readers. Use a point expressed in a topic sentence, elaboration and evidence, and a concluding link to the topic (PEEL).

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Hinduism has no universally accepted canon and is unique among the world religions because access to its most sacred writings is limited by age, gender and class. A significant feature of sacredness relates to whether or not a text is transmitted orally or in writing. Although we tend to think of 'text' as written objects, prior to the advent of writing, texts were memorised and transmitted orally. *Shruti* literature continues to be transmitted orally because committing it to writing is regarded as diminishing its sacredness. This does not mean that the Vedas were never written down. However, despite being part of the written tradition for centuries, particular families of *Brahmins* have maintained the tradition of memorising and reciting the Vedas.

ACTIVITY **2.16**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Design a diagram showing how the sacred texts of Hinduism are grouped to form the sacred body of work of this tradition.
2 Choose a text from one of those referred to in the section, or one provided by your teacher, and transform it into a different genre to communicate its underlying theme and message to a contemporary audience. Present this to the class.
3 Read the following Hindu texts and answer the questions below:

The sacrifice of God: Devayajna
Brahma, the self-existent, was performing fervid concentration. 'In fervid concentration,' he reflected, 'there is no infinity. Come, let me sacrifice myself in living things and all living things in myself.' Then, having sacrificed himself in all living things and all living things in himself, he acquired greatness, self-radiance and sovereignty (*Srimad Bhagavatam* XIII, 7, 1, 1).

4 What characteristics of Brahma and creation does this extract indicate? Provide evidence to show how the text invites this reading.

Karma Yoga
12. Desiring success, they sacrifice to the Gods with ritual actions, for from such actions success comes quickly in the world of men.
23. Liberation achieved, attachments gone, with a mind fixed on knowledge, man's whole action becomes a sacrifice, his deeds melt entirely away.
24. *Brahman* is all: the act of offering, the offerer and the fire! He who concentrates on *Brahman* in all his actions shall surely reach *Brahman*. (extracts from *Bhagavad Gita* IV, 12:23–4, R. Panikkar, trans., *The Vedic Experience Mantramunjari*, 1997)

5 What behaviour does this text encourage in adherents?
6 How does this text reinforce the idea of the existence of parallels between *Brahman* and humanity?
7 'Ancient texts have little to offer people in the twenty-first century.' Write some sentences about both sides of the argument that might emerge when debating this statement, using examples and evidence from Hindu texts to support your view.

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about the sacred texts of Hinduism?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 What impact do the sacred texts of Hinduism have on people, society and culture?
4 What further questions do I have?



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2.8 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Buddhism

Traditional accounts of the life of Siddhartha Gautama (the Buddha) indicate that he taught for approximately 45 years. The oral teachings he gave to his followers were passed down to subsequent generations and were communicated in local Indian languages including Magadhi, the language of the region in India where the Buddha spent much of his life. As the Buddha's teaching spread throughout India some people made efforts to record these teachings in a common literary language. Several influences from these languages can be identified in Pali, the literary language in which the Theravada lineage of Buddhism has preserved its canonical texts.

The Theravada tradition says that after the Buddha died, 500 of his disciples met in Magadha to collect what they remembered of his teachings. The recitation of the teachings and of the rules that governed monastic life signified agreement on their authenticity. The rule of the *Sangha* (*Vinaya*) and the Buddha's sermons (*Sutra*) were recited in the Pali language. Out of respect for the teachings, these rules and sermons were not written down for many centuries. Because Pali was only a spoken language, the texts were recorded in other languages.

Eventually, the *Abhidhamma* (higher teaching), a collection of summaries and scholastic interpretations of Buddhist teaching, were added as the third section of sacred writings. The three sections of the Pali Canon – *Vinaya*, *Sutra* and the *Abhidhamma* – became known as *pitaka* (baskets) and eventually the Pali Canon was called the *Tipitaka* (Three Baskets). The image of the three baskets has been explained in several ways. Some argue that the scriptures were originally written on palm leaves stitched together at the edges and kept in three separate baskets.

When the *Sangha* divided, Mahayana Buddhists used Sanskrit, an ancient Indian language, for their scriptures. They also added some of their own ***sutras*** in Sanskrit. As Buddhism spread, the sacred texts of Buddhism were translated into other languages and expanded.

***sutra* (or *sutta*)** literally means 'thread' and refers to the Buddha's teachings being sewn together into collections

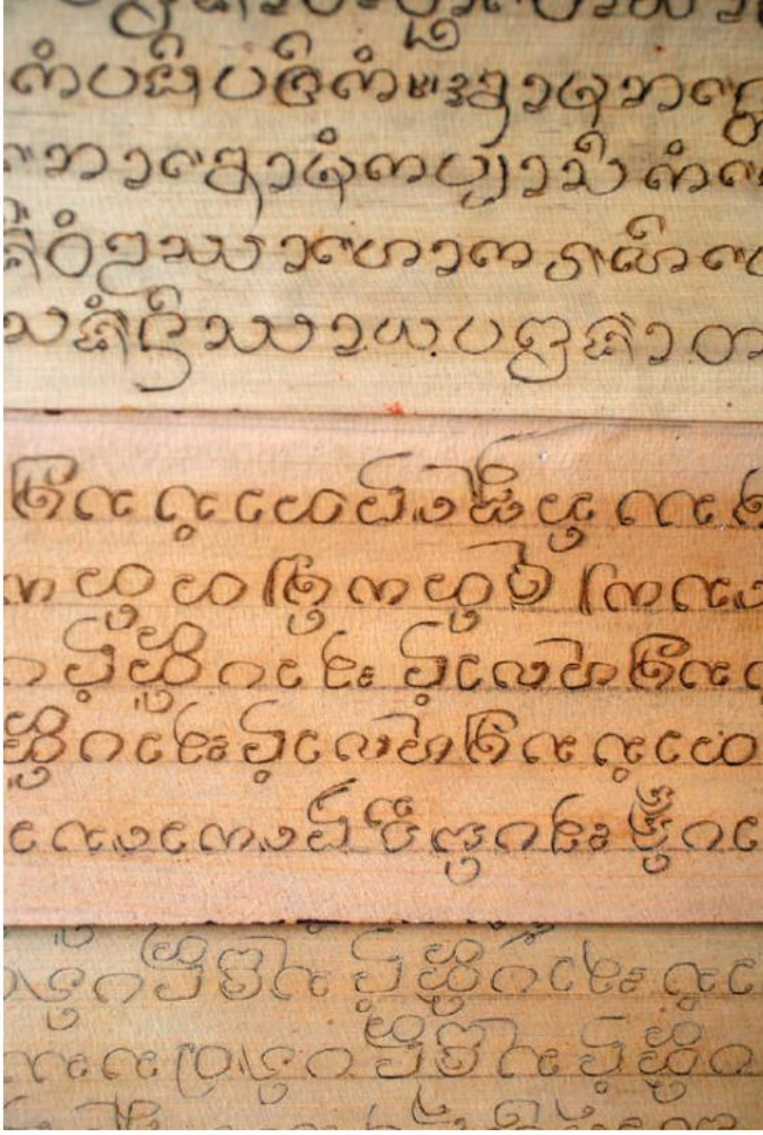


FIGURE 2.18 Pali writing tablets, Myanmar



FIGURE 2.19 Carving in Sanskrit on lontar leaves in Bali, Indonesia

ACTIVITY 2.17

Forming and finding

Create an infographic that shows the history and development of Buddhist sacred texts.

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Canons

Buddhists have no single authoritative book and there are multiple canons with varying criteria for inclusion. Complete sets of authoritative scripture exist in Pali, Chinese and Tibetan languages and there are partial canons of scripture preserved in Sanskrit and various Prakrit languages. The difficulties of interpreting texts across cultures contributed to an evolving canonical process. In addition, a vibrant oral tradition of commentary influenced the composition of many works included in these canons. Subsequently, each of the canons is a unique compilation, shaped by different people over centuries. The Theravada tradition of Burma/Myanmar accepted four works excluded by other Theravada Buddhists. Some editions of Chinese and Tibetan canons also differ both in the arrangement of the texts included and in their number. The Mahayana tradition created large quantities of new *sutras* that the faithful regarded as being the authentic words of the Buddha. Modern scholars distinguish between the formal canon of the Pali, Chinese and Tibetan *Tipitakas*, the definitive sources of interpretative authority, and the ritual or practical canon that contemporary monastics draw upon when conducting rituals and preaching sermons.

The Pali Canon is a sizable body of material of more than 50 volumes. The texts of the Pali Canon as they exist today show clear evidence of having developed over time. Often within a single discourse there are passages that were constructed at different times and some passages are obviously assembled by interpolating material borrowed from other sources. According to the Theravada tradition, the Pali Canon was settled at the First Council held by the Buddha's monastic disciples in Rajagaha immediately after the Buddha's death. While this is more likely to be tradition rather than fact, there is nevertheless strong evidence in the texts that some material may be as old as the third or fourth century BCE. Scholars do not believe that the Pali Canon is the verbatim teaching of Buddha, but they do think that the texts provide the spirit of the teaching of the historical Buddha as well as some passages that recount the Buddha's own words.



FIGURE 2.20 Young Buddhist studying sacred texts with a teacher at the Sin Sur Monastery in Arunachal Pradesh, India

The Pali Canon was not developed in a vacuum. It shows that early Buddhists were aware of Vedic literature and tradition and aware of the Upanishads. It would appear from the texts that the Buddha borrowed and reconstructed some philosophical concepts from other traditions such as Brahmanism and Jainism. However, when the Buddha borrowed a concept from another tradition he often used it to prove a point at odds with the tradition from which it was borrowed.

Vinaya Pitaka (Basket of Discipline)

The *Vanaya Pitaka* is the portion of the canon specifically relevant to monastic communities and regulating monastic life. It is the smallest basket and consists of 227 rules for monks (*bhikkhus*) and 311 rules for nuns (*bhikkhunis*) covering subjects such as simplicity and celibacy.

The *Vinaya* is divided into three sections:

1. *Sutra-vibhanga* – contains rules, explanations and commentaries for *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*.
2. *Khandhaka* – deals with regulations for communal living (*kamma-vacana*) as well as rules for clothing and food.
3. *Parivara* – contains extra precepts that vary from school to school.

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ACTIVITY **2.18**

Forming, finding and analysing

Read the extract from the *Patimokkha* – rules for monastic discipline (monks and nuns) – on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. Categorise each rule as to whether you think it exists to maintain material simplicity, celibacy or inoffensiveness.
2. Do any of these rules serve another purpose, apart from the three mentioned in the chapter? Explain your answer.
3. Rank these rules from most important to least important, according to your own views.

The rules are recited every two weeks in monasteries and are designed to ensure harmony in the *Sangha*.

ACTIVITY **2.19**

Analysing

On the Activity Worksheet are six excerpts from the *Dhammapada*. For each, suggest a practical situation in which a Buddhist's life might be directed or guided by the saying.

ACTIVITY **2.20**

Analysing

Read the extracts from the first *vegga* of the *Dhammapada* on the Activity Worksheet.

1. What is the purpose of such a text?
2. How might it assist someone on the path to enlightenment? Provide evidence to support your claims.

Sutra Pitaka (Basket of Threads)

The *Sutra Pitaka* is a collection of myths, stories, sayings and teachings related to the Buddha. It is usually divided into five *nikayas* (sections). The *Digha Nikaya* contains 34 *sutras*, including a *sutra* that describes the last three months of the Buddha's life, and is thought to record some of the actual words of the Buddha. The *Majjhima Nikaya* contains 152 *sutras* grouped in 15 *veggas* or sections. The *Samyutta Nikaya* contains 7762 *sutras* in 56 groups, arranged according to subject. It also includes the Buddha's first teaching after his enlightenment. The *Anguttara Nikaya*, the one-at-a-time teachings, contains 2308 *sutras* arranged in 11 groups. The *Khuddaka Nikaya*, or minor teachings, contains 15 *sutras* that do not easily fit into the other *nikayas*. These *nikayas* include some of the most well-known *sutras* such as the *Dhammapada*, on the meaning of love, a collection of 423 verses set in 26 *veggas*, which provides moral guidelines to those following the path to enlightenment.

Tipitaka (The Three Baskets)

The Three Baskets are:

1. *Vinaya Pitaka*: Basket of Discipline:
   - *Sutravibhanga* (fundamental rules)
   - *Khandhaka* (rules and sayings)
   - *Parivara* (summaries)
2. *Sutra Pitaka*: Basket of Threads:
   - *Digha Nikaya* (extended teachings)
   - *Majjhima Nikaya* (medium teachings)
   - *Samyutta Nikaya* (grouped teachings)
   - *Anguttara Nikaya* (specific teachings)
   - *Khuddaka Nikaya* (minor teachings)
3. *Abhidhamma Pitaka*: Basket of Higher Teaching:
   - *Dhammasangani* (phenomena)
   - *Vibhanga* (treatises)
   - *Dhatukatha* (elements)
   - *Puggalapannatti* (individuals)
   - *Kathavatthu* (points of controversy)
   - *Yamaka* (pairs)
   - *Patthana* (relations).

The *Sutra Pitaka* also contains the *Jataka*, 547 stories about the previous lives of the Buddha,

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which emphasise the qualities a person needs to progress towards enlightenment. The themes of the *Jataka* stories are often shown in pictures at Buddhist shrines.

ACTIVITY 2.21

Finding and analysing

Go online and locate a written version of one of the *Jataka* stories and then try to locate a video or illustration of the same story.

1. Provide a brief outline of the story.
2. Identify the moral of the story.
3. Who might be an appropriate audience for the story?
4. Compare the written text version with the video and/or illustration. Is the message conveyed the same, or have some elements been omitted or changed? Use evidence to support your claims.
5. Read the *Jataka* story *Two Ways of Beating a Drum* on the Activity Worksheet and either create a storyboard for a three-minute animation or sketch a design for a carving.

Abhidhamma Pitaka: Basket of Higher Teaching

The third basket, *Abhidhamma Pitaka*, contains seven separate works which not only reflect on earlier doctrine but also explore it from a philosophical perspective. The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* is considered to be a highly advanced form of the Buddha's teaching revealed from the heavenly realm after his death.

Mahayana Buddhism

While Theravada lineage emphasised oral tradition, the Mahayana tradition appears to have depended much more on the creation of a written canon of scripture. Written texts were highly valued and venerated in the early Mahayana tradition and the books were expansive in number as well as scope and vision.

The Mahayana texts fall into three broad divisions of the *Tipitaka*:

1. *sutras* or discourse of the Buddha
2. *vinaya* or works dealing with the monastic code
3. *sastras* or philosophical treatises.

The striking difference is that the Mahayana Canon was never officially closed, so text continues to be added along with expansions of existing texts, including the *sutras*. As the Mahayana spread to Central and East Asia, new and more localised schools of thought emerged, each developing its own distinctive exegetical traditions and *sastra* literature.

There is no fixed canon for Mahayana Buddhism that uses texts in Sanskrit, Tibetan, Japanese and Chinese. The Chinese Canon consists of 2184 texts in 55 volumes with a supplementary 45 volumes. It contains the *Tipitaka*, the *Sutras*, the *Tantras*, the *Sastras*, commentaries, histories and biographies, encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Mahayana texts such as the *Lotus Sutra* are widely used in East Asia. Zen Buddhism does not use these texts, preferring to transmit truths verbally from one generation to the next.

Tibetan texts

The Tibetan Canon contains much of the Chinese Canon, plus some texts that are unique to Tibetan Buddhism. Texts are added to the canon continually.

The Tibetan Canon consists of two parts: *bKa'gyar* and *bStan'gyur*. The *bKa'gyar* (translations of the Buddha) contains *Vinaaya*, *Prajna-paramita Sutras*, *Avatamsaka Sutra*, *Ratnatkutta Sutra*, other *sutras* (75 per cent of which are Mahayana) and *tantras*. The *bStan'gyur* (translations of teachings) includes *stotras* (hymns of praise), commentaries on the *tantras* and other commentaries and *Abhidhammas*. Tibetan scholars compiled translations made over a 500-year period and determined which of these to include in an authoritative collection of Buddhist scripture.

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There is no standard edition of the Tibetan Canon. *bKa'gyar* and *bStan'gyur* come from different regions of Tibet and have a complex history of transmission.

In Tibetan Buddhism, books or texts are considered sacred because they contain the *Dharma*. They are kept in places of honour in shrines. The oldest copies have the greatest place of honour.

Studying Buddhist texts is one of the most important religious activities a Buddhist can perform.



FIGURE 2.21 A Tibetan Buddhist monk reads from a sacred text

ACTIVITY **2.22**

Forming and analysing

1 The sacred texts of Buddhism are often depicted visually as 'three baskets'. Find three or four different images of baskets and identify the most notable and distinguishable differences between them. Provide suggestions as to the possible reasons for this.
2 You have been tasked with the job of designing a modern image of the *Tipitaka*, but as a non-adherent you need to ensure authenticity. What questions do you need to ask an Australian adherent in order to create a suitable image? What will be included in your design brief to ensure you complete the task appropriately?

Finding and analysing

The *Abhidhamma Pitaka* are more philosophical than the *Vinaya* and *Sutra Pitaka*. Do some research to find some key similarities and differences between these and include your information in a three-way Venn diagram. Try to find specific examples from each to support your perspective.

Evaluating

As there is no unifying text in Buddhist traditions, is it appropriate to identify the various forms of Buddhism as one religion or should they be recognised as distinct religions? In responding to this question, you will need to discuss how central the role of the sacred text is in defining the religion.

Reflecting

1 What have I discovered about the sacred texts of Buddhism?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 What impact do the sacred texts of Buddhism have on people, society and culture?
4 What further questions do I have?

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2.9 Sacred texts of the world's major religions: Australian Aboriginal spiritualities

Oral traditions

Storytelling in Indigenous cultures sustains communities and validates the experiences and ways of thinking of Indigenous peoples. Indigenous Elders, as the wisdom and knowledge keepers of Indigenous communities, are the people who sustain and keep the culture alive by retelling sacred stories to subsequent generations. The stories educate children, young people and adults about the living systems of which they are a part. For Indigenous Australians, storytelling is a teaching tool for learning about life.

Religions that depend on oral traditions tend to express themselves and transfer their sacred stories through body painting, masks, tattoos, carvings, rock paintings and ritual objects. Dances, for instance, tell significant stories. Masks also have religious significance. When a dancer is wearing a mask, the dancer not only represents the spirit but also is thought to become the spirit. Statues and paintings too record sacred stories. Some cultures use totem poles to depict animals, birds and people representing kinship groups. These have special meanings for individuals and family groups.



Feathers can also play a part in some oral religions because of their powerful association with flight and the world beyond the present. Another important art, which often has religious meaning, is weaving, basketry and clothing decoration. The colour and imagery of these arts are closely linked to nature deities or tribal lore. Many such sacred texts are not permanent.

Australian Aboriginal spiritualities

Indigenous Australians tell and record their sacred stories in a variety of ways. Many communities use dance, body painting, song and

FIGURE 2.22 Indigenous dancers in the Northern Territory dancing and wearing masks



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rhythm sticks to accompany a corroboree, which may tell an ancient story or explain tribal lore. Other communities record their sacred stories in sand paintings, rock art or dot paintings. Each Indigenous group, depending where they are located, records their texts in different ways and via different media.

Professor A.P. Elkin, a social anthropologist examining some Aboriginal art, said: 'As social anthropologists we are concerned with art as an element in the lives of people … we look at the art divorced from its context … [we should look at] the painting or engraving as a window through which we glimpse, or even a door through which we enter, an abiding world – the world of spiritual relations, the world of meaning, which increases in depth and fades not away' (1930, p. 6). If we engage and view Aboriginal art in this way, we may begin to see some of the spiritual significance of the stories that are told through these sacred texts.

Art

Aboriginal paintings are painted differently depending on the context in which they are going to be viewed and used. For the Yolngu people of northeast Arnhem Land, their art is an expression of clan and country and their images have five levels of meaning and purpose: *wakinngu*, *garma*, *bulgu*, *ngaarrapuy* and *likanbuy*. *Wakinngu* paintings are decorative and created in order to make something more attractive; they are not connected with ancestors or sacred law. *Garma* paintings depict the 'outside' or public aspects of totemic and sacred law and they are displayed in some public places such as grave posts. *Bulgu* paintings consist of simple outlines of *mardayinbuy* images and are connected with men's ceremonial life: they are painted on objects or as body paintings for restricted contexts such as initiation ceremonies. *Ngaarrapuy* paintings are figurative representations of totemic species painted on the bodies of people performing dances in the context of closed phases of major ceremonies. *Likanbuy* or *ranggapuy* paintings are detailed designs that are used on sacred objects and are produced away from women, children and men who are not fully initiated into the ceremony for which they will be used.

The distinction between sacred and mundane art is central to many Indigenous people's idea of the significance of paintings, carvings and body painting. For non-Indigenous people, learning to read Aboriginal art is like learning to read iconography which has additional meaning for those who belong within the tradition. While some non-Indigenous people have knowledge of the symbol systems used in some Aboriginal art, as outsiders they are not exposed to the deeper knowledge and meaning of the designs that are revealed to insiders through participation in ceremonies. Unlike Western paintings, which are produced as static objects for appreciation, Aboriginal paintings are often produced for use within rituals and can only be interpreted fully within this context. In addition, there is a difference between symbols produced in the context of ceremonies and symbols used in more generic situations. The material from which ceremonial designs are constructed, such as earth pigments, animal products, plants and feathers, retain an association with their source and these elements provide meaning within the ceremony.

Papunya Tula dot painting

In Papunya Tula dot painting, for instance, sacred meaning is often purposefully hidden. To non-Indigenous people, the dots may appear as background, but they are used to downplay iconic elements and to obscure the meaning of sacred designs. Indigenous people also control the context in which a painting is produced as well as regulate who may participate in ceremonies as a sign of power or status within Yolngu society. Releasing this type of information would be detrimental to their way of life and undermine the community's social structure.

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FIGURE 2.23 Aboriginal artist making a dot painting

Kimberley rock art

Rock art in the Kimberley region (northeastern Western Australia) is dominated by paintings of large anthropomorphic beings called Wandjina painted in red and white ochre. The Wandjina are unique to the Mowanjum people, who consist of three language groups: the Worrorra, Ngarinyin and Wunambal.

Each painting is believed to be a Wandjina spirit that transformed itself into the painting when it ceased wandering on earth. According to the people, Wandjina spirits control fertility by indirectly controlling weather conditions and monitoring the flow of baby-spirits from the sky.

The body of a Wandjina is covered with dots that represent rainfall. Sometimes, torrential rains of the wet season, including lightning and thunder, are included in the imagery around the head of the Wandjina. The facial features of the Wandjina also represent climatic features: the eyes are thunderstorms and the line between the eyes transfers energy. For the people of the Mowanjum community, the Wandjina brought the law, culture and language to their people. Their *Dreaming* stories tell of Idjair, the first Wandjina who lives in the Milky Way and is father to all Wandjinas. The story says that Idjair's son created the earth and the first human beings, the Gyorn Gyorn people. Contemporary Aboriginal artists of the region continue to paint the Wandjina images on canvas, which enables the great Rain Maker image to move beyond his traditional Kimberley sites.

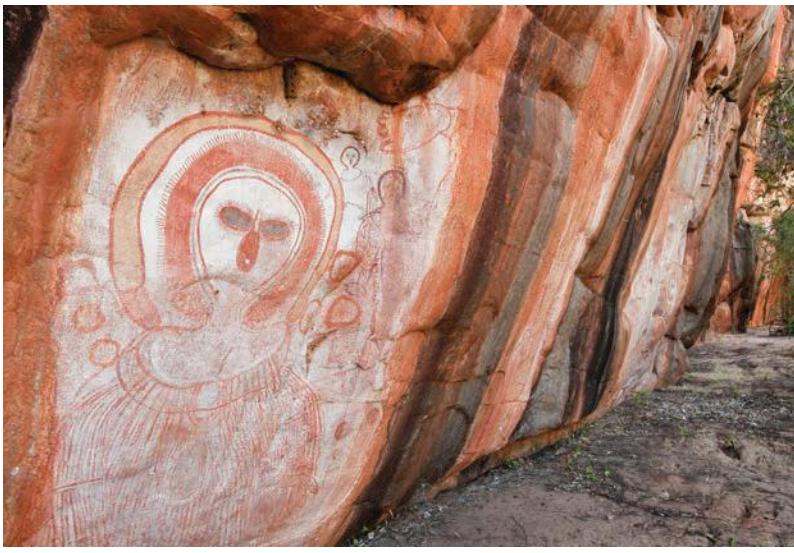


FIGURE 2.24 Wandjina rock art in the West Kimberley region, Western Australia

Western Desert art

There is a marked difference between the art of the Kimberley and the art of the Western Desert, which covers diverse areas of Australia from Western Australia to northern South Australia and the southwest lands of the Northern Territory. Western Desert art often has layers of meaning that are not obvious on first viewing and some of which are secret and only revealed to people during ceremonies that may be gender specific. Western Desert art is also very symbolic. For the Western Desert people, the country is a mosaic over which ancestral beings

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FIGURE 2.25 Aboriginal rock paintings at the Killagurra Spring Waterhole along the Canning Stock Route in the Western Desert

travelled, and while travelling they created the features in the landscape. While these sacred stories are generally widely known, details of the stories are restricted to specific groups, often divided by gender and age. The paintings are interpreted through dances, songs and rituals. The Western Desert people were among the last Indigenous groups in Australia to have contact with Europeans.

Song

Prior to white settlement, there were over 600 Indigenous language groups in Australia. While some language material was recorded in the nineteenth century, most were wordlists and place names rather than full texts. Initially, anthropologists paid little attention to the songs that provide a unique perspective on Aboriginal life and culture, but more recently, ethnomusicologists have established that music

ACTIVITY **2.23**

Finding and forming

Go online to the National Gallery of Australia website, and search for 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art'.

1 Read the section on 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art' and find two quotes that support the belief that Aboriginal art is intrinsically linked to the people and their way of life.
2 Locate and select three pieces of art from different collections by clicking on the various options available. Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

While Professor Elkin said: '… we look at the art divorced from its context … [we should look at] the painting or engraving as a window through which we glimpse, or even a door through which we enter, an abiding world – the world of spiritual relations, the world of meaning, which increases in depth and fades not away' (in Crawford, 1972), there are often many cultural and spiritual restrictions surrounding access to the metaphorical doorway. Those who are 'outsiders, [and] not exposed to the deeper knowledge and meaning of the designs which are revealed to insiders through participation in ceremonies' are excluded from the richness of the art and its spiritual significance.

3 Provide at least three reasons both for and against Aboriginal art being transparent and explicit in its use and application of symbolism, colour and technique.

Evaluating

Is it appropriate to use Aboriginal art as decoration? State your position and provide reasons to justify your response.

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is central in the construction and maintenance of individual and collective identities among Indigenous people.

The Aboriginal peoples of southwest Western Australia refer to themselves as Noongar people. More than 30 000 people identify as part of the Noongar language group and many families still converse and sing in Noongar language today. Song is particularly important to Aboriginal Australians because it is one way in which they articulate connection to country and kin. Music also creates boundaries between groups, constructing, shaping and preserving ethnic identities. Some Indigenous songs are performed by groups and accompanied by dance, and other songs are sung as solo vocal pieces. While some Indigenous songs have been shared with diverse Aboriginal groups, many songs belong to certain places and people.

Traditional music from Aboriginal Australia and the Torres Strait Islands can be classified using the following groupings:

- Northern Australia, subdivided into:
  - Central Eastern Arnhem Land
  - Western Arnhem Land including Bathurst and Melville Islands
- Kimberley
- Central Australia
- Southeastern Australia
- North Queensland
- Torres Strait.

ACTIVITY 2.24

Forming and finding

Locate two or three traditional Australian Indigenous songs from the different geographical regions listed above. Listen to the music. What might the music reveal about the country and the people from which it originates?

Australian Aboriginal spirituality is uniquely linked to the land and culture and is essentially contemplative, based on listening and a state of wordless contemplation. It is also communal; the individual is part of the community of all living



FIGURE 2.26 Indigenous men playing didgeridoo and clap sticks

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things. Aboriginal culture seems to have what many people would say Western culture has lost – a sense of reverence, obedience and community.

One particular form of Indigenous spirituality, shared with us by members of the Ngangikurungkurr (meaning 'deep water sounds') people from the Daly River in the Northern Territory, is a spirituality called *Dadirri*.

Dadirri

Dadirri is inner, deep listening and still awareness. It invites people to contemplation and to enter the deep spring within them. Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, an Elder from the Nauiyu community, says that when she experiences *dadirri* she is made whole again. She finds peace in stillness. An important part of *dadirri* is listening: listening to ancient stories. Miriam-Rose describes how a smoking ceremony focuses her contemplation and brings her wholeness. She says:

> When I take part in the ceremonies I love to see the painted bodies and to watch the dancers. I like the sound of the didgeridoo and the clapsticks. I never feel alone in the ceremonies. Sometimes, at a corroboree, before the dancing has started, we sit and listen as the song-men or song-women begin the story. Everyone is relaxed. We feel secure and happy. We are all together and it is good!
>
> Source: Ungunmerr, 1995, p. 180.

Quiet listening and stillness is important for people. Some people may feel uncomfortable with silence, but Miriam-Rose says her people have lived for thousands of years in the silence of the great Life-Giving Spirit so it is easy for her to experience God's presence, particularly when she is in the bush, or beside a billabong.

Another important part of *dadirri* is waiting: not wanting to hurry things up but allowing life to follow its natural course. She relates her waiting to watching the moon in each of its phases, or waiting for the rain to fill the rivers, or waiting for bush food to ripen. She also describes how Aboriginal people wait for the right time for ceremonies and meetings. The right people must be present and everything must be done in the proper way. Waiting indicates that things are done with care. Miriam-Rose believes that the spirit of *dadirri* is deep within Aboriginal people and when Aboriginal culture is strong and respected *dadirri* grows and strengthens people's spirits.



FIGURE 2.27 Dr Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr

ACTIVITY **2.25**

Finding and forming

Locate lyrics and recordings of one key song from two of the following Indigenous artists: Yothu Yindi, Ruby Hunter, Christine Anu, Archie Roach, Emily Wurramara or Jessica Mauboy. Listen to the song and list what is the central message of the text.

Analysing and evaluating

Should non-Indigenous artists include the didgeridoo into their music? What reasons would you give to both support and deny such a request.

Reflecting

1. What have I discovered about the sacred texts of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities?
2. What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3. What impact do the sacred texts of Australian Aboriginal spiritualities have on people, society and culture?
4. What further questions do I have?

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2.10 Literary styles: introduction

Sacred texts are ancient texts that express the faith of the communities from which they emerge. Often, they are written versions of oral traditions translated from ancient languages and derived from cultures very different from the ones in which we live today. Consequently, we need to have some insight into the life, times, language and culture of the ancient world from which the texts emerged, as well as some understanding of the literary forms of the writings, in order to understand the texts. Various literary styles are used in sacred texts; some of these include sacred myth, parable, miracle and poetry.

Narrative

A narrative is simply a story or report of events presented to people in a logical sequence. Usually, a narrative involves a main character who encounters a problem or engages in an interesting, significant or entertaining activity or experience. There are many different types of narrative writing and in sacred texts narratives can be written in either prose or poetry, and many narratives are presented as myths, parables or miracles.

Structure of a narrative

Most narratives follow a similar structure. Figure 2.28 indicates how a narrative progresses.

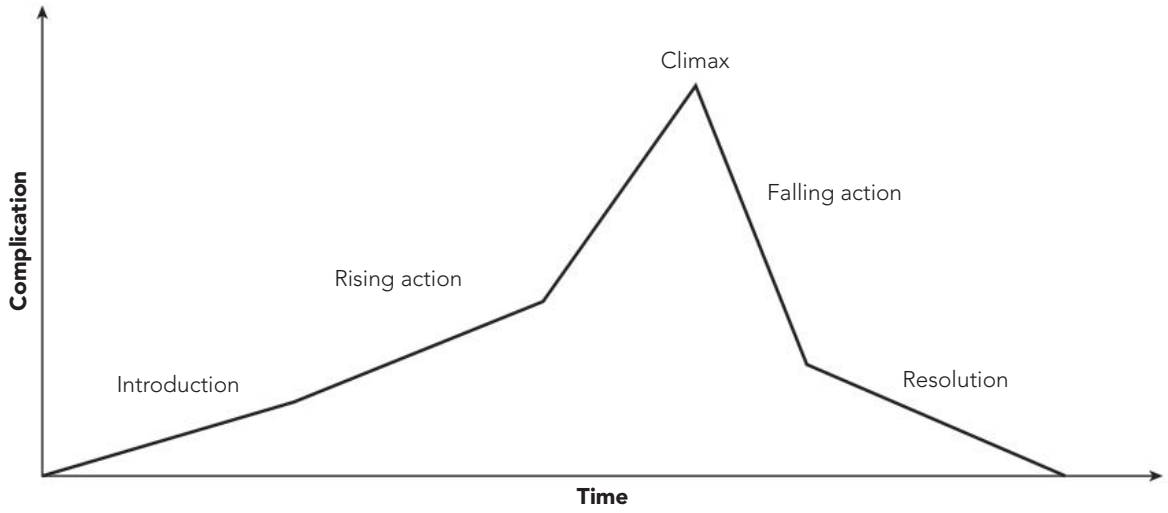


FIGURE 2.28 Structure of a narrative

ACTIVITY 2.26

Forming, finding and analysing

Locate the Book of Ruth in the Bible. Read the text and complete the table on the Activity Worksheet, providing examples from the story of Ruth.



FIGURE 2.29 An artist's illustration of a scene from the Book of Ruth

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2.11 Literary styles: sacred myth

The word 'myth' comes from the Greek term *mythos*, which means story or word. Myths are symbolic stories of the past concerning cosmogony (the origins and development of the universe) and cosmology (the study of the nature of the universe) and within the context of sacred texts they are intimately connected to the belief systems, rituals and values of the traditions to which they belong. Myths are passed down orally and emerge from particular contexts, so in order to interpret myths it is important to understand the context from which they emerged and the purpose for which they were used.

Sacred myths often evoke the presence of mystery and a world beyond the mundane or ordinary. They are used by people as a way of understanding and organising the world in which they live and they are not meant to be interpreted literally. Myths are not fairy-tales: they are significant stories which attempt to explain the origins of the world, the origins of people and of different civilisations. Myths present a culture's worldview, the understandings of humankind's place in the world and within the universe, and how people interact with both the natural world and the spiritual world. Myths also teach moral lessons. In a myth the symbolism of the events in the story is usually more important than the events themselves. Myths almost always feature gods or supernatural beings.



FIGURE 2.30 Adam and Eve being cast out of Paradise, c. 1880

ACTIVITY 2.27

Finding and analysing

In small groups, locate creation myths from the following: Australian Indigenous peoples, ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, South America, Central Asia and ancient Greece.

Read the myth or listen to it and then complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

2.12 Literary styles: parable

A parable is a short narrative in prose or poetry developed for the purpose of teaching or instructing people. A parable tells a story in the shortest possible way and the story has more than one meaning. The surface meaning is quite clear, but other meanings are hidden within the complexities of the story. A parable is neither a simple tale with a transparent lesson nor a difficult story with a secret message; it is a narrative that actively elicits from its audience the interpretation and application of its message. The social context of the parable clarifies the parable by giving the audience the information they need to understand it.

One of the earliest uses of parables is found in the book of Judges 9:8–15.

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Judges 9:8–15

The trees once went out
to anoint a king over themselves.
So they said to the olive tree,
'Reign over us.'
9The olive tree answered them,
'Shall I stop producing my rich oil
by which gods and mortals are honoured,
and go to sway over the trees?'
10Then the trees said to the fig tree,
'You come and reign over us.'
11But the fig tree answered them,
'Shall I stop producing my sweetness
and my delicious fruit,
and go to sway over the trees?'
12Then the trees said to the vine,
'You come and reign over us.'
13But the vine said to them,
'Shall I stop producing my wine
that cheers gods and mortals,
and go to sway over the trees?'
14So all the trees said to the bramble,
'You come and reign over us.'
15And the bramble said to the trees,
'If in good faith you are anointing me king over you,
then come and take refuge in my shade;
but if not, let fire come out of the bramble
and devour the cedars of Lebanon.'

ACTIVITY **2.28**

Forming and finding

Read the parable in Judges 9:8–15.

1 What is the surface meaning of the parable?
2 What might be a more complex or hidden meaning?

The word 'parable' comes from the Greek work *parabole*, meaning comparison, illustration or analogy. *Parabole* is the translation of the Hebrew term *mashal* (plural *meshalim*), which means 'to represent' or 'to be like' something. Generally, *meshalim* use figurative language and were sometimes used to help explain the relationship between G-d and Israel. The first book of Isaiah (Isaiah 5:1–7) contains a parable about a vineyard, which causes the people to recognise their infidelity to G-d.

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Isaiah 5:1–7: The song of the unfruitful vineyard

Let me sing for my beloved
my love-song concerning his vineyard:
My beloved had a vineyard
on a very fertile hill.
[2]He dug it and cleared it of stones,
and planted it with choice vines;
he built a watch-tower in the midst of it,
and hewed out a wine vat in it;
he expected it to yield grapes,
but it yielded wild grapes.

[3]And now, inhabitants of Jerusalem
and people of Judah,
judge between me
and my vineyard.
[4]What more was there to do for my vineyard
that I have not done in it?
When I expected it to yield grapes,
why did it yield wild grapes?

[5]And now I will tell you
what I will do to my vineyard.
I will remove its hedge,
and it shall be devoured;
I will break down its wall,
and it shall be trampled down.
[6]I will make it a waste;
it shall not be pruned or hoed,
and it shall be overgrown with briers and thorns;
I will also command the clouds
that they rain no rain upon it.

[7]For the vineyard of the LORD of hosts
is the house of Israel,
and the people of Judah
are his pleasant planting;
he expected justice,
but saw bloodshed;
righteousness,
but heard a cry!

In 2 Samuel 12, David's prophet Nathan uses a parable to expose David's infidelity. The prophet Ezekiel uses at least three parables when prophesying. In Ezekiel 17, he uses the allegory of the eagle in a parable about the failed attempt of Judah to make an alliance with Egypt, therefore betraying Babylon. In chapter 16, he tells the story of a woman who was raised by God in the desert and later became a harlot; and in chapter 23 he uses the parable of the two sisters, Odolah and Oholibah, to tell the story of the unfaithfulness of Israel and Judah before the Babylonian exile.

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The Books of Wisdom in the Hebrew scriptures also have several examples of parabolic literature in the narratives of Job, Jonah and Tobit. These stories focus on how the mystery of faith in G-d is revealed. The Book of Sirach 10:19 uses *mashal* in the form of a riddle:

Sirach 10:19: Persons deserving honour

Whose offspring are worthy of honour?
Human offspring.
Whose offspring are worthy of honour?
Those who fear the Lord.
Whose offspring are unworthy of honour?
Human offspring.
Whose offspring are unworthy of honour?
Those who break the commandments.

Parables in the New Testament

Jesus drew on this well-known literary form and used many parables throughout his teaching ministry. Some parables attributed to Jesus critique society and other parables reinforce conventional wisdom and the societal norms of the early Christian communities.

Jesus used parables to teach and challenge people and several of his parables are retold in the Synoptic Gospels. In the parable of the wicked tenants (Matthew 21:33–43), Jesus uses similar imagery to that used by the Old Testament prophets in their parables. Some scholars think that Isaiah 5:1–7 (see page 178) may have been the source for Jesus's parable of the wicked tenants.

'Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a
vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built
a watch-tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another
country. [34]When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to
the tenants to collect his produce. [35]But the tenants seized his
slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. [36]Again he
sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in
the same way. [37]Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will
respect my son.' [38]But when the tenants saw the son, they said to
themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his
inheritance.' [39]So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard,
and killed him. [40]Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what
will he do to those tenants?' [41]They said to him, 'He will put those
wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other
tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time.'
[42]Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures:
'The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone;
this was the Lord's doing,
and it is amazing in our eyes'?
[43]Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from
you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.

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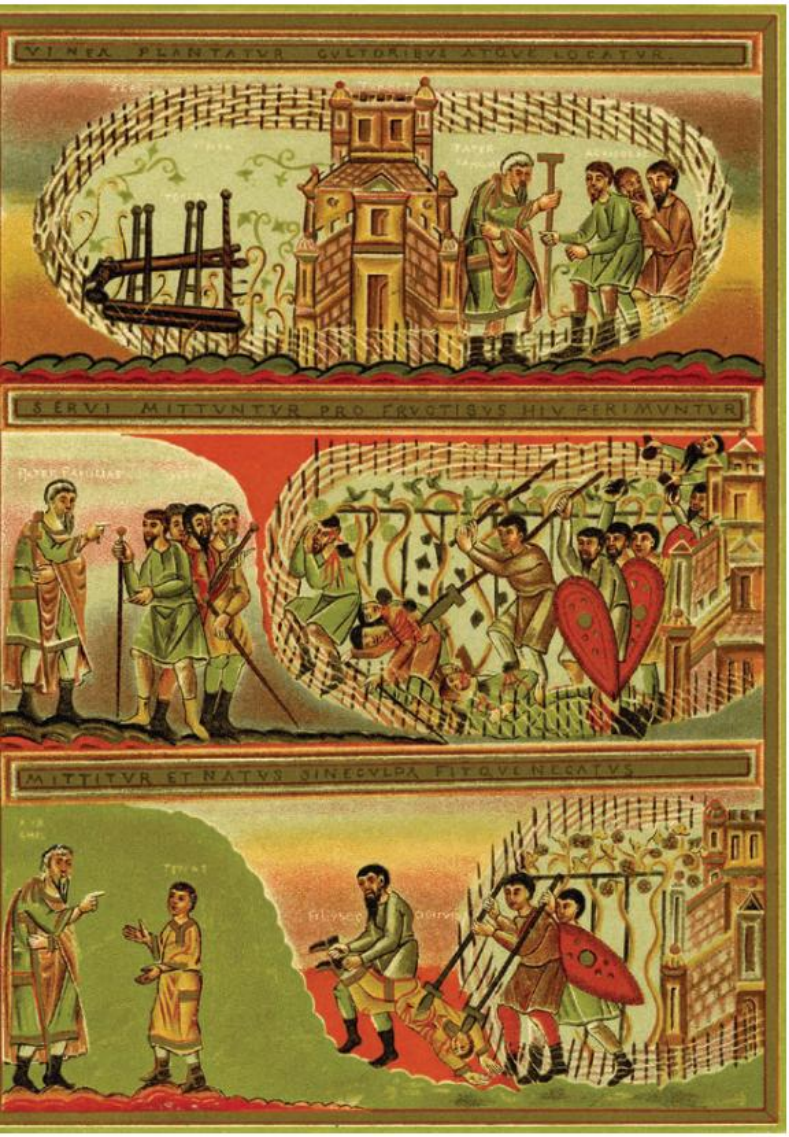


FIGURE 2.31 Miniature from the Evangeliaria of Echternach, a tenth-century gospel book, depicting the parable of the wicked tenants

ACTIVITY **2.29**

Forming and finding

Read Isaiah 5:1–7 and Matthew 21:33–43. Note the similarities and differences in a Venn diagram.

The parables of Jesus are frequently made up of three linked parts: a parable narrative; an application of the parable; and a response from the hearers or readers.

Parable narrative

The parable narrative, sometimes referred to as the 'image', tells a fictional story about something which relates to the world of the people at the time. The narrative is not intended to describe an historical event, but rather a structure such as political rule, social relationships or a work structure. Researching the world behind the text is a necessary component in understanding a parable. Parables are designed to make a theological point and, therefore, are placed within a theological context. Parables also have a narrative structure (world of the text) which includes exaggeration, the rule of three, contrast, and the rule of end stress.

Parable applications

Parable applications are integral, not secondary, to the parable. Applications provide frames for parables. The invitation to compare the parable to the kingdom of God invites people to reflect on God's action – past, present and future – in the world. It also invites people to ask: Where is the gospel's liberating message? What does the parable say about God's promise?

Parable response

The parable narrative and application presume the active engagement of the listeners. The response of the hearers is essential in each parable, even if it is not recorded in the gospel account of the parable. A parable is incomplete without questions and conversation. Parables were told orally, and people engaged in conversation about the parable. What we have in the gospel accounts is the written version of the parable – we do not have the oral exchange that took place as people talked about the parable and asked questions of Jesus.

Amy-Jill Levine, an American biblical scholar, reminds us that modern listeners often miss the original provocation of parables and that we revert to simplistic interpretations of parables that lack historical grounding and understanding. The parables of Jesus need to be heard in their original context and the more we know about the time in which the parable was created and the audience

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to whom it was addressed, the better equipped we are to understand and interpret the parable.

Luke 12:13–34 – the parable of the rich fool

The parable of the rich fool, found in Luke's gospel, is prompted by an argument between two brothers over their inheritance. The regulations for such inheritances are found in Numbers 27:1–11 and Deuteronomy 21:15–17. Rather than acting as a judge to settle the dispute between two brothers, Jesus tells the parable.



FIGURE 2.32 *The Parable of the Rich Fool*, Rembrandt (1627)

ACTIVITY **2.30**

Finding and analysing

1 Read Numbers 27:1–11. The scripture focuses on the inheritance practices at that time. After reading the passage, what do you learn about the rights of women?
2 Why do you think the daughters of Zelophehad would need to bring their concerns regarding inheritance before Moses?
3 How does Moses resolve the issue?
4 Reading the scripture passage Deuteronomy 21:15–17, what do you learn about marriage at that time?
5 The passage in Deuteronomy is quite complex with regard to how the inheritance is worked out. Debate within your class if you think this method of inheritance is just.
6 In modern times, there would be a number of complexities with this method of inheritance. List some of these.

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As well as Hebrew scripture *meshalim*, New Testament parables are also influenced by Greco-Roman elements. Some scholars have suggested that the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) derives from an Egyptian folktale about the journey of Set me Chamois through the realms of the dead. They believe that Jesus adapted the Egyptian story for his own purposes and created the second half of the parable (Luke 16:27–31).

ACTIVITY **2.31**

Analysing

1 The parable of the rich fool brings to light another complexity with inheritance rights. Thinking of the world behind the text, or the parable narrative, what do we learn about inheritance and life at that time?
2 What is Jesus's view about inheritance?
3 The theme of inheritance is used by Jesus to lead into a deeper discussion or theme about God. What images does Jesus use in the parable to bring a deeper understanding about God?
4 Using the information about inheritance from Numbers 27:1–11 and Deuteronomy 21:15–17, how do you think the people listening to Jesus tell the parable of the rich fool would have reacted when he gave his final words to the crowd to sell their goods and give alms to the needy for 'where your treasure is, there your heart will be also'?

The parables told by Jesus pre-date parables in rabbinic literature. Parables in post-biblical, Jewish literature were used by rabbis as a way of assisting people to understand scriptural verses and as a means of making abstract theological points accessible to people. Most post-biblical, rabbinic parables have a fivefold structure:

1 Illustrand, which sets out the matter to be illustrated or explained.
2 Introductory formula which is prefixed to the story; for example: 'Rabbi said "Unto what is the matter like?"'
3 Parable proper which is an illustrative story.
4 Application, often introduced by the word *kak* translated as 'even so' or 'likewise', which attaches an explicit interpretation to clarify the *mashal*'s meaning.
5 Scriptural quotation usually introduced by the phrase 'as it is said' or 'as it is written'.

ACTIVITY **2.32**

Finding and analysing

Read the banquet attire parable on the Activity Worksheet and identify the fivefold structure within it.

Parables in the Talmud

The Talmud is a collection of writings used by Jewish scholars to assist them in interpreting Jewish law and tradition. It consists of two volumes: the Palestinian Talmud, completed in approximately 5 CE; and the Babylonian Talmud, which was completed in the mid-sixth century CE. The parables in the Talmud have a clear, fourfold structure:

1 a motivation
2 a key insight called *hiddush*
3 the *mashal* itself
4 the *nimshal* (the parable's interpretation).

A *mashal* was generally used to help interpret a verse of scripture and was one or two verses, the *hiddush* was the insight provided for the verse, and the *nimshal* followed the parable and tried to make connections between the parable and the verse that was used for preaching.

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Buddhism

The *Saddharmapundarika Sutra* (also called the *Lotus Sutra*) from Mahayana Buddhism contains a teaching that has some similarities with the parable of the lost son found in Luke 15:11–32. The *Lotus Sutra* was composed towards the end of the second century CE and the discourse is said to have taken place in a group made up of nuns and *bodhisattvas*. Tradition has it that the parable was addressed to people in the *arhat* stage of becoming and who are supposed to advance to becoming a *bodhisattva* and ultimately a Buddha. The son in the parable should aspire to a higher position.

ACTIVITY **2.33**

Finding and evaluating

Read the parable of the lost son (Luke 15:11–32) and also the Buddhist parable that has been provided on the Activity Worksheet.

1. Complete a Venn diagram showing the unique and similar features of both stories.
2. Retell each of the stories using no more than six storyboard panels.

2.13 Literary styles: poetry

Poetry is a common literary style used in sacred texts. It is important to remember that we are not reading these poems in their original language. We are reading a translation, and so the rhythm, rhyme, metaphors, symbols, intonations and other poetic devices used in the original may not be obvious in English. We can, nevertheless, recognise that the texts are poetry because of the way the lines are printed on the page.

Judaism and Christianity

The Book of Psalms consists of more than a hundred psalms composed over many centuries. Many of the Psalms have been attributed to David (*le-david*) but it is more accurate to translate *le-david* as 'for' or 'in honour of' David rather than 'composed by' David. Each psalm in the Book of Psalms is a separate piece of poetry. One interesting literary device used within Hebrew poetry is the acrostic poem where each line of the poem begins with successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet such as Psalms 25, 37, 111, 112, 119 and 145.

Another feature of Hebrew poetry, and especially the Psalms, is the use of a parallelism, where within two paired lines or couplets, the first line A is either similar to or the opposite of line B. An example of synonymous parallelism is: Line A: Heed my words. Line B: Listen to my voice. An example of antithetical or opposite parallelism is: Line A: The righteous are blessed. Line B: The wicked are cursed.

ACTIVITY **2.34**

Analysing

Examine the table and the extracts on the Activity Worksheet. Indicate, in the column on the right, whether it is an antithetical (A) or synonymous (S) parallelism.

In English, there are various styles and forms of poetry such as love poems, epics and sonnets. The same is true for Hebrew poetry. The most common form of poetry used within the Psalms is the lament. This communicates a plea for deliverance from a distressing situation such as that expressed in Psalm 13, which asks for deliverance from enemies. Laments usually begin with an appeal to God, followed by a description of the complaint, and a request for help. The voice of the psalmist is usually an individual, but it can sometimes be a community as a whole as in Psalm 44. Occasionally, the lament is difficult to identify because of the language used, but most laments conclude by expressing confidence that God will respond to the author's requests.

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Psalm 13

How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever?
How long will you hide your face from me?
2 How long must I bear pain in my soul,
and have sorrow in my heart all day long?
How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

3 Consider and answer me, O Lord my God!
Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep the sleep of death,
4 and my enemy will say, 'I have prevailed';
my foes will rejoice because I am shaken.

5 But I trusted in your steadfast love;
my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.
6 I will sing to the Lord,
because he has dealt bountifully with me.

ACTIVITY **2.35**

Finding

Identify the three major sections of the lament in Psalm 13 by recording the verse numbers next to the description below:

- appeal to God
- description of the complaint
- request for help.

Other poetic forms include psalms of thanksgiving, which describe a past experience of distress and then celebrate God's deliverance as well as God's goodness and faithfulness; and hymns of praise, which are not connected to any act of deliverance but are songs offering praise to God. A hymn might focus on the glories of creation as in Psalm 19, or God's interaction with Israel as in Psalm 106. Laments, thanksgiving psalms and hymns are the most dominant genres through the Book of Psalms in the Bible.

ACTIVITY **2.36**

Finding and analysing

Read the following psalms and classify each as either psalms of lament, thanksgiving or praise. Quote from the psalm to support your claims:

- Psalm 13
- Psalm 29
- Psalm 30
- Psalm 12
- Psalm 54
- Psalm 103.

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Hinduism

In all the major Indian languages, poetry is used as a form of religious expression. The telling of religious stories in verse is reflective of the substantial oral status of the sacred texts of Hinduism and their access via recitation. In Indian languages, however, much of this writing is not called poetry. While the *Mahabharata* is composed in metrical verse, it is called *itihasa*, which means legends. The bulk of Sanskrit literature is composed in metrical verse form containing four feet and a standard number of syllables measured by the so-called heaviness or lightness of the syllable.

Recitation of poetry has been important since the earliest recorded history of Sanskrit literature. The *Rig Veda* is the earliest Sanskrit text and is composed in a variety of metres. These poems are hymns which were sung in sacrifices to venerate gods. Poems that are used as hymns are called *stotras* and, though embedded within the standard *anustubh* metre, they can easily be extracted and used for singing. A *stotra* to Ganesha is found in the *Ganesapurana*.

To him who has the form of the supreme Brahma
Who has the form of bliss and consciousness,
Who has the form of the bliss of truth,
The Lord of the gods, the supreme Lord,
The Ocean of qualities, Lord of the qualities,
Beyond the qualities, the Lord,
To Mayuresa, the primeval,
We have bowed! We have bowed!
To him who should be praised by the world,
The one, the supreme syllable Om,
Who is free from transformation,
Protector of the world, its destroyer,
To Mayuresa, the primeval,
We have bowed! We have bowed!
(*Ganesapurana* 2, 123, 40–41)

While a considerable amount of information is available about the two great canonical languages of Hinduism, Sanskrit and Tamil, poetry also exists in all the major Indian vernacular languages and assumes an important role in religious observance.

2.14 Literary styles: miracles

Miracle stories and accounts of signs and wonders exist within the sacred texts of the major world religions and continue to be retold in religious communities across the globe. These stories include Moses parting the Sea of Reeds, Jesus walking on the Lake of Galilee, Muhammad ascending into heaven from Jerusalem, Krishna straightening a woman's curved spine, and Buddha levitating in the air while fire and water streamed from his body. Miracle stories within religious traditions are interpreted events, set within a tradition's broader system of beliefs and understandings of God, gods or ultimate reality.

For believers within the tradition, the meaning of the miracle story is determined within the world constructed by the narrative and the social consensus which ascribes authority to the person or being with whom the miracle is associated. Miracles have many meanings, depending on where and when they occur, who performs them and who benefits from their power. Miracle stories contribute to the formation of many religious communities as a means of representing the transcendent and expanding understandings of doctrine or ritual performance.

Judaism

Within Judaism, knowledge of G-d is mediated through the Torah. Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, former Chief Rabbi in the United Kingdom, describes miracles as 'an awakening from above' and 'an awakening from below. … A miracle is a moment when the veil behind which G-d is hidden is lifted and we see a signal of transcendence' (Sacks, n.d.).

The accounts of creation in Genesis 1–3 present the miracle of G-d creating the world and all living beings. These narratives also highlight that there is a moral obligation to live in right relationship with G-d. At the end of the Book of Genesis, the Israelites are in trouble and they call on G-d to rescue them from slavery in Egypt. Several events throughout the Book of Exodus are acts of deliverance highlighting the transcendent power of G-d. The miracles in Exodus are enacted through the human agency of Moses who speaks directly with G-d.

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FIGURE 2.33 Artist's interpretation of the Crossing of the Sea of Reeds, one of the miracles of Moses

The career of Moses is punctuated with miracles, beginning with G-d's call to him, the appearance of G-d in the burning bush, the 10 plagues and the crossing of the Sea of Reeds. Moses calls on G-d and because Moses is a 'friend of G-d', G-d responds.

Throughout the Hebrew scriptures, miracles are intended to bring glory to G-d alone, not to bring attention to the miracle worker.

Elie Wiesel (1928–2016) offered an explanation of miracles. He said: 'I know [miracle stories] may seem shocking, even revolting to the rationalists among us … [but we must consider] the immense suffering that Jews were subject to. Caught in ever-growing despair, what they needed most was a reason to believe. The very possibility of believing was a miracle in itself … To strike the imagination. To inspire awe. To help souls open themselves to faith and hope' (Katz & Rosen, 2013). Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor, knew more than most people that keeping hope alive in conditions of despair requires superhuman courage.

Miracle stories in Jewish tradition express confidence in G-d as the creator of the world, revealer of moral law, and companion of justice within history. The biblical stories of

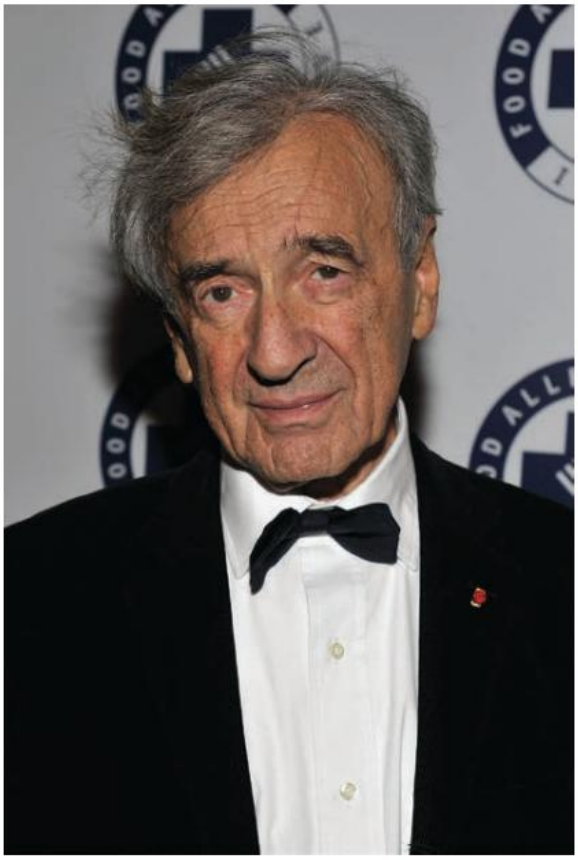


FIGURE 2.34 Elie Wiesel

Exodus and Zion are interpreted as miracles performed on behalf of those with whom G-d entered into covenant. Throughout the history of Israel, G-d also worked miracles through the prophets and rabbis. In Judaism, miracles serve the purpose of confirming the authority of divine revelation. They are interventions of G-d into the lives of believers in the most extreme circumstances.

Christianity

Christians believe that Jesus is the incarnation of God and that his existence expresses God's love:

> 'For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life' (John 3:16).

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Therefore, the miracles performed by Jesus are signs of the presence of God in the world, and New Testament miracle stories are used to make specific theological points. Mark uses miracles to make the point that Jesus is the Son of God; Matthew has 10 miracles in chapters 8 and 9 of his gospel to show that Jesus is not only a teacher but also a miracle worker; Luke connects miracles with the work of the Spirit; and in the Gospel of John, miracles are used to reveal Jesus's true identity. Within the Catholic tradition, contemporary biblical scholars are not really concerned with the historicity of the miracle itself, but rather they are concerned with what the gospel writers intended to say by telling the story of the miracle and its place within the gospel as a whole.

We are able to better understand miracles when we can find out the use of recurring themes or the placement of the miracle story within the particular gospel. It is also important to understand the religious and literary tradition in which the miracle stories were born. The gospel writers retold the miracle accounts of Jesus in the light of their experience of the risen Jesus and within their religious tradition of first-century Judaism.

The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand alludes to Israel's period in the wilderness following the exodus from Egypt. There was no food and God provided them with manna, a mysterious bread-like substance that fell from the sky each morning like dew. The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand makes the point that Jesus is like Moses and, in fact, Jesus is greater than Moses. The gospel writers employ stylistic and symbolic forms in their accounts of miracles: many details are missing, and the stories are very compact.

Contemporary approaches to interpreting miracles identify that these stories are symbolic and have symbolic meaning in that they reveal something beyond the story itself, something which nourishes the faith of believers. Miracle stories are part of the history of the story of Jesus on earth, but they are also about the meaning of that story.

In general, there are two types of miracle stories in the New Testament: healing miracles and nature miracles.

Healing miracles

Jesus was well known as a healer and a significant number of healing miracles appear in the gospels. In the Synoptic Gospels there are 13 healing stories related to different physical conditions; typically they include: fever, leprosy, paralysis, withered hand, bent back, haemorrhage, deafness, dumbness, blindness, dropsy, severed ear, and sickness near death or paralysis. In most healing miracles, touch is involved: Jesus touches the leper, he puts his fingers in the ears of the deaf man. The miracles were powerful events and in Greek the word *dunamis*, meaning power, is used to convey the mighty deeds of Jesus. These deeds were understood by the gospel writers as *powers* from *the Power* (God).

Nature miracles

Miracles such as walking on water are classified as nature miracles and also reveal the presence of God in the world as well as the power of God. The miracle of the large haul of fish, which forms part of the story of the calling of the disciples in Luke 5:1–11, notes that the disciples were



FIGURE 2.35 Artist's impression of Jesus walking on water

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'amazed' by the display of divine power and benevolence. The extravagance of the miracle, producing a quantity of fish that surpassed the capacity of the nets to hold them, reflects the parable of seeds that yielded 'thirty and sixty and hundred-fold' (Mark 4:8).

In John's gospel, the miracles of Jesus are 'signs' to evoke faith in God. The most dramatic sign of Jesus's divine authority is seen in the miracle of the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11:1–27), which is followed by Jesus's statement: 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?' Mary of Bethany responds: 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one coming into the world' (John 11:25–7). The resurrection of Jesus the Christ is the confirming miracle of the Christian tradition and included in the profession faith in the Apostles' Creed.

Miracles are also reported in the letters of Paul. In 1 Corinthians 12:11–14 we read: 'the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with utmost patience, signs and wonders and mighty works'.

Throughout the Christian tradition, miracle stories promote the values of compassion and justice, particularly for the poor and deprived. For Christians, God is made manifest in many ways but particularly through the person of Jesus, whose miracles confirm his divine nature. The miracle of the resurrection of Jesus the Christ provides the basis for Christians' hope of everlasting life.

Literary structure

Over time, the genre of miracle narratives has developed from the Hebrew scriptures, New Testament and Hellenistic sources and often has three elements: a problem is identified, the miracle worker responds, the problem is removed.

Healing miracles in the New Testament display some common characteristics, which include the presence of a person (or their representative) who is in need of healing. Often the miracle account includes details of the extent of the miraculous deed required, such as the length of the illness, previous failures at being healed, the condition of the ill person, doubt about the ability of the healer, and various effects the sickness has on members of the family or community. The miracle accounts also include the words or actions of the healer, such as touching the ears, washing eyes, commands to walk, dialogue with demons, plus the surprise of those witnessing the event and a return to previously impossible activity.

There are slight differences in the literary form of healing miracles and nature miracles (calming of the storm, walking on the sea, multiplication of loaves and fishes), which are epiphanies revealing something about the profound character of Jesus.

In the Bible, miracles are understood as special interventions by God into the world on behalf of people. In the Old Testament, Moses, Joshua, Elijah and Elisha were considered miracle workers because they were empowered with the Spirit to act on God's behalf for people. In the New Testament, Jesus is considered to continue in the line of the great miracle workers, whose actions and interventions on behalf of people demonstrate the salvific and creative activity of God.

In English, we have one word to describe events called miracles. In the languages of the Bible, Hebrew and Greek, a number of words are used to describe miraculous events. Hebrew has at least three words: *ot* meaning sign, *mopet* meaning wonder and *nipelaot* meaning great deeds; all of these words stress the extraordinary character of the action or deed. In Greek also at least three words are used: *semeion* meaning sign, *teras* meaning wonder, *dynamis* meaning deeds of power; and in each account of a New Testament miracle the verb *thaumazo*, meaning to be amazed, is used to describe the reaction of onlookers. The biblical text, therefore, uses a wide range of vocabulary to describe miracles.

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ACTIVITY 2.37

Finding and analysing

Read the miracle accounts provided in the table on the Activity Worksheet and identify the threefold structure.

Islam

For many Muslims, the only event they acknowledge as a miracle is the revelation of the Qur'an to the Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century (Qur'an 2:23–4). Known as the 'standing miracle', this event confirms the authority Muhammad had to convey the words of Allah, which caused many who heard them to convert immediately. The inimitability of the Qur'an for Muslims is proof of its divine origin. The Qur'an is not the presence of God on earth but a divine manifestation in the form of a revealed text. Islamic tradition regards the written Qur'an as the perfect expression of the will of Allah and so the Qur'an cannot be translated; versions in other languages are referred to as 'paraphrases' or 'translations'. Most Muslims agree that the Qur'an is a miracle, and some accept the authenticity of miracle stories in the Qur'an, but there is sharp controversy over contemporary miracle claims.

Controversy regarding miracles exists within the three groups of Islam, with each group viewing miracles differently. Sunnis, who are the majority of Muslims and follow traditions established by legal scholars called the *ulama*, largely deny miracles ascribed by the Shi'ites, the minority group loyal to successors of the family of the Prophet who call their teachers *imams*. Sufis, the third group, belong to a mystical order under the guidance of masters call *shykhs*, some of whom are regarded as capable of miraculous works. While all groups agree that miracles are signs of divine authority, they disagree on whether any leader after Muhammad could perform miracles in support of their teachings. Despite the Sunni view that the Qur'an is the only miracle in the age inaugurated by Muhammad, miracle stories, nevertheless, abound in the Islamic tradition.



FIGURE 2.36 *Muhammad's Call to Prophecy and the First Revelation*. Folio from *Majma' al-Tavarikh* (Compendium of Histories), Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

In Islam, miracles function as signs of divine authority, and for some Muslim thinkers the immutable unity of God's creation is the singular witness to divine authority and sufficient to inspire faith in all rational beings. For other Muslims, miracles betray faith.

Muhammad is revered in Islamic tradition as the human instrument through whom Allah revealed the truth. He is considered a prophet. There are three levels of prophetic calling in Islam: *nabi* – one who speaks Allah's word at a particular time and place; *rasul* – one who proclaims the message he received to a specific people; and *ulu'l-'azm* – one called to found a new religion. Muhammad is considered all three. Because the Prophet is the message to all, he is considered as being in permanent unity with Allah. Therefore, he need not perform miracles because he is a miracle. The Qur'an

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states: '… solemnly swear by God that if a sign be given them they would believe in it. Say: "Signs are only vouchsafed by God". And how can you tell that if a sign be given them they will indeed believe in it?' (6:109). Based on this verse, Sunni Muslims reject all miracles other than the revelation of the Qur'an.

As with founders of other religious traditions, wondrous events found their way into accounts of Muhammad's life, beginning with stories of his birth. In one account, his mother heard a voice that announced her son as the 'Lord of this people' and instructed her to name him Muhammad, meaning 'praiseworthy'. Later in the pregnancy, she saw a light emanating from her body that illuminated the world. Two miracles about Muhammad are prominent in Islamic tradition. The first is when he was tending sheep and two angels appeared and told him to lie on the ground; they opened his chest, removed a drop of black blood from his heart and washed his internal organs with melted snow from a gold basin. The story may provide a link to the opening line of *Surah* 94: 'Did we not open your breast?' The story is a symbolic counterpart of the traditional claim that Muhammad was illiterate and therefore could not have composed the prose and poetry of the Qur'an, supporting the statement in the Qur'an that Muhammad 'does not speak out of his own fancy. This is an inspired revelation' (53:5). In the second story, the young Muhammad was travelling with his uncle's caravan to Syria when they passed the cave of a Christian hermit called Bahia who was said to possess esoteric knowledge. Bahia would normally ignore travellers, but on this occasion he saw a cloud overshadow Muhammad shading him from the sun. Bahia invited the entire party to a feast, but the group left Muhammad to guard the caravan. When Bahia noticed that Muhammad was not there, he insisted that he be brought to the meal. Bahia questioned Muhammad and after hearing his responses, said he would be a great leader. The story is said to confirm the Prophet's esoteric insight and loyalty to Allah.

As a military and spiritual leader, Muhammad is said to have performed miracles to supply his troops with water. On one occasion he produced water for his soldiers from a small dish in the palm of his hand and water gushed out between his fingers so that 70 men were able to perform *wudu*. Another time, when the men came to a dry well, Muhammad spat into the well and they were able to draw water for about 1400 men.



FIGURE 2.37 An illustration of the Prophet Muhammad's mystical ascension to heaven

One miracle story that generates debate among Muslims is called Muhammad's Night Journey (*isra*) and Ascent (*mi'raj*). According to tradition, Muhammad was transported on the back of a supernatural horse through the night sky from Mecca to Jerusalem. Stepping from a rock which Muslims believe still bears his footprint, Muhammad ascended through seven heavens, accompanied by the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel).

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When he approached the throne of Allah, Jibra'ail withdrew for fear his wings would burn. Sufis regard this story as a metaphor for the ascent of the soul to Allah through graduated stages of discipline and meditation. For most Muslims, however, the story is less about mystical exercises and more a sign that Muhammad is the 'seal of the prophets' (Qur'an 33:40) and was uniquely authorised by Allah to direct the practice of the Muslim community and to proclaim the divine will for the present age.

As is true of all miracle stories in Islamic tradition, the Night Journey has both exoteric and esoteric levels of significance. Its outer meaning (*zahir*) is that Allah ordered Muhammad to change the direction Muslims faced while praying from Jerusalem to Mecca and to fix the number of prayers at five per day. The inner meaning (*batin*) of the miracle is an invitation for Muslims to pilgrimage inward and upward towards transcendent wisdom requiring an abandonment of self-interest for the love of Allah.

In the Shi'ite tradition, the power of *imams* to work miracles is a sign of divine authority and related to their level of esoteric knowledge. Miracle stories are associated with the 12 *imams* in succession from Ali. Along with Muhammad and his daughter Fatima, these figures are known as the Fourteen Infallible Ones, who are unable to make mistakes and whose authority intercedes with Allah on behalf of believers. For Shi'ites, knowledge of Allah is proved by submission to divine guidance and miracles are a sign of the *imam*'s authority to proclaim that guidance accurately.

In the Sufi tradition, miracles as signs of authority are available to all believers willing to develop their own intimate friendship with Allah. Friends of Allah are called *awliya* (singular *wali*). The name comes from the Arabic word for wool and refers to the coarse garments worn by the early Sufis. The Sufi movement began as a protest against Islamic rulers, whom Sufis saw as being more interested in gaining and keeping political power than seeking a closer union with Allah. While Sufis are referred to as Muslim mystics, they are not other-worldly and engage in the events of the world. There is no formalised process for sainthood in Islam, and to a large extent a spiritual leader's reputation depends on the response of his/her followers. Miracle stories became a central part of acknowledging, remembering and transmitting the saint's divine authority. An example is the story of al-Hallaj, who provided food for four hundred of his companions when they had nothing to eat. In Sufism, miracles function as signs of divine authority when linked to the saint's moral perfection. A Friend of God, therefore, combines piety and sanctity with power and authority.

In Islamic tradition there are a variety of views related to miracles. Muslims committed to the strongest version of *tawhid* (unity) of Allah maintain that the order of creation is sustained by divine will and therefore natural laws are invulnerable to being suspended or modified by human insight or virtue. Only Allah can produce a miracle and for the majority of Sunnis such an extraordinary event happened only once – in the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad. The Wahhabis, a conservative movement led by Muhammad al-Wahhab (1703–1792), only recognise legal decisions made in the first three centuries of Islamic tradition and reject all ideas and practices that deviate from them as heresy. Consequently, Sufi saints or Shi'ite claims of divine revelation are particularly offensive and rejected by Wahhabis, who preserve tradition in the form of a fixed interpretation of the Qur'an.

Miracles in Islamic tradition serve as signs of divine authority, interpreted as such by the community of believers who ascribe events of transcendent power to prophets, *imams* and saints. Miracles associated with the life of Muhammad are signs of his divine authority and his perfection of body and spirit. For Sunnis, the significance of those signs is confined to the founding events of the Muslim community. For Shi'ites, miracles continue to have meaning as signs of authority invested in their *imam* as guardians of the meaning of the Qur'an entrusted to Ali and transmitted through the spiritual lineage of his family. In Sufism, miracles are ascribed to saints whose authority is signified

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by their powers such as levitation, healing and translocation. Regardless of the differences, miracle stories exist in all branches of Islamic tradition, but are interpreted in different ways and given varying levels of authority.

ACTIVITY **2.38**

Analysing

Create an infographic related to miracles in Islam showing how miracles are understood within the three major traditions of Islam.

Buddhism

Miracles in Buddhism signify the authority of spiritual attainment, but their primary purpose is for teaching. They are performed for the sake of teaching the witnesses what the Buddha discovered: that everything, including the world of nature, is impermanent. Therefore, people should not expect to find lasting satisfaction by clinging to anything in the world.

The primary sources of miracles stories about Buddha are regarded by Buddhists as sacred texts. But it would be a modern error to assume that adherents always interpreted sacred texts in a literal way. For many Buddhists, sacred texts are contemplated rather than read and the central question for them is not did it really happen, but rather, what does it mean? Miracle stories are for moral or spiritual instruction, not information.

In Buddhism, many adherents believe that miracles can happen as an effect of disciplined meditation and, in some ways, they are 'expected' in a world constructed according to Buddhist principles. Miracles in Buddhism are effects of knowing that the world is not a fixed construction of a deity but the impermanent explanation of illusion and subject to modification by a fully realised mind.



FIGURE 2.38 Buddhists meditating with their lanterns during the yearly Makha Bucha ceremony in Bangkok, Thailand

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Stories about the Buddha contain miracles including supernatural features of his conception and birth, signs of his destiny and astonishing manifestations of his enlightened mind. The various lineages of Buddhism consider miracle stories in different ways. The Theravada school insists that Buddha was an exemplary human and that others must exert their own efforts to reach liberation. On the other hand, the Mahayana and Vajrayana branches emphasise Buddha's supernormal powers.

According to Buddhist tradition, the conception of Siddhartha Gautama was miraculous. His mother dreamed that she was visited by a white elephant and discovered that she was pregnant. As soon as he was born, he stood and declared, 'I am born for supreme knowledge, for the welfare of the world. Therefore, this is my last birth'. One tradition adds that he was washed by fragrant rain from the mouth of a dragon. There is a ritual re-enactment of this event on celebrations of Buddha's birthday on the eighth day of the fourth lunar month in most Buddhist countries.

Buddha exercised miraculous powers throughout his career, but the first century BCE work called *Acts of Buddha* does not mention any miracles. From time to time throughout his life miracles are used as signs of his teaching and his enlightened mind. According to *Acts of Buddha*, after attaining enlightenment Buddha 'mounted on a throne, up in the air to the height of seven palm-trees'. Suspended in the air he instructed heavenly beings on the way to perfect knowledge, saying: 'everything is achieved by meritorious works, therefore as long as existence lasts acquire merit'. This text is significant in Mahayana teaching. In another story, Buddha used psychic power to levitate to avert a war over water rights. The transcendent wisdom of Buddha was signified by the appearance of his body in the meditating position suspended over the disputed water and he called on both sides to go beyond their economic interests and embrace a higher ideal.

The *Vinaya Pitaka* (Book of Discipline) sets out a code for governing the lives of monks. The fourth rule says that monks may not declare 'false proclamation of superhuman faculties'; that is, claiming the power to work miracles to advance one's interest is a supreme instance of ignorance and failure to realise the emptiness of one's ego.



FIGURE 2.39 Illustration of Buddha's birth

2.15 Literary styles: conclusion

Sacred texts serve many functions. A number record the story and teaching of religious founders, the history of a people and the faith journey of early followers. Some clearly delineate doctrines and teachings and provide guidelines for living. Other texts are used for ritual and prayer and some even uplift the spirit. Sacred texts are important as they help adherents to interpret the meaning of life and many of life's situations. The symbols and images in the sacred texts form the foundation for worldviews and the good ordering of society as well as supplying reflection and motivation for the lives of individuals.

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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

1 Create a collage or mind map of different kinds of sacred texts belonging to the various religious traditions.
2 Begin a glossary of terms for the sacred texts you are studying.

FINDING

This chapter has surveyed the sacred texts of the major world religions.

1 Find out the names of the sacred texts of three other religions.
2 Give a brief explanation of the nature of each text or set of texts.
3 What rituals or practices exist in the major world religions that demonstrate followers' respect for their sacred texts?

ANALYSING

1 Choose one of the religions explored in this chapter. Design a diagram clearly showing how a number of sacred texts, or parts of one sacred text, are grouped to form a sacred body of work.
2 Transformation of text: choose a text from those referred to in the chapter, or use one provided by your teacher, and transform it into a different genre while retaining its underlying theme and message.
3 What criteria do you think are applied to texts to determine whether they become part of a canon? What criteria do you think should be applied?

ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1 'Ancient texts have little to offer people in the twenty-first century.' Write about one or both sides of the argument that might emerge when debating this statement, using examples and evidence to support your point/s of view.
2 Which mode of communication (e.g. written, oral, visual or physical) do you think is most useful for communicating deep religious truths? Why? Give examples to support your opinion.

REFLECTING

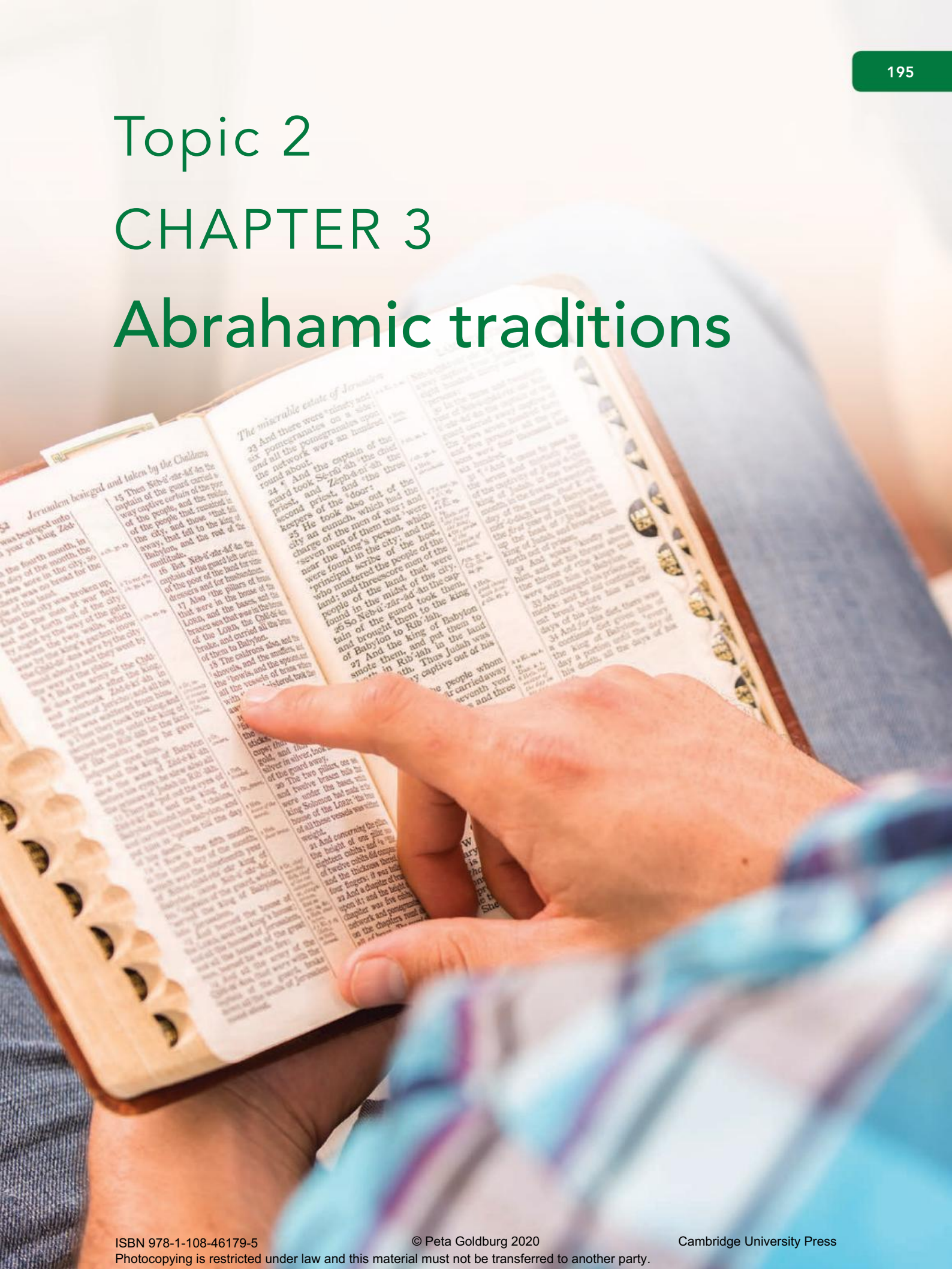
1 What have I discovered about sacred texts?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 How is this area of inquiry relevant to my life?
4 What further questions do I have?

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Topic 2

CHAPTER 3

Abrahamic traditions



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Topic 2, Abrahamic traditions, is focused on the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In this topic, students investigate how sacred texts become authoritative, the ways texts are interpreted, and the influence these texts have on people, society and culture. Within the topic students will: identify the sacred texts of Judaism, Christianity and Islam and explain how adherents perceive God to be revealed through these texts; describe similarities and differences in selected narrative accounts; explain ways religious texts become authoritative, including stages of development, authorship and canon; and differentiate between and analyse the ways in which adherents within the Abrahamic traditions, read, interpret and analyse sacred texts.



FIGURE 3.1 Two generations reading the Torah

3.1 Sacred texts of the Abrahamic traditions

The adherents of the Abrahamic traditions are also referred to as the 'People of the Book' because their sacred texts are central in each of the traditions and core to belief and worship.

Judaism

The sacred texts of Judaism are all written in Hebrew script. Like other languages in the Semitic family, the root meaning of words is contained in the consonants, as originally most of the vowels were not written down, which meant that proper pronunciation had to be memorised. The Jewish sacred texts consist of 24 books divided into three main sections: Torah (five books); *Nev'im* (eight books); and *Ketuvim* (11 books), collectively known by the acronym TaNaK. For additional information about the sacred texts of Judaism refer to Unit 1, Topic 1. The Torah means 'teaching' or 'instruction' and consists primarily of two types of material: narratives tracing the history of the world, humanity and the Hebrew people; and laws in the form of divine commandments.

The first book of the Torah begins with two accounts of creation followed by the garden narrative in chapter 3, the story of fratricide in chapter 4, the flood in chapters 6 to 9, and the story of Babel in chapter 11. The narrative then focuses on a righteous Hebrew, Abram (Abraham), who with his wife Sarai is commanded by G-d to leave their ancestral birthplace and travel to an undefined destination. G-d enters into a covenant with Abraham and assures him that his descendants will be as numerous as the stars of heaven. Although this seems unlikely at the time, Abraham's descendants eventually end up in Egypt where the prophet, Moses, enters the narrative. Moses leads the Hebrew people to freedom and at Mt Sinai G-d reveals the Torah to the people. From the middle of the Book of Exodus through the books of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy, the story of the people of Israel is punctuated by complaints and rebellions against G-d and Moses. The Torah ends with Moses's death and his appointment of Joshua as his successor to lead the people into the land of Israel.

Christianity

The Bible, the sacred text of Christianity, is a library of books consisting of two major sections – the Old Testament and the New Testament – and is written in the vernacular.

The Old Testament, referred to as the Hebrew scriptures, forms the first part of the

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FIGURE 3.2 Family reading the Bible



FIGURE 3.3 A young Muslim studying the Qur'an

Christian Bible and contains the same accounts of creation and origins of the Israelites. The New Testament contains books that proclaim belief in Jesus as the messiah and the fullest revelation of God to humanity.

In more recent years, the New Testament is sometimes called the Second Testament, because for Jews the Hebrew scriptures are not 'old' as these texts present the covenant that still guides believing Jews today.

The New Testament begins with four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The word gospel means 'good news' indicating that these books are intended to proclaim faith in Jesus as the messiah. Following the gospels is the Book of Acts of the Apostles, which presents Luke's account of how the early followers of Jesus grew and spread the message of Jesus to the whole of the known world. The Letters or Epistles follow and provide written instructions from the time of the apostles to the various Christian communities established in the first century CE. The final book of the New Testament is Revelation, written during a Roman persecution at the end of the first century. The order and grouping of books differ according to denominations (refer to Table 2.2 in Chapter 2).

Islam

The sacred text of Islam, the Qur'an, is believed by Muslims to be the revealed will of Allah (God) and the final word of guidance given by Allah to the Prophet Muhammad. The Qur'an is written in Arabic and Muslims believe that all translations are deficient as the true meaning can only be found in Arabic.

The Qur'an lays out its message with no obvious chronology and without discrete parts that can be identified as legal, narrative, homiletic and so forth. Units within and between chapters tend to be more compact than those in the Hebrew scriptures or the Christian New Testament and motifs appear somewhat disparate. Consequently, the Qur'an must be treated as a single unit.

The Qur'an contains numerous references to Hebrew and Christian scriptures. It assumes that people are familiar with the earlier texts and therefore does not recount their historic narratives. Instead, it uses characters and events familiar to Jews and Christians in order to make specific moral and theological points. Reference to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Jacob, Moses and Jesus appear frequently, but they are not arranged in chronological order.

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FIGURE 3.4 The Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, built on the original site of the Jewish Temple. Jerusalem is sacred to the three Abrahamic traditions.

3.2 What are the Abrahamic traditions?

The Abrahamic traditions refer to the three monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam which all claim the prophet Abraham (Ibrahim in Arabic) as their common forefather. Whether known as Avraham (modern Hebrew), Abraham or Ibrahim, he is the archetype of the steadfast religious individual who is willing to leave family and community to reveal the truth of God. While the Abrahamic traditions all recognise his key role, each understands his nature differently. For Jews, Abraham is the ancestor of the Israelites, while for Muslims, his son Ishmael (Isma'il) is the ancestor of all Arabs. Christians consider Abraham as their 'father in faith' (Romans 4).

Abraham in the Hebrew Bible

According to the Hebrew scriptures, Abraham, one of the patriarchs, is described as the father of the Jewish nation (Genesis 17:5), a friend of G-d (2 Chronicles 20:7) and someone who represents unfailing obedience to divine law. In Genesis 17, there is an account where G-d appears to Abram and makes a covenant with him. As a sign of the covenant, G-d changes his name from Abram to Abraham and his wife's name, Sarai,

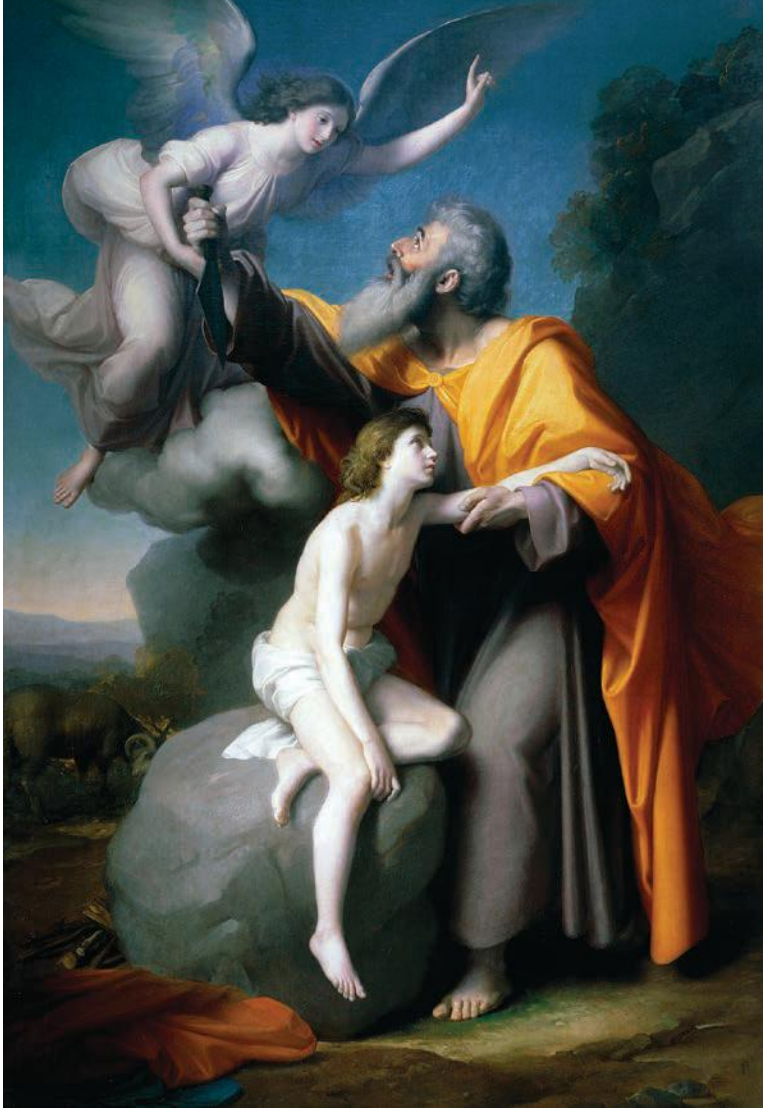


FIGURE 3.5 *The Sacrifice of Isaac* (1858) by Santiago Rebull (1829–1902)

to Sarah. Originally from Ur, a Sumerian city of Mesopotamia, Abram along with his father Terah, wife Sarai, and nephew Lot travel to Harran, a trading centre in northern Syria. His father dies and G-d calls Abram to go to Canaan: 'Now the LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing"' (Genesis 12:1–2). Finally, he settles in Hebron where he experiences a revelation that confirms his deliverance from Ur was an act of G-d: 'I am the LORD who brought you from Ur of the Chaldeans, to give you this land to possess' (Genesis 15:7). The Bible relates that Sarai, because of her old age, had not given birth to any children and that, according to the custom of the day, Abram had a relationship with her servant girl, Hagar, who gave birth to Ishmael (Genesis 16). When Abram was

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99 years old and Sarai 90, G-d gives them a son, Isaac (Genesis 21). When Isaac is born, Abraham sends Hagar and Ishmael away. Later, God tests Abraham's dedication by ordering him to sacrifice Isaac, only telling him at the last moment to stop (Genesis 22).

Abraham always responds appropriately to the divine call. He is obedient even when he is not always convinced of the purpose or reasoning behind G-d's demands (Genesis 12:11–20; 17:12–17; 10–14). The biblical accounting of Abraham's loyalty is structured around several motifs. He is the first biblical character to establish sacred sites that become identified and revered by subsequent generations of adherents. Bethel, 'the House of God', becomes identified via Abraham's altars (Genesis 12:8; 13:3), and the sanctity of Jerusalem originates through communication to Abraham at Moriah (Genesis 22:2–9; 2 Chronicles 3:1). The second motif is the special relationship Abraham and his family have with G-d. G-d blesses him, promises him offspring to inherit the Land of Canaan and protection from foreign peoples, and assures him that he will be the 'father of many nations' (Genesis 12:1–3; 13:12–17; 17:1–8; 17–18). The third motif is one of faithful servant. When G-d commands Abraham to leave his community for an unknown land, Abraham obeys. The nature of the relationship is epitomised in Genesis 17:1: 'I am G-d Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless'. The conditional nature of this relationship is often lost in translation. The pronouncement means that Abraham will be protected by G-d from the dangers of life if he responds to the divine imperative. In the light of this special and ongoing relationship with G-d, Abraham is referred to with special reverence in the Hebrew Bible. Like Moses and David, he is called G-d's servant (Genesis 26:24; Psalms 105:6, 42), but only Abraham is G-d's *ahavi* – meaning love or friend (Isaiah 41:8; 2 Chronicles 20:7).

Abraham in the New Testament

Christianity accepts the texts concerning Abraham from Judaism, but the way that Abraham is written about in the New Testament differs from the Hebrew original.

Early Christian writing represents Abraham as a patriarch and spiritual forebear (Matthew 1:1–2; 1:17; 3:9) while in the Gospel of Luke, Abraham becomes a symbol of compassion (Luke 16:19–31). The most prominent theme related to Abraham in the New Testament is his depiction as one who trusts in God (Acts 7:2–50; Romans 4:1–25; Galatians 3:1–29; Hebrews 6:13–14; 7:1–10; 11:8 and 11). In Christianity, Abraham is the epitome of Christian faith.

Abraham appears over 70 times in the New Testament. While the motifs are similar to those of the Hebrew Bible, they are nevertheless extended and take on new meaning. In the gospels and the Book of Acts, a new association is presented with the image of Abraham sitting in the heavenly paradise (Matthew 8:11–12; Luke 16:19–31). Luke 1:70–3 supports the continued validity of the Abrahamic covenant and God's promise to Abraham's descendants.

> … as he spoke through the
> mouth of his holy prophets
> from of old,
> [71]that we would be saved from
> our enemies and from the
> hand of all who hate us.
> [72]Thus he has shown the mercy
> promised to our ancestors,
> and has remembered his holy
> covenant,
> [73]the oath that he swore to
> our ancestor Abraham,
> to grant us.

The Book of Acts retells the story of Israelite history and does not alter the image of Abraham presented in the Hebrew Bible and refers positively to Jews as the 'stock of Abraham' (13:26).

The Epistles (Letters) present another view of Abraham. In Romans 4, Abraham proves his merit through his unwavering faith, which is the Christian interpretation of why God chose Abraham.

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> Is this blessedness, then, pronounced only on the circumcised, or also on the uncircumcised? We say, 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness.' [10]How then was it reckoned to him? Was it before or after he had been circumcised? It was not after, but before he was circumcised. [11]He received the sign of circumcision as a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. The purpose was to make him the ancestor of all who believe without being circumcised and who thus have righteousness reckoned to them, [12]and likewise the ancestor of the circumcised who are not only circumcised but who also follow the example of the faith that our ancestor Abraham had before he was circumcised. (Romans 4:9–12)

Romans indicates that all people of faith, both Jews and Gentiles, are descendants of Abraham in a spiritual sense. The Pauline writings present a new view. They argue against the Hebrew biblical notion of tribal religion as the traditional markers of religious identity. The Letter of James (2:21–4) identifies faith in conjunction with action as central:

> Was not our ancestor Abraham justified by works when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? [22]You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was brought to completion by the works. [23]Thus the scripture was fulfilled that says, 'Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness', and he was called the friend of God. [24]You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone.

As in the Hebrew Bible, the Abraham of the New Testament is the first to know God and the unique 'friend of God', but he is separated from the Hebrew biblical idea of obedience and becomes the epitome of Christian faith. He remains the patriarch, but the relationship is defined spiritually rather than genealogically.

Abraham (Ibrahim) in the Qur'an

The Qur'an contains several references to the 'religion of Abraham' (Qur'an 2:130, 135; 3:95; 6:123, 161; 12:38; 16:123; 22:78). Commonly, the expression refers specifically to Islam but sometimes it refers to Christianity and Judaism, as in *Surah* 2:135: 'They say: "Become Jews or Christians if ye would be guided [to salvation]". Say though: "Nay! [I would rather] the Religion of Abraham, the True, and he joined not gods with God"'. Ibrahim is considered part of a line of prophets beginning with Adam. He is often referred to as 'Our Father Ibrahim' as well as 'Ibrahim the Monotheist'. Islam holds that it

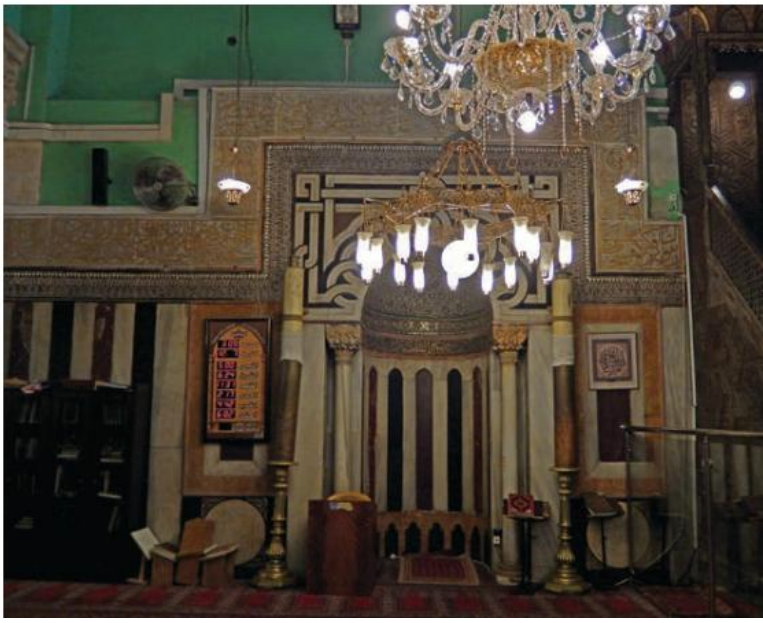


FIGURE 3.6 Interior of the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron, Palestine

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was Ishmael (Isma'il) rather than Isaac whom Ibrahim was instructed to sacrifice. For Islam, Ibrahim was the 'first Muslim' to submit fully and without reservation to the divine will.

Ibrahim is one of the more familiar Jewish biblical figures to be found in the Qur'an and he appears more than one hundred times in 25 chapters. He is frequently included in the list of prophets (Qur'an 2:136; 3:33, 84; 4:163; 57:26, etc.), but his role as the first person to realise the truth of monotheism and live in relationship with God serves as a prototype for Muhammad's religious conversion and leadership.

The Qur'anic Ibrahim discovers the unity of God through the power of his own thinking. References to his reasoning out monotheism are organised around three themes. He proves the futility of celestial worship (Qur'an 6:74–83); he demonstrates the ineffectuality of idol worship by personally destroying his people's graven images (Qur'an 19:41–50; 21:51–71; 37; 83–99); and he either argues against idolatry or publicly refuses to take part (Qur'an 26:70–104; 29:16–17; 43:26–8). Like the New Testament, the Qur'an offers a rationale for God's choice of Ibrahim, but rather than absolute faith, rational arguments are presented as supporting the unity of God.

In the Qur'an, Ibrahim is associated with Arabian rather than Israelite geography, thereby bringing him into an Arabian context. Ibrahim established the sacred Ka'bah in Mecca in response to Allah's command. He purifies it, prays that it becomes a safe area and raises up its foundations with his son Ishmael. He ensures that the shrine is dedicated to one God and proclaims the requirement to make pilgrimage to it (Qur'an 3:95–7; 14:35–7; 22:26–7).

Ishmael's involvement in erecting the foundations of the Ka'bah relates to a prayer that their descendants become a Muslim nation:

> We covenanted Abraham and Ishmael [saying]: Purify My house for those who circumambulate, are engaged [with it], and bow and prostrate themselves…. And when Abraham and Ishmael were raising up the foundations of the House [they prayed]: Our Lord, accept [this] from us, for You are the Hearer, the Knower. Our Lord, make us submitters to You (*muslimayn laka*) and our progeny a nation submissive to You (*umma muslima laka*) …. (Qur'an 2:125–8)

FIGURE 3.7 The Ka'bah



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Ibrahim's role as the original monotheist is conveyed through the use of terms such as 'religion of Abraham', 'pre-Islamic monotheist' and the qualifier that 'he was not an idolater'. These three expressions are strung together in Qur'an 3:95: 'Say: God speaks the truth, so follow the religion of Abraham, the pre-Islamic monotheist. He was not an idolater' (see also Qur'an 16:120, 123; 22:78). This statement appears to set up the religion of Abraham against the claims of Jews and Christians.

According to the Qur'an, the biblical patriarchs are neither Jews nor Christians, but rather 'lower case "m" muslims'. They represent a kind of pure and primordial, uncorrupted monotheism that is distinct from the inadequate institutionalised forms of religion known to the Jews and Christians, as is expressed in Qur'an 3:65–7:

> O People of the Book, why do you argue about Abraham when the Torah and Gospel were not revealed until after him? Have you no sense? Are you not those who argue about what you know? So why do you argue about what you do not know? God knows, but you know not. Abraham was not a Jew nor a Christian, but rather a pre-Islamic monotheist (ḥanīf), a muslim, and not an idolater.

Emerging Islam claims authenticity by critiquing the practice of Judaism and Christianity. The Qur'anic Ibrahim has a closer resemblance to his namesake in the Hebrew Bible than in the New Testament. Ibrahim is obedient, follows the law and observes ritual as he prays according to ritual obligations (Qur'an 2:128; 14:40). He is also associated with four of the Five Pillars of Islam: witnessing to one God (Qur'an 2:129); praying (Qur'an 2:125–9); giving alms (Qur'an 22:78); and the pilgrimage (Qur'an 22:26–7). He appears in narratives, which may appear to be similar to those in the Hebrew Bible, but the Qur'an disengages him from Jews and Christians. The Qur'anic Ibrahim warns his people to be pious and true to God (Qur'an 26:16–17), charges his children to be 'muslims' (Qur'an 2:132), and prays that his heirs will pray to Allah as he does (Qur'an 14:40).

Not only does Abraham serve as a symbol of the common aspirations of the Abrahamic traditions because of his centrality in their sacred texts, but he is also a source of religious difference. The biblical Abraham is later 'Judaised', 'Christianised' and 'Islamised' because of his importance. He is the model monotheist, religious founder, and human in a unique personal and ongoing relationship with God. He epitomises the human partnership with God through covenant and he represents the religious ideal. It is no surprise, then, that he has become a contested symbol claimed by Jews, Christians and Muslims as a representative exemplar of each religion.

The place of Abraham in the history of the ancient Near East is difficult to assess. Some scholars maintain there was an historical Abraham; others generally maintain that Abraham is an eponymous figure, a person whose name is taken for a people.

ACTIVITY **3.1**

Forming and finding

Read Genesis chapter 17 and answer the following questions.

1. How many times is the word 'covenant' mentioned in this passage? Why?
2. What are the conditions of the covenant?
3. What is the consequence of a broken covenant?
4. Explain the significance of the name changes for Abram and Sarai.
5. a Using evidence from the passage to support your reasoning, what arguments could you provide to suggest this is an androcentric text?
   b Conversely, what evidence could you provide to support the perspective that this text is egalitarian?

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Canon

Early in their histories, the three Abrahamic religions developed complex conceptions of canon – that is, a text or list of texts to which they assign the highest sacred authority. The Abrahamic traditions believe their sacred texts are divinely inspired, whether dictated directly by God, uttered through a prophet or prophets, or written by sages. Even within the one tradition, adherents may attribute different aspects of divine origin to sacred texts.

In literate societies, sacred texts are often distinguished physically from ordinary texts. A sacred text may be written using archaic technology or script. It may be written on expensive material, adorned with ornamental binding or illustrated artistically. The Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, is not the whole of the Hebrew canon but it carries special sanctity within the canon because it is believed to have been revealed by G-d directly to Moses on Mt Sinai. Both the Torah and the Qur'an are chanted using complex cantor traditions that require the cantor to use specific melodic tones and phrasing. The canons of the Abrahamic traditions are considered closed in the sense that no other books can be added.

The New Testament canon focused on the texts that preserved the 'authentic Jesus tradition'. Alongside the oral tradition, it soon became apparent that written texts were required, especially with the deaths of the eyewitnesses and the need for written texts for communities founded far from Jerusalem. By the end of the second century, a new canon was taking place which included the four gospels and some apostolic letters even though the status of several of the letters was disputed as late as the fifth century. By the fourth century, the Western churches had accepted the decisions of the early church councils and adopted the Greek Bible. The Eastern churches preferred the list of inspired books drawn up by the Jews. At the Council of Trent (1546) the Roman church adopted the wider Greek canon and the Protestant churches retained the shorter Jewish canon.



FIGURE 3.8 Jewish cantors and singers (top) and a communal recital of the Qur'an (bottom)

Earlier in this chapter it was noted that while each of the Abrahamic traditions may have similar stories and even characters in common, often the stories contain different details and sometimes even different endings. What is even more significant, however, is that the texts are interpreted differently by adherents of each of the three traditions. We will explore this further by considering some selected sacred texts from the Abrahamic traditions namely: creation, Noah

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and the flood accounts, Abraham and the near-sacrifice of his son, and key moments in the life of Jesus.

Qur'an

Contemporary scholars, while agreeing that the Qur'an had a prehistory, vary on the length and nature of that prehistory. For Muslims the process was simple, short and linear: Muhammad began to receive revelations from Allah through the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel) in 610 CE; the Prophet recited the revelations in the presence of his followers throughout his career; and his followers memorised or wrote down these revelations. After Muhammad's death, some of his companions gathered and organised the revelations in written collections. Eventually, in approximately 650 CE, Uthman arranged for the collection and editing of an official version of the Qur'an from the best written and oral sources and ordered all deviant copies destroyed.

Nevertheless, some Muslim traditions report that revelations were lost – according to 'A'isha, Muhammad's third wife, one portion was eaten by a domestic animal and some legitimate revelations were excluded from the final text. Shi'ites, for instance, say that verses indicating the place of 'Ali as proper successor to Muhammad were edited out, and Islamic legal scholars were convinced that there was originally a Qur'anic revelation to justify the stoning of adulterers. What we can infer from such information is that the Qur'an went through a process of formation and moulding before the text was stabilised. The Muslim account is less than 20 years after the death of Muhammad.

In Muslim tradition there were 40 years' evolution from the beginning of the revelations to Muhammad to the establishment of a canonical text. For the remaining centuries, the Qur'an is believed to have remained unchanged. It seems that by the time of formalisation of the canon much of the material included in the Qur'an was very old and the vocabulary archaic, and there was no one around who remembered what it meant originally. Scholars put forward two possible explanations. Either the tradition



FIGURE 3.9 Holy Qur'an manuscript from the Safavid dynasty on display in Istanbul, Turkey

is correct, and the Qur'anic materials originated in the early seventh century and were collected and formalised in the eighth and ninth centuries; or the canon of the Qur'an was formalised in the seventh century but some of its content was already ancient by that time. While both of these explanations are possible, they nevertheless call the 'traditional account' into question.

Creation accounts

The Abrahamic traditions emphasise creation by God and see time as being linear, moving in a straight line from the beginning of the universe to its end. Judaism, Christianity and Islam identify a Creator whose actions started the world and who continues to guide the universe daily.

Ancient peoples wanted to know how they came to be in the world and so most religions and cultures have creation myths that attempt to explain humankind's existence and the beginnings of the universe. Creation myths are stories that not only describe the origins of places and people, but also provide an order and meaning for the world as it is known and understood. Creation myths use symbols to point to important values within the culture and to expound those values from their particular worldview. Creation myths perform a variety of functions.

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FIGURE 3.10 Medallions representing the Hebrew/Genesis six-day creation on display in Chantilly, France

They are considered:

- cosmogonic in that they speak about foundations or origins of the universe and important elements within their culture
- sacred in the sense that they are intimately connected with the faith system of the culture
- reflective of the values which are important within the culture
- ways of understanding and organising thought, often expressed via the use of opposites or dualities such as light and dark; good and evil
- ways of understanding how human beings and God/gods relate, as well as presenting a pattern for living.

Judaism and Christianity

Christianity shares Judaism's creation myths in the book of Genesis. In these stories, creation is not merely the initial coming into being of the universe and its life forms; it also includes the ordering and continuous unfolding of the world. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are about the creation of the cosmos.

Genesis 1:1–2:4a

When looking at the Torah as a whole, the Genesis 1 creation account identifies G-d, who is Israel's covenant partner and the creator of the world. Genesis 1 sets forth implicitly and explicitly the rationale on which the Torah's religion is grounded. The first Genesis creation account (Genesis 1:1–2:4a), when compared with creation accounts outside of the Hebrew Bible, is devoid of sensational, violent dramatic action but, nevertheless, conveys a sense of awe and majesty. In this account, G-d creates the world in six days and rests on the seventh day – the Sabbath observance is thereby hallowed (Exodus 31:17). Judaism has always taught that this world is good, and that G-d created everything in wisdom and love. This is a stark contrast to other religions in neighbouring lands.

The first Genesis creation story is an elegant and highly structured piece of writing replete with repetition. The repeating of phrases emphasises the ordering of the universe. In this story, G-d creates by word: 'G-d said, "let there be" … "and it was so …"', building day by day: 'there was evening, there was morning, the "x"'th day'. On the sixth day, G-d makes humankind, a mirror of the divine image: 'in the image of G-d, male and female G-d created them' (Genesis 1:27). Here, humankind is found in two varieties: male and female, both of whom are a reflection of G-d. Another element of the structure is that the events of days one, two and three are paralleled and developed in days four, five and six. In Semitic lists, the seventh place is often climactic. The climax of the first Genesis creation account is not the creation of humankind but rather the establishment, setting apart and blessing of the

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day that has been anticipated by the division of the story into days, the day set aside for G-d: G-d's Sabbath.

The principle of separation, as a characteristically divine behaviour, is established in Genesis 1 with the use of the Hebrew verb *lehavdil*, meaning 'to separate'. G-d separates: light from darkness (1:4), water above the dome from water below (1:6), day from night (1:14, 18). The idea of separation is highlighted in the Jewish ritual of **Havdalah**, which concludes the Sabbath. In this ritual, adherents bless G-d who: 'makes separation between holy and profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and other peoples, between the seventh day and the six days of work'.

Havdalah
a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat and ushers in the new week

Because humankind is made in the 'image and likeness of G-d', people are expected to conduct themselves on the model of G-d expressed in Genesis 1. In the midrash (commentary) on Genesis, *Genesis Rabbah*, an analogy is drawn between the G-d–human resemblance using a parable about a king and his look-alike general who were riding together in a chariot (Midrash 8:1). Spectators seeing the chariot pass by did not know which of the two look-alikes to hail as king. So, the king threw the general off the chariot, and the people knew who was king. The midrash highlights both the positive and negative side of the G-d–human resemblance. On the one hand, the likeness of people to G-d motivates Torah laws defending the life and dignity of each person (Genesis 9:6; Deuteronomy 21:22–3). On the other hand, the close resemblance of people to G-d means that special care must be taken to keep the boundary between them clearly defined – people should not assume that they are god.

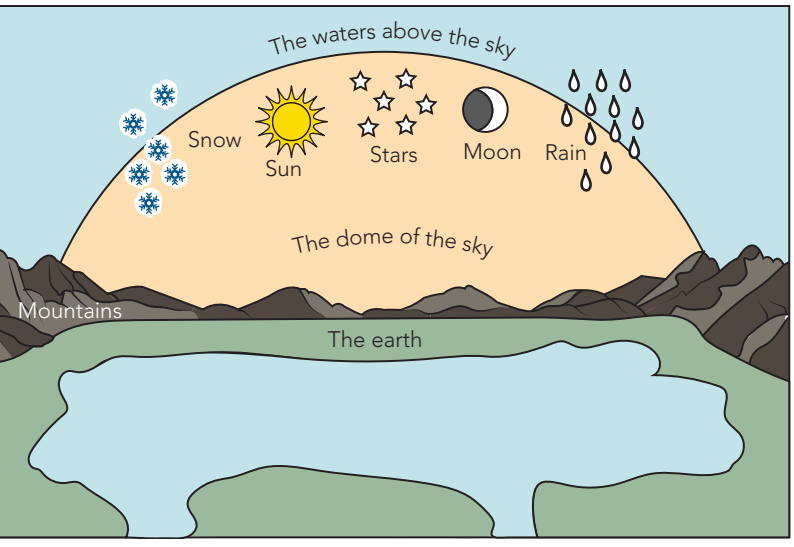


FIGURE 3.11 Representation of the ancient Hebrew understanding of the universe

The English translation, 'In the beginning', is not an accurate translation of the Hebrew words. Other biblical and ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies use 'when … and then …'. The Akk creation poem 'Enuma Elish' begins: 'When on high the heavens had not been named … then it was that the gods were found within them'. The Hebrew words that follow the opening phrase, *tohu wabbohu*, translate as 'formless void'. G-d creates out of the formless void and the wind (*ruah*) of G-d (sometimes translated as the breath of G-d or the spirit of G-d) sweeps over the waters. This phrase shows the power of G-d to control chaos and to create out of nothing.

In the first Genesis creation account the foundation for the Hebrew understanding of the universe with a vault separating the water below from the water above is clearly articulated.

Predominantly from the Priestly (P) tradition, the first creation account emphasises G-d as the source of life and hope and in this liturgical poem, G-d is transcendent, and creation effortlessly emerges from G-d's word. Unlike the creation accounts of their neighbours, the Hebrews paint an image of a serene, beautifully ordered world with human beings as the climax of the creative act. Everything G-d creates is 'good' and when the whole of creation is complete, it is indeed 'very good' (Genesis 1:31).

The Jewish belief that G-d created heaven and earth is also a central feature of contemporary synagogue services.

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Before every reading from the Psalms, G-d is depicted as creator of everything:

> Blessed be He who spoke, and the world existed: Blessed be He; Blessed be He who was the master of the world in the beginning.

In *Genesis Rabbah*, the idea of the world as a pattern in the mind of G-d is expressed in relation to the belief that G-d looked into the Torah and created the world. The School of Shammai records: 'the heavens were created first and then the earth' (following Genesis 1:1). The School of Hillel, in contrast, argues that Heaven and Earth were created simultaneously (*Genesis Rabbah* 1:9). In the Middle Ages, a number of Jewish theologians believed that G-d created the universe *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). The Kabbalists, members of a mystical tradition within Judaism, interpret the doctrine of *ex nihilo* in a special way. They say that the Divine is beyond human understating and so creation *ex nihilo*, therefore, refers to the creation of the universe out of G-d, the Divine Nothing.

Contemporary interpretations of the first Genesis creation account, particularly within Christianity, draw attention to how adherents have misinterpreted verse 28: '… Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'. This account contains a profound message about stewardship: G-d created the world and entrusted it to human beings. Consequently, mistreatment of the natural world not only damages creation but also diminishes our dignity as human beings.

Roman Catholic theological foundations for stewardship of creation were explicated by Pope John Paul II in the social **encyclical** *Laborem exercens* (1981), where humankind is described as being a co-creator with God and consequently responsible for the preservation of the earth. Pope Francis, in *Laudato si'* (2015), continues to develop the ideas of co-creation linking stewardship of creation with the Catholic social teaching principles of the common good and preferential option for the poor.

ACTIVITY 3.2

Forming and finding

Read Genesis 1:1–2:4a. As you read note the repetition – for example, 'God said, "let there be …"'; 'Evening came, morning came …'.

1. Create a list of the repeated phrases.
2. On the Activity Worksheet, complete the chart showing the parallels between days 1–3 and days 4–6.

Day 1: light/ darkness	Day 4: sun, moon, stars
Day 2:	Day 5:
Day 3:	Day 6:

Genesis 2:4b–3:24

The second creation story, Genesis 2:4b–3:24, classified as part of the Yahwist (J) tradition, provides a different perspective on God's creation. The story refers to reflections on marriage (2:23–4); a God who walks in the garden (3:8); and it expresses fears about humankind wanting to be divine (3:22). Genesis 2 presents an imminent G-d, an anthropomorphic G-d who walks in the garden, and it names G-d as 'YHWH G-d' (Genesis 2:4b); a unique double-naming of G-d that only occurs in this chapter.

This text has been significant in shaping attitudes towards the treatment of women in the Western world.

In the 1970s, Professor Phyllis Trible presented an analysis of the second Genesis creation account which has had a profound impact on its interpretation ever since. Trible focused on the translation of several key Hebrew words in the text. In Genesis 2:4–7, for example, she points out a literary 'play-on-words'. The Hebrew word

encyclical
a letter written by the pope and 'circulated' throughout the whole Church

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for earth is אדמה (*adamah*); the Hebrew word *adam* אדם refers to a creature made from the earth. This 'earth-creature' is both male and female and does not refer to man (Adam). Using Trible's translation of the Hebrew words, verse 7 would read '… then the LORD G-d formed the earth-creature from the earth', which provides a very different way of reading the text than what has been traditionally used. In verse 21, she notes that the Hebrew word צֶלַע (*tsela*), usually translated as rib, actually means 'side' and so a more accurate translation would be: '… then G-d took the side and closed up its place with flesh'. So rather than part of the body – the rib – being used the second creature is created from the whole side – that is, an equal portion of the original earth-creature. Trible also notes that sexual differentiation does not appear until verse 22 when the earth-creature (*adam*) is divided into אִישׁ *ish* (male) and אִשָּׁה *ishah* (female). Trible argues that the two creatures created by G-d are equal and that man does not have superiority over woman, but rather that G-d's creative power is over both man and woman. Trible's investigations not only corrected misconceptions of the past but also provided Jewish and Christian people with new ways of interpreting the second Genesis creation account.

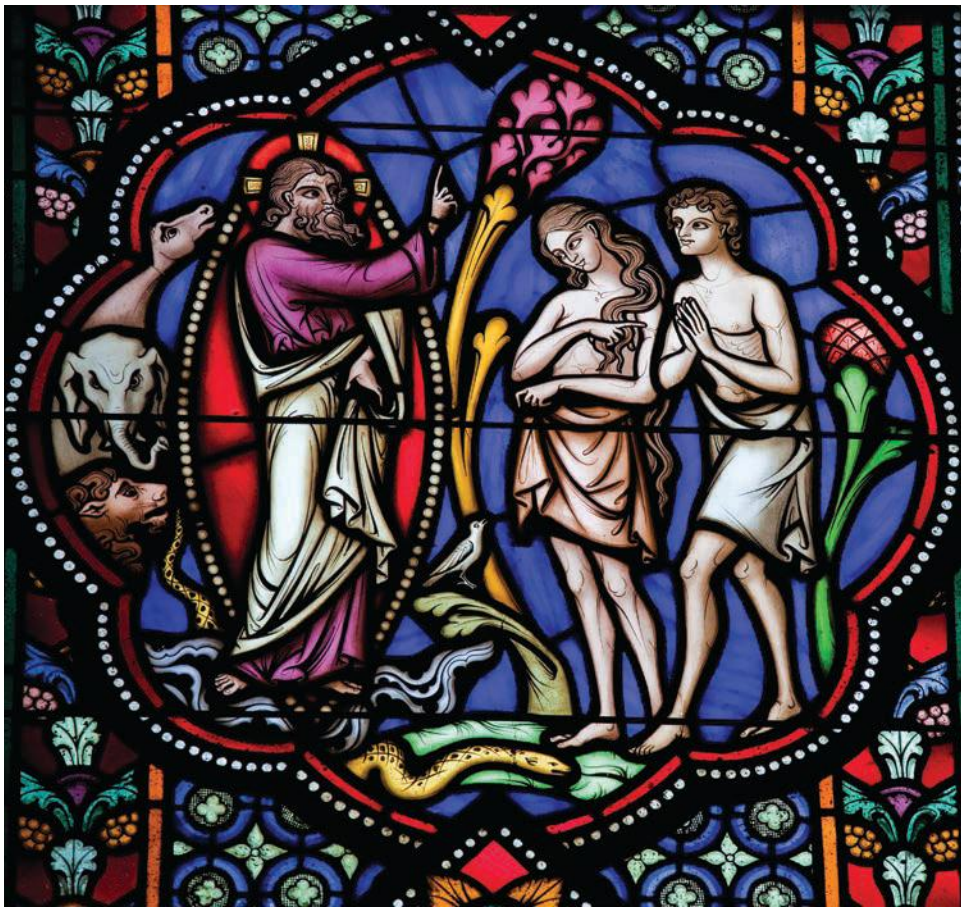


FIGURE 3.12 Stained-glass illustration of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Cathedral of Brussels, Belgium

Somewhat more recently, the Jewish scripture scholar Judith Plaskow has extended interpretations of the Genesis 2 creation account through a feminist midrash which enables her to address the silencing of women in traditional Jewish writings.

Historically, Genesis 3 has also been misunderstood. The curious woman is the lynchpin in the ongoing process of the ordering of the world. Eve is the protagonist, not her husband. Eve, the seeker of knowledge, the tester of limits, demonstrates the traits of what it means to be quintessentially human.

The story of Eve's transgression in the garden and her so-called responsibility for Adam's crime as told in the Hebrew Bible has been immensely influential in Jewish, Christian and even Muslim views of women. Although not directly linked back to her creation, it influences traditional religious views of her as being inferior to Adam.

During the past 40 years, traditional Jewish, Christian and Muslim interpretations have been challenged by the two fields of biblical criticism and oriental studies, which examine texts using philological, linguistic and historical critical methods. More recently, feminist scholars have pointed out that these sacred texts are written by men and for men, and therefore the status of women within these texts reflects the authors' male-oriented worldview.

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ACTIVITY 3.3

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

Read Genesis 2:4b–3:24.

1. From your reading of Genesis 2:4b–3:24, create a visual storyboard/mural which depicts the order of creation.
2. Read Genesis 3 and track the portrayal of Eve. On a literal reading, what impression does the text leave of the woman? Complete a character map if that helps you keep track of Eve's traits according to the text.
3. Search online for the article 'Eve and the Identity of Women' by Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe. What does this particular analysis say about the identity of Eve in the social context of when the second Genesis account was written?
4. View the series of art produced by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) on The Fall on the Art and the Bible website (locate the website online and search for 'Biblical art by Lucas Cranach the Elder'). For each piece, create a list of words that describe Eve, Adam, the perceived nature of their relationship, the scene of the temptation and the tone of the piece. Does the artwork leave you with the same impression as the literal reading of Genesis 3? Explain your answer using examples from the images in Cranach the Elder's works.
5. How do you account for the variety of images in Cranach the Elder's work over a period of some 25 to 30 years?
6. Reread Genesis 3 in light of your understanding of the artwork presented and create a new character map for Eve.

Islam

The Qur'an describes the creation of the first woman as contemporaneous and similar to that of the first man (Qur'an 4:1; 7:189; 35:11; 39:6; 49:13). Moreover, the woman is not more responsible than Adam for their offence and it is Adam who bears a greater degree of culpability (Qur'an 2:35–6; 7:1–25; 20:115–23). Despite what is in the Qur'an, Muslim patriarchal exegesis has interpreted the texts to mean that Eve was created secondarily to Adam and that she was responsible for their disobeying God and their subsequent expulsion from the garden. The Hadith also presents the image of Hawwa (Eve) in negative terms, including her being created from Adam's rib. Adam is considered a prophet but Hawwa, nor any other woman, is not.

In the late 1980s, Dr Aisha Abd al-Rahman began an examination of Qur'anic texts related to creation and excluded additional interpretations such as the Hadith. She concluded that the Qur'an confirms the equality of woman and man and she criticised Muslim interpreters who embellished the Qur'anic narrative with unreliable Hadith reports of the words and deeds of the Prophet. Later, in 1985, Riffat Hassan provided a feminist interpretation of the Qur'an. She says that the term *adam* is not a name but rather a collective noun synonymous with *al-insan* or *bashar*, meaning undifferentiated humanity, neither man nor woman.



FIGURE 3.13 Islamic scholars Dr Aisha Abd al-Rahman (left) and Riffat Hassan (right)

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ACTIVITY **3.4**

Forming and finding

Read the following Qur'an references and in your own words note the key ideas presented.

Qur'an reference	Key ideas
4:1	
7:189	
35:11	
39:6	
49:13	
2:35–6	
20:115–23	
7:11–25	

Analysing and evaluating

In a structured paragraph of 150 to 200 words, respond to the following question: How have new interpretations of the second Genesis creation account challenged people to rethink relationship between men and women? Use evidence to support your views.

For the past 40 years, leading Jewish, Christian and Islamic feminist scholars have investigated and ultimately reinterpreted problematic and misogynist verses of the sacred texts within the Abrahamic traditions. Feminist studies have challenged conventional learning and interpretations of sacred texts as well as challenging the established authority of *shaykhs* (sheikhs), priests and rabbis. They have pointed to how earlier interpretations of texts such as the creation of the first woman after man and from man has served as a foundation for patriarchy. While there are significant differences between biblical and Qur'anic renditions of human creation, the result of feminist exegesis has identified some remarkable similarities, especially related to the understanding of the word '*adam*'.

Noah and the flood narratives

The story of Noah is told in both the Torah and the Qur'an. In the Torah, it is recorded in chapters 6 to 9 of the book of Genesis. But this flood story is not completely unique. Stories of floods are common in many ancient cultures: one of the most well-known is in the Epic of Gilgamesh.

Gilgamesh epic

Written in cuneiform script on 12 clay tablets, the Gilgamesh epic from ancient Sumeria tells the story of the King of Uruk. Tablet 11 contains the Gilgamesh epic and it is believed that the story was circulating between 2900–2400 BCE.

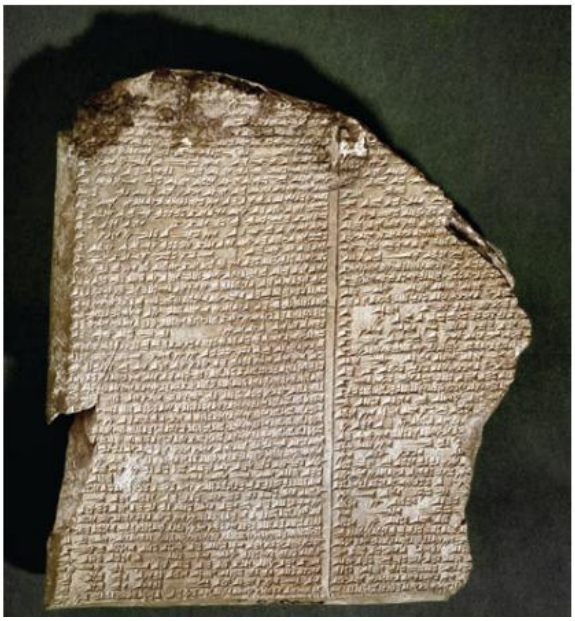


FIGURE 3.14 Tablet containing part of the Epic of Gilgamesh (Tablet 11 depicting the Deluge). Clay, 15.2 cm x 13.3 cm, Neo Assyrian culture, seventh century BCE. British Museum, London, UK.

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Gilgamesh epic (tablet 11)

Six days and seven nights came the wind and flood, the storm flattening the land.
When the seventh day arrived, the storm was pounding,
the flood was a war – struggling with itself like a woman writhing (in labor).
The sea calmed, fell still, the whirlwind (and) flood stopped up.
I looked around all day long – quiet had set in and all the human beings had turned to clay!
The terrain was as flat as a roof.
I opened a vent and fresh air (daylight!) fell upon the side of my nose.
I fell to my knees and sat weeping,
tears streaming down the side of my nose.
I looked around for coastlines in the expanse of the sea,
and at twelve leagues there emerged a region (of land).
On Mt Nimush the boat lodged firm,
Mt Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
One day and a second Mt Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A third day, a fourth, Mt Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
A fifth day, a sixth, Mt Nimush held the boat, allowing no sway.
When a seventh day arrived
I sent forth a dove and released it.
The dove went off, but came back to me;
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
I sent forth a swallow and released it.
The swallow went off, but came back to me;
no perch was visible so it circled back to me.
I sent forth a raven and released it.
The raven went off, and saw the waters slither back.
It eats, it scratches, it bobs, but does not circle back to me.
Then I sent out everything in all directions and sacrificed (a sheep).

Source: 'The Epic of Gilgamesh,' translated by Maureen Gallery Kovacs, Academy of Ancient Texts

Noah and the flood in the Book of Genesis

Parts of the Gilgamesh story resemble the story of Noah in Genesis 8:1–12. Read the Genesis version provided.

Genesis 8:1–12

But God remembered Noah and
all the wild animals and
all the domestic animals
that were with him in the
ark. And God made a wind
blow over the earth, and
the waters subsided; [2]the
fountains of the deep and
the windows of the heavens
were closed, the rain from
the heavens was restrained,
[3]and the waters gradually
receded from the earth. At
the end of one hundred and
fifty days the waters had
abated; [4]and in the seventh
month, on the seventeenth
day of the month, the
ark came to rest on the
mountains of Ararat. [5]The
waters continued to abate
until the tenth month; in
the tenth month, on the
first day of the month,
the tops of the mountains
appeared.
[6]At the end of forty days Noah
opened the window of the ark
that he had made [7]and sent
out the raven; and it went to
and fro until the waters were
dried up from the earth. [8]Then
he sent out the dove from
him, to see if the waters had
subsided from the face of the
ground; [9]but the dove found no

continued ...

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… continued

place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. [10]He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; [11]and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. [12]Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him anymore.

ACTIVITY **3.5**

Forming and finding

Using the Activity Worksheet, complete a Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences in the Gilgamesh epic and the story of the flood from Genesis 8:1–12. What might account for the similarities and differences?

The story of the flood in the book of Genesis transforms the ancient Gilgamesh flood story. The G-d of the Hebrews creates with wisdom and justice, in contrast to the gods in Atrahasis, who created from trial and error.

The Genesis flood story uses a complex literary form known as a chiastic structure: the first part is echoed and developed in the second part; the second part begins at a central turning point, a single statement: 'G-d remembers Noah'.



FIGURE 3.15 Fresco depicting the animals entering Noah's ark (1556) by Aurelio Luini in the church of San Maurizio in Milan, Italy

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ACTIVITY **3.6**

Finding

Read Genesis 6:5–9:17.

1. What reason is given for why the earth is to be destroyed?
2. How was the destruction to take place?
3. What were the dimensions of the boat Noah was asked to build?
4. Why were Noah and his family saved from the flood?
5. What animals was Noah told to take with him? (Genesis 6:19–20; 7:2–3) What might account for the divergence?
6. How long did the flood last? (cf Genesis 7:4, 12, 17, 24; 8:3, 6; 8:6–12) What reasons could be given for the divergence?
7. How could Noah tell the flood was receding?
8. How did the writer of the story account for the rainbow?
9. List six things you consider to be symbolic in the Noah story.

Resembling a giant sandwich, the literary structure assists people to remember and retell the story. The structure of the story can be summarised visually.

1. Lawlessness in G-d's creation (Gen 6:11–12)
2. G-d's first command: Destruction of earth (Gen 6:13–20)
3. G-d's second command: Enter the ark (Gen 7:1–10)
4. The flood begins (Gen 7:11–16)
5. Flood waters rise (Gen 7:17–23)

G-D REMEMBERS NOAH (Gen 8:1)

6. The flood recedes (Gen 7:24–8:5)
7. The earth dries (Gen 8:6–14)
8. G-d's third command: Leave the ark (Gen 8:15–19)
9. G-d's promise to preserve order (Gen 8:20–2)
10. G-d's fourth command: Establishment of covenant (Gen 9:1–17)

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ACTIVITY 3.7

Finding and analysing

Students work in pairs to unpack the chiastic structure of the story of Noah and the flood. Complete a T-chart on the Activity Worksheet listing the characters involved, the actions taken, and the main ideas presented in each section.

The Genesis account draws on a variety of traditions, but the Priestly (P) and Yahwist (J) accounts are easily identified. According to the P account, two pairs of every animal enter the ark (Genesis 6:19–20), whereas in the J account, seven pairs of clean animals and two pairs of unclean animals come onto the ark (Genesis 7:2–3). In the P account, reflecting the Genesis 1 creation account (Genesis 1:6–10), the waters above and the waters below surge over the earth. In the J account, the rains last 40 days and nights (Genesis 7:12).

The biblical account provides a specific list explaining how to build the ark, including: materials, dimensions, type of construction, windows, doors and waterproofing (Genesis 6:14–16). It also indicates that Noah opened a window and sent out a raven and a dove to check the water level prior to leaving the ark (Genesis 8:6–12).

The flood narrative in Genesis is the fifth and longest of what is known as the primeval history. Noah is presented as a just man in an unjust world: he stands out because he is in 'right relationship' with G-d and walks with G-d. It is in the story that the covenant between G-d and the people is first mentioned and it is the first of four covenants occurring in the P tradition. The other covenants are: the covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17:1–14), the covenant with Israel at Mt Sinai (Exodus 19–24), and the covenant with Phineas (Numbers 26:12–13). The promise made to Noah, and symbolised in the rainbow, extends to all Jews.



FIGURE 3.16 An artist's impression of the return of the dove to Noah's ark

Noah and the flood in the Qur'an

Read the story of Noah contained in the Qur'an 11:36–49.

> It was revealed to Noah: 'None of thy people will believe except those who have believed already! So grieve no longer over their (evil) deeds. [37]'But construct an Ark under Our eyes and Our inspiration, and address Me no (further) on behalf of those who are in sin: for they are about to be overwhelmed (in the Flood).' [38]Forthwith he (starts) constructing the Ark: Every time that the chiefs of his people passed by him, they threw ridicule on him. He said: 'If ye ridicule us now, we (in our turn) can look down on you with ridicule likewise! [39]'But soon will ye know who it is on whom
>
> *continued ...*

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... continued

will descend a penalty that will cover them with shame, on whom will be unloosed a penalty lasting.' [40]At length, behold! there came Our command, and the fountains of the earth gushed forth! We said: 'Embark therein, of each kind two, male and female, and your family – except those against whom the word has already gone forth, – and the Believers.' But only a few believed with him. [41]So he said: 'Embark ye on the Ark, In the name of Allah, whether it move or be at rest! For my LORD is, be sure, Oft-Forgiving, Most Merciful!'

[42]So the Ark floated with them on the waves (towering) like mountains, and Noah called out to his son, who had separated himself (from the rest): 'O my son! embark with us, and be not with the unbelievers!' [43]The son replied: 'I will betake myself to some mountain: it will save me from the water.' Noah said: 'This day nothing can save, from the command of Allah, any but those on whom He hath mercy!' And the waves came between them, and the son was among those overwhelmed in the Flood. [44]Then the word went forth: 'O earth! swallow up thy water, and O sky! Withhold (thy rain)!' and the water abated, and the matter was ended. The Ark rested on Mount Judi, and the word went forth: 'Away with those who do wrong!' [45]And Noah called upon his LORD, and said: 'O my LORD! surely my son is of my family! and Thy promise is true, and Thou art the justest of Judges!' [46]He said: 'O Noah! He is not of thy family: For his conduct is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which thou hast no knowledge! I give thee counsel, lest thou act like the ignorant!' [47]Noah said: 'O my LORD! I do seek refuge with Thee, lest I ask Thee for that of which I have no knowledge. And unless thou forgive me and have Mercy on me, I should indeed be lost!'

[48]The word came: 'O Noah! Come down (from the Ark) with peace from Us, and blessing on thee and on some of the peoples (who will spring) from those with thee: but (there will be other) peoples to whom We shall grant their pleasures (for a time), but in the end will a grievous penalty reach them from Us.'

[49]Such are some of the stories of the unseen, which We have revealed unto thee: before this, neither thou nor thy people knew them. So persevere patiently: for the End is for those who are righteous.

ACTIVITY **3.8**

Forming and finding

Read the account of Noah from the Qur'an.

1. What reason is given for the flood in the Qur'anic account?
2. Who was allowed on the ark?
3. Note the similarities and differences in the text with the other two stories of the flood and complete a three-way Venn diagram.

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Noah in the Qur'an

In the Qur'an, Noah usually heads the lists of prophets and his story occurs in 10 accounts: Qur'an 7:59–64; 10:71–3; 11:25–49; 21:76–7; 23:23–30; 26:105–21; 29:14–15; 37:75–82; 54:9–16; 71:1–28. All the Qur'anic accounts of the Noah story appear as part of the Meccan revelations and, according to tradition, date from the period of approximately 10 years when Muhammad struggled to establish his prophethood in Mecca. Once Muhammad was accepted, the stories no longer appear in the Qur'an. It would appear that the function of prophetic stories such as those of Noah are used to reinforce the prophethood of Muhammad and in doing so reassure believers that in their long struggle against persecution they will eventually succeed.

The stories of Noah in the Qur'an are used to teach lessons and their distribution throughout the Qur'an is a technique applied to reinforce the message over a period of time. While there are at least 10 accounts of Noah in the Qur'an, the material presented in each account is selected to illustrate a specific point and none of the passages offers a full version of Noah's life or of his prophethood.

ACTIVITY **3.9**

Forming and finding

In the table provided on the Activity Worksheet, summarise the ideas presented in the following Qur'anic accounts related to Noah.

Differences between the Genesis account and the Qur'anic account

There are several dissimilarities between the Genesis flood narrative and the Qur'anic flood narrative. According to the Genesis account, the entire planet was submerged during the flood, but in the Qur'anic account the flood is localised. In the Qur'anic text, God does not destroy all life on earth, but according to Genesis 9:11 the whole of earth is destroyed: 'I establish my covenant with you, that never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth'. Another significant difference is that the promise of the covenant articulated in Genesis is absent in the Qur'an.

The Qur'an says that the occupants of the ark included Noah and other believers, but there were not a large number. Noah's wife and Noah's son were drowned along with other nonbelievers. Also, in the Qur'anic account, Noah was instructed to take a pair of every kind into the ark (*min kullin sawjayn*), but the term is not definitive and some interpreters conclude that the phrase may mean 'a pair of each animal or bird serviceable to man'. The Qur'anic account does not mention specific creatures as does the Genesis account (Genesis 7:2–3; 8–9). Unlike the details provided in the Genesis account, the Qur'an does not provide any details of the *fulk* or *safina* (ark), only that Noah was instructed to build the ark 'under Our eyes and in accordance with Our instructions' (Qur'an 23:27).

The length of the flood varies according to the different accounts. In the Gilgamesh epic and the Genesis account, it appears to last for 40 days but the Qur'an is silent on the duration of the flood. The Qur'an indicates that the purpose of the flood was to drown those who disbelieved Noah's message (Qur'an 25:37).

The distinguishing feature of the Genesis flood narrative is that G-d's justice exempts Noah from punishment and the blessing given to Noah is a reaffirmation of the original blessing given by G-d in Genesis 1. The G-d of the Hebrews creates with wisdom and justice, unlike the gods of their neighbours who create by trial and error. In the Qur'an, Noah is the first of the prophets and the 'messenger of firm resolve' who are given to Muhammad as an example to follow: 'We have sent revelation to you as we sent it to Noah and the prophets after him … so that mankind would have no excuse before God once the messengers had delivered their message' (Qur'an 4:163–5).

Abraham and the near-sacrifice

The accounts of the near-sacrifice of Isaac in the Hebrew scriptures (Genesis 22:1–19) and the near-sacrifice of Ishmael in the Qur'an (37:102–10) are shown in Table 3.1.

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TABLE 3.1 Accounts of the near-sacrifice of Isaac and Ishmael

Genesis 22:1–19	Qur'an 37:102–110
After these things God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' [2]He said, 'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt-offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you.' [3]So Abraham rose early in the morning, saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and his son Isaac; he cut the wood for the burnt-offering, and set out and went to the place in the distance that God had shown him. [4]On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place far away. [5]Then Abraham said to his young men, 'Stay here with the donkey; the boy and I will go over there; we will worship, and then we will come back to you.' [6]Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering and laid it on his son Isaac, and he himself carried the fire and the knife. So the two of them walked on together. [7]Isaac said to his father Abraham, 'Father!' And he said, 'Here I am, my son.' He said, 'The fire and the wood are here, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?' [8]Abraham said, 'God himself will provide the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son.' So the two of them walked on together. [9]When they came to the place that God had shown him, Abraham built an altar there and laid the wood in order. He bound his son Isaac, and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood. [10]Then Abraham reached out his hand and took the knife to kill his son. [11]But the angel of the LORD called to him from heaven, and said, 'Abraham, Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' [12]He said, 'Do not lay your hand on the boy or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from me.' [13]And Abraham looked up and saw a ram, caught in a thicket by its horns. Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt-offering instead of his son. [14]So Abraham called that place 'The LORD will provide'; as it is said to this day, 'On the mount of the LORD it shall be provided.' [15]The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven, [16]and said, 'By myself I have sworn, says the LORD: Because you have done this, and have not withheld your son, your only son, [17]I will indeed bless you, and I will make your offspring as numerous as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of their enemies, [18]and by your offspring shall all the nations of the earth gain blessing for themselves, because you have obeyed my voice.' [19]So Abraham returned to his young men, and they arose and went together to Beer-sheba; and Abraham lived at Beer-sheba.	And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, 'O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think.' He said, 'O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast.' And when they had both submitted and he put him down upon his forehead, We called to him, 'O Abraham, You have fulfilled the vision.' Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good. Indeed, this was the clear trial. And We ransomed him with a great sacrifice, And We left for him [favorable mention] among later generations: 'Peace upon Abraham.' Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good.

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While these two narratives share the same basic plot, with God commanding Abraham to sacrifice his son, the Book of Genesis devotes 19 verses to this defining moment in Abraham's life, while the Qur'an account is shorter using only eight verses.

Both the Torah and Qur'an texts make it clear that the direction from God is a test of faith; Genesis 22:1: 'After these things G-d tested Abraham'; and Qur'an 37:106: 'Behold, all this was indeed a trial, clear' (this verse is sometimes translated as '… it was a test to prove [their true characters]'. There is, however, a difference in who is being tested. In the Torah, G-d is testing Abraham not Isaac. In the Qur'an, it is not specified who is tested – Abraham or Ishmael or both? Most Qur'anic interpreters indicate that God is testing both Ibrahim and his son. The Qur'an does not name the son in the episode but the Torah names Isaac explicitly. As a result, early Muslim exegetes were divided in their opinion about the identity of the son involved in the 'near-sacrifice', but over time they settled in favour of Ishmael – the main reason being that the Qur'an's narrative of the near-sacrifice begins with a prayer from Ibrahim: 'My Lord, grant me (the gift of a child who will be) one of the righteous' (Qur'an 37:100). If the son were Isaac, this would mean that Abraham's first-born son, Ishmael, was not righteous. Given that the Qur'an indicates that Ishmael is righteous then scholars have concluded that Ishmael was the son intended for the sacrifice.

Torah account – Genesis 22:1–19

The account in Genesis 22 is known as the 'binding of Isaac' and the story occupies a central role in rabbinic theology. The text too is incorporated in the daily liturgy. The *Akedah* (binding) is the 10th and climatic test of Abraham. It is clear from the outset that G-d wants to 'put Abraham to the test' (Genesis 22:1). There is no good English equivalent for the Hebrew word '*hineni*', which is translated in verse 1 as 'Here I am'. The word indicates readiness, alertness and responsiveness to instruction and is used a few times throughout this text. In verse 1 Abraham uses it as an answer to G-d; in verse 7 the word is translated as 'Yes' in reference to Isaac; and in verse 11, when Abraham answers the angel, it is translated as 'Here I am'. The test is a choice that Abraham must make between responding to G-d's direction and his love for his son (Genesis 22:2).



FIGURE 3.17 Artist's interpretation of the sacrifice of Isaac, by Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674)

Abraham is on the road for three days with two servants and his son. On the third day, he tells the servants to remain with the ass and he takes the boy with him. At no point throughout the three days does Abraham share the information about the sacrifice with Isaac nor does he initiate a conversation with Isaac. Readers can only assume that Isaac may have been aware of what was to happen because he sees his father splitting the wood for the burnt offering and that he would have been aware there was no animal to sacrifice. Eventually on the third day, Isaac says to his father: 'Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?' (Genesis 22:7). Still unaware of what he is preparing for, his father responds: 'G-d will see to the sheep for his burnt- offering, my son' (Genesis 22:8). In the end, Abraham could not conceal the sacrifice from his son. Abraham binds his son and lays him on the altar.

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A rabbinic commentary from the sixth century says that Isaac insisted that his father bind him 'lest I kick and your sacrifice be rendered useless'. A midrash has Abraham praying that G-d 'see the blood of this ram as if it were the blood of my son Isaac, the entrails of this ram as if they were the entrails of my son Isaac' (*Genesis Rabbah* 56.9). Later commentators indicate that such statements may be attempts to address the distressing nature of the near-sacrifice account.

Several rabbinic commentators are troubled by Abraham's concealment of the intended sacrifice and argue that it is unlikely that Abraham could have concealed the sacrifice or used force against his son. The evidence in the text, however, is clear. Abraham refuses to tell his son when he asks him about the missing lamb and he conceals the intended sacrifice from the two servants who accompanied him during the first two days.

The Torah account does not indicate any autonomy on the part of Isaac. At no point do G-d, the angels or Abraham tell Isaac about the sacrifice nor do they seek his consent. The binding of Isaac also indicates the absence of Isaac's consent in the sacrifice. In addition, there is also no indication in Genesis 22 that G-d is testing Isaac. At the end of the account, after holding Abraham back from completing the sacrifice, G-d commends and blesses Abraham alone.

Qur'an account – *Surah* 37:102–110

The Qur'anic account is clearly different from the Torah account. This brief narrative opens with Ibrahim telling his son the content of his troubling dream: 'O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I [must] sacrifice you, so see what you think' (Qur'an 37:102). In the Qur'anic account, Ibrahim and his son enter the narrative together and they appear to be co-equals or near co-equals. In the Qur'anic account, Ibrahim takes his son into his confidence and even seeks Ishmael's consent to his own sacrifice (Qur'an 37:102).

In the Torah account, G-d speaks directly with Abraham while in the Qur'anic account God comes through a dream. One Islamic tradition reported by al-Tabari plays on this ambiguity, suggesting that Ibrahim's dream is from Iblis (the devil), but Ibrahim recognises Iblis and tells him that his dream is from God. Iblis then talks to Ishmael, telling him that his father, following God's command, was going to sacrifice him. Iblis also tells Hagar, Ishmael's mother, but neither is troubled by the revelation, insisting that since the dream is from God, Ibrahim must do what he is told. Ibrahim is convinced the dream is from God and acts on it because to delay would show weakness of faith.

After sharing his dream with Ishmael, Ibrahim asks Ishmael a question: 'see (consider) what you think?'. The question leaves Ishmael free to give or refuse his consent to the sacrifice. In asking his son to consider, to judge for himself, whether the dream is from God, they decide together how they should respond to it. This interpretation is supported in the opening lines of the text: 'And when he reached with him [the age of] exertion, he said, "O my son …"' (the same passage is also translated as: 'When the boy is old enough to work with his father, Ibrahim said, "My son …"'). To many commentators the construction suggests that God's command had come to Ibrahim some years before when Ishmael was perhaps still a child and that Ibrahim waited for the boy to be old enough to work with his father. He could not have asked for Ishmael's consent when he was a child; he waited until he was old enough to give his informed consent.

In many ways, Ishmael's decision is a harder task since the only information he has is based on his father's dream. Convinced that his father's dream is from God, he tells Ibrahim to '… do as you are commanded' and as a good Muslim submit to God. Throughout the Qur'an people are reminded to focus on God. *Surah* 64:15 says: 'Your wealth and your children are only a test for you.' Ibrahim prepares to sacrifice Ishmael. Throughout Islamic tradition, Ishmael is offered as an exemplar of filial devotion. When Ishmael consents, Ibrahim discovers that God has heard his prayer: 'Lord, grant me a

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righteous son.' In the Qur'anic account, Ibrahim does not make the life and death decision for Ishmael; it is Ishmael's right to make the decision for himself. This upholds the Muslim principle that God does not ask people to do things without their full consent, as is evident in: 'There is no compulsion in religion' (Qur'an 2:256). Prophets are sent to warn unbelievers and invite them to submit to God employing every means of persuasion to do so, but never to change their beliefs at the point of a sword. God said to Muhammad: 'If it had been God's will, they would not have done so, but We have not made you their guardian, nor are you their keeper' (Qur'an 6:106–7).

According to Islamic teaching, Ibrahim's act was personal; its reward was not given to successive generations. While the patriarch serves as a model for others to follow, each individual must earn their own reward from God by submitting to the divine will.

While the narratives of the near-sacrifice share the same basic plot, in the Torah God commands Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac. In the Qur'an, Ibrahim and Ishmael are both involved in the decision. What is common to both sacred texts is that the near-sacrifice incident is a test of faith.

ACTIVITY **3.10**

Analysing and evaluating

1 Create a list of possible advantages and disadvantages for both father and son in seeking permission for the intended sacrifice.
2 What conclusions can you form about the nature of the relationship between God and Abraham/Ibrahim? Use evidence from both texts to justify your response.
3 What does God's request suggest to subsequent generations about their responsibilities as faithful people?

New Testament

The process of composing the gospels begins with oral traditions: collections of memories about Jesus's life on earth including his teachings, healings, crucifixion and resurrection. The followers of Jesus gathered together on a regular basis to celebrate the ritual of the Lord's supper, sharing stories about Jesus in the light of their growing insight into the meaning of his words and actions. As time passed, the followers of Jesus also recorded the stories in written form. After the original disciples died, Christians felt a need to collect the various oral and written materials circulating about Jesus and the gospels were created.

The gospel writers had access to a range of sources: a variety of oral and written traditions as well as prayers, songs and short creedal statements about Jesus. As a member of a community existing in a specific time and place, each of the evangelists was influenced to some extent by their living situation, their own background, points of view and education. Each evangelist shaped the message they proclaimed to suit their specific faith community. Originally the gospels were unnamed and it was not until the second century that the names of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) were added.

Annunciation

The account of the Annunciation only appears in the Gospel of Luke (Luke 1:26–36). The Annunciation account sets the scene for the birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1–20.



FIGURE 3.18 *The Annunciation* (1472–75) by Leonardo da Vinci

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ACTIVITY 3.11

Forming

Read the account of the Annunciation in Luke 1:26–36 provided on the Activity Worksheet. Circle any words or descriptions that you might need to investigate further.

Using the three worlds of the text, we will investigate the Annunciation account in the Gospel of Luke.

Behind the text

The author of Luke is accredited with writing two volumes: the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts of the Apostles. The author of Luke was probably a well-educated Greek Gentile Christian. The opening lines of the gospel indicate that he was not an eyewitness and that he carefully selected material from earlier writers and teachers.

> Since many have undertaken to
> set down an orderly account
> of the events that have been
> fulfilled among us, [2]just as
> they were handed on to us by
> those who from the beginning
> were eyewitnesses and
> servants of the word, [3]I too
> decided, after investigating
> everything carefully from
> the very first, to write an
> orderly account for you,
> most excellent Theophilus,
> [4]so that you may know the
> truth concerning the things
> about which you have been
> instructed. (Luke 1:1–4)

The gospel is dated around the late 80s, after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem. Luke's audience is predominantly Gentile Christian and parts of the gospel suggest that some of these people are quite well-off financially. Luke addresses both his volumes to Theophilus, a Greek name indicating a Greek audience. The name Theophilus means 'friend of God' and Theophilus might symbolise any potential reader of Luke's good news.

Because the author is a Gentile writing for Gentiles there are no Semitic words in this gospel such as *abba*, *hosanna* and Gethsemane, which appear in other gospels. His audience is not familiar with the geography of Palestine and so he explains Jewish places and festivals, for instance, 'a city called Bethsaida' or the 'feast of unleavened bread which is called Passover'. Luke presents Jesus as a prophet because Gentile culture was familiar with prophets. His gospel also has Jesus praying more than the other gospel writers and he emphasises the power and presence of the Holy Spirit acting in the world.

The story of the Annunciation takes place in Nazareth, a village of no more than 150 people. A significant detail in Luke's gospel is that when the child is born in Bethlehem, he is placed in a manger. The translation of the next phrase is interesting. Although commonly translated as '… there was no room in the inn', the Greek does not mention an 'inn' and reads 'there was no place in the lodgings'. Lodgings is not necessarily an inn: it is a place where travellers put down their belongings. Given that there was no room in this area, it seems that Mary, wanting some privacy, went elsewhere, where there was a manger.

Of the text

The author of Luke employs a variety of literary techniques, one of which is parallelism. He has two announcement stories: Luke 1:8–20 where an angel tells Zechariah that he and his elderly wife are to have a child; and Luke 1:26–36 where an angel tells Mary, a very young pre-pubescent girl, that she is going to have a child through the power of the Holy Spirit. He follows this with the accounts of two extraordinary births: John the Baptist is born to Elizabeth and Zechariah; and Jesus is born to Mary and Joseph.

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FIGURE 3.19 Stained-glass windowpanes depicting the Annunciation (left) and the visitation to Elizabeth (right) from a church in Bruges, Belgium

The Annunciation account is presented using a literary form common in the ancient world: the announcement story. An announcement story has the following characteristics:

- appearance of angel or God
- fear response of person
- divine message
  - person addressed by name
  - phrase describing person
  - urged not to be afraid
  - woman to have child
  - name of child
  - phrase interpreting name
  - future accomplishments of child
- objection of person
- sign to reassure the person.

Announcement stories are used in the Hebrew scriptures to herald the births of Ishmael, Isaac and Samson.

ACTIVITY **3.12**

Forming and finding

1 Locate the following biblical texts: Genesis 16:7–12; Genesis 17:1, 3, 16–21; Judges 13:3–23. For each biblical story, map the characteristics of the announcement story. Record your findings in the table provided on the Activity Worksheet. The characteristics may not appear in the text according to the order listed in the table.

2 Apply the pattern of the announcement story to the two accounts in the Gospel of Luke. Record the verse numbers.

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In the past, Mary has been presented as a model of passivity and submission to male authority and as a woman valued chiefly for her virginity and her maternity. Frequently, Mary, who is sinless, has been contrasted with Eve, who was considered sinful. Mary, the young girl who was visited by an angel and asked to take on a challenging role, did not passively accept the challenge but rather she questions the angel, asking 'how can this be …' before making her decision and responding to God's call.

ACTIVITY 3.13

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Locate five or six images of the Annunciation from different time periods. How has Mary been represented in each image? Is she presented as passive or active? Young or old? Accepting or questioning? Use evidence from the images to support your viewpoint.

After examining the images, create a hypothesis addressing how images of the Annunciation have shaped peoples' reading and understanding of the biblical account of the Annunciation.

2 The biblical account of the Annunciation has been used in formal prayers of the Catholic Christian tradition – namely, the 'Hail Mary' and 'The Angelus'. Locate the texts of the 'Hail Mary' and 'The Angelus'. Using different colours, identify the elements of the Annunciation account in Luke's gospel in the 'Hail Mary' and in 'The Angelus'.

Infancy narratives

The birth of Jesus is recorded in two gospels – Luke (2:1–20) and Matthew (1:18–2:23) – and each account provides a different interpretation of the event for different audiences and to make different theological points.

ACTIVITY 3.14

Forming, finding and analysing

Read the accounts of the birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (2:1–20) and the Gospel of Matthew (1:18–2:23).

1 For each account, list the characters in the story and the action/s they perform.

2 Using a Venn diagram, compare and contrast the two accounts. Note the unique features of each in the relevant circle and the common features in the overlapping section of the diagram.

3 Based on the evidence you have gathered above, construct an hypothesis related to the infancy narratives in the gospels of Luke and Matthew.

4 Refer to the information below to extend your understandings of the two infancy accounts.

Infancy narrative: Gospel of Luke

The birth of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke (2:1–20) presents Jesus as the Davidic Messiah. He contrasts the powerlessness of the babyhood of Jesus as bringer of peace with the might of the Roman ruler, Caesar Augustus, whose imperial cult was supposed to bring peace. The angels' revelation of the meaning of Jesus is accepted by the shepherds and pondered by Mary.

The author of Luke uses the census as a means of getting Mary and Joseph from Nazareth to Bethlehem, the city of David. The infancy narrative in Luke is presented in three sections: verses 1–2 provide the setting and birth of Jesus; verses 8–14 are the angelic pronouncements; and verses 15–20 contain the responses to the angelic pronouncements.

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The key to the meaning of the whole message is in Luke 2:11–14:

> … to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is the Messiah, the Lord. 12This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.' 13And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, 14'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom God favours!'



FIGURE 3.20 Nativity scene with hand-coloured figures made out of wood

Infancy narrative: Gospel of Matthew

For many centuries, people presumed that the Gospel of Matthew was written by the Matthew frequently mentioned in the gospels. Contemporary biblical scholars, however, do not believe this to be the case for several reasons: most of the Gospel of Mark is included in the Gospel of Matthew, which would be unusual if the author of Matthew was a firsthand witness of the life of Jesus. Whoever wrote this gospel had a well-developed understanding of the Hebrew scriptures, the law and the prophets, and in fact refers to the Hebrew scriptures more than the other three gospels combined. Many scholars agree that the author was probably a Jew who had converted to Christianity.

Matthew's gospel was popular throughout the early Christian world and is the most cited gospel. It contains instructions for the church (Matthew 18:15–20) and its opening genealogy provides a smooth transition between the Hebrew scriptures and the story of Jesus. Whether the gospel was written for a particular Christian or Jewish-Christian community remains debated.

The Gospel of Matthew is dated between 80–90 CE, about a decade after Mark. Matthew 22:7 states: 'The king was enraged: He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city', providing clear evidence that the gospel was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE.

Because of the frequent references to and quotes from the Hebrew scriptures, it is likely that Matthew's audience were Jews who had converted to Christianity – such references to the Hebrew scriptures would only be meaningful if people already knew and understood them. The gospel also contains a missionary outlook, so many scholars believe that there were also Gentile converts within the community. This would be consistent with the command in Matthew 28:19 to 'make disciples of all nations'.

While scholars cannot be completely sure, they believe that the gospel was commonly used in Antioch, Syria. The reasons given for this include: Matthew's is the only gospel to mention awareness in Syria of Jesus's ministry (4:24); later texts mention the prominence of Jesus's followers there (cf Acts 11:19–27; 14:22–3; Galatians 2:11); and Peter has connections both to the city and to Matthew's gospel (Matthew 16:17–19). A Galilean setting is also possible, given the gospel writer's interest in the region (Matthew 4:12; 21:11; 26:32; 28:10).

Matthew's Jesus teaches from a Jewish perspective as would a rabbi: he uses parables and wisdom sayings. In the Sermon on the

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Mount (Matthew 5–7) he teaches that God offers new life to all people without any exceptions and reminds them that they must even love their enemies. Jesus is referred to as the new Moses and the new Law-giver, highlighting the prominence of Jesus as teacher. He displays substantial interest in Jewish observance and shows how to understand the Jewish laws and how to apply them to the circumstance of an early church community trying to accommodate both Jewish and Gentile members.

Matthew's Jesus is presented as the 'new Moses': as a baby, Jesus is taken into Egypt and returns to Israel – Moses flees Egypt for the Promised Land; Jesus proclaims the Beatitudes on a mountain – Moses receives the Ten Commandments on Mt Sinai; at the end of the gospel Jesus gives his followers instructions from a mountain as Moses did in Genesis 28:16 and Deuteronomy 32:48.

Matthew has the visit of the magi. The Greek historian Herodotus described a priestly cast of the Medes who interpreted dreams as magi.



FIGURE 3.21 The visit of the magi – detail from a mosaic in the Basilica of Sant' Apollinare-Nuovo in Ravenna, Italy

Matthew uses cultivated Greek in his gospel and the writer appears to be quite skilful in how he plans and sets out the gospel. Many sections of the gospel are highly structured: the genealogy has three divisions; there are three temptations; and three sets of miracles (Matthew 8–9). There are seven parables related to the kingdom of God (Matthew 13) and seven parables of warning (23:13–33; 24:32; 25:46). Some characteristics that hint at the Jewish audience of the gospel include how Matthew refers to the Kingdom of Heaven rather than the Kingdom of God and other typically Jewish words such as prayer, fasting, almsgiving and day of judgement.

Matthew's gospel is divided into five major discourses, separated by the formula 'when Jesus had finished' (Matthew 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1), suggesting a restatement of the Torah. However, the themes used do not match the contents of the Torah books.

While there is an announcement story in the Matthean account, the announcement is via a dream to Joseph (Matthew 1:18–25). The inclusion of a statement from Isaiah stresses the intervention of God in history.

ACTIVITY **3.15**

Finding and analysing

Apply the announcement story characteristics listed in Activity 3.12 to the announcement in Matthew 1:18–25.

The story of the coming of magi is like *aggadah* – that is, a story made up from biblical materials to make a theological point.

Frequently the two accounts of the infancy narratives from Matthew and Luke are combined into one story. Common depictions and re-enactments of the infancy narratives include animals, but no animals are mentioned in close proximity to Mary in either account.

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FIGURE 3.22 *The Adoration of Magi* by seventeenth-century painter Pedro Atanasio Bocanegra, showing the magi with baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Matthew's gospel makes no mention of a manger and his account talks of a 'house': '… when they saw the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his Mother' (Matthew 2:10–11). Re-enactments usually include three magi but Matthew's gospel does not indicate that there were three people, referring to three gifts but not three people. The name of the 'kings' and their arrival on camels comes much later in history in a document called the Armenian Gospel of the Infancy.

ACTIVITY **3.16**

Analysing and analysing

Return to the evidence lists you have created for Activity 3.14.

1 Add additional information you have gleaned from this chapter.
2 Return to your hypothesis. Modify and expand your original hypothesis in the light of your new information.

Passion, death and resurrection of Jesus

The passion, death and resurrection of Jesus are recorded in all four gospels. While small details vary from one account to another, the stories of the last days of Jesus's life have the greatest continuity and overlap between the four Canonical Gospels. When comparing the passion narrative in the four gospels, a cluster of events and themes are present. Jesus's ministry comes to a climax with his movement towards Jerusalem. Once in Jerusalem, intense engagement with religious leaders ensues, especially in the Synoptic Gospels. John scatters this engagement with leaders throughout his earlier narrative. The final set of events include the last supper, the arrest and trials of Jesus, his crucifixion, death, burial, the empty tomb and the appearances of the risen Lord. An overview of the accounts is presented below. When reading these accounts, it is important to remember that the gospel authors did not intend to write 'history' in our modern sense, but rather 'sacred history' in the light of revelation.

ACTIVITY **3.17**

Finding

In groups, complete the table on the Activity Worksheet by locating the parallel texts of the Passion account in the four gospels. The first has been completed for you.

The gospels appear to portray Pilate as an indecisive administrator who found no fault with Jesus. Non-canonical sources present a very different picture: Pilate was a ruthless tyrant who crucified hundreds of Jews without proper trial under Roman law and in the year 36 CE he was recalled to Rome to explain his brutal behaviour.

The Farewell Discourse in John's gospel prepares the disciples for what is about to happen. The theme of 'love' runs throughout the discourse.

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FIGURE 3.23 The title of this painting, *Ecce Homo* (1862) by Antonio Ciseri, is the Latin for 'Behold the man' – the words used by Pontius Pilate, governor of Judaea, when he presented Jesus to the hostile crowd.

At the heart of Jesus's vision for the community is the community's love for one another. This vision of love is most explicit in statements such as:

> I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. (John 13:34–5)

> This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

> I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. (John 15:17)

In the Farewell Discourse, Jesus uses the metaphor of the vine and the branches to explain the Christian community: Jesus is the vine and the ones who love Jesus are the branches; God is the vine grower who looks after the vine.

> I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. 2He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. 3You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. 4Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. 5I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. 6Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. 7If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. 9As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. 10If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. 11I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. (John 15:1–11)

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The vine metaphor describes the Christian community as a community of mutuality as is Jesus's relationship with God. Individuals within the community will prosper when they realise that they are part of the whole. This is in stark contrast to today's world where individualism and success are valued over community and the common good. The metaphor of the vine and the branches also provides a non-hierarchical image of church. All branches are rooted together in one vine and only when people work together can the best be achieved.

Mary Magdalene and the risen Jesus (John 20:1–18)

All four gospels note that early on Easter morning the women, including Mary Magdalene, go to Jesus's tomb. In John's gospel, Mary Magdalene makes the discovery of the empty tomb. The story of Mary Magdalene in chapter 20 is the most detailed of the four gospel accounts of the women at the tomb. There are two scenes: 20:1–10 (Mary at the tomb) and 20:11–18 (Mary and the risen Jesus).

In the first scene, Mary arrives at the tomb to find it empty. She runs and reports the news to Peter and the beloved disciple, suggesting that someone must have taken Jesus's body out of the tomb. Peter and the beloved disciple run to the tomb and are unable to say what has happened to the body of Jesus. In the second scene, Mary is alone in the tomb, weeping. Two angels appear to her saying, 'Woman, why are you weeping?' Mary answers, 'They have taken away my LORD, and I do not know where they have laid him.' She turns around and sees Jesus, but does not recognise him. Jesus has a conversation with Mary, and the reader, knowing the pattern from previous parts of John's gospel, waits, anticipating Mary's recognition of Jesus. When Mary recognises Jesus for who he is, Jesus tells her to go to the disciples. She runs to the disciples and proclaims, 'I have seen the LORD!' Her announcement of the presence of the risen Jesus is the core of the Easter gospel. Her confusion and sadness at the empty tomb have been transformed by her encounter with the risen Jesus. Mary Magdalene is the first to see the risen Jesus, the first Easter witness and the first to tell the others what she has seen: she is named as the first disciple of the risen Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus is a central belief of the Christian faith. This resurrection faith is expressed in three ways in the New Testament: the disciples proclaim their faith by announcing it to non-believers; the disciples celebrate their faith using hymns and creedal statements which proclaim the resurrection of Jesus; and the disciples tell of their faith via narratives about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

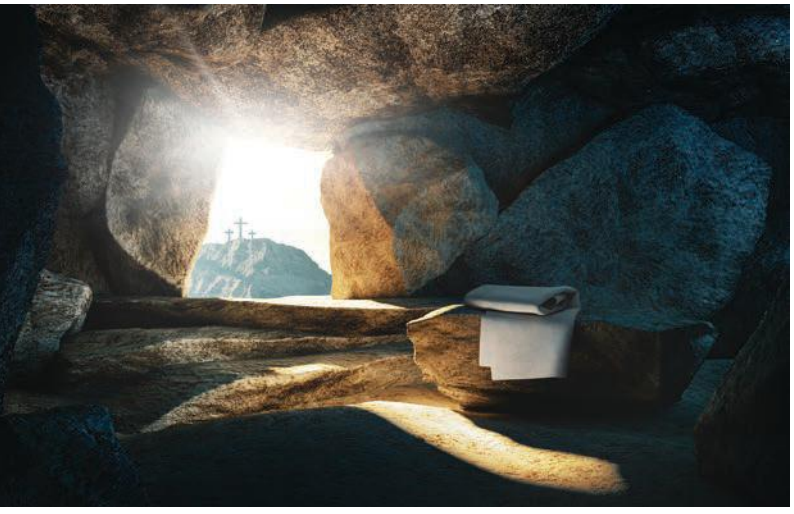


FIGURE 3.24 Artist's interpretation of the empty tomb

Jesus (Issa) in the Qur'an

In Islam, Issa (Jesus) was the last great messenger in the chain of prophethood before Muhammad. As a prominent prophetic figure in the Qur'an, Issa is arguably its most fully developed character. The Qur'an records his miraculous virgin birth, the miracles he performed, and we also read about his disciples. Mentioned more than one hundred times in the Qur'an, Issa is one who brought great signs from God and he is called the 'messiah' even though the meaning of the term is different for Jews, Christians and Muslims. For Muslims, the message Jesus presented in the gospels is considered consistent with the messages of all the prophets of Islam.

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The Qur'an nevertheless says that those who believe that Jesus is divine, the son of God and part of the Trinity are mistaken:

> O People of the Book! Do not go beyond the bounds in your religion, and do not say anything of God but the truth. The Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, was but a Messenger of God, and Word of His (Power) which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God (as the One, Unique God), and His Messengers (including Jesus, as Messenger); do not say (God is one of) a trinity. Give up (this assertion) – (it is) for your own good (to do so). God is but One God. (Qur'an 4:171)

Throughout the Qur'an, Issa is given several titles, including: *al-nabi* (the prophet, Qur'an 19:30), *al-rasul* (the messenger of God who received the scripture from God, Qur'an 3:49), *min al-muqarrabin* (of those close to God, Qur'an 3:45), *Mubarak* (the blessed one, Qur'an 19:31), *qawl al-Haq* (the true word, Qur'an 19:34), *'abd Allah* (the servant of God, Qur'an 4:172), *Kalimat Allah* (the word of God, Qur'an 4:171), *Kalimat Minh* (a word from Him, Qur'an 3:45), *ruah Allah* (a spirit from God, Qur'an 21:91, 66:12), *wajeeh* (a person of distinction, Qur'an 3:45), and a confirmer of the Torah (Qur'an 3:50). Regardless of the titles bestowed on Issa, the Qur'an repeatedly denies that he is the Son of God, insisting that he is a messenger, albeit a remarkable messenger.

The story of Issa is one of the most well-known prophetic stories in the Qur'an with substantial information presented in chapter 3, 'The Family of 'Imran'. This chapter also speaks of Mary as chosen by God; Zachariah's care for her; Mary's encounter with angels; Jesus's birth; his miracles, which are performed with permission from God; the support of Jesus's disciples; and Jesus's death and ascension (Qur'an 3:42–64).

In chapter 4 of the Qur'an, the message of Muhammad is connected to the message of Issa and the other prophets before him, confirming that what was revealed to Muhammad was not something unprecedented but sent by the same divine messenger as it was to the prophets before him. Qur'an 4:163 includes the messengers of God as being: Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, Solomon and David. Chapter 5 continues to emphasise the importance of the message of Issa and its relationship with earlier messages. Issa does not reject the divine message – he accepts it and confirms the message of the Torah.

The Qur'anic Issa speaks as a forerunner of Muhammad and consoles his disciples by giving

ACTIVITY 3.18

Forming and finding

1. Find two different translations of Qur'an 3:42–64 and copy and paste them into a document. Note the source of each.
2. Consider the key similarities and differences between the translations. Identify anything significant and suggest how this might impact the understanding of the passage.

Analysing and evaluating

1. Which prophet is Issa compared to in Qur'an 3:59? What implications might this have for understanding the importance of Issa? What might it tell the adherent about Allah?
2. Where are the 'People of the Book' referred to as Muslims? To what extent is this an accurate description from a Muslim perspective?
3. Find three passages that refer to Mary (Maryam). What conclusions can you reach about the way in which Maryam is revered in the Qur'an? Use evidence to support your conclusions.

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them good news of the coming of Muhammad after him: 'Jesus, son of Mary, said: O Children of Israel! Lo! I am the messenger of Allah unto you, confirming what was revealed before me, the Torah, and giving good tidings of a messenger who shall come after me, whose name shall be Ahmad' (Qur'an 61:6). The names Ahmad and Muhammad are derived from the same word, denoting 'the praised one'.

The Jesus of the Qur'an is a receiver of divine scripture, *al-Injil*, the Islamic name for the gospels (Qur'an 3:48; 5:46; 19:30; 57:27). Qur'an 5:46 refers to the gospels as a source of guidance, light and admonition for God-fearing people. In chapter 5, Issa calls upon the people to become muslims (lowercase 'm') to submit themselves to the will of Allah (Qur'an 5:116–17). While the Qur'an teaches that Jesus was a messenger of God, it does not contend that he was God or part of God. The Qur'an warns:

> They have indeed disbelieved who declare: God is the Messiah, son of Mary. Say: 'Who then has the least power against God, if he had willed to destroy the Messiah, son of Mary, and his mother, and all those who are on earth?' To God belongs the sovereignty of heavens and the earth and all that is between them. He creates whatever He wills. God has full power over everything. (Qur'an 5:17)

In the Qur'an, the word 'Messiah' is a title used for Issa alone. While 'messiah' is a common term used by Jews, Christians and Muslims, each applies different understandings to it. In Jewish tradition, the Messiah will bring peace, justice and secure the return of Jews to the land of Israel. In Islam, the messianic figure will also bring justice, prosperity and peace. In the Qur'an, the title of Messiah for Issa does not make any connection between Jesus and the messianic expectation of the Old Testament. Neither Jews nor Muslims consider their Messiah to be divine, so, in this regard, Christianity is unique in believing that the Messiah is divine.

In chapter 4, the Qur'an warns that there should be no exaggeration about the nature of Issa:

> O People of the Book! Do not go beyond the bounds in your religion, and do not say anything of God but the truth. The Messiah, Issa son of Maryam, was but a Messenger of God, and a Word of his (Power) which He conveyed to Mary, and a spirit from Him. So believe in God (as the One, Unique God), and His Messengers (including Jesus, as Messenger); and do not say: (God is one of) a trinity. Give up (this assertion) – (it is) for your own good (to do so). God is but One god; All-Glorified is He in that He is absolutely above having a son. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. And God suffices as the One to be relied on, to Whom affairs should be referred. The Messiah never disdains to be a servant to God, not do the angels near-stationed to Him. Whoever disdains to worship God as a servant and feels his pride (puffed up by arrogance, should know that) God will gather them all to Himself (and call them to account). (Qur'an 4:171–2)

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The birth of Jesus is mentioned in two chapters in the Qur'an (3 and 19) and both chapters do so with reference to Maryam (Mary). Prior to revealing the birth of Issa, the Qur'an speaks of Maryam and how she was chosen among all women of the world and purified (Qur'an 3:42–45).

According to the Qur'an, many people wanted to be the guardian of Maryam. The prophet Zachariah was the most pious of those who displayed interest in being her guardian, but the potential guardians had to cast lots by throwing arrows into the Jordan River. The arrows of the other people fell into the water and went down with the current, but God made Zachariah's arrow stand up. This was interpreted as a sign that Zachariah won the contest and that it was God's will that he should take care of Maryam.

ACTIVITY **3.19**

Forming and finding

Read Qur'an 3:42–5. On the Activity Worksheet, make a list of the attributes and characteristics of Maryam. An example has been provided for you.

Attributes/ characteristics	Qur'an reference
Chosen by God	4:42

The Qur'an presents Maryam as an example for believers: 'And also Mary, the daughter of 'Imran, who kept herself chaste (body and soul), so We breathed into it out of Our Spirit, and who affirmed the truth of the words of her Lord (His Revelations – commandments, promises and warnings – to His Messengers), and His Books; and she was of those devoutly obedient to God' (Qur'an 66:12).

The story of the birth of Issa is presented in a concise way that assumes the reader already has knowledge of the topic. Many details are omitted, with the Qur'anic account being only concerned about the most important aspects of the story: that Issa was not left alone and that God was with him to protect him. Chapter 19, named after Maryam, begins with the account of the birth of Zachariah's son Yahya (John). In this chapter, Issa miraculously speaks from the cradle and declares that he is the servant of God:



FIGURE 3.25 Page from the Walters manuscript with an illuminated headpiece inscribed with the chapter heading for chapter 19 ('Surat Maryam')

> (The infant) said: 'Surely I am 'abdul-lah (a servant of God). He (has already decreed that He) will give me the Book (the gospel) and make me a Prophet.'
> 'He has made me blessed (and a means of His blessings for people) wherever I may be and he has enjoined upon me the Prayer (the Salah) and the prescribed Purifying Alms (the Zakah – and to enjoin the same upon others) for as long as I live.'
> (Qur'an 19:30–1)

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The Qur'anic Jesus is a messenger of God to the people of Israel (Qur'an 3:49; 4:157; 5:75). His mission is to proclaim the monotheistic, ethical message of Allah. The Qur'an also presents him as the one who is supported by the Holy Spirit (Qur'an 2:87).

ACTIVITY **3.20**

Forming and analysing

Read the accounts of the birth of Jesus in Qur'an 3:44–8 and 19:16–37. Compare the two accounts by noting the similarities and differences in a Venn diagram.

The Qur'an also has interesting accounts of the death, crucifixion and ascension of Jesus. According to the Qur'an, Jesus was not crucified but only appeared to be crucified.

> And their saying 'We killed the Messiah, Jesus son of Mary, the Messenger of God' – whereas they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but the matter was made dubious to them. Those who differ about the matter and about Jesus are indeed confused; they have not definite knowledge thereof, following mere conjecture; and of a certainty, they did not kill him. (Qur'an 4:157–8)

The difficult part is the transition of '*wa lakin shubbiha lahum*'. This is sometimes translated as 'but it appeared so to them', 'but the resemblance of 'Isa was put over another man (and they killed that man)', 'but so it was made to appear to them' or 'only a likeness of that was shown to them'. Since the Qur'an says, 'they did not kill him, nor did they crucify him', Muslims believe that Jesus was not crucified, that he was raised by God to heaven, and that he is still alive there and will return when God wants to send him.

The nature of Issa's ascension has also long been a matter of discussion for Muslim scholars. Two Qur'anic verses are presented as references for the ascension of Jesus:

> (it was part of His executing His will) when God said: 'Jesus, (as your mission has ended,) I will take you back (to Myself) and raise you up to Myself, and will purify you of (the groundless slanders of) those who disbelieve, and set your follower above those who disbelieve until the Day of Resurrection. Then to me you will return, and I will judge between you concerning all that on which you were used to differ.' (Qur'an 3:55)

Qur'an 3:55 depicts Issa's departure from the world as unusual, just as his coming into the world was unusual. He does not die as other people do, but God takes him back, body and spirit. This is similar to the ascension of Muhammad. However, while Issa has completed his mission so remains where he ascended, Muhammad returned to the world to complete his mission.

The second account is in *Surah* 4:

> But God raised him to Himself. God is All-Glorious with irresistible might, All-Wise. (Qur'an 4:158)

The position in the Qur'an is clear: Issa was not killed but ascended to God.

Muslims believe that the predication of the coming of Muhammad was deleted from the Christian scriptures. So, while the word of God was accurately revealed before the time of Muhammad, the Qur'an says that the communities who received these scriptures became confused about them (Qur'an 42:13), either through ignorance or by deliberately

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distorting the message. In fact, the Qur'an chastises both Jews and Christians for the mutual rejection saying: 'The Jews say the Christians have nothing to stand on, and the Christians say the Jews have nothing to stand on, while they both recite the same Scripture' (Qur'an 2:113).

Terminology

Ahmad is a variation on the name Muhammad and refers to Prophet Muhammad in this passage.

Muhammad is presented as the last in the succession of prophets sent by God to reveal the divine will:

> And (remember) when Moses said to his people: 'O my people! Why do you affront me while you know indeed that I am the messenger of God sent to you?' And so when they swerved from the right way, God made their hearts swerve from the truth. God does not guide the transgressing people. And Jesus son of Mary said: 'O Children of Israel! Surely I am the Messenger of God sent to you, confirming (whatever of the truth is contained in) the Torah which was revealed before me, and bringing the glad tiding of a Messenger to come after me, whose name is Ahmad.' But when he came to them (the whole of humankind including the later generations of the Children of Israel) with the manifest signs (of his being God's Messenger), they said: 'This (which he preaches and does) is clearly (nothing but) sorcery.' (Qur'an 61:5–6)

3.3 Reading and interpreting sacred texts

In Study of Religion we not only read sacred texts, but also interpret and analyse them. The analytical approaches outlined in this chapter can be used as tools to help you to understand how to read a range of texts, understand their structure and interpret their meanings.

As readers of sacred texts, we need to understand that sacred texts witness to the faith of the communities from which they emerge and we may or may not share this particular faith. In order to analyse and interpret texts, we employ many theoretical approaches. While these approaches can be applied across religions, they were predominantly developed to assist interpretation of the Christian Bible; while they could be applied to sacred texts from other religious traditions, it is not common practice to do so.

The technical term for textual analysis is exegesis, which simply means a systematic study of a passage using a range of methods. Another term that is associated with exegesis is **hermeneutics** or interpretation. While exegesis is an important part of the process of interpretation, it is not the whole of the process, which should be as broad as possible and include insights drawn from history, cultural studies and other applicable disciplines.

hermeneutics
a method or principle of interpretation

Contemporary interpretations of sacred texts within the Abrahamic traditions have developed over time and each generation unpacks and teases out new meaning as the text resonates with the reader personally or throws light on current social or political matters. While the canon of scripture is fixed for each of the Abrahamic traditions, political, social and religious demands give rise to different interpretations of it.

Ancient and modern Jewish, Christian and Islamic scriptural interpretation share some elements in common, while other elements are unique to the single traditions. Regardless of the differences, the Abrahamic traditions approach scripture as God's word to humankind – but how the three traditions interpret scripture differs significantly.

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Jewish biblical interpretation

Jewish tradition has always encouraged intellectual and scholarly pursuits, especially the study of the written and oral Torah. Fundamental to Judaism is the belief that G-d's message was revealed to the people of Israel via prophecy and that the message is preserved in written form in the Hebrew Bible. At some point in time, probably after the Second Temple era, Jews agreed that prophecy from G-d ceased and that the body of sacred texts was considered closed: no new texts would be included in the official canon of sacred texts. No longer were the prophets living in their midst, so Jews sought guidance by reading the message that G-d had addressed to previous generations preserved in their sacred texts. The study of the Torah and other biblical books was subsequently elevated to a central activity of the Jewish religion.

Midrash

Midrash, from the Hebrew word meaning 'to inquire', refers to commentary on the Jewish scriptures. During the rabbinic era, two main systems of midrashic interpretation emerged. One method associated with Rabbi Ishmael ben Elisha respected the simple meaning of the Torah's text and refrained from reading much more into it than was warranted by the actual language and literary norms of Hebrew. He applied Greek logic as a method of analysis to many of the laws of the Torah. A different approach was used by Rabbi Akiva, who insisted that the words of the Torah could not be reduced to the trivial conventions of human literary expression. Rabbi Akiva created links between the written Torah and many of the traditions that had been passed down in the name of the oral Torah. The two schools of Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Akiva coexisted through the Tannaitic era (10–200 CE) and each school published its own commentaries on the legal sections of the Torah (Exodus and Deuteronomy), some of which still survive today.



FIGURE 3.26 Jewish students studying sacred texts

Midrash may focus on either *halakhah*, religious practice, or *aggadah*, which deals with theological ideas, ethical teachings, popular philosophy, imaginative exposition – everything that is not *halakhah*. *Halakhah* questions in rabbinic literature are usually very technical and precise in their scope. They focus on how to apply laws to situations that are not mentioned in earlier sources, and especially on how to rule in cases where two different *halakhic* principles come into conflict.

Aggadah involves an enormous variety of subjects and literary formats including hagiographic tales and legends about pious rabbis, folklore, medical advice, moralist observations, proverbs, parables, as well as texts of prayers. *Aggadic* midrash falls into two broad categories: homiletical midrash, which is a sermon on general themes; and exegetical midrash, which contains line-by-line explanations of the biblical text. The classic *aggadic* midrash collection of *Genesis Rabbah* is exegetical; whereas *Leviticus Rabbah* is homiletical in style.

The diversity of exegetical approaches that developed throughout the Middle Ages meant that scripture could be read on numerous levels.

The Mishnah

The Mishnah is a collection of legal rulings and opinions written in Mishnaic Hebrew, which is different from biblical Hebrew. The Mishnah is divided into six *sedarim* (orders). Each order is named according to its primary topic: *Seraim* (Seeds) deals with the laws of agriculture; *Mo'ed* (Appointed Seasons) deals with festivals, fast days

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and Sabbath; *Nashim* (Women) is concerned with marriage laws, divorce, betrothal and adultery; *Nezikin* (Damages) concerns civil and criminal law including idolaters; *Kedlshim* (Holy Things) covers Temple-related matters such as sacrifices, ritual slaughter and the priesthood; and *Tohorot* (Purities) focuses on issues of ritual purity and impurity.

The Mishnah is written in concise prose designed for easy memorisation. It parallels the Torah, discussing the 613 *mitzvot*, filling in gaps and interpreting ambiguities. The commentary on scripture takes different forms including paraphrasing scripture, while other sections provide details regarding marriage and divorce.

Below is an extract from the first tractate Berakhot.

> From what time do we recite the evening Shema? From the hour that the priests enter to eat their *terumh* [the regular offering given to them in the days of the Temple] until the end of the first watch. These are the words of Rabbi Eliezer. And the sages say: until midnight. Rabbi Gamaliel says: until the beginning of sunrise. It happened once that his sons returned from a celebration and said to him: we have not yet recited the Shema. He said to them: If sunrise has not yet begun, you are obligated to recite it. And not in respect to this alone did they so decide but wherever the sages said 'until midnight' the obligation to perform the mitzvot applies until the sun comes up. If this is so, why did the sages say 'until midnight'? To keep a man from transgression.

This passage gives three answers to the question asked. The answers indicate that the longer one takes to say the evening *Shema* the greater is the risk of not performing the *mitzvah*.

The Talmud

The word '*talmud*' means to study or learn. There were two Talmuds produced during the period of Rabbinic Judaism. The Babylonian Talmud is the most famous and was completed around the fifth century CE; the other is the Palestinian or Jerusalem Talmud, which was edited in the early fourth century CE. Both use the Mishnah collection of the *tannaim* as their core and additional commentary and discussion has been added by scholars and respected rabbis.

In the second half of the twentieth century a new method of reading Talmud, called the critical method, evolved. Today, Talmud scholars recognise that the texts we have are part of a long process of selection, accumulation and redaction, so they try to reconstruct that process looking for scribal errors, and comparing different texts to arrive at a deeper understanding of the thought processes of the sages.

Christian biblical interpretation

A number of methods of interpretations can be applied to the Christian Bible. These methods have been classified in a variety of ways, but one of the most common forms of classification is the three worlds of the text.

The three worlds of the text

When we enter the world of sacred texts, we are entering a world that is different from the world in which we currently live. The stories recorded in sacred texts were written a long time ago and by people belonging to a different culture. Consequently, we need to have some insight into the life, times, language and culture of the ancient world in order to understand the texts. To be an effective reader of sacred texts, we need to ask significant questions of the text and of ourselves as readers.



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FIGURE 3.27 A Bible study group

One way to explore and investigate sacred texts is through the three lenses known as the three worlds of the text:

1. World behind the text – this helps us to understand the historical, social, cultural, geographic and religious background related to the text.
2. World of the text – this helps us to explore and examine the literary style of the text including genre, literary structure, characters and themes.
3. World in front of the text – this helps us to see the ways in which the texts have been interpreted over time, how they engage contemporary readers, and how they are used within religious traditions.

We will examine each of the worlds of the text in detail.

The world behind the text

The world behind the text refers to the world in which the text was created. A study of the world behind the text requires locating information related to the social, historical, geographical, cultural and religious world in which the text was created. It also means trying to identify, if possible, the author, where and when the text was created, and what language was used for the original text as well as the audience to whom the text was addressed.

When and where?

Often it is easy to identify the time in which the text was written, so the social, cultural, historical and religious world of the text provides us with insights into the world behind the text. It is important to ask questions of the text such as:

- In what historical time is the text written? What is happening at this time in history? Are the people concerned prosperous, living under foreign occupation, in exile?
- Where does the story/action take place? (If a town, region or country is named locate it on a map so that you know where in the ancient world it is located.)
- When does it take place? (This includes what was happening at this time in history for the people involved in the text.)
- How did society operate at that time in history? What is the relationship between men, women, slaves, priests, etc?
- What customs, beliefs and values were common at the time?

Who?

Trying to identify the author of sacred texts can be difficult: it may involve trying to identify whether the author was male or female; slave or free; peasant or middle class; priest or laity. If we are able to identify the author, we read and see the text in a new light. Unfortunately, there is little information in some texts that reveals who the author was and so we may need to look at other information in the world behind the text to assist us with reading.

How?

Because many sacred texts are written in languages other than English, we need to have some understanding of what words, expressions or images meant at that time in history, so language is another important area in the world behind the text. In exploring the language of an ancient text, we need to know what certain words mean, how grammar worked and what expressions or figures of speech meant. Sometimes other writings of the same time period can also assist us in our investigations.

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To whom?

It is also helpful if we can locate some information about the original intended audience – the people to whom the text was addressed. Was the text written for a certain group? What was the audience's situation? It is important to locate this type of information because otherwise we might be tempted to impose our own meaning on the text. Words and meanings of words change over time and context is important – we need to understand the context of the time in which the text emerged so that we can better understand how to read the text today in a different context.

Customs

Knowing something about the customs of the time can also provide important insights into ancient texts. The following questions may assist your investigations:

- What religious or social customs need to be explored to aid understanding of the story?
- What social groups are represented in the story?
- Are women mentioned? Why are women not mentioned in the story? What is said about women?

The following questions may also assist you to uncover information related to the world behind the text:

- Who and what are talked about in the text?
- What historical situation is being described?
- In which historical situation was the author writing?
- What concerns was the author addressing in their own time?
- Are there special emphases by the author that colour the work?
- What may have happened in the development and transmission of the text? Does it address more than one later situation?

ACTIVITY **3.21**

Finding and analysing

Read Matthew 2:1–15 and complete the questions in the table on the Activity Worksheet.

World of the text

The world of the text focuses on those characteristics of the text that assist the reader to find meaning.

Genre

Sacred texts can be studied and analysed just like any other text, so one of the first things to find out is the genre of the text: is the text a poem, a speech, a wise saying, a narrative, a list, a genealogy, a parable or a letter? Identifying the genre of a text is important because once we know the genre, we read the text differently. We know that when we read and understand poetry, it is very different from reading a science book or reading directions to make a cake, for example. The following questions will assist you with genre analysis:

- What is the genre?
- What function did the genre serve in the original ancient life setting?
- What was its purpose or intention?
- What function does it serve in the final form of the sacred text?
- Why did the author use this particular literary form?

If the text is a narrative, we need to know who the protagonist or hero is and who the antagonist or villain might be. It is also helpful to look for clues in the text that might enable us to evaluate each character. Character analysis is an important element in the world of the text.

Characters

The following questions will assist you with character analysis:

- Who is in the story?
- How are they described? And by whom?
- What emotions do they reveal?
- Who is the main character?
- Who initiates the action?
- Which characters interact with one another?

Narrator

When reading a narrative, the role the narrator plays is important. The narrator is the person telling the story. An author often creates a narrator and the story is told from the narrator's point of view. It is helpful to try to separate when

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the narrator is narrating the story and when the narrator is speaking directly to the reader. Through language choices, the narrator can position readers to think and feel a certain way about characters and plot points.

Plot

The plot of a story is the events that make up the story. How these events are linked to each other and what order they occur in the story are integral to how the plot is shaped.

Structure

The following questions will assist you with structural analysis.

- Are there any patterns or parallels in the story?
- Is there any repetition of words, phrases or questions?
- What is their significance?
- Is there a parallel of this story in another section of scripture?

Speech

The following questions will assist you with analysing speech in the text.

- Who speaks in the story?
- What is said?
- Why is it said?
- Who initiates the speech?
- What is the form/genre of the speech?
- What titles are used?

Positioning

As part of the world of the text we also need to examine how the material is arranged and what might be left out.

Authors 'position' readers. In other words, the author attempts to shape the readers' point of view or perspective. Authors shape texts using a range of techniques that are designed to encourage readers to support the writer's ideas, attitudes and values and ultimately to engage sympathetically or unsympathetically with characters in the story. Authors use a variety of techniques to position readers; some of these techniques include:

- *Dialogue* – how characters speak and interact influences the reader.
- *Figurative speech* – this includes the type of imagery used by the author as well as the way scenes are described.
- *Narrative structure* – the narrative may be constructed in a variety of ways: it may be linear – that is, in chronological order – it might be fragmented, have flashbacks, start in the middle of the action, or involve dreams or multiple points of view.
- *Style* – style is related to how language is used: what words are chosen, how the sentences are constructed to engage the reader in the action, setting and characters.
- *Symbolism* – symbolism is often used in sacred texts and so the use of symbols can also position the reader because of an association of meaning.

Readers are also positioned by their own background and circumstances and this element of reader positioning falls into the category of the world in front of the text.

Context

When studying ancient texts, context is important. Context includes all elements – social, cultural, political, historical, economic – that surround an event. If we know more about the context then we will have a deeper understanding of the text. Understanding the context involves investigating and researching information. Some questions that will assist us to have a better knowledge of the context of a text include:

- Where is the story located within the Hebrew scriptures or the Bible?
- How does this passage answer questions previously raised in the other sections of the Hebrew scriptures or the Bible?
- How do the characters use language to their advantage?
- What is its relationship to the passages immediately preceding and following it?
- If the text is from the Christian scriptures, how is it related to the Hebrew scriptures?

World in front of the text

In the past, the world in front of the text was only explained in homilies, sermons and spiritual

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reading. More recently, a focus on the reader and on how and where certain sacred texts are used and how they are interpreted in the contemporary world has been included in the world in front of the text. On its own, the text is nothing without the reader – the reader comes to the text and responds to the text.

Modern readers are different from ancient readers. A contemporary Christian reader, reading the prophets from the Old Testament, brings to the text two thousand years of Christian reflection on the prophetic message of the Old Testament and their interpretation is influenced and filtered through the Christian belief in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is important to remember that what we read into a text may not be what the author of an ancient text intended.

The world in front of the text reminds us that we need to identify and acknowledge what it is as readers that we bring to the texts – we do not come as neutral or value-free people; we come with a certain set of beliefs and understandings that are developed and shaped within a context of the contemporary world. So the effort to find meaning in the world in front of the text begins with the worldview of the contemporary reader.

Feminist biblical scholars, for example, bring their experience of being a woman to the biblical text and of having experienced discrimination because of their gender. Their experience is that sacred texts sometimes present a patriarchal or male-centred point of view that devalues women and their contribution. When feminist scholars read sacred texts, they consciously look for examples where women are included or excluded, how women are treated, and whether women have a voice in the text. They also look for where women have been portrayed positively. The text is questioned and evaluated in light of their experience.

If readers believe that what they bring to the text such as Christian beliefs, modern ideas of science and modern ways of thinking are really in the text, then there might be a problem because they assume it is the intention of the author. When that occurs, it is confusing the *world in front of the text* with the *world behind the text*. It is helpful to come to a text acknowledging as much as possible the points of view we bring, but we have to be careful not to canonise our own reading of the text and make our interpretation the only interpretation.



Forms of biblical criticism

The three worlds of the text are made up of different types and subtypes of biblical criticism. The word 'criticism' does not mean 'critical' or 'finding fault' but rather applying critical thinking skills and forms of analysis to the text in order to better understand it. Biblical criticism includes exploring texts in their historical, cultural, literary and religious contexts in an attempt to discover what the author may have been trying to communicate to the audience at the time and what the text might mean for an audience today.

Different types of biblical criticism depend on each other and need each other for balanced understanding. No one type of criticism on its own can provide a full context for any passage or book. The major branches of biblical criticism are outlined below, and they are grouped according to the categorisation of the worlds of the text. Some forms of criticism are broad and touch on more than one specific world of the text, so the categorisation should be considered indicative rather than definitive.

Behind the text approaches to biblical criticism

Social science criticism

Social science criticism attempts to understand the social world from which biblical traditions emerged using models borrowed from social science disciplines. The method explores the society, culture, customs, beliefs, values and ways of thinking of the ancient world in which a book was written so that the text can be understood in its own time and place.

Social science critics might ask: What are the social structures of the time? What customs, beliefs and values are evident? What social or cultural factors influence the text? What religious rituals are referred to and what is their purpose and function in the ancient world?

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Historical criticism

Some historical critics evaluate the accuracy of texts that purport to record historical events by comparing biblical accounts of an event with non-biblical evidence to try to determine what actually happened. Other historical critics investigate the historical situation in which a given text was composed. These critics assume that the circumstance of the author and their intended audience are vital to interpreting a text.

Historical critics might ask: What historical information would assist me to understand the text? What was the political situation at the time? Was it a time of war or peace? Who was leading?

Tradition criticism

A 'tradition' is a body of material passed on in oral or written form by a particular community and later used to compile a book or books in the Bible. Tradition criticism seeks to understand the origins of a tradition and the community that shaped and passed it on. For instance, the Hebrew Bible's historical books often refer to the establishment of Israel as a nation ruled by a king. The Bible contains positive and negative opinions about Israelite kingship, sometimes even within the same book. Tradition criticism investigates each point of view of the tradition and the circumstances that led to each community's understanding and opinion of that tradition.

Tradition critics might ask: What community began or passed on a particular tradition? What was this community's life setting? How did the community's life setting influence the content and viewpoint of this tradition?

Of the text approaches to biblical criticism

Literary criticism

Literary criticism is the analysis of text as literature paying attention to matters such as plot, character, setting and point of view. Literary critics are not concerned with the historical development or background of a text but deal with the final form of the text as we now have it. This method highlights literary strategies such as important themes, symbols, irony, metaphor and simile, and other rhetorical devices. The Gospel of Mark, for example, uses a structure called framing, which sets off a key point with a pair of similar elements just before and after the important content – for example, two stories in which a blind man is healed frame Jesus's threefold statement that he must go to Jerusalem to suffer and die. Awareness of literary techniques assists readers to recognise what the author considers as meaningful. Literary criticism also compares a biblical book or passage with other literature of the time, seeking to discover changes, additions or omissions. For example, the biblical account of Noah and the flood has parallels with ancient Mesopotamian flood stories, as discussed earlier in the chapter.

Literary critics might ask: What genre or type of literature is this text? What is the structure, style and purpose of the book? What sub-genres are used? How does the book or passage compare and contrast with other non-biblical literature of the time?

Text criticism

Text criticism is completed by specialists skilled in ancient manuscripts and languages. The specialists search for the most ancient and trustworthy manuscripts, usually on papyrus or animal skin, and they compare the manuscripts, trying to determine the most accurate, complete version of the book. In some cases, text critics discover copyists' errors or additions and changes in a manuscript. The work of text critics is important for translators in order to produce a translation that is true to the original meanings of a biblical text.

Text critics might ask: Are there existing complete manuscripts of a biblical book? How many are there? How old are they? How do they compare? Where different manuscripts disagree, which one has the correct reading?

Form criticism

Form criticism focuses on the oral or pre-literary stage of development behind the present text. Form criticism tries to uncover the original

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fixed oral form, the life setting in which it was used, and the actual purpose or intention of each form. Form critics analyse small, self-contained units of text that seem to represent distinctive forms or genres like folktales, genealogies, proverbs, hymns and creeds. These forms probably circulated in oral form before they were incorporated into a written text.

Form critics might ask: What is the structure of original oral forms used in the written text? What was the purpose of each oral form?

Source criticism

Source criticism is so named because it asks questions about the written or oral sources used by an author. These sources may not always be explicitly cited, requiring source critics to rely on clues within the text such as sudden changes in vocabulary, literary style and theological perspective. Inconsistencies and unnecessary repetition may also indicate the combination of multiple sources. For instance, the author of the Book of Chronicles used the books of Samuel and Kings as sources for compiling a new history of Israel. Source criticism has also played an important role in the study of the Torah.

Source critics might ask: What sources, oral or written, group or individual, were used to construct the text or book?

Redaction criticism

Redaction criticism examines editorial work done by authors on earlier source material which has been artistically shaped and arranged by the final editor of a text. Redaction critics recognise that texts are more than a random amalgam of sources. Instead of attempting to recover earlier stages in the production of a text, redaction critics focus on the final shape in order to determine the intention and perspective of the editor. Redaction criticism also seeks to determine what stages of editing a book might have gone through on its way to a final version. The Gospel of John, for instance, shows signs of having undergone several stages of editing before it reached the form in which it now appears.

Redaction critics might ask: What evidence of redaction is present in the text? What were the redactor's particular interests, emphasis and purposes? How did they affect content, form and major emphases of the book?

In front of the text approaches to biblical criticism

Reader response criticism

Reader response criticism emphasises the reader's role in creating the meaning of a text. This approach discounts the intention of the author as totally inaccessible and denies that the text itself has any inherent meaning. Instead, reader response critics view meaning as whatever readers find in the texts. There is no single 'correct' reading of a text, although interpretation can be validated by groups such as the academic community or a faith community.

Reader response critics might ask: How have my life experiences influenced my reading of the text? What character/s do I identify with, and why?

Feminist criticism

Feminist criticism intentionally claims the concern of modern feminism as its starting point. This approach recognises that women historically have been denied access to authority, including the production and interpretation of religious texts. Some feminist critics offer reinterpretations of texts that are supportive of women, while others focus on exposing what they see as the inherent sexism of biblical literature.

Feminists critics ask: Whose voices are heard? What has been left out or covered up in the account? What does the text say about women?

Post-colonial criticism

Post-colonial criticism, a subset of social science criticism, interprets the Bible through the lens of colonialism. It is a perspective that reads biblical text through the experience of the colonised, and a critical method that uses post-colonial theory to critique other approaches to interpretation and the biblical texts themselves. It attempts

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to identify colonial intentions, political, cultural or economic, that informed and influenced the writer's context. Post-colonial theory deals with the Bible as a cultural product in time and space. It is concerned with the socio-political context in which the voice of the other is being silenced and often focuses on ethnocentrism and anachronism. For example, biblical characters such as Ruth are only accepted as foreign, resourceful women through their assimilation into the Israelite community.

Post-colonial critics might ask: How has this text been used to shape communal identity and ideological commitment? How does this text promote or refute oppression and/or exploitation? How might this text be reappropriated in order to liberate people?

ACTIVITY **3.22**

Analysing and evaluating

1 Complete a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis for each of the methods of biblical criticism provided above.
2 In a paragraph of 150 words explain why scholars advise using more than one method to analyse a biblical text. Provide examples to support your claims.

OR

3 Evaluate and compare each of the methods of biblical criticism using one or more of the following:
- SWOT analysis
- Compare and contrast chart
- PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart
- Multiple Venn diagram
- De Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

Interpreting the Qur'an

The Qur'an is believed by Muslims to be the revelation of God, dictated by the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muhammad between 612 and 632 CE.

The first chapter, al-Fatiha (The Opening) is a prayer-like segment used within the Muslim *salat* ritual. Each chapter is divided into *ayas* (verses). The divisions do not always correspond to the sense of the text, but are generally related to the rhyme structure of the individual *surahs*. The rhyme is constructed through a vowel plus the final consonant at the end of each verse – in longer chapters the rhyme is created by the use of the phrase 'God is all-knowing, all-wise'. As a preface to each *surah*, except *Surah* 9, is the *basmala* statement: 'In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful'. This phrase is also used to open all Muslim religious statements and is found in the Qur'an as the opening phrase of the letter written by Solomon to the Queen of Sheba (Qur'an 27:30).

Scholars from both within and outside Islam have tried to map the organisation of the Qur'an but there appears to be no historical, biographical, thematic, aesthetic or poetic criteria by which one can understand the overall structure of the work. It does not have a narrative framework and its *surahs* are ordered without any apparent concern about content, and even within each *surah* topic and tone fluctuate abruptly and without warning. This can be seen in the extract from *Surah* 22:

> And among men there is such as dispute about God without any true knowledge and follow every rebel Satan, against whom it is written down that whosoever take him for a friend, him he leads astray, he guides him to the chastisement of the burning. O men, if you are in doubt as to the Uprising, surely We created you of dust then of a sperm-drop, then of a blood clot, then of a lump of flesh, formed and unformed that We may make clear to you. (Qur'an 22:3–5)

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The style of the above extract is common throughout the Qur'an. In one verse God talks about himself in the third person and in the next God speaks using first person plural.

The Qur'an also acknowledges that some passages might be difficult to understand and offers explanatory comments. There are 12 instances where a difficult word is accompanied by the phrase 'And what shall teach you what is the …', which is followed by an explanation. *Surah* 101 is an example:

> In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate. The Clatterer! What is the Clatterer? And what shall teach thee what is the Clatterer? The day that men shall be likely scattered moths, and the mountains shall be like plucked wool tufts. Then he whose deeds weigh light in the Balance shall plunge in the womb of the Pit. And what shall teach thee what is the Pit? A blazing Fire! (Qur'an 101:1–11)

Readers were not expected to know what the words translated as 'Clatterer' and 'Pit' meant: translators of the Qur'an still do not know and sometimes 'Clatter' is translated as 'calamity'.

Early Muslim Qur'anic commentators did not know what the words meant and guessed: their guesses are often very different from one another. The traditional account of the formation of the Qur'an cannot account for this gap in knowledge. If the Qur'an was composed during Muhammad's lifetime and compiled within 20 years of his death, there was simply not enough time to allow for such widespread forgetfulness.

The Qur'an includes four overlapping types of material: oracular utterances (especially focused on judgement); polemical passages; narrative passages; and religious law.

The narrative sections draw on characters and themes from biblical literature. They tell stories about Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Solomon and Jesus – recognised variants of biblical accounts. Most of the stories of the past prophets as recounted in the Qur'an are familiar from the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament but are presented without the extensive narrative element. The Qur'an often presents summaries of the stories to get to religio-moral points interpreted from them. This has led some modern scholars to conclude that the audience of the Qur'an may have been familiar with biblical stories. In some instances, the variants are similar to the narratives preserved in the Talmud or in midrashic literature. Similarly, Qur'anic accounts of Jesus resemble accounts found in non-canonical Christian sources such as the Gospel of Thomas.

There are a number of polemical forms in the Qur'an. The long *surahs* at the beginning of the Qur'an, which make up the opening fifth of the Qur'an, contain a great deal of **polemical** material. These polemical passages show signs of being part of the larger process of the development of Islamic identity.

polemical referring to a mode of writing or speaking that uses vigorous and at times even combative language to defend or oppose someone or something

The earliest manuscripts of the Qur'an do not have vowel pointing to distinguish some Arabic consonants from others. Without pointing, a 't' might be indistinguishable from a 'b'. Consequently, recitations of the Qur'an might vary according to which vowels are inserted and how the consonants are pointed, and seven differing systems of reciting the text are accepted as canonical. These variations rarely have significance for understanding and interpreting the text. Today, most modern editions of the Qur'an have uniform vowels as well as consonants because one particular way of reciting the Qur'an has gained widespread acceptance.

Like all sacred texts, the Qur'an needs interpretation. Muslim scholars have attempted to distinguish between *surahs* revealed in Mecca and those revealed in Medina; they have also tried to determine the chronological order of

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the *surahs*. The *surahs* associated with Mecca are shorter and more poetic, while those related to Medina are longer, prosaic and often focus on legal material. In some instances, a *surah* may include material from different periods. Sometimes a later passage abrogates an earlier passage and, therefore, it is important for adherents to know which is the later passage. For example, Qur'an 2:219 says that wine is of some value: 'They ask you about intoxicating drinks and games of chance. Say: "In both there is great evil, though some use for people, but their evil is greater than their usefulness"' (Qur'an 2:219). Whereas Qur'an 5:90 forbids alcohol: 'O you who believe! Intoxicants, games of chance … are loathsome evil of Satan's doing; so turn wholly away from it so that you may prosper (in both worlds)' (Qur'an 5:90).

An important part of interpretation is the 'occasion of revelation' (*asbab al-nuzul*) – that is, the circumstance under which a passage was revealed and the issue that was being addressed – because the Qur'an does not provide the contexts of its statements.

Another important body of literature is the 'stories of the prophets' which collate the Qur'anic accounts of each prophet and fill in the gaps. These texts contain considerable amounts of Jewish and Christian material. Contrary to the Qur'an, Eve's name, Hawwa in Arabic, is included in the stories of the prophets as well as statements saying she was the first to be tempted and then she tempted Adam.

Commentaries which follow the order of the Qur'anic text are called *tafsirs* and contain a substantial amount of linguistic analysis and other technical material as well as discussion of occasions of revelation and stories of the prophets. *Tafsirs* are still written and those written by Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb raise concerns because they promote radical Islamist positions. In the writings of Qutb (1909–1966) there is no compromise between a society run by God's laws and one run by human laws. The only way to establish an Islamic society according to Qutb is by *jihad*, which to him means a revolutionary takeover after a long period of preparation and then a long struggle.

A distinction is made between two types of interpretation known as *tafsir* and *ta'wil*. A *tafsir* is a straightforward interpretation, while a *ta'wil* seeks hidden, esoteric meanings. An example of *tafsir* is the interpretation 'Lord' in the Fatiha (the opening lines of the Qur'an) as meaning master and nurturer based on the root of the Arabic word. A *ta'wil* would be the interpretation of the first letter of the same *surah* as symbolising the beginning of creation and also 'Ali, the first Shi'ite *imam*.

Since the 1970s, some scholars have concluded that the Qur'an was authored and edited over a period of two centuries before it reached its final form and that the material does not all come from Muhammad. Other scholars are beginning to apply methods of literary criticism to the Qur'an, but such critical schools of thought are very much in the minority and most Muslims remain with the traditional understanding that the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad.

3.4 Conclusion

The sacred texts of the Abrahamic traditions record in distinct narratives the ways people express their relationship with God. These sacred texts assist people as they interpret the meaning of life and many of life's situations. The narratives form the foundations for worldviews and the good ordering of society as well as supplying reflection and motivation for the lives of adherents.

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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

Begin a glossary of terms for the sacred texts you are studying.

FINDING AND ANALYSING

Read the four translations of Genesis 1 available on the Activity Worksheet and complete the questions.

1 What aspects of the four translations of Genesis 1:27–8 are similar?
2 Using the four translations of Genesis 1:27–8, highlight any differences.
3 What can you conclude from a textual analysis of these translations?
4 How does the use of inclusive language change the text? In what way does it make the text more accessible?
5 Which translation of the texts do you prefer? Why?

FINDING AND ANALYSING

Using a New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible (one that includes study or footnotes), compare 'The Lord's Prayer' in Luke 11:2–4 with that in Matthew 6:9–13, and compare both with 'The Lord's Prayer' as it is commonly said.

FINDING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

Locate the following gospel passages of the story of plucking grain on the Sabbath: refer to Matthew 12:1–8; Mark 2:23–8; and Luke 5:12–16.

1 Paste the three versions of the story into three parallel columns.
2 Highlight in yellow all the words common to all three versions.
3 Highlight in green all words that are common to two versions only.
4 What conclusion can you draw based on the evidence you have gathered?
5 In the same way, complete the cleansing of the leper recorded in Matthew 8:1–4; Mark 1:4–45; and Luke 5:12–16.
6 Develop a hypothesis based on your findings.

FINDING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1 Read the story of Delilah in Judges 16:4–22. The Delilah we know is a montage of images from art, music, film, literature and common parlance.
2 Look up the word Delilah in a dictionary.
3 Research the story of Delilah in a contemporary biblical commentary.
4 Complete the following sentences, which begin with alternative assumptions about Delilah. What alternative readings of the text might be offered?
   a If we presume that she is a Philistine …
   b If we presume that she is a prostitute …
5 What image of Delilah is presented in paintings, film and song?
6 How do these other interpretations influence our reading of the biblical text?

FINDING AND ANALYSING

Compare the accounts of the Annunciation in Luke.

1 Populate the table on the Activity Worksheet by locating and inserting the following passages.

Qur'an 19:16–34	Qur'an 3:45–53	Matthew 1:18–2:23	Luke 2:1–20

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Read the four extracts as preparation to complete the following:

2 Create a four-way Venn diagram to identify the similarities and differences between each account. What do they ultimately have in common?

3 What do all the accounts suggest about Mary? What conclusions can you reach about her significance as Jesus's mother in both the Christian and Muslim traditions?

4 What key characters do not appear in the Qur'an? Provide reasons as to why you think this may be so.

5 A significant narrative in Islam comes from the time Muhammad conquered Mecca and claimed the Ka'bah. It was believed to have been filled with various deities and figures and Muhammad ordered them all removed and destroyed. However, upon the discovery of a statue of a Virgin with Child, Muhammad covered it with his robe and preserved it alone.
   - **a** Drawing upon the textual information and this tale, what conclusions can you reach about the importance of Mary and Jesus in Islam?
   - **b** Read Qur'an 19:35. What claim is this verse making and how does it differ from a Christian understanding of the significance of Jesus's birth?

6 Read closely the account of the visitation of the angel to Mary in Luke 1:26–38 and Qur'an 3:42-48.
   - **a** On whose authority does the angel appear?
   - **b** How does the angel interact with Mary?
   - **c** What news does he bring her? Is it welcomed?
   - **d** Explain, using specific evidence, how Luke's version connects with Jewish tradition while the Qur'an poses a Muslim connection.
   - **e** To what extent can the same narrative be claimed by both traditions and remain authentic? Discuss.

FINDING AND ANALYSING

1 Read the following texts from the Christian scriptures and identify male-centred and patriarchal elements contained in them.
   - **a** Mark 5:25–34
   - **b** Timothy 2:11–15
   - **c** Matthew 1:1–17.

2 Now read Acts 1:15–26, substituting female terms for male terms.

FINDING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

Fact File: What do the scriptures say about Mary Magdalene? Complete the Fact File on Mary Magdalene on the Activity Worksheet. Answer the questions that accompany the Fact File.

INVESTIGATING

This chapter has surveyed the sacred texts of the Abrahamic traditions.

1 Construct a definition of the Abrahamic traditions.

2 Give a brief explanation of the nature of sacred texts within the Abrahamic traditions.

3 What rituals or practices exist within the Abrahamic traditions that demonstrate followers' respect for their sacred texts?

4 Modern Western culture relies heavily on the written word and people's access to ideas in written form has repeatedly sparked social change.
   - **a** Collect referenced notes about the link between the printing press and the Protestant Reformation.
   - **b** Then, construct an expository paragraph with a topic sentence, elaboration, evidence and a concluding sentence to present your findings.

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ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

What criteria do you think are applied to texts to determine whether they become part of a canon? What criteria do you think should be applied?

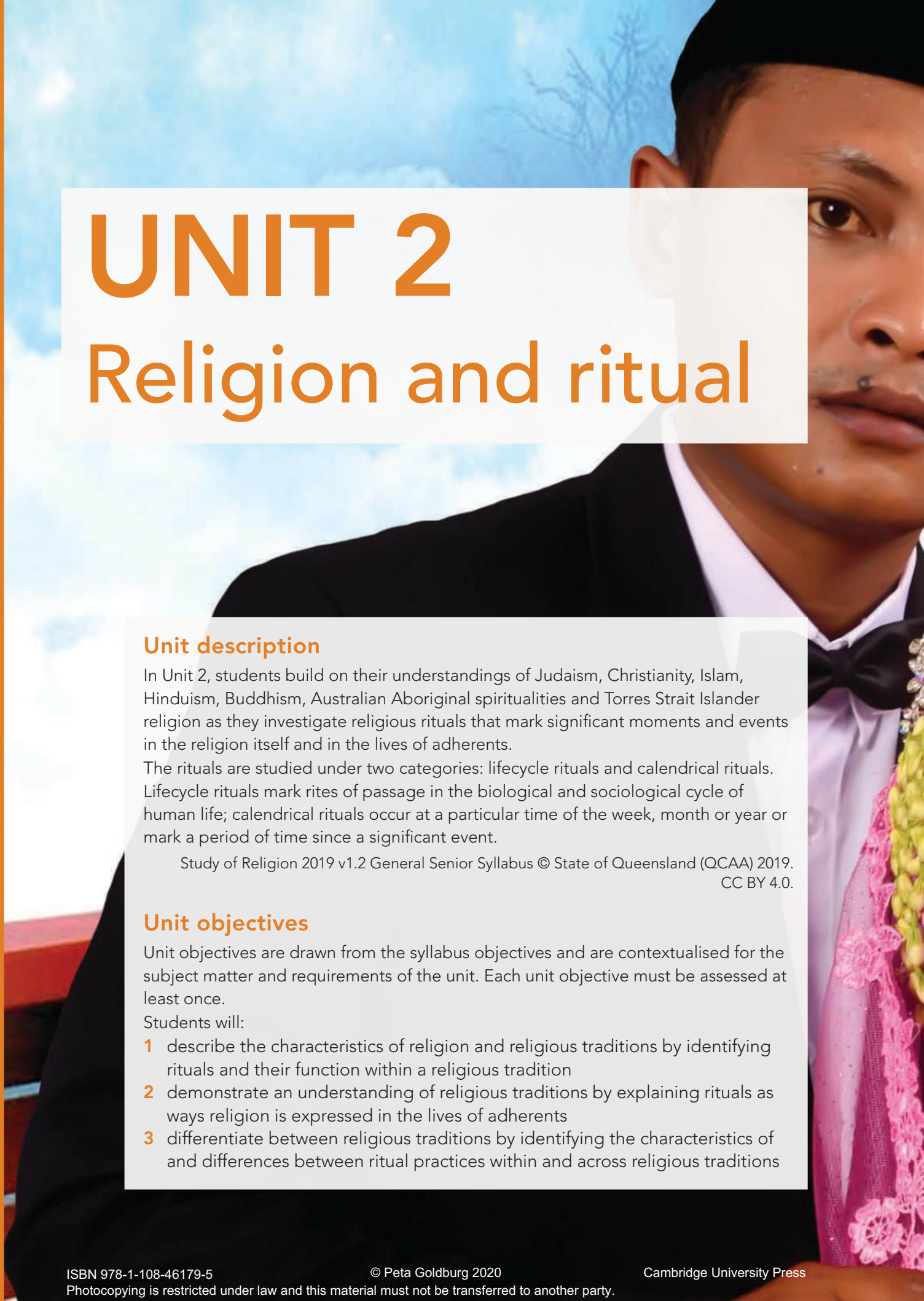
ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1 Which mode of communication (e.g. written, oral, visual or physical) do you think is most useful for communicating deep religious truths? Why? Give examples to support your opinion.
2 Drawing on the tools of reader response criticism, write a letter to a character in a sacred text from the Abrahamic traditions communicating your interpretation and opinion of that character's actions. You may wish to point out to the character the significance the text holds for you because of your gender, class or ethnicity.

REFLECTING

1 What have I discovered about the sacred texts of the Abrahamic tradition?
2 What have I learnt about religion as a result of this inquiry?
3 How is this area of inquiry relevant to my life?
4 What further questions do I have?

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UNIT 2
Religion and ritual

Unit description

In Unit 2, students build on their understandings of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Australian Aboriginal spiritualities and Torres Strait Islander religion as they investigate religious rituals that mark significant moments and events in the religion itself and in the lives of adherents.

The rituals are studied under two categories: lifecycle rituals and calendrical rituals. Lifecycle rituals mark rites of passage in the biological and sociological cycle of human life; calendrical rituals occur at a particular time of the week, month or year or mark a period of time since a significant event.

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Unit objectives

Unit objectives are drawn from the syllabus objectives and are contextualised for the subject matter and requirements of the unit. Each unit objective must be assessed at least once.

Students will:

1. describe the characteristics of religion and religious traditions by identifying rituals and their function within a religious tradition
2. demonstrate an understanding of religious traditions by explaining rituals as ways religion is expressed in the lives of adherents
3. differentiate between religious traditions by identifying the characteristics of and differences between ritual practices within and across religious traditions

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4 analyse perspectives within religious traditions that relate to religious rituals and their purpose
5 consider and organise information about religious rituals and their purpose by interpreting sources and deciding on their validity
6 evaluate and draw conclusions about the significance of religious rituals and their influence on people, society and culture
7 create responses that communicate ideas or arguments using understandings of religious rituals.

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Chapters in this Unit

Chapter 4 Lifecycle rituals

In this topic, students will identify, analyse and interpret religious lifecycle rituals within and across religious traditions. Students will also consider how some rituals have remained unchanged for centuries, while others have incorporated cultural practices.

Chapter 5 Calendrical rituals

In this topic, students will identify, analyse and interpret religious calendrical rituals within and across religious traditions. Students will investigate the significance of calendrical rituals in the lives of individuals and examine the influence that culture may play in these rituals.

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Introduction

Rituals use signs, symbols, and dramatic and personal action to invoke and promote feelings of belonging, transition and commitment, and enable the participants to experience things that are larger than life because they make meaning of the abstract and make tangible the intangible. Rituals also enact belief through celebration, sharing, obedience, submission and purification as well as bridge the movement between belief and practice.

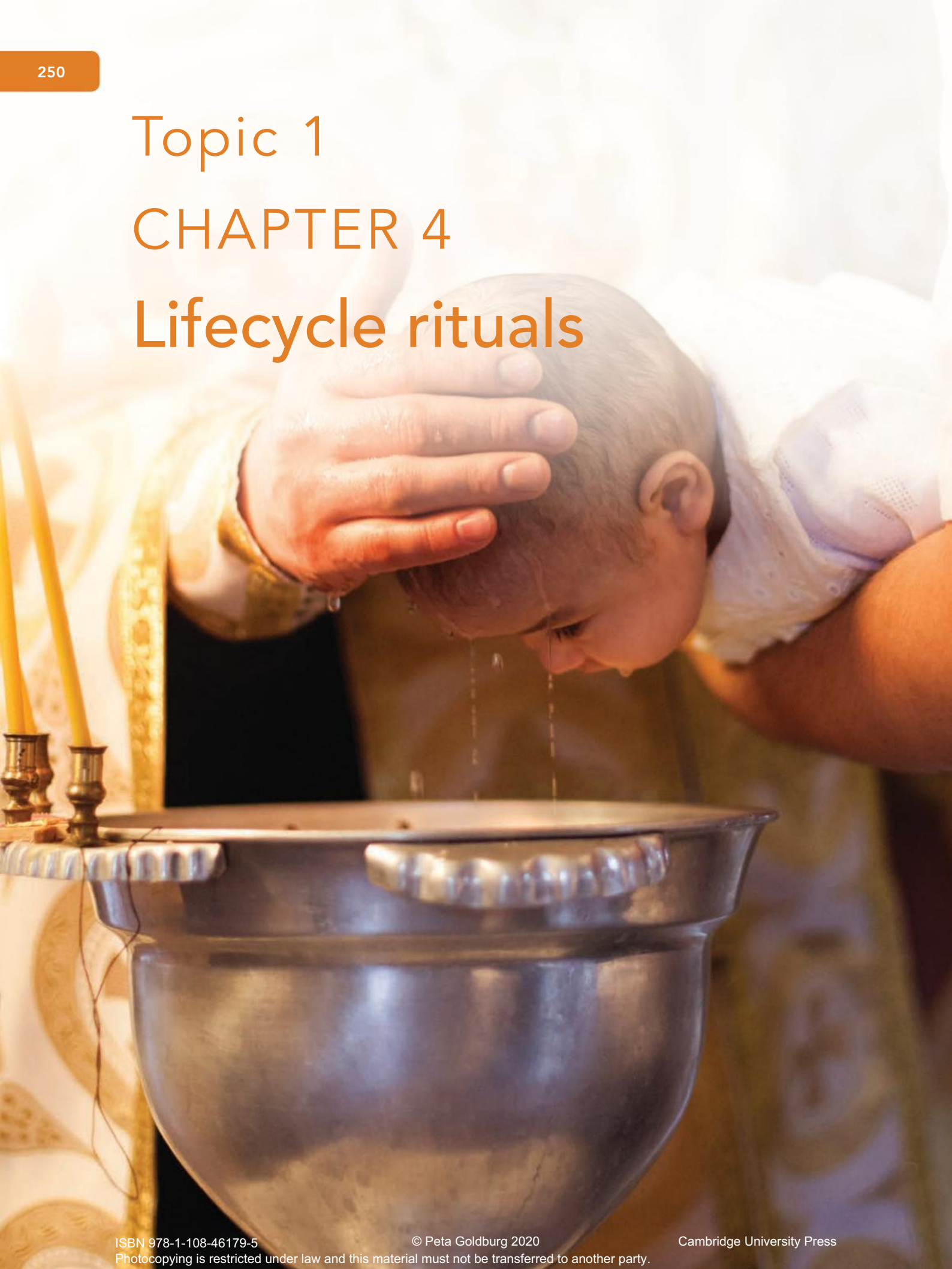
Rituals generally communicate on two levels: between people and their god or higher being, and between the individual and fellow believers. Some rituals, such as those once practised by Aryan Indians, are closely linked to cultural practices because they required a sacrifice to be made to the gods in the hope of controlling the natural world. Christian rituals tend to emphasise community, particularly Eucharistic rituals, which include sharing and belonging. Many rituals in Judaism mark significant moments in the lifecycle of adherents, from birth through to death. Buddhists, on other hand, identify meditation as an important ritual and Muslims have a specific focus on rituals of purification, particularly prior to prayer or pilgrimage. What rituals demonstrate is that religion is not only about what people believe in but it is also about what people do to practise and enhance their belief.

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Topic 1

CHAPTER 4

Lifecycle rituals



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In every culture, people mark milestones in life in various ways. Some cultures and religious traditions have developed specific rituals to mark significant moments in people's lives and these rituals are called lifecycle rituals or rites of passage. Lifecycle rituals mark when people may be entering an important new or different stage of life. A lifecycle ritual may be a simple action involving only one or two people or it might be a complex religious ceremony involving the whole religious community.

Prior to exploring lifecycle rituals in the major world religions, we need to investigate ways of analysing rituals.

4.1 Ritual analysis

Scholars of religion have provided a number of ways to analyse rituals, each of which fulfils a different purpose and provides a useful tool.

The anthropologist, Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957), noticed that many cultures and religions performed rituals that commemorate milestones in people's lives such as birth, passage through puberty, marriage and death. He argued that all lifecycle rituals or **rites of passage** consist of three phases:

1. the **pre-liminal**, which involves separating from the previous life
2. the **liminal**, which involves transitioning from one stage to another
3. the **post-liminal**, which is the new status or state of life.

The word *liminal* is from the Latin *'limen'*, which means 'threshold', and is used to describe the second stage of the ritual where the person's status is somehow changed or transformed. Van Gennep used the term 'liminality' to describe the state in which people are on the threshold of entering a new phase in their life, who have left the previous one behind, but are not yet fully in the new stage of life. He also emphasised that people need time to recognise and ritualise the liminal phases they go through in life, and he believed ceremonies that marked rites of passage were not only essential for human beings but also played a valuable role in society by providing a type of social stability.

rites of passage rituals or ceremonies that mark a change in a person's social or religious status

pre-liminal related to separating from the previous life

liminal related to transitioning from one stage to another

post-liminal related to a new status or state of life



FIGURE 4.1 Anthropologist Arnold van Gennep



FIGURE 4.2 Anthropologist Victor Turner

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ACTIVITY 4.1

Forming and finding

1 How are the following transitions ritualised? Identify the pre-liminal, liminal and post-liminal stages of each transition and explain how each is expressed in religious or secular ritual:
   a going from school to university
   b becoming a parent
   c going from being single to getting married.
2 Identify similar rites of passage that exist in society, either religious or otherwise, and apply van Gennep's classification to these rites of passage.

communitas intense community spirit and solidarity

liminality a subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of or between two different existential planes

Van Gennep influenced the work of another important anthropologist, Victor Turner (1920–1983), who examined the symbolism used in rituals and introduced a new term '**communitas**', which is experienced by people in **liminality**.

Turner decided that rituals had three meanings:

1 the *exegetical* (subjective) meaning, which is explained by the person performing the ritual
2 the *operational* (objective) meaning, which is what can be observed by the outsider and refers to the purpose of the ritual in society
3 the *positional* meaning, which focuses on the symbols used and the relationships between them.

In addition, he concluded that different levels of meaning are available to people. The 'manifest' meaning can be seen by the observer; the 'latent' meaning may be identified after a period of thought and reflection; and the 'hidden' meaning is in some way revealed to those belonging to the ritual community. Turner found that symbols are multivocal – that is, they may mean different things to different people and most probably there is no universal agreement even among ritual participants as to precisely what the ritual might mean. It is this ability to sustain multiple interpretations that unites communities participating in the ritual.

ACTIVITY 4.2

Finding

1 Use Table 1 on the Activity Worksheet to apply Turner's ideas to the ritual of the induction of school leaders at your school.
2 Choose one symbol used during the ritual (perhaps a school captain's badge). Select four different people associated with the ritual and explore the multivocality of this symbol by explaining what different meanings this symbol might have for each person. You could choose, for instance, a Year 8 student, the principal, the school captain's parent, the school captain.
3 Complete Table 2 on the worksheet.

Evaluating

Draw on your findings in both tables to shape a hypothesis about how these multiple interpretations of the meaning of the ritual and its symbols unite the school community participating in this ritual.



FIGURE 4.3 Religious educator Professor Terence Lovat

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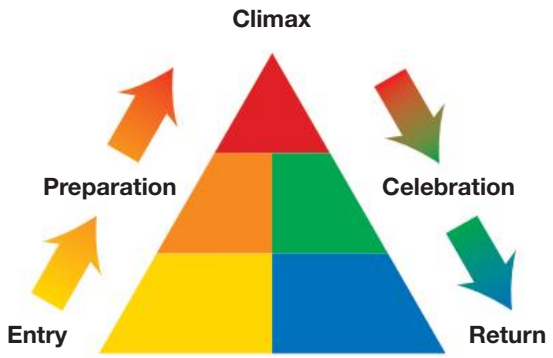


FIGURE 4.4 A graphical representation of Lovat's five-step approach

Terence Lovat, an Australian religious educator, has developed a model that can be applied to all rituals. Lovat began his analysis of rituals from the perspective that all rituals have a beginning, a middle and an end. He developed a five-step approach, which can be applied to rituals. The participant:

1. leaves the ordinary or mundane world and enters the ritual
2. engages in some type of preparatory rite
3. experiences a central point or highpoint of the ritual
4. joins in some form of celebration in the ritual
5. leaves the ritual and returns to the ordinary world.

ACTIVITY 4.3

Finding and analysing

Analyse two of the rituals outlined in Activity 4.2 using Lovat's five-step model. Indicate which parts of the ritual belong to each of the five steps. Provide a reason for your choice.

Who, what, where, when, how?

Another way to analyse a ritual is to ask questions dealing with eight elements of a ritual: place, time, participants, leader or expert, form, community, symbols and transforming power, as shown in Table 4.1.

It is important to remember that not all rituals follow the symmetry of separation, transition and incorporation presented by van Gennep and Turner. Other scholars have noted that the three-part schema is insufficient to encompass the structure of all rites of passage, especially those that are not initiations. There is also significant evidence to indicate that gender has a major influence on ritual patterns.

Rituals developed by and for women often have very different features from those that focus on males. Caroline Walker Bynum, Medieval scholar, has shown that women's rituals proceed more horizontally rather than having clearly delineated status reversals. While change still occurs for women involved in the rituals, the women may not necessarily change societal rank and the change may be subtler

TABLE 4.1 Ritual analysis questions

Element	Questions
Place	*Where* is the ritual taking place? (e.g. home, sacred space)
Time	*When* is the ritual performed? (what time of the year, month, day)
Participants	*Who* is involved in the ritual? (is everyone allowed to participate or is this ritual for a select group of people only)
Leader or expert	*What* is the role and function of the ritual leader or expert? Is this position open to both men and women?
Form or pattern	*What* is the form, pattern or order of the ritual?
Community	*What* does this ritual mean for the community? What effect does it have on the community? How does the community participate?
Symbols	*What* symbols are used? What do the symbols mean?
Transforming power	*How* does the ritual make present the divine? How does the ritual bring alive the faith of the participants?

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FIGURE 4.5 University Professor *emerita* Caroline Walker Bynum

than those evidenced in men's puberty rites, for instance. Sometimes in feminine rituals, the sense of place is emphasised rather than time. Often, too, women's celebrations are focused more on individuals, while adolescent boys' rituals usually take place within the community of men. Women's rituals, especially rites of passage, have different emphases, meanings, elements and structures. Women's rituals tend to be subtle, complex and affected by time, place and culture.

Lifecycle rituals mark rites of passage in the biological and sociological cycle of human life. Many lifecycle rituals are connected with biological milestones of life: birth, maturity, reproduction and death. In this section, we explore the lifecycle rituals of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.

ACTIVITY **4.4**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Read the description of a Bar Mitzvah or joining the *Sangha* on pages 257 and 278, respectively.
2 Identify van Gennep's three stages in the chosen rite of passage.
3 In what way/s is van Gennep's classification helpful?
4 How might using such a classification limit your analysis?
5 Using the same rite of passage, identify and explain Turner's three levels of meaning in the ritual.
6 Apply Lovat's five-step model to the same ritual.
7 Analyse the ritual using the eight categories.
8 What do each of the models highlight in the ritual?
9 Which model/s is more appropriate for this particular ritual?
10 Evaluate the various models provided by using one of the following methods:
   a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis
   b Compare and contrast chart
   c PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart
   d Multiple Venn diagram
   e De Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

For a detailed description of how these methods can be used, refer to the Activity Worksheet.

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4.2 Judaism

Birth

Jews believe that all life is given by G-d because in the Torah (Genesis 1) G-d creates man and woman and breathes life into them and then later in the text indicates that they should 'be fruitful and multiply'. Judaism considers children as a gift and a blessing from G-d and, although the pain of childbirth was supposedly the punishment for Eve (Genesis 3:16), G-d later tells Abraham (Genesis 17:16) that Sarah will be 'blessed (and that) … I will give her a son by you', so having children is seen as a blessing.

However, women who have just given birth are considered to be unclean (see Leviticus 12). In ancient Judaism, the mother was not permitted to enter the Temple or handle sacred objects until a prescribed number of days had passed, at which time she would bring a burnt offering to the Temple.

Today, observant Jews consider a new mother to be 'unclean' as they do a woman who is menstruating, and after a prescribed time she purifies herself by immersion in a ***mikveh***.



FIGURE 4.6 Ancient and modern *mikvehs* where ritual purification takes place

Brit Milah

Eight days after the birth of a Jewish boy, the family and friends gather in the synagogue or at the family home to celebrate one of the most ancient rites of Judaism, a *Brit Milah* (covenant of cutting) where the baby boy is circumcised by a highly trained ***mohel***, most often with a doctor in attendance, and in the presence of a *minyan*. The *Brit Milah* is performed on the eighth day even if this falls on Shabbat or Yom Kippur. Circumcision, one of the 613 commandments of the Torah, first mentioned in Genesis 17:10–14 as a command of G-d, is seen as the physical mark of the covenant between G-d and Abraham. So not to circumcise a baby boy is to exclude him from the Jewish people and to break a *mitzvot* (commandment).

mikveh
ritual bath

mohel
a person trained in Jewish circumcision

The ceremony proceeds in the following manner. The godmother takes the child from



FIGURE 4.7 During the *Brit Milah*, the *sandek* holds the child while he is circumcised by a *mohel*.

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sandek
honoured family friend

Kiddush
prayer of sanctification or blessing recited over wine at Shabbat and festival meals

the mother and presents him to the ***sandek***, a specially honoured male family member or friend, who holds the baby during the ceremony. The boy is given a small piece of gauze soaked in wine to suck on to lessen the pain and to help him sleep. The baby is placed on a highly ornate seat called the Chair of Elijah, after the ninth-century BCE prophet who defended the covenant against pagan influences, and who is believed to be present at every circumcision ritual. Any chair may be used, but it must be placed next to the chair occupied by the *sandek* and not moved for three days after the ceremony. The climax of the ritual is the circumcision, which is performed by the *mohel* using a ritual knife (*izamel*). After an initial blessing on the baby from the *mohel*, the guests respond with a blessing: 'As he entered the covenant, may he enter into the study of Torah, into marriage and into the doing of good deeds.'

At the conclusion of the procedure, ***Kiddush*** is recited and the baby is placed in the lap of his godfather by the *sandek* and given his formal Hebrew name.

Outside Israel, a child may have two names – a secular name for everyday business and a Jewish name for religious events – but it is becoming more commonplace for Jews to use their Hebrew name for both secular and religious purposes. In many Jewish families, the grandfather is invited to be the godfather to ensure that the child will have an upbringing in the Jewish faith. In Ashkenazi communities the *mohel*, *sandek*, family and friends watch over the child until midnight, saying prayers for the child. A TaNaK may be placed under the baby's pillow to symbolise that he will grow into a person of faith.

Brit Habat

If *Brit Milah* is one of the oldest Jewish customs, then the *Brit Habat* (covenant of the daughter) is one of the newest rituals. This ritual, which includes naming the child, developed during the rise of American feminism in the 1970s. It has roots in Sephardic (Spanish Jewish) tradition where an event called the *seder zeved habit* celebrated the gift of a daughter and it was customary to hold a party for the mother's recovery. In Sephardic and Ashkenazi communities it is common to hold the naming ceremony during the Torah service immediately following the birth and to include a special blessing, *mi sheberakh*, for the mother and child.

While there is no set ceremony for the *Brit Habat*, there are common elements that are included in most ceremonies, some of which echo the *Brit Milah*. Celebrated in the synagogue or home, the ritual usually opens with the child being brought into the room to a call of *B'rucha habah* (Blessed is she who enters). There are prayers and readings by the parents and usually a rabbi. *Kiddush* is made and the parents demonstrate some physical expression of affection for the child, which may include washing the girl's hands and feet accompanied by a blessing. The child is also named during the ceremony. This ceremony is becoming very popular within Jewish families and there may soon be a formal liturgy developed for this important rite of passage.



FIGURE 4.8 A *Brit Habat* ceremony

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ACTIVITY 4.5

Finding and analysing

Construct an information leaflet about *Brit Milah* appropriate for maternity wards in hospitals explaining the ceremony and its meaning.

Adolescence – Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah

Bar Mitzvah means 'son of the commandment' and Bat Mitzvah 'daughter of the commandment'. An adolescent *becomes* a bar mitzvah or bat mitzvah, and for boys this occurs at the age of 13 while for girls it occurs at the age of 12. The designated ages are considered the ones at which, according to Jewish law, a young person is able to fulfil the *mitzvot*, the central tenets of Judaism.

Bar Mitzvah ceremonies have become more important over the past one hundred years, but their origins are unclear. The ceremony is not mentioned in the TaNaK nor in the Talmud, and there is no evidence of the ceremony prior to the 1400s. The Talmud mentions that adolescence for a male child begins at the age of 13.

Prior to becoming a Bar Mitzvah, the Jewish boy attends classes given by the rabbi to prepare him for his new responsibilities as an adult within the tradition. He is also taught to wear *tefillin* and *tallit* for weekday prayers, studies the scriptures and Jewish history and learns to recite a passage from the Torah. Bar Mitzvahs usually occur in the synagogue or if possible at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. Once the boy becomes a Bar Mitzvah, he is able to be counted in a *minyan*.

Originally there was no similar rite of passage for girls. In 1922, Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan decided to have a Bat Mitzvah ceremony for his daughter, Judith. Girls celebrating their Bat Mitzvah read from the Jewish scriptures: in Orthodox synagogues it is not the Torah



FIGURE 4.9 A family during a Bar Mitzvah (top) and the celebrant wearing *tefillin* and *tallit* (bottom)

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FIGURE 4.10 A family during a Bat Mitzvah

but another text from the TaNaK. Girls attend classes in scripture and history and in addition they learn how to keep kosher food laws and how to prepare for Shabbat and the other religious festivals. In some communities young girls also wear *tefillin* and *tallit*, but this is not common practice across all forms of Judaism.

Both Bar Mitzvahs and Bat Mitzvahs are a time of celebration for the young person, their family and the community and a festive meal or party often follows the formal religious ritual.

Marriage

The Hebrew word for marriage is *kiddushin* – 'sanctification' – as marriage in Judaism is viewed as a sacred act. As well as being a sacred institution, marriage also requires a legal agreement called a *ketubah* (plural *ketubot*), which is made between two equals and becomes effective only when the female accepts the contract.

A traditional *ketubah* usually includes:

- A provision for the maintenance of the wife after divorce equivalent to the amount needed to support her for one year and paid in a lump sum.
- The value of the property the bride brings to the marriage; the husband may enjoy the income accrued from this property, but in a divorce he must repay the principal.
- An additional amount pledged by the husband, the '*tosefet ketubah*' or additional *ketubah*.
- A woman's *ketubah* acts as a mortgage on her husband's property assuring her ability to collect in the event of his death or their divorce.

The Talmud states clearly that the purpose of the *ketubah* is to make sure that 'it should not be easy for a husband to divorce his wife', a protection under Jewish law since only the husband can initiate a divorce.

Conservative Jews have introduced a passage into their *ketubot* in which both husband and wife agree to accept the decision of the *bet din*, the rabbinical court, in matters regarding divorce. The Reform movement has replaced the traditional *ketubah* with a more modern version focusing on the interpersonal obligations of marriage and less on the financial and legal ones.

In ultra-Orthodox communities, the custom of a dowry still exists and often takes the form of a promise to support the new son-in-law while he completes his study at the *yeshiva*.

On the Shabbat prior to the wedding, Jewish couples partake in a ritual called the *aufrufa*, a Yiddish word meaning 'calling up'. The groom is called up to the Torah and after he



FIGURE 4.11 The rabbi reads out the *ketubah* to the bride and groom and guests during a marriage ceremony in Ness Ziona, Israel

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has completed the second of the blessings he is showered with lollies from the congregation, symbolising the wish for a sweet future. The day before the wedding ceremony the bride visits the *mikveh*. On the day of the wedding just before the ceremony, the *ketubah* is signed by two witnesses and a *t'nayim*, which is a legal contract between the parents agreeing that their children will be married, is also signed. After the declaration of the *t'nayim*, the two mothers break a dish, symbolic of the irreversible nature of the decision which has just been made.

At the wedding ceremony the groom usually wears a *tallit* and sometimes a *kittel* (a white robe that he will also wear at Yom Kippur, the **Pesach** Seder and his burial). The ceremony begins with the parents leading their children to the *huppah* (marriage canopy). Once the couple is under the *huppah*, the rabbi begins the ceremony with a blessing over a cup of wine, the couple sips the wine and exchanges rings, declaring, 'You are consecrated to me with this ring according to the faith of Moses and of Israel'. The *ketubah* is read aloud, followed by seven blessings made for: wine; creation; the creation of humanity; the creation of the human ability to reproduce; the future joy of Zion and her children; the joy of the bride and groom; love, kinship, peace, friendship and the sound of happy wedding couples in a restored Jerusalem. The part of the wedding with which most people are familiar is the groom stamping on a glass wrapped in a cloth, which may symbolise the destruction of the Temple. The sound of the breaking glass triggers shouts of *Mazel tov!* (good luck!).



FIGURE 4.12 A bride and groom under a *huppah* at Jewish wedding ceremony

ACTIVITY 4.6

Finding

1 According to Jewish law and custom, what is Levirate marriage?
2 What does the term 'marrying out' mean? Is it considered good or bad? Why or why not?
3 Investigate the parameters for divorce in Judaism.

Death and burial

Pesach
a holy day and festival commemorating the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt

According to Jewish custom, a dying person should not be left alone. Observant Jews will recite the *vidui* (deathbed confession) and their final words will often be the *Shema*. The instructions of the *goses* (the dying person) are binding and it is forbidden to manipulate a *goses* in a manner that would speed up the dying process. While euthanasia is forbidden, it is permissible to pray for the death of a terminally ill patient who is suffering and to remove any external obstacle that is preventing death – for instance, it is permissible to accept medical advice that life-support machines should be turned off.

When a person has died, the body is covered with a sheet to maintain its dignity and the corpse is not left alone from this time until burial. A *shomer*, or guard, stays with the body and reads the Psalms. Members of the immediate family tear a small portion of their clothing, usually a collar or lapel, a custom known as *k'riah*, and these torn garments are worn throughout the seven days of mourning. Some liberal Jews might wear a black ribbon that is torn as an equivalent practice.

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FIGURE 4.13 An Orthodox Jew with ripped clothes as a gesture of mourning at a funeral in Bnei Brak, Israel

Kaddish
a Jewish prayer recited in the ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a relative

To keep the *mitzvot*, the *Khevrah Kadishah*, a group of people whose duty it is to prepare the corpse for interment, wash the body, cut the person's hair and nails, and wrap the body in a white linen shroud. Males might also be wrapped in their *tallit* but the *tzitzitm*, the fringes, will be cut, signifying that they are no longer required to perform *mitzvot*. In countries where a coffin is required, it should be a simple box made without nails so as not to impede the return of the body to the earth. Outside of Israel, a small bag of earth from Israel may be placed under the head of the deceased.

Burial should take place within 48 hours of death, but may not take place on Shabbat or on festivals. There is no set liturgy for the funeral service but the service often includes Psalm 23, the Mourner's **Kaddish**, and a eulogy. Escorting the dead is important for Jews and one is obligated to accompany the casket on foot at least part of the way into the cemetery. Each person at the graveside is required to put three shovels full of dirt into the grave. Generally, participants do not pass the shovel on after using it but plant it in the ground so as not to 'pass on death'. Observant Jews wash their hands before leaving the cemetery.

During the seven days of solemn mourning (*shivah*) that follows, members of the immediate family stay home from work and friends bring

FIGURE 4.14 Dirt is thrown over the coffin during the interment



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them food. Sometimes the mirrors in the house are covered. On the first day of mourning, a *minyan* comes to the home to say the *Kaddish*, and on the seventh day the mourners go to the graveside to pray. A less formal mourning period continues for 30 days but the mourning for parents continues for 11 months. Those who are mourning parents are given priority in leading services in the synagogue and it is considered a great *mitzvah* to do so at this time. After 12 months, a tombstone is added to the grave and while there is no formal ritual for this, there is usually a reading of Psalm 23, saying the *Kaddish* and another eulogy. On the anniversary of the death, it is customary to light a memorial candle, which burns for 24 hours in the home.



FIGURE 4.15 *Kaddish* is prayed during a funeral service in Baltimore, United States

ACTIVITY 4.7

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Create two Jewish life journey diagrams marked with major life events, one for a man and one for a woman. Annotate the journey diagrams to show how *mikveh*, *Brit Milah/Brit Habat*, Bar Mitzvah/Bat Mitzvah, marriage and death/burial rituals mark and celebrate particular events and transitions in the life of devout Jews.
2 What beliefs about G-d and humanity are expressed in the rituals you have included on the life journeys?
3 What values are reinforced in Jewish communities through the celebration of these rituals?

ACTIVITY 4.8

Analysing and evaluating

1 Compare the Jewish rituals with life journey rituals celebrated in your family. To what extent are the sets of rituals similar or different?
2 To what extent do Jewish and other life journey rituals assist people who experience them to negotiate important life events and perceive meaning in life?

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4.3 Christianity

For most denominations of Christianity, baptism is considered a sacrament.

The baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the Jordan River is recorded in all four Canonical Gospels. While each of the gospels provides different details of the baptism of Jesus, they all agree on certain ritual actions, which later became central parts of the rite of baptism.



FIGURE 4.16 An artist's depiction of the Baptism of Jesus by John the Baptist in the church Chiesa di San Giorgio in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

ACTIVITY 4.9

Finding and analysing

1. Read through the accounts of the baptism of Jesus on the Activity Worksheet.
2. Devise and use a colour code to show where the gospel accounts agree on what took place. Prioritise these elements according to how significant you think they were in the evangelists' accounts of Jesus's baptism. Record these elements in priority order on the worksheet.
3. As you read the section, 'Birth and naming', tick off the elements on your list that you think are included in Christian baptism rituals.

FIGURE 4.17 A Coptic Egyptian pilgrim emerges from the waters of the Jordan River after being baptised



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ACTIVITY 4.10

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Read the extracts on the Activity Worksheet about how baptism was conducted in the second and third century.
2 In two columns, list the required order of service for the second century and then the order of service for the third century.
3 Create a visual (diagram or picture) showing the requirements for baptism in each century.
4 Identify differences between baptism in the second century and baptism in the third century.
5 Write a statement about the nature of the differences or changes from the second to the third century.
6 Construct a structured paragraph of 250 words about the development of the rite of baptism in early Christianity. Your paragraph should have: a topic sentence, evidence sentences and a concluding sentence.
7 Locate a contemporary service for baptism from within mainstream Christianity. Compare it with the second- and third-century documents. What is common? What is different?
8 Create a hypothesis about baptism in early Christianity and contemporary Christian tradition.

Sacraments

In the Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican traditions, there are seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation, anointing of the sick, marriage and holy orders. In most Protestant churches there are only two sacraments: baptism and Eucharist. The Salvation Army and the Society of Friends do not have any sacraments.

Birth and naming

The term 'baptism' (from the Greek 'to immerse, to dip, or to bathe') became a common initiation practice in early Christianity. Initially a ceremony for adults, gradually infant baptism became the norm. Infant baptism is normal practice in Orthodox, Anglican, Lutheran and Roman Catholic denominations; adult baptism is the norm in evangelical Christian denominations.

Baptism is seen as a statement of faith. When children are baptised, the parents or godparents speak on behalf of the child. This also indicates the commitment of the parents and godparents to bring the child up within the faith and to teach the child the fundamentals of Christianity. In the baptism ceremony, the profession of faith, based on the *Creed*, is generally presented as a series of questions and answers.

Priest: Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
Parents/Godparents: We do.
Priest: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died and was buried, rose from the dead and is now seated at the right hand of God?
Parents/Godparents: We do.
Priest: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting?
Parents/Godparents: We do.

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FIGURE 4.18 Water is poured over the head of a baby during a baptism

The central symbol of baptism is water and the child has water poured over his/her head as the priest says, 'I baptise you (name of child) in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. Sometimes the water is poured at three separate intervals, linking it to the Trinitarian formula of Father, Son and Spirit. Baptisms are most commonly performed in churches at a baptismal font using blessed water.

In the Greek Orthodox tradition, several additional ceremonies mark the birth of a child. Prayers are said on the day the child is born and on the eighth day after the birth, the child is officially received as a member of the church, receives its name and prayers are said for the mother and child.

The mother brings the child to be 'formally introduced' to the church in a ceremony called the forty-day blessing (*sarantismos*), which remembers Mary bringing Jesus to the Temple on the 40th day after his birth. This is the first time that the new mother and the baby are allowed to enter the church. After the forty-day blessing, close family members say, 'Na mas Zisi' ('May s/he live for us'). Baptism in the Orthodox tradition requires that the baby be fully immersed three times in water as well as being anointed with oil and dressed in a white robe.

ACTIVITY **4.11**

Finding

There are many similarities between Orthodox and other Christian infant baptism rituals, but also some interesting differences. Research the gestures and symbols used in baptisms in the Orthodox tradition compared with baptisms in one other Christian denomination. Record what you believe to be the three most significant differences and account for these differences.

Baptisms are sometimes called christenings as a sign that one is brought to 'Christ' during the ceremony. The child is given their 'Christian' name, often from the Bible. Also during the ceremony the child is anointed with consecrated oil. Baptists, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Pentecostals believe a person should make an informed choice about whether they want to be baptised. Therefore, these groups only conduct adult baptism, called 'the believer's baptism'. In the Baptist church there is a large pool called the baptistery where people being baptised enter the pool and declare their faith, responding to questions such as:

Minister: Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord?
Person: I do.
Minister: On confession of your faith in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord, I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

When the questions are answered the person is lowered backwards into the water as believers' baptisms generally require full immersion in the water.

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FIGURE 4.19 The full immersion of an adult during baptism

Childhood and adolescence

Confirmation

In the early Christian church, confirmation was part of baptism, but later it became a separate ceremony. Confirmation, meaning 'to make firm', provides the opportunity for the child to speak for him or herself. In the Catholic Church, the time for confirmation varies: some children are confirmed prior to their first communion; others are confirmed around the age of 12 or 13. If confirmation is administered at 13, then it is likely that the rite is considered as a rite of passage to adulthood within the tradition.

In the Catholic and Anglican traditions, confirmation is usually performed by a bishop, although it is not a requirement of the sacrament itself.

Confirmation in the Anglican tradition requires the candidate to answer the following questions:

- Do you turn to Christ?
- Do you repent of your sins?
- Do you renounce evil?
- Do you believe and trust in God the Father, who made the world?
- Do you believe and trust in his Son Jesus Christ, who redeemed humankind?
- Do you believe and trust in his Holy Spirit, who gives life to the people of God?

The candidate declares their commitment, kneels, and the bishop says: 'Confirm, O Lord Your servant (name) with your Holy Spirit'. The candidate is then anointed with oil.

In the Catholic tradition the bishop recites the following formula:

Bishop: Do you reject Satan and all his works and all his empty promises?
Candidate: I do.
Bishop: Do you believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?
Candidate: I do.
Bishop: Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried, rose from the dead, and is now seated at the right hand of the Father?
Candidate: I do.
Bishop: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who came upon the apostles at Pentecost and today is given to you sacramentally in confirmation?
Candidate: I do.
Bishop: Do you believe in the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?
Candidate: I do.
Bishop: This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.
All present: Amen.

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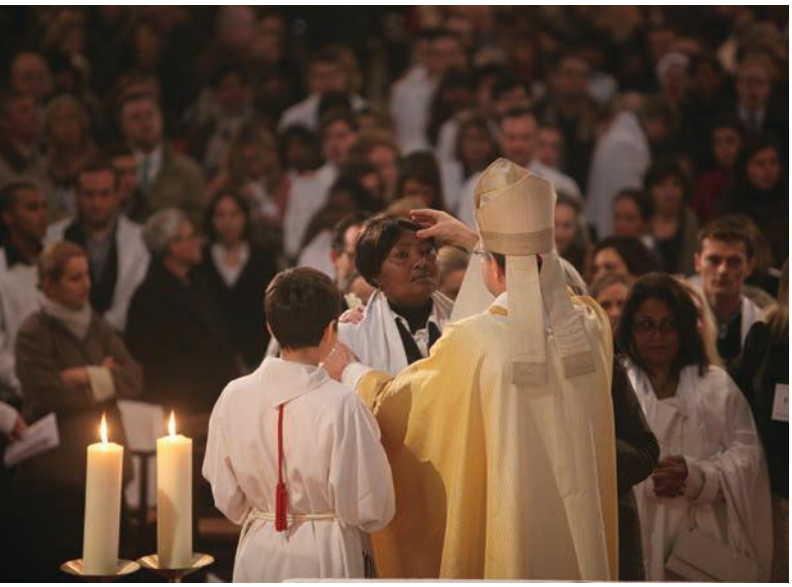


FIGURE 4.20 An adult confirmation



FIGURE 4.21 A Greek Orthodox priest performs a wedding service

Marriage

Much Christian theology of marriage is inherited from Judaism, in particular the idea that marriage is an important part of God's plan and that it is a lifelong partnership.

Christian marriage draws on three ideas from Genesis:

1. that humans are relational people and therefore intimate relationships are fulfilled in marriage
2. that children are a gift
3. that, while they are not the sole purpose of marriage, children should be loved and accepted as an outcome of marriage.

Orthodox and Catholic traditions include marriage as one of the seven sacraments and while Protestant groups do not call marriage a sacrament, they nevertheless agree that it is an important and sacred ritual.

Generally, wedding ceremonies are held in a church or place of worship and the bride and groom are attended by witnesses (i.e. groomsmen and bridesmaids) in the presence of a priest or minister. The marriage service can vary considerably, but includes hymns, readings from sacred scripture and a sermon. The climax of the ceremony involves the bride and groom stating their vows and exchanging blessed rings, at which point they are declared 'husband and wife'.

In the Orthodox tradition, the bride and groom wear crowns (*stephana*) and they circle the wedding table, following the priest, who holds the book of the gospels aloft as a sign that they are to follow the word of God in all that they do and say.

Divorce and remarriage within Christianity varies according to denominations. Protestantism allows for divorce but stresses the permanence of marriage. The Catholic Church has the strictest interpretation about the permanence of marriage and, while it has a process of annulment whereby a person is able to remarry within the Church, the couple must be able to state how elements were lacking in the original marriage and therefore prevented the marriage from being a sacrament. Examples of grounds on which annulments have been granted include unwillingness to have children or psychological immaturity.

Death

Christians believe that death is not the end of life but the beginning of a new life with God. A Christian funeral is a celebration of hope as well as a time of sadness. Care of the dying is important within Christianity and people often

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stay with the dying person, praying for them and reading the Bible.

Unlike Judaism and Islam, there is no rush to bury the person immediately, so funerals often occur a few days after death. In some cultures, families and friends gather around the coffin to pray or a vigil service is held in the funeral parlour where Catholics recite the Rosary for the deceased. Many Christians 'view' the body and offer final farewells. Orthodox Christians hold a three-day vigil when prayers of praise are offered to God.

Generally, the funeral service is led by a priest or minister and is conducted in a church. The coffin is covered in a white cloth called a pall and a cross or crucifix is placed on the coffin, reminding people of the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Depending on the denomination, symbols of baptism are often part of the service; for example, the coffin is sprinkled with holy water, incense is used as a sign of reverence for the body and the Easter candle is lit as a symbol of the resurrection. In some traditions, flowers are also placed on the coffin. Generally, the funeral service consists of hymns, readings from the Bible, a sermon and often a eulogy.

Traditionally, burial has been the preferred method of disposal for Christians. Given that Jesus was buried, this method became popular among the Christian community. More recently, Catholic and Protestant churches have allowed cremation. Originally, cremation was forbidden because it was believed that the burning of the corpse prohibited resurrection. However, contemporary theology has broadened the previous literal understanding of physical resurrection.

Christian graves normally have a cross on the tombstone and sometimes they are highly decorated with angels. In Orthodox and Catholic traditions, prayers for the dead are offered on the 40th day and on the anniversary of the death. Catholics also pray for the dead on All Souls' Day (2 November).



FIGURE 4.22 Cemetery in Ireland

ACTIVITY 4.12

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Develop an information leaflet appropriate for hospitals and nursing homes that details the main requirements at the time of Christian death and in preparation for Christian burial.
2 Design a series of questions that could be addressed to a priest or minister asking what they do for the dying and in preparation for funeral services.
3 Why is a Christian funeral a time of hope as well as sadness? Ground your explanation within the sacred texts of Christianity.

ACTIVITY 4.13

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Review the information on Christian lifecycle rituals and complete the retrieval chart on the Activity Worksheet. What appears to be the strongest type of 'connection' for each of the ritual groupings?

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ACTIVITY 4.14

Analysing and evaluating

1 How do Christian rituals play a role in maintaining, promoting, challenging or changing worldviews and values in contemporary Australian society?
2 What is the significance of Christian religious lifecycle rituals and what influence do they have on people, society and culture?
3 Form groups and have each group consider one area of investigation (birth/naming, childhood-adolescence, marriage and death). Each group reports its conclusions to the class.

4.4 Islam

Birth

Muslims believe that the gift of life is precious and that the birth of a child is an occasion of joy. While the Qur'an does not provide specific instructions on how to celebrate the birth of a child, the Hadith provides the basis for a series of rituals that may or may not take place; differences exist between Islamic legal schools as to whether the rituals are obligatory and at what time they should be performed. Regardless of the differences, there are three clearly identifiable rituals linked to infancy.

Adhan
the Muslim call to prayer
aqiqah
to cut or break

The first, which occurs soon after birth, requires the father to say the ***Adhan*** in the baby's right ear.

The second ritual, the ***aqiqah***, which occurs approximately seven days after the birth, involves several ritual actions.

The first action involves shaving the baby's head as a sign of purification. Prior to disposing of the hair, the parents weigh it and give the same weight in silver to charity. The child is also named during the *aqiqah*. The parents usually choose a name which has significance either in the Qur'an or the Prophet's family.



FIGURE 4.23 The newborn baby is welcomed into the family.



FIGURE 4.24 Shaving of the baby's hair in Jakarta, Indonesia

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The final action in the *aqiqah* is an act of sacrifice. For a boy, two sheep are slaughtered but only one is required for a girl. The meat is divided by the halal butcher into three portions: one for the family, another for friends and the third for the poor, a symbol of sharing the family's good fortune with others.

The third ritual is male circumcision. While some communities circumcise a boy soon after he is born, others wait until he is old enough to recite the Qur'an or has reached adolescence. The *Shafi'i* school considers circumcision obligatory while the *Maliki* and *Hanafi* schools only recommend it. Female circumcision, widely practised in North Africa and parts of the Middle East, is neither required nor recommended by the Qur'an or Islamic tradition and instead derives from tribal or cultural practices.

ACTIVITY 4.15

Finding and analysing

1 Locate information about birth rites in Islam to complete the ritual analysis table on the Activity Worksheet.
2 Construct a Venn diagram that outlines the common and unique characteristics of birth rites in Islam and one other religious tradition.
3 What conclusions are you able to draw after comparing the birth rites of the two religions? How do you account for the similarities and differences?

Marriage

According to the Qur'an, men and women were created to be partners in life and marriage is intended to bring tranquillity, love and protection for both partners. There is extensive material in both the Qur'an and the Hadith on the essential role marriage plays in the life of the faith.

Many Muslim marriages are arranged (or assisted). The parents are involved to ensure that a suitable partner is found because romantic love alone is not seen as sufficient assurance for a successful marriage. Families arrange to meet the couple in each other's presence, and if both parties are interested, then a meeting is arranged at the girl's home so that the couple can talk together. Free consent of both parties is required prior to the wedding. Marriage is seen not just as the union of a couple but as the joining of two families.

The Hadith reminds Muslims:

> Do not marry only for a person's looks; their beauty might become the cause of moral decline. Do not marry for wealth, since this may become the cause of disobedience. Marry rather on the grounds of religious devotion.

Islamic marriage contracts are binding on both parties and include financial responsibility for the wife and children irrespective of the wife's personal wealth. A dowry, or *mahr*, in the form of money, education or another asset, must be paid to a wife for the marriage to be valid. The *mahr* remains part of the wife's personal property even if the couple divorce. In Islam, it is relatively simple for a man to get a divorce; all



FIGURE 4.25 Bulgarian-speaking Muslims celebrate a wedding in the village of Ribnovo in southwestern Bulgaria

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he has to do is tell his wife he wants to leave her on three separate occasions. It is not as simple for a woman. She has to establish grounds for a divorce.

Weddings in Islam vary between cultures, but generally have two stages. The first is the signing of the marriage contract, the *nikah*, in a simple ceremony involving the two parties and two witnesses: the bride need not be present, but can act through her father or the *wali* (guardian). The signing of the *nikah* takes place in the presence of an *imam* and is accompanied by readings from the Qur'an and a sermon. The second stage is the *walima*, or banquet, which is a very elaborate affair when presents are given.

One of the interesting features of Islam is polygamy. The Qur'an states:

> And if you fear that you will not deal fairly by the orphans, marry such women as seem good to you, two, three or four; and if you fear that you will not do justice (between them) then (marry) one or what your right hand possesses. (Qur'an 4:3)

Traditionally the verse is understood to give permission for Muslim men to take up to four wives as long as they are treated equally. Some Muslims argue that this is really only appropriate in exceptional circumstances such as a severe scarcity of males in times of war. Although rare in most Muslim societies, polygamy is popular in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and parts of West Africa. Some marriage contracts stipulate that the husband must obtain permission from the first wife before marrying again.

Mixed marriages exist in Islam but they are not encouraged. Muslim men may marry Christians or Jews, but a Muslim woman must always marry a Muslim, as the children have to take the religion of the father.

ACTIVITY **4.16**

Finding and analysing

1 Classify the above facts about marriage in Islam using the table on the Activity Worksheet.
2 In your opinion, informed by the table you have completed, do Islamic marriage customs protect both parties? Write a structured paragraph (topic sentence, evidence and concluding sentence) defending your claim.

Death

Every day, Muslims remember that there is a life to come after death and what they do in this life will determine what happens to them when they die (Qur'an 1:1–7).

> In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.
> Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds
> The Beneficent, the Merciful.
> Owner of the Day of Judgement,
> You alone we worship; You alone we ask for help.
> Show us the straight path,
> The path of those whom You favoured, not of those who earn Your anger nor of those who go astray.

For Muslims, death ushers in the next stage of existence known as *barzakh*, life in the grave. The immortal soul separates from the body and is interrogated by two angels, Nakir and Munkar. It is common for Muslims to prepare the dying person for their encounter with the angels by whispering the *Shahadah* into their ear: as the last words they will hear it is hoped that they will then be ready to answer the questions from the

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FIGURE 4.26 Prayer for the dead in Sindh, Pakistan

angels. Family members and friends stay with the dying person, reading verses of the Qur'an. When death arrives they recite these words from the Qur'an: 'We belong to Allah and to Him we shall return.'

While there are no directions in the Qur'an regarding funeral rites, the example of the Prophet is followed. According to tradition, the body is washed and clothed in a simple white burial shroud, except for martyrs who are buried in the clothing in which they died as a symbol of the blood they shed for the faith. Those performing the washing should be of the same gender as the deceased, no alcohol is allowed in the perfuming process and embalming is strictly forbidden. Three white sheets are generally used for males, as the Prophet was buried in this manner, and five sheets for females: one as a waist cloth and another as a head veil. The burial should occur as soon as possible after death – the body must be buried, not cremated.

The *imam* leads the service and stands beside the corpse with everyone facing Mecca. The official prayer for the dead (*salat al-Jenazah*) has the same basic structure as the standard *salat*, but most of the formulas are said silently and the bows and prostrations are omitted. The timing of the burial service should not coincide with sunrise, sunset or noon to avoid any association with pagan sun worship. The *salat al-Jenazah* is said for all Muslims who have died, including babies who die in childbirth. As the body is lowered into the grave, the following phrase is recited:

> From the earth we did create you and into it we shall return and from it shall we bring you out once again.

The corpse is laid on its right side with the head facing towards Mecca. Mourners sprinkle dirt into the grave while appropriate verses from the Qur'an are read.

Funeral processions should be simple to avoid any hint of idolatry. Placing flowers, plants, candles or any objects on the grave is forbidden as the dead person needs nothing. A brief three-day mourning period follows, except for a widow who should grieve for 10 days (*iddah*). The widow should not wear jewellery, move house or marry during this 10-day period. Visiting the gravesite is an honourable deed but should not be accompanied with wailing or crying out. In Islam, life after death is called *Akhirah*.

ACTIVITY 4.17

Finding and analysing

1 Construct a flowchart showing the sequence of individual actions that constitute Muslim funeral rituals.
2 Mark points of similarity to, and difference from, other death rituals with which you are familiar.

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ACTIVITY **4.18**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Locate and read five different sources of information about Muslim rituals (in different modes and from different perspectives) and complete an annotated bibliography. This should include a:
   - **a** full bibliography
   - **b** brief description of what the source covers
   - **c** summary of the positive and negative features about the source's treatment of Muslim rituals.

2 In conclusion, write a paragraph about what you consider to be the most useful source on your list for students of Study of Religion explaining why you recommend it.



4.5 Hinduism

Hinduism has one of the most extensive systems of lifecycle rituals, called *samskaras* (being made fit for use), which mark key moments in people's lives from before birth to death. There are over 40 *samskaras*, 16 of which are described in Hindu religious literature and divided into four general groupings.

Birth and childhood

Nine of the 16 *samskaras* are concerned with birth and infancy. The first *samskara* is performed during the new bride's first fertile period. It is related to celestial events as Hindus believe that the date the child is conceived determines its gender and personality. The ceremony requires participants to make an offering of food to the gods and to chant an appropriate mantra.

Hindu *samskaras*

Parental:	Childhood:	Adolescence:	Adulthood:
1 conception of a child (*Garbhahana*)	4 birth ceremony (*Jatakarm*)	10 the sacred thread ceremony (*Upanayana*)	13 marriage (*Vivaha*)
2 consecrating a male child in the womb (*Pumsavana*)	5 naming ceremony (*Namakarana*)	11 the start of formal education (*Vedarambha*)	14 retirement (*Vanaprastha*)
3 parting the hair of a pregnant woman (*Simantonnayana*).	6 child's first outing (*Niskramana*)	12 graduation from education and return home (*Samavartana*).	15 ascetic life (*Sanyasa*)
	7 child's first solid food (*Annaprashana*)		16 death and funeral rites (*Antyeshti*).
	8 child's first hair cut (*Choodakarma* or *Mundan*)		
	9 child's ears are pierced (*Karnavedha*).		

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FIGURE 4.27 The *Aum* symbol, which is drawn on the lips or tongue of a newborn child with honey



FIGURE 4.28 Naming ceremony

The second *samskara* is carried out between the second or third month of pregnancy and expresses the couple's desire for a male child. Drops of banyan juice are placed on the mother's right nostril to inhale and she must eat yogurt and grains.

The third *samskara*, performed during the sixth or eighth month of the pregnancy, requires the husband to part his wife's hair three times using a special comb such as the quill of a porcupine. From then on the mother is careful about her diet, rests and tries to remain calm until the birth. The husband must refrain from having his hair cut, taking part in pilgrimages and performing funeral rites.

The second grouping of *samskaras* begins with the birth of the child, when the father writes the sacred *Aum* symbol on the lips or tongue of the child with honey. This ritual marks the child as a new member of Hinduism and so the father whispers a secret name, such as *Brahma*, into the child's ear.

After a time of ritual impurity, the naming ceremony takes place. The mother bathes and is given new clothes and the house is filled with flowers. The father shaves to emphasise the removal of pollution. A priest casts a horoscope to determine the first letter of the child's name, then the father writes the name of the family deity, followed by the child's date of birth and the proposed name. The father whispers the name into the baby's right ear.

The final *samskaras* in this group focus on the early development of the child. At four months, the child is taken out of the house to see the sun and the moon for the first time. The baby must face north and the ceremony must be performed within one day: a sacred fire is lit and an appropriate mantra chanted.

When the child has its first solid food, another ritual is performed: the mantras used in this ceremony focus on good health and good digestion. Sometime within the first three years of life, the child celebrates the eighth *samskara*. This haircutting ceremony, a sign of spiritual cleanliness, is performed by the father, who combs some hair from the right side of the child's head, makes a loop with some blades of grass and cuts the hair. The hair and grass are then placed in a container and buried in a remote location. A barber shaves the child's head and rubs in a butter or oil-like substance prior to the child taking a bath.

The final *samskara* in this series is ear-piercing, which represents the child's ears being opened up to spiritual truths.

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FIGURE 4.29 A Hindu child with shaved head and pierced ears

ACTIVITY 4.19

Finding and analysing

1 Conduct an internet search on the rituals associated with pregnancy and childbirth in Hinduism. Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.
2 Create a series of information sheets designed for hospital staff in a maternity ward outlining the importance of these rituals to Hindus.
3 Make recommendations for staff to help fulfil the religious requests of new Hindu parents.

Adolescence

During adolescence, three *samskaras* take place marking the transition to adulthood. The first, the sacred thread ceremony, which is only available to the upper three castes (those who are twice born), is when a boy is introduced to a guru and given the sacred thread (*yajnopaveet*) made up of three strands symbolising the three vows he will follow in his life:

1 to promote knowledge gained from the sages (*Rishi Rin*)
2 to look after and respect his parents and ancestors (*Pitri Rin*)
3 to contribute to society and the nation (*Dev Rin*).

In the past, the boy usually left home to live with the guru and learnt how to meditate and the language of the Vedas. Today, this is a ceremony that takes place in front of family and friends.

The day for the ceremony is chosen by the family priest, and the boy's head is shaved except for a tuft of hair on the crown. He bathes, wears special white clothes and shares a meal with his mother prior to the mother leaving the ceremony. The boy faces west opposite his father and a piece of cloth is held between father and son as blessings are chanted. Offerings of rice and ghee are made to Agni, the god of fire. The boy is given new clothes and a piece of deer skin on a loop of cotton is placed around his neck. Then three strands of white cotton, tied with a sacred knot, are placed over his left shoulder and are hung

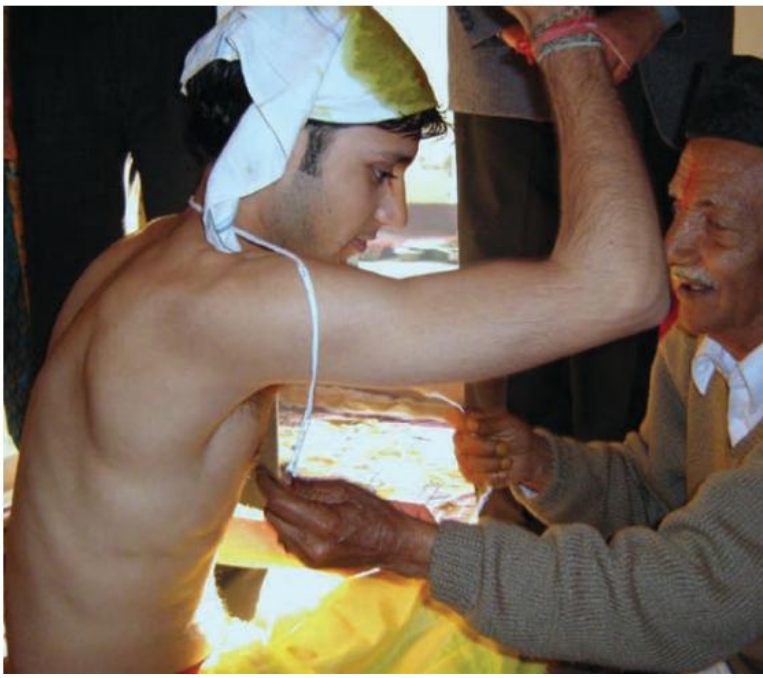


FIGURE 4.30 The *Upanayana* ceremony where the sacred thread is given.

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diagonally across his chest: the thread is worn for the rest of his life and is renewed annually at a special ceremony for Ganesha's birthday. Kneeling, the boy recites a hymn, takes a vow of celibacy and makes a promise to obey his father, his guru, the family priest and to concentrate on his studies. He is then presented with a staff to follow the right path. The ceremony concludes with a feast for family and friends.

ACTIVITY 4.20

Finding and analysing

1 Complete the Y-chart for the sacred thread ceremony on the Activity Worksheet.
2 What values are reinforced through the sacred thread ceremony?
3 What rites of passage mark the transition to adulthood among non-Hindus in Australia? What values do they reinforce?
4 How are other religious rites of passage for adolescents similar to and different from the sacred thread ceremony?

Marriage

In Hinduism, marriage is an alliance between two families. In the past, marriages were arranged by the parents. Today, couples are 'guided' in their choice of partner rather than having a marriage arranged. When the couple decides to get married, a priest checks the partners' horoscopes to find a good time for the wedding, which normally takes place in the bride's home. Within Hinduism there is an enormous variety of wedding traditions but most common elements are drawn from Vedic literature.

On the wedding day, both the bride and groom dress lavishly because they represent incarnations of Vishnu and his consort Lakshmi. After bathing, the bride and groom are anointed with substances related to fertility such as turmeric, sandalwood paste and oil. The bride's hands and feet are decorated in elaborate



FIGURE 4.31 Hindu bride and groom on their wedding day

mehendi patterns using henna and she normally wears red and as much jewellery as possible to resemble Lakshmi.

The ceremony begins with prayers to Ganesha who is said to remove obstacles and bring good fortune. The bride's family welcomes the groom with the application of the ***tilak*** to his forehead, showering him with flowers and sprinkling him with perfumed water.

tilak
a painted mark on the forehead or other parts of the body that can signify various things, such as sect membership, marriage or the third eye

The groom is brought to a specially decorated altar called a *mandap*, where he is offered a drink of milk, ghee, yogurt and honey. This is followed by the Songs of Blessing where the bride and groom stand facing each other and a silk cloth is held between them by the priest. The couple is showered with rice as the Songs of Blessing are chanted. In the third step of the ceremony the bride is given to the groom by her father and the groom promises to be moderate in the observance of his moral duty (*dharma*), the earning of money (*artha*) and the enjoyment of good things in life (*kama*). Gifts are then exchanged, with the groom's mother giving the bride an auspicious necklace. The priest then lights the sacred fire and the couple makes offerings as mantras in Sanskrit are chanted. After the tying of the bride's sari to the

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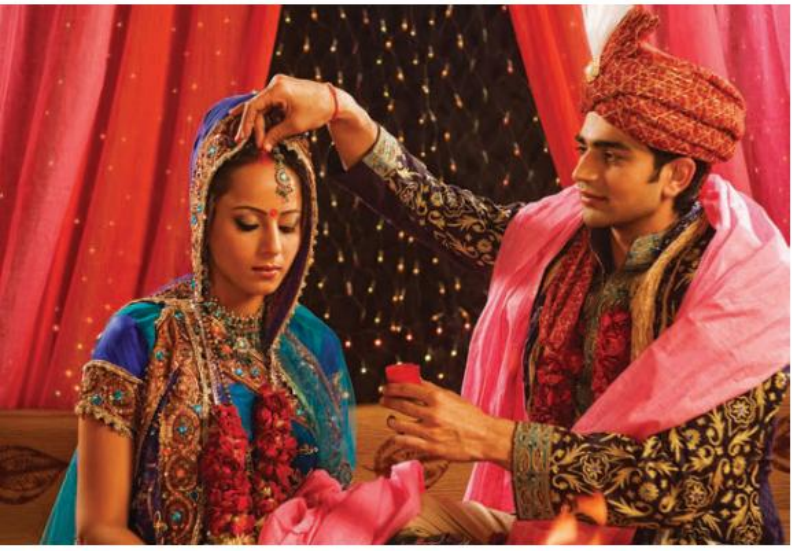


FIGURE 4.32 The husband marks the parting of his wife's hair during the wedding ceremony

pyre
a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite

bier
a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed

groom's scarf, the couple exchange vows and offer rice to the sacred fire. The bride then steps on a stone, which symbolises her willingness and strength to overcome difficulties in the pursuit of her duties. Together the couple take seven steps around the fire reciting a prayer with each step: the prayers are for food, power, prosperity, wisdom, children, health and friendship. This walk is the climax of the ritual. The bride's brother pours barley into the couple's hand as a symbol that they will work together and then the husband marks the parting of his wife's hair with red *kumkum* powder as a sign that she is married. If the wedding is during the day, the couple look to the sun for a blessing or if at night to the Pole Star. The couple is blessed by the elders and the priest for a prosperous married life and the crowd celebrates with a festive meal.

ACTIVITY 4.21

Finding and analysing

Find out what takes place at a Hindu festive wedding meal. How do these activities reinforce the meanings of the Hindu wedding ritual?

Death

Many rituals for death exist in Hinduism. These vary according to family and region, though across all regions bodies are usually cremated rather than buried. A relative of the same gender as the deceased person bathes and dresses the body in new clothes. The corpse is placed on a **pyre** made of sandalwood, saffron, musk and camphor, beside a river. The feet of the body must face south towards the realm of the god of death, Yama. The chief mourner, the eldest son or a male mourner, or the priest lights the fire and throws rice, nuts and other offerings into the flames.

Cremation fires act as purifying agents and the reduction of the body to ash is symbolic of the transience of life. The ashes are collected and scattered into a river, preferably the Ganges.

Mourning lasts for 10 days, after which a series of 16 *pindas* (special rice balls) are placed in strategic places associated with the death: the place of death, where the corpse was laid, the path of the funeral procession, where the **bier** stopped, the place of cremation, and the place where the ashes were scattered. On the 10th day, the chief mourner shaves, bathes and receives a new sacred thread. The *Shraddha* rites (funeral rites) are prescribed in the ancient law books and the rites reflect a linear understanding of the afterlife.

ACTIVITY 4.22

Finding and analysing

1. Use the internet to locate a map showing the location of the Ganges River.
2. What Hindu rituals are performed on the Ganges?
3. In a paragraph of approximately 150 words, explain how urban design and architecture in cities along the Ganges point to and reflect the river's sacred status.
4. How might environmental issues affecting the Ganges impact on Hinduism's rituals? Express your reasoning using a consequences wheel or a mind map.

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ACTIVITY 4.23

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Review the information on Hindu lifecycle rituals and complete the retrieval chart on the Activity Worksheet.
2 What appears to be the strongest type of 'connection' for each of the ritual groupings?

4.6 Buddhism

Birth

In stark contrast with Hinduism from which it emerged, Buddhism has very few lifecycle rituals. Buddhist religious life is not marked by rites of passage and there is no evidence that the Buddha required rituals nor are there any scriptural references to such rituals. There is no universal Buddhist ceremony for the birth of a child. In the context of the wheel of life, birth is understood as rebirth and ultimately delays a person achieving their ultimate purpose. Nevertheless, birth is listed in the 12 stages of life and each stage is the cause of the next, which sets up the circle of birth, suffering, death and rebirth.

Stages of life

- Ignorance
- Intentional acts
- Consciousness
- Body and mind
- The senses
- Sense impressions
- Feelings
- Craving
- Clinging
- Becoming
- Old age and death
- Rebirth

Buddhists commemorate crucial moments in life and this varies according to local beliefs and customs. When a child is born, offerings are made to local and traditional gods to ward off evil.



FIGURE 4.33 Buddhist monk conducting a ceremony for babies in the United Kingdom

Other rites may include repeating mantras, walking around statues of the Buddha or praying before Buddha images. In Tibet, the sacred symbol *dhih*, symbolising the celestial Buddha Manjusri, is painted on the baby's tongue in saffron powder or butter in the hope that the child will grow up to be wise. The child is taken to the local monastery to be named by the *lama* (priest). The father makes a small offering of money wrapped in a special scarf (*kata*).

In Thailand, the naming ceremony involves local monks chanting the *Pancasila*, the five moral principles of Buddhism, before the child is named either by the head monk or the father. One common feature across all these ceremonies is the presence of monks who, while they might not necessarily lead the ceremony, are considered a valuable presence at the ritual.

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ACTIVITY **4.24**

Finding and analysing

1 Research the Tibetan symbol for the syllable '*dhih*'. Draw the Tibetan character and write a short explanation of its meaning.
2 What is saffron? List ways in which saffron is used. Why do you think it is used in this ceremony?
3 This ritual is conducted 'in the hope that the child will grow up to be wise'. Create a table showing other religious rituals that are designed to engender wisdom in the participant and the particular symbols used to represent or impart wisdom. Do the rituals in your table have any common elements or characteristics?

Adolescence

One ritual that is common in many lineages of Buddhism is joining the *Sangha*. In some traditions, young boys spend a few months or a few years within a *Sangha*, learning the teachings of the Buddha before completing their education. Various ceremonies mark the entry into the *Sangha*. Sometimes the boy dresses elaborately, like a prince, as a reminder of how Buddha gave up his life as a prince to become a holy man. The boy's clothes are then exchanged for the saffron robe of the monk.

The boy's head is shaved to show that he has given up worldly concerns and as a mark of poverty and self-discipline. He kneels before the senior monk, requests permission to join the *Sangha* and promises to obey the rules while concentrating on overcoming *dukkha* (suffering). Once he has made his vows he receives his robes and follows the daily routine of the *bhikkhus* (monks) and *bhikkhunis* (nuns) living according to the Ten Precepts (refer also to Chapter 1).



FIGURE 4.34 Group of young monks outdoor in a temple courtyard

ACTIVITY **4.25**

Forming and finding

1 Find out where *Sangha* congregations in your state are located. Mark the locations on a map.
2 What are the challenges and benefits of the distribution pattern of these congregations for Buddhists who wish to celebrate their religious and cultural rituals within an established Buddhist community?

Marriage

While monks do not marry, most Buddhists believe family life is important. There is no traditional Buddhist marriage ceremony or ritual and in some traditions it is thought to be ill-fated to have monks attend a wedding because their vow of celibacy might cause infertility for the couple. In the Theravadan tradition, the *Vinaya Pitaka* prohibits a monk from being involved in any activity that might lead to a romantic relationship or marriage.

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FIGURE 4.35 The water pouring as part of a Thai wedding ceremony

Couples seeking to be married may seek the blessing of a monk prior to their wedding by inviting a monk to their home or by visiting a temple. The visit normally involves paying homage to images of the Buddha, reciting mantras and listening to a short sermon from the monk. In return the monk is offered food and gifts for good *karma*. In Thailand, the pouring of water over a ribbon connecting the monk with the couple is often a common practice but, on the whole, wedding ceremonies are generally civil affairs. More recently, Mahayana Buddhism, which once had a taboo on monastic involvement in weddings, sometimes allows weddings to be held in temples with the blessing of monks who also issue a marriage certificate.

ACTIVITY 4.26

Finding and analysing

Complete the three-way Venn diagram on the Activity Worksheet. Outline the unique and common attributes of Western civil weddings, Christian weddings and Buddhist weddings.

Death

According to Mahayana Buddhist belief, each time a person dies their spirit is reborn into one of the six divisions of the universe, the realms of: gods, titans, humans, hungry ghosts, animals or hell. For Buddhists, life is a cycle of birth, death and rebirth known as *samsara* and funerals concentrate on facilitating the journey of the dead person through the process of death and rebirth.

Prior to death, monks are often invited to the home to chant mantras so that the dying person's thoughts are pleasant; they are often asked to return to the home after the death to chant or preach a sermon on the teachings of the Buddha. When the person dies, the family washes the body, places it in a wooden coffin and carries it in procession to the shrine room of the local temple. The funeral procession is often accompanied by cheerful rather than sorrowful music to generate good *karma*.

In most Buddhist cultures bodies are cremated, but in Sri Lanka burial is common, and in Tibet 'sky burials', where the corpse is cut into pieces and left for vultures, are practised.

Buddhist lineages differ in their beliefs about the amount of time between death and the next life. In Theravada Buddhism rebirth is understood to be almost immediate, while in Mahayana Buddhism the mourning rituals suggest that there is an interval of time between death and rebirth during which offerings are made to earn good *karma*. A well-known text, the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, describes how the dead person moves through three stages,

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FIGURE 4.36 Vulture and skeleton sculpture at a sky burial site

or *bardos*. During the first stage they are not aware that they have died, and a light appears to which they are drawn, indicating liberation; in the second stage the person knows they are dead and experiences a review of their life with its cosmic consequences during which they yearn for a new body; in the third stage, their *karma* leads them to their new form.

ACTIVITY **4.27**

Analysing

Complete a fishbone diagram on the topic of Buddhist death rituals on the Activity Worksheet.

1. Write the topic in the box on the left-hand end (the 'head') of the diagram.
2. For each of the four main 'bones' emerging from the 'spine' of the diagram, nominate a subtopic explored in the text above.
3. On the horizontal lines provided for each subtopic, record details of that subtopic.

ACTIVITY **4.28**

Evaluating

'The nature of rituals celebrated by Buddhists is primarily determined by the culture in which they take place.' List evidence from the text that supports and refutes this claim. Construct a paragraph of 150 words to either support or reject the statement.

4.7 Conclusion

Ritual gives concrete and dramatic expression to beliefs within social and cultural settings. Some rituals instil order in the world and make present the transcendent. Ritual space and objects enable the believer to move beyond the ordinary functions of life and to communicate with other members of the group and with the tradition.

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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

1 Compose an alphabet list of secular and sacred lifecycle rituals of which you are aware.
2 Consequences wheel: if lifecycle rituals were banned then …

FINDING

1 Investigate the rituals of a Buddhist marriage in either the Theravada or Mahayana tradition. Using one of the theoretical frameworks presented in this chapter, complete an analysis of the ritual and write a paragraph (topic sentence, evidence sentences, concluding sentence) explaining your findings.
2 Create a visual storyboard (either with photos or drawings) that traces the important phases, elements and symbols of a Christian baptism. Annotate each photo/picture with important details so that it could be understood by a non-Christian.

ANALYSING

1 How does the religious naming of children differ in each tradition explored in this chapter?
2 In a T-chart, provide arguments for and against infant baptism.
3 Why might birth in Buddhism be considered a sad event?
4 How might people who do not belong to any religious tradition celebrate rites of passage?
5 Construct a diagram showing the relationship between 'ritual' and 'rite of passage'. (Suggestion: use concentric circles.)

EVALUATING

1 To what extent are religious rites (or the rites of one religion) related to key religious beliefs?
2 To what extent are religious rites (or the rites of one religion) based on sacred texts?
3 How do religious rites (or the rites of one religion) consolidate or strengthen social structures?
4 How have lifecycle rituals within a selected religious tradition changed over time?
5 How are lifecycle rituals influenced by culture?
6 Write an opinion column about the importance of lifecycle rituals in society.

REFLECTING

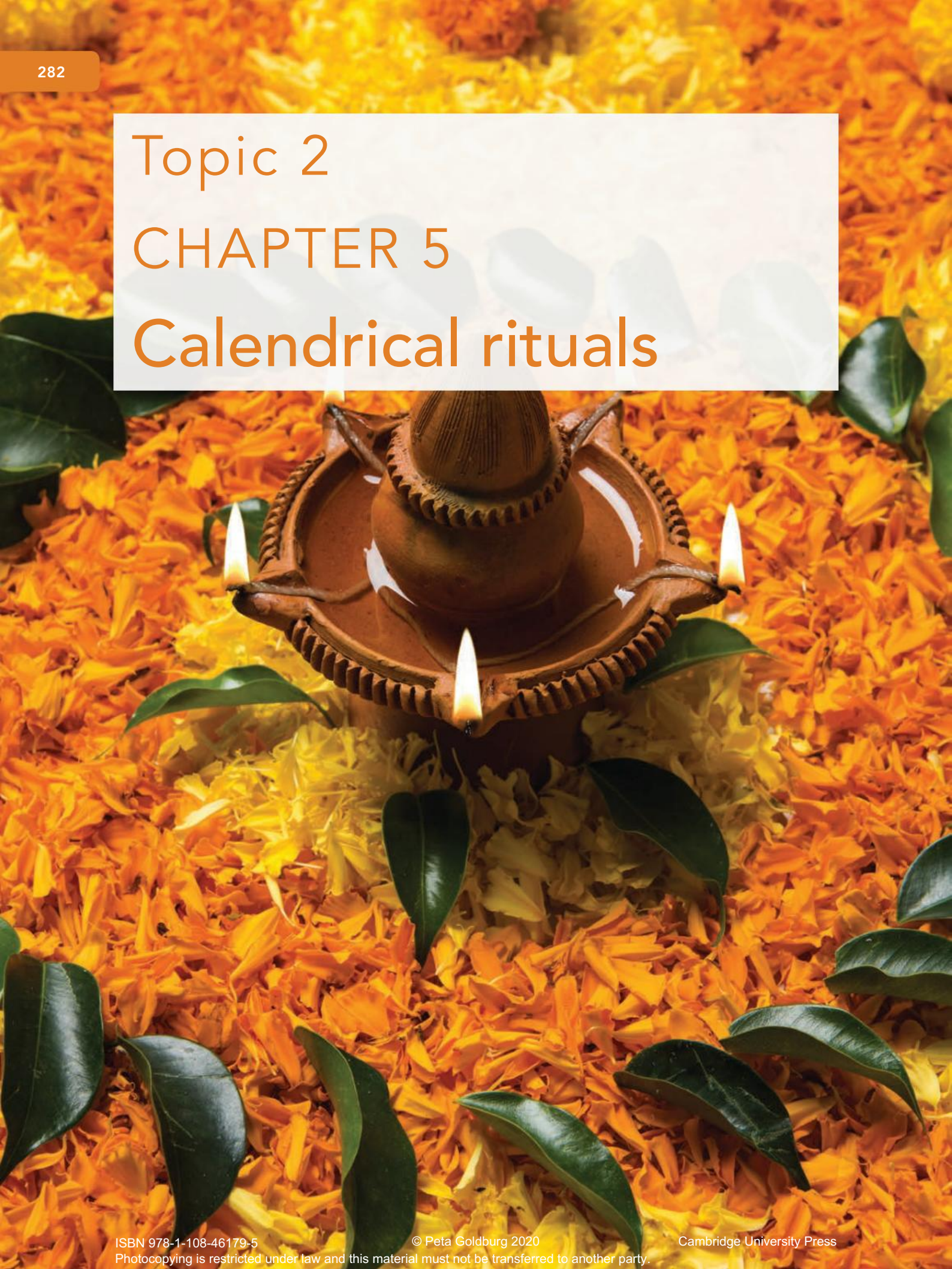
1 What have I learnt about lifecycle rituals?
2 What has challenged or surprised me about lifecycle rituals?
3 What religious lifecycle rituals appeal to me? Why?
4 What do I still wish to find out about lifecycle rituals?

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Topic 2

CHAPTER 5

Calendrical rituals



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Rituals help people to experience and understand the world by transporting them beyond time and place and enabling them to experience things that are larger than life. Rituals use signs, symbols, and dramatic and personal action to assist people and to enhance ordinary, everyday life by making meaning of the abstract and making concrete the indescribable.

Calendrical rituals occur at regular intervals on a particular time of the week, month or year or to mark a period of time since a significant event.

ACTIVITY 5.1

Forming, analysing and evaluating

1 Identify a sacred or secular calendrical ritual that you or your community engage in.
2 Building on your learning in Topic 1 (Lifecycle rituals), identify the significant elements of the ritual.
3 Evaluate the extent to which the ritual 'make[s] meaning of the abstract and make[s] concrete the indescribable'.

5.1 Introduction

Religious rituals generally take place within a particular space and provide time for believers to interact with the world of the unseen, a world out of the ordinary. Rituals have certain distinguishing features:

- the ritual action is meant to communicate with participants or with a higher being or god
- rituals have a pattern
- rituals are repeatable – otherwise they are just random movements.

Rituals do not have universal meaning: the meaning of a ritual is given by the group using it. Many religious traditions, for example, use water, the pouring of water, or washing with water, but the pouring of water on the head of a baby in Christian baptism is not the same as pouring water over the shoulder of the statue of the Buddha at the Bathing of the Buddha ceremony, nor is a Hindu bathing in the Ganges the same as a Muslim performing *wudu* (washing before prayer). We cannot assume that using water in one tradition has the same meaning in another religion or even the same meaning for a subgroup within a religious tradition.

Symbolism

Many rituals use symbols to enhance or create meaning. A symbol is different from a sign, which is often universally recognised – traffic signs, for example, generally mean the same thing across the world. Symbols, on the other hand, have layers of meaning: they may have personal meaning; cultural meaning; and universal meaning. Within religious traditions, symbols have their own language, they communicate in particular ways to believers or insiders of that tradition and the same symbol may not communicate in the same way with people who do not belong to the tradition. Some commonly used religious symbols include water, light, fire and ash.

The rest of this chapter provides an introduction to calendrical rituals in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Torres Strait Islander religion.

FIGURE 5.1 Light is a symbol common in many religious traditions.



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ACTIVITY 5.2

Forming, finding and analysing

1 Each of these calendrical rituals is performed regularly according to a religious calendar. Conduct brief preliminary research on each ritual and identify when each ritual is celebrated or performed, along with the reason for each.

Ritual	When is this ritual performed?	What is the purpose of this ritual?
Hindu Diwali		
Jewish Shabbat		
Christian Ash Wednesday		
Muslim Id al-Iftar (fast-breaking) during Ramadan		
Buddhist Wesak		
South-East Queensland Bunya Gathering (the last recorded gathering was in 1902)		

2 List any questions this research has raised for you about religious calendrical rituals.

5.2 Judaism

Jewish ritual expresses a very clear relationship between G-d and humanity. At the heart of Jewish ritual is the idea that G-d listens to prayer and that prayer is part of a dialogue between humankind and the Creator. The incredible variety of rituals and prayers in the Jewish liturgy suggest the multitudinous relationship between G-d and humanity. During a single ritual, G-d can be described as Creator, Redeemer, Father, Judge, Rock of Israel and Shield of Abraham. Each of these personifications of G-d implies a different relationship between G-d and the person praying.

Jewish rituals are designed to reinforce a sense of community. Communal worship provides the additional satisfaction of being tied into a historical continuity that began with the covenant between G-d and Abraham and continues with the worldwide community of Jews. When a Jew prays, s/he stands in a spiritual highway made up of three roads of time. First, an individual Jew brings a personal history to prayer. Second, if they are praying in a synagogue, that synagogue has its own customary ways of doing things. For instance, in an Ashkenazi synagogue, the entire congregation stands when the mourner's *Kaddish* is recited; in a Sephardic congregation, only the mourners stand. Third, Jews pray within an uninterrupted four-thousand-year history of Judaism, a four-millennium-long covenant between G-d and the Jews, a history that includes some two thousand years of organised and ordered ritual.

Although communal prayer is one of the central tenets of Jewish religious practice, it is no more important than home ritual. There is a wide range of ritual practices that are specifically for the home and performed within the family circle. Home ritual practices range from the lighting of candles and reciting of the *Kiddush* (a prayer of sanctification over wine) to mark the Shabbat (Sabbath) and festivals, to the building and eating of meals in the ***sukkah*** for the holiday of Sukkot. There is hardly an aspect of life for

sukkah
a three-sided dwelling with a roof made of leaves

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FIGURE 5.2 Jewish family eating a meal in a *sukkah* during the festival of Sukkot

which an observant Jew does not thank and bless the Creator. In worship, the creation of sacred space and time are of paramount importance, but in Judaism even the everyday has a sacred aspect.

Jewish calendar

The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, based on a 12-month year and regulated by the cycles of the moon. Hebrew months begin with a new moon, an event which is celebrated as the minor holiday of Rosh Khodesh (head or beginning of the month). Traditionally, the coming of a new month was regarded as an appropriate time for self-examination, a time of atonement.

Each of the 12 Hebrew months is either 29 or 30 days long, so each year has 354 days. The Jewish calendar adds an additional month (Adar II) in the spring, seven times in each 19 years. The shortage of 11 days between lunar and solar years is made up by adding a 13th month in certain years.

Days begin at sunset and end at nightfall on the following day: consequently, the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday and ends the next night with the appearance of three stars. The same pattern applies to all holy days.

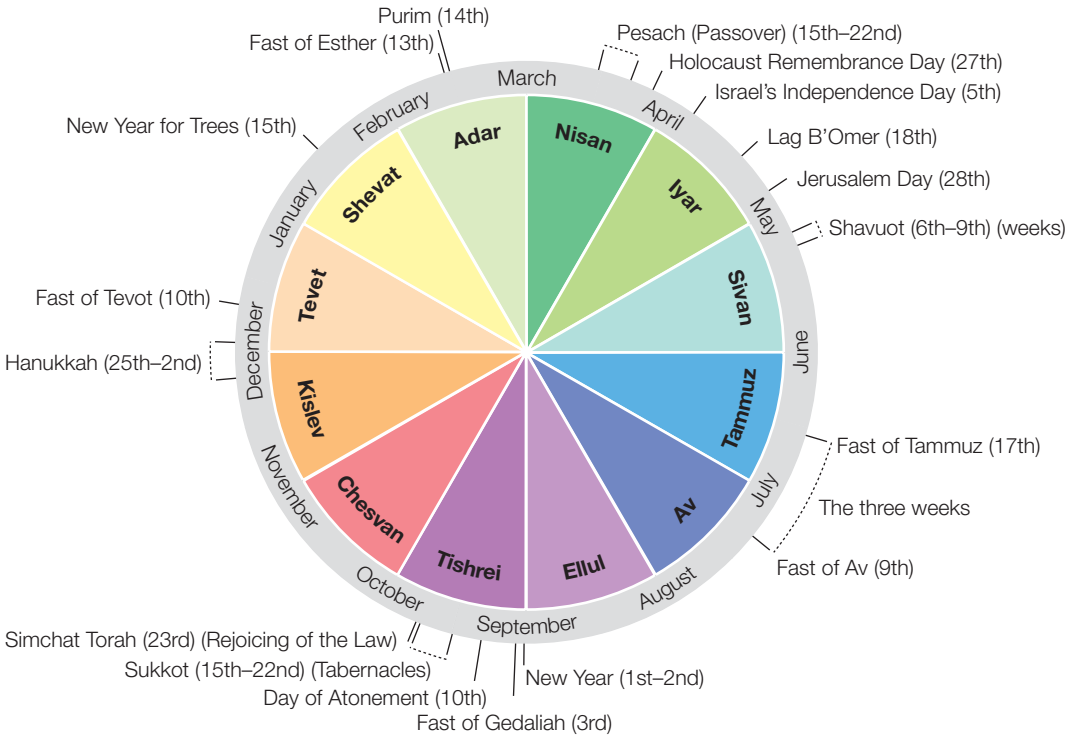


FIGURE 5.3 The Jewish calendar

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ACTIVITY 5.3

Finding

Using the Chabad.org website (or similar), find out today's month and day in the Jewish calendar and identify the dates of the next Jewish 'holiday' this year.

Daily rituals

In Judaism, there are at least three worship services each day. On Shabbat and festivals there are four services and on Yom Kippur there are five. The elements of each ritual, regardless of the time of day, day of the week or year, are fundamentally the same.

When an observant Jew rises in the morning, s/he says: 'Thank you, O G-d, Living and Eternal Ruler, for having compassionately returned to within my soul – abundant is your faithfulness'. S/he washes her/his hands in the prescribed ritual manner: right hand picks up the water vessel, passes it to the left hand and pours water over the right hand. S/he switches hands and repeats the process, three times for each hand and then says: 'The beginning of wisdom is fear of G-d – good understanding to all their practitioners; His praise endures forever. Blessed be G-d's name forever'.



FIGURE 5.4 Prayers are said three times daily

A traditionally observant male Jew then puts on a *tallit katan*, a four-cornered undershirt with a set of *tzitzit* (fringes) at each of its corners while saying the following blessing: 'Blessed are You, Adoni our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who has sanctified us and commanded us concerning the *tzitzit*.' If praying at home, the person puts on the *tallit* (prayer shawl) and, for Orthodox men and those other men and women who do so, puts on the *tefillin* while reciting the appropriate blessing and Torah passages regarding the wearing of each ritual object as prescribed in the *siddur* (Jewish prayer book).

ACTIVITY 5.4

Finding and analysing

1 View an online video of an observant Jewish male performing the above ritual, donning *tallit* and *tefillin*.
2 Draw and label the *tallit* and *tefillin*, as well as any other relevant details, on the figure provided on the Activity Worksheet.

Shakharit – the morning service

The morning service is designed to bring the ordinary to the attention of the adherent. The first prayer uttered in the synagogue for morning service is the *Mah Tovu*, a series of five verses from Numbers 24:5; Psalms 5:8; 26:8; 95:6 and 69:14. This prayer is generally followed by the blessing for the study of Torah. Then follows 15 blessings thanking G-d for the simple miracles of each day such as rising from bed, clothing, freedom, the earth, etc. The next section of the morning service is a series of Talmudic and biblical readings including the story of the binding of Isaac, which is followed by the

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Songs of Praise drawn from Psalms and from 1 Chronicles 16:8–36. The liturgy proceeds to the *Barekhu*, a call to prayer, which is the beginning of the *Shema* and its blessings. The *Shema* is three paragraphs long, including Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21; and Numbers 15:37–41: they prescribe the most important elements of Jewish ritual, including instruction on when to recite the *Shema*. The *Shema* concludes with the declaration that G-d took the people out of Egypt. The *Amidah* opens with a blessing that asserts G-d's ability to redeem Jews in the future. The *Aleinu* is the prayer that closes every service and is the proclamation of G-d's sovereignty.

Minkhah – the afternoon service

The *Minkhah* is the shortest service of the day. Its name comes from the meal offering that was made at midday in the Temple in Jerusalem. The service opens with Psalm 145, which is followed by half-*Kaddish*, the *Amidah* and concludes with mourner's *Kaddish*.

Ma'Ariv – the evening service

The name *Ma'Ariv* comes the opening prayer which thanks G-d for the evening. It opens with a confessional prayer, *Vehu Rakhum*: the leader intones the *Barekhu* and the congregation responds. The *Shema* is preceded by two benedictions, the second of which asks G-d to sustain people through the night. The remainder of the service consists of the *Amidah* and the mourner's *Kaddish*.

Before going to sleep, a Jew prays the 'bedtime' *Shema*. After asking forgiveness of anyone who has been wronged during the day and that their words will find favour with G-d, people also pray for protection from harm during sleep. The *Shema* is said, followed by a three-part benediction:

> May G-d bless you and guard you.
> May G-d show you favour and be gracious to you.
> May G-d show you kindness and grant you peace.

The final prayer, the *Adon Olam*, is recited ending with 'I place my spirit within His care, when I wake as when I sleep, G-d is with me, I shall not fear, body and spirit are within his care'. The day ends as it began, offering praise to G-d, protector and creator.

Weekly rituals

Shabbat (Sabbath)

Shabbat means to cease or rest. It is the last day of the week, beginning at sunset on Friday and ending at sunset on Saturday and lasts for 25 hours.

ACTIVITY 5.5

Forming and finding

Locate a website providing Australian Shabbat times. Record the times of Shabbat for the coming week for the following locations: Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Darwin, Byron Bay and Melbourne.

Account for the difference/s in time at various locations.



FIGURE 5.5 Shabbat – lighted candles, *challah* and wine

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Shabbat is a day of celebration which is focused on spiritually and physically invigorating people for the week ahead. The Hebrew scriptures remind Jews that there are two reasons to celebrate Shabbat: Exodus 20:8–11 reminds Jews that G-d rested on the seventh day after creation, and Deuteronomy 5:12–15 reminds Jews to rest after labouring for six days and to make the seventh day a Sabbath to the Lord. On Shabbat, Jews must stop work and remember the powers G-d has given them. The Talmud (Mishnah Shabbat) lists 39 activities that are prohibited on Shabbat.

According to Exodus 35, these were the tasks that were needed to build the Tabernacle, so they are prohibited on Shabbat. Shabbat is meant to be a delight not a burden, so all Shabbat laws are suspended if there is danger to human life (Mishnah Shabbat 7:2).

In the synagogue, Shabbat is welcomed by the singing of special hymns, usually Psalms, some of which refer to Shabbat as a Queen or Bride. The service ends with a hymn called the *Yigdal*, which attempts to put into words the foundation of all Jewish belief.

In the home, many Jews plan for Shabbat as if an honoured guest was coming to dinner. Shabbat is welcomed by the mother or woman of the house, who lights two special candles which represent the *mitzvot* (law) to 'remember' and

TABLE 5.1 The Talmud (Mishnah Shabbat) lists 39 activities that are prohibited on Shabbat.

Agricultural work	Working with clothing/fabric	Working with leather or parchment; writing	Construction work	Working with fire
Ploughing	Shearing	Catching game/ hunting	Building	Kindling
Sowing seeds	Bleaching	Slaughtering	Demolishing (for the sake of building)	Extinguishing (when done for a positive purpose as in the manufacture of charcoal)
Cutting or harvesting crops	Carding	Skinning or flaying	A final hammer blow – any act that completes or makes useable a finished product	Carrying – from the public domain to the private or vice versa
Binding or gathering crops	Dying	Tanning		
Threshing	Spinning	Scraping		
Winnowing	Inserting thread into a loom	Marking out (in preparing for cutting)		
Selecting	Weaving	Cutting		
Sifting	Taking off a finished product from a loom	Writing		
Grinding	Separating threads	Erasing (for the sake of writing again)		
Kneading	Tying a permanent knot			
Baking	Untying a knot (in order to re-tie it)			
	Sewing			
	Tearing			

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FIGURE 5.6 Jewish mother and daughters light Sabbath candles

'observe' and are symbols of joy, blessing and peace. As the candles are lit, she recites the following Blessing (*berachah*) in Hebrew:

> King of the universe, who has hallowed us by the commandments, and commanded us to kindle the Sabbath lights.

In some families, a candle is lit for every member of the family and is often followed by a blessing for the children.

Then the father, or man of the house, recites the *Kiddush* over the wine.

Terminology

Kiddush means sanctifying or hallowing – this ceremony makes holy or sets apart the time of Shabbat and other festivals.

The first part of *Kiddush* is the reciting of Genesis 2:1–3. Then a blessing is said over two plaited loaves of white bread (*challot – challah* singular), which remind people of the manna given in the desert – the bread is covered with a special white cloth. It is also customary for a piece of bread to be dipped in salt and given to each person present.

On Shabbat morning, Jews worship in the synagogue. The service includes a reading from the *Sefer Torah* and a reading from the Prophets. The afternoon is spent relaxing or visiting friends. Some Jews also attend an afternoon service in the synagogue.

Havdalah

The Havdalah ceremony bids farewell to Shabbat and begins after three stars appear in the evening sky on Saturday night. Havdalah means *division* and the ceremony begins by praising G-d for dividing: Secular – sacred; Dark – light; Other nations – Israel; and Six days – Shabbat.

During Havdalah, blessings are made over the wine, a specially plaited multi-wick Havdalah candle and a spice box called *samin*, which contains sweet-smelling spices. The cup for the wine is filled to the brim, expressing hope that the coming week will be filled with divine blessings. The Havdalah candle's flame



FIGURE 5.7 Havdalah set showing the plaited multi-wick Havdalah candle, spice box and wine cup

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shofar a horn used for Jewish religious purposes

Rosh Hashanah Jewish New Year – literally 'head of the year'

signifies light and guidance through life. The spices remind Jews to try to bring the sweetness of Shabbat into the coming week. Children are included in the ceremony and together the family recites the final blessing.

ACTIVITY 5.6

Finding and analysing

Your teacher may allocate you (a) Kabbalat Shabbat (welcoming Shabbat) or (b) Havdalah. Design an information page that includes:

- a clear heading identifying the ritual
- in the centre of the page, an image of a table – set ready for the ritual – with all necessary ritual objects. This image should be annotated to show the names, uses and purposes of the ritual objects.
- two brief excerpts from relevant prayers or blessings from the ritual.

ACTIVITY 5.7

Analysing and evaluating

In pairs, deliver a 15-second 'elevator pitch' about the reasons for, and benefits of, celebrating Shabbat within Judaism. Be sure to refer to Exodus 20:8–11 and Deuteronomy 5:12–15.

Annual rituals

High Holy Days

The Jewish religious year ends as autumn approaches. The month of Elul is a time of *teshuvah* (turning) or repentance. It is a time of self-reflection and self-evaluation, of turning back to look at one's deeds of the previous year, to return to G-d. There are no fast days or festivals in the month of Elul and on each day Psalm 27 is recited in the synagogue, asking G-d to hear people and to 'be … gracious … and answer'. In Orthodox and Conservative synagogues, the **shofar** (ram's horn) is sounded after the morning service for the whole month.

The month of Elul is preparation for the two most powerful days of the Jewish religious year: Rosh Hashanah (New Year) and Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement).

Rosh Hashanah

Rosh Hashanah literally means 'head of the year' and falls on 1 Tishri (usually September), marking the beginning of a period of solemnity and joy. On the one hand, it is the festival of Yom Ha-Zikaron (Day of Remembrance) and on the other hand it is also Yom Ha-Teru'ah (Day of the Shofar Blast) and the 'birthday of the world': the day on which Jewish lore remembers that G-d created humankind.

In the synagogue, the colours of the curtain on the Ark and the mantles over the Torah scrolls are changed to white, symbolising the purity of G-d and the colour of festivity. For the next 10 days – Rosh Hashanah, the Ten Days of Repentance and Yom Kippur – Jews turn their thoughts to mortality, sin, repentance and redemption. At midnight on the Saturday before Rosh Hashanah, Jews attend *Selikhot* services. At these services they recite the 13 divine attributes of G-d's mercy from Exodus 34:

> LORD, the LORD God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness, abundant in truth, keeping mercy unto the thousandth generation (forever), forgiving iniquity and forgiving transgression and forgiving sin.

Rosh Hashanah begins at sunset with candle lighting, followed by synagogue services, *Kiddush*, and a festive meal. After *Kiddush*, people dip bread in honey, and say a brief prayer asking for 'a good and sweet year', and a slice of apple dipped in honey is also eaten. Fish is often eaten at this meal, as a symbol of fertility. The liturgy for the

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FIGURE 5.8 Blowing a shofar

two High Holy Days is the same as other festivals but with significant additions. The blowing of the shofar after the Torah service is the oldest part of the observance of this festival and is prescribed in Numbers 29:1. The three blasts of the shofar is linked to three concepts: G-d's sovereignty, G-d's merciful remembrance, and the eventual coming of the Messianic age. Before the *Amidah*, the shofar is blown 30 times. After each of the three blessings added to the *Amidah*, the horn is blown 10 times. Finally, when the service ends, the shofar is blown 40 times, for a total of 100 times. The 10 days that begin with Rosh Hashanah end with Yom Kippur.

On the eve of Yom Kippur, some people give money to the poor. This stems from a ceremony which once occurred in the Temple when a goat, thought to carry the sins of the people, was driven out of Jerusalem into the wilderness (the word 'scapegoat' originates from this practice). After the destruction of the Temple, the custom of killing a chicken and giving it to the poor for a meal developed. In preparation, many observant men go to the *mikveh* (ritual bath) for purification and they wear a white *kittel*. On this most solemn of fast days it is forbidden to wear leather shoes: one cannot ask for forgiveness while wearing the skin of another of G-d's creatures. Before leaving for the synagogue, people light festival candles in preparation for the most holy day of the Jewish year.

Yom Kippur

Sometimes described as the 'sabbath of sabbaths', Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, is a very special day for Jews throughout the world. It is the only fast day never postponed for Shabbat and the only day on which people wear *tallit* for all services. For many non-observant Jews, this is the only day of the year when they go to synagogue.

Yom Kippur is grounded in Leviticus 16:29–31:

> This shall be a statute to you forever: In the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall deny yourselves, and shall do no work, neither the citizen nor the alien who resides among you. [30]For on this day atonement shall be made for you, to cleanse you; from all your sins you shall be clean before the LORD. [31]It is a sabbath of complete rest to you, and you shall deny yourselves; it is a statute forever.

All males over the age of 13 and females over the age of 12 are obliged to fast for 25 hours, but the sick and the elderly are exempt. The fast serves several purposes. It is a penance for wrongdoing and a sign of remorse; it is an act of self-discipline; it helps people to focus on the spiritual rather than the material; and it is a way of awakening compassion by making people aware of the hunger that many bear daily. As well as fasting, Jews abstain from wearing cosmetics and lotions, having sexual relations, and washing parts of their body other than the fingers and eyes.

There are five services held, beginning with an evening service called *Kol Nidre*; the following day, there are three services, the last of which includes a *Yizkor* (memorial) service; and the concluding service is the *Neilah* (the closing of the gates), when the Ark is kept open to the congregation who remain standing. At the end of *Neilah* the door of the Ark, symbolising the gates of heaven, is closed.

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At this point Jews make three declarations:

> Hear O Israel, the LORD is our G-d, the LORD is One.
> Blessed is the name of His glorious kingdom forever and ever (said three times).
> The LORD is G-d (said seven times).

After night falls, a single shofar blast signals that the fast is over. At home, families perform Havdalah and the fast is broken.

Yom Kippur is not a sad day, but it is full of emotional intensity unlike any other day of the year. Jews face their G-d with the knowledge that G-d is merciful, and they are urged to 'seek out G-d when the Almighty is near'.

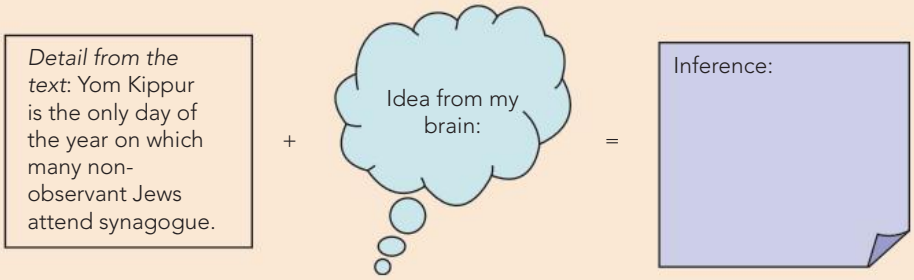
ACTIVITY **5.8**

Finding

As a form of note taking, create a timeline for the days starting on the day before Rosh Hashanah and ending at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. Label the days with the Jewish month and date, as well as the days on which they will fall this year. Briefly note on the timeline the performance of each ritual action described in the text above.

Analysing

1 What inferences can you draw based on this detail from the text?



2 What reasons might a Jewish person give for attending synagogue only on Yom Kippur?

Analysing and evaluating

On the Activity Worksheet, list the ideas about G-d that are reflected in the ritual actions of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur and explain how the meanings of these actions illustrate beliefs of Judaism.

Action	Belief about G-d	How the action reflects the belief

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Use a search engine to locate and view the online video *What Makes Rosh Hashanah Beautiful?* by AishVideo.
2 Yom Kippur is described in the text as a day 'full of emotional energy'. List some emotions that might be felt during Yom Kippur, and quote from the song lyrics to illustrate where possible.
3 How might the experience of Yom Kippur influence the attitude and behaviour of a Jewish person and a Jewish community?

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Three pilgrim festivals: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot

There are three pilgrim festivals in Judaism: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot. They are known as pilgrimage festivals because in ancient Judaism, Jews would make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem to bring offerings for each festival.

Pesach (Passover)

Pesach, in the month of Nisan (in spring), celebrates the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt. It is the first pilgrim festival of the year and lasts for seven days. The first and last days of Pesach are holy days, when no work, apart from the preparation of food, can be done (Exodus 12:16). The preparations for Passover require great effort and it takes several days to prepare the home as all *chametz* must be removed from the house (Exodus 12:17–19).



FIGURE 5.9 A Jewish family during Passover



FIGURE 5.10 *Matzah* box

The entire home, including the kitchen, must be cleaned and made *chametz*-free. Not only must all *chametz* be removed from the home but also any utensils or crockery that have come into contact with *chametz* must not be used during the festival. Some households have an entire set of kitchenware that is used exclusively for Passover.

During the seven days of Pesach, *matzah* (unleavened bread), is eaten. *Matzah* is a grain product made of flour and water that is baked quickly so that it does not rise. Not eating *chametz* and eating *matzah* instead is a reminder of the Jews' dependence on G-d.

The highlight of Pesach is the **Seder** meal, which is celebrated on the first night of the festival. The entire Seder is laden with meaning. Seder literally means 'order'. At the centre of the table is the Seder plate, which holds a hard-boiled/roasted egg, lamb bone,

Seder
order; meal celebrated on the first night of Pesach

Terminology

Chametz is anything made from the five major grains (barley, wheat, oats, rye and spelt) that has not been completely baked within 18 minutes after coming into contact with water. Some observant Ashkenazi Jews avoid rice, corn, peanuts and beans during Passover as these are often processed with wheat and there is a fear that wheat may be mixed in.

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maror (bitter herbs), *charoset* (a mixture of apple, nuts, cinnamon and wine), *karpas*/greens (usually parsley), and a small container of salt water. In addition, there is a plate holding three *matzahs* covered with a cloth. The food on the Seder plate is symbolic and related to the story of the Exodus from Egypt; most of it is eaten but two items are not consumed – the roasted egg and the lamb shank, which reminds people of the Paschal lamb slaughtered at Pesach. Wine is also part of the Seder. When each of the 10 plagues is mentioned, every person at the table spills a drop of wine to express their sorrow at the suffering at the hands of the Egyptians. Everyone at the table has a *Haggadah* (the Telling), a book containing the special liturgy for the evening meal.

The evening has 14 elements that occur in a prescribed order.

The order of the Seder

1. *Kadesh*: The Seder opens with the recitation of the festival *Kiddush* over a glass of wine. Everyone drinks their first of four glasses of wine.
2. *Urkhatz*: The ritual washing of hands as in the hand-washing before eating bread but with the blessing omitted.
3. *Karpas*: The leafy greens are dipped in the salt water, and after the blessing for *karpas* is recited, they are eaten.
4. *Yakhatz*: The middle *matzah* from the centre of the table is broken in half. One portion is hidden for the *afikoman*, to be eaten at the very end of the meal. The tradition is for the host to hide it and for the children to search for it, ransoming it back to the leader at the end of the meal.
5. *Maggid*: The first part of the *Haggadah* is read. This section of the Seder includes the four questions:
   - Why on this night do we eat unleavened bread?
   - Why on this night do we eat bitter herbs?
   - Why on this night do we dip our herbs?
   - Why on this night do we recline?

   This is followed by the list of the 10 plagues, the story of the Exodus, an explanation of the significance of the paschal lamb, *matzah*, *maror*, the first part of *Hallel* and second and third glasses of wine.
6. *Tahktsah*: Hands are washed again, reciting the blessing.
7. *Motzi matzah*: The *matzah* is eaten with the blessing for eating unleavened bread: it signals the beginning of the meal proper.
8. *Maror*: The bitter herb is dipped in the *charoset* and eaten with an appropriate blessing.
9. *Korekh*: A sandwich of bitter herb and *charoset* on *matzah* is eaten.
10. *Shukhan orekh*: Dinner is served and eaten, a full festive meal.
11. *Tsafun*: The *afikoman*, representing the Paschal sacrifice, is ransomed and eaten, officially ending the meal. After this no more food should be eaten.
12. *Barekh*: *Birkat ha-Mazon*, grace after meals, is recited.
13. *Hallel*: The remainder of the *Hallel* psalms are recited.
14. *Nirtzah*: The celebration is 'accepted' and those assembled declare 'Next year in Jerusalem'.

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FIGURE 5.11 Seder plate

The Seder is a joyous occasion, a gathering of family and friends, and can last into the early hours of the morning. In Orthodox households, the meal itself may not be served until well past midnight.

The Seder ends with the following words:

> The redemption is not yet complete …
> Peace, shalom …
> Next year in Jerusalem …
> Next year may all be free.

ACTIVITY 5.9

Finding

1 Read Exodus 12 and then answer the following questions, including the Exodus reference, on the Activity Worksheet.

Question	Answer	Exodus reference
To whom were the directions for Passover given?		
On what day of the month is the lamb to be obtained? On what day of the month is the lamb slaughtered?		
What directions are given regarding the blood of the lamb? For what purpose?		
How were the people to dress when eating?		
According to verse 14ff, how is the festival to be celebrated?		
According to verse 47, who is to celebrate this festival?		

2 Locate an interactive Seder plate online and use the information provided to complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

Food	What it is	What it is used for	What it represents
Karpas			
Beitza			
Zeroa			
Charoset			
Maror			

Analysing

Create a flowchart to show the steps of the Seder meal.

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Shavuot

From the second night of Pesach to Shavuot, the next pilgrim festival, there are exactly 50 days linked by a ritual called *S'firat haOmer*, or Counting the Omer. In ancient Judaism, Jews were instructed to bring a small harvest offering of grain to the priests on the second day of Pesach, called the Omer offering. From that day, according to Leviticus 23:9, 'you shall count seven weeks' up to Shavuot.

Shavuot is the only festival mandated in the Torah solely on an agricultural basis. In Exodus 23:19 the Jews are commanded 'The choice first fruits of your soil you shall bring to the house of G-d', after the counting of the Omer. In the time of the Temple, farmers would mark the fruits that were heading for early maturity, as spring turned to summer and they would bring them to Jerusalem as an offering.

Today, there is a custom of decorating the synagogue with flowers and plants and the marking of the holiday with a vegetarian meal. The reading of the *Megillah* (Scroll) of Ruth in the service is the primary reminder of its agrarian provenance. The reading of the Book of Ruth is also a reminder to Jews of commitment to the Jewish people freely made and to the covenant with G-d that is the core of the Jewish tradition and experience. Shavuot celebrates the most important moment in that covenant: the giving of the Torah to Moses and its acceptance by the Jews at Mt Sinai.



FIGURE 5.12 Foods eaten during Shavuot

Shavuot has come to be dedicated to the idea of Torah study and Jewish education. One custom that traditional Jews observe is an all-night study session held on the first evening of the festival called *tikkun leil Shavuot*. In keeping with the theme of Jewish education, Shavuot has traditionally been the time when many Conservative and Orthodox schools mark graduation.

Liturgically, Shavuot includes a *Yizkor* service, the reading of the Book of Ruth and the *Akdamut* prayer, which is recited at the morning service in Ashkenazi congregations. *Akdamut* is a 44-verse acrostic poem that explains the Ten Commandments while offering praise to G-d and Creation. In Sephardic congregations a special *ketubah*, or marriage contract, is read, recognising the 'marriage' between G-d and the Jewish people.

ACTIVITY 5.10

Finding and analysing

1 Create a concept map to outline these three aspects of Shavuot:
   - a agricultural basis (including timing of the festival)
   - b the Book of Ruth
   - c the giving of the Torah.

   Give your concept map three main branches and show the connections between these branches.
2 Conduct an image search on the internet for the term 'Shavuot'. Print and glue (or digitally copy and paste) three varied images, and annotate each image to show what elements relate to the various aspects of Shavuot.

Sukkot

The Feast of Booths, *sukkot* in Hebrew, is the third of the pilgrim festivals of Judaism. Sukkot, an autumn festival, is intimately linked with Jewish history and remembers the time Jewish people spent wandering in the desert after the Exodus from Egypt. The festival lasts for eight days and is a joyous event when people build in their yard

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a *sukkah*, a temporary shelter, as a reminder of the temporary shelters their ancestors lived in during the 40 years in the desert. A *sukkah* has three sides and must be big enough for a person to stand inside. The Book of Leviticus 23:33–44 describes the *sukkah* or booth:

> The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: [34]Speak to the people of Israel, saying: On the fifteenth day of this seventh month, and lasting seven days, there shall be the festival of booths to the Lord … [41]You shall keep it as a festival to the Lord seven days in the year; you shall keep it in the seventh month as a statute for ever throughout your generations. [42]You shall live in booths for seven days; all that are citizens in Israel shall live in booths, [43]so that your generations may know that I made the people of Israel live in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: …

The roof of the *sukkah* must be made from cut vegetation, often palm branches, and they must cover the roof but be thin enough to see the stars through the roof. The *sukkah* is a multifaceted symbol. It links Jews back to their agricultural roots, offering a scaled-down version of the temporary shelters that farmers and shepherds built in their fields.

Leviticus 23:40 reminds Jews to pray holding a *lulav*, which is made from a date palm branch, two willow branches, three myrtle branches and an etrog (a fruit like a lemon). Seeing the stars reminds the people of the hardships of their ancestors. In ancient Judaism, people lived in the *sukkah* for the eight days of the festival. Today, modern Jews eat the evening meal in the booth.



FIGURE 5.13 Jewish family builds their *sukkah* in Jerusalem, Israel



FIGURE 5.14 A *lulav* and etrog

ACTIVITY 5.11

Finding

1. Conduct a 5Ws + H (what, when, where, why, who plus how) strategy on the festival of Sukkot.
2. Use a Y-chart (looks like, feels like, sounds like) to imagine what it would look like, sound like and feel like to eat an evening meal in a *sukkah* during Sukkot.

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ACTIVITY 5.12

Finding and analysing

Pilgrim festivals: Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot

Create a three-way Venn diagram in which the respective motivations and purposes of the three Jewish pilgrim festivals are identified and differentiated.

Hanukkah

Hanukkah means rededication and is a celebration of the Maccabees, Jewish warriors who fought a series of battles to overturn the forces of Hellenisation. The battles lasted between 165 and 163 BCE when, eventually, Judah the Maccabee reclaimed the Temple for the Jewish people. This festival commemorates the re-dedication of the Temple after it had been desecrated in the second century BCE. The story of the re-dedication of the Temple is told in Maccabees 1 and 2 with the main part of the story recorded in Macabees1:1–4. The most significant rite of Hanukkah is the lighting of the *hanukkiah*, a nine-branched **menorah**, in memory of the seven-branched menorah used in the temple. Part of the purpose of lighting the *hanukkiah* is to publicise the miracle of Hanukkah, which remembers when the Maccabees reclaimed the Temple they could find only one single cruet of oil to light the Temple menorah – enough only for a single day. Miraculously, the light remained burning for eight days when the people returned with new oil for the menorah.

Hanukkah
an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE, also known as the Festival of Lights

menorah
a branched candelabra, used in Jewish services



FIGURE 5.15 The lighting of the nine-branched *hanukkiah*

The *hanukkiah* has eight candles, one for each day of the festival and the ninth candle, the *shamash* (servant candle), is used to light the candles on each successive night of the festival. Today, Hanukkah is a home-oriented holiday and it is customary for the menorah to be placed in a front window of the home. The central event of each evening is the lighting of the Hanukkah candles. The Hanukkah candles are lit immediately after dark, except on Friday nights when they are lit before the Shabbat candles. They are lit from right to left and should burn for at least 30 minutes. When the candles have been lit, people recite the blessing for the light of candles:

> Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who sanctified us with Your commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of Hanukkah.

This is followed by a blessing thanking G-d for the many wonders performed.

> Blessed are You, Adonai our G-d, Ruler of the Universe, who performed miracles for our ancestors in ancient times and in our days.

During this eight-day festival, which is a special time for children, families sing songs that celebrate Hanukkah and play the dreidel game. They also consume food cooked in oil as a reminder of the miracle of the oil that lasted for eight days. Hanukkah is celebrated in the month of Kislev, which often falls during November to December. More recently, gift giving for children has become popular.

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FIGURE 5.16 Children playing dreidel

ACTIVITY 5.13

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Conduct an online image search for 'Hanukkah Card' and investigate your search results.
2 Consider the literal and symbolic meanings of words, images and colours that you see. What trends or patterns are evident that provide insight into the atmosphere and significance of Hanukkah for Jewish people?

ACTIVITY 5.14

Finding and analysing

Find out about the dreidel game. Write your own instructions for how to play it, along with diagrams, to share with younger students at your school. Ensure that you outline the religious and historical significance of the Hebrew letters on the dreidel, as well as their significance for game play.

Purim

Purim is the most joyous and raucous festival in the Jewish calendar. It commemorates the story of Esther, a young, beautiful Jewish woman, who with the help of her uncle Mordecai prevents the destruction of the Jews by marrying king Ahashverus of Persia. She is also instrumental in preventing Harman, one of the royal councillors and an anti-Semite, from overthrowing the king. Purim is celebrated on the 15th day of Adar in the Jewish calendar, which in the Gregorian calendar can be late February or March.

Purim
a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in the Book of Esther

Purim literally means 'lots', a name coming from Harman's casting of lots to determine the day for his massacre of the Jews. In the synagogue during the reading of the Scroll of Esther, the congregation is encouraged to make noise to drown out the mention of Harman's name each time it occurs in the reading of the story from the scroll. Today, many synagogues host a Purim play, which dramatises the story of Esther. Adults and children come to the synagogue dressed as characters from the Book of Esther and they bring 'graggers' or noisemakers to use to blot out Harman's name.

Like most Jewish festivals, there is food associated with Purim: special triangular pastries called *hamantaschen* or Haman's pockets, which are filled with prunes, apricots and poppy seeds. The holiday is also a time for serious reflection on the duties of a Jew in his/her community and to make donations to the poor. The day before the holiday is a minor fast day coinciding with Esther's own fast on the day during which she decided to tell Ahashverus that she was a Jew and that he needed to stop the massacre of her people.

FIGURE 5.17 Preparing *hamantaschen* for the festival of Purim



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ACTIVITY **5.15**

Forming and finding

1 Locate a Jewish calendar website to create a table showing the dates when Purim will be celebrated in Australia over the next five years.
2 The story of Esther is celebrated as a Jewish festival and customs and rituals are now part of this festival. Consult two or three Jewish websites and list the customs and rituals associated with Purim.
3 Use an online search engine to view the music video *Purim Song* by the Maccabeats. Create an observation quiz for your learning partner, ensuring that you ask at least three questions that pertain to religious symbols or ritual actions depicted in the video.

Recent additions of calendrical rituals

For millennia the Jewish calendar remained unchanged until the 1950s, when four new rituals were added: Yom Ha-Shoah, Yom Ha-Atzma'ut, Yom Ha-Zikaron and Yom Yerushalayim.

Yom Ha-Shoah

The full name of this ritual day is Yom Ha-Shoah ve-Hegevurah, which means the Day of Commemorating the Holocaust and Heroism, and it was established by an act of the Knesset, the Israeli Parliament, in 1951. Yom Ha-Shoah is held on the 27th day of Nisan – a week after the end of the Passover holiday and a week before Yom Ha-Zikaron, the Memorial Day for Israel's fallen soldiers. It marks the anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising.

The ritual is designed to memorialise the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis during World War II and in the absence of true *yahrzeit* (lighting a memorial lamp or candle and reciting the *Kaddish* for the deceased person), given that it is not known when they died as individuals, the day is marked by a wide range of observances. In many synagogues, six *yahrzeit* candles are lit to commemorate the six million men, women and children murdered and *Kaddish* is prayed. Some synagogues invite speakers to reflect on the Shoah. In Israel, a siren is sounded at sundown and again at 11 a.m. and there is an official torch-lighting ceremony at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial and museum, with music and speeches. On this day in Israel, as a mark of respect, there is no public entertainment open and television and radio programs are adapted to the atmosphere of Yom Ha-Shoah.

Many ultra-Orthodox Jews do not endorse the Memorial Day and consider the minor fast day Asarah b'Tevet, the Tenth of Tevet, commemorating the beginning of the siege of Jerusalem in ancient times, as the general *Kaddish* day in which Jews recite the memorial prayer and

FIGURE 5.18 Warsaw Ghetto memorial



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light candles in memory of those who perished in the Holocaust to be the universal *yahrzeit* for those who were murdered by the Nazis.

The following three ritual observances all relate to the State of Israel and have the most impact there rather than elsewhere.

Yom Ha-Atzma'ut

Yom Ha-Atzma'ut, Israeli Independence Day, falls on 5th Iyar, a week after Yom Ha-Shoah, and celebrates the end of the British Mandate and the Declaration of Independence by Israel on 14 May 1928. Many Jewish congregations sing Israeli songs and have speakers or sermons focused on the current state of the Jewish homeland. Most people recite the 'Prayer for the State of Israel', which is literally called 'A Prayer for Peace for the State', composed by Israel's chief rabbis in 1948, and there is also a special prayer for soldiers serving in the Israel Defense Forces that is also said every Shabbat in Israel.

A Prayer for Peace for the State

Our Father in Heaven, Rock and Redeemer of Israel, bless the State of Israel, the first manifestation of the approach of our redemption. Shield it with Your loving kindness, envelop it in Your peace, and bestow Your light and truth upon its leaders, ministers, and advisers, and grace them with Your good counsel. Strengthen the hands of those who defend our holy land, grant them deliverance, and adorn them in a mantle of victory. Ordain peace in the land and grant its inhabitants eternal happiness.

Our brethren, the house of Israel, redeem them from the countries of their residence and lead them, swiftly and upright, to Your city Zion and to Jerusalem, the abode of Your Name, as is written in the Torah of Your servant Moses: 'Even if your outcasts are at the ends of the world, from there the LORD your G-d will gather you, from there He will fetch you. And the LORD your G-d will bring you to the land that your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will make you more prosperous and more numerous than your fathers.' Draw our hearts together to revere and venerate Your name and to observe all the precepts of Your Torah, and send us quickly the Messiah son of David, agent of Your vindication, to redeem those who await Your deliverance.

Manifest yourself in the splendour of Your boldness before the eyes of all inhabitants of Your world, and may everyone endowed with a soul affirm that the LORD, G-d of Israel, is king and his dominion is absolute. Amen forevermore.

On the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel the prayer was reworked.

Our Father, in heaven and on Earth, Rock of Israel and its redeemer, bless the state of Israel, so that she may become the beginning of the flowering of our redemption.

Shield her with Your embrace of love and spread over her Your *sukkah* – shelter of peace, and send Your light and Your righteousness to her heads, ministers, advisers, and judges, and to the nation that elects them, and align them with the spirit of justice from You, as it says, *Zion through justice will be redeemed and her captives through righteousness.* (Isaiah 1:27)

Rescue all of Your land, from the Jordan River to the sea, from the spilling of blood, and all of her inhabitants and sojourners, under every government, from haters without and hatred within, and grant peace in the land, and secure calm to her defenders, lasting joy to all her inhabitants, and real hope for all her peoples. And let us say: Amen.

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Yom Ha-Zikaron

Yom Ha-Zikaron, the Day of Remembrance, is the day before Yom Ha-Atzma'ut and is something like Anzac Day in Australia, commemorating the nations' war casualties. It is a day of mourning in Israel, marked by the sounding of sirens across the country at 11 a.m. followed by two minutes of silence. A pilgrimage to Mt Herzl military cemetery is common, where communal memorial services take place and at the Kotel, the Western Wall of the ancient Temple, there is a torch-lighting ceremony.



FIGURE 5.19 Day of Remembrance ceremony in Jerusalem's Mt Herzl cemetery on 8 May 2019

During this ritual, the following prayer is prayed:

> May G-d remember the souls of His heroic children: The fighters of the Israel Defense Forces, who fell in the wars of Israel, in defensive, retaliative, and security actions and during the fulfilment of their duty, including the souls of the underground fighters and brigades who fought in the national struggle – all those who sacrificed their lives for the sanctification of G-d's Name.
>
> And with the help of G-d, the LORD of Israel's campaigns, they brought about the revival of the nation and the state and the redemption of the land and the city of G-d.
>
> They were quicker than eagles and stronger than lions as they volunteered to assist the nation, and they saturated our holy land with their pure blood.
>
> The memory of their self-sacrifice and heroic deeds will never disappear from us. May their souls be bound in the Bond of Life with the souls of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and with the souls of the other heroes and martyrs of Israel who are in the Garden of Eden. Amen.

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Yom Yerushalayim

Yom Yerushalayim, Jerusalem Day, is the newest calendrical ritual day in the Jewish calendar. Observed on 2nd Iyar, it celebrates the reunification of Jerusalem on 7 June 1967, as a result of Israeli military successes in the Six-Day War. After the War of Independence in 1948, Jerusalem was divided, and Jews did not have access to the Western Wall and parts of the Temple. When the city was retaken by Israeli troops in 1967, it was the first time in two thousand years that the city was unified under Jewish rule.

The Chief Rabbinate of Israel consider Yom Yerushalayim a festive day and encourage the saying of *Hallel* and praying a long version of the Psalms in morning prayer. Orthodox Jews differ in their ritual commemoration of this holiday. Religious Zionists recite special holiday prayers and partake in celebratory meals and wear festive clothing. Some Haredi Jews make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and recite special passages of text and laws regarding Jerusalem. Many Israelis make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem and thousands march around the city, walking through the liberated Old City and enjoying the sites that were not accessible between 1948 and 1967. Some liberal Jews feel uncomfortable about celebrating the reunification of Jerusalem and complete Jewish sovereignty, due to political conflicts with the Arabs. Yom Yerushalayim is a politically charged day often supported by right-wing religious and political people rather than by supporters of the peace movement.

ACTIVITY **5.16**

Forming

The text states: 'For millennia the Jewish calendar remained unchanged until the 1950s when four new rituals were added.' It is unusual for a religion with ancient origins to add new rituals to its calendar. Why is this? What do you think has prompted Judaism to add these rituals?

ACTIVITY **5.17**

Finding and analysing

Yom Ha-Atzma'ut, Yom Ha-Zikaron and Yom Yerushalayim are all explicitly to do with Israel.

1. What texts from the Torah makes Israel such a potent focus for many Jewish people today?
2. In pairs, prepare dot points outlining the contesting perspectives of Orthodox and Liberal Jews regarding celebration of Yom Yerushalayim.

ACTIVITY **5.18**

Finding and analysing

Choose one of the recently added calendrical rituals of Judaism and list ritual words, ritual actions and ritual symbols along with the greater reality that each points towards.

ACTIVITY **5.19**

Forming and evaluating

What reasons could be put forward for the inclusion of rituals commemorating national interests within a religion's calendar? Why might adherents of Judaism have added these ritual celebrations as calendrical rituals? (You may like to review this question during completion of Unit 4: Religion, rights and the nation-state.)

Conclusion

Except for the most recent additions, the calendrical rituals of Judaism have strong connections to the sacred texts of Judaism and have been celebrated for thousands of years. The rituals remind people of their covenant with G-d and that every aspect of their life is lived in relationship with G-d.

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5.3 Christianity

Christian rituals celebrate the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus as well as preparation for his coming and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. The basic unit of the Christian calendar is the day, subdivided into hours. From the outset, Christians, like their Jewish forbears, had prescribed times of prayer in the evening, the morning and at intervals during the day on the third, sixth and ninth hours. In ancient times a night vigil was kept. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) said, 'we should pray in the early morning that by means of our morning prayer the resurrection of the Lord might be recalled; also at the setting of the sun and in the evening we should pray again'. These times of prayer became the daily public service of Lauds and Vespers in the fourth century. Later, monastic communities developed these prayers into the communal Liturgy of the Hours. Wednesday and Friday were fast days in remembrance of the passion of Jesus.

Christian calendar

The Christian calendar is a solar calendar of 365 days or 366 days in a leap year. There are two main versions of the Christian calendar: the Julian calendar and the Gregorian calendar.

The Julian calendar, proposed by Julius Caesar in 46 BCE, was a modified form of the Roman calendar. The average length of a year is 365.25 days and it has two types of year: 'normal' years consisting of 365 days and 'leap' years of 366 days. The Julian year drifts over time with respect to the solar year, gaining about three days every four centuries when compared to observed equinox times and seasons. Because of the drift, the Julian calendar introduces an error of one day every 128 years. So, every 128 years the typical year shifts one day backwards with respect to the calendar. Most branches of the Eastern Orthodox Church use the Julian calendar for calculating the date of Easter and other feast days.

The Gregorian calendar, named after Pope Gregory XIII, was introduced in October 1582

ACTIVITY **5.20**

Finding

On the Activity Worksheet, complete the table by inserting the dates for the celebration of the Holy Days listed for both the Gregorian and Julian calendars.

Holy Day	Gregorian calendar date for the current year	Julian calendar date for the current year	Gregorian calendar date in five years' time	Julian calendar date in five years' time
Ash Wednesday				
Palm Sunday				
Holy Thursday				
Good Friday				
Easter Sunday				
Pentecost				
First Sunday of Advent				
Christmas Day				
Epiphany				

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and is a refinement of the Julian calendar. This solar calendar adjusts the length of an average year to 365.2425 days so that a leap year occurs every four years. The length of months varies between 28 and 31 days. The motivation for the adjustment in the calendar was to bring the date for celebrating Easter to the time when it was celebrated in the early church, tied to the spring equinox. The First Council of Nicaea (325 CE) specified that Christians should celebrate Easter on the same day, but it took many centuries before Christianity adjusted the calendar. It was really only in the sixteenth century, a time of increased astronomical knowledge and precision, that the Gregorian calendar was authorised during the Council of Trent, and since that time the Gregorian calendar has been the official calendar of the Roman Catholic Church and some other Christian churches.



FIGURE 5.20 Julius Ceasar (left) and Pope Gregory XIII (right)

ACTIVITY **5.21**

Forming and finding

1 Conduct some research to discover which Christian churches use the Julian calendar and which use the Gregorian calendar.
2 Holy Days in the Christian tradition celebrate important events recorded in the New Testament. Examine the list of Holy Days provided in Activity 5.20.
   a Which of the days listed are mentioned in the New Testament?
   b Why are these Holy Days noted on calendars?
   c Identify three reasons for the ritual celebration of these historical events.
   d What other significant events recorded in the New Testament are included as ritual celebrations in the Christian calendar?
   e In a separate list, identify any events recorded in the New Testament which are ritualised in only one denomination of Christianity rather than all denominations of Christianity.

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In the sixteenth century when the Protestant Reformation Churches separated from Catholicism, the Protestants removed many existing Holy Days from their liturgical calendar and simplified the remaining ritual observances. This section focuses predominantly on the prayer and rituals of Catholic Christianity because it continues to have a strong focus on prayer and ritual and there are a variety of calendrical rituals celebrated throughout the calendar year.

Daily prayer: Liturgy of the Hours

The Liturgy of the Hours or the Divine Office, also known as the Breviary, is the public prayer of the Catholic Church and consists of an official set of daily prayers used by clergy, members of religious orders and laity. The Breviary consists of a combination of psalms, hymns and readings from the Old and New Testaments and together with the Mass makes up the public prayer life of the Catholic Church.

The Liturgy of the Hours forms the basis of prayer life within monastic communities and is about sanctifying time, linking each moment of each day with the presence of God in the world and in people's lives. Often the Liturgy of the Hours is prayed communally, but it is also prayed by individuals, families and groups.



FIGURE 5.21 Nuns at the Monastery of Visitation in East Sussex praying the Liturgy of the Hours

From the sixth century, the Liturgy of the Hours was made up of eight offices or prayer times:

- Matins (sometimes called Vigils or Nocturns) occurs during the night, usually at midnight.
- Lauds occurs at dawn.
- Prime (first hour) or Early Morning Prayer – approximately 6 a.m.
- Terce (third hour) or Mid-Morning Prayer – approximately 9 a.m.
- Sext (sixth hour) or Midday Prayer – approximately 12 noon
- None (ninth hour) or Mid-Afternoon Prayer – approximately 3 p.m.
- Vespers or Evening Prayer – approximately 6 p.m., at the lighting of the lamps.
- Compline or Night Prayer – approximately 9 p.m. or just before going to bed.

While the arrangement of the Liturgy of the Hours is attributed to St Benedict, it can be traced back to the earlier monastic practices of the Desert Fathers of Egypt. At the Second Vatican Council, Pope Paul VI promulgated a new Roman Breviary. Prime was removed and 'major' and 'minor' hours were defined. The current Liturgy of the Hours has three major hours and two to four minor hours:

- Office of Readings, formerly Matins (major hour)
- Lauds or Morning Prayer (Major hour)
- Daytime prayer, which can be one or all of:
  - Terce or Mid-Morning prayer
  - Sext or Midday Prayer
  - None or Mid-Afternoon Prayer
- Vespers or Evening Prayer (major hour)
- Compline or Night Prayer

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All Liturgy of the Hours rituals follow a similar pattern. They begin with a prayer of invocation: 'God, come to my aid; LORD make haste to help me'; followed by 'Glory be to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit'. The opening acclamation is followed by: a hymn; one or two psalms which are framed by antiphons, concluding with a doxology; a scripture reading; prayers of intercession; and a concluding prayer.

ACTIVITY 5.22

Forming and finding

1 The information above indicates that the Liturgy of the Hours was followed by the Desert Fathers of Egypt. Conduct some research to identify who were the Desert Fathers and hypothesise why this form of prayer arose within this community.

2 The Liturgy of the Hours forms the routine within monastic communities. Conduct some research to provide some insight into why communities pray every three hours, including during the night. Complete a Y-chart related to the Liturgy of the Hours. Use the information from the Y-chart to generate reasons that regular daily prayer continues today.

Weekly rituals

The Book of Acts in the New Testament says that the early Christians marked the first day of the week, Sunday, with a gathering where they celebrated the presence of the crucified and risen Christ in the Eucharist: 'On the first day of the week, when we met to break bread …' (Acts 20:7). In the third century, the Emperor Constantine proclaimed the Day of the Sun (Sunday) as a day of rest in the Roman Empire. Sunday became the day on which Christian Eucharist was celebrated.

Sunday Eucharist

The Eucharist is a commemorative meal that recalls the Passover meal Jesus celebrated with his disciples. The Passover meal reminds the people of God's goodness and fidelity in rescuing them from Egypt. When Jesus added to the ritual of the Passover he encouraged people to remember his life, death and resurrection as a sign of the new covenant.

Throughout the world, Christians gather to celebrate the Lord's Day by listening to scripture, praying and breaking bread together. The Eucharist is about hospitality. It reminds Christians that because they have received the body and blood of Christ they must become the body and blood of Christ. They should, therefore, care for the elderly and the sick, they should befriend the lonely, and they should be a voice of righteousness in the world. When people celebrate the Eucharist, they are called to be bearers of an alternative voice within contemporary society. The Eucharist is a countercultural practice – it is the celebration of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.



FIGURE 5.22 Symbols of the Eucharist – the wine and bread

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Structure of Roman Catholic Mass

The Mass or the Lord's Supper is where the people of God, together with a priest, celebrate the Eucharistic sacrifice. The Mass is a single act of worship made up of two parts: the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The Mass is communitarian in nature and there are dialogue responses between the priest and the congregation. The acclamations and responses of the people actively engage people in the liturgy. The Mass follows a particular ritual order.

Introductory Rite

The Mass begins with the priest processing into the sanctuary of the church often accompanied by a gathering song. The priest greets the assembly and the Penitential Rite, a time of reflection on one's sins and praying or God's mercy follows. The Introductory Rite concludes with the Opening Prayer.

Liturgy of the Word

This part of the Mass contains readings from sacred scripture.

The First Reading, usually from the Old Testament, is followed by the Responsorial Psalm selected from the Book of Psalms where the congregation responds to a repeated antiphon. The Second Reading is from the New Testament. The Gospel Acclamation precedes a reading from one of the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke or John). After the readings the priest delivers a Homily, which breaks open the Word for the gathered community. The Prayers of the Faithful, also known as the General Intercessions, follow. These are prayers of petition that seek God's guidance for the world and the local community.

Liturgy of the Eucharist

The Liturgy of the Eucharist and communion are the most sacred parts of the Mass. The Liturgy of the Eucharist begins with the Presentation and Preparation of the Gifts of Bread and Wine. The priest prays the Prayer over the Gifts. As the Eucharistic Prayer begins, the congregation kneels as a sign of reverence for the most sacred



FIGURE 5.23 A worshipper receives communion during a Catholic mass

part of the Mass. There are three acclamations during the Eucharistic Prayer: the *Sanctus* (or Holy, Holy, Holy), Memorial Acclamation and the Great Amen, and they are often sung by the worshipping community. The congregation prays 'The Lord's Prayer' and then, prompted by the priest, they offer each other a sign of peace using the greeting 'Peace be with you'. The *Agnus Dei*, or Lamb of God, is prayed when the Eucharistic Bread is broken and shared. The congregation processes to the front of the altar to receive communion and then returns to their seat for silent prayer. The Liturgy of the Eucharist concludes with the Prayer after Communion.

Concluding Rite

The Concluding Rite contains the final prayers, blessing and dismissal. The Mass ends with the priest saying 'The Mass is ended. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord'. The priest processes out followed by the congregation.

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ACTIVITY 5.23

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

Within the Catholic tradition, the ritual of Sunday Eucharist has developed from the early church to today.

1 Read the following New Testament extracts and complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

Biblical reference	Summary of information related to the celebration of Eucharist
Acts 2:42	
Acts 20:7–11	
Acts 27:35	
1 Corinthians 10:16	
1 Corinthians 11:17–33	

2 Analyse the information gathered using What, When, How and Why as a means of collating your information. Now write a paragraph of 100 words that outlines the celebration of the Eucharist ritual according to New Testament sources.

Eucharist in the second century

In the middle of the second century, Justin wrote an apology, a defence of the Christians, to the Emperor Antoninus Pius explaining how Christians celebrated Eucharist:

> And on the day called Sunday there is a meeting in one place of those who live in cities or the country and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as time permits. When the reader has finished, the president in a discourse urges and invites us to the imitation of these noble things. Then we all stand up together and offer prayers. And, as said before, when we have finished the prayer, bread is brought, and wine and water, and the president similarly sends up prayers and thanksgivings to the best of his ability, and the congregation assents, saying the Amen; the distribution, and reception of the consecrated elements by each one, takes place and they are sent to the absent by the deacons. Those who prosper, and who so wish, contribute, each one as much as he chooses to. What is collected is deposited with the president, and he takes care of orphans and widows, and those who are in want on the account of sickness or any other cause … We all hold this common gathering on Sunday, since it is the first day, on which God transforming darkness and matter made the universe, and Christ Jesus our Saviour rose from the dead on the same day … the food we call eucharist, of which no one is allowed to partake except one who believes that the things we teach are true, and has received the washing for forgiveness of sins and for rebirth, and who lives as Christ handed down to us. For we do not receive these things as common bread or common drink; but as Jesus Christ our Saviour being incarnate by God's word took flesh and blood for our salvations, so also we have been taught that the food consecrated by the word of prayer which comes from him, from which our flesh and blood are nourished by transformation, is the flesh and blood of that incarnate Jesus. (Justin, *Apology* 67, 66)

continued …

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… continued

3 Create an infographic detailing how the ritual of Eucharist was celebrated in the second century.
4 Create a flowchart using the information about the contemporary celebration of Eucharist presented in this chapter on page 308.
5 After reviewing the three sources related to the celebration of Eucharist, write a structured paragraph of 200 words describing how the ritual of Eucharist has developed over time.

Major calendrical rituals

By the sixth century an annual celebration of rituals had evolved that is still followed by most Christian traditions today. The two most important celebrations for Christians are Easter and Christmas.

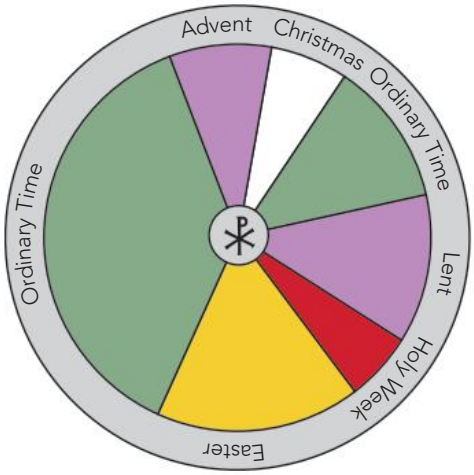


FIGURE 5.24 Liturgical seasons

The Christian year is divided up into an annual cycle known as the liturgical year. Each liturgical season has its own colour, customs and feel. The Church too marks each liturgical season by using different colours, symbols and rituals.

The seasons of the Church's liturgical year are:

- Advent – purple
- Christmas – white
- Ordinary Time – green
- Lent – purple
- Holy Week – red
- Easter – gold.

The liturgical year begins with the first Sunday of Advent, which also marks the beginning of the cycle of readings used in the liturgy.

TABLE 5.2 Major calendrical rituals

Liturgical season	Holy Day	Time of year
Lent	Ash Wednesday	40 days prior to Easter Sunday (omitting Sundays)
	Palm Sunday	Sunday before Easter Sunday
	Holy Thursday	Thursday before Easter Sunday
	Good Friday	Friday before Easter Sunday
Easter	Easter Sunday	Sunday following the first full moon after the March equinox
Easter ends	Pentecost	Seven weeks after Easter Sunday
Advent	First Sunday of Advent	Four Sundays before Christmas Day
Christmas begins	Christmas Day	25 December
Christmas ends	Epiphany	6 January

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Advent

At the beginning of the sixth century, Advent was included as a preparation time for Christmas just as Lent was used as a preparation time for Easter. Eventually, the Feast of the Presentation of Christ (Candlemas) was added. The Christmas cycle now consists of:

- Advent
- Christmas
- Epiphany.

Advent, from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning *going before*, is a time of preparation and waiting for the birth of Jesus and reminds people to 'Prepare the way of the Lord'. Communities of faith use Advent as a time to teach about trust and patience in God.

Sometimes referred to as a 'little lent', Advent has always been less austere than Lent. During Advent people are encouraged to pray, fast and perform deeds of good work. Traditionally, all major feasts were preceded by a time of fasting, which made the feast more memorable. The Roman Catholic Church no longer has a requirement of fasting during Advent but the Eastern Catholic Church continues a period of fasting from 15 November until Christmas, known as Philip's Fast because it begins on the feast of St Philip. It reminds people to sanctify time by praying and helping others.

The most recognisable symbol of Advent is the Advent Wreath, which originated in the German Lutheran Church and was later adopted by Catholics. The wreath is a green circle of branches that holds four candles, three purple candles and one pink candle: one candle for each of the four Sundays of Advent. The three purple candles remind people of the penitential nature of Advent while the pink candle is used on Gaudete Sunday, the third Sunday of Advent. Gaudete Sunday reminds people that they are past the midpoint of Advent and the colour change from purple to pink provides people with encouragement to continue their spiritual preparation for the birth of Jesus.



FIGURE 5.25 Advent wreath with four candles: three purple and one pink

Christmas

The festival of Christmas emerged in the fourth century and was an adaptation of the pagan winter solstice festival. Because people did not know the actual date on which Jesus was born, 25 December was chosen to commemorate the birth of Jesus.

After patiently waiting throughout Advent, Christians celebrate God becoming human with the birth of Jesus. At Christmas, Christians not only remember the birth of Jesus as it is recorded in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, but they also remember how God is present with them today. The season of Christmas provides people with opportunities to demonstrate the presence of God in their life, such as helping the elderly, giving food to the poor or even volunteering in a soup kitchen. Christmas, a time of incarnation when God became human, is the second most important day in the Church's year.

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FIGURE 5.26 Christians gather at Melbourne Town Hall to sing Christmas carols and enact the nativity



FIGURE 5.27 Catholics in Guatemala City are marked with a cross on their foreheads on Ash Wednesday

In most churches, the birth of Jesus is recreated in a nativity scene or a nativity pageant.

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and concludes with the feast of the Baptism of Jesus, which is celebrated on the Sunday after the feast of the Epiphany.

Epiphany

In Roman Catholicism, the Epiphany is celebrated on 6 January. In Latin cultures it is also known as the Three Kings Day or Day of the Magi. According to ancient custom, the Epiphany is 12 days after Christmas Day. The one or two Sundays between Christmas Day and the Epiphany are called Christmastide. The colours used for the feast of the Epiphany are the same as for Christmas – white or gold and sometimes the symbols of crowns are used to remind people of the magi who brought three gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh.

The Easter cycle

The Easter cycle has three major phases: Lent, the Paschal cycle and Pentecost, which cover approximately 12 weeks within the liturgical year.

Lent

Lent, which begins on Ash Wednesday, is the six weeks prior to Easter and concludes on Holy Thursday. The purpose of Lent is to prepare believers for Holy Week, which marks the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus. On Ash Wednesday, Christians are marked on their forehead with a cross in ashes, usually the blessed and burned palms from the previous Palm Sunday. As the cross is put on the person's forehead the minister says: 'Turn away from sin and believe in the gospel' (Mark 1:15). An older prayer, not used as frequently today, is 'Remember that you are dust, and unto dust you shall return' (Genesis 3:19).

Lent is a time of abstinence and fasting when Catholics over 14 years of age are required to abstain from eating meat on Ash Wednesday, each Friday during Lent and Good Friday. People with special dietary requirements are exempt, but they usually perform some other act of self-denial. Lent, a time of prayer, penance, almsgiving, self-denial and abstinence, reminds believers of the 40 days that Jesus spent in the desert prior to beginning his ministry.

The colour for this liturgical season is purple, a colour that is associated with mourning and so anticipates the suffering of the crucifixion. Throughout the season of Lent, parts of the liturgy are changed or omitted. The *Gloria*, usually said or sung at Sunday Mass, is omitted on the Sundays of Lent, as is the *Alleluia* before the Gospel Reading. The gospel *Alleluia* is replaced with the statement: 'Glory and Praise

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to You, Lord Jesus Christ'. Before the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), religious statues and pictures in the church were covered with fabric so that people could not see the image for the duration of Lent. While this is not common practice today, it is still observed in some countries, including Spain, Peru and the Philippines. At the end of Lent, Christians begin the Paschal cycle.

The Paschal cycle

Palm Sunday is celebrated the Sunday before Easter and begins Holy Week. Holy means to 'set apart' so Christians set apart a week to mark: Jesus's entry into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday or Passion Sunday), the Last Supper (Holy Thursday), the Crucifixion (Good Friday) and the Resurrection (Holy Saturday – Easter Sunday).

Passion Sunday

Palm or Passion Sunday commemorates Jesus's entry into Jerusalem, which is recounted in the four gospels (Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–10; John 12:12–16; Luke 19:28–40). The priest wears red vestments, a symbol of Jesus's passion. As people enter the church on Passion Sunday, they are given a small palm branch, which is blessed as a prayer similar to the following is said:

> Almighty God, we pray you bless these branches and make them holy. Today we joyfully acclaim Jesus our Messiah and King. May we reach one day the happiness of the new and everlasting Jerusalem by faithfully following him who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

The psalms distributed at Mass are a *sacramental*, a grace-bearing sign, which reminds people of the presence of God in their lives. The congregation joins a procession around the church following the priest, cross bearer, candle bearers, holy water bearer and the Book of Gospels. The procession is a physical reminder of Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. The gospel readings for the day are the Passion of Jesus, which begin at the Last Supper and end with the crucifixion.

Chrism Mass

Another important ritual held during Holy Week is the Chrism Mass, which is held once a year in the cathedral of the archdiocese or diocese. During this mass, the archbishop or bishop blesses the Holy Oils to be used throughout the coming year. The oils are: Oil of the Sick used for Anointing of the Sick; Oil of Catechumens used in baptism; and Sacred Chrism used for confirmation, ordination of priests, and the consecration of altars. The oil is traditionally olive oil with balsam added for perfume. The blessing of oils is a tradition that has existed since the early church and the bishop is the only person able to consecrate the oils.

The importance of the oils is explained in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

> Anointing with oil has all these meanings in the sacramental life. The pre-baptismal anointing with the oil of catechumens signifies cleansing and strengthening; the anointing of the sick expresses healing and comfort. The post-baptismal anointing with sacred chrism in Confirmation and Ordination is the sign of consecration. By Confirmation Christians, that is, those who are anointed, share more completely in the mission of Jesus Christ and the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which he is filled, so that their lives may give off 'the aroma of Christ.' (2 Cor 2: 15) (CCC, no. 1294)

During the Chrism Mass, the entire congregation is invited to renew their baptismal promises. Deacons and priests are asked to renew their vow of obedience to the local bishop and their commitment to serve God's people.

The Oil of the Sick is blessed during the Eucharistic Prayer. The archbishop adds balsam to the oil and prays: 'Make this chrism a sign of life and salvation for those who are to be born again in the waters of baptism … when they are anointed with the holy oil make them temples of your glory, radiant with the goodness of life that has its source in You.' When the Chrism is blessed, the archbishop breathes over the oil, a reminder of when the Holy Spirit breathed

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FIGURE 5.28 The Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, blesses the Holy Oils for the coming year

over the face of the waters before creation in Genesis 1 and when the Holy Spirit breathed on the disciples in John 20:22–23 saying: 'Receive the Holy Spirit …'. After the Chrism has been blessed, the Archbishop blesses the Oil of Catechumens. The oils are distributed to representatives of all the parishes in the diocese and transported back to local churches for use in parish ceremonies. In many new churches the oils are displayed in an ambry located near the baptismal font. The oils remind people that they are united in Christ and the Church.

Easter Triduum

The Easter Triduum, the Great Three Days, begins on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord's Supper, followed by a reading or enactment of the Passion on Good Friday, and concludes with the Easter Vigil on Saturday evening.

Holy Thursday

Holy Thursday commemorates the institution of the Eucharist by Jesus. Celebrated in the evening because, as a Jew, Jesus would have gathered in the evening to celebrate Passover, the Holy Thursday liturgy uses readings from both the Old and New Testaments. During the singing of the *Gloria*, bells, a symbol of joy, are rung. This is the last time the congregation hears bells during the Easter Triduum until they are sounded during the *Gloria* on Holy Saturday night. The removal of the sound of bells is a signal for people to focus on the suffering of Jesus as they remember the agony in the garden and the crucifixion.

In the Mass of the Last Supper, the first reading from the Book of Exodus (12:1–14) is about Passover and how to prepare for Passover, and the second reading, from 1 Corinthians (11:23–6), is about the institution of the Eucharist.

The gospel reading from John 13:1–15 tells how Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. For centuries, the Church has imitated Jesus's action of washing the feet of the disciples through a ritual washing of people's feet on Holy Thursday. Pope Francis has performed the foot-washing ritual for different groups of people such as inmates of a prison or refugees from Mali, Eritrea, Syria and Pakistan.

After communion, the Blessed Sacrament is removed from the centre of the church and placed on an altar of repose (a temporary altar). The hosts consecrated at the Holy Thursday mass are reserved for use on Good Friday. The

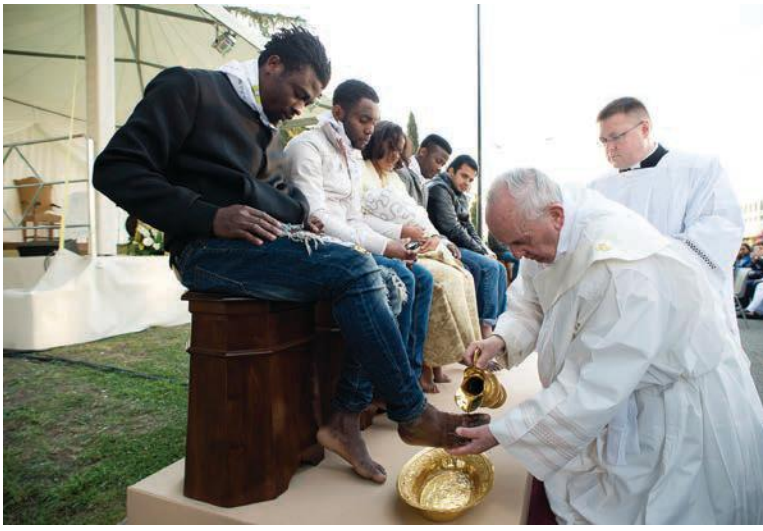


FIGURE 5.29 Pope Francis performs the foot-washing ritual at the Castelnuovo di Porto refugee centre near Rome on Holy Thursday

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priest, along with a cross bearer, candle bearers and thurifer (the person carrying the thurible with incense), processes to the altar of repose. The congregation leave the church in silence. In many parishes, people spend some time in prayer kneeling before the altar of repose. At the conclusion of mass, the main altar is stripped of all candles and decoration and left bare. In some churches, the statues and religious images are covered in purple cloth and the Holy Water fonts are emptied. No masses are celebrated from the conclusion of the Holy Thursday mass until the vigil mass of the Resurrection on Holy Saturday evening.

Good Friday

Good Friday is the day Christians commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus. In the Roman Catholic Church, it is a day of fasting and abstinence when people are required to refrain from eating meat. The liturgical service is normally held at 3 p.m. and the priest wears red vestments to remind people that Jesus died for the sins of all.

The Good Friday liturgy consists of four parts:

1. The liturgy of the word, which is the reading the Passion of Jesus from the gospels. In some parishes, the Passion story is dramatised while in other parishes there may be a number of people who participate in a dramatic reading of the Passion narrative.
2. Intercessory prayers for the Church and the world.
3. Veneration of the cross.
4. Communion – Mass of the Pre-sanctified where the Blessed Sacrament, which has been held at the altar of repose, is distributed to people for communion.

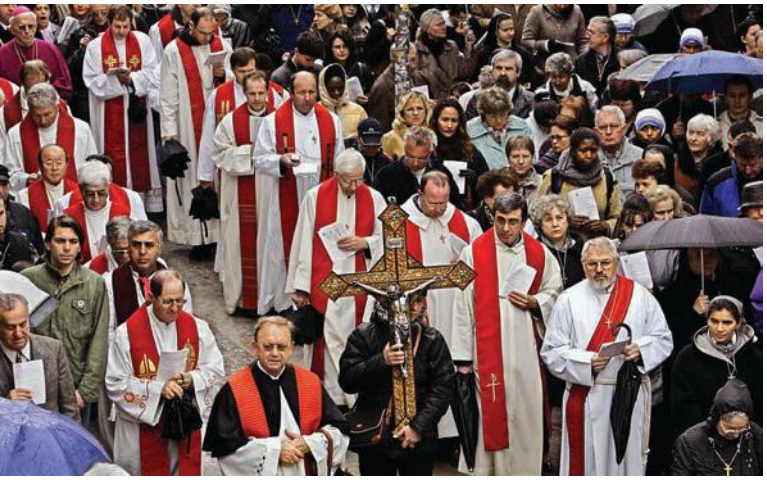


FIGURE 5.30 A Good Friday procession in Munich, Germany

Veneration of the cross

The veneration of the cross is a practice that dates from the fourth century. According to tradition, St Helen, the mother of the emperor Constantine, discovered a small piece of the cross when she was in Jerusalem on a pilgrimage in 326 CE. From the sixth century onwards, a container holding the wood of the cross was placed on a table in the Chapel of the Crucifixion and people either touched or kissed it as a sign of reverence while the priest said: 'Behold the wood of the cross.' Veneration of the cross does not mean that people adore the image; rather the cross is a reminder of what Jesus sacrificed in order to give his life to save others. Today, the veneration of the cross takes a number of forms. In some parishes, people process forward and kiss a crucifix; in other parishes a large wooden cross is placed in the centre of the church and people place flowers around the cross; in many parishes a large wooden cross is passed over the heads of the congregation and people feel the weight of the cross as they pass it from one area of the congregation to another.

After venerating the cross, people leave the church in silence as a mark of respect, having just listened to the gospel account of the passion and death of Jesus.

Easter Vigil – Holy Saturday

The climax of the Easter Triduum is the Easter Vigil, the highest feast in the Church calendar and the oldest Christian festival. Remembering the resurrection of Jesus, it celebrates the Paschal Mystery: the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and its significance for all Christians.

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FIGURE 5.31 A Catholic priest lights a Paschal candle inside the Church of the Nativity compound in Bethlehem, Israel

The Easter Vigil ceremony, which marks the beginning of Easter, consists of four distinct parts:

1. Service of Light
2. Liturgy of the Word
3. Liturgy of Baptism
4. Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The vigil begins with the Service of Light, which is generally held outside the church where a fire is lit and blessed. Inside the church is visibly different: the holy water fonts are empty, the church is in darkness, and the tabernacle is empty. The Paschal candle, a very large candle with an image of the cross at its centre, is blessed at the fire. Above and below the cross are two Greek letters: *alpha* α (the first letter of the Greek alphabet) and *omega* Ω (the last letter of the Greek alphabet) – the beginning and the end. The current year is also engraved on the candle. The priest inserts five grains of incense into the candle representing the five wounds of Jesus (nails in two hands and feet, the spear which pierced his side, and the crown of thorns on his head). As he inserts the incense, the priest says: 'By his holy and glorious wounds may Christ the Lord guard us and protect us. Amen'. The priest lights the candle from the flames of the fire saying, 'May the light of Christ, rising in glory, dispel the darkness of our hearts and minds'. The Paschal candle is processed into the church: at the front door the candle is held high above the priest's head as he sings: 'The light of Christ', and the congregation responds: 'Thanks be to God.' This process is repeated in the middle of the church and then again just before the altar. As the candle is processed through the centre aisle of the church, the congregation light individual candles from the flame of the Paschal candle symbolising the risen Christ as the light of the world. When the priest reaches the lectern, the *Exsultet* (the Easter proclamation) is sung. The *Exsultet*, a long, sung prayer which tells the story of God's love and mercy for all people, begins with the words:

> Rejoice heavenly powers! Sing choirs of angels!
> Exult, all creation around God's throne!
> Jesus Christ, our King is risen!
> Sound the trumpet of salvation!
>
> Rejoice, O earth, in shining splendour,
> radiant in the brightness of your King!
> Christ has conquered! Glory fills you!
> Darkness vanishes forever!
>
> Rejoice, O Mother Church! Exult in glory!
> The risen Saviour shines upon you!
> Let this place resound with joy,
> echoing the mighty song of all God's people!

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Ascension

The feast of the Ascension of Jesus into heaven is celebrated on the 40th day of Easter. The Book of Acts 1:6–11 contains an account of the Ascension.

> So when they had come
> together, they asked him,
> 'Lord, is this the time when
> you will restore the kingdom
> to Israel?' 7He replied, 'It
> is not for you to know the
> times or periods that the
> Father has set by his own
> authority. 8But you will
> receive power when the Holy
> Spirit has come upon you; and
> you will be my witnesses in
> Jerusalem, in all Judea and
> Samaria, and to the ends of
> the earth.' 9When he had said
> this, as they were watching,
> he was lifted up, and a cloud
> took him out of their sight.
> 10While he was going and
> they were gazing up towards
> heaven, suddenly two men in
> white robes stood by them.
> 11They said, 'Men of Galilee,
> why do you stand looking up
> towards heaven? This Jesus,
> who has been taken up from
> you into heaven, will come in
> the same way as you saw him
> go into heaven.'

The feast of the Ascension is known as a solemnity, which means it is a significantly important day for people of the Catholic Christian tradition. It marks the end of the Easter season and anticipates the feast of Pentecost.

Pentecost

On the 50th day after Easter Sunday, the Christian church celebrates Pentecost Sunday, which marks God's gift of the Holy Spirit descending on the people of the Church. Pentecost is one of the earliest documented feasts of the Church, being described in Acts 2. It is also reported as being a transformative moment in the life of the followers of Jesus. Each person heard the good news in their own language (Acts 2:6) and they were inspired to spread the good news to the entire world.

In the early church, Pentecost was an eagerly awaited feast and celebrated with great joy. The Council of Nicaea banned all kneeling and fasting during Pentecost because it was a mark of penitence. The Council directed Christians to stand up straight and pray confidently and boldly. Throughout history, different ways of celebrating Pentecost developed and some of the symbolism used was quite imaginative and even exotic. In Germany, rose petals were dropped into the church through a hole in the

FIGURE 5.32 Pentecost dove with flame



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roof to represent the tongues of fire spoken about in Acts, while trumpets imitated the sound of rushing wind. In other parts of Europe, people dropped burning straw from the roof beams to symbolise the tongues of fire. This practice was soon stopped by the priests after several churches burned to the ground! Another custom involved suspending either a live dove or a carved dove from the church roof – the dove is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. The liturgical colour for Pentecost is red, which reminds people of the tongues of fire.

Pentecost day offers Christians the opportunity to renew their own spiritual commitment to spread the good news to others.

Ordinary Time

There are two periods of Ordinary Time in the Church calendar: the first is between Christmas and Lent and the second is between Pentecost and Advent. Ordinary Time provides people with time to reflect on the seasons just passed and to prepare for important feasts to come. During Ordinary Time some parishes provide programs for people to extend their knowledge of prayer or scripture and to think about their faith.

The title 'Ordinary Time' could be deceiving. It does not mean dull or uninteresting; rather it is from the word 'ordinal', meaning 'time counted' – each Sunday has a consecutive number, for instance, Third Sunday of Ordinary Time. Throughout Ordinary Time, the gospel stories focus on Jesus's preaching and healing and his explanations of how to live a good life. Ordinary Time is sacred time and provides people with time to reflect and establish good prayer habits. The liturgical colour for Ordinary Time is green.

Other feast days

In Catholic Christianity, there are numerous feast days. The Australian Catholic Church identifies two days as Holy Days of Obligation: the Nativity of Jesus (Christmas Day – 25 December) and the Assumption of Mary (15 August). In addition to Holy Days of Obligation, a number of other days are named as feast days of saints: St Patrick is remembered on 17 March, and on 29 June the Church honours Sts Peter and Paul. All Saints' Day, celebrated each year on 1 November, remembers all saints known and unknown who live in the presence of God. All Saints' Day is celebrated in a number of Christian denominations including the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran and Methodist. The Eastern Christian Church also celebrates All Saints' Day, usually on the first Sunday after Pentecost. On All Souls' Day, 2 November, people remember all Christians who have died. In some Christian denominations, people visit cemeteries on All Souls' Day to pray for deceased relatives and friends.

ACTIVITY **5.24**

Finding

In groups of three, conduct some research to locate a saint's feast day for each month of the year. Complete a character profile for each saint noting: Name; Place of birth; Ministry within the Church; Contribution to Christianity; and specific rituals performed on the feast day.

Conclusion

There are many calendrical rituals within Christianity ranging from the Liturgy of the Hours, which punctuate the day with prayer, to major celebrations such as Easter and Christmas. The rituals remind people of the importance of individual and group prayer as well as focusing on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

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5.4 Islam

In this section we consider some of the calendrical rituals of importance in the lives of Muslims. The most important rituals are those associated with the Five Pillars of Islam, but there also other rituals that punctuate the lives of Muslims. Essential to all ritual action for Muslims is proper intention. For ritual acts, a person must state consciously and, if possible, audibly his/her intention to carry out a particular action, and must keep this intention in mind throughout the act. Ritual purity is also a requirement and is primarily a matter of sanctity. The laws related to purity are a reminder that sanctity relates to the physical as well as the mental and spiritual aspects of life. In general, Shi'ites have been stricter about purity than have Sunni Muslims.

Calendar

The Muslim calendar, or Hijri calendar, is a lunar calendar consisting of 12 months in a year and 354 or 355 days, and is used by Muslims to calculate the times of Islamic rituals, holidays, times of fasting and the pilgrimage to Mecca. The Hijri era was established in 622 CE when Muhammad and his followers migrated from Mecca to Yathrib, where they established the first Muslim *umma* (community). Each month begins with a new moon and the months are alternately 30 or 29 days, except for the 12th month, Dhu al-Hijjah, the length of which varies over a 30-year period: for 11 years it has 30 days and for 19 years it has 29 days.

The 12 months of the Hijri calendar

1	Muharram	7	Rajab
2	Safar	8	Sha'ban
3	Rabi al-Awwal	9	Ramadan
4	Rabi'al-Thani	10	Shawwal
5	Jumada al-Awwal	11	Dhu al-Qi'dah
6	Jumada al-Thani	12	Dhu al-Hijjah

Ritual practice

Rituals punctuate the daily life of Muslims and the Islamic lunar calendar year is filled with ritual observances. Islam is a faith that requires a high level of discipline in its required ritual observances and ritual prayer is one of the most visible expressions of Islam. All human activity in Islam must have proper intention (*nyya*).

Islam means 'submission' and Muslims demonstrate their submission to Allah by making at least two full prostrations (touching their foreheads to the ground) while praying. Prayer in Islam is carefully choreographed as each body movement is specified. The times of prayer are also set.

A Muslim may pray anywhere: at home, work or in the street, except for noon on Friday when Muslims gather at the mosque for communal prayer. Community prayer is also important at the end of Ramadan and at the end of the pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj) or at times of disaster.

Each prayer begins with a public call, even if the believer is alone. Prayer is a physical symbol of a Muslim's absolute submission to Allah and there is no room for ritual innovation.



FIGURE 5.33 Preparing for prayers at home

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The Qur'an, which means 'recitation' in Arabic, is like a liturgical document for Muslims and all Muslims must recite at least part of the Qur'an, in Arabic, during their prayer. Many Muslims have memorised the first chapter of the Qur'an, which, when translated, says:

> In the Name of God, the
> Merciful, the Compassionate.
> Praise belongs to God, Lord
> of the worlds, the Merciful,
> the Compassionate,
> Master of the day of faith.
> It is you that we serve and
> to you we pray for aid.
> Guide us in the straight path
> the path of those for whom you
> have made the ways smooth,
> not of those against whom you
> are angry,
> nor of those who are astray.
> (Qur'an 1:1–9)

This passage exemplifies the focus of Muslim prayer because it not only invokes God's name and his characteristic mercy and compassion, but it also describes God as both the Creator and the Judge of creation. It then proclaims the rightful position of Muslims as utterly dependent on God for help and protection from hell.

It is interesting to note that the Qur'an does not specify the number of daily prayers nor the ritual movements required for prayer. To eliminate confusion about the correct time for prayer and differences in ritual movements, Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani (d. 996) provided one of the four accepted interpretations for prayer time.

Daily prayer – *salat*

Salat, daily prayer, is a highly structured form of worship requiring specific body movements, the recitation of specific verses, and must be performed five times per day. Before praying each Muslim is expected to perform a ritual



FIGURE 5.34 The ritual of *wudu* at ablution taps in the Sultan Ahmed Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey

washing (*wudu*) of hands, arms, feet, face and neck. If a person believes that they are in a state of purity, then they are not required to complete *wudu* but it is customary to do so.

While *salat* is prescribed in the Qur'an (11:114), prayer five times a day is not prescribed in the Qur'an. The times for prayer are:

- *Fajr* - dawn
- *Suhr* – noon
- *'Asr* – mid-afternoon
- *Maghrib* – after sunset
- *'Isha* – evening when the sun disappears.

Times according to the clock vary with date and place. In the Muslim world, the times for a particular day and locality are published in the newspaper and world times for prayer are available on the internet. Under certain circumstances, such as travelling, two *salats* may be joined together or a *salat* may be made up later.

Salat may be performed alone or in a group and it may be performed anywhere that is ritually clean, but it is preferable that it be performed in a group in a mosque. While it may not always be possible to perform *salat* in a mosque, for practical reasons it may be performed at home, in the workplace, either alone or in a small group.

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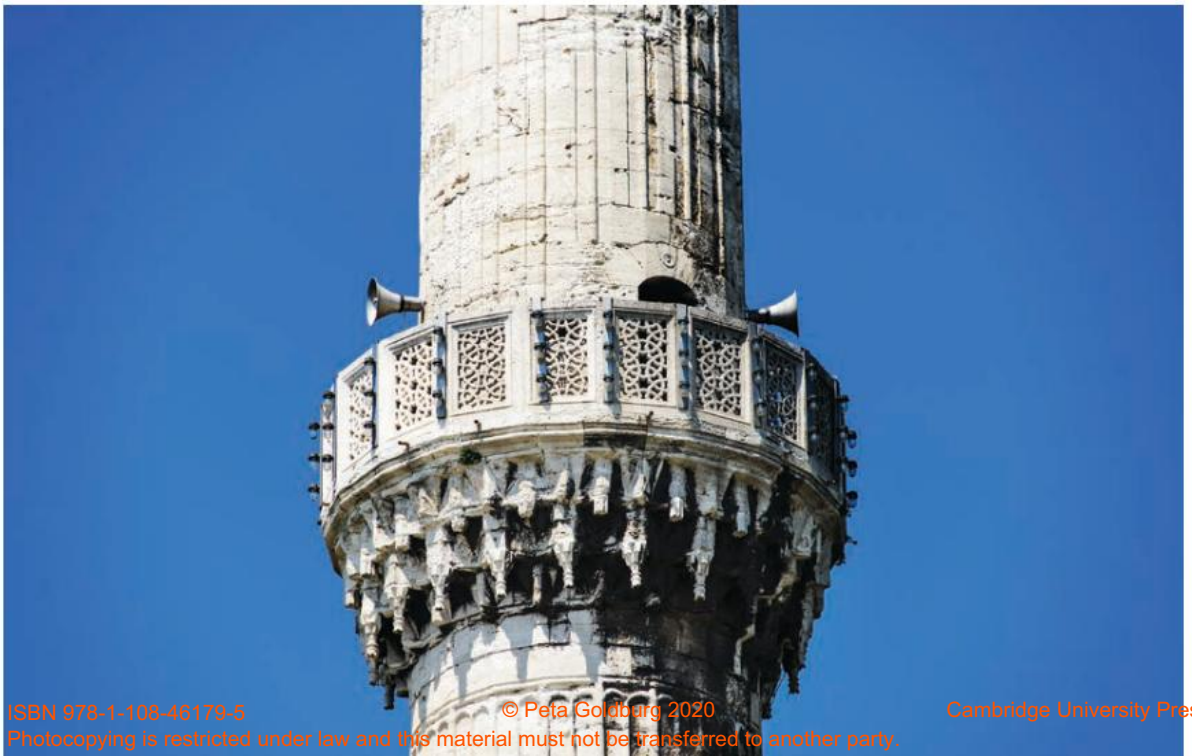
Prayer rugs are one way of assuring that the area is clean, but they are not compulsory. When performing *salat* in public, it is usual to place a small object about one metre in front of the person or people praying; it is a serious breach of etiquette for anyone to walk between this object and those praying. If there is more than one person performing *salat*, one of them, usually the oldest or most knowledgeable person, acts as the prayer leader. When there is a group, they will place themselves in straight rows and coordinate their actions following the prayer leader or *imam*. The *imam* will be male unless the group praying is made up entirely of women.

Shortly before the time of *salat* the *Adhan*, or call to prayer, is recited in a loud voice by the *muezzin*, usually from the minaret but sometimes from the roof or steps of the mosque or elsewhere. Today the *Adhan* is often recorded and broadcast over loudspeakers or on television or radio. The words are:

Allahu akbar – God is most great (four times).
Ashhadu an la ilaha illa allah – I witness that there is no god but Allah (twice).
Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasul allah – I witness that Muhammad is the messenger of Allah (twice).
Shi'ites may add here: *ashhadu anna Aliyan wali allah* – I witness that 'Ali is the guardian appointed by Allah.
Hayya 'ala al-alah – Come *salat* (twice).
Hayya 'ala al'falah – Come to success (twice).
Al-Salat khary min al-nawm – Prayer is better than sleep (twice, only before *fajr salat*). Shi'ites say instead: *Hayya 'la khary al-'amal* – Come to the best deeds (twice before all *salats*).
Alluh akbar – God is most great (twice).
La ilaha illa allah – There is no god but Allah (Sunnis once, Shi'ites twice).

Just before the *salat* starts the *iqama* is said; it is similar in wording but recited in a lower voice. Believers pray facing Mecca and in mosques the direction of Mecca is marked by a niche or *mihrab*. The ritual performance of *salat* consists of one or more *rak'as*.

FIGURE 5.35 Minaret with loud speaker system for the call to prayer



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TABLE 5.3 Muslim prayer movements

1  *Niyyat* – hands raised to the ears, palms outward, thumbs at earlobes.	2  *Qiyam 1* – hands folded, right over left, over the lower chest, recite the first chapter of the Qur'an.	3  *Ruku* – hands on knees, bowing from the waist.
4  *Qiyam 2* – hands by the side, standing upright.	5  *Sajda* – on hands and knees with head to the ground.	6  *Qu'ud* – rise to a kneeling position.
7  *Sajda* – on hands and knees with head to the ground.	8  *Tashahhud 1* – in a kneeling position, turn to the left and to the right, while a sacred benediction is said (a blessing upon all present, even if alone).	9  *Tashahhud 2* – in a kneeling position, turn to the left and to the right, while a sacred benediction is said (a blessing upon all present, even if alone).

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These details may vary slightly depending on circumstances and also on the *madhhab* (school) one follows. Shi'ites usually place a piece of clay from the ground of Karbala (in Iraq) on the ground and touch their foreheads on it in prostrations. The precise number of *rak'as* varies with the times of day; generally, there are between two and four obligatory *rak'as* and between two and five *sunna rak'as*.

ACTIVITY 5.25

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 List the distinguishing features of ritual for *salat*.

2 Investigate *salat* online, using links to videos and text websites. Suggested links are:
- YouTube video: *Learn How to Pray (Salah) the Right Way*
- BBC website at the following link: http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8588.

Under each of the distinguishing features in your list, give examples of how it is demonstrated in *salat*. Use information from the chapter and from online resources.

3 What do Muslims see as the benefits of having set times for daily prayer?

Friday prayer – *salat al-Jum'a*

Friday prayer (*jum'a*) is congregational prayer in the mosque and it is compulsory for all men to pray the noon prayer together. The congregational *salat* (*salat al-Jum'a*) includes ***khutba***, a sermon which is delivered from the minbar (raised platform like a pulpit). The *khutba* is divided into two parts and the preacher takes a brief rest between the two sections. Usually the *khutba* deals with a range of religious and moral topics and sometimes political issues: most of the *khutba* consists of quotations from the Qur'an and praises to Allah. Traditionally, prayers for the ruler or the state are included as an important symbolic recognition of the ruler's authority.

khutba
formal sermon given at *salat al-Jum'a*; may cover a range of topics

Shi'ites place less emphasis on *salat al-Jum'a* and sometimes they refuse to hold it because they questioned the legitimacy of the existing government. Friday is not a day of rest. The Qur'an says that people should go about their ordinary business after *jum'a* (62:10).

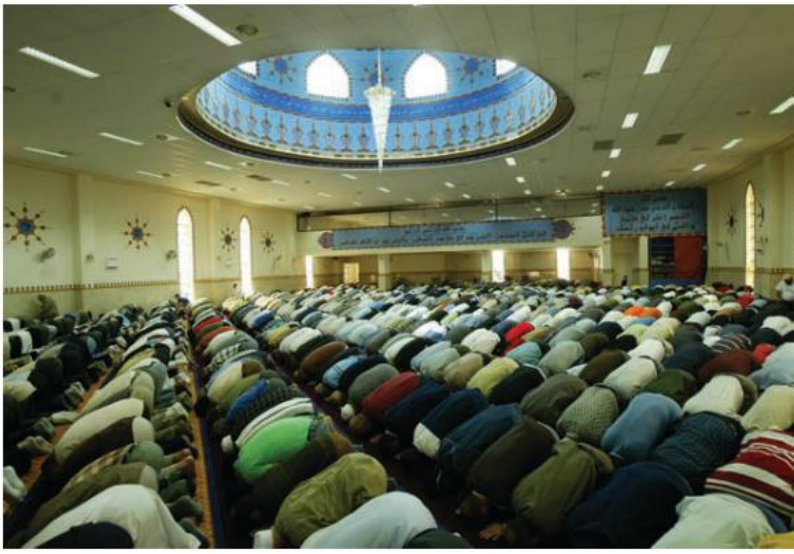


FIGURE 5.36 Friday prayers at the Lakemba Mosque in Sydney

ACTIVITY 5.26

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Use the internet to investigate *salat al-Jum'a*. Suggested links are:
- YouTube video: *How To Attend a Muslim Friday Prayer Service (Jum'ah)*
- Al Islam website.

2 Use a Venn diagram or similar strategy to analyse the similarities and differences between daily *salat* and *salat al-Jum'a*.

3 Write a structured paragraph of 150–200 words evaluating the purpose of a set time for communal prayer.

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Ramadan

Muslims have a duty to fast for one month every year during the ninth month of the Muslim year, Ramadan. Ramadan reinforces the sense of solidarity of the *umma*. Those who are well-off experience the hunger that the poor experience daily and thus have increased sympathy for them. Fasting is also considered victory over one's impulses and demonstrates self-control.

Ramadan was the month in which, according to tradition, Muhammad received the first words of the Qur'an. During this month, Muslims fast from just before dawn to just after sunset, abstaining from food, drink, smoking and sexual intercourse. Muslim legal scholars devised criteria for those who qualified to undertake the fast: a person must be a physically fit Muslim over 10 years of age and in full possession of his/her senses; a woman who is menstruating or who has just given birth is not able to fast; children, pregnant women, the elderly and those who are unwell are exempted partially or completely. Others exempted may include travellers, but in most instances the person should make up the fast by fasting a day for each day missed or providing a meal for the needy or its monetary equivalent. People, including non-Muslims, who are not fasting should, as a matter of consideration, not eat in the presence of those who are fasting. The ending of the fast, *iftar*, should be a conscious act, not one that occurs by accident. The fast ends at sunset and before the *maghrib* prayer when people consume a small amount of food such as dates or fruit juice. After *salat*, families and friends gather for a large and sometimes lavish meal. The nights of Ramadan are joyous occasions and are filled with entertainment, visiting friends and even special programming on television.



FIGURE 5.37 Family gathers for the *iftar* meal during Ramadan

Ramadan is a time of heightened spiritual awareness. Special *salat*, called *tarawih*, consisting of between eight and 20 *rak'as*, are preformed after the *'isha salat* by Sunnis. Some people spend the nights in mosques studying the Qur'an, praying or completing other spiritual exercises. Often mosques arrange a *khatima*, a recitation of the Qur'an by professional Qur'an reciters, where one of the 30 parts of the Qur'an is recited each night. Muslims also believe that the *jinn* (invisible beings) are confined to prison during Ramadan, which allows people to celebrate freely.

Because of the lunar calendar, Ramadan falls at different times of the year and in different seasons. When Ramadan falls in winter, the days are short, and fasting is relatively easy, but when Ramadan falls in summer, the days are long and hot and fasting can be a great hardship. During Ramadan, the rhythm within society changes and slows down as people's daily timetables adjust. Muslims living in non-Muslim countries often find fasting more difficult because the general society does not adjust to Ramadan as in a Muslim country.

ACTIVITY **5.27**

Finding

Use a reliable internet source to identify the dates of Ramadan for the next five years. What would be differences for people completing the fast in the northern hemisphere and in the southern hemisphere?

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Laylat al-Qadr – Night of Power

The exact date of the Night of Power is uncertain, but it can be any odd-numbered night from the 21st to the 29th days of Ramadan, and most often it takes place on the 27th night of the month. According to tradition, this is the night on which the Qur'an was revealed to Muhammad. On this night, according to tradition, the heavens are open to convey special blessings and answer prayers. The Night of Power is described in the Qur'an in the following manner:

> Behold, We sent it down on
> the Night of Power
> And what shall teach you what
> is the Night of Power?
> The Night of Power is better
> than a thousand months; in
> it angels and the
> Spirit descend, by the leave
> of the Lord, with all
> decrees.
> Peace it is, till the rising
> of the dawn. (Qur'an 97)

Across the world, Muslims celebrate this occasion by staying up all night for prayer and reciting of the names of Allah. Laylat al-Qadr culminates the days of fasting during Ramadan and is considered to be the night when the human and the divine are closest.

Id al-Fitr

Id al-Fitr, the festival of breaking the fast, is held the day after Ramadan; in some places the festival is held for three days. There is a special *salat* in the morning followed by visits to cemeteries and then parties with gifts for children. In some countries it is a national holiday. There is also Zakt al-Fitr, where each person gives the value of one meal to charity. Because Muslims do not accept astronomical calculations for their festivals, the new moon must be sighted for Ramadan to end and for the Id al-Fitr to begin. Consequently, the festival may be celebrated on different days in different parts of the world when the new moon is visible in one place and not in another.

Fasting

While fasting is obligatory during Ramadan, it may also be undertaken for other reasons such as during a period of drought. Voluntary fasting is recommended on the Day of Ashura, the 10th day of the month of Muharram, and, if possible, on the day preceding as well as the day following it. Fasting is also recommended on the day of Arafat during the Hajj; for six days from the second to seventh days of the month of Shawwal; for 10 days in the month of Dhu al-Hijja, and on the day of the Mi'raj (ascension of the Prophet). Historically, other fast days could include every Monday and Thursday; the first, middle and last day of each Muslim calendar month; the days of the white nights of each lunar month (12th, 13th, 14th and 15th) and the days of the black nights (28th, 29th, 30th and sometimes first).

The Hadith also says that the Prophet recommended that a person fast every other day. Fasting is forbidden during the 'Id celebrations Id al-Adha and Id al-Fitr. Fasting is considered a time of renewing commitment to be more mindful of one's ethical behaviour to Allah, others and self. Some people view fasting as a time to be thankful for the bounties provided by Allah and a time to be compassionate for those who go hungry or suffer.

ACTIVITY **5.28**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Use the text of this chapter and an online search engine to locate the video *How Not to Fast (Ramadan Film)*. Use the information gathered to explain the meaning of fasting during Ramadan.

Hajj

The Hajj, pilgrimage to Mecca, Arafat and Mina, is considered to be a duty for every Muslim who is physically and financially able, to be taken at least once in their lifetime or to appoint someone to make the pilgrimage on their behalf if they are elderly or infirmed. Traditionally performed during the month of Dhu al-Hijja,

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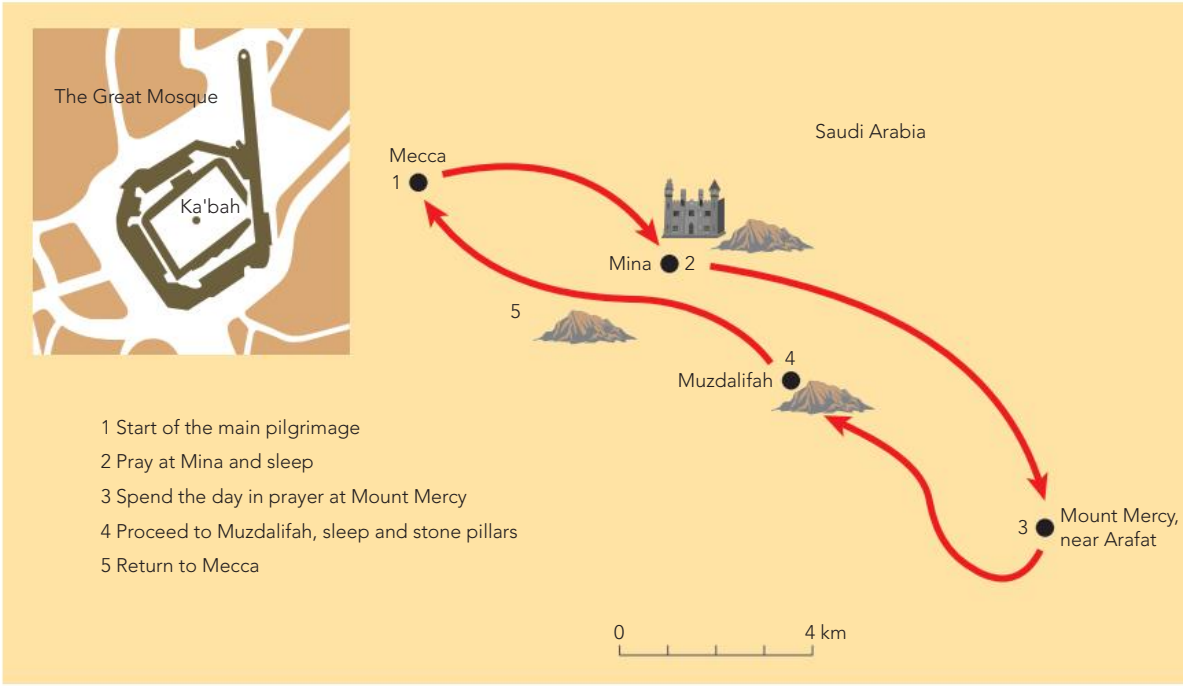


FIGURE 5.38 A map of Hajj locations

from the eighth to the 12th days, the Hajj can be performed at any time of the year especially during the Muslim month of Rajab.

The pilgrimage to Mecca was already a practice before Muhammad was born because worshippers wanted to visit the mysterious black meteorite that had fallen in the area. Muhammad, according to divine revelation, continued the practice, including veneration of the meteorite. Men dress in a special two-piece white robe called *ihram*, which symbolises the equality of all Muslim believers. Women have no special clothing but usually do not cover their faces when participating in Hajj. Before beginning the pilgrimage, the pilgrim recites the *talbiya* in Arabic:

> Here I am, O God, here I am.
> You have no associate. Here I am.
> Praise belongs to you, and blessing and power.
> You have no associate. Here I am.

For the Hajj, pilgrims travel to Mina outside Mecca and then to Arafat, the Mount of Mercy, where they stand from noon until sundown listening to *khutbas* and engaging in devotions including the *talbiya*. They then run to Mazdalifa, where they spend the night and return to Mina on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijja, where they stone three pillars symbolising the devil and then sacrifice an



FIGURE 5.39 Muslim pilgrims in white clothes for Hajj

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animal commemorating the sacrifice of Ibrahim. After the sacrifice, the men's heads are shaved, women's hair is cut, and all fingernails and toenails are trimmed to signify a new, purified life and a return to ordinary activities. They circle (*tawaf*) the Ka'bah and return to Mina from the 10th to the 13th days of Dhu al-Hijja and stone pillars again on these days. Most pilgrims then go to Medina to visit the tomb of the Prophet, but this is not required. Muslim governments control the number of people going on Hajj and have developed systems for deciding who goes. In Malaysia, the Tabund Hajji has helped people save for the Hajj and makes arrangements for them.

The Hajj season lasts three months: Shawwal, Ramadan and Dhu al-Hijja. Many pilgrims arrive during Shawwal, observe the fasts of Ramadan while in Mecca and remain for the Hajj during Dhu al-Hijja, celebrating Id al-Adha before returning home. A pilgrim who has completed the Hajj is known by the title *Hajji*.

ACTIVITY **5.29**

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

Locate two or three websites on the Hajj. Use the information in this textbook and the information from the websites to respond to the questions below.

1 List some of the spiritual and logistical preparations that would be required before beginning a Hajj.
2 Create a diagram showing the sequence of activities that occurs during the Hajj.
3 Script and/or create a video recording of a 5–6-minute TV interview for a current affairs program featuring an interview with members of an Australian Muslim family who has just returned from the Hajj. You should include:
   a questions and responses about preparing for Hajj
   b questions and responses about what occurred during their pilgrimage
   c questions and responses about the significance of their experiences.

   These videos may provide you with suitable background material; access them via the following links:
   - *Hajj Part I (expectations and requirements of pilgrim)*: http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8580
   - *Hajj Part II (goals and activities of the hajj)*: http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8581
   - *Hajj Part III (effects of the hajj experience)*: http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8582.
4 Princeton University hosts a website allowing users to take part in a 'Virtual Hajj' (see the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8583). List three reasons why this website might be considered worthwhile despite the fact that all Muslims are obliged to take the Hajj at least once in their lives.
5 Create a Y-chart related to Hajj.
6 Use information gathered from this textbook and other reliable sources to create a travel brochure/itinerary for Hajj pilgrims.
7 Annotate a map of each sacred site, describing the rituals performed at each location of the Hajj.
8 Complete a Venn diagram comparing the requirements and expectations for men and women participating in the Hajj.
9 How might male and female participation in the Hajj maintain or suspend the gender divide commonly associated with Muslim societies?

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ACTIVITY 5.30

Response to stimulus – analysing and evaluating

Malcolm X

Read the extract from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* on the Activity Worksheet describing Malcolm X's pilgrimage to Mecca, and answer the questions that accompany it.



FIGURE 5.40 Malcolm X (1925–1965), an African American Muslim and human rights activist in the 1950s and 1960s

Other rituals marking significant milestones in the life of the Prophet include: Milad al-Nabi – the birth of the Prophet; Laylat al-Qadr – the night of revelation (see earlier in this section); Mi'raj – ascension; and Id al-Adha and Id al-Fitr – the two festival days.

Milad al-Nabi – the birthday of the Prophet

The Prophet's birthday is celebrated by Sunnis on the 12th day of Rabi al-Awwal, the third month of the Muslim year, which some also consider to be the date of Muhammad's death. Generally referred to as his *mawlid*, the birthday of the Prophet was celebrated from the tenth century and was a time during which scholars delivered lectures and sermons, people gave food to the poor and children were given sweets.

Many *mawlid* celebrations include the recitation of poetry in honour of the Prophet. In Turkey, mosques are decorated with candles and



FIGURE 5.41 Pakistani Muslims attend the celebration on Milad al-Nabi with fireworks and a procession with burning torches

lights and in South-East Asia the 12 days leading up to the birthday are commemorated through the sounding of drums, special prayers for the Prophet and exhibitions of paintings, dance, acrobatics and the performance of heart-stirring *ghazals*, or love-poems. Cities in Muslim nations are festooned with flags and special programs are featured on television and radio. The gatherings often include stories of the miraculous events surrounding the birth of the Prophet. These stories comprise angels and *jinn* congratulating themselves on the Prophet's birth, the gardens blossoming and the sky coming close to the earth. Many people still recite the poem by the Turkish poet Suleyman Celebi (d. 1422), the opening lines of which are:

> Amina Khatun, Muhammad's mother dear:
> From this oyster came that lustrous pearl.
> After she conceived from 'Abdullah
> Came the time of birth with days and weeks.
> As Muhammad's birth was drawing near
> Many signs appear before he came!
> …
> Amina said: 'When the time was ripe
> That the Best of Mankind should appear,
> I became so thirsty for that heat
> That they gave me sherbet in a glass
> Drinking it, I immersed in light
> And could not discern myself from light.
> Then a white swan came with soft great wings
> And he touched my back with gentle Strength.'

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Shi'ites celebrate the birthday of the Prophet on the 17th day of Rabi al-Awwal, but it is not as important for them.

Isra – Night Journey and Mi'raj – Ascension

The Isra and Mi'raj are two parts of a spiritual and physical journey which, according to tradition, took place on a single night in 621 CE. The two events are referred to in the Qur'an: 'Praise Him, who travelled in one night with His servant from the *masjid al-haram* to the *masjid al-aqsa*, whose surrounding We blessed in order to show him Our signs' (Qur'an 17:1). Muslim tradition considers the one to be praised to be the angel Jibra'ail (Gabriel), the servant refers to Muhammad, the Prophet, the *masjid al-haram* to be the Ka'bah in Mecca, and the *masjid al-aqsa* to be a reference to Jerusalem in earthly or heavenly form. The term *miraj* means ladder and there are several Qur'anic references to a ladder connecting heaven and earth.

Hadith literature says that angels came upon Muhammad while he was sleeping and opened his heart, washing away all doubt, idolatry and error with water from the well of Zamzam, and filled him instead with wisdom and belief. Purified, Muhammad was then taken on his night journey (*isra*) from Mecca to Jerusalem and then on the ascent (Mi'raj) to the heavens.

Muslims commemorate this event through various rituals. Celebrated on 27th of Rajab, rituals vary from region to region with many entailing fasting, recitations of the Qur'an, reading from texts detailing the journey, lectures on the importance and meaning of the celebration, as well as silent and communal prayer.

Id al-Adha (also called Id al-Qurban, Id al-Nahr or Id al-Kabir) marks the end of the rite of pilgrimage to Mecca and commemorates when Ibrahim was asked to sacrifice his son as a token of loyalty, devotion and obedience to Allah. Celebrated on 10th of Dhu al-Hijja, it is observed throughout the Muslim world. The festival is for people who have participated in the Hajj and also those who have not, and the ritual lasts for two or three days. Pilgrims celebrate their sacrifice in the valley of Mina. Special prayers are said, and Muslims wear their best clothes, visit family and friends, and exchange or give gifts.

FIGURE 5.42 Muslim pilgrims end their Hajj by praying in the Mina valley near the Saudi Arabian holy city of Mecca



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Muharram rites: Ashura and the tragedy at Karbala

Muharram, meaning that which is sacred, is the first month of the Muslim lunar calendar and is one of the four sacred months. The 10th day of Muharram is significant to Sunnis and Shi'ites for very different reasons. The day is spent in fasting. On this day the Ka'bah's doors are opened to visitors.

For Shi'ite Muslims, this day marks the day on which the Prophet's grandson Husayn was martyred in 680 CE by Yazid. Husayn, the son of the Prophet's daughter Fatima and his cousin Ali, is held in great reverence by Shi'ites as the holder of the Imamate. It is a day of intense mourning for Shi'ites. Rituals are observed during the first 10 days of Maharram. The suffering of Husayn is recalled in passion plays called *taziya* (offering condolences) or *rawda-khwani*, which include melancholic chants called *anwha* or *marthiya*. The 10 days culminate in the story of Husayn's martyrdom in a retelling that invokes expression of profound sorrow. Mourning ceremonies often take the form of street processions, at which ritual performers beat their chests or strike their backs with chains sometimes fastened with blades or small knives to draw blood.

For Sunnis, the event is remembered, but to a lesser extent, and it is considered a time of remembrance rather than a time of mourning.

Nawrusz – New Year

The festival of Nawrusz (new day) is observed primarily by Shi'ite Muslims in the area of Iran and is also known as Persian New Year. The day of the vernal equinox, Nawrusz marks the beginning of spring in the northern hemisphere and the first day of the month of Farvardin in the Iranian calendar.

Families usually perform rituals such as gift-giving for children, spring cleaning, and in some homes there is the setting of a *haft* table. The *haft* table contains several items beginning with the letter 's'. These include: *sabzeh* (sprouted wheat grass for rebirth and renewal); *samanu* (sweet pudding) for affluence and fertility; *senjed* (sweet, dried lotus tree fruit) for love; *serkeh* (vinegar) for patience and wisdom gained through aging; *sir* (garlic) for medicine and maintaining good health; *sib* (apples) for health and beauty; and *sumac* (crushed spice made from red berries) for recalling the sunrise. Other items included on the table may be a mirror to reflect the past year; a goldfish in a bowl representing new life; an orange in a bowl of water symbolising the



FIGURE 5.43 A ritual performer strikes himself with chains during Muharram in Khorramabad, Iran



FIGURE 5.44 A *haft* table showing the traditional items for the festival of Nawrusz

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earth; decorated eggs for fertility and coins for prosperity; as well as books of classical poetry or the Qur'an for spiritual sustenance.

ACTIVITY 5.31

Finding

Imagine that you have been invited to take part in one of the rituals in this section. Create a social media post that describes your experience of the ritual, its patterns, symbols and community participation.



FIGURE 5.45 Balinese Hindu religious ceremony and dances in a village temple near Ubud, Indonesia. The Ngusaba ceremony celebrates the beginning of the rice harvest.

Conclusion

All ritual acts in Islam require the full attention of the adherent and his/her intention to carry out the particular ritual must be at the front of his/her mind throughout. The Prophet said: 'Deeds [are judged] by intentions and every person will receive according to their intention.' The major calendrical rituals common to all of Islam are *salat*, Ramadan and the Hajj. The Hajj not only symbolises the unity of the *umma*, but it also helps to effect it. Other calendrical rituals mark significant times in the life of Muhammad but are celebrated differently in the various traditions.

5.5 Hinduism

The Hindu year is crowded with festivals and rituals involving narratives, songs, foods and family festivities. The celebration of calendrical rituals in Hinduism varies considerably depending on region, caste, gender and family. While Divali, the Festival of Lights, and Navaratri, Nine Nights of the Goddess, are celebrated throughout India, the rituals, myths and foods associated with them differ significantly between regions. Such is the diversity within Hinduism that some rituals are only celebrated locally and may not be known beyond a few villages or a geographic region.

Most Hindu calendrical rituals are based on the lunar calendar and many coincide with the agricultural cycle of seasons: hot season, rainy season, winter season, ploughing, planting, first fruits and full harvest. During the autumn harvest season in North India, Navaratri, Dashera and Divali are common while in South India the harvest is celebrated for four days during the winter solstice called Pongol.

Many calendrical rituals are domestically oriented, while others are associated with temples and some are even celebrated in public spaces. The spring festival of Holi, when coloured powders are thrown between people, was traditionally celebrated in domestic courtyards among family and friends, but today it is celebrated in the streets and includes fireworks displays.

Hindu calendar

The traditional Hindu calendar is lunisolar. The solar calendar is a seven-day week and the monthly calendar (*masa*) is lunar, based on the waxing and waning fortnights followed by the full and new moons. The difference between the year of 12 lunar months and the solar year (approximately 10.87 days every year) is made up by inserting an additional month every third year called *adhika masa*. In Hinduism, almanacs are used to identify the correct and auspicious time for making vows, celebrating festivals, offering sacrifices and observing lifecycle rites. An

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TABLE 5.4 How the months of the Indian Reformed Calendar relate to the dates of the Gregorian calendar

Month	Number of days	Start date in Gregorian calendar
Caitra	30 days; 31 days leap year	22 March; 21 March in leap year
Vaisakha	31 days	21 April
Jyestha	31 days	22 May
Asadha	31 days	22 June
Sravana	31 days	23 July
Bhadrapada	31 days	23 August
Asvina	30 days	23 September
Kartika	30 days	22 October
Margasirsa	30 days	22 November
Pausa	30 days	22 December
Magha	30 days	21 January
Phalguna	30 days	20 February

almanac is a published list of events for a year, including weather forecasts, tide times, planting dates, rising and setting times for the sun and moon, dates of eclipses and religious festivals.

In 1947, when India gained its independence, there were over 30 different calendars used in India. The government established a Calendar Commission in 1952 to connect the Indian calendar with the Gregorian calendar. On 22 March 1957, the spring equinox, the Indian Reformed Calendar was introduced, and the day became New Year's Day. The Indian Reformed Calendar separates the Indian months from the moon phases and approximates the length of each month to that of the Gregorian calendar. The Indian Reformed Calendar does not provide very specific details required for religious purposes, so people consult the numerous regional *Pancangas*, which are published annually.

Because the times for religious festivals are set according to lunar months that can be calculated from either the beginning of the bright fortnight or the beginning of the dark fortnight, there is no India-wide agreement on the beginning of calendrical feast days.

puja religious ritual that Hindus perform on a variety of occasions to pray or show respect to gods

ACTIVITY 5.32

Finding

Use an online search engine to identify the dates of Divali, Navaratri and Holi in the coming year for the following locations: North India; South India; Singapore; and Indonesia. Account for the similarities and differences.

Temple rituals

Hindus often use the phrase 'taking *darshan*' for their visits to and participation in temple rituals. The word *darshan* comes from the Sanskrit work *drish*, meaning sight, but its everyday use in religious contexts implies much more than literal sight. The entire body of the worshipper and all the senses are involved in *darshan*. After bowing, the worshipper hears the chanting of mantras and ringing of bells, smells burning incense and camphor, and tastes the *prasad* (fruits, spiced water, nuts) offered to worshippers at the end of ***puja***. Temples are very busy places with multiple rituals taking place at different shrines.

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FIGURE 5.46 Preparing for *puja* in Hindu temple, Jaffna, Sri Lanka

Daily temple rituals

The first ritual of the day is wakening the deity, often with a morning song (*suprabhatam*). *Puja* is offered throughout the day using the primary ingredients of flowers and fruits, turmeric and vermilion powder, and coconuts. When cooked food (*naivedyam*) is offered, the curtain or door in front of the deity is closed to give him/her privacy to eat. Worshippers can also pay a fee to a priest to offer an *archana*, the recitation of the deity's 1008 names, while he sprinkles *kumkum* or rice at the feet of the deity when uttering each name.

At the end of the day, a series of rituals are performed to put the deity to bed. In Shiva temples, it is called *ardhajama aradhanai* (evening ritual) and in Vishnu temples it is called *sayana utasava* (laying down ritual) or *ekanta seva* (last service). These rituals are often accompanied by evening ragas or lullaby-type songs.

Weekly temple rituals

One ritual that is unique to temple worship is *abhishekam*, the anointing of the image of the deity with substances such as water, milk, honey, yogurt and turmeric water. The ritual, a sign of protection for the deity from inauspiciousness, is performed in Southern Indian temples on a weekly basis, but it is not commonly performed in North India.

Annual temple rituals

Many temples celebrate an annual festival procession when a small metal image of the deity (no taller than one metre) is processed outside the temple on wooden carts. The annual nine-day procession for Venkateshvara in Tirumala-Tirupati draws hundreds of thousands of pilgrims. Each day the *utsava mutri* is decorated differently. On the second day, for example, the guise is female Sarasvati, on the sixth day the god is decorated to be Rama and his ***vahana*** is Hanuman; on the seventh day he is decorated as Govardhanadhari (Krishna who holds up the Govardhan Mountain); on the eighth day his *vahana* is a white horse, implying that god is Kalki, Vishnu's avatar still to come.

vahana
term meaning vehicle, which refers to the attribution of animals as modes of transportation to most of the major gods

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ACTIVITY 5.33

Forming and finding

Create an infographic which names and describes the daily, weekly and annual rituals that take place in Hindu temples.



FIGURE 5.47 Devotees bathing at the Agni Tirtha in Rameshvaram

Pilgrimage

While pilgrimage is not required of Hindus, many people visit sites related to the gods such as the land of Braj where Krishna grew up, Cidambaram where Shiva dances or Rameshvaram where Ram crossed the ocean to Lanka.

Divali
a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection, which takes place on the full moon in the month of Shravana

Divali – Festival of Lights

One of the most well-known rituals of Hinduism is **Divali**. Also called Dipavali (meaning 'row of lamps'), it is one of the few rituals observed across India and is celebrated on the darkest night of the lunar month of Kartika (October-November).

The focus of the ritual is to throw light into the darkness by lighting oil lamps to drive away inauspicious forces and to invite auspiciousness in the form of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. In North India, Divali also celebrates the occasion of Rama's return to Ayodhya after conquering the demon King Ravana. The lights and fireworks celebrate Rama's return and are a testimony that evil has been conquered by *dharma*. In South India, Divali is more commonly associated with the mythical event of Krishna's killing of the demon Narakasura.

In Central and North India, Divali falls at the end of the monsoon season when rice paddies are being harvested. At the end of the monsoon

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FIGURE 5.48 *Rangoli* pattern on a floor



FIGURE 5.49 Kashmiri Hindu devotees light candles for the festival of Divali

season, people need to repair their houses and so the theme of renewal is prominent at this time. Houses are cleaned and decorated, beautiful *rangoli* patterns are made on the floor, lamps are placed on window sills and porches and fireworks erupt during the night. Women prepare sweets and other foods and make sure that houses have sufficient *diyas* (clay lamps) filled with oil. Paths are also lined with lamps leading to the *puja* shrine inside the house.

The theme of light has various meanings, but two are prominent. Divali commemorates the safe return to India of Ram and his rescued bride, Sita. According to the *Ramayana*, people lit the way home by placing lamps on the path. Divali is also the time when Lakshmi visits the earth, bringing fortune and success to those she blesses. During Divali, Lakshmi's image is portrayed with coins falling from her hands and many businesses commence their new financial year at this time.

Divali is celebrated for five days. The first day is dedicated to Lakshmi and business people invoke a prosperous new year by offering *puja* to their recently balanced account books. The second day celebrates Krishna's killing of the demon Narakasura and his freeing thousands of captive princesses. The main festivities occur on the third day when houses are decorated with rows of small clay lamps filled with oil. These lamps are also placed along the parapets of temples and set adrift on rivers and streams. On the third day people remember how Lord Rama returned to Ayodhya accompanied by Sita and the army commanded by Hanuman. Also on the third day, the lamps beckon Lakshmi into homes and the goddess of learning, Sarasvati, is also revered. On the fourth day, Govardhana *puja* is performed. Govardhana is named after the mountain Krishna lifted up above his village to protect its inhabitants and cattle from the fierce storm-god Indra. Worshippers tell the story, construct replicas of the hill and offer a huge feast. On this day Lakshmi, in the form of the wealth of cattle, is celebrated; cattle owners decorate their animals' horns, dot their backs with vermilion powder and feed them special food from brass plates. On the fifth and final day, the family and kinship is celebrated when girls and women give gifts to their brothers who, in turn, are responsible for protecting their sisters.

Divali is recognised around the world as the quintessential Hindu calendrical ritual. The celebration has expanded outside of India to include gift-giving, sending Divali cards, attending parties and socialising.

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ACTIVITY **5.34**

Analysing

Locate a YouTube clip of a community celebrating Divali, then answer the questions below.

1. From the video, list as many activities as you can that are part of Divali celebrations.
2. Write a short description (200–250 words) for a travel guide explaining the Divali festival for non-Hindus. Remember to explain the symbolism, practices and religious significance of the festival for foreigners visiting a Hindu community during Divali.
3. Compare your description of the Divali celebration with another student who has watched a Divali celebration from a different community. Complete a Venn diagram showing similarities and differences. What reasons can you give for the differences?

Rituals to mark the change of seasons

There are many Hindu rituals to mark the changing of seasons. Three of the most important are the solar festival Pongal, also known as Lohri and Makara Sankranti; Vasanta Panchami, the welcoming of spring; and the noisy and colourful ritual of Holi.

Pongal/Lohri/Makara Sankranti

Pongal is observed particularly by Tamils and celebrates the end of the main harvest period. Pongal means 'it has boiled' and refers to the sweet rice offered to the sun god, Surya. In Punjab the ritual is called Lohri and in other parts of India it is known as Makara (Capricorn).



FIGURE 5.50 A ritual *sarkkarai ponggal* dish – rice boiled in milk – during the Pongal celebration in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

The first day honours Lord Indra. To prepare for the festivities, old clothes and materials are burned or thrown away, marking the end of the old. On the second day, the main day, people put on new clothes to symbolise the start of a new cycle. In the open air, women boil rice in fresh milk using new clay pots as an offering to Surya. The mixture is topped with raisins, cashew nuts and palm sugar and is intentionally boiled over, symbolising prosperity. The cooking process is special too, and the moment it comes to the boil the woman makes a prolonged trill with her voice to notify her neighbours. Some of the food is given to the deity and the rest is shared with family and friends. On the third day, farmers wash their cattle, paint their hooves and horns and lead them in a procession. On the fourth and final day, festivities conclude with visits to friends, relatives and nearby towns and cities.

In Tamil Nadu, the ritual occurs in two distinct contexts: just outside the home during the Pongal festival in mid-January and outside village goddess temples during the winter solstice.

Vasanta Panchami

The ritual of Vasanta Panchami is celebrated annually on the fifth day of the month of Magha marking the first day of spring. Hindu poets call spring '*rituraja*', the king of seasons, and the *Bhagavad Gita* identifies it with god's splendour

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FIGURE 5.51 An adherent performs *puja* in front of the goddess Sarasvati during a Vasanta Panchami festival in Noida, India



FIGURE 5.52 Coloured powdered paint flies in the air during Holi

and opulence. According to Hindu texts, the deity of love, Kamadeva, is always accompanied by the god in charge of spring.

The spring festival coincides with Sarasvati Puja, the goddess of learning. On this day, ancestors are worshipped, *Brahmins* are fed, and children are taught to write their first words. Schools and colleges offer special prayers to Sarasvati and children place pens and notebooks at the goddess's feet, seeking blessings to pass their exams. Artists and musicians ask the goddess to bless their tools and instruments.

People dress in yellow and Sarasvati is draped in yellow silk. Hindus eat sweets dyed with saffron and in Punjab the fields are ablaze with blooming mustard. The colour yellow is associated with the planet Jupiter and with growth, wisdom and prosperity. During the day, children fly kites and women adorn their houses with *rangoli* patterns.

Holi

Falling on the full moon of the month of Phalguna (February-March), **Holi** is the most rowdy and colourful of all Hindu calendrical rituals. Traditionally, the festival is marked by the lighting of bonfires on the evening before Holi into which pieces of coconut are sacrificed and people circle the fire seeking the blessing of Agni, the god of fire.

Today, the festival is associated with the throwing of coloured powder and water. Participants cover each other with fluorescent powder and children spray passers-by with coloured water. It is a time for breaking with custom and transgressing standard codes of etiquette: women rebuke their husbands; students make fun of their teachers; and small children throw mud at adults passing by. The atmosphere is one of abandonment and frequently becomes quite aggressive and competitive.

The origins of the ritual vary, but the most common is associated with the female demon Holika who is said to have eaten a child every day. One day, a poor widow was to offer her only son to be eaten, but all the children gathered together and abused Holika, who subsequently died of shame and rage. Holika is also linked with the demon-king Hiranyakashipu (whose name means 'gold' and 'soft beds', implying he was highly materialistic) and his child, Prahlad. Prahlad was the opposite of his father and a devotee of Vishnu. This enraged his father who tried to teach his son the art of deceit. When this proved useless, he tried to murder Prahlad by pushing him from a cliff, casting him into a snake pit, and throwing him under the feet of charging elephants.

Holi
a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and family, happiness and friendship

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Raksha Bandhana a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of Shravana

Throughout each ordeal, the boy's prayers to Vishnu protected him and he remained unharmed. Seething with fury, Hiranyakashipu summoned his evil sister, Holika. He knew that she could not be harmed by fire and so the two plotted to carry Prahlad into a blazing fire. When Holika took Prahlad into the fire, he was saved, and she was burned to ashes.

In various parts of India, different stories are retold. At Krishna's birthplace in Mathura, elders relate stories of how Krishna and the milkmaids threw dyed water and fluorescent powder. During Holi people remember how Vishnu protects his followers and destroys evil.

ACTIVITY **5.35**

Finding and analysing

1 Conduct a 5Ws + H strategy on the festivals of Pongol, Vasanta Panchami and Holi.
2 Use a Y-chart to imagine what it would look like, sound like and feel like to celebrate each of these festivals.

Analysing and evaluating

Often ritual celebrations are enacted on three levels. The first level is according to accepted tradition; the second is an adaptation of the tradition for the local community group; and the third is individual adaptation.

1 Search the internet to locate three media reports about celebrations of the Holi ritual in India. Use the template provided on the Activity Worksheet to analyse how the various reports of Holi ritual celebrations align with tradition and indicate where adaptations for the group or individual have taken place.
2 When your analysis is concluded, complete the following statement: Celebrations of Holi in India ...

Family rituals

Raksha Bandhana

The family ritual of **Raksha Bandhana** (*raksha* means 'protection' and *bandhana* means 'to tie') coincides with the full moon in the month of Sravana. The ritual dates to an ancient initiation rite, when the guru knotted a red thread around his disciple's wrist symbolising commitment. Today, the ritual concerns siblings: the sister ties her '*rakhi*', a decorated silk amulet, around her brother's right wrist. In return he gives her a gift and makes a pledge to protect her. A similar event is held on the fifth day of Divali. The tradition is said to relate to stories about Yama, the god of death, who visited his sister Yamuna. She decorated Yama's forehead with



FIGURE 5.53 Family rituals – applying *tilak* (top) and tying a *rakhi* (bottom)

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a *tilak* mark and he declared that a person who received *tilak* from his sister would be liberated from all miseries.

The *rakhi* is not only reserved for brothers, or even Hindus. When Queen Karnavati of Chittor was threatened by the military might of the Gujarati sultan, she appealed to the sultan by sending him a *rakhi*. The emperor rode to her rescue. In Kerala, devotees hear how Lakshmi tied an amulet on King Bali to win his favour. Lord Indra, rendered invincible by a *rakhi*, ousted the demons from his heavenly realm.

Karva Chauth

Mainly observed in North India, Karva Chauth is a traditional ritual for married women. On the fourth day of the waning moon, 11 days before Divali, married women fast from sunrise until the appearance of the moon for the purpose of enhancing the longevity of their husband's life. The ritual signifies the wife's love and devotion to her husband. While some women object to this ritual as a form of female servility, it nevertheless remains a popular festival. The South India equivalent celebrates the story of Savitri whose devotion saved her husband Satyavan from the clutches of death.

A few days before the Karva Chauth ritual, married women purchase spherical earthen pots called *karvas*. They paint the outside of the pot with ornate designs and place bangles, ribbons, cosmetics and home-made sweets inside. On the evening before the main ritual day, they begin their 24-hour fast. The following evening, they wear their best clothing and adorn themselves with henna and jewellery. When the moon first appears, they pray to the moon god Chandra for the wellbeing and longevity of their husbands. In turn, the husband offers his wife the first bite of food and sip of water to end their fast. Once the fast is broken, a lavish meal is served. The women who observe this ritual are known as *shaubhagyavati* – a joyous and fortunate wife.

Maha Shivaratri

Maha Shivaratri
a Hindu religious festival for devotees of Shiva

In late February or March, the festival of **Maha Shivaratri** honours Lord Shiva and his marriage to the goddess Parvati. The couple are considered to be an ideal husband and wife. On this day, the 14th day of the waning moon, devotees fast throughout the night and carry pots of sacred water to shrines and temples. Traditionally, young girls pray for a husband who, though not necessarily wealthy, will be as virtuous as Lord Shiva. A man with a wife like Parvati is also considered divinely blessed.



FIGURE 5.54 A performance of the Karva Chauth ritual



FIGURE 5.55 *Puja* offered at a temple on the occasion of Maha Shivaratri in Thane, India

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Five to six weeks later in April, Hindus mark the birthday of Rama with readings from the *Ramayana*, theatrical presentations and the chanting of Rama mantras. A week later, the ritual called Hanumat Jayanti celebrates the birthday of Rama's servant, Hanuman, by reciting a prayer called Hanuman Chalisa. In late summer, the ritual **Janmashtami** (*janma* means 'birth' and *ashtami* refers to the eighth day) celebrates the birth of Lord Krishna, one of the most loved of all deities.

Janmashtami
a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu

Krishna Janmashtami

According to tradition, Krishna was born at midnight on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of Sravana. The day before the ritual celebration, many Hindus fast for 24 hours. Late in the evening they offer milk sweets to baby Krishna and greet him with a midnight ***arati***. Other parts of the celebration include singing *bhajanas*, retelling the story of Krishna's birth and swinging a cradle before the temple shrine.

arati
worship of a deity, particularly the flame offering, mostly in temples

Annual rituals

Ganesha Chaturthi

Twelve days after Janmashtami, the ritual of Ganesha Chaturthi celebrates the birthday of the elephant-headed son of Shiva and Parvati. Observed in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada it begins on the fourth day of the waxing moon. Depending on different family traditions the ritual is observed for an uneven number of days. Plaster or clay images of Ganesha are installed in public shrines for 10 days and then are immersed in water on the 11th day. It is common for large processions to take place at the end of the festival and images of Ganesha are carried to be immersed in water.

Various rituals take place in homes. In the past, women made images of Ganesha but today the images are purchased at local bazaars. *Puja* is performed twice a day in the home with specially prepared food offerings for the 10 days.



FIGURE 5.56 Roadside Hindu shrine of Ganesha near Sigiriya, Sri Lanka

In rural villages, a shrine may be set up where the god sits under a canopy of bamboo covered with leaves, flowers, fruits and vegetables. In some villages, girls often plant wheat seeds in baskets and place them at the feet of Ganesha. The seedlings grow over the 10 days and are then carried by the girls in procession to water. The seedlings are washed off and exchanged between the friends as *prasad* (religious offerings) from the ritual.

In large cities, businesses sponsor the construction of enormous statues of Ganesha. The large processions are a way of claiming public space and forming communal identities. There is also the custom of visiting friends and family to see as many Ganeshas as possible.

ACTIVITY **5.36**

Finding and analysing

Design an infographic that shows the variety of ways in which the birthday of Ganesha is celebrated in various parts of India.

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Navaratri

Almost a month after Ganesha's birthday, on the first day of Ashwin, the Festival of Nine Nights centres on the adoration of Parvati and other goddesses. This is one of the few rituals that happens across India. Families install large brass images of Parvati and *puja* is performed twice daily. A ghee lamp is left to burn continuously for the entire nine days. A single strand garland is offered every day and special food is placed before Parvati at midday. Each night, Hindu families gather in halls and temples to enjoy *rasa-garbha* traditional folk dances, in which decorative sticks are struck together in time to devotional music. People dance around a six-sided shrine.

According to local custom or regional preference, goddesses other than Parvati may also be worshipped, including Lakshmi, Sarasvati and nine different forms of Durga. On the 10th day Dussehra is celebrated, linking both the goddess and Rama and their victory over the 10-headed Ravana. The burning of an effigy of Ravana is the most popular part of this ritual celebration.

Conclusion

Calendrical rituals in Hinduism are many and varied and their celebration and format may be different depending on where they are celebrated and what gods or goddesses are worshipped by that particular family or within the local area. Most of the rituals include *puja* and involve some form of celebratory action.

ACTIVITY 5.37

Finding and analysing

Create a yearly calendar and map the rituals related to Hinduism. Colour code the rituals according to whole community, family and location.

5.6 Buddhism

Calendrical rituals within Buddhism differ according to the lineage of the particular Buddhist tradition. Regardless of the lineage, most Buddhists engage in some form of meditation on a regular basis. Calendrical rituals in Buddhism celebrate seminal events in the life of the Buddha and each culture adjusts the Buddhist calendar to their own histories and circumstances. In South-East Asia, rituals connected to the life of the Buddha are articulated within the agricultural cycle. For instance, Buddha's Day occurs at the onset of the monsoon rains and *kathina* ceremonies come at the end of the planting season, while merit-making ceremonies occur after the rice harvest. The Buddhist religious year is tightly linked to the cycle of rice cultivation and its accompanying economic activities.

From the time of the Buddha, Buddhists have devoted enormous energy to developing and participating in a vast array of rituals and practices. Technically, Buddhism is something one does rather than something one believes.



FIGURE 5.57 The Uppatasanti Pagoda in Myanmar can be seen from all the rice paddies in the surrounding area.

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Buddhist calendar

The Buddhist calendar is a lunisolar system derived from the Hindu calendar which takes account of the movements of both the moon and the sun. The calendar is mainly used in South-East Asian countries as well as in Sri Lanka and among the Chinese populations of Malaysia and Singapore for religious and official occasions.

The Buddhist calendar divides the year into 12 months of either 29 or 30 days. The name of the months is different in each language and location and in some places numbers are used instead of names.

The starting point of the Buddhist calendar is the Buddha's death or his reaching of nirvana (*Nibbana*). Within the various lineages there is some disagreement about the exact year. The calendar allocates seven years within a 19-year cycle as leap years when an extra 30-day month is added following the summer month of Asadha/Waso.

Today, the Buddhist lunisolar calendar is used mainly for Theravada Buddhist festivals.

ACTIVITY **5.38**

Finding

Locate at least two Buddhist calendars and note the similarities and differences in dates and times to celebrate various festivals.

Meditation

All Buddhists are encouraged to spend time meditating on a regular basis, which may be daily or weekly. Various meditational systems are practised throughout the different lineages of Buddhism. Buddhist scripture contains large numbers of texts devoted to meditation. These texts recount how the Buddha meditated and spoke to monks about meditation. Several of the techniques were enshrined in the texts and others are mentioned only casually in discussions. Two techniques are central to the contemplative path: the process of withdrawal from sensory input in progressive states of trance (*jhana*) as described in the *Samannaphala Sutta*, and the process of observation of sensory input in progressive states of mindfulness (*sati*), as in the *Satipatthana Sutta*.

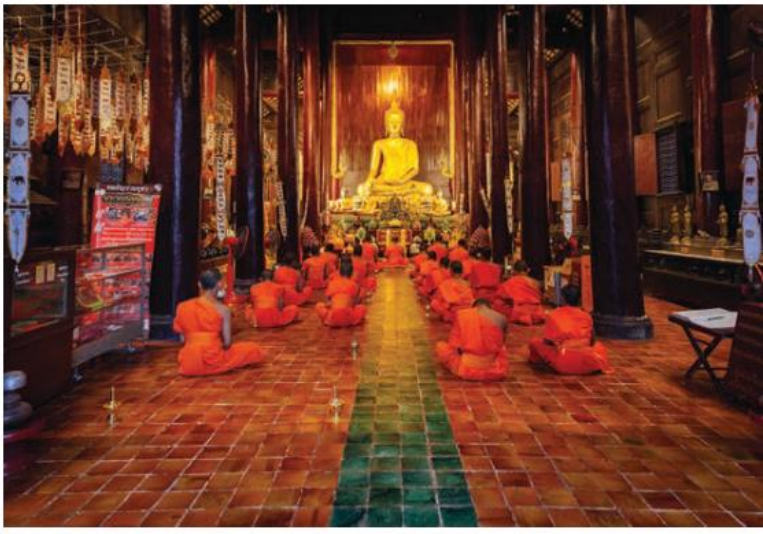


FIGURE 5.58 Buddhist monks inside the Wat Phan Tao in Chiang Mai, Thailand

Theravada forms of meditation developed by Buddhaghosa in the fifth century CE are described in the *Visuddhimagga*. Buddhaghosa lists 40 objects of contemplation that may be used in the process of calming the mind. They fall into two groups: those that involve the induction of trance, and those that function to eliminate distractions and impediments in the contemplative process.

The Mahayana sequence of meditation varies, but one of the common forms was given by Kamalasila in his *Bhavanakrama*, a text that has been used in Tibet since the ninth century. The meditator is prepared by study so that the meditation is not erroneous but rather the fruit of the meditation will be clear and manifest knowledge of reality. First, the meditator must calm his/her mind by taking a contemplative object and focusing upon it in order to achieve a state of calm. The meditator examines external events and realises that every event is a mental event. S/he transcends the notion of object and subject.

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Eventually s/he enters into the highest reality, a state of meditation where s/he sees all events with the eye of wisdom. When the meditator wishes to arise from the contemplative state, s/he awakens his/her compassion and pities the sufferings of those who think that things are real, and thus experiences all the sorrows of their delusion. The meditator realises the emptiness of things in the union of means and wisdom. S/he seeks for nothing less than perfect Buddhahood for the sake of all beings, all the while knowing that there is no such thing as Buddhahood, and no such thing as being.

Temples

Temples and monasteries serve as centres for collective rites and ceremonies within Buddhism. Among the most important rituals to take place are monastic legal proceedings such as ordinations as well as community celebrations surrounding the lives and deeds of Buddha and *bodhisattvas* (enlightened beings). **Lay people** often present prayers of petition related to day-to-day problems as well as social and political concerns to the Buddha and *bodhisattvas*.

For lay people, temples and monastic complexes provide access to potentially efficacious sacred power and authority, such as blessings and protection. Sometimes people go to temples to seek the counsel of a respected monk. Temple complexes also provide the context for general or special merit, which contributes to a better rebirth or the liberation from the cycle of rebirth. The types of rituals and activities that take place in temples and monastic complexes vary considerably throughout the Buddhist world.



FIGURE 5.59 Lay people at a temple

Annual rituals

Uposatha

Uposatha are the four monthly holy days of ancient Buddhism and they are still observed today in Theravada countries of South-East Asia. The four days are: the new moon and full moon days of each lunar month and the eighth day following the new and full moons. Both lay people and monks perform religious rituals during the Uposatha days.

The ritual usually involves the repetition of the precepts, offering flowers before an image of the Buddha and reciting Pali *suttas*, a period of time spent in meditation, and listening to a sermon from a monk. Sometimes, lay people observe the eight precepts for the duration of the Uposatha. This includes the five precepts observed by all Buddhists (no killing, stealing, lying, taking intoxicants or committing sexual offences), as well as not eating after midday, not attending entertainment, not wearing bodily adornments and not sleeping on a luxurious bed. During the Uposatha days, monks also listen to a recitation of the rules of conduct contained in the *Vinaya Pitaka* (monastic discipline teachings) and confess any breaking of rules they may have committed.

lay people
non-ordained members of a religion

Dharma Day/Asala Day

Dharma Day, a Theravadan Buddhist ritual celebrated on the full moon day in July, marks the beginning of the Buddha's teaching. According to tradition, soon after the Buddha's enlightenment he told his disciples about his experience. The day is remembered for the first sermon preached by the Buddha when he taught the Four Noble Truths, which is believed to have taken place at Sarnath in the Deer Park. Since the first sermon contains the core teachings

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of the Buddha, it marks the beginning of the spread of Buddhism. It is also known as the First Turning of the Wheel of the Dharma.

Dharma Day also marks the beginning of *vassa* – the rainy season. During the rainy season, the Buddha and his followers ceased travelling and sheltered together until it was over. While settled, they focused on meditation. Today, modern monks spend the rainy season in a monastery rather than travelling.

Dharma Day is usually celebrated in a temple or monastery and is a time to express gratitude that the Buddha and other enlightened people shared their knowledge. The format of the ritual usually includes readings from Buddhist sacred texts and listening to sermons. It is an opportunity to reflect on the life of the Buddha and his key teachings and to make offerings at the temple. Dharma Day is considered one of the most important festivals in Buddhism.

ACTIVITY **5.39**

Finding and analysing

Locate at least two descriptions of Dharma Day from two different countries.

1. Create a list of what takes place in each location.
2. How do the ritual celebrations align the general description from the tradition?
3. What adaptations for the group or the individual have taken place?

Bodhi Day

Bodhi Day commemorates the day when the Buddha experienced enlightenment. According to tradition, Siddhartha Gautama chose the middle way, which enabled him to liberate himself from the root of suffering. The Pali Canon contains several discourses relating to this story. In the longer discourse to Saccaka (MN 36) the Buddha describes his enlightenment in three stages:

1. During the first watch of the night, the Buddha discovered his past lives in the cycle of rebirth.
2. During the second watch, the Buddha discovered the law of *karma* and the importance of living according to the Eightfold Path.
3. During the third watch, the Buddha discovered the Four Noble Truths and reached nirvana.

Bodhi Day is celebrated differently in various countries and lineages of Buddhism. In China, it is called Laba and is observed between the winter solstice and Chinese New Year. In Mahayana traditions the ritual commemorates the Buddha's achievement of nirvana with people completing additional meditations, study of the *Dharma* and chanting of Buddhist texts as well as performing good deeds for others. In some countries, people celebrate with a traditional meal of tea, cake and readings from sacred texts.

People sometimes decorate their homes with coloured lights as a recognition of enlightenment and a candle is lit for 30 days. In Buddhist homes, it is not uncommon to see a fig tree decorated with shiny ornaments to represent the Three Jewels: the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha*. A meal of rice and milk is common, which according to tradition was the first meal offered to the Buddha after his awakening. Children sometimes make biscuits in the shape of a leaf or tree to symbolise the bodhi tree.



FIGURE 5.60 Free porridge is distributed at a temple during the Laba Festival in Chongqing, China

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In Japan this festival is known as Rohatsu (eighth day of the 12th month) and is the last day of a week-long session of intensive meditation and retreat, with each meditation being longer than the previous day. The climax is reached when the Zen monks and their followers stay awake the night before Rohatsu, spending the whole night meditating.

Vesak

Vesak, also known as Buddha Purnima and Buddha Day, is celebrated in the Theravada and Mahayana traditions. It is generally observed by Buddhists and some Hindus. The festival commemorates the birth, enlightenment and death of Gautama Buddha. The date of the celebration varies from year to year in the Gregorian calendar but is usually late April or early May.

In Japan, the celebration includes the pouring of sweet tea made from hydrangea plants onto statues of the Buddha. These rituals usually take place in temples and are conducted by lay people, monks and nuns.

In Nepal, Buddha's birthday is commemorated as a public holiday. Buddhist pilgrims from across the world flock to Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha. At the Swayambhu Temple, also known as the 'Monkey Temple', the main door of the temple is open only on this day. People celebrate by donating food and clothes to the poor and by providing financial assistance to monasteries and schools where Buddhism is practised.



FIGURE 5.61 The Buddha Birthday Festival is annually celebrated at Southbank, Brisbane

Vesak in Sri Lanka is celebrated on the full moon in the lunar month of Vesak. For a week the selling of alcohol and fresh meat is prohibited and abattoirs are closed. The celebrations include almsgiving, and electrically lit *pandals* (temporary structures) are erected with each *pandal* illustrating a story from the *Jataka* tales. Colourful lanterns are hung in homes and on the streets and at some venues *sbhakti fee*, Buddhist devotional songs, are performed.

In Malaysia, Buddhists mark three events at Vesak: the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha. The celebration begins at dawn where devotees assemble at temples and meditate on the Eight Precepts. People offer food, money and incense as *sutras* are chanted by the monks. The highlight of the day, which is a national holiday, is the candle procession around the temple.

Vesak in Singapore begins at dawn when Buddhists gather at temples for a ceremony that involves the hoisting of the Buddhist flag, and singing of hymns in praise of the Buddha, the *Dharma* and the *Sangha*. Adherents offer flowers, candles and joss sticks, reminding them that life is fleeting and transient and that all things decay and pass away. The rest of the day is spent chanting mantras, performing good deeds such as visiting hospitals and releasing caged birds and animals. Only vegetarian meals are eaten before illuminated statues of Buddha are processed through the streets. Some people practise the two-hour-long 'three-step, one-bow' ritual, which involves taking steps on both knees and bowing at every third step as they pray for world peace and personal blessings.

One of the most popular rituals that takes place on Vesak Day is the bathing of the Buddha ceremony. The ceremony, which requires a person to pour fragrant water over the shoulder of a statue of a baby Buddha, is said to purify the mind and improve inner harmony and balance.

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FIGURE 5.62 Master Chuen Shan from the Chung Tian Temple in Brisbane conducts the bathing Buddha ritual during the annual festival in the city

Legend says that when Prince Siddhartha was born the sky was clear and full of sunshine, flowers bloomed, birds sang, and dragons appeared in the sky and sprayed two streams of purified water over him to bathe him. At his birth, seven lotus flowers sprang from under his feet as he walked with one hand pointing to the sky and the other to the ground, and he was reported as saying: 'in the heaven above and the earth below, I vow to liberate all who suffer in these three realms.'

The bathing of the Buddha ritual usually follows the following format. The adherent kneels at an altar before the statue of the baby Buddha and fills a ladle with the fragrant water. The water is poured three times over the shoulder of the Buddha statue. With each pouring, the person says: 'May I eliminate all evil thoughts; May I cultivate good deeds; May I help save all living beings.'

ACTIVITY **5.40**

Finding and analysing

1 Conduct an image search using the term 'Bathing of the Buddha'. Print and glue (or digitally copy and paste) three varied images, annotating each image to show what elements relate to the various aspects of Vesak.
2 Use a Y-chart to imagine what it would look like, sound like and feel like to celebrate Vesak.
3 Use an online search engine to locate at least two different versions of the Bathing of the Buddha ceremony – one a video and one a printed text. Analyse the rituals. Record your findings on a Venn diagram. Use the information gathered to respond to the question: How has the Bathing of the Buddha ceremony been influenced by various cultures?

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Seasonal celebrations

New Year

The Buddhist religious year celebrates seasonal changes, the agricultural calendar and the seasons of human life and death. In Japan, seasonal celebrations include New Year's Eve Day and New Year's Day; the heralding of spring; spring and winter equinox; and the Festival of the Dead.

In Tibet, New Year incorporates the great miracle of *Sravasti*, but its fundamental meaning is the exorcism of evil influences from the old year and the calling up of good fortune for the year to come. The elaborate ritual performances held during the New Year festival are not only for the good of the individual but also for the good of the community. People visit temples and shrines and eat pounded rice cakes and drink sweetened wine symbolising hope for good health and longevity.

In Thailand, New Year falls in the middle of April, at the end of the dry season just before the coming of the monsoon rains. While Buddhist temples and monasteries are the site of many New Year ceremonies, the rituals are more concerned with good luck and healthy life than specific Buddhist concerns.

New Year festivals are very much influenced by local tradition. In some countries, images of the Buddha are processed through the streets. Adherents visit temples, and some also circumambulate *stupa* (bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead) as well as giving food and gifts to monks.

Harvest festivals

Harvest festivals in Buddhist areas are often a unique combination of local customs and Buddhist traditions. For instance, in Sri Lanka people celebrate the harvest festival as a 'first fruits' ceremony, which entails offering part of the harvest to the Buddha as well as a large bowl of milk and rice. Sometimes part of the ritual at the harvest festival includes the performance of an event from the Buddha's life. In Tibet, groups of actors perform stories from Buddhist legends and in Thailand people recite the story of *Phra Wes* as part of an agricultural festival.

Commemoration of Buddha relics

According to the *Mahaparinibbana Sutta*, after the Buddha's death his relics were divided among the eight rulers of India who enshrined them at eight locations across the country.



FIGURE 5.63 Tamang children performing a cultural dance during a celebration of the Sonam Losar festival in Kathmandu, Nepal



FIGURE 5.64 Elephants at the entrance of the Temple of the Tooth, Kandy, Sri Lanka

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In Sri Lanka, an elaborate national festival celebrates the arrival of the eye-tooth relic of the Buddha, which is enshrined in the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy. Today, the festival is held in the month of Asalha, the lunar month of July-August. The ritual has a carnival atmosphere and continues for 11 nights, culminating on the 12th day with a water ceremony that commemorates the sprinkling of holy water over the city when the relic arrived 10 days after the Buddha reached nirvana.

Pilgrimages

Since 3 BCE pilgrimage has had a significant place in Buddhist practice when Ashoka the Great visited the Buddhist holy site within his empire. From ancient times, Buddhists have visited the Eight Great Places identified in texts and commentaries. After the twelfth century, and with the demise of Buddhism in India, many of the sacred sites were destroyed. As Buddhism spread, new pilgrimage sites were established outside India. The Eight Great Places include the following locations, four of which are associated with the Buddha's life and the others, according to tradition, are sites of miraculous events.

Buddhist pilgrimages are undertaken for a variety of reasons. Some Buddhists complete a pilgrimage as a discipline that helps to foster spiritual development, while for others it may be to facilitate recovery from an illness or to fulfil a vow made. Regardless of the reason, many Buddhists complete pilgrimages and see them as a significant part of their spiritual journey.

ACTIVITY **5.41**

Finding

On a modern map, locate the pilgrimage sites listed and annotate the map, indicating the importance of the site for Buddhists.

These eight great places are associated with miraculous events:

- Lumbini, Nepal – the Buddha's birthplace.
- Uruvela (now Bodhgaya), Bihar, India – the place where the Buddha attained enlightenment.
- Isipantana (modern Sarnath near Varanasi, India) – the place where the Buddha preached his first sermon, so turning the Wheel of the Dharma in the Deer Park here.
- Kushinara (modern Kushinagar) – the place where the Buddha died and entered nirvana.
- Shravasti in northeastern Uttar Pradesh – where the Buddha performed the Two Miracles: sending fire and water from his body and appearing in several places at once. The remains of the Jetavana, the first Buddhist *vihara* (monastery), are located here.
- Rajagriha, modern Rajir near Bihar – the Veluvan Bamboo Grove at Rajagriha was a retreat for the *Sangha*, a gift from the King Bimbissara. A *vihara* was built and the Buddha delivered important sermons here.
- Sankashya (modern Sankiss) – where the Buddha is said to have ascended to the Tushita heaven, where his mother had been reborn as a male god. Following in the tradition of his predecessors, the Buddha taught the *Dharma* to his mother before descending to earth at Sankashya.
- Nalanda (near Bihar) – where the Buddha preached for long periods at a mango grove and a tree miraculously grew from a toothpick he discarded. It became renowned as a great Buddhist centre of teaching.

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Conclusion

The Buddhist religious year sanctifies the life of the individual and the community in all of its aspects. Through annual ritual ceremonies, ordinary life is transfigured into a meaningful and ordered sequence of events. While the life of the Buddha and events of early Buddhist communities provide the central focus of the Buddhist calendar, its comprehensive scope incorporates all aspects of life.

5.7 Torres Strait Islander religion

Coming of the Light

The major calendrical ritual of the Torres Strait Island community is the Coming of the Light ceremony. This ritual remembers and celebrates the arrival of Christianity to the Torres Strait via the London Missionary Society (LMS) in 1871. On 1 July each year, the community celebrates the acceptance of Christianity as the religion of the Torres Strait.

Tradition says that on 1 July 1871, Reverend Samuel MacFarlane and Reverend Archibald Murray of the LMS, accompanied by eight New Caledonian missionaries, landed at Erub (Darnley Island) in the Torres Strait. A warrior named Dabad watched the group approach; he gathered a group of warriors and went to the water's edge with the intention of killing the new arrivals. MacFarlane held up a Bible in his hands and knelt before Dabad pleading for his life. Dabad dropped his spear, and accepted the Bible even though he could not read. This moment in Torres Strait history is called the Coming of the Light.

Since that time, the Coming of the Light ceremony is celebrated in various ways across the Islands. On 1 July there is a public holiday in the Torres Strait and the day is marked by a re-enactment of the landing of the missionaries accompanied by feasting and dancing. In some communities the celebration continues for three days. In preparation for the celebrations on 1 July, model traditional houses made from grass, lawyer-cane and palm leaves are constructed. After the re-enactment of the arrival, there is a performance by people wearing masks depicting the *Alag* spirits, representing the forces of evil that existed on the Islands prior to the arrival of the missionaries. Accompanying the retelling of the arrival story, people sing hymns in Creole and a sermon is delivered to the gathered community. Another element included in the festival is a display of cultural heritage including *ailan dans* (island dance). Drummers wearing grass skirts sit cross-legged on the ground and begin to play while dancers, dressed in *daris*,



FIGURE 5.65 Dancers at the Coming of the Light festival



FIGURE 5.66 Torres Strait Islander men dancing

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traditional head-dresses, and grass skirts dance and sing telling stories of the Islands.

Torres Strait Islanders refer to the time before the arrival of the missionaries as *bipotaim*, a Torres Strait Creole word meaning 'before time'. The acceptance of the Christian missionaries in the Torres Strait resulted in profound changes for the people and communities of the Torres Strait, including new language, songs, dances and customs influenced from the Pacific Islands. Some commentators identify the Coming of the Light ritual as a symbol of the Torres Strait's relationship with the world beyond the Islands. For others, the ritual is seen as marking a transition from inter-island conflict to peace across the Islands. For those who accepted Christianity, the Coming of the Light ceremony is recognition of two interacting worldviews: Christianity and Torres Strait Island culture where Christianity was embraced and woven into Island culture. For others, it is interpreted as the loss of traditional ways of life and a form of colonialism and imposition.

The following is one description of the Coming of the Light ritual.

'Since I've been born, I've participated in the Coming of the Light festival,' Father Pilot told me. 'When I left here I went to mainland Australia, but I still remembered this day as a great day for me and the Torres Strait – the day when Christianity began … This day is for all of us as Torres Strait Islanders. Doesn't matter what [sect] you are, as long as you are a Torres Strait Islander you remember the day that missionaries brought the good news.'

As people settled in plastic chairs and the drums fell silent, Father Pilot retold the story of Dabad and offered thanks. The service flowed like water between rocks, ebbing from hymns sung in Creole and other island languages, to sermons delivered by lay people and pastors. It culminated in the congregation filing up the stairs, beating drums and with voices rising, before gathering behind the altar, to face the sea from which missionaries had first arrived, changing the course of life here forever.

Before the missionaries came, the people of Erub had practised head-hunting and traded skulls with Papua New Guineans in return for long canoes. The shrubby island vegetation prevented Erub people from making their own canoes, but watercraft were vital to their seafaring way of life. Head-hunting was a violent and bloody exercise and Ida said that the reason the Coming of the Light was such a happy festival was because it was a celebration of peace. The missionaries preached that killing was a sin, and the island people had laid down their weapons.

Opinion here is divided on the difficult matter of whether the arrival of missionaries was a good or a bad thing for the islanders' culture, depending on who you ask.

'We've lost some of the culture because of the [missionaries],' Ida said. But she was adamant that the people are better off with some of those things gone. 'We've lost the part of some of the ceremonies that are inhumane because they involved eating flesh or taking out hearts for bravery from the people they killed.'

Ida also believes that the missionaries brought much that's worth celebrating. For the most part, the new religious ideas were quickly adopted and practised alongside the peaceful traditions and subsistence way of life. 'Christianity was all about God and God is love and we aren't supposed to kill,' said Ida.

Source: 'Torres Strait Islands: Coming of the Light festival,' Josephine Sargent, Australian Geographic, 21 July 2015





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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

JUDAISM

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Present a two-minute information session on one of the calendrical rituals you have studied in this section, demonstrating how one of the ritual analysis models in Topic 1 of Unit 2 can be applied. Include images/short videos where appropriate.
2 Using another calendrical ritual of Judaism, apply the eight elements of ritual, and use this to analyse and evaluate the way that rituals consolidate or strengthen social structures. Write a structured paragraph of 200 words explaining your judgements.
3 The ritual analysis frameworks outlined in Topic 1 (including those of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Terence Lovat) are an interesting toolkit for examining rituals. Review these frameworks and ensure that any questions you have about them have been answered.
4 Choose one of Judaism's calendrical rituals from the text and, by applying the analysis frameworks in Topic 1, ascertain which model lends itself best to working with this calendrical ritual.
5 Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation showing:
   a your thesis about which framework is most suitable and why
   b what your analysis using this model has shown.
   c Share your PowerPoint in a small learning group comprised of students who have chosen different rituals from yours.

CHRISTIANITY

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Present a two-minute information session on one of the calendrical rituals you have studied in this section, demonstrating how one of the ritual analysis models in Topic 1 of Unit 2 can be applied. Include images/short videos where appropriate.
2 Using another calendrical ritual of Christianity, apply the eight elements of ritual, and use this to analyse and evaluate the way that rituals consolidate or strengthen social structures. Write a structured paragraph of 200 words explaining your judgements.
3 The ritual analysis frameworks outlined in Topic 1 (including those of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Terence Lovat) are an interesting toolkit for examining rituals. Review these frameworks and ensure that any questions you have about them have been answered.
4 Choose one of Christianity's calendrical rituals from the text and, by applying the analysis frameworks in Topic 1, ascertain which model lends itself best to working with this calendrical ritual.
5 Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation showing:
   a your thesis about which framework is most suitable and why
   b what your analysis using this model has shown.
   c Share your PowerPoint in a small learning group comprised of students who have chosen different rituals from yours.

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ISLAM

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1. Present a two-minute information session on one of the calendrical rituals you have studied in this section, demonstrating how one of the ritual analysis models in Topic 1 of Unit 2 can be applied. Include images/short videos where appropriate.
2. Using another calendrical ritual of Islam, apply the eight elements of ritual, and use this to analyse and evaluate the way that rituals consolidate or strengthen social structures. Write a structured paragraph of 200 words explaining your judgements.
3. The ritual analysis frameworks outlined in Topic 1 (including those of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Terence Lovat) are an interesting toolkit for examining rituals. Review these frameworks and ensure that any questions you have about them have been answered.
4. Choose one of Islam's calendrical rituals from the text in the section and, by applying the analysis frameworks in Topic 1, ascertain which model lends itself best to working with this calendrical ritual.
5. Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation showing:
   a. your thesis about which framework is most suitable and why
   b. what your analysis using this model has shown.
   c. Share your PowerPoint in a small learning group comprised of students who have chosen different rituals from yours.

HINDUISM

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1. Present a two-minute information session on one of the calendrical rituals you have studied in this section, demonstrating how one of the ritual analysis models in Topic 1 of Unit 2 can be applied. Include images/short videos where appropriate.
2. Using another calendrical ritual of Hinduism, apply the eight elements of ritual, and use this to analyse and evaluate the way that rituals consolidate or strengthen social structures. Write a structured paragraph of 200 words explaining your judgements.
3. The ritual analysis frameworks outlined in Topic 1 (including those of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Terence Lovat) are an interesting toolkit for examining rituals. Review these frameworks and ensure that any questions you have about them have been answered.
4. Choose one of Hinduism's calendrical rituals from the text in the section and, by applying the analysis frameworks in Topic 1, ascertain which model lends itself best to working with this calendrical ritual.
5. Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation showing:
   a. your thesis about which framework is most suitable and why
   b. what your analysis using this model has shown.
   c. Share your PowerPoint in a small learning group comprised of students who have chosen different rituals from yours.

BUDDHISM

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

1. Present a two-minute information session on one of the calendrical rituals you have studied in this section, demonstrating how one of the ritual analysis models in Topic 1 of Unit 2 can be applied. Include images/short videos where appropriate.
2. Using another calendrical ritual of Buddhism, apply the eight elements of ritual, and use this to analyse and evaluate the way that rituals consolidate

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or strengthen social structures. Write a structured paragraph of 200 words explaining your judgements.

3 The ritual analysis frameworks outlined in Topic 1 (including those of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner and Terence Lovat) are an interesting toolkit for examining rituals. Review these frameworks and ensure that any questions you have about them have been answered.

4 Choose one of Buddhism's calendrical rituals from the text in the section and, by applying the analysis frameworks in Topic 1, ascertain which model lends itself best to working with this calendrical ritual.

5 Create a PowerPoint or similar presentation showing:
   - a your thesis about which framework is most suitable and why
   - b what your analysis using this model has shown.
   - c Share your PowerPoint in a small learning group comprised of students who have chosen different rituals from yours.

TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER RELIGION

Evaluating and analysing

Complete the activities below using the information outlined about the Coming of the Light ritual on the following websites.

- Queensland Museum: search for 'Coming of the Light – Torres Strait Islands'
- Queensland Art Gallery: see the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8584.

1 Terence Lovat uses a five-step approach to ritual analysis. Investigate one or more descriptions of the Coming of the Light ceremony and complete the table on the Activity Worksheet. Compare your responses with other students.

2 Victor Turner's approach to ritual analysis is focused more on the meaning that transpires from the ritual than on the distinct stages of transition. Complete the table on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions, again referring to the Coming of the Light.

3 Consider the information you gathered using both Lovat's and Turner's approaches. Outline the advantages and disadvantages of each analytical approach when examining the Coming of the Light ritual. What information and insights are foregrounded in the process? What is overlooked or disregarded? What conclusions can you reach about the application of ritual analysis when coming to an understanding of religious rituals, particularly for the Coming of the Light? Can you recommend one approach as being more appropriate for understanding this ritual? Justify your reasons.

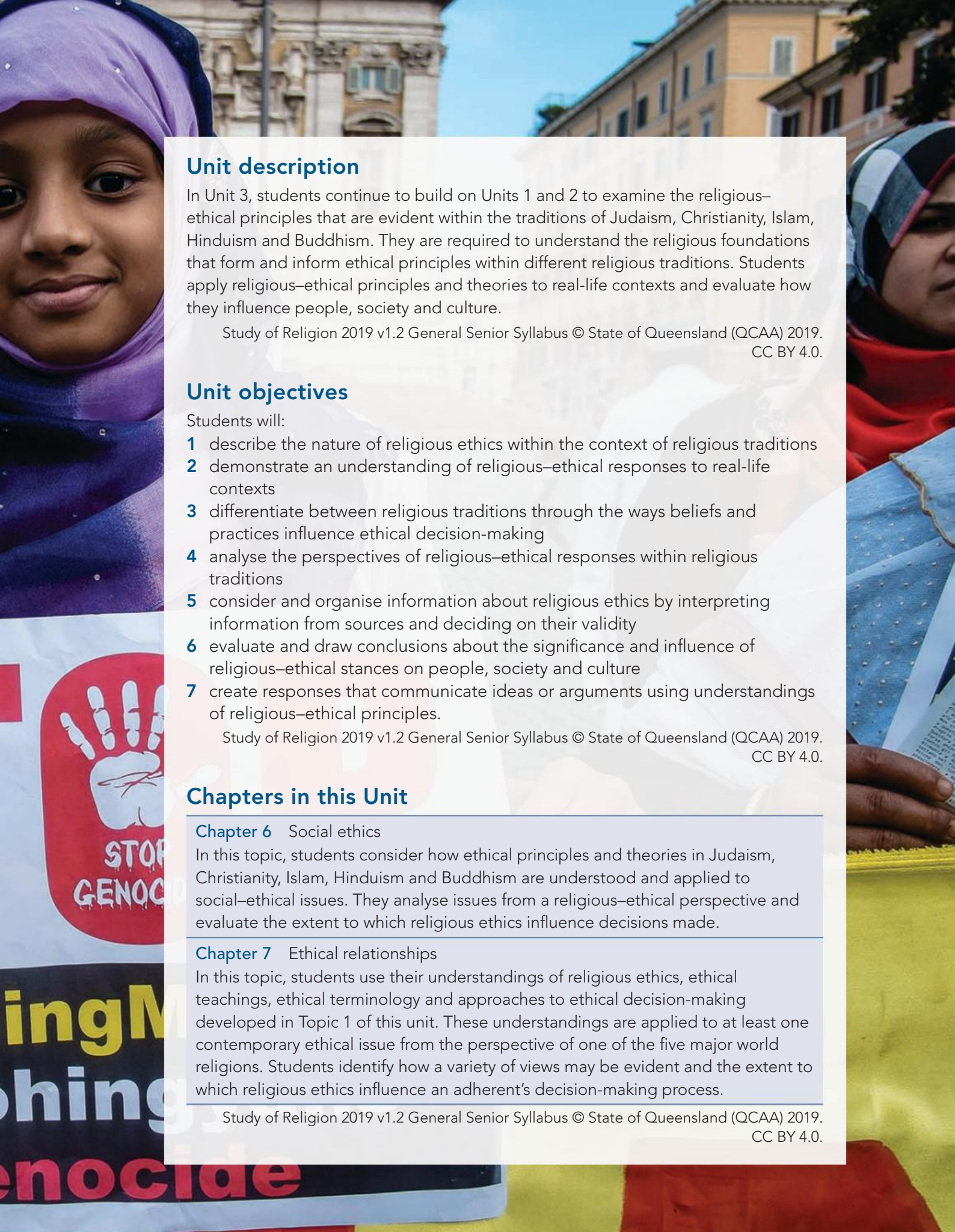
4 The debate surrounding the impact of the arrival of the Christian missionaries to the Torres Strait Islands evokes varied responses regarding the issues of tradition, cultural erosion and colonisation; however, some people regard it as the turning point in the Islands' history and the beginning of peaceful and cooperative living.
   - a Outline the arguments on both sides of the debate.
   - b What traditional aspects of cultural life remain central in the Coming of the Light ritual? Provide reasons as to why you believe these are important for insiders participating in the annual ritual – for example, *ailan dans* is a mix of traditional (Indigenous and Pacific Island genres) with contemporary style.
   - c What aspects of cultural life have been changed or altered with the arrival of the Christian missionaries? How are the distinct Christian aspects incorporated into the ritual?

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UNIT 3
Religious ethics

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Unit description

In Unit 3, students continue to build on Units 1 and 2 to examine the religious–ethical principles that are evident within the traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. They are required to understand the religious foundations that form and inform ethical principles within different religious traditions. Students apply religious–ethical principles and theories to real-life contexts and evaluate how they influence people, society and culture.

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Unit objectives

Students will:

1. describe the nature of religious ethics within the context of religious traditions
2. demonstrate an understanding of religious–ethical responses to real-life contexts
3. differentiate between religious traditions through the ways beliefs and practices influence ethical decision-making
4. analyse the perspectives of religious–ethical responses within religious traditions
5. consider and organise information about religious ethics by interpreting information from sources and deciding on their validity
6. evaluate and draw conclusions about the significance and influence of religious–ethical stances on people, society and culture
7. create responses that communicate ideas or arguments using understandings of religious–ethical principles.

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Chapters in this Unit

Chapter 6 Social ethics

In this topic, students consider how ethical principles and theories in Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism are understood and applied to social–ethical issues. They analyse issues from a religious–ethical perspective and evaluate the extent to which religious ethics influence decisions made.

Chapter 7 Ethical relationships

In this topic, students use their understandings of religious ethics, ethical teachings, ethical terminology and approaches to ethical decision-making developed in Topic 1 of this unit. These understandings are applied to at least one contemporary ethical issue from the perspective of one of the five major world religions. Students identify how a variety of views may be evident and the extent to which religious ethics influence an adherent's decision-making process.

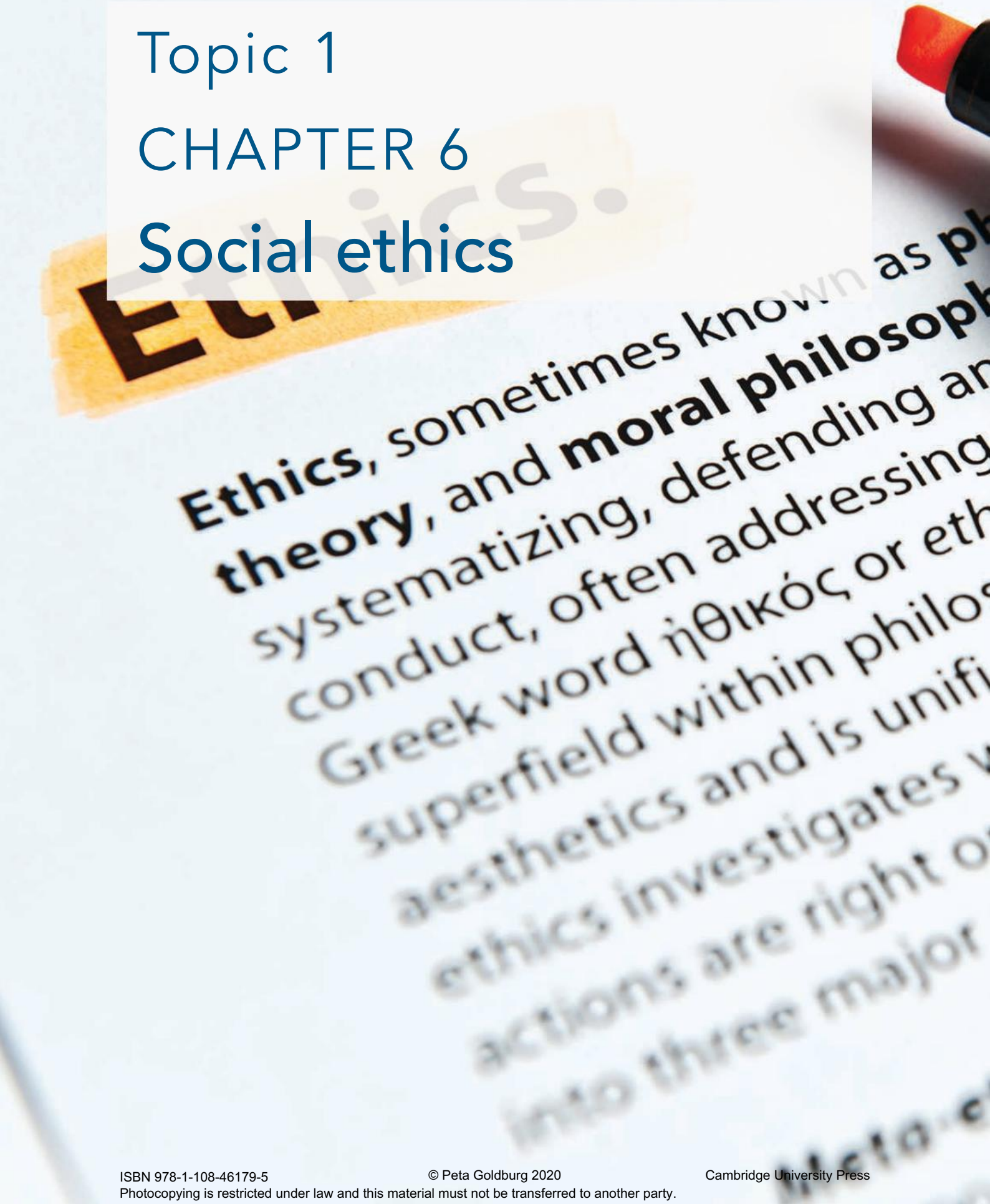
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Topic 1

CHAPTER 6

Social ethics



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In this chapter, students will be introduced to terminology used in ethical decision making and ethical teachings in the five major world religions. Various ethical theories will be explored and approaches to ethical decision making will be examined and critiqued.

ACTIVITY 6.1

Forming

1 What is ethics?
2 What does a study of religious ethics involve?
3 Who are the leaders in the fields of ethics and in religious ethics?
4 What methods or approaches exist to assist people in making ethical decisions?
5 Locate a newspaper, television news program or online news report. Select three items which you think have ethical implications. Share your items in small groups and indicate whether or not you agree that the issue has ethical implications.

6.1 What is ethics?

Ethics is concerned with what is good for individuals and society. It includes how to live a good life, rights and responsibilities, deciding what is good or bad, right or wrong, and making moral decisions. Ethics provide a moral guide to behaviour and ethical theories and approaches to decision making help people in gathering information, which assists in making informed decisions. At the heart of ethics is concern about something or someone other than an individual's own desires or self-interest. Thinking ethically is to think beyond the personal. Ethics is not only about the morality of particular courses of action; it is also about the goodness of individuals and what it means to live a good life.

Ethics, a branch of philosophy that dates from the time of Socrates (470–399 BCE), a Greek philosopher, encourages people to think about how they live life. Socrates followed the idea that 'the most important thing is not life, but the "good life"' (*Crito* 48b) and he wanted people to reflect on and examine their behaviour. Ethics uses reason, logic, concepts and arguments to analyse problems and find answers. Ethics has two basic dimensions: what people do, and how they do it.



FIGURE 6.1 A nurse attends to a child in the clinic of a refugee camp

When making ethical decisions people are influenced by a variety of sources. Adherents of religious traditions consider the sacred writings of their tradition and guidelines provided by religious authorities as well as civil and religious laws. Making ethical decisions can sometimes be a complex activity. Some strictly illegal actions may be ethical – for example, breaking the speed limit (as long as it does not endanger the lives of others) while rushing a very sick friend to the hospital. On the other hand, many immoral actions are perfectly legal, such as misleading someone about how you feel just to seduce them. The important thing in ethics is what people do with facts, laws and precepts to help them analyse the issue and then decide on actions for the good, taking account of the consequences of the action.

Ethics is not about what people 'feel'. Feeling statements describe your own internal, private, emotional states such as: 'I feel happy', 'I feel angry', 'I feel like I'm in love', 'I feel cold'.

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We should avoid feeling statements to express ethical convictions. A statement such as 'I feel that capital punishment is morally wrong', for instance, does not explain your moral evaluation of capital punishment. If we want to say something is 'wrong', then we need to use thinking statements. Thinking statements communicate a position we hold for specific reasons and we need to make the reasons public. If someone says to you that 'men make better politicians than women' you are entitled to ask why and to seek an explanation and then decide whether this is an acceptable reason or not.

ACTIVITY **6.2**

Forming

1 Describe one decision you have made today. What were your options? How did you come to the decision?
2 Is this an ethical decision? Does it involve values? If so, where do these values come from?
3 Describe one decision you have made about which you are proud. What elements of the situation did you consider? How did you come to the decision?
4 Is this an ethical decision? What values are demonstrated? Where do these values come from?

Sources of ethics in religious traditions

Scholars have identified five sources that religious traditions employ when making ethical judgements. These are: sacred texts, institutions and traditions, human reason, natural order and religious experience. Each of these sources is interpreted and applied differently within each religious tradition and sometimes there is variety even within the one tradition.

Most religions have some form of sacred texts which record the ways in which God/gods/truth is revealed and/or communicated. In the theistic traditions, God reveals Godself through the words of scripture. For many traditions, God is also the source of the moral order. In some strands of mystical Judaism, adherents believe that the Torah pre-existed creation and provided the blueprint for the order of creation. While all Christians accept the Bible as the Word of God, some adherents describe it as one source of authority, yet others believe it to be the only source of authority and an infallible guide to human behaviour. Muslims believe that the Qur'an is a revealed source of morality. Some Muslims do not separate the sacred and the secular and believe that the whole world should be governed according to the word of Allah. Eastern traditions, in particular schools within Hinduism, talk about the Vedas as eternal and the *Laws of Manu* as providing guidance about the ordering of human society. Buddhists use the Four Noble Truths as a way of guiding their decision making.

The second source of moral guidance is the institution and tradition of each religion. In Christianity, the Roman Catholic tradition holds that the magisterium, the teaching body of the Church, provides guidance for believers. In Islam, the Hadith is very important in the formation of Islamic law. Some strands of Judaism acknowledge the authority of a chief rabbi while all Jews acknowledge traditions developed in the Mishnah and Talmud. Some lineages of Mahayana Buddhism have institutional authority

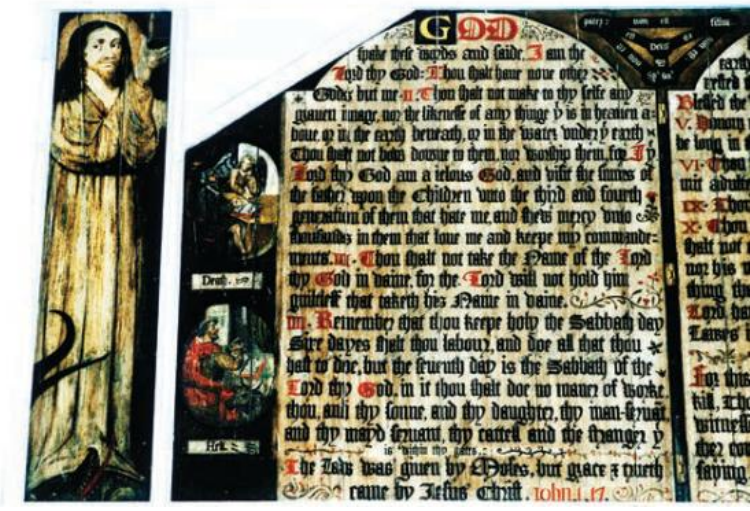


FIGURE 6.2 Interior of a church in Great Snoring in Norfolk, United Kingdom, showing a seventeenth-century illustration of Moses with the Ten Commandments

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and other lineages of Buddhism use the history of monastic practice as an authoritative source for ethical insight.

The third source of moral guidance is human reason. Judaism, Christianity and Islam share similar ideas that people need to use human reason when making decisions. The Roman Catholic understanding of natural law assumes that all people everywhere, without explicit aid of biblical revelation, are able to discern at least partially the moral truth.

The fourth source of moral knowledge is the natural order. Equivalents to natural law are found in strands of religious traditions outside Catholic Christianity. The Hindu notion of *dharma* (right action), for instance, is grounded in the Hindu understanding of the eternal law of the universe. Some scholars within Judaism disagree whether the Torah reveals natural law. Rabbinical sources generally agree that Noachite laws (those laws required to be observed by the righteous Gentile) incorporate natural law.

The fifth source of moral values is religious experience, which in some ways underpins all the others because it is the human awareness of God or higher being that generates all religion. This source is identified separately because some religious traditions make direct awareness of God much more central to their ethical system than others. Some religious traditions talk about discovering what God wants through religious experience and prayer, which can sometimes run counter to the society's conventional ethics.

It is important to remember that even within one religious tradition there can be differences regarding ethics, so we need to be careful to avoid identifying ethical equivalents across different religions.

Significance of religious rituals

In many religious traditions, ritual plays a significant role in forming the virtuous person. Ritual is the means through which people express religious meaning and commitment. Rituals are enacted to mark the start and end of life; and lifecycle rituals mark significant milestones in people's lives. Days, weeks, months and years are organised around a religious calendar that involves certain rituals. Fasting on special days is common to most religions: not eating is meant to remind adherents of their obligations before God. The dietary laws of Judaism and Islam transform the act of eating into a religious activity. Rituals provide the disciplines that help to keep adherents focused on what is important in a particular religious tradition.

Some contemporary scholars believe that ritual is key to a moral life. Dr Jonathan Sacks, formerly the Chief Rabbi in the United Kingdom, says:

> Without holy times there is no framework or architecture of time, merely the rush and press of random events. A civilisation needs its pauses, its intervals, its chapter-breaks if it is to be a civilisation at all.
>
> Source: 'Rituals are how civilizations preserve their memory,' The Office of Rabbi Sacks, 22 March 2013

He reminds people that they need pauses in order to think about life in the bigger perspective.

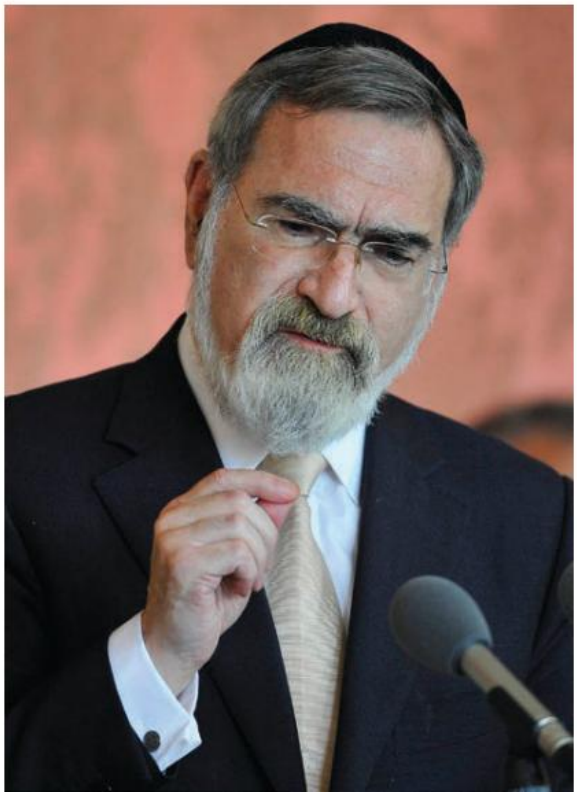


FIGURE 6.3 The former Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, Jonathan Sacks

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The habitual nature of ritual helps to support morality. A life lived with constant reminders of God through prayer, observing dietary obligations, keeping Shabbat, ritual washing and making offerings, for example, helps people to focus on what is important and not to be distracted by what is inappropriate. When a person's God-consciousness is raised, their opportunities to behave unethically are often reduced.

Differing ethical outlooks

While many religions have common ideas on some ethical issues, they have very diverse ideas on other ethical issues. In Judaism, Christianity and Islam humankind is understood as having a more significant role than animals. In Hinduism and Buddhism, the human is only a creature accumulating more good or bad *karma*. The non-human world is more important in the Eastern traditions than in the Semitic traditions.

How an individual is perceived within religious traditions is quite different. Theravada Buddhism, for instance, is quite individualistic. While it is good to be part of the *Sangha* (Buddhist monastic community), it is not essential. It is possible to be a lay Buddhist and make significant progress to enlightenment. Some denominations within Protestantism also stress individual salvation. The idea of individual salvation promoted by Protestantism is said to have influenced Western democracy, particularly the concept of each individual having his or her own equal say in government.

The opposite is the case for Orthodox Judaism, where one's Judaism cannot change. Similarly, being a Muslim cannot be private because the Five Pillars of Islam embrace a social dimension. A person cannot give alms to the poor within their religious community unless they are part of that community. In Hinduism too, the family, occupation and location are part of previous *karmic* lives.

In Catholic Christianity, more recently, scholars have drawn attention to unbridled anthropocentrism (human centredness) and some, including Pope Francis, have indicated that anthropocentrism has contributed to ecological crisis. In *Laudato si'* he says:

> Modernity has been marked by an excessive anthropocentrism which today, under another guise, continues to stand in the way of shared understanding and of any effort to strengthen social bonds … An inadequate presentation of Christian anthropology gave rise to a wrong understanding of the relationship between human beings and the world … Instead, our 'dominion' over the universe should be understood more properly in the sense of responsible stewardship. (*Laudato si'*, no. 116)

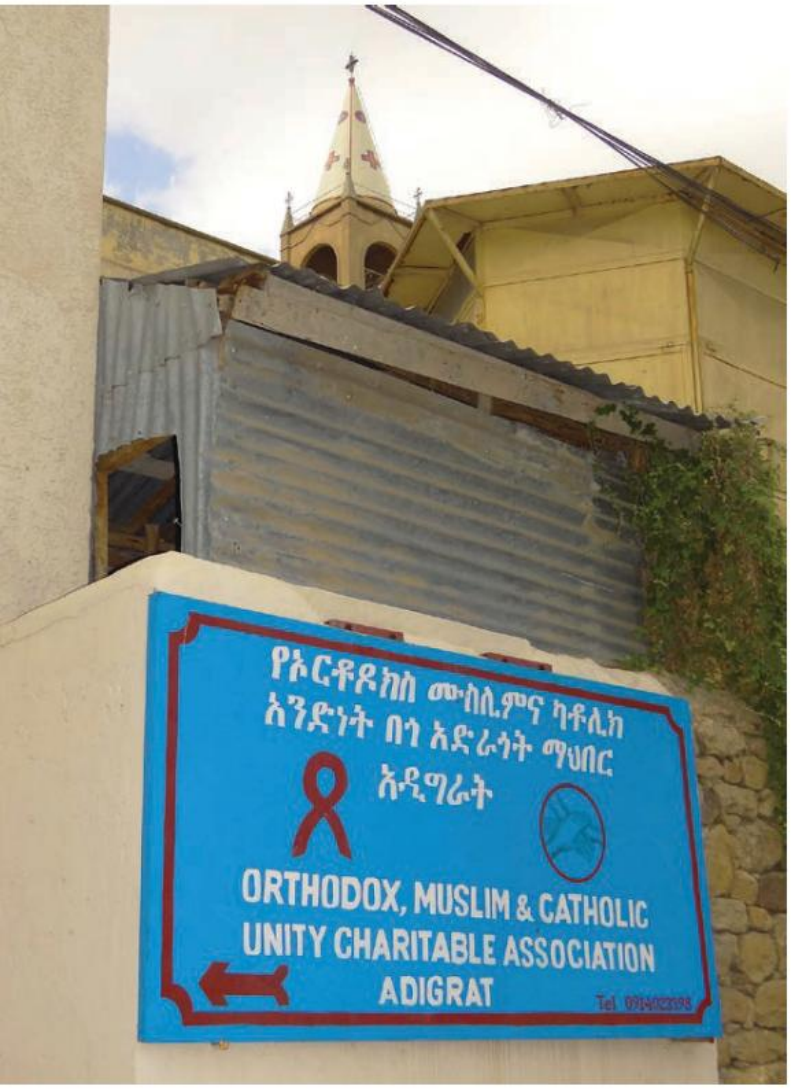


FIGURE 6.4 Sign for Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic Unity charity in Adigrat, Ethiopia

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6.2 World religions and ethics

All religious traditions provide ethical guidance for adherents. In the following section, a brief overview of ethics offered by religious traditions is provided.

Judaism

In the TaNaK, the term for ethics is *uir'at Elohim* – 'fear of God'. In this instance, the term 'fear' is understood as 'respect'. The most important ethical issues in ancient Judaism were actions required in the social realm to relieve the oppression of the poor and powerless and to prevent corruption. Many of the *mitzvot* (commandments) are intended to deter the Israelites from acting towards others with vengeance and malice. Indeed, the central commandment is to 'love one's neighbour as oneself' (Leviticus 19:18).

The Torah utilises a number of rhetorical tools to motivate ethical behaviour. In the books of the *Nev'im* (Prophets), the prophets play a significant role in declaring G-d's demand for a just and compassionate society by reminding people that ethics takes precedence over ritual, in contrast to the Torah where both are viewed as vital components of holiness. In the *Ketuvim* (Writings), special ethical demands are highlighted relating to Israel's treatment of the 'other' – that is, slaves, foreigners and strangers.

At the heart of ethics in Judaism are two passages from the Torah: 'G-d created male and female in the image of G-d' (Genesis 1:27), and in Leviticus, G-d says to the people of Israel: 'You have to be holy for I, the LORD your G-d, am holy' (Leviticus 19:2). If people are made in the image of G-d, it follows that a person should behave in the manner of the Holy One, to honour G-d and to give thanks to G-d who made them. Later, the Book of Deuteronomy states, 'What does Adonai your G-d require of you but to … walk in G-d's ways, to love and serve Adonai … with all your heart … [and] to keep the commandments and the statutes?' (Deuteronomy 10:12–13). These ideas are central to Jewish ethics and they are elaborated in the Torah, in the 613 *mitzvot*, and in the Talmudic and post-Talmudic rabbinical writings.

A *mitzvah* is an act having religious significance, commanded to humanity by G-d through the Torah and defined by the Talmud as being of biblical origin. *Mitzvah* commands are both positive (do something) and negative (refrain from certain things). Positive commandments consist of duties to be performed such as wearing *tefillin* or giving to the poor. Negative commandments are prohibitions such as do not place a stumbling block before the blind; you shall not eat unclean animals; have no other gods before Adonai.

The Torah distinguishes between obligation to G-d, such as prayer or sacrifices, and commandments that govern relationships among people, such as liability in accidents or the charging of interest on a loan. The *mishpatim* are rules governing behaviour – for example, it is bad to covet another's goods because such behaviour sows seeds of trouble between people. Some *mitzvot* are time-dependent – for example, a person does not eat *matzah* at Rosh Hashanah. Others are not time-dependent – for example, there is always an obligation to give assistance to the poor.

When the rabbis of the Talmudic period began to codify the *mitzvot* around the beginning of the Common Era, they distinguished between *mitzvah kalah* (light *mitzvah*) and *mitzvah khamurah* (heavy *mitzvah*). Clearly where there are 613 *mitzvot*, some are more significant than others. The principle of *pikuakh nefesh*, saving a life, for instance, takes precedence over virtually all other *mitzvot*. However, there are three exceptions that take precedence over the principle of life saving: adultery, idolatry and murder. Rather than commit any of these three offences, a Jew is expected to give up his or her life.

In everyday life, a Jew is expected to exert him/herself on behalf of others whenever possible: this is known as *gemilut khasadim* and it takes many forms. It is important to visit and comfort the sick, to comfort the bereaved, to rejoice with the bride and groom, to extend the hospitality of one's home and table to those who need it. It is an imperative for Jews that they take any expense and trouble needed to save

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the life of a neighbour (Leviticus 19). People are expected to praise the virtues of others, return lost objects to their rightful owners, and protect the property of others from loss, theft or damage. Moreover, the obligations of *gemilut khasadim* extend to those not belonging to Judaism.

Within the area of *gemilut khasadim* there is a special category called *Tzedakah*. Sometimes translated as 'charity', the word '*tzedakah*' is from the word 'justice' and *Tzedakah* is part of the process of seeking a just world. While everyone is required to give *Tzedakah* according to his/her means, they are also required to address the social structures that cause injustice. Judaism has a long history of establishing philanthropic organisations ranging from burial societies, loan agencies that provide interest-free loans to the needy, and centres that provide hospitality to wayfaring strangers.

FIGURE 6.5 A form of *Tzedekah* where charity boxes are mounted on a wall in a Jerusalem suburb. Money is dropped through the slots.



Ethical behaviour goes beyond the *mitzvot* and *gemilut khasadim*. The prophet Micah says that people are required to: 'act justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with your G-d'. Among the injunctions governing interpersonal conduct, the *mishpatim*, there are strictures against murder, theft, corruption, jealousy and deceptive business practices. There are also prohibitions against oppression of the non-Jew, against perjury, bribery and taking of revenge.

Three misconceptions about Jewish ethical teaching exist in common conversation. These are: laws governing loans; capital punishment; and 'an eye for an eye'.

Loans

William Shakespeare's play, *The Merchant of Venice*, presents Jews as being unscrupulous moneylenders with the character Shylock demanding his pound of flesh and charging exorbitant interest rates. The actual situation of Jewish money lending is quite the opposite. The grounds for Jewish lending are found in *Tzedakah* – charitable works. Loans were to be given as a form of charity, not for personal gain. Jews were specifically prohibited from lending money with interest to other Jews. The poor were not condemned for their inability to repay a loan and loans could be of money or goods. Maimonides points out in Mishnah Torah that: 'a person who assists the poor man by providing him with … a loan [is] placing him in a situation where he can dispense with other people's aid.' All Jews are obligated to give such free loans regardless of gender or class. Free loans, however, are only made to other Jews. It is permissible to make loans with special interest to non-Jews. It is also interesting to note that during the same period in history, Christians were not allowed to charge interest on a loan to other Christians, so they often borrowed money from Jewish moneylenders.

There are also several *halakhic* rulings that mitigate charging interest on a loan. Rabbi Isaac Abrabanel, a fifteenth-century commentator,

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says that the acceptance of interest from non-Jews does not apply to Christians or Muslims, because their faith system stems from Judaism and, therefore, they share a common ethical basis.

Capital punishment

Even though Genesis 9:6, which states: 'Whoever sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed', is used by some to support capital punishment, the teachings of the Talmud do not encourage capital punishment. The Oral Law makes it virtually impossible to execute someone for murder. For the death penalty to apply, two witnesses must have seen the perpetrator about to commit the crime and warned him/her of the potential penalty. The perpetrator must then acknowledge that s/he is aware of the illegality of the act and its consequences. The witnesses must see the actual murder; circumstantial evidence is not admissible in such cases. While the conditions stated were the norm in ancient Israel, it is interesting to note that the modern State of Israel inherited the death penalty from the British Mandate; in 1954 it abolished the penalty for murder. Although a legal option under the law, Israel does not use the death penalty.

Eye for an eye

The passage in Exodus in which the principle of 'an eye for an eye' occurs is one of the most controversial in the Jewish sacred texts. The Talmud specifically states that it is about monetary compensation being sought for an injury inflicted, rather than a comparable wound. The commentator Dr Avigdor Bonchek offers an alternative view. After analysing the Hebrew, he says the passage reads: 'But if there be harm then you shall give soul for soul, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, burn for burn, wound for wound, bruise for bruise.' He emphasises the word 'give', saying that throughout the Torah the word *takhat* is translated as 'in place of' or 'on account of' and never 'as identical substitution for'. Consequently, he reasons the meaning of the passage is that recompense must be given in place of the injured organ.



FIGURE 6.6 Matanot l'Evyonim is a principle of charity related to the feast of Purim

Rights of workers

Both the Torah and Talmud are unequivocal in their stance on labour. It is forbidden to delay paying an employee wages and a worker is entitled to fair pay for work completed. The Talmud recognises the rights of workers to organise in unions. Even the rights of animals are safeguarded under Jewish law. The rabbis prohibited hunting for sport and pastimes that inflicted pain on animals. The Talmud states: 'Man [sic] must provide for those animals he has domesticated and must not cause them any unnecessary pain.' Jewish law is predicated on the understanding that people are G-d's partners in creation and that people alone can repair the unredeemed world. The only way this can be achieved is through moral behaviour.

For many secular Jews, social action is what connects them to their Jewish identity, and for all Jews, social action is what the tradition demands of them.

Tikkun Olam

In the Jewish creation accounts, particularly Genesis 1, everything that G-d creates is 'good' and even 'very good' (Genesis 1:31). At the conclusion of the creation narrative, there is a call in Hebrew 'to do', meaning that those

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living in the world need to work to improve the world. The narrative describes the creation of humankind in order to 'protect the world'. Midrash teaches 'all that G-d created, G-d made to be improved' (*Midrash Rabbah Genesis* 11:6).

Tikkun Olam, which means 'repairing the world', requires that every Jew seek justice and every Jew must seek to repair the world as stated in Deuteronomy 6:18: 'you shall do what is right and good.' To that end, everyone's conduct is closely regulated to ensure fairness in business dealings. Rabbis prohibited the making of excess profits through the setting of excessive prices. The Torah bans the giving of short measure and the use of rigged weights. The ethical imperative of Tikkun Olam, is enacted by Jews across the world.

Tikkun Olam is synonymous with the notion of social action in the pursuit of social justice. The phrase is found in the Mishnah, but was not commonly used to refer to social action until the 1950s and is now used when discussing issues of social policy, particularly that which ensures the safeguarding of the disadvantaged. It is especially focused on humankind taking responsibility for attempts to fix what is wrong with and in the world. Tikkun Olam is frequently used to describe acts of social justice and environmental awareness, but there are numerous ways in which Tikkun Olam can be enacted in the daily lives of adherents. The Mishnah teaches that any '*tikkun*' made in the world reverberates through the world and teaches that *tikkun* has the potential to change everything.

Practical reasoning

Any approach to Jewish ethics needs to take account of practical reason. The philosopher and scholar Martha Nussbaum describes practical reason as the ability to recognise the salient features of a complex situation. Just as understanding comes only through long experience, practical perception is gained only through the long process of living and choosing that develops a person's resourcefulness and responsiveness. Judgements of practical reason are powerful ethical guides. The application of general rules and duties in the context of particular issues requires judgement, first of all



FIGURE 6.7 Philosopher and scholar Martha Nussbaum

to know whether a given rule or duty applies in the given circumstances. The significance of reason or thinking applied to an ethical issue is significant when the choice of the correct action requires more than simply applying rules and principles. Decision making is more difficult when rules and general values conflict. Jewish religious writings suggest the need for practical reason to go beyond simply applying the rules; while the rules are necessary, they are not always sufficient. Ethical knowledge increases with experience, as new elements are added and new connections made to increase the breadth and coherence of the system.

Christianity

Within Christianity, ethics is also referred to as moral theology and the principle of morality is deceptively simple: 'do good and avoid evil.' However, this simple statement masks significant complexities. The word 'moral' from the Latin '*mores*' means customs, habitual ways of doing things. While the customary way of doing things can be either right or wrong, good or evil, we usually say that something is moral if it is also good. As human beings we exist within community, so personal morality can never be separated from our responsibilities as members of society.

Since customs, practices and habitual ways of doing things vary from culture to culture, there are various ways of approaching morality within Christianity and within specific Christian denominations. In the East, 'saving face' is a moral value little understood in the West; in many parts of Africa, the good of the tribe is the

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principal determining factor in moral situations, while in the West, some moral decisions are focused on the good of the individual and others focus on the common good.

Every person has an innate tendency to seek his/her fulfilment and each person has needs and desires. Fulfilment is 'the good'. Anything that contributes to human potential and the proper development of the human person is good or moral. For Christians, human development is lived under the guiding principle of love, because God is love.

Anything that contributes to human fulfilment and growth is good while anything that acts against human growth is considered to be evil. Humans can be deprived of what they need for growth in different ways. Natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, epidemics, accidents which are outside human control are called physical evils. However, most evil in the world does not occur in this way. Most evil is brought about by deliberate and unjustified actions of human beings.

No society can function properly for the good of its members unless there is some form of agreed-upon moral code that binds everyone. In one way or another, most people seek to live a good life and try to avoid evil. Sometimes, however, in seeking the 'good life' we bring evil on others. We trample others to attain our own selfish ends and our selfishness makes us insensitive to the harm we do to others. To be a moral person sometimes requires people to sacrifice their own needs and desires for the good of others.

Because there are different approaches to morality, sometimes moral stances vary according to the situation in which people find themselves. This is called 'moral relativism'. There are two types of moral relativists: social relativists and personal relativists. *Social relativists* hold that that whatever a particular society accepts and approves is the only standard of morality. If slavery, for example, is common in a particular society, then according to social relativists it is acceptable. For *personal relativists*, the principal criterion of morality is their own personal satisfaction – their slogans are well known: 'My way is as good as your way'; 'Do your own thing' or 'I feel good about it so therefore it is right'.

In the Bible, morality is understood in terms of covenant, an agreement between two or more parties. A covenant establishes a deep personal relationship that cannot be spelled out in purely legal terms. In the covenant that God made with the Jewish people through Moses, recorded in Exodus 19 to 24 and Deuteronomy 1 to 30, God offers a special relationship in words that are grounded in love: 'I will be your God and you shall be my people.' God promises the people that if they are faithful to their side of the bargain, they will become God's 'treasured possession out of all the people', a 'holy nation' (Exodus 19:5–6).

In addition to the Decalogue (Ten Commandments), God gave the Israelites many other prescriptions concerning their everyday life. These laws constitute the basis of Israelite morality. This morality is religious because it arises from faith and from a people's sensitivity to the presence of God in their lives. Jesus constantly refers to the covenant in his teaching. When asked, 'What must I do to have eternal life?', Jesus responds with two statements: 'Keep the commandments' and 'love your neighbour as yourself'. Together with the command to love God, these two commandments sum up all the teaching and the law of the prophets (Matthew 22:32–40).

Christian morality focuses on the type of person the Christian should be and the sorts of actions a Christian person ought to perform. The sort of person one is depends on the types of decisions and actions a person takes, which in turn shapes the type of person they are.

Morality is often discussed within the context of behaviour and rules. While actions are an expression of a person, moral goodness is the quality of the person that is cultivated by virtues, attitudes and outlooks. Christian morality has a particular focus on the interiority of the person or the person's character. In other words, it is who a person is as well as what actions s/he performs. Christian ethics is concerned with the pattern of actions or habits that people acquire and the vision of life that they have and the values they live by. Within Christianity, the classic idea of virtue is contained in the question: 'What sort of person should I become if I believe in Christ?'



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Moral theology is a twofold enterprise of ethics and morals. It is concerned with clarifying the foundations of the moral life based on Christian religious convictions (ethics) and with interpreting how to judge and act in the light of these convictions (morals). In some instances, the relationship between Christianity and ethics is explicit, while in other instances it is implicit.

The message and ministry of Jesus directs Christians regarding their moral behaviour. Christians share with Jews the great commandment to love, expanded in the Ten Commandments, which lays the foundation for the daily life of humankind. God's law was elaborated in detail in the scriptures and in Jewish exegetical and teaching tradition, with specific regulations touching upon all areas of human life, including worship, sex, marriage, family life, agriculture, trade, property, rest, and social and political responsibility. How to live a moral life is also presented through sacred myths such as the Adam and Eve story, the fidelity of Abraham and Sarah, the courage of Daniel and Esther, the wisdom of Solomon and the chastity of Susanna. The prophets too present issues of morality and challenge people regarding idolatry, and the misuse of wealth, power and privilege.

Patristic
period of Christian history between 100 and 450 CE



FIGURE 6.8 Sermon on the Mount windows at Herzogenbuchsee Reformed Church near Berne, Switzerland. Picture by Eugène Burnand (1910), glass by Emil Gerster of Basel (1911).

The New Testament elaborates the moral teaching of Jesus in sermons such as the Sermon on the Mount, and in parables like the lost son, as well as in actions such as healing on the Sabbath and evicting money-changers from the Temple. The letters of Paul urge Christians to imitate the virtues shown by Jesus and to live as people who have been saved through the grace of Christ.

During the **Patristic** period, moral topics were generally treated as part of pastoral works, such as sermons, monastic rules and general theological works such as *The City of God* by Augustine of Hippo (354–430 CE). Augustine's work *On the Good of Marriage* presented a case for marriage during a time when people thought that a consecrated, celibate life was of more value than married life. Augustine's writings on marriage, which focused on faithfulness, children and the sacramental body of marriage, are central to Catholic thought even today.

It was not until the Middle Ages, at the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), that moral theology came to be understood as a distinct discipline. It was decided at this council that people, over the age of reason, were required to confess their sins privately in the sacrament of reconciliation at least once a year.

An important shift in moral theology occurred at the time of the Council of Trent (1545–63), which condemned the doctrine of 'total depravity' promoted by some of the Protestant Reformers. Catholic theologians emphasised that human beings had free will and they reinforced the idea of natural law, encouraging the separation of morals from being solely focused on scripture and Christian doctrine.

The Second Vatican Council (1962–5) aimed to renew the Church in the context of the modern world and urged Catholics to engage in dialogue with other Christians and people of different faith traditions. It emphasised the need to be aware of experiential reality and not just written doctrines. For Catholic moral theologians, moral action

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is considered to be nothing more or less than human action understood in its totality. Catholic moral theology is profoundly **teleological** – that is, it is shaped by consideration of the final end (*telos*) of human life. Nevertheless, the ultimate end is not constituted by the aggregation of good 'consequences', whether for the body or the mind or both.

Catholic moral theology uses the sense of freedom as freedom to act responsibly in accordance with the human good. Freedom is a presumption of human action. When considering what to do and what not to do, we could do something else.

Intention is a key concept for Catholic moral theology. The intention of the person performing an action is the rationale for an action. Closely related to intention is the principle of double effect. This states that effects that should never be caused intentionally may sometimes be accepted as a side effect of action. For example, a life-saving drug might cause a fatal reaction in a small percentage of patients: this does not mean it can never be prescribed if it cures a disease.

Being good is not a matter only of action but also concerns the dispositions that shape and are shaped by those actions. Christian virtues, given by God, enable human flourishing.

Islam

The discipline of ethics has several names in Islam. It is described as: the science of innate dispositions (*'ilm al-akhlaq*), the science of conduct (*'ilm al-suluk*) or the science of mysticism (*'ilm al-tasawwuf*). The emphasis is on the cultivation of individual practices focusing on the key principle that Islam is a 'way of life'.

'Right conduct' (*adab*) is the key to Muslim ethics. Therefore, ethics is the cultivation of right conduct through education and practice. Muslim ethics is a responsibility-based ethics, invoking reciprocal rights and duties involving a range of people, including parents and teachers, as every individual is considered a moral agent. Ethics, therefore, combines self-discipline with the observance of ritual and legal obligations. When Muhammad proclaimed the revelations he received from Allah, he declared that God, not the tribe, ruled over humanity and the people were to submit to Allah's will and law. From this time onward, the individual adherent, in community with other Muslims, took precedence over the tribe and its obligations.

teleological pertaining to a way of doing moral theology which emphasises the end (*telos*), or purpose, of human existence

In Islam, law and ethics are inseparable. The terms *fiqh* and *sharia* signify the law: *sharia* refers to revealed normative discourses; *fiqh* (meaning discernment) is the interpretation and application of these discourses. *Fiqh* must meet two conditions: the practices must fulfil worldly ends and simultaneously serve as acts of salvation. The scholar Ghazali said that *fiqh* should ensure that the practitioner develops a moral consciousness of the divine (*taqwa*). Individual responsibility is central to Muslim ethics. Even if a jurist issues an informed opinion, the lay person is compelled to subject any ruling to the scrutiny of his/her conscience.

Forgiveness is a key theme in the Qur'an, which repeatedly draws attention to Allah's compassion and mercy for humanity. The Qur'an urges people to be mindful of the fact that while they are free to believe, and do as they like, the standards of judgement belong to Allah:

> Oh, you who believe, be mindful of God. Let each person consider what they have set aside for tomorrow. Be mindful of God, for He knows what you do. The residents of Hell and those of Heaven are not equal, for the residents of Paradise will be the winners! (Qur'an 59:18–19)

As a result, the Qur'an highlights individual moral responsibility in its many depictions of Judgement Day, when each person will be called to account for the good and bad deeds that s/he did: 'on that Day, people will come forward separately to be shown their deeds, and, so, whoever did an atom's weight of good will see it, and he who did an atom's weight of evil will see it' (Qur'an 99:6–7).

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Each person must submit (*islam*) to Allah and His will and strive to cultivate righteousness for success in this world and the next:

> Righteousness is from believing in God, the Last Day, the angels, the scriptures and the prophets, and from giving, out of love for Him, to one's relatives, orphans, the wretched, travellers, and beggars, and [righteousness is] from freeing slaves, undertaking prayers, giving alms, fulfilling covenants that were pledged and from patience in adversity. (Qur'an 2:177)

As recorded in this verse, a righteous life is based on correct belief and right actions. Repeatedly, the Qur'an calls to 'those who believe and do good works' and a major theme of the Qur'an is the need to work for social justice (cf Qur'an 2:261–2; 273–4). People are also encouraged to be fair in their social and commercial transactions and always give 'full measure' (Qur'an 83:1–6).

ACTIVITY **6.3**

Forming and finding

Locate Qur'an 2:61–2, 2:273–4 and 83:1–6. Summarise in your own words the ideas presented in each extract.

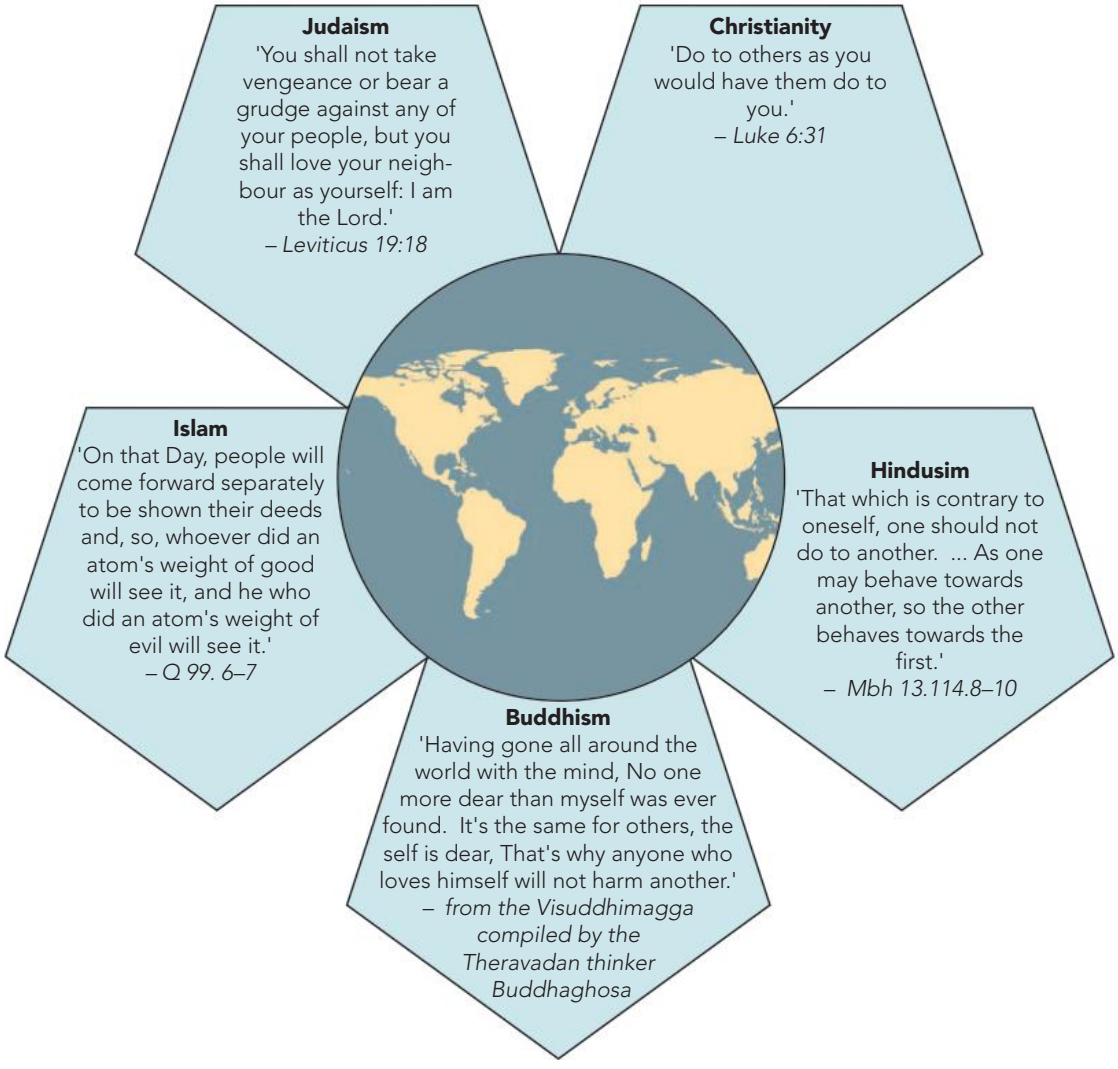


FIGURE 6.9 The Golden Rule represented in five major world religions

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Some Muslim commentators have indicated that Qur'an 83:1–6 is an implicit statement of the Golden Rule (see Figure 6.9). Similar examples of the Golden Rule are found among the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad. An oft-quoted Hadith is: 'None of you believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself!'

The Qur'an distinguishes between a *muslim*, 'one who submits' and professes to be a believer, and a *mu'min*, 'one who believes' in Allah and His revelations deep within his/her heart. Muhammad's interpretation of the Golden Rule is a call to self-examination and religious transformation aimed not at reciprocity so much as humility by acknowledging the humanity of other human beings. One of the most extensive discussions of the Golden Rule appears in the Qur'anic commentary by the eleventh-century Sufi scholar Abbu al-Qasim al-Qushayri (d. 1037), who said:

> [those who give short measure] are those who cheat when measuring or weighing. What is meant by that are those who do business with people, such that when they take for themselves, they take a full share, but when they wait on the customers, they short change them. This is seen clearly in weights and measures, and applies to finding fault, in making judgements, payments, and restitution. For if one does not want for his Muslim brother what he wants for himself, he is not fair. As for the righteous, whenever they regard Muslims, they regard everyone to be treated the same. Truth is honourable! This is their position regarding friendship and social relations. (Abbu al-Qasim al-Qushayri, 3:699–700)

Ghazali says that a Muslim's interactions with others should mirror their relationship with Allah.

However, Muslims have interpreted and applied the Golden Rule in several contrasting ways, and two recent examples show dramatically different understandings of reciprocity. On the negative side is retaliation as payback as proposed by Osama Bin Laden and the perpetrators of the September 11, 2001 bombings in the United States. In such situations, invocations of '*jihad*' do not bring justice. In contrast to Bin Laden, there is another Muslim call for reciprocity, a positive one of reconciliation. In an attempt to seek world peace and international justice, over 125 Muslim clerics and scholars from around the world sent an open letter to Pope Benedict XVI and other world leaders of Christianity on 3 October 2007. The letter, entitled *A Common Word Between Us*, affirms that the common beliefs held by Jews, Christians and Muslims in 'the love of one God, and the love of the neighbour' should serve as a 'basis for peace and understanding'. The letter interprets the Golden Rule in various forms, including the Hadith: 'None of you believes until you love for your brother what you love for yourself.' The letter accepts religious pluralism and ends with a call for building a world of peace and harmony.



FIGURE 6.10 Volunteers distribute food packages to workers during the *iftar* meal as part of a Ramadan charity drive by a local mosque in Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Contemporary approaches

Within traditional Islam, contextual legal ethics is somewhat muted. However, reformist and progressive Islam take contextual ethics seriously. On issues of the status of women within the family,

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marriage and Islamic governance, the ideological differences between Muslim approaches to ethics are very apparent. There are generally three types of contemporary approaches: doctrinaire traditionalism, critical traditionalism and modernist transcendentalists.

fundamentalism a belief in, and strict adherence to, a set of religious principles; often a reaction to perceived compromises with modern social and political life

Doctrinaire traditionalism is predominant in contemporary Islam. This is where formalised legal and ethical opinions of past jurists form the canon of normative teachings. Grounded in the past, the opinions are regarded as universally valid and perfect because they are inherited from the past. The weakness of this approach is that it has a static and idealistic notion of history. Contemporary experiences do not qualify to influence adaptation and change to the law or ethics. Present knowledge is either resisted or reluctantly adopted in order to supplement or update the inherited body of ethical teachings. Doctrinaire traditionalists do not generally distinguish between facts and values. Versions of doctrinaire traditionalism are prevalent on the Indian subcontinent, in Africa, East and Central Asia and the Middle East, and cut across sectarian divisions of Sunni and Shi'ite.

Critical traditionalism is beginning to emerge, but mainly in intellectual circles. This movement involves scholars using the material of critical thinkers of the past, history and tradition as well as adopting contemporary knowledge and experience. A small group of scholars has succeeded in engaging both the Muslim and Western knowledge traditions.

soteriological literally the study of the theory of salvation

Modernist transcendentalism almost exclusively involves a revelation-centred approach without engaging with the lived experience of the community (*Sunna*). In this approach, there is an almost exclusive reliance on the Qur'an as the idealised source of norms and a refusal to attach any credibility to history. Transcendentalist ethics play down differences and insist that the latest iteration of ethics is the most perfect incarnation of the revealed norms. Past communities are judged as having failed to discover the true norms. A major weakness of this approach is that it presumes that all norms are self-explanatory and literally derived from revealed sources. It fails to account for the role of the interpreter and people's changing subjectivity in both the interpretation and practice of ethical traditions. It is a pathway to text-fundamentalism with its accompanying ethical **fundamentalism**.

Hinduism

Some scholars maintain that there is no concept of Hindu ethics as Western thought defines ethics – rather, it is more appropriate to speak about Hindu ethical theory. Ethical reflection in Hinduism is deeply pragmatic and decisions about human nature, debates regarding issues such as equality and inequality, are closely linked to patterns of proper societal behaviour and inevitably intertwined with discussions of caste, relationships and practices.

One of the challenges in studying Hinduism is that the tradition is extremely diverse. The sacred texts of Hinduism are immense, with each having varying degrees of authority as well as being composed of several genres. Because each genre addresses different purposes, Hindu sacred texts rarely provide straightforward answers to any questions. In post-Vedic classical Hindu literature, different philosophies speak about the good: *moksha*, freedom, liberation and release. Classical Hindu thought is primarily **soteriological** and focused on *moksha*, while *Dharmasastra* literature deals less with soteriological issues and more with worldly issues. Consequently, several considerations must be taken into account because in Hinduism, law, ethics and soteriology are tied together. The tradition also acknowledges levels of 'the right'. For instance, certain actions may be provisional in accordance with ethical standards that are cognitively available to the individual, but they may be ultimately ill-advised, given the highest ethical ideals. Thus, ethical thinking in Hinduism must take account of two things: *moksha* – thinking directed towards the eternal; and *samsara* – thinking directed at the temporal or mundane.

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In the Hindu tradition, human beings are understood within a complex social matrix. Some of the factors in the matrix include hierarchy such as class, caste and gender. Others are more relational: a person is not simply a person, but a man or a woman; and a person is not simply a worker in the public world, but someone who belongs to a particular occupational community – for instance, a community of sweepers, or scholars, or philosophers – in other words a caste community. A person is defined by their vocation or stage of life – whether a student or a householder; by their age and seniority in various hierarchies. Thus, 'Pallavi' is not simply a person but she is female, with certain social standing, belonging to a landowning caste community, married and engaged in the householder stage of life; and, depending on the context, may be a teacher or student, a parent or child, elder or younger, a citizen or an administrator. All of these considerations dictate how Pallavi should behave in any given situation. The codes of conduct are not generalisable to all human beings. An act may be very wrong for one person in a given situation, but may be quite defensible for another person.

Dharma

The dominant mode of ethical thinking in classical India revolves around the term '*dharma*', a word which has many meanings. It can be understood as an overarching cosmic order and as a set of guidelines for proper righteous conduct by individuals. Because *dharma* assumes that specific acts are necessary to maintain order – cosmic, natural and social – it covers many things not generally included in modern Western ethics. These include piety and customs required by caste duty.

The roots of *dharma* appear in two Vedic ideas. The first, *rta*, meaning proper, right, fit, divine law, righteousness and law, refers by extension to the universal order – that is, the rhythm of the seasons, movements of planets and so forth. The second, *rna*, is the debts that one must repay. The underlying idea of *dharma* is normative ordering. This explains the Hindu emphasis on **orthopraxy** rather than **orthodoxy**.

orthopraxy correct conduct as related to ritual and actions

orthodoxy adherence to accepted beliefs and creeds

The *Dharmasastras* further classify *dharma* into: acts that are required daily (*nitya*), acts that are required occasionally (*naimittika*); acts that are optional (*kamya*); and acts that are prohibited (*pratisiddha*). The first two refer to Vedic rituals that are mandatory for *Brahmins*; the third is open to anyone who wants to fulfil a personal desire; and the fourth includes both universal prohibitions such as abortion, except when the mother's life is in danger, and those specific to particular groups.

Hindu ethics are also informed by the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. These texts translate the lists of earlier texts into dramatic narratives that explore moral complexity and ambiguity. In the *Mahabharata*, *dharma* is extended to include intention, which can be seen in teaching stories about animals such as the *Pancatantra* and the *Subhashitas*.

Social commitment is part of *dharma* – a moral duty. *Dharma* connotes rules of ethical conduct which ensure the security and welfare of all. *Dharma* does not just mean observance



FIGURE 6.11 A page from an eighteenth-century *Pancatantra* fable, 'The elephants trample the hares'

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of rituals, but living a life of truth, non-violence, compassion and equal regard for others and their welfare. The *Bhagavad Gita* reminds people that: 'He who judges pleasure and pain in others by the same standard as he applies to himself, that "yogi" is the Highest' (Chapter 6 vs 32). And: 'If I have a right to enjoy, I should not forget that others have the same right. If I do not like to be exploited and harassed, others should not be treated like that.' This is basic *dharma*. Non-violence is considered to be the highest *dharma*. It is not just non-killing but includes compassion, forgiveness, selfless help, peace and harmony. The *Gita* lists the ethical values to be cherished and practised (10:4; 10:5; 12:13; 14:16).

The classical Hindu view of ethics influenced warfare too because *dharma* regulated *artha* (statecraft which includes warfare). A war was *dharmic* if both its means and ends were righteous. Prior to entering a battle, clarity was sought that the fight would be between equals, restricting the battle to particular locations, protecting women, children and the elderly, priests and teachers. Fairness was also considered. For instance, the battle would not continue if the enemy became panic-stricken, had broken weapons or showed signs of being willing to surrender. Other conditions included reconciliation after victory such as reinstating the defeated king and allowing the defeated people to maintain their customs and laws as long as they recognised the victorious king.

Karma

While *dharma* is one side of the coin, *karma* is the other. *Karma*, too, includes ritual. The law of *karma* focuses more on personal behaviour and personal destiny. Primary ethical responsibility rests on the individual.

Many Hindus consider health the root of *dharma*. The lapse of *karma* explains birth defects, disease, forms of suffering that resist medical treatment and untimely death. Hindus relate right acts to good diet, exercise, adequate sleep and avoiding psychological stress. Just as Hindus strive for harmony in society, nature and the cosmos, they strive for harmony in the physical, psychological, social, ethical and spiritual dimensions of life: past *karma*, diet, season, personal habits, temperament, caste, age, occupations and even astrological signs all contribute to personal harmony.



FIGURE 6.12 A cow resting in the middle of the street in Manali, India

In response to ecological and environmental disasters, some Hindu religious leaders have argued that Hinduism has many resources to support 'eco-dharma' – that is, the divine expressing itself through nature. Hindus are also sympathetic to animals, believing that they have souls, and some Hindus express their concern for animals by being vegetarian.

Hindu ethics can be considered secular in the sense that it does not require a monitoring god. The monitoring is taken care of by the law of *karma* operating automatically. It is essentially a moral law intended to motivate social responsibility. The law does not mean destiny or fate, but rather whatever a person does has consequences not only for others but also for the initiator of the action. The law of *karma* extends to social concern. For example, if I see another person in pain and do nothing to alleviate the pain believing it to be the person's *karma*, then I incur bad *karma* for losing an opportunity to help, and I fail in my moral duty or *dharma*. Hindu sacred texts are clear that good deeds count for the law of *karma*

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as *punya* and a good deed means acceptance of social responsibility. Another justification for ethics of social concern in Hinduism is the concept that god is not only transcendent but also immanent in the world. This makes all life sacred. Humanity is a manifestation of *chit* (consciousness) in addition to *sat* (existences) and *aananda* (happiness). While all life is to be respected, the Hindu epics and *Puranas* indicate that animals are also attributed with *chit*. The human body is considered to be the abode of god – the body is a temple and its dweller is no less than god.

The idea of ethics within Hinduism is to maintain order, balance, tolerance, purity and restraint – all of which enhance the Hindu way of life.

Buddhism

All lineages of Buddhism emphasise the importance of a moral life and the sacred texts of Buddhism speak of virtues such as non-violence, compassion and the Golden Rule. While the various cultural expressions of Buddhism are quite divergent, there is a core of ethical principles and precepts attributed to the Buddha and followed by Buddhists around the world.

The foundation for Buddhist ethics is *Dharma*. The *Dharma* is the underlying idea of law which governs both the physical and moral universe. Every aspect of life is regulated by *Dharma*; the physical laws that regulate the rising of the sun, the seasons, the movement of constellations. *Dharma* is neither caused by, nor under the control of, a supreme being and even the Buddha himself was subject to its laws. Living in accordance with *Dharma* and implementing its requirements is thought to lead to happiness, fulfilment and salvation: neglecting or transgressing it is said to lead to endless suffering in the cycle of rebirth (*samsara*).

Since the middle of the third century BCE, Buddhism has presented itself as a politically and social formative factor. From almost the beginning of Buddhism, contrary to popular belief, Buddhism was not purely individualistic. The Pali Canon and several other ancient Buddhist texts demonstrate an interest in ethics as well as explaining the origin and removal of suffering such as crime, poverty and war from within the social and political spheres.

In Buddhism, human beings do not occupy an absolutely privileged position but are seen against the doctrine of rebirth as being continuous with all sentient beings. Consequently, Buddhists have pointed out the additional need for animal rights. Buddhist understanding of human beings does not have human beings in an exceptional position; nevertheless, rebirth as a human being is regarded as particularly precious because it carries the most favourable conditions for progress on the path of nirvana. Therefore, it is usually assumed that enlightenment can be achieved only in human form. Buddhist sacred texts praise existence in human form as precious and this implies the specific worth of individual self-determination and free agency.

The personal responsibility of humans for their deeds and their consequences is also at the centre of the Buddhist teaching on *karma* and is emphasised by the standard formula: 'I myself am responsible for my deed, I am the



FIGURE 6.13 Statue of Gautama Buddha delivering his first sermon in the Deer Park at Sarnath, Varanasi

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heir to my deed' (*Anguttara Nikaya* X.48). Good or bad spiritual development is the direct responsibility of the individual. For Buddhists, there is no contradiction between responsibility for oneself and responsibility for one's fellow humans or other sentient beings. Both belong together: 'Protecting oneself, one protects others; protecting others, one protects oneself' (*Samyutta Nikaya* 47.19). This is based on the fundamental insight that all beings '… yearn for happiness and recoil from pain' (*Majjhima Nikaya* 51).

In the First Sermon, the Buddha was said to have 'turned the wheel of the *Dharma*' and given doctrinal expression to how things are in reality. In this sermon, the Buddha set out the Four Noble Truths, the last of which is the Noble Eightfold Path which leads to nirvana. The path has three divisions: morality (*sila*), meditation (*samadhi*) and insight (*prajna*). Morality is an integral component of the path to nirvana.

Karma

In Buddhism, the doctrine of *karma* is concerned with the ethical implications of *Dharma*, particularly the consequences of moral behaviour. *Karma* is the principle of moral retribution in terms of good and bad deeds which brings about pleasant or unpleasant consequences in the future as well as transformation of the person's present moral status.

Belief in *karma* did not originate with the Buddha but was common to many Indian religions. Because it was common in Indian thought, the Buddha does not bother to defend it or justify it; however, the idea of *karma* permeates his teachings.

In Buddhism, *karma* involves a matrix of interrelated ideas that embrace both ethics and belief in rebirth. Not all the consequences of what a person does are experienced in the lifetime in which the deeds are performed. *Karma* that has been accumulated but not yet experienced is carried forward to the next life, or even many lifetimes ahead. Early sources offer five possible rebirth destinations, known as *gatis*. These are as a god, a human being, a hungry ghost, an animal or one in hell. To these five, later sources added a sixth, the realm of the titans (*asura*), powerful and aggressive warlike beings. Rebirth in the human world is regarded as the most fortunate location because it involves the best mix of pleasure and pain appropriate to the quest for nirvana.

Karma is not the same as determinism, so it does not determine precisely what will happen or how anyone will react to what happens.

Precepts

As in Indian tradition, Buddhism expresses its ethical requirements in the form of duties rather than rights. These duties are the implicit requirements of *Dharma*. The most widely known precepts in Buddhism are the Five Precepts.

The Five Precepts

1. Refrain from harming living creatures.
2. Refrain from taking what has not been given.
3. Refrain from sexual immorality.
4. Refrain from speaking falsely.
5. Refrain from taking intoxicants.

Apart from the Five Precepts, various other lists of precepts are found, such as the Eight Precepts and the Ten Precepts. These are commonly adopted as additional commitments on the twice-monthly holy days and supplement the first four of the Five Precepts with additional restrictions such as the time when meals may be taken. Another set of Ten Precepts is the Ten Good Paths of Action, which apply to the laity but are relatively few compared with those observed by monks and nuns.

The *Dharma-Vinaya* (doctrine and discipline) is a term used to describe the whole body of Buddhist teachings and practice. Originally, the *Sangha* existed as a sect within a broad community of wandering teachers and students. Eventually, a complex code for the regulation of monastic life was formulated known as the

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FIGURE 6.14 Monks walking with a buffalo

Vinaya Pitaka. The *Vinaya Pitaka* contains several stories relating to the Buddha as well as historical matter related to the *Sangha*.

The purpose of the *Vinaya* is to regulate life within the community of monks and nuns and their relationship with the laity. Different lineages have their own versions of the *Vinaya* and the number of rules varies in each. In the Theravada *Vinaya* there are 227 rules for monks and the rules for nuns varies from 218 to 380. Not all the rules are ethically based and some deal with behaviour related to food, clothing, furniture, etc. The rules are arranged in eight sections in decreasing degrees of punishment and therefore roughly correspond to the degree of importance attached to their observance. The rules are recited once every two weeks on the days of the full moon and new moon and anyone who has infringed a rule is expected to declare their transgression.

There is more to Buddhist moral life than following rules: rules must not only be followed for the right reasons, but also enacted with correct motivation. Buddhist ethics is like a two-sided coin. On one side are the precepts and on the other the virtues. Early sources emphasise the importance of cultivating correct dispositions and habits so that ethical conduct is natural and spontaneous and a manifestation of beliefs and values. A person who follows the first precept is said to be: 'Laying aside the club and the sword, he dwells compassionate and kind to all living creatures' (*Digha Nikaya* 1:4). Refraining from killing, therefore, is the result of a compassionate identification with living things. The task of the virtues is to counteract vices (*klesas*). The lengthy lists of virtues and vices which appear in Buddhist commentaries are developed from a cluster of three main virtues: non-attachment (*araga*); benevolence (*advesa*); and understanding (*amoha*). These are the opposites of the 'roots of evil', sometimes referred to as the 'three poisons': greed (*raga*); hatred (*dvesa*); and delusion (*moha*).

A central virtue for lay Buddhists is *dana*, which means giving or generosity. The primary recipient of lay Buddhist generosity is the *Sangha*. The laity provide all material needs of the monastic community from food, robes, medicine, to land and buildings. In return, the monks provide *Dharma* teachings to the laity and the gift of the *Dharma* is said to be the highest of all gifts.

Ahimsa, meaning non-harming or non-violence, is a fundamental Buddhist virtue and includes compassion (*karuna*) and sympathy (*anukampa*) for all living creatures. Compassion is a virtue which is significant in all lineages of Buddhism but is particularly emphasised by the Mahayana school. In the Mahayana, the *bodhisattva* who devotes him/herself to the service of others is the epitome of religious practice. Great emphasis is placed on the twin values of compassion and insight and the *bodhisattva* practises six special virtues known as the Six Perfections, which are: generosity, morality, patience, perseverance, meditation and insight.

The Mahayana did not reject the ethical teachings of early Buddhism but subsumed them under an expanded framework of three levels. The first level is moral discipline and consists of scrupulous observance of the moral precepts; the second is the cultivation of virtues, which is concerned with the accumulation of the good qualities necessary for attainment of nirvana; and the third is altruistic conduct consisting of moral action directed to the needs

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of others. A significant innovation in Mahayana ethics was the doctrine of skilful means (*upaya-kausalya*). The pressure to bend or suspend the rules in the interests of compassion results in certain texts establishing new codes of conduct for *bodhisattvas* which sometimes allow the precepts to be broken. The result is a form of Buddhist 'situation ethics'.

Socially engaged Buddhism

While Buddhist ethics is primarily concerned with the specifics of individual conduct, socially engaged Buddhism focuses on larger questions such as public policy, social justice, poverty, politics and the environment. It is perhaps coincidental that socially engaged Buddhism emerged roughly at the same time as Buddhism moved into the West. It flourishes in Asia in more recently established lay Buddhist associations.

Some Buddhist scholars suggest that there are three different styles of Buddhist ethics. The first is the 'ethics of discipline', where the mental impurities are combated by observing the given vows of the laity. The focus in this style is on the individual adherent. The second is the 'ethics of virtue', where the individual's relationship is the primary focus on loving kindness, compassion, sympathetic joy and equanimity. The third style is the 'ethics of altruism', where service to others predominates. Such an approach involves awareness, identification of the self and the world, and a call to action.



FIGURE 6.15 Believers offer food to monks every morning, but at the end of the street, monks also give some food back to the people in need.

ACTIVITY 6.4

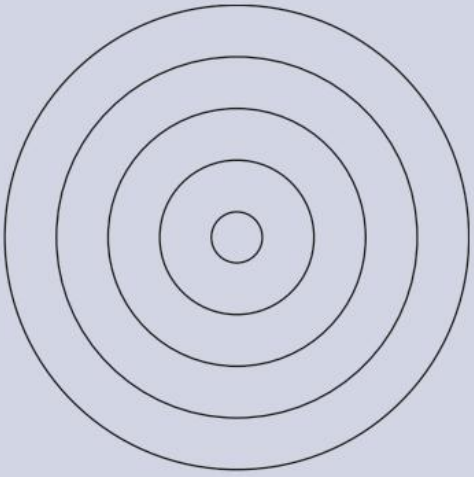
Forming, analysing and evaluating

'Our cultural and religious traditions can give us the strength and guidance we need to make informed choices in a complex world.'

'Our personal values are always embedded in social and religious relationships.'

Influences on values

1 Write your name in the centre circle on the Activity Worksheet.
2 In the ring closest to this circle, name the people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that have had a very strong influence on the formation of your values.
3 In the outer circles, show those with less influence, so that in the outermost circle you list people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that have had only minimal influence on the formation of your values.



continued …

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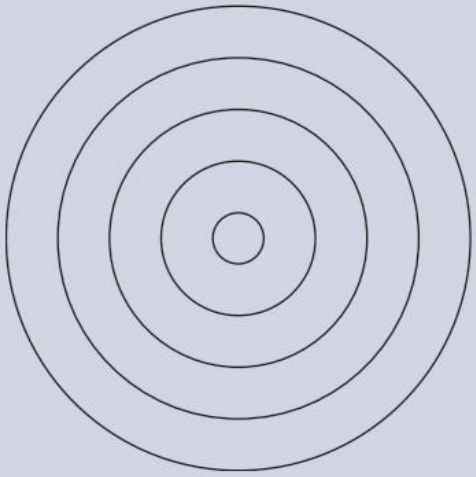
… continued

'We often apply different values to different areas of our life: home, school, work, religious community, ethnic community, politics or sport.'

Influences on particular choices

1 Nominate a situation in which you might be faced with a difficult ethical choice.
2 Write your name in the centre circle.
3 In the ring closest to the centre circle, name the people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that would have a very strong influence on your choice in this situation.
4 In the outer circles, show those with less influence, so that in the outermost circle are shown people and aspects of cultural and religious tradition that would have only minimal influence on your decision in this situation.
5 Account for the differences and similarities between the two diagrams.

Situation:



People approach ethics in a variety of ways. The following section outlines various types of ethics and the different terminology used within the discipline of ethics.

ACTIVITY **6.5**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Compare the attitudes of different religions to one of ethical issues listed below:

- Asylum seekers
- Capital punishment
- Employment and work
- Environment
- Refugees
- Slavery
- War.

Ideas to explore:

1 What common elements exist across religions?
2 What changes have occurred within the religious tradition over time?
3 Remember, attitudes change over time. How does each religious tradition deal with the necessity to reinterpret its past attitudes and practices?

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6.3 Social ethics

Ethicists are interested in the wellbeing of humans and in some cases the wellbeing of other species, and so are inevitably involved in both describing the actions of individuals and collective bodies and prescribing norms and practices that should guide the future actions of individuals and groups. All ethics are social, because human beings are social by nature.

Social ethics is the systematic reflection on the moral dimensions of social structures, systems, issues and communities. The principal tasks for social ethicists are to examine social conditions in the light of what is right or fair and examine possible courses of action.

The subject matter of social ethics is grouped in two ways. The first approach draws a distinction between moral choices that each individual must make, and the corporate decision reached, and actions taken by collective bodies such as corporations, states and nations. Here, social ethics focuses on policies and practices that govern social institutions. The second approach is grounded in the idea that all ethics are social because they are socially constituted and embedded in a social matrix. This view focuses on the way in which individual moralities are shaped by social contexts and the way individual moral choices, in turn, shape social contexts. The emphasis in social ethics is on those matters that concern groups of people, as distinct from ethical inquiries that focus more on individual matters such as personal integrity or character.

ACTIVITY 6.6

Forming

Brainstorm a list of ethical issues. Highlight the ethical issues which you consider to be social ethics.

Normative ethics

Normative ethics seeks to set norms or standards for conduct. More broadly, it is the study of ethical action and the area of ethics that investigates questions that arise when considering how one ought to act. It is concerned with the criteria of whether an action is right or wrong and includes the formulation of moral rules that have direct implications for human actions. The core question of normative ethics is determining how moral standards are arrived at and justified.

Commonly, normative theories are used in applied ethics, the field of ethics that focuses on contemporary issues such as human rights, social equality and the moral implications of scientific research, particularly in the area of genetic engineering. Generally, there are two broad categories within normative ethics: deontological approaches and teleological approaches.

Deontology

Deontological theories (from the Greek word *deon*, which means 'duty') focus on the inherent rightness in establishing standards. Deontological approaches call for acting on principle or because something is inherently right. These theories stress the concepts of obligation, duty, right and wrong, and set out formal or relational criteria such as equality or impartiality. In other words, there are considerations that should govern moral choices other than the good of the consequences. For deontologists, morality is not a matter of producing right results but of meeting obligations. It is possible then for an action to be morally right even if it does not produce the greatest new balance of good, or in some cases, it may not produce good consequences at all.

The eighteenth-century philosopher Immanuel Kant was a deontologist. For Kant, moral rules could be known and could be known to be valid only through the exercise of reason. Kant developed a theory known as the categorical imperative. This is a proposition declaring a certain action (or inaction) to be necessary. Not all deontologists are Kantians. Other deontologists focus on considerations that recognise obligations such as agreeing to a contract or having children. Others ground their ethical decisions in divine commands that are found in religious traditions.

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FIGURE 6.16 German philosopher Immanuel Kant

Many ideas of justice focus on what people are entitled to according to their need or place in society. Another approach is focused on equal opportunity. All these concepts are based in a fundamental belief that we should pay attention to the way in which a society distributes goods and services, but the differing guidelines for distribution yield differing results.

Teleology

Teleological theories (*telos* from the Greek for 'goal') assess human actions by the consequences those actions produce. The focus is on the good and bad consequences that flow from actual or contemplated decisions, especially when those results are compared with those of other available alternatives. The saying 'the end justifies the means' is an expression of this perspective on morality. These approaches advocate that certain actions are right because of the goodness of the consequences. Teleological theories stress the good, the valuable and the desirable and the theories provide material or substantive criteria such as happiness or pleasure.

Teleological concerns in social ethics also focus on the benefits and effectiveness of decisions. A full consideration of ends should include the harms to be avoided or the benefits to be secured as well as the costs and risks entailed in avoiding the harms or securing the benefits. In the area of social policy, risk assessments and cost-benefit analysis form part of this process. Questions asked might include: How should we handle the uncertainty of projections of costs and benefits for the proposed action? Does the action provide benefit or the solution to the problems it was intended to provide? Does the action create other problems that should be considered? Is there a better, more effective way to solve this problem?

In its pure form, cost-benefit analysis requires assigning a value to a particular course of action, but this may be difficult and contentious. How do we value a human life? How do we measure the benefit of a childhood free from polio? How do we measure an education enriched by music or art classes? How do we measure human dignity free of racism?

Critics of teleological approaches identify two faults. First, teleology does not take adequate notice of how benefits are distributed and costs are allocated; and, second, it does not adequately recognise moral obligations that arise in the relationships between people as they make promises or encounter responsibilities to or for others.

Descriptive ethics

Descriptive ethics, also known as comparative ethics, is the study of moral beliefs and practices of people from different cultures and traditions across time. It aims to understand the beliefs as well as what informed and shaped the beliefs and practices. Of particular interest are the similarities and differences of ethical practices of people from different cultures and traditions.

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ACTIVITY **6.7**

Forming

Refer to the following example as a guide.

- It is always wrong to take an innocent human life. (Normative ethics)
- Innocent human lives are sometimes taken. (Descriptive ethics)

1 Decide whether the following statements are normative or descriptive:
   - **a** Drivers should not exceed the speed limit.
   - **b** Many drivers exceed the speed limit occasionally.
   - **c** Buddhists should not earn their livelihood as butchers.
   - **d** Stealing is against the law.
   - **e** Downloading films for free is seen as acceptable by some people.
   - **f** Islamic *sharia* law forbids the drinking of alcohol.
   - **g** Slavery is wrong.
   - **h** Adultery is a grave sin.
   - **i** Devout Jews eat kosher food.
   - **j** You should always demonstrate compassion.

2 Write a descriptive and a normative statement for each of the following ethical issues:
   - testing of cosmetics on animals
   - corporal punishment
   - war
   - the environment
   - academic honesty.

Utilitarianism

Utilitarianism is probably the most widely practised form of consequentialism in the area of social ethics. According to utilitarian standards, an act is right if it produces the greatest possible balance of good consequences compared to bad consequences. The goal is to maximise benefits and minimise harm. John Stuart Mill, one of the best-known utilitarians, promoted the principle of utility, which identified happiness with benefit, and pain with harm, so that actions were judged by the net happiness or pleasure they produced. Not all utilitarians agree with Mill that happiness is the ultimate good that should guide ethical calculations. Other theorists suggest that health, wisdom and friendship are also goods that should be valued. Maximising the beneficial consequences for a person means acting so as to give her/him the most of what s/he desires. While this approach avoids the debates about



FIGURE 6.17 British philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill

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what is truly good, it nevertheless introduces a new debate about some preferences that many would think should not be so honoured because they seem to be immoral or unjust, such as a majority desire to enslave or exterminate a minority group. Welfare-based utilitarianism judges consequences in terms of measuring wellbeing.

Utilitarians are often described as act utilitarians or rule utilitarians. An act utilitarian argues that an actor should perform the act that leads to the greatest good in each and every situation and considers rules such as 'you ought to keep promises' as little more than summaries of decisions made in the past. Therefore, an act utilitarian would break a promise if s/he thought that the greatest good for the greatest number of people would result from breaking the promise. Rule utilitarians believe that rules such as 'you ought to keep promises' have moral weight. For rule utilitarians, the willingness to violate such rules in particular cases destroys the effectiveness of the rules, leading to a less beneficial future in the long term.

Virtue ethics

In 1930, the Cambridge philosopher C.D. Broad proposed to divide ethical theories into two types, teleological ethics and deontological ethics, thereby introducing a dichotomy that quickly became standard in ethics. It is important to note that when Broad put forward this dichotomy, he did not consider ancient moral philosophers such as Aristotle or Catholic moral theologians such as Augustine.



FIGURE 6.18 Cambridge philosopher C.D. Broad



FIGURE 6.19 Ethicist and philosopher Elizabeth Anscombe

Broad's dichotomy was widely accepted even though his terminology was later modified slightly where the term 'consequentialist' replaced 'teleological'. Broad said:

> However, there are two fundamental types of normative moral judgements that [the dichotomy] ignores. First, both consequentialists and deontologists focus entirely on moral rightness or obligation, and so the dichotomy excludes moral judgement about what is admirable, good, excellent or ideal. Second, it concerns only actions and their consequences, saying nothing about moral judgements concerning a person's character, character traits or dispositions.
>
> Source: Louden, 2012, in Chadwick, 2012, p. 503.

Virtue ethics approaches emphasise virtues or moral character in contrast with approaches that emphasise duties or rules (deontology) or approaches that emphasise the consequences of actions (consequentialism).

The contemporary movement known as virtue ethics is generally said to have started in 1958 with Elizabeth Anscombe's advice to do ethics without the notion of a 'moral ought'. Her proposal was to look for moral norms, not in duty concepts, but within the virtues or character traits that one needs to flourish as a human being. As a result, virtue ethics became popular as a reaction against the underlying common assumptions of both consequentialist and deontological ethical theories.

Virtue ethics has two complementary parts: it critiques prevailing assumptions, methods and aspirations of consequentialist and deontological moral theories; and it provides an alternative, virtue-oriented normative moral conception. Virtue theorists point out why elements of consequentialism and deontology are unable to satisfactorily account for moral experience. They highlight that real-life moral exemplars

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do not simply deduce what to do from a rigid hierarchy of rules and principles; rather, they possess sound judgement skills that enable them to respond appropriately to the nuances of each particular situation in ways that go beyond mere mechanical applications of rules. For instance, a person who visits a friend in hospital because it is the morally right thing to do does not seem to be as morally admirable as the person who visits an ill friend out of direct concern for the friend's wellbeing.

Virtue theorists, rather than simply favouring duty concepts and following logical arguments based on such analysis, are more open to drawing connections between morality and other areas of life such as religion, psychology, anthropology, history, art and culture. They see moral deliberation as more than making discrete decisions in moments of uncertainty and in isolation to other issues.

Originally developed by the ancient Greek philosopher, Aristotle (385–322 BCE), virtue ethics is person-centred rather than action-based and focuses on the virtue or moral character of the person carrying out the action, rather than the ethical duties and rules or the consequences of particular actions. Aristotle identified a personality type, which he called the 'good person' – that is, someone who exemplifies special moral virtues including honesty, generosity and bravery. For Aristotle, people demonstrate the moral virtues they have, not so much by *what* they do, but in *how* they do it. He identified three conditions for how the 'good person' operates. A good person: knows what s/he is doing; chooses to do it because it is the right thing to do; and the action is automatic and immediate. For Aristotle, moral virtues are traits that human beings need in order to live well or flourish.

Aristotle says that people can learn the skill of being a 'good person'. He says that people are born with the capacity to achieve moral excellence, but our actions determine whether we acquire the skills involved. We learn by doing and so we become just through the practice of just actions, we are self-controlled by exercising self-control and we are courageous by performing acts of courage.

Theorists propose different sets of virtues for different sorts of people. Historically, four cardinal virtues were proposed: prudence, justice, fortitude/bravery and temperance.

Philosopher and monk Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) regarded prudence to be the first cardinal virtue because it concerns the intellect: the ability to think and reason and then to practise it.



FIGURE 6.20 Statue of Aristotle in Athens



FIGURE 6.21 Thomas Aquinas

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It is the virtue that enables people to judge correctly what is right and what is wrong. If we make a mistake, we are not exercising prudence – in fact, we are showing a lack of prudence. Prudence or wise judgement also requires people to seek the advice of wise people, particularly those who demonstrate strong moral character. Prudence is also having the ability to know and judge whether to say something or do nothing at all.

The second cardinal virtue, justice, demands that people are treated fairly and with respect. Even small children know the meaning of justice when they want their friends to play fairly. Justice is the virtue which enables people to assume their responsibilities and to give others their due. There are four forms of justice: communicative justice, distributive justice, legal justice and social justice.

Communicative justice relates to contractual obligation between individuals involving rights and the obligation of restitution. For instance, one person loans another person some money; the second person is obliged, in conscience, to return the money according to the agreement. Distributive justice relates to the obligation of a government towards its citizens whereby the government regulates the burdens and benefits of societal life. For example, a government taxes its citizens fairly and according to their ability to pay, and then distributes the tax money according to need, especially in areas of housing, food, healthcare and education. Legal justice relates to a citizen's obligation towards the government or society. Citizens should pay their fair share of taxes: the greater the wealth, the greater the burden. Social justice relates to the obligation of all parties to apply the gospels to the structures, systems and institutions of society within which all human relationships take place. For example, the individual and the group must take an active interest in necessary social and economic reform.

Fortitude is the ability to persevere in times of trouble and hardship. It is the courage to do the right thing, no matter how hard that might be. Fortitude is the virtue which enables people to overcome fear, to decide what needs to be done,

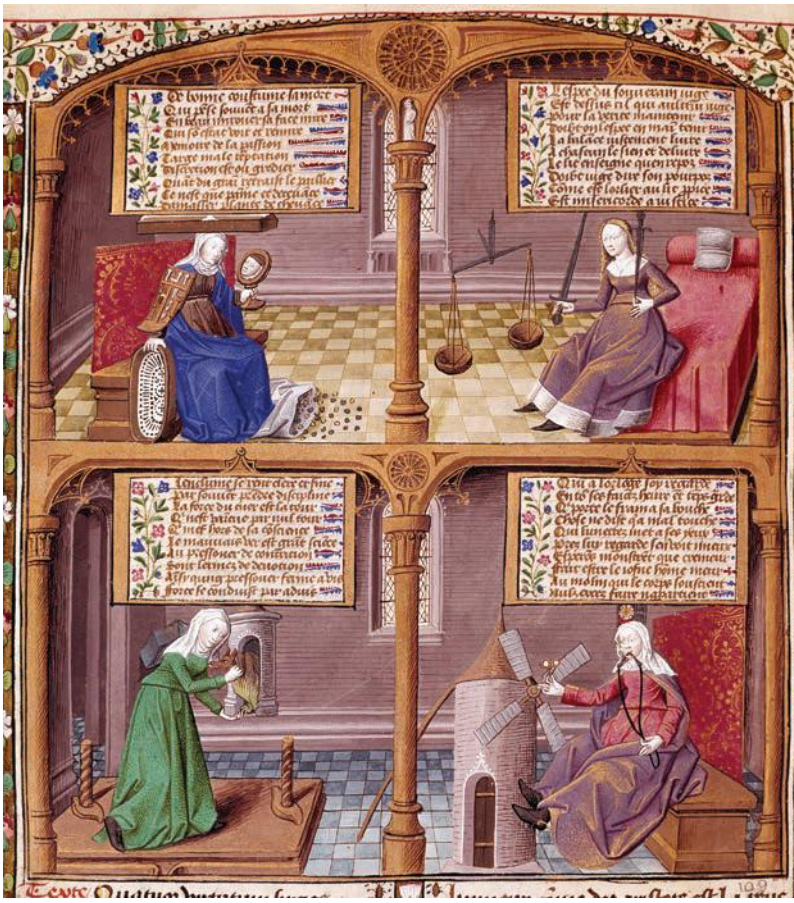


FIGURE 6.22 An illustrated depiction of the four Cardinal Virtues (clockwise from top left: prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude)

and to do it. Fortitude is not foolhardiness, nor is it about being reckless. Fortitude enables people to cope and to rise above challenges and troubles.

Temperance is about balance and moderation. It is the good habit that allows people to enjoy life without 'going over the line'. Temperance is practised when people refrain from overeating (gluttony) or drinking an inordinate quantity of alcohol (drunkenness). Temperance is about self-control and balancing the good against the desire for overindulgence. Outwardly, it refers to the pleasures of the senses, but inwardly, temperance serves to calm and nurture a balanced life.

Aristotle refers to 12 moral virtues that are associated with different aspects of life: courage; self-control; generosity; magnificence; high-mindedness; appropriate ambition; gentleness; truthfulness; wittiness; friendliness; modesty; and righteous indignation. He adds that a

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FIGURE 6.23 Theologian James Keenan (left) receiving an award in 2019

critical intellectual virtue of practical wisdom (some people call this moral intelligence) is also important.

Contemporary theologian James Keenan suggests that contemporary virtues are: justice – treating all people equally and impartially; fidelity – treating people close to you with special care; self-care – assuming the responsibility to care for ourselves affectively, mentally, physically and spiritually; and prudence – the prudent person always considers justice, fidelity and self-care and always looks for opportunities to acquire more of the other virtues.

One of the things to notice regarding virtues is that they begin to capture the emotional side of ethics. Human beings are relational as well as emotional beings and our feelings are a major part of any ethical dilemma.

Some virtue ethicists note that most of the virtues generate positive instructions for action but the connection between moral virtues and action is not a simple one. A just person will normally act justly, a generous person generously. However, important exceptions include actions done out of character and people sometimes do act out of character when faced with moral dilemmas. Also, some important moral virtues do not appear to be directly tied to specific actions. For instance, integrity is viewed as a central moral virtue in most moral traditions. However, how exactly does the person of integrity act? How consistent must the person's actions be for the person to be considered to have integrity?

Virtue ethics approaches can be applied to a variety of concrete moral issues such as the treatment of non-human animals, medical ethics, healthcare, business ethics, environmental ethics, engineering ethics, media ethics, professional ethics and population policy.

ACTIVITY 6.8

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Complete a media search for issues which, according to the description provided, could be addressed according to virtue ethics.
2 Using evidence from your sourced material, provide a reason for your position.
3 Prepare an infographic contrasting virtue ethics according to Aristotle and contemporary virtue ethics according to Keenan. Account for the similarities and differences.

Ethics of care

Human relationships play a central role in ethics. The way we care for each other shapes our understanding of ourselves as individuals as well as the societies in which we live. Caring relationships are the foundations of all functional social units – partnerships, families

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FIGURE 6.24 American scholar and philosopher Nel Noddings

> Any mode of thought that lays out complete and final answers to great existential questions is liable to dogmatism. A great attraction of care ethics, I think, is its refusal to encode or construct a catalogue of principles and rules. One who cares must meet the cared-for just as he or she is, as a whole human being with individual needs and interests. [...] At most, it directs us to attend, to listen, and to respond as positively as possible. [...] it recognizes that virtually all human beings desire not to be hurt, and this gives us something close to an absolute: We should not inflict deliberate hurt or pain. Even when we must fight to save our children, we must not inflict unnecessary or deliberate pain.
>
> Source: Noddings, 2011.

and communities. How we shape those relationships is not just a question for close personal contacts, but it is equally important for distant relationships, strangers and even future generations. More recently, the ethics of care has even been extended to our relationships with non-human animals and the environment.

Care ethicists have been critical of approaches to ethics that neglect care in favour of contractual obligations, impartiality, non-interference and self-determination, particularly as they are applied to public life, economics or law.

From this perspective, care is perceived to be the fundamental value, even more fundamental than justice because we are all, for a significant part of our lives, dependent on being cared for. Nel Noddings (b. 1929), an American scholar and philosopher, reminds us that care is an activity that is characterised by involvement or 'engrossment' with the other. Therefore, care does not mean caring about in a general, non-committal way but rather an active 'taking care of'. Caring is regarded as an attitude or disposition, which precedes or accompanies a care activity.

Care ethics has six identifiable characteristics. A care perspective:

1. views human beings as interrelated and dependent on each other
2. considers moral judgements as contextual and moral standpoints as positioned
3. values potential emotions in appreciating moral conflicts and identifying solutions and sees moral conflicts as conflicting responsibilities based on the perception of different needs
4. requires an empathic reconstruction of the perspective of the concrete other as well as a conscious balancing of responsibilities towards others and self
5. responds to needs of others, while avoiding hurting, and maintaining or improving particular relationships that may well be asymmetric and not freely chosen
6. consists of the ability to capture the complexity of human relationships and the mutual connectedness of self and others together with the capacity to appropriately balance care for others and care for oneself.

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FIGURE 6.25 American ethicist and psychologist Carol Gilligan

Care ethics emerged from the seminal work of Carol Gilligan who proposed an alternative to Lawrence Kohlberg's model of moral development. Kohlberg's stages of moral development were based on a number of empirical studies that only focused on boys and young men who were confronted with the 'Heinz dilemma': Heinz's wife is desperately ill, but Heinz does not have the money to pay for the required medication. The pharmacist refuses to hand out the medication for less money than the stipulated price. Should Heinz steal the drug? When Gilligan extended these studies to include female participants, she realised that the girls she interviewed frequently ended up in the lower stages of Kohlberg's moral development scale. Further analysis revealed that the females were not immature but, rather, they were interpreting the dilemma differently and providing an alternative model of moral development. Subsequently, Gilligan's model comprised three levels:

- Level 1 is characterised by egocentric perspective.
- Level 2 centres on elaboration of a conventional concept of responsibility together with a concern for the wellbeing of others. 'Good' is understood as being synonymous with 'care for others'.
- Level 3 involves finding the balance between caring for others and for oneself: care becomes the leading principle for moral judgements.

In the words of bioethicist Nikola Biller-Andorno:

> The ethics of care is frequently taken to address questions of a 'good life'. This means it does not limit itself to determining if actions are right or wrong but reflects on the moral agent in a person's relatedness to others, on his or her moral motivation and emotional responses. These features are typical of virtue ethics. Moreover, the focus on appropriate contextual moral decisions that is characteristic for the ethics of care has been compared to the Aristotelian concept of practical wisdom (*phronesis*).
>
> Source: Biller-Andorno, 2012, p. 394.

The ethics of care focuses on an interdependent instead of an independent self; it defines moral conflicts not as competing rights but, rather, as conflicting responsibilities; it does not presume an impartial moral point of view but focuses on individual, concrete moral agents that are seen as situated selves; and it does not seek to identify the one and only correct moral decision, but instead aims to change situations in a way that avoids a clash of the interests at stake.

The ethics of care can be helpful in identifying conceptual challenges such as those involved with organ transplantation. The rules for organ transplantation appear to be straightforward: what is usually required is the consent of a competent individual that is (1) informed and (2) voluntary. While these decisions are scrutinised by psychologists and clinical ethicists, the context of a close relationship between donor and recipient needs to be considered. For instance, Biller-Andorno asks: 'does a mother "voluntarily" decide

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to donate a kidney for her teenage daughter who is not coping well with dialysis? Does a husband "voluntarily" donate a part of his liver to his wife, whose physical deterioration during the past year he has watched with great sorrow?' (Biller-Andorno, 2012, p. 396).

Whereas the ethics of care cannot give a straightforward answer, it can provide an analytical framework for reflection about the particular nature of the relationships at stake and about how concrete moral agents can be empowered to make decisions that reflect a high level of moral maturity.

ACTIVITY 6.9

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Complete a media search for issues which, according to the description provided, could be addressed as ethics of care. Using evidence from your sourced material, provide a reason for your position.

Natural law

The phrase 'natural law' refers to human choices and actions which lead to the good and can be deduced through human reason. Through human reason and reflection on human nature, human beings can determine what is for their own good and at the same time what God requires of them to flourish. This is the basis of the 'common morality' shared by all people of goodwill and of notions such as universal human rights. It does not depend on any special revelation from God.

Within religious ethics, the exploration of natural law tradition focuses primarily on Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as these religions were influenced by Greek philosophy. For Hinduism and Buddhism, the so-called *dharmic* faiths, natural order is also a bedrock of ritual, societal order and related ethical frameworks, preserved and reflected in the Vedic and other scriptures.

Natural law is reflection on the natural world, experience and creation in a search for understanding, meaning, the good, and how to live the good life. The 'good life' encompasses a life that enables flourishing for the individual and a communal life that enables the common good.

In ethics, the writings of Thomas Aquinas are grounded in natural law and for Aquinas there are two key features: the first is related to belief in God and so natural law is considered as part of the providence of God; the second is that people, as the human recipients of natural law, are required to apply the principles by which action is considered to be reasonable or unreasonable. Aquinas's interpretation of natural law is that the precepts of natural law are universally binding by nature and universally knowable by nature.

For Aquinas, the fundamental principle of natural law is that good is to be done and evil avoided. He indicates that there are a variety of things that count as good and therefore ought to be pursued – life, knowledge, society and reasonable conduct.

Casuistry

Casuistry is a method in moral theology for resolving particular moral problems. It works by comparing difficult problems with easier or well-known cases and then exploring analogies and contrasts. David Albert Jones, Director of the Anscombe Bioethics Centre, Oxford, suggests:

> Consider, for example, the difficult case of separating conjoined twins. Traditional natural principles prohibit killing one child to save two (e.g. taking the first child's organs) but they would allow a person to save one child and leave a second to die when it was not possible to save both. The problem becomes, how similar is separating the twins to 'killing one for the sake of the other'? How similar is it to 'saving one when you cannot save both'? Determining which analogy is more applicable may well depend on the details of the medical condition, the nature of the operation, and other particular circumstances. Casuistry is not an exact science but is a method to help people decide difficult cases. It is not a substitute for principles of virtue, but it relies on knowledge of the principles of the natural law exemplified in well-known cases.
>
> Source: Jones, 2012, p. 440.

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Conscience

Conscience refers to the ability to make considered moral judgements, to recognise and apply natural law in practice. For example, a public servant may feel pressure to keep quiet about government wrongdoing, but his/her conscience may be clear that the public interest demands s/he discloses the facts, even at the risk of losing his/her job. Similarly, in the face of pressure to conform, some people 'conscientiously object' to doing what they regard as wrong in the life-or-death circumstance of war or medicine.



6.4 Approaches to ethical decision making

In this section, we will explore and analyse two approaches that assist people in gathering and evaluating information in order to make ethical decisions. The two approaches are:

1. Holland and Henriot's Pastoral Spiral
2. Isaacs and Massey's multidimensional approach.

The approaches, both forms of social analysis, assist people to reflect on what is happening, what issues need to be addressed, and what action might be taken as a result of the analysis. The approaches offer individuals and communities a framework within which to explore the details of social issues, apply moral principles, make prudent judgements and act in the light of the decisions made.

Social analysis as described by Holland and Henriot (1986) is the effort to obtain a more complete picture of the social situation by exploring historical and structural relationships, by moving beyond issues, policies and structures to focus on systems in terms of levels including primary groups, local communities, nation-states and global systems. These systems are analysed in terms of their history and structure, behaviour patterns, values and ideologies. The questions posed within the process attempt to uncover the underlying values that shape the perspectives and decisions.

The two methodologies discussed in this section begin from peoples' lived experience and from the assumption that as individuals and groups we are neither objective nor blind. We come to all social-ethical analysis situations from a particular perspective and we also need to identify and include other perspectives that struggle with the same social-ethical issues. We need to ensure that all voices are heard in the conversation, especially the voices of the disadvantaged and marginalised. Since the values we bring to our social-ethical analysis naturally influence our decisions, both of these methodologies remind participants to apply the lens of religious tradition, including sacred texts, religious writings and ritual, to the decision-making process. Both models function more appropriately as ongoing spirals rather than closed circles and both provide avenues to explore issues of inequality in ways that they do not become either too abstract or too personal to be persuasive or effective.

Pastoral Spiral approach

The Pastoral Spiral, a form of social analysis, can be applied to ethical decision making. Consisting of four movements – experience, social analysis, religious or theological reflection, and action – the Pastoral Spiral approach was developed by Joe Holland and Peter Henriot and is an expansion of the See, Judge, Act model originally developed by Belgian Cardinal Joseph Cardijn (1882–1967). Cardijn founded the Young Trade Unionists in France and he used the model with workers in factories as a means of improving their work and life situations. The See, Judge, Act approach involves a movement from engagement to reflection, understanding, analysis and evaluation, to taking action to restore, alleviate or change a situation. In the 1960s and 1970s, liberation theologians including Leonardo Boff and Clodovis Boff used the See, Judge, Act methodology as a foundation for investigating oppression in Latin America. In the 1980s, Holland and Henriot expanded the model, describing it as an academic and pastoral

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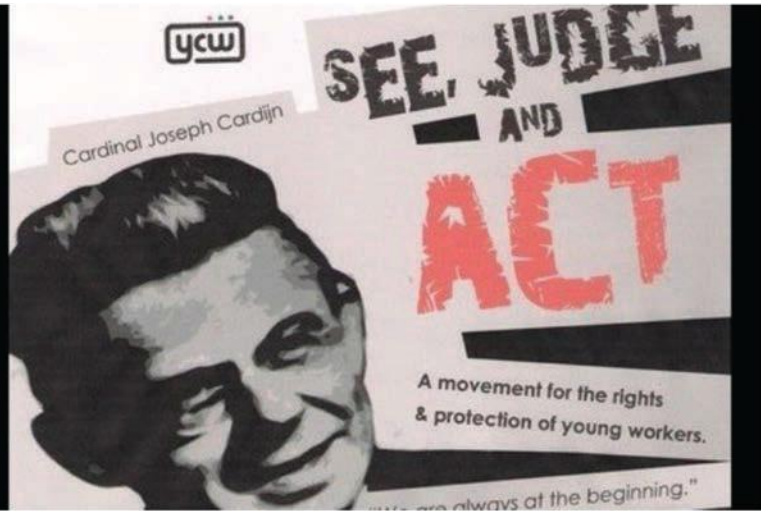


FIGURE 6.26 Cardinal Joseph Cardijn's See, Judge, Act method is part of Catholic social teaching and practice.

approach involving a historical committed stance, discerning the situation for the purpose of action and/or decision.

Holland and Henriot describe the four movements of the Pastoral Spiral as:

1. Experience – what is happening?
2. Social analysis – why is it happening and what are the root causes and values underlying the issue?
3. Religious or theological reflection – what does it mean? In this phase, a person makes judgements about the issue and its causes based on religious traditions as appropriated into their life and culture.
4. Action or response – act on the judgements made in a manner consistent with one's own moral and religious values.

The Pastoral Spiral is referred to by some as the 'circle of praxis' because it emphasises the ongoing relationship between reflection and action. The concept of praxis is drawn from Paulo Freire's classic book *The Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970) and is related to the hermeneutic circle, a method of interpretation that sees new questions continually raised to challenge older theories in the light of new situations.

The first movement, Experience, is situated in the lived experiences of people and communities. It tries to identify what the issue is and what people are undergoing, feeling and how they are responding as a consequence of the issue. The second movement, Social analysis, examines the causes, probes the consequences, delineates linkages and identifies the actors. It attempts to make sense of the issue by placing it within the broader picture and drawing connections between them. The third movement, Religious or theological reflection, challenges people to understand and analyse the experience in the

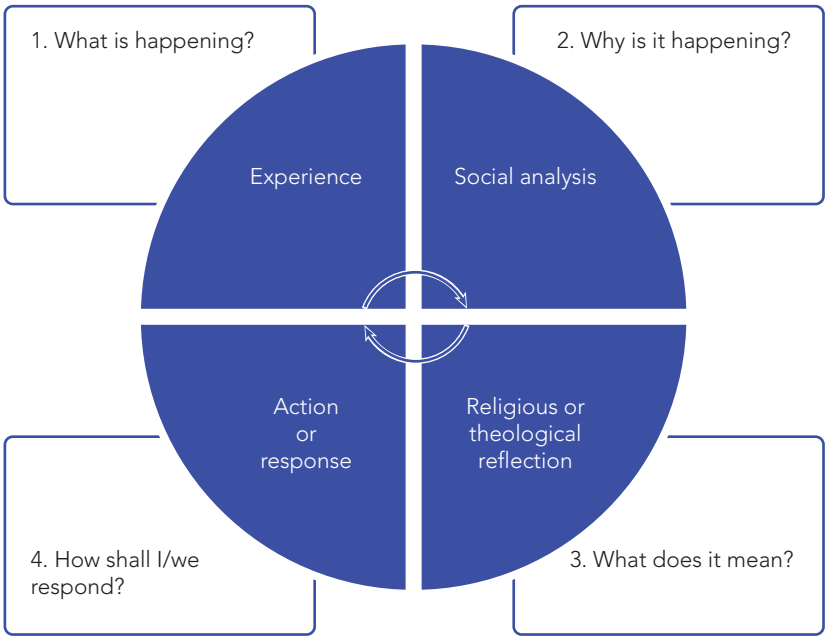


FIGURE 6.27 The four movements of the Pastoral Spiral

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light of faith, sacred texts, religious writings, rituals, formal teachings and religious experience. The fourth movement, Action or response, is designed to be most effective not only in the short term but also in the long term. A response or action brings about a new situation, which in turn calls for further mediation through analysis, reflection and action. Thus, it is called the Pastoral Spiral because each approach breaks new ground and leads on to further action.

The framework below provides a foundation for applying the Pastoral Spiral to various ethical investigations.

- *Movement 1:* Identify the issue or experience by asking: What is happening? What is the current situation? and What is happening that we would like to investigate further?
- *Movement 2:* Social analysis asks: why is it happening? In this stage, consider the social, cultural, economic, political, environmental and religious factors that influence the situation. Some questions may include:
  - What is the history of the issue or situation?
  - What are the major structures (institutions, policies and processes) that affect the issue?
  - What are the connections, explicit and implicit, between these structures?
  - What is the future direction of this issue or situation?

  Draw conclusions considering some or all of the following:
  - What influence do policy and economics have?
  - What role do cultural and religious values play in the situation?
  - What are the causes of the issue or situation and why?
  - What do the people need or want?
  - What institutions have shaped the situation for better or worse? Government? Religious institutions? Family? Community groups? Corporations?
- *Movement 3:* Religious or theological reflection requires people to probe what the issue means. Some questions which focus the probing may include:
  - What religious values need to be considered?
  - What aspect/s of the issue undercuts religious values?
  - What does the religious tradition have to say about the issue or situation?
  - What do we understand from sacred texts, religious writings, religious rituals and formal teachings about the issue or situation?
  - What do other religious teaching/s have to say? What insight might religious men and women through history bring to the situation?
- *Movement 4:* Action or response focuses on identifying possible responses to the issue or situation and the practical steps required to make a decision or response. Consider the following:
  - What is a realistic decision or action given the previous investigations and religious insights?
  - What specific steps could I/we take?
  - How can I/we assist people to engage in responding to the issue or situation?

The Pastoral Spiral method of analysis presumes certain religious presuppositions – that is, that adherents have 'values' and 'biases' that come from their religious and cultural traditions.

A multidimensional approach

Ethicists Peter Isaacs and David Massey developed a four-step approach to ethical decision making which focuses on relationships and the interests and needs of all participants affected by the decision. The four steps are: Explore meanings; Appreciate particulars, including constraints on choices; Explore ethical frameworks; and Do something about it.

1 *Explore meanings*. In the first step, it is important to ask questions which will help to understand the contexts of all participants, individual and institutional.

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When exploring meanings it is helpful to identify the assumptions, insights and limitations from various points of view. Ask: what is going on? Not just from my point of view but from all points of view? What meanings does this have for the participants from their point of view? This step includes gathering the facts and defining the issue or issues at hand; there may be multiple ethical issues and it is important to focus on one sub-issue at a time.

2 *Appreciate particulars, including constraints on choices.* The second step involves identifying all the players. Who are the primary or direct players? Who are the secondary or indirect players? Acknowledge the richness, complexity and particularity of others. Try to see things through the eyes of all involved. How well do I understand the factors which enable or constrain them? What power do they have in the situation? How is engagement with others being promoted? How well have I developed a multifaceted understanding of the situation? Are relationships, practices, individuals, institutions and communities being morally enriched? Identify the consequences. What are the potential positive and negative consequences for all affected by the decision? What is the magnitude of the consequences and the probability that the consequences will happen? Questions such as these are necessary because not everyone is in a position to choose freely from all the options.

3 *Explore ethical frameworks.* Only after asking the questions outlined in steps one and two should a person move to begin to investigate the issue applying ethical frameworks from one or more religious traditions. How do the sacred texts and religious writings, rituals and other teachings of the tradition form and inform the response? What elements of the religious rituals of the tradition inform the response? What other ethical frameworks would assist in responding to the issue?

4 *Do something about it.* Ethical decision making is not simply an academic exercise. Ideally, people need to act. We need to ask: What action is possible? What strategies for change are appropriate and in line with our ethical frameworks? What possibilities are there for informing, educating, mobilising, mediating or, if necessary, resisting?

Moral responsibility demands more of us than *intellectual skills* alone; it also involves *skills of perception* (noticing and attending to what is going on), *discursive skills* (ability to describe what is happening and to communicate our feelings about what is happening), and *responding skills* (the ability to listen to others and to empathise with their situation). Acting responsibly requires these communication skills because morality is always interpersonal.

ACTIVITY 6.10

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Select a social ethical issue. Apply the Pastoral Spiral approach to reach a decision or action. In what way/s is the Pastoral Spiral approach helpful?

2 Using the same social ethic issue, apply the multidimensional approach to reach a decision or action. In what way/s is the multidimensional approach helpful?

3 Evaluate the two approaches to ethical decision making using the following tools:
   - a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis of each of the two approaches
   - b Compare and contrast chart
   - c PMI (Plus, Minus, Interesting) chart
   - d Multiple Venn diagram
   - e De Bono's Six Thinking Hats.

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6.5 Social ethical issue: war

In this section, we focus on one social ethical issue identified in the syllabus – namely, war. The information provided below should be considered as a starting point for ethical investigation rather than a definitive or comprehensive response to the social ethical issue of war.

War

War is a significant social ethical issue in today's world. Throughout history, religious beliefs have been used to permit, justify or prohibit involvement in war. Religion is a powerful force which has shaped historical perceptions of war and peace. The relationship between religion and war is therefore very complex.

On the whole, the five major world religions promote similar values, such as respect for human beings, ethical behaviour, modesty, hope, love and assisting people in need. They generally reject and condemn acts of killing, raping, injuring or offending people. When states mobilise soldiers and declare wars, religious leaders usually advocate caution, tolerance and self-restraint. Religions normally oppose violence as a way of settling disputes because of the large loss of human life. Nevertheless, there are some circumstances in which religions have found the use of armed force acceptable. The most obvious would be self-defence. Religious teachings, while generally condemning wars, find clear justifications for war when all other measures fail. Religions accept that war can be the lesser evil, the last resort to defeat a tyrant and restore peace and harmony.

Sacred texts of various religious traditions present complex and sometimes conflicting ideas about war. Some texts focus on tolerance and love while other texts speak about destruction of the enemies of the faith. It is important to investigate how religious texts define and develop specific norms of war; to examine in what circumstances the major world religions would justify a resort to military force, and what they would consider to be acceptable targets and weapons in war.

The norms and ethics of war can be differentiated and grouped into three broad viewpoints. First, there is an argument that war

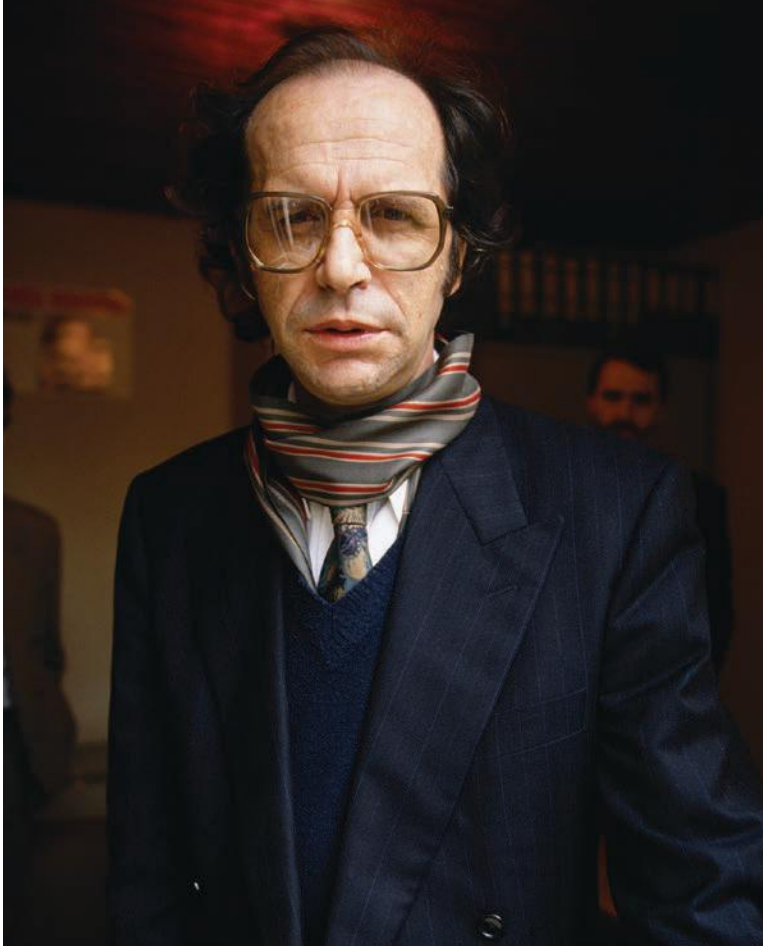


FIGURE 6.28 Leader of the Kosovo Albanians Dr Ibrahim Rugova, also known as the 'Ghandi of the Balkans'

is intrinsically wrong because it results in death, destruction and suffering. Pacifists oppose any violence and all wars. In India's struggle for independence from British rule, Mohandas Gandhi is an example of a pacifist. Ibrahim Rugova, the leader of the Kosovo Albanians, called the 'Gandhi of the Balkans', attempted a similar non-violent approach against Yugoslav rule but it did not deliver results and was brutally suppressed by the former Serbian President Slobodan Milošević. Similarly, the non-violent protests of Buddhist monks in Myanmar (Burma) have not yet achieved change in a country where a brutal military junta has denied democracy and human rights for decades.

The second position is that of the realists who present war as a normal state of affairs. They ground their position in the argument that nation-states never fully trust each other. Realists work to maximise their military power to be ready to engage in military combat to defend territorial boundaries and sustain national interests.

The third position challenges the pacifist and the realist paradigms and works from the

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position of the just war theory. A just war theory argues that war is neither wholly unacceptable nor always acceptable. Just war traditions arose for two reasons: first, it was believed there would always be war; and, second, it was believed that individuals and nations must impose moral standards related to proper and improper conditions related to warfare.

In this section, we investigate what the five major world religions say and do about war.

Judaism

Although Jewish tradition does not operate from a just war position, biblical and rabbinical sources parallel *jus ad bellum* (resorting to war) and *jus in bello* (conduct within war). However, what is significantly different in Judaism from the just war theory is that, in Judaism, war is not perceived as a natural condition from which universal peace will automatically follow. Sacred texts and religious writings within Judaism are much more concerned with peace and its importance than they are concerned with war. When reviewing these texts, it is important to remember that Judaism emerged from a tribal society which had its own rules and practices regarding war. What is important to recognise is how the biblical authors tried to distinguish Judaism from existing practices and introduce different or alternative practices. The most significant biblical text related to war and peace is Deuteronomy 20.

In this chapter, G-d is presented as the warrior for the Israelites:

> When you go out to war against your enemies, and see horses and chariots, an army larger than your own, you shall not be afraid of them; for the LORD your God is with you, who brought you up from the land of Egypt. 2Before you engage in battle, the priest shall come forward and speak to the troops, 3and shall say to them: 'Hear, O Israel! Today you are drawing near to do battle against your enemies. Do not lose heart, or be afraid, or panic, or be in dread of them; 4for it is the LORD your God who goes with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to give you victory.' (Deuteronomy 20:1–4)

In the following verses there is an extensive list of those exempted from military service:

> Then the officials shall address the troops, saying, 'Has anyone built a new house but not dedicated it? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another dedicate it. 6Has anyone planted a vineyard but not yet enjoyed its fruit? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another be first to enjoy its fruit. 7Has anyone become engaged to a woman but not yet married her? He should go back to his house, or he might die in the battle and another marry her.' 8The officials shall continue to address the troops, saying, 'Is anyone afraid or disheartened? He should go back to his house, or he might cause the heart of his comrades to fail like his own.' (Deuteronomy 20:5–8)

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These verses are followed by a required call for peace before the battle begins:

> When you draw near to a town to fight against it, offer it terms of peace. (Deuteronomy 20:10)

The chapter ends with a warning about wanton destruction:

> If you besiege a town for a long time, making war against it in order to take it, you must not destroy its trees by wielding an axe against them. Although you may take food from them, you must not cut them down. Are trees in the field human beings that they should come under siege from you? [20]You may destroy only the trees that you know do not produce food; you may cut them down for use in building siege-works against the town that makes war with you, until it falls. (Deuteronomy 20:19–20)

The concept that it is G-d who wages war on behalf of Israel is common throughout biblical texts and up until the time of the Judges it was not common practice for everyone to go to war. Going to war with soldiers and mercenaries only happened after the monarchy was established. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, war is an aberration and peace for all humankind is the ideal. According to the Torah, war was to be avoided.

proof text
a scripture passage presented as proof for a theological doctrine, belief or principle

In the rabbinical tradition, peace was the ultimate purpose, as can be seen in *Tanhuma Shoftim* 18: 'all that was written in the Torah was for the sake of peace.' The Mishnah and Talmud also reinforce the idea of peace. *Leviticus Rabbah* 9:9 contains a dictum on peace:

> Great is peace, since all blessings, goodness and comfortings that the Holy One, Blessed Be He, brings upon Israel begin with peace … Great is peace, for of all the commandments it is written … In relation to peace, 'seek peace and pursue it', seek it in your own place and pursue it, even to another place as well.

The rabbis defined different kinds of wars using the rule of war in the Hebrew Bible as a **proof text** to create conditions that could never be met.

Sotah 8 describes two types of war: obligatory war (*Milchemet Mitzvah*) and discretionary war (*Milchement Reshut*). Wars of obligation are military wars fought for the conquest of Canaan or self-defence while



FIGURE 6.29 Israeli soldiers meet family members for a picnic in a park near the Israel- and Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip border in southern Israel

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discretionary wars are for the glory of the king and for the purposes of expansion. In the Babylonian Talmud, the list of exemptions for fighting in Deuteronomy 20 is expanded and excludes almost everyone from fighting in discretionary wars.

All Judaic conceptualisations of war were hypothetical because there was no Jewish nation-state until the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. The dilemma of the modern State of Israel, forged in the tradition where peace is a Messianic ideal, was the safeguarding of a homeland for the Jewish people for the first time in history. The modern construct for justifying war has included the following ideas:

1. An international society of independent states exists.
2. The international society has laws that protect territorial integrity and political sovereignty.
3. Any use of force or threat of force from political sovereignty on the territorial integrity of another is a criminal act.
4. Aggression justifies two types of violent response: war of self-defence and war of law enforcement by the victim.
5. Nothing but aggression can justify war.
6. Once the aggressor state has been militarily repulsed it can also be punished.

The principle of self-defence is based on the rabbinical exegesis of Exodus 21: 'If someone comes to kill you, get up early in the morning to kill him first' (*Berakhot* 58a; *Yoma* 85b; *Sanhedrin* 72a).

The Jewish people and the founding fathers and mothers of Israel knew what it was like to be strangers in the land and what it meant to be nationally homeless and unprotected. Thus, from the day of its birth, the modern nation-state of Israel knew what it was like to be involved in a defensive war for its survival.

Based on Western ethical considerations and Jewish thought, the concept of 'purity of arms' has become the hallmark of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF).

Purity of arms is defined as:

> The IDF servicemen and women will use their weapons and force only for the purpose of their mission, only to the necessary extent and will maintain their humanity even during combat. IDF soldiers will not use their weapons and force to harm human beings who are not combatants or prisoners of war and will do all in their power to avoid causing harm to their lives, bodies, dignity and property.
>
> Source: 'The Ethical Code of the Israel Defense Forces,' Zionism and Israel Information Center

This ethic is grounded in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish thought and tradition.

To preclude inordinate suffering, Jewish society has determined that reciprocity is permitted within the bounds of proportionality. Proportionality takes into account the event at hand and the contextual situation of the event. Asymmetric war aims to erode popular support for war in the society of the enemy and uses guerrilla warfare, human shields, and combatants and non-combatants. Such tactics are morally reprehensible and violate all ethical standards. The warfare Israel faces today is a problem for all nations because rules of conventional warfare are not observed by those who resort to terrorism.

As a Jewish state, Israel cannot forsake its Jewish tradition and heritage and universal ethical categories. If Israel were a secular nation it would respond in terms of realpolitik (a system of politics based on practical rather than ideological considerations), and ethics would apply secondarily since the prime aim would be survival. Many Israelis are Shoah survivors and descendants of Shoah survivors who witnessed firsthand the persecution of non-combatants.

Under these conditions the challenge for the State of Israel when it comes to war is not to accept the realpolitik approach even though the approach admits there is no such thing as a just war. The problem with the just war theory is that there is

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an expectation that both sides of the conflict will follow the 'rules of war', which currently is not the case. In war, ethical acts are magnified, and consequences are unimagined. What is required is for humankind to work for peace.

Christianity

Over two thousand years, several different approaches to the ethics of war have been explored within Christianity. These include: pacifism, just war, perpetual peace and regular war.

Pacifism

For the first three centuries of Christianity, the dominant position of pacifism was drawn from the teaching of the gospels.

> But I say to you, 'Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also.' (Matthew 5:39)
>
> Then Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword.' (Matthew 26:52)

Two additional sources of inspiration included the rejection of idolatrous practices associated with Roman military life and the belief that the end of the world was near. On this basis, strong reservations about war were expressed by a number of early Christian writers including Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen and Lactantius. The rise of Christian civilisation under the Emperor Constantine and the fact that Christianity had become the religion of the empire meant that early pacifism lost its appeal.

In the second half of the twentieth century, a new wave of pacifism emerged with Catholic Christian activists such as Dorothy Day, Protestant theologians such as Karl Barth, Paul Tillich and Helmut Richard Niebuhr, as well as organisations such as Pax Christi. The Church, while admitting that armed struggle may be permissible only as a last resort to end tyranny, also asserted that passive resistance was more compatible with Christian moral principles. The downfall of Communism in Eastern Europe during the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, for instance, is cited as evidence of non-violent means of resistance.

FIGURE 6.30 Members of Pax Christi protest against the Munich Security Conference, held in Munich, Germany



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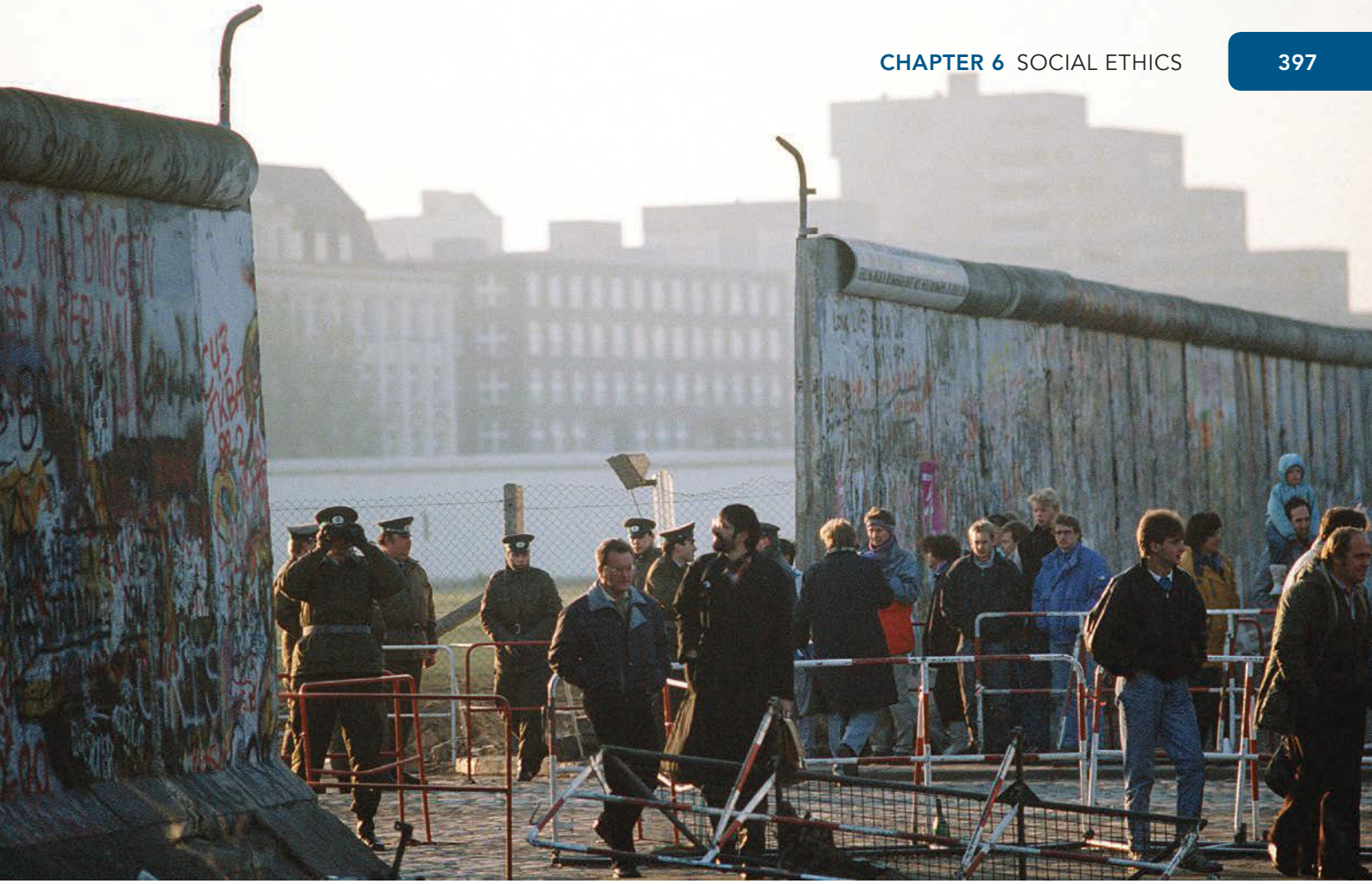


FIGURE 6.31 East German police in 1989 watch as visitors pass through the newly created opening in the Berlin Wall at Potsdamer Platz

Just war theory

Just war theory is often the starting point for Christian thinking about war for both Roman Catholics and Protestants. It begins from the premise that wars are inevitable and that all efforts should be made to limit the occasions for war and the damage done by wars when they occur. Essentially, it is about justification for the use of force. The theory says that while war is terrible, it is not always the worst option.

A 'just war' concept was first articulated by the Roman jurist Cicero in the first century BCE and later developed by Aristotle. Although it was rejected by early Christian leaders such as Tertullian, Origen and Justin Martyr as a 'pagan' idea, by the time of Constantine (fourth century), when Christianity was the religion of the empire, the idea of a just war became accepted as doctrine.

There are three parts to just war theory:

1 *jus ad bellum*, which concerns the justice of resorting to war in the first place
2 *jus in bello*, which concerns the justice of conduct within war, after it has begun
3 *jus post bellum*, which concerns the justice of peace agreements and the termination phase of war.

Many of the principles of the just war tradition are embodied in international laws on armed conflict, in the Charter of the United Nations and the Hague and Geneva Conventions. The just war theory says that all elements of the criteria must be fulfilled for a war to be justified:

1 Just cause
2 Right intention
3 Proper authority and public declaration
4 Last resort
5 Probability of success
6 Proportionality.

The rules are somewhat arbitrary, but one way to apply the theory is to assess the level of suffering and oppression of large numbers of people. The Catechism of the Catholic Church

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indicates that 'the use of arms must not produce evils and disorder graver than the evil to be eliminated' and notes that the 'power of modern means of destruction weighs very heavily in evaluating this condition' (CCC no. 307–17).

There are two alternatives to the just war tradition: realpolitik and pacifism. Realpolitik claims that moral categories do not apply to war and pacifism claims that since killing of people is immoral, all war should be disallowed/banned on moral grounds.

War in the contemporary world raises several ethical questions. Nuclear war not only damages adversaries but also whole areas and potentially even the whole world, and civilian populations suffer massively. Modern warfare also blurs fundamental distinctions that have existed between combatants and non-combatants, and since the twentieth century the trend has moved to more non-combatants dying in wars than combatants. In addition, saturation bombing, atomic bombing, forced labour camps, death camps and new forms of warfare, including terrorist strikes, suicide bombing and 'military martyrdom', have introduced various questions regarding the ethics and norms of the use of force.

In 2016, the Vatican held a landmark conference sponsored by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace and Pax Christi International, which rejected the just war theory on the grounds that often it had been used to justify violent conflicts and that the global church had to reconsider Jesus's teachings on non-violence. The massive predominance of civilian casualties in modern warfare undercuts the moral ground for conceiving of any war as just. The focus, according to Pope Francis, should be on the elimination of the underlying causes of violence and war and he called on people to reintroduce the power of non-violent action in the world.

FIGURE 6.32 Devastation caused by the nuclear bomb dropped on Hiroshima in 1945



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Theologians, philosophers and ethicists have long wrestled with the problem of the just war theory, and while in the past the theory focused on proportionality, today the massive and disproportionate response of war is exemplified in pre-emptive wars of choice. Five reasons were provided for the ending of the just war theory:

1. modern wars have made the just war theory obsolete
2. the growth of Christology 'from below'
3. a clearer understanding of how the New Testament relates to contemporary problems
4. a renewed appreciation of the way the early church practised Jesus's teachings on peace
5. the growing non-violent peace action over the previous 60 years.

Modern wars

While in the past having made the just war theory its standard on war, Christian church leaders now realise that the focus of the theory was on war, rather than on peace. The major problem is that proportionality and protection of non-combatants are never met by modern wars. Civilian deaths in World War II were 10 per cent of deaths. In modern wars, such as the internal conflict in Syria or the US invasion of Iraq, civilian deaths range from 80 to 90 per cent of all casualties. So, in the modern era, no war is justified. The call of the New Testament, in particular the Sermon on the Mount, is to positive peacemaking.

Growth of Christology from 'below'

A Christology from below makes Jesus's life normative for Christians. Jesus worked to relieve the suffering of people and he also spoke out against the unjust political system of Roman occupation. Christology, the theological study of the nature, person and ministry of Jesus, has two elements: Christology from above, which emphasises the divinity of Jesus or the Christ of Faith, and Christology from below, which emphasises the Jesus of history and his humanity. A Christology from below calls all Christians to be peacemakers, to present a positive vision of peace which is not just the absence of war. The just war theory ignores the New Testament and approaches the problem of war and violence using natural law thinking rather than the call to positive peacemaking found in the New Testament.

New understanding

Over the past 20 years, Christian biblical scholars have encouraged adherents to read biblical texts in dialogue with contemporary issues and problems. Such 'in front of the text' readings frequently lead to new meanings and insight. This contemporary understanding of how to read the scriptures is reflected in the Second Vatican Council's call for the Church to come up with 'an entirely new attitude to war and violence' that recognises 'the signs of the times'.

Early church

The first 300 years of Christianity provides evidence that non-violent responses to persecution are possible. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, wrote five letters counselling the early Christians to greet violence with love. He and the other Church Fathers wrote as if the prophecy of Isaiah and Micah had come true in their midst:

> … they shall beat their swords
> into ploughshares,
> and their spears into
> pruning-hooks;
> nation shall not lift up
> sword against nation,
> neither shall they learn war
> any more;
> 4but they shall all sit under
> their own vines and under
> their own fig trees,
> and no one shall make them
> afraid … (Micah 4:3–4)

Thomas Merton (1915–1968) noted that the early church converted the Roman Empire through non-violence and so this example should embolden all Christians to re-embrace Jesus's way.

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Non-violent action

Non-violent action across the world in Poland, East Germany, South Africa, Tunisia and the American civil rights struggle are all examples of the power of coordinated non-violent action which achieved positive results. Erica Chenoweth, a professor at the University of Colorado, points out that over the past 50 years, non-violent campaigns have been twice as effective as violent campaigns in achieving their intended results.

Christians all over the world, including those from the global south (i.e. countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean), are harnessing the power of coordinated non-violent action in multiple small settings to achieve change. In addition, regimes that have been established through non-violent means are more likely to remain at peace after their struggles. It is no surprise then that Christian church leaders are encouraged to proclaim the Sermon on the Mount as the message of positive peacemaking.

ACTIVITY **6.11**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 What biblical quotations can be drawn upon to promote peacemaking and the non-violent struggle for justice for all?
2 Prepare an infographic on why Christianity is developing alternatives to just war theory.
3 Write a feature article on Christian organisations that campaign for peacemaking.

ACTIVITY **6.12**

Forming, finding and analysing

View this short video (find the online link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8585) and read the introductory article from BBC 'Religion and Ethics' (available via http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8586). Then design and create a mind map to organise the ideas you have encountered.

Islam

Muslim communities, like other religious communities, have developed laws and traditions pertaining to war and peace. These traditions, sometimes referred to as ethics of war, are primarily based on the Qur'an, Hadith literature, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), politics and decisions necessitated by events with which the communities had to deal, and *fatawi*, theological interpretations of religious and political leaders. For Muslims, the principles of war were defined by Allah and the Prophet Muhammad.

Muslims learn from an early age that human life, body and soul is a gift from Allah and that protecting the body from harm is a command in the Qur'an. Protecting and assisting the helpless is also a major teaching of the Qur'an and the Hadith contains many examples of feeding orphans, taking care of wayfarers and protecting them in every possible way, including going to war. During times of war, the guiding principle is protection of the weak.

Those who should be protected in war include old people, children, the helpless and the handicapped. Included among this group are the *dhimmis* (non-Muslims) who paid the *jizyah* (a poll tax levied on non-Muslims) in place of participating in war and who were considered protected people. Wounded enemy warriors also fit within the category of the helpless, so



FIGURE 6.33 A family outside the rubble of their house next to other bombed buildings in Homs, Syria, in 2019

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extending medical care to the wounded is an essential part of Islamic war ethics and fits the ultimate purpose of protecting life. Similarly, Islam advocates humane treatment of prisoners. Other activities which are forbidden during war include poisoning of water wells and food supplies, the destruction of homes, massacres, and punitive punishment to relatives of enemies. The Qur'an states:

> And fight [*waqatiloohum*] in the way of Allah with those who fight with you, and do not exceed the limits, surely Allah does not love those who exceed the limits. And kill them wherever you find them, and drive them out from whence they drove you out, and persecution [*al-Fitnah*] is severer than slaughter; and do not fight with them at the Sacred Mosque [al-Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca], until they fight you in it, but if they do fight you, then slay them; such is the recompense of the unbelievers.
> But if they desist [fighting], then surely Allah is Forgiving, Merciful. (Qur'an 2:190–2)

While punitive war to take back what has been usurped is acceptable, in Islam it is also considered a duty.

In Islam, there is a clear distinction between the word *jihad* which means 'struggle' and the word *qital* or *qatilu* which means 'fight' or 'go to war'.

Jihad in the Qur'an

The word *jihad* comes from the Arabic root letters *j h d* meaning 'to strive' or 'to exert' oneself in a religious sense in the service of Allah. While the word *jihad* appears many times in the Qur'an, the vast majority refer to 'struggle' or 'spiritual struggle', as can be seen in the following:

> Those who believed and those who suffered exile and fought [*jahadu*] (and strove and struggled) in the path of God, they have the hope of the mercy of Allah. And Allah is Oft-forgiving, Most merciful. (Qur'an 2:218)

This verse refers to those who went from Mecca to Medina to escape persecution by non-believers. They built a new community in Medina, making sacrifices in the process and fighting against those who tried to stop them. The Qur'an also makes it clear that Muslims are expected to strive for the sake of Allah as that is the way to heaven:

> Did ye think that ye would enter heaven without Allah testing those of you who fought hard (in His cause) and remained steadfast? (Qur'an 3:142)

Using one's wealth and person related to *jihad* is mentioned several times in the Qur'an and it means that Muslims must work for the good and security of their community in every way possible, including joining the fight against Islam's enemies.

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This is seen in the following verse:

> Those who believed, and adopted exile, and fought [*jahidu*] for the Faith, with their property and their persons, in the cause of Allah, as well as those who gave (them) asylum and aid, – these are (all) friends and protectors one of another. As to those who believed but came not into exile, ye owe no duty of protection to them until they come into exile; but if they seek your aid in religion, it is your duty to help them, except against a people with whom ye have a treaty of mutual alliance. And (remember) Allah seeth all that ye do. (Qur'an 8:72)

In the Meccan verses of the Qur'an where *jihad* appears, the Qur'an tries to inculcate a sense of personal effort (*jahada*). According to some Muslim scholars, *jihad* appears in verses that were revealed to Muhammad long before any fighting between Muslims and their Meccan opponents took place. The term 'holy war' is not in the Qur'an. Only four verses use the term *jihad* in a warlike interpretation.

When the term *qatilu* appears in the Qur'an, it is always used in the context of actions dealing with war, fighting or killing. The language and the context are quite explicit and involve taking up arms in the defence of the community. War should only be waged for a just reason. Basically, war is waged against oppressors or those allied to them: 'Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war [*yuqatiluna*] is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them' (Qur'an 22:39). Fight those 'who fight against you' has been seen as the basic reason for Muslims to go to war and it is tied to the treatment of Muslims at the hands of non-believers (*kuffar*) in Mecca during the early years of Islam. Two principles, expulsion from homes and protection of places of worship, are laid out in Qur'an 22:40:

> Those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah's repelling some people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah's name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, All-Glorious with irresistible might.

In other words, war is waged for self-defence, defence of one's faith and in support of the oppressed.

Throughout Islamic history, the term *jihad* has included political action (the *jihad* of the pen), warfare (*jihad* of the sword), as well as an individual's own struggle to lead a righteous life (*jihad* of the soul).

Hadith literature expands the meaning of war and it is in the Hadith that we see the beginning of reference to '*jihad*' as meaning waging war.

> Narrated by Ibn 'Umar … Allah's Apostle said: 'I have been ordered (by Allah) to fight against the people until they testify that none has the right to be worshipped but Allah and that Muhammad is Allah's Apostle, and offer the prayers perfectly and give the obligatory charity, so if they perform that, then they save their lives and property from me except for Islamic laws and their reckoning (accounts) will be done by Allah.

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This Hadith conveys the message that *jihad* is to be waged against unbelievers until they accept Islam.

Today, the term *jihad* is highly politicised and used in many different contexts without regard for its original spiritual meaning. 'Jihadists' and 'jihadis' are terms used in the media to refer to either terrorists and/or separatists who claim to engage in religion-inspired activities. Violence associated with the term has been used by some as a justification to further their ideological, political and extremist agendas. However, for the majority of Muslims, *jihad* continues to evoke religious and spiritual sensibilities. A distinction is made between the greater *jihad* and the lesser *jihad*. The greater *jihad* is understood to be 'striving in God', which is a difficult spiritual notion. The lesser *jihad*, 'striving for God', is understood to be a social, political and military struggle.

Rules for war

Within Islam there are clearly articulated rules for a defensive war, rules for deciding, rules for declaring and rules for conduct in war. A defensive war permitted by the Qur'an is referred to as *harb* (warfare) or *qital* (combat) and not by the term *jihad*. Qur'an 22:39, one of the earliest verses that refers to the violence of war, uses the term *qital* and also gives a rationale for it – that it be undertaken as a means of defence against oppressions: 'To those against whom war is made, permission is given (to fight), because they are wronged.' It does not sanction warfare as a means of political expansion or for domination over other peoples. The Qur'an offers a choice in what means one might adopt, such as taking up arms to defend oneself and one's community. The Qur'an does not see it as an option whether a person should take measures to defend oneself and to stand up to injustice and aggression forced by an adversary. The Qur'an is emphatic that one must strive to eradicate injustice, but the choice of means is left to the person in charge of the task of defending.

Muslim extremists can be seen as violating Islamic ethics in several ways. They misinterpret and misuse the text of the Qur'an; they breach local laws and rules of the country in which they live, which is a violation of *sharia* law; and they cause mistrust and division between Muslim and other communities, disregarding the Qur'anic imperative for dialogue and cooperation with other communities. Extremists who use 'suicide' attacks to seek martyrdom (*shahadah*) or to be a martyr (*shahid*) contravene Islamic ethics based on their political and/or spiritual interpretation of the term *shahid*. In Islam, martyrdom is never sought, it is given by Allah. Muhammad said intention is half of one's faith and therefore a person has to be quite clear in his/her mind what s/he is seeking – personal glory or divine will. Moreover, no martyrdom can be achieved when a person is knowingly willing to harm oneself and others, especially non-combatants. True martyrdom in Islam is when a person saves others and oneself from being harmed; not to cause harm on a mass scale.



FIGURE 6.34 The violence done by Muslim extremists, such as to this church in North-eastern Syria, is a misinterpretation of the Qur'an

Justice and peace are two concerns of the Qur'an. Qur'an 2:190 says: 'fight in the way of Allah against those who fight against you but be not the aggressors. Surely Allah does not love aggressors.' The granting of permission to fight is qualified by the statement: 'do not be aggressors.' The Qur'an also reminds people that during a fight or war, if the opponent inclines towards peace, Muslims must put down their weapons immediately.

Only a legitimate head of government can, as a last resort, make the decision to go to war, which today must meet the requirements set by the United Nations. Some Muslim scholars such as Wahiduddin Khan, Jawdat Sa'id and Rabia Harris are of the view that no war can be considered 'just' and that the only way to resolve conflicts is through non-violent means.

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Professor Chaiwat Satha-Anand, a Muslim scholar from Thailand, offers eight theses on Muslim non-violent actions which provide a significant challenge to many of the violent options available.

1 Islam permits limited violence – it is mentioned in the Qur'an as *qital*.
2 Violence is governed by strict rules and conditions and use of violence is understood to be the last resort.
3 These conditions include prohibition on harming non-combatants and nature.
4 Modern war-technology disallows the possibility of leaving non-combatants unharmed.
5 Therefore, under this reality of how wars are generally fought today, violence cannot be used based on religious principles.
6 Yet Islam calls for 'fighting' against injustice – a call for all times to 'strive' to do jihad.
7 Therefore, the sole option for Muslims to carry out jihad for justice is through non-violent means.
8 Qur'anic use of jihad as striving can be precisely followed through such non-violent activism; it is not sought but demanded by the Qur'an.

Source: Satha-Anand, 1999, quoted in Omar, 2015, p. 29.

ACTIVITY **6.13**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 What Qur'anic quotations can be drawn upon to promote peacemaking and the non-violent struggle for justice for all?
2 *Jihad* is a much-abused term today with many negative derivatives in circulation such as 'jihadism' and 'jihadists'. Should Muslims abandon the use of this term and replace it with some other term to refer to the inner spiritual struggle? Present a case for or against.

Hinduism

Hinduism contains teachings that condemn violence and teachings that permit violence. Teachings that condemn violence are contained in the doctrine of *ahimsa*, while the teachings that permit violence centre around the *Kshatriyas*, the warrior caste.

Some sacred texts of Hinduism such as the Epics and the Puranas reflect on the moral dilemmas of warfare. Because warfare had a religious dimension, such as battle being ritualised and ethicised and death in battle guaranteeing heaven, the topic of warfare was called *Dhanurveda*, the Veda of Warfare. Peace (*santi*) is good – both political peace and spiritual peace. Within Hinduism there are two ways to attain political peace: by non-violence or by just war.

The two great statements (*mahavakyas*) in the *Mahabharata* capture the ethical dilemma: that supreme righteousness is *ahimsa* and so is righteous violence. According to this teaching, *Kshatriyas*, the warrior caste, are to protect society using violence if necessary.

The Vedas, a collection of more than 1000 hymns composed between 1200 and 900 BCE, unashamedly present violence and power as part and parcel of the natural order of the cosmos. Many scholars believe that the brutal and materialist worldview of the Vedas was shaped by historical circumstances. Hindus believe that it is right to use force in self-defence and the *Rig Veda* states:

> May your weapons be strong to drive away the attackers,
> may your arms be powerful enough to check the foes,
> Let your army be glorious, not the evil-doer. (*Rig Veda* 1–39:2)

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The *Rig Veda* also sets out rules for war, indicating that if a warrior breaks any of the rules they will go to hell. According to the *Rig Veda*, a warrior should not:

- use poisoned-tip arrows
- attack the sick or the elderly
- attack children or women
- attack from behind (*Rig Veda* 6–75:15).

In addition to the above rules, battles should be conducted according to the principles of *dharma*. The time and place of the battle was to be decided between the warring parties beforehand and the war was declared with the blowing of conch shells. The warriors on chariots fought each other with bows and arrows. Killing in war was not considered illegal, as warriors killed out of duty rather than personal enmity. Some other rules of war included the moderation of conduct so that chariot drivers and diplomatic envoys were not harmed.

The *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* epics provide readers with military details regarding warfare in India during the Epic age around 400 BCE. The *Mahabharata*, the longest poem in the world with over 100 000 couplets, describes the struggle between two Aryan tribes in North India, the Pandavas and the Kuravas.

In the *Mahabharata*, and especially in the dialogue between Lord Krishna and the warrior Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, the topic of righteous war is contrasted with unrighteous war. Arjuna is about to go into battle when he discovers many of his relatives and friends are on the opposing side. Arjuna does not want to kill the people he loves, but is persuaded to do so by Krishna. Krishna tells Arjuna that he should fight for the following reasons: it is his duty, his *dharma*, to fight because he was born a warrior; he was born a member of the warrior caste and his duty to his caste and the divine structure of society are more important than his personal feelings; violence only affects the body and cannot harm the soul, so killing is not a fault and there is no reason for Arjuna not to kill people, nor should he be sorry for those he has killed; underlying this is the Eastern idea that life and death are part of an illusion and that the spiritual is what matters.

The *Ramayana* portrays Aryan expansion against the Dravidians of South India. It is clear in the *Ramayana* that in order to defeat the superior Dravidians, the Aryans resorted to the strategy of 'divide and rule' as well as treachery and viciousness against them.

FIGURE 6.35 Episodes from the Hindu epics, *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, in the inner walls of the outer gallery of Angkor Wat, Cambodia



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The *Ramayana* lists the following principles of just war:

- clarity – it must be an open fight with procedures agreed to by both sides before the battle
- discrimination and containment – fighting must only take place in restricted places and at times that must be announced and between restricted people
- prudence – acknowledgement of the commonality of warfare and the need for an ethics of warfare grounded in realism such as keeping Hinduism allied with the sources of political power to prevent abrogation of rights
- fairness and equality – battles between equals in physique, armour and psychology; the battle must stop if warriors become panic-stricken, scatter, hide, become tired, sleepy, thirsty, disabled, have broken weapons or give signs of unconditional surrender
- reciprocity – the Hindu version of the Golden Rule – one should not do unto others that which is unpleasant to oneself
- self-defence – warfare to defend the community is an exception to the general rule of *ahimsa*
- reconciliation after victory – reinstatement of a defeated king or his substitute and permission to maintain his own customs and laws as long as the victor's superiority is accepted.

In modern times, the strongest proponent of *ahimsa* was Gandhi, who believed that *ahimsa* was the highest duty of a human being. Gandhi interpreted the battle context of the *Gita* allegorically as the eternal duel between the forces of darkness and light. His basic values were closely allied to the *samanya* principles. Gandhi extended the ethics of *ahimsa* to everyone as well as politicising and modernising them as the just means to a just end: Indian independence. He said: '*Ahimsa*, non-violence, comes from strength and the strength is from God not man. *Ahimsa* always comes from within.'

Underlying the Hindu opposition to killing or violence is the concept of *karma*: any violence a person carries out will return to them at some time in the future by the natural law of the universe. The *Rig Veda* also contains statements regarding peace:

> Come, together, talk together,
> Let our minds be in harmony.
> Common be our prayer,
> Common be our end,
> Common be our purpose,
> Common be our deliberations,
> Common be our desires,
> United be our hearts,
> United be our intentions,
> Perfect be the union among us. (*Rig Veda* 10-191:2)

Since independence, the Indian Government has universalised conscription for men and has developed weapons of mass destruction for deterrence, arguing that these are just means and necessary for self-defence. The Bharatiya



FIGURE 6.36 Supporters of India's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) listen to BJP Leader and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi

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FIGURE 6.37 Indian Army T-90 (Bhishma) tanks take part during the Republic Day parade in New Delhi in 2019

Janata Party (BJP), the most important political organisation in present-day India, mixes Hinduism with modern statecraft in an effort to create a Hindu India. Instead of a metaphysical interpretation of Hinduism, the BJP promotes hard-line, literalist interpretation of Hindu texts. Rather than seeing Hinduism as a peace-loving, pacifist culture, the BJP believes that Hinduism advocates domination of non-Hindus in order to create a strong, aggressive state. The BJP supports the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy backed by strong military power and promotes policies of increasing military expenditure.

To a certain extent, Hinduism structures the army–state relationship in India, and Hindu thought continues to shape India's nuclear policy. Indian academic Raja Mohan asserts that India's strategic leaders are rediscovering realpolitik in place of moral politick from the *Mahabharata*, the *Arthashastra* and the *Panchatantra* because all these texts emphasise the importance of power politics.

The Indian academic Kaushik Roy writes:

> In post-colonial India, ancient Hindu texts and not Hindu priests remain important for the power elites and for the process of strategy-making. Nationalist Hindu priests organised under the umbrella organisation Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP or World Hindu Council) aim to spread the Hindu religion and to bring Hindus who have accepted other religions such as Islam and Christianity back into the fold of Hinduism. Their proselytising activities have resulted in riots between Hindu and Muslim communities. The BJP uses VHP for garnering Hindu votes during elections but never allows this body any say in strategic decision-making. Hindu sacred texts remain a central part of ethical decisions related to war and warfare.
>
> Source: Roy, 2009, in Popovski, Reichberg & Turner, 2009, p. 52.

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Some groups advocate a literalist reading of sacred texts and others urge a more moderate pacifist interpretation of the strategic ideas embedded in the Hindu texts.

Buddhism

Peace is central to Buddhism and Buddhists encourage people to focus on love and compassion. In early Buddhist tradition, the concept of peace was expressed in the word *santi* (tranquillity, peace). The *Dhammapada*, part of the Pali Canon, states: 'There is no bliss higher than peace' and so the ultimate goal of Buddhists is the attainment of perfect inner peace. As well as focusing on inner peace, Buddhists in some lineages are encouraged to work for peace in the social and cultural contexts in which they live. Harmonious living is closely identified with the idea of righteous living.

Some questions raised regarding Buddhism and war include:

> Can Buddhists join an army? When one is a soldier what happens to one's Buddhist identity? Can a state that has a majority Buddhist population use force to manage a war situation? What is the role of Buddhism in a war-torn country? Can Buddhism justify a defensive war? Within the teachings of the Buddha is there any consideration of the use of force?
>
> Source: Deegalle, 2009, in Popovski, Reichberg & Turner, 2009, p. 60.

The historical Buddha, Siddhartha Gautama, preached against war but even he could not avoid the threat of war. On two occasions the Buddha was forced to become directly involved in conflict resolution situations. One account tells the story of a dispute between his relatives, the Sakyans and Koliyans, about sharing the rights to water in the Rohini River. A dam was constructed and the Sakyans and Koliyans used its water for agriculture. During a drought, a violent dispute arose between the two groups. Just as war was about to be waged, the Buddha decided to intervene. After meeting the two sides, he asked them what was more precious for them: river water or their blood. His questioning pointed out the futility of war for the sake of water.

Early Buddhist literature contains numerous references to war. The view expressed almost unanimously in the texts is that because war involves killing, and killing is a breach of the first precept, it is morally wrong to fight in either offensive or defensive wars. The Buddha states that warriors who die in battle do not go to heaven but to a special hell, because at the moment of death their minds are intent on killing beings (*Sutta Nipata* 4:308–11). According to Vasubandhu in the *Abhidharmakosabhasya*, a soldier 'even if conscripted, is guilty of killing unless he makes the firm resolve that he will definitely not kill anybody, even for the sake of saving his own life'. The same text affirms that killing is bad *karma* even in the case of self-defence or when done for the sake of defending friends. The *Jatakas* contain stories concerning princes and kings who were so horrified by violence that they renounced their kingdoms to become ascetics or refused to defend themselves in the face of attack.

The pacifist ideal of the sacred texts of Buddhism has not prevented Buddhists from fighting battles and conducting military campaigns from a mixture of political and religious motives. The historical background to Buddhist involvement in war in different countries is complex. War between Sinhalese and Tamils in the early history of Sri Lanka was common. King Dutthagamani (1 BCE) is regarded as national hero for defeating the Tamil general Elara who had invaded the island from South India. This story is glorified in the *Mahavamsa*, which says that his army was accompanied by Buddhist monks.

East Asia has also seen the involvement of monks in insurrections and military campaigns. This was common in Japan, where monasteries

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FIGURE 6.38 A Buddhist monk takes part in an anti-war protest in London, 2018

became wealthy landowning institutions employing bands of warrior monks to provide protection and intimidate opponents. The teachings and practices of Zen Buddhism were helpful to the military caste as techniques for discipline of the mind in battle and were used to dispel the fear of death. In the modern period, Buddhist religious groups have had a close involvement with Japanese nationalism and militarism. The Zen and Pure Land lineages provided financial support for the 1937–45 war with China, and in World War II most Buddhist schools, with the exception of Soka Gakkai, supported the Japanese war effort against the Allies.

With respect to war, there appears to be a tension in Buddhism between precept and practice. On the one hand, ancient texts teach pacifism, while on the other hand, Buddhist states have used force and sometimes invoked religion as a justification for military campaigns.

6.6 Conclusion

Religion and ethics are closely connected historically and conceptually. Many ethical teachings emerged in religious cultures and often religious teachings provided justifications and rationales for ethical injunctions. Ronald Green, a contemporary writer on interfaith ethics, argues that there is agreement between religions about the content of morality. He says that most religions have an ethics structure consisting of a mode of moral reasoning that involves the moral perspective; retribution for inappropriate or immoral behaviour; and a framing set of beliefs that shapes the relationship between moral judgement and retribution. For adherents of religious traditions, there is a complex relationship between religion and ethics. Religious perspectives are an important consideration when making ethical decisions, particularly in an era dominated by relativist and secular assumptions.

ACTIVITY 6.14

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Access the BBC page on ethics via the link at http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8589. Use the section on 'Religious views of war' to create a concept web of war from religious perspectives on the Activity Worksheet. Use different colours to represent similar and dissenting views. What surprises you in the results? Are there more similarities than differences between religions on the topic of war?

2 Apply Pastoral Spiral and multidimensional approaches to ethical decision making to a specific instance of war from one religion's perspective. Present your analysis in a PowerPoint presentation of 12–15 minutes.

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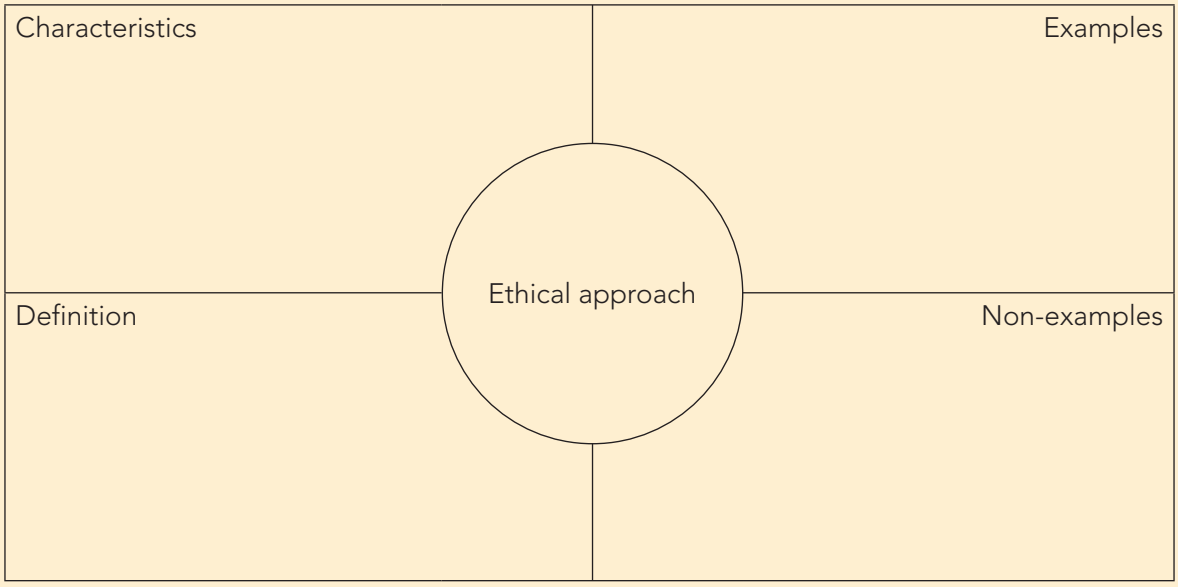
END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

1 In pairs, list ways in which people determine what actions are right and which are wrong (e.g. if someone was given $10 extra change at the local newsagent, should they keep it?).
2 Write your own account of a situation in which you and a friend disagreed about what was morally right and what was morally wrong.
3 Think, Pair, Share: Locate two different kinds of religious ethical guidelines represented in the media as 'extremely strict'. Pair with a classmate to enlarge your list to four, then share these four answers with another pair so that each student has a list of eight.
4 Conduct a Google Images search using the word 'ethics'. Of the first 20 images provided by the search engine, choose one image to deconstruct. Explain what the elements of the image mean and how the image overall relates to the search term.

INVESTIGATING AND REASONING

Complete the Frayer concept model on 'Ethical approach.'



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ANALYSING

1 Mind map: Create a mind map to organise the ideas covered in this chapter showing their relationships to each other.
2 Consequences web: Complete a consequences web: 'If everyone acted according to Buddhist ethics on war and peace, then …' or 'If women and men were genuinely treated equally, then …'

ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1 Letter to the editor: Choose a recent ethical issue that has been covered by the media and write a letter to the editor, starting with a normative statement about the issue. This should be justified with reference to a particular ethical framework and/or religious ethical code.
2 Write an opinion piece for a newspaper responding to one of the following quotes from Nel Noddings.

> For many people, that war [WWII] is called the 'good war' because it was fought against a regime guilty of unspeakable atrocities. But the Allies did not enter the war to save Jews from extermination. The United States entered the war after it was attacked by Japan at Pearl Harbor and, as a nation, we certainly did not do as much as we should have to save the Jewish population of Europe. The basic question is still with us: Is it right, justifiable, to intervene in a nation's internal activities when those activities include genocide, ethnic cleansing, or some other demonstrable harm to a subset of its people?
>
> Source: Nel Noddings, 2011, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*.

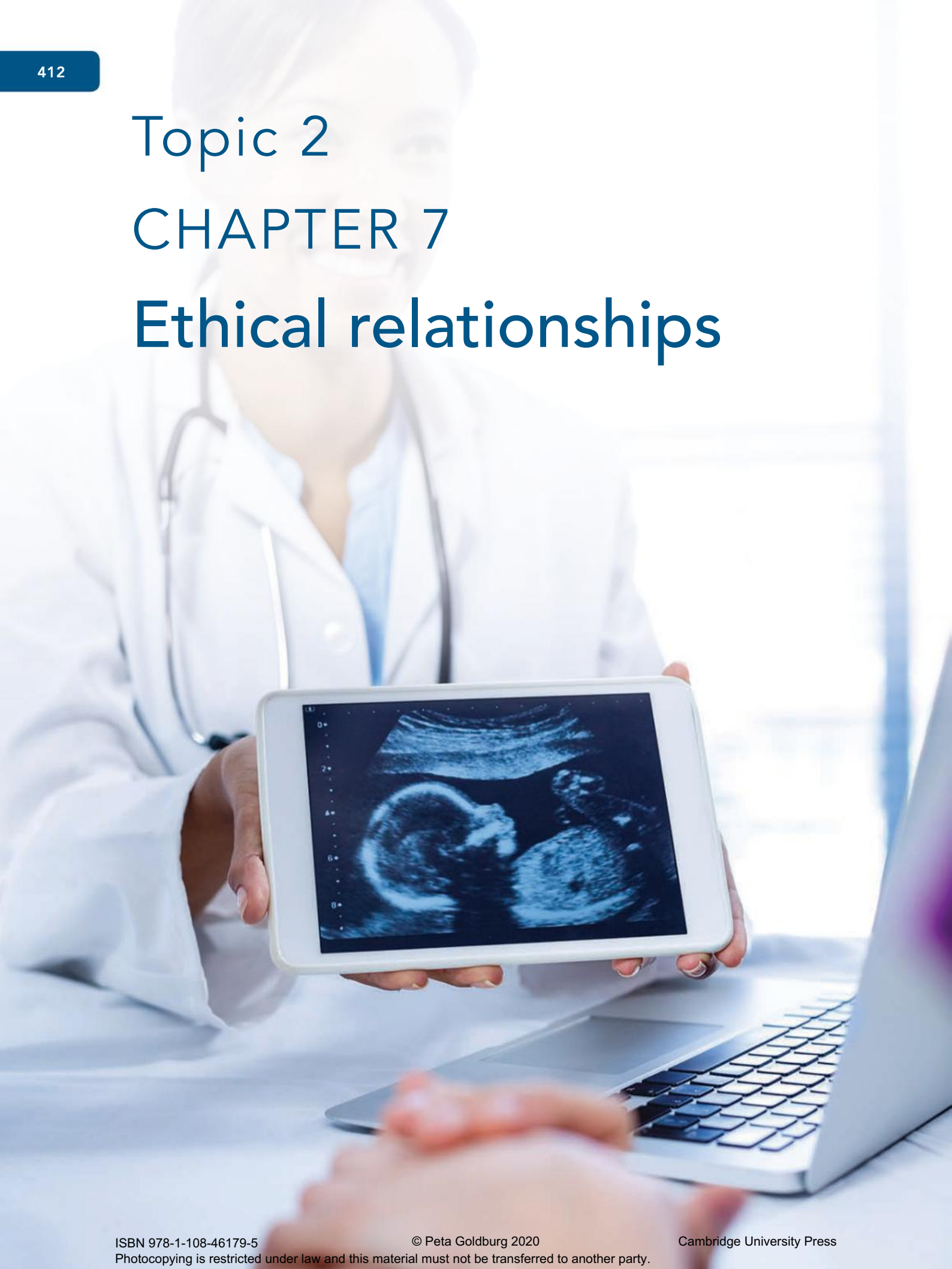
> It is not my purpose here to document the destruction caused by war [...] The point is to ask ourselves why these accounts have not had greater effect. [...] Why is it that many of us are deeply moved by visual art, fiction, and firsthand accounts of destruction and yet accept war as a means of resolving conflict or defending ourselves?
>
> Source: Nel Noddings, 2011, *Peace Education: How We Come to Love and Hate War*.

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Topic 2

CHAPTER 7

Ethical relationships



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In Topic 2, Ethical relationships, students will use their understandings of religious ethics, ethical teachings, ethical terminology and approaches to ethical decision-making developed in topic 1 of this unit. These understandings will be applied to contemporary ethical issues from the perspective of one of the five major world religions. Students will identify how a variety of views may be evident and the extent to which religious ethics influences an adherent's decision-making process.

The syllabus for Study of Religion identifies a broad variety of ethical issues including beginning and end of life, body image, interpersonal conflict, medical technologies, and substance abuse. Each of these broad areas needs to be broken down into specific topics. This chapter will focus on selected areas of contemporary ethical issues which can be used as a foundation for exploration of ethical relationships.

After investigating the ethical issues, students will apply one of the models of ethical decision making presented in chapter six as a way of investigating and analysing how religion influences an adherent's decision-making process.

Study of Religion 2019 v1.2 General Senior Syllabus © State of Queensland (QCAA) 2019. CC BY 4.0.

The following process provides a guide for how to investigate, analyse and apply religious thinking to ethical issues.

- Select an area for investigation – for example, medical technologies.
- Narrow the area to a specific topic within the area for investigation – for example, genetic engineering.
- Research the topic so that you are familiar with it, including subject-specific terminology.
- Ensure you have a sound understanding of the topic area before investigating various religious ethical positions related to the topic.
- Analyse the selected topic from the perspective of the religious ethics of one of the five major world religions.
- Apply one of the approaches used for ethical decision making – a multidimensional approach (Isaacs and Massey) or the Pastoral Spiral (Holland and Henriot) – to the area of investigation.
- Draw conclusions about the extent to which religious ethics influence individual decision-making processes and responses to ethical issues within a religious tradition.

7.1 Beginning and end of life issues

Reproductive technologies

Many people wish to have children and their desire to be able to procreate is a fundamental expression of their identity. Over the past 50 years, there has been considerable growth in the global technological revolution of artificial reproductive technologies. Reproductive advances such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF), sex selection, reproductive cloning and embryo selection have all emerged as part of a rapid and overarching branch of medicine and ethics.



FIGURE 7.1 Louise Brown, the world's first baby to be born following successful in vitro fertilisation (IVF), speaks at a press conference in 2018 in London to mark 40 years since her pioneering birth.

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Worldwide, more than 250 000 babies are born each year through assisted reproductive technologies (ART).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that approximately 8–12 per cent of the world's population experience issues related to infertility. Many people seek medical help in conceiving children and turn to ART. Women and men utilising ART have many decisions to make and their decisions are frequently influenced by religious beliefs and values.

Artificial reproductive technologies include IVF, use of donor gametes (egg or sperm), and the use of a gestational carrier (i.e. a surrogate) for the purpose of conceiving a child. IVF consists of combining a woman's egg with a man's sperm in a Petri dish with the goal of creating embryos. Viable embryos are frozen, usually for three days, and then the reproductive endocrinologist transfers one or more, depending upon the age of the woman, into her uterus. Intrauterine insemination (IUI) involves using the intended father's sperm and injecting it directly into the intended mother's vaginal canal. Some couples or individuals use donor gametes in order to conceive through either IUI or IVF. This is the case if the woman or man does not have viable eggs or sperm. Donors may be anonymous or someone the couple knows, such as a sister or brother. A gestational carrier is a woman who is not the intended parent who will carry the baby. Couples where the woman is not able to carry a baby herself, such as a woman who has miscarried frequently, may choose this option.

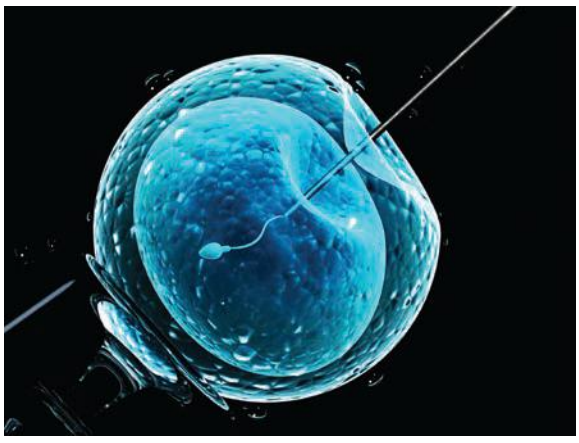


FIGURE 7.2 Cell injection for artificial insemination

Couples who experience infertility will first need to decide whether or not to adopt, remain childless or begin medical treatments. Medical treatments typically involve a progression from using fertility medications designed to improve the implantation of the embryo in utero to IUI and then IVF. Often people decide ahead of time when they will cease to utilise ART, but if their attempts are unsuccessful one or both members of the couple may change their minds during the process. If IVF is unsuccessful, they may need to consider use of donor gametes or a gestational carrier. Some people may forgo a step, depending upon the cause of their infertility or their age.

Each step involves complex decisions and ethical dilemmas for the couple. These include, but are not limited to, male masturbation, conceiving outside of the body, making a choice about any leftover embryos not used for an IVF transfer, choosing to conceive by utilising donor gametes, deciding between anonymous donors or known donors, choosing between secrecy and sharing with others the means of conception, including the prospective child.

Many people seek assistance from religious professionals during this time because religions provide people with a sense of purpose and a way of making meaning. Sometimes people assume that their religious tradition would not



FIGURE 7.3 Liquid nitrogen cryogenic tank at a life sciences laboratory where leftover frozen embryos are stored

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support ART when, in fact, many do support aspects of utilising ART in order to reproduce. Because death, grief and loss are strongly tied to a person's belief system about the afterlife, religious rituals are often helpful for people when a loss is experienced; however, some religious rituals are not performed regularly for losses such as infertility, selective reduction and miscarriages.

In this section we focus on the Abrahamic traditions and their practices related to ART. One issue that all monotheistic religions agree on is the prohibition of killing another human being. Although reproductive endocrinologists typically only transfer one to three embryos, each embryo has the potential of splitting into twins or more. Thus, couples may be placed in a position where they need to decide whether or not to reduce the number of foetuses because of risk to the foetuses and/or to the mother. This process is known as selective reduction or multi-foetal pregnancy reduction. Some other areas where religious teachings may need to be considered include opinions about one's duty to have children, the place of natural conception, when life actually begins, the ramifications of using donor gametes, and the ramifications of utilising gestational carriers.

Judaism

It is important to remember when investigating this ethical issue that there is no single authority on ART practices within the three major groups of Judaism: secular Jews, Reform Jews and Orthodox Jews.

For Jews, the development of IVF made it necessary to consider the ethics of conceiving a human being outside the womb, and the fact that this was even feasible has been considered as proof that embryos have not taken a different character by being created outside a woman's body and that therefore the technique is permitted. According to rabbinical teaching, what is important is not where the conception occurs, but whether conception is the consequence of the encounter between the gametes of the spouses, based on the commandment of procreation stated in Genesis 1:18. The Chief Rabbi of Israel and the majority of Jewish religious leaders have been supportive of using most methods possible for conception.



FIGURE 7.4 Doctors holding a newborn baby

Jewish determination of when human life begins is extracted predominantly from *halakhic* sources, because the Hebrew Bible does not make any direct references to when exactly a new life begins. The Talmud, however, gives the full status of humanness to a child at birth, and rabbinical writings have slightly extended the acquisition of humanness for full-term infants to the 13th day of extra-uterine life. The Babylonian Talmud (*Yevamot* 69b) states that 'the embryo is considered to be mere water until the fortieth day'. Afterward, it is considered 'subhuman' until birth.

Jewish leaders promote utilising medical interventions that assist Jewish couples hoping to bring life into the world. From the Jewish perspective, the soul does not actually enter the fertilised egg for 40 days, so issues pertaining to destruction of remaining embryos do not cause the same concerns that some Christians may have about right to life issues. Rabbinical authorities also acknowledge the strain that involuntary childlessness can place on a marriage and suggest that couples protect their marriages from distress and potential divorce. In Israel, there are strong policies supporting IVF and the Israeli Government provides subsidies for IVF. Israel has the largest number of reproductive medicine clinics per capita, indicating the widespread support and utilisation of IVF in Israel.

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Despite this advocacy, there are debates over specific decisions that Jewish couples may have to make. The use of donor gametes remains controversial, with many Orthodox leaders discouraging the use of donors and others stating that use of donor gametes is a private matter to be decided by the couple. Some rabbis permit surrogacy as long as the gestational carrier is Jewish, because the Jewish line is passed through the womb rather than the eggs.

Christianity

Christians comprise approximately one-third of the world's religious adherents and Roman Catholics represent the largest Christian church, with membership exceeding 1.25 billion worldwide. The Catholic Church, through the teaching of the magisterium, presents a strong position in the use of ART. The foundation of all discussions related to IVF centre on the dignity of the human person. The Catholic Church also states that life begins at the moment of conception, when the egg and sperm unite to form an embryo. Consequently, the Church says that the destruction or removal of an embryo during the IVF process is the killing of a human life.

The Catholic Church states that from conception the life of every human being is to be respected in an absolute way because humankind is the only creature that God has 'wished for God's self', the spiritual soul of each person is 'immediately created by God', and the whole being bears the image of the Creator. Human life is sacred because from its beginning it involves the creative action of God and it remains forever in a special relationship with its Creator who is its sole end. The Catholic Church's commitment to life is also evidenced in its willingness to collaborate with others to alleviate the causes of high infant mortality rates and to provide adequate healthcare to mothers and their children before and after birth.

Several Christian Orthodox Churches share the Catholic view that 'nascent' human life should be given absolute protection.

> It should be recognised, however, that given the proportion between the total number of embryos produced and those eventually born, the number of embryos sacrificed is extremely high. These losses are accepted by the practitioners of IVF as the price to be paid for positive results. In reality, it is deeply disturbing that research in this area aims principally at obtaining better results in terms of the percentage of babies born to women who begin the process, but does not manifest a concrete interest in the right to life of each individual embryo. It is often objected that the loss of embryos is, in the majority of cases, unintentional or that it happens truly against the will of the parents and physicians.
>
> Source: Benagiano, Carrara & Filippi, 2011.

The Catholic Church holds that the 'origin of human life has its authentic context in marriage and in the family, where it is generated through an act which expresses the reciprocal love between a man and a woman' (*Dignitas personae*, no. 6). There are at least three religious truths contained in this statement. First, the Church recognises that the proper place for procreation is within the marriage of one man and one woman. Second, the Church affirms that this procreation should only come about through sexual intercourse, which at once expresses the spouses' love and creates new life. Third, the Church holds that this creation of new life should involve the union of the husband's sperm with his wife's egg. The Catholic Church therefore teaches that 'fertilisation of a married woman with the sperm of a donor different from her husband and fertilisation with the husband's sperm of an ovum not coming from his wife are morally illicit' (*Donum vitae*, IIA 2). The Church does not support the destruction of human embryos or their deliberate generation in such a way so as to simply maximise the chances of implanting.

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Some infertility treatments are acceptable within the teachings of the Catholic Church. These include the use of drugs to increase the number of eggs produced, surgery to eliminate blockages in the male's or female's body, and gamete intra-fallopian transfer (GIFT), which is similar to IVF. In GIFT, the female's eggs and male's sperm are both injected into the woman's fallopian tubes with the hope that it will result in an embryo.

For Protestant Christians, there is no central organisation or hierarchy that Protestants turn to for concrete answers regarding appropriate choices. Many Protestant leaders disagree about when life actually begins. There are two primary arguments: an embryo has the potential to split into two or more up until 14 days and therefore is not an individual; and the second argument states that as soon as the egg is fertilised the embryo has rights of its own. The first viewpoint says embryos are not individuals and therefore do not present an ethical dilemma for Christians; the second viewpoint is similar to teachings within the Catholic tradition and says that life begins with conception.

Islam

Islam gives strong and unequivocal emphasis to high fertility. Muhammad is reported to have said: 'Marry the kind and fertile women who will give birth to many children for I shall take pride in the great numbers of my umah' (Hadith, no. 2050). While Islam commonly supports scientific and technological advances, ART creates challenges for some Muslims, with Shi'ites and Sunnis differing regarding the use of ART. Islamic law frowns on any use of ART with no medical justification. Single motherhood or fatherhood is a negation of Islamic law provisions.

IVF with its various modifications such as GIFT and ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection) has been declared permissible under Islam only if the following conditions are satisfied. First, the IVF must involve a married couple. Second, the sperm must be from the husband and the eggs from the wife. Third, the process must occur within the context of a valid marriage. Fourth, the procedure must be conducted by a competent team in order to reduce the chances of failure or mixing of zygotes and pre-embryos of different couples when kept in liquid nitrogen. Fifth, surrogacy is not accepted. Finally, no more than the appropriate number of fertilised eggs should be transferred to the uterus. It is common to transfer only two or three fertilised eggs, although there are usually more fertilised eggs produced.



FIGURE 7.5 Multi-generation Muslim family at mealtime



FIGURE 7.6 Muslim couple expecting a baby

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Freezing the remaining fertilised ova is permissible by some Islamic scholars as long as they are only used in subsequent cycles for the same couple, and the couple is still married.

fatwa an advisory opinion by a qualified *faqih* stating whether an action is permitted or forbidden by *sharia* law

The Qur'an says that 'Wealth and progeny are adornments for the life of this world' (Qur'an 18:46), which means that families seek two things: to have a secure financial future and children. Family ties are very important within Islam and these include inheritance rights and providing designations of relationships such as 'milk siblings', those nursed by the same woman, which dictates who are forbidden marriage partners. Kinship, which is created through birth, and lineage are of the utmost importance in Islamic families, adding pressure to Muslim couples to procreate using their own gametes. Women often carry the burden because infertility is frequently deemed a woman's problem.

Assisted reproduction is not specifically mentioned in the Qur'an or the primary sources of *sharia* (Islamic law). Generally, adherents of Islam believed that seeking assisted reproduction was a challenge to Allah's will by trying to render barren women fertile. Similar to the position of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, the idea of artificial handling of human gametes and embryos was rejected. Only after prestigious scientific and religious bodies issued guidelines, and they were adopted by medical councils and accepted by concerned authorities in different Muslim countries, did IVF became widely seen as an ethical solution to infertility. When procreation fails, Islam encourages treatment, especially because adoption is not an acceptable solution. In the same circumstances, *sharia* permits surrogacy.

IVF is supported by most Islamic leaders as a means to carry on the family. However, there is debate regarding the use of third-party reproduction. Within Sunni Islam, the mixture of eggs and sperm from unmarried individuals is considered as adultery, thus third-party reproduction is strictly forbidden. Sunni leaders have also decreed that the use of donor gametes and/or surrogates confuses the lineage of the child. Hence the widespread practice in ART facilities of sperm, ovum and embryo donation and the 'rental' of a uterus is incompatible with the Islamic injunctions related to human reproduction. The ban on third-party assistance is upheld in many ***fatwas*** and bioethical decrees issued since 1980 in Sunni Muslim countries, which represent approximately 90 per cent of the world's 1.7 billion Muslims.

Shi'ite leaders have traditionally agreed with Sunnis. However, in the 1990s a *fatwa* was decreed by an Iranian jurist allowing third-party reproduction. It was stated that use of donor gametes or surrogacy was not illegal, and that the child belongs to the infertile couple. However, inheritance could only be passed through the donor or surrogate parents. Within Iran, the law provides strict provisions on who can be a donor and also protects the identity of the donor. Some Shi'ite authorities have said that donors should marry the intended parent as a second spouse or divorce the first spouse and remarry the first spouse after conception. Other Shi'ite authorities suggest that the use of donor gametes is prohibited, disagreeing with the more liberal interpretations. Iran is the only Muslim country in which ARTs using donor gametes and embryos have been legitimised by religious authorities and passed into law. This places Iran, a Shi'ite-dominant country, in a unique position vis-à-vis the Sunni Islamic world where all forms of gamete donation are strictly prohibited.

The prevention and treatment of infertility is particularly significant because the social status of women means their dignity and self-esteem are closely related to their potential for procreation both for the family and the society as a whole. Islamic teaching on the issue of the status of early human embryonic life stems directly from the Qur'an, where it is explained that the development of intrauterine life advances step by step from a clot to a lump of flesh, then boned flesh, and finally a fully grown infant (Qur'an 22:5; 23:14). Therefore, according to Islam, ensoulment of the foetus occurs after 120 days following fertilisation, although some

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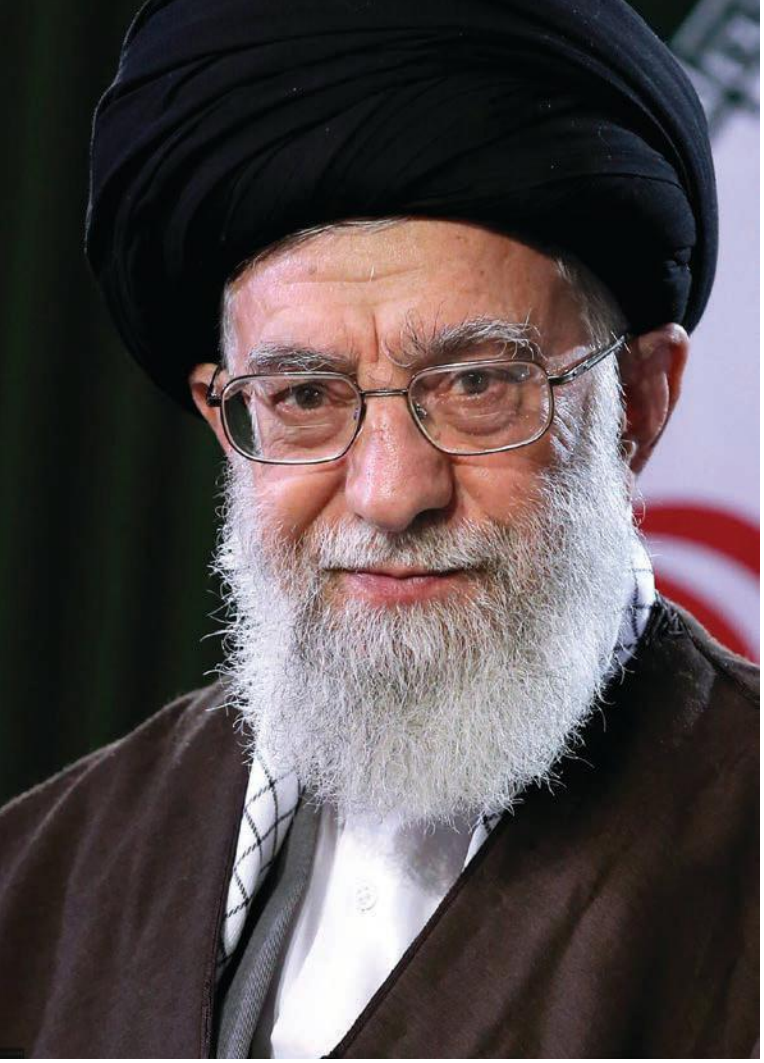


FIGURE 7.7 Ali Khamenei, Supreme Leader of Iran

authorities consider it to occur as early as 42 days post-fertilisation. Recently, the threshold has been brought back to 14 days after conception because discoveries in human embryology have established that individuality of the new being is achieved at that stage.

Under Islamic law, surrogacy is prohibited, but surrogacy between the wives of one husband is allowed by Ali Khamenei of Iran.

The Islamic position on medically assisted conception can be summarised as follows:

- Artificial insemination with the husband's semen is allowed and the resulting child is the legal offspring of the couple.
- IVF of an egg from the wife with the sperm of her husband is allowed, provided that the procedure is indicated for a medical reason and is carried out by an expert physician.
- No third party should intrude into the marital functions of sex and procreation. Therefore, no third-party donor is allowed.
- Adoption is not allowed.
- If the marriage contract ends because of divorce or the death of the husband, medically assisted conception cannot be performed on the ex-wife even if the sperm comes from the former husband.
- An excess number of fertilised embryos can be preserved by cryopreservation. The frozen embryos are the property of the couple alone and may be transferred to the same wife in a successive cycle, but only for the duration of the marriage contract.
- Multi-foetal pregnancy reduction should not be intentionally performed, as in ART; foetal reduction is only allowed if multiple pregnancies occurred spontaneously and are endangering the viability of the multiple embryos.
- Multi-foetal pregnancy reduction is allowed if the health or life of the mother is in jeopardy.
- All forms of surrogacy are forbidden.
- Establishment of sperm or egg banks is strictly forbidden because it threatens the existence of the family.

Hinduism and Buddhism

In Hinduism and Buddhism, important life events and circumstances, including infertility, are a working out of the *karmic* cycle. Infertility is often interpreted as the result of a misdeed such as mistreating children in a previous existence. This inference is applied to both partners in an infertile couple even if the immediate cause of the infertility clearly lies with a single partner, since the marriage of two particular people is not thought to be a matter of chance but is guided by *karma*. The longing for children traps people within the cycle of rebirth, so in order to overcome the longing for children, people participate in the spiritual disciplines of meditation, ritual and pilgrimage.

Dharma, righteous conduct or duty, takes a collective rather than an individual view of human identity and places particular emphasis on family formation. For a Hindu woman, the height of *dharma* involves being a good householder, wife

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FIGURE 7.8 A newborn in the hospital surrounded by admiring siblings and cousins

and mother. For a man, fathering and providing for children, especially male children, is the primary duty he owes his wider family.

Concern for the embryo is related to issues such as identity and dignity. Fundamental to these decisions is when new human life is recognised and honoured. Hindu and Buddhist scholars generally hold that the transmigration of consciousness, or incarnation, takes place at conception. From that point, the destruction of the conceptus incurs the *karmic* burden of killing. Deliberate destruction of an embryo is tantamount to murder. From this point of view, sex selection, pre-implantation genetic diagnosis (PGD) and any destructive embryo research cannot be contemplated because it involves the killing of an innocent person. Embryo freezing is also highly questionable, as it increases the risk that those embryos will either not survive the freezing and thawing process or will prove to be superfluous to the couple's needs and be destroyed. IVF itself is often problematic because it involves the deliberate creation of persons beyond the protection and sustenance of the mother's womb and therefore is vulnerable to external hazards.

TABLE 7.1 Similarity between the Abrahamic traditions and Eastern traditions in the concerns and in the range of responses to ART

ART procedure	Religions opposing or questioning procedure
In vitro fertilisation	Christianity (Roman Catholic)
Embryo freezing	Christianity (Roman Catholic)
Donated gametes	Christianity (Roman Catholic), Islam
Treatment involving destruction of embryo – e.g. PGD	Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism

Buddhist bioethics incorporate a range of views. Some appeal to ancient Hindu embryology that regarded incarnation as taking place as late as the seventh month of pregnancy. Others point to contemporary neuro-embryology and maintain that the transmigration of consciousness does not happen all at once but progressively, and that it may not be until after birth that the foetus embodies all five *skandhas* (the components of individuality). Absolutists hold that any act of killing incurs bad *karma* regardless of the circumstances. Buddhist utilitarians hold that killing can be an expression of compassion that has positive *karmic* consequences and Buddhist virtuists are of the opinion that the *karmic* skilfulness of the patient and clinicians depends on their attitudes and motives in procedures that risk or require the killing of any embryo.

While generally seeing ART as a potential ally in the project of family formation and relief of infertility, religions have expressed particular concern for perceived threats to marriage and the sanctity of the human embryo in some of the artificial reproductive processes.

Gamete donation in Australia and the rights of children

In the wider society, gamete donation is becoming increasingly common within ART. In Australia, sperm banks were established in the early 1970s. The first successful pregnancy in Australia from oocyte donation was in 1984.

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In 1992–3 there were 288 pregnancies from donor sperm, which resulted in 221 live births. In the same two-year period, there were 73 treatment cycles with donor oocytes, which resulted in 119 pregnancies and 88 live births. The number of births from donation of oocytes and embryos is steadily increasing, while the number of births from donor sperm is not experiencing the same growth. It is also interesting to note that the number of children available for adoption in Australia has fallen since the 1970s. In 1972, 8542 children were adopted and in 2017–18, 330 adoptions occurred.

In 2011, the Australian Senate released the *Donor Conception Practices in Australia Report*. The concerns of the offspring were a major focus of the report, with 32 recommendations put forward to protect children born through these practices. The report suggests that approximately 600 children per year since the 1970s have been born using donors. The report also recognised the inconsistencies between the states and territories concerning the number of donations, the number of recipients of gametes, the counselling requirements, and legislation that allows access to donor identification. It noted that in Australia there was no controlling organisation that administered ART practices and that under the Australian Constitution, the Commonwealth is unable to pass donor legislation. In 2007, the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) released its *Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Clinical Practices and Research*, but these guidelines are not legally binding. The guidelines request that the following data be recorded by the fertility clinic: name, including any previous names; date of birth; most recent address; family medical history including genetic testing (if available); physical characteristics; and the number of children conceived through a particular gamete donor. The guidelines state that donor-conceived people are 'entitled to know their genetic parents'. This requirement reflects the UN *Convention on the Rights of the Child* where article 7.1 states that children have the right to a name and to know and be cared for by their parents. Article 8.1 acknowledges the right of children to know and preserve their identity, including their nationality, name and family relations.

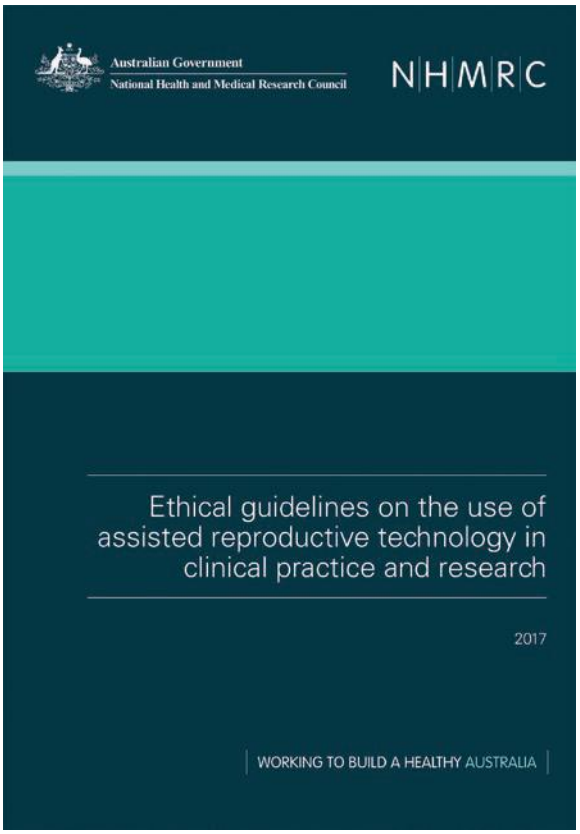


FIGURE 7.9 The NHMRC's *Ethical Guidelines on the Use of Assisted Reproductive Technology in Clinical Practice and Research*

Currently, the creation of a child through gamete donation revolves around the rights and privacy of the would-be parents. In ART clinics, attention is focused on the parents, who are the consumer of the product – that is, the fertility treatments that will provide them with a pregnancy. As well as focusing on the parents, the rights of children who are born as a result of these technologies also need to be considered. An ethical stance which is child-centred rather than solely based on the desires and rights of the parents could enlighten and improve ART practices in Australia.

Other ethical considerations

Equally complex is the issue of availability of infertility treatment for women across the world regardless of their location, economic or social situation. Even within Europe, the European

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FIGURE 7.10 A clinic in Mumbai has rented a room in a ghetto for three surrogate mothers to carry the embryos for the clinic's clients.

Commission has acknowledged that gender-based inequalities are present in healthcare and in long-term care. Because of their cost and complexity, reproductive technologies are not readily available to all women and are available for a limited minority of women in a minority of countries (mainly first world countries) where the women can afford to pay. The personal grief and moral suffering resulting from the inability to have children for women in poor communities in the developing world produces broad social problems, including social stigma, economic hardship, social isolation and even violence. In some societies, motherhood is the only way for women to improve their status within the family and the community, and on a practical level, many families in developing countries depend on children for economic survival.

Over the past decades, some people from Western countries have cultivated a belief that overpopulation, not infertility, is the major problem of developing countries, creating a practical barrier to even considering infertility treatment in resource-poor countries. This approach fails to take into consideration the personal suffering of individuals. Clearly, infertility treatment in resource-poor countries can only be considered when two conditions are fulfilled: a minimal level of political stability and a minimal basic structure of healthcare provision.

The cost of fertility treatments prohibits many women from accessing treatment. In Australia, more than 41 000 IVF cycles occur each year and 4 per cent of all babies born in Australia are products of IVF. The overall IVF success rate is around 25 live births for every 100 cycles. For women under 35 years of age, the percentage is 30–35 live births for every 100 cycles, a rate that decreases to 20 per cent for women aged 38–40. The average cost of an IVF cycle in Australia is approximately $10 000 per cycle.

Palliative care

Palliative care is a form of healthcare provided to people who have a progressing illness that will lead to death. It is an active and supportive care that seeks to maximise quality of life and helps people to live their life as fully and as comfortably as possible while experiencing a life-limiting or terminal illness.

Palliative care identifies and treats symptoms that may be physical, emotional, spiritual or social, and the care provided is in response to the individual needs of the person. Some of the services may include: relief of pain and other symptoms, providing equipment needed to assist care in the home, assistance for families to come together to talk about sensitive issues, links to other services such as home help and financial support, support for people to meet cultural obligations, support of emotional, social and religious concerns, counselling and grief support



FIGURE 7.11 Hospice nurse assisting a patient receiving palliative care

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and referrals to respite care services. Palliative care can be provided in homes, hospitals, hospices or residential aged care facilities. Many people prefer to die at home and making this possible depends on several factors, including: the nature of the illness and the amount of care the person needs; how much support is available from the person's family and community; and whether the person has someone at home who can provide physical care and support for them. One of the crucial foundations of the palliative approach is the understanding that treatment of serious illness is not only about the tension between life and death, but also includes reducing suffering and improving the person's quality of life.

One of the principles of palliative care is to avoid treatment that adds to the amount of suffering without a medical expectation of curing the condition or improving quality of life.



FIGURE 7.12 An elderly Jewish person praying

Judaism

The Jewish tradition emphasises that a person must strive to live until their last breath, that human life should be preserved and that nothing should be done that would shorten life. However, it does not require doctors to make dying last longer than it naturally would.

In Judaism, the commandment 'and you shall not see your neighbour's donkey or ox fallen on the road and ignore it; you shall help to lift it up' is the source of the doctor's obligation to heal his/her patients. If a doctor has it in his/her power to 'return' the patient that which s/he has lost, namely, good health, then the doctor must do so. Maimonides writes that the commandment broadly refers to returning 'his body, his money and his mental health' – the obligation to provide healing includes returning to a patient his/her lost quality of life and returning to him/her the previous form of life that s/he enjoyed – life free from suffering.

Life is considered a gift in Judaism. All of creation, including the creation of humankind, is, according to Genesis, 'very good'. Rabbi Meir teaches that death is also good and something positive. In Judaism, some patients or their families might refuse palliative care because they see it as a prohibited form of 'giving up' on healing. They might feel that it demonstrates a less than perfect faith that G-d will heal.

Jews have an obligation to make the most of their lives in terms of serving G-d, fulfilling the commandments and growing religiously. Palliative care can sometimes be more conducive to fulfilling these tasks than continued treatments that involve difficult side effects. A palliative approach can leave the patient with more strength for doing good deeds, while an aggressive treatment approach might mean that all one's energy is devoted to just getting through the treatment. The decision regarding an aggressive treatment can be left to the patient because s/he is often best placed to know for him/herself which approach will best enable him/her to serve G-d.

Attending to the spiritual needs of the patient is also important. Fear is often one of the overwhelming parts of the experience of seriously ill patients. Judaism puts treatment of a patient's fears on the same level as their medical needs.

Christianity

The Christian faith and the teachings of the New Testament provide some clear messages about the way terminally ill people should be treated. The community has a responsibility to care for people who are dying and for those close to them. Therefore, the best possible

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FIGURE 7.13 A patient receiving palliative care

palliative care should be provided. Palliative care is an essential part of what Christians call the healing ministry because it affirms the sanctity and dignity of human life. People, no matter at what stage of their life, are created in the image and likeness of God, and therefore human life is precious even when marked by age and sickness. Christians believe that palliative care offers an opportunity to manifest God's unfailing love for the terminally ill and the dying.

All the sacred texts and teachings of Christianity emphasise the basic right of people to live a decent and dignified life until the very moment of death. Christians understand human beings as not just physical beings, but also as spiritual beings, and that the whole of the person is to be cared for rather than reduce a human being to a set of systems. Consequently, within Christianity, palliative care ministers include physicians, nurses, social workers, psychologists, chaplains, pastoral workers and spiritual counsellors. All these professionals contribute to the total welfare of the patient being given palliative care with the goal of improving the quality of life of both the patient and their family.

Christians say that patients cannot be dehumanised and reduced to bundles of corrupted and malfunctioning organs. Because Christians believe in life after death, the experience of death is not a frightening one because they believe in the resurrection of Jesus and the resurrection of Christian believers. Patients in palliative care may also be suffering psychologically and sometimes they experience a spiritual vacuum. Within the Catholic Christian tradition, the anointing of the sick is often administered to patients quite early in their illness and can be received regularly prior to death. While modern medications can reduce and even totally remove physical pain, the thought of imminent death can be distressing for some people and addressing the spiritual domain of people's lives provides an important component in their quality of life. For Christians, sacraments make God's presence visible and tangible through the words prayed and the actions of the ritual. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states:

> the special grace of the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick has its effects: the uniting of the sick person to the passion of Christ, for his/her own good and that of the whole Church; the strengthening, peace and courage to endure in a Christian manner the sufferings of illness or old age; the forgiveness of sins, if the sick person was not able to obtain it through the sacrament of Penance; the restoration of health, if it is conducive to the salvation of his/her soul; the preparation for passing over to eternal life. (CCC, no. 1532)



FIGURE 7.14 Requirements for a Catholic priest for the anointing of the sick

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All denominations within Christianity regard it as morally acceptable to refuse extraordinary and aggressive medical means to preserve life. Refusing such treatment is not euthanasia, but a proper acceptance of the human condition in the face of death. Patients, family members and healthcare providers are not morally obligated to pursue every possible avenue of extending human life. Instead, 'it needs to be determined whether the means of available treatment are objectively proportionate to the prospects for improvement' (*Evangelium vitae*, no. 65).

The Catholic Church distinguishes between 'extraordinary' and 'ordinary' care, with ordinary care regarded as being morally obligatory. 'Discontinuing medical procedures that are burdensome, dangerous, extraordinary, or disproportionate to the expected outcome can be legitimate; it is the refusal of "over-zealous" treatment. Here one does not will to cause death; one's inability to impede it is merely accepted' (CCC, no. 2278). In principle, there is an obligation to provide patients with food and water, including medically assisted nutrition and hydration for those who cannot take food orally. This obligation extends to patients in chronic and presumably irreversible conditions such as those in a persistent vegetative state, who can reasonably be expected to live indefinitely if given such care. Medically assisted nutrition and hydration become morally optional when they cannot reasonably be expected to prolong life or when they would be excessively burdensome for the person. The free and informed judgement made by a competent adult patient concerning the use or withdrawal of life-sustaining procedures is respected unless it is for ordinary means.



FIGURE 7.15 Patient in intensive care surrounded by medical equipment

Even when death is imminent, patients, by virtue of their human dignity, should continue to receive ordinary care. Ordinary care includes nursing care, hygiene and palliative care; it involves nutrition and hydration, orally or with artificial assistance, if this helps to support the patient's life without imposing serious burdens on him/her. Allowing the patient to die a natural death with dignity does not amount to euthanasia. It is not permissible to cause death of patients through starvation, dehydration or by foregoing care. When palliating a patient, the person's death is accepted without being willed or deliberately accelerated. Some forms of treatment may have two effects – one good, for example, pain relief; and one evil, for example, shortening the patient's life. In appropriate circumstances, the treatment provided may because of the intended good effect have an unintended bad effect – this is known in Christian ethics as the principle of double effect.

Palliative care recognises the value of the person at the end of life. While most of the examples provided here have been from the Catholic Christian tradition, Protestant Churches, while not having magisterial teaching, affirm the importance of palliative care. The Community of Protestant Churches in Europe, representing 105 Protestant Churches in 30 countries, presented a document called *A Time to Live and a Time to Die*. This document points out the need to improve the social and medical conditions required to care for patients so that a worthwhile life has a peaceful end. The Jewish philosopher Viktor Frankl reminds people that 'human life, under any circumstance, never ceases to have a meaning, and that this infinite meaning of life includes suffering and

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dying, privation and death' (Frankl, 1946). Palliative care restores the whole person, giving the patient a sense of meaning that helps him/her cope with the life-death situation. The sacrament of the anointing of the sick promotes preparation of patients for restoration, reconciliation and a good death. Within Christianity, palliative care is the opportunity for Christians to manifest God's unfailing love through the protection of human life, which has meaning beyond death.

Islam

For Muslims, sickness and suffering are part of life and seen as a spiritual test from Allah. Illness should teach people to understand other sick people better and to help them. Forbearance of an illness leads to expiation of sins in Islam and the Qur'an says that those who claim to believe in Allah will not be left alone after a proclamation of their belief, and also asserts that believers will be put to the test in various ways: 'Be sure that we shall test you with something of fear and hunger, some loss in goods or lives or the fruits of your toil, but give glad tidings to those who patiently persevere' (Qur'an 2:155). Islam teaches that pain and suffering delete sins: 'And bear in patience whatever (ill) may befall you: this, behold, is something to set one's heart upon' (Qur'an 31:17). The Prophet says that 'When the believer is afflicted with pain, even that of a prick of a thorn or more, God forgives his sins, and his wrongdoings are discarded as a tree sheds off its leaves' (Book 75, Hadith no. 2).



FIGURE 7.16 Elderly Muslim person with a young child

At the same time, treatment to reduce pain and suffering is mandated in Islam because Allah opposes human suffering. Muslims are encouraged to seek treatment when they are ill and medical treatment is recommended. Death in Islam is from the command of Allah: 'Every soul shall have a taste of death: in the end to Us shall you be brought back' (Qur'an 29:57). When death is approaching, believers should pray the *Shahadah*.

Many Muslims believe that palliative care does not preserve life but delays death and postpones a person's fate. When death approaches and is unavoidable, Islam directs that the patient be allowed to die without heroic measures of supreme efforts. Islam also forbids acts that expedite death. Withdrawing care is permissible in two circumstances in Islam. The first is when the diagnosis of brain death has been made and the second is when current treatment is no longer curing or palliating suffering, but merely prolonging a natural inevitable death.

Spiritual care is also a vital part of care for the Muslim patient and reading special verses from the Qur'an contributes to spiritual healing. When a Muslim is dying, several things may be comforting to the patient and family: turning the patient on his/her side to face Mecca; letting visitors recite the *Shahadah*; and reading verses of the Qur'an to assist the dying person overcome fear of death.

Hinduism

The sanctity of life is central to Hindu teachings as Hindus believe that all living beings possess a soul which passes through successive cycles of birth and rebirth. According to Hinduism, the *Atman* is immortal and divine. While the physical body perishes following death, the *Atman* does not. The ultimate goal for the Hindu is to attain *moksha* or freedom from all physical limitations. Hinduism believes in reincarnation of the soul and the theory of *karma*. The cycle of birth and death continues until the individual attains *moksha* by his/her continuous good deeds in

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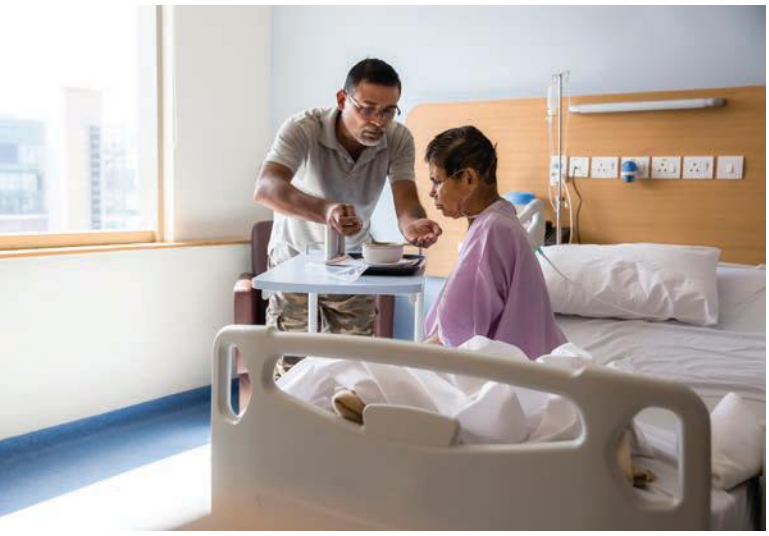


FIGURE 7.17 A carer assisting a patient in hospital

the present life. Physical suffering due to illness is the result of one's *karma*, which brings back results in this life.

Hinduism views the needs of the individual within the context of family, culture and the environment. Consequently, family members, especially elders, will influence decision making related to health matters and some Hindus may wish for their family members to be responsible for making treatment decisions. Because Hinduism encourages the acceptance of pain and suffering as part of *karma*, pain is not seen as a punishment but as a natural consequence of negative behaviour and is often seen as an opportunity to progress spiritually.

Hindus believe that the time of death is determined by one's destiny and accept death and illness as part of life. As a result, treatment is not required to be provided to a person if it merely prolongs the final stages of a terminal illness. Under these circumstances, life support systems can be disconnected, but suicide and euthanasia are forbidden.

Hindu understandings of a good death are informed by three interwoven theological streams. The first stream emphasises the power of ritual action in life and in post-mortem ceremonies designed to ensure eternal life in the world of the ancestors. This stream is sustained by priestly interpretations of the first sections of the Vedas. The second stream draws from the teaching of the Upanishads and puts the salvific emphasis on wisdom. Knowledge of the identity between *Brahman* and *Atman* constitutes liberation and brings an end to *karma* and to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The third stream places the emphasis on love and devotion to god and draws from texts such as the *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Ramayana* commending the love of god who is personalised as Vishnu and his incarnations. This devotion finds expression in temple ritual centred on images, pilgrimage, acts of piety, fervent singing and chanting. This ensures freedom from the bonds of *karma* and *samsara*.

Hindus welcome the administering of medication and other palliative measures that alleviate pain. It is preferable, however, if these measures do not impair significantly the person's awareness and ability to control mental processes. The Hindu patient should be consulted about such decisions and may choose the experience of some pain in favour of retaining clarity of mind.

Buddhism

Buddhist teachings recommend that doctors and healthcare workers should heal with love and compassion first and foremost. From a Buddhist perspective, they are expected to encourage their patients to focus on their minds rather than their physical complaints, even if they are suffering an incurable disease.

For Buddhists, body and mind are not considered to be separate, everything is intertwined and causally linked, and things are constantly changing and regrouping. Therefore, transitoriness and changes are basic features of Buddhist teaching. The human body is similar, changing constantly from birth to death. The body is perceived to be a teacher of impermanence. The confrontation with death goes hand in hand with rejection, refusal, denial and defiance.

The first Noble Truth says that all existence is suffering. This includes birth, sickness, death, separation from what is pleasing, union with what is displeasing, not obtaining what is desired and the five *skandhas* (physical form,

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FIGURE 7.18 Research has proven that touch plays an important role in enhancing an ill or dying person's psychological and physical comfort.

sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness). The second Noble Truth is about the causes of suffering, which include thirst for life, lust, hatred, ignorance and delusion. They bind a person to the lifecycle. The third Noble Truth is that by eliminating the root of suffering, an end to suffering can be achieved. The fourth Noble Truth is about the means to end suffering, which is the Eightfold Path.

From a Thai Buddhist perspective, four qualities describe the concept of a peaceful death: having a peaceful mind, not suffering, the family's acceptance of the person's death, and being with others and not alone. Addressing death and the impermanence of life is important in Buddhist philosophy. Death is considered to be ever present and a natural part of existence. The physical event of dying presents a person with the opportunity of preparing and training the mind. Sometimes at the end of life, the body cannot be controlled, but the mind often remains clear until the end. Buddhists encourage patients to focus their mind.

Peri-mortem rituals vary across the lineages of Buddhism but a person's condition at the time of death is very important. If a person experiences great distress while dying, an unpleasant rebirth could result. Taking medications such as narcotics is generally discouraged because it alters a person's state of mind, which impacts on his/her transition and rebirth. Commonly, Buddhists ask to die at home where they are surrounded by family and friends and sometimes monks recite *sutras* and chant to facilitate a peaceful state of mind.

From a palliative care perspective, religious and spiritual beliefs help patients cope with disease and ease distress at the end of life. Pain control and attentiveness to social, emotional and spiritual needs is a balance that is determined differently by the various religious traditions.

7.2 Medical technologies

Organ farming

Organ donation – that is, the process of transplanting healthy human organs into sick patients – can be a life-saving procedure, but it also touches on profound beliefs involving personal identity, embodiment, the relationship between the individual and the community,



FIGURE 7.19 Richard Herrick is wheeled out by his identical twin brother Ronald as they leave the Peter Bent Brigham Hospital in Boston, United States, after the world's first organ donation operation in 1954. Ronald donated a kidney to his brother.

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FIGURE 7.20 Appeal for the Australian Organ Donor Register

and death. No religions object completely to the principle of organ donation, although there is a divergence of opinion within Islam. Most religions consider the human heartbeat, or lack of it, as a clear sign of life and death. Defining death using a definition of brain-stem death causes concern for some religious groups such as conservative Catholics and Orthodox Jews. The major concern for many people is whether their loved one is really dead, particularly prior to harvesting organs to be donated.

The demand for organs for transplantation has reached a critical level. Improvements in transplantation techniques, new methods of preserving organs, new immunosuppressants and a steady increase in survival rates have led more and more patients to see transplantation as a viable option. However, the supply of organs is insufficient to meet clinical needs.

Organ donation also raises concerns regarding respect for the dead body. For the vast majority of Jews and Muslims, burial must take place within 24 hours of death and for some Muslims the body is returned to the country of origin to be buried with other family members. Hindus cremate their loved ones as soon as possible after death and Buddhists and Christians bury or cremate their loved ones.

Judaism

All branches of Judaism agree that G-d created human beings and sustains people in life, and that each person has value and intrinsic dignity. The Jewish community is concerned about



FIGURE 7.21 Ex-Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres with his organ donor card. Courtesy of the Israeli Government Press Office.

respect for the body, the value of healing and the responsibility to help those in need. The view of the human person as being made in the image and likeness of G-d is the foundation on which Jewish understandings of the human person are built. Central to Jewish ethics is an appreciation for the value of human persons and for life as a blessing and gift from G-d. Flowing from this appreciation is a sense of respect for and responsibility towards people. In part, this responsibility stems from a sense of community. A person's identity is not simply that of an atomistic individual, with few obligations, but rather it is bound up with others as a member of a shared community.

A person has the responsibility to care for him/herself and seek medical treatment needed for recovery. A person should also help others to receive healing. The mandate to help those in need, Deuteronomy 22:2 and Leviticus 19:18, is especially powerful when it is possible to save a life. Saving a life justifies virtually any action that is otherwise prohibited by Judaism. An example from the Talmud concerns Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, a fast day that is the holiest day of the Jewish year. If a physician says that fasting would

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be dangerous, a person should eat. According to Jewish law, there are only three exceptions to the overriding value of saving life: murder, idolatry, and adultery or incest. Otherwise the value of saving life is always decisive.

Judaism teaches that a person has an obligation to help others in need and especially to save life: 'You shall not stand idly by the blood of your neighbour' (Leviticus 19:16). The medieval physician and rabbi, Moses Nahmanides, said: 'Saving life is a great mitzvah. Who approaches it with alacrity is praised, who hesitates is despicable, who questions it is guilty of murder, and certainly so, one who despairs and does not do it'.

Respect for the dead body is also important. There are two reasons for respecting a dead body. The first is a way of respecting the person who has died and reflects the biblical anthropology that a person's body is part of who s/he is. The second reason is that people are G-d's creation and created in G-d's image.

Donating an organ represents one of the clearest cases in which life can be saved, and if a donation is not made, someone will die. Concerns raised by organ donation include the prohibition against dishonouring the dead or disfiguring a dead body. For some Jews, removing parts of a body before burial constitutes mutilation and would be anathema to them. Nevertheless, most religious authorities across the various traditions within Judaism have come to agree that none of these concerns prohibit donation of organs or tissue and most agree that the removal of organs and tissue for transplantation does not dishonour the dead, especially when the donor has given consent before death or when the benefit of transplantation is clear and consent given. Jewish tradition considers saving human life to be among the highest ethical obligations and the Talmud says that saving one life is equivalent to saving an entire world.

Christianity

Christianity begins with an understanding of the human person as being unique, with their own identity, self-consciousness and unrepeatability. The mystery of the human person is a fundamental principle of Christian anthropology.

Christianity has always sought to embody Jesus's concern for the sick. The gospel accounts are replete with acts of healing – lepers are cured, the blind see, mutes speak and people are brought back to life. Jesus's healing mission went further than caring for physical affliction: he sought physical, mental and spiritual healing for people and 'came so that they might have life to the full' (John 10:10).

In a time of ongoing medical discoveries, rapid technological developments and social change, what is new can either be an opportunity for genuine advancement in human culture, or it can lead to policies and actions that are contrary to the true dignity of the human person. In consultation with medical professionals, church leaders review these developments, judge them according to the principles of right reason and revealed truth, and offer authoritative teaching and guidance about the moral and pastoral responsibilities entailed by the Christian faith.

Within the Catholic Christian tradition, while the Church cannot provide a ready answer to every moral dilemma, there are, however, many questions about which the Church provides normative guidance and direction.

People are seen as made in the image and likeness of God and so through science and technology must protect, conserve and perfect nature in harmony with God's purposes. The goal of all engagement between medical science and Christian faith is the common good of all people. It presupposes that science and faith do not contradict each other. Healthcare within the Christian tradition is grounded in a commitment to promote and defend human dignity, demonstrating respect for the sacredness of human life from the moment of conception until death. The biblical mandate to care for the poor prompts adherents to ensure that healthcare delivery is available and adequate for the disadvantaged. Healthcare also contributes to the common good.

All people cared for by Catholic healthcare providers have the right and duty to protect and preserve their bodily and functional integrity. The functional integrity of the person may be sacrificed to maintain the health or life of the

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FIGURE 7.22 Human organs for transplant are transported to a hospital.

person when no other morally permissible means is available. The transplantation of organs from living donors is morally permissible when such a donation will not sacrifice or seriously impair any essential bodily function and the anticipated benefit to the recipient is proportionate to the harm done to the donor. Furthermore, the freedom of the prospective donor must be respected, and economic advantages should not accrue to the donor.

No one should be the subject of medical or genetic experimentation, even if it is therapeutic, unless the person has given free and informed consent. While every person is obliged to use ordinary means to preserve his or her health, no person should be obliged to submit to a healthcare procedure that the person has judged, with a free and informed conscience, not to provide a reasonable hope of benefit without imposing excessive risks and burdens on the patient or excessive expense to the family or community. The wellbeing of the whole person should be taken into account when deciding about therapeutic intervention or use of technology. Therapeutic procedures that are likely to cause harm or undesirable side effects can be justified only by a proportionate benefit to the patient.

The Catholic Church has no specific ethical guidelines regarding organ transplantation but it approves the donation of vital organs after death has been confirmed and with prior informed consent (CCC, no. 2296). The principle of double-effect is applied in some situations where transplants are required. There is the possibility that a proposed course of action has two consequences: one good and the other evil. The principle of double-effect was never intended to be an inflexible rule or mathematical formula, but rather a guide to prudent moral judgement in solving difficult moral dilemmas. The principle of double-effect specified four conditions that must be fulfilled for an action with both a good and an evil effect to be ethically justified:

1. The action, considered by itself and independently of its effects, must not be morally evil. The object of the action must be good or indifferent.
2. The evil effect must not be a means of producing the good effect.
3. The evil effect is sincerely not intended, but merely tolerated.
4. There must be a proportionate reason for performing the action, in spite of the evil consequence.

The principle of double-effect is sometimes applied for organ donation/harvesting. The good effect is that the donor is able to donate his/her kidney for the benefit of another. The evil effect concerns the administration of drugs, which are given to the donor prior to declaring death and may have the possibility of hastening the donor's death. Ultimately, the judgement of proportionality is indispensable to the application of the principle showing that the harm caused is an indirect side effect, rather than a direct and intended effect, and is not sufficient to justify the action. The agent is morally responsible for the foreseen, even though not intended, side effects that are avoidable because the agent could have acted differently. The various effects must therefore be balanced to determine whether the action is justified. Three criteria are proposed for establishing proportionate reason:

1. The means used will not cause more harm than necessary to achieve the value.
2. No less harmful way exists to protect the value.
3. The means used to achieve the value will not undermine it.

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Islam

End of life ethics within Islam is a growing field of research. One of the most significant influences on Muslims deciding whether or not to participate in organ donation is not formal teaching itself but the impact of the local *imam* in Muslim immigrant settings. Because of the limited number of relevant texts in Islamic sacred texts and spiritual writings, contemporary teachings of *imams* and the internet have become the common source of information for adherents.

The starting point for discussion related to organ donation is the sacredness of human life based on Qur'an 5:32. This verse stresses the importance of a human life, saying that saving the life of an individual equals saving the life of the whole of humanity. In addition to the sacredness of life is the central place human beings have in creation and Qur'an 17:70 is often used to support this stance: 'We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation.'

Some *imams* argue against organ donation because they consider it to be deforming a human body. Other *imams* argue that organ transplantation/donation is allowed. Those in favour of organ donation apply three principles in advocating for organ donation: the principle of *darura*, where the necessity breaks the law principle; the principle of *maslaha*, which requires working for the wellbeing of society; and the principle of *al-ithar*, which is altruism. *Darura* allows for exceptions to general rules, while *maslaha* and *al-ithar* are arguments that overrule the individual concern and stress the need to look out for the wellbeing of the whole of society or go against general prohibitions because they can be seen as a form of altruism.



FIGURE 7.23 The former Grand Mufti of Australia, Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, expressed support for organ donation in 2016 stating 'Islam accepts organ donation and it is seen as an act of merit'. This *fatwa* opened the doors for Muslim organ donation in Australia.

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For Sunni Muslims, transplantation of one part of the body to another place in the same body (auto-transplant) does not appear to be too problematic under three conditions: there should be a real necessity for the transplant not for mere beautification; there should not be any risk to the life of the person during any stage of the operation; and there should be an authentic medical report stating that this transplantation is likely to be successful. For allotransplant situations, a distinction is made between organs taken from living donors or dead donors. **Allotransplantation** from a living donor could be allowed under the following conditions. First, that the donor has full mental capacity to agree to the transplant and does not feel pressurised to do so. Second, the person is an adult. Other conditions include the kind of organs that can be used for transplantation: vital organs (heart and liver) cannot be transplanted. There is no problem in transferring non-singular organs that are not crucial for the survival of the donor or in transferring self-renewing organs. Transplantation of sexual organs is forbidden because, from a Muslim perspective, this would be considered adultery as the transplanted organ would continue to produce the donor's genetic code.



FIGURE 7.24 The Australian Red Cross Mobile Blood Donor Centre travels around southern Queensland to take donations of blood from local residents.

The issue of allotransplants from dead donors is more controversial because it involves the concept of brain death. The issue of transplanting animal organs into the human body (**xenotransplantation**) is not commonly discussed, but the animals must be slaughtered and eaten with the permission of Islamic law.

There is also concern within some Muslim communities regarding blood transfusions and whether the donor is Muslim or non-Muslim. In some Muslim communities, organ donation and blood transfusions are seen as an ongoing form of charity (*sadiqa jariyah*) and combined with Qur'an 5:32 and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad could provide Muslims with a firm basis for a positive attitude towards organ donation and blood transfusion.

Other ethical concerns: organ trafficking

Organ trafficking is a reality in many parts of the world with well-documented cases in Indonesia, China, India, South Africa, Brazil as well as other countries. The demand for organ transplants, especially kidney transplants, is very high. Worldwide, over 123 000 men, women and children are on organ donor lists, and an average of 25 people die each day waiting for organ transplants.

The trafficking of people for the removal of organs is a recent phenomenon, only made possible as the result of 1970s pharmaceutical development of immunosuppressant drugs. The ability to perform organ transplants developed the possibility of a market for human organs which could be harvested from people who might be exploited, deceived or coerced into agreeing to relinquish an organ without full and informed consent. Organ trafficking has developed into a lucrative global illicit trade.

allotransplantation the process of transplanting an organ or another part of the body from a genetically non-identical donor of the same species

xenotransplantation the process of transplanting an organ or another part of the body from one species (= set of animals with similar characteristics) to a different species

organ trafficking the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of living or deceased persons or their organs by means of threats or other forms of coercion, to achieve the transfer of control over the potential donor, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs for transplantations

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In Australia approximately 1500 people are on transplant waiting lists at any one time. Australian state and territory laws criminalise the removal of organs for the trade or sale of the organs, where there is no consent for the removal of the organs. Organ trafficking into, out of and within Australia is illegal under the Commonwealth *Criminal Code*. There are, however, individuals and groups who seek to engage in the illegal practice of organ trafficking or 'transplant tourism'.

In 2004 the *Declaration of Istanbul* was created at a Summit on Organ Trafficking and Transplant Tourism. As a consequence of the widespread shortage of organs and the increasing ease of internet communication, organ trafficking and **transplant tourism** have become global problems accounting for an estimated 10 per cent of organ transplants that are performed annually around the world. The Declaration emphasised that organ trafficking and transplant tourism should be prohibited because they violate the principles of equity, justice and respect for human dignity. The Declaration asserts that because **transplant commercialism** targets impoverished and otherwise vulnerable donors, it leads to inequity and injustice and should be prohibited.

transplant tourism the practice of travelling to another country, especially India, China or the Philippines, for organ transplantation

transplant commercialism a policy or practice in which an organ is treated as a commodity, including being bought or sold or used for material gain

While transplant tourism is typically cheaper, transplant tourists may be subject to substandard surgical care, poor organ matching, unhealthy donors, and post-transplant infection, prompting some institutions, especially in the United States, to refuse to treat the tourists who return needing post-op care or even a new organ should their 'tourist' organ fail.

India is well known as an organ-exporting country, where organs from local donors are regularly transplanted to foreigners through sale and purchase. The WHO estimates that over 2000 Indians sell a kidney every year. In China over 12 000 kidney and liver transplants were performed in 2005 and most of the transplant organs were procured from executed prisoners, a practice that is criticised by the international community.

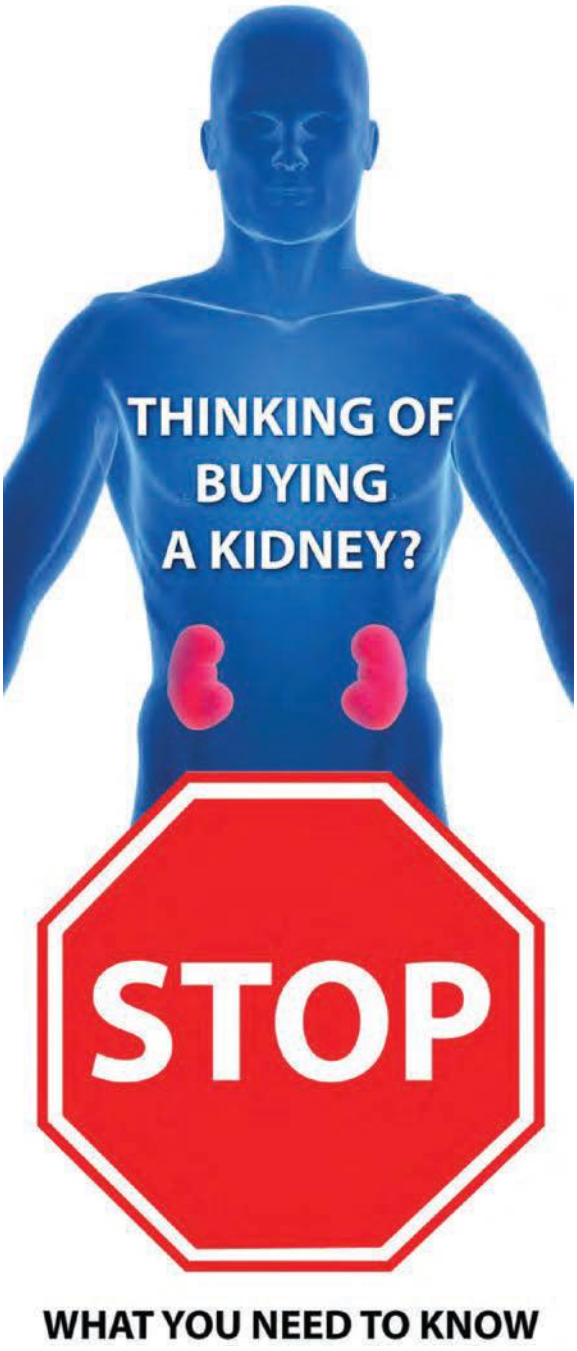


FIGURE 7.25 Image from a brochure on the *Declaration of Istanbul*. In 2008, leading medical experts from around the world met in Istanbul, Turkey to develop strategies to prevent organ trafficking and transplant tourism.

According to the WHO, kidney transplants are carried out in over 91 countries. The access of patients to organ transplantation varies according to national situations and is also dependent on the cost of healthcare, the level of technical capacity and the availability of organs.

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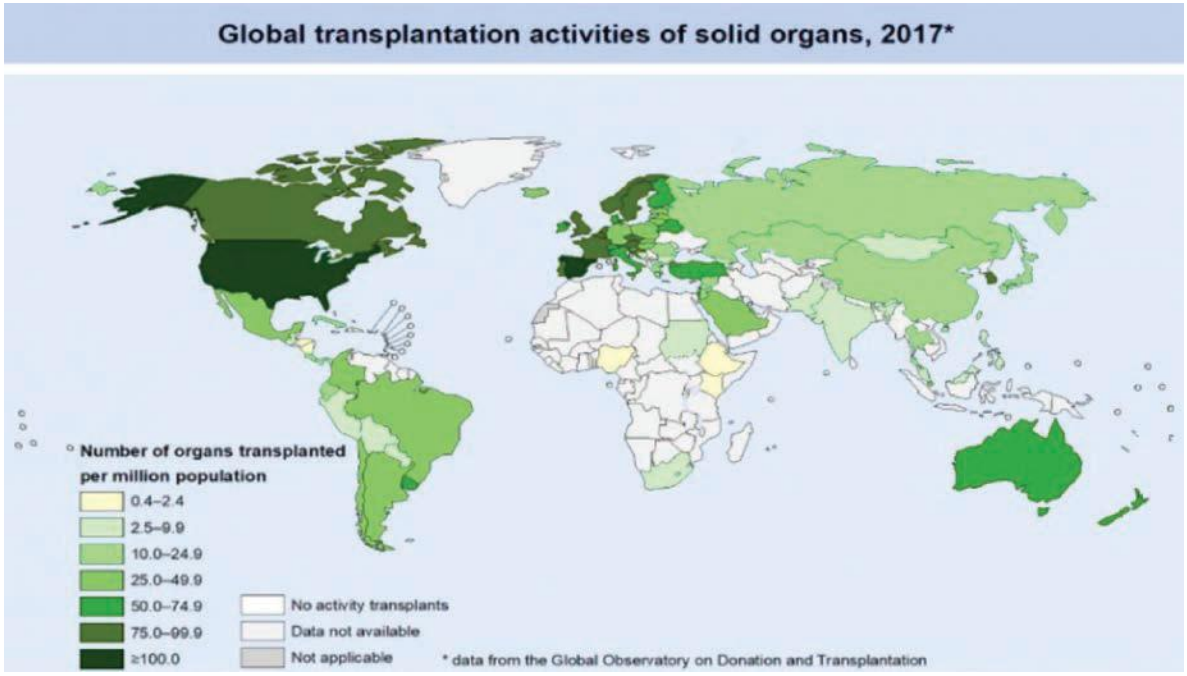


FIGURE 7.26 In 2016, 135 860 solid organ transplants were reported, a 7.2 per cent increase compared with 2015.

The Istanbul Declaration distinguishes transplant tourism from travel for transplantation. Travel for transplantation is the movement of organs, donors, recipients or transplant professionals across jurisdictional borders for transplantation purposes. Travel for transplantation becomes transplant tourism if it involves organ trafficking and/or transplant commercialism; or if the resources (organs, professionals and transplant centre) devoted to providing transplants to patients from outside a county undermine the country's ability to provide transplant services for its own population. Not all travel to a foreign country to undergo transplantation is unethical. Travel for transplantation may be ethical if the following conditions are fulfilled:

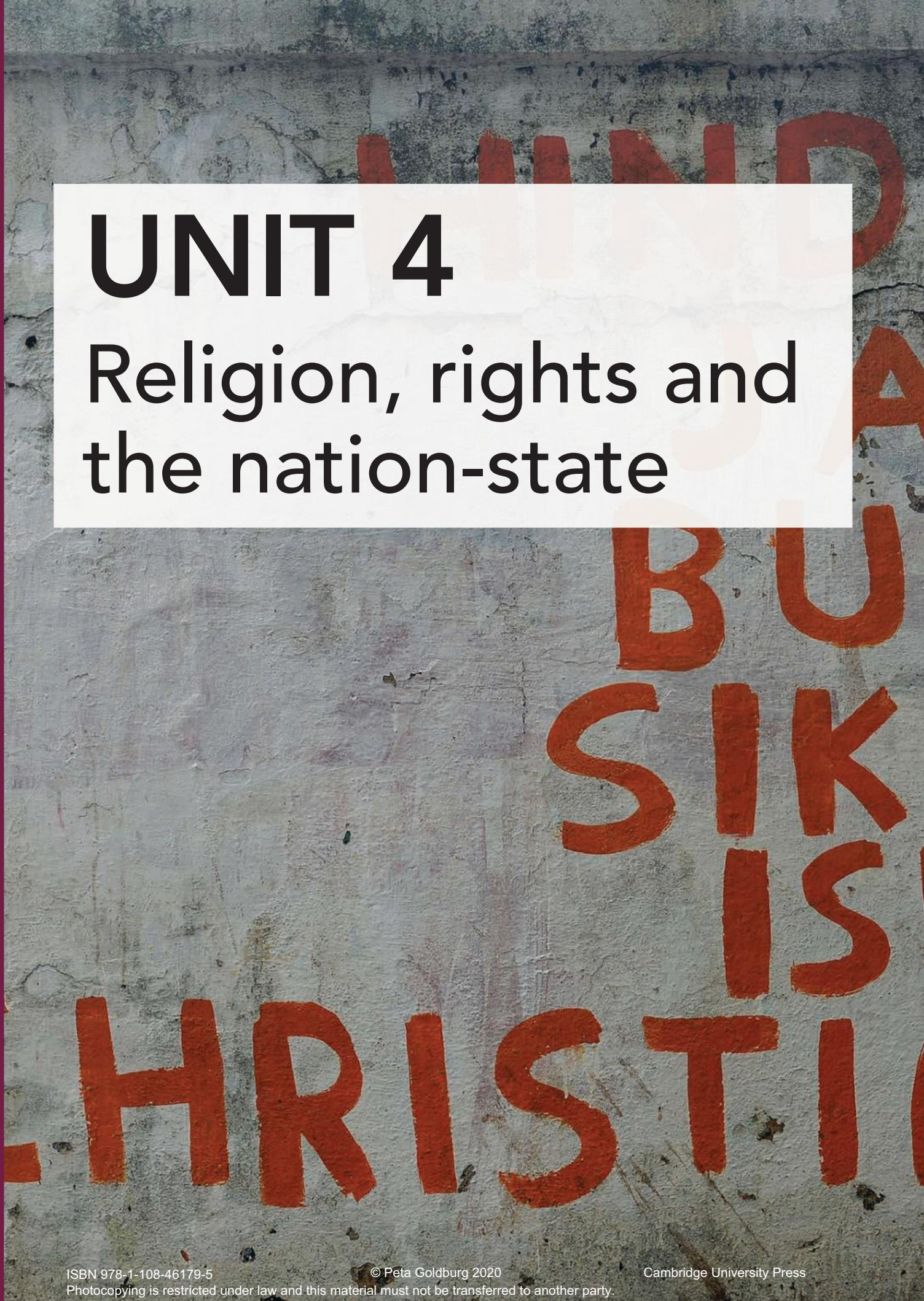
- For live donor transplantation: if the recipient has dual citizenship and wishes to undergo transplantation from a live donor who is a family member in a country of citizenship that is not their residence; or if the donor and recipient are genetically related and wish to undergo transplantation in a country not of their residence.
- For deceased donor transplantation: if official regulated bilateral or multilateral organ-sharing programs exist between or among jurisdictions that are based on reciprocated organ-sharing programs among the jurisdictions.

7.3 Conclusion

Religions articulate their own particular view of how people are and ought to be. They suggest a particular way of viewing the world and what life should be like. Religion assists people to have the conversation regarding ethical issues and, by drawing attention to the rich traditions of belief and morality, religious voices enrich the debate, add complexity and even counterintuitive thinking.

This chapter has focused only on some areas of social ethics listed in the syllabus. The information provided forms a basis on which further investigations should take place prior to analysing the social ethics issue, using one of the models outlined in the previous chapter.

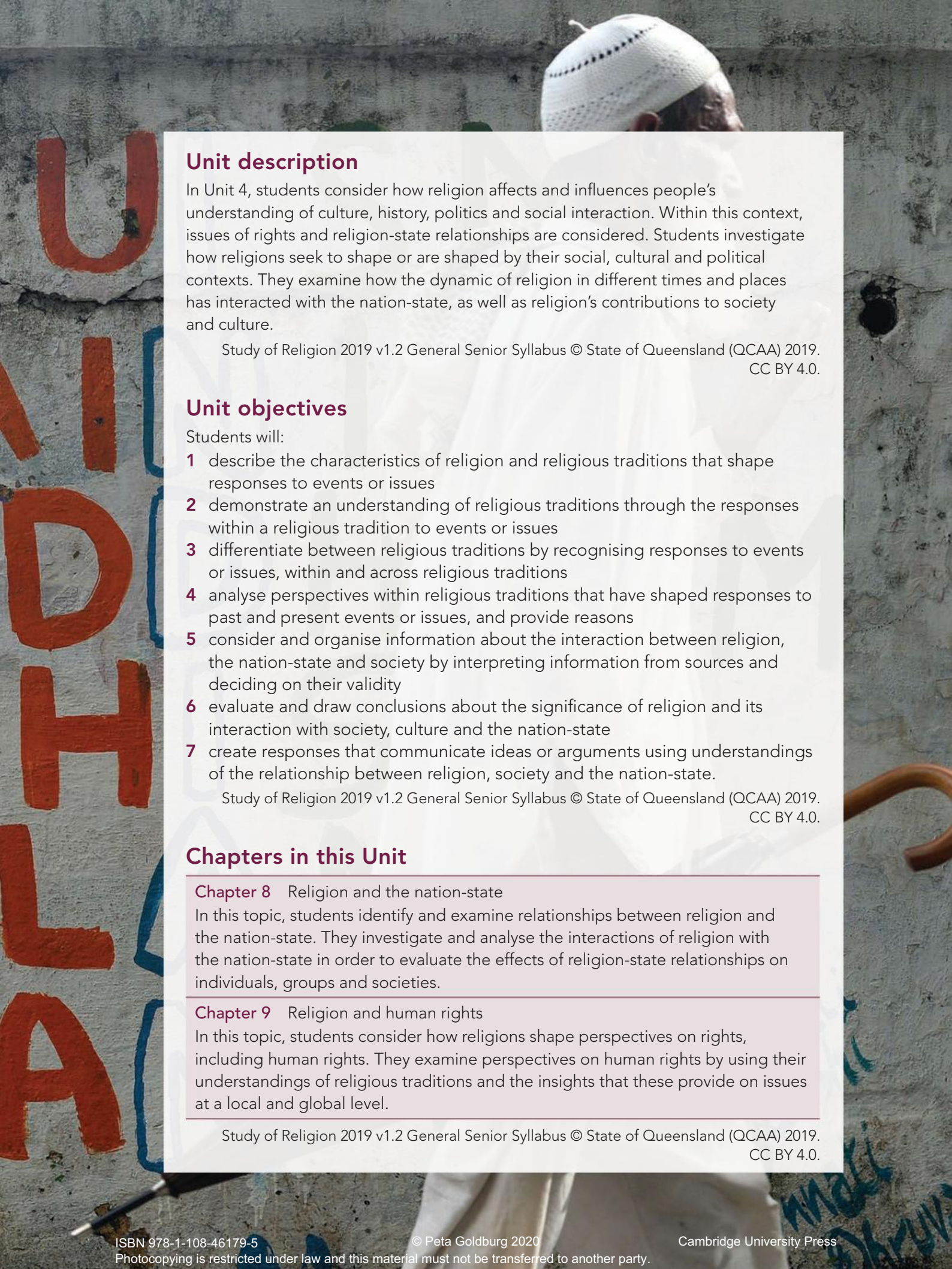
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UNIT 4

Religion, rights and the nation-state

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Unit description

In Unit 4, students consider how religion affects and influences people's understanding of culture, history, politics and social interaction. Within this context, issues of rights and religion-state relationships are considered. Students investigate how religions seek to shape or are shaped by their social, cultural and political contexts. They examine how the dynamic of religion in different times and places has interacted with the nation-state, as well as religion's contributions to society and culture.

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Unit objectives

Students will:

1. describe the characteristics of religion and religious traditions that shape responses to events or issues
2. demonstrate an understanding of religious traditions through the responses within a religious tradition to events or issues
3. differentiate between religious traditions by recognising responses to events or issues, within and across religious traditions
4. analyse perspectives within religious traditions that have shaped responses to past and present events or issues, and provide reasons
5. consider and organise information about the interaction between religion, the nation-state and society by interpreting information from sources and deciding on their validity
6. evaluate and draw conclusions about the significance of religion and its interaction with society, culture and the nation-state
7. create responses that communicate ideas or arguments using understandings of the relationship between religion, society and the nation-state.

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Chapters in this Unit

Chapter 8 Religion and the nation-state

In this topic, students identify and examine relationships between religion and the nation-state. They investigate and analyse the interactions of religion with the nation-state in order to evaluate the effects of religion-state relationships on individuals, groups and societies.

Chapter 9 Religion and human rights

In this topic, students consider how religions shape perspectives on rights, including human rights. They examine perspectives on human rights by using their understandings of religious traditions and the insights that these provide on issues at a local and global level.

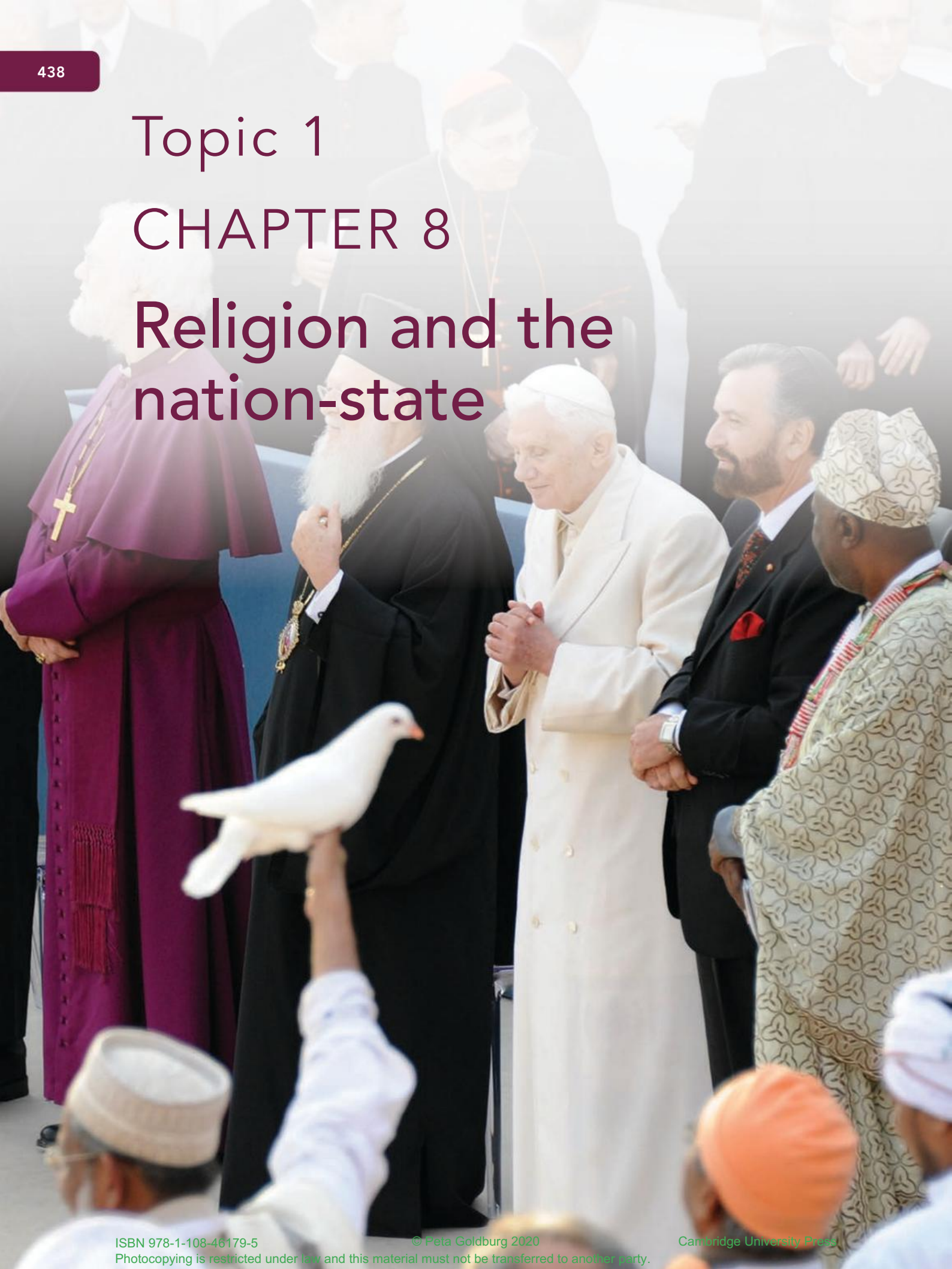
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Topic 1

CHAPTER 8

Religion and the nation-state



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In Topic 1: Religion and the nation-state, students will identify different types of religion-state relationships and explore the variety of relationships that exist between religions and nation-states. Students will analyse the ways religion has interacted with nation-states and evaluate and draw conclusions about relationships between religion and the nation-state and its impact on individuals, groups and society.

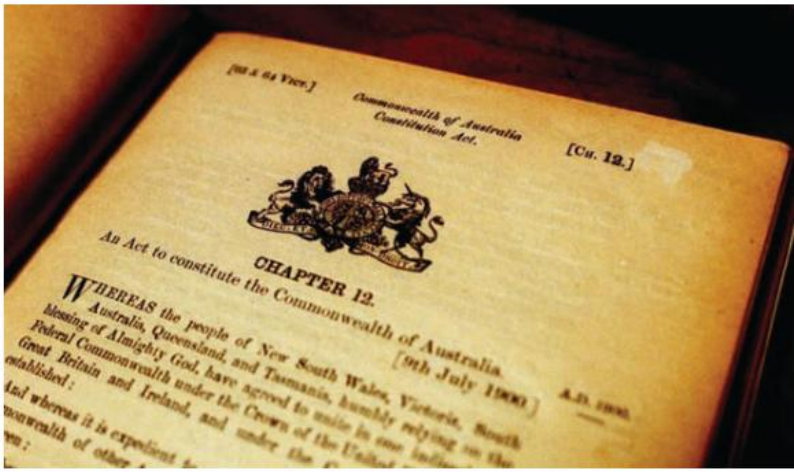
8.1 Religion and the nation-state

Religion has always been influential in society; it is among the basic elements of modern society and has been an intrinsic part of all major civilisations. For many people, religious identification is an integral part of individual, communal and national identity. Several countries have constitutional requirements that acknowledge and protect religious diversity in society. However, constitutions vary according to the different relationships between religion and state. The differences are evident in Muslim-majority countries, religiously diverse societies and societies where there has been historical tension between religious and secular authorities. Contrary to many expert predictions, religion has not disappeared; rather it has evolved and renewed itself in new social and political settings.

The Australian Consitution Act states:

> Whereas the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown ... Be it therefore enacted ... as follows …

Few religions have been left unaffected by the rise of the secular nation-state. Interaction between religions and **nation-states** takes many forms: some governments are aggressive towards


[63 & 64 Vict.] Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act. [Cu. 12.]

An Act to constitute the Commonwealth of Australia.

CHAPTER 12.

[9th July 1900.]

WHEREAS the people of New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Queensland, and Tasmania, humbly relying on the blessing of Almighty God, have agreed to unite in one indissoluble Federal Commonwealth under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and under the Constitution hereby established:

FIGURE 8.1 The Constitution Act of the Commonwealth of Australia

religion, while others have tried to win support from religious organisations to give their role legitimacy. Throughout history, religions have both supported and opposed the state at different times.

In the late nineteenth century, **nationalism** replaced religion-based allegiances as the binding force in society in some countries. However, in the latter half of the twentieth century, religious nationalism again had a significant impact. For example, in 1979 the secular government ruling Iran was overthrown by Islamic nationalists. More recently, we have witnessed the growth and impact of Hindu nationalism in India and ultra-Orthodox Judaism in Israel. The rise of the religious right in the United States and Australia has highlighted religion's role in political affairs, education, welfare and community organisations.

Across the world, there is an enormous variety of perceptions of relationships between religion and state. There are no universal legal standards that directly deal with the issue of religion-state relationships, but some benchmarks can be seen in the working of international human rights bodies. The Human Rights Committee, in its General Comment No. 22 on the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion

nation-state an independent state inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history, religion and language

nationalism a term referring to an ideology, sentiment, form of culture or social movement that focuses on the nation

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(Article 18 of UN *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*), states:

> The fact that religion is recognised as a state religion or that it is established as official or traditional or that its followers comprise the majority of the population, shall not result in any impairment of the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant, including [the fight to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion and the rights of members of ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities], nor in any discrimination against adherents to other religions or non-believers.



The terms 'church' and 'state' are grounded firmly in a Christian understanding of Western culture. The notion of the 'nation-state' emerged from post-Reformation European political experiences and the 1648 Treaty of Westphalia, which enabled rulers to decide which Christian denomination – Protestantism or Catholicism – would be favoured in their region. Since the Enlightenment, Western society has endorsed the principle of the separation of church and state; however, debate over their roles continues today. The debate over church and state is predominantly a Western phenomenon influenced by European culture and history, but the tension goes as far back as Jesus's statement, 'Give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's' (Mark 12:17).

When comparing religion-state relationships in Islamic cultures the issue is clouded. The 'political community' rather than the state, and the 'moral community' rather than the church, need to be considered, as in Islamic countries there is no separation between religion and politics: Allah is the ruler of all aspects of life.

In many parts of the world, governments strive to balance the unique relationship each nation-state has with religion. Nevertheless, there are some general categories that assist in describing the various relationships between religion and the nation-state. Sometimes a particular religion is associated with the national identity of the foundational values of the community – for example, Catholic Christianity in the Republic of Ireland. Public opinion may be expressed through political parties that are motivated by or identify with a particular religion, like the Christian Democrats in Germany (CDU). Some people within the nation-state may be opposed to the protection of rights for religious groups because they consider religion to be a private matter and that the nation-state should maintain neutrality in religious matters.

In this chapter, we examine different types of religion-state relationships; analyse the ways religion has interacted with the nation-state through a variety of examples; and evaluate and draw conclusions about the significance of religion and its interaction with society, culture and the nation-state.

ACTIVITY **8.1**

Forming and finding

1 What understandings of 'religion' and 'state' exist?
2 What states are classified as 'religious states'?
3 How does the state interact with religion?
4 What does the separation of religion and state mean?
5 List ways in which the state and religion work together.
6 What different kinds of relationships exist between religion and state in different parts of the world?
7 What different kinds of relationships have existed between religion and state in different times in history?
8 Which countries have constitutions that provide guidelines for the regulation of religion-state relationships?

Throughout history, many states have existed with a close relationship between religion and civil authorities. In the ancient world, emperor worship combined theocracy with absolute monarchy as evidenced in China, Egypt and Japan.

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In the Greco-Roman world there were civic gods and religion played an integral part in the state. During the Middle Ages, Western Christendom saw the pope as the head of the state. In the Islamic world, the system of law traditionally had a religious basis with the caliph and sultan often combining roles in the one person.

When religion and politics are closely related, religious dissent is often equated with political subversion and religious dissenters were often subject to exile and even death. Several wars were fought to establish religious obedience by force such as the Thirty Years' War (1618–48) between Protestants and Catholics in Europe. Significant advances in religious tolerance were achieved in the Netherlands with the Treaty of Utrecht (1513–15), in England by the Act of Toleration (1689), in France with the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789) and in the United States with the *First Amendment to the Constitution* (1791). The United Nation's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (1966) also contributed to protection of religious freedom.

Today, religious freedom is a recognised principle of liberal democracy. A liberal democratic state cannot forbid peaceful religious expression as long as it does not disturb public order or infringe the rights of others; enforce unity or compliance in matters of religious faith or practice; or punish or discriminate against people on account of their religious beliefs or identity. These conditions broadly accommodate what is required for religious pluralism common in today's world.

Classifications of religion-state relationships

Relationships between nation-states and religious groups are expressed in a variety of ways, including the extent to which state funds support religion or recognise a religious basis to the nation or to public authority; and the extent to which religious laws or institutions control or influence the state. The major approaches, while approximate rather than definitive, have been categorised by Dawood Ahmed in *Religion-State Relations* (2017) as follows:

- laïcité (strong secularism)
- neutrality (weak secularism)
- pluralist accommodation
- recognition
- weak establishment
- strong establishment.

Laïcité (strong secularism)

France is the most obvious example of laïcité, with the Constitution of the Fifth French Republic stating:

> France is an indivisible, secular, democratic and social Republic. It ensures the equality of all citizens before the law, without distinction of origin, race or religion. It respects all beliefs.

The French Constitution declares the state to be secular, and according to this model, the state recognises and protects the right of religious freedom in private life but maintains a defensive attitude towards public displays of religion. Its aim is to enforce a civic republican



FIGURE 8.2 In April 2011, France became the first European country to impose a ban on full-face veils in public areas. Veils, scarves and other headwear that do not cover the face are unaffected by this law.

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ethic where there is neither Catholic nor Protestant, Muslim nor Jew, believer nor sceptic. French secularism prohibits explicit displays of religious affiliation in public spaces such as wearing religious insignia in public schools and banning headscarves in public buildings. All public ceremonies, including the inauguration of the president, are entirely non-religious in character. While there is no prohibition on religion, France rejects religious privileges, communal religious identities and considers religion a matter of private practice.

ACTIVITY **8.2**

Finding and analysing

Search online for the article by Elizabeth Winkler (8 January 2016) entitled 'Is it Time for France to Abandon Laïcité?' in the *New Republic*. Read the article and answer the following questions.

1. How does the author describe laïcité? Quote from the document to support your claim.
2. What are some of the disadvantages of laïcité cited in the article?
3. What arguments does the author put forward regarding respecting difference?

Neutrality (weak secularism)

Expressions of neutrality mean that the state remains impartial in matters of religion, neither endorsing nor criticising it. State authorities cannot prohibit, limit, support or promote any religious belief or practice and the state may not discriminate against or in favour of any religion. An example of neutrality is the United States, where the US Constitution states:

> No religious test shall ever be required as a qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States … Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. (Article VI, section 3)



FIGURE 8.3 US Senator Ted Cruz is sworn in by Vice President Mike Pence during the swearing-in re-enactments for recently elected senators in Washington, DC in 2019

Unlike laïcité, religion-state neutrality does not restrict the expression of religion at public events. In the United States, the inauguration of the president includes a prayer, and public officials usually take their oath of office on a book of religious scripture. While this is not required, it is more a matter of social custom and personal choice.

Pluralist accommodation

Some nation-states, such as Germany, India and South Africa, aim to protect the religious neutrality of the state by promoting the equal and non-discriminatory treatment of religions.



FIGURE 8.4 Leaders from a range of religions officiated at the 1994 inauguration of South African President Nelson Mandela.

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The state tries to accommodate religions and sometimes cooperates with religious institutions in their social functions.

The Law of the Federal Republic of Germany is an example of pluralist accommodation:

> Religious bodies forming corporations with public rights are entitled to levy taxes on the basis of the civil tax rolls […] Religious bodies shall have the right of entry for religious purposes into the army, hospitals, prisons, or other public institutions, so far as is necessary for the arrangement of public worship or the exercise of pastoral offices, but every form of compulsion must be avoided.

Within a pluralist model, religious bodies are protected and play a public role in society. The state does not favour or discriminate against any religion but recognises that religions have an important role to play in society and the religious institutions often partner with civil authorities to achieve common goals.

Recognition

In the recognition model, a state may give formal or symbolic recognition to a particular religion. The Constitution of Ireland until the 1970s recognised the special position of the Catholic Church as the 'guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens'. It still 'acknowledges that the homage of public worship is due to Almighty God, [holds] His name in reverence, and respects and honours religion' (Constitution of Ireland, Article 44). Prior to the Fifth Amendment being made in 1972, the Constitution used to say: 'the State recognizes the special position of the Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church as the guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of the citizens.'

Recognition differs from laïcité and passive secularism in associating the state and sometimes the nation itself with a particular religious identity or a set of religious identities. It differs from pluralist accommodation in that the recognised religion/s does not get any special privileges.



FIGURE 8.5 Irish Government Buildings in Dublin are coloured green on the eve of St Patrick's Day

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Religious establishment

Religious establishment is when the state maintains a formal connection with a specified religion which is 'established' – supported, funded or patronised by the state. Religion can be adopted as an official state religion; religious law can become a source of law or it may be a source of inspiration. Sometimes it can be required that heads of state must have certain qualifications and that the government could be made accountable to religious norms or religious education is mandated in all schools. An example of religious establishment is Norway where the constitution states: 'The Norwegian Church, an Evangelical-Lutheran Church, remains Norway's Church and is supported as such by the state' (Constitution of Norway, amendment of 2012).

Weak establishment

Weak religious establishment may occur when state-supported religion is self-funded and self-governed and has little or no influence on public affairs. While the constitution of Argentina proclaims that the government supports Catholicism (Article 2), the president is no longer required to be a Catholic and priests are excluded from public office. This means that there is a separation of religion and state authorities.

Strong establishment

In strong religious establishment situations some senior positions may be reserved for members of the established religion. Strong religious establishments are generally of two forms: those where religious hierarchy has superiority over civil power; and those where religious hierarchy is under the control and patronage of the civil power. If civil authorities can appoint religious leaders, then religious establishment is likely to be state-dominated, whereas if religious authorities have autonomy over their own appointments, then religious establishment is likely to be of the religion-dominant type.

proselytise the practice of converting or attempting to convert people to another religion



FIGURE 8.6 Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (left) makes a speech during Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's meeting in Tehran, Iran on 3 April 2019

The Iranian Constitution is an example of a religion-dominant establishment that gives religious authorities a significant role in the state. The Greek Constitution says that the 'prevailing religion in Greece is that of the Eastern Orthodox Church of Christ' and it also prohibits **proselytising** and bans unauthorised translations of the Bible.

The various relationships between religion and states are quite nuanced – for instance, India, which is a secular state, allows religious minorities to conduct their affairs in accordance with their religion in private legal matters. India even subsidises the pilgrimage to Mecca for some Muslims.

In countries where there is one dominant religious group and membership of that religion has historically been tied to national identity, it is possible to give established status to one religion. For instance, in Malta, a country where more

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than 90 per cent of the population is Catholic and where Catholicism has long been associated with national identity, the constitution states that Catholicism is the established religion, that Catholic Religious Education is compulsory in state schools and that the Catholic Church has the 'right and duty to teach which principles are right and which are wrong'.

ACTIVITY 8.3

Forming and analysing

1 Prepare an infographic summarising the information related to different classifications of religion-state relationships.
2 Complete a PMI (plus, minus, interesting) chart for each of the following statements:
   - Religion is central to national identity.
   - Religion is a personal choice.
   - Religion and the state should be intimately linked.
   - Religion and the state should never be linked.

8.2 Religious states

A state is a '**religious state**' if it explicitly declares itself religious, thereby reserving a determinative role for religion within the overall function of the state. The precise role that religion plays in religious states varies from state to state. Contemporary religious states include: Christian states, Islamic states, monotheist states (unspecified) and a Jewish state. There are many states that identify strongly with a religion in a way that does not amount to them being religious states.

Religious states are where religion controls the state or the government. There is a subtle distinction between religious states and **active state religions**. In active state religions, the state supports religion while maintaining a level of independence from it.

ACTIVITY 8.4

Forming, finding and analysing

1 List three countries, one each in Asia, Europe and the Middle East.
2 Classify them as religious states or as active state religions.
3 Provide evidence to support your claims.

Christian states

religious states states or countries in which religion controls the government

active state religions the state supports a religion while maintaining a level of independence from it

The history of Christian states goes back to the Imperium Christianum, with the conversion in 312 CE of Emperor Constantine I (c. 288–337). On the eve of the battle of Milvian Bridge in 312 Constantine saw in a dream a cross bearing the inscription '*in hoc signo vinces*', meaning 'in this sign you will conquer'. Following his victory, he gave favoured status to Christianity. While Constantine's Edict of Milan 313 did not immediately establish Christianity as the state religion, it did address the broader issue of religious tolerance. The edict formed the basis for the transition from three centuries of persecution of Christians to state protection of Christians.

FIGURE 8.7 Emperor Constantine I



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Today there are relatively few states that explicitly name themselves as a Christian state. The most obvious is the Roman Catholic state of the Vatican City. Established by the Lateran Pacts of 1929, the Vatican State approximates the ideal typical conception of a theocratic Roman Catholic state. The Pope is ex-officio leader of the Roman Catholic Church as well as Head of State and Head of Government of the State of the Vatican City. Almost all acts and policies of the Vatican City revolve around the interests of the Holy See and virtually all inhabitants, except for the Pontifical Swiss Guard, are members of the clergy or religious orders.

Another contemporary Christian state is Zambia. The Preamble of the Constitution of Zambia establishes Zambia as a Christian state, saying: 'We the people of Zambia … declare the Republic a Christian nation.' The government of Zambia maintains relations with the Zambian Council of Churches and requires that Christianity is part of the public school curriculum and taught in public schools.

Some Pacific states identify strongly with Christianity. The Constitution of Samoa proclaims:

> In the Holy name of God, the almighty, the ever loving whereas sovereignty over the Universe belongs to the Omnipresent God alone, and the authority to be exercised by the people of Samoa within the limits prescribed by His commandments is a sacred heritage; whereas the Leaders of Samoa have declared that Samoa should be an Independent State based on Christian principles and Samoan custom and tradition …

The phrase 'a state based on Christian principles' expresses the notion of a religious state, but the Preamble also makes it clear that Samoa is not exclusively founded upon Christian principles but also on Samoan custom and tradition.

FIGURE 8.8 Swiss Guard at the Vatican



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Tuvalu is an independent state based on Christian principles. The Constitution of Tuvalu states: 'the people of Tuvalu, acknowledging God as the Almighty and Everlasting Lord and giver of all good things, humbly place themselves under His good providence and seek His blessing upon themselves and their lives.' The Principles of the Constitution continue:

> The right of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, to full free and happy life and to moral, spiritual, personal and material welfare, is affirmed as one given to them by God … the people of Tuvalu recognize and affirm with gratitude to God, that stability of Tuvaluan society and the happiness and welfare of the people of Tuvalu, both present and future, depend very largely on the maintenance of Tuvaluan values, culture and tradition …

Similar to Tuvalu, the Constitution of Vanuatu proclaims:

> We the people of Vanuatu, proud of our struggle for freedom, determined to safeguard the achievements of this struggle, cherishing our ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity, mindful at the same time of our common destiny, hereby proclaim the establishment of the united and free Republic of Vanuatu founded on traditional Melanesian values, faith in God and Christian principles, and for this purpose give ourselves this Constitution.

While Christianity is supported in all three states, Christianity is not decreed as a state religion.

Islamic states

The very first Islamic state was founded in Medina (then Yathrib) by Muhammad. Medina, after the *Hijra* of 622, is the place where the religion, the laws and the empire of Islam first began. From there, the first Islamic state spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula (present-day Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Oman and the United Arab Emirates). The initial relations between the different tribes, including Jews and pagans, were organised as per the Medina Charter. Extracts from the Charter are presented below:

> **1** This is a document from Muhammad the Prophet (may Allah bless him and grant him peace), governing relations between the Believers i.e. Muslims of Quraysh and Yathrib and those who followed them and worked hard with them. They form one nation – Ummah.
> **2** The Quraysh Mohajireen will continue to pay blood money, according to their present custom.
> **3** In case of war with anybody they will redeem their prisoners with kindness and justice common among Believers. (Not according to pre-Islamic nations where the rich and the poor were treated differently …)
> **5** In case of war with anybody all parties other than Muslims will redeem their prisoners with kindness and justice according to practice among Believers and not in accordance with pre-Islamic notions …
> **12** A Believer will not kill another Believer, for the sake of an un-Believer. (I.e. even though the un-Believer is his close relative.)
> **13** No Believer will help an un-Believer against a Believer.
> **14** Protection (when given) in the Name of Allah will be common. The weakest among Believers may give protection (In the Name of Allah) and it will be binding on all Believers.
> **15** Believers are all friends to each other to the exclusion of all others.
> **16** Those Jews who follow the Believers will be helped and will be treated with equality. (Social, legal and economic equality is promised to all loyal citizens of the State.)
> **17** No Jew will be wronged for being a Jew.
>
> Source: 'Full Text of the Madina Charter,' Constitution Society.

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FIGURE 8.9 Kemal Atatürk founded the secular Republic of Turkey.

Muhammad was succeeded by the first four Caliphates and under his successors, in three decades, Islam and the Islamic empire spread towards the West – to North Africa and northern Egypt, north as far as the Black Sea and east into present-day Iran. In the subsequent centuries, Islam spread to Central Asia, Western Asia and Southern Europe.

Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), founder of the secular Republic of Turkey and its first President, abolished the Caliphate in 1924. After 13 centuries of Islamic imperialism there are identifiable traces of legal-political systems of contemporary states in this region. Muhammad's *umma* (Muslim community) and his modus operandi and religio-political structure remain the prototype for Islamic state organisation and nation building. However, many important differences are identified between the original Islamic state and contemporary Islamic states.

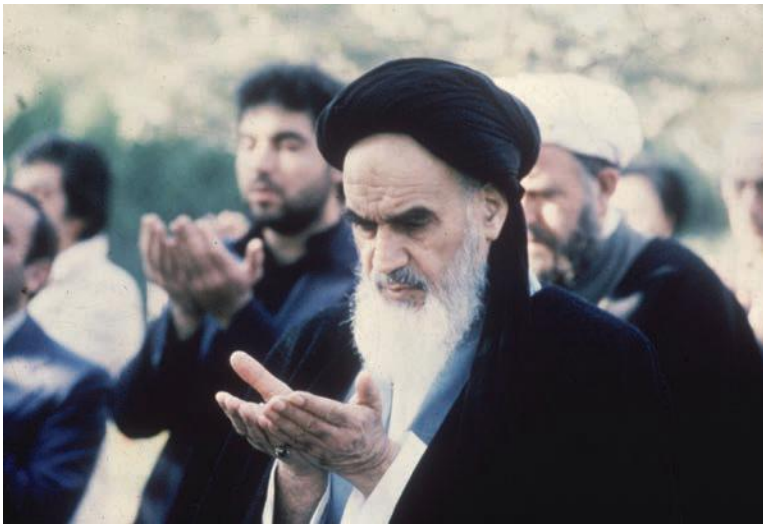


FIGURE 8.10 After the shah and his family fled from Iran, the Ayatollah Khomeini, a Shi'ite leader in exile in Iraq, returned to Tehran and established a religious state. In November 1979 the new constitution named Khomeini as Iran's political and religious leader for life.

Contemporary Islamic states include: Afghanistan, Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Iran, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. If the *khalifa* (successor or leader of a Caliphate) is considered as a necessary aspect of an Islamic state, then no Islamic state exists today. However, all contemporary Islamic states strongly identify with Islam and in these states the constitution is informed by Islamic principles and some follow Muhammad's example more closely than others.

States that reflect the Islamic nature of the state in their official constitutional name of the state are the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Mauritania and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and the constitutions of these states contain additional references to the Islamic nature of the state. The Islamic nature of the state is also evident in the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Yemen. A state can also be deemed Islamic if it is constituted as a sultanate.

The Constitution of Iran was established in 1979 with amendments through to 1989.

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The Preamble begins:

> In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate, the Merciful
>
> We sent aforetime Our apostles with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance that men may uphold justice … (57:25) The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran sets forth the cultural, social, political, and economic institutions of Iranian society on the basis of Islamic principles and norms, which represent the earnest aspiration of the Islamic Ummah. This basic aspiration was made explicit by the very nature of the great Islamic Revolution of Iran, as well as the course of the Muslim people's struggle, from its beginning until victory, as reflected in the decisive and forceful slogans raised by all segments of the populations. Now, at the threshold of this great victory, our nation, with all its being, seeks its fulfilment.

The form of government is described as:

> In the view of Islam, government does not derive from the interests of a class, nor does it serve the domination of an individual or a group. It represents rather the crystallization of the political ideal of a people who bear a common faith and common outlook, taking an organized form in order to initiate the process of intellectual and ideological evolution towards the final goal, i.e., movement towards Allah. Our nation, in the course of its revolutionary developments, has cleansed itself of the dust and impurities that accumulated during the *taghuti* past and purged itself of foreign ideological influences, returning to authentic intellectual standpoints and world-view of Islam. It now intends to establish an ideal and model society on the basis of Islamic norms. The mission of the Constitution is to realize the ideological objectives of the movement and to create conditions conducive to the development of man in accordance with the noble and universal values of Islam.

Article 2 of the Constitution states:

> The Islamic Republic is a system based on belief in:
>
> 1. the One God (as stated in the phrase 'There is no god except Allah'), His exclusive sovereignty and the right to legislate, and the necessity of submission to His commands;
> 2. Divine revelation and its fundamental role in setting forth the laws;
> 3. the return to God in the Hereafter, and the constructive role of this belief in the course of man's ascent towards God;
> 4. the justice of God in creation and legislation;
> 5. continuous leadership (imamah) and perpetual guidance, and its fundamental role in ensuring the uninterrupted process of the revolution of Islam;
> 6. the exalted dignity and value of man, and his [sic] freedom coupled with responsibility before God; in which equity, justice, political, economic, social, and cultural independence, and national solidarity are secured by recourse to:
>   a. continuous ijtihad of the fuqaha' possessing necessary qualifications, exercised on the basis of the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Ma'sumun, upon all of whom be peace;
>   b. sciences and arts and the most advanced results of human experience, together with the effort to advance them further;
>   c. negation of all forms of oppression, both the infliction of and the submission to it, and of dominance, both its imposition and its acceptance.



Brunei Darussalam and Oman are unique Islamic states as they are the last remaining well-defined sultanates. The holder of the title, sultan, is bestowed with spiritual as well as political authority. The Sultan of Brunei is ex-officio Head of Religion and Head of State.

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FIGURE 8.11 The Sultan of Brunei, Hassanal Bolkiah

There are also regional sultanates. Malaysia, for instance, is a federal state, not a declared religious state, but nine out of the 13 states that compose the Federation of Malaysia are either sultanates (Johor, Kedah, Kelantan, Pahang, Perak, Selangor and Terengganu) or styled after a sultanate (Negeri Sembilan and Perlis). The sultan is head of religion and of the state and vested with worldly executive power over their state. Malacca, Penang, Sabah and Sarawak do not have a sultan exercising authority over religious affairs. In these states, the king is head of the religion of Islam.

The Maldives, while not a genuine Islamic state, nevertheless identifies with Islam. The second article of the Constitution of the Republic of Maldives states that the Maldives shall be 'based on the principles of Islam'. In this respect it parallels the Christian states of Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu, which are founded on Christian principles rather than established as Christian states. With the Maldives, however, Islam is declared the official religion of the state and there are many constitutional references to Islam and *sharia* law.

Article 10 states:

> **a** The religion of the State of the Maldives is Islam. Islam shall be the one of the basis of all the laws of the Maldives
> **b** No law contrary to any tenet of Islam shall be enacted in the Maldives

Article 19 states:

> A citizen is free to engage in any conduct or activity that is not expressly prohibited by Islamic Shari'ah or by law. No control or restraint may be exercised against any person unless it is expressly authorised by law.

Article 27 on freedom of expression states:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought and the freedom to communicate opinions and expression in a manner that is not contrary to any tenet of Islam.

Since the twentieth century, Islamic states have been characterised by the application of *sharia* law. Unlike caliph-led government, modern Islamic states sometimes incorporate modern political institutions such as elections, parliamentary rule and judicial review.

Jewish state

Israel was established as a Jewish state in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The Declaration elaborates on the 'natural right of the Jewish people to be master of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State'. Israel does not have a written constitution because of the perceived differences between a secular constitution and the *halakhah* (Jewish religious law).

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The Declaration of Independence states:

ERETZ-ISRAEL (the Land of Israel) was the birthplace of the Jewish people. Here their spiritual, religious and political identity was shaped. Here they first attained to statehood, created cultural values of national and universal significance and gave to the world the eternal Book of Books. After being forcibly exiled from their land, the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion and never ceased to pray and hope for their return to it and for the restoration in it of their political freedom … In the year 5657 (1897), at the summons of the spiritual father of the Jewish State, Theodore Herzl, the First Zionist Congress convened and proclaimed the right of the Jewish people to national rebirth in its own country. This right was recognized in the Balfour Declaration of the 2nd November, 1917, and re-affirmed in the Mandate of the League of Nations which, in particular, gave international sanction to the historic connection between the Jewish people and Eretz-Israel and to the right of the Jewish people to rebuild its National Home. The catastrophe which recently befell the Jewish people – the massacre of millions of Jews in Europe – was another clear demonstration of the urgency of solving the problem of its homelessness by re-establishing in Eretz-Israel the Jewish State, which would open the gates of the homeland wide to every Jew and confer upon the Jewish people the status of a fully privileged member of the community of nations. Survivors of the Nazi holocaust in Europe, as well as Jews from other parts of the world, continued to migrate to Eretz-Israel, undaunted by difficulties, restrictions and dangers, and never ceased to assert their right to a life of dignity, freedom and honest toil in their national homeland … On the 29th November, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Jewish State in Eretz-Israel; the General Assembly required the inhabitants of Eretz-Israel to take such steps as were necessary on their part for the implementation of that resolution. This recognition by the United Nations of the right of the Jewish people to establish their State is irrevocable. This right is the natural right of the Jewish people to be masters of their own fate, like all other nations, in their own sovereign State.

ACCORDINGLY WE, MEMBERS OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, REPRESENTATIVES OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND OF THE ZIONIST MOVEMENT, ARE HERE ASSEMBLED ON THE DAY OF THE TERMINATION OF THE BRITISH MANDATE OVER ERETZ-ISRAEL AND, BY VIRTUE OF OUR NATURAL AND HISTORIC RIGHT AND ON THE STRENGTH OF THE RESOLUTION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY, HEREBY DECLARE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A JEWISH STATE IN ERETZ-ISRAEL, TO BE KNOWN AS THE STATE OF ISRAEL.

… THE STATE OF ISRAEL will be open for Jewish immigration and for the Ingathering of the Exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

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FIGURE 8.12 A sculpture that incorporates both the Magen David (Star of David) and the menorah, in the garden at the Knesset, the Parliament of Israel, in Jerusalem

The adjective 'Jewish' refers to both the people adhering to the Jewish faith as well as to Jews as a people. The existence of religious courts and the state-controlled or sanctioned application of religious laws are typical of religious states. There are rabbinic courts, which have exclusive jurisdiction over marriage and divorce, but there are also *sharia* courts, Christian courts and Druze courts operating in Israel.

Some laws are reflective of a religious state – for example, the Law of Return defines a 'Jew' as 'a person who was born of a Jewish mother or has become converted to Judaism and who is not a member of another religion'. Here a religious basis for nationality is established from which it is impossible to disentangle religion from politics or use to ground citizenship on purely secular criteria.

The Jewish character of the state is also reflected in its national days of rest and festivals as well as state education – the national flag, the state emblem and the national anthem are replete with Jewish symbols.

Hindu state

Hinduism dates back to the civilisation living in the Indus Valley three millennia before the common era. The history of religion-state relationships on the Indian subcontinent in the post-Maurya period (322–298 BCE) reflects the promotion of Hinduism under various rulers up to the time of the Maratha Hindu Empire (1674–1818).

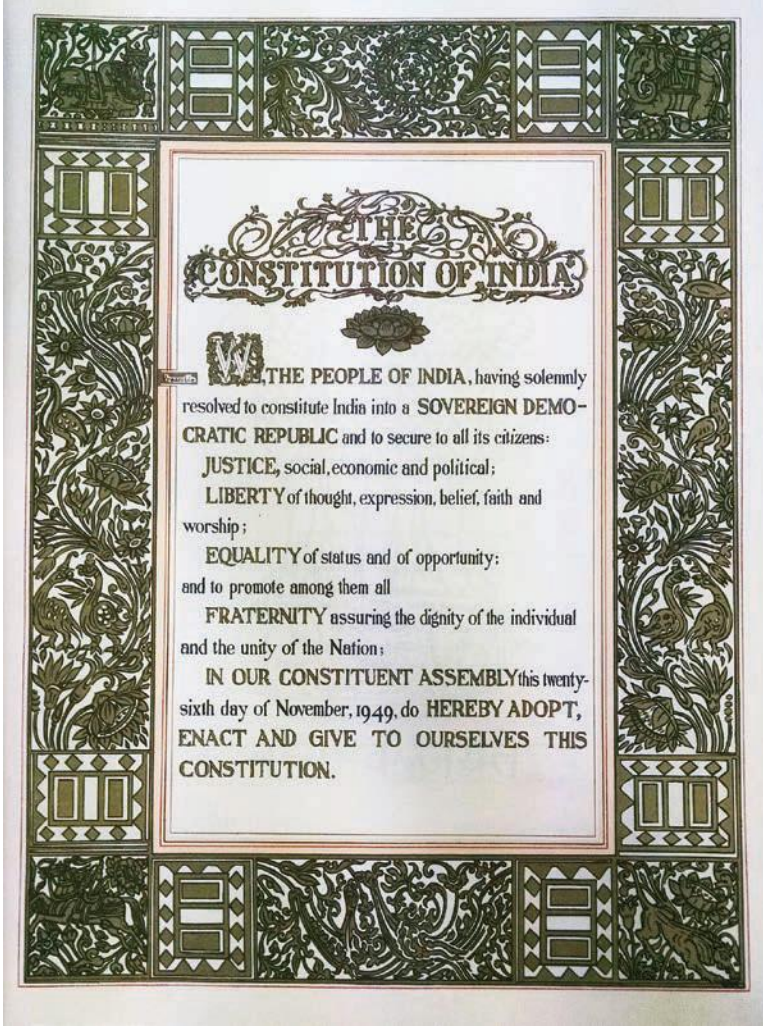


FIGURE 8.13 Preamble to India's constitution

Contemporary India, particularly since its independence in 1947, has been organised along secular lines, largely due to the influence of Mohandas Gandhi (1869–1948) and Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964).

Buddhism as a state religion

At present there are no 'Buddhist states', only states that have established Buddhism as a state-protected religion. Presently, Cambodia and Bhutan have proclaimed Buddhism as the state religion. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Cambodia declares that Buddhism 'shall be the religion of the state'. While the overwhelming majority of Cambodians adhere to the Hinayana lineage of Buddhism, Buddhism in its entirety is officially the religion of the state. In Bhutan, the Drukpa Kargyupa lineage of Buddhism was traditionally the official religion.

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However, in 2008 the Constitution was modified and now Buddhism is referred to as the 'spiritual heritage of Bhutan'.

Monotheist states

The Republic of Indonesia is considered a religious monotheistic state, as Article 29 of the Constitution states:

1 The State shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God.
2 The State guarantees all persons the freedom of worship, each according to his/her own religion or belief.

The constitution, however, does not establish a specific religion as the state religion. While Indonesia has a predominantly Sunni Muslim population, there are also significant numbers of Shi'ite Muslim, Catholic and Protestant communities present. Article 29 states:

The Indonesian constitution has its origin in the political philosophy of Pancasila (Sanskrit for 'five principles') and the constitution references the first of the five political principles (Ketuhanan yang Maha Esa, the belief) in the one and only God.

State religions

A religion can be established as the official religion of a state but the exact legal and pragmatic ramifications of establishing a religion as a state religion vary from state to state. Islam and Buddhism are established as state religions, as are various denominations of Christianity.

Roman Catholicism is the established state religion of Costa Rica, Malta, Monaco and the State of the Vatican City. Roman Catholicism was firmly established in Latin America, through European expansion and exploration, by the late fifteenth century and many constitutions in this region give special place to the Roman Catholic Church. In Costa Rica, the Roman Catholic tradition is granted the status of state religion. Until 2009, the Constitution of Bolivia stated: 'The State recognizes and upholds the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion … Relations with the Catholic Church shall be governed by the concordats and agreements between the Bolivian State and the Holy See'. In 2009, Bolivia separated religion and state affairs. The Dominican Republic did not establish a state religion but the Concordat between the Dominican Republic and the Holy See endorses Roman Catholicism as the official religion and grants the Church important privileges.

State churches and national churches

The idea of a 'state church' is exclusively within Christianity. Currently, all state churches are national endorsements of a specific Christian denomination rather than a general non-affiliated 'Christian Church'. A state church is predominantly a European phenomenon and linked to the history of European royalty. Today, the monarch's connections to the established church are more symbolic than in the past. Constitutionally recognised 'state churches' and 'national churches' include: the Roman Catholic Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church, the (Anglican) Church of England and the (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland.

Roman Catholicism is predominantly in Catholic states, especially in Liechtenstein, which explicitly proclaims the Roman Catholic Church as 'the State Church and as such shall enjoy the full protection of the State'. In Norway, Denmark, Finland and Iceland the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the established state church (Sweden is the only Nordic country without a state church). Finland's endorsement of two churches is unique, especially since one of the two churches is a minority church. Finland's constitution endorses the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland with over 80 per cent of the population adhering to this tradition and the Orthodox Church of Finland with just over 1 per cent of Finns belonging to the church. This

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is partly explained by Finland being part of the Russian empire until the end of World War I. The two churches are national churches: the state collects church income taxes on their behalf and grants financial privileges, including the wages of military and prison chaplains being paid by the state. The Republic of Iceland identifies the Evangelical Lutheran Church as the state church and ministers of religion are considered civil servants and paid by the state.

Armenia was the first state to establish Christianity as the state religion at the beginning of the fourth century after the conversion of King Tiridates III. While the current constitution formally separates the church from the state, it grants the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church a special status as 'national church':

> The republic of Armenia recognizes the exclusive historical mission of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church as a national church, in the spiritual life, development of the national culture and preservation of the national identity of the people of Armenia … The relations of the Republic of Armenia and the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church may be regulated by the law.

While the Armenian Church may freely disseminate its faith throughout the state, proselytism is forbidden by other religions.

The United Kingdom does not have a state religion. Each of the constituent countries has defined its own approach. England and Scotland have an established and national church, the (Anglican) Church of England and (Presbyterian) Church of Scotland, respectively; in Northern Ireland and Wales, the (Anglican) Church of Ireland and the (Anglican) Church in Wales have been disestablished since 1871 and 1920, respectively.

The role that religion plays in the nation-state varies from state to state. In the next section we will investigate the role that religion plays through some specific examples of relationships between religion and the nation-state.



FIGURE 8.14 Pope Francis welcomes Queen Elizabeth II for a private audience in Vatican City during a one-day visit to Rome in 2014

8.3 Israel

In the early history of Judaism, the exodus from Egypt was a formative event, not only for the religion, but also for the Israeli/Jewish nation. The covenants, a formal promise or contract, between G-d and Abraham and G-d and the Israelites at Mt Sinai have deep-rooted significance for Jewish people today.

Prior to the founding of modern democracies, there was no country in the world where Jews were permitted the status of citizens. Jews might sometimes have had right of residence, but that right could be withdrawn at any time. Jews were often excluded from certain professions and segregated into special living areas or ghettos.

The democratic movement began in Europe with the French Revolution in 1789 but it did little for Jews, who were still discriminated against and subjected to anti-Semitic behaviour. Many Jews left Europe for the United States where, under the Federal Constitution, they were granted full citizenship. The Zionist movement emerged from the failures of nineteenth-century politics and attempted

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FIGURE 8.15 East Jerusalem

to fulfil the movement's promise that Jews would eventually have a homeland. The basic principles of Zionism were for Jews to return to the land of Israel, settle the land and control the economy, create a Jewish majority in the country, and revive the Hebrew language as the national tongue of the people. The State of Israel was finally proclaimed in 1948. Israel is a state that was founded by Jews with the declared intention of creating a homeland for Jews dispersed across the world.

In 2019, Israel's population was 9.078 million, more than a tenfold increase from 1948. Jews comprise about 75 per cent of the population or 6.668 million people. Arab Israelis number about 1.8 million; and Christians, Arab Christians and Druze make up about 4.8 per cent of the population (426 000). Of Israeli Jews, 44 per cent identify as secular, 11 per cent identify as religious, and 9 per cent identify as ultra-Orthodox. Israel does not have a formal separation between religion and the state but instead has a hybrid system of limited intervention by government in religious affairs.

Judaism in Israel is an active state religion where the government supports the state religion, rather than controls it. Israel has no constitution; instead it has a series of basic laws. The country's declaration of independence describes Israel as a Jewish state but provides for equality regardless of religion. These laws guarantee access to and prohibit the desecration of holy sites. Under the Right of Return, any Jew who wishes to return to Israel gains automatic citizenship.

Some aspects of Jewish law are enforced on the population under the 'status quo' agreement that existed from the founding of the State of Israel, such as Sabbath and Jewish religious holidays when businesses must close; buses and the national airline do not operate but the airport remains open; and the streets in some ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighbourhoods are closed to vehicles. Marriage is possible through a religious tribunal but not divorce, thereby making interreligious marriage impossible. Cemeteries are managed by religious communities, so for people who do not belong to a community or who do not want to be buried without a religious ceremony, there is a problem. The *kashrut*, or Jewish dietary norms, are observed by public institutions such as hospitals, the army and schools except for non-Jewish towns. Israel's Chief Rabbinate maintains exclusive authority over whether food can be classified as kosher and consequently some hotels and restaurants have been refused *kashrut* certificates by the Rabbinate for being open on the Sabbath. Many of the recognised religions in Israel receive government funding for their operations and the government funds religious and secular schools, including religious schools for Muslims. Jewish religious schools receive substantial funding and most secular Jewish schools include religious education in the curriculum.

The law provides for freedom of worship. The Israeli Government, however, limits Muslims making the Hajj (the Muslim pilgrimage to Mecca) to those over 35 years of age and allows only one trip per person in order to meet quotas set by Saudi Arabia. The government also limits the number of Muslims able to pray on the Temple Mount due to violent incidents in the past and it has also banned two extremist Jewish political parties on the grounds that they are racist.

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The modern State of Israel is a multi-religious society and the relationship between religion and state has followed that of the Ottoman and British periods of history. The state respects freedom of religion and religious interests are safeguarded; however, points of tension exist around the Rabbinate having a monopoly over personal and family law.

ACTIVITY 8.5

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 What is the Right of Return and how is it applied?
2 What might be some difficulties regarding the Right of Return?
3 What is Zionism? How did it develop? Why are some Jews opposed to Zionism?
4 Given that Zionism is a secular movement and many Israeli Jews are ultra-Orthodox, how does the State of Israel balance religion-state relationships?

8.4 Muslim states

Politics is important to Muslims because they believe their salvation requires not only redemption from sin but also the building of a just society to facilitate their surrender to God. Islam is considered a faith system without separation between religious beliefs and political practices.

More recently, Muslim societies have struggled with secularisation. In Iran, the Pahlavi Shahs enforced secularism: they replaced *sharia* law with a civil system and forbade Muslims from going on the Hajj. They directed soldiers to remove women's veils with bayonets and rip them to pieces. In 1935, people staged a peaceful protest against the dress laws but soldiers fired on the unarmed crowd, leaving hundreds injured.

In general, it is difficult for Muslims to set up a modern nation-state as a democracy because 'government of the people, by the people and for the people' is virtually impossible when religious leaders have the ultimate authority.

Saudi Arabia attempted to create an alternative and in 1932 built a government based on Wahhabi ideals. There was no constitution, because the governing system was based on a literal reading of the Qur'an. Gambling and alcohol were forbidden, women were forced to be fully covered and traditional punishments such as mutilating thieves were made part of the legal system. Today, most Muslim states do not consider that the Qur'an requires such practices, and the political group, the Muslim Brotherhood, has condemned the Saudi Government's use of Islamic punishments.

8.5 Active state religions

Pakistan

Pakistan's constitution includes numerous references to Islam and also protects the religious freedom of religious minorities. The founder of the state, Muhammad Ali Jinnah (1876–1948), worked for a secular ideal but Abul Ala Mawdudi (1903–1979) promoted a strict application of *sharia* law and eventually in 1956 the constitution defined Pakistan as an Islamic Republic. The constitution declares Islam the official religion, but Article 22 prohibits educational institutions from requiring students to take religious education or participate in religious ceremonies in any religion other than their own. The constitution also requires all laws to be consistent with Islam and the government-supported Islamic Ideology Council advises whether the laws conform. The constitution exempts non-Muslims from Islamic personal laws.

The government of General Muhammad Ayub Khan (1958–69) promoted secularism, including a secular legal system and restrictions on *madrasah* (Islamic) education. Muhammad

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Ayub Khan wanted to make Islam a civil religion under state control but, ultimately, this led to his downfall. After the coup of 1977, an Islamic regime was enforced. Traditional Muslim dress was reintroduced and Islamic penal law was restored. Islam became a required subject in all schools and, while non-Muslims are exempt from classes on Islam, no alternative is provided. Foreign books are censored for anti-Islam content but religious literature of minority religions is not substantially restricted. In 2002 the government banned all mosque construction without prior government approval and demanded the registration of all existing mosques with the authorities. At the same time, the government required all *madrasahs* to register and prohibited them from accepting foreign aid. Non-Muslims are at a disadvantage in all court proceedings as their testimony is given less weight. In Pakistan today there remains a tension between secular approaches to the economy and an Islamic way of life.

Indonesia

The Indonesian constitution says that 'the state shall be based upon the belief in the One and Only God' (Article 29), but it also protects religious freedom. A majority of Indonesians want the country to become an Islamic state. In the Aceh province, special authority is given for *sharia* law, except where it contradicts national laws. The Ministry of Religion recognises Islam, Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, Hinduism and Buddhism. While practising other religions is legal, the groups must register as social organisations, and atheism is illegal. Religious groups must obtain permits for public events including concerts. Religious speech is permitted as long as people do not proselytise and people are forbidden to disseminate religious materials to members of other faiths. Indonesia experiences severe interreligious violence, which has included incidents where Muslims have forced Christians to convert to Islam as well as violence by Christians against Muslims.

ACTIVITY 8.6

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Read the article, 'In religious Aceh, Islamic law is taking hold' from the *International Herald Tribune* on the Activity Worksheet and answer the following questions.

1. Which sentence in this article indicates that Indonesia is a secular state?
2. Why has the province of Aceh incorporated *sharia* law into its legal code?
3. List three crimes punishable by *sharia* law in Aceh.
4. How does the application of *sharia* law differ between Indonesia and Saudi Arabia?
5. Explain the benefits and problems associated with Aceh's introduction of *sharia* law.
6. Is religious freedom threatened by the introduction of *sharia* law in Aceh? Why, or why not?

Laos and Cambodia

During the 1960s and 1970s, Buddhism in Laos and Cambodia became a vehicle through which political groups advanced their agenda. This happened as the nation-state became more common in Buddhist societies and welfare and education, once the province of religion, shifted to other authorities.

Buddhism has responded differently in various nation-states. For example, in Laos from the 1950s onwards, the government infiltrated the *Sangha* (the Buddhist community) by issuing monks with identity cards and spreading anti-imperialist slogans that appealed to monks from rural and poor areas. Thailand employed a similar approach in the 1960s, when the government trained monks to become anti-communist. Both tactics resulted in divisions between rural and urban monks. During the 1970s in Laos, the

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government made a concerted effort to link Buddhism with socialism and monks were used as propaganda pawns.

In Cambodia, between 1975 and 1979, the Khmer Rouge, a socialist movement under Pol Pot, attacked Buddhism as unpatriotic and killed many of its followers. Monks who survived the mass killings were sent for 're-education'. The general population was discouraged from donating to monasteries. More than 60 000 monks were killed by Pol Pot and Buddhism was virtually made extinct in Cambodia. In recent times, Buddhist monks have joined in the reconstruction of the country.

Myanmar (Burma)

Myanmar, one of the five Theravada Buddhist majority countries in the world, has witnessed serious interreligious conflicts since 2011. The conflicts between the Buddhist majority and Muslim minority communities have affected freedom of religion and religion is identified as a potent source of power, identity and contentious politics. The current Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (2008) does not define religion, but the 1961 Constitution defines '*batha*' (religion/faith) as Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Animism.

The majority of the population – approximately 87 per cent – are Buddhist, with Christians at 6 per cent, Muslims at 4 per cent and Hindus and Animists at 0.5 per cent. The percentage of Muslims is lower than reality because the 2014 census did not count Rohingya Muslims who are about one million people. While the constitution states that: 'Every citizen is equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess and practise religion subject to public order, morality or health and to the other provisions of this Constitution' it also prohibits discrimination based on religion: 'The Union shall not discriminate any citizen … based on race, birth, religion, official position, status, culture, sex and wealth.' The constitution recognises the 'special position of Buddhism as the faith professed by the great majority of the citizens'.

Buddhists have not faced any obstacles in privately or publicly practising their religion. While the state does not directly fund public Buddhist events, it has provided moral and administrative support, as was evidenced under the military during the 1990s and 2000s. However, various human rights reports have reported violations of religious freedoms and cases of hundreds of Buddhist monks who

FIGURE 8.16 Bangladesh Coast Guard pose with rescued Rohingya refugees in Teknaf on 31 May 2019



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participated in public protests against the military regime in 1988, the 1990s and the 2000s being disrobed, tortured, imprisoned and forced to leave the country.

History and context

Buddhism in Burma remained relatively intact even after the demise of the kingship in 1853. The first Burmese Prime Minister promoted a form of Buddhist nationalism, and in 1954 the country hosted the Sixth Great Buddhist Council and introduced Buddhist moral policies. Today, however, Buddhism is strictly controlled by the state.

In 1962, a military leader staged a coup and took over the country, forming a new government. It then removed anti-government monks from positions of influence and introduced national registration for all monks. In 1988, half of the monks participated in anti-government demonstrations and actively supported the National League for Democracy (NLD) led by Aung San Suu Kyi. Between 1990 and 1992, the military arrested and de-robed hundreds of monks and many fled to Thailand. Since 1990, only nine officially recognised Buddhist monastic orders have been allowed to operate.

In 1992, Mandalay monks protested – striking and overturning their food bowls when soldiers approached. This symbolic action prevented the soldiers gaining spiritual merit. Since that time, the military government has tried to win the *Sangha* over by offering donations to monasteries. Nevertheless, the *Sangha* remain defiant and continue to promote democracy.

The Myanmar Government also opposes the spread of Christianity and bans public meetings of Christian groups. Soldiers have beaten Christian clergy who refuse to stop preaching to non-Christians, and since 2002 the government has refused groups permission to repair their churches.

The government is particularly hostile to the Chin Christian minority, and since 1990 has supported forced conversions of Chins to Buddhism to 'Burmanise' them.

State/Buddhist–Muslim relations

During the 1990s to 2000s Muslims constituted 4.3 per cent (if Rohingya are included) and 2.3 per cent if Rohingya are excluded. Anti-Muslim sentiment originated in colonial Burma in the early twentieth century due to migration from India that made it difficult for native Burmese to get work. A second wave of anti-Muslim discourse began in the late 1980s with a new wave of Rohingya refugee exodus to Bangladesh. The anti-Muslim discourse reached a climax when the Ministry of Immigration and Population (MIP) was established in 1995 with its official motto of 'A Landslide does not Submerge a Race, but Another Race Does'.

FIGURE 8.17 Monks from Myanmar residing in Sri Lanka engage in a peaceful demonstration to show solidarity with the Buddhist community in Myanmar at Colombo, Sri Lanka in September 2017



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Between 1980 and 2000, a series of anti-Muslim violence occurred sparked by rumours and actual events of Muslim men's sexual abuse of Buddhist women, intermarriage with Buddhist women and their conversion to Islam, and allegedly forced marriages. The state's direct involvement or complicity is well documented. The popular press labelled Rohingya as *'ko win Bengali'*, which means 'Bengali(s) who have illegally entered'. Despite the evidence that the Rohingya did not illegally enter Myanmar, the country's media continue to use the phrase.

In the aftermath of two rounds of inter-communal violence in Rakhine State in 2012, 140 000 Muslims were internally displaced. About 128 420 Muslims remained in internally displaced person (IDP) camps in December 2017 and they have been subject to political, social and economic discrimination. Almost all of the Rohingya have no permanent citizenship or identity documentation.

State–Christian relations

Christianisation of several racial and ethnic minorities in Myanmar began in the nineteenth and twentieth century during the British colonial period. The Kachin, Kayah, Kayin and Chin practised animism and folk or traditional belief systems before being converted to Christianity. Unlike Muslims, Christians are politically and socially accepted as native, or *taingyintha*, of Myanmar because most Christians are ethnically Kachin, Kayah, Kayin or Chin.

State–Christian relationships in the 1900s and 2000s were problematic against the backdrop of the militarisation of Myanmar. The most discriminated and persecuted Christians were ethnic Chins. Several religious symbols and sacred sites were destroyed, but outright repression of the Christian faith by the state was not reported.

State–Hindu relations

Compared with Indian Muslims, Indian Hindus are generally accepted in the majority Buddhist culture and the eclectic nature of Hinduism seems to assist the process. Nevertheless, since the 1930s Hindus have become Burmanised and many Hindus now claim that they are Buddhist.

Contemporary context

The unprecedented communal violence in Rakhine State and other parts of Myanmar in 2012, 2013 and 2014 pitted Rakhine and non-Rakhine Buddhists against Rohingya and non-Rohingya Muslims. A new five-monk association known as Tha-tha-na Palaka Gaavacaka Sangha Apwe (Defenders of Sasana and Religious Teachers Network) formed the 969 movement in October 2012. The symbolic '969 Buy Buddhist' campaign emerged using a colourful 969 emblem representing the nine qualities of the Buddha, six qualities of the *Dharma* and nine qualities of the *Sangha*. Along with the 969 campaign, the monk-led Ma Ba Tha movement reached its climax in 2015 and its predominantly anti-Islam/Muslim discourse became widespread.

Written and spoken pronouncements by 969 and Ma Ba Tha gave four reasons to justify their anti-Muslim views. First, Muslims only buy from Muslim-owned shops and they lure Buddhist women to convert to Islam; second, they contend that Muslim men are polygamous; third, they argue that Buddhist women suffer from violations of their human rights because they have to convert to the religions of their non-Buddhist husbands in order to legalise the marriage and enjoy their rights; and, fourth, they claim that four race-protection bills, especially the interfaith marriage bill, are in urgent need as a defensive response to the laws of Hinduism, Islam and Christianity, which do not approve marriage between Buddhist women and non-Buddhist men. In the months before the 2015 election, these monk-led movements launched a widespread discourse against Aung San Suu Kyi and her party, accusing them of being pro-Muslim. The NLD government came to power in 2016, but the government has proven ineffective in dealing with violations of religious freedom of minority Christians and Muslims. Muslims and Christians are unable to repair or build places of worship.

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Thailand

In Thailand, there is no official religion, but almost everyone practises Theravada Buddhism. After 1957, the *Sangha* became part of the government's political program, when monks were trained to promote programs related to national goals. Monks who spoke out against the programs were labelled as communists and expelled from the *Sangha*. As a result, public opinion of the *Sangha* diminished. During the 1970s, reformist Buddhist groups emerged under the leadership of the monk Buddhadasa, who promoted 'this worldly' Buddhism.

Religious education is mandatory in Thai public schools and is generally offered in Buddhism and Islam. Officially, Muslim civil servants are not allowed to wear head coverings, but in practice head covering is not uncommon.

ACTIVITY 8.7

Analysing and evaluating

Read the extract from the abstract of Nick Cheeseman's article 'School, state and *Sangha* in Burma' on the Activity Worksheet and complete the activities below.

1. Devise a diagram to show the sequence of events which has shaped religion-state relationships (particularly in the area of education) in Myanmar/Burma.
2. How does control over schooling relate to state legitimacy in this case?

China

China's policy is to control religion, limit it to registered activities and places of worship, and prevent it from becoming a separate source of authority or political opposition. Currently, there are five recognised religions in the country – Catholicism, Protestantism, Buddhism, Islam and Taoism – and all are closely supervised by government agencies.



FIGURE 8.18 Chinese Catholics wait to receive communion from a priest during a service for the Assumption of the Virgin Mary at a government-sanctioned church in August 2014 in Beijing, China

The government has banned all 'cults' including Falun Gong and the Zhong Gong movements. Since 1995, over 100 000 Falun Gong members have been detained or placed in 're-education' camps. In some areas where there have been ethnic uprisings, the building of mosques has been restricted, but in other regions the Chinese Government permits religious expression and even subsidises the building of mosques and participation in the Hajj. The government supports the rebuilding of religious buildings destroyed during China's Cultural Revolution but will destroy unregistered places of worship.

Tibet

The Chinese communist invasion of Tibet in the early 1950s sought to repress Buddhism, which caused massive social upheaval. After the aborted uprising in 1959, 100 000 refugees fled Tibet for India and surrounding countries. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, religious expressions and Tibetan cultural tradition were suppressed and the entire *Sangha* and its socioeconomic support structure was disbanded. The textual heritage of Tibetan Buddhism was destroyed and many monks and nuns were forced to disrobe.

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It was not until the early 1980s, when the Cultural Revolution in Tibet ended, that some limited religious activities were permitted in the hope that by integrating Tibet into the People's Republic of China (PRC), religious belief and practice would lessen without the need for forcible repression. The Chinese Government considers Buddhism in Tibet to be a challenge to the state and regulates Tibet's religious institutions. Religious activities are generally allowed unless they are considered to be a vehicle for political dissent. The government limits the number of monks in monasteries and oversees their daily operation. All monks and nuns must undergo patriotic education and a number of them have been detained for actions against the state. The Chinese Government has also taken control of the process for recognising reincarnated lamas; however, lamas living outside Tibet rarely recognise the government's choice.

Buddhism became the symbol of Tibetan ethnic aspirations and since the 1960s Tibetan exiles have worked for the reconstruction of Tibetan monasteries. The monasteries are not a return to the past but are now organised very differently from pre-modern Tibet. Lamas must not only attract patronage from Himalayan Buddhists but also from wider international sources, including Western Buddhists. The government-in-exile has brought some cohesion to Tibetan religious traditions but it has had little effect on monastic organisation. At the local level some people have worked to keep alive the traditional connections between monasteries and communities.

In the international context in which Tibetan Buddhism now operates, lamas cater for people who receive modern education and work in modern economies such as India or the PRC. Great effort has gone into the recovery of the scriptural and written liturgies of monastic life while at the same time allowing for choice in practice that is appropriate for people in a variety of situations.



FIGURE 8.19 In 1959, the 14th Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Gelug school of Tibetan Buddhism, fled to India to seek political asylum from an invasion of his country by the People's Republic of China. He has not been able to return.

In Tibet, Buddhist revival steers a careful path between enhancing Tibetan identity and cooperating with Chinese authorities, and adopting confronting approaches concerning human rights and democracy are blended with Buddhism in opposition to the restrictions of the Chinese state.

In pre-modern Tibet, the Dalai Lama was head of state, played an active role in government and his religious authority went beyond sectarian boundaries. He was also held in high esteem and treated with devotion. This traditional function of the Dalai Lama has been taken up by the 14th Dalai Lama, who has worked to overcome sectarian divisions in the exiled community and in many ways become the symbol of Tibetan nationalism for people in exile and those in Tibet.

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ACTIVITY 8.8

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Text comparison chart: the Dalai Lama and the invasion of Tibet.

1 Examine representations of the Dalai Lama and his response to the invasion of Tibet by the Chinese army. Suitable sources might include relevant scenes from the films *Seven Years in Tibet*, *Kundun* and information from this text. Find another source (e.g. cartoons, news clips, YouTube or the internet in general), examine it and complete your inquiry.
2 Use information from your research to complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

India

When the Indian constitution was created, those drawing it up did not separate religion and state because they feared that such a separation could help create a state that was hostile towards religion and that would eventually deny religious freedom. India's constitution prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion, except when an office or position is connected to a particular religion. Article 25 of the constitution includes the possibility of throwing open all religious institutions to all classes of Hindus, but in reality, this would conflict with Hindu caste divisions. The constitution bans religious education in state-funded institutions, but otherwise religious education is permitted. While the national government respects rights outlined in the constitution, some local governments restrict them. For example, the state of Uttar Pradesh requires a permit to build new places of worship.

Much of Indian politics is dominated by religious nationalism known as 'communalism'. In 1964, the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) gave voice to Hindu religious leaders who demanded the destruction of mosques that were built over temple sites. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), from the mid 1980s, attempted to make India a Hindu state. World attention was drawn to the situation when members of the BJP destroyed the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya in 1992 and tried to replace it with a temple commemorating Rama's birthplace. More recently, the BJP campaigned to reconvert Indian citizens believed to have been 'forcibly' converted away from Hinduism, even people who had been Christian or Muslim for generations.

ACTIVITY 8.9

Analysing and evaluating

Conduct a SWOT analysis of religion-state relationships in India as described above.

Judaism in Europe pre-1945

Anti-Semitism in Europe allowed an attitude to develop which enabled Adolf Hitler and the Nazis to murder six million Jews during World War II (1939–45). The Nazi policy of extermination of the Jews (1933–45), which resulted in the Shoah, must be studied because it is a part of world history that must not be forgotten.

anti-Semitism a term used to describe prejudice against, or hostility towards, people of Jewish lineage

While Christianity did not cause the rise of anti-Semitism in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s, traditional Christian teachings formed some of the attitudes towards the Jews that led to prejudice and hostility. While in some instances Jews and Christians have lived together in harmony, there has also been hostility and conflict.

The history of anti-Semitism

Despite having a unique relationship, some Christians have spoken of Judaism disparagingly, even promoting the idea that the validity of Christianity depended upon supplanting the Jewish tradition. Many Christians understood their tradition as a replacement of Judaism.

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FIGURE 8.20 Stained glass depicting the legend of Jews stealing sacramental bread, in the Cathedral of Brussels, Belgium. This anti-Semitic legend dates back to 1370.

deicide the killing of a god, goddess or similar deity

As early as the second century, Jews were accused of committing **deicide** as some Christians held the belief that all Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus.

During the Middle Ages over 20 church councils issued rulings regarding relations with Jews. Among the decrees: marriages were forbidden between Jews and Christians (Councils of Orleans, 533 and 538; Clermont, 535; Toledo, 589 and 633); Jews and Christians were forbidden to eat together (Councils of Clermont, 535; Toledo, 589; Paris 614–15); Jews were prohibited from owning Christian slaves (Councils of Orleans, 538 and 541; Toledo, 589 and 633); and Jews were forbidden to appear in public during Easter (Councils of Orleans, 538; Macon, 583) and to work on Sunday (Council of Narbonne, 589). While these decisions were regional and do not appear in the canon, they nevertheless suggest that church officials were concerned about Christians and their relationships with Jews.

As Jews migrated into northern Europe in the late tenth century, they became the subject of popular antipathy. In the twelfth century, the papal statement *Sicut Judeis* called for the protection of Jews while disparaging Judaism. This proclamation was promoted 16 times during the twelfth and thirteen centuries. In popular opinion, Jews were not simply historic enemies who had put Christ to death: they were a threat to society.

During the Reformation it appeared that Jews might receive greater tolerance, but this was not to be. Martin Luther saw Jews as enemies of society, declaring that if they did not convert to Christianity, their synagogues should be burnt, their homes destroyed, their prayer books taken away and their rabbis forbidden to teach.

With the Enlightenment, Jews achieved legal equality in most of Europe and became less separate from mainstream society, working in the community. But in the worldwide depression of 1873, Jews became the scapegoats. Anti-Semitism, a term attributed to Wilhelm Marr in 1878, developed into a body of beliefs in Germany, and by the end of the nineteenth century it was rife throughout Europe. The stage was set for Hitler's rise to power, World War II and the Shoah.

The chronology in Table 8.1 notes major events relevant to the state, Christianity and Judaism.

Anti-Semitism is a particular form of racism directed specifically against Jews. The word comes from an eighteenth-century etymological analysis that differentiated languages with 'Aryan' roots and those with 'Semitic' roots. Anti-Semitism ranges from quiet contempt to hatred and persecution of Jews.



FIGURE 8.21 Entrance to Auschwitz concentration camp

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TABLE 8.1 Major events leading up to, and during, the Shoah

Date	State	Judaism	Christianity
1932			Politicians, pastors and lay people meet in Berlin to discuss how to use Germany's Protestant churches for the National Socialist cause.
30/1/1933	Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.		
22/3/1933	Dachau concentration camp established.		
1/4/1933		Germans boycott Jewish businesses.	
7/4/1933	Law for Restoration of the Professional Civil Service enacted – non-Aryans dismissed from government and public positions.		
10/5/1933		Public book burnings of Jewish authors and those opposed to Nazism.	
20/7/1933			Pope Pius XI signs Concordat with Hitler.
3/8/1934	Hitler declares himself Chancellor and Reichsfürher (leader of the Reich).		
15/9/1935	Nuremberg Laws decreed.	Jews cannot be Reich citizens. Classification system of 'Jewishness' introduced.	
14/3/1937			Pope Pius XI's encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (With Burning Concern) issued.
1/7/1937			*Bekennende Kirche* (The Confessing Church) is banned in Germany.

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TABLE 8.1 *Continued*

Date	State	Judaism	Christianity
22/6/1938			Pope Pius XI instructs two Jesuits to draft an encyclical letter denouncing racism and anti-Semitism. It was never published.
17/8/1938		Jewish women made to include Sarah in their names and men to include Israel.	
28/10/1938		17 000 Polish Jews expelled from Germany.	
15/1/1938		Jewish children excluded from German schools.	
10/2/1939			Pope Pius XI dies.
2/3/1939			Cardinal Pacelli elected as Pope Pius XII.
15/3/1939	Hitler invades Czechoslovakia.		
4/4/1939			German Christians establish the Institute for Research into the Elimination of Jewish Influence in German Church Life.
1/9/1939	Germany invades Poland.		
3/9/1939	France and Great Britain declare war on Germany.		
October 1939			214 Catholic priests are executed in Poland.
23/11/1939		Jews must wear armbands displaying the Magen David.	
9/5/1940	Germany invades Holland, Belgium and France.		

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TABLE 8.1 *Continued*

Date	State	Judaism	Christianity
24/10/1940			Protestant churches in Holland send letter protesting discriminatory regulations against Jews. Lutheran churches refuse to associate with the protest.
January 1942		Escapees from Chelmno extermination camp reach Warsaw with testimony of the horrors.	
23/12/1942			Pope's Christmas message contains veiled references to the murder of thousands of Jews.
18/1/1943		First Warsaw Ghetto uprising.	
March–June 1943	Construction of four crematoria and gas chambers completed at Auschwitz–Birkenau.		
29/9/1943			Danish Lutheran Church sends protest against Jewish persecution to Nazi authorities.
18/1/1945	Auschwitz abandoned.		
27/1/1945	Auschwitz liberated.		
15/4/1945	Bergen-Belsen liberated.		
7–8/5/1945	Germany surrenders.		
19/10/1945			Stuttgart Declaration of Guilt issued by Evangelical Church in Germany.
14/5/1948			First assembly of Protestant World Council of Churches.

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German churches and the Third Reich

The Nazi regime was hostile to institutionalised Christianity and, in particular, Catholicism, with its strong centralised hierarchy, was perceived to be more of a threat than Protestantism. Church establishments were neither equipped for confrontation with the state, nor were they financially or theoretically able to resist to any great extent. Protestants and Catholics were concentrated in different parts of Europe: Germany was largely Protestant and the areas Hitler occupied were predominantly Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christian (Poland, Ukraine, Austria, Greece, France, Hungary and Czechoslovakia; only in the Netherlands were Protestants and Catholics equally divided). Two-thirds of Germany was Protestant and Protestants served in the Schutzstaffel (SS) alongside Catholics and anti-Christians. Joseph Goebbels hated Christianity and planned to destroy it because he believed it was an extension of Judaism.

Roman Catholic Church

The German Catholic Church reacted in a variety of ways over the 12-year period of Hitler's rule (1933–45). Before Hitler came to power, Catholic bishops warned the faithful about Nazi racism: these warnings were fairly successful as very few Catholics voted for Hitler or the National Socialists in the elections between 1930 to 1933 and the German Bishops regularly refused the rites of the church to Nazi officials. However, after Hitler came to power in 1933 the Catholic Church stopped officially opposing the Nazi party and Catholics were told they should cooperate with the government. One of the key moments in the Catholic Church's relationship with the Nazi Party centres on the **Concordat** signed in 1933.

Concordat an agreement between the Vatican state and a government of a certain country on religious matters

The Concordat

A concordat is an agreement which defines relationships between the nation-state and the Vatican state. The main negotiator of this concordat was Cardinal Pacelli, who later became Pope Pius XII (1939–58). The Vatican believed that the Concordat would guarantee German Catholics religious liberties, but in reality it consolidated Hitler's power by reducing Catholic opposition. While the Concordat may have secured rights and privileges for the Catholic Church, it meant that it could not intervene in state affairs. It therefore prevented Catholics, at the official level, from acting against Nazi policies.

FIGURE 8.22 Pope Pius XII



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As Nazi policies became more extreme, Pope Pius XI became more concerned about the increasing racism in Europe. In 1937, he released an encyclical *Mit brennender Sorge* (With Burning Concern), which focused on racism. This letter was smuggled into Germany and read in every Catholic Church. By the end of the 1930s, church officials were aware that Hitler's ultimate aim was to destroy Catholicism and Christianity. When the war officially broke out, Hitler, not wanting to distract Christians from the war effort, limited his anti-Catholic activities. The Catholic bishops did not wish to appear unpatriotic and supported the war effort even though it was against Catholic Poland.

Several bishops spoke out against what was happening to Jews in Germany. Konrad von Preysing, for instance, preached a sermon in 1942 that attacked the state. Cardinal Josef Frings wrote a pastoral letter cautioning the faithful to respect the rights of others and later preached at Cologne Cathedral, saying that 'no one may take the property or life of an innocent person just because he was a member of a foreign race'.

ACTIVITY **8.10**

Analysing and evaluating

Statements of Pope Pius XII

Christmas broadcast, 24 December 1942

Humanity owes this desire (for a return to peace) to the hundreds of thousands of people who, for no fault on their part, but simply because of their nationality or ethnic origin have been condemned to death or progressive extinction.

Letter to Mgr von Preysing, Bishop of Berlin, 30 April 1943

We have to leave to the pastors where they work the task of estimating whether and to what degree caution must be exercised, despite reasons for intervening, in order to avoid greater evils. The declarations of bishops run the risk of leading to reprisals and pressures, and other circumstances must be taken into account, arising perhaps from the length and the psychology of the war. That is one of the reasons why we ourselves are restrained in our declarations.

Allocution to the Sacred College (the Cardinals), 2 June 1943

Our heart responds with deep and attentive concern to the prayers of those who turn to us with an attitude of anxious entreaty, tormented as they are because of their nationality or their race by great misfortunes, by the most searing and severe sufferings, and delivered over, for no fault of their own, to measures of extermination.

You will not expect us to describe here even some of what we have attempted to accomplish in order to diminish their suffering, to mitigate their moral and legal situation, to defend their inalienable religious rights and to meet their distress and their needs.

Every word on our part, addressed in this connection to the relevant authorities, every public reference on our part has to be seriously weighed and measured, in the

continued …

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… continued

interest of those who suffer, so that despite us their situation is not made even more serious and intolerable.

Source: Comby & MacCulloch, 1989, p. 214.

Letter of Pope John Paul II (March 1998)

[This letter was written to Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, an Australian Cardinal who for many years headed the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews at the Vatican.]

To my venerable brother, Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy:

On numerous occasions during my Pontificate I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Second World War. The crime which has become known as the Shoah remains an indelible stain on the history of the century that is coming to a close.

As we prepare for the beginning of the Third Millennium of Christianity, the Church is aware that the joy of a jubilee is above all the joy that is based on the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and neighbour. Therefore she encourages her sons and daughters to purify their hearts through repentance of past errors and infidelities. She calls them to place themselves humbly before the Lord and examine themselves on the responsibility which they too have for the evils of our time.

It is my fervent hope that the document 'We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah', which the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has prepared under your direction, will indeed help to heal the wounds of past misunderstanding and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible. May the Lord of history guide the efforts of Catholics and Jews and men and women of good will as they work together for a world of true respect for the life and dignity of every human being, for all have been created in the image and likeness of God.

Source: 'Letter of his Holiness Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the publication of the document "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah",' © Libreria Editrice Vaticana 1998

Response to stimulus

1 What reasons does Pius XII give for:
   - **a** taking action in the interest of those who were suffering
   - **b** being cautious in dealings with the Nazi regime?
2 Summarise the two popes' attitudes to the actions of the Nazi regime as illustrated in the documents.
3 For each pope, formulate a hypothesis about the reasons for his stance. Provide a quote to support each hypothesis.
4 From the evidence provided, what conclusion can be drawn about the Catholic Church's attitude between 1943 and 1998 to the suffering of Jews during the Shoah?

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Protestant churches

From the time of the Protestant Reformation, a strong link existed between Protestant churches and political rulers. Protestant churches in Germany in the 1930s and 1940s included Lutherans, Reformed, United Protestants, Methodists, Baptists and Mennonites, each with their own hierarchy and international divisions. While there was not a time when the Protestant churches denied political parties access to church services, each of the established churches tried to defend their interests and resisted Hitler's attempt to unite them into a National Church.

Throughout the 1930s there are many examples of anti-Semitic sermons and anti-Semitic articles in German church publications. While some church leaders openly stated that they were anti-Semitic, others warned people against showing support for Jewish victims. Martin Luther's tract *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543) was widely quoted and circulated and some Protestants even claimed that Luther's hatred of the Jews proved that they were more German than Catholic Germans. Christian anti-Semitism complemented the strong nationalism evident in German Protestant churches.

An extreme example of anti-Semitism was the German Christian Movement, whose members controlled many of the regional Protestant churches. The German Christian Movement not only embraced and openly endorsed anti-Jewish policies, but it also worked to bring Christianity in line with Nazism by working to suppress the Old Testament, revising liturgies and hymns to remove all aspects of Judaism from Christianity, and promoting Jesus as an Aryan who personified the ideals of Nazi Germany. While some in the church did not express anti-Semitism, they nevertheless worked to convert Jews to Christianity, which posed a problem with the state, which wanted to eradicate Jews altogether.

Some Protestants, like Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906–1945), opposed the Nazis and realised that respect for Jews and Judaism was integral to the Christian faith. But



FIGURE 8.23 Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Bonhoeffer and other like-minded thinkers were in the minority. He was executed on Hitler's orders three weeks before the end of the war.

After the Nuremberg rally in 1935, laws were introduced against Jewish people. Protestant and Catholic Churches had to provide baptismal and marriage records to the Nazis to identify if a person's grandparents were Aryan or Jewish because no Nazi scientist could provide a definition of Jewishness based on biological or physical traits.

Between 1939 and 1945 the Nazis used the T4 Euthanasia Program to murder handicapped people who lived in church-run institutions. Protestant institutions largely cooperated with this. No Protestant leaders spoke out publicly against the T4 Program. Some Catholic priests protested against the killings from the pulpit.

Even though Bishop Theophil Wurm (Protestant) and Cardinal Adolf Bertram (Roman Catholic) spoke out against euthanasia of the handicapped in 1940, neither said anything to defend the Jews who were being systemically deprived of their civil rights. More concerning was that neither the papal encyclical *Mit brennender*

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FIGURE 8.24 (left) Bishop Theophil Wurm in 1946, attending the Geneva Church Conference, and (right) Cardinal Adolf Bertram (shown centre) in Breslau, 1935

Sorge nor the Protestant *Bekennende Kirche* said anything about the plight of the Jews.

Churches throughout Europe were mostly silent when Jews were deported and murdered. Church leaders wanted to avoid any conflict with the Nazi regime for several reasons. First, the anti-Jewish teachings within Christian traditions had coloured people's perception of Jews. Second, Christianity was considered to be the foundation of Western values; therefore, anything 'other', for example, Judaism, along with secularism and Marxism, was considered to be against Western/Christian values. In the German church, Christendom was linked to nationalism, which embodied German Protestants' belief in 'Throne and Altar', the association of church and state.

Another reason was the churches' opposition to state control of their affairs. The churches sought to maintain some degree of independence by entering into agreements with the Nazi regime. Church leaders, both Catholic and Protestant, went to great lengths to avoid antagonising Nazi officials. Most public statements of the churches during this time show an obvious desire to say very little about what was actually happening for fear of jeopardising their own interests.

Post-Shoah statements

Post-1945, Christian churches have reflected upon the events of the Shoah and responded with compassion to that horrific event.

The International Council for Christians and Jews (ICCJ) was founded over seven decades ago as a reaction to the Shoah. At the International Emergency Conference on Anti-Semitism in 1947 Christian participants, with the advice of Jews, issued the *Address to Churches*, a statement regarding Christian–Jewish relations. It said: 'We have the firm hope that they [Christian Churches] will be concerned to show their members how to prevent any animosity towards the Jews which might arise from false, inadequate or mistaken presentations or conceptions of the teaching and preaching of the Christian doctrine.'

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The statement concludes with the following 10 points:

1. Remember that One God speaks to us all through the Old and the New Testaments.
2. Remember that Jesus was born of a Jewish mother of the seed of David and the people of Israel, and that His everlasting love and forgiveness embraces His own people and the whole world.
3. Remember that the first disciples, the apostles and the first martyrs were Jews.
4. Remember that the fundamental commandment of Christianity, to love God and one's neighbour, proclaimed already in the Old Testament and confirmed by Jesus, is binding upon both Christians and Jews in all human relationships, without any exception.
5. Avoid distorting or misrepresenting biblical or post-biblical Judaism with the object of extolling Christianity.
6. Avoid using the word Jews in the exclusive sense of the enemies of Jesus, and the words 'the enemies of Jesus' to designate the whole Jewish people.
7. Avoid presenting the Passion in such a way as to bring the odium of the killing of Jesus upon all Jews or upon Jews alone. It was only a section of the Jews in Jerusalem who demanded the death of Jesus, and the Christian message has always been that it was the sins of mankind which were exemplified by those Jews and the sins in which all men share that brought Christ to the Cross.
8. Avoid referring to the scriptural curses, or the cry of a raging mob: 'His blood be upon us and our children', without remembering that this cry should not count against the infinitely more weighty words of our Lord: 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do.'
9. Avoid promoting the superstitious notion that the Jewish people are reprobate, accursed, reserved for a destiny of suffering.
10. Avoid speaking of the Jews as if the first members of the Church had not been Jews.

Full text available at the International Council of Christians and Jews website.

Founded in 1948, the ICCJ has continued to promote Jewish–Christian dialogue and to provide models of wider interfaith relations.

The Catholic Church gradually developed, albeit somewhat tentatively at first, better relationships with Jews and Judaism. Approximately 17 years after the Shoah it made its first formal statement about Jewish–Christian relations, which it promulgated at the Second Vatican Council. The groundbreaking document *Nostra Aetate* (The Declaration on the Relation of the Church to non-Christian Religions) was released on 28 October 1965.

Since the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church has built a strong relationship with Jews and Judaism and has issued a number of significant documents including: *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate*, No. 4 (1974); *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (1985); and *We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah* (1998), which has been described by Cardinal Kasper as the first universal document of the Catholic Church dedicated to remembering the particularity of Jewish suffering in the Holocaust and the seriousness with which all Catholics must take account of how the evil of the Shoah was possible in Christian lands. It also invites people to reflect on the Shoah and says that Holocaust education should be a part of every Catholic educational institution.

In 1948 the World Council of Churches (WCC) issued *The Christian Approach to the Jews*, a statement that described anti-Semitism as 'a sin against God and man [sic]', and later at the Third Assembly of the WCC in New Delhi in 1961 its call to combat anti-Semitism was repeated.

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Islam and anti-Semitism

When Islam emerged in the seventh century, Jews were a homeless and powerless people, having been exiled from Judea by the Romans, who renamed the region Palestine.

The Qur'an distinguishes between warfare against pagans and toleration of Jews and Christians. It states that Jews and Christians should be tolerated, provided they pay a special tax. Islam regarded Jews and Christians in the regions they controlled as *dhimmi* (protected peoples). Judaism and Christianity were tolerated in the Muslim world as long as their adherents adopted a low profile and a self-effacing attitude.

Traditional Islam had an ambivalent attitude towards Jews, due to various references to them in the Qur'an which could be invoked according to the political and historical climate as well as the theological inclinations of different leaders. Some Muslim leaders promoted the Jews as 'the People of the Book' (Qur'an 9:29 et al) while others saw them as 'corrupters of scripture' (Qur'an 3:63); 'promoters of falsehood' (Qur'an 3:71) and as the enemies of Islam. In the case of Mediaeval Spain and again in the Ottoman Empire, the former attitude was adopted and Jews were protected and even reached leading positions in society under Muslim rule. The opposite attitude was taken by the Almohads (twelfth century) and in Yemen, for example.

Anti-Semitism among Muslims was exacerbated by the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, and the series of Arab-Israeli wars which followed. Muslim anti-Semitism became more pronounced after the 1956 Sinai War and the Six-Day War in 1967: both of these wars were Israeli victories.

FIGURE 8.25 View of the West Bank separation barrier built by Israel in the Palestinian town of Al-Ram, which lies between Jerusalem and the Palestinian city of Ramallah in Israel



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Roman Catholicism in Poland

The Catholic Church has been significant in Poland since the late eighteenth century as it was the only arena where Poles could preserve their history and tradition and promote their own interests. Poland was under foreign occupation and domination between 1793–1918 and 1939–89. In many ways the Catholic Church in Poland became something of a substitute Polish state. Polish social activities centred around the Church, which meant that, in turn, the Church became involved in broad social issues outside religious issues. Roman Catholics make up 95 per cent of Poland's population. From the 1960s to the late 1980s, the Catholic Church protected and cooperated with the Founding Fathers of the Solidarity Movement, which eventually liberated Poland from communism in 1989.

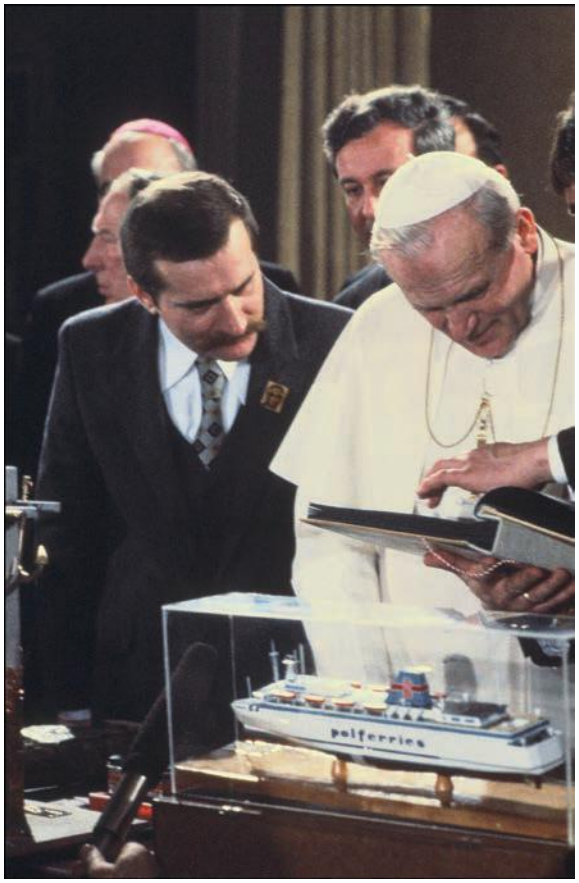


FIGURE 8.26 Lech Walesa, with Pope John Paul II in the 1980s. Walesa, co-founder and leader of Solidarity (the first independent trade union in the Soviet Union), served as President of Poland from 1990–5 and won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983.

During the 1980s, the Catholic Church, encouraged by Polish-born Pope John Paul II, played a significant role in overthrowing communism in Poland and in Eastern Europe in general. The Polish Roman Catholic Church (PRCC) played an important role, supporting the Solidarity Movement's opposition to the Communist government. The government was eventually defeated in the 1989 elections. Polish Catholic opposition to communism is a classic example of religion versus state.

The rise of the Solidarity party, which started as a trade union movement, can be traced to the organisation of workers and intellectuals in the 1970s. Workers were increasingly dissatisfied with growing hardship, the inability of Poland's economy to recover from the worldwide recession and the government's repression of dissent. The Catholic Church not only supported the rights of the workers, but also fostered independent intellectual movements and made public statements supporting workers and human rights.

During the 1950s under the Communist regime, many Catholic clergy were arrested, including the Polish Cardinal. The government was actively trying to control and divide the Church and interfere in the appointment of church leaders. While still in prison, Cardinal Wyszynski instigated a protest, the *Great Novena* (special prayer devotions of nine days), as a symbolic and unifying strategy. The *Great Novena* (1957–66) involved the icon of Madonna of Czestochowa, also known as the 'Black Madonna', touring all parishes and resting for a night in private homes. This tour helped the society bond together, which increased the religious vitality of Poland and the political dissemination of ideas. Wyszynski blended Polish legend, folklore and peasant mysticism with Polish Romantic poetry to create a **mariological** vision of the Polish nation.

mariological of or relating to devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus

The *Great Novena* and the touring icon were opposed by government authorities, who continually tried to disrupt the celebrations. The disruptions backfired, however, and instead reinforced national opposition solidarities. In Gdansk, for example, state authorities refused to allow people to decorate the streets for the

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procession. In protest, people placed hundreds of candles along the perimeter of the church's boundaries, marking the limit they were allowed to decorate. This shifted the ground of conflict from the political to the symbolic, where the Church could make a powerful statement.

Catholicism inspired other opposition groups such as the Confederation for an Independent Poland (KPN), formed in 1979, which is based on Catholic ethics. The Catholic Church also contributed to the development of civil society by supporting cultural activities and by expanding its role in education, so much so that by 1987 there were more than 22 000 Catholic places of religious teaching in Poland whose curriculum ranged from practical subjects to 'consciousness-raising'. The Catholic press and publishing houses encouraged **pluralism** and even published the poems of agnostic political dissidents who were jailed. The Church also played an important part in welfare and channelling foreign aid to rural communities. Its role in civil society in Poland was multilayered and not only formed the foundation for political change, but also supported and enabled the people to fight for political change.

pluralism the acceptance or acknowledgement of different religions



FIGURE 8.27 Bishop Henryk Jankowski celebrates the Eucharist with striking Solidarity workers of the Lenin shipyards at Gdansk, Poland

ACTIVITY 8.11

Finding and analysing

1 Search online for information on Catholic social teaching (CST). For example, search for the homepages of:
   - Australian Catholic Social Justice Council
   - Office for Social Justice.

2 Locate *Rerum novarum* (On the Condition of Labour) 1891 and *Laborem exercens* (On Human Work) 1981.
   - **a** What do these two documents say about the rights of workers?
   - **b** How might CST as expressed in *Rerum novarum* and other CST documents have motivated the Solidarity party?
   - **c** How relevant are CST documents regarding the rights of workers today?
   - **d** What role did the Catholic Church play in influencing state decisions in Poland? Use evidence to support your claims.

Finding and analysing

Select evidence from the chapter which supports the claim that the Church and Solidarity practised non-violent resistance.

Forming, finding, analysing and evaluating

Find another situation where religion has interacted with state authority through non-violent resistance. Investigate this in detail and present your findings in a multimodal format, drawing a conclusion about its effectiveness.

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8.6 Australian government relationships with Australian Aboriginal peoples and spiritualities

The **land rights** struggle for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples began in 1788, when the colonisers declared Australia *terra nullius* (land belonging to no-one). This declaration stated that the land was unoccupied. Aboriginal land rights came into the national spotlight in 1966, when the Gurindji stockmen, working on the Wave Hill cattle station in the Northern Territory, walked off the job, demanding better working conditions and control of their traditional lands.

In 1972 the Aboriginal Land Rights Commission was established by the federal government to recognise land rights for Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory. One of the assumptions underlying the recognition of land rights was the spiritual link Aboriginal peoples have with their land. This spiritual link gives Aboriginal peoples a sense of identity and remains at the heart of their spiritual beliefs. The Northern Territory *Aboriginal Land Rights Act 1976* stated people making a claim had to be:

> a local descent group of Aboriginals who have common spiritual affiliations to a site on the land, being affiliations that place the group under a primary spiritual responsibility for that site and for the land and are entitled by Aboriginal tradition to forage as of right over that land. (Section 50:1)

land rights the rights of Indigenous Australians to access and ownership of land possessed before the arrival of Europeans

Christian churches campaigned for Aboriginal land rights and worked to bring Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians together. In 1978, the newly formed Uniting Church of Australia (UCA)

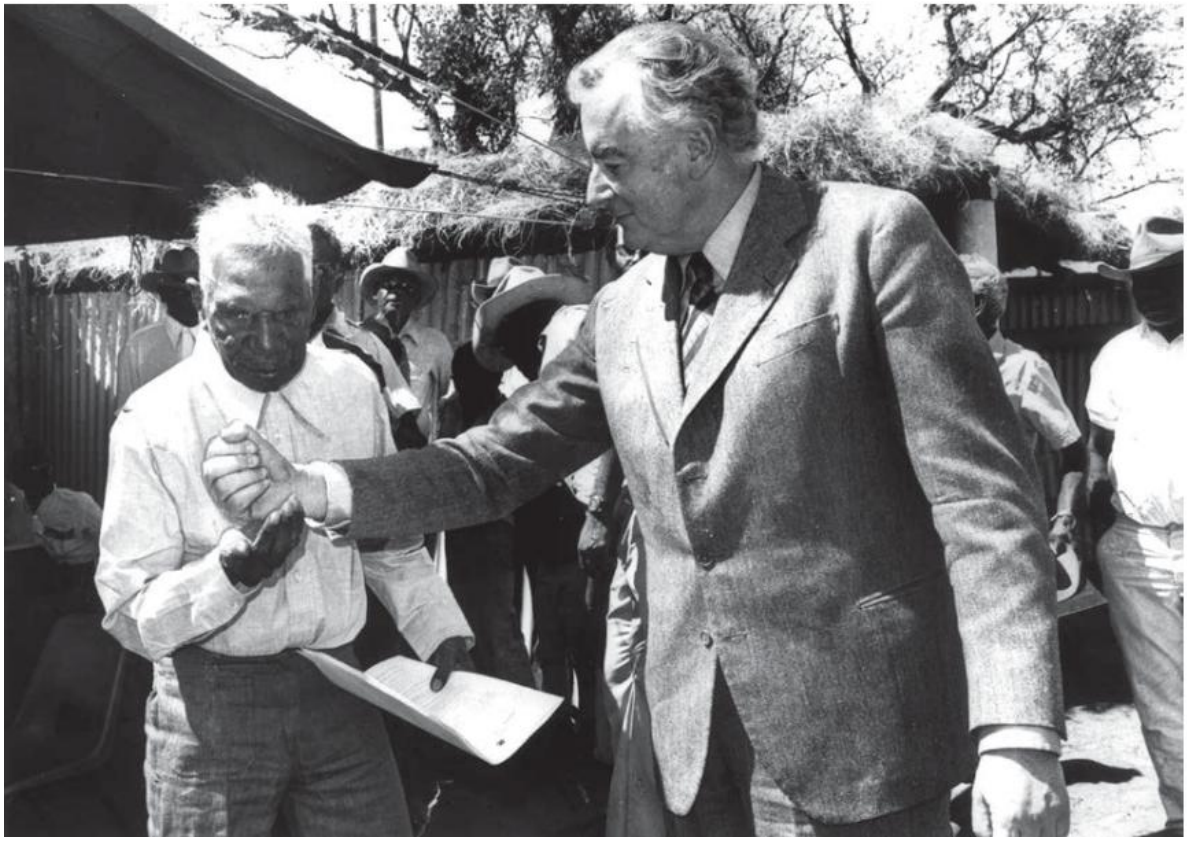


FIGURE 8.28 In a symbolic gesture then-Prime Minister Gough Whitlam pours sand into the hands of Vincent Lingiari, a Gurindji man, activist and leader of the Wave Hill walk-off. The strike resulted in the return of some lands to the Gurindji, a landmark in the land rights movement for Indigenous Australians.

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became involved in the struggle for the rights of Indigenous people on the former Presbyterian missions at Aurukun and Mornington Island. The Queensland Government had allocated a 1900-kilometre mining lease over the area. With the support of the Uniting Church, the Aurukun people successfully challenged the legislation in the Queensland Supreme Court, but the decision was later overturned by the Privy Council in England after an appeal from the Queensland Government.

The UCA believed so strongly in the importance of land to Aboriginal peoples that it set up a fighting fund for the communities of Aurukun and Mornington Island that raised over $100 000. In 1982, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders in the UCA formed the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, which not only took responsibility for ministry with Indigenous people but also worked to develop Indigenous leadership.

In 1988, to celebrate the bicentenary of Australia, the Uniting Church sponsored the March for Freedom, Justice and Hope that brought together Aboriginal people from all over Australia to celebrate their survival. The UCA also made a detailed submission to the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families (1995–7) and then campaigned for the government to deal appropriately with the issue of the stolen generations through a national apology.

Another well-known statement of support for Indigenous peoples' rights came from Pope John Paul II when he said at Uluru in 1986:

> Let it not be said that the fair and equitable recognition of Aboriginal rights to land is discrimination. To call for the acknowledgement of the land rights of people who have never surrendered those rights is not discrimination. Certainly, what has been done cannot be undone. But what can now be done to remedy the deed of yesterday must not be put off till tomorrow.
>
> The establishment of a new society for Aboriginal people cannot go forward without just and mutually recognised agreement with regard to these human problems, even though their causes lie in the past.

Refer back to Figure 1.72 in Chapter 1 for a detailed map of Indigenous Australia.



FIGURE 8.29 Protest badge referring to the bicentenary of Australia in 1988

8.7 Conclusion

There is great diversity in relationships between the state and religion but some common patterns have emerged. Historically, states have given preference to one religion over others and each state has its own policy towards religion. States see the need to protect their citizens from religions that they perceive to be dangerous. In many states, religion is linked to national identity, particularly states with Muslim majorities. In India, many Hindus strongly associate Hinduism with the national identity. In a number of Asian states, such as Bangladesh, India, Indonesia and Vietnam, restrictions are placed on conversion from the national religion and converts suffer harassment. Religions and religious institutions often have a symbiotic relationship with the state as each supports the other. Religion remains a significant influence on society and politics and the state.

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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

1. Create a collage or mind map depicting interactions between religion and state in different contexts.
2. Graffiti wall: complete the following statements:
   - a Religion and state should never interact because …
   - b Religion and state should cooperate because …
   - c Religion and state should be one because …
3. List:
   - a religious states
   - b places that have state religions
   - c secular states.
4. Recite a line from a national anthem that refers to God. What does this suggest about the country to which the anthem belongs?

FINDING

1. List countries that have religious symbols on their national flags.
   - a What percentage of the world's countries uses religious symbolism in this way?
   - b Are the countries concentrated in particular areas or spread evenly throughout the world?
   - c Are symbols from all five major world religions represented?
2. Complete a Who, What, Where, When, Why and How table based on a religious reformer who also influenced politics.
3. Create a comic strip telling the story of a time when there was significant struggle or cooperation between religion and state.
4. Prepare an information brochure for Australian travellers planning to visit a religious state of your choice.

ANALYSING

1. Construct a paragraph (employing a topic sentence, elaboration and evidence sentences and a concluding sentence) on the current relationship between religion and state in Australia.
2. Complete a Venn diagram showing the unique and common attributes of 'States with an official religion' and 'Religious states'. *Extension:* complete a three-way Venn diagram showing the unique and common attributes of 'Secular states', 'States with an official religion' and 'Religious states'.
3. Devise and produce a summary chart showing the attributes of secular states, states with an official religion and religious states.

FINDING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1. Assess whether the religion-state relationship in a chosen country is consistent with the country's declarations about religion-state relationships in its constitution. Provide evidence to support your assessment.
2. To what extent do the sacred text/s of a chosen religion mandate a particular kind of religion-state relationship? How well is this kind of religion-state relationship upheld in countries around the world?

REFLECTING

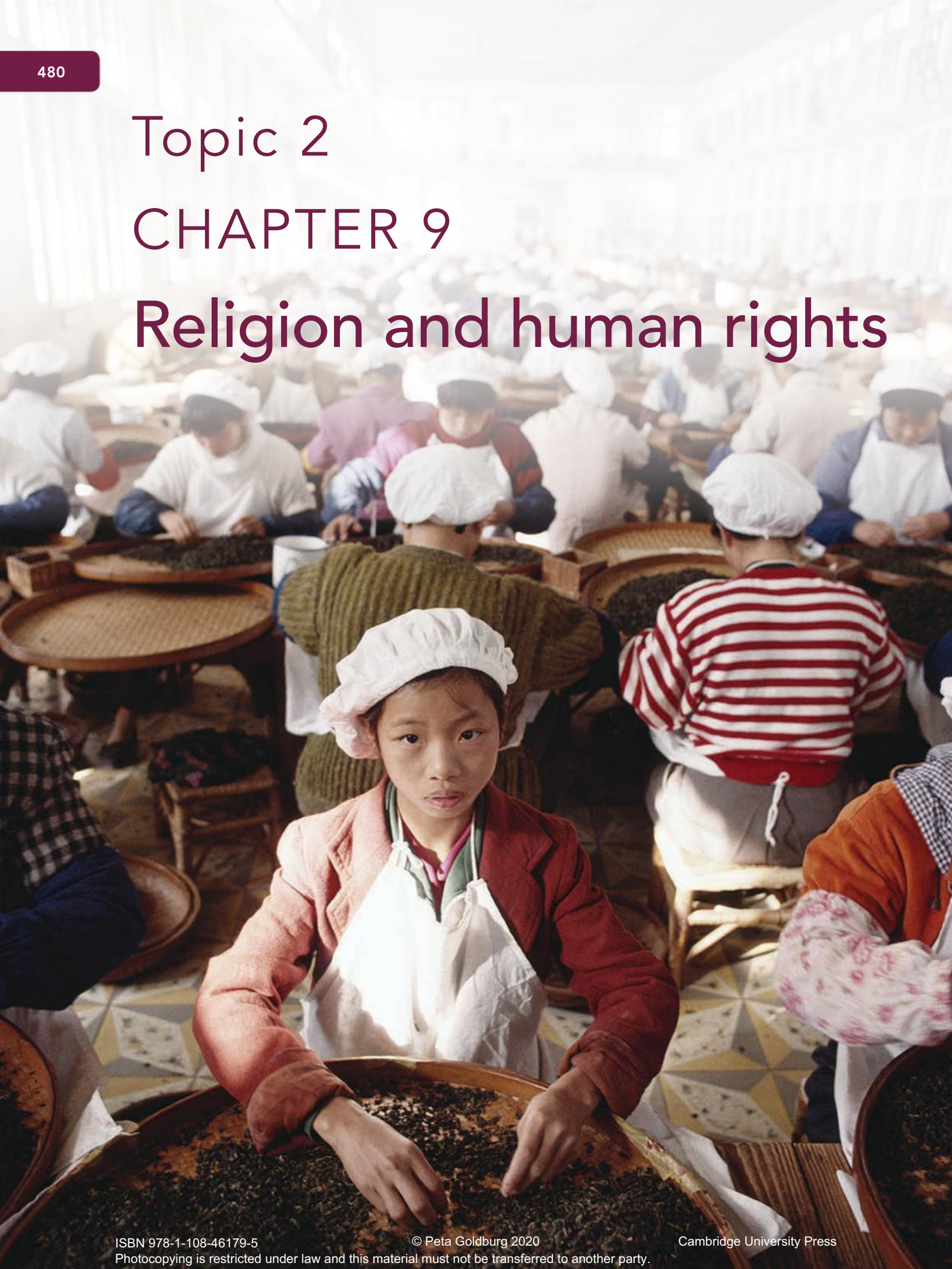
1. What has been most interesting about this area of inquiry?
2. How can I apply my new understandings about religion-state relationships to my own life?
3. What has surprised me during this inquiry process?
4. How has my learning about religion-state relationships enhanced my appreciation of current affairs?

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Topic 2

CHAPTER 9

Religion and human rights



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In Topic 2: Religion and human rights, students consider how religions shape perspectives on rights, including **human rights**. They examine perspectives on human rights by using their understanding of religious traditions and the insights that these provide on issues at the local and global levels.

In this chapter, students will explore the concepts of rights, religious rights and human rights; we identify the ways in which religions describe human life through sacred texts and religious writings, religious rituals, religious ethics, and analyse religious perspectives on human rights.

human rights
basic rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all humans, such as civil and political rights, right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, the right to participate in culture, the right to food, work and education

9.1 Introduction

The international human rights and liberties recognised today were not always recognised, and the struggle to establish them has millennium-long roots in various religious, philosophical and cultural traditions. The modern formulation of human rights came in 1948, when the United Nations (UN) issued the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR). This was in response to the despair and destruction of World War II, including Hitler's concentration camps, Stalin's gulags, and the dropping of nuclear bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States. US President Franklin D. Roosevelt called for a worldwide way of protecting freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from want and freedom from fear.

The UDHR was drafted by a sub-committed of the newly-established UN Commission on Human Rights. The founding chair was Eleanor Roosevelt, and the drafting committee included scholars, philosophers and legal specialists as well as representatives of a variety of religious traditions. Members included René Cassin, a Jewish jurist, law professor and judge from France and later Nobel Peace Prize winner; Pen-chun Chang, a distinguished Confucian scholar from China; John Peters Humphrey, a leading Canadian jurist; Charles Malik, a Maronite Christian from Lebanon; and Jacques Maritain, a prominent French Catholic philosopher and the French ambassador to the Vatican. The Commission had representation from atheist, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Hindu and Muslim populations from India, China, the Philippines, the USSR, Iran, Egypt, Lebanon, Austria, France, the United States, Panama and Chile. It drew on bills of rights from around the world, as well as seeking advice from scholars in the field and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).



FIGURE 9.1 Eleanor Roosevelt in 1946 at the temporary UN headquarters at Lake Success, New York

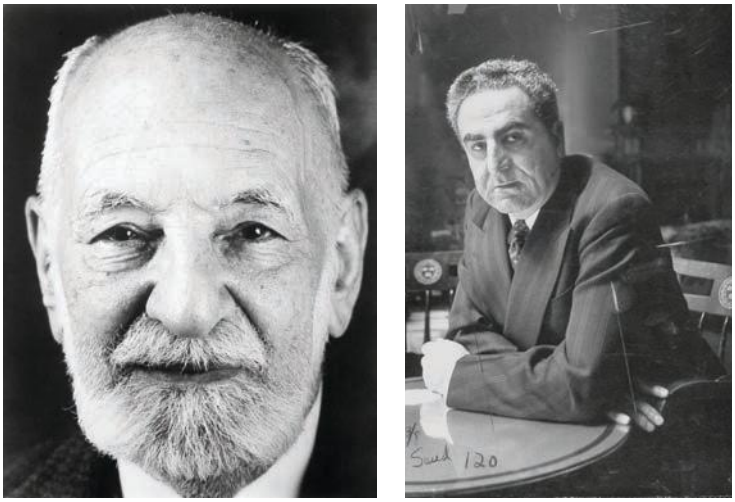


FIGURE 9.2 René Cassin (left) and Charles Malik (right) were both members of the UN Commission on Human Rights drafting committee.

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The core of the UDHR is stated in the Preamble and Article 1, which focus on the 'inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. The 30 articles in the UDHR set out the universal rights of all human beings. In the years since 1948, various other documents and elaborations expand on these key concepts to include rights to peace, orderly development and environmental protection. One of the hallmarks of the modern human rights movement is that human rights are interrelated and interdependent.

While the UDHR expressed hope for an end to the scourge of war and oppression, the document also provoked heated arguments about whose rights matter more – the individual's or the community's. The concept of human rights becomes even more complex when religion is added to the consideration. Where Christianity has made significant contributions to the Declaration and subsequent human rights documents, many Islamic countries believe that the assumptions underpinning human rights are alien to Islam, and are solely the product of Western liberalism.

Human rights can be studied from a variety of perspectives, including theories of rights or through the international human rights movement and its documents. This chapter includes both approaches and opens up conversations around religion and human rights, and the complexities involved in investigating religion and human rights. Human rights are viewed by many people from two broad perspectives: human rights are legal entities; and human rights are grounded in moral perceptions of the world from various religious traditions and their view of humanity. In general, world religions share understandings of morality: murder, stealing, sexual impropriety and the like are universally prohibited, although there are differences in understanding of what is considered to be prohibited. Some general principles are also shared among world religions – for example:

- 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18).
- 'Do unto other as you would have them do to you' (Luke 6:31; also, Matthew 7:12).
- 'He [sic] who for the sake of happiness hurts others, who also want happiness, shall not hereafter find happiness' (*Dhammapada* 131:2).
- 'One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of dharma. Yielding to desire and acting differently, one becomes guilty of adharma' (*Mahabharata* XII:113,8).
- 'No man [sic] is a true believer unless he desires for his brother [sic] that which he desires for himself' (Muhammad from Hadith).

Human rights, then, derive in part from different religious traditions.

Human rights are minimal standards. They focus on areas of great injustice and attempt to shift the balance in favour of individuals. As minimal standards, they often have universal appeal. The justification of human rights has several stages. The most basic stage involves trying to identify and establish the abstract values or norms that underlie human rights. The second stage involves trying to show that some specific norms follow from these abstract considerations, and that these norms are plausibly conceived as universal rights. A third stage of justification involves defending the measure that will be necessary to protect and promote human rights internationally.

Human rights are by definition universal, but it may be helpful to consider what this means at three levels: the concept (idea), the content (norms or standards), and the context of defining and implementing these rights.

First, as a concept, human rights are necessarily universal, because they are supposed

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FIGURE 9.3 Children from the UN International Nursery School look at a poster of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. UN Photo (1950).

to be the rights of every human being, yet 'human' in this concept of human rights is particular to the individual person's identity, beliefs, experiences and context.

Second, assuming acceptance of the concept, there is then the question of its content: what are these rights and what makes them universal in the reality of permanent and profound adversity among human beings, individually and collectively? How can people of different cultural, religious or philosophical orientations, different social and economic classes, and educational backgrounds, for example, agree on what is due to every human being by virtue of his or her humanity?

Third, there is also the role of context in understanding the definition, as well as the implementation of human rights in the reality of deeply rooted and structural differences in power relations among and within societies.

Paradoxically, the conception, content and implementation of human rights are all shaped by the same conditions they seek to challenge in the sense that it is difficult to imagine a right and how it can work in practice without imagining or knowing the violation of that right.

ACTIVITY **9.1**

Forming

1 What are human rights?
2 How are they similar to, or different from, other rights?
3 What responsibilities accompany human rights?
4 How are human rights administered?
5 How do human rights relate to religion?
6 What gave rise to the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*?
7 Name and describe any of the 30 articles enshrined in the UN document.

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9.2 The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*: history and development

After World War II, the United Nations (UN) took a leading role in formulating a charter of rights, which was not just guaranteed in its members' constitutions but also secured by international law. In 1945, the UN Charter called for respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, but did not specify what these entailed. Under the leadership of Eleanor Roosevelt, the new Commission of Human Rights worked to develop the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR), which was proclaimed by the UN Assembly in 1948.

To a large extent, human rights can be traced to Judeo-Christian concepts and European Enlightenment philosophies.

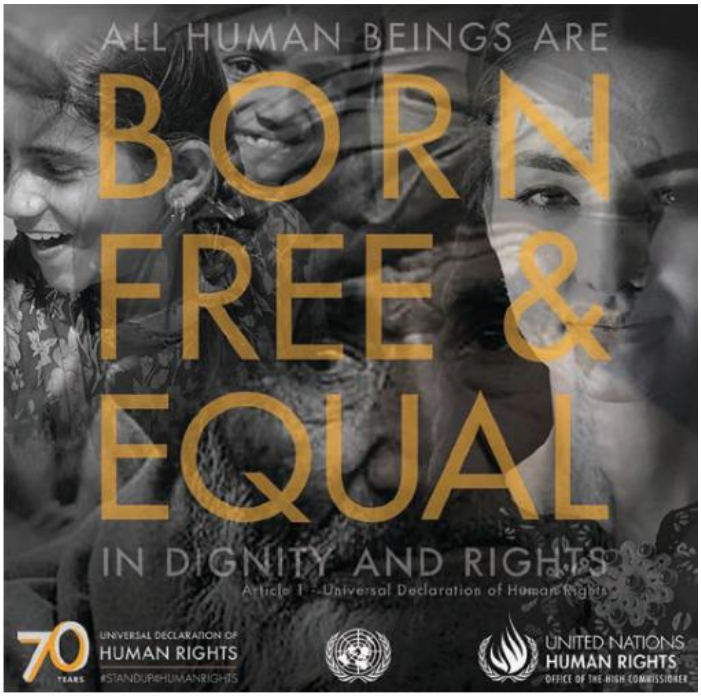


FIGURE 9.4 Poster to promote 70th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in 2018

The UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

(Abridged version)
Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.
Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.
Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.
Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.
Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.
Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.
Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.
Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights.
Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.
Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal.
Article 11. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial.
Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his [sic] privacy, family, home or correspondence.
Article 13. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

continued …

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Human rights emerged from Western traditions of justice that valued the individual, humanism, rationalism and legal principles that protected individual rights.

According to the preamble in the UDHR, human rights are the 'recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable right of all members of the human family [and] the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world'. A key feature of human rights according to the UDHR is that these rights are 'due to all human beings by virtue of their humanity, without distinction on such grounds as race, sex (gender), religion, language or national origin'.

ACTIVITY **9.2**

Finding

1 Read the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* in the preceding text extract. Note the articles that specifically deal with religion. Find examples of how they are applied in different countries and cultures.
2 Make a class list of situations in which human rights have not been upheld and discuss how the rights in question have been violated. Has religion been a factor in any of these situations and, if so, how?

… continued

Article 14. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.
Article 15. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
Article 16. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family.
Article 17. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.
Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.
Article 20. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
Article 21. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country.
Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security.
Article 23. Everyone has the right to work.
Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure.
Article 25. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being.
Article 26. Everyone has the right to education.
Article 27. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community.
Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.
Article 29. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any state, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Source: For the full version of the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* refer to the UN website

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Nickel (2015, pp. 9–10) describes human rights, as conceived in the UDHR and subsequent human rights documents, as having eight important features.

1. Human rights are rights. Human rights have rightsholders (people who have them); addressees (parties assigned duties or responsibilities); and scopes that focus on a freedom, protection, or benefit. Rights are mandatory in that some behaviours of the addressees are either required or forbidden.
2. Human rights are universal in that they extend to every person living. Characteristics such as race, sex, religion, social position and nationality are irrelevant to whether one has human rights.
3. Human rights are high priority norms. They are not absolute, but they are strong enough to win most of the time when they compete with other considerations. The Universal Declaration states that human rights are grounded in the dignity and worth of human beings and in the requirements of domestic and international peace and security.
4. Human rights are not dependent for their existence on recognition or enactment by a particular government. They exist as legal norms at the national and international levels and as norms of enlightened political morality.
5. Human rights are international standards of evaluation and criticism unrestricted by political boundaries.
6. Human rights are primarily political norms rather than interpersonal standards. The rights forbid governments to discriminate in their actions and policies, and they impose duties on governments to prohibit both private and public forms of discrimination.
7. Human rights are numerous and specific rather than a few and general (refer to list of Universal declaration).
8. Human rights set minimum standards; they do not attempt to describe an ideal social and political world.

People have analysed the UDHR in various ways. Table 9.1 categorises the UDHR according to different rights.

TABLE 9.1 The UDHR categorised according to different rights

Security rights
• Life, liberty, and security of person (Article 3) • No torture or cruel punishments (Article 5)
Due process rights
• Right to an effective remedy for violations of rights (Article 8) and to a social and international order in which human rights can be enjoyed (Article 28) • No arbitrary arrest, detention or exile (Article 9) • Right to a trial in criminal cases (Article 10) • Presumption of innocence in criminal cases (Article 11) • No retroactive criminal laws or penalties (Article 11) • No arbitrary deprivation of nationality (Article 15) • No arbitrary deprivation of property (Article 17.2) • Protection of moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which one is the author (Article 27.2)

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TABLE 9.1 *Continued*

Basic liberties
• No slavery or servitude (Article 4) • No arbitrary interference with one's privacy, family, home or correspondence (Article 12) • Freedom of movement and residence (Article 13) • Freedom to leave and return to one's country (Article 13) • Freedom to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution (Article 14) • No marriage without full and free consent of the intending spouses (Article 16.2) • Freedom to own property individually and collectively (Article 17.1) • Freedom of thought, conscience and religion (Article 18) • Freedom of opinion and expression (Article 19) • Freedom of peaceful assembly and association (Article 20) • Freedom to form and join trade unions (Article 23.4) • Freedom of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children (Article 26) • Freedom to participate in cultural life (Article 27)
Rights of political participation
• Freedom to participate in government, directly or through freely chosen representatives (Article 21.1) • Equal access to public service (Article 21.2) • Opportunities to vote in periodic and genuine elections (Article 21.3)
Equality rights
• Equality of fundamental rights and freedoms (Article 2) • Legal personality (Article 6) and equality before the law (Article 7) • Freedom from discrimination (Articles 2, 7) • Equal rights in marriage and family (Article 16) • Equal pay for equal work (Article 22) • Equal social protection for children born out of wedlock (Article 25.2)
Economic and social rights
• Social security (Article 22) • Just and favourable remuneration for workers (Article 23.30) • Rest and leisure (Article 24) • Adequate standard of living for health and well-being (Article 25) • Healthcare (Article 25) • Special care during motherhood and childhood (Article 25.1) • The right to educational opportunities (Article 26)

The declaration of human rights and subsequent human rights conventions inscribe into international law rights of individuals, and forms of protection of the individual against powerful institutions of state, society, religion or others. These rights apply to every individual regardless of race, colour, sex, religion and place of birth. The UDHR sets out to protect individual self-determination and free agency by defining the minimum of what is necessary in order to guarantee freedom of individual agency and self-determination – in other words, 'moral individualism' is central to the UDHR. Later, this understanding was extended to collective rights and collective legal entities such as a nation's right to self-determination, and the right to peace and the right to development.

The UDHR is a universalisation of the idea of fundamental constitutional rights as developed by Western countries, although the actual set of rights surpasses what can be found constitutionally in any country, Western or non-Western.

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ACTIVITY 9.3

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Use an online search engine to locate cartoons focusing on human rights – some are available on the United Nations website.

1. Choose two cartoons, one focusing on human rights in general and the other focusing on religion and human rights, to analyse. For each cartoon, explain who or what is represented and how these representations help to construct a message about human rights.
2. Choose one cartoon and explain what alternative or resistant reading/s might be possible.
3. Are there any cartoons where you think the cartoonist's country of origin has particularly influenced the message their cartoon communicates? If so, which ones and how?
4. Choose one cartoon and assess whether its message is fair and/or accurate. Give reasons for your answer.
5. According to these cartoons, how much difference has the publication of the UDHR made in the world? Provide evidence from the cartoons to support your answer.

Extension activity

Design your own cartoon to communicate a message about international human rights.

Objections to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

While no state voted against the Declaration in 1948, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the Soviet-bloc countries abstained from the vote. Saudi Arabia abstained because it objected to Articles 16 and 18. Saudi Arabia's objection to Article 16 was that it gives women and men equal right to marry and to have a family, equal rights during marriage, and at its dissolution. In full, Article 16 reads:

covenants formal, solemn and binding agreements

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

For Article 18, Saudi Arabia said that the idea of changing one's religion was in direct conflict with a true understanding of Islam.

A number of Islamic countries, such as Pakistan, supported and accepted the UDHR, but Yemen did not turn up for the vote because it agreed with Saudi Arabia's criticism.

While the Declaration set out a number of basic human rights, it took another 18 years for UN members to agree upon how to give legal force to its principles. Eventually, two international **covenants** were agreed:

1. the *Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*
2. the *Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

These two covenants were required because Western liberal democracies wanted to stress liberal rights of the individual and the Soviet bloc wanted to stress group and class rights of an economic and social nature.

Since then, the UN has developed five documents which relate to religion and belief:

1. the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948)
2. the Arcot Krishnaswami study (1959)
3. the two International Covenants on Human Rights (1966)

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4 the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (1981)
5 the *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious, and Linguistic Minorities* (1992).

The *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and religion

The UDHR, as the founding document for all international human rights treaties, has played an important legal and intellectual role for over 70 years. Specific articles of the Declaration refer to religion: Article 2 forbids distinctions of any kind, including religion, Article 26 refers to religious groups and covers the right of education, and Article 29 addresses the limitation of proclaimed rights and protecting religious rights.

Article 18, which specifically relates to religious rights, was not only incorporated into the 1966 Covenants, but was also influential in the 1981 Declaration. Article 18 can be divided into two parts: the first guarantees the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and the second spells out the specific rights included within the article.

The term 'belief' has a particular meaning in the Declaration and relates specifically to religion. It does not refer to political or scientific beliefs and was incorporated to protect non-religious convictions such as atheism or agnosticism.

One of the difficulties with Article 18 was the recognition of the right to change one's religion, a right which is denied in some countries and by some religions. Article 18 also makes reference to religious groups and how religious rights can be exercised by a community rather than just acted upon individually.

A special category of religious rights and freedom has also emerged to deal with some of the unique needs of religion. Articles 2 and 18 of the UDHR called these rights of 'thought, conscience and belief' and the freedom from religious discrimination. Four international documents elaborating the UDHR contain the most critical protections of religious rights and liberties. These are:

1 *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) 1966
2 *United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief* (the Declaration on Religion) 1981
3 Concluding document of the Third Follow-Up Meeting of Representatives of the Participating State of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (the Vienna Concluding Document) 1989
4 *Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities* (the Minorities Declaration) 1992.

ICCPR 1966

The ICCPR, a binding treaty accepted by 165 countries, repeats the guarantee of religious rights and liberties first announced in the UDHR. Article 18 of the 1966 Covenant states:

Article 18

1 Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his [sic] choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2 No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.
3 Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4 The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

Article 18 distinguishes between the right to freedom of religion or belief, and the freedom to observe one's religion or belief.

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9.3 The Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief

The *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (also known as The 1981 Declaration on Religion) was proclaimed on 25 November 1981. It is currently the most important international instruction regarding religious rights and the prohibition of intolerance or discrimination based on religion. The declaration was created in response to outbursts of anti-Semitism in several locations in 1959–60, with many fearing the revival of Nazism. The UN proposed that two declarations be drafted after lobbying by developing countries, which wanted a document on racism but were largely indifferent to religious discrimination, the Cold War, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the issue of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

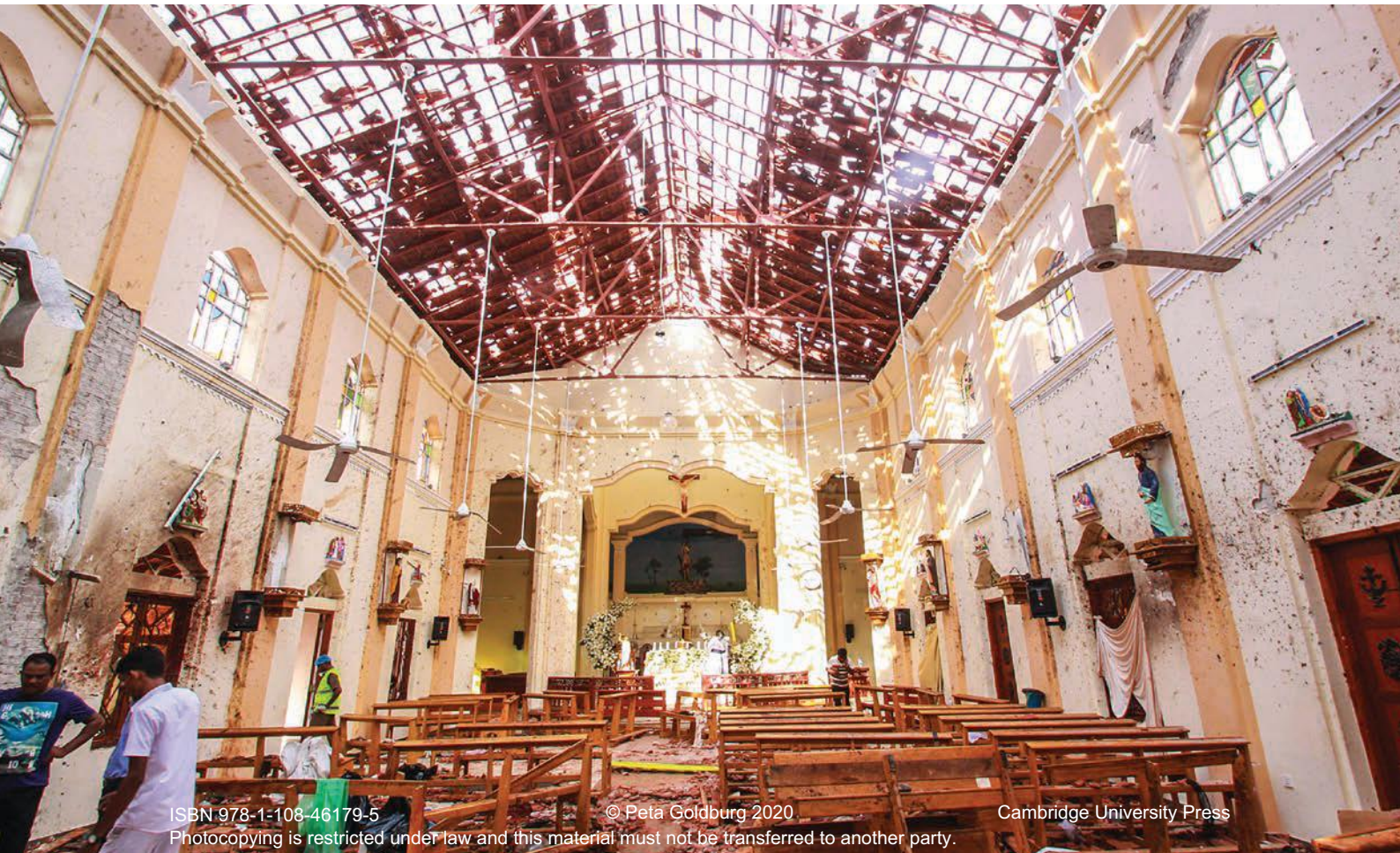
As a result, discussion developed about the term 'religion'. Communist spokespeople argued that 'religion' did not sufficiently cover atheistic beliefs. Western delegates saw the declaration as protecting religious human rights, while also protecting the rights of people without a religion.

As a result, a number of changes were made to the draft declaration. The word 'whatever' was inserted before 'belief' in the preamble and Article 1.1 Discussion about the right to convert (Article 18.2) led to the deletion of explicit reference to the right to change one's religion. Article 6 contains a list of freedoms of thought, religion and belief.

The 1981 Declaration of Religion was an important breakthrough in the struggle to extend international protection to religion. Unfortunately, it is not a treaty and therefore is not binding. Nevertheless, it does carry weight and members of the international community are expected to support and obey it under international law.

The 1981 Declaration on Religion elaborates the religious liberty provisions of the ICCPR.

FIGURE 9.5 Sri Lankan officials inspect St Sebastian's Church in Negombo, north of Colombo, after multiple explosions targeting churches and hotels across Sri Lanka on 21 April 2019.



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Articles 1 and 6 set out examples of rights to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, as well as the free exercise of religion. Article 6 states:

> … the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief shall include, inter alia, the following freedoms:
> **a** To worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief, and to establish and maintain places for these purposes;
> **b** To establish and maintain appropriate charitable or humanitarian institutions;
> **c** To make, acquire and use to an adequate extent the necessary articles and materials related to the rites or customs of a religion or belief;
> **d** To write, issue and disseminate relevant publications in these areas;
> **e** To teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes;
> **f** To solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions from individuals and institutions;
> **g** To train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief;
> **h** To observe days of rest and to celebrate holidays and ceremonies in accordance with the precepts of one's religion or belief;
> **i** To establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels.

ACTIVITY **9.4**

Forming

After reading Article 6, provide examples to illustrate what each point means and how they could be applied in general society.

ACTIVITY **9.5**

Analysing and evaluating

1 Conduct an internet search and compare ICCPR Article 18(3) with Article 29(2) and (3) from the UDHR. What is stated? What conclusions can you draw from the evidence?
2 Examine Article 6 above from the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.
   a What rights have been included?
   b What rights have been omitted?
   c What might be the reason/s for the omission?

Further guidance for the protection of a person's freedom of conscience is provided in the 1990 Copenhagen Document, which recognises 'the right of everyone to have conscientious objection to military service'.

The 1981 Declaration on Religion, Article 5, also focuses on religious rights of children and their parents, and guarantees the rights of parents/guardians to organise life within their household and to educate their children 'in accordance with their religion or beliefs'. The parents' religious upbringing or education of their child 'must not be injurious to his/her physical or mental health or to his/her full development'. The 1981 Declaration on Religion permits states to enforce against religious individuals and institutions general regulations designed to protect public safety, order, health, morals or fundamental

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FIGURE 9.6 A toddler attends a Catholic mass at St Mary's Church in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, with her parents

rights and freedoms of others. Article 2 of the 1981 Declaration on Religion bars religious 'discrimination by any State, institution, group of persons or person'. The document also includes principles of implementation and application. It urges states to take 'all effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, economic, political, social and cultural life'.

The Vienna Concluding Document

The 1989 Vienna Concluding Document extends the religious liberty norms of the 1981 Declaration on Religion, particularly for religious groups. Principle 16 states:

> In order to ensure the freedom of the individual to profess and practise religion or belief, the participating States will, inter alia,
>
> (16.1) – take effective measures to prevent and eliminate discrimination against individuals or communities on the grounds of religion or belief in the recognition, exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms in all fields of civil, political, economic, social and cultural life, and to ensure the effective equality between believers and non-believers;
>
> (16.2) – foster a climate of mutual tolerance and respect between believers of different communities as well as between believers and non-believers;
>
> (16.3) – grant upon their request to communities of believers, practising or prepared to practise their faith within the constitutional framework of their States, recognition of the status provided for them in their respective countries;
>
> (16.4) – respect the right of these religious communities to • establish and maintain freely accessible places of worship or assembly, • organize themselves according to their own hierarchical and institutional structure, • select, appoint and replace their personnel in accordance with their respective requirements and standards as well as with any freely accepted arrangement between them and their State, • solicit and receive voluntary financial and other contributions;
>
> (16.5) – engage in consultations with religious faiths, institutions and organizations in order to achieve a better understanding of the requirements of religious freedom;
>
> (16.6) – respect the right of everyone to give and receive religious education in the language of his [sic] choice, whether individually or in association with others;
>
> (16.7) – in this context respect, inter alia, the liberty of parents to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions;
>
> (16.8) – allow the training of religious personnel in appropriate institutions;
>
> (16.9) – respect the right of individual believers and communities of believers to acquire, possess, and use sacred books, religious publications in the language of their choice and other articles and materials related to the 9 practices of religion or belief;
>
> (16.10) – allow religious faiths, institutions and organizations to produce, import and disseminate religious publications and materials;
>
> (16.11) – favourably consider the interest of religious communities to participate in public dialogue, including through the mass media.

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A number of the rights provisions in the Vienna Concluding Document reflect the international right to self-determination of people. The Document not only guarantees a religious community the right to practise its religion, but also includes the right for an ethnic community to promote its culture and for a linguistic community to speak its language without undue interference from the state.



FIGURE 9.7 Dr Arcot Krishnaswami (India) and Mr Richard Hiscocks (United Kingdom), members of the Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, 1959. © United Nations

ACTIVITY 9.6

Forming

Visually represent the major ideas presented in Article 16.

9.4 The Arcot Krishnaswami study

The UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities commissioned Arcot Krishnaswami, from India, to examine the subject of religious human rights. The study was based on the experiences of 82 countries. It included a detailed list of the components that make up the freedom to manifest religion or belief. Krishnaswami argued that freedom to manifest religion or belief included protecting a religion's words, teachings, practice, worship and observance.

Some of these religious practices could be subject to permissible limitations, as in the case of human sacrifice, **self-immolation**, mutilation, slavery, prostitution, subversion activities, polygamy and other practices that clash with the requirements of Article 29 of the UDHR.

self-immolation
suicide by fire

Krishnaswami also wrote a short chapter showing the possible relationships of a religion to the state. These included states with either an established church or a state religion; states that recognised several religions; and states that mandate a separation of religion and state. In a footnote, he referred to anti-Semitism and other forms of racial prejudice. The report ended with 16 rules that he believed the UN should approve.

FIGURE 9.8 Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc sets himself on fire protesting the persecution of Buddhists by the South Vietnamese government in 1963



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ACTIVITY **9.7**

Analysing and evaluating

Read the Krishnaswami study extracts below and complete the tasks that follow.

I. Freedom to maintain or to change religion or belief

Rule 1

1 Everyone should be free to adhere, or not to adhere, to a religion or belief, in accordance with the dictates of his [sic] conscience.
2 Parents should have a prior right to decide upon the religion or belief in which their child should be brought up. When a child is torn from its family environment, the decision as to the religion or belief in which that child is to be brought up should be made primarily in accordance with the objectively ascertained interests of the child, due attention being paid to the expressed or presumed wish of the parents.
3 No one should be subjected to coercion or to improper inducements likely to impair his freedom to maintain or to change his religion or belief.

II. Freedom to manifest religion or belief

Rule 2

Everyone should be free to comply with what is prescribed or authorized by his religion or belief, and free from performing acts incompatible with the prescriptions of his religion or belief.

Rule 3

1 Everyone should be free to worship in accordance with the prescriptions of his religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private.
2 Equal protection should be accorded to all forms of worship, places of worship, and objects necessary for the performance of rites.

Rule 4

The possibility for pilgrims to journey to sacred places as acts of devotion prescribed by their religion or belief, whether inside or outside their own country, should be assured.

Rule 5

1 The members of a religion or belief should not be prevented from acquiring or producing articles necessary for the performance of the rituals prescribed by their religion or belief, such as prayer books, candles, and ritual wine.
2 Where the government controls the means of production and distribution, it should make such articles, or the means for producing them, available to the groups concerned.

Rule 6

1 The prescriptions of the religion or belief of a deceased person should be followed in the assignment of places for burial, cremation or other methods of disposal of the dead, the display in such places of religious or other symbols, and the performance of funeral or commemorative rites.

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… continued

2 Equal protection against desecration should be afforded to all places for burial, cremation or other methods of disposal of the dead, as well as to religious and other symbols displayed in these places; and equal protection against interference by outsiders should be afforded to the funeral or commemorative rites of all religions and beliefs.

Rule 7

The prescriptions of each religion or belief relating to holidays and days of rest should be taken into account, subject to the overriding consideration of the interest of society as a whole.

Rule 8

1 No one should be prevented from observing the dietary practices prescribed by his religion or belief.

2 Where the government controls the means of production and distribution, it should place the objects necessary for observing dietary practices prescribed by particular religions or beliefs, or the means of producing them, at the disposal of members of those religions or beliefs.

Rule 9

1 No one should be prevented from having marriage rites performed in accordance with the prescriptions of his religion or belief, nor compelled to undergo a religious marriage ceremony not in conformity with his convictions.

2 The right to seek and to obtain a divorce should not be denied to anyone whose convictions admit divorce, solely on the ground that he professes a particular religion or belief.

Rule 10

Everyone should be free to disseminate a religion or belief, in so far as his actions do not impair the right of any other individual to maintain his religion or belief.

Rule 11

1 No group professing a religion or belief should be prevented from training the personnel required for the performance of practices or observances prescribed by that religion or belief.

2 When such training is available only outside the country, no permanent limitations should be placed upon travel abroad for the purpose of undergoing such training.

Rule 12

No one should be compelled to take an oath contrary to the prescriptions of his religion or belief.

Rule 13

In a country where the principle of conscientious objection to military service is recognized, exemptions should be granted to genuine objectors in a manner ensuring that no adverse distinction based upon religion or belief may result.

Rule 14

In a country where exemptions from participation in certain or all public ceremonies are granted to individuals who object to such participation on the ground that it

continued …

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… continued

is contrary to a prescription of their religion or belief, such exemptions should be granted in such a manner that no adverse distinction based upon religion or belief may result.

Rule 15

No cleric who receives information in confidence, in accordance with the prescriptions of his religion, should be compelled by public authorities to divulge such information.

III. Duties of public authorities

Rule 16

1 Public authorities should refrain from making any adverse distinction against, or giving preference to individuals or groups of individuals with regard to the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; and should prevent any individual or group of individuals from making such adverse distinctions or giving such undue preferences.

2 These duties must be discharged through the adoption of appropriate legal provisions of a preventive or remedial character, including penal sanctions when necessary, as well as by administrative action.

3 Public authorities should make every effort to educate public opinion to an acceptance of the principle of non-discrimination in respect of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion and to create proper leadership for this purpose.

4 In discharging these duties, public authorities should be guided by the following considerations:

- **a** The freedom of everyone to maintain or change his religion or belief must be ensured;
- **b** The freedom of everyone to manifest his religion or belief, either alone or in community with others, and in public or in private, must be ensured as widely as possible. Any limitation imposed upon that freedom should be exceptional, should be confined within the narrowest possible bound, should be prescribed by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society; and should not be exercised in a manner contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations;
- **c** In case of a conflict between the requirements of two or more religions or beliefs, public authorities should endeavour to find a solution assuring the greatest measure of freedom to society as a whole, while giving preference to the freedom of everyone to maintain or to change his religion or belief over any practice or observance tending to restrict this freedom;
- **d** Public authorities should make no adverse distinctions against, or give undue preference to religions or their followers in the granting of subsidies

continued …

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… continued

> or exemptions from taxation. The State is, however, not precluded from levying general taxes or from carrying out obligations assumed as a result of arrangements made to compensate a religious organization for property taken over by sequestration or otherwise, nor from contributing funds for the preservation of religious structures recognized as monuments of historic or artistic value.

1. Summarise in your own words the religious freedoms protected by the first 15 rules.
2. How should governments discharge their duty to protect people's religious rights, according to the Krishnaswami study?
3. Describe three imaginary scenarios in which people might call on the Krishnaswami study rules to defend their rights.

Krishnaswami's rules formed the basis of the *Draft Principles on Freedom and Non-Discrimination in the Matter of Religious Rights and Practices*. The Draft Principles are divided into four parts that promote freedom of thought, conscience and religion. Part I affirms the right of all people to follow, or not to follow, a religion or belief according to their own conscience. Part II applies 13 principles that serve as a catalogue of rights, as outlined below:

1. To worship, with equal protection to be accorded to all forms of worship, places of worship and objects necessary for the performance of rites.
2. To journey to sacred places.
3. To observe dietary practices prescribed by the religion or belief.
4. To acquire or produce materials and objects necessary for the prescribed practices, including dietary practices.
5. To have marriage rites performed in accordance with his/her religion or belief and the right to seek marital dissolution and obtain it solely in accordance with the acceptable law, without any discrimination.
6. To have the prescriptions of the religion or belief of a deceased person followed in all matters affecting burial, cremation, or other methods of disposal of the dead.
7. To have due account taken of religious holidays and days of rest.
8. To teach or disseminate his/her religion or belief, in public or in private; and to be free from being compelled to take religious or atheistic instruction, contrary to his convictions or, in the case of children, to those of their parents or legal guardians.
9. To train personnel or bring teachers from abroad and to be free from permanent limitations on training abroad.
10. To exemption from compulsory oath-swearing of a religious nature contrary to his/her convictions.
11. To exemption for genuine objectors to military service.
12. To exemption on similar ground from participation in certain public ceremonies.
13. To exemption for priests or ministers of religion from having to divulge information received in confidence in the performance of their religious duties.

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Part III addresses restrictions on religion. Part IV states that public authorities should not make distinctions about the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and prevents individuals or groups from doing so. When there is a conflict between two or more religions, public authorities should try to find solutions, reconciling those demands in a manner ensuring the greatest measure of freedom to the whole society.

ACTIVITY 9.8

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Consider the Draft Principles as you read the article 'Supreme Court Rules in Ohio Prison Case' online at the following link: http://cambridge.edu.au/redirect/8587. Answer the questions that follow.

1. Complete a 5Ws chart about the legal decision on which this article is based.
2. Why were some people opposed to the statute under consideration by the US Supreme Court?
3. Under what circumstances could prisoners' religious requests be refused under the old law?
4. Under what circumstances can prisoners' religious requests be refused under the new law?
5. In what ways does the ruling uphold the Draft Principles? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.
6. In what ways does the ruling contravene the Draft Principles? Use evidence from both texts to support your answer.
7. Is the 2005 US Supreme Court ruling fair? Why, or why not?

9.5 Covenants on human rights

The *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (ICESCR) and the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) were adopted in 1966. The most relevant provisions in the ICCPR are Articles 18, 20 and 27.

Article 18 states that 'no one shall be subject to coercion that would impair his/her freedom to follow or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice'. While there are no problems here regarding the religious practice of the major religions, there have been some difficulties with *shehitah*, the slaughtering of animals according to Jewish tradition (and similar practices in Muslim traditions). Issues related to wearing turbans, skullcaps or veils, or growing facial hair, have required adjudication. Inevitably, some religious rites, customs and rules of behaviour clash with public norms, health or morals and judicial intervention becomes necessary. Other practices have been determined to be more cultural than religious.



FIGURE 9.9 In 2011 France became the first country in Europe to apply a ban on the wearing of full-face coverings or veils, including the Islamic niqab. Some Muslims have protested against the ban claiming it impinges on their religious rights, but others have argued that as the niqab is not encouraged in the Qur'an, it is more a part of Muslim cultural heritage.

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Article 20 (2) of the ICCPR provides: 'Any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence shall be prohibited by law'. Importantly, Article 20 does not require intent.

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People

The 2007 UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People* gives specific elaboration of rights of self-determination for Indigenous, Aboriginal or First Peoples. Article 12 states:

> 1. Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practice, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.
> 2. States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with Indigenous peoples concerned.

And Article 25 states:

> Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Other human rights declarations

Declarations by the Catholic Church

A number of religious traditions have also issued important international declarations on human rights. The Roman Catholic Church issued the decree entitled *Dignitatis humanae* (Of the Dignity of the Human Person) (1965). *Dignitatis humanae*, one of the most significant documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962–5), declares that all people are to be free from coercion in matters concerning religious belief and worship so that they may seek the truth in a manner befitting their human dignity. Christians are exhorted to respect religious freedom as a human right and the document declares that coercion is antithetical to Christian belief and tradition.

FIGURE 9.10 The sign at the base of Uluru, a site sacred to Anangu traditional custodians, indicating it's permanent closure, as of 26 October 2019



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The document states:

> This Vatican Council declares that the human person has a right to religious freedom. This freedom means that all men [sic] are to be immune from coercion on the part of individuals or of social groups and of any human power, in such wise that no one is to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his own beliefs, whether privately or publicly, whether alone or in association with others, within due limits.
>
> The council further declares that the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself. This right of the human person to religious freedom is to be recognized in the constitutional law whereby society is governed and thus it is to become a civil right. (*Dignitatis humanae* no. 2)

The authors continue:

> … The freedom or immunity from coercion in matters religious which is the endowment of persons as individuals is also to be recognised as their right when they act in community. Religious communities are a requirement of the social nature both of man and of religion itself. (*Dignitatis humanae* no. 4)

The Catholic Church emphasised the religious rights of conscience, worship, assembly and education, calling them the 'first rights' of any civic order, and stressed the need for balance between individual and associational rights. The Church also advocated the separation of church and state.

Consequently, the Catholic Church enabled new democratic and human rights movements in Brazil, Chile, Central America, the Philippines, South Korea, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Ukraine.

Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights

The *Universal Islamic Declaration on Human Rights* (Islamic Declaration 1981) is another example of a religious tradition's interpretation of human rights. The Islamic declaration speaks of 'freedom of belief, thought and speech' as well as a person's 'right to freedom of conscience and worship in accordance with his [sic] religious beliefs'. It condemns actions that 'Hold in contempt or ridicule the religious beliefs of others or incite public hostility against them' saying that 'respect for the religious feelings of others is obligatory on all Muslims'. Sections 7 and 8 state:

XII Right to Freedom of Belief, Thought and Speech

a Every person has the right to express his [sic] thoughts and beliefs so long as he remains within the limits prescribed by the Law. No one, however, is entitled to disseminate falsehood or to circulate reports which may outrage public decency, or to indulge in slander, innuendo or to cast defamatory aspersions on other persons.
b Pursuit of knowledge and search after truth is not only a right but a duty of every Muslim.
c It is the right and duty of every Muslim to protest and strive (within the limits set out by the Law) against oppression even if it involves challenging the highest authority in the state.
d There shall be no bar on the dissemination of information provided it does not endanger the security of the society or the state and is confined within the limits imposed by the Law.
e No one shall hold in contempt or ridicule the religious beliefs of others or incite public hostility against them; respect for the religious feelings of others is obligatory on all Muslims.

XIII Right to Freedom of Religion

Every person has the right to freedom of conscience and worship in accordance with his [sic] religious beliefs.

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Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam

The 1990 *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (Cairo Declaration) does not have any articles specifically devoted to religious freedom, but it does cite 'race, colour, language, sex, religious belief, political affiliation and social status' as not permissible bases of discrimination. In linking religion with race and other categories of identity, the Cairo Declaration is a precursor to the more recent connection made between religion, race and ethnicity in 'combating defamation of religions' resolutions that have been introduced by Muslim member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation at the UN in recent years.

9.6 Human rights and the world's major religions

Many religion and human rights issues involve the rights of religious groups to organise as a legal entity. How to negotiate the complex needs of religious groups while at the same time protecting the fundamental rights of their members is a challenge in contemporary society.

Judaism

There is no word or phrase for 'human rights' in the Hebrew scriptures, but the absence of these or related words does not mean the nonexistence of the ideals and values for which they stand. When exploring the idea of human rights in Judaism, rights are closely linked to duties. The Jewish tradition often identifies three types of rights: divine rights that G-d claims for G-d's self; natural rights that all humans claim for themselves, individually or collectively; and Torah rights that Jews claim for themselves, individually or collectively.

In Judaism, a right is a justified claim made by a weaker party upon a stronger party either to do something for the claimant, or to refrain from doing something to or against the claimant. Therefore, a right requires an appropriate response from the person or persons concerned. A right is a 'human right' when it is exercised by a human being for him/her self or for some other human being like a child or an incapacitated person. Human beings have rights by virtue of their being members of humankind. In interpersonal situations, individuals have a twofold right: their claim on another individual person/s; and their claim on the polity where they are living to advocate that right, enforce it as much as possible, and punish violations of that right as much as possible. All rights are essentially public matters. The public is obliged to respect the privacy of individuals and individuals are obliged to respect their own privacy by shielding certain actions from public scrutiny. If there is an abuse of individual rights, such as being physically or sexually abused within a home, there is a social duty of public authorities to rescue an abused member of the family from the abuser. In Judaism, nothing can be kept private from G-d's scrutiny and judgement – hence privacy is relative to inter-human relations: 'Where can I go away from Your spirit and where can I flee from Your presence? If I ascend to heaven You are there; and if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!' (Psalms 139:7–8).

When a right is justified, it entails a justified response or duty on the part of the person to whom the claim is made. The responsive person has an obligation (*hovah* in Hebrew – meaning to owe) to the one claiming on him or her.

In the Jewish tradition, rights-duties operate in three relational spheres in which humans are involved: G-d–human relations; inter-human relations; and community–individual relations. In each of these relational spheres there are both natural rights-duties and Torah rights-duties.

G-d–human relations

Because each person is unique and created in the likeness of G-d (*be-demut Elohim*), humans have a right to justice because humans share with G-d intellect and will. In rabbinic thought, the predominant opinion is that G-d is commanding all humankind to do justice among themselves, to set up courts of law, and to rectify various injustices committed by one human person to another. Responsible human dominion (Genesis 1:28) is to be exercised among humans and also non-humans. Thus, humans only have the right to use G-d's creation for their real needs, plus the duty not to wantonly destroy created beings.

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Inter-human relations

The famous biblical commandment, 'You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against any of your people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself' (Leviticus 19:18), is one of the foundations of Jewish moral law. The commandment of neighbour-love is not a command to feel good about one's neighbour. Rather, the neighbour is loveable insofar as s/he is a human being created in the image of G-d. In other words, the neighbour is essentially loveable in as much as a person is the image of G-d and the essence of humanity. Neighbour-love is a natural right as expressed in the maxim of Hillel the Elder: 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.' The only real difference between Jews and Gentiles regarding the right and duty of neighbour-love is that Jews are commanded to seek out their fellow Jews to be benefited, which is not the case with Gentiles.

Community–individual relations

In Jewish tradition, the relationship between the individual and his/her community is a covenantal relationship of cosmic significance. In Jewish civil law, the most significant difference in the ways Jews are treated and the way Gentiles are treated is in the area of interest on loans. In the Bible and rabbinic sources, Jews are forbidden to both take and pay interest on loans to one another, whereas they may pay interest on money borrowed from Gentiles and charge interest on money lent to Gentiles.

When the State of Israel was first declared in 1948, it was led by Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and the Labor Zionist movement. They viewed Israel as part of the socialist world – the welfare of the group took precedence over the rights of individuals. One distinct feature of Israel at the time was *Kibbutzim*, where people lived and worked within community groupings. The founding socialist structure began to change in the 1970s and 1980s, and by the early 1990s Israel had developed into a liberal capitalist society where the rights of individuals were seen to be equal with the rights of the group.

Israel's situation with the Palestinians has shaped its human rights policy. Suicide bombings, war and military incursions have been a constant part of Israeli life since 1948.



FIGURE 9.11 Workers in the field in Kibbutz Zikim in the 1950s

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Currently, human rights concerns in Israel could be categorised in three ways:

1. Human rights and civil liberties are extended to Israeli Jewish citizens. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, however, are under Israeli military control. Because the Palestinians are not Israeli citizens, they do not have the rights of citizens. The Israeli military is prohibited from violating human rights.
2. Christians, **Druze** and Muslim Arabs who hold Israeli citizenship theoretically share the same legal and human rights as Jewish Israelis. However, many social services in Israel are delivered by Zionist or Jewish welfare agencies. Arab Israelis, in particular, are often unable to benefit from these services.
3. Zionists saw the creation of a Jewish homeland in secular rather than religious terms, yet the state was linked to Jewish religious tradition and culture. One-in-five Israelis are non-Jewish, but the bulk of the population consists of either ethnic or secular Jews. This has led to debates as to whether the state is to be regarded as Israeli or Jewish, and whether it is to be governed by Jewish religious or secular law.

Jewish attitudes towards human rights are influenced by a history of persecution and, in particular, the attempted annihilation of European Jews during World War II. The State of Israel is little more than 70 years old and the population has grown from one million at the time it was founded, to approximately 8.5 million This has mainly been through immigration, which has brought together people from a wide variety of backgrounds and traditions, each with different understandings of human rights. At the same time, Israel has undergone five wars, and lives with the constant threat of terrorism.

The 1998 Report from the UN on Israel says that 'Israel has been quite successful in guaranteeing the freedom of religious practice and use of holy sites to the three monotheistic faiths, particularly for non-Jewish communities', but 'it is more difficult to claim that "freedom of religion" is fully protected, particularly for the Jewish population'. Israel is only now in the process of writing a constitution, which will be founded on human rights.

Druze
a religious community found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories whose traditional religion is said to have begun as an offshoot of Islam

FIGURE 9.12 View of the Temple Mount in Jerusalem



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ACTIVITY **9.9**

Finding and analysing

1 Use a Bible to find the five Jewish scripture references listed in the table below, and complete the table on the Activity Worksheet.

Text	Meaning in your own words	Implications of this text for Jews	Implications of this text for others
Leviticus 19:32–34			
Leviticus 24:22			
Leviticus 19:9–16			
Psalm 15			
Deuteronomy 24:10–13			

2 For each of the following issues addressed by Rabbis for Human Rights (search online for its website), identify and explain whether and how the issue relates to:

- **a** the scripture references in the table you completed
- **b** the UDHR
- **c** economic and social justice: Rabbis for Human Rights organises local communities in their struggle for just economic policies, lobbies in the Knesset to ensure adequate budgetary allocations for the needy, and helps increase public awareness of the plight of the poor while stressing society's responsibility towards them in the light of Jewish tradition
- **d** minority rights
- **e** indentured servants: Rabbis for Human Rights has worked to guarantee healthcare and education to foreign workers and their families, campaigned for legislation to prevent abuse by employers, pressed for adequate law enforcement of foreign workers' rights and sought redress for abuse suffered by workers at the hands of their employers
- **f** women's rights
- **g** interfaith dialogue
- **h** defence of Palestinian human rights
- **i** preventing home demolitions
- **j** agricultural access
- **k** separation barrier: Rabbis for Human Rights works to oppose the route of the separation barrier where it unnecessarily expropriates lands, cuts people off from their fields, divides villages or surrounds them.

Christianity

Christian sacred texts consist of the Bible, which includes the Jewish scriptures (named the Old Testament by Christians) and the Christian scriptures (New Testament), as well as extracanonical writings and doctrinal writings. The Bible has been an anchor text for Christian teaching on human rights, and is filled with passages that have inspired deep theological insights into the nature of rights. The stories of creation in the book of Genesis, particularly

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FIGURE 9.13 Artistic representation of *Moses with the Tablets of the Law* (1624), by Guido Reni, oil on canvas

the first Genesis creation account, 'let us make humankind in our image … So God created humankind in God's image … male and female God created them (Genesis 1:26–8), underscore the ontological foundations of a Christian theory of human dignity, human worth and human rights. Fundamental to Christian understandings of human rights is Mosaic law, which is based on a series of covenants between God and ancient Israel. In these texts, reciprocal rights and duties are elaborated and their amplifications are continued via the biblical prophets. This early Jewish understanding of rights inspired not only the early church fathers and medieval scholastics, but also Protestants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Calvinists, for instance, used the Decalogue, as well as the New Testament, as an organising framework for their understanding of fundamental religious and civil rights.

The New Testament contains many examples of texts related to Christian freedom, including:

- Romans 8:2: 'For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.'
- John 8:32: 'you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.'
- 1 Peter 2:16: 'As servants of God, live as free people, yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil.'

Passages such as these and other teachings on Christian ethics have inspired Christians to work out the meaning of Christian freedom within their church communities. The New Testament also calls for a greater equality among people than prevailed in Greco-Roman culture. Paul's letter to the Galatians states: 'for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.' This message of equality was significantly different from Greco-Roman hierarchies based on nationality, social status and gender. Texts such as this eventually became critical sources for modern progress towards equal protection and treatment of all people before the law, and to domestic and international guarantees of freedom of all from discrimination based on gender, race, culture, ethnicity, social or economic status. The New Testament is radical in its call to treat the 'least' members of society with love, respect and dignity.

Christian theologians and philosophers have also contributed to understandings of human rights. They have shaped the way in which conversations about human rights have developed over time. Despite the New Testament's foundational teachings, historically Christians have not had a perfect record in respecting human rights (e.g. treatment of heretics, slavery, post-Reformation religious intolerance and conversions of Indigenous peoples). On the other hand, Western Christianity was the first religion to recognise and promote religious liberty and freedom. While religious liberty is primarily concerned with individuals, it has group application and community benefits.

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The first move towards religious liberty is seen in the Edict of Milan, in 313 CE, when the Roman emperors Constantine I and Licinius I came to a political agreement to provide citizens with the authority to observe the religion they preferred.

> When I, Constantine Augustus, as well as I, Licinius Augustus, … so that we might grant to the Christians and others full authority to observe that religion which each preferred … that no one whatsoever should be denied the opportunity to give his [sic] heart to the observance of the Christian religion, … Therefore, your Worship should know that it has pleased us to remove all conditions whatsoever, which were in the rescripts formerly given to you officially, concerning the Christians and now any one of these who wishes to observe Christian religion may do so freely and openly, without molestation. … this regulation is made that we may not seem to detract from any dignity or any religion.
>
> Source: Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum*, p. 288.

ACTIVITY **9.10**

Analysing

Design a poster promoting the sentiments contained in the Edict of Milan.

The years immediately after 1945 are known as the golden age of religious liberty declarations. The dominant declaration of the time, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, had direct input from leading Christian thinkers, including the French philosopher Jacques Maritain, Monsignor Roncalli who later became Pope John XXIII, and O. Frederick Nolde, a Lutheran professor from the United States. The World Council of Churches' *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (1948) and the Catholic Church's *Declaration on Religious Liberty* (*Dignitatis humanae*) (1965) made a substantial contribution to the recognition of the human right of religious freedom for Christians. The Christian community universally declared that the foundation of the right to **religious freedom** lies within the dignity of every human being.

religious freedom a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

Human rights and the Catholic Church

The Roman Catholic Church, comprising the majority of Christians, has made slow but steady progress in responding to the human rights agenda. The theological case for human rights is rooted in *imago dei* ('human beings are made in the image of God') and human beings must be understood in relation to other individuals.

The development of human rights language can be traced through England's *Bill of Rights* (1689), the American *Declaration of Independence* (1776) and the French Revolution's *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789), but the Catholic Church rejected such ideas out of suspicion and fear of liberalism's promotion of individualism. Pope Pius VI in his 1791 encyclical *Caritas* (On the Civil Oath in France) condemned the Declaration of the Rights of Man, arguing that the rights to freedom of

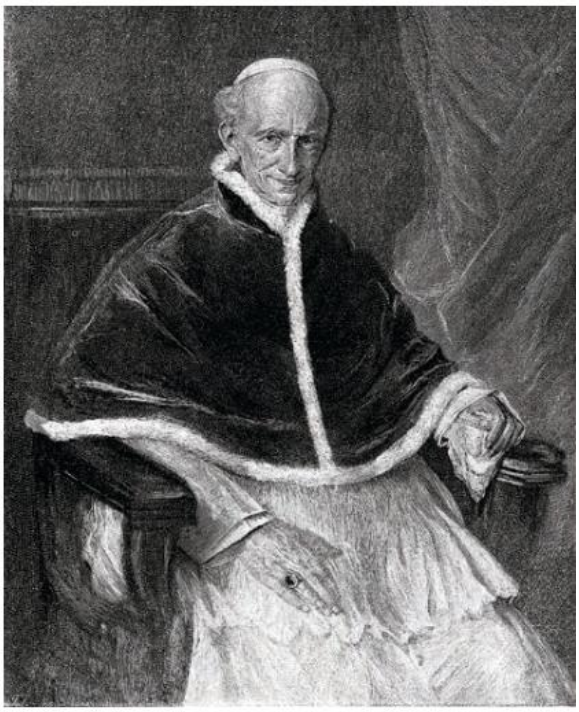


FIGURE 9.14 Pope Leo XIII

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religion and freedom of the press were contrary to the divine principles of the Church. In 1832, Pope Gregory XVI's encyclical *Mirari vos* (On Liberalism and Religious Indifferentism) condemned and refuted indifferentism, freedom of speech, religious liberty, and the separation of church and state. Pope Pius IX condemned the principle of human rights and most modern freedoms, including religious freedom, in his *Syllabus of Errors* (1864). During the nineteenth century, Catholicism was wary, and even held a hostile view of human rights, and perceived Enlightenment ideas that promoted reason, knowledge, freedom and individual happiness as dangerous.

Pope Leo XIII, while possessing a hierarchical view of civil society, overcame his fear of the modern notions of freedom and equality to eventually lead the Catholic Church to embrace religious freedom, human rights and democracy. In the encyclical *Rerum novarum* (On the Condition of Labour) Leo XIII said: 'Man [sic] precedes the State, and possesses, prior to the formation of any State, the right of providing for the substance of his body' (*Rerum novarum*, no. 7). The encyclical also called for the right to a just day's wage for a just day's work, 'a wage that will enable him, housed, clothed and secure, to live a life without hardship' (*Rerum novarum*, no. 46). He also encouraged workers to form unions (*Rerum novarum*, no. 54) to negotiate on behalf of individual members for better working conditions and wages (*Rerum novarum*, no. 57). While *Rerum novarum* presented a defensive position regarding socialism, it nevertheless moved the Church in the direction of social and economic rights, and brought the suffering of the poor, especially exploited workers, into official church teaching.

Pope Pius XII, probably most remembered for his failure to denounce publicly the persecution and attempted extermination of the Jews during World War II, did, to some extent, address questions of civil and political rights in his Christmas messages of 1941 to 1945. The Catholic Church was fearful of totalitarianism, and Pius XII's focus on human rights in the face of this laid the foundations for a more positive engagement of Catholicism with human rights. In a radio broadcast in 1941 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, Pius XII spoke out against the blatant disregard for the basic rights and duties that belong to all members of the human family, saying: 'These are the principles, concepts, and norms, beloved children, with which we should wish even now to share in the future organization of that new order which the world expects and hopes will arise from the seething ferment of the present struggle.'

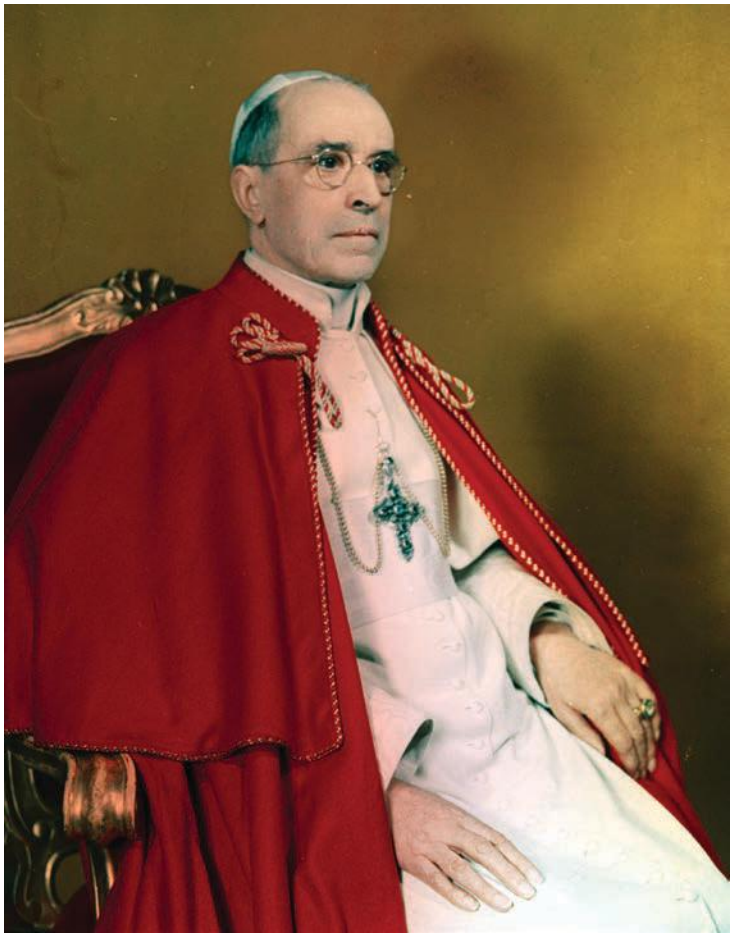


FIGURE 9.15 Pope Pius XII

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He continued the idea of human dignity and rights in his Christmas message in 1942, saying:

> He [sic] who would have the star of peace to shine permanently over society must do all in his power to restore to the human person the dignity which God conferred upon him from the beginning; he must resist the excessive herding together of human beings, as though they were a soulless mass; … He must foster the observance and practical implementing of the following fundamental rights of the person: the right to maintain and develop physical, intellectual. and moral life, … the right to worship God, … the right to work as an indispensable means for the maintenance of family life; the right to the free choice of a state of life, … the right to a use of material goods, subject to its duties and to its social limitations. (Pope Pius XII, 1942)

While the Catholic Church initially struggled to update its thinking in the area of human rights, it was conscious of human rights discourse. The current teaching of the Catholic Church on human rights is relatively new, but it has its grounding in the theological and philosophical anthropology of the human person foundational to Catholic social teaching. Today, Catholic social teaching and engagement with human rights is dramatically different from earlier times and this change was marked by the promulgation of *Pacem in terris* (Peace on Earth; Pope John XXIII, 1963).

Human rights and Catholic social teaching

The incorporation of human rights discourse into the social teachings of the Catholic Church has been a slow and complicated process. The period between World War II and the Second Vatican Council (1962–5) was punctuated by considerable Catholic intellectual engagement with the themes of democracy, human rights and religious freedom, which laid the groundwork for the first systematic treatment of human rights in Catholic social teaching in the encyclical *Pacem in terris*.

FIGURE 9.16 Pope John XXIII



FIGURE 9.17 Jacques Maritain



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Prior to being elected pope, Angelo Roncalli was papal nuncio in Paris in the 1940s and he discussed with René Cassin the possibility of the drafting of the UDHR. Cassin and Charles Malik, a Lebanese philosopher of the Greek Orthodox faith, were both well acquainted with the work of Jacques Maritain, and were members of the UDHR's drafting committee. Roncalli was also influential in ensuring that the Catholic Church made connections with the UN. Ideas from Catholic social teaching were brought into the UDHR by the Latin American delegates who were enthusiastic promoters of social and economic rights, and who continued to play a role during the UN's general debate on the draft Declaration. In 1948, 21 Latin American nations were among the UN's 58 members and they used their power to make amendments based on the *American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man* (Bogota Declaration; 1948). Hence, Catholic social teaching, with its links between freedom and social justice, was one of many influences that contributed to the UDHR.

With the development of the Cold War, human rights discourse was criticised: the Eisenhower State Department dismissed the social and economic provisions of the Declaration as socialistic, and the Soviet bloc nations derided political and civil rights as bourgeois. Throughout the 1950s to 1970s, the Holy See spoke out in relation to human rights in an attempt to uphold the universality principle and the principle of indivisibility, but without influence or impact.

When Pope John XXIII called the Second Vatican Council and spoke of *aggiornamento* (literally 'bringing up to date'), he not only wanted the Church to engage with modernity, but he also wanted it to engage with democracy, religious freedom and human rights.

Pacem in terris, promulgated on 11 April 1963 between the first and second sessions of Vatican II, expressed Pope John XXIII's openness to the world and his concern regarding global social relations, the nature of the human person, and the consequent moral requirements for social and political

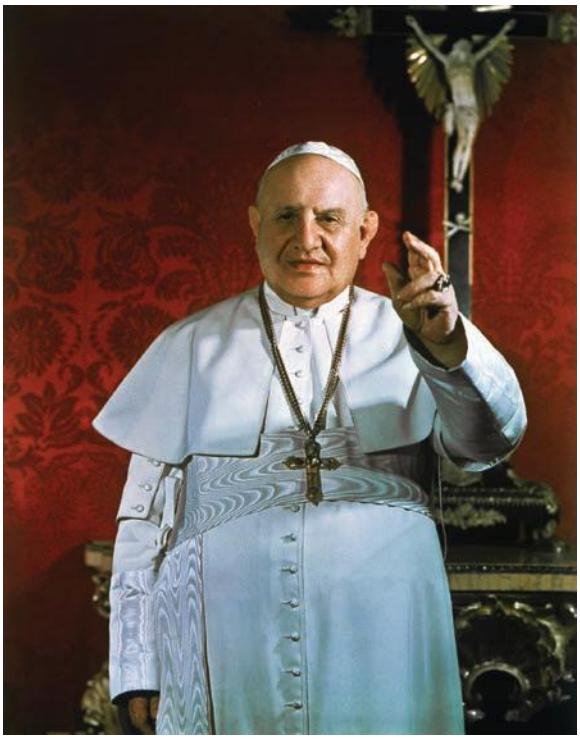


FIGURE 9.18 Pope John XXIII

orders. *Pacem in terris* was the first encyclical to present a sustained discussion of human rights in the context of Catholic social teaching. Breaking with tradition, the encyclical was not just addressed to 'Venerable Brethren, the Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, Bishops, and other ordinaries' but also to 'men and women of good will'. In this encyclical, Pope John XXIII appealed to the anthropological principle that every human being is gifted with intelligence and free will and that s/he has 'rights and duties, which together flow as a direct consequence from his/her nature. These rights and duties are universal and inviolable, and therefore altogether inalienable' (*Pacem in terris*, no. 9.7). John XXIII not only affirmed the work of the UN, particularly the UDHR, but he also elevated the promotion of human rights to a first order priority in the mission of the Catholic Church to the world.

In making reference to the UDHR and the UN, *Pacem in terris* provides a detailed enumeration of the moral, religious, economic, civil and political rights and duties of all people, saying: 'It is a solemn recognition of the personal

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dignity of every human being; an assertion of everyone's right to be free to seek out the truth, to follow moral principles, discharge the duties imposed by justice, and lead a fully human life. It also recognized other rights connected with these' (*Pacem in terris*, no. 144). As a member of the human family, each person has rights and duties. The document provides a comprehensive list of 27 specific rights, beginning with the right to live and to have a livelihood (no. 11); the right to moral and cultural values (nos. 12, 13); the right to worship according to one's conscience (no. 14); the right to choose freely one's state in life (nos. 15–17); the right to emigrate and immigrate (no. 25). It concludes with the right to participate in public affairs and contribute to the common good (nos. 26, 27). While the document does not specify how these rights are prioritised, it nevertheless makes a significant contribution to the Catholic discussion of human rights, and links the conversation with the UN document. *Pacem in terris* also declares that each person should 'make his whole-hearted contribution to the creation of a civic order in which rights and duties are ever more diligently and more effectively observed' (no. 31).

The rights focusing on work and the economy expand ideas presented in earlier Catholic social teaching documents, but one of the major developments within *Pacem in terris* is the endorsement of civil and political rights, which distances it from earlier documents that emphasise the union of church and state. In this document there is a change in how state authority is perceived: moving from a paternalistic one to an understanding of the state's function in terms of protecting human rights. *Pacem in terris* emphasises the relational nature of rights and corresponding duties focusing on interdependence and solidarity rather than an individualistic understanding. John XXIII makes a significant contribution to Catholic social teaching by shifting traditional Catholic opposition to state intervention, saying: 'considerations of justice and equity can at times demand that those in power pay more attention to the weaker members of society, since these are at a disadvantage when it comes to defending their own rights and asserting their legitimate interests' (*Pacem in terris*, no. 56), thereby contributing to the development of liberation theology and the theological concept of the preferential option for the poor.

Pacem in terris places human dignity at the centre of Catholic social teaching by stressing the social and structural mediation of dignity and how dignity is linked to human rights. It also influenced the manner in which the Second Vatican Council viewed human rights and how the Church positioned itself regarding the Constitution on the Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium et spes*, 1965) and the Declaration on Religious Liberty (*Dignitatis humanae*, 1965).

The Catholic Church proclaimed in *Gaudium et spes*: 'The Church, therefore, by virtue of the Gospel committed to her, proclaims the rights of man [sic]' (no. 41), thereby linking human rights with human nature and the core of Christian faith. In *Gaudium et spes* the human person in his or her totality is key to the discussion. The human person is understood as unique, historical, embodied and relational, making fundamental equality universalisable. The Constitution reflects on social and communal dimensions, calling humanity to become 'one family' (no. 24), reflecting the 'exalted dignity proper to the human person … [whose] rights and duties are universal and inviolable' (no. 26). The promotion of human rights was one way in which the Church was to carry out its role as 'she champions the dignity of the human vocation' (no. 21). The desire to fulfil this vocation has led the post-Vatican II Church into the struggle for human rights across the world. A significant focus of *Gaudium et spes* was to provide a theological foundation for the protection and promotion of human rights, thus placing human rights within the mission and ministry of the Church.

Dignitatis humanae – *the Declaration on Religious Liberty*

In *Dignitatis humanae*, the human rights of people, especially that of religious freedom, were brought to the fore. The language used

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reflects that of the UN's documents but at the core of *Dignitatis humanae* is human dignity, rather than human nature, which is essential to religious freedom. Freedom is owed to the person in justice. In *Dignitatis humanae*, the Church adopted the position that the human person has a right to religious freedom, thereby overturning the teaching that church–state union represented the ideal form of the polity. In acknowledging the basic right to religious liberty, the Church redefined its relationship to the whole of political liberalism. According to Regan, 'without the promulgation of this document, human rights could not have taken a core role in the social teaching of the Church, nor could the Church have become the advocate of human rights that it has become in many parts of the world' (2010, pp. 37–8).

Often referred to as the Catholic human rights revolution, *Pacem in terris*, *Gaudium et spes* and *Dignitatis humanae* marked a U-turn in official church teaching regarding liberalism and the notion of human rights. All of these documents stress that human dignity, the foundation on which Catholic social teaching is grounded, can only be achieved through participation in community, making a distinctive Catholic point linking human rights and social solidarity. In turn, human rights are recognised as being essential for the protection of human dignity and for the flourishing of the human community.

Human rights, liberation theology and Catholic social teaching

While the focus on human rights grew increasingly important for the social mission of the Catholic Church during the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, it was not embraced by liberation theologians in Latin America.

It was not until the late 1980s that liberation theologians embraced the human rights agenda. Three phases have been identified: initial rejection, gradual development of critique, and theological and practical engagement.

The first phase, occurring during the 1970s, was one of avoidance, where liberationists shunned rights language because of its connection with Western liberal, individualist notions that to them represented a bourgeois ethic of a self-interested middle class. Liberation theologians avoided the conventional liberal anthropology of human rights and instead focused on the development of a 'new humanity or new society', which was driven by the theological view that the Kingdom of God should include the empowering of the poor. In stark contrast to the encyclical *Pacem in terris*, the Latin American theologian, Gustavo Gutiérres's 1971 work, *A Theology of Liberation*, hardly mentions human rights, and when he does refer to human rights he embeds them within theological themes in a way that draws attention to theological discourse rather than a human rights discourse. There was widespread agreement from the liberationists that human rights language reflected not only the society from which it came but also the ideological biases contained within that society, and, therefore, a new approach should be developed that focused on the group rather than the individual.

The political situation of Latin America in the 1970s was marked by increasing repression under national security governments that initiated neoliberal economic policies via state terror.



FIGURE 9.19 An exhibition devoted to Father Rutilio Grande SJ, who was assassinated in El Salvador in 1977 after speaking out against government oppression of the poor and attempted silencing of priests

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Consequently, the Latin American Catholic Church became increasingly involved in actions to protect people's human rights against dictatorial leaders and state terrorism. The liberationists used symbolic language, including liturgical symbols, to de-legitimise dictatorships and to conscientise the people.

The second phase, prompted by the rise of human rights discourse during the US Presidency of Jimmy Carter (late 1970s–early 1980s), was one of criticism. The liberationists criticised Carter's use of human rights, describing it as an ideological trap and an ideological weapon of imperialism that upheld a morality that was primarily concerned with political and civil rights enforced by a court of law. Such an approach to human rights was seen as deficient as it did not offer the poor a voice, nor did it adequately understand institutional oppression and violence. The critique of the liberationists identified a gap between theory and practice based on the 'universal' nature of human rights and the failure to extend human rights protection beyond first-generation rights. Many scholars pointed out that the societal group from which human rights emerged were the same group who, throughout history, had enabled racism, patriarchy and imperialism to flourish.

The liberationists identified four dangers: the first is that human rights on their own lack a systemic vision and that human rights language does not provide conceptual tools to understand oppression from an institutional perspective. The second danger is that human rights discourse makes the 'capitalist first-world into a model of global citizenship, absolving it of the guilt of the oppression it perpetrates' (Engler, 2000, p. 347). The third danger is the way in which human rights language is used to uphold the rights of the individual while the rights of oppressed minorities may be ignored. The fourth danger focuses on how the language of human rights reflects the experience of the bourgeoisie and relies on their action. Liberationists point out that when the institutional church uses traditional human rights language, it loses its ability as an institution to stand *with* the poor rather than *for* the poor.

In addition, the UN's *Universal Declaration of the Rights of Peoples* (1976), drafted by representatives of people from countries recently freed from colonialism, helped the liberationists to articulate a Catholic-Christian defence of human rights. Their central focus was the grounding of human rights in religious principles rather than secular values, and so they based their distinctive stance on the Catholic principle of the 'image of God' – all people are made in the image and likeness of God. For liberationists, the preferential option for the poor is at the heart of their theology and, therefore, the poor are a social class whose circumstances are the product of systematic exploitation. Liberationists applied the preferential option for the poor to the domain of human rights, enabling them to frame human rights as a set of 'claims in conflict'.

The third phase, which began in the mid-1980s and continues today, demonstrates an engagement with human rights language tempered by theological understanding. Liberation theologians are not only influenced by social and political changes, but also by ecclesial and theological considerations. After criticism from papal authorities in the mid-70s, the liberationists struggled with the tension of the universality of human rights theory and the particularity of the liberation struggle of the poor.

Human rights discourse during this third phase became increasingly associated with the preferential option for the poor. The concept of the option for the poor was influenced by changes in the post-Vatican II Church and its commitment to be in the world rather than separate from the world. Essentially a theological term, the preferential option for the poor is challenging. While it is relatively easy to use in theological discourse, it is more difficult to bring into action. The 'poor' are not a homogeneous group and, initially, little was said about children, women, Indigenous people, people of colour and the multidimensional nature of poverty. What the

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preferential option for the poor does emphasise is that in opting for the poor, people opt for the Reign of God. By emphasising the preferential option for the poor, liberationists have made a significant contribution to breaking the silence of the poor in the Church, and enabling their voices to affect theological thinking, as well as sensitising many to human rights through the voices of those whose reality is poverty. Liberation theology challenges human rights as a boundary (i.e. from the edge, not the centre) discourse of justice and for its failure to speak from the position of the reality of the poor and marginalised.

During the 1980s, Pope John Paul II used the language of human rights to great effect. *Laborum exercens* (On Human Work, 1981), *Sollicitudo rei socialis* (On Social Concern, 1987) and *Centesimus annus* (On the Hundredth Anniversary of *Rerum novarum*, 1991) focus on human personhood and the priority of culture over economics and politics. He insisted that human rights need a culture that fosters solidarity and the responsible exercise of freedom.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community (COMECE) published a special edition of *Europe Infos* in which it distinguished four generations of human rights thinking. The first generation concerns civil and political rights: the prohibition of torture and slavery; and freedom of religion, expression and association. The second generation concerns economic and social rights: the right to work, social security, protection of the family, and rights necessary for the development of the human person. The third generation concerns rights to solidarity, to a healthy environment and to development. The fourth generation concerns rights to safeguard human dignity from abuses of technology and biomedicine. After the Nice summit meeting of the EU in 2000, a fifth generation of rights emerged, including freedom

FIGURE 9.20 Pope Benedict XVI speaks at the UN General Assembly Hall, 18 April 2008, at the UN headquarters in New York



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of scientific research and enterprise, protection of intellectual property, children's rights, access to utilities, and individual equality before the law, and between men and women.

Pope Benedict XVI's address to the UN in 2008 was complimentary regarding human rights, but he was also cautious, identifying nine dilemmas which he saw as clouding the future of the human rights project. The nine dilemmas identified were: cultural relativism, positivism, philosophical relativism, utilitarianism, selective approaches to rights, escalating demands for new rights, hyper-individualistic interpretations of rights, forgetfulness of the relation between rights and responsibilities, and the threat posed to religious freedom by dogmatic forms of secularism.

In the most recent social encyclical from Pope Francis, a contemporary Catholic social teaching understanding of human rights is evident in a new way that acknowledges the inherent dignity of all members of the human family, which becomes the organising basis for global, social and political life, challenging closed nationalisms and calling for solidarity to address the severe inequalities that mark our world.

ACTIVITY **9.11**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Examine the extracts from *The World Council of Churches: Declaration on Religious Liberty* and the Vatican *Declaration on Religious Freedom: Dignitatis humanae* (On the Right of the Person and of Communities to Social and Civil Freedom in Matters Religious, 1965) provided on the Activity Worksheet.

Record your responses in the table provided on the worksheet.

	Individual's entitlements	**State's responsibilities**	**Reasons for religious freedom**
Declaration on Religious Liberty			
Dignitatis humanae			

When you have finished the table, complete these activities.

1 Construct a Venn diagram showing the unique and shared characteristics of these two documents.

2 Does one document appear stronger than the other? Defend your answer in a structured paragraph, using evidence to support your points.

Islam

The Islamic term for human rights is *al-haqq*. However, the meaning of *al-haqq* is not confined to human rights: it is also used for an 'established fact'. In the context of human rights, it means a proven obligation, or an established claim that cannot be denied. For Muslims, Allah is the source and guarantor of rights, and so all rights originate with Allah, and no ruler, government or authority can curtail or violate the human rights conferred by Allah, nor can they be surrendered. Human rights in Islam are an integral part of the overall Islamic order and it is obligatory on all Muslim governments to implement them in letter and in spirit.

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The word *al-haqq* is used in the Qur'an 160 times, each with different connotations of meaning. Some examples of its variant use include:

- As 'proven fact' (Qur'an 36:7): 'The word is proved true against the greater part of them; for they do not believe.'
- As 'ultimate truth' (Qur'an 8:8): 'That He might justify truth and prove falsehood false, distasteful though it be to those in guilt.'
- As 'obligation' (Qur'an: 2:241): 'For divorced women maintenance (should be provided) on a reasonable (scale). This is a duty on the righteous.'
- As 'right' (Qur'an 51:19): 'And in their wealth and possessions (was remembered) the right of the (needy), him who asked and him who (for some reason) was prevented (from asking).'

Al-haqq is also used as the opposite to *dalal*, meaning error. Thus, the word *al-haqq* means different things in different contexts but retains its core meaning as 'meaning the right'.

There are three elements of *al-haqq*, namely:

1 The source of the rights.
2 The person upon whom a right or *al-haqq* is vested.
3 The person or things with which the right is attached.

The normative structure of Islamic human rights is governed by four principles:

1 Rights are given by Allah. Allah is the only cause of existence of any right and no right can emerge or exist merely through human sources. The five sources of legal rights which *sharia* law permits with regard to compulsion or obligation are: command of Allah, the lawgiver; contract; intention of a person; acts of benevolence; and acts that cause damage.
2 There is a hierarchy in rights, so no man or woman can ever alter or suspend these rights. Hence all human rights are inalienable. The rights can only be curtailed in the result of an act done, positive or negative, by the rights holder – the person him/herself.
3 Rights are based on certain norms. The covering norms of human rights include justice, equity, equality, consistency, certainty, transparency, freedom and self-determination. Thus, rights of equality before the law, right to life, and freedom to profess religion become unassailable.
4 Rights have corresponding duties. Acts which are beneficial are desired and those which are harmful are prohibited. Obligation in Islam is of two types: negative duties or mandatory abstention (*haram*) and positive duties or mandatory practice (*fard*).

The rights of human beings or human rights include the following:

1 Right to life.
2 Right to property.
3 Right to honour.
4 Right to protection of intellect.
5 Right to belief.
6 Rights created through contract.
7 Right to do lawful actions (*tassarrufat*).
8 Right not to do unlawful actions.

An Islamic state is obliged to do all the necessary acts to promote or facilitate these rights of individuals. This duty of the state is known as duty to ordain the good (*amr bi al-m'aruf*) and to prevent vice (*nahi 'an al-munkir*).

While focus on the individual is a characteristic of Western civilisation and one of the fundamental ingredients in the development of human rights, this is not the case in Islam. Individualism is not emphasised and Islamic civilisation has not created an intellectual climate conducive to the protection of individual rights and freedoms. Islamic doctrines are the historical products of traditional societies where value is placed on social, family and community structures rather than on individuals. There exists a variety of views about human rights in Islamic societies around the world.

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FIGURE 9.21 A woman shouts slogans marching in support of the Muslim community's 'March Against Sharia' at Foley Square on 10 June 2017 in New York City

The aim of Islamic law is to ensure the wellbeing of the Islamic community, or *umma*. As a consequence, *sharia* doctrines remain idealistic in the sense that they do not provide institutional mechanisms to deal with situations where governments of Islamic states contravene Islamic law and oppress and exploit their subjects.

Profound political and theological differences have divided Muslims since the time of the Prophet's death. *Sharia*, human interpretations of the Qur'an and Sunna of the Prophet, evolved during the first three centuries of Islam and the process included a diversity of opinion among various schools of Islamic jurisprudence (*madhahib*) of the Sunni and Shi'ite traditions, each according to its own methodology of *usul al-fiqh* (the science of sources or the foundation of Islamic jurisprudence).

The modern system of human rights, formulated in international law, came to the Middle East from the West and has been received with either enthusiastic endorsement or hostile rejection by Muslims. It is interesting to note that within the past two centuries, when Muslims sought legal means for deposing dictators, they turned to European constitutional law rather than *sharia* law. Muslims who advocated constitutionalism were often Western educated



FIGURE 9.22 The Grand Mufti of Egypt, Muhammad Abduh

or from secular nationalist movements. They met severe resistance from the conservative *Ulama* (learned men of religion), who fought constitutionalism in the name of preserving Islam and *sharia* law. However, not all of the *Ulama* were against constitutionalism. Muhammad Abduh, the Grand Mufti of Egypt, was a strong supporter of Egyptian nationalism and constitutionalism and saw no conflict between constitutionalism and fidelity to Islam.

Literalist and contextualist approaches

Many people have asked: is Islam compatible with human rights? This question is answered from a variety of different, even opposing, positions. A literalist reading of Islam emphasises the gaps between the limits of tolerance and acceptability in the Qur'an and Hadith, and internationally sanctioned standards for human rights. A literalist reading of Islam has been adopted by two very distinct groups. Traditionalist Muslim leaders, as well as Islamists, have taken up a hostile attitude towards the idea of human rights

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FIGURE 9.23 Muslims protest against the Taliban after it carried out a brutal attack that left at least 95 people dead, in November 2018 in Mumbai, India



FIGURE 9.24 Malala Yousafzai, an activist for female education, addresses guests at ICC Sydney Theatre in December 2018

because it is seen as a neo-colonial attempt at regaining domination over the Muslim world by Western powers. According to this view, the principles enshrined in the UDHR are seen as contravening *sharia*. This perspective is shared by groups such as the Taliban, who argue that the text of the Qur'an and the Hadith is perfect and eternal and anything that contradicts or deviates from the text is forbidden. People holding this position have an underlying belief in the timeless and eternal nature of sacred and related texts.

The literalist approach to Islam has been challenged by Professor Abdullah Saeed and others, who argue that the Qur'an is a compilation of disparate verses that were revealed to the Prophet Muhammad over more than two decades. Reading the text requires interpretation and choice, and Saeed argues that people require context to help give meaning to the text, and that contextualisation offers opportunities to explore the relevance of Islam for contemporary society. This position highlights the compatibility between Islam and human rights, and challenges restrictions on women and religious freedom as being contradictory to the essence of Islam.

Muslim thinkers who interpret Islam from a contextualist perspective see a unity between Allah and humankind where personal devotion is key to the ideal Islamic state. From this perspective, the individual Muslim believer is a conscious actor, and therefore this perspective could be viewed as a humanistic approach. Ali Abootalebi, a former associate of the Iranian President Muhammad Khatami, argued for freedom of thought and expression, indicating that state-imposed gender segregation and dress codes that directly affected women in Iran and Saudi Arabia were an overzealous interpretation of the faith. Other scholars, such as Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, argue for religious neutrality of the state in Muslim communities. Such an approach would enable Muslims to exercise engagement with the human rights regime on their own terms, thereby rejecting the view of human rights as a 'Western' concept imposed on Muslim communities. A humanist approach offers an alternative to a literalist approach and focuses on the importance of values such as justice, consultative government, mercy and compassion as being essential values for Muslim policy.

From the literalist perspective, the dichotomy of *sharia* versus secular law is absolute.

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But the humanist approach moves beyond the apparent dichotomy and questions the assumed contradiction between the two. Professor Tariq Ramadan at the University of Oxford argues that Western-style secular law is very much inspired by the same core values that are at the heart of Islam. He points out that principles of fairness, equity and justice are common to Islamic jurisprudence and secular law and sees no contradiction between them. For him, Muslims in the West can abide by secular rules that govern their country without fear of violating Islamic principles. At the heart of the humanist approach is Islamic reformism, and it is still in its infancy.

Reconciling Islamic rule with the principles of human rights and democratic governance cannot be achieved overnight because it involves fundamental questions about the worth of the individual. The intense examination of women's rights in Islamic thought has given rise to a vibrant debate that is challenging previously entrenched modes of thought. For some, this has led to a reformulation of the bases of enquiry into women's rights and their relationship to the course of Islamic law, and a shift away from a reliance on juristic interpretations to define and determine rights and privileges in Muslim communities. This reflects a broader trend which discusses women's rights in Muslim communities while accommodating a diversity of Muslim women's voices.

ACTIVITY **9.12**

Forming, finding and analysing

1 List some Middle Eastern countries that generally responded to Western ideas about human rights with 'enthusiastic endorsement'. Are Western ideas of rights and/or government still in practice in these countries?

2 List some Middle Eastern countries that generally reacted to Western ideas about human rights with 'hostile rejection'. What styles of government do these countries have today?

'Islamic' human rights declarations

There are two declarations on human rights from the perspective of Islam. The first, the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* (UIDHR) released in 1981, was created by the Islamic Council in Paris and London and restated basic human rights using the language of Islamic jurisprudence. The UIDHR is based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah, and was, according to the Foreword to the document, compiled by eminent Muslim scholars, jurists and representatives of Islamic movements and thought. The *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam* (CDHRI) was declared by the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in Cairo on 5 August 1990. Described as an Islamic response to the UN's UDHR, it guarantees many of the same rights as the UDHR but restricts them according to the limits set out by *sharia*. Some of the restrictions impact directly on women and members of other religions as they do not have the same rights as men under *sharia*. Freedom of expression is also limited for religious reasons because blasphemy may be punishable by death.



FIGURE 9.25 Members of an Indonesian Islamic group demonstrate in front of a sign illustrating Jakarta Governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, better known as Ahok, in February 2017 in Jakarta, Indonesia. The protestors were demanding the governor be suspended for blasphemy.

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ACTIVITY 9.13

Finding, analysing and evaluating

Use a search engine to locate a copy of the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights*.

1 Read the 23 articles of the Declaration. Complete a PMI chart.
2 What are the key ways in which the *Universal Islamic Declaration of Human Rights* is similar to and different from the UDHR? Quote from the documents to support your claims.

Locate the text of the *Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam*.

3 Read the 25 articles of the Declaration. Complete a PMI chart.
4 What are the key ways in which the Cairo Declaration is similar to and different from the UDHR document. Quote from the documents to support your claims.

TABLE 9.2 Basic differences between the UDHR, the UIDHR and the CDHRI

Theme	UDHR 1948	UIDHR 1981	CDHRI 1990
Equality	All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. (Article 1)	As Muslims we believe g) in our obligation to establish an Islamic order: i) wherein all human beings shall be equal and none shall enjoy a privilege or suffer a disadvantage or discrimination by reason of race, colour, sex, origin or language; ii) wherein all human beings are born free; (Preamble)	… All men are equal in terms of basic human dignity and basic obligations and responsibilities, without any discrimination on the basis of race, colour, language, belief, sex, religion, political affiliation, social status or other considerations. The true religion is the guarantee for enhancing such dignity along the path to human integrity. (Article 1a)
Life	Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person. (Article 2)	Human life is sacred and inviolable and every effort shall be made to protect it. In particular no one shall be exposed to injury or death, except under the authority of the Law (Sharia). (Article 1)	Life is a God-given gift and the right to life is guaranteed to every human being. It is the duty of individuals, societies and states to safeguard this right against any violation, and it is prohibited to take away life except for a Shari'ah prescribed reason. (Article 2a) There shall be no crime or punishment except as provided for in the Shari'ah. (Article 19d)

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TABLE 9.2 *Continued*

Theme	UDHR 1948	UIDHR 1981	CDHRI 1990
Degrading treatment	No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. (Article 5)	Every person has the right to protection against harassment by official agencies. He [sic] is not liable to account for himself except for making a defence to the charges made against him or where he is found in a situation wherein a question regarding suspicion of his involvement in a crime could be *reasonably* raised. (Article VI) No person shall be subjected to torture in mind or body, or degraded, or threatened with injury either to himself [sic] or to anyone related to or held dear by him, or forcibly made to confess to the commission of a crime, or forced to consent to an act which is injurious to his interests. (Article VII)	Safety from bodily harm is a guaranteed right. It is the duty of the state to safeguard it, and it is prohibited to breach it without a Shari'ah-prescribed reason. (Article 2d)
Marriage and family	Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution. (Article 16)	Every person is entitled to marry, to found a family and to bring up children in conformity with his religion, traditions and culture. Every spouse is entitled to such rights and privileges and carries such obligations as are stipulated by the Law (Sharia). (Article XIX a)	… Men and women have the right to marriage, and no restrictions stemming from race, colour or nationality shall prevent them from exercising this right. (Article 5a) Woman is equal to man in human dignity, and has her own rights to enjoy as well as duties to perform, and has her own civil entity and financial independence, and the right to retain her name and lineage. (Article 6a)

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TABLE 9.2 *Continued*

Theme	UDHR 1948	UIDHR 1981	CDHRI 1990
Freedom of religion	Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [sic] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance. (Article 18)	Every person has the right to freedom of conscience and worship in accordance with his [sic] religious beliefs. (Article XIII)	Islam is the religion of true unspoiled nature. It is prohibited to exercise any form of pressure on man or to exploit his [sic] poverty or ignorance in order to force him to change his religion to another religion or to atheism. (Article 10)
Freedom of opinion and expression	Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. (Article 19)	Every person has the right to express his thoughts and beliefs so long as he [sic] remains within the limits prescribed by the Law. No one, however, is entitled to disseminate falsehood or to circulate reports which may outrage public decency, or to indulge in slander, innuendo or to cast defamatory aspersions on other persons. (Article XIIa) No one shall hold in contempt or ridicule the religious beliefs of others or incite public hostility against them; respect for the religious feelings of others is obligatory on all Muslims. (Article XIIe)	Everyone shall have the right to express his [sic] opinion freely in such manner as would not be contrary to the principles of the Shari'ah. (Article 22a) Information is a vital necessity to society. It may not be exploited or misused in such a way as may violate sanctities and the dignity of Prophets, undermine moral and ethical values or disintegrate, corrupt or harm society or weaken its faith. (Article 22c)
The Declaration's authority	These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations. (Article 29.3)		All the rights and freedoms stipulated in this Declaration are subject to the Islamic Shari'ah. (Article 24)

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ACTIVITY 9.14

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Complete a three-way Venn diagram showing the similarities and differences in the three declarations listed in Table 9.2.
2 Use the information gathered to shape a hypothesis regarding human rights in Islam.

> All human rights are universal, indivisible and interdependent and interrelated. The international community must treat human rights globally in a fair and equal manner, on the same footing, and with the same emphasis. While the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds must be borne in mind, it is the duty of States, regardless of their political, economic and cultural systems, to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms. (para 5)

Eastern approaches to human rights

A key feature of Asian societies is that many are built around religious concepts and that the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism are in accord with the freedoms and rights of the UDHR.

Buddhism in the *Singalovada Sutta* spells out the duties of a householder to the six quarters. He is required to treat, 'the parents as the East, teachers as the South, the spouse and offspring as the West, friends and companions as the North, servants and work people as the nadir and the religious as the zenith'.

Within Asian culture, the family is the focal point of unity. However, according to the conventional human rights approaches, emphasis is placed on the rights of the individual. This is a basic deviation from the concept of human rights as seen from an Asian perspective, where family rights and community relations figure prominently, and provides some explanation as to the emphasis on group rights rather than on individual freedoms.

Participants of the Asian Regional Preparatory Meeting held in Bangkok in April 1993, while recognising the universality of human rights, stressed the importance of national and regional particularities and culture, religious and historical backgrounds. Asian leaders claim that there is a difference based on cultural perspectives when it comes to human rights. This distinction has been termed 'situational uniqueness' and is reflected in the UN's Vienna Declaration (1993), which states:

At a meeting held in preparation for the 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights, the Asian position was laid out in the Bangkok Declaration 1993. An important aspect of Asian perspectives on human rights in the Bangkok Declaration is the statement discouraging any attempt to use human rights as a conditionality for extending development assistance. Asian governments point out that human rights should be developed from within and should not be imposed from outside. However, an unfortunate result of enforcing these conditions is that it is the poor who suffer from withdrawal of aid. The violators of human rights, who in some instances are the rulers in these countries are unlikely to be affected.

Human rights in the Asian region have been nurtured by Asian societies for centuries. In some instances, the teachings of Hinduism and Buddhism have gone beyond the standards set down in present-day human rights documents, indicating a strong religious backing for human rights. It is therefore important that due regard should be paid to religious particularities including historical, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Hinduism

Just as there are many understandings of Hinduism, there are also many understandings of human rights within Hinduism. For some people, Hinduism invokes negative mental images of religious domination, reinforced by ancient fixed codes, leading to religiously sanctioned

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abuses of power such as today's gender-related and caste-based discriminations. Some point to human rights violations, but these may be more correctly identified as Hindu nationalism rather than Hinduism.

For example, the Gujarat riots of 2002 were a three-day period of inter-communal violence in the Indian state of Gujarat, prompted by the burning of a train, which caused the deaths of 58 Hindu pilgrims returning from Ayodhya. This instigated a series of violent attacks that continued for approximately 12 months and resulted in the deaths of over a thousand people, with another 2500 injured. Many scholars identified Hindu nationalism, specifically *Hindutva* (Hinduness), as the root cause of the violence, and consequently Hinduism and human rights were seen as irreconcilable.

Historically, some Western commentators have referred to Hindu religion and culture as a collection of backward normative systems, violating basic human rights. Well before the Christian era, Vedic Hindus struggled over the right way to lead a good life for all humans and even other creatures. The *Brahmin* elite began to assert privilege by constructing elaborate rituals focusing on higher consciousness, right knowledge and action to claim privilege and power to the exclusion of others. Using this as evidence, many commentators have indicated that the *Brahmins* did not develop human rights but rather cultivated their own caste-based interest. Another challenge to human rights has emerged through the development of *Hindutva*, where religious 'others' – Buddhists, Jains, Chinese, early Jewish and Christian traders and later Muslims followed by various denominations of Christianity – were discriminated against.

There is nothing in Hinduism that explicitly addresses human rights. Sanskrit has no word for 'right'. Theoretically, the caste system is meant to be a relationship of mutual benefits; however, the system does not always work that way, and more often than not is discriminatory, particularly for those in the lowest caste. The lives of women and the lives of the Dalit, the untouchables, is exceedingly difficult. In the last few years, groups of Hindu women, for example, have called for the application of human rights as described in the UDHR.

More recently, protecting human rights in India has involved antagonism between religious groups. After the assassination of Indira Gandhi (1917–1984) by her Sikh bodyguards, violence between Hindus and Sikhs erupted. More than 3000 Sikhs were killed, and their businesses destroyed. In the early 1990s, violence flared between Hindu nationalists and Muslims, instigated by the demolition of a mosque in Ayodhya. In 1999, the Australian Christian missionary Graham Staines and his two sons were killed in Orissa, and in 2002 Christian churches were attacked by members of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) right-wing paramilitary organisations.

FIGURE 9.26 Indira Gandhi



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FIGURE 9.27 Cows that have been rescued from smugglers are seen at a rescue shelter in November 2015 in Ramgarh, Rajasthan, India. The local 'cow vigilante' group is one of dozens of such hardline Hindu cow protection vigilante groups operating across India.

Cows are considered sacred animals in Hindu majority India and cow slaughter is forbidden in most parts of the country. However, beef is consumed by members of other religious groups, such as Christians and Muslims, as well as other ethnic minorities. Consequently, 'cow protection' groups have spread all over the country. Hindu leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which came to power in May 2014, want to enforce a ban on all cattle trading. Members of the party have increasingly used the media to spur on a violent vigilante campaign against beef consumption and those linked to beef production. Between May 2015 and December 2018, 44 people, 36 of them Muslims, were killed in 12 Indian states. The attacks have been led by 'cow protection' groups claiming to be affiliated to militant Hindu groups that often have ties to the BJP.

The 'cow protection' violence has significantly impacted the livelihoods of those linked to livestock, including farmers, herders, cattle transporters, meat traders and leather workers. The victims are largely Muslim or from the Dalit and Adivasi (Indigenous) communities.

Many Indians believed that adherence to the UDHR would overcome cultural differences and religious tensions such as those described above. Some human rights activists have noted, however, that this has not happened for Hinduism because human dignity rests on social duties and social hierarchies.

Rights language is problematic when applied to Hindu family or society, which is basically hierarchical in structure. While women in India have constitutional and legal rights, these rights remain relatively untapped for a variety of reasons, one of which is the concept of *dharma*. *Dharma* has a wide range of meanings, including duty, righteousness, eternal law, conduct, behaviour and morality, but it has more to do with duty than rights. Ideas regarding 'duty' apply equally to men and women, who have a *dharma* to each other and to the family, but an undue emphasis is placed on the woman's duty to her husband. In addition, a person's place in the family hierarchy has to do with age, gender and seniority. Younger male and female family members are expected to show deference to older members.

Duties are not the same as rights. In a duty-based society, a person's place in the world is linked to their duties. *Dharma* refers to ethics and moral behaviour, and so writings on *dharma* have informed the Indian constitution and understandings of human rights. For Hindus,

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dharma texts prescribe a person's duties and responsibilities in terms of gender, caste and stage of life. Rather than seeing one set of human rights as the norm for all, *dharma* texts specify a person's responsibilities and rights in terms of a social context.

The UDHR stresses individual rights. Hinduism, on the other hand, stresses *svadharma*, or collective identity. Collective identity means that one is interacting with an extended family, caste and even non-humans. A distinction is made between *saamanya dharma* and *svadharma*. *Saamanya* is basic and common to everyone while *svadharma* is relative and specific to occupations or callings derived from birth (not caste). *Svadharma* is subordinate to *saamanya dharma*: if there is a conflict between different values what is ultimately good for the welfare of all beings is what is considered as Truth (*Shanti Parva* 329-13). Thus, the ultimate test of what is moral is what promotes the welfare of all.

Compassion and help to others in need is a highly cherished value in Hinduism, emanating from the Vedic phrase *Daan* (charity), and is recognised as the most potent way of earning *punya* (merit). *Padmapuranam* declares: 'those who feed the crippled, the blind, children, the old, the ill, those helpless and pinched by penury, will enjoy bliss in heaven; there is not end to the *punya* accumulated by constructing wells and tanks, where aquatic animals and those moving on land drink water when they desire, for life is centred on water.' The *Bhagavad Gita* also values generosity and charity, adding that it should be given without any contempt towards the beneficiary.

The Indian constitution lists an impressive series of 'fundamental rights' but does not ground them in anything.

While there are no human rights, in the modern Western sense, in traditional Hindu thought, some scholars consider that the concept of *dharma* serves as a functional, albeit imperfect, parallel to the UDHR's idea of rights.

ACTIVITY **9.15**

Analysing and evaluating

Examine the following extracts from the Indian Constitution.

- **14** Equality before law. The state shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- **15** (2) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them, be subject to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to:
  - **a** Access to shops, public restaurants, hotels and place of public entertainment; or
  - **b** The use of wells, tanks, bathing ghats, roads and places of public resort maintained wholly or partly out of State funds or dedicated to the use of the general public.
- **23** Prohibition of traffic in human beings and enforced labour
  - **1** Traffic in human beings and beggars and other similar forms of forced labour are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.
- **24** Prohibition of employment of children in factories. No child below the age of fourteen years shall be employed to work in any factory or mine or engaged in any other hazardous employment.

1 Which extracts correspond with rights in the UN Declaration?
2 How might an understanding of *dharma* be applied to the extracts chosen? Provide evidence to support your claims.

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Buddhism

Like Hinduism, Buddhism focuses on duties and responsibilities over rights. Traditionally, Buddhists have focused on perfecting the individual through cultivating right behaviour, meditation and personal insight, rather than on reforming society. Consequently, Buddhists have not developed a comprehensive social philosophy and there is nothing in the sacred texts or in the Theravada tradition that directly advocates radical social transformation. The ultimate goal, according to Buddhism, is the elimination of the independent self.

Buddhist doctrine describes the world through the enlightened eyes of the Buddha. His teachings, the *Dharma*, include liberation from the cycle of *samsara* and rebirth. If the traditional idea of *karma* is taken at face value, the question of rights does not occur, as one's rebirth is determined by prior *karma*. Despite this, scholars agree that Buddhist teachings are compatible with the goals of contemporary human rights. Contemporary Buddhist activists continue to rely heavily on the language of human rights as an integral part of their work.

FIGURE 9.28 Buddhist activists use the language of human rights in their work.



One of the clearest statements on human rights within Buddhism comes from the contemporary Thai monk Phra Prayudh Payutto. Payutto says: 'society is based on selfish interest and ethical concepts such as "human rights" are needed to keep everybody from cutting each other's throats in the process.'

Nevertheless, Payutto believes that human rights systems have three flaws:

1. Human rights arise from cut-throat conditions.
2. They are not part of the natural order (*dharma*).
3. They pertain to the social realms.

In contrast, Buddhist ethical matters pertain to individual motivation. Payutto offers a 'positive ethic', which stresses compassion, harmony, cooperation and wisdom.

While the concept and content of human rights is acceptable to some Buddhists, there is debate among Buddhist schools as to whether the idea of human rights has a philosophical justification within the overall Buddhist vision of the individual and social good.

Buddhist justifications of human rights

Buddhists who embrace human rights have offered explanations about how they are able to ground this embrace of human rights within Buddhist concepts, principles and values. Traditional Buddhism has no concept of a 'right'. However, Buddhism does assign a high value to human beings, and proclaims the equality of human beings as well as advocating for moral behaviour, non-violence and human freedom. The Five Lay Precepts instruct Buddhists not to kill, steal, lie, commit sexual misconduct or ingest intoxicants. These form the foundation of Buddhist justifications for embracing human rights.

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Buddhist concerns about human rights

One of the fundamental teachings of Buddhism is the teaching of *anatman* or 'no-self'. According to this teaching, there is no entity of any kind constituting the core or foundation of human identity. When invoking rights, the inevitable effect is emphasising individuals and their status, thereby strengthening the illusion of self. There is a fear that human rights may lead to self-aggrandisement on the part of individuals who claim their rights. One way to address this, however, is by considering how human rights language is used. In Tibet, for instance, protection of rights is group-focused with an emphasis on free speech, rather than being focused on individual rights.

In 1962, thirteen years after the UDHR was declared, the 14th Dalai Lama declared that the UDHR was compatible with the principles taught by the Buddha. Since then, defence of human rights has been a theme in his speeches and writings. The Dalai Lama has encouraged the Tibetan people, who have been oppressed by the Chinese Government since 1950, to defend themselves using non-violent Buddhist principles, saying that the Buddhist principle of compassion for others is related to human rights. The Dalai Lama is also an environmentalist and he emphasises the interdependence of all things: 'compassion and altruism require not only that we respect human beings, but also that we respect, take care of, and refrain from interfering with other species and the environment.' On the whole, this represents the views of a number of contemporary Buddhist social and political activists, known as Engaged Buddhists, who represent a worldview of interdependence and compassion.



FIGURE 9.29 Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama during a press conference in April 2019 in New Delhi, India

Some Asian governments argue that the UDHR cannot be applied to Asia because human rights are based on Western standards and are not applicable to other cultures. Buddhist scholars, on the other hand, argue that rights are implicit within the core of *Dharma*, from which it is possible to derive a Buddhist doctrine of human rights. There are those who argue that the Western-based notion of human rights is also inconsistent with the Buddhist doctrine of 'no-self'. Nevertheless, many Buddhist ideals lead in the direction of human dignity and Buddhists are encouraged to live with compassion, to be generous and to work for the cessation of suffering, and to strive for the happiness of all creatures.

Buddhism entered the West over 150 years ago and the Buddhism of Western converts has been influenced by Western liberal democracy. Western Buddhism has embraced social activism more than Buddhism has in Asia, and much has been written on human rights by Western Buddhists over the past few decades. Western Buddhism focuses on compassion, non-harm, mutual dependency, no-self and the dignity of human beings that comes from their potential enlightenment. Leading Asian and Western Buddhists express their concern about social injustice using the language of human rights.

While most scholars agree that the content of various human rights is acceptable for Buddhists, they disagree in their evaluation of the idea of human rights in itself. Some Buddhists criticise the idea of human rights because it promotes the idea of an ego and the illusion of self. The Thai political reformer, Bhikkhu Buddhadasa, says the priority of every political system must be the wellbeing of the community and for this to happen the individual must be unequivocally subordinate. Moreover, the concept of freedom is highly ambiguous. For Buddhadasa, true freedom consists in conquering all selfish tendencies.

During the 1990s, a number of non-Buddhist Asian political leaders, supported by China,

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ignited a controversy called the 'Asian values' debate by saying that human rights were a part of Western culture and therefore exclusively individualistic. They claimed that human rights did not suit Asian culture, which was inherently communitarian. Some countries such as China, Vietnam and Myanmar (Burma) used this argument to distract attention from considerable violations of human rights within their own states, or to escape international criticism. In contrast to this claim, Engaged Buddhists have incorporated the language of human rights into their campaigns to bring about fundamental political change in their home countries.

The most significant examples of Buddhist usage of human rights language is found in Tibet, Cambodia and Myanmar. Since 1959, the Chinese annexation and occupation of Tibet has resulted in the deaths of over one million Tibetans from direct causes, such as executions, torture and labour camps, and indirect causes, such as famine resulting from Chinese agricultural policies. The International Commission of Jurists announced in 1959 and 1960 that there was a prima facie case of genocide against China in Tibet, and that specific human rights had been violated by the Chinese Government in Tibet, including: the right to self-determination; freedom of religion, speech, assembly and movement; freedom of the press; and the right to peaceful protest.

In Cambodia, between one and two million people, of a population of seven million, were killed during the rule and auto-genocide of the Khmer Rouge in the 1970s. The legacy of the Khmer Rouge era has been significant loss of traditional Buddhist-based morality. In an effort to rebuild order and trust, the Buddhist community and some secular Cambodian NGOs have combined their efforts to teach basic Buddhist morality together with international human rights. The Cambodian Institute for Development and Human Rights has developed a human rights teaching methodology which has trained over 25 000 teachers in how best to convey messages about human rights, peace, democracy and non-violence. Cambodian Buddhist leaders affirmed that human rights were consistent with Buddhist



FIGURE 9.30 Maha Ghosananda

teaching. Maha Ghosananda (1929–2007), a Cambodian Buddhist monk who led peace walks (*dhammayietra*) during the political turmoil, said that the 'Cambodian people must obtain all basic human rights, including rights of self-determination and rights to freely pursue economic, social and cultural development'. Today, Buddhist monks are trained in human rights as part of their preparation to teach and they are expected to include instruction in human rights in their sermons.

An array of human rights abuses has been reported in Myanmar since 2011. Millions of people have been pressed into forced labour on construction projects or as porters for the Myanmar army. Myanmar juntas' use of forced labour is widespread, particularly throughout the country's rural ethnic areas. In efforts to cloak itself with a Buddhist aura, the junta has moved to marginalise those residents who are non-Buddhist, especially if they are ethnically distinct from the dominant Burmese. Karen Christians in northern Myanmar have suffered and some of their places of worship have been destroyed and replaced with new buildings such as hotels. The most significant violence and discrimination has been against Rohingya Muslims.

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FIGURE 9.31 In Kolkata, India, people gather at the Myanmar Consulate to protest against the killing of Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar

During 2017 and 2018, hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims fled Rakhine State to neighbouring Bangladesh. Increased religious intolerance and anti-Muslim sentiment in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar continued beyond that. The violence is wide-ranging, including: Rohingya women and girls being raped and experiencing other forms of sexual violence; villages being burned; and landmines being laid. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights has described what is happening as ethnic cleansing. Armed conflict between the military and ethnic armed groups in northern Myanmar has intensified, causing mass displacement. Aung San Suu Kei, the de facto leader, once hailed as a human rights supporter, has presided over a government that allows prosecutions of journalists and human rights activists. The military remains the country's most powerful institution, with control of key ministries.

The fundamental Buddhist assumption about human nature, that is common to all Buddhist traditions, is that humans will, unless they have disciplined their desires (*tanha*), act in ways that generate consequences that are manifested as *dukkha*. While *dukkha* is usually referred to as suffering, it is more accurately understood as the cessation of pleasure (*sukkah*). Of the Five Precepts – abstaining from taking life, from taking what is not given, from wrong conduct in sexual desires; from telling lies; and from intoxicating liquors that occasion heedlessness – the first four expressed can be seen as entailing rights, since duties are based on the relations one has with others. Consequently, the interrelatedness of people is connected to human rights.

In addition to the UDHR, therefore, it is important to consider intercultural and interreligious questions that emphasise social and moral responsibility alongside human rights. In 1997, UNESCO held a meeting of philosophers representing a wide range of religious and philosophical traditions. At the meeting they concluded that the rule of law and human rights depended on the readiness of people to act justly, because rights without the corresponding commitment to responsibilities cannot endure. They proposed a Universal Declaration of Human Responsibilities consisting of 22 Articles, the first of which is: Every human being, regardless of social origin, sex, property, colour, language, nationality or religion, ought to be treated humanely.

ACTIVITY 9.16

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Prepare A5-sized fact cards about the activist work of Maha Ghosananda and the Dalai Lama.

2 To what extent do you agree with the claim that the Buddhist principles of compassion, non-harm, mutual dependency, no-self and the dignity of human beings concur with the ideas underpinning the UDHR? Use quotes from the UDHR to support your answer.

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9.7 China and human rights

China has a particularly poor reputation for human rights, especially as they relate to religion. Instances of human rights breaches are common throughout the country. Since President Bi Jinping assumed power in China in 2013, the government has detained and prosecuted hundreds of activists and human rights lawyers and defenders. The government's highly repressive rule in the ethnic minority regions of Xinjiang and Tibet persists. In addition, the Chinese authorities have detained Uyghurs and other Turkic Muslims in political education camps for perceived disloyalty to the government and Chinese Communist Party (CCP). People in these camps are subjected to forced political indoctrination, and they are also required to renounce their faith.

In Qinghai province, Tibetan children are forbidden to attend classes in local monasteries to learn the Tibetan language. The classes, run by monks in the school holidays, have been described by the CCP as 'harmful' and 'dangerous'. Preventing Tibetan children from contact with monks and monasteries fuels Tibetan fears that China is increasingly restricting Tibetan culture and religion. In 2017, during the month when many Tibetans visit monasteries to perform religious rituals, parents in Lhasa were instructed not to allow their children to engage in any superstitious or religious activity. In Chamdo, the third-largest city in the Tibet Autonomous Region, parents were warned that where children missed any days of school and were later found to have been secretly taken to a monastery or religious festival, the family would be reported to the city education bureau. In areas where populations practise a particular faith, such as Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang or Buddhists in Tibet, such restrictions deny children who belong to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities the right to their culture, to profess and practise their religion, and to use their own language.



FIGURE 9.32 Uyghur human rights activists in France participate in a demonstration to protest against Chinese Government policy in Uyghur

In recent years, religion has become more important in China. As interest in religion has increased, so too has state control over religious organisations. The Chinese Government believes that religions breed disloyalty, separatism and subversion. Under communism, China is officially an atheist country, but there are currently 19 million Muslims in China, and conversions to Christianity have significantly increased in recent years. The Chinese Government sees Christianity and Islam as threats, as well as being vehicles of foreign influence. The government is also keenly aware of the role the Catholic Church played in Eastern Europe during the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the dismantling of communism.

The government exercises control over religion by making each religion register with the State Council's Religious Affairs Bureau. The Bureau monitors religious training, meetings, publications and the funding of religious activities. Religious activists still face the threat of long-term imprisonment and physical abuse by security forces in China. The government's argument that control of religion is strictly in accordance with the law is the same argument it applies to political dissent. The government engages in public re-education and campaigns promoting 'socialist spiritual civilisation' and patriotism, as an antidote to religion. This type of control over religious activities violates the

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right to freedom of association, assembly and expression, as well as freedom of religion.

Since 1996, Chinese leaders have consistently repeated three guiding principles for managing religions: adaptation to socialist society; supervision according to the law; and correct and comprehensive implementation for the party's religious policy. Since the 1990s, the government has regularly cited violations of Chinese law as a pretext for dismantling churches, monasteries, mosques, temples and congregations.

ACTIVITY 9.17

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1. What has been the Chinese Government's approach to religious freedom in Tibet and Xinjiang and to Christianity in China?
2. Locate at least four different media reports related to one of the above. Analyse the reports using the lens of the UN's UDHR.
3. What conclusions can you draw?
4. Create a hypothesis related to religion and human rights in China.

9.8 Australia and human rights for Indigenous peoples

In 1770, Captain James Cook arrived on Australian shores and declared the country *terra nullius* (land belonging to no one) even though it was clear that Australia was occupied by Aboriginal people. European settlement denied the rights of Aboriginal people, who suffered not only loss of land but also died from introduced diseases and deliberate killings. From approximately 300 000 Indigenous people in 1770, the Indigenous population today has decreased significantly. Additionally, in the early twentieth century the government policy of removing children from their Indigenous families and placing them in either group homes or with white families has had a serious impact on Indigenous languages and culture.



FIGURE 9.33 A group of children classified as 'half-caste' and 'quadroon' in Darwin. These terms are offensive.

Recent statistics indicate that:

- the infant mortality rate for Indigenous Australians is more than three times the national average
- suicide rates are six times higher for Indigenous Australians than for other Australians
- Indigenous Australians are imprisoned at 14 times the national average
- Indigenous Australians are 16.5 times more likely than non-Indigenous people to die in custody.

The year 2016 marked the 25th anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The commission recommended that imprisonment of Indigenous people convicted of crimes be a sanction of last resort. However, since 1991, over 340 Indigenous people have died in custody.

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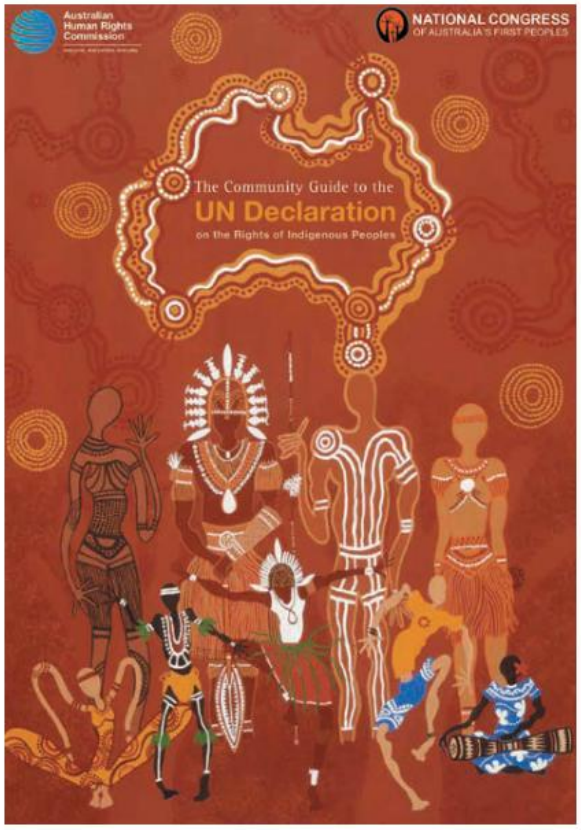


FIGURE 9.34 Cover of the *Community Guide to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*

In 2007, the UN adopted the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. The Australian Government pledged its support for the Declaration in April 2009. The following articles specifically refer to religious and spiritual traditions of Indigenous peoples.

Article 12

1 Indigenous peoples have the right to manifest, practise, develop and teach their spiritual and religious traditions, customs and ceremonies; the right to maintain, protect, and have access in privacy to their religious and cultural sites; the right to the use and control of their ceremonial objects; and the right to the repatriation of their human remains.

2 States shall seek to enable the access and/or repatriation of ceremonial objects and human remains in their possession through fair, transparent and effective mechanisms developed in conjunction with indigenous peoples concerned.

Article 25

Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain and strengthen their distinctive spiritual relationship with their traditionally owned or otherwise occupied and used lands, territories, waters and coastal seas and other resources and to uphold their responsibilities to future generations in this regard.

Article 34

Indigenous peoples have the right to promote, develop and maintain their institutional structures and their distinctive customs, spirituality, traditions, procedures, practices and, in the cases where they exist, juridical systems or customs, in accordance with international human rights standards.

ACTIVITY **9.18**

Analysing and evaluating

1 How has religion been used as a well-meaning but misguided justification for the way in which Indigenous Australians were treated?

2 What bodies and processes exist to help protect human rights in Australia? Construct a diagram to show how they work.

3 Locate the text of the UN *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*. Locate the statements that refer to religious or spiritual beliefs and traditions. How are these rights protected or violated in Australia?

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9.9 Religion, human rights and women

In this section we focus briefly on religion, human rights and women. In 1995, at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women, Hillary Rodham Clinton famously said 'women's rights are human rights' and that human rights imply universality. Yet despite the provisions in formal law, women's rights are often incorrectly interpreted as being culturally relative, and the law often yields to claims by religious groups that seek to discriminate against women in the name of religious or cultural freedom. Women's rights stand among the rights sacrificed in the name of religious freedom today.

One question that clouds the universal nature of human rights in some religions is the degradation and marginalisation of women. Human rights violations committed against women in Hindu and Islamic cultures include physical and verbal abuse, dowry killings, gender-biased laws, forced prostitution, female trafficking, restricted access to education, exclusion from participation in government, unfair court proceedings, and **premenarchal** marriage.

Often human rights abuses towards Hindu and Muslim women are justified on the grounds of Hindu and Muslim religious teachings and sacred texts, even though the sacred texts of both religions hold women in equal regard to men. The gender bias that exists in Islamic and Hindu culture does not reflect the original interpretations of the sacred texts, but rather subsequent male interpretations of those texts. The sacred texts of Hinduism and Islam describe women as equal partners to their husbands, as well as indicating that women played integral parts in daily religious rituals.



FIGURE 9.35 Hillary Rodham Clinton at the United Nations

The UDHR makes very clear statements related to the equal rights of all people whether male or female. The most significant of these include:

- Article 1: provides free and equal rights for all human beings.
- Article 7: condemns discrimination and extends protection of the law to all.
- Article 10: protects the right to a fair and public trial by an 'independent and impartial tribunal'.
- Article 16: upholds equal rights within the institution of marriage.
- Article 17: extends the right to own property to everyone.
- Article 18: protects the right to change religion and observance of religious practices.
- Article 26: states that everyone has the right to an education.

premenarchal relating to or being in the stage of life of a female before the onset of menstruation

All of the rights have, to some extent, been violated in many Hindu and Islamic cultures around the world with respect to women, as reported by Human Rights Watch.

Child marriage in Bangladesh

According to UNICEF, Bangladesh has the fourth-highest rate of child marriage in the world after Niger, the Central African Republic and Chad. Between 2005 and 2014, 29 per cent of girls in Bangladesh married before the age of 15 and 65 per cent married before the age of 18. Child marriage around the world is associated with many harmful consequences, including health dangers associated with early pregnancy, lower educational achievement for girls who marry earlier, higher incidence of spousal violence, and increased likelihood

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FIGURE 9.36 Fourteen-year-old Mousammat Akhi Akhter in her wedding sari in her home in 2015 in Manikganj, Bangladesh. When she was only 13, Akhi was forced to marry a man more than twice her age.

of poverty. In Bangladesh a significant factor driving the high rate of child marriage is gender discrimination, which feeds social attitudes and customs that harm girls at every stage of their lives. Harassment and intimidation also play a major role in driving child marriage. Unmarried adolescent girls often face unwanted advances and threats, including the threat of abduction from suitors, and parents feeling unable to protect their daughters with no prospect of help from police or local authorities see marriage as a solution.

Lebanon

Lebanon does not have a civil code regulating personal status matters. Instead, there are 15 separate personal status laws for the country's different recognised religious communities, including 12 Christian, four Muslim, the Druze, and Jewish confessions, which are administered by separate religious courts. Religious authorities often promote this judicial pluralism as being essential to protecting Lebanon's religious diversity. In reality, the multiplicity of laws means that Lebanese citizens are treated differently when it comes to key aspects of their lives, including marriage, divorce and custody of children.

In 2015, Human Rights Watch completed a report that focused on problems with the current system of personal status laws and their discriminatory impact on women. Across all religions, women faced legal and other obstacles when terminating unhappy or abusive marriages; limitations on their pecuniary rights; and the risk of losing their children if they remarried or when the so-called maternal custody period (determined by the child's age) ended. Women were also systematically denied adequate spousal support during and after marriage with religious courts often unfairly denying or reducing payments, including if a judge found a woman to be 'recalcitrant' by leaving her marital home and refusing to cohabit with her husband or filing for severance. Religious institutions provided little sustainable and appropriate legal or social support for women involved in court proceedings. In addition, women are often torn between numerous judicial authorities – criminal, civil and religious – when attempting to resolve personal status-related disputes because they may have to petition more than one of these courts to claim their rights.

Across all religions, Human Rights Watch found that personal status laws and religious courts give women lesser rights than men to access divorce. Sunni and Shi'ite laws in Lebanon grant men an absolute right to divorce while women only have a conditional right to divorce. Under these laws, spouses may agree to share the right to dissolve the marriage by giving the wife the *'isma* or the power to divorce without her husband's consent. In practice, this is rarely done and is usually rejected by society. Shi'ite personal status law does not recognise severance, making a Shi'ite woman's access to divorce, without the power to divorce written into her marriage contract, even more limited than that of Sunni women.

In Christian marriages, while it is difficult for both the husband and wife to dissolve their marriages, there are instances that allow men

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more grounds for divorce or annulment than women. Christian personal status laws hold that spousal violence, which overwhelmingly affects women, is in itself insufficient to obtain a prompt end to marriage, except in attempted murder cases. Christian men in Lebanon can unilaterally convert to Islam, which affords them the right to marry up to four women and allows them to enter into new marriages without obtaining divorces. No similar process exists for Christian women to bypass Christian personal status laws after their marriages have been consummated.

Shi'ite and Sunni men in Lebanon also have the right to discipline their wives and have intercourse with their wives without seeking consent. These rights, and the obligation of women to cohabit with their husbands across all religions, endanger women's safety. Abused wives are often unable to obtain relief from the religious courts and civil and criminal laws also fail to provide them with adequate protection from domestic violence.

9.10 Religious freedom

Religious freedom is detailed in Article 18 of the UDHR:

> Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his [sic] religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Accordingly, based on the ability of individuals to change religions, religious freedoms include the right for religious groups to promote their message within society with the intent of winning new adherents. It also includes the ability for an individual to manifest his or her religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance, and religious freedom prohibits one religion from seeking to control another.

Virtually all religions have examples of their faithful being imprisoned, tortured, murdered and maimed either by the state or directly by another religion. In the past two millennia, more than two hundred million people have been killed because of their religious affiliation. The following three familiar historical examples demonstrate this violence. At the beginning of the twentieth century, three million Christians in Turkey, mainly Armenians who made up 20 per cent of the population, were driven out, killed or left to die at the beginning of World War I. When the Nazis came to power in Europe in 1933, nine million Jews lived in Europe but by the end of the World War II, six million Jews had been executed or had died as a result of Nazi practices. During China's Cultural Revolution (1966–76), intellectuals, people with foreign connections or possessions, religious groups, and anyone else charged with being a counter-revolutionary were severely oppressed. Religion was singled out because it promoted loyalties and faith in the spiritual realms, which were beyond the control of the revolution. All religious practice was banned and religious leaders and those continuing to practise their faith faced ridicule, exile, imprisonment, torture and death. These three examples emphasise that the physical abuse or displacement of people because of religion is a form of social conflict often embedded in larger conflicts within and between societies and countries.

In the twenty-first century, religious groups continue to suffer persecution. Jews remain targets of violence and discrimination in many regions of the world; adherents of minority Muslim faiths have been jailed, deported and/or killed in Iraq and Saudi Arabia; Hindus remain victims of violent persecution in Bangladesh and elsewhere; Falun Gong, Roman Catholics, Protestants, Uyghur Muslims and other religious figures are routinely jailed in China; adherents of minority religions such as Jehovah's Witnesses are incarcerated in numerous countries.

When religious freedom is high, there are fewer incidents of armed conflict, better health

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outcomes, higher levels of earned income, prolonged democracy and better educational opportunities for women. Religious freedom is linked to a wide range of human rights, including:

- communal religious practices: houses of worship, educational institutions, humanitarian organisations
- individual religious practices: prayer, worship, dress, diet, proclamation
- particular religious bodies, individuals and activities: freedom to proclaim one's religion, freedom of the press, freedom of association.

Like all civil liberties, religious liberties must be consistently protected by the state and sought by their adherents if they are not to give way to discrimination, prejudice, persecution and conflict.

Governments often restrict religious freedoms, claiming that this helps to maintain order, protect citizens and reduce potential violence. France reduced freedoms to protect citizens from the dangers of religious cults and sects; while in China, increased restrictions on Falun Gong, Tibetan Buddhists and Muslims in Xinjiang were justified in the name of preserving social order. Many social restrictions on religion rely on similar justifications. The Hindu nationalist movement in India aggressively promotes Hinduism above all other religions to preserve the unity of Hindus and India, and the Russian Orthodox Church views its battle against other religions as a way of preserving civic peace and protecting the mental, physical and spiritual health of Russians. Some of the religious restrictions promoted by dominant religions have helped these groups retain their dominance. Violent religious persecution and conflict rise as governments impose social restrictions on religion with or without popular support.

Interestingly, in countries that have seen an increase in the plurality of religions and religious diversity, there has not been an increase in religious persecution. Religious freedoms force those in power to protect the rights of minorities, even when the majority does not agree with such protection.

Religious freedom and religious persecution can affect all religious groups. Christians in Sudan, Bahá'ís in Iran, Ahmadiyyas in Pakistan; Shi'ite Muslims in Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan suffer persecution from some Sunni groups, and the Buddhists in Tibet are perhaps the most intensely persecuted religious group in the world.

The *International Religious Freedom Report*, published annually by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom, indicates that Christian countries tend to rank highest

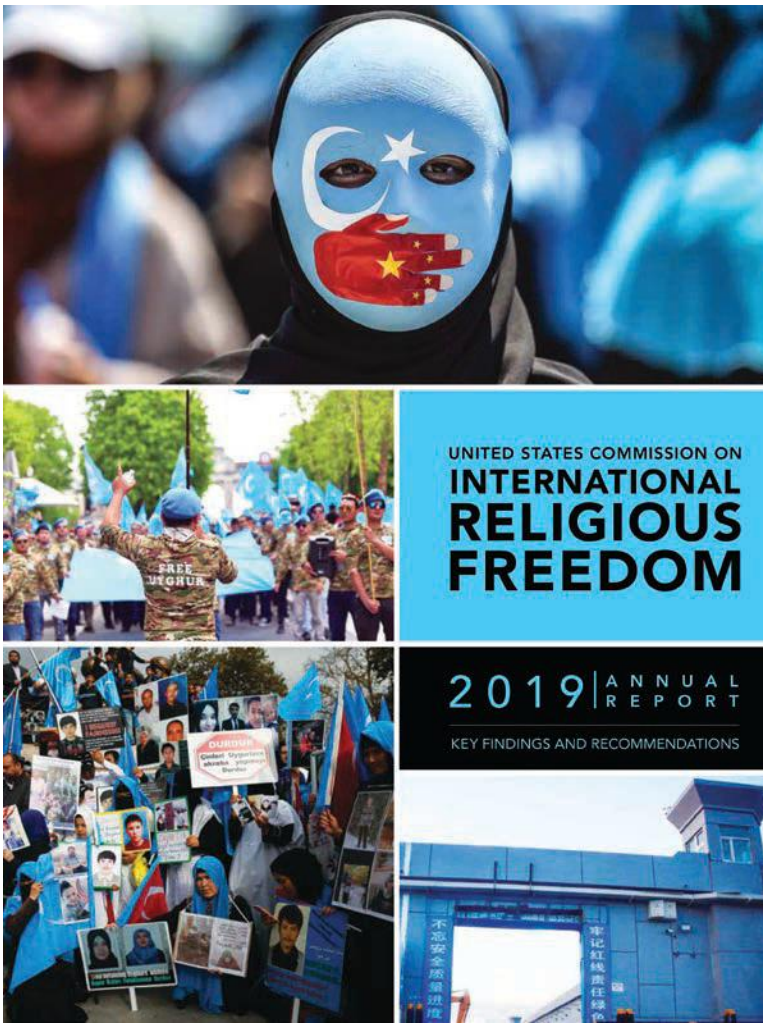


FIGURE 9.37 Front cover of *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Report* 2019

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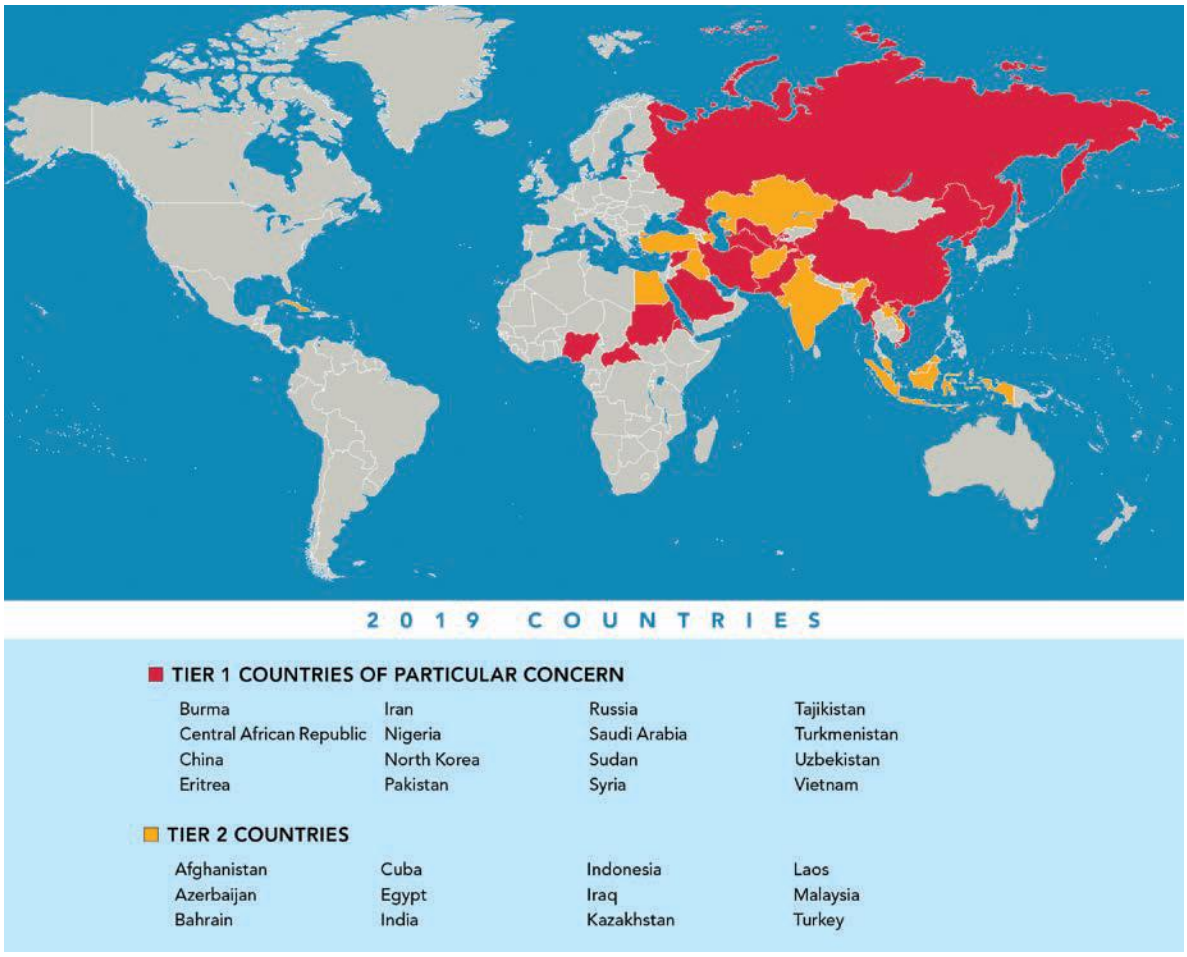


FIGURE 9.38 Back cover of *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Report* 2019 showing a map and list of countries of concern in terms of religious freedom

in granting religious freedom. Other countries which have also scored highly include Israel, Japan and Taiwan. The greatest restrictions on religious freedom are found in Islamic countries. Iran, Saudi Arabia, Sudan and Turkmenistan were ranked lowest in the survey. In 37 out of 75 countries surveyed, the score for religious freedom is identical to the score for civil liberties, indicating that religious freedom correlates closely with civil liberties in general.

Today, violations of religious freedom throughout the world are widespread, and attention to and action on religious freedom has been weak. Commonly, political leaders tend to ignore religion when negotiating decisions that affect people's lives.

Australia

In Australia, the rights of freedom of religion and belief are protected constitutionally and legislatively by the Commonwealth Constitution, Section 116; the *Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act 1986*; the *Racial Discrimination Act 1975*; the *Workplace Relations Act 1996* and by state and territory anti-discrimination and state industrial relations legislation. Within Australia, two international documents are important for the freedom of religion and belief: the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR; 1996); and the *Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief* (Religion Declaration; 1981).

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The ICCPR states in Article 18 that:

1 Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or adopt a religion or belief of his [sic] choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching.
2 No one shall be subject to coercion which shall impair his freedom to have or adopt a religion of his belief or choice.
3 Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.
4 The States Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

It also provides that:

- advocacy of religious hatred which amounts to incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence must be prohibited by law (Article 20);
- everyone is entitled to equality before the law and equal protection of the law without discrimination on the ground of religion among other grounds (Article 26); and
- minority groups are entitled to profess and practise their own religion (Article 27).

The Religion Declaration prohibits unintentional and intentional acts of discrimination and defines discrimination in Article 3 as 'any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on religion or belief and having as its purpose or as its effect nullification or impairment of the recognition, enjoyment or exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms on an equal basis'.

Article 6 stipulates that the religious community's joint or shared expression of its beliefs is protected equally with the individual's right, and protects manifestation of religion or belief including, but not limited to:

- worshipping and assembling, and maintaining places for this purpose
- establishing and maintaining charitable or humanitarian institutions
- practising religious rites and customs
- writing and disseminating religious publications
- teaching of religion and belief
- soliciting voluntary financial support
- training and appointment of religious leaders in accordance with the requirements and standards of the religion or belief
- observing religious holidays and ceremonies
- communicating with individuals and communities on matters of religion and belief.

The rights of individuals and religious groups to act in accordance with their beliefs free from interference by the government have often been balanced against prohibitions on discrimination in employment based on religion or belief. In addition, the ICCPR guarantees 'the enjoyment of human rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status' (Article 2.1) and 'provides that everyone is equal before the law'. It requires that everyone be guaranteed equal and effective protection against discrimination (Article 26).

Direct discrimination occurs when religion is used as the reason for refusing to hire an applicant – for example, if an employer advertised a position and the suitable applicant was refused employment because it was discovered s/he was

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a Jehovah's Witness. An example of indirect discrimination may occur when the employer does not make appropriate adjustments to allow for an employee's religious practices – for example, a rule that says people must work until 5 pm each day affects Orthodox Jews in winter because they must leave work with enough time to reach home before sunset on Friday to observe the Sabbath.

Religious organisations are also able to seek exceptions providing that the distinction on religious belief does not breach the requirements of the Act. For instance, an organisation may require an applicant to be a practising member of a particular religious tradition. The organisation must be able to demonstrate why the individual needs to have that particular belief to be able to perform the duties of the position.



FIGURE 9.39 Logo of the Australian Human Rights Commission

In 2018, the Australian Human Rights Commission presented the following recommendations related to religious freedom to the Australian Government.

Recommendation 1: The Commission recommends the Government commission an independent body to collect and analyse, in accordance with conventional scientific standards, quantitative information on the nature and prevalence of matters such as:

- threats and actual physical violence linked to a person's religion
- verbal abuse, harassment or intimidation because of a person's religion
- discrimination based on religion and the contexts in which this arises
- restrictions in the ability of a person to educate their children in a manner consistent with their religious belief.

Recommendation 2: The Commission recommends the Government consider the development of public education about religion and its place in Australia, the importance of the right to freedom of religion and belief, and the current protections for religious freedom in Australian and international law.

Recommendation 3: The Commission recommends the Government enable the operation of a multi-faith advisory group, consisting of leaders and representatives of Australia's diverse religious communities, to advise the Government on the practical experience of freedom of religion and belief, as well as policy and law reform in this area.

Recommendation 4: The Commission recommends that the Australian Government undertake research and community consultation, with a view to developing new legislation that prohibits discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.

Recommendation 5: The Commission recommends that the Australian Government follow the recommendation of the United Nations Human Rights Committee to 'adopt comprehensive federal legislation giving full effect' to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Recommendation 6: The Commission recommends that the Government examine alternatives to the current system of religious exemptions to anti-discrimination laws, including a general limitations clause, and that proposed changes should adhere to Australia's obligations under international law.

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ACTIVITY **9.19**

Finding, analysing and evaluating

1 Prepare a fact sheet for employment agencies related to religious freedom in Australia and religious freedom related to employment.
2 Conduct research to find out how the Government has responded to the Australian Human Rights Commission's recommendations.

9.11 Conclusion

There is no doubt the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the subsequent covenants and declarations have brought human rights to the fore internationally. Although many of them do not carry a great deal of weight legally, they are nevertheless important documents because they set a standard and act as constant reminders to people and governments of the ideals to be achieved.

There is a significant relationship between human rights and religion. Human rights norms need the norms, narratives and practices of the world's religions because they set an ideal against which a person or community might measure itself. Abstract human rights establish ideals of the good life and the good society and depend on the visions and values of human communities and institutions to give them content and coherence and to provide what the Catholic philosopher Jacques Maritain once called 'the scale of values governing [their] exercise and concrete manifestation'.

Religion is significant in the lives of many people and many communities. Religions also provide many of the sources and values by which people and communities govern themselves. In many ways, religions provide unique resources for protecting and enhancing human rights. Conversely, religious narratives need human rights norms to protect them and to challenge them. Human rights are the modern political fruits of ancient religious beliefs and practices.

FIGURE 9.40 There is a significant relationship between human rights and religion.



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END-OF-CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

FORMING

1 Create a vocabulary bank for the discourse of human rights.
2 Graffiti wall: complete the following statements.
   a Human rights need to be enshrined in law because …
   b Human rights and religion can conflict when …
   c Human rights and religion can work together when …

ANALYSING

1 Conduct a search of news reports on human rights abuses around the world over the course of one day. Complete the table provided on the Activity Worksheet to summarise your findings.
2 Complete the Frayer concept model on the topic 'inalienable human rights'.
3 Research and present a one-minute presentation about how a religion works to protect human rights.
4 Imagine you were the UN Secretary General in 2018 (the 70th anniversary of the UDHR). Write a 200-word letter to senior high school students, reflecting on the significance of the UN document and the importance of studying human rights with reference to religion.

ANALYSING

1 How does the Australian idea of a 'fair go' align with human rights policies?
2 Fill in a consequences wheel on the topic: 'If there were no UDHR, then …'. Be sure to consider some consequences for religion.
3 Read the quotes below:

> We are collective custodians of universal human rights standards, and any sense that we fall into camps of 'accuser' and 'accused' is absolutely corrosive of our joint purposes. The reality is that no group of countries has any grounds for complacency about its own human rights performance and no group of countries does itself justice by automatically slipping into the 'victim' mode.
>
> Mary Robinson, United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, 1997

> A universal renunciation of violence requires the commitment of the whole of society. These are not matters of government but matters of State; not only matters for the authorities, but for society in its entirety, including civilian, military, and religious bodies. The mobilisation which is urgently needed to effect the transition within two or three years from a culture of war to a culture of peace demands co-operation from everyone. In order to change, the world needs everyone.
>
> Federico Mayor, Director-General of UNESCO, 1997

For each quote, list the implications for:
   a individuals
   b governments
   c religions.

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FINDING, ANALYSING AND EVALUATING

1 Find out about the following Nobel Peace Prize winners at the Nobel Prize website.
   - **a** Martin Ahtisaari (2008)
   - **b** IPCC and Al Gore (2007)
   - **c** Muhammad Yunus and Grameen Bank (2006).

2 How is each recipient's work connected to the promotion of human rights?

3 How is each recipient's work connected to religion/s? (E.g. do they work from religious conviction? Do their ideas match the philosophy or ethics of one or more religions in particular? Do they work within a religion?)

EVALUATING

Evaluate the validity of the claim that the UDHR has been successful in its aim of promoting freedom of religion. Suggest reasons why or why not and use evidence to support your points.

REFLECTING

1 How has this study informed my own position in relation to religion and human rights?

2 Are my ideas about human rights different from those of other people in my class?

3 What action could I take in response to my learning in this area of inquiry?

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GLOSSARY

active state religions: the state supports a religion while maintaining a level of independence from it

***Adhan*:** the Muslim call to prayer

Allah: a combination of the word *Al*, meaning 'the' and *ilah*, the Arabic word for 'God'; thus Allah means 'the God'

allotransplantation: the process of transplanting an organ or another part of the body from a genetically non-identical donor of the same species

***anatta*:** a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'the absence of self or soul'

***anicca*:** a central concept of Buddhism; translated as 'impermanence'

animism: a belief that spirits inhabit nature and have influence over people and natural events

anti-Semitism: a term used to describe prejudice against, or hostility towards, people of Jewish lineage

***aqiqah*:** to cut or break

***arati*:** worship of a deity, particularly the flame offering, mostly in temples

Aryans: early Indo-Europeans who migrated to the Indian subcontinent

***Ashramas*:** four stages of life in Hinduism, laid out in classical Sanskrit texts

***Atman*:** a divine spirit that all people share

avatar: the descent of a deity to the earth in an incarnate form or some manifest shape; the incarnation of a god

***Bhagavad Gita*:** 'The Lord's Song', one of the most popular texts in Hinduism, which describes a conversation between Arjuna and his charioteer, who is later revealed as Krishna

***Bhakti*:** a special form of worship and deep, personal devotion that expresses love to one's god

bier: a stand on which a corpse or coffin is placed

***bimah*:** raised platform in a Jewish synagogue from which the Torah is read

***bodhisattva*:** enlightened being; an ordinary person who takes up a course in his or her life that moves in the direction of Buddha

Brahma: the Hindu god of creation

***Brahman*:** the unchanging, infinite, immanent and transcendent reality which is the divine ground of all matter, energy, time, space, being and everything beyond this universe

breviary: a book of prayers, hymns, Psalms and other scripture texts

canon: 'list' or 'measuring rod'; canon of scripture is the title given to the official list of writings that constitute the sacred texts of a tradition

Catechism: a book that outlines the faith in the form of questions and answers

communitas: intense community spirit and solidarity

Concordat: an agreement between the Vatican state and a government of a certain country on religious matters

Conservative Judaism: a modern stream of Judaism that arose out of intellectual currents in Germany in the mid-nineteenth century and took institutional form in the United States in the early twentieth century

covenants: formal, solemn and binding agreements

creed: a statement of religious belief

culture: the customary beliefs, social forms and material traits of a racial, religious or social group

deicide: the killing of a god, goddess or similar deity

***dharma*:** from the word meaning to uphold – righteousness, duty, morality, law, social obligations, particular religious teachings, the deity who embodies righteousness

Divali: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection, which takes place on the full moon in the month of Shravana

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Docetists: those who believe that Jesus's physical body was an illusion, as was his crucifixion

Druze: a religious community found primarily in Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Palestinian territories whose traditional religion is said to have begun as an offshoot of Islam

***dukkha*:** a central concept of Buddhism; the basic element of the human condition, translated as 'suffering', 'desire' or 'anguish'

Eightfold Path: one of the principal teachings of the Buddha, who described it as the way leading to the end of suffering and the achievement of self-awakening

encyclical: a letter written by the pope and 'circulated' throughout the whole Church

enlightenment: gaining insight or wisdom which informs or instructs the individual

Enlightenment: a phase in Western philosophy and cultural life during which reason was promoted as the primary source and legitimacy for authority

epistles: letters in the New Testament written by the Apostles to Christians

exegesis: critical explanation or analysis, especially of a text

***fatwa*:** an advisory opinion by a qualified *faqih* stating whether an action is permitted or forbidden by *sharia* law

Five Pillars of Islam: the term given to the five duties incumbent on every Muslim

Four Noble Truths: fundamental Buddhist teachings relating to the nature, origin and cessation of suffering, and the path leading to this cessation

fundamentalism: a belief in, and strict adherence to, a set of religious principles; often a reaction to perceived compromises with modern social and political life

G-d: When Moses demanded to know the name of G-d, G-d said to Moses 'Ehyeh-asher-ehyeh' [I am who I am, YHWH] (Exodus 3:14). Traditionally, rather than uttering the sacred name YHWH, Jews say Adonai, Lord. This respect or prohibition is expressed in English as G-d.

Ganesha: a popular Hindu god revered as the Lord of Obstacles

genealogies: history or accounts of the descent of a person, family or group

glossolalia: speaking in tongues

godhead: the unknowable aspect of a god, deity or divinity

gospels: the story of Jesus's life and teachings, especially as in the first four books of the New Testament

grace: self-communication of the presence of God

Hadith: collection of sayings of Muhammad and reports of actions as observed by his companions and compiled by scholars and theologians approximately two centuries after the death of Muhammad. There are six different collections that are recognised as authoritative.

Hajj: a pilgrimage to Mecca; an obligation that must be carried out at least once by every able-bodied Muslim in their lifetime

Hanukkah: an eight-day Jewish holiday commemorating the re-dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem in the second century BCE, also known as the Festival of Lights

Havdalah: a Jewish religious ceremony that marks the symbolic end of Shabbat, and ushers in the new week

heresies: the rejection of one or more established beliefs of a religious body, or adherence to 'other beliefs'

hermeneutics: a method or principle of interpretation

Holi: a joyful celebration for Hindus that celebrates the coming of spring and family, happiness and friendship

human rights: basic rights regarded as belonging fundamentally to all humans, such as civil and political rights, right to life and liberty, freedom of expression, equality before the law, the right to participate in culture, the right to food, work and education

inter-religious dialogue: cooperative and positive interaction between people of different religious traditions

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Janmashtami: a Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Krishna, an avatar of Vishnu

***jihad*:** an Arabic word for 'struggle'; meaning 'striving in the way of God'

***jinn*:** invisible beings in Islam

Ka'bah: a cube-shaped building in Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the most sacred site in Islam

***Kaddish*:** a Jewish prayer recited in the ritual of the synagogue and by mourners at public services after the death of a relative

***karma*:** the effects of one's actions in life, good or bad; the natural consequences of actions

***Kathina* ceremony:** the largest alms-giving ceremony of the Buddhist year

***khandhas*:** five aggregates (or groups) that categorise all individual experience

***khums*:** an Arabic word meaning 'one fifth'; meaning that one fifth surplus wealth must be administered by scholars for the welfare of the community

***khutba*:** formal sermon given at *salat al-Jum'a*; may cover a range of topics

***Kiddush*:** prayer of sanctification or blessing recited over wine at Shabbat and festival meals

Lakshmi: the Hindu goddess of beauty, prosperity and goodness

land rights: the rights of Indigenous Australians to access and ownership of land possessed before the arrival of Europeans

lay people: non-ordained members of a religion

liminal: related to transitioning from one stage to another

liminality: a subjective, conscious state of being on the 'threshold' of or between two different existential planes

liturgy: the customary public worship done by a specific religious group, according to their particular traditions; the official public worship of the Church

lores: traditional knowledge or beliefs

Maha Shivaratri: a Hindu religious festival for devotees of Shiva

Mahayana Buddhism: one of the two main lineages of Buddhism and a term for classification of Buddhist philosophies and practice; literally 'Great Vehicle'

***mandala*:** a diagram used in Buddhism and Hinduism, usually concentric in design and used during meditation and ritual

***mandir*:** Hindu temple or house of worship

mantra: a devotional prayer or incantation used for meditation and worship

mariological: of or relating to devotion to Mary, the mother of Jesus

***maya*:** the Hindu belief that the everyday world is an illusion and that the distinction between the self and the universe is a false dichotomy

Mecca: the holiest city in Islam, located in Saudi Arabia

Medina: the second holiest city in Islam, and the burial place of Muhammad

meditation: silent prayer that may focus on a word, person or sacred text

menorah: a branched candelabra, used in Jewish services

Messiah: from the Hebrew word meaning 'anointed one'

***mikveh*:** ritual bath

***minyan*:** quorum of 10 adult Jewish men over the age of 13

mission: a group of persons sent by a church to carry out religious work, especially evangelisation in foreign lands, and often to establish schools, hospitals, etc.

***mitzvot*:** commandments

***mohel*:** a person trained in Jewish circumcision

***moksha*:** means 'freedom' and, according to the Upanishads, is the ultimate goal of human life

monism: the notion that everything (including religion) is one; that there are no divisions

monotheism: a belief in only one god

mosque: a place of worship for followers of Islam

***mudra*:** a symbolic or ritual gesture in Hinduism

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***muezzin*:** the one who calls the faithful to daily prayer in Islam

Muhammad: the founder of the religion of Islam, regarded by Muslims as a messenger and prophet of God

nation-state: an independent state inhabited predominantly by a people sharing a common culture, history, religion and language

nationalism: a term referring to an ideology, sentiment, form of culture or social movement that focuses on the nation

organ trafficking: the recruitment, transport, transfer, harbouring or receipt of living or deceased persons or their organs by means of threats or other forms of coercion, to achieve the transfer of control over the potential donor, for the purpose of exploitation by the removal of organs for transplantations

Orthodox Church: the body of modern churches that is derived from the church of the Byzantine Empire, adheres to the Byzantine rite, and acknowledges the honorary primacy of the Patriarch of Constantinople

Orthodox Judaism: the most traditionally observant stream of Judaism

orthodoxy: adherence to accepted beliefs and creeds

orthopraxy: correct conduct as related to ritual and actions

Pali: historical middle Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism

patrilineal: involving the inheritance of names, titles, property or religion through the male line

Patristic: period of Christian history between 100 and 450 CE

Pesach: a holy day and festival commemorating the time when G-d delivered the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt

plenary indulgence: teaching of the Roman Catholic Church where temporal punishment for sin is reduced

pluralism: the acceptance or acknowledgement of different religions

polemical: referring to a mode of writing or speaking that uses vigorous and at times even combative language to defend or oppose someone or something

post-liminal: related to a new status or state of life

prayer: an address to God or a god in word or thought

predestination: the Calvinist doctrine that God decides who will be saved and who will be damned irrespective of a person's exercise of free will

pre-liminal: related to separating from the previous life

premenarchal: relating to or being in the stage of life of a female before the onset of menstruation

primordial deity: ancient god or goddess

proof text: a scripture passage presented as proof for a theological doctrine, belief or principle

proselytise: the practice of converting or attempting to convert people to another religion

prostrate: to lie stretched out with face on the ground in adoration or submission

Protestant Reformation: a Christian reform movement that eventually led to the formation of the Protestant churches that moved away from the Catholic Church in Rome

Protestants: literally one who protests; the churches that split from the Catholic Church during the sixteenth-century Reformation

***puja*:** religious ritual that Hindus perform on a variety of occasions to pray or show respect to gods

Purim: a Jewish holiday that commemorates the deliverance of the Jewish people from the ancient Persian Empire as recorded in the Book of Esther

pyre: a structure, usually made of wood, for burning a body as part of a funeral rite

***quelle*:** a German word for 'source', probably referring to a collection of the sayings of Jesus

Qur'an: the central sacred text of Islam

***rak'at*:** one unit or cycle of Islamic prayer

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Raksha Bandhana: a celebration symbolising loyalty and protection that takes place on the full moon in the month of Shravana

Ramadan: the ninth month of the Islamic year, observed as sacred, with fasting practised daily from dawn to dusk

Reform Judaism: adapts its beliefs and practices to the norms of modern society – also referred to as Progressive or Liberal Judaism

religion: a personal or institutionalised set of attitudes, beliefs, and practices, which may include a system of prayers and religious laws

religious freedom: a principle that supports the freedom of an individual or community, in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance

religious states: states or countries in which religion controls the government

resurrection: a central doctrine of Christianity in which Jesus is raised from the dead

rites of passage: rituals or ceremonies that mark a change in a person's social or religious status

Roman Catholic Church: the world's largest Christian church, representing over half of all Christians and one-sixth of the world's population

Rosh Hashanah: Jewish New Year – literally 'head of the year'

Sabellians: those who believed the Heavenly Father, Resurrected Son and Holy Spirit are different modes or aspects of one God, as perceived by the believer, rather than three distinct persons in God

sacrament: an official Christian ritual that uses symbols such as water, clothing, light, oil and actions to symbolise being washed clean, clothed with new life and strengthened for a life which should be committed to God

***salat*:** five daily ritual prayers in Islam

***sandek*:** honoured family friend

***Sangha*:** a Pali word meaning 'assembly' and more generally understood as a group of people who follow the Buddha and his teachings. It also refers to a community of Buddhist monks.

Sanskrit: historical Indo-Aryan language used in the sacred texts of Buddhism

***sawm*:** an Arabic word meaning 'fasting'; observed during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan

schism: a split or a division, usually in an organisation or a movement

Seder: order; meal celebrated on the first night of Pesach

self-immolation: suicide by fire

***Shahadah*:** the first pillar of Islam; the statement of belief that 'there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet'

***sharia* law:** meaning 'the path', a legal framework that includes faith and the Muslim way of life

Shi'ite: a minority subdivision of Islam that claims that the true successors to Muhammad were Ali and his descendants

Shiva: the Hindu god of destruction and transformation

Shoah: a Hebrew word meaning destruction and catastrophe. Used by Jews in preference to Holocaust, which means a burnt offering to G-d given in the Temple and, therefore, something sacred.

shofar: a horn used for Jewish religious purposes

soteriological: literally the study of the theory of salvation

***stupas*:** bell-shaped constructions that store relics of the dead

Sufi: a member of a devotional or mystical movement within Islam in which the individual aims to attain spiritual union with God through love

***sukkah*:** a three-sided dwelling with a roof made of leaves

Sunni: a majority subdivision of Islam that accepts the legitimacy of the first four caliphs and their successors

***sutra* (or *sutta*):** literally means 'thread' and refers to the Buddha's teachings being sewn together into collections

***tallit*:** Jewish prayer shawl

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TaNaK: an acronym used by Jews for the Hebrew Bible. T = Torah (Law); N = *Nev'im* (Prophets); K = *Ketuvim* (Writings)

***tefillin*:** a pair of black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with Torah verses; the hand-*tefillin* is wrapped around the arm, hand and fingers and the head-*tefillin* is placed on the forehead

teleological: pertaining to a way of doing moral theology which emphasises the end (*telos*), or purpose, of human existence

Ten Precepts: fundamental Buddhist values related to ethical and moral teaching

***The Dreaming*:** a term used to describe a time of ancestral creation and the origins of all things for Indigenous Australians

Theravada Buddhism: the oldest surviving Buddhist lineage, literally, 'the teaching of the Elders'

***tilak*:** a painted mark on the forehead or other parts of the body that can signify various things, such as sect membership, marriage or the third eye

***Tipitaka*:** the sacred writings that contain the teaching of the Buddha; also known as the Pali Canon; literally 'three baskets'

Torah: the first five books of the Jewish scriptures (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy)

totemic identity: a feature of Indigenous Australian spiritualities, which orients the person to a particular totem (e.g. snake, crocodile)

transplant commercialism: a policy or practice in which an organ is treated as a commodity, including being bought or sold or used for material gain

transplant tourism: the practice of travelling to another country, especially India, China or the Philippines, for organ transplantation

Trinity: the concept in Christianity that states that there are three persons in one God (Father, Son and Holy Spirit)

***tzitzit*:** fringes or tassels hanging from the four corners of prayer shawls

***umma*:** an Arabic word meaning 'community' or 'nation'

Upanishads: collections of Hindu philosophical writing that are attached to the Vedas but move beyond their emphasis on ritual by seeking the meaning of human existence

***vahana*:** term meaning vehicle, which refers to the attribution of animals as modes of transportation to most of the major gods

Vatican Council: a conference of the bishops of the whole Roman Catholic Church convened to discuss and settle matters of Church doctrine and practice

Vedas: a large body of texts originating in ancient India that form the oldest layer of Sanskrit literature and the oldest sacred texts of Hinduism

vernacular: a language or dialect native to a region or country rather than a literary, cultured or foreign language

Vishnu: the Hindu god of preservation

Wahhabi: a conservative Islamic movement that is predominant in Saudi Arabia and follows the Hanbali school of law

World Council of Churches: an international Christian ecumenical organisation

worship: acts of religious devotion to a god or gods

***wudu*:** Muslim ritual washing

xenotransplantation: the process of transplanting an organ or another part of the body from one species (= set of animals with similar characteristics) to a different species

***yamulkah*:** thin, slightly rounded skullcap worn by Jewish males during prayer

yoga: refers to traditional physical and mental disciplines in Hinduism; it is a way for Hindus to perfect their union with the divine

Yom Kippur: the most solemn and important of the Jewish holy days – also known in English as the Day of Atonement

***zakat*:** the Islamic principle of giving a percentage of one's income to charity

Zionism: the international Jewish political movement that originally supported the re-establishment of a homeland for Jews in Palestine, it concentrated on secular components such as land, language and culture

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