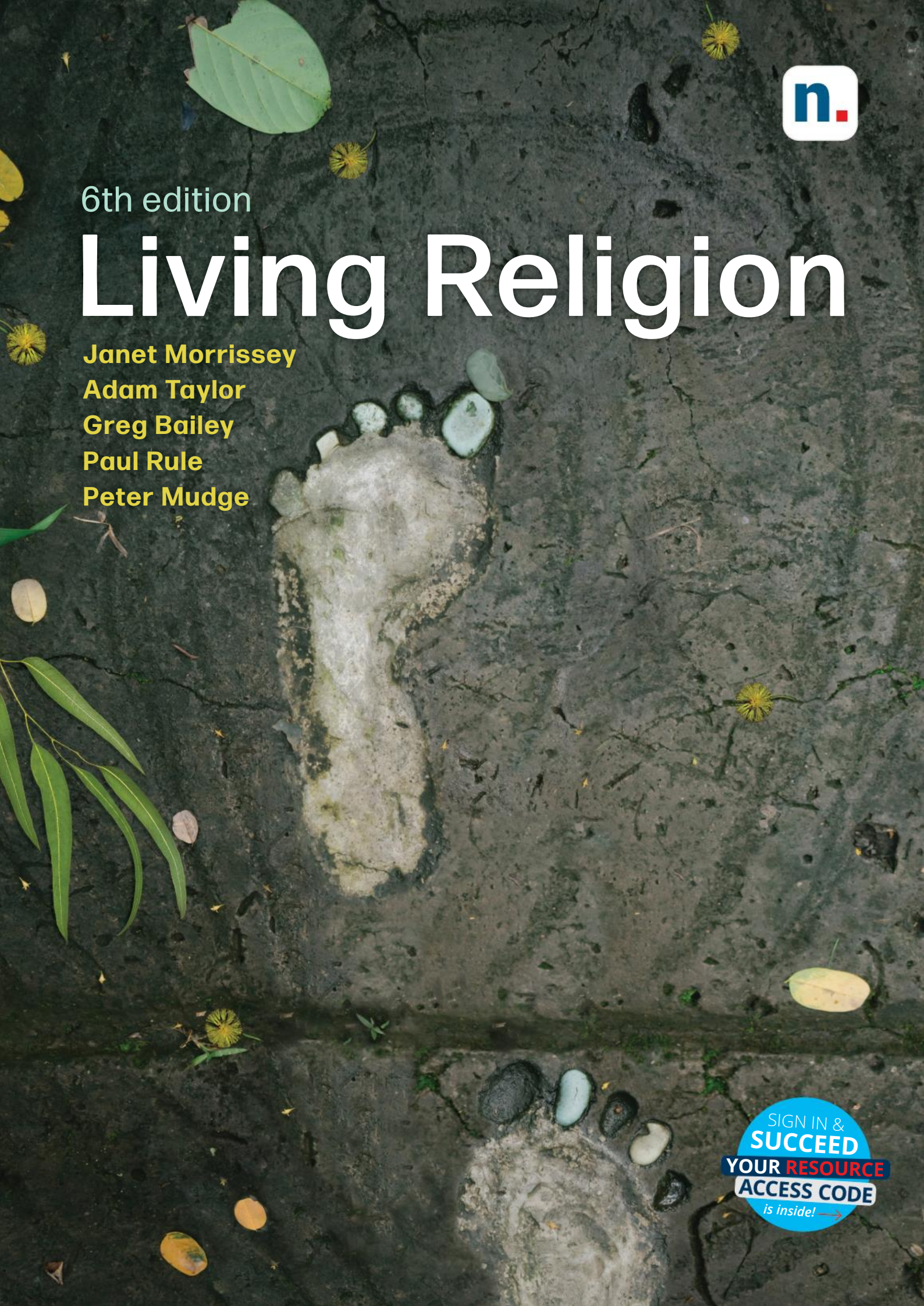
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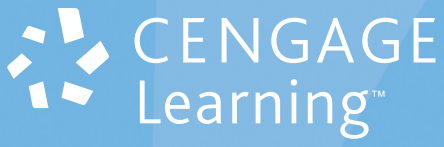

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Peter Mudge
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How to use this book

Living Religion, sixth edition, has been developed for the New South Wales Stage 6 Studies of Religion syllabus. Retaining all the features of previous editions, *Living Religion* has been updated to include the most current information on religious traditions, recent statistics and images, new options for depth studies, and includes new student and teacher support materials hosted on the NelsonNet portal.

Student book features

Chapter opening page features syllabus-based outcomes and specifies content and skills covered in each chapter.

1

Nature of religion and beliefs

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **define** the supernatural dimension and **discuss** a transcendent and immanent religious world view
- **define** the characteristics of religion and **explore** how these characteristics interact to create a dynamic, living religion
- **appreciate** the contribution of religion to individuals and society and culture
- **outline** the nature of Dreaming for Australia's Aboriginal peoples and **recognise** the importance of Dreaming for them
- **discuss** the diversity of Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples
- **investigate** the inextricable connection of Dreaming, the land and identity.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets
- Nature of religion and beliefs (p. 4)
- Dreaming stories (p. 10)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (p. 11)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (p. 12)

Online activity
- Chapter 1 multiple-choice quiz (p. 13)

2 LIVING RELIGION

Chapter glossary provides clear definitions of key terms and concepts. A consolidated glossary brings together terms and concepts relevant to the whole course and can be found on pages ix–xiv.

Consolidated glossary

Did you know? boxes, **Feature** boxes and **Notes** provide additional information on important ideas.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Arabic term for Islamic mysticism, *tasawwuf*, literally means 'to dress in wool', but it has been called 'Sufism' in Western languages since the early nineteenth century. 'Sufism' derives from the Arabic term for a mystic, *sufi*, which in turn comes from *suf* ('wool'), a reference to the woollen garment of early Islamic mystics. The Sufis are also generally known as *faqir* ('the poor') or, in Persian, *darwish* – in English, the words are 'fakir' and 'dervish'.

There were strong women in Muhammad's life who helped establish the Muslim tradition. Historical evidence shows that women fled aristocratic tribal Mecca by the thousands to enter Medina, the Prophet's city, in the seventh century CE, because Islam promised equality and dignity for all – men and women, masters and servants. Women who lived in Muhammad's time were neither secluded nor subservient.

NOTE

It is important to remember that, while 'Sufism' is described as a school of thought within Islam or a particular expression of Islam, the significant people in its development and practice, such as Rabi'a and al-Ghazali, are very much part of mainstream Islam.

Cross-referencing directs students to related information in the student book.

▷ Refer to Chapter 5, pages 89–91, for the core ethical teachings of Islam.

NESA directive terms are highlighted in red in chapter outcomes and in Review and Extension tasks. **Bolded red directive terms** indicate that the term is specific to the outcome of a specific area of study.

Question and task blocks occur regularly throughout the text and are carefully crafted to support skill development and student learning.

Review questions are for revision and consolidation of content.

REVIEW

1 Construct an infographic of the key dates and events in the life of 'A'isha.
2 Identify the evidence present in this section that indicates 'A'isha's importance to Islam.
3 Explain the contribution of 'A'isha to the development and expression of Islam.

Extension tasks broaden and challenge assumptions and invite a range of responses.

EXTENSION

Update the Islamic list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

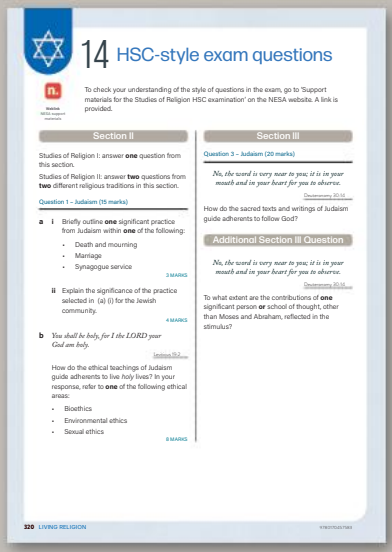
Respond activities prompt discussion of images and texts.

RESPOND

What reasons can you suggest for the different positions of the bodies in relation to the *imam*?

Religious traditions summaries identify origins and variants, principal beliefs, sacred texts, ethical teaching, significant practices and people and ideas for each of the five major religious traditions.

HSC-style exam questions are included for each of the HSC topics (Chapters 9–16).



NelsonNet features

Living Religion is fully supported by the NelsonNet platform, offering additional resources and support for teachers and students.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Students

- NelsonNetbook
- worksheets
- practice quizzes
- weblinks
- additional Depth Study options

Teachers

- chapter review tests and answers
- answers to student book questions
- two practice exams and suggested responses
- teaching programs
- suggested responses to worksheets
- additional teacher notes and support

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WARNING: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander readers are advised that this book contains the images and names of people who have died. Seeing these images or names may cause sadness and distress to the relatives of those people. We advise reading with caution and apologise for any distress unintentionally caused by the inclusion of this material.

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Consolidated glossary

aboriginal From the Latin *ab origine*, meaning 'from the beginning'. It is always capitalised when used in reference to Australian Aboriginal peoples.

aggadah (J) The non-legal tradition in Jewish religious writing. The *aggadah* of the Talmud and other later writings includes astrology, folklore, magic, medicine, parables, proverbs, speculation and stories about the rabbis.

agnosticism The belief that the existence or non-existence of God cannot be proved; or the belief that human knowledge is limited to experience.

alchemy (Daoism) A set of procedures and principles meant to prolong human life.

aliyah (J) Literally means 'going up'. *Aliyah* is the calling of a member of the congregation to read from the Torah scroll in the synagogue service.

Allah (I) The Arabic word for the one and only true God.

Ancestral Beings (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) Those spirits who moved about forming the landscape and creating the plants, animals and peoples of the known world. They also founded the ceremonies, marriage laws and other laws of human society. They continue to inhere (to exist permanently and inseparably) in the living generations.

anthropomorphic Expressed in terms of human thought, action and being.

antisemitism Hatred towards Jews. The term was coined by Wilhelm Marr, a Hamburg journalist, in 1879. While the term was not known until the late nineteenth century, the phenomenon of antisemitism has ancient roots.

apocrypha From the Greek word meaning 'hidden away'. These are texts of uncertain authenticity, or writings where the authorship is questioned.

apostasy (n. apostate) Total desertion of, or departure from, one's religion.

'Aqida ul-Islam (I) The beliefs or creed of Islam.

arahant (B) A monk who seeks to attain enlightenment only for himself.

asceticism The act of performing bodily austerities designed to acquire magical power or purify the body. Ascetic, one who practises asceticism.

ashrama (H) A stage of life mainly for *brahmins*, of which there are four.

assimilation The process whereby a cultural, ethnic or religious group takes on the habits, customs and practices of the dominant culture. Also, an Australian Government policy directed at Aboriginal peoples.

atheism The acceptance that there is no credible scientific or factually reliable evidence for the existence of a god, gods or the supernatural.

atheist A person who denies or does not believe in the existence of God.

atman (H) The essence or principle of life; Ultimate Reality as present within a human being – not a 'soul' or 'spirit'.

austerities Severe acts or practices that usually require someone to abstain from or deprive themselves of something.

avatara (H) The earthly manifestation of a god or goddess.

baptism (C) A religious act of purification by water, from the Greek word *baptizo*, 'immerse'. For Christians, it marks their reception into the Christian community.

Bar Mitzvah (J) Coming-of-age ceremony for Jewish boys.

Bet Din (J) A rabbinical court, usually consisting of three judges, responsible for making judgements on matters of *halachah*.

bhakti (H) Loving devotion to a personal god or goddess and sharing in the loving grace of the divine person.

Bible (C) The Bible comprises the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament) and the Christian Scriptures (the New Testament).

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating, but not limited to, medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – a large number of disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgements for humans

bodhi (B) Enlightening knowledge attained when a person achieves buddhahood.

bodhisattva (B) One who is close to enlightenment but forgoes *nirvana* to help others escape *samsara*.

bodhisattva (Shinto) A being who is motivated by compassion and seeks enlightenment not only for themselves but for everyone.

Brahman (H) The name given to Ultimate Reality or Cosmic Self.

brahmin (H) The male priestly class (*varna*).

Buddha (B) A formal title that literally means 'awakened'. The Buddha's family name was Siddhartha Gautama.

buddhahood (B) The view that all beings have within them the potentiality to become a Buddha and possess enlightening knowledge.

caliph (I) (from *khalifa*) Refers to the successor of Muhammad as leader of the Islamic community.

caliphate (I) The succession to the sovereignty of the Islamic community.

canon Books considered to be authoritative as scripture by a particular religious tradition.

canonisation (C) The official act of declaring a person a model for true Christian discipleship, most commonly in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches and therefore to be publicly venerated by the whole Church; to be placed in the canon of saints.

challot (J) (singular *challah*) The two uncut plaited loaves of bread prepared for, then eaten on, the evening of *Shabbat* and holy days.

Chasidim (J) Jewish revivalist movement that is based on the teachings of the *Baal Shem Tov* (c. 1700–1760).

Chevra Kadisha (J) The Chevra Kadisha is the Jewish burial society that takes charge of the ritual matters associated with death and burial.

chuppah (J) The canopy under which a Jewish wedding takes place. It is sometimes a large *tallit* held overhead by four men, but more often it is an elaborately decorated canopy supported by four poles.

circumcision The removal of the foreskin of the penis.

civilisation A complex of institutions involved in organising life in cities. It includes governing bureaucracies, merchant activity, the arts and religious organisations.

cohen (J) A male who is a member of the priestly class, a status that is determined by direct descent. *Cohens* have a role in Jewish ritual life; for example, at the rite of *brit milah* (circumcision).

conservative The tendency to preserve existing conditions. The term can be used positively or negatively. To be positively conservative is to emphasise the preservation of the richness of past beliefs, institutions and practices. To be negatively conservative is to have difficulty in accepting anything that would modify what is held to be unchangeable.

country (sometimes with an initial capital, as **Country**) Term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to refer to the land to which they belong and their place of Dreaming. Aboriginal English usage of the word is much broader than standard English.

covenant In general, an agreement between two parties. Each of the parties has both rights and responsibilities. In the Bible, the covenant is an agreement between God and his people.

creed A formal, but concise, statement of beliefs.

culture The way a group of human beings relate to each other to develop the sum total of ways of living built up by human beings and then transmitted from one generation to another.

Dao 'The Way', a key idea in Chinese religion. It is used both as a general term for the main religions or Ways of China – Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism – and as the main concept in Daoism.

dar al-Islam (I) 'Abode of peace', Islamic territory; where Muslims are free to practise Islam.

darshan (H) 'Seeing' God; viewing the image of the divine indwelled (inhabited) by a god or goddess in a temple or other holy place.

deist One who believes in the existence of a god on the evidence of reason and nature only, with rejection of supernatural revelation (distinguished from theist).

deity (plural, deities) God or goddess.

deuterocanonical (C) From the Greek word meaning 'belonging to the second canon'. The term has been used since the sixteenth century in the Catholic Churches and Eastern Christianity to describe certain books and passages of the Christian Old Testament that are not part of the Hebrew Bible.

devotions Religious observances and forms of prayer or worship.

dhamma (B, H) (*dharma*) The complete body of the teachings of the Buddha or any other teacher.

Diaspora (J) The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people throughout the ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

diocese (C) The territory overseen by a bishop.

divination Practices to discover future events by determining the will of the spirits or the natural processes involved.

divine Of or relating to a god, especially the Supreme Being. From the Latin word *divinus* – of the gods or superhuman.

diviner A person trained or endowed with special gifts to perform divination.

doctrine Collective teachings (adjective, doctrinal).

Dreaming (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) A complex concept of fundamental importance that embraces the long-ago creative era of the Ancestral Beings as well as the present and the future.

---

ecumenism The movement among Christian churches to promote the restoration of unity among all Christians.

Elders Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Aboriginal communities. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities as Elders.

emancipation The granting of independence to an individual or a minority group of people.

emptiness (B) The view that everything is interdependent and is caused by something outside of itself, and so has no intrinsic reality of its own.

enlightenment (B) The state in which the true nature of existence is known both intuitively and intellectually.

Enlightenment Also known as the Age of Reason, it is defined as the period of rigorous scientific, political and philosophical discourse that characterised European society from the late seventeenth century to 1815.

epic A text, usually very long, that depicts a total view of creation and society and explores the deepest concerns of humans.

episcopalism (C) Having church authority vested in the company of bishops as a whole rather than with any individual.

established church (C) A church recognised by the government as the official church and supported by it.

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

ethnic Relating to a population or particular group and their history, customs and language.

Eucharist (C) The sacred meal of bread and wine commonly celebrated in some form by Christians as their central act of worship. It commemorates the last meal of Jesus with his disciples prior to his death.

evangelical (C) Applies to a type of Christianity that emphasises the preaching of the gospel and personal experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ.

evangelise (C) Literally means to 'teach the gospel'. Bringing people to Christianity. The terms 'missionary activity' or 'missionary work' are often used as synonyms.

exegete Person skilled in explaining and interpreting difficult passages from scripture.

Exodus (J, C) Greek word for 'departure', and used to describe the escape of the people of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

---

feminism The notion, once radical, that women are fully entitled and responsible citizens in society and its institutions, including organised religions. A feminist supports this idea.

feminist theology A body of thinking and writing that reconsiders scripture and traditions from a feminist perspective and challenges structures and institutions that have excluded women.

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filioque clause (C) Literally 'and Son' in Latin. It is referred to as the '*filioque* clause' because the phrase 'and son' was added to the Nicene Creed, indicating that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father 'and Son'. Debate about this clause divided the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in 1054 CE.

gemilut chasadim (J) Deeds of loving kindness. To perform *gemilut chasadim* is considered a *mitzvah*.

gentiles General term for non-Jewish people.

get (J) The formal Jewish bill of divorce. The *get* is handed over by a husband to his wife, although either party can take the first steps to arrange divorce proceedings.

ghetto Originally referring to the walled quarter of Venice where Jews were ordered to live in 1555, Jewish ghettos were instituted across Western Europe. 'Ghetto' has come to mean any quarter of a city where a minority lives.

gospel(s) (C) The stories of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, usually referring to the first four books of the Christian Scriptures – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

guru (H) A religious teacher, often regarded as an enlightened being; sometimes the central object of worship in a cult.

hadith (I) The traditional reports of what the Prophet Muhammad did and/or said. They are second only to the Qur'an in religious importance, although there is not unanimity in the Muslim community about the authenticity of every *hadith*.

hagiography A biography that treats its subject with undue reverence; biography of a saint.

Hajj (I) Annual pilgrimage to Mecca and required of all Muslims at least once in their lifetime, if possible. It is the fifth pillar of faith.

halachah (J) The Jewish legal tradition, grounded in the 613 commandments of the Torah.

halal (I) That which is permitted or lawful.

haram (I) That which is forbidden and unlawful, also sinful.

Haskalah (J) The Jewish Enlightenment – a period in the eighteenth century of expansion in Jewish cultural and philosophical thought and in dialogue with European society at large; strongest in Eastern Europe.

hermeneutics The science of interpretation, especially of the Scriptures.

hierarchy A vertically structured system of organisation.

High Holy Days (J) The major Jewish festivals of *Rosh ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

Holocaust (J) (also *Shoah*) The Nazi destruction of European Jewry (1942–45), including the murder of six million Jews.

humanism A philosophy that in most cases embraces agnostic or humanist beliefs about the non-existence of a god.

icon (C) (also ikon) A representation of Christ, the Virgin Mary or a saint, especially one painted in oil on a wooden panel in a traditional Byzantine style, and venerated in the Eastern Churches; from the Greek word *eikon*, meaning 'image'.

iconostasis (C). A screen covered with icons that separates the sanctuary from the rest of the church.

ihram (I) A state of consecration (dedication) in which Muslims remove their worldly clothing and put on the simple, white attire of pilgrims that is worn during *Hajj*.

ijma' (I) The consensus of Muslim religious scholars (*ulama*) in a particular generation.

'ilm usul al-fiqh (I) The science of law or the science of interpretation (jurisprudence). The Arabic word *fiqh* means knowledge, understanding and comprehension.

imam (I) Its primary meaning is prayer leader.

immanent An indwelling, constant reality of a divine being or spiritual forces as an intrinsic part of the world. And immanent dimension, a worldview that recognises this. The opposite of transcendent.

incorporeal Without bodily or material form.

indigenous Those people who are the original inhabitants of any country. It is always capitalised when referring to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

indulgences (C) The practice whereby money is paid for the remission or lessening of punishment due to sins after penance has been performed.

infallible Absolutely trustworthy; inerrant (free from error).

initiation Formal admission into a society; the ceremony of admission.

integration A form of assimilation that recognises many Aboriginal peoples wish to keep a distinct identity.

interfaith dialogue The move to greater cooperation and harmony between different religious traditions.

jihad (I) The word means to strive, to apply oneself, to struggle, to persevere in the way of Allah.

Judaica (J) Historical, literary and religious objects and information relating to Judaism.

jurisprudence The science of law.

Ka'ba (I) The cube-shaped central shrine of Islam that is the focal point for daily prayer and the pilgrimage. Today it is within the precincts of the Great Mosque of Mecca.

kaddish (J) The prayer said by mourners.

kami The gods or spirits of Japan.

karma (B, H) The Sanskrit word *karma* literally means 'action that is pregnant with its fruits' – action that will inevitably lead to certain results.

kashrut (J) The laws of Torah regarding permitted foods. Permitted foods are known as *kasher* (or more commonly in English, kosher).

ketubbah (J) The Jewish marriage contract. Traditionally written in Aramaic, it sets out the responsibilities of the husband and makes financial guarantees for the wife should the husband die or divorce her.

kiddush (J) The prayers and blessings said over a cup of wine, ushering in *Shabbat* and holy days.

kinship The system of relationships traditionally accepted by a particular culture and the rights and obligations they involve.

kippah (J) (or *yarmulke*) The skullcap worn by Jewish males.

Land Rights Claims by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to repossession and compensation for use of their lands and sacred sites.

liturgy The official or set forms of public worship. Liturgies (pl) is often used as a synonym for rituals.

machzor (J) The special prayer book for festivals. Editions differ from age to age and from country to country, reflecting strongly the customs of the local Jewish community.

Mahdi (I) Divinely guided leader who is to come in the future to establish God's rule on earth and a socially just society, restore the community to its rightful place, and usher in a perfect Islamic society.

menorah (J) A seven-branched candelabrum, resembling the one kept burning in the ancient Temple. Along with the Star of David, it is one of the main Jewish symbols.

Messiah (C, J) Translation of a Hebrew word meaning 'Anointed One'. Its Greek equivalent in the New Testament is 'Christ'.

mezuzah (J) A miniature scroll placed in a cylindrical case that is affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes.

Midrash (J) A form of ancient biblical commentary and interpretation, mostly written between the second and eighth centuries BCE.

mikvah (J) (plural *mikvot*) A Jewish ritual bath.

Mishnah (J) Completed c. 200 CE, the Mishnah was the Oral Law established in written form. The Oral Law had developed among the teachers of the Second Temple period as the interpretation and development of the Torah.

mission An Aboriginal settlement that may or may not have been at one time a religious institution.

missionary A person who works to convert others to their religious faith, often in places where that religion is not widely practised.

mitzvah (J) (plural, *mitzvot*) Hebrew word meaning 'commandment'. There are 613 *mitzvot* in the Torah.

moksha (H) (also *mutki*) Liberation or release from *samsara*; the end of rebirth for the human being.

monastic Describing an institutionalised form of religious life, either alone or in a community.

monocultural Culture in which there is very little diversity in terms of ethnic groups, language and so on.

monotheistic Characterised by the belief that there is only one God.

mujtahid (I) One entitled to give an independent judgement on a point of theology or law.

multicultural Reflecting cultural diversity.

mystical The adjective applied to those practices, experiences and writings in which direct awareness of and/or union with God is the main focus.

myths In a religious context, myths are stories that are passed on orally – spiritual or religious ideas expressed in human terms.

mythological symbolism The representation of the stories about supernatural beings and events.

native title The name given by the High Court of Australia to Indigenous property rights recognised by the court as handed down in the Mabo decision (3 June 1992).

nirvana (B) The state of no suffering, desire or sense of self that results from enlightenment; the extinction of desire.

oligarchy A form of government in which the power is invested in a few, or in a dominant class or clique.

orality The remembered and spoken tradition, as opposed to literality – the written tradition.

pacifism The opposition to war or violence as a means of settling disputes; refusal to engage in military activity because of one's principles or beliefs.

Pali (B) The language of Theravada Buddhist texts.

Pali texts (H, B) The earliest known Buddhist texts. The Pali language is closely related to Sanskrit and many words are similar in the two languages.

pantheon All the gods of a particular religion, people or nation.

Passover (*Pesach*) (J) The Jewish festival that celebrates the Exodus from Egypt and related events.

patriarchal Literally, a society where the father has domination over the members of *his* household. Related to a form of social organisation in which men are dominant and the organisational structure and belief systems reflect and value the experience of men rather than women.

Patriarchs (J) The forefathers of the Jews – Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob (later known as Israel).

pogroms (Russian: devastation, destruction.) Organised mass killings, especially of Jews.

polytheism The belief in many gods or more than one god.

Pope (C) The Bishop of Rome, considered to be the successor of the apostle Peter – the head of the Catholic Church.

prophecy Revelation of divine will working through the mediation of a person.

prophet One who is appointed to convey a divine message. Prophets (plural) Inspired teachers, revealers or interpreters.

Protestantism (C) A general term for those breaking away at the Reformation, the early sixteenth-century movements for reform in the Christian Church. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 'protesting' churches in England were often called the nonconformist churches or dissenters – those churches that did not acknowledge the authority of the established church of England.

public devotion The communal sharing of prayer and other religious actions beyond the home.

puja (B, H) Worship; the ritual that honours a god or goddess as a divine guest, usually in a temple, but it can also be a domestic ritual.

Puranas (H) *Purana* literally means 'ancient tale'. Composed in Sanskrit, these texts are filled with myths about the Hindu gods, rituals to be performed to these gods and lists of rules giving guidance in everyday behaviour.

purgatory The intermediate stage between death and heaven according to Catholic theology.

qibla (*kiblat*) (I) Direction of the Ka'ba at Mecca to which Muslims face when performing their daily ritual prayers.

qiyas (I) Comparative analogy – a source of law or legal tool where existing rulings are extended to cover new situations when there is no specific mention in the Qur'an or *hadith*.

Qur'an (Koran) (I) The sacred book of Islam: the word of God revealed to the Prophet. The Arabic word for 'recitation' or 'reading' is *qur'an*, which became the name for the collected revelations as passed on by Muhammad.

radical A person, institution or idea that favours changes or reform. From the Latin word for 'root', the term is used positively and negatively. For some, the sense is 'going back to the roots' and discerning what, for example, the founder of the religion would have done in these changed circumstances. For others, the term suggests an extreme transformation with little regard for anything in the past.

rak'a (I) (plural, *rak'at*) A cycle or section of prayer.

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Ramadan (I) The ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar and also the Muslim month of fasting.

Rebbe (J) The name given by *Chasidic* Jews to their charismatic leader. *Rebbe* is Yiddish for teacher.

Reformation (C) The early sixteenth-century movement that began as an effort to purify the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and eventually led to the establishment of separate Christian churches.

refuge (B) The taking of refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha* is a brief ritual that can be performed in private or in public by the laity and is extremely popular because of its simplicity.

renouncers (H) Those who ritually leave society in order to lead a life in the forest and perform yoga and bodily austerities. Renunciation includes giving up all material possessions and all social connections.

responsa (J) The formulations of questions and the rabbinical responses concerning the dual Torah – Oral and Written – that flowed back and forth across the Jewish world from the early Middle Ages. The term is used also to refer to the modern written rabbinical dialogue on ethical and moral issues.

revelation/s (C, I, J) God's disclosure of himself and his will to his people.

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use. Within the rite there are certain **rituals**; these are established or prescribed procedures and actions for the ceremony.

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sacraments (C) Sacred or holy actions that can bring about changes; a visible sign of an invisible action of God.

sages (J) The rabbis (teachers) of the Talmudic period.

samsara (B, H) A name for existence seen as bondage to a set of ongoing rebirths caused by karmic action. In Buddhism, it is the opposite of *nirvana*.

sangha (B) Name for the assembly of monks and nuns.

Sanskrit The classical language of India. The language of the *Vedas* and a huge body of later literature; regarded by Hindus throughout history as a sacred language.

sceptic (also skeptic) One who questions the validity or authenticity of something purporting to be knowledge; one who doubts the truth of the Christian religion or of important elements of it.

schismatic A word describing the process where a group that has come together on the basis of common belief begins to split into different groups.

sectarianism The narrow and excessive allegiance to a particular religious group.

sects Groups of people with a common interest; factions.

secular About things not religious, sacred or spiritual.

secularism A social or political philosophy that rejects all forms of religion.

Shabbat (J) The Jewish day of rest and religious observance, known in English as the Sabbath. It begins at sunset on Friday and ends on Saturday at nightfall when three stars can be seen in the sky.

shamanism A belief in controlling spirits who can be influenced by a priest or someone who works with the supernatural.

Shari'a (I) Islamic law based on the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the Prophet.

Shi'i (I) Those Muslims who believe that Muhammad designated 'Ali and his rightful descendants the true leaders (*imams*) of the Muslim community. They are sometimes called Shi'is or Shi'ites and you can talk about Shi'i Islam, Shi'ism or the Shi'a.

shirk (I) To believe and worship another god or gods alongside the one true God, Allah. *Shirk* is the worst and only unpardonable sin in Islam.

shivah (J) The period of mourning following death.

shramanas (B) Wandering holy men searching for enlightenment and performing austerities such as fasting.

siddur (J) Jewish prayer book.

stupa (B) A monument containing relics or other sacred objects.

suffrage The right to vote, particularly in public elections.

Sufism (I) The inner mystical dimension of Islam – ***tasawwuf***

sunna (I) All the sayings, actions and approvals attributed to Muhammad that have become models to be followed by Muslims; the normal lifestyle of the Prophet that became a unifying bond for all parts of the Islamic *umma* (community).

Sunni (I) Those Muslims who follow the tradition (*sunna*) of the Prophet and his companions without acknowledging any innate political privilege to the descendants of 'Ali or any other companion.

sutra (B) A Buddhist scripture, said to be the Buddha's words.

symbolism The use of visual or verbal signs that point to something beyond themselves.

synod (C) An assembly or council of church officials.

synoptic Literally means 'seen together'; the Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew, which share many common features.

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takbir (I) The act of exalting God; for example, reciting the statement *Allahu Akbar* (God is most great).

tallit (J) A fringed, four-cornered Jewish prayer shawl (see Num 15:38–39). It is most frequently white in colour, with blue, black or deep purple stripes. It is used by males in daily morning prayer.

Talmud (J) (adjective, Talmudic) The most authoritative work of the Oral Torah, written in the period c. 200–500 CE.

tawhid (I) The declaration of the unity of God. Allah is the one true God, the sole Creator and Lord of the universe. All divine attributes belong to Allah and all human worship is to be directed to Allah.

tefillin (J) The two black leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, worn by Jewish males aged 13 and over, that are strapped to the forehead and the arm during weekday morning services.

Tenach (J) The 24 books that make up the Hebrew Scriptures.

theist One who believes in the existence of a god or gods without the rejection of revelation.

theology Literally 'words about god'; the study of god/s, their attributes and their relationship to the universe.

tikkun olam (J) The principle of a commitment to social justice and social order.

Torah (J) Also known as *Chumash* among Jews. In its narrow sense, Torah refers to the first five books of the Bible.

totem An object such as an animal, a plant or a particular landmark through which a person is linked to the Ancestral Being responsible for his or her existence.

transcendent Ultimate reality that exists beyond our world and our experience. And **transcendent dimension**, a worldview that recognises this.

transubstantiation (C) The Catholic teaching that the elements of the Eucharist, bread and wine, truly become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ even though they retain the appearance of bread and wine.

tzaddik (J) The term used to refer to the leaders of *Chasidic* groups, meaning 'righteous man' in Hebrew.

'ulama' (I) Religious scholars; specialists in Islamic sciences, particularly jurisprudence, or law.

umma (I) Islamic community; refers to the worldwide Muslim community.

usury Lending money for interest.

Vedas (H) 'Sacred knowledge, sacred texts' – the most ancient and sacred Indian scriptures dated from approximately 1200–600 BCE.

Vedic sacrifice (H) Described in the *Vedas*; a fire sacrifice in which offerings (food and other gifts) were made by priests (*brahmins*) to honour the gods, and hymns were chanted. Less elaborate sacrifices were offered in the home.

Vesak (B) The annual ritual celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death.

Vinaya (B) The name given to the collections of books detailing the conduct of monks, and a word denoting correct conduct – the monastic code.

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wudu' (I) The means of obtaining ritual cleanliness by washing the exposed parts of the body, wiping the hair and rinsing the mouth and nostrils. One must be in a state of wudu' if the performance of ritual prayer is to be valid.

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yang (Daoism) The male principle in nature, associated by the Chinese with the sun – power, activity, heat and light.

yeshiva (J) (plural, *yeshivot*) Jewish religious academy. The Talmud is the major subject of study at *yeshivot*.

yin (Daoism) The female principle in nature, associated by the Chinese with the earth – passivity, negativity, cold and dark.

yoga (H) 'Joining'/'yoking' of mind and body to achieve perfect unity or wholeness; a spiritual and bodily discipline.

yogins (B, H) Holy men who focus on the performance of intensive meditational and ritual practice for long periods.

Zion (J) The hill on which the city of King David first stood and around which the city of Jerusalem grew. Today Zion is the iconic symbol of redemption for both religious and secular Jews.

Zionism (J) The name given to the movement that began life seeking the establishment of a modern Jewish State.

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1

Nature of religion and beliefs

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **define** the supernatural dimension and **discuss** a transcendent and immanent religious world view
- **define** the characteristics of religion and **explore** how these characteristics interact to create a dynamic, living religion
- **appreciate** the contribution of religion to individuals and society and culture
- **outline** the nature of Dreaming for Australia's Aboriginal peoples and **recognise** the importance of Dreaming for them
- **discuss** the diversity of Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples
- **investigate** the inextricable connection of Dreaming, the land and identity.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Nature of religion and beliefs (p. 8)
- Dreaming stories (p. 10)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks (p. 11)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (p. 12)

Online activity

- Chapter 1 multiple-choice quiz (p. 13)

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Southern view of the Milky Way, ranging from Sagittarius and Scorpius, at left, to Centaurus and Crux (the Southern Cross) at right. This area of the Milky Way, with its dark nebulae, has a distinctive shape that has been described in Australian Aboriginal astronomy as 'The Emu in the Sky'. The head of the emu is the Coalsack with the Southern Cross directly above. For thousands of years, different Aboriginal groups have told numerous stories regarding the Emu in the Sky.

RESPOND

View the video *Dhinawan (Emu) in the Sky*, in which a man from the Kamilaroi language group explains this creation story.

Weblink
Dhinawan (Emu) in the Sky

GLOSSARY

myths In a religious context, myths are stories that are passed on orally. Each myth has a beginning, a middle and an end, and narrates the deeds of superhuman beings or gods, who can do things that human beings cannot. Societies use myths to explain the 'truth' about how the world, social customs, rituals and other realities came to be.

Although space exploration and science have brought the world 'out there' closer and unravelled many questions about how the universe began, people still ponder the mysteries of human existence. They seek to find answers to what lies beyond the realm of the ordinary. In an attempt to answer the questions that people have asked – and continue to ask – about the search for meaning and the ultimate goal of human life, a number of quite distinctive responses have emerged. For some, the answers come through revealed texts and writings. For others, such as Australia's Aboriginal peoples, answers come through ancestral **myths**, such as the stories of Dreaming that they express through symbolism and art and re-enact in their ceremonies.

Living Religion, sixth edition, explores the expression and practice of the world's various belief systems that have arisen as people sought answers to the ultimate questions of human existence. Five of these belief systems are called the major religious traditions – major because of the number of their adherents – and each has its own distinctive response. Before looking at these belief systems, however, we need to understand the nature of religion and those characteristics we call 'religious'.

The exploration of how people explain the ultimate questions of human existence is not an easy task – it requires the explorer to acknowledge that their understanding of religion is modified by their own experience of 'religion'. How you were brought up, your family's religious experience and the many other factors that have shaped you to this stage of your life affect your attitude towards religion and how you define it. Is it possible to ever arrive at a definition that can be explained in simple terms?

Religion, however one defines it, is complex. It can be a cohesive force in society and, at the same time, a source of division. But the investigation of these different aspects is exciting.

NOTE

The five major religious traditions are Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

EXTENSION

1. Maintain a list where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas explored in this chapter.
2. Compare the first and subsequent definitions of 'religion' that you make as you work through this chapter with your definition of 'religion' at the end of the chapter.

1.1 The nature of religion

GLOSSARY

Diaspora The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people throughout the ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

divine Of or relating to a god, especially the Supreme Being. From the Latin word *divinus* – of the gods, or superhuman.

immanent dimension A world view that recognises a divine being or powers as a constant reality – an active and continuing presence among believers and in this world.

rituals Established or prescribed procedures and actions for a rite – a formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use.

transcendent dimension A world view that recognises a divine being or powers whose existence 'goes beyond' human limitations. It is often contrasted with the term 'immanent dimension'.

Before one can talk about the 'nature of religion', it is necessary to come to some sort of definition of 'religion'. This is not as simple as consulting the dictionary.

> A belief in, worship of, or obedience to a supernatural power or powers considered to be **divine** or to have control of human destiny.
>
> *Collins Concise Australian Dictionary*

> Religion is constituted by a set of beliefs, actions and emotions, both personal and corporate, deemed necessary on account of some concept of an Ultimate Reality.
>
> Michael L. Peterson (b. 1950), *Reason and Religious Belief*

> This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.
>
> 14th Dalai Lama (b. 1935), *Tibetan Buddhism and Modern Physics: Toward a Union of Love and Knowledge*

> In general, religion is a way of relating to mystery as a sacred or divine reality rather than as useless or meaningless.
>
> Michael H. Barnes (b. 1947), *The Enduring Quest for Meaning*

> Religions are confluences of organic-cultural flows that intensify joy and confront suffering by drawing on human and suprahuman forces to make homes and cross boundaries.
>
> Thomas A. Tweed (b. 1954), *Crossing and Dwelling: A Theory of Religion*

> Religion is the inmost voice of the human heart that under the yoke of a seemingly finite existence groans and travails in pain.
>
> D.T. Suzuki (1870–1966), *Outlines of Mahayana Buddhism*

> The Prophet Muhammad was asked, 'What is religion?' And he reportedly replied that religion is the way we conduct ourselves towards others.

What is clear when we explore the different definitions of religion is that religion eludes exact definition. As Dr John Dickson, Director of the Centre for Public Christianity in Australia, said:

> Like love, art or consciousness itself, religion is a feature of human existence that defies definition. Such realities stand over us and within us to such a degree that objective analysis is perhaps impossible. And, yet, when one is truly touched by love, art or religion, one knows it. It is a thing to be experienced as much as assessed.

The only common agreement seems to be about 'something beyond the ordinary' – a **transcendent dimension** – and that religion helps in some way to map a course through life's obstacles and the limitations of human existence.

Throughout this chapter, we will consider a number of different perspectives on the question, 'What is religion?'

So how can we bring all this together, including all the various contradictions about what religion is? The Latin roots of the word 'religion' (see Did you know? box) help us in a limited way to understand it as a complex set of experiences, images, beliefs, feelings, **rituals**, texts, symbols and institutions that enable individuals and members of a community to identify, express and live out their most fundamental relationships.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Latin word *religio* translates as 'religion', but what was the root meaning of this Latin word? Scholars have proposed that its meaning comes from one or both of these sources: *relegare*, 'to gather up' or 'turn to constantly', and *religare*, 'to bind together'. There is, however, no agreement about which is the critical term, and this approach is problematic when studying cultures where the word is not connected to a Latin root or derivative.

> To our ancestors there was much in Nature to be afraid of – lightning, storms, earthquakes, volcanos, plagues, drought, long winters. Religions arose in part as attempts to propitiate and control, if not much to understand, the disorderly aspect of Nature.
>
> Carl Sagan (1934–1996) 'A universe not made for us', from *Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space*

A particular world view

A 'world view' means the way in which an individual or society sees the world. It refers to a fundamental orientation about reality and influences how we live, move and express our being. The society into which you were born may determine how you see the world. Each religion promotes its own world view. Buddhism and Hinduism, for example, see time as a cycle, whereas for many Christians, Jews and Muslims time is linear – it has a beginning and an end. What religion does is provide its believers with a source of meaning that both transcends and contains their life and their world. Religion offers believers a specific set of beliefs and practices that give meaning to their lives.

The supernatural

When we talk about the supernatural, we are talking about something being above or beyond what is natural – not able to be explained by known natural laws. The supernatural exceeds the ordinary limits of human existence and is sometimes described as abnormal, or even miraculous.

Religion has a transcendent dimension

Religion possesses a transcendent dimension. It points us towards the sacred or divine world and beyond this earthly and material world. The words 'transcendent' and 'transcendence' come from the Latin word *transcendere*, meaning 'to climb over' or 'to surpass'. This transcendent dimension of religion enables humans to surpass the limits of their creatural existence and earthly concerns to focus on heavenly or spiritual matters.

In contrast, the **immanent dimension** emphasises the presence of God or gods within human existence, in the day-to-day, concrete, ordinary concerns of life, rather than above and beyond it. A healthy approach to religion is often characterised by a balance between the transcendent – the 'out there' aspect of existence – and the immanent, or the 'inner' aspect.

Wikimedia Commons/Hardscarf Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en)

FIGURE 1.1.1 A Neanderthal skeleton unearthed in the Shanidar Cave in the semi-autonomous Kurdistan region of northern Iraq, a site already famous for fossils of these cousins of our species, is providing fresh evidence that Neanderthals buried their dead – and intriguing clues that flowers may have been used in such rituals. 'The way we treat the dead is an expression of our mourning and also about our ideas of what happens after we die,' said Dr Emma Pomeroy, an archaeologist from the University of Cambridge who led the discovery (18 February 2020).

RESPOND

Construct some possible questions, issues and answers about human existence and the supernatural that might arise from Dr Pomeroy's statement.

Religious world views

- Christianity, Islam and Judaism – a divine power is said to transcend (be predominantly above or beyond) the world. The One God exists beyond the human and yet guides humanity throughout its everyday existence.
- Buddhism and Hinduism – a divine being or powers dwell within the individual (immanent). In the case of Buddhism, for example, it is important not to look for a Buddhist equivalent of 'God' but for an ultimate goal or principle, such as *nirvana* or *dhamma*, that gives Buddhists a sense of ultimate meaning.
- Shinto – *kami* (gods and spirits) dwell in people, specific places or natural phenomena.

REVIEW

1 In your own words, **define** the terms 'religion', 'supernatural', 'transcendent dimension' and 'immanent dimension'.

2 Clarify what is meant by the term 'world view'.

EXTENSION

1 Construct a table to compare the meanings and world perspective of 'transcendent world view' and 'immanent world view'.

2 **Discuss** examples of each of the following world views:

   a one that holds a belief in a divine power and/or powers beyond the human (transcendent)

   b one that maintains a belief in a divine being or powers dwelling within the individual (immanent).

   Add these examples to the table you constructed for Question 1.

3 Organise a class debate on the topic: 'There must be a balanced relationship in religions between the immanent and transcendent dimensions.'

Characteristics of religion

If religion is a human response to the sense that there is something beyond the ordinary and that this sense gives meaning and purpose to life, it follows that we have to have some organised way of responding to and explaining the sense of *mystery*, the *holy*, the *sacred*, the *transcendent*, or the *ultimate reality*. These responses are called the characteristics of religion. Four such characteristics are:

- beliefs and believers
- sacred texts and writings
- ethics
- rituals and ceremonies.

Some scholars would say that a list of characteristics of religion should also include many other characteristics, such as structures and institutions, sacred sites and times, and sacred symbols and figures.

DID YOU KNOW?

The academic study of religion is a modern development. It began during the eighteenth-century Enlightenment with its advancement of the sciences and discovery of other cultures.

Beliefs and believers

Beliefs and believers sustain all religions. For example, the central beliefs of Christianity – Jesus of Nazareth as the Son of God, the resurrection, the forgiveness of sins, and the divine inspiration of the Bible – helped to keep the early Christian community unified. At times, however, as is shown in Chapter 3, differing interpretations of these beliefs have resulted in disunity. For Jewish people from the time of the **Diaspora**, it was their beliefs that kept alive their identity and community.

Sacred texts and writings

At their centre, all religions have oral and/or written sacred texts, writings, or other types of stories. In Buddhism, these are the *Tripitaka* or Pali Canon, as well as a huge collection of *sutras* ('threads' of teaching). In Islam, the Qur'an is the central sacred text. Of less importance are the *hadith*, which detail the life of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as the *sunna*, the reference point for regulations within Islamic belief and custom. This is a good example of how these characteristics are interconnected: the Qur'an is a sacred text that is not only read and meditated upon, but which gives essential direction for Islamic beliefs and customs.

Ethics

Ethics can be understood as the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs within a tradition. They are central to any religion. Their purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong, and what the followers of a religion should freely do, or refrain from doing. In Hinduism, *sadharana dharma* is the general code of Hindu ethics. It is the universal natural law and also the moral and religious duties, laws and customs that are in harmony with the natural law. The ultimate goal of life is *moksha*, or liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth of souls (*samsara*).

DID YOU KNOW?

Australian law is administered by the government, which represents the world view of a Western secular (that is, non-religious) democratic state. While religious law can influence people's lives in ethical ways, all religious groups living in Australia must live under local secular laws.

Rituals and ceremonies

Rituals and ceremonies are enactments or systems of actions and beliefs that each have a beginning, a middle and an end. They are directly linked to superhuman beings or forces. Rituals and ceremonies in Judaism include male circumcision and the coming-of-age ceremony *Bar Mitzvah*, as well as significant rituals for marriage, divorce and death. Jewish ritual circumcision, or *brit milah*, is performed by a *mohel* on male infants on the eighth day after birth. Historically, it was required of Abraham and signified the covenant between God and the Jewish people (Gen 17:10–14: this is an abbreviation for the Book of Genesis, Chapter 17, Verses 10 to 14). Its intention is to place a permanent reminder of the covenant in the flesh of the male Jew. The circumcision is followed by a festive meal for family and friends.

AJN/Peter Haskin

FIGURE 1.1.2 A Jewish circumcision or *brit milah*

RESPOND

Explain ways in which this ritual is linked to key Jewish beliefs about God and human existence.

A dynamic, living religion

These key characteristics create a dynamic, living religion. A dynamic (Greek *dunamikos*, meaning 'powerful') religion is one characterised by energy, ambition, new ideas and practical achievements. It develops into a powerful force that refreshes itself constantly, and therefore avoids settling into a predictable or conservative rut. A living religion is one that is full of life; it is practical, real and immersed in – not removed from or afraid of – everyday human existence.

In general, any religion is likely to stagnate if it does not constantly revitalise its beliefs and believers, sacred texts and writings, ethics, rituals and ceremonies. When these characteristics of religion interact creatively, they help to nurture a religion that is alive, dynamic and active in the lives of its adherents, and in the society and culture in which it exists. It is a religion that is lived.

It is important to remember that, when studying religion, it is not enough to just read about its history or study its texts; you must also see it in action.

REVIEW

1. **Define** the four main characteristics of religion.
2. Demonstrate ways in which these four characteristics affect the everyday lives of believers in two particular traditions.
3. Explain ways in which these characteristics combine to create dynamic, living religious traditions. In other words, how does religious theory become a living, day-to-day practice?

EXTENSION

1. **Investigate** important links between the four characteristics of religion. Construct a mind map or flow chart to present your findings.
2. In pairs, briefly **discuss** the question: 'What is essential for a religious tradition to remain a dynamic, living force in contemporary society?' List your key findings and **discuss** these with another pair.

The contribution of religion

> The unexamined life is not worth living.
>
> Attributed to Socrates in Plato, *Apology*, 38a

Certain questions have puzzled people for thousands of years. These have sometimes been referred to as 'the great questions of human existence'. They include:

- Is there a supreme being?
- Who am I?
- Why is there evil, pain and suffering?
- Is there life after death?

Religious beliefs can help us answer such questions. They can provide a sense of self, and a sense of belonging and community. Religion can confront and challenge social and political injustices, and can be an agent for change in a society. Religion can also encourage violence when its adherents come to believe that their world view is being challenged.

It is important to acknowledge that many cultures outside those based in or dominated by developed Western countries are not specifically interested in 'the great questions of human existence'. For example, many indigenous cultures understand their relationship with the cosmos in terms of the perceived unity of past, present and future. Such cultures have very little interest in questions to do with the origins of the universe, humanity or related areas.

Is there a supreme being?

A supreme being, god or deity (from the Latin word *deus*, 'god') is the name given to a god or goddess, depending on the religion being considered. In the Christian, Jewish and Islamic traditions, 'the Deity' refers to the monotheistic God (one God alone). In these religions, the Supreme Being, or God, is understood as the source and creator of the universe, the source of all that exists, and the ultimate ruler of all time and space.

Who am I?

The question 'Who am I?' takes a person to the heart of human existence. For Christianity, the question 'Who am I?' is understood in relation to 'What is human nature and what is its ultimate purpose?' For many religions and traditions, the person gains their identity (their answer to 'Who am I?') by relating to their God or gods, guided by the beliefs and practices of their tradition.

Why is there evil, pain and suffering?

Human evil, pain and suffering have limitless aspects – physical illness, death, social injustice and poverty, loneliness and aloneness. This also raises limitless questions: Does life have meaning because of, or apart from, suffering? If God is all-powerful and all-loving, why does God allow evil, pain and suffering to exist?

Getty Images/Scott Barbour

Getty Images/Anadolu Agency

FIGURE 1.1.3 Footwear removed from men, women and children at the Auschwitz concentration camp, 1945; thousands of life jackets and rubber boats, abandoned on Lesbos by refugees escaping the civil war in Syria, 2020

RESPOND

Investigate and **explain** a variety of religious responses to the problem of evil, pain and suffering in the world.

In most traditions, evil is the opposite of what is good and beneficial. It can be understood as a cosmic power or as a human way of behaving or deciding. Evil, pain and suffering are interrelated. Suffering can be understood as the experience of pain that could be caused by evil, ignorance or neglect. As such, this three-part issue raises crucial questions for religions about the nature of God, of the universe and of human existence itself.

Buddhists, for example, refer to suffering as *dukkha* – a 'desire to be in the world too much'. The cause of *dukkha* is selfish craving.

A different viewpoint on the existence of evil, pain and suffering is found in this Jewish text:

> If a person sees that suffering afflicts them, let them examine their deeds.
>
> Babylonian Talmud, *Berakhot*, 5a

Is there life after death?

'Death' is generally understood as the ending of ordinary human existence. Issues and questions about the origin of death and the destiny of the dead, as well as rituals for the dead, are part of all religious traditions.

Each of the attitudes to death in the major religious traditions is not a scientific explanation of death, but an attempt to make sense of life – to understand death as a part of the pattern of life. Reincarnation, resurrection and other concepts of life after death provide powerful images for their believers. They help sustain people in the knowledge that there is a deeper meaning to life than that which is played out externally. The responses to death and afterlife in each tradition have helped humans to live with the mystery of existence and to give concrete meaning to their lives.

For example, Muslims believe that death is the common destiny willed by God for all living things – 'Every soul will taste of death' (Qur'an). After death, Muslims believe, the soul waits in *barzakh* (the place of waiting for Judgement Day). When judgement comes, God will deal with everyone according to their actions. After judgement, the dead will be restored to their bodies, so Muslims do not cremate their dead.

The contribution of religion

This section on the nature of religion has provided various examples of how religion contributes to individuals and to society and culture. With its claim to a supernatural dimension (and, by association, to the transcendent and immanent world views), religion succeeds in fixing the minds and hearts of its adherents in the here and now, while at the same time pointing them beyond the material to the spiritual or divine realm.

Religion also contributes to individuals, society and culture by adhering to the key characteristics that have been discussed – beliefs and believers, sacred texts and writings, ethics, and rituals and ceremonies. These characteristics enable religion to become practical and concrete. They change over time and affect the society and culture in which that change takes place. This in turn not only creates a dynamic and living religious tradition, but a dynamic and living society in which that particular religion exists.

> Religion is part of the human make-up. It's also part of our cultural and intellectual history. Religion was our first attempt at literature, the texts, our first attempt at cosmology, making sense of where we are in the universe, our first attempt at health care, believing in faith healing, our first attempt at philosophy.
>
> Christopher Hitchens (1949–2011)

Worksheet
Nature of religion and beliefs

REVIEW

1. Recall and describe the nature of 'the supernatural dimension' and the main 'characteristics of religion'.
2. Identify and provide possible responses to one 'great question of existence' to which you think most human beings would like an answer.
3. Describe the religious responses of at least two traditions to the basic questions of human existence listed in this section. Present your findings in the form of a chart or mind map.

EXTENSION

1. Investigate Christopher Hitchens and write three sentences about him.
2. In small groups, conduct a brief discussion to show that you **appreciate** the contribution of religion to (a) individuals and (b) society and culture. In your discussion, refer to at least two religious traditions and provide examples of the everyday beliefs and practices of their adherents. Share your list of key points with the rest of the class.
3. Research the response to COVID-19 of two living, dynamic religious traditions. How did these faiths contribute during this time of crisis to:
   a. individuals
   b. society?
4. Synthesise your key learnings about the nature of religion in the form of a mind map or flow chart. In your chart, make explicit reference to a range of traditions and some of their beliefs and practices.
5. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this section and ensure that it is clear and complete. Identify and discuss any definitions of key terms that you have changed throughout the chapter so far, especially 'religion', 'supernatural', 'transcendent' and other important terms.

1.2 Australian Aboriginal beliefs and spiritualities – Dreaming

GLOSSARY

aboriginal From the Latin *ab origine*, meaning 'from the beginning'. It is always capitalised when used in reference to Australian Aboriginal peoples.

indigenous Those people who are the original inhabitants of any country. It is always capitalised when referring to the Indigenous peoples of Australia.

Aboriginal peoples have been in Australia for more than 40 000 years. It is now generally held that they came from Asia via what is today Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, East Timor, Indonesia and the Philippines. By the time James Cook entered Australian history in 1770, Australian Aboriginal peoples had occupied and utilised the entire continent and a common management system which can still be recognised in enough dispersed places to say that the system was universal.

> Fences on the ground make fences in the mind. Until Europeans came ... Australia had no *terra nullius*'.
>
> Bill Gammage, 'The biggest estate on earth: how Aborigines made Australia' in *The Conversation*, 8 December 2011

Wagilag Sisters © Philip Lilipiyana Gudthaykudthay/Copyright Agency, 2021

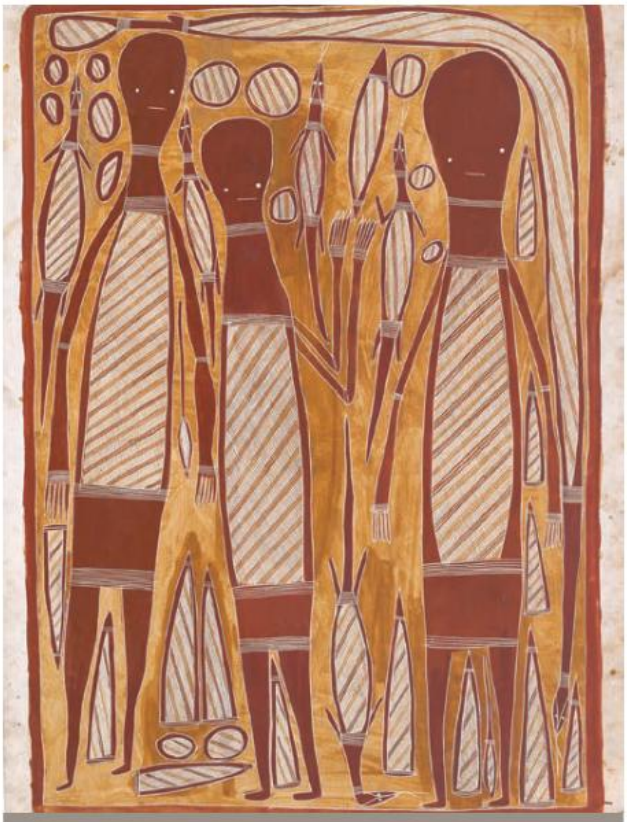


FIGURE 1.2.1 *Wagilag Sisters, with child*, 2007, by Philip Gudthaykudthay (b. 1923/1927), Central Arnhem Land, natural earth pigments on canvas, 172 × 120 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra.

This painting represents a component of the Wagilag Sisters epic creation story. The upper-left corner of the work shows Wititj the sacred python emerging from its home, Mirarrmina waterhole.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

The most precise and inclusive way to refer to **Indigenous** Australians is as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Today, many Aboriginal groups prefer to identify themselves in local terms drawn from the language group or territory group to which they belong. Some of the most widely used local terms are:

- Anagu – Central Australia
- Koori(e) – south-eastern Australia
- Murri – Queensland
- Nunga – South Australia
- Nyoogah or Nyungar – south-west Western Australia
- Yolngu – Arnhem Land region, Northern Territory.

Within these areas they may identify with a more specific language or territory group; for example, Wiradjuri, Gamillaroi, Arrernte (Aranda), Warlpiri and Pitjantjatjara.

Torres Strait Islanders are the Indigenous people of the Torres Strait Islands. Torres Strait Islanders use the names of their island community – Badu, Murray, Yam, Boigu and the Meriam-speaking people of the eastern Torres Strait Islands.

Note: It is important to remember that these terms apply to specific groups and should not be misapplied. For example, 'Koori' is not a synonym for 'Aboriginal' and should not be applied to groups from other parts of Australia.

Diversity has always been a feature of Aboriginal society – there are several hundred distinct languages (two-thirds of which are now extinct), and songs, stories, dances, ceremonies, Dreamings and paintings that are all owned in different ways depending on complex laws. In spite of this diversity, it is possible to speak of common features of Australian Aboriginal cultures – highly developed, deeply religious, and closely associated with nature and the land.

EXTENSION

Identify the language group of the Indigenous Australians in your area using the interactive Gambay: Australian First Languages Map or the AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia.

Weblinks
Australian First Languages Map

AIATSIS map of Indigenous Australia

Nature of Dreaming

GLOSSARY

Ancestral Beings Those Creator spirits who moved about, forming the landscape and creating the plants, animals and peoples of the known world. They also founded the ceremonies, marriage laws and other laws of human society. They continue to inhere (to exist permanently and inseparably) in the living generations.

Dreaming A complex concept of fundamental importance to Aboriginal culture that embraces the long-ago creative era of the Ancestral Beings as well as the present and the future. Shark Dreaming, Honey Ant Dreaming, Yam Dreaming and the hundreds of other Dreamings known across Australia are part of the spiritual identities of those Aboriginal peoples who claim them as their Ancestral Beings or totems. To falsely claim the Dreaming of another group is a serious infringement of Aboriginal law.

Dreaming is the centre of Aboriginal religion, spirituality and life; it is the closest translation of the Aboriginal concept of how the world works. Dreaming is the past, the present and the future.

The term itself translates as different words in different languages of the Aboriginal peoples – the Arrernte call it *alcheringa ngambukala*, literally meaning 'that springing from its own eternity'; the Pitjantjatjara people call it *tjukurpa*; in north-east Arnhem Land it is called *wongar*.

This section will concentrate on Dreaming in relation to how the sacred sites, stories, art and symbolism of Aboriginal society are the living expression of Dreaming. Chapter 9 discusses those aspects of Dreaming – kinship, ceremonial life and obligations to the land and people – that most affect contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities.

What is Dreaming?

Dreaming is the beginning of all things. It is when all the things we know in the world today were formed.

- Dreaming refers to events and places, rather than what Westerners would call time. The Aboriginal sacred stories are stories about events of Dreaming and how Ancestral (Spirit) Beings formed the land, and founded life on the land.
- Dreaming is the unseen spirit world. This spirit world is not obscure and in the past. It is what gives life and reality to the visible world.
- Dreaming affects all of life. The performance of ceremonies that were first performed by Ancestors in Dreaming brings to life the power of Dreaming. Dreaming is experienced in the songs, stories, rituals and symbols.
- Dreaming is both personal and communal. A particular Aboriginal group may speak of 'the' Dreaming, with which it has been linked from the beginning, but each person may also speak of 'my' Dreaming. 'My' Dreaming may include a story about a form of life with which 'I' am connected; for example, the black swan, the dolphin, the eagle. As an Aboriginal person, 'my' Dreaming connects me all the way back to 'the' Dreaming. Symbols of 'my' Dreaming would be depicted in the sacred art and objects used in the rituals about it.
- Dreaming is reflected in a special way in the land. To Aboriginal peoples, the land is not just soil or rock or minerals, but the whole environment – all related and linked by Dreaming. Humans are not separate from their environment, but indivisibly united with it. Aboriginal peoples reflect a constant awareness that they are in the presence of Dreaming wherever they travel, hunt, gather food or reside. Aboriginal peoples are part of the land and it is part of them.

Adapted from W.E.H. Stanner, *Oceania Monograph*, no. 11, 1966

In traditional Aboriginal Australia, world order comes from all those events in which the **Ancestral Beings** travel and transform themselves into sites. There is no sense of creation or of a first creator. Aboriginal myths begin from the assumption that the life-giving power of the Ancestors simply exists, and the issue of who made the Ancestors or the world does not arise.

Worksheet
Dreaming stories

FIGURE 1.2.2 **Dreaming as the basis of all aspects of life in traditional Aboriginal society (based on W.H. Edwards, *An Introduction to Aboriginal Societies*, 1988, p. 13)**

The stories, songs, art and ceremonies recall the journeys of the Ancestral Beings and their interaction with people and their bestowal (gifting) of land upon particular language groups. Aboriginal art and ritual objects play an important role in the telling of stories and in preserving the sacred laws handed down from the past. All this underlines the fact that Aboriginal spiritualities are not so much a series of complex 'religious' practices as they are a way of life. The whole way of life of traditional Aboriginal society is grounded in direct links to the land. Their stories, art and ceremonies recall the way the Ancestral Beings shaped the environment as it is now known, laid down the law and established the relationships and responsibilities by which Aboriginal peoples live out their lives – Aboriginal spiritualities are not separate; they are a way of life.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **explain** the meaning and significance of Dreaming.
2. What is a 'sacred site'?
3. In small groups, **discuss** what is meant by the statement: 'Dreaming is the past, the present and the future.' Write a brief report of your discussion.
4. **Construct** a two-column chart to **distinguish** the differences between the Western and Aboriginal concepts of how the world works.

9780170457583

EXTENSION

Investigate three Dreaming stories, each from a different location in Australia. Use the weblinks provided on the NelsonNet student website as a starting point. Write a report on your research under the following headings:

a Name of language or territory group to which it belongs

b Ancestral Being(s) in the story

c Outline of the main features of the story.

Weblinks
Coomaditchie United Aboriginal Corporation
Welcome to Dreamtime
Aboriginal Dreamtime Stories

Layers of meaning

GLOSSARY

Elders Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Aboriginal communities. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities as Elders in respect of:

a kinship, and as overseers of many Dreaming tracks; that is, they are 'Boss over country'

b being leaders of large extended family networks

c knowledge acquired and services given within the community.

initiation Formal admission into a society; the ceremony of admission.

mythological symbolism The representation of the stories about supernatural beings and events.

totem An object such as an animal, a plant or a particular landmark through which a person is linked to the Ancestral Being responsible for his or her existence.

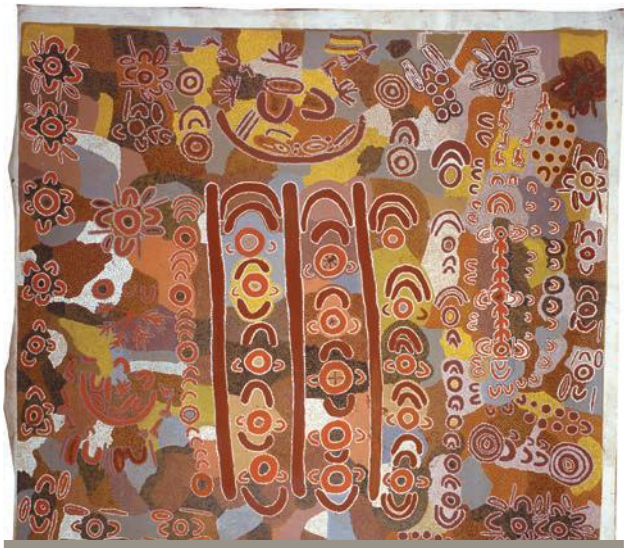
There are many layers of meaning in all Aboriginal rituals and ceremonies – Aboriginal art, stories and ceremonies are full of **mythological symbolism**. The first layer is the most obvious and open and is accessible to all. The second and further layers are not so obvious and require some degree of experience of, or relationship with, Aboriginal peoples or culture in order to understand them. The deepest layers are secret/sacred, and as such are only available to **Elders** and initiated Aboriginal people; these layers give the full story, with all details, meanings and significance.

Many ceremonies are a combination of public and secret/sacred ceremonies. It is inappropriate for non-initiated Aboriginal people and, particularly, non-Aboriginal people to try to access the secret/sacred rituals. The secret/sacred nature of ceremonies has parallels through all Aboriginal life – certain sites may only be visited by certain groups; for example, women or Elders, for the purpose of **initiation**.

Much traditional art was 'temporary' and lasted only for the duration of particular ceremonies such as initiations and funerals. Today most Aboriginal art called 'traditional', as well as the so-called transitional works, such as Western Desert acrylic paintings on canvas and board, represent the places, events and Dreaming Ancestors depicted earlier in the 'temporary' art, but also incorporate actual events (see *Sugarleaf Dreaming at Ngarlu* in Figure 1.2.3). The boundaries between the mythical past and the actual present as non-Aboriginal people understand them are blurred – but then, Dreaming is 'the past, the present and the future'.

All Aboriginal art has a religious theme, but some, such as the carved boards, incised stones, carved trees and **totem** images of the inner circle of initiation grounds, has particular secret/sacred significance.

Worksheet
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artworks

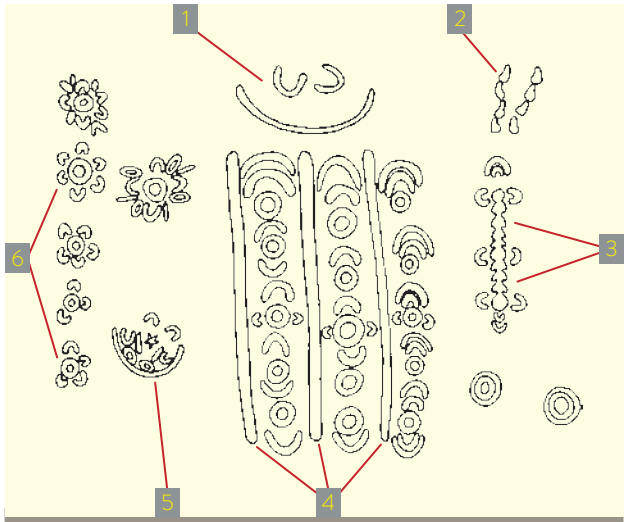


Sugarleaf Dreaming at Ngarlu, 1986. © Ruth Napaljarri Stewart, Hilda Napaljarri, Lucy Napaljarri Kennedy/Copyright Agency, 2021

FIGURE 1.2.3 ***Sugarleaf Dreaming at Ngarlu*, 1986, by Lucy, Hilda and Ruth Napaljarri, Walpiri, Yuendumu, Central Australia, acrylic on canvas.**

In this painting, Ancestral Beings and real people are presented as one. It shows mythical women gathering sugarleaf and dancing a yawulyu, a women's ceremony involving the story of a man who took as his wife a woman whom he was not supposed to marry. At the same time, it depicts the birth (to the man's sisters) of two babies who are actual men living today.

Peter Sutton (ed.), *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, 1988, p. 121



© Hilda Napaljarri/Copyright Agency, 2021

FIGURE 1.2.4 The 'map' of *Sugarleaf Dreaming at Ngarlu*

1 Napangardi's camp
2 Jungarrayi's footprints
3 Women dancing
4 Ceremonial poles
5 Windbreak (birthplace of two Jampijinpa boys)
6 Women gathering Yanyirlingi

Aboriginal art and its symbolism communicates the intimate relationship between the Ancestral Beings and the Law, values, customs, ceremonies and obligations of Aboriginal peoples. It enables the passage of knowledge within Aboriginal society and, in limited ways, to the outside world.

Dr David Malangi's *Sacred Places at Milmindjarr'* (Figure 1.2.5) is a powerful illustration of how Dreaming determines the cultural responsibilities and the rituals and ceremonies. It also demonstrates the difficulties experienced in trying to understand the spiritualities and beliefs of Aboriginal peoples under separate headings. *Sacred Places at Milmindjarr'* is a partial representation of the mythical geography of the artist's 'country'.

With permission Aboriginal Artists Agency.

FIGURE 1.2.5 *Sacred Places at Milmindjarr'*, 1982, by Dr David Malangi (1927–1999), Central Arnhem Land, ochre on bark, 107 × 79 cm

> The story concerns the travels of the founding ancestral figures known over much of Arnhem Land as the Djan'kawu Sisters. As they travelled from place to place, paddling their canoe and walking overland, they created the clans (landowning groups) and their languages, naming natural phenomena and creating spring waters by plunging their digging sticks into the ground. In Manharrngu clan country they created the well Milmindjarr' and had a ceremony there. They were looking for fish, and caught a small Catfish, which is represented in the painting. They gave birth to the peoples of the area. When asked about the significance of a certain motif, Malangi replied, 'I know. You don't know.'
>
> Peter Sutton (ed.), *Dreamings: The Art of Aboriginal Australia*, 1988, p. 53

REVIEW

1. From the text extracts and artwork in this chapter, identify four specific examples to demonstrate the diversity of Dreaming for Aboriginal peoples.
2. Clarify what is meant by 'layers of meaning'.
3. Discuss how the bark painting *Sacred Places at Milmindjarr'* could help clarify your understanding of Dreaming and its importance for the lives of Aboriginal peoples.
4. In three concise paragraphs, show that you **recognise** the importance of Dreaming to Aboriginal peoples.

Dreaming, land and identity

> I feel with my body, with my blood. Feeling all these trees, all this country. When this wind blow you can feel it. Same for country … you feel it, you can look, but feeling … that make you.
>
> Big Bill Neidjie (c. 1920–2002), Gagudju Elder, Kakadu

For Indigenous Australians, the land is the core of all spirituality – the land is not dead, it is alive with power and the Ancestral Beings who live in it. The land is the Ancestors and as long as the land lives, so do the Ancestors. The land is not just soil or rocks or minerals, but a whole environment, and is sustained by people and culture.

Places on earth share in the sacredness of Dreaming as they were formed in their present shape by the journeys of the Ancestral Beings.

For the Pitjantjatjara people of the Western Desert of Central Australia, a high mountain peak may represent a place where one of the Ancestors reared up and looked over the surrounding country, and the ridge along a range may be an Ancestral track. The usually dry claypans that dot the plains are often viewed as camping places of the Beings. Some Ancestral Beings are said to have ascended to the sky after their wanderings, and various star groups are their final resting places. The Seven Sisters, or Kungkarangkalpa, were chased over a vast area by a man named Nyiyunya and left the earth to become the Pleiades constellation (Taurus).

For the Wiradjuri people of New South Wales, the black streak in the Milky Way, towards the Southern Cross, is one of the Ancestors of the Wawi, a serpent-like creature that lives in deep waterholes on the Darling River and burrows into the bank.

Worksheet
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

It is impossible to discuss the beliefs and spiritualities of Indigenous Australians without talking about the land. It is the land that gives them their identity – 'the Land is my mother'. The journeys of the Ancestral Beings – journeys that are re-enacted in the rituals and ceremonies of the people and expressed in their art – shaped the landscape and gave birth to its people.

9780170457583

© Jan Billycan/Copyright Agency, 2021

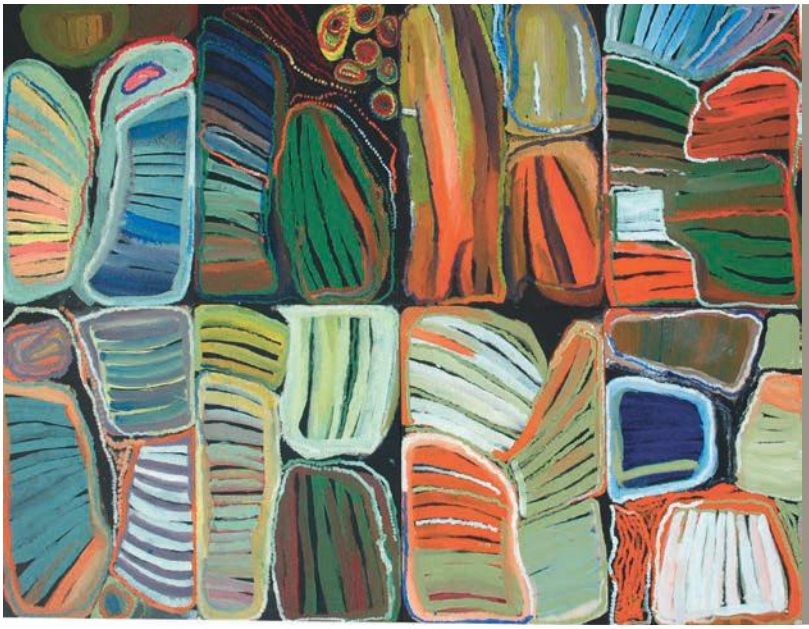


FIGURE 1.2.6 ***All the Jila*****, 2006, by Jan Billycan (Djan Nanundie) (1928/1932–2015), paintings, natural earth pigments and oil on canvas, each panel 90.0 × 60.0 cm, National Gallery of Australia, Canberra**

The eight panels depict the Great Sandy Desert near Well 33 in Western Australia. Jan Billycan is a *maparn* (medicine woman) from this country. She can see 'inside' the human body, and is a renowned traditional healer. A living waterhole becomes a liver or kidney, while the *tali* (sand dunes) are stretched across the canvas like the human ribcage. The body is just an extension of the land. Billycan knows these things on a deep metaphysical level and does not like to discuss her talents. However, it is important for *kardiya* (whitefellas) to be aware of this in order to understand the significance of Billycan's work.

Text © National Gallery of Australia, Canberra

Our story is in the land ... it is written in those sacred places. My children will look after those places, that's the law. Dreaming place … you can't change it no matter who you are. No matter you rich man, no matter you King. You can't change it … Rock stays, earth stays. I die and put my bones in cave or earth. Soon my bones become earth … all the same. My spirit has gone back to my country … my mother.

Big Bill Neidjie (c. 1920–2002), Gagudju Elder, Kakadu

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **clarify** what is meant by 'the Land is my mother'. Why do you think 'Land' has a capital letter?
2. Give three reasons why the land provides identity for Aboriginal peoples.
3. In a graphic form of your choice, prepare a presentation to **examine** the connection between Dreaming, the land and identity for Aboriginal peoples. In your presentation, refer to Dreaming stories, sacred sites, and symbolism and art.
4. In groups, **discuss** the statement: 'There is not one Dreaming, there are many.' Share the points your group raises with another group.

EXTENSION

Construct your own Dreaming mind map.

Weblink
Understanding Songlines

Quiz
Chapter 1 multiple-choice quiz

Conclusion

So what is the 'nature of religion and beliefs'? The characteristics of religion have been defined (pages 5–6), but what do they really tell you? Is it possible to understand a religion by putting it into categories? Do Australian Aboriginal Dreamings fit there? This chapter has probably raised more questions than it has given answers – and, no doubt, the rest of your investigations into religious traditions and how they are lived out by their adherents will continue to raise questions. Throughout your studies, you will continue to refine your definition of religion. The search for meaning and what human life is all about, and how we come up with answers to the seemingly unanswerable questions, will always exercise our imaginations – the answers will be different for everyone.

REVIEW

1. Survey how members of your class **define** 'religion'. Is it possible to arrive at a definition that satisfies everyone in the class? If so, why? If not, why not?
2. What is your definition of 'religion'? Has it changed from what it was before you started this course? Do you think it might further change during the course?

EXTENSION

Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

2

Buddhism

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **outline** the cultural and historical context in which Buddhism began
- **examine** the principal events in the Buddha's life and **explain** why the Buddha is the model of Buddhist life
- **describe** the early formation of the *sangha* within the first five years and **identify** the importance of the first two councils in the development of Buddhism
- **outline** the unique features of the major schools of Buddhism
- investigate the principal teachings of Buddhism
- **identify** the importance of the *Tripitaka*, the *Lotus of the Good Law* and the Tibetan Book of the Dead, and **examine** extracts from these sacred texts that **demonstrate** the principal beliefs of Buddhism
- **outline** the principal ethical teachings of Buddhism and **describe** their importance in the life of adherents
- **outline** puja as celebrated in the home.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Buddhist terminology (p. 15)
- Life of the Buddha (p. 16)
- Buddhist schools of thought (p. 21)
- Buddhist celebrations (p. 33)

Online activity

- Chapter 2 multiple-choice quiz (p. 34)

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Newspix/Bill Rosier

Buddhist teacher Vidya Jayasinghe at a Buddhist meditation centre in Point Clare, New South Wales

Buddhism is a living world religion that has appeared in many different forms since it began sometime during the sixth to fifth centuries BCE. Originally arising in north-eastern India, it spread rapidly throughout Asia and absorbed cultural and religious elements from a variety of cultures. In this way, Buddhism became the very vibrant and rich religious movement it remains today, with an estimated 535 million followers. People can practise it in many ways and on many different levels. Each level or way of practice leads to a particular lifestyle – monks or nuns, laypeople, even those who simply practise a form of Buddhist meditation and are vegetarians (many Australians would fall into the last category).

While Westerners show a preference for some of its philosophical traditions, this is only one aspect of a complex religion. Buddhism is extremely rich at both intellectual and popular levels, and we need to be aware of the tension between its various forms throughout history and the tendency to simplify it doctrinally. It combines a series of highly intellectualised beliefs and ritual practices, an assembly of monks/nuns and a formally recognised body of laypeople.

Originating in India, Buddhism spread to Sri Lanka within three centuries, into China and Burma (Myanmar) by the beginning of the Common Era, and then into the rest of Asia. Buddhism's successful expansion is due to its ability to adapt itself to cultural and political conditions quite different from those of its country of origin. Any attempt to define 'Buddhism' – either as a philosophy or as a set of practices and lifestyle options – is bound to fail if it does not consider the richness of these *many* Buddhisms.

Despite its wide variety of forms and practices, and its separation into the two large schools (or branches) – Theravada and Mahayana – Buddhism has a number of basic features that are recognisable throughout its history and across its geographical spread. Though seemingly abstract, the Four Noble Truths provide the foundation of these basic teachings. These truths can be found, no matter how indirectly, in all Buddhist teachings that have evolved since the Buddha's lifetime.

EXTENSION

Maintain a list where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. A worksheet has been provided to assist you in identifying key terms.

Worksheet
Buddhist terminology

2.1 Origins

Historical and cultural origin

GLOSSARY

austerities Severe acts or practices requiring abstinence from something or deprivation.

Buddha A formal title that literally means 'awakened'. The Buddha's family name was Siddhartha Gautama. He was also called Shakyamuni, 'the sage of the Shakas' (the Shakas were his birth clan).

doctrine Collective teachings (adjective, doctrinal).

enlightenment The state in which the true nature of existence is known both intuitively and intellectually.

sangha Name for the assembly of monks and nuns living in a given geographical area.

shramanas Wandering holy men searching for **enlightenment** and performing **austerities** such as fasting.

yogins Holy men who perform intensive meditational and ritual practices for long periods.

It is hard to pinpoint the beginning of a religion because this incorrectly assumes we can define religion in contrast to other cultural institutions. Nor can we assume that a religion begins with the life of its founder, as the founder might not have been aware of creating a new religion. But, as a set of distinct teachings and practices, Buddhism began as a religion some time during the life of the **Buddha**, who lived in either the sixth or fifth century BCE. Its beginning is dated about six weeks after the day the Buddha achieved **enlightenment** (530/527 BCE). At this time, at the Deer Park in Sarnath near Benares in India, five holy men, with whom he had practised religious **austerities**, agreed to accept the path the Buddha had pursued to success. Through what became a formal process of ordination, they were converted as the first monks.

Worksheet
Life of the Buddha

The Buddha then began a wandering life that lasted for 45 years until he died at the age of 81. During this time, he converted people as both monks or nuns and lay Buddhists, adopted a conspicuously different clothing style from other holy men, and oversaw property and wealth being granted to the emerging ***sangha*** of monks and nuns. In terms of **doctrine**, physical appearance of its followers and institutional support, Buddhism developed a somewhat different identity from the other religious movements of the time. Although it would be a few hundred years before this identity became easily recognised, it is these distinctive features that allow us to describe it as a separate religion.

Buddhism originated during an era characterised by economic plenty. Whereas the prior sociopolitical situation had been one of tribal societies and small kingdoms, this period saw the emergence, consolidation and growth of large, centralised states, each ruled by a king with the help of a developing bureaucracy and a well-organised army, and increasing urbanisation. Literary sources confirm that what became the four classes of Hindu society were beginning to take shape as reference points for measuring social status.

Religious life during the Buddha's time was dominated by practices centred on gift exchange rituals – animal sacrifices and plant offerings – designed to win the favour of multiple gods. These rituals were either large-scale, requiring heavy financial outlay and time, or, more commonly, small rituals performed by the eldest male of the household over an open fire. The goals were to acquire material wealth on earth and to be reborn in heaven after death.

Alongside this, a new wave of thinking developed that questioned these goals. It focused on searching within the person to find what was considered to be the absolute truth. Many groups of people and charismatic individuals taught various forms of these ideas and engaged in meditational practices. Some performed dramatic bodily austerities – including severe fasting, or remaining in one place for days without moving – to demonstrate their abhorrence towards the material world. We might call them holy men (they usually were men), ascetics or spiritual guides, but in the language of the time they were called ***shramanas***. Some were magicians, some rogues, but others were serious and learned philosophers and well-practised ***yogins***.

Shramanas made a point of wandering from place to place, often wearing striking garments or no clothes at all, and taking every opportunity to communicate their teachings to anyone who would listen. They offered teachings about the nature of the soul, the certainty of rebirth across many lives, the uselessness of ritual, the benefits of bodily austerities and the ineffectiveness of the gods to influence human destiny. They argued that the material and the internal or psychological worlds produced only frustration, rebirth and world-weariness, but if the soul was discovered and known intuitively, escape from this potentially endless round of unsatisfactory rebirths was possible.

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The Buddha was one such charismatic individual and Buddhism arose as one of these movements. But, while most of the others fell away, the Buddha attracted a following and, importantly, institutionalised it in such a way that it could flourish following his death.

It is often said that the rise of the *shramana* movement was caused by significant socioeconomic changes that occurred in the century before (and continued during) the Buddha's life. But why would religious movements so passionate about denying the value of the material world arise in times of economic plenty?

This mystery becomes even more significant when you realise that the doctrine of *dukkha*, inadequately translated as 'suffering' (see page 25), is one of the central doctrines of early Buddhist teaching. It is as if there existed a kind of deep dissatisfaction among the *shramana* groups towards the world around them and existence. But this could not have been because of the economic conditions they lived under. One possible explanation suggests there might have been a high rate of disease in the area of north-eastern India where the Buddha lived, making death unpredictable, frequent and highly visible. In this situation, it would be rational to develop world-denying beliefs where the religious quest centred on transcending the possibilities of (repeated) death.

REVIEW

1. In point form, clarify the characteristics of religious life in the Buddha's time.
2. Describe the significance of holy men in ancient India in the Buddha's time.
3. Explain how the factors that led to the rise of the *shramana* movement might influence the *shramanas*' view about existence.
4. Draw a timeline to **outline** the historical and cultural context in which Buddhism began.

The Buddha – life and enlightenment

GLOSSARY

buddhahood The view that all beings have within them the potentiality to become a Buddha and possess enlightening knowledge.

dhamma (*dharma*) The complete body of the teachings of the Buddha or any other teacher. *Dhamma* is a Pali word based on the **Sanskrit** word *dharma* and is identical in meaning. It is used in this chapter unless it occurs as *dharma* in a name.

nirvana The state of no suffering, desire or sense of self that results from enlightenment; the extinction of desire.

Sanskrit The classical language of India.

schismatic A word describing the process where a group that has come together on the basis of common belief begins to split into different groups.

Alamy/Konstantin Kalishko

FIGURE 2.1.1 The Fasting Buddha in the Marble Temple, Bangkok. This sculpture represents the Buddha's quest for *nirvana* through asceticism. After six years of extreme asceticism, it came to him that 'one does not attain enlightenment by starving.'

What we know about the Buddha's life comes from a series of biographies written several hundred years after his death – biographies that intermingle legend and myth with more verifiable material. The legendary material tells us how the Buddha was understood by later Buddhists. It makes it difficult, however, to draw out a detailed and accurate picture of his life. Nor do we know much about him until after the age of 29 when he left his palatial home to seek enlightenment.

The bare facts are that Siddhartha Gautama was born in Lumbini, located in the small state of Shaka in south-eastern Nepal, in 566/563 BCE or perhaps a century later. He was raised in well-to-do circumstances, was married and had a son at the age of 16. At the age of 29, disillusioned with his life, he abandoned his wife and son and became a student of various philosophers and *yogins*. He became expert in certain meditational practices and studied most of the philosophies prevalent at that time. The textual sources indicate that he remained extremely frustrated at his lack of success in overcoming self-doubt and experiencing what would be called ***nirvana***.

After six years of wandering over the present-day Indian states of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh and experimenting with the teachings of the so-called six heretical teachers,

he arrived at Bodh Gaya, located in central Bihar. He placed himself under a tree, resolved not to get up until he attained enlightenment, and then meditated for the entire night. He thus experienced a state of psychological relief that enabled him to be detached from all desire and affirmed the truth of the new system of thought he had developed.

Claiming that he was awakened (*buddho*), the Buddha travelled to Benares, ordained the five monks and then preached his famous sermon called The Turning of the Wheel of the Law, in which he introduced the Four Noble Truths and the important teaching of no-self. These provided a clear doctrinal foundation that distinguished the Buddhist ***dhamma*** from all other sets of teachings. Subsequently, a declaration of beliefs would underpin teaching the basics of what came to be known as Buddhism. After this, he spent another 45 years moving around north-eastern India (often staying in the large capital cities) converting people and teaching his path to enlightenment.

Beyond this basic data, it is difficult to fill in the details. However, we do know that the Buddha spent a lot of time dealing with economic and political elites. He knew both Bimbisara and Ajatashatru, kings of the newly formed large kingdom of Magadha. He also put considerable effort into visiting small villages – where he was presented as a virtual celebrity – in Magadha and the neighbouring state of Koshala. In the villages he preached the *dhamma* and gained financial and material support from people of all classes of society. It is likely that he also oversaw the establishment of the first monasteries in the two large cities of Savatthi and Rajgir. We have no idea how big these were, but we do know they were initially used for shelter during the rainy season.

Near the end of the Buddha's life, his cousin Devadatta attempted to assassinate him, an attempt partly due to **schismatic** movements developing in the growing Buddhist community. While the attempt was unsuccessful and the Buddha reconciled with Devadatta, it foreshadowed the many schisms to come.

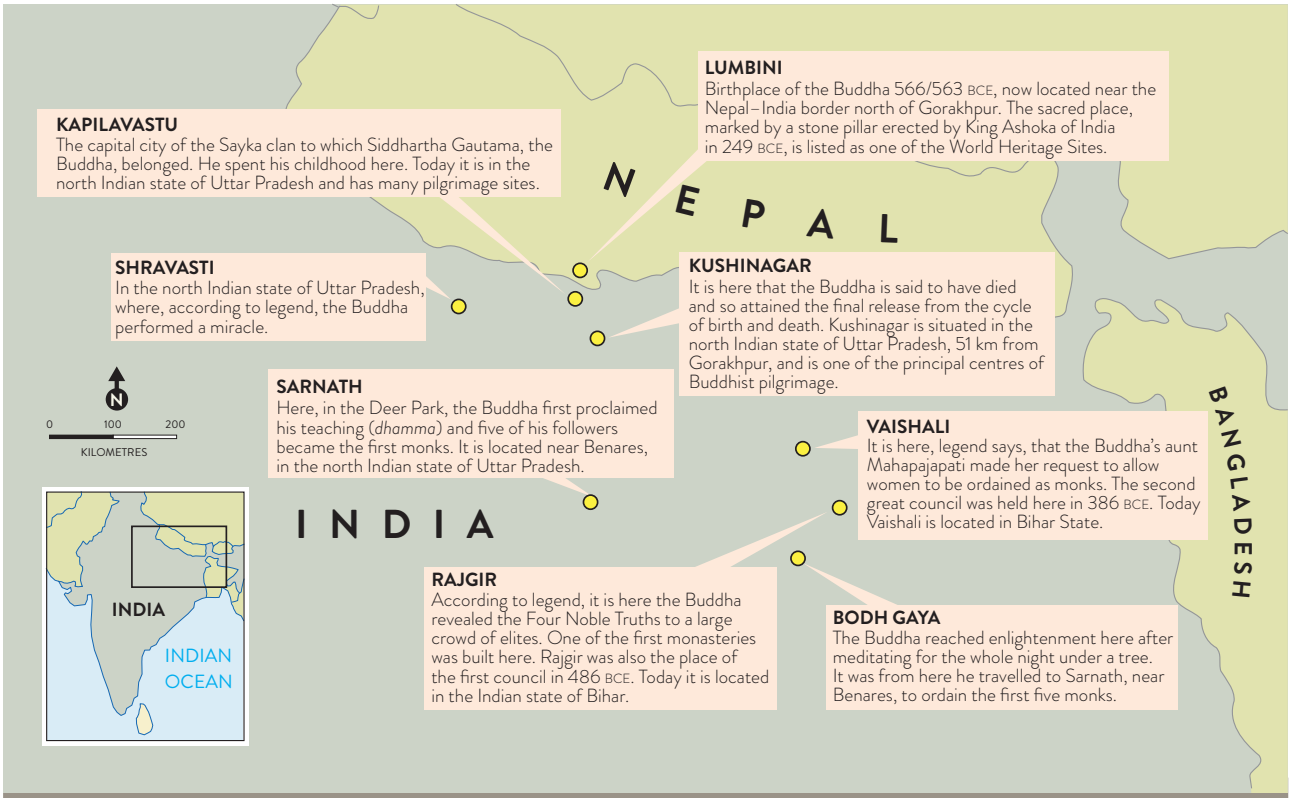

FIGURE 2.1.2 **Some of the places in the life of the Buddha**

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the stories about the Buddha says his father was a king, and that when the prince (the Buddha) left the palace he saw a poor man, a sick man, a dead man and a holy man. To the prince, only the holy man seemed truly happy. This encounter formed the basis of his philosophy: all life contains suffering. Poverty, illness and death challenge all of us.

In the end, the most important information to take from the body of biographical sources is the image of the Buddha – as an example of an enlightened person and as a religious teacher – that was being taught, the highly social nature of the religion, and the emergence of the *sangha*. This image is particularly significant because it provides a model of **buddhahood** – one that is traditionally regarded among the Theravadin school as the mandatory path of attainment of buddhahood for all Buddhas. Even for lay devotees who do not hope for *nirvana* it provides the possibility for devotional worship of an enlightened being.

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FIGURE 2.1.3 A gilded Buddha in a temple in Chiengmai province, Thailand

▷ Refer to pages 21–3 for a more detailed explanation of Buddhahood.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** the term 'Buddha'.
2. **Describe** the enlightenment of the Buddha.
3. **Examine** the principal events of the Buddha's life and prepare an infographic to show these events.
4. **Clarify** what is important about the biographical sources of the life of the Buddha. Does it matter whether they are legendary or not?
5. **Explain** why the Buddha is the model of Buddhist life.

The formation of the *sangha*

GLOSSARY

Ashoka King and ruler of the Mauryan empire 269–232 BCE, and prominent supporter of the *sangha*.

Pali The language of Theravada Buddhist texts.

stupa A monument containing relics or other sacred objects.

Vinaya The name given to the collections of books detailing the conduct of monks, and a word denoting correct conduct – the monastic code.

The first book of the ***Vinaya***, the five-volume Book of Conduct, begins with the Buddha's enlightenment and describes in general terms the growth of the *sangha* over the next 12 years. It tells of the conversion, at the Deer Park in Sarnath, of the five monks who had previously rejected the Buddha before he had achieved his enlightenment. It then presents many anecdotes about the conversion and entry of prominent lay figures into the Buddhist *sangha* and the development of an informal lay following. This informal lay following would be used as a permanent base for sustaining the *sangha* of monks and nuns, none of whom engaged in paid work.

Initially, all of the monks were wanderers who taught the Buddhist *dhamma*. Many texts found in the *Vinaya* and some other **Pali** narrative texts were developed around a framework of conversion, indicating how important early Buddhists thought it was to demonstrate their success at this. The conversion of Yasa is an excellent example illustrating the social tensions that arose when a person became a monk.

The conversion of Yasa

Yasa was the son of a wealthy merchant who lived in Benares. On witnessing some dancing girls sleeping in ungainly poses he became upset and said to himself, 'What distress! What affliction!' Immediately he left home, aided by some divine beings, and went straight to the Deer Park, where he met the Buddha. The Buddha intuited by his special psychic powers that Yasa's mind was sufficiently prepared and malleable enough to be able to receive the teachings of the *dhamma*. On receiving these teachings, Yasa took the very brief ordination ritual that would allow him to become a monk.

In the meantime, his father came looking for him. He too found the Buddha, received the teachings and became a lay Buddhist. When asked, he agreed with the Buddha that Yasa would not be able to re-enter lay life, even though Yasa's mother was very upset that he had become a monk.

Next, Yasa's wife and brother met the Buddha and became lay disciples. Then four men, friends of Yasa's, became monks, 50 of their friends became monks and these monks brought in other people from outlying areas to receive ordination.

From I.B. Horner, *Book of the Discipline*, 1971, pp. 11–29

This is a summary of a longer narrative that explains Yasa's emotional and philosophical disgust with the material world (the original impulse for him seeking ordination), but also focuses on his mother and father trying to prevent him from becoming a monk. This and other accounts in Buddhist texts tell us of the high level of concern among the families of those (often very young) men who took the Buddha's path at the level of the monk. Taking such a path meant a complete break with their own families, although the monks were not prevented from visiting them. The account also tells us that initially the *sangha* grew virtually by word of mouth.

Mahapajapati's request

At first the Buddha allowed only men to be ordained, even though he was approached three times by Mahapajapati, his aunt, to let women be ordained as nuns. It was only after the Buddha's cousin Ananda intervened that he relented

at Mahapajapati's third request and a female *sangha* was established. Even then he predicted that allowing women entry would weaken the entire *sangha*, eventually leading to its decline after 500 years. The view was that women could never be as spiritually developed as men. But the *sangha* of nuns has survived to the present day in various forms, and eventually entire handbooks of rules designed specifically for nuns were produced.

Sunnataram Forest Monastery Inc

FIGURE 2.1.4 Monks' quarters at the Sunnataram Forest Monastery at Bundanoon, New South Wales. It is a Theravada Buddhist monastery in the Thai forest tradition and was established in July 1990.

It is likely there were Buddhist monks in the large cities of north-eastern India by the time of the Buddha's death. Certainly, at the council at Rajgir, held straight after his death, the proceedings had to wait until a number of monks arrived from distant places. Still, we cannot accurately know how geographically widespread the *sangha* was at this time, nor the number of its members. The early Pali texts consistently mention that the Buddha was accompanied by either 500 or 1250 monks during his travels. These figures must have been exaggerations – the resources needed to feed this number of wanderers would simply not have been available. More significant than the numbers is the attempt to show the *sangha* as growing constantly, with the monks and nuns being provided with resources by an increasingly large lay following.

Very little is known about the development of the *sangha* in the period between the Buddha's death (486/483 BCE) and the ascension of **Ashoka** to the throne of Magadha (269 BCE), though it is likely the number of Buddhists remained small, being restricted to the areas where the Buddha himself had travelled. It did develop during this time, however, because two councils were held to discuss doctrinal differences, and Ashoka himself, in one of his official edicts (proclamations), warned the *sangha* against schismatic activity. This implies it had increased in size and that schisms – apparent almost since the beginning of the Buddha's preaching activity – were continuing to occur. Beyond this we know almost nothing about the growth of Buddhism up until Ashoka's reign: archaeological evidence is unclear, and the texts are difficult to date.

▷ Ashoka is a significant person considered in Online Option A.

After Ashoka's reign, Buddhism expanded dramatically. This can easily be measured by the huge number of Buddhist archaeological remains (including ***stupas***, 'funerary monuments' and monasteries) dating between 200 BCE and 400 CE, and the large body of regulations governing the behaviour of monks recorded in several sets of *Vinaya* literature.

▷ *Vinaya*, the monastic code of conduct, is dealt with in detail on page 32.

The early councils

There were at least four councils held within the first 600 years of Indian Buddhism. The first three of these councils were by far the most important. The second and third councils were particularly instrumental in furthering the schisms in the Buddhist *sangha* that eventually led to the development of the Theravada and Mahayana schools (see pages 21–2). Our knowledge of the councils is based on texts written centuries after they were held, meaning that the doctrinal conflicts that characterised the second and third councils are extremely difficult to unravel.

The council at Rajgir, 486/483 BCE

The first council was held at Rajgir (then known as Rajagriha) immediately after the Buddha's death. It involved a full recitation of the Discourses of the Buddha (the *Suttapitaka* and the *Vinaya*, as both then existed) in what was probably an attempt to distinguish what was the authentic word of the Buddha from what was not. Whatever actually happened, the brief reports of this council show there was already concern about purifying aberrant teachings from those regarded as genuine. Each subsequent Buddhist school always claimed it possessed the true essence of the Buddha's teachings.

Important as this council was for establishing the Buddha's teachings, the second one was more important still.

The council at Vaishali, 386 BCE

Schisms were strongly evident in the second council, held at Vaishali, where disputes over both doctrine and the rules of monkish conduct were aired.

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Ten areas of dispute

The 10 areas of dispute were:

1. Carrying salt in an animal horn
2. Eating food past noon
3. Travelling to one village to eat after already having eaten in another village
4. Holding several assemblies of the *sangha*
5. Confirming *sangha* business in an incomplete assembly
6. Citing habit as the authority for violations of monastic procedures
7. Drinking milk whey after meals
8. Drinking unfermented wine
9. Using a mat with fringes
10. Accepting gold and silver.

These areas of dispute relate to the interpretation of how monks should conduct themselves and are specifically directed at gluttony, ostentatious behaviour and the possession of money. For example, if a monk was allowed to carry salt in a horn, he could store food and potentially eat at any time during the day, whereas traditionally monks were only supposed to eat in the morning and cease at noon – a reference to the second rule. To us, at a distance of more than 2000 years, these rules seem very obscure. However, they crystallise arguments about laxity or looseness of monkish conduct, and strongly suggest a growing split out of which the Hinayana and Mahayana schools of Buddhism may have developed. It was easier to measure this split in terms of monkish conduct than in terms of doctrine, often notoriously difficult to interpret.

The council at Pataliputra, c. 251 BCE

The third council was held at Pataliputra during Ashoka's reign and under his patronage. Like the other councils, this one attempted to iron out further disagreements over both conduct and doctrine. But it also decided to start sending Buddhist monks outside of India, beginning the internationalisation of the religion.

The overall effect of the councils was probably not to purify the essence of the Buddha's teachings, but to intensify the divisions that were most likely present since the Buddha's own lifetime.

REVIEW

1. **Recall** the names of people and/or groups who were among the earlier followers of the Buddha.
2. **Describe** the early formation of the sangha.
3. What was Mahapajapati's request?
4. **Summarise** the evidence on which the knowledge of the early formation of the *sangha* is based.
5. Prepare an infographic that gives a brief outline of each of the three councils.
6. **Identify** the importance of the first two councils in the development of Buddhism.
7. With reference to the conduct of monks, **explain** why the disputes in the *sangha* occurred. In your explanation, refer to the conduct of monks rather than to matters of the Buddha's teachings.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided to find out more about the early disciples of the Buddha. Choose two early disciples and prepare a brief summary of who they were and why each is important.

Weblink
Buddhist Studies

The schools of Buddhism

GLOSSARY

arahant A monk who seeks enlightenment only for himself.

bodhi Enlightening knowledge attained when a person achieves buddhahood.

bodhisattva One who is close to enlightenment but forgoes *nirvana* to help others escape ***samsara***.

emptiness The view that everything is interdependent and is caused by something outside of itself, and so has no intrinsic reality of its own.

karma The Sanskrit word *karma* means action that will inevitably lead to certain results.

samsara The opposite of *nirvana*. A name for existence seen as bondage to a set of ongoing rebirths caused by ***karma***.

▷ The teachings of Buddhism mentioned in this section are dealt with in detail on pages 24–8.

By approximately 100 years after the third council, the Buddhist *sangha* existed within two fundamental tendencies, later often classified as schools – Theravada and Mahayana. Both schools operate based on the common set of teachings that are claimed to derive from the Buddha himself, yet there are substantial areas of divergence. It is important, however, not to overstress the differences between them. Traditionally, Buddhists of the different schools would stay in the monasteries of the other school when on pilgrimage, and much of the initial differentiation occurred at the rather abstract level of doctrine.

Worksheet
Buddhist schools of thought

Theravada

The first school was Theravada Buddhism. Its living expressions are found today in Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia and Thailand. The earliest available teachings of the Buddha, which are in the Pali Canon, belong to the Theravada. It regards itself as the most orthodox school of Buddhism.

▷ For more information on the Pali Canon, see page 29.

The Buddha's teaching is very plain: '… abstain from all kinds of evil, to accumulate all that is good to purify the mind'. This can be accomplished by the Three Trainings: the development of ethical conduct, meditation and insight. The Theravada philosophy is that all worldly phenomena are subject to three characteristics:

- They are impermanent and transient.
- They are unsatisfactory and nothing in them can be called one's own, nothing substantial, nothing permanent.
- All compounded things (those things in a person's mind, rather than just those external to the mind) are made up of two elements – the material and the non-material.

The focus of Theravada has always been on the Buddha as a living example of an individual who attained enlightenment, and on the individual attainment of enlightenment by the monk (***arahant***). It maintains a sharp division between monk/nun and layperson. The Buddha is a model for what can be achieved by other individuals. But, while he achieved enlightenment on his own, Theravadins require assistance from the wise members of the *sangha*. And, although the Buddha has always been treated like a god by his lay followers, Theravada literature downplays this view of him.

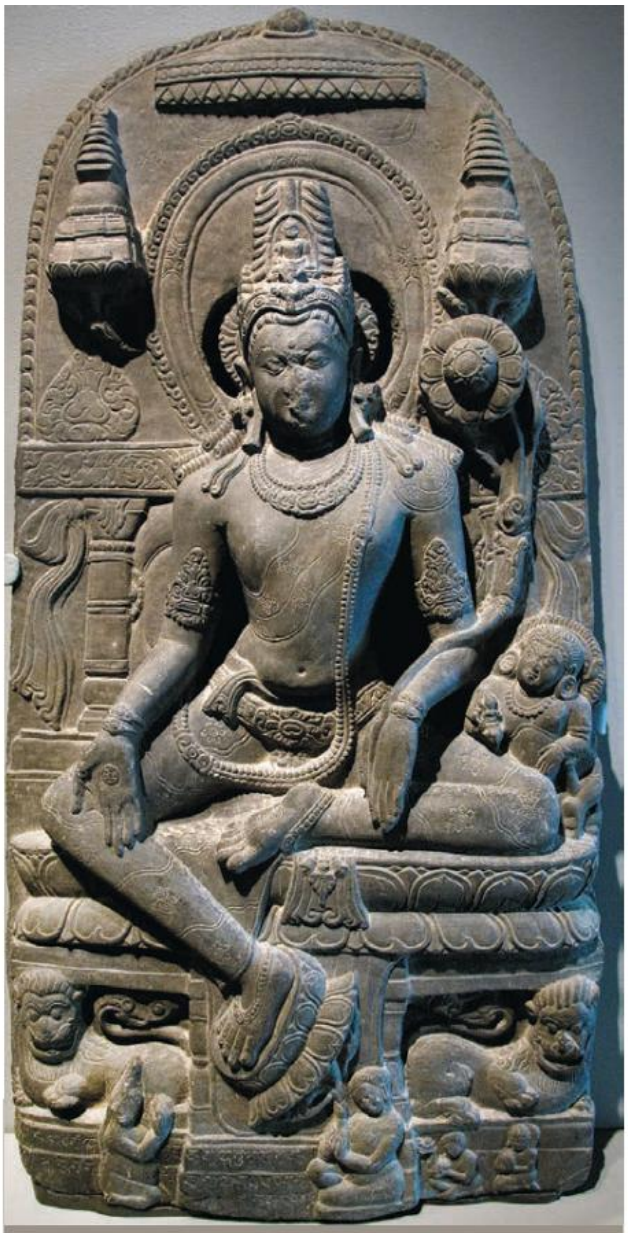
Mahayana

Mahayana Buddhism is now found over most of Asia, but it is most prominent in Tibet, China and Japan. For Mahayanists, the Buddha is always treated as a transcendent, god-like figure – one who can leave his blissful state of *nirvana* to re-enter the world to help other beings in whatever way seems appropriate. A related belief concerns the figure of the ***bodhisattva*** and the distinctive pathway to enlightening knowledge (***bodhi***) associated with this.

In the early Mahayana literature, the Theravada tendency is named Hinayana or 'lesser vehicle', where *hina* is a derogatory term – the opposite of *maha* or 'great', which describes what became Mahayana. The same literature accuses the Theravada *arahant* of fearing the world of ***samsara***, and of being preoccupied with their own enlightenment to the detriment of helping those who cannot become monks or nuns, and so cannot enter the Noble Eightfold Path (see pages 27–8). In short, it implies they are selfish. In contrast, Mahayana, while including the *arahant* as a possible pathway to *nirvana*, shifts its emphasis to the *bodhisattva*, a figure whose path to *nirvana* requires them both to help others escape from *samsara*, and to help them within *samsara*.

The three fundamental themes developed in Mahayana literature are:

- the *bodhisattva*
- the **emptiness** of all phenomena
- that all humans possess within them the potentiality for buddhahood.



Alamy/Peter Horree

FIGURE 2.1.5 *Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*, 900–1000, Nalanda, Bihar state, India. Avalokiteshvara means 'Lord who looks down with compassion.' Avalokiteshvara is one of the more widely revered *bodhisattvas* in Mahayana Buddhism.

The *bodhisattva* role is conceived as a pathway to enlightenment, differing from *nirvana* in that the attainment of enlightening knowledge is all important and the *bodhisattva*'s complete withdrawal from *samsara* is played down. The *bodhisattva* path assumes that every individual has the potential to attain buddhahood. It prescribes 10 stages involving the attainment of six 'perfections', each centred on the giving of something. The path requires the aspiring *bodhisattva* to take vows that they will take all sentient beings to enlightenment. In practice, this puts great emphasis on spiritual and material self-sacrifice and unselfishness. An enlightened *bodhisattva* can continue to live in the world, or after death in any number of heavens, but they can always reappear when called upon by their devotees. This is why *bodhisattvas* became such

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important cultic figures in all countries where Mahayana Buddhism has flourished.

The teaching of the emptiness of all phenomena probably existed in embryonic form in the Buddha's teachings. It was systematised by the great second-century CE philosopher Nagarjuna. He declared that when the elements that make up perceived objects are examined, they are really no more than mental phenomena having no true existence. He argued that even the most basic Buddhist concepts such as ***karma*** and *dhamma* were concepts whose interdependence rested on their presence within a web of language.

While Nagarjuna's teachings remain difficult to understand, his ideas became enormously influential in most later schools of Mahayana Buddhism.

From the perspective of gaining liberation, Nagarjuna's ideas had one fundamental implication – that buddhahood was available to everyone if only they knew how to find it. One way was meditation on his teachings; another was by simply realising this truth through a flash of insight. Sometimes this flash of insight could be provoked by hearing a particular verse (*koan*), a practice famously associated with the Chinese Ch'an school of Buddhism and its Japanese equivalent, Zen.

Getty Images/John Stevenson

FIGURE 2.1.6 The ninth-century Zen master Hotei pointing to the full moon (original Japanese woodblock print, 1888). The full moon is a symbol of ultimate truth. The 'finger pointing at the moon' is a favourite Zen image that indicates the need to distinguish reality from its symbols; for example, ultimate truth from its descriptions in words.

Koans

A *koan* is a problem or riddle, often involving a paradox, which has no solution. A number of *koans* have become fairly well known, such as: 'What is the sound of one hand clapping?' Others include:

- How do you get a goose out of a bottle without breaking the bottle or injuring the goose?
- Two monks were observing a flag flapping in the wind. They began to argue about whether the wind or the flag was moving. Hui-Nêng said, 'It is your mind that is moving.'
- A monk asked Joshu, 'Why did Bodhidharma come to China?' Joshu said, 'The oak tree in the garden.'

A pupil would be given a verse containing an apparent riddle. No matter how much the pupil might try to solve it, resolution only occurred when the pupil realised there was no solution. This led them to step completely outside their normal thought patterns and then discover the emptiness of all phenomena – breaking them away from habitual behaviour that was keeping them in *samsara*.

For a committed Mahayanist, the point of most activity is to access this already existent state of enlightenment, which is somewhat concealed by the mass of information in the mind, especially emotional material.

Vajrayana

Out of Mahayana came the more mystically inclined Vajrayana. It probably started in northern India, then was widely developed in Tibet after the eleventh century, and in Java and Thailand even earlier.

Vajrayana gave rise to considerable literary developments. It built on the teachings of emptiness and the idea of potential buddhahood, asserting that enlightening knowledge could be spontaneously attained by visualising Buddhas and other divine figures under the guidance of a teacher. Students would be initiated into higher levels of knowledge and given verses to recite that should not be divulged to non-initiates. The recitation of such verses and the visualisation of the images of those already enlightened brings forth the enlightening knowledge.

> Then he should make the wrathful hand-gesture and divulge the symbolic gesture of Being – *vajra*. He causes (the pupil) to recite a *vajra*-verse of his choice pertaining to intuitive knowledge of the Mahayana. Thus it pervades him, and as soon as it does so, divine wisdom becomes manifest. By means of that wisdom he knows the thoughts of others; he knows all events in past, present and future; his heart is confirmed in the teaching of all Buddhas; all sufferings are ended; all fear is dispersed; he is invulnerable to all beings …
>
> Extract from pp. 63–72 of the *Sarvatathagatatattvasamgraha*, translated in D. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors*, 1987, p. 218

Alamy Stock Photo/Abbus Archive Images

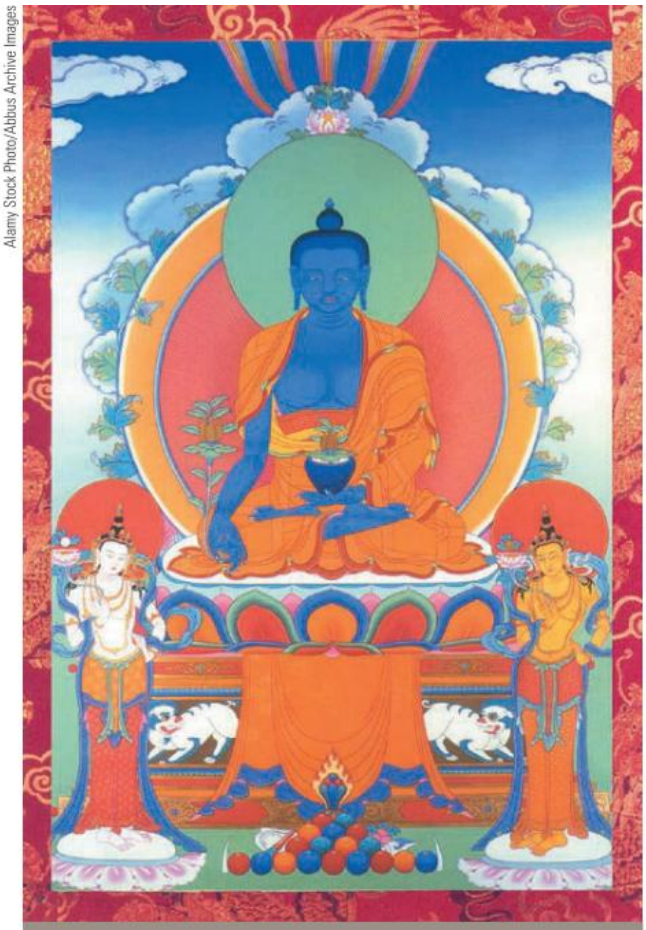


FIGURE 2.1.7 Bhaisajyaguru, the Medicine Buddha. In Vajrayana Buddhism, the deep blue colour of lapis is thought to have a purifying and strengthening effect on those who visualise it. In Buddhist iconography, the colour lapis is nearly always incorporated into the image of Bhaisajyaguru.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, define 'buddhahood'.
2. Explain the meaning of *bodhisattva*.
3. Which school of Buddhism is seen as the most orthodox?
4. To which school of Buddhism does Zen belong?
5. How would you explain what a *koan* is?
6. In point form, **outline** the unique features of each of Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism.
7. Construct a visual representation to show where the main schools of Buddhism are found.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided to find out more about the different schools of Buddhism. Outline the common ground between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
2. Choose four topics and use these to distinguish differences between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
3. Compare and contrast key similarities and differences across the three schools of Buddhism.

Weblink
Buddhist Studies

2.2 Principal teachings

DID YOU KNOW?

Teachings or beliefs? From a Buddhist point of view, the word 'belief' has a rather negative ring to it – it means 'trust in ideas whose truth one has not personally experienced' or tested. Beliefs are known in Buddhism as 'views'. The Buddhist approach is that one should know for oneself through deep exploration of one's human potential. The Buddha taught his own followers not to believe even his own teachings, but to test them and discover for themselves whether they were true, just as a jeweller tests gold to make sure it is genuine.

The Three Jewels: the Buddha, *dhamma* and *sangha*

The ideals at the heart of Buddhism are collectively known as the Three Jewels:

- the Buddha refers to the historical Buddha and to the ideal of buddhahood that is open to all
- *dhamma* signifies the totality of the Buddha's teachings
- the *sangha*, in its broadest sense, means all the Buddhists in the world and those of the past and the future.

At the centre of the Buddha's *dhamma* lies his diagnosis of the human condition. This is given as a rather brief set of propositions that accurately describe the condition of all so-called 'sentient beings', including animals and gods as well as humans. These propositions are called the Four Noble Truths.

The Four Noble Truths depend on a more fundamental and seemingly simple view of the constancy of change. This is expressed by the idea that 'whatever is of a nature to rise up, all that is of a nature to stop', and that a relation of interdependence between things always exists. Simple as this seems, the task for someone who aspires to enlightenment is to intuitively understand existence itself, and not just as one particular interpretation of perceived reality among many others.

From this insight comes the understanding that all existence is movement, often expressed by the technical term *samsara*. This term roughly means 'the run-around' or 'the whirl of existence'. When fleshed out with details from the texts, *samsara* conveys the idea of culturally and self-determined wants, the gaining of which lead to a desire for

Suzanne Martino, All rights reserved © 2009

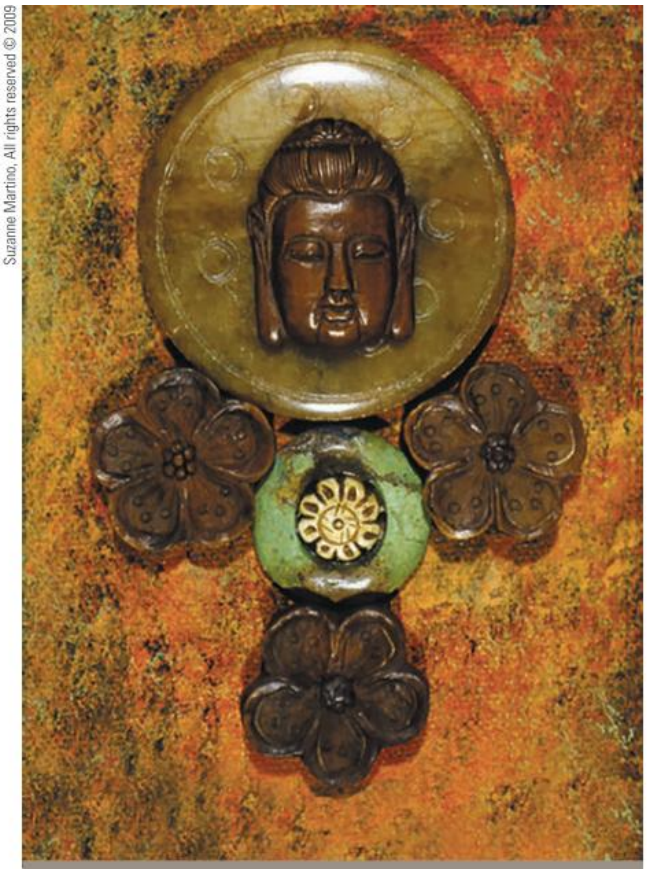


FIGURE 2.2.1 A contemporary image of the Three Jewels by Suzanne Martino

RESPOND

How is the artist explaining the Three Jewels?

other goals and the quest for continued existence to achieve these further desires. Both resistance to the ongoing circle of change and the decision to flow with it (in the belief one can influence its direction) lead to inevitable dissatisfaction. The Buddha adopted the **Sanskrit** word *duhkha* (Pali *dukkha*) for this dissatisfaction, which is often misleadingly translated as 'suffering'.

The Four Noble Truths

The truths can be defined in these words:

- There exists *dukkha*.
- There is the arising of *dukkha*.
- There is the cessation of *dukkha*.
- There is the path leading to the cessation of *dukkha*.

Often presented as simple formulas, the truths are best understood by Buddhist intellectuals and highly educated monks. Most lay Buddhists know them, but they are too remote from their daily lives. However, the four truths do lie at the heart of the Buddha's vision of the nature of existence, and to that extent inform all later developments in Buddhist philosophy and scholarship. They can be depicted in a more accessible manner in Buddhist art, especially in Tibetan and Chinese art, where the so-called Wheel of Life, a metaphor for *samsara*, was often the subject of paintings.

The directness of the truths allows them to be analysed in different ways. For instance, the first and third truths can be regarded as contradicting each other because, if the first asserts the presence of *dukkha*, the third asserts its absence. Similarly, the second truth explains the process of the arising of dukkha, the fourth the process for its reversal. This conforms with the basic assumption that things rise and things fall in a consistent and interdependent manner. That an individual's immersion in *dukkha* can occur over a very large number of lives gives stronger weight to the possibilities of coping with it. If one experienced *dukkha* over only one birth, one could conceivably cope with it, but its ongoing presence induces a kind of world-weariness in those who are subject to it.

iStock.com/yogesh_more

FIGURE 2.2.2 The footprints of the Buddha. This limestone panel is from the Great Stupa at Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh, India, 1 BCE. In early Buddhist sculpture, the Buddha was not represented as a human figure, but through symbols. In the centre of each foot is a *dharmachakra* (Wheel of the Law). On the heels are *triratnas* representing the Three Jewels of Buddhism.

The First Noble Truth

In defining the continual presence of *dukkha*, the first truth explains existence as having three basic characteristics, called the three marks of existence. Each mark can be understood in an existential sense, in a more pointed lifestyle sense and in artistic form.

The three marks of existence

1. *Dukkha* asserts that existence is always and ultimately unsatisfying at its deepest level of comprehension.
2. *Anicca* is the idea that everything is in a state of constant flux. Such impermanence can be seen around us constantly by mere observation, whether in the seasons or the changes in our own bodies. The mind, itself in a continuous process of change, is an observer of all the other changes going on around it. The Second Noble Truth (see page 26) proposes a sophisticated 12-linked chain of elements that underlies and drives all change occurring in an individual's life, at the same time

explaining the mechanism whereby this occurs. Where this becomes fundamental for individuals is in the attitude they take towards it.

3. *Anatta* asserts the absence of an individual self – what the Buddha called 'non-self'. Buddhists and scholars alike have still not been able to determine precisely what he meant when he referred to the 'non-self'. Was it the absence of a self that existed beyond the fluctuations of the mind and the ongoing rebirths caused by *karma*? Was it something existing beyond the personality? To accept *anatta*, one has to accept that there is nothing separating the self from every other part of existence. Attachment to the idea of a permanent self, however, is much easier to accept than attachment to something impermanent.

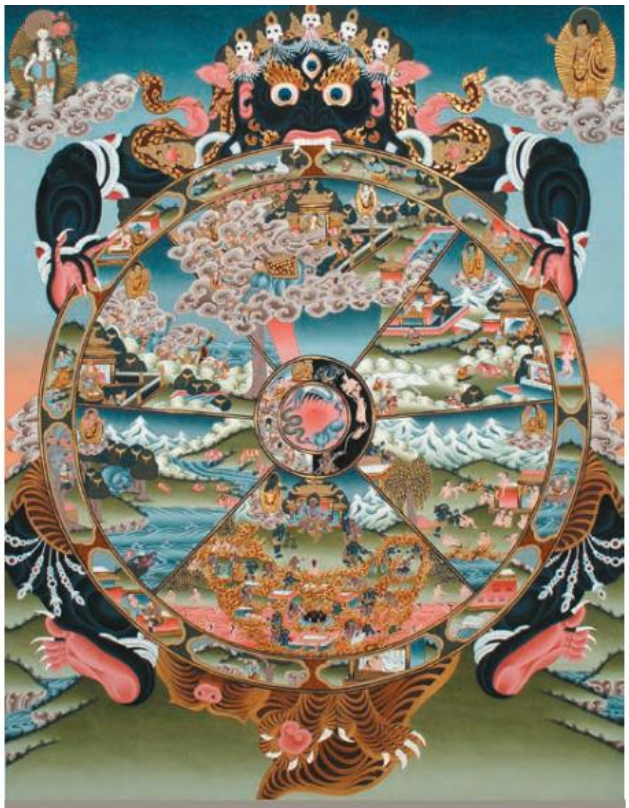
The Second Noble Truth

The Second Noble Truth explains the arising of *dukkha* by describing the workings of the forces that cause a person to be reborn across two or possibly three lives. If the First Noble Truth explains the exact circumstance of existence as it occurs at any given time, the Second Noble Truth explains what it is that drives any individual being through this existence. This explanation is essential given the Buddhist emphasis on process, which is also demonstrated in the related doctrines of *karma* and rebirth. But it is also fundamental in explaining how rebirth can occur in the absence of a permanent self.

So, the Second Noble Truth defines the nature of the person and the psychological forces impelling the individual's wish for continued existence, along with the actions that produce karmic results for this continued existence.

This process of change and development is summarised in the 12-linked chain of dependent origination, whose 12 component parts are dependent upon each other for their sequential appearance. It assumes the presence of ignorance about the true nature of existence, which most people think of in entirely opposite terms to those laid down in the First Noble Truth, believing in a permanent self, that life can be fundamentally satisfying and that permanence exists within the world.

The complete chain is the sum of its individual parts and the relation of interdependence existing between them. Because each component arises in dependence upon the previous one, the whole set of 12 links is not thought of as having a finite beginning and end, but instead as a circle flowing ever onwards, almost an exact synonym of *samsara* itself. In this way, ignorance gives rise to karmic impulses, which give rise to the five component parts of the body. Four of these component parts are mental and create the interaction between the mind and the external world. Dependent upon the mind is craving; and dependent upon this is grasping after the object of desire. This fact defines the actual mechanics of *karma* —the desires resulting in further rebirths, the 'final' part of the 12-linked chain.



Alamy Stock Photo/Art Directors & TRIP

FIGURE 2.2.3 A Tibetan *thangka* depicting the *bhavacakra*. A *thangka* is a complicated, composite, three-dimensional picture panel that is painted or embroidered.

The *bhavacakra*

The individual components of the chain (*bhavacakra*) as represented in art are:

1. *ignorance* – a blind old woman
2. *volitional impulses* – pots being made by a potter
3. *consciousness* – a monkey plucking fruit
4. *personality* – a boat on the journey
5. *the six sense organs* – a house with many windows
6. *contact* – the act of kissing
7. *feeling* – a man with an arrow in his eye
8. *desire* – a drinking scene
9. *appropriation* – plucking fruit from a tree
10. *the process of becoming* – a pregnant woman
11. *birth* – a birth scene
12. *old age and death* – a corpse being carried to its place of disposal.

Following D. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors*, 1987, p. 15

Karma

The chain of dependent origination defines and explains *karma*. The essential idea of *karma* derives from the very basic Buddhist view that things rise and fall in dependence on each other. From this comes the belief that all intentions ripen into corresponding future responses to these intentions. Although *karma* means 'action' (among other

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things), it is the mind's intention to act, or the willed action (action carried out by choice), that is of central concern for the Buddha.

> The theory of *karma* is the theory of cause and effect, of action and reaction; it is a natural law that has nothing to do with the idea of justice or reward or punishment. Every volitional action produces its effects or results.
>
> Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, 1959 (revised 1974), p. 32

Because *karma* establishes reactions that are seen only within the world around us and because of the continuity it establishes from life to life, it appears very much like *samsara*, where one life flows into another, as if echoing the flow suggested in the word *samsara*.

This continuity operates in the sense that intentions to act in one life will ripen in a later life. At the same time, as new actions are being proposed, their effects will themselves ripen in a subsequent life. Thus, an action – classified as good, bad or neutral – performed in one life will produce its effect in another life, but need not have a direct continuity with other actions performed in that life, which will ripen in a still later life.

REVIEW

1. Recall the Three Jewels.
2. Identify the three marks of existence.
3. Define each of the following words to clarify your understanding of the concepts: *dukkha*, *anicca*, *anatta*, *samsara*, *karma*.
4. In graphic form, **demonstrate** that you recognise the connection between *samsara* and *karma*.

EXTENSION

1. In groups, discuss what it means to describe a person as having 'no self'. Do people actually think in terms of having a self or not, or is this simply taken for granted by everyone? Share your ideas with other groups.
2. If you had to describe yourself in terms of the Buddhist non-self doctrine, how would you do so?
3. Review the components of the *bhavacakra*. The words in the first column are abstract; those in the second column describe graphic images. Assess whether the images accurately bring out what is expressed in the abstract words.
4. Do an Internet search, using the words *bhavacakra thangkas*, to find and download a large image of a *bhavacakra*. Can you identify each of the 12 components in it?

The Third Noble Truth

The Third Noble Truth simply asserts the cessation of *dukkha*, a condition the Buddha called *nirvana*. This word has been imported into English to indicate the highest state a person can achieve. Like so many Buddhist terms, it is impossible to translate exactly. Literally, it means 'blowing out' and Buddhist texts describe it using only similes and metaphors such as 'coolness' and 'the other shore'. However, it can be paraphrased as indicating the complete absence of desire within the mind. That is, the deepest psychological components found in the chain of dependent origination – craving and grasping – are absent, allowing a person to remain in complete control of themselves and to extinguish entirely the forces producing *karma* and rebirth.

To understand *nirvana* fully, we need to be aware of its threefold interrelated dimensions:

- a person who has utterly eradicated desire, the fundamental cause of rebirth and *karma*
- a perfect knowledge of *dukkha* and an absence of it for the person who has attained *nirvana*, even if it continues to exist as the dominant quality for other humans
- the eradication of that special form of ignorance preventing individuals from realising the true nature of existence as demonstrated in the Four Noble Truths.

Among other things, the enlightened being will know intuitively their own *karma*, and the *karma* of others.

Each of these could be said to be accompaniments of *nirvana*, but *nirvana* should never be regarded as a kind of objective state attained by following a particular program of spiritual exercises. *Nirvana* can be attained either through a flash of insight, sometimes induced by a special oral teaching given by a Buddha or, more commonly, by following the Noble Eightfold Path as laid down in the Fourth Noble Truth.

The Fourth Noble Truth

The Fourth Noble Truth is the practice of Buddhism – the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path

1	Right Understanding	Wisdom
2	Right Thought	
3	Right Speech	Conduct
4	Right Action	
5	Right Livelihood	
6	Right Effort	Meditation
7	Right Mindfulness	
8	Right Concentration	

Each of the components in this path must be practised simultaneously. It is likely, however, that the ethical components ('Conduct') – designed to regulate the monk's, nun's or layperson's interaction with other sentient beings, including (but not restricted to) humans – are mastered first.

'Wisdom' includes a knowledge of the Buddha's teachings. Initially, this knowledge will be intellectual – as taught by the Buddha – rather than existential in the sense that the teachings and the behaviour are seen as the core of one's life.

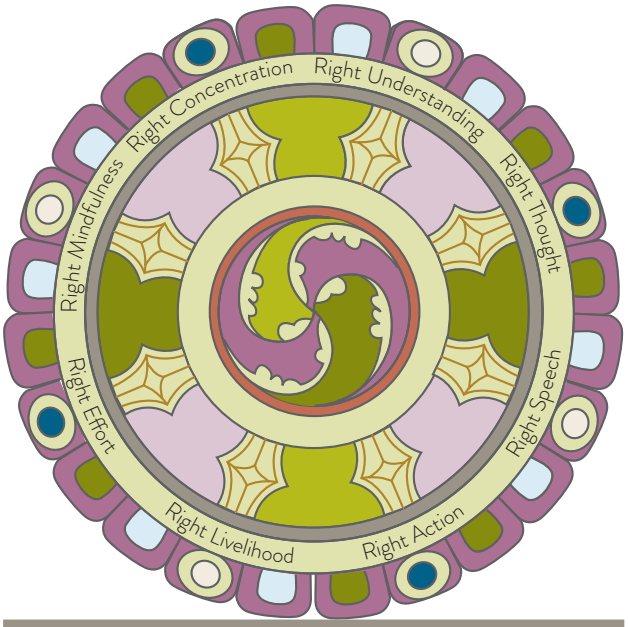

FIGURE 2.2.4 The Noble Eightfold Path – the 'Wheel of Enlightenment'

The three limbs classified under 'Conduct' involve the intentional practice of correct behaviour towards all beings. This behaviour is based on developing and showing the compassionate attitude that is supposed to reside in and be cultivated by all Buddhists. It requires them to exercise 'wholesome' and positive responses towards all other people, and to extend beneficial ethical and psychological attitudes throughout the world. Right attitude is stressed here, reflected in the precise rules of conduct for monks and nuns detailed in the *Vinaya* texts.

The 'Meditation' component of the path requires the disciplined cultivation of the mind. This is encompassed by two meditational procedures – one that empties out all emotions and thought patterns from the mind; the other that applies the empty mind to fully understanding the nature of the external world through four fundamental categories taught by the Buddha.

These meditational practices are not designed just to still the mind; they also prepare it so it can focus powerfully on those aspects of existence the aspirant is required to penetrate as deeply as possible, both intellectually and intuitively. This then flows through to the third component, 'Wisdom'.

Though placed first in the list of the individual parts of the Noble Eightfold Path, the 'Wisdom' component develops to its highest point by cultivating the other two parts. The two limbs of 'Wisdom' are composed mainly of the teachings of the Buddha, yet initially these teachings are only accepted on faith in the Buddha's competence as a great religious teacher. To finally reach *nirvana*, these teachings must be understood intuitively, completely replacing the ignorant beliefs and goal-oriented attitudes (desires) of most sentient beings.

In short, strenuous cultivation of the Noble Eightfold Path contains the possibility of gaining the correct knowledge to eradicate desire, the capacity to discipline the mind and the constancy of living a wholly ethical life. These are the minimum preconditions for the attainment of *nirvana*.

This path is so rigorous that it is restricted to those who live in a monastic environment or who don't need to engage in a secular (non-religious) occupation. For laypeople, a simpler path was developed – one not leading to *nirvana* in the short term, but to the development of an ethical stance and an understanding of how the world of *samsara* really operates.

These teachings form the bare minimum of the Buddha's own foundational sermon, part of the famous The Turning of the Wheel of the Law – the first sermon he preached after he had gained enlightenment. They are common to all Buddhists even if they were interpreted differently in the many different forms of Buddhism emerging within 500 years of the Buddha's death.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** *nirvana* and, in one paragraph, **outline** its importance in Buddhism.
2. **Identify** the Four Noble Truths and **describe** their significance.
3. **Explain** how the Noble Eightfold Path summarises the practice of Buddhism.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink for an explanation of the teachings of Buddhism. What further understandings of these teachings does the website provide?
2. Prepare an outline for a 10-minute talk on *samsara*, *karma* and *nirvana*.

Weblink
Buddhanet

2.3 Sacred texts and writings

GLOSSARY

canon Writings accepted as sacred scripture within a religious tradition.

Pali The language of Theravada Buddhism. Pali is derived from Sanskrit and many words are similar in the two languages.

sutra A Buddhist scripture, said to be the Buddha's words.

We cannot definitely trace any one text directly back to the Buddha himself. But he is depicted as the speaker in most of the enormous amount of literature transmitted to us in at least 20 different languages and in genres ranging from philosophy to grammar, medicine to ritual, biography to poetry. It is reasonably certain that this literature dates from the middle of the third century BCE, because certain

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Pali texts are mentioned in the inscriptions of King Ashoka. No doubt a body of texts comprising the sayings of the Buddha was being recorded and transmitted during his own lifetime, but anything we say about them is simply speculation.

Tripitaka

The *Tripitaka*, or 'The Three Baskets', designates the oldest complete Buddhist **canon**, the Pali Canon, composed in Pali, a language used primarily by monks.

Getty Images/Eye Ubiquitous

FIGURE 2.3.1 Carved on 81 340 woodblocks in 1251, the Korean *Tripitaka* is housed in the library (Changgyong-gak) at Haein-sa.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are complete canons in Sanskrit, Pali, Tibetan, Chinese, Japanese, Mongolian, Manchu and Korean. Some have hundreds of volumes and not even one is known in its entirety by any single person. In addition, there are large bodies of post-canonical literature that are still important without having the same status within the tradition as the canonical literature.

The Pali Canon, the authoritative body of texts for Theravada Buddhists, is the one best known by Westerners. It was brought to the West earlier than the others and is one of the shortest (approximately 35 volumes). Evidence from Sri Lanka suggests it existed by the middle of the first century BCE. It is divided into three sections:

- *Sutta Pitaka* – comprises sermons of the Buddha and other material, and is subdivided into five further sections
- *Vinaya Pitaka* – includes the complete rules regulating the behaviour of monks, many anecdotes surrounding these rules, and biographical data about the Buddha
- *Abhidhammapitaka* – defines the basic elements of existence and other metaphysical material from the Buddha's sermons.

Of these, the third section is really only of interest to monks devoted to philosophical study. The second is in part memorised by all monks, as they must know by heart the rules of conduct, and parts of the first are known by both monks and laypeople. The first is the most popular because it contains the actual teachings of the Buddha, largely in what are said to be the Buddha's own words. Among the texts it contains is the *Dhammapada*, a collection of sayings offering a summary of the Buddha's teachings for the layperson.

> Nobody should ever associate with anything that is pleasant or unpleasant. Not seeing pleasant things is pain. So too is seeing unpleasant things.
>
> Therefore, do not deal with what is pleasant as loss of what is pleasant is bad. The person who has neither what is pleasant or unpleasant is not bound.
>
> In a person whose thoughts are churned, whose passions are strong, who looks for what is pleasant, craving increases massively. He certainly makes his bondage very strong.
>
> He who dwells in quieting his thoughts, always reflecting, dwells on what is not pleasant, he will certainly remove, he will certainly cut the bonds of death.
>
> But he who delights in stilling his thoughts and always meditates on what is not auspicious … he cuts the bonds of death.
>
> A person without wisdom has no meditation, nor does a person who is not meditating have wisdom. The person in whom meditation and wisdom are present is close to *nirvana*.

These sayings are pithy and easily remembered. However, their composition in Pali means only educated monks would have been capable of understanding them. Today the few Pali verses recited by laypeople are not really understood, and vernacular texts (those written in the local language) are most widely used.

Other canons are not organised as systematically as the Theravadin Pali Canon, though most contain similar kinds of material with notable additions. This means there is not a distinctive Mahayana canon. There are thousands of Mahayana texts, some extremely obscure and scarcely known, others quite famous. Apart from the so-called Perfection of Wisdom literature (first century BCE to fourth century CE), which gave rise to a large body of texts, the Mahayana texts were produced on an individual basis. One of the earliest of such texts is the *Saddharmapundarika*, or the *Lotus of the Good Law*.

Lotus of the Good Law

Possibly dating from the first century BCE, the *Lotus of the Good Law*, or *Lotus Sutra*, is one of the earliest texts that reveals clear Mahayanist tendencies, enabling this stream of Buddhism to be distinguished from Hinayana. Composed in Sanskrit (it was quickly reworked into vernacular languages), it contains 28 chapters. Many chapters give an anecdote illustrating how the Buddha, often in disguise, has rescued an individual or a family group from a disastrous situation, usually through unorthodox means. Each plot is really a metaphor for the Buddha's enlightening role, where he explicitly helps people escape from a difficult situation, meant to be *samsara*.

Alamy Stock Photo/Svintage Archive

FIGURE 2.3.2 Section of illustrated scroll of the *Lotus Sutra*, thirteenth century, Japan

The stories are accessible to a large audience because of the lively plots and the particular aspects of the Buddha being depicted. Above all, the Buddha is portrayed as saving other individuals who are either incapable of saving themselves or need an initial helping hand. This emphasis fits perfectly with the image of the Buddha as *bodhisattva*, where emphasis is always placed on helping other sentient beings attain liberation (or escaping from any other distressful situation) rather than just attaining liberation for oneself.

For the Theravadins, the Buddha is regarded as a historical being who, by his own efforts, attained *nirvana*. He is significant, principally, as an example to others to follow the same path. In contrast, for Mahayanists, the Buddha of the *Lotus of the Good Law* **sutra** – though enlightened – is not satisfied just to achieve this state, but also makes great efforts to bring other beings to liberation. As such he is virtually given the status of a god, and some of the names used for him have been taken over from Hindu gods. He is no longer the rather austere or stern figure of the Theravadin texts.

> The *Tathagata* who is endowed with knowledge, strength, self-confidence – the distinctive characteristics and the teachings of a Buddha – is very strong by virtue of his magical powers, is the father of the world and has gained the highest perfection in the knowledge of skilful means. He has great compassion, his mind is entirely wearied, and he is benevolent and compassionate. He springs up in this triple world – which is like a dwelling whose roof has decayed and is burning due to a huge mass of depression and pain – in order to instigate the unsurpassed perfect knowledge … and liberate beings from passion, hatred and delusion.
>
> *Saddharmapundarikasutra*, p. 53

NOTE

Tathagata is a term the Buddha used about himself as an individual who has brought an end to suffering and has reached *nirvana*.

The imagery in the *Lotus Sutra* is dramatic and colourful, with the Buddha appearing in a range of different guises to trick, cajole and push the unenlightened people out of a state of ignorance onto the path towards enlightenment. However, this is not regarded as deception. Instead, it is described by the technical term *upayakausalya*, or 'skilful means'.

> The Lord of the world performs a difficult task when he displays his skilful means, taming his sons of low interest. When he has tamed them, he gives them knowledge.
>
> *Saddharmapundarikasutra*, p. 82, v. 49

This justifies his capacity to use virtually any means to extract individuals out of *samsara* just as a father uses all sorts of devices to entice his children out of a burning house when they do not realise the seriousness of the fire (the tale told in the third book of the *Lotus Sutra*). The analogy explains the Buddha as the father and his sons as unenlightened people.

Because it is so obviously about the Buddha as saviour, the *Lotus Sutra* very quickly became a central text of Mahayana Buddhism and remains arguably the most important Buddhist text in Japan today, as it was in medieval Japan. It is because it is both positive and negative in its outlook towards received Buddhist ideas that it is considered such an important text in the development of the Mahayanist movement.

Tibetan Book of the Dead

There are at least two separate (although related) canons in Tibetan covering the entire genre of Buddhist texts. The *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (a title given by Walter Evans-Wentz for the first English translation of the text), or *Great Liberation upon Hearing in the Bardo* (*Bar-do thos-grol chen-mo*), has been well known in the West following its first translation into English in 1927.

It is primarily a collection of funeral liturgies and descriptions of funerary rituals pertaining in part to any intermediate state between death and rebirth, named *bar-do* in Tibetan – a stage where the consciousness of the deceased can be reborn either into *samsara* or into some enlightened state. Though deriving from Sanskrit texts composed in the mid-fifth century, the idea of an intermediate state between birth and death and death and birth gave rise to considerable speculation in Tibet. It led to a variety of different views covering at least four kinds of intermediate states, which were expressed in a large body of literature.

Great Liberation upon Hearing in the Bardo was 'rediscovered' (composed from an earlier source) in the late fourteenth century in south-eastern Tibet. Within a few centuries it had become the standard text used in performing funerary rituals involving disposal of the body

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Photo (C) RMN-Grand Palais (MNAAG, Paris) / Thierry Ollivier

FIGURE 2.3.3 A Tibetan *thangka* known as *The Vision of Serene Deities*, from a nineteenth-century copy of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*

and the transferral of the consciousness of the deceased from one state into another. The intermediate state was always regarded as a potentially dangerous condition because the soul was wandering – it could easily go the wrong way and could be subject to attack from evil forces.

The aim of all the manuals dealing with the soul during the intermediate stage was to provide expiation (atonement) rituals for purifying it from past evil acts (which produced bad *karma*) and to guide it to an appropriate new body or back to *samsara* in a favourable body.

In basic terms, the *bardo* ritual is a plea for the purification of the sins of the departed, for release from the perilous pathways of the *bardo*, and for auspicious rebirth among one of the three higher destinies (human, demigod or god). The prescribed texts that accompany these rites, such as those included in the *Peaceful and Wrathful Deities* and the *Liberation upon Hearing*, ritually recreate the circumstances of the deceased's journey through the *bardo* after death and invoke the image of Buddhas and *bodhisattvas* coming down to lead the departed along the path:

> When the time has come to go alone and without friends, may the compassionate ones [buddhas and *bodhisattvas*] provide refuge to so-and-so [name of the deceased] who has no refuge. Protect her, defend her, be a refuge from the great darkness of the *bardo*, turn her away from the great storms of *karma*, provide comfort from the great fear and terror of the Lord of Death, deliver her from the long and perilous pathway of the *bardo*.
>
> Bryan J. Cuevas, *The Hidden History of the Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 2003, p. 74

REVIEW

1. In point form, **clarify** what the Pali Canon is.
2. **Construct** a table that shows the three major sacred texts of Buddhism. Include the language in which they were written, their approximate date of origin and a brief outline of the content of each.
3. In one paragraph for each, **explain**:
   - **a** how the Buddha of the *Lotus Sutra* differs from the Buddha of the Pali texts
   - **b** how the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* differs from the *Tripitaka* and the *Lotus of the Good Law*.
4. **Identify** the importance of the Buddha in the three texts mentioned.
5. **Examine** the extracts provided from each of these three collections of writing and **summarise** how they **demonstrate** the principal teachings of Buddhism.

EXTENSION

1. **Investigate** the symbolism of the lotus flower. **Summarise** your findings in one paragraph.
2. Use the weblink provided to learn more about the Buddhist scriptures and read them online.
3. Use the Internet to find a multimedia presentation on the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Write a 20-line review of the presentation.

Weblink
Buddhist scriptures

2.4 Core ethical teachings

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

▷ The application of Buddhist ethics to specific issues is addressed in Chapter 10, pages 210–13.

Buddhist **ethics** are not a set of rules or commandments imposed from 'above'. Buddhist scriptures and commentaries certainly provide general guidelines for ethical behaviour, but few moral issues are discussed in those texts. Many works, such as the *Vinaya* or monastic code, are aimed at a monastic audience and are of lesser relevance to the Buddhist layperson. But for both groups – monks/nuns and laypeople – the ethics are based on the twin principles of causing no harm of any sort to living beings and striving for the welfare of all beings.

Vinaya

The Noble Eightfold Path (see pages 27–8) shows that ethics are central to the lifestyle of the Buddhist monk or nun. Fundamental is the need to show compassion in everything they do. Yet the lifestyle of the monk (*bhikkhu*) or nun (*bhikkhuni*), whether lived inside or outside a monastic environment, was one of avoiding completely the conditions under which desire might arise. The *Vinaya* rules are designed to remove members of the monastic *sangha* from such situations, and the meditational practices complement this physical and social removal by taking away the roots of desire altogether.

The *Vinaya* rules may seem restrictive – they impose strict limitations on the social activity of the monk/nun, especially in relation to the other gender and to taking what is not appropriate for them. Yet the injunction to practise compassion towards all sentient beings is expansive because it requires the monk/nun to take an active interest in the affairs of those people who have not rid themselves of the ignorance that, unwittingly or not, will keep them on the wheel of *samsara*.

Monks must observe 227 rules. Their observance of the rules is tested every month at the *patimokkha* ritual, where an offending monk must make public any breaking of individual rules. There are nine levels of rules distinguished by the punishment allocated to those who break them. Punishments range from expulsion from the *sangha* to the performance of minor penance. Many of the rules are highly specific, though they do fall into the two categories of causing no harm of any sort to living beings and striving for the welfare of all beings.

The Five Precepts

The *Vinaya* stands on the basis of abstention by monks/nuns from many areas of life. The five abstentions laid down for laypeople are much more universal in their aim and could be found in virtually any major world religion. It is recommended that people do not engage in:

1. killing living beings
2. taking what is not given
3. sexual misconduct
4. speaking falsely
5. taking drink and drugs that confuse the mind.

In many instances, the Buddha goes beyond these five recommendations and lays down modes of behaviour that are both ethical in tone and guaranteed to give success in interactions with other people.

> There are these five disadvantages, householders, for a person of poor morality who fails in morality. What five? Now, householders, a person of poor morality who fails in morality suffers great diminution of wealth owing to laziness; this is the first disadvantage for a person of poor morality who fails in morality.
>
> *Vinaya* 1, 226 ff.

Then the Buddha lists four other disadvantages: loss of reputation, loss of self-confidence, confusion at death and entry into hell. Here he was ensuring that individuals act honestly – especially in business dealings, but also in all other areas of life.

Such proclamations recur frequently throughout the Buddha's teachings. It is important to be aware that he proposes these general statements of attitude in addition to the more specific Five Precepts.

REVIEW

1. In one paragraph, **demonstrate** that you understand the purpose of the *Vinaya*.
2. **Recall** what the Buddha says will result from 'poor morality'.
3. **Explain** the relationship between the Five Precepts and the *Vinaya*.
4. **Outline** the principal ethical teachings in Buddhism.
5. Write a half-page summary to **describe** the importance of the ethical teachings in the life of Buddhists.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided to find out more about the *Vinaya*. Prepare a summary of three of the rules.
2. Based on your research, **demonstrate** how the purpose of the *Vinaya* is put into practice.
3. Interview a practising Buddhist about how they implement Buddhist ethics in everyday life in Australia.
4. Many Buddhist centres and organisations also perform a social welfare role for their community. Use the weblink provided to **investigate** such a centre. **Evaluate** whether their social welfare role is an extension of Buddhist ethical teachings found in the classical texts.

Weblinks
Lay Guide to the Monks' Rules

Quang Duc Buddhist Welfare Association of Victoria

2.5 Personal devotion in the home

Lay Buddhists may participate in rituals at a monastery, shrine or temple where monks/nuns lead them in veneration of the Buddha. In essence, however, Buddhism is a private religious tradition and most Buddhist devotion takes place in the home.

Puja

GLOSSARY

puja Worship; the Buddhist ritual that honours the Buddha, a god or a goddess as a divine guest; usually performed in a temple, but it can also be a domestic ritual.

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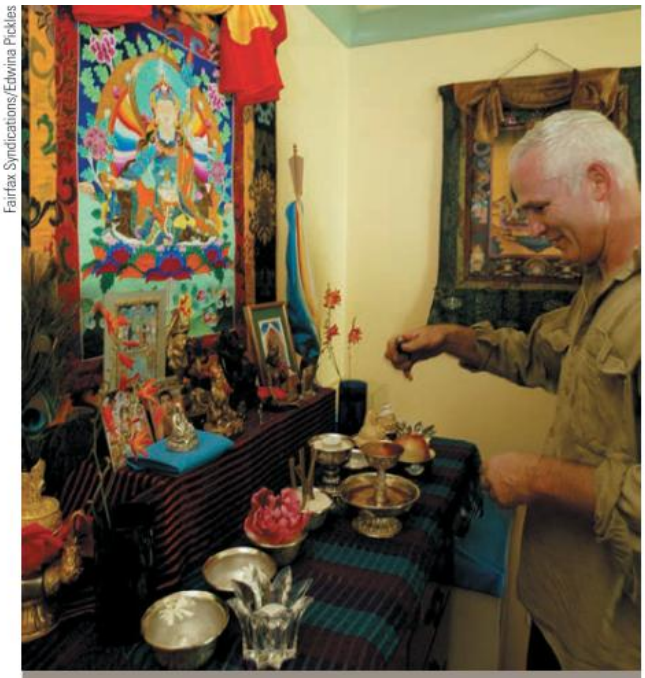

Fairfax Syndications/Edwina Pickles

FIGURE 2.5.1 A household *puja*

Buddhist worship in the home is not foreshadowed in the early Buddhist texts and is likely to have been a later development. Many Buddhist homes will contain small shrines holding pictures or images of the Buddha or of a prominent living monk, a Buddhist holy man or a *bodhisattva*. These can be quite simple or very elaborate. For example, in some Tibetan houses there are entire rooms set aside as the focus of worship and, in addition to candles, flowers and incense, they contain images of the Buddha and *bodhisattvas* and brightly coloured paintings on silk.

Worksheet
Buddhist celebrations

The taking of refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha* is a brief ritual that laypeople can perform in private or in public. It is extremely popular because of its simplicity. It reaffirms a person's commitment to the Buddhist path and is usually done before an image of the Buddha. Even if a Buddhist layperson knows no other formula or prayer, they will know how to take refuge. This is normally done within a few minutes with a few offerings, and possibly bodily prostration.

Flowers and lights are especially important in the household ***puja***. Flowers are placed in front of the Buddha and bathed with special water. When they are blooming, they are symbolic of the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment. This verse is sometimes recited:

> This mass of flowers endowed with colour, fragrance, and quality I offer at the lotus-like feet of the King of Sages. I worship the Buddha with these flowers: by the merit of this may I attain freedom. Even as these flowers do fade, so does my body come to destruction.

Oil lamps are also important because they symbolise the removal of ignorance. These are set on the altar and the flame represents the Buddha's capacity as the disperser of light. However, for most lay Buddhists, the main aims of this and the other forms of *puja* are to acquire good *karma* (merit) and prevent evil influences from entering their house.

While Buddhist festivals were not allowed during the COVID-19 pandemic – especially in Buddhist centres in the United States – chanting in temples and meditation classes continued online, but with different practices. East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) in Oakland, California, remained open and is promoting mindful handwashing, saying it is a 'a great 20-second practice all of the time.' The Portland Insight Meditation Center in Portland, Oregon, shared the following 20-second handwashing loving-kindness (*metta*) meditation on its Facebook page:

> 'May all beings be safe.
> May all beings be content.
> May all beings be healthy.
> May all beings live with ease.'
>
> That's about 20 seconds, right?

REVIEW

1. Recall the definition of *puja*.
2. Identify the symbols found in a household *puja*.
3. **Outline** *puja* as celebrated in the home.
4. Describe the importance of household *puja* for the Buddhist family.
5. Explain how belief underpins practice in the handwashing meditation ritual outlined above.

EXTENSION

1. Visit a Chinese, Japanese or Vietnamese restaurant and make a note of the symbols in its shrine. Are there elements in common with the symbols in this section?
2. Use the weblinks provided as a starting point to investigate the ritual of taking refuge in the Three Jewels. Write a short report about its elements.

Weblinks
Buddhist Studies

Discovering Buddhism Module 7

Taking refuge in the triple gem

Taking Refuge: Becoming a Buddhist

The meaning of taking refuge

Newspix/Carmelo Bazzano

FIGURE 2.5.2 A Vietnamese Buddhist shrine in Braybrook, Victoria

RESPOND

What are the obvious common elements in Figure 2.5.2 above and Figure 2.5.1 on page 33?

Conclusion

Buddhism continues to thrive throughout the world except, paradoxically, in India, the land where it began. Since its discovery by the West in the eighteenth century, it has sometimes not been considered a religion because of the apparent absence of a creator god. Even if this is so, the actual practice of Buddhists over the past 2000 years and the method of approaching the Buddha, the *bodhisattvas* and various Buddhist deities functions like similar practices in other religions.

Today Buddhism remains a vibrant, growing religion, expanding in virtually every country where it is found. Throughout its history and in all societies to which it was introduced, it has demonstrated that it is capable of adapting to social and cultural change. It has been so adaptable that in most countries where it has a history, we speak of a particular form of Buddhism as being, for example, Chinese, Japanese, Indian or even American.

EXTENSION

1. Propose three reasons to explain the decline of Buddhism in India.
2. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
3. The links for the websites of four Buddhist organisations in Australia are provided. See how often the terms included in your list of key terms, concepts and ideas appear. Assess whether these organisations are primarily for Buddhists or non-Buddhists.
4. You have to give a 10-minute talk on Buddhism. Prepare an outline for your talk. What would your priority be – the teachings of Buddhism or the living-out of Buddhism? Propose reasons for your decision.

Weblinks
Aloka Meditation Centre

Buddhist Council of Australia

Dhammakaya International Society of Australia

Diamond Way Buddhism Australia

Online activity
Chapter 2 multiple-choice quiz

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22 INDICATIVE HOURS

3 Christianity

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **outline** the cultural and historical context in which Christianity began
- **examine** the principal events of Jesus' life and **explain** why Jesus is the model for Christian life
- **describe** the early development of Christianity after the death of Jesus
- **outline** the unique features of the major variants of Christianity
- **investigate** the principal beliefs of Christianity
- **identify** the importance of the Bible in Christianity and **examine** extracts from the Bible that **demonstrate** the principal beliefs of Christianity
- **outline** the principal ethical teachings of Christianity and **describe** their importance in the life of adherents
- **describe** the different types of personal prayer for Christians.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Christian terminology (p. 36)
- The life of Jesus (p. 40)
- Early Christianity and later divisions (p. 45)
- Christianity and prayer (p. 53)

Online activity

- Chapter 3 multiple-choice quiz (p. 54)

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Fairfax Syndications

Palm Sunday in the Sydney suburb of Punchbowl: the celebration included representatives of four different Orthodox churches and the Anglican Church.

GLOSSARY

Bible The Bible comprises the Jewish Scriptures or Torah (the Old Testament) and the Christian Scriptures (the New Testament).

gospel(s) The stories of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, usually referring to the first four books of the Christian Scriptures – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

Messiah Translation of a Hebrew word meaning 'Anointed One'. Its Greek equivalent in the New Testament is 'Christ'.

salvation In general, the belief that human beings require deliverance. In Christianity, the process or state where one is redeemed by Jesus Christ from the power of sin, evil and death.

Christianity is the name given to a religion based on the first-century CE life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. The followers of Jesus claimed that he was the Jewish **Messiah**, the long-awaited deliverer sent to the people of Israel by God to bring hope and **salvation**. During that first century, the followers of Jesus broke away from Judaism, and what is now known as Christianity spread throughout the regions controlled by the Roman Empire and established itself as a tradition separate from Judaism. Christianity was centred on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth as told through the writers of the **gospels** and the work of the early followers. Christianity's Jewish heritage was fundamental to the major text for Christianity – the **Bible**.

Right from its very beginnings in Jerusalem, Christianity has been profoundly influenced by various events. Christianity suffered many early persecutions, but by 381 CE it had been confirmed as the central religion of the Roman Empire. The collapse of the Roman Empire and its eventual division into the Eastern and Western Empires brought more conflict, and by the eleventh century the Christian Church had become the Church of the West – the Roman Church – and the Church of the East – the Orthodox Church. The sixteenth century brought more division with the Reformation in Europe and in England. All these events produced the variants of Christianity that exist today. Throughout its entire history, Christianity has demonstrated a great capacity to adapt to the signs of the times and to renew itself accordingly. Today, Christianity in all its variants is the largest of the world's organised religions. There are almost 2.3 billion Christians in the world today, which is 31.1 per cent of the global population. The fastest-growing Christian population is sub-Saharan Africa, while the largest decline in the Christian population is occurring in Europe; in fact, only about 16 per cent of the world's Christians are expected to be living in Europe by 2050. Christianity is the major religion in Europe, North and South America and Australia.

In Australia's 2016 census, 51.1 per cent of the population – 12.2 million people – stated an affiliation with Christianity. This was down from 61.1 per cent – 13.15 million people – in the 2011 census.

EXTENSION

Maintain a list in your personal workspace where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. A worksheet has been provided to assist you.

Worksheet
Christian terminology

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3.1 Origins

GLOSSARY

Exodus Greek word for 'exit', used to describe the escape of the people of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses.

Jewish The name given to the people of Israel after their exile in Babylon; the survivors were mainly from the tribe of Judah.

Judea Part of a mountainous area (now divided between Israel and Palestine) that the **Jewish** people believe has been promised to them by God.

prophets Inspired teachers, revealers or interpreters.

Roman Empire Two thousand years ago, Rome controlled all the land surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, including **Judea**. The Romans spoke Latin, but Greek was also important.

sects Groups of people with a common interest; factions.

The Jewish context

Christianity began in **Judea** where Jerusalem was the main religious and economic centre. Jerusalem contained the Temple, the principal place of Jewish worship, where priests offered sacrifices to their God as well as performing other rituals.

For the Jewish people, it was the story of their **Exodus** (see the Exodus and the Crossing of the Red Sea in Ex 14 onwards) that held them together and gave meaning and direction to their life. Their beliefs had survived all the sufferings of the domination and oppression of the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians and Persians, but they could not survive Greek persecution without being modified. The Greeks, after the time of Alexander the Great, were determined to destroy Judaism as a religious tradition. The oppression of Greek rule gave rise to expectations of the future intervention of God – evil was so present that a new Moses, a deliverer, had to be imminent.

Jewish groups at the time of Jesus

Pharisees

The Pharisees were progressive and are the spiritual fathers of modern Judaism. They held closely to the scriptures but also believed that it was open to interpretation within reason. They maintained that an afterlife existed and that God punished the wicked and rewarded the righteous in the world to come. They also believed in a Messiah who would herald an era of world peace.

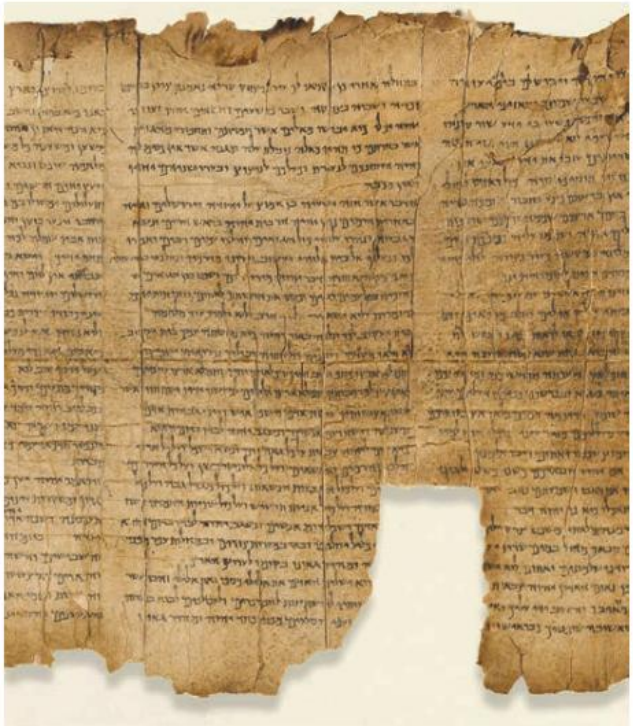
Sadducees

The Sadducees were elitists and supported a Jewish monarchy, but they were also liberal in their willingness to incorporate Greek ideas into their lives – something the Pharisees opposed. They insisted on a literal interpretation of Jewish scripture. They disappeared as a group after 70 CE.

Essenes

The Essenes emerged out of disgust with the other two groups. This **sect** believed the others had corrupted the city and the Temple. They moved out of Jerusalem and lived a monastic life in the desert, adopting strict dietary laws and a commitment to celibacy. The Essenes are particularly interesting to scholars because they are believed to be an offshoot of the group that lived in Qumran, near the Dead Sea.

When the **Roman Empire** gained almost complete control over Judea in 64 BCE, religious and political tensions arose. The Jews worried that their God, Yahweh, had abandoned them, and various political and religious groups looked for a way to free Judea from Roman control. Some of them hoped that a Messiah would come, a man like King David, who would lead an independent Judea. This idea of a deliverer of political and religious freedom is often found in the later writings when **prophets** such as Elijah and Isaiah spoke of the arrival of a saviour.



Alamy Stock Photo/www.BibleLandPictures.com

FIGURE 3.1.1 Part of first parchment sheet of the Qumran Great Isaiah scroll that contains the first chapters of the Book of Isaiah. These manuscripts help us to understand the ideas that were current at the time of Jesus. Qumran is the only archaeological site that matches the Roman historian Pliny's description of the Essenes' settlement.

As well as these tensions, Jewish religious character and spiritual unity was splintered by a variety of sects. There was no central Jewish authority; rather, religiously active Jews organised themselves into different groups.

It was into this world that Jesus, a Jew, came – his followers recognised him as the Messiah. At first, this community of followers was a sect within Judaism, but by the end of the first century CE it had become the separate religion of Christianity.

REVIEW

1 **Recall** the main Jewish groups of Jesus' time and their role in the society at the time of Jesus.

2 Prepare a chart to **outline** the historical and cultural context in which Christianity began. Note the ways Greeks, Romans and Jews might have influenced the origins of Christianity.

EXTENSION

1 Use the weblink provided to find out more about Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls. Present a three-paragraph report on your findings.

2 The Sadducees and the Pharisees represented the 'religious' people of Jesus' day. In the gospels there are many references to Jesus' conflict with them. Why was Jesus so critical of these two groups? (See Mt 23; Mk 8:11–21, 12:1–40; Lk 7:36–50.)

Weblinks
The Orion Center

Center for Online Judaic Studies

Bible references

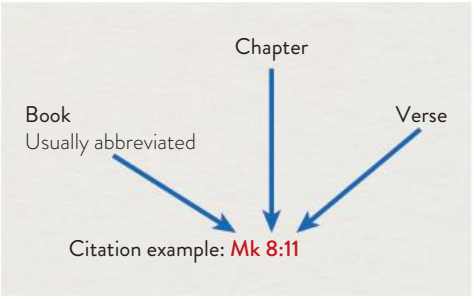
The Christian Bible (see pages 49–50) is made up of a number of books. There is a convention for citing biblical passages and this system is also used to enable readers to locate biblical quotations.

The title of each book is usually abbreviated, and the chapters and verses are indicated by numbers separated by a colon:

Mt 23 = Gospel of Matthew, Chapter 23

Mk 8:11 = Gospel of Mark, Chapter 8, Verse 11

1 Cor 5:3–8 = 1st Letter to the Corinthians, Chapter 5, Verses 3 to 8.



Weblink
Bible Study Tools

A link to the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) website is provided.

Jesus Christ

GLOSSARY

baptism A religious act of purification by water, from the Greek word *baptizo*, 'immerse'. For Christians, it marks their reception into the Christian community.

Bar Mitzvah Coming-of-age ceremony for Jewish boys.

gentiles General term for non-Jewish people.

kingdom of God Also referred to as the 'kingdom of heaven' or the 'reign of God', this expression was one of the key terms used by Jesus in his preaching and ministry and can be summed up as 'God's people in God's place under God's rule'.

myths Spiritual or religious ideas expressed in human terms.

Passover The Jewish festival that celebrates the Exodus from Egypt.

Sabbath (Jewish *Shabbat*) The Jewish day of rest and religious observance. It begins at sunset on Friday and ends on Saturday at nightfall.

What is known about Jesus comes almost exclusively from the Christian gospels. While all four gospels tell of Jesus' ministry and the last three years of his life, only the Gospels of Matthew and Luke tell us of Jesus' birth and early years. These 'infancy narratives' are really **myths** and were written to place Jesus' ministry in a strongly Jewish context. Matthew and Luke wanted to explain that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, as some of the Jews expected that the Messiah would be born in that city, the birthplace of David (c. 900 BCE), the first king of Israel and a Messiah figure.

The story of Jesus' birth in about 6 BCE, near the end of the reign of Herod the Great (37–34 BCE), tells of an angel who visited his mother, Mary, and predicted her son would be the son of God (Lk 1:26–38). The wise men or Magi were also said to be present soon after his birth. These were star worshippers from the Persian religion Zoroastrianism who had long predicted the birth of a 'chosen' man from the womb of a virgin. While there is no evidence that Jesus' family fled to Egypt because King Herod ordered the male babies of Bethlehem killed, it links Jesus' story with that of the Egyptian Pharaoh.

Luke stresses that the practices of Judaism were part of the daily life of Jesus' family. Jesus was circumcised and named eight days after his birth (Lk 2:21–22). At the required time, Jesus was taken up to Jerusalem and brought to the Temple 'to do for him what was customary under the law' (Lk 2:22). We read in Luke that every year the family went to Jerusalem for the festival of **Passover** and that they were there when Jesus was 12 years old, the age for ***Bar Mitzvah*** (Lk 2:41–43).

Apart from the annual journeys to Jerusalem, Jesus spent the first 30 years of his life in the obscure town of Nazareth in southern Galilee. Jesus is described as a carpenter (Mk 6:3), although this term refers generally to any artisan working with hard materials. There is no more

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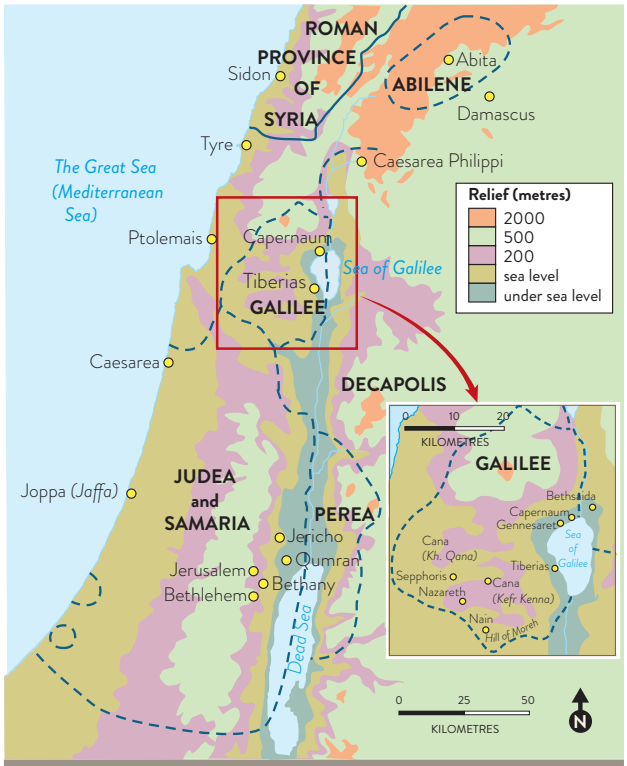

FIGURE 3.1.2 Palestine in the first century CE

about Jesus' life until the event, related in each of the four gospels, that heralded the beginning of his ministry – his **baptism** by John the Baptist when 'Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan' (Mt 3:13). Jesus was 30 years of age.

Principal events of Jesus' life

According to the gospels, after Jesus' baptism he began his three years of ministry, not in the great Galilean cities such as Tiberias and Sepphoris, but as a wandering preacher and healer in the villages among the ordinary people (Lk 8:19–21, 9:57–61, 11:27–28; especially Mt 19:10–12). He returned to his hometown after a preaching tour but was rejected:

> [Jesus] left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the **sabbath** he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, 'Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given him?' … Then Jesus said to them, 'Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house.' And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.
>
> Mk 6:1–6a

Jesus' ministry eventually took him to Jerusalem, where he was arrested and brought before Pontius Pilate, the Roman emperor's representative, who sentenced him to death by crucifixion.

The public ministry of Jesus

After his baptism by John, the gospels tell us Jesus began his ministry in Galilee (Mt 4:12–19; Mk 1:14–15; Lk 4:14–15). John the Baptist had been arrested, and Jesus left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum. At first his message was the same as John's – 'Repent, for the kingdom of [God] heaven has come' (Mt 4:17) – but as he gathered followers, Jesus shifted his message more to the joy of salvation for those who heard God's message. The term **kingdom of God** is found in 61 sayings across the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus does not refer to himself in his teaching but points outside himself to this kingdom. Jesus uses this image to challenge his listeners to change, repent and completely turn around their lives (Mt 3:2).

The followers of Jesus remained at first a small group within early Judaism. Jesus called his disciples to share in his teaching and healing ministry (Mt 10) and chose 12 in particular, perhaps to mirror the 'twelve tribes of Israel' (Lk 22:30). Although the Twelve Apostles, as they are called, were all male, it is important to remember that Jesus, unlike other rabbis (teachers) of his time, called women disciples. Indeed, women continued to exercise leadership roles in the earliest church communities (see page 41).

Jesus addressed his message to the Jews – his language, imagery and ideas are decidedly Jewish, particularly his favourite expression, 'kingdom (or reign) of God' (Mk 1:14; Mt 4:17) – and the Jewish people, to whom his ministry was directed, understood what he was saying. Jesus encouraged his listeners to move beyond the strict legalism of his day and look for motives for actions. Those who saw the Messiah as a new king – a David who would unite them and battle against the oppressors – were disappointed: Jesus didn't seem interested in gathering battalions. Those who saw Judaism as offering salvation only to those who strictly kept the Law of Moses were disappointed: Jesus was saying that all were welcome into the kingdom. He stated that he had come to 'fulfil the law' of Judaism and mixed freely with those considered 'sinners and outcasts' (Mt 5:17).

His favourite form of teaching was the parable, a mysterious saying designed to tease the minds of his audience, to knock his hearers off balance, unmask any false security and open people's eyes, ears and hearts to the kingdom of God (Mk 2:15–17; Mt 11:29). Jesus' parables turned everything upside down. The rich ate with the poor; the lepers, the blind, the possessed, the lame – all seemed to be welcome in the kingdom. Those who had difficulty were the ones who insisted on 'the letter of the law' as the most important qualification for entry to the kingdom. Jesus also worked miracles: healing the sick, casting out demons, showing power over nature and even raising the dead (Mk 4:35–41, 5:22–30; Jn 11:1–44). Jesus soon came into conflict with Jewish and Roman authorities.

On the Sunday of the last week of his life, which Christians now celebrate as Holy Week, Jesus made a triumphal entry into Jerusalem (Mk 11:1–11) – Palm Sunday. He visited the Temple and overturned the stalls of the moneychangers and those who sold offerings for sacrifice (Mk 11:15–16). He then entered into a series of arguments with the Pharisees and Sadducees about paying taxes and life after death (Mk 12:13–40). After celebrating Passover with his

disciples – the Last Supper – Jesus was arrested and brought to trial before Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator.

Jesus was sentenced to death and crucified on Friday (Mk 15:21–41; Mt 27:45–50) – Good Friday. He was buried hastily on Friday evening so as not to contravene the Sabbath. When some women came on Sunday morning – Easter Sunday – to prepare Jesus' body for permanent burial, they found the tomb empty and angels said he had risen from the dead (Mk 16:1–8). Some people declared they had experienced visions of him (Mt 28:1–10; Lk 24:1–12). Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus was said to have ascended into heaven (Acts 1:6–11).

What happened to those followers who were left behind after the death of Jesus and how the words, deeds and claims of Jesus' ministry became the tradition called 'Christianity' is dealt with in the next section.

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FIGURE 3.1.3 *The Last Supper*, 1953, by American Fritz Eichenberg. Here Christ is sharing his supper with the poor and outcast.

RESPOND

Describe what this wood engraving says about the ministry of Jesus. What features of this portrayal of the Last Supper differ from more traditional images?

Jesus – the model of Christianity

The focus of Christianity is Jesus' message that all were welcome into the kingdom of God and that he was sent by God to teach God's ways to others. Jesus left in his teachings the Christian commands that apply to ethical behaviour, such as the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5–7). He also lived a life that Christians should follow – he showed compassion to the poor, healed the sick and taught the love of God.

Nevertheless, Jesus is more than a model, an idea, a philosopher or a teacher of values. He is a teacher of wisdom who calls Christians to a radically personal relationship with God. He also calls his followers to conversion and discipleship that involve sacrifice and suffering. Finally, he calls them to forgiveness and transformation, and to live a completely different life to the one they were currently living (Galatians 2:20).

DID YOU KNOW?

Many people hold misconceptions about Jesus and his most common preaching themes. Jesus spent very little time talking about the body and sexuality, and much more on other topics. For example, across the four gospels, he warned some 20 times about the dangers of worry or anxiety, and on 40 occasions cautioned about the risks of worshipping money or wealth.

Portraits of Jesus

A range of portraits or interpretations of Jesus have been handed down to today's Christians. Each views Jesus from different historical, cultural and faith perspectives.

- Mark wrote to **gentiles** from the perspective of Christians under persecution, and emphasised the Crucified Christ as the Son of God (c. 54–68 CE).
- Matthew wrote for Jewish Christians in Antioch, Syria, and focused on Jesus the Teacher (c. 85 CE).
- Luke wrote around the same time as Matthew, probably for wealthy gentile Christians in the Roman Empire. He emphasised the compassion and forgiveness of Jesus.
- Paul's writings, particularly his letters to the Romans, Galatians and Corinthians, emphasise that Jesus is God in action and that he is the wisdom of God. In Paul's writings, the whole world is the sphere of God's redeeming action in Christ, since Jesus Christ is God's new covenant with humanity. The earliest of Paul's writings was probably 1 Thessalonians (c. 50–51 CE).

REVIEW

1. Construct a timeline to outline the principal events in Jesus' life.
2. Identify three reasons why Jesus experienced conflict with various groups during his ministry. In your answer, cite specific events and scripture passages.
3. **Explain** why Jesus is the model for Christian life. In your answer, refer to 'portraits of Jesus' from various sources.

EXTENSION

How would you describe the 'kingdom of God' as understood by Christians? Refer in your answer to the glossary on page 38 and to the suggested website link provided.

Weblink
The kingdom of God

Worksheet
The life of Jesus

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The development of early Christian communities

GLOSSARY

deacon From the Greek word *diakonos*, which is often translated as 'servant'.

The beginnings of Christianity were more complicated than they might seem at first. The gospels and the Acts of the Apostles recount that, during his lifetime, Jesus chose 12 from among all his disciples. All acknowledge that Simon from Galilee was the leader of the group. Jesus gave him the nickname of 'Rock', which translated into Greek as *Petros*, hence, 'Peter'. At some point, Peter was forced to leave Jerusalem and moved his centre to Antioch, and is said to have gone to Rome and become the first bishop of the Roman Church. When Peter was forced to leave, James became the undisputed Christian leader in Jerusalem. James was put to death in 62 CE by a Jewish group attached to the Temple.

We know, therefore, that there were two early Christian leaders – Peter, who was the leader of the 12, and James, whose group had its base in Jerusalem. Another significant figure in this formative period was Saul. A Roman citizen from the city of Tarsus in modern-day Turkey, he was well trained in Jewish learning and awaited the coming of the Messiah. He is said to have come to Jerusalem and been commissioned by the high priest to seek out and persecute Christians in Damascus. He was converted to Christianity and took on a new name – Paul.

▷ Paul is a significant person considered in Chapter 11, pages 223–6.

The early development of Christianity can be identified through four major stages:

- *Stage One* – Jesus' death and resurrection is announced to the Jews and others at Pentecost (see Acts 2–4).
- *Stage Two* – The church learns its first lesson about expansion. The first break – the gospel message is not tied to Jerusalem (see Acts 6–9).
- *Stage Three* – The church learns a second valuable lesson. Expansion and disagreement – you need not be a Jew to be Jesus' disciple (see Acts 10–11:1–18; 13:4, 15).
- *Stage Four* – The church expands through Paul's missionary journeys.

Earliest church communities and followers

Was Jesus the founder of a 'church'? The Greek word *ekklesia* means 'assembly, congregation, council' and has become the term used to express the concept of a united Christian Church. It is only in Matthew's gospel, written in Greek in 80–90 CE, that we find Jesus using the word *ekklesia* – 'I will build my church' (Mt 16:18). It is highly doubtful that Jesus was using the word *ekklesia* as it is understood today. It appears that Jesus' intention was to preach the gospel to all, at the same time knowing that only some of those 'assembled' would accept it. He was not founding a church, nor would he have had our understanding of 'church'.

Christian communities formed very quickly in major cities such as Ephesus and Antioch, and it became common to confess 'the name of Jesus' (Acts 4:18) or to accept baptism as a sign of belonging to the Way (Eph 4:5). Later writers, such as Ignatius of Antioch and Origen, also begin to refer to these early groups of Christians as 'the church'.

DID YOU KNOW?

Paul's letters to the communities he visited are the earliest writings of the Christian Scriptures and, with the Acts of the Apostles, formed the foundation of Christian beliefs and practices.

The Christians

The Acts of the Apostles records that Christians were first known by that name in the town of Antioch (Acts 11:26). After Jesus' death and resurrection, his followers also called themselves the 'brethren' (Acts 1:16), 'disciples' (Acts 11:26), 'believers' (Acts 2:44) and 'those of the Way' (Acts 9:2, 24:14).

The famines during the reign of Claudius (Acts 11:28), also mentioned in other sources, allow the naming of Christians to be dated to around 40 CE:

> ... and when [Barnabas] had found [Paul], he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for an entire year they met with the church and taught a great many people, and it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called 'Christians.'
>
> Acts 11:26

The word 'church' seems to have been used to refer both to the local community and the whole communion.

Women were frequently referred to as disciples or followers of Jesus, including Mary Magdalene and Tabitha (Acts 9:36). Paul commends Phoebe as a sister, patron and **deacon** of the church of Cenchreae (Rom 16:1–2) and also mentions many other women by name who served the church as 'fellow workers' (Rom 16:1; 1 Cor 16:19; Phil 4:2–3). The period known as early Christianity extended until 400 or 500 CE. Under Emperor Constantine (d. 337 CE), Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire.

REVIEW

In one page, **describe** the development of the early Christian communities following the death of Jesus.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided and **investigate** the lives, contributions and ongoing impact of two early Christian women. Write a short report on each. Debate the topic: 'The important role women had in the early church is not reflected in the later history of the Christian churches.'

Weblink
Women in ancient Christianity

Major variants of Christianity

GLOSSARY

Articles of Religion The Thirty-nine Articles 'agreed upon by the Archbishops, Bishops, and the whole clergy of the Provinces of Canterbury and York, London, 1562'. They form the basis of Anglican doctrine (teaching).

bishop The title given to the leader in some Christian churches. In Orthodox churches, the title is 'patriarch'.

creed A formal, but concise, statement of beliefs.

Eucharist The sacred meal of bread and wine commonly celebrated in some form by Christians as their central act of worship. It commemorates the last meal of Jesus with his disciples prior to his death.

***filioque* clause** Literally 'and Son' in Latin. It is referred to as the '*filioque* clause' because the phrase 'and son' was added to the Nicene Creed, indicating that the Holy Spirit proceeded from the Father 'and Son'. Debate about this clause divided the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches in 1054 CE.

icon (also ikon) A representation of Christ, the Virgin Mary or a saint, especially one painted in oil on a wooden panel in a traditional Byzantine style, and venerated in the Eastern churches; from the Greek word *eikon*, meaning 'image'.

iconostasis Greek word for 'icon stand'. A sanctuary screen, covered with **icons** (images of Christ, Mary and the saints), which separates the sanctuary from the rest of the church.

liturgy The official or set forms of worship, as opposed to private devotions.

monastic Describing an institutionalised form of religious life, either alone or in a community, in which individuals take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

patriarch *see* **bishop**

Pope The Bishop of Rome, considered to be the successor of the apostle Peter – the head of the Catholic Church.

Protestant A general term for those breaking away at the **Reformation**. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 'protesting' churches in England were often called the nonconformist churches or dissenters – those churches that did not acknowledge the authority of the Church of England.

purgatory The intermediate stage between death and heaven according to Catholic **theology**.

Reformation The early sixteenth-century movement that began as an effort to purify the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and eventually led to the establishment of separate Christian churches.

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious context. In this chapter, it also refers to a particular form of religious practice; for example, the Roman rite and various Eastern rites of the Catholic Church.

sacraments Sacred or holy actions that can bring about changes; a visible sign of an invisible action of God.

theology Literally 'words about god'; the systematic study of God, God's attributes and God's relationship to the universe.

The history of Christianity is a history of division, often for political and social reasons as much as theological. Two key historical developments in Christianity were the division between Eastern and Western Christianity, and the **Reformation** in Europe and Britain that saw the development of Anglicanism and the major **Protestant** denominations.

The division between the East and the West had its roots in the fourth-century split in the Roman Empire and the establishment of two capitals – Rome and Constantinople. Tensions always existed between the Greek-speaking Christians of the East, who became the Orthodox Church, and the Latin-speaking Christians of the West, who became the Roman Catholic Church. These tensions came to a head when the church was trying to formulate a **creed**. The Western church looked to the **Bishop** of Rome for guidance, the Eastern church to the **Patriarch** of Constantinople. In what is referred to as the Great Schism of 1054, the separation became official.

A further split occurred within the Western (Roman Catholic) church in the sixteenth century with the movement known as the Reformation. This movement began as an effort to purify the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and eventually led to the establishment of separate Christian churches. All these variants adhere to specific beliefs related to Jesus Christ, creation, salvation and the afterlife, and believe that the scriptures are the inspired word of God. The question of leadership, the expression of the beliefs, and the role of scripture and tradition are what separates them.

More recent times have seen the birth of various religious movements, mostly from within the Protestant churches, such as Pentecostalism.

Catholicism

The Catholic Church consists of the Eastern and Western or Roman/Latin traditions. There are four original Eastern traditions: Antiochian, Alexandrian, Byzantine and Armenian. These four Eastern traditions are divided into several different churches; for example, Maronite (Antiochian), Coptic (Alexandrian), Melkite and Ukrainian (Byzantine). While it has been traditional to speak of the Eastern **rite** or Latin rite, they are better defined as a communion of churches that recognise the **Pope** as their head on earth.

While their rituals are different, all have the **Eucharist** as the central act of worship and recognise seven **sacraments**: baptism, confirmation, Eucharist, reconciliation (penance or confession), ordination,

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marriage and anointing of the sick (extreme unction). Catholicism has a strong emphasis on Mary as the Mother of God and Mother of the Church, and on the communion of saints that intercede for those on earth and, finally, a strong belief in the existence of heaven, hell and **purgatory**. It also stresses the dual role of Scripture and Tradition in Revelation.

Catholics differ from other Christians on several points, including the necessity of penance, the meaning of communion, the composition of the canon of scripture, purgatory, and the means of salvation. Protestants and Anglicans believe that salvation is by faith alone (*sola fide*), while Catholics believe that faith is exhibited in good works.

> Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.
>
> James 2:17

While the Eastern traditions use local languages for the **liturgy**, Latin remained the liturgical language in the Western Catholic Church until the 1960s. There has always been a strong **monastic** tradition in the Catholic Church, which saw the later development of religious orders devoted to special services such as education or missionary work.

None of the rites within the Catholic Church ordains women to the priesthood. To be a priest in the Roman Catholic rite, one must be male and unmarried (but widowers are not excluded). In the non-Roman rites, you must be male, but you can be married. Married men, however, cannot become bishops.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'catholic' comes from the Greek word for 'universal.' In this chapter it refers to a variant of Christianity – the Catholic Church. It is also used to describe someone who has wide tastes in, for example, music. 'Orthodox' is from the Greek word for 'correct belief'; 'Protestant' is from one who 'protests'; and 'Anglican' derives from the word for the people from Anglia – England. As used within Christianity, each one of these words says something about the history of the variants of Christianity that have arisen since the time of the first Christian communities.

Orthodoxy

Currently there are 15 self-governing churches within the Orthodox communion. These include the four ancient patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem, which see themselves as lying in unbroken continuity from the time of the apostles. Over time, differences emerged in ideas and practices; the authority of the Pope was not accepted and there were some differences in the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit – the ***filioque* clause**.

The heart of Orthodox worship is the Divine Liturgy – the celebration of the Eucharist. A distinctive feature of its worship is the use of **icons**. Orthodox liturgies are notable because of their length (often two hours or more), their frequent use of incense, their fully sung liturgies, and because parts of their services are hidden from view within a sanctuary enclosed by a curtain, barrier or **iconostasis**. Liturgies are also characterised by the beauty of their chant, and by very rich symbolism, vestments and ceremonies.

While Greek was the first language of Orthodoxy, there was no concern about translating the scriptures and the liturgy into local languages. The Orthodox Church has a profoundly sacramental view of existence and church membership. Monasticism has been an important element in Orthodoxy since the fourth century CE, although, unlike the Catholic orders, the Orthodox Church did not develop religious orders for specific works. Only males can become priests; they may be married, but married priests cannot become bishops or patriarchs. Orthodox Christians are represented in Australia by many groups, including the Greek, Russian, Macedonian and Serbian churches.

Anglicanism

The Anglican Church, or Church of England, emerged from the context of the Catholic Church (sometimes called the Roman Catholic Church) in England in the sixteenth century, during the reign of Henry VIII. Between 1534 and 1535, the English Parliament passed Acts that made the head of the Catholic Church in England not the Pope in Rome, but the English king. A national church was created with a doctrinal basis formulated in 1562 as the Thirty-nine **Articles of Religion**. It claims to be both Catholic and

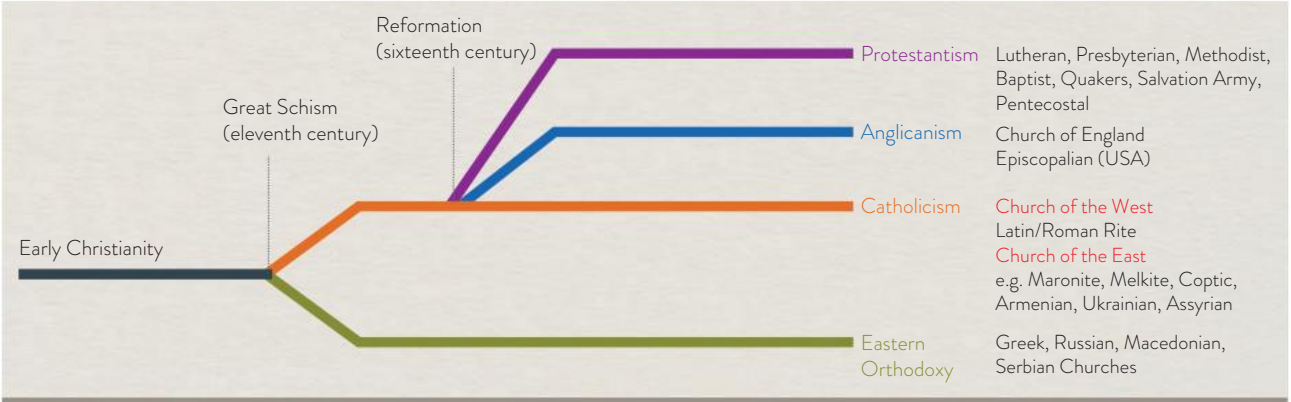

FIGURE 3.1.4 The major branches that developed within Christianity

Reformed – Catholic in its order of ministry (clergy), but with a conservatively reformed liturgy outlined in the Book of Common Prayer (1662).

The Church of England now operates flexibly and autonomously in many nations, but all accept the creed statement:

> … a fellowship within the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church of those duly constituted dioceses, provinces or regional Churches in communion with the See of Canterbury.
>
> Lambeth Conference of 1930

Anglicanism was heavily influenced by the **theology** of Martin Luther and other reformers such as John Calvin. The distinguishing features of Anglican theology that emerged from these influences included various teachings on authority, justification, the role of the sacraments in salvation, and links between the priesthood and the Eucharist.

▷ Martin Luther is a significant person considered in Chapter 11, pages 226–8.

Traditionally, there have been two strands in Anglicanism – the 'Low', or 'Bible', and the 'High', or Anglo-Catholic. Bible Anglicans stress the Word and its preaching dimension rather than ritual, and many would describe themselves as Protestants. 'High' Anglicans stress the ritual and sacramental dimension, and their rituals are very similar to those of Catholicism, as are those of many Lutheran churches.

In some traditions of Anglicanism, ordination is a sacrament in which the priest is affirmed as a representative of God to humankind; in other traditions, the priest functions more as a trained leader of the congregations. Most Anglican clergy are married and while most Anglicans accept the ordination of women, there are some places within the Anglican Church where women cannot be ordained as priests.

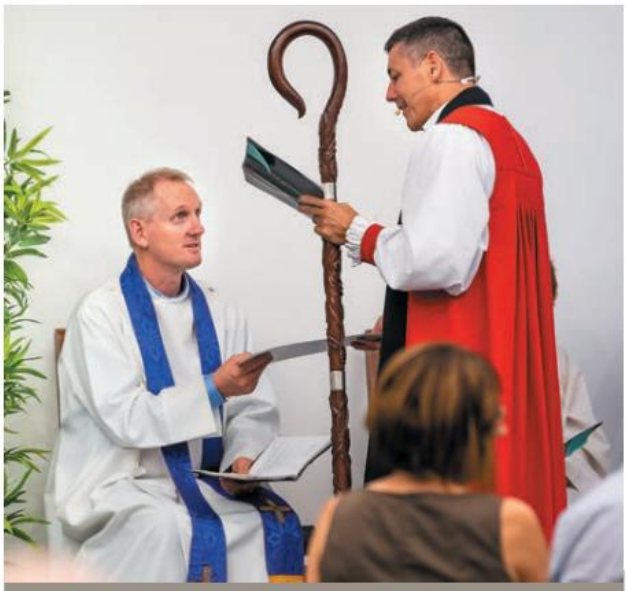

Photo: *anglican focus* March 2020, the news site of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland

FIGURE 3.1.5 The Reverend David Ruthven being commissioned by Bishop Jeremy Greaves as the new priest for the North Pine Anglican Parish Brisbane, 4 March 2020

Protestantism

Protestantism is the system of Christian faith and practice based on acceptance of the principles of the Reformation. It derives from the 'protestation' of the reforming members of the Diet of Speyer (1529), who voted against the decisions of the Catholic majority.

The three founding branches of Protestantism are Lutheranism, Calvinism and Zwinglianism. It is from these that Methodism, Presbyterianism and the other Protestant denominations grew. None of these groups acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope and most minimise the liturgical and sacramental aspects of Catholic Christianity.

While the Protestant movement is diverse, its distinguishing features for most Protestants are:

- the Bible as the only source of revealed truth – doctrine should not be based upon church tradition
- the importance of faith alone – salvation is achieved individually through the merit of faith, and not faith plus the efforts of oneself and others
- baptism and the Eucharist (Holy Communion) as the central sacraments
- recognition of 'the priesthood of all believers' (1 Pet 2:9) in gaining access to God – no other earthly mediator is necessary
- the emphasis on the transcendence (total otherness) of God, and therefore the effects of the Fall and Original Sin
- the emphasis on preaching and hearing of the Word. Clergy can generally marry and some, but not all, Protestant churches allow women to be leaders.

The Quakers

The Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers, shares a way of life rather than a set of beliefs. It had its origin in seventeenth-century England, and George Fox (1624–1690) is considered the founder. However, numbers of 'Seekers' had already separated themselves from the churches and were meeting together for worship without any ordained priests or ministers, and without the use of any rites such as baptism or the Eucharist. The basis of their worship was silently waiting upon God. Many of the Seekers turned to Fox as their leader, and in course of time the Religious Society of Friends emerged.

Quakers consider themselves neither Roman Catholic nor Protestant but instead as 'primitive Christianity revived.' Their official name, the Religious Society of Friends, was an adoption of the words of Jesus, 'I have called you friends' (John 15:15).

The Society was established in Australia in 1832 when James Backhouse and George Washington Walker were sent by British Friends on a six-year journey around south-east Australia to inquire into the condition of the penal settlements and the welfare of the Aboriginal peoples and free settlers (see page 139).

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RESPOND

What do the Quakers mean by 'primitive Christianity revived'?

Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism, unlike other denominations within Protestantism, has no universally accepted origin story. In the United States there are two starting points: one at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles in 1906, where the movement emerged under the leadership of African-American pastor William Seymour; and the other, in a Bible School in Kansas where Agnes Ozman spoke in an unknown language after receiving the Holy Spirit. This became known as 'speaking in tongues' and was an early hallmark of the movement.

Pentecostalism sought to restore the 'gifts of the Holy Spirit', those gifts bestowed on the church at Pentecost (see Acts 2:4–11), to Christian thought, worship and practice (see Acts 10:46; 1 Cor 14). Other gifts of the Holy Spirit that Pentecostalists value are healing, prophesying, speaking in tongues, and the interpretation of prophecy (1 Cor 12:8–10; 1 Cor 14:3–5).

Pentecostal churches in Australia include Australian Christian Churches (formerly known as the Australian Assemblies of God), Hillsong, C3 Australia and United Pentecostal Church of Australia.

DID YOU KNOW?

Some Pentecostal denominations trace their roots to the Welsh Revival of 1904. The first Pentecostal church in Australia was an Aboriginal congregation meeting in Queensland in 1904, an offshoot of the Welsh Revival.

Weblink
The Welsh Revival

REVIEW

1. **Recall** the two key developments that resulted in division within Christianity.
2. **Construct** a timeline to show the significant events and people that relate to the development and variants within Christianity.
3. **Outline** the major features of Anglicanism, Catholicism, Orthodoxy, Pentecostalism and Protestantism. Specify some major differences between these variants.

EXTENSION

In pairs, **research** the number and location of variant Christian churches within your own local area.

Worksheet
Early Christianity and later divisions

3.2 Principal beliefs

GLOSSARY

deacon In this section, it refers to the office of deacon that originated in the selection of seven men to assist with the pastoral and administrative needs of the early church (Acts 6:2–6).

revelation From the Latin word *revelare*, meaning 'to take away the veil' and so God's disclosure of himself and his will to his people. In this context, it means the disclosure of something that could not have been revealed without the will of God. It is also the name given to the last book of the New Testament, 'The Revelation to John' (Book of Apocalypse).

Over the centuries, Christianity has organised its beliefs into a systematic theology that draws from its sacred writings and traditions. While the major beliefs of Christianity are shared by all Christian variants, there are degrees of difference in the interpretation of these beliefs and how they are lived out in everyday life. Some of these similarities and differences between the beliefs of the major branches are outlined in Table 3.1 on page 48.

Christianity is not just, or even primarily, a list of beliefs and practices. Being a Christian begins with a person's lived experiences and an encounter with Christ. In this context, the principal beliefs of Christianity are examined here. How these beliefs are put into practice through the ethical and moral teachings of Christianity and the personal devotion of its adherents are examined in later sections.

The divinity and humanity of Jesus Christ

In the centuries after Jesus' death it became necessary to provide explanations for what was being said about Jesus and his relationship to God. Early Christian thinkers believed that Jesus Christ was divine, yet this in turn raised difficult questions about the nature of Jesus and the nature of God. In what sense was Jesus both truly divine and truly human? Most people understood that a man could become a god – Roman emperors sometimes did after death. But it was much more difficult to explain how and why a god 'was made man'.

These and other questions came to a head at the Council of Nicaea in 325 CE. The teaching of Athanasius was adopted and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity was formulated: God is understood as one God, yet within the Godhead there are three distinct persons: God the Father/Creator, God the Son/Jesus Christ and God the Holy Spirit.

▷ See 'The Nature of God and the Trinity' on page 46.

Since then, Christians have understood more clearly that Jesus was human: he was born like other human beings; he ate, drank, slept and went to the toilet; and he knew sadness, suffering, uncertainty and joy. Yet at the same time he was also, mysteriously, the divine Son of God, 'one

with the Father', the second person of the Trinity. In other words, he was a human being who lived at a particular time and place with normal human limitations; yet he is also the divine Son of God whose life, death and resurrection has cosmic significance for the whole of humanity.

Death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ

From the gospels we know that Jesus was arrested, briefly examined, taken to Golgotha outside Jerusalem, and put to death by crucifixion alongside other criminals. Thus ended the earthly life of Jesus of Nazareth. But this was not the end – the gospels affirm that Jesus not only rose from the dead but also was seen by many of his followers (Mk 16:1–8; Jn 20:1–18).

As well as the resurrection narratives, there is the ascension of Jesus to heaven (Lk 24:50–53). The ascension of Jesus refers to the event where Jesus returns to heaven after his resurrection (Lk 24:51; Acts 1:9). The Christian feast of the ascension is celebrated 40 days after Easter.

From the very beginning, Christians believed in the resurrection of the body – that each believer will one day be completely human but transformed – body and soul – for all eternity, and will share in the glorious life of Jesus Christ (refer to 2 Cor 4:14 and 1 Cor 15:35–37, 42–44). This belief is based on the event that is the heart and foundation of all Christian beliefs. At his resurrection, Jesus Christ, after truly suffering and dying, was raised to new life and entered a transformed, victorious and glorified state.

Newspix/Robb Cox

FIGURE 3.2.1 The Good Friday service at the Russian Orthodox Cathedral in Strathfield, Sydney. This procession symbolises the carrying of Christ to the tomb after he has been taken down from the cross. On the feast of Easter, the congregation greets one another with 'Christ is risen!' The response is 'Truly, He is risen!'

The nature of God and the Trinity

Christians believe that God is One and the Creator of all things. This same God is also known as three persons: Father or Creator of all, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit or Sanctifier. This is known as 'the mystery of the Holy or Blessed Trinity'. The Holy or Blessed Trinity is the central dogma and mystery of the Christian faith. 'Mystery' is used here to mean 'deepest reality' or 'that which is always beyond anything we can fully know or experience'. In the Trinity, God exists as three persons – traditionally referred to as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – all existing in a relationship of 'intimate self-surrender' to each other. When one person in the Trinity acts, so too do the other two persons. Each person is distinct but does not act in isolation from the others.

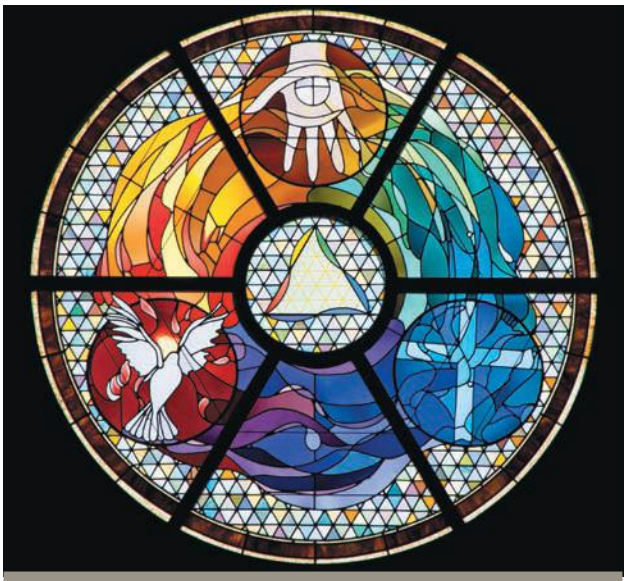
Although the word 'Trinity' does not occur in the Bible, the origins of the trinitarian formula seem to be present in texts such as the following:

> The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
>
> 2 Cor 13:13

> Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
>
> Mt 28:19

The Trinity traditionally has been described in relation to three key functions:

- creating (bringing God's new life to all creation)
- sanctifying (blessing and making holy all creation)
- redeeming (turning all creation from sin and darkness and more fully towards God).



Window by Beyer Studio photo by Neil Cippon.

FIGURE 3.2.2 Contemporary interpretation of the Trinity in stained glass in Avondal Catholic Church, Pennsylvania, USA

RESPOND

Identify the symbols that depict the three key functions of the Trinity.

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Revelation

Revelation, put simply, is the transmission of knowledge from the divine to the human that is ongoing throughout human history. It includes not only biblical revelation but revelation evident throughout the whole of human history. In other words, revelation is knowledge given by God to human beings about people, events and things previously hidden or only partly known.

Christians believe that revelation is not only God's self-communication to human beings, but it is also a loving and utterly free invitation to join in friendship with God. Through this revelation, God calls human beings to respond in faith and action today, not just intellectually or by accepting certain doctrines or beliefs.

Salvation

> 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 everlasting life.
>
> Jn 3:16

Salvation is the belief that human beings require deliverance by God from the power of sin and darkness. At the same time, it is also the process or way in which human beings are saved or brought to fullness of life in God. The New Testament speaks of salvation as the forgiveness of sin (Titus 3:5), living as a 'saved' person (Rom 1:17) and looking forward to a life in heaven (Mt 19:27–29).

- This 'deliverance' may be experienced now in this present life, but its full realisation is delayed until the next life or afterlife. Salvation is therefore 'here now' but 'not yet fully complete'.
- Because there are many obstacles in the present life that make salvation difficult, people cannot achieve salvation by themselves. It is only through the grace of God that humans can attain salvation.
- Jesus Christ is central to salvation, for it is through his life, death and resurrection that God has offered salvation to all humanity.

Some Christian churches (for example, Catholic, Anglican and Uniting churches) hold that those who strive to do God's will as it is made known to them in conscience can be saved, even if they are not members of that particular church. Other churches hold this belief partially or would be opposed to it.

Whatever their viewpoint, in the final analysis, Christians believe that to experience God's love is to experience the essence of salvation's meaning and mystery.

Christian beliefs in the everyday life of the believer

For Christians in general, these principal beliefs are not just a doctrine but also a living relationship with Jesus Christ, and can be summarised as follows:

- The divine Christ became human so that humans might become more divine.
- God created the world, so everything within it is good.
- God saves us but we cannot be saved without our own cooperation.
- God is ever present as Creator (or Father), Son and Spirit, and God's Spirit and power make us new people.
- Mary followed God's will.
- The church is necessary for salvation and is the body of Christ.
- Christian lives are to be based on God's love and forgiveness.
- Christians are called to live in accordance with the gospel in their own lives, acting justly and compassionately in the world.
- The whole of humanity is destined for eternal happiness, yet some may totally and deliberately reject God's gift of love and salvation.

Mary the mother of Jesus

The New Testament begins its account of Mary's life with the Annunciation, the appearance to her of the Archangel Gabriel heralding her divine selection to be the mother of Jesus. It records Mary's role in key events of the life of Jesus, from his virgin birth to his crucifixion. Other apocryphal writings (see pages 48–9) tell of her subsequent death and bodily assumption into heaven.

Christians hold a number of important doctrines concerning Mary. Primary among these are that Mary lived a sinless life, and that as mother of Jesus she became *Theotokos*, literally the 'God-bearer' or 'Mother of God.'

Catholics, Orthodox, as well as some Anglicans and Lutherans venerate (honour) Mary as the mother of Jesus, but they make a clear distinction between this and the worship due to God. Generally referred to as the Blessed Virgin Mary by Catholics, Mary is much depicted in Western art and the icons of Orthodoxy.

As detailed above, the church of the early 'followers of the way' moved along different paths and developed, not so much different beliefs but a different emphasis in its teachings. Table 3.1 (see following page) highlights some of the differences in the four major variants of Christianity.

Table 3.1 The four major variants of Christianity

Christian variant	Principal teachings
Catholic	• God as Creator and the Trinity as Father, Son and Holy Spirit • Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary and in the Immaculate Conception • Jesus is the judge of the living and the dead • The church as God's body and the Communion of Saints and in the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body and life everlasting • Scripture is the inspired word of God; the Bible, and particularly the gospels, are at the heart of Catholic belief • Tradition is not just historical beliefs or habits but Catholic teaching, life and worship
Orthodox	• The Holy Scriptures combined with Holy Tradition are of equal value and importance • Baptism by full immersion is central to salvation • Eucharist is the focus of worship where believers partake mystically of Christ's body and blood and through it receive his life and strength • The Holy Trinity and its empowerment of the church • Jesus Christ and his final judgement and salvation • Mary as Mother of God (*Theotokos*), but reject the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception (the belief that God preserved the Virgin Mary from the taint of original sin from the moment she was conceived) • God's foreknowledge of human destiny (predestination) • Veneration of icons • Salvation is a life-long process of becoming more Christ-like
Anglican	• The Bible contains all Christian faith and thought • The Anglican way of worship and life was first set out in the Book of Common Prayer • Celebration of the sacraments, baptism and Holy Communion are ordained by Jesus • A system of church order that stems from ancient times and is focused in the ordained ministry of bishop, priest and **deacon** • A firm commitment to the ministry of the whole people of God, lay and ordained together; their approach to Christianity involves an imaginative combination of Scripture, Tradition and Reason • Anglicans have been divided by some into Low or Evangelical and High or Anglo-Catholic
Protestant	• The five *solas* (alones) – by grace alone, by faith alone, by Scripture alone, by Christ alone, and Glory to God alone; Protestants generally believe that salvation will be achieved through these five beliefs • There are varying views among Protestants regarding such matters as the nature and extent of human participation in salvation • God is all-powerful and good • Human nature is good but fallen and sinful • The purpose of existence is to give glory to God, and to serve others, all through God's grace; suffering is a form of evil, but should be accepted as part of life • Salvation is a gift of God granted by faith; belief in judgement, resurrection and a life of blessedness in God's presence

REVIEW

1 **Outline** the principal Christian beliefs regarding Jesus Christ and the Trinity.

2 **Explain** the central importance for Christians of both the death of Jesus and his resurrection.

EXTENSION

1 Construct a mind map or flow chart to summarise the principal beliefs of Christianity. Make reference to differences and similarities between the four major variants of Christianity.

2 Clarify what Christians mean when they say their beliefs are 'not just a doctrine but also a living relationship with Jesus Christ'.

3.3 Sacred texts and writings

GLOSSARY

apocrypha From the Greek word meaning 'hidden away'. These are texts of uncertain authenticity, or writings where the authorship is questioned. When used in this context, the term apocrypha refers to any collection of scriptural texts that falls outside the **canon**.

canon Those books considered to be authoritative as scripture by a particular religious tradition.

deuterocanonical From the Greek word meaning 'belonging to the second canon'. The term has been used since the sixteenth century in the Catholic churches and Eastern Christianity to describe certain books and passages of the Christian Old Testament that are not part of the Hebrew Bible.

synoptic Literally means 'seen together'. In this context it applies to the Gospels of Mark, Luke and Matthew, which share many common features.

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The Bible

The Christian Bible is a collection of writings that Christians believe is of divine and human origin. The Bible is accepted by Christians as authoritative for belief and practice. The Bible is also sometimes referred to as 'Scripture' and 'Holy Scripture'.

The Christian Bible is divided into the Hebrew or Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) and the Christian Scriptures (New Testament). The Hebrew Scriptures contain 39 books from the Jewish tradition, while the Christian Scriptures contain 27 early Christian works – the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the letters (epistles) of the early followers of Jesus and the final book, the Revelation of John (or the Apocalypse). The first three gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, are the **synoptic** gospels – they share many common features and concentrate on Jesus' public ministry. John's Gospel, written much later than the first three, is a series of long reflections on Jesus as the divine Son of God.

The Catholic and Orthodox churches accept a number of books not found in the Hebrew Bible – the **apocrypha** or **deuterocanonical** books. The Bible is sometimes called 'a closed **canon**' – no new writings can be added to it.

DID YOU KNOW?

The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible is faithful to the earliest and best manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (HB/OT) and the Greek New Testament (NT). It is one of the most commonly used versions, uses gender-inclusive language, and is employed by a wide range of biblical scholars (Evangelicals, Catholics, Mainline Protestants, Jews, secular historians, and others).

The importance of the Bible

All variants of Christianity view the Bible as the basic source of belief and practice. Some Christian churches, however, hold differing views on the relationship between the Bible and tradition, and the function of modern interpretation of the Bible.

The Bible is the central sacred text for Christians, especially because of its role in the everyday life of believers. The Bible is the basis for many major Christian beliefs; it is used in the liturgy of Christianity; it is the basis for prayer; and it provides the guidelines for the behaviour of Christians. The Bible is viewed as particularly important and sacred in the context of sacramental liturgy or worship, for it is here that Christians at the same time read from the Bible and celebrate the Eucharist, Mass or Lord's Supper. The Bible teaches them about the nature of God and the ministry and teachings of Jesus.

During the Middle Ages, the Bible was also revered as the 'sacred page' (Latin, *sacra pagina*) since it was the basis on which theology (words and teachings about God) was developed.

> Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.
>
> St Jerome (c. 340–420 CE), the most famous biblical scholar in the history of Christianity

The Bible and beliefs

While the beliefs underpinning sacred texts and writings are shared by all Christians, there are degrees of difference in the interpretation of these beliefs and how they are lived out in everyday life. Most Christian beliefs are introduced in the Bible:

- the Ten Commandments, which include 'Keep holy the sabbath day' (Ex 20; Deut 5)
- the centrality of baptism (Mt 3:13–17)
- Jesus is the Word of God made flesh (Rev 19:13)
- Christ will judge both the living and the dead (Rom 14:9)
- at Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out and the church was born (Acts 2:33–36).

The following sections will demonstrate how the Bible underpins the ethics and devotions of Christianity.

Courtesy of the University of St Andrews Library

FIGURE 3.3.1 An illustration of God surrounded by the symbols of the Four Evangelists, from an eighteenth-century Ethiopian psalter

RESPOND

Investigate the origins and meanings of the symbols used to represent the evangelists. What is a psalter?

The everyday life of believers

The Bible has a role in every aspect of the everyday life of believers. Various texts are used during the basic rituals and sacraments of the Christian life cycle, from baptism through initiation, the Eucharist, marriage, ordination, sickness and death. The same range of texts is also used in the liturgical cycle of each Christian Church, especially during the Eucharist or Last Supper.

In addition, Christian sacred texts and writings are also central to the thought, morality and ethics of believers. For example, they help believers to better understand how to make decisions and how to act in certain situations. Finally, sacred texts underpin Christian practices of prayer and meditation. Sacred and devotional texts are also used in domestic rituals, such as grace before meals, prayers at bedtime and the blessing of homes.

REVIEW

1. Describe the Christian Bible. Is it the same Bible for all Christians?
2. **Examine** extracts from the Bible in this section. Identify links between these extracts and key Christian beliefs; for example, scriptural texts about the divinity and humanity of Christ, and how they inform belief.

EXTENSION

1. Investigate the books that comprise the apocrypha for Catholic and Orthodox churches.
2. Construct a table to detail *all* the books of the Christian Bible. Include dates and authors where possible. Compare your chronologies with a partner. Which are the earliest books in both the Old and New Testaments?
3. The first translation of the Bible into the vernacular (the language of the people) was by John Wycliffe in the 1380s CE. Investigate other early translations and hold a class discussion on why the Catholic Church was reluctant to accept translations into the vernacular.
4. Explain the introduction of vernacular versions of the Bible introduced by Catholicism following Vatican II. Why was the change made? A link to a helpful website for these extension questions is provided.

Weblink
English Bible History

DID YOU KNOW?

The Bible continues to be the most translated book throughout the world. The Bible has been translated into many languages from the biblical languages of Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek. As of October 2019, the full Bible has been translated into 698 languages, and 3384 languages have access to at least some part of the Bible.

3.4 Core ethical teachings

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

▷ The application of Christian ethics to specific issues is addressed in Chapter 11, pages 232–7.

The concept of Christian **ethics** refers to the moral norms that are seen to be distinctive of Christianity. Moral norms are those guidelines that help the Christian to reflect on their moral life and on what actions they should take in certain situations. Christian ethical teachings are based on the belief that the human person is an image of God with intellect, free will and power of self-determination. Most Christian churches stress the importance of both faith and works (good moral actions), along with the central place of community, prayer and sacraments.

The ethical teachings of Christianity are based on a range of sources, including the Christian Bible. Some churches, such as the Anglican, Catholic and Orthodox, also take heed of statements from Church Councils and Conferences, and the Pope and Bishops of the Church. Christian ethics pay particular attention to key passages from the Scriptures, such as:

- the Decalogue or Ten Commandments (Ex 20:1–17 and Deut 5:6–21)
- the 'Golden Rule' (Mt 22:37–39)
- the Beatitudes (Mt 5–7)
- the nature of the Final Judgement (Mt 25)
- 'Love one another as I have loved you' (Jn 13:34)
- following 'the law of Christ' (Gal 6:2) as the basis of morality
- uniting our will to God's, our spirit united with the Holy Spirit (Rom 8:15–17).

The Ten Commandments (Decalogue)

The Ten Commandments, also known as the Decalogue ('10 words' from God), are the laws revealed by God to Moses (see Ex 20:1–17 and Deut 5:6–21). The first three commandments of the Decalogue refer to the worship of

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God, while the rest refer to obligations to one's neighbour and society. The fourth commandment, to keep holy the Sabbath day, is often seen as the bridge between the first three and the final six commandments.

The Decalogue is introduced by God's own words of freedom: 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me' (Ex 20:2). The Decalogue summed up the type of relationship that Israel should have with God.

Jesus and those to whom he was preaching were, of course, well versed in the commandments of the Decalogue.

For Christians, observance of the Decalogue is based on love, not fear. The commandments should be viewed as life principles to be internalised by the human heart – not avoided because of perceived punishment and damnation by God. The practice of virtue is understood as more important than the listing of sins.

In the final analysis, the Decalogue is like a set of 10 'boundary markers' beyond which are danger, alienation, unhappiness and death. The Decalogue is an important basis for structuring and living the Christian life. It calls Christians back to loving God alone among gods, and loving their neighbour as themselves.

The Beatitudes

In his most well-known teaching, the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1–12), Jesus says that certain people will be 'blessed with happiness'. Some of the Beatitudes (from the Latin for 'blessed') also appear in Luke's Sermon on the Plain (Lk 6:20–26). Beatitudes have their origins in the Jewish Scriptures, where they were understood as declarations of praise or congratulations for an exercise of virtue.

In Matthew's Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' main purpose is to instruct his hearers. He delivers nine Beatitudes that praise people for various virtues that could be cultivated; for example, poverty of spirit, meekness, and hunger for righteousness. The final two praise people for being persecuted and promise future rewards.

In Luke's version, Jesus blesses his listeners for conditions of real poverty, hunger and desolation by promising them future rewards from God. The four consoling Beatitudes are then balanced by four threatening woes.

Jesus' commandment of love

Three factors are important in order to understand Jesus' ethics:

- repentance as the basis of the ethical life
- the radical nature of God's ethical demand on humanity
- the centrality of the love commandment (Mt 7:12).

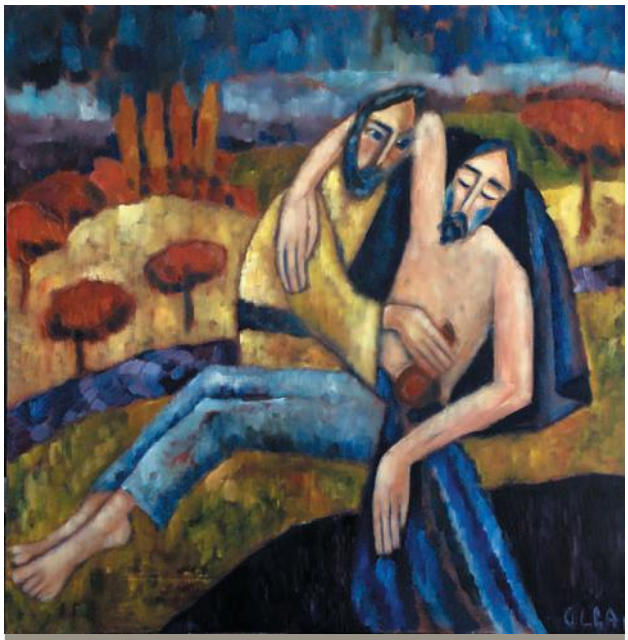
Further insight into Jesus' command to love is found in the first Letter of John:

> Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God … God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him …
>
> Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us …
>
> God is love, and those who abide in love abide in God, and God abides in them.
>
> 1 Jn 4:7–12, 16

Importance of the ethical teachings in the lives of Christians

Jesus preaches a God who is the source and model of love for Jesus and his disciples (Mt 5:48). Jesus proclaims a love that is to bind and distinguish the Christian community (1 Cor 12–13) and compared to which the individual will ultimately be judged (Mt 25:31–46).

In the final analysis, Jesus' command to love means that the Christian expresses their longing for God and constantly seeks the good of their neighbour. In the first three gospels in particular, 'love' is connected with the preaching of God's kingdom that arrives in the person of Jesus, and also with the greatest commandment (Mt 22:34–40). This type of love unavoidably involves suffering (Lk 6:22 ff.), and the Christian is asked to follow in Jesus' footsteps to the cross (Mt 10:3–7 ff.) and beyond to the Risen Christ's victory over sin and death.



www.olgabakhtina.com

FIGURE 3.4.1 *The Good Samaritan*, 2016, by Olga Bakhtina, in the collection of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. Oil on canvas, 100 × 100 cm. In the words of the artist, 'There is mercy in this beautiful world' (see Luke 10: 25–37).

RESPOND

Describe important Christian ethical teachings that could be associated with this image.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** the terms 'ethics' and 'Decalogue'.
2. **Outline** the principal ethical teachings that underpin two of the following: the Ten Commandments, the Beatitude discourse and Jesus' commandment to love.
3. **Describe** the importance of Christian ethics in the everyday life of believers, especially in relation to the Ten Commandments, the Beatitudes and Jesus' commandment to love.

EXTENSION

1. In pairs, **discuss** the statement: 'The Decalogue is like a set of 10 boundary markers.' Write a paragraph to **summarise** your discussion.
2. Imagine two worlds – one where there are no ethical guidelines and another where there are many moral laws.
   a. **Compare** and **contrast** these two worlds.
   b. Organise a class discussion on how someone would think and act if they were living in each of the worlds.

3.5 Personal devotion

GLOSSARY

devotion(s) Used in the singular, 'devotion' is the ready will to serve God. The plural term 'devotions' refers to religious observances and forms of **prayer** or **worship**.

meditation From the Greek word *melete*, meaning 'care, study, exercise', implying preparation and practice in this form of prayer. Meditation in the Christian tradition is understood as a spiritual practice that serves as preparation for 'pure prayer' or 'prayer of the heart'.

prayer The act, action or practice of praying to entities beyond the world, as in petition, thanksgiving, adoration or confession. In the Christian context this can include God, Jesus, his mother Mary and the **saints**. Prayer is also the form of words used for praying, such as the Lord's Prayer or Our Father.

saints People whose exceptional holiness of life is formally recognised by the church and who are entitled to veneration.

spirituality Christian spirituality describes the manner in which people live their lives in relationship with God, others and the world, based on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Spirituality is a way of life and more than a set of beliefs.

worship Often used interchangeably with 'liturgy', although 'worship' is the preferred term in the Reformed churches. Both refer in general to celebrations or gatherings of the faithful for prayer and sacraments.

DID YOU KNOW?

The English word 'prayer' literally means a 'petition' or 'request'. It derives from the Latin word *precari*, meaning 'to entreat or beg'. For Christians, prayer is the most important and fundamental form of personal address to God.

Personal **devotions** refer to those various types of religious observances, whether public or private, that are usually separate from congregational **worship**. Many Christians see their 'personal devotions' as fostering true faith and **spirituality**.

Alamy Stock Photo/dpa picture alliance

FIGURE 3.5.1 Christians form a circle of prayer near the Al Noor Mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand, 17 March 2019.

RESPOND

Identify the event that brought this group of Christians together in prayer.

Prayer as personal devotion

Prayer is an important way in which the Christian acknowledges the existence of a relationship between God and humanity and, more importantly, that God relates to each human being and all creation with ongoing compassion and goodness. In other words, a divine person interacts with human people, who in turn reach out to the One who sustains all creation. When Christians pray to the mother of Christ or to a **saint**, the one prayed to is viewed as linked with God and therefore having the power to answer prayers.

Prayer is encouraged in the Bible and there are many phrases from the scriptures used to describe prayer, including 'to call upon', 'intercede with', 'meditate upon', 'draw near to', and 'seek the face of [God]'. Each of these expressions is obviously linked to various situations that prompt people to pray personally to God.

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The personal prayer life of Jesus

Jesus is described as praying privately, silently or in solitude at various times during his ministry:

- after his baptism by John the Baptist (Lk 3:21–22)
- during the temptations and fasting in the desert (Lk 4:1–13)
- when seeking relief from his busy ministry (Lk 5:16)
- as a matter of course, early in the morning before dawn (Mk 1:35).

He often spent the whole night in prayer, particularly before important decisions (Mk 14:26–42); after key sermons (Jn 6:15); and in times of distress (Jn 12:27–28), including during the crucifixion (Mt 27:46).

Different types of personal prayer

There are many different prayer practices and styles that Christians use in their everyday lives. Practices such as vocal, mental and contemplative prayer, **meditation** and going on retreat focus the Christian for their involvement with the world. Each of these prayer practices strengthens and directs the Christian so that they can interact in a more Christ-like way with others in the world. The practices give them direction when they feel alone, a sense of community when they feel lost, and a sense of joy when they are successful in spreading 'the Good News'. Prayer infuses the life of the Christian because it is understood as an important way of experiencing 'life with the living God'.

AAP Image/David Mariuz

FIGURE 3.5.2 Christian prayer is often linked to silence, meditation and being in the presence of God.

Vocal prayer uses words that are recited, spoken or sung. It may draw on traditional prayers with a long history, such as the Lord's Prayer (Mt 6:9–13), the Hail Mary, liturgical texts and litanies. Some prayers follow a prescribed formula, such as the Catholic Rosary. Vocal prayer can also be original, spontaneous and based on one's personal experience, the Psalms, the gospels and other sources.

> O Lord, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth! … When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for?
>
> Ps 8:1–4

Mental prayer refers to a process of reflection that involves the mind, the imagination and the will. During mental prayer, the Christian asks for God's help to still the wandering mind and, eventually, to move the heart and convert it to the ways of God. Meditation is the most well-known form of mental prayer. Meditation is generally understood as the exercising of one's spiritual memory based on repetition of words and phrases, usually pronounced aloud, and accompanied by vocal and bodily rhythm. A good example is the Orthodox Christian Jesus Prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Often, icons are used as an aid to mental prayer.

Worksheet
Christianity and prayer

DID YOU KNOW?

The oldest Christian prayer is found in 1 Cor 16:22 (Rev 22:20) – '*Maranatha*' – Come, Lord [Jesus], Come.

REVIEW

1. What are the key features of Jesus' prayer life? Discuss possible ways in which his prayer life might influence the everyday practices of Christians. What does the Our Father teach about the nature of prayer?
2. **Describe** the main characteristics of vocal and mental prayer and examine their importance in the life of a Christian.

EXTENSION

1. Interview five Christians and ask them what their favourite prayers are. In class, collate the responses and make a 'Top of the Prayers' list.
2. Research the Angelus prayer. Using your knowledge of belief and features of Christian variants, why might only some Christian churches pray the Angelus daily?
3. Use the weblink provided and investigate why meditation is linked almost exclusively to Eastern practices.
4. Outline points for discussion in a class debate on the topic: 'Meditation should be an important part of Christian prayer practices.'

Weblink
The World Community for Christian Meditation

© Trevor Nickolls/AIARTS/Copyright Agency, 2021

FIGURE 3.5.3 ***Metamorphosis*** **by Trevor Nickolls (1949–2012), 91.5 × 91.5 cm, acrylic on Belgium linen, the winner of the 2013 Blake Prize for religious art.**

Nickolls was the great pioneer of urban Aboriginal art, creating the concept of Dreamtime to Machinetime to express the link between traditional indigenous and urban cultures. Metamorphosis represents that transition between life and death — from the physical realm to the spiritual realm … he is a *mimi* spirit butterfly. 'He leaves the world of pitched-roof houses and, accompanied by angelic flights of birds, goes home to a great nurturing mother.'

Joanna Mendelssohn in *The Conversation*, 21 October 2013

RESPOND

How does this work relate to the material in this chapter? You can read more about the Blake Prize and its interesting history at *The Conversation*.

Weblink
The Blake Prize

Online activity
Chapter 3 multiple-choice quiz

Conclusion

The Pew Research Center predicts the number of Christians will rise from almost 2.4 billion, or 31.1 per cent of the world's population, in 2020 to about 2.9 billion, or 31.4 per cent, in 2050. Four out of every 10 Christians will live in sub-Saharan Africa.

Beyond such global statistics, and perhaps due to its long and complex history, it is easy to forget that Christianity is based on a simple belief – that human beings exist in a state of alienation in this world, from God and their neighbour, and that this state has been redeemed through the life, death and resurrection of one person, Jesus of Nazareth. Therefore, Christianity has at its heart not entertainment of an idea but commitment to a person. Christians gain access to this person through a combination of historical understanding of Christianity, and by committing to its key features in their daily lives – principal beliefs, sacred texts and writings, core ethical teachings and personal devotion. Evangelical Christian David Platt describes very well the type of commitment required:

> Radical obedience to Christ is not easy … It's not comfort, not health, not wealth, and not prosperity in this world. Radical obedience to Christ risks losing all these things. But in the end, such risk finds its reward in Christ. And he is more than enough for us.
>
> David Platt, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*, 2010, p. 181

Photo by Michael Caloudis

FIGURE 3.5.4 **This 2019 billboard at St Peters Anglican Church is an example of the way some Australian churches provide a Christian reflection on current events.**

'The goal with the communication was to try and be engaging with a reflection upon the hope Jesus brings while doing it side by side with people who live in our neighbourhood. That is not an easy thing to do in our area, but certainly nothing quite unified the locals like their opposition to westconnex!'

The Rev. Andrew Bruce

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. Synthesise the main features of Christianity evident from all topics in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map.

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22 INDICATIVE HOURS

4

Hinduism

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **discuss** the early Indus valley civilisation
- **describe** the Vedic period and **outline** the early development of Hinduism to the time of the Upanishads
- **outline** Hinduism as *sanatana dharma*
- **describe** the main features of devotion to Vishnu and Shiva
- investigate the principal teachings of Hinduism
- **identify** the importance of the Vedas and the epics for Hinduism, and **examine** extracts from them that **demonstrate** the principal teachings of Hinduism
- **outline** the principal ethical teachings in Hinduism and **describe** their importance in the life of adherents
- **outline** *puja* as celebrated in the home.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Hindu terminology (p. 56)
- Hindu gods and goddesses (p. 61)
- Hindu sacred texts (p. 67)
- Hindu celebrations (p. 72)

Online activity

- Chapter 4 multiple-choice quiz (p. 73)

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Dr Jayant Bapat

A recitation ritual for Shiva at Mount Waverley High School, Victoria (see detail on page 61). Here the 1000 names of Shiva are being recited in unison. On the back wall is a *lingam*, a very common symbol of Shiva.

Most world religions are considered by believers and scholars alike to have been founded by someone, and they often seek to find the 'essence' of a particular religion in the teachings of its founder. But what about religions that have no person or figure who could be regarded as having performed a founding role? The best known example of this is Hinduism. Having no founder and many distinct forms, it has often been described not as a coherent religion in itself, but as a multiplicity of related religions.

Instead of trying to find an 'essence' of Hinduism, it is far more fruitful to regard the set of beliefs and practices covered by that name as forming a cultural 'process' that develops over time. Hinduism is the process that allows a remarkable variety of phenomena to be held together and to be recognised by Hindus as making up a particular cultural system, whatever name it may be given.

In many respects, Hinduism is almost an ethnic category – most Hindus live in South Asia, with the exception of some immigrant groups in other countries, and Hinduism, as a religion, attracts few converts. This does not mean that it has remained static throughout its history. South Asia has always been the home of many different ethnic and linguistic groups, all historically contributing to the very rich umbrella of ideas conveyed by the word 'Hinduism'. Because of the great variety of religious practices, held together by teachings and a ritual framework of devotion, this richness has been sustained. Devotional practices are the heart of practical Hinduism and can be easily modified to meet new technologies and new theological views. Hinduism has grown to such an extent that it has approximately 970 million followers today – mainly in India, but also in smaller numbers elsewhere in the world.

EXTENSION

Maintain a list where you **summarise** the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. A worksheet has been provided to assist you.

Worksheet
Hindu terminology

4.1 Origins

The early inhabitants of the Indus valley

GLOSSARY

deity (plural, **deities**) God or goddess. Hinduism is characterised by its multiplicity of deities believed to perform different roles for their worshippers.

Sanskrit The classical language of India, beginning with the ***Vedas*** and a huge body of later literature; regarded by Hindus throughout history as a sacred language.

Vedas 'Sacred knowledge, sacred texts' – the most ancient Indian scriptures, dated from approximately 1200–600 BCE. The *Vedas* are organised in four collections (*Samhita*, *Brahmana*, *Aranyaka* and *Upanishads*) and consist of hymns of praise, ritual/ceremonial manuals and mystical/philosophical treatises (*Upanishads*).

The Harappan culture

The earliest civilisation of ancient India flourished between about 3000 and 1500 BCE. It was centred on the Indus River in present-day Pakistan, but spread over most of west-central India, eastern Iran and Afghanistan. Called the Harappan culture, it was located around large cities – Harappa, Mohenjo-Daro and Kalibangan – the existence of which implies sophisticated social, economic and political structures.

We know very little about the religion of the Harappan civilisation. It is thought that it might have been focused around astrology, the worship of fertility gods and goddesses, ritual performances by groups of priests (suggesting the existence of a sacred cult) and the belief in purification by water. We do not know the names of any particular **deities**,

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FIGURE 4.1.1 Seal from the Harappan culture

nor details of any Harappan beliefs. Nevertheless, it is very likely that later Indian religion was in some way influenced by the intellectual culture of the Harappan civilisation, as it offers the first component of what later became Indian civilisation.

The emergence of the Aryans

Another component of Indian civilisation developed with the arrival of the people who are often called Aryans, people speaking Indo-European languages. They were not a distinctive race – the **Sanskrit** word *arya* really means 'noble'. The term *arya* occurs commonly in Sanskrit literature after the fourth century BCE, referring to those who followed the teachings of the *brahmins* (see next section) as being 'religiously cultivated', and as living in the heartland of brahmanical culture between the Ganga and Yamuna rivers.

People speaking Indo-European languages entered India in successive waves of immigration between about 3000 and 1200 BCE. It is often incorrectly thought that they invaded India, but it is likely they mingled with the remnants of the Harappan culture. The enduring image the texts give us of these people is one of small bands of nomads wandering the countryside in search of pasture for their cattle, horses and goats.

The Aryans brought with them the Sanskrit language, which rapidly became the language in which most religious texts were composed. Their great literary monuments were the ***Vedas***, of which the most famous is the *Rig Veda*, a collection of texts dating back to about 1200 BCE. It is mainly through these texts that we know about their culture.

FIGURE 4.1.2 Ancient India

RESPOND

Compare this map with a map of modern India. What differences can you see?

Vedic period

GLOSSARY

asceticism The act of performing bodily **austerities** designed to acquire magical power or purify the body.

atman Ultimate Reality as present within a human being – not a 'soul' or 'spirit'.

austerities Severe acts or practices requiring abstinence from, or deprivation of, something.

Brahman The name given to Ultimate Reality or Cosmic Self.

brahmin The male priestly class (*varna*).

karma(n) Originally, ritual action; later meaning all human actions. The law of *karma* refers to the belief that all human actions have consequences that affect not only one's present life but also future lives until ***moksha*** is achieved.

moksha Liberation or release from *samsara*; the end of rebirth for the human being. In later Hinduism *moksha* is described differently – for instance, the attainment of union with God or knowledge of one's identity with ***Brahman***.

pantheon All the gods of a particular religion, people or nation.

renouncers Those who ritually leave society in order to lead a life in the forest and perform yoga and bodily austerities. Renunciation includes giving up all material possessions and all social connections.

Vedic sacrifice A fire sacrifice in which offerings (food and other gifts) were made by priests (***brahmins***) to honour the gods, and hymns were chanted. Less elaborate sacrifices were offered in the home. The priestly sacrificial ritual became very complex and was seen as a sacred creative power in its own right, which guaranteed the continuity of the material universe – if the ritual was performed correctly by *brahmins*, who knew all the rules of the sacrifice, results would occur automatically. Over time, this power was interpreted as residing within the human being (an 'internal' sacrifice or meditation on sacred knowledge), and the emphasis shifted from material to spiritual wellbeing.

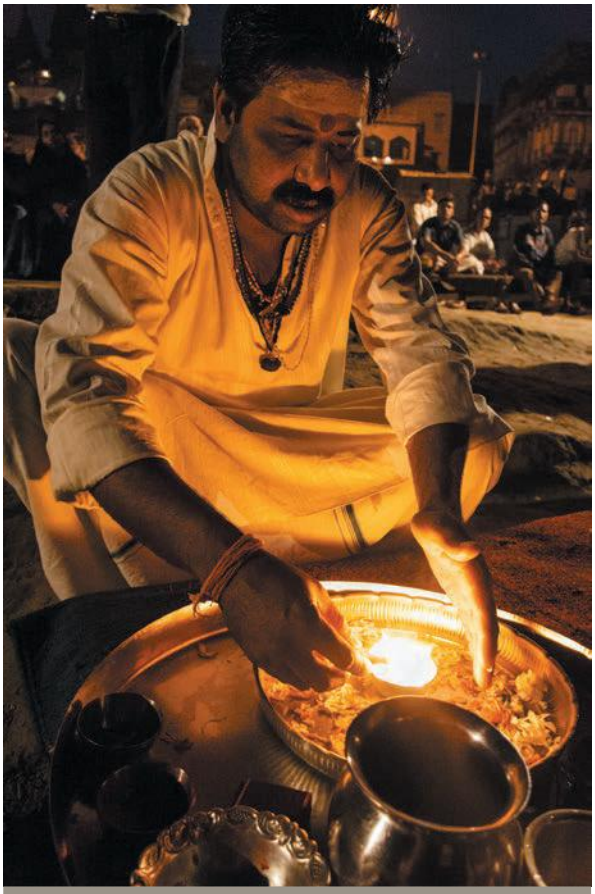
Most scholars date Vedic literature from about 1200 to 100 BCE, with many texts being composed during these centuries. The Vedas depict a **pantheon** of gods and associated myths and theologies that shaped all later Hindu mythology. They also extensively describe the **Vedic sacrifice**, which involved the ritual slaughter and cooking of cattle, sheep and goats for the purpose of maintaining the fertility of the earth and for the material wellbeing of the sacrificer. Finally, the image of the ancient Indian warrior-chieftain looking after his cattle, but also engaging in cattle rustling to increase his herd, became an important symbol of manhood in Vedic literature until at least the beginning of the Common Era.

FIGURE 4.1.3 This Sanskrit verse is taken from *Rig Veda* 3, 62:10, and can be translated as follows: 'We meditate on the supreme splendour of the god, Savitr: May it stimulate our thoughts.'

The later parts of Vedic literature, named *Brahmanas* and *Upanishads*, reflect clear developments in religion. In the *Brahmanas*, the performance of the sacrifice became the main element of religious life, and theorising about the sacrifice became the principal form of theological activity. As a ritual, the sacrifice itself was regarded as a mechanically performed set of acts and utterances in which men and gods alike were equal participants. Its performance was a highly technical, complex and quite spectacular affair, requiring up to 18 ***brahmins*** who were trained ritual specialists.

Correct performance of the ritual was believed to be enough to generate power that could rejuvenate the fertility of the earth, confer material goods upon its performer in the future, and give rebirth in heaven. In the final analysis, the ritual was more powerful than the gods.

However, such was the expense of its performance – paying for the animals to be killed, the wages for the priests and the lost production during the ritual performance – that only the wealthy could afford to have these sacrifices staged. Smaller household sacrifices, which could be performed by the male head of the household and his wife, became increasingly popular and formed a central part of the religious life of the people, as they still do today. The foundation of the ritual life of the Hindus was the household ritual, rather than the large public sacrifices, which virtually disappeared around the beginning of the Common Era.



Alamy Stock Photo/Luis Dafos

FIGURE 4.1.4 A Hindu priest performing a fire sacrifice in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, India

▷ Concepts and terms introduced in this section are dealt with in more detail on pages 62–6.

The final section of Vedic literature is called the *Upanishads*, the 18 earliest of which were composed between 600 BCE and 100 CE and are regarded as the most important, doctrinally speaking. The period

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reflected in this set of texts marked the second great flowering of Indian city culture. The nomadic lifestyle of the Vedic tribes was over. Under the influence of new technologies, enabling the clearing of the jungle, and new political and economic systems, large towns with up to 20 000 people had sprung up and a lively mercantile trade had begun.

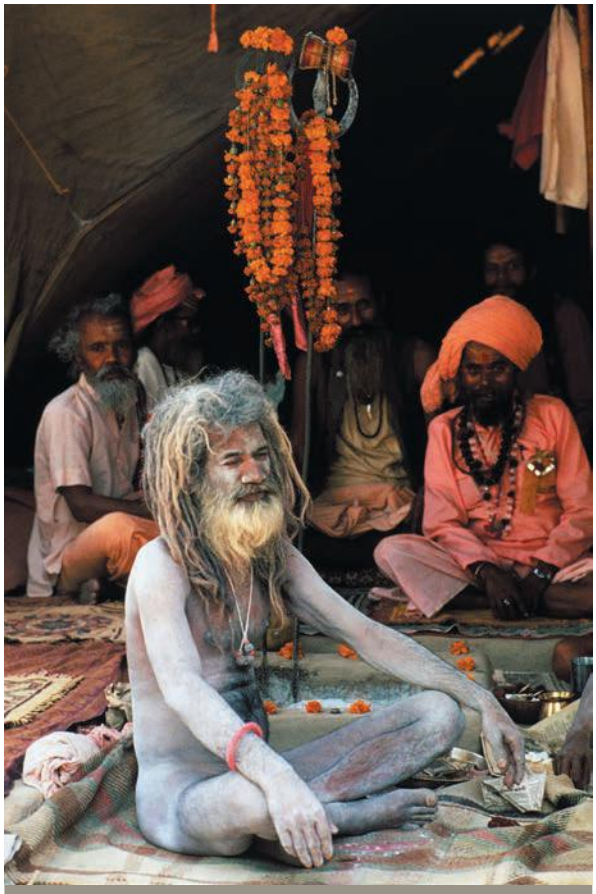
These changes were accompanied by the emergence of an introverted world view that led to permanent abandonment of the socioeconomic world, and the performance of meditational exercises and bodily **austerities** in the solitude of the forest. Many saw this new and quite distinct lifestyle as being strongly opposed to the ritual world view, which emphasised family ties, material possessions, rebirth in heaven and performance of the sacrifice for specific material ends.

A new stream of thinkers arose who rejected the idea that power resided in the sacrifice. Instead, they looked inwards, asserting the existence of an eternal Self (***atman***) within each person, transcending the impermanent and incessantly moving mind and body. They argued that this Self was completely identical to a greater Self (***Brahman***), which was the Ultimate Reality of the whole cosmos.

The person – regarded as consisting of *atman*, mind and body – was reborn constantly as a result of a residual power created by the performance of actions, from which the good or bad effects that arose had to be lived out in later lives. This power was called ***karma*** and has become a permanent feature in all Indian religions. Through a combination of exhausting one's *karma* and meditation on the *atman*, it was believed that rebirths would cease and a person would enter some kind of undefined blissful state called ***moksha***.

Those who taught meditation on *atman-Brahman* held a strongly pessimistic view about the social and material world, considering it to be a place quite unsuitable for achieving any kind of lasting happiness. Accordingly, they left the social world and went into the forest to lead a contemplative life of **asceticism**. This is often called 'renouncing the social world' and those who did were called **renouncers**. The isolation they craved was symbolic as well as actual, since it implied the isolation of the self from both body and mind and, by means of meditation, the isolation of the mind from the external world.

Since the sixth century BCE, the various ascetic movements, both within Hinduism and outside of it in Buddhism, have become a tremendously influential force in the religious and cultural life of India.



Alamy Stock Photo/Universal Images Group North America LLC / DeAgostini

FIGURE 4.1.5 A Hindu ascetic in meditation, Rajasthan, northern India

REVIEW

1. Clarify what is known about Harappan culture.
2. Recall who the Aryans were and explain their impact on the development of Hinduism.
3. Explain the characteristics of Vedic literature.
4. In one paragraph, describe the main differences between Vedic religion based on the sacrifice and the changed religious view found in the *Upanishads*.
5. In point form, **outline** the early development of ancient Indian religion up to the time of the *Upanishads*.

EXTENSION

1. With a partner, propose two reasons why the changes in Indian society during the late Vedic period gave rise to a different direction in religious practices. Then discuss your ideas with the class.
2. Type 'Harappan culture' into an Internet search engine. Investigate two sites from the results list and summarise the information you find helpful and interesting in a brief report.

Hinduism as the cultivation of *dharma*

GLOSSARY

dharma The law(s) of the cosmos and also the moral and religious duties, laws and customs that are in harmony with the natural law. *Sadharana dharma* is the general code of Hindu ethics.

varna Class into which a person is born. There were four classes in ancient Indian society (not to be confused with 'caste').

The key concept for understanding the Hindu world view is ***dharma***. *Dharma* is a very complex idea, with many meanings. It reflects both how the world is and how it ought to be, as well as how religious practice fits in with the whole cosmos. At the highest and most abstract level, it is *sanatana dharma* – the unchanging and everlasting law of order in the universe with which all things and all people should be in harmony.

> *Dharma* is the foundation of the whole universe. In this world people go to a person who is best versed in *dharma* for guidance. By means of *dharma* one drives away evil. Upon *dharma* everything is founded. Therefore, *dharma* is called the highest good.
>
> *Taittiriya Aranyaka*, 10:79

Harmony and balance are achieved by means of ordering human groups in different levels (or classes), each one having obligations and privileges. The four ***varnas*** are the most ancient social divisions, at least in an ideal sense. They are:

- *brahmin* – priest/teacher
- *kshatriya* – warrior/king
- *vaishya* – farmer/merchant
- *shudra* – servant to the other three classes.

A fundamental principle resulting from the application of *dharma* to society as a whole is that of hierarchy. As a principle of social organisation, this arrangement rests on the idea of the interdependence of all groups leading to good order in society, with different groups understood to have different responsibilities.

Dharma also refers to the laws and duties by which human beings ensure harmony with *sanatana dharma* (see pages 62–6).

REVIEW

1. With a partner, **discuss** the statement: '*Dharma* is the way the world works.' **Assess** whether this is too simple a definition of *dharma*.
2. **Outline** the meaning of *sanatana dharma*.
3. **Explain** how a social hierarchy can achieve 'harmony and balance'.

EXTENSION

Propose some reasons for the hierarchical order of the four *varnas*. **Assess** the extent to which the order reflects a society very different from that of present-day India.

Devotion to Vishnu and Shiva

GLOSSARY

avatara The earthly manifestation of a god or goddess taken with the specific intention of restoring *dharma* when the world is in a state of decline.

bhakti Loving devotion to a personal god or goddess and sharing in the loving grace of the divine person.

guru A religious teacher, often regarded as an enlightened being; sometimes the central object of worship in a cult.

yogin A person who engages in intensive meditational and ritual practice for long periods of time in caves or other isolated sites.

So far, the way of the ritual (associated with early Vedic literature) and the way of the renouncer (associated with the *Upanishads*) have been identified as two fundamental elements of what came to be called Hinduism. However, Hinduism did not yet exist as a religious or a cultural body; one more element was needed. This element is called ***bhakti***, best translated as 'devotion.' It suggests the attitude of devotion to a deity or **guru**, as well as the means by which the devotion is expressed. Its initial appearances in literature are in the two Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, composed between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

Large-scale devotional movements arose centred on the worship of the two great gods Shiva (who destroys the universe) and Vishnu (who preserves the universe), the goddess (*devi*) under various names, and the gods Ganesha and Surya. Other deities, such as Krishna and Skanda, who fall within the family of Vishnu and Shiva, were also worshipped, as were prominent sages (Lakulisha, Caitanya and Shankara) who claimed they were ***avataras*** of gods (see Figure 4.1.6).

Vishnu and Shiva became especially important. By the time the Sanskrit epics appeared, both gods had taken over some of the names and roles of other gods.

In the *Svetashvatara Upanishad*, probably composed around the beginning of the Common Era, Shiva (under the name Rudra) is worshipped as a deity in a devotional manner. Many myths had developed around him that identified him as both ascetic and householder, as a kind of divine nonconformist and cosmic destroyer.

Vishnu became famous through his 10 *avataras*. He is more prominent than Shiva in the two epics, because his two most famous *avataras*, Krishna and Rama, are the heroes of the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* respectively. Their role is to restore *dharma* in the world when

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observance of it has drastically declined, and they became worshipped as independent deities, but their association with Vishnu has never been lost.

Alamy Stock Photo/ B Christopher

FIGURE 4.1.6 A statue of Lord Vishnu with *avataras*, Dhaka district, Bangladesh, from the eleventh century

From the fourth century CE onwards, there was a tremendous increase in temple building and the construction of images of deities. Sacred places or *tirthas* – usually located near water – also became popular through being associated with one or more of the great gods. Texts were composed to record the mythology surrounding the founding of these places and the results to be gained from performing rituals there.

The rapid expansion of devotionalism was associated with the emergence of a whole new literary genre called *Purana* (literally 'ancient tales'). Composed in Sanskrit, these texts are filled with myths about the Hindu gods mentioned above, devotional rituals and rules giving guidance in everyday behaviour. Such texts continue to be composed and recited up to the present day. Vishnu and Shiva are especially important in these texts, and each god has at least one *Purana* named after them, in which their mythology and theology are extensively developed.

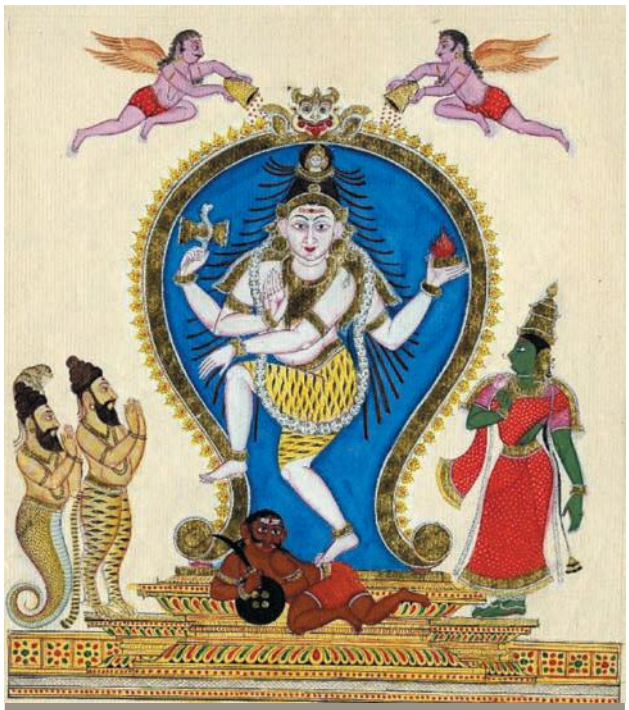

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FIGURE 4.1.7 Shiva dances the *ananda tandava*, the eternal dance of creation and destruction. Paint on paper, c. 1820.

Shiva has become very important as a local deity as well as a universal one. He is represented in many ways, including:

- as a ***yogin***, sitting and meditating, often with the River Ganges flowing through his hair
- as a family man, with his wife, Parvati, and two sons, Ganesha and Skanda
- as Nataraja, 'Lord of the Dance'
- as a teacher, seated on a throne surrounded by sages who are receiving his instruction
- as Ardhanarishvara, with one half of the body as male and the other half as female. This symbolises the Hindu belief that the sacred ultimate power of the universe is both feminine and masculine.

Worksheet
Hindu gods and goddesses

Dr Jayant Bapat

FIGURE 4.1.8 Detail of a recitation ritual being performed for Shiva. The food offerings – here, symbolic offerings to Shiva – are standard to all *pujas* (see page 72).

REVIEW

1. What is *bhakti*?
2. In your own words, **define** *avataras*.
3. **Recall** the names of the two main Hindu gods and **clarify** their roles.
4. **Explain** the importance of devotionalism in the development and spread of Hinduism.

EXTENSION

1. **Investigate** and **describe** the main features of devotion to Vishnu and Shiva.
2. Conduct online research to locate two different representations of Shiva. Then **identify** what attributes of Shiva each depicts.

4.2 Principal teachings

In the long history of Hinduism, there has never been universal doctrinal orthodoxy – that is, a 'creed' or set of beliefs established by an elite group to which all 'believers' must give assent. Instead, Hindus operate on a set of assumptions about the world, which all believers tend to share but which can be (and are) questioned or denied without loss of religious identity. Only total rejection of the validity of the *Vedas* would technically merit exclusion. A Hindu's framework for religious belief and practice is set by the particular interpretation of shared insights within the group into which they are born. Every village and town has unique aspects of religious practice as well as some that are more widely shared. There is endless variety, and some very large differences occur between groups.

Atman and *Brahman*, gods and goddesses

GLOSSARY

samsara A name for existence seen as bondage to a set of ongoing rebirths caused by karmic action.

Atman – 'Ultimate Reality' or 'Inner Self'

Underlying all Hindu belief is a philosophy that a person consists of a physical body, a mind and the *atman* – an Inner Self that exists beyond these. While the first two disappear at death, the *atman* potentially flows through from life to life. The *atman* is the essence of life – the Ultimate Reality as present within a human being.

Time and the nature of the material world

In general, Hindus will assume there is no absolute beginning and end, either to their own lives or to the existence of the world or, indeed, of the cosmos. They also assume that cycles of birth, death and rebirth affect all aspects of existence. This world view took centuries to evolve and people speculated about questions such as:

- What is Ultimate Reality?
- What is the nature of the 'divine' and the nature of human beings and human consciousness?
- What causes and maintains the processes of the creation and destruction of the material world?

Creation – one question, many answers

Hindu scriptures tell many different stories in answer to these questions. The most important scriptures (*shruti* – that which is heard) are traditionally thought to be inspired by the religious experience of 'seers' – those who are able to see, hear or intuit understandings of the 'real' as a result of their spiritual power.

There are different ideas about how creation occurred: as a result of either a battle or sexual union between the gods, through ascetic practices by the gods, or the mysterious action of a divine embryo. In the *Rig Veda*, it was thought that a divine sacrifice of the first or primeval 'man' might have been the source of all life. But in the end, creation is understood as the greatest and most sacred mystery that neither human beings nor even the gods understand.

> Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen?
>
> Whence this creation has arisen – perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps he does not know.
>
> Creation Hymn from the *Rig Veda*, 10:129, in W. O'Flaherty (trans. and annotat.), *The Rig Veda: An Anthology*, 1981

In later scriptures (*smrti*), especially the *Mahabharata* and the *Puranas*, the idea of *Brahman* as a creator god arose, together with the idea that time goes in cycles, from age to age. In each cycle, the cosmos gradually becomes less perfect and is finally destroyed; then, after a long period of absolute quiet, it is recreated into a golden age, only to begin deteriorating again over very long periods (*yugas*), until yet another cycle of cosmic destruction, inactivity and re-creation begins.

Hindus as individuals see themselves as having a very long history of birth, death and rebirth through the long cycles of creation and destruction in a process called ***samsara***. A human being is 'chained' or 'bound' in *samsara* unless they seriously seek total liberation (*moksha*) from it by religious practice. In the intervening time, what is sought and hoped for is a better rebirth in a higher caste or in the 'world of the gods' (heaven). One text describes it thus:

> This entire world is bound to craving and rolls around like a wheel forever so long as there exists the notion 'there is' and 'there is not'. Just as lotus fibre is found everywhere within a lotus stalk, so too fibre which is craving, and has neither beginning nor end, is always found in the body. And just as a weaver sews a thread into a garment, so one is bound to the thread of *samsara* by the needle of craving.
>
> *Mahabharata*, 12, 210:32–34

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FIGURE 4.2.1 The great gods Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma give an interview in heaven, while a record of it is being prepared. From an 1836 manuscript in Assamese script.

Brahman

Brahman is the Ultimate Reality behind all appearances. It is neutral in gender and cannot be worshipped directly, nor described except in abstract terms such as 'Bliss', 'Awareness' or 'Consciousness', and 'Being'.

Some Hindu theologians and philosophers prefer not to describe *Brahman* at all. One view is that everything other than *Brahman* has only a limited reality because it possesses no permanence. *Maya* is the veiling power that hides Ultimate Reality from us and leads us to believe that the world we see is permanent.

One is bound to the world because of self-interest, attachment and desire. Liberation from this bondage to the cycle of birth, death and rebirth can only be achieved by linking oneself with *Brahman* – the Ultimate Reality – or to a god.

Just as religious intuitions about creation changed over the centuries (as they have in all cultures), ideas about the gods/God-consciousness/Ultimate Reality have changed over time. There were times when particular ideas became very powerful, while others disappeared.

The *brahmin* priesthood recorded the texts and exercised a good deal of theological power among the literate minority from very early times. However, in the later texts, especially the *Puranas*, the understanding of the divine was influenced by the beliefs of non-*brahmins*.

The gods (*devas*) and goddesses (*devis*)

All gods and goddesses are manifestations of *Brahman*, but for a typical Hindu the god or goddess is much more important than the largely abstract *Brahman*. A god or goddess can be described in a personal way; for example, he or she will have a number of special names, may be closely connected with other gods or goddesses, may be a saviour and destroyer of evil, and may intervene in human affairs.

There is debate about whether the major gods are on the same level of 'reality' as *Brahman* or on a lower level, but all points of view are allowed to flourish. Most Hindus spend much of their life in praise and worship of several gods and goddesses.

Some of the goddesses are fiercely independent and powerful, such as Kali; others are controlled and peaceful, such as Parvati. They are thought to be the manifestation of the active power of the gods (*shakti*) and are also associated with the material world, the reality of matter (*prakriti*) and the senses.

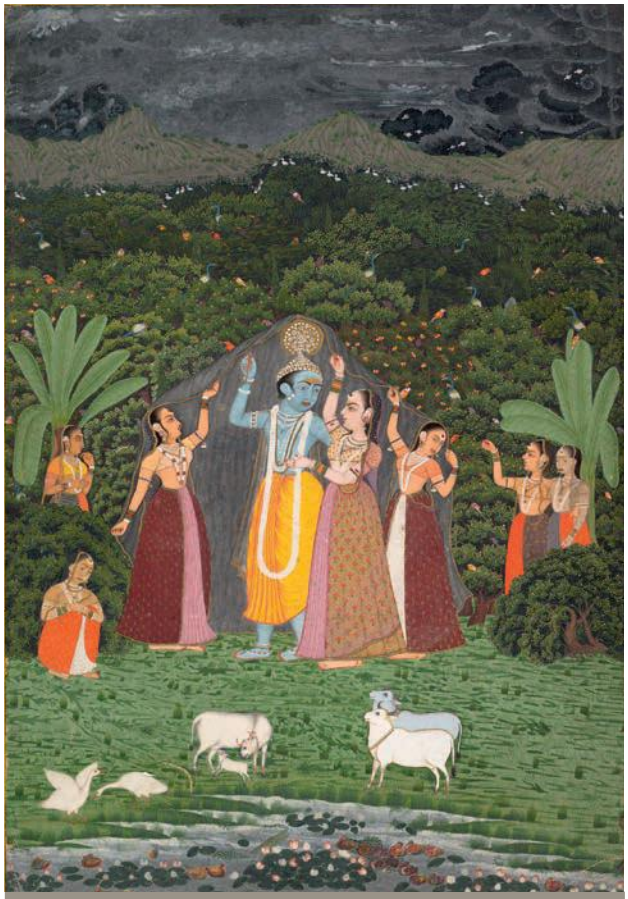

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FIGURE 4.2.2 Krishna and the *gopis* (cow-herdesses) take shelter from the rain, Jaipur, Rajasthan, 1760. The play of Krishna and the *gopis* is regarded as an image of the soul's relationship with God. The love of Krishna and Radha (pictured on the right), his favourite *gopi*, is celebrated in Sanskrit and Bengali love poetry.

The cosmos as the body of god

One of the most influential interpretations of the relationship between the divine and the world of matter is that the world is the divine body. In this interpretation, many natural features of the landscape, such as rivers, mountains and rocks, together with animals and human beings, are seen as concrete expressions of the divine. For instance, the River Ganges is a goddess, as well as being the Milky Way, which descended to earth as a great body of water to cool the heat of Shiva's bodily austerities.

For Hindus, the whole world is sacred, but at a number of different levels. Saintly human beings are thought of as incarnations of god, but not as total a divine presence as the god or goddess in complete divinity.

Despite the many names, texts and local oral traditions that describe what one Vedic hymn calls the '330 million gods', there is an important assumption that all the gods and goddesses are one. The multitudinous appearances are only limited expressions of the infinite and unsayable nature of *Brahman*, yet the deities are approached by their worshippers with different expectations of what they will do.

Alamy Stock Photo/IndiaPicture

FIGURE 4.2.3 The goddess Durga. Durga represents the power of the Supreme Being that preserves moral order and righteousness in the world. The Sanskrit word *durga* means a fort or a place that is protected and thus difficult to reach.

Newspix/Chris Reichl

FIGURE 4.2.4 An image of the goddess Durga in the Sri Durga Temple at Rockbank, near Melbourne

REVIEW

1. In your own words, define *atman* and *Brahman*.
2. Identify the most important gods and goddesses in Hinduism and write a sentence about each.
3. Explain how Hindus can worship many different gods while still believing they are just manifestations of the one god.

EXTENSION

What can you discover about some of the many *devas* and *devis* of Hinduism? Use the weblinks provided as a good starting point. Investigate six of the *devas* and *devis* and construct your findings in graphic form.

Weblinks
10 important Hindu gods

Hindu gods and goddesses

Dharma, *karma* and *moksha*

Dharma – human beings and their destiny

GLOSSARY

jati (literally 'births') The term used to denote communities and sub-communities in India based on birth lineages.

sva dharma (own *dharma*) This is the framework of duties and obligations in which each person works out their religious/life practice.

Dharma is not a precise doctrine to believe in, but a complex set of teachings to be understood and practised from the beginning to the end of one's life. In this context,

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it is similar to the Western concept of religious practice and its accompanying belief – that is, the right way of living in every sense.

> It is neither morality, nor the good, the right, justice, nor law. It is the socio-cosmic order which can be said to be good simply because it is necessary for the maintenance of the successful existence of everything constituted by the 'three worlds' – (earth, sky and intermediate space …). It is the good simply in that it assures the continuity of the empirical world.
>
> M. Biardeau, *L'Hindouisme: Anthropologie d'une Civilisation*, 1981, p. 49

Autonomy and equality, important values in Western societies, are thought to lead to chaos and anarchy, the very opposite of *dharma*. The central value is the good of the whole society and the harmony of the cosmos – not individual wishes and ambitions – and this profoundly influences ethical beliefs. The essence of *dharma* is the necessity of upholding and harmonising with the order of the world, which is continually threatened by the possibility of disorder and disturbance. It is a world-affirming ideal, and anyone who acts contrary to *dharma*, even in trivial ways, is seen as threatening the survival of all.

Purity and pollution

Closely connected with order and harmony is the concept of 'purity' and its opposite, 'pollution'. Purity is assumed to be perfect permanent order in its individual and social dimensions. To attain perfection in this way is, however, impossible. All temporary order is continually under threat, both by our ordinary bodily condition (which is messy, subject to ageing and decay, and virtually never perfect) and by our ignorance and selfishness. Pollution as disorder (and by implication, danger) is closely connected with all bodily fluids and products when they break the boundary of the body. Blood outside the body, such as during menstruation and childbirth, is seen as particularly polluting.

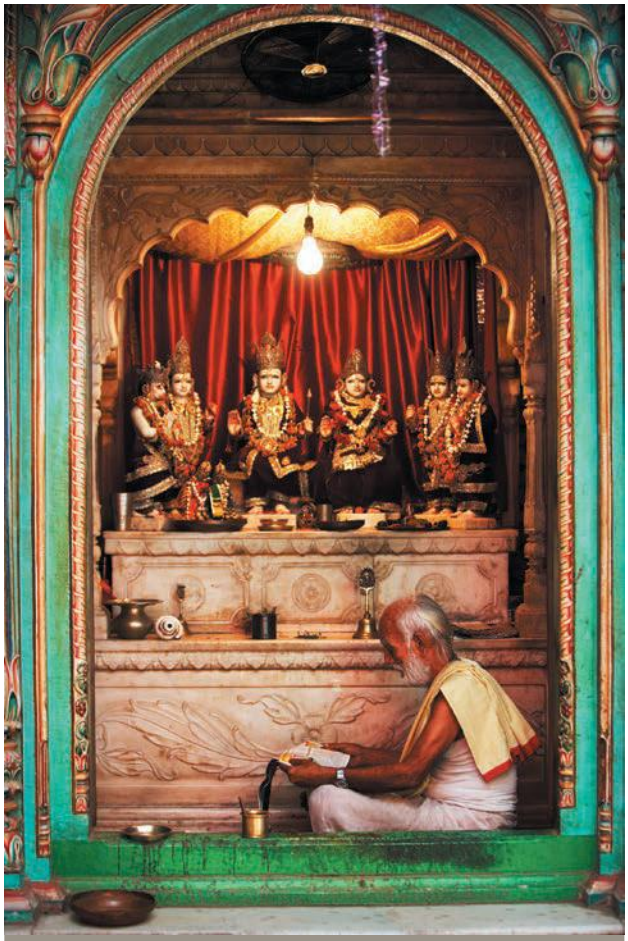
The meaning of pollution is not 'dirty' or 'unhygienic', but more accurately 'disturbingly powerful', with the potential to destabilise order and harmony. The symbolism of breaking boundaries is important. Hindus understand the sacred not only as 'order', but also as 'disorder' – the kind of sacred that is awesome and dangerous and threatens to be out of control.

Class and caste

The application of *dharma* to Hindu society rests on the principle of hierarchy, where different groups within that hierarchy are understood to have different responsibilities. Each family has a place in the hierarchy of birth (***jati***) and in the simpler hierarchy of class (*varna*) (see page 70). Each person also has a particular place in the hierarchy of the family. *Jati* is a separate hierarchy that came later, and refers to caste. The system of caste matches the system of class (*varna*) at the top and the bottom (*brahmins* and *shudras*), but it is very difficult to match caste with class in between these two extremes. Today there are more than 2000 castes.

A Hindu's position in the caste system is decided at birth, and is connected with occupation. Different occupations are either more or less polluting – those who work with blood and death (slaughtering animals, washing soiled clothes) are lowest in the caste hierarchy; those who do not deal with such matters but deal mainly with the sacred as order (the priestly castes), whose messes are cleaned up for them by others, have the responsibility to maintain religious 'purity', and are highest on the caste scale.

What is unique about Hinduism is that a Hindu is born into and remains in a particular caste – and theoretically a class – for their whole life, and this is seen as an individual's destiny, directly connected with the *karma* of previous lives. ***Sva dharma*** is the particular *dharma* that is appropriate to one's position in the caste hierarchy. It is not something that an individual decides themselves.



Alamy Stock Photo/Seth K. Hughes

FIGURE 4.2.5 A man preparing offerings of flowers and water for the gods of his altar in Varanasi, India

Karma – actions have consequences

Another major Hindu teaching is that all human actions (karma) have consequences that not only affect oneself and others in the immediate sense, but that also shape the spiritual and even the material future of a person. Good actions lead to good results and more good actions – good *karma* or making merit (*punya*) is the way to fulfil the obligations of *dharma* and will lead to a better rebirth. This means a birth in which it is easier to follow spiritual goals in a higher caste position or to renounce material possessions and caste altogether, in the desire to devote one's life to seeking God-consciousness and attaining

liberation from *samsara*. Action, or *karma*, against *dharma* is considered a demerit (*papa*), leading to rebirth in one of many hells.

To a certain extent, Hindus explain their current situation as the result of the quality of their actions (*karma*) and commitment to *dharma* in a previous life. Some actions are assumed to be so evil or so meritorious that not only is the doer's life affected, but possibly also that of whole families and districts, even through generations.

Moksha or *mukti* – ways of liberation and the divine

GLOSSARY

ashrama A stage of life, of which there are four, mainly for *brahmins*: the period of being a young student; the period of marriage and running a household; the period of partial withdrawal in middle age for more intense religious practice; the final period of complete withdrawal from social life and the performance of ascetic practices.

moksha (or *mukti*) The 'release' from the cycle of *samsara*.

yoga 'Joining' or 'yoking' of mind and body to achieve perfect unity or wholeness; a spiritual and bodily discipline.

Most Hindus prefer to worship a personal god or goddess (or more than one), ideally with an attitude of love and surrender (*bhakti*), and to lead an ordinary social life in which the ideal goal is to avoid self-interest and do all 'for the love of god' (the way of *karma* or action). The *Bhagavad Gita* (see pages 68–9) recommends *bhakti* above all.

Most people hope only for a better rebirth – the attaining of ***moksha***, although promised by Krishna in the *Gita* to all who are devoted to Him, is still considered very difficult without more committed renunciation than is possible in ordinary social life. There are three traditionally accepted ways of liberation.

Ways of liberation

Jnana yoga – the way of knowledge

'Knowing *Brahman*' means 'knowing one's Inner Self', knowing that at the deepest level, the *atman* (the real self) is *Brahman*. This requires total abandonment of the sense of individual 'self' (understood as ego, mind and body) and the practice of ***yoga***. In this framework, the great flaw of the human race is its ignorance of Self and *Brahman*, not its sinfulness or exile from Heaven and god.

Bhakti yoga – the way of devotion

A renouncer may also opt for emotional *bhakti* devotion to a particular god or goddess. The goal is to become physically and spiritually close to the god or goddess through divine grace. Most Hindus follow a *bhakti* path without total renunciation, especially when linked with the 'way of action'.

Karma yoga – the way of action

The person who follows *karma yoga* opts to stay active in the ordinary world but renounces all attachment to their own intentions and actions. The goal of this path is not to wish for reward for one's behaviour, nor to let it be shaped by fear of social and personal consequences. All self-interest is put aside. Even building up a store of *punya* or merit is a form of self-interest. Within the framework of *bhakti* and *karma yoga*, the main flaw in human beings is our attachment to ourselves, our desires and our actions.

▷ The *bhakti* movement is a significant idea considered in Chapter 12, pages 249–50.

The perfect practice of each of the *yogas* requires a highly committed religious discipline, whether 'within' the world or renouncing it. A better rebirth is considered a more realistic goal than final liberation. One of the great themes of Hinduism is the tension between love of the world and all the good things in it and the accompanying wish to be reborn on the one hand, and, on the other hand, the knowledge that absolute freedom in the divine can only be achieved by renouncing that self-interested love.

One way of balancing these two goals is to set aside a part of life for renunciation. It is an ideal for the males in the highest *varnas* (classes) to see their lives in four stages or ***ashramas***. In this way, a person can fulfil the *dharma* of their birth, contributing to the enrichment of the order of the world, and also renounce their attachment to it in preparation for leaving it behind forever.

REVIEW

1. **Investigate** the connection between *dharma* and *karma*. Then in your own words, write a paragraph to explain each concept.
2. Clarify how purity and pollution are connected with 'order and harmony'.
3. Outline what Hindus understand by class (varna).
4. Explain the principle behind the caste system.
5. Distinguish the difference between 'caste' and 'class' in Hindu society.
6. Explain the concept of *moksha* and why it is considered to be very difficult to attain.
7. **Outline** the importance of *moksha* for a Hindu devotee.

EXTENSION

1. With a partner, discuss whether *karma* makes sense in terms of Western ideas about birth and status. Justify your responses.
2. Imagine you are a Hindu devotee of Krishna. How difficult would it be to take up a lifestyle of total renunciation? Is *karma yoga* an easier option for most people?
3. 'A better rebirth is considered a more realistic goal than final liberation.' Examine this statement from the point of view of a Hindu 'living in the world'.

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4.3 Sacred texts and writings

GLOSSARY

epic A text, usually very long, that depicts a total view of creation and society and explores the deepest concerns of humans.

orality The remembered and spoken tradition, as opposed to literality – the written tradition.

Hinduism is taught through tens of thousands of texts composed in many languages and covering different genres. All Hindus have access to some of these texts, even just a few hymns of praise to a god and a few short tales involving heroes and the exploits of gods, or folktales telling how low-caste tricksters and merchants succeed in outsmarting high-caste figures.

Orality has always been the dominant way of transmitting knowledge in Indian culture. By far the majority of recitations have been of 'fluid' texts, where the basic storyline remains the same, but with some variation in detail being added by the reciter. Professional reciters still wander around India, telling stories from the two great Sanskrit **epics** as well as many others derived from collections of myths and legends originally found in vernacular (local) languages. In most cases, these texts are accompanied by long oral commentaries in the vernacular language. These are among the principal means of religious instruction.

In addition, most Hindus will know a few verses in Sanskrit by heart for use in rituals, as well as hymns sung in devotional performances of praise to their chosen deities. Most Hindus approach the great Hindu classics through translations and summaries in vernacular languages. Sanskrit may still have a higher status than vernacular languages, but it remains a mystery for most Hindus.

Worksheet
Hindu sacred texts

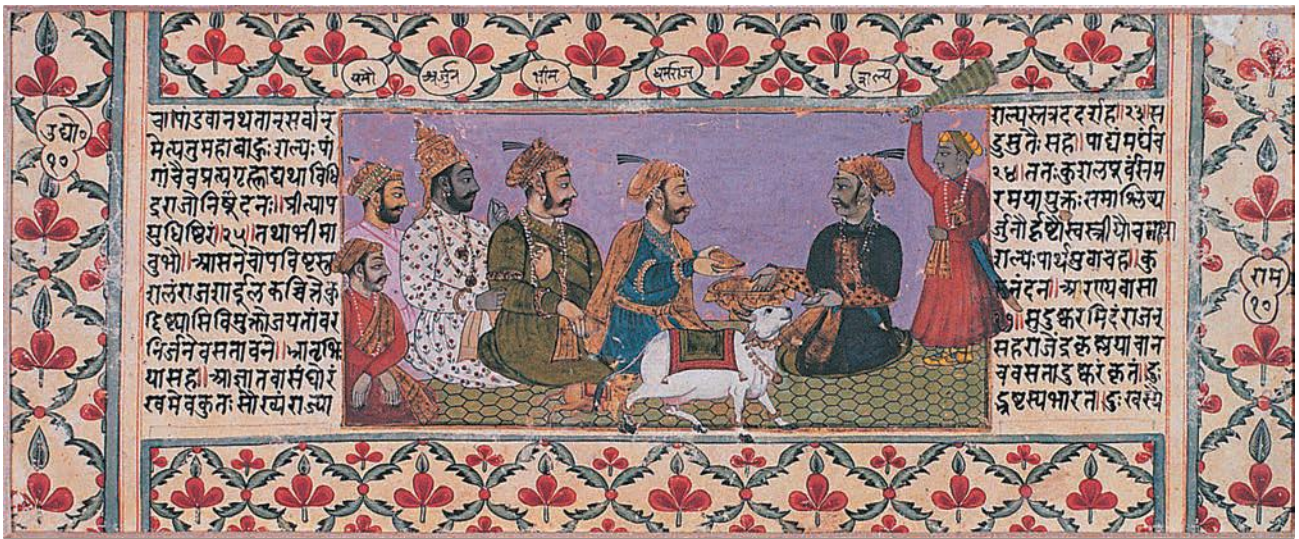
The *Vedas*

The *Vedas* (see pages 57–9) constitute a large body of texts composed in an archaic dialect of Sanskrit. They consist of four parts differing by date of composition and content. The first three are significant because of the mythological narratives they passed on to later Hindu culture and the system of large-scale sacrifices they described. The main reason for their veneration now is their antiquity; their contents are scarcely known.

In terms of ongoing influence in Hindu culture, the *Upanishads*, the most recent part of the *Vedas*, are the most significant. They speculate about the nature of the person, distinguishing between the body, the mental processes and the Inner Self (*atman*). They also speculate about the relationship between the *atman* and the *Brahman*, the cosmic equivalent of the *atman* (see pages 58–9). Rather than directly asserting the nature of the *atman*, the *Upanishads* skirt around it, describing it by saying what it is not, rather than what it is. Besides the famous statement in the *Bhrhadaranyaka Upanishad* that the *atman* is 'not this, not that', the *Chandogya Upanishad* presents a short narrative describing how Indra and Virocana approach Prajapati as students seeking knowledge of the *atman*.

> The Self which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose conception is the Real. It should be searched out, one should want to understand it. He obtains all worlds and all desires who has found out and who understands that Self.
>
> *Chandogya Upanishad*, 8,7,1, after R.E. Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads*

Indra goes on to identify the Self with the body, then with the person who appears in a dream, and next with the content of the mind in dreamless sleep, all of which are



Courtesy of the National Museum of India

FIGURE 4.3.1 Illustrated folio from the *Mahabharata*, sixteenth century CE

declared to be wrong. Finally, he realises the Self is a fourth state beyond these three.

The *Upanishads* are known by hardly anyone but the most intellectually inclined Hindus, yet their teachings are a powerful legacy that influenced later Hindu literature – the *Mahabharata*, the later philosophical writings of Shankara and the *Puranas*. In all of these texts, the idea of *atman/Brahman* becomes integrated with the dominant *bhakti* stream of thought where devotee and god come to be regarded as identical at the deepest level of being – the *atman* of the devotee being identical to the *atman* of the god, also regarded as *Brahman*.

The epics

The two great Sanskrit epics, composed after the *Vedas*, became the first popular texts. The earliest glimpses of *bhakti* occur in the later *Upanishads* and early Buddhist literature, yet *bhakti* really came to fruition as a religious force in the following centuries when it was depicted extensively in the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* (both dating from the second century BCE).

The *Bhagavad Gita*

The *Bhagavad Gita* is a text of 18 chapters inserted within the sixth book of the *Mahabharata*. It is certainly not as well known as the *Mahabharata*, primarily because, being very theoretical, it never captured the imagination of the general public. However, it became very popular in the nineteenth century following its

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*

The *Mahabharata* is an extensive (100 000-line) narrative telling the legendary history of the disputed claims of royal inheritance and subsequent battle between sets of cousins. In the midst of this steps Krishna, an incarnation (*avatara*) of Vishnu, who, together with Shiva, is one of the first of the great *bhakti* gods. He plays a pivotal role in the battle and is ultimately responsible for the re-establishment of *dharma* at a time when it had declined.

The *Mahabharata* speaks about three subjects of central importance for *bhakti*:

- the nature of god
- the nature of the devotee
- the way in which the devotee communicates in a devout way with god.

It provides a clear and practical account of the pathway of devotion to god, combining the way of the ritual and the way of worldly abandonment into a new synthesis set within the framework of devotion.

The *Ramayana* takes up similar themes to the *Mahabharata*. Its plot concerns the denial of the kingship of Ayodhya to the hero Rama; his banishment to the forest with his wife Sita and brother Lakshmana; Sita's abduction by the demon Ravana; the discovery of Sita by the monkey Hanuman on the island of Lanka; the battle between Rama and Ravana; the reuniting and eventual separation of Rama and Sita.

Like the *Mahabharata*, this epic has been transmitted in many different versions and languages and remains very popular among Hindus of all classes. Rama is an *avatara* of Vishnu, and Hanuman very quickly became a *bhakti* god in his own right, worshipped in temples and shrines all over India.

AGEfotostock/BL./Robana

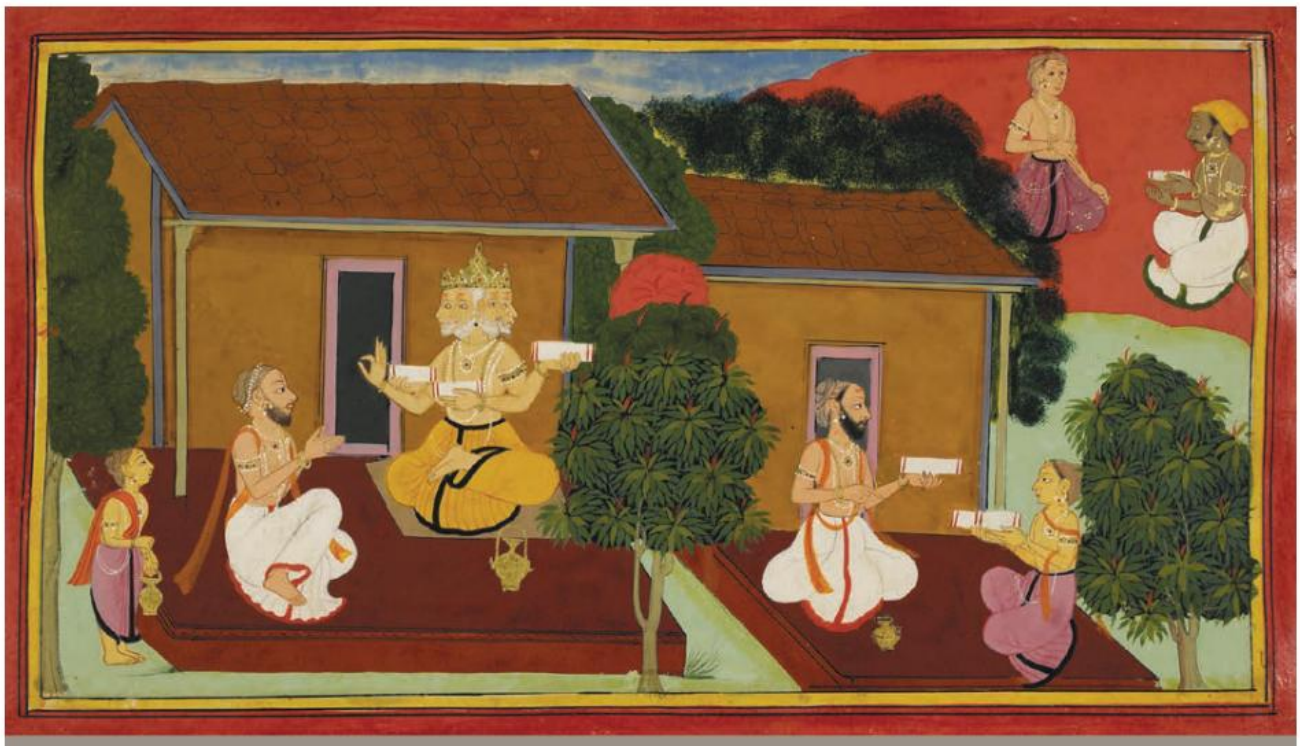


FIGURE 4.3.2 **Composing the *Ramayana*. Valmiki is shown composing and completing the epic *Ramayana*. Image taken from *Ramayana*, Bala Kanda, originally published/produced in Udaipur, 1712.**

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first English translation in 1784 and has since become an established text of contemporary, middle-class Hinduism.

It consists of a dialogue between Krishna and the Pandava hero Arjuna just before the great battle described in the middle books of the *Mahabharata* is about to begin. Arjuna does not want to fight because he has no wish to kill his cousins, who are part of the enemy army. He sits down in his chariot and expresses his despair to Krishna, his chariot driver. A dialogue begins, with Krishna offering Arjuna a summary of the main teachings of Hinduism as it was conceptualised at that time. It focuses on reinterpreting the *atman/Brahman* teaching in light of *bhakti* theology, where Krishna is *Brahman* and Arjuna is the *atman*. This sets the theory within a firm devotional foundation.

But the *Bhagavad Gita* is also a practical text. While it reworks the Upanishadic theory into a *bhakti* framework, it also traces the path by which Arjuna becomes a devotee of Krishna. Between chapters 2 and 11, Arjuna is shown to move from a condition of ignorance and despair to one of knowledge and awe after a direct revelation of the *bhakti* god's true nature. This revelation occurs in the famous eleventh book where Krishna gives Arjuna the divine eye, enabling him to see the god in his cosmic, hidden form – accessible only to his true devotees, thus signalling that Arjuna is now such a devotee.

> The Blessed Lord said:
>
> 'But you cannot see me just with this your own eye. Here I give you the divine eye. Behold my supreme *yoga* …'
>
> Then he, Arjuna, filled with amazement, his hair standing on end, bowed down his head and, with folded hands, said to the God.
>
> Arjuna said:
>
> 'I see all the gods in your body, O God, as also the various hosts of beings … I see you possessing numberless arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes, infinite in form on all sides … Wearing the crown and bearing the mace and the discus, a mass of splendour radiating on all sides, I see you – hard to gaze at – all around me, possessing the radiance of a blazing fire and sun, incomprehensible …
>
> Your form is fierce. Tell me who you are. Salutation unto you, O Foremost among the gods, confer your grace on me, I desire to know you fully, the primal one, for I do not comprehend your activities.'
>
> *Bhagavad Gita*, 11, 8, 14, 17, 31. Translation (modified) in W. De Bary (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Vol. 1, 1964, pp. 288–9

Just as a *darshana* or direct vision of the deity is the high point of the devotional experience for any devotee, this episode in the *Bhagavad Gita* is the climax of the text – where Arjuna begs Krishna to assume his human form – and also of Arjuna's own devotional experience. The final six chapters of the text spell out some details of Hindu cosmology as it is relevant to *bhakti* theology.

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FIGURE 4.3.3 Statue of Arjuna in Ubud, Bali

REVIEW

1. Clarify the importance of the *atman/Brahman* theory in the *Upanishads*.
2. Recall what texts are called the 'epics' and explain why they are part of this body of texts.
3. There are 'strands within strands' in the Hindu scriptures. Prepare a graphic organiser to clarify your understanding of what constitutes the major sacred texts and writings of Hinduism.
4. Explain the importance of the *Vedas* and the epics for Hinduism.
5. Using the extracts in the previous sections, **examine** how the *Vedas* and the epics **demonstrate** the principal teachings of Hinduism.
6. Propose why orality has always been an important method of transmitting Indian culture.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to read about the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*. Propose why you think these two texts, rather than the *Vedas*, have remained so popular in India.
2. Use the weblinks provided to find a copy of the *Bhagavad Gita* and trace the changing relationship between Krishna and Arjuna from chapters 2 to 11.
3. Compare and contrast the style of the *Bhagavad Gita* and the style of the two epics.
4. Ask a Hindu what they know about the contents of the *Vedas* and the *Bhagavad Gita* and which for them is the more important text.

Weblinks
The story of *Ramayana*

The *Ramayana*: Summary

The story of the *Mahabharata*

Bhagavad Gita

4.4 Ethical systems

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

▷ The application of Hindu ethics to specific issues is addressed in Chapter 12, pages 256–60.

It is often difficult for those raised in Western cultures to understand how **ethics** operate within Hindu society because the idea of the individual within Hindu culture is different from Western views. In India, what a person does is primarily governed by their caste, their gender and their life-stage. In the West, where group affiliations are much weaker and there is a multiplicity of prevailing ethical systems, the onus for ethical decisions rests on the individual. In the Hindu framework, attention is placed on relationships between individuals as members of groups possessing different qualities and social requirements.

Hindu ethics can only be understood with reference to *dharma*, as the set of rules that define the appropriate group behaviour that will achieve the balance and stability necessary in a society seen to consist of groups rather than individuals. In this sense, we cannot speak of a separate ethical dimension in Hinduism, and any attempt to find one reduces the extent of what *dharma* embraces, because *dharma* is designed to encompass every aspect of a person's life. Individual 'rules' of *dharma* are, in theory at least, not too difficult to follow because of the clarity with which they are presented. There are specific texts, *Dharmasutras*, that provide comprehensive lists of precepts that govern many aspects of human behaviour and provide a systematic overview of human life from an ethical perspective. Typical texts belonging to this class date back to around the beginning of the Common Era, with the most famous, *The Laws of Manu*, dating to about the second century CE.

The body of precepts are not binding rules, and no external penalty is imposed if they are broken.

The four *varnas* and *ashramas* – stages of life

▷ Refer to page 60 for an explanation of the four *varnas*.

Class ethics – sources of ethical authority

The *Bhagavad Gita*, following other texts, assigns specific areas of duty to each of the four classes: for *brahmins*, 'Calm, self-restraint, ascetic practice, purity, forbearance and uprightness, wisdom'; for warriors, 'High courage, energy, endurance, skill, lack of cowardliness in battle, generosity, a lordly nature'; agriculture and trade for *vaishyas*; and service for *shudras*.

> By dedicating the work that is proper to his class to Him who is the source of the activity of all beings … a man attains perfect success.
>
> It is better to do one's own class duty, even if it is devoid of merit, than to do another's duty, however well performed.
>
> *Bhagavad Gita*, 18:41–44; 46–47, author's translation

In this socio-religious scheme, the *brahmin* is more concerned with learning and matters of the mind (including religion) than warriors and merchants/farmers, whose broad occupational categories require them to be much more active and less concerned with learning and contemplation. In reality, most members of these classes would have made their living from farming.

The images given in the verses are projections of how the classes were desired to be seen from the perspective of the *brahmin* priesthood – which is exclusively male, although the class itself naturally contains females. This last point is an important one: what we find in the writings dealing with *dharma* only gives us the *brahmin* male's view of ethics, because the *brahmins* held the monopoly in composition and transmission of these texts.

DID YOU KNOW?

Many *brahmin* women carried out the ritual of *sati*. They threw themselves into the fire on their husband's funeral pyre, for it was seen as unseemly for a woman to live beyond the life of her husband. Although it was often claimed that the *Rig Veda* sanctions or prescribes *sati*, *bhakti* movements that tended to be anti-caste – that favoured egalitarian societies – generally condemned the practice. Before it was outlawed in 1829, there were a few hundred officially recorded incidents each year.

What we find in *Manu's Code of Law*, a text that lays down the conduct of a *brahmin*'s life in normative terms, is imprecise. Here are three examples from *Manu's Code of Law*:

> He should never follow worldly conduct merely for the sake of subsistence. He should live the honest, sincere and pure livelihood of a brahmin.
>
> Once he has become entirely content, the person who wants happiness should control himself. For happiness is the foundation of contentment and its opposite is the foundation of unhappiness.
>
> 4:11–12

> No guest should stay in his house without being honoured with a seat, food, a bed, water, fruits and roots, in accord with his capacity.
>
> But those who are heretics, those in prohibited occupations, cheats, hypocrites, sceptics and liars, he should not honour even just with a word.
>
> 4:29–30

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> Let him not dwell in a country where the rulers are *shudras*, nor in one which is surrounded by unrighteous men, nor in one which has become subject to heretics, nor in one swarming with men of the lowest castes.
>
> 4:61, author's translation

Many of the rules are negative in outlook, specifying those people or substances with whom the person should avoid contact. They apply to both men and women, and centre primarily on avoidance procedures determined by the *brahmin*'s need to maintain a degree of purity appropriate for the *brahmin* class. Mixing with people of a lower class or of an impure occupation leads to temporary entrance into an impure state, and a purifying ritual is required.

Gift exchange

Many verses, especially in the third book of *Manu's Code of Law*, are concerned with gift exchange – a subject of considerably more importance in ancient India than in contemporary Australia (although it is certainly still significant here). For the *brahmin*, gift exchange is important for two reasons:

- the necessity to participate in the sacrifice, itself a form of gift exchange
- gift-giving imposes a duty on the person who receives the gift, because the gift brings with it the degree of purity of the donor. Regulations pertaining to gift exchange have the effect of controlling personal interaction for the *brahmin*.

At the most general level, *Manu's Code of Law* proclaims that:

- a *brahmin* must give hospitality to any other *brahmin*, except one who lives in his own village
- specific rules apply to the feeding of the guest, but they differ for guests of different classes
- *kshatriyas* can only be given food after any *brahmins* have been fed
- *vaishyas* and *shudras* must eat with the servants.

Here is a very clear instance of how hierarchy affects interpersonal relations. Gift-giving usually takes place in a ritual context and, since the gift is always loaded with the purity or the impurity of the donor, a *brahmin* will not, or will be very reluctant to, receive one from a member of a lower class, because of the temporary pollution he would receive.

A *brahmin*'s *dharma* means that he must remain as pure as his daily business will allow, and that he is not free to show attitudes such as altruism, generosity, compassion or kindness that are so important as the basis for ethics in the West and in Buddhism. These attitudes can be seen to be disruptive of *dharma*, so they are not absolute values in themselves.

The *brahmins* are the model for the rest of society, but the lower castes did develop their own ethical behaviour. *Manu's Code of Law* and the other scriptures state that the local conduct and the opinion of the wise can be regarded as an authoritative source of ethical behaviour. Therefore, specific forms of behaviour developed in villages and particular regions. Each village had its own council, comprising people of various classes, to oversee and adjudicate on any disruptions to this behaviour.

So what kind of external authority was there to prevent people from engaging in theft and murder, for example? Kings did have at their disposal warriors who sometimes acted as peacemakers, and individual villages had councils that could adjudicate on matters of *dharma*. However, the principal form of authority was, and still is, a religious one, because the most commonly cited reward for strict adherence to one's class rules is rebirth in heaven in a subsequent life – a principle repeatedly laid down in a whole variety of texts. This is where *karma* becomes an important component of Hindu ethical beliefs, for the Hindu texts on *dharma* classify actions as either possessing merit or demerit and lay down the rewards or punishments (rebirth in hells) for particular forms of action.

> Through virtuous conduct one obtains long life, through virtuous conduct desirable offspring, through virtuous conduct imperishable wealth; virtuous conduct destroys the effect of inauspicious marks.
>
> *Manu's Code of Law* 4:156

▷ Refer to page 66 for an explanation of *ashramas*.

Accordingly, ethics within a Hindu context regulate the behaviour of individuals as members of a group, not as free agents with the possibility of choosing between alternative courses of action.

REVIEW

1. **Define** the four *varnas*.
2. **Clarify** what is meant by 'gift exchange'.
3. **Explain** what *Manu's Code of Law* is and what role it plays in the ethical systems of Hinduism.
4. What do Hindus mean by *ashramas* or stages of life?
5. **Outline** the principal ethical teachings in Hinduism.
6. **Describe** the importance of ethical teachings in the life of Hindus.

EXTENSION

1. With a partner, try to imagine the complexity of Indian society and ask yourselves if the ethical precepts laid down in the *Bhagavad Gita* would be sufficient as models for such a society. In point form, **summarise** your conclusions.
2. Interview a Hindu about how they respond to everyday situations of purity and pollution. Prepare a report of the interview.

4.5 Personal devotion in the home

GLOSSARY

darshan 'Seeing' God; viewing the image of the divine indwelled (inhabited) by a god or goddess in a temple or other holy place.

puja Worship; the ritual that honours a god or goddess as a divine guest, usually in a temple, but it can also be a domestic ritual.

There are special times and sacred places set aside for intimate contact with God-consciousness, which in Hinduism is centred on ***darshan*** or 'seeing' the divinity as an expression of Ultimate Reality, not just as a humanoid figure. The eyes are the part of the body most symbolic of spiritual perfection and enlightenment, and Hindu rituals are very visually oriented. Most Hindu rituals, whether small ***pujas*** in the home or large-scale rituals performed in temples, are implicated in the achievement of *darshan*. Any ceremony that includes the offering of reverence and food gifts to the gods or goddesses is a form of *puja*, which is most often translated in English as 'worship'. Hindus, however, speak of 'taking *darshan*' – encountering the holy 'eye to eye'.

n.

Worksheet
Hindu celebrations

Dr. Jayant Bapat

FIGURE 4.5.1 A household shrine

Household *pujas*

Household *pujas* are the simplest form of worship of the gods, except on occasions when a special priest is invited to conduct the ceremony and many guests are present. For instance, a family might arrange the reading of certain sacred texts. The recitation of scriptures on a special occasion set aside for this is called a *katha*. A more frequent form of *puja* offered by a group of people is the *kirtana*, in which hymns or *bhajanas* are sung or chanted in honour of a particular god.

Each house will have a small shrine, perhaps in a small open cupboard, in which either a picture or an image of the household deity (*ishtadevata*) is contained. If this deity is Shiva, for example, the images will normally be of him and Parvati, and often a separate image or picture of Ganesha will be included as well.

The basis of any household *puja* is no different from that of any large temple *puja*. It involves the welcoming of the god, as indwelling in the image, into the house, the cleaning and dressing of the god, adorning it with perfumes and flowers, and the offering of prayers. These are designed primarily to protect the household.

In a simple everyday *puja*, the images of the household shrine are cleansed with water and special marks are made on them with coloured paste. Lamps are lit, incense is burnt and offerings of fruit and sweets are placed before the images while short prayers are recited. The traditional duty of a wife is to wake early, purify herself with bathing, renew the offerings at the shrine and also offer prayers on behalf of the whole household, then prepare and purify the kitchen for cooking the first meal of the day. Various members of the family will also offer a simple *puja* when it suits them during the day.

In many families, children will offer a quick *puja* before leaving for school. In a very busy household, a *puja* will be offered only in the evening after everyone comes home from work. This form of *puja*, when everyone is present, is more like the full *puja* rituals at the temple, which include the *arati* ritual (a circular, clockwise moving of a flame or lamp in front of an image) and the sharing of the food received by the gods (*prasada*).

Most Hindu villages contain temples separate from the household – usually one for each of the five main Hindu gods – and many small shrines for the individual mother goddesses. The large temples are normally open in the morning and evening for people to have *pujas* performed for them by priests; the smaller ones usually have no priest and so worshippers simply offer flowers, tinsel and fruit while uttering prayers.

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The COVID-19 pandemic affected the ability of followers of all religions to worship in a collective manner. In the case of Hinduism, while acts of *puja* could still take place in the home, worship in temples was temporarily halted and large religious festivals stopped. However, temple priests performed *pujas* that were transmitted online.

The famous 10-day festival of Ganesha's Fourth was held in 2020 from 22 August to 1 September. This is a festival that attracts huge crowds and where people make clay images of Ganesha that are thrown into the sea in a highly festive environment accompanied by music. This did not happen in 2020. Instead, trucks went to people's houses, picked up clay images no more than 60 centimetres high and immersed them in water. The next night, the trucks went to other homes. Everybody wore masks, and so the basic components of the festival were maintained.

REVIEW

1 Explain the importance of *darshan* in Hindu worship.
2 Clarify why *puja* is the most common form of ritual performed by Hindus.
3 **Outline** a household *puja* as celebrated in a Hindu family.
4 Account for the importance of *puja* in the home.

EXTENSION

1 Imagine being a younger member of a Hindu household. Describe how religious beliefs affect the way you behave towards other members of the family.
2 Use the weblink provided and investigate how many steps a household *puja* may include.

Weblink
Puja at home

Conclusion

In the final analysis, Hinduism is the synthesis of three ways: the way of the ritual, the way of renunciation and *bhakti*. It is neither ritualism, renunciation nor *bhakti* alone; rather, it is the interaction of all three. Thus, Hindus might fall predominantly into one of these categories, yet still regard themselves as devotees of one or more deities. The majority of Hindus in the past, and certainly today, fall into the third category of *bhakti* – that of individual devotees performing their own private rituals. They also occasionally participate in large collective rituals, and less often perform certain kinds of yogic exercises and practise meditation by constantly reciting the name of the deity.

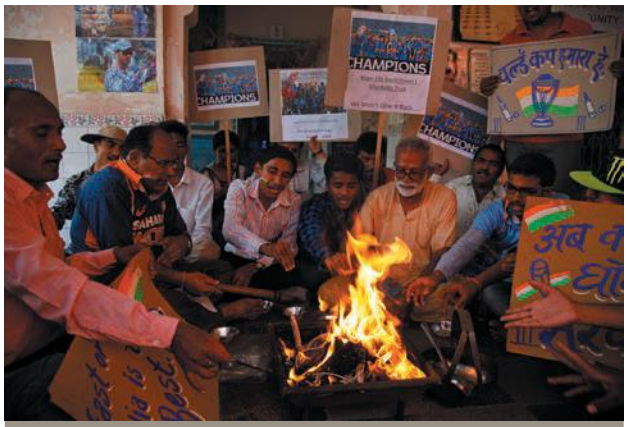
The cultural complex developed around these three areas is one that was mostly consolidated by about 200 BCE. Since then, Hinduism has developed into a very rich tradition that derives its overarching cohesion from its *bhakti* framework.

The name 'Hinduism' really only began to be used in the nineteenth century – before then, the most universal words to describe the religion, at least in Sanskrit literature, were 'The Everlasting Law' or *sanatana dharma*. Today the word 'Hinduism' is used by Hindus and non-Hindus because of its usefulness in distinguishing Hinduism from other religions.

EXTENSION

1 Go back through this chapter and look at the images. What conclusions can you draw from them about Hinduism?
2 Is the worship of gods the most important element in the Hindu religion? Explain your response.
3 Prepare for a debate on the topic: 'Hinduism is often described as a multiplicity of related religions.'
4 You have to give a 10-minute talk on Hinduism. Prepare an outline for your talk. What would your priority be – the teachings of Hinduism or the living-out of Hinduism? Clarify the reasons for your decision.
5 Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

Online activity
Chapter 4 multiple-choice quiz



AAP Image/Ajit Solanki

FIGURE 4.5.2 Performing a Hindu fire ritual in Ahmedabad in support of the Indian cricket team on the eve of the ICC Cricket World Cup semifinal match against Australia, March 2015

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

5

Islam

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **outline** the social conditions and religious practices of pre-Islamic Arabia
- **examine** the principal events in Muhammad's life and **explain** why the Prophet Muhammad is the model for Muslim life
- **describe** the development of Islam after the death of Muhammad and account for the emergence of Sunni and Shi'i Islam
- **investigate** the principal beliefs of Islam
- **identify** the importance of the Qur'an and *hadith* and **examine** extracts from these sacred texts and writings that **demonstrate** the principal beliefs of Islam
- **outline** the principal ethical teachings and the process of jurisprudence within Islam and **describe** their importance in the life of adherents
- **outline** each of the five pillars of faith.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Islamic terminology (p. 75)
- The origins and spread of Islam (p. 85)
- Islamic calendar of feasts (p. 93)

Online activity

- Chapter 5 multiple-choice quiz (p. 95)

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AAP Images/Universal Images Group

Reading the Holy Qur'an, the sacred book of Islam

GLOSSARY

monotheistic Characterised by the belief that there is only one God.

prophet (Arabic *nabi*) One who is appointed by God to convey a divine message.

Qur'an (Koran) The sacred book of Islam: the word of God revealed to the Prophet. The Arabic word for 'recitation' or 'reading' is *qur'an*, which became the name for the collected **revelations** as passed on by Muhammad.

revelation God's disclosure of himself and his will to his people.

NOTE

Islam is the Arabic word for 'submission', and *Muslim* means 'one who makes a devotional submission to God.'

Islam is just as much an Asian as a Mediterranean/Middle Eastern religion. Today over one billion people adhere to some form of Islam and the majority live outside the 'Arab World'. It is the second largest world religion.

Islam, the religion of love of and submission to the one God, emerged in the seventh century CE in a region where Asia and Africa meet – halfway between the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean – and spread rapidly north, east and west. Islam established its main pattern very quickly, partly because it had a founder (Muhammad), partly because it had a foundation document (the **Qur'an**) and partly because, in having a communal and political aspect, it had to make rapid decisions on organisation in view of its great success.

Its name is inseparable from that of Muhammad, the **prophet** who preached it. For more than 14 centuries, Islam has grown and spread from a religion of the seventh-century Arabia of the Prophet Muhammad to a world religion whose followers are found across the globe. It created and inspired Islamic empires and states as well as a great world civilisation that stretched from North Africa to South-East Asia. In the process, a great **monotheistic** tradition, which shares common roots with Judaism and Christianity, has guided and transformed the lives of millions of believers down through the ages.

Characterised by an uncompromising belief in the one, true God (Allah), through his **revelation** and his Prophet, Islam developed into a spiritual path whose law, ethics and theology made it a rapidly growing world religion, both in the past and today in a number of countries.

The foundation of Islamic belief and practice is the Qur'an. For Muslims, the Qur'an is the revealed literal word of God. Second to it in authority are the narratives about sayings, doings and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions. Muslim faith and practice are based in revelation but expressed in a variety of beliefs, attitudes, rituals, laws and values.

Throughout its 14 centuries of history, the Islamic community has had to respond to internal and external threats to its continued life and vitality. As a result, Islam has a long tradition of religious renewal and development, extending from its earliest history to the present. Muslims today, like believers the world over, continue to grapple with the continued relevance of their faith alongside the realities of contemporary society.

EXTENSION

Maintain a detailed list where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. A worksheet has been provided to assist you.

Worksheet
Islamic terminology

5.1 Origins

Pre-Islamic Arabia

GLOSSARY

Allah The Arabic word for the one and only true God.

Bedouin Arab desert nomad.

Ka'ba Cube-shaped religious shrine believed to have been erected by Adam and then rebuilt by Abraham. Today it is the central shrine of Islam – the focal point for daily prayer and the pilgrimage – and is within the precincts of the Great Mosque of Mecca.

oligarchy A form of government in which the power is invested in a few, or in a dominant class or clique.

polytheism The belief in many gods or more than one god.

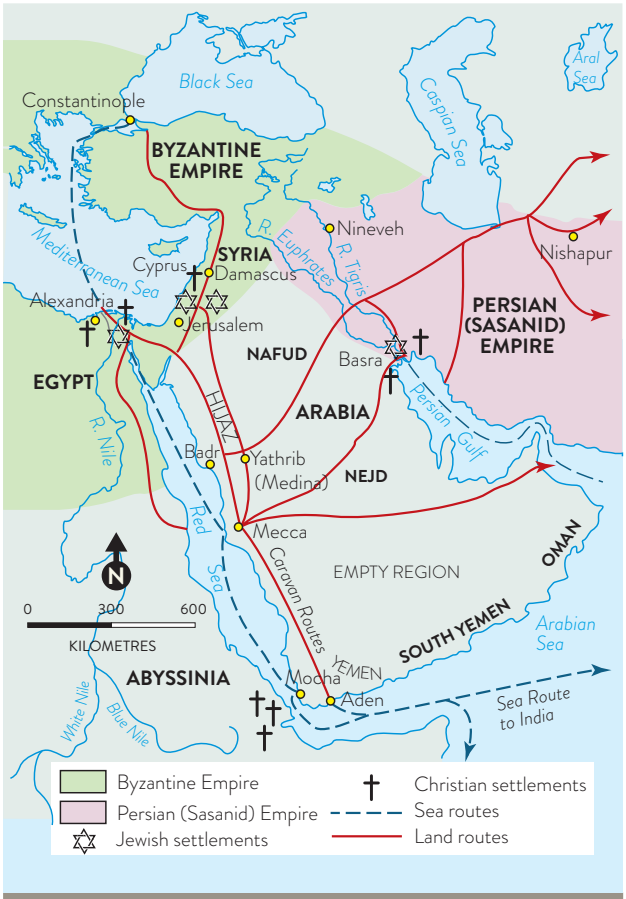

FIGURE 5.1.1 Arabia and its environs in the early seventh century CE, and pre-Islamic trade routes

Because Islam developed in central Arabia, the religious and social environment of that region provides the context for understanding Muhammad's message and mission. Seventh-century CE pre-Islamic Arabian society and religion reflected the tribal realities of the Arabian Peninsula. Arabia's 1 700 000 square kilometres were dominated by desert and steppe areas. **Bedouin** tribes travelled from one area to another in search of water and pasture for their flocks of sheep and camels. The landscape was dotted with oasis towns and cities. Among the more prominent of these were Mecca, a centre of trade and commerce, and Yathrib (Medina), an important agricultural settlement.

Social organisation and identity for the peoples of Arabia were based on membership of an extended family – a tribe consisting of a cluster of several family groupings (a clan), led by a *shaykh* (chief) who was elected by a consensus of the heads of leading clans. Gods and goddesses served as protectors of individual tribes, and their spirits were associated with sacred objects – trees, stones, springs and wells. Local tribal gods were feared and respected and were the object of rituals – sacrifice, pilgrimage, prayer – celebrated at local shrines. In Mecca, there was a central shrine of the gods, the ***Ka'ba***, which housed 360 idols of tribal patron gods, and was the site of a great annual pilgrimage and fair. While these gods were the main objects of worship, beyond this tribal **polytheism** was a shared belief in **Allah**. Allah was the supreme high god – the creator and sustainer of life – but was remote from everyday concerns and so was not the object of cult or ritual.

The Arabian tribal society value system or ethical code was based firmly in the tribal experience – the preservation of tribal and family order was most important – and with this came fatalism that saw no meaning beyond this life.

At this time there were also three other flourishing religious traditions in the Arabian Peninsula and surrounding region – Judaism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism. All three of these traditions shared a belief that God is one and that there was a moral universe encompassing individual and communal accountability and responsibility. Each had, to differing degrees, become associated with political power; that is, they had become the official state religion – Judaism in Palestine, Christianity in the Roman (Byzantine) Empire, and Zoroastrianism in the Persian (Sasanid) Empire.

Arabian tribal society provided the context for the rise of Islam and so was marked by the tensions and questioning that accompany changes in a transitional society – Mecca and Medina were prospering and attracting many from a nomadic to a more settled life. The emergence of Mecca as a major commercial centre ushered in a new political, social and economic order. New wealth, the rise of a new commercial **oligarchy** from within the Quraysh tribe, greater divisions between social classes and a greater disparity between rich and poor brought stresses to the traditional system of Arabian tribal values and its way of life. This was the time and the social environment into which Muhammad was born.

EXTENSION

Investigate the Arabian Peninsula during the time of Muhammad. From your research, outline briefly the beliefs of Zoroastrianism and identify why Mecca was at the centre of the pre-Islamic trade routes (see Figure 5.1.1).

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The Prophet Muhammad

GLOSSARY

infallible Absolutely trustworthy; inerrant (free from error).

umma Islamic community; refers to the worldwide Muslim community.

usury Lending money for interest.

> Allah did confer a great favour on the believers when He sent among them a messenger from among themselves, rehearsing unto them the Signs of Allah, sanctifying them, and instructing them in Scripture and Wisdom, while, before that, they had been in manifest error.
>
> *Surat al-'Imran* 3:164 'The Family of Imran'

History, legend and Muslim belief portray Muhammad as a remarkable man and a prophet. While we know a good deal about Muhammad's life after his 'call' to be God's messenger at the age of 40, in about 610 CE, historical records tell us little about Muhammad's early years. The Qur'an has some information regarding the life of the Prophet. The majority of information about him comes from prophetic narratives (reports about what Muhammad said, did and approved), and biographies based on such reports give us a picture of his role and significance in early Islam. So also do Islamic calligraphy and art, where the names of Allah and Muhammad often occur side by side.

Understanding Muhammad and his role in the early Islamic community is central for an appreciation of the development of early Islam, as well as the dynamics of contemporary Muslim belief and practice.

Muhammad ibn Abdullah (the son of Abd Allah) was born in about 570 CE into the Hashim clan of the Quraysh tribe, the major tribe in Mecca. At the age of 25, he married a 40-year-old wealthy widow, Khadija. During 25 years of marriage, they enjoyed a very close relationship and had two sons (who died in infancy) and four daughters, the most famous of whom was Fatima.

Muhammad, who had become a successful member of Meccan society, was deeply disturbed by the changes that came with Mecca's transition from a semi-Bedouin culture to a commercial, urban society. He was greatly respected for his judgement and trustworthiness. He retreated regularly to a cave on Mount Hira, a short distance north of Mecca, where he meditated and worshipped one God and contemplated his life and the troubles of his society, seeking greater meaning and insight.

It was on Mount Hira, in 610 CE, during what is now the month of Ramadan (the ninth month of the Muslim calendar), that Muhammad became Muhammad the Messenger of God. On the night the Qur'an refers to as 'The Night of Destiny', he received the first of many revelations from God. A heavenly intermediary, later identified by tradition as the Archangel Gabriel, commanded, 'Recite'. Muhammad responded that he had nothing to recite. Twice the angel repeated the command, and each time a frightened and bewildered Muhammad pleaded that he did not know what to say. Finally, the words came to him:

> Proclaim! (or read!) in the name of thy Lord, Who created – Created man, out of a (mere) clot of congealed blood: Proclaim! And thy Lord is Most Bountiful – He Who taught (the use of) the pen – Taught man that which he knew not.
>
> *Surat al-'Alaq* 96:1–5 'The Blood Clot'

With this revelation, Muhammad saw himself as a divinely inspired messenger or prophet of God following in the line of the great prophets of Judaism – Moses and Abraham. Muhammad continued to receive divine revelations over a period of 23 years (610–632 CE). Muhammad memorised the revelations and scribes in Mecca wrote them down. These messages were collected and arranged between two covers about a year after his death as the Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture.

After the revelation on Mount Hira, the Prophet Muhammad's life can be divided into three distinct periods: the Meccan period, the Migration to Medina, and the Treaty of Hudaybiyya and his death.

Bridgeman Images/Photo Josse

FIGURE 5.1.2 Archangel Gabriel reveals to the Prophet Muhammad the eighth *sura* of the Qur'an. Detail from a miniature in an illustrated late sixteenth-century Turkish manuscript, *Siyer-i Nebi*, Life of the Prophet.

The Qur'an

The Qur'an occupies a central place in Islam. For any study of Islam, it is important to have access to a copy of the Qur'an. Muslims hold that the Arabic text can be explained but it is not possible to translate it fully, and renderings of it in English (or any other language), while a guide to understanding its content, do not have authority. In other words, any translation of the Qur'an immediately ceases to be the literal word of Allah, and hence cannot be equated with the Qur'an in its original Arabic form. A translation is actually an interpretation.

For Muslims, the Qur'an is the eternal, uncreated, literal word of God sent down from heaven and revealed one final time through the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) to the Prophet Muhammad as a guide for humankind. Muslims believe therefore that the Qur'an is the **infallible** word of God. Qur'an means 'recitation' – a recitation by Muhammad of Allah's word.

Sura is the Arabic word for chapter. When *sura* is used as a modifier, it is *surat*; for example, *surat al-'Alaq*, the ninety-sixth *sura* of the Qur'an. The title of each *sura* comes from a specific phrase or word in that chapter. Muslims always refer to the *sura* by its title.

A useful weblink is provided.

Weblink
The Noble Qur'an

The Meccan period

The first 13 years of Muhammad's preaching were difficult, hampered by Meccan resistance, rejection and violence. His message was not altogether welcome for at least two reasons:

- His rejection of polytheism threatened the livelihood and prestige of the Meccans (in particular, the Umayyad clan) as keepers of the Ka'ba, the religious shrine that housed the tribal idols.
- The values he expressed did not agree with the money-making policy of the rich merchants of the city.

Muhammad denounced false contracts, **usury** and the neglect and exploitation of orphans and widows. He defended the rights of the poor and the oppressed, asserting that the rich had an obligation to the poor and dispossessed and that this would be met as a 'welfare tax' levied on wealth and agricultural lands.

Later, too, Muhammad would be involved in conveying revelations that altered the legal shape of society, especially concerning marriage. A potential economic loss was combined with the undermining of Meccan tribal political authority by Muhammad's claim to prophetic authority and leadership, and his insistence that all true believers belonged to the ***umma*** (a single universal community) that went beyond tribal bonds.

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the social conditions, cultural norms and religious practices of pre-Islamic Arabia.
2. **Recall** the definition of polytheism and **explain** its relevance to Islam at this time.
3. **Recount** what happened on 'The Night of Destiny'. Why is this night significant in Islam?
4. **Identify** the reasons Muhammad was opposed by the leaders of Meccan society.

Migration to Medina

GLOSSARY

caliph (from *khalifa*) Refers to the successor of Muhammad as leader of the Islamic community. The caliph performs three functions – political administration, tax collection and ensuring the security of the Muslim nation. A caliph does not hold religious authority.

Hajj Annual pilgrimage to Mecca in the month of Dhu'l-Hijja and required of all Muslims at least once in their lifetime, if possible. *Hajj* is also the title of one who has made this pilgrimage.

al-Hijra Migration of Muhammad and his followers from Mecca to Medina in 622 CE (Year 1 AH of the Muslim lunar calendar), where he established an independent Muslim community-state. Sometimes written in English as 'Hegira', AH stands for *anno Hegirae* and is Latin for 'in the year of Hijra'.

qibla *(kiblat)* Direction of the Ka'ba at Mecca to which Muslims face when performing their daily ritual prayers.

While Muhammad struggled in Mecca preaching God's message, he gathered a small band of faithful followers. Among the early converts were 'Ali, his paternal cousin and son-in-law, and Abu Bakr, his future father-in-law and the first **caliph**. The deaths of Khadija and of his uncle and protector, Abu Talib, in 619 CE made life even more difficult. The core of the opposition came from the Umayyad clan of the Quraysh tribe. As we shall see, their descendants, even after their later conversion to Islam, would continue to challenge the family of the Prophet.

The situation changed significantly in 621 CE. Muhammad was invited by a delegation from Yathrib (later called Medina, 'city of the Prophet') to serve as a chief arbitrator (or judge) in a bitter feud between two Arab tribes. Muhammad accepted this invitation at about the same time as an event referred to in the first verse of *Surat al-Isra* 17:1 'The Night Journey':

> Glory to (Allah) Who did take His servant for a Journey by night from the Sacred Mosque to the farthest Mosque, whose precincts We did bless – in order that We might show him some of Our Signs: for He is the One Who heareth and seeth (all things).

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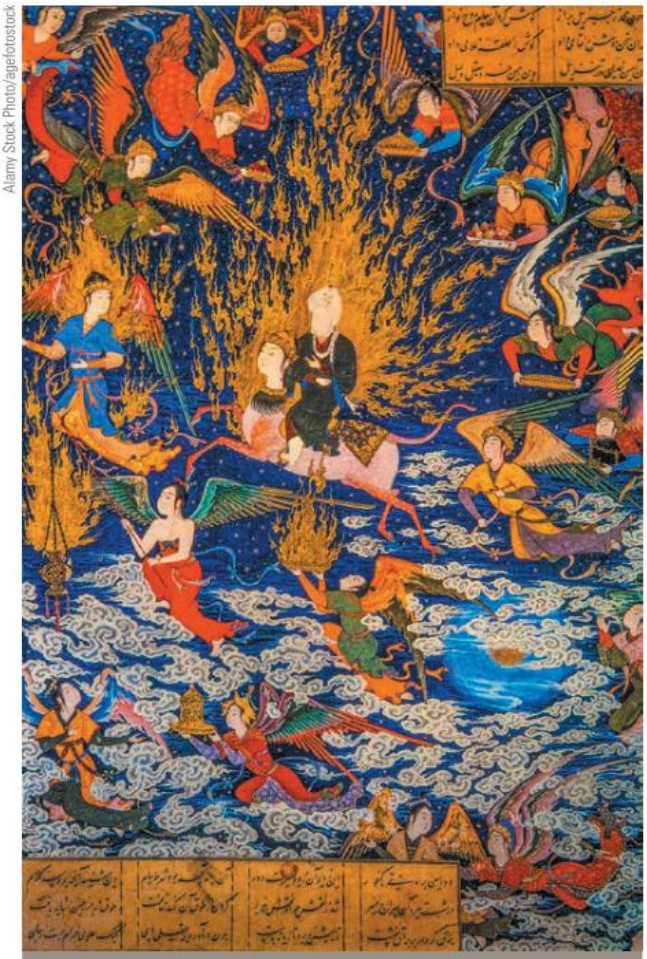
This 'Night Journey' was the miraculous journey when the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel) took the Prophet through the air from Mecca to Jerusalem and then, from the site that is now the Dome of the Rock mosque (*al-Aqsa*), he made the Ascension (*Mi'raj*) to heaven past the great prophets who had preceded him, to the presence of God. A widely recorded tradition (*hadith*) states that it was there that Muhammad was taught the ritual of the five daily prayers.



Alamy Stock Photo/agefotostock

FIGURE 5.1.3 *Mi'raj* (The Night Journey of the Prophet). Muhammad is guided by the Archangel Jibril, with an escort of angels. A full-page illustration in a copy of Persian poet Nizami's *Khamsah* (*Five Poems*), 1539–43, created for Shah Tahmasp.

RESPOND

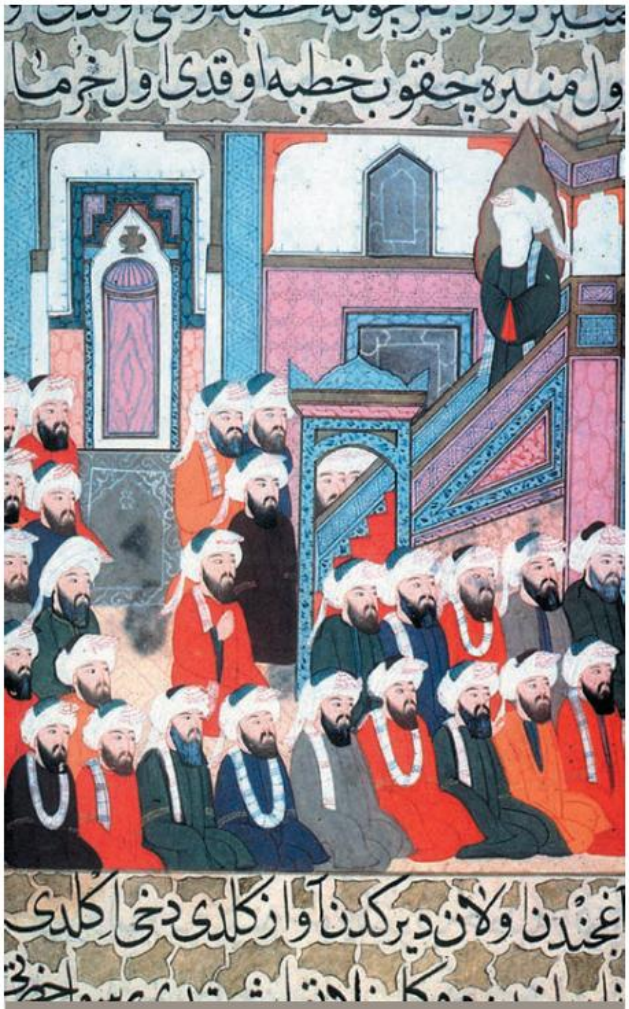
Investigate the reason for the Muslim ban on figural art and explain the role of calligraphy in Islam, citing examples.

Muhammad and about 200 of his followers quietly emigrated to Medina between July and September of 622 CE. ***Al-Hijra*** marked a turning point in Muhammad's fortunes and a new stage in the history of the Islamic movement. Islam also covered the social and political dimension of human life with the establishment of an Islamic community-state at Medina.

The importance of the *hijra* is reflected in its adoption as the beginning of the Islamic calendar. Muslims chose to date their history from neither Muhammad's birth nor his reception of the first revelation in 610 CE, but from the creation of the *umma*, the Islamic community. The community, as much as the individual, was to be the instrument for realising God's purpose for humanity on earth.

By leaving Mecca, Muhammad broke with the old tribal organisation to create a community of faith, and established a religion with its own institutions. The community in Medina who accepted this religion were called Muslims.

On arriving at Medina, Muhammad announced a charter, sometimes called the constitution of Medina, which set out the rights and duties of all citizens and the relationship of the Muslim community to other communities. Muslims formed a community whose primary identity was no longer tribal ties but a common religious faith and commitment. Jews were recognised as a separate community allied to the Muslim *umma*, but with religious and legal independence.



Bridgeman Images/Pictures from History

FIGURE 5.1.4 Muhammad on the *minbar* (pulpit) addressing the Muslim community in Medina, as represented in an illustrated late sixteenth-century Turkish manuscript, *Siyer-i Nebi*, (*Life of the Prophet*)

At the same time, Muhammad turned his attention to Mecca. Mecca had a special status as a religious and economic centre due to the shrine of the Ka'ba. Further revelations to Muhammad, which named Mecca as the ***qibla*** for ritual prayer and the focus for Muslim ***Hajj***, increased its religious significance.

Muslims were viewed as defectors and traitors to Meccan tribal traditions. Muhammad attempted to intercept a large Meccan caravan carrying the possessions of Muslims left in Mecca during the migration. This threatened both the political authority and the economic power of the Quraysh. Several critical battles followed and in 624 CE at Badr, near Medina, Muslim forces defeated the much larger Meccan army. This was the first exercise of *jihad* or 'striving' to expand the boundaries of Islam. A year later, Muslims nearly lost at Uhud. In 626 CE Medina was unsuccessfully besieged by a Meccan-led tribal coalition army.

▷ For more information on *Hajj* and *jihad*, see pages 92 and 94.

Treaty of Hudaybiyya and the death of Muhammad

The Treaty of Hudaybiyya with the Meccans in 628 CE was a turning point for Muslims. In the peaceful atmosphere, many willingly converted to Islam. When Mecca broke the treaty in 630 CE, the Muslim army conquered Mecca without any resistance. Muhammad entered Mecca and granted amnesty to the great majority of his former enemies. He destroyed the idols and images within the Ka'ba and dedicated it to one God as intended by Abraham. In Muslim tradition, the Ka'ba was rebuilt by Abraham and was the first shrine on earth for the worship of God after Adam's expulsion from Paradise, pre-dating Jerusalem. The Meccans converted to Islam, accepted Muhammad's leadership, and were within the *umma*.

During the next two years, Muhammad established his authority over much of Arabia, and tribes one after the other converted to Islam. Representatives were sent from Medina to teach God's revelations and the duties and rituals of Islam, and to collect the welfare taxes due to Medina. In the spring of 11 AH (632 CE), Muhammad led the pilgrimage to Mecca. There, at 63 years of age, he preached what was to become known as his farewell sermon. He died later that year.

> All those who listen to me shall pass on my words to others and to those others again; and may the last ones understand my words better than those who listen to me directly. Be my witness, O Allah, that I have conveyed your message to your people.
>
> Concluding words from the Prophet Muhammad's Last Sermon

Muhammad – model of Muslim life and devotion

GLOSSARY

hadith The traditional reports of what the Prophet Muhammad did and/or said. They are second only to the Qur'an in religious importance, although there is not unanimity in the Muslim community about the authenticity of every *hadith*.

sunna All the traditions and practices of Muhammad that have become models to be followed by Muslims; the religious practices, morals and normal lifestyle of the Prophet that became a unifying bond for all parts of the Islamic *umma*.

DID YOU KNOW?

When you are researching Islam, you will often see the Roman or Arabic letters 'saas' or 'saws' after a reference to Muhammad; for example, 'Prophet Muhammad (saas)'. These letters stand for the words *Salla Alahu 'Alaihi Wa Sallam*, which mean: 'May the blessing and peace of Allah be upon him.' Sometimes it is written PBUH ('Peace be upon him'). When the name of the Prophet Muhammad is mentioned, a Muslim is to respect him and invoke this statement of peace.

Muhammad's remarkable character and personality inspired extraordinary confidence and commitment. Both during his lifetime and throughout the following centuries, Muhammad has provided the ideal model for Muslim character and life, providing the pattern that all believers are to emulate. He is, as some Muslims say, the 'living Qur'an' – the witness whose behaviour and words reveal God's will. The practices of the Prophet became the guiding source of Islamic law alongside the Qur'an.

Muslims look to Muhammad's example for guidance in all aspects of life – how to treat friends as well as enemies, what to eat and drink, how to love and conduct war. His influence on Muslim life cannot be underestimated, since he served as both religious and political leader of Medina – prophet of God, ruler, military commander, chief judge, lawgiver. As a result, the practice of the Prophet, his ***sunna***, became the standard for community life.

Muslims commemorated and remembered stories about what the Prophet said and did. The ***hadith*** were preserved and passed on in oral and written form. The body of *hadith* literature reveals the extensive scope of Muhammad's example. He is revered as the ideal religious and political leader, loyal friend and model husband and father. Traditions of the Prophet give guidance for personal worship, morals, dress, eating, marriage, treatment of wives, diplomacy and ethics of warfare. He is certainly not a figure to be worshipped, but is an example of the extreme good in humanity.

▷ For more information on *hadith*, see page 89.

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REVIEW

1. **Recount** what happened on 'The Night Journey' and **explain** its significance to Islam's development as a world religion.
2. What is the Ka'ba and why is it significant for Muslims?
3. Why was Mecca so important to Muhammad?
4. **Examine** the principal events in Muhammad's life. **Construct** an infographic setting out these events in the order in which they happened.
5. Why is Muhammad called the 'Messenger of God'?
6. **Define** what is meant by the '*sunna* of the Prophet' and **explain** why Muhammad is considered 'the model for Muslim life'.

EXTENSION

1. In 600 words, **describe** the origins of Islam. In your response, **explain** the role of Muhammad and **analyse** how he transformed much of the existing culture of the Arabian Peninsula into his response to his 'call to be the Messenger of God'.
2. **Discuss** with a Muslim why Muhammad is seen as the model of how to live an authentic life as a Muslim.

Islam after the prophet

GLOSSARY

caliphate The succession to the sovereignty of the Islamic community.

dynasty The sequence of rulers from the same family or stock.

imam Its primary meaning is 'prayer leader'. In early Islamic history, the title *imam* was associated with the *khalifa* (from which 'caliph' is derived). The **Shi'i** acknowledge 12 principal *imams* after the death of the Prophet, one of whom disappeared and whose return is awaited. Shi'i believe this 'hidden' *imam* communicates with individuals of great holiness who give the community guidance through him.

Shi'i Those Muslims who believe that Muhammad designated 'Ali and his rightful descendants the true leaders (***imams***) of the Muslim community (*shiat-u-'Ali*, 'party or faction of 'Ali'). They are sometimes called Shi'is or Shi'ites, and you can talk about Shi'i Islam, Shi'ism or the Shi'a.

Sunni Those Muslims who follow the tradition (*sunna*) of the Prophet and his companions without acknowledging any innate political privilege to the descendants of 'Ali or any other companion.

Muhammad's death in the eleventh year of the Islamic calendar (632 CE) was unexpected, and no explicit provision had been made for a successor. Over the next 30 years, the Islamic community intermittently plunged into political crises revolving around leadership and authority. The question of who had the right to be caliph was to cause more division and bloodshed in Islam than any other issue. The first successors are called the four 'rightly guided' caliphs – *al-Khulafa' al-Rashidun* – who were all early converts and companions of the Prophet. Their rule is especially significant, not only for what they did, but also because the period of Muhammad and the 'rightly guided' caliphs became regarded in **Sunni** Islam as the normative period.

After the first four caliphs, a semi-monarchy was established by the fifth caliph, Mu'awiyah. Over the centuries, differences over these early political events caused significant polarisation in the Islamic world.

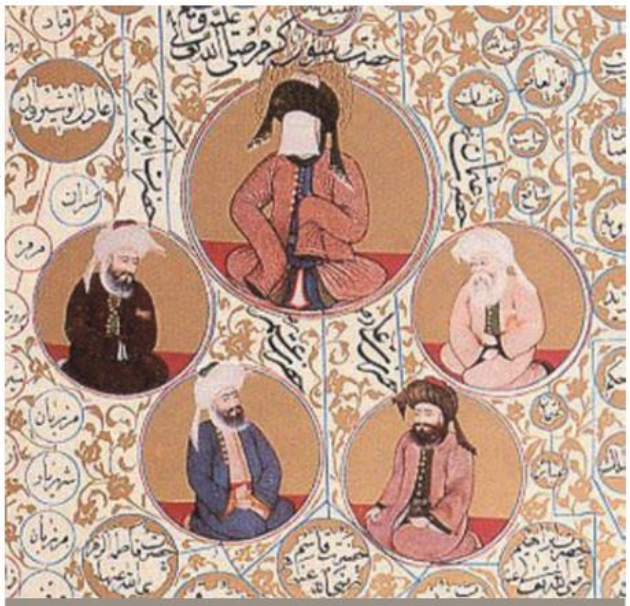
DID YOU KNOW?

The Arabic word *khalifa* (plural *khulafa*) literally means 'successor' or 'deputy'. In the Qur'an, both Adam and Dawud (King David) are given the title *khalifa*.

The four 'rightly guided' caliphs

- Abu Bakr (632–634 CE) – A very early follower of the Prophet, he was the father of Muhammad's alleged favourite wife (after the death of Khadija), 'A'isha. He was acknowledged as Muhammad's successor by the Prophet's companions. He pacified and united the Muslim tribes, and ordered the first collection of the written text of the Qur'an.
- 'Umar (634–644 CE) – An early follower of the Prophet, he was the designated nominee for succession to Abu Bakr, a member of the Quraysh clan and father of Muhammad's wife Hafsa. 'Umar extended Muslim rule to Syria, Egypt, Persia and, in the north, to Armenia. 'Umar appointed a council of six men to select his successor.
- 'Uthman (644–656 CE) – An early follower of the Prophet, 'Uthman was from the Umayya, a leading Meccan family and part of the Quraysh clan. Reports hold that 'Uthman commissioned the officially endorsed copy of the Qur'an that was written in Meccan dialect, its current form. His murder in 656 CE was the first in a series of Muslim rebellions that would plague the Islamic community's political development.
- 'Ali (656–661 CE) – Muhammad's closest male relative, his paternal cousin. 'Ali was married to the Prophet's daughter Fatima and father to his grandsons Hasan (d. 669 CE) and Husayn (d. 680 CE). 'Ali moved his capital to Kufah in Iraq, a more central location within the expanding Muslim world.

Based on the practice of the first three caliphs, a pattern was established for the selection of the caliph from the Quraysh tribe through a process of consultation. The appointment of 'Ali, however, had another dimension – he was a blood relative of the Prophet, and his children, Hasan and Husayn, by the Prophet's daughter Fatima, maintained the bloodline of the Prophet, the founder of Islam. It is here the origins of Shi'i Islam are found. For **Shi'i**, 'Ali is not the fourth *khalifa* but the first ***imam*** of the community.



Alamy Stock Photo/Art Collection 4

FIGURE 5.1.5 Muhammad (top, veiled) and the four 'rightly guided' caliphs, from *Subhat al-Akhbar*, a seventeenth-century Turkish manuscript outlining the genealogy of the Ottoman Sultans, from the prophets Adam and Moses through Muhammad and on to Sultan Mehmed IV (d. 1687) – the birth of the family tree?

RESPOND

Identify a reason for Muhammad to be in the image.

During 'Ali's reign, his authority was challenged by two opposition movements – one a coalition led by Muhammad's widow, 'A'isha (the daughter of Abu Bakr), and the other by the forces of Mu'awiyah, the governor of Syria and a nephew of 'Uthman. The opposition was largely inspired by accusations that 'Ali was complicit in the killing of 'Uthman. After a series of battles, 'Ali lost effective power and he was assassinated by a fringe group while entering a mosque in Kufah.

The female companions of the Prophet – *Sahabiyat*

There were strong women in Muhammad's life who helped establish the Muslim tradition. Historical evidence shows that women fled aristocratic tribal Mecca by the thousands to enter Medina, the Prophet's city, in the seventh century CE, because Islam promised equality and dignity for all – men and women, masters and servants. Women who lived in Muhammad's time were neither secluded nor subservient.

Khadija, the first wife of the Prophet, was a businesswoman and is revered as the first Muslim after Muhammad. Nusibah bint Ka'ba al-Mazinyyah, known as Umm 'Umarah, an early convert to Islam, joined in the battle of Uhud (3 AH/625 CE) with her sword and bow and arrow. She formed part of the human barrier that was protecting the Prophet. Fatima, the daughter of Khadija and Muhammad, also played a pivotal role in the emergence of Islam and was the wife of the fourth and last 'rightly guided' caliph, 'Ali Abi Talib, and the mother of Hasan and Husayn – the 'martyrs of Islam'. Muhammad's third wife, 'A'isha, and alleged favourite wife after the death of Khadija, was the daughter of Abu Bakr, the Prophet's successor.

In this foundational period of Islam, many women worked for a living and fought alongside Muhammad in battle. Throughout his lifetime, Muhammad acknowledged their role and encouraged them as teachers of the new religion. After his death, 'A'isha and several of his other wives made major contributions to Islam by recounting and recording what Muhammad did and said during his lifetime (*sunna*). Women of the founding period were also regularly consulted by the Prophet's companions about many aspects of Islam.

> Every woman who came to Medina when the Prophet was the political leader of Muslims could gain access to full citizenship, the status of '*Sahabi*', Companion of the Prophet. Muslims can take pride that in their language they have the feminine of that word, *sahabiyat*, women who enjoyed the right to enter into the councils of the Muslim *umma* [community], to speak freely to its Prophet–leader, to dispute with the men, to fight for their happiness, and to be involved in the management of military and political affairs.
>
> Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, 1991, p. 8

'A'isha is a significant person considered in Chapter 13, pages 272–5.

EXTENSION

Using the Internet and/or other resources, investigate the life and contribution of one *sahabiyat* other than 'A'isha and then evaluate the status of the female companions of the Prophet for contemporary Muslims.

The end of the elected caliphs

There is no fifth 'rightly guided' caliph. Hasan as the head of the Prophet's household was the second Shi'i *imam*, but in an agreement with Mu'awiyah he abdicated the **caliphate** to him. Mu'awiyah moved Islam's capital to Damascus and, at the end of his life (in 680 CE), was able to secure the caliphate for his son. So a new period of Islamic and political history began, and political rule in the vast Muslim world became a **dynasty** or a hereditary monarchy.

After Mu'awiyah's death, Husayn, as the Prophet's grandson, was urged to reclaim the role and authority that was considered his due. He took up arms against the Umayyads and was brutally massacred at the Battle of Karbala in 61 ah/680 CE. Husayn is revered by both the Sunni and Shi'i branches of Islam, but it is Shi'i who have invested such significance in his death. Shi'i regard 'Ali and his son Husayn as martyrs of Islam, and it is the memory of their 'martyrdom' that has provided the model of suffering and protest that has guided and inspired Shi'i Islam.

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The expansion of the Muslim world

GLOSSARY

dar al-Islam 'Abode of peace', Islamic territory; where Muslims are free to practise Islam.
hierarchy A vertically structured system of organisation.
mosque Muslim place of worship.
Shari'a Islamic law based on the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the Prophet.
'ulama' Religious scholars; specialists in Islamic sciences, particularly jurisprudence, or law.

By the time the rule of the Umayyads from Damascus ended with their massacre in 750 CE, Islam had spread to Spain and would be stopped only in southern France. To the north, Muslim armies were already at the gates of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, while to the east they roamed the Indus River in India.

The Muslims were remarkable in the administration of their expanding community. The caliph exercised direct political, military, judicial and monetary control of the Muslim community. Mostly they did not occupy conquered cities but established new garrison towns nearby, and so kept their army from damaging civilian property. These towns were centred on a **mosque**, which served as the religious and public focal point of the community.

There was no centralised religious **hierarchy** that was separate from the political administration. The caliph at the head of the community, and the judges and governors under him, had combined political and legal authority over Muslims. It was during the 'Abbasid dynasty centred in Baghdad (132 AH/750 CE–750 AH/1258 CE) that ***Shari'a*** (the Islamic law) developed, and it was the ***'ulama'*** (religious scholars) who interpreted the Qur'an and the Prophet in such a way that the teachings could be applied to everyday life.

All Muslim citizens were members of a transnational *umma*, citizens of the ***dar al-Islam*** who, despite differences of interpretation, professed faith in God, his Prophet and his revelation. All were bound by the Islamic law and obliged to observe the five pillars of faith.

Sunni and Shi'i Islam

As has been said previously, the major divisions within the Muslim community began less than 30 years after the Prophet's death and the reasons for their appearance were largely political – the question of who had the gifts and the spiritual insights to guide the Muslim community.

For the Sunni (who, in 2019, numbered as many as 90 per cent of Muslims) the head of the Muslim community must be the best qualified Muslim. The Sunni claim to follow the 'right path' of Islam. For them, this 'right path' is the way based on the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the

FIGURE 5.1.6 The Age of the Caliphs, 750 CE

RESPOND

Using a contemporary atlas, identify the countries/states/territories that were part of the caliphate in 750 CE.

Prophet. For Sunni, all direct revelation from Allah was complete with Muhammad's death and is represented by the Qur'an and explained, elaborated and put into practice through the *sunna* of the Prophet.

The Shi'i (today, around 10–13 per cent of the total Muslim population) believe that only descendants of the Prophet can be invested as the leader (*imam*) of all Muslims, and they keep an official list of those who should have governed the Muslim world since the death of the Prophet. Shi'i hold that although the 12th *imam* disappeared in 874 CE, divine guidance is still available through the descendants of Muhammad and qualified scholars. *Imams* could reveal the inner meaning of the Qur'an or could add to the understanding of the revelation of Allah.

Shi'i have always been a minority in Islam. The largest group (about 74.5 million people) is in Iran, where they form over 99.5 per cent of the population. Iran is the only country to make Shi'i Islam the official religion, but there are Shi'i majorities in Lebanon and southern Iraq.

The difference between these two major variants is not one of belief, but rather of the expression of those beliefs in the fields of doctrine and theology, law and religious organisation – how Islamic history is perceived. Over time, various schools of jurisprudence have developed within Sunni and Shi'i Islam as well as offshoots or movements within the schools.

Alamy Stock Photo/Bridgeman/Pictures from History

FIGURE 5.1.7 Muhammad designating his son-in-law Ali as his successor, from a late sixteenth-century Shi'i manuscript, *Safavid Persia*. According to the Shi'i tradition, Muhammad formally designated his son-in-law 'Ali as his successor at Gadir Khum, an oasis located midway between the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, in the Arabian Hijaz. The Sunni tradition disputes this.

RESPOND

Investigate the event at Gadir Khum that is depicted in Figure 5.1.7. Sunni and Shi'i both accept the words that Muhammad said, so what is their disagreement?

Weblink
Hadith of the Pond of Khum

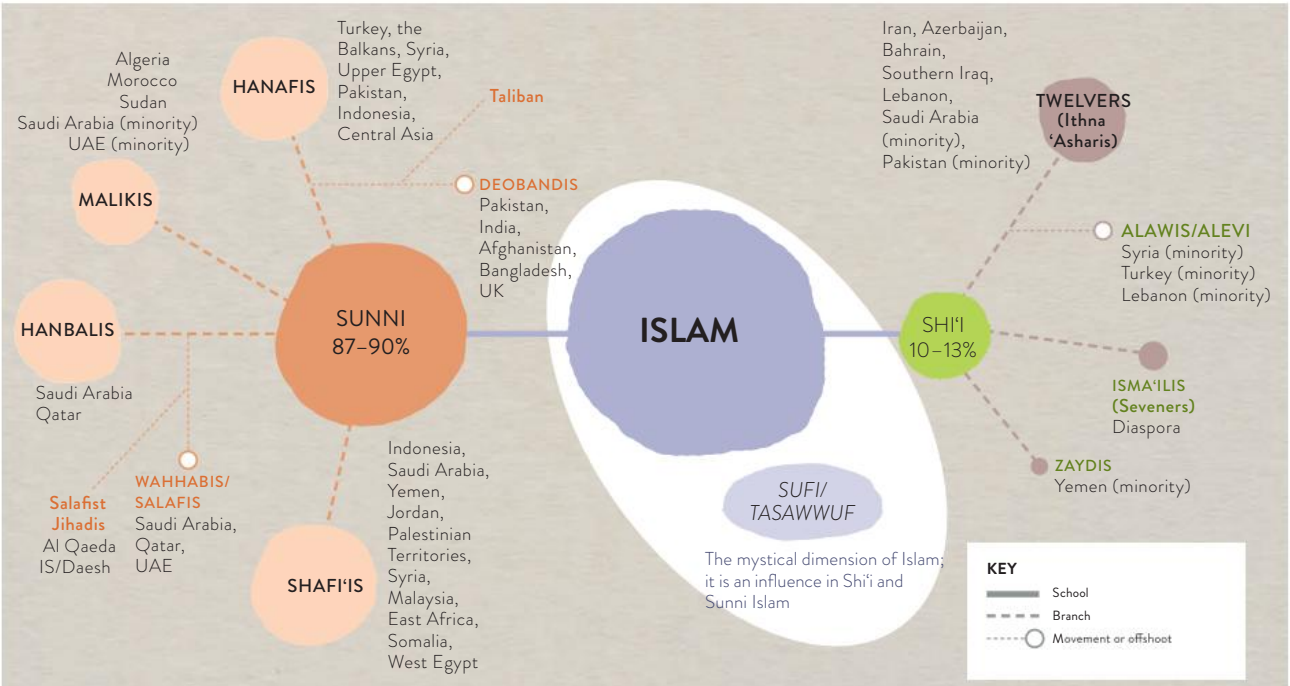

FIGURE 5.1.8 Major schools and movements of Islam. This diagram shows the countries in which these schools of law and their movements are found and their relative size. The world population of Muslims in 2020 was 1.9 billion.

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REVIEW

1 What was the role of the caliph in the time of Muhammad? Has this role changed in more recent times?
2 Construct an infographic to organise your information about the four 'rightly guided' caliphs and the period following Muhammad's death in 632 CE. In your infographic, outline the development of Islam after Muhammad's death and identify the contribution of the 'rightly guided' caliphs.
3 In small groups, discuss the statement: 'The expansion of the Muslim world was so successful because of the way it was administered.' Share your ideas with other groups.
4 Explain why the question of Muhammad's successor was so important after his death. Why is it still important to Shi'i Muslims?
5 How would you **account** for the emergence of the Sunni and Shi'i expressions within Islam?

EXTENSION

1 Re-examine the map in Figure 5.1.6 and on it identify the following locations: Isfahan, Basra, Mosul, Herat, Kabul, Damascus, Toledo. Are these locations relevant to Muslims today?
2 Conduct online research to investigate the assassination of 'Ali and his son Husayn. Identify who was responsible for the assassinations and describe how Shi'i remember these events.
3 Construct a timeline that contains all the major periods, people and events in the history of Islam up until the beginning of the Sultanate period in 1281. Explain the relevance of these events to the expansion of Islam.

Worksheet
The origins and spread of Islam

5.2 Principal beliefs

NOTE

This section takes a general approach to the principal beliefs of Islam. Where there are major differences of interpretation and emphases in the two major orientations – Sunni and Shi'i – this is noted.

GLOSSARY

'Aqida ul-Islam The beliefs or creed of Islam.
shirk The opposite of ***tawhid***, *shirk* means to believe and worship another god or gods alongside the one true God, Allah. *Shirk* is the worst and only unpardonable sin in Islam.
tawhid The declaration of the unity of God. Allah is the one true God, the sole Creator and Lord of the universe. All divine attributes belong to Allah and all human worship is to be directed to Allah.

5.2.1 The articles of faith

> The Messenger believeth in what hath been revealed to him from his Lord, as do the men of faith. Each one (of them) believeth in Allah, His angels, His books, and His messengers. 'We make no distinction (they say) between one and another of His messengers.' And they say: 'We hear, and we obey: (We seek) Thy forgiveness, our Lord, and to Thee is the end of all journeys.'
>
> *Surat al-Bakara* 2:285 'The Cow'

This verse from the Qur'an sums up the main articles of faith (or doctrines) in Islam (***'Aqida ul-Islam***), which it says have been revealed or 'sent down' from Allah. It speaks of belief in the following:

1 Existence and unity of God – *tawhid*
2 Existence of angels – *mala'ika*
3 God's revelation to humans in holy books – *kutubu'llah*
4 God appointing prophets to all people – *rusuluhu*
5 Resurrection and life after death – *al-Akhira*
6 God's will and human freedom of choice – *al-Qadr*

Existence and unity of God

> Say: He is God, the One and Only; God, the Eternal, Absolute; He begets not, nor is He begotten; and there is none like unto Him.
>
> *Surat al-Ikhlas* 112:1–4 'Oneness'

The first article of faith is ***tawhid*** – the belief in the oneness and unity of Allah. If there is only one God, then he alone is the creator of all that exists, but was not himself created; he is 'The Eternal'. *Tawhid* has some far-reaching implications in Islam. Muslims should worship Allah alone; no one else is worthy of worship. No other being should be associated with Allah. The sin of idolatry is called ***shirk*** (attributing Allah's divinity and qualities to someone else), and is regarded by Muslims as the worst of all sins.

FIGURE 5.2.1 An example of Islamic square Kufic script. This is *Shahada*, the declaration of faith: 'I testify that there is no god but God. And I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God' – the first pillar of faith (see page 92).

The 99 names of Allah given in the Qur'an to describe the attributes of Allah (for example, the Compassionate, the Giver of All Things, the All-knowing) are often written on the walls as part of the decoration of a mosque.

Existence of angels

> All praise is due to Allah, the Originator of the heavens and the earth, the Maker of the angels, messengers flying on wings, two, and three, and four; He increases in creation what He pleases; surely Allah has power over all things.
>
> *Surat al-Fatir* 35:1 'The Creator'

A belief in angels is central to the religion of Islam, beginning with the belief that the Qur'an was dictated to the Prophet Muhammad by the Archangel Jibril (Gabriel). The angels are created from light (*noor*), have no gender and do not eat or drink. They often serve as God's messengers as Jibril did. Jibril, also called the holy spirit, is the greatest of all God's angels as he was the vehicle for the revelation of the Qur'an.

Other great angels are Izra'il (Azreal), the angel of death, whose task is to separate a person's soul from their body at death; Mika'il (Michael), who with Jibril instructed Muhammad; and Israfil, whose task is to sound the trumpet on the Day of Resurrection.

Each person has two recording or guardian angels who record their good and bad deeds, and these angels are acknowledged during daily *salat* (prayer).

Belief in prophets and the Books of Allah

> We have sent you inspiration, as We sent it to Noah and the Messengers after him: We sent inspiration to Abraham, Isma'il, Isaac, Jacob and the Tribes, to Jesus, Job, Jonah, Aaron, and Solomon, and to David We gave the Psalms. Of some apostles We have already told you the story; of others We have not; – and to Moses Allah spoke direct; – Messengers who gave good news as well as warning, that mankind, after (the coming) of the apostles, should have no argument against Allah. For Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise.
>
> *Surat al-Nisa* 4:163–165 'The Women'

A prophet is someone through whom Allah speaks. The Qur'an names 25 prophets, but tradition says there have been more than 124 000. God sent a prophet to every nation on earth. *Nabi* is the word used for most of these prophets, but *rasul* describes a prophet who has delivered a holy book. These are known as the Messengers of Allah. Belief in prophethood is closely linked with belief in holy books – *kutubu'llah*, the Books of Allah.

Five prophets are considered the most important as they received special revelations and performed their work at a pivotal time in history. They are Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. For Muslims, Muhammad is Allah's last prophet, known as the 'Seal of the Prophets' (*Surat al-Ahzab* 33:40 'The Clans'), who brought the final message that has been preserved intact in the Qur'an. This is seen as the final and complete message from Allah to humanity. Along with the Qur'an, the holy books that contain Allah's revelation to these revered prophets are the Hebrew Bible and the Christian gospels.

bpk / Museum für Islamische Kunst, SMB / Jürgen Liepe

FIGURE 5.2.2 **The Prophet Muhammad ascending to heaven with the prophet Moses on the left and the Archangel Gabriel (Jibril) in the centre**

Resurrection and life after death

> So consider the signs of God's mercy; how He gives life to the earth after its death. Indeed, it is He Who gives life to the dead, for He is powerful over all things.
>
> *Surat al-Rum* 30:50 'Romans'

> O soul that art at rest, return to your Lord, well-pleased (with Him), well-pleasing (Him). So enter among My servants, and enter into My garden.
>
> *Surat al-Fajr* 89:27–30 'The Dawn'

Islam sees the real universe – more than what is visible – and that 'real' universe continues after death. Belief in *al-Akhira* is so crucial to Islam that any doubts about it amount to the denial of Allah. The Qur'an states that for each person after death, there is an intermediate period where souls wait for resurrection (*Surat al-Mu'minun* 23:99–100 'The Believers'). When, at some time in the future, this present world ends, Allah will call these souls and they will be brought to judgement before Allah.

Every human who has ever lived will be rewarded for their goodness or punished for their sins. God's forgiveness will manifest in abundance, but the only sin that will not eventually be forgiven by Allah is the deliberate worship of other gods (*shirk*). While there is a place for the wicked called *jahannam* (hell), ruled over by *Iblis* (Satan), depictions of which in the Qur'an are particularly graphic, believers and good people will be rewarded forever in *jannah*

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(paradise). Because death marks the beginning of eternal life in Islam, the funeral is highly significant (see Chapter 13, pages 288–90).

God's will and human freedom of choice

> And with Him are the keys of the unseen treasures – none knows them but He; and He knows what is in the land and the sea, and there falls not a leaf but He knows it, nor a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything green nor dry but (it is all) in a clear book.
>
> *Surat al-An'am* 6:59 'The Cattle'

Although Muslims are held responsible for their own sins, they also believe that nothing happens unless it is the will of Allah. *In sha-'Allah* (meaning 'If God is willing') is a frequent statement that shows their recognition of his power and acceptance of his will for them – people cannot do anything unless approved by God; however, they still have a free will to choose. In other words, while Allah knows the past and future actions of every person, individuals have the free will to act for good or for evil; he does not force them to do anything – they do have control over their fate. Islamic scholars have had to attempt to reconcile the two notions: that humans are fully responsible for their final happiness or suffering, and that Allah knows, wills and creates everything. The nominal position is that humans choose their actions but God creates them.

Shi'i Muslims do not believe in absolute predestination since they consider it incompatible with God's justice. Neither do they believe in absolute free will since that contradicts God being all-knowing and all-powerful – omnipotent. Rather, they believe in 'a way between the two ways' – believing in free will, but within the boundaries set for it by God and exercised with his permission.

REVIEW

1. Define *tawhid* and **outline** the implications of tawhid for Muslim belief.
2. **Examine** the role of the Books of Allah and prophecy in Islam. In your examination, explain why Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses and Jesus are seen as 'special', and outline the implication of Muslim belief that Muhammad is Allah's last prophet.
3. What do Muslims believe about angels?
4. **Outline** the principal Muslim beliefs about life after death and predestination.
5. Construct a mind map to explore the interrelationship of the principal beliefs of Islam.

EXTENSION

1. Conduct online research to identify 10 of the 'Ninety-nine Beautiful Names of Allah' found in the Qur'an, which describe the attributes and qualities of Allah.
2. Depictions of the Prophet Muhammad are controversial. Examine the images of the Prophet Muhammad in this chapter, discuss whether it is appropriate for these images to be in this chapter. The weblink will give you some background information.

Weblink
History of Muhammad images

5.3 Sacred texts and writings

GLOSSARY

linguistics The study of the principles of language.

sahih An Arabic word that means 'valid' and is applied to the *hadith* reports that have been critically analysed and authenticated. Collections of such *hadith* are also given the name *sahih* by the consensus of scholars.

sunna All the sayings, actions and approvals attributed to Muhammad that have become models to be followed by Muslims; the normal lifestyle of the Prophet that became a unifying bond for all parts of the Islamic *umma* (community).

syntax The structural components of sentences and phrases in a language.

The Qur'an is the central sacred reality of Islam. The words of the Qur'an are the first and last sounds that a Muslim hears in this life. As the direct word of God, the interpreter of the universe and human being, and the embodiment of God's will, the Qur'an is considered the essential guide for the life of Muslims. It is the universal source of all Islamic beliefs, practices and ethics. Both the intellectual and spiritual aspects of Islam as well as Islamic Law have their source in the Qur'an. The second source complementary to the Qur'an is the ***sunna*** of the Prophet recorded as *hadith*.

The Qur'an – its revelation and the writing of the text

The Qur'an was revealed orally to Muhammad over a 23-year period. The revelation was usually tied to certain events, the questions of believers or non-believers, and needs that arose as early Muslim society developed. Sometimes a few verses, at other times whole chapters, were revealed in a variety of ways (*Surat al-Shura* 42:51 'Counsel').

The Qur'an consists of 114 *sura* subdivided into 6238 *ayat* (verses). The *sura* are generally arranged according to length, not date of revelation. The longer *sura*, representing the later Medinan revelations, precede the shorter, earlier Meccan ones. The second *sura*, *al-Baqara*, is the longest – 'the Qur'an in miniature' – and outlines the *'Aqida ul-Islam* and *Arkan al-Islam* (see pages 85 and 92).

Muslims do not speak of Muhammad writing the Qur'an, but of his receiving it and reciting it. Muhammad employed scribes (secretaries) to record the words of revelation placed in his heart. At the death of Muhammad, a good deal of the Qur'an was already written down, though not as a volume, for while he was alive new *sura*

were constantly being added. Numerous companions learnt a great deal of it by heart, for in that era professional memorisers who could repeat the whole of a poet's compositions had long been recognised as indispensable members of Arabian society.

It was under 'Uthman, the third caliph, that an authorised version of the Qur'an in the dialect of Mecca was established. 'Uthman's edition to this day remains the authoritative word of God to Muslims.

There is only one text of the Qur'an accepted by all schools of Islamic thought and there are no variants. And since Muslims believe that the Qur'an's Arabic language is revealed, all Muslims, regardless of their national language, memorise and recite the Qur'an in Arabic whether they fully understand it or not. Arabic is the sacred language of Islam because, in a very real sense, it is the language God chose to reveal his word. In Islam, Arabic has remained the language of the Qur'an and of religious learning. Strictly speaking, the Qur'an should only be recited in Arabic, whether the reader is from Tunis, Riyadh, Dhaka or Sydney.

In every part of the world, Muslim children memorise the Arabic words of the Qur'an. If they do not understand Arabic, they are taught the meaning of the words they learn.

> In plain Arabic speech.
>
> *Surat al-Shu'ara* 26:195 'The Poets'

Not only the language of the Qur'an, but a living language

In addition to its place as a religious text, the Qur'an was crucial to the development of Arabic **linguistics**, and provided the impetus for the development of Arabic grammar, vocabulary and **syntax**.

The need to preserve the accuracy and pronunciation of the verses (*ayat*) of the Qur'an led to the refining of the Arabic alphabet and the codification of Arabic grammar in the second and third Islamic centuries. Furthermore, the need for Muslims, whether native or non-native speakers of Arabic, to memorise and recite verses from the Qur'an in their daily worship has helped to keep the Arabic language alive.

The existence of scientific words of Arabic origin in European languages is attributed to the pioneering efforts of Muslim scholars in the fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry and medicine. Muslim scholars had to coin an entirely new terminology to introduce their innovations; for example, algebra, the algorithm, alkali, alchemy, alcohol.

In addition to scientific terms, European languages contain many everyday words of Arabic origin; for example, coffee, sugar, saffron, admiral, arsenal. And then there are Arabic numerals.

RESPOND

What other everyday words of Arabic origin can you locate?

Recitations of the Qur'an – *Tilawat al-Qur'an*

Muslims are highly recommended to recite or read the Qur'an at all times, and to read it through completely at least once a year. In a *hadith* by 'A'isha she said, 'The house in which *al-Qur'an* is recited is seen by the heavenly world as the stars are seen by the earthly world.'

Every chapter, except *Surat al-Tawba* 'The Repentance' (Chapter 9), commences with *Bi'smi'llahi–rrahmani-rrahim* – 'In the Name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate' – and it is a habit to say *Bi'smi'llah* before reading and before every good act. For instance, if you want to read, it becomes 'I read in the Name of Allah …'; if you want to eat, it becomes 'I eat in the Name of Allah …' The best time to read or recite the Qur'an is during *salat* (daily prayer).

Getty Images/Asanka Ratnayake

FIGURE 5.3.1 A mother and her daughter read the Qur'an following prayers, Melbourne, May 2020. The first chapter of the Qur'an, *Surat al-Fatiha* 'The Opening', is the first *sura* that Muslim children learn by heart and use as a prayer.

RESPOND

Write out *Surat al-Fatiha* and **explain** why Muslims believe it contains the whole of the Qur'an in principle.

The Qur'an is treated with the greatest respect. Muslims will not open it unless they have had ablution, a ritual washing of hands, arms, face and feet (*Surat al-Waqi'a* 56:76–79 'The Happening'). They hold it above the waist and no other book is ever placed above it on a bookshelf. It is recited and chanted during the daily ritual prayer. All observant Muslims know some chapters by heart, and some memorise the whole book.

> Muhammad said: 'He who recites the Qur'an well and clearly is equal in rank to the Angels who record creation's deeds. These Angels are gracious, honourable and of lofty rank. He who finds difficulty in reciting the Qur'an will obtain a double reward.'
>
> *Hadith* of Bukhari and Muslim

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Hadith – the *sunna* of the Prophet

The Arabic word *hadith* means a 'spoken word' or a 'saying'. In the Islamic context, it refers to the recorded sayings, actions and approvals of the Prophet Muhammad. The books in which these are compiled are called '*hadith* books'.

Most Muslims accept six collections of *hadith* as being the most trustworthy. These are known as 'The Accurate Six' and were collected within the first three centuries of Islam. The two most authoritative books are called ***sahih***, meaning 'sound'; they are *Sahih* al-Bukhari and *Sahih* Muslim. The collectors of these books have critically analysed reported *hadith* and only included the ones they could confirm as authentic.

For Shi'i Islam, the authenticity of *hadith* is guaranteed by its transmission through 'Ali and Shi'i *imams*; they have their own five collections and they also have sayings of their *imams*.

Extracts that demonstrate principal beliefs

Both the Qur'an and *hadith* lay down correct behaviour for the good ordering of Islamic society. In *Surat Ghafir* 40:1–12 'The Forgiving One' or 'The Believer', there is a series of teachings about acting with good intentions and encouraging behaviour that brings harmony to the community.

The following *hadith* also underline the importance of acting with justice.

> One who shows no mercy to our young or who cannot acknowledge the rights of our old is not one of us.
>
> Tirmizi

> One who believes in Allah and the Last Day should do good unto guests. One who believes in Allah and the Last Day should do good unto neighbours. One who believes in Allah and the Last Day should say something good, if not keep silent.
>
> Bukhari

> A tough person is not one who can fight. A tough person is one who can control himself when he is angry.
>
> Bukhari; Muslim

REVIEW

1. Explain what is meant by the statement: 'Muslims do not speak of Muhammad writing the Qur'an, but of his receiving it and reciting it.'
2. What has kept the Arabic language alive?
3. Recall the two most authoritative collections of *hadith*.
4. Explain the relationship between the Qur'an and *hadith*.
5. **Identify** three key textual references that demonstrate the importance of the Qur'an to all Muslims.
6. Throughout the previous sections of this chapter there are extracts from the Qur'an and *hadith*. **Examine** these extracts and explain how they **demonstrate** the principal beliefs of Islam.
7. Give three reasons to demonstrate how the Qur'an acts as a unifying focus within the Muslim community throughout the world.

EXTENSION

1. Identify those collections of *hadith* known as 'The Accurate Six'. Which of these is not accepted by Shi'i and why?
2. Discuss with a Muslim adherent the different ways sacred writings from both Qur'anic and *hadith* literature are used.
3. Use the weblink provided and investigate how Islamic scholars distinguished the authentic reports of how Muhammad lived his life from the less authentic or false reports. Present the result of your investigation as an infographic.

Weblink
Science of Hadith

5.4 Core ethical teachings

Islamic jurisprudence

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

halal That which is permitted or lawful.

haram That which is forbidden and unlawful, also sinful.

ijma' The consensus of Muslim religious scholars (*ulama*) in a particular generation.

'ilm usul al-fiqh The science of law or the science of interpretation (jurisprudence). The Arabic word *fiqh* means knowledge, understanding and comprehension.

qiyas Comparative analogy – a source of law or legal tool where existing rulings are extended to cover new situations when there is no specific mention in the Qur'an or *hadith*.

Shari'a Islamic law based on the Qur'an and the *sunna* of the Prophet.

▷ The application of Islamic ethics to specific issues is addressed in Chapter 13, pages 282–7.

The ethical teachings of Islam reflect how the beliefs and teachings of Islam influence human behaviour. Islam places very strong emphasis on the importance of right action, and the laws that govern actions fall roughly into two categories. On the one hand, there is that body of law that governs the behaviour of Muslims towards God. These include laws about prayers, fasting, almsgiving, pilgrimages and the like. The most important of these laws are described in the *Arkan al-Islam*, the five pillars. The second type of Islamic law directly regulates the ways in which human beings treat one another. For Muslims, there is no clear distinction between the sacred and the secular.

> For each we have appointed a divine law and a traced out way.
>
> *Surat al-Maeda* 5:48 'The Table'

A Muslim's whole life is guided by ***Shari'a***, which literally means the 'the clear well-trodden path to a waterhole', but is more often called 'the straight path' and is based on the teachings of the Qur'an, the life of Prophet Muhammad, and the expertise of Islamic scholars.

> The overriding principle of *Shari'a* is justice. It's very broad and includes ordinary ways of life, for example how you behave towards other people. Religious duties like prayer and fasting and giving to charity – which is very important. … And it includes things like commercial law, inheritance law, family law.
>
> Dr Jamila Hussain, University of Technology Sydney, 2014

Muslims must therefore know what is obligatory, *fard* (religious duties – the five pillars), what actions are ***halal*** and what actions are ***haram***. *Shari'a* encompasses both public and private life. It is a reflection of Allah's guidance for Muslims, whatever situation they may find themselves in.

Guidelines for the Muslim life place great stress on the individual as well as the community (*umma*).

> You should do what is natural.
>
> You should promote unity and harmony.
>
> You should support the community of Muslims.
>
> You should obey the law (*Shari'a*) as found in the Qur'an and *hadith*, and as interpreted by recognised Muslim scholars.
>
> Justice, compassion and generosity are frequently given as qualities of a truly human life.
>
> No one (truly) believes until what is wished for his brother is what is wished for himself.
>
> From al-Nawawi's Forty Hadith

© Australian Halal

FIGURE 5.4.1 The *halal* logo. This logo on Australian red meat products lets Muslims know that the animal has been slaughtered according to *Shari'a*, and that the meat is therefore *halal* and permissible to eat.

The process of Islamic jurisprudence

Shari'a has four sources from which to draw its guiding principles:

- the Qur'an
- the *sunna* and *hadith*
- ***ijma'***
- legal precedent or ***qiyas***.

The Qur'an is the most important authority for Muslims, followed by the *sunna* of the Prophet as found in the officially accepted written accounts of what he said, did and approved – *hadith*. The *sunna* confirmed the rulings of the Qur'an and detailed some of the concepts, laws and practical matters that are briefly stated in the Qur'an. For example, the Qur'an instructs 'Establish the service of worship', but doesn't specify how to worship. By describing how the Prophet Muhammad prayed, the *sunna* provides details of what the Qur'an instructed.

The *sunna* and *hadith* are complementary sources to the Qur'an but may not be interpreted or applied in any way that is inconsistent with the Qur'an. ***'Ilm usul al-fiqh*** refers to the science of drawing legal rulings by Muslim scholars, based on their knowledge of *Shari'a*. The science of *fiqh* started with the expansion of Islam in the second century after *hijra* when the Islamic community faced several issues that were not explicitly covered in the Qur'an and *sunna*.

It is in this area of the authority to make rulings that the greatest difference between Sunni and Shi'i is manifested – the interpretation, by 'recognised Muslim scholars', of the *hadith* and *Shari'a* on how Muslims should define and govern themselves.

NOTE

There are five distinct schools of jurisprudence in the Islamic world today: four in the Sunni tradition (Hanafis, Hanbalis, Shafi'is and Malikis) and one in Shi'i ('Twelvers'). Two other legal schools that share the 'Twelvers' origin are the Zaydis and the Ismai'lis.

▷ See Figure 5.1.8 on page 84.

The consensus of Muslim scholars (*ijma'*) is used to make rulings about things not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an or *hadith*. If there is consensus over a ruling, chances are it is right as it is impossible for every scholar to agree over a wrong interpretation.

The primary benefit of *ijma'* is that it allows Muslim scholars to make legal rulings that provide guidelines on a variety of modern issues. This gives Islam the flexibility to be applicable in all times and places, and among all peoples. All rulings of these scholars must be derived from the teachings and principles of the Qur'an and/or the *sunna*.

While *Shari'a* is enshrined in the Qur'an and unchanging, *fiqh* can vary according to the situation at hand, meaning Islamic law can adapt and remain applicable to modern life.

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DID YOU KNOW?

A *fatwa* is a non-binding legal opinion or ruling issued by a recognised Islamic legal scholar. A *fatwa* will be issued at the request of an individual or judge or by a government authority or corporate entity to resolve an issue where Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) is unclear at that point in time. Contemporary *fatwas* consider social and economic practices that challenge boundaries in the twenty-first century, including the legitimacy of genetically modified crops, organ donation, surrogacy and cloning.

Legal precedent, or *qiyas*, is a legal ruling arrived at through a process of deductive reasoning or analogy. For example, the Qur'an prohibits the consumption of alcohol, but does not mention drugs. Based on reason (*qiyas*), drugs are also illegal in Islam by extension because the common denominator, or reason for prohibition for both alcohol and drugs, is intoxication and harmful effects on health.

While Islamic **ethics** are articulated in *Shari'a* and this provides the common principles of life for all Muslims, there are some areas where Muslims differ in its interpretation. Shi'i have traditionally opposed the principal of *ijma'*; they believe that God always provides a guide, first the *imams* and then *ayatollahs* or experienced Shi'i scholars who continue to make new binding interpretations directly from the Qur'an.

For Sunni, rulings based on the consensus of the community of Muslim scholars are usually binding. All the schools are similar, but some take a more literal approach to texts while others prefer a loose interpretation.

Decision-making based on collective consultation (*shura*) is very important in Islam to minimise individual error in judgement, and *shura* ranks as a principle in political, social and religious affairs. It is not permissible, however, to use *shura* with core beliefs and practices of Islam that are clearly and firmly established, such as belief in the unity of God or fasting in the month of Ramadan.

REVIEW

1. What is *Shari'a*? What are the central characteristics and conditions of *Shari'a*?
2. In point form, **outline** the principal ethical teachings within Islam.
3. Recall the four sources for Islamic ethics.
4. Demonstrate how each of the four sources is used in determining what is acceptable under Islamic Law.
5. How does *Shari'a* relate to the beliefs and practices of Islam?
6. Explain why there can be different interpretations of *Shari'a*.
7. Analyse the implications of the ethical teachings of Islam for the everyday lives of Muslims.

EXTENSION

1. Identify what is *haram* for Muslims to eat. What is *halal*?
2. Using the Internet and/or other resources, investigate three examples of actions that are forbidden (*haram*) to Muslims and three examples of actions that are permitted (*halal*).
3. As a Muslim, propose how you would follow 'the guidelines for life' (see page 90) in your everyday life.

5.5 Expressions of faith

The five pillars of faith

The Muslim goal of devotional submission to God is put into practice through *Arkan al-Islam* – the five pillars of Islam. Throughout the Muslim world, these five duties are performed by practising Muslims and are a unifying force in Islam.

Shahada – declaration of faith

The first duty of a Muslim is to publicly declare his or her faith: 'I testify that there is no god but The God. And I testify that Muhammad is the Messenger of God.' This declaration is called *Kalima*, which is simply the Arabic word for sentence, any sentence. When a person utters this sentence in front of other Muslims, he or she is accepted as Muslim.

Salat – daily prayer

Salat is obligatory five times each day for every Muslim 'who is sane, mature and, in the case of women, free from menstruation and confinement due to childbirth'. It is the distinctive mark of believers and it provides them with opportunities for direct communion with God five times a day, helping them to avoid too much attachment to non-essential things. It is also the foremost of the basic conditions for the success of the believers.

> Successful indeed are the believers who are humble in their prayers.
>
> *Surat al-Mu'minun* 23:1–2 'The Believers'

Zakat – obligatory (religious) almsgiving

> But the firm in knowledge among them and the believers believe in what has been revealed to you and what was revealed before you, and those who keep up prayers and those who give the poor-rate (*zakat*) and the believers in Allah and the last day, these it is whom We will give a mighty reward.
>
> *Surat al-Nisa* 4:162 'The Women'

The payment of *zakat* is a compulsory welfare contribution by economically well-off Muslims for the needy, wherever they may live. It is paid once a year based on their cash savings, and gold, silver and jewellery if their savings are

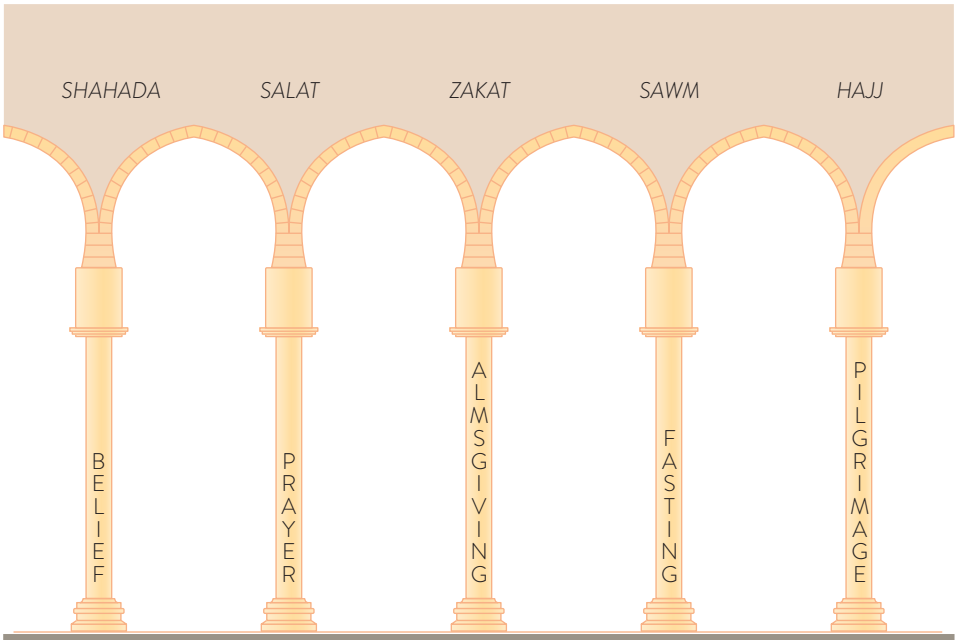

FIGURE 5.5.1 The five pillars of faith – *Arkan al-Islam*

above a certain threshold. It is also paid on cattle and agricultural products. The minimum amount of alms (*zakat*) obligatory for a Muslim is 1/40 (2.5 per cent) of excess personal wealth. Once collected, *zakat* can only be distributed to poor, needy and other rightful beneficiaries.

Zakat is an act of devotional duty of worship and obedience, and is paid to gain Allah's favour. In Islam, wealth belongs to Allah – he is the real owner and Muslims are the trustees of his wealth. In addition to the annual *zakat*, the Qur'an encourages Muslims to make voluntary contributions to help the poor and needy. This payment is *sadaqa* (charity). At the end of Ramadan, Muslims are asked to make a small donation to allow the poor to celebrate the end of fasting.

Sawm – fasting in Ramadan

> O you who believe! fasting is prescribed for you, as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard (against evil).
>
> *Surat al-Baqara* 2:183 'The Cow'

Muslim adults are required to fast from dawn to sunset each day during the month of Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic calendar. This means a Muslim should not eat, drink, smoke or have sexual intercourse during the hours of fasting. They eat a light meal before dawn, then go without food or drink all day until sunset. As well as fasting, they should spend time, where possible, in prayer and meditation.

The month of Ramadan is of special significance to all Muslims. The Qur'an was first revealed during Ramadan. It is a time of spiritual focus, moderation, forgiveness, patience, kindness and concern for the welfare of others. All Muslims desire to achieve a good disposition through self-control, and fasting in Ramadan is designed to achieve this. Although all adult Muslims are expected to fast, there are some exceptions. Those who are too old or sick or people on long journeys do not have to fast; nor do women who are pregnant, breastfeeding or menstruating. They can make up the missed days later.

Hajj – pilgrimage

Hajj is the fifth pillar of Islam. It is the pilgrimage to the Ka'ba in Mecca, the symbolic house of Allah dedicated to belief and devotion to one God, that must be undertaken at least once in a lifetime by those Muslims who can afford it. *Hajj* is performed during the period 8–13 *Dhu'l-Hijja*, the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar. During this period all the barriers of language, territory, colour, race and culture disappear and the bond of faith is uppermost. Muslims reflect on their lives and collectively ask for forgiveness.

> Perform the pilgrimage and the visit (to Mecca) for Allah.
>
> *Surat al-Baqara* 2:196 'The Cow'

▷ For more information on *Hajj*, see Chapter 13, pages 290–2.

REVIEW

1. Define the following terms and write one sentence about each:
   - a *Shahada*
   - b *Salat*
   - c *Zakat*
   - d *Sawm*
   - e *Hajj*.
2. Why do you think these five are called 'pillars of faith'?
3. In two paragraphs, outline the importance of *umma* in Islam.
4. Investigate the connection between the five pillars and the ultimate goal of Islam as submission to Allah. Summarise your conclusions in point form.
5. Explain how Muslim belief is put into practice through *Arkan al-Islam*.

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Salat in the daily life of Muslims

GLOSSARY

rak'a (plural, ***rak'at***) Literally means 'bowing'. The *rak'a* is a 'unit of prayer' in which the worshipper recites a number of ritual prayers and invocations while standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting. The number of *rak'at* performed varies from prayer time to prayer time, as does whether the recitation is silent or said aloud.

> Thee alone we worship; Thee alone we ask for help. Show us the straight path.
>
> *Surat al-Fatiha* 1:5, 6 'The Opening'

Salat is highly formalised and regulated in its cycles of spoken formulas and body postures. The set words in Arabic are recited from memory and these words are accompanied by actions – standing, kneeling and bowing in a set pattern. Before performing each ritual prayer, Muslims must perform *wudu'* by washing hands, feet and face, and rinsing the nostrils and ears (body, clothes and the place of prayer must be clean). Traditionally, women cover their hair. Each *salat* must be offered at or during its proper time and while facing in the direction of the sacred mosque in Mecca (*qibla*).

Salat underlines the belief that faith and works are inseparable. It consists not only in the turning of the heart and mind and soul to Allah, but also in a series of movements involving the entire body. Body and mind are inseparable. All must be devoted to Allah.

There are five obligatory (*fard*) prayers in a day and each prayer contains a set number of ***rak'at***:

- *Salat al-Fajr*, the morning prayer – two *rak'at* said aloud
- *Salat al-Zuhr*, the noon prayer – four silent *rak'at*
- *Salat al-'Asr*, the afternoon prayer – four silent *rak'at*
- *Salat al-Maghrib*, the evening or sunset prayer – three *rak'at*, two said aloud and one silently
- *Salat al-'Isha'*, the night prayer – four *rak'at*, two said aloud, two said silently.

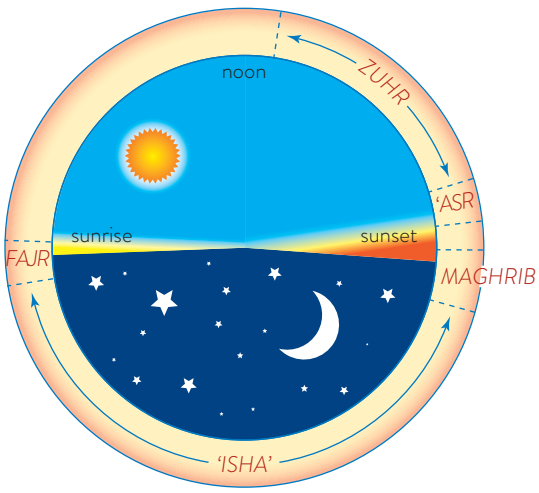

FIGURE 5.5.2 The timing of the daily prayers

Thus, the observant Muslim must perform a minimum of 17 *rak'at* every day. Prayer five times a day may seem excessive to some people. In reality, it only takes a maximum of 20 minutes in a day. If, however, a person does the optional cycles, the time taken can double.

Although it is preferable to perform the ritual prayer with other people and in a mosque, led by an *imam*, a Muslim may pray almost anywhere – in the workplace, at school, in the home, and at universities.

Before each *salat* the worshipper recites *iqama* (private call to prayer) and expresses the intention (*niyya*) to perform *salat*. For example:

> I intend to offer the four *rak'at* of the *'Isha'* prayer and face *qibla* for the sake of Allah and Allah alone.

Surat al-Fatiha, the first *sura* of the Qur'an, is always recited twice during each *salat*. To complete every second *rak'a* and at the end of any time of prayer, when all *rak'at* have been completed, *Tashahhud* ('Praise be to God') is recited while seated and then the other Muslims in the congregation, as well as the worshipper's recording or guardian angels, are acknowledged by looking over the right shoulder (towards the angel recording good deeds), then the left (towards the angel recording wrongful deeds), and saying each time: 'Peace and blessings of God be upon you.'

After this, personal prayers, *du'a*, are said and, if praying in a group, each person stands and individually greets the others saying, 'May God receive our prayers.' Depending upon the number of *rak'at* for a particular prayer time, certain postures and prayers will be repeated.

There are differences between Sunni and Shi'i in some details of *salat*. Both acknowledge the five daily prayers but Shi'i are allowed to combine noon and afternoon prayers and evening and night prayers and perform them in three distinct times, not five. Another difference is that, traditionally, Shi'i will only pray on natural rock, the ground (if it is not planted with something edible and/or something from which clothing can be made), or rugs made of dry, grass-like material. Sunni allow prostration on anything that is clean. Shi'i also pray with their hands hanging down their sides in standing position, not folded across their navel (see prayer postures in Figure 5.5.3).

Only on Friday (at noon – *salat al-Zuhr*) do Muslims have to pray in congregation in a mosque. After the call to prayer, the *imam* gives a sermon and then they pray together. In some Muslim countries, Friday is a holiday – the first part of the weekend. Although women can attend the Friday prayers, this is optional for them. If they do, there is a separate section (often an upstairs gallery) for them.

Apart from the five daily prayers and the Friday prayers, there are two special festive prayers that are called *'Id* prayers. One is straight after the month of fasting (Ramadan) and the other during the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*) when Muslims gather together in large numbers. Whatever the prayer, and whenever the prayer, *salat* follows the same ritual.

Worksheet
Islamic calendar of feasts

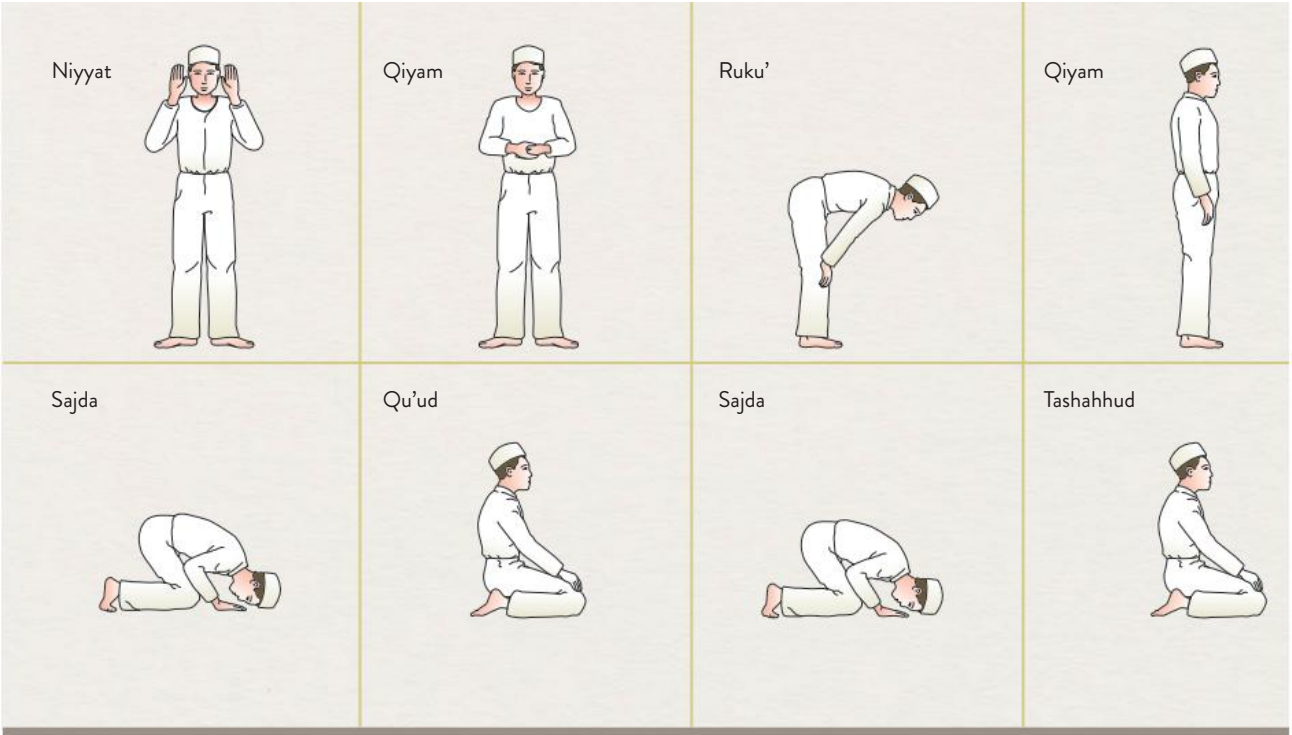

FIGURE 5.5.3 Body postures for ritual prayer

Jihad

Jihad means 'to strive or struggle' in the way of Allah, and is often referred to as the sixth pillar of Islam by some Muslim scholars, although it was given no such official status by the Prophet Muhammad.

Jihad is a notion that Westerners often misunderstand. The term 'holy war', which is often used to mean *jihad*, was coined in Europe during the Crusades, meaning a war against Muslims. The term does not have a counterpart in Islamic terminology, and *jihad* is certainly not its translation.

All Muslims are obliged to wage a spiritual *jihad* – the struggle within the Muslim community and within each person against evil. It describes the effort that Muslims must make to do Allah's will every day of their lives. It means fighting all the evil thoughts and desires within ourselves, such as greed, envy, lust and laziness. This 'greater' *jihad* demands sacrifice – sacrifice of one's time, skills and money.

The 'lesser' *jihad* is the struggle against external evils. It is a war fought in the last resort after all peaceful attempts have failed. It is not an aggressive war. The Qur'an teaches that it should only be fought by Muslims in self-defence or in defence of Islam. *Jihad* was initially necessary for the survival of the early Muslim community in Medina and was the means whereby, in the first expansion period, Islam annexed the neighbouring areas of the Middle East from two large hostile empires. Even in that setting, *jihad* was only feasible when there were valid and legally justifiable reasons and a reasonable chance of success.

REVIEW

1. Recall the five obligatory daily prayers of Islam and the time of day for each prayer.
2. Define the role of *salat* in the daily life of Muslims.
3. Describe the importance of Friday prayer and *salat* in Islam.
4. Identify two references from the Qur'an that demonstrate the importance of prayer for Muslims.
5. Evaluate the statement: 'It is impossible to call oneself a Muslim if you do not perform *salat* each day.'

EXTENSION

1. Imagine you are a Muslim at a large workplace. What are some of the difficulties you may face in performing your ritual prayers each day?
2. In pairs, propose the arguments you would present to management to enable Muslim employees to fulfil their *salat* obligations. Share these with another pair.
3. What more can you find out about the rituals of *salat*? In two paragraphs, summarise what you have discovered about the performance of *salat*.

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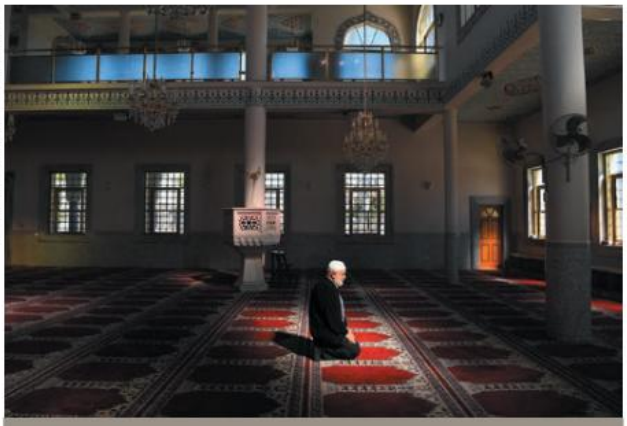
Conclusion



Fairfax Syndications/Kate Geraghty/SMH

FIGURE 5.5.4 The first day of Ramadan, 2020. Instead of thousands, there was only the general manager at Auburn Gallipoli Mosque.

In the centuries since the days of Muhammad, Islam has truly become a world religion. Although it has spread throughout the world, most Muslims are still living in those countries to which Islam originally spread from Arabia. The total world population of Muslims is estimated at 1.9 billion. While most Muslims live in Muslim-majority countries such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Turkey and Egypt, many live as minorities in different countries around the world. The country with the greatest number of Muslims is Indonesia, followed by Pakistan, both with over 120 million.

According to the 2016 census, 604 200 Muslims live in Australia. Of them, 62.8 per cent were born overseas, coming from all corners of the globe, including the Middle East, Africa and Asia, and 82 per cent are under 45 years of age, compared with 59 per cent for the total population. In terms of ancestry, 36.6 per cent of the Muslim community were of North African and Middle Eastern origin, followed by South and Central Asia (32 per cent). Of this Muslim population, nearly three-quarters live in either Sydney (45 per cent) or Melbourne (33 per cent). While there is a very small (less than 10 per cent) but significant Shi'i community in Australia, the differences are not as pronounced as in some countries and Muslims in Australia tend to organise along ethnic lines rather than as Shi'i or Sunni.

The conflicts that are apparent in some Islamic countries and that have their roots in the early schisms of Islam are not really a factor in Australia. While some Muslims think it is their duty to establish an Islamic state and implement Islamic law wherever they are, even in a minority context, this is a contemporary idea rather than being a norm throughout Muslim history. For Muslims living in a country where Islam is well established, it is natural for Islamic norms and values to be reflected in that society. For those who live as minorities, it is their duty to implement Islam in their individual lives as best they can and form cooperative communities. One of the major challenges for Muslims living in Western countries is adjusting traditional Islamic norms to Western contexts. For Australian Muslims, much of the theoretical discussion that occupies legal scholars in Muslim countries is not relevant to their lives as Australians.

Fairfax Syndications/Dean Sewell

FIGURE 5.5.5 For the Dalati family, *'Id al-Fitr*, the Feast of Breaking the Fast of Ramadan, was a very different occasion in 2020. Instead of praying at the mosque and then celebrating and visiting relatives over three days, they prayed with a video broadcast from 7 a.m. and then ate breakfast at home.

RESPOND

Interview some Muslim community members to assess how their community was affected by restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online activity
Chapter 5 multiple-choice quiz

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. You have to present a 10-minute overview of Islam to a class of students who have no previous knowledge of Islam. Prepare an outline of your presentation that includes brief presenter notes to accompany relevant slides or visual aids.
3. Discuss in pairs the extent to which this course is useful in addressing stereotypical or inaccurate representations of faith traditions.
4. In small groups, **assess** the difference between what you have learnt about Islam and how it is reported in the Australian media.
5. **Construct** a 'Things you must know' package for journalists who are reporting on Islam and Muslims.

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

6

Judaism

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **outline** the life of Abraham and **describe** the covenant with the Patriarchs
- **outline** the story of Moses and the Exodus and the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
- **outline** the unique features of the major variants of Judaism
- **investigate** the principal beliefs of Judaism
- **identify** the importance of the Hebrew Bible and the Talmud and **examine** extracts from the Hebrew Scriptures that **demonstrate** the principal beliefs of Judaism
- **outline** the principal ethical teachings of Judaism and **describe** their importance in the life of adherents
- **describe** the importance of *Shabbat*.

n.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Jewish terminology (p. 98)
- Aspects of Judaism (p. 107)
- The Book of Proverbs (p. 114)
- *Shabbat* and observance (p. 116)

Online activity

- Chapter 6 multiple-choice quiz (p. 116)

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AJN/Peter Haskin

The reception of a new Torah scroll for the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation. The chief rabbi writes the last letter on a new Torah scroll (*Sefer* Torah) following its parading along the city streets of Melbourne. Torah scrolls are very valuable and highly prized in Jewish communities. Parading of the new Torah is a Jewish custom; it honours God and God's word. It also affirms that the Torah belongs to all, and should always be on our lips, 'sweet as honey' (Ezek 3:3).

GLOSSARY

creed A formula of religious beliefs.

Diaspora The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people throughout the ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

Haskalah The Jewish Enlightenment – a period in the eighteenth century of expansion in Jewish cultural and philosophical thought and in dialogue with European society at large; strongest in Eastern Europe.

sages The rabbis (teachers) of the Talmudic period (for Talmud, see pages 109–10).

Shabbat The Jewish day of rest (see Exodus 20:8–10; Deuteronomy 5:12–14) and religious observance, known in English as the Sabbath. It begins at sunset on Friday and ends on Saturday at nightfall when three stars can be seen in the sky. *Shabbat* is a foretaste of the peace and tranquillity of the world to come. A part of Jewish mystical belief is that if all Jews kept the Sabbath, the Messiah would come.

Temple The sacred building built in Jerusalem as a place to offer sacrifices and bring burnt offerings to God. Rebuilt several times, the Temple was finally destroyed in the Jewish war against Rome, 66–73 CE. Traditional Judaism still looks to the day when the Temple will be rebuilt.

Tenach The 24 books that make up the Hebrew Scriptures (see page 108).

Torah Also known as *Chumash* among Jews. In its narrow sense, Torah refers to the first five books of the Bible – Genesis (Gen), Exodus (Ex), Leviticus (Lev), Numbers (Num), Deuteronomy (Deut). Torah literally means 'teaching'. The 613 commandments are contained within these Five Books of Moses. The term 'Torah' is often used in a much broader sense as Jewish tradition as a whole (see 'The Torah' on page 108).

As Jews understand it, the history of Judaism is the story of the dialogue of the Jewish people with God and the developing religious tradition. That story begins with Abraham and the Patriarchs, and follows with Moses and the other great figures of the Hebrew Scriptures, known as the **Tenach**.

After the destruction of the Jerusalem **Temple** in 70 CE, the rabbis emerged to establish the form of Judaism (normative), based on a strong commitment to synagogue worship and study of the **Torah** that has persisted to this day. The rabbis were the inheritors of the traditions of the Pharisees, a Jewish sect that had flourished in the several hundred years before. The Pharisees believed in the 'dual Torah': the Written Torah – that is, the Five Books of Moses; and the Oral Torah – that is, the debates and deliberations, the elaboration and interpretation of the Written Torah, developed by the **sages** of the Pharisees. Most famous among the Pharisaic sages were Hillel and Shammai. The Pharisees also focused their religion around their homes, a pattern that was to become a major feature of Jewish religious practice.

Through the ages, Judaism spread its influence beyond its birthplace, first to Babylon, then to Spain and the

expanse of Europe. This dispersion of the Jewish people is known as the **Diaspora**. While there were flowerings, such as the Jewish Golden Age in Spain (c. 900–1200) and the eighteenth-century ***Haskalah***, much of this period was one of oppression under Islamic or Christian rulers. The emergence of the modern State of Israel in 1948 re-established a Jewish homeland. Today, nearly seven million Jews live in Israel, while a similar number of Jews live in the United States. While these two countries account for the majority of all Jews worldwide, there are significant Jewish communities in many countries, including Australia. The 2016 Australian census put the Jewish population at around 90 000 Jews, but changes to the religious question formatting between 2011 and 2016 led some experts to estimate the Australian Jewish population to be somewhat higher, at over 110 000.

Though today Judaism is sometimes perceived by those outside the tradition to be a single, normative religion, movements have interpreted the Jewish tradition in varying ways throughout the ages. Even today, Judaism is a tradition of enormous diversity, with different expression in the forms of Orthodox, Progressive and Conservative Judaism.

DID YOU KNOW?

Who is a Jew? Traditionally, any person whose mother is a Jew is considered Jewish. This definition means that there are both religious, or observant, Jews and secular Jews.

Though not laid down in a binding **creed**, Jewish beliefs are those concepts and values that are found throughout the Hebrew Bible and later Jewish writings. The Jewish way of life is based on the commandments and the Torah (*Chumash*) as explained, expounded and applied from ancient times. In Judaism, the history of the Five Books of Moses, expressed through ritual and prayer, is a living story that transforms people's lives every day. The 248 positive and 365 negative commandments of the Torah provide all the guidance necessary to live and pray as a Jew. Routine Jewish life culminates each week in ***Shabbat***, the sacred day of the week, marked out from the rest of the week as the day of rest, prayer and study of the Torah.

EXTENSION

Maintain a list where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. The accompanying worksheet will get you started.

Worksheet
Jewish terminology

6.1 Origins

GLOSSARY

circumcision The removal of the foreskin of the penis.

covenant In general, an agreement between two parties. Each of the parties has both rights and responsibilities. In the Bible, the covenant is an agreement between God and his people.

Patriarchs The forefathers of the Jews – Abraham, his son Isaac, and Isaac's son Jacob (later known as Israel).

Abraham and the covenant

Abram (as Abraham is first known in the biblical account) and his half-sister and wife Sarai, later known as Sarah, emerged with their tribe out of ancient Mesopotamia.

Abraham led a nomadic life. Famine eventually led him and his tribe to the fertile lands of the Nile Delta in Egypt. They later journeyed back north, settling in the southern part of Canaan. In Genesis 22, we read of how Abraham took his young son Isaac and, in response to God's call, prepared to sacrifice him. However, a messenger of the Lord called to Abraham not to kill Isaac, and a ram was substituted in his place. In acknowledgement of his loyalty, Abraham's **covenant** with God was established.

> 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.
>
> Gen 22:17

The importance of the Patriarchs

Isaac was the second son of Abraham and the first born to him by his wife Sarah. Isaac was the father of Esau and Jacob, twins born to his wife Rebekah. Jacob was to become known as Israel, after he wrestled all night with an angel (Gen 32:23–29). The name Israel means 'contender with God'. 'Israelites' is the term used to refer to the descendants of the **Patriarchs** in ancient times. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are known collectively as the Patriarchs.

> Then the man said, 'You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.'
>
> Gen 32:28

The covenant

The Patriarchs are seen as the forefathers of modern Judaism, as the covenant was established with them. The first covenant with the unseen God was made with Abraham. It is the covenant, the special relationship with God, which is at the very heart of Jewish belief and practice even to this day.

The covenant is first mentioned as a promise by God to Noah (Gen 6:18) and is confirmed through God's eternal promise to Abraham to make him the 'ancestor of a multitude of nations' (Gen 17:5). The key stipulation of God's covenant with Abraham was that

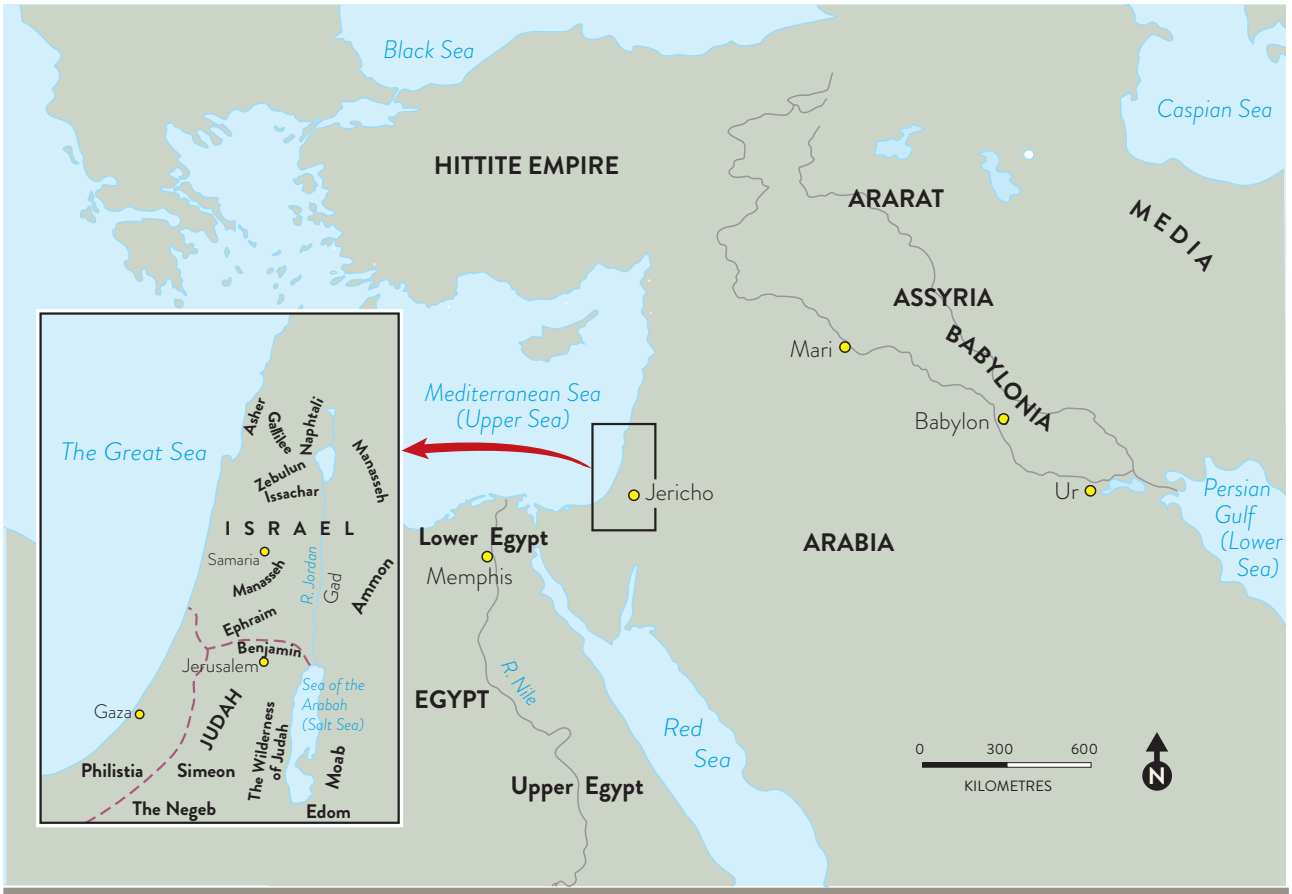

FIGURE 6.1.1 The stage for the story of the Patriarchs is a broad one, ranging from ancient Ur in Mesopotamia in the east, to the Nile Delta in the south-west. In a later period, in the time of the Davidic monarchy, the story of Israel is enacted in a narrower territory, as illustrated on the inset map.

every male undergo **circumcision** (Gen 17:10–14). This remains the ritual mark of every Jewish male to this day (Gen 15:18, 17:1–14).

God's promise to Abraham was renewed with his son Isaac, and again with Isaac's son Jacob. Jacob (Israel) lent his name to a nation. Abraham's steadfastness to his God, demonstrated in his willingness to sacrifice his son Isaac, is a model for the steadfast love that Jews are expected to hold for their God. It is from the promises made to the Patriarchs that a great nation and one of the world's great religions flowed. The theme of covenant began with the Patriarchs and continued in Jewish history with the further development of the covenant through Moses.

▷ Read more about the importance of the covenant for Judaism on page 106.

Moses, the Exodus and the giving of the Torah

GLOSSARY

Midrash A form of ancient biblical commentary and interpretation, mostly written between the second and eighth centuries BCE. *Midrash* does not always take the biblical text literally, but rather seeks to uncover the hidden meaning of the Torah.

mitzvah (plural, ***mitzvot***) Hebrew word meaning 'commandment'. There are 613 *mitzvot* in the Torah.

The life of Moses

If Abraham is the father of Judaism, then Moses is its teacher. Moses was called by God to lead his people out of slavery:

> When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, 'Moses, Moses!' And he said, 'Here am I.' Then he said, 'Do not come near; remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.' And he said, 'I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God. Then the LORD said, 'I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites.'
>
> Ex 3:4–10

The Exodus

The Book of Exodus tells the story of a Hebrew baby being plucked from the river by the daughter of the Pharaoh (Ex 2). This child grew up in the Pharaoh's court and was known as Moses. Having killed an Egyptian whom he witnessed being cruel to a Hebrew slave, Moses fled the court of the Pharaoh.

Eventually, Moses' Hebrew background was revealed to him. Reluctant at first, Moses (*Mosheh*) was to become a powerful spiritual and political force among his people. He

led the Hebrews' dramatic escape from slavery in Egypt in the episode known as the Exodus (Ex 1:8–12:42). He received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai (Ex 20:1–17; Deut 5:6–21) and established the covenant relationship between God and the Israelites. The laws of the Torah are formulated in his name. He is considered by Jews as the first and greatest prophet, God having spoken to him face to face (Num 12:8). Ultimately, Moses was to die in sight of the land that God had promised to his forebears (Deut 34:1–5).

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'exodus' is from the Greek word for 'departure'. The events of the Exodus – the plagues on Egypt; the 'passing over' of the houses of the Israelites; and the parting of the sea that saved the Israelites and then swamped the Egyptians – are commemorated at the great Jewish family feast *Pesach* (Passover).

Miriam

Miriam, sister to Aaron and Moses, was one of the three leaders of the Hebrews in the period of the Exodus (Micah 6:4). Gifted as a leader, skilled in poetry and song, she is the first woman in the Hebrew Scriptures to be referred to as a prophet (Ex 15:20). According to the ***Midrash***, she prophesied Moses' role in the emergence of his people. The sages knew her as Puah, the midwife of Exodus 1, who in courage defies the Pharaoh's orders to kill the males born to Hebrew women. As a reward for her courage, the people grew stronger.

> But the midwives feared God; they did not do as the king of Egypt commanded them, but they let the boys live ... So God dealt well with the midwives; and the people multiplied and became very strong.
>
> Ex: 1:17, 20

It is Miriam who watched the infant Moses be placed in a basket among the reeds and persuaded the Pharaoh's daughter to have the child protected and nurtured to maturity (Ex 2:1–10). Much later in the desert, having crossed the Red Sea, Miriam led the women in 'Miriam's Song'. The style and language of this text mark it as among the oldest compositions in all of Hebrew scripture.

> Then the prophet Miriam, Aaron's sister, took a tambourine in her hand; and all the women went out after her with tambourines and with dancing. And Miriam sang to them: 'Sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.'
>
> Ex 15:20–21

Another story from the *Midrash* tells of the miraculous 'Miriam's Well', created by God at sunset on the very first Sabbath. According to the tradition, the well was given to Miriam as reward for her faithfulness, and it followed and sustained the Israelites throughout their 40 years of wandering in the desert. 'Miriam's Well' can indeed be seen as a metaphor for what Miriam was for her people – a power that nourished and healed.

Ultimately, Moses' exclusion of Miriam and Aaron from the group of 70 elders (Num 11:16), and Miriam's dissatisfaction with Moses' marriage to a Cushite woman (Num 12:1), relegated her to a less prominent place in Jewish history than that reserved for Moses. Today, despite this, Miriam is increasingly seen as an iconic woman of the Hebrew Scriptures. Miriam reminds Jews of the nurturing and sustaining power of women within family structures and of their relationship with God.

The giving of the Torah

On the Exodus from Egypt, Moses receiving the Torah or Ten Commandments from God became the defining moment in the history of the Israelites and made Moses the greatest teacher and intermediary in the Jewish tradition. To this day, a reminder of this event is recorded above the 'ark', the housing for the Torah scrolls in modern synagogues.

The Israelites built a portable structure, known as the Ark of the Covenant (Ex 25:8–22), to house the stone tablets on which were written the Ten Commandments that had been given to Moses (Ex 20–23, 28, 31:12–17, 32:15–19, 34:1–4, 37:1–9, 40:20–21; Deut 5:6–21). Eventually, the Ark, the symbol of the unseen God, was to find its home in the Temple (1 Kings 8:1–9).

The biblical story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments from God on Mount Sinai in the desert (Ex 24:12–18, 34:1–28) further embeds the importance of the covenant in the Jewish story. To be circumcised, as was originally commanded of Abraham, is just one of the ***mitzvot*** of the Torah. The Ten Commandments come to be seen as emblematic of all the 613 *mitzvot* that a Jew must follow to be faithful to the covenant. Depending on the interpretation of 'being Jewish', this influences the way a Jew eats, dresses and prays. Indeed, to live as a religious Jew is to observe a range of everyday religious practices.

God's promise of a homeland to Abraham, reaffirmed in the promise to Moses in the desert to deliver the Israelites into a land 'flowing with milk and honey' (Ex 3:8), is also the origin of the Jewish affinity with the Holy Land. Today the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948, holds a special place in the hearts and minds of all Jewish people, both those who live in Israel and those of the Diaspora.

Alamy Stock Photo/Angela Dampier

FIGURE 6.1.2 Mount Sinai, the site of Moses' ascent to receive the Torah. Mount Sinai is situated in the north-east of modern Egypt.

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REVIEW

1 a Define the term 'Patriarch' as it applies to Judaism.
  b Name the three Patriarchs.
  c Explain the meaning of the word 'Israel'.
2 Describe the importance of the Patriarchs in the development of early Judaism.
3 Construct a chronology of the events of the Exodus story.
4 Outline the covenant at Sinai and describe its importance in Judaism.

EXTENSION

1 Compare the relative importance of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Miriam for Judaism.
2 Summarise the origins of Judaism. In your response, explain the role of the Patriarchs and Moses, and analyse the degree to which they have shaped modern Judaism.

Modern Judaism

GLOSSARY

antisemitism Hatred of Jews. The term was coined by Wilhelm Marr, a Hamburg journalist, in 1879. While the term was not known until the late nineteenth century, the phenomenon of antisemitism has ancient roots.

assimilation The process whereby a cultural, ethnic or religious group takes on the habits, customs and practices of the dominant culture.

Chasidim Jewish revivalist movement that is based on the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov (c. 1700–1760).

emancipation The granting of independence to an individual or a minority group of people.

ghetto Originally referring to the walled quarter of Venice, where Jews were ordered to live in 1555, Jewish ghettos were instituted across Western Europe. 'Ghetto' has come to mean any quarter of a city where a minority lives.

Holocaust (*Shoah*) The Nazi destruction of European Jewry (1942–45), including the murder of six million Jews.

yeshiva (plural, ***yeshivot***) Jewish religious academy. The Talmud is the major subject of study at *yeshivot*. (For Talmud, see page 110.)

Zionism The name given to the movement that began life seeking the establishment of a modern Jewish State.

The Middle Ages had seen the exile of Jews from the West to the East. The reopening of England and France to Jews in the middle of the seventeenth century began a return to the West. By 1800 the vast majority of Jews remained in the **ghetto**, lacking the money or opportunity to escape it. Some Jews, however, through secular education, talent and wit, became 'Salon Jews', dining with the elite of Christian society, or 'Court Jews', serving the leaders of society. Jews such as Moses Mendelssohn, an eighteenth-century German Jewish thinker, pushed for the integration of Jews into Western society. A wave of liberalism spread across Europe and the United States in the wake of the American Declaration of Independence (1776) and the French Revolution (1789–99). The pressing for Jewish **emancipation** that had begun with Mendelssohn and the *Haskalah* was intensified.

The establishment of the United States saw Jews there granted full citizenship. In the years to come, this attracted many Jews to the United States. They joined other Jews, some of whom had arrived in New Amsterdam (New York) as early as 1654. This exodus of Jewish refugees from Europe would, in time, give the United States one of the world's largest Jewish populations.

In the Netherlands, and more slowly in Great Britain, Germany and Austria, equal rights were attained for Jews, freeing Jews to join in the social and cultural revolution of Europe. This they did. Emancipation was welcomed by very many Jews, as it was the road to the rich rewards of a rapidly industrialising Western Europe. The price of emancipation was **assimilation**, and it was a price many Jews of the day were prepared to pay. Jewish languages such as Yiddish were discouraged, as English, French and German (and Russian in the East) were considered necessary for advancement. Rabbinic leadership and general religious observance declined. A significant number of Jews entered into mixed marriages or converted to Christianity. A process of Jewish assimilation had begun. Wrestling with assimilation has been a highly significant factor in the emergence of the modern variants of Judaism.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eliezer ben Yehuda was the father of Modern Hebrew. A Lithuanian-born Zionist, he determined upon his emigration to Palestine in 1881 not to speak any other language than Hebrew, encouraging his wife to do the same. Through his publishing and teaching, he revived the language almost single-handedly. Today Hebrew is the native tongue of more than six million Israelis.

It has been suggested that what saved emancipated Judaism from being swallowed up by the dominant religion in nineteenth-century Western Europe and the United States was the constant flow of traditional Jewish scholarship and piety arriving with the immigrant Jews from Russia, Poland and Hungary.

It was against this background of Jewish emancipation that new movements within Rabbinic Judaism developed as a response to the modern world. The most significant of these movements are Orthodox, Progressive and Conservative Judaism.

DID YOU KNOW?

Yiddish is a Germanic dialect with a number of Slavonic and Hebrew loan words, using the Hebrew script. There are well-known Yiddish loan words in English, such as 'klutz', 'schmooze' and 'spiel'. The Yiddish word *shul* is commonly used for 'synagogue' among the Australian Jewish community.

Cultural branches of Judaism

The difference between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews lies in the cultures developed in the countries in which they have lived. The Ashkenazi culture originated in the Franco-German region in Western Europe and developed in Eastern Europe and Russia. In contrast, the formative experience of the Sephardim was in Spain, North Africa and the Middle East.

Due to their different historical experiences, there is variation in the customs and traditions of the two groups. Each has a distinctive language: Yiddish in the case of the Ashkenazim, and Ladino among the Sephardim. The Sephardim have a distinctive pronunciation of Hebrew, which was adopted in the modern spoken language of Israel. They also have their own traditional liturgical melodies and an order of the synagogue service that differs slightly from the Ashkenazi service. There are two Sephardi synagogues in Sydney, and the remainder are Ashkenazi.

Orthodox Judaism

The term 'Orthodox Judaism' was first used in 1795. In reality, Orthodox Judaism is the umbrella term that is used to describe Jewish traditionalists who accept the authority of the code of Jewish law and reject the modernist adjustments of the Progressive movement (although accommodations to modern life are becoming more common in Orthodox communities in Australia). Orthodox Judaism is also distinguished by its traditional forms of worship in Hebrew.

There are different styles of Orthodoxy. Each Orthodox synagogue in Australia is the responsibility of the local Jewish community who affiliate with it. Consequently, there is some variety in the culture attached to each. Generally speaking, Australian Orthodox Judaism is more open to modern idiom than is the more isolationist Orthodoxy practised in parts of Israel and the United States. The vast majority of Australian Jews are affiliated with Orthodox synagogues.

Orthodox Jews are sometimes distinguished as Modern Orthodox and Ultra Orthodox. Ultra Orthodoxy rejects much of the modern world. This is symbolised by repudiating secular studies and often dressing in stylised ghetto clothing. Modern Orthodoxy balances the requirements of living in modern circumstances, while being faithful to the world view of the dual Torah.

Perhaps best known among the Ultra Orthodox groups is the ***Chasidim***. There are very active Chasidic groups in Australia, particularly the Chabad-Lubavitch movement, strongly represented in the Sydney ***yeshiva*** and through rabbis serving in Orthodox synagogues. Because of the keenness of Chasidic Jews for outreach to other Jews, and because of their strict adherence to Jewish study and practice, this tiny community of a few thousand has considerable influence on the larger Australian Jewish community.

A/JN Photo Sales/Noel Kessel

FIGURE 6.1.3 *Lag B'Omer* Parade in Bondi, Sydney. The adult centre-left is dressed in the stylised attire of an Ultra Orthodox or Chasidic Jewish male. Although relatively small in numbers, the Ultra Orthodox Jewish community, in several different forms, is active in Jewish life in Sydney and Melbourne.

▷ *Chasidim* is a significant idea considered in Chapter 14, pages 300–1.

Progressive Judaism

The Progressive movement has also been known as Reform or Liberal Judaism. While 'Progressive' did not become the preferred term until the late twentieth century, the term is used throughout this section to describe this originally German and North American movement of Jewish faith and life. In Australia, the movement prefers to go by the name of Progressive Judaism, with Reform synagogues affiliated under the Union for Progressive Judaism. The movement's presence in Australia supports 14 member congregations nationally.

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Inspired by the freedom of the Enlightenment, the Progressive movement in Judaism began in 1810 with the building in Germany of the first 'Temple', the term frequently used to describe Progressive synagogues. German Progressive Judaism gained considerable popularity among Jews. By the middle of the nineteenth century, Progressive Judaism had taken firm root in the United States also. Some features of Progressive Judaism that distinguish it from traditional Judaism are as follows:

- Progressive synagogues are known as temples.
- The Progressive movement rejected beliefs in:
  - a personal Messiah
  - resurrection of the dead
  - return to the Holy Land
  - rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem
  - the eventual reintroduction of Temple sacrifice.

Significant innovations introduced by the Progressive movement were:

- religious services in the local language of the community (rather than in Hebrew)
- men and women sitting together during worship
- a lessening of the importance of traditional Jewish laws
- the belief that the Torah needs to be interpreted so as to capture the spirit of the age
- in recent years, the ordination of women rabbis and the equality of men and women as readers of the Torah during synagogue services
- use of the organ and other liturgical features deriving from church practice
- the *Bat Mitzvah* and Confirmation ceremony
- adaptation of the Jewish prayer book to include modern Jewish writings and reference to modern situations.

Since the **Holocaust**, Progressive Judaism has been more supportive of **Zionism** and has shown a greater interest in the revival of ritual.

Plus61J Media

FIGURE 6.1.4 Sydney lawyer Rabbanit Judith Levitan who, in 2020, was the first woman to be accepted into the Orthodox rabbinate in Sydney. Female rabbis are addressed by the title 'rabbanit.' Female rabbis are common in Progressive Judaism.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided and examine 'A Statement of Principles for Reform Judaism' from the 1999 Pittsburgh Convention.
2. Summarise what it says about Progressive Judaism that makes it distinct from other forms of Judaism.

Weblink
Central Conference of American Rabbis: Platforms

Conservative Judaism

The seeds of the Conservative movement were planted in Germany in the work of Zacharias Frankel (1801–1875). After the focus of the Progressive movement shifted to the United States, a less radical group broke away from Progressive Judaism after the Pittsburgh Conference of 1885. The movement, known as Conservative Judaism, is sympathetic to modern Western ways of thinking, but is more traditional than Progressive Judaism, especially in matters of worship. There is great diversity in Conservative Judaism. Some synagogues are close to Orthodox ones in custom and practice; others are nearly Progressive in character. Despite this diversity, there are some distinguishing features of Conservative Judaism:

- Conservative Judaism holds that tradition should be informed by contemporary science and thought.
- The service includes prayers in English, although most of the service is in Hebrew.
- Many Conservative synagogues use the organ.
- Unlike Progressive Judaism, Conservative Judaism accepts the authority of the Oral Law, but reserves the right to reinterpret it in keeping with changing needs.
- Conservative Judaism places great importance on a universal people of Israel, the centrality of the land of Israel, the continuation of Jewish tradition, and the sponsoring of Jewish scholarship.
- In recent times, women have been allowed into Conservative rabbinical schools. Conservative Judaism is centred in the United States, where it is the second largest Jewish denomination, after Reform Judaism.

Outside the United States, Conservative Judaism is generally referred to as Masorti Judaism. 'Masorti' means traditional. In Australia, there is one Masorti synagogue in Melbourne and one in Sydney. While Conservative Judaism is largely a US movement, its influence is broader than that. In the Conservative movement's acceptance of the authority of the code of Jewish law (with some concessions to modern Western ways of thinking), what Conservative Jews practise in the United States is quite close to the practice of many Australian Orthodox Jews.

The vast majority of Australian Jews affiliate themselves with Orthodox synagogues. Of the 24 synagogues in Sydney, 13 are Orthodox, five are Lubavitch, four are Progressive/Conservative and two are Sephardi. Progressive synagogues in Australia (known generally as 'temples') have something of a conservative flavour, preferring, for example, the wearing of the *kippah* or skullcap inside the temple and the use of a fair amount of Hebrew in the liturgy. Overall, Australian Jewry is strongly Orthodox. The views of its Orthodox community would, however, be closer to the middle-of-the-road Conservative Judaism of the United States, although there is a strong presence of Chasidic rabbis leading Sydney and Melbourne Orthodox congregations.

Zionism

Political Zionism was born in 1897 at the first Zionist conference in Basel, Switzerland. The Zionist movement was fired by the failure of emancipation to prevent **antisemitism** in the West, and also the failure to gain political rights in the East.

Zionism in its beginnings was a political movement, not a specifically religious one, although two of the earliest Zionist writers were rabbis. Unlike the other Jewish movements that emerged in the nineteenth century, Zionism did not spring from the well of the Torah. Zionism explained that Jews were one people by viewing Jewish history as a unified and continuous experience of exile and return, which would culminate in the establishment of the Jewish State.

Jewish settlement in Palestine continued to build into the twentieth century, supported by Eastern European Jews. Zionism, however, did not become an urgent passion for Jews in Western Europe until the Holocaust.

Sixty-nine per cent of Australian Jews identified with Zionism in the 2017 Monash University Gen17 survey of the Australian Jewish community. This figure is down from the Gen08 (2008) figure of 80 per cent, although it should be noted that in the 2008 survey, Zionism was interpreted very broadly to mean any connection with Israel, and an affinity with Jewish history, language, culture and belief.

RESPOND

What is the origin of the word 'Zionism'?

The relative isolation of the Australian Jewish community from the rest of the Jewish world has meant that synagogues have played an extraordinarily important role in the development of the Australian Jewish community.

> The Jewish community is sometimes erroneously described as monolithic in its views. Yet Jews represent a wide spectrum of beliefs and ideologies on social, economic and foreign affairs matters. Whether it is in youth movements, synagogues, sporting associations, educational programs, youth leadership forums, newsletters, conferences, workshops, informal gatherings or social clubs, a mosaic of voices is on display.
>
> Dvir Abramovich (2015) 'Australia's Jewish People and Democracy', *Meanjin Quarterly*, Vol. 74, no. 3, p. 227

REVIEW

1. **Recount** the history that led to the emergence of variants within Judaism.
2. **Construct** a table that highlights the unique features of Orthodox, Progressive and Conservative Judaism.
3. **Compare** the key similarities and key differences between Orthodox and Progressive Judaism.

EXTENSION

1. **Contrast** Orthodox Judaism as it is practised in Australia with how it is practised elsewhere.
2. **Critically analyse** the statement: 'Conservative Judaism is a religious halfway house.'
3. **Account** for the pluralism that exists in the Australian Jewish community today.
4. Use the weblink provided to find a chronology of the development of Judaism. **Outline** the key elements of the chronology for your own understanding of the history of Judaism.

Weblink
Israel and Judaism Studies

9780170457583

6.2 Principal beliefs

GLOSSARY

anthropomorphic Expressed in terms of human thought, action and being.

halachah The Jewish legal tradition, grounded in the 613 commandments of the Torah.

iconography The symbolic representation of a tradition through art, especially paintings or drawings.

immanent An indwelling, constant reality; an intrinsic part of the world.

incorporeal Without bodily or material form.

transcendent Ultimate reality that exists beyond our world and our experience.

In the twelfth century, the Jewish scholar Moses Maimonides offered the Thirteen Articles of Faith as a summary of the 613 commandments of the Torah. Neither Maimonides' nor any other formulation has binding authority as a compulsory creed of Judaism, but the Thirteen Articles of Faith are a good indication of the basics of Jewish belief.

▷ Moses Maimonides is a significant person considered in Online option E.

The Thirteen Articles of Faith

1. God is creator.
2. God is one.
3. God is **incorporeal**.
4. God is eternal.
5. God alone is to be worshipped.
6. God has spoken through the prophets.
7. Moses was the greatest of the prophets.
8. The whole of the Torah was revealed to Moses.
9. The Torah is the unalterable word of God.
10. God has knowledge of and concern for all the deeds of human beings.
11. God rewards those who keep the *mitzvot* and punishes those who transgress them.
12. The Messiah will come.
13. The dead will be resurrected.

Alamy Stock Photo/Zvonimir Atletić

FIGURE 6.2.1 Moses Maimonides (1135–1204). He is known in rabbinical literature as Rambam, an acronym derived from his given name **R**abbi **M**osheh **B**en **M**aimon. As well as being the greatest Jewish philosopher of his age, Maimonides was famed as a physician, as depicted in this image.

Belief in one God

The first five of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith speak of the belief in one God. In Judaism, God has neither parents nor children. God always was and always will be. In Jewish belief, God is **transcendent**, **immanent** and creator. While the Bible and Jewish religious literature have used **anthropomorphic** language to refer to God, the incorporeal nature of God remains central in Jewish belief. God is without form, and this is why images of God are never found in synagogues or as a part of Jewish **iconography** generally.

Anthropomorphic language is used to illustrate how humans are but a shadow of God inasmuch as they weakly reflect the moral perfection of God. Human categories

applying to God indicate not that God is human-like, but rather that humans must strive to emulate God's moral attributes.

> Then God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God …
>
> Ex 20:1–17

Jewish belief holds that while God is separate from the world, God continues to be involved in the world and with people. God's plan for creation is made clear to Jews through the words of the Hebrew Scriptures, with the Torah as its core. God's plan for creation can perhaps be summed up by the rabbi Hillel's famous retort to the heathen who said he would convert to Judaism if he could be taught the whole of the Torah while standing on one leg: 'What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour: this is the whole of the Torah. The rest is commentary. Now go and study it.'

A moral law prescribed by God

It is Jewish belief that the Torah contains the divinely inspired moral law that binds Jews to their God. Woven within the Torah are 613 *mitzvot* (commandments): 248 positive *mitzvot* and 365 negative *mitzvot*. They cover all aspects of life and worship. The negative *mitzvot* detail those things from which the Jew must refrain, and are largely consistent with the secular law in modern Western societies. (Indeed, modern Western societies have drawn their laws and ethics from the principles outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures.)

Women are exempt from some of the positive *mitzvot*, while other *mitzvot* refer specifically to them. This highlights the distinct roles of men and women in the home, in the synagogue and in society that give character and uniqueness to the Jewish way of life. Overall, the positive *mitzvot* describe the rituals by which a Jew can express faithfulness to the covenant.

The covenant

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, a covenant was established between God and Abraham. The importance of the covenant is that it affirms a unique relationship between God and the Jewish people that was cemented in the encounter between God and Moses on Mount Sinai (Ex 24). This covenant was further developed in the Hebrew Scriptures as God worked through the lives of the kings and prophets.

The whole of the Torah, in fact, is an expression of the covenant. In terms of Jewish belief, the requirements of the covenant are known as ***halachah***, which is dealt with in detail later in this chapter. The legal tradition of *halachah* is grounded in the 613 commandments or *mitzvot* contained within the Written Torah, the first five books of the Bible. The *mitzvot* are mentioned in Article 11 of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith.

In return for God's steadfast love, the Jew is bound by observance of *halachah*. For the Orthodox Jew, understanding the importance of the covenant reveals the Torah as the teacher and guide for everyday life. For Progressive Jews, the covenantal relationship is expressed as a deep desire to continue developing an intellectual engagement with, and expounding on, the meaning of Jewish sacred texts and writings for living spiritually well in today's world. In all forms of Judaism, the covenantal relationship is expressed in the form of a deep affection for and concern with the State of Israel.

Other Jewish beliefs

GLOSSARY

Talmud (adjective, **Talmudic**) The most authoritative work of the Oral Torah (see 'The *Yerushalmi* and the *Bavli*', page 110). Written in the period c. 200–500 CE, the Talmud contains the Mishnah and the Gemara, an Aramaic commentary on, elaboration of, and scriptural underpinning of the Mishnah.

Revelation

Articles 6–9 of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith concern Jewish beliefs about God's revelation to humankind. In Orthodox Judaism, their importance is preserved to this day. In more liberal forms of Jewish interpretation, there has been a lessening of importance of the literal word of the laws of Moses and a corresponding increase in the importance of the message of the prophets.

The afterlife, the messianic age and final judgement

Articles 10 and 11 of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith define the notion of the reward and punishment of this world. The tendency at times to blame the ill fate of the Jews at one time or another on the people's own failure to keep the *mitzvot* is based on this belief. On the positive side, it is Jewish belief that preserving God's commandments ensures a good and satisfying life.

In line with Article 12 of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith, traditional Judaism affirms the belief in the coming of a person who will be the Messiah (the

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Anointed One). The Progressive movement prefers to speak of a messianic age of truth, justice and peace among all humankind. Messianism has waxed and waned throughout Jewish history, according to the circumstances of the people. The foundation of the State of Israel has led to strengthening of the messianic hope. The Israeli Chief Rabbinate has approved the use of a liturgical formula that sees modern Israel as the 'beginning of the sprouting of our redemption'.

Contrary to Article 13 of Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith, the importance of the belief in the bodily resurrection of the dead has declined since medieval times in all but Orthodox Judaism. Despite this, it continues to be the subject of prayers in traditional prayer books. More common among Jews today is the belief in the immortality of the soul, without reference to the rejoining of soul and body in the afterlife.

Practices surrounding burial reflect modern Jewish beliefs about the afterlife and judgement before God. For example, Jewish communities go to some lengths to ensure that, in the ritual preparation of dead bodies, in burial and in the design of gravestones, there is an equality that reflects the Jewish belief that in death, everyone is equal before God.

In addition, traditional Jewish belief is that the integrity of the body should not be disturbed after death. Therefore, organ transplantation and embalming are to be avoided. The same applies to autopsy, unless required by law. According to this traditional belief, cremation is forbidden, as it mutilates the body and is seen as a denial of the doctrine of bodily resurrection. However, cremation is allowed by Progressive Jews.

Humanity and the world

According to Jewish thinking, there is no more important creature than humankind. Some **Talmudic** passages state that Adam was more intelligent than the angels. This superior status, combined with free will, leads to the special duties and responsibilities of humankind to God and to the world. As humans often fail in their responsibilities, there is also the need to repent.

REVIEW

1. **Identify** the most important belief in Judaism.
2. **Explain** why Jews reject an anthropomorphic image of God.
3. **Outline** the difference in the conventional understanding of the covenant between Orthodox Jews and Progressive Jews.
4. **Identify** then **classify** the principal Jewish beliefs in the order of their importance to the believer/adherent.
5. What is the relationship between the Torah and *halachah*? **Justify** your response.

EXTENSION

1. **Propose** how the principal Jewish beliefs would apply to the everyday life of the believer/adherent.
2. Use the weblink provided to learn more about Jewish ideas and beliefs. **Investigate** three beliefs that you think are similar to your own personal beliefs or those of your tradition, and three that are different. **Discuss** the similarities and differences.

Weblink
My Jewish learning

Worksheet
Aspects of Judaism

6.3 Sacred texts and writings

GLOSSARY

aggadah The non-legal tradition in Jewish religious writing. The *aggadah* of the Talmud and other later writings includes astrology, folklore, magic, medicine, parables, proverbs, speculation and stories about the rabbis.

Amoraim Interpreters; Aramaic for 'speakers'. This is the title given to the sages of the Talmud.

Baraita The teachings of the ***Tannaim*** that were not included in the **Mishnah**. Best known among them are the *Midrashim* on Leviticus (*Sifra*), Numbers and Deuteronomy (*Sifre*) and Exodus (*Mekilta*), and the *Tosefta* – discussions on the traditional Law that complement and deepen those in the Mishnah.

canon Writings accepted as sacred scripture within a religious tradition.

Mishnah Completed c. 200 CE, the Mishnah was the Oral Law established in written form. The Oral Law had developed among the teachers of the **Second Temple period** as the interpretation and development of the Torah. (See section on the Mishnah on pages 109–10.)

responsa The formulations of questions and the rabbinical responses concerning the dual Torah – Oral and Written – that flowed back and forth across the Jewish world from the early Middle Ages. The term is used also to refer to the modern written rabbinical dialogue on ethical and moral issues.

Second Temple period The age extending from the return from the Babylonian Exile, c. 536 BCE, a short time after which the Temple was rebuilt, to the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple by the Romans in 70 CE (see Ezra 1–3).

Tannaim Aramaic for 'teachers'. Literally the term means 'repeaters' – the *Tannaim* were originally those who memorised the Oral Law. It came to be the term used to designate the sages of the period in which the Mishnah was written – first to third centuries CE.

Yavneh The town, just south of modern Tel Aviv, from which modern Rabbinical Judaism was founded. (See Chapter 14, page 311, for further details.)

Zion The hill on which the city of King David first stood and around which the city of Jerusalem grew. Today Zion is the iconic symbol of redemption for both religious and secular Jews. (See the feature on Zionism on page 104.)

The Hebrew Scriptures (Tenach)

> He who brings into his house more than twenty-four books brings confusion.
>
> *Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah* 2:12

Jewish belief and practice are based on teachings derived from many writings and teachers. The source of all of these teachings, however, is the Tenach, the 24 books that make up the Hebrew Scriptures. The form of the Hebrew Scriptures as they are known today was completed around 100 CE, although the books within them are hundreds of years – some, thousands of years – older than that in their origins.

At the core of the Hebrew Scriptures is the principal sacred writing of Judaism, the first five books of the Bible known as the Torah. It is also known as the Pentateuch and the *Chumash*. Both these words, in Latin and Hebrew respectively, derive from the word for 'five'. Originally in Hebrew and still read in that language by Jews today, the Torah is the foundational writing of Jewish religious literature.

The rabbis of **Yavneh** finished compiling the **canon** of the Hebrew Scriptures around 100 CE. They did not actually add to or take away from the collection of books that had been known among Jews since the second century BCE; they simply clarified the status of certain books, such as Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes. These books had long been used among Jews as religious works, but their authorship was a matter of controversy.

The Tenach

The term 'Tenach' comes from the Hebrew name of the three sections of the Hebrew Scriptures.

TABLE 6.1 The three sections of the Hebrew Scriptures

TE	NA	CH
Torah (The Teaching)	Neviim (The Prophets)	Ketuvim (The Writings)
Genesis	Joshua	Psalms
Exodus	Judges	Job
Leviticus	Samuel	Proverbs
Numbers	Kings	Ruth
Deuteronomy	Isaiah	Song of Songs
	Jeremiah	Ecclesiastes
	Ezekiel	Lamentations
	The Twelve Minor Prophets (counted as one book)	Esther
		Daniel
		Ezra–Nehemiah
		Chronicles

Thus, the 24 books.

The themes of the Hebrew Scriptures

The compilation of the Hebrew Scriptures bore one overriding theme: the people of Israel had a special relationship with God and the land. If the people fulfilled God's commandments, as contained in the Torah, God would bless the people. This was the theme of the crisis of exile and the promise of return, the theme of alienation and reconciliation, and the idea that to be an Israeli Jew is to have gone into exile and then returned to **Zion**. This motif has been the motivating force for the range of Jewish movements that have sprung up through the ages.

From the time of the Babylonian Exile in the sixth century BCE, and for much of the **Second Temple period**, Jews were subjected to continual domination from foreign powers. This is a very important point to note. Control of Israel by a series of foreign powers meant the continuation of the theme of loss and recovery and thus ensured, right down to the formulation of the **Mishnah** in the second century CE, the central importance of the Torah to Judaism.

The Torah

The core of Jewish sacred writings – indeed, the core of Judaism – is the Torah. Otherwise simply known as the Law, the Torah is the source and inspiration for all Jewish teaching. Each new generation that built upon the Torah – the ***Tannaim*** who wrote the Mishnah, the ***Amoraim*** who wrote the Talmud – added another layer of scholarship that was to become the body of work that is Jewish tradition. That is why the term 'Torah' is also used in the broader sense to refer to the entire corpus of Jewish sacred writings and stories. If you are looking for the most pious Jewish men, you will find them studying the Torah.

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FIGURE 6.3.1 The *yad* (Hebrew for 'hand') is used to keep one's place while reading from the Torah scroll in the synagogue, so that the page is not soiled. Scrolls are handwritten on parchment and thus are very expensive and precious. This, together with the fact that they embody Jewish sacred text, means that they are deeply treasured by their communities.

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The *Shema* prayer

The observant Jew will pray three times a day. Indeed, the various modes of Jewish prayer lead to the very heart of Jewish practice and belief.

The oldest passage commonly recited within the Jewish tradition is the *Shema*, named from its first word in Hebrew, the language of Jewish prayer. The first two parts of the *Shema* are also contained within the *mezuzah* and *tefillin* (see pages 111 and 112). The *Shema* affirms belief in the oneness of God, then instructs the faithful as to His commandments.

> Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God. The LORD alone.
>
> You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.
>
> Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. 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. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
>
> If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today – loving the LORD your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul – then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather in your grain, your wine, and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill.
>
> Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshiping them, for then the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit; then you will perish quickly off the good land that the LORD is giving you.
>
> You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and fix them as an emblem on your forehead. Teach them to your children, talking about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land that the LORD swore to your ancestors to give them, as long as the heavens are above the earth.
>
> The LORD said to Moses: Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the LORD and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God.
>
> I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: I am the LORD your God.

Deut 6:4–9, 11:13–21; Num 15:37–41

Hobart Hebrew Congregation

FIGURE 6.3.2 A historic Sephardi Torah scroll donated by an Indian Jewish community in 1951 and now housed in the Hobart Synagogue. It is usual for scrolls to be elaborately covered – in the Ashkenazi cultural tradition, generally with velvet and a metal breast plate; in the Sephardi cultural tradition, mostly in a hard silver casing.

Other Jewish sacred writings

The Mishnah

The Mishnah, completed around 200 CE, put into written form the long tradition of the Oral Law that had developed in Second Temple Judaism. The Oral Law was an interpretation and development of the Torah. While based on the Written Torah, it extended its vision so that it would apply to the whole of life in the contemporary world.

The Mishnah has 63 tractates (books or sections) in all, in six divisions:

1. laws of prayer and agriculture
2. laws of Sabbath and holy days
3. laws of marriage and divorce, including the status of women
4. civil and criminal laws
5. laws about the Temple
6. laws about ritual cleanliness.

The Oral Law was not complete, even though it had been set down in writing. As the Roman Empire continued to decline in the West, many Jews left Palestine

for the comparative peace of Babylon. There was a further strengthening of the Babylonian Diaspora and important Jewish academies developed there. They developed new forms of Jewish writings, such as the ***responsa*** – formulations of questions and their rabbinical responses concerning the dual Torah, Oral and Written. *Responsa* as a form of Jewish sacred writing had their origins in the Babylonian academies.

The *Yerushalmi* and the *Bavli*

The writing of the *Yerushalmi* and the *Bavli*, the two versions of the Talmud, continued with this concept, expanding the legal tradition of the Mishnah, as well as adding a considerable body of ***aggadah*** literature to the Jewish tradition.

The Mishnah generated questions within the Jewish community. In the several centuries after the completion of the Mishnah, the *Amoraim* set to work interpreting and clarifying the Mishnah and responding to the new situation in which historical events placed them. The result was the Talmud.

In fact, two Talmuds emerged – the *Yerushalmi* (the Palestinian Talmud) was finalised in the fourth century CE, and the *Bavli* (the Babylonian Talmud – four times the size of the *Yerushalmi*) around a century later.

The *Bavli* is a commentary on the Mishnah and it follows the Mishnah's order. The commentary is lengthier than the text on which it comments. This is because it goes into detailed explanations of how the Mishnah's authority is derived from the Torah. It applies the Mishnah's rulings and logic to practical situations – something like mini 'case studies'; it spends much time comparing the judgements of different rabbis and apparent contradictions in the Mishnah, explaining why the differences exist. In addition, it includes the many stories, parables and proverbs of the *aggadah*. It also expands on the writings of the *Tannaim* by including the ***Baraita***. Thus, the Talmud provides a body of literature that quite literally places layer upon layer of tradition over the text that is its source and inspiration, the Torah. Later glosses and commentaries added to the Talmud, such as that of Rashi, contribute to the richness of the layers of tradition in the Talmud. When one understands the complexity and length of the Talmud (20 large volumes in the standard Vilna edition), it is easier to understand how and why Talmudic scholars spend a lifetime in its study in *yeshivot* – Jewish academies designed for the prime purpose of the study of the Talmud.

While the Mishnah and the Talmud are not canonical, they are nonetheless highly authoritative. The Talmud is the principal subject of study at *yeshivot*. From the start, the *Bavli* was considered more authoritative than the *Yerushalmi*, and still is. Indeed, within the pages of the *Bavli* one will find the roots of most forms of modern Judaism.

▷ Rashi, the famous eleventh-century French Talmudic scholar, is a significant person considered in Chapter 14, pages 298–9.

Later writings

There have been other, later Jewish writings that have also gained authoritative status. Moses Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah* (The Second Law) organised the complex and haphazardly arranged Talmud and its myriad of accretions into a logical order that was accessible to the non-Talmudic scholar.

Drawing in part on Maimonides' *Mishneh Torah*, Joseph Karo's *Shulchan Aruch* (The Prepared Table) was completed in 1563. It was a codification of the *halachah* from a Sephardi perspective. Moses Isserles in Poland added glosses to illustrate the Ashkenazi view. With broad support, the *Shulchan Aruch* quickly gained favour as an authoritative codification of the Oral Law.

Other religious texts and stories have been composed over the centuries, even up to the present. While not authoritative, they are part of the heritage of Jewish religious literature that has sustained and invigorated Jewish scholarship over time. That scholarship, in turn, has left its mark on Jewish belief and practice.

REVIEW

1. **Recount** the theme of exile and return that dominates the Tenach.
2. **Distinguish** between the layers or complexity of writing that make up the *Bavli*.
3. **Identify** the list of reasons offered in this section as to why the Torah is the core of Jewish sacred writing.
4. Re-read all the verses from the Hebrew Scriptures that are quoted in this chapter. Reading from the context in which they are placed, **examine** how each one **demonstrates** a belief of Judaism. Place your findings in a meaningful table.

EXTENSION

1. **Explain** the difference between canonical and authoritative writings in Judaism.
2. **Evaluate** the relative importance of later Jewish writing, such as Joseph Karo's *Shulchan Aruch*.
3. Use the weblink provided to learn more about the structure and appearance of pages in the Talmud.
4. Do an Internet search to find a tutorial on how to say the *Shema* prayer. Prepare a brief summary of your findings.
5. **Construct** an infographic to **summarise** the sacred texts and writings of Judaism. In it note those that are considered to be:
   - **a** canonical
   - **b** highly authoritative.

Weblink
Babylonian Talmud

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6.4 Core ethical teachings

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

kashrut The laws of Torah regarding permitted foods. Permitted foods are known as *kasher* (or more commonly in English, kosher). The food laws of Judaism give the Jewish home a unique atmosphere. Even Jews who do not keep strictly to all the food laws tend to steer away from eating some of the forbidden foods or food combinations.

mezuzah A miniature scroll placed in a cylindrical case that is affixed to the doorposts of Jewish homes.

▷ The application of Jewish ethics to specific issues is addressed in Chapter 14, pages 304–9.

The standards of ethical behaviour in Judaism are derived from the thoughts and writings of Jewish sages from antiquity. As the writings of the sages in turn all derive from the text that is at the core of the Talmud – namely, the Torah – it is true to say that all Jewish behaviour is ultimately derived from the Torah. This is why the term 'Torah' in its narrowest sense refers to the first five books of the Bible, but in its broadest sense refers to the entire body of Jewish teaching that expounds the Law.

The importance of the Torah in the everyday life of believers is evidenced in the customary placement of the ***mezuzah*** on the doorpost of a Jewish home. The *mezuzah* is a small cylinder containing a piece of parchment on which are written several verses of the Torah. The *mezuzah* is a reminder to each member of the Jewish home that the Torah is the guiding principle in the way they conduct their lives.

> Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to affix a *mezuzah*.
>
> Blessing of the *mezuzah*

The study of Torah

Among the greatest of all the *mitzvot* is the commandment to study the Torah. Maimonides and other Talmudic scholars comment throughout the Talmud about the way in which the study of the Torah draws Jews together. People who study common thoughts with a common purpose will grow in unity and love. Just as study of the Torah develops friendship between Jews, it also develops friendship between the student of the Torah and God.

Of course, not all Jews can devote themselves to a lifetime of study of the Torah – that role is taken up by only a relative few – but the great respect that is given to those who do reflects the Jewish desire to know the Torah and live by its precepts. Typically, a Jew will live by the Torah by what they eat (living by the dietary laws of ***kashrut***), by the rhythm of their home life (with Friday nights given over to the celebration of *Shabbat* and Saturdays to public worship in the synagogue) and by how they 'love their neighbour'.

As a direction for the spiritual life, as the source and justification of Jewish **ethics** and as the 'guidebook' for Jewish ritual, the Torah in both its narrower and broader sense helps make sense of life for Jews.

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FIGURE 6.4.1 ***Mezuzah*****. The scroll containing the *Shema* is rolled up and placed in the case so that the first letter of the name of God (*Shin*) is visible or, more commonly, the letter *Shin* is written on the outside of the case. The scroll and case are fixed on an angle to the right side doorpost as one enters the house. If the doorpost is wide enough, the *mezuzah* should be tilted with the upper part slanting towards the house or room.**

The Torah prohibits graven images (images of God in works of art). It has been argued in modern Judaism that moral human beings are the only image of God that is appropriate. The religious ethic that emerges from such a view is that humans are the nearest thing to the divine. As such, others should always be treated with respect and generosity, and one should always act with humility. In order to love one's neighbour, as the Torah teaches, one must know the other's pain.

A system of positive and negative commandments

The ethical system that operates within Judaism is represented by the codes of positive and negative

commandments that have been produced in Judaism and works that study and analyse ethical concepts. Under this system of ethics, one acts in a certain way because that is in the *halachah* and the *halachah* is God's will. While many ethical codes and moral philosophies are available in Judaism, the tradition has more practical ways of relating its ethics to its people. The fundamental values that underpin the ethical and moral teachings of Judaism can be found in the lived experience of the halachah, and are associated with the rituals of the Jewish holy days. The Jewish ethical system makes demands on Jews to act in certain ways on a wide range of social, environmental, economic and personal issues.

The commandments of the Torah – *halachah*

The ethical and moral teachings of Judaism are grounded in the Torah, the rule of life. The tradition of *halachah* contained within the Torah is long and complex, and involves scholars and ordinary people alike in a lifetime of study. Ultimately, *halachah* is concerned with guiding believers in right relationship with God and right relationship with one's family and neighbours. The many attempts at reducing *halachah* to its essence reveal the Jewish understanding of the fundamental ethical principles and moral values that lie at the heart of Judaism.

As has already been noted, Torah has a broader meaning than simply the first five books of the Bible. Torah is sometimes used to refer to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. Torah is even used sometimes to refer to the entire body of Jewish teaching. The Talmud suggests that the person who has mastered the Torah is, in their thoughts and actions, the very embodiment of Torah. Whichever way Torah is understood, Torah is axiomatic to Judaism – it is evident without proof or argument. In traditional Jewish thinking, to live by the Torah is to live as a religious Jew.

Halachah is to be distinguished from *aggadah*, the non-legal material of the rabbinic literature. The *aggadah* takes on a variety of forms: stories, legends, wise sayings, parables, prayers and many other forms of literary expression. While the *aggadah* is a part of the Oral Law, it is not authoritative in the same way as the *halachah*. Nonetheless, the *aggadah* is often used in Jewish teaching to explain and illustrate the prescriptions of the *halachah*.

The *halachah*, the tradition that expounds the religious obligations of Jews, might be viewed by the outsider as legalistic and restrictive. This is not the view of the lover of the Torah. One of the most famous teachers of Judaism, Moses Maimonides, known in rabbinical literature as Rambam, taught that one could observe all the *mitzvot* and yet be an evil and vile person. In order to be truly holy, one needs to comply with the spirit of the Law, as well as the letter of the Law.

Halachah is the fleshing out of the essence of ethical living, so that it can be understood and actually lived by the follower. At its core, the *halachah* symbolises the very ethical principles upon which Judaism is based. Some of the attempts to synthesise *halachah*, gathered in the Talmud, are summarised in the feature box (below). They illustrate the way in which the Jewish way of life is one that symbolises ethical principles.

AJN Photo Sales/Peter Haskin

FIGURE 6.4.2 **Men converse during the Melbourne Chanukah in the Park. The man on the right wears the *tefillin*. The *tefillin* are black leather boxes containing passages from the Torah that are bound to the arm and the forehead. Usually *tefillin* are worn by Orthodox Jewish males only during weekday morning services.**

The essence of *halachah*

King David's Psalm 15 reduced the 613 commandments to 11:

One who:

1. walks uprightly
2. works righteously
3. speaks truth in his heart
4. does not slander
5. does no evil
6. does not take up a reproach against a neighbour
7. despises vile people
8. honours those who fear the LORD
9. does not change his pledged word even though it hurts him
10. does not lend on interest
11. does not take a bribe against the innocent shall never be disturbed.

Isaiah reduced them to six (Isa 33:15–16):

He who:

1. walks righteously
2. speaks honestly
3. rejects gain from extortion
4. keeps his hand from accepting bribes
5. stops his ears against bloodshed
6. shuts his eyes from looking upon evil will dwell on high.

Micah reduced them to three (Mic 6:8):

He has shown you, O man, what is good and what the LORD demands of you:

1 to act justly

2 to love mercy

3 to walk humbly with your God.

Isaiah, again, reduced them to two (Isa 56:1):

Thus says the LORD:

1 keep justice

2 do righteousness.

Amos reduced them to one:

Seek Me and live.

From *Bavli Makkot* 24a

The prophetic vision – Tikkun olam

The Hebrew prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the minor prophets lived in times of difficulty and oppression. Their words, seeking social justice for their people, transpose themselves through time as calls to *tikkun olam*, 'repair the world'.

Tikkun olam is a Jewish principle of a commitment to social justice and social order. *Tikkun olam* is a partnership with God in a divine purpose that was established with the bringing of social order on the Giving of the Law to Moses on Mount Sinai. In the Giving of the Law, the process of repairing the world began, and each day is an opportunity for the Jew to be a cooperator in furthering God's purpose. *Tikkun olam* today takes the form of volunteering time and energy for the good of the community, or through giving *tzedakah* or *gemilut chasadim*. Involvement in Jewish *tzedakah* organisations and in secular social justice and social responsibility groups is viewed as *tikkun olam*.

Tzedakah and *gemilut chasadim*

> Let no man think to himself, saying: 'Why should I diminish my wealth by giving it to the poor?' For he must be mindful that the wealth belongs not to him, but that it was simply given to him as a trust with which to execute the will of the One who has entrusted this fund to him … Every man must contribute *tzedakah* according to his means.
>
> From the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch*, in H.E. Goldin, *The Jew and His Duties*, 1953, p. 180

The doing of *gemilut chasadim*, deeds of loving kindness, was identified in the Midrashic literature as a distinguishing feature of Jewish people (Deuteronomy Rabbah 3:6). *Tzedakah* (almsgiving) and *gemilut chasadim* are considered to be equal to all the commandments of the Torah. *Tzedakah* requires the giving away of some material possession, perhaps just a coin, but *gemilut chasadim* requires the investment of one's personal time and energy. Simply the giving of money is not the heart of *tzedakah*. *Tzedakah* given, say, to help make a person self-reliant is far more meritorious than *tzedakah* given begrudgingly.

In considering *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim*, the latter is considered more important. Examples of *gemilut chasadim* are assisting in setting up the household of a bride, giving hospitality, visiting the sick, feeding the poor, comforting

Tikkun Olam Makers

Tikkun Olam Makers (TOM) was founded in Israel in 2014. TOM uses the skill, expertise and dedication of its supporters to create and share physical, technological solutions for people who need support. TOM now has a presence in more than 20 countries worldwide.

TOM Tikkun Olam Makers

FIGURE 6.4.3 Satisfied participant and makers at TOM Melbourne, 2019

Weblink
Tikkun Olam Makers

a mourner and attending a funeral. Already a part of the teachings of the Talmud, *tzedakah* and *gemilut chasadim* were strongly reinforced in Maimonides' twelfth-century *Mishneh Torah* and Joseph Karo's sixteenth-century *Shulchan Aruch*. While the study of the Torah is considered a high calling in Jewish life, it is interesting to note that it is common practice for the students of a *yeshiva* to be engaged one afternoon a week in community service activities – *gemilut chasadim*.

The sick, the old and the poor

It is a traditional responsibility of Judaism to visit the sick and assist the elderly, the disadvantaged and the poor. In Judaism, I am my brother's keeper. In Australia, Jewish welfare organisations play an important role; for example, there are large Jewish aged-care homes and day-care centres in the capital cities. Practical assistance for the poor is evidenced in some Jewish day schools, which admit students regardless of their parents' financial position.

> A blind beggar accosted two men walking on the road. One of the travellers gave him a coin, but the other gave him nothing. The Angel of Death approached them and said: 'He who gave to the beggar need have no fear of me for fifty years, but the other shall speedily die.' 'May I not return and give charity to the beggar?' asked the condemned man. 'No,' replied the Angel of Death. 'A boat is examined for holes and cracks before departure, not when it is already at sea.'
>
> *Midrash* in *Me'il Tzedakah*

> If one noticed a poor man asking for something and ignored him, and failed to give *tzedakah* (charity), he has broken a prohibitive command, as it is written: Do not harden your heart and shut your hand against your needy brother.
>
> Deut 17:7
>
> Rambam, *Mishneh Torah* 'Gifts to the Poor' 7:2

Proverbs

The Book of Proverbs is ascribed to King Solomon, and gives advice for upright living. Proverbs exalts the quality of wisdom as a necessary value for a virtuous life.

> Happy are those who find wisdom, and those who get understanding, for her income is better than silver, and her revenue better than gold. She is more precious than jewels, and nothing you desire can compare with her.
>
> Prov 3:13–15

Wisdom stems from knowledge, and the beginning of knowledge is fear of the Lord (Prov 1:7). Thus, the wisdom of Proverbs connects with the heart of Torah. The wisdom of Proverbs is important, too, in the later rabbinic tradition. In elevating wisdom to a virtue for its own sake, the Book of Proverbs foreshadows the rabbis' ethic that strongly emphasises the importance of the study of Torah for its own sake.

The Book of Proverbs has always had wide appeal (even beyond the Jewish community). The theme that flows through Proverbs is a universal one: the wise shall be rewarded with happiness and contentment and the foolish will reap the bitter rewards of their short-sightedness. For the Jew, the wise phrases of Proverbs direct one to a life of righteousness, purity and generosity of spirit, as the following selection from Proverbs indicates.

> Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it. Do not say to your neighbour, 'Go, and come again, tomorrow I will give it' – when you have it with you.
>
> Prov 3:27–28

> Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. Keep straight the path of your feet, and all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.
>
> Prov 4:24–27

> Treasures gained by wickedness do not profit, but righteousness delivers from death.
>
> Prov 10:2

> On the lips of one who has understanding wisdom is found, but a rod is for the back of one who lacks sense.
>
> Prov 10:13

> When pride comes, then comes disgrace; but wisdom is with the humble.
>
> Prov 11:2

> Fools think their own way is right, but the wise listen to advice.
>
> Prov 12:15

> Better is a dinner of vegetables where love is than a fatted ox and hatred with it.
>
> Prov 15:17

REVIEW

1. How does the *mezuzah* underline the importance of the Torah for Jews?
2. **Define** the meaning of *tikkun olam*.
3. **Explain** the relationship between the *mitzvot* and *halachah*.
4. If 'the giving of money is not the heart of *tzedakah*', then what is central to its purpose?
5. **Describe** the importance of the care of others as a social justice principle of Judaism.
6. Choose three of the proverbs quoted in this section and rewrite each in your own words to **demonstrate** that you understand their meaning.

EXTENSION

1. **Construct** a mind map to **synthesise** the importance of *halachah* for the everyday life of the observant Jew.
2. Use the weblink provided to find out more about Jewish ethics.
   - **a** **Outline** the principal ethical teachings of Judaism.
   - **b** **Evaluate** the degree to which Jewish ethics impact on the everyday life of the believer.
3. How do the Proverbs provide a guide for 'a life of righteousness, purity and generosity of spirit'?

Worksheet
The Book of Proverbs

Weblink
Board of Jewish Education

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6.5 Observance

GLOSSARY

birkat ha-mazon The grace after meals. It contains four blessings praising God for food, for the land, for Jerusalem and for God's goodness.

challot (singular, ***challah***) The two uncut plaited loaves of bread prepared for, then eaten on, the evening of *Shabbat* and holy days.

havdalah The prayer of separation said at the end of *Shabbat*.

kiddush The prayers and blessings said over a cup of wine, ushering in *Shabbat* and holy days.

Pesach *Pesach* or Passover is a Jewish festival that commemorates the 'passing over' of the houses of the Israelites as God seized the firstborn of the Egyptians (Ex 12:21–30). *Pesach* is very widely practised in Australia and around the Jewish world, being celebrated by Jews of every degree of religious commitment. (Read more about *Pesach* in Chapter 14, page 314.)

In general terms, religious observance refers to conformity with the laws and practices of a tradition. This is certainly true of Judaism, where religious observances can have a transformative effect on its adherents.

For example, the effect of *kashrut* (kosher) is to transform the act of eating from a mundane activity to a discipline charged with religious significance. The ***Pesach*** meal, so widely commemorated in Jewish family groups with varying degrees of personal commitment, is at the very least an occasion that focuses the individual on their place in the life of the Jewish community and the foundational beliefs and values of Judaism. The synagogue services, rituals and celebration of *Shabbat* in the home are elements of Jewish religious observance that can have a similar impact. It is the observances of *Shabbat* in particular that are the focus of the following section.

Shabbat

The Torah commands that the seventh day, known as *Shabbat*, or Sabbath in English, belongs to God. As such, no work is to be done. Among Orthodox Jews, the *halachah* of *Shabbat* is applied very strictly. One may not cook, write, drive a car, turn lights on and off and other such weekday activities. Refraining from these actions heightens the special nature of the *Shabbat*. In Israel, strict observance of *Shabbat* is catered for – the country virtually closes down from sunset on Friday evening until the third star appears in the sky on Saturday at nightfall, which marks the end of *Shabbat*. Strict observance of *Shabbat* is more difficult in secular societies such as Australia, but universally in Judaism it is seen as the day of the week set aside for one's family, for the community, for God and the study of Torah.

The family is a significant focus of *Shabbat* ritual. As no work is permitted on the *Shabbat*, preparations for *Shabbat* will start well before *Shabbat* itself, with the shopping for the *Shabbat* meal and the preparation of the house, the children and the *Shabbat* meal. Special bread, ***challah***, is baked for the *Shabbat* meal and the loaves are placed under a cloth on the *Shabbat* table for later use in the *Shabbat* ritual. The table should be set with at least two candles (representing the dual commandments to remember and observe the Sabbath), a glass of wine, and at least two loaves of *challah*. The *challot* should be whole and should be covered with a bread cover, towel or napkin. Eighteen minutes before sunset, the traditional family will usher in the beginning of *Shabbat* with the lighting of two *Shabbat* candles, accompanied by blessings. The candles are lit by the woman of the household. After lighting, she waves her hands over the candles, welcoming *Shabbat*. She then covers her eyes, so as not to see the candles, and recites the blessing:

> Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to light the *Shabbat* candles.

She then uncovers her eyes and looks at the candles, completing the *mitzvah* of lighting the candles.

Following the *Kabbalat Shabbat* ('Welcoming the Sabbath') and evening service at the synagogue, a husband blesses his wife and children, and then recites ***kiddush*** over a cup of wine.

> Blessed are You, Lord, our God, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine.
>
> … You have lovingly and willingly given us Your holy *Shabbat* as an inheritance, in memory of creation.
>
> This day is the first among our holy days, and a remembrance of our Exodus from Egypt …
>
> Blessed are You who sanctifies the *Shabbat*.
>
> From *Kiddush*

After *kiddush*, the *challot* are uncovered. A blessing is said over the *challah*, and it is broken and distributed to those present. The *Shabbat* meal is then eaten, interspersed with traditional songs. To conclude the meal, another special prayer is said, the ***birkat ha-mazon***.

The synagogue, a Jewish house of worship, also plays a significant role in *Shabbat* religious observances in each Jewish community. Saturday morning involves the main synagogue service of *Shabbat*, at which the Torah is read.

Lunch is accompanied by songs and blessings. After the meal, people may rest, study the Torah, or visit friends or family. There is a final afternoon service, followed by the last of the *Shabbat* meals. After nightfall, the ***havdalah***, the prayer that closes *Shabbat*, is recited.

Havdalah involves a blessing over wine. This is followed by a blessing over spices. The fragrance of the spices is to compensate for the heavy-heartedness that one feels with the passing of the *Shabbat*, and the leaving of the *neshamah yeterah* – the 'additional soul' that enters each person for the duration of *Shabbat*. Finally, there is a blessing over the light of a two-wicked twisted candle. Light cannot be kindled during *Shabbat*, and so the lighting of the *havdalah* candle sets apart Shabbat from the rest of the week.

> … Blessed are you, O Lord, who separates the holy from the everyday.
>
> From the *Havdalah*, said over wine, spices and a twisted candle

▷ The synagogue is the central place for public observance on *Shabbat*. You can read about it in depth in Chapter 14, pages 311–13.

REVIEW

1. Identify the key elements of the *Shabbat* meal.
2. List things that would need to be prepared/done to faithfully celebrate the *Shabbat*.
3. Classify the adult responsibilities of *Shabbat* according to those of men and those of women.
4. **Describe** the importance of *Shabbat* for the Jewish family.

EXTENSION

1. '*Shabbat* is a day of stifling restrictions.' Propose a response to this that you might expect to come from a faithful and observant Jew.
2. Use the weblinks provided for more information on the symbols and foods of *Shabbat*. Prepare an illustrated report based on your findings.

Weblinks
Shabbat: My Jewish Learning

BJE Shabbat Symbols and Food

Worksheet
Shabbat and observance

Conclusion

The presence of Jews from the very beginnings of modern Australia in 1788 has meant that Jews have always found a ready place in the Australian community. Significant waves of European Jewish migration to Australia in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries strengthened Jewish differentiation from the rest of the Australian community, while increasing the diversity of the Australian Jewish community. In most recent times, significant numbers of Jews have migrated to Australia from southern Africa and Eastern Europe.

The Shabbat Project

Inspired by an idea that arose in the South African Jewish community, the Shabbat Project has emerged on the Australian Jewish scene. Once a year, Australian Jews are encouraged to join a global movement to observe the rituals of *Shabbat*. The project has fostered community involvement and pride in Jewish heritage.

Celebrated in Australian cities since October 2014, the Shabbat Project (known internationally as the Shabbos Project) has included events such as a mass community baking of *challah* bread (the special bread prepared for the Sabbath meal), community *kiddush* (blessing of the Sabbath wine which precedes the Sabbath meal) and community celebrations of *havdalah* (the ceremony that ends each Sabbath and welcomes the coming week). Many synagogues have reported synagogue attendance several times greater than the regular attendance numbers on the Shabbat Project day, emphasising the effectiveness of the Shabbat Project in reinvigorating the significance of the Sabbath for Jews in a wide variety of Jewish communities around the world.

Amid the diversity found in the modern Australian Jewish community are the constants of Jewish life: belief in one, incorporeal, transcendent God; a confidence in the covenant between God and the Jewish people that was forged in ancient times by Abraham and the Patriarchs; a cleaving to the Torah as the guide to right living; a knowledge of the important place of the Talmud and other Jewish writings in expounding the meaning of the Torah; and a faithfulness to the observation of *Shabbat* worship. These are the constants that sustain the Jewish life in all its forms to this day.

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. Construct a 'Things you must know' package for journalists who are reporting on Jews and Judaism.

Weblink
Shabbat Project Archive

Online activity
Chapter 6 multiple-choice quiz

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22 INDICATIVE HOURS

7

Religions of ancient origin

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **investigate** the nature of *two* ancient Asian religions – Daoism and Shinto
- **identify** the principal beliefs and practices of each religion
- **identify** and **describe** the role of supernatural powers and deities
- **discuss** the relationship between sacred spaces and the beliefs of each religion
- **identify** the principal rituals and **examine** their significance for the individual and the community
- **explain** the interrelationship between each religion and its society
- **explain** how the religion provides a distinctive response to the search for meaning in the society.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Daoist terminology (p. 119)
- The *Jiao* ritual (p. 128)
- Shinto terminology (p. 130)
- Kokugaku (p. 132)
- Shinto Shrine of Isé Jingu (p. 132)

Online activity

- Chapter 7 multiple-choice quiz (p. 135)

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National Library of Australia, (obj 231209112)

Map of East Asia by Willem Janszoon Blaeu, first printed in the mid-seventeenth century. 'East Asia' is a geographical term to describe China, Japan and Korea. These areas had a multitude of local religions, but as China began to create a large, united imperial system it became the 'big brother' from which others borrowed. East Asia does not, however, have a common culture, even though, as you will see, there are mutual borrowings and influences throughout history.

GLOSSARY

ancient The distant past. Of religions, the religion of early **civilisations**.

archaic Sometimes used as an alternative to **ancient**, or to describe the early stages of ancient civilisations.

civilisation A complex of institutions involved in organising life in cities. It includes governing bureaucracies, merchant activity, the arts and religious organisations.

divination Practices to discover future events by determining the will of the spirits or the natural processes involved.

diviner A person trained or endowed with special gifts to perform **divination**.

fertility cults Religious rituals to promote the production of crops, domestic animals and humans.

hierarchy A social structure in which individuals or classes of people are ranked so that some people occupy higher levels of importance than others. In religion, it refers to the relative importance of holders of religious offices.

liturgies Formulas for the conduct of religious rituals. 'Liturgies' is often used as a synonym for 'rituals'.

primal Of religions, those that are earliest in time and that influence those that follow.

primitive Same as **primal**, but now generally avoided in use because of implications of being inferior or undeveloped.

symbolism The use of visual or verbal signs that point to something beyond themselves.

Ancient religions are the religions of early **civilisations**. They are often presented as if they were dead and gone. This is perhaps the case with the ancient religions of Europe, Western Asia and Central America. It is, however, surprising how much has been incorporated into the rituals and **symbolism** of the world religions that succeeded them. We have only to think of the way Christian churches are often modelled on Roman temple architecture, how Christian **liturgies** used the symbols of fire and water found in pre-Christian rituals and the extent to which Christianity

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incorporated pagan pilgrimages and harvest festivals into its yearly round.

Historians have traced many of the popular Christian saints of Europe and the Americas back to pre-Christian gods and goddesses. But while these ancient religions are no longer practised as living religions, in Asia the direct descendants of ancient religions are among the major living traditions. Buddhism has become a world religion and is found in all parts of Asia today; Hinduism, which grew out of the religion of ancient India, is the major religion of modern India; and Confucianism continues to deeply influence all of East Asia and Chinese people wherever they are found.

Ancient religions were themselves influenced by the earlier religious beliefs and practices of the places where they developed. We can easily find in them echoes of the **fertility cults** of early farmers and herders, and the practices that hunters and gatherers used to attempt to control the forces of nature. But as societies grew more complex, new religious forms evolved and these are what are commonly called 'ancient' or '**archaic**' religions. They are contrasted with the '**primitive**' or '**primal**' religions that preceded them by virtue of the new forms of religious organisation that suited the more complex large-scale societies of the city-states and empires where they developed. When we look at the continual warfare, prevalence of slavery, human sacrifice and so on in such societies, we may question whether they were 'civilised', but that description certainly fitted the root meaning of that term (from the Latin word *civitas*, 'city').

Ancient religions arose where city living had created the need for new forms of social organisation and specialisation (kings, bureaucracies, armies, law courts and merchants). Even more importantly for religion, writing was invented to serve the needs of the bureaucracies. Religion, too, fitted into this new pattern. Instead of religious and civil authority being exercised by the same people, as was usually the case in primal religions, a new class of religious leaders evolved with special functions: priests to offer sacrifice and control rituals, teachers, prophets, mystics and diviners. Thus, a **hierarchy** was created. They had a close but sometimes antagonistic relationship with the political and military leaders, who often tried to assume sacredness or even divinity for themselves. Whereas in primal religions religious status depended on personal powers and qualities, now it came from holding office and was often inherited.

When ancient religions emerged, there was not a complete break with the primal religions from which they grew. One common feature is that all members of the society shared the same religious beliefs. No doubt there were some dissenters and sceptics, but they were not organised into different religions or 'heretical' groups. It is only with the creation of the great empires with many conquered peoples that other religions came to be tolerated and sects developed. Another thing that ancient religions have in common with primal religions is that religion was part of everyday life, not just for festivals or special days. And the peasants in the countryside probably continued worshipping nature gods and celebrating the changing seasons of the farming year much as they always had.

The ancient religions of East Asia differed from each other greatly as they developed out of the earlier religions of the areas we now call China, Japan and Korea. However, one thing they had in common was a lack of interest in questions that bothered ancient peoples elsewhere. In particular, unlike the ancient religions of West and South Asia, they were not concerned with the origins of the universe. People assumed the universe always existed and worried about the origins of their part only (in the case of the ancient Japanese) or about how it worked (the ancient Chinese). This has been described as a focus on cosmology (how the world works) as opposed to cosmogony (how it began). Hence, too, there was an emphasis on **divination**, which might predict what will happen. The Chinese theory of nature that lies behind Chinese divination is called Daoism and the Japanese religion of the spirits who control the world is called Shinto.

REVIEW

1. Can you find anything in Australia's customs, holidays, ceremonies and religious rituals that corresponds to the ancient celebrations of the seasons and the fertility of the land?
2. In your own words, define 'primal' religion.
3. Describe the characteristics of 'ancient' or 'archaic' religions.
4. Distinguish the similarities and differences between primal and ancient religions.
5. What is a major difference between the ancient religions of East Asia and those of West and South Asia? What terms are used to describe this difference?

EXTENSION

Maintain a list where you summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter. A worksheet has been provided to assist you.

Worksheet
Daoist terminology

7.1 Daoism

GLOSSARY

Dao 'The Way', a key idea in Chinese religion. It is used both as a general term for the main religions or Ways of China – Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism – and as the main concept in Daoism.

yang The male principle in nature, associated by the Chinese with the sun – power, activity, heat and light.

yin The female principle in nature, associated by the Chinese with the earth – passivity, negativity, cold and dark.

Bridgeman Images/Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris, France/Archives Charmet

FIGURE 7.1.1 The ***yin***/***yang*** symbol is often, as here, associated with the eight trigrams (*ba gua*) of the classic *Book of Changes (Yi Jing)*, both ways of expressing and interpreting the changing states of the world. (Colour lithograph, French School, nineteenth century.)

Ancient China

The early royal religion in China, revealed in the earliest Chinese writing, was one of sacrifices to earlier rulers – the origin of the modern Chinese cult of ancestors. The peasants, however, were more concerned with the fertility of their land, and worship of 'gods of the soil' continued until modern times. These two themes – ancestors and fertility of humans, animals and crops – have always been central in Chinese religion.

Confucianism and Daoism are the main religions that are native to China (as opposed to Buddhism, Islam and Christianity, which were introduced from outside). Both began around 500 BCE and derive their authority from the writings of their founders, Kongzi (K'ung-tzu), whom Westerners generally call Confucius, and the mysterious Laozi (Lao-tzu).

Confucianism is mostly concerned with how people should behave (ethics), but has a God that Confucians call Heaven (*Tian*) or the Supreme Ruler (*Shangdi*), as well as religious rituals. It was adopted as the state ideology of the Chinese empires, which lasted, with many changes of the ruling house, from 221 BCE to 1911. It continues to shape Chinese society today and its ideas are used to underpin family and political structures and even business relations.

Daoism, named after the Chinese word ***Dao***, 'the Way', taught a simple way of life that was close to nature and avoided striving for good fortune that was contrary to nature. It too has deeply influenced the Chinese way of life and popular religion as practised in local temples and shrines. Some scholars want to use the label 'Daoism' for all popular Chinese religious ideas other than those derived from Confucianism and Buddhism – but this is not justifiable. Many popular Chinese religious beliefs and practices go back long before the theory of the *Dao* was developed. It is probably better to think of a very ancient common Chinese religion that feeds into later Daoism and Confucianism, and in many respects into Chinese Buddhism too.

Alamy Stock Photo/CPA Media Pte Ltd

FIGURE 7.1.2 A classic Chinese painting, *The Vinegar Tasters*, depicting Confucius, the Buddha, and Laozi tasting vinegar and showing different expressions reflecting their philosophies on life.

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The spelling of Chinese words

Chinese is written in 'characters' (more or less complex graphs or combinations of strokes written with a brush or pen). They are sometimes called 'pictographs' (picture writing), but only very few characters are pictures; for example, *ri* 日, 'sun.' Some are 'ideographs' (representing ideas); for example, *shang* 上, 'above.' Most, however, are a combination of a meaning part and a sound part; for example, *fu* 福, 'good fortune,' which consists of the sign for 'religion' on the left, and a sign indicating the pronunciation 'fu' on the right.

To represent these characters in an alphabetical language, we have to try to find letters that convey the sound or something like it (in practice, Chinese words have intonations that further distinguish them). This is called 'romanisation' – their representation in Roman or Western letters. There are many ways of doing this, usually based on the national standard of pronunciation, which nowadays is Northern Chinese (formerly called Mandarin because it was the language of government).

The Chinese Government has adopted a system called *pinyin*. In general, this is closer to English pronunciation with some exceptions; for example, it uses 'q' for our 'ch' sound and 'x' for our 'sh.' All Chinese terms will be given here in *pinyin*, occasionally with the older Wade-Giles system equivalent following in square brackets.

One key Chinese religious term is 道, 'the way.' It is written in *pinyin* as *dao*, which is how it sounds, but in Wade-Giles as *tao*. So the Chinese religion that makes this its central idea used to be called Taoism but is increasingly referred to as Daoism. Both are correct, but the one that is closer to the sound of Chinese is preferable.

The earliest Chinese religion, as practised in the emerging village society from 6000 to 7000 years ago, seems to have been related to the cycles of nature. This was prior to the use of writing, so we have no textual evidence, but later Chinese writing relating to religion is based on the earliest Chinese characters that reflect their practices. One, for example, seems to depict an earth mound with a plant on top of it, probably an altar (*tu* 土, meaning today 'earth' or 'place', and in its earliest form much more clearly a mound with vegetation on top of it). Even today, in villages outside Hong Kong you can see small altars to local gods consisting of a stone, or a heap of earth at the base of a tree.

We can assume that the powers of nature were personified as gods or goddesses, given names and personal histories. There are many traces of these in later Chinese writings. Then, as now, religion reflected the deepest needs of the people: good harvests, safety from human and non-human enemies, and children to carry on the line and support the parents in old age. The main and enduring features of Chinese religion over 4000 years or more are:

- a concern with nature, fertility and reproduction.
- a focus on the family, linking ancestors, the present and future generations
- a view of the spirit world as a hierarchy that parallels the social structure on earth, which can be influenced, bribed or persuaded to help.

Zhou religion – the origins of Confucianism and Daoism

In the third Chinese dynasty, the Zhou [Chou] (c. 1050 – c. 256 BCE), we find both the first Chinese books and the origins of Daoism and Confucianism. These books, the five 'classics,' later became the main texts of Confucianism; but parts of them long preceded Confucius (551–479 BCE), and they contain much that is the common cultural property of all Chinese.

Recent research on the history of Confucianism strongly undermines the claim that it was not or is not a religion. Even in its later form known as Neo-Confucianism, it has a God figure, *Tian* (or Heaven), and rituals and practices of self-examination and meditation that are clearly religious. And Confucius himself often seems closer to the later Daoists than to the busy officials who claimed to be Confucians. For example, there is a passage from the *Sayings* or *Analects* (Bk 11, Ch. 25) collected by his followers that shows Confucius favouring the simple life and enjoying nature.

In this fascinating exchange, Confucius asks his closest disciples what they would do if they had their wishes. Zi Lu, the bold and pugnacious disciple, plunges in and expresses a wish to be made prime minister of a large state, besieged and invaded by its enemies, and suffering from famine. Confucius simply smiles. The next in seniority, Dian, misses his turn because he is playing the lute at the time. Ran You replies next, and perhaps taking his cue from Confucius' lack of enthusiasm for Zi Lu's grand ambitions, asks for three years to set in order the affairs of a small state, but protests his lack of ability to teach the rules of behaviour or the arts. Gongxi Hua, knowing that Confucius strongly stressed the importance of rituals, has an even more modest ambition: to be an assistant in the ancestor rituals and court ceremonial of a king. Finally, without further comment, Confucius turns to Dian:

> 'Dian, what about you?' Dian, who was playing the lute, paused and put aside his instrument which was still sounding, and replied: 'I differ from the choices of the three other gentlemen.' The Master said: 'No harm in that. Each of you should indicate your real desires.' Dian then went on: 'In late Spring, wearing our new Spring outfits, I would go with five or six young men and six or seven boys to bathe in the Yi River, enjoy the breeze at the Rain Altar, and return home singing.' The Master sighed deeply and said: 'I am with Dian.'

REVIEW

1. Recall the two central themes of Chinese religion.
2. What have been the three enduring features of Chinese religion?
3. Identify the writings from which Confucianism and Daoism derive their authority.
4. Deduce what we can learn about Confucianism from the material in the previous feature box.

EXTENSION

'Taoism' or 'Daoism'? Search online for each term. How many sites are there for each? Investigate if the terms are used synonymously. Which term is used more today?

The origins of Daoism

The origin of Daoism as a formal system of thought or religion is associated by the Chinese with a book and its alleged author. The book is generally called the *Dao De Jing* [*Tao Te Ching*], 'The Classic of the Way and Its Virtue'. The Chinese text, as we now have it, dates from the third century CE but a number of earlier complete and partial versions have recently been found in ancient tombs; these show very interesting variations and confirm that it goes back to at least the third century BCE. According to tradition, it was written by a contemporary and critic of Confucius called Laozi [Lao-tzu], 老子, 'The Old Master'. Most Western and some Chinese critics, however, think it is a compilation from many sources. Even if this is so, some person (or persons) edited the text as we now have it and we may as well call him Laozi.

Bridgeman Images/Oriental Museum, University of Durham

FIGURE 7.1.3 Laozi leaving China riding his water buffalo (bronze). According to legend, when Laozi was leaving China and reached the pass to India, the frontier official Yin Xi asked Laozi to write down the essence of his teaching before leaving. This record became known as the *Dao De Jing*.

Who was Laozi?

The name is suspicious. It is clearly not a surname but rather a pseudonym. Even more suspiciously, the earliest biographies are contradictory and confusing. Some say he was the keeper of the royal archives and that, when Confucius came to do research on the ways of the old kings, Laozi told him he was wasting his time. Truth was found only by experience, not from written records (a strange view for an archivist to hold). The story goes on:

> Laozi cultivated the way and its virtue. His teaching used self-concealment and abandoning names in order to succeed. He lived in Zhou for a long time, but when he saw the decline of Zhou, he left. When he reached the Pass, Yin Xi, the Keeper of the Pass said: 'Since your honour is about to retreat from the world, would you for my sake leave a record of your teaching?' So, Laozi wrote down a book in two parts, dealing with the meaning of the way and its virtue, in some 5000 words or more, and then departed. No one knows where he eventually ended up.

But the same source (the first great history of China, the *Shiji* or 'Historical Records' from the first century BCE) gives two other incompatible stories. In other words, nobody knew who Laozi was.

The best explanation is that he never existed. The legend, however, is important because it depicts him riding off towards the west – the direction from which Buddhism was to later come. But if Laozi didn't exist, the book did, and its teaching is remarkably like the early Chinese religion. It discusses the ways of nature, how to avoid trouble by reading the way the world is and acting naturally, and, according to some, by contacting the spirit world.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term *Dao* is not used exclusively by Daoists. Confucians and Buddhists use it to describe their 'Way'. Even Chinese translations of the Bible have used it to translate 'the Word' at the beginning of the Gospel of John.

Daoist texts

Dao De Jing 道德經 – The Way and Its Virtue

NOTE

'*De*' means 'virtue' in the sense of power or action, rather than moral virtue.

The 81 chapters of *Dao De Jing* are short and its wording is mysterious. How we translate it depends on what we think the book is about. Is it the result of meditation and mystical experience? Or advice about how to get on in the world? Or is it a work of philosophy that has nothing to do with the later religious practices of organised Daoism? Opinion today favours the first interpretation and denies any radical break with later religious Daoism. But, in the end, you have to make up your own mind by a close reading of the text.

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There are many good translations into English as well as many very bad ones.

To show how difficult it is, here is a literal translation of the opening six words:

> 道可道 非常道
>
> *Dao ke dao, fei chang dao.*
>
> The Way that can be wayed is not the unchanging Way.

Some other translations are:

> A way can be a guide, but not a fixed path.
>
> The *Dao* that can be spoken of is not the eternal *Dao*.
>
> The *Dao* that can be described in words is not the true *Dao*.
>
> The ways that can be walked are not the eternal Way.
>
> The *Dao* which can be expressed is not the unchanging *Dao*.
>
> Spoken *Dao* is not eternal *Dao*.
>
> The Dao that can be expressed is not the *Dao* of the Absolute.

Dao can mean a 'path' or, as a metaphor, a 'way' to follow. It can also be a verb 'to speak', which is how it is generally interpreted here. So it appears to be saying that the real way cannot be spoken. And the second line confirms this: 'The name that can be named is not the unchanging name.' But, in that case, why write a book about it? And why can we not describe this mysterious Way in words? It would seem that the reason is that it is not a thing, and words describe things. Ultimately, it is 'no thing', 'nothing' (*wu* 無). If not a thing among other things, what is it? It is their source, what lies ultimately behind everything that exists. It cannot be labelled but it can be understood through comparisons – it is like water, a valley, a female, a baby, an empty vessel, an uncarved block of wood, a boat drifting on the water.

Is the *Dao* then God? Perhaps, but the text also refers many times to *Tian* (Heaven) and the Way seems to be produced by Heaven. Is it Nature? This seems closer, but it is nature as an active force, not the sum total of things in the world. The *Dao De Jing* invites us to observe or, better, meditate upon the world around us and see the Way at work.

If we do so, we will understand that it simply goes its way and nothing we do will stop it. In fact, we should 'not act' (*wu wei* 無為); that is, not act purposefully. If we try to change, to reform the world as Confucians advocated, we will be destroyed like the 'straw dogs' that were used in ritual, then just thrown away. The real 'virtue', which is in conformity with the Way, is not to try to be something we are not.

Zhuangzi 莊子

The other foundational work of Daoism is the *Zhuangzi* [*Chuang-tzu*], the core of which is the work of a teacher named Zhuang Zhou 莊周 (called by his disciples and posterity Zhuangzi – Master Zhuang), who lived in the late fourth century BCE. He seemed to draw on the same ideas about the Way as were attributed to Laozi, but adds much that was taken up in later Daoism: practices of meditation and bodily postures that led to understanding (*yoga*), retiring from the world as hermits, special diet and even sexual practices. Recently discovered manuscripts have shown a great interest in such matters in early China.

What makes the *Zhuangzi* so compelling is the personality and style of Zhuangzi himself. He thought that to help people understand the Way it was necessary to twist language, play games with it, force the reader or hearer to realise that truth must be experienced and not received from others. He used stories, paradoxes and striking images. As his disciples said of him in the last chapter of the book: 'He believed that everyone in the world had become stupid and could not grasp serious language so he used impromptu expressions in his effusions, allusions to convey the truth and metaphors to expand the mind.' All this makes the *Zhuangzi* one of the great works of world literature.

The book opens with an extraordinary leap of the imagination:

> In the depths of the North there is a fish. Its name is Kun. It is gigantic, and no one knows how many thousands of miles it stretches. It is suddenly changed and becomes a bird named Peng with a back no one knows how many thousands of miles wide. It leaps into the air and takes off, and its wings are like clouds floating in the sky. This bird floats above the waves towards the southern deeps, the Pool of Heaven.

The world is one of constant transformation, full of marvels. We ordinary people, the story goes on to say, are like the short-lived cicada or the common dove who see the shadow pass above but cannot do anything but wonder at it. But we should aim, as the title of the chapter suggests, to 'wander freely forever', unrestrained by society or rules.

Like Laozi, Zhuangzi is constantly telling us what the *Dao* is like. The *Dao* is like a great clod of clay, with potential to be shaped into anything whatever (Ch. 24). We know it when we encounter it. Recognising the *Dao* is a knack, like that of the good butcher who slaughters a beast without stopping to think about how to do it (Ch. 3) or the wheelwright who cannot teach his son how to make wheels but simply knows (Ch. 13). We must avoid 'the machine mind' and try to be 'useless' and then we will survive like the gnarled old oak tree that lived to extreme old age because it could not be made into furniture or a bridge or a house (Ch. 4). The more we try, the worse we make things, like the two friends who tried to give senses to Chaos by boring holes for eyes, ears and mouth. Chaos died (Ch. 7).

Above all, Master Zhuang tells stories – memorable stories that are still told in China and elsewhere. One is about a foolish man who tried to get Zhuangzi to point out to him where the Way was:

> Master Dongguo asked Zhuangzi: 'This thing you call the Way, where can I find it?' Zhuangzi said: 'There is

nowhere where it is not.' Master Dongguo said: 'That won't do, be specific.' Zhuangzi said: 'It is in crickets and ants.' Dong replied: 'How could it be in such an insignificant place?' Zhuangzi said: 'It is in the weeds in the fields.' 'But that's lower still.' 'It's in tiles and debris.' 'That's even worse.' Zhuangzi said: 'It is in human excrement.' Master Dongguo did not reply.

Ch. 22

The point, of course, as Zhuangzi goes on to explain, is that *Dao* is everywhere and nowhere – it is behind all reality but not to be identified with any particular reality.

Other famous stories illustrate that in the end all is the Way. The differences we perceive are unimportant. The royal monkeys in a time of famine rioted when their keeper told them they would only get three nuts in the morning and four in the afternoon. When the keeper agreed to give them four in the morning and three in the afternoon they were happy (Ch. 2).

Perhaps the best known of all is the butterfly story at the end of Chapter 2.

> Once upon a time, I, Zhuang Zhou, dreamed I was a butterfly, a butterfly fluttering about, happily going its way, enjoying life without knowing who I was. Suddenly I woke up and was indeed Zhou. But I didn't know whether I was Zhou who had been dreaming he was a butterfly or a butterfly who was dreaming he was Zhou. There must be some distinction between Zhou and the butterfly. This is what is called the transformation of things.

There are whole books of commentary on this story but, as Zhuangzi does, we leave it to you to work out what it means.

Zhuangzi advocates the simple life. Again a story to illustrate it:

> Zhuangzi was fishing in the Pu River when the King of Chu sent two of his high officials to him with a message: 'I want to entrust to you the government of the state.' Zhuangzi kept on fishing and did not even turn around. He said: 'I have heard that in Chu there is a sacred tortoise which has been dead for three thousand years. Your king keeps it wrapped up in a box in a place of honour in his ancestral hall. This tortoise, do you think it would rather be dead and its bones preserved and honoured, or would it rather be alive and wagging its tail in the mud?'
>
> The two officials said: 'It would prefer to be alive and wagging its tail in the mud.'
>
> Zhuangzi said: 'Go away! I intend to wag my tail in the mud.'

Ch. 17

Alamy Stock Photo/The Picture Art Collection

FIGURE 7.1.4 'In the North Sea there is a fish whose name is Kun.' The opening lines of the *Zhuangzi* about the great fish Kun, by the Japanese artist Goga. Calligraphy (writing Chinese characters with a brush) was for both Chinese and Japanese a quasi-religious exercise involving meditation and concentration.

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We must bear in mind when reading passages like this that the historical background to the writings of Zhuangzi and Laozi is the period known as the 'Warring States'. The power of the Zhou dynasty had collapsed and China was being torn apart by war between competing states, each hoping to conquer all the rest (475–221 BCE). A philosophy of state power called Legalism predominated. The slaughter only ended when one state, Qin [Ch'in] destroyed all the rest in 222 BCE, only to be in turn destroyed in 206 BCE by the Han. During the Warring States period, dropping out was not a viable option – rather a utopian vision. But some individuals might retire to the mountains and cultivate the simple life to the point where, they hoped, they would become 'immortals'.

Daoists never believed anyone could live forever, but they did believe one could prolong life enormously by the right diet – no meat, no grain, just vegetables – the right unhurried lifestyle, contemplation of nature and pleasant occupations such as writing poetry or making music. Strangely, these Daoist hermits seemed to enjoy congenial company and they had no objection to drinking alcohol.

Zhuangzi himself had reservations about special exercises like those which later Daoists advocated. Rather it was an attitude of mind: 'All you need do is practise quiet, placidity, retirement, imperturbability, emptiness, non-being and non-action' (Ch.15). In the *Zhuangzi* we can see the nucleus of the organised religion that persists until the present day. Daoism took many forms as teachers and prophets emerged and sacred writings were added until the *Dao Zang* 道藏 ('Collected Daoist Scriptures') comprised some 1476 works in 1120 volumes. This was a development that came to include rituals and practices (see pages 127–8) that the early Daoist thinkers never dreamed of and perhaps would not have approved of. Daoism, however, always remained opposed to the government – in fact, it was often associated with rebellion. It appealed to ordinary people, especially women, who often played a leading role, and it reflected the daily experience of peasants and workers.

Recent research has found that the earliest signs of Daoism seem to have arisen in South China. A famous work called in translation *The Songs of the South* depicts a religion in which spirit mediums called down gods and goddesses from above and penetrated the mysteries of the natural world. Perhaps Daoism comes from South China just as Confucianism comes from North China.

REVIEW

1. Recall the names of the two major texts of Daoism.
2. Outline the major ideas of each of these texts.
3. The Chinese term *Dao* has many meanings – identify some of these meanings and prepare a short summary to clarify your understanding of the term.
4. Construct a visual summary of some of the characteristics of early Daoism.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided to read more of the Daoist scriptures in English and view different Chinese script versions.

Weblink
The Daoist Scriptures

Organised or 'religious' Daoism

GLOSSARY

alchemy In Daoist practice, a set of procedures and principles meant to prolong human life. In Daoism, there were two types of alchemy: Outer Alchemy, which consisted of the chemical production of elixirs that were meant to be swallowed; and Inner Alchemy, which relied on symbolic meditation to achieve the same end.

pantheon All the gods of a particular religion, people, or nation.

In the turmoil of the collapse of the Han dynasty at the end of the second century CE, many new religious movements arose all over the country. Between the second and sixth centuries CE, organised or 'religious' Daoism developed out of these movements, coming to maturity in the Tang dynasty. The most important of these movements was the 'Way of the Celestial Masters'. It grew from the Five Bushels of Rice healing cult, so called after the offering made to join, established by the Zhang family in Sichuan province. Its founder, Zhang Daoling, supposedly received divine revelations from Laozi himself. Following this experience, Zhang developed a distinct system of religious teachings based on 'The Classic of the Way and Its Virtue'.

NOTE

The descendants of Zhang Daoling in Taiwan preside over this Daoist movement to the present day.

Daoism became a popular religion that offered consolation to the ordinary people and to those of the educated elite who had seen their Confucian world collapse around them. To use an image of the time, the scholar-officials were like lice in a pair of trousers on someone caught in a fire – they were destined to perish with their host. The unworldly doctrines of Daoism appealed to such people. Partly this was due to new teachings known in China as *xuan xue*, 'dark' or 'mysterious' learning that combined the ideas of Laozi and Zhuangzi with cosmology, numerology, sexology and **alchemy**.

Another group of the time, the probably legendary Seven Sages of the Bamboo Grove, has become famous for its eccentric behaviour. One of the sages, Liu Ling, is said to have gone everywhere accompanied by a small boy carrying a flask of wine and a spade (the latter to be used to bury Liu Ling on the spot if he should drop dead). On one occasion his friends were scandalised to find him stark naked on a very hot day. 'The whole world is my trousers,' he said. 'What are you doing inside my trousers?'

Alamy Stock Photo/ Yoshio Tomii

FIGURE 7.1.5 Qingxu Daoist Temple in Pingyao, Shanxi province, China

The Daoist pantheon

Daoism also acquired a **pantheon**, the history of which is confused. The highest gods have titles such as 'Celestial Worthy' or 'Emperor' and hold court in celestial paradises and govern a complex hierarchy of gods, similar to the hierarchy of emperor and officials on earth. Many of the gods that emerged were consolidated into a well-defined pantheon by the Tang dynasty (618–906 CE). Among them were the Three Purities or Three Clarities (which included Laozi) and the Three Officials.

The Three Purities are:

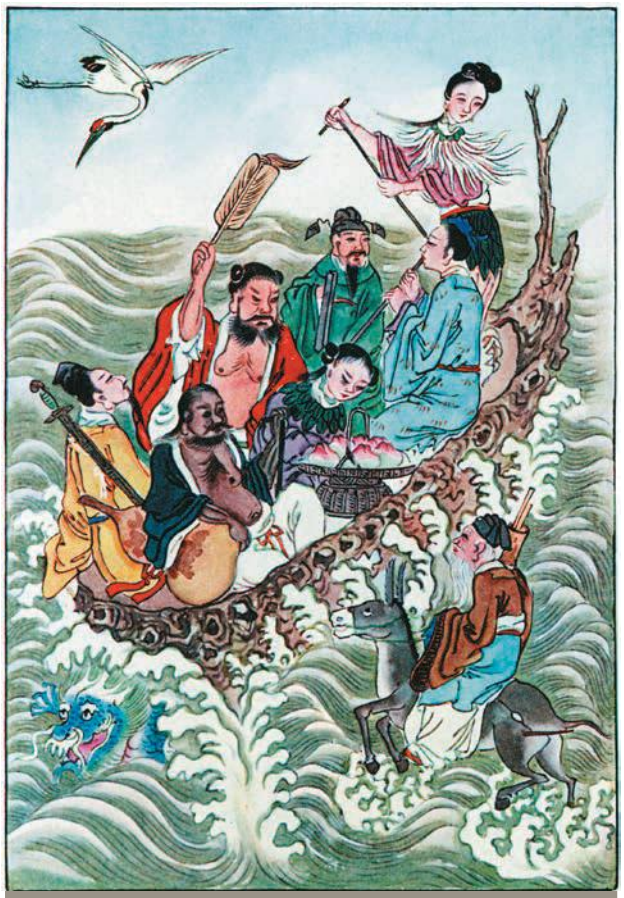
- the Celestial Venerable of the Original Beginning
- the Celestial Venerable of Numinous Treasure (the Jade Emperor)
- the Celestial Venerable of the Way and Its Power (Lord Lao up in Heaven).

The Three Officials are in charge of heaven, earth and the waters under the earth, and record people's good and bad deeds and determine their life span and destiny.

A second category of deities are human beings who, through learning, self-discipline, alchemy or other means, have purified themselves of mortal imperfections and become gods; a transformation often described as 'ascending to the heavens in broad daylight'. Among them are the Eight Immortals with their racy histories.

TABLE 7.1 The Eight Immortals

1 **Zhuan Zhongli** **Emblem:** fan of feathers or peach of immortality **Represents:** the military	5 **Li Tieguai** **Emblem:** iron crutch and gourd of life-preserving medicine **Represents:** the sick
2 **Zhang Guolao** **Emblem:** paper horse **Represents:** the old	6 **Han Xiangu** **Emblem:** lute **Represents:** the cultured class
3 **Lu Dongbin** **Emblem:** sword **Represents:** the scholars	7 **Lan Zaihe** **Emblem:** flower basket **Represents:** the poor
4 **Cao Guojiu** **Emblem:** court writing tablet **Represents:** the nobility	8 **He Xiangu** **Emblem:** lotus **Represents:** unmarried girls



Alamy Stock Photo/Lordprice Collection

FIGURE 7.1.6 *The Eight Immortals (Ba Xian) Crossing the Sea.* This illustration from the 1920s by a Chinese artist depicts the eight legendary beings of Daoism who have attained immortality – the Eight Immortals.

RESPOND

In what way do you think the artist captures the characteristics of the Immortals?

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REVIEW

How would you **describe** the role of deities in Daoism?

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to find out more about the Eight Immortals. Choose four of them and **extrapolate** how their symbols relate to their role.
2. The Eight Immortals are described as having 'racy histories'. Do an Internet search to **investigate** three of them. Is this description accurate?

Weblinks
The Eight Immortals

The Eight Immortals of Taoism

Mythopedia: Eight immortals

Daoist practices

DID YOU KNOW?

Central to Chinese religious thinking is duality, a 'oneness' made of complementary opposites. *Yin* and *yang*, 'female' and 'male', were found in all things, not just human beings; and a balance between them was regarded as necessary. This principle applies to all elements of existence – from nature to a particular individual. Social disturbance, natural disasters, personal illness, unsettled family relationships and so on are all the result of an imbalance between the forces of *yin* and *yang*. Restoring harmony cures the ills and gives a sense of direction.

Practices arose to 'nourish the vital principle' by special diet (abstaining not only from meat but also from grain) and sexual practices designed to conserve and increase the male *yang* at the expense of the female *yin*. There were also meditation and *yoga* practices and, increasingly, rituals designed to bring about these ends.

In time, a number of Daoist sects arose with a priesthood and monasteries, probably mainly in response to Buddhism, which had introduced these Indian religious customs. Many schools of Daoism, however, remained largely 'lay', and even today, many Daoist priests are part-time. Daoist priests (*dao shi*) are ordained in a ceremony that closely imitates Buddhist ordination, in which they promise to observe the five prohibitions of the Very High Lord Lao (no killing, no meat, no wine, no lying, no sex) and to take refuge in the *Dao*, the scriptures and the priesthood.

Although sectarian Daoism has almost disappeared in the People's Republic of China, its influence remains strong in popular ideas about long life and healing. In Taiwan, however, Daoist sects, priests, temples and rituals are still very popular and have been adapted to modern urban living. Gods may be offered cigarettes in place of incense, and evil spirits are driven out of the sick and carried away in paper bags on the back of motorcycles. Divination may be used to arrange the furniture in a high-rise apartment or promote the career of a film star. It is a long way from Laozi and Zhuangzi, but the connections are there. The world follows a natural course and hence is predictable. Human beings should follow that course as closely as possible. As Laozi said, the ideal society is one where 'the people all say: "we act naturally"' (Ch. 17).

Alamy Stock Photo/myLAM

FIGURE 7.1.7 Daoist ritual in honour of the dead, Ching Chung Koon Temple, in Tuen Mun district, Hong Kong.

Sacred spaces – the *Jiao* ritual

There is a sense in which no spaces are especially sacred in Daoism, or rather all are equally manifestations of the great Way. However, the major ritual of religious Daoism, the *Jiao* ritual, the Rite of Cosmic Renewal that is also called the Great Ritual Offerings to the All-Embracing Heaven, involves ritually creating a sacred space. Over several days, Daoist priests create in a temple a kind of model of the universe or microcosm and make offerings to purify and renew each part of it.

- On the first day, the spirits are invited to attend, scriptures are read, a fire is lit and a flame divided to symbolise the *Dao* giving birth to the universe. The gods of the five directions (the Chinese consider the centre should be counted as well as the four points of the compass) are called on to purify the whole world.
- On the second day, audience is held with the spirits in ascending order ending with Laozi, and petitions are presented.
- On the third day, the Jade Emperor himself arrives, a memorial is presented to the Three Pure Ones (the main gods of Daoism), and they are thanked and sent off.
- Other rituals are often performed over several more days, in honour of the dead and sometimes healing the living of sickness of body and soul.

It is clear that this ritual is based on the notion of a heavenly hierarchy that parallels the earthly one (imagined as the old pre-1911 imperial hierarchy). They are invited, honoured, and petitioned to intervene and purify a world that is run-down and has been corrupted. Many popular

Chinese beliefs also figure in this ritual:

- the power of reciting scriptures and the use of talismans (pieces of paper with mysterious writing on them)
- symbolic actions involving fire and water
- possession by spirits who give messages through a medium who goes into a trance.

Worksheet
The Jiao ritual

The Wong Tai Sin Temple

The Wong Tai Sin Temple is the most popular shrine in Hong Kong. The first temple building you come to after entering from the Wong Tai Sin MTR station is inscribed 'The Confucius and Dao Gate'. Wong Tai Sin ('the Great Immortal Huang') was originally Huang Chuping, one of the 84 Daoist immortals described in Ge Hong's *Biographies of Immortals* (third century CE), but he intervened through a spirit medium during a plague in Guangdong in the nineteenth century and became a popular local god.

Wong Tai Sin became a 'refugee' when his image was taken to Hong Kong and his cult became very popular among the Hong Kong population, most of whom were themselves refugees.

A very active temple administration, which engages in charitable works and accommodates a large number of booths for diviners and fortune-tellers, has helped it flourish. Many elements of Chinese popular religion, Confucianism and Buddhism as well as Daoism, are found in this large temple complex. If you go to Hong Kong, it is well worth a visit. In the meantime, you can find out more about it on the Internet.

REVIEW

1. What is divination and what role does it play in Daoism?
2. In your own words, **define** 'alchemy'.
3. Daoism has no creeds or statements of main beliefs, but certain basic beliefs can be deduced from its main texts and practices. If you were asked to write a Daoist creed, what would you **identify** as the principal beliefs of Daoism?
4. How would you **define** 'a sacred space' in Daoism?
5. **Identify** the principal rituals or practices of Daoism. What is the relationship between sacred spaces and the beliefs of Daoism?
6. **Examine** the significance of Daoist rituals for the individual and the community.

EXTENSION

1. Use the Internet to **investigate** three Daoist rituals and **summarise** your findings. Use the weblink provided for a useful starting point.
2. In groups, prepare a discussion outline to **analyse** the statement: 'Classifying Daoism as an "ancient" religion precludes any examination of it as a living tradition.'
3. How would you **explain** the relationship between Daoism and the culture of China? What influence has it had on the culture?
4. Are any aspects of Daoism visible in Australian society?
5. **Construct** arguments for and against the statement: 'It is impossible to understand Daoism if one tries to fit it into a Western definition of religion.'

Weblink
Daoist rituals

Paul Rule

FIGURE 7.1.8 The Wong Tai Sin Temple in Kowloon, Hong Kong

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7.2 Shinto

GLOSSARY

bodhisattva A being who is motivated by compassion and seeks enlightenment not only for themselves but for everyone.

kami The gods or spirits of Japan.

shamanism A belief in controlling spirits who can be influenced by a priest or someone who works with the supernatural.

Ancient Japan

The origins of the Japanese people are a very controversial subject, not least for the Japanese themselves. It is probable that the modern Japanese are a mixture of peoples from the Pacific and from North Asia, especially via Korea. From about 8000 BCE there was a Neolithic culture in Japan that is marked in the archaeological record by fine pottery known as Jomon pottery. The religion, in so far as religion can be deduced from material objects, seems to have centred on fertility cults, shown by clay cult figurines, female 'mother goddesses', phalluses and half-human, half-animal figures known as *dogu*.

A great cultural leap seems to have occurred in the Yayoi period, c. 300 BCE to 300 CE (contemporary with the Han dynasty in China). This was probably due to Chinese and Korean influences, perhaps an actual invasion that brought rice cultivation and metalworking.

In the following Kofun ('Great Tomb') period, 300–538 CE, there arose a warrior society with a hierarchy of rulers who symbolised their authority in regalia that consisted of mirrors, swords and jewels. These are still symbolic of the Japanese imperial dynasty today.

In the Yamato period of the sixth and seventh centuries CE, the Japanese monarchy finally emerged in the Yamato plains. With the monarchy came the theory of the ***kami***, who were the ancestors of the royal house and the source of their authority. The emperor, the *tenno*, was the descendant of the gods and hence destined to rule the islands of Japan forever. The religion of the ordinary people, however, in this period and probably long before, was a kind of **shamanism** (like that of most of North Asia), which was based on spirit mediums who contacted the spirits and were taken over by them to communicate messages from their world to ours.

Alamy Stock Photo/Karen Su/China Span

FIGURE 7.2.1 Itsukushima Shrine on the island of Itsukushima (popularly known as Miyajima). Like many Japanese shrines, it has been destroyed and rebuilt several times, always to the same design. The shrine is dedicated to the three daughters of Susano-o no Mikoto, the Storm God and brother to Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess (see page 131).

The Japanese state that developed from a centre in the Yamato plains in South Central Honshu seems to have been originally indigenous in its structures – an extension of a warrior clan society. But around 600 CE, a great change was begun by Prince Shotoku that involved the introduction of Chinese political institutions and ideologies. Eventually, in the *Taika*, 'Great Reform', of the mid-seventh century CE, both Confucian and Buddhist ideas were adopted.

DID YOU KNOW?

Buddhism is said to have been imported to Japan from China via Korea, by Buddhist monks sent by the friendly Korean kingdom of Kudara (Paikche) in 552 CE. While this may be legendary, it was the Chinese form of Mahayana Buddhism that was adopted in Japan.

One paradoxical result of these reforms was the consolidation of Japanese mythology through its collection in two compilations: the *Kojiki*, 'Record of Ancient Matters' (712 CE), and the *Nihongi*, 'Written Chronicles of Japan' (720 CE). These are not regarded as revealed scriptures but rather as authoritative ancient records, like the classics of China. But they begin with the *kami*, the spirits or gods and goddesses. The religion based on them is called 'the way of the *kami*', *kami-no-michi*, or Shinto (from Chinese *Shen Dao* – the way of the gods).

Shinto has been the 'national' religion of Japan in the fullest sense, and is still today despite the postwar constitutional changes that denied it special status as the state religion. It is respected and to some extent practised by most Japanese. It incorporates many of the features of the oldest religion of the Japanese, is based on the myths of national origin, and pervades Japanese culture from high art to the materials of daily life. It is not the exclusive religion of Japan, but has tended to adapt itself to other religious currents: popular folk religion and the religions imported from China – Buddhism and Confucianism.

Worksheet
Shinto terminology

REVIEW

1 Recall the names of two compilations of Japanese mythology.
2 What is shamanism?
3 In what century was Buddhism introduced to Japan?

EXTENSION

In the Nara and Heian periods (710–1185 CE) of Japanese history, Chinese influence declined and many of the imported ideas were gradually 'Japanised'. Use the weblink provided and investigate some examples of this 'Japanisation'. Prepare an infographic to summarise the impact this had on Japanese religion.

Weblink
Naran and Heian periods

The *kami*

If Shinto is 'the way of the *kami*', what are *kami*? The *kami* are the very centre of the state and popular religion of Japan. But it is hard to pin down who or what are *kami*. Motoori Norinaga (1730–1801), an important figure in the modern revival of Shinto, wrote:

> In general, one can say that kami signifies, firstly, the deities of heaven and earth described in the ancient records and who are found in the shrines where they are worshipped today. But it also includes some humans, and birds, animals, trees, vegetation, seas and mountains. In fact, in the old days, anything at all which was extraordinary, which was powerful or awe-inspiring was called kami. This power did not have to be something high or good or admirable. Kami is used also of bad or spooky things if they are abnormal and terrifying. Of course, the most eminent of the human kami are the line of emperors down to our day.

So they are gods, spirits of any kind, including human spirits, powerful natural objects, and in a special way, the Japanese emperors.

> Kami is essentially an expression used by the early Japanese people to classify experiences that evoked sentiments of caution and mystery in the presence of the manifestation of the strange and the marvellous.
>
> D.C. Holtom, *The National Faith of Japan*, 1996, p. 24

Kami relate to specific places, persons or natural phenomena and hence are guardians or protectors of these. Especially important are the *ujikami*, the guardians of the *uji* or clan. And each household has or had its '*kami* shelf' (*kamidana*) or shrine for its household *kami*. In theory, the number of *kami* is unlimited, but a 1930s study listed 214 *kami* worshipped in recognised State Shinto shrines. The Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, is considered Shinto's most important *kami*.

The *kami* were also assimilated into the Buddhist deities and ***bodhisattvas*** in the form of Shin-butsu-konko (mixed Shinto-Buddhism). Buddhist shrines were included in the precincts of Shinto temples and statues of the *kami* were introduced into Buddhist temples. This was clearly in response to popular demand but was hard to reconcile with either Shinto or Buddhist theology. Sometimes the *kami* were equated with *bodhisattvas*, or interpreted by Buddhists as manifestations of the Buddha in Japanese guise, or presented as lower-ranking spirits in need of the salvation offered by the Buddha. Humans become *kami* after they die and are revered by their families as ancestral *kami*.

With the Meiji restoration of 1868, when the emperor's political power (which had long been eclipsed by the shogun, or military leader of Japan) was restored, Shinto too received a new emphasis. Shinto was made Japan's state religion, Shinto priests became state officials, important shrines started to receive government funding, Japan's creation myths were used to foster an emperor cult, and efforts were made to separate and liberate Shinto from Buddhism.

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Alamy Stock Photo/Hannizhong

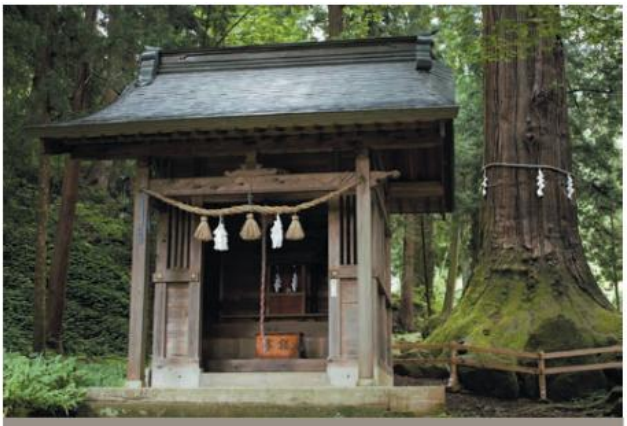

FIGURE 7.2.2 A small shrine beside a *yorishiro*. A *yorishiro* is an object – in this case, a tree – capable of attracting *kami*. Note the *shimenawa* and *gohei* (see Figure 7.2.5).

Popular Shinto, as we shall see, was something different again, incorporating many elements of folk religion. But all these variants rest ultimately on belief in the *kami*.

Weblink
Shinto and Pokémon

NOTE

Is there a connection between Pokémon and *kami*?

Creation mythology

The *kami* were responsible for the creation of the world as we know it. In the *Kojiki*, we are told that in the beginning there were the '*kami* of the centre of heaven', and then there appeared the '*kami* of birth and growth'. But it was the brother and sister *kami* – Izanagi-no-mikoto, 'the male who invites', and Izanami-no-mikoto, 'the female who invites' – who gave birth to the other great *kami*:

- Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess, was their first and favourite child and so was sent up to rule over Heaven.
- The Moon God, Tsuki-yomi, came next and was placed in the sky as her consort.
- The next born was the Leech-child, who could not stand so was set afloat in a camphorwood boat.
- Then came Susano-o, who, because he was an unruly god given to destruction and loud noises, was assigned to earth as the Storm God.
- They also gave birth to the Eight Great Islands of Japan.

NOTE

No-mikoto has an honorific meaning of something like 'his or her highness'.

Amaterasu and her brother Susano-o had a literally stormy relationship. Susano-o delighted in destroying what his sister had done for human beings. In the spring he broke down the earth walls of her rice fields and at harvest time made 'the heavenly piebald colts' trample the crops. This refers to the typhoons and storms to which the islands of Japan are subject.

The birth of the islands

Izanagi and Izanami stood on the floating bridge of heaven and plunged a spear into the ocean and stirred until the brine congealed to form the first Japanese island. They then descended to the island and set up a pillar. They circled the pillar until they met and Izanami said: 'I see a handsome young man.' Izanagi was angry because the man should speak first. They went around again and this time Izanagi said: 'I see a beautiful young girl.' They then examined their bodies and found their organs fitted together. They mated and produced the rest of the Japanese islands. This makes Japan, even in its physical make-up, sacred, and the direct production of the gods.

Izanami finally died of burns after giving birth to the Fire God, but before dying managed to bring forth the Water Goddess, the Earth Goddess and Gourd of Heaven, who together could control Fire and prevent the world being destroyed. When Izanami died and her body decayed, Izanagi came to the land of Yomi (god of the dead) to see what had happened. Izanami told Izanagi not to look at her but he broke off a tooth of his wooden comb and lit it to see. Izanami then created eight avenging females who pursued Izanagi to the end of the world. He purified himself from the contamination of contact with death, and from his bathwater were produced a myriad of other *kami*.

Amaterasu was so annoyed that she retired into a cave and refused to come out – thus explaining the alternation of the seasons. Japanese mythology is typically jokey and down-to-earth. Amaterasu is enticed out of hiding (see Figure 7.2.3) by hanging jewels and a mirror in the tree outside her cave, and a wild and obscene dance by the other *kami* that attracts her curiosity, and then she is persuaded to stay. So the sun returns each year, and wild rituals were held to celebrate it.

The last but, in Japanese eyes, not least of the creations of the *kami* is the Japanese imperial line. From her heavenly home Amaterasu sent down Ninigi, her own grandson. Ninigi's great-grandson, Jimmu, eventually conquered the central plains of Japan and became the first emperor of Japan. So all Japanese emperors since are physically divine. The sacred insignia of Amaterasu – the jewel, mirror and sword, which are also the insignia of the emperor – are enshrined in one of the great imperial shrines at Isé, which became the centre of Amaterasu's cult and the most sacred place in Japan. It is rebuilt in exactly the same way every 20 years.

The behaviour of the *kami* as depicted in the *Nihongi* and *Kojiki* is very human. They act foolishly, break the moral codes they themselves enforce, they die and are killed, then take on purely spiritual forms.

> The most characteristic feature of Shinto is a basic conviction that Gods (*kami*), men and the whole of Nature were actually born of the same parents, and are therefore of the same kin.
>
> Jean Herbert, *Shinto: At the Fountain-head of Japan*, 1967, p. 21

Alamy Stock Photo/ Uber Bilder

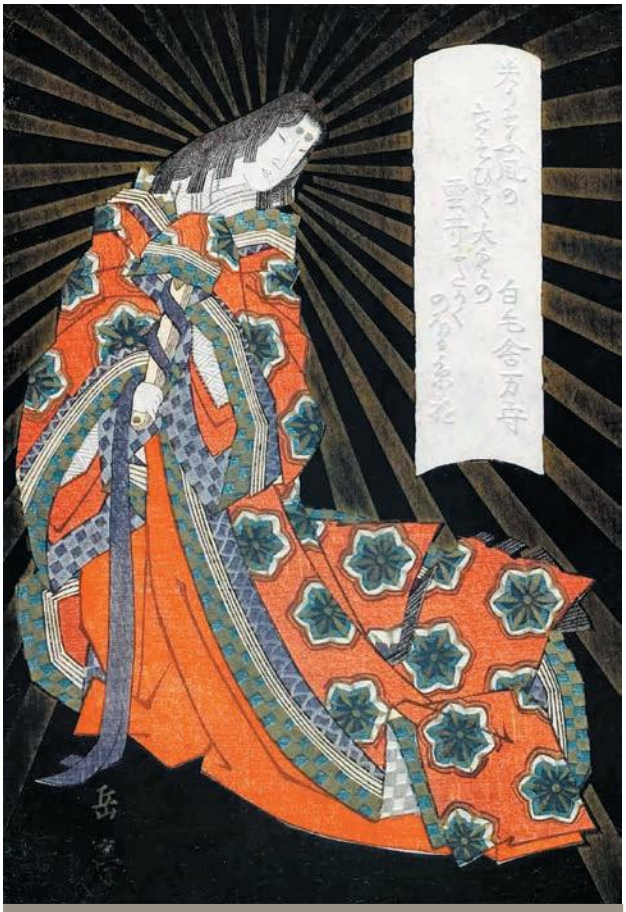

FIGURE 7.2.3 Amaterasu appearing from the cave – a woodblock print by Yashima Gakutei (1786–1868)

We may question whether the Japanese really believe that all men and women and all the world, or only the Japanese people and the Japanese islands, are included in this kinship. Of course, at the time Shinto originated, there was probably no thought that any other land or any other people existed.

Later, during the national revival of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a notion of the special, unique status of Japan was drawn from these myths by proponents of Kokugaku ('national revival'), such as Motoori Norinaga (see page 130), with tragic consequences.

Worksheet
Kokugaku

REVIEW

1. Recall the meaning of the word 'Shinto'.
2. Outline the main features of the creation story of Shinto.
3. According to Shinto, what happens to humans after they die?
4. Explain the relationship between the Shinto creation story and the Japanese emperor.
5. **Identify** the principal Shinto beliefs.
6. Who is considered Shinto's most important kami?
7. The only common belief in Shinto is in the existence and importance of *kami*. How would you **describe** the role of the *kami* in Shinto?

EXTENSION

1. In groups, discuss the role of the *kami* and the creation stories of Shinto. Agree on three points to demonstrate how they have shaped the Shinto world view.
2. Using the Internet and/or other resources, investigate how the creation myths of Shinto have been used with 'tragic consequences' in times of national revival. Prepare a brief report on your findings.

Shrines

Alamy Stock Photo/Chris Wilson

FIGURE 7.2.4 The Outer Shrine of Isé Jingu on the Shima Peninsula. Isé Jingu consists of two shrines: the Outer Shrine (Geku) dedicated to Toyouke, the *kami* of clothing, food and housing, and the Inner Shrine (Naiku), which enshrines Amaterasu. The Isé shrines are so sacred that no pictures may be taken near their main halls and, unlike most other Shinto shrines, they are built in a purely Japanese architecture.

As we have seen, the *kami* can be found anywhere, not least in places of natural beauty or power – mountains, forests, caves, rocks and so on. But they are also found in special places of pilgrimage and worship where shrines are erected, *jinja* or '*kami* places'. These shrines are often extremely beautiful, and are built of wood. Outside the shrines stand gates called *torii* – there are 20 different types of *torii*, and they indicate the status and cult of the shrine. The heart of the shrine is the *honden*, an inner chamber containing sacred objects that constitute the 'divine body' (*shintai*) or 'august-spirit-substitute' (*mitamashiro*). On visiting a shrine, after ritual purification by washing the hands and mouth, you make an offering, clap your hands to alert the *kami*, then pray to the enshrined *kami*. There are tens of thousands of shrines across Japan, some of which can be categorised into a few major groups.

Worksheet
Shinto Shrine of Isé Jingu

The architecture and features of Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples have melded over the centuries. There are several construction styles, most of which show Buddhist influences from the Asian mainland. Only a few shrines are considered to be built in a purely Japanese style. Among these are Shinto's most important Isé shrines.

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Alamy Stock Photo/CulturalEyes - AusSoc2

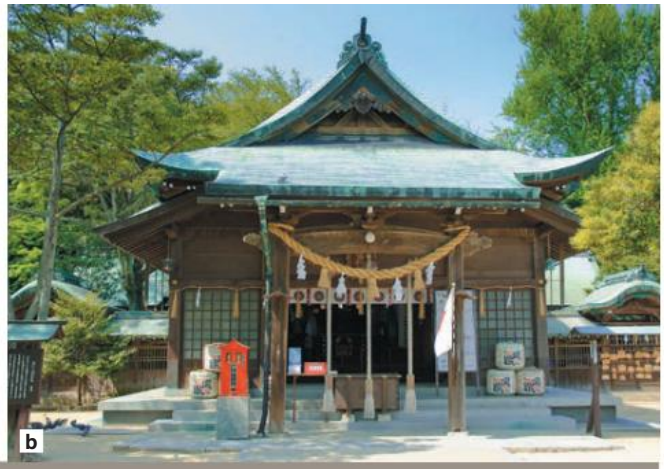

FIGURE 7.2.5 **(a) The *torii* gate that marks the approach to the Iminomiya Shrine at Shimonoseki, Honshu. Across the gate is the straw rope (*shimenawa*) with white zigzag paper strips (*gohei*) that marks the boundary to something sacred. Through the gate on either side are two lion-dogs (*kamainu*), which are the shrine's guardians, and then another *torii* with *shimenawa* and *gohei* at the entrance to the hall of offerings. To the right of the hall (b) are rows of wooden plaques (*ema*); shrine visitors write their wishes on them and then leave them at the shrine in the hope their wishes come true.**

Shinto shrines

Imperial shrines: These are the shrines that were directly funded and administered by the state in the Meiji period. They include some of Shinto's most important shrines, such as the Isé shrines (see page 132) and a number of shrines built during the Meiji period, such as Tokyo's Meiji Shrine and Kyoto's Heian Shrine. Imperial shrines can be recognised by the imperial family's chrysanthemum crest, and they are often called *jingu* rather than *jinja*.

Inari shrines: These are dedicated to Inari, the *kami* of rice. They can be recognised by fox statues, as the fox is considered the messenger of Inari. The most famous of the Inari shrines is Kyoto's Fushimi Inari Shrine.

Hachiman shrines: These are dedicated to Hachiman, the *kami* of war, who used to be popular among the leading military clans of the past. The most famous is probably Kamakura's Tsurugaoka Hachimangu.

Tenjin shrines: These are dedicated to the *kami* of Sugawara Michizane, a Heian period scholar and politician. They are particularly popular among students preparing for exams. Tenjin shrines can be recognised by ox statues and plum trees, Michizane's favourite trees.

Sengen shrines: These are dedicated to Princess Konohanasakuya, the Shinto deity of Mount Fuji.

Toshogu shrines: Some powerful clans in Japanese history established and dedicated shrines to their clans' founders. As the name suggests, these celebrate the era of the shoguns.

Priests, usually called *shinshoku*, are trained at special Shinto training institutions, and then appointed to a shrine. Many, especially those at local shrines, are part-time. They wear distinctive white robes. Men and women can become priests and they are allowed to marry and have children.

Charms called *omamori* are sold at shrines for protection. These may be amulets, charms worn around the neck, or placards for doorways designed to keep out evil spirits.

Festivals

Festivals (*matsuri*) are held annually or even more frequently at the great shrines – at Isé, for example, for each season of the year. They typically involve food offerings (*shinsen*), a procession of the *kami* in palanquins (*mikoshi*) and ritual prayers (*norito*). The celebration of the new year includes visits to the local Shinto shrine. At the beginning of spring is the Setsubun ('change of seasons') festival, which like many other festivals aims at purifying the household and neighbourhood. The autumn or harvest festival is particularly important in the countryside. The Bon or Obon festival for the dead, a Shinto adaptation of the Buddhist 'All Souls', is held on 15 July. The dead are invited to visit the family altar by a fire lit at the door of the house two days before and then are 'sent off' by another fire.

Shinto rituals

▷ Refer to page 131 for the story of Izanagi and Izanami.

Purification is a major theme of Shinto rituals. Physical cleanliness is associated with moral and spiritual purity. The model is the purification ritual performed by Izanagi after he had been polluted by contact with the corpse of Izanami in the land of Yomi. Until recently, women were forbidden to enter certain sacred places, to climb Mount Fuji and so on, because they might be polluted by childbirth or menstruation. Purification rituals often involve symbolic bathing; for example, in a stream, a waterfall or the sea. Salt is also used in purification. When a house is built, there are rituals for clearing the ground (*jichinsai*), erecting the frame and celebrating the completion of the building – *kami* are invited to enter the house and protect it.

Other Shinto rituals relate to the life cycle. Weddings are often performed in Shinto shrines, although Buddhist temples are preferred for funerals. The 'First Shrine Visit' (*hatsu-miyamairi*) is performed after a child is born: on

the 32nd day after birth for a boy and on the 33rd day after birth for a girl. The father goes to the district Shinto shrine to present the child to the local *kami* and introduce him or her to the community.

Even today, the emperor performs a large number of private rituals relating to his ancestors. But imperial rituals are largely secret affairs and not for the general public.

Alamy Stock Photo/Newscom

FIGURE 7.2.6 Emperor Naruhito heads to the *Daijosai* ceremony at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo, November 2019. The *Daijosai*, which can be roughly translated to mean 'great food offering ritual,' is the last of the three main imperial ceremonies marking the enthronement of a new emperor and the beginning of the new imperial era. It is a private ceremony held in autumn after the year's rice harvest, during which the new emperor prays for peace and a rich harvest for the nation.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cemeteries are almost never found at shrines, because death is considered a cause of impurity in Shinto and is dealt with mostly using Buddhist rituals.

REVIEW

1. Explain why there are so many shrines in Japan.
2. What role do shrines play in Shinto rituals?
3. Recall the names of two Shinto festivals.
4. Outline the typical elements of a festival.
5. Recall the major theme of Shinto rituals and clarify how it relates to the creation story of Shinto.

EXTENSION

1. Construct a visual summary to identify the features of a typical Shinto shrine.
2. If you visit a Tenjin shrine, what would you expect to see and do?
3. Construct a mind map to explain the relationship between Shinto shrines, rituals, festivals and the beliefs of Shinto. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

n.

Weblinks
Shintoism
Shinto shrines

Shinto in daily life

GLOSSARY

aesthetic Relating to the principles of beauty.

A Japanese saying has it that 'Shinto is not a religion, it is a folk way'. This is somewhat misleading since Shinto certainly involves the worship of spirits and the other main features of religion. But it does point to an important truth: that Shinto is a way of life, of daily living.

Shinto is expressed through simplicity of life. Again, as with bathing, the Japanese associate the spiritual with something most people normally separate from it, namely, the **aesthetic**. Religious feelings are aroused by the beauties of everyday life, by poetry and music, as much as, or more than, by scriptures or rituals. For example, the *Manyoshu*, a collection of poetry from the eighth century CE, is regarded by the Japanese as a religious text. And going into the countryside to observe the cherry blossoms has taken on religious overtones. Similarly, visits to Mount Fuji are regarded as religious pilgrimages rather than tourism, and the famous tea ceremony and flower arranging (*ikebana*) are regarded as essentially religious rituals.

Shamanism

It is arguable whether or not Japanese shamanism should be regarded as part of Shinto. Most probably, its origins lie far back in Japanese prehistory, before the formulation of Shinto. But, just as Shinto rests on the notion of the *kami*, shamanism rests on communication with the *kami* – spirits who enter the bodies of mediums and send messages, advice and oracles. The common metaphor is that of crossing a bridge to the other world (remember the bridge that Izanami and Izanagi stood on when they made the islands of Japan). Shamanism is not practised much in modern urban Japan, but it still remains a part of Japanese culture, as anyone who likes Japanese films would know.

Emperor cult

In the nineteenth century, Shinto was used by the proponents of 'national revival' to promote the restoration of the emperor to power and authority, which finally culminated during the Meiji period (1868–1912). The theory was that Jimmu Tenno, the Emperor Jimmu – the first emperor of Japan – was a direct descendant of

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Amaterasu the Sun Goddess, and hence his descendants, the emperors of Japan, had a special place in the world (see page 147). In practice, the power of the Japanese emperor was usurped by military leaders, the shoguns. The School of National Learning, which began in the early eighteenth century, argued for a return to the old idea of the divine emperor and articulated an ideology that was to lead to Japanese militarism and eventual defeat.

In 1868, when the Emperor Meiji was restored to real power, Shinto was named as the basis of the Japanese state. A new Department of Shinto was given sweeping powers, and Shinto priests were henceforth to be appointed by the government rather than being hereditary. At birth, each Japanese person was required to be registered at a Shinto shrine as a member of a Shinto parish (under the Tokugawa shoguns, Buddhist parishes had served the same purpose). In 1882 most Shinto shrines were named as state shrines administered by a Bureau of Shrines. The government declared that State Shinto was not a religion, but this was really an attempt to proclaim it a super-religion that was different from and superior to all the others – State or Shrine Shinto (to distinguish it from various Shinto sects) was the sign of Japanese unity and superiority.

In December 1945, after the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the occupation government issued the Shinto Directive, which disestablished the Shinto shrines and forbade state support and state control. In February 1946, the various Shinto organisations formed themselves into the Association of Shinto Shrines, which still oversees most Shinto activities. In 1946 Emperor Hirohito formally renounced any claim to divinity and became simply 'a symbol of the state' – Shinto was formally separated from the state. Shinto then became, in theory, simply one of the religions of Japan that citizens were free to follow or to reject. In practice, however, and in the minds and hearts of Japanese, it remains much more, as is clear on occasions of national crisis.

Where does this leave postwar Japan? Some Japanese nationalists have never accepted the secularisation of the Japanese state and the de-divinisation of the emperor, but most people have. The result is a spiritual vacuum that has largely been filled by so-called 'New Religions', some drawing on Shinto, some on Buddhism, others much vaguer and 'New Age' in doctrine and practice.

Popular Shinto, however, is still deeply rooted in the Japanese mind. It sits somewhat uneasily with the technological and economic organisation of contemporary Japan. In fact, it is perhaps the only major example of a simple group or folk religion still flourishing in a modern industrial society. Japan is a 'living museum of religion'. In this, as in other respects, the Japanese are, as they claim, unique.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo has become a source of controversy in Japan and abroad. Originally designated by the Emperor Meiji as the 'Shrine of the Peaceful Country', it has come to be the place of enshrinement of the nation's war dead, and so associated with militant nationalism. Although Article 20 of the 1946 Constitution says 'No religious organisations shall receive any privileges from the State nor exercise any political authority', Yasukuni Jinja has become a political symbol. The emperor no longer honours the war dead there, but politicians, including recent prime ministers, have attended the annual ceremonies and stirred up controversy in Japan and abroad.

FIGURE 7.2.7 Japanese tea ceremony – *sado*. This ceremony is a good example of the fusion of religion and the aesthetic. A woodblock by Mizuno Toshikata (1866–1908).

RESPOND

With a partner, discuss why *sado* is a good example of the fusion of religion and the aesthetic.

REVIEW

1. What role do you think shamanism has in contemporary Shinto?
2. **Explain** the interrelationship between Shinto and Japanese society.
3. Discuss the role of Shinto in the 'emperor' cult.
4. In groups, prepare a discussion outline to analyse the statement: 'Classifying Shinto as an "ancient" religion precludes any examination of it as a living tradition.'

EXTENSION

1. Organise an actual or virtual visit to a Shinto shrine/temple. Did this help you understand Shinto as a living tradition?
2. 'One of the reasons many Japanese bathhouses exclude foreigners is because bathing is a religious activity.' What can you discover to justify this statement?
3. Construct an infographic to demonstrate the elements and characteristics of Shinto. In it, provide examples to explain how such an ancient tradition can still be such an important part of the everyday lives of the majority of Japanese people today.
4. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

Weblink
Cultural Atlas: Japanese culture

Online activity
Chapter 7 multiple-choice quiz

16 INDICATIVE HOURS

8

Religion in Australia pre-1945

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **outline** the arrival and establishment of Christianity and two other religious traditions in Australia prior to 1945
- **examine** the impact of sectarianism on the relationship among Christian denominations in Australia pre-1945
- **examine** the contribution of Christianity to social welfare in Australia pre-1945
- **discuss** the role of one religious tradition in rural and outback communities in Australia pre-1945
- **outline** the contribution of one religious tradition to the provision of education in Australia pre-1945
- **examine** initiatives taken by one religious tradition in the area of public morality in Australia pre-1945.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Religion in Australia pre-1945 terminology (p. 137)
- Religious traditions in Australia pre-1945 (p. 145)

Online activity

- Chapter 8 multiple-choice quiz (p. 155)

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Pictures Collection, State Library of Victoria. Accession No: H92.294/7. Call no: PCV LTSL 44

God, King, Country, the Bushman Soldier, Anzac – some of the enduring themes of Australia before 1945

8.1 Religious traditions in Australia pre-1945

Religion, as defined by Europeans, came to Australia in 1788 with the establishment of the British settlement in the colony of New South Wales. It was the religion of the British – Christianity. This British Christianity, however, was not a unified Christianity, and the lack of harmony among Christians remained part of Australia's religious history well into the twentieth century. It was not until the mid-nineteenth century that there was official recognition of any religious tradition other than Christianity, and that was of Judaism. Relative isolation from the rest of the world and a fairly narrow immigration stream from the British Isles ensured that the religious make-up of Australia did not change much for 100 years. The exceptions to this were waves of non-British immigration during the nineteenth-century gold rushes, and some refugees around the time of the First World War.

The real marker point for a change in the Australian religious landscape came with the worldwide upheaval of the Second World War. The end of that war is where this chapter ends.

In 1845 those who identified as Christians made up 98.6 per cent of the recorded population: 72.4 per cent were Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and other Protestants from Britain, and 26.2 per cent were Catholics from Ireland and Britain. In 1945 Australia was still overwhelmingly Christian, although the mix was a little more exotic and slightly less British and Irish. As far as most Australians were concerned, there were Anglicans and Protestants and Catholics who were white and spoke English. There were some notable minorities – Lutherans who spoke German, and Jews from England, Russia, Poland and Germany. Largely, however, these communities assumed a trend of assimilating, considered to be the norm at that time.

Worksheet Religion in Australia pre-1945 terminology

Arrival and establishment of Christianity

GLOSSARY

atheist A person who denies or does not believe in the existence of God.

Calvinism John Calvin (1509–1564) was one of the major religious reformers of what became known as **Protestantism**. Calvinism became the name of one of the founding branches of Protestantism. The Presbyterianism of early Australian settlers had its origins in Scottish Calvinism.

diocese The territory overseen by a bishop. Both the Church of England and the Catholic Church had established dioceses in the various colonies of Australia by the end of the first 100 years of European settlement.

established church A church recognised by the government as the official church, and supported by it.

evangelical Applies to a type of Christianity that emphasises the preaching of the gospel and personal experience of the saving power of Jesus Christ. Evangelicalism also places a strong emphasis on personal and public morality. The word 'evangelical' can be applied to any denomination, but it mostly applies to the Protestant churches and to evangelical Anglicanism.

Protestantism A general term for those breaking away at the Reformation, the early sixteenth-century movements for reform in the Christian Church. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 'protesting' churches in England were often called the nonconformist churches or dissenters – those churches that did not acknowledge the authority of the **established church** of England.

religious orders Organisations of men or women who take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Bands of men or women in these religious orders most frequently live in community and devote themselves to a specific vocation such as work in schools or hospitals.

synod An assembly or council of church officials.

> What shall I render unto God for his goodness to me …
>
> Ps 116:12, from the first prayer service in the colony, 1788

'Formal' Christianity came to Australia with the First Fleet and its Church of England chaplain, Rev. Richard Johnson. Its arrival was rather an afterthought – it was only after lobbying by evangelical Christians in Britain that a chaplain was appointed.

Australia was a series of British colonies until 1901. The establishment of the different denominations of Christianity and their subsequent development is reflected in the history of those colonies. On the First Fleet, two-thirds of the convicts classified themselves as Church of England, one-third as Roman Catholic. Convicts in fact, made up around 80 per cent of the first wave of European arrivals to Australian shores. It was considered that the new colony of New South Wales would be useful as a dumping ground for moral undesirables of the British Isles.

Governor Phillip's official instructions regarding religious observances were comprehensive.

> He was to enforce due observance of religion and good order among the inhabitants, and take such steps for the due celebration of public worship as circumstances would permit … He was to grant full liberty of conscience, and the full exercise of all modes of religious worship not prohibited by law, provided his charges were content with a quiet and peaceable enjoyment of the same, not giving offence or scandal to government; he was to cause the laws against blasphemy, profaneness, adultery, fornication, polygamy, incest, profanation of the Lord's Day, swearing, and drunkenness to be rigorously executed … [The governor] was to take care that the Book of Common Prayer as by law be read each Sunday and Holy Day, and that the Blessed Sacrament be administered according to the rites of the Church of England.
>
> Manning Clark, *A History of Australia*, Vol. 1, 1962, p. 80

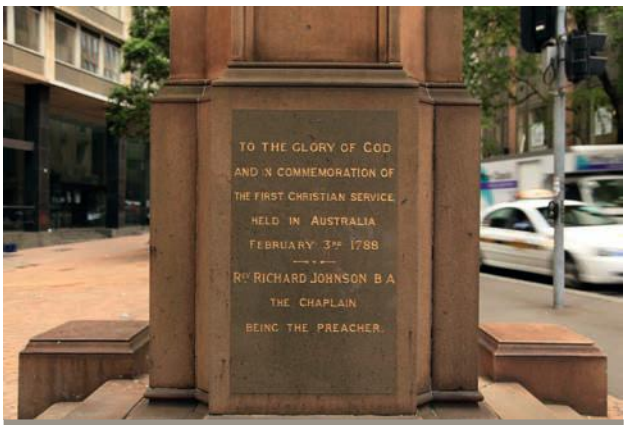

Photo Courtesy City of Sydney

FIGURE 8.1.1 **The Rev. Richard Johnson conducted Australia's first church service on 3 February 1788 under a great tree near the corner of modern-day Bligh and Hunter streets, Sydney. This obelisk marks the spot to this day.**

Naturally, it was Johnson who was expected to carry out these duties.

For the first 30 years of the new settlement, Church of England ministers were the only clergy with any power or influence in the community. They had a role in legislative activity and were supported financially by the authorities. The Church of England was the state religion of England, and it was expected that things would be no different in Australia. The English convicts, many from the 'unchurched' slums of London, were **atheists** for all intents and purposes. The Church of England was seen as being associated with

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the authorities and with the maintenance of stability in the colonies. The Irish Catholic convicts despised the religion of the English, a people they saw as their oppressors.

All convicts were obliged to attend Church of England services, but these had little effect in establishing a climate of religious feeling. For the English convicts, compulsory worship and religious instruction were viewed as part of the punishment. For the Irish convicts, it was an imposition and offensive.

A community of exiles

Rev. James Fleet Cover, a Congregational Minister who arrived from Tahiti with missionaries of the first London Missionary Society on 14 May 1798, wrote:

> Here we have to contend with the depravity and corruption of the human heart, heightened and confirmed in all its viciousness by long and repeated indulgences of inbred corruption.

Captain William Bligh, Governor of New South Wales 1806–08, described the colony as:

> ... a community of exiles, each dragging the others further into the filth of moral corruption and the slime of physical surdity.

The Quakers James Backhouse and George Walker wrote to the governor on 18 January 1837:

> We cannot but regard with mournful interest, the low state of morality and the necessarily consequent defect of religious principle in the generality of the inhabitants of this colony.

Early Presbyterian minister Rev. William Hamilton wrote in his diary (1837–53) of the rural districts between Berrima and Goulburn:

> I am continually shocked by the religious indifference of those among whom I live.

In James Udy, *Church Union in Australia*, 1983, pp. 1–5

The Catholic free settler John O'Sullivan wrote to the Archbishop of Dublin in 1830:

> Some of our unfortunate and wretched countrymen are foremost in perpetrating the shocking crimes that mark this colony ... I did not think the Irish character capable of performing the villainous deeds that are daily blazoned forth.

In Patrick O'Farrell, *The Catholic Church and Community: An Australian History*, 1992, p. 9

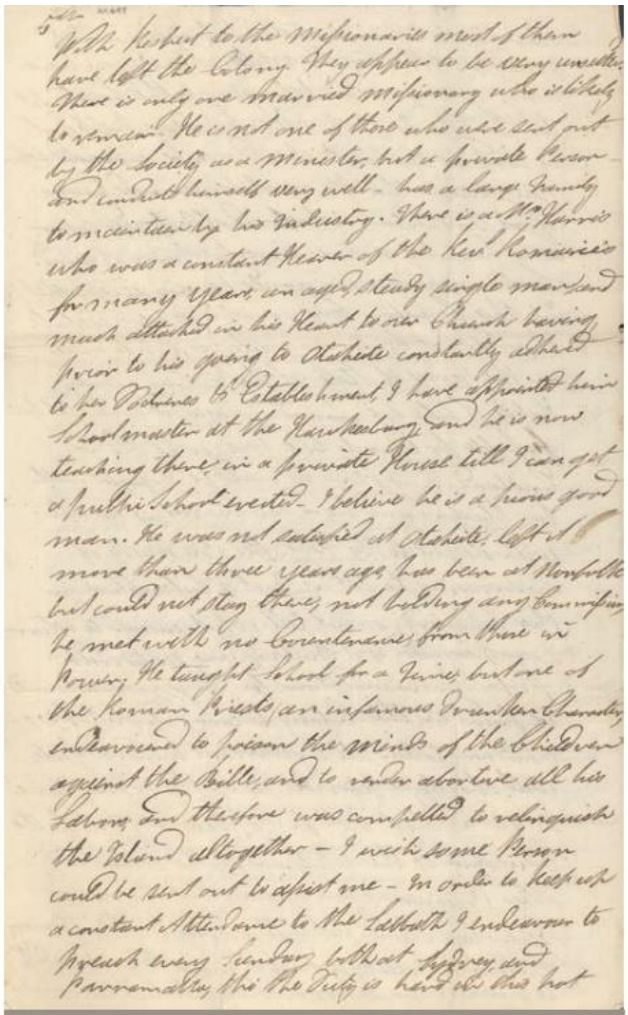
DID YOU KNOW?

Transportation to New South Wales ended in 1840 (Port Phillip, Victoria, and Moreton Bay, Queensland, were part of New South Wales). It ended in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1853. In 1840 convicts were 30 per cent of the European population of New South Wales. In 1851 Port Phillip became a separate colony.

The Church of England (Anglican)

The earliest Church of England ministers were of the 'Low' church or **evangelical** persuasion. The evangelicals stressed religion as an individual matter of personal conviction and salvation, as mediated through the direct authority of the Bible. Evangelicalism placed a strong emphasis on personal and public morality.

Support from the colonial government brought many privileges for the Church of England in Australia. But



National Library of Australia (nla.obj-562737952)

FIGURE 8.1.2

A page from a letter from the Rev. Samuel Marsden written to the Rev. Miles Atkinson, Parramatta, 19 May 1803. The letter highlights the thinness of the clergy ranks available in Sydney in the early part of the nineteenth century, as well as the deep mistrust between Church of England pastors such as Marsden and the Catholics.

'With respect to the missionaries most of them have left the Colony. They appear to be very unsettled. There is only one married missionary who is likely to remain. He is not one of those who were sent out by the Society as a Minister, but a private person and conducts himself very well – has a large family to maintain by his industry. There is a Mrs Harris who was a constant Hearer of the Revd Romaine's for many years; an aged, steady single man and much attached in his heart to our Church having prior to his going to Otaheite [Tahiti] constantly adhered to her Doctrines and Establishment, I have appointed him schoolmaster at the Hawkesbury and he is now teaching there, in a private house till I can get a public School erected – I believe is a pious good man. He was not satisfied at Otaheite; left it more than three years ago, has been at Norfolk but could not stay there, not holding any commission he met with no Countenance from those in Power. He taught school for a Time but one of the Roman Priests, an infamous drunken Character, endeavour to poison the minds of the Children against the Bible, and to render abortive all his Labors; and therefore was compelled to relinquish the Island altogether – I wish some person could be sent out to assist me – in order to keep up a constant Attendance to the Sabbath I endeavour to preach every Sunday both at Sydney and Parramatta, tho' the duty is hard ...'

Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales

FIGURE 8.1.3 St Philip's Church, Sydney, c. 1840. Sydney's first church building, made of wattle and daub, was not completed until 1793. It cost 67 pounds 12 shillings and 11 pence ha'penny and was paid for by Rev. Johnson himself. It burnt down in 1798. A new stone church named St Philip's was opened in 1810, and this was replaced by the current building in 1856.

it also meant interference in the affairs of the Church of England, particularly in the appointment of senior church officials, such as bishops. The first bishop of Sydney and the first and only bishop of Australia (before the single **diocese** was divided into four in 1847) was Bishop William Grant Broughton. Broughton sought permission for self-government for the Church of England in Australia in 1850. The British Government initially refused. Only in 1962 did all the parliaments of Australia pass legislation to completely separate the Church of England from its formal link to the Crown under Australian secular law. From around 1860, local **synods** of the Church of England in Australia developed in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney. A nationwide General Synod was formed in 1872, but historically the power and influence within Anglicanism in Australia has remained in the dioceses.

The Church of England drew heavily on assistance from Britain, the mother country, in terms of both finances and personnel. In fact, the first Australian-born Anglican bishop, Sir Marcus Loane, was not appointed to the diocese of Sydney until 1966. The term 'Anglican', while first used in Australia in 1851, was not adopted as the official title of the Anglican Church in Australia until 1981. The reliance on English men and women was particularly seen in the bush brotherhoods and the Bush Church Aid Society (see pages 150–1).

The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian)

The Presbyterian of 8 April 1899 commented on the forthcoming formation of the General Assembly: 'God made a free offer of salvation to men without distinction.' This was a softening of the strongly Calvinistic stance of the Presbyterians that had been evident before the 1870s. Presbyterian ministers were reminded not to shirk their duty of informing their parishioners of the eternal damnation that awaited the wicked, although they focused more on the issue of Sabbath observance. In the secular press, the *Bulletin* magazine made frequent satiric comment about this kind of strict **Calvinism**.

Presbyterians were not necessarily the wealthy classes in the nineteenth-century Australian community. The Rev. John Dunmore Lang sponsored a significant number of Presbyterians to emigrate to Australia to escape the poverty of Scotland and also to help ensure a **Protestant** 'character' to New South Wales.

Movement towards the union of the various divisions within Presbyterianism in Australia started in the second half of the nineteenth century. A national Federal Presbyterian Union was formed in 1901 as the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

DID YOU KNOW?

John Hunter, captain of the First Fleet flagship, HMS *Sirius*, and Governor of the colony 1794–1800, was a former candidate for the Church of Scotland ministry. The first Church of Scotland congregation was formed at Ebenezer on the banks of the Hawkesbury River, around 70 kilometres north-west of Sydney, in 1803.

The Church of Rome (Roman Catholic)

In its Australian beginnings, the Catholic Church was Irish, and the Irish were convicts. Certainly there were hardened criminals among the Irish convicts, but a large share of the Irish on the transport ships were on minimum seven-year sentences, and they were there because their poverty and English oppression had driven

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them to rebellion. After the uprising of 1798, Irish rebels were transported to Australia in large numbers, among them principled men whose crime was to stand up to their English oppressors. That said, it was also the case that those most indifferent or hostile to religion back in Ireland were the ones most likely to have been involved in rebellion. Nonetheless, resentment against the English and their religion could not have been sharper.

The Irish Catholics were more given to piety than some others in the colony, encouraged as they were from 1820 by the powerful influence of the colony's early Catholic priests, such as Father John Therry. Therry became adviser, banker and confidant of the Irish Catholic community. The foundation stone of Sydney's St Mary's Cathedral was laid within a year of Therry's arrival. Therry's many battles with the authorities eventually led to the loss of his official commission in 1825.

The Catholic Church did, however, continue to grow in strength. In the 1860s, 12 **religious orders** entered Australian dioceses to set up schools, hospitals and hostels – but mostly schools. By the late 1860s, two Australian religious orders had been founded: the Good Samaritan Sisters in 1857, and the Sisters of St Joseph in 1866. By 1880 there was a total of 815 sisters from all orders teaching in schools.

Collection of the State Library of NSW

FIGURE 8.1.4 St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney, c. 1900–10, from the collection of the State Library of New South Wales. The original cathedral, blessed by Father Therry in 1821, was destroyed by fire in 1865. The present cathedral was blessed by Bishop Polding in 1868. Use Google Street view to place yourself in the same position as the photographer of this photo. What looks the same and what looks different? St Mary's was not fully completed until 2000, when the spires were added. A Catholic school has also been on this site since 1824.

The nonconformist churches (Methodist and Congregationalist)

The nonconformist churches had an important place in the establishment of Christianity in Australia. A number of missionaries from the Congregationalist Church–sponsored London Missionary Society arrived in New South Wales in 1798, having fled unrest in the Pacific Islands. They were able to assist the uncompromising Samuel Marsden, the colony's second Church of England chaplain, to plant the seeds of Christian institutions in Australia.

The first Congregationalist minister arrived in September 1830. The independent stand of Congregationalists mediated against them establishing strong communities in Australia – they were never more than 5 per cent of the population. Yet their desire to get involved in political life has seen them exert far greater influence than their numbers would suggest.

Collection of the State Library of NSW

FIGURE 8.1.5 Samuel Leigh (1785–1852) became the first Methodist minister of New South Wales in 1815. The rapid expansion of the Methodist Church (of which Australia and New Zealand were its most far-flung outposts) is evidenced by the fact that Samuel Leigh was not instituted into 'Full Connexion' with the Methodist Church until the Sheffield (UK) Conference of 1817, two years after his arrival in Sydney.

> Leigh's work was in many respects a failure, but he did establish the requisite Methodist discipline that provided a foundation for subsequent growth, something the earlier lay preachers had not been able to do. By March 1816, Leigh had established Sunday Schools and the first Benevolent Society in NSW.
>
> Glen O'Brien, 'Methodism in the Australian Colonies, 1811–1855', in Glen O'Brien and Hilary Carey (eds), *Methodism in Australia: A History*, 2015, p. 16

Methodist ministers were active in Australia from the early part of the nineteenth century. A lack of clergy, however, did not hold back Methodism in the early years. The small class meetings of Methodism could continue successfully for years without a clergyman. All the streams of Methodism had a strong commitment to evangelicalism, as well as to missionary work in Australia and the Pacific. Methodists were active in their establishment of schools, colleges, hospitals and churches.

Movement towards Methodist union waxed and waned throughout the nineteenth century. A united Methodist

church, the Methodist Church of Australia, came into being on 1 January 1902.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ties to Germany, the maintenance of German language and membership of the Lutheran Church (Lutheranism) were hallmarks of the German-speaking immigrants to South Australia in 1837–38. While some of them were missionaries to Aboriginal peoples, most were refugees from religious persecution in Prussia. The people of this German community brought with them the skills of vine planting and winemaking, learnt from the famous Rhine valley winemaking districts of Germany – skills for which South Australia has become world famous.

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the arrival and establishment of Christianity in Australia after 1788.
2. Write a short narrative account of the religious outlook of the convicts who arrived in Australia.
3. In pairs, have one partner consider the similarities of the arrival and establishment of the Church of England and the Catholic Church in Australia; the other partner should consider the differences. **Compare** the lists. On balance, were the experiences of the Church of England and the Catholic Church more similar or more different? **Justify** your response.
4. What difficulties did the nonconformist Christian churches face in establishing themselves in Australia?

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided to read more on the history of the Anglican Church in Australia. List three points that extend your knowledge of the arrival and establishment of Anglicanism in Australia.
2. Use the weblink provided to **investigate** the history of the Lutheran Church in Australia. What does this tell you about the establishment of Lutheranism in Australia up to 1945? **Outline** how this relates to the history of the establishment of Christianity in Australia.

Weblinks
Anglicanism in Australia

Lutheran Church of Australia

Religious traditions other than Christianity

Apart from Judaism, it would be difficult to say that any tradition other than Christianity was established in Australia before 1945. Other traditions, however, were present in Australia, particularly in the years before Federation and the *Immigration Restriction Act 1901*, which underpinned the 'White Australia Policy', a program that sought to preserve Australia's white, European identity.

A 'white Australia'

The origins of the White Australia Policy go back to the goldfields of the 1850s. Large numbers of Chinese miners, with 'foreign' ways and unfamiliar religions, who undercut 'white' labour prices, were resented by the Anglo-Australian population. By 1861 Victoria and New South Wales had passed anti-Chinese restriction legislation. Australia's first Prime Minister, Edmund Barton, was later to say, 'The doctrine of the equality of man was never intended to apply to the equality of the Englishman and the Chinaman.'

The *Immigration Restriction Act 1901* was one of the first pieces of legislation passed by the first Commonwealth Parliament. This Act was the basis of the White Australia Policy for over 50 years. Rather than focus on particular nationalities, as the anti-Chinese legislation had done in the nineteenth century, it prohibited all those who failed to pass a dictation test of 50 words in a European language. After 1905 any prescribed language could be used, although this change was never implemented. The use of the test by immigration officers was discretionary and explicitly aimed to exclude all those who looked 'coloured.'

By the mid-1940s, many of the churches in Australia, Catholic and Protestant, had begun to raise concerns about what they considered to be offensive colour bars in immigration policy – but they still advocated a strict quota.

> White Australia has long been regarded as a national dogma ... But a policy with international reverberations is not sacrosanct just because it has been inherited. Moreover, an increasing number of Australians are feeling a little worried about it. Carefully conducted opinion studies ... suggested that over 40% think that some modification of the policy would be justified. The war has had a good deal to do with this ... The Churches, too, are interested.
>
> A. P. Elkin, 'Re-thinking the White Australia Policy', in *The Australian Quarterly*, 17(3), 6–34, 1945, pp. 6, 8

Although not explicitly stated, it was a given that immigrants would be Christian. For example, government resistance to immigration by 'white' European Jews was certainly encountered before the Second World War. It is therefore of little surprise that religious traditions other than Christianity did not increase their profiles significantly until after the Second World War, when immigration drives by the government began changing the make-up of the Australian population.

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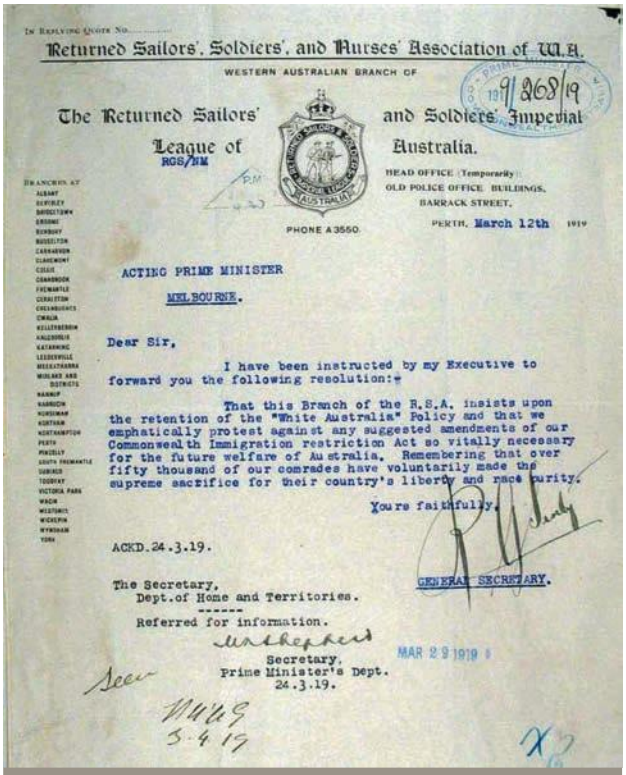
Courtesy of the National Archives of Australia. NAA: A1, 1919/4097



Returned Sailors', Soldiers', and Nurses' Association of W.A.
WESTERN AUSTRALIAN BRANCH OF
The Returned Sailors' League of Australia
and Soldiers' Imperial
HEAD OFFICE (Temporarily)
OLD POLICE OFFICE BUILDINGS,
BARRACK STREET,
PHONE A3550
PERTH, March 12th 1919

ACTING PRIME MINISTER
MELBOURNE.

Dear Sir,

I have been instructed by my Executive to forward you the following resolution:-

That this Branch of the R.S.A. insists upon the retention of the "White Australia" Policy and that we emphatically protest against any suggested amendments of our Commonwealth Immigration restriction Act so vitally necessary for the future welfare of Australia. Remembering that over fifty thousand of our comrades have voluntarily made the supreme sacrifice for their country's liberty and race purity.

Yours faithfully,

GENERAL SECRETARY.

ACKD.24.3.19.

The Secretary,
Dept.of Home and Territories.
Referred for information.
Secretary,
Prime Minister's Dept.
24.3.19.

MAR 29 1919

FIGURE 8.1.6 A letter to the Acting Prime Minister from the Returned Sailors, Soldiers and Nurses Association of Western Australia, 12 March 1919. The resolution of the Association reads:

'That this Branch of the R.S.A. insists upon the retention of the "White Australia" Policy and that we emphatically protest against any suggested amendments of our Commonwealth Immigration restriction Act so vitally necessary for the future welfare of Australia. Remembering that over fifty thousand of our comrades have voluntarily made the supreme sacrifice for their country's liberty and race purity.'

RESPOND

What kind of a reception would material like this receive were it to be published in Australia today? Who would be offended? Who would defend it?

Buddhism

It is most likely that the first lay Buddhists to come to Australia were some of the Chinese working on the goldfields of the 1850s, but these people probably also stood within the traditions of Confucianism and popular Daoism as well. Victoria had the highest Buddhist population at 27 000 in 1857. In 1891 Buddhists represented 1.2 per cent of the Australian population, but by 1911 the total number had fallen to just 3268, or 0.07 per cent.

The first permanent Buddhist community was established in the 1870s by Sinhalese migrants from Sri Lanka who came to work on Queensland sugar plantations and in the Thursday Island pearling industry. By the 1890s, there were about 500 people in the Thursday Island community, a temple had been built, Buddhist festivals were celebrated and a monk was said to have visited to officiate. There were also mainly Japanese Shinto/Buddhist communities in Broome and Darwin.

Hinduism

Hindu Indians first came to Australia with British families who had employed them in India. There were even a few Indian convicts sent here by the British Government in India, and it is recorded that two Bengali Indians fought at the Eureka Stockade.

Many Hindus who came to Australia in the nineteenth century worked as hawkers, travelling around the remote communities. Some came as labourers to work on sugarcane or cotton plantations. In 1880 there were about 3000 Indians in Australia. Most Indian migrants returned to India after a period of work here. In any census year, the number of Indians in Australia who identified as Hindus in the census was substantially lower than the Indian population in Australia.

By 1896 a firm of merchants from Hyderabad in India had branches in Melbourne. In 1898 about 30 merchants from Sindh (in modern-day Pakistan) also settled in Melbourne. There is no evidence that Hindus were able to practise their religion and it is probable that the only ceremonies were private domestic rituals at home shrines.

Hinduism was, however, present in other ways in Australian life. The Theosophical Society, centred in Sydney and Melbourne from 1879 until the present, had many prominent members, including prime ministers such as Alfred Deakin, some of whom were well-read in Hindu texts. However, these people were more interested in the intellectual and philosophical aspects of Hinduism and did not engage in devotional or ritual activities.

DID YOU KNOW?

Founded in New York in 1875, Theosophy – meaning 'Divine Wisdom' – embraced aspects of Hinduism, Buddhism and mysticism. Theosophists claimed to have rediscovered an ancient wisdom that, unlike denominational Christianity, did not clash with the new scientific theories of the late nineteenth century and so attracted many well-educated people. In time, the Theosophical Society drifted away from its strong focus on Eastern philosophies and gave greater emphasis to spiritualism and occultism.

Islam

Muslims from as far away as Broken Hill in New South Wales and Kalgoorlie in Western Australia gathered at least once a year at the Adelaide mosque, usually for the Fast of Ramadan. In 1890 it was reported that 80 Afghans were present to observe this important festival (*Adelaide Observer*, 2 August 1890).

There was a Muslim presence in Australia before European settlement, as Muslim fishermen from Makassar (in modern-day Indonesia) visited north-western Australia long before 1788. This is known from the graves

they dug there, which face Mecca, and local Aboriginal cave paintings and ceremonies that incorporate Makassan Muslim motifs.

Afghan camel drivers (not all were from Afghanistan, but most were Muslims) began to work the inland areas of Australia from 1860, after three Afghan camel drivers accompanied the Burke and Wills expedition. The 'Ghans', as they were known, built the first mosques in Australia around the turn of the century. Many returned to their homeland after their period of work and, during the first half of the twentieth century, the number of Muslims in Australia declined. The 1911 census recorded just under 4000 Muslims in Australia and this fell to 1877 in 1933.

Australian Heritage Photographic Library

FIGURE 8.1.7 The Adelaide mosque was built in 1888 and is the oldest mosque in Australia. Its original four minarets were added in 1903.

Judaism

There were, it is believed, between six and 14 Jewish convicts on the First Fleet. By the time transportation ended in 1853, at least 1000 Jews, mostly males and mostly from London's East End, entered New South Wales and the other colonies as convicts. Convict numbers were supplemented by emigrant Jews from Britain's urban poor and then increasing numbers of middle-class English Jews, who brought with them their particular Anglo-Jewish style of practice. There is a record of a Chevra Kadisha (the Jewish burial society that takes charge of the ritual matters associated with death and burial) from as early as 1817.

Jews in public life

High Court of Australia

FIGURE 8.1.8 Sir Isaac Isaacs

National Archives of Australia: A1200, L3310

FIGURE 8.1.9 General Sir John Monash

Shown above are Sir Isaac Isaacs (1855–1948), third Chief Justice of Australia and later the first Australian-born Governor-General of Australia, and General Sir John Monash (1865–1931), whom Field Marshal Montgomery called 'the best General on the Western Front in Europe' in the First World War. Both men were Jewish, Australian and, like other Anglo-Jews of the time, were loyal to the British Empire (Isaacs, fiercely so). 'We Australian Jews in this remote outpost of the British Empire are Britishers to the backbone and spinal marrow,' the *Jewish Herald* reported shortly after the end of the First World War.

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DID YOU KNOW?

Perhaps best known among the Jews of the First Fleet was Esther Abraham. She bore her first child, a daughter, in London's Newgate Prison while awaiting transportation to Sydney and later went on to become the wife of George Johnston, Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales. Esther's grandson by that daughter, George Nicholls, went on to become Auditor General of New South Wales in 1856. Nicholls was instrumental in gaining parity with Christian congregations for the progress of Jewish clergy. Also among Esther Abraham's descendants was the late Rear Admiral Sir David Martin, Governor of New South Wales, 1989–90.

By the 1840s, Jewish numbers made up 0.5 per cent of the population and have remained around that percentage nationally ever since. The Jewish community in Sydney demonstrated sufficient self-reliance by 1845 to be granted aid in the repayment of a debt for the erection of a purpose-built synagogue. That synagogue, in York Street, Sydney, was the forerunner to the Great Synagogue, which has stood on its present site between Castlereagh and Elizabeth streets since 1878.

A Jewish community flourished in Melbourne after 1845. There were also Jewish communities in Goulburn, Maitland and Grafton in the nineteenth century and, while those communities are gone today, their gravestones mark their former presence.

The 1880s saw Eastern European Jews fleeing persecution in their homelands, and some came to Australia. Jewish refugees continued to come to Australia in the first half of the twentieth century – initially after the First World War, and then after 1933 as Hitler came to power in Germany. Seven thousand Jews took Australian visas between 1938 and the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939.

The Anglo-Jewish and Western European, more liberal influences remained strong in Sydney, while the Eastern European, stricter Orthodoxy became a feature of Melbourne Jewry, where many Eastern European refugees settled. Even though the Western European immigrants were liberal compared with their Eastern European counterparts, they were far more observant than the descendants of the nineteenth-century Jewish population in Australia, who had strongly assimilated into the dominant culture.

Collection of the State Library of NSW/Charles Pickering

FIGURE 8.1.10 The York Street Synagogue. It served the Sydney Jewish community between 1844 and 1877, after which it made way for the Great Synagogue.

REVIEW

1. Recall the cultural and legislative factors that worked against the expansion of traditions other than Christianity in Australia before 1945. List your responses in a table.
2. In point form, **outline** the arrival and establishment of Buddhism and Judaism in Australia.
3. Recall some of the kinds of work in which nineteenth-century Hindu immigrants might have been found.
4. Identify the different countries and places from which Muslims came to Australia before 1945.
5. You are asked to present a seminar on the establishment of strong representation of Judaism in Australia in comparison with other traditions (except Christianity). Summarise the most significant points in an infographic to support your answer.
6. You are asked to summarise the establishment of religion in Australia from 1788 to 1945. What would you say? Identify in your response at least five key points.

Worksheet
Religious traditions in Australia pre-1945

Issues related to the development of Christianity in Australia

GLOSSARY

conscription Compulsory military service.

sectarianism The narrow and excessive allegiance to a particular religious group.

Christianity in Australia developed along denominational lines, and this brought with it the sectarian rivalries that had fragmented the churches in Britain. Many Protestant groups objected to the domination of the Church of England (Anglicans). At the heart of anti-Catholic sentiment was the issue of loyalty to the British Empire. Catholics could be suspected of disloyalty to the Empire because of their loyalty to the Pope or to other Catholic nations. These rivalries had an impact on how education developed in Australia and in the way social welfare was organised.

Sectarianism

Until quite recently there has been a climate of mistrust and bad feeling between the various Christian denominations. This enmity, known as **sectarianism**, is a significant part of Australia's religious history.

Sectarianism was usually most obvious between Protestants (and Anglicans) and Catholics, but it also existed among the Protestants. Sectarianism going back some centuries existed between Anglicans, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, Baptists and Quakers. While there were instances of cooperation among the Protestant clergy in the early days of the colonies, there are more than a few recorded instances of Methodist and Presbyterian clergy complaining about their ill-treatment at the hands of the established church (the Church of England).

All the Protestant denominations kept apart from the Irish Catholics, whose loyalty to Ireland, strange language (many spoke only Gaelic), disreputable convict connections and mysterious religious practices made them objects of suspicion. The Reformation and the English presence in Ireland had created fear and mistrust. Between the Protestants and Catholics was an ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious divide wider than the seas they had all crossed to arrive in Australia.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1902 Prime Minister Edmund Barton returned to Australia following a visit to Britain and Europe that included an audience with the Pope. It raised such sectarian ire that 30 000 Protestants signed a petition. This petition, which opposed conferring on the Pope 'any position of honour or dignity in the Commonwealth', was presented to the House of Representatives.

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.
>
> Section 116, Australian Constitution

> The uneasy dance of religion and politics has long been an issue in Australian public life and the poisonous sectarian disputes of the nineteenth century were uppermost in the minds of the framers of the constitution when they formulated Section 116 in the hope that this would guarantee the new commonwealth a secular state.
>
> Amanda Lohrey, 'Voting for Jesus: Christianity and politics in Australia', *Quarterly Essay* 22, 2006, p. 40

Sectarianism, in its broader sense, was on show at the celebrations for Federation. Federation in 1901 was supposed to herald the unity of the Australian people, but what happened during the Sydney Federation ceremony marred the celebration. The Catholic Cardinal Moran and the heads of the Methodist and Presbyterian churches did not follow the Church of England Archbishop Smith and civic leaders to the inauguration ceremony at Centennial Park.

> The two Protestant churchmen had refused to march because they had been placed far behind the Anglican and Catholic leaders in the order of the procession. After all, they protested, the new constitution guaranteed equality to all religions! Cardinal Moran withdrew because he had not been given first place over the Archbishop as he was a cardinal.
>
> Richard Broome, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels: Protestant Christianity in NSW Society 1900–1914*, 1980, p. 95

Conscription and sectarianism

The First World War was a crucial period in the entrenchment of the sectarian rift between Catholics, on one side, and Protestant and Anglican Australia on the other. It was crucial because it raised questions of loyalty and national interest that had not been raised before.

In 1916, when the Labor prime minister, William Morris (Billy) Hughes (1862–1952), announced his intention to hold a referendum of the people on the question of **conscription** for military service outside the Commonwealth, the issue began to divide the country. Hughes was the leader of a party that had pledged to oppose conscription for overseas service and was highly suspicious of all imperialist wars. The Labor Party believed that conscription threatened the White Australia Policy and class solidarity because it would create a need for imported labour. When Hughes announced the referendum for 28 October, he was expelled from the Labor Party.

The non-Labor parties were deeply Protestant and so were not natural places for Catholic loyalties. On the other hand, the Labor Party was not all Catholic and the opposition to conscription was not only from Catholics.

Both Catholic men and Protestant men enlisted and died in great numbers in the war, but it is true to say that at the extremes of politics, those who fiercely supported conscription tended to be Protestant and those who opposed it, Catholic. This reflected the closeness of religion and socioeconomic status in early twentieth-century Australia. The language of war propaganda saw highly emotive religious language and imagery used, particularly in support of conscription. Many saw the British cause as akin to a holy war in which the mother country was the moral defender of freedom and democracy.

Those who opposed conscription, such as the prominent Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, Dr Daniel Mannix (1864–1963), saw the war and conscription more in terms of economics and politics. Mannix won few friends outside the Catholic Church when he called the First World War a 'sordid trade war'. With respect to the war, he declared: 'First settle Ireland's wrongs, and then we will talk about going to the rescue of Belgium.' Other Catholic bishops did not share his view. They stressed that Catholics should vote according to the dictates of their consciences.

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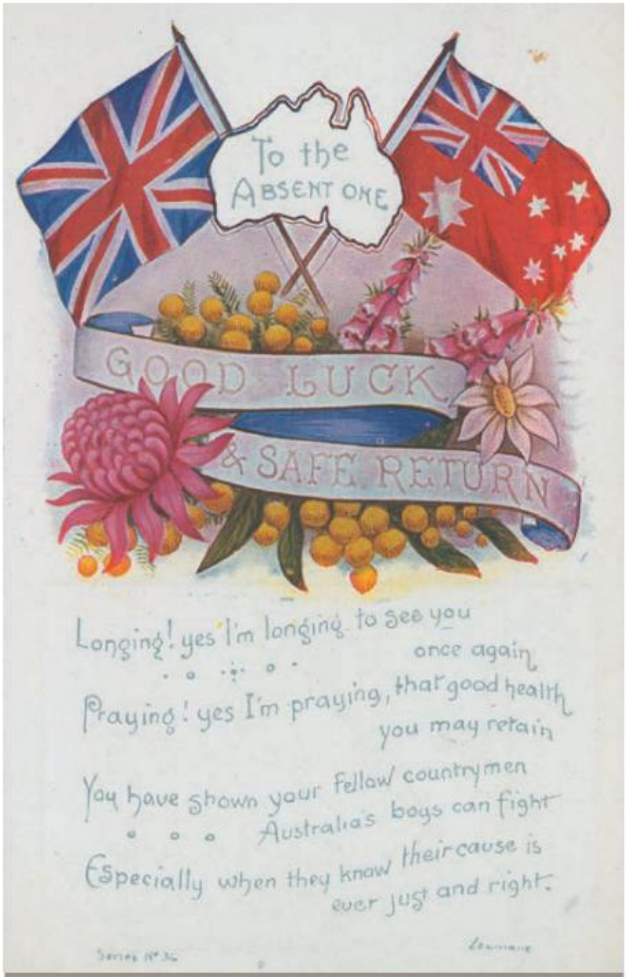

State Library of Victoria, Gift of Mrs Shirley Jones, 1999

FIGURE 8.1.11 A First World War postcard dating from c. 1914. The overtones of loyalty to God, King and Country are evident in its message that it is the righteous soldier who will be graced by God.

RESPOND

What would have been the response of Melbourne's then Catholic Archbishop Daniel Mannix to the line, '... they know their cause is ever just and right'?

Another prominent Australian who opposed conscription was the Rev. Charles Strong (1844–1942). Strong came to Australia to take up the position as minister at Scots Church, Melbourne. His liberal views saw him fall foul of the Presbyterian Church in Victoria. In 1885 Strong was invited to be the foundation minister of the Australian Church. An advocate of social reform, Strong was the founder of the Melbourne Peace Society and of a branch of the Women's International League for Peace. Perhaps his most prominent conscription action was to sign the Anti-Conscription Manifesto, amid strong opposition from within his own church.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Australian Church existed from 1855 to 1957. The year after the church's dissolution, the Charles Strong (Australian Church) Memorial Trust was established to foster the study of comparative religion. The Charles Strong lecture is still delivered annually by a prominent scholar. The lecture titles reveal a wide range of interests across many religions, new and old, but an interest in Aboriginal spirituality is a recurring theme. A link to the Charles Strong lecture is provided.

Weblink
Charles Strong Trust

Conscription and Christianity

The Anti-Conscription Manifesto was prepared in opposition to the second conscription referendum of December 1917. The manifesto was signed by a wide variety of Protestant ministers who stood in defiance of the majority view of their co-religionists, which was in favour of conscription. Co-signatories included the Rev. F. Sinclaire of the Free Religious Fellowship, the Rev. Dr Charles Strong of the Australian Church, the Rev. E. Hope Hume and Rev. A. Rivett of the Congregationalist Church, the Rev. F. Clemens of the Baptist Church, the Rev. W.H. Beale and the Rev. B. Linden Webb of the Methodist Church, the Rev. Arthur J. Prowse of the Presbyterian Church, and Mr W. Cooperas of the Society of Friends (Quakers).

In the first referendum, held on 28 October 1916, the 'no conscription' vote was only 72 480 more than the 'yes' vote. Despite the sectarian fury during the campaign, the electorate results show that voting was in the main on party lines. A second referendum was held in December 1917 – Mannix called Hughes a 'little Czar' during the campaign, and Hughes threatened to deport Mannix. Again the referendum was defeated by the slimmest of margins.

> Australia first and the Empire second.
> Dr Daniel Mannix, Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne

In the aftermath of the First World War there was a real sectarian bitterness in Australian society. The hope that the war would unify the young nation was not fulfilled. Catholics who had signed up, who had served and who lost sons were very bitter that their loyalty to Australia as a nation was still suspect. One of the reasons for this suspicion was because Catholics had continued to push the issue of funding for Catholic schools during the war; others thought they ought to have given up on their sectional demands and thrown themselves into the national effort. In the main, the aggressive face of sectarianism was restricted to a few groups, such as the Loyal Orange Lodge and the Protestant Defence Society (PDS), which was formed in 1902 to counter the 'secret tactics and open aggressiveness' of Roman Catholicism.

Catholics formed their own organisations, such as the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (1871) and the Knights of the Southern Cross (1919), to attract Catholics away from organisations attached to Freemasonry. Usually the face of sectarianism was subtle. There were many important firms that intentionally did not employ Catholics. On the other hand, it was assumed by many people that the public service was a Catholic preserve.

Some sectarianism, however, was not so subtle. Until the late 1940s there were still job advertisements in newspapers explicitly stating 'no Catholics need apply' or that the person

should be a Catholic. And, well into the 1950s, Catholic and Protestant children would meet on the street and taunt each other with sectarian rhymes; mixed marriages often resulted in exclusion from church and families; and Catholics had to seek permission to go to non-Catholic funerals.

It was not until the late 1960s and early 1970s that overt sectarianism disappeared from Australian society. There were many factors, both inside and outside Australia, that created a more 'open' society and led almost incidentally to the decline of sectarianism. Some of these are examined in Chapter 9.

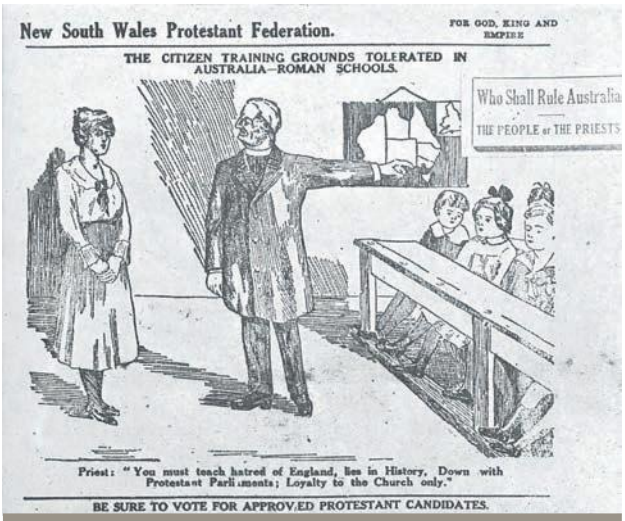

FIGURE 8.1.12 A Protestant Federation leaflet issued during the 1922 New South Wales election campaign. It shows a teacher being instructed by a Catholic priest, who says: 'You must teach hatred of England, lies in History, Down with Protestant Parliaments; Loyalty to the Church only.'

REVIEW

1 Recall the names of the two major opponents in the First World War conscription debate.
2 Identify the various factors that link conscription in the First World War and sectarianism.
3 Summarise some of the impacts of sectarianism in Australian society before 1945 using the following headings: Funding for schools; Job restrictions; Mixed marriages.
4 Distinguish between subtle and more overt forms of sectarianism outlined in this section.

EXTENSION

1 Use the Internet to investigate the history of the Loyal Orange Lodge, the Protestant Defence Society or the Hibernian Society. Do any of these organisations exist today?
2 Discuss the proposition: 'Sectarianism was the inevitable result of importing European religions and tensions into Australia.'
3 Use the weblink provided as a starting point to investigate the language of war propaganda. Can you find one or more examples of highly emotive religious language and imagery that was used to build support for the war effort?

Weblink
firstworldwar.com

Social welfare

In the area of social welfare, agencies such as St Vincent de Paul, the Wesley Mission and the Brotherhood of St Laurence have a major impact today on the lives of Australians. They had their origins in Australia in nineteenth-century church men and women who took seriously the Christian call to service. Each of the major religious bodies in nineteenth-century Australia, in the absence of extensive government support, sought to assist their communities in the area of medical care. Frequently this assistance was incorporated with other community services through various welfare agencies. Religious organisations have had a significant role in the welfare of the Australian people.

Collection of State Library of NSW

FIGURE 8.1.13 Christmas poor relief appeal, 1938. Canon Hammond (far left) was a well-known Church of England minister at St Barnabas Church on Broadway in Sydney. It was the teetotaller Hammond who began the tradition of the sign outside St Barnabas that each week proclaimed a new message of salvation for all who passed by down Parramatta Road. Hammond was heavily involved in social welfare work, including the establishment of a low-cost, self-help housing project for disadvantaged families in Sydney's south-west. The suburb Hammondville was named in his honour.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Irish Sisters of Charity arrived in Australia in 1838 and went on to establish St Vincent's Hospital at Potts Point, Sydney, in 1857. The founding Sisters of this hospital were professional nurses trained in France, and the Sisters of Charity were the first professional nurses in the penal colony.

In 1817 the Benevolent Society of New South Wales – an outgrowth of the 1813 organisation the NSW Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and Benevolence – was formed. It was the first charitable organisation to receive government subsidies and became the model for the involvement of the community in providing services directly or administering government funds. Through their volunteer services, organisations such as this have, since their beginnings, provided a level of social welfare services that the government alone simply does not have

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the resources to provide. Most often this has been without consideration of the religious affiliation of the people being cared for. Some of the most important of these organisations are listed below.

Anglican Home Mission Society

Small organisations caring for homeless children, women in need, the unemployed and the poor, in one form or another, have operated in partnership with local Anglican parishes since 1856. Over time, these disparate groups came under the 'Anglicare' banner.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Anglican Church Missionary Society (CMS) first met as the 'Eclectic Society' in the Castle and Falcon pub in London. The society, renamed the Church Missionary Society, was one of the first to send chaplains to Australia, among them the famous Samuel Marsden. There were 43 separate Australian missions operating in towns and rural areas around Australia between 1814 and 1900. Anglicans, Baptists, Catholics, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Methodists, Moravians and Presbyterians were all represented.

St Vincent de Paul Society

The St Vincent de Paul Society is a Catholic lay organisation originally established in France in 1833. By 1895 there were already 26 branches of the St Vincent de Paul Society in Sydney alone. Members of the association visited people in hospitals and prisons, and offered assistance to the aged, homeless and poor.

The Sydney Rescue Work Society

The Sydney Rescue Work Society was founded in 1882. It was established specifically to tend to the needs of poor families, particularly their women and children. Today it continues as Integricare and is involved primarily with providing services in family day care, supported playgroups and family support services.

Weblink
Integricare

Central Methodist Mission

The Central Methodist Mission was established in Sydney in 1884 in Castlereagh Street. The slogan chosen was 'A living Christ for a dying world', and the mission looked to combine social action with word in the preaching of the gospel. Wesley Mission is the name used today for social welfare services that come under the banner of UnitingCare Australia, a work of the Uniting Church in Australia. The Uniting Church makes provision for a central mission in each of the capital cities.

The Salvation Army

The Salvation Army, a Christian denomination that began as the 'Christian Mission' in London's East End in 1865, found its way to South Australia in 1880. The Salvation Army has a strong belief in the importance of bringing the Christian message to people through practical means, thus its emphasis on providing welfare services. From humble beginnings, the 'Salvos' have become a part of the fabric of Australian society.

Social welfare during the Great Depression

During the 1930s Great Depression (at that time, the period of perhaps the greatest social need in the history of the young nation), the Australian churches were mostly silent. On the political causes of poverty and social dislocation, they held a moderate and politically conservative position. They provided some material comfort for their own people, but rarely questioned government policy. It appears that Christians found little support from their churches for long-term solutions to society's ills.

REVIEW

1. Define 'social welfare'.
2. Recall and list the kind of groups that church social welfare agencies sought to support before 1945.
3. Outline the contribution of three Christian agencies to social welfare in Australia before 1945.
4. Clarify the factors that motivated the churches to become involved in social welfare. Support your answer with examples from at least one organisation.

EXTENSION

Investigate an Australian religious social welfare agency and write a report to summarise its history and work in the period before 1945.

The contribution of religious traditions in Australia

GLOSSARY

Anglo-Catholic A strand within the Church of England (Anglican) whose rituals retained many aspects of Roman Catholicism. The Anglo-Catholic or 'High' church also had religious orders for women and men.

proselytising Winning converts to one's religion.

secularism A social or political philosophy that rejects all forms of religion.

Given Australia's religious history, it is not surprising that it is Christianity that contributed most to Australian society in the first 150 years after the arrival of the First Fleet. This section deals with that contribution in rural and outback communities, education and public morality.

Rural and outback communities

The make-up of Australia's religious communities, state by state, reflects the differences in their colonial past. The Catholic Church went where the Irish went, and many of them went into rural Australia. In rural areas the Catholics had the advantage: Catholic nuns and brothers and priests, mostly from Ireland, were prepared to go where married Anglican clergy refused to go. The Lutherans established a strong presence in Central Australia – the Hermannsburg mission for the western Aranda Aboriginal peoples was established in 1877.

Bush brotherhoods

Australia's vast open spaces and absence of church authorities were two of the factors that played a part in the emergence of the Church of England 'bush brotherhoods'. At the turn of the twentieth century there were those among the English clergy who dreamed of a 'band of men' who could 'preach like Apostles, ride like cowboys' and, with just their food and clothing as material comforts, be content to minister to the European population in the bush. The brotherhoods relied on clergy who were recruited from England and lured by the promised romance of a life as a minister in the bush – culturally the early brothers were upper class, well-educated, celibate Englishmen.

The Bush Brotherhood Movement began with the establishment of St Andrew's Mission House at Longreach, Queensland in 1897, with Rev. George Douglas Halford (1865–1948) as its head.

At Dubbo in May 1904, Rev. Frederick Henry Campion (1872–1957) formally established and became principal of the Brotherhood of the Good Shepherd. He founded the society's journal, the *Bush Brother*, later that year.

Anglican Archives of Rockhampton

FIGURE 8.1.14 The first 'bush brothers' – Brotherhood of St Andrew, Longreach, Queensland, 1898. Back: A. Perry and W. Scott; front: T.C. Chapman and G. Halford.

It was Campion who established by example the pattern of a bush brother's life – trips into his district, interspersed with frequent short visits to the central house and quarterly reunions there with all members of the brotherhood.

In 1928 there were six of these brotherhoods working in Australia, covering over 180 million hectares of territory between them.

Well into the twentieth century, the concept of loyalty to the Empire was disappearing in Britain. English clergy no longer felt the same sense of duty to travel across the world to serve the church as bush brothers. Of course there were Australian brothers, but local Anglicans were never as inclined towards the lonely, celibate life that seemed to have romanced the English brothers from afar.

> The Brothers must also be unmarried and free from matrimonial understandings.
>
> In the archives of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane

The achievements of the brotherhoods are perhaps to be measured by the degree to which they have become a part of Australian Anglican culture. An extraordinary number of English brothers were made bishops – 20 in all, 18 of them in Australia. The brotherhoods carried a pastoral ministry to the farthest reaches of the continent. The ministry of the bush brotherhoods is responsible for the presence of High Church Anglicanism in many rural regions.

> Mr Edmund Jowett said that it was to prevent a depopulation of the vital portions of Australia, sparsely populated and forming an open gateway to the East that the great work of the brotherhood must be carried on. The provision of the amenities of civilisation for the dwellers in the 'outback' was not only a humanitarian question or a religious question but a national question.
>
> Reported in the Melbourne *Argus*, 29 February 1928

The Bush Church Aid Society

The Bush Church Aid Society was an attempt by the evangelical Sydney Anglicans to capture the bush dioceses from the influence of the bush brotherhoods and their strongly **Anglo-Catholic** stance. In addition, Anglicans feared Catholic 'aggression' in the bush. Social services, such as child welfare and education, were almost entirely under the control of Catholic nuns and brothers, who had established convent schools in places the married Anglican clergy had refused to go.

A mission to the bush was also an escape route for conservative Sydney evangelicals, who felt besieged by the increasingly liberalising forces around them. The Bush Church Aid Society for Australia and Tasmania, known as the BCA, was launched on 26 May 1919. The BCA, with its married clergy and army of female volunteers, took over in places where the brotherhoods had failed, particularly the settled rural areas and townships.

In an age when women were mostly restricted to fetes and flowers in the service of the church, the BCA was noteworthy for its pioneering use of women missioners, and

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they were the backbone of the Society. Australian women took up the challenge, too, as hostel sisters and nurses.

The BCA developed a reputation for its healthcare services, hostels for young people, and innovative use of aeroplanes. The hostels – models of Christian service rather than **proselytising** preaching – assured the BCA of a welcome and a long life in the bush. The BCA is still working in some of the areas it pioneered in the 1920s.

Australian Inland Mission

Victorian-born Presbyterian minister John Flynn (1880–1951) went on a mission to shearers in 1909 and in 1912 founded the Australian Inland Mission, which brought a range of religious, health, pastoral and other services for Europeans in outback Australia. Flynn used the modern inventions of the wireless and the aeroplane to establish the Flying Doctor Service in the late 1920s to provide reliable medical assistance for people in remote areas. The School of the Air was an offshoot of the introduction of the wireless in the bush. Flynn's motto, 'For Christ and the Continent', is still the motto of the Uniting Church in Australia's outback mission service, Frontier Services.

REVIEW

1. What 'advantage' did Catholics have in their ministry in sparsely populated rural regions?
2. Explain the background of most of the 'bush brothers' and the appeal of the call to the Australian outback.
3. Identify the religious groups that had an impact on rural and outback life in Australia before 1945.
4. Deduce the difficulties of ministering in the rural and outback areas for the mainstream Christian churches.

EXTENSION

1. Form groups and then further divide into 'bush brothers' and 'rural settlers from the United Kingdom'. Imagine what might have been the key concerns about your sub-group's life in Australia and decide on six concerns. In your larger group, write a short script between a bush brother and a rural settler.
2. '. . . amenities of civilisation for the dwellers in the "outback" was not only a humanitarian question or a religious question but a national question.' Discuss issues that arise from this comment by Mr Jowett from the *Argus* excerpt on page 150.

Education

The story of religion and education in nineteenth-century Australia is essentially a story of the interplay of Christianity and politics. The churches battled with the government for financial support and autonomy in an area where they saw the future of their religious communities – education.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, legislation was enacted in each of the colonies to provide free, compulsory and secular elementary education for all children in schools operated by the state. These enactments influenced the contribution of the churches to Australian society and also the process of **secularism** in Australian society.

DID YOU KNOW?

Established in 1856, St Catherine's Anglican Day and Boarding School for Girls in Waverley, Sydney, is Australia's oldest Anglican school for girls. It was not uncommon for Anglican, Presbyterian and Lutheran boarding schools to be established in rural centres, where they could cater for the educational needs of widely dispersed pastoral populations. In 1858 the Catholic Sisters of Charity opened St Vincent's College, Potts Point, now Australia's oldest Catholic school for girls.

Church and School Corporation (1826)

This attempt to endow the Anglican Church as the Established Church in the Australian colonies and to place all public education under its control failed. Catholics and Presbyterians campaigned against the Corporation on the grounds of religious equality and its charter was suspended in 1829. It was dissolved in 1833.

The *Church Act 1836*

This Act provided a more general support for religion, as money was allocated to the major denominations according to their numbers in the population: one pound was promised for each pound raised by a congregation for the building of churches. The Act reflected the practical beliefs of the early legislators that all the religious bodies present in the colony could contribute to the moral welfare of a growing community that was badly in need of refinement. It also, however, had the effect of ensuring that the bigger Christian churches in Australia were both mainstream and urban. Small religious denominations or people living in far-flung rural areas lacked the facility to organise themselves into congregations and received virtually no aid. The major denominations firmly established their power base in the cities, particularly Melbourne and Sydney.

In the matter of schools, different models were proposed, both non-denominational with non-sectarian religious instruction and denominational, but all models were rejected. The abolition of state aid to the four major churches in 1862 showed that secular feeling was strengthening, and there were calls for unified control of elementary education. A New South Wales Royal Commission in 1866 found that many children were not attending school at all. The majority of the colony's schools remained with the Church of England and the majority of Catholic parents refused to send their children to school, preferring no education rather than have them come under the influence of the Church of England. As late as 1911, census statistics still showed a significantly higher rate of illiteracy among Catholics compared to the rest of the population.

NSW *Public Instruction Act 1880*

This Act sought to bring to an end some of the inequities that had resulted from the *Church Act 1836*.

Among its provisions were:

- separate religious instruction by visiting clergy in public schools (government school teachers could also provide non-sectarian scripture lessons)
- compulsory attendance
- the reduction (though not the abolition) of fees
- the removal of state aid to denominational schools from 31 December 1882.

This eventually led to the establishment of a Catholic education system entirely separate from the state. State-controlled schools had been condemned in Pope Pius IX's 'Syllabus of Errors' in 1864, so Catholics did not welcome the secular education system that was proposed by the Act. This, together with the urban power base of the Church, brought about the establishment of a system of Catholic schools with religious orders of teachers as their essential foundation.

> Let parents send their children, when of fit age, exclusively to Catholic schools. Let them regard all other schools as no places for their children, who have to learn before everything else to save their souls …
>
> Australian Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter, 1879

DID YOU KNOW?

Presbyterians, Methodists, Anglicans and Lutherans all had schools established before 1945. These schools most often were 'elite' schools. Catholics established some elite schools as well, but also had a 'second tier' of parish schools linked to local churches. The private school systems that this history gave rise to have created a higher rate of private school enrolment in Australia than in any other English-speaking country.

Jewish schools in New South Wales

1844–47 The first schoolmaster, Rev. Moses Rintel, conducted the Sydney Jewish Academy.

1848 Zion House School was established.

1863 The Sydney Jewish Sabbath School was established by Rev. Alexander B. Davis with 14 pupils. Enrolments increased in the first year to 81.

1868 The Sydney Hebrew School in Pitt Street opened.

1882 When all aid to denominational schools ceased, the day school closed and the Sydney Jewish Education Board was established to conduct classes in state schools. The first classes were held at Fort Street, Crown Street and William Street public schools.

1909 The Sydney Jewish Sabbath School was amalgamated with the Sydney Jewish Education Board to form a New South Wales Board of Jewish Education.

Alamy Stock Photo/stock imagery/Archives Office NSW

FIGURE 8.1.15 Children outside Harrington Street Ragged School, The Rocks, Sydney, in 1900. 'Ragged schools' existed in the inner suburbs of Sydney between 1860 and the 1920s. Although established as non-denominational philanthropic schools for poor and destitute children, they nonetheless based their work on a Protestant reading of Bible teachings and had an emphasis on Christian evangelism as the means to rescue the children they served. Ragged schools are a little-known part of the non-government education story of this period.

The education debate leads to the emergence of secularism

The three pieces of legislation outlined on pages 151–2 were a response to the religio-political secular education debate of the nineteenth century. The Anglican and Protestant Churches did not wish to see any extension of Catholic influence. Given that the dominant culture in Australia was Protestant in nature, their sense was that if education was compulsory, free and secular, it would serve their needs. Ironically, the secularisation of values that would be very prominent in twentieth-century Australia was heavily influenced by the energetic reformist agenda of nineteenth-century Australian Protestantism.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Australian Catholics had established for themselves a strong network of schools to serve their faith community. Other Christian denominations had also established schools, but these were mainly secondary schools and they had a much higher fee structure than the Catholic parish schools. The Catholic school became the linchpin of Australian Catholicism.

REVIEW

1 **Outline** the contribution of one religious tradition to education in Australia before 1945.

2 **Explain** how the *Church Act 1836* assisted churches in making their contribution to the provision of education before 1945.

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3 Clarify how the *Church Act 1836* disadvantaged some denominations and people.

4 Evaluate the extent to which the *NSW Public Instruction Act 1880* contributed to the establishment of a Catholic education system entirely separate from the state.

EXTENSION

1 Use the weblink provided to examine the information about the Denominational School Board, which existed from 1848 to 1866. Use this web page to list at least three items of information about the involvement of churches in education in New South Wales at this time.

2 Using the Internet and/or other resources, investigate further the contribution of one Christian denomination to education in Australia before 1945. In a report on your findings, include information on rural schools as well as on those in urban areas.

3 'Nineteenth-century Acts of Parliament concerned with the provision of education not only moulded our modern system of church-related schools, but also helped create the secular society of today.' Construct a mind map or flow chart to synthesise the material presented in this section to justify your response to this statement.

Weblink
State Archives

Public morality

Religion, something of an afterthought in the founding and early development of Australia, came to be seen as the only hope for an improvement in public morality. The clergy could do the job of being 'God's police'. Christians had a powerful influence on public policy in this area and established a reputation as 'wowsers'.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1914 the Sydney newspaper *Truth* defined a wowser as 'a pernickety kind of person, always objecting to everybody else who does not agree with him; he will interfere with the pleasures and enjoyments of others; thinks that he alone has the right conception of right conduct, and a monopoly of the narrow way to paradise ...' Its editor, John Norton, had used it in a headline in 1899 and claimed he had invented it. Another theory is that it came from the slogan '**W**e **O**nly **W**ant **S**ocial **E**vils **R**ighted'!

The influence of Christian values in legislation can be seen clearly in the twentieth century, particularly in the first half of the century. 'Criminal' adultery, liquor licensing and anti-gambling laws, as well as laws to protect women and children, are all evidence of the influence of Christian morality over twentieth-century lawmakers.

One early example is the Women's Christian Temperance Union, a national organisation that began in the late nineteenth century. Although its primary aim was the prohibition of alcohol, it was also active in other areas of social and political reform, including the gaining of women's suffrage.

Various Sunday Observance laws were passed by Australian parliaments, reflecting the influence of Christian values surrounding Sunday as a day of rest. Extensive Sunday retail trading did not become a feature of Australian urban life until the 1980s and 1990s. Sunday editions of newspapers were banned in Victoria until 1969. Similarly, restrictions on Sunday professional sport and entertainment also stood in the early part of the century but fell to a changing culture more quickly.

> Diocesan Church House
>
> George Street Sydney
>
> 13th April 1942
>
> My dear Prime Minister
>
> I write to express the earnest hope that you will not allow the secularisation of Sunday in response to the suggestion being made by certain newspapers the Cinemas should be opened on that day as a means of providing hospitality for our American friends and I approach you with the greater confidence because of your well-known appreciation of spiritual values …

Letter from Howard Sydney, Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, to Australian Prime Minister John Curtin, upon the call for cinemas to be opened on Sundays for the entertainment of US troops in Australia during the Second World War

> Dear Sir
>
> I am requested by the members of this Fraternal, representing the various Protestant Churches from Bankstown to Campsie, to approach you on their behalf on the question of Temperance Reform … we would emphasise the need for drastic reduction in the amount of alcoholic liquors perwith to be produced – we strongly suggest a cut of 50% in last year's alarming figures.

Letter from the Rev. John Morris, Hon. Secretary of the Campsie–Bankstown Fraternal Association and Minister of the Lakemba Congregational Church, to the Australian Attorney-General, Dr H.V. Evatt, 5 November 1942

The emphasis on morality was very much focused on the individual. The belief was that if people are saved, then the nation will be saved. This can be contrasted with the notion of a communal responsibility to 'social justice' – a

feature of the mainstream churches today. The 'social gospel' was not a prominent part of Protestant religious thinking until fairly recently. Catholics gave it some attention from 1891 because of Pope Leo XIII's letter 'On the Condition of the Working Classes', which stressed, among other things, the rights of workers to organise into unions and to withdraw their labour in the face of injustices.

When it came to questions of sexual immorality and 'immoral' art and literature, Protestants and Catholics were more likely to be of one mind. But, despite this apparent shared conservatism, Australian Catholics have a contradictory history. It could be said they have been both the most pious and the most irreligious of the religious communities: they have displayed a high level of moral conservatism and at the same time a tolerance of drinking and gambling. The general perception of religion in Australia as having to do exclusively with moral concerns about sex, pornography and abortion persists, no matter how inaccurate that perception happens to be.

Image sourced from Heritage Victoria, Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning

FIGURE 8.1.16 **The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) drinking fountain, opposite the Queen Victoria Market in Elizabeth Street, Melbourne, erected in 1901. The WCTU was the largest women's organisation in Victoria at the time. Fountains like this were erected to influence the public away from alcohol. Pub owners disliked them for obvious reasons. The inscription includes the WTCU motto, 'For God, Home and Humanity'.**

REVIEW

1 **Define** the term 'wowser'.
2 **Describe** at least three areas of life where Christian morality had an influence on laws and practices in Australian secular society before 1945.
3 **Evaluate** the contribution of one religious tradition in Australia to rural and outback communities, education and public morality.

EXTENSION

1 **Investigate** the role of the Women's Christian Temperance Union's political history and its initiatives in the area of public morality. Use the weblink provided as a good starting point.
2 **Compare** and **contrast** the attitudes of two Christian denominations towards public morality in Australia before 1945.
3 **Investigate** some of the prohibitions in the various state Sunday Observance laws. Use the weblink provided as a good starting point. Prepare a report to outline some of the prohibitions.
4 Use the weblink provided and **examine** letters written during the Second World War to the Australian prime minister. **Prepare** a report that outlines the moral concerns expressed in the letters.
5 In small groups, **propose** some reasons and examples of how Catholics 'have been the most pious and the most irreligious of the religious communities' with reference to their attitudes to public morality. Share your reasons and examples with another group.

Weblinks
Women's Christian Temperance Union

Sunday law reform

Letters to Australian Prime Minister

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Conclusion

It is difficult to deny that Christianity has been a formative influence in Australian life. The influence of Christianity remains today, despite the changing realities of a multicultural, multifaith Australia and the shame of the Royal Commission into child sexual abuse (2012–17). There are many examples: Australia has an enormous number of church-related schools, built upon the energies of the churches in the nineteenth century, with a degree of hard-fought autonomy from government educational authorities that is unique in the Western world. The Australian legal system is supposed to be secular – based on the values of the 'reasonable person'. Yet, in reality, Christian morality and ethics have had a major influence in shaping Australian laws. Many of our leading hospitals are institutions owned and operated by church authorities. There are higher penalty rates of pay for many Australian workers who work on a Sunday, 'the Lord's Day', and Christian notions of moral right and wrong still have a marked impact on the outcome of certain political debates in Australia. Even the secular celebration of Anzac Day, with its ode and dawn service, contains shades of quasi-Christian ritual forms.

Like any society, modern Australian society is the product of a mix of forces that have shaped it and tested it. Sometimes those forces positively influence a society. At other times, it is reaction against those forces that shapes a society. Those forces and their interaction with society become a nation's heritage. Religious thought and action, particularly the work of the Christian churches, have played a significant role in forming Australia's national heritage.

EXTENSION

1. **Extrapolate** on the contribution of one religious tradition to life in Australia before 1945. How is the contribution of this religious tradition still visible in Australian society today?
2. **Synthesise** your reading in this chapter and your research outside it to write an extended response to the following statement: 'More good than harm emerged from the thoughts, ideas and practices of religious communities in Australia in the period 1788–1945.'
3. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

Online activity
Chapter 8 multiple-choice quiz

Religious tradition summaries

Religious tradition
BUDDHISM

Origins and variants

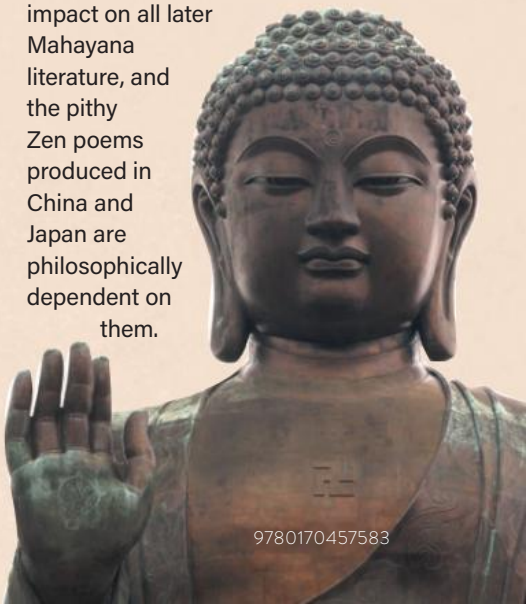
- Buddhism emerged as a distinctive set of teachings and practices during the lifetime of the Buddha (566/563–486/483 BCE or a century later). The Buddha attained enlightenment at the age of 35. This gave his teachings both an intellectual and experiential base. He established the Order (*sangha*) a few years later, which gave the emerging religion an institutional base. The Buddha became the first living embodiment of the religion.
- Buddhism grew slowly until the reign of Ashoka, king of Magadha 269–232 BCE. He supported Buddhism financially and assisted with the sending of Buddhist monks to Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar) and north-west India.
- In 200 BCE – 200 CE Buddhism received more royal support in North and Central India and expanded rapidly with considerable building of monasteries and funerary monuments, and the composition of a large body of literature in several languages.
- About the beginning of the Common Era, Buddhism entered into China, where it flourished from about the beginning of the third century CE.
- Between 100 BCE and 100 CE, new texts appear that mention the word 'Mahayana', distinguishing them from Hinayana. This marks the beginnings of Mahayana and Theravada as the two large schools of Buddhism. Mahayana, which today represents around 70 per cent of Buddhists, is located mainly in East Asia, whereas Theravada, with the remaining 30 per cent, is located in South-East Asia.

Principal teachings

- Buddhism speaks about teachings rather than beliefs, and these teachings differ according to particular social levels and forms of practice. They can be highly intellectualised, where the ultimate goal is enlightenment, or pragmatic, where the goals are more attuned to material concerns.
- At the intellectual level, the fundamental teachings are summed up in the Four Noble Truths, which centre on the problem of the unsatisfactoriness that is asserted to lie at the heart of existence. The truths define this condition as being insubstantial, impermanent and painful. Its cause is described by a 12-linked path where the individual's mind is pushed along by desire and grasping, but it can be reversed and lead to its opposite, *nirvana*, a condition achieved by following a particular ethical and religious path.
- The world is defined as *samsara*, a word indicating that the totality of thinking beings in it is driven along by endless desires to act and gain objects to consume. Rebirth and *karma* are both associated with *samsara* as dynamic forces of continuity.
- The Buddha is the model of a person who has achieved enlightenment and his life is taken as an example by all others. He has exhausted all of his *karma* and has acquired a perfect knowledge of the Four Noble Truths. He is completely without desire.
- At a more pragmatic level, it is believed that monks/nuns and holy men and women are centres of power, and this can be transferred to other people as good *karma*.

Sacred texts and writings

- Buddhism has produced a huge amount of literature in many languages and continues to do so.
- This literature is divided into canons, which sometimes include up to 1000 separate texts.
- There is much overlapping content in these texts, but they all claim to represent the word of the Buddha.
- Each canon can be subdivided into three main areas:
  - Discourses of the Buddha, which convey Buddhism's basic doctrinal teachings
  - rules of conduct for monks and nuns. These texts explain the origins of particular rules and give illustrative examples of how they are used
  - philosophical texts of restricted accessibility that are designed to give psychological commentaries on the basic teachings expounded in the Discourses.
- There is a large body of additional literature lying outside of the canons. This ranges over several genres – drama, poetry, epics, short stories and mixed narratives – and a considerable variety of content, encompassing many of the intellectual traditions that have existed in the West. Especially important are some early philosophical treatises composed in Sanskrit by the celebrated Nagarjuna (c. 150 – c. 250 CE). These have had a profound impact on all later Mahayana literature, and the pithy Zen poems produced in China and Japan are philosophically dependent on them.



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Ethical teachings

- Buddhist ethics were highly developed right from the beginning and are designed to provide appropriate behavioural guidance for both the monk/nun and the layperson. Their intention is both practical in governing personal interaction, and religious in helping to create the conditions that will eventually allow the person to be removed from the painful round of existences everyone must undergo.
- Underlying all Buddhist ethical attitudes is the need to exercise compassion towards all sentient beings, reflecting the fundamental belief that existence is basically unsatisfactory and that all conscious beings should be helped to become aware of this.
- For laypeople, five basic ethical precepts are laid down. People should refrain from: killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and taking intoxicating substances.
- The rules for monks and nuns are much larger in number and are more specific than those for laypeople. They are especially designed to prevent sexual misconduct by monks and nuns, but also pertain to dietary restrictions as well as to other aspects of life.

Significant practices

- Ritual practices in Buddhism differ considerably, depending on whether they apply to monks and nuns or laity.
- Both of these groups take part in the *parivara* and *kathina* rituals, which occur at the end of the rainy season. These rituals involve a statement to the laity of the purity of the order of monks, nuns and the donation of newly made robes to the laity.
- Monks perform funeral services for the laity, but marriage and birth ceremonies are uncommon in Buddhist countries.
- Popular festivals are celebrated by the laity. One example is Vesak, which commemorates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death. It is usually held in April or May to mark the beginning of the rainy season.
- Both monks/nuns and laypeople undertake pilgrimages to Buddhist sacred sites, which are usually associated with aspects of the Buddha's life or with the presence of renowned monks.
- Meditational practices are performed by both monks/nuns and the laity.
- Buddhist deities are worshipped at festivals and shrines.
- The *pratimoksha* ritual is held fortnightly for monks. Monks in a particular area assemble and any infringements of the *Vinaya*, or monkish conduct, are to be confessed and appropriate penalties are laid down.

Significant people and ideas

- Buddhism has been pushed along by the order of monks, nuns and the laity, yet certain prominent individuals have had a decisive influence on the development of the religion.
- The Buddha (566/563–486/483 BCE) remains the spiritual model to be followed. Even in his time certain monks disagreed with his ideas, but the differences were usually smoothed over.
- Ashoka (c. 304 – c. 232 BCE), king of Magadha, extensively supported the Buddhist Order, tried to stop dissident disputes, built monasteries and stupas, and encouraged the spread of Buddhism throughout India and elsewhere. Buddhism as an institutional religion expanded dramatically after his reign.
- Nagarjuna (c. 150 – c. 250 CE) was a philosopher of very great importance who criticised earlier interpretations of the Buddha's thought, arguing that other Buddhist schools were developing the idea that in some way permanency existed in the world, whereas the Buddha had argued no such thing was possible. With his emphasis on the 'emptiness' of all phenomenal things, Nagarjuna influenced many Buddhist thinkers in India, China and Japan, and is perhaps the ultimate inspiration for the development of Zen.
- Kumarajiva (343–413 CE) was a very important figure in translating Buddhist literature into Chinese. His efforts were of great significance in spreading Buddhist ideas throughout China.
- Bodhidharma (prominent 480–520 CE) was a legendary Indian monk who introduced Ch'an Buddhism into China and became a very important figure in Chinese folk religion.
- The Dalai Lama (b. 1935) is the spiritual head of Tibetan Buddhists. He has lived in North India since 1960, but has travelled extensively in the West, introducing the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism to the West and acting as a political leader for Tibetans in exile.
- Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926) is a charismatic Vietnamese monk who became a significant peace campaigner and had a huge impact on the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s. He has also been heavily involved in establishing and growing the movement called Engaged Buddhism.

Religious tradition

CHRISTIANITY

Origins and variants

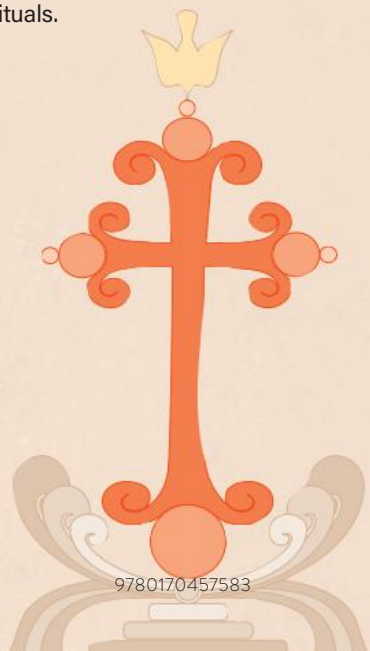
- Christianity emerged around 6 BCE from within a Jewish context, through the life and ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth (c. 6 BCE – 30 CE). Jesus was a religious Jew who attended the synagogue, and celebrated Jewish festivals.
- After his death, Jesus' message was spread and adapted by Paul and the other men and women who were his disciples. Christianity became a separate identity when it was accepted that to follow Jesus one did not have to be a Jew. By 150 CE there were Christian communities in most major provinces of the Roman Empire.
- The 'Great Schism' of 1054 divided the West (Catholic) and the East (Orthodox), and the Reformation in the sixteenth century led to the emergence of Protestantism and Anglicanism.
- The Catholic communion includes eight distinct rites including the Roman and Maronite rites and acknowledges the Pope as head.
- The Eastern Orthodox Churches include the four ancient Patriarchates of Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch and Jerusalem. Patriarchates of more recent origin include Russia, Serbia and many others. The Oriental Orthodox family is comprised of the Ethiopian, Coptic, Armenian, Syrian, Indian and Eritrean churches.
- The historical Protestant churches include the Baptist, Lutheran and 'Reformed' churches; for example, Presbyterian. Modern Protestant churches include Pentecostal and Seventh-day Adventist. Anglican churches usually describe themselves as somewhere on the spectrum between Anglo-Catholic and evangelical or Protestant.
- Christianity is the largest of the world's major religions, with about 2.3 billion followers, roughly one-third of the world's population.

Principal beliefs

- Christians believe in one God, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that God sent his Son to earth to save humanity from the consequences of its sins.
- Christians believe that Jesus was fully human and that through their belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and in his death and resurrection, they can have a right relationship with God, whose forgiveness was made once and for all through the death of Jesus Christ.
- Christians believe in the Trinity – that is, God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and that God, through the work of the Holy Spirit, is present today and evident in the works of believers.
- Christians believe that the Church or communion of believers is necessary for salvation and is the body of Christ, and believe in life after death.
- Christians believe that by repeating the actions of Jesus at the Last Supper – by eating bread and drinking wine – Jesus becomes especially present in some way.
- Christians believe that sacraments were established by Jesus himself. Generally, they retain at least the two sacraments clearly mentioned in the Christian Scriptures – baptism and Eucharist. The Catholic and Orthodox churches recognise seven sacraments.
- Some Christian churches also hold strong beliefs in saints, and in Mary as the Mother of God.
- Protestantism emphasises the authority of the Bible and the traditions of the early Church, and salvation by faith alone.

Sacred texts and writings

- The Christian Bible consists of the Jewish Scriptures, including the Torah or Pentateuch, and the Christian Scriptures (New Testament). Often the Jewish Scriptures are referred to as the 'Old Testament.'
- By about 400 CE, the Christian Church had decided on an official list or canon of Scripture containing the following books: the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Acts of the Apostles; Paul's Letters; other Letters; and Apocalypse or Revelation.
- The word 'gospel' means 'good news.' It was a term used by the early Christians to describe what Jesus was preaching.
- The Jewish Scriptures were written in Hebrew with a few sections in Aramaic. The Christian Scriptures were written in Greek and then translated into Latin for the Western Church. This translation was called the Vulgate and it became the official Bible in the West. The Reformation saw the Bible translated into English, and Martin Luther completed a German translation in 1534.
- There are differences between the canons of Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant churches.
- The Bible offers Christians support and guidance, including guidelines for moral behaviour. It is used for reading, reflection, prayer, liturgy, and family or domestic rituals.



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Ethical teachings

- Jesus' ethical teaching fits into the tradition of prophetic and early rabbinical teaching, especially his emphasis on justice and mercy over ritualistic ethics of purity and cult offerings. His teaching is especially linked to love of God and love of neighbour (Mk 12:30–31).
- The core Christian ethical teachings are the Ten Commandments or Decalogue, the Beatitudes, and Jesus' 'commandment of love.'
- Christian ethical teachings raise questions for believers: What is a good life? How do I distinguish between good and evil, and right and wrong? How does Jesus challenge me to think and act today?
- Historically, there have been quite different approaches to ethics by Catholics and Protestants. For Catholics, there was the eternal law, which could be known by human reason (natural law) and by God's revelation through the Scriptures and tradition (Church teaching). Because the Protestant reformers generally based their ethics on the Bible, there was never the same certainty in Protestant ethics as there had been in Catholic ethics.
- Christians today tend to exercise their conscience when making their decisions in ethical issues. Such conscience should be informed, but it cannot be coerced.

Significant practices

- Christian worship involves praising God in music and speech, readings from Scripture, prayers of various sorts, and various holy ceremonies. Christian liturgy or worship is a key reference point for prayer, reflecting the life, death and resurrection of Christ for believers.
- Christian worship grew out of Jewish worship and the first obvious divergence was making Sunday the holy day instead of Saturday, with both based on the spirituality of the Jewish Sabbath. By doing this, the day of Christian worship is the same as the day Jesus rose from the dead.
- Church services on a Sunday (or Saturday for some) divide into two general types: Eucharistic services, focused on the act of Holy Communion; and services of the Word. Both types of service include hymns, readings and prayers.
- Reformed churches stress the preaching of the Word in their practices, while Orthodox and Roman Catholic churches stress symbolic actions and rites. Icons are particularly important in Orthodox and Eastern liturgical practices.
- Prayer was central to the life of Jesus, and many Christian prayer forms have their earliest roots in Judaism.
- Forms of Christian personal devotion include vocal, mental and contemplative prayer, as well as practices such as praying grace at mealtimes. Meditation is used as an exercise where sacred words and phrases are repeated, accompanied by vocal and bodily rhythm.
- The rites of baptism, marriage and the other sacraments are also significant practices in the tradition and find their inspiration in Jesus' preaching and in the sacred rituals of the early church.

Significant people and ideas

- After Jesus and Paul of Tarsus (d. c. 65 CE), significant early Christian figures were Clement of Alexandria (d. c. 215 CE), Origen (d. c. 254 CE) and Ambrose (d. 397 CE).
- Augustine (d. 430 CE) and Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274) were also major interpreters of the Christian tradition.
- The Reformation of the sixteenth century saw a significant reinterpretation of Christianity under Martin Luther, John Knox, Huldrych Zwingli, John Calvin and others.
- Some figures have been called 'revitalisers.' They include Thomas Merton (d. 1968) and Bede Griffiths (d. 1993), who have connected Eastern and Western Christianity, and Dennis Bennett (d. 1991), who was an early leader of what became known as the Charismatic Movement.
- Many of the great challengers in Christianity have been women, such as Hildegard of Bingen (d. 1179), Catherine of Siena (d. 1380), Catherine Booth (d. 1890), Dorothy Day (d. 1980) and Sarah Maitland (b. 1950).
- Hildegard of Bingen and Catherine of Siena come from the monastic tradition and are known as mystics. Catherine Booth, who with her husband founded the Salvation Army, was well known as a preacher at a time when a woman's role was seen as a 'silent' one. Sarah Maitland is an Anglo-Catholic feminist from Britain.
- Pope John XXIII (d. 1963) 'opened the windows' to the Spirit in the Roman Catholic Church and moved the Church towards ecumenism.
- Schools of thought or movements within Christianity, such as feminist and liberation theologies, mysticism and Pentecostalism, continue to challenge Christianity in areas such as liturgy, ethics, images of God, scripture, justice, and Western and Eastern and Indigenous spiritualities.

Religious tradition
HINDUISM

Origins and variants

- Hinduism has no identifiable beginning. If, however, Hinduism is regarded as the collection of cults associated with the worship of the great gods such as Shiva and Vishnu, it probably began about the second century BCE.
- Evidence shows religious life in India began in the Harappan civilisation dating from 3000 BCE. It involved rituals and beliefs associated with fertility.
- There is textual evidence from north-western India, dating from about 1200 BCE, of a full body of mythology involving a family of gods and demonic figures. Animal sacrifices comprised the principal religious practice.
- By about 600 BCE, a new stream of religious beliefs – associated primarily with the cultural elite – focused on discovering the true nature of reality within the person, who is regarded as potentially undergoing a large number of rebirths in an unsatisfactory state of existence.
- From the same time, worship of personal gods and demigods developed and gave rise to large-scale cults centred on gods and holy men.
- By about the second century BCE, a Hinduism emerged that combined ritual activity, devotion to gods and worship of the god as identical with the innermost self.
- Most subsequent variants involved different manifestations of these three basic forms or mixtures thereof. Large-scale theologies of Vishnu, Shiva and the goddess developed and individuals/groups worshipped them in a host of different ways. Ganesha became a popular god from about the tenth century CE.

Principal teachings

- *Bhakti*, or loving devotion to the godhead, defines the basic framework of belief for a Hindu.
- The object of devotion is regarded as the supreme being in the universe. They are responsible for the creation, preservation and destruction of the world. The god/goddess is born on earth when evil forces need to be removed. Equally the god/goddess can be approached at a personal level and will extend their favour (*prasada*) to the devotee if ritually approached with the correct amount of devotion.
- A philosophy of the person underlies all Hindu belief. A person consists of a physical body, a mind and a Self – *atman* – that exists beyond these. While the first two disappear at death, the *atman* can potentially be reborn from life to life.
- Rebirth is caused by *karma* – actions caused in a given life that will have repercussions in a later life. Many Hindus believe that rebirth in the world or one of the hells is ultimately unsatisfactory and measures must be taken to escape from it.
- People will be reborn according to the ethical status of their actions. Rebirth can occur in a heaven, a hell or, if final liberation is achieved, in a place beyond space and time.
- The correct order of the world is governed by *dharma*, the belief that there is a right order that can be upset if correct social and ritual actions are not followed.

Sacred texts and writings

- Hinduism divides its huge volume of sacred texts into two fundamental categories: *shruti*, or 'texts heard by the sages', and *smrti*, or 'texts remembered by the sages'. The first encompasses the *Vedas*; the second, everything else.
- The *Vedas* are the oldest texts, dating from 1200 BCE until about 600 BCE. They deal mainly with the sacrifice, mythology and the beginnings of philosophy.
- *Smrti* involves a much larger body of texts and includes the two great Sanskrit epics, the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana*, which have become very popular because they were quickly translated into vernacular languages spoken by the bulk of the population. *Smrti* also includes the *Puranas*, comprising a huge body of mythology, and a set of legalistic texts called *Dharmasutras*.
- There is also a huge body of other religious literature in vernacular languages. Sanskrit ceased to be a spoken language before the beginning of the Common Era and so Sanskrit literature continued to be transmitted only by a body of learned *brahmin* scholars. Vernacular literature includes religious epics, collections of hymns and translations of Sanskrit texts.
- In addition to all of these (now) written texts, there has always been a strongly thriving oral tradition of recitation in India, comprising folk tales and oral versions of some of the texts mentioned.

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Ethical teachings

- The ethical teachings of Hinduism are based on the assumption that the group determines normative behaviour and that the individual has little choice in applying any interpretation over this.
- *Dharma*, or 'the right order of the universe', as reflected in correct roles associated with the four social classes, determines normative behaviour. If people act in accord with dharmic precepts, stability will be preserved in society and in the larger context governing the interrelation of gods and humans.
- Love and altruism do not play an important role in Hindu ethics. Individual adherence to class roles will produce a good rebirth in a later life and will contribute to the maintenance of the status quo.
- Ritual purity and impurity are very important in Hindu ethics, as the caste system reflects a mode of differentiation based on high castes remaining relatively more pure than low castes. The need to retain purity is based substantially on rules pertaining to the need to avoid particular polluting substances.
- Ethical rules are contained in Sanskrit texts called *Dharmasutras*. These are open to some degree of interpretation, which is reflected in commentaries composed on them. Interpersonal behaviour for lower castes is based partially on these rules and particularly on traditional local customs.
- Hindu religious practice is essentially associated with expressions of devotion towards a deity or another sacred figure, such as a holy man or woman.

Significant practices

- A common form of ritual (*puja*) involves the placing of vegetable offerings into a fire or simply having a priest offer them to the god. This involves not just the physical offering but the formalised utterance of prayers and acts of obeisance, such as kneeling before the god.
- Acts of devotion performed in temples are very common. These can involve ritually walking round the temple in a clockwise direction, gazing at the central image of the god in a fixated manner, uttering prayers before the god, and listening to religious stories and disquisitions.
- Public festivals associated with the worship of a particular god or goddess are also very common and combine the performance of large *pujas* with hymn singing and performances of mythological dramas.
- Pilgrimage to sacred sites is also very important for Hindus of all classes and involves travelling along a set trail of sacred sites and performing *pujas* at these sites.

Significant people and ideas

- Particular individuals have had a strong influence on the development of Hinduism, but because of the importance of group identity in Hindu society, it is the interests of social groups that have had more impact on its development.
- Knowledge of the lives of prominent individuals has always been very sketchy. Although there is a body of literature produced by such people, the details of their lives were always considered unimportant.
- Shankara (c. 700 – c. 750 CE) was a South Indian who developed a distinctive school of Vedanta philosophy and set up four important monastic orders and 10 orders of monks, all of which survive today. He was very influential in teaching a strictly monistic religious philosophy.
- Ramanuja (1017–1137) expounded a theistic form of Vedanta that united North and South Indian forms of devotion. He placed great emphasis in his teachings on the importance of divine grace.
- Mira Bai (c. 1500 – c. 1550) was a female mystic and poet, notable for her devotion to Krishna and her contribution to the *bhakti* movement.
- Tulsidas (1532–1623) composed a Hindi version of the *Ramayana* entitled *The Holy Lake of the Deeds of Rama*. This cut across various intellectual levels and made the *Ramayana* very popular in North India.
- Ramakrishna (1834/1836–1886) was an important Bengali Tantric mystic. He was a devotee of the goddess Durga, and manifested many ecstatic states in public. He wrote no books, but his teachings were popularised by his disciple Vivekananda (1863–1902). He contributed to the development of a resurgent Hinduism in the second half of the nineteenth century.
- Vedanta is a school of philosophy that seeks to understand the real nature of reality. It emphasises the *Upanishads*.
- The *bhakti* movement emphasises devotion to a particular deity and is one of the most popular expressions of Hinduism in India.

Religious tradition
ISLAM

Origins and variants

- Islam emerged in the seventh century CE within the tribal society of the Arabian Peninsula. Its name is inseparable from that of Muhammad (570–632 CE), the Messenger of God.
- In the month of Ramadan (now the ninth month of the Islamic calendar) in 610 CE, Muhammad received the first of many revelations from God. These revelations continued for 23 years and when collected and arranged became the Qur'an, Islam's sacred scripture.
- Muhammad's preaching of God's message was not well received in his home city of Mecca, and he and a small number of followers quietly emigrated to Medina in 622 CE. This *hijra* (migration) marked a turning point, and it was in Medina that an Islamic community (*umma*) was formed and its members were called Muslims. After defeating the Meccan armies, Muhammad returned to Mecca in 630 CE, and died there in 632 CE.
- Muhammad was succeeded by the four 'rightly guided' caliphs (632–661 CE), but the community suffered a series of crises about authority and leadership that led to a number of schisms.
- Sunni and Shi'i, the two major branches of Islam, arose at this time. Today Sunni comprise 87 per cent of Muslims and Shi'i around 13 per cent. There are four main law schools of Sunni – Hanafis, Shafi's, Hanbalis and Malikis. For Shi'i, the role of the *imam* is more powerful than that of the Sunni *khalifa*.

Principal beliefs

- In Islam, it is impossible to separate beliefs from practice – faith and the right action or practice are intertwined.
- The foundation of Islamic belief is the revelation from Allah in the Qur'an. The beliefs of Islam are found in the seven articles of its creed – *'Aqida ul-Islam* – as revealed by Allah. The first of these is *tawhid*, the belief in and declaration of the oneness and unity of God. The others are belief in angels; belief in the holy books; belief in the Prophets; belief in the Day of Judgement and the world to come; and belief in the will of God. These articles are often condensed into three aspects:
  - *Tawhid* – the oneness of Allah. Only Allah must be worshipped and no other being should be associated with Allah. The sin of idolatry (*shirk*) is the worst of all sins.
  - *Rusuluhu* – the belief in prophethood. The Qur'an names 25 prophets, among them Ibrahim (Abraham), Musa (Moses), Dawud (David) and Isa (Jesus). Muhammad is the final prophet.
  - *al-Akhira* – the world to come. Muslims believe in an afterlife and that when they die their lives on earth will be assessed. While they believe that nothing can happen without the will and the knowledge and the power of God, that does not stop human beings making free choices.
- Muslim belief is put into practice through *Arkan al-Islam* – the five pillars of faith.

Sacred texts and writings

- Islam has two universal texts that are considered sacred – the Qur'an and *hadith*.
- The Qur'an is the direct word of God and contains all the essential teachings of the unity and power of God, the stories of the prophets, and the consequences of good and evil for the life hereafter.
- Muslims do not speak of Muhammad writing the Qur'an, but of his receiving it and reciting it. This recitation was copied down by scribes. It was during the time of the third 'rightly guided' caliph that the authorised version was established.
- The Qur'an consists of 114 *sura* (chapters) subdivided into 6000 verses.
- For Muslims, Arabic – the language of the Qur'an – is the language of God and so all Muslims memorise and recite the Qur'an in Arabic.
- Any translation of the Qur'an is regarded as giving only an approximate interpretation of the original.
- Second to the Qur'an in authority is *hadith*, which record the *sunna* of the Prophet. These are the traditions and practices of Muhammad that have become models to be followed by Muslims.
- Most Muslims accept six collections of *hadith* as being the most trustworthy. These were collected within the first three centuries of Islam.

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Ethical teachings

- The ethical teachings of Islam reflect the beliefs and teachings of Islam.
- Islam places a very strong emphasis on the importance of right action.
- Laws that govern actions fall into two categories – the behaviour of Muslims towards God and the ways in which human beings treat one another. For Muslims, there is no distinction between the sacred and the secular.
- Islamic jurisprudence has four sources: the Qur'an, the *sunna* of the Prophet, *ijma'* (the consensus of the scholars of a particular generation), and legal precedent or *qiyas*.
- The most important of the laws that govern Muslims' behaviour towards God are described in the five pillars of faith.
- Moral guidelines for Muslims place great emphasis on the *umma*, or community. In this context, Muslims are called upon to do what is natural, promote unity and harmony, support the community of Muslims and obey *Shari'a* (Law). Justice, compassion, generosity and love of neighbour are also stressed.
- The interpretation of *Shari'a* is not uniform among Muslims. Shi'i have traditionally opposed the principle of *ijma'* and the senior scholars of the *imams* make binding interpretations directly from the Qur'an. For Sunni, rulings based on the consensus of Muslim scholars and *qiyas* are binding.

Significant practices

- Muslim ritual, ceremony, prayer and belief are centred on the five pillars of faith: declaration of faith (*Shahada*); ritual prayer (*Salat*); obligatory religious almsgiving (*Zakat*); fasting (*Sawm*); and pilgrimage (*Hajj*).
- These rituals are the practical expressions of the Muslim's devotion to God and are extended to all sectors of human activity.
- The daily ritual prayer is the distinctive mark of believers and provides them with opportunities for direct communion with God five times a day, and so helps them to avoid too much attachment to non-essential things.
- *Salat* is highly formalised and regulated in its cycles of spoken formulas and body postures and is recited from memory in Arabic. Each *salat* must be offered at its proper time and while facing in the direction of Mecca.
- The place of worship for Muslims is the mosque (*al-Masjid*), but the obligatory daily prayers can be said anywhere. Congregational prayer (*Salat al-jama'at*) at the mosque on Friday at noon is highly recommended.
- *Salat al-janaza*, the funeral ceremony, and *Hajj* are considered highly significant and collective duties.
- Major Islamic festivals include *'Id al-Fitr* at the end of Ramadan, *'Id al-Adha* in the month of pilgrimage, and those that celebrate significant events in Muhammad's life. The most significant day on the Shi'i calendar is *'Ashura*, the commemoration of the martyrdom of al-Husayn, the son of the fourth caliph, 'Ali.

Significant people and ideas

- From the earliest years of Islam, there have been individuals and groups who have had great influence on the practice of Islam. Sometimes they have been a focus for consolidation, sometimes they have challenged, and sometimes they have caused disputes.
- Two women were among the earliest people of significance: Khadija bint Khuwaylid (554–619 CE), the first wife of the Prophet Muhammad and revered as the first Muslim after him; and 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr (c. 614 – c. 678 CE), the third and favourite wife of the Prophet. 'A'isha fought unsuccessfully against 'Ali, the fourth 'rightly guided' caliph.
- Imam al-Shafi is widely recognised as 'the Father of Islamic Jurisprudence.' He and Imams Malik, Abu Hanifa and Ahmad b. Hanbal are the main figures whose interpretation of *hadith* and the Qur'an are followed by the majority of Sunni Muslims.
- Sufism, or *tasawwuf*, the inner, mystical dimension of Islam, and Sufis such as Rabi'a al-'Adawiyya (d. 801 CE) and Abn Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111), have been influential. Al-Ghazali, one of Islam's greatest scholars, was a reconciler and was recognised as one of the *mujaddid* – 'Renewers of Islam.'
- Nana Asma'u (d. 1864), is a poet and teacher from nineteenth-century West Africa whose writings have been 'rediscovered' since being translated into English.
- Two influential figures in the 'reawakening' of Islam in the twentieth century are Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) and Sayyid Maududi (1903–1979). Qutb was a major thinker of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Maududi was the founder of Jama'at-I Islam, the revivalist movement that had a particular impact in Pakistan.
- The contemporary Turkish Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen (b. 1941) teaches that the Muslim community has a duty of service (Turkish: *hizmet*) to Muslims and non-Muslims all over the world; and that the Muslim community is obliged to conduct dialogue with people of all religions, but also with agnostics and atheists.

Religious tradition
JUDAISM

Origins and variants

- Judaism as a historical religion has its origins in the clan of Abraham and Sarah, which wandered from ancient Mesopotamia, on to Egypt, and eventually settled in southern Canaan. God revealed to Abraham that Israel was God's Chosen People. God's call of Abraham and Israel was shown in the Exodus and in the giving of the Torah or Ten Commandments to Moses (Ex 24, 34).
- There are three major groups or variants within Judaism: Orthodox (including Modern Orthodox, Ultra Orthodox and Chasidic); Progressive (also known as Reform or Liberal); and Conservative. The two main variants in Australia are (Modern) Orthodox and Progressive.
- In traditional terms, a person is considered a Jew if their mother is a Jew.
- There are two cultural variants of Judaism. Ashkenazi Jews derive from the Jewish communities of Germany and came to be the dominant Jewish form in Eastern Europe. Ashkenazi Jewry developed the distinctive language of Yiddish. The other is Sephardi Judaism, a cultural form derived from the Jews of Spain. While Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews worship the same God and hold sacred the same sacred texts, they differ in the style of their synagogue service, the form of the Hebrew script used in Torah scrolls and their prayer books.

Principal beliefs

- Rabbinic Judaism is the religion of the Jewish people in the period following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE. This is distinct from the Jewish religion of biblical times, which focused on Temple worship.
- The basic beliefs of modern Judaism emerged from and follow the council of Yavneh (70–132 CE).
- The development of Rabbinic Judaism was influenced by the outlook of the Pharisees and shifted the focus of Jewish life from the Temple cult to the religion of the home and synagogue worship.
- Jewish belief also developed through oral teaching that found its way into written form, creating many layers of sacred writings.
- The central concepts of Jewish belief are covenant and *berekah* (blessing), flowing from the great Exodus or liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.
- Today, as in the past, Jewish beliefs find expression through the authority of the rabbi as a teacher of *halachah* (legal tradition) and Torah, and through the religious practices of the faithful Jew who fulfils the *mitzvot* (commandments).
- See Moses Maimonides' Thirteen Articles of Faith in the 'Ethical teachings' column.

Sacred texts and writings

- The most important collection of sacred texts is the Torah or first five books of the Hebrew Bible. The first five books are also referred to as the Pentateuch or *Chumash*. There is also the Mishnah (a commentary on the Torah), which forms part of an even broader commentary, the Talmud.
- The general term Tenach is used to refer to the whole of the Hebrew Scriptures. It is an acronym for *Torah* (Law), *Neviim* (Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings).
- The Talmud is the most authoritative work of the Oral Torah. It contains the Mishnah and the Gemara. The Mishnah was completed c. 200 CE and is the Oral Law in written form. The Gemara is an Aramaic commentary related to the Mishnah.
- Another part of Jewish sacred writings is *Midrash*, a collection of traditional Jewish interpretations of the books of the Bible, in the form of homilies or commentaries.
- Many other writings are held in great esteem by Jews; for example, the *Sefer ha-Zohar* of the *Kabbalists*. The many additional writings form a huge corpus of Jewish sacred texts and writings.

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Ethical teachings

- Significant ethical teachings include the Decalogue or Ten Commandments and the *Shema* (Hear, O Israel) from Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21; Numbers 15:37–41.
- The ethical principles of Judaism are lived out through the commandments of the Torah, the rule of life, and include *gemilut chasadim*, the obligation to do deeds of loving kindness.
- Almsgiving (in Hebrew, *tzedakah*) and *gemilut chasadim* (deeds of loving kindness) are considered to be equal to all the commandments of the Torah.
- Of particular importance is *halachah*, the Jewish legal tradition grounded in the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah, which seeks to guide Jews in right relationship with God and all people.
- The Torah prohibits graven images. It has been argued in modern Judaism that moral human beings are the only image of God that is appropriate. The religious ethic that emerges from such a view is that humans are the nearest things to the divine. As such, others should always be treated with respect and generosity, and one should always act with humility. In order to love one's neighbour, as the Torah teaches, one must know the other's pain.
- Moses Maimonides (d. 1204) penned the most famous summary of Jewish belief – the Thirteen Articles of Faith. This, combined with the Torah and *mitzvot*, contains important teachings on covenant, prayer, humanity, the afterlife, and the religious roles of individuals, families and the Jewish community.

Significant practices

- The Jewish call to holiness is based on the precepts of the Torah, and in particular the keeping of the *mitzvot*, the 613 commandments contained within the Torah.
- Key features of Jewish spirituality also include the *Shabbat* (Sabbath) meal, *Shabbat* synagogue services, and the recitation of daily prayers.
- Judaism includes the *Kabbalah* or mystical tradition.
- Jewish perspectives have been changed irreversibly by the event of the *Shoah* or Holocaust.
- The woman of the household performs the home ritual of the lighting of the candle and blessing of the meal to usher in *Shabbat*. In the Orthodox tradition, the woman is responsible for the maintenance of the home and is obedient to her husband. Women do play a public role in synagogue service in the Progressive and Conservative variants of the tradition; these variants have also ordained women as rabbis.
- The Jewish festivals of *Pesach* (Passover), *Shavuot* (The Giving of the Torah) and *Sukkot* (The Festival of Booths) are known as the three pilgrim festivals. This is because the Torah commands Jews to make a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem on each occasion. The Temple no longer stands, but the festivals remain as important aspects of the Jewish experience of the pilgrim's journey of faith.
- The call to *aliyah* (literally, 'going up') – physical pilgrimage to the State of Israel – is a powerful notion in modern Judaism, particularly nurtured within the Zionist movement. To make *aliyah* is to embroider more richly the tapestry of the Jewish life.

Significant people and ideas

- Apart from the Patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (c. 1800 BCE) and Moses (c. 1300 BCE) – important figures are King David, who founded the United Israelite Kingdom (c. 1000 BCE), and his son Solomon (c. 900 BCE).
- Other important figures are the Major and Minor Prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures; for example, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel.
- Moses Maimonides (d. 1204) wrote 13 articles of belief that are perhaps the most enduring interpretations of Judaism.
- Rashi is an acronym for **Ra**bbi **S**olomon (Hebrew: ***Sh****lomo*) ben **I**saac (d. 1105), the famous French Talmudic scholar. His key work was his commentary on the Talmud. Rashi's commentary is considered so important that it has been printed in all versions of the Talmud since the time the printing press was invented.
- The wisdom and the halachic judgements of Beruiah, wife of Rabbi Meir, appear in the Talmud and other later writings. Contrary to the norm of her day, she faced the dilemma of dealing with a demanding intellectual life and the demands of family and home.
- The revivalist movement known as Chasidic Judaism has its roots in eighteenth-century Eastern Europe, in the life of its founder, Israel Ben Eliezer, the Baal Shem Tov (c. 1700). Chasidic Jews today are tireless and strict in their devotion to the commandments of the Torah. It is for this reason that the *Chasidim* hold the favour of even quite assimilated Jews, who see them as the custodians of the tradition.
- *Kabbalah* was a major influence in the development of Chasidism, and still has followers among Chasidic Jews. The mysticism of the *Kabbalah* flourished in Eastern Europe in the shadow of Jewish persecution towards the end of the seventeenth century. Kabbalistic tradition makes much of letters and numbers – each has a mystical significance that only Kabbalistic teaching can unlock. *Kabbalah* also has a strong emphasis on messianism (belief in a Messiah).
- Feminism has expressed itself in very diverse ways within the Jewish tradition. There are four readily identifiable genres of Jewish feminism: secular Jewish feminism; orthodox Jewish feminism; essentialist Jewish feminism; and Jewish feminism of evolutionary equality.

HSC course

- 9 Religion and belief systems in Australia post-1945 170
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16 INDICATIVE HOURS

9

Religion and belief systems in Australia post-1945

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **discuss** how Aboriginal spirituality is determined by Dreaming
- **discuss** the continuing effect of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities
- **outline** the importance of the Land Rights movement and **analyse** the relationship between Dreaming and Land Rights
- **examine** the relationship between the spiritualities of Aboriginal peoples and religious traditions in the process of Reconciliation.
- **outline** changing patterns of religious adherence in Australia from 1945 to the present
- **account** for the present 'religious landscape' in Australia
- **describe** the impact of ecumenism on Australian Christianity
- **evaluate** the importance of interfaith dialogue in multifaith Australia.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Indigenous rights and Aboriginal spiritualities (p. 176)
- The process of reconciliation (p. 183)
- Ecumenical movements (p. 195)
- Religion and belief systems in Australia post-1945 terminology (p. 198)

Online activity

- Chapter 9 multiple-choice quiz (p. 198)

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National Council of Churches in Australia

The Gamillaroi Aboriginal dancing group from Sydney led a cleansing ceremony and call to worship at the inauguration of the National Council of Churches in Australia at St Christopher's Catholic Cathedral in Canberra, 3 July 1994.

Given Australia's religious history, who could ever have imagined that there could be, in 1994, an Aboriginal cleansing ceremony at the beginning of a worship service to inaugurate a meeting of almost all the denominations of the Christian churches in Australia?

The religious make-up of Australia's population in 1945 had hardly changed from that of 1901. With the exception of a small but significant Lutheran element, Australian society was predominantly Anglo-Celtic Christian, with about 0.5 per cent professing non-Christian religions. This was all to change with the impact of migration to Australia after the Second World War.

The end of the Second World War in 1945 brought huge changes throughout the world – including changes in how people saw their world. These changes are reflected in the relationship between various Christian denominations; in the relationship between the Christian tradition and those traditions other than Christianity; and in the relationship between the non-Indigenous community and First Nations people (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples) in Australia. This chapter will address some of these changes and their impact on Australia's religious landscape.

DID YOU KNOW?

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, Aboriginal, Indigenous, First Nations or First Australians – what is the appropriate term? There is not a unanimous view, but some of these terms are considered more appropriate than others.

Weblink
Aboriginal or Indigenous or ...?

EXTENSION

Maintain a list where you **summarise** the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

9.1 Contemporary Aboriginal spiritualities

Aboriginal spirituality: A sense of belonging

Cynthia Rowan, a descendant of the Birra Birra People, north-west of Rockhampton, speaking at the First National Conference on Aboriginality and Perceptions of Christianity, 1990:

> ... when I talk about Aboriginal Spirituality, I am talking about something which had its beginnings over 40 000 years ago ...
>
> So because of our diversity of cultures and diversity of experiences when, as Aboriginal People, we talk about Aboriginal Spirituality, we must be careful. It is we who must define and take responsibility for how our Spirituality is presented. For us to let others define our

Spirituality is to allow them to say, 'This is Aboriginal Spirituality,' and they would put it in a little box and say, 'Look, this is it here.' Does a concept of Aboriginal Spirituality from another culture adequately express and articulate to all Aboriginal clans in Australia that it is good for us to come together and talk about Aboriginal Spirituality: where we come from, how it has sustained us, and how the Spirituality of some of our brothers and sisters has been oppressed, how it has ripped them apart? Are we going to define it for ourselves, or are we going to define it for all our brothers and sisters who are not with us today? We need to look at Aboriginal Spirituality. We need to be talking about it, but we cannot put it down in writing. It cannot be studied like theology and sociology or cultures and societies, because we come from an oral tradition and we are all at different stages of understanding our own Spirituality.

In Anne Pattel-Gray (ed.), *Aboriginal Spirituality: Past, Present, Future*, 1996, pp. 13–16

RESPOND

In your own words, briefly **clarify** how Cynthia Rowan links a sense of belonging to Aboriginal Australian spiritual beliefs.

Aboriginal spirituality as determined by Dreaming

GLOSSARY

country (sometimes takes an initial capital, as **Country**) Term used by Aboriginal peoples to refer to the land to which they belong and their place of Dreaming. Aboriginal English usage of the word is much broader than in standard English.

Elders Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Aboriginal communities. They are chosen and accepted by their own communities as Elders in respect of:

- **a** **kinship** and as overseers of many Dreaming tracks; that is, they are 'Boss over **country**'
- **b** being leaders of large extended family networks
- **c** knowledge acquired and services given within the community.

estate The heartland of a local group and the centre of their attachment to territory.

kinship The system of relationships traditionally accepted by a particular culture and the rights and obligations they involve.

▷ Refer to Chapter 1, pages 9–12, for the nature of Dreaming.

As we saw in Chapter 1, Aboriginal spiritualities are not just a series of complex 'religious' practices, they are a way of life. The **kinship** systems of Aboriginal peoples, the obligations to both the land and the people that follow from their kinship and their expressions in ceremonial life are not separate from, or additional to, their spiritualities; they are the expression of Dreaming in a physical sense. Aboriginal ceremonies have two major purposes: they mark the relationship of Aboriginal peoples to the spirit world and the Ancestral Beings (including humans) who made the cosmos; and they also mark the stages in every Aboriginal person's life.

Kinship

Dreaming, as the basis of all aspects of life, is expressed tangibly in the complex and sophisticated network of relationships, rights and obligations within Aboriginal societies. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a complex system of family relations, where each person knows their kin and their land. These extended family relationships are the core of Indigenous kinship systems that are central to the way culture is passed on and society is organised.

> No matter if they are fish, birds, men, women, animals, wind or rain … All things in our country here have Law, they have ceremony and song, and they have people who are related to them.
>
> M. Harvey, 'The Dreaming', in J. Bradley, *Yanyuwa Country: The Yanyuwa People of Booroloola Tell of their Land*, 1988, p. xi

Kinship systems define where a person fits into the community, binding people together in relationships of sharing and obligation. Relationships are cultivated within an extended family in which each person has a defined position. It is not unusual for a person to have many mothers and fathers, aunties, uncles, sisters and brothers, nieces and nephews. And there are special words that define the nature of these relations. As part of an Aboriginal community, what becomes important is the role played within the community.

Ceremonial life

Traditional Aboriginal peoples have a rich ceremonial life. There are rites of passage, such as initiation and death and burial, and periodic ceremonies unconnected with the life cycle and performed at various intervals for a variety of reasons. These periodic ceremonies may range from a ceremony purely for enjoyment to ones promoting the overall health and wellbeing of the whole group.

Death and burial rituals

For Aboriginal peoples, death is not the end of life but the last ceremony in the present life. They believe the spirits of the dead return to the Dreaming places they had come from, which is part of the eternal transition of the life force of Dreaming.

Burial grounds and the spirits of the dead are held in great fear. Often the possessions of the dead are destroyed, their shelters are burnt, and the whole camp moves away. Even the names of the dead cannot be spoken, so as not to disturb the spirits' rest. This is why, in contemporary Australian media, the names of dead Aboriginal people are not stated unless permission to do so has been obtained from the deceased's relatives. The dead should be buried in their own **country** and their spirits properly sung to rest.

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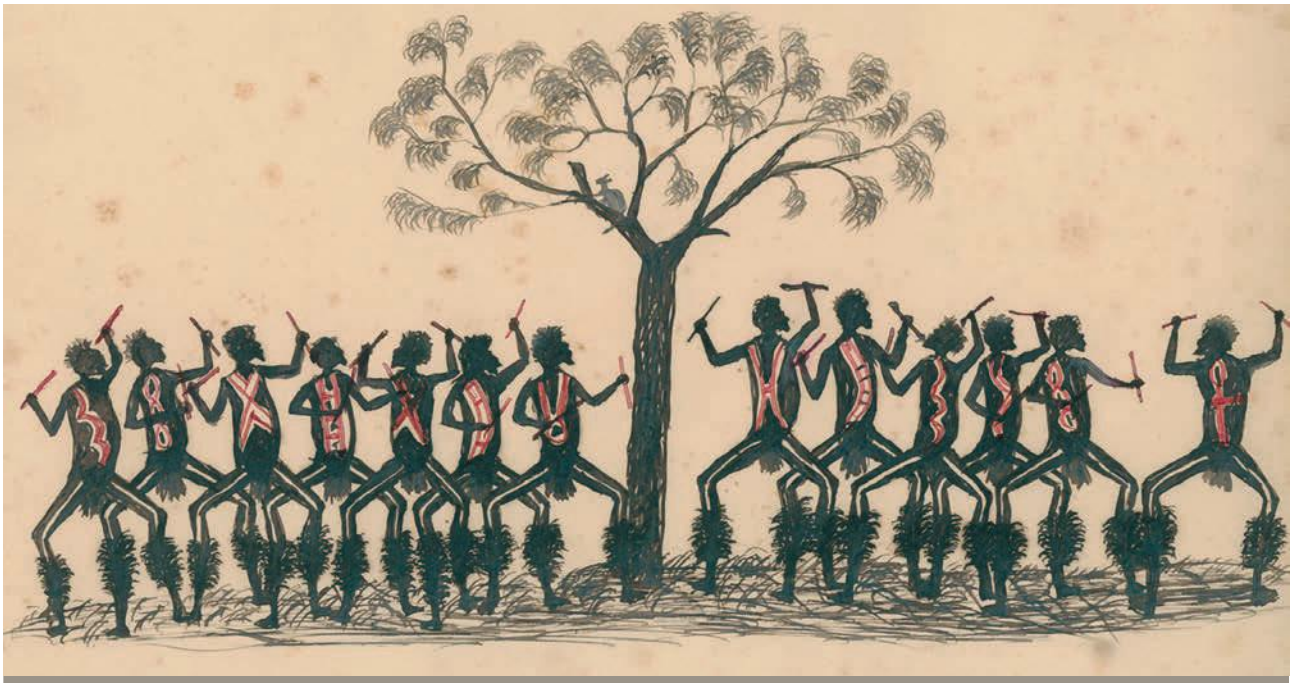

Mitchell Library, State Library of NSW

FIGURE 9.1.1 *Corroboree*, c. 1860s – 1901, pen and ink drawing by Tommy McRae (c. 1830s – 1901), an Aboriginal artist of the Upper Murray. The public corroboree or ceremonial dance is the ritual that was most familiar to early Europeans. These dances were mostly the concluding ceremony of secret/sacred rituals and were the opportunity for all members of the group to come together.

Funeral ceremonies lay the spirits of the dead to rest in their proper places and reaffirm the place of the living in the unity of nature.

> Traditions are very different all around Australia. What would be the norm for one community could be unknown to another … we fashion our rituals and ceremonies to suit our environments, which are vastly different from one clan to another … We have rituals for every season of our lives. These rituals rule our lives as they are connected to the Lore (our ancient teachings).
>
> S. Balcombe, 'Aboriginal Spirituality: A testimony from Australia', *Concilium*, 2019 (4), p. 16

AAP Photos/Aimee McArdle

FIGURE 9.1.2 In March 2019, two Narungga community representatives from South Australia travelled to the United Kingdom to participate in a handover smoking ceremony in London, which saw the repatriation of Aboriginal ancestral remains from the Natural History Museum. More than 1200 ancestral remains have been repatriated from the UK in recent years.

REVIEW

1. **Explain** in your own words the understanding of 'kinship' for Aboriginal Australians.
2. How does the Aboriginal Australian's understanding of kinship differ from that of Australians from other cultural backgrounds?
3. **Explain** how 'ceremonial life' gives meaning and purpose to the life as an Aboriginal person.
4. **Discuss** how death and burial rituals are connected to an understanding of Dreaming.

EXTENSION

Investigate the return of Aboriginal remains and **explain** why it is so important for Aboriginal peoples that these remains return 'home'.

Obligations to the land and people

For Aboriginal peoples, ownership of the land means that they have a responsibility to care for it and nurture it. The land and all the forms of life it contains are regarded as a sacred trust, to be preserved and passed on in a timeless cycle of mutual dependence. It is important, however, to distinguish between the economic use of the land and the ritual association with land. Land not only provides food and water, but is also the repository of the secret/sacred – the activities of Dreaming Beings.

A group will have land that they regularly search for food and water. These people will be familiar with the important ritual features of all that land, but they may not have responsibility for it all. The area of land for which they

do have responsibility is their ritual **estate**. It is this ritual estate that is 'my country' and contains the sites of spiritual significance or 'sacred sites'. Learning of the story of one's country is a lifelong process that brings with it ever greater rights and responsibilities.

It is the responsibility of the appropriate **Elders** to properly perform the relevant rites each year. And all this relates to the kinship systems within Aboriginal societies.

> When we talk about traditional 'country' we mean something beyond the dictionary definition of the word. For Aboriginal Australians … we might mean homeland or tribal or clan area and we might mean more than just a place on the map.
>
> We are talking about the whole of the landscape, not just the places on it. For us, country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the title-holders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians and caretakers of their land.
>
> Professor Mick Dodson AM, Australian of the Year address at the National Press Club, 17 February 2009. Professor Dodson was a co-commissioner of the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from Their Families. He retired as professor of law, ANU College of Law, in 2017 and in 2020 was Northern Territory Treaty Commissioner.

> People talk about country the same way that they would talk about a person: they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, is sorry.
>
> Dr Deborah Rose Bird (d. 2018), was a leader in ethnographic research. *Nourishing Terrains: Australian Aboriginal Views of Landscape and Wilderness*, 1996 Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, p. 7

REVIEW

1. Clarify what Aboriginal people mean by 'country'.
2. 'It ['country'] describes the entirety of our ancestral domains.' Explain what this statement says about Aboriginal societies and their relationship to the land.
3. 'Aboriginal spiritualities are determined by Dreaming.' Summarise the key points that support this statement.

Weblink
Importance of land

EXTENSION

1. Construct a mind map to explore the relationship of kinship, ceremonial life and obligations to the land and people to Dreaming.
2. Analyse the statement: 'Because the most obvious Aboriginal ceremonies early Europeans witnessed were 'public' rituals, they failed to appreciate the spiritual significance of these ceremonies.'

Issues for Aboriginal spiritualities

GLOSSARY

assimilation A nineteenth-century idea that peoples should be absorbed into the majority culture. In the context of this chapter, the peoples to be 'improved' in this way were Aboriginal peoples and the majority culture was 'civilised' Christian culture.

evangelise Literally means to 'teach the gospel'. Bringing people to Christianity – 'winning souls for Christ'. The terms 'missionary activity' and 'missionary work' are often used as synonyms.

mission An Aboriginal settlement that may or may not have been at one time a religious institution. A person is described as living 'in or off' a mission, rather than 'in or at'. The name derived from the original purpose of many Aboriginal settlements – as a mission of one of the various Christian denominations. When the government took over the management, the name often remained, or was applied to Aboriginal communities that had in fact never been missions but were rather government 'reserves'.

Dispossession

With the European settlement of Australia from 1788 there were competing interests for the land of the original inhabitants, and it was to be over a century before the 'new' inhabitants began to realise the effects of this dispossession.

National Library of Australia, (obj 135516869)

FIGURE 9.1.3 *Scenes of Aboriginal Life*, c. 1850, drawing in pencil and wash by Mickey of Ulladulla (d. 1891)

RESPOND

Carefully examine this picture and find three examples to demonstrate that there is European settlement in the district. What impact would this have had on the rituals and ceremonies of the Aboriginal peoples of the area?

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The policy of protection and relocation onto reserves

In the beginning, it was thought that all that could be done in the areas of first occupation (the colony of New South Wales) was to 'smooth the pillow of a dying race'. Fifty years after European settlement, 'protection' became the official policy – the 'race' was not dying, so it had to be protected, and **missions** and reserves or settlements were set up to 'protect' the Indigenous peoples. Protection, however, meant segregation and isolation from European communities and, while offering protection for Indigenous peoples, it also allowed the taking of large tracts of land for pastoral purposes. It also meant that Christian missionaries could **evangelise** and therefore 'civilise', and could protect the Indigenous peoples from the negative influences of European society.

By 1911 the reserve system was in place around Australia. State-run Aboriginal Protection Boards or Aborigines Welfare Boards controlled and supervised the lives of Indigenous Australians. These boards could decide where Indigenous people were allowed to live, where they could travel, who they could visit, who they might marry or have relationships with, and where and how their children could be raised. They determined which jobs they could have, and withheld their wages indefinitely. They governed what property Indigenous people could own and how they disposed of it.

By driving Aboriginal people off their land, the European settlers did more than deprive them of their 'country'. They deprived them of their independence, their culture and their spiritual world. Some missions on or near traditional lands had an active policy of destroying Aboriginal culture: ceremonies could not be held and kin from 'outside' could not visit. Other missions worked within traditional culture, adapting teachings and practices to suit local traditions. In most places, big ceremonial gatherings and movement of kin from one place to another were forbidden. In all states, in fact, the movement of Aboriginal people was controlled, in some cases very harshly.

> All the work was done by Aborigines. They were told: 'do not go around naked, do not be dirty, do not work on Sunday, and do not drink, smoke or be promiscuous.' Corroborees were usually forbidden. Children had to wear uniforms and work, play, learn and pray according to clockwork schedules.
>
> Richard Broome, quoted in Nigel Parbury, *Survival: A History of Aboriginal Life in New South Wales*, Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, 1986, p. 51

The relocation of Aboriginal people to land away from their traditional area resulted in the destruction of families and cultural ties, and sometimes led to animosity between the various traditional groups struggling to survive.

The missions

The missionary institutions have been very significant as places of both cultural repression and cultural survival. Within the missions, Aboriginal people were provided with some protection from some of the excesses and the violence of the European community. Often, however, the price of this type of safety was cultural oppression, especially of aspects of culture such as language and ceremony.

Some missions were agents of government policy and engaged in practices such as forcibly separating Aboriginal children from their families. This was done to maximise control over the child's education into Christian ways and beliefs. In this way, missions contributed to the suppression of Aboriginal cultural practices and languages.

Missions often also provided places where large numbers of Indigenous peoples were forced to congregate, thus unintentionally preserving some forms of cultural and community identity against the **assimilation** intentions of the majority society.

Some missionaries were frequently outspoken in their defence of Indigenous peoples, not only to save the lives of the people, but also to argue for the recognition of Aboriginal people as being fully human in their intellectual ability. Most missionaries, however, were at least seeking vigorously to change the ways that Indigenous peoples expressed their spiritual relationship through the land in story and ceremony.

While large groups of Aboriginal people living in settlements and missions were similar in size to those that traditionally formed for ceremonial occasions, there were two important differences:

1. The groupings were permanent and their composition had been imposed as a result of non-Aboriginal considerations.
2. Groups were no longer able to move around geographically, and restriction of ceremonies meant that Aboriginal people were much more isolated from one another than they had ever been before.

All this dislocation undermined the basis of Aboriginal culture. Without enough people to remain self-sufficient or to sustain complex cultural practices, Aboriginal identity and self-esteem was difficult to maintain. Customary law and authority and a close relationship with the land were also undermined – land was lost to the more powerful European settlers.

National Library of Australia, (obj 140339887)

FIGURE 9.1.4 Aboriginal people with a minister at a funeral, c. 1900. This photograph, taken in the Tilba Tilba region of the far south coast of New South Wales, is a good example of how Christian ceremonies replaced traditional Aboriginal ones.

RESPOND

Identify three aspects of this photograph that demonstrate dispossession.

Assimilation policies

The policy of protection was followed in the late 1930s by assimilation policies, which would stay in place until the 1960s. In 1937 the Commonwealth Government convened a conference with the states, at which it was officially agreed that the aim for those Aboriginal people not of 'full blood' should be their ultimate absorption into the wider population. This policy, referred to as 'assimilation', was designed to solve the 'Aboriginal problem' by ensuring that Aboriginal people would lose their identity and culture within the wider community.

Under the government's protection and assimilation policies, Aboriginal Protection Boards throughout Australia oversaw the removal of thousands of Aboriginal children from their families. Often, these children would be sent to 'training homes', where they were trained as domestic servants or farm labourers, or fostered out to non-Aboriginal families away from their community of origin. These children are today known as 'the Stolen Generations'.

From the late 1950s, families were increasingly encouraged, sometimes with force, to leave the reserves and try to 'make it' in the European community. Those who left the reserves were not permitted to visit family members who remained behind.

Assimilation policies changed the way many missions and reserves operated. Their focus shifted and, rather than acting as protectorates for Aboriginal peoples, they became institutions that facilitated the assimilation of mixed-race children into European society.

The government's policy of assimilation was not officially abandoned until 1972 when, as a direct result of growing Aboriginal activism, it was officially replaced with a policy of self-determination – defined as 'Aboriginal communities deciding the pace and nature of their own future within a diverse Australia'.

REVIEW

1. Construct a timeline that identifies the different policies for 'managing' Australia's Indigenous population up until 1972.
2. Distinguish between 'protection' and 'assimilation'.
3. How did the separation from 'country' affect the kinship systems and ceremonial life of Aboriginal peoples?

EXTENSION

1. Using the Internet and/or other resources, including speaking to Elders at your local Aboriginal Education Consultative Group (AECG), investigate the Aboriginal history of your region after European settlement. Were any missions, reserves or settlements established?
2. Research the history of an Aboriginal mission, reserve or settlement. (Helpful weblinks are provided.)
   - a When was it established and why?
   - b Who was in charge of the mission (church, government and so on)?
   - c Was the mission, reserve or settlement only for local Aboriginal peoples? If not, where did the people who lived there come from?
   - d When did it cease operating as a mission, reserve or settlement?

Weblinks
Kinchela Boys Home

Mission life

Pioneers of love

In sad but loving memory

The Stolen Generations

The forced separation or 'taking away' of children of Aboriginal mothers and European fathers from their families occurred in every part of Australia from the late 1800s. Children were taken from Aboriginal parents so they could be brought up 'white' and taught to reject their Aboriginality. From the 1950s to the 1970s, this was government policy. During this time, as many as 100 000 children were separated from their families. These children have become known as 'the Stolen Generations'.

Worksheet
Indigenous rights and Aboriginal spiritualities

The separation took three forms:

- putting Indigenous children into government or church-run institutions
- adopting children into 'white' families
- fostering children into 'white' families.

The last two strategies were applied in particular to children of mixed heritage.

By separating Indigenous children from their families and their traditional background, it was hoped that they would adopt European culture and behaviour – in other

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words, assimilate. Although never explicitly stated, the ultimate goal was to absorb 'half-castes' into the European community with the hope that 'full-blooded' Aboriginal people would 'die out' as quickly as possible.

The children who were taken away lost their identity, culture, language and spirituality, and their self-esteem. Today many Aboriginal people still do not know who their relatives are or have been unable to track them down.

Aboriginal individuals and rights organisations had been active since at least the mid- to late 1980s in advocating for a national inquiry into removal policies and practices, and in 1995 the Full Court of the Family Court of Australia stated that:

> It is now beyond controversy that there is devastating long term effect on thousands of Aboriginal children arising from their removal from their Aboriginal families and their subsequent upbringing within a white environment.

The National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families, launched in August 1995, received submissions from many of the churches and church groups that had been actively involved in missionary activity among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, as well as those who had been under their care. Mostly the churches accepted that they share some responsibility for forcible removals because of their involvement in providing accommodation, education and work placements for children in their care.

> With the wisdom of hindsight we can only wonder how as a nation, and as a Church, we failed to see the violence of what we were doing. Hopefully, today we are more vigilant regarding the values we espouse.
>
> Catholic Church of the Diocese of Darwin, submission 456, p. 2

> It must be acknowledged that, no matter how well intentioned the motives of the Church were in its involvement in separating children from their families, its complicity has contributed to the dislocation of the people concerned, and therefore their loss of land, language, and identity.
>
> It is evident that the present high rate of continuing social dislocation and Aboriginal imprisonment is the direct result of the separation of children from their families in which the Church was complicit.
>
> Anglican Church of Australia, Diocese of Perth, submission 410, p. 2

One unforeseen outcome of the national inquiry was raised by the Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission:

> Perhaps the saddest legacy of this [mission] experience is that in many outback communities today, there is deep division between those who wish to defend the Church to which they belong and those who wish to blame it for all the suffering they have experienced.
>
> Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, submission 6.3

The legacy of separation goes beyond breaking up families, and extends to the breaking up of communities and a spirit of solidarity as well.

Another comment that must be made about the impact of missionary activity is that many missionaries gained from the contact. In place of paternalistic condescension, there grew an appreciation of the deeply spiritual foundations of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural traditions.

> There has been a gradual recognition that Indigenous people could make a positive contribution to Australian national identity and values, rather than simply assimilate into the ready-made, religiously packaged culture of materialism that seems to prevail in Australia.
>
> Australian Catholic Social Welfare Commission, submission 6.2

'We apologise …', 2008

The report from the National Inquiry into the Separation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children from their Families was called *Bringing them Home*. Among the report's numerous recommendations was one for an official apology by the Australian Government to the Stolen Generations. Eleven years and two months later, on 13 February 2008, the nation stopped to hear the newly elected Labor Prime Minister Kevin Rudd deliver that apology:

> We apologise for the laws and policies of successive parliaments and governments that have inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these our fellow Australians.
>
> We apologise especially for the removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, their communities and their country.
>
> For the pain, suffering and hurt of these Stolen Generations, their descendants and for their families left behind, we say sorry.
>
> To the mothers and the fathers, the brothers and the sisters, for the breaking up of families and communities, we say sorry.
>
> And for the indignity and degradation thus inflicted on a proud people and a proud culture, we say sorry.
>
> We the parliament of Australia respectfully request that this apology be received in the spirit in which it is offered as part of the healing of the nation …

Weblink
Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples

A weblink to hear the apology, or read a transcript of it, is provided.

Alamy Stock Photo/Richard Milnes

FIGURE 9.1.5 February 2020 marked the 12-year anniversary of the National Apology and 23 years since the *Bringing them Home* report, in which the increasing rate of removal of Aboriginal children into foster care and juvenile detention was highlighted. In 2021, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children are still 10.6 times more likely than non-Indigenous children to be removed from their families.

DID YOU KNOW?

The first National Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998, one year after the *Bringing them Home* report was tabled in Parliament. As Reconciliation Australia said in 2020, 'We cannot begin to fix the problems of the present without accepting the truth of our history. Sorry Day asks us to acknowledge the Stolen Generations, and in doing so, reminds us that historical injustice is still an ongoing source of intergenerational trauma for Aboriginal and Torres Islander families, communities, and peoples.'

RESPOND

Listen to Mo'Ju's song 'Native tongue' (2018). What themes do you notice in the song's lyrics?

Weblink
'Native tongue' (Mo'Ju)

REVIEW

1 Propose how the policies of 'protection' and 'assimilation' facilitated the removal of Aboriginal children from their parents.

2 In pairs, using the material quoted in this section, assess what reflections and insights on their missionary activities Christian churches and individuals within those churches might have had in the process of making their submissions to the national inquiry. What difficulties and challenges might they have encountered in preparing their submissions?

EXTENSION

1 Go to the weblink provided. Choose two stories and summarise what each of these stories tells you about the impact of forced separation on Aboriginal peoples.

2 In groups, outline points for a discussion on the topic: 'Dispossession – from land and from kinship groups – continues to affect Aboriginal spiritualities.'

Weblink
Bringing them Home: Our stories

The Land Rights movement

GLOSSARY

integration A form of assimilation which recognises that many Aboriginal peoples wish to keep a distinct identity.

Land Rights Claims by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to repossession and compensation for use of their lands and sacred sites.

native title The name Australian law gives to the traditional ownership of land and waters that have always belonged to Aboriginal people according to their traditions, laws and customs. The High Court of Australia found in the Mabo decision (3 June 1992) that native title existed in 1788.

self-determination The achievement of full and effective participation of Indigenous peoples in Australian society. This involves recognition of the cultural distinctiveness and diversity of Indigenous peoples.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, attitudes to assimilation changed. By the late 1960s, the policy was **integration**, not assimilation, and in 1972 **self-determination** became the dominant policy in Indigenous affairs. From the 1960s, the Aboriginal quest for justice became part of the political landscape and provided the groundwork for the **Land Rights** struggles to come.

1963 – Yirrkala petition

The Yolngu people of Yirrkala in the Northern Territory sent two petitions 'written on bark' to the Commonwealth Parliament, protesting about their land being taken by a mining company.

> They are not just a series of pictures but represented the title to our country under law.
>
> Galarrwuy Yunupingu, whose father was one of the petitions' painters and signatories

1965 – the 'freedom riders'

Thirty students led by Charles Perkins, one of two Aboriginal students at Sydney University, undertook a bus tour of northern and western New South Wales towns to protest against racial discrimination that had been generated and supported by the White Australia Policy. On returning to Sydney, Perkins said, 'This small group of students has created a new dawn of hope for my people'.

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Photo: Louise Higham with permission

FIGURE 9.1.6 Sydney University students set out on a 'freedom ride' bus.

1966 – Wave Hill strike

The Gurindji People went on strike to press their claim to part of the Wave Hill pastoral station in the Northern Territory.

Courtesy National Indigenous Australians Agency, Mr Mervyn Bishop and Museum of Applied Arts and Science, Powerhouse Museum

FIGURE 9.1.7 Prime Minister Gough Whitlam handed back the deeds to traditional Gurindji lands to Vincent Lingiari at Wattie Creek, Northern Territory, on 16 August 1975. After handing back the deeds, the prime minister poured soil into Lingiari's hand. A weblink explaining more about this event is provided below.

RESPOND

Listen to Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody's song 'From little things big things grow'.

What is the symbolism of the Prime Minister's action?

Weblink
Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and Vincent Lingiari

'Original' photo of Whitlam and Lingiari

1967 – the referendum

On 27 May, Australians voted overwhelmingly in favour of proposed changes to the Constitution so that Aboriginal people would be counted in the census, and the Commonwealth would have the power to make laws regarding Aboriginal people.

1972 – the 'Tent Embassy'

On Australia Day in 1972, a tent appeared on the lawns in front of the then Parliament House in Canberra. This was called the Aboriginal Embassy and it was here that the Aboriginal flag, designed by Luritja artist Harold Thomas, became a national symbol – black for the people, red for the land (and bloodshed) and yellow for the sun, giver of life. The embassy became the focal point for protests against denial of rights for Aboriginal peoples, their 'living' conditions (which were not at all conducive to living) and the lack of action in Aboriginal affairs by federal and state governments. After Commonwealth police moved in on 20 July and pulled down the tents by force, Aboriginal people arrived from all over Australia to re-erect them, and again they were forcefully pulled down. There were protest marches all around Australia, and the government was surprised by the amount of public support for the Aboriginal cause. Aboriginal Land Rights had become a national issue.

Weblink
Aboriginal Tent Embassy

National Archives of Australia: A6135, K14/3/74/11

FIGURE 9.1.8 The Aboriginal Tent Embassy, Canberra, July 1972

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1888 Aboriginal people boycotted Australia's centenary celebrations, but few noticed. For the 1938 sesquicentenary (150th anniversary), a Day of Mourning was proclaimed. In 1970 Australia celebrated the bicentenary of Captain Cook's landing at Kurnell and there, on the site of the old Aborigines Protection Board reserve at La Perouse, Aboriginal Australia again staged a ceremony of mourning and called for 'Land Rights – Nationally – Now.' At the bicentenary Australia Day celebrations on 26 January 1988, Aboriginal groups proclaimed the date as 'Invasion Day' to focus public attention on the issue of Land Rights.

For Australia's First Nations people, the Land Rights movement is both a religious and a political movement. It seeks to secure their inherent rights to their land so that their religious and cultural integrity is preserved. Land is at the heart of Dreaming, and all relationships within Aboriginal communities are determined through relationships to land.

For non-Indigenous Australians, there must be '… an act of recognition, a recognition that it is we who did the dispossessing, we took the traditional lands and we smashed the traditional way of life'

Weblink
Redfern Park speech

Prime Minister Paul Keating, Redfern Park speech, 10 December 1992

Mabo, native title and Wik

> It is my father's land, my grandfather's land, my grandmother's land. I am related to it, it give me my identity. If I don't fight for it, then I will be moved out of it and [it] will be the loss of my identity.
>
> Father Dave Passi, plaintiff in Mabo case, in *Land Bilong Islanders*, documentary, 1990

Although various Land Rights legislation had been passed in Australian states and territories beginning with the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976*, it was in the 1992 High Court judgment in *Mabo v. Queensland* (No. 2) – notably, not unanimous – that the Indigenous peoples of Australia finally won a case in law regarding their ownership of land. This case was initiated by five Indigenous plaintiffs, led by Eddie Mabo, from the Murray Islands in the Torres Strait – the Meriam people. The Mabo decision overthrew the legal fiction of *terra nullius*; that is, that the land of Australia belonged to no one when the first European settlers arrived in 1788.

> The fiction by which the rights and interests of Indigenous inhabitants in land were treated as non-existent was justified by a policy which has no place in the contemporary laws in this country … The common law of this country would perpetuate injustice if it were to continue to embrace the enlarged notion of terra nullius and to persist in characterising the Indigenous inhabitants of the Australian colonies as people too low in the scale of social organisation to be acknowledged as possessing rights and interests in land.
>
> Justice Brennan, High Court Mabo decision, 3 June 1992

Mabo decision, 1992

The High Court ruling found that a **native title** to land existed in 1788, and may continue to exist provided it has not been extinguished by subsequent Acts of government and provided Indigenous groups continue to observe their traditional laws and customs. The Mabo decision also made it clear that native title had been extinguished over freehold land. As most private land in urban Australia is freehold, it meant that suburban homes were not at risk from land claims.

Weblink
Mabo and native title

NOTE

Land Rights and native title are not the same thing.

Native Title Act 1993

This legislation came into force on 1 January 1994 and recognised the existence of Aboriginal native title in Australian federal law and the native title rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

> The Native Title Act is anchored on one particular important concept and that is truth. The truth that this was a land of people, that this was a country with a very ancient society and that that society lived in a customary and traditional way and in that same society people had title to their land… The Mabo judgement … embraced the truth.
>
> Paul Keating, Australian Prime Minister (1991–96), in 2017, discussing negotiating and implementing the Native Title Act, following the High Court Mabo decision

Wik decision, 1996, and the *Native Title Act Amendment 1998*

One year after Mabo, in June 1993, the Wik people (later joined by the Thayorre people) claimed native title over some traditional lands on the Cape York Peninsula in Queensland. The Wik decision, handed down by the High Court in December 1996 (*Wik Peoples v. Queensland*), determined that native title could coexist with other rights on land held under a pastoral lease. While this judgment did not determine whether or not native title exists, it did allow the Wik and Thayorre peoples to continue their claim in the Federal Court. The Coalition (Liberal–National parties) government elected in March 1996 had a policy of amending the Native Title Act to make it more 'workable'. Prime Minister John Howard introduced a 10-point plan to put the Wik ruling into practice. One of the proposals was a drastic curtailment of the rights of Indigenous peoples to negotiate. *The Native Title Amendment Act 1998*, passed in October of that year, empowers the states and territories to legislate their own native title regimes.

Native title – amendments and amendments

Since 1998 the Native Title Act has been amended in 2007, 2009 and 2017, and a further 2019 Bill to amend the Act moved in a protracted way through the Parliament and its committees in 2020.

The High Court judgment (Mabo), the Native Title Acts and the Wik decision show a fundamental change in

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the way Australian law views the relationship of Aboriginal peoples to the land, and dispel the idea that Australia was *terra nullius* at the point of white contact. In May 2020, however, the destruction of the Juukan Gorge caves in Western Australia, on the land of the traditional owners, the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) People, called into question how much native title means when it is up against opposing interests. Senator Pat Dodson says that 'piecemeal' legislative changes that give governments ever more power to direct the operation of Indigenous land corporations have 'whittled away' at the fundamental concept of native title.

> The uniqueness of native title is rapidly being lost. The concept of collective ownership of land and collective decision-making is being rapidly taken away from the meaning of native title. The nature of the [Native Title Act] has been basically brought into disrepute by the capacity of those who are rich and powerful to manoeuvre in a manner to suit their purposes.
>
> 'Mine over matter', in *The Saturday Paper*, 21 November 2020

REVIEW

1. **Recall** two early examples of Aboriginal protest and explain the insight these give us about the Aboriginal connection to the Land.
2. When was the term 'Land Rights' first used?
3. In your own words, **define** 'native title'.
4. **Distinguish** the differences between the Mabo and Wik decisions.
5. **Explain** how the Land Rights movement, and the subsequent Native Title Acts, sustain Dreaming.

EXTENSION

1. Return to the mind map you constructed (see page 174). Add to it to illustrate that you understand the effects of dispossession on Aboriginal spiritualities.
2. **Examine** the importance of Mabo, native title and Wik to:
   - **a** Indigenous Australians living in areas first occupied by European settlers
   - **b** Indigenous Australians still living on or near their traditional lands
   - **c** Indigenous Australians living in urban areas.
3. 'Mabo, native title and Wik provided a major shift in the process of Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.' **Discuss**.
4. **Outline** the importance of the Land Rights movement:
   - **a** for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
   - **b** to the establishment of the various Native Title Acts
   - **c** in recent Australian history.

Aboriginal spiritualities and religious traditions – the process of Reconciliation

> Truth may be difficult to ascertain, and unpleasant to face once discovered, but without it there can be no firm foundation.
>
> 'Recognition, Reconciliation and History', 1988 bicentenary essay by the Australian historian and Jesuit John Eddy

> With resolve, we commit ourselves to Reconciliation so that all may share with equity and justice, and live peacefully, in this land that is Australia.
>
> This was declared by over 20 New South Wales church leaders during an ecumenical liturgy of Repentance, Solidarity and Commitment in St Mary's Cathedral, arranged by the NSW Ecumenical Council, in December 1997.

Twenty-five years after the Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation was established, Reconciliation Australia issued the report *The State of Reconciliation in Australia*. In the foreword, Pat Dodson, Chairperson Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation, 1991–98, and Co-Chairperson Referendum Council on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, says:

> Reconciliation must transcend Australian political theatre and promote a sense of national unity. All Australians should feel, as a nation, connected to the tens of thousands of years of human occupation of the Australian continent and surrounding Islands.
>
> *The State of Reconciliation in Australia*, 2016

> Reconciliation isn't a single moment or place in time. It's lots of small steps, some big strides, and sometimes unfortunate backwards steps. A reconciled Australia is practising respect, understanding and empathy for the first peoples of this nation, in our everyday lives – in schools, workplaces, sporting clubs and community spaces, but also in our laws, policies and systems of government.
>
> Karen Mundine, July 2018. Karen Mundine was appointed CEO, Reconciliation Australia, in 2017.

The process of Reconciliation with First Nations peoples by religious traditions in Australia is a work in progress – 'lots of small [not always consistent] steps, some big strides, and sometimes unfortunate backwards steps'.

Today the vast majority of Indigenous Australians are affiliated with one or another of the Christian churches. For Christian churches the relationship between Aboriginal spiritualities and Christianity can be especially problematic.

> As for the expression of Aboriginal spirituality in the churches, if a banner or flag with Aboriginal colours is present in the church, then Christians think this should be enough for Aboriginal people to feel welcome.
>
> Lyndell Robb, 'A homeless spirit', in Anne Pattel-Gray (ed.), *Aboriginal Spirituality: Past, Present, Future*, 1996, p. 113

Many changes have taken place in the relationship between Aboriginal peoples and the Christian churches since the mission days. In contrast to the early missionary days, there are now Aboriginal Christian church movements, particularly among the Protestant churches.

2020	20th Anniversary of the Bridge Walks for Reconciliation
2017	27 May: 50th anniversary of the referendum to include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the census 26 May: Uluru Statement from the Heart presented to the Australian people October: Government rejects the Uluru Statement from the Heart
2016	*The State of Reconciliation in Australia* report released
2015	December: Referendum Council to enable Indigenous-designed and -led consultations about constitutional recognition
2013	'Sorry Day', Reconciliation Australia launches the Recognise campaign, 'The Journey to Recognition'
2008	Formal Apology to Australia's Indigenous peoples
2007	40th anniversary of 1967 Referendum Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program set up
2001	Reconciliation Australia established
2000	CAR presents its final proposal for a national document for Reconciliation Approximately 300 000 people walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge as part of National Reconciliation Week, joined by hundreds of people throughout Australia 'crossing bridges for Reconciliation'
1998	26 May: the first National Sorry Day
1997	*Bringing them Home* report released
1996	First National Reconciliation Week launched by CAR
1993	UN International Year of the World's Indigenous people First National Week of Prayer for Reconciliation is held, supported by all major religious groups
1992	Mabo decision Paul Keating's Redfern speech
1991	Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody final report released Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation (CAR) established

FIGURE 9.1.9 **Timeline of the process towards Reconciliation**

Honouring William Cooper

AJN Photo Sales/Lochlan Tangas

FIGURE 9.1.10 **Alf 'Uncle Boydie' Turner (centre), the grandson of William Cooper, leading members of the Aboriginal and Jewish communities in the re-enactment of William Cooper's 1938 march**

On 6 December 1938, Yorta Yorta man William Cooper, who was secretary of the Australian Aborigines League, led a protest march down Collins Street, Melbourne, against the treatment of Jews in Germany. The League attempted to present a petition to the German consul-general. The consul-general would not take the petition, but the protest caused a stir. The petition protested the 'cruel persecution' of Jews in Germany.

William Cooper was one of the organisers of the Day of Mourning on Australia Day, 1938 (see page 179). With John Needham of St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney, who was Chair of the Australian Board of Missions, he was also responsible for the establishment of a National Aborigines Day, first celebrated in 1940 across the Protestant churches, held on the Sunday nearest to Australia Day. Today, celebrated in May, it is known as NAIDOC Week. And in 2018, the Melbourne Federal electorate of Batman was renamed Cooper in his honour.

You can see Rabbi James, Principal of Mt Scopus College in Melbourne, speaking about William Cooper, Reconciliation, and why the legacy of William Cooper and Uncle Boydie's journey still have such important ramifications these days, at the weblink provided.

Weblink
Rabbi James' speech

Many churches have begun to bring together traditional Aboriginal cultural practices with different aspects of church life, especially its ceremonial and ritual life. Most of the mainstream churches now incorporate Aboriginal ministries. There are, however, voices of caution.

> In the past, the process of theologising in Indigenous contexts was primarily a matter of taking theological principles – already shaped within a western

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> denominational enculturation – and then asking what they mean for Indigenous people. Aboriginal artwork has been used, for example, to communicate concepts derived from the missionaries' theology. In general, Aboriginal people have been obliged to adopt western styles of worship and church leadership. There has been very little theological reflection that begins from an Indigenous mindset and engages more directly with biblical theologies and practices.
>
> Rev. Graham Paulson, a respected Elder, pastor and theologian, 'Towards an Aboriginal spirituality', *Pacifica* 19, 2006

> The colonising thinking of missionaries is still found widely in contemporary church circles and in particular in mission agencies who wish to exercise control over recipients via their donations and commissioned staff …
>
> Our fellow First Australians have many wonderful teachings about the land, language, clan and ways of living that they are willing to share with us. This is a valuable and exciting gift we are being offered and which we need to recognise as a privilege to receive …
>
> Our mutual respect deepens when we place ourselves in the position of student rather than teacher.
>
> Greg Thompson, Anglican Bishop of Newcastle, Morpeth Lecture, 2014

In the revised preamble to its constitution (2009) the Uniting Church in Australia recognised that:

> The First Peoples had already encountered the Creator God before the arrival of the colonisers; the Spirit was already in the land revealing God to the people through law, custom and ceremony. The same love and grace that was finally and fully revealed in Jesus Christ sustained the First Peoples and gave them particular insights into God's ways.

Many Aboriginal people today have connected Christianity into their existing Aboriginal belief systems. Others have, by learning more about their own culture, discovered meaning in the stories of their own people that revitalised their Christian beliefs.

▷ See Figure 11.3.4, page 245.

> I believe in both ways – our own and the Christian. If we had taken both ways and thought of them separately, we would have become confused. We believe in the old Law and we want to keep it; and we believe in the Bible too. So we have selected the good laws from both and put them together.
>
> Badangga of Elcho Island, in R.M. Berndt, *An Adjustment Movement in Arnhem Land, Northern Territory of Australia*, 2004, pp. 59–60

There are, however, deeply opposing views in the troubled relationship between Christianity and Aboriginal beliefs – opposing views within Aboriginal groups, within non-Aboriginal groups, and between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.

> For mainstream churches to try to absorb Aboriginal culture is genocidal. We will lose our traditional ways if they try to continue to marry our beliefs into their religious beliefs. It will be one more loss to a ravaged culture – it's the rape of our religion.
>
> Chicka Dixon, 'Rainbow Spirit Theology', *Compass*, ABC TV, 1 August 1999

Uluru Statement from the Heart

FIGURE 9.1.11 **Anangu artists from the APY lands in the remote north-western tip of South Australia complete their work on the Uluru Statement of the Heart canvas.**

> Uluru is the beginning of the process, *the coming together after a struggle*. And that, my friends, is the potential of the Uluru Statement from the Heart. It was deliberately issued to the Australian people, not politicians, because it is we, as a united people, who can unlock that potential in a referendum:
>
> > In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We leave base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.
>
> Megan Davis, 'The long road to Uluru: Walking together – truth before justice', *Griffith Review*, 60

Professor Davis is a constitutional lawyer and Pro Vice Chancellor Indigenous at the University of New South Wales. She is an Aboriginal woman from the Cobble Cobble clan from south-west Queensland.

In 2017 over 250 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander delegates came together to reach consensus on the Uluru Statement from the Heart, calling for three key elements:

- a Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Constitution
- a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty processes and truth-telling
- a Truth-telling Commission.

On 26 May 2017, the Uluru Statement from the Heart was presented to the Australian people. On 26 October of the same year, the Australian Government rejected the proposal, saying: 'The government does not believe such an addition to our national representative institutions is either desirable or capable of winning acceptance in a referendum.' Coincidentally, this statement was made on the 32nd anniversary of the handing back of Uluru to its traditional owners.

Weblink
Uluru Statement from the Heart

Maruku Artists, Uluru Statement from the Heart © Rene Kulitja, Christine Brumby, Charmaine Kulitja, Happy Reid, Uwankaraku Punu Aboriginal Corporation/Copyright Agency, 2021 Photograph by Clive Scollay, Maruku Art Centre

DID YOU KNOW?

On 26 May 2021, The Uluru Statement from the Heart was awarded the prestigious Sydney peace prize.

Condemnation of the government's rejection of the Uluru Statement from the Heart was swift, and it came from all corners of the country. Naturally, the immediate reactions were from those involved in the journey to Uluru:

> I think Malcolm Turnbull has broken the First Nations hearts of this country, expressed in the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
>
> Noel Pearson, member of the Prime Minister's Referendum Council, ABC News, 27 October 2017

> It's been a kick in the guts for us all. And of course now, the Prime Minister has turned himself into the latest mission manager.
>
> Pat Anderson, Alyawarre woman and co-chair of the Prime Minister's Referendum Council, ABC News, 27 October 2017

In November that year, 2500 churches and agencies signed a statement, prepared in consultation with First Nations peoples, expressing disappointment at the government's rejection:

> Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples made their views crystal clear in the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. It is a deeply disrespectful act for our Federal leaders to have unilaterally rejected those views on our behalf. There is broad agreement among the general Australian community for constitutional reform regarding the rightful place of First Nations peoples in our country. We celebrated the *Uluru Statement* and are now stunned that the First Nations leadership has been treated in this way.

The government's rejection of the Uluru Statement from the Heart has galvanised the voices of those accepting this 'gift to the Australian people' and accelerated the process of Reconciliation through the Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) program.

> While we are still challenged to honour our Covenant relationship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters, the Uniting Church has shown that progress on representation is possible, if you keep working at it. Instead of buckling preemptively to intolerance, the Government should be leading for the future. We don't need a dead hand on the Uluru Statement from the Heart.
>
> Stuart McMillan, President of the Uniting Church in Australia

> As Muslims, and Australians who care about this country, we stand with the people of our First Nations. They have voiced their concerns and we owe it to them to listen, hear and respond.
>
> Dr Rateb Jneid, AFIC President

> The reasons set out in the Prime Minister's response are deeply inadequate. This dismissive rejection of the considered voice of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people after such an extensive consultation only highlights the need for a constitutionally entrenched voice.
>
> Celia Kemp, Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) Reconciliation Coordinator

> We have a long and proud history of supporting the quest of Indigenous Australians for recognition, reconciliation and justice. We believe that the proposals put forward by the Uluru Statement from the Heart are just, reasonable and achievable.
>
> Executive Council of Australian Jewry

Weblink
Listening to the Statement from the Heart

> There is a healing that must happen for us all, and the Uluru Statement from the Heart calls with a deep cry for this healing for our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.
>
> Bishop Ken Howell, Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane

Reconciliation Action Plans (RAP)

An important dimension of Reconciliation is recognition of the reality that Indigenous communities are as varied as any other community in Australian society. For example, the largest population of Indigenous Australians lives in Sydney (mostly in western Sydney) and has a profile quite different from Aboriginal people living a more traditional lifestyle in north-west Arnhem Land. Reconciliation must take different forms in keeping with the different circumstances of each community. The RAP framework provides a structure that acknowledges that Reconciliation is a journey and not everyone is at the same place at the same time.

In November 2020, the first RAP in Australia to be linked directly to a place, to country and the people that care for it rather than to an institution, promised to deliver jobs, opportunities, recognition and respect to the traditional owners of The Rocks (Tallawoladah to the Cadigal people) and Darling Harbour (Tumbalong).

> Until 2018, many Reconciliation plans had failed to consult local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. [Since then] they have started to include us, and dare I say, shock and horror, ask us what we think. We are now turning to a more gleeful time, where we are assisting people to make plans. We can all get warm and fuzzy, but it is better to have real outcomes. These are practical, tangible and real.
>
> Nathan Moran, Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council chief executive

REVIEW

1. Where does the process of Reconciliation fit into your mind map (page 181)? **Explain** why Reconciliation can have a different meaning for Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.
2. What does the image at the beginning of this chapter (page 171) say about the process of Reconciliation for the Christian churches?
3. **Construct** a visual summary of the reception of the Uluru Statement from the Heart using the material offered in this section and your own research.
4. 'We can all get warm and fuzzy, but it is better to have real outcomes'. **Analyse** this statement in the light of how Christian churches have been journeying towards Reconciliation with First Nations peoples.

Weblink
The process of reconciliation

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AGNSW. © Richard Bell, courtesy Milani Gallery, Brisbane, 2003.2010.a-b

FIGURE 9.1.12 *Pay the rent* (2009), Richard Bell. According to George Petelin, of Griffith University, 'Culture for [Bell] is not something of the past but part of a daily struggle.'

RESPOND

How do the title of Richard Bell's painting and George Petelin's quote relate to the material in this section?

EXTENSION

1. Conduct research into a RAP connected to a specific religious tradition. It could be a school, parish, diocese or other organisation.
2. Using the Internet and/or other resources, research examples of how specific Christian denominations have incorporated Aboriginal traditions into their worship. Examine whether they are more than 'good intentions and gestures'.
3. Investigate why Reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples is problematic for the Christian churches. Some helpful weblinks are provided.
4. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this section and ensure that it is clear and complete.

Weblinks
The Uniting Church and First Peoples

natsiac.com

Aboriginal Christians and Australian spirituality

9.2 Religious expression in Australia – 1945 to the present

Photo © Eirini Alligiannis

FIGURE 9.2.1 A gathering of congregants at St Catherine's Greek Orthodox Church in Mascot, Sydney, September 2020. As is typical of Orthodox Christian churches, the scene is rich in iconography and symbols.

GLOSSARY

ethnic Relating to a population or particular group and their history, customs and language.

monocultural Said of a culture in which there is very little diversity in terms of **ethnic** groups, language and so on.

The impact of immigration from Europe after the Second World War led to an increase in affiliates of the Orthodox churches, the forming of Reformed bodies and growth in the number of Catholics, particularly from Italian migration, as well as the formation of **ethnic** parishes in many other denominations. More recently, immigration from South-East Asia, the Middle East and Pacific and African nations has expanded Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim numbers considerably, while also adding to the ethnic diversity in Christian groups.

Despite the dominance of Christianity in Australian life since the Second World War, bipartisan political support for increased and diversified immigration into Australia has seen the nation emerge out of its Anglo-Celtic dominance to evolve into an open and, for the most part, tolerant multicultural, multifaith society.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided to analyse the recent research about Christian religious practice in Australia from the National Church Life Survey (NCLS). Construct a two-column table. In the first column, record what the NCLS says about Christian religious practice and belief in Australia that is new to you; in the second column, record what surprises you.

Weblink
Trends over 20 years

Australia's religious landscape since 1945

The following section outlines the changes in Australia's religious landscape through two sets of data. The first set is the Australian census, which provides a thumbnail of those who identify with a religious tradition and, in the case of Christianity, its denominations. The second is the National Church Life Survey, which identifies those who 'go to church' – quite a different picture. This section will then investigate some of the ways in which the current religious landscape is different from the earlier years and the reasons for that difference.

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Changing patterns of religious adherence

Long-term census data is shown in Table 9.1 on the following page. Several points, some of which are additional to the information in the table, can be made about the changes between the 2011 and 2016 census data:

- The 2016 census data continues a long-term trend to diversity: Australia is becoming both more secular and more multifaith at the same time.
- There is a decline in the total number of people identifying with the three largest Christian denominations – Catholic, Anglican and Uniting Church (and its forebears) – since the Second World War, from a high of 81.2 per cent in 1947 to 39.6 per cent in 2016.
- There is a 7.8 per cent increase in those stating 'no religion' since the 2011 census.
- While Catholicism is the largest Christian denomination, it saw a decline of 2.7 per cent in 2016, after a long period of stability as a percentage of the Australian population since the 1960s.
- There is an increase in the actual number of people identifying with traditions other than Christianity. The Hindu population grew by 31.6 per cent; the Islamic population grew by 15.4 per cent; the Sikh population grew by 40 per cent.
- Between 2011 and 2016, the number of children identified by their parents on the census as Christian decreased by 11 per cent.
- Of the Christian denominations, only Latter-day Saints and Brethren have an age profile with more than 50 per cent of adherents under the age of 35 years. Forty-four per cent of Catholics are under 35 years. Presbyterian and Reformed has the oldest age profile of the Christian denominations, with 34 per cent over the age of 65.
- Among other faith traditions, Sikhs have the youngest age profile (74 per cent aged under 35 years) followed by Islam (66 per cent) and Hindu (64 per cent). Jews have the oldest age profile, with 23 per cent over the age of 65.
- Unsurprisingly, the most religiously diverse states of Australia are New South Wales and Victoria, where we find Australia's two largest cities, Sydney and Melbourne, both highly diverse, with 14 and 13 per cent of their citizens, respectively, professing a faith other than Christianity.

It is important to remember that the question about religion in the census is not compulsory. Hence, because some people may choose not to state their religion on the census, the 'no religion' and 'not stated/inadequately described' categories cannot be added together. It is also important to note that an answer of 'no religion' does not imply a blanket rejection of all religion. It can mean simply that people do not wish to identify with any particular religious or denominational group. Research over recent years suggests that people exploring alternative spiritualities often classify themselves as religious but do not identify with religious institutions in any particular way. In 1971 the instruction to describe oneself as having 'no religion' if one had no religion was explicitly included in the census. This is one explanation for a steep climb in the numbers of 'no religion' responses, and why the numbers not answering the question fell. As well, it is more acceptable today to describe oneself as having 'no religion'.

DID YOU KNOW?

'No box to tick!'

1954–76: Buddhism was not identified on the census.
1954–81: Hinduism was not identified on the census.
1954–61: Islam was not identified on the census.

In fact, the census data reveals very little about what Australians believe, or even whether they ever attend temple, church, mosque or synagogue. At the very least, what the census data does reveal is the religious institutions with which Australians choose to identify themselves. In an era when there is little if any pressure to conform to social or religious norms, perhaps identification, of itself, takes on more significance than it might have in the second half of the twentieth century.

> Declaring 'no religion' does not mean that someone is anti-religious, lacking in spirituality, or an atheist. It means they just do not identify with a particular organised form of religion.
>
> The response to the religion question provides an indication of a person's cultural orientation and formation. Religion, culture and formation used to be overlapping and reinforcing categories. For example, Catholics were Irish, went to Catholic schools, and shared certain orientations. Presbyterians were British (Scots or Northern Irish), went to state or private schools, and shared certain orientations.
>
> While this overlapping is no longer true, religious identity is far from meaningless. The census provides a moving series of snapshots of religious identity. But it does not tell us about religious belief, practice, or anything else about a person's religious life.
>
> Gary Bouma, 'Census 2016 shows Australia's changing religious profile, with more "nones" than Catholics', *The Conversation*, 27 June 2017

> Australia is a secular multi-cultural and multi-faith democracy with a significant proportion of the population who self-identify as having no religion. At the same time religion continues to play an important role in public policy debates, as exemplified in the recent debate around the legislation of same-sex marriage … Australia's relationship with religion is therefore both complex and uniquely Australian.
>
> Renae Barker, *State and Religion: The Australian Story*, 2019, pp. 325–6

Weblink
Religion and the Australian Census

TABLE 9.1 Religions in Australia: census data 1961–2016 (figures are percentages)

	1961	1976	1981	1986	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016
Christian									
Anglican	34.9	2.7	26.1	23.9	22.0	20.5	18.7	17.1	13.3
Baptist	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.5
Catholic	24.9	25.7	26.0	26.1	27.0	26.6	25.8	25.3	22.6
Lutheran	1.5	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.3	1.3	1.2	0.7
Methodist*	10.2	7.3	3.4						
Eastern Orthodox	1.5	2.7	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.1
Pentecostal**		0.3	0.5	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1
Presbyterian & Reformed	9.3	6.6	4.4	3.6	3.8	3.4	3.0	2.8	2.3
Uniting			4.9	7.6	7.5	6.7	5.7	5.0	3.7
Other Christian†	4.7	5.8	6.1	6.5	3.7	2.8	3.9	4.5	4.3
Total	**88.4**	**78.8**	**77.1**	**74.1**	**70.9**	**67.7**	**63.9**	**61.1**	**51.6**
Non-Christian									
Buddhism	NA	NA	0.2	0.5	1.1	1.9	2.1	2.5	2.4
Hinduism	NA	NA	NA	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.3	1.9
Islam	NA	0.3	0.5	0.7	1.1	1.5	1.7	2.2	2.6
Judaism	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.4
Other non-Christian	0.09	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.5
Total	**0.6**	**1.0**	**1.4**	**2.0**	**3.4**	**4.8**	**5.7**	**7.2**	**7.8**
Other									
No religion‡	0.4	8.3	10.8	12.7	16.6	15.5	18.7	22.3	30.1
Not stated/Inadequately described	10.7	12.2	11.4	12.3	9.0	11.7	11.9	9.4	9.1
Total other	**11.1**	**20.5**	**22.2**	**23.0**	**25.6**	**27.2**	**30.6**	**31.7**	**39.2**

* After May 1974 there was no continuing Methodist Church in Australia, although many people clearly continued to describe themselves as Methodists for some time afterwards (see page 194).

** The Australian census in 1976 was the first time 'Pentecostal Churches' were recognised as a distinct Christian denomination. They include Australian Christian Churches, C3 Church Global, CRC International and International Network of Churches Australia.

† 'Other Christian' includes Churches of Christ, Salvation Army, Religious Society of Friends (Quakers), Oriental Orthodox, Seventh-day Adventist.

‡ In 1971 the instruction 'if no religion, write none' was introduced. In 2016, 'no religion' was placed at the top of the list of categories of religions. The category includes belief systems such as Atheism and spiritual beliefs such as 'New Age'.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics

National Church Life Survey

While the census data is limited in what it can tell us about religion in Australia, other research efforts, such as the National Church Life Survey, provide important data about Australians and their religion. The National Church Life Survey, a joint cooperative of the major churches in Australia, has conducted surveys since 1991. While these surveys complement the census data, they are also limited, in that they only poll church attenders or those in close association with the churches.

The figures in the 2016 National Church Life Survey (Table 9.2) reveal that the churches have greater proportions of followers of people aged over 60 years and fewer under 40 years than in the community at large. This has not always been so – a 1966 study found no differences between age groups. The most striking change in the National Church Life Survey data from 2011 to 2016 is the decline in the percentage of Pentecostals in the 20–29 age group from 29 per cent to 16 per cent.

The 2016 National Church Life Survey found that 36 per cent of church attenders were born in countries other than Australia. Interestingly, the percentage of university graduates who attend church increased by 10 per cent between the 2006 and 2016 surveys. The survey also found that the gender distribution in church attenders is less even than that of the Australian population, with 60 per cent of church attenders being female (see Table 9.3). A question for churches is how they can engage and retain younger males.

The 2018 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes illustrated that Australians have lost confidence over time in all institutions, less so in schools and the courts, but more so in politicians and churches. The continuing decline in affiliation to Christian denominations and church attendance evidences this loss of confidence.

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TABLE 9.2 National Church Life Survey 2016, adult age profile by denomination (figures are percentages)

	15–19 years	20–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60–69 years	70–79 years	80+ years
Australian community (ABS data, June 2019)	6	14	14	13	12	10	7	4
All Church attenders (NCLS 2016)	5	8	11	14	15	19	19	11
Denominations								
Anglican	4	9	10	12	13	17	20	14
Baptist/Churches of Christ	6	12	13	16	17	17	13	6
Catholic	3	5	8	13	15	21	22	12
Lutheran	3	5	7	11	15	23	23	13
Pentecostal	8	16	19	19	17	14	6	1
Uniting	3	4	5	9	12	20	27	20
Other Protestant*	6	11	11	14	15	18	16	10

* 'Other Protestant' includes Aboriginal Evangelical Mission, Congregational, Presbyterian, Salvation Army and Seventh-day Adventist.

Source: National Church Life Survey 2016 and Australian Bureau of Statistics (2019)

TABLE 9.3 Gender profile of attenders by denomination (figures are percentages)

	Anglican	Baptist/Churches of Christ	Catholic	Lutheran	Pentecostal	Uniting	Other Protestant
Female	61	56	62	58	58	63	58
Male	39	44	38	42	42	37	42

Source: National Church Life Survey 2016

RESPOND

What portrait of Australia's religious diversity can you imagine 10 years from today, based on the data that you see in Tables 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3?

REVIEW

1. Using the census data (Table 9.1), describe the present religious landscape in Australia.
2. Give three reasons why census data alone does not give an accurate picture of Australia's religious landscape.
3. Account for how population growth affects religious affiliation percentage figures in the census data.
4. Construct a timeline to help you analyse the changes in Australia's religious landscape since 1945.

EXTENSION

1. Two significant online sources of information about religion in Australia are the National Church Life Survey and the Christian Research Association. The weblinks for these sources of information are provided. Investigate some of the findings of these organisations and draw conclusions about:
   a. what people believe
   b. what they practise.
2. Table 9.1 includes census data about religious identification in Australia between 1961 and 2016. The results of the August 2021 census are scheduled for release in 2022. Visit the Australian Bureau of Statistics website to review census results. A link to the website is provided. Summarise any changes you identify in these results in an extended paragraph.

Weblinks
Gen Y and the church

Young Australian people and God

The landscape of local churches in Australia

The ABS Census

The current religious landscape

There are many reasons for the nature of Australia's current religious landscape as outlined in the census figures. Immigration has had the most dramatic effect, leading to an increase in the size of some groups and a decline in others. Other reasons are the movement of people from one denomination to another; an increase in those seeking answers in new religious or spiritual movements; and an increase in those who acknowledge that they have 'no religion'.

The impact of immigration

Australia is among the most ethnically diverse countries on earth. This diversity is entirely the result of waves of immigrants from the period of massive immigration after the Second World War until the present day. Most of the waves of immigration have been associated with upheavals caused by war in other countries.

Initially, the majority of immigrants were from European countries and were from Christian backgrounds.

In the major Christian denominations, an enormous range of ethnic communities has been catered for through the use of existing church buildings and other resources. There are several Eastern Catholic churches in Australia, including the Ukrainian, Maronite and Melkite churches. Essentially because of immigration, there are now 14 Orthodox denominations recognised in the census classification groupings.

Religious diversity is concentrated in the large cities of Australia and some rural centres. In Melbourne and Sydney particularly, one finds the most diverse multifaith communities in the world. Undoubtedly, post-1945 immigration of non-Anglo-Celtic people into Australia is among the most significant developments in Australia's history.

> The attitudes and behaviours of those born this century relative to religious diversity is that they are *awash, but not adrift in a sea of diversity*. Superdiversity, of all kinds – cultural, religious, non-religious, gender and sexuality, and multispecies – is an everyday part of their lived reality, be they non-religious or religious, and for the most part they seem to be respectful of it.
>
> Gary Bouma, 'Australia's changing religious profile – rising nones and Pentecostals, declining British Protestants in superdiversity: Views from the 2016 census', *Journal for the Academic Study of Religion*, 30(2), 2011, pp. 137–8

DID YOU KNOW?

While the impact of immigration in the aftermath of the Second World War led to an increase in those affiliated with the Orthodox churches, one of the reasons for the decline in adherents to the Anglican Church was the decrease from the 1960s in the number of British migrants.

Religion and immigration

When the first migrants began arriving after the Second World War, Australian Christianity was divided along its original 'ethnic' lines – Christianity was Anglican (British), Catholic (Irish and Italian), Protestant (British) and Orthodox (Greek) – and many European Christians were seen as bringing a 'new religion' with them to Australia. Except for Jews, who were European, those who were not Christians were seen as **monocultural** – Muslims were Arabs; Buddhists were Chinese and, later, Vietnamese; Hindus were Indian. Today, however, none of the religious traditions, nor the denominations within them, can be slotted into 'ethnic' or national boxes.

- Before 1901 most Jewish migrants were from Britain and then, in the early years of the twentieth century, many Polish, Russian and German Jews came to Australia. Just before the Second World War, a small number of Jewish refugees arrived from Nazi Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia, and later, much larger numbers of Eastern European survivors of the Holocaust arrived. During the 1950s, there was a further wave of migrants from Hungary and South Africa, then Russia and Israel in the 1970s and 1980s. More recently, South Africa has been the source of most Jewish migrants.
- The growth in Hinduism since 1991 reflects recent immigration of people with an Indian heritage, from India, Fiji and Malaysia.
- Australian Muslims come from countries as diverse as Turkey, Lebanon, Indonesia, Pakistan, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Syria, and from parts of Africa such as Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia.

Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

FIGURE 9.2.2 A young speaker addresses a meeting of Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions), Sydney.

RESPOND

What assumptions might be made based on the many symbols that appear in the photograph above?

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▷ How Australia responded to the changes that immigration brought to its religious landscape is discussed on pages 194–6.

REVIEW

1 **Outline** the changes brought to Australia's religious landscape by immigration since 1945.

2 'Increased religious diversity brings many challenges to the religious landscape of Australia.' With a partner, **discuss** what some of these challenges might be. Share your responses with the class.

EXTENSION

1 You have been asked to interview a young person from a different ethnicity and religious tradition to your own about how their religion and ethnicity impact on their life. Prepare a list of the questions you would ask.

2 In groups, **classify** your questions into those about ethnicity and those about religion.

3 Now interview yourself!

Denominational switching

Free movement between the Anglican/Protestant denominations has long been a feature of Australian church life.

Survey data from the National Church Life Survey, 2016, indicates the contemporary pattern of denominational switching in Australian churches in the five years since 2011 (Figure 9.2.3). The data demonstrates the high levels of movement from the church in which people grew up for certain Protestant denominations. This pattern is consistent with earlier survey data.

> I think it's fair to say that … I come from the Methodist tradition of the Christian church. Although when I do go to church now, which is more often than Christmas and Easter, but certainly not once a week, I tend to go to an Anglican church. I don't really care what denomination it is.
>
> Former Australian Prime Minister John Howard, 'What Our Leaders Believe', *Compass*, ABC TV, 3 October 2004

Today the 'shopping around' for the kind of church that suits one's particular needs reflects changing attitudes to what a church offers to a member of its congregation. Switchers place a high priority on personal spiritual fulfilment and a relatively low priority on denominational loyalty. Some Protestant church leaders fear that this may have a corrosive effect, through neglect, on their various churches' distinctiveness. Denominational loyalty is very high among Orthodox and Catholics.

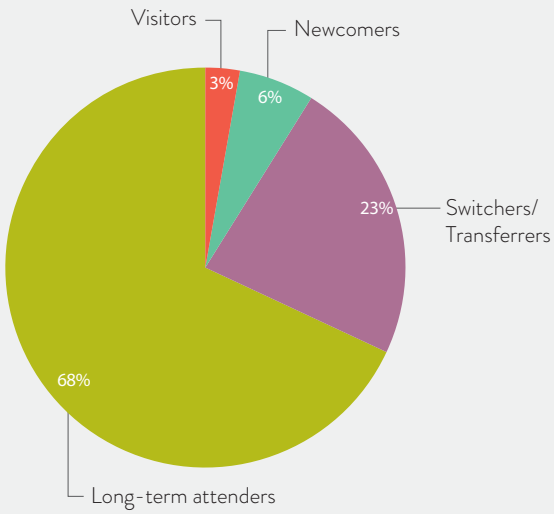

FIGURE 9.2.3 **Denominational switchers and transferrers over the period 2011–16. Switchers are people who previously attended a church of a different denomination. Transferrers are people who previously attended a church of the same denomination.**

Source: Based on National Church Life Attender Survey 2016

RESPOND

Explain, from your perspective, some of the reasons people have for denominational loyalty or switching.

The conservative (Evangelical and Pentecostal) churches have weathered the storm of declining church membership better than the mainstream churches. Assertive evangelising among Pentecostals accounts for some of this, but is not the whole story. Well-known conservative denominations, such as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses, have been aggressively evangelising for many decades but have remained very small denominations on the Australian religious scene.

> … the making of a virtue out of selfishness [has] encouraged people to look out for number one. Money is the measure of all things and supermarkets are the new cathedrals. American writer Laurie Beth Jones, in seeing Jesus as a 'chief executive officer', talks about his visionary leadership capturing the hearts and minds of people and so dropping their fishing nets to become fishers of people. This is very inspiring but in today's consumerist society most people would more likely ask 'what's in it for me?' The thriving 'prosperity gospel' churches talk of happiness and wealth, and not of self-denial, obedience, suffering and being ready to sacrifice oneself for others.
>
> Keith D. Suter, *The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia*, PhD thesis, 2013, pp. 274–5

Newspix/ Craig Greenhill

FIGURE 9.2.4 Hillsong Annual Conference, Sydney. These conferences are attended by thousands of people including, in 2015, Justin Bieber. Since its humble beginnings, when 150 people attended its 1986 Conference in Baulkham Hills, Sydney, Hillsong has become a global church. The employment of contemporary music, social media and entertainment technologies – with a conservative and literalist religious outlook – has attracted a large following. The church claims 100 000 attendees at Hillsong services weekly across 15 countries. An emphasis on evangelism and personal conversion wins new followers, although the effects may not be lasting. Statistics indicate that the Pentecostal Churches do not command the same denominational loyalty as the mainstream churches.

RESPOND

Explore the Hillsong conference page at the weblink provided. What media techniques can you see in use to inspire and entice participation?

Weblink
Hillsong Conference

The mainstream churches (Catholic, Anglican and Uniting) being well established in terms of membership, developed over the twentieth century with a relatively strong emphasis on engagement in the world and social responsibility – the so-called 'social gospel'. This often gives these churches a powerful voice in public debate, but does not contribute much to the numbers who pass through the church door each Sunday. The relative stability in numbers in the conservative churches is puzzling, as these churches offer the very things that potential churchgoers have indicated that they do not want in a church. One pattern that is clear is that older Australians remain attached to churches more than younger Australians. Migrants also have a stronger attachment to traditional churches. Younger people have a greater attraction to the excitement offered by the Pentecostal churches and their appropriation of popular music cultural forms.

In 2017, the Australian Government appointed an Expert Panel to explore matters of religious freedom in Australia. A tension exists between the right of religious traditions to practise their beliefs and the existence of practices that others might perceive as discriminatory. The subsequent Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Freedom of Religion) Bill 2019 protects Australians from discrimination on the basis of their religious belief or religious activity. While contentious, the Bill is an indication of the ongoing significance of religion in the life of the nation.

REVIEW

1. Define the terms 'switching' and 'remaining' in the context of changing patterns of adherence to Christian denominations.
2. Re-read John Howard's statement about his personal church attendance on page 191. Clarify the degree to which you think this statement reflects a more general attitude of Australian Christians to religious denominations.
3. Outline why people change from one Christian denomination to another.

EXTENSION

1. Create a short multimodal advertisement that encourages adherents to 'remain' in a particular denomination or encourages adherents to 'switch' to another denomination. What are the key arguments for your campaign?
2. Can you find statistical data from the NCLS and other sources to provide a snapshot of denominational switching in your local area?

Secularism and 'New Age'

▷ Refer to Chapter 16, pages 356–8, for more information on 'new' religious expressions.

> A total of 46 per cent of the adult Australian population describe themselves as 'spiritual' compared with 36 per cent who describe themselves as 'religious'… The 2016 SEIROS survey found that approximately 75 per cent of those who were 'spiritual but not religious' used to attend a church, at least during their childhood.
>
> Philip Hughes, 'Spiritual but not religious: Who are spiritual but not religious?', *Pointers* 29(2), 2019, p. 3

Secularism is a concept that seeks to construct the world without reference to religious belief. The modern Australian state is a secular society; in its Constitution (see page 146) it sets itself apart from religion. Secularisation, on the other hand, refers to the process of a society becoming increasingly more secular (not religious) in its practices and institutions. Secularisation has had a major influence on changes to religious practices and beliefs across the Western world, including Australia. While secular, Australia is also highly accommodating of a wide range of beliefs. The increasing diversity of Australian belief and practice, including the growth of non-traditional beliefs and practices

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unassociated with religious institutions, finds a natural place in an open, secular society such as Australia that increasingly sees itself as having moved beyond its Christian foundational roots.

NOTE

Caution is required here with the use of the terms 'secularism', 'secular' and 'secularisation'.

While, as Australian writer David Tacey states, the traditional religious container has broken, young people still yearn to be connected to the spirit, aware in their hearts, of a 'God-shaped hole'. For example, research indicates that a connection to nature and the land is one way in which Australians express their non-institutional spirituality. Specifically, 'New Age' spirituality has its origins in paganism and Wicca and is characterised by an interest in the body and experience, objects and rituals, both traditional and (to a greater extent) invented. In fact, only a tiny minority of young Australians are directly involved in organised 'New Age' movements.

Australians have never been given much to religion, if religion is simply defined by regular attendance at religious services. For the Christian majority, church attendance moved up and down around a median of 25 per cent of the population through the twentieth century. The 2018 Australian Survey of Social Attitudes reported regular religious service attendance at 13 per cent across all faith traditions. The figure is closer to 10 per cent among Christians.

DID YOU KNOW?

A 2011 Australian Human Rights Commission report entitled *Freedom of religion and belief in 21st century Australia* defined secularism as 'a belief in no religious belief, such as is found in atheism, agnosticism, secular rationalism or Humanism'.

An increasing tendency of Australians is to state that they have 'no religion' in each succeeding national census. 'No religion' rose from 6.7 per cent in 1971 to 30.1 per cent in 2016. In 2019, 80 per cent of all marriages in Australia were conducted by civil celebrants – an increase of 15 per cent since 2008 – and a substantial percentage of funerals were conducted by civil celebrants. This increase in secularism has occurred against a background of gradual globalisation and associated changes in social values and attitudes.

In twenty-first-century Australia, a rise in interest in new spiritualities unlocks religious seekers from dogmatic religious boundaries. People feel free to make spiritual choices, but they are potentially more adrift from the sense of belonging that traditional religious communities offer.

These religious seekers are not easily categorised or profiled with statistical data, but they do present an interesting challenge to traditional religion. Many people who identify with one of the major religious traditions incorporate non-traditional spiritual ideas and practices into their lives.

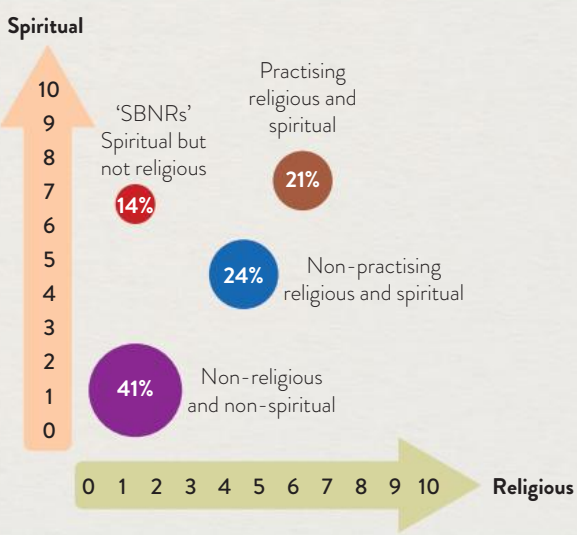

FIGURE 9.2.5 **Religious and spiritual self-perceptions**
Source: 2020 Australian Community Survey, NCLS Research

RESPOND

What do you think people mean when they say they are 'spiritual but not religious'?

REVIEW

1. Identify some facts and figures in this section that illustrate the pattern of secularisation in Australian society.
2. Discuss two examples of 'New Age' spiritualities and how they reflect a change in the Australian religious landscape in the twenty-first century.
3. Look at a website of one of the new religious expressions and describe three characteristics of the expression.

EXTENSION

1. Next time you are in a bookshop (or browsing one online), compare the range of New Age resources with the number of texts on organised religion. What do you observe?
2. Do you think the events of 2020 encouraged people to turn to New Age spiritualities more than ever before? When the data emerges, does it support your prediction?
3. Propose what might be the 'gradual globalisation and associated changes in social values and attitudes' that have contributed to an increase in secularisation in Australian society.
4. In small groups, extrapolate from the available data on what Australians believe, or are searching for, today, compared with what they are likely to believe in 10 and 20 years from now. Make a list of your main ideas and share this with the class.

Religious dialogue in multifaith Australia

GLOSSARY

ecumenism The movement among Christian churches to promote the restoration of unity among all Christians.

episcopalism Having church authority vested in the company of bishops as a whole, rather than with any individual.

interfaith dialogue The move to greater cooperation and harmony between different religious traditions.

multicultural Reflecting cultural diversity.

In an increasingly secularised society, the Australian mainstream churches have renewed their relevance by becoming vitally involved in issues of peace and social justice. A **multicultural**, multifaith society and an increasingly globalised world demand that a significant dimension of the pursuit of peace and social justice is the ongoing dialogue with those whose practices and beliefs are different from one's own. In Australia today, relationships between Christian churches (**ecumenism**) and relations between the various religious traditions (interfaith dialogue) are characterised by mutual tolerance and respect.

Ecumenical movements

Since the 1970s, in particular, there have been many conversations between different Christian groups and denominations dealing with doctrinal matters and areas of cooperation. State Ecumenical Councils, and informal ecumenical initiatives such as the Christian Research Association and the National Church Life Survey, are some examples. Overall, though, the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia in 1977 and the emergence of the National Council of Churches in Australia in 1994 have been the most significant developments.

The Uniting Church in Australia

In the early years of the twentieth century there had been a number of moves towards ecumenism by the Protestant churches, but their failure demonstrated the difficulty in church union. In 1945 the Presbyterian Church voted to reopen negotiations with the Methodist and Congregational churches. Long negotiation and reflection led to votes on the principle of union in the various churches in 1972. After 1 May 1974, there was no continuing Methodist Church. The union was completed on 22 June 1977 and the new unified church was to be known as the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). There is a continuing Presbyterian Church in Australia today, as well as a small number of Congregationalist communities.

The Uniting Church in Australia – National Assembly Archives

FIGURE 9.2.6 A service is held at Sydney Town Hall to inaugurate the Uniting Church in Australia, 22 June 1977.

The formation of the UCA was described by the then Catholic Archbishop of Brisbane, Francis Rush, as 'the most significant ecumenical event in Australia's history'. Today around one million Australians are members of the Uniting Church in Australia, making it Australia's third largest religious community.

National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)

In 1922, at the instigation of the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney, John Wright, the main Protestant churches formed the Joint Australian Council of the Churches Contemplating Reunion. Lack of agreement about **episcopalism** saw the council dissolved in the 1930s.

A national council of churches, which was later to become the Australian Council of Churches (ACC), was formed in 1946. In 1994 the ACC was succeeded by the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) and for the first time the Catholic Church was officially part of this ecumenical body. In 1998 the Lutheran Church joined the NCCA. The NCCA has played a significant role as a peak body representing the voice of the Christian churches in public debate in recent years.

The Faith and Unity Committee of the NCCA continued to develop the work of *Covenanting Together* in 2009. They affirmed the dynamic nature of the ecumenical relationships of the member churches, and recommended

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that regular acknowledgement, review and renewal take place to further embed the practices of *Covenanting Together*. To push through the difficulties of reaching whole-of-churches agreements, the NCCA produced a guide for 'Australian Churches Covenanting Together Locally' in 2010. The guide can be found at the weblink provided.

Weblink
Australian Churches: Covenanting Together Locally

Ji Zhang UCA Assembly

FIGURE 9.2.7 **Members of the NCCA Board pictured at the 10th National Forum, 2019: Rob Floyd (UCA), Rev. John Gilmore (Churches of Christ), Bishop Philip Huggins (NCCA President), Liz Stone (NCCA Interim General Secretary), Anne Hywood (Anglican Church), Geoff Officer (Catholic Church), Fr Abanoub Attalla (Coptic Church). Not pictured: Bishop John Henderson (Lutheran Church), Thomas Ling (Chinese Methodist Church)**

Australian Churches: Covenanting Together

In July 2004, the members of the NCCA committed to a document entitled *Australian Churches: Covenanting Together*. The document was updated in 2010. The document proposes five dimensions of commitment.

- **Dimension One:** A general commitment to common prayer, intercession and exploration of common beliefs.
- **Dimension Two:** A commitment to the shared use of resources.
- **Dimension Three:** A commitment to common mission and ministry.
- **Dimension Four:** A commitment to common sacraments.
- **Dimension Five:** A commitment to shared ordained ministries.

Different combinations of the 19 member churches have signed to each of the dimensions. For example, 18 members signed to dimension one; 11 member churches have mutually recognised baptism and agreed to the use of a common baptismal certificate; Churches of Christ and the Uniting Church agreed to share Eucharist according to pastoral need; four pairs of members made agreements about sharing with each other mutually recognised ordained ministry.

These are significant steps towards the goal of ecumenical union.

In addition to the NCCA, there are literally dozens of interdenominational and ecumenical groups operating in Australian society in a range of biblical, educational, missionary, social justice, spiritual, student-focused and theological endeavours.

Despite their theological differences, Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox leaders of today meet, discuss and agree on matters of doctrine to a level unimaginable 40 years ago. The atmosphere is one of mutual respect and acceptance.

A link to the NCCA website is provided.

Weblink
National Council of Churches in Australia

Worksheet
Ecumenical movements

Interfaith dialogue

The postwar period, which brought with it a dramatic diversification of Australia's ethnic and religious make-up, forced a reassessment of old sectarian ways. Despite the past, Australia's increasing secularism, as well as its long-standing cultural sense of tolerance and a 'fair go' for all, left little place for sectarianism in the latter part of the twentieth century. By the mid-1980s, the recognition that religions other than Christianity were now a significant minority in Australia became an impetus towards establishing broader forums in which to address the issue of increasing religious diversity.

Many significant developments in Australia's religious communities point to a strongly developing sense of **interfaith dialogue** and religious harmony from the time of the Second World War to the present. The Catholic Church tentatively opened its dialogue to other Christian denominations by having Protestant observers at the Second Vatican Council (1962–65). One of the documents of that Council, *Nostra Aetate* (1965), went further. *Nostra Aetate* gave Catholics permission to enter into dialogue on equal terms with other traditions. Officially titled the *Declaration on the Relations of the Church to Non-Christian Religions*, *Nostra Aetate* opened the door for Catholics to that which is 'true and holy' in other religions, extending a hand to Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Judaism.

The holding of the fifth world assembly of Religions for Peace in Melbourne in 1989 was a turning point in interreligious relations in Australia. Religions for Peace continues to be a significant force in leading world interfaith dialogue: the 10th world assembly was held in 2019 in Lindau, Germany, with women and men from 125 countries. Since 2000, Religions for Peace Australia has sponsored, organised and supported a variety of interfaith initiatives nationally.

At a national level:

- the Uniting Church has established working groups on relations with both Muslim and Jewish communities
- the Catholic Church has a Committee for Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations

AAP Photo/JOEL CARRETT

FIGURE 9.2.8 **Interfaith memorial gathering at St Mary's Catholic Cathedral, Sydney, 17 March 2019. Faith leaders gathered their communities to reflect in solidarity with those who mourned the death of New Zealand Muslims in the Christchurch Mosque massacre two days earlier. From left to right: President of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies Lesli Berger, Coptic Bishop Daniel, Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Richard Umbers, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney Anthony Fisher, Grand Mufti of Australia Ibrahim Abu Mohammed, Melkite-Greek Catholic Bishop Robert Rabbat, Sheikh Yahya Safi and Catholic Auxiliary Bishop Terence Brady.**

- the Commission for Dialogue with Living Faith and Community Relations of the NCCA has become far more focused.

Many of these groups are reinforced by similar state groups. As well, there are many local and grassroots initiatives, such as the Women's Interfaith Network of New South Wales, formed under the auspices of Religions for Peace Australia to foster closer relationships between women of different faiths. Many universities have multifaith centres. In 2020, the interfaith charter known as the Sydney Statement was published by the Youth Parliament of the World's Religions (Youth PoWR). The charter seeks to identify the shared values with which believers from all faiths can build bridges of understanding and mutual action for the good of the world.

Recent years have seen unprecedented combined action from Australia's religious leaders and their communities to further interfaith dialogue. For example, in March 2021, leaders from across many faith traditions organised the 'Sacred People, Sacred Faith' event as part of a global day of action on climate change by faith communities. The Australian event called on the federal government to commit to a climate goal of zero carbon emissions by 2030.

Those who initiate interfaith dialogue and events clearly seek to find peace and harmony among Australia's diverse population, which runs counter to the hatred and contempt that some believe motivate international terrorism.

Interfaith initiatives

- **The Australian Council of Christians and Jews** is active in Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne and Perth. The Council is made up of Christians and Jews who recognise their common heritage and seek to promote understanding.

A particular focus of the Council is to stand together against antisemitism. Activities of the Council include annual Holocaust remembrance services, and education seminars and courses designed to deepen mutual understanding and respect.

The Council of Christians and Jews also seeks to foster broader interfaith relations, particularly dialogue between Christians, Jews and Muslims.

A link to the Australian Council of Christians and Jews website is provided.

Weblink
Australian Council of Christians and Jews

- **The Columban Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations** was established in 1997. It has two main objectives: to foster relationships with the Muslim community; and to address the misconceptions, lack of understanding and stereotyping regarding Muslims that exist in the Christian community.

  The Centre also works closely with the Affinity Intercultural Foundation and supports teachers and students in the process of education for Christians about Islam.

  The Women's Dialogue Network is associated with the Columban Centre and has developed a network that includes Quaker, Tibetan Buddhist, Muslim, Catholic, Jewish, Parsee, Hindu and Baha'i women.

  A link to the Columban Centre for Christian–Muslim relations website is provided.

Weblink
Columban Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations

- **The Affinity Intercultural Foundation** was established in 2001 by a group of young Muslim Australians who wished to extend the interaction between the Muslim community and their fellow Australians. The organisation seeks integration, tolerance and understanding through a process of dialogue and education. Affinity has initiated, or been involved with, successful and ongoing dialogues with Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Jewish groups.

  A link to the Affinity Intercultural Foundation website is provided.

Weblink
Affinity Intercultural Foundation

- **The Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia** was founded in 2003 by Progressive Jew Rabbi Jonathan Keren-Black and Uniting Churchman Ian Fry. Based in Melbourne, its small but committed membership has been a part of the growth and development of interfaith dialogue in Australia since the emergence of the politics of fear in the early years of the twenty-first century.

  A link to the Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia website is provided.

Weblink
Jewish Christian Muslim Association of Australia

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With permission Columban Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations

FIGURE 9.2.9 Youth PoWR (Parliament of the World's Religions) commenced in Sydney in 2015 as an initiative of the Columbans, a Catholic missionary society of priests, students and laypeople. It has since achieved broad interfaith support. Pictured here are young people collaborating on the development of The Sydney Statement: Building Bridges Between Believers of Different Religions, an interfaith Charter for Sydney launched in October 2020.

RESPOND

Find out more about the Sydney Charter at the website of Youth PoWR: Parliament of the World's Religions. Select one element from the charter that resonates with you. **Explain** why in a sentence.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** the terms 'ecumenism' and 'interfaith dialogue'.
2. **Construct** a two-column table that **summarises** the key ecumenical and interfaith dialogue initiatives in Australia since 1945.
3. **Describe** the impact of ecumenism on Australian Christianity to this point in Australia's history.
4. **Account** for the rising interest in interfaith dialogue in Australian society since 1945.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided to find out more about the National Council of Churches in Australia. **Examine** what the various member churches are, and are not, prepared to do together. **Account** for the differences. What might be some of the benefits of the churches 'covenanting together'?
2. **Investigate** interfaith initiatives in your local area. Were any specific interfaith initiatives undertaken to address the pandemic crisis of 2020? Write a short report on two of these initiatives. The weblinks provided may assist you.
3. Evaluate the importance of interfaith dialogue for the future of Christianity in Australia. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblinks
National Council of Churches in Australia

Religions for Peace Australia

Comparative religious education and its role in creating a harmonious society

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

Faith Communities Council of Victoria

Ecumenical and Interfaith Commission

Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations

Regional Interfaith Network

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the churches

A growing number of proven cases of child sexual abuse in institutions led to the formation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, established in Australia in 2013. The Royal Commission handed down its final report to the Governor-General on 15 December 2017. The report has had far-reaching impacts on faith-based institutions in Australia and has led to a deepening of their overt commitment to the safety of children.

The Royal Commission uncovered historical, systematic sexual abuse covering a wide range of institutions that worked with children. Faith-based schools and churches came under particular scrutiny, with the perpetration of crimes by teachers, priests and religious brothers in the spotlight. The breach of trust in these despicable acts has tested the confidence of the Australian community in the churches. While various churches have made efforts at restitution with victims, the matter continues to cause deep hurt for victims and deep humiliation for the churches involved, and to impact heavily on confidence in church institutions, damaging their capacity to be a powerful moral voice in the public debate in Australia.

RESPOND

In what ways might the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse be understood as an interfaith issue? Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblinks
Religious institutions

Case study 18 – Australian Christian churches

Final information update

Conclusion

Great changes in the Australian religious landscape have been witnessed since 1945. Greater awareness and sensitivity to Aboriginal spiritual perspectives has influenced the development of an ecological awareness in the spirituality of other Australians. A more diverse postwar Australia and a more globalised society have resulted in broadening ecumenical and interfaith perspectives. Greater awareness of the privilege of Australian society and the relative strife in which people in other parts of the world live has raised awareness of social justice and social analysis.

There are tensions, of course. For example, there are those who seek to revitalise Australian Christianity by reference to Aboriginal spirituality, those who reject this as a new form of 'colonisation' and those who see the two as mutually incompatible.

The desire for increased ecumenism and interfaith dialogue exists uneasily with those who seek to protect against the erosion of their religious distinctiveness in the face of an increasingly secularised society.

The Christian churches, and the other religious traditions along with them, have increasingly seen the importance of involving themselves in public debate, of being a voice in an evolving society and an evolving world. Paradoxically, despite their conservatism, the churches have often been the countercultural forums in which Australians have felt the freedom to make their cry for justice. This has resulted in the churches being the breeding ground of important movements, such as social reform, the leadership of women, Aboriginal Reconciliation, and social justice in employment and education. The important movements in ecumenism and interfaith dialogue illustrate also the desire of Australia's religious traditions to engage with each other and engage with the world.

EXTENSION

1. Create a five-minute TED Talk or multimodal presentation that provides an overview of the expression of religion in Australia from 1945 to the present.
2. If you were writing this year's HSC paper, what would you include for Question 11? Write your question and marking criteria to go with it. Exchange responses with a peer and engage in a peer-marking process.
3. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

Fairfax Syndications/Janie Barrett

FIGURE 9.2.10 The Invasion Day rally in Sydney, 26 January 2017

RESPOND

In two sentences, **explain** what this image says about Australia's 'religious landscape'.

Worksheet
Religion and belief systems in Australia post-1945 terminology

Online activity
Chapter 9 multiple-choice quiz

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9 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section I: Part A

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II: answer **all** questions in this section

Multiple-choice: Questions 1–10 (10 marks)

1 Key persons and keepers of various knowledge within Aboriginal communities are referred to as:

- **A** Leaders.
- **B** Elders.
- **C** Kinship systems.
- **D** Traditional owners.

2 Ukrainian, Maronite and Melkite Churches are examples of the diversity within the:

- **A** Eastern Catholic Church.
- **B** Western Catholic Church.
- **C** Anglican Church.
- **D** Evangelical Church.

3 The Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Freedom of Religion) Bill 2019 might best reflect:

- **A** a rise in secularism and non-religious influences.
- **B** an increasing significance of religion in the life of the nation.
- **C** an ongoing significance of religion in the life of the nation.
- **D** a decreasing significance of religion in the life of the nation.

4 The Affinity Intercultural Foundation was established in 2001 by a group of young:

- **A** Buddhist Australians.
- **B** Christian Australians.
- **C** Jewish Australians.
- **D** Muslim Australians.

5 'A general commitment to common prayer, intercession and exploration of common beliefs' is an ecumenical objective of which document?

- **A** The Sydney Statement: Building Bridges Between Believers of Different Religions
- **B** *Nostra Aetate*
- **C** 'The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia'
- **D** *Australian Churches: Covenanting Together*

6 The organisation responsible for the *Australian Churches: Covenanting Together* publication is:

- **A** Religions for Peace Australia.
- **B** Australian Partnership of Religious Organisations.
- **C** Youth PoWR.
- **D** National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA).

7 RAP stands for:

- **A** Reconciliation Action Plan.
- **B** Recognition and Action Program.
- **C** Restoration and Action Plan.
- **D** Recognition Acknowledgement Program.

8 The Aboriginal flag first appeared on the lawns in front of the then Parliament House in Canberra in:

- **A** 1967.
- **B** 1970.
- **C** 1972.
- **D** 1992.

9 Which of the following are in the correct chronological order?

- **A** Mabo Decision, Wik Case, Native Title Amendment Act, Stolen Generation Apology
- **B** Native Title Amendment Act, Wik Case, Stolen Generation Apology, Mabo Decision
- **C** Native Title Amendment Act, Stolen Generation Apology, Mabo Decision, Wik Case
- **D** Mabo Decision, Native Title Amendment Act, Stolen Generation Apology, Wik Case

10 A central element of which document is 'a Makarrata Commission to supervise treaty processes and truth-telling'?

- **A** The *Bringing them Home* report
- **B** The Uluru Statement from the Heart
- **C** *The State of Reconciliation in Australia*
- **D** 'Recognition, Reconciliation and History'

Short-answer: Question 11 (5 marks)

In today's consumerist society most people would more likely ask 'what's in it for me'?

Keith D. Suter, *The Future of the Uniting Church in Australia* , PhD thesis, 2013, pp. 274–5

11 With reference to the stimulus, account for the impact of secularism on the present religious landscape in Australia.

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22 INDICATIVE HOURS

10

Buddhism depth study

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **explain** the contribution to and **analyse** the impact of **one** significant person **or** school of thought on the development and expression of Buddhism
- **describe** and **explain** Buddhist ethical teachings on **one** ethical area
- **describe** **one** significant practice within Buddhism, **demonstrate** how this practice expresses the beliefs of Buddhism and **analyse** its significance for both the individual and the Buddhist community.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online option

- Ashoka (c. 304 – c. 232 BCE)

Online worksheets

- Buddhism significant individual or group (p. 209)
- Buddhist ethics (p. 210)
- Buddhism significant practice (p. 214)

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Gerald Lim

Vesak, the annual ritual celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death, Melbourne, 2014

10.1 Significant people and ideas

The Buddha is acknowledged within the Buddhist tradition as the most famous teacher of his own religion and the most exalted role model of someone who has succeeded on the path to *nirvana*. However, throughout its history the religion has been transmitted through the examples and teachings of a large number of unheralded monks, nuns and prominent laypeople. Other teachers and holy men who are celebrated throughout Buddhist countries have become very famous. Some, such as Ananda, the Buddha's cousin, and the two early disciples Sariputta and Moggallana, lived during the Buddha's own lifetime and were famous as both pupils and teachers. Later philosophers such as Nagarjuna (second century CE) and Candrakirti (seventh century CE) became famous through their teachings. We know next to nothing about their lives, though this has not stopped the rise of Buddhist literature attributing all sorts of supernatural powers to these figures – whose own philosophical treatises are incomprehensible to all but the most learned of scholars.

More is known about the famous Tibetan sages whose writings were partially autobiographical, and also about many of the founders of the various Zen schools in Japan. Most of these figures were monks, but laypeople have also been extremely prominent in the development of the religion.

The founding of new schools within Mahayana Buddhism, especially in China and Japan, can usually be traced back to a particular, often charismatic, individual, or to a monk who had spent many years meditating and undergoing austerities in a remote mountainous or forest area. Lay Buddhists have traditionally been attracted to such people because of the huge merit or good *karma* they have built up, which could be transferred as an act of compassion. This continues even today, especially in Sri Lanka and Thailand. Because of the legitimacy and authority they have by virtue of their expertise in meditation and their performance of austerities, such people are in a position to reinterpret the Buddha's teaching or to introduce new elements into existing ideas. This has become especially important in contemporary Buddhism as many Buddhist countries have had to come to terms with the impact of modern science on their cultures.

This section treats the growth of Mahayana Buddhism as a significant idea, and looks at Ashoka (online option), Sister Dhammadinna (d.1967) and the charismatic Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926) as significant people. Ashoka had a profound impact on the spread of Buddhism in India and internationally after 250 BCE and, although Sister Dhammadinna may not rate as a significant person in world Buddhism, her visits to Australia in the 1950s had a great impact on the development of Buddhism in Australia.

Online option A
Ashoka
(c. 304 – c. 232 BCE)

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EXTENSION

Update the Buddhism list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

Mahayana Buddhism

GLOSSARY

arahant A monk who seeks to attain enlightenment only for himself.

bodhisattva One who is close to enlightenment but forgoes *nirvana* to help others escape *samsara*.

stupa A monument containing relics or other sacred objects.

▷ Refer to Chapter 2, pages 22–3, for the schools of Buddhism.

Scholars of Buddhism have traditionally regarded Mahayana Buddhism as developing alongside various groups of monks who were part of what was later known as Theravada Buddhism, possibly by about the first century BCE. Theravada Buddhism is regarded as the backdrop for the rise of Mahayana Buddhism. Other scholars have even used the term 'Primitive Buddhism' to describe the state of Buddhism between the time of the Buddha's death (486/483 BCE) and the ascension of Ashoka (269–232 BCE) to the throne of Magadha.

It is difficult to speak of a single mainstream of Buddhism even during the Buddha's own lifetime. Schismatic activity – where people who disagree on matters of doctrine or behaviour create new groupings within the larger Buddhist *sangha* – was recorded even during his lifetime, and there were probably 18 such groupings in India by the beginning of the Common Era. Though not much is known about these groups, most of whose literature has been lost, their likely existence testifies both to the vibrancy of Buddhism and its ongoing reinterpretation. The exception here is the Theravadins, whose texts survive to the present day, and the history of the splits within Theravada is still studied from texts such as the *Kathavatthu*, 'Matters of Controversy', which was composed decades or even centuries following the occurrence of the splits.

Mahayana Buddhism is really an umbrella term covering a whole set of schools and sub-schools, some differing considerably from each other. Its main historical function as a movement has been to act as a set of boundaries distinguishing certain types of Buddhists from others of the Theravada school.

It is not at all easy to trace the origins of Mahayana. To do so rests on the belief that Theravada and Mahayana can be very easily distinguished as different religious entities – that they can be easily allocated doctrinal boundaries and different forms of monkish behaviours. In truth, they cannot. Most of what they have is common to both: the centrality of the Buddha as an example of a man who attained enlightenment and taught this possibility to others; a sophisticated view of the nature of reality; and a social organisation that resulted in a sharp differentiation between monastic and lay bodies. The two differ in some doctrinal aspects and in how they see themselves and their relation to each other: whereas the Mahayanists distinguish themselves from the Theravadins, the reverse does not seem to have happened.

TABLE 10.1 The main features of Mahayana Buddhism

The Buddha is a transcendent, god-like figure treated as an object of devotion.
The Buddha is worshipped in *stupas*.
The *bodhisattva* is more important than the *arahant*.
The *bodhisattva* helps lay Buddhists in all aspects of their lives.
Enlightenment exists in everyone. It just has to be found.
All phenomenal things are empty (*shunya*) of existence at an absolute level.
Instant enlightenment can be gained through a flash of insight into the true nature of reality.

Despite the common base from which both developed, one would find considerable differences between the two if one were first to read a body of Theravada literature and then some Mahayana texts, or if one were to observe the appearance and behaviour of monks in a Theravadin country such as Sri Lanka and then those of Tibetan or Chinese origin. Beyond this, some of the sub-schools of Mahayana, such as Zen and Vajrayana, do not appear to have any doctrinal equivalents in Theravada Buddhism.

REVIEW

1. Explain what 'schismatic activity' is.
2. Clarify what it means to say that 'Mahayana Buddhism is an umbrella term'.
3. Recall what has been the main historical function of Mahayana Buddhism.
4. Identify what Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism have in common.

Alamy Stock Photo/Hitendra Sinkar

FIGURE 10.1.1 Reclining form of the Buddha in Abhayagiri Vihara monastery, Anuradhapura, northern Sri Lanka. This is a very common mode of portraying the Buddha.

Development of Mahayana

Mahayana is thought to have arisen as a reaction against the small-mindedness (*hina*) of the early Hinayana schools. The line of descent goes through the development of the so-called Mahasamghika split – an event that occurred perhaps at the time of the second council held at Vaishali (386 BCE). The Mahasamghika wanted a larger, less exclusive, *sangha* than the Theravadins, one that would somehow include the laity. They developed policies apparently much more conducive to the religious aspirations of the laity, rather than simply concentrating on the higher aspirations of the monks who, at least in principle, sought *nirvana*.

A Japanese scholar, Akira Hirakawa, argued in 1963 that Mahayana Buddhism first arose when groups of laypeople and monks who entered the ***bodhisattva*** path congregated physically around ***stupas*** and monasteries. The resulting process led to the development of a new form of Buddhism, one that permitted people other than just monks to aspire towards enlightenment. According to this view, the laity was demanding more inclusion in the elite path to *nirvana* previously reserved in Theravada schools for the ***arahants***, and *stupas* were places where lay Buddhists, monks and nuns congregated for the performance of religious festivals. Such places and locations were also excellent venues for teaching the *dhamma*.

A more recent view of the rise and growth of Mahayana suggests that the huge number of Mahayana (and Theravada) texts translated into Chinese from 150 CE onwards, but especially after 380 CE, convey a false impression that Indian Mahayana Buddhism was a much more extensive and divergent cultural phenomenon than Theravada Buddhism. After 500 CE, with the development of Mahayana Buddhism in China, then Korea and Japan, and finally Tibet, the various Mahayanist sects – with their emphasis on the *bodhisattva* path, the existence of the Buddha nature in all sentient beings, and the presence of a transcendent god-like Buddha – convey a much richer understanding of approaches to enlightenment than are found in Theravadin countries.

> The Mahayana takes a hard line against other faiths, in theory at any rate, but its attitude to the rest of the Buddhist fold is characterised by ambivalence and defensiveness, and it gives every appearance of being a minority movement …
>
> P. Harrison, 'Who gets to ride in the Great Vehicle? Self image and identity among the followers of the early Mahayana', *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, 10, 1987, p. 86

This brief quote justifies the idea that Mahayana Buddhism was probably just one small sect among others in India up until about 400 CE, and that most were probably Theravada schools. It is true that the Perfection of Wisdom literature, always regarded as among the earliest of the Mahayana literature, had been composed since the beginning of the Common Era along with some other texts discussed below. But, because of the difficulty of their content and their composition in Sanskrit, these works were probably passed around in very narrow circles, and so cannot be taken as a sign of the popularity of Mahayana in India.

Mahayana texts and teachings

The Pali Canon is the most complete of the Theravadin Canons, composed in a language derived from Sanskrit. Other canons existed in Sanskrit but are now substantially incomplete. It is likely the Pali Canon existed in some form or other by about 140 BCE. One hundred years later, Buddhist texts in Sanskrit began to appear, and many of these depicted doctrinal tendencies that are closely related to what came to be the Mahayana.

▷ Refer to Chapter 2, pages 29–30, for more on the *Lotus Sutra*.

Perhaps the oldest is the *Lotus Sutra*, but this is followed by the earliest of what became a complete genre of literature, the Perfection of Wisdom texts (*Prajnaparamita*). There are at least a dozen such texts and they range in size from a few lines (the *Heart Sutra*) to *The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in One Hundred Thousand Lines*.

A flood of Mahayana literature associated with Tantric practices, involving visualisation of the Buddha and particular *bodhisattvas*, appeared after the eighth century CE. From about the fourth century CE, many independent (that is, not translations of Sanskrit originals) Mahayanan texts appeared in China and soon after in Tibet, Korea and Japan.

One of the principal areas of difference between the Mahayana and Theravada texts is in the differing images of the Buddha they depict. The Theravadin Pali texts present a much more austere image of the Buddha and of the monks in comparison with what is found in early Mahayana texts. To some extent this matches a perception that the *sangha* in contemporary Theravadin countries are similar, whereas those in the Mahayanan countries are not only marked by their greater variety from the Theravadin *sangha* but also from each other. Especially in the *Lotus Sutra*, the Buddha is described in a luxuriant manner through a set of highly pictorial narratives easily comprehensible to an audience who are not well versed in Buddhist teaching. With their sustained teaching of the doctrine of 'skilful means' they depict a Buddha who is much more concerned with the fate of those people who are apparently incapable of enlightenment than the Buddha depicted in Theravadin literature.

The Perfection of Wisdom Sutra in Eight Thousand Lines teaches about two other fundamental Mahayana teachings – the related themes of the *bodhisattva* and the doctrine of emptiness – integrating both quite intentionally with the understanding of what it means to be a *bodhisattva*. Another important theme of this text and other Mahayana texts is the inadequacy of what they called Hinayana. It is taken to mean 'small-minded' (a quite derogatory term in Mahayana texts), as opposed to 'great,

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Bridgeman Images/Private Collection/photo Christie's Image

FIGURE 10.1.2 *Zhao Mengfu Writing the Heart Sutra in Exchange for Tea*, 1542–43, handscroll, ink and colour on paper by Qiu Ying

expansive vehicle'. And it is this distinction that helps to convey a perception of the difference between Hinayana and Mahayana. But the authors of these texts directed their critique in a manner more potent than just developing the sharp contrast expressed by the two names.

> Those, however, who are certain that they have got safely out of this world (i.e. the Arhats [*arahants*] who have reached their last birth, and think they have done with it all), are unfit for full enlightenment (because they are not willing to go, from compassion, back into birth-and-death). And why? The flood of birth-and-death hems them in. Incapable of repeated rebirths, they are unable to aspire to full enlightenment.
>
> E. Conze, *Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita*, The Asiatic Society, Calcutta, 1970, p. 15

The so-called selfishness of the Theravadin *arahants* (because they were perceived as being concerned only about their own attainment of *nirvana*) is always contrasted with the generosity of the *bodhisattva*, who is required as part of his chosen path to help all other beings obtain enlightenment. A concern with the spiritual (and material) good of all beings is a formal difference between Theravada and Mahayana, reflected heavily in inscriptions from the fourth century CE onwards. In inscriptions of the former, donors of gifts present their gift as a ritual act for their deceased parents, whereas the equivalent formula in Mahayana inscriptions specify: 'Let whatever merit is here, with my parents placed in front, be for all beings to obtain supreme knowledge.' Yet, in the final analysis, those who are *arahants* are always required to exercise compassion towards all sentient beings, even if this is not so formally inscribed within the pathway they follow.

DID YOU KNOW?

In Australia both Mahayana and Theravada Buddhism are represented. Both groups are really defined in terms of ethnic background, though Mahayana is more strongly patronised by native-born Australians than Theravada, which is mainly patronised by immigrants from South-East Asia, and Sri Lanka to a lesser extent, regions where Theravada has been traditionally practised for centuries. Mahayana patronage too has been associated mainly with Australians of Chinese and Vietnamese origin, yet because of the widespread publicity given to Zen and to Tibetan Buddhism, especially in their philosophical dimensions, they have been taken up by native-born Australians. Equally, the success of the Dalai Lama in publicising the plight of Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism has also heightened the interest in Tibetan Buddhism. People can maintain an interest in Tibetan Buddhism and Zen without engaging in the ritual and devotional aspects of Buddhism, but this is not so for Chinese and Vietnamese practitioners, nor is it so for those who attend Theravadin temples, who support the monks, but do not occupy themselves with the philosophical side of Buddhism.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **explain** what the *sangha* is.
2. Prepare a mind map to **outline** the development of Mahayana Buddhism. Note the appearance of the various Mahayanan texts in your mind map.
3. **Distinguish** how the image of the Buddha in Mahayanan literature differs from the Theravadin image.
4. In one sentence, **summarise** the difference between Theravada and Mahayana Buddhism.
5. **Explain** the contribution of Mahayana to the development and expression of Buddhism.
6. **Analyse** the impact of Mahayana on Buddhism.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided to **investigate** some of the Mahayana schools. Choose two schools and write a report to **summarise** what their websites tell you about Mahayana Buddhism.

Weblink
Mahayanan Buddhism

Sister Dhammadinna (1881–1967)

GLOSSARY

refuge The taking of refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha* is a brief ritual that can be performed in private or in public by the laity and is extremely popular because of its simplicity.

Vesak The annual ritual celebrating the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death (*parinirvana*).

Sister Dhammadinna was born in the United States and lived in Sri Lanka for 30 years, probably from the early 1920s. She visited Australia twice, first in 1952 (a trip financed by the prominent Sri Lankan Buddhist scholar and diplomat, Dr G.P. Malalasekera) and again in 1957. At the time of those visits she was quite well known in Sri Lanka. She had been given patronage there by a Lady de Silva, who had built a Forest Hermitage – a kind of retreat that may be located in an urban area but retains a strong atmosphere of isolation. There Sister Dhammadinna lived in a hut, leading a life of seclusion.

The paradox of all this is that her life in Sri Lanka, the little we know about it, was that of a forest-dwelling monk more concerned about meditation than the ritualistic functions of a monk who acts like a parish priest in guiding a particular designated area. In this she was following the model of the small number of other Western women who went to Sri Lanka, became ordained as nuns and lived a life of poverty and chastity in an isolated location. This model of the forest-dwelling monk who builds up huge merit is well known in Buddhism. It is believed this merit can be transferred to those not capable of engaging in the meditational lifestyle needed to produce it.

Mr Graeme Lyall, a member of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales since its inception in 1985, knew Sister Dhammadinna and has provided valuable information about her time in Sydney. He paints a picture of a strong-willed, austere woman who tested her students in different ways, held eccentric views about the identity of some of the people she came into contact with, and tried to influence most aspects of the lives of those who became her students.

When she first arrived in Sydney, in 1952, she was 70 years old and virtually penniless. Initially, she stayed with Marie Byles, who housed Sister Dhammadinna in a hut in the backyard of her own house. Eventually, she was provided with accommodation by another Sydney Buddhist, Leo Berkeley, until she moved to a granny flat in the home of Eric and Lynne Penrose. As well as conducting weekly classes at Leo Berkeley's house, she also gave lectures at the Centre Club in George Street.

> Although she had a solid knowledge of Buddhism, she was somewhat eccentric. It was not unusual for her, during her lectures to cry out saying that she had had a glimpse of enlightenment. She also gave weekly lectures at the Centre Club premises in George Street, Sydney. A very old man used to attend these lectures. She claimed that she followed him to the stairs one night and he disappeared. She claimed that he was a manifestation of Sakka, king of the gods, who had come to subdue evil whilst she lectured.
>
> Graeme Lyall, 2004

DID YOU KNOW?

Marie Byles (1900–1979) was the first woman to qualify to practise law in New South Wales and was a founding member of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales, the first society of Western Buddhists in Australia. As well as writing several books on Buddhism, she was an ardent bushwalker and advocate for the conservation of the environment.

It is said in the Pali meditational texts that meditators can receive a glimpse of *nirvana* at a certain point in their meditation, and both Sakka and Brahma were Hindu deities who performed protective roles in relation to the Buddha. In this sense, Sister Dhammadinna's comments are fully understandable within a Buddhist cultural background.

On 29 May 1953, she gave the **refuges** and the Five Precepts (see Chapter 2, page 32) to a group of eight people, who from then on were considered lay Buddhists. A **Vesak** celebratory ritual was held on the same day. She left Australia shortly after the refuges and lived for a while in Hawaii before returning to Australia in 1957. Once more she gave classes and lectures, though by this time the Buddhist Society of New South Wales had split into two factions. When her visa expired, Sister Dhammadinna went back to Hawaii and lived in a Zen temple there. She died in 1967.

▷ Refer to pages 214–5 for a description of Vesak.

FIGURE 10.1.3 Sister Dhammadinna in Sydney with those who took the refuges and celebrated Vesak with her in May 1953. At front right is Graeme Lyall (1931–2015) one of the central figures of Australian Buddhism in the twentieth century.

What, in conclusion, can be said of Sister Dhammadinna? She obviously had a good knowledge of Buddhist doctrine and was a proficient practitioner of meditation. With her focus on meditation and knowledge of Western culture, Sister Dhammadinna was an ideal person to visit Australia at a time when Buddhism was attracting considerable interest. When she arrived in 1952, she had lived in Sri Lanka for 30 years, and before that had

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been brought up in the United States. It is possible that the reasons she became a Buddhist were also reflected in the decisions of the European Australians to take the same step – although spending 30 years in Sri Lanka would have alienated her somewhat from the changes then occurring in Europe and the United States.

It cannot be said that she was the founder of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales, nor that interest in Buddhism would have subsided without her initial year-long visit. A so-called 'Little Circle of *Dhamma*' had already existed in Melbourne in 1925 and a number of influential personalities were already studying Buddhism prior to her arrival in Sydney. Yet her year in Sydney would have sustained the interest and practices of those early pioneers who helped establish Buddhism in Australia. Sister Dhammadinna was somebody who had long experience in a well-known Theravada country, she had good credentials as a meditator, and she was also able to bring a taste of an actual Buddhist culture to people whose knowledge of Buddhism had been primarily gained through books. In addition, she might have been responsible for focusing the interests of the two main Buddhist societies in Australia on Theravada rather than Mahayana Buddhism (which remained rather peripheral until the early 1970s).

To say she is a significant person in Buddhism as a whole is problematic – that would be to assume her influence in Buddhism extended beyond a group of European Australian Buddhists who were associated with the founding of the Buddhist Society of New South Wales. To them, however, she was quite significant.

REVIEW

1. Briefly **outline** the distinguishing features of Theravada Buddhism.
2. In your own words, **define** 'refuge'.
3. **Explain** the contribution of Sister Dhammadinna to the development and expression of Buddhism in Australia.
4. **Analyse** the impact of Sister Dhammadinna on Buddhism in Australia.

EXTENSION

1. What do you think is the significance of the name 'Dhammadinna'?
2. Use the weblinks provided to find out more about Sister Dhammadinna and Buddhism in New South Wales.

Weblinks
Buddhism in NSW

ABC Radio National Encounter

Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926)

GLOSSARY

sangha Name for the assembly of monks and nuns

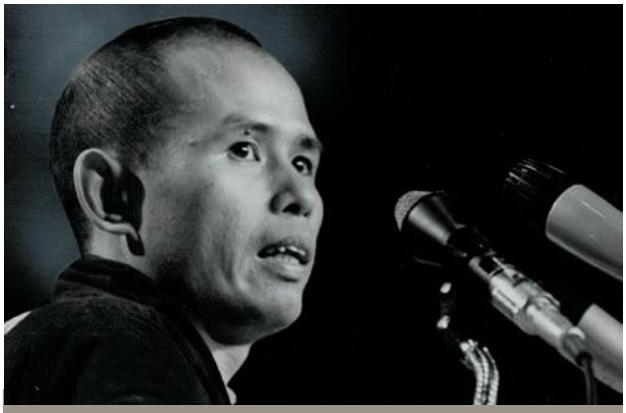
Thich Nhat Hanh is a charismatic Vietnamese monk who became a significant peace campaigner and had a huge impact on the anti-war movement of the 1960s and 1970s. He continues to speak out against violence in all its forms. Hanh became a Mahayana monk at a young age, received a monastic education, and became active at a time when his country was fighting for its independence during a long civil war (1955–75). He was exiled from Vietnam in 1966 and only allowed to return in 2005. In 1982, he established the Plum Village Monastery in Southern France and other Buddhist centres in Europe, America and Australia. His literary output has been enormous – more than one hundred books – and he has also been heavily involved in establishing and growing the movement called Engaged Buddhism (see page 208).

© Plum Village Community of Engaged Buddhism

FIGURE 10.1.4 Thich Nhat Hanh leading his community on a walking meditation in Plum Village, France, 2014

Hanh is very much a Buddhist activist, a stance he took during his emergence on the international scene during the beginnings of the Vietnam War. The government of Ngo Dinh Diem (1955–63) had a strong Catholic bias. It persecuted various Buddhist groups, and engaged in forced conversions and destruction of pagodas. Different groups led by monks had come out against this persecution, especially since Vietnam had long been primarily a Buddhist country.

Hanh was involved in 1964 with the Unified Buddhist ***Sangha***, an organisation attempting to unify the different Buddhist groups in Vietnam, and was instrumental in establishing the Van Hanh Buddhist University and then the School of Youth for Social Service in September 1965. In 1966 he accepted an invitation from Cornell University to visit the United States for a speaking tour. He left Vietnam for what he thought would be only a few



Getty Images/Jeff Goode

FIGURE 10.1.5 Thich Nhat Hanh in Canada, speaking against the war in Vietnam, on 22 October 1967, the year Rev. Martin Luther King Jr nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize. That year no one was awarded the prize.

weeks. In June 1966, a peace proposal Hanh presented in Washington, DC, urging Americans to stop bombing and offer reconstruction aid, led to an immediate ban on his return to Vietnam – the beginning of his 40-year exile. When peace talks were held in Paris in 1969, he led the Buddhist delegation.

Out of his deep concern for world peace Hanh developed the ideas of Engaged Buddhism and 'walking meditation', which have been very influential in modernising Buddhism and bringing it to the West.

DID YOU KNOW?

Thich Nhat Hanh could not return to Vietnam until he was permitted to visit in 2005. He spent his years of exile in France, where he founded Plum Village Monastery in the Dordogne.

Weblink
Life of Hanh

▷ Chapter 15 Religion and peace, pages 327–8.

Engaged Buddhism

Engaged Buddhism was developed by Thich Nhat Hanh as a means of taking Buddhism out of the monastery and into the social and economic world. It is a form of active social work applying Buddhist principles to social and economic problems.

The idea of Engaged Buddhism was based on the example 'of a living *Bodhisattva* named Bac Sieu, who had been riding a bicycle for fifty years to bring rice and care to thousands of destitute in the city of Hue'. Students associated with the School of Youth for Social Service initially practised it as 'volunteers' – and not necessarily as monks – who had 'rejected a life based on materialism but sought only the happiness that a life of service could bring'.

Hanh lays out the 14 principles of Engaged Buddhism in his 1993 book *Interbeing: Fourteen Guidelines for Engaged Buddhism*.

These 14 principles include: not holding any doctrine – even of Buddhist teachings – as absolute truth; confronting suffering; rejecting fame, profit and wealth; not hating or being angry; maintaining mindfulness at all times; not creating conflict with words; always speaking truthfully; not using the Buddhist community for profit; not engaging in an occupation that is harmful; not killing or letting others kill; not stealing; looking after your own body; and practising sexual integrity.

Weblink
Engaged Buddhism

In these, one can see the five basic precepts (see Chapter 2, page 32) that the Buddha laid down for laypeople. But they go further by applying them to a world of over-consumption, greed, unsustainability, communal hatred and excess individuality.

Collectively, these precepts establish a coherent program that forms the foundation for a world where economic inequality is diminished, where peace reigns instead of warfare, and where, because of the application of mindfulness, individuals are much more sensitive to the thoughts of others and also of the way their own emotions drive their behaviour. Engaged Buddhism is then another social movement perfectly suited to confronting the problems of the twenty-first century, while also offering to people a sense of religious depth that is not dogmatic.

> Today, there are thousands worldwide who regularly recite the Fourteen Precepts of Engaged Buddhism, which remain uniquely applicable to contemporary moral dilemmas. They are guidelines for anyone wishing to live mindfully. By developing peace and serenity through ethical and conscientious living, we can help our society make the transition from one based on greed and consumerism to one in which thoughtfulness and compassionate action are of the deepest value.
>
> Fred Eppsteiner, Introduction to 'The fourteen precepts of Engaged Buddhism', Lion's Roar website, 2017

Walking mindfulness

Over the last 10 years the form of meditation known as mindfulness has been released from its Buddhist framework and adopted into all sorts of practices associated with psychology and educational training. It is a mode of meditation that involves training the mind to step back and contemplate everything around it without making any judgement. It can be adaptable to all sorts of contexts and has become an almost universal aspect of contemporary Buddhism.

DID YOU KNOW?

Mindfulness, which has become so popular in the Western world, is ultimately derived from one of the two fundamental forms of meditation taught by the Buddha in the fifth century BCE.

Walk with Me is a meditative film about a community of Zen Buddhist monks and nuns who have dedicated their lives to mastering the art of mindfulness with their world-famous teacher Thich Nhat Hanh.

Weblink
Walk with Me

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Hanh's special contribution has been to make its application much easier by developing the idea of 'walking meditation'. This enables the development of meditational activity in the mind, slowing down one's mental and physical activity, and providing a new focus for appreciating the earth.

> To walk in this way, we have to notice each step. Each step made in mindfulness can bring us back to the here and the now. Go slowly. Mindfulness lights our way. We don't rush. With each breath we may take just one step. We may have run all our life, but now we don't have to run anymore. This is the time to stop running. To be grounded in the earth is to feel its solidity with each step and know that we are right where we are supposed to be.
>
> …
>
> Walking meditation unites our body and our mind. We combine our breathing with our steps. When we breathe in, we may take two or three steps. When we breathe out, we may take three, four, or five steps. We pay attention to what is comfortable for our body.
>
> …
>
> In Buddhism, we speak of meditation as an act of awakening. To awaken is to be awake to something. We need to be awake to the fact that the earth is in danger and living species on earth are also in danger. When we walk mindfully, each step reminds us of our responsibility. We have to protect the earth with the same commitment we have to protect our family and ourselves. The earth can nourish and heal us but it suffers as well. With each step the earth heals us, and with each step we heal the earth.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh on walking meditation

Climate change

It is clear from his teachings on walking meditation and Engaged Buddhism that Hanh is very concerned about the earth and its welfare, and this has led him into a further deep concern about the problem of climate change. Much that he writes now is directed at making people – all people – aware that the earth is precious, that humans are part of it, and that they must begin to appreciate the true relationship they have with it. Using analogies such as 'The earth is our mother …' reaches deep into the beliefs of various religions, though not into the teachings of the Buddha himself.

> We need to change our way of thinking and seeing things. We need to realise that the Earth is not just our environment. The Earth is not something outside of us. Breathing with mindfulness and contemplating your body, you realise that you are the Earth. You realise that your consciousness is also the consciousness of the Earth. Look around you – what you see is not your environment, it is you.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh, statement to the UN on climate change, September 2015

In 2014, Hahn suffered a severe stroke, and in 2018 he returned to Vietnam to live at Tu Hieu Temple for 'his remaining days'. This is the temple where he was given *dhamma* transmission – which made him a teacher as a 16-year-old.

Hanh has become famous in the West as a monk who has taken Buddhism into the secular world. He uses language that comes from Christianity, Hinduism and other religions, and this makes his teachings very accessible to a wide audience. But the Buddhist flavour is strongly retained. He remains a typical monk with shaved head and saffron robes.

Getty Images/Linh Pham

FIGURE 10.1.6 **Buddhist monks and nuns greeting Thich Nhat Hanh (centre) at a ceremony marking the first day of Lunar New Year at Tu Hieu temple on 25 January 2020**

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the major events in the life of Thich Nhat Hanh.
2. What is the relationship between Engaged Buddhism and mindfulness?
3. **Explain** the contribution of Thich Nhat Hanh to Buddhism.
4. 'There is no doubt that Thich Nhat Hanh has had a huge influence on the acceptance of Buddhist teachings by Westerners. It is difficult, however, to assess how influential he is in contemporary South-East Asian Buddhism.' **Analyse** some implications of this statement.

EXTENSION

1. Using the weblinks provided, **construct** a storyboard for a documentary on the life of Thich Nhat Hanh. What would be your priorities in telling his story?
2. Try mindfulness by downloading one of the free apps available from reputable sites. For example, see the Mindful Check-in meditation app from Nan Tien Temple or a mindfulness app from Plum Village. Write three sentences to **describe** your experience.

Weblinks
Memories of Thich Nhat Hanh

Thich Nhat Hanh prepares to die

Life of Thich Nhat Hanh

Life of Thich Nhat Hanh podcast

Thich Nhat Hanh's peerless influence

Mindfulness apps

Mindful check-in

Worksheet
Buddhism significant individual or group

10.2 Ethics

GLOSSARY

ethics Ethics is the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Its purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

The Buddha stressed the cultivation of particular **ethics**, and Buddhist ethical behaviour was grounded within the realm of individual intentionality, not of group cohesion. Intentionality was emphasised because the accrual of *karma* was a consequence of the intention to act in a particular way, not just of the physical act itself. Ethics in Buddhism are directed at a person's present situation such that, if followed, ethical behaviour will always produce positive outcomes. Ethical behaviour is also directed towards the ultimate attainment of *nirvana*, at least as far as monks and nuns are concerned.

Worksheet
Buddhist ethics

At the most elementary (yet still difficult) level, Buddhist practice requires that negative emotions are translated into positive emotions, until the negative emotions finally disappear. Three negative emotions – greed, hatred and delusion – lie deep within the mind and, being so basic, are extremely difficult to eradicate. It is primarily through meditational practices that these will be eradicated as emotional tendencies, whereas the transformation of negative emotions to positive emotions will be achieved more easily by following the Buddha's precepts about behaviour. The Buddha's teachings on ethics could be described as having both therapeutic and spiritual implications.

▷ Refer to Chapter 2, pages 31–2, for the core ethical teachings of Buddhism.

All of this is laid down with considerable emphasis in Buddhist literature, and the specific forms of ethical attitudes are defined with great precision. This means it is easier to trace changes in ethical attitudes nowadays back to what is found in the classical texts or, more pointedly, to locate precedents in canonical texts for shifts in contemporary ethical behaviour.

Bioethics

GLOSSARY

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating, but not limited to, medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgements for human conduct.

Vinaya The name given to the collections of books detailing the conduct of monks, and a word denoting correct conduct – the monastic code.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'bioethics' was coined in 1970 by US biochemist Dr Van Rensselaer Potter as a bridge between science and humanity.

In the last decade there has been a great deal of writing on **bioethics** from scholars of Buddhism and Buddhist practitioners. Although this can be considered a response to advances in both medical technology and modernist thinking, it is possible to find passages in Buddhist canonical and post-canonical literature that have a direct bearing on what have come to be framed as bioethical questions. Abortion and euthanasia are both important subjects of bioethical discourse. Both share the characteristic of being processes that require acts of violence (admittedly, qualified violence) for their proper execution. Violence is, however, strongly condemned in Buddhism, both for laypeople and for monks and nuns. Laypeople are requested to abstain from killing any living beings, although exceptions are made for people in certain occupations, such as farmers who may unintentionally have to engage in the killing of animals. In the case of monks, the intentional taking of a human's life is one of the four ***Vinaya*** offences that lead to immediate expulsion from the *sangha*.

The classical texts go further than simply opposing acts of violence, as understood in the broadest possible sense. Passages in these texts against abortion and euthanasia would then seem to function as definitive precedents. The famous and still influential fifth-century CE commentator Buddhaghosha expressed this view:

> 'Taking life,' means to murder anything that lives. It refers to the striking and killing of living beings … 'Taking life' is then the will to kill anything that one perceives as having life, to act so as to terminate the life-force in it, in so far as the will finds expression in bodily action or in speech.
>
> Cited in E. Conze, *Buddhist Scriptures*, 1959, pp. 70–1

The *Vinaya* goes even further than this, specifically making proscriptions against acts of abortion by the monk:

> An ordained monk should not intentionally deprive a living thing of life even if it is only an ant. A monk who deliberately deprives a human being of life, even to the extent of causing an abortion, is no longer a follower of the Buddha.
>
> *Vinaya* I, 97, translation by D. Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics*, 1995, p. 93

This may seem obvious when applied to living beings that can be seen to be such. What about a foetus, which cannot be seen and may not be obviously a living thing?

Abortion

Buddhist literature is clear that the criterion of life is determined by the presence of consciousness (*vijnana*) in an entity, as this makes such an entity a 'sentient being'.

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If anything, whether god, human, animal or plant, is capable of reflective thought, it is regarded as having the capacity to know self-consciously and is therefore regarded as a sentient being. A foetus is considered to have sufficient qualities to meet the above definition, leading to the conclusion that the act of abortion is an act of violence against a living being who possesses an individuality that is distinct from that of the woman carrying it.

> The correct analysis of pregnancy from a Buddhist perspective is not that the fetus is a 'part' of the mother but that one individual is temporarily housed within the body of another. Abortion is therefore neither simply the loss of part of the mother nor a temporary redirection of the life flow. In the simplest terms it is the intentional destruction of a karmic being.
>
> D. Keown, *Buddhism and Bioethics*, 1995, p. 106

Abortion was certainly known in early Buddhist literature, and a number of texts in the *Vinaya* literature make reference to it. Because monks were known to possess medical knowledge, there are recorded cases where they were approached to provide drug-related remedies that would lead to abortion. The provision of these remedies was forbidden by the Buddha and any monk who provided them would have been liable for formal punishment. It is not known how common this would have been in the period when the early texts were composed, but the prohibitions are illustrated by actual examples.

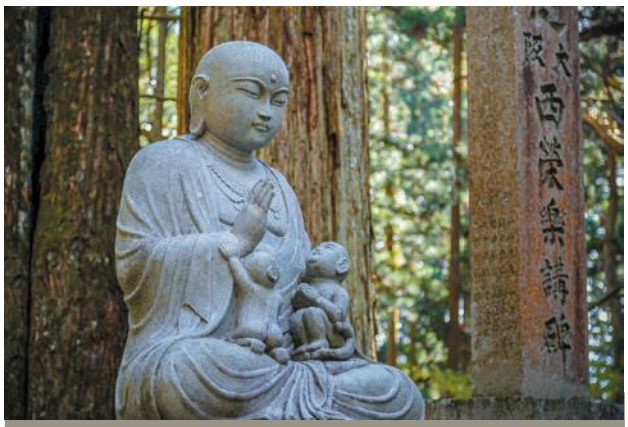
In contemporary Buddhist societies of South-East Asia, the image of monks is that they are too far removed from the 'secular' world to even engage in debates about abortion and other bioethical matters. Their traditional status as people who leave the social world to pursue a spiritual life is such that they are regarded as incapable of dealing with bioethical problems. However, while members of the monastic orders in these countries are viewed in this light, this is not so for the rest of the population who have been raised as lay Buddhists. As Buddhists, the lay members of the population should not conduct abortions because of the prohibition against killing living beings, the first of the five actions not recommended for laypeople. Nonetheless, abortions are performed and are quite widespread in Thailand, and especially Japan, even though the statistics can never be fully accurate.

The performance of an abortion has karmic implications for the aborted foetus, the person who conducts the procedure, and the woman who undergoes the abortion. Each will experience karmic consequences that must be lived out in the future. The least of these will be experienced by the aborted foetus – birth as a human is always regarded as being superior to birth in the other five life worlds, as it is only humans who are in the privileged position to attain *nirvana*. This is why the karmic consequences of abortion for those who perform it are greater than the act of violence perpetrated.

The *sangha* does not want to be involved in the abortion debate – in fact, its attitude towards it is already clear – yet abortion is widespread in many Buddhist countries. What is to be done from a Buddhist perspective? A positive response to it can scarcely be expected, for the reasons already given. One resolution is the performance of rituals that are in some vague sense associated with Buddhism, and that are perhaps modelled on the transfer of merit from the living to the dead. This enables the appropriate ceremony to be placed within an existing Buddhist framework.

> [In Thailand] the very common ceremonies of making money, flowers, or incense offerings to Buddhist images, and releasing birds, fish, or turtles at temples are frequently resorted to by women to assuage their feelings of guilt and to lessen the harm done to the aborted fetus. This would be achieved by transferring the merit of the ritual to the fetus.
>
> R. Florida, 'Buddhism and abortion', in D. Keown (ed.), *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, 2000, p. 154

A similar resolution to the problem is found in the veneration among Japanese of the *bodhisattva* Jizo Bosatsu, whose images are made in honour of aborted foetuses. He is a *bodhisattva* who is long reputed to have assisted the dead and was especially connected with children dying in childbirth and at a very young age. Commissioning the construction of an image of him and having it formally established in a temple has become an important religious means of expressing compassion for the aborted foetus.



Alamy Stock Photo/ coward_lion

FIGURE 10.2.1 Statue of the *bodhisattva* Jizo Bosatsu holding two children, Koyasan, Japan

RESPOND

Explain how veneration of Jizo Bosatsu and other ceremonies can lessen the guilt of 'the intentional destruction of a karmic being'.

Euthanasia

It is not difficult to see that the same arguments that apply to abortion will also apply to euthanasia, even if the latter differs from the former in that it applies to a demonstrable living being. Both acts are instances of violence conducted against a sentient being.

Bioethical problems pertaining to elderly people have two dimensions in contemporary Buddhist countries, either in shortening or lengthening a person's natural life. Both are regarded in a similar light and both have assumed a different dimension in the last 20 years because of the substantial improvement in medical technology. But decisions on the use of this technology, especially in countries where a strong pressure on resources exists, often clash with existing belief systems.

> We have here, then a conflict of values and moral perceptions between, on the one hand, the doctors who have faith in the healing powers of modern technological medicine and who have the obligation to save lives as part of their professional ethics; and on the other hand, the monk's [Venerable Buddhadasa] and his disciples' belief in the limitations of modern medicine … this famous monk who accepted natural death had wanted to set an example of facing it without fear or anxiety, in keeping with the tenets of Buddhism. These teachings emphasise non-clinging to life, and the non-craving for the prolongation of life, that is, the acceptance of death as part of the human condition.
>
> Pinit Ratanakul, 'To save or let go: Thai Buddhist perspectives on euthanasia', in D. Keown (ed.), *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, 2000, p. 172

This is a brilliant summary of the dilemma. Medical technology can 'artificially' lengthen or shorten a person's life, but to do so violates fundamental beliefs about *karma* for a Buddhist. Buddhists do not reject the use of medical treatment. If a person is sick, they should make use of available remedies, and medicine was developed to a very high level among monks in the monastic context. The two dimensions of extending or bringing an end to life apply mainly to the old.

Early Buddhist texts forbid suicide. Both taking your own life and having somebody else take it for you with your own informed consent stand directly at odds with the traditional teachings of *karma*. According to Buddhist (and Hindu) views of *karma*, many details of a person's life are determined by past actions, even to the point where the time and circumstances of one's death may be determined. Though it could be argued that suicide concludes a person's life at a particular time as determined by past *karma*, there is also the possibility that it cuts short a life that would have lasted longer if a natural death had been allowed. Cutting short one's life can lead to the consequence that the past karmic impulses that should have been lived out in that life will now have to be lived out in a later life. Hence, suicide could be understood as a cause for further rebirth. Euthanasia may well fall into this category even if it is agreed upon by the patient.

Similarly, if life is extended artificially (the opposite of euthanasia) the same problem may arise. Karmic impulses dictate a particular life span and this is violated if technology is used to prolong that life span.

There is also the question of the karmic implications for those who undertake the process of euthanasia. Ultimately, all violent acts are opposed according to Buddhist doctrine, even violent acts towards oneself, because they will be productive of (usually) bad *karma*. In the case of the famous Thai monk Venerable Buddhadasa (1906–1993), the doctors found it necessary to use artificial means to save his life after a severe stroke. They were reluctant, however, to keep him in hospital against his own wishes because they were concerned that his inevitable death might have been attributable to them, with the accompanying karmic consequences.

While it is likely that debate about euthanasia will continue to emerge in Buddhist countries, the parameters of this debate will not be markedly different from what has been suggested here.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** the Buddhist concept of *karma*.
2. **Describe** the principal ethical teachings of Buddhism as covered in this section.
3. **Explain** how these teachings are used to determine Buddhist positions on bioethical issues.
4. In pairs, **discuss** whether cultural factors have any influence in a Buddhist response to bioethical issues.
5. **Analyse** the application of Buddhist ethical teachings to one bioethical issue.

EXTENSION

Use the weblink provided to find out more about Buddhist ethics in relation to stem-cell research. **Summarise** in point form the Buddhist attitude to stem-cell research.

Weblink
Buddhism and stem-cell research

Environmental ethics

In contemporary Buddhist countries, the current situation that is applied to the treatment of the natural environment in an ethical sense is the same as that found in relation to bioethics. To even consider the idea of environmental ethics in Buddhism requires an understanding of Buddhist perspectives on the environment.

Buddhist teachings certainly take a negative attitude towards the sociocultural world of the city and the village, but deal with it in a realistic way. Monks and nuns can be *in* the world while they are not *of* it (that is, not consumed by worldly things). As for nature, there is no definitive view in the early texts. In the early *Theragatha* poems composed by monks, the natural world of forest and mountain is seen as a place of isolation and danger from animals and demons, and the courage of the monk who resides there is lauded. The theme of the heroic forest-dwelling monk is frequently found in such poems. So, if the natural environment was appreciated, it was in a very broad sense without any real attempt to define precisely why it should be so appreciated. Isolation was important for the meditator, not the precise nature of the environment governing this isolation.

With its focus on liberation from *samsara*, Buddhist doctrine aims towards creating the conditions where a person

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can free themselves of the conditions that produce further rebirths. At a very basic level, then, Buddhist doctrine would result in an attitude of indifference towards the condition of the environment which, like all other phenomenal things, is conditioned by the three marks of existence.

▷ Refer to Chapter 2, pages 25–6, for coverage of the three marks of existence.

> Liberation, then, comes through escape from the bonds that tie us to samsara, not through some fundamental restructuring of existence. In this light the environmentalist agenda of restoration, though well intentioned, misses the fundamental point.
>
> Ian Harris, 'Buddhism and ecology', in D. Keown (ed.), *Contemporary Buddhist Ethics*, 2000, p. 123

This is the dilemma faced by contemporary Buddhists who want to be activists for the preservation of the environment, while wanting to anchor their activism in their tradition's understanding of the Buddha's own teachings. To put this succinctly: if a person's sole aim is to put an end to rebirth, why waste time improving the conditions from which one is attempting to escape? A qualification to this is that plants and animals are both regarded as sentient beings. The case for regarding plants as sentient beings is a difficult one, yet there is some evidence in the texts that this is how plants were regarded. If so, this would justify active intervention to preserve the environment on the basis of the monk's need to exercise compassion.

AAP Photos/Reuters/Apichart Weerawong

FIGURE 10.2.2 A Buddhist monk in Thailand ordaining a tree

A new element in the Buddhist response to environmental concerns relates to developing Buddhist activism in regard to human-induced climate change. This has long been foreshadowed by very prominent Buddhist figures such as Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama, who have for 20 years expressed a deep concern about the environment and climate change, basing their concerns on what they have observed around them and a strong belief in the interdependence of all things. They have connected this directly with their teachings on world peace (see Chapter 15, pages 326–8) and the *bodhisattva* impulse of helping all beings in both a material and a religious sense. Both men have been very influential in internationalising Buddhism in the West, and with this they have brought a strong recommendation about the need for action about climate change.

DID YOU KNOW?

A recent book, *Our Only Home: A Climate Appeal to the World (2020)*, has the Dalai Lama speculating that if the Buddha returned to this world he would 'certainly be connected to the campaign to protect the environment … Buddha would be green' (*The Guardian*, 12 November 2020).

In practical terms a number of initiatives have taken place. The widely publicised statement 'The time to act is now: A Buddhist declaration on climate change' of 2015 was developed from contributions by Buddhist scholars and monks of all traditions. The first signatory was the Dalai Lama, and he was followed by many thousands of others. The website Ecological Buddhism, associated with this declaration, provides a Buddhist justification for action to confront the environmental and social effects of climate change. Much of the short declaration is taken up with summarising the present scientific position on climate change, but there are very clear signs of an attempt to frame this within the context of fundamental Buddhist teachings. Consider this extract from the declaration:

> From a Buddhist perspective, a sane and sustainable economy would be governed by the principle of sufficiency: the key to happiness is contentment rather than an ever-increasing abundance of goods. The compulsion to consume more and more is an expression of craving, the very thing the Buddha pinpointed as the root cause of suffering.
>
> 'The time to act is now: A Buddhist declaration on climate change', 14 May 2015

A more practical application of concern for the environment can be found in Thailand, where Buddhist monks are involved with sustainability, placing solar panels at Buddhist temples and helping villagers build houses out of mud and other sustainable material. Another expression of this environmental concern is found in the tree ordination movement, in which trees are ordained in a ceremony and this prevents them from being logged. This is in response to

Weblink
Buddhism and climate change

the widespread logging that has been so damaging to forests in several South-East Asian countries.

REVIEW

1. **Describe** the principal ethical teachings of Buddhism as covered in this section.
2. **Explain** how these teachings are used to determine the development of environmental ethics in Buddhism.
3. **Analyse** the application of Buddhist ethical teachings to a specific environmental issue by using the material provided at the weblinks.

Weblink
Dharmanet International

Buddhist 'eco-monks'

EXTENSION

Follow the weblink to read David Loy's essay 'What would the Buddha do?' on the Ecological Buddhism website. To what extent are his perspectives consistent with your knowledge of basic Buddhist teachings?

Weblink
What would the Buddha do?

10.3 Significant practices

GLOSSARY

buddhahood The view that all beings have within them the potential to become a Buddha and possess enlightening knowledge.

public devotion The communal sharing of prayer and other religious actions, beyond the home, that binds the religious group as a faith community.

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use. Within the rite there are certain rituals; these are established or prescribed procedures and actions for the ceremony.

Worksheet
Buddhism significant practice

Most Buddhist countries today have a rich ritual calendar, something that was not present within early Buddhist culture, in which most rituals were practised in respect of Hindu and non-Hindu fertility deities. Many contemporary rituals are in fact fertility rituals and, with the exception of funerary rituals, Buddhist countries do not show much interest in performing the more typical Western '**rites** of passage'.

Some of the specifically Buddhist rituals centre on the commemoration of the Buddha himself. Others are designed to reaffirm particular relations between the *sangha* and the laity. Still others are directed towards the veneration of Buddhist deities, each having their own place within a hierarchy of functions of power and authority, with the Buddha placed at the top.

This may seem odd given the popularly held belief that Buddhism does not accommodate a belief in gods. Yet, in most countries where Buddhism enjoys a strong presence, pre-Buddhist beliefs have been incorporated into Buddhist practices. This means that, in studying Buddhist ritual, there are very few 'pure' Buddhist rituals that are not in some way intermixed with what were originally non-Buddhist elements.

Vesak

NOTE

Vesak (sometimes anglicised to Wesak) derives from the Sanskrit *Visakha*, but in modern South-East Asian languages it becomes Vesak, which is now the most commonly used word.

One of the most commonly performed rituals of **public devotion** in Buddhist countries, including Australia in recent years, is the celebration of Vesak or *Visakha*. This annual ritual celebrates the Buddha's birth, enlightenment and death (or *parinirvana*), all of which are believed by the celebrants to have occurred on the same day. By bringing together these fundamental events the ritual not only mirrors the temporal boundaries of the Buddha's life, but also focuses on the religious high points of his life. In South-East Asian countries, it is performed on the full-moon day of the month of *Visakha* (April–May), hence the name Vesak. It may not be coincidental that this is just before the beginning of the rainy season in these countries.

DID YOU KNOW?

The decision to agree to celebrate Vesak as the Buddha's birthday was formalised at the first Conference of the World Fellowship of Buddhists, held in Sri Lanka in 1950.

The earliest occurrence of the practice of Vesak seems very old, though obviously it must come after the death of the Buddha since it celebrates his life and spiritual achievements. In the Sinhalese (literally 'from Sri Lanka') chronicle of kingship, the *Mahavamsha*, composed in the fifth century CE, most of the early Sinhalese kings are credited with performing many Vesaks. Of these kings, the earliest was the famous Dutthagamini (101–77 BCE), who erected many religious edifices and held 24 Vesak *pujas*. Later kings are also recorded as having performed large

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numbers of these. Considering early Sri Lanka (then called Ceylon) was a Buddhist state, and the kings were active supporters of the religion, it is likely the Vesak ritual was a pre-eminent expression of the close connection between religion and state. Today the political implications are not so apparent, but it is inconceivable that a country where Buddhism is a prominent religion would not perform Vesak in some form or other. Today most South-East Asian Buddhist groups in Australia celebrate Vesak.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is likely the earliest Vesak to be held in Australia was the one performed in Sydney by Marie Byles and eight other people on 20 May 1951. Another was held in Sydney in May 1953 in the presence of Sister Dhammadinna (see page 202).

Vesak in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, where Vesak day is a national holiday, lamps are specially lit and, although flowers and coconut oil are used in the ritual, it is the parading of the lights that is most important. This reaffirms the importance of the symbolism associated with the Buddha as the remover of the darkness of ignorance. It is important to note that the royal family are present at the performance of the ritual, directly connecting the religion with the state.

Alamy Stock Photo/ZUMA Press, Inc.

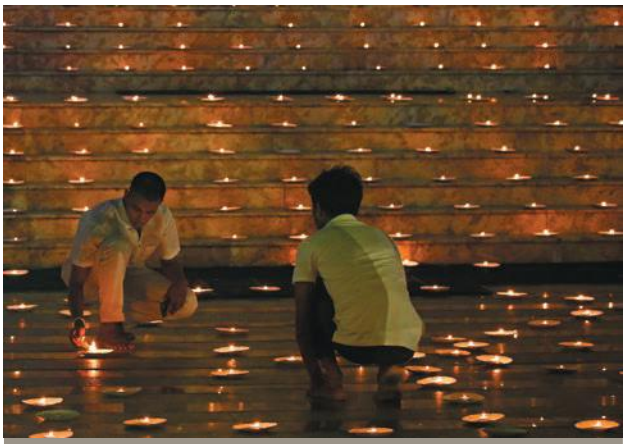

FIGURE 10.3.1 Sri Lankan Buddhist devotees in Colombo light coconut oil lamps for Vesak 2020 during an island-wide curfew.

Vesak in Thailand

In Thailand, Vesak is the year's greatest religious holiday, and it comes during seeding and ploughing season. During the day, Buddhists will do merit and attend sermons at the temples (*wat*). In the evening, Buddhist monks throughout the country lead the laity in a magnificent candlelight procession three times around Buddhist shrines. In the villages, elders attend temple celebrations and sermons during the day. Those who have been working all day in the fields return at dusk to join the candle- or torch-lit processions. These processions are enacted in every village, town and city *wat*. Each person carries flowers, three glowing incense sticks and a lighted candle in silent homage to the Buddha, his teaching and his disciples.

The procedures followed here occur in most other South-East Asian countries where Vesak is performed. Both the laity and the monks participate, indicating the great importance of the Buddha as a behavioural exemplar for both groups. Lights of various kinds are also common in many countries.

In South-East Asia, Vesak coincides with the spring festivals, and so brings rituals associated with Buddhism directly into conjunction with the agrarian calendar, reflecting a correspondence that has probably been associated with Buddhism since near its beginning.

Vesak in Burma (Myanmar)

Vesak in Burma is described thus:

> The full moon of May … is marked by watering the bo tree, the tree under which Enlightenment came to the Buddha. As at the New Year, merit is also acquired by capturing fish in the dwindling ponds and lakes, for this is the very end of the dry season, in which many lakes and riverbeds dry up, and releasing them in fresh water.
>
> Strangely enough, Buddha Day, despite its important mythological associations, is not one of the popular festivals in Burma. In the villages it comes at the beginning of the agricultural season, and few villagers find time to take part in its various observances.
>
> M.E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and its Burmese Vicissitudes*, 2nd edn, 1987, pp. 221–2

In Burma, the most important component is a celebration of the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment. This celebration is usually made easy as most Buddhist temples contain replicas of bo or Bodhi trees and the ritual watering of one of these is not expensive in either time or money. The act of releasing fish into fresh water is an act of compassion. It is an expression of the compassionate aspect of the Buddha's own practices of generosity that were described in popular tales such as the Jataka tales, which tell of the Buddha's previous lives before he attained **buddhahood**.

Even though the Buddha's attainment of enlightenment is highlighted in Vesak, most lay Buddhists would recognise this as being an unattainable goal for them, at least in this life. Yet in the use of lights and the release of fish we observe an intermingling of intellectual Buddhism with behavioural expressions of compassion, both understood well by the laity. Both expressions are essential in folk Buddhism and Vesak is a clear elaboration of the need for both levels of Buddhism to coexist, as well as a measure of the success with which they do exist. Note that it is the monks who recite the texts – this and their central role in such rituals reaffirms the difference between the *sangha* and the laity.

Vesak in India

Although Buddhism no longer has the following in India that it has in South-East Asia, the celebration of Vesak continues in those areas where there is a strong Tibetan and Nepalese influence. Here, on the full-moon day in *Vaishakh* (the second month in the traditional Hindu

Newspix/John Casamento

FIGURE 10.3.2 Preparations for Vesak at the Sri Lankan Buddhist temple at Yuroke, north-west of Melbourne

calendar followed in North India), all the important occasions related to the Buddha are combined in one.

Buddhist rituals for celebrating the three-in-one occasion are naturally elaborate. On this day, after bathing, Buddhists wear only white clothes. They gather in their *viharas* (monasteries) for worship and give alms to monks. Prayers, sermons and nonstop recitation of Buddhist scriptures resound in *viharas*, religious halls, and homes. There are day-long readings of the scriptures, before statues of the Buddha, by monks in the *viharas*. Laypeople listen to these readings and also offer gifts such as incense, flowers and candles to the statues.

The replica of the *Bodhi Vrksa* – the tree under which the Buddha attained enlightenment – is hung with garlands and coloured flags. Its roots are sprinkled with milk and scented water, and lamps are lit around it.

Many Buddhists spend their entire day at the *vihara* listening to discourses on the life and teachings of the Buddha or invite monks to their homes. They also reaffirm their faith in the Five Precepts – not to take life, not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to lie and not to take alcohol or drugs that confuse the mind.

On Vesak, Buddhists refrain from eating meat. They eat kheer (rice cooked in milk and sugar), which they share with the poor. They set up stalls in public places to offer others clean drinking water and also show kindness to animals.

Aims of Vesak

Descriptions of Vesak vary slightly from country to country, but all have in common the apparent fact that, despite the importance of this ritual, it does not make complex demands on its performers. The aims of Vesak are to:

- commemorate, and therefore explore, three extremely important events in the life of the Buddha
- celebrate the achievements of the Buddha and recognise his importance as a model for all Buddhists, monastic and lay, to emulate.

This explains the reading of tales about the Buddha at these events and the observance of behavioural attitudes directly associated with the life of the Buddha.

It is also important that Vesak occurs on a very significant full-moon day, when planting is about to begin in anticipation of the coming rains. Somehow a connection is drawn between the Buddha himself and fertility associated with the rains.

REVIEW

1 **Define** the term 'ritual' in the context of Buddhism.
2 **Clarify** how a Buddhist would define 'public devotion'.
3 Re-read each of the descriptions of Vesak and **outline** their similarities and differences.
4 **Describe** in one paragraph the extent to which Vesak is a celebration of the Buddha's life.
5 **Construct** a flow chart to illustrate and **explain** the key elements of Vesak.
6 **Demonstrate** how the ritual of Vesak expresses the teachings of Buddhism.
7 **Analyse** the significance of Vesak for both the individual and the Buddhist community.

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EXTENSION

Use the weblinks provided to **investigate** the significance of Vesak. Write a 300-word report to **summarise** your findings.

Weblinks
Day of Vesak

Day of Vesak 2020

Vesak Sri Lanka

Vesak Day (documentary)

Pilgrimage

> Ananda, a man of good family who has confidence in the Buddha's teachings should visit these four awe-inspiring places. 'Which are these four?'
>
> Here where the Tathagata was born … Here where he attained the unsurpassed enlightenment and perfect awakening … Here where the Tathagata set rolling the unsurpassed wheel of *dhamma* … Here where the Tathagata attained his final *nirvana* consisting of that nirvana where nothing whatever remains …
>
> Ananda, monks, nuns, male and female lay followers – all having confidence in the Buddha's teachings – will come to where the Tathagata was born … And any of these who, believing in their heart, might die whilst undertaking a tour of a pilgrimage spot (*cetiyacakram*), will be reborn after death in the happy world of heaven.
>
> Summary of *Mahaparinibbanasutta*, *Digha Nikaya* 2, pp. 140–1

Four places are mentioned by the Buddha as appropriate places for what would later become famous pilgrimage spots. These places correspond to Lumbini, Bodh Gaya, Sarnath and Kushinagar, respectively. As early as 250 BCE, Ashoka announced in his inscriptions that he had visited the birthplace of the Buddha in Lumbini and helped refurbish the Bodhi temple at Bodh Gaya, the spot that marks the place where the Buddha became enlightened. He also established roadside centres to provide refreshments and temporary accommodation for pilgrims going to these spots. Ashoka's is the first publicised account of pilgrimage sites, and it is very likely pilgrimages were made to these sites well before his time. Later, in the fourth and sixth centuries CE, Chinese pilgrims also visited these sites and left accurate descriptions of them as they saw them at that time.

▷ Refer to Chapter 2, page 18, for a map of significant places in the life of the Buddha.

Today in India, these four places remain the most important on the map of pilgrimage for Buddhists, although there are other pilgrimage sites in India and in other countries as well. Another four places that are also accorded a very high status are all associated with miraculous events in the life of the Buddha. In order, these are Rajgir, Shravasti (now just a set of ruins), Vaishali and Samkasya. The Buddha spent many years of residence during the rainy season in both Rajgir and Shravasti. Buddhists from all over the world visit the first four locations and perform rituals, in particular, at the Bodhi temple. The other four sites are to some extent off the tourist track, although a special hotel has been built to accommodate Japanese tourists who visit Rajgir. Once there, pilgrims are also able to visit Nalanda. This 14-hectare site contains the ruins of a huge Buddhist university that flourished from the fourth to the seventh centuries CE.

Buddhists also visit other sites, such as famous *stupas* and locations where celebrated monks, or occasionally nuns, have lived for many years leading an austere life of meditation. Such places are considered to be strong sources of merit, but they differ from those sites sacred to the life of the Buddha. These latter sites help focus the mind on the Buddha's achievements, and are important as memorials and places where good merit can be accessed and where the example of the Buddha as one man who attained enlightenment can be celebrated. In contrast, the forest hermitages of prominent monks and places where Buddhist deities are famous are attractive to pilgrims because of the availability of good merit there, associated with the good *karma* built up over many lives by these monks.

When is a site sacred?

Buddhist texts themselves have provided three criteria by which a particular site is to be judged as sacred. First, there are those believed to contain a relic of the Buddha's body. This refers to the ritualised cremation of the Buddha's body after his death. All his bones remained after everything else was burnt and fragments of these were taken by the seven kings present at the cremation, to be distributed at various locations. A famous example of such a relic is represented by the Temple of the Tooth in Kandy, Sri Lanka. It is believed to contain one of the Buddha's teeth, which was brought there in the early centuries of the Common Era.

The second category relates to the kinds of things the Buddha used and that he subsequently left behind. The third concerns simple reminders of the Buddha's presence; that is, stories that tell that he had visited a particular place. For the latter, the Sinhalese chronicles, such as the *Mahavamsha* and the *Culavamsha*, provide many examples. Another category of sacred sites involves those of Buddhist deities who usually perform a protective or helping function within a designated local area.

Many of these sacred sites had probably been considered sacred before the Buddhists defined their sacredness in particular Buddhist terms. They may have been the residence of a prominent fertility deity, such as a snake god, or a place where a holy man dwelt for many years. This demonstrates the capacity of Buddhism to integrate within itself beliefs and practices that were originally non-Buddhist. It also enhances in the eyes of believers the amount of sacred power inherent in these sites.

The sacred tooth relic

In August each year there is a huge seven-day festival, called *Esala Perahera*, held in Kandy with long processions of elephants and thousands of spectators, virtually bringing the city to a halt. It is extravagant in

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its display and attracts people from all over Sri Lanka, combining a traditional concern with fertility with the veneration of the Buddha's tooth.

Alamy Stock Photo/Emmanuel Lattes

FIGURE 10.3.3 Highly decorated elephants feature prominently in the processions of *Esala Perahera*.

RESPOND

Investigate some sites for the *Esala Perahera* festival and write a brief summary of the history of the festival. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblinks
Temple of the Sacred Tooth

Kandy Esala Perahera

REVIEW

1 Recall the names of the four most important sites for Buddhist pilgrimage and explain their significance to Buddhism.
2 How would a Buddhist define 'sacred site'?
3 Recall the four categories of sacred sites for Buddhists.

Bodh Gaya

Bodh Gaya is the most important pilgrimage site for all Buddhists. The Bodhi temple is located on three acres in the eastern part of the small town of Bodh Gaya in the Indian state of Bihar. The Mahabodhi Temple ('Great Awakening Temple') is built slightly to the north of the famous Bodhi tree where the Buddha achieved his enlightenment. Cuttings of this tree have been transported to many other prominent Buddhist temples around the world so that they too can have their own Bodhi tree.

The existing temple was in ruins when the prominent Sri Lankan reformer monk Dharmapala Angarika visited it in the last years of the nineteenth century and began the process of its renovation. During the 1980s, Japanese Buddhists poured millions of dollars into the construction of a two-metre-high protective marble wall around the site. The wall creates a huge contrast between the site and the surrounding area. Outside it is noisy, traffic is constantly moving, and little street-side stalls remind us how close religion and business are. Inside it is quiet. The temple is surrounded by lush lawns, large ponds of lotus-covered water and raised daises where people can just sit and, at the

Alamy Stock Photo/Tim Whitby

FIGURE 10.3.4 Bodhi temple in Bodh Gaya, India

southern end of the temple, many *caityas* (small funeral monuments) can be found.

Despite the groups of people who are visiting the temple itself and the surrounding shrines, it is possible to find quiet places to meditate or simply reflect. There is no compulsion to perform particular rituals, and an extended stay at the temple will enable you to see people expressing their commitment in a variety of ways. For example, a party of Japanese Buddhists may be standing before the huge Buddha image in the main hall of the temple, being instructed in the symbolism of the objects – flowers, lamps and wall hangings – surrounding the Buddha. The high point of their time there will most likely be a brief recitation of the vow of taking refuge in the Three Jewels of the Buddha, the *dhamma* and the *sangha*.

Or you may see a group of Sri Lankan laypeople being led by a monk. He will be explaining the significance of the temple and simultaneously giving a teaching in Sinhalese on the main points of the Buddha's teachings in a way that the lay audience can easily understand. Next to them may be a group of Indian Buddhists being read a story in Hindi by a monk. At the raised dais at the southern end of the temple, young Westerners may be seated on meditational rugs, engaged in elementary forms of meditation, having perhaps been taught in one of the many meditation schools located in Bodh Gaya. Consistent with the inclination of most Westerners, they are probably more interested in

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the meditational and intellectual aspects of Buddhism than they are in its ritual and devotional processes. This reflects the different approaches of those brought up in Buddhist countries compared with those who were raised in predominantly Christian countries and subsequently developed an interest in Buddhism as an alternative to Christianity or secular liberalism.

Alamy Stock Photo/Neil Cooper

FIGURE 10.3.5 Buddhist devotees sit during a *puja* being performed at the Bodhi tree in the Bodhi temple at Bodh Gaya, India.

Dotted around within a kilometre of the Bodhi temple are at least a dozen other temples, representing all of the Buddhist countries. The monks in them are constantly engaged in the performance of Buddhist rituals and they are often visited by prominent Buddhists such as the Dalai Lama. Each of the temples contains an area set aside for accommodating pilgrims at cheap prices, which means pilgrims can actually stay in a working monastery instead of a secular hotel. This temporarily places them in a heightened religious environment and allows them to give offerings, often financial, to the monks and/or the temple, and, in turn, to receive teachings from the monks. From this perspective the visit to Bodh Gaya should be seen as having a kind of transactional purpose: the receipt of good *karma* or merit is cultivated by the monastic order and is expected by the laity. This kind of transaction reaches back to the earliest years of Buddhism.

Finally, there are a whole range of Buddhist institutions that run meditational courses and elementary introductions to Buddhist philosophy, as well as advanced courses in *Vinaya* for monks and nuns. Bodh Gaya is both an important pilgrimage spot and a central location for the propagation of Buddhist teachings and values.

There is also an interesting new development there – some huge images of the Buddha are being constructed, particularly by Japanese and Tibetans, that are capable of being seen from a great distance. While a protective function can be found in the presence of these images, this kind of activity also betrays a competitiveness about the final size of the Buddha being constructed. Similar huge Buddhas are also being built in Thailand and Sri Lanka and elsewhere.

Virtual Buddhism

While Buddhist festivals were not allowed during the COVID-19 pandemic, chanting in temples and meditation classes continued online – especially in Buddhist centres in the United States – but with different practices.

East Bay Meditation Center (EBMC) in Oakland, California, before it took all its classes online, promoted mindful handwashing at the centre, saying it is 'a great 20-second practice all of the time.' The Portland Insight Meditation Center in Portland, Oregon, shared the following 20-second handwashing loving-kindness (*metta*) meditation on its Facebook page:

'May all beings be safe.

May all beings be content.

May all beings be healthy.

May all beings live with ease.'

That's about 20 seconds, right?

The delayed United Nations Vesak Day was also virtual.

Weblink
Day of Vesak

A final aspect of pilgrimage that should not be overlooked is its tourism component. Since Bodh Gaya is a Buddhist pilgrimage site in India, and Buddhism currently has only a few million adherents in India, most of the pilgrims travel there from overseas. This means there is a considerable investment in time and money for those who make this pilgrimage, and this will only serve to heighten the good merit they expect to receive as a consequence of attending these sites.

REVIEW

1. **Define** the term 'ritual' in the Buddhist context.
2. **Clarify** how a Buddhist would define 'public devotion'.
3. **Identify** two aspects of pilgrimage for Buddhists.
4. **Describe** a pilgrimage to one of the major pilgrimage sites.
5. **Demonstrate** how pilgrimage expresses the teachings of Buddhism.
6. **Analyse** the significance of pilgrimage for both the individual and the Buddhist community.

EXTENSION

Use the weblinks provided to find out more about Bodh Gaya.

Weblinks
Bodh Gaya

Pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya

Buddhist Society of WA pilgrimage to India

Conclusion

In the contemporary world, Buddhism remains a vibrant, growing religion, expanding in virtually every country where it is found. Australia, with its rapidly changing number of adherents, is an excellent example of this. In the 1947 Australian census, 411 people (0.01 per cent of the population) identified themselves as Buddhists. This increased to 139 795 (0.8 per cent) in 1991 and 563 700 (2.4 per cent) in 2016, the majority of whom were born overseas. This growth in numbers can be accounted for by the immigration of South-East Asian Buddhists to Australia, and by the charismatic presence of the Dalai Lama in teaching a particular brand of Tibetan Buddhism to Westerners.

Throughout its long history, Buddhism has adapted to broad social and cultural change. This adaptability is demonstrated in the development of Mahayana Buddhism, a movement that showed a self-conscious awareness of its difference from other forms of Buddhism that were contemporary to its period of development between 100 BCE and 400 CE. It emerged out of a broadening of religious beliefs and practices, especially deriving from new views about the nature of god that were associated with the doctrine and practice of *bhakti* flooding through Hinduism at the same time.

Under this influence, the images of the Buddha presented in literature and art expanded considerably from what they were in the Pali literature. In this literature, the Buddha is presented as a somewhat austere figure, which contrasts with his much more expansive persona in the Mahayana literature found throughout much of Asia. In addition, *bodhisattvas* were created and became the centre of cult followings all over Asia. This expansiveness has made it possible for Buddhism to respond to ethical and philosophical questions that have arisen, especially under the influence of Western scientific thought, and contributed to its success in most Asian countries over the last century and a half.

It is especially in the area of ethics that Buddhism has continually shown itself to be capable of adapting in a manner that meets the requirements of highly differing cultures, but which enables identification with Buddhism – seen as a religion of great antiquity – to be maintained. Tradition is therefore continued in such a way as to allow whatever is new to be made to seem part of the past. One example of the maintenance of traditional values is found in the emphasis that Buddhists continue to place on the application of compassion. A fundamental requirement that compassion should be exercised towards all sentient beings means all Buddhists, ideally at least, should have an active concern in maintaining the world around them in a way that benefits everybody and causes the least possible harm. In this area, intentions and actions intersect in a positive way that can be applied by Buddhists of all persuasions. Revised ethical attitudes very easily fit within this framework of thinking.

Like all other world religions, Buddhism must provide its adherents with a sense of certainty and solidity in a world that is fragile and shifting. Since the Second World War, no Asian country has been able to escape the modernising process that has been so visible as a cultural force for change. Buddhist teaching stresses the overwhelming importance of coming to terms with change. Change is unavoidable, and resistance to it will usually result in *dukkha* for oneself and others. Buddhism responds to this in the ethical sense by its pragmatic willingness to take up, albeit slowly, questions of bioethics and environmental ethics, including responses to climate change, that have been at the forefront of Western ethical thinking for at least the last 20 years.

Buddhism also responds to change by offering a continual reinforcement of the Buddha's message and its relevance for daily life. This is how the annual performance of Vesak and other important rituals need to be understood. They reconfirm the importance of a Buddhist community in those countries where they are performed, they bring the laity directly into contact with the *sangha* of monks (and nuns), and finally, they function as an important reminder of the centrality of the figure of the Buddha in the life of Buddhists. Each of these rituals, even if their performance changes slightly over time, is a constant (and is seen as such) within the religious life of Buddhists and stands almost outside of time, giving people the opportunity to see again the timeless values represented in the teachings of the Buddha and the examples set by living monks.

Alamy Stock Photo/David Paul

FIGURE 10.3.6 Decorations for Year of the Rat celebrations at the Nan Tien Temple, Wollongong, January 2020

EXTENSION

1. 'Buddhist teaching stresses the overwhelming importance of coming to terms with change.' To what extent does the material in this chapter support this statement? **Identify** at least three key examples to support your assessment.
2. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
3. **Synthesise** the main features related to Buddhist people, ideas, ethics and practices in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map, then place the completed detailed mind map into your HSC revision notes to reflect on when preparing for your exam.

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10 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exams, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section II

Studies of Religion I: answer **one** question from this section.

Studies of Religion II: answer **two** questions from **two** different religious traditions in this section.

Question 1 – Buddhism (15 marks)

a **i** Briefly outline **one** significant practice from Buddhism within **each** of the following:

- pilgrimage
- temple *puja*
- Vesak.

3 MARKS

ii Explain the significance of the practice selected in **(a) (i)** for the individual.

4 MARKS

Follow the path of virtue. The virtuous rest in bliss in this world and the next.

Dhammapada 13:168

b How do the ethical teachings of Buddhism guide adherents to live virtuous lives? In your response, refer to **one** of the following ethical areas:

- Bioethics
- Environmental ethics.

8 MARKS

Section III

Studies of Religion I and Studies of Religion II: answer **one** question from this section that is from a different religious tradition to the question(s) answered in Section II.

Question 3 – Buddhism (20 marks)

One must understand the nature of the suffering from which we wish to free others (this is wisdom) and one must experience deep intimacy and empathy with other sentient beings (this is loving kindness).

In Essence of the Heart Sutra (14th Dalai Lama)

How does Buddhism guide adherents to strive for wisdom and loving kindness?

Additional Section III Question

One must understand the nature of the suffering from which we wish to free others (this is wisdom) and one must experience deep intimacy and empathy with other sentient beings (this is loving kindness).

In Essence of the Heart Sutra (14th Dalai Lama)

To what extent does **one** significant person **or** school of thought, other than the Buddha, encourage adherents to demonstrate wisdom and loving kindness in their lives?

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

11

Christianity depth study

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **explain** the contribution to and **analyse** the impact of *one* significant person *or* school of thought on the development and expression of Christianity
- **describe** and **explain** Christian ethical teachings on *one* ethical area
- **describe** *one* significant practice within Christianity, **demonstrate** how this practice expresses the beliefs of Christianity and **analyse** its significance for both the individual and the Christian community.

n.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online options

- Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)
- Feminist theology

Online worksheets

- Christianity significant individual or group (p. 223)
- Christianity significant practice (p. 245)
- Christian ethics (p. 237)

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With permission the Very Rev. Archimandrite Christodoulos Economou.

Celebration of the Divine Liturgy of St Basils at St Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church Marrickville, 1 January 2020.

11.1 Significant people and ideas

Throughout the history of Christianity, to this very day, significant people and ideas have challenged the tradition. They include Paul of Tarsus, Pope John XXIII, Martin Luther, Catherine Booth and Mary Mackillop. Sometimes these challenges have led to schisms, or rifts, that are still apparent today. At other times they have led to a revitalisation of the tradition. Often it is only in hindsight that a person or an idea is acknowledged as having shaped the tradition – in their own lifetimes, the people might have been seen as troublemakers or the ideas as heretical offshoots. Sometimes a person from a previous era is 'rediscovered', as happened with Hildegard of Bingen. The person or idea might have been 'right' for another time, but is no longer considered significant – perhaps to be 'rediscovered' sometime in the future. Then there is a relatively 'new' movement or idea, feminist theology, whose roots lie in the women's suffrage movement of the late nineteenth century.

Online option B
Hildegard of Bingen (1098–1179)

Online option C
Feminist theology

Worksheet
Christianity significant individual or group

This section deals with arguably the most significant Christian after Jesus, Paul of Tarsus; one of the key reforming figures of the middle ages, Martin Luther; and Dorothy Day (d. 1980) who has been described as 'a great anomaly in American life: an orthodox Catholic and a political radical'.

EXTENSION

Update the Christianity list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

Paul of Tarsus (c. 10 BCE – c. 65 CE)

GLOSSARY

Diaspora The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people throughout the ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

gentiles Those who were not Jews.

missionary A person who works to convert others to their religious faith, often in places where that religion is not widely practised.

predestination In Paul's theology and later, this term refers to God's eternal, unchanging desire to bring about goodness in creation and, above all, to bring about the salvation of those God wishes to save (see 1 Cor 2:7).

theologian A person who is learned in theology or who speculates about theology.

Getty Images/Godong

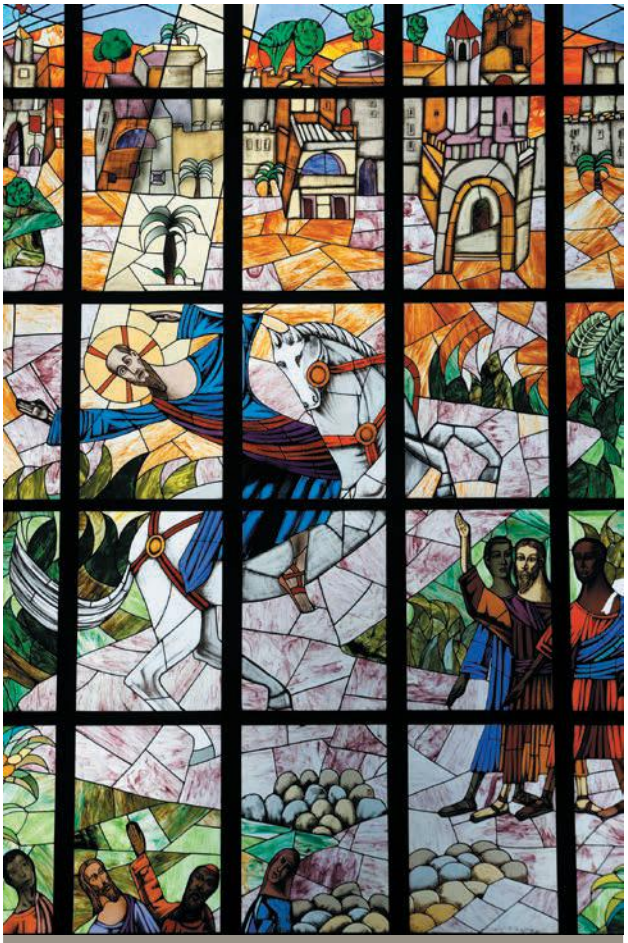

FIGURE 11.1.1 The Conversion of St Paul on the road to Damascus, where he encountered the Risen Christ (1 Cor 5:8; 9:1). Stained glass panel in St Paul's Cathedral, Abidjan, Ivory Coast, 1985. St Paul's Cathedral served as a refuge for approximately 1800 civilians fleeing violence during the height of the political crisis that engulfed Abidjan in 2010–11.

RESPOND

Investigate a range of images of St Paul similar to the one above and, after reading the passage 1 Cor 5, explain the symbolic meanings of features such as Christ holding his cross and Paul's sword.

Paul of Tarsus did much to advance Christianity among the **gentiles**, and is considered one of the primary sources of early church doctrine. Some argue that it was he who first truly made Christianity a new religion, rather than a sect of Judaism. Paul, himself a Jew, spoke Greek and inherited Roman citizenship from his father. He was able to put Jewish ideas into the language of the gentiles.

DID YOU KNOW?

It was Paul who first used the term 'gospel' (*euangélion*, Greek for 'the good message') when he reminded the people of the church at Corinth 'of the gospel I preached to you' (1 Cor 15:1).

Life of Paul

What we know about Paul comes from two exceptional sources: the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's own letters. The Acts of the Apostles were written after Paul's death, most likely by the same person who wrote Luke's Gospel. The author of the Acts claims that he knew Paul and even went with him on many of his journeys. It seems reasonable, however, to accept the second source, Paul's letters, as a more reliable account as they represent his own version of events.

Paul (Saul, as he was known in the Aramaic-speaking community) was a Jew and Roman citizen from the city of Tarsus, the capital city of the Roman province of Cilicia, in what is now southern Turkey. He was well trained in Jewish learning – in Romans (2:17–20) he speaks of holding the law of the Jews – and awaited the coming of the Messiah. He is said to have come to Jerusalem and had been commissioned by the high priest to seek out and persecute Christians in Damascus.

Since the **Diaspora**, Jews like Paul lived among people they viewed as pagans; they were particularly conscious of how their religion might appear to those around them. Jews were called to be a 'light to the nations' (Isa 42:6); and the story of a crucified Messiah might have the opposite effect – it could hold Judaism up to ridicule. So Paul was tasked with eradicating this fledgling movement before it could do too much damage.

But on the road to Damascus (c. 33 CE), Paul was converted to Christianity after an overwhelming personal experience in which he saw the Lord (1 Cor 9:1) in the form of the Risen Christ (1 Cor 5:8).

Naturally enough, the followers of Jesus in Damascus and Jerusalem were, at first, suspicious of their former persecutor. But first Ananais in Damascus (Acts 9:17–18) and then Barnabas in Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–27) affirmed his conversion.

Following his conversion, Paul first went to live in the Nabataean kingdom (which he called 'Arabia') for three years, and then returned to Damascus (Gal 1:17–20) until he was forced to flee from that city under the cover of night (Acts 9:23–25; 2 Cor 11:32 ff.). He travelled to Jerusalem, where he met Peter and James.

It was from Jerusalem that Paul set out on his **missionary** journeys.

Paul's missionary journeys

Paul undertook three missionary journeys and established Christian communities in Asia Minor and Greece. His commission for these journeys came from Peter, although he also sought out James in Jerusalem. Certain details of his journeys remain unclear. The Acts of the Apostles record five trips to Jerusalem by Paul, while his Letters record only three. When he returned to Jerusalem after his third journey, Paul was arrested. He was imprisoned in Caesarea, but because he was a Roman citizen he was entitled to be taken to Rome for his trial. We know no more about his activity. He was probably executed in Rome under Emperor Nero sometime in the early to mid-60s CE.

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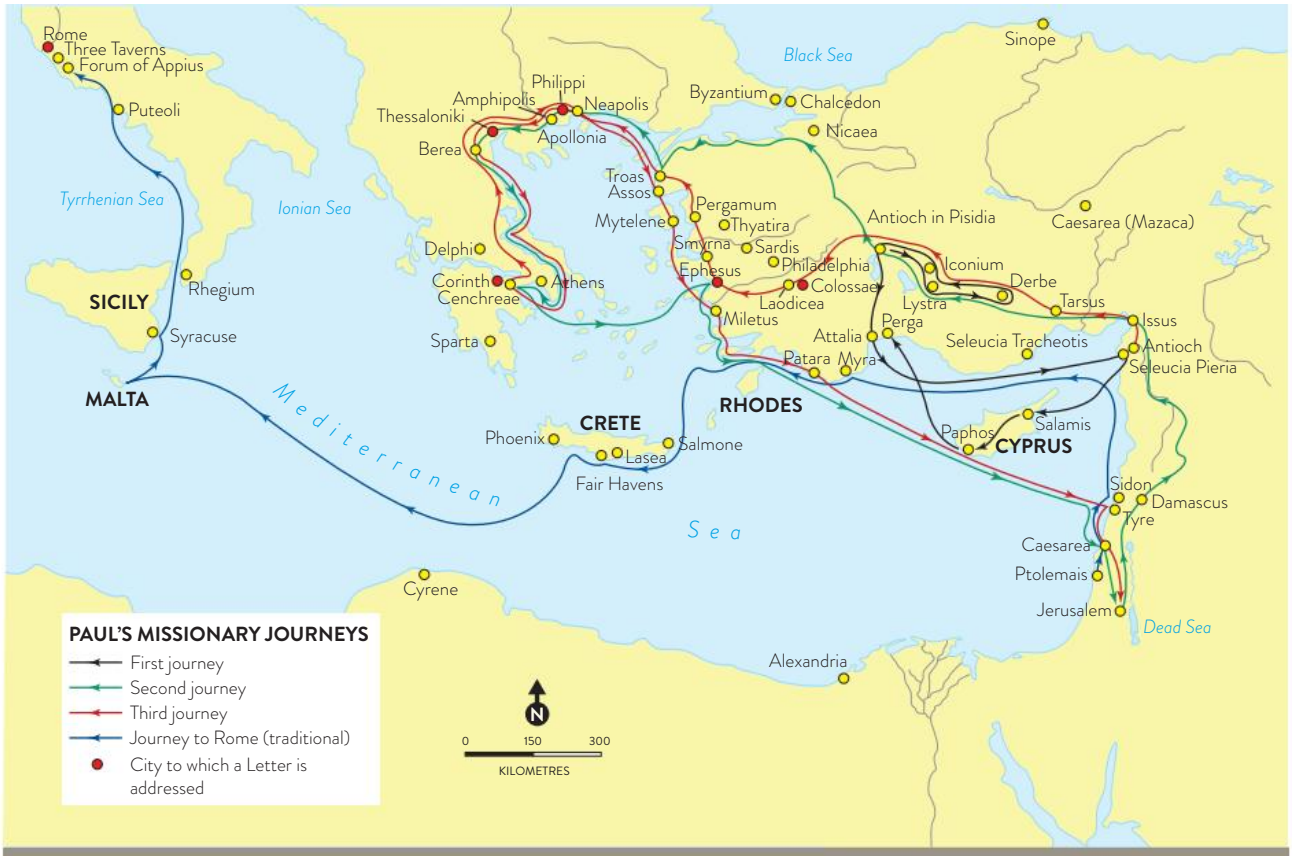

FIGURE 11.1.2 **The missionary journeys of St Paul**

Contribution to the development and expression of Christianity

Paul's life was remarkable and there is little doubt that it changed the course of Christianity. He was the most effective missionary of the early Christian communities, and Christianity's first theologian.

- Paul's Jewish, Roman and Greek background prepared him ideally as the 'apostle' to the gentiles.
- More than one-quarter of the Christian Scriptures are attributed to Paul, although some of these were by authors writing under Paul's prestigious name.
- As a **theologian**, he made clear to the early Christian communities, and subsequently to those throughout history, the meaning of following Christ (see in particular Romans – Paul's 'gospel' – and 1 Cor 15:3):

> For I handed on to you as of first importance what I in turn had received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to [many] … Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.
>
> 1 Cor 15:3–8

- In his missionary work, he established churches in the political and cultural centres of the Western world (for example, Rome, Antioch, Ephesus and Corinth), thus increasing the chances of survival for Christianity.
- Paul's theology has been used as a source of church and spiritual renewal at crucial times during the history of Christianity; for example, during the Protestant and Catholic Reformations.
- Paul's writings are an extremely important summary of the Christian faith, as they were written before the completion of the gospels. Nevertheless, some scholars are still debating the meaning of Paul's writings about women. For example, in the passage 1 Corinthians 11:2–16, Paul's notorious restriction of women (1 Cor 14:33–36), regarded by some scholars as a later addition, might have resulted from disturbances caused by a small group of women in Corinthian society that did not exist in other early Christian communities. This theory raises the caution that Paul's writings need to be understood in their specific social, historical and cultural context.

The centre of Paul's teachings was the understanding that the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was a historical turning point. His teachings were essential for the development and success of the early Church – otherwise it would have remained as just another Jewish sect. Paul's teachings included:

- Jesus' resurrection as a signal of the end of the need to live under Jewish law
- that gentiles had as much access to the faith as Jews and that freedom from Jewish law set everyone free
- living in the Spirit in which the power of God was made to work through human flesh
- that Christ crucified is the image and wisdom of God (1 Cor 1:18–25)

- the importance of preaching the gospel rather than (but not excluding) sacramental activity (see 1 Cor 1:17).

Importantly, Paul preserved Christianity's Jewish heritage, affirmed God's ongoing call to the Jewish people, and interpreted all this in the light of Jesus' message. His writings on grace, **predestination**, free will and 'the imitation of Christ' had profound effects on later major theologians such as Martin Luther and John Calvin.

Letters of Paul

Scholars generally agree that, of Paul's 13 letters, 1 Thessalonians, Galatians, Philippians, Philemon, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Romans are definitely by him. These letters are largely written to 'churches' that he had visited, and they talk about the particular needs of the early Christian communities to which they are addressed. For example:

- The Corinthian community is suffering from too much division and strife; he writes a letter of instruction on harmony and unity (1 Cor 1:10–17).
- The Thessalonian community is apparently anxious and confused in his absence; they receive a letter of consolation and comfort (1 Thess 2:17–5:28).
- The Galatian community seems ready to reject Paul entirely and become much more Jewish in their orientation; like a scolding parent, he berates them and tells them that they cannot turn away from the Gospel of Christ that he had given them (Gal 1:6–24, 2:1–14, 3:1–5:26).
- The Roman community comprised many Jews as well as gentiles and it is probable that Paul's Letter to the Romans was written in preparation for his journey to Rome. Paul is aware there is some conflict between gentile and Jewish Christians in the Roman church and so he outlines the essential elements of Christianity so that it will not be confused with that of 'false teachers' (Rom 1:1, 1:11–12, 1:16–17).

DID YOU KNOW?

Paul's First Letter to the Thessalonians is probably the first of the documents that were to form the New Testament. It was written in about 50 or 51 CE.

REVIEW

1. **Analyse** the impact of Paul's influence on the development and expression of Christianity.
2. **Identify** three reasons why Paul is so important in the history of Christianity.
3. **Explain** the importance of Paul's legacy to Christian thinking today.

EXTENSION

1. Choose one of Paul's letters, locate the community to which it was written on the map of his journeys (Figure 11.1.2, page 225) and briefly **summarise** its significant content.
2. Prepare a discussion outline for a debate on the topic: 'Without Paul, Christianity would not have become what it is today.'

Martin Luther (1483–1546)

GLOSSARY

antisemitism Hatred of Jews. The term was coined by Wilhelm Marr, a Hamburg journalist, in 1879. While the term was not known until the late nineteenth century, the phenomenon of antisemitism has ancient roots.

indulgences The practice whereby money is paid for the remission or lessening of punishment due to sins after penance has been performed.

Protestant A general term for those breaking away at the Reformation. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the 'protesting' churches in England were often called the nonconformist churches or dissenters – those churches that did not acknowledge the authority of the Church of England.

Reformation The early sixteenth-century movement that began as an effort to purify the life and teachings of the Catholic Church, and eventually led to the establishment of separate Christian Churches.

transubstantiation The Catholic teaching that the elements of the Eucharist, bread and wine, truly become the actual body and blood of Jesus Christ even though they retain the appearance of bread and wine.

Martin Luther was undoubtedly the leading figure of the European **Reformation**. It is generally agreed that the Reformation was led by two leading luminaries: Martin Luther and John Calvin, with the Swiss Reformer Huldrych Zwingli viewed as the 'third man' of the Reformation.

A rich but turbulent life

Born in the small town of Eisleben, in modern central Germany, Luther initially studied law. In 1505, however, much to the anger of his father, he suddenly switched directions and entered an Augustinian monastery. He was ordained to the priesthood in 1507. Eventually he became professor of Bible studies at the University of Wittenberg and received his doctorate in 1512. From 1516 onwards, based on the belief that faith alone was required for salvation, Luther began to question a number of central Catholic teachings. He gradually came to believe that faith alone justifies without good works, that humanity amounted to nothing before God, and that there was no need for the mediation of the church and the priesthood between God and believers. And so, in 1517, when the Dominican priest Johann Tetzel preached on **indulgences** to be granted

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by Pope Leo X for the renovation of St Peter's Basilica in Rome, a crisis soon developed.

Luther responded to the sale of indulgences with his 'Disputation on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences', also known as the Ninety-five Theses, a list of questions and propositions for debate. The first two theses detailed Luther's central idea that God intended believers to seek repentance and that faith alone, and not deeds, would lead to salvation. The other ninety-three supported these first two – directly criticising the practice of indulgences and a range of other practices, such as the sale of church offices and usury, while stressing the authority of the Bible. According to legend, the Ninety-five Theses was nailed to the door of Wittenberg church in October 1517, a common method of expressing protest in early modern Europe. In reality, Luther had included the Ninety-five Theses in letters to his superiors. Within two months the Ninety-five Theses had been translated from the original Latin and printed and widely distributed across Europe.

Intended as a criticism of practices, rather than a revolutionary declaration of change, the Ninety-five Theses expressed a turning point in Luther's thinking, which by 1517–18 had come to include the following beliefs:

- faith throws itself upon God
- there is a distinction between Law and Gospel
- the believer as righteous yet sinful
- justification through faith in Christ
- faith alone, grace alone, scripture alone.

> Unless I am convinced by Scripture and plain reason – I do not accept the authority of the popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other – my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen.
>
> Martin Luther, Imperial Diet of Worms, 1521

For Martin Luther, 'reformation' not only meant practical reform but more 'liberation of consciences', a new theological approach that he viewed as the ancient and authentic biblical one. It was this new theological approach that made Luther such an influential figure of the Reformation and introduced a new strand of Christian practice in Europe that remains influential today.

The wide distribution of the Ninety-five Theses and its critique of church practices prompted Luther to expand on his thinking. In 1520 Luther, in his letter to the German Princes, argued that they needed to reform the church themselves and abolish taxes to Rome, clerical celibacy, Masses for the dead, pilgrimages, religious orders and other Catholic practices. He also wrote against withholding communion from the laity and rejected the doctrines of **transubstantiation**, and the Sacrifice of the Mass. Luther preached only two sacraments: baptism and Eucharist.

Alamy Stock Photo/dpa picture alliance archive

FIGURE 11.1.3 A statue of Martin Luther (1821) at the main square in front of the city hall in Wittenberg. The poster behind the statue is for the celebrations that took place here to mark the 500th anniversary of the Reformation on 31 October 2017.

RESPOND

Luther is depicted holding a book (a Bible) on which the words in German script read 'For God will come to you forever', 'The books of the Old Testament' and 'The end' on the left and 'The New Testament made clear by Doctor Martin Luther' on the right. Find a translation of the words at the top of the banner behind the statue and, based on the information on this page, write a short paragraph to **explain** how these and the words on the statue's Bible relate to the Ninety-five Theses.

The Catholic Church's response was decisive and swift. Luther's writings were pronounced heretical and he was formally condemned by the papal bull (charter issued with the Pope's seal) *Exsurge domine* – 'Rise, O Lord, and judge your own cause' – on 15 June 1520. After Luther rejected and burned the bull, he was excommunicated (excluded from the life of the church and its community) in January 1521.

Following his excommunication, Luther continued his campaign for religious reform that reinforced the distinction between Catholic teaching and his own. Central to this project was his translation of the Bible into German and the writing of sermons and Bible Commentaries. After abandoning many Catholic practices such as private Masses and fasts, Luther then finally discarded his Augustinian habit (religious dress) in 1524. On 13 June 1525, he married Catherina von Bora, a former Cistercian nun. The final years of his life were marked by his support of those churches that were to bear his name – Lutheran. He helped rebuild the life and liturgy of churches now separate from Rome – which resulted in his writing of catechisms, hymns and postils (sermon books). Nevertheless, the last years of his life were marked by fierce verbal battles with those who disagreed with him, such as the papacy, the Jews and the Anabaptists. He died where he was born, in Eisleben, on 18 February 1546, and is buried in the castle church at Wittenberg.

I will not quarrel with those good-hearted men who tell us that Dr Luther was a bit too rough, but will use Erasmus's answer often given by him, namely that God prescribed a harsh and bitter physician for those last days, when a grave illness had begun to take over.

Philip Melanchthon, funeral oration for Luther, 22 February 1546

DID YOU KNOW?

Martin Luther's family name was actually 'Luder'. However, from around 1519, and especially after his 1520 publication of *On the Freedom of a Christian*, he altered his name to 'Eleutherius', which literally meant 'liberator'. This new name stuck and led to him being called 'Luther' ever since.

Contribution to the development and expression of Christianity

The contributions of Martin Luther to the development and expression of Christianity have been expansive and far-reaching. At its most obvious, his role is central to the development of Lutheranism, one of the largest **Protestant** denominations. The church that bears his name was modelled closely on Luther's writings and thought and, with the support of local princes, was adopted in many German states and Scandinavia.

Beyond the particularity of Lutheranism, his legacy is broad-ranging and had significant influence on the development of other varieties of Protestantism in Europe. For example, Luther saw the relationship between human righteousness and God's justice (the doctrine of justification by faith) in terms of the 'theology of the cross', the belief that God always works in history in a veiled or hidden way, not always seen in reality. For example, Jesus on the cross appears as an executed criminal, but in reality he symbolises the redemption of humankind.

DID YOU KNOW?

Luther's extensive writings in the German language have earned him a reputation akin to that of Shakespeare in English.

Luther's thinking and his critique of the Catholic tradition also established an approach to Christianity that individualised the relationship between God and the faithful, unmediated by the role of the clergy and the Pope. This understanding underpinned his translation of the Bible from Latin to vernacular German, a revolutionary act that made the central text of the Christian tradition accessible for individual interpretation. This outlook is also apparent in his preaching style, a method that remains influential today. Closely following biblical passages, he preached in the language of the people, as opposed to Latin, in a down-to-earth manner, and filled his sermons with experiences of real life and faith. Luther also wrote hymns such as *Ein feste Burg ist unser Gott* ('A mighty fortress is our God') and a range of other tracts, including catechisms and instructional material in vernacular German. Luther's translations of religious writings into the local language served as a model for later translators into English and other European languages.

Luther and antisemitism

Many of Martin Luther's writings are explicit in their hostility towards Jews. In a number of tracts, for example, he called for restrictions to be placed on the rights of Jews and called for their conversion to Christianity. A number of Luther's followers acted on such calls, notably the Prince of Saxony, who banned Jews from living, working and travelling through his kingdom. Considered in its historical context, Luther's **antisemitism** is not unconventional. Rather it was echoed by Catholic theologians such as Johann Eck (Luther's Catholic adversary in theological debates) and by other Protestant theologians. In recent decades, the Lutheran Church has rejected the antisemitic aspects of Luther's writings.

To read more about Martin Luther and the Jews, a helpful weblink is provided.

Weblink
Luther and the Jews

RESPOND

Why do Luther's modern followers reject his antisemitism?

In spite of Martin Luther's excommunication in 1521 and his identification of the Pope as the Antichrist, in September 2015, with the approval of the Vatican, a hilltop square in Rome was named Piazza Martin Lutero in memory of Luther's achievements.

REVIEW

1 **Explain** the contribution of Martin Luther to the development and expression of Christianity with reference to the specific challenges and changes that developed from his ideas and theology.

2 **Analyse** the impact of Martin Luther on the Christian tradition. In your answer, refer to the strengths and weaknesses of his views and approaches, as well as to his contributions to theology, the use of language and other areas.

EXTENSION

1 Analyse Martin Luther's Ninety-five Theses and explain which theses challenge the teachings of the Catholic Church. Some helpful links are provided.

2 Explain why Philip Melanchthon, in his funeral oration for Luther, mentions Erasmus.

Weblinks
Ninety-five Theses

Theopedia: 95 Theses

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Dorothy Day (1897–1980)

Dorothy Day has been described as 'a great anomaly in American life: an orthodox Catholic and a political radical, a rebel who courted controversy'. Her life followed an unorthodox path – from rejecting religion in favour of activism, to embracing Catholicism and integrating it with social action through the Catholic Worker Movement.

When Day became a Catholic as an adult in 1927, she was an unmarried mother with a complicated past that included love affairs and an abortion – an unlikely beginning for someone whom Pope Francis, speaking before the United States Congress in 2015, named as one of four morally exemplary Americans, along with Abraham Lincoln, Martin Luther King Jr and Trappist monk Thomas Merton:

> In these times when social concerns are so important, I cannot fail to mention the Servant of God Dorothy Day who founded the Catholic Worker Movement. Her social activism, her passion for justice and for the cause of the oppressed, were inspired by the Gospel, her faith, and the example of the saints.
>
> Pope Francis to the joint session of the US Congress, 24 September 2015

Early years

GLOSSARY

canonisation The official act of declaring a person a model for true Christian discipleship, most commonly in the Catholic and Eastern Orthodox Churches and therefore to be publicly venerated by the whole Church; to be placed in the canon of saints.

fascism A set of political beliefs that includes strong control of society and the economy by the state, a powerful role for the armed forces, and the stopping of political opposition.

May Day A commemoration of the historic struggles and gains made by workers and the labour movement, observed on May 1.

pacifism The opposition to war or violence as a means of settling disputes; refusal to engage in military activity because of one's principles or beliefs

Born in New York City in 1897, Dorothy Day returned to the city as a 20-year-old and took a job writing for *The Call*, a socialist newspaper in which she published articles describing the plight of the destitute in the New York City's tenements and slums. She became an activist, and in November 1917 she was arrested and jailed for picketing the White House to demand the vote for women.

In 1926, when Day had their daughter baptised, the loving relationship she had with William Forster Batterham became very difficult, but her decision to have herself baptised was a life-changing one. It meant completely breaking with Batterham and also the loss of many radical friends. She later said she felt no great joy in the action, but rather regarded it as something she had to do.

Finding purpose

Day had been struggling to find her role as a Catholic when the hunger marches at the end of 1932 decided the task for her – to try to discover how the mission of the church might become one of solidarity with those who marched. It was then that she met Peter Maurin, a French immigrant who was a frequent speaker in Union Square, New York. Maurin gave her a whole new set of ideas and a historical vision of being a Catholic, and she began a process with her church that put Jesus, rather than the theologians of the just war, at the centre of the church's social teaching.

NOTE

There are some excellent short videos on Dorothy Day's life available via the weblinks.

Weblinks

Don't Call Me a Saint

Don't Call Me a Saint trailer

Who is Dorothy Day?

Revolution of the Heart trailer

The Catholic Worker

Peter Maurin had sought out Dorothy Day after reading some of her articles on social justice. He suggested she start a newspaper to publicise Catholic social teaching and advance a neutral, Christian pacifist position in world that seemed to be rapidly heading towards another war.

On **May Day** 1933 *The Catholic Worker* was launched – and a philosophy to go along with it: pro-union, anti-poverty, pacifist, anti-government. At a communist rally in Union Square that day, Dorothy and a few volunteers handed out papers to demonstrators and curious passers-by. From a first issue of 2500 copies, circulation rose to 25 000 in a few months, and by 1936 it had reached 150 000. The four-page newspaper cost one penny, the price at which it remains today.

FIGURE 11.1.4 The masthead of *The Catholic Worker*

The Catholic Worker Movement (www.catholicworker.org)

The first issue of the paper contained a column, written by Day, which asked the question: 'Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?' The article outlined the paper's purpose:

> For those who are walking the streets in the all but futile search for work.
>
> For those who think that there is no hope for the future, no recognition of their plight – this little paper is addressed.
>
> It is printed to call their attention to the fact that the Catholic Church has a social program – to let them know that there are men of God who are working not only for their spiritual, but for their material welfare.
>
> Dorothy Day, 'To our readers', *The Catholic Worker*, May 1933

Dorothy Day wrote a column in each issue, and her contributions continued for nearly 50 years, until her death in 1980.

Getty Images/New York Daily News Archive

FIGURE 11.1.5 Dorothy Day inside the office of *The Catholic Worker*, November 1965

The Catholic Worker Movement

Soon the Catholic Worker developed into a social movement and, again with Peter Maurin's influence, Day and her supporters opened soup kitchens in New York City and 'houses of hospitality' were opened to give shelter to the homeless. By 1936 there were 33 Catholic Worker houses spread across the country.

> If your brother is hungry, you feed him. You don't meet him at the door and say, 'Go be thou filled,' or 'Wait for a few weeks, and you'll get a welfare check.' You sit him down and feed him. And so that's how the soup kitchen started.
>
> Dorothy Day in an interview in 1971

It continues today – a faith-based, grassroots movement for peace and social justice through nonviolent direct action, represented by more than 150 loosely affiliated 'houses of hospitality' (including several in Australia and New Zealand) in which the poor and homeless are welcomed as guests rather than as 'clients'.

Weblink
Catholic Worker Movement

Activism

In 1936 *The Catholic Worker* started an organisation of Catholic conscientious objectors and refused to take sides in the Spanish Civil War. The Catholic Church supported the Nationalist General Francisco Franco, who was a Catholic, and about two-thirds of readers abandoned *The Catholic Worker* because of the **pacifism** advocated in its pages.

> We are not, of course, pro-Franco, but pacifists, followers of Gandhi in our struggle to build a spirit of nonviolence. But in those days we got it from both sides; it was a holy war to most Catholics, just as world revolution is a holy war to Communists.
>
> Dorothy Day, *The Catholic Worker*, June 1967, 2, 8

The *Worker* was denounced as 'Communists masquerading as Catholics' and the Archbishop of New York pressured Day to remove 'Catholic' from the name of the newspaper. She used to enjoy recounting the story of how Catholic workers competed with Communists when selling newspapers on the corner. When the Communist shouted, 'Read *The Daily Worker*!' a Catholic worker would retort, 'Read *The Catholic Worker daily*!'

DID YOU KNOW?

The major economic depression and social dislocation after the First World War saw many people turning to communism when there seemed to be no other hope. Its rapid spread, particularly among the working class, led to the rise of **fascism**, which was seen as a line of defence against the theism of communism – the lesser of two evils.

Weblink
What Catholics don't understand about communism

The Catholic Worker's pacifism continued. The second World War was unpopular among Americans until the bombing of Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, and then attitudes changed. Many now found Day's opposition to this war not only unfathomable, but unforgiveable. The weblink provided examines how Dorothy Day's staunch pacifism during World War II tarnishes her reputation in Catholic circles.

Weblink
Dorothy Day's unpopular stance

The Catholic Worker denounced the continued testing of the atomic bomb and the development of the hydrogen bomb, and called for total disarmament of nuclear weapons.

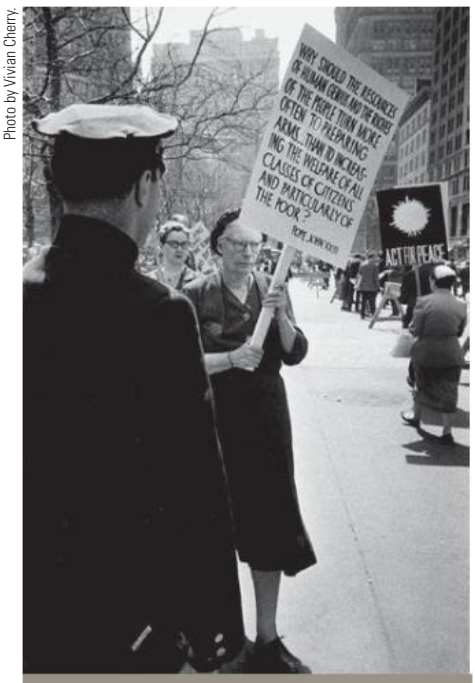
In establishing *The Catholic Worker*, Day found a place not only for her pacifist views —opposing US entry into the Second World War and the Vietnam War – but also for direct action to aid the poor and working people. It had readers from many different many faith traditions, and from none:

> The regular event of the arrival of *The Catholic Worker* is always like a visit from a friend who moves with freedom and fearless abandon to follow the direction of Christ.
>
> Pastor Del Eberhardt, East Shore Community Church, to Dorothy Day, 1945

9780170457583

I don't know that you could ever convert me to becoming a Roman Catholic. but if I keep reading your paper I may possibly become a real Christian.

Bishop Austin Pardue, Episcopal Diocese of Pittsburgh, 1949



Department of Special Collections and University Archives, Raynor Memorial Libraries Marquette University. Photo by Vivian Cherry.

FIGURE 11.1.6 Dorothy Day picketing against the atomic bomb, New York, 1959. She also led protests against New York City's annual air-raid drill, which required that all take shelter for at least 10 minutes. The drills continued from 1955 until 1961 and Day was jailed three times – once, for a month.

In Australia …

Australia committed combat troops to Vietnam in 1965. At that time, opposition to conscription was growing. On 8 May 1970, massive peaceful demonstrations took place in capital cities and rural towns. The Catholic archbishops of Sydney and Melbourne supported the Vietnam War and opposed the demonstrations. Three months later, Dorothy Day and Eileen Egan (1912–2000), co-founder of the Catholic peace group American Pax Association, came to Australia for a series of peace and justice seminars and public meetings. In August 1970, there were overflow crowds in Melbourne and Sydney, where Day and Egan shared the platform with Dr Jim Cairns, a Labor member of the Australian parliament and leading anti–Vietnam War campaigner.

Dorothy Day – a sign of contradiction

Yes, there was pacifism, there was submissive faith – but my God, there was strength.

John Nicholson, 2011. Nicholson interviewed Day for 30 minutes on ABC television during her visit to Australia.

Day was a rigidly conservative Catholic whose piety shaped every aspect of her.

When it comes to labour and politics, I am inclined to be sympathetic to the left, but when it comes to the Catholic Church, then I am far to the right.

In an interview in 1970 in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, she said, 'I've always felt that there is tremendous liberty in the Church. The freedom is there, it's just to be taken'.

No one in the Church can tell me what to think about social and political and economic questions without getting a tough speech back; please leave me alone and tend your own acreage; I'll take care of mine.

Quoted in William Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography*, 1982, p. 358

How to measure Dorothy Day's contribution

Don't worry about being effective. Just concentrate on being faithful to the truth.

During her lifetime, Day could seem out of step with mainstream Catholics who, in her era, were among the most strenuous defenders of the 'American way of life'. Yet in 1940, *Time* magazine noted that, 'Among US Christians who care for the poor, none are more blessed with selfless zeal than those Roman Catholics who labour in the Catholic Worker movement'.

Think what the world could look like if we took care of the poor even half as well as we do our Bibles!

By the time of her death, nonviolence had moved from the edge to the centre of Christian teaching. If President George W. Bush could quote her in a speech – 'Any effective war on poverty must deploy what Dorothy Day called "the weapons of spirit"' – and there is talk of **canonisation**, does this mean Dorothy Day is no longer radical and has become mainstream?

Dorothy Day knew that, if you live long enough, eventually you come to be regarded as a 'venerable survivor'. In an interview with the *Chicago Tribune*, three years before her death, she remarked:

That kind of talk makes me sick. That's the way people try to dismiss you. If you're a saint, then you must be impractical and utopian, and nobody has to pay any attention to you.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Episcopal Church in the United States commemorates Dorothy Day as Activist, Contemplative, and Writer annually on 29 November, as does the Uniting Church of Australia.

Australian Jesuit Andrew Hamilton postulates that:

Dorothy Day brings together many strands of the Gospel: companionship with people who are poor, an uncompromising discipleship of Jesus, a commitment to simplicity of life, engagement with the world outside the Church and a radical trust in God.

In the end, what Dorothy Day's life demonstrates is that there are different ways of being a loyal citizen and a devout Christian. She both followed the Church's practices and challenged it with the implications and radical possibilities of its teaching.

Day both followed the Church's practices and challenged it with the implications and radical possibilities of its teaching.

REVIEW

1 **Identify** three contributions made by Dorothy Day to an understanding of the role of social justice in contemporary Christianity.

2 'Is it not possible to be radical and not atheist?' **Identify** how this quotation **explains** Dorothy Day's life work.

3 **Analyse** the impact of Dorothy Day's life work on today's Christianity.

EXTENSION

1 'If you're a saint, then you must be impractical and utopian, and nobody has to pay any attention to you.' **Propose** arguments for and against the canonisation of Dorothy Day.

2 Dorothy Day was a Catholic. **Demonstrate** why she might be commemorated in other Christian denominations.

11.2 Ethics

GLOSSARY

conscience An inner guide to determining whether a course of action is right or wrong. Like all other human faculties, it develops and matures through time.

ethics Ethics is the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Its purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

natural law As it is broadly understood, natural law refers to a range of moral theories that rely on rational discernment of the natural order of things as a means of telling good from evil, in other words, that nature has its own built-in moral laws that are self-evident. Initially developed by the Greek Stoic philosophers, it was adopted by Christians on the basis that observations of creation ought to reveal aspects of God the Creator's will. In other words, what is natural is what God intends.

The role of Christian **ethics** is to enable Christians to live together in a way that reflects the life and teachings of Jesus by providing guidelines for their behaviour and decision-making and a basis for self-examination and judgment.

The role of **conscience** and the development of personal and corporate codes of ethics are particularly significant aspects of the Christian ethical system.

Weblink
Moral discernment in the UCA

While there is a shared Christian ethic based on the Ten Commandments (Ex 20:2–17), the Beatitudes (Mt 5–7) and Jesus' commandment of love (Mt 22:37–39), there is also diversity across the Christian churches. Differences are evident based on the varying sources of ethical guidance; for example, the biblical focus of Protestant ethics, and the **natural law** and teaching authority in Catholic and Orthodox ethics. It must also be noted that the churches' sacred texts do not refer specifically to many of the ethical issues that challenge today's Christian.

Common cause is found almost unanimously on, for example, environmental issues, where Christianity has provided global leadership. On the other hand, bioethical issues reflect greater diversity. There is most controversy in the area of sexual ethics.

All ethical issues and decisions are complicated – whether one considers their biblical basis, conscience, steps in decision-making, types of medical intervention or other factors. This section explores some of the issues involved in sexual ethics, bioethics and environmental ethics.

▷ Refer to Chapter 3, pages 50–1, for the core ethical teachings of Christianity.

Sexual ethics

NOTE

The terms 'sex' and 'sexuality' often get confused. Sex refers to a person's biological sex, whereas sexuality refers to their sexual and/or romantic attraction (orientation) or practice. The first is about objective facts of a person's body; the second is about whom we subjectively find sexually and/or romantically attractive.

Christian sexual ethics is a highly controversial area. For most Christians, the purpose of human sexual activity is to express love and create new life in the context of marriage. Any sexual activity or expression that is not consistent with, or goes against, this purpose is considered to be morally wrong or questionable, because it opposes the divine plan, as understood in the Christian tradition. The emphasis has tended to be on what is permitted or forbidden, not about a loving relationship between two people and their growing in friendship with God. This has led to sexual intercourse often being seen narrowly in terms of reproduction.

Christianity teaches that human life and human sexuality are inseparable: we were created in the image of God (Gen 1:26-27) and the image of God refers to the totality of an individual, not his or her parts.

> The Christian understanding of marriage considers marriage to be a central symbol of God's gift in creation. Traditionally there has been a great emphasis on procreation as one of the purposes of marriage. More recently the church has recognised the importance of the couple's emotional relationship.
>
> Uniting Church of Australia, *Uniting Sexuality and Faith*, 1997, 5.81, p. 46

9780170457583

Homosexuality

Newspix/Peter Clark

FIGURE 11.2.1 This sign appeared outside Gosford Anglican Church in August 2014.

RESPOND

What debate was this sign addressing?

Christianity teaches that the focus in any sexual act must be more on what people *are* or *are becoming*, rather than on what they do or fail to do. The creation of man and woman as sexual beings is specifically linked with their creation in God's image (Gen 1:27). Hence, sexuality is linked to the growth and formation of the human person, to the very nature of God and, later in the Bible, to faithfulness to the covenant itself. This is specifically a heterosexual sexuality.

Some Christians view homosexuality as undermining the ideal of marriage and the traditional family; some see it as a sin – 'an abomination' (Lev 18:22) – and believe that any person who lives a homosexual lifestyle should be excluded from communion. Others, however, accept homosexuality as a natural part of human life.

The decision by the Australian Government to hold a plebiscite on same-sex marriage forced all Christian denominations to address issues relating to homosexuality. It was a divisive issue, and beliefs about marriage and beliefs about homosexuality became conflated.

▷ See page 241 in this chapter for more on same-sex marriage.

Contemporary understanding of sexuality and homosexuality has changed, and modern biblical scholarship casts doubt on some of the verses that have been used to condemn homosexuality. Common among all denominations is the distinction between sexual orientation and practice, as the following statements demonstrate:

- 'The Bible is silent about homosexual orientation. Being homosexual or heterosexual is not, of itself, morally good or bad. It is not our orientation but what we do with our sexual nature that constitutes right or wrong.' (Uniting Church of Australia)
- The Catholic church's official stance prohibiting sexual relations between people of the same sex has remained constant, but the importance the church ascribes to the 'sin' has varied. Today, the Catholic Catechism [#2358-2359] teaches that desiring others of the same sex is not sinful, but acting on those desires is.
- 'Hillsong Church welcomes *all* people but does not affirm all lifestyles. Put clearly, we do not affirm a gay lifestyle and because of this we do not knowingly have actively gay people in positions of leadership, either paid or unpaid.'
- There are deep divisions within the worldwide Anglican communion over homosexuality. A resolution of the 1998 Lambeth Conference, an assembly of Anglican bishops held every 10 years, called for pastoral care for those who experiences homosexual orientation and, at the same time, described homosexual practice as 'incompatible with Scripture'.
- The Lutheran Church of Australia says 'it is more helpful to respond pastorally, to help people understand that it is our relationship with God, rather than sexuality, that is the basis of human identity'.

> If someone is gay and searches for the Lord and has good will, who am I to judge?
>
> Pope Francis, 2013

> Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love … No one has ever seen God. Yet, if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.
>
> 1 John 4:8, 12

REVIEW

1 **Describe** the principal ethical teachings that determine the unique response of Christian variants to sexual ethics. In your answer, refer to the nature of Jesus' own teaching and the modern Christian understandings of sexuality.
2 **Explain** how Christian ethical teaching is applied to *one* issue in relation to sexual ethics mentioned in this section or that emerges from your research.

Weblink
Being gay and Christian

Bioethics

GLOSSARY

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating, but not limited to, medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgments for human conduct.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'bioethics' was coined in 1970 by US biochemist Dr Van Rensselaer Potter as a bridge between science and humanity.

Some of the most contentious and disputed issues of our day are matters of **bioethics**, and there is an ever-increasing number of new and complex issues, such as gender, stem-cell technology and assisted dying/suicide, that call for a response. Christian bioethics gathers the data and uses the principles (commands and teachings/doctrine) and values to be found in Christianity to arrive at a judgement. As suggested by the definition of bioethics, there tends to be a spectrum of opinions about what is acceptable, rather than a definitive answer.

For most variants in Christianity, reasoning about what is morally right or wrong is based on principles such as the sanctity or holiness of life, the integrity and dignity of the person, and stewardship. There is, however, considerable variety of attitudes on what is acceptable.

Gender

GLOSSARY

gender Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women. 'Masculine' and 'feminine' are gender categories, as opposed to the biological distinction between the sexes. This distinction between 'sex' and 'gender' is relatively recent (c. 1963).

gender dysphoria This is the medical term for the experience of distress associated with having a psychological or emotional gender identity that does not match a person's biological sex.

gender identity In recent times, this has come to be about how a person feels or experiences themself. It is a private and subjective sense of identity and experience.

transgender (also **trans**) An umbrella term for people whose gender identity differs, to varying degrees, from their biological sex (male or female, the sex they were born with), and who want to express the gender with which they identify. Some trans people might take hormones or undergo surgery to bring their bodies into alignment with their gender identity, but not all trans people can or will take those steps. Transgender is about gender identity, not sexual orientation. Transgender people can be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual (in relation to their subjective gender identity, not their biological sex).

Christians have been forced to respond to issues about **gender** for much the same reasons as with homosexuality – societal changes and civil anti-discrimination legislation. Because the various authoritative bodies within the churches have had comparatively little time to absorb and reflect upon the findings in the human sciences about the complexity of gender and sexuality, it is possible their responses could be judged as 'works in progress'.

The responses have addressed the concept of gender and **gender identity** and, consequently, **transgender** and medical interventions. *The Transgender Moment, the Gospel and the Church*, a 2019 report to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, illustrates three areas of response:

- the nature of sex and gender
- teachings and biblical principles
- the pastoral response.

Responses across the Christian denominations, and within the denomination itself, differ particularly in the first two categories; the stated pastoral responses are nuanced and carefully worded.

Nature of sex and gender

- **Anglican Church of Australia:** '… sexual orientation and gender identity are widely regarded as inherent matters, like race, age or disability, that people are in most cases born with or unable to choose otherwise …' (Public Affairs Commission, 2019)
- While the **Catholic Church** rejects the idea that gender is distinct from biological sex, it also acknowledges: 'If we wish to take an approach to the question of gender theory that is based on the path of dialogue, it is vital to bear in mind the distinction between the ideology of gender on the one hand, and the whole field of research on gender that the human sciences have undertaken, on the other.' *(Male and Female He Created Them: Towards a path of dialogue on the question of gender theory in education, 2019)*
- **Presbyterian Church of Australia:** 'Our belief and assertion that humanity is binary-sexed …' (*The Transgender Moment, the Gospel and the Church*, 2019)
- **Uniting Church of Australia:** '… the concept that male and female sexes are always (and unambiguously) binary has been demonstrated not to be the case. New technologies in DNA sequencing and cell biology are revealing that almost everyone is, to varying degrees, a patchwork of genetically distinct cells, some with a sex that do not match the rest of their body.' (Jonathan Foye, Transgender people in the church, *Insights*, January 2020)
- **Sydney Anglican Church:** 'God created humanity in the form of two biological sexes … The Bible never endorses a divergence between biological sex and gender identity and expression … Nor does the Bible ever envisage a 'third sex' – eunuchs are still regarded as male … Biological sex is a fundamental aspect of embodiment in God's ordering of human life. Blurring the distinctions between male and female, or seeking to present one's sex as contrary to one's biology, is an attempt at self-creation that involves a denial of the biologically-sexed body that God has given to us.' (Doctrine Statement on Gender Identity, 2019)

9780170457583

Teachings and biblical principles

> Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them 'Humankind' when they were created.
>
> Gen 5:2

> 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.
>
> Galatians 3:28

> For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.
>
> Ephesians 2:10

For many Christians, the beliefs of those identifying as transgender would be seen to go against God's good creation. Others approach biblical texts differently and consider the insights gained from current science relevant to the process of interpreting scripture. Christians living with **gender dysphoria** and their families, and indeed their church communities, face many conflicts.

If they make the decision to transition, the next question is, in what way to do so. If the decision is to change the physical characteristics of their body with some combination of hormone treatment or surgery, such actions bring with them another conflict: are these actions moral or are they medical? In other words, are such actions mutilations of the body, which would be unethical according to biblical principles, or are they therapeutic in nature?

All denominations accept that experiencing gender dysphoria is not sinful, but that procedures such as sex reassignment surgery are morally impermissible.

Pastoral care

While, in the past, some Christians may have responded to issues of gender identity such as these with condemnation and rejection, today, across all denominations, the response is to offer support.

> Our churches, schools, and organisations should be places where those dealing with gender identity issues are welcomed, loved, and nurtured with generous care shaped by the love of Christ, and informed by the word of God. All those who have faith in Christ belong to the body of Christ, regardless of their personal trials and afflictions. It is our hope that those dealing first-hand with gender identity issues might find the love and support they need within our fellowship.
>
> Gender Identity Initial Principles of Engagement, Sydney Anglican Church, 2018

> Pastoral care for such a person struggling with sexual identity does not begin with debates about what is or is not moral. Certainly, the Christian pastor is called to help an individual struggling with sexual identity to understand the biblical view of human sexuality and to distinguish between his or her feelings and actions based on those feelings. The rightfully persistent idea of loving the sinner even as one discourages specific sins is vital here as it is in every situation of pastoral care and moral guidance.
>
> Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, Commission on Theology and Church Relations, 2014

In 2017 the Church of England synod in the United Kingdom passed a motion by a strong majority – 284 votes to 76 – calling for transgender people to be 'welcomed and affirmed in their parish church' as part of the 'long and often complex process' of transitioning, and asked bishops to consider preparing a nationally approved liturgy to mark a person's transition.

In August 2020 Uniting Church ministers in the Australian Capital Territory stated, 'It is vital that, in accepting people as they are, we accept their sexual orientation, and their gender identity, without qualification'.

Weblink
Moral discernment in the UCA

DID YOU KNOW?

Queensland, the ACT and Victoria have legislated to ban sexuality and gender identity conversion practices (often referred to as conversion therapy) involving minors or those with diminished responsibility.

Vaccine development

In August 2020, religious leaders in Sydney raised ethical doubts over one of the coronavirus (COVID-19) vaccines in development. Anglican, Catholic and Greek Orthodox leaders questioned the practice of using cell lines from an electively aborted foetus. The archbishops said they supported a COVID-19 vaccine in principle, but harvesting 'foetal tissue was deeply immoral'.

> It is in the best interests of the community that vaccination is widely taken up and this deadly disease defeated, and this will better be achieved if the vaccines available do not create an ethical quandary.
>
> Anthony Fisher, Catholic Archbishop of Sydney

The foetal cells used in vaccine development are derived from a small number of foetuses that were legally terminated decades ago. The Oxford vaccine uses a kidney cell line (HEK-293) obtained from a female foetus in the Netherlands in 1973.

Weblink
HEK-293 cells

Cells derived from elective abortions have been used since the 1960s to manufacture vaccines, including current vaccines against rubella, chickenpox, hepatitis A and shingles. They have also been used to make approved drugs against diseases including haemophilia, rheumatoid arthritis and cystic fibrosis.

There are ethical issues here for those manufacturing the vaccine and for those who will use it.

Two statements from the Pontifical Academy for Life address these:

> As for the question of the vaccines that used or may have used cells coming from voluntarily aborted foetuses in their preparation, it must be specified that the 'wrong' in the moral sense lies in the actions, not in the vaccines or the material itself.
>
> The technical characteristics of the production of the vaccines most commonly used in childhood lead us to exclude that there is a morally relevant cooperation

between those who use these vaccines today and the practice of voluntary abortion. Hence, we believe that all clinically recommended vaccinations can be used with a clear conscience and that the use of such vaccines does not signify some sort of cooperation with voluntary abortion.

Pontifical Academy for Life, 2005

It should be noted that today it is no longer necessary to obtain cells from new voluntary abortions, and that the cell lines on which the vaccines are based in are derived solely from two foetuses originally aborted in the 1960s … Hence, we believe that all clinically recommended vaccinations can be used with a clear conscience and that the use of such vaccines does not signify some sort of cooperation with voluntary abortion.

Pontifical Academy for Life, 2017

Returning to the definition of bioethics (page 233), which states that 'many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgments for human conduct', it is obvious that the number of disciplines feeding into the making of 'appropriate judgements' is an ever-expanding field. Advances in artificial intelligence, for example, bring new and more complex issues into the bioethical landscape. And, by their very nature, churches will always be responding 'after the event'. Pope Francis acknowledged this when he wrote:

Since 'time is greater than space', I would make it clear that not all discussions of doctrinal, moral or pastoral issues need to be settled by interventions of the magisterium. Unity of teaching and practice is certainly necessary in the Church, but this does not preclude various ways of interpreting some aspects of that teaching or drawing certain consequences from it.

Amoris Laetitia ('The Joy of Love'). Apostolic Exhortation, April 2016

REVIEW

1. **Describe** the principal ethical teachings that relate specifically to the various Christian approaches to bioethics. In your answer, **refer** to the sanctity or holiness of life, the integrity and dignity of the person and stewardship, and **support** with quotations from the Christian Scriptures.
2. **Explain** how the application of Christian ethical teaching is applied to one issue of bioethics that is covered in this section or emerges from your research.

EXTENSION

1. Using the weblinks provided as a starting point, select one significant contemporary bioethical issue and, in point form, write a possible Christian response to it.
2. Allocation of health resources has emerged as a critical issue in recent years. **Investigate** one specific aspect of this issue and **analyse** the significance of this issue for both the individual and the Christian community.

Weblinks

Adelaide Centre for Bioethics and Culture

The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity

Environmental ethics

How long will the land mourn, and the grass of every field wither! For the wickedness of those who live in it the animals and the birds are swept away, and because people said, 'He is blind to our ways.'

Jeremiah 12:4

Worldwide concern for the environment has brought together Christians in a way no other issue could. For Christians, social justice and the integrity of the environment are linked, and the environment itself has intrinsic value.

For human beings … to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life – these are sins. [For] to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God.

His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, also known as 'The Green Patriarch', November 1997

The texts and the teachings

This joint message of Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew summarises Christian beliefs about the environment:

The story of creation presents us with a panoramic view of the world. Scripture reveals that, 'in the beginning', God intended humanity to cooperate in the preservation and protection of the natural environment. At first, as we read in Genesis, 'no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb of the field had yet sprung up – for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was no one to till the ground' (2:5). The earth was entrusted to us as a sublime gift and legacy, for which all of us share responsibility until, 'in the end', all things in heaven and on earth will be restored in Christ (cf. Eph 1:10). Our human dignity and welfare are deeply connected to our care for the whole of creation.

However, 'in the meantime', the history of the world presents a very different context. It reveals a morally decaying scenario where our attitude and behaviour towards creation obscures our calling as God's co-operators. Our propensity to interrupt the world's delicate and balanced ecosystems, our insatiable desire to manipulate and control the planet's limited resources, and our greed for limitless profit in markets – all these have alienated us from the original purpose of creation.

The World Day of Prayer for Creation, 2017.
© Libreria Editrice Vaticana

The good news on climate!

Young Christian groups across all denominations are coming together and providing resources and demonstrating 'through strategic local electoral engagement, that everyday Christians care about tackling the climate crisis'. They see that loving your neighbour means climate justice. And the wider church is supporting youth climate leaders calling for action on climate change and to build a better future.

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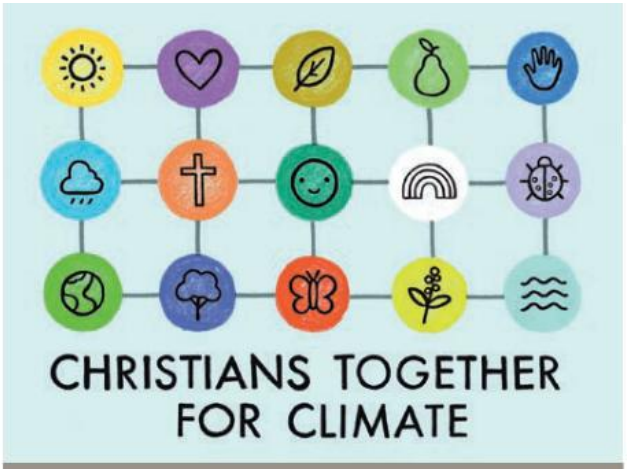

Common Grace (www.commongrace.org.au)

FIGURE 11.2.2 Logo of the campaign Christians Together for Climate

Divesting from fossil fuels

Many churches are divesting themselves of fossil fuel-based company investments.

The Uniting Church in Australia has a long history of caring for creation, and in 2014 its Assembly resolved to divest itself of fossil fuel-based company investments. Then Uniting Church president Rev. Professor Andrew Dutney called the decision an important act of public witness, saying it must do its part to support small island states at risk over global warming.

> As Christians we are called to respect and care for the whole of creation ... Our partner churches in the small island states have been calling on Australia to take seriously the threat to their futures. We simply must act. This is a matter of social, environmental, and intergenerational justice.
>
> Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, 'Assembly to divest from fossil fuels', 29 August 2014

In January 2015, the Public Affairs Commission of the Anglican Church of Australia stated: 'This [divestment] is a moral and theological issue for the Anglican Church in Australia; action is needed to underpin expressions of concern about climate change.'

In May 2020, a total of 42 faith organisations from 14 countries pledged to divest from fossil fuel companies or avoid such investments in the future. In the same month, a coalition of faith-based organisations in the United States launched a campaign in support of Big Shift, a global effort calling on the World Bank to end support for fossil fuels and shift investment to renewable energy.

In June 2020, the Vatican issued its first-ever set of comprehensive environmental guidelines. The guidelines frame investing in fossil fuels as an ethical choice, on par with other significant ethical choices. The guidelines suggest that Catholic institutions' ethical commitments should lead to 'avoiding supporting companies that harm human or social ecology (for example, abortion and weapons) and environmental ecology (for example, fossil fuels).'

Concern about climate change has built connections between the major faith traditions, within those traditions and in the community at large that probably no other issue has ever been able to achieve.

In November 2019, a multifaith plea involved representatives of 150 religious leaders, who called on Prime Minister Scott Morrison to recognise Australia's moral responsibility to avoid a climate catastrophe.

> Despite the differences in our faith, we all regard addressing the climate emergency as our shared moral challenge. We stand together for our common home, the Earth.
>
> Australian faith leaders, November 2019

ARRCC/Peter Branjerdporn

FIGURE 11.2.3 West End Uniting Church Brisbane, March 2019

REVIEW

1 **Clarify** the principal biblical texts that support Christian environmental ethics.
2 **Describe** and **explain** Christian ethical teachings on the environment.
3 **Analyse** the actual difference that the application of Christian environmental ethics might make to the everyday life of the believer.

EXTENSION

Investigate the ecumenical and interfaith connections established through concern about environmental issues.

Propose reasons why environmental issues have facilitated these connections. Do you think these connections could flow on to other areas? Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblink
No faith in coal

Christian environmental ethics

Uniting earth

Response to climate change

World Day of Prayer for Creation

Common Grace

Religious leaders call for climate action

Faith and Ecology Network

Worksheet
Christian ethics

11.3 Significant practices

GLOSSARY

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use. Within the rite there are certain rituals; these are established or prescribed procedures and actions for the ceremony.

ritual A prescribed, repetitive form of action, sometimes accompanied by words, which forms part of a liturgy or act of worship. Examples include the sign of the cross, processing with the Bible, and the blessing of the bread and wine during the Eucharist or Lord's Supper.

worship 'Worship' is mostly the preferred term in the Reformed churches, and 'liturgy' in the Catholic Churches. Both refer to gatherings of the faithful for prayer and sacraments. In their specific senses, both refer to the Eucharist or Lord's Supper.

▷ Refer to Chapter 3, pages 45–8, for the principal beliefs of Christianity.

Christianity has developed into a highly **ritual**-filled tradition, and its significant practices are acts of public **worship** that mark a changing status within the community and celebrate communally key beliefs. The **rite** of baptism, which proclaims a person's membership of the Christian community, is mostly celebrated these days during Sunday worship; the marriage ceremony acknowledges the commitment of two people before God and the community; and the focus of Christian public worship is the Saturday or Sunday celebration with Holy Communion.

COVID-19 and significant Christian practices

Measures designed to lessen the impact, and prevent the spread, of COVID-19 have affected the usual patterns of church life. Public worship, by its very nature, is communal, and religious groups have had to adapt and find new ways to worship so that they can stay connected to their communities. Throughout this unit, keep in mind how this may have changed the significance of the practice for the individual and their community.

Baptism

GLOSSARY

exorcism A ritual act to free persons, places or things from the power of evil through prayer and symbolic ritual; for example, signing with oil.

Baptism is one of the sacraments of the church and, along with the Eucharist or Holy Communion, is accepted as such by most churches. The rite of baptism admits a candidate into the Christian Church community. The origin of the word suggests not only 'to dip, to immerse'; classical Greek used it in the sense of being 'turned upside down' or 'overwhelmed', such as with suffering, as when Christ and the apostles are 'baptised' with suffering (see Mk 10:38–39). The Christian Scriptures use 'baptism' in a technical sense to refer to the religious ceremony of baptism. This section will explore the significance of baptism within Christianity (including the Scriptures), how baptism reflects key Christian beliefs, and its significance for the individual and the community.

The elements of baptism

Christian baptism can be performed by a bishop, priest/minister or deacon. It is usually celebrated during or after the Sunday worship and is divided into five main parts, the elements of which are usually present in baptism celebrated in the major Christian denominations:

- Reception of the person to be baptised
- Welcoming Rite:
  - questioning of parents/sponsor – their willingness to have their child/sponsored adult baptised, and their responsibilities
  - signing by the priest/minister, parents and godparents/sponsors of the child or adult with the sign of the cross
- Celebration of God's Word:
  - a celebration of the Liturgy of the Word or readings from the Bible
  - **exorcism**, followed by anointing of the child/adult with oil
- Celebration of the Sacrament:
  - blessing of the baptismal water
  - renunciation of sin and profession of faith – the Apostles' Creed
  - baptism in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Explanatory Rites:
  - anointing on the forehead with sacred oil
  - clothing with a white garment
  - the giving of the candle
  - the *ephphatha* (from Greek, 'be opened') or prayers over the ears and mouth
- Conclusion of the Rite:
  - the Lord's Prayer
  - the blessing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Water is the main symbol of baptism. It can be poured or sprinkled on the person being baptised, or sometimes the candidate for baptism is dipped or immersed in water.

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Timothy & Cassie Morrissey

FIGURE 11.3.1 Here Emma, held by her godfather, is anointed with oil after her baptism.

RESPOND

Describe the elements of Christian baptism that are visible in this photograph.

Approaches to baptism across the Christian Churches

In the Anglican, Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox and Uniting churches of Australia, the ceremony of baptism contains most, if not all, of the elements listed on page 238 and the baptism is performed 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit', or the Trinity. After the baptism, Orthodox churches include chrismation (confirmation), a religious dance (circling the font three times), tonsure (cutting of four locks of hair) and Holy Communion.

Some Christians, particularly Quakers and the Salvation Army, do not see baptism by water as necessary.

Pentecostal churches baptise in Jesus' name only and also stress the need for a second baptism of the Spirit.

Most churches baptise infants; some do not. Some insist on submersion, or at least partial immersion, of the person who is baptised; others consider that any form of washing by water is sufficient.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eleven Australian churches have agreed to recognise the Sacrament of Baptism administered in each other's church and that baptismal certificates should read, '"N" was baptised with water in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.' The Greek Orthodox and Serbian Orthodox churches add 'according to the rites of the Eastern Orthodox Church.'

Weblink
Orthodox Baptism

DID YOU KNOW?

Although infant or child baptism is not mentioned in the Christian Scriptures, it is perhaps implied in the early church when whole 'households' (Acts 16:33; 1 Cor 1:16) – a term encompassing children and infants as well as servants – were baptised.

Baptism by immersion or being 'buried with Christ' is reflected in Romans 6:4 and in the account of the Ethiopian convert in Acts of the Apostles 8:36–38.

Baptism and the basic beliefs of Christianity

While baptism is central to the beliefs and ministry of Christianity, it is uncertain whether it was formally instituted by Christ during the encounter with Nicodemus – 'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit' (Jn 3:5) – at an unspecified time before his Passion, or after his Resurrection, when he commanded his disciples to baptise in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Mt 28:19).

Whatever its origins, two things are certain. First, the Christian Scriptures state that baptism is necessary for salvation and must be preceded by faith (Acts 8:13) and repentance (Acts 2:38). It is to be administered in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and allows believers to participate in the death and resurrection of Christ (Rom 6:4), to form part of the Body of Christ (1 Cor 12:13), and to be cleansed of their sins (1 Cor 6:11). These beliefs are evident in the features of the ceremony – statements about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the affirmation of the believer as a member of the Christian community.

Second, Christians have often seen echoes of their baptismal beliefs in the Jewish Scriptures – particularly in the stories of the Flood (Gen 7–8), the passage through the Red Sea (Ex 14), the crossing of the Jordan River into the Promised Land (Josh 3:16), and the rite of circumcision (Gen 17:9–14).

The passage from Paul in Romans 6:3–11, which understands baptism as burial with Christ and rising with him, provides the summative statement:

> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death? Therefore we have been buried with him by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.

Courtesy YWAM Wollongong

FIGURE 11.3.2 Baptism by immersion, Youth with a Mission Wollongong Discipleship student

The significance of baptism for the individual and community

Baptism is significant for the individual because it initiates them into the whole Christian life, introduces them to life guided by the Holy Spirit and gives them access to any other rites or sacraments offered by their particular church. In addition, it frees them from sin and allows them to be reborn as a son or daughter of God. They also become members of Christ and are incorporated into the church and therefore share in its mission.

Baptism is significant for the Christian community in all the ways outlined above. The individual is personally involved in the baptism rite for the first time, whereas the members of the community have completed their rite of initiation and witness the baptism of the new adherent into their church community. The Christian community is aware that baptism is the sacrament of faith and helps the individual's faith to grow.

All that is required officially for baptism – for example, by the Catholic and other churches – is the pouring of water and the words, 'I baptise you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit'. However, because the church is an important symbol, there is emphasis on the need for baptism inside a church, not because the building is important, but to stress that baptism is not primarily about the person being baptised but about building up the church (community) as the Body of Christ.

REVIEW

1 **Describe** the ceremony of baptism in a specific Christian Church/denomination and **explain** the significance of each of its components.
2 **Demonstrate** how baptism expresses some of the basic beliefs of Christianity. **Refer** in your answer to the Trinity, the resurrection, the power of the Holy Spirit and the role of the Christian community.
3 **Analyse** the significance of baptism for both the individual believer and the Christian community. In your answer, **refer** specifically to the significance before, during and after the baptism of an adherent for Christians.

EXTENSION

1 **Investigate** the significance of baptism in four Christian denominations. **Construct** a chart with the following headings: Denomination; Manner of baptism; Meaning of baptism; Baptising infants/adults. What similarities and differences are there?
2 In pairs, **discuss** the statement: 'Baptism is more important for the community than the individual.'

Marriage ceremony

Characteristics of a Christian marriage

As a significant rite of passage, marriage not only marks the establishment of a new family unit; it also has an important legal and societal function.

Weblink
Christian marriages

As well as legal requirements, a Christian marriage has its own symbols and rituals, and these are common across all Christian denominations:

- a priest, minister or deacon as the celebrant
- readings from Scripture
- the marriage ceremony:
  - statement of intentions
  - solemn consent (or vows)
  - the blessing and exchange of rings (although it is not necessary to have rings).

NOTE

All religious marriage celebrants must be registered with the Commonwealth of Australia.

Differences across denominations

In reality, the differences across the denominations are minor: mostly they concern the number of readings and the wording of the vows. As well as Scripture, the Catholic and Uniting churches may allow a suitable reading from another source, provided the words express a Christian understanding of marriage. The Eastern Orthodox and the Eastern Catholic churches, however, have two services within the wedding ceremony: the Betrothal at the door of the church, where rings are exchanged, and the Marriage or Crowning at the altar.

Weblinks
Orthodox Christian Betrothal

Orthodox Christian Crowning

The vows

The Catholic Church offers several forms of wording and does not permit personal adaptation. The Uniting Church offers a number of different wordings and the couple may choose to write or find their own vows, but the vows must include the promise that this is a lifelong commitment – using words such as 'as long as we both shall live' or 'until death parts us'. Minor variations are possible to the vows in

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the Anglican Australian Prayer Book, but only in consultation with the minister conducting the marriage.

Unlike Western churches, there are no traditional vows in the Eastern churches.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2012, the Anglican Church in Sydney caused controversy by adopting an alternative vow in which the woman is asked: 'Will you love and serve him, honour and submit to him, as the church submits to Christ ...?' This was not something new, but the reintroduction of a traditional vow 'to love, honour and obey', based on Ephesians 5:24: 'Just as the church is subject to Christ, so also wives ought to be, in everything, to their husbands.'

RESPOND

1 **Compare** two examples of vows available for use in each of three different Christian churches.

2 **Appreciate** the importance of language in formulating marriage vows.

Christian beliefs about marriage

Both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures (the Bible) are sources for Christian beliefs/teachings about marriage. Marriage recognises the instruction that humans should be fruitful and multiply:

> So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it …'
>
> Gen 1:27–8

It is a reflection of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the church:

> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her… For no one ever hates his own body, but he nourishes and tenderly cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, because we are members of his body.
>
> Eph 5:25, 29–30

So Christians see marriage as a loving, life-long relationship, and that means leaving one's family and forming a new family unit:

> 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' This is a great mystery, and I am applying it to Christ and the church.
>
> Eph 5:31–3, which quotes Gen 2:24

> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.
>
> Mark 10:9, Mt 19:6

A contentious issue

In 2017, Australians voted in favour of marriage equality via a postal survey, and on 9 December 2017, the *Marriage Act 1961* was updated to allow for marriage equality. The Act defines marriage as 'the union of 2 people to the exclusion of all others, voluntarily entered into for life.' The debates surrounding the issue of same-sex marriage legislation were very divisive and remain so. While the legislation was about civil marriage being open to people of the same sex, some Christians were apprehensive that the legislation would force churches to celebrate same-sex marriages. Within the Churches it has led to many rewarding discussions on the nature of marriage, and particularly of Christian marriage, and, while these discussions continue, there has been some accommodation. The Uniting Church has allowed authorised celebrants – lay and ordained – to choose whether to conduct same-sex marriages since 2018: they 'may exercise freedom to decide whether the minister's or celebrant's religious beliefs allow the minister or celebrant to accept requests to celebrate marriages, as authorised under the Marriage Act and according to the rites of the Uniting Church in Australia.' Some Anglican dioceses have voted to bless same-sex civil unions, and in November 2020 the Anglican Church's Appellate Tribunal voted by a five-to-one majority that blessing civil same-sex marriages is consistent with the constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Weblink
Same-sex marriage

Marriage as a sacrament

▷ See page 42 for the sacraments.

The Eastern Orthodox Catholic churches believe marriage is one of the seven sacraments and cannot be dissolved except by annulment – this means that the original grounds for the marriage were invalid.

Across all denominations, Christian baptism is a requirement for the couple to be married. There are different and various dispensations. The Anglican Church of Australia does require that one party to the marriage be baptised in the Christian tradition and there is mutual recognition of baptism as administered in the majority of Christian churches.

▷ See Australian Churches Covenanting Together, pages 194–5.

In the Latin (Roman) Catholic Church, marriage is the only sacrament where those receiving it are the ministers of the sacrament. The bride and groom give the sacrament to each other; the priest is there as the church's witness (and as the state-sanctioned celebrant).

Eastern Catholic churches share with the Orthodox churches the tradition that the minister of the sacrament is the bishop or priest who 'crowns the bridegroom and the

bride as a sign of the marriage covenant', a ceremony that has led to the sacrament being called the Crowning.

Tradition and culture

Most of the symbols and customs that we associate with marriage in the Western tradition are cultural or part of a civil tradition, not specifically religious. The wedding ring was once connected to the exchange of valuables at the moment of marriage: rather than a symbol of eternal love, a sign of 'earnest money.' According to the 1549 edition of the Book of Common Prayer (Church of England): after the words 'with this ring I thee wed' follow the words 'This gold and silver I give thee,' at which point the groom was supposed to hand a leather purse filled with gold and silver coins to the bride. Today, if there is a blessing and giving of rings, in most churches it occurs after the exchange of vows – that is, after the actual marriage has taken place. A ring for the bridegroom is a fairly recent custom for Australian men.

'Who gives this woman to be married?' The tradition of the father of the bride walking his daughter down the aisle and 'giving her away' goes back to rather an ancient formula from the days when women were thought of as chattels, or the property of their families, especially their father's family. Today, it is common for the bride and groom to walk down the aisle together.

'If anyone knows any reason why these two should not be wed, let him speak now, or forever hold his peace.' This recalls times when communications were limited and also when many marriages were not freely entered into. It is very rarely used now as notice of marriage (banns) is published beforehand. In some services the question is asked of the bride and groom: 'If either of you know any reason why you may not lawfully be joined together in marriage, you now confess it.'

The tradition of a white wedding dress is commonly credited to Queen Victoria, who wore one for her wedding in 1840. Before then, European and American brides had worn a plethora of colours, including blue, yellow, and practical colours like black, brown, or grey!

The lighting of wedding candles and an accompanying ceremony are a recent addition from the United States. They are not part of the rite of marriage.

The significance of marriage for the individual and the Christian community

For the individual:

- Marriage affirms the commitment of one person to another for life.
- The vows are made by each person before God.
- It marks the beginning of a new family unit (rite of passage).
- It is an acknowledgement of the purposes of marriage: companionship, an appropriate sexual union and the good order of society, which affirms an individual commitment.

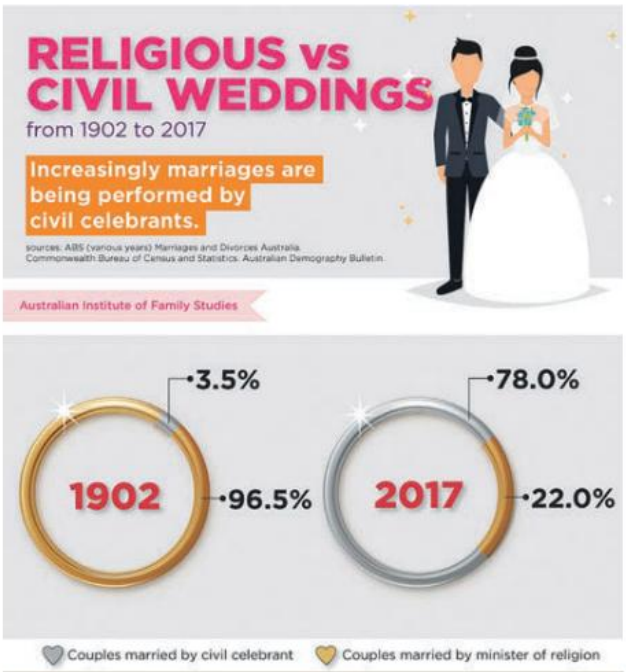
For the Christian community:

- The public vows affirm what a family is and what a marriage is.
- Not only are the couple saying 'yes' to each other, they are saying 'yes' to the Christian community.
- It symbolises the relationship between the Christian community and Jesus Christ.

> Marriage is to be seen as part of the new creation of reconciliation. This is part of the reason why the marriage ceremony is a public act, carried out in the community of faith. While marriage is a private expression, it is also a public witness to the reconciling work of God, something which enables us to reach beyond the self to the Christian community and the wider society.
>
> Uniting Church of Australia, *Uniting Sexuality and Faith*, 1997, 5.86, p. 46

DID YOU KNOW?

Under Australian law, marriages conducted by Ministers of Recognised Religions will use the words of their approved marriage service, and the point at which you are married is when you will take each other as husband and wife/spouse/partner in marriage, in front of two adult witnesses and a registered marriage celebrant.



Australian Institute of Family Studies (AIFS) on behalf of the Commonwealth of Australia, CC BY 4.0 https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/

FIGURE 11.3.3 2000 was the first year in which there were more marriages performed by civil celebrants than by ministers of religion. In 2019, the figure was four out of five (80.4 per cent).

RESPOND

Predict the effect the increase in the number of civil marriages in Australia might have on the Christian community.

There is a distinction between civil marriage and Christian marriage, although a Christian one must meet the same legal requirements. A dilemma facing many churches today is how they deal with those baptised who

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wish to marry in the church but are not really members of the church. Reasons for wanting to do so are many and varied: maybe their parents had a connection with the church; culturally, it might be expected of them to marry in a church; or it's great for the photos!

REVIEW

1 Identify the common rituals of marriage within Christianity.
2 **Demonstrate** how the marriage ceremony expresses Christian beliefs.
3 Analyse the significance of the Christian marriage ceremony for:
   a the individual
   b the Christian community.

EXTENSION

Examine whether the traditions surrounding a Christian marriage ceremony have come to carry more meaning than its religious significance.

Saturday or Sunday worship

GLOSSARY

Eucharist From the Greek for thankful, grateful, to show favour. It is used synonymously with Communion, Holy Communion, the Lord's Supper, the Breaking of Bread, the Mass.

homily A homily or sermon is a commentary that follows a reading of scripture to give insight into the meaning of the scripture and relate it to the lives of the worshippers.

rubrics Directions for the conduct of divine service or the administration of the sacraments.

Sabbath Technically speaking, the weekly day of rest and refraining from work that was enjoined upon the Israelites, and is part of the Jewish tradition. From the Hebrew word *shabbat*, meaning 'to cease or desist [from labour]'. Most Christian churches celebrate it on Sunday, but some – for example, Seventh-day Adventists – do so on Saturday.

The origins of Sunday worship

As is the case for many Christian beliefs and practices, the original inspiration for Sunday worship is found in the Jewish practice of honouring the **Sabbath** (on Saturday). Its initial importance in the Jewish tradition is evident in their naming of the days of the week from 'the first day' to 'the sixth day', and then a special title given for the 'Sabbath' or 'seventh day'. On the Sabbath, no work is done, in accordance with early biblical laws (Ex 23:12; Lev 23:2–3) and both versions of the Ten Commandments or Decalogue (Ex 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15). The Jewish Sabbath was a festival marked by holy rituals and sacrifices (Lev 23:2–3), and was symbolically associated with creation (Gen 2:2–3) and with the central relationship of covenant (Ex 31:16). Later in the Jewish tradition, the Sabbath gradually came to be understood as a day devoted to physical restoration, spiritual nourishment and intellectual stimulation.

The followers of Jesus continued this observance of every seventh day as holy but soon transferred the day to Sunday, the day of Jesus' resurrection (Mk 16:2; Acts 20:7; and often mentioned in early Christian literature). From the fourth century CE onwards, councils and Christian legislation often mandated cessation from work and the obligation of worship on Sunday.

There is no firm evidence that Christians considered Sunday a day of rest, that they chose it as the only day for worship, or that they celebrated **Eucharist** on Sunday only. No evidence for equating the Sabbath with Sunday is found before the end of the third century CE. These facts seemed to influence the early Reformers – Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Tyndale, Cranmer and Knox – who insisted on the value of Sunday as a day of rest and worship. However, they refused to sanction it as the Christian fulfilment of the Sabbath.

Nowadays, most Christian churches are in agreement that Sunday is the Lord's Day. The Catholic Church, however, also has Saturday evening worship and the Seventh-day Adventists observe Saturday as the Sabbath.

DID YOU KNOW?

'Sunday' is the English equivalent of the Latin phrase *dies solis*, 'the day of the sun', a pre-Christian name for the weekday, but it was retained by Christians because Christ was worshipped as the *sol verus* or 'true sun'. After the 'Peace of the Church' was decreed in 313 CE, it became customary for Christians to meet at 9 a.m., the third hour of the Roman day. This faith commitment meant that Christians missed vital hours of employment and pay.

Features of contemporary Sunday worship

Sunday worship is the primary rite or religious act through which Christians worship God. Depending on the denomination in which the worship takes place, it is called variously the Mass, the Lord's Supper, Sunday Worship or the Divine Liturgy. There is evidence that the basic structure for Sunday worship – gathering, reading the Scriptures, **homily** and Holy Communion – was in place

very early, as described here by Justin Martyr in Rome in about 150 CE:

> And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things [then] follow prayer, communion and an offering for the poor.

The major difference today is the varied emphasis on the celebration of the Holy Communion.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 325 CE, the Church Council at Nicea decreed 'that prayer be made to God standing' on Sundays throughout the year, in honour of the Resurrection. Kneeling is a gesture of penitence and Sunday is a time to rejoice in glory.

TABLE 11.1 Features of Sunday worship in some Christian churches

Christian variant	Features of Sunday worship
Catholic (Latin rite)	Called the Mass or Eucharist, it includes opening prayer, penitential rite (asking forgiveness), Liturgy of the Word (readings from the Scriptures), a homily, creed, intercessions and the Liturgy of the Eucharist (the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of Peace, Holy Communion) and the Rite of Dismissal (closing prayers). Each Sunday service is a Mass and the prayers and readings are in a formal prayer book – the Roman Missal. The rites of the Eastern Catholic churches are similar to those of the Orthodox.
Orthodox	Called the Divine Liturgy, it is divided into two parts, the Liturgy of the Catechumens, which contains readings from the Scriptures and sermon, followed by the Liturgy of the Faithful. The priest prepares the bread and wine, which is carried through the church, and after the creed come a prayer of thanksgiving, the Intercessions, and the Lord's Prayer communion is shared. There are number of different Divine Liturgies and all have formalised **rubrics**.
Anglican	Most Anglican churches have one Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper each Sunday as well as a Word and Prayer Service. The key elements include Praising God (opening hymn/prayer), Hearing God's Word (scripture readings, homily), Praying to God (confession of sins) and Going out to Serve (prayer of dedication or blessing). The Lord's Supper has two halves – the Word and Prayer, and the Lord's Supper, which includes the Creed. The forms the worship services take are formalised in the Australian Prayer Book. There are some differences of emphasis between dioceses and between the evangelical and Anglo-Catholic strands of Anglicanism in Australia.
Uniting	The Service of the Lord's Day has four parts: Gathering as God's People, including a prayer of confession; the Service of the Word – Scripture reading, homily, the Creed may be said; the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper – Communion; and finally the Sending Forth of God's People. Frequent celebration of Holy Communion is relatively new in Uniting Church tradition. The Uniting Church has a number of forms for worship: 'The liturgy should give expression to the life of a local worshipping community' (UCA Assembly).
Pentecostal	Worship for Pentecostal churches does not follow a formal ritual. It uses contemporary music in its praise and worship – it is a sensory experience, with body movements, sounds, dancing, shouting, praying out loud and speaking in tongues. Pentecostals do have communion but its frequency is left to the discretion of individual churches.

TABLE 11.2 Beliefs about Holy Communion in some Christian churches

Christian variant	Belief about Holy Communion
Anglican (Anglo-Catholic), Catholic (Latin and Eastern) and Orthodox	The bread and wine become the actual body and blood of Christ.
Lutheran	When the bread and wine become the body and blood of Christ, the 'reality' of bread and wine remains.
Uniting	Christ is really present in the action of the Eucharist. It is a remembering, a remaking of the Last Supper.

EXTENSION

Investigate the Orthodox Liturgy of the Faithful and **identify** how it differs from celebration of Holy Communion in Western churches.

Weblinks
Service of the Lord
Common Prayer
Holy Communion
Lutheran Church of Australia worship Q&A
Liturgy and the Holy Eucharist
The Divine Liturgy in English

Sunday worship and the key beliefs of Christianity

> Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly; as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom; through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.
>
> Col 3:16

Looking at elements of contemporary Sunday worship in the previous section, it is obvious how they are based on the key beliefs of Christianity. Christians affirm the sacredness, power and efficacy of God's Word (the Scriptures), they remember the death and resurrection of Jesus and anticipate his return. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor 11:23–26) uses exactly the same words that are used in the Communion service in most Christian churches. Sunday worship also acknowledges for Christians the value of gathering as a faith community:

> Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy.
>
> Ex 20:8

Keeping the Sabbath holy can be achieved by 'remembering' the essential links between God and human beings – that all things exist in and through Jesus Christ (Jn 1:3).

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The significance of Sunday worship for the individual and the community

Sunday worship provides Christians with space to be themselves. It provides a special time of engagement with God and the faith community.

> In worship, we speak to God in a direct way in praise and adoration, confession and lament, intercession and thanksgiving. It is the primary speech of the community *to* God, rather than speech *about* God, the secondary speech of reflection and discussion. It is also God's speech to us – for example, in the word of grace at the declaration of forgiveness, in the proclamation of the Scriptures, in the blessing that rings in our ears as we leave.
>
> Uniting Church in Australia Assembly, Worship Resources

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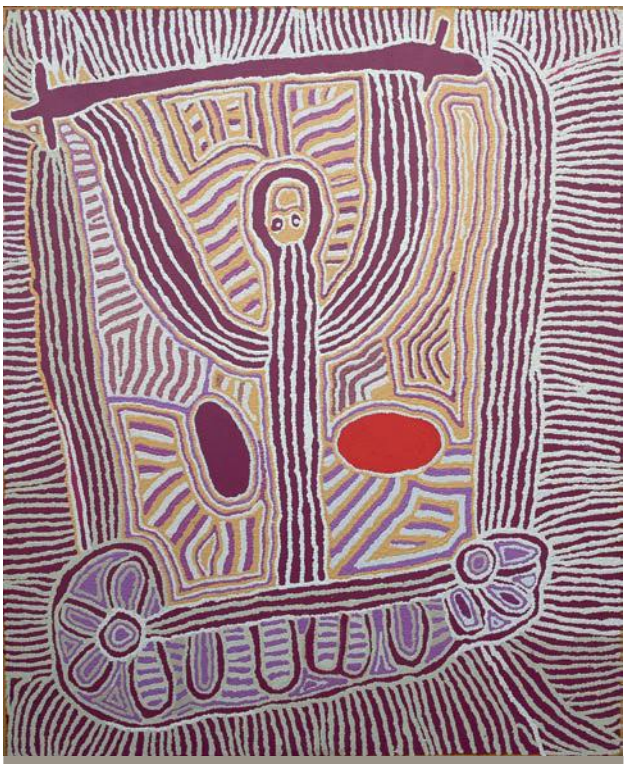

FIGURE 11.3.4 *Eucharist*, by Linda Syddick Napaltjarri (born c. 1937) a Pintupi- and Pitjantjatjara-speaking artist from the Kintore region, Western Desert. Her innovative and distinctive paintings are intensely original and combine iconic desert stories of the *Tingari* or Dreaming era and Christian spirituality – narratives that have deep meaning to the artist.

RESPOND

Describe how Napaltjarri's *Eucharist* relates to an understanding of Christian beliefs about the Eucharist and Sunday worship.

Worksheet
Christianity
significant practice

REVIEW

1 **Describe** the main components and symbols of a typical Saturday/Sunday ritual in a Christian Church. **Explain** the significance of each of these components.

2 **Demonstrate** how Saturday/Sunday worship expresses some key beliefs of Christianity. In your answer, **refer** to:
- the key elements of Saturday/Sunday worship
- the influence of these beliefs on the everyday lives of Christians.

3 **Analyse** the significance of Saturday/Sunday worship for both the individual believer and the Christian community. In your answer, **refer** to the most important aspects of Saturday/Sunday worship for the Christian believer; for example, reception of communion as a faith community.

AAP Images/DAVID MARIUZ

FIGURE 11.3.5 In 2020, Sunday worship was stripped back to online and TV as churches remained shut and large gatherings were banned due to COVID-19. Even with the gradual lifting of some restrictions, church attendance was by booking only!

> Longer term effects of virtual worship [are] likely to transform worship from corporate singing, prayer and confession to a juxtaposition of households offering private prayer at a time of their choosing.
>
> Rev. Geoff Flynn, The Wesley Church, Wollongong

> This is a time when Christians can identify with and learn from Jews like never before. Since 70 CE, Jews have prayed, lit candles, and kept Sabbath without being able to be present in the Temple. They have kept the prayers, known by heart, passing down the faith generation to generation. For Christians, offering the Eucharistic prayers faithfully though online worship and so forth is a way of Sabbath-keeping even without the consumption of elements. The Jews have a lot to teach Christians about knowing God's presence when the tangible signs of worship are stripped away and sacred places of gathering are not accessible for a time.
>
> Rev. Dr Samuel Wells, vicar of St Martin-in-the-Fields, London. From 'Keeping the feast: Thoughts on virtual communion in a time of social distancing'.

EXTENSION

In small groups and with reference to the material in this section, **discuss** what might be the impact of these restrictions on Sunday worship for the individual and for the Christian community.

Conclusion

As Christianity advances through its third millennium, it faces many serious challenges, both in terms of how it views itself, and how it is viewed by those who do not share its beliefs. Historically, Western Europe has been the traditional centre of both Catholic and Reformed Christianity. Now that centre has shifted outwards to Africa, South America, Asia and Oceania.

In terms of what has been covered in this chapter, this shift away from Western European Christianity also signals huge shifts in how Christians view their tradition, particularly in Australia. Throughout the Christian world, significant people and ideas will always support and challenge the tradition. Ethical guidelines and core beliefs will remain constant, whereas interpretation of and actions based on those beliefs will vary. Ritual and sacramental expressions will always be at the heart of significant practices in the life of adherents.

Christianity will always struggle with the enormous shifts mentioned earlier. Its words will not always match its actions.

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. Synthesise the main features of the life of Christian people, ideas, ethics and practices in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map. Include the completed mind map in your HSC revision notes to revisit when you are preparing for your exam.

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11 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section II

Question 2 – Christianity (15 marks)

a **i** Outline **one** significant practice within Christianity from **one** of the following:

- Baptism
- Marriage ceremony
- Saturday/Sunday worship

3 MARKS

ii Demonstrate how the practice outlined in (a) (i) expresses the beliefs of the Christian community.

4 MARKS

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

John 14:15

b To what extent does **one** significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, guide Christians to love God?

8 MARKS

Section III

Question 2 – Christianity (20 marks)

Do good, even if you suffer for it.

1 Peter 3:14–16

How do ethical teachings in Christianity guide adherents to do 'what is good'? In your response, refer to **one** of the following:

- Bioethics
- Environmental ethics
- Sexual ethics

Additional Section III Question

Do good, even if you suffer for it.

1 Peter 3:14–16

To what extent has **one** significant person or school of thought, other than Jesus, encouraged Christian adherents to 'do good'?

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

12

Hinduism depth study

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **explain** the contribution to and **analyse** the impact of one significant person or school of thought on the development and expression of Hinduism
- **describe** and **explain** Hindu ethical teachings on one ethical area
- **describe** one significant practice within Hinduism, **demonstrate** how this practice expresses the beliefs of Hinduism and **analyse** its significance for both the individual and the Hindu community.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Hinduism significant individual or group (p. 249)
- Hindu ethics (p. 256)
- Hinduism significant practice (p. 261)

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Newspix/Colin Murty

A procession of Hindus from different temples show respect to Lord Shiva as devotees witness the consecration of the new Hindu Temple at Canning Vale, Perth, June 2008.

12.1 Significant people and ideas

The history of Hinduism is a history of its significant people and ideas. Hinduism has no structures for determining the orthodoxy or the various – and sometimes quite divergent – tendencies within the tradition. While the *brahmin* priesthood has acted as both custodian and transmitter of traditional (Sanskritic) knowledge, there has always been a different group of teachers (ascetics) working on an individual basis. Their authority and their teachings are based on their own religious experiences, which become the guide for their own interpretation of the sacred texts. All this is easily accepted in a religion that encourages several different pathways to liberation.

Worksheet
Hinduism significant individual or group

This section investigates *bhakti*, one of the most popular expressions of Hinduism in India; Adi Shankara, an Indian philosopher from the eighth and ninth centuries CE; and Mira Bai, a female poet from the sixteenth century.

EXTENSION

Update the Hinduism list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

Bhakti movement

GLOSSARY

Pali texts The earliest known Buddhist texts. The Pali language is closely related to Sanskrit and many words are similar in the two languages.

Puranas *Purana* literally means 'ancient tale'. Composed in Sanskrit, these texts are filled with myths about the Hindu gods, rituals to be performed to these gods and lists of rules giving guidance in everyday behaviour.

Since about 500 BCE, *bhakti* has embraced the most popular expressions of religious practice in India. It easily adapted to itself the other important currents of Indian devotional worship, the performance of ritual and the lifestyle of renunciation. The *bhakti* movement is simply the collection of people who have grouped themselves around a particular god or goddess whom they regard as the highest being in the universe and who, it is believed, has the capacity and the willingness to benefit them both spiritually and materially. There is no overarching institutional or doctrinal control over these groups, although there may be over individual groups, but they share so many common features of belief and practice as to justify the term 'movement'.

Origins of *bhakti*

The origins of the *bhakti* movement are lost in history. Devotion to deities is universal in human history and is probably very old in India. It is possible *bhakti* as a self-conscious form of practice had its beginnings in Buddhism. There are passages in the early **Pali texts** where the Buddha is described as a god, is declared to be unique and is praised by individuals and gods. The Buddha was an object of devotion/veneration and this becomes readily apparent in the *Sakkapanhasutta* where the Hindu god Indra definitely praises the Buddha in the manner of a devotee. Certainly, by the appearance of the earliest Mahayana texts in the first century BCE, the Buddha is depicted as the father of the universe, the saviour of all beings from *samsara* and stands at the centre of the Buddhist universe of *bodhisattvas*, monks, laypeople and deities.

▷ Refer to Chapter 10, pages 204–5, for the rise of Mahayana Buddhism.

Thus, *bhakti* ideas and practices were first depicted in Buddhist literature. The *bhakti* movement promotes two basic objects of devotion – deities, and holy men and holy women. All were regarded as having supernatural powers and, importantly, were held to be able to use these powers for the benefit of people and animals in general. Holy men, of whom the Buddha was an exemplar, have been prominent throughout the history of Buddhism and Hinduism. Even today they continue to attract large followings at the centre of devotional cults. To access their powers, laypeople are required to express their desire for help from the figure to whom they are devoted, and various techniques were developed to communicate this desire – techniques designed to persuade or even to cajole help from this figure. As such, a kind of economy of exchange (obligation of reciprocity) developed that came to have both material and religious aspects to it.

Though *bhakti* might have originated in early Buddhism, its first explicit development is found in early Hindu literature. An inscription from 130 BCE shows that Krishna/Vasudeva (a form of Vishnu) was being worshipped by a group called the Bhagavatas or 'those who follow the Bhagavan'. More generally, scholars have identified two texts – the *Svetashvatara Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad Gita* – as pivotal in presenting the early development of *bhakti*. These texts are considered important because of how they treat their respective deities.

The *Svetashvatara Upanishad*, now recognised as dating from the early Common Era, is centred on the god Rudra, one of the deities who became part of the composite Shiva of the *Mahabharata* and the ***Puranas***. A whole theology of Rudra/Shiva as a god of devotion is worked out in the six chapters of this text. He is depicted in the important roles of creator, preserver and destroyer and, of central importance, he is said to be identical to the *Brahman*, the name of the ground of all being in the *Upanishads*. In this *Upanishad*, the god's willingness to extend his favour to his devotees is explicitly stated.

▷ Refer to Chapter 4, pages 67–9, for more information on the *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Similarly, the *Bhagavad Gita* develops a distinctive theology of Vishnu in its 18 chapters. Vishnu there is called Krishna, an *avatara* of the god, demonstrating the same tendency as was done with Shiva to integrate the myths, theologies and names of many other gods into the one great god. Where the *Bhagavad Gita* differs from the *Svetashvatara Upanishad* is that it focuses as much on the devotee as it does on the god who is the object of devotion.

The plot of the *Bhagavad Gita* is very simple, revolving around a dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna, during which there is a transformation in the status of both figures. Initially, Krishna appears to be human, the chariot driver of the rather elevated warrior Arjuna. As the dialogue proceeds, Arjuna is slowly taught that Krishna is really a god, and that Arjuna's own status is significantly less than that of the god, who in every way is much more powerful and distinctive than he. The transformation becomes complete after Krishna reveals himself in his cosmic form in the eleventh chapter, an experience so powerful as to

Alamy Stock Photo/Louise Batalla Duran

FIGURE 12.1.1 Mural on a Hindu temple wall showing Arjuna and Krishna in their chariot – the Kurukshetra battle

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shatter Arjuna's knowledge of himself and his relation to the deity. After this he becomes a devotee of Krishna and the text fills in the obligations of the devotee.

We can understand the transformation of the two characters in the devotional relationship depicted in the *Bhagavad Gita* in terms of the following stages:

1 Introduction
2 Spiritual ignorance of the future devotee
3 Beginning of spiritual realisation for the future devotee
4 Demonstration of the god's grace
5 'Conversion' of the devotee
6 Demonstration of the devotee's devotion
7 The god offers grace to his devotee
8 The devotee reaffirms devotion by accepting the grace
9 The devotee performs specific activities as an expression of devotion.

These stages capture the differentiation of status and the mutual recognition of this, which must occur if the *bhakti* relationship is to be developed to its fullest potential. These stages can be found in this sequence in an enormous number of myths in the *Puranas*, a genre of texts that brings together collections of myths, lifestyle and ritual material, where the underlying point of coherence is always the devotional treatment of various gods.

The earliest *Puranas* appeared in about the fourth century CE, the same period in which temple building began on a large scale. That both appeared at a similar time is scarcely chance, as they seem to be a response to the increasing popularity of the same religious movement. Both were preceded in history by the widespread use of images in worship. Images of the best known Hindu gods have been dated to as early as the second century BCE in the central Indian town of Mathura, the area where Krishna worship possibly first developed. It is likely many of these images were placed in palaces or the homes of the wealthy, as there is no evidence of the occurrence of temples before the date suggested above. Then, as now, deities were worshipped in a devotional sense in sacred places, though what is significant about the fourth century CE is the conspicuous increase in the number of temples where the devotees could participate in a group *darshan* of the deity and have rituals performed by priests.

▷ Refer to pages 261–3 for temple worship – *puja*.

With the development of temple worship and the composition of the *Puranas*, the *bhakti* movement came to maturity as the dominant form of religious practice in South Asia. While it had certainly existed before this time, it was much more fragmented in its literary portrayal and had not been taken up by the elite Sanskritic tradition.

Worship of the gods

At first it was Vishnu and Shiva who were the centre of devotional cults. This has remained so until the present day, but formal cults also subsequently developed around

Alamy/travelbild.com

FIGURE 12.1.2 Sculpture of Krishna at Sri Mariamman Temple, Singapore's oldest Hindu temple

Ganesha, the mother goddess under the generic name of Devi, and the monkey-headed god Hanuman. These three deities became especially important after 100 CE and are still heavily worshipped today. All three attract considerable interest because of their protective function, and Ganesha thrives because he is the creator and remover of obstacles. Their rise to the status of virtual pan-Indian deities was marked by the production of Sanskrit literature around them, the development of a distinctive theology and an integration of these gods with the *Brahman* of the *Upanishads*.

Alamy Stock Photo/david pearson

FIGURE 12.1.3 Devotees visit the Hanuman shrine in the Kadri Manjunatha temple complex in Mangalore, India.

Side by side with these high-profile gods, there continued to thrive the devotional worship of a whole series of mother goddesses and lesser known male protective deities. These had probably been worshipped for at least 2000 years before the beginning of the Common Era. They differed from any of the five pan-Indian gods mentioned in the previous paragraph in that the pan-Indian gods could confer liberation from *samsara* onto their devotees. Worship of the mother goddesses was associated more with the attainment of tangible goals, and their sphere of influence was never the more metaphysical concerns found in the beliefs about the pan-Indian gods.

Although the earliest devotional texts are in Sanskrit and Pali, a body of texts in Tamil was composed around Shiva and Vishnu from the sixth century CE onwards. These texts were easily put to music in order to be sung in group worship. Tamil was the vernacular language of the far south of India at that time. This signalled the future production of devotional texts in vernacular languages as well as the use of vernacular languages for worship of the deities. Such poems are highly emotional and combine strong metaphysical beliefs and yogic practices with imagery that suggests a rich sensuality.

By the sixth century CE, certain famous individuals – usually men who had undertaken a life of ascetic renunciation – not only attracted a large cult following around themselves, but also were regarded as *avataras* of particular gods, usually Vishnu or Shiva.

Belief in the capacity of gods and holy men or holy women to complete miraculous deeds has long been a central part of the *bhakti* movement. In the literature, famous devotees will make great sacrifices to their chosen deity – such as the cutting off of bodily limbs, or sacrificing and offering of children to the deity – in the expectation that this sacrifice will be rewarded and that their bodies will be fully restored by the deity. Similar beliefs are held of the holy men who often promote this feeling of mystery and other-worldly activity. Miraculous events are common in the mythic biographies of all the great gods, and their devotees often know these narratives by heart.

DID YOU KNOW?

A modern example of this worship phenomenon is the figure of Satya Sai Baba (born 1926), who has come to be regarded by his followers as an *avatara* of Shiva. He is said to be the incarnation of an earlier swami of the same name and is famous, according to his followers, for being able to manifest dust and other objects from the air. Now dead, he had a large following of Indian and European devotees, who often made pilgrimage to his centre in the state of Karnataka and experienced *darshan* of him when he sat on a raised platform and they filed past, gazing at him, at a fixed time of day.

Alamy Stock Photo/dbimages

FIGURE 12.1.4 A disciple of Hanuman in Pushkar, India

In the final analysis, the *bhakti* movement has been so successful in India because it is predicated on the possibility of the direct experience of divinity, however this might appear. Religious festivals and pilgrimages, especially where large groups are involved, as well as collective hymn-singing to particular deities, all give partial access to this experience and help maintain the *bhakti* movement's vivacity.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** *avataras*.
2. In your own words, **explain** the concept of *bhakti*.
3. **Recall** two texts that are important in the early development of *bhakti* and which deity is central to each.
4. **Explain** the importance of the story of Krishna and Arjuna.
5. **Clarify** your understanding of the devotional worship of gods in Hinduism.
6. In point form, **outline** the major aspects of the *bhakti* movement.
7. **Explain** the contribution of the *bhakti* movement to the development and expression of Hinduism.
8. **Analyse** the impact of the *bhakti* movement on Hinduism.

EXTENSION

1. Choose one of the following deities: Ganesha, the Devi Durga or Hanuman. **Investigate** some of the practices associated with worship of that deity. Prepare an infographic to **outline** these practices.
2. In small groups, **discuss** what is meant by the statement: 'The *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita* both develop a theology of the deity.'

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Shankara (c. 700 – c. 750)

GLOSSARY

hagiography A biography that treats its subject with undue reverence; biography of a saint.

Of the many philosophers who have emerged in India over the past two and a half millennia, Shankara is probably the best known and, along with the eleventh-century philosopher Ramanuja, has had a marked influence on the development of Hinduism. Shankara's major contributions have been in the systematisation of the philosophical view known as *Advaita Vedanta*, and his establishment of a set of monasteries that gave some institutional shape to the growth of high-caste Hinduism. Vedanta refers to a philosophy that was developed in the *Upanishads* (the final strata of Vedic literature) and flowed through a whole series of other texts until they were systematised from one perspective by Shankara, and then later by Ramanuja from the opposite perspective. Such change has had a strong influence through to the present day: the conceptions of self, *Brahman* and god taught by these two men can still easily be seen in the pronouncements and beliefs of many contemporary Hindu holy men and women, as well as prominent spokespeople for Hinduism, both in India and abroad.

Shankara has been immensely important in India since about 1300 CE, when a series of **hagiographies** began to be composed about him. The most important is the *Shankaradigvijaya* attributed to Madhava in the fourteenth century. That these were composed in Sanskrit meant that their accessibility would have been limited; but it also meant that his teachings were becoming universalised among *brahmin* intellectuals. These hagiographies are full of legendary stories and attribute Shankara with the capacity to change the shape of his body and other magical powers, depicting him in terms of the model expected of a holy man in medieval Hinduism.

NOTE

Shankara is also known as Shankaracharya.

Life of Shankara

A distinction must be drawn between the manner in which Shankara's own successors, who composed the hagiographies, and modern historians describe his life. The bare facts are that he probably lived between 700 and 750 CE (the traditional dating is 788–820 CE) and was born in the state of Kerala in south-western India. He probably spent time in Benares, but also travelled around India engaging in debates with his opponents and giving teachings. It is likely he also established four teaching institutions called *mathas* in locations corresponding to each of the four directions: Badarikashrama in the north, Dvaraka in the west, Puri in the east and Sringeri in the south. The purpose of education at the *mathas* is to transmit the *sanatana dharma* as expressed in Vedic literature and in later Vedanta texts to the *brahmacarins* or 'celibate students'. But the *mathas* are also centres of education in orthodox Hinduism for laypeople and dwelling places for ascetics. The head of each *matha* is given the title of Shankaracharya and Jagadguru or 'Teacher of the world'.

▷ Refer to Chapter 4, page 60, for an explanation of *Sanatana Dharma*.

Sringeri, in the state of Karnataka, is the most famous of the four *mathas*. It still attracts thousands of pilgrims each year and has become very wealthy as a result. It is still regarded as a dwelling place for ascetics, a centre for philosophical study and a place where Sharada, goddess of learning, can be worshipped. It is traditionally believed that the image of the goddess found there was installed by Shankara himself.

Nirupama Sriram

FIGURE 12.1.5 A statue depicting Shankara in the Trikuteshwara temple at Gadag in North Karnataka, southern India

Teachings of Shankara

Shankara was the author of four texts, mainly learned commentaries on the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Brahmasutras*, the *Upanishads* and an independent text, the *Upadeshasahasri*. The basic teachings of Shankara can be determined from these texts. For him, the only reality is *Brahman* which is undifferentiated, content-less consciousness, and blissful. The Self (*atman*) is the witness, not the participant, in all actions, and is identical with *Brahman*. All perception of change is ultimately unreal and derives from some kind of primordial ignorance or *avidya* that brings about the mistaken idea that the Self is independent of the *atman*, and that the person as a whole is a composite of the *atman* and material/psychological things. Only the cultivation of a mystical knowledge (*jnana*) of the Self, accompanied by renunciation of social and personal activities that produce *karma*, will lead to release from *samsara*. Knowledge of the *Brahman* is hinted at in literature such as the *Upanishads*, which must be studied and meditated upon.

Though Shankara elaborated on these teachings with great technical skill in his writings, they are accessible only to

the most accomplished scholars of Sanskrit and philosophy. However, he is important in the history of medieval Hinduism because he tried to integrate his philosophy into a more comprehensive system that would accommodate existing Hindu theological positions and lay Hindu practices – including rites and forms of worship that would come to be called *smarta* Hinduism, which are widespread particularly throughout South India. In this sense, he offers a vision of a unified Hinduism that integrates philosophy, devotion and lifestyle rules, including adherence to dharmic prescriptions and engagement in ritual performance.

REVIEW

1. Clarify the meaning of Vedanta.
2. Outline the life of Shankara.
3. **Explain** the contribution of Shankara to Hinduism.
4. **Analyse** the contribution of Shankara to the development and expression of Hinduism today.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblink provided to find out more about Shankara.
2. Use the weblink provided to find out about the rituals of *puja* to honour the Jagadguru of Sringeri.
3. Investigate and discuss the impact of Shankara on modern India.

Weblinks
Sringeri Sharada Peetham

Successor appointed to Sharada Peetham

Mira Bai (c. 1500 – c. 1550)

Mira Bai is well known as a devotee of Krishna and is the earliest female poet to have composed poetry in any dialect of Hindi, which made it available to the ordinary people, not just to the learned elite. Her poetry *expresses* a model of devotion she herself strove to fulfil. Many works, including songs and poetry, have been attributed to her, but there is no certainty as to what is authentic or otherwise – a recent edition contains only 103 poems. Her poems are known all over India, even in areas where Hindi was not initially spoken, and many films have been made about her in the Mumbai film studios. This alone would guarantee a huge popular audience.

The biographical fragments used to reconstruct the events of her life depict an anguished woman raised in well-to-do surroundings, who was frustrated in her marriage and showed all signs of wishing to break out of a woman's traditional role. She was born a princess in the small state of Merta, in the present-day state of Rajasthan, in about 1500. She was married in about 1516 and might have been widowed not long after, though this seems unlikely on the basis of the biographical material. Later poetry affirms that she was a strong devotee of Krishna, someone who sought the company of holy men and other devotees of Krishna.

Apart from the biographical references in her poems, information about her life can only be obtained from other works – texts intended to describe the lives of devotees – composed in Hindi. When looking at this biographical material, it must be recognised that it is hagiography, a kind of biography attempting to make a particular point about the positive value or otherwise of a person's life, rather than presenting a sequence of events in their life. In Mira Bai's case there are two aspects to this: her status as a great devotee of Krishna and, conversely, the angering of her husband's family because of her love for Krishna and refusal to play the role of the dutiful wife. Both aspects are read into all the biographical fragments because they are so central for the understanding of Mira Bai as a special kind of devotee in the later devotional tradition.

Alamy Stock Photo/Scorpio

FIGURE 12.1.6 A statue of Mira Bai in the Meera Temple Chittorgarh, India

On the basis of Nabhadas' biographical text *Bhaktamal* (c. 1600), some of these elements emerge in her life almost at the very time of her marriage. The following translation of the relevant passages demonstrates the blending of actual events and devotional fervour:

> She followed her youthful husband around the marriage fire as tradition dictated she must, but the mantras she said in her heart as she did so tied her for life to a different youth, the one she called the Mountain Lifter. When it came time for her to depart for her new home, similarly she was uninterested in taking along the requisite dowry. All she wanted to have at her side was her image of Krishna …
>
> Never content with the family that marriage had given her, princess Mira proceeded to replace it with another, 'the company of the saints' … who were 'attached to the will of Syam', that is, Krishna. Her sisters-in-law tried to dissuade her from associating with wandering mendicants and religious enthusiasts – hardly the proper involvement for a woman sheltered inside the palace – but to no avail, and before long the *rana* [mother-in-law] took action by dispatching to Mira a cup of poison intended to bring an end to such disgraceful behaviour.

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> … the action failed. The poison was sent in the guise of a liquid offering (*caranamrt*) to the feet of Krishna, Mira's deity, with the foreknowledge that Mira would be bound by Hindu practice to consume whatever was left over from the table of her divine Lord as *prasad*. But as she dutifully drank it, the poison became *caranamrt* indeed: 'immortal liquid from his feet.'
>
> J.S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India*, 1988 (new ed. 2004), pp. 124–5, © By permission of Oxford University Press, USA

Stress is placed here on the contrast between the positive effects of her role as a devotee and the strongly negative effects this had on her capacity to play her proper role in the family. Some of her resulting frustrations were played out in her devotional practice, which had strong psychological elements associated with it.

Her poems illustrate a devotion to Krishna – Krishna being the main object of worship in North Indian devotional poetry – of a style that has been called *virahabhakti* or 'love-in-separation'. Love-in-separation is based on the idea within *bhakti* theology that the devotee seeks to be close, both emotionally and physically, to the god or goddess who is the object of devotion. The high point of this closeness is attained when the deity appears before the devotee in a vision, allowing the devotee both to experience the presence of the god and to practise *darshan*. Once experienced, this can be repeated by the devotee who can witness the deity inhabiting an image, but this form of *darshan* can never match the experience of an actual vision of the deity. It is the exploration of the anguish of one who has had such a living vision of the god, and who is unable to repeat it, that forms the dominant theme of Mira Bai's poetry.

▷ Refer to Chapter 4, page 72, for an explanation of *darshan*, and in this chapter, pages 249–50, for *bhakti*.

It may seem strange to build a whole theory of devotion on separation from the deity, but it makes sense within the theology of *bhakti*. All understandings of *bhakti* required that the devotee must focus on the object of devotion in some way or other, and this focus was equally valid whether the deity was close to the devotee or far away. Yet if the deity was far away, a sense of poignancy and frustration could be added to the depiction of the devotional relationship. The idea is that the devotee wants to be near the god, yet the god will not permit this closeness to occur. On the side of the deity, it appears they are punishing the devotee; on the side of the devotee, they can express a very powerful longing for what can be called unrequited love. This leads the devotee to cry out their frustration with such passion and suffering as to make the deity appear in front of them. *Virahabhakti* becomes the expression of the outpouring of grief and feeling.

An extremely popular depiction of this grief occurs in narratives of the god Krishna, lover of the cow-herdesses (*gopis*) in the Vrindavan forest, a theme that dates back to the second century CE in the well-known text, the *Harivamsha*. Depicted widely in painting, sculpture and literature, the story of Krishna's loves became extremely popular after the tenth century CE and by the fifteenth century had been expressed in the Hindi poetry of Sur Das. Krishna's loves with the *gopis* became a pre-eminent instance of love-in-separation and had a strong sensual atmosphere around them. This meant it was legitimate to treat *bhakti* in similar terms, and this had been done most effectively even before Mira Bai composed her poetry.

▷ You can see an illustration of Krishna and the *gopis* in Chapter 4, page 63.

For the rare *bhakti* poet who is a woman, two parameters are readily available. First, it is that she is both lover and devotee – Krishna's lover and beloved; second, that the lost (or unrequited) love she depicts so powerfully is the opposite of what the devotee potentially could have. The following poem hints at both themes:

> Life without Hari is no life, friend,
> And though my mother-in-law fights,
> my sister-in-law teases,
> the *rana* is angered,
> A guard is stationed on a stool outside,
> and a lock is mounted on the door,
> How can I abandon the love I have loved
> in life after life?
> Mira's Lord is the clever Mountain Lifter:
> Why would I want anyone else?
>
> J.S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India*, 1988 (new ed. 2004), p. 134

There are clear autobiographical elements in this poem, which is centred on the apparent anger Mira Bai's husband's family expressed towards her when – as a passionate devotee of Krishna (named Hari and Mountain Lifter) – she pined after Krishna as if he were her husband. Her mother-in-law (the *rana*) even attempted to poison her. Whereas this devotion towards Krishna demonstrates her alienation from her family, it also serves to increase the depth of that devotion. On the one hand, she is rebellious in not conforming to the traditional role of the devoted wife. On the other hand, she receives great veneration because of the strength of her devotion and so is a model devotee by the standards of *virahabhakti*.

> Mira's special, even divine, status among *bhakti* saints has directly to do with her sex. For her, womanhood before God was no religious conceit, but a total identity. So those who treasure Mira's songs often feel that her words have an authenticity that no male poet can match. It transports her to a different level in the eyes of those who look upon her legends and sing her songs. For them and to a large extent for the poet as well, the distinction between Mira and the *gopis* who form Krishna's inner circle is blurred.
>
> J.S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India*, 1988 (new ed. 2004), p. 122

DID YOU KNOW?

The poems of Mira Bai are known as *bhajans*. The *bhajan* has a special place in India. Most *bhajans* were written between the fourteenth and seventeenth centuries. They are simple songs sung in the praise of God – complex spiritual truths are portrayed in the simple language of the ordinary people of the time. The *bhajan* is difficult to describe musically because it is not defined by any musical characteristics; it is defined by a sense of devotion – *bhakti*.

Like so many devotees, Mira Bai's mind is enchanted, captured by the god. Devotion is expressed more on the mental than the physical level. There is no interest in abstract concepts such as *Brahman*. Feeling and desire are everything in her poems, and self-control and emptying out of emotion from the mind are entirely rejected.

> Let us go to a realm beyond going,
> Where death is afraid to go,
> Where the high-flying birds alight and play,
> Afloat in the full lake of love.
> There they gather – the good, the true –
> To strengthen an inner regimen,
> To focus on the dark form of the Lord
> And refine their minds like fire.
> Garbed in goodness – their ankle bells –
> They dance the dance of contentment
> And deck themselves with the sixteen signs
> Of beauty, and a golden crown –
> There where the love of the Dark One comes first
> And everything else is last.
>
> J.S. Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer, *Songs of the Saints of India*, 1988 (new ed. 2004), p. 140

Mira Bai's poetry and her own life stand as one expression of the very rich devotional tradition of Hinduism called *bhakti*.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** *bhajan*.
2. **Recall** the major events of Mira Bai's life as they have been reported.
3. **Clarify** how Hindus explain 'love-in-separation'.
4. **Account** for the popularity of Mira Bai's poetry in India over the last few hundred years.
5. How would you **explain** Mira Bai's contribution to the expression of Hinduism?
6. **Analyse** the impact of Mira Bai on Hinduism.

EXTENSION

1. In small groups, **discuss** what Mira Bai's poetry tells us about the feminine role in devotional poetry. Prepare a summary of your discussion.
2. Search the Internet for some 'biographies' of Mira Bai. **Summarise** the positive points made about her life. Or **conduct** a class debate on the topic that hagiography is not a reliable source of information to evidence the contribution and impact of a significant person.
3. Use the weblink provided to listen to some of Mira Bai's *bhajans*.

Weblink
Mira Bai

12.2 Ethics

GLOSSARY

ethics Ethics is the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Its purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

▷ Refer to Chapter 4, pages 70–1, for the core ethical systems of Hinduism.

For Hindus, standards of behaviour or **ethics** applicable to individuals are based on the need to maintain group identity. This contrasts with an ethical view that offers a set of principles that an individual may apply according to any given situation that may arise. This means that modern ethical problems, such as those raised by new forms of technology, will necessarily be interpreted differently in India than they are in the West and will provoke a different response. Issues associated with euthanasia and abortion, for example, are more difficult to conceptualise in a society where group affiliation overrides individual choice in matters of behavioural practice. And the whole issue of ethics is somewhat complicated by the general notion of nonviolence, a strong religious ethic first developed in about 500 BCE. This ethic has always been a powerful current in the thinking of Hindu religious leaders, from the early Upanishadic sages to Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) – even when the actual society itself has been quite violent. Questions of abortion and euthanasia will inevitably rub up against the traditional problem of the sanctity of life. More generally, ethical problems that are considered significant in the West will be considered less so in India because traditional thinking is still more important than modernism when it comes to determining what constitutes significant moral questions.

Worksheet
Hindu ethics

Bioethics

GLOSSARY

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating, but not limited to, medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgements for human conduct.

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DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'bioethics' was coined in 1970 by US biochemist Dr Van Rensselaer Potter as a bridge between science and humanity.

In modern India, an interest in **bioethics** has a direct bearing on the two focal areas of abortion and euthanasia and, arguably, concerns birth control as well. In the West, these are subjects of intense and ongoing debate. In contrast, in India such debates are just beginning, and the influence of various strands of the women's movement has played an important role in bioethical questions.

Abortion

It has been estimated that there were 723 142 reported abortions in India in 2000, and it is likely there were many more unreported. While abortion has been legal under the Indian constitution since 1971, it certainly does not receive cultural assent.

Classical Sanskrit literature does recognise the process of abortion – certain medical texts describe how it can be done – and takes a negative position on it. There are several Sanskrit words that can be unambiguously translated as 'destruction of the foetus', where the word for destruction has the sense of 'killing'. The practice definitely occurred as early as 1000 BCE, as abortion is regarded as a heinous crime in the *Atharva Veda*, a text dating from that time. Medicine developed as a science very early in Indian history, and knowledge of human anatomy and reproductive processes was well developed. Words for miscarriage exist side by side with several words for abortion, but the former is never treated with the same moral anger as the latter.

> Killing a *kshatriya* or a *vaishya* engaged in sacrifice, a menstruating woman, a pregnant woman … [and] … the embryo [even] of a stranger … is tantamount to killing a *brahmin*.
>
> *Vishnudharmasutra* XXXVI

This is a quote from a text of a legal nature. Many others could be cited. The severity of abortion is brought out by its direct comparison to the killing of a *brahmin*, one of the most severe crimes imaginable, for which loss of caste (and hence of one's socially determined identity) was a possibility. Given that such statements appear often, it is clear that the unborn child was regarded as having a special status sanctioned by the authority of *dharma*.

Abortion was opposed because it was considered that the unborn foetus in some sense possessed personhood, and that the possibility of working out *karma* accrued from past lives would be lost if the foetus was not permitted to be reborn. It can also be added that extremely bad karmic consequences would result for the person performing the abortion. *Karma* implies free will in the sense that a person has control over the moral tone of the act they are about to commit. For a foetus to be aborted denies completely the possibility of this free will being exercised.

Yet another powerful cultural reason for prohibiting abortion reflected the strongly patriarchal nature of Hindu society from very early times. The lineage had to be maintained at all costs. Women were expected to produce sons who would, when adults, perform the rituals necessary to maintain the ancestors living in heaven. Female infanticide was common and continues to the present day. But to abort a foetus might result in the abortion of a male.

In India, the traditional prohibition towards abortion clashes with the legal right of abortion under certain conditions. It is also a problem of increasing urgency for Hindus living in Western countries where the attitude towards abortion is much more liberal.

Euthanasia

> … there is a growing consensus in the West that the term euthanasia is to be reserved for the concept of compassionate murder in medically defined cases of terminal illness, which involves the medical profession in the active killing of the patient given due process of decision making.
>
> Katherine K. Young in *Hindu Ethics: Purity, Abortion and Euthanasia*, 1989, p. 72

Euthanasia is another focal point of contemporary bioethics, but in contemporary India it is a subject that receives almost no attention, except in regard to a few special cases that have reached the law courts.

Sanskrit literature does not dwell on the question of suicide or on euthanasia in the sense just defined. Nor does it see it as a problem on the boundary of medicine and the law, as it is in the West. This is not to say there were no recorded instances of self-willed death. In particular, the Jain (a body of ascetics and laypeople who followed a religion that combined elements of Hinduism and Buddhism) idea of ritual starvation to death, undertaken by monks, is well known even among Hindus. A famous example of self-willed death is found in the figure of Drona in the seventh book of the *Mahabharata*, who, on hearing falsely of the death of his son Ashvatthaman, went into a yogic posture and simply allowed himself to die. From there he went straight to heaven, his death fitting into self-willed death within the warrior ethos. There are cases of Hindu women in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries jumping off the walls of palaces in order to prevent the possibility of rape at the hands of invading Muslim troops.

Katherine Young has collected much of the evidence pertaining to what she called self-willed death (in Sanskrit, *ishtamrtyu*) in Sanskrit literature and suggests that euthanasia – that is, self-induced death in the face of incurable illness – was treated sympathetically in the early texts, only to be criticised around the tenth century CE, and became illegal with the imposition of a British-inspired legal code. In 1976 an Indian judge published a pamphlet arguing that the Jain form of ritual 'suicide' should not in law be regarded as suicide.

In the treatises on *dharma* composed between 400 BCE and 600 CE, suicide is strongly condemned, to the extent that a person who takes their own life will be reborn in hell in later lives. Yet there are exceptions made for people suffering extreme illness. Some of the commentators on the Law books allow these people to commit suicide by burning themselves on a sacrificial pyre.

> *Brahmin* authors of the legal texts also give a religious dimension to the context of euthanasia, which helps to distinguish it from suicide. Euthanasia may be done when a person no longer can perform the rites of bodily purification, which may occur in the case of extreme illness or extreme old age.
>
> Katherine K. Young in *Hindu Ethics: Purity, Abortion and Euthanasia*, 1989, p. 95

The argument behind this is complicated, resting on an analogy. If it is in accord with *dharma* not to perform rites, if one is incapacitated physically, then to take one's own life in such circumstances is also consistent with *dharma*. Of course it is impossible to know if such justifications were given when a person did take their own life in conditions that would meet these requirements. *Karma* continues to play a role in all of this. Suicide produces bad *karma*; self-willed euthanasia does not. An element of personal responsibility therefore enters the picture.

Given the precedents that occur in early Hindu texts and the extensive debates about self-willed death in Hindu legal literature, much traditional weight will be given to contemporary arguments about euthanasia. Any argument developed on the basis of biological justifications of death and the capacity of the individual to make a judgement on these will need to be balanced against the traditional arguments.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** *karma*.
2. **Describe** the role of *karma* in Hindu ethics.
3. **Clarify** how these teachings are used to determine Hindu positions on bioethical issues.
4. **Demonstrate** how cultural factors influence the outcome of ethical debates.
5. **Describe** and **explain** Hindu ethical teachings on bioethics using specific examples.

EXTENSION

1. 'Traditional texts are based on the principle of inequality. Modern human rights perspectives are based on the presumption of equality.' This quote was taken from a recently published encyclopaedia of ethics. In small groups, **discuss** whether you think it summarises the problems Hindus face when dealing with contemporary bioethical questions. Give reasons for your response.
2. **Analyse** the application of Hindu ethical teachings on one issue of bioethics not covered in this section. Use the weblink provided for a good starting point.

Weblink
BBC Religions: Hinduism

Environmental ethics

Protection of the environment, especially in relation to particular local ecologies, emerged as a battleground between various marginalised groups in India in the nineteenth century. During this time, the British administrators appropriated certain natural resources, especially forests, which the peasant villagers who lived near them had been using carefully for many generations. Such people had a demonstrated record of not overusing the natural resources available to them.

Certain intellectuals have written on the effects of environmental degradation at a nationwide level, and Gandhi's followers have developed an ideology of environmental ethics that links a particular notion of the environment with a specific social structure centred on self-contained villages. Much of the activity associated with the application of environmental ethics, however, has been for pragmatic purposes. Any relationship between the environment and local groups has traditionally been seen as one of interdependence – a relationship that has broken down under the demands for commercial development. Much direct action, usually involving nonviolent protest, is aimed at restoring a situation (both ideological and pragmatic) that has been lost.

Chipko, an important environmental movement in the new state of Uttarakhand (located in the foothills of the Himalayas) demonstrates the fundamental problem of the environment.

> … state control was a negation of the communal appropriation of nature in Uttarakhand. Not only did forests constitute an important means of subsistence, but their products were treated, as in other peasant societies, as a free gift of nature to which all had equal access. The assertion of state monopoly ran contrary to traditional management practices. These practices were at once an affirmation of communal action orientated towards production and of the unity between humans and nature.
>
> R. Guha, *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalayas*, 2000, p. 57

The Chipko (Tree-hugging) movement originated in northern central India in 1977 as a means of preventing trees from being removed from forests. It has become a potent symbol of the kind of environmental activism that has become common in India, but it also reveals something of the ethical foundation behind this activism. Gandhian ethics of self-sufficiency and simplicity have had a role to play here, as have attempts to anchor the protest into a more general vision of Hindu civilisation. Dr Vandana Shiva (b. 1952), a well-known activist and writer, attempts to tie the preservation of forests into 'civilisational' aspects of India's culture:

> In the Rig Veda, the forest is described as *Aranyani*, or mother goddess, a deity that takes care of wildlife and ensures that food is available for man. *Ashramas* and forests, not urban settlements, were recognised as the

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> highest form of cultural evolution, providing society with both intellectual guidance and material sustenance. Forest dwelling saints were given high respect as a recognition of their intellectual capabilities.
>
> V. Shiva and J. Bandhyopadhyay, *Chipko: India's Civilisational Response to the Forest Crisis*, 1986, p. 1

This may be regarded as romanticising the relationship between holy men and nature and, in mentioning the *Rig Veda*, it references the very text that for Hindus is the oldest and most prestigious. At the same time, it traces a concern for the environment back to the earliest period of Hinduism. Shiva goes further in defining the basis for an environmental ethic:

> The ecological role of forests in soil and water conservation was widely recognised, and the social control on the felling of trees in ecologically sensitive areas such as riverbanks was strictly enforced.
>
> Religious beliefs about trees were woven about their central ecological and economic role in supporting human survival. Forests, like all other vital common natural resources like water, were managed by village communities to satisfy basic needs as well as to ensure sustained productivity …
>
> V. Shiva and J. Bandhyopadhyay, *Chipko: India's Civilisational Response to the Forest Crisis*, 1986, p. 1

Accordingly, over-production and consumption of production for other than subsistence is regarded as a form of violence against the earth. This only becomes strongly noticeable, however, when excessive pressure is placed on use of resources – as it has been in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, first with the appropriation of forests by the colonial administration and, after independence, with the commercialisation of forests pushed by governments. Prior to this, the pressure on land use was never so great. The conflicts that arose in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were due to the different expectations of small groups of traditional villagers, long regarded as having nurtured the earth, from those of the state (irrespective of whether this was the colonial or independent state). Within this broad distinction, the villagers are regarded as always having practised a form of environmental ethics, whereas the state has not.

For some of the activists in the Chipko movement, environmental ethics is based on a religious ethic. Religious symbolism is used extensively in an interview given by Dr Vandana Shiva:

> Chipko started in the Himalayas … the source of the Ganges River … The Ganges was a mother goddess, and there were prayers for her to be brought to earth … She just couldn't come because her power was so strong that if she landed on earth, she would just destroy. It's really symbolic of the way we get our monsoon rain. It comes so strong, so powerful, that if we don't have forest cover, we get landslides and floods. So, the god Shiva had to be requested to help in getting the Ganges down to earth. And Shiva laid out his hair, which was very matted, to break the force of the descent of the Ganga. Shiva's hair is basically seen by a lot of us in India as a metaphor for the vegetation and forests of the Himalayas.
>
> Interview with Dr Vandana Shiva, 1988

The Chipko movement has been successful in North India because it has mobilised much of the population who have felt 'progressively alienated from nature' and this has caused a kind of environmental consciousness to develop among them. In the Garhwal district, this mobilisation has been further aided by a charismatic figure, Sunderlal Bahuguna (b. 1927), who effectively uses Gandhian methods of nonviolent resistance. He is one of the most prominent leaders of Chipko resistance, and is not a politician.

Climate change

As has been happening among engaged Buddhists, so has there been an increased emphasis among certain Hindus on dealing with human-induced climate change. At the Parliament of the World's Religions held in Melbourne in December 2009, a Hindu declaration was read out. Included in it are these words:

> Mahatma Gandhi urged, 'You must be the change you wish to see in the world.' If alive today, he would call upon Hindus to set the example, to change our lifestyle, to simplify our needs and restrain our desires. As one sixth of the human family, Hindus can have a tremendous impact. We can and should take the lead in Earth-friendly living, personal frugality, lower power consumption, alternative energy, sustainable food production and vegetarianism, as well as in evolving technologies that positively address our shared plight.
>
> Hindu Declaration on Climate Change

In 2012 the distinguished academic Makarand Paranjape, from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, called for a reinterpretation of Hindu behaviour to confront the problems of climate change.

> Hinduism, similarly, is in a crisis. I am not just saying that there is a climate crisis but that Hinduism is in crisis! Unless we find a way to be Hindu all over again in a way that is ecologically responsible, which is socially compassionate, we are going to be very bad Hindus … We live in very interesting times … A crisis of ecology, economics, and evolution. A crisis from which a new combination of technology and spirituality will need to kick in to save us … We need a new *Advaita* [see page 253], one that emphasises the interconnectedness of everything, which will be one way to move forward from this crisis.
>
> Makarand Paranjape, 'Hinduism and Climate Change'

How much this kind of attitude percolates down below the level of Hindu elites remains to be seen, but it is significant that new forms of Hinduism are being suggested as a way to confront climate change.

Photo by Asian Development Bank

FIGURE 12.2.1 A pay-as-you-go solar project in Sonsa Village, Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, India. In May 2015 the Indian Government announced a commitment to move towards renewable energy, and in May 2020 it abandoned planned investments in coal-fired power stations with a combined capacity of 14 gigawatts.

Ramsar sites

Alamy Stock Photo/ agefotostock

FIGURE 12.2.2 Kabartal wetland

In October 2020, Kabartal Wetland in Begusarai in Bihar and the Asan Conservation Reserve in Uttarakhand were named Ramsar sites. A Ramsar site is a wetland designated to be of international importance under the UNESCO-established Ramsar Convention. This 'Convention on Wetlands' provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. India now has 38 of these sites.

RESPOND

Find some information about these two recent Ramsar sites. Why are they of international importance, and what responsibility does this designation place on India?

In conclusion, any environmental ethics in ancient India would have been muted, but would have been framed in terms of the sustenance of forest use and water supply. Today these are the resources over which there is much conflict and they continue to inspire the various strands of India's environmental movement. Some commentators have recently suggested that pilgrimage visits to sacred places could represent an opportunity for environmental education. If this is tried, it will be a new development in environmental ethics in India.

REVIEW

1 **Examine** the significance of the forest in Hindu literature and practice.
2 **Clarify** why the concept of environmental ethics is 'new' to Hinduism.
3 **Describe** the principal ethical teachings of Hinduism.
4 **Explain** how these teachings are used to determine the development of environmental ethics in India.

EXTENSION

1 Using the Internet and/or other resources, **investigate** the life of Mahatma Gandhi and Gandhian ethics of self-sufficiency and simplicity.
2 Use the weblinks provided to find out more about the Chipko movement. Write a half-page report on the movement.
3 **Discuss**: Will responses to climate change require modifications to the practice of traditional Hinduism?
4 Using the Internet and/or other resources, **investigate** a specific example of an environmental program in India. Prepare a report of your findings. Use the weblinks provided for some good starting points.
5 **Analyse** the application of Hindu ethical teachings on one environmental issue not covered in this section.

Weblinks
Chipko movement

Religion and Ecology

Urban Chipko movements

Alliance of Religions and Conservation

Indian Government Ministry of Environment and Forests

Navdanya

Hindu Declaration on Climate Change

Hindu climate action

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12.3 Significant practices

GLOSSARY

public devotion The communal sharing of prayer and other religious actions, beyond the home, that binds the religious group as a faith community.

Worksheet
Hinduism significant practice

The lifestyle of Hindus is highly ritualised. The principal forms of ritual activity fit into two basic categories: life-cycle rituals such as marriage, and rituals performed with the explicit purpose of demonstrating a devotee's expression of devotion to a god or goddess, such as the **public devotions** of Temple *puja* and *tirthayatra* (pilgrimage). All Hindus will at some time during the year worship in a temple, and many will do so once a week or more. In addition to the small *pujas* performed in the household shrine, the practice of paying a priest to perform a ritual in a temple is the most typical form of devotional observance in India. All Hindu devotions must be considered in the context of the whole ritual tradition of Hinduism. It is also important to take account of the diversity of practice in a religious tradition that is not centralised or unified.

Temple worship – *puja*

If you were to enter the Vinayaka (another name for Ganesha) temple in the South Indian city of Pondicherry at any time between 7 and 9.30 in the morning or from 4 to 9.30 in the evening, you would be impressed by the huge hall made of stone and plaster, in the middle of which is a smaller room reached by a fenced-in walkway. This small room houses the main image of Ganesha and all the implements for use in the ritual, including oil lamps, oil, powder, paint and implements for chopping up food. Here the priests stand and are separated by a slight barrier from the worshippers. While most of the activity takes place at the entrance to this room when the devotional ritual is in full swing, other things are also happening. The whole process may seem excessively noisy and disordered. But it is not. It is simply a reflection of the many ways of expressing devotion to the principal god, not to mention the other gods and goddesses who may also be represented in the temple either as images or in paintings.

▷ Refer to Chapter 4, pages 72–3, for the basic intent of *puja*.

Most people line up in the queue to wait their turn to be close to the deity. At the head of the queue, the priest offers a prayer to the god on their behalf, and places a touch of powder on their forehead to indicate the offering has been made. Then a bell is rung. One priest utters prayers, another may cut up coconuts and a third cleans the implements used in the ritual. Devotees who have given money to the temple may be provided with a more extended *puja*, but most people are put through in a minute or so. In this form of *puja*, the priest functions as a kind of intermediary between the devotee and the god, even though the devotee still performs *darshan* before the image of the deity.

Kerri-Lee Schoof

FIGURE 12.3.1 An elephant at the Vinayaka temple

Besides those in the queue leading to the central shrine, many other people will be present in the temple at the same time. This particular temple has about 50 paintings of Ganesha, each reflecting a different aspect of the god and containing different names written in both Hindi and Tamil, on its southern and western walls. People can look at these while moving in a clockwise direction, therefore completing what is called a circumambulation, a form of worship in its own right. Most will probably have some idea of the stories associated with these pictorial images, either having heard them as a part of their religious upbringing or having read about them in one of the books about Ganesha sold in the stalls outside of the temple. Images of Vishnu, Shiva and Parvati are placed against the back of the temple on the western wall, and worshippers can offer their own prayers to these deities. On the northern side, two other rooms lead off from the main room of the temple. In one of these there is a sub-shrine containing an image of Ganesha. It is served by a *brahmin* who, for a small fee, will offer a prayer and place a piece of red Sindura powder on the worshipper's brow.

At the main entrance of the temple an elephant, representing Ganesha with his elephant head, is chained up each day. Worshippers pose in front of it for pictures and feed it continually with peanuts and bananas bought from the roadside stalls located opposite the main entrance. These stalls testify to the very close relationship between business and religion. Fruit and coconuts to be offered to the main image in the temple are sold, as well as small pamphlets and books about Ganesha and other Hindu gods, and postcards of the gods and contemporary holy men. Finally, these stalls also stock a whole range of cheaply produced images of the gods, as well as incense holders and a variety of incense.

Beggars are seated on both sides of the road leading up to the temple, hoping to benefit from the generosity of the devotees who approach the temple at a time when they are required to engage in ritual gift-giving.

This Ganesha temple is not one of the largest in South India, or even in Pondicherry. If you were to visit the famous Shiva temple, built on over one and a half hectares in Chidambaram, you would notice the same variety, but on a much larger scale. There are always more visitors and pilgrims performing different acts of devotion to the many different images, and dozens of priests who work there for a short period before going on to a secular job. The impression often received by Westerners is that temples are chaotic. But this chaos appears very ordered when you realise that each person in the temple has a very clear understanding of what they are doing.

Temples and shrines

There are two kinds of Hindu temples. The first are the large stone or brick temples that contain one or more images of the gods. They have four walls, a roof and a special sacred place called the *garbhagrha* or the 'house of the womb', the innermost sanctum of the temple where the image is kept and only the priests may go. These temples can accommodate many people. They often contain many other lesser temples and shrines, all built around the image of the god who is the focus of that particular shrine or temple.

Newspix/Yuri Kouzmin

FIGURE 12.3.2 Worshippers with priests (right) outside the Shiva Vishnu temple at Carrum Downs, near Melbourne

RESPOND

Visit the Shiva Vishnu temple website to find out more about its history and activities. What does it tell you about the expression of Hinduism in Australia?

Weblink
Shiva Vishnu temple

The second are 'shrines', which are much simpler and less elaborate than temples. These are found everywhere in villages and towns, but are sometimes so small as to be unrecognisable. Such shrines can be a tree, an image of a deity scratched in chalk on the side of a rock or a stone wall, or a small box-like structure with an open front that can be enclosed by placing bars on the front. Sometimes such shrines will have part-time priests, but usually people will make offerings and recite prayers in whatever way they see fit.

The large number of gods in India is one reason for the large number of shrines that can be found in and around even the smallest villages. In the village of Ramkheri in western central India, for example, there are three temples – two Vishnu temples and one Shiva temple – and 41 shrines, mostly to the mother (*mata*) goddesses such as Shakti Mata, who protects the village, and Shitala Mata, the smallpox goddess.

This is typical for most villages. In such villages, Vishnu and Shiva are treated as deities who are remote from the concerns of everyday life, whereas the mother goddesses are much more significant for the villagers because they have important protective functions, both for the household and village.

The rituals devotees offer to these deities can be as simple as standing before the image (which can be a crude

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sculpture, a painting on a rock, a brick, or a sapling with a few rags on it) and offering a few prayers, placing some fruit on the ground in front of it, offering an oil lamp, asking for something specific and promising further rituals if what has been requested is received. Such rituals are economical to perform in both time and money, and these shrines are probably used more than the large temples, even if the latter hold larger numbers of people.

Alamy Stock Photo/David Gee

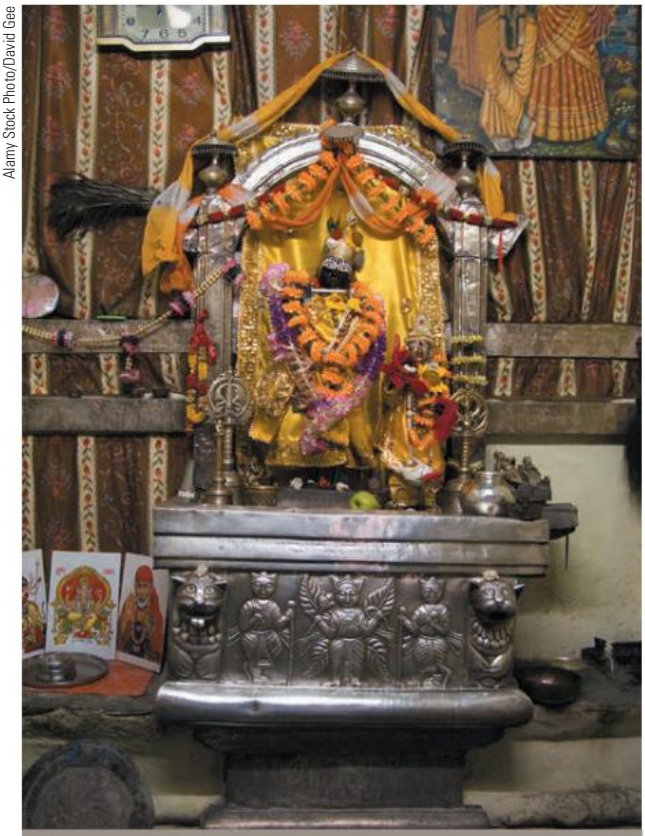

FIGURE 12.3.3 An outdoor shrine in a residential area of Chamba, in Himachal Pradesh, India

The structure of Temple *puja*

In the large temples, the most basic form of worship is the *puja*, and it is invariably more complex than the short rituals performed at the village shrines. It has a common form whether performed in the household or by a priest (*brahmin*) in a temple. The structure of the *puja* as the invitation, reception and entertainment of the god as a living guest can best be appreciated when its 16 stages are listed sequentially:

1 Invocation of the deity
2 Offering a seat to or installation of the deity
3 Offering water for washing the feet
4 Offering water for washing the head and body
5 Offering water for rinsing the mouth
6 Bathing
7 Dressing or offering a garment
8 Putting on the sacred thread
9 Sprinkling with perfume
10 Adorning with flowers
11 Burning incense
12 Waving an oil lamp
13 Offering food
14 Paying homage by prostration and so on
15 Circumambulation
16 Dismissal or taking leave.

Ganesha *pujas* correspond to this basic structure. The feature box provides a description of a Ganesha *puja* and how the intent of the *puja* is realised within the parameters established by the stages.

A Temple *puja* to Ganesha performed by the resident *brahmin* follows the same pattern, but more ornate images are used.

Mark Williamson

FIGURE 12.3.4 Temple *puja* to Ganesha in Australia – offering of the sacred fire

Ganesha *puja*

What appears to be common to all *pujas* is their goal: to bring about an enhanced level of intimacy between the worshipper and the deity. This intimacy is realised through a series of transactions.

The worshipper prepares a sacred arena (in the house) and provides an unfired, 'raw' clay image and establishes Ganesha's special presence in that image by invoking the life force and vital capacities. This process of invocation or establishment involves the transferring of both the worshipper's own and the cosmos's life force and vital capacities into the inert clay image, thus bringing it to life. It is as if Ganesha were condensed from his universal presence in the cosmos into a particular and accessible form in time and place coinciding with that of his devotees.

The worshipper then honours Ganesha-in-the-image by bathing him (in the form of a betel nut, as the clay image would dissolve in water) and by feeding, clothing, and giving the god gifts and an entertainment of songs; in short, honouring him as one would the most valuable and royal of guests.

Ganesha reciprocates by giving his obstacle-removing powers to watch over the family during the coming year. After he has enjoyed the offerings of food, Ganesha 'returns' to the family to be shared as *prasada* or leftover spiritual food ... In eating this leftover food, the devotees take into themselves the substance that has been in closest proximity to the presence of the deity and thereby receive spiritual nourishment. *Prasada* is the edible symbol of the 'real presence' in the image.

P. Courtright, *Ganesha: Lord of Obstacles, Lord of Beginnings*, 1985, p. 175, used by permission of Oxford University Press, Inc.

Fairfax Syndications/James Alcock

FIGURE 12.3.5 Ganesha *puja* at Liverpool in Sydney's west, September 2015. The immersion and dissolving of the clay image used in the ritual (*visarjana*) was carried out in Chipping Norton Lake on the Georges River.

Finally, digital technology has now enabled the performance of electronic *pujas*, which can be used by Hindus living away from temples. A helpful weblink is provided.

Weblink
Virtual puja

REVIEW

1. Define the term 'ritual' in the Hindu context.
2. Explain how a Hindu would define 'public devotion'.
3. Distinguish whether there is a social dimension to Temple *puja* or if it is simply a means of communication between devotee and god. Give reasons to support your response.
4. Construct a flow chart to **describe** and explain the key elements of Temple *puja*.
5. How does Temple *puja* **demonstrate** the beliefs of Hinduism?
6. **Analyse** the significance of Temple *puja* for both the individual and the Hindu community.

EXTENSION

1. In small groups, construct a visual presentation to describe a visit to the Vinayaka temple in Pondicherry.
2. Go to a Hindu temple in your region and seek permission to observe the performance of a *puja*. Evaluate the different roles of the participants in the ritual.
3. Use the weblinks provided to look at a Ganesha *puja* and other *pujas*. List the common symbols found in each *puja*. Are these symbols covered in the information about the performance of *puja* in this section?
4. Investigate some other websites dealing with the performance of *puja*. Write a report about the information on one of these sites. Analyse how it compares with the information in this section.

Weblinks
Ganesh Chaturthi *puja*

Puja Services

Pilgrimage – *tirthayatra*

GLOSSARY

ford A place where a river may be crossed by wading.

tirthayatra From the Sanskrit name for sacred place, *tirtha*, a word deriving from a verbal root '*tr*', meaning 'to take across'. This can be understood as taking the person to a state where they are released from the constraints of human bondage and able to attain union with god.

In addition to the performance of a daily *puja* to their chosen deity – the one who is the focus of most of their devotional activity – individuals at various times in their lives may undertake ***tirthayatra*** to holy places.

Pilgrimage is an ancient practice in India, and the third book of the *Mahabharata* describes how a pilgrim is given a systematic tour of sacred places. In the pilgrimage itineraries, performance of rituals at the sacred places is said to confer on the pilgrim more benefits than can be attained from the performance of large-scale sacrifices – a deliberate comparison indicating how devotional activity has become more important than ritual activity without devotion. Holy places are usually located near rivers, lakes and mountains, and there are seven cities described from very early times as being most sacred.

Sacred places in Hindu literature

Places such as Benares, Kurukshetra and many other locations have been recorded in Sanskrit literature since at least 500 BCE. Special texts called *mahatmyas* have been composed as a means of glorifying these sacred places. These texts tell myths that explain the cause of the holiness of the particular location (usually the presence of a god or goddess there or the defeat of a demonic figure by a god), the ritual the pilgrim should perform there and the reward to be gained by worshipping the god. Each of the 18 *Puranas* normally contains a description of pilgrimage places that is modelled on the long section on pilgrimage places found in the third book of the *Mahabharata* and, by the sixteenth century, entire texts were devoted to providing exhaustive details of particular pilgrimage sites.

DID YOU KNOW?

Benares, in the state of Uttar Pradesh, has at least 52 sacred places in a five-kilometre stretch on the western bank of the Ganges River. In the area of Kurukshetra, about 200 kilometres north of present-day Delhi, there are hundreds of sacred places.

Pilgrimage rituals

Performance of a pilgrimage involving the visiting of many sacred **fords** (*tirtha*) is considered a ritual (or devotional) act in its own right. At each *tirtha* the pilgrim is required to perform a relatively standard act of worship to the

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god of the *tirtha*. The pilgrim can do this themselves or, if sufficiently wealthy, employ a *brahmin* priest to do it for them. Following is an account of a typical form of worship at a sacred place: the pilgrimage path of the 'Five-*tirtha*' pilgrimage along the Ganges in Benares. Although the location is best known as a centre for the performance of funerary rituals, including the cremation of the body, the sacred sites of the Ganges are also typical *tirthas*.

> At each stage of the journey, the pilgrims make a statement of intention called *sankalpa*, the explicit profession of intent to worship that accompanies every important ritual act. Learned *brahmin* pilgrims may recite the *sankalpa* for themselves, but ordinary pilgrims hear the words of their *sankalpa* from the *panda*, the pilgrim priest whom they employ. Cupping the right hand over the left and holding some grains of rice, perhaps some betel nut, some Ganges water, and a few coins, they listen to the words as they are recited: 'I, of this family and this village, am here in Kashi [Benares] in this year, in this month, on this day, in this place, making the pilgrimage to the Five *Tirthas*.' If the pilgrim is journeying in fulfilment of some vow or in the hope of some particular end, that end will be stated. This is a *sakama* pilgrimage, made 'with desires' in mind: to bear a son, to live a long time, to recover from disease. Often, however, pilgrimage is made 'without desires', *nishkama*, without any specific personal goal in mind. It is done in the traditional words of the *sankalpa*, 'to please Shiva Vishvanatha'. As a devout housewife explained, 'rewards are in accordance with our deeds and actions. We should just do these things, like the Panchatirthi pilgrimage, and good will naturally result.'
>
> Diana L. Eck, *Banaras: City of Light*, 1998, p. 221

There are many variants of this general procedure, but the statement of intention and the physical act of visiting the *tirtha* never varies. The ritual is an act of devotion to whichever deity resides in the *tirtha*, and it also is a sacrifice along the lines of the traditional *puja*.

On pilgrimage

Pilgrims usually travel by train or bus – or walk if they want to express their devotion in the form of bodily austerity (*tapas*). At the actual sacred sites, many stalls supply the pilgrim with food, religious items of all kinds, flower garlands for use in the ritual, religious literature, images of the god and provisions for the onward journey. The economic importance of pilgrimage should never be underestimated, just as its religious significance is central for Hindus, who are encouraged to visit the most important sacred places at least once in their lifetime. Pilgrimage has always been big business in India. The wealthy have often spent huge amounts of money in visiting sacred places, not least because of the large financial and material gifts required of *brahmins* who live at the sacred places and perform rituals there. Yet the poor are also able to make such pilgrimages as many religious organisations provide subsidised accommodation for the pilgrims.

A pilgrimage to *Kumbh Mela*

Alamy Stock Photo/ZUMA Press, Inc.

FIGURE 12.3.6 **Pilgrims crossing the pontoons and bathing on the auspicious day of *Maghi Purnima* in the waters of Sangam, the confluence of the rivers Ganges, Jumna and mythical Saraswati, during the *Maha Kumbh* festival in Allahabad on 15 January 2019**

Most pilgrims follow a particular route encompassing more than one sacred site. Some others, however, focus on a single site, the most famous of these being the meeting point of the Ganges and Jumna rivers, where the famous *Kumbh Mela* (Fair of the Vessel of Immortality) is held every 12 years. Meeting points of rivers are always regarded as intensely sacred, but this particular point of convergence – traditionally called Prayaga, though now named Allahabad – is especially important due to the fame and sacredness of the two rivers that come together here.

The massive *Kumbh Mela* festival commemorates an ancient battle between gods and demons for a pitcher (*kumbh*). During the fight for possession, four drops of nectar fell from the pitcher and landed in Allahabad, Haridwar, Nasik and Ujjain. The *Mela* is held every three years, rotating through these four cities.

There are several *Melas* held in different locations of India, both large and small, and the precise time for their occurrence is determined astrologically. They have become so important over the past 100 years that during the *Kumbh Mela* held at Allahabad, an entire tent city will arise, a temporary *Mela* administration will be established and religious organisations will make use of it to publicise their teachings and to display their place within the hierarchy of religious groups. As such, the *Mela* is very competitive, and over time different ascetic groups have built up rights that give them access to land closest to the point where the two rivers converge.

Everyone accepts that the sect of *Dasnami sadhus*, who are either naked or dress with a brief loin cloth, are the first to enter the waters and there will be tension if this precedence is violated. The *Kumbh Mela* is an extremely important meeting place for ascetics.

> The *akharas* (ascetic groups) are the focal point of the *Kumbh Mela* – the big draw, with their naked *sadhus*. They are the gymnosophists, the warriors of the faith. They have the right to march in processions to the central point of the Sangam to bathe on the big days, and they guard that right jealously.
>
> Mark Tully, *The Kumbh Mela*, 2006, p. 24

An estimated eight million people bathed at the confluence of the Ganges and Jumna rivers on the first day of the *Maha Kumbha Mela* in January 2019, and it was estimated up to 100 million would attend the 55 days of the festival. In addition, about 2500 religious and social organisations were also in attendance. The *Mela* provides a wonderful opportunity for the propagation of religious views, and dozens of religious discourses by prominent swamis are being delivered all the time during the 10 days of the event. Recently, it has also been used as a forum for spreading the views of militant Hinduism, a movement becoming increasingly powerful in Indian politics today. Such is the fame of the *Mela* that it is broadcast all over the world – it is even covered by the Australian television news services – and several websites now exist exclusively to cover the *Mela*.

RESPOND

Investigate the preparations for the *Kumbh Mela* 2021 and **explain** how and why they were different from 2019.

The significance of pilgrimage

Why do such huge numbers of people attend these pilgrimage spots and swim in the rivers where so many of them are located?

- In Hindu culture, water has always been regarded as having a very strong purifying capacity, such that bathing in a sacred ford or pool can remove bad *karma* accumulated over many lives. In this sense, the performance of a pilgrimage can be seen to fast-track a person's chance of escaping from *samsara* by quickly eradicating the stock of bad *karma*.
- Pilgrimage also offers the possibility of worshipping the most prominent Hindu gods, normally Vishnu and Shiva, in a much more concentrated manner than would be available in the normal ritual calendar of the village or town.
- The large *Melas* and the lesser festivals of a similar type allow individuals to experience, temporarily at least, the very heightened environment of sacrality associated with the combination of events occurring at these festivals.

Experience is fundamental in all the devotional traditions in India and the *Melas* definitely feed the need for the senses to be stimulated religiously in a variety of ways. While a *puja* may offer a small experience of the deity and of the purificatory powers of a sacred place, the *Melas* magnify this a hundredfold. To this must be added the importance of the holy men, *sadhus* and ascetics of all kinds who are in attendance in huge numbers at these festivals. The average Hindu, who lives in a village or a city and holds a secular job, is provided with the possibility of a total religious experience – *darshan* of the gods and holy men, telling of tales about the gods, community hymn-singing, performance of large-scale *pujas* – concentrated into a very short space of time. It also reminds them of the presence at the heart of their culture of a body of practitioners who are genuinely seeking an escape from *samsara*.

REVIEW

1. **Define** the term 'ritual' in the Hindu context.
2. How would a Hindu **define** 'public devotion'? **Clarify** how 'pilgrimage' fits into this definition.
3. **Explain** the importance of sacred places for Hindus.
4. **Construct** a graphic representation of the main features of Hindu pilgrimage.
5. **Describe** a Hindu pilgrimage using specific examples.
6. How does pilgrimage **demonstrate** the beliefs of Hinduism?
7. **Analyse** the significance of pilgrimage for both the individual and the Hindu community.

EXTENSION

1. Give two reasons why water is regarded in Hinduism as an agent of purification. **Propose** an example of how it plays this role in another culture or religious tradition.
2. Use the weblinks provided, which cover the *Kumbh Mela*. Prepare a report or a graphic presentation to **describe** the steps of the *Kumbh Mela* pilgrimage.
3. In small groups, **examine** the proposition that experience is more important than doctrinal discussion in the context of Hindu festivals. Share three points from your discussion with other groups.

Weblinks
Kumbh Mela

Kumbh Mela official website

Maha Kumbh 2021

Marriage

Along with temple worship and puja in the home, the Hindu marriage ritual is of great importance in Hindu society. It stands within a series of life-cycle rituals that define a Hindu's – especially a Hindu man's – life from birth to death. Apart from joining a man and woman together in a union, the marriage ceremony brings together two different families, almost always from the same class and locality. It also symbolises differences of gender and status and has other forms of symbolism, especially associated with fertility.

The Hindu marriage ritual is mentioned in the earliest text, the *Rig Veda*, but its ritual elements are really formalised in texts – called *Grihyasutras* – dealing with household ritual and dating from about 200 BCE, where considerable variations in the ritual are noted. Although the ceremony has been somewhat modernised, its traditional elements are still very strong. The main word for marriage is *vivaha*. It conveys the idea that the bride is taken from her father's house to the groom's house, and

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traditionally this would have meant moving from one extended family to another. The marriage ceremony, with its accompanying rituals, was and remains a highly social affair because it creates and cements family alliances and can often be taken as a sign of status for the two families who participate in it. In the classical literature this is fundamentally important because the household is the foundation of society, and is firmly rooted in the belief that the living family is directly related to deceased ancestors through the performance of monthly ancestor rituals which the eldest male must perform. Hence the emphasis on fertility symbolism in the wedding, as it is essential that male offspring be born. Often, hundreds of people are invited, especially so if the two families are wealthy. The bride's family traditionally paid a dowry, though that is less common now.

The marriage is arranged by the couple's families, and before the actual wedding is held the betrothal takes place.

DID YOU KNOW?

An astrologer determines the date of the marriage to ensure that it is favoured by good fortune.

A marriage contract – called *lagnapatrika* – is signed, usually in the bride's parents' house, in a ritual, often overseen by a priest, where the two families are present. This is an important ceremony and has given rise to a large industry producing *lagnapatrika* cards. In addition, before the actual wedding day various minor rituals have already been held, especially in the bride's parents' house. Some of these involve the bride throwing rice over members of her own family and the groom's relations, symbolising the fertility of the marital union.

The wedding ceremony

The actual wedding ceremony involves a number of activities and procedures, and there are many variations relating to particular geographical regions, but the most crucial part of the ceremony can be summarised in terms of three basic rituals. As the marriage is essentially about the bride leaving her own paternal household in order to enter the groom's paternal household, these are:

1. the giving of the bride (*kanyadana*) by her father to the groom
2. the acceptance of the bride and the groom by each other (*panigrahana*) and his family
3. the actual wedding, completed by the ritual of the seven steps.

In the area where the second and third procedures take place, a *mandapa* – a temporary pavilion covered by a canopy – has already been set up. The sacrificial fire – which is regarded as the witness of the marriage ritual – has been established and lit, and other physical objects used in the wedding have been placed in their appropriate places. In wealthy families a priest – *purohita* – will oversee the ritual sacrifice involved in the wedding, but a priest's presence is not necessary.

Shutterstock.com/dkroy

FIGURE 12.3.7 The 'giving' of the bride (*kanyadana*) and the acceptance of the bride and groom (*paṇigrahaṇa*)

In the classical texts the second element, the acceptance of the bride, is described like this:

> When the woman has taken his hand, and he has placed to the west of the fire a mill-stone, to the north-east (of the fire) a water-pot, and has sacrificed, he stands, with his face turned to the west, while she is sitting and with her face turned to the east, and should say, 'I take your hand for marital felicity' and then seize her thumb if he desires that only male children may be born to him …
>
> *Ashvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 7, 3, author's translation

In some weddings the groom touches the bride's heart and recites a prayer which suggests the union of their heart and mind.

Then, with their right sides facing the pot and the fire, he leads her around the fire, saying the prayer:

> I am this, you are that,
> That are you, this I am,
> I am the heaven, you are the Earth,
> I am the *sama* (hymn), you are the *Rig* hymn.
>
> Come let us both marry,
> Let us produce offspring.
> Liking each other, shining, very cheerful,
> May we live one hundred years.
>
> *Ashvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 7, 6, author's translation

During the circling of the fire, the bride offers grain into the fire.

The third element is the most significant in that it concludes with the bride and groom taking seven steps in a north-easterly direction from the sacred fire, which is regarded as the witness of the actual marriage ritual. This act is accepted by the *Hindu Marriage Act, 1955* as making the marriage legal. No marriage certificate is needed, and the marriage will be known to have taken place by those who witnessed the ceremony. The bride and groom are often joined by an item of clothing and both take the steps together. Before this the bride offers grains and clarified

butter, both symbols of fertility, into the sacred fire as it is expected the bride will eventually give birth to sons for the prosperity of the household.

The seven steps are described like this:

> He has her step forward seven steps in a north-easterly direction, and he says, 'One step for vigour, with two steps for strength, with three steps for the thriving of wealth, with four steps for enjoyment, with five steps for offspring, with six steps for the seasons, with seven steps you be a companion. So you be devoted to me. Let us have many sons who will reach old age.'
>
> *Ashvalayana Grhya Sutra* 1, 7, 19, author's translation

In contemporary Hinduism, after the seven steps have been taken, the husband places a thread around his wife's neck. Called the *mangalasutra* – huge numbers of which are advertised on the Internet – it symbolises good fortune and conjugal happiness, and it is now worn by most married Hindu women.

Shutterstock.com/Raksha Shelare

FIGURE 12.3.8 The bride and groom take the seven steps around the sacred fire.

A large feast is normally held after the completion of the seven steps, and eventually the married couple go to the groom's home, where there is a ritual for the entry into the home and finally the consummation of the marriage.

In contemporary Australia, Hindu marriages are usually conducted by a Hindu priest who is also a registered marriage celebrant. A marriage certificate is also signed, a practice not observed in the traditional Hindu wedding.

Hindu marriages are very vibrant, colourful and full of cultural symbolism. Anybody who has witnessed or participated in one will immediately appreciate the very strong ritual base of the whole procedure and the extent to which it reinforces the fundamental teachings about the fecundity of the ritual and the centrality of the householder – husband and wife – in Hindu culture. This is strengthened by the acceptance that the groom represents Vishnu and the bride, Mahalakshmi, both of whom are regarded as fundamental for the preservation of the world and the household. Finally, the fact that the sacrificial fire is still a central element of the wedding ceremony demonstrates the long continuity of this practice and the sense in which the sacrificial fire is still powerfully symbolic of the Hindu notion of the household.

REVIEW

1. Using the material here and online research, **construct** an infographic to **identify** the signs and symbols that are part of the Hindu marriage ritual.
2. **Demonstrate** how Hindu marriage rituals reflect the teachings of Hinduism.
3. **Analyse** the significance of the Hindu marriage for the individual and the Hindu community.

Weblinks
Hindu marriage rituals

5 wedding rituals

Hindu wedding ceremony

Hindu wedding ceremony traditions

Indian wedding traditions

The Hindu Sacrament of Marriage

EXTENSION

What is the status of a traditional Hindu marriage in Australian law?

Conclusion

Many first-time visitors to India are shocked by the divergent levels of culture and the variety of cultural and religious practices on display. Like other South Asian cultures, India is both religious and secular, and both these aspects are presented in extreme ways. Urban areas appear as absolute hives of energy, with people apparently moving in all directions in a manner that seems utterly chaotic to Westerners. The kind of quietism associated with meditation and spiritual practice – emphasised in many of the religious texts and so often considered to reside in Hindu holy men – seems entirely lacking. The need for economic security seems to dominate everything. Yet, for all that, signs of religious practice are found everywhere.

In the main streets of Hindu cities, large temples almost spill out onto the road. In the morning and evening, lines of people can be seen entering the doors of temples to perform devotional ritual and worship of the deity embodied in an image. On street corners or in side alleys, there are small shrines consisting of just a single image of a *lingam* with Nandi the bull in front, or of Lakshmi, goddess of prosperity, to name only two. These images will be placed within a small cage-like structure that contains a small opening for money to be put into a box and a few bowls containing water and other ritual substances. Even in motorised rickshaws and taxis, small, brightly coloured pictures of gods are contained in brackets, around which a bunch of flowers will be draped each day.

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Religion, then, remains highly visible in India in spite of the ever-increasing pace of life and the trappings of modernisation that have so transformed South Asia over the last 50 years. Its visibility is greatly magnified when festivals that attract huge crowds are held, such as Diwali (pan-Indian) or Durgapuja in Bengal and Pongal in Tamil Nadu. They are well-known fixtures on what is a rather full religious calendar, and they offer many opportunities for displays of devotional activity. Add to this the influence that is exerted on both the economic/political elite and the masses by the teachings and proclamations of holy men and women, many of whom are constantly touring around the countryside. Hinduism still shapes the attitudes and behaviour of the people, and has a defining role in the onward movement of South Asian culture.

Religious change has become particularly important as South Asia deals with the ideological and cultural forces that come with modernisation, which in many areas is primarily a Western phenomenon. Hindu ethics, for example, have always been centred on relationships between classes within society. But now, under the influence of Western individualism, Hinduism has to come to terms with ethical problems that are based on the pre-eminence of the individual over the social class. Bioethics is one area where this is especially important, as this overrides the importance of class and requires decisions to be made primarily on the basis of the sanctity of the individual. In contrast, environmental ethics do rest on the idea of class and tribal interests. Decisions to preserve environmentally sensitive areas often require the overturning of the traditional practices of particular occupational classes. But such decisions link politics and religion. Their area of concern is not yet large enough to involve a change in any aspect of Hinduism, but reinterpretations of the ethical aspects of Hinduism are occurring under pressure from environmentalist groups.

> This year we do not have any fairs, we don't have big dinners, small dinners yes. We don't have 400, 500 people going to dinners, but we do have celebrations at home. The celebration will not be as flamboyant, it will not be open in the park, but we will celebrate at home with family members, only family members.
>
> Dr Yadu Singh, President of the Federation of Indian Associations of New South Wales

In many respects, Hinduism is almost an ethnic category since most Hindus live in South Asia, and Hinduism as a religion is not conducive to conversion. This does not mean that throughout its history it has remained static. South Asia has always been the home of many different ethnic and linguistic groups, all of whom have contributed to the very rich umbrella of ideas conveyed by the word 'Hinduism'. Because of the

Dr. Yadu Singh © SBS

FIGURE 12.3.9 Dr Yadu Singh celebrating Diwali at home with his family in Sydney, November 2020

great variety of religious practices, held together by the doctrinal and ritual framework of devotion, this variety has been sustained. Devotional practices are the heart of practical Hinduism and can easily be modified to meet new technologies and new theological views. New gods have appeared over the past 50 years, yet they can very easily be accommodated into the existing doctrinal and ritual framework. The overwhelming nature of Hindu devotionalism – the dominant feature of the religion – guarantees that, even with new pressures to adapt to, especially changing economic circumstances, the new will continue to coexist with the old in such a way that both will be enriched.

For those Hindus living outside South Asia, the religious fabric of society sometimes becomes very thin. There is little possibility of full ritual observance as the complete ritual calendar cannot be observed, temples are scarce and the celebrities – holy men and holy women – are largely absent. Sadly, without the continual presence of religious symbols to provide a religious texture, the religious aspect of a Hindu's ethnicity may become diffused and be reinforced only on special occasions.

EXTENSION

1. 'India is both religious and secular, and both these aspects of the culture are presented in extreme ways.' Using examples, **interpret** what this statement means.
2. Using Figure 12.3.9 as your starting point, **investigate** and identify examples of where COVID-19 had an impact on the maintenance of tradition for Hindus in Australia during and after 2020.
3. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
4. **Synthesise** the main features related to Hindu people, ideas, ethics and practices in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map. Include the completed mind map in your HSC revision notes to revisit when you are preparing for your exam.

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12 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section II

Studies of Religion I: answer **one** question from this section.

Studies of Religion II: answer **two** questions from **two** different religious traditions in this section.

Question 3 – Hinduism (15 marks)

a **i** Briefly outline **one** significant practice within Hinduism from **one** of the following:

- Marriage ceremony
- Pilgrimage
- Temple worship

3 MARKS

ii Explain the significance of the practice selected in (a) (i) for the individual.

4 MARKS

The disciplined man, having relinquished the fruit of action, attains perfect peace. The undisciplined man, impelled by desire, is attached to the fruit and is bound.

Bhagavad Gita 5.12

b How do the ethical teachings of Hinduism guide adherents to live *disciplined* lives?

In your response, refer to **one** of the following ethical areas:

- Bioethics
- Environmental ethics
- Sexual ethics

8 MARKS

Section III

Question 3 – Hinduism (20 marks)

There should be no inadvertence about truth. There should be no deviation from righteous activity.

Upanishads: 8425

How does Hinduism guide adherents to strive for *truth* and *righteousness*?

Additional Section III Question

There should be no inadvertence about truth. There should be no deviation from righteous activity.

Upanishads: 8425

To what extent does **one** significant person **or** school of thought, other than the *Vedas*, encourage adherents to live *righteous* lives?

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

13

Islam
depth study

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **explain** the contribution to and **analyse** the impact of one significant person or school of thought on the development and expression of Islam
- **describe** and **explain** Islamic ethical teachings on one ethical area
- **describe** one significant practice within Islam, **demonstrate** how this practice expresses the beliefs of Islam and **analyse** its significance for both the individual and the Muslim community.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online option

- Sufism – *tasawwuf*

Online worksheets

- Islamic significant individual or group (p. 275)
- Islamic ethics (p. 282)
- Islamic significant practice (p. 294)

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Alamy Stock Photo/Heritage Image Partnership Ltd

The annual pilgrimage caravan from Egypt to Mecca. The Egyptian governor had a beautifully decorated symbolic litter, called a *mahmal*, that was transported on camelback. The last Egyptian *mahmal* embarked on the journey from Cairo to Mecca and back in 1926.

13.1 Significant people and ideas

When the Prophet Muhammad died in 11 AH/632 CE, he left behind a Revelation from Allah (the Qur'an), a tradition (the *sunna* of the Prophet), and the reports of what he did, said and approved (*hadith*). There were also his companions who would assume leadership roles – who would be the teachers and interpreters – within the community, who were followers of the Prophet. In Islam, there is a widely held belief based on *sunna* that God sends a 'renewer' at the beginning of each century to restore or strengthen Islam. Who is a genuine 'renewer' (*mujaddid*) is a matter of considerable dispute.

Through the centuries, from the earliest years of Islam, there have been individuals and groups who have had great influence on the practice of Islam. Sometimes they have been a focus for consolidation, sometimes they have challenged, and sometimes they have caused disputes that resulted in rifts within the community of Islam in a way that is still apparent today. Indeed, the major division between Sunni and Shi'i Islam occurred with the assassination of the fourth caliph, only 29 years after the Prophet's death.

This section will explore the complicated legacy of 'A'isha, a wife of the Prophet; Nana Asma'u, daughter of a *Shaykh*, a poet and teacher from nineteenth-century West Africa; and Sayyid Qutb, one of the most influential and controversial contemporary interpreters of Islam.

Online option D
Sufism – *tasawwuf*

The online option 'Sufism – *tasawwuf*' explores the mystical dimension of Islam that has its origins in the century after the Prophet's death.

EXTENSION

Update the Islamic list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

'A'isha bint Abi Bakr (c. 614 – c. 678)

The first written account of 'A'isha was produced some 150 years after her death. Her multiple roles in the Islamic past – as an 'exceptional' female in Islamic society, as a scholar and political activist, and as a close, honourable companion and wife to the Prophet – make her life a point of contention in continued debates surrounding the true lineage of Muhammad's successors. Each of her roles is interpreted differently by Islamic scholars, making 'A'isha's part in early Islamic tradition very complicated.

There is no doubt, however, that the first Muslim woman whose views have been important to Muslims throughout Islamic history was 'A'isha, wife of the Prophet. Muhammad's contemporaries, among them both *al-muhajerun* (emigrants who followed him from Mecca) and *al-Ansar* (those who helped the Prophet in Medina), considered 'A'isha a source of religious rules and an expert on issues of Islamic legislation. Ata Bin Abi Rabah (d. 120 AH/736 CE), a prominent transmitter of *hadith*, said: "A'isha was the most knowledgeable Muslim and had the best opinion in public affairs; 2210 sayings of the prophet Muhammad were attributed to her among which are 170

which have been approved and Bukhari took 54 sayings from them.'

> 'A'isha narrates, 'God's apostle said and she quotes, "If any of you feels drowsy while praying he should go to bed till his slumber is over because in praying while drowsy one does not know whether one is asking for forgiveness or for a bad thing for oneself."'
>
> Bukhari Ch. 41, 161

A brief account of 'A'isha's life

'A'isha was the third wife of the Prophet Muhammad and her father was Abu Bakr, Muhammad's successor and the first 'rightly guided' caliph. She was betrothed to the Prophet at a very early age and it is suggested the marriage was formally consummated around 624 CE, when Muhammad was 54. 'A'isha's marriage to the Prophet represents a cultural norm of the time – marriages that solidified family, tribal or political ties. Marriage to 'A'isha allowed the Prophet and Abu Bakr to establish a public alliance, while the young bride received honoured status as wife of the Prophet. Of the 11 or 12 wives Muhammad took, it is clear from sources that 'A'isha became his favourite. It was in her room that Muhammad died and was buried. The Prophet's Mosque, al-Masjid al-Nabawi, now stands on that site in Medina.

Accusation of adultery

It was during Muhammad's lifetime, when returning from an expedition with him in 5 AH/627 CE, that 'A'isha became the victim of malicious gossip. She became separated from the company when she went to look for a necklace she reported she had lost. When she returned she found that the company had left without her. She was found by a young man called Safwan ibn Al-Muattal, who took her on his camel to rejoin the caravan. This led Abdullah Ibn Ubay, a known critic of the Prophet in Medina, to initiate speculation that she had committed adultery. Weeks later, when she found out about the rumours, 'A'isha returned to her parents' house in grief. Muhammad sought advice and later announced that he had received a revelation confirming 'A'isha's innocence and directing that charges of adultery be supported by four eyewitnesses (*Surat al-Nur* 24:11–19 'Light').

Battle of the Camel

The first violent division among Muslims occurred when the third caliph, 'Uthman, was killed and some suspected that 'Ali b. Abi Talib, his successor, conspired in the murder. Although 'Ali was 'A'isha's stepson-in-law and denied involvement, 'A'isha formed a military expedition against him when 'Ali was delayed in finding and punishing the perpetrators. The battle, which 'Ali won, was fought near Basra in 656 CE. 'A'isha was taken prisoner, though accorded enormous reverence as a wife of the Prophet Muhammad, and later sent back to Medina. It became known as the Battle of the Camel

Bridgeman Images/The Stapleton Collection

FIGURE 13.1.1 'A'isha, at the Battle of the Camel, from a Persian manuscript c. 1425

because 'A'isha gave directives from a howdah on the back of a camel.

Sources say she often regretted her involvement in war but lived long enough to regain her position. She died peacefully in 678 CE in the month of Ramadan and was buried in the cemetery Jannat al-Baqi', across from the Prophet's Mosque, beside other companions of the Prophet.

Contribution to the development and expression of Islam

As was said earlier, analysing 'A'isha's legacy is complicated and the two major strands of Islam have conflicting views – views that depend on their version of the proper lineage of the Prophet's successors (see page 81 in Chapter 5).

Some scholars suggest her involvement in the Battle of the Camel relegated 'A'isha to a divisive role in early Islamic history. But her later focus on scholarship and teaching gave her an important legacy in Sunni Islam.

> I have not known of any woman who was accused of falsifying *hadith*. To this we add, that from the time of 'A'isha, the mother of believers, until the time of al-Zahabi the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad were not kept or related by anyone as they were kept in the hearts of women and related by them.
>
> al-Hafez al-Zahabi (d. 1347), a renowned Muslim authority on *hadith*

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Views of 'A'isha

Sunnis hold 'A'isha in high esteem. Many believe that she was Muhammad's favourite wife and consider her to be *Umm al-Mu'minin* ('Mother of Believers') and among the *Ahl al-Bayt* (the household of the Prophet). For Sunnis, this household consists of the Prophet's wives, his daughter (Fatima) and her three children, as well as his cousin and son-in-law ('Ali).

Shi'i reject the idea that 'A'isha was the Prophet's favourite wife and believe that Muhammad favoured none of his wives in compliance with the Qur'anic verse *Surat al-Nisa* 4:3 'The Women.' The Shi'i definition of *Ahl al-Bayt* includes only Fatima, 'Ali, Hasan and Husayn (known collectively as the *Ahl al-Kisa*, 'people of the mantle') and the *Imams*, descendants of Fatima, whom they consider to be divinely chosen leaders of the Muslim community. Her participation in the Battle of the Camel (where she attacked 'Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet) is widely considered the most significant reason for Shi'i contempt. They also do not believe that she conducted herself in an appropriate manner in her role as Muhammad's wife.

Depending on your view, it can be said that:

- 'A'isha helped preserve the details of the early years of Islam, as well as the details of the private and public life of Muhammad by narrating more than 2000 *hadith*.
- She started the method of *hadith* critique, by questioning many of the *hadith* reported by Abu Hurayra (d. 681 CE) after Muhammad's death. She was also critical of Abu Hurayra's skills in deducing legal conclusions from *hadith*. For example, 'A'isha declared of Abu Hurayra 'to whoever wanted to hear it: "He is not a good listener [to the Prophet], and when he is asked a question, he gives wrong answers."'
- She was eloquent; her power of speech was described by al-Ahnaf (a well-known Muslim general who lived during the time of Muhammad): 'I have heard speeches of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali and the Khulafa (successors of the Prophet) up to this day, but I have not heard speech more persuasive and more beautiful from the mouth of any person than from the mouth of 'A'isha.'
- The Prophet is reported to have said: 'Learn a portion of your religion from this, *humayra*, (rosy lady)' – a description given to 'A'isha by the Prophet. She taught more than 80 major scholars in the early Islamic period.
- 'A'isha provided a role model for women's political participation in Islamic communities.
- Some scholars claim up to one-quarter of *Shari'a* (Islamic religious law), based on the collection of *hadiths*, has stemmed from her narrations and her teaching.

REVIEW

1. **Construct** an infographic of the key dates and events in the life of 'A'isha.
2. **Identify** the evidence present in this section that indicates 'A'isha's importance to Islam.
3. **Explain** the contribution of 'A'isha to the development and expression of Islam.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to find out more about 'A'isha. List six points you have learnt about 'A'isha from the website.
2. In groups, **discuss** the statement: 'Each of her roles is interpreted differently by Islamic scholars, making 'A'isha's part in early Islamic tradition very complicated.' Share your ideas with other groups.
3. **Analyse** the impact of 'A'isha on Islam. In your answer, **refer** to differing views of 'A'isha within Islam.

Weblinks
Women in world history

Islam women

Worksheet
Islamic significant individual or group

Nana Asma'u (1793–1864), scholar, educator, poet

After Khadija, Fatima, 'A'isha and Rabi'a, the foundational women of Islam, women seemed to disappear. Of course they didn't, but sometimes they can be difficult to find.

Nana Asma'u was born in a place called Degel in the Hausa state of Gobir, in what is now Northern Nigeria. It was a 'state within a state' – a place inhabited by scholars who spent their lives in the pursuit of Islamic learning – and it belonged to the Qadiriyya Sufi order (see page 3 of Online option D). She was the daughter of Shenu (*Shaykh*) Usman d'an Fodiyo. The Shenu was well educated in Islamic sciences and philosophy and was a popular and revered teacher.

DID YOU KNOW?

Asma'u bint Shehu Usman d'an Fodiyo is Nana's birth name. The title 'Nana' – 'chief of all women' – was probably given her by the Shenu.

Islam in West Africa

Islam has deep roots in West Africa. As far back as the ninth or tenth century, travelling merchants tried to unite West Africa with the Muslim societies in the north. By the late thirteenth century, Timbuktu, Gao and Kano, all in present-day Mali, had become bastions of Islamic learning. West African Muslims joined the annual *Hajj* to Mecca and Medina, and *Hajj* caravans (see page 273) brought books back to West Africa as souvenirs. For generations, owning books reflected social status.

Weblink
Arabic medicinal manuscripts

FIGURE 13.1.2 The Sokoto caliphate at its nineteenth-century prime

The Shenu's message was inclusive, directed at men and women alike, for he was himself descended from women scholars, who, just like the men, could trace their family through lines of educated ancestors. Women were accepted as intellectual peers and the Shenu said that to impose on women tasks like the preparation of food and the washing of clothes while neglecting their education was wrong.

His aims were to teach those who professed Islam but mixed their religion with paganism. Eventually this led him to speak about practices at the courts of the Hausa kings, which ended with him and his followers leaving Gobir and establishing the Sokoto Caliphate in 1808.

Asma'u was educated to the high standards of Degel and committed the entire Qur'an to memory. She was fluent in Hausa, Arabic and the Fula language Fulfulde, and is known to have had some proficiency in Tamajek, a language of the western Sahara. In about 1808, aged 15, Asma'u married Gid'ad'o d'an Laima, the friend and chief aide of her brother Muhammad Bello, and in 1809 they went to live in Sokoto, the new town built by her brother.

Nana Asma'u's role in the new caliphate

The rulers of the new caliphate had to find a way to implement what they knew in theory – Islamic government – and how to educate the next generation, many of whom would be born to the slave concubines of caliphate officials taken during the struggle to establish the caliphate. Many of these women were followers of a spirit cult and had only a very hazy knowledge of Islam. Asma'u was put in charge of women's education and wrote easy-to-learn poetry to teach her students how to be good Muslims.

Asma'u wrote poetry in three languages, and her work 'The Qur'an' is a mnemonic device used for teaching beginners the names of the chapters (*sura*). It appears in Arabic, Fulfulde and Hausa and so is accessible to all members of the community. For example, here are the first 15 chapters (the *sura* numbers are not part of the original work):

		Sura
1	I pray to God the Glorious	1
	Through the honour, al-Fatihah and the *sura* Baqara	2
2	And Al Imran and Nisa and Ma'ida	3, 4, 5
	Lan'am, La'araf and Lanfal and Bara	6, 7, 8, 9
3	Through the honour of Yunus, and Hud, Yusuf all,	10, 11, 12
	And the Ra'ad *sura*, Ibrahim and Hijra	13, 14, 15

Boyd and Mack, 1997, *Collected Works of Nana Asma'u*, Work 5, vv 1–3, p. 41

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'The Qur'an' was written in 1829 but, as far as is known, her first work was 'The Way of the Pious', written when she was in her twenties. It is an important work because it shows what was the focus of her life: Asma'u believed that one who loves Muhammad should work for the interests of the Muslim community, humbly, modestly, visiting the sick, teaching and contributing to society. It is, in reality, a condensed rule for Muslims and, in particular, *sufis*.

Alamy Stock Photo/Album/British Library

FIGURE 13.1.3 **Copies of the Qur'an like this one from northern Nigeria (late eighteenth/nineteenth century) would have been familiar to the Fodiyo family. The manuscript is loose-leaf and kept in a leather bag. This allowed individual pages to be read while travelling, or to be lent out and learned by heart. Asma'u would have kept her own writings in satchels similar to this one.**

Yan Taru movement

Asma'u organised women's education by transforming organisations that had existed among non-Muslim women in the region into a movement that became known as *Yan Taru*. In that way she made working for the community both desirable and honourable. *Yan Taru* is a Hausa word that means 'those who come together' or 'collective'.

Asma'u started teaching women in her home, and it was these classes that developed into a structure for women from outlying villages to have regular lessons.

Asma'u appointed reputable, mature women, who, because of their age, were no longer strictly confined to their homes, to head women's groups in villages and outlying areas. These women leaders were called *jaji* – the title of a man in charge of a caravan. Asma'u gave each *jaji* a *malfa*. These hats were usually worn only by elderly and distinguished men, and have a distinct high dome so they can be worn over a turban. When Asma'u ceremonially bestowed a red 'turban' or strip of red cloth to be tied around the brim of the hat, she was in fact giving the wearer a sign of authority.

Only girls and older women with permission to travel from the head of their household could go with the *jaji*, so a system was devised to allow the young wives to stay at home to look after their families while taking their lessons. The *jaji* travelled through the caliphate teaching in women's homes and, in turn, using Nana Asma'u's poetry and other writings to train a new group of leaders.

> The women's caravans set off, the best singers in front to keep spirits high and the *jaji* in the middle wearing her distinctive head gear. At night they stayed with sisterhood colleagues in the villages they passed.
>
> Jean Boyd, 'Distance learning from purdah in nineteenth-century northern Nigeria: the work of Asma'u Fodiyo' in *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, Volume 14, Number 1, June 2001, pp. 7–22

Dreamstime.com/Fabian Plock

FIGURE 13.1.4 **The *malfa* worn by the *jajis* would have been very similar to this one. The *malfa* is a work of art; at least eighty rows of finely plaited grass are shaped into a hat standing 20 centimetres high with a brim 6 centimetres broad and no apparent seam or join in its construction.**

As well as their distinctive hats, they would also have a copy of Nana Asma'u's work 'The path of truth'. Written in Hausa in 1842, it emphasises the following of the *sunna* of the Prophet. The opening prayer describes the pillars of Islam, which sets the tone for the additional lessons:

> Let us thank God the Generous, King of Justice
> He who created us, who sent the Best of Mankind,
> Muhammada.
>
> Who came and saved us from the darkness of sin
> Who gave us the light of the *Sunna* of Muhammada.
>
> And faith, and religion. So let us praise
> God the Merciful who loved Muhammada.
>
> He brought the Qur'an, and explained to us
> The laws of the King who created us. Let us follow
> Muhammada.
>
> Who revealed to us the Truth. We all received it.
> Except for the infidels who refuse to follow the Path of
> Muhammada.
>
> May God save us and give us the grace to follow
> The Way of the *Shari'a* so that one day we might see
> Muhammada.
>
> May the blessings of God be upon him for ever
> And also peace, for he exceeds all, Muhammada.

> And also his Family and Companions and the Followers of the Companions And, in turn, their Followers in the Way of Muhammada.
>
> Listen to my song, friends, and take care!
> Follow the Path and cease falling away from Muhammada.
>
> Boyd and Mack, 1997, *Collected Works of Nana Asma'u*, Work 23, vv 1–9, p. 41

Clearly, Asma'u was confident of her position as 'chief of all women' – Nana – as just before the end of 'The path of truth' she writes:

> If anyone asks who composed this song, say
> That it is Nana, daughter of the Shehu, who loves Muhammada.
>
> You should firmly resolve, friends, to follow her
> And thus you will follow exactly the *Sunna* of Muhammada.
>
> vv 125–7

Her writings

Asma'u's mother tongue was Fulfulde, and she wrote most of her poetry in that language. Arabic was for formal works and Hausa for what she wanted to say directly to her students. She also translated many works, the best known of which is 'Begore', written in Fulfulde by Muhammad and translated by Nana into Hausa verse. It is a poem of 315 lines and is an example of *sira*, a literary account of the life of the Prophet Muhammad. It is the most famous of her poems among the descendants of her women students today.

An example of her 'teaching' poetry is *Wa'azi* – 'A warning' – written in Fulfulde in 1834. This is a poem to teach her students what their basic religious duties were: the five pillars. Its final verses, however, demonstrate that, as a teacher of teachers, Asma'u did not distance herself from her students:

> May I be rescued from the wicked ways of
> Satan into which I have fallen through my own obstinacy.
>
> *Wa'azi* v. 22

Much of her poetry places a strong emphasis on women leaders and the rights of women within the Muslim community. Her work 'Sufi women', written in Fulfulde and Hausa, is a roll of honour of pious women in which she thanks God for the exemplary lives lived by women *sufi* saints. Its effect was to elevate the perceived position of women in the Muslim community, creating role models for her contemporaries.

The language of her Hausa poems is simple and was meant to be memorised and sung. If you read aloud the verses of 'The path of truth', above, you will get an idea, even in English, of its rhythm and so the ease with which it could be sung or chanted at home or when travelling to meet Asma'u. She wanted her students to know more about the teachings of Islam; to read, write, sing and work.

She was famous in her lifetime and exchanged messages in verse with scholars from different regions. There is one poem, written in Arabic, 'Welcoming the Mauritanian scholar' which was in reply to the visitor's poem announcing his arrival en route to Mecca from Mauritania.

NOTE

Mauritania is at least 1500 kilometres to the north-west of Sokoto.

Nana Asma'u wrote in the Islamic literary tradition, using Arabic script for the local languages, which is called *ajami* script. Her compositions were written with vegetable dye inks on unbound sheets of paper, and kept together in a leather book-bag similar to the one pictured in Figure 13.1.3.

There are 62 authenticated works by Nana Asma'u, which had remained in storage in her home since her death in 1864. Some of her works had become popular in her day and have remained in circulation since then, having been widely distributed in the region.

> Talented as she was, Asma'u was neither alone in her intellect nor unique among women in her activism. Indeed, her accomplishments exemplify a long-standing pattern in West Africa of Muslim women's scholarship and contributions to the community.
>
> Boyd and Mack, 1997, *Collected Works of Nana Asma'u*, p. 33

Nana Asma'u's legacy

The *Yan Taru* movement did not fade away after Nana's death. Through her poems Asma'u taught generations of women and children, assisted as she grew older by her sister, Maryam. After Asma'u's death the classes continued, and in the 1870s they were moved to the *Hubbare* (tombs) where Maryam lived and where the Shenu and Asma'u were buried. A list of her students who came from the area south-west of Sokoto has survived. In the villages, people knew their leaders generation by generation, and a recital of their names ends with 'and it was she who was Asma'u's student'. Today the *Yan Taru* still journey to Sokoto with their *jajis*, Asma'u's poetry is still sung, and in Northern Nigeria many Islamic women's organisations, schools, and meeting halls are named after her.

Postscript

The end of the Sokoto caliphate began when internal rivalry brought civil war while European colonial armies were beginning to encroach on its periphery. By 1903 the caliphate fell to the French and British colonial armies. More recently, the modern state of Sokoto in north-west Nigeria has been the target of major attacks by Boko Haram – which loosely translates from Hausa as 'Western education is forbidden'. Boko Haram sees such education as corrupting

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Muslims and seeks to rid northern Nigeria of its traditional Islamic leadership, a leadership that fosters education for all.

REVIEW

1. **Construct** an infographic to **summarise** the life and work of Nana Asma'u. The 20-minute podcast at the weblink provided will help you.
2. Read the verses from 'The path of truth' (pages 277–8) and **clarify** how they relate to the beliefs of Islam.
3. **Explain** what Nana Asma'u has contributed to the development and expression of Islam.
4. In what way is her contribution important?

Weblinks
Nana Asma'u

EXTENSION

Using the material in this section and the weblinks provided, prepare five statements that **distinguish** Islam in West Africa.

Weblinks
Islam in West Africa

The Sokoto caliphate

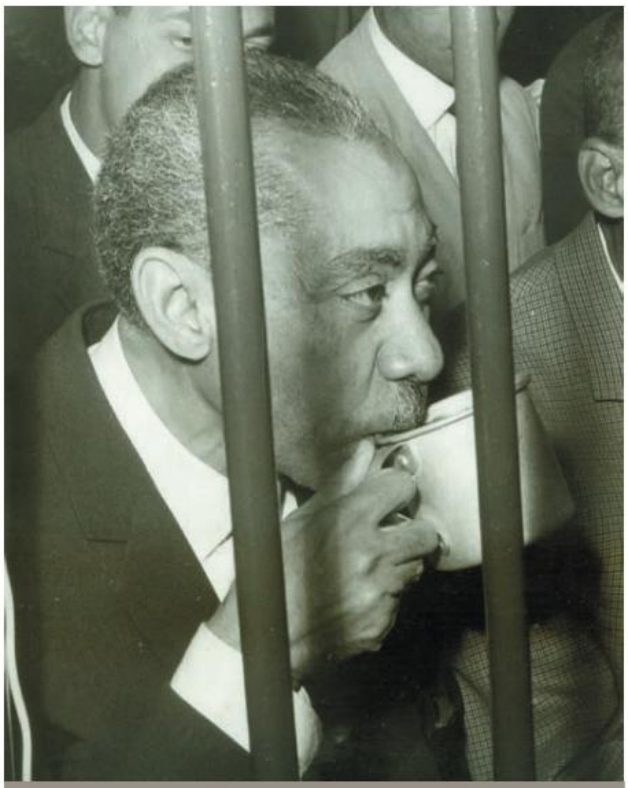
Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966)

GLOSSARY

jahiliyya The Arabic word used to designate the pre-Islamic period, usually translated as 'the time of ignorance'. The primary meaning of the root is 'irascibility' – excessive arrogance, a tendency to anger.

Without any doubt, Sayyid Qutb is one of the most influential and controversial contemporary interpreters of Islam and, since his execution in Cairo in 1966, is revered as the martyr of Islamic revivalism. Finding the 'real' story of Qutb in the legend that has developed around him is difficult, and interpretations depend on how one views contemporary Islam.

Sayyid Qutb was born in the village of Musha, in the township of Qaha, in the province of Assyout in Egypt. He had two younger sisters and a younger brother. As a young boy, he received a traditional Muslim education – he had memorised the Qur'an by the age of 10 – and, like countless others in the years after the First World War, he migrated to Cairo to receive a modern, secular education and joined the new urban educated class. He qualified as an Arabic-language teacher and received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1939. For six years he worked as a teacher and an inspector of schools for the Egyptian ministry of education, and in his spare time he struggled to establish himself as a writer of poetry, fiction and literary criticism. His early writings reflected a 'Western-tinged' outlook on cultural and literary questions. In the early 1940s, Qutb came to be more aware of the importance of the Qur'an in Islamic life and he began to take a greater interest in social reform. He subscribed to the essentially secular nationalism of the day, the focus of which was opposition to British rule in Egypt. Shortly after finishing the manuscript of his first important book, *Social Justice in Islam*, in 1948, Qutb went to the United States to study American education curricula and earned a master's degree. He became disillusioned with the materialistic attitude and lack of spirituality in US society and the racial prejudice he experienced, and cut short his stay, returning to Egypt in August 1951. At some time after his return to Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood, *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*, the largest Islamic movement of its time, and became the chief editor of the Brotherhood's newspaper.



Getty Images/AFP

FIGURE 13.1.5 Sayyid Qutb in prison in Cairo. Qutb spent most of the years from 1954 until his execution in 1966 in prison.

The Muslim Brotherhood – *al-Ikhwan al-Muslimun*

This organisation was founded by Hasan al-Banna' in 1928 with a view to advocating a return to true Islam via the Qur'an and the *hadith*. It was at first a social and moral reform movement to revive Islam as a way of life and end the separation of religion and state. It complemented government activities by providing valuable community services. It was opposed to Western colonialism and imperialism, especially in Muslim countries, and it aimed at the establishment of a Muslim state where ideals of Islam could create a good society.

Although the Brotherhood was not a political party, its belief that the Islamic community (*umma*) was to exist in a state and society governed by Islamic law drew it into the political arena, and al-Banna' was assassinated in 1949. The Brotherhood was banned by the Egyptian Government in 1954. In the 1970s, after the death of Nasser and under the new president, Anwar Sadat, the Egyptian Brotherhood was invited back to Egypt and began a new phase of participation in Egyptian politics. The organisation was tolerated to varying degrees until the upheavals of the 2011 Egyptian revolution. In December 2013, the then Prime Minister declared it a terrorist organisation.

Qutb's early work *Social Justice in Islam* (1949) shows that even before his trip to the United States he was building on the Islamic idea of *tawhid* (the oneness of God and, therefore, of the universal order). In it he made clear that true social justice can only be realised in Islam.

> So the universe cannot be hostile to life, or to man; nor can 'Nature' in our modern phrase be held antagonistic to man, opposed to him, or striving against him. Rather she is a friend whose purposes are one with those of life and mankind. And the task of living beings is not to contend with Nature, for they have grown up in her bosom, and she and they together form a part of the single universe which proceeds from the single will.
>
> *Social Justice in Islam*, trans. by John Hardie, 1970 (rev. ed.), p. 66

He certainly became more radical on his return to Egypt, yet his views remained moderate and tentative. In the early 1950s, many people in Egypt were veering in even more radical directions.

Egypt's political tensions in the 1950s

In 1952 Gamal Abd al-Nasser and a group of nationalist army officers (including Anwar Sadat, who became president of Egypt after Nasser's death in 1970) overthrew the monarchy of King Farouk and launched a nationalist revolution on Pan-Arabist grounds – the idea of a political alliance or union of all Arab states. Nasser's Pan-Arabists and the Muslim Brotherhood shared the dream of rescuing the Arab world from the legacies of European imperialism and fashioning a new kind of modernity that was going to be up to date on economic and scientific issues, and both movements dreamed of removing the monarchy that was collaborating with the European powers. Colonel Nasser, in the days before staging his coup d'état, is said to have paid a visit to Qutb at his home, presumably to get his backing for the coup.

The Brotherhood hoped that the young officers would accept an implementation of Islam through *Shari'a*, but that was not the case; instead, Nasser cracked down on the Muslim Brotherhood. Two events in particular contributed to the break: the Brotherhood's insistence on an Islamic constitution and a free press; and their denunciation of the July 1954 Anglo-Egyptian Agreement on the Suez Canal.

EXTENSION

Investigate Egypt under the government of President Nasser (1952–67). Reach some conclusions to **assess** why Nasser's policies and style of leadership alienated the Muslim Brotherhood.

In 1954 the Brotherhood was accused of attempting to overthrow the government of President Nasser and of an assassination attempt. Mass arrests followed and Sayyid Qutb was arrested, along with other leading Brothers, and spent most of the rest of his life in prison until his execution in 1966.

It was the violence of Nasser's prison and the torture Qutb experienced, not at the hands of foreigners but his own people, that radicalised Qutb.

Qutb's writings

What Qutb wrote is of more significance than what is known about his life. While in prison, he managed to continue with his writings, no longer in the 'Western-tinged' vein of his early literary days.

> I spent thirty years of my life, wasting my life, studying European philosophy before I turned back to the Qur'an and understood the secrets of the Qur'an.

His major work is *In the Shade of the Qur'an* (*Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*), a commentary on the Qur'an in 30 volumes, which began to appear in 1952 and was completed in prison. Apart from its length, two things are striking about the commentary: first, Qutb's unfailing sensitivity to the Qur'an's literary qualities; and second, his insistence that the Qur'an provided the principles for living and that true Muslims engage in a lifelong study of it.

Qutb began the first volume of *In the Shade of the Qur'an* by saying:

> To live 'in the shade of the Qur'an' is a great blessing which can only be fully appreciated by those who experience it. It is a rich experience that gives meaning to life and makes it worth living. I am deeply thankful to God Almighty for blessing me with this uplifting experience for a considerable time, which was the happiest and most fruitful period of my life – a privilege for which I am eternally grateful.

His book *Milestones*, written in prison, was drawn from his vast commentary on the Qur'an. *Milestones* proposed a radical transformation, not mere reform, of Islam. It was the publication of this book in 1964 that led to his re-arrest with the accusation of conspiracy against the Egyptian president. He was tried and rapidly sentenced to death, based on many excerpts from his book. Shortly before his execution, he was asked to sign a petition seeking mercy from the president. Sayyid Qutb replied:

> If I have done something wrong in the eye of Allah, I do not deserve mercy; but if I have not done anything wrong, I should be set free without having to plead for mercy from any mortal.

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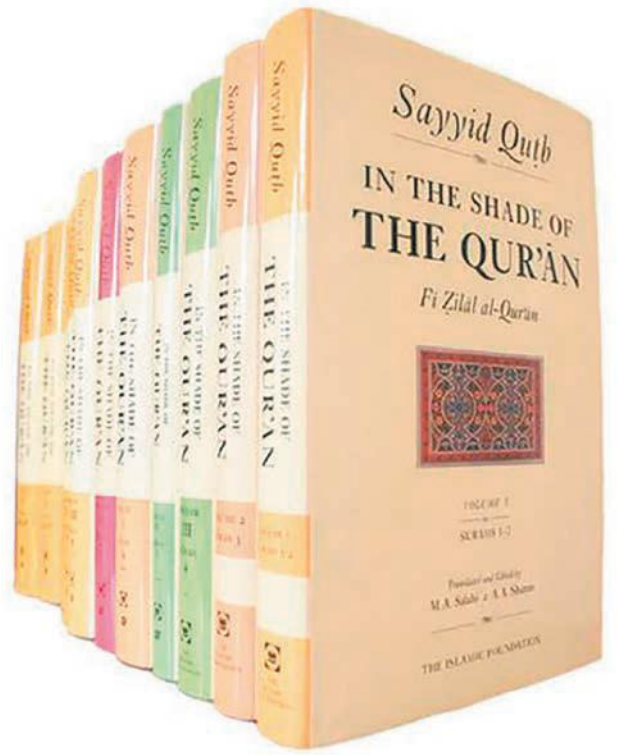

FIGURE 13.1.6 Eight volumes of the English translation of *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Islamic Foundation (UK)

> The Qur'an and its texts must have the last word, not archaeology and archaeologists. The Qur'an has been revealed by Him who knows the secret in the heavens and earth, who 'knows the secret and that yet more hidden' (*Surat Taha* 20:7).
>
> *In the Shade of the Qur'an*

That *Milestones* was cited at Qutb's trial gave it enormous publicity, and it became a classic manifesto of the future terrorist wing of Islamic fundamentalism. It is important, however, to investigate the concepts used in Qutb's writings and how he used them. The three key concepts are *'aqida*, ***jahiliyya*** and *jihad*. Qutb gave a new, dynamic character to *'aqida* (creed of Islamic faith): he saw it as that ideological spiritual bond that would give young Muslims the hope of building a new Islamic society, and the stability and the power to withstand all the change around them. Traditionally, Islam was supposed to supplant all the ideas of *jahiliyya* with the new Islamic system. Qutb, especially when he was in prison, used it to condemn Muslim governments and societies which, in his eyes, had been corrupted by Western culture and secularism to the point where they had abandoned Islam. His understanding of the obligation of *jihad* also departs from traditional understanding. Qutb understood *jihad* as taking on many forms depending on the stage of development of the Muslim community (*umma*) – from the struggle to assert *tawhid*, to defending the community's right to 'freely practise Islamic beliefs', even if it entails the use of arms. He argued that *jihad* is mandatory and proactive in seeking to establish Allah's sovereignty on earth. He was careful to emphasise that it does not necessarily mean the use of violence – it includes preaching the use of service and wealth in the way of Allah. He was also careful to remind his readers that there is no compulsion in Islam. But if someone has chosen to live by it, then no one has the right to prevent them from doing so.

In *Milestones*, Qutb insists that the establishment of the Islamic order is in stages and he repeatedly emphasises that the need for implementing *Shari'a* would not arise until every member of the community had completely submitted to the sovereignty of Allah and by doing so had agreed to live under Allah's laws. Laws would then be framed merely to serve the needs of this 'living community of Islam'.

Qutb's writings emphasised the perfection and comprehensiveness of Islam, and, hence, its self-sufficiency. He proposed Islamic views as alternatives to secularism, nationalism, capitalism and communism. He hoped that Muslims could unite to form one bloc (a group of states united by a common factor), though not necessarily one Islamic nation. He was not a fundamentalist; he believed that there could be adaptations of civil law as long as they are in accord with renewed interpretations of *Shari'a*.

The development in Qutb's thinking – his ideology – and his martyrdom have profoundly influenced later Islamic activists. In the end, what he was advocating amounted to a call for Islamic revolution. Qutb 'pre-figures' in some ways the shift from a more secularist Muslim society, such as that of Kemal Ataturk in the 1920s and 1930s, to a more 'fundamentalist' or more self-consciously Islamic ideology since his death. Whatever the final judgement is, Sayyid Qutb will remain an important part of the modern history of Islam.

> Executed in 1966, he [Qutb] did not live long enough to work out the practical implications of his programme. But unlike some of his later followers, he seems to have realised that Muslims would have to undergo a long spiritual, social and political preparation for armed struggle. After his death, however, the political situation in the Middle East deteriorated and the increasing violence and consequent alienation meant that Qutb's work would resonate with disaffected youth, especially those Brothers who had likewise been hardened in Egyptian gaols and felt there was no time for such a ripening process. When they were released in the early 1970s, they would bring Qutb's ideas into mainstream society, and try to implement them practically.
>
> Karen Armstrong, *Fields of Blood: Religion and the History of Violence*, 2014, p. 294

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the social and cultural factors that influenced the life and work of Sayyid Qutb.
2. In your own words, **explain** what is meant by 'Islamic secularism'.
3. Give three reasons to **justify** naming Sayyid Qutb a 'significant person' in Islam.
4. **Explain** the contribution of Sayyid Qutb to the development and expression of contemporary Islam.
5. **Analyse** the effect of Sayyid Qutb's writings. In your response, **examine** how they are used to **justify** particular ideologies.

EXTENSION

1. Using the Internet and/or other resources, **investigate** the title of *mujaddid*. **Assess** why the title can cause controversy in the Islamic community (*umma*).
2. **Outline** the arguments for and against giving Sayyid Qutb the title of *mujaddid*.
3. Type 'Sayyid Qutb' into an Australian Internet search engine and choose three articles. For each article:
   a. briefly summarise it
   b. **evaluate** its content
   c. **describe** what perspectives it reflects in various expressions of Islam.

13.2 Ethics – *'Ilm al-Akhlaq*

GLOSSARY

ethics Ethics is the explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices. Its purpose is to clarify what is right and wrong and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

jurisprudence The science of law.

Mahdi Divinely guided leader who is to come in the future to establish God's rule on earth and a socially just society, restore the community to its rightful place, and usher in a perfect Islamic society.

mujtahid One entitled to give an independent judgement on a point of theology or law. In Iran, the title of Ayatullah has been applied to *mujtahids* in recent times.

taqlid Literally this means 'follow (someone)', 'imitate'. In Islamic legal terminology, it means to follow a ***mujtahid*** – a person who is an expert in Islamic ***jurisprudence***.

▷ Refer to Chapter 5, pages 89–91, for the core ethical teachings of Islam.

Worksheet
Islamic ethics

In Arabic, the phrase *'Ilm al-Akhlaq* indicates **ethics** or morals. Islamic ethics is an extension of *Shari'a* that is itself based on two foundations – the Qur'an, in itself 'a healing and a guidance to those who believe' (*Surat Fussilat* 41:44), and the *sunna* of the Prophet. The overriding concept that informs Muslim ethics is *tawhid*, the absolute Oneness of God.

This section explores some of the issues involved in sexual ethics, bioethics and environmental ethics and Islamic ethical teachings on these issues. In many instances, it is difficult to separate the first two because they overlap in various ways. For example, the various methods of assisted fertilisation such as in-vitro fertilisation are both a sexual and a bioethical issue.

The basis of the ethical teachings of Islam – that all actions are governed by *tawhid*, the belief in the oneness and unity of God, and *umma*, the promotion of unity and harmony within the Muslim community – show that Islam is not monolithic and a diversity of views in ethical matters does exist. This diversity derives from the various schools of **jurisprudence**, different movements within Islam, differences in cultural backgrounds and different levels of religious observance.

It is the interpretation of new issues that most distinguishes Shi'i and Sunni, and it is in the concept of ***taqlid*** where the major difference lies between Sunni and Shi'i jurisprudence. Essentially, the difference is in the concepts each have of what constitutes the *sunna* of the Prophet.

According to Sunni, the *sunna* is everything narrated from the Prophet as long as the transmitters are trustworthy. Development of *Shari'a* for Sunni has also required *ijma'* (consensus) and *qiyas* (analogy), resulting in four major schools of jurisprudence. Sunni acknowledge the concept of *taqlid*, but they understand it differently. For Sunni, *taqlid* is following any one of these four major schools.

Shi'i developed its own interpretations, methodology and authority systems. Shi'i believe that until the return of the ***Mahdi***, the Twelve *Imams* instructed believers to follow the ***mujtahid***. Which particular scholar (*mujtahid*) someone follows is a matter of choice, not compulsion. For both Sunni and Shi'i, *taqlid* in the matter of fundamental beliefs and practices is ruled out.

Sexual ethics

> And one of His signs is that He created mates for you from yourselves that you may find rest in them, and He put between you love and compassion; most surely there are signs in this for a people who reflect.
>
> *Surat al-Rum* 30:21 'Romans'

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According to Islamic tradition (*sunna*), marriage is natural for human beings and celibacy has always been regarded as something to be avoided and open to all sorts of evils.

In early Islam, the growth and prosperity of the Muslim community was very important and so sexual desire was seen as a part of the nature that was not to be repressed or inhibited – the Qur'an and *hadith* provide examples of how it was part of the 'nature and temperament of the prophets'. According to one *hadith*, love and affection for women were characteristic of the moral conduct of the prophets. The harmony of the Muslim community was also important.

Because of this, sexual relations outside marriage are forbidden, and this includes homosexual relations.

Homosexuality

The Qur'an is quite specific in condemning homosexuality. It includes the story of Lot (Lut), one of the prophets sent by God to warn his people about their crimes, one of which includes sodomy.

> And (We sent) Lut when he said to his people: What! do you commit an indecency which any one in the world has not done before you? Most surely you come to males in lust besides females; nay you are an extravagant people. And the answer of his people was no other than that they said: Turn them out of your town, surely they are a people who seek to purify (themselves).
>
> *Surat al-A'raf* 7:80–82 'The Heights'

Contraception

Although we may think that contraception is a modern issue, Islamic medicine has known about contraception for centuries. The Persian physicians al-Razi (856–923 CE) and Avicenna (980–1037 CE) refer to different methods of contraception.

DID YOU KNOW?

Early Islam actually developed contraceptive medicine and instructed Europe on it. Muslim physician Avicenna, in his book *Canon of Medicine*, discusses 20 different substances used for birth control. *Canon of Medicine* was a standard medical text at many European universities until the mid-seventeenth century.

Islam is strongly pro-family and regards children as a gift from God. Muslim sexual ethics forbid sex outside marriage, so Islam's teaching about birth control should be understood within the context of husband and wife. There is a range of Muslim views on this matter – Islam's attitude towards family planning consists only of the opinion of jurists since the Qur'an and *sunna* of the Prophet say nothing about contraception. There are two contradictory views, both of which cite the Qur'an to support their opinions. The conservative group sees contraception as a

Yale University, Harvey Cushing/John Hay Whitney Medical Library

FIGURE 13.2.1 The opening decoration and invocation to Allah from a sixteenth-century manuscript of Avicenna's *Canon of Medicine*

form of abortion and quotes the Qur'anic verse, 'Kill not your children, on a plea of want. We provide sustenance for you and for them' (17.31). The liberal group led by the twelfth-century scholar al-Ghazali (see Online option D) uses the verse, 'And one (God's) sign is, that he has created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may dwell in tranquillity with them, and has ordained between you love and mercy' (30.21) to support the use of contraception in certain circumstances.

Al-Ghazali argued that, while abortion and infanticide were crimes against an existing being, contraception was different. While al-Ghazali accepted some of the motives for birth control, he rejected others as objectionable (*makruh*). Use of contraception for fear of having daughters is not allowed in Islam. Similarly, its use by women for personal reasons – such as that they dislike pregnancy or simply because they are not interested in having children – are not permitted (*mubah*) either. It must be noted, however, that it was the intent of contraception that was objectionable, not the concept of family planning itself.

Al-Ghazali supported use of contraceptives with one's wife to protect her from dangers of childbirth – or simply to preserve her beauty! He also supported the economic reasons for family planning, such as the wish to limit the family to a manageable size. Another valid reason for practising contraception in Islam is

the wellbeing of children. The presence of a nursing infant was a major reason for birth control. For those Muslims who follow al-Ghazali's reasoning and the fact that there is no record that the Prophet condemned withdrawal, all forms of reversible contraception (for example, condoms, intra-uterine devices and the 'pill') are permissible if it is consensual between husband and wife. In the predominantly Muslim countries of Pakistan and Indonesia there are family limitation programs. More conservative Islamic leaders, however, have openly campaigned against the use of condoms or other birth control methods, thus making population planning in many countries ineffective.

The resistance to birth control was reflected in 2005, when a conference involving 40 Islamic scholars from 21 countries urged fresh efforts to support population planning and better reproductive health services. While the participants were in favour of promoting the use of contraceptives for married couples, they were reluctant to make it part of their joint declaration for fear of reprisals from the more conservative Islamic scholars in their respective countries.

REVIEW

1. Clarify the principal ethical teachings of Islam in relation to sexual ethics.
2. Recall the major differences in the Sunni and Shi'i approaches to ethical decision-making.
3. In your own words, summarise the circumstances under which al-Ghazali saw contraception as permissible.
4. Outline how the Muslim belief that everything should promote unity and harmony (see Chapter 5, page 90 for al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*) demonstrates the principal teachings of Islam on sexual ethics.
5. Using specific examples, **describe** and **explain** Islamic ethical teachings on sexual ethics.

EXTENSION

1. Discuss the statement: 'It is the "new issues" that distinguish the differences in interpretations of sexual ethics issues in Islam.'
2. Using media sources, interviews with Muslim teachers and your own reading and research, investigate a specific example of sexual ethics to demonstrate the diversity of Muslim opinions. Prepare a report of your findings.
3. Analyse the application of Islamic ethical teachings to one issue of sexual ethics for adherents. Use the weblinks provided as a good starting point. Add your own links and references and summarise why you included each in your analysis.

Weblinks
Contraceptives and abortion

BBC Religion and Ethics: Islam

Bioethics

GLOSSARY

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating but not limited to medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgements for human conduct.

in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) A method of assisted reproduction that involves the collection of ova (female eggs) and sperm, which are then fertilised in a lab, before implantation in the woman's uterus.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'bioethics' was coined in 1970 by US biochemist Dr Van Rensselaer Potter as a bridge between science and humanity.

Islamic **bioethics** derives from a combination of principles, rights and duties and, to a certain extent, a call to virtue (*ihsan*). Bioethical decision-making is carried out within a framework of values derived from revelation and tradition. Islamic bioethics emphasises the importance of preventing illness but, when prevention fails, it provides guidance not only for the physician but also to the patient. In Islam, life is sacred: every moment of life has great value, even if it is of poor quality. The saving of life is a duty and the unwarranted taking of life is a grave sin. The Qur'an affirms the reverence for human life:

> … that whoever slays a soul, unless it be for manslaughter or for mischief in the land, it is as though he slew all men; and whoever keeps it alive, it is as though he kept alive all men.
>
> *Surat al-Ma'ida* 5:32 'The Table'

And it is this passage that legitimises medical advances in saving lives and justifies the prohibition of both suicide and euthanasia:

> … to protect human life in all stages and under all circumstances, doing [one's] utmost to rescue it from death, malady, pain and anxiety. To be, all the way, an instrument of God's mercy, extending … medical care to near and far, virtuous and sinner and friend and enemy.
>
> Oath of the Muslim Doctor, in the 1981 Islamic Code of Medical Ethics

Organ transplantation

Organ transplantation is practised in almost all Muslim countries. This generally involves kidney donations from living relatives, but donation from cadavers is increasing. The Qur'anic affirmation of bodily resurrection (*Surat al-Bayyina* 98:8 'The Clear Proof') determines many religious and moral decisions regarding cadavers.

Death is considered to have occurred when the soul has left the body, but this exact moment cannot be known with certainty. Death is therefore diagnosed by its physical signs. The concept of brain death was accepted by the majority of

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scholars and jurists at the Third International Conference of Islamic Jurists, in Amman, Jordan, in October 1986:

> … the religious jurists based the view that if a person has reached, with certainty, the state of brain stem death, then such a person has departed from his life, and some of the rulings concerning death are applicable to him. This is in analogy to the juridical ruling about the person that reached the stage of 'movement of the slain'.

In view of all this, there was a consensus that, if death of the brain stem is diagnosed with certainty, then disconnecting the person from artificial life support apparatus may be carried out.

Most, but not all, Muslim countries now accept brain death criteria. In Saudi Arabia, for example, about half of all kidneys for transplantation come from cadavers with the application of brain death criteria.

In-vitro fertilisation

The Islamic ruling on **in-vitro fertilisation (IVF)** is no exception to its rulings on intercourse and reproduction in general that have been already referred to. The procedure is acceptable and commendable to Islam, but only if it solely involves husband and wife and if it is performed during the span of their marriage. The fusion of sperm and ovum (a step further than the sexual intercourse between man and woman) should take place only within the marriage contract. If the woman becomes widowed or divorced, then the marriage contract has come to a conclusion, and stored semen of the husband would be alien to her.

Artificial insemination

Artificial insemination using the husband's semen (AIH) is acceptable as long as it remains between husband and wife, and provided that it is carried out during the span of their marriage. Its acceptability is based on the fact that the procedure takes place within an authentic marriage contract.

Artificial insemination by a donor (AID), however, is unacceptable to Islam. From the point of view of jurisprudence, Islamic law would not consider this practice adultery since it lacks the legal specifications, but morally it is considered nearly as sinful, and is legally punishable, but not with the punishment of adultery. The child is not the fruit of the marriage contract and is therefore robbed of its right to legitimacy.

REVIEW

1. Clarify the principal ethical teachings of Islam in relation to bioethics.
2. Recall the major differences in the Sunni and Shi'i approaches to ethical decisions.
3. Outline how the Muslim belief that everything should promote unity and harmony (see Chapter 5, page 90 for al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*) demonstrates the principal teachings of Islam on bioethics.
4. Using specific examples, **describe** and **explain** Islamic ethical teachings on bioethics.

EXTENSION

1. Discuss the statement: 'It is the "new issues" that distinguish the differences in interpretations of bioethical issues in Islam.'
2. Using whatever means you can, investigate Muslim teachings on a specific bioethical issue. Prepare a report of your findings to be delivered, either as an informative pamphlet or as a TED-style presentation to your class.
3. Analyse the application of Islamic ethical teachings to one issue of bioethics. Use the weblinks provided for a good starting point. Add your own links and references and summarise why you included each in your analysis.

Weblink
Islamic bioethics

Environmental ethics

GLOSSARY

ayat As well as meaning verses in the Qur'an, it has an additional meaning of 'sign' or 'miracle' (Surat Fussilat 41:53 'An Enlightening').

For a religious tradition that had its origins in the deserts of Arabia, it is not surprising that the environment features strongly in Islam's sacred writings. And in the pastoral civilisation of seventh-century Arabia, Prophet Muhammad had nationalised pastures, forests and water.

> And the earth – We have spread it forth and made in it firm mountains and caused to grow in it of every suitable thing. And We have made in it means of subsistence for you and for him for whom you are not the suppliers. And there is not a thing but with Us are the treasures of it, and We do not send it down but in a known measure. And We send the winds fertilizing, then send down water from the cloud so We give it to you to drink of, nor is it you who store it up.
>
> *Surat al-Hijr* 15:19–22 'Stoneland'

Alamy Stock Photo/Gabbro

FIGURE 13.2.2 The desert of the Empty Quarter, Oman, on the Arabian Peninsula

> And He it is Who sends down water from the cloud, then We bring forth with it buds of all (plants), then We bring forth from it green (foliage) from which We produce grain piled up (in the ear); and of the palm-tree, of the sheaths of it, come forth clusters (of dates) within reach, and gardens of grapes and olives and pomegranates, alike and unlike; behold the fruit of it when it yields the fruit and the ripening of it; most surely there are signs in this for a people who believe.
>
> *Surat al-An'am* 6:99 'The Cattle'

The ethical principles that guide a Muslim's relationship to the environment can be summed up as: understanding the Oneness of God and God's creation (*tawhid*), seeing the signs of God (***ayat***) everywhere, being a steward (*khalifa*) of the earth, honouring the trust or covenant humans have with God (*amana*) to be protectors of the planet, moving towards justice (*adl*) and respecting balance (*mizan*) and proportion (*miqdar*) with nature.

> The earth is a mosque for you, so wherever you are at the time of prayer, pray there.
>
> *Sahih Muslim* 520b

> Partake of it gladly, so long as you are a benefactor, not a despoiler; a cultivator, not a destroyer.
>
> 'Ali ibn Abi Talib

DID YOU KNOW?

It is a duty (*wajib*) upon Muslims to clean themselves with water before prayer (*wudu'*) and it is a devotional (*mandub*) action to have a bath before going to pray the congregational prayer on a Friday. Using water in the daily needs is *mubah* (normally permissible), but if there is a scarcity of water then to use water can become *makruh* (actions ranging from dislike to distaste) and even *haram* (prohibited). According to the tradition of the Prophet (*sunna*), he said 'do not waste' to someone who was using excessive amounts of water for *wudu'*. Muhammad was then asked whether there is wastage if water was used for the purpose of *wudu'*. He replied, 'In anything there can be waste.'

The practice

While Islam as a religion has a deep sense of respect and consideration for the natural environment, in practice, the current status quo in Muslim countries is not noticeably different from that in the rest of the world. In Muslim countries, the modern industrial culture has overtaken traditional culture and it is only in recent times that the environmental damage that comes with industrialisation has been realised. In Muslim countries, there are now areas in which development is forbidden so as to conserve natural resources, and wildlife reserves have also been introduced. There are also practical laws to safeguard water resources, to prevent overgrazing, to conserve and regenerate forests, and to limit the size of cities.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the 10 years from 2010 to 2020, Indonesia's highest Islamic authority, the Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI), has issued six *fatwas* on environmental affairs, such as water management, protection of endangered animals and land burning.

Climate change

> Corruption has appeared in both land and sea because of what people's own hands have brought so they may taste something of what they have done so that hopefully they will turn back.
>
> *Surat al-Rum* 30:41 'The Greeks'

In August 2015, in the lead-up to the COP21 climate negotiations in Paris, Muslim scholars from 20 countries issued an 'Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change' calling on the world's 1.6 billion Muslims to do their part to eliminate dangerous greenhouse gas emissions and commit to renewable energy sources.

The declaration calls on Muslim countries, especially those that are 'well-off' and 'oil-producing', to lead the charge in phasing out greenhouse gas emissions 'no later than the middle of the century'.

> We recognise the corruption (*fasad*) that humans have caused on the Earth due to our relentless pursuit of economic growth and consumption.
>
> Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change, 2.5

The declaration also calls on wealthy Muslim countries to provide financial and technical support to less affluent states so they too can work to eliminate pollution, reduce consumption of finite resources, work to stabilise the earth's temperature, abandon 'unethical profit from the environment' and help create a global green economy.

> Do not strut arrogantly on the earth. You will never split the earth apart, nor will you ever rival the mountains' stature.
>
> *Surat al-Isra'* 17:37 'The Night Journey'

Weblink
Islamic Declaration on Global Climate Change

Muslim Women's Welfare of Australia

FIGURE 13.2.3 **Australian Muslim women – 'protectors of the planet, moving towards justice (*adl*) and respecting balance (*mizan*) and proportion (*miqdar*) with nature.'**

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EcoMasjid

In Indonesia the MUI launched a national program of environmentally friendly mosques in 2011 to help the government with its environmental initiatives. A typical eco-mosque usually has a sustainable water management system, and the sermon usually combines scientific explanation and Qur'anic verses to promote conservation and environmental protection. Built in 2010 in Sentul, around 45 kilometres outside Jakarta, Az-Zikra Mosque became ecoMasjid's pilot project in 2014. Tanks hold rainwater collected from the roof for ablutions before prayers and to water the mosque's gardens; a biogas tank buried under the courtyard generates cooking fuel; and solar panels will be next.

Weblinks
Indonesia's 'eco-mosques'

Water resources and mosque design

Photo by Matthew Teller

FIGURE 13.2.4 'Besides coming here to learn about religion, we would like people to come to learn about the environment', says Khotib Kholil, who heads management of Az-Zikra Mosque in Sentul.

REVIEW

1 Clarify the principal ethical teachings of Islam relating to the environment.
2 Recall the major differences in the Sunni and Shi'i approaches to ethical decisions.
3 Identify four quotations from the Qur'an and *hadith* that promote care of the environment.
4 Outline how the Muslim belief that everything should promote unity and harmony (see Chapter 5, page 90 for al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*) demonstrates the principal ethical teachings of Islam on the environment.
5 Using specific examples, **describe** and **explain** Islamic ethical teachings on environmental ethics.

EXTENSION

1 Discuss the statement: 'It is the "new issues" that distinguish the differences between Sunni and Shi'i interpretations of ethical issues in Islam.'
2 Investigate a specific example of an environmental program in a Muslim country. Prepare a visual report of your findings. Use the weblinks provided for some good starting points.
3 Analyse the application of Islamic ethical teachings to one issue of environmental ethics. Use the weblinks provided for a good starting point. Add your own links and references and summarise why you included each in your analysis.

Weblinks
ifees.org

Clean Malaysia

Globalized EcoIslam

Islam and climate change

BAKWATA

13.3 Significant practices

GLOSSARY

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use. Within the rite there are certain **rituals**; these are established or prescribed procedures and actions for the ceremony.

The **rituals** of Islam are the practical expression of the Muslim's desire to display his or her devotion to God and achieve God's pleasure and acceptance. They are not restricted only to actions to glorify God in prayer; rather, they have been extended to include all sectors of human activity. In Islam, '*ibada* (worship) is everything one says or does for the pleasure of Allah. All the 'observances' connected with the five pillars (see Chapter 5, pages 89–91) are classed as **rites**. The rules regarding rites represent an important part of the worshipping conduct in the daily life of a Muslim. Islamic law – *Shari'a* – sets

down the prescriptions for the right conduct of prayer and pilgrimage.

Essentially, worship represents the relationship between the person and God. Islamic law has often linked ritual practices to people in order to enhance and share the spiritual experience. In congregational prayer, the individual's prayer becomes a group's worship and so deepens the spiritual links among them through their unity in practising the rituals. *Hajj* has definite timings and places, and each participant has to perform the pilgrimage within those timings and in those places; hence, performing *Hajj* evolves as a great social activity.

This section explores the funeral prayers (*Salat al-janaza*) and *Hajj* (pilgrimage) as two examples of public worship within Islam.

Funeral ceremony – *Salat al-janaza*

GLOSSARY

fitna Test or trials.

janaza The Arabic word for bier – the frame or stand on which a corpse, or the coffin containing it, is laid before burial.

qibla Direction of the Ka'ba at Mecca, to which Muslims face when performing their daily ritual prayers.

tahajjud Optional prayers that can be performed in the early to late hours of the night, before dawn.

takbir The act of exalting God; for example, reciting the statement *Allahu Akbar* (God is most great).

wudu' The means of obtaining ritual cleanliness by washing the exposed parts of the body – hands, feet and face – wiping the hair and rinsing the mouth and nostrils. One must be in a state of *wudu'* if the performance of ritual prayer is to be valid. There is also the major ablution, *ghusl*, that is carried out by all Muslims in general and specifically on the body of a dead before burial. *Tayammum* is the term used for the form of ablution to be performed when there is no water available, making use of clean sand or dry earth.

> The Messenger of Allah came to us when his daughter died and said, 'Wash her three times, or five, or more than that if you think it necessary, with water and lotus leaves, and at the end put on some camphor, or a little camphor, and when you have finished let me know.' When we finished we told him, and he gave us his waist-wrapper and said, 'Shroud her with this.'
>
> Malik's *Muwatta'*

> Every soul will taste of death.
>
> *Surat al-'Imran* 3:185 'The House of Imran'

When a Muslim is dying, the family gathers around to read the Qur'an and say prayers. If possible, before a Muslim dies, the call to prayer (*Adhan*) should be whispered into the person's ear. Just as this happened at birth, so Allah should be the last word a Muslim hears before death. After death, Muslims believe the soul waits in *barzakh* (place of waiting for Judgement Day). On Judgement Day, the dead will be restored to their bodies; hence, Muslims do not cremate their dead. During the judgement process, God will deal with everyone according to their beliefs and actions.

In Islam, death is the beginning of eternal life and the burial of a deceased person is a collective obligation – *fard kifaya* – for the Muslim community. This obligation consists of:

- body washing – *ghusl*
- shrouding – *kafan*
- funeral prayers – *Salat al-**janaza***
- funeral procession
- burial.

The *Salat al-janaza* is offered in congregation, facing the ***qibla*** with the *imam* in front. The prayer, unlike others, has neither bowing nor prostration, and is performed standing erect. All Muslims in the neighbourhood of the deceased and his or her relatives are expected to attend the rituals. The body of the deceased, facing the *qibla*, is placed on a stand in a place of prayer, a mosque or any other clean premises. Traditionally, coffins were not used for Muslim burials – in hot, dry countries a coffin was not necessary and was seen as a waste of natural resources. All participants in the prayer must perform an ablution – ***wudu'***.

AAP/Reuters/David Gray

FIGURE 13.3.1 *Salat al-janaza* at Gallipoli Mosque, Auburn, New South Wales. It is usual for *Salat al-janaza* to be performed outside the mosque or prayer room; for example, in the courtyard or mosque activity room. *Salat al-janaza* is silent except the ***takbir*** and *taslim* (concluding peace greetings). There is no eulogy or sermon.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Victorian Muslim community was the first in Australia to have the regulation changes to allow earth burial, according to Islamic law.

The funeral prayer is led by an *imam* (or the deceased's father), who must stand by the head of the body if the deceased is a man, and by the middle if it is a woman. If there is more than one body, then they should be put one in front of the other, those of the men nearest to the *imam* and those of the women furthest from him. Those who are praying divide themselves into rows behind the *imam* – everyone faces Mecca.

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Yahya related to me from Malik that he had heard that 'Uthman ibn Affan and Abdullah ibn 'Umar and Abu Hurayra used to pray over the dead, both men and women, in Medina. They would put the men nearer to the *imam* and the women nearer to the *qibla*.

Malik's *Muwatta'*

Allah's Apostle informed the people about the death of al-Najashi [King of Abyssinia who helped Muslims migrate to his country] on the very day he died. He went towards the *Musalla* (praying place) and the people stood behind him in rows. He said four *takbirs* (that is, offered the Funeral prayer).

Hadith Bukhari

Abdullah ibn 'Umar used to say, 'No one should pray over a dead person unless he is in *wudu*'.'

Malik's *Muwatta'*

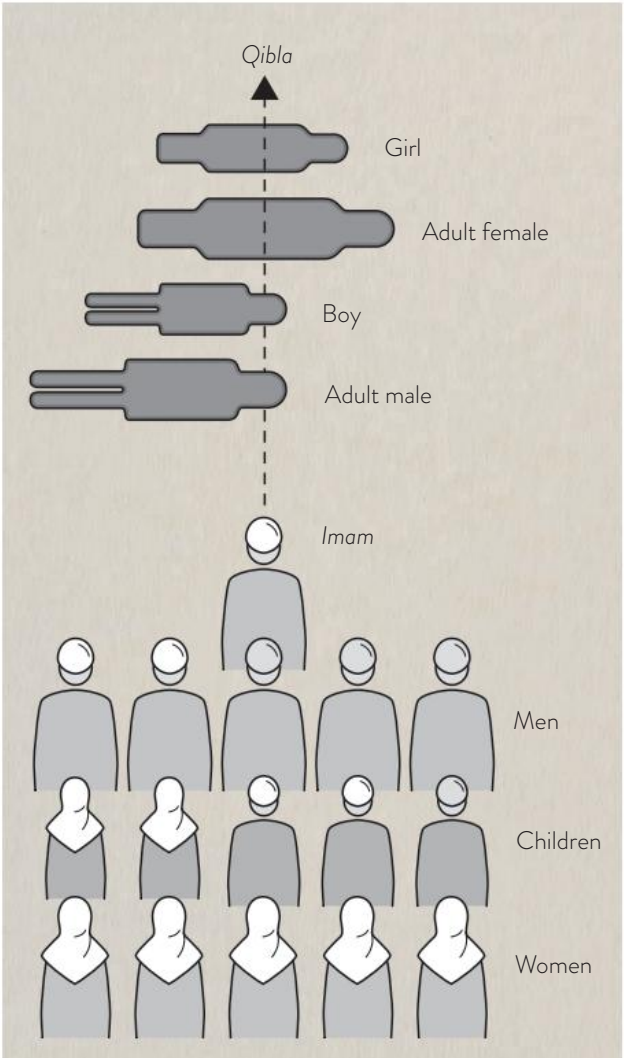

FIGURE 13.3.2 The arrangement of the congregation, the *imam* and the bodies for *Salat al-janaza*

RESPOND

What reasons can you suggest for the different positions of the bodies in relation to the *imam*?

The funeral prayer

The funeral prayer follows a set pattern and consists of four *takbir*.

1 Have the appropriate *niyyat* (intentions) in your heart.

'I am reciting *salat* on this deceased with four *takbirs*, obligatory, for Allah's sake.'

2 Raise your hands in the usual manner and say *Allahu Akbar* (the first *takbir*); then fold your hands on your breast in the usual manner, the right hand on the left.

3 Read *al-Fatiha* – 'The Opening' (the first *sura* of the Qur'an) quietly.

4 Say *Allahu Akbar* without raising the hands.

5 Pray for the Prophet in the same way you do in ***tahajjud*** at prayers.

'O Allah! Grant peace to Muhammad and his family as you did to Ibrahim and his family. O Allah! Bless Muhammad and his family as you blessed Ibrahim and his family. Truly you are Most Glorious and Most Praiseworthy.'

6 Say *Allahu Akbar* (do not raise the hands).

7 Make *du'a* (supplication) for the deceased.

'O Allah! Grant forgiveness to our living and to our dead, and to those who are present and to those who are absent, and to our elders and our children, to our men and women. O Allah! Those whom you grant to live, from among us, keep them alive in Islam, and those from us whom you give death, help them to die in faith.'

'O Allah! Forgive him/her and have Mercy on him/her and keep him/her in protection and forgive him/her.'

8 Say *Allahu Akbar* (do not raise the hands).

9 Make *du'a* for the Muslims.

'O Allah! Do not deprive us of his reward and after him/her, do not put us in ***fitna*** and pardon us and him/her and with him/her, have Mercy on us through your mercy, O Most Merciful.'

10 Say the concluding peace greetings *al-Salamu 'alaykum* right and left as in other prayers.

'Peace be with you! Peace be upon you!'

NOTE

Salat al-janaza 'ala al-gha'ib, the funeral prayers when the body of the deceased is absent (*al-gha'ib*), are exactly the same, four *takbir*, as if the body is present.

For the funeral procession, after *Salat al-janaza*, mourners should walk in front of or beside the body. Those in cars should follow the procession. Silence is recommended and it is absolutely forbidden to accompany the body with music or loud crying.

> Allah's Apostle said, 'A believer who accompanies the funeral procession of a Muslim out of sincere faith and hoping to attain Allah's reward and remains with it till the funeral prayer is offered and the burial ceremonies are over, he will return with a reward of two Qirats [Qur'an recitations].

Each Qirat is like the size of the (Mount) Uhud. He who offers the funeral prayer only and returns before the burial, will return with the reward of one Qirat only.'

Hadith Bukhari

Muslims seek strength from the Qur'an during their bereavement, and pray for the dead person. They are taught to trust in Allah's goodness, and to accept death as a stage in their life, and not the end of it.

DID YOU KNOW?

Islam does not insist that women come out for the *janaza* prayer, but if they are available then they should join other Muslims in the prayers. Of course, like other *salat*, this *salat* also requires *tahara* (being clean, not impure) and *wudu'* (having performed a spiritual washing). Women who are menstruating are not allowed to perform the *Salat al-janaza*.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** 'ritual'.
2. **Recall** the five stages of the Muslim funeral ritual.
3. **Construct** a visual summary of the key elements of Muslim funerary rituals.
4. **Demonstrate** three ways that Muslim death rituals reflect *al-Akhira* – Muslim beliefs about life and death.
5. **Analyse** the significance of *Salat al-janaza* for the family of the deceased and for the Muslim community.

EXTENSION

1. **Investigate** the Muslim rituals for the preparation of the body, the funeral prayer and burial. **Explain** the symbolism of the rituals. Use the weblink provided as a good starting point.
2. **Assess** the effect COVID-19 restrictions had on the funeral rituals for Muslims.

Weblinks
Muslim funerals

Death as a Day Job

COVID-19 and Islamic burial

Changing burial rituals

Facebook funeral rites

Muslim funerals during COVID-19

Pilgrimage – *Hajj*

GLOSSARY

Hajj The annual, week-long pilgrimage to Mecca (in modern-day Saudi Arabia), which is the fifth pillar of faith (see Chapter 5, page 92). The complete *Hajj* occurs two months and 10 days after Ramadan ends and culminates with *'Id al-Adha* (the Festival of Sacrifice).

ihram A state of consecration (dedication) in which Muslims remove their worldly clothing and put on the simple, usually white attire of pilgrims that is worn during ***'umra*** or ***Hajj***. For men, it consists of two seamless sheets of cloth, and simple dresses and scarves for women. *Ihram* is also the name given to the first stage of ***Hajj***. For those who have performed Hajj, the *ihram* can be used as their funeral wrapping.

al-Maghrib The third of the five daily obligatory prayers performed after the disappearance of the sun below the horizon.

nahr The slaughter of an animal on the 10th day of ***Hajj***. Today, instead of actually slaughtering an animal, pilgrims from overseas pay for *nahr* at ***Hajj*** offices and the animal is slaughtered for them, with meat going to charity.

rak'a (plural, ***rak'at***) A cycle or section of prayer.

sa'y The act of hurrying seven times back and forth between the hills of Safa and Marwa. Both these sites are now within the large mosque that houses the Ka'ba.

talbiya A prayer that asserts the pilgrim's conviction that the pilgrimage is only for the glory of Allah. This prayer is recited frequently throughout *Hajj*. Male pilgrims recite the *talbiya* loudly, whereas female pilgrims are required to recite it in a low voice.

tashriq days The 11th, 12th and 13th days of *Dhu'l-Hijja*.

tawaf Prayers recited while moving in a circular, anticlockwise procession. There are different types of *tawaf*; for example, the *tawaf* performed by the pilgrim while walking seven times around the Ka'ba, the *tawaf* performed as a rite of ***'umra***, and *tawaf al-Ifada*, the last formal rite of ***Hajj***.

'umra A set of religious and devotional rites performed in Mecca. *'Umra*, or lesser ***Hajj***, can be performed at any time during the year and, unlike ***Hajj***, does not involve the rites at Mina, Muzdalifa and Arafat (see Figure 13.3.5).

And accomplish the pilgrimage and the visit for Allah, but if you are prevented, send whatever offering is easy to obtain, and do not shave your heads until the offering reaches its destination; but whoever among you is sick or has an ailment of the head, he should effect a compensation by fasting or alms or sacrificing, then when you are secure, whoever profits by combining the visit with the pilgrimage should take what offering is easy to obtain; but he who cannot find any offering should fast for three days during the pilgrimage and for seven days when you return; these make ten days complete; this is for him whose family is not present in the Sacred Mosque, and be careful of your duty to Allah, and know that Allah is severe in requiting evil.

Surat al-Baqara 2:196 'The Cow'

Hajj is a once-in-a-lifetime obligation upon adult men and women whose health and means permit it, or, in the words of the Qur'an, upon 'those who can make their way there'. It is not an obligation on children, though some children do accompany their parents on this journey. It is an essential part of Muslims' faith and practice. The rites of the *Hajj* are elaborate, numerous and varied. These rites symbolise the essential concepts of Islam and commemorate the trials of the Prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) and his family. Over two million Muslims perform the pilgrimage annually, and all Muslims celebrate the *'Id al-Adha* festival in conjunction with *Hajj*.

Before setting out, the pilgrim should redress all wrongs, pay all debts, plan to have enough funds for their own journey and for the maintenance of their family while

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they are away, and prepare themselves for good conduct throughout the *Hajj*.

> The Prophet said: 'Islam does not allow for failure to perform the *Hajj*.'
>
> *Hadith* Abu Da'ud

DID YOU KNOW?

According to the Qur'an, it was Abraham (Ibrahim) who, together with Ishmael (Isma'il), built the Ka'ba, 'the House of God', the focal point towards which Muslims turn in their worship five times each day. It was Abraham, too – known as Khalil Allah, 'the friend of God' – who established the rituals of the *Hajj*, which recall events or practices in his life and that of Hagar (Hajar) and their son Ishmael.

Getty Images/SAEED KHAN

FIGURE 13.3.3 Waiting to enter the Auburn Gallipoli Mosque for Friday prayer on the first day of the *'Id al-Adha* festival in Sydney on 31 July 2020. Only 400 people were allowed at the mosque.

The symbols of *Hajj*

ihram The garments are symbolic of human equality and unity before God, since all pilgrims are dressed similarly. Money and status are no longer a factor for the pilgrims – the equality of each person before God becomes foremost.

tawaf While performing the initial *tawaf* at the Ka'ba, pilgrims recite: 'Here I am at your service, O God. Here I am!' This is meant to awaken each Muslim's consciousness that God is the centre of their reality and the source of meaning in life, and that each person's self-identity derives from being part of the community of Muslim believers (*umma*).

sa'y Performing *sa'y* re-enacts the biblical and Qur'anic story of Hajar's desperate search for life-giving water and food.

jamra (stoning the pillars) This symbolises Abraham's stone-throwing at Satan when he tried to dissuade Abraham from sacrificing his son.

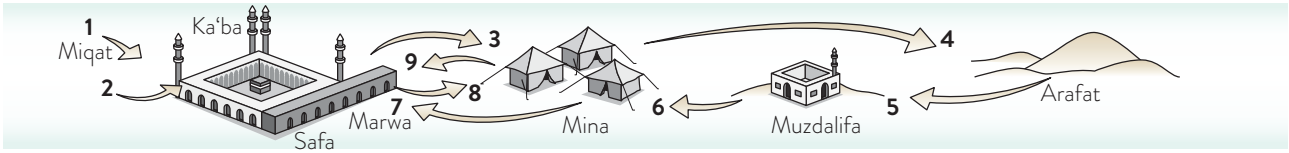
nahr This is a re-enactment of the story of Abraham who, in place of his son, sacrificed a sheep that God had provided. The meat from the slaughtered sheep is distributed to family, friends, and poor and needy people in the community. Money given for *nahr* is distributed to charity.

Muslims believe that the rites of *Hajj* were designed by God and taught by the Prophet Muhammad. The *Hajj* is designed to develop God-consciousness and a sense of spiritual rebirth. It is also believed to be an opportunity to seek forgiveness of sins accumulated throughout life. Prophet Muhammad had said that a person who performs *Hajj* properly 'will return as a newly born baby [free of all

AAP Photos/Reuters

FIGURE 13.3.4 *Jabal Al-Rahma* or the Mount of Mercy on the plains of Arafat. On the second day of *Hajj* (ninth day of *Dhu 'l-Hijja*) the pilgrims travel here from Mina. Standing at Arafat is an integral *Hajj* requirement. On 30 July 2020 the pilgrims were wearing face masks and distancing.

1 *Ihram*	2 *'Umra*	3 Going to Mina Noon, the 8th	4 Going to Arafat Morning, the 9th	5 Going to Muzdalifa After sunset, the 9th
• Clean yourself (***ghusl***) • Wear ***ihram*** garments • Make intention for ***'umra*** • Recite ***Talbiya*** • Avoid forbidden acts of *ihram*	• Make ***tawaf*** around the Ka'ba • Pray two ***rak'at*** behind Maquam Ibrahim (Ibrahim's Station) • Make ***sa'y*** between Safa and Marwa • Trim hair and remove *ihram* garments	• Put on the *ihram* garments again • Make intention for *Hajj* • Remain in Mina for the Tarwiah Day (8th day) of *Dhu 'l-Hijja*) and perform five prayers starting with ***al-Zuhr*** prayer and ending with ***al-Fajr*** prayer on the day of Arafat	• Leave for Arafat on the 9th day of *Dhu 'l-Hijja* and stay until sunset • Stay in any part of Arafat • Glorify in Allah, repeat supplication, repent to Allah and ask for forgiveness • Pray *al-Zuhr* and ***al-'Asr***, shortened and combined at the time of *Zuhr*	• Leave Muzdalifa soon on the 9th day of *Dhu'l-Hijja* • Perform ***al-Maghrib*** and ***al'Isha'*** prayers (*'Isha'* is shortened to two *rak'at*) • Stay overnight and perform *al-Fajr* prayer



10 *Going home*	9 Farewell *tawaf* After the 12th	8 Return to Mina On the 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th	7 *Tawaf al-Ifadha* On the 10th or after	6 Proceed to Mina Sunrise, the 10th
• It is preferable to visit the Prophet's Mosque at Medina, but this is not part of *Hajj*	• Going to Mecca and make farewell *tawaf*. Perform two *rak'at* of *tawaf* • Let the *tawaf* be the last thing you do in Mecca	• Spend the ***tashriq days*** in Mina • After *al-Zuhr* each day, stone the three *jamrat* (stone pillars), starting from the small and ending with *Jamra al'-Aqaba* • You may leave on the 12th after stoning the *jamrat*, but it must be before sunset	• Make *sa'y* between Safa and Marwa • After *tawaf al-Ifadha* all restrictions are lifted	• Shortly after sunrise, leave Muzdalifa for Mina. Go to *Jamra al-'Aqaba* and stone it with seven pebbles • Perform ***nahr*** • Shave head and trim hair • Take off *ihram* garments (all *ihram* restrictions are lifted except for sexual intercourse)

FIGURE 13.3.5 The *Hajj* journey

sins]'. It is also an opportunity for Muslims from all over the world to come together to worship the One God.

> I came back different. You eventually get back to life and it overtakes you [but] for a period of time after coming back, I was a lot more conscious, more patient, more focused. Not that I'm a superficial person but I found myself wanting to move beyond superficialities and connect.
>
> Adel Salman, vice-president, Victorian Islamic Council, 2019, extract, *Sydney Morning Herald* article by Maher Mughrabi and Felicity Lewis.

DID YOU KNOW?

There are five fixed places known as *Miqat* within a radius of Mecca, which pilgrims must not cross before they are in a state of *ihram* if they are intending to perform the *Hajj* or *'umra*. You will often see pilgrims in their *ihram* garments at various airports so that they avoid the inconvenience of changing on the aircraft or crossing one of these boundaries during the flight.

RESPOND

What can you discover about these five places, and can you suggest why these places became the 'gathering point' for pilgrims?

REVIEW

1 In your own words, **define** 'ritual'.

2 'The rites of *Hajj* symbolise the essential concepts of Islam.'
   a **Outline** the essential concepts of Islam (refer to the five pillars of faith in Chapter 5, pages 91–3).
   b Design a flow chart to **describe** the key elements of *Hajj*.

3 **Demonstrate** how *Hajj* expresses the beliefs of Islam.

4 **Analyse** the significance of *Hajj* for the individual and for the Muslim community.

EXTENSION

1 Organise a visit from a representative of the local Islamic Centre, mosque or organisation, to speak about the spirit of *Hajj* and **describe** how Muslims celebrate *'Id al-Adha*.

2 Interview a Muslim who has performed *Hajj*. Ask them if and how their life has changed as a result. If this is not possible, you can find articles about people's *Hajj* journeys on the Internet or in media articles and interviews. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

3 Research the effect COVID-19 had on significant practices such as *Hajj* for Muslims. How were global restrictions and challenges overcome? Assess the extent to which these restrictions changed the ritual obligations of adherents during this time.

Weblinks
The *Hajj*
What is the *Hajj*?
Muslim pilgrimage
Hajj during COVID-19

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Friday prayer at the mosque

NOTE

It is recommended that you revise 'Salat in the daily life of Muslims' in Chapter 5, page 93.

The place of worship for all Muslims is a mosque (*masjid* in Arabic). The word means 'a place of bowing down' – simply, a place for prayer. A *jami'* or *masjid jami'* indicates a larger mosque in a central location that is the site for congregational prayer (*Salat al-Zuhr*) on Friday as well as the five daily prayers – *Salat al-jama'at*. Some mosques in Australia are referred to as Islamic Centres. As well as a place for prayer, the mosque provides a community and education centre. Most mosques in Australia are supported by specific communities; for example, Darul Imaam Mosque at Wolli Creek, by the Islamic Malay Society; Gallipoli Mosque, Auburn, by the Turkish community; and the Ali bin Abi Talib mosque at Lakemba, by the Lebanese Muslim Association.

There are several *hadith* that strongly emphasise the advantages of *Salat al-jama'at* over individual prayer.

> 'Umar reported that the Prophet said: 'Congregational prayer is twenty-seven degrees more excellent than the prayer said by a single person.'
>
> Bukari, Muslim

Traditionally, it was recommended that one should leave one's dwelling for the mosque for prayer, and that one should attend with 'calmness and gentleness'. Today, for most Muslims, it is impossible to attend the mosque five times a day, particularly with 'calmness and gentleness'! Many Muslims try to attend mosque for the noon prayer or for the evening prayer after work.

While women explicitly have the right to attend mosque, they are not required to attend congregational prayers. A *hadith* says, 'Do not prevent women to attend al-Masjid, but their prayer in their home is better for them' (Ahmad).

Congregational prayer on Friday is, however, highly recommended and, in some majority Muslim countries, Friday is part of the weekend, Saturday a holiday and Sunday a work day. Men are required to attend Friday prayer as long as they are not travelling, while women are given the option to attend, reflecting their role in the household when Islam was established. Those who do not have time during the week will make a special effort to attend during Friday prayers. If women attend, they stand at the back, often separated by a curtain or in a side room.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2016, the Mariam mosque opened in central Copenhagen, Denmark, with the call to prayer sung by women. Once a month, Friday prayer is reserved for women only. The al-Azhar University in Cairo, as well as three out of four Islamic schools of jurisprudence, acknowledge females leading prayers for other females.

Today in Australia, as in many countries, Muslims are given special accommodation so that they can attend Friday prayers at a nearby mosque, and at some workplaces, such as hospitals and universities, employees organise their own Friday prayers on site.

Getty Images/Brook Mitchell

FIGURE 13.3.6 Redfern Islamic Society Mosque in Cleveland Street, completed in 1977, is an example of a small mosque that services business people who work in the central Sydney CBD. The *khutba* is given in Turkish.

The prayer on Friday – *Salat al-Jum'a*

> O you who believe! When you are called to congregational (Friday) prayer, hasten to the remembrance of God and leave off trade. That is better for you, if you but knew.
>
> *al-Jum'a* 62:11

Al-Jum'a means 'Friday', and *Salat al-Jum'a* replaces the usual noon prayer, *Salat al-Zuhr*. The prayer used at Friday prayers is shorter than that normally used, two *rak'at* instead of four, and the obligatory *khutba* (sermon or address) is given before the prayers. Without the sermon, of which there are two, the prayer is not valid. Preached from the *minbar* (pulpit) by the *imam*, the first consists of words and praise for Allah, blessings for the Prophet and recitations of the Qur'an with an explanation. After a short break for personal prayers, *du'a*, the second sermon is given usually on general topics of concern and concludes with a prayer for the Muslim *umma*. Community organisations will ask the *imam* to alert the congregation to various issues affecting the community.

> The Prophet said, 'When it is a Friday, the angels stand at the gate of the mosque and keep on writing the names of the persons coming to the … When the *Imam* comes out for *Jum'a* prayer they (i.e. angels) fold their papers and listen to the *Khutba*.'
>
> Bukhari

Two quite different resources that will give you a better understanding of Friday prayer are a song by US Muslim singer Raef Haggag, describing how Muslims prepare and perform Friday prayers, and their benefits; and a short documentary film showing Friday prayers at the Sultan Hassan Mosque in Cairo, Egypt.

Weblinks
Raef, 'It's Jumuah'

Friday prayers

REVIEW

1. **Describe** Friday prayer – *Salat al-Jum'a* at the mosque. In what way does it differ from noon prayer on other days of the week?
2. **Demonstrate** how *Salat al-Jum'a* expresses the beliefs of Islam.
3. **Analyse** the significance of *Salat al-Jum'a* for the individual and for the Muslim community.

EXTENSION

1. 'Do not prevent women to attend *al-Masjid*, but their prayer in their home is better for them'. **Examine** this statement in relation to the 'significance of Friday prayer for the individual and the Muslim community'.
2. How did 2020 impact the prayer rituals outlined in this section?

Conclusion

Islam, the world's second most followed religion, can be summed up in the two sentences: 'There is no god but God' and 'Muhammad is the messenger of God'. Everyone and everything depends upon Allah, and it is through the guidance of the Qur'an and the example set by the Prophet's life that Muslims cultivate an understanding of God and surrender themselves to the will of God. The relationship between the individual and God and with the community is expressed in the living out of the five pillars and following *Shari'a*.

Throughout its history, there have been shifts in how Islam views significant people and schools of thought, and the modern world has brought new challenges to Islamic jurisprudence in regard to ethical issues. Muslims living in Australia have not always found it easy to 'live out' their religion according to *Shari'a* and have had to confront misconceptions about their beliefs and practices. Today, however, the practices of Islam are a normal part of Australia's religious landscape.

Photographs of Muslims 'living out' their beliefs appear in Australian newspapers with captions that accept that Muslim practices are known to the readership.

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. **Synthesise** the main features related to Muslim people, ideas, ethics and practices in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map. Include the completed mind map in your HSC revision notes to revisit when you are preparing for your exam.

Worksheet
Islamic significant practice

Getty Images/Luis Ascui

FIGURE 13.3.7 Young Muslim women at the Virgin Mary Mosque, Hoppers Crossing, Victoria, during National Mosque Open Day

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13 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section II (15 marks)

Studies of Religion I: answer **one** question from this section.

Studies of Religion II: answer **two** questions from **two** different religious traditions in this section.

Question 2 – Islam

a **i** Outline **one** significant practice within Islam from **one** of the following:

- Friday prayer at the mosque
- Funeral ceremony
- *Hajj*

3 MARKS

ii Explain the significance of the practice outlined in (a) (i) for Islamic individuals.

4 MARKS

Among the believers are men who have proven true to what they pledged to Allah.

Surat al-Ahzab 33:23

b How do the ethical teachings of Islam guide adherents to be truthful to the commands of Allah?

8 MARKS

Section III

Question 3 – Islam (20 marks)

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Surat al-Nahl 16:97

To what extent has **one** significant person or school of thought, other than Muhammad or the Four Rightly Guided Caliphs, encouraged the *righteousness* of adherents?

Additional Section III Question

Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer – We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the hereafter] according to the best of what they used to do.

Surat al-Nahl 16:97

How do sacred texts and writings in Islam direct adherents to live *good* lives?

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

14

Judaism
depth study

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **explain** the contribution to and **analyse** the impact of one significant person or school of thought on the development and expression of Judaism
- **describe** and **explain** Jewish ethical teachings on one ethical area
- **describe** one significant practice within Judaism, **demonstrate** how this practice expresses the beliefs of Judaism and **analyse** its significance for both the individual and the Jewish community.

n.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online option

- Moses Maimonides (1135–1204)

Online worksheets

- Judaism significant individual or group (p. 299)
- Jewish ethics (p. 304)
- Judaism significant practice (p. 311)

9780170457583

Courtesy of Tefillin Beit E-l. www.tefillin.co.il

An expert in proofreading of Hebrew scripture checks the contents of a Torah scroll fragment, which contains four brief passages: two from Exodus (13:1–10, 13:11–17) and two from Deuteronomy (6:4–9, 11:13–22). The text must be perfect in every respect, following the prescriptions of the *halachah*. The scroll is rolled tightly and then carefully placed in the *tefillin shel yad*, the *tefillin* that is wrapped around the arm for use in the synagogue service. While the passages are the same, there are different prescriptions for the *tefillin shel rosh*, which is placed on the forehead (see Figure 6.4.2, page 112).

14.1 Significant people and ideas

GLOSSARY

Bavli The Babylonian Talmud. There were, in fact, two versions of the Talmud written (see Chapter 6, page 110).

Diaspora The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people across all ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

exegete Person skilled in explaining and interpreting difficult passages from scripture.

Judaica Historical, literary and religious objects and information relating to Judaism.

pogroms (Russian: devastation, destruction.) Organised mass killings, especially of Jews.

Talmud Written c. 200–500 CE, two bodies of work that formed systematic commentaries on the Mishnah (see pages 109–10).

Tosafot A term meaning 'additions'. The *Tosafot* is a class of writing, chiefly the critical and explanatory notes to Rashi's Talmud commentary.

yeshivot Jewish religious academies. The Talmud is the major subject of study at a ***yeshiva*** (singular).

There have been scores of influential characters who have richly embroidered the tapestry of Judaism over the ages. Of these, the most notable must be Moses, who brought his people out of slavery in Egypt and delivered them to the Promised Land in Canaan. Along the way, he repeatedly challenged them; he brought them the Law and the books that are the cornerstone of Jewish belief and practice. Many followed Moses – teaching, challenging, shaping, inspiring.

This section examines several other influential individuals, and two schools of thought: Rashi, the French scholar of the eleventh century, whose important commentary on the **Talmud** had a decisive influence on Talmudic scholarship; Moses Maimonides (see Online option E), a twelfth-century scholar who codified the Torah; the *Chasidim*, a movement that provides a counterpoint to the rushing tide of modernity that constantly challenges the priorities of the Jewish community at large; and Jewish feminism, which has assumed a variety of forms since its strong emergence in the 1970s.

Online option E
Moses Maimonides (1135–1204)

EXTENSION

Update the Judaism list in your workspace with the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

Rashi – Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac (1040–1105)

Rashi is an acronym for **Ra**bbi Solomon (Hebrew: **Sh**lomo) ben Isaac, the famous French Talmudic scholar. Rashi lived and died in the town of Troyes in the Champagne region of north-eastern France. He had completed substantial studies and was acting as a rabbi in Troyes by the age of 25. Nonetheless, he seems to have been only a part-time scholar (albeit a scholar of the broadest learning in **Judaica**). We know this because he seems to have depended on his vineyards and wine production to sustain him financially. His achievements, given this limitation on his time and energies, are all the more remarkable.

His key work was his commentary on the Talmud. Rashi's commentary has been considered so important that it has been printed in all versions of the Talmud since the printing press was invented in the fifteenth century. It is always printed on the inner column of the page, closest to the book's binding (see Figure 14.1.1). One measure of the importance of Rashi's commentary on the Talmud is the fact that no scholar has since tried to supersede his work. On the contrary, many Jewish scholars have provided centuries of 'commentaries on the commentary', adding to the deeply layered terrain of Jewish sacred writings.

Alamy Stock Photo/Israel Images

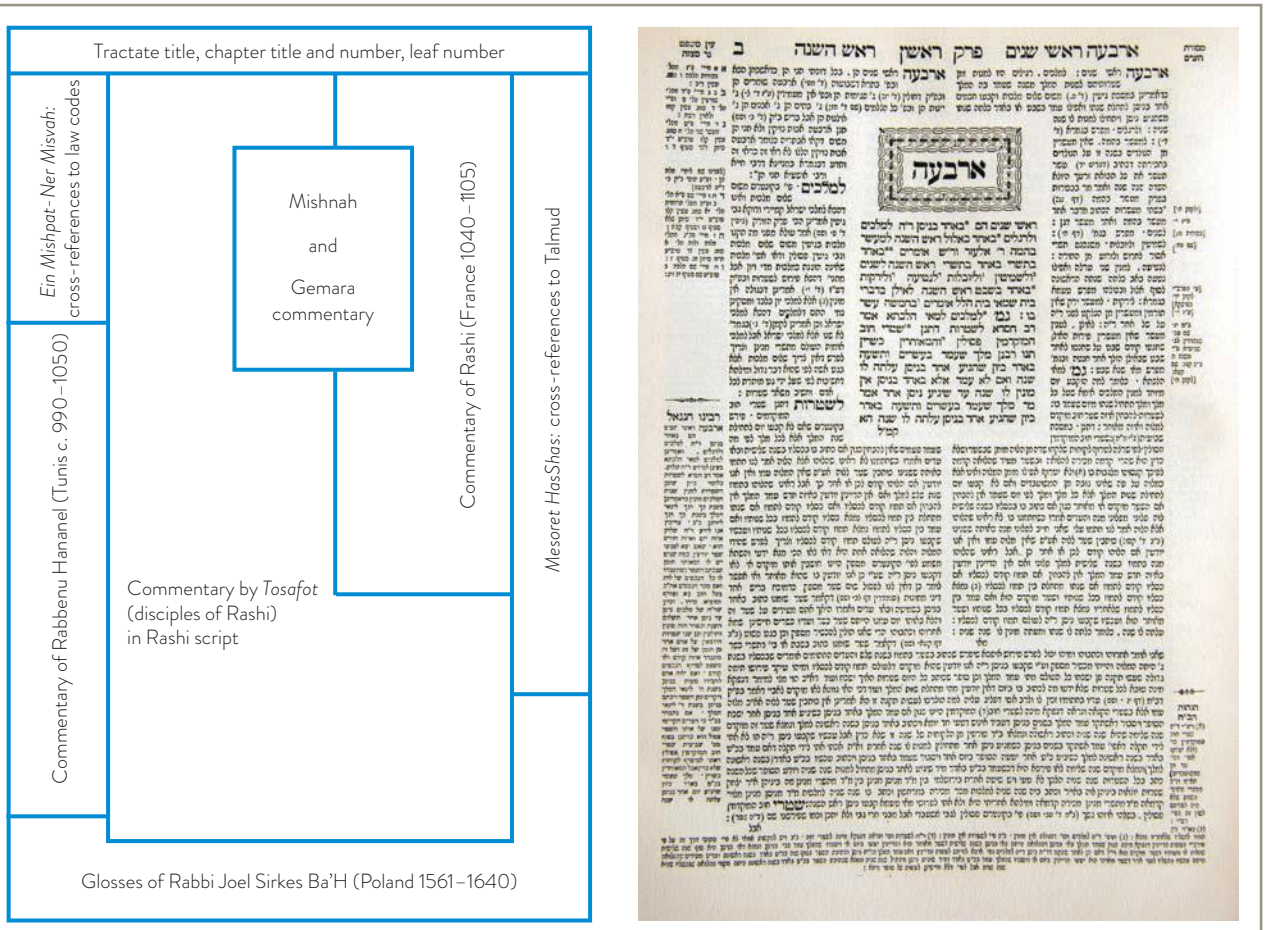

FIGURE 14.1.1 **Layout of a typical page of the Talmud. It is the opening page (leaf 2) of the tractate *Rosh ha-Shanah* from a standard (Vilna) printed edition of the Babylonian Talmud. *Rosh ha-Shanah* has four chapters and contains the rules for proclaiming New Moon, for the New Year liturgy and for the blowing of the *shofar*. Rashi's commentary is traditionally printed along the edge of the page closest to the book's binding.**

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Unlike some other commentaries, Rashi's work does not paraphrase or exclude any part of the text, but carefully elucidates the whole of the text. Rashi also did important work in examining the different forms of the Talmud that had emerged by his time. He exerted a decisive influence on establishing the correct text of the Talmud; he compared different manuscripts and determined which readings should be preferred.

Rashi's commentary covers virtually the whole of the Babylonian Talmud (*Bavli*). Some of the commentary attributed to Rashi was not written by him, but completed by his students, among them his sons-in-law and his grandson. Rashi's students contributed to a whole class of Jewish writing known as the ***Tosafot***. What made Rashi's commentary so special was its clarity, its insightfulness and his seemingly limitless knowledge of the rabbinic scholarship that had preceded him. These factors made Rashi's commentary the model that shaped future generations of rabbinic commentary.

Rashi's work, and that which it inspired, greatly extended knowledge of the Talmud. Rashi's influence increased the number of ***yeshivot*** in France, making them well known and important to Jewish scholars. One of the external factors that contributed to their importance occurred when the *yeshivot* of the Rhineland were destroyed in the **pogroms** of the First Crusade (1096), forcing surviving scholars to go to France to continue their study.

Rashi script

In traditional editions of the Talmud, Rashi's commentary is printed in a particular script to distinguish it from other scripts. Known as 'Rashi script', or *ktav Rashi*, it is derived from Spanish cursive script.

Rashi script was created by a Christian, Daniel Bomberg, an early sixteenth-century publisher in Venice. Bomberg completed the first complete editions of both the Babylonian and the Palestinian Talmuds, the ***Bavli*** and the *Yerushalmi* (see page 110 for further details).

Most modern printings of Rashi's commentary use the standard Hebrew block script or a modern variant of it. The exception is in the Talmudic editions produced in Israeli Ultra-Orthodox *yeshiva* circles, which print Rashi's commentary in *ktav Rashi*, in keeping with tradition. Because of its limited use, Rashi script is not widely read by many Jews.

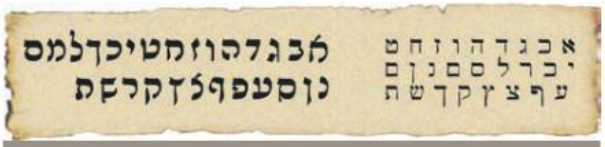

FIGURE 14.1.2 'Rashi script' or *ktav Rashi* (on the left) as opposed to the regular Hebrew block script (on the right). This script marks out Rashi's commentary as distinctive in Hebrew editions of the Talmud.

Ultimately, Rashi's influence spread beyond France to the rest of the **Diaspora**. In the centuries before the printing press was invented in the fifteenth century, disseminating works widely was difficult and slow. Some of Rashi's work was lost with the expulsion of Jews from France and the burning of Hebrew books in the thirteenth century. But so great was his influence and so rapid was the spread of his ideas that Rashi's commentary reached the whole of the Jewish world.

Rashi's influence even spread beyond Judaism. The fourteenth-century Christian monk and **exegete**, Nicholas of Lyra, heavily used Rashi's commentary in writing his own exegesis, which in turn was used extensively by Martin Luther (the German theologian) in his writings.

Today Rashi stands as one of the great rabbis of the Jewish tradition.

DID YOU KNOW?

In his commentary, Rashi frequently uses expressions from his native French, which he transliterates into Hebrew characters. These have become known as *la'azim*. There are over 3000 of them in Rashi's commentary on the Talmud, making up a vocabulary of over 2000 words. They are easily transliterated back into the original French, and have proved valuable in the phonological (language pronunciation) and lexicographical (the study of words) reconstruction of Old French.

REVIEW

1 **Identify** the evidence presented in this section that supports and explains Rashi's importance to Judaism.
2 **Describe** the connection between the importance of the Talmud to Judaism and the work of Rashi.
3 **Explain** the contribution of Rashi to the development and expression of Judaism.

EXTENSION

1 'Rashi exerted a decisive influence on establishing the correct text of the Talmud; he compared different manuscripts and determined which readings should be preferred.' Using material in this section and also with reference to Chapter 6, pages 109-10, **analyse** the importance of this achievement for Judaism.
2 Use the weblink provided to see how a page of the Talmud looks and how it is structured. **Examine** the page and **synthesise** what it tells you about the importance of Rashi's commentary.

Weblink
Page of the Talmud

Worksheet
Judaism significant individual or group

The *Chasidim*

GLOSSARY

assimilation The process whereby a cultural, ethnic or religious group takes on the habits, customs and practices of the dominant culture.

menorah A seven-branched candelabrum, resembling the one kept burning in the ancient Temple. Along with the Star of David, it is one of the main Jewish symbols.

Rebbe The name given by Chasidic Jews to their charismatic leader. *Rebbe* is Yiddish for teacher. Yiddish is the Germanic-derived language of Ashkenazi Judaism (see Chapter 6, page 102).

tzaddik The term used to refer to the leaders of Chasidic groups, meaning 'righteous man' in Hebrew. *Chasidim* believe that in each age there is one *tzaddik* who may in fact be the incarnation of the Messiah, and will herald the beginning of the messianic age if the generation has been dutifully observant of all the commandments of the Torah.

AJN Photo Sales/Peter Haskin

FIGURE 14.1.3 As part of the lead-up to the 2019 ShabbaTTogether, Zac Chester lays *tefillin* with Rabbi Reuven Cooper at Malvern Chabad. ShabbaTTogether is an annual initiative for inclusion initiated by the global Chabad-Lubavitch community. Chabad-Lubavitch is Australia's best known Chasidic movement.

The revivalist movement known as Chasidic Judaism is, in some ways, a rejection of the world of modernity. This is in sharp contrast to all other modern streams of Judaism, which are an attempt, to a greater or lesser degree, to accommodate the experience of modernity. Today it is sometimes assumed that all so-called Ultra Orthodox Jews are *Chasidim*, but in fact there are very strict Orthodox Jews who are completely opposed to Chasidism. Chasidism has its roots in eighteenth-century Eastern Europe, in the life of its founder, Israel Ben Eliezer, the *Baal Shem Tov*.

The *Baal Shem Tov* (c. 1700–1760) and the *Chasidim*

Israel Ben Eliezer was born in Okup in the Carpathian Mountains, Ukraine, in about 1700. He was orphaned at a young age, and was raised within a Jewish community that was profoundly influenced by *Kabbalah* (see feature box on page 301). He worked as a teacher's assistant and later as an innkeeper in the mountains, and he also took part in the practice of meditation. He became known as a healer and a charismatic figure. So charismatic was he that today much of his life is surrounded by wondrous legends. Perhaps as a response to the crisis of persecutions suffered by Jews in seventeenth-century Poland, he eventually founded the Chasidic movement. Strongly influenced by *Kabbalah*, the *Baal Shem Tov* (Master of the Good Name), as he became known, taught his followers to 'cleave to God', which involved making every living moment an opportunity to experience the presence of God. The *Baal Shem Tov* is also known by his acronym, *Besht*. Prayer was more important than Torah study to the *Baal Shem Tov*, and he encouraged his followers to drink, dance and sing as a means of moving closer to God.

The tradition of the ***tzaddik*** emerged among the followers of the Chasidic movement, who came after the *Besht*. The first generation of *tzaddikim* were actual disciples of the *Besht*. Because charismatic leadership was encouraged among the *Chasidim*, a variety of spiritual leaders emerged over time.

Chasidism today

Chasidic Jews often spurn contact with secular study. They are tireless and strict in their devotion to the commandments of the Torah. For them, the whole of life should be a continuous struggle to draw closer to God. It is for this reason that the *Chasidim* are well regarded by even quite **assimilated** Jews, who see them as the custodians of the tradition. As well as for their devotion to Jewish practice, the *Chasidim* are known for their joyful celebration of Jewish festival days.

As suggested above, charismatic leadership is common among the various Chasidic movements. The leader, known as the *tzaddik*, or ***Rebbe***, makes rulings and pronouncements that can take on the quality of holy writ for the followers. Many *Chasidim* will postpone important decisions (about marriage, business, even medical matters) until they receive the blessing of the *Rebbe*. Unlike other branches of the Jewish tradition, some Chasidic movements have a rather missionary goal, although their aim is to win over less committed Jews to Chasidism, rather than seek converts from outside the Jewish tradition.

DID YOU KNOW?

The words of the *Baal Shem Tov* are remembered in *Yad Vashem*, the Holocaust Remembrance Centre in Jerusalem and one of the modern monuments of Jewish history. On a prominent wall it reads: 'In remembrance lies the secret of redemption.'

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The *Chasidim* in Australia

Self-confident Chasidic communities have flourished in Sydney and Melbourne in recent years. Their self-confidence arises partly from their living in an open, tolerant society (which is at ease with their distinctive dress and lifestyle) and is partly from their importance to the larger Australian Jewish community (which sees their faithfulness to the tradition as a visible sign of Jewish strength).

While the focus of Chasidic communities in Australia is now in the big cities of Sydney and Melbourne, the first organised Chasidic community, fleeing the Holocaust in Europe, settled in the country town of Shepparton, Victoria, in 1948. Around eight families, followers of the Chasidic *Chabad* movement, farmed the land there and established a *yeshiva* to teach their children.

From small beginnings, *Chabad* has established a network across Australia. Their numbers remain relatively small, but the enthusiasm of their commitment to Jewish thought, worship and lifestyle has given them an influence far beyond their numbers.

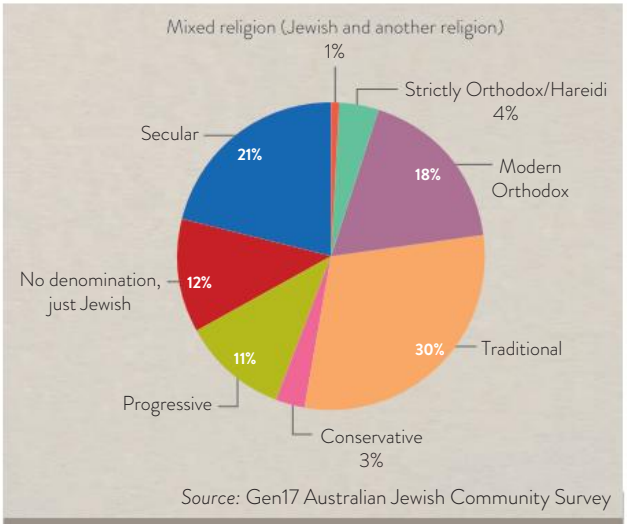


FIGURE 14.1.4 Estimate of the distribution of Jews across the streams of Judaism in Australia. Chasidic Jews in Australia are the main subset of the more broadly defined stream of 'Strictly Orthodox/Hareidi', the category name used in the Gen17 Australian Jewish Community Survey of 2017. This stream is otherwise named as Ultra Orthodox in this text. Chasidic Jews have an influence in contemporary Judaism in Australia that far exceeds their relatively small number.

Kabbalah – Jewish mystical tradition

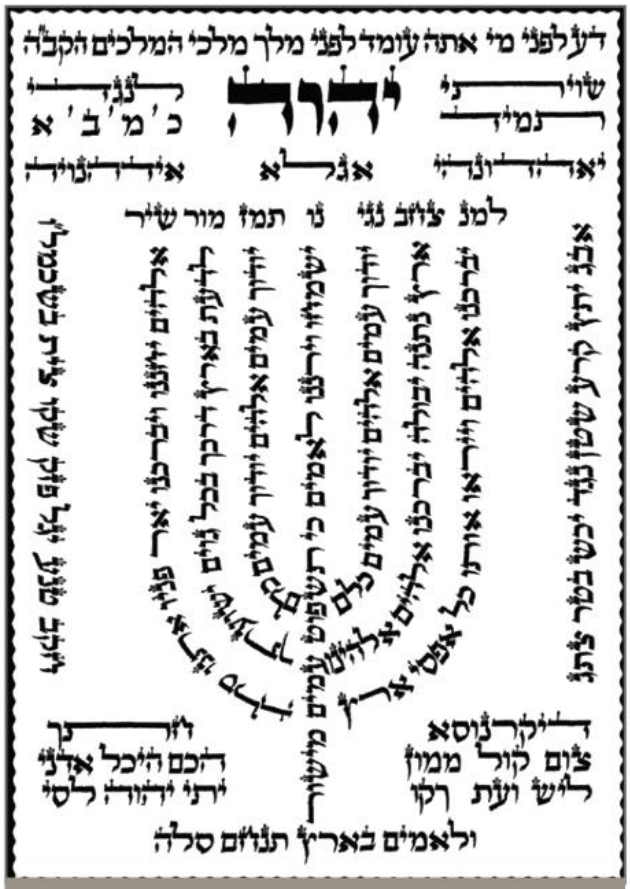
Kabbalah was a major influence in the development of Chasidism, and still has followers among Chasidic Jews. The mysticism of the *Kabbalah* flourished in Eastern Europe in the shadow of Jewish persecution towards the end of the seventeenth century. In the wake of that crisis, the *Kabbalah* provided much-needed vitality in Jewish culture.

Indeed, the crises of Jewish life through the ages have met with a strong response in the form of Jewish mysticism. The *Spanish Book of Splendour* (*Sefer ha-Zohar*), usually known simply as the *Zohar*, is a significant text for Kabbalists. The mysticism of the *Zohar* is very different from the formalism of mainstream Jewish literature of that age. Kabbalistic tradition makes much of letters and numbers – each has a mystical significance that only Kabbalistic teaching can unlock. *Kabbalah* also has a strong emphasis on messianism (belief in a Messiah).

Following the expulsion of Jews from Spain, the fringe interest in *Kabbalah* grew until it became a religious preoccupation of whole Jewish communities in other countries. A major centre of Kabbalistic teaching emerged in Safed in northern Palestine, under the leadership of Isaac Luria (1534–1572). Most of the table songs sung on *Shabbat* evenings come from the Safed Kabbalists, as do many prayers and customs commonly associated with *Shabbat* ritual.

The *Zohar*

The *Zohar*, ascribed to a second-century rabbi, is most probably the work of the Spaniard Moses de Leon (c. 1240–1305). Kabbalists believe that the roots of the work are ancient. The *Zohar* contains an esoteric commentary on the Torah, as well as mystical descriptions of the nature of God and the universe. The *Zohar* proved popular upon its publication, and after the development of printing in the fifteenth century it became widely



Aharon N. Varady and Andrew Meit/Creative commons ShareAlike 4.0 Interantional (CC BY-SA 4.0)

FIGURE 14.1.5 A Kabbalistic meditation on Psalm 67. The words of Psalm 67 can be seen in this graphic, shaped into a ***menorah***. Meditating on Psalm 67 in this form is a common Jewish mystic textual form, and is found in many prayer books.

distributed among Jews. Mystical Judaism proliferated as a result. The *Zohar* reached such a level of importance that it rested on bookshelves beside the Torah and the Talmud. It maintained influence in Judaism throughout the seventeenth century, at least until the emergence of the pseudo-messiah Shabbatai Zvi (1626–1676), who was proclaimed as Messiah by some Kabbalists. After this event, *Kabbalah* became enmeshed in suspicions of heresy and its popularity and influence waned. The *Zohar* remains a highly influential sacred writing among Chasidic Jews.

REVIEW

1 Describe the role of the Baal Shem Tov in the emergence of the *Chasidim* as a significant school of thought in Judaism.
2 Propose reasons why Chasidic Jews are considered by many Jews to be 'custodians of the tradition'.
3 **Explain** the contribution of Chasidism to the development and expression of Judaism.
4 Summarise the relationship between the *Chasidim* and *Kabbalah*.

EXTENSION

1 Use the weblink provided to gain insight into the Chasidic variant of Judaism. Analyse the importance of the life of the Lubavitcher *Rebbe* Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson to this movement within Judaism.
2 Examine the importance of charismatic leadership in Chasidism, both at its foundation and in contemporary times.
3 Predict what might be the future of Judaism if there were to be a continued strengthening of the influence of Chasidism.

Weblink
About Chabad

Jewish feminism

GLOSSARY

aggadah The non-legal tradition in Jewish religious writing. The *aggadah* of the Talmud and other later writings includes astrology, folklore, magic, medicine, parables, proverbs, speculation and stories about the rabbis.

gemilut chasadim Deeds of loving kindness. To perform *gemilut chasadim* is considered a *mitzvah*, one of the commandments of the Torah, to be completed without expectation of reward.

halachah The Jewish legal tradition, grounded in the 613 commandments of the Torah.

patriarchy A system of social, political, economic and/or religious organisation where the power and decision-making authority is held by men. Patriarchy is typified by rigid gender roles.

tikkun olam Literally to 'repair the world'. *Tikkun olam* is a Jewish principle of a commitment to social justice and social order.

There are three principles of Jewish traditions that have had a strong influence on Jewish feminists, both secular and Orthodox: ***tikkun olam*** – the responsibility to heal the world; ***gemilut chasadim*** – the call to engage in works of goodness and kindness; and lastly, women's special responsibility for the family economy whereas, according to a traditional reading of the ***halachah*** a married man is more responsible for Talmudic study. Responsibility for *tikkun olam* and *tzedakah* translates into commitment to peace and social justice activities, including justice for women and their rights. In Western societies such as Australia, a woman's responsibility for the home economy cannot be separated from the working rights and conditions of women and the politics of a capitalist society. Early expressions of Jewish women's activism can be seen in the establishment of the Sydney Ladies' Hebrew Benevolent Society in 1844 and the National Council of Jewish Women. Australian Jewish women have been active in advocating for refugees and migrants and in general social welfare for distressed community members.

> And the best of all impressions to take back from this Conference to your states, your cities and your homes is, that the Council of Jewish Women stands above all things for the Law of Loving kindness.
>
> Dr Fanny Reading, Founder, National Council of Jewish Women (Australia), 1929

> In a world beyond patriarchy, rather than focus on right and wrong, and power and money, we need to focus on healing, reparations, and restoration.
>
> C. Zavis, 'Enwombedness: A world beyond patriarchy to heal and repair the world through nurturing love', 2019, *Tikkun*, Vol. 34, no. 1, p. 20

Despite the common starting-points, feminism has expressed itself in very diverse ways within the Jewish tradition. There are four readily identifiable genres of Jewish feminism. secular Jewish feminism; Orthodox Jewish feminism; essentialist Jewish feminism; and Jewish feminism of evolutionary equality. Each of these four genres of Jewish feminism will be explored in turn.

Secular Jewish feminism

The first genre stems from minimalist and well-educated Jewish women, particularly in the United States, who were highly prominent in the left-wing movements of the mid-20th century and in the women's liberation movement of the 1960s. These secular Jewish feminists contributed significantly to what became known as the women's liberation movement. It was during the 1970s and 1980s that Jewish feminists' interest in identifying the strong thread of **patriarchy** in the Jewish tradition developed. Secular Jewish women pointed out the power imbalance between women and men and called for an expanded role for women in ritual and organisational leadership, as well as a greater prominence for women in the important roles of teaching and learning in the

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Jewish tradition. These early secular Jewish feminists have had a lasting impact on the debate about women in the Jewish tradition.

> Jewish feminism is not about equality with men … Feminism is about women's refusal to submit to male authority. The real issue is not equality, but power. Who's in charge? Who defines Judaism, and who determines whether or not we get to dance with the Torah?
>
> Susan Heschel

Orthodox Jewish feminism

A second genre, which might be termed Orthodox Jewish feminism, is one that seeks to appeal to the Orthodox Jewish community to change from within. Since 1981, when Blu Greenberg wrote the hugely influential *On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition*, women's access to many aspects of the Jewish tradition and religious education has expanded dramatically in most, but not all, of the streams of Judaism. Tamar Ross, who follows in Greenberg's feminist tradition, believes that the Torah is subject to continuing revelation that can benefit from the fresh insights that feminist thought brings to halachic interpretation.

> Where there [is] a rabbinic will, there [is] a halakhic way.
>
> B. Greenberg, *On Women and Judaism: A View from Tradition*, 1998, p. 44

Used with permission of Lilith magazine. For more information: www.Lilith.org

FIGURE 14.1.6 The first cover of the Jewish feminist magazine *Lilith*, launched in 1976. Jewish feminists Betty Friedan and Blu Greenberg had feature articles in this first issue. *Lilith* is still published quarterly and regularly features stories on religious topics.

RESPOND

What stereotypes, symbols, metaphors and memes do you notice in this illustration?

Jewish feminist theologians such as Rachel Adler have argued for the full participation of women in a model of inclusive Jewish worship, where Jewish women become 'fully visible and fully audible'. To Judith Plaskow, women are present in the Torah, but their stories are told from a male point of view. Plaskow and Jewish writers who have come after her share in a vision of Jewish feminism that sees the need to transform Orthodox Judaism through engagement with the contemporary world, so that it might better suit the aspiration of women to be seen and heard within the tradition.

> The female images that exist in the Bible and (particularly the mystical) tradition form an underground stream that occasionally reminds us of the inadequacy of our imagery without transforming its overwhelmingly male nature.
>
> J. Plaskow, 'Setting the problem, laying the ground', In A. W. Hughes (ed.), *Defining Judaism: A Reader*, 2010, p. 72

Essentialist Jewish feminism

A third genre of Jewish feminism, typified in the writing of Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller, is the group of feminists who have been described as 'essentialists'. They seek to reaffirm and reframe the importance of the traditional roles of women within Jewish Orthodoxy. This form of Jewish feminism rejects the notion that a Jewish woman might seek to take on the roles prescribed for Jewish men in the *halachah*. This is because doing so would undermine the spiritual contribution of women to family and home, abandoning these dimensions of life, leaving them, most painfully, unrecognised by women.

In this essentialist Jewish feminism, the Jewish woman has an innate and soaring spirituality, unburdened by the ritual requirements that dominate the life of observant Jewish males, giving women a perspective that truly understands the spiritual requests of the divine. Women are the spiritual channel through which the divine enters the world; it is women who appreciate best that the only requests that will bring true happiness and continuance are understanding, consciousness, forgiveness and redemption. Jewish feminist essentialists teach about a spiritual yearning that can be realised through a fiercely proud fidelity to a traditional Jewish woman's role, which is the fulfilment of God's purpose and which will deliver true happiness and redemption.

> The Happy Homemaker was not Jewish. The stereotype she represented was antithetical to the idealized Jewish vision of womanhood, portrayed as early as in King Solomon's time in his poem 'A Woman of Valor'.
>
> There we see qualities such as wisdom, courage, creativity, business acumen, and the profound insight to recognize how to relate to individuals according to their specific needs.
>
> Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller, *Feminism and Judaism*

Jewish feminism of evolutionary equality

A fourth genre has been dubbed 'Jewish feminists of evolutionary equality', and they are exemplified by the writing and teaching of Sarah Yehudit Schneider. Schneider accepts the criticisms of Judaism's patriarchal hierarchy that it oppresses women. She does not support, however, the secular feminist path of simply reversing each gender's fortunes, but rather an openness to new possibilities. This genre of Jewish feminism focuses on an ever-evolving process of thought and action that focuses on women actualising their own potential. It takes its inspiration from kabbalistic texts to conceive of our lives as being on an evolutionary trajectory from a hierarchical system, in which men have dominated, to a non-hierarchical consciousness, where both the masculine and feminine work in harmony. Here the feminine exerts a non-hierarchical consciousness that liberates all. This genre of Jewish feminism utilises the ***aggadah***, inspired by Chasidism's strong reliance on narrative and storytelling to understand and expound on the complex religious lives of women and women's spirituality.

The variety of expressions of Jewish feminism is testimony to its rich flowering in recent decades and the influence it has had on more liberally minded Jewish thinking. It has, for example, seen the emergence of female rabbis in Jewish communities, including those now ordained as female rabbis who serve Australian Jewish communities.

REVIEW

1. Use the weblink provided to describe the life of one Australian Jewish woman of note. Would you classify her as a Jewish feminist? Why/why not?
2. Explore the websites of the National Council of Jewish Women Australia and the Women's International Zionist Organisation (NSW Branch) and construct a list of similarities and differences between the two organisations.
3. Use the weblink provided to help you discuss Dr Fanny Reading's role in promoting the role of Jewish women in Australian society.
4. Read page 23, column 3, of the article 'A vision of a world beyond patriarchy', then create your own list of the features of a transformed world.

Weblinks
Jewish women

NCJWA

wizonsw.org

NCJWA: Dr Fanny Reading

A vision of a world beyond patriarchy

Sarah Yehudit Schneider

jofa.org

The Center for Jewish Feminism

Neve Yerushalayim

Jewish Women's Archive

EXTENSION

Further explore the rich diversity of Jewish feminist thought and action using the weblinks provided.

14.2 Ethics

GLOSSARY

ethics The system of explicit, philosophical and/or religious reflection on moral beliefs and practices to clarify what is right and wrong, and what human beings should freely do or refrain from doing.

halachah The Jewish legal tradition, grounded in the 613 commandments of the Torah.

responsa The formulations of questions and the rabbinical responses concerning the dual Torah – Oral and Written – that flowed back and forth across the Jewish world from the early Middle Ages. The term is used also to refer to the modern written rabbinical dialogue on ethical and moral issues.

Ethics touches on all aspects of life, from the home to school or work, from the individual to the community, from the social to the scientific. Judaism has deeply reflected ethical standpoints that help to guide the adherent in making good life choices. As new life situations present themselves in our evolving modern world (for example, around the application of new bioscience), Jewish ethicists continue the timeless debate that produces the ***responsa*** to answer the questions that arise. Always the answers are drawn from the wellspring of the ***halachah***, which has Torah at its foundation.

Worksheet
Jewish ethics

Sexual ethics

GLOSSARY

ascetic A way of life that is characterised by rigorous self-denial.

mikvah (plural ***mikvot***) A Jewish ritual bath. A *mikvah* must contain a prescribed amount of 'living water', usually rain or spring water. The *mikvah* is used for ritual purification, by women after menstruation, and by many Orthodox Jews prior to *Shabbat* and the Holy Days.

▷ Refer to Chapter 6, pages 111–13, for more on *halachah* and the fundamentals of Jewish ethics.

One of the commandments of the *halachah* is to be fruitful and multiply (Gen 1:28, 8:17, 35:11). In this context, sex and sexuality are accepted as a natural part of being human.

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Yet the Hebrew Scriptures and later rabbinic literature offer two opposing views about sex and sexuality. The extreme **ascetic** view sees sexual relations as appropriate only for the purpose of procreation and it is thus a necessary evil. The view that predominates in the *halachah*, however, is that sexual intercourse for the pleasure of the married couple is wholesome and good. What typifies the *halachah* on sexual conduct is the view that sexual expression must be modest and private and is appropriate only within marriage.

Traditional Judaism adheres to the prohibition on women engaging in sexual intercourse for seven days following the cessation of the bleeding of menstruation. After this a woman must immerse herself in a ***mikvah***. There are *mikvot* for this purpose in Australian cities.

In modern Jewish thought, the idea of marriage remains central to sexual relations. Modern Judaism notes that the principle that lies behind sexual relations is that of respect and concern for the dignity of the other.

There are numerous sexual taboos that are specific *mitzvot* in the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah. Drawn from Leviticus 18:6–24, they are prohibitions, essentially, against all forms of adultery, incest, homosexuality and bestiality. Gay marriage is debated in the Jewish community, as it is in Australian society generally. While Orthodox communities reject gay marriage, Progressive Judaism expresses a different view, and has endorsed same-sex ceremonies for many years.

DID YOU KNOW?

While Orthodox Jewish Law does not permit same-sex marriage, many Australian Jews, including rabbis, were significant voices in Australia's movement for marriage equality, which resulted in a 2017 national postal plebiscite and a change in the Australian law to permit same-sex marriage. The New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies voted 99–1 in favour of 'equal treatment under Australian law to same-sex couples who choose to marry'. The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the Council of Progressive Rabbis of Australia and the Council of Masorti Rabbis of Australia also endorsed marriage equality.

The Sydney Beth Din opposed same-sex marriage, as did the Rabbinic Council of Victoria, although members of the Rabbinic Council of Victoria spoke out against public statements opposing same-sex marriage.

Australian rabbis in favour of same-sex marriage refer to the Torah's emphasis on our equality in the eyes of God, in whose image we are all created. For many Orthodox Australian Jews, love, the importance of human companionship, and fidelity in relationships are principles that go beyond gender.

The support for gay marriage in the Jewish community is consistent with the Jewish intolerance for exclusion of people based on their difference. The first same-sex Jewish weddings took place in Australia in 2018 in Sydney's Emanuel Synagogue, although same-sex commitment ceremonies had occurred in that same synagogue as early as 2008.

Australian Judaism understands that the Australian same-sex laws do not relate to religious marriages and preserve the right of clergy to conduct traditional religious marriages as they see fit.

Getty Images/Boston Globe

FIGURE 14.2.1 **A Jewish same-sex marriage ceremony. Despite opposition from some Orthodox Jewish voices, the right of same-sex couples to marriage under Australian law was strongly defended by the majority of Australian Jews in the 2017 marriage debate.**

RESPOND

Research what the Hebrew word *tznius* means. What do you think might be the purpose of their written message? Is this a question of sexual ethics?

> A complete and thorough Jewish sex ethics will address every serious question that a contemporary individual might personally ponder. Choosing to do that, I have learned, is deeply upsetting to people who think that certain aspects of inherited tradition are beyond challenge or the need for explanation. [But] how does one avoid unself-consciously sliding into positions identical to those held by the secular culture? My approach involves asserting Jewish values, which for sex ethics obviously include such basics as family, health, integrity, kindness, modesty, holiness, and pleasure. I would add egalitarianism to those classical values even though it is a recent addition to the Jewish canon.
>
> David Teutsch, 'Choosing a sex ethic, then and now', *Journal of Jewish Ethics*, 1(1), 2015, pp. 141–2

RESPOND

How would the Jewish values that David Teutsch has named influence your own thinking on a contentious contemporary issue of human sexuality?

Some rabbinical statements on sex and sexuality

Were it not for the evil impulse, no man would build a house, take a wife, beget a child, or engage in business.

Genesis Rabbah 9:9

He who is twenty years of age and is not married spends all his days in sin.

Bavli Kiddushin 29b–30a

Everything which a man wishes to do with his wife, he may do.

Bavli Berachot 62a

When a husband unites with his wife in holiness, the divine presence abides with them.

Bavli Sotah 17a

REVIEW

1 **Identify** the foundation beliefs and documents that underpin Jewish ethics.
2 **Clarify** the principal ethical teachings in Judaism that determine sexual ethics.
3 **Describe** and **explain** Jewish ethical teachings on sexual ethics. Refer to relevant sacred writings to support your explanation where necessary.

EXTENSION

1 Use the weblinks provided to read about Jewish ethical views on sexual ethics. **Construct** a table that classifies the range of ethical views that Jews have on sexual matters.
2 **Analyse** the application of Jewish ethical teaching to a specific issue of sexual ethics.

Weblinks
My Jewish Learning: Sex and sexuality

Same-sex marriage resolution

Bioethics

GLOSSARY

bioethics A branch of applied ethics relating to moral decisions and behaviour in the life sciences and incorporating but not limited to medical ethics, which is commonly considered to be a subspecialty of bioethics. It is usually referred to as being interdisciplinary – many disciplines feed in the data to be considered in order to make appropriate judgements for human conduct.

cloning The process of making genetically identical copies of organisms.

cohen A male who is a member of the priestly class, a status that is determined by direct descent. *Cohens* have a role in Jewish ritual life; for example, at the rite of *brit milah* (circumcision).

embryo In humans, the embryo is the organism developing in the uterus between the second and the eighth week after fertilisation.

foetus A baby in the womb. In medical terms, the human foetal period is from eight weeks until the baby is born.

gene therapy Medical treatment that seeks to correct genetic defects or diseases by replacing dysfunctional or missing genes with functioning ones.

genetic screening Testing groups of people to check for potential hereditary disorders.

in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) A method of assisted reproduction that involves collection of ova (female eggs) and sperm, which are then fertilised in a lab, before they are implanted in the woman's uterus.

pre-implantation screening With reproduction assisted by **in-vitro fertilisation**, the screening of **embryos** for genetic defects before they are implanted in the woman's uterus.

pre-natal screening Medical techniques of examining the **foetus** in the womb to detect potential abnormalities.

As suggested by the definition of **bioethics**, there tends to be a spectrum of opinion about what is acceptable in bioethics, rather than single, definitive answers. This is especially true of Judaism, a tradition that encourages, through its rabbinical teachers, interpretation of new life situations in the light of the *halachah*. As a living religion, Judaism will continue to engage in dialogue about, and respond to, the moral dilemmas posed by modern advances in science and technology. What might be considered particular about Jewish bioethics is that, in reflecting on ethical directions to be gleaned from the *halachah*, it prioritises duty over rights. This is different from modern secular bioethics, which tends to prioritise the importance of rights.

Jewish opinion can occupy the full spectrum between duty and rights. Unlike Christianity and Islam, though, the rabbis have avoided applying religious authority to restrict medical and scientific freedoms, except in cases of direct human harm.

Generally speaking, Jewish bioethics operate within the tension created between the opposite ends of this spectrum. The appropriateness of any of the new technologies is considered on the merits of the individual case, dependent upon the motives of those using it and the insights gained by a reading of the *halachah*.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'bioethics' was coined in 1970 by US biochemist Dr Van Rensselaer Potter as a bridge between science and humanity.

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Birth control and abortion

Jews are required to 'be fruitful and multiply'. Having children is therefore a *mitzvah*. There may be reasons to avoid conception, but it is also one's responsibility to participate in marital relations. For this reason, some birth-control methods are not allowed in Judaism. Rabbinical opinion has generally approved only the use of female contraceptive devices, such as the diaphragm and the contraceptive pill. The reasoning is that, as long as the male is attempting procreation with each act of sexual intercourse, the commandment to 'be fruitful and multiply' is fulfilled.

Jewish views on abortion do not fit neatly into the 'pro-choice' or 'anti-abortion' camps. Generally, it is the life of the mother that is seen as paramount. In the Talmud, the **foetus** is not considered a person until the time of the birth. At the same time, Jewish commentators realise the 'potential human being' status of the foetus.

Abortion presents Judaism with a moral dilemma. In the first 40 days of the existence of the **embryo**, it is considered by the Talmudic authorities to be merely 'water', and thus abortion, given the right motivations, is acceptable. The question remains whether, in any particular case, the human potentiality of the foetus becomes so compelling a factor as to make abortion morally unjustifiable. An equally important question is whether the life or health (including mental health) of the mother becomes so threatened as to morally justify abortion.

Traditional Judaism has had a strong anti-abortion message in Israel in recent years through the work of *Efrat* – the International Organization for Saving Jewish Babies. *Efrat* also has offices in the large Jewish community of the United States.

Reproductive technologies

The liberal Jewish approach to bioethics enables free expression of the strong *mitzvah* to be fruitful and procreate. For example, married Jews who are unable to conceive children naturally are supported in their use of modern reproductive technologies such as **in-vitro fertilisation (IVF)** and surrogacy. As mentioned previously, the embryo in the first 40 days does not have strong status in the *halachah*. The same thinking applies to concerns about embryos that are fertilised for the purposes of IVF treatments but never implanted. That is not to say that Jewish ethicists trivialise the status of the embryo. Always the expectation with IVF and other reproductive technologies is that it is being done within the context of marriage and with the intention of bearing children to loving parents. These things having been said, Jews wrestle with reproductive technologies that might confuse genetic heritage. Traditionally, a Jew is considered so by virtue of one's mother's Jewishness. If reproductive technologies such as IVF and surrogacy might result in the Jewishness of the maternal genes being called into question, this can present an ethical difficulty for the Jewish person. Similar questions of inheritance are encountered, for example, with the use of donor sperm for artificial insemination and the status of a potential male baby who is the son of a ***cohen***. The status of the *cohen* is determined by descent through the male line.

Judaism presents a generally open attitude to modern reproductive technologies. *Halachah* is, however, considered to be God-given Law, and it may not be right for people to have their every desire (page 324). Some conservative authorities want a 'fence' around the Law – they prefer to prohibit some behaviours that are not strictly forbidden according to the *halachah*, but which, if allowed, might lead to other, actually prohibited behaviours.

AJN Photo Sales/Noel Kessel 2015

FIGURE 14.2.2 A Sydney family celebrating the importance of family life at a Jewish young families fair

Genetic technologies

Genetic screening in general is strongly supported by most authorities in Judaism. Tay-Sachs disease, an affliction that causes death in early childhood, is confined mostly to Jews of Eastern European descent. Genetic screening for Tay-Sachs disease has been highly successful in Israel, resulting in dramatic reductions in the number of children born with the disease. A significant part of the success of this program has been attributed to the support given to it by rabbis in their religious communities. The screening has raised the ethical question, though, of how far screening should go. Genetic screening is seen as preferable to **pre-natal screening**, which would suggest the possibility of abortion.

A technology for dealing with Tay-Sachs disease that is in between genetic screening and pre-natal screening is **pre-implantation screening**. This is where IVF-type techniques are used to detect affected embryos and only implant healthy ones in the mother's uterus. Current Jewish ethical thinking sees this as less than ideal, but more acceptable than pre-natal screening.

Gene therapy is acceptable in the Jewish tradition for similar reasons to stem-cell research; that is, the potential to save human lives is great, and the embryo does not have the status of a human person. Judaism is quite clear that gene therapy can and should be used in the investigation of a cure for diseases such as Tay-Sachs disease. It is equally cautious about the 'slippery slope' of genetic engineering – the potential use of these techniques to do things other than save human lives; for example, to select for, or manipulate, height, intelligence, eye colour and so on.

DID YOU KNOW?

In gene therapy, how do doctors get the new genes into defective cells? They use carrier viruses. Viruses have the special ability to penetrate cell walls.

REVIEW

1. Identify the foundation beliefs and documents that underpin Jewish ethics.
2. Clarify the principal ethical teachings in Judaism that determine bioethics.
3. Classify the various bioethical technologies referred to in this section. Give a brief description of each and make connections between them where appropriate.
4. Discuss the Jewish ethical perspective(s) on the use of reproductive technologies.
5. Assess one of the arguments offered in this section in favour of the use of a particular bioethical technology.

EXTENSION

1. With a partner, identify a genetic dysfunction or disease of particular interest to the Jewish population and analyse the Jewish ethical issues that arise from the application of biomedical techniques to address it. Create a brief multimodal presentation or TED talk to communicate your findings.
2. Do an Internet search to gain a better understanding of how biomedical techniques work and some of their implications. Key terms to search are '**cloning**', 'stem cells', 'genetic engineering' and 'designer children'. Use the weblink provided as a good starting point.
3. Using the Internet and/or other resources, identify the distinctive Jewish perspectives of two contemporary bioethical issues not addressed in this chapter. Use the weblink provided as a good starting point.

Weblinks
Jewish Virtual Library: Issues in Jewish ethics

Israel and Judaism Studies: Bioethics in Judaism

Environmental ethics

GLOSSARY

Midrash A form of ancient biblical commentary and interpretation, mostly written between the second and eighth centuries BCE. *Midrash* does not always take the biblical text literally, but rather, through homilies and commentaries, seeks to uncover the hidden meaning of the Torah.

prophecy Revelation of divine will working through the mediation of a person. Such a person is known as a **prophet**.

Environmental ethics is the attempt to define a system of values to guide human interaction in the natural world. Environmental ethics as a specific area of intellectual inquiry emerged in the 1970s, in response to the growing realisation of the negative impact of humans on the natural environment and the need to 'change or perish'.

Worldwide concern for the environment has provided the impetus for Jews to tap into the rich 'environmental wisdom' of their tradition, looking at it with a fresh view.

What are now called environmental ethics abound in classical Jewish sources, drawing from the archetypal stories of the Garden of Eden (Gen 2:8–3:23), the Flood (Gen 6:9–9:17) and the Plagues of Egypt (Ex 7:14–11:10). The Hebrew Scriptures, Talmud, ***Midrash***, *responsa*, and other classical Jewish sources contain literally tens of thousands of allusions to environmental concerns. Concerns include the treatment of animals, protection of food sources, water purity, excessive consumption, avoiding the pollution and overcrowding of towns and cities, and the protection of the natural environment. The biblical **prophets** particularly warn of the catastrophe that will result from contamination of the land. From the Hebrew Scriptures on, Judaism has seen humans as lords of creation, but at the same time needing to be deeply grateful to God for the sustenance creation brings, and responsible for its stewardship.

Modern Jewish environmentalists emerge from a non-Orthodox background. Nonetheless, in formulating their environmental ethics, they draw heavily on the *halachah* and *aggadah*, providing an opportunity for bridging the divide between different Jewish groups. Increasing interest from all the world's major religious traditions in developing a stronger environmental ethic also provides a medium, and the opportunity, for interfaith dialogue.

DID YOU KNOW?

Numbers 35:4 mandates for a 'green belt' around cities and towns: 'The pasture lands of the towns, which you shall give to the Levites, shall reach from the wall of the town outward a thousand cubits all around.'

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Environmentalism in the classical Jewish sources

In the hour when God created the first person, He showed him the trees in the Garden of Eden, and said to him: 'See My works, how fine they are; Now all that I have created, I created for your benefit. Think upon this and do not corrupt and destroy My world, for if you destroy it, there is no one to restore it after you.'

Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:28

Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakkai says: 'If you are holding a sapling in your hand, and someone says to you, "Here comes the Messiah!" – come and plant the sapling, and afterwards go and welcome the Messiah.'

Avot D'Rebbe Natan B 31

Righteous people of good deeds ... do not waste in this world even a mustard seed. They become sorrowful with every wasteful and destructive act that they see, and if they can, they use all their strength to save everything possible from destruction. But the wicked are not thus ...

Sefer Chasidim 530 (*Sefer Chasidim* is a thirteenth-century work on ethics written by Judah ben Samuel, the *Chasid* of Regensburg.)

Bal tashchit

The Talmudic principle that stands behind the Jewish environmental ethic is 'Do not destroy'. It is known in Hebrew as *bal tashchit*. This Jewish demand dates back to one of the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah:

> 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.
>
> Deut 20:19

This verse in fact specifically refers to the destruction of trees in the course of laying siege to a city in battle. The later rabbis extend the biblical example to a general prohibition against any wasteful and wilful destruction.

The Talmud further understands that nothing was created by God without a purpose, thus the whole of creation is deserving of respect and appropriate care. Just as humans were created in God's image (Gen 2), so they are called to be creators in the world, not destroyers.

> The earth is the LORD's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.
>
> Ps 24:1

Climate change

In common with other faiths, Judaism has expressed an increasing concern about climate change. In the United States, the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL) has actively worked with other faith groups to pursue climate justice – for example, through the Jewish Environmental and Energy Imperative.

Weblink
Religions for Peace Australia

In Australia, Progressive and Orthodox Jewish leaders have worked with leaders of other faiths to create a unified public stance on the environmental issues of our age that affect all humans. Perhaps no other issue has done so much to encourage interfaith dialogue as concern about climate change. The organisation Plus 61J: Israel, Australia and the Jewish world has emerged as a powerful Australian voice for climate change policy and climate action.

Weblink
Plus61J

The Jewish approach to environmental ethics is similar to its approach to bioethics. Judaism allows full rein for the discussion of the scientific evidence, and then seeks to support the intelligent, responsible and life-giving conclusions of rational thought with references to the *halachah*. This approach reinforces the correctness of ethical directions, decisions and positions.

The centrality of *Shabbat* is also important to Jewish environmental ethics. *Shabbat* is a day of rest, a break from the use of technology, an opportunity to walk to the synagogue and reflect. *Shabbat* enables connection with God, self, others and the world. *Shabbat* is a weekly cycle of renewal that connects the observant Jew with the concept of the renewal of the world.

▷ For more information on *Shabbat*, see Chapter 6, pages 115–16.

> The ancient rabbis said: 'If [the people] Israel observed a single Sabbath properly, immediately would the son of David [i.e., the messiah] come' and 'If Israel were to keep two Sabbaths [in a row] as properly as they should, then messiah would come' (Palestinian Talmud, *Ta'anit* 64a; Babylonian Talmud, *Sanhedrin* 97a and *Shabbat* 118b). I have a more modest vision (no messiah here) and yet perhaps a more audacious one: If a billion or more monotheists – and interested Hindus, Buddhists, indigenous peoples, atheists, and agnostics – observed a weekly *Shabbat* seriously for the near term, imagine how much of a break we would be giving the world that sustains us, a world that desperately needs some rest.
>
> Jonathan Schorsch, 'The Sabbath in an era of climate change', *Tablet*, 4 February 2020

Resolution No. 49, Executive Council of Australian Jewry

This Council:

49.1 NOTES that there is scientific consensus that climate change poses a major challenge facing Australia and the world. The threat to all human life, through the increasing frequency and magnitude of such extreme weather events as bushfires, drought, water shortages and record temperatures, is increasing;

49.2 NOTES that the protection of the environment and conservation of its resources for the benefit of future generations are well-established principles of Jewish teaching and *halacha*;

49.3 APPLAUDS the action of governments, leading business, religious and civil society organisations, in

➜

addressing the issue of climate change as a priority issue for our time;

49.4 DECLARES its support for laws and policies with appropriate milestones designed to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, or earlier where necessary ...

49.5 CALLS ON its constituents, its affiliates and Australian Jewish organisations to:

- stay informed on climate change issues ...
- educate members using clear and compelling educational resources, informed by Jewish teachings, about taking action on climate change and to demonstrate environmental responsibility;
- take all appropriate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with their own activities; and
- continue to work with other faith and cultural communities towards taking action on climate change and to demonstrate environmental responsibility.

Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Policies

Jewish National Fund

The Jewish National Fund was founded by the Zionist movement in 1901 to acquire land in Palestine. With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, its role and purpose evolved; it has become a major player in the environmental rehabilitation of the land of Israel. In the last 100 years, it has planted close to a quarter of a billion trees and created more than 400 parks throughout Israel. In recent years, the Fund has expanded its interests to more general environmental issues.

The Jewish National Fund also plays a role in educating Jews around the world about Israel and the environment.

In Australia every year in February, the Jewish National Fund of Australia holds a special tree-planting telethon (called Green Sunday) on a Sunday close to *Tu B'Shevat*. The Jewish National Fund's education program in Australia organises activities in Jewish schools in Sydney and Melbourne to help foster students' awareness of issues regarding the land and environment in Israel.

JNFuture NSW brings together young adults in activities aimed at deepening their appreciation of environmental issues both locally and in Israel.

REVIEW

1. **Clarify** the principal *mitzvah* that influences Jewish environmental ethics.
2. **Outline** the evolution of the minor festival of *Tu B'Shevat*.
3. **Describe** and **explain** Jewish ethical teachings on the environment. Refer to relevant sacred writings to support your explanation where necessary.
4. **Analyse** the actual difference that the application of Jewish environmental ethics might make to the everyday life of the believer.

EXTENSION

1. **Assess** the degree to which modern environmentalism accommodates traditional Judaism.
2. 'The wellspring of Jewish wisdom on the environment provides ample material for the development of a modern environmental ethic.' **Synthesise** the material presented in this section as a means of responding to this statement.
3. Use the weblinks provided to find out about the Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL), Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) and other Jewish views on climate change. Using the resources on these websites, **explain** what is Jewish about protecting the environment.
4. **Investigate** the excerpts of classical texts that support the *mitzvah* of *bal tashchit* and the COEJL's accompanying discussion. Create a summary table that **clarifies** the principles of *bal tashchit*.

Weblinks

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL)

Jewish Climate Network Australia

The Jewish Environmental and Energy Imperative Covenant

Jewish Earth Alliance

My Jewish Learning: Nature and the environment

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)

The Jewish National Fund (Australia)

Tu-B'Shvat

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

Jewish Climate Network

FIGURE 14.2.3 Melbourne, September 2019. The Jewish response to climate change issues finds its foundation in the *Shabbat* call for regular renewal.

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14.3 Significant practices

GLOSSARY

public devotion The communal sharing of prayer and other religious actions beyond the home that bind the religious group as a faith community.

rite A formal or ceremonial act or procedure that is prescribed or is customary in a religious or other solemn use. Within the rite there are certain rituals; these are established or prescribed procedures and actions for the ceremony.

Worksheet
Judaism significant practice

The Torah is central to the practices of Judaism. Specific **rites** containing rich layers of symbolism mark each important stage of life and are important elements of religious identity within the Jewish tradition. They are celebrations of, and memorials to, the covenant by which Jews understand their relationship to God as expressed in the Torah. To follow the *mitzvot* of the Torah is both an individual and a community responsibility in Judaism, and the synagogue is the focus for community worship or **public devotion**. This section will examine the role and significance of the synagogue services and the rituals of marriage for the individual and the Jewish community.

Synagogue services

GLOSSARY

Exile The Exile into Babylon in 587 BCE was a turning point in Jewish history. It is recorded in 2 Kings 25.

High Holy Days The major Jewish festivals of *Rosh ha-Shanah* and *Yom Kippur*.

Holocaust (*Shoah*) The Nazi destruction of European Jewry (1942–45), including the murder of six million Jews.

incorporeal Without bodily or material form.

kippah (or ***yarmulke***) The skullcap worn by Jewish males.

machzor The special prayer book for festivals. Editions differ from age to age and from country to country, reflecting strongly the customs of the local Jewish community.

siddur Jewish prayer book. The *siddur* usually has four sections: (i) prayers for the weekday services; (ii) prayers for *Shabbat* and holy days; (iii) special prayers said only on the holy days; and (iv) a variable final section, which may include special prayers for life-cycle religious ceremonies, such as circumcision, marriage and mourning, as well as the brief Torah readings for Mondays and Thursdays, or the entire Book of Psalms.

tallit A fringed, four-cornered Jewish prayer shawl (see Num 15:38–39). It is most frequently white in colour, with blue, black or deep purple stripes. It is used by males in daily morning prayer.

tefillin The two black leather boxes containing passages from the Torah, worn by Jewish males aged 13 and over, that are strapped to the forehead and the arm during weekday morning services (see Deut 6:8).

> We affirm the mandate of our tradition to create strong Jewish communities wherever we live. A genuine Jewish life is possible in any land, each community developing its own particular character and determining its Jewish responsibilities. The foundation of Jewish community life is the synagogue.
>
> From 'Reform Judaism: A Centenary Perspective', 2004 Central Conference of American Rabbis

The synagogue is the gathering place for the Jewish community, a place for prayer, song and instruction. It is the central place where Judaism expresses its public devotion. The synagogue complex usually includes classrooms, offices and facilities for recreation and education. The synagogue is the place for public worship, most particularly on *Shabbat*.

Origins of the synagogue

The emergence of the synagogue as a dimension of Judaism can be traced back to the **Exile** into Babylon in 587 BCE.

Inspired by the prophets, the Jewish captives taken into Exile in Babylon found ways to maintain their religious traditions without the rituals of the Temple. Prayers replaced sacrifices; synagogues developed as places for assembly, prayer and learning.

The Pharisees, forebears of the rabbis, were champions of the synagogues in the first century CE, teaching the people and giving them access to study and worship beyond the Temple. After the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE, the synagogue took over as the centre for Jewish prayer and worship. Tradition records that in 68 CE, during the siege of Jerusalem, one of the leaders of the sages, Yohanan ben Zakkai, was secreted out of Jerusalem in a coffin and, with the permission of the Romans, established the original *yeshiva* at Yavneh, a coastal town just south of modern Tel Aviv. Yavneh became the chief centre of Jewish learning. It was in the late first century and second century CE, and from Yavneh, that the foundations of the religious tradition we know today as Judaism were laid. The compilation of the Hebrew Scriptures was completed, the rites and festivals of the Temple were adapted and transferred to the synagogue, and above all, the intellectual ideal of Judaism as lived through the study and practice of the Torah, Written and Oral, was established.

DID YOU KNOW?

In the fifth century BCE, a basic prayer was composed covering most things one could want to pray about. This is the *Shemoneh Esrei*, which means 'eighteen' and refers to the 18 blessings originally contained within the prayer. It is also referred to as the *Amidah* (which means standing, because Jews stand while they recite it), or *Tefilah* (prayer, as in 'The Prayer', because it is the essence of all Jewish prayer). This prayer is the cornerstone of every Jewish synagogue service.

Worship at the synagogue

On entering a synagogue, all males (both Jews and non-Jewish visitors) will don the ***kippah*** or ***yarmulke*** or some other form of head covering. Males also wear a special prayer shawl, known as a ***tallit***, at every morning service. In some Orthodox synagogues, there is a custom that unmarried men do not wear the *tallit*. At weekday morning services only, Jewish males strap on the ***tefillin***, one on the arm, and another on the forehead (see Chapter 6, page 112). In some non-Orthodox synagogues, women claim the right to wear the *kippah*, *tallit* and *tefillin*, although this is not traditional practice. All worshippers use the ***siddur***, the Jewish prayer book. On *Shabbat*, fasts and festivals, and on Mondays and Thursdays, the worshipper will also have the *Chumash*, the name used for the Torah.

> The sanctity of a synagogue or a house of study is very great. We are warned to be in awe of the One who rests within them, God, blessed be His name, as [Lev 19:30] states: 'Fear My sanctuaries.' This applies to a synagogue and a house of study, for they are also called sanctuaries, as [Ez 11:16] states: 'I will be a small sanctuary for them' and [Megillah 29a] interprets: 'These are the synagogues and houses of study.'
>
> *Yomi* 13:1

The synagogue is also a focus for the practices associated with the Jewish festivals. A special prayer book for festivals, called the ***machzor***, finds its place on the bookshelves of home and synagogue. Editions differ from age to age and from country to country, reflecting strongly the customs of the local Jewish community.

There are a few significant differences in the way synagogue services are conducted in different variants of Judaism:

- In Orthodox synagogues, women and men are seated separately; in Progressive and Conservative synagogues, all sit together.
- In Orthodox, and usually Conservative synagogues, the source is in Hebrew. In Progressive synagogues, most worship is in the local language (in Australia, English), though they are increasingly using Hebrew.
- In Orthodox synagogues, the person leading the service has their back to the congregation, and prays facing the same direction as the congregation. In Conservative and Progressive synagogues, the person leading the service faces the congregation.
- Conservative and Progressive synagogues are rather rigidly structured: everybody arrives at the same time, leaves at the same time, and does the same thing at the same time. Orthodox services can be somewhat more free-form: people arrive as it suits them, catch up to everybody else at their own pace, and often do things differently from everybody else.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Jewish custom of covering the head during prayer is an ancient practice. It most likely derives from the fact that in Eastern cultures it is a sign of respect to cover the head, so covering the head during prayers shows one's respect for God. In ancient Rome, servants were required to cover their heads, while free men were not – so Jews covered their heads to show that they were servants of God. In medieval times, Jews covered their heads as a reminder that God is always above them. No matter why it is done, it has always been regarded as a custom rather than a commandment (*mitzvah*).

The order of the synagogue service

Morning service – *Shacharit*

- The Verses of the Song (passages from Psalms)
- The *Shema* and its blessings
- The *Amidah* prayer
- Supplications (weekdays only)
- *Hallel* (hymns of praise, Psalms 113–118; festivals only)
- The reading of the Torah (on *Shabbat*, Mondays and Thursdays, fasts and festivals)
- *Musaf*: additional *Amidah* (on *Shabbat*, festivals and the beginning of a new month)
- Concluding Psalms, hymns and the *Aleinu* prayer:

  > It is our duty to praise the Master of all, to ascribe greatness to the Moulder of primeval creation, for He has not made us like the nations of the lands ... Therefore, we put our hope in you, Lord our God, that we may soon see Your mighty splendour ... On that day, the Lord will be One and His Name will be One.
  >
  > Extract from *Aleinu*

Afternoon service – *Minchah*

- Psalm 145
- The *Amidah* prayer
- The *Aleinu* prayer

Evening service – *Ma'ariv*

- The *Shema* and its blessings
- The *Amidah* prayer
- The *Aleinu* prayer

DID YOU KNOW?

You can tell a lot about a person's Judaism by the word they use for synagogue. Ashkenazi Orthodox Jews will frequently use the Yiddish world *shul* to refer to the synagogue. Progressive Jewish synagogues are referred to as Temples.

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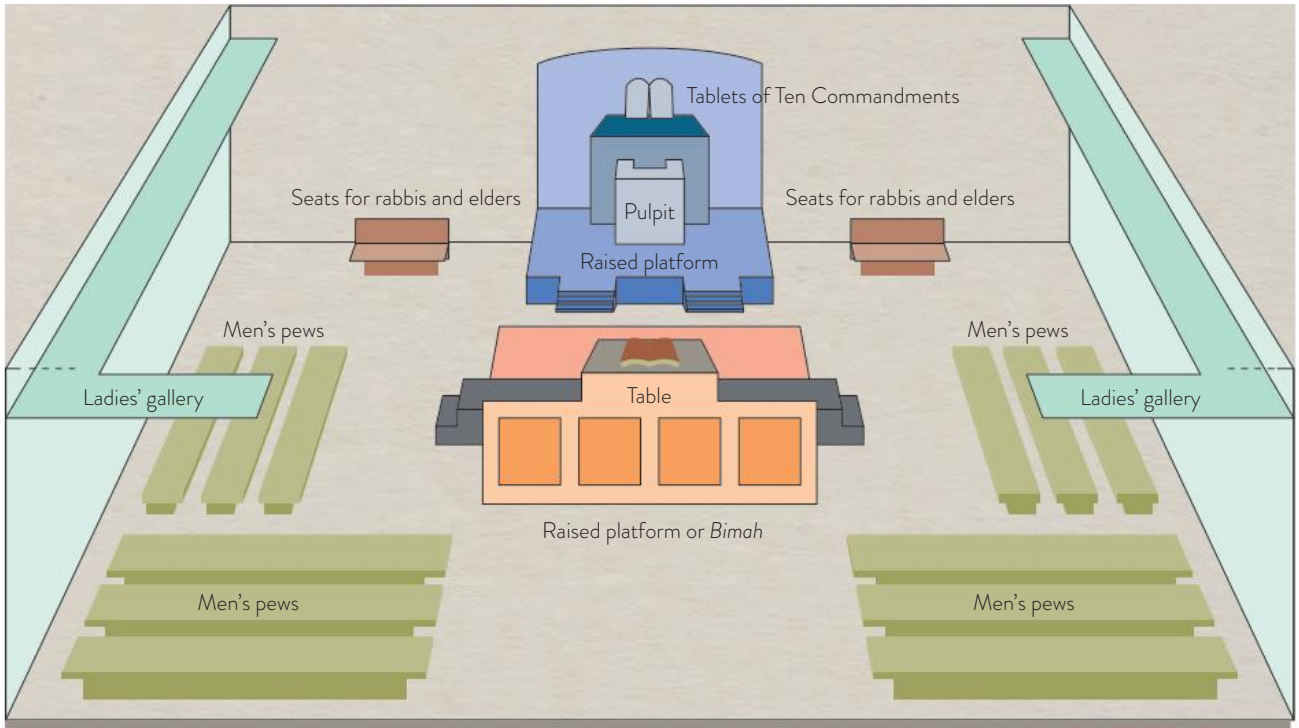

FIGURE 14.3.1 Schema of a typical Orthodox synagogue

Jewish festivals and their relationship to the synagogue

Rosh ha-Shanah

Rosh ha-Shanah is the Jewish New Year festival, and the beginning of the **High Holy Days** period. The *shofar*, a curved ram's horn, is blown to usher in the new year and to herald the majesty of God. *Rosh ha-Shanah* is a day of judgement of the past year and a day of preparation for the year ahead. Synagogues are filled to overflowing capacity for the services on *Rosh ha-Shanah*. Special sweet foods are eaten in the home. This is a symbol of the sweetness of the year ahead.

AJN Photo Sales/Peter Haskin

FIGURE 14.3.2 Moshe Kahn of the Caulfield Hebrew Congregation sounds the *shofar* on the streets of Caulfield North, ushering in *Rosh ha-Shanah*. Usually, the *shofar* is sounded in the synagogue, but it was done in the parks and streets of Melbourne in 2020 due to the restrictions on religious practice imposed as a part of the city's COVID-19 pandemic lockdown rules.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. This day is the climax of a period of repentance, focusing on a public confession of sins and a plea for forgiveness from God. Jews believe, however, that God will only forgive the sins of the person who has sought forgiveness from the people they have wronged. Thus, it is an obligation to try to make peace with one's neighbour in the days before *Yom Kippur*. *Yom Kippur* has 25 hours of complete fast, and work is forbidden as on *Shabbat*. As with the celebration of *Rosh ha-Shanah*, the synagogues are filled with people on *Yom Kippur*.

Sukkot

Sukkot is also known as the Feast of Tabernacles, or Booths. A *sukkah* is built – a small impermanent structure with a roof of branches, standing under the open sky (see Lev 23:33–44). Many Jews just eat in the *sukkah*, but some will sleep in it as well for seven days. The *sukkah* is a memorial to the impermanent structures in which the Israelites had to live in the desert after their Exodus from Egypt. Historically, *Sukkot* is also connected with the autumn harvest. It is a festive time (Lev 23:40). The 'four species' – palm, myrtle, willow and etrog (a citrus fruit) – are held together and waved in the four directions of the compass, as well as up and down, in acknowledgement of the bounty of God. After *Sukkot* comes *Simchat Torah*, the Rejoicing of the Torah. The reading of the Torah for

the liturgical year is completed and then recommenced, and the scrolls are paraded around the synagogue with great fanfare.

Pesach

Pesach, or Passover, commemorates the 'passing over' of the houses of the Israelites as God seized the firstborn of the Egyptians (Ex 12:21–30). The laws of *Pesach* revolve around eating. No leavened food is eaten, and all leaven (rising agents, such as yeast) is removed from Jewish houses. At this time, Jews eat *matzah* or unleavened bread. The *Pesach* meal, called the Seder, invites the participant not merely to remember the bitterness of slavery in Egypt and the sweetness of deliverance, but to relive it. It is intended that each person at the Seder becomes captivated by the liturgy of the meal, so that they see themselves as actually having gone forth from Egypt. This makes the Seder an exciting personal and family experience. Along with the recitation of the *Pesach Haggadah*, special foods are eaten. *Pesach* is very widely practised, being celebrated by Jews of every degree of religious commitment. Many Jews attend the synagogue every day during the week-long period of *Pesach* (eight days in the Diaspora).

Shavuot

Otherwise known as Pentecost or Weeks because it occurs seven weeks after *Pesach*, *Shavuot* commemorates the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is also described in the Torah as a harvest festival (Ex 23:16). It is customary for dairy meals to be eaten on *Shavuot*, a symbol that Torah is the basic spiritual nourishment, just as milk is the most basic food. Tradition also offers the story that having received the dietary laws from Moses at Sinai, the people could only eat dairy foods, as it took time to organise the ritual slaughter of their cattle. The Ten Commandments are read in the synagogue on *Shavuot*. In Progressive Judaism, *Shavuot* is often the time designated for confirmation ceremonies for young people.

Post-biblical festivals

- *Chanukah* marks the rededication of the Temple at the end of the Maccabean Revolt of the second century BCE (1 Macc 4:36–58). During *Chanukah*, the *chanukiyah*, or eight-branched *menorah*, is lit, one candle each day. The tradition is that on reclaiming the desecrated Temple, there was only enough pure oil for the lamp in the Temple to burn one day, but miraculously it lasted eight days, by which time more oil could be procured.
- *Purim*, or the Festival of Lots, has as its main feature the *Megillah*, a handwritten scroll of the Book of Esther. Whenever the name of the evil Haman is mentioned in the reading of the *Megillah* in the synagogue, people will stamp and even boo and whistle to drown out his name. (In the Book of Esther, Haman plotted to destroy the Jews in Persia – the people were saved by the intervention of Mordecai and Esther.) There is a great carnival mood, with eating and drinking and the giving of gifts of food to neighbours or friends (see Esth 9:20–23).
- *Tisha B'Av* – simply meaning the ninth day of the month of Av – is the saddest day of the Jewish year. It is a day of fast, commemorating the destruction of the First and Second Temples. The 25 hours of fasting is accompanied by many of the practices of Jewish mourning, and the Book of Lamentations, known as *Eichah*, is read in a dimly lit synagogue. *Tisha B'Av* ends a three-week period of mourning, during which time no celebrations may take place.
- *Yom ha-Shoah*, the Day of the **Holocaust**, is a solemn day of remembrance for the victims of the Holocaust. Being a recent addition to the religious calendar, rituals and symbols associated with the day are still developing. Of course, the fact that the Holocaust happened in the lifetime of living Jews heightens the poignancy of the day in the contemporary religious calendar of Judaism.

▷ For information on the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption, see page 320.

- *Yom ha-Atzma'ut* is Israel Independence Day. A nation's Independence Day may not ordinarily be seen as a day primarily of religious significance, but the connection between the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 and the traditional Jewish hope for the restoration of the Promised Land makes *Yom ha-Atzma'ut* a powerful symbol of Jewish hope.

How does the synagogue express the beliefs of Judaism?

Synagogue worship centres on reading and veneration of the Torah, and the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah are surely at the very heart of Judaism. Jewish belief in the **incorporeal** nature of God is reflected in the fact that images of God are absent from synagogues. Jewish belief that God must be worshipped finds its public expression in the synagogue. As education and social centres offering community outreach programs, synagogues are living expressions of Jewish belief.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** 'ritual'.
2. **Describe** the synagogue service.
3. **Identify** the role of the synagogue in each cycle of Jewish festivals and High Holy Days.
4. **Demonstrate** how synagogue rituals reflect the beliefs of Judaism.
5. **Analyse** the significance of synagogue services for:
   - **a** the individual
   - **b** the Jewish community.

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EXTENSION

1. In pairs, conduct a brief discussion in which you **appreciate** why a thoroughly modern Jewish person may value the conservatism and tradition inherent in an Orthodox synagogue service. Write the points from your discussion and share them with others in your class.
2. Using the illustration on page 313 as a guide and being faithful to the requirements of Judaism as you understand them, **construct** a sketch of a synagogue space that you believe best meets the need for meaningful public devotion.
3. **Compare** and **contrast** a typical Orthodox and a typical Progressive synagogue service. What impact did the COVID-19 restrictions in 2020 have on the rituals at each service? In your answer, make reference to material you have studied here, as well as what you know of Orthodox and Progressive Judaism from Chapter 6 (see pages 102–4). A helpful weblink is provided.

Weblink
My Jewish Learning: Prayer

Marriage

GLOSSARY

aliyah Literally means 'going up'. *Aliyah* is the calling of a member of the congregation to read from the Torah scroll in the synagogue service.

Bet Din A rabbinical court, usually consisting of three judges, responsible for making judgements on matters of *halachah*. Because disputes between Jews should be contained within the community, the *Bet Din* plays an important role as a private court of arbitration.

chuppah The canopy under which a Jewish wedding takes place. It is sometimes a large *tallit* held overhead by four men, but more often it is an elaborately decorated canopy supported by four poles.

get The formal Jewish bill of divorce. The *get* is handed over by a husband to his wife, although either party can take the first steps to arrange divorce proceedings.

halachah The Jewish legal tradition, grounded in the 613 commandments of the Torah.

ketubbah The Jewish marriage contract. Traditionally written in Aramaic, it sets out the responsibilities of the husband and makes financial guarantees for the wife should the husband die or divorce her.

mikvah A Jewish ritual bath. A *mikvah* must contain a prescribed amount of 'living water', usually rain or spring water. The *mikvah* is used for ritual purification, by women after menstruation, and by many Orthodox Jews prior to *Shabbat* and the Holy Days.

tallit A fringed, four-cornered Jewish prayer shawl (see Num 15:38–39). It is most frequently white in colour, with blue, black or deep purple stripes. It is used by males in daily morning prayer.

yichud The few minutes that the bride and groom spend alone together immediately after the wedding ceremony.

The rites and rituals that surround the traditional Jewish marriage ceremony between a woman and a man derive from instructions of the rabbis in the Talmud. Inasmuch as the Talmud, and the ***halachah*** it gives rise to, are grounded in the commandments of the Torah, then it is true to say – as in all aspects of Jewish life – that the Jewish wedding ceremony is grounded in Torah principles. Certainly, there are many of the 613 *mitzvot* of the Torah that refer specifically to marriage – around permissible and taboo sexual relations, duties and obligations of husband and wife, and the responsibility to bear children. There is even a *mitzvah* that the newly married couple be free to enjoy each other's company for a year! Unlike some other religious traditions, where the status of the celibate individual is held in high esteem, in Judaism there is an expectation that each man and woman will eventually marry and contribute to the ongoing growth and success of the community.

> When a man is newly married, he shall not go out with the army or be charged with any related duty. He shall be free at home one year, to be happy with the wife whom he has married.
>
> Deut 24:5

There is no direct Jewish equivalent of an 'engagement' as commonly practised in Western society. The couple simply make an announcement of their intention to marry. In some more traditional religious communities, this is followed by formal negotiations and agreements made about the time, place and nature of the wedding ceremony and the financial arrangements for the marriage. In the modern Jewish wedding, the betrothal (engagement) and the marriage itself take place as two parts of the one ceremony.

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FIGURE 14.3.3 **Bride and groom under a *chuppah* at an Orthodox Jewish wedding. They hold together their *ketubbah* (see Figure 14.3.4).**

The marriage ceremony takes place under a canopy, called the ***chuppah***. It may take place outdoors or in a synagogue. It can be held on any day except *Shabbat* or the High Holy Days. Strictly speaking, under Jewish Law, a marriage can be completed without a rabbi, but in practical terms, given that the laws of the state require a marriage official, a rabbi generally presides.

On the *Shabbat* preceding the wedding, the groom is entitled to an ***aliyah***, a calling to read the Torah in the synagogue. This is an occasion for great rejoicing. In Reform congregations, the bride is also called to *aliyah*.

The Torah requires the bride to immerse in the ***mikvah***, or ritual bath, prior to the marriage. On the day of the wedding, both bride and groom fast. They are starting out on a new life and seek forgiveness for past sins. In this sense, the wedding day has some similarities to *Yom Kippur*.

The wearing of a bride's veil is prescribed in the Jewish wedding, in imitation of Rebekah, who donned the veil as she approached her groom, Isaac (Gen 24:65). The wearing of a white dress is also customary in the Jewish wedding. Chasidic grooms will also wear a white coat. In some communities, the groom wears a ***tallit***. White is, as it is in many cultures, a reminder of the purity and sanctity of marriage.

FIGURE 14.3.4 A sample of a *ketubbah*. The text of the *ketubbah* was once composed by the sages, and it varies in its details in different Jewish communities. The composition of a *ketubbah* (the right indication of names, dates and so on) is usually done by a rabbi.

A ***ketubbah***, or marriage contract, is prepared and signed by witnesses. The *ketubbah* sets out the responsibilities of the groom to his bride in marriage and states what maintenance will be due to the wife in the case of divorce. In the presence of witnesses, the groom accepts the obligations contained in the *ketubbah*. He indicates his acceptance by taking hold of a handkerchief or some other garment given to him by the officiating rabbi. He is then escorted to the *chuppah* by his father and the bride's father.

The bride's mother and the groom's mother escort the bride to the *chuppah*, where she stands on the groom's right. There are blessings over wine, then the ring is placed on the bride's right index finger and the groom recites the consecration in Hebrew, a declaration that in English means: 'Behold you are consecrated to me with this ring according to the Law of Moses and Israel.'

The *ketubbah* is read and then presented to the bride, followed by the singing of the seven wedding blessings. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the husband smashes a glass under his foot – even in their joy, the Jewish people remember the destruction of the Temple and the suffering of others.

Less traditional weddings may introduce some measure of mutuality, with the exchange of rings and the exchange of the words of consecration.

▷ See page 305 for information about the reception of Jewish same-sex marriage in Australia when the Australian Marriage Act changed following the 2017 national plebiscite.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, there is the ***yichud***. The new husband and wife retire to a private room for a short time, guarded by witnesses. They may break their fast together; originally, it may have been the time when the marriage was consummated. When the couple emerge, they share a banquet with their wedding guests.

Divorce is allowed in Judaism, although it is seen as a tragedy. Either party can approach the ***Bet Din*** for a divorce, but the husband must initiate the writing of the bill of divorce, the ***get***. The divorce requires the consent of both parties. The *Bet Din* is recognised as authoritative by the secular law in Australia; there have been cases where the Family Court of Australia has ordered a party to a civil divorce to appear before a *Bet Din*. The court recognised that, without the *get*, the party that wished to live by the Jewish Law would not be able to marry again.

DID YOU KNOW?

The custom of lavishly decorating the *ketubbah* is relatively recent, being just four centuries old. The illustrations traditionally depict scenes from the Bible and themes relating to courtship and marriage. The art form reached its height in Italy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, where illuminated *ketubbah* drew on the rich traditions of Renaissance and Baroque art.

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REVIEW

1 In your own words, **define** 'ritual'.
2 **Identify** the signs and symbols that are a part of the Jewish marriage rite.
3 **Demonstrate** how the rituals in the marriage rite reflect the beliefs of Judaism.
4 **Analyse** the significance of the Jewish marriage ritual for:
   a the individual
   b the Jewish community.

EXTENSION

1 What is the status of Jewish marriage in Australian Law?
2 **Construct** a modern *ketubbah* of your own that, in its use of words and symbols, reflects fundamental Jewish beliefs and Jewish beliefs about marriage. Some helpful weblinks are provided.
3 **Assess** the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on the rituals of Jewish marriage.

Weblinks
My Jewish Learning: The Ketubah

My Jewish Learning: Weddings and marriage

Death and mourning

GLOSSARY

Chevra Kadisha Aramaic for 'Holy Fellowship'. The Chevra Kadisha is the Jewish burial society that takes charge of the ritual matters associated with death and burial. Admission to the membership of the Chevra Kadisha, in consideration for the sacred work it does, is among the highest religious honours a Jew can attain.

kaddish The sanctifying prayer that praises God and asks for God's peace. *Kaddish* is not said alone, but always in community. Since the thirteenth century, *kaddish* has been the prayer said by mourners. It does not make mention of the dead, but it is an acceptance by the mourner of the divine judgement.

mitzvah (plural ***mitzvot***) Hebrew word meaning commandment. There are 613 *mitzvot* in the Torah.

Shabbat (Sabbath) The seventh day of the week, from sunset on Friday evening until nightfall on Saturday.

shivah The period of mourning following death.

tzitzit The fringes of the *tallit*. Rich in religious and numerological symbolism, the *tzitzit* reminds its wearer of the importance of the 613 commandments contained within the Jewish Law.

Death

In Judaism, death is not a tragedy, even when it occurs early in life or through unfortunate circumstances. Death is a natural process. Death, like life, has meaning and is all part of God's plan. Jews have a firm belief in an afterlife, a world to come, where those who have led a worthy life will be rewarded.

Mourning practices in Judaism are extensive, but they are not an expression of fear or distaste for death. Jewish practices relating to death and mourning have two purposes: to show respect for the dead (*kavod ha-met*), and to comfort the living (*nihum avelin*), who will miss the deceased.

In death, as in life, Jews seek to retain the dignity of the individual. The dead body is like the damaged Torah scroll – no longer fit for its intended purpose but nonetheless a sacred thing and deserving of care and reverence in its putting to rest. Burial is arranged immediately upon death. The saying of prayers, particularly Psalms 23 and 91, is common, as are the lighting of a candle by the deceased and the 'watching' of the body. The body is never left alone until after burial as a sign of respect. The people who sit with the body are called *shomerim*, meaning 'guards' or 'keepers'. Respect for the dead body is a matter of paramount importance. For example, the *shomerim* may not eat, drink or perform a commandment in the presence of the dead. To do so would be considered mocking the dead, because the dead can no longer do these things.

The **Chevra Kadisha**, the Jewish burial society, takes charge of the ritual matters associated with death and burial. The Sydney Chevra Kadisha, established about 1817, is the oldest Jewish institution in Australia. Admission to membership of the Chevra Kadisha, in consideration for the sacred work it does, is among the greatest ***mitzvah*** a Jew can perform.

The Chevra Kadisha is called immediately a person has died. Jewish burial must be not delayed, so members of the Chevra Kadisha will come immediately to take the body away. They ensure that the body is guarded at all times until its final burial. The body is cleaned by people of the same sex as the deceased, and then ritually purified with a prescribed amount of water – approximately 30 litres. The body is dressed in linen garments like those that were worn by the high priest in ancient days. This signifies that we are all equal before God, irrespective of our status in life. A man is wrapped in his *tallit*, which has had its fringes, or ***tzitzit***, rendered invalid (cut or torn).

The body is placed in a simple wooden coffin that contains no nails. In this way, it can be assured that the coffin will break down easily, allowing the body to

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FIGURE 14.3.5 *Tzitzit* and *tallit*

be against the earth, as required in the *halachah*. In Israel, Orthodox Jews generally wrap the body only in interwoven reeds. In the Diaspora, some earth from Jerusalem is usually placed in the coffin with the body. Sometimes the body is taken to Israel for burial; in that way, the dead will be closer to the place from which the Messiah will launch the resurrection of the dead on the Day of Judgement. It is most typical among the Jewish community in Australia today for the tombstone to be simple and of like kind to the other tombstones in the Jewish burial area. In this way it is symbolically shown that, in death, all are equal before God.

> We need not erect monuments to the righteous; their deeds are their monuments.
>
> *Genesis Rabbah* 32:10

The funeral itself should take place within 24 hours of death. A tear is made in the garments of the close relatives. Prayers are said for the dead person, and the body is taken to a consecrated Jewish burial ground. Husbands and wives are buried beside each other, highlighting, in death as well as in life, the importance of marriage and the family to Judaism. Earth is thrown upon the coffin by those present – often, until the grave is filled. The ***kaddish*** is recited, which requires a *minyan* (quorum of 10 adult males). The mourners wash their hands after the burial.

> May the Lord comfort you among all who mourn in Zion and Jerusalem.
>
> Traditional greeting for mourners

DID YOU KNOW?

Jewish law requires that a tombstone be prepared so that the deceased will not be forgotten and the grave will not be desecrated. It is customary in some communities to keep the tombstone veiled, or to delay putting it up, until the end of the 12-month mourning period. The idea underlying this custom is that the dead will not be forgotten when they are being mourned every day. In communities where this custom is observed, there is generally a formal unveiling ceremony.

Mourning

After the burial, a period of mourning begins. A meal of consolation (*se'udat havra'ah*) is shared by the chief mourners, close relatives of the deceased. This meal traditionally consists of hard-boiled eggs (a symbol of life) and bread. After this time, condolence calls are permitted. The mourners will remain at home, preferably all together in the deceased's home, for seven days – this period is known as ***shivah*** (seven). They will not sit on chairs, only low stools. Hair will not be cut, nor new clothes worn, and male mourners will not shave. Mirrors in the house are covered. Prayer services are held where the *shivah* is held, with friends, neighbours and relatives making up the *minyan*. On the first ***Shabbat*** after the burial, the mourners will attend the synagogue and repeat the *kaddish* prayer, which has already been recited at the funeral.

Intense mourning ceases after seven days. After the death of close relatives, a period of 30 days of semi-mourning (*shloshim*) follows. During that time, the mourners do not attend parties or celebrations, do not shave or cut their hair, and do not listen to music. The final period of formal mourning is *avelut*, which is observed only for a parent. For 11 months of that period, starting at the time of burial, the son of the deceased recites the mourner's *kaddish* every day. A person is permitted to recite *kaddish* for other close relatives as well as parents, but only if his parents have died.

Alamy Stock Photo/Charles LUPICA

FIGURE 14.3.6 It is a Jewish custom to place a pebble on the gravestone of a loved one. It is left as a mark of respect and remains long after the physical visit to the gravesite as a reminder of the commitment of the living to remember their dead.

DID YOU KNOW?

It is customary not to wear leather shoes during the seven days of *shivah*. This is because they are considered a luxury in the Talmud (*Yora Deah*).

Mourner's *kaddish*

May His great Name grow exalted and sanctified in the world that He created as he willed.
May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days, and in the lifetimes of the entire family of Israel, swiftly and soon.
May His great Name be blessed forever and ever.

Blessed, praised, glorified, exalted, extolled, mighty, upraised, and lauded be the Name of the Holy One, Blessed is He beyond any blessing and song, praise and consolation that are uttered in the world.

May there be abundant peace from Heaven, and life upon us and upon all Israel.

He Who makes peace in His heights, may he make peace, upon us and upon all Israel.

After the *avelut* period is complete, the family of the deceased are not permitted to continue formal mourning. There are, however, a few continuing acknowledgements of the deceased. Each year, on the anniversary of the death, family members observe the deceased's anniversary (*Yahrzeit*): sons recite *kaddish* and bless the Torah reading in synagogue if possible, and all mourners light a candle in honour of the deceased that burns for 24 hours.

DID YOU KNOW?

Kaddish is commonly known as a mourner's prayer, but in fact, variations on the *kaddish* prayer are routinely recited at many other times. The *kaddish* is not actually a prayer for the dead, but an affirmation of belief in God's justice; it asks for God's peace on earth, as it is in heaven. The real mourner's prayer is *El Molai Rachamim*, which is recited at grave sites and during funerals.

REVIEW

1. Follow the weblink to Sydney Chevra Kadisha. Identify and note down at least three new facts about the operation of the Chevra Kadisha about which you were not aware.
2. Visit Jewish websites to learn more about Jewish death and burial. Of particular interest is a Guide to Jewish Funerals at one of the links provided.
3. Prepare a brief summary from your visit to these or other sites under the heading: 'What is important to Jews in death, burial and mourning'.
4. Assess the impact of COVID-19 restrictions on Jewish rituals for death and burial.
5. a. List all the symbolic elements of rituals associated with Jewish death, burial and mourning. Which of these rituals were impacted during 2020 and how were these challenges overcome?
   b. Based on what you understand to be important in Judaism, rank these elements in order of importance.
   c. How would Judaism be different if the order of importance was reversed?

Weblinks
Sydney Chevra Kadisha

Guide to Jewish Funerals

Judaism 101: Life, Death and Mourning

The *Shoah*

No study of the development and expression of Judaism would be complete without reference to the ways in which events of the twentieth century – most particularly, the Holocaust – have affected the Jewish community. With reference to Australia, the fact that the Jewish community is an immigrant community means that events on a European stage affected the Jewish community more powerfully than other Australian communities. The 2017 Gen17 study of the Australian Jewish community indicated that, in fact, remembering the Holocaust was 'very important' or 'fairly important' for 96 per cent of Sydney and Melbourne Jews across all streams of the tradition, the strongest of all the measured dimensions of Jewish identity.

Consequences of the Holocaust

The most significant wave of Jewish immigration in the twentieth century took place immediately before and after the Second World War, when the Australian Jewish community doubled in size. That wave of immigration was precipitated by increased sanctions against Jews in Germany with the election of Hitler in 1933 and then the Holocaust, known in Hebrew as the *Shoah* (total destruction). The Nazi destruction of European Jewry (1942–45) saw the murder of six million Jews.

It is supremely ironic that the Holocaust united Jews despite all the differences between Jewish groups and ideologies. It made no difference to the Nazis whether Jews were Orthodox or Progressive, assimilated or Chasidic. All Jews were to be exterminated. All Jews suffered.

The Holocaust has irrevocably refashioned Jewish self-understanding.

> So comprehensively methodical was the Nazi assault as to be all-but-irresistible: hence preoccupation with 'why didn't they fight?' … is as unhealthy as it is false to the facts. Nevertheless, victims did resist the all-but-irresistible assault: hence any attempt by the victims to stay alive, to retain their dignity, to resist-in-faith despite despair must be reverently remembered.
>
> Emil Fackenheim, 'The commanding voice of Auschwitz', *Generation*, 2(2), 1991, p. 31

Australian Jewish responses to the Holocaust

In remembering the Holocaust today, Jews feel that they were there, at Auschwitz or the other Nazi concentration camps. They are transformed in time and place; this transforming element makes remembering the Holocaust a sacred event for modern Jews. To exist as a Jew, to survive and prosper beyond Hitler, is to deny Hitler a posthumous victory.

Some Jews argue that this view leads to the danger of making the Holocaust the foundation of Jewish life. Jews live today despite the Holocaust – not because of it. All views acknowledge the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 as giving hope for the future of Judaism – a view that is very strong in the Australian Jewish community. There are nearly 20 different Australia–Israel organisations operating in New South Wales alone. The state Zionist councils, the Jewish Community Council of Victoria and

the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies all date from around this time.

The *Shoah* delivered to the existing Australian Jewish community a surge of Jewish refugees and a sense of urgent purpose that resulted in significant cultural and religious growth.

The Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption

There is a new kind of Judaism after the Holocaust. It is what one US scholar and rabbi, Jacob Neusner, has called the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption. The focus of the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption is a deep affection for the modern State of Israel. It is different from Zionism: it does not insist that those outside Israel, in places like Australia, are in exile; but it connects the Holocaust and the State of Israel in a mythical way. The redemption from the evil of the Holocaust is the formation of the State of Israel. In the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption, Jews are called to support and proclaim modern Israel in public life; it is a religion that is not a mere private matter of conscience. The Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption strangely turns the dictum of the Jewish Enlightenment – to be a Jew at home, and assimilated in public – on its head. In the Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption, one is called to be a Jew in public, but one might well be quite indistinguishable from other Australians at home.

The Judaism of Holocaust and Redemption is a new dimension to Jewish religion. It even has its own 'religious' occasions; for example, *Yom ha-Shoah* and *Yom ha-Atzma'ut*, both of which are widely acknowledged in Jewish schools in Australia and in the Jewish community generally. This kind of Judaism sometimes complements, and sometimes contrasts with, the Judaism of the dual Torah, which has sustained Jews in the home and in the synagogue for 2000 years.

EXTENSION

1. **Discuss** the ways in which the Holocaust has had an impact on Judaism generally, and Judaism as it is lived in Australia.
2. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
3. **Synthesise** the main features related to Jewish people, ideas, ethics and practices in this chapter in the form of a flow chart or mind map. Include the completed mind map in your HSC revision notes to revisit when you are preparing for your exam.

© Copyright 2019 March of the Living Australia, All Rights Reserved. Photograph by Yoav Lester, taken at Auschwitz-Birkenau, Poland, on 2019 Adult March of the Living program.

FIGURE 14.3.7 Australians at Auschwitz, participating in the international March of the Living, an annual three-kilometre walk from Auschwitz 1 to Birkenau – both sites of former Nazi concentration camps in Poland. In the week following the walk, participants travel to Israel to participate in Israel's Independence Day celebrations. The 2017 Gen 17 Australian Jewish Survey reported that 'remembering the Holocaust' is the most important element of Jewish identity for Australian Jews. 'Combatting antisemitism,' 'learning Jewish history,' 'feeling part of the Jewish people worldwide' and 'visiting Israel' ranked third, fourth, sixth and eighth respectively.

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14 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section II

Studies of Religion I: answer **one** question from this section.

Studies of Religion II: answer **two** questions from **two** different religious traditions in this section.

Question 1 – Judaism (15 marks)

a **i** Briefly outline **one** significant practice from Judaism within **one** of the following:

- Death and mourning
- Marriage
- Synagogue service

3 MARKS

ii Explain the significance of the practice selected in (a) (i) for the Jewish community.

4 MARKS

b *You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*

Leviticus 19:2

How do the ethical teachings of Judaism guide adherents to live *holy* lives? In your response, refer to **one** of the following ethical areas:

- Bioethics
- Environmental ethics
- Sexual ethics

8 MARKS

Section III

Question 3 – Judaism (20 marks)

No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

Deuteronomy 30:14

How do the sacred texts and writings of Judaism guide adherents to follow God?

Additional Section III Question

No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

Deuteronomy 30:14

To what extent are the contributions of **one** significant person **or** school of thought, other than Moses and Abraham, reflected in the stimulus?

22 INDICATIVE HOURS

15

Religion and peace

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **investigate** the understanding of peace in two religious traditions and how their sacred texts inform this understanding
- **outline** the principal teachings about peace in these same two traditions
- **demonstrate** how these same two traditions guide the individual in achieving inner peace
- **discuss** how these same two traditions are contributing to world peace.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheet

- Peace in the Abrahamic sacred texts (p. 343)

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Fairfax Syndications/Justin McManus

In September 2019, hundreds of thousands of school students participated in rallies held across Australia as part of a global mass day of action demanding action on the climate crisis. Students again rallied to demand action on 21 May 2021.

RESPOND

A quick brainstorm: what does the climate crisis have to do with peace?

NOTE

This whole study is to be completed within two religious traditions. At the end of your investigations of peace in two religious traditions, go to 15.5 'No simple answers' on page 347.

The title of this unit is 'Religion and peace', and a good place to start is to look at these two words. As has been demonstrated throughout this course, there is no universal way to define religion; and defining peace poses many difficulties.

The broad definition of peace that usually first comes to mind is a negative one: we view it as an absence of war. Seeking peace in the modern world, however, is much more complex than simply the absence of war. A critical element for a culture of peace is social justice – and social justice means equality and solidarity. The United Nations believes that social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations.

DID YOU KNOW?

The 2020 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to the World Food Program (wfp.org), an agency of the United Nations. The organisation won the prize for its contribution 'to bettering conditions for peace in conflict-affected areas' by preventing the use of hunger as a weapon of armed conflict.

> I think that peace means cooperation and understanding between groups or communities who may not always agree with each other. Most obviously, peace is an absence of violence, but I think it can also be more subtle, creating a sense of safety that allows people to express themselves freely. This would mean that peace also requires tolerance of different religions, races and gender identities, not just by individuals, but by the government and the media as well. I think the maintenance of peace is very difficult because everyone has their own biases and grievances depending on their individual life experiences, and it can be very hard to put these aside for the wellbeing of a person or group that you hardly know. However, I think that the threat of war actually encourages people to try and make amends, as they are conscious that retaliation or provocation could lead to permanent destruction on both sides. For me, this means that the defence of peace also requires the defence of your enemy or the defence of a stranger, so there is definitely an element of courage involved as well.
>
> Ruth, aged 18, September 2020

Maybe, instead of trying to define peace, it would be more profitable to speak of peacefulness – being at peace, having a sense of security. Is a peaceful world one where people have political security, economic security, climate security, food and water security? Would it be better to discuss how religious traditions are contributing to a more peaceful world, rather than to the ephemeral 'world peace'?

DID YOU KNOW?

In July 2020, echoing the United Nations Security Council appeal for a global ceasefire, the Vatican issued a call for global disarmament during the COVID-19 pandemic, and for investment in what were described as peacemaking measures such as healthcare, food security and the environment:

> In the light of the emergency, complexity and interconnected challenges arisen from the pandemic, we could conclude that human and financial resources and technology should be used to protect lives and the planet and not to kill people and ecosystems.

EXTENSION

1 'A critical element for a culture of peace is social justice.' What is meant by a 'culture of peace'?
2 Brainstorm the difficulties you might encounter in your study of religion and peace.
3 Construct a mind map of your brainstorm from the previous question. Add to your mind map as you study this chapter.

15.1 Buddhism

Getty Images/ABDUL MAJEED

FIGURE 15.1.1 The chief Buddhist monk of the *Sangha* Supreme Council of Thailand, Most Venerable Arayawangso, rings the Peace Bell installed at the Peshawar Museum during his visit to Pakistan, 30 October 2019.

RESPOND

Why is it significant that a Buddhist monk from Thailand rang a Peace Bell in Pakistan?

Buddhism has become widely known in the West over the past 100 years as a 'religion of peace'. This perception is strengthened by images of the Buddha and monks in meditational poses of tranquillity and repose. More recently this perception has been aided by the popularity of 'mindfulness' as a mode of fostering mental calmness and of 'living in the now'. Many organisations have sprung up, especially in the West, promoting the cause of peace from a Buddhist perspective.

> … living without hatred amongst those who hate, the calmed person leaves behind victory and defeat.
>
> *Dhammapada* 15.197

> World peace must develop from inner peace. Peace is not just mere absence of violence. Peace is, I think, the manifestation of human compassion.
>
> 14th Dalai Lama

> Root out the violence in your life, and learn to live compassionately and mindfully. Seek peace. When you have peace within, real peace with others is possible.
>
> Thich Nhat Hạnh

▷ It is recommended that you read through sections 2.3 'Sacred texts and writings' and 2.4 'Core ethical teachings' of Chapter 2 before beginning this unit.

The Buddhist understanding of peace

GLOSSARY

Jains An ascetic group focused heavily on nonviolence

The relationship between Buddhist teachings and peaceful attitudes seems reasonably clear. Yet, taking into consideration the historical context of Buddhist countries over the past two and a half thousand years, the

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teachings have not universally translated into widespread peaceful attitudes, either at a personal or a collective level. Nonetheless, especially in the second half of the twentieth century, two prominent Buddhists – the 14th Dalai Lama and the Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh – have written and spoken extensively about peace. They have succeeded in directly connecting an attitude of peace at both the national and the individual level to Buddhist teachings and meditational practices, and have universalised the Buddha's message about peace. In this way they have helped to foster the impression that Buddhism is a 'religion of peace'.

Words for peace

The most common word for 'peace' in ancient Indian languages is *śānti*, deriving from the verb *śam* – 'to toil at, stop, rest, be calm'. The Pali equivalents are *santa* and *santi*. This word brings together a sense of calmness, tranquillity and restraint within the individual person, defining a person's state of mind. While the person who is in a state of *śānta* could be described as being peaceful, this does not necessarily mean they bring peace to others. It can be essentially self-regarding.

The word *ahiṃsa*, or 'not wishing to injure', which has come to mean nonviolence, represents a specific attitude to be applied towards both oneself and others. Nonviolence towards living things was developing as a doctrine central to the various ascetic groups in India from about 500 BCE. The Jains were the most extreme in this regard and, while other groups were less stringent, they still focused on the bad *karma* that inevitably arose from any act of violence, and on the lack of mental control producing violence. In this sense, the intention leading to violence was as important as the act itself – a point stressed in all early Indian religions.

DID YOU KNOW?

Jain monks walked along sweeping the ground before them to avoid destroying insects. They also wore masks to avoid breathing any insects in and thus doing them harm.

Peace in early Buddhist texts

The *Dhammapada*, a collection of sayings designed for both laypeople and monks, lays out how a person should cultivate their mind in order to become calm. The verses selected here teach how the mind works and stress the need to control it. Only with this control is there a firm basis from which an attitude of peace towards others can be developed.

> By effort, awareness,
> Restraint and self-control,
> The wise one should make an island,
> Which the flood will not overwhelm.
>
> 2.25

This verse might seem to imply that 'the wise man' is active, but it is activity applied to the mind, rather than physical actions. The body follows the mind, which must first be controlled, because it is so fickle. The ideal state is described in this verse:

> Calm (*santam*) is the mind
> And calm (*santā*) the speech and actions.
> Of such a one, perfectly calm (*upasanta*),
> Who is freed through right knowledge.
>
> 7.96

The sense of calmness this verse describes is a disciplined and calmed state, not one that necessarily occurs naturally. Such a person does not seek control over other things, and this absence of desire is prerequisite for a mind that is not violent in any sense. A series of verses recommends 'self-conquest rather than conquest of others' (8.104), 'living without hatred amongst those who hate, the calmed person (*upasanta*) leaves behind victory and defeat' (15.197). And finally, the result of nonviolence for the person's future is spelled out:

> Those sages who abstain from harm (*ahinsaka*),
> Ever restrained in body.
> Go to the imperishable state.
> Whence go those who don't grieve.
>
> 17.225

EXTENSION

In groups, **evaluate** the idea that a sense of mental calmness is the equivalence of a peaceful attitude.

Principal teachings about peace

The ideal state of the mind is calmness; its opposite is unfocused mental attitudes, which produce violence, both physical and psychological. While the recommendations about mental control are directed towards everyone in society, the literature accepts that for most people the kinds of attitudes producing violence would still be present. To counter this, the Buddha developed the idea of *metta* or 'friendly benevolence', a state of mind individuals should attempt to communicate beyond themselves. *Metta* is both a form of peace and a means of promoting further peace.

For calmness to be more than just a state of repose for the individual, it needs to be expressed in a dynamic manner beneficial to other people. The dynamic use of *santa/śānti* benefits society as a whole. If enough people can cultivate this state of mind, levels of aggression will fall dramatically and lead to a more peaceful society. The *Mettasutta* of the *Suttanipata* is a short statement of nine verses that brings out the positive side of the calmed mind through cultivation of *metta*. While emphasis is still placed on mind states, the extension of an application of this state outside of oneself is expressed as nonviolence in the broadest possible terms.

> One man should not humiliate another; one should not despise anyone anywhere. One should not wish another misery because of anger or from the notion of repugnance. 148

> Just as a mother would protect with her life her own son, her only son, so one should cultivate an unbounded mind towards all beings, 149
>
> and loving-kindness (*mettam*) towards all the world. One should cultivate an unbounded mind, above and below and across, without obstruction, without enmity, without rivalry. 150
>
> Standing or going, or seated, or lying down, as long as one is free from drowsiness, one should practice this mindfulness (*satim*). This, they say, is the holy state here. 151
>
> *The Group of Discourses (Sutta Pitaka, Dhammapada)*. Trans. K. R. Norman, Oxford, Pali Text Society, 2001, p.19

Metta is cultivated by *jhānic* meditation, where the meditator slows the mind down and allows it to focus on a particular object or state of mind, and then spreads it out to their immediate environment, eventually to the whole world. Spreading *metta* beyond oneself is an attempt to influence others of the benefit of a calmed mind, and is considered one practical mode for establishing peace.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, define the concept of *metta*.
2. Using the verses from the *Dhammapada* and *Sutta Pitaka* above, identify key understandings of peace in Buddhism.
3. The understanding of peace recommended in Buddhist texts is too individualistic to be practical. Discuss this statement.

Buddhism and violence

The Buddha and the first monks did not live in a world free of violence, just as most Buddhists do not now. All the textual evidence suggests the Buddha was a realist, fully aware that violence among humans was an integral part of life, especially when associated with political rule.

As a prominent holy man he was sought after for advice by the political and economic elites of his day, and he spread the message of restraint when dealing with those who could apply violence towards people. He knew some violence was inevitable in the process of ruling a kingdom, but he advised this should be carried out with the utmost restraint, both because of the effect it would have on the subjects and because of the negative effect it would have on the mind of the king/general himself. Buddhist literature shows that the intentional killing of living beings is always motivated by negative states of mind.

In the history of early Buddhism much attention is placed on the figure of Ashoka. After a particularly ferocious suppression of a rebellion in the eastern Indian province of Kalinga, Ashoka experienced a feeling of great remorse and progressively put into place policies that would promote peace and compassion towards all things, including animals. This did not mean there would be no punishment for crimes, but that such things would be applied with a maximum of restraint. In the inscriptions written and erected under his name the idea of *dhamma* he developed was one that integrated within itself compassion and self-restraint. Many scholars have argued this may have been one of the earliest applications of the Buddha's emphasis on nonviolence (see Online option A, 'Ashoka c. 304 – c. 232 BCE').

The monastic lifestyle

The Buddhist monastic lifestyle that developed after the Buddha's death was one that facilitated nonviolence in enabling the monk/nun to avoid constant interaction with the world outside of the monastery where violence did occur: animal sacrifices, eating meat, warfare and other state-sanctioned violence. The monastery was ideally a place for contemplation, learning and meditation, all conducive to a minimum of activity and leading to the cultivation of self-control, the normative attitude for manifesting a peaceful attitude in all things.

Historically, however, some monks have been warriors, and even more recently monks have been exponents of nationalistic fervour in both Thailand and Myanmar, resulting in considerable violence against Muslim minorities.

RESPOND

Clarify the meaning of 'nationalistic fervour' by providing an example from either Thailand or Burma (Myanmar).

Contemporary Buddhist teachings on peace

In all the countries where Buddhism has flourished, and in some South-East Asian countries where it has been the state religion, violence has occurred, both between individuals and due to state-sanctioned violence.

From the history of Buddhism within the countries where it has been the dominant religion, it is clear that forms of violence have been as prominent there as in countries where Buddhism has not been the dominant religion. The Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1949–50 and the Vietnam War (1955–75) have played a major role in bringing certain contemporary streams of Buddhism into connection with larger international peace movements. Buddhist teachings on peace have come to the fore, from Vietnam, with the work of Thich Nhat Hanh, and in the Tibetan diaspora in India, represented above all by the present (the 14th) Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

The change of media forms – especially television and the Internet – has also been crucial in enabling the message to be spread to a much wider audience.

Essentially, this affirmation of peace as integral to Buddhism is about the modernisation of Buddhism. It is probably the strongest push for peace as a dominant feature of Buddhism in the past 2000 years of its history.

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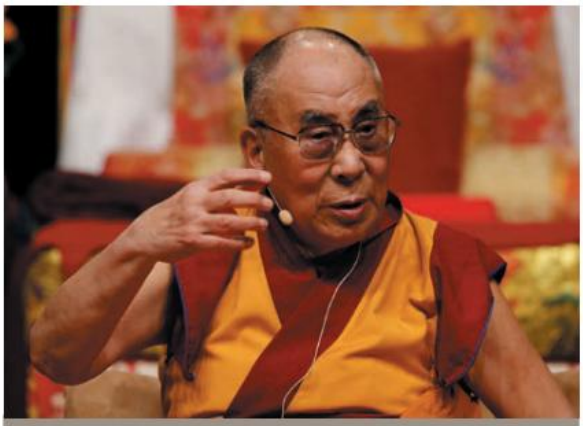
The 14th Dalai Lama

Initially, much that the present Dalai Lama (b. 1935) said about peace related directly to Tibet and what he sees as the destruction of a traditional way of life that had endured for at least 10 centuries until the Chinese invasion and takeover. As he travelled the world, however, he began to broaden his teachings in such a way that they could be related to what might be called the 'general human condition'. The basic teachings of Buddhism could provide an explanatory framework for the understanding of this condition and the manner in which this understanding could be used to develop a sense of individual and world peace.



Newspix/Mark Calleja

FIGURE 15.1.2 Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama, in Brisbane in 2015 during one of his 10 visits to Australia

In an address to the US Congressional Human Rights Caucus on 21 September 1987, he said, 'I speak to you today as the leader of the Tibetan people and as a Buddhist monk devoted to the principles of a religion based on love and compassion. Above all, I am here as a human being who is destined to share this planet with you and all others as brothers and sisters.' In the same speech he stressed the interdependence of the world and the need for peace at every level. Allusions to interdependence and the planet have become common themes in his more recent teachings, enabling him to develop a concern with climate change as an expression of Buddhist teaching.

In all of his teachings over the past four decades, the Dalai Lama has attempted to universalise the teaching he has derived from his own Buddhist background: 'However, I also have a more general and concrete idea of happiness: a combination of inner peace, economic development, and, above all, world peace. To achieve such goals, I feel it is necessary to develop a sense of universal responsibility, a deep concern for all irrespective of creed, colour, sex, or nationality.' In saying this, he goes somewhat beyond an emphasis on the individual mind, a personal quality. He is suggesting that world peace cannot be achieved without something external to the mind, namely economic equity. To eradicate suffering one must first deal with its source, which is in one's own mind.

The Dalai Lama's views on peace are motivated by what he calls 'love and compassion', which he regards as 'the moral fabric of world peace'. For him 'real love is not based on attachment, but on altruism. In this case your compassion will remain as a humane response to suffering as long as beings continue to suffer. This type of compassion is what we must strive to cultivate ...' He relates these teachings back to the Mahayanist tradition, yet the language resembles what is found in certain Christian teachings on peace. Altruism is an expression of love that takes it beyond the individual and becomes an expression of compassion and *metta*.

Weblinks
The Dalai Lama

Dalai Lama speaks

DID YOU KNOW?

The Dalai Lama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989. The citation read: 'In his struggle for the liberation of Tibet, he consistently has opposed the use of violence. He has instead advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people.'

Thich Nhat Hanh

▷ Thich Nhat Hanh is a significant person in Chapter 10, pages 207–9.

Like the Dalai Lama, Thich Nhat Hanh (b. 1926) has extended his teachings far beyond a traditional Buddhist audience. For instance, he has given talks to corporate leaders in the business and finance sectors, emphasising the importance of mindfulness, and in this he closely aligns himself with the Dalai Lama.

He emphasises the everyday condition of the mind, which requires spiritual cultivation to develop the calmness that is a precursor to a peaceful attitude. His aim is to instruct all people in the value of mindfulness and the role this can play in bringing world peace.

> By the way we live our daily life we contribute to peace or to war. It is mindfulness that can tell me that I am going in the direction of war and it is the energy of mindfulness that can help me to make a turn and to go in the direction of peace.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh, 'Dharma talk: Brotherhood = Reunification', 2003. The Mindfulness Bell

> Peace is not simply the absence of violence; it is the cultivation of understanding, insight and compassion, combined with action.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh, *Creating True Peace*, 2003

> War is not just the bombs falling on us. Every time you have a thought that is full of anger and misunderstanding – that is war. War can be manifested through our way of thinking, our way of speaking, and our way of acting. We may be living in war, not knowing that we are fighting with ourselves and the people around us. With the war in yourself and the war that you inflict on other people, there is suffering within you and there is suffering around you.
>
> Thich Nhat Hanh, 'Dharma talk: Brotherhood = Reunification', 2003. The Mindfulness Bell

And, like the Dalai Lama, he introduces the idea of the interdependence of people in the world. Everything is anchored back into the mind, but the development of compassion and wisdom can be transformed into an attitude of peace that will reach beyond the individual.

> We have to wake up to the fact that everything is connected to everything else. Our safety and wellbeing cannot be individual matters anymore … It is the mind of discrimination and separation that is at the foundation of all violence and hate …
>
> Every time we breathe in, go home to ourselves and bring the element of harmony and peace into ourselves, that is an act of peace. Every time we know how to look at another living being and recognize the suffering in him that has made him speak or act like that, we are able to see that he is the victim of his own suffering. When that understanding is in us, we can look at this other person with the eyes of understanding and compassion. When we can look with the eyes of compassion, we don't suffer and we don't make the other person suffer. These are the actions of peace that can be shared with other people.
>
> Address to the United States Congress, September 2003

In other words, Hanh is asking for a complete change of heart and a cultivation of perception which he specifically connects with peace. Compassion arises from understanding and communicates automatically to others. This then could be taken as the foundation of a peaceful life that extends beyond oneself.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 2015, Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh was awarded the *Pacem in Terris* Peace and Freedom Award by the Davenport (Iowa, USA) Catholic Interracial Council. The award was instituted 'to honour a person for their achievements in peace and justice, not only in their country but in the world.' This was the 50th anniversary of the presentation of the same award to Dr Martin Luther King Jr, who called Hanh 'an apostle of peace and nonviolence.'

REVIEW

1. Outline the principal Buddhist teachings about peace.
2. Explain how the modernisation of Buddhism represents an attempt to place a new emphasis on certain teachings of the Buddha.

Weblinks

The Art of Being Peace

War and Peace Within

EXTENSION

'Like the Dalai Lama, [Thich Nhat Hanh] introduces the idea of the interdependence of people in the world.' Using the material on Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama and your own research, deduce what this statement means. Answer in four concise sentences.

Contributing to world peace

The influence of Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama has spread well beyond those who follow the Buddhist path. Both have emphasised that 'inner peace' must be combined with action in the 'worldly' sphere – with economic development, for example – to provide tools for working towards a more peaceful world. As inspirational as both are, neither are leaders at a regional or global level, and that is where peaceful solutions to difficult issues have to be found.

South and South-East Asia are among the most religiously diverse regions in the world and are home to a humanitarian crisis, in the situation facing Rohingya refugees, and an environmental crisis – the effects of climate change. Nationalistic narratives and tensions are rising, particularly among Muslims and Buddhists. In November 2019, Buddhist and Muslim leaders from South and South-East Asia met at Cox's Bazar, in Bangladesh. They committed themselves to implementing the shared action plan of the 2015 Yogyakarta Statement on Shared Values and Commitments across the region. Importantly, they stated that '[the values] must be applied by religious actors to promote mutual understanding and tolerance amongst Buddhist and Muslim communities'. The conference was held under the banner of the International Forum on Buddhist–Muslim Relations (BMF).

International Forum on Buddhist–Muslim Relations (BMF)

On 16 June 2013, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), the International Movement for a Just World (JUST) and Religions for Peace (RfP) convened a consultative meeting in Bangkok on 'Contemporary Issues in Buddhist–Muslim Relations in South and South-East Asia.'

The 25 participants – Buddhist and Muslim religious leaders from South and South-East Asian countries – recognised the challenges facing the two communities in the region as:

- the rise of extremism, hate speech, hate campaigns and instigation leading to religious discrimination and violence
- prejudice, fear and hatred caused by ignorance, misperceptions, stereotypes, negative impact of traditional and social media, simplification and generalisation of ethnic issues and communal pressures
- misuse of religion by certain religious, political and other interest groups and individuals
- socioeconomic dimensions of conflict
- spill-over effects across the region.

The participants committed themselves to implementing a shared action plan across the region and to engaging in partnership with governments, intergovernmental bodies and the United Nations.

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As a result of this consultation, a permanent body named the International Forum on Buddhist–Muslim Relations (BMF) was formed, with these objectives:

- to serve as a platform for intra-religious and interreligious initiatives in education and advocacy
- to enable rapid reaction/solidarity visits/early warning/conflict prevention in the event of conflict
- to develop and provide tools and materials for constructive engagement and strategic common actions
- to develop the effective use of media for positive messaging, particularly via social and alternative media.

Weblink
BMF

At a local level, Buddhists in Australia engage in interfaith initiatives and social action to bring attention to issues that disturb the security of the community, the nation and the world.

And Buddhists are particularly active in what the United Nations calls 'Climate action for peace' through their involvement with the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC).

Uniting Church in Australia Assembly

FIGURE 15.1.3 Reverend Shigenobu Watanabe (third from left) represented Buddhists at an Interfaith Roundtable on Nuclear Disarmament on 24 February 2020, organised by the Nobel Prize–winning International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons.

> According to Buddhism, conflict, intolerance and disharmony arises out of desires, hatred and ignorance. To develop confidence, tolerance, and harmony it is extremely important to cultivate common values or universal ethics. Therefore, promotion of education, dialogue, social and economic development would lead for sustainable development of peace in the world.
>
> Ven. Dr Thampalawela Dhammaratana Thero, UNESCO consultant, address to the United Nations, May 2017

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)

FIGURE 15.1.4 Climate change rally, Melbourne, September 2019

REVIEW

1. How would you explain what 'inner peace' means for Buddhists?
2. Demonstrate how Buddhism can guide the individual to achieve inner peace and provide direction on how to contribute to world peace.
3. What support can you find for this guidance in the sacred writings of Buddhism?
4. Discuss how Buddhists are contributing to world peace in a specific situation or region.
5. Construct a mind map to draw together all the material in this section.

EXTENSION

1. Prepare a list of debating points to explain the importance of dialogue in working towards peaceful solutions to conflict. Justify which groups would be the most valuable participants in the dialogue.
2. Using the weblinks provided and others you know of, investigate the various ways Buddhist organisations/groups are involved in 'Climate action for peace'.

Weblinks
BMF

One Earth Sangha

Climate action for peace

RfP

rfpasia.org

15.2 Christianity

Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace

FIGURE 15.2.1 Act for Peace Sydney members participate in the Global Climate Strike, 23 September 2019. Act for Peace is the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia.

RESPOND

Deduce how the call for 'Climate Justice Now' relates to religion and peace.

'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not let them be afraid' (Jn 14:27). This is the core teaching Jesus gave to his disciples just hours before his death. Jesus' peace is not a concept or idea, it is his peace – the true homeland of the Christian. And he continues, 'I have said this to you, so that in me you may have peace. In the world you face persecution. But take courage; I have conquered the world!' (Jn 16:33)

The peace that was announced by Jesus is primarily peace of mind and heart: a state in which there is orderliness in one's relation to God and to others. Peace is what results from actively working towards right relationships between the individual, God and one's neighbour – the work of peacemaking, which Jesus singled out for blessing (Mt 5:9). Peacemaking is not something optional for Christians.

So, in theory, Christianity is a religion of peace. While the Church often officially spoke for peace, what was often, if not always, implied was a peace achieved by fighting 'just' wars or crusades. This meant wars that were conducted only under particular limits, rules, and conditions, and for particular goals.

> Saint Augustine, who forged a concept of 'just war' that we no longer uphold in our own day, also said that 'it is a higher glory still to stay war itself with a word, than to slay men with the sword, and to procure or maintain peace by peace, not by war'.
>
> Pope Francis in his encyclical letter 'Fratelli tutti' ('Fraternity and social friendship'), October 2020

▷ It is recommended you read through Chapter 3 Christianity before beginning this unit.

Peace in the sacred texts of Christianity

The Bible does not clearly answer questions of war and peace, but gives Christians guidelines on how to work for peace and justice.

Inner peace

> Do not adorn yourselves outwardly by braiding your hair, and by wearing gold ornaments or fine clothing; rather, let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in God's sight.
>
> 1 Peter 3:3–4

> I will both lie down and sleep in peace;
> for you alone, O LORD, make me lie down in safety.
>
> Ps 4:8

Peace with each other

> Salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.
>
> Mark 9:50

> Pursue peace with everyone, and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
>
> Hebrews 12:14

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Making peace

They have treated the wound of my people carelessly, saying, 'Peace, peace,' when there is no peace.

Jeremiah 6:14

Deceit is in the mind of those who plan evil, but those who counsel peace have joy.

Proverbs 12:20

Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual upbuilding.

Romans 14:19

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.

Matthew 5:9

God's peace

For God is a God not of disorder but of peace.

1 Corinthians 14:33

Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

2 Corinthians 13:11

And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:7

Love of neighbour

You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.

Exodus 22:21

Owe no one anything, except to love one another; for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery; You shall not murder; You shall not steal; You shall not covet'; and any other commandment, are summed up in this word, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.'

Romans 13:8–9

Whoever says, 'I am in the light,' while hating a brother or sister, is still in the darkness.

1 John 2:9

Love of enemies

Do not rejoice when your enemies fall, and do not let your heart be glad when they stumble, or else the LORD will see it and be displeased, and turn away his anger from them.

Proverbs 24: 17–18

But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

Luke 6:27–8

The Christian Scriptures, including the four gospels, build on the Jewish notion of *shalom* by presenting Jesus as the way to this peace.

The language of peace

The main term used for 'peace' in the Jewish Scriptures is *shalom*. It is an extremely rich and variegated Hebrew word with multiple levels of meaning. It certainly connotes more than 'peace.' At its root it means material wellbeing in relation to bodily health or to the nation enjoying prosperity. *Shalom* conveys an idea of peace that overwhelms all aspects of a person's life and the life of the community as a whole, and it is always seen as a gift from God. So, when Jesus taught, 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called the children of God' (Matthew 5:9), his listeners knew that he was challenging them to redefine how they lived their lives.

When the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek began in the third century CE, *shalom* was translated as *eirene*. Originally the sense of the term *eirene* was to denote the absence of disturbance. Later on, when it was translated into Latin, *eirene* became *pax*.

The Romans' term *pax* had a similar meaning, being understood as 'a reciprocal legal relationship between two parties,' and was used in phrases such as 'treaty of peace,' 'the conclusion of peace' and the 'conditions of peace' – the *Pax Romana*.

So, when Jerome completed his task of translating the four gospels in 384 CE, 'peace' had been *shalom*, *eirene* and was now *pax*. The various translations of this simple word have, over the centuries, influenced the different Christian approaches to peace and war.

DID YOU KNOW?

The word 'peace' occurs 340 times in the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, the one used in this textbook.

REVIEW

1. Using the Bible quotations on the previous page as your reference, write a paragraph to **summarise** the foundational Christian teachings about peace as found in the Christian Scriptures.
2. **Investigate** other examples from the New Testament that refer to peace.
3. **Identify** one quotation that for you best expresses the Christian understanding of peace. **Justify** your response.

Principal teachings about peace

The Christian understanding of peace has been developed over centuries of thought and practice. The early church (in the first 300 years) was strongly pacifist (supportive of nonviolence and disarmament), but this began to change in the time of Constantine. The Council of Arles in 314 CE said that to forbid 'the state the right to go to war was to condemn it to extinction', and, not long after this, Christian philosophers began to formulate the doctrine of the 'just war'.

> We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to the prosperity of peace.
>
> Augustine's letter to Boniface, Letter 189, 418 CE

Christian pacifism

The divisions within Christianity brought with them different attitudes to war and peace. The stance of pacifism had its modern origins in the early years of the twentieth century. Its proponents included Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King Jr, Thomas Merton and what are known as the 'historic peace churches' – specifically, the Church of the Brethren, Mennonites, the Amish and the Quakers (Religious Society of Friends), and groups such as the Catholic Worker Movement and the Anglican Peace Fellowship.

▷ See Chapter 11, pages 229–31, for Dorothy Day and the Catholic Worker Movement.

Christian pacifism is the theological and ethical position that any form of violence is incompatible with the Christian faith.

- Within the Christian tradition, the almost universal commitment to pacifism and nonviolence lasted almost three centuries.
- Christians resisted early Roman laws requiring them to renounce their faith, and many were executed for this.
- For the first three centuries, Christians almost universally refused to serve in the Roman army. Again, many were executed for this.

Groups of Christians embraced nonviolence during and after the Reformation. Some, such as the Anabaptists, would not take part in government because they didn't want to be associated in any way with the exercise of violence. The Quakers, however, were often directly involved in the politics of the day.

There are different sorts of pacifism; for example, selective pacifism, where the opposition is to a particular war or to wars involving weapons of mass destruction. During a war, many pacifists will refuse to fight, but some will take part in activities that seek to reduce the harm of war – for example, by driving ambulances. Other pacifists will refuse to take part in any activity that might support the war.

The Quakers – Society of Friends

The Quakers were founded by George Fox in 1648 during England's protracted Civil War. Their hope, embodied in the phrase 'Everybody has that of God within them', is that even the government and authorities can be led towards a better relationship with God; for the Quakers, this means nonviolence. While Quakers have a 'testimony to peace', it is a matter of conscience. There are Friends who have chosen to serve in the armed forces, or as first aid workers – the testimony to peace and nonviolence is there for each to consider as they walk in life.

> Peace means casting out fear with love, and through love, finding our way to other hearts at a point in them beyond weakness and strength.
>
> Peace is loving our enemies, and thereby changing the relationship.
>
> Australian Quakers, *This We Can Say* , section 3.109. Glasshouse Books, 2008

Alamy Stock Photo/jeremy sutton-hibbert

FIGURE 15.2.2 Faslane, Scotland, September 2018. UK Quakers preparing for a rally outside the Clyde Naval Base, 40 kilometres west of Glasgow, in protest against the continued housing there of Trident nuclear missiles.

Among the many Australian Quakers who have been involved in peace movements are Margaret Thorp (1892–1978) and Nancy Shelley (1926–2010).

Margaret Thorp was active in the anti-Conscription campaigns of the First World War. She worked with Quaker relief teams in Europe, and in Russia during the famine which followed the Revolution. By the end of the Second World War she was again serving with Quaker relief teams in Europe, and on returning to Australia she became a pioneer in welfare work among migrants in Australia. In her retirement, she was a fierce critic of the Vietnam War, helped to raise funds for victims of the Vietnam War and arranged for the adoption of Vietnamese War orphans by Australian families.

Nancy Shelley became a tireless volunteer worker for peace during the 1980s – a time of demonstrations and rallies to raise awareness and to try to bring about nuclear disarmament. In 1982 she attended the second United Nations Special Session on Disarmament in New York on behalf of the Quaker Program for Peace Committee and spent time at the Women's Peace Camp at Pine Gap. Her work in peace-making was recognised with the awarding of the Order of Australia Medal in 1989.

The Quakers were awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace 1947. In his presentation speech, Gunnar Jahn, the chairman of the Nobel Peace Prize Committee, said:

> The Quakers have shown us that it is possible to translate into action what lies deep in the hearts of many: compassion for others and the desire to help them – that rich expression of the sympathy between all men, regardless of nationality or race, which, transformed into deeds, must form the basis for lasting peace.

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EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to **investigate** more closely the Quaker commitment to peace and social justice. Prepare a point summary of two of their most recent public statements and **identify** a scripture quote (see pages 330–1) to support the statement.
2. You might also like to visit the online exhibition about the peace and resistance work of Quakers during the First World War, and a Quaker calendar of active nonviolence.

Weblinks
Quakers Australia

First World War exhibition

Active nonviolence calendar

The development of Christian teachings on peace

The internecine nature of conflicts since the Second World War has called into question any plausibility of theories of a just war. There has been massive development of technologically sophisticated 'weapons of mass destruction'; 'undeclared' wars in, for example, Vietnam (1955–75) and, more recently, Iraq (2003–11); and 'engagements' that democratic governments characterise as a military action or armed response. These have seen a dramatic rethinking of Christian teachings on peace. Today, it is rare to hear the word 'peace' without the addition of 'justice' and, more recently, 'reconciliation'.

> Without justice and love, peace will always be a great illusion.
>
> Hélder Câmara (d. 1999), Archbishop of Olinda and Recife, Brazil

Peace and reconciliation are at the heart of the gospel, and so Christian teaching on peace has moved dramatically from one that was concerned with limiting war to one of 'building peace' —a peace based on truth, justice and mercy.

> We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits.
>
> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 2020

> Peace, then, is the fruit of truth, justice and love. Christians as peacemakers cannot avoid the task of building a society free of injustice, oppression, discrimination and inequality.
>
> Bishop of Parramatta, Vincent Long, 2017

Universally accepted by the global Anglican Communion, one of its five marks of mission commits it 'to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation' (2012).

The Uniting Church of Australia states, 'The Uniting Church is a peacemaking church. The Uniting Church believes that true justice and peace can only be achieved through means that do not consist of violence, nor perpetuate the cycle of violence' (2012).

> We recognise that peace requires justice and justice requires peacemaking.
>
> Catholic Church Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2016

Reading through these statements, it becomes obvious that Christians no longer speak about peace as something abstract or a remote ideal, but rather about peacemaking and peace-building.

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the principle Christian teachings about peace.
2. Revisit the scripture texts on pages 330–1 and **identify** those that support Christian teachings about peace.
3. **Explain** why the teachings about peace have developed over the last 75 years. Can you think of one particular event that could have been the catalyst for this?

EXTENSION

1. Working in small groups, **interpret** the statement 'peace requires justice and justice requires peacemaking', using examples, to **clarify** the meaning.
2. Why is it important that Christian teachings about peace continue to develop?

A guide for inner peace

> In the silent meditation and prayer of the Quaker Meeting for Worship, and in our search in daily life for that of God in all other people, Quakers have sought to develop an ethos which puts love of our fellow human beings into practice.
>
> Quaker peace testimony, Quakers Australia

The first letter of St Peter says, '… let your adornment be the inner self with the lasting beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit'. And a gentle and quiet spirit is what inner peace is about. It is not inward-looking nor selfish; it is not turning away from the world – it is both personal and communal. Christians have the example of Jesus' ministry, which conveys a sense of balance between prayer and contemplation on one hand and active service on the other.

That peace is impossible without forgiveness is strongly underlined in Christianity. Forgiveness is the inner dynamic

of Christian peace, as Pope Francis says when speaking about those who suffer injustice defending their own rights:

> The important thing is not to fuel anger, which is unhealthy for our own soul and the soul of our people, or to become obsessed with taking revenge and destroying the other. No one achieves inner peace or returns to a normal life in that way.
>
> Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 2020

So inner peace is all about relationships, and relationships with other people are often linked with one's individual relationship with God.

> Whoever loves a brother or sister lives in the light, and in such a person there is no cause for stumbling. But whoever hates another believer is in the darkness, walks in the darkness, and does not know the way to go, because the darkness has brought on blindness.
>
> 1 John 2:10–11

Being at peace with oneself means being at peace with God and with one's neighbour. The Psalms offer Christians insight into that quiet of the Quaker meditation:

> Be still, and know that I am God.
>
> Psalms 46:10

> Be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him.
>
> Psalms 37:7

REVIEW

1. What do Christians mean by 'inner peace' and how do they achieve this?
2. In your own words, **explain** why Christians believe 'peace is impossible without forgiveness'.

Contributing to world peace

> Seven decades after this war began, it is time to acknowledge that it ended long ago. New challenges to peace and stability in the region have arisen in the meantime, but we do not believe that the resolution of those challenges will be facilitated by keeping that 70-year-old conflict open.
>
> From a statement issued by the World Council of Churches on 25 June 2020, the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Korean War on 25 June 1950

The National Council of Churches in Australia, the Uniting Church in Australia and the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia joined global churches and ecumenical bodies from countries that played a role in the conflict endorsing this statement.

Today, it is understood that a critical element for a culture of peace is social justice. Perceptions of injustice lead to discontent, non-cooperation, conflict, civil unrest, and war. Interreligious and religious-secular dialogues have the power to promote lasting change through a dialogue that fosters mutual coexistence, tolerance and empathy. This entails sharing a relationship of respect and mutual confidence.

The Christian churches have been challenged to work together for peace through ecumenical (between Christian churches) bodies like the World Council of Churches and interfaith (between religious traditions) initiatives such as Religions for Peace and the Centre for Christian–Muslim Relations. They are also increasingly involved with various United Nations agencies.

Ecumenical United Nations Office (EUNO)

The EUNO is the World Council of Churches' focal point for advocacy initiatives at the United Nations headquarters in New York City.

Key aspects of the EUNO's advocacy strategy are to encourage and expand the capacity of church leaders and community representatives to engage in national-level advocacy as well as to have access to decision makers in the UN. Through cooperative relationships with UN member states, the EUNO ensures open channels of communication. We also work to identify strategic synergies within the ecumenical movement to link actors and facilitate collective advocacy.

The EUNO ensures that the WCC is actively represented and highly influential on its priority activities:

1. Peace and security
2. Sustainable development and monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
3. Religion, violence, and extremism
4. Gender justice
5. Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Weblink
EUNO

From the World Council of Churches website

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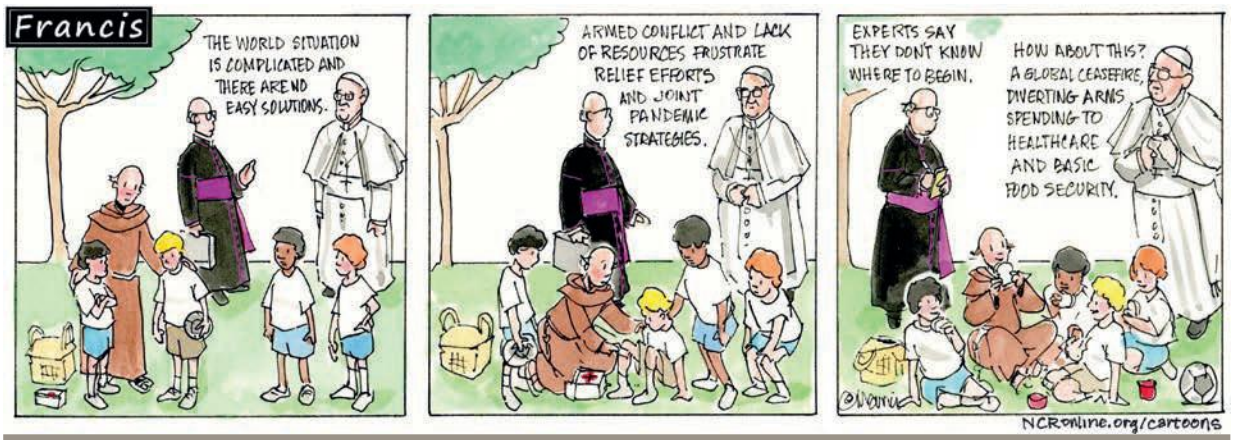

Pat Marrin, and National Catholic Reporter, www.ncronline.org

FIGURE 15.2.3 *Francis the Comic Strip*, 14 July 2020

RESPOND

There are three religious figures in this cartoon: Pope Francis, an important church figure, and a simple friar (Francis of Assisi?) How does this cartoon relate to the material in this section, 'Christianity and peace'?

> We resolutely declare that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood … We thus call upon all concerned to stop using religions to incite hatred, violence, extremism and blind fanaticism, and to refrain from using the name of God to justify acts of murder, exile, terrorism and oppression.
>
> 'Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together', co-signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, during the Global Conference of Human Fraternity in Abu Dhabi on 4 February 2019

REVIEW

1. Is it necessary to achieve some sort of inner peace before one can work for world peace? **Propose** reasons for or against to support your response.
2. How important is dialogue as a means of achieving world peace? Research and **provide** recent examples of interfaith dialogue.
3. **Demonstrate** how Christianity can guide the individual to achieve inner peace and at the same time provide direction on how to develop peace in the world.
4. **Construct** a mind map to draw together all the material in this section.

EXTENSION

Using the weblinks provided as a starting point, **investigate** how Christianity is contributing to world peace.

Weblinks
La Croix International

NCPO

Pax Christi

Columban Mission

Religions for Peace

Uniting Justice Australia

Photo: Jon O'Brien

FIGURE 15.2.4 Uniting Church members at Sydney Palm Sunday Rally, 2018

RESPOND

How does this type of activity contribute to a more peaceful world?

15.3 Islam

Fairfax Syndications/The Age/Luis Enrique Ascui

FIGURE 15.3.1 If only it were as easy as this! A seven-year-old Muslim girl draws a peace message in Melbourne.

Whenever they kindle the fire of war, God extinguishes it. They strive to create disorder on earth and God loves not those who create disorder.

Surat al-Ma'ida 5:64

If the nationalist aspirations of all people were vigorously pursued, a state of perpetual war and severe, ongoing persecution would likely ensue.

Zaid Shakir, American Muslim scholar, 2017. Zaytuna College

Islam, for instance, puts strong emphasis on equality, proclaiming that all human beings are born free and equal. During the era of Prophet Muhammed, he said to his followers: 'An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab nor a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; also a white has no superiority over a black nor a black has any superiority over white, except by piety and good action.'

Blerim Mustafa, Geneva Centre for Human Rights Advancement and Global Dialogue, 2019

The Charter of Makkah

On 29 May 2019 in the city of Mecca, 1200 religious scholars and leaders of 139 countries, representing 27 various sects and schools of thought, unanimously endorsed the Charter of Makkah. The Charter outlines the responsibility of all individuals to combat terrorism and injustice while rejecting the violation of human rights.

It follows the example of the Madinah Charter, drafted by the Prophet 14 centuries ago to preserve the diversity of the Islamic nation and its coexistence. The fourth and seventh of its 27 principles read:

4 Religious and cultural diversity never justifies conflict. Humanity needs positive, civilized partnerships and effective interaction. Diversity must be a bridge to dialogue, understanding and cooperation for the benefit of all humanity.

7 Religions and philosophies are exonerated from the sins committed by their adherents and claimants. These sins reflect the adherents' opinions, not the religions. The role of religious leaders is to call people to worship their Creator and seek His satisfaction by caring for his creations, protecting their dignity, and making positive societal and family contributions.

Weblink
Charter of Makkah

EXTENSION

Using the text above, and referring to the chapter outcomes (page 321), assess in what way they relate to this topic. Write a succinct paragraph of explanation.

▷ It is recommended you read through Chapter 5 Islam before beginning this unit.

'The way of the Prophet'

Fighting was built into the culture of pre-Islamic Arabia in a complex and integral way. Warring would distribute and redistribute limited resources from raiding and

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plundering, but, at the same time, there were rules that prohibited fighting during certain months, the killing of non-combatants and unnecessary plunder. The Islamic *umma* (community) emerged out of this environment and the early followers of Muhammad had to fight to survive in this harsh economic and political environment.

DID YOU KNOW?

Umma was a highly emotive word in the time of the Prophet Muhammad, and remains so among Muslims today, Arab or otherwise, many of whom dream of or regard themselves as a single Muslim community.

Muhammad's approach to the ethics of war and peace, however, was quite different from that of pre-Islamic Arabia. Indeed, there are verses in the Qur'an that suggest that part of the reason many of the Prophet's contemporaries hesitated to follow him was their fear that they would lose the support of their tribes and allies and thus be open to attack.

> They say: 'If we accept your guidance, we shall be driven from our land.'
>
> *Surat al-Qasas* 28:57

Likewise, other verses clearly indicated that a state of war was the existing norm for seventh-century Arabia. For example:

> Those whom the people warned, 'Your enemies have mustered a great force against you: fear them.
>
> *Surat al-Imran* 3:173

> Do they not see that we have established a safe haven (in the Great Mosque) while people all around them were being snatched away?
>
> *Surat al-Ankabut* 29:67

One of the most consistent Qur'anic criticisms of the early Muslims is their unwillingness to fight – the need to overcome this unwillingness explains in large part the eloquence and urgency of the injunctions to fight:

> Fighting is obligatory for you, much as you dislike it.
>
> *Surat al-Baqara* 2:216

The early Muslims had a deep sense of divided loyalties between Islam and the old order, at the centre of which were tribal alliances. It was not fighting in general that they had trouble accepting – after all, it was the normative state – but fighting against their own kin. What the Qur'an was revealing in the verses in which believers are commanded to wage *jihad* was not the obligation to fight – but rather, redirecting their energies towards a new order of peaceful coexistence. And it was an end to aggression, not conversion to Islam, that was the ultimate goal of this fighting.

> And fight with them until there is no persecution, and religion should be only for Allah, but if they desist, then there should be no hostility except against the oppressors.
>
> *Surat al-Baqara* 2:193

This verse was revealed during the 10 years Muhammad spent in Medina (622–632 CE) when the Muslims became a coherent community. During these years, the young Muslim community at Medina was surrounded by a range of groups who were hostile to Muhammad's message of Islam.

Although it is very clear that Muhammad personally conducted several key campaigns, the combined evidence of the sources indicates that he remained a reluctant warrior. On several occasions, he urged the use of nonviolent means or sought an early end to hostilities, often in the face of stiff opposition from his companions. At the same time, in the light of the Qur'anic revelations, he seems to have accepted unavoidable fighting in defence of what he saw as Muslim interests. The essence of his approach to war can be found in this *hadith* of *Sahih* al-Bukhari:

> O people! Do not wish to meet the enemy, and ask God for safety, but when you face the enemy, be patient, and remember that Paradise is under the shade of swords.
>
> al-Bukhari 2861

DID YOU KNOW?

Neither the Qur'an nor *hadith* uses the term *jihad* for fighting and combat in the name of Allah; *qital* is the word for fighting, while *harb* is the word for war.

The expansion of Islam

Within about 20 years after Muhammad's death, Islam laid claim to the remains of the Byzantine and Persian empires in Persia, Syria–Palestine, Iraq and Egypt. The territorial expansion did not mean forcible conversion of the conquered peoples. In 19 AH/641 CE, the Christian Patriarch of Egypt invited the Muslims to help free Egypt from the Romans.

In 583 AH/1187 CE Salah al-Din (Saladin) recaptured Jerusalem from the Christians. Although a number of Muslim holy places had been violated, Salah al-Din prohibited acts of vengeance, and his army was so disciplined that there were no deaths or violent acts after the city surrendered. The residents were taken prisoner, but their ransom was set at a token amount.

Centuries later, in 1492, Jews fleeing from the Spanish *reconquista* would find refuge in the Ottoman Empire and establish flourishing communities there.

Before Muhammad, the Arabian peninsula was characterised by an overall 'state of war'. What Muhammad's mission did was to alter how the various groups and individuals identified; the 'rightly guided' caliphs codified rules for battle based on Qur'anic verses. Even with the expansion of the Muslim world, Islamic scholars of the early decades of the fourth Islamic century/ tenth century CE continued to reflect this 'state of war'

thinking: aggression was necessary to provide for the security and freedom of Muslims in a world that kept them under constant threat.

> … whenever we are placed beyond the reach of the enemy and the outlying districts of the Muslim lands are secured and the gaps in their fortifications filled the obligation to wage jihad falls from the rest of the Muslims.
>
> Ibn Rushd al-Kabir (the elder) (d. 520 AH/1126 CE)

This 'state of war' thinking was not restricted to Muslims – peace was not the prevailing medieval order, it was part of the medieval 'unimaginable', as the Crusades demonstrate.

DID YOU KNOW?

There was a whole series of so-called Crusades, beginning in 1095, when European Christians answered the call to expel Muslims from Jerusalem and its surrounding region. Jerusalem was conquered in 1099. Many later conflicts that were called Crusades were not actions against Muslim armies at all. The Fourth Crusade, for example, was Catholic Christians attacking Orthodox Christians and looting the city of Constantinople.

The narrative of the Crusades is a complicated chapter in medieval history in which people fought each other and also tolerated each other. Medieval Muslim sources describe many political and military alliances, the sharing of sacred spaces, commercial dealings and the exchange of science and ideas. Unfortunately, the complexity of this story often becomes lost in the dynamics of contemporary politics.

Patrimonio Nacional, Palacio Real, Spain

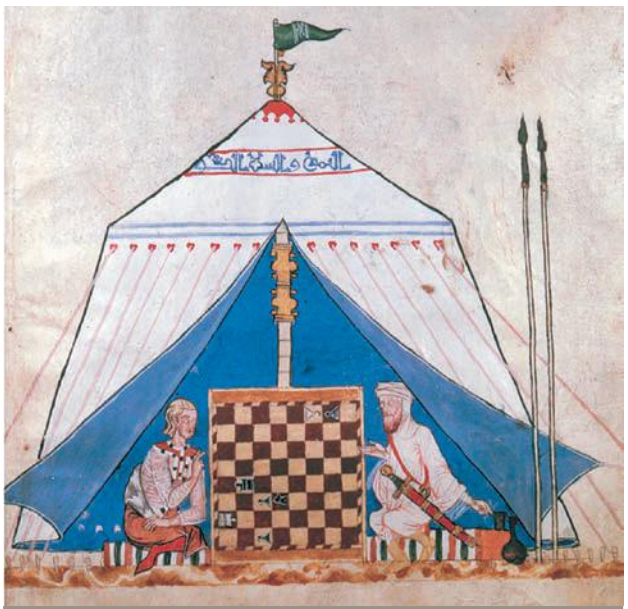

FIGURE 15.3.2 Medieval Muslim and Christian leaders play chess together, dated 1283. Individual Christians and Jews sometimes obtained high positions in Muslim administrations throughout the medieval period. Syriac-speaking Christians were employed by their Muslim patrons in eighth- and ninth-century Baghdad to translate Greek manuscripts into Arabic, thus helping to preserve the learning of the ancient world.

DID YOU KNOW?

Emperor Frederick II, who led the Sixth Crusade in 1228–29, negotiated a peace with Sultan al-Kamil that allowed the Muslims and Crusaders to share Jerusalem. The Christians had full control of their religious places while the Muslims maintained control over their sacred places in the city and the surrounding villages.

REVIEW

1 Outline Muhammad's attitude towards and teachings on the concept of peace. How did his attitude and teachings differ from those of the prevailing tribal culture of his time?

2 Outline the attitudes and actions of the early Muslim communities to peace.

EXTENSION

Peace was part of the medieval 'unimaginable'. Explain what this means.

Peace in the sacred texts of Islam

As discussed earlier, many verses of the Qur'an deal with warfare – this was a fledgling Muslim community in a hostile environment – but it is the inner peace that comes by surrendering to the will of Allah that is the constant theme. In fact, the word *islam* itself is derived from the root *slm*, which are the root letters for peace.

The Qur'an voices the foundational principles of Islam, *tawhid*, the belief in oneness of God when it calls upon Muslims, 'Come, all of you, into complete peace and follow not the footsteps of the devil. Surely he is your open enemy' (*Surat* 2:208) for '… God loves not those who create disorder' (*Surat* 5:64); and *umma*, the unity and harmony of the Muslim community in *Surat* 15:46: 'The world can become like *al-Janna* [paradise] only if there is peace in the world …'

FIGURE 15.3.3 *Al-Salamu 'alaykum* – 'Peace be with you! Peace be upon you!' This is the traditional and much-used Muslim greeting often rendered as '*salam*'. This greeting is also used at the end of each of the daily *salat* (prayers).

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Peace in *hadith*

He who makes peace between the people by inventing good information or saying good things, is not a liar.

Sahih al-Bukhari

Do you know what is better than charity and fasting and prayer? It is keeping peace and good relations between people, as quarrels and bad feelings destroy mankind.

Sahih al-Bukhari

O people, spread peace, feed the hungry, and pray at night when people are sleeping and you will enter Paradise in peace.

Sunan Ibn Maja

None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself.

Al-Nawawi's *Forty Hadith*, No. 13

A strong person is not the person who throws his adversaries to the ground. A strong person is the one who contains himself when he is angry.

Mālik's *Muwatta'* 47.12

Shall I show you something that, if you did, you would love each other? Spread peace among yourselves.

Sahih al-Bukhari

The merciful are shown mercy by the All Merciful. Show mercy to those on earth and God will show mercy to you.

al-Tirmidhi and Abu Da'ud

REVIEW

1. Outline the importance of *hadith* for Muslims.
2. Select three quotations from the Qur'an and three from *hadith* and explain how they inform an understanding of peace in Islam. A helpful weblink is provided.

Weblinks
Faith in Allah

The Noble Qur'an

Principal teachings about peace

From its very beginnings, Islam emphasised peace as a fundamental value:

- Islam means establishing peace in society as well as achieving inner peace by surrendering to the will of Allah.
- Muslims believe that God desires peace and created humankind for that purpose.
- Muslims know that humans can have a tendency towards violence, aggression and greed.

The concept of *jihad* is a notion that Westerners often misunderstand and a concept that is often abused by some Muslims for political purposes. There will always be an internal struggle (*jihad*) against evil temptations, a struggle to do God's will every day of their lives – this is the 'greater' *jihad*. The 'lesser' *jihad* is the struggle against external evils – a war fought as a last resort after all peaceful attempts have failed.

Jihad is supposed to run through all aspects of a Muslim's life, as it is the Muslim's duty in the world to do good and prevent harm and evil in every way. Of course, this can entail the use of force when peaceful means are not successful, but *jihad* does not necessarily involve waging war.

Jihad is the active expression of the Islamic commitment, responsibility and sense of duty wherever it is required in practical life. To interpret *jihad* only as offensive or defensive war is to misunderstand the meaning of the word and philosophy behind it. It is equally wrong to assume that *jihad* is a 'holy war' in the Western sense. To interpret the basis of Muslim relations with non-Muslims as war or peace is to misunderstand the meaning of Islam and the historic conditions that led to its definition. Islam invites people to Islam – *Da'wa* – it does not coerce them. And for Muslims, reconciliation is of great importance.

If the enemy inclines towards peace, then you should also incline towards peace and trust in Allah, for He is the One that hears and knows all.

Surat al-Anfal 8:61

Islamic law and the language of war and peace

By the third Islamic century/ninth century CE, scholars began to organise themselves into interpretative communities or schools of law. From then on, any interpretations to be sanctioned and recognised as authoritative or 'orthodox' had to come through one of these schools. It was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with the introduction of Western political, legal and educational institutions into Muslim countries, that this monopoly over authoritative legal interpretation was challenged.

The question today is: how are the sacred texts of Islam to be read – in a literal way or in a dynamic way? The answer from two men of very different backgrounds is: in a dynamic way.

In his *Risale-i Nur*, a 6000-page commentary on the Qur'an, Said Nursi (1876–1960), a Kurdish theologian, explained that the Qur'an addresses all people in every age in accordance with the degree of their understanding and development – 'it has a face that looks to each age.'

In his commentary *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Egyptian Sayyid Qutb (1906–1966) says:

The legal rules of Islam are, and always will be, subject to certain dynamism in accordance with the Islamic approach. And it is not possible to understand the texts of scripture in isolation from this reality. Indeed, there is a fundamental difference between reading the verses of scripture as if they existed in a vacuum and reading them in their dynamic context in accordance with the Islamic approach.

In a more recent work (1997), Saudi scholar 'Adil Quta expands on this topic:

> It is obvious that any leader (*Imam*) of any school of law, nay, any independent jurist (*mujtahid*), period, can only devise rulings for his particular time and place. It is impossible for him to extract rulings for all times and places. Rather, the most that he can do is lay down general precepts, universal rules and basic principles on the basis of which his followers and descendants can proceed (to extract rulings).

RESPOND

'How are the sacred texts of Islam to be read?' **Discuss** why this can be such a divisive issue.

The Islamic terms *Dar al-Islam* (domain of peace) and *Dar al-Harb* (domain of war) are often used in today's media as proof of Islam's inherent hostility towards the West – that the only 'domain of peace' is those countries where Muslims live under Islamic law. This is contradicted by the notable Shaf'i scholar al-Mawardi (d. 450 AH/1058 CE), who says:

> If a Muslim is able to declare his Islam openly and living therein (in a land dominated by non-Muslims), it is better for him to do so […] because by this it becomes *Dar al-Islam*.

AAP/REUTERS/Ezra Acayan

FIGURE 15.3.4 Muslim women join hundreds of peace advocates in a peace march towards the House of Representatives in Quezon City, Manila.

RESPOND

How does an activity such as this relate to the Muslim understanding of *jihad*?

REVIEW

Outline the principal Islamic teachings about peace and **demonstrate** how these are informed by the Qur'an and *hadith*.

EXTENSION

'It is necessary to develop a new vision of *jihad*.' **Outline** discussion points for a debate on this topic.

Achieving inner peace

In Islam, the concept of peace is twofold. First, to be at peace with God and therefore with oneself; then, second, to be at peace with the rest of the world. As has been demonstrated in previous sections, being at peace with God means to give oneself fully and completely to God and to enter into a covenant of peace with Him by praying, fasting, performing the *Hajj* and all of the other spiritual practices of Islam. It is through 'submitting' to God, that one finds inner peace.

Inner peace is the source of all peace. Islam believes it is imperative that the individual human be at peace with themselves before the goal of universal peace may be realised. The obligatory prayers (*salat*) are at the heart of Muslim practice and provide Muslims with opportunities for direct communion with God five times a day, and so help them to avoid too much attachment to non-essential things.

> We open our hearts and first and foremost through prayer. Prayer is the key means by which we pursue our path or way on a daily basis.
>
> Ibrahim Abdul-Matin, 2010

Inner peace is developed by submission to Allah and is expressed in one's relationships with one's family and the community and society. It is put into practice through the five pillars of faith (see Chapter 5, page 92).

Insha'Allah – 'God willing'. This inherent understanding of peace within Islam is accepted in patient acceptance of events in life. The Qur'an assures believers that this patient and peaceful approach to life will be rewarded:

'… the patient man is the helper of God' (*Surat al-Saff* 61:14).

Contributing to world peace

For Muslims, the idea of waiting for someone else to change one's condition runs counter to the divine scheme governing human society.

> God does not change a people's lot unless they change what is in their heart.
>
> *Surat al-Ra'd* 13:11

Islam the religion, Muslim politics – there is a confusion of interests! But, despite all this confusion, there are millions of Muslims for whom Islam is a deeply spiritual experience and has nothing to do with politics or violence or the use of Islam for one's interests. The first priority for Muslims in Australia and globally is dialogue

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and education – within the Muslim communities and with other faith communities and the world community.

> Social cohesion is the most important tool we have in the fight against radicalisation and violent extremism.
>
> Anooshe Aisha Mushtaq

DID YOU KNOW?

Anooshe Aisha Mushtaq is chair and founder of the Raqib Taskforce, a Muslim-led organisation that builds social inclusion through engagement across the Australian community, dispelling extremist messages in the public domain.

Weblink
Raqib Taskforce

As the recent Charter of Makkah (page 336) demonstrates, dialogue within Muslim communities is an urgent priority to combat the widespread use of religiously inspired political appeals in so many regions. Alongside this is interfaith dialogue at leader level and at the grass roots, particularly in countries where Muslims are a minority.

AAP Photos/AP/Andrew Medichini

FIGURE 15.3.5 The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmed el-Tayeb, and Pope Francis after signing their joint statement 'Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together', in February 2019. The document invites 'all persons who have faith in God and faith in human fraternity to unite and work together so that it may serve as a guide for future generations to advance a culture of mutual respect in the awareness of the great divine grace that makes all human beings brothers and sisters.'

> Interfaith dialogue is about acceptance and not tolerance … it's not about compromising, but creating a space for the others to be what they want to be in the world.
>
> Pastor James Wuye and Imam Ashafa in Australia, 2008

Weblink
Joint statement

> Say, 'O, people of the Book Come to a word that is common between us and you: that we serve none but God'.
>
> *Surat al-Imran* 3:64

> Your religion is for you: my religion is for me.
>
> *Surat al-Kafirun* 109:6

Those many Muslim organisations working towards a more peaceful society see education, dialogue and acceptance as the instruments of peace at every level of this work. And in a world facing two enormous challenges – climate change and the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic – the focus is on practical action.

Some of the organisations are specifically Muslim, others are interfaith and some are community-based. Some examples are:

- Affinity Intercultural Foundation
- Coalition of Women for Peace
- Islamic Women's Welfare Association (IWWA)
- Regional Interfaith Organisation
- United Muslim Women Association.

REVIEW

1. How would you **explain** what 'inner peace' means for Muslims?
2. Is it necessary to achieve some sort of inner peace before one can work for world peace? Give reasons to support your response.
3. **Demonstrate** how Islam can guide the individual to achieve inner peace and provide direction on how to develop peace in the world. Support with evidence from the sacred writings.
4. **Discuss** how Muslims are contributing to world peace in a specific situation or region.
5. **Construct** a mind map to draw together all the material in this section.

EXTENSION

1. Give three reasons to **explain** the importance of dialogue as a means of achieving world peace.
2. **Outline** reasons why it is important to educate non-Muslim Australians about Islam.
3. Do some research into Mala Yousafzai's story. How does her campaign 'Malala Fund' contribute to a more harmonious and peaceful world?
4. **Investigate** two Australian interfaith organisations/groups. Write a summary of some of their comments about the dialogue and **describe** some of their initiatives. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblinks
Malala Yousafzai's mission

Malala Fund

Malala Yousafzai

Affinity Intercultural Foundation

Regional Interfaith

Coalition of Women for Peace

columban.org

MWA

JCMA

Peace Direct: Insight on Conflict

IWWA

15.4 Judaism

Wikimedia/Ashdye CC BY-SA 4.0 Licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en)

FIGURE 15.4.1 Symbol of the Hand in Hand network, Israel. The Hand in Hand network teaches over 2000 children and young people aged 3–18 in seven schools across Israel. Instruction is bilingual and the students are drawn from both Arab and Jewish communities, which is unusual in Israel. Through their practice, Hand in Hand schools seek to break down barriers and build mutual understanding. Hand in Hand is an initiative of peace co-founded by two Israelis – one Arab and one Jewish.

No study of peace in Judaism can be undertaken without first understanding the importance of the *Shoah* and Israel to Jewish sensibilities (see Chapter 14, pages 319–20). The deep connection Australian Jews have to Israel is as strong as that of any nation's Jews. Israel's location in the world, as a Jewish land surrounded by Arab cultures, makes questions of peace highly significant for Judaism.

> This Council supports the principle of two-States for two peoples, as the only principle upon which a just and sustainable peace between Israel and its Palestinian neighbours can be built.
>
> Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Policies, 2020

Because peace is an important issue for Israel, it is also an important issue for Australian Jews. As is typical for Judaism, Jews look to the *halachah* to guide them in right judgement on issues of peace and justice.

▷ It is recommended you read through Chapters 6 and 14 before beginning this unit.

The prophetic vision of peace on earth

Peace – *shalom*

The Hebrew word for peace is *shalom*. It is closely related to the Hebrew word *shalem*, meaning complete or fulfilled. It is central to the prophetic vision of Judaism that the purpose for God's people is completed when peace reigns on earth – this is the way the world is meant to be.

From ancient times through to the present, faithful Jews have drawn inspiration from the sacred texts of their tradition to understand how God intends them to lead purposeful and peaceful lives. The sages of the Talmud suggest that the purpose of the whole of the Torah (and thus the whole of Judaism) is promoting peace.

The seeking after peace is reflected strongly in the vision of the prophet Isaiah, who saw that in the days to come God would judge between the nations, and the nations would 'beat their swords into ploughshares':

> … and 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.
>
> Isa 2:4

The theme of peace and justice is also strongly mirrored in the prophet Micah. What God requires of the faithful is for them 'to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God' (Mic 6:8).

The prophet Amos, writing in the eighth century BCE, warned against the evil and corruption of the age. He foretold that God would punish actions of social injustice and that the only way to peace was to seek the Lord.

> The city that marched out a thousand shall have a hundred left, and that which marched out a hundred shall have ten left. For thus says the LORD to the house of Israel: Seek me and live.
>
> Am 5:3–4

DID YOU KNOW?

The Hebrew name for Jerusalem is *Yerushalayim*, meaning 'City of Peace.'

Other sacred texts about peace

The Torah, the most sacred part of the Hebrew Scriptures, illuminates God's covenant with Abraham, a promise, that 'I will make you a great nation, and I will bless you' (Gen 12:2). Abraham was charged with the responsibility to teach 'his children and his household after him to keep the way of the Lord by doing righteousness and justice' (Gen 18:19). After Abraham, Moses commanded his people to observe the Torah diligently, and in doing so, other nations would see them as 'a wise and discerning people' (Deut 4:6).

The Torah makes it clear that the Jew is not to bear a grudge, and must 'love your neighbour as yourself' (Lev 19:18). For early Judaism, when the Torah spoke of neighbour, it meant one's fellow Jew. But a *mitzvah* (commandment) a little later in the same chapter of

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Leviticus indicates that to do what is right and just extends to the way one treats the foreigner:

> When an alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.
>
> Lev 19:33–34

The same chapter of Micah that calls the believer to 'walk humbly with your God' recalls that God had sent to the people redeemers in the persons of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. The sages refer particularly to Aaron as a model of the peacemaker: 'He loved peace and pursued peace, and passed through the entire camp of Israel and promoted peace between a man and his wife, and between a man and his neighbour' (*Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer* 19a).

The ultimate deliverer of peace is God, and the Hebrew Scripture is replete with God's acts of loving kindness towards his people. Made in God's image (Gen 1:27), the people are called upon to walk after God (Deut 13:5). The Babylonian Talmud book *Sotah* (14b) explains exactly what that means for the Jew:

> What means the text: 'You shall walk after the LORD your God?' (Deut. 13:5) is it, then, possible for a human being to walk after the *Shekhinah*; for has it not been said, 'for the LORD, thy God is a devouring fire?' (Deut. 4:24). But [the meaning is] to walk after the attributes of the Holy One, blessed by He, as he clothes the naked …

Some Talmudic sayings on peace

> But the whole of the Law is also for the purpose of promoting peace, as it is written, Her ways are ways of pleasantness and all her paths are peace. (Prov 3:17)
>
> *Gittin* 59b

> Be among the disciples of Aaron: love peace and pursue peace; love all fellow creatures, and bring them near to the Torah. (Hillel)
>
> *Pirkei Avot* 1:12

> The world is sustained by three things: by justice, by truth, and by peace. (Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel)
>
> *Pirkei Avot* 1:18

> May the One who makes peace in the heavens let peace descend on all of us and all of Israel, and let us say: Amen.
>
> From the *Birkat HaMazon*, Grace After Meals

To walk after the attributes of the Holy One is essentially to fulfil the requirements of the *halachah*: 'You must diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his decrees, and his statutes that he has commanded you' (Deut 6:17). The very next verse of Deuteronomy entreats the faithful Jew to go one further: 'Do what is right and good in the sight of the LORD.' A person who acts in this way at all times is considered an *ish chesed* – a saintly person.

The prophetic vision of peace in Judaism constantly returns to the theme of sin and redemption. When the people turn away from God, they will be punished. In turning to God and being righteous to their neighbour, they will be fruitful and assured of God's salvation.

> Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. Surely his salvation is near to those who fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs up from the ground, and righteousness looks down from the sky. Yes, the LORD will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase.
>
> Ps 85:8–12

Worksheet
Peace in the Abrahamic sacred texts

REVIEW

1. **Identify** one quotation from the sacred texts discussed in this section which encourages deeper thought or reflection. **Explain** your response from your own point of view.
2. **Identify** some of the key passages from the Hebrew Scriptures and rabbinical statements that capture the essence of the Jewish prophetic vision of peace on earth. Create a timeline that identifies the political conditions of the time in which they were written.
3. **Identify** some of the elements of the Jewish understanding of peace and comment on why it is hard to attain.

Principal teachings about peace

Social justice and social order are important principles of Jewish ethical teaching, captured in the Jewish call to *tikkun olam*, 'repair the world'.

Through *tikkun olam*, Jews join in God's divine purpose of establishing social order through the living out of the *mizvot* of the Torah. In modern Judaism, *tikkun olam* finds expression most readily in *gemilut chasadim*, deeds of loving kindness, and the teaching to love one's neighbour. The *mitzvah* of *tikkun olam* is a powerful motivator in Jewish peace activism.

> Upon three things the world stands: The Torah; the worship of God; the bestowal of loving kindness.
>
> Simon the Just, *Pirkei Avot* 1:2

It needs to be borne in mind that the idea of who is one's neighbour has changed over time. In its beginnings, Judaism contended with life in a world surrounded by foreign powers – with people whose customs, beliefs and values were different from their own. In early Judaism, one's neighbour was narrowly defined. The destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the consequent Diaspora, however, saw the need for more day-to-day dealings with gentiles. The writings of the sages reflect this. The desire for good relations with non-Jews saw the teaching of *gemilut chasadim* extended. In the Babylonian tractate *Nazir* (61a), the sages seek to extend the meaning of 'one's fellow'. It asks, 'Does the mention of Israel always exclude Gentiles?' So when *Mishnah Sanhedrin* 4:5 records that Adam was 'created single, to teach you that the destruction of any person's life is tantamount to destroying a whole world', it is a reference to all human beings, not just Jews.

Many Talmudic references develop the concept of *gemilut chasadim* into a clear charter of social justice, as is seen in many religions. What is particularly Jewish about *gemilut chasadim* is the call to less tangible acts, over and above the physical acts of charity: praying for the sick and the unfortunate, giving good advice, and working for reconciliation between those who have fallen out. The sages also point out that it is the right intentions of *gemilut chasadim* that are the measure of its worth.

> The greatest hero is he who makes his enemy his friend.
>
> *Avot de-Rabbi Natan* 23

There are numerous references in the Talmudic literature specifically to *gemilut chasadim* towards gentiles. Two important points should be noted. First, unlike much of the Talmud, where the opinion of one sage is pitted against the view of another, passages concerning *gemilut chasadim* towards gentiles begin with 'our sages taught', indicating an ancient root and strong agreement about the teaching. Second, a frequent justification given in the text for the teaching is 'for the sake of peace'. The 'peace' that the sages had in mind was specifically peace between fellow Jews.

To act 'for the sake of peace' is, in fact, a common epithet in Judaism. The ordinary Jewish greeting, '*Shalom*', is a prayer for peace. One can tell a 'white lie' for the sake of peace (*Shabbat* 10b). Torah is studied for its own sake or 'for the sake of peace' (*Yebamoth* 65b).

In summary, the principal teachings about peace in Judaism are: to love one's neighbour; to hold steadfastly to God's commandments, which will ensure a just society and social order; and to realise that there are times when to act for the sake of peace takes priority over other considerations.

Alamy Stock Photo/DES E GERSHON

FIGURE 15.4.2 Rabbi Lord Sir Jonathan Sacks (1948–2020), Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth, 1991–2013. Among the most revered Orthodox Jewish intellectuals in the modern world, Rabbi Sacks advocated extensively for peace and for Judaism's role in being a leading advocate for peace, through recognising the 'other.' He called it Judaism's tradition of the 'dignity of difference.'

RESPOND

What do you think Jonathan Sacks meant by the term the 'dignity of difference'? How can it lead to peace?

> Jews, Christians and Muslims all speak of peace. They love peace, they pursue peace, their God is the God of peace … Peace means making space for the other. That is the religious imperative of Abraham's God.
>
> J. Sacks, *Future Tense: Jews, Judaism and Israel in the Twenty-first Century*, 2010, p.88

REVIEW

1. **Outline** the principal Jewish teachings about peace.
2. Explain the Jewish concept of 'my neighbour'.

EXTENSION

1. Propose some situations that you can think of where it might be best to tell a 'white lie' for 'the sake of peace'. Choose one that might involve your friends, one that might involve your family and one that might involve your wider community.
2. In light of your answers to the previous question, explain your response to the dilemma – is it ever right to lie 'for the sake of peace'?

Achieving inner peace

Judaism teaches that without inner peace a person is torn; without communal peace, people are isolated; without global peace, the world is fractured and *shalom* remains an unrealised ideal.

As has been noted in the previous sections on teachings about peace and sacred texts, the whole of Jewish life is a struggle to adhere to the commandments of the *halachah*. A core commandment of the *halachah* is to do deeds of loving kindness – and the outcome of such living is peace

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and justice. In their daily lives, Jews work towards a personal peace through living out their faith.

> The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
>
> Isa 32:17

In the daily prayers recited by devout Jews, believers ask God to grant 'peace, goodness and blessing; life, grace and kindness; justice and mercy'.

At the end of the thrice-daily *Amidah* prayer, the petitioner asks that 'the One who makes peace in the heavens bring peace to us and to all of Israel (and all of humanity)'. Whenever the Torah is returned to the Ark in the synagogue, the congregation sings, 'Its ways are ways of pleasantness and all its paths are peace'. In these prayers can be seen the Jewish tradition's guidance for the individual in their search for inner peace.

> No religion is an island; there is no monopoly on holiness … we share the kinship of humanity, the capacity for compassion. God's spirit rests upon all, Jew or Gentile, man or woman, in consonance with their deeds. There is no truth without humility. There can be disagreement without disrespect. Should we hope for each other's failure? Or should we pray for each other's welfare? Have we not all one God? Are we not all God's children? The hand of God is extended to all who seek God. Let our deeds reflect that we share the image of God.
>
> From the writings of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907–1972)

For the observant Jew, the search for inner peace is at one with the desire to live out the *mitzvot*, particularly those commandments that contribute to a world of order and justice. Inner peace is a necessary precursor to the human desire to seek peace in the world.

REVIEW

1. What do Jews mean by 'inner peace' and how do they achieve this?
2. Use this book's index to find all the references to *halachah* (see '*halachah*' as a sub-entry of 'Judaism'). Read these references and **evaluate** the relationship between *halachah* and the search for inner peace.

EXTENSION

Using the Internet and/or other resources, **investigate** the life of Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. **Distinguish** the elements of his peace activism that relate clearly to his Jewish roots.

Contributing to world peace

Jewish writing on peace is most powerfully influenced by the memory of the Holocaust. It is not possible to understand Jewish writing on peace without appreciating the impact of the Holocaust on Jewish life and thought.

▷ See Chapter 14, pages 319-20, for more on the Holocaust.

Jewish responses to the Holocaust

On issues of war and peace, the Holocaust holds the greatest significance in modern Jewish consciousness. In remembering the Holocaust today, Jews 'feel' that they were there, at Auschwitz. They are transformed in time and place; this transforming element makes the Holocaust a deeply religious event for modern Jews. As noted by famous Jewish Reform rabbi and writer Emil Fackenheim, to exist as a Jew, to survive and prosper beyond Hitler, is to deny Hitler a posthumous victory.

Along with many others, Jewish author and Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel sees the importance of preserving the memory of the Holocaust as a means of ensuring the future dignity of the Jewish people, and the way to peace.

> Nothing provokes so much horror and opposition within the Jewish tradition as war. Our abhorrence of war is reflected in the paucity of our literature of warfare. After all, God created the Torah to do away with iniquity, to do away with war. Warriors fare poorly in the Talmud: Judas Maccabeus is not even mentioned; Bar-Kochba is cited, but negatively. David, a great warrior and conqueror, is not permitted to build the Temple; it is his son Solomon, a man of peace, who constructs God's dwelling place. Of course some wars may have been necessary or inevitable, but none was ever regarded as holy. For us, a holy war is a contradiction in terms. War dehumanises, war diminishes, war debases all those who wage it. The Talmud says, *Talmidei hukhamim shemarbin shalom baolam* (It is the wise men who will bring about peace). Perhaps because wise men remember best …
>
> Elie Wiesel – Nobel Lecture 1986: 'Hope, Despair and Memory', from Nobel Lectures, Peace 1981–1990, Editor-in-Charge Tore Frängsmyr, Editor Irwin Abrams, World Scientific Publishing Co., Singapore, 1997 Copyright © The Nobel Foundation 1986

Some Jews argue that an emphasis on the Holocaust in Jewish thought leads to the danger of making it the foundation of Jewish life. But Jews live today despite the Holocaust, not because of it.

Getty Images/Bill Clark

FIGURE 15.4.3 Elie Wiesel (1928–2016) was a Jewish writer and Holocaust survivor. He was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. In his writing on Judaism, he emphasised the importance of preserving a collective memory. This photo was taken in March 2015.

RESPOND

Elie Wiesel exhorted his people to never forget. Do you think that Jewish people, because of their historic memory, are more or less likely than other people to seek peace?

Jews of all persuasions acknowledge the importance of the modern State of Israel as a symbol of Jewish resilience and post-Holocaust survival. Any criticism of Israel runs the risk of being seen as disloyal to the memory of those who died in the death camps. One cannot understand the dilemmas of those agitating for peace in the Middle East without understanding these historical factors.

All Jews subscribe to the principle of pursuing peace, although there is vigorous debate about the best means of achieving this amid diverse views on Israel and the Middle East peace process.

> The opposite of love is not hate but indifference. The opposite of faith is not arrogance but indifference; The opposite of art is not ugliness but indifference. And the opposite to both peace and war – indifference to hunger and persecution.
>
> Elie Wiesel

Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam – Oasis of Peace

Established in 1972, Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam is a cooperative Israeli Jewish–Palestinian community that seeks to give practical expression to its vision of peaceful coexistence.

The village has grown to over 70 families and includes several significant enterprises: a hotel to welcome guests; a primary school with a bilingual, binational curriculum; a School for Peace; and a Pluralistic Spirituality Centre. Perhaps most significant among its accomplishments is an internationally recognised School for Peace.

The School for Peace and the village have an important symbiotic relationship. The school has delivered its workshops, programs and university courses promoting peace and tolerance to over 65 000 Palestinians and Jews. The village in turn lends credibility to the teachings of the school, a living testimony to the power of peaceful, cooperative living.

Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam

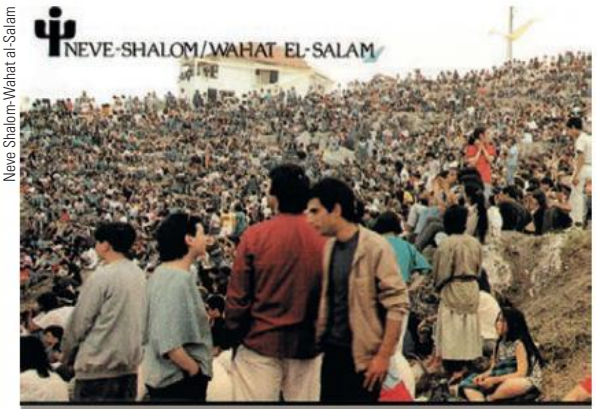

FIGURE 15.4.4 One of the early peace rallies held at Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam – Oasis of Peace

RESPOND

Watch the video of young people of Neve Shalom – Wahat al-Salam – Oasis of Peace discussing their views about peaceful coexistence in Israel.

Weblink
Oasis of peace

Jewish organisations in Australia are vocal on local social justice issues, as well as those that primarily affect the Middle East.

Australian Jewish voices for peace and reconciliation

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies: Statement on Reconciliation Week 2020:

We acknowledge the First Nations people who have nurtured this vast continent for over 40 000 years and have a deep and unshakeable connection to this land.

We also acknowledge that Jewish Australians and the Indigenous community have often fought together in struggles for justice and human rights, from William Cooper and the Australian Aboriginal League's protest against Kristallnacht in 1938 and the Jewish participation in the Freedom Ride in 1965 to the work that organisations like *Shalom-Gamarada, Derech Eretz* and the Rona Tranby Trust do today.

NSW Jewish Board of Deputies: Statement on Reconciliation Week 2020

Australian Jewish organisations demand end to cruel treatment of 'boat people'

Seven years have now passed since the then Australian government announced that all people seeking asylum arrived on unauthorised boats would be processed offshore and that none would ever be resettled in Australia, a policy that has been continued by all Australian governments since.

...

Together with many fellow Australians, we demand that our Government take immediate and effective action to resettle these people safely and give them some hope again in what remains of their interrupted and damaged lives.

Signed as of 30 July 2020.

Statement co-signed by 19 Australian Jewish community organisations

Plus61J Media

FIGURE 15.4.5 There are literally dozens of Jewish organisations that have as their central objective to work for a more just, peaceful and equitable world. A key focus, naturally, is a call for peace in Israel and the Palestinian territories, but social justice organisations also pay heed to local issues. They are the expressions of Jewish individuals, banded together, who feel that faithfulness to the *halachah* calls them to speak out against injustice that they see in the world.

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REVIEW

1. Prepare a discussion outline for Elie Wiesel's idea that peace can only be achieved if all human beings are given dignity and justice.
2. Using one of the written sources other than the sacred texts in this section, **explain** how the source develops the understanding of peace in the Jewish tradition.
3. **Research** online to find out more about one Jewish organisation that is engaged in the promotion of peace, tolerance and social justice.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to find out more about Neve Shalom Wahat al-Salam. **Critically analyse** its effectiveness as an instrument of peace.
2. Use the weblinks provided **to discuss** the degree to which Jewish religious views on peace can contribute to lasting peace in Israel and in Australia.
3. Reflecting on your response to the previous task, how important is dialogue as a means of achieving world peace?

Weblinks
Wahat al-Salam – Neve Shalom

School for Peace

Doumia-Sakinah

Rabbis for human rights

Jewish Peace Fellowship

AJDS

Stand Up

New Israel Foundation (AU)

Jews for Refugees (AU)

Tikkun

15.5 No simple answers

The understanding of peace in the major religious traditions began with laying down rules for how their adherents live in peace with one another. Then the questions arose about how to (or could they) live a peaceful coexistence with those who did not 'belong'. These questions continue to this day, and the histories of the traditions continue to colour many of their understandings of what peace means.

Any study of religion and peace probably leads to more questions than answers. Is it possible for religion to have the answer in today's complex world? And whose religion are we talking about? Is there a 'clash of civilisations'? And what is civilisation? And whose 'civilisation' is it? These are some very difficult questions with no simple answers.

> Finally, peace is woven out of rich and interconnecting relationships between people and their shared history. Where wars have been an important part of our history, whether frontier wars with Indigenous people, as in Australia, or wars with other nations, the building of peace will depend on the shared acknowledgment of that conflict and its consequences for later Australians.
>
> Andrew Hamilton, *Eureka Street*, 23 September 2015

Courtesy Patricia Madigan

FIGURE 15.5.1 Some of the participants (including Australian Sr Trish Madigan op) at the 6th Regional Interfaith Dialogue in Semarang, Indonesia, in 2012. The theme was 'Strengthening Collaborative Communities to Promote Regional Peace and Security: Interfaith in Action.'

RESPOND

Explain the role 'regional peace and security' plays towards achieving global peace.

REVIEW

1 Discuss how the two religious traditions you have studied are contributing to world peace in a specific situation.

2 Does Studies of Religion have a role in contributing to peace at the local, national and regional level? To what extent can education contribute to peaceful solutions? Discuss.

EXTENSION

1 Return to the mind map you constructed at the beginning of this chapter (page 324). What would you add to it, having investigated the understanding of peace in two religious traditions?

2 Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.

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15 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section IV

Allow about 35 minutes for this section.

Question 1 (20 marks)

If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.

Nelson Mandela

How do sacred texts and teachings in **two** religions encourage world peace?

Additional questions

Question 1

Learning to ignore things is one of the great paths to inner peace.

Robert J. Sawyer

With reference to the stimulus, explain how adherents of at least **one** religious tradition seek to achieve inner peace.

Question 2

Forgiveness equals inner peace – more peaceful people equals more world peace.

Richard Branson

With reference to the sacred texts and teachings of **two** religious traditions, explain how inner peace might lead to the achievement of world peace.

16 INDICATIVE HOURS

16

Religion and non-religion

Chapter outcomes

In this chapter, students:

- **identify** expressions of the religious dimension in human history
- **evaluate** the place of the religious dimension in human history
- **investigate** the current global distribution of the five major religious traditions
- **recognise** the reasons for the rise of new religious expressions and spiritualities and **explain** influences leading to their growth
- **investigate** the human search for meaning through non-religious world views
- **compare** the difference between religious and non-religious world views.

To access resources below, visit www.nelsonnet.com.au

Online worksheets

- Religion and human history (p. 354)
- Religion and non-religion review (p. 366)

Online activity

- Chapter 16 multiple-choice quiz (p. 366)

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© Jon Worth/British Humanist Association https://humanism.org.uk/about/atheist-bus-campaign

The first 'atheist buses' started running in London on 6 January 2009. The advertising watchdog was called upon to rule on the likelihood of God's existence – the question that has taxed the minds of the world's greatest thinkers for centuries – after complaints were made about the atheist bus advertising campaign. On 21 January, it ruled that the advertisements were not in breach of its rules as the advertisement 'was an expression of the advertiser's opinion' and was incapable of substantiation.

> As a teenager I found myself increasingly alienated from organised religion, but that didn't mean I was any less interested in God. In professional terms my degree (MA in theology) has proved about as useful as a chocolate teapot … [Yet] I am still fascinated by those big questions …
>
> Richard Price, who is now a journalist

While many of the 'mysteries' of life that confronted our ancestors have been solved by scientific discoveries and human achievement, the human search for meaning continues. The fundamental questions remain:

- How do we make sense out of this life we are experiencing?
- What is its purpose?
- How do we make responsible decisions that will give meaning and coherence to life?

And so do the answers given …

> I'm a Faithist. A word I've coined for atheists who acknowledge belief in a force mightier than themselves. Certainly not Him. It's an It. Science. Centuries of exploration via microscope and telescope have taken us from the infinitely small to the unimaginably enormous.
>
> Phillip Adams, *The Weekend Australian Magazine*, 4 April 2015, p. 38

Perhaps this unit could be better named 'Religion and non-religion and everything in between'! The 'in between' is increasing every day, and social media provide the questions about, and answers to, 'everything in between' at a speed unimaginable just 10 years ago.

The 2016 census showed nearly a third of Australians do not identify with a particular organised form of religion; among young adults (18–34 years) 39 per cent reported not having a religion. While attendance figures for religious services in 'mainstream' churches are in decline, a growing number of Australians say they are spiritual but not religious. University of Sydney religious studies professor Carole Cusack said people have a range of reasons for turning away from organised religion.

> Most people now construct themselves as individuals, rather than members of communities and they're more interested in expressing their individuality than in belonging to institutions that create rigid rules or patterns of behaviour.

When trying to make sense of the 'mysteries of life', people tend to seek out those who have come to a similar conclusion about these questions, and 'systems' evolve. In times past, this was mostly a religious belief system that gave its believers meaning. But the evolution of science called into question the idea that there was a power, or divine beings, whose existence 'goes beyond' the known or visible world, and new words were coined to explain how people were trying to answer the perennial questions outside a set of religious beliefs.

Australia does not have an established religion. Section 116 of the Constitution states:

> The Commonwealth shall not make any law for establishing any religion, or for imposing any religious

observance, or for prohibiting the free exercise of any religion, and no religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office or public trust under the Commonwealth.

However, the Australian Government does interact with religion. It provides funding to schools run by religious organisations, registers religious marriage celebrants and recognises marriages celebrated by them, and has established a school chaplaincy program whose funding (as of 2014) is only for religious chaplains.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) defines religion according to the finding of the High Court. In 1983, it held that 'the beliefs, practices and observances of the Church of the New Faith (Scientology) were a religion in Victoria.'

As part of the ruling, it was stated that:

> For the purposes of the law, the criteria of religion are twofold: first, belief in a Supernatural Being, Thing or Principle; and second, the acceptance of canons of conduct in order to give effect to that belief, though canons of conduct which offend against the ordinary laws are outside the area of any immunity, privilege or right conferred on the grounds of religion.

In a country where faith is considered to be private and personal, religion seems to be always in the news. However, the question remains: What is religion and whose religion is it? The notion that 'religion' is not a single belief, practice or idea seems fairly obvious, but, as Chapters 8 and 9 demonstrated, even Australia's religious history has to be read through the narrative lens of politics.

EXTENSION

1. Go back to your definition of religion from Chapter 1. How has it evolved through this course of study?
2. Summarise the meanings of the key terms, concepts and ideas discussed in this chapter.

16.1 The religious dimension in history

Expressions of the religious dimension

▷ Refer to Chapter 1, pages 5–6, for the characteristics of religion.

As Chapter 1 demonstrates, throughout human history people have struggled to understand a world beyond complete understanding – the mysteries of human existence – and to find answers to what lies beyond the realm of the ordinary. The answers found to these mysteries are what have been called the 'religious dimension' in our lives – a world view that has a belief in a divine being and/or powers beyond the human. It also demonstrates that there is no 'one' definition of religion.

The expression of this belief in something 'beyond the human' is often categorised under these terms: animism, polytheism and monotheism. One of the problems with this categorisation is that, unfortunately, it has been seen as a progression of sorts – from the 'primitive' animism to the more 'civilised' monotheism. Putting that aside, what do we mean by these three expressions of the 'religious dimension'?

Animism

Animism is the belief that all natural objects have a spirit or soul independent of their physical being – that all of reality is somehow animate. The person or animal lives on after death through the presence of their spirit, which in turn takes an active role among the living. Death happened, but in death people became part of the larger environment that sustained all life. It was important to respect nature, as it represented the past upon which the future depended. Prayer, sacrifice and ritual were natural responses to a world where everything was connected – the survival of individuals and communities depended upon a harmony with all the forces that comprised their world. Most Indigenous or tribal belief systems (sometimes called 'Folk religions') are animistic. Shinto, 'the way of the *kami*', is often cited as an example of animism (see Chapter 7, pages 129–30).

Polytheism

As its name implies, polytheism is acceptance of many gods/goddesses. The term has often been used negatively to mean idolatry and, as such, labelled inferior or evil; consider, for example, the Israelites and the gods of their Babylonian oppressors, or Islam's struggle to establish itself in the polytheistic Arabian peninsula of its origins. Polytheism can be seen as a significant expression of the human response to the complexity of the world and whatever superhuman power(s) may lie behind it – how could one god possibly oversee everything? The religions of the ancient Greeks and Romans were polytheistic, and Hinduism could be considered a form of polytheism.

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Monotheism

It follows, then, that monotheism is the belief that there is one, and only one, divine being. More specifically, the term is often used for belief in the personal creator-God of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. For some, the Christian doctrine of the Trinity (see Chapter 3, page 45) rather modifies this.

Whatever explanation of that something or someone 'beyond one's own experience' was reached, it needed a human response to give meaning to the explanation. Rituals, stories and ways of behaving were constructed to acknowledge and explain this 'other', and this is what has become known as religion.

–ism and *–ist*

There are lots of *-isms* and *-ists* in this chapter ...
The *Macquarie Dictionary* defines *-ism* as 'a suffix of nouns **1**. denoting action or practice (*baptism*, *criticism*, *nepotism*), state or condition (*heroism*, *despotism*), principles, doctrines (*Catholicism*, *puritanism*, *Darwinism*), a usage (*Australianism*) or characteristic (*classicism*, *realism*), etc. **2**. denoting a prejudiced view formed on the basis of a specified feature, as in *racism*, *sexism*, *ageism*, *sizeism*'.

It defines *-ist* as 'a suffix of nouns, often accompanying verbs ending in *-ise*/*-ize* or nouns ending in *-ism*, denoting one who does, practises, or is concerned with something, or holds certain principles, doctrines, etc., as in *apologist*, *dramatist*, *machinist*, *plagiarist*, *realist*, *socialist*, *theorist*'.

The usage today gives rise to some quandaries. 'Catholicism' and 'Protestantism' are all right, but 'Islamism' and 'fundamentalism' are not. A 'Methodist' today might be rather quaint, but an 'Islamist' is to be avoided!

Definitions of '-ism' and '-ist' from the Macquarie Dictionary Online.
© Macquarie Dictionary Publishers, 2020

RESPOND

How does the lack of a 'common' language affect the way we talk about religion?

REVIEW

1. In pairs, discuss why religion is difficult to define. Make a list of four reasons.
2. Explain the statement: 'There is a sense in which all religions are animistic.'
3. Critically evaluate the statement: 'The expression of the religious dimension in human history has progressed from the "primitive" animism to the more "civilised" monotheism.'

Significance of the religious dimension

GLOSSARY

conservative The tendency to preserve existing conditions. The term can be used positively or negatively. To be positively conservative is to emphasise the preservation of the richness of past beliefs, institutions and practices. To be negatively conservative is to have difficulty in accepting anything that would modify what is held to be unchangeable.

culture The way a group of human beings relate to each other to develop the sum total of ways of living built up by human beings and then transmitted from one generation to another.

Diaspora The dispersion of Jews, caused by the Exile into Babylon and other scatterings of the Jewish people across all ages. Today it is the generic term used to refer to all Jews who live outside the modern State of Israel, founded in 1948.

radical A person, institution or idea that favours changes or reform. From the Latin word for 'root', the term is used positively and negatively. For some, the sense is 'going back to the root or origin' and discerning what, for example, the founder of the religion would have done in these changed circumstances. For others, the term suggests an extreme transformation with little regard for anything in the past.

To talk about a religious dimension in human history is to explore the functions of religion – how religion works.

Religion is both personal and social. Religion is also cultural. Many of the rituals, and even languages, of religious traditions have their roots in the cultural origins of the tradition.

The individual

For the individual, religion provides a means of finding a place in the larger world. It offers a framework of meaning and coherence that gives direction to one's life. It provides support through rituals and celebrations for life events, and is a source of values and ideas to help make sense of life and give it some certainty.

Social cohesion

Religion also functions as a source of social cohesion – it provides meaning and purpose for the community of believers. Religion, by its nature, tends to be **conservative**. It has played an important part in maintaining and reinforcing social structures, customs and values. This is particularly obvious in times of adversity – religion offers emotional support by providing a view of a better future. The doctrines and rituals and values of religion provide continuity in a dislocated world. And these can also help preserve a **culture**.

Religion as a source of social cohesion is particularly obvious in Australia's religious history. For immigrant communities, it has been religion that has provided a constant in their new home, and this has been repeated

throughout world history from the beginning of the Jewish **Diaspora** to every group of people who have been forced, or have chosen, to seek a life in a 'new' world. In times of rapid social change, religion offers people a sense of communal identity when all else seems to be changing and there is a feeling of alienation.

> Crises often have unintended and unforeseen consequences. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of these consequences involves the rediscovery of the importance of religion. Over the last few months, many of us have become more religious and we have all been reminded of the importance of faith in bringing society together in times of distress.
>
> Michael Wakelin, former Head of Religion and Ethics at the BBC, 17 July 2020

This social cohesion, however, can also function as a form of social control. Religion can support a social structure that is unjust, that denies the legitimate concerns of individuals and groups. This happened with, for example, the acceptance of slavery and the denial of rights to those not of the established religion of a particular society. Religion can be used to 'keep people in their place' and deny them autonomy – for instance, the place of women within the tradition.

Social transformation

The paradox of religion is that, while it can help to maintain the structures, customs and values of society, it can also offer profound criticism of those same social structures, customs and values and so be a source of social transformation. Religion can provide an achievable vision of a better world. Religion is both conservative and **radical** – it can support the established order and also challenge it. Religious groups and individuals have, throughout the course of history, been strongly critical of the social and political order. Religion is never totally the servant of society, as your explorations during this course will have demonstrated. The Exodus story of the Jewish people exemplifies the overthrow of oppression and the realisation of a better world. Many of the reform movements within the various traditions have grown out of a challenge to a tradition that appeared to be supporting the status quo.

DID YOU KNOW?

Six Western European countries – Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland – have mandatory taxes for members of the largest churches to help finance their activities. While most registered Christians (and in some countries, members of other religious groups) in these countries are required to pay the tax, they have the option of not paying by deregistering from their church. In some of these countries, there are churches that will only serve those who have paid up. In September 2012, a German court gave its backing to a decree by the country's Catholic bishops declaring that believers who refused to pay an 8 per cent church tax could not be considered Catholic and would automatically lose the right to receive Holy Communion and a religious burial. The judges ruled that in Germany it was 'not possible' to stop paying church tax and remain a member of the Catholic Church. It added that the state was obliged by law to tax church members, but stressed it was up to the church to decide how to deal with those who refused to pay.

RESPOND

In groups, brainstorm the pros and cons of having to register as a member of a specific religious tradition.

Worksheet
Religion and human history

REVIEW

1 **Identify** how each of the three major traditions you have studied in this course provides:
   - **a** meaning and purpose for the individual adherent
   - **b** meaning and purpose for the community of believers
   - **c** social transformation.

2 **Evaluate** the place of the religious dimension in human history.

EXTENSION

1 Analyse the differences between a 'positively conservative' and a 'negatively conservative' approach to religion. Provide examples to clarify your analysis.

2 In small groups, discuss the statement: 'Religion is both conservative and radical.' List the key points from your discussion and share them with the other groups.

Global distribution of the major religious traditions

It is interesting to look at statistics for the major world religions – they tell all sorts of stories. These stories are interwoven with the history of the world, particularly since the beginning of the Common Era.

Christianity was the first expansionist religion, and it filled the void created by a Roman Empire in decline. At the beginning of the seventh century CE, Christianity was faced with the new religion of Islam and, by 750 CE, the Muslim world had expanded to take in much of the then Christian world. Christianity responded to Islam with the struggle to reconquer Europe and with the Crusades to the 'Holy Land' from the eleventh century to the end of the fifteenth century. And the Jews of Europe and the Middle East were caught in the middle. Meanwhile, Islam had been moving across the top of Africa and down the east coast and to what was then called the Far East, including the East Indies, where it encountered Hinduism and Buddhism. At the same time, the Age of Exploration was taking the Christians of Europe to the New World – the Americas, the Antipodes and East Asia. This was followed by the 'grab for Africa' by the European nations.

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By the turn of the eighteenth century, the Muslim empire was in decline (although Islam continued to dominate in the regions of its earliest expansion) and Christian Europe dominated the colonial map of the world.

Basically, this is the way the world remained until the twentieth century – although the gradual emancipation of the Jews of Europe had led to the rebirth of some Jewish communities in Western Europe and many Jewish people migrated to the United States, which granted Jews full citizenship from the beginning. The Second World War saw the destruction of European Jewry in the Holocaust, and severe dislocation in Europe led to the resettlement of many displaced people in countries outside Europe. The creation of the Jewish State of Israel in 1948 hugely increased the Jewish population that had begun settling in Palestine in the nineteenth century.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, decolonisation brought many Muslims and Hindus to countries such as the United Kingdom and France. Since then, civil wars in many regions have increased the spread of religions. The need for population growth and the removal of the White Australia Policy brought Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims to Australia.

For Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims, Table 16.1 reflects the region of origin and, in the case of Muslims, the early spread of that tradition. For Jews, we see the extent of the dislocation caused by the Holocaust and also the establishment of the State of Israel; and for Christians, the missionary activity of that tradition.

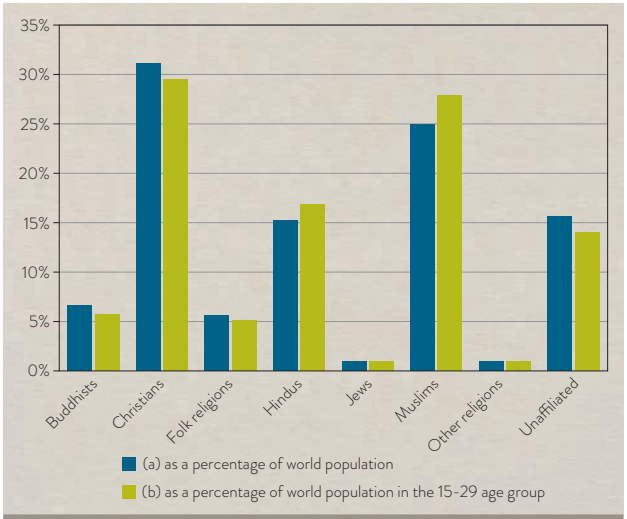

FIGURE 16.1.1 **Religious population of the world (a) as a percentage of world population, and (b) as a percentage of world population in the 15–29 age group, in 2020. Adapted from Pew-Templeton Global Religious Futures Project, Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org**

RESPOND

Name three religions that would be included in the 'Other religions' category.

TABLE 16.1 Estimated religious composition of the world by regions in percentages for 2020 and 2040†

Region	Buddhists	Christians	Hindus	Muslims	Jews	Other*	Unaffiliated**	Folk religion
Asia–Pacific								
2020	11.3	7.2	26.0	25.7	< 0.1	1.2	20.0	8.6
2040	10.1	7.5	27.2	28.3	< 0.1	1.0	17.9	7.8
Europe								
2020	0.2	75.2	0.2	6.8	0.2	0.1	20.0	0.1
2040	0.3	67.5	0.3	9.0	0.2	0.1	23.3	0.2
Latin America–Caribbean								
2020	< 0.1	89.7	0.1	0.1	< 0.1	0.2	8.0	1.8
2040	< 0.1	89.1	< 0.1	0.1	< 0.1	0.2	8.5	1.9
Middle East–North Africa								
2020	0.2	3.6	0.6	93.1	1.6	< 0.1	0.6	0.3
2040	0.2	3.2	0.6	93.5	1.4	< 0.1	0.6	0.4
North America								
2020	1.2	74.6	0.8	1.3	1.6	0.9	19.2	0.4
2040	1.4	68.4	1.2	2.0	1.4	1.3	23.8	0.5
Sub-Saharan Africa								
2020	< 0.1	62.0	0.2	31.4	< 0.1	0.2	3.0	3.2
2040	< 0.1	59.6	0.1	34.1	< 0.1	0.2	2.7	3.2

* Includes followers of African traditional religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian Aboriginal religions.
** Includes 'none', agnostics, atheists, secular humanists, etc.
† Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Estimated population figures are based on United Nations World Population Prospects: 2012 Revision, June 2013
Source: Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050. Pew Research Center, Washington, DC. Pewforum.org

REVIEW

1 Using a map of the world, identify the countries that belong to each region.

2 Refer to Figure 16.1.1. In pairs, brainstorm some possible reasons for the differences in the figures for the total world population and for the 15–29 age group (remember, this is your age group).

EXTENSION

1 Go to the weblink provided and use the information there to prepare two tables: one to show the 15 largest national populations of the five major traditions; and one to show these as a percentage of the total population of each country. Compare and contrast the differences in each table. Is there anything in these figures that surprises you?

2 Use the information from the weblink to investigate the projections for the global religious population in the 15–29 age group in 2030, 2040 and 2050. Identify five conclusions that could be drawn from this data.

3 In groups, discuss how the use of statistics can affect how one approaches the study of religious traditions. Make a list of the key points of your discussion and share these with the other groups.

Weblink
The future of world religions

16.2 New religious expressions

Today there are a multitude of new religious movements, expressions and spiritualities found in Australia. How one categorises them is difficult, and really depends on how one defines 'religion' and 'spirituality' and whether one sees these terms as being inclusive or exclusive. Is Pentecostalism a 'religion' or a 'spirituality'? Is it 'emergent' or is it now 'mainstream'? What about the Church of Scientology? Is it a 'church', a 'cult', a 'movement'? Where does one put the Mormons and hundreds of other groups, movements and spiritualities that have their roots in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism – the so-called major traditions? It's quite a dilemma!

Leo Pfeffer (1910–1993), an observant Jew and a distinguished American jurist and leading authority on church–state separation, once observed:

> If you believe in it, it is a religion or perhaps *the* religion; and if you do not care one way or another about it, it is a sect; but if you fear and hate it, it is a cult.
>
> Leo Pfeffer, 'Equal protection for unpopular sects', *New York Review of Law and Social Change* 9–10, 1979–80

So again, definitions are important, and it depends on how one defines 'religious' and 'spirituality/spiritualities' – are spiritualities the plural of spirituality? It also depends on who is doing the defining and who is asking the questions. The sociology of religion in all its expressions is one of the growth areas of Australian academic publishing. Is there a distinction between religion and spirituality, or is that not the right question?

Perhaps the phenomenon of the Dalai Lama is the best example of a 'new' religious expression. He believes there is an important distinction between religion and spirituality. For him, spirituality is 'concerned with those qualities of the human spirit – such as love and compassion, tolerance, forgiveness, contentment, a sense of responsibility, a sense of harmony – which bring happiness to both self and others' (*Ancient Wisdom, Modern World*, 1999). While all these qualities are directly connected to the teachings and practices of the major religious traditions, the Dalai Lama sees no reason why the individual should not develop them without recourse to any religious or metaphysical belief system:

> That is why I sometimes say that religion is something we can perhaps do without. What we cannot do without are these basic spiritualities.

What can be said with confidence is that the Western world in particular is probably less religious than it was 150 years ago, and the dynamics of belief and observance have certainly become more complex.

DID YOU KNOW?

The term 'spirituality' is not new. It has a long history of use in Islam, where the Sufi way, *tasawwuf*, refers to a centuries-old form of mystical religious practice; and in Christianity, in particular the Catholic Church, where centuries-old traditions of spiritual practice continue with, for example, Benedictine and Ignatian spiritualities.

Why are people open to new ideas?

In the past, religion was a community affair. A community 'owned' religious beliefs. A community celebrated religious rituals. The individual made the decision how active they wanted to be in the community, but it was primarily the community that determined the nature and expression of faith. Most people saw themselves as born into a religious

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community, and gradually they learnt the ways of that community. Today many people do not see themselves primarily as part of religious communities. The individual has become the measure of faith. Individuals are very aware that they have choices. They exercise that right of choice. If they choose to be part of a religious community, it is because they want to be, rather than because they are.

Religion or no religion, spiritual but not religious

Question 19 in the Australian census is optional and asks simply 'What is the person's religion?' With boxes for the nine most popular responses from the previous census, the question is designed to measure the population belonging to particular organised faith communities. There is a box labelled 'Other – please specify.' In the most recent census (2016), 9.1% did not answer the question, 30% answered 'No religion', so described, and the 'Other' box provides this information:

Other Spiritual Beliefs 0.17%

- Multi faith
- New Age
- Theism
- Unitarian Universalism
- Own Spiritual Beliefs

Secular Beliefs 0.29%

- Agnosticism
- Atheism
- Humanism
- Rationalism

Declaring 'no religion' does not mean that someone is anti-religious, lacking in spirituality, or an atheist. It means they may not identify with a particular organised form of religion or may not wish to state their religion.

RESPOND

Are there any possible limitations to consider when using census data?

Commenting on the 2016 census results, Sydney University Professor Carole Cusack said she didn't believe those seeking spirituality outside religion were grasping for something else to believe in. Instead, she thinks people are adapting to a society where many aspects are becoming increasingly complicated and uncertain.

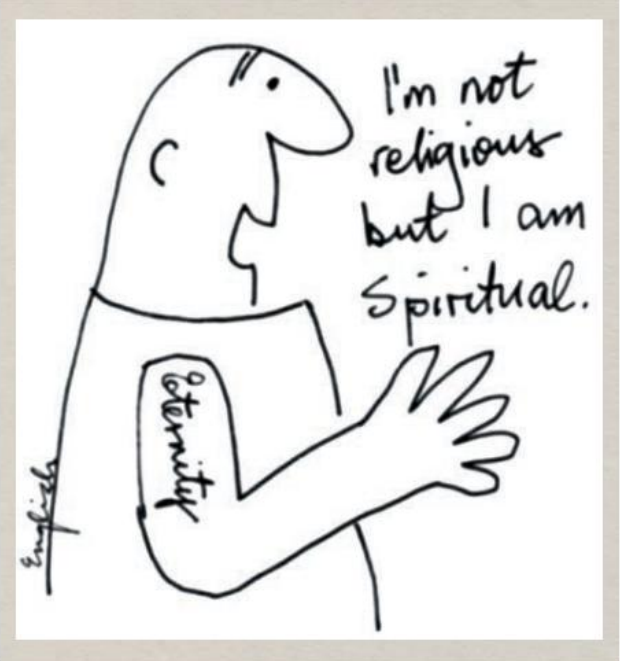
> Spirituality is something that people self-identify with or as. You don't sign up for anything to be a spiritual person. You're allowed to move in and out of different things, and to sample things and try things out.
>
> It's practical to be flexible, and to be adaptable, and to be interested in new things. So the people who are spiritual seekers are flexible and adaptable and they're looking for the things they can use in different circumstances.

© SBS

Or, as Gary Bouma, emeritus Professor of Sociology at Monash University, puts it:

> In the past few decades spirituality has become popular, in part as an alternative to religion – a way to have the benefits of religion without having to belong to a religion … While spiritualities have a long history, the term spirituality has more recently come to refer to the generic in religion minus the organisational, historical and clerical trappings.

Gary D. Bouma in *The Conversation*, 23 August 2017



Graham English

FIGURE 16.2.1

RESPOND

In your own words, clarify what this cartoon is expressing.

The traditional notion of 'community' has also changed – many people do not have much to do with the localities within which they live. They neither work nor shop there. Their children may well not be educated there, and their sporting and leisure interests may be pursued in other places.

While there are many and varied reasons why people today are choosing new religious expressions and spiritualities, there is no doubt that many people are still looking for answers to those age-old questions:

- How do we make sense out of this life we are experiencing?
- What is its purpose?
- How do we make responsible decisions that will give meaning and coherence to life?

They are seeking these answers in new places because they have either 'tried' a traditional religion and found it wanting, or have never been part of a religious tradition, or need some group or organisation to support what they believe are the answers.

How one distinguishes the differences between religious and non-religious world views is becoming more difficult as both the notion of what is 'religious' and how one defines 'religious' become more complex. And how does one define 'spirituality'?

> Spirituality is about finding a meaning for your life, that unlike addiction, is not destructive, a meaning that enriches and enhances instead. It is about knowing that you are not God and then getting on with your life. Spirituality is to do with humans trying to work out a convincing and helpful meaning of life. Religion allows people to do it in a community or at least in company.
>
> Graham English, 2013

The search for meaning

The search for some sort of meaning to life leads people in many different directions and to many new religious expressions and spiritualities. Some of these are termed 'non-religious' and have a long history, such as humanism – but are they necessarily non-religious? Others, while objecting to many of the 'trappings' of religion, have developed their own rituals. The following section addresses some of these questions but does not attempt to provide the answers.

> In turbulent times, in times of great change, people head for the two extremes: fundamentalism and personal, spiritual experience … With no membership lists or even a coherent philosophy or dogma, it is difficult to define or measure the unorganised New Age movement. But in every major US and European city, thousands who seek insight and personal growth cluster around a metaphysical bookstore, a spiritual teacher, or an education centre.
>
> John Naisbitt, in J. Naisbitt and P. Aburdene, *Megatrends 2000*

'New Age' teachings became popular during the 1970s as a reaction against what some perceived as the failures of traditional religion, particularly mainstream Christianity, to provide spiritual and ethical guidance in a time of rapid change and political and social upheaval. While the term 'New Age' could be termed 'Old Age' now, its philosophies and practices continue to provide a template for reasons many people are seeking new religious expressions and spiritualities.

The view that traditional religion, particularly mainstream Christianity, was too concerned with rules and outdated rituals, was too involved in capitalist structures, did not acknowledge the importance of ecology, and was too hierarchical, clerically dominated and misogynist, led people to:

- seek solutions through Eastern spiritual paths, particularly Buddhism, Hinduism and Sufism, although in a Westernised form
- revisit the belief systems of Indigenous peoples for a simpler connection to the world of nature
- develop creation-centred spiritualities – 'we experience that the Divine is in all things and all things are in the Divine'.

Religion and spirituality in Australia

In 2016 Australians* were asked:

- How important is religious faith or spirituality in shaping life decisions?

Very important	14%
Important	25%
Of little importance	25%
Not important	36%

- Which of these comes closest to your belief?

There is a personal God	24%
There is some sort of spirit or life force	35%
I don't know what to think	19%
I don't think there is any spirit, God or life force	21%

* The final sample is 1258 cases. Quotas were set for age, gender and location. Results are weighted to reflect the demographic profile of the Australian population aged 18+ on age, gender and education.

The 2016 Australian Community Survey, by NCLS Research.

DID YOU KNOW?

www.meetup.com

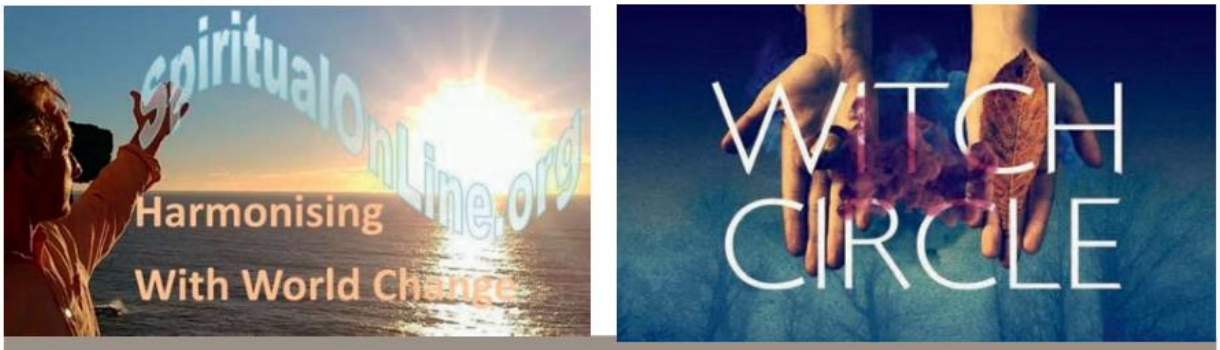


FIGURE 16.2.2 These are just two of the many groups on the Meetup 'Explore beliefs' website. There is also a Spiritual dating: Meet Other Spiritual Singles website.

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REVIEW

1. How would you **define** spirituality? Is there a difference between spirituality and spiritualities?
2. **Discuss** this statement: Most definitions of spirituality reflect the proposer's religious origins.
3. 'In turbulent times, in times of great change, people head for two extremes: fundamentalism and personal spiritual experience …' Using this statement of John Naismith from 2000 and Michael Wakelin's from 2020 – '… we have all been reminded of the importance of faith in bringing society together in times of distress' – on page 354, **examine** how they relate to the material in the previous two sections, 16.1 and 16.2
4. In pairs, brainstorm reasons why many people are dissatisfied with traditional religion. **Summarise** the results under the following headings: Religious reasons; Material (or secular?) reasons. Share your results with the rest of the class.
5. **Critically analyse** the results from the previous question and write a response to the statement: 'Traditional religion does not provide answers to the questions people are asking today.'
6. **Identify** four influences on the growth of new religious expressions and spiritualities and **explain** how they may influence people to seek 'new' answers.

EXTENSION

1. Use the weblinks provided to read articles about new religious expressions and spiritualities. Prepare a summary of the material to **outline** reasons for people seeking new religious expressions and spiritualities.
2. 'New religious expressions and spiritualities' or 'new religious expressions and/or spiritualities' – is there a difference? **Discuss**.

Weblinks
ABC Religion Report

Right-wing religion

Religious freedoms

C of E and religious communities

Types of teenage spirituality

Australian teen spirituality

Religion in Australia

What is the future of religion?

16.3 Non-religious world views

GLOSSARY

agnosticism The belief that the existence or non-existence of God cannot be proved; or the belief that human knowledge is limited to experience.

apostasy (noun, **apostate**) Total desertion of, or departure from, one's religion.

atheism The acceptance that there is no credible scientific or factually reliable evidence for the existence of a god, gods or the supernatural. Atheists might also be called humanists or rationalists, although these categories have particular historical contexts.

deist One who believes in the existence of a god on the evidence of reason and nature only, with rejection of supernatural revelation (distinguished from **theist**).

Enlightenment Also known as the Age of Reason, the Enlightenment is defined as the period of rigorous scientific, political and philosophical discourse that characterised European society during the 'long' eighteenth century: from the late seventeenth century to the ending of the Napoleonic Wars in 1815.

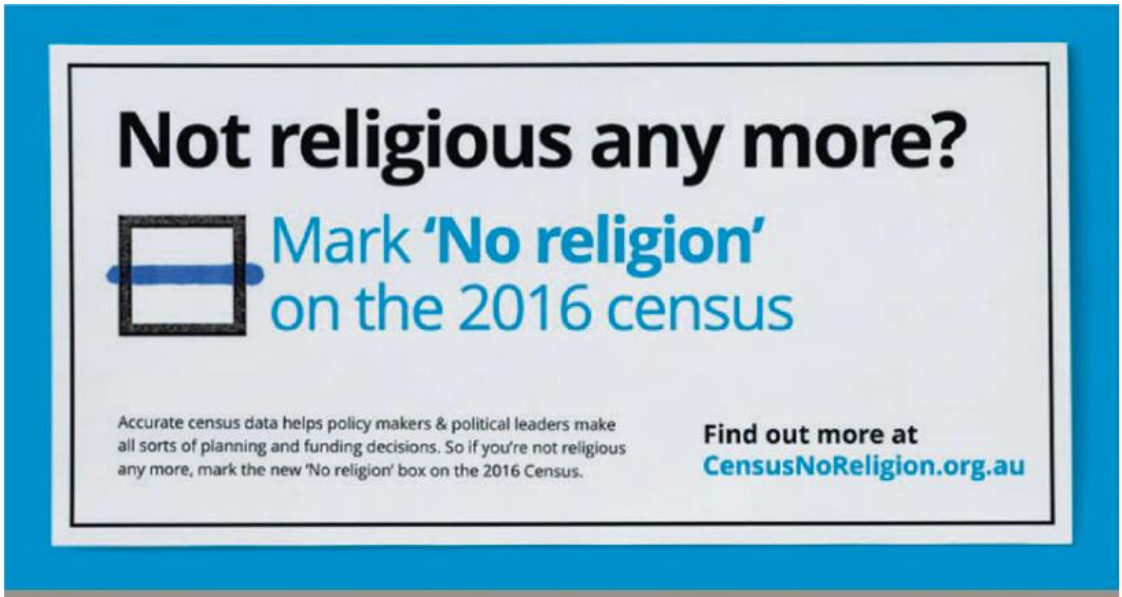
humanism A system of thought and reasoning based on human values and interests, often without accepting the beliefs of religion.

Renaissance A great cultural movement that brought about a period of scientific revolution and artistic transformation. It marks the transitional period between the era of the Middle Ages and the start of the Modern Age. The Renaissance is usually considered to have begun in the fourteenth century in Northern Europe.

sceptic From the Latin and Greek for 'inquiring', 'reflective'. One who questions the validity or authenticity of something purporting to be knowledge; one who doubts the truth of the Christian religion or of important elements of it.

secular About things not religious, sacred or spiritual.

theist One who believes in the existence of a god or gods without the rejection of revelation.



Atheist Foundation of Australia

FIGURE 16.3.1 The Atheist Foundation of Australia ran a crowd-funded 'Mark no religion' campaign before the 2016 census.

Non-religion and 'formal' religion

For as long as there has been belief, there have also been doubt and disbelief; and one of the problems in the field of religion and ethical systems is that certain terms (for example, the three main and interrelated non-religious belief systems – **agnosticism**, **atheism** and **humanism**) have multiple and often conflicting meanings. This is reflected in Australian census information – some agnostics and atheists specify their beliefs as a 'religion'.

'None', 'no religion' and the census

From 1971, the instruction to describe oneself as having 'No religion' if one had no religion was explicitly included in the Australian census. From this time, reporting no religion has increased with every census. In 1991, a 'No religion' box was introduced underneath the 'Other: please specify' box.

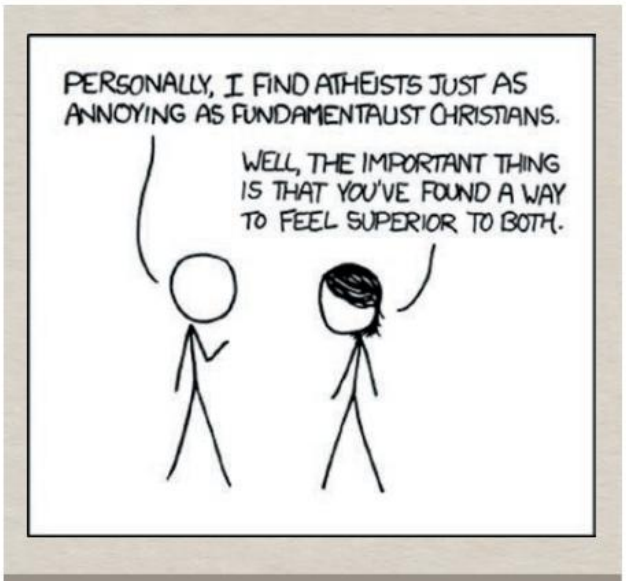
After the 2016 census topic review process, the Australian Bureau of Statistics decided to move 'No religion' to the top of the list on the census. The move was in line with it being the second highest response to the religion question in the 2011 census.

TABLE 16.2 Australians identifying as having no religion

1971	1991	2001	2006	2011	2016
6.7%	12.9%	16%	18.7%	22.3%	30.1%

'Nones' are a diverse collection of people, including atheists and agnostics, as well as those who have a mix of religious beliefs and practices but do not identify with a particular faith. While the 'nones' are not a religion per se, they are broadly categorised as such because, regardless of their beliefs, they don't identify with a religious group.

Pew Research Center, 22 June 2015



https://xkcd.com/774

FIGURE 16.3.2

RESPOND

What does this cartoon reveal about contemporary attitudes to belief systems?

The rise in numbers in the 'No religion' category has led some religious people to call for protection as they feel under attack. In Australia, the debates around same-sex marriage and proposed Freedom of Religion legislation have been ferocious.

The Global God Divide, released by Pew Research Centre in July 2020, found that people's thoughts on whether belief in God is necessary to be moral vary by economic development, education and age. They posed the question whether a belief in God is necessary in order to be moral and

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have good values. They asked 38 426 people in 34 countries and found that, overall, 45 per cent said it was necessary. However, most Australians (79 per cent) took the opposite position – that it is not necessary to believe in God to be a moral person and have good values. The disparity in North America is quite startling: in the United States, 44 percent of people held that a belief in God was necessary, while in Canada it was just 26 per cent. Overall, those with higher incomes are less likely to say a belief in God is necessary.

Weblink
The Global God Divide

Agnosticism

Agnosticism is a belief about the existence or non-existence of God. An agnostic has concluded that there is no proof for either the existence or non-existence of God. Since they are not certain that God does not exist, they are not atheists, but could an agnostic also be a **theist**? These two beliefs are not necessarily mutually exclusive – an agnostic could still believe in the existence of God even though they accept that there is no proof either way. Agnostics are willing to change their belief if some evidence or solid proof is found in the future.

> The mystery of the beginning of all things is insoluble by us, and I for one must be content to remain an Agnostic. I think an Agnostic would be the more correct description of my state of mind. The whole subject [of God] is beyond the scope of man's intellect.
>
> Charles Darwin, *Life and Letters*

Thomas H. Huxley, a well-known English professional scientist and religious **sceptic**, invented the term 'agnostic' at Cambridge in the 1840s. He combined 'a', which implies a negative, with gnostic, a Greek word meaning 'knowledge'. He coined the term, he said, because everyone else was an '-ist' of one kind or another, and he had no label to apply to his own beliefs. He meant to distinguish himself from those whose faith provided answers to the most profound questions:

> When I reached intellectual maturity, and began to ask myself whether I was an atheist, a theist, or a pantheist; a materialist or an idealist; a Christian or a freethinker, I found that the more I learned and reflected, the less ready was the answer, until at last I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with any of these denominations, except the last … So I took thought and invented what I conceived to be the appropriate title of 'agnostic'. It came into my head as suggestively antithetic to the 'gnostic' of Church history, who professed to know so much of the very things of which I was ignorant …
>
> T. Huxley, 'Agnosticism', *The Nineteenth Century*, February 1889, p. 183

The famous American trial lawyer and agnostic Clarence Darrow's 1929 essay 'Why I am an agnostic' begins:

> An agnostic is a doubter. The word is generally applied to those who doubt the verity of accepted religious creeds of faiths. Everyone is an agnostic as to the beliefs or creeds they do not accept. Catholics are agnostic to the Protestant creeds, and the Protestants are agnostic to the Catholic creed. Any one who thinks is an agnostic about something, otherwise he must believe that he is possessed of all knowledge. And the proper place for such a person is in the madhouse or the home for the feeble-minded. In a popular way, in the western world, an agnostic is one who doubts or disbelieves the main tenets of the Christian faith.

DID YOU KNOW?

Clarence Darrow (1857–1938) is best remembered as the defence attorney for teacher John Scopes in what became known as 'The Scopes Monkey Trial'. In 1925, the US state of Tennessee had passed the Butler Act, making it a misdemeanour to teach evolution. Darrow's chief argument was that the Butler Act promoted one particular religious view and was therefore illegal. Scopes was found guilty and fined $100. The controversy over the teaching of science and evolution has continued into the twenty-first century. *Inherit the Wind*, a dramatised version of the trial, has been made and remade four times for film and television.

Atheism

A good example of the difficulties in defining terms lies in the various definitions of the term 'atheist':

- a person who lacks a belief in a god or gods (Urbandictionary.com)
- a person who rejects the idea of the existence of a god or gods, or of any supernatural being, on the basis of lack of evidence that they exist (Macquarie Dictionary online)
- someone who does not believe in any God or gods (Cambridge Dictionary online).

A small child who has not developed the concept of deity would be an atheist under the first definition, but not under the second! And is the 'faithist' Phillip Adams (see page 351) still an atheist?

DID YOU KNOW?

Atheism is derived from the Greek word *atheos*, and means simply 'away from the belief in a god or gods'. In ancient Greece, the term was used to refer to people who did not believe in the official religion. In ancient Rome, Christians were often called 'atheists' because they did not believe in the pantheon of Roman gods and goddesses. Until the word 'agnosticism' came into general usage during the nineteenth century, people who would now be called agnostics were lumped together with atheists. But then, atheism hasn't necessarily meant one thing throughout history.

Atheist Foundation of Australia Inc

A brief history of atheism

Modern atheism has its beginnings in post-**Enlightenment** Europe. The Enlightenment, an eighteenth-century European movement of philosophy and science, stressed the supremacy of reason over religious revelation or ancestral tradition. Atheism's growth is also linked with the political development of the nation-state, as nations would often try to limit the control that religious bodies had within their borders. This secularism reverberated into the debates about the broader social influence of religion as well as its role in daily life.

The 1782 pamphlet *Answer to Dr. Priestley's Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever* was the first published declaration of atheism. Until then, atheists mostly concealed their disbelief in God by pretending to be **deists**.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, advances in scientific principles and knowledge of the natural world enabled English naturalist Charles Darwin to outline his theory of evolution. These scientific developments challenged religious – especially Christian – understandings of creation. At the same time, textual analysis of the Bible and archaeological excavations in the Middle East were causing people to question the Bible's reliability as a historical document.

Then there was German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche's famous 1882 declaration, 'God is dead'. Nietzsche wrote about the death of God at a time when many thinkers were starting to recognise a shift in the way Western culture related to Christianity.

Most atheists have analysed the available material evidence for the existence of one or more deities (gods and/or goddesses) and have concluded that there is no real evidence for the existence of deities. They believe that the universe, earth and its life probably evolved by perfectly natural processes, without intervention by a supernatural entity. They generally feel that ethical and moral systems governing human behaviour can be developed without any code of behaviour of allegedly divine origin.

Atheists are not people who are angry at God for something. That is not atheism; that is **apostasy**. Atheists only have a quarrel with people who claim everybody should believe in God because, in their view, God is an objective fact that is supported by overwhelming evidence that the atheist is deliberately suppressing.

In practice, atheists follow the same moral code as people of faith – but they arrive at the decision of what is good or bad without any help from the idea of God. Others, however, are convinced that faith is not only a virtue itself but the source of virtue. The ongoing battles over Special Religious Instruction ('Scripture classes') and ethics classes in New South Wales government schools is an example of atheists, humanists and various others trying to convince the world that one can be good without God.

REVIEW

1. In your own words, define 'atheism' and 'agnosticism' and distinguish the differences between the two definitions.
2. Clarify your definition of 'religion'.
3. Deduce whether or not it is possible to define atheism and/or agnosticism as a religion.
4. In point form, **outline** the essential features of atheism and agnosticism.
5. In groups, discuss how atheism and agnosticism determine the aspirations and behaviour of individuals. Prepare a list of your key points and share them with the class.

EXTENSION

1. Investigate the introduction of ethics classes as an alternative to Scripture classes in New South Wales schools. In groups, prepare the points for and against ethics classes.
2. The number of people who reported being an atheist almost doubled between the 2006 and 2011 Australian censuses, from 31 300 to 58 900 people, but in 2016 it was down again at 32 302. Give three reasons for these changes.
3. Prepare a discussion outline for a debate on the topic: 'It is possible to be agnostic and remain affiliated to a religion.'

Humanism

> I am a Humanist. I don't believe in any higher power than the best expressions of the human spirit, and those are to be found in personal and social relationships. Evaluating my life in those terms, I've had some mixed results. I've hurt some people and disappointed others, but I hope that on balance, I've given more than I've taken.
>
> Professor Fred Hollows AC (1929–1993), ophthalmologist

Humanism is probably the most powerful **secular** alternative to religion to have arisen in the modern era that functions as a source of social cohesion and social transformation. Humanism is an approach to life based on humanity and reason.

> Humanism is a democratic and ethical life stance that affirms that human beings have the right and responsibility to give meaning and shape to their own lives. Humanism stands for the building of a more humane society through an ethics based on human and other natural values in a spirit of reason and free inquiry through human capabilities. Humanism is not theistic, and it does not accept supernatural views of reality.
>
> The Minimum Statement on Humanism, Humanists International

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Humanist philosophies have arisen separately in many different cultures over many thousands of years. Classically, humanism refers to the **Renaissance** study of the ancient cultures of Greece and Rome and promotion of the concept that truth could be discovered by human effort.

> Renaissance humanism – focused on the humane studies – therefore engendered in more ways than one, the development of a natural science which, as time went by, increasingly left little space for the divine and supernatural, until finally modulating into a scientific worldview.
>
> David E. Cooper, 'Humanism and the scientific worldview' in *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* No. 93, June 1999, pp. 15–16

The word 'humanism' has a number of meanings, and this can cause some confusion when trying to explain it. There are, however, two major schools of 'traditional' humanism – rational humanism (often called 'secular humanism') and scientific humanism (often called 'ethical humanism') – which can be grouped together as modern humanism.

Rational humanism

> 'I refuse to prove that I exist,' says God, 'for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing.' 'But,' says Man, 'The Babel fish is a dead giveaway, isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves you exist, and so therefore, by your own arguments, you don't. QED.' 'Oh dear,' says God, 'I hadn't thought of that,' and promptly disappears in a puff of logic. 'Oh, that was easy,' says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that black is white and gets himself killed on the next pedestrian crossing.
>
> Douglas Adams (1952–2001), *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (book one of the series), p. 50

Published in 1627, English philosopher Francis Bacon's incomplete utopian novel *New Atlantis* was his dream of what the world might have been, and might still become, if human knowledge were directed towards improving the worldly condition of humankind. The new spirit of inquiry that flourished in the seventeenth century saw many of Bacon's ambitions for science fulfilled – the great achievement of the last half of the seventeenth century was to arrive at a general scheme of belief within which the cultivation of science was seen to be very proper, very useful, and by no means irreligious. This larger conception or purpose, of which science was a principal agent, is called 'rational humanism'.

Rational humanism became the dominant philosophic influence in human affairs for the next 150 years, and by the end of the eighteenth century the spokespersons of Reason and Enlightenment had taken completely for granted many of the ideas that had seemed exhilarating and revolutionary in the century before. Many thinkers during the Enlightenment held to the belief that human progress was possible through a rational application of the human mind. The mind, they argued, must be free to explore the world; it must not be encumbered by superstition or unthinking tradition. And the philosophers of the Enlightenment developed the notion of egalitarianism – the presumption of, and belief in, the equality of all humanity, from which was born modern democracy.

It was during the nineteenth century, when the conflict between science and religion arose, that humanism acquired its modern association with atheism or agnosticism.

FIGURE 16.3.3

RESPOND

This cartoon was created in 2015. Write three sentences to **explain** this cartoon. **Compare** your response with others in the class. Why might explanations differ?

Scientific humanism

> … as I construe the phrase scientific humanism the first word indicates an approach to matters of fact while the second refers primarily to fundamental criteria of evolution. To adopt such a scientific approach unreservedly is to accept as ultimate in all matters of fact and real existence the appeal to the evidence of experience alone; a court subordinate to no higher authority, to be overridden by no prejudice, however comfortable.
>
> Paul Kurtz (ed.), 'Scientific humanism', in *The Humanist Alternative*, 1973, p. 109

Scientific humanism is the term used to describe the intellectual movement directed towards justice, equality and world peace. Its ethics were essentially those of modern Christianity – indeed, it has many Christian supporters – but it placed its faith in progress and 'salvation' in science and technology. It was felt that through the determination of ethical men and women, humanity's problems – want, ignorance and disease – were to be directly addressed.

Its roots, of course, were the same as those of rational humanism, but the major difference was that scientific humanism laid its emphasis on the scientific method, the systematisation of which began with English physicist Isaac Newton (1642–1726).

The scientific method or process

- Scientists propose new assertions about our world in the form of theories: observations, hypotheses and deductions.
- Predictions from these theories are tested by experiment.
- A theory that is convincing enough to make fallible predictions can then be tested reproducibly in this way.

American astronomer Carl Sagan (1934–1996) explained that at the heart of science there are two distinguishing features that make it uniquely valuable as the foundation of a workable world view:

- the self-correcting mechanism that not only allows for, but encourages, an unrelenting process of testing propositions in terms of their workability and falsifiability
- an essential balance between two attitudes – 'an openness to new ideas, no matter how counter-intuitive, and the most ruthless skeptical scrutiny of all ideas, old and new.'

He explained as well that 'scientists do not seek to impose their needs and wants on Nature, but instead humbly interrogate Nature and take seriously what they find.' In fact, scientific theories, by their very nature, cannot be negotiated or politically imposed.

So, while science has the objective tools to address many of the world's problems, it has its limitations:

> Theories that involve the end of the world are not amenable to experimental verification – or at least not more than once.
>
> Carl Sagan, 31 October 1983

Today, the descriptors 'rational' and 'scientific' are rarely applied to humanism. A resolution from the Council of Australian Humanist Societies Convention of 2013 states 'That the Australian Humanist movement adopt the defence and promotion of the values of the Enlightenment as an ongoing process for organising our aims, objectives and programmes' and goes on to say that these can be encapsulated in the following key concepts:

> To encourage respect for the universal rights of men, women and children free from discrimination on the basis of race, class, disability, gender, age, nationality, or sexual orientation without belief in the supernatural and based on the values of the Enlightenment as the roots of Humanism.

Calling oneself an atheist or an agnostic is a declaration of one's position on the existence of God rather than a 'belief system' that determines one's aspirations and behaviour. Humanists can be either agnostic or atheist in their approach to the existence or non-existence of a supreme being or God, but it is their humanism that determines their ethics.

DID YOU KNOW?

Humanists International is an international non-government organisation (NGO) with Special Consultative Status with the United Nations and other international bodies. It is the sole global umbrella organisation embracing humanist, atheist, rationalist, secularist, sceptic, ethical cultural, freethought and similar organisations worldwide.

Weblink
Humanists International

© 2015 Nan Tien Temple, Australia

FIGURE 16.3.4 A poster for the Buddha's Birthday Education Project, Nan Tien Institute in Wollongong, 2020

RESPOND

Where does Humanistic Buddhism fit into 'the human search for personal fulfilment through non-religious practices' (Studies of Religion Syllabus, p. 50)?

REVIEW

1. In your own words, **define** 'humanism'.
2. Prepare a brief summary of the history of humanism.
3. **Outline** in point form the positions held by:
   - **a** rational humanism
   - **b** scientific humanism.
4. Is it possible to make distinctions between rational humanism and scientific humanism? If so, how would you **distinguish** them?
5. How would you **define** Christian humanism?

EXTENSION

1. **Construct** a table to show the differences between agnosticism, atheism and humanism.
   - **a** Annually since 1983, Australian Humanists have bestowed the award of Humanist of the Year on a person who has made an outstanding contribution to public life, consistent with humanist principles and values. Go to its web page and in pairs, agree on three of your favourite recipients. **Explain** the reasons for your choice.
   - **b** As a class, agree on six Humanists of the Year. **Examine** the profiles of the six. Is it possible to **distinguish** differences between their social activism and that of adherents to a religious tradition? **Propose** reasons why and why not. Some helpful weblinks are provided.

Weblinks
Humanists Victoria

CAHS

Canberra Humanists

9780170457583

16.4 The difference in world views

What do we mean by a world view? Probably it means how we see the world and its people living together. For some, the question of the creation of the universe – how planet earth and its people fit into the larger universe, and whether there is an 'ultimate reality' – is the 'big' question, and the answer to that determines how we view the human person and how we live together. For others, the major question is how we live together as humans on this finite planet. And then there is another question: is there any real consensus about what 'human values' are?

▷ Refer to Chapter 1, page 5, for a good background to understanding the religious and non-religious world views.

What separates a 'religious' world view from a 'non-religious' one is the concept of the transcendent – a belief in a divine being and/or powers beyond the human. But this can also be a bit of a trap. Buddhism, for example, does not seem to have much concern about a transcendent reality. Buddhism, however, seeks to motivate its adherents to move beyond the limits of the ordinary and be awakened to the unknown.

To emphasise differences can lead to all sorts of dogmatism and neglect the realities of the world today. In the area of how we as humans live together in this world, there is more often 'common cause' than there are differences. The area of environmental ethics is a good example of this.

It is impossible to ignore the influence of humanism in the pursuit of knowledge. Over the last 50 or so years, religious traditions have acknowledged that a 'scientific' approach to inquiry can be positive for the tradition rather than threaten it; for example, biblical scholarship for Judaism and Christianity has given greater insights into their sacred texts.

REVIEW

1 How would you **define** a 'world view'?
2 **Construct** a chart to **compare** the response of two religious belief systems (include one Eastern) and one non-religious belief system to:
   a the concept of the transcendent
   b the human person
   c social responsibility.
3 Write three short paragraphs to **summarise** the material in your chart.

EXTENSION

1 **Discuss** the statement: 'In the twenty-first century, the distinction between religious and non-religious world views is not as obvious as it was in the nineteenth century.'
2 What challenges do non-religious world views present to 'traditional' religion? Suggest three 'challenges' and give reasons for your suggestions.
3 **Propose** three points for and against the statement: 'Each person chooses the content of their own religion.' Organise a class debate on the topic.

God, religion and the courts

1 Can a distinction be drawn between a conscientious decision based on a religious doctrine and a conscientious belief not so based? Australian courts have defined a conscientious belief as a belief based on a seriously and deeply held moral conviction, whether or not it is part of a religious doctrine or creed. They have affirmed (1968) that the term 'conscience' of itself is not to be restricted by the ambit of 'religion'. Nor is the term 'religion' to be defined restrictively. The Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia (1943) warned that 'each person chooses the content of his [*sic*] religion' and '[i]t is not for a court upon some *a priori* basis, to disqualify certain beliefs as incapable of being religious in character'.

2 Scientology has been recognised officially as a religion after Britain's highest court swept aside 158 years of law to rule that worshipping a god is not essential to religion. The judgment concluded that religion could be defined more accurately as a 'spiritual or non-secular belief system' that 'claims to explain mankind's [*sic*] place in the universe and relationship with the infinite' and give people guidance on life (December 2013).

3 The High Court of Australia ruled that the Church of Scientology (then called the Church of New Faith) had the right to operate in Victoria under the legal status of 'religion' for purposes of payroll taxes (1983).

Conclusion

> For the mainstream Christian Churches, the challenge lies both in their practices and in how they present their message to people. For the other major traditions, it is the challenge of keeping within the community those young people who are removed from the cultural and religious heritage of their parents and grandparents. It is also a challenge for Australian media and their reporting of Australian religion and culture.
>
> Graham English

While it is obvious that Christianity continues to have a primary influence in Australian society, the diversity of religious expression continues to grow. Migration has increased the number of adherents to traditions other than Christianity, and it has also increased the number of variants/strands within Christianity. And the longer a religious group has been in Australia, the more likely there will be 'leakage' in its membership. As we have seen, there is an increasing number of people who subscribe to belief systems or have beliefs about the world and how it and its people function that are outside the traditional religious models. The statistics for civil marriage in Australia are one example of this: in 2018 four out of five (79.7%) marriages were performed by a civil celebrant, and in the first full year (2018) after changes to the Marriage Act same-sex couples represented 5.5% of all marriages.

And what role will religion play in a post-pandemic world?

EXTENSION

1. Check your list of key terms, concepts and ideas from this chapter and ensure that it is clear and complete.
2. Brainstorm some of the questions and challenges facing traditional religions in Australia. **Predict** what Australia's religious landscape might be in the twenty-second century.
3. In pairs, **discuss** the statement: 'It is impossible to arrive at a definition of "religion" that will satisfy everyone.' Make a list of your key points and share them with the class.
4. **Propose** your own definition of 'religion' and give reasons to support it.

Weblink
Religion post-pandemic

Worksheet
Religion and non-religion review

Online activity
Chapter 16 multiple-choice quiz

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16 HSC-style exam questions

Weblink
NESA support materials

To check your understanding of the style of questions in the exam, go to the Studies of Religion Stage 6 syllabus page on the NESA website. A link is provided.

Section I: Part B

Multiple-choice: Questions 1–10 (10 marks)

Studies of Religion II: Answer **all** questions from this section.

1 Religion provides meaning and purpose for a community of believers. In this way it functions as a source of:

- **A** radicalism.
- **B** conservatism.
- **C** social control.
- **D** social cohesion.

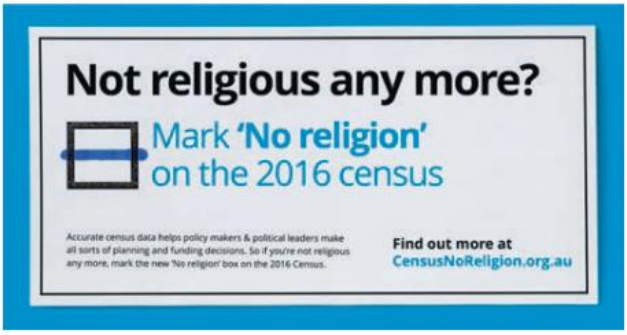
2 Rituals and stories that explain belief in a divine creator-God are found in:

- **A** animism.
- **B** polytheism.
- **C** monotheism.
- **D** humanism.

3 The Dalai Lama's spirituality centres on human qualities of love, compassion, forgiveness and harmony brought to others. This is an example of a 'new':

- **A** religious dimension.
- **B** religious expression.
- **C** religious distinction.
- **D** religious tradition.

Questions 4 and 5 refer to the following image.



Atheist Foundation of Australia

4 In the 2016 Australian census, approximately how many Australians identified as having 'no religion'?

- **A** 10%
- **B** 20%
- **C** 30%
- **D** 40%

5 The advertisement suggests a reason some may identify this way. It is best summarised as the individual's:

- **A** complete rejection of all religions.
- **B** confusion about denominational affiliation.
- **C** drift away from organised religion.
- **D** difficulty with selecting an alternative option.

6 'New Age' philosophies continue to provide spiritual paths for people who reject:

- **A** communal rites and capitalism.
- **B** organised hierarchies and clericalism.
- **C** mainstream beliefs and individualism.
- **D** traditional rituals and environmentalism.

7 Statement I: Atheists are angry at God for something.
Statement II: Most atheists have concluded that there is no real evidence for the existence of deities.

- **A** Both statements are true.
- **B** Both statements are false.
- **C** Statement I is false and statement II is true.
- **D** Statement I is true and statement II is false.

8 Sam believes it is both values of the Enlightenment and scientific processes that underpin societal progress and that his ethics are not necessarily derived from God. Sam is a:

- **A** rationalist.
- **B** humanist.
- **C** atheist.
- **D** scientist.

9 Nick has planned to visit predominantly Buddhist countries on his next holiday. He will likely travel to:

- **A** Thailand.
- **B** Bangladesh.
- **C** Malaysia.
- **D** Indonesia.

10 Which of the following views is held by a theist?

- **A** Humans are free from having to follow absolute moral teachings.
- **B** Scientific processes will lead to the discovery of all truths.
- **C** Ethical standards should be based on widely accepted values.
- **D** The source of morality lies in a transcendent being.

Short-answer: Question 11 (5 marks)

Crises often have unintended and unforeseen consequences. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of these consequences involves the rediscovery of the importance of religion. Over the last few months, many of us have become more religious and we have all been reminded of the importance of faith in bringing society together in times of distress.

Michael Wakelin, former Head of Religion and Ethics at the BBC, 17 July 2020

With reference to the stimulus, account for the rise of new religious expressions and spiritualities.

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