

Major World Religions - Comparison Chart

Aspect	Hinduism	Buddhism	Judaism	Christianity	Islam
Title	Hindus	Buddhists	Jews	Christians	Moslems
Belief System	Polytheistic	Polytheistic	Monotheistic	Monotheistic	Monotheistic
Nation of Origin	India	India	Mesopotamia	Middle East	Arabia
Language	Indian	Indian	Hebrew	Latin, English, Greek	Arabic
Symbol	Om	Wheel of Life (Samsara)	Star of David	The Cross, (crucifixion)	Crescent & Star
Founder & Time	No Founder - < 3,000 years old.	Siddhartha Guatama (563-483BC)	Abraham (Made covenant w/ G*d 3400 years ago– if Hebrews worship G*d, they will be the chosen people.	Jesus – Born in Bethlehem, Raised in Nazareth, Crucified in Jerusalem.	Muhammad (570-632) Born in Mecca, driven to Medina (Hajira).
Sacred Texts	Upanishads, Mahabharata, & 4 Vedas	Sutras	1 st 5 books of the Bible & Talmud	The Bible	Qu’ran or Koran
Major God(s)	Brahman, Vishnu, & Shiva. Atman = Essential self/Perfect understanding.	No rituals, Gods, or Priests. Enlightenment through meditation only	Yahweh, G*d	God	Allah
Place of Worship	Temple	Temple	Synagogue	Church	Mosgue
Clergy	Brahmins (Priestly Class)	Monks, Dalai Lama, no rituals, Gods, or Priests.	Rabbi	Priest, Preacher, Bishop, and Pope.	Prophet
Law			10 Commandments & Mishna (Rabbinic Law) Moses was a prophet given G*d’s Law. Torah.	10 Commandments. Moses was a prophet given God’s law.	No separation of Church and State – Theocracy. Sharia – Laws based on the Qu’ran. Moses was a prophet given God’s law.
Sacred Ideas	Cattle, Monkeys, Tree Squirrels, & some snakes. Ganges River & City of Varanasi. All Hindus are vegetarian. Daily declaration of prayer, pilgrimage to places where Buddha traveled.	Trinity: Buddha, Dharma (teachings/laws), and Sangha (community of believers. April 8: Buddha’s birth. Dec 8: Buddha’s enlightenment. Feb 15: Buddha’s Death.	Covenant b/w G*d and the Jewish people. Hannukkah, Passover, Bar/Bas Mitzvah, Zionism, Rosh Hashhanah (New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement). Jesus was just a man. Wailing Wall.	Sunday Worship, Golden Rule, Jesus died for man’s sins. Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Messiah. Disciples. Baptism, Communion (Eucharist) & Confirmation. Sunday, Christmas, Easter. Jesus was the Son of God.	Ablutions (washing of hands, face, and feet) before prayer, Muezzin (Call to Prayer), Minaret Towers, Friday Worship, Ramadan, Jihad (the effort of a good Muslim to preserve community). Jesus was a prophet.
Goal of Life	Moksha	Nirvana	A moral life through obedience to G*d’s law.	Salvation	Other World Paradise
Moral Code	Kharma (Actions) + Dharma (Religious and Moral Duty) = Reincarnation up or down.	4 Noble Truths & 8-Fold Path. Prayer, meditation, and ritual to achieve enlightenment.	A moral life through obedience to G*d’s law.	Faith, prayer.	5 Pillars: Creed, Prayer, Pilgrimage, Fasting, Zakat.
Attitude towards violence	Ahimsa	Ahimsa	10 Commandments Golden Rule	10 Commandments Golden Rule	Concept of Jihad – the effort of a good Muslim to preserve community. Context sometimes perverted.
Afterlife	Reincarnation based on moral code and Caste system: Priests, Warriors, Merchants, Servants (Untouchables). Contact w/lower class requires ritual cleansing in the Ganges River.	Release from wheel of life and cycle of birth/rebirth. Union w/the universe.	Arrival of Messiah Do not presume to know. Lead a good life and the afterlife will take care of itself.	Heaven/Hell	Pleasant based on reward and punishment
Sects	Caste System	Theraveda: Strict fundamentalists (monks). Mahayana: Less strict observance - commoners	Orthodox / Conservative	Catholic, Protestant, hundreds of other groups and denominations.	Fundamentalist, Shi’ite (radical traditionalists), Sunni (Majority), Sufi (Mystics)
Importance of Jerusalem	None	None	Site of 1 st Jewish Temple – Temple of Solomon. Birthplace.	Church of Holy Sepulcher – Site of Crucifixion of Jesus	Gabriel’s ascendance to Heaven on horseback.
Modern Issues	Widow Burning, Ghandi, Caste Abolishment.		Middle East Conflict Israel v Palestine Jerusalem ownership	Political conflict s with Muslim world concerning Israel and Palestine.	Ban against symbols representing Allah.
Members (# or %)		1/8 world population	17 Million – Diaspora has forced preservation through small, tightly knit communities.	<1 Billion – Complex doctrine and factional denominations make unity impossible.	Approx 750 Million – Simple doctrine is unifying.