

WEEK 4

Subsistence economy and traditional culture

Unit 3: The role of religion in shaping our beliefs and behavior

Belief and behavior

Nietzsche: God is dead.

God: Nietzsche is dead.

Person A:
I believe in God



Goes to church
Gives offering

Person B:
God does not exist



Does not go to church
Does not give offering

Religion

- ❖ Religion is defined as a belief system concerning the spiritual world that we cannot see that controls the human and natural world and beyond.
- ❖ It provides answers to many wondrous questions such as the origin of life and birth, disease and natural disasters, and life after death – events that humans cannot comprehend.

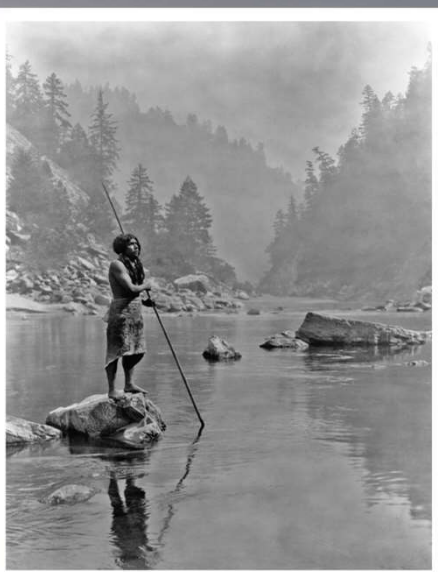
Religion

- ❖ It outlines what is right or wrong through moral codes, practices, values, institutions and rituals telling how to live, consistent with the beliefs.
- ❖ Religion vary by culture and personal individual beliefs.

Religion

- ❖ Spirituality is a belief at the personal level and it may or may not follow a particular religion or follow traditional practices or rituals.
- ❖ It involves trying to answer fundamental questions about meaning of life, the difference between right and wrong and how to deal with humankind and the world around us and the ideal way to live.

Animism and anthropomorphism



A Hupa man, California, 1923

- ❖ The earliest attempts to explain natural events involved a projection of human attributes onto nature, which nature was seen as alive with human emotion.
- ❖ For example, the sky could become angry and thunder and lightening will results.

Animism and anthropomorphism

- ❖ Looking at all of nature as though it was alive, especially inanimate objects, is called animism.
- ❖ These attempts involved early attempts to make sense of life, disease, death and nature.
- ❖ The projection of human attributes onto nature is called anthropomorphism.

Northern lights: Aurora Borealis



Mummified body



Dolmen



Egyptian burial



Funeral in Bali



Buddhist cremation, Japan



Native Americans



Mystic River Singers, USA



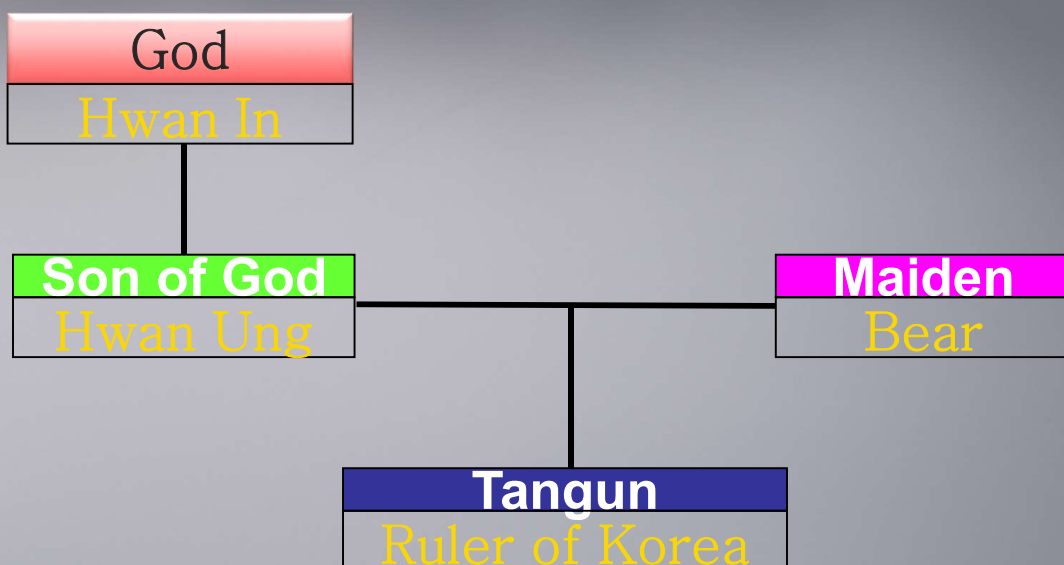
Totem pole: Victoria, Canada

Amaterasu: Shinto sun goddess



- ❖ Amaterasu (天照) is Japanese sun goddess and the Emperor is considered to be the descendant, and a god.
- ❖ She is credited with inventing the cultivation of rice and wheat, use of silkworms and weaving.

Tangun myth



Korean native religion



Sotdae: Connecting to Hwanin in the sky



Jangseung: Guardian for a village



Korean native religion

1. Syncretism

Integration of heaven, nature, and humans.

2. Community

Emphasize connectedness of community, relationship, family, and individuals.

3. Harmony

Balance among the natural, human, and spiritual worlds

Korean native religion

4. Dependence

Request the assistance of Tangun and ancestral spirits in times of need

5. Ethnocentrism

Koreans are descendants, God, ethnic homogeneity, uniqueness and superiority.

6. Celebration

This-worldly, hope, optimism, enjoyment, celebration of life.

Shamanistic ritual, kut



Ancestor worship (祖上崇拜)



Part II

Monotheistic religions and civilizations

The cradle of Western civilization



Zoroastrianism and Persia

- ❖ The Iranian plateau became a battlefield between the peaceful herders, farmers against pillaging nomadic tribes.
- ❖ Many experienced the ruthless slaughter, violence, and destruction created by the nomadic tribes.
- ❖ Although they brought destruction, anarchy and chaos, they would eventually settle and live in peace.

Zoroastrianism

- ❖ During this turbulent time, prophet Zoroaster preached a message of hope, justice, peace, and the final judgment.
- ❖ The constant struggle between the destructive forces of the warriors and peaceful farmers represented the struggle between good and evil.
- ❖ Zoroaster preached that there is one God, Ahura Mazda, “the Wise Lord,” the Creator of all things good.

Zoroastrianism

- ❖ Human beings had a choice between the forces of good or evil.
- ❖ He preached that everyone had a free will and each person must decide between the forces of good and evil before the Day of Judgment.
- ❖ Ahura Mazda was in an eternal struggle against the Evil Spirit, Ahriman, the god of destruction.

Zoroastrian theology

- ❖ If they choose the forces of evil, then destruction and despair will result and they will ultimately end up in hell.
- ❖ If people choose the forces of good by living a moral, just, and responsible life, then Ahura Mazda will be there to help them to prosper and allow them to enter paradise in the afterlife.
- ❖ Leaders must receive mandates from heaven and possess *farr*, divine blessing, to rule the people.

Zoroastrian theology

- ❖ He had to be enlightened, moral, and rule with justice and compassion.
- ❖ If he was evil, corrupt, or wicked then the community would be riddled by famine, destruction, and war.
- ❖ It was evidence that the leader lost the *farr* and then the people had the right in revolting against him.

Zoroastrian ritual of worshipping fire



Founding of Persia

- ❖ The Aryans were Indo-European nomadic tribes, who migrated from the Central Asian Steppes traveling west, around the Caspian Sea, to settle in the Iranian plateau.
- ❖ The Aryans settled in the Iranian plateau and developed a distinctive language from their cousins, the Indians and Germans, around 3,000 BC.

Founding of Persia

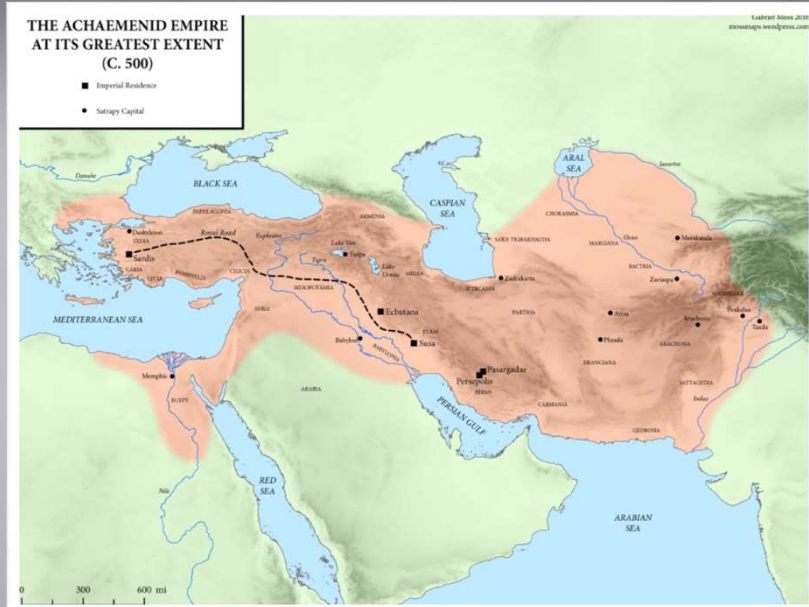
- ❖ After settling in the plains of Pars, the Aryans integrated with the local inhabitants and became known as Persians.
- ❖ Emperor Cyrus established the Persian Empire that extended from Turkey to India, from the Caucasus Mountains to the Persian Gulf.
- ❖ His son, Darius, expanded the empire to include Egypt and Libya.

Cyrus (558–529 BC)



- ❖ Cyrus was the King of Persia and was able to defeat Babylonia and freed the slaves.

Achaemenid Dynasty (550–330 B.C)



Cyrus (558–529 BC)

- ❖ The Jews regarded him as a liberator being appointed by God: “This is what the LORD says to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I take hold of to subdue nations before him and to strip kings of their armor, to open doors before him so that gates will not be shut” (Book of Isaiah, 45:1).

Cyrus (558–529 BC)

- ❖ He freed the Jews from Babylonia and allowed them to return to Jerusalem and reconstruct their temple: “who says of Cyrus, ‘He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, “Let it be rebuilt,” and of the temple, “Let its foundations be laid.”” (Isaiah, 44:28).
- ❖ The Greeks that he conquered, they considered him as the 'Law-giver.'

Roads in Achaemenid Empire



Existing remains



The First Charter of Human Rights



- ❖ The charter laid out by Cyrus was discovered in 1878, a baked-clay cylinder in Persian.
- ❖ It is regarded as the first charter of human rights, recognized in 1971 the United Nations.

The First Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ Cyrus states: My numerous troops moved about undisturbed in the midst of Babylon. I did not allow anyone to terrorize the land of Sumer and Akkad. I kept in view the needs of Babylon and all its sanctuaries to promote their well being. The citizens of Babylon... I lifted their unbecoming yoke. Their dilapidated dwellings I restored. I put an end to their misfortunes.

Cyrus Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ I announce that I will respect the traditions, customs and religions of the nations of my empire and never let any of my governors and subordinates look down on or insult them until I am alive.
- ❖ From now on, till Ahura Mazda grants me the kingdom favor, I will impose my monarchy on no nation.

Cyrus Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ Each is free to accept it , and if any one of them rejects it , I never resolve on war to reign. Until I am the king of Iran, Babylon, and the nations of the four directions, I never let anyone oppress any others, and if it occurs, I will take his or her right back and penalize the oppressor.

Cyrus Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ And until I am the monarch, I will never let anyone take possession of movable and landed properties of the others by force or without compensation. Until I am alive, I prevent unpaid, forced labor.
- ❖ Today, I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion. People are free to live in all regions and take up a job provided that they never violate other's rights.

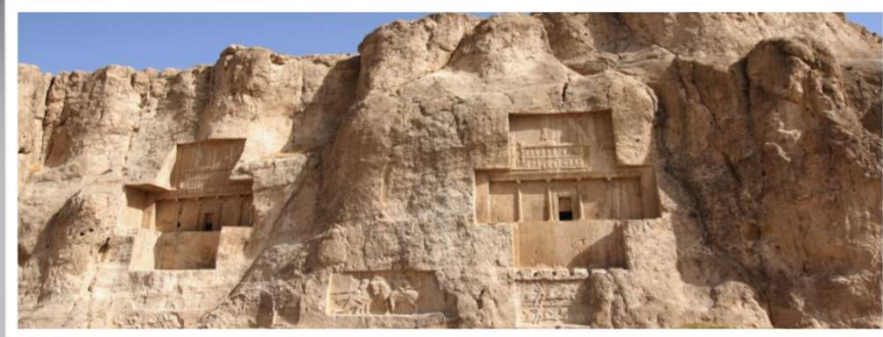
Cyrus Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ No one could be penalized for his or her relatives' faults.
- ❖ I prevent slavery and my governors and subordinates are obliged to prohibit exchanging men and women as slaves within their own ruling domains.
- ❖ Such a traditions should be exterminated the world over.

Cyrus Charter of Human Rights

- ❖ I implore to Ahura Mazda to make me succeed in fulfilling my obligations to the nations of Persia, Babylon, and the ones of the four directions.

Darius (522–486 BC)



A great god is Ahura Mazda who created this excellent work which you see, who created peace for mankind, who endowed Darius the King with wisdom and strength.

Said Darius the King

By the desire of Ahura Mazda this is my nature, to that which is just I am a friend, to that which is unjust I am no friend. I do not wish that the weak should suffer harm at the hands of the powerful, nor that the powerful should suffer harm at the hands of the weak. Whatever is just, that is my desire. The follower after falsehood do I detest, I am not vindictive. If anything raises up anger within me, I restrain myself with reason; I am master of my emotions. Who works for me I reward according to his work.

Said Darius the King

Who does ill I punish according to the ill he has done...If one man speaks ill of another, I do not give him credence until he has provided proof. If a man acts to the best of his ability, I am satisfied...

If you wish to see and hear what I have achieved, seek for it in the home and in the army. These are my qualities of thought and understanding.

Darius and the rule of law

- ❖ He built a canal linking the Red Sea with the Nile River, 2,400 years before the Suez Canal, centralized and standardized bureaucracy, money, weights, and measures.
- ❖ He instituted codification of universal laws: “Now, Your Majesty, issue the decree and put it in writing so that it cannot be altered – in accordance with the law of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be repealed.” So King Darius put the decree in writing” (Daniel 6: 8–9)

Darius and the rule of law

- ❖ Richard Frye points out that Darius “wanted a system of international law, which was the king’s law above the local laws, but he wanted the local laws also to be in good order” and “this is, in my opinion, the real background of Roman law, which is the background of all western law.”

Darius and the rule of law

- ❖ In 492 BC, Darius sent his son-in-law, Mardonius, to support the emerging democracy in the region. Herodotus remarked: “This will come as a great surprise, especially to Greek propagandists; the removal of despots and their replacement of democratic governments, under the aegis of the Persian king!”

Founding of Persia

- ❖ The Archmedian Dynasty came to an end when Alexander the Great defeated the last king
- ❖ Although the Greeks, Arab, Mongols, and Turks subsequently conquered them, they were able to maintain their own cultural identity, language, and way of life and the country is known as Iran from Aryans.

Part III

Judaism, Islam and Christianity

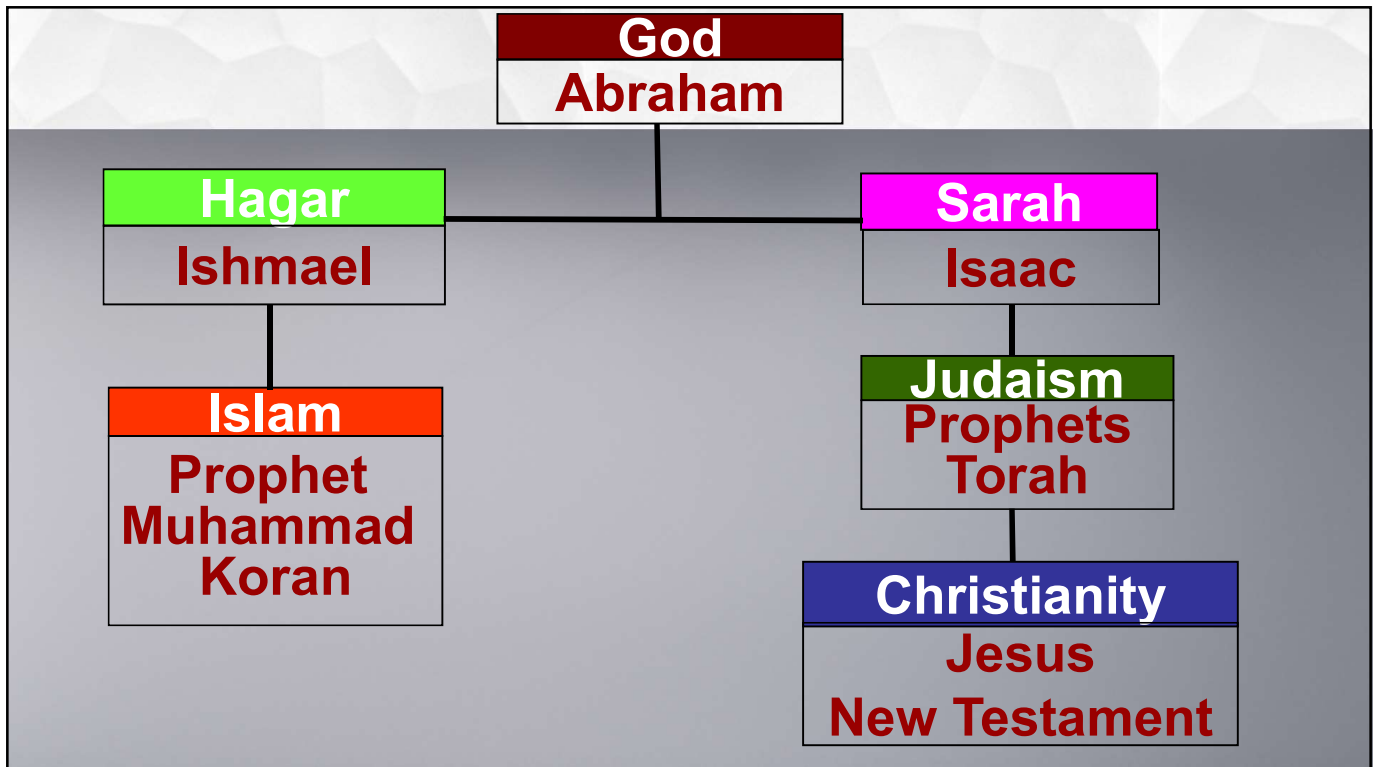
Judaism

- ❖ Judaism represents the belief in one God, *Yahweh*, meaning nameless God, who is the creator and source of all knowledge, justice and love.
- ❖ He is omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent God, and continues to be involved in people's lives and governance.

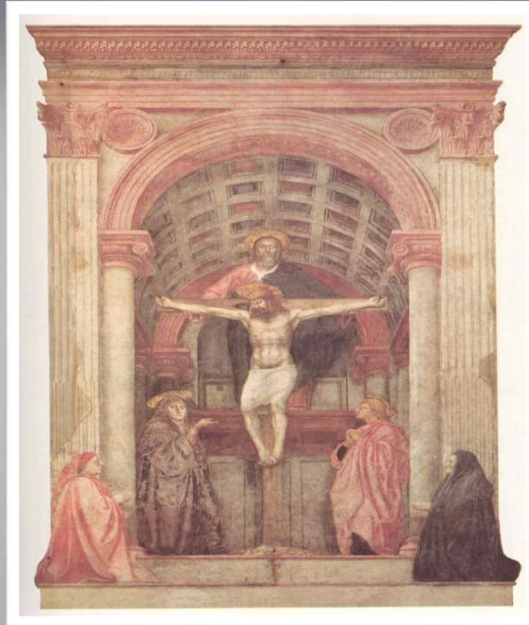
Judaism

- ❖ Teachings are recorded in Torah (תורה) a Hebrew word meaning "teaching," "instruction," or "law." Five Books of Moses or the Pentateuch.
 1. Genesis (בראשית)
 2. Exodus (שמות)
 3. Leviticus (ויקרא)
 4. Numbers (במדבר)
 5. Deuteronomy (דברים)

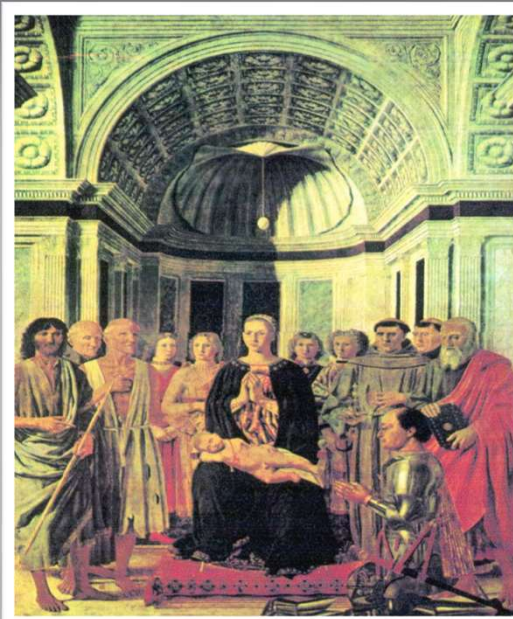
Wailing wall

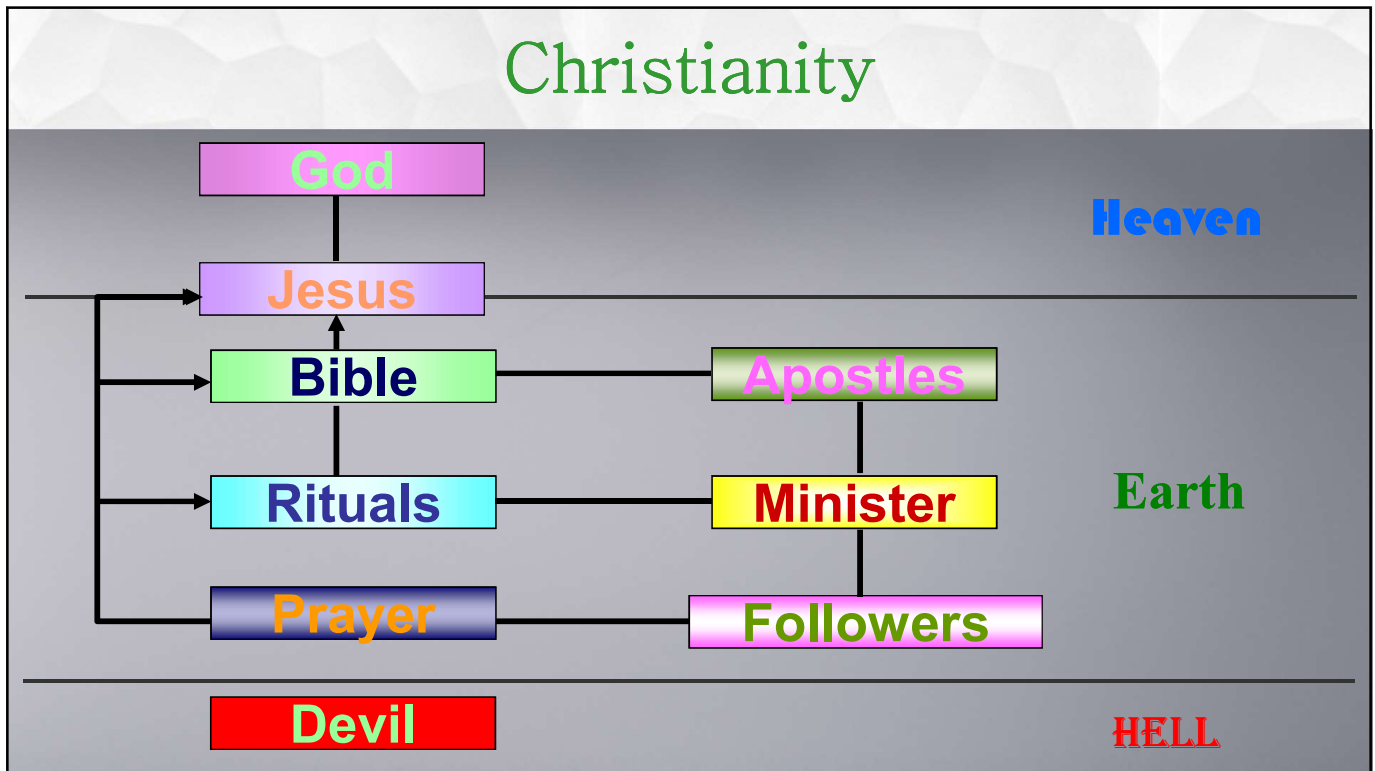


Christian worldview



Christian worldview





Part IV

Arab culture and Islam

Arabia



Southern Arabia: Oman



Bedouin nomads



Bedouin



Arab society

- ❖ For the nomadic Arabs, autocratic authority was not accepted nor tolerated.
- ❖ Decisions were made through discussion and consensus among the community members and tribal leaders.
- ❖ A tribe was led by a chief who forged alliances with neighboring tribes and represented his tribe at the council meeting of tribal leaders.

Arab society

- ❖ The chief ruled not by force but by persuasion.
- ❖ Important decisions were made in a council of the tribe.
- ❖ A war-leader held the military power and a council of nobles decided upon justice.
- ❖ In difficult situations, the arbiter, who was respected for his knowledge and wisdom was sought to settle disputes.

Arab culture and justice

- ❖ The decisions of the arbiter were binding thus the plaintiffs were required to adhere to the rulings of the arbiter.
- ❖ In Arabia, people were not under the formal protection of the state, laws, police or military.
- ❖ The fate of individual members was closely tied to the fate of the tribe and family, and the fate of the tribe depended on alliances formed with neighboring tribes.

Arab culture and justice

- ❖ To maintain public security and justice, a social norm of “just revenge” became widely adopted, *lex talionis*, or “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, and a life for a life”.
- ❖ This norm created many conflicts, war and revenge killings.
- ❖ This norm was modified by Prophet Muhammad to create peace, security and stability.

Arab culture and justice

- ❖ Instead of just revenge, Prophet Muhammad recommended just compensation: A killer could offer to the victim's tribe 100 camels for an adult male and 50 camels for an adult female, to spare his life.
- ❖ Since men can be engaged in trade, farming and war, their economic value is considered twice that of a woman since she cannot engage in war.

Muhammad the person

- ❖ In 568, Muhammad is born from the Hashim clan in Mecca.
- ❖ He was a descendent of Ishmael, the son of Abraham.
- ❖ His father, Abd Allah, died two months before his birth and his mother, Aminah, died when he was 6 years old and he lived as an orphan with his grandfather and then with his uncle.

Muhammad the person

- ❖ At the age of 25, a rich merchant widow, Khadijah, hired him as a steward and subsequently married him.
- ❖ Muhammad took over her business, and being a skilled administrator, and his business thrived.
- ❖ He was now in a position to enjoy the wealth and power of a successful merchant.

Muhammad the person

- ❖ At the age of 40, he had a calling from Allah, meaning one God, and he accepted his role as the *rasul Allah*, which means “messenger of God.”
- ❖ He was persecuted in Mecca for his beliefs and his teaching, and in 622, Prophet Muhammad and his followers had to flee to Medina.

Constitution of Medina

- ❖ The followers of the new religion Islam are called the Muslims, created a community based on their belief of Allah and acceptance Prophet Muhammad and acceptance of the Constitution of Medina (Watt, 1968).
- ❖ Each clan is responsible for the payment of ransom and blood-money for its members. (Articles 2-11)

Constitution of Medina

- ❖ The community should not tolerate crime and protect criminals, even if the person belongs to the same clan and even when the crime was directed against an outsider. (13, 21)
- ❖ Members of the community shall unite and show solidarity against unbelievers in both peace and war (14, 17, 19, 44) and provide protection to neighbors (15).

Constitution of Medina

- ❖ Jewish groups that are specified in the Constitution are allowed to retain their own religion, belong to the community and Muslims should provide help when necessary (Articles 24-35, 37, 38, 46).

Innovations of Constitution of Medina

- ❖ In traditional Arab societies, a community is composed of family members, relatives, and clan, connected by blood.
- ❖ Muslims community is heterogeneous, but united in their belief of God and accepting the message of Prophet Muhammad.

Innovations of Constitution of Medina

- ❖ For Arab tribes, it was their duty to protect its members against outsiders at all cost. For the Muslim community, the Constitution advocates universal justice by punishing the offender, even if the offender is a community member.
- ❖ In the Koran, Muslims were encouraged to show compassion, to forgive and accept compromises, rather than seek just revenge.

Innovations of Constitution of Medina

- ❖ In Arabia, a vast network of alliances developed and individuals and tribes were protected from wonton violence, and social order was maintained. A weaker tribe can agree to become a part of the Islamic community by becoming a Muslim and observing the rituals of prayer, worship and paying the tithe or *zakat*.

Economy, raids and war

- ❖ When Prophet Muhammad escaped to Medina, they did not possess land and were not trained as farmers.
- ❖ They did not have enough wealth and tribal power to engage in trade.
- ❖ They engaged in raids to attack a hostile tribe, capture, their sheep, camels or goods.

Economy, raids and war

- ❖ This practice was accepted to be a normal in Arabia and some even considered it as a sport.
- ❖ In March 624, Prophet Muhammad decided to raid a rich caravan from Mecca and at the Battle of Badr, Muslims emerged victorious and obtained great wealth.
- ❖ At the Battle of Uhud, 75 Muslims were killed and Prophet Muhammad was wounded.

Economy, raids and war

- ❖ Prophet Muhammad encouraged men to marry up to four wives, to care for the widows of Battle of Uhud since no one can take care of them.
- ❖ Prophet Muhammad successfully led campaigns in Mecca, Yemen, Bahrain, and Oman, and he was able to consolidate his power in Arabia.
- ❖ The victory over neighboring tribes in Medina and Mecca did not end the war since the fallen tribes had alliances with other tribes.

Muslim Empire

- ❖ Since every tribe had an alliance with other tribes, Prophet Muhammad had to conquer all the tribes in Arabia in order to ensure the safety of his community members.
- ❖ Opponents of Prophet Muhammad were given a choice between the sword or Islam.

Muslim Empire

- ❖ The Jews, Christians and other religious communities were allowed to enter into an alliance to become a “protected community” of the Islamic state.
- ❖ The *jihad* (“striving” or “holy war”) was necessary to wage war against tribes in Arabia to secure the safety for Muslims and by 630, he expanded his territory to all of Arabia, Iraq, bordering the Byzantine Empire.

Islamic theology and practice

- ❖ Unlike Christians and Jews, Muslims do not believe in the original sin and they do not need an intermediary (e.g., messiah, savior, or priest) to wash away their sins and to allow them to enter heaven.
- ❖ Muslims believe that the last and final Word of God has been revealed through Prophet Muhammad and recorded in Koran.

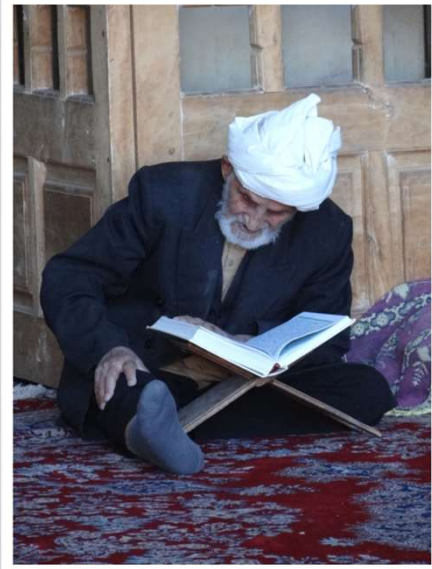
Islamic theology and practice

- ❖ They do not have to pray “in the name of Jesus” (Christian ritual), or perform sacrificial rites (Jewish ritual), or confessions to wash away their sins (Catholic ritual) since Muslims can have direct communion with God through prayers, rituals, and reciting the Koran.

Islamic theology and practice

- ❖ In Islam, an individual with piety and spirituality are respected, complemented by a strong sense and obligation to the community, and it is not centralized through formalized priesthood or the church.
- ❖ It is up to the individual Muslims to accept the Word of God, follow clerics of their choice to obtain eternal salvation.

Studying the Koran



Prayers and worship



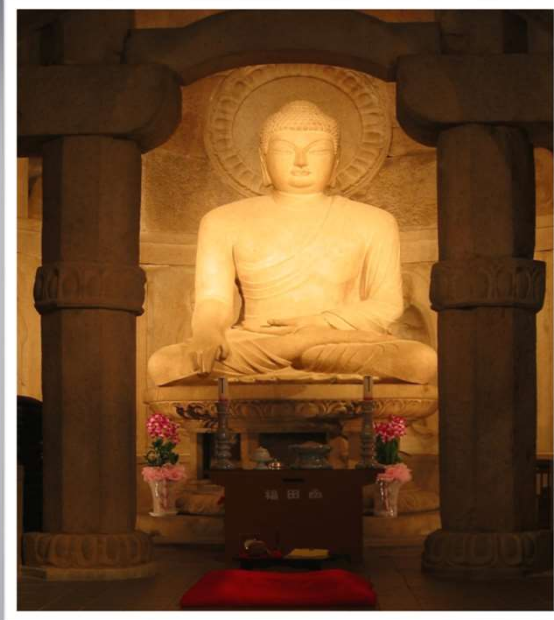
Communal meal after prayers



Part VI

Buddhism

Buddhism



Buddhism

The Four Noble Truth

1. Life is suffering.
2. Desire and craving are the cause of suffering.
3. Give up desires and craving.
4. Follow the Eightfold Path.

Four noble truths

- ❖ The Nature of Suffering, *Dukkha*: Birth, aging, illness, death; sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief and despair; union with what is displeasing; separation from what is pleasing; not to get what one wants; in brief, the five aggregates subject to clinging are suffering.

Four noble truths

- ❖ Suffering's Origin, *Samudaya*: It is desire or craving which leads to renewed existence, accompanied by delight and lust, seeking delight there is craving for sensual pleasures, craving for existence, craving for death.

Four noble truths

- ❖ Suffering's Cessation, *Nirodha*: It is letting go of the desire and craving and experiencing the freedom from the desires and craving and no longer relying on them.
- ❖ The Way, *Mārga*, that leads to cessation of suffering: The Noble Eightfold Path; right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration.

The Eightfold Path

Wisdom

1. Right understanding
2. Right thoughts

Morality

3. Right speech
4. Right action
5. Right livelihood

Concentration

6. Right endeavor
7. Right mindfulness
8. Right concentration

Eightfold path

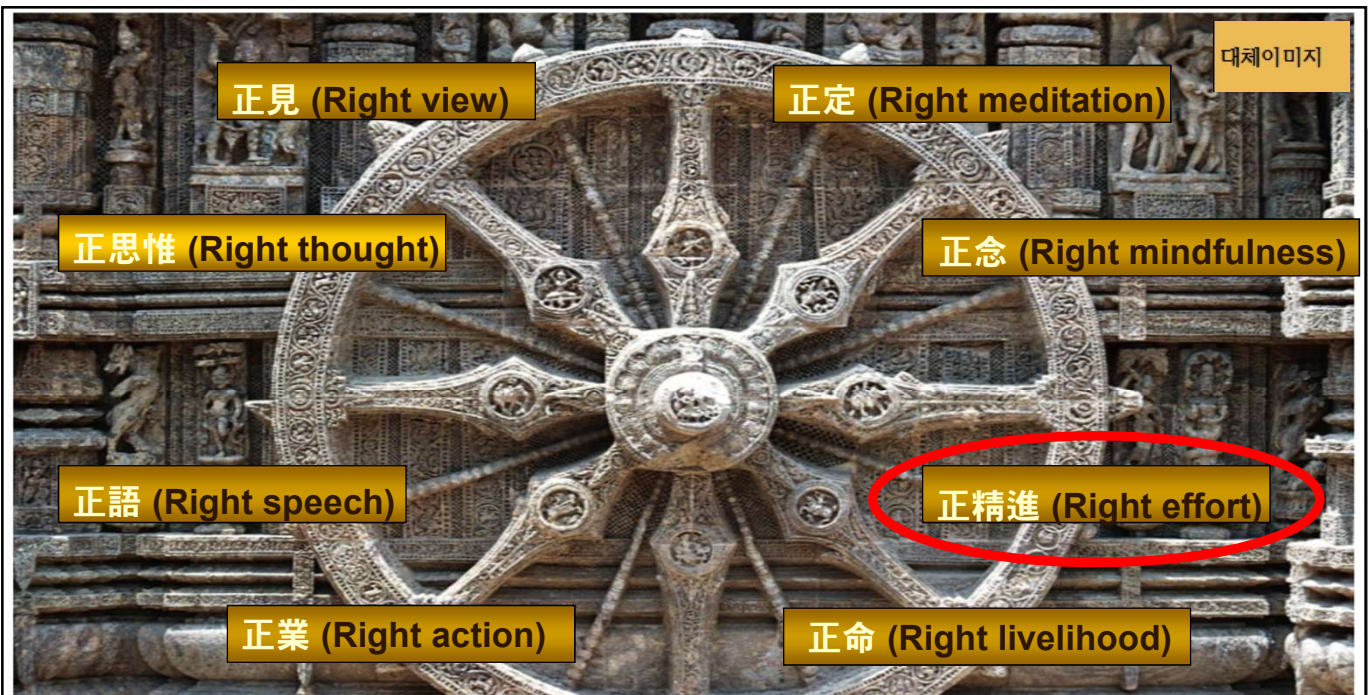
- ❖ Right Speech: One should speak in a non-hurtful, none-exaggerated and truthful way, *samyag-vāc*, *sammā-vācā*.
- ❖ Right Actions: Genuine action, avoid actions that would harm others, *samyak-karmānta*, *sammā-kammanta*.

Eightfold path

- ❖ Right Livelihood: One should live in a way that does not harm oneself and others, directly or indirectly, *samyag-ājīva*, *sammā-ājīva*.
- ❖ The word *samyak* means "perfect" and it is developing a mastery over one's own mind through:
- ❖ Right Effort, Exercise: Constant effort and self-cultivation, *samyag-vyāyāma*, *sammā-vāyāma*.

Eightfold path

- ❖ Right Mindfulness, awareness: Ability to see clearly at things for what they are, *samyak-smṛti*, *sammā-sati*.
- ❖ The Eightfold Path is seen as progressive series of stages which one needs to go through starting from wisdom, virtuous behavior and concentration.



The Eightfold Path

Symbol of Buddhism



Philosophical outlook

1. Humanism

human-centeredness and individual's power to realize the Truth and ultimately become a god .

2. Holism

Whole-particular relations one (principle) is many (manifestations), and many is one.

Philosophical outlook

3. Harmony

Continuity of the natural, human, and spiritual worlds (karma).

4. Self-realization

Enlightening through self-cultivation, continual self-development, and wisdom

Philosophical outlook

5. Mind-control

Meditation, self-control, self-regulation, avoiding the extremes and following the middle path.

6. Transcendental

To become other-worldly, reflective, detached and integrative

Secular Buddhism



People praying in front of Buddha for blessing