

# World Religions

## Hinduism c. 2000 BCE

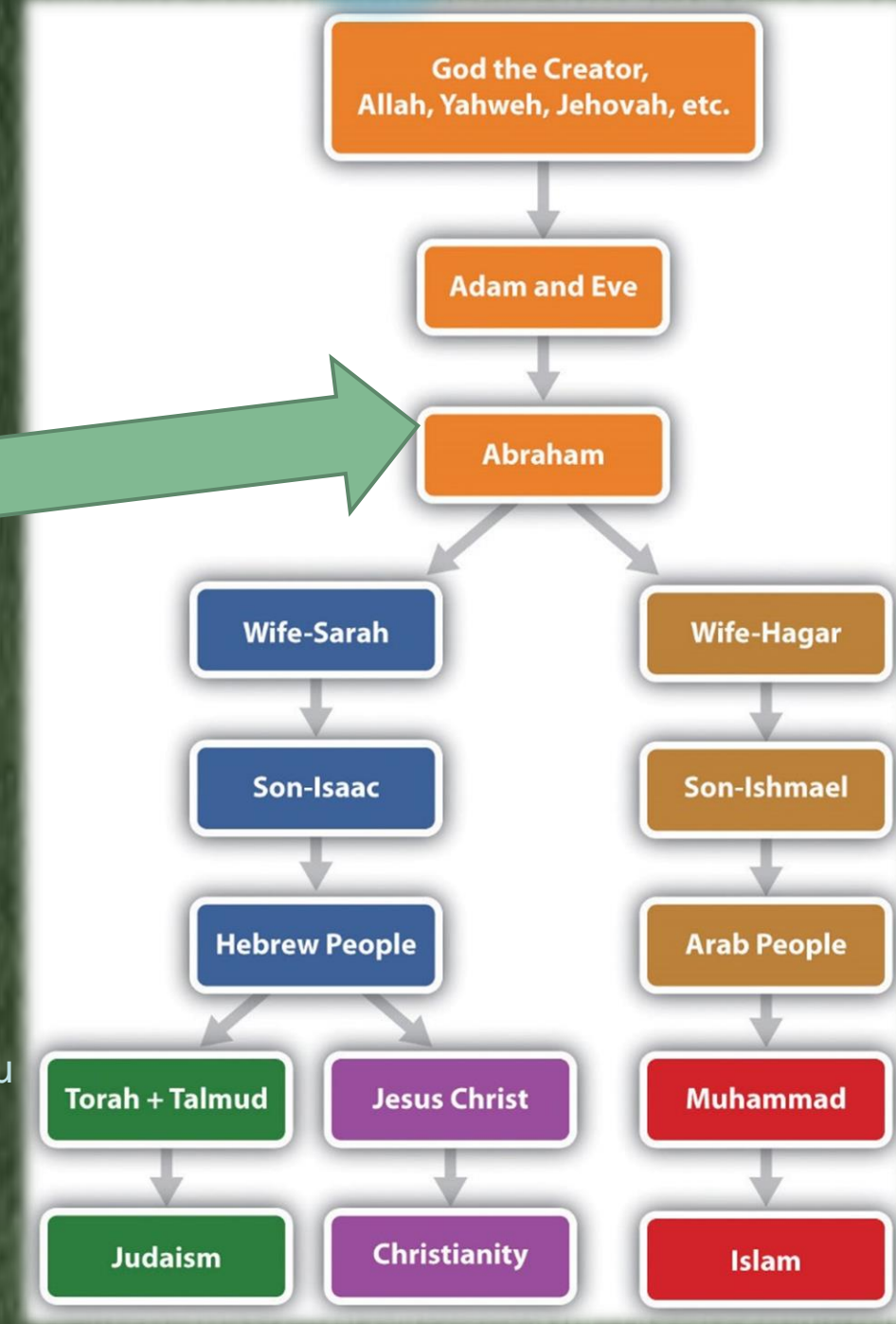
2000

## Abraham



So this is Abraham, he is pretty important to history. The three major, monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) all trace themselves back to Abraham. These three religions are known as the Abrahamic Religions. How do they do this? I have provided you a simple chart to the right to figure it out.

This chart, based on religious texts, shows how all three Abrahamic traditions can call Abraham their "father." Note: This is from RELIGIOUS TEXTS, not necessarily historical ones, that is why you see Adam and Eve at the top.

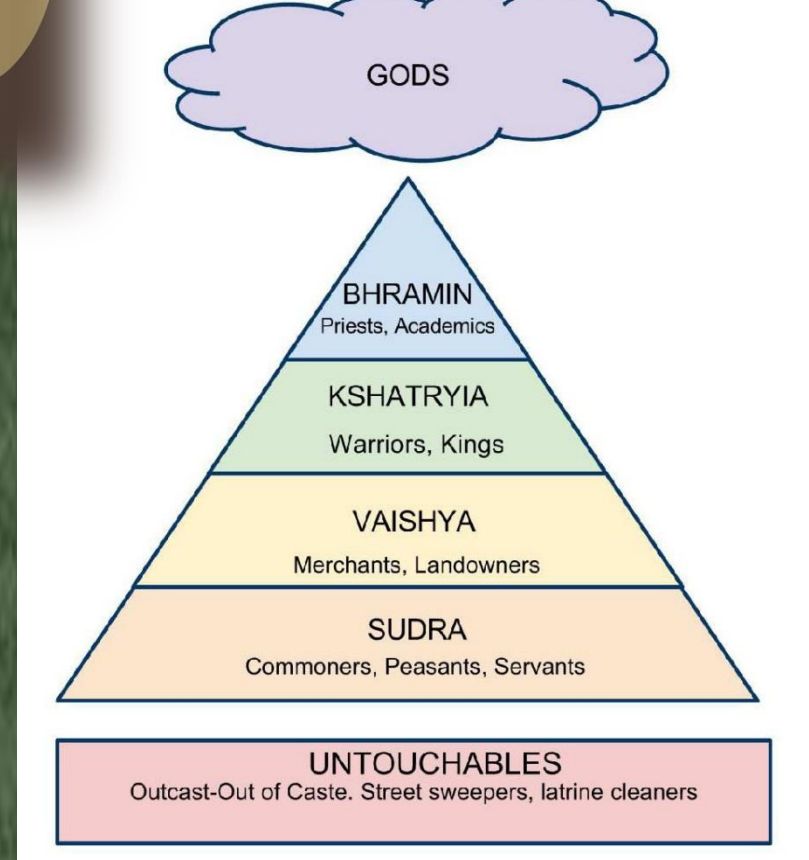


Hinduism is a very old religion from India that is still practiced today. It was one of the first religions that had the ideas of **reincarnation** (that people can be born again after death) and **karma** (one event invents another, or that every action has its consequences). Hinduism takes ideas from the **Vedas**, the **Upanishads** (sacred texts), as well as the teachings of many Hindu **gurus** (teachers). It has over 900 million believers worldwide.

Unlike most other religions, Hinduism has no single founder, no single scripture, and no commonly agreed set of teachings. Hinduism can be considered both **monotheistic** and **polytheistic**. Some believe that the many gods in Hindu beliefs are all the manifestation of one god, and therefore, they are monotheistic. Many others believe that each of these gods is separate and consider Hinduism to be polytheistic. Throughout its extensive **history**, there have been many key figures teaching different philosophies and writing numerous holy books. For these reasons, writers often refer to Hinduism as 'a way of life' or 'a family of religions' rather than a single religion.



This is an Om, the greatest of all Hindu mantras. It was believed that from this sound, Brahma first created this universe.



This should look familiar by now, but in case it doesn't, this is a diagram of the Hindu caste system, the rigid social system backed by Hinduism.



Here you see a depiction from the sacred Hindu book, the **Bhagavad Gita**. In this story, prince Arjuna has a dilemma because he is in a conflict with family members. As a Kshatriya (warrior), his Dharma (duty) is to fight. He is being advised and driven around by the Hindu God Krishna (the blue one). Krishna advises that Arjuna fulfill his duty and fight his family.

## Judaism c. 1740 BCE

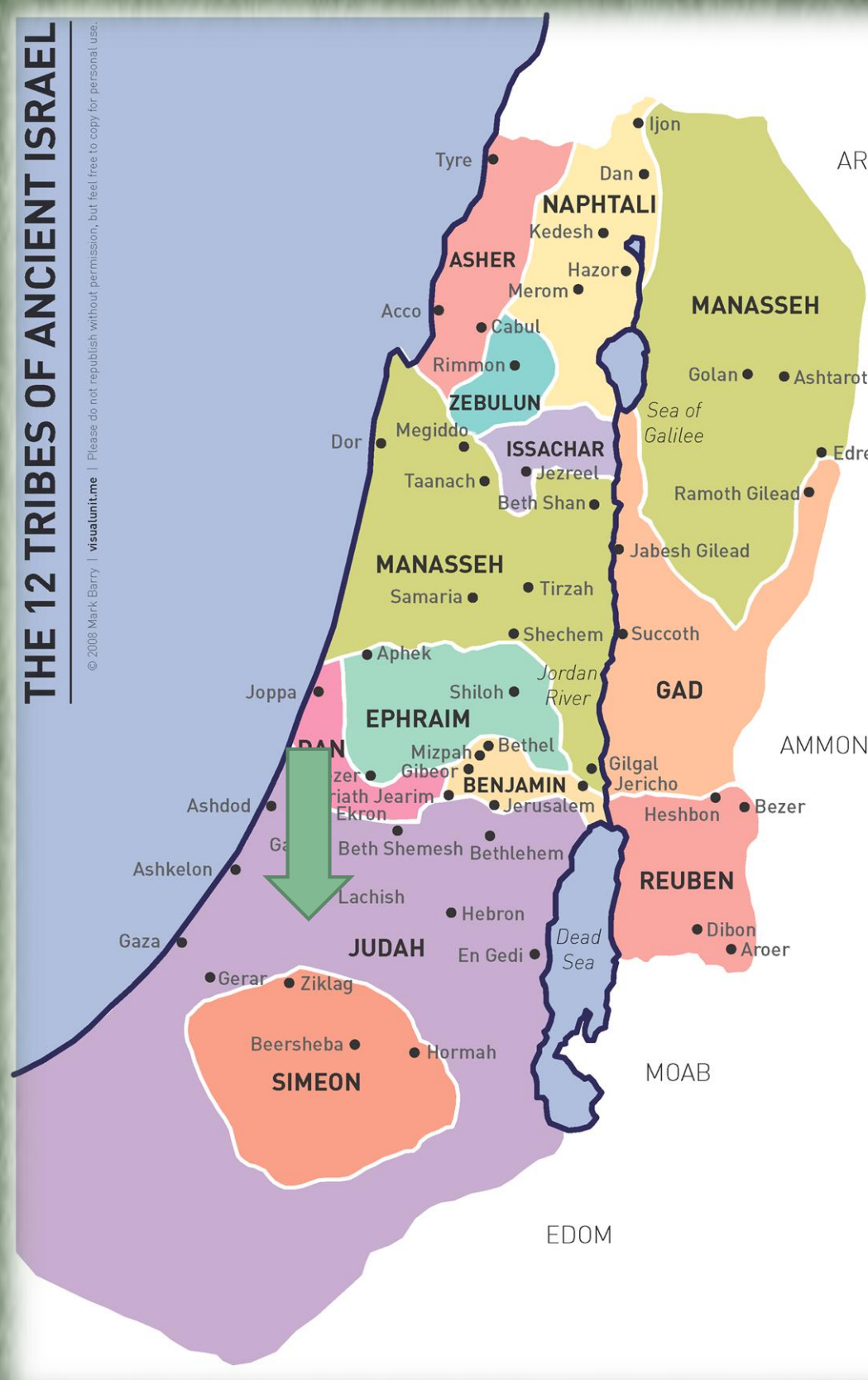
Judaism is the world's oldest Abrahamic religion. There are roughly 15 million followers who are called Jews. It is one of the oldest monotheistic religions - teaching the belief in one God. Judaism accepts the belief in one God and the moral teachings of the Hebrew Bible, which includes the Torah. The laws and teachings of Judaism come from the Torah, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible and oral traditions. Some of these oral traditions were later written down in the Mishnah, the Talmud, and other works. The Torah is the most important holy book of Judaism. The Hebrew Bible is a collection of writings called the "Tanakh" in Hebrew. It is divided into three parts - Torah (Instruction), *Nevi'im* (Prophets), and *Ketuvim* (Writings).



An old Torah

## 13 Principles of Faith

- The closest that anyone has ever come to creating a widely-accepted list of Jewish beliefs is **Rambam's** thirteen principles of faith. These principles, which Rambam thought were the minimum requirements of Jewish belief, are:
1. G-d exists
  2. G-d is one and unique
  3. G-d is incorporeal
  4. G-d is eternal
  5. Prayer is to be directed to G-d alone and to no other
  6. The words of the prophets are true
  7. Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets
  8. The **Written Torah** (first 5 books of the Bible) and **Oral Torah** (teachings now contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses
  9. There will be no other Torah
  10. G-d knows the thoughts and deeds of men
  11. G-d will reward the good and punish the wicked
  12. The **Messiah** will come
  13. The **dead** will be **resurrected**



Here is a map of Israel, and the twelve tribes of Israel. Here's how it went... Abraham had Isaac, Isaac had a son named Jacob, Jacob then had **twelve** sons that settled in the region above. This land is Israel. Here you see how the twelve sons divided the land.

## Confucianism c. 200 BCE

Confucianism is an ethical and philosophical system, on occasion described as a religion developed from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher **Confucius** (551–479 BCE). Following the official abandonment of **Legalism** in China after the **Qin Dynasty**, Confucianism became the official state ideology of the **Han Dynasty**. The disintegration of the Han in the second century CE opened the way for the doctrines of **Buddhism** and **Taoism** to dominate life at that time.



This is the Chinese Character for "Water," and an important symbol for Confucianism. It is representative of life, as water is "life giving"

Confucian ethics are described as **humanistic**. This ethical philosophy can be practiced by all the members of a society. Confucian ethics is characterized by the promotion of virtues, encompassed by the **Five Constants**. The Five Constants are:

- Ren** (humaneness)
- Yi** (righteousness or justice)
- Li** (proper rite)
- Zhi** (knowledge)
- Xin** (integrity).

These are accompanied by the classical four virtues: **Zhi**ng (loyalty); **Xiao** (filial piety); **Ji** (continuity); **Yi** (righteousness)

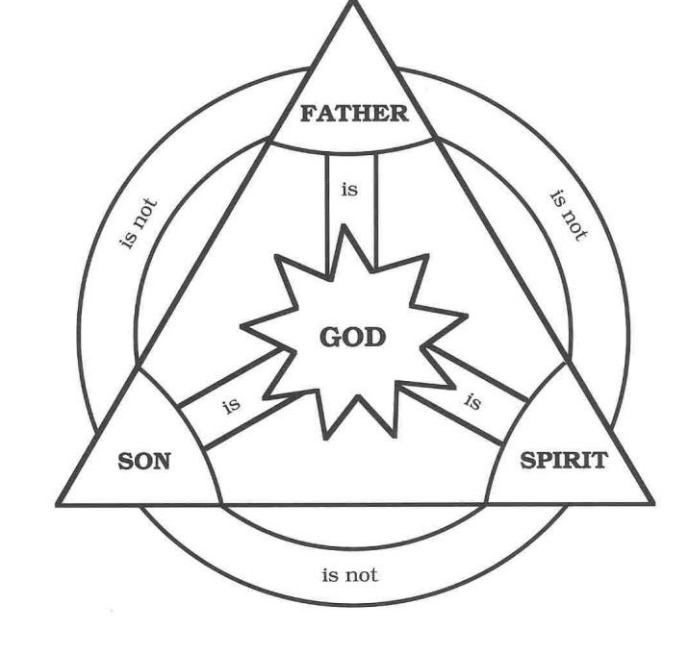


Confucius was a great thinker, educator and the founder of Confucianism in the late Spring and Autumn Period (770BC- 476BC), which occupies a dominant position in Chinese culture. Confucius was among the best recognized sages of that period. He devoted his whole life to education. He had some 3,000 disciples.

## Catholicism



Christians believe that Jesus, the Messiah was crucified (nailed to a cross) as expiation (payment) of their sins.



To the Christians though, Jesus was not just a regular guy who happened to be the Messiah. They believe that he is part of the Trinity, that he is God and is of God. There are three parts to the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the holy spirit. It can get confusing, so here is a chart.

## Christianity

For the purposes of this infographic, we will focus on the two main divisions of Christianity prior to 1517: Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

Both Catholic and Orthodox Christians agree on several aspects of their faith. Did you read number 12 on the list of Jewish Tenets above? All Christians believe that the Messiah (Savior) did come, and they believed that Jesus Christ, who was born in the early first century CE was him.

## ORTHODOX

The East-West Schism (sometimes also called **Great Schism**) is a word that is used to describe how Christianity developed into two big branches in the Middle Ages. The Western part later became the Roman Catholic Church. The Eastern part is known as the Eastern Orthodox Church. Because of political, regional, and theological (religious) disagreements Christianity split into two different sects in the year 1054



The Orthodox church did not agree with the concept of the Papal Primacy. They did not think that the bishop of Rome (the pope) should be the most important bishop of the Church, this along with the **filioque doctrine** led to the eventual split of the church into Roman Catholic and Orthodox.

A big reason why the orthodox wanted to leave was because of this guy. This is Peter, the apostle of Jesus and the first Pope of the Catholic Church.



The Cross has long been a symbol of Christianity



The Catholic church is now based out of St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City in Rome

## Buddhism

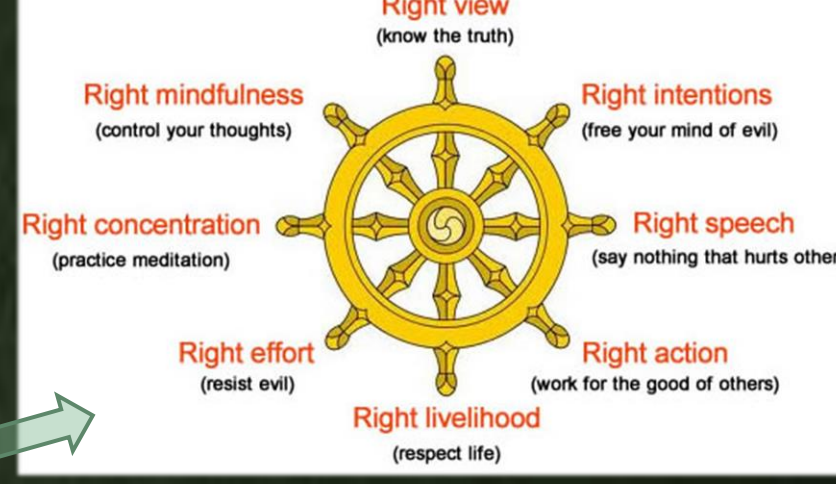
**Buddhism** (really good link, you should click it). Buddhism is a religion and philosophy founded by **Siddhartha Gautama**. Buddhism teaches people how to end their suffering by cutting out greed, hatred and ignorance. When people do bad things, they will get bad consequences. Similarly, when people do good things, they will get good consequences. Good and bad things do not cancel out. This cause-and-effect chain is reflected in the endless cycles of life, death and rebirth. Buddhism believes in **reincarnation** (being reborn). The ultimate goal of a Buddhist is to reach the state of **Nirvana** (enlightenment), and liberate oneself from endless reincarnation and suffering. Some see Buddhism as a religion, others see it as a philosophy, and others think it is a way of finding reality. Some think that it is unnecessary to label Buddhism.



Gautama Buddha - a prince who lived between about 563 BC and 483 BC - was a rich prince. He gave up everything to find a way to end suffering. His teachings started in Nepal and slowly spread, after his death, through most of Asia. Siddhartha Gautama was a prince who had never been out of his palace in his 29 years of life. When he finally did go out of his palace, he saw **four sights**: an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a holy man. When he saw the holy man, he gave up everything he owned and followed a very simple life.

His most famous teachings are the **four noble truths**:

1. All life is suffering
2. Suffering comes from desire
3. To end suffering, one must first end desire
4. Follow the Eight-fold Path



For the record, we are talking about this nirvana



## Sikhism c. 1500

Sikhism is a monotheistic religion. The followers are called "Sikhs", and their holy book is the **Guru Granth Sahib**. 27 million people are followers of Sikhism, that makes it the fifth largest religion in the world. Sikhs are usually identified by the Turban that they wear, but not all wear turbans. Sikhism was started around 1500 by **Guru Nanak Dev**, the first of the Ten Gurus (their religions leaders). According to the Sikhs, Salvation is achieved through breaking the process of rebirth (they believe in reincarnation) and becoming one with God, through prayer, meditation, and community.



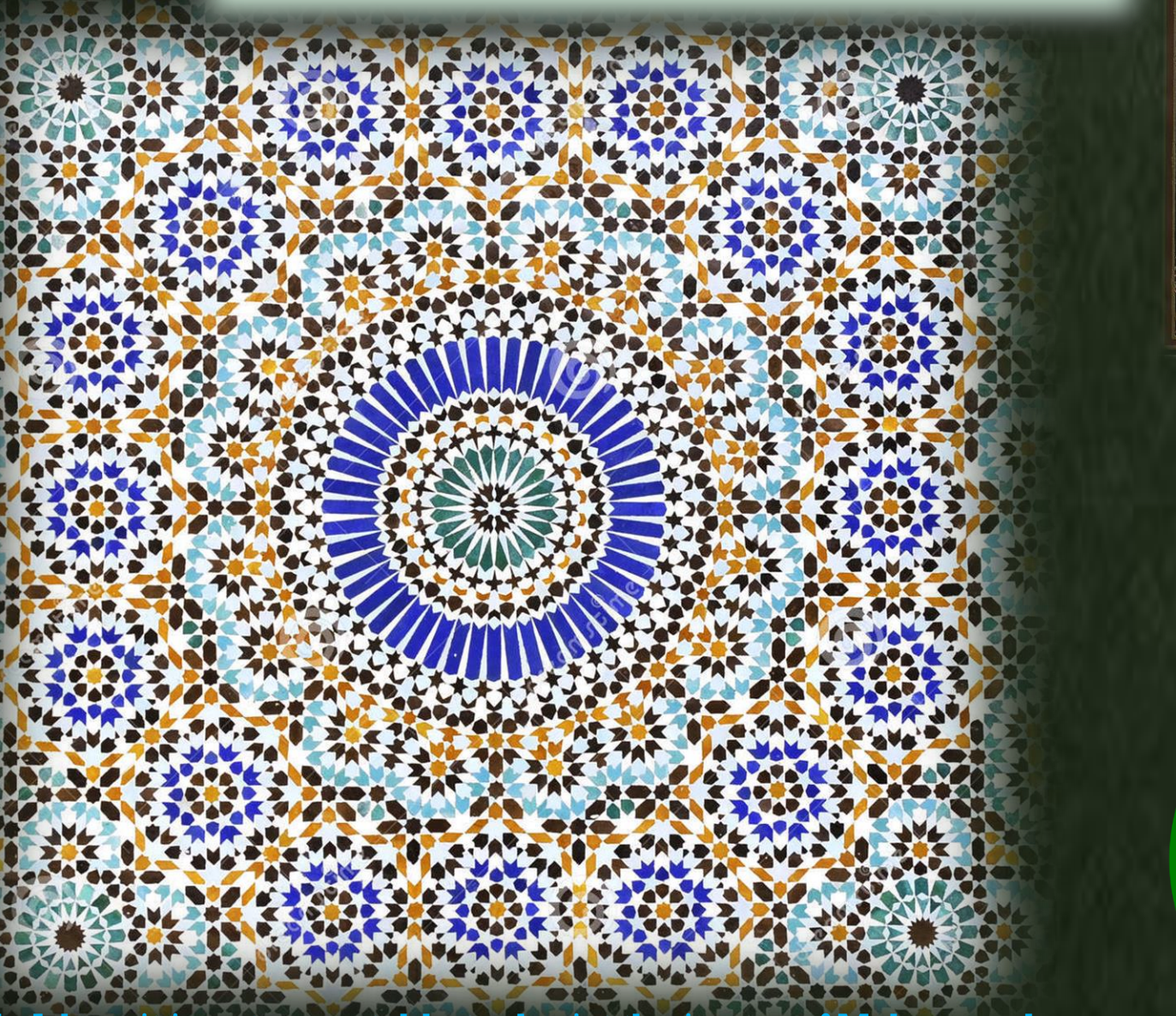
Here you see the Five Ks of Sikhism. These five items must be on every Sikh, every day. Keshiki, Kirpan, Kanga, Kachera, and Kara. They are the turban, the dagger, the comb, the undershorts, and the iron bracelet, respectively.

Interesting note: Nearly every Sikh male has the last name "Singh" and nearly every female has the last name "Singha". This is meant to create a sense of community for Sikhs worldwide.

You did really well to make it through all of that, here is a picture of a smiling, baby elephant sitting under a waterfall. Enjoy.



## Islam



This is our Qur'an, the sacred scripture of Islam. Muslims also read the Hadith, the sayings of Muhammad



The crescent moon and star have long been the symbol of Islam, though originally this was a symbol of the Ottoman Empire

The religion of Islam bases itself on five main pillars of belief. They are clearly explained here.

### THE FIVE PILLARS OF ISLAM

- 1 SHAHAADAH**  
Declaration of Faith  
Muslims declare their faith by saying: 'Hach-hada yenisil Basma Billahilhe wa ash-hadu anna muhammadar rasulullah'
- 2 SALAAH**  
Five Compulsory Daily Prayers  
A physical and mental means of worship prescribed five times a day. These are to remember God and to seek forgiveness throughout the day. We face towards the Holy Ka'bah in Makkah. Salat (Prayer) is performed at set times before sunrise, at midday, in the afternoon, in the evening after the sunset and at nightfall.
- 3 ZAKAAT**  
Almsgiving  
The Arabic word Zakaat means to purify. Muslims give 2.5% of their surplus wealth to charity every year. This shows obedience to God and prevents greed. Zakaat is given to the poor and those that are less fortunate than ourselves. It is believed that by giving charity, the possessions you keep are made pure.
- 4 SAWM**  
Fasting During the Month of Ramadhan  
For one month of the Year, Muslims refrain from food, drink and keep away from things that distract us from worship. This is done during the day from dawn till dusk. Although fasting is beneficial to health, fasting is a form of worship. Additionally, it helps us to remember others who are less fortunate and do not have enough food or water.
- 5 HAJJ**  
Pilgrimage to the Holy Sites in Makkah  
Hajj is the journey to the holy sites in Makkah to perform various rituals. It is one obligatory once in a lifetime upon those who have the financial means and are physically able. The pilgrims adorn simple garments that keep every unnecessary distinction of class and culture, so they all stand equal before Allah (God). The focal part of the pilgrimage is at the Holy Ka'bah (cube) in the centre of the Great Mosque in Makkah.



This map depicts how quickly Islam spread as a major religion. The Islamic empire, which starts out of the important cities of Mecca and Medina spread through the Persian Empire, North Africa, and eventually even into Spain. In less than 150 years, Islam as a religion spread across three continents.



Here you see a time lapse photograph of the millions of people who make the pilgrimage to Mecca every year. All those dots are people