

FAMILY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES “O” LEVEL BY MR MASHIRINGWANI J**CHAPTER 1:****THE CONCEPT OF RELIGION.**

- A concept is defined as a general idea of something. A concept is an idea of how something is
- **Concept of religion** is a general idea of what religion is.

DEFINITION OF RELIGION

- There is no single correct definition of religion.
- The word religion is derived from the Latin word *religio*, which means both earnest observance of ritual obligations and an inward spirit of reverence.
- **There are three aspects that might explain why we do not have a single definition of religion, and these are:**
 - (i) Culture – people have different cultures.
 - (ii) Religions are many and therefore, no single definition can be suitable for them all.
 - (iii) Religion is dynamic and complex.
- Cox [1993] tried to define religion from five categories, namely:
 - (a) Theological definition.
 - (b) Moral definition.
 - (c) Philosophical definition.
 - (d) Psychological definition.
 - (e) Sociological definition.

(a) Theological definition - Religion is believing in God.

This definition is incomplete because other religions do not believe in God [a Supreme Being].

(b) Moral definition - Religion is leading a good life.

This definition tells us that to be religious is to be good, without telling us what goodness entails. Therefore, this definition is vague, it lacks clarity.

(c) Philosophical definition- Religion is the ultimate concern.

This definition is ambiguous and too broad.

(d) Psychological definition - Religion is some kind of inner experience.

This definition stresses that religion has to do with emotions, feelings and psychological state of human being in relation to religious object.

This definition is narrow and ambiguous.

(e) Sociological definition - Karl Marx said, Religion is the opium of the people.

Religion according to Karl Marx is used by the ruling class to keep the oppressed people docile, hoping that they will enjoy life after death, and for the oppressed to think that the status quo is the will of God.

Religion according to Karl Marx is seen as a painkiller, which relieves pain for a short time.

This type of a definition is biased because it seems as though religion encourages people to be inactive in the face of oppression, yet on the other hand religion has inspired many people to fight for their rights and freedom.

Working definitions or operational definitions of religion

1. **Religion** is a system of activities and beliefs directed towards that which is perceived to be of sacred values and transforming power.
2. **Religion** is a strong feeling that human beings have towards the Supreme Being.
3. **Religion** is a belief about the Supreme Being and other spirits.
4. Religion is a sacred engagement with what is taken to be a spiritual reality.

RELIGIONS IN ZIMBABWE.

- Zimbabwe is society with many religions which co-exist; they live alongside one another.
- The Zimbabwean constitution allows the freedom of religion or freedom of worship; thus Zimbabwe has an assortment of religions, as people are allowed to worship God in a religion of their choice.
- Zimbabwe has religions like Indigenous Religion, Christianity, Judaism and Islam. However, there are many other religions but they are not very common.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RELIGION

- **A characteristic** – is a quality that makes someone or something to be recognised easily.
 - **A characteristic** is a noticeable feature and a noticeable quality in someone that set apart and helps to identify and tell apart.
 - **A characteristic** is a distinguishing mark that acts as a form of identity.
1. Belief in the supernatural (eg spirits, gods, God)
 2. Religions distinguish between sacred (holy) and profane (ordinary) in terms of time, space, objects and people. Religions believe in sacredness. [For example, Christmas and Easter are sacred days in the Christian calendar and are not like any other ordinary day. For Muslims Mecca is different from Masvingo or Harare, Mecca is sacred city and Masvingo and Harare are ordinary cities to Muslims]
 3. Religion has rituals or set of practices. [For examples rituals connected to birth and death]
 4. Religion has a code of conduct to guide individuals and communities. In short religion has rules on what is good and what is bad; e.g. Ten Commandments for Judaism and Christianity; and Sharia [Islamic Law] for Islam.

5. Religion is emotional and experiential, that is religion is emotional, it raises feelings like fear, guilty, remorse, inner peace, joy, thanksgiving and awe in followers. Religion is something you feel from inside and you experience it.
6. Religion is a group phenomenon or organisation of believers; it is communal activity involving group worship, prayers and rituals.
7. Religion is about society- is concerned with how people are organised and how they relate to each other.
8. Religion has sacred texts and writings- e.g., Christianity and Judaism have the Bible and Islam has the Koran [Quran].
9. Religions encourage communication and provide ways to communicate and connect with the divine or Supreme Being. For example, Individual and group prayers are visible among Christians, Muslims and Jews.
10. Religions provide a coherent worldview through sacred stories.
11. Soteriological [Salvation] beliefs- all religions have teachings about salvation. Religions offer a future hope through the coming of a new age in the afterlife.
 - "Soterio" is a Greek word which means to be 'saved'.
12. Religions have a set of beliefs [body of beliefs] or doctrines that are to be followed- these set of beliefs are usually seen in sacred books and oral traditions. These set of beliefs are ideas about the Supreme Being, spirits and society.
13. Religions promise an inner peace and harmony despite the vicissitudes or problems of life such as diseases, evil, death and injustices in life.
 - Religions offer hope and meaning that move beyond mere physical survival.
14. Suffering and compassion are main and common themes of most religions.
15. Religions propagate or spread themselves through the recruitment of new members and procreation within the community of faith.
16. Religions have religious practitioners or functionaries or leaders.
17. Religion is expressed through material things- we worship God through things we can see and touch e.g., religious clothes, symbols, buildings built in a special way, sacred cities, natural rivers, art and sacred landmarks.
18. Religion organises life for individuals and societies- it tells people what they can do and how they can do it. It tells people what they should eat and how they should eat it. It prescribes or recommends what people should and should not wear.

IMPORTANCE OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY.

1. **Religion promotes social solidarity**- as people worship together and participate in rituals together gives rise to the spirit of brotherhood and strengthen unity and solidarity in society.
2. **Religion provides mental peace**- in face of challenges and dangers of life, religion is there to console and encourage people face challenges and problems of life. Thus, one gets mental peace and emotional support from religion. As the world is in panic due to Corona Virus pandemic religion plays a role in comforting people telling them that God is in control of the situation. Religion gives hope to the hopeless. Religion gives solace or comfort to the bereaved or mourning their loved ones.

3. **Religion in-stills social virtues-** religion teaches social virtues like honesty, hardworking, truth, service, love and discipline. These qualities help a person to be a good citizen and to live in harmony with others in society.
4. **Religion influences economy-** religion encourages people to work and to be self-sufficient. For examples members of Johane Masowe weChishanu [JMC].
5. **Religion influences political system-**religion plays a part in influencing politics as political leaders take oath in the name of God. Religion also plays a role in political disputes for example in Zimbabwe in 2009 religion mediated between Morgan Tsvangirai of MDC and Mugabe Robert of ZANUPF to form a Government of National Unity [GNU] after 2008 Presidential Election dispute.
6. **Religion builds self-confidence-** religion teaches that we are all made equal before God and that each individual was created for a special task and this promotes self-confidence.
7. **Religion promotes charity -** religion provides humanitarian assistance. Religion develops philanthropic [humanitarian] attitude in people for example after the Cyclone Idai disaster in Manicaland and Masvingo, members of religious groups donated food and goods to the victims of the Cyclone Idai disaster. Furthermore, religion encourages people to give and support the disadvantaged members in society such as the poor, beggars, orphans, widows and the homeless.
8. **Religion is an agent of socialisation and social control-** religion helps in teaching and preserving social norms and values and also helps to control the behaviour of people in society. Politically they control people by endorsing leaders as the ones chosen by God.
9. **Religion gives recreation-** religion plays a role in providing recreation to people through religious festivals, rituals, singing and dancing. Thus, religion helps to remove stress.
10. **Religion helps to preserve and protect the environment** – each religion has a way of conserving the environment for example IR has taboos which help in protecting the environment.
11. **Restoration of health** – religion plays a role in healing the sick in society through miracles, holy waters, anointing oils and through herbs.
12. **Religion helps in peace building,** prays for peace before, during and after elections.
13. **Religion encourages forgiveness and reconciliation-** religion has played a part in ensuring that people resolve their differences peacefully; religion emphasises on forgiveness and forgetting. Thus religion encourages forgiveness and reconciliation.
14. **Religion helps in infrastructure development-** religion helps in the building of schools, colleges, universities, clinics and hospitals.
15. **Religion helps in preventing diseases** – for example IR prevents diseases through nyora [incisions] and dumwa [charms or amulets] to protect people from diseases and evil spirits.
16. **Religion helps to empower women** – religion has played a role in empowering women as pastors, prophetesses, administrators and founders of churches.
17. **Religion acts as the voice of the voiceless-** religion has been vocal against social injustice in society for example against political intimidation and violence during Presidential Re-run of 27 June 2008.
18. **Consolation in time of bereavement.** Christian songs are used to comfort the bereaved. Sahwiras in IR help in comforting the bereaved through their jokes. Furthermore, religion assists the bereaved in cash and kind by providing food and clothes.
19. Religion through its teachings reduces cases of crime in society.

20. Religion promotes education

- Religions such as Christianity and Islam have built schools, colleges and universities in Zimbabwe.
- Assisting the disadvantaged children through payment of school fees.
- Give bursaries to the disadvantaged learners.
- Provide school uniforms to the disadvantaged learners.
- Provide supplementary feeding to learners.
- Provide textbooks and furniture to learners.

Disadvantages of religion in society

1. **Religion helps to oppress the people**- religion is the opium of the people therefore it makes people docile in the face of injustice thinking it is the will of God.
2. Religion encourages conflicts in society for example Islam believes in Jihads or holy wars.
3. Religion also causes conflicts as prophets and Tsikamutandas [witch-hunters] accuse some family members especially grandmothers as witches; this will cause conflicts and division in the family.
4. Religion encourages terrorism due to fanaticism or extremism for example the Taliban under Osama Bin Laden.
5. Religion leads to abuse of women – women are raped and abused by fake prophets and n'angas in the name of being prayed for or being healed.
6. Religion is also sometimes used by politicians for their own benefits, for example the former first lady Grace Mugabe used to attack her opponents at church gatherings.
7. Religion supported and sponsored political violence for example during Fast track Land Redistribution Program in 2000; some church leaders such as Obediah Musindo supported the killing of white commercial farmers and forceful repossession of land from white minority.
8. Religion pollutes and degrades the environment during gatherings and during festivals.

NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF RELIGIONS

- National distribution of religions refers to the spreading out of religions in Zimbabwe.
- The Zimbabwean constitution allows the freedom of religion or freedom of worship; thus, Zimbabwe has an assortment of religions, as people are allowed to worship God in a religion of their choice.
- However, in our study we will discuss on the four main religions in Zimbabwe, namely Indigenous Religion, Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Geographical distribution and membership of religions in Zimbabwe.**Christianity.**

- Christianity is a religion of people who believe in Jesus Christ as the messiah.
- Christianity is the most dominant and most populated religion in Zimbabwe with about 87% of the population.
- Christianity was brought in Zimbabwe by Portuguese Missionaries, hunters and traders.
- Colonisation paved the way for the spreading of Christianity across the whole country.

- Christianity is found all over the country in both urban and rural areas.
- Mainline Churches in Zimbabwe include Roman Catholic, Seventh Day Adventist, Methodist, and Reformed Church in Zimbabwe, Presbyterian, Anglican Church and many others. Roman Catholic Church has a membership of 50% of all Christians in the mainline churches.
- The Apostolic Sect is spreading very fast in Zimbabwe, with membership scattered all over Zimbabwe, in both urban and rural areas.
- Charismatic ministries which are being spearheaded in Zimbabwe by Prophets like Emmanuel Makandiwa, Ubert Angel and Walter Magaya through the Gospel of prosperity are also becoming popular as they attract large crowds.
- However, most Christians continue to practice to varying degrees, elements of Indigenous Religion.
- African Initiated Churches such as Johane Masowe weChishanu, Johane Marange, Zaoga, Zion Christian Church [ZCC] and many others have incorporated worship practices that include traditional African rituals, songs, dance, non- Christian iconography and oral culture.
- African Initiated Churches are churches formed by Africans.

Indigenous Religion

- Indigenous Religion is a religion of the local people that was not borrowed from outside the country or the continent.
- About 4% of Zimbabweans belong to Indigenous Religion [IR].
- One is not converted into IR but one is born into it.
- IR unlike other religions has no founder. IR has no texts; it is passed through oral tradition.
- Indigenous Religion is located in both rural and urban areas, but is mostly practised in rural areas where chiefs are custodians of Indigenous Religion.
- However, most Christians in Zimbabwe continue to practice elements of Indigenous Religion.

Islam.

- Islam is a religion of people who believe in Mohammad as the last true prophet of Allah.
- Islam is a religion of the Moslems.
- In Zimbabwe Islam has a membership of less than 1 %.
- The Muslim community in Zimbabwe consists mostly of South Asian immigrants [Indians and Pakistani], a small number of indigenous Zimbabweans, and a very small number of North Africans and Middle Eastern immigrants.
- There are mosques located in nearly all of the larger towns.
- There are 18 mosques in Harare, 8 mosques in Bulawayo, and a number of mosques in small towns. Thus, Moslems in Zimbabwe are mostly located in urban areas and a few in rural areas.
- The building of mosques and proselytization [preaching] effort is financed with the aid of the Kuwaiti sponsored African Muslim Agency [AMA].

Judaism.

- Judaism is a religion for the Jews.
- The Jews have a population of less than 0.1% in Zimbabwe.

- Today about 120 Jews live in Zimbabwe, mostly in Harare and Bulawayo.
- Two-thirds of Zimbabwean Jews are over 65 years of age, and very few are children.
- The Jewish community developed institutions to serve and strengthen the community.
- The Jewish community has 2 day schools in Zimbabwe, namely Sharon School in Harare and Carmel School in Bulawayo.
- The Jews in Zimbabwe also have community centres, Jewish cemeteries, Zionist Youth Movements, Sports Clubs, Women Organisations and Savyon Old Age Home in Bulawayo.
- The Jews have two synagogues in Harare and one in Bulawayo.
- Members of Judaism in Zimbabwe are mostly Jews immigrants from Israel.
- However, the local Lemba [vaRemba] people claim to have a common descendant belonging to the Jewish people.
- In Zimbabwe, it should be noted that Judaism is mostly practised in Urban areas especially in Harare and Bulawayo, but to a certain extent it is also practised in rural areas through the Lemba people who are scattered in rural Zimbabwe.

CHAPTER 2.

INDIGENOUS RELIGION

What is Indigenous Religion?

- Indigenous Religion is a religion that originated from that continent.
- Indigenous Religion is a religion that was not borrowed from outside the continent.
- Indigenous Religion is a religion for the Africans that were passed down from generation to generation through the spirit mediums, family elders, chiefs, headmen, it does not have written scriptures it relies on oral transmission.
- IR is not a fossil religion; it is not a religion of the past, but a religion that Africans today have made theirs by living it and practicing it [Awolalu 1976:275].
- Indigenous Religion is a religion for Africa.
- Indigenous Religion might refer to religion for the natives of Zimbabwe.
- Indigenous religion is a religion of the local people of Zimbabwe.
- IR has no founder; it is not a religion of one hero.
- IR is based mainly on oral transmission [It is passed with the word of mouth]
- IR is not written down, it is written in people's hearts
- Indigenous Religion influences every area of an African life. It shapes the character, and culture of the people
- This is why Mbiti said; "Religion permeates in every aspect of an African life." Everything to an African is connected to religion. Mbiti went on further to say, "Africans are notoriously religious." Everything to an African has a religious explanation.
- Some writers use to say an African always carry his religion even to the parliament. It is taken everywhere around the world.

History and Development of Indigenous Religion.

- The history of IR dates back a thousand years ago.

- IR is sometimes misunderstood as backward, old fashioned, primitive, archaic, out-dated and rooted in the past; this was caused by Europeans and missionaries who did not understand IR.
- Today IR is part of the worldwide culture.
- Today IR cut across all African families as represented by totems across Africa.
- IR has been exported to other parts of the world by people who spread out of Africa to other parts of the world. Africans in the diaspora were responsible for spreading rituals and other religious ideas associated with IR.
- IR has no founder; it is not a religion of one hero.
- IR is based mainly on oral transmission; thus, professional story tellers such as elderly women and men were important for passing beliefs and practices of Indigenous Religion.
- IR is not written down, it is written in people's hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, totems, proverbs, folktales, songs, idioms, myths, legends, jokes, shrines, and religious functions.
- IR can be called cultural religion because it is not easy to separate IR from the culture of the people.
- According to Mbiti, "Religion permeates in every aspect of an African life." Everything to an African is connected to religion. Mbiti went on to say, "Africans are notoriously religious." Everything to an African has a religious explanation.
- Totems unite or bind indigenous people together.

Characteristics/features or dimensions of Indigenous Religion.

1. Have no known founder.
2. Have no written scriptures.
3. IR is passed on through oral tradition.
4. Have no sacred buildings.
5. IR has no missionaries - who seek to convert others to their religion. Members of IR are there to defend their faith.
6. It is not a revealed religion.
7. IR is tolerant to other religions. IR can assimilate ideas from other religions.
8. IR has sacred practitioners or leaders.
9. IR is malleable or flexible.
10. IR lives in the hearts and minds of the people.
11. IR is pragmatic, that is it is practical.
12. IR is secretive- the information is hidden; it is not easy to get information. The death of one African traditionalist is like the burning of the whole library.
13. IR is cyclic; it links the people who practice it now with their forebears. This is why the past is important in IR.
14. IR is pervasive, it is all-encompassing, it is omnipresent- it is everywhere.
15. IR has mythological dimension whereby there are myths to explain things difficult to understand.
16. IR has rituals.
17. IR distinguishes or separates between sacred and profane.
18. IR has social dimension- is concerned with how people are organised and interact, for example it has totems.
19. IR has code of conduct which determines what is good and what is bad for examples taboos.

20. IR has historical dimension- recording of history from time immemorial.
21. IR is this worldly and other worldly; that is salvation or happiness is obtained now and also one seeks happiness in the other life.
22. IR has symbolism- it uses symbols such as axes, knives, cloths.
23. IR uses materials in worship or physical forms such natural objects, sacred landmarks, natural rivers.
24. IR is emotional and experiential, that is religion is emotional, it raises feelings like fear, guilty, remorse, inner peace, joy, thanksgiving and awe in followers. Religion is something you feel from inside and you experience it.

Characteristics peculiar to IR

- Have no known founder.
- Have no written scriptures.
- It is not a revealed religion.
- IR is passed on through oral tradition.
- Have no sacred buildings.
- It is religion that has no zeal for membership drive; that is IR has no missionaries - who seek to convert others to their religion.
- IR is tolerant to other religions. IR can assimilate ideas from other religions.
- IR is secretive- the information is hidden; it is not easy to get information. The death of one African traditionalist is like the burning of the whole library.
- IR is cyclic.

NB - IR has never been accused of heresy, falsehood or deception.

- IR has no religious controversies.
- There is no claim of purity. There is no authority to say what it was before or what it would be in the future.
- Indigenous Religion is very pragmatic and applies to the need as it arises. It has supplied answers and direction to many African lives. It is hard to destroy its beliefs.
- African Religion is open to new ideas. Some ideas of the past have been forgotten because people found them useless and did not carry them over to the next generation.
- IR affects the whole person, the whole clan or tribe.

Wrong ideas about IR

1. Indigenous Religion is ancestor worship.
2. It is superstitious
3. It is animism or paganism
4. It is magic or fetishism

Where to find IR

1. **It is found in rituals, ceremonies and festivals of the people:** that is Birth, giving of names, circumcision, initiation ceremonies, marriage, funerals, harvest festival, need for rain.
2. **It is found in shrines and sacred places :** that is Graves, caves, rocks, hills, mountains, tree,
3. **It is found in religious objects:** objects tied around people's neck, legs and waists. Other objects are kept in pockets, bags or placed on gates or ground.
4. **It is found in art and symbols:** wood, stools, calabash, bones, sticks, pots, handcraft, domestic animals, and human bodies. It is represented by insects, birds, animals, trees, colours, etc.
5. **It is found in music and dance:** Drums, mbira, flute, rattle, hosho etc

NB: Religious festivals are accompanied by songs and dance. Music is used to spread religious ideas.

6. **It is found in proverbs, riddles and wise saying:** There are proverbs that speak of God, human relationship, man, nature of things etc. Riddles are for entertainment but some contain religious ideas. Wise saying are about the world in general.
7. **It is found in names of people and places:** African names have meanings that are also religious.
8. **It is found in myth and legends:** Stories, myth, legend, biographies
9. **It is found in beliefs and customs:** religious ideas, and that which people approve and do. Beliefs influences behaviour and what to do in life.
10. **Values and morals:** Truth, justice, love, right and wrong, respect, decency, agreements, promises, integrity, blame
11. **Religious officials:** Priests, rain makers, ritual elders, diviners, medicine men, chiefs and spirit mediums.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION.

- Africans have a concept of one God- that is belief in monotheism.
- Monotheism is the belief in one God.
- The African God is one but is known by many names such as Mwari, Musikavanhu, Musiki, Samasimba, Tenzi and Ishe; one who rules over spirits.
- The names of God reveals what people think about God. The names of God reveal His attributes.
- In IR God is called Mwari , Musikavanhu, Musiki, Tenzi and Ishe; one who rules over spirits.
- In IR God is the Supreme Being and is believed to be the origin of everything in this universe.
- In IR God is supreme and great over all the visible and the invisible beings or things that exist.
- It is believed that the code of conduct or the rules of behaviour comes from the Supreme Being.
- The Supreme Being rewards those who behave well and punishes those who misbehave, thus the Supreme Being controls how believers behave; and this makes religion sacred.
- The Supreme Being is the source of morality- determines what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil.
- It is believed that the Supreme Being has endless power and therefore, should be approached with a mixture of wonder and fear, that is should be approached with awe.
- In other words, the Supreme Being is awesome.
- In IR, God is viewed in both immanent and transcendent dimensions; that is God dwells inside human souls and He is also beyond any reach. In IR, God dwells in the sky and the sky is beyond human reach.

- In IR it is believed that the Supreme Being is approached through ancestors. The Supreme Being is worshipped through the ancestors.
 - It is also believed that the Supreme Being and other spirits are approached through rituals such as prayer and casting of lots or hakata.
- IR has no sacred text, but the idea or concept of God in IR is mainly taken from proverbs, stories, religious rituals, songs, myths and short statements.

Who is God in IR

- God is spirit. He is not a human being. He is not visible, for none has ever seen Him. No one can surely describe Him.
- He is not made. He exists on His own. He has no father, mother, neither child.
- God is the creator of everything. He is the first cause, the original source. He sustains the universe.
- God is all knowing and nothing is hidden from Him.
- God sees, hears, and smells, tastes. He eats, sleeps, plays, walks, rejoices, get angry, thinks, and remembers.
- He is present everywhere like air. At the same time He is very far from the universe and His creatures.
- God is unknowable. He cannot be explained.
- God is regarded as the first ancestor
- Africans turn to God when in trouble and seeking peace, happiness, and security.
- God does not do anything more for people. He does not interfere with man who is the centre of the universe. Man ignores God and wait for the need to arise.
- Africans turn to God when in trouble and seeking peace, happiness, and security.
- Worship is to keep contact with the invisible world so that there is harmony, thus, prayers, sacrifices, offering are done and rituals performed.
- No human being can get near to God or talk to Him.
- God is the author of both good and evil. He causes people to sin.
- God is feared as a judge and as one full of wrath.

What is a Supreme Being?

- The Supreme Being is God who is the creator of all things.
- The Shona and the Ndebele people call the Supreme Being with many different names such as Mwari and uNkulunkulu, respectively. In short, the Supreme Being is God.

NAMES OF SUPREME BEING IN IR

NAME	MEANING
Mwari	Comes from the shona word 'kumwarika' meaning breaking into pieces, this means God is everywhere, he is omnipotent. Mwari also means one who speaks through nature.
Musiki	Creator.
Nyadenga	God is owner of heaven. God is owner of the sky. God stays in the sky.

Wekumusoro	The one above.
Musikavanhu	Creator of people. Is God of life
Samasimba	God is the owner and source of power. Means all powerful, or all mighty
Mutangakugara	God is eternal. One who pre-existed.
Dzivaguru	Great pool. Huge and large pool. Shows that God is the source of water and rain.
Chidzivachopo	A pool that never dries up. God is a pool that always exists.
Chirazamauya	God is the giver of blessings such as life, wealth and health.
Chirozvamauya	God is the one who withdraws blessings.
Zame	One who is to be respected. God is the source of everything, source of justice, all wise, all knowing, all seeing, is immortal and holy.
Chibwechitedza	God is alienated or separated from humanity. God is spiritually infinite, eternal, invisible, mysterious, and morally upright. God is characterised with pity and love.
Ziendanakuenda	God has no end, God is infinite.
Chipindukire	God is one who brings change
Chikara	One who is all powerful
Rungirushumba	God is a moving thread like lightning
Mudzimumukuru	God is a great grand ancestor.
Tenzi	God is the King. God is the owner of the world.
Muumbi	God is the moulder. God is also known as muumbipasi, that is the moulder of the earth

Attributes of God in IR

- An attribute- is a quality or a characteristic or an important part of someone or something.
- Every name in IR of the Supreme Being describes aspects of people's relationship with the Supreme Being and therefore, represents an attribute of the Supreme Being.

Attributes of the Supreme Being in IR.

1. Transcendent – God operates above his creation. He is beyond any reach.
2. Omnipotent – God is all powerful. God has power and influence to do anything. There is nothing that God cannot do and above that God can only do what is good and what is consistent with his nature.
3. Omniscient – God knows everything, there is no limit to What God knows. He knows even the future. God is all-knowing God.
4. Omni present – he is present everywhere
5. Eternal – existed before the creation. God always existed.
6. Creator- God is the originator of everything. God is the explanation for the origins of the universe.
7. God is faithful- in God one can put all her/his trust. God will not let you down, he is reliable and unchangeable.

8. God is incomprehensible and mysterious- God is invisible and therefore he is incomprehensible. No mind can measure him and no intellect can understand him.
9. Incorporeal – God has no physical existence
10. Oneness – he is only one.
11. God is everlasting- he is indestructible for all time.
12. Omni benevolent – all that God does is good
13. God is Holy – he is separate from sin
14. Impeccable – he is perfect and without sin
15. Immutable – he never changes
16. God is love- he is a loving God.
17. God is the provider – he knows all our needs.
18. God is merciful- he is full of mercy, is God of mercy. God is the source of mercy.
19. God is forgiving- he is not concerned with the number of sins one has committed.
20. God is compassionate- is kind hearted
21. Immanent- he is present within his creation. God dwells inside human souls and live temporally in the rivers, large trees, mountains and forests.

NB: The names of God in IR are attributes of God, they reflect what God does, the human picture of God, the nature of God and people's relationship with God.

Key beliefs of IR

Definition of belief

- A belief is something that is accepted or considered to be true without proof.
- Belief is a conviction or an opinion.
- Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.
- A belief is something that is accepted or considered to be true, or held as an opinion.
- Belief is something believed.
- Belief is a tenet or body of tenets held by a group.

Beliefs in IR

- Believe in the Supreme being, called God
- Belief in spirits. There are two types of spirits:
 1. **Human spirits:** The spirits of those who were people on earth, that is ancestral spirits
 2. **Nature spirits:** The spirits that were created as spirits. The nature spirits live in forests, trees, waterfalls, strange shaped rocks, caves, villages, hills, pools, mountains etc. The spirit also in dwell animals like snakes (python), goats, bulls, tigers, giraffe, baboons, lions etc.

NB: -The spirits are highly honoured and feared. Their help is sought for anything. In IR one cannot do anything without consulting the spirits for permission or approval. In occasion like illness, marriage, childbirth, work, study, trip, poor harvest, accidents, family conflict, and war, spirits are consulted.

- Believe in life after death.

- Belief in witchcraft.

Important beliefs of IR

1. Belief in one God
2. Belief in the ancestors
3. Belief in spirit mediums
4. Believe in life after death.
5. Belief in witchcraft
6. Belief in Mashavi and other spirits
7. Believe in ngozi [avenging spirits]
8. Believe that when one dies s/he will become too powerful.
9. Belief that salvation is this worldly and other worldly.
10. Believe in protective power such as charms, amulets, shrines and other sacred objects.
11. Belief in the protective power of sacrifices to ancestors or spirits.
12. Belief in n'angas or traditional healers.
13. Belief in veneration of the dead.
14. Belief in rituals.

Religious symbols in IR

- **Religious symbol** is an iconic representation intended to represent a specific religion.
 - A symbol is a means of identification.
 - Symbols in I.R, includes images, icons, objects, traditional clothes which have sacred connotations.
1. The totem animals are vital symbols of indigenous life.
 2. When a traveller saw a baboon or baboons seated or walking it signified that there was no problem. The traveller would travel happily and safely. It meant the ancestors had blessed the journey, but if one saw one baboon seated with its palm on cheek looking sad/ unhappy it meant the journey was unsafe and the ancestors of the land would be advising the traveller to go back.
 3. The **sun** is one of the most important indigenous symbols and regarded as female due to its life giving powers. It is a symbol of hope and new beginning.
 4. The wearing of a black dress by a widow in some parts of Africa is symbolic of bereavement.
 5. The man's objects that symbolise manhood include:
 - **Gano-small axe**- traditionally used in close combat symbolises the man's role in close protection of his family.
 - **Pfumo-small spear**- a hunting instrument also used for warfare symbolic of the man's role as a breadwinner and a hunter for the family.
 - **Tsvimbo- knobkerrie or walking stick**- A sceptre of authority symbol of patriarchy and honour associated with the institution of manhood.
 - **Bows and arrows** - a symbol of manhood
 6. **The Woman's wedding jars** - These jars must be new ones; which symbolises the bride's virginity
 7. If a branch falls while you watch, it communicates the death of a loved one.

8. Snuff – used in religious ceremonies.
9. Gate [a big clay pot for beer]
10. Beer - is poured as libations to the ancestors.
11. Wooden plates [ndiro] – is used for prayers through the ancestors
12. Beads- represent position and one's wealth.
13. Pfumo, gano, tsvimbo- spear [pfumo], axe [gano] and knobkerrie [tsvimbo] – symbolise that the head of the family must protect the family.
14. Fuko yababa [sacred cloth]- is put on by the head of family when worshipping and communicating with the ancestors.
15. Animal skins- symbolise position and authority.
16. Bones of different creatures- were worn and used by a n'anga
17. Wooden club or rod- represent authority
18. Gourds [mikombe] – used for drinking beer. Spirit mediums drink beer using gourds.
19. Specified clothes [with single or mixed colours]
20. Birds' feathers –represent position and birds' feathers were usually worn by traditional healers and spirit mediums.
21. Chikuva – is where mother's utensils are kept and religious symbols such as wooden plates are kept.
22. Kitchen hut- is the centre of all religious activities in IR. In the hut is where we find other religious symbols such as chikuva, where the mother keeps her utensils; and house the choto. Hut is a centre of worshipping. Funerals rite and marriage rites take place in a round hut. Round hut represents completeness.
23. Choto [Fire place] symbolised a married life. Choto has three mounted supporters which symbolised the father, mother and children.
24. Sacred bull [bhuru remusha] is believed to be possessed by ancestral spirits and it is believed to guard and protect the family.
25. Mombe yehumai [mother's cow]- is a cow paid to the bride's mother when lobola [bride price] is paid. This cow symbolised motherhood and it is paid as an appreciation to the mother.
26. Rukukwe [sleeping mat] – it symbolised marriage and union of married people. During burial if a spouse has died, it is destroyed and buried underneath the coffin to symbolise the end of marriage.

Ways people worship God in IR

- ✓ Sacrifices
- ✓ Offerings
- ✓ Singing and dancing
- ✓ Prayers.
- ✓ Invocations.
- ✓ Blessings.
- ✓ Salutations.

Ways people communicate with God in IR

- ✓ Spirit mediums

- ✓ N'anga or traditional healers.
- ✓ Rituals or ceremonies.
- ✓ Sacred places.
- ✓ Libations/ kudeketera.
- ✓ Mashavi/ Alien spirits.
- ✓ Sacrifices
- ✓ Offerings
- ✓ Singing and dancing
- ✓ Prayers.
- ✓ Invocations.
- ✓ Blessings.

Mashavi Spirits [Alien spirits]

- These are spirits of non-relatives, spirits of foreigners, or spirits of unmarried people who might have died young or unmarried.
- Mashavi are hovering spirits for people who either died in faraway places or had no decent burial, or people who died having deep grudges with other people, or whose home coming rituals were not performed for them.
- There are good and bad Mashavi.
- It should be noted that Mashavi are good for individuals and beneficial for society while on the other hand, Mashavi are dangerous for individuals and society.
- There are good Mashavi which are important in IR enterprise such as shavi for hunting, craftwork, farming, tool-making, healing, pot making, basketry, smartness, business, trading, dancing, singing and many others.
- Evil Mashavi are those which are harmful such as shavi for witchcraft, stealing, backbiting, fighting, laziness and killing.

RITUALS IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION.

What is a ritual?

- A ritual is a set of action performed for its symbolic value.
- A ritual is a prescribed order of performing religious services.
- A ritual is formal, ceremonial behaviour that represent religious meaning.

Rituals in IR

- There are many rituals in IR and in this book will discuss the following rituals.
 1. Masungiro [First Pregnancy rituals]
 2. Birth rituals
 3. Naming rituals
 4. Puberty rituals
 5. Marriage rituals.
 6. Death and burial rituals

7. Magadziro/ Kurova guva ritual.
8. Mukwerera [Rain making ritual]

Masungiro or Kusungira [First pregnancy rituals]

- Is when women, mainly those pregnant for the first-time return during the last three months of their pregnancy to their parents' home, so that they give birth.
- When a first-time expectant mother is six months pregnant, goes back to her parents so that they can administer some herbs called masuwo, which will make it easy for her when giving birth. Masuwo helps to enlarge the birth passage, thus making it easy when giving birth.
- Masungiro or kusungira is symbolised by the goats which are brought by the husband's family [vakwasha] to their in-laws [vanatezvara] and will be tied on a tree.
- On the day of Masungiro, the husband's family takes two goats [a male and a female], a piece of material big enough to be tailored into the mother-in-law's dress, the tailor's fee, and a mealie-meal for sadza. There should be a bit of rapoko or millet meal that is enough to cook for four people.
- The he-goat is for the father-in-law and the she-goat is for the mother-in-law.
- The husband's family will slaughter the male goat and cook the food for everyone. The portion of meat is cooked with some herbs and is served with the rapoko or millet sadza to the father-in-law and mother-in-law and the couple. The slaughtering of the male goat which belongs to the father-in-law on the kusungira day to provide meat for people symbolised that it is the duty of the man [husband] to provide for his family.
- The female goat is left as the property of the mother-in-law to bear kids – and this symbolised that it is the duty of the woman [wife] to bear children.
- The ceremony is held as an agreement between the two families that the expectant mother will be left in the care of her parents; and relatives and the community are witnesses to the ceremonial process.
- The mother, grandmother or aunts are to see to it that the expectant mother gets necessary herbs that will make it easy for her when giving birth.
- It is believed that if the herbs are administered while the pregnant woman is with the husband the herbs might not be effective because it is assumed that some husbands may secretly be sleeping with other women and this may cause the herbs not to work.
- While the woman is at her parents' home, she is not allowed to have sex with her husband, in case, the husband is not clean, as this may bring problems and complications for the wife and the baby.

Importance of Masungiro.

1. The expectant mother is well looked after at her parents' home.
2. So that herbs can be administered properly.
3. The expectant mother while at her parents' home, she finds time to rest, as she is not under pressure to do work as a muroora.
4. The expectant mother is taught during this time how to look after herself and the baby; and other challenges that come with motherhood.
5. To ensure that mother-in-law appeals to her ancestors to guide her daughter in giving birth safely.

6. So that when there are complications during delivery, the mother is right there to assist and appeal to her ancestors to intervene.
7. In the event of complications and embarrassing confession, this was better managed by the girl's family.
8. It was a celebration of fertility and also a show of gratitude to the female ancestry for upcoming fruits [children].
9. Is for protection and blessing the mother and the unborn child.
10. Meant to ensure safe delivery of the baby.

Challenges of Masungiro in today's society.

Although there are some benefits of masungiro, there are also some disadvantages or challenges of masungiro ritual in today's society.

1. It separates the husband and wife for too long [for three months].
2. It is a fertile ground that encourages the husband to have extra- marital affairs.
3. It increases the spread of STIs and HIV and AIDS.
4. It puts the expectant mother at risk since the parents might be living in rural areas where there are no hospitals to deal with major complications.
5. It compromises the safe delivery of the baby.

Birth rituals

- These rituals are done as a way of announcing and recognising the arrival of the child and its separation from the mother.
- It is believed that the child comes from the spirit world and is commissioned by the ancestors to come to the world to accomplish a particular task.
- Soon after birth the child is commended into the hands of guardian ancestral spirits for protection from evil forces.
- Participants in this ritual are exclusively women.
- The baby can only be shown to the public after the umbilical cord [guvhu] has shrivelled or dried up.
- Some burn the umbilical cord in the fire place [Choto].
- The umbilical cord, mostly, is buried into the land; this reflects the relationship between child and the land this is why people are regarded as vana vevhu.
- This is done to protect the child from witches and sorcerers.
- Since the child is vulnerable, stringent measures are taken to protect the child's delicate parts such as the navel [rukuvhute] and the fontanelle [nhova], which are viewed as the centre of life of the child.
- The new born child is also dedicated to the ancestors. Libations [kudeketera] are also done to the ancestors and are accompanied with pouring of snuff [bute] on the ground.
- The ritual provides an opportunity for the protection and blessing of the mother and child.

Naming rituals.

- A special public ceremony is held to present the child to community.
- A special dish comprising chicken [a symbol of special welcome to visitors] is prepared.
- This is marked by singing, dancing and presentation of gifts.
- The mother is also given special treatment as she is relieved from household duties, thereby, facilitating her recovery from pain the experienced during labour.
- The peak of the ritual is marked by naming the child.
- Naming ritual is meant to give the child an identity with the family, community and even with the ancestors.
- Naming ritual is also meant to introduce the child to the family, community and ancestors.
- The child could be named after a deceased relative who was not anti-social.
- Before this event, family elders consult a n'anga to check the qualities of the deceased person.
- This is based on the understanding that if a person was a witch or sorcerer, then his/her name must not be inherited, since this can perpetuate or prolong the same qualities.
- Ancestors are asked to protect the child as well as to identify themselves with the new child.

Puberty rituals.

- Puberty rituals are meant to transform boys and girls from being children into adults. In other words, puberty ritual is meant to usher boys and girls into adulthood.
- Initiation into adulthood ritual or puberty ritual has a bearing on the health condition of the initiates.
- These rituals are done to a child especially a teenager who has shown signs of adulthood, for example releasing of semen for boys and menstruation for girls.
- It is done at the onset of puberty age around 12-13 years of age.
- Puberty ritual aims to ensure the shaping of productive, community-oriented and responsible adults. IR believes that one does not automatically becomes a responsible person; one should be taught what is expected of him/her as an adult. One should be taught the knowledge, wisdom, norms and values of the society.
- Boys in Indigenous Religion [especially those of Remba or Lemba origin] are sometimes taken out to some forest camp where they are circumcised.
- Indigenous Religion methodically initiates boys and girls by taking them away from the concerns of everyday life, to teach them all the ways of adulthood; including rules and taboos of the society; moral instructions and social responsibility.
- They undergo physical training to overcome difficulties and pain; and to cultivate courage, endurance, perseverance and obedience.
- Furthermore, numerous vigorous activities are performed to promote well-being of the initiates.
- They sometimes go through a painful experience like going to the river or dam early in the morning, no matter how cold it is.
- Various medicines are either eaten or rubbed on their naked parts of their bodies.
- Some medicines taken by boys include concoctions which enhance male's reproductive capacity by strengthening their sperm. This will assure boys of their manhood.
- On the other hand, girls are taught on socio-moral norms and their responsibilities in society.
- Virginity is appraised and sex education forms a central subject of discussion.
- Girls acquire skills for motherhood, how to care and maintain the body.

- Girls get groomed in preparation for marriage, motherhood and adulthood.

Importance or significance of puberty rituals.

1. It equips boys and girls mentally, bodily, emotionally and morally for adolescence and adulthood.
2. It offers a quality of sacredness to the initiates, who are fashioned anew, and endowed with additional power to enable them to cope with new life of adulthood.
3. Initiates are recognised as adults.
4. Boys have a right to acquire wealth in their name.
5. A person has a gateway to marriage.
6. Puberty ritual is a bridge between youth and adulthood.
7. It helps people to transmit their culture across generations.
8. It helps to preserve or protect culture.
9. Acquisition of skills by initiates.
10. Promotes moral life in society, as it encourages young girls to be patient and stay away from early sex until they get married.
11. Helps in promoting oneness and unity in society.
12. Promotes well-being or health of the initiates.
13. Person gets to know of his/her mission in life.
14. It is a mark of identity.

Disadvantages of puberty rituals.

1. It is considered as old fashion and an abuse to the initiates.
2. Cause conflicts in society as the initiates for example those of Remba or Lemba origin, if they come across non Remba [Lemba] they sometimes beat them up.
3. Some initiates die during these rituals.
4. Puberty rituals such as circumcision cause unnecessary pain to the initiates.

Circumcision ritual

- Circumcision is done at a very early stage, even a few days after birth, while others do circumcision at the period of puberty as an initiation into adulthood.
- Circumcision is mostly done on boys.
- Cutting of flesh is a symbol of getting rid of childhood and getting ready for adulthood.
- Circumcision is painful experience where blood is split, this represent the flow of life.
- If one is not circumcised [excision for girls] the person is considered to be a child, no matter how old he/she might be. In addition, the person might be isolated if he/she is not circumcised.
- Thus, circumcision is sometimes an initiation into adulthood.
- Boys are taught about the laws, norms and values of the society.
- They are also imparted with the sacred knowledge of the community and on how to be responsible adults.
- They are shown sacred objects of the community and are instructed how to respect and use them.
- Circumcision is a community or a public affair.

- In other communities in IR girls are circumcised, and this is called clitoridectomy [excision] - the cutting of a portion of the clitoris, as a way of delaying the sexual activity of girls.
- Girls are trained on being responsible and good mothers.
- Girls are taught on how to be a good wife, who is able to satisfy her husband and raise children properly.
- They come out of this ritual sexually mature and responsible.
- These rituals are accompanied with ceremonial drumming, dancing, singing and sometimes seclusion.
- Circumcision and clitoridectomy [excision] symbolically represent the floor of life. The blood that is shed, binds the person to the land and the departed members of their society. It is a mark of identity.

Significance of circumcision.

- Makes one to be recognised as a man.
- Makes one to be recognised as an adult.
- It is a mark of identity.
- Helps in promoting oneness and unity in society.
- It is a way of passing culture from generation to generation
- In some cases it is a gateway to marriage.
- Circumcision gives a sense of belonging.
- In recent years circumcision has been encouraged for medical reasons; as it is believed to reduce the chances of being infected with STIs [Sexually Transmitted Infections] and HIV and AIDS.
- It is also believed that circumcision of males reduces cases of cervical cancer in women.

Disadvantages of circumcision.

- On the other hand, some people denounce circumcision as unnecessary and harmful; and believe circumcision to be mentally and physically damaging.
- It causes unnecessary pain.
- Circumcision of females is seen as a form of abuse.
- Circumcision might lead to infections and in some cases leads to death.

Marriage rituals.

Marriage is a union of two or more people of the opposite sex.

In Indigenous Religion marriage is a contract between two families. Marriage is not a contract between two people in IR because the tezvara is the tezvara of the whole family of the groom, negotiations for marriage is done by senior representatives of each family, and people usually say we have married such and such family.

- Marriage ritual procedure starts with informal courting which is accompanied with exchange of love tokens [nduma] mostly clothes which are exchanged in the presence of the tete [aunt].
- This is then followed by a formal and public engagement whereby the suitor through the munyai [middleman] approaches the girl's family with some gifts.

- The bride price [lobola] is then negotiated and then paid but not in full – mukwasha should remain in debt, hence the proverb mukwasha mukuyu hauperi kudyiwa.
- The bride price included rutsambo, mombe yeumai, roora.
- Rusambo was associated with sexual rights and was only paid to virgins. Roora was paid in form of cattle; this gave the husband rights over children born to the woman.
- Mombe-yeumai- cow of motherhood was for the matrilineal ancestors.
- A wife was not bought as a property and was not a slave that can be sold again. In case of divorce she was to be officially returned to her kin.
- Marriage marks a change of status from single to married.
- Marriage makes one to be recognised as an adult.
- Marriage is a union of male and female adults.
- Marriage is for procreation.
- Marriage helps in uniting families and extends relationships to a wider community.
- Marriage in Indigenous religion is seen as a communal affair rather than an individual affair; it binds communities together and not individuals only. The relations made from marriage affect the whole family and not individuals.
- Marriage rituals are performed to ensure the approval of the ancestors of both families, and also to ensure fertility.
- Marriage is seen as a sacred duty which every normal person must perform.
- There are various ways one can get married in IR; namely Kukumbira, kutizira, musengabere, kutema ugariri, kuzvarira, chimutsa mapfiwa.
- However, in contemporary society people get married in IR through Kukumbira and kutizira.
- In IR marriage is at the centre of human existence. Through marriage the effects of death are reduced and neutralised. Marriage and child-bearing are medicine against death in IR. Marriage in It is the only means of human survival; thus it is a religious duty.
- Marriage is a meeting point for three layers of human life in IR; namely the departed, the living and the unborn. The departed are the roots on which the living stand. The living are the link between death and life. The unborn are the seeds in the loins of the living and marriage ensures their germination.
- Failure to get married means that one is cutting off the vital link between death and life.

Importance of marriage in IR

- Helps to set up a family and have children.
- Helps to create relationships between families, clans and even communities.
- Allows one to become an ancestor if one dies after having children.
- One would be consider a full adult after getting married.
- Sex is allowed in marriage only in IR.
- Marriage helps in perpetuating clan or family name through children.
- Marriage helps to inculcate values such as love, hard work, caring and respect.
- Marriage and bearing of children are the medicines against death in IR.
- Marriage helps to regain lost generation; the traits of departed members would be seen again in children who are born.
- Marriage connects the past, present and future generation.

Death Rituals/ Burial Rituals

- Death is the transition from the physical world to a spiritual life.
- Death rituals are for sending off the departed, and normalise life for the survivors.
- Death rituals are a preparation for the dead's next life, and are for reincarnation in the invisible world.
- Though death is sorrowful and marks a physical separation of the individual from other human beings. In IR and culture, when a person dies he/she leaves the physical world and goes to the invisible world or the spiritual world.
- In IR the dead person wields more power after death than he/she did in his/her lifetime. Corpse is perceived to be dangerous and untouchable.
- After death, the dead person is folded [kupeta mufi]; eyes are closed, legs and hands are straightened. The corpse is washed, anointed with oil and dressed in his/her best clothes. This prepares the dead person for the journey to the spirit world.
- Young people and children are not allowed to see the corpse for it might cause them to be blind.
- The coffin of the dead person is normally placed in a kitchen [kitchen is connected to the ancestors], as people will be singing and dancing throughout the night in memory of the deceased.
- A beast especially a cow or a goat is slaughtered and is dedicated to the ancestors.
- Purpose of the beast: (i) to feed the mourners.
(ii) to accompany the deceased to the world of the ancestors.
(iii) to pave the way of the deceased into the world of the ancestors.

To prepare the deceased for the next life he/she is buried with his/her belongings for use in the next life.

The marking of the grave called kutema rukawo is done by a close relative.

The burial is usually in the morning or evening; a special time when it is cool and the family spirits are active to be able to welcome the dead amongst their group.

No burials occur at midday because at that time it is hot and spirits are at rest and the dead may not be received and end up being a wandering spirit.

On the way to the grave the corpse is made to rest at various intervals so as to allow the dead to rest and to bid farewell to his/her home and mourners.

At the grave the corpse is laid on its right side, the right side represents goodness and power.

Before covering the grave with soil ancestors are informed as men clap hands and women ululates. Close relatives throw a handful of soil into the grave as a way of casting away evil and misfortune saying 'famba zvakanaka' or 'zorora murugare' or 'tungamira nesu tichatevera.'

Kurova guva/ Magadziro rituals [Home coming ritual].

Kurova guva or Magadziro ritual takes place a year after burial and is performed for adults who had a family. This is a ritual of bringing back home the spirit of the deceased; so that the living dead will continue to look after his family and protect it the same way when he was alive. Kurova guva/ Magadziro is a process of making a deceased elderly family member an ancestor. It is meant to reunite the deceased with his/her family.

The purpose of kurova guva/ Magadziro is to bring back the spirit of the dead so that he/she resides with the family, protecting and blessing it, and occasionally punishing it for misbehaviour by allowing calamities and sickness to befall it.

Magadziro ritual is not performed to a person who committed suicide, who was a witch or sorcerer, who died without getting married, and who was anti-social. Magadziro or Kurova guva is performed to people who were married, had children and lived a morally upright life.

The ritual is based on the belief that life in IR does not end with death, but one continues to live as an ancestor in the world of the living dead. IR believes that death does not alter or change the life or personality of an individual, but only causes a change in its condition.

A cow is slaughtered a night before kurova guva in honour of the dead and to feed people who might have gathered. A goat or a chicken is slaughtered on the grave for magadziro ritual as well. Beer is brought to the grave and is shared by the living and what is left is poured over the grave. One gourd of beer is saved solely for the deceased, and after pouring beer on the grave the gourd is smashed and the spirit of the deceased is believed to have returned home.

Some pour beer on the goat at the grave and when the goat shakes it will be a sign that the deceased has accepted to come back home as an ancestor.

After the kurova guva ceremony the deceased's belongings are shared and the widow decides who she wants to marry through kugarwa nhaka.

In IR, the goal of life is to become an ancestor after death.

Importance of Magadziro/Kurova guva

1. It marks the end of mourning. The widow will no longer veil his head with black cloth and wear black cloth which symbolised mourning.
2. It brings hope and confidence into the family considering the unpredictability of the spirit of the deceased.
3. It allows the ritual of nhaka to take place.
4. It unites people together as people meet for the Magadziro ritual.
5. It asserts the belief in life after death.
6. It helps to strengthen the relationship of the living and the dead.

Rain making ceremony [Mukwerera]

Is a ritual performed during a crisis of a drought and it involves the whole community. Mukwerera ritual is also a seasonal ritual which is performed just before the start of the rain season. Mukwerera is a ritual meant to ask for rain from the ancestors and was performed by the whole community.

The ceremony was led by the chief [mambo, working together the spirit medium [svikiro] called Manyusa, alongside elderly women who would have stopped sexual activity. Elderly women who are past sexual activity are responsible for immersing the seed in water and brewing beer for the mukwerera ritual. These elderly women were assisted young girls who are not yet sexually active.

The ritual was held under a sacred Muchakata [Muhacha] tree, or other trees of religious significance. A day before the mukwerera ritual, spouses were not allowed to indulge in sexual activities for them to be clean for the ritual. Thus, before the rain making ceremony, the community should be clean.

Importance of Mukwerera ritual.

- Meant to call the ancestors and ask God for abundant rains.
- To ask for forgiveness if people had defiled the environment.
- To ask for a bumper harvest.
- Promoted life of purity.
- To show allegiance to Musikavanhu who was responsible for rains
- Show people's dependence on God.
- Provided interaction between people and the spiritual beings.
- It promoted social interaction and unity in society.

The Mukwerera ritual was meant to cleanse the land of bad spirits of murder, adultery which anger God and ancestors. After the ritual people left a pot of beer for the ancestors to drink, and it always rained after the mukwerera ritual.

People sing sexual songs and perform sexual dances in order to seduce the ancestors to pour rain. Mukwerera ritual is a community ritual which helps to bring oneness and unity in the community as people eat, drink, sing, dance and rejoice together.

Health rituals

- (i) **Health** is the state of being well and free from sickness in the body or mind.
- (ii) **Health** is the absence of any disease or impairment.
 - Good health in IR consists of mental, physical, spiritual and emotional stability of an individual, family and community. Good health in IR is understood in terms of one's relationship with the ancestors [for ancestors to continue protecting the living]; living in accordance to norms and values of the society [that is good relations with the ancestors and the community.]
 - In IR sickness to an individual is sickness to the whole community.
 - Human life in IR is viewed as essential and valuable.

Health rituals are meant to:

- Ensure good health.
- Prevent danger to health.
- Curing barrenness.
- Removing impurities in people and homestead.
- Protecting people.
- Protecting animals and crops.
- In IR diseases are not only physical condition but also a religious matter. IR is not against Western medical way of treatment or Western healing process, but believes that there are certain diseases that Western medicine cannot treat, and therefore need spiritual attention.

Causes of diseases in IR

- Attacks from evil or bad spirits.
- Ancestors who are not treated well, they could punish people with diseases.
- Witches and sorcerers.
- Spell-casting.
- Disobeying taboos.

In IR rituals for good health and good life are performed with the assistance of a n'anga. Community health rituals are performed when there is an epidemic in an area.

There are also witch hunting rituals performed by Tsikamutanda to expose witches, with the aim of protecting the community.

Importance of rituals in IR

1. Rituals are a primary means of social communication and cohesion.
2. Ritual gives confidence in the face of danger.
3. Is a link established between the present and the original reality.
4. Rituals bind the community together.
5. Rituals are a form of socialisation.
6. Rituals help in educating young people.
7. Promotes group solidarity and cohesion.
8. Help in making young men and women to be part of the community.
9. Help to preserve culture.
10. Promotes moral life in society.
11. Rituals are a sign of allegiance to the Supreme Being.
12. Rituals are a sign of identity.
13. Rituals connect people to their history.
14. Rituals help us to share our emotions.
15. Rituals help to transform girls and boys into adulthood.

MYTHS IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION.**Definitions.**

- Myth – is a sacred story told over and over by believers.
 - Myth – is a way of explaining some actual or imaginary reality.
 - Myth – is a traditional story handed down within a culture, about gods or ancient heroes [Bourdillon, 1990:54].
 - Myth is a widely held but false belief or idea.
 - A myth is a vehicle for conveying a certain fact or a certain basic truth about man's experiences in his encounter with the created order and with regard to man's relation to the super sensible world.
- 1 Africans believe that God created the universe; that is, someone great created the world.

- 2 Man is said to have come from the clay, from marsh, from a hole, from the leg of god, he was brought from the sky to earth. It is thought that at first man was living in harmony and immortality and in fellowship with the Supreme Being (God).
- 3 At that time heaven was very close to earth, and that a rope tied them up.
Later on God went away from man because of sin. He went away not to be interested in him forever.
God was tired of man's requests. Man wiped his dirty fingers on the sky
A woman pounding in her mortar lifted her pestle too high and kept poking God in the eye, and God decided to go up higher.
Smoke get into God's eyes, when man set the grass on fire.
The hyena broke the rope joining heaven and earth.
There is a sense of disobedience on the part of man in all the myths.
Thus, because of disobedience man lost his immortality

Myth about God [Mwari].

- 4 God is seen as being all powerful [omnipotent], he can do all things, and there is nothing he cannot do.
- 5 God is the creator; he is the one who created the universe which consists of both the visible and the non-visible. God is also the sustainer of life.
- 6 God is all knowing [omniscient]; he is all seeing and there is nothing hidden from him; there is no limit to what he knows. God is all wise; he is the wise One, whose knowledge and understanding are without limit.
- 7 God is merciful; he is God of pity, the merciful One, he is God of mercy and is the source of mercy.
- 8 God is seen as a just God; who is the source of justice.
- 9 God is immortal and holy. This shows that God is eternal he does not die and whatever he does is good.

Myth about creation.

African creation myths usually take it for granted that the earth always existed; African myth may tell about the earth being fashioned out of some material that is available.

The Myth of Kurumbi/Gwambe

The Shona people, specifically the Karanga, are believed to have emerged from a reed. This reed was growing in a marsh area. The reed split and out of the reed came a person called Kurumbi/Gwambe. He was accompanied by a woman called Dzavana. These two are regarded as the greatest ancestors or the first people to survive. These people feature in various legends, for example, one of the legends talk of Kurumbi and Dzavana migrating from their place of origin. Thus migration created a path called Gwara raKurumbi which is now represented through a cluster of stars. Kurumbi is believed to have passed through Great Zimbabwe and at Great Zimbabwe they are believed to have walked along a certain road which was still in its liquid form.

Myth of a place called Ngomalungundu

While the place is believed to be in the Southern part of Zimbabwe, some people believe the place is in South Africa. Its exact location is unknown but is believed to be a place of mysteries. The first beings are thought to have come from Ngomalungundu. The description that is given of Ngomalungundu is that it is a hole and around a swampy place. It is from this hole that human beings emerged and they walked facing northwards. Due to this movement, people think that these were Ndebele people who came from South Africa into Zimbabwe. This place is sacred because drums are heard especially in the morning and evening. *Ngoma* means drum and *lungundu* means sound. At times fire is seen at Ngomalungundu.

Myth of Guruuswa

According to the myth the first human beings emerged from the marsh of reeds and these were different ethnic groups. Each clan had its own peculiar customs. This myth has been incorporated by the historians into the Bantu history. According to this myth, the spot at which human creation took place is either in or around Lake Tanganyika. There other historians who think that the place is around Mt. Kilimanjaro in the regions between Kenya and Tanzania. The Shona were created in Tanzania or Kenya and travelled down South to Zimbabwe and first settled at Great Zimbabwe. The world across the Zambezi can be referred to as the mythical world. These people migrated from myth to history.

The Mwedzi Myth

God (Mwari) created the first man, Mwedzi (the moon) in a great depth of water. Mwedzi became lonely and yearned to live on land. Despite Mwari's warnings, he insisted on being released to the earth. Once there, he found that the earth was indeed a lonely and desolate place and begged Mwari for a partner. Mwari sent him morning star (Hweva / Massassi) and the couple gave birth to all the vegetation on earth. After a period of two years, the lovers were separated, leaving Mwedzi desolate once again. He petitioned for another wife and was given evening star (Morongo / Venekatsvimborume) and together they gave birth to the herbivores and birds of the earth and then to boys and girls. Morongo also gave birth to wild animals and reptiles but then created a great sin when she mated with a snake. This snake eventually bit Mwedzi and made him ill. His illness marked the dawn or the beginning of all human suffering.

Myth about coming of death

It is believed that Mwari wanted people to have eternal life and he sent the tortoise with the news of eternal life to the people, and after some time the lizard was sent with the news of death and because the lizard is fast he overtook the tortoise and thus, the people received the news of death first before they receive the news of eternal life. This is why in IR there is a belief that people die and then have eternal life after death.

Importance of Myths

- 1 In Indigenous religion, myths have rich wealth of African ideas, beliefs, values, literary expression and human imagination.
- 2 Myth helps to support and validate the rules of the society.
- 3 Myth is used as a way of circulating ideas from one generation to another.

- 4 A myth endeavours to probe and answer questions about origins and meanings and purposes. These answers are naturally clothed in stories which serve as a means of keeping them in memory as well as handing them to generation to generation.
- 5 Myths help to answer difficulty questions, such as the “How”? “Where”? and “Why”? Myths are highest forms of culture’s ideals and beliefs. Myths teach us how to live our lives and for individuals to realise the mystery of the universe and how awesome it is.
- 6 Helps to develop imaginative powers

RELIGIOUS PRACTITIONERS IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION

The following are religious practitioners in IR:

1. Spirit mediums [Masvikiro]
 2. N’anga [traditional healers]
 3. Chief [ishe]
 4. Mid- wife [Nyamukuta]
 5. Rain makers [manyusa]
 6. Tete [aunt]
 7. Mbuya [grandmother]
 8. Uncle [sekuru]
 9. Grandfather [sekuru]
 10. Muzukuru [cousin]
 11. Elders
 12. Baba [father]
 13. Mother [amai]
 14. Nyamukumbi [acolyte]
- Religious practitioners are professionals and can either be males or females.
 - Their roles affect individuals, families and the whole society.
 - They initiate and influence individuals on the way of life expected of them.
 - They socialise and make individuals aware of the code of conduct of the family, lineage and the whole society.
 - Religious practitioners are responsible for instilling norms and values.
 - They are also responsible for instilling Unhu/Ubuntu in the young people.
 - Religious practitioners are character builders.
 - They are the mirror of the family and society.
1. **Spirit mediums [Masvikiro]**
 - These are the people who are possessed by the spirit of the ancestors.

The roles of spirit mediums.

- Can expose causes of illness.
- Can prescribe herbs.
- Are consulted in choosing a chief.
- Can expose witches.
- They acted as political advisors to chiefs.

- Are consulted during a crisis such as wars, drought and famine.
- They encouraged people to fight their land during colonial rule.
- Gave medicines to soldiers to protect them during wars.
- They communicate with God on behalf of the people.
- Led in the mukwerera ritual.
- They are mediators between humans and ancestors.
- Can exorcise or cast out spirits.
- They are foretellers.
- Encouraged people to live in harmony by following rules and taboos of the society.

2. Chiefs [madzishe]

- The chief is at the top of the society with various duties.
- The chief has economic, political, religious, socio-economic and judiciary roles in society.

Economic roles or duties of the chief.

- Lead in agricultural ceremonies such as mukwerera.
- Give people food through zunderamambo during drought or famine.
- Food hand outs and donations come through chiefs.

Political roles of the chief.

- Declared and led wars.
- Distribute land to the landless.
- Is the chief administrator.
- Work hand in hand with councillors and District Administrators [Das].

Religious roles of the chief.

- Chiefs are custodians of culture and religion.
- Controlled the chisi day.
- Responsible for appeasing the tribal and national ancestors in time of natural disasters.
- Perform rituals before and after harvest.
- Bless seeds before planting.

Socio-economic roles of the chief.

- Controlled the cutting of tress.
- Received tribute from their subjects.
- Help in distributing food from donors.
- Controlled mining and fishing.
- Controlled hunting.
- Feed people during famine through Zunde ramambo.

Judiciary roles of the chief.

- Solving land disputes.

- Solving disputes between couples.
- Handle cases of witchcraft.
- Investigate mysterious death in the society through Tsikamutandas.

3. **Nyamukuta [mid-wife]**

- Is responsible for helping women in giving birth.

Roles of Nyamukuta [mid-wife]

- Prepares the birth passage by enlarging the birth passage by applying masuwo medicines.
- Encourage expecting mother to confess in case of complications [for example confess infidelity or witchcraft.]
- Give mothers medicine to change the sex of the child [kuchinja nyoka].
- Shapes the head and legs of the child.
- Know how to attend to still-birth.
- Buried the still-born child along the banks of the river.
- Responsible for cutting the umbilical cord [rukuvhute].
- Responsible for burying the umbilical cord.
- Responsible for cutting the hair of the child.
- Responsible for treating the nhova [fontanele]
- Was consulted when weaning [kurumura].
- Discouraged early sex after birth.
- Abortion could be helped by Nyamukuta.
- In case of twins the Nyamukuta was the one who was responsible for selecting the child to kill.

4. **N'anga [traditional healers]**

- Traditional healers [N'angas] are charismatic people who are feared and respected in society.
- The roles of a n'anga can be destructive and positive since it benefit the society by bringing harmony.

Roles of a n'anga.

- Is a herbalist or medicine man who cures illness by use of herbs.
- Exposes or reveals causes of illness.
- Is also a spirit medium.
- Can exorcise or cast out evil spirits.
- Can reveal causes of bad luck.
- Divining – identifying of hidden things.
- Act as a political advisor to chiefs and other political leaders.
- Mediators between humans and spiritual world.
- Is a psychiatric.
- Is a foreteller.
- Is a health worker.
- Act as a counsellor by counselling those in distress.
- Is a judiciary worker who bring harmony in society for example they are hired for a ngozi [avenging spirit] to go
- Use rukwa to protect people's property.
- Use runyoka [the fencing system] to fence adulterous women.

- Act as a witch hunter as Tsikamutanda – thereby protecting the society. On the other hand this cause conflicts in society.
- They are consulted during, before and after death.
- Before magadziro, a n'anga is consulted.
- A n'anga is consulted before the naming ritual of a child.
- Encourage people to confess.
- Can be used by people to kill their enemies.
- They give love portions
- Give divisi to make people rich and have a bumper a harvest. This might be dangerous to the community as the divisi might be using human blood.
- Give people mubobobo also known as 'Bluetooth sex, or remote control sex, or African wireless sex or witchcraft sex.'

5. Nyamukumbi [acolyte]

- The acolyte was responsible for assisting the n'anga.

Roles of the acolyte.

- Sent by a n'anga to fetch herbs.
- Pack medicines.
- Prescribe dosages.
- Helps to sing and beat drums to induce spirits.
- Carry the nhava [bag] of the n'anga if moving from one place to another.
- Interprets what the n'anga says in a language of the ancestors.

6. Tete [aunt]

- Was responsible for the girl child in most cases, but was also useful to boys.

Duties or roles of Tete.

- Responsible for the upbringings especially in relation to marital issues to females.
- Impart skills to female relatives such as pottery, weaving, basketry, cooking.
- Promotes relationships.
- Takes advisory role in family disputes.
- Tete can play the role of a father as babakadzi.
- Responsible for the initiation of girls into adulthood.
- Teach both girls and boys norms and values of the society.
- Can play the role of grandmother as nyamukuta [mid wife].

7. Grandmother [mbuya]

Grandmother performs the following duties:

- Play the role of nyamukuta.
- Teach boys and girls norms and values through folktales.
- Tell folktales for passing time and for character development.
- Teach girls life skills such as weaving, basketry and pot making.
- Play an advisory role in family disputes.
- Give advice to girls on bedroom issues and on life experiences.

- Advice girls on how to be good mothers and good wives.
- Accompany girls during initiation into adulthood.
- They could invoke spirits.
- Assisted girls during courtship.

8. Uncle [Sekuru]

Performs these functions:

- Give advice to boys.
- Teach boys how to be good fathers and husbands during the rite of passage to adulthood.
- Teach boys about bedroom issues.
- Teach practical skills such as blacksmithing, hunting, herding cattle.
- They could invoke spirits.
- Assisted boys in courtship.

9. Elders.

Are mature people.

They are usually of an old age and full of wisdom.

They are people who are morally upright.

They are rich depositories of cultural values and norms.

Duties of elders.

- Settle disputes in community.
- Make important family decisions.
- Preside over functions such as rites of passage.
- Help in solving land disputes.
- Give general guidance to individuals, family and community.
- Teach norms and values.

10. Rainmakers [Nyusa]

Are highly respected in IR.

The roles of rainmakers.

- They predict the weather by studying stars, moon, clouds, sky and winds movement.
- Use sacred objects in rainmaking.
- They could stop destructive rains.
- They perform special rituals to cause rain.
- They preside over rain making ceremony.
- They mediated between God and people.
- During big gathering they could delay the rain until the event is over.

11. Baba [Father].

Was responsible for the boy child.

Roles of baba.

- Leads in family venerations.
- Teach morals through story telling.
- Teach skills to boys such as hunting, tool making.
- In today's society the roles used to be played by sekuru are now the roles of the father.
- Responsible for disciplining his family.

12. Amai [Mother]

- Was responsible for the girl child.

Roles of mother.

- Teach morals through story telling.
- Mother teach girls about pot making, weaving, basketry, cooking.
- Teach girls to have unhu/Ubuntu.
- Teach norms and values to girls.
- Responsible for disciplining children.
- In today's society the roles that used to be the roles of tete and mbuya are now the roles of the mother.

SACRED PLACES IN INDIGENOUS RELIGION.

Sacred place – is a place that is regarded as holy in a religion.

Sacred places- are places which are set apart from daily activities.

A sacred place is a meeting point between God and people.

- Sacred places in IR includes :
 1. Mountains
 2. Caves and groves.
 3. Pools and rivers.
 4. Hot springs.
 5. Trees
 6. Forests.
 7. Shrines.
 8. Rocks [Domboramwari in Epworth]
 9. Wetlands.
 10. Graveyards.
 11. National monuments eg Great Zimbabwe.
 12. Choto [fire place].
 13. Chikuva.

1. Mountains

- Mountains such as Nyanga, Matopos, Hariyeumba, Bunchwa, Selinda, Matonjeni, Defe, Dopota, Gombe, Rasa, Manhize are considered sacred in IR.
- Mountains in IR are sacred because Chiefs lived on top of them and are buried in the caves that are at the bottom of the mountains.
- Mountains are habitat for wildlife including sacred animals in IR.
- Mountains were a meeting place between God and people. It is where people communicated with the ancestral spirits.
- Mountains were places of worship in IR.
- Rituals such as Mukwerera are still performed under the Muchakata tree under the foot of the mountain.

- Cleansing ceremonies took place on the mountain where people with bad spirits or mashavi were cleansed.
- Mountains are also a source of herbs in IR.
- Mountains are sources of food such as Mashuku [mazhanje]. Mushrooms and other edible wild fruits.
- Mountains also sheltered freedom fighters during the liberation struggle.
- Sacred mountains help in preserving and protecting the environment since cutting down of trees, burning of grass, hunting and farming is forbidden at and near mountains.
- Mountains such as Nyanga attract tourists, and this helps the country with foreign currency as well as employment creation.

2. Caves and groves.

- Chiefs were buried in caves.
- Groves are passages underneath the mountains known to link hills and mountains throughout the country.
- Groves are bigger than the caves and this is where most rituals and ceremonies were held.
- Rain making ceremonies are held in caves such as Matopo hill cave.
- In the First and Second Chimurenga war the freedom fighters used to hide in caves and groves.
- Freedom fighters also hide their weapons in caves and groves.
- Caves such as Chivavarira in Chirumhanzu were a hiding place for the community in time of war.
- Caves and groves are also habitat of sacred animals such as pythons.
- Caves and groves help in preserving the environment as hunting, cutting down trees and burning of grass is not allowed near and around sacred caves and groves.
- Caves and groves are a source of historical evidence as they have paintings and writings on their walls.
- Sacred caves and groves attract tourists, thus help in bringing foreign currency and job creation.

3. Forests.

- Forests such as Dark forest in Matebeleland and Nyamweda forest in Mhondoro are considered sacred.
- Rain making ceremonies are held in these forests.
- They are places of worship in IR
- They provide fruits and herbs.
- Sacred forests are used as burial places for chiefs.
- Sacred forests have taboos such as no cutting down of trees, no hunting, no farming and no burning of the grass in the forests and this help in protecting and preserving the environment.

4. Pools.

- Pools such as Chirorodziva [Chinhoyi pools], Gonawapotera and Manapools are considered sacred in IR.
- Pools are considered sacred because they are inhabited by Njuzu [mermaids].
- Sacred pools such as Chirorodziva are sacred because they have bones of Shona tribe heroes who died after being thrown by Nguni raiders in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.
- Gonawapotera river or pool is sacred because that is where criminal offenders such as witches, sorcerers, thieves and adulterous used to be drowned as death punishment.
- Traditional ceremonies and rituals are done at these pools.

- Spirit mediums would go down into the deep ends of the pool and spend hours under water and come out with prophetic word from water spirits.
- Sacred pools are places of worship in IR.
- Sacred pools help in protecting the environment as there are taboos which forbid people to fish and use dirty pots to fetch water in these pools.
- Sacred pools help to prevent pollution of rivers and siltation of rivers.

5. Hot springs

- Hot springs such as those in Nyanyadzi are sacred and water from these hot springs are believed to have healing qualities.
- Taboos such that deals with hot springs such as not using dirty pots, no farming around the area, are meant to protect and manage the environment and water sources.
- They provide people with purified water.
- Sacred hot springs attract tourists.
- Help to bring foreign currency.
- Create employment.

6. Wetlands and swamps.

- Wetlands and swamps are considered sacred since they are believed to be drinking places for Mhondoro and ancestors.
- Wetlands and swamps sustain the life of the rivers and they give the vital water.
- Taboos on wetlands and swamps such as no farming in these areas and not using sooty pots are meant to protect and preserve the wetlands and not to pollute them.
- Wetlands are regarded as the origin of fertility of nature.
- Taboos on wetlands help in ensuring values in hygiene.

7. Tsime [Well].

- The Well [tsime] is the most common source of drinking water that deserves high level of reverence.
- Taboos such as ukachera mvura nechirongo chitema, tsime rinopwa; are meant to transmit values of hygiene and thus safeguard human life.

8. Rocks. Such as the Chiremba balancing rocks and Domboramwari in Epworth are considered sacred.

- Rituals such as mukwerera are performed at these sacred places.
- They also attract tourists, thus help to bring foreign currency.
- The balancing rocks were used as a symbol of Zimbabwean currency.
- Help in preserving the environment.

9. Trees.

- Trees such as Muchakata, Mutiusinazita, Mukute, Mishuku, Mumvee, Mushozhowa, mutamba and other big trees are considered sacred trees.
- They are inhabitant of spiritual beings or bodies.
- They are trees of the ancestors.
- Rituals such as mukwerera are performed under these trees.
- These trees also provide fruits for people and animals.
- They are also source of medicines in IR.
- Mukute is seen as a source of water in IR.

- Cutting down of these trees is prohibited and thus preserving the environment.
- Mutiusinazita is considered sacred because it is believed that it used to provide people with food in time of need.

10. Shrines.

- Shrines such as:
 - Matopos shrine
 - Njelele shrine.
 - Manyanga shrine
 - National Heroes Acre.
 - Great Zimbabwe.
 - Victoria Falls.
 - Tsindi ruins.
 - Chiremba balancing rocks.
 - Chinhoyi caves.
 - Matonjeni.
- These places were worshiping places in IR.
- Shrines were meeting place between God and people.
- Rainmaking rituals were performed at these shrines.
- Shrines helped in the preservation of the environment since people were not allowed to hunt, cut down trees, burn grass, and do farming around the shrines. Animals that sought refuge at the shrines were not to be killed.
- People also sought refuge at the shrines in times of war.
- Some shrines are burial places for the heroes of the country.

11. Graveyards.

- Graves are considered as resting place of the ancestors and are therefore sacred.
- People consult ancestral spirits at the graveyard.
- The grave is the meeting place between the living and the dead.
- Kurova guva ritual is done at the grave.

Importance of sacred places in IR

1. Sacred places are rain inducing centres. [Used for rain making ceremonies.]
2. Are pilgrimage centres, where local people often visit for spiritual and human inspiration.
3. Sacred places are places of worship.
4. Community celebrations such as coronation of the chief takes place at a sacred place.
5. Are burial places for the chiefs.
6. Was a meeting place for the community in time of wars.
7. Is where the gold and salt of the community was kept.
8. Sacred places attract tourists.
9. Sacred places help in bringing foreign currency.
10. Sacred places help in creating employment.
11. Sacred places help in protecting the environment as people are not allowed to cut trees around and near sacred places.
12. Most community rituals are performed at sacred places.

13. Sacred places were used as hiding places for freedom fighters.
14. Freedom fighters also hide their weapons at sacred places.
15. Sacred places are habitat for sacred animals such as pythons.
16. Sacred places are used for healing and cleansing rituals.

Benefits of sacred places to the community.

1. Preserve vegetation for example trees and grass.
2. Preserve wild animals.
3. Provide fruits.
4. Provide herbs
5. Provide more rainfall.
6. Helps to purify oxygen.
7. Attract tourists.
8. Create employment.
9. Help in bringing foreign currency.
10. Provides water for people and animals to drink.
11. Provide people with fish.
12. Helps in preventing siltation.
13. Prevent pollution of the rivers.

CHALLENGES CAUSED BY SACRED PLACES TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

1. Deforestation during pilgrimage.
2. Pollution of air, water, land and noise during pilgrimages [visits or tours].
3. Poaching of animals.
4. Vandalism of sacred places by pilgrims [tourists or visitors].
5. Destroying of plants and trees as people look for herbs and medicines.
6. Over-population caused by huge gatherings at a sacred place which results in huge production of waste, leading to land, water and noise pollution as well as to environmental degradation.
7. Environment can be polluted through improper or incorrect disposal of waste.
8. Rituals which involve burning of things will cause air pollution.
9. Rituals which involve dumping of things into water and forests will cause water and land pollution.
10. Sacred places can be vandalised for the purpose of technological innovation and use.

Solutions to these challenges.

1. Educate people about the importance of sacred places and the preservation of the environment.
2. Punishing offenders by asking them to pay fines.
3. Imprisoning of offenders.
4. Do awareness campaigns on the importance of sacred places and the preservation of the environment.
5. Ensure police patrol at sacred places.
6. Enact laws that protect sacred places and the environment.

7. Empower local leaders to punish those who vandalize and disrespect sacred places.
8. Fencing of sacred places.

CHAPTER 3

JUDAISM

What is Judaism?

- Judaism is a religion of the Jews.
- Judaism refers to both religion and culture of the Jews.
- Judaism is a cultural religion because its members practice the Jewish way of life such as observing certain food laws and Jewish customs.
- Followers of Judaism are born into the religion and are not converted to the religion.
- The Jews are also called Hebrews.
- Judaism is represented by a symbol called the Star of David.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- The story of the Jews is in the Bible and we learn that during the exile the Jews were scattered all over the world for more than two thousand years.
- **Exile** – is the time the Jews were scattered all over the world.
- In 1947 the United Nations created the state of Israel by dividing Palestine.
- Jews from different parts of the world began to move to Israel.
- **Sephardic Jews** – are Jews who came from Africa especially Morocco and from Spain.
- **Ashkenazi Jews**- are Jews who came from Europe.
- In Zimbabwe we have the Lemba [vaRemba] people who consider themselves as Jews.

HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF JUDAISM

Origins of Judaism

- The history of Judaism can be traced back to Abraham who is the first patriarch of the Jews. The other patriarchs of the Jews are Isaac, Jacob and the twelve sons of Jacob.
- **Patriarchs**- are male leaders of a tribe or clan.
- Others claim that history of Judaism started with Moses who led the Jews out of Egypt to the Promised Land and who was given the Ten Commandments by God.
- According to the Torah, Abraham who at birth was called Abram was the son of Terah.
- Abraham was born at Ur.
- **Torah**- the first five books of the Bible.
- Abraham believed in one God and later God called him and made an agreement with him. The agreement spelt out what God expected from Abraham and God's responsibilities to Abraham.
- God promised Abraham to be his God and to give him the land of Canaan [now Israel].
- In return Abraham would worship God as the only true God.

Tests given by God to Abraham to prove if he was obedient

1. To leave the land his fathers and kinsmen [relatives].
2. Abraham was not given a child until he was very old
3. Abraham was asked to sacrifice his son Isaac as an offering called Akeidah in Judaism.
 - Akeidah- means the binding. This shows that Abraham bound Isaac as he prepared to sacrifice him to God.
 - This story also shows Isaac's faith to God for he was aware that he was going to be sacrificed but because of his faith he did not go against it.
 - Isaac was the son of Abraham.
 - Jacob who was later called Israel after he wrestled with the angel was the son of Isaac.
 - **Israel** – means 'one who wrestled with God'.
 - Jacob had two wives who were sisters, namely Leah and Rachel who were daughters of Laban.
 - From his two wives Jacob had twelve sons namely Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Zebulun, Issachar, Dan, Gad, Asher, Naphtali, Joseph and Benjamin.
 - These twelve sons of Jacob are the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel.
 - Joseph's elder brothers sold him into slavery in Egypt, but he was later appointed governor of Egypt after he interpreted Pharaoh's dreams. Later his father and brothers followed him to Egypt, where the Jews were later turned to slaves.
 - God sent Moses to liberate the Jews out of Egypt.
 - Moses led the Jews out of Egypt in the incident known as the exodus.
 - **Exodus**- is the mass movement of the Jews out of Egypt to the Promised Land.
 - The liberation of the Jews out of Egypt was accomplished through the involvement of God and this experience shaped their unique relationship with their God.
 - God met Moses at Mount Sinai also called Mount Horeb, where God revealed his actual name Yahweh, and he gave the Ten Commandments.

Key beliefs in Judaism.

Definition of belief

- Is the acceptance that something is true or exists without proof.
- Belief is a conviction or an opinion.
- Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.
- A belief is something that is accepted or considered to be true without evidence.
- Belief is something believed.
- Belief is a tenet or body of tenets held by a group

Basic beliefs in Judaism

- The central idea of Judaism involves a commitment by the Jewish people to a single, omnipotent, incorporeal God, who is the creator and ruler of the universe and the source of a moral law for humanity
1. Belief in the existence of one God.
 2. Belief that God is eternal.
 3. Belief in that God is the creator of the universe.
 4. Belief in that God alone should be worshipped and be served.

5. Belief that Moses is the father and a model of all prophets.
6. Belief in the Torah [the first five books of Moses].
7. Belief in that the Torah was given to Moses by God.
8. Belief that God is omnipotent [all-powerful].
9. Belief that God is omniscient [all-knowing], God knows the deeds and thoughts of every human being.
10. Belief that God will reward those who obey him and will punish those who disobey him.
11. Belief in resurrection or life after death.
12. Belief in angels.
13. Belief in the prophets.
14. Belief in the oral tradition or teachings of the elders.
15. Belief that the Messiah will come and save mankind from the evil of this world.

Thirteen Principles of Faith in Judaism.

1. God exists
 2. God is one and unique
 3. God is incorporeal
 4. God is eternal
 5. Prayer is to be directed to God 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 and Oral Torah (that is teachings contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses
 9. There will be no other Torah
 10. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men
 11. God will reward the good and punish the wicked
 12. The Messiah will come
 13. The dead will be resurrected.
- Believe that circumcision is a symbol of the covenant Jews made with God.
 - There are 613 Commandments given by God in the Torah as well as laws instituted by the rabbis and long-standing customs.

The Jewish Law

1. The Law first covered the Torah or the Pentateuch (the first five books of Moses), and the most important part of the Torah were the Ten Commandments given to Moses on Mount Sinai.
- The Torah had two purposes :
 - (i) **Religious Relationship-** between God and his people, that is, the obligation of the Jews to their God.
 - (ii) **Social Relationship-** between members of the community; that is, the obligation of the people to one another.

2. The Law also included the **Mishnah** or Oral Law which were set by Scribes after studying the Torah to apply it to day to day life.
 - For example the Law allowed no work on a Sabbath. But what was work? This was defined by the scribes.
3. The Law included the **Talmud** which consists of written Laws based on Oral tradition.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Worship no other God but me.
 2. Do not make images to worship.
 3. Do not misuse the name of God.
 4. Observe the Sabbath Day (Saturday) and keep it holy.
 5. Honour and respect your father and mother.
 6. Do not murder.
 7. Do not commit adultery.
 8. Do not steal.
 9. Do not accuse anyone falsely. Do not tell lies about other people.
 10. Do not envy other's possessions.
- The Ten Commandments form the foundation of Jewish ethics, as well as civil and religious law.
 - The Ten Commandments shape behaviour.
 - The Ten Commandments in Judaism focuses on relationships: the relationship between God and mankind, between God and the Jewish people, between the Jewish people and the land of Israel, and between human beings.
 - The Ten Commandments provided a code of conduct that honoured family, protected life, secured property, defined boundaries, enhanced trust and thereby secured the foundation for cohesive and productive social interaction.
 - The Ten Commandments launched into human history the hypothesis that a society could be peacefully ordered under a rule of generally applicable laws rather than the forceful whim of autocrats.
 - The Ten Commandments yearn for a cohesive and cooperative society that supports familial ties, secures the integrity of personhood and property, shuns petty jealousies and violence, and seeks to treat all alike in the eyes of social authority and before God.
 - They are a guide for Jewish living today.
 - Following the Ten Commandments is part of the covenant made at Mount Sinai, which applies to all Jews.
 - God will judge Jews on how well they have observed these commandments.
 - Following the commandments helps Jews to become better people today.
 - The commandments help Jews to treat other people with respect.

- The commandments guide Jews to love and worship God effectively.
- The commandments are guiding principles that refer to general situations, without going into detail: murder, theft, adultery, false witness in court. The fine points — such as what constitutes murder? Is killing in wartime murder? What about killing a foetus to save the mother? Thus, the Ten Commandments are general and not specific guidelines on how we should live in a peaceful community.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN JUDAISM.

- The basic laws and tenets of Judaism are derived from the Torah, the first five books of the Bible.
- Jews believe that God is beyond human comprehension.
- The most important teaching and tenet of Judaism is that there is one God, incorporeal and eternal, who wants all people to do what is just and merciful.
- Jews believe in one God [monotheism], who created the universe [“Hear O Israel, the Lord is your God, the Lord is one.” Deut 6:4].
- Jews believe that God created all people in the image of God. Their God is also a universal God; he is God of all the people.
- Jews believe that God first revealed himself to Abraham and made a special covenant with Abraham and made the Jews the Chosen people of God. Thus, their God is a God of Israel.
- They believe that every Jew can have an individual and personal relationship with God. The Jewish relationship with God is a covenant relationship.
- God speaks to the Jews through the prophets and performs miracles for all to see. God’s dialogue with humans is not a one- way relationship, if people complain God listens.
- Jews believe that God is the one who liberated them out of Egypt through his servant Moses.
- Jews believe that God brought them out of Egypt through his mighty power to the promised land of Canaan.
- Jews believe that God gave them the Ten Commandments through Moses at Mount Sinai.

God Exists

- The fact of God's existence is accepted almost without question. Proof is not needed, and is rarely offered. The Torah begins by stating "In the beginning, God created..." It does not tell who God is or how He was created.
- In general, Judaism views the existence of God as a necessary prerequisite for the existence of the universe. The existence of the universe is sufficient proof of the existence of God.

God is one

- One of the primary expressions of Jewish faith, recited twice daily in prayer, is the Shema, which begins "Hear, Israel: The Lord is our God, The Lord is one." This simple statement encompasses the following ideas:
 1. There is only one God. No other being participated in the work of creation.

2. God is a unity. He is a single, whole, complete indivisible entity. He cannot be divided into parts or described by attributes. Any attempt to ascribe attributes to God is merely man's imperfect attempt to understand the infinite.
3. God is the only being to whom we should offer praise. The Shema can also be translated as "The Lord is our God, The Lord alone," meaning that no other is our God, and we should not pray to any other.

God is the Creator of Everything

- Everything in the universe was created by God and only by God. Judaism completely rejects the dualistic notion that evil was created by Satan or some other deity. All comes from God. As Isaiah said, "I am the Lord, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I am the Lord that does all these things." (Is. 45:6-7).

God is Incorporeal

- Judaism firmly maintains that God has no body. God has no physical form.

God is neither male nor female

- This follows directly from the fact that God has no physical form. God is genderless.

God is Omnipresent

- God is in all places at all times. God is present everywhere. He fills the universe and exceeds its scope. He is always near for us to call upon in need, and He sees all that we do. Closely tied in with this idea is the fact that God is universal. He is not just the God of the Jews; He is the God of all nations.

God is Omnipotent

- God can do anything. It is said that the only thing that is beyond His power is the fear of Him; that is, Human beings have free will, and He cannot compel us to do His will. This belief in God's omnipotence has been sorely tested during the many persecutions of Jews, but we have always maintained that God has a reason for allowing these things, even if we in our limited perception and understanding cannot see the reason.

God is Omniscient

- God knows all things, past, present and future. He knows our thoughts.

God is Eternal

- God transcends time. He has no beginning and no end. He will always be there to fulfil his promises

God is Just and Merciful

- Judaism has always maintained that God's justice is tempered by mercy, the two qualities perfectly balanced.

God is holy and perfect

- One of the most common names applied to God the Holy One; God is separated from sin, He is sinless.

God is our Father and our King [Avinu Malkeinu]

- Judaism maintains that we are all God's children. The Jews believe that their relationship with God is a Father-Son relationship.

NAMES OF GOD IN JUDAISM

Name	Meaning
Elohim	God of Creation or God of power and mighty [Gen 1:1]
Adonai	Lord, Master meaning God is the owner [Exo 4:10;13]
El-Shaddai	Lord God Almighty [Gen 17:1]
El'Elyon	The Most High God or God is the most high [Gen 14:18-20]
El'Olam	The Everlasting God [Gen 21:33]
Jehovah Jireh	The Lord will provide or God who provides [Gen22:14]
Jehovah Nissi	The Lord our banner or our victory [Exodus 17:8-15]
Jehovah	God of redemption and revelation [Exo 3:14]
Jehovah Shalom	The Lord our peace [Judges 6:23-24]
Jehovah Roi	The Lord is my shepherd [Psalm 23:1]
YHWH	The Lord. The living God, the uncreated Creator. He is the Iam.

IMPORTANCE OF GOD'S NAMES TO THE JEWS

- To the Jews the names of God are for identification and also symbolises the nature, character and personality of their God, or their relationship with their God.
- The names of God show God's deeds or his works.
- So what is the significance or importance of these names to the Jews?
 - i. The names of God gives confidence to the Jews in the face of difficulty or problems and gives them courage to face them knowing that God is in control.
 - ii. Reminds them of their covenant with their God, that they are the Chosen people of God.

- iii. Reminds them that nothing is impossible with God who is all-powerful. Thus, names remind them of God's great deeds.
- iv. Comforts them in the knowledge that God always fulfils his promises and is in control of every situation.
- v. Give them confidence that when they are in needy God will always provide.
- vi. Reminds them that God is their protector and that nothing will happen without his will.

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN JUDAISM.

1. Transcendent – he operates above his creation
2. Omnipotent – he is all powerful
3. Omniscient – he knows everything
4. Omni present – he is present everywhere
5. Eternal – existed before the creation
6. Omni benevolent – all that God does is good
7. God is Holy – he is separate from sin
8. Impeccable – he is perfect and without sin
9. Immutable – he never changes
10. Incorporeal – has no physical existence
11. Oneness – he is only one
12. God is love- he is a loving God, who loved us before we love him.
13. God is everlasting- he is indestructible for all time.
14. God is the provider – he knows all our needs.
15. God is merciful- he is full of mercy.
16. God is forgiving- he is not concerned with the number of sins one has committed.
17. God is compassionate- is kind hearted
18. God is gracious- he favoured us when we did not deserve it
19. Immanent- he is present within his creation.

Attributes of God and problem of evil

- The problem of evil is the question of how to reconcile the existence of evil and suffering with an omnipotent, omnibenevolent, and omniscient God. The Greek philosopher Epicurus puts it: "Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is not omnipotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Then from whence comes evil?"
- God is believed to be at the very least, is very powerful, very knowledgeable, and morally very good. But if such a being exists, then it seems initially puzzling why various evils exist. Why, then, do such undesirable states of affairs exist, if there is a being who is very powerful, very knowledgeable, and very good?
- Thus if, for simplicity, we focus on a conception of God as all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good, one very concise way of formulating such an argument is as follows:
 1. If God exists, then God is omnipotent, omniscient, and morally perfect.
 2. If God is omnipotent, then God has the power to eliminate all evil.
 3. If God is omniscient, then God knows when evil exists.
 4. If God is morally perfect, then God has the desire to eliminate all evil.

Evil exists.

If evil exists and God exists, then either God does not have the power to eliminate all evil, or does not know when evil exists, or does not have the desire to eliminate all evil. Therefore, God does not exist.

Omniscient God – if God were all-knowing, He would have foreseen the evil and suffering that afflict the world, and should have done something to prevent it. For example, if God knew that Adam was going to fall from grace, then why did he put him to test in the first place? More so, why did God create a world that would contain evil and suffering? Perhaps God did not know that the world would contain evil and suffering, and if that is the case then God is not an all-knowing God or God does not exist.

However, Jews on the other hand maintain that God is all-knowing, but such knowledge need not necessarily interfere with human free will. Furthermore, it is asserted that God knows that at the end good will triumph over evil and suffering will come to an end.

Omnipotent God – if God is omnipotent or powerful, then why is it that God appears to be powerless in stopping evil and suffering in the world? Therefore, the existence of evil and suffering in the world shows that God is either not willing or not able to stop evil and suffering in the world. Because if God is ultimately powerful, he must be able to abolish all evil; but evil exists, therefore, either God is not perfect or he is not all powerful.

However, it can also be argued that God is all- powerful because he at least allowed evil to exist. Since God allowed evil to exist, it therefore, shows that God is powerful [Schmidt 1980]. It is further argued that God allows human suffering in order to bring the best out of humans.

God is merciful – human suffering contradicts the concept of a merciful God. The concept of a merciful God is unbelievable in this world of sickness, hunger, death and physical disabilities. If God is merciful he would have stopped or acted to stop the pain and suffering in the world. If God is merciful, why is he allowing millions of people to die of Corona Virus [Covid 19]? If God is merciful then why did he create Hell?

God is the creator- God is considered the creator of the universe, and when he created the world it was good and the world became evil and wicked because of man's failure to obey God.

However, in 1965 scientists such as Edwin Hubble came up with a theory of the "Big Bang." According to Hubble's theory; 15 billion years ago, there was a cosmic explosion, called "Big Bang" which led to the formation of the universe. It is claimed that echoes of the "Big Bang" can be picked up today by a powerful radio telescope. Scientists claim that the 'Big Bang' has no cause. However, theists such as Aquinas argued that things in motion are moved by someone and this someone is the unmoved mover who is God. Logically this might mean that the 'Big Bang' was started by this unmoved mover who is God.

Some philosophers on the other hand claim that the world was created by an apprentice God [God who was on training, a trainee God], that is why the world is full of evil and some good.

On the other hand, Charles Darwin came up with the theory of evolution which rejected God as the creator. Darwin's theory of evolution states that animals are relatively efficient organism in relationship

to their environment and those which fail to adapt died out in a struggle to survive. The theory of evolution claims that animals evolved to be what they are today and were not created by God. However, theory of evolution of Charles Darwin does not tell us where these animals came from to evolve.

JEWISH FESTIVALS AND DAYS OF REMENBERANCE

Passover [Pesach]

- It is a feast to commemorate the biblical Passover and the exodus when God freed the Jews from Egypt.
- It is a remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage.
- Passover was a feast to commemorate the exodus when God freed the Jews from Egypt.
- It is a remembrance of God's deliverance of the Jews from Egyptian bondage.
- It is a remembrance of how the angel of God passed over the houses of the Israelites as he killed all the first born Egyptians.
- It is a day the Jews remember their journey and how God set them free from Egypt.
- Passover feast is also known as the feast of Unleavened Bread as the Jews ate unleavened bread the following day.
- The feast of Passover is celebrated on the sunset of the 14th day of the first month.

Tabernacle [Sukkot] [Lev 23:33-44]

- Also known as Sukkot and is meant to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in the booths in the wilderness or desert during their 40years journey to the Promised Land.
- Tabernacle commemorates the sojourn in the wilderness.
 - This is a seven day festival also known as the feast of Booths [Musangano wematumba].
 - The first day is a sacred assembly.
 - This is a pilgrimage festival where every Jew has to go so as to offer sacrifices to God for seven days.
 - The Tabernacle ritual is made up of four species:
 - (i) Palm
 - (ii) Myrtle
 - (iii) Willow
 - (iv) Citron.
- This feast is held after harvest, therefore fruits and grains are used as offering symbols.
- People will be thanking God (Yahweh) for the harvest and asking God to bless them in the next planting season.

Day of atonement (Yom Kippur) (Leviticus 23:26-32)

- Is considered the holiest day in the year.
- Is held on the tenth of the seven month.
- Is a solemn day devoted to fasting, prayer and asking for forgiveness (repentance).
- The focus is directed to the quest or search for atonement.

- Jews will not do any work, eat, drink (even water), bath, engage in sexual activities, or wear leather shoes or clothes or use perfumes.
- The Day of Atonement was given to the Jews by God.
- All sins of the whole or past year are atoned or forgiven.

Pentecost [Shavuot]

- Is a Jewish festival known as Shavuot or the Feast of Weeks, and it was a harvest festival.
- It was meant to commemorate the giving of Ten Commandments to Moses and the Jews at Mt Sinai.
- Pentecost takes place fifty days after Passover.
- The feast is meant to thank God for the Torah [the five books of Moses] and for the Ten Commandments.

Sabbath- The seventh day of the week is the *Sabbath* a day ordained by God as a day of rest.

- No work is permitted, except that connected with worship or the preservation of life and health.
- Central to the observance of the Sabbath is the morning reading in synagogue of the week's portion of the Torah.

Year of Jubilee (Lev 25:8)

- Is the 50th year after the counting of the seven Sabbaths of the year, times seven years.
 - Is the year of returning properties to their rightful owners.
 - Each person was to return to his family land.
 - The year of jubilee was holy to the Jews.
- [Lev 23:33-44]

Holocaust Martyrs' and Heroes' Remembrance Day

- Is done in honour and memory of the six million Jews murdered by the Nazis under Hitler.

Israel Independence Day

- The Independence Day is the day when Jews celebrate the restoration of Israel to national sovereignty or independence.

RITUALS IN JUDAISM

The following are rituals in Judaism:

1. Circumcision [Brit milah]
2. Naming ritual.
3. Redemption of male first born/presentation [Pidyon Haben]
4. Purification ritual or Cleansing ritual.
5. Marriage ritual.
6. Death and funeral rituals.
7. Passover rituals.
8. Coming of age ritual.
9. Harvest rituals.

10. Baptism ritual.

1. Circumcision ritual. [Genesis 17: 10-14]

- Circumcision was for boys only and not for girls in Judaism.
- It was performed eight days after birth.
- It takes place in the morning at the family's home.
- It was the duty of the father to see that his son is circumcised.
- Circumcision is so important that it may be performed on the Sabbath or any Jewish holidays.
- Circumcision is performed by a Mohel; that is an observant Jew who has been trained in the relevant Jewish Law and surgical techniques.

Importance of circumcision in Judaism.

- Circumcision is an outward sign of a man's participation in Israel's covenant with the God of Israel.
- It is a sign that the Jewish people will perpetuate [continue] through him.
- Circumcision is a symbol of partnership with God.
- Circumcision shows that the child belongs to God.
- Circumcision shows that the child is part of the covenant and has to follow the commandments that apply to all Jews.
- Circumcision recognises that God has ownership of the body and it is God who commanded it.
- Circumcision is a proof of one's dedication towards one's ancestors.
- Circumcision is a sign that one is a Jew, a member of the chosen people.
- Circumcision gives a sense of belonging.
- Circumcision is a sign of obedience to God.
- Circumcision is a covenant of the flesh which is similar to the covenant of the heart.
- Circumcision is symbolic, it shows the flow of life and that life is full of pain as symbolised by the spilling of blood.

In recent years circumcision has been encouraged for medical reasons; as it is believed to reduce the chances of being infected with STIs [Sexually Transmitted Infections] and HIV and AIDS.

It is also believed that circumcision of males reduces cases of cervical cancer in women.

On the other hand, some people denounce circumcision as unnecessary and harmful; and believe that circumcision to be mentally and physically damaging.

- However, circumcision in Judaism was never performed for medical reasons but for religious reasons, that is it was commanded by God.

2. Naming Ritual

- The naming ritual takes place soon after circumcision if the child is a boy.
- On the first Sabbath after the child is born the father of the infant is called forward at the synagogue to recite the Aliyah [the benedictions] and ask blessings for the health of the mother and the child.
- If the child is a girl she is named at this time.
- Boys will be named on the eighth day after birth as part of circumcision rite.

- The Hebrew name for boys takes the form of –‘child’s name’ bar –‘father’s name’ for example Simon bar Jonah. Simon bar Jonah means Simon son of Jonah. [Bar means son of].
- Hebrew name for girls will take the form of ‘child’s name’ bat – ‘father’s name’. Bat means daughter of.
- Jews traditionally name their children after a deceased relative.
- Most males are given names of their male forefathers.
- The naming is a way of accepting the child into the Jewish community.
- Naming ritual also gave the child an identity.
- Names also depicted the child’s character and his or her mission.
- A name also speaks volumes about the history of the family.

3. Presentation or redemption of the male first born. [Pidyon Haben]

- When a male first born son is born, the father takes the son to the Priest in the Temple and the father pays a redemptive price so that the son stays with him and not to be given up to full time temple duties.
- The father recites two blessings for the boy.
- The father takes the shekels from the father, and puts them on the boy’s head and blesses him.
- The first male first born were said to belong to God and the father was supposed to buy the child back so that he won’t be dedicated to temple duties.
- This ritual shows that all that we have belong to God.

4. Coming of age rituals

- [**Bar Mitzvah** – means Son of the Commandment, and boys at 13 years are expected to live by the commandments and are considered as adults who are responsible to the Law or to the commandments of the Torah and is expected to read the Torah in the synagogue in Hebrew, and **Bat Mitzvah**- means girl or daughter of the Commandment, and girls at 12 years are expected to live by the commandments and are considered as adults who are responsible to the Law or to the commandments of the Torah and is expected to read the Torah in the synagogue in Hebrew]

5. Marriage ritual.

- This is the first institution given to the Jews by God during the time of Adam and Eve [Genesis 1:20 - 28].
- The ritual secure union of a man and a woman for life; to share strength, pleasure and hard times; and for rearing of children.
- This ritual is an honour to God’s commandment; ‘Be fruitful and multiply.’
- This was ritual was done in a synagogue.
- Sex is only for the married in Judaism.
- There are blessings and protection for the husband and wife from evil.
- Marriage ritual joined families together.
- Marriage ritual involved the exchange of wedding rings.
- Jews married only from the Jewish community.

6. Cleaning ritual/ purification ritual

- This is the bathing or cleansing of a woman one week after the menstruation had stopped.
 - Furthermore, the mother was considered unclean for forty days if she gave birth to a boy and for eighty days [80 days] if the child was a girl. The mother was supposed to offer sacrifices so as to be made pure (clean).

- This was done to clean the woman before she sleeps with her husband.

7. Death and funeral rituals.

- Death is undisputed truth.
- Death is the separation of an individual with the loved ones and the community; therefore, death rituals are associated with sorrow and mourning.
- Burial takes place as soon as possible; in most cases less than 24 hours after death.
- Relatives mourn for seven days [shiva- seven].
- During this period mourners sit on low stools, mirrors are covered, head is not shaved, or cut; there will be no music, mourners do not leave the house except on Sabbath, and no wearing of leather shoes. Mourners are allowed to express their grief and gradually resume normal operations.
- Neighbours and people in the community bring food and provide company during the Shiva.
- A year after death a rite to end mourning is performed; and life returns to normal. Prayers or kaddish are performed in honour of the deceased relative.
- The ritual is made to sustain and comfort the spirit of the bereaved.

Rituals for different purposes, times and places

8. Passover rituals

- Passover itself is not a ritual, but there are special rituals for the Passover.
- There are rituals which involves killing of the Lamb and eating unleavened bread.
- These rituals are meant to commemorate the liberation or emancipation of Jews from Egypt.

9. Harvest rituals.

- Rituals are done for the first and last fruits and crops as a thanks-giving to God the provider of food.
- The ceremony involves giving a portion of one's yields to:
 - (i) The poor.
 - (ii) Widows.
 - (iii) Orphans.
 - (iv) The temple.

10. Prayer and offering rituals.

- There special and unique way prescribed on how to pray and how to kill the lamb, turtle doves for sin offerings, peace offerings and thanks- giving.
- There was also a special way on how to build an altar wit 12 stone which represents the 12 tribes of Israel.

11. Baptism.

- Baptism is the outward washing away of sins. It is the washing away of one's sins before God.
- Baptism is also a sign of repentance and water was used.
- Baptism was used to initiate converts into Judaism.

Why rituals were introduced in Judaism.

- (i) It was a command or an order from God [Yahweh]
- (ii) As an act of obeying God.
- (iii) To show that they were the chosen people.
- (iv) As a form of identity.

Religious practitioners in Judaism.

- The following are some of the religious practitioners in Judaism.
 - (i) Rabbi (Teacher)
 - (ii) Priests.
 - (iii) Prophets.
 - (iv) Levites.
 - (v) Mohel.
 - (vi) Kings.
 - (vii) Dayan (Judge)

Roles of religious practitioners in Judaism.**1. Prophets**

- Prophets were defenders of monotheism that is the belief in one God.
- The role of the prophet was to pronounce the will, purpose and character of God.
- To defend Yahweh's covenant with Israel.
- They were inter-mediators between God and people.
- They reminded the people of their covenant with God.
- They predict the future.
- They advised kings.
- They were the voice of the voiceless.
- They were social commentators.

2. Priests.

- They worked in the temple and their duty was to burn incense and offer sacrifices.
- They teach the Torah.
- They lead in prayers.
- Lead in Jewish court.
- Act as spiritual leaders.
- Act as inter-mediators between God and people.
- Recites the Ten Commandments to the people.

3. Levites.

- The Levites were responsible for order in the temple.
- They assisted the priest in the temple.
- They provided choir and music in the temple.
- They helped the priest to dress and undress.

4. Mohel.

- Was the one responsible for circumcising Jewish boys in Judaism.

5. Rabbi [Teacher]

- Rabbi is a Jewish scholar who is charged with answering the legal questions of a congregation and/or acting as is pastor.
- Most Jewish practitioners were called rabbi, meaning teacher.
- They teach the Torah.
- They interpreted the Law.

- They acted as pastors.
- They were spiritual leaders.
- Conducted Torah classes for people.
- They are educators and counsellors.
- Represents the Jewish nation to a country he temporary resides.
- Represents the Jewish community before the government.
- Presides over members' weddings and funerals

6. Dayan.

- The Dayan is an expert in Jewish Law and sits in a rabbinical court.
- Deals with civil law and divorce cases.
- Leads Jewish Law court.

7. Hazzan (cantor)

- Is a trained vocalist who leads in the recitation of prayers, chants, or songs.
- He leads in singing in a synagogue; is a choir leader.
- He leads prayers in a synagogue.

8. Kings.

- They were divinely chosen.
- Were representatives of God on earth.
- Defend the covenant and Laws of God.
- Protected the kingdom and the people.
- Increase the wealth and trade of the Kingdom.
- Take care of the poor.
- Receive and distribute tribute.
- Declared and led in wars.
- Responsible for peace talks.
- Leads Jewish Law court.

9. Shochet

- A butcher trained in the slaughter of kosher meat, that is meat meant for food.

Summary on roles of religious practitioners in Judaism.

1. To teach the Torah.
2. To defend monotheism [worship of one God]
3. Participate and lead wars.
4. Prophets were to predict the future.
5. To advise kings.
6. Lead in prayers.
7. Lead in offerings and sacrifices.
8. To be a go-between before God and people.
9. Recite the Ten Commandments to the people.
10. Spiritual leader.
11. Counsellor.
12. Educator.

13. Takes part in naming process.
14. Lead rituals and ceremonies.
15. Lead Jewish Law court.
16. Represent the community before the government.
17. Conduct Torah classes for people.
18. Leads over members' weddings and funerals.
19. Represent the Jewish nation in a country they temporary resides.

SACRED PLACES IN JUDAISM.

A Sacred place is a place that is regarded as holy.

A sacred place is a meeting place between God and people.

The following are some of the sacred places in Judaism.

- (i) Israel.
- (ii) Western Wall.
- (iii) Mount Sinai.
- (iv) Jerusalem.
- (v) Temple Mount.
- (vi) Mountains.
- (vii) Graveyards.
- (viii) Synagogues.
- (ix) Rivers.

1. Israel.

- Israel is sacred because it is the Promised Land.
- It is a holy land because it is the land given to them by God.

2. Western Wall.

- Western Wall is also known as the 'Wailing Wall' because Jews grieve over the destruction of the temple.
- Western wall is the wall that used to surround the temple before it was destroyed.
- The Temple was regarded as the most sacred place [the holiest] place on earth for the Jews.
- The Western Wall is a trace of the ancient temple; therefore, the wall is regarded as sacred or holy.

3. Mount Sinai.

- Is where Moses received the Ten Commandments.
- God himself descended from heaven at Mount Sinai.
- Mount Sinai was once the visiting place of God and that makes it a sacred place in Judaism.
- Mount Sinai is regarded as the meeting place of God and Moses.

4. The Temple Mount.

- The temple mount is where the Temple was built.
- It is where God chose his divine presence to rest [the temple was known as God's house].
- It is regarded as the most holy place because this is where the Ark of the Covenant [a sacred container, a gold plated wooden chest of the two tablets of the Ten Commandment] stayed.
- Jews do not walk on the mountain itself to avoid entering the place where the Holy of Holies stood.

5. Jerusalem.

- Today Jerusalem is viewed as a holy place, holy city; a holy land in the world.
- It is a holy city for Jews.
- It is the centre of the Jewish people.
- It is regarded as the city of great kings of the Jews.
- Jerusalem is the world's number one religious tourist centre.

6. Synagogues.

- Synagogues are regarded as sacred because they are places of worship, education and community gathering.

7. Rivers.

- Rivers such as Jordan are considered as sacred because this is where people's sins were washed away after baptism.
- Water in Judaism is a symbol of purity, and this is why rivers are considered sacred in Judaism.

8. Mountains.

- Mountains are considered sacred in Judaism because they are closer to heaven and therefore closer to God.
- In Judaism people used to speak to God while on a mountain such as Mount Sinai and mount Horeb.

9. Dome of the Rock.

- The Dome of the rock in Jerusalem is believed to be the rock on which Abraham used as an altar to sacrifice his son Isaac.

10. Graveyards.

- Graves are seen as the resting places for the forefathers; for example, Mount of Olives contains Judaism's most important graveyard.
- Graves connects individuals with their forefather and their faith or religion; this is why they are sacred.

CHAPTER 4**CHRISTIANITY.****What is Christianity**

- Christianity is a religion of people who believe in Jesus Christ as the Messiah.
- **NB:** Christianity came out of Judaism. Christianity is an off-shoot of Judaism.

Origins of Christianity

- Christianity developed out of Judaism and is founded on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Those who follow Jesus Christ are called "Christians."
- Christianity traces its beginning to the miraculous birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.
- Christians believe Jesus was born by a Virgin Mary and that his father was the Holy Spirit of God, making Jesus both fully human and fully divine.
- Jesus lived and experienced the suffering of humans.

- Jesus healed the sick and told stories, or parables, and preached sermons that taught what God wanted people to do – to love God with all their hearts and love their neighbours as themselves.
- Jesus taught by example. By being loving and forgiving himself, Jesus taught others to be loving and forgiving – especially toward those who were considered outcasts in society. This is the central message and style of Jesus' teaching.
- During his adult ministry, Jesus built up a loyal following, led by his twelve disciples.
- But Jesus also made enemies among the religious and political leaders of his time. In the end, these powerful leaders were so threatened by Jesus' growing following that the Roman governor sentenced Jesus to death and had him crucified.
- The third day after Jesus' death, his followers found his tomb empty and discovered that he had been raised from the dead.
- Christians believe that the painful sacrifice of Jesus' life on the cross shows how much God loves God's people.
- Jesus paid with his life on Earth for the sins of the world.
- Christians believe that in raising Jesus' from the dead, God showed that Jesus' message of love and forgiveness was more powerful than death, and that believing in Jesus and following the example of his life and his teaching would lead to eternal life after death.
- The resurrection (rising from the dead) is the sign of God's salvation offered to all people.
- After his resurrection, Jesus Christ's followers spread his message throughout the world, creating the Christian Church.
- Today there are about two billion Christians living all over the world.

The summary of Jesus' teaching was based on the following Jewish teaching:

- Love God with all your heart, soul and mind.
- Love your neighbour as yourself.
- Christians also seek to follow the ten commandments God gave Moses to give the Israelites:
- Worship no other God but me. Do not make images to worship.
- Do not misuse the name of God.
- Observe the Sabbath Day and keep it holy.
- Honour and respect your father and mother.
- Do not murder.
- Do not commit adultery.
- Do not steal.
- Do not accuse anyone falsely.
- Do not tell lies about other people.
- Do not envy other's possessions.

THE BASICS OF CHRISTIAN BELIEFS

Definition of belief

- Belief is a conviction or an opinion.
- Belief is a state or habit of mind in which trust or confidence is placed in some person or thing.
- A belief is something that is accepted or considered to be true, or held as an opinion.
- Belief is something believed.
- Belief is a tenet or body of tenets held by a group

Key Christian Beliefs

- Belief in the one and only true God, who exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Belief that Jesus is the divine and human Messiah sent to save the world.
- Jesus is the Son of God and the expected Messiah.
- Believe in the bible; both the Old and the New Testament.
- Central to Christian practice is the gathering at churches for worship, fellowship, and study, and engagement with the world through evangelism and social action.

God

- Christians believe that there is only one God, whom they call Father as Jesus Christ taught them.

Jesus

- Christians recognise Jesus as the Son of God who was sent to save mankind from death and sin.
- Jesus Christ taught that he was Son of God. His teachings can be summarised, briefly as the love of God and love of one's neighbour.
- Jesus said that he had come to fulfil God's law rather than teach it.
- Christians believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God – fully human and fully divine – and that through believing in him and following his teachings they can inherit eternal life.
- Christians believe that Jesus died for humanity, that God raised him from the dead, and that Jesus will come again at the end of time.

Justification by faith

- Christians believe in justification by faith - 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.

The Trinity

- Christians believe in the Trinity; that is, in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Christians believe that God took human form as Jesus Christ and that God is present today through the work of the Holy Spirit and evident in the actions of believers.

Life after death

- Christians believe that there is a life after earthly death.
- Christians believe that Jesus died for humanity, that God raised him from the dead, and that Jesus will come again at the end of time.
- Christians believe God sent his son Jesus, the messiah, to save the world. They believe Jesus was crucified on a cross to offer the forgiveness of sins and was resurrected three days after his death before ascending to heaven.
- The cross is a symbol of Christianity.

Second Coming of Jesus

- Christians contend that Jesus will return to earth again in what's known as the Second Coming.

The Saints

- These days, the word saint is most commonly used to refer to a Christian who has lived a particularly good and holy life on earth, and with whom miracles are claimed to have been associated after their death.
- The formal title of Saint is conferred by some churches such as the Roman Catholic Church through a process called canonisation.
- Roman Catholic Church believes that Saints created in this way can intercede with God on behalf of people who are alive today. However, this is not accepted by most Protestants.
- In Bible the word saint is used as a description of anyone who is a committed believer.

Prayer

- Prayer is the means by which Christians communicate with their God.
- The New Testament records that Jesus taught his disciples how to pray and that he encouraged them to address God as Father. Christians believe that they continue this tradition.
- Sometimes the prayers are formal and part of a ritual laid down for hundreds of years.
- Other prayers are personal and spontaneous, and come from personal or group need.
- Whilst prayer is often directed to God as Father, as taught by Jesus, some traditions encourage prayer to God through intermediaries such as saints and martyrs.
- Prayers through Mary, as the mother of God, are central to churches such as Roman Catholic and form a traditional part of their worship.

The Church

- The Christian church is fundamental to believers; it is recognised as God's body on earth.
- The church is the place where the Christian faith is nurtured and where the Holy Spirit is manifest on earth.
- It is where Christians are received into the faith and where they are brought together into one body through the Eucharist.

Baptism

- The Christian church believes in one baptism into the Christian church, whether this is as an infant or as an adult, as an outward sign of an inward commitment to the teachings of Jesus.

Eucharist

- Eucharist is a Greek word for thanksgiving. Its celebration is to commemorate the final meal that Jesus took with his disciples before his death (the Last Supper).
- This rite comes from the actions of Jesus who, at that meal, took bread and wine and asked his disciples to consume them and continue to do so in memory of him.
- At the meal, the wine represented his blood and the bread his body.
- The Eucharist (also known as a Communion meal in some churches) is central to the Church and is recognised as a sign of unity amongst Christians.
- Different Churches understand and practice the Eucharist in different ways. As a result, the central ideas of the Eucharist can cause disharmony rather than unity.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN CHRISTIANITY**Christian beliefs concerning God**

- There is only one God
- God is a Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit

- God is perfect
- God is omnipotent
- God is everywhere
- God is Omni benevolent – that is God is good and all he does is good.
- God knows everything
- God created the universe
- God keeps the universe going
- God intervenes in the universe
- God loves everyone unconditionally (though people have to comply with various conditions in order to achieve salvation)
- Human beings can get to know God through prayer, worship, love, and mystical experiences
- Human beings can get to know God through God's grace - that is through his love and his power

God the Son

- God lived on earth as Jesus
- Jesus was both wholly God and wholly human
- Jesus was born to a human woman, Mary, but conceived of the Holy Spirit
- Because Jesus was wholly human he was subject to pain, suffering, and sorrow like other human beings
- Jesus was executed by crucifixion but rose from the dead on the third day.
- Jesus' life provides a perfect example of how God wants people to live
- Jesus died on the cross so that those who believe in him will be forgiven all their sins

God the Holy Spirit

- After the Resurrection, Jesus remained on earth for 40 days before going up into Heaven
- Jesus promised that he would stay with his followers, so after he went to Heaven he sent his Spirit to guide them
- The Holy Spirit continues to guide, comfort, and encourage Christians

ATTRIBUTES OF GOD IN CHRISTIANITY

1. Transcendent – he operates above his creation
2. Omnipotent – he is all powerful
3. Omniscient – he knows everything
4. Omni present – he is present everywhere
5. Eternal – existed before the creation
6. Omni benevolent – all that God does is good
7. God is Holy – he is separate from sin
8. Impeccable – he is perfect and without sin
9. Immutable – he never changes
10. Incorporeal – has no physical existence

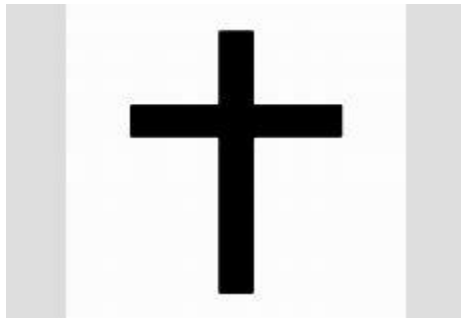
11. Oneness – he is only one
12. God is love- he is a loving God, who loved us before we love him.
13. God is everlasting- he is indestructible for all time.
14. God is the provider – he knows all our needs.
15. God is merciful- he is full of mercy.
16. God is forgiving- he is not concerned with the number of sins one has committed.
17. God is compassionate- God is kind hearted
18. God is gracious- he favoured when we did not deserve it
19. Immanent- he is present within his creation.

SYMBOLS IN CHRISTIANITY

Definition of symbol.

- Symbol is something used for or regarded as representing something else.
- The word *symbol* comes from the Greek *symbolon*, which means contract, token, insignia, and a means of identification.
- A symbol is a representation or mark or form of an identity.

The Cross



- The cross especially the Latin cross is one of the oldest and most universal of all symbols for Christianity. Tradition says that Christ was crucified on a Latin cross.

- The cross is a universal symbol for the Christian faith and a reminder of Jesus' death (and resurrection).
- The cross is a symbol of Christ because of His sacrifice upon the Cross.
- The cross has become the mark or sign of the Christian

religion, the emblem of atonement, and the symbol of salvation and redemption through Christianity.

- The cross is used to symbolize the Passion of Christ or the Atonement.
- The cross today represents Christ's victory over sin and death through the sacrifice of his own body on the cross.
- Roman Catholic depictions of the cross often reveal the body of Christ still on the cross; this gives emphasis to the sacrifice and suffering of Christ.
- Protestant churches tend to portray the empty cross, emphasizing the resurrected, risen Christ.
- Five red marks or jewels are sometimes placed on the face of the cross to represent the five wounds Christ suffered while being crucified.
- In addition, Christ's crown of thorns is frequently shown with the cross or hanging upon it.
- The Peter's Cross and St. Andrews cross are symbols of humility in suffering.

The Chalice or cup



- In the new covenant the Cup refers to the passion or suffering and death of Jesus Christ.
- A chalice is the cup from which the consecrated or holy wine and water of the Eucharist are shared at Holy Communion. It refers to the Last Supper and the sacrifice of Christ upon the cross.
- Cup might represent the body of Jesus Christ which housed Jesus' body.



Bread

-Bread has always been a symbol of the means of sustaining life, hence the phrase, "Bread is the staff of life." In the Old Testament bread was the symbol of God's providence, care, and nurture of His people.

The bread symbolised Christ's sacrifice upon the Cross.

-The bread symbolised Christ's sacrifice upon the Cross.

Bread- represents the crucifixion and death of Jesus Christ

- Bread also represents the body of Jesus Christ.

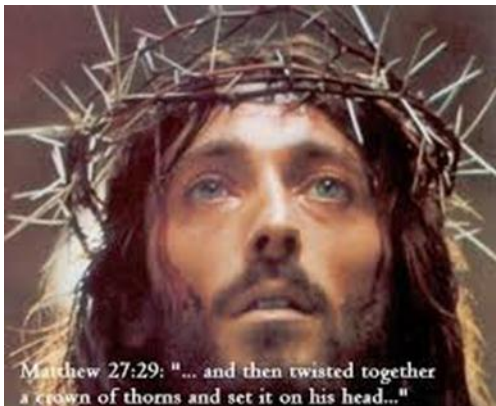
Wine

- Wine was part of the Passover meal and now it represents the blood of Jesus Christ which was poured for the sins of mankind.
- Wine also represents Jesus' suffering or Jesus' passion.
- Wine shows that Jesus suffered for the sins of mankind.

Flame

- The flame is often representative of the Holy Spirit, based on the Pentecost story in Acts 2:
- The flame also represents the power of God, where God is seen as a consuming fire.

The Crown of Thorns



- Crown of thorns which Jesus wore before his crucifixion. It is said that when the Roman soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns, they set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand and knelt in front of him and mocked him. "Hail, king of the Jews!" they said. (Matthew 27:29)

- In the Bible thorns often represent sin, and therefore, the crown of thorns is fitting because Jesus would bear the sins of the world.

- The crown of thorns also represents the suffering King of Christianity; that is Jesus Christ, is the King.

- Thorns and thorn branches signify grief, tribulation, and sin.
- The crown of thorns represents the crown which the soldiers crowned Jesus before the Crucifixion
- The crown of thorns, when shown in connection with saints, is a symbol of martyrdom.

The cross and the crown

- The Cross and Crown represents the reward in heaven (the crown) that believers will receive after the suffering and trials of life on earth (the cross).
- Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him. (James 1:12)
- The crown reminds us that Jesus is King. (Revelation 19:16).
- The crown may also represent the crown of thorns that Jesus wore on the cross and the crown of glory given to him in heaven.

Shepherd's crook [stick]

- David described God as his shepherd in Psalm 23, and in the New Testament, Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd, watching over his flock.
- The shepherd's crook is a reminder of how God cares for us, goes with us wherever we go, seeks us out when lost, and protects us.

Circle

- The circle has no beginning and no end.
- Thus, in Christian faith it symbolizes love that knows no end; a commitment or promise, as symbolized by wedding rings
- The circle symbolises eternal life.
- The circle can also be seen as a halo or crown

Holy bible

- The Bible is the Word of God.
- It is the Christian's handbook for life. God's message to mankind.
- The Bible is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness... (2 Timothy 3:16)

Alpha and Omega

- These are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, a symbol that God is the first and the last, the beginning and the end (Revelation 22:13).
- Alpha and Omega is critical to Christianity because it clearly shows that Jesus existed before creation and will continue to exist for all eternity.
- Alpha and omega shows that Jesus was with God before anything was created, and therefore, Jesus took part in creation.
- Alpha and Omega shows that Jesus, like God, was not created. It shows that Jesus is eternal.
- Thus, Alpha and Omega as a Christian symbol signifies the eternal nature of Jesus Christ and God.

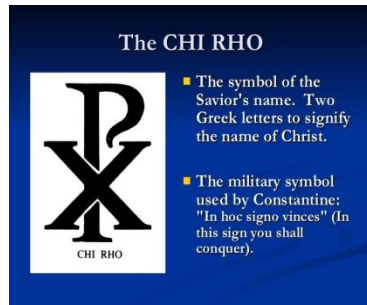
Water

- Water is a symbol of cleansing and purifying.
- In this sense water is used in the sacrament of baptism, symbolizing the washing away of sin and the rising to newness of life.
- Water is a symbol of baptism and new life (being born of the Spirit). It represents cleansing and healing

- Water also denotes innocence, as when Pilate publicly washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person" (Matthew 27:24).
- Water sometimes suggests trouble or tribulation: "Save me, O God; for the waters are come into my soul . . . I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me" (Psalm 69:1, 2).
- The water, mixed with wine, in the Eucharist has come to denote Christ's humanity, the wine representing His divinity.

The Chi Rho

- The Chi Rho is one of the earliest cruciform symbols used by Christians.
- It is formed by superimposing the first two letters of the word "Christ or Christos" in Greek, Chi is written as X and Rho is written as P.
- Although not technically a cross, the Chi Rho reminds the crucifixion of Jesus as well as symbolizing Jesus' status as the Christ.



- The earliest evidence shows that the Chi Rho symbol was first used by Constantine after he had a vision of God saying, "In this sign you shall conquer." Thus God commanded Constantine to mark his men's shields with the Chi Rho symbol. After Constantine's success at the battle of Milian Bridge, the Chi-Rho became the official imperial insignia

The Dove

- The dove is a symbol of purity and peace. In the story of the flood, the dove, sent out from the ark by Noah, brought back an olive branch to show that the waters had receded and that God had made peace with man (Genesis 8).
- In the Law of Moses, the dove was declared to be pure and for this reason was used as an offering for purification after the birth of a child.
- Most importantly in Christianity a descending dove is used as the symbol of the Holy Spirit.

Fish



- The most frequent use of the fish is as a symbol of Christ.
- The fish is also used as a symbol of baptism, for, just as the fish cannot live except in water, the true Christian cannot live save through the waters of baptism.
- The fish was a sign of the Christian Faith for early Christians, those meeting in secret for fear of Roman persecution.
- The Greek word for fish is *Ichthus*, which is also an acronym:
Iesous
CHristos
THeou

Uios

Soter

- This means "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."
- The fish reminds us of the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, and how Jesus called his disciples to be "fishers of men."
- The fish was a secret symbol of early Christians.

The Lamb



- The lamb is a symbol of Christ. In John 1:29 when John the Baptist saw Jesus he said; "Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- The Lamb of God represents Jesus Christ, the perfect, sinless sacrifice offered by God to atone for the sins of man.
- The lamb represents Jesus, who was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter. Thus, Jesus was the sacrificial lamb.
- The lamb is also used to symbolize the sinner

for Jesus said that he is a good shepherd.

The Olive



- The olive is a tree which yields great quantities of oil. Its rich yield symbolized the providence of God.
- The olive branch is a symbol of peace.
- When Noah was in the ark during the floods, he sent a dove to find out whether the waters had receded from the earth. The dove came back with an olive leaf in her mouth as a sign that the water has subsided. (Genesis 8:11). In this passage, the olive branch is symbolic of the peace God made with men.
- A dove with an olive twig in its beak is often used to indicate that the souls of the deceased have departed in the peace of God.

The Palm

- The palm is a symbol of victory.
- More often, the palm branch is associated with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
- The palm branch was used to represent a martyr who sacrifices his/her life for the sake of faith in God and thus symbolised the martyr's triumph over death.
- The Palm Branch in the hands of Jesus Christ is considered as a symbol of resurrection and it depicts supreme triumph over death

- Christ is often shown bearing the palm branch as a symbol of resurrection and Jesus' triumph over sin and death.

Peacock



- The peacock was believed by the Ancient Greeks that it does not decompose after death, making it a symbol of eternal life.
- The peacock is often pictured in scenes with the Tree of Life.

The Star



- The star, lighting the darkness of the heavens at night, is a symbol of divine guidance or favour.
- The Star of the East, often seen in pictures of the Magi, was the star that guided the wise men to Bethlehem and stood in the sky over the manger where Christ was born.

Rainbow



- The Christian rainbow is a symbol of God's faithfulness and his promise to never again destroy the earth by flood.
- After the flood God placed a rainbow in the sky as a sign of his covenant with Noah to never again destroy the earth and all living creatures by flood.
- By arching high over the horizon, the rainbow shows the all-embracing expanse of God's faithfulness through his work of grace.
- The gospel of salvation, like a rainbow, is all-encompassing, and everyone is invited to behold it:
- The Bible uses rainbows to describe the glory of God:
- In the book of Revelation, the Apostle John saw a rainbow around the throne of God in heaven.
- When believers see a rainbow, they are reminded of God's faithfulness, his all-encompassing grace, his glorious beauty, and his holy and eternal presence on the throne of our lives.

The Horn



- The horn represents God's power.
- The horn is the principal means of defence as well as an attack that most animals are endowed with; therefore, the horn is a symbol of dominion, power, triumph, fierceness, strength, intelligence, dignity, prosperity and glory.
- A horn with oil is representative of David being anointed as the King
- The seven horns of the Ram stand for the conquering of Jericho by the Israelites.
- The phrase 'horn of plenty' denotes the Almighty's generosity.
- The phrase 'horn of salvation' refers to Jesus Christ as a powerful saviour.

The Donkey

- The donkey is frequently portrayed in the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, and the Entry of Christ into Jerusalem.
- The donkey symbolizes that the humblest and least of the animal creation were present when Jesus was born and that they recognized Him as the Son of God.

The Bee



- The bee, because of its industrious habits, has become the symbol of activity, diligence, work, and good order. Also, because the bee produces honey, it has come to be accepted as a symbol of sweetness and religious eloquence.
- Thus, the beehive is the symbol of a pious and unified community.
- The Bee as a producer of honey, which is a symbol of Christ and for the virtue of its habits, the bee has been used to symbolize the virginity of Mary.
- Since, according to ancient legend, the bee never sleeps, it is occasionally used to suggest Christian vigilance and zeal in acquiring virtue.

The Foot

- The human foot, because it touches the dust of the earth, is used to symbolize humility and willing servitude. The woman in the house of the Pharisee who washed Christ's feet with her tears did so as a token of her humility and penitence, and her sins were forgiven (Luke 7: 38).

- Christ washed the feet of His disciples at the Last Supper to show his humility and servant hood.

The Whale

- In this way, the whale came to be used as a symbol of the Devil.
- The whale's open mouth represents the open gates of Hell.

Butterfly



- Butterflies are a symbol of new life. They begin as caterpillars, make a cocoon for themselves, and through a process of metamorphosis, emerge as butterflies.
- As such, butterflies are a symbol of transformation through faith.

The Apple



- The apple symbolises evil since it was used by the devil to tempt Eve and Adam.
- The apple may also be symbolic of Christ, the new Adam, who took upon himself the burden of man's sin. For this reason, when the apple appears in the hands of Adam it means sin, but when it is in the hands of Christ, it symbolizes the fruit of salvation.

The Grape



- Grapes with ears of grain symbolized the wine and bread of Holy Communion.
- In general, the grape is a symbol of the Blood of Christ.

The Reed

- The reed symbolised the suffering of Jesus on the cross; this is so because when Jesus was on the Cross, he was given a sponge soaked in vinegar on the end of a reed.
- The reed, thus symbolizes the greatest humiliation.
- The reed is also used to represent the just who dwell on the banks of the waters of grace.

The East

- East, being the direction in which the sunrise appears, is symbolic of Christ, the Sun of the Universe.

Honey



- The purity and sweetness of honey have made it a symbol of the work of God and the ministry of Christ.
- Paradise, the reward of the faithful Christians, is known as “the land of milk and honey.”

Oil



- Oil is the symbol of the Grace of God. It is used in the Church in the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, ordination, and union.
- Oil is also used in anointing the sick for a healing.

Smoke

- Smoke has come to suggest vanity and all that is fleeting because it rises into the air only to disappear.
- Symbolically, it is a reminder of the shortness of this life and the futility of seeking earthly glory.
- Smoke also symbolised the anger and wrath of God.

Wings

- Wings are the symbol of divine mission. That is why the angels, archangels, seraphim, and cherubim are painted with wings.
- The emblems of the four evangelists, the lion of St. Mark, the ox of St. Luke, the man of St. Matthew, and the eagle of St. John, are all depicted as winged creatures.

Blood

- Blood is the symbol of life and of the human soul.
- Blood represents the blood of Jesus which was sacrificed for the sins of mankind.

- Red, the colour of blood, has become the common attribute of all those martyrs who died rather than deny Christ.
- Red, the colour of blood also represents the blood of Jesus which was sacrificed for the sins of mankind.

RITUALS IN CHRISTIANITY.

- Rituals in Christianity are called sacraments. Birth rituals in Christianity include: naming ritual, circumcision ritual and dedication ritual.
- The following are some of the rituals in Christianity:
 - (i) Naming ritual
 - (ii) Baptism
 - (iii) Marriage
 - (iv) Circumcision.
 - (v) Communion, Last Supper, Eucharist.
 - (vi) Extreme Unction [Anointing of the sick]
 - (vii) Penance.
 - (viii) Funerals.

Birth Rituals- The birth of a child is a time of celebration. Christians believe that a child is a gift from God and that each and every child is born into the land of the living for a specific purpose and mission.

- The birth of a child is a stage of life whereby a child moves from the life in the womb to life in the world. It is also a celebration of a safe delivery by the mother; that the mother had survived the ordeal of delivering a child or labour of giving birth.

1. Naming ritual

- The child is named to be a complete human being. The child is named by the father, mother or a close relative. The child may be named after his or her relatives, or might be given a biblical name.
- A name is for identity and a name reflects on the character and mission of the child. A child after given a name move from a nameless being to a named being.
- During the naming ritual people gather, eat and celebrate through music and songs.

2. Circumcision

- Circumcision is a symbol of covenant between God and his people.
- To some Christians who are still rooted in Judaism; circumcision is:
 - (i) A symbol of purity.
 - (ii) A sign of acceptance of God.
 - (iii) A sign of holiness.
- **NB: However, most Christian organisations today do not demand circumcision though it is still performed by others.**

3. Baptism.

- Baptism involves the application of or immersion in water as a way welcoming new members into Christianity.
- Baptism is an outward sign of washing away sins and water is used.
- Baptism is a proof that the sins have been washed away and that one has been made clean.

- Water is used in baptism because it is a symbol of purity and rebirth.
- Baptism is a symbol of repentance and a sign of being born again.
- Baptism is a public confirmation of sins having been forgiven.
- Baptism is a sign that one has accepted Jesus Christ.
- Baptism is a sign of membership.
- Baptism is a sign that you belong to that denomination.
- Baptism symbolises the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Baptism assures Christians of eternal life.
- Baptism is a unifying factor in the church [baptism brings oneness and unity in the church].
- Baptism shows that one has taken the way of the cross [that is one is prepared to suffer or die for the sake of the gospel].
- **NB:**Baptism is done in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
- **NB:** Some Christians believe in infant baptism and therefore infants are baptised. This is based on the belief that we are all born sinners.

4. Marriage.

- Marriage ritual is as old as our planet.
- The church through the Priest gives formal blessings upon Christians when they enter into matrimony [marriage].
- In Christianity every person must enter into marriage at their own free- will.
- Marriage is regarded as one of the Holy institutions given by God himself; and therefore any form of impurity is not accepted.
- The marriage ritual encourages one man one wife.
- Pre-marital sex and extra marital sex is not allowed and is regarded as a sin.
- The ritual puts man as the head of the family, and the woman as the helper.

5. Communion/Lord's Supper/ Eucharist

- Communion or Eucharist is a ritual whereby Christians eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of the Last Supper of Jesus Christ.
- The bread represents the body of Jesus Christ and the wine represents the blood of Jesus Christ.
- It symbolized remembrance of Jesus Christ's death.
- It is a unifying force between spiritual Christ and the Christians.
- It is a sign of unity in Christ.
- It is also a sign of obedience to Jesus who commanded that it should be practised.
- Communion is also a thanksgiving ritual meant to thank Jesus who died for people's sins.
- Eucharist or communion is regarded as the centre of Christian life; it shows the selflessness of Jesus Christ, his suffering, pain and death for the sake of mankind.
- The Eucharist also symbolised the new covenant God made with his people through Jesus Christ.
- It is also done for the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Jesus.

6. Extreme Unction [Anointing the sick]

- This is a ritual of anointing the sick with oil for healing purposes.
- The pastor is called to pray for the sick and anoint the sick with oil in the name of Jesus.
- Anointing the sick with oil was done for these reasons:
 - (i) To heal the sick.
 - (ii) For the sins of the sick to be forgiven.

- (iii) To make the sick clean before death.
- (iv) A sign of faith in the power of prayer.

7. Funerals.

- Death though sorrowful, it is accompanied by Christian ceremonies.
- To Christians death is not the end of life but the beginning of eternal life.
- Some Christians believe that when a person dies, the soul returns to God and the dead will resurrect for eternal life with the second coming of Jesus Christ.
- People pray for the dead so that he/she might be forgiven and be accepted by God.
- Some Christians prepare the deceased for his/her next life.
- Prayers for the dead do not cease with burial, but continued after burial.
- Funerals in Christianity are a preparation for re-incarnation or resurrection with the second coming of Jesus Christ.

8. Penance.

- Is the confession and granting of forgiveness to a sinner.

Religious practitioners in Christianity.

- (i) Bishops
- (ii) Pastors.
- (iii) Prophets/ prophetesses
- (iv) Apostles.
- (v) Evangelists/Preachers.
- (vi) Deacons.
- (vii) Elders.
- (viii) Priests.

Names of early Christian practitioners.

1. Jesus.

- Jesus is the founder of Christianity.

2. Simon Peter.

- Is believed to be the first leader of the Christian church.

Religious leaders in colonial period in Zimbabwe.

1. Samuel Mutendi of Zion Christian Church [ZCC]
2. Johane Masowe of Johane Masowe weChishanu [JMC].
3. Johane Marange of Johane Marange Apostolic Church [JMAC]
4. Rev Ndabaningi Sithole
5. Bishop Abel Muzorerwa

- These are some of the African Initiated Church leaders who opposed colonial rule and supported the liberation struggle.
- They encouraged Africans to resist and reject colonialism.
- Some religious practitioners such as Ndabaningi Sithole started his own political party such as ZANU

- However, some religious practitioners such as Bishop Abel Muzorerwa supported colonial rule and joined hands with colonialists.

Roles of Christian practitioners in colonial period.

1. They supported the liberation struggle.
2. Prayed for freedom fighters.
3. Challenged oppression.
4. They were advisors to political leaders.
5. They unified the people.
6. They defended the poor and the oppressed.
7. They were the voice of the voiceless.
8. They healed the sick.
9. They encouraged the spirit of patriotism and nationalism.
10. Encouraged people to fight for their God given land.
11. Give divine advice on how and when to attack the enemy.
12. Gave shelter and moral support to freedom fighters.
13. Predicted victory for the freedom fighters.
14. Gave spiritual support to the freedom fighters.

Present day Christian practitioners.

1. Ezekiel Guti of ZAOGA
2. Paul Mwazha of African Apostolic Church [AAC]
3. Walter Magaya of PHD
4. Emmanuel Makandiwa of UFIC
5. Gandiya of Anglican Church.
6. Father Mukonori of Roman Catholic Church.
7. Pius Ncube of Roman Catholic Church.
8. Nehemia Mutendi of ZCC
9. Apostle Chiwenga

Present Day roles of Christian practitioners.

1. Pray for and heal the sick.
2. Defend the Law of God.
3. To be voice of the voiceless.
4. Preach the word of God.
5. Defend justice among people.
6. Pray for unity and national healing.
7. Mediators in political disputes.
8. Pray for rain.
9. Pray for rain.
10. Donate to charity for example assisting victims of cyclone Idai.

11. To foretell the future through prophecies.
12. To raise other leaders after them.
13. To drive away demons.
14. Help people with breakthroughs.
15. Assist those who are less privileged.
16. Supported government policies of land distribution.
17. Encouraged people to be self-sufficient.
18. Leads in Christianity rituals such as baptism, weddings and funerals.

Sacred places in Christianity.

- In Christianity and in other religions, sacred place is connected to the origin of that religion; that is where that religion is formed, started or developed.
- Sacred places in Christianity are associated with places where Jesus was born, did his ministry, crucified and resurrected.
- Some places in Christianity are considered sacred or holy because:
 - (i) It is the place where God revealed himself to the people or to the leader of that denomination.
 - (ii) It is the place “set aside” [chosen] for the purpose of worship.
 - (iii) It is the place where the church leader received his/her call or revelation.
 - (iv) It is the place where the religious leader is buried.

NB: sacred places differ from denomination to denomination in Christianity.

The following are some of the sacred places in Christianity.

- (i) Jerusalem.
- (ii) Nazareth.
- (iii) Bethlehem.
- (iv) Jordan
- (v) Jericho.
- (vi) Sea of Galilee.
- (vii) The Red Sea
- (viii) Saint Peter Square [The Vatican].
- (ix) Churches.
- (x) The pulpit.
- (xi) The altar.
- (xii) Mt Tabor
- (xiii) Mt Nebo
- (xiv) Moriah in South Africa for ZCC
- (xv) Defe and Dopota for ZCC
- (xvi) Ngarikure in Masvingo for AAC of Mwazha.

1. Jerusalem.

- Jerusalem is sacred for Christians, Jews and Muslims.
- For Christians Jerusalem is sacred because:

- (i) Is where Jesus ministered.
 - (ii) Is where Jesus died, resurrected and ascended to heaven.
 - (iii) Is where Jesus was presented in the temple.
 - (iv) Is where Jesus attended festivals such as Passover.
 - (v) Is where Jesus had his Last Supper with his disciples.
 - (vi) Is where we find the cross and the tomb of Jesus.
 - (vii) Jerusalem is considered as the birth place of Christianity.
- Jerusalem is a religious tourists destination from all over the world because it is considered as the holy land because it is:
 - (i) The dwelling place of the Ark of the covenant.
 - (ii) Abrahamic covenant point to Jerusalem as the promised land.
 - (iii) It is [was] home of many holy prophets of God.
 - (iv) The throne of David.
 - (v) The ascension place of Prophet Muhammad.

NB: Christians associate themselves with the city of Jerusalem so that they can physically be in touch with their faith.

- **Jerusalem becomes a mysterious city for Christians:**

- (i) A city without pain or sorrow.
- (ii) A beautiful city and home.
- (iii) It is a city that symbolised paradise.

2. Nazareth.

- Jesus spent most part of his life about 20 years in Nazareth.
- Nazareth is seen as Jesus' home town; this is why Jesus is referred to as Jesus of Nazareth or the Nazarene.
- Jesus' birth was announced to Mary in Nazareth.
- After returning from Egypt Jesus and his parents settled in Nazareth.
- Jesus was rejected by his people in Nazareth.
- Nazareth is a holy city to Christians because this is where the holy family of Mary, Joseph and Jesus lived.

3. Bethlehem. [Means house of bread]

- Bethlehem is sacred to Christians because it is the birth place of Jesus Christ.
- Bethlehem is also the birth place of King David, and was known as the City of King David.
- Bethlehem was also the place where the Messiah was to be born thereby fulfilling the prophecy of Micah 5:2.
- Bethlehem is the place where Rachel died while giving birth [Genesis 35:19-20]

4. River Jordan.

- River Jordan is sacred because John the Baptist preached and baptised people in the river Jordan.
- Jesus was baptised in river Jordan.
- Jesus was proclaimed the Son of God in the river Jordan.
- Jesus received the Holy Spirit after baptised in the river Jordan.
- River Jordan connects Christians with their faith.

5. Sea of Galilee.

- It was also known as the Lake of Gennesaret or Sea of Tiberias.
- Sea of Galilee was the central point of Jesus' ministry for three years.
- Jesus called his first disciples by the Sea of Galilee.
- Jesus performed the miracle of the great catch of fish in the Sea of Galilee.
- Jesus taught and healed people along the Sea of Galilee.
- Jesus asked Simon Peter to go and catch a fish with a coin in its mouth in the sea of Galilee.
- Jesus performed nature miracles of Calming the Storm and walking on water on the Sea of Galilee.
- Sea of Galilee is seen as the place where Christian Church of Christ started; a place where the disciples shown deep faith.
- After resurrection Jesus instructed his disciples to meet him in Galilee.

6. Saint Peter Square [Vatican]

- Catholics regard Saint Peter Square as a holy place because:
 - (i) It is the permanent residence of the Pope.
 - (ii) Is where Peter's grave is believed to be; and Peter is believed to be the first Pope.
 - (iii) It is the burial place for the Holy cardinals.
 - (iv) Nominations and meetings of the Pope are held in the Vatican City.
 - (v) The Vatican is a symbol of the birth of Catholic.

NB: Catholic Church members make holy pilgrimage to the Saint Peter Square.

7. Church.

- Is a building where Christians meet to pray and worship and this why it is sacred.
- Church is built with symbols which are seen from outside such as the cross and the pinnacle.
- The church is the house of God, which is not to be visited without real reason.

8. Pulpit.

- Pulpit is a raised stand for Christian church.
- The pulpit is generally reserved for the man or woman of God.
- Pulpit is regarded as the most important piece of furniture in the sanctuary.
- Pulpit is sacred because the bible, the word of God is placed on the pulpit and the word of God is preached from the pulpit.

9. Ngarikure in Masvingo for AAC of Mwazha.

- It is sacred because this is where Paul Mwazha the founder of AAC received divine revelation.
- Ngarikure is a symbol of AAC's faith and beliefs.
- Contact with the place is believed to be the contact with God's revelation spirit.
- Members of Paul Mwazha's church meet at Ngarikure annually.

Moriah of ZCC of Samuel Mutendi

- Members of ZCC meet every year for prayer and worship ceremonies.
- Moriah was a dwelling place of the founder and chief priest of ZCC.
- Other sacred places for ZCC are Mbungo, Defe and Dopota.

CHAPTER 5

ISLAM

Islam is a religion of people who believe in Mohammad as the last and true prophet of Allah [God].

Meaning of term Islam

- Islam means 'submission to will of God'.
- Islam means surrender to the will of Allah [God]

THE ORIGINS OF ISLAM

- The rise of Islam is basically or intrinsically linked with Prophet Muhammad, who is the founder of Islam.
- Muhammad was born in 570 C.E. in Mecca, and his early life was unremarkable. He married a wealthy widow named Khadija who was 15 years older and his employer
- Islam is a monotheistic faith centred on the belief in the one God (Allah). In this regard, it shares some beliefs with Judaism and Christianity by tracing its history back to the patriarch Abraham, and ultimately to the first prophet, Adam.
- Muslims believe that all the prophets preached the same universal message of belief in one God and kindness to humanity. The last in the series of prophets, according to Muslims, was Muhammad.
- Muhammad worked first as a shepherd and then as a merchant, however he was not happy with the people around him because of superstitions and social and economic injustice. The people were worshipping many gods and had forgotten the message of Prophet Abraham to worship one God.
- Muhammad loved to pray and meditate in the mountains. It was on Mount Hira, according to tradition, where the archangel Gabriel [Jibril] appears to Muhammad. Muhammad is said to have returned from the cave a changed man. The first person he preached to on his return was his wife Khadija, who became the first disciple of this new religion.
- From about 613 Muhammad preached in Mecca the message which he has received. His main message was that there was no other God but Allah and that people should lead their lives in a way that was pleasing to Allah.
- Muhammad's message was essentially the existence of one God, all-powerful but also merciful, and he acknowledged that other prophets - in particular Abraham, Moses and Jesus have preached the same truth in the past.
- But monotheism was not a popular creed [faith or belief] with those whose livelihood depends on idols. Muhammad's preaching of a single God brought him into conflict with the Meccans whose economy relied on polytheism (merchants sold statues, figurines, and charms of the various gods) and the social stratification it supported. Thus, Muhammad had enemies among the traders and the rich people of Mecca. The Meccans took serious measures to stop him. In 622 there was a plot to assassinate him. Eventually in 622, Muhammad and his followers fled Mecca for the city of Yathrib, which is known as Medina today, where his community was welcomed. This event is known as the Hijra, or emigration and it marks the beginning of the Muslim calendar even today.
- The people of Medina accepted Islam. Later with well-organized finances and a vast army, Muhammad fought, conquered and converted Mecca. He did not stop there but he sent numerous emissaries to different parts of Arabia. Today Islam remains one of the most flourishing religions in the world; it is the second largest with around 23% of the earth's population identifying as Muslim. The main teaching in the Qur'an is the belief in Allah, the one and true God. The followers of Islam are traditionally divided into two main branches, the Sunni and Shia. Each group, although they follow the same religion; interpret certain events and teachings of Islam differently.

KEY OR CORE BELIEFS OF ISLAM / SIX ARTICLES OF FAITH

- 1 Belief in one God (Allah)
- 2 Belief in the Angels
- 3 Belief in the holy books sent to all the prophets including Torah that was revealed to the prophet Moses, Bible that was revealed to the prophet Jesus, and Qur'an (Koran) that was revealed to the prophet Muhammad
- 4 Belief in all the prophets sent by God including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. Although Muslims believe in Isa or Jesus they don't think of Jesus as the Son of God the way Christians do.
- 5 Belief in the Day of Judgment and life after death. The day those who did good deeds will be rewarded and the evil will be punished.
- 6 Belief in divine decree. This means that God is all-powerful and nothing can happen without His permission, however, he has given human beings freedom to choose whether to be good or bad. In the end, everyone will be questioned about how they lived in this life.

These six articles of faith form the foundation of Islamic belief system.

- 1 **Belief in One God:** The most important teaching of Islam is that only God is to be served and worshipped. Muslims believe that that God has no partner, has no equal and cannot be divided. Muslims also believe that the biggest sin is to worship other beings with God; and Muslims believe that it is the only sin that God does not forgive if a person dies without repenting from it.
- 2 **Belief in Angels:** God created unseen beings called angels who work tirelessly to administer His kingdom in full obedience. The angels surround us at all times, each has a duty; some record our words and deeds.
- 3 **Belief in Prophets of God:** Muslims believe that God communicates His guidance through human prophets sent to every nation. These prophets start with Adam and include Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. The main message of all the prophets has always been that there is only One true God and He alone is worthy of being supplicated to and worshipped.
- 4 **Belief in Revealed Books of God:** Muslims believe that God revealed His wisdom and instructions through 'books' to some of the prophets like the Psalms, Torah, and the Gospel. Over time, however, the original teachings of these books got distorted or lost. Muslims believe the Quran is God's final revelation revealed to Prophet Muhammad and has been fully preserved.
- 5 **Belief in Day of Judgment:** The life of this world and all that is in it will come to an end on an appointed day. At that time, every person will be raised from the dead. God will judge each person individually, according to his faith and his good and bad actions. God will show mercy and fairness in judgment. According to Islamic teachings, those who believe in God and perform good deeds will be eternally rewarded in Heaven. Those who reject faith in God will be eternally punished in the fire of Hell.
- 6 **Belief in Destiny and Divine Decree:**
 - Muslims believe that since God is the Sustainer of all life, nothing happens except by His Will and with His full knowledge.
 - This means that God is all-powerful and nothing can happen without His permission, however, he has given human beings freedom to choose whether to be good or bad.

- In the end, everyone will be questioned about how they lived in this life. This belief does not contradict the idea of free will.
- God does not force us; our choices are known to God beforehand because His knowledge is complete. This recognition helps the believer through difficulties and hardships.

THE SOURCES OF AUTHORITY IN ISLAM

There are three main sources of information for Muslims namely:

1. The Quran [Koran]
2. The Sunnah
3. The Hadith

The Quran

- The Quran is the title given to primary sacred text for all Muslims. It contains God's word as revealed to Muhammad through the angel Gabriel over a period of 23 years.
- The Quran is believed to have been authored by God himself. The Quran is different from the Bible in that it is a record of one Prophet's experience, whereas the Bible contains experiences of several individuals.
- Muslims believe that the Quran is based on a pre-existing heavenly tablet, existing in heaven with God; hence the Quran is not written by divinely inspired humans but is reproduced from God's original text. The Quran is different from the Bible in that it has been preserved in its exact original form from the time it was received 1 400 years ago. It has been preserved in its entirety syllable by syllable, word for word, sentence for sentence. The Quran is believed to be for the whole of mankind.
- When Muhammad was alive the people did not see the need for the Quran to be compiled but after Muhammad's death Caliph Abu Bakr ordered the compilation of the first complete text of the Quran. According to Islamic tradition reciting the Quran brings blessing to those doing the chanting and also to the whole world. It is believed that when the Quran is recited, divine tranquillity descends, mercy covers the reciters and angels draw near. Muslim children are taught to memorise the Quran. To be able to memorise the entire Quran by heart is a great accomplishment for a Muslim, and will be given the title of Hafiz (Coward).
- Islam is considered to be a religion of the book; this shows the importance of the Quran. It is a complete guide to life for a Muslim. The Quran is also used in public worship.
- The verses from the Quran are used to decorate houses and public buildings. The Quran can also be used to ward off evil. When not being read the Quran is carefully wrapped in cloth and kept on a shelf above all other books. A Muslim is expected to wash carefully before reading the Quran.

The Sunnah of the Prophet.

- Literally, the word 'Sunnah' means 'a clear path', 'busy path', 'trodden path', 'beaten path', and smooth path.
- In Islam the Sunnah came to mean the example of the Prophet. After the Quran, an important source of guidance for the Muslims is the life of the Prophet; his ways (Sunna), one is to simply do it the way the Prophet did.

- Sunnah includes what the prophet said, what he did and what he allowed or permitted. It is the body of traditional custom and practice of the Islamic community, both social and legal, based on the verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings, silent permissions (or disapprovals of the Islamic prophet Muhammad). The Sunnah is also a path, a way, a manner of life. The Sunnah of the Prophet includes his exact words, habits, practises and silent approvals. The Sunnah and the Quran make up the two primary sources of Islamic theology and law. The **Sunna** refers to the actions, statements and way of life of the Prophet Muhammad. It is an essential aspect of the entire system of Islam. God Himself in the Quran has ordered Muslims to take the Prophet as their role model and to listen and obey his words. *'And whatever the Messenger has given you - take; and what he has forbidden you - refrain from.'*
- The Sunnah is the ultimate normative practical expression of Islam. It is also the definitive explanation of the Quran itself. Without it there can be no true understanding of how to implement Islam.
- In short the sunnah includes the hadith; since the sunnah contains the words and actions of Mohammad.
- The Sunnah is a lived way of life, a way of life in which the Reality of God is constantly recognized and remembered.
- Sunnah is the physical example of the Prophet in his daily living, for example, how he prepared himself by washing before standing up for prayer, how he performed his fast, how he treated people with extreme kindness. These examples of daily living are called Sunnah.

The hadith

- Hadith on the other hand, literally means something new that comes out, a saying, a statement, refers to narrations that are attributed to the companions of the Prophet who narrate a statement or a story about the Prophet or related to the Prophet. The Hadith has reached us through individual or a few narrators in every generation.
- Hadith is a report of Prophet Mohammad's statement, act, silent approval or an incident that took place in his life.
- The Hadith encompasses everything that was said by the prophet during his teachings during 23 years. The Hadith contains the words attributed to Prophet Mohammad. Act as the Prophet instructed, that is the hadith. Thus, the hadiths are the instructions of the Prophet.
- Hadith are classified by Hadith Scholars in different categories: authentic, good, accepted, weak, and fake. So the degree of authentication differs, depending on the transmission chain of all Hadith has been written so far after the death of the prophet.

Summary

- Sunnah is as reliable as the Qur'an because it has been transmitted in the same way. Therefore, the Qur'an and the Sunnah remain as the only primary sources of understanding Islam.
- Hadith is not as reliable as the Qur'an and the Sunnah, therefore, it needs to be verified and understood under the light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. While the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the primary sources of understanding Islam, Hadith is a very rich source of understanding the life of the Prophet and his way of living (Sira) and the history of Islam and the Qur'an.
- Hadith is also a good facilitator to study the Qur'an and the Sunnah although understanding these two sources is not depending on Hadith.

- Sunnah is always an act of the prophet, while a hadith is a report of his statement, act, silent approval or an incident that took place in his life.
- Sunnah has come down to us from generation to generation while hadith has been reported, in most cases, by one individual to another. Thus, the act that qualifies as sunnah is undoubtedly authentic; quite as authentic as the Quran itself. On the other hand, the hadith, at best, carries a strong probability that it may have been correctively reported.
- This is because God arranged the two sources to be the way they are: He arranged sunnah to remain completed beyond doubt, because it was to be a part of His last message and allowed hadith to be a human effort at preserving information about the prophet.

CONCEPT OF GOD IN ISLAM

Muslims believe that Allah:

- is the one true God - all worship and praise is directed towards him
- should be treated with respect as he is the supreme being
- is the creator, designer and sustainer of the world

The word Tawhid is used to describe the **oneness of Allah**, which is the fundamental belief of Islam. It means believing in Allah, believing that he is the one and only God. It helps Muslims to think of Allah as the centre point of life.

Confirming that Allah is the only God is the first part of the Shahadah. It is blasphemy to believe in other gods, which means it is the worst sin.

ATTRIBUTES OF ALLAH

Muslims believe that Allah is:

- **Transcendent** – Allah is above and beyond anything that exists in the world.
- **Fair and just** - Allah judges everyone equally.
- **Immanent** - Allah is close to every human and within all things on Earth.
- **Omnipotent** - Allah is all-powerful.
- **Beneficent** - Allah is all-loving.
- **Merciful** - Allah shows compassion and mercy, and he forgives people.

Muslims believe that Allah is just and created the world in a fair way (Adalat). They also believe that he always behaves in a merciful way.

NAMES OF ALLAH [GOD] IN ISLAM

- The names of God in Islam shows the attributes of God in Islam
- There are 99 names of God in Islam. Here we will look at some of the names of God [or Supreme Being] in Islam.

- Prophet Muhammad said, *“Allah has ninety-nine names, that is. One-hundred minus one and whoever knows them will go to Paradise.”*

Name	Meaning
1. Allah Glorified and exalted be He	The word ‘Allah’, the proper name of God, indicates that Allah is the true God who alone deserves to be worshipped, whom all creatures worship out of love, praise His greatness, revere Him and turn to Him in times of need and adversity. <i>“Surely I am Allah, there is no god but I; therefore, worship Me and keep up prayer for My remembrance.”</i> (Surat Taa Haa, 20:14)
2.Ar – Rabb The Lord	He is the creator, the owner and disposer of all affairs who bestows His blessings upon His creatures and looks after His righteous servants by setting their hearts aright. This name must not be attributed to other than Allah, Exalted be He
3.Al-Waahid; Al-Ahad The only One; the One and Only	He is, and has always been, one, without anyone else with Him. He is unique and there is no one like Him in His being, just as He is unique in His attributes, actions and Lordship. He is the only One who deserves to be worshipped. He is Allah, the One and Only.
3.Ar-Rahmaan; Ar-Raheem The Most Gracious; the Most Merciful	These two names indicate Allah’s comprehensive mercy which He shows to all His creation without exception by creating them and providing for them, and the particular mercy that He has exclusively for the believers, both in this life and in the hereafter.
4.Al-Hayy The Ever-Living	He is the One who will remain and will never die. His Life is perfect in every sense, which requires all perfect attributes and negates all their opposites in every sense. This perfect attribute shows that God neither sleep nor slumber.
5.Al-Qayoom The All Sustainer	He is the Self-Sufficient Master who is not in need of anyone; everything exists because of Him and everything other than Him needs Him and totally depends on Him.
6.Al-Awwal; Al-Aakhi The First; the Last	Al-Awwal (The First): There was nothing before Him, and everything other than Him He brought into existence from absolutely nothing. Al-Aakhir (the Last): There is nothing after Him and, being Infinite, He will exist for all eternity.
7.Al- Waarith The Inheritor	The One who will ever remain after the creation perishes. He is the One who will repossess whatever He has granted them after their death. He is, and has always been, the owner of everything which He bequeaths to whomever He wills and gives to whomever He likes.
8.Al- Quddoos The holy	He is free of any imperfection, and evil is not attributed to Him, for all perfect and sublime attributes belong to Him.
9.Al-Haqq The truth	He is the One who truly exists and who is undeniably the Lord and King, the One who is perfect regarding His actions and attributes. His speech, His decree, His promise and His legislation is the truth.
10.Al-Hakeem The All-Wise	He has supreme wisdom in everything, in whatever He has decreed, in His legislation and reward and punishment on the Day of Judgement. He has given everything its perfect form and created everything in the best possible manner. He never creates anything in vain, nor does He legislate or judge in vain. He does things in His absolute wisdom.
11.Al-Aleem, Al-Aalim, Allam-ul-Ghuyoob. The All-Knowing, the Omniscient.	He is the One whose knowledge is comprehensive and extends to everything seen and unseen, apparent and hidden. Nothing whatsoever is hidden from Him and He knows what was in the past, what is in the present, and will be in the future.
12.Al-Khabeer	He is fully aware of everything; apparent, hidden, all the secrets, and what is yet more hidden.

The All-Aware	
13.Ai-Ghafoor; Al-Ghaffaar The Ever forgiving, the Most Forgiving.	He is the One who forgives sins and accepts the repentance of all those who turn to Him; He conceals the sins of His servants, shows never-ending compassion to them and lavishes kindness on them. The word Al-Ghaffaar points to God's immense and constant forgiveness of sins. "Allah is the Ever-Forgiving, the Most Merciful."
14.Al-Khaaliq, Al-Khallaq The creator, the All-Creator	God is the One who creates things out of nothing and with no precedents.
15.Al-Azeez The All- Mighty	He is the All-Strong, All-Dominant who reigns supreme over His creatures. He has subjugated all His creatures, all of whom have humbled themselves before Him and have totally submitted to His authority.
16.Ar-Raof The Most Compassionate	He bestows mercy upon His servants and is compassionate towards them. God has the highest form of mercy, and He bestows it upon all His creation in this world and upon some of them in the hereafter.
17.Al-Wadood The Most Loving	Allah loves His prophets, messengers and obedient servants who also love him. He is the most beloved, who deserves to be loved with all our hearts and better than ourselves, better than our children, and better than everyone and everything else we love and cherish.
18.Al-Barr The Source of All Goodness	Allah showers His apparent and hidden blessings upon His slaves. All His creation totally depends on Him at all times and cannot do without His absolute kindness. He multiplies the rewards of the righteous among the righteous and forgives the wrongdoers among them, and His promise is true
19.As-Samee The All-Hearing	Allah hears and is aware of all secrets without exception. He hears everything people say and whatever His creation utters. Nothing is hidden from Him, and He is the All-Hearing who answers the prayer of those who pray to Him.
20.Al-Baseer The All-Seeing	He is the One whose sight encompasses everything that is conceivable, hidden or apparent, no matter how hidden or small it may be.
21.Al-Ghaniyy The Self-Sufficient	Allah is not in need of His creation. He does not stand in need of anyone at all, while His creation is in need of Him
22.Al-Muheet The All-Encompassing	He is the One from whom nothing is hidden. He encompasses everything with His knowledge and keeps strict count of all things.
23.Ar-Raaziq, Ar-Razzaaq The Provider, the Sustainer	He takes it upon Himself to provide sustenance to all His creatures without exception. He also takes it upon Himself to grant, with His immense mercy and grace, His righteous servants, special provision, namely, blessings of faith and lawful earnings. Abundant provision and plentiful sustenance are the attributes of Allah.

FIVE PILLARS OF FAITH IN ISLAM.

- These are five essential Islamic practices known as the pillars of Islam.
- (i) Shahada [profession or declaration of faith].
- (ii) Salat. (Salah) [worship]
- (iii) Zakat. (Zakah) [Alms-giving]
- (iv) Saum. [Fasting on the month of Ramadan]

- (v) Hajji. [Pilgrimage]

1. **Shahada [declaration of faith]**

- The beginning and essence of being a Muslim is to recite with sincere intention the simple Islamic creed called Shahada [confession] consisting of two statements:

“There is no god but Allah; and Mohammad is the messenger of God.”

- The declaration of faith is bearing witness (testifying) that there is no deity worthy of worship but Allah (God), and that Muhammad is His Servant and Messenger. It must be based on a sincere and firm belief in the heart, as well as being uttered verbally.
- The first part of the declaration implies that:
 - (i) No person, object or being has the right to be worshipped except Allah alone. The Arabic name “Allah” refers to the One True God of all mankind and everything that exists.
 - (ii) Allah alone is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists, and He has power over all things.
 - (iii) Allah has no partner, equal, father, mother or son.
 - (iv) Allah alone has perfect attributes and is free from all deficiencies.
- The second part of the declaration is that Muhammad is Allah’s Servant and final Messenger.
- He is the final Prophet in a long chain of Prophets sent to call the people to the obedience and worship of Allah alone. Some of these Prophets include Adam, Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus.
- The Prophet Muhammad was sent with the Qur’an (the final revelation), in order to teach the people Allah’s message, and serve as an example for all to follow.

The Shahada is pronounced:

- (i) By new converts as part of the ceremony of becoming a Muslim.
- (ii) In each performance of the Salat.
- (iii) At birth ritual to a new born baby [The first words the child should hear is the shahada].
- (iv) To a dying man [The last words the person should hear is the shahada].

Importance or benefits of the Shahada.

- Complete surrender to the will of Allah and becoming His true servant and subject.
- Produces a high degree of self-respect and confidence, while also remaining humble and modest.
- Produces strong determination, patience and perseverance, making a person brave and courageous, as well as dutiful and upright.
- Makes a person obey and observe Allah’s commands.

2. **The Salat [Salah]and Friday worship [Prayer]**

- The Salat or the daily prayer ritual is the earliest Islamic practice.

- The five daily prayers form the most important ritual of worship in a Muslim's life; one each at dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset and nightfall. They pray facing Mecca, the Holy city.
- Mohammad once asked his companions, ***"If one of you had a river by his door in which he bathed five times a day, would any filth remain on him?"*** They replied, ***"No."*** Then the Prophet added ***"Likewise, Allah wipes away sins with the five daily prayers."***
- On Friday Muslims go to the Mosque to pray and are asked by a public caller an official called Muezzin.
- The call to pray consists of seven short statements:
 - (i) God is most great.
 - (ii) I testify that there is no god but Allah.
 - (iii) I testify that Mohammad is the prophet [messenger] of Allah.
 - (iv) Come to pray.
 - (v) Come to salvation.
 - (vi) God is most great.
 - (vii) There is no God but Allah.

NB: in the call for the Morning Prayer the statement; "Prayer is better than sleep," is inserted after the fifth statement or at the end.

- Prayer is the centre of a Muslim's life and the best way to achieve submission to Allah.
- It can be offered almost anywhere clean: such as in fields, offices, factories or universities; and takes only a few minutes to perform.
- It consists of recitation from the Holy Qur'an, supplicating to and praising Allah, with various body postures such as standing, bowing, prostrating and sitting.
- Through prayer, the Muslim remembers the greatness of his Creator and supplicates to Him for his needs and wishes.

Benefits of the Salat

- (i) Prayer establishes a personal and spiritual connection between the Muslim and his Creator, based on faith, love, hope and reverence.
- (ii) It fills one's heart with contentment, peace and closeness with Allah.
- (iii) Helps in achieving submission to Allah.
- (iv) Prevents a person from falling into sin.
- (v) It purifies one's soul.
- (vi) Is an opportunity for repentance and seeking forgiveness from Allah

3. Zakat or Zakah [Alms –giving or charity]

- The sharing of wealth with the poor is stressed in the Quran as a pious act.
- The Quran states that Muslims should pay the 'surplus' as alms-giving
- Islam teaches that all things belong to Allah, including wealth, which is considered as a trust. The prescribed charity (zakah) of 2.5% is an obligation on every Muslim who is mature, sane and has wealth above a certain threshold.

- The Prophet Mohammad said, “Allah has made zakah obligatory simply to purify your remaining wealth.”
- The meaning of the word “zakah,” is both ‘purification’ and ‘growth’. This is similar to the pruning of plants, whereby regularly trimming provides balance and encourages growth. By fulfilling this obligation, Muslims purify their remaining wealth, as well as ensure both financial and spiritual growth.

Benefits of Zakat

- Purifies one from selfishness, arrogance and a greedy heart.
- Trains one to be sympathetic and compassionate towards the poor and needy.
- Reminds one of the blessings from Allah and encourages one to be grateful.
- Bridges the gap between different socio-economic classes and groups, and is a form of social security.
- Reduces poverty and ensures equality by making it obligatory upon the rich to share some of their wealth with the less fortunate.

4. Saum [Fasting in the month of Ramadan]

- is a time for fasting throughout the month
- people will be confessing their sins to God
- As with any act of worship, fasting requires obedience and submission to Allah’s commands through the highest degree of commitment and sincerity. Every year during the month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the lunar calendar), Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from three key human needs – food, drink and sexual relations. One should also abstain from all sinful actions.
- During the days of fasting Muslims should avoid indecent talk, gossip, slander and anything else that will cause anger or grief to anyone, along with any actions that might arouse passion in oneself or someone else.
- Fasting during Ramadan is obligatory on every physically and mentally capable adult Muslim. Children, the sick, the mentally unfit, the elderly, menstruating women, and travelers are exempted.

Benefits of fasting:

- (i) Promotes spiritual self-purification and growth.
- (ii) Scientifically proven health benefits.
- (iii) Sympathy for those less fortunate, prompting more charities.
- (iv) A means of learning self-restraint and patience.
- (v) Purifies the soul and helps it acquire the habit of obeying Allah by restraining desires, and promotes steadfastness.
- (vi) Creates an increased feeling of unity and collective identity amongst those fasting.
- (vii) Creates an increased awareness about the state of affairs across the globe and the hardships endured.

- (viii) Forgiveness of sins. The Prophet Mohammad is believed to have said, “He who fasts Ramadan, with faith and hoping for reward (from Allah), then his past sins are forgiven.”

5. Hajj. [the Great Pilgrimage to Mecca]

- is the journey to Mecca the birth place of Muhammad
- is the journey to the most holy place
- Pilgrimage to the Holy city of Mecca or Makkah (in Saudi Arabia) and other sacred sites must be performed at least once in a person's life, if they are physically and financially capable.
- Performing the pilgrimage is a temporary suspension of all worldly activities, and is a time for one to reflect, worship, seek the forgiveness of Allah and attain His closeness.
- The Pilgrimage is an annual event in the 12th month of the lunar calendar (Dhul-Hijjah in Arabic), which unifies people of every colour, race, status and age, as they join in worship of the One True God. All pilgrims wear simple and similar clothing, which strips away distinctions of class and culture, so that all stand equal before Allah.

Benefits of Hajj

- (i) Humbles a person
- (ii) Making them more patient and thankful to Allah.
- (iii) Brotherhood is increased, as all Muslims, regardless of their differences, are one nation.

Rituals in Islam

- These are beliefs prescribed by God [Allah] in the Quran and by the holy Prophet Mohammad.
- Islam just like Judaism and Christianity is an Abrahamic religion and has similar rituals.
 1. Birth rituals [Adhan]
 2. Naming ritual [Tasmiyah]
 3. Circumcision ritual [khitan]
 4. Commitment ritual [Bismillah]
 5. Marriage ritual [Nikah]
 6. Death ritual.

1. Birth ritual [Adhan]

- A prayer is whispered into the baby's right ear when the child is born.
- They recite the Islamic creed: “God is great, there is no other god but Allah, and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah,” are the first words the child must hear.
- Muslims believe that every child is born a Muslim.
- The first taste of the child should be sweet and this is why the baby is fed with a teaspoon of honey and this symbolises the sweetness of the Quran.
- This ritual was first carried out by Muhammad himself.

2. Naming ritual [Tasmiyah].

- Seven days after birth the child is given a Muslim name which is also an identity to the community.

- The naming ritual is performed because God demands that it must be done.
- A child in Islam should not go beyond seven days without a name.
- Parents name the child with the help of family members, friends and priests [Sheiks].

3. Removing of hair ritual [The Aquiqah(Aquqah)]

- This ritual takes place soon after naming ritual.
- This ritual is done to thank Allah for the gift of the child. It is a thanks giving ritual.
- The baby's hair is shaved and weighed and the family is asked to give at least the same weight of gold or money to charity [the poor] and at least two livestock should be sacrificed.
- After this ceremony a community meal with relatives, friends and neighbours is held as a way of welcoming the new bony baby into the community.
- Furthermore, an animal is sacrificed and its meat is distributed among the poor.

4. Circumcision ritual [Khitan]

- This is mostly done soon after birth to new born sons.
- This is done as a sign of human submission to God.
- Circumcision is done as a sign of purity and cleanness.
- It is done to imitate Mohammad who was circumcised.
- A child is circumcised as a sign of belonging and attachment to the Islamic community.
- Circumcision is a sign of sacredness, loyalty and purity to God.
- A person who is not circumcised in Islam is not regarded as a man no matter his age. Thus, new born sons are circumcised to show that they are men.
- Circumcision is painful; hence it prepares the child for difficulties and pains of life.
- Spilling of blood occurs during circumcision, a sign of life; and symbolised the running and continuity of life.

5. Commitment ritual [Bismillah]

- Muslims children are considered to be born Muslims.
- At four years commitment ritual is performed and the child is dressed in traditional clothes or his/her best clothes and sit in front of the Koran [Quran] and recite verses from it.
- Parents, relatives and friends pray that he/she will grow in full knowledge of the Koran.
- The parents or elderly members of the family promise that apart from fulfilling the basic needs of food, shelter and education; they will teach moral qualities, religious knowledge and religious practices to the children.
- At this ceremony they share sweet food to show the sweetness of the Quran.
- After the ritual the child takes part in the prayer life of the Muslim community.

6. Marriage ritual [Nikah]

- Marriage serves as the foundation of a Muslim family.
- The Quran states that marriage is a natural state.
- Sex should only take place within marriage; all forms of pre and extra- marital relations are strictly forbidden.
- Marriage is therefore, a means of obtaining legal sex.
- Marriage is therefore, the correct and legal way to produce children and replenish or refill the earth.
- Muslims parents arrange a suitable partner for their children and the couples should agree on their parents' choice.
- The bride and the groom accept each other in the presence of two witnesses.

- Forced marriages are not accepted in Islam.
- Marriage rituals are usually done in a Mosque.
- The process of 'Nikah' [marriage] shows the change of status from young adults to fully grown adults.
- The groom is required to pay a bridal gift to the bride.
- The reading from the Quran takes place.
- The bride and groom exchange vows and rings.
- The ritual is performed to bless and protect the new family.
- The Quran allows men to practice polygamy, and a husband may have up to 4 wives provided he is able to love and treat them equally.
- Women are only allowed to have one husband.
- Celibacy is not allowed in Islam.
- Marriage is seen as a righteous act in Islam.

Reasons for marriage in Islam or importance of marriage in Islam

- **For procreation**- marriage contributes to the continuity and preservation of human race
- **For Companionship**- that is for mutual love and support for husband and wife. Marriage creates or generates and sustains love, mutual confidence, compassion and responsibility; this is therefore, suitable for raising a family.
- **For sexual expression of love** – marriage is a means of obtaining legal sex.
- **To support a stable family**- marriage safeguard morality. Marriage lays a spiritual and legal foundation for raising a family.
- **Comfortable home**- marriage relieves one from worries. Spouses cooperate in the management of the house. Duties and responsibilities are shared and thus, there will be more time for worship and seeking knowledge of God [Allah].
- **To fulfil God's commandment**- marriage is ordained by God [Allah] as the correct and legal way to produce children.
- **To be considered as adults**- marriage enhances social status, one is seen as an adult after marriage.
- **Foundation of society**- marriage makes people to be responsible in society. Marriage trains people to bear and solve problems in life. Marriage supports a stable society. Marriage trains one to be patient and to accommodate other people.
- **For spiritual perfection**- Shariah forbids sex before marriage. Allah commands people to fulfil their sexual urges lawfully through marriage. In marriage there is comfort to the soul. Marriage reduces temptations of immorality. Marriage promotes health relaxation and this improves concentration during prayer and worship.

7. Death rituals

- Those near a dying man encourage him to pronounce the Shahada; "God is great, there is no other god but Allah; and Mohammad is the messenger of Allah."
- Muslims want their last words to be their declaration of faith.
- After death the body is bathed properly by members of the same gender and put in a three-fold white garment called kafan.

- The body is placed on the bier and taken first to the Mosque where funeral prayer is offered for the dead person, and then taken to the grave for burial.
- Muslims believe in life after death.
- Muslims offer prayers for the forgiveness of the deceased and that he/she might find peace and happiness in the world to come.
- The body is buried as soon as possible.
- In the grave the head of the deceased faces Mecca, and the following words are said, "To Allah we belong, to Allah we return."
- There is a three-day mourning period.
- Muslims believe in the Day of Judgement:
 - (i) All people will be judged by Allah.
 - (ii) Everyone will be raised from the grave.
 - (iii) People will have their faith in Allah and their earthly good and bad deeds weighed.
 - (iv) Those who can cross the bridge over Hell [Sirat] carrying their books of life will enter paradise and have eternal life.
 - (v) Those who cannot cross the bridge will fall into hell forever.

Importance of rituals in Islam.

- Rituals leads to:
 - (i) Unity.
 - (ii) Respect
 - (iii) Obedience
 - (iv) Dignity [Self- worth or self-esteem or self-respect].
 - (v) Fear.
 - (vi) Self-control.
 - (vii) Love for one another.
 - (viii) Team work
 - (ix) Identity.
 - (x) Responsibility.
 - (xi) Leadership.
 - (xii) Spirit of belonging.
 - (xiii) Loyalty
 - (xiv) Sharing and giving.

Religious practitioners in Islam.

1. Mohammad.
2. The Alim.
3. Allamah.
4. The Caliph.
5. Imam.
6. Sheik
7. Ayatollah.
8. Muezzin [the one who calls for prayer five times a day]

9. Grand Imman.
10. Mosque leaders.

1. Mohammad

- Mohammad is the founder of Islam.
- He was born in Mecca and later moved to Medina.
- He is believed to be the last great Prophet of God.
- His teachings form the base or the foundation of the Islamic religion.
- It is believed that after death he went to heaven.
- Muslims believe that the Quran is a direct revelation from Allah to Mohammad through the angel Gabriel [Jibril]
- The name Mohammad means highly praised.

2. The Alim.

- Alim means the scholar or the learned one.
- It refers to experts and scholars in Arabic.
- The Alim is used to describe a knowledgeable person in Islamic religion.

3. Allamah.

- Is an honorary and prestigious title in Islam.
- It is a title given to a person who is educated in several disciplines in Islam.

4. The Caliph.

- The Caliph is a religious and a political leader.
- Caliphs were political successors of Mohammad.
- Caliphs were like kings in Muslim community.
- In modern days the Caliph refers to the Chief civil and religious leader in Islam.
- The first Caliph was Abu Bakr who succeeded Muhammad after his death.

5. Imam.

- Is a religious leader who teaches people the Quran and the Hadiths.
- Imam leads and performs rituals.
- They also lead in community prayers, at birth, weddings and funerals.
- Imam gives religious advice and delivers sermons.
- The Shia Muslims believe that the Imam is the successor of Muhammad and should be appointed by God.
- Imam interprets the Quran and the Sharia.

6. Mosque Leaders.

- The Sheiks in most cases are the mosque leaders.
- Their duties are:
 - ✓ Pray for the sick.
 - ✓ Interpreting the Quran
 - ✓ Lead all worship services.
 - ✓ Act as a priest.
 - ✓ Lead the journey to Mecca.
 - ✓ Are counsellors of the people.
 - ✓ They are advisors.

- ✓ Teach the congregation the Prophet's teachings.
- ✓ Provide leadership at the Mosque.
- ✓ Look after Zakat.

Sacred places in Islam.

- Some places are considered important in Islamic history because they were important in the life of Muhammad and to Muslims today.

1. Kaaba
2. Mecca.
3. Medina.
4. Jerusalem.
5. Mosques.

1. Kaaba

- The most sacred site in all of Islam is Kaaba in Mecca in Saudi Arabia.
- Muslims believe that the Kaaba was a shrine built by Adam and rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael The Kaaba represents the oneness of God.
- Kaaba is the qibla or the direction of prayer for Muslims

2. Mecca.

- Mecca is the heart of Islam.
- Mecca is the birth place of Prophet Mohammad.
- Is the holiest city for Muslims.
- The Kaaba the holiest site in Islam is in Mecca.
- Prophet Mohammad's mission manifested or revealed in Mecca.
- The Hira cave where Mohammad received his first revelation is in Mecca

Medina.

- Medina is the second holiest city for Muslims.
- Medina is believed to contain the tomb of Prophet Muhammad.
- Mohammad was buried in Medina.
- Medina is where Mohammad lived after he fled Mecca.
- Medina is significant because it contributed to the development and growth of Islam.
- It was in Medina that the followers of Mohammad were called Muslims.
- In Medina is where Mohammad hid from his persecutors. He hid in a cave where he received some divine revelation.
- Mohammad built the first mosque in Medina.

3. Jerusalem.

- Is the third most holy place for Muslims.
- Jerusalem is a place where Prophet Mohammad is believed to have been taken to heaven after his death.
- Is where "the dome of the rock" is; and is on the site of the Jewish temple.
- "The dome of the rock" is a building in Jerusalem that enshrines the rock from which Mohammad ascended to heaven on the night he died as believed by Muslims.

4. Mosques.

- Mosques are regarded as holy in Islam because they are used for:
 - Prayer.
 - Worship
 - Religious ceremonies and rituals.
 - Residents of priests.
 - Weddings.
 - Funerals.
- Mosques in Zimbabwe are cited near or in towns and big cities.
- Mosques are meeting place for Muslims in their stipulated prayer times.

CHAPTER 6**RELIGION AND CONTEMPORARY ISSUES**

The term Contemporary Issues means current issues, or present- day issues, or modern-day issues. In other words, we will be looking at issues that are affecting the society today; issues that are topical in society today.

In short, we will be looking at the relationship between religion and topical issues in today's society. For example, we are looking at the relationship between religion and family; how does religion influence family or how does family influences religion?

RELIGION, FAMILY AND IDENTITY**FAMILY****Definition of a family**

- A family is a group of people who live together and are related to each other by marriage, blood or adoption.
- A family is a group of people who are related through blood, marriage or custom.
- A family is a group of people consisting of parents and children.
- A group of people consisting of a grandfather and mother living with their children.
- The term family is derived from the Latin word 'familia', meaning a household establishment and refers to a 'group of individuals living together during important phases of their lifetime and bound to each other by biological and or social and psychological relationships.'

Family structure**Definition**

- Family structure is the way in which families are organised in terms of the members found in each particular family.
- Family structure has to do with the different people making a family.

- A family in an African society is made up of parents and children.
- In Zimbabwe a family is headed by the father who is seconded by the wife or wives.
- NB: In Zimbabwe a man can marry more than one wife [polygamy], but a woman cannot marry more than one husband.

Types of families or family structures

1. Nuclear family-(i) *Monogamous family*. (ii) *Polygamous Family*
2. Extended family
3. Single parent family
4. Child- headed family
5. Adopted family
6. Step or blended family
7. Foster family.

1. Nuclear family

- Consists of a husband [father] and wife [mother] and their children.
(a) *Monogamous family*: consists of a father, mother and children.
(b) *Polygamous family*: consists of a father, several wives and children.

Advantages of Monogamous family

1. It is easy to look after.
2. There are less quarrels
3. It is easy to take care of children
4. Spreading of diseases such as Hiv/Aids is minimal.

Disadvantages of polygamous family

1. It has many quarrels and fights
2. It is not easy to look after children
3. If one partner is unfaithful diseases such as Hiv/Aids can easily spread.
4. It is not easy to look after since it is difficult to satisfy everyone.
5. Jealousy and suspicion are rife or common.

2. Extended family

- This includes members of the nuclear family, father, mother and children, and their relatives such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews and many others.

-

3. Single parent family

- This is a family that has one parent and the child or children. The parent can either be the mother or the father.
- This type of a family is caused by either the death of either the husband or the wife or caused by divorce.

4. Child- headed family

- Child headed family is a family whereby one of the children especially the eldest child heads the family and this could have been caused by either the death of parents, divorce, or neglect of children by their parents and relatives.
- In contemporary society children heads families because parents went to Diaspora for green pastures.
- Child headed families and single families [one parent headed families] are a result of the diminishing role of extended family.

5. Adopted family

- It is whereby someone legally takes responsibility of a child from the biological parents and permanently becomes a member of the adoptive family and takes the adopting family's name.
- Adoption is a permanent set up which is made binding by law or religious approval.
- Adoption can result in multi-racial and multi-ethnic families.

6. Step or blended family

- Is a family whereby one parent or both have children from a previous relationship which they bring into the new relationship.
- The partner who has no biological ties with his or her partner's children is called a step parent [step mother or step father].
- The partner's children are step children [step daughter or step son].
- Children who do not share any of the biological parents are step siblings [step brother or step sister].
- Step families can blend people from different races.

7. Foster family

- A foster family is when another family takes a child from another family as temporary guardians. Fostering is a temporary arrangement whereby another family provides for the child with care that the parents would be failing to provide.
- The child would return when the conditions have improved or when he/she is to live independently or to be placed for adoption.
- A foster family can either be a single parent family or may have both parents.

NB: We don't choose families to belong to and it is not a mistake to belong to any type of a family. We should, therefore, feel proud of our families no matter what.

IDENTITY.

- It is a uniqueness of a person or something from the rest.
- Identity is the difference or the character that marks off an individual from the rest.

Family identity

- Family identity is the family's values and desires.
- Values and desires are what set a family apart from other families such as dressing, type of food, the way we talk [our language], family values, family name, and family belief system.

Factors that influence one's identity

1. Family

- Family is important in moulding one's personality. Families promote unity and oneness among family members.
- Family teaches the values of Ubuntu/Unhu; that is, a person is a person through others. Family is important in imparting or teaching good moral values into the growing child.
- A family has shared values, a strong common identity, and a protective environment for all members and strong support systems.
- The family is the first socialization agent of an individual.

2. Society.

- Some values, beliefs and practices as well as behaviours are found in the society we live.

3. Religion.

- Religion helps in giving individuals good identity and in some cases; religion can be used negatively which leads others to have a negative identity.
- Religious factors that show identity are:
 - (i) Commitment
 - (ii) Leadership
 - (iii) Brotherhood or unity
 - (iv) Customs
 - (v) Traditions
 - (vi) Symbolism
 - (vii) Dress
 - (viii) Values
 - (ix) Ethics
 - (x) Family
 - (xi) Language
 - (xii) Gender.

4. School.

- Some people's identities are shaped and perfected at school, such as being punctual, hardworking, smartness, honesty and being responsible.
- However, some are influenced for good or for bad at school. Some are copycats of others and this impact negatively on character and identity.
- Being imitators of other people in doing bad at school leads to one being identified as a bad person.

5. Friends.

- Some people copy certain behaviours from friends.
- Some are influenced by their friends to be better people, and will be identified as good people.
- Bad influence from friends leads to most people being identified as bad people in society and family.
- Bad company ruins good character.

6. Media

- Some people are influenced for good or bad through television, internet, newspapers and radios.
- People should be therefore, be careful on what they see on the media because their behaviours, values and family identity can be eroded.

- Thus, some people's identity is shaped by media.

ROLE OF IR AND FAMILY IDENTITY

-IR gives families an identity through:

1. Totems.

- Totem is an object or animal which serves as a symbol or emblem of a family eg lion [shumba], moyo [heart], zebra [mbizi].
- A totem distinguishes between two families.
- People of the same totem are relatives and therefore, discouraged to marry each other.

2. Language.

- Language is a particular form of words and speech used by people of a particular family, country, area or social group.
- Language involves signs, symbols, sounds, feelings and ideas of a specific group of people.
- Different languages spoken by different families give them an identity. Some speak Shona, others Ndebele, English, Venda, Nda, Kalanga, Nambya etc.

3. Cultural practices.

- Culture is a way of life of a people.
- It involves ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society.
- This has to do with people's behaviour [hunhu], beliefs, norms and values, language and symbols.
- Cultural practices include rituals, rites, taboos, dressing, dancing, songs, and habits. These practices help in giving a family an identity.

4. **The Land.** Is seen as ancestral land. Each family or clan is identified by the land they own. Land bears the remains of the ancestors in the form of graves

5. Surnames

- Different surnames such as Mashiringwani, Zvokureva, Chikokori, Hwingwiri, Munyikwa, Dikito and many others also give a family an identity. These surnames give a sense of belonging.

Role of families in fostering Ubuntu/Unhu values in IR.

- Family is the most important foundation of society.
- Family is/was responsible for developing human resources for the community.
- Family help to develop an ideal person, a person with ubuntu values such as good behaviour, respect for others, respect for elders, hard work, dignity, perseverance, friendly, hospitality, self-control, teamwork, tolerance, honesty, faithfulness, generous, helpful, empathy and caring.
- Family structure played an important role in the formation of ubuntu core values such as unity, socialisation, good morals, responsibility, gender roles, social responsibility, language and culture.
- In IR the extended family played an important role of shaping a person into a cultured, respected and dignified person [munhu pavanhu] and not nzenza, nhubu, or mhuka yemunhu.
- Family members such as Aunts, uncles, father, mother, brothers and sisters helped children to know what is right and wrong, and to do what is good to others and to be morally upright.
- They interact with each other at different levels such as family gathering, night vigils, rituals or ceremonies and day to day activities.

- Parents are the first agents of socialising ubuntu/unhu values into children.
- **The mother** teaches her daughter the expected code of conduct, tsika. The daughter's behaviour was always a measure of the work done by the mother in fostering unhu values to her daughter, thus the shona saying; "Mwana asina kurairwa namai vake". These sayings were common to married girls who lacked unhu/Ubuntu values such as respect for elders.
- The mother also taught her daughters gender roles and what it means to be a woman.
- The mother taught her daughters tsika -that is the ability to show unhu/ubuntu values such as respect, helpfulness, humbleness and hospitality.
- Mothers teach girls to be humble, to talk in a peaceful way to elders and how to respect the mother-in-law even when she did wrong
- **The Aunt [Tete]** played a pivotal role in fostering unhu/ubuntu values in girls in IR. Aunt taught girls to maintain their virginity so that they get respect from their future husbands.
- Tete taught girls how to cook delicious food, to respect the parents in laws, how to be good mothers, how to be good wives, to be hardworking, hospitable and honesty. In other words, Aunt played a major role in shaping the behaviour of the girl child in IR.
- Aunt played a pivotal role during the rite of passage into adulthood, when they took girls to Chinamwari and teach them how to take care and handle their husbands when married.
- Tete taught girls how to interact with others gracefully or kindly.
- Aunt played a role in courtship, thus encouraging unity in the community.
- Tete played a role in solving family disputes, thus fostering the unhu/ubuntu values of peace, tolerance, reconciliation, teamwork, interdependence, unity and solidarity.
- **Uncle** taught boys to be good fathers with wisdom, who obey ancestors since ancestors are the ones who communicate with God.
- Teach boys to respect others, respect elders, to respect their wives and to do good to others, thus teaching boys the values of unhu/ ubuntu.
- **The family unit** was also responsible for fostering unhu/ubuntu values such as unity, collectivism and teamwork.
- The family was united during calamities thereby creating a sense of belonging to family members.
- Night vigils [pungwe] created opportunities for storytelling, and these stories were important in shaping unhu/ubuntu values in individuals such as respect, communalism, solidarity, dignity, patience and perseverance.
- The family encourage each member to work hard and avoid laziness, thus fostering the values of hard work.
- **Brothers and sisters** teach unhu/ubuntu values through games, songs and dances. Through mahumbwe they teach gender roles in society.
- In IR brothers enforced their sisters' behaviour and would sometimes beat them for misbehaviour.
- **However**, elders in the community also help to promote unhu/ubuntu in IR.
- Education and churches also help in fostering unhu/ubuntu.

Roles of members in IR family

1. Father:

- He buys food for the family

- He provides accommodation or shelter.
 - Protects his family
 - Disciplining members of his family
 - Giving rules and regulations
 - Milking cows.
- 2. Mother.**
- Cook food
 - Sweep the house
 - Wash clothes
 - Working in the fields such weeding of the fields.
 - Bearing and caring for children [Looking after children]
- 3. Girl child.**
- Helping mother to clean the house
 - Help mother in farming.
 - Help mother to looking after her young siblings
 - Help mother to cook
 - Washing of dishes.
 - Fetching water
- 4. Boy child.**
- Herding cattle
 - Doing gardening
 - Helping father to milk cows.
 - Help father in farming

INTER-DEPENDENCY OF FAMILIES

- Inter-dependency of families is whereby families complement each other.
- It means families depend on each other and need each other.
- Families depend on each other, and no family can live in isolation.
- Families do not exist in isolation.

Ways in which religions encourage families to depend on each other.

- 1. Marriages.**
 - Religions encourage people to marry from other families, it is forbidden and a sin to marry within a family.
 - Therefore, families depend on each other for wives and husbands.
 - Furthermore, family members take part in the preparation of their children's marriage and this show and encourage family inter-dependency.
- 2. Visiting the sick-** IR, Judaism, Christianity and Islam consider the visiting of the sick as a social responsibility and as a way of interdependency as the sick person will be assisted with thing he/she lacks and at the same time it promotes healing as the sick person might forget about his/her sickness because of visitors. Visiting the sick is a sign of love and interdependency of families in society.
- 3. Funerals.**

- IR, Christianity, Judaism and Islam encourage family inter-dependency of families in the face of death.
 - When a loved one dies, relatives and people in the surrounding communities assemble to comfort the grieving family.
 - It is this time that other families come together to pay their condolences, assist in burying and to give hope to the surviving members.
- 4. Assisting each other in time of natural disasters and calamities-** all religions teach that community members must assist each other to get of trouble or to get what one lacks for example during cyclone Idai, families assisted the people whose homes were destroyed by providing them with tents, food, clothes and a variety of items.
- 5. Charity or assisting the needy**
- Christianity and Judaism have tithe that is 10% of one's wealth, Islam has zakat, which is 2.5% of one's wealth which should be given to the poor and those in needy. This encourages family inter-dependency.
 - IR has Kuronzera or kuperekana mombe, whereby rich families are encouraged to assist poor families by lending them cattle to use in ploughing fields as well as for milk and this encourage families to depend on each other since the poor family will have cattle to use and on the other hand the rich family will have someone to look after the cattle.
- 6. Humwe/Nhimbe/ ilima**
- It is a ritual in IR which encourages collectivism, whereby community members assist each other in doing work such as weeding of the fields, harvesting, cultivation of the fields and taking out of the cow dung from kraal.
 - Humwe - means oneness. This means the community becomes one as they assist one another.
 - Humwe/Nhimbe brings people together and creates oneness and a sense of unity within the community, thus it encourages family inter-dependency.
- 7. Zunderamambo**
- In IR traditional leaders such as chiefs [madzishe] have royal granaries into which all members of the community contribute and the leader will give the food to the poor and the disadvantaged members of the community, as well as to the people in the community in time of a famine or drought.
 - This shows that the community of families depend on each other through the zunderamambo program.
- 8. Teaching about sharing**
- Religions teach the importance of sharing and this encourages families to depend on each other.
 - IR has a proverb, "Ukama igasva hunozadziswa nekudya." [a relationship is a covenant that is strengthened through eating together]. The shona also have a proverb, "Kandiro kanoenda kunobva kamwe' or kandiro enda kandiro dzoka.' This shows that IR just like Christianity teaches that what you wish that man do to you do so to him. This encourages sharing and acts of love to fellow human beings and this encourages families to depend on each other.
 - Kupanana mbeu [sharing crop seed; seed exchange for food sovereignty and security] shows that families depend on each other.
 - Christianity teaches that he who has two coats let him share with he who has none, and he who has food let him do likewise, this encourages family inter-dependency.

9. Barter trade.

- Barter trade in all religions encourage families to depend on each other.

10. Taking good care of strangers and culture of love.

- All religions teach that we ought to be kind and take good care of strangers and visitors.
- Christianity teaches that we must take good care of strangers because Jesus or an angel might come in a form of a visitor and this encourage people to be hospitable to strangers and visitors, therefore encouraging family inter-dependency.
- IR has a proverb, 'Mweni haendi nedura' or 'zuva rimwe haripedzi dura,' [the guest does not carry away the granary or one day does not empty the granary/]. This shows that the belly of the sojourner does not deplete one's resources. IR teaches its members to take good care of strangers, thus encouraging families to depend on each other.

11. Majana or Madzoro [rotational herding of cattle or livestock]

- Is whereby families rotate to herd cattle in the community in IR shows the inter-dependency of families in IR.

12. Rituals and ceremonies

- In all religions there are some rituals or ceremonies which are community based such as Mukwerera for IR and Praying for rain in Christianity shows that religion encourage families to depend on each other.
- Initiation ceremony in IR where youth from different families are initiated into adulthood shows the inter-dependency of families

13. Strong emphasis on Kinship [relational ties to extended families] and collectivism.

- IR teaches that 'mwana ndweddu tese,' it takes a village to raise a child. This shows that other families have a role in raising children in IR. It is a responsibility of a society or community to raise a child, and this shows that the families depend on each other.
- In case of death of parents in IR children will be taken care of by other members of the extended family and this shows that families depend on each other.
- IR has a proverb, 'Kutsva kwendebvu varume vanodzimurana.' This encourages families to assist each other in time of trouble or need.

14. Mutambo yevana vadiki/ mahumbwe [children's play or game]

- Children of the whole community play together and this shows the inter-dependency of families in IR.

15. Giving each other gifts. In Islam if families give each other gifts from time to time, that will create love, cooperation and goodwill between them. In IR they believe in kandiyo kanoenda kunobva kamwe, thus giving each other gifts in IR help to build a strong bond of love and cooperation between families and this promotes good neighbourliness and inter-dependency.

16. Church camps.

- Church camps such as Youth camps and Ruwadzano rwemadzimai where people from different families meet, share and discuss on religious issues, show the inter-dependency of families in Christianity.

17. Unhuism/ Ubuntu

- IR emphasises on the individual in relationship to the community [hunhu], rather than on the individual themselves, that is, 'I am human because I belong.'

- Unhu/Ubuntu embraces the sense and belief that, “I am because you are, and since we are, therefore, I am.” This means that everything that one does will affect others in a community.
 - Unhu/Ubuntu looks at norms and values in society and oneness in society. Harmony and inter-dependency, sharing life together, belongingness based on human solidarity.
 - Unhu/ Ubuntu encourages unity, one man’s problem is another’s problem, varume kutsva kwendebyu tinodzimurana.
 - Unhu/ Ubuntu is the love for fellow human beings since a person is a person through other people [munhu munhu nekuda kwevanhu], thus IR through Unhu/Ubuntu encourages family inter-dependency since it teaches that each one of us needs all of us.
18. Respect for each other by not speaking evil against one another and to desist from violence and murder are teachings of all the religions which encourage families to depend on each other.

Ways religion hinders family inter-dependency

- **Witch- hunting-** the exercise of witch-hunting in Christianity and Indigenous Religion causes enmity between families and this hinders families to depend on each other.
- **Ritual Killings** especially in IR hinders families to depend on each other; for example, the killing of Tapiwa Makore in Murerwa in 2020.
- Christianity, Judaism and Islam consider people who do not follow their religion as pagans or infidels and this cause hostility and enmity between families.
- Holy wars or Jihads in Islam do not promote families to depend on each other.
- Cases of divorce in all religion do not promote family inter-dependency.
- Terrorism especially by Islamic groups such as the Taliban and the Boko Haram do not encourage families to depend on each other for this cause hostility and suspicion.