

World Religions Final

Hinduism

“The soul never takes birth and never dies at any time, nor does it come into being again when the body is created.... As a person gives up old and worn out garments and accepts new apparel, similarly the embodied soul giving up old and worn out bodies verily accepts new bodies.”

Bhagavad Gita 2:20 & 22.

Part A

- The soul, or *Atman*, is beyond the body, mind, or consciousness. It is eternal.
- Instead the *Atman* goes through the process of *samsara*, or reincarnation, where the soul leaves an old body and enters a new one.
- The soul is basically the identity of the person; the true self of the person behind the facade of an imperfect and impermanent body.

Part B

Samsara, in Hinduism, is the constant cycle of death and rebirth. However, reincarnation is not the goal of Hinduism; the biggest goal of Hinduism is to escape this constant cycle of death and rebirth and attain *moksha*. Whether (or what) you reincarnate into another life or attain *moksha* is determined by *karma* in this life (and past lives), which is basically the spiritual principle of cause-and-effect, your bad actions have consequences, and your good actions have rewards. Therefore, if you do mostly good actions in your life, you will attain *moksha*, and if you do mostly bad actions, you will be reincarnated.

Judaism

“See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and adversity. If you obey the commandments of the Lord your God that I am commanding you today, by loving the Lord your God, walking in his ways, and observing his commandments,

decrees, and ordinances, then you shall live and become numerous, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering to possess.”

Part A

- If you get rid of the inclinations to do bad, or *yetzer ha-ra*, God will bless you.
- Israel is the holy land of the Jews, after they escaped from Egypt, led by Moses.
- Commandments by God, or *mitzvoth*, must be followed with your own free will or God will not bless you (or, if you really screw up, you go to Hell)

Part B

Humans have free will because the actions that humans took on a day-to-day basis would be insignificant otherwise -- if a person who steals has been destined to steal, he or she would be no different from a person who is destined to be a philanthropist. However, the way that Jews exercise free will causes either rewards or retribution to be meted out by God.

Daoism

“Less and less do you need to force things,
until finally you arrive at non-action.

When nothing is done,
nothing is left undone.

True mastery can be gained
By letting things go their own way.

It cannot be gained by interfering.”

Part A

- "interfering" is the best way to leave nature undisturbed, which is one of the principal goals of Daoism. Therefore, if you do not interfere with nature, you will gain mastery of being one with nature.

Part B

Non-action, or *wu wei* is very important in Daoism, since leaving nature unchanged by human hands is one of the principal tenets of Daoism. However, even though nothing is getting done externally through the concept of inaction, integrating the flow of nature and not doing anything to upset that flow in your own life will cause you to progress through life at the perfect pace.