

# Islam

Islam began to develop in A.D. 610. This is when Islamic tradition states that the angel Gabriel began to reveal the word of God to a merchant named Muhammad. These revelations were eventually written down in a book called the Qur'an—Islam's sacred book. They formed the basis for Islamic belief and practice. Islam teaches that there is only one God, called Allah in Arabic. This is the same God that is worshiped in Christianity and Judaism. The followers of Islam, called Muslims, show their devotion to God by performing five ritual duties, also known as the Five Pillars of Islam. These duties are faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and a pilgrimage to Mecca.

Today, Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world. Many of the more than 1 billion Muslims live in southwestern and central Asia and parts of Africa. Followers also live in Southeast Asia, Europe, and the Americas.



## ▲ Mosque

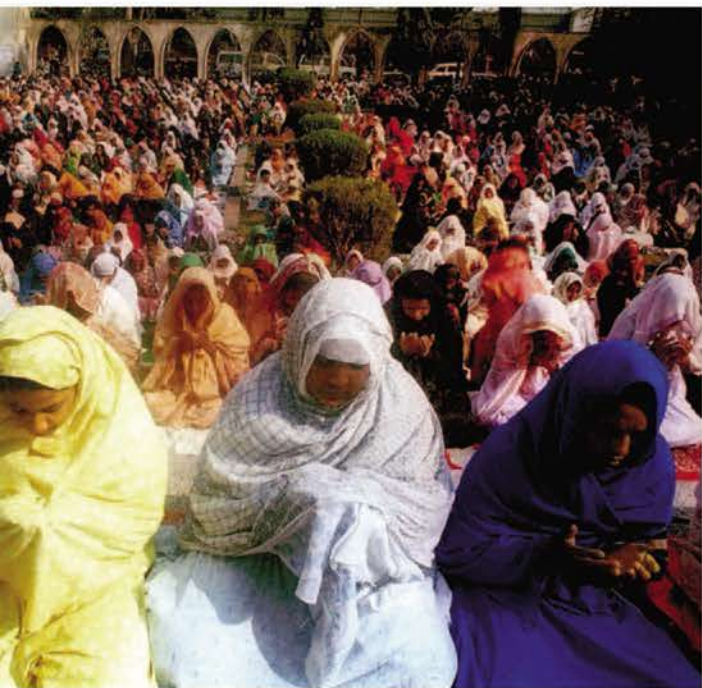
An Islamic house of worship is called a mosque. All mosques contain a prayer niche, which indicates the direction in which to pray—always toward Mecca. Many mosques also include the minarets, or towers, seen in this mosque in Turkey. The call to prayer is often made from these towers.

## ▼ Pilgrimage

The hajj, or pilgrimage to Mecca in Saudi Arabia, is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. Believers who are financially and physically able are expected to make the journey at least once. Pilgrims carry out many rituals, including circling the Ka'aba, the small shrine shown to the left in this photograph.







### ▲ Muslim Women

The role of women in Islamic society is hotly debated today. In some traditional societies, women are not allowed to pursue an education or work outside of the home. Like the women in this photograph, they are also expected to wear a full veil in public.



## Learn More About Islam

**Symbol** The crescent moon and star are often used to symbolize Islam. The symbols sometimes appear on the flags of Islamic countries or decorate the tops of mosques.



### Primary Source

The Qur'an is the chief authority in all matters of Islamic life. Muslim children begin receiving instruction in the Qur'an at an early age. Muslim adults continue to read and consult the book throughout their lives. The following selection discusses the all-powerful nature of God. It appears in a chapter of the Qur'an titled Faith in God.

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate,  
the Merciful*

All that is in the heavens and the earth gives glory to God. He is the Mighty, the Wise One.

It is He that has sovereignty [authority] over the heavens and the earth. He ordains life and death, and has power over all things.

He is the First and the Last, the Visible and the Unseen. He has knowledge of all things.

*from the Qur'an 57:1–3*

**Chapter Connection** For more on the beginnings and early history of Islam, see Chapters 3 and 4.



# Judaism

Jews, the followers of Judaism, believe in one God. In fact, Judaism is probably the oldest monotheistic religion. The first five books of the Hebrew Bible, called the Torah, set down the basic laws and teachings of Judaism. According to the Torah, God chose a Hebrew shepherd named Abraham to be the “father” of the Hebrew people. Around 1800 B.C., Abraham led his people to a land that he believed God had promised them. This land would later be called Israel. In 1948, a Jewish state was created on the land.

Judaism is the smallest of the world’s major religions, with slightly more than 14 million Jews. But this small religion has greatly influenced the development of today’s two largest religions—Christianity and Islam.



## ▲ Hanukkah

According to legend, the mid-winter holiday of Hanukkah celebrates the miracle of an oil lamp that burned for eight days instead of one. For eight days, Jews observe the holiday with prayers and rituals. Jewish children, like those shown here, play a traditional game with a dreidel, a sort of spinning top.

## ▼ Jewish Ghetto

During the Middle Ages, Jews were forced to live in special areas of cities called ghettos. The areas were named after the section of Venice where Jews were forced to live in the 16th century. This synagogue, the Jewish house of worship, is located in the Jewish ghetto in Venice.





### ▼ Moses

According to the Torah, Moses led the Hebrews out of slavery in Egypt. During the journey, Moses received the Ten Commandments from God. The commandments set down many moral laws for all of humanity. This painting shows Moses holding the Ten Commandments.



## Learn More About Judaism

**Symbol** A major symbol of Judaism is the Star of David. The six-pointed star honors King David, who ruled ancient Israel around 1000 B.C. and ushered in its golden age.



### Primary Source

The Hebrew Bible contains writings about Jewish history and culture. However, it also contains many stories that are important to other people as well. The Book of Genesis is the first book of the Hebrew Bible and of the Torah. It tells the history of the Jewish people. It also includes the story of the creation of the world.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters.

And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day.

*Genesis 1:1–5*

**Chapter Connection** For information on Jews in Medieval Europe, see Chapter 10.



# Confucianism

Confucianism is an ethical system based on the teachings of an ancient Chinese scholar named Confucius. Confucius believed that society should be organized around five basic relationships. These are the relationships between (1) ruler and subject, (2) father and son, (3) husband and wife, (4) elder brother and junior brother, and (5) friend and friend. Confucius believed that the proper conduct of these relationships would create a harmonious society founded on goodness. His ideas became the foundation of Chinese thought for more than 2,000 years.

Confucianism was never a religion, but it has greatly influenced people's spiritual beliefs. Many Chinese and other people in East Asia combine the religious practice of Buddhism with the teachings of Confucianism.



## ▲ Confucius

Confucius was born in 551 B.C., during a time of crisis in China. He hoped his ideas and teachings would restore the order of earlier times to his society. This painting shows Confucius with some of his followers.

## ▼ Celebration for Confucius

Although no one knows exactly the day when Confucius was born, many people in East Asia celebrate his birthday on September 28. Here, performers in traditional dress take part in Confucius' birthday celebration.





### ▼ Golden Rule

Confucius taught that people should treat others with respect and live by the golden rule. The characters in this ink-stamp spell out the rule "Do not do unto others what you would not want others to do unto you."



## Learn More About Confucianism

**Symbol** The harmony that Confucius hoped to achieve is represented by the yin-and-yang symbol. The symbol represents opposite forces in the world working together. Yin represents all that is cold, dark, soft, and mysterious. Yang is the opposite—warm, bright, hard, and clear.



### Primary Source

During his lifetime, Confucius never had enough power to put his ideas into practice. But after his death, Confucius' students spread his teachings. In the 400s B.C., they collected his teachings in a book called the *Analects*. In the following selections from the *Analects*, Confucius is referred to as the Master.

The Master cut out four things. He never took anything for granted, he never insisted on certainty, he was never inflexible and never egotistical. (9.4)

The Master said: "Regard loyalty and good faith as your main concern. Do not make friends of those who are not up to your own standard. If you commit a fault, do not shrink from correcting it." (9.25)

The Master said: "If one loves someone, can one avoid making him work hard? If one is loyal to someone, can one avoid instructing him?" (14.7)

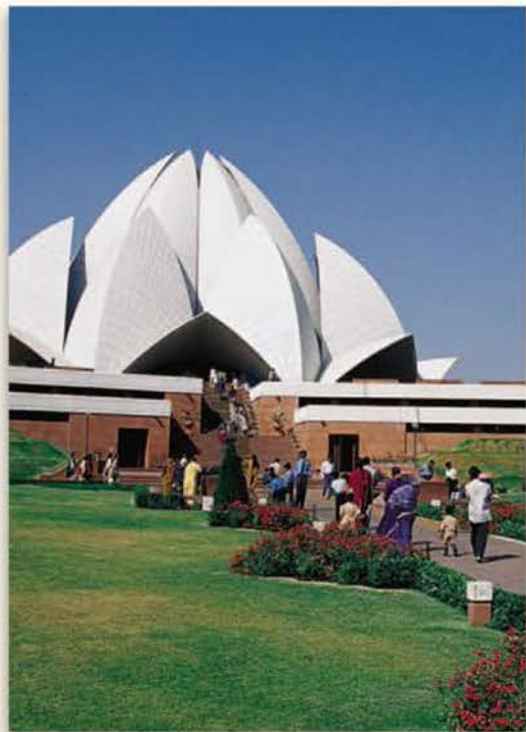
from the *Analects*  
Translated by Raymond Dawson

**Chapter Connection** For more about Confucianism, see Chapter 7.



## Other Important Religions

In addition to the five major world religions you have learned about, there are many other important religions. Among these are Bahaism, Shinto, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. Two of these religions—Shinto and Zoroastrianism—are especially important historically because they are ancient. All of the religions are significant today because they have many followers.



### ▲ Bahaism

Bahaism (buh•HAH•IHZ•uhm) was founded in Persia in 1863 by a man known as Bahauallah, which means “splendor of God” in Arabic. The religion’s founder was believed to be the most recent in a line of messengers sent by God to teach people moral behavior. Above all, the founder taught that God wants all the different people of the world to form a single, united society. People’s differences and their unity are symbolized by the Baha’i (bah•HAH•ee) houses of worship, which have nine sides and a central dome. Worshipers here are entering the Baha’i house of worship in New Delhi, India.

### ▼ Shinto

Shinto is the oldest surviving religion of Japan. It is based on the worship of nature. Shintoists believe that spirits, called *kami*, are found throughout nature. They worship these spirits at shrines in their homes and in public shrines. The torii, or gate, shown here marks the entrance to a Shinto shrine. Most of the nearly 3 million Shintoists practicing today live in Japan. Many combine Shinto with Buddhism or Confucianism.







## ◀ Sikhism

Sikhism (SEEK•IHZ•uhm) is one of the religions of India and was founded over 500 years ago by Guru Nanak, a man raised in the Hindu tradition. The religion's followers are called Sikhs, which means "disciples." Sikhs believe in one God who created the universe and who is present everywhere. They believe that by living a good and simple life they can free themselves from the cycle of life and death. The Golden Temple in India, shown here, is the holiest Sikh shrine for the religion's nearly 24 million followers.









## ▲ Zoroastrianism

A prophet from Persia (present-day Iran) named Zoroaster founded Zoroastrianism (ZAWR•oh•AS•tree•uh•NIHZ•uhm) around 600 B.C. The religion teaches a belief in one god, Ahura Mazda (ah•HUR•uh MAZ•duh). Followers must obey this god, who will judge them when they die. Today, many of the world's nearly 2.5 million Zoroastrians make a pilgrimage and pray at this temple built in a mountain in southern Iran.





# Comparing World Religions and Ethical Systems

	Buddhism	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam	Judaism	Confucianism
						
<b>Followers worldwide</b> (estimated 2003 figures)	364 million	2 billion	828 million	1.2 billion	14.5 million	6.3 million
<b>Name of god</b>	no god	God	Brahman	Allah	God	no god
<b>Founder</b>	the Buddha	Jesus Christ	no one founder	no founder but spread by Muhammad	Abraham	Confucius
<b>Holy book</b>	many sacred books, including the Dhammapada	Bible, including Old Testament and New Testament	many sacred books, including the Upanishads	Qur'an	Hebrew Bible, including the Torah	<i>Analects</i>
<b>Clergy</b>	Buddhist monks	priests, ministers, monks, and nuns	Brahmin priests, monks, and gurus	no clergy but a scholar class, called the ulama, and imams, who may lead prayers	rabbis	no clergy
<b>Basic beliefs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Followers can achieve enlightenment by understanding The Four Noble Truths and by following The Noble Eightfold Path of right opinions, right desires, right speech, right action, right job, right effort, right concentration, and right meditation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He died to save humanity. His death and resurrection made eternal life possible for others.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The soul never dies but is continually reborn until it becomes enlightened.</li> <li>Persons achieve happiness and enlightenment after they free themselves from their earthly desires.</li> <li>Freedom from earthly desires comes from many lifetimes of worship, knowledge, and virtuous acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Persons achieve salvation by following the Five Pillars of Islam and living a just life. The pillars are faith, prayer, charity, fasting, and pilgrimage to Mecca.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is only one God, who watches over and cares for his people.</li> <li>God loves and protects his people but also holds people accountable for their sins and shortcomings.</li> <li>Persons serve God by studying the Torah and living by its teachings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social order, harmony, and good government should be based on strong family relationships.</li> <li>Respect for parents and elders is important to a well-ordered society.</li> <li>Education is important for the welfare of both the individual and society.</li> </ul>

Source: *World Almanac 2004*