

# World Religions



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# JUDAISM: THE JEWISH FAITH

# Judaism

IS ONE OF THE OLDEST MONOTHEISTIC RELIGIONS AND WAS  
FOUNDED OVER 3500 YEARS AGO IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Abraham's faith in God is tested time and again. In this way, Abraham proves to be a righteous man and leads this example to Jewish people.



He is considered as the Forefather of Christians and Jews, as well as Muslims.

Abraham



Star of David



The Torah

It is the Centre of Jewish life. It lays the groundwork of Israel's faith in God.

The stories of Creation, Abraham and Sarah, and Moses, as well as the Commandments are reflected in the Torah.



It has seven spaces, the six points plus the centre. The number seven is important in Judaism, for example, the Six Days of Creation plus the Seventh Day of Rest.

## The Synagogue

IT HAS TWO PURPOSES. FIRST, IT IS THE HOUSE WHERE TORAH IS TAUGHT TO ALL JEWS. SECOND, IT PROVIDES THE PLACE OF WORSHIP OUTSIDE JERUSALEM.

THROUGH THE SYNAGOGUE, JEWISH PEOPLE MAINTAIN THEIR IDENTITY AND THEIR WORSHIP NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE. SERVICES ARE CONDUCTED AND THE TORAH SCROLL IS READ FROM A RAISED PLATFORM. THE RABBI SPEAKS FROM A PULPIT TO EXPLAIN THE TORAH.

# A Personal Reflection

What are some of the traditions of the Jewish faith that you find very interesting? How do these traditions teach people to be more faithful to God or teach people to live a better life?

Religious traditions encompass practices, customs, and norms which nurture the connection among believers of the same faith. In the Jewish faith, traditions are most obvious during religious holidays. Some of these traditions which mainly piqued my interest are the Shabbat, the Yom Kippur, and the Shavuot. The practice and observance of such traditions teach people to be more faithful to God or to live a better life in a way that they are reinforcing the core values of gratitude, forgiveness, and obedience. For example, the Shabbat celebrates how God created the world in 6 days and rested on the 7<sup>th</sup>. During the Shabbat, families come together for a dinner in the presence of God and phones, TVs, and such electronic devices are not used since it is considered as the "Holiest Day of the Week". This tradition will teach people to be grateful of what God has blessed them—the food on their tables and most especially, the relationship they have with their families; if people develop a sense of gratitude not only on the material things they have but also on the relationship they established with the people around them, they will learn to be satisfied with the simple things in life. Another example, the Yom Kippur is considered as the "Holiest Day of the Year" since it is during the celebration where Jews confess their sins and make up for their wrong deeds. This tradition teaches us to forgive those who have done us wrong because God himself forgives us every time we repent for our sins. And lastly, the Shavuot commemorates when Moses received the Ten Commandments. This one teaches the value of obedience, for most part, obeying God's commands. Obedience to God's commandments will help us live a better life because this is the best way we could show to others that we reflect Him and His everlasting love within us.



# *The Story of Islam*

# Islam

IS AN ABRAHAMIC MONOTHEISTIC RELIGION WHICH TEACHES THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, AND THAT MUHAMMAD IS THE MESSENGER OF GOD

He was deeply troubled by the idol worship of people in Mecca; he devoted his belief to Allah only. One day, Angel Gabriel visited him to utter direct words of Allah by which he was able to recall the exact words.



The Quran

It is the book in which Allah's revelations to Muhammad are recorded. It gives guidance on how to worship, behave, and see the world.



Muhammad

Crescent Moon and Star

This symbol is seen at the top of Mosques and some flags of Muslim countries. It is used by the Ottoman Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and also dates back from centuries to Pre-Islamic times in Arabia.

## The Mosque

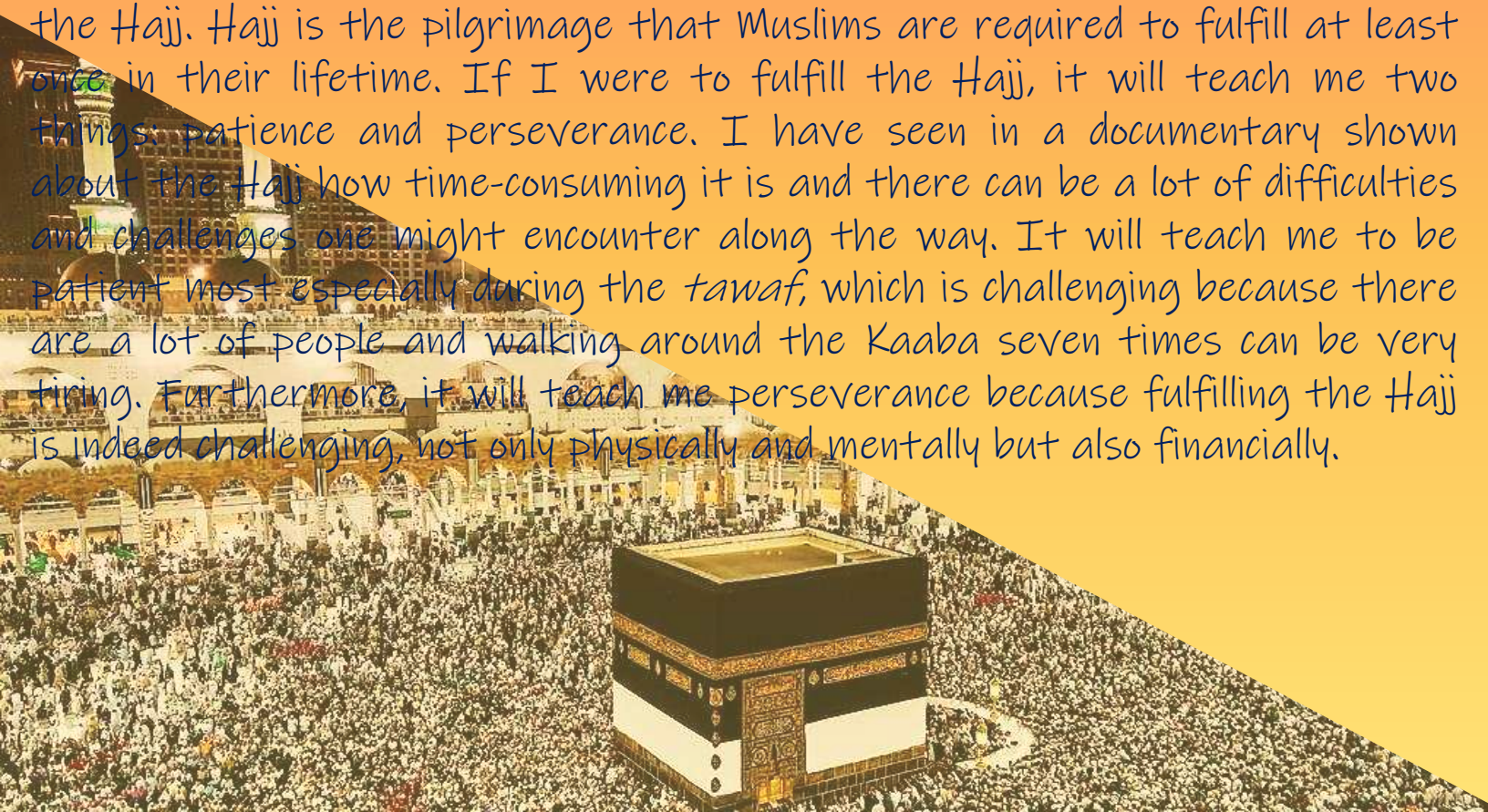
IS A PLACE OF WORSHIP FOR MUSLIMS. MANY OF IT HAVE ELABORATE DOMES, MINARETS, AND PRAYER HALLS, IN VARYING STYLES OF ARCHITECTURE.

MATS OR CARPETS COVER THE FLOOR OF THE MOSQUE, WHERE THE RITUAL PRAYER (SALAT) IS PERFORMED BY ROWS OF MEN WHO BOW AND PROSTRATE THEMSELVES UNDER THE IMAM'S GUIDANCE. THE GENERAL RELIGIOUS LIFE OF MUSLIMS IS CENTERED AROUND THE MOSQUE. IT IS ALSO THE CENTRE OF ALL COMMUNITY LIFE.

# A Personal Reflection

The Five Pillars of Islam are the major source of belief for Muslims. Describe two(2) of the five Pillars and indicate how your life would change or be affected if you were to follow these two(2) Pillars.

Sawm(fasting), Salat(prayer), Shahada(proclamation of faith), Zakat(almsgiving), and Hajj(pilgrimage) are the Five Pillars of Islam, which is the major source of belief for Muslims. One of the Five Pillars is the sawm, also known as fasting, which is observed during the Islamic month of Ramadan. During its observance, Muslims abstain from consuming foods and drinks. If I were to practice fasting, I would deeply feel what it's like to be free from physical gratification. It is because being free from physical gratification will make us avoid the hunger we have for the material things this world offers, which are temporal. On the contrary, being free from physical gratification will make us crave for the spiritual and divine things that are necessary for developing a stronger relationship with God, which is eternal. As people have always seen life, especially making decisions in life, as a battle between the heart and mind, for me it is not. In my opinion, life overall is a battle between the body and the spirit. Another pillar in Islam, the Hajj. Hajj is the pilgrimage that Muslims are required to fulfill at least once in their lifetime. If I were to fulfill the Hajj, it will teach me two things: patience and perseverance. I have seen in a documentary shown about the Hajj how time-consuming it is and there can be a lot of difficulties and challenges one might encounter along the way. It will teach me to be patient most especially during the tawaf, which is challenging because there are a lot of people and walking around the Kaaba seven times can be very tiring. Furthermore, it will teach me perseverance because fulfilling the Hajj is indeed challenging, not only physically and mentally but also financially.





*Christianity*

# Christianity

IS A MONOTHEISTIC ABRAHAMIC RELIGION  
BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF JESUS CHRIST



## The Cross

This symbol recalls the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ and the redeeming benefits of his Passion and death.

The cross is thus a sign both of Christ himself and of the faith of Christians.

## Jesus Christ



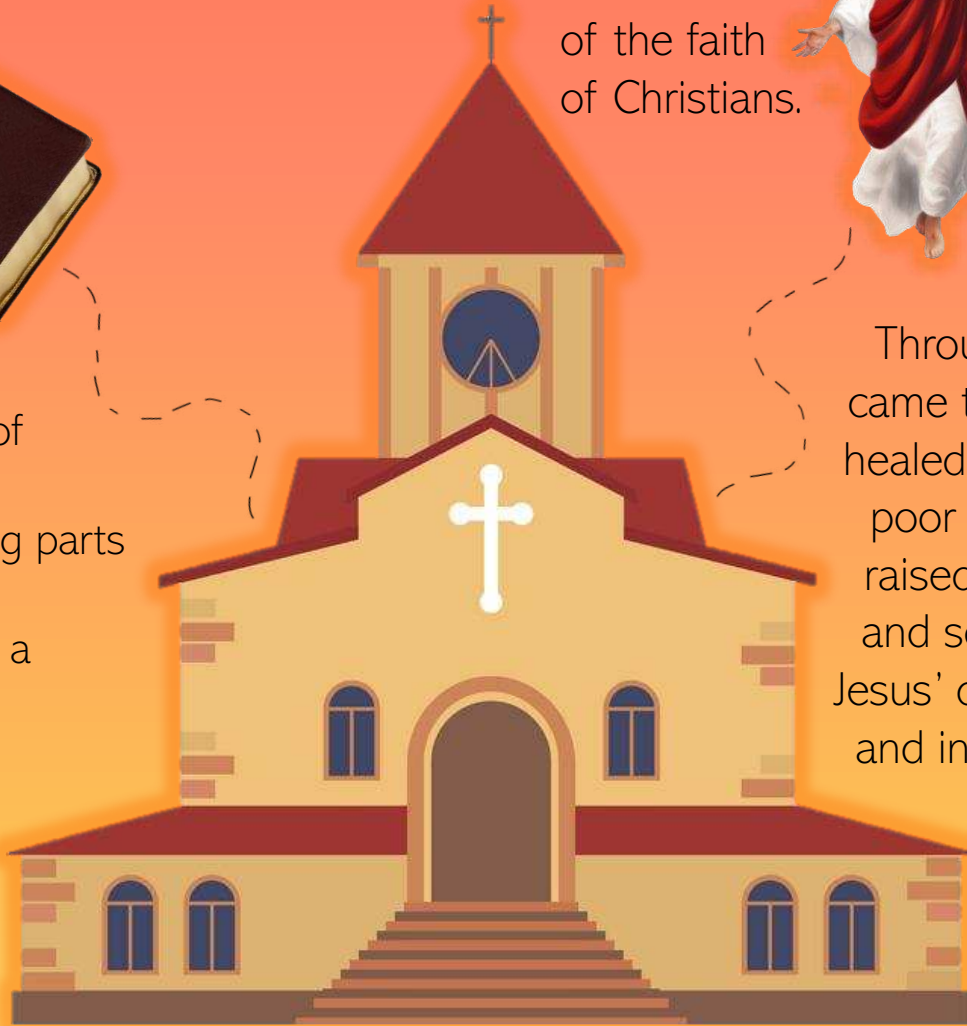
He revealed in a unique way who God is.

Through Him, people came to know God who healed people, loved the poor and the outcast, raised the dead to life, and set people free. In Jesus' death on the cross and in His resurrection, people experienced how faithful He is to God.



## Holy Bible

It is a collection of sacred texts or scriptures. Varying parts of the Bible are considered to be a product of divine inspiration and a record of the relationship between God and humans.



# The Church

IS A BUILDING USED FOR CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY FOR WORSHIP SERVICES. THE TERM "CHURCH" COULD ALSO REFER TO BELIEVERS OF THE SAME FAITH.

IN TRADITIONAL CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE, THE CHURCH IS OFTEN ARRANGED IN THE SHAPE OF A CHRISTIAN CROSS. IN CATHOLIC AND ORTHODOX DENOMINATION, THE PRIEST OR BISHOP LEADS RELIGIOUS SERVICES. IN PROTESTANT DENOMINATION, THE PASTOR FULFILLS THE SAME TASK. ADDITIONALLY, THE EARLIEST DID NOT BUILD CHURCH BUILDINGS, BUT THEY GATHERED IN HOMES INSTEAD.

# A Personal Reflection

What is one(1) interesting point you learned about in the unit that helped you understand aspects of Christianity better? Explain this point and how it changed your understanding.

The most fascinating point that helped me understand the aspects of Christianity better is how Christian denominations came forth—this includes the topics about the Great Schism and the Protestant Reformation. I learned that it is the differences of beliefs in Christian doctrines that had caused such divisions. For example, The Roman Catholic Church and The Eastern Orthodox Church view the celibacy of religious leaders differently; the latter allows married priests while the former does not. As I thoroughly found out about how such differences of beliefs are the reasons why there are a lot of Christian denominations, I have realized that these differences are deeply rooted on the struggles that Christians continue to face personally and spiritually. To be specific, when us Christians struggle with our own ego and/or cynical attitude, it can greatly change the way we see things in this world, may it be physical or spiritual things. For example, if a person has a big ego, that person will think that his belief or faith should be valued more than anyone else. The way we deal with these struggles can also affect our relationship with other people. With that said, differences in beliefs on certain Christian doctrines as influenced by various perspectives in life have are the reasons why there are times that people whose faiths can be traced back from the same religion could not get along and because they could not get along, they form or join a separate denomination which does not go against their beliefs.

