

World religions report in apa style

Religion



Judaism is the Jewish religion. It is one of the oldest of the great world religions, and is the mother religion of both Christianity and Islam. Judaism was not founded by one towering personality, as were most other religions. Abraham and Moses are not regarded as founders. Abraham was the “father of the Hebrew people” and Moses was the “law-giver”. With the destruction of Solomon’s temple at Jerusalem in 586 B. C. began the scattering of the Hebrews over many lands. From then on Judaism developed as a religion without the priestly class of the ancient temple.

Moreover, Judaism is one of the oldest beliefs that are still observed and practiced up to the present and considered as one of the first recorded “monotheistic” faiths. The Jewish’s values and history are the main part of the foundation of different Abrahamic religions like Christianity, Islam, Samaritanism and the Baha’i Faith. In 2006, Judaism’s devotees are approximately 14 million that makes Judaism faith as the eleventh-biggest organized religion globally. Unlike with other religions, Judaism is totally distinct in such a way that its “central authority is not vested in any person or group” but it abides in its writings and traditions.

This would mean that Judaism religion does not have a head or a leader that oversees them but they rather obey what is written in its writings and traditions. Moreover, the Judaism church is continually bound to a number of religious practices and beliefs, specifically its belief that there is one, omnipotent, omni benevolent, transcended omniscient God who made the heavens and the earth and continually have its control over mankind. The conventional Jewish belief stated that the God who made the universe had

made a covenant with the Jewish people only and gave his laws and commandments through Torah.

Judaism's belief and practices are focused on these laws and commandments (see Asheri, Michael. *Living Jewish: the Lore and law of the Practicing Jew*, 1999). According to Jewish law, anyone who has a Jewish mother counts as a Jew, even if he or she is not religious. Many Jews do, however, actively follow the religious practices of Judaism. Judaism is one of the world's oldest religions, beginning some 3,500 years ago in the Middle East. Today, there are about 18 million Jews. They live all over the world, but mostly in the United States, Europe and Israel.

There are many different groups of Jews with different ways of practicing their faith. The main groups are Orthodox, Reform and Conservative Jews (see Jacobs, Louis. *The Book of Jewish Belief* (Behrman House, 2000). II.

Background According to the Jewish holy books, the first Jew was a man called Abraham, who is known as the father of the Jewish people. He was the leader of a group of nomadic people, called the Hebrews. At that time, the Hebrews worshipped many different gods. Abraham taught his people that there is only one God and that they should worship only him. Jews believe that God made a covenant, or agreement, with Abraham.

If Abraham and his people worshipped God and lived good and just lives, God would look after them and give them a land of their own to live in. This was the Promised Land of Canaan (see Shenker, Israel. *Coat of many Colors: Pages from Jewish Life* (Doubleday, 2001). The Jews settled in Canaan but centuries later, famine forced their descendants to move to Egypt in search

offood. They worked for the Egyptians but were treated like slaves and their lives were extremely miserable. God remembered his promise to Abraham and sent a man called Moses to lead the Jews to freedom.

Several times, Moses asked the Pharaoh to let the Jews go, but each time he refused. Only after God sent ten terrible plagues to Egypt did the Pharaoh change his mind. Moses led the Jews out of Egypt and into the desert. After 40 years of wandering, God guided the Jews back to the Promised Land (see Prager, Dennis, and Joseph Telushkin. *Nine Questions People Ask About Judaism* (Simon & Schuster, 1999). The Jewish scriptures are called the Tenakh. They are divided into three parts—the Torah (5 Books of Teaching), the Nevi'im (21 Books of the Prophets) and the Ketuvim (13 Books of Writings).

The initials of the three parts—T, N and K—give the word Tenakh. For Jews, the Torah is the most important part of their scriptures because it contains the rules that teach Jews how to live their lives. These are the teachings that God gave to Moses on Mount Sinai during the Jews' journey through the desert. They are summed up by ten rules, or commandments (see Musaph-Andriessse, R. G. *From Torah to Kabbalah: a Basic Introduction to the Writings of Judaism* (Oxford University, 1998). 1. I am the Lord your God. 2. Worship no other gods but me. 3. Do not use God's name falsely. 4. Keep the Sabbath day holy. . Respectyour father and mother. 6. Do not kill. 7. Do not commit adultery. 8. Do not steal. 9. Do not tell lies about other people. 10. Do not be jealous of other people's possessions. Copies of the Torah are handwritten on scrolls and kept in the synagogue, the Jewish place of worship. Traditional Jews follow the Torah exactly and believe that its teachings should not be

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changed. Less traditional Jews believe that the teaching of the Torah can be adapted to make them more suitable for modern life. Jews can worship anywhere but many choose to pray with other Jews at the synagogue.

The word synagogue means “meeting place”. Synagogues are not only places of worship but also centers for study, celebration and for the community to meet. Large synagogues have services every day but many Jews go to the synagogue only on the Sabbath (called Shabbat in Hebrew) (see below) and special holy days. The service on the morning of the Sabbath lasts for about two hours. A service includes prayers, blessings and readings from the Torah and is led by a teacher, called a rabbi. Readings from the Torah are given from a raised platform, called a bimah, in the centre of the synagogue.

When they are not in use, the scrolls of the Torah are kept in a special alcove, called the Holy Ark. This is the holiest part of the synagogue.

Everyone faces the Ark as they pray (see Musaph-Andriessse, R. G. From Torah to Kabbalah: a Basic Introduction to the Writings of Judaism (Oxford University, 1998). At services in the synagogue, Jewish men wear a small cap, called a kippah, to show respect for God. At some services, men also wear a prayer shawl that reminds the person wearing it of God. Traditional Jews may also wear two small leather boxes, called tefillin.

One is worn on the middle of the forehead; the other is tied to the arm, facing the heart. Inside the boxes are tiny scrolls on which passages from the Torah are written. The tefillin remind Jews that they should love God with their whole hearts and minds (see Musaph-Andriessse, R. G. From Torah to

Kabbalah: a Basic Introduction to the Writings of Judaism (Oxford University, 1998). III. Discussion A. Name and Location of the Site The interview was conducted at Mikvah Chabad House at New Brunswick, New Jersey this is where I had the chance to converse and interview Gary Austein.

It is the place where Jewish people go for spiritual purification. Going in these places help Jewish women come together with their husbands and together with their love for each other where in they also follow the commandments that God has established for His people. Mitzvah of Mikvah is one of their traditions in which helps them get more connected with their God. B.

Interview Summary During the interview I asked Gary Austein the important holidays and traditions of this religion. He answered “ The important holidays and traditions of Judaism are Yom Kippur.

Rosh Hashana and the Passover. The holiest day in the Jewish calendar is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. This day is set aside to repent for the sins of the previous year. It is a day when any adult who has been Bar/Bat Mitzvah'd (age 12-13) fasts and reflects on the past year and asks God for forgiveness. Rosh Hashana is the previous weeks and is the Jewish New Year. Passover is in the spring and it is a time when Jews cannot eat unleavened bread reflecting on the Israelites exodus from Egypt. ” When I asked him on how Judaism has shaped his life.

And I quote “ Religion defines who I am as a person. I would say I am a Jew first and an American second, that is how important it is to me. My value and belief system is a product of my Jewish identity and upbringing. My adult life has brought my Judaism more into my life than ever as I now have a Jewish

home, Jewish wife and child on the way. I also work at a Jewish Day School so I am always reminded of my Jewish identity as both my professional and personal life revolves around my religion. " Jews throughout the world are always a target of anti-Semitism.

This is a fact that they accepted and so with other families. It is scary that millions upon millions of people have been murdered because of their belief in Judaism. Between the Holocausts, pogroms in Russia, and terrorist's attacks, an astounding amount of Jews have died because of their belief. Society is not very conducive for an observant Jewish lifestyle; Jews are supposed to observe the Sabbath (Friday night to Saturday night) and are not supposed to drive, work, spend money, etc. A lot happens on the weekends so this is difficult.

Also if you keep Kosher (Jewish dietary restrictions) it is difficult to eat out as the vast majority of food and restaurants are not kosher. People have much false impression about Judaism. A lack of understanding and acceptance has led to misconceptions, not only of Judaism, but throughout the world. People need to always remind themselves that both Christianity and Islam were born from Judaism. Both religions accept the Torah (the Jewish Bible, also referred to as the Old Testament) as the word of God and credit Judaism for the birth of their respective religions.

If people are more aware of this people then maybe open to differences of people. Judaism defines who a Jew is, they wear it as a badge of honor. For them it is amazing that time still honors traditions that are still practiced at present. Something like male circumcision is the oldest religious tradition in

the world today. It is amazing that it has lasted for thousands of years. It shows the resiliency and the testament of the Jewish faith that they are able to continue throughout the generations. Judaism has greatly shaped his life as a Jew.

And it is through the people around that have helped him a lot in his Religious belief. His parents gave him his Jewish identity and the friends of his family have nurtured it. His best friend who is a rabbinical student has been very influential in shaping his Jewish identity. His marriage also shaped his Jewish identity as his wife converted to Judaism which has given him a newfound zeal and love for his religion. His study of Holocaust has been a dramatic part of his Jewish identity. Finally his visits to Israel, the Jewish state has given him a unique pride in his homeland.

He considers himself a Conservative Jew which is best classified as the middle of the road. For the most part, Jews of different backgrounds are fairly understanding and respectful of the traditions and practices of other sects of Judaism, with the exception of the ultra-Orthodox movement. He believes that if you are a Jewish according to the laws and traditions of Moses then it does not matter how you practice as long as you believe it in your heart. However, he believes that there are certain misinterpretations some of the other sects have undertaken, but that is not something that he could be worried or be burden about.

Judaism has been the common bond of the Jewish people. It is the foundation of their culture and the reason for the creation of Israel, the Jewish State. Israel is the most important tangible asset they have and something that

must be protected at all costs. Judaism is the reason the Jewish people have and are persecuted, yet is the belief and intangible asset that keeps them together as a people. The Covenant is the “ agreement” between God and Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people, that the Jews will be “ the chosen people. This is a fact that is accepted by both Christians and Muslims alike. This covenant was symbolized by Abraham being circumcised and is something that is required for all Jewish males a week after they are born. This is a common misconception. All three of the major monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam have more similarities than differences. Their major prophets are the same; their historical texts are born out of the Jewish Bible, and their belief in one all powerful, all knowing, and benevolent God are distinct commonalities.

They all practice and worship God in different ways, but when it comes down to it, they were all born from Abraham and Sarah, meaning they are all brothers and sisters. IV. Comparing Judaism to Christianity A. Christianity Christianity is the religion based on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. It began in Palestine and was proclaimed the fulfillment of Jewish teaching regarding the coming of the messiah, promised by God to redeem man from sin. Jesus taught the doctrine of the Hebrew prophets that the Jews were God’s chosen people and therefore had the right to hear the message of the Gospel before all others.

However, his teachings had a universal objective and were destined to reach every man and nation (see McCollister, J. C. *The Christian Book of Why* (Jonathan David, 2000). Christianity is a missionary religion, holding that Christ’s message was intended for the whole world, not just for a particular

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area of people. In Mark 16: 15-16, Jesus is quoted as saying: “ Go ye into the entire world, and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved...” Christianity has been not only a religious force, but also a social and political one.

Often it has been imposed by military power that hardly seems in keeping with the precepts of the gentle Jesus. Nevertheless, the moral lessons taught by Christianity have had a profound effect in teaching man to deal justly with his fellows and to observe the pleas of Jesus to “ love thy neighbor as thyself” (Matthew 19: 19). About one-fourth of the world’s people are Christians. Christian churches have an estimated world membership of more than 1. 6 billion—more than twice the membership of any other religion. The original basic beliefs of Christianity are stated in the Apostles’ Creed.

It affirms that Jesus Christ is the son of God and that God sent him to earth to live as a man and to suffer and die for the redemption of mankind. It also states the belief that Jesus, after being crucified, arose from the dead and ascended to heaven, from which he will return to earth to judge the living and the dead. Belief that Jesus was born of a virgin mother and that there is a life for man after death are essential parts of the creed (see McCollister, J. C. *The Christian Book of Why* (Jonathan David, 2000).

Man’s need for help from a higher power was stressed in religions earlier than Christianity. The concept of God as benevolent and forgiving—rather than as vengeful— is a main tenet of the Christian’s faith. Another Christian belief is that even though man has sinned seriously and separated himself from the love of God, he can be saved by repentance. The necessity, and

therefore the possibility, of communion between God and man are accepted by all Christians (see Wiggins, James, and R. S. Ellwood. *Christianity: a Cultural Perspective* (Prentice-Hall, 2002). B. Doctrinal Differences

At first, the gospel of Jesus was spread by his disciples, followers who remembered his sayings. As gentiles (non-Jews) as well as Jews entered the church, the influence of other minds began to be seen in the interpretation of doctrines. In this work, early Christian theologians borrowed ideas from the teachings of the Greek philosophers. At the same time, national traits and customs began to affect rituals and observances. Even within each of the three great divisions of the Christian church—Roman Catholic, Protestant, and eastern Orthodox—there are variations of practice.

This is particularly true of the Protestants. The sacrament of baptism provides an example. Baptists hold that the convert must be completely immersed in water; Methodists believe that sprinkling water on the head is sufficient. Most denominations baptize infants, but some insist that the individual be old enough to understand the meaning of the sacrament (see Walker, Williston. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th edition (Scribner's, 1998). There are other differences. The Disciples of Christ and certain other Protestant groups insist upon using the Bible alone as a source of guidance.

The doctrine of the Trinity—the belief that God is three beings (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) in one divine nature—is accepted as basic by most Christians, but is rejected by Unitarians and Universalists (see Wiggins, James, and R. S. Ellwood. *Christianity: a Cultural Perspective* (Prentice-Hall, 2002). Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox and Anglicans recognize

seven sacraments, while most Protestants recognize only those of Holy Communion (also called the Eucharist or Lord's Supper) and baptism. Catholics believe that the priest by the sacrament of the Eucharist changes bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.

Most Protestants see in the ritual only a spiritual representation of the presence of Jesus (see Wiggins, James, and R. S. Ellwood. *Christianity: a Cultural Perspective* (Prentice-Hall, 2002). The method of church government is a common cause of differences between denominations. The Roman Catholic Church places final authority in the pope, whom it calls the Vicar of Christ. The Episcopal form of church government is headed by bishops of equal authority. Authority over the churches in the Presbyterian form of government is exercised by boards, called presbyteries, ministers and elected laymen.

In churches with the congregational type of government, each congregation has complete local rule (see Walker, Williston. *A History of the Christian Church*, 4th edition (Scribner's, 1998). IV. Conclusion Judaism in the United States has four branches: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist. The total membership of the four branches is lower than the estimated total number of Jews in the United States, because many Jews are not outside the United States and Canada are Orthodox. Orthodox Jews advocate strict observance of traditional rituals and customs.

Hasidic Jews form a small, extremely orthodox, mystical group. Many orthodox synagogues are members of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Reform Jews have abandoned many rituals and

customs that they consider unsuited to modern life. They stress the prophetic ideas of the Bible rather than the Law, and emphasize the mission of the Jews to spread godliness throughout the world. The reform movement began early in the 19th century in Germany and is now centered mainly in the United States. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations is an association of reform congregations.

Conservative Jews hold a middle ground between the orthodox and the reform. In the United States, this movement began during the 1890's. The United Synagogue of America is the national organization of Conservative congregations. Reconstructionist Jews observe many of the traditional rituals and customs, but reject supernaturalism and divine revelation.

Reconstructionist Judaism was founded by Mordecai Kaplan in the 1920's as a movement within the Conservative branch. With the establishment of Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1968, it emerged as a separate branch of Judaism.