

Origins of the world religions essay examples

[Religion](#), [Islam](#)



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Origins of Animism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Shintoism

Animism is a wide term, which is used to refer to any religion, which recognizes spiritual beings. The term originates from the Latin word anima. At present time it is considered that animism is one of the oldest beliefs.

Quite often it can be heard that animism is associated with something primitive. Animism is especially widespread among tribes in East Asia and some other rural areas. It can be said that the core of animism is a belief in spiritual world. Spirits are considered to be more strong and powerful than human beings. In accordance with animism, spirits can live in any object, including trees. They can also move around and pursue a person.

Interestingly enough, all spirits have different nature. Some of them are inherent in nature and the others are spirits of our ancestors.

Hinduism is a term, which is widely used in order to refer to a number of "philosophical and religious traditions throughout India" (Patheos). Unlike many other religions, Hinduism does not have a founder. The exact date of its origin is also unknown. In the majority of cases names of the authors, who wrote numerous sacred texts, are unknown as well. Hinduism exists for a long period of time and it is considered to be one of the oldest religions.

There are some evidences that Hinduism may be more than 5000 years old.

At present time, the historians suggest that the evolution of Hinduism can be divided into three main periods: the ancient, the medieval and the modern.

It is widely considered that Buddhism is an offspring of Hinduism. However, unlike with Hinduism, Buddhism has a certain founder, whose name is known as Siddhartha Gautama. For several centuries, Buddhism was a dominant

religion in the majority of Eastern countries. At present time, this religion occupies dominant place in lives of Chinese, Japanese and Korean people. In the majority of Southeast Asian countries Buddhism is a leading religion as well.

There are three main concepts in Buddhism. They are Karma, Samsara and Nirvana. Karma can be understood as a certain law, which regulates causes and effects of our deeds. Buddhists believe that each person has to go through a certain number of such cycles as births and rebirths in order to reach nirvana. Nirvana is a state of eternal being. People can reach nirvana only when they finish their cycle of rebirth.

Christianity is one of the most widespread religions of the world, which bases on life experience and teachings of Jesus Christ. It is also one of the oldest religions. Christianity is a monotheistic religion. It can be divided into three main branches: Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy and Protestantism. Christianity has one of the largest number of followers and counts over 2 billion Christians all over the world. The Bible is the central concept in Christianity. All of the Christian practices and beliefs are based on the New and Old Testaments. All Christians share a certain number of believes including: the ten commandments, salvation and trinity.

Islam is a monotheistic religion of the Middle East, which originated in 600 AD. Islam bases its believes on supreme God, known as Allah. Allah is considered to be a creator of the world. The religion is known to start from "the teachings of Prophet Muhammad who is considered to be the messenger of Allah" (Bala, North, Moidu & Kirkam). Islam has its sacred text, Quran. In accordance with the Islamic views, Allah is the creator of the world. Like in

many other religions, there are divisions into certain branches in Islam. The main of them are Sunni and Shi'a. The main difference between the branches lies in their understanding of religious authority. Islam has five fundamental practices, which are known as the Five Pillars. They are " a ritual possession of faith, ritual prayer, the zakat, fasting, the hajj" (Patheos). In addition, the majority of Muslims regularly pray five times per day. At present time, Islam is not a religion of the Middle East only. It is nowadays widespread in Asia, Africa, the USA and even Europe.

Shintoism is an ancient Japanese religion. It is a set of certain practices, which helps Japanese people to held connection with the ancient past. For the first time Shintoism was mentioned in the 8th century in the Chronicles of Japan. Followers of Shintoism believe that natural world is endowed with spiritual power. The spirits known as kami can live in any kind of natural places, including plants, trees, mountains and stones, human beings and animals. Japanese people worship kami in special shrines, which are usually beautiful places with pure nature. Shinto shrines can be easily found, because they are decorated with special archways. In accordance with Shintois, torii serve as a border between the sacred world and the world of people. There is a gradation of kami in Shintoism. The most important is the goddess of sun, Amaterasu. Another outstanding kami is Inary, the producer of rice.

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