

Major Contributions to Understanding and Managing the Human Condition by Cultures which Led to Today's World Religions: Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, and Islam

Hinduism: We are not our bodies. **Our true self is eternal, and not ever separate from the unified, eternal foundation of reality.**

All humans have a responsibility to do their assigned duties to maintain the social order.

<https://tvmgita.wordpress.com/gita/chapter-2/>

Lord Krishna says to Warrior Arjuna:

There never was a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings. We will also never cease to exist. Just as the soul which is in the body, passes through childhood, youth and old age, it also passes into another body after death. Wise people are not baffled by this fact. O son of Kunti, impermanent things like happiness and sadness, heat and cold in summer and winter, come and go. They are temporary so learn to endure them. O best of men, he who is not affected by happiness and sadness, is steady and is suitable for immortality. Seers have who have studied both, the material body and the eternal soul, have concluded that the unreal does not endure and the real never ceases to be. You must know that, that which pervades the body can never be destroyed. The soul is indestructible and imperishable. The material body is perishable but not the eternal, indestructible and immeasurable Self, which has no end. So fight O descendant of Bharata. Those who think that the Self is a killer or is killed, are ignorant. **The truth is that the Self neither kills nor is killed. The Self is never born, nor does it die at any time. It does not come into existence by being born. The Self is constant. It is not killed when the body dies....The soul cannot be cut by weapons, it can't be burned by fire, water cannot wet it nor can wind dry it. The soul or the Self is indeed incombustible, it cannot be cut, nor moistened nor dried. It is eternal and it has been there forever. The Self is said to be formless, inconceivable, immutable and unchangeable. Hence knowing this, you should not grieve. The soul which is inside everybody can never be destroyed O Arjuna. Therefore you have no reason to grieve for any being.**

Judaism: History marches on. All members of the group are chosen by God, not just the Kings. **God is great, but in some ways co-equal with humans. Each human has both individual rights and responsibilities to maintain the social order.** Do the right thing. Follow the laws. Reward to the body and mind will follow the righteous.

Genesis Chapter 15

1 After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying: 'Fear not, Abram, I am thy shield, thy reward shall be exceeding great.' 2 And Abram said: 'O Lord GOD, what wilt Thou give me, seeing I go hence childless, and he that shall be possessor of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?' 3 And Abram said: 'Behold, to me Thou hast given no seed, and, lo, one born in my house is to be mine heir.' 4 And,

behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying: 'This man shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir.' 5 And He brought him forth abroad, and said: 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars, if thou be able to count them'; and He said unto him: 'So shall thy seed be.' 6 And he believed in the LORD; and He counted it to him for righteousness. 7 And He said unto him: 'I am the LORD that brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldees, to give thee this land to inherit it.' 8 And he said: 'O Lord GOD, whereby shall I know that I shall inherit it?' 9 And He said unto him: 'Take Me a heifer of three years old, and a she-goat of three years old, and a ram of three years old, and a turtle-dove, and a young pigeon.' 10 And he took him all these, and divided them in the midst, and laid each half over against the other; but the birds divided he not. 11 And the birds of prey came down upon the carcasses, and Abram drove them away. 12 And it came to pass, that, when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram; and, lo, a dread, even a great darkness, fell upon him. 13 And He said unto Abram: 'Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years; 14 and also that nation, whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterward shall they come out with great substance. 15 But thou shalt go to thy fathers in peace; thou shalt be buried in a good old age. 16 And in the fourth generation they shall come back hither; for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet full.' **17 And it came to pass, that, when the sun went down, and there was thick darkness, behold a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch that passed between these pieces. 18 In that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram, saying: 'Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates; 19 the Kenite, and the Kenizzite, and the Kadmonite, 20 and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Rephaim, 21 and the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Girgashite, and the Jebusite.'**

Buddhism: The human condition is inherently filled with suffering. There is a proven path to escape suffering, but not pain, as long as we inhabit a body.

<https://www.bcc.ca/buddhism/fournobletruthsandeightfoldpath.html>

The Four Noble Truths

1. The Truth of Suffering (Kutai)

The Buddha declared that this world is full of suffering; that actual existence including birth, decrepitude, sickness and death is suffering and sorrow. This is called the Truth of Suffering.

2. The Truth of the Cause of Suffering (Jutai)

The cause of human suffering lies in ignorance and Karma. Ignorance and its resulting Karma have often times been called "desire" or craving. The Buddha declared: Verily it is this thirst or craving, causing the renewal of existence, accompanied by sensual delight, seeking satisfaction now here, now there - the craving for gratification

of the passions, for continual existence in the worlds of sense.

3. The Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (Mettai)

The extinguishing of all human ignorance and Karma results in a state known as Nirvana. This is the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering.

4. The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (Dotai)

The Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering is the Noble Eight-fold Path.

The Noble Eight-fold Path

1. Right Views - to keep ourselves free from prejudice, superstition and delusion and to see aright the true nature of life.
2. Right Thoughts - to turn away from the evils of this world and to direct our minds towards righteousness.
3. Right Speech - to refrain from pointless and harmful talk to speak kindly and courteously to all.
4. Right Conduct - to see that our deeds are peaceful, benevolent, compassionate and pure; to live the Teaching of the Buddha daily.
5. Right Livelihood - to earn our living in such a way as to entail no evil consequences.
6. Right Effort - to direct our efforts incessantly to the overcoming of ignorance and selfish desires.
7. Right Mindfulness - to cherish good and pure thoughts for all that we say and do arise from our thoughts.
8. Right Meditation - to concentrate our will on the Buddha, His Life and His Teaching.

Since these eight paths can be put into the categories of precepts, meditation and wisdom we can say that the path of practice of Buddhism is the Three Vehicles of Learning. By following the precepts we learn to control the body and mind. Through meditation we learn to unify our mind. Wisdom is attained by the practice of the above two and through this wisdom all ignorance and passions are cut off and true state of Enlightenment is then realized.

Christianity: The spirit of the law is paramount. Consciousness drives behavior. Clean the mind of greed and fear, then right action and it's attendant rewards will follow.

NOTE: As Buddhism was a reaction to the over-ritualization of Hinduism, Christianity was a reaction to the over-ritualization of Judaism.

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+23&version=NIV>

23 Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 "The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. 3 So you must be careful to do everything they tell

you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach. 4 They tie up heavy, cumbersome loads and put them on other people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to lift a finger to move them.

5 "Everything they do is done for people to see: They make their phylacteries wide and the tassels on their garments long; 6 they love the place of honor at banquets and the most important seats in the synagogues; 7 they love to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces and to be called 'Rabbi' by others.

8 "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers.

13 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in people's faces. You yourselves do not enter, nor will you let those enter who are trying to. [14] [b]

25 "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

Daoism: Humans would be much better off if we acknowledged our place in nature, rather than trying to control things. Excessive reliance on intellect and language is a great contributor to the problems of the human condition. Duality is not really how we see it. (Yin Yang makes the whole...)

Daoism evolved in response to Confucian's teachings. This document is already too long, and Confucianism is not a world religion in the same way as the others listed here. This essay from Columbia University is fairly comprehensive, so I took some out, so please go read the whole thing at the link below.

http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1000bce_daoism.htm

The Chinese word dao means a way or a path. Confucians used the term dao to speak of the way human beings ought to behave in society,,, Daoists preferred to understand the dao as the Way of Nature as a whole. They believed that Confucians, by insisting on a purely human Way, exaggerated the importance of man.

Their solution to the problem of how human beings should behave is expressed in the typically Daoist doctrine of wu-wei or non-action. This did not mean doing absolutely nothing but doing nothing unnatural, nothing that was out of keeping with the Dao.

As believers in the way of the natural, the Daoists characteristically favored the spontaneous and the simple. One of their favorite images was that of the uncarved block. Suggesting a block of wood which is uncut and uncrafted, the

uncarved block is associated with an original simplicity and wholeness which is purely natural...

In addition to being unsympathetic to the Confucian idea of ritual, the Daoists tended also to be mistrustful of that other great human invention, language. This was perhaps because they realized that all those who speak are locked in time and confined to a particular human identity. What was needed, from their point of view, was not logical argument or the arts of persuasion, but quiet attunement to the rhythms and cycles of nature and to the process of change.

One of the most important figures in the shaping of classical Daoism is that of Laozi, which simply means "the elder" or "the old man." ... Laozi is supposed to have written the eighty-one chapters of a book called the Daodejing, one translation of which is The Way and Its Power....The other great contributor to early Daoism. Zhuangzi was in all likelihood an historical figure who lived in the third century B.C. It is by almost anyone's standards one of the greatest works of world literature. In the Zhuangzi, wit, humor and playfulness combine with a spirituality which is at once earthy and sublime.

<https://cctext.org/dao-de-jing>

The Dao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Dao. The name that can be named is not the enduring and unchanging name. (Conceived of as) having no name, it is the Originator of heaven and earth; (conceived of as) having a name, it is the Mother of all things. Always without desire we must be found, If its deep mystery we would sound; But if desire always within us be, Its outer fringe is all that we shall see. Under these two aspects, it is really the same; but as development takes place, it receives the different names. Together we call them the Mystery. Where the Mystery is the deepest is the gate of all that is subtle and wonderful.

POEM BY SHONA MOONBEAM

Without darkness to dispel,
light has no value.

Without suffering to assuage,
compassion has no task.

Without the female,
what defines the male?

Without evil,
who can recognize good?

Islam: The prophet Mohamed was an ethical reformer, working to overcome what he saw as the harmful and outdated beliefs, practices and rituals of the tribal groups of his native region. Note: Portions of humanity had been working toward reverence for a single God for many centuries, first as a method of improving the loyalty of the military.

<https://www.islamreligion.com/articles/10256/core-values-of-islam/>

Core Islamic Beliefs: Six Articles of Faith (I have edited for shortness...please see original)

More than a billion Muslims share a common set of fundamental beliefs that are described as "Articles of Faith." These articles of faith form the foundation of Islamic belief system.

1. Belief in One God: The most important teaching of Islam is that only God is to be served and worshipped
2. Belief in Angels: God created unseen beings called angels who work tirelessly to administer His kingdom in full obedience.
3. Belief in Prophets of God: Muslims believe that God communicates His guidance through human prophets sent to every nation.
4. Belief in Revealed Books of God: ... Muslims believe the Quran is God's final revelation revealed to Prophet Muhammad and has been fully preserved.
5. Belief in Day of Judgment: The life of this world and all that is in it will come to an end on an appointed day. At that time, every person will be raised from the dead. God will judge each person individually, according to his faith and his good and bad actions. God will show mercy and fairness in judgment. According to Islamic teachings, those who believe in God and perform good deeds will be eternally rewarded in Heaven. Those who reject faith in God will be eternally punished in the fire of Hell.(ALIYA NOTE: This was taken fairly directly from the Zoroastrians.)
6. Belief in Destiny and Divine Decree: Muslims believe that since God is the Sustainer of all life, nothing happens except by His Will and with His full knowledge.

Core Religious Practice of Islam: The Five "Pillars" of Islam

In Islam, worship is part of daily life and is not limited to mere rituals. The formal acts of worship are known as the five "pillars" of Islam. The five pillars of Islam are the declaration of faith, prayer, fasting, charity, and pilgrimage.