

# Snazzlefrag's World Religions DSST Study Notes

Contact: <http://www.degreeforum.net/members/snazzlefrag.html>

Hosted at: <http://www.free-clep-prep.com>

Hinduism - ("People of the Indus"), Pantheistic, 1500 BC, 750 Million believers

Harrapans - Original local people.

Aryans - European race

Atman - Human soul.

Gods: - God Is in Everything (pantheism), various gods are all aspects of the supreme god "Brahman" (330 millions gods).

Brahma - The creator.

Vishnu - The savior/protector. Various animal/human forms (ie, Krishna & Rama), 9 out of 10 forms so far.

Shiva - The destroyer of evil/creator of new life, contradictory roles, sexual.

Samsara - Reincarnation.

Karma - Action and reaction.

Nirvana - Salvation.

Bhakti - Devotion to God.

4 Goals in life:

Artha (Pursuit of material gain by lawful means).

Dharma - (Appropriate living), A Way of Life, virtue and principle.

Kama (Delight of the senses), Sensual/sexual pleasure (Kama Sutra)

Moksha (Release from reincarnation).

4 daily duties:

Respect the deities

Respect ancestors

Respect all beings

Respect all humankind

Scriptures:

Four Vedas - (what is written), Atharva/Rig/Sama/Yajur, Brought by Aryans, Sanskrit, Transhuman origin.

Brahmanas - Ritual instructions.

Upanishads - 108 sacred teachings (mystical search for knowledge to achieve Moksha).

Bhagavad Gita - (Song of the Lord) Part of Mahabharata, Krishna describes three paths to salvation/Nirvana (knowledge, action, devotion) to his cousin Arjuna.

Sruti - (what is heard)

Smriti - (what is remembered)

Laws of Manu - 1st century text, Poverty, serenity, austerity, learn about God, obey his laws

Hindu Periods - Vedic, Upanishadic, Gupta

4 Major Branches of Hinduism - Vaishnavism, Shaivism, Shaktism, and Smartism.

Holy Places/Pilgrimages - Ganges, Benares (Holiest City), Allahabad

Caste System:

1. Brahmin (priests)
2. Kshatriya (rulers, warriors)
3. Vaishya (merchants, farmers)
4. Shudra (servants/laborers)
- X. Harijahn (untouchables)...outlawed in 1940s.

Mantras - Hymns of praise

Agni - God of Fire (worshipped daily).

Maya - Goddess of Illusion.

Yoga - Physical, mental or spiritual....Union with the Brahma.

Satyagraha - (Gandhi) non-violent protest, pacifism

Tantric - Ritual practises, unaccepted by mainstream.

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Islam - ("Surrender"), Youngest religion, 1.2 Billion believers

Allah - "The One Who Is God"

Muhammad - Peace Be Upon Him (Pbuh), Just a prophet/NOT god, Allah founded Islam/NOT Muhammad.

Born in Mecca (570 AD).

Time of Polytheism, idolatry.

Orphan

Worked as a trader ("The Trustworthy").

Married a wealthy widow (Khadija)

Visions in his 40s. (Archangel Gabriel).

Recited visions became Qur'an (Last word of God, and last prophet)

Persecuted/Mocked

Hijrah - "Flight", he and 70 followers fled to Medina

Final pilgrimage to Mecca before he died.

Caliphs - Led Islam after Muhammad died (Ali [Sunni/Shiite split]).

Scriptures:

Qur'an - 114 chapters (Surahs)

Hadith - Sayings of Muhammad.

Laws:

Tawhid - What you should believe.

Shari'a - What you should do.

Divisions:

Sunni - Traditionalist, literal qur'an.

Shiite - Imams, coming messiah (Ali is successor).

Sufi - "Wool", mystical, ascetic

Wahhabi - Anti-modernists, anti-change.

Ummah - Community of all Muslims (regardless of race or location).

Adam - First Muslim (also: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus)

Mosque - "Place of Prostration".

Festivals/Holidays:

Ramadan - One Month, fast & pray.

Eid Al Fitr - Feast at the end of Ramadan.

5 Articles of Faith:

1. God

2. Angels

3. Scripture (4): Torah, Psalms, Gospels, Koran

4. Prophets

5. Last Days

5 Pillars of Islam:

Shahada - Creed (morning & night), "No god but Allah, Muhammad is the prophet of Allah"

Salat - Prayer (5 times a day), if over 10 years old.

Sawm - Fasting (during Ramadan).

Zakat - Almsgiving (2.5%).

Hajj - Pilgrimage.

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Buddhism - ("One Who Has Woken Up"), 2,500 years old, Founded in India, 6th century BC, 500 Million believers

Siddhartha Gautama (560 BC) - Nepal, Founded on his teachings, Wealthy upbringing, left home to be ascetic, sat under a tree, had Bodhi (awakening)..became Buddha.

Mara - Tempted Guatama to prevent him from achieving enlightenment.

Path to Enlightenment - "The Middle Way", Not ascetic and not self-indulgent.

God - There is No Omnipotent, Creator God

Dukkha - Suffering.

Dharma - Buddha's Teachings (Truth about Humans and Suffering)

Samsara - Reincarnation.

Anatman - "no soul", the UNself!

Karma - Accumulated Action and reaction (rebirth).

Nirvana - Enlightenment, end of suffering, end of reincarnation.

3 Universal Truths:

Everything is impermanent

"Things" won't make you happy.  
"Self" is always changing

4 Noble Truths:  
Suffering exists.  
The cause of suffering is Craving.  
Suffering will end.  
8-fold Path to overcoming Suffering.

Eight-fold Path to Nirvana:  
Right:  
Views  
Thought  
Speech  
Conduct  
Livelihood  
Effort  
Mindfulness  
Contemplation.

The Three Jewels - Buddha, Dharma, Sangha (disciples).

Festivals:  
Wesak - Birth of Buddha.  
Vassa - Meditate and Study.  
Dana - "Giving" ritual

Scriptures:  
Tripitaka - "Three Baskets": (Sermons of Buddha, His commentary, Rules for Monks)  
100 Volumes.  
Dhammapada - Book of Poems/Sayings by Buddha

Divisions of Buddhism:  
Theravada - (Way of the Elders) Southern Buddhism, Scriptures in Sanskrit (Pali), oldest/original, (Thailand, Sri Lanka, Burma, Cambodia).  
Mahayana - (For the Layman) Eastern Buddhism (Sutras), Scriptures in Chinese, (China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam).  
Vajrayana/Tibetan - Northern Buddhism (Tantric), Scriptures in Tibetan, Tantrism, Goddess Shakti (sexual power), a cult devoted to idols, magic and sex.  
Zen - "Be Nothing, Think Nothing", peace, calm, order, perfecting skills.

Stupas - Burial mounds (later became Pagodas).  
Bodhisattva - Dead who stick around to help the living achieve enlightenment too.

Key Symbols - Lotus (peace, process of enlightenment: blooming), Wheel of Life, Buddha Images, Mandala (symbolic map of universe), Hand Prayer Wheel, Bell (Chorten).

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Judaism - 4,000 years old, only 12 Million believers

Scriptures:

Torah - (Pentateuch) The Law

Talmud - Commentary on Torah (based on Mishnah)

Mishnah - Law (basis of Talmud)

Founders:

Abraham - (Founder of the Nation) Married Sarah, Descendants will enter the Promised Land (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob).

Moses - (Founder of the Faith) Given the law on Mt. Sinai (Covenant).

Rabbi - NOT A PRIEST, no special religious status.

Festivals:

Hannukah - Festival of Lights, candles and potato cakes, Dedication of the Temple.

Passover - (after death of first borns) Entry into Promised Land, unleavened bread.

Rosh Hashanah - New Year (shofar is blown)

Yom Kippur - Day of Atonement (forgiveness)

Purim - Feast of Lots, celebrate victory over Haman by Esther.

Divisions:

Ashkenazi Jews - European.

Sephardi Jews - Spain and Middle East.

Ultra-orthodox Jews - Haredi

Conservative Jews - Masorti

Hasidic Jews - 18th Century Poland, mysticism rather than learning.

Get - A religious divorce granted by the man.

Agunot - Women without a "Get". They cannot remarry, any future children are not legitimately 'Jewish'.

Symbols:

Mezuzah - Doorposts.

Tefillin - Forehead.

Yarmulke/Kippa - Skullcap

Menorah - 7 Candles

Magen - Star of David

Taoism - "The Way", "The origin of all things", Tao = Equilibrium, Yin and Yang (female and male), NO GOD!..simply become one with Tao!

Founder - Lao Tze (taught Confucius).

Scriptures:

Tao Te Ching - (Scripture), "The Path to Virtue" by Lao Tze

The Classic of the Great Peace - (Scripture), Salvation, foresaw a great man who would restore peace to the world.

Taoist Canon - Split into 'The Three Caverns', 1,000 volumes

Chuang Tzu - (Scripture), Mystical aspects of Taoism

Three Jewels - Seek: Compassion, Moderation, Humility.

Tai Chi - Bodily Equilibrium, balance of the flow of energy.

Ancestors - Heaven: Help the Living, Hell: 9 Stages of Punishment (demon king).

Divisions:

Wu-wei - Path of least resistance, natural simplicity.

Neo-Taoism - 6th Century, Transformed Taoism.

Heavenly Masters Sect - Chang Ling claimed Lao-Tzu appeared to him and made him a Heavenly Master.

Perfect Truth Sect - Fasting, Inner meditation, alchemy

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Confucianism (Kung fu tze) - "A code of Conduct", NO RELIGION!, Ritual, Syncretism is allowed.

Universal Virtues - Wisdom. Benevolence, Fortitude.

Scriptures:

Five Classics - Primary text.

I-ching - Divination Manual

Analects - Collection of Confucius' teachings.

Jen - Goodness, (do not do unto others).

Chun - Gentlemanliness

Li - Propriety, "The way things should be done"

Te - Ruler's Virtue, "The power by which men are ruled"

Wen - "The arts of peace"

Po - Animal soul

Hun - Intellectual soul

Proponents - Mencius, Hsun Tzu, Chu His.