



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**COURSE CODE: CRS202**

**COURSE TITLE: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**



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National Open University of Nigeria  
**Headquarters**  
University Village  
Plot 91, Cadastral Zone  
Nnamdi Azikiwe Expressway Jabi,  
Abuja

**Lagos Office**  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island, Lagos

Email: [centralinfo@noun.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@noun.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.noun.edu.ng](http://www.noun.edu.ng)

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**CRS202**

**COURSE TEAM**

Course Developer/Writer      Dr. P. A. Ojebode  
Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo

Course Editor                      Dr Olubiyi Adewale  
National Open University Nigeria

Course Reviewer

Course Coordinator              Dr Abel Aor Inyaregh  
National Open University of Nigeria

Head of Department              Dr Michael Enyinwa Okoronkwo

## **CRS202: COMPARATIVE STUDY OF RELIGIONS.**

The comparative study of the nature, beliefs, sacred writings and practices of some major religions of the world: Christianity: Islam: Buddhism: Shintoism: the distinctiveness and importance of each of these religions.

NB: For clarity sake the author grouped these ancient religions into three Modules:

### **MODULE 1: ASIANITIC RELIGIONS**

Unit 1: Concept of Comparative Religion

Unit 2: Hinduism

Unit 3: Buddhism

Unit 4: Shintoism

Unit 5: Confucianism

Unit 6: Zoroastrianism

Unit 7: Taoism

### **MODULE 2: ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS**

Unit 1: Judaism

Unit 2: Christianity From Early Formation to the Church of the Early Middle Ages (474 – 800)

Unit 3: Christianity From Protestant Reformation to Ecumenism Era (1521 – 79)

Unit 4: Islam

Unit 5: Bahaism

### **MODULE 3: AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS**

#### **DIALOGUE**

Unit 1: African Traditional Religion: From Early Formation to the Technological Development in the society

Unit 2: Nature of African Traditional Religion

Unit 3: Religious Dialogue

## **MODULE 1.**

## **ASIAN TIC RELIGIONS**

This module examined the origins and activities of the religions traced to be originated from the Asian world. The module is divided into seven units. They include;

1. Unit 1: Concept of Comparative Religion
2. Unit 2: Hinduism
3. Unit 3: Buddhism
4. Unit 4: Shintoism
5. Unit 5: Confucianism
6. Unit 6: Zoroastrianism
7. Unit 7: Taoism

### **Unit 1: CONCEPT OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION.**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
- 3.1 An overview of comparative religion
- 3.2 Approaches to the study of religion
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutoed Marked Assignment
- 6.1 Making Guides to TMA
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The goal of every religion is man's universal thirst for, peace and goodness. Man achieves this goal through many ways in which he expresses his beliefs and attitudes. No matter when or how man developed from the time he became man, his irresistible urge to worship has created and will continue to create endless forms of religious behaviour. This force is so powerful in man that it has produced a Mosaic kind of beliefs, attitudes and practices. And considering the fact that each of the world religions embraces varying beliefs and practices, areas of interaction and co-operation are necessary for peaceful co-existence. This is because religion whether Islam, Christianity, Taoism, Buddhism or African Traditional Religion, remains a potent factor to reckon with in the scheme of things the world over.

However, one needs to be aware of the changes which particular religious traditions and institutions have undergone, that is, changes which are evident from historical comparison. The person who is more likely to be hostile to another man's religion is that man who knows no other religion than that of his own. He will attempt to make an impartial study of religious traditions by highlighting their historical records in terms of the ideas they teach, the types of personality they have and the kinds of societies where they were found.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:-

- Explain the goals of religion in man life.
- Acknowledge the cause for many religions of the world.
- Explain what comparative religion all about.
- Imbibe the mechanism for studying religion.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 AN OVERVIEW OF COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Comparative religion centered on the application of comparative or scientific method to the data provided by the religious of the world, past and present. This involved the assignment to each of a place within a scheme of progress development, or evolution, and the assessment of their value (Sharpe, 1987). To Kasiera (1990). Comparative religion is the study of the various religious traditions and of the inter-relation to the way in which religious themes and ideas are fused in these traditions. Tiwari (1983) also sees comparative religion as a comparative study of the important features of the different religions of the world in a perfectly scientific spirit. The purpose is not to assert the truth or falsity or relegate any religion or to incorporate value judgment about other religions, but to show that the religions of the humankind are similar in many ways and also different in significant ways (Dopamu 2000).

Dopamu (2000) further studied that comparative religion is not restricted to comparison between religious but it involves comparison between concepts, themes, elements, topics or phenomena of different religions. The implication of Dopamu submission is that, religions are placed side by side for the purpose of underscoring their claims and values.

Through comparative study of religion, scholars endeavors to evaluate the religion in order to show how they stood relative to another in term of their various levels of development. In this wise, religions are studied in an appreciative and non-judgmental manners. The aim of comparative religion therefore, as it is observed by Dopamu (2000) is to identify the point of similarities and differences between two religions or more. This course examines the various notable religions of the world.

### 3.2 APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Idowu (1973) accounted for the following approaches in the comparative study of religions. These include:-

1. Caution: - To study a religion other than ones own effectively, a scholar or religious investigator must exercises great caution. The scholar must not prove that he has known everything already about that religion even if he belongs to it. This is because religion is a divinely invented phenomenon that application of self mind cannot be easily comprehended, thus Job 11:7-9 query.

“Can you fathom the mysteries of God?  
Can you probe the limits of the Almighty?  
They are higher than the heavens  
What can you do?  
They are deeper than the depths of the  
Grave –what can you know?”

The above strengthening the words of Idowu which continues to say that one must rather learn slowly painfully and actively to ask new questions and to sense new visions cautions approach therefore will not make the study of any religion subjective but objective.

2. Openness: - The approach of openness in the study of religion implies that when we are studying other people's religion we must enter into their feelings and aspirations. Religion cannot be properly studied unless it is studied from inside and only those who are prepared to allow truth to reveal itself to them and those who prepared to enter into the feelings of worshipers as soon as possible can make any profitable and objective study of religion. That one must not enter the field of studying religion with self imprisoned mind or misconception about any religion to be investigated.
3. Sympathy: - In studying religion we must have appreciation for understanding and sympathy. It is not what people say about religion that is of importance rather it should be what the religion says about itself. Religion is a sacred phenomenon therefore, the scholar must show sympathy and enter into the feeling of the people and see with their own eyes in order to grasp and possess the knowledge of what they actually know and believe about the spiritual world.
4. Reverence: - Religion is a sacred phenomenon and this should be studied with reverence. Thus Psalms 5-7 inter-alia says:

The arrogant cannot stand in your presence:  
You hate all who do wrong.  
You destroy those who tell lies;  
Bloodthirsty and deceitful men

The Lord abhors. But by your great mercy, will come into your house, in reference will I bow down toward your holy temple. (NIV Topical Study Bible). The above depict that to understand and established the mysteriousness of God or gods the religion is seeking to accounted for the researchers or scholars of religion need to go about with reference heart, and total sense of submission.

5. Interest: Absolute interest and honest is another key to obtain a meaningful result while studying religion. The sacred and the mysterious fundamentally endowed religious phenomenon calls for total interest of the religious scholars so as to obtain an objective result.
6. Adaptability: - To attain acceptable information about a religion being studied calls for adaptability of all purposes. The researcher should comply with the norms and traditions surrounding the subject of his or her investigation. This in returns will open ways for sense of belongings and remove fear on the path of the leaders and the individuals who suppose to assist and releases the needed information to the researcher. Association and interaction of all purposes are ingredients that can streamline the easy ways to the hidden information about the religion that the researcher sought to know.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From the discussions so far you have learnt the following:

- That religion came to being as a result of mans thirst for truth, peace and goodness
- Religion remains a potent factor to reckon with in the scheme of things the world over.
- That religions of the world are similar in many ways and also different in significant ways
- Comparative religion aims at under scaring claims and values of religions of the world and not solely in comparing one religion better than the others.
- Approaches the scholars of religion need to adopt while studying religion for the purpose of achieving the set goals.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have been exposed to the concept of comparative religion. In addition you have been able to understand that comparative religion is not solely for judging one religion over the other, but to study the various religions of the world and ascertaining the areas of commonalities and differences for the purpose of thorough understanding and better knowledge about them.

The unit also reveals the better ways for the religious researchers or scholars to study religion. You are therefore enjoined to be acquainted with this information for proper understanding of the course before you proceed to the next unit.

#### 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Explain in details what do you understand by comparative religion.
- ii. Identify the best approach to the studying of religion.
- iii. Explain the goals of religion in man's life

#### 6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA

##### Question 1:

- i Explain in details what do you understand by comparative religion?  
Comparative Religion is an application of scientific method to the data provided by the religions of the world
- ii Comparative religion reveals scheme of progress, development, evolution and the assessment of the values of various religions
- iii Through comparative religion, the various religions traditions and their inter-relations are established
- iv Comparative religion revealed the existence of similarities and differences between the various religious of the religion
- v Comparative religion underscores the claims and values of various religion
- vi Comparative religion gives ways for evaluation for various religions for the purpose of determining the levels of their development

## **Question 2:**

Identify the best approach to the studying of religions

The approach to the study of religion include the following

- 1 Caution: Exercises of caution is needed while studying religion for objectivity sake.
- 2 Openness: studying religions with an open minded allows profitability and objectivity for the study.
- 3 Sympathy: Appreciation for understanding and sympathy why studying religion enables scholars to grasp and possess the knowledge of what the various religions taught about the spiritual world
- 4 Reverence: Reverence of heart and total sense of submission by the researcher are needful for the purpose of understanding and establishment of the mysteriousness of God or gods the religions are seeking to account for
- 5 Interest: To obtain an objective results while studying religion calls for interest and honest of all purposes so as to reach and ascertain the sacredness and mysteries religious phenomenon.
- 6 Adaptability: Adaptability of the researchers to the norms and traditions surrounding the religion to be investigated opens ways to sense of belongings and acceptability of the researcher to the needed information and facts.

## **Question 3:**

Explain the goals of religion in man's life the goals of any religion of the world in man's life focuses on the followings:

- 1 Religious and consciousness of God, the maker of heavens and earth
- 2 To makes man understand the essence of life
- 3 Creating atmospheres for peaceful co-existence
- 4 Moral and character training
- 5 For divine and physical security
- 6 Leadership Training
- 7 Answers to the problems of life.

## **7.0 REFERENCE AND FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 2: HINDUISM**

### **Content**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
- 3.1 Hindus scriptures
- 3.2 Caste system in Hinduism
- 3.3 Basic concepts in Hinduism
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 4.1 Hinduism and Christianity
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored Marked Assignment
- 6.1 Marking Guides to TMA
- 7.0 References/Further readings.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM AS A RELIGION**

Hinduism is one of the world's great religions. It is very difficult to define Hinduism. It grew gradually over a period of nearly 5000 years absorbing and assimilating all the religions and cultural movements of India.

Hindus call their religions SANATANA-DHARMA Eternal Religion, the Universal Truth. Hinduism is not revealed by any act of a personal God, but it is seen by those whose pure minds catch its reflection. The ancient seers or 'rishis' transmitted this truth to humanity.

When one considers the religion from the point of inner growth, Hinduism may be described as the way of life lived and brought to conscious self-reflection by the Indo-Aryans, who then taught the truth they discovered from the early settlers. The difference of Hinduism from revealed religions such as Judaism, Islam and Christianity lies in the fact that in the case of the latter religions, it is accepted that the truths were revealed by God to be a particular person at a particular time and place. But in the case of Hinduism the realization of the truths and their expressions was the result of a gradual process of reflection by many individuals through centuries.

Hinduism is more of orthopraxy rather than Orthodoxy. Orthodoxy is the holding of commonly accepted religious opinions but in Hinduism, there is no commonly acceptable religious opinion. The religion is more of practice than an accepted dogma. One is Hindu because he is born a Hindu that is of Hindu parentage and ancestry and as such need no specific religious doctrines. The fact that Hinduism is orthopraxy is evidenced in the following areas:

- (a) No Dogma: Hinduism has no set of beliefs put forward to be accepted without question. This is why many writers describe it as the traditional religions of the Indians. It was a religion moulded out by the merging of the Dravidian and

the Aryan cultures with the Aryana succeeding conquering the Draviana religiously and traditionally.

- (b) No Doctrinal Orthodoxy: There is no doctrinal orthodoxy in Hinduism. So long as a person accepts the authority of the Vedas and the basic elements of Hindu social order in his conduct, he may believe anything and still remain within the fold of Hinduism. He must however follow with the greatest strictness, the rules that govern the life and activities of the sub-group to which he belongs.
- (c) No Credit: Both Christianity and Islam are creedal religions. It is their creeds that attracted many adherents to them the entire world over. But Hinduism is not a credit religion. Hindus are born Hindus and are therefore predominantly found in the land of India where Hindus originated and in other parts of the world to which Indians have migrated in large numbers.
- (d) No Revelation: Unlike Christianity and Islam Hinduism does not claim any great revelation of God to an individual at a particular place or time. Rather religious truths are results of reflections by many individuals through the centuries. In Hinduism, the truths rather than the privileged mediators are all that matters. The truths are not revelation properly but insights or intuitions of the human mind and heart.

They do not enjoy the undeniability of revealed truth as we have in orthodox religions. This is why Hinduism is called a natural religion, a metaphysical religion and a reflective religion rather than an orthodox religion.

In the light of the afore-mentioned reasons, Hinduism is best studied as a process rather than as a fixed and integrated body of doctrines. It is best studied as a developing tradition which changed considerably over the centuries and which is still changing in a creative direction. Thus in the study of Hinduism, we do not present a list of fixed and integral system which could be designated by the term Hinduism. We rather present a process which had a beginning and which has gone through several main phases of development up to the present time. Hinduism is still a living process and must be seen as such.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to :-

- State the origin of Hinduism
- Give reasons why Hinduism is orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy.
- Explain caste system in Hinduism and the basic conceptions in Hinduism
- Explain method of obtaining salvation in Hinduism.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Hindus scriptures give us a clear understanding of the basic tenets of Hinduism. They provide a framework of its historical development. These scriptures are mainly written in Sanskrit and they cover a very wide variety of religious beliefs and practices. The texts are believed to have been written over a period of more than

2000 years. The fact of the matter is that at different periods in the history of Hinduism, different philosophical schools and religious movements have been found in selected scriptures, inspiration and authority for their beliefs and social behaviour. For these reasons the scriptures merit our attention.

### **Classifications of Hindu Scriptures**

The Hindu scriptures are divided into two classes *Scruti* and *Smriti*, *Scruti* or 'what is heard' refers to the eternal truths of religion which the Hindus seers saw or heard. They are independent of any god or man to whom they are communicated. They are the primary and final authorities of religious truth. As the external truth was related to seers their disciples recorded it and the record is known as the *VEDAS*.

*Smriti* or "what is remembered" possess a secondary authority, deriving their authority from the *Sruti* whose principles they seek to expand. As recollections, they contain all the sacred texts other than *Vedas*. *Smriti* include the law-books, the two great epics, the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* which are largely collections of myths, stories, legends and chronicles of great events. It also contains the *Agamas* which are the theological treaties and manuals of worship.

**Vedas:-** The word *Veda* means 'knowledge', 'wisdom' and when applied to the scripture, it signifies the 'Book of Wisdom'. The *Vedas* the earliest Hindu scriptures, are collection of hymns, prayers rituals and magical formulae. There are four of them' the *Rig-Veda*, the *Same Veda*, the *Yajur-Veda* and the *Atharva-Veda*. Each of these consists of three parts namely the hymns in praise of the gods, the *Bahamans*, written in prose as guide books for the performing of the sacrificial rites for pleasing of the gods. Thirdly, there is the *Upanishads* which are the concluding portions of the *Vedas* and are speculations in philosophy and mystical discourses on spiritual truths.

**Upanishads:-** The *Upanishads* constitute the foundation of later Hinduism. Their teaching centers around the concepts of *Brahman* that is, the 'Absolute Being' and *Arman* (self). They search for the relationship of identify of *Brahman* and *Arman* and mans knowledge of his true self. The *Upanishads*, though based on the *Vedas*, reflect a movement away from the sacrifices and ritualism of *Polytheism* to a more man-centered philosophy and to the problem or ethical behaviour.

**Epics:-** The two great Hindu epics the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* expound the principles of the *Vedas* by interpreting the exploits of the great national heroes. Characters like *Rama* and *Sita* depict the ideals of moral and social behaviour for the individual, the family and the nation.

The *Ramayana* epic relates the story of *Rama*, the ideal man and shows how an individual should behave towards all other men and how a community should live in peace and harmony.

The *Mehabharata* is the story of the conflict between two branches of the same family. Through problems and dialogues the epic seeks to answer the moral, spiritual and metaphysical problems of the times. For the first time in the development of Hindu spirituality the love of God for man and of man for God is introduced.

### 3.2 Caste system in Hinduism

Cast system in India was not originally a planned institution: Rather, the system came into existence as a result of circumstances of race and occupation. In term of religion, caste system was an accidental feature of Hinduism. The four popular Castes are; the Brahmins, the Ksatriyas, the Vaisyas and the Sudras.

**The Brahmins:-** These are the priestly group. They are regarded as the people nearer to the Supreme Being. They are usually approached in all matters of worship. They offer sacrifices on behalf of the Hindu. They are the intermediaries between the Supreme Being and men.

**The Ksatriyas:** The Kastriyas consists of warriors who are repressible for fighting the people's wars; they defend the traditional integrity of the Hindu society; the Ksatriyas also present kings who rule the society. Because most of them were recognized soldiers, their rule over the people was usually successful in those days.

**The vaisyas:-** This group produces the eminent traders. The group also constitutes a bulk of the owners of properties including lands. Because of the financial assistance rendered to various governments, the Vaisyas as a group are highly regarded by the Hindu.

**The Sudras:-** These are the coloured people. Mostly, they are the pre-Aryan settle in India. In the early days of their settlement, they were responsible for cheap labour. They specialized in professions such as agriculture and services of any other kind.

**Out-Castes or Untouchables:-** The people not belonging to any of the four Castes were the Out-castes or the Uncountable. It was as a result of intermingling of the four castes whereby several sub-castes were born.

It should be mentioned, however, that the Hindu Caste system cannot be regarded simply as a social scale of class distinction. Rather, when linked with the social ministration, it is a religious justification known as Karma-Samsa which states that each mans birth into a particular Castes determined by the actions of his previous existence or expenses. To this extent, each Caste defines and regulates a man's social and religious status as well as his duties and obligations.

### 3.3 Basic Concepts in Hinduism

In order to understand the Hindu view of life one needs to look into the various doctrines put forward in Hinduism. Here below are some of them:

(a) **Karma:** This is 'Action' or 'Doing'. It is an interpretation of the moral law of causation. It states that any action is the effect of a cause and is in its turn the cause of an effect. Karma. Is a principle of moral reaction to both good and evil action. In principle, as a man sows, so shall he reap. Bad action reaps suffering and bondage to human existence while good action leads to freedom from this bondage. The law of Karma is fixed in the spiritual realm and unalterable.

(b) **Samsara:** The Samsara concept is bound up with Karma. It is the re-birth or transmigration of the soul. According to this concept, the soul is capable of transmigration from body to body carrying its load of Karma with it. It makes it

possible for a man to be reborn as a god, a member of higher caste, a member of lower caste or as an animal. The re-birth depends on individuals thought, word or action. This would then mean that individual man carried with him his own very past.

In Samsara, there is the wheel of birth, death and rebirth. As a caterpillar gather itself up before passing into another leaf so does the soul. The soul goes round and round in endless existences. No wonder then that all Hindus aims at escaping from the wheel of Samsara.

(c). **Morksha:** Morsha is the escape, release, liberation or emancipation. The idea of Morksha is as a result of Hindu belief that unless the chain of cause and effect is broken, the soul will forever be bound to the process of birth, death and re-birth. With Morksha, the soul is believed to be released from both righteousness and unrighteousness. It is the deliverance from the body. It is a final escape from the law of Karma.

(d). **Soul:** Hindu teaches that the soul is eternal and as such shares the very essence of all living things plants, animals and man. The soul is imprisoned with the impurities of finite existence but in itself it is detached from the personal existence of the physical self. The soul does not act and so it is not the agent of sin. The Hindu hope is in the realization of the immortality of the soul either in its individuality or in its absorption into Brahman. According to the teachings of Hinduism, the body is the prison house of the soul and therefore any idea of an eternal union of body is unacceptable. There is No idea of resurrection of the body in Hindu scheme of things.

(e) **Sin:** For Hindu, sin is not the personal guilt that it is for the Christians and the Jews. It belongs to the realm of the metaphysical. It is variously described as ignorance of truth, attributing reality to empirical personhood, and the feeling of individuality. The true self never sins, it is neither born nor does it die.

(f) **Salvation:** Salvation in Hinduism is primarily the separation of the eternal soul from the phenomenal world. It is the relationship of the soul to God. It is the soul realizing it own mortality. Such emancipated soul is identified with the ultimate reality, Brahman. It enters a mystical union with Brahman described as 'dreamless sleep'. This union is often expressed as 'Tat Ivana Asi' 'Thou art that'.

### 3.4 **Methods of obtaining Salvation**

In Hinduism, there are three paths (margas) or methods of obtaining salvation each of which is valid. Below are the methods;

- i. Karma-marga (the path of selfless or disinterested Action) Karma marga is the path of religious duty. Action is motivated by the desire for its fruits bind the soul to the wheel of existence. Action done without any attachment to its consequences leads to spiritual perfection.
- ii. Bhakti-marga (the path of exclusive devotion to God). The second path to salvation is the path of exclusive devotion to God. For an atheist, this is a higher path. It is the way of love. This may depend on external aids such as ritualistic worship or it may be on a higher level of direct communion with God. Devotion to God may assume many forms reflecting the variety of human relationships. It may be the attitude of servant to master or it may be the love of wife and her husband.

- iii. Jana-marga (spiritual insight). The third way of achieving salvation is the path of higher knowledge or spiritual insight. It is for the intellectual few. It leads to release from the bondage of ignorance and to complete union with Brahman. The Vedanta School holds that this is the highest way of salvation while other schools think that it is preparatory to Shakti.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

From the study you have on this topic, you have been made to realize that:

- Hinduism is an ancient religion of the people of India.
- There is a difference in the manners at which Hinduism was revealed to the Hindus ancestors compared with Judaism, Islam and Christianity where the truths were revealed by God to the individuals.
- Hinduism has its own peculiar features different from any other traditions of the world.
- Hindu scriptures give a clear understanding of the basic tenets of Hinduism.
- Through the basic concepts in Hinduism one can understand Hindu view of life.
- There are three paths (Margas) or methods of obtaining salvation in Hinduism.

They are

i	Karma-marga
ii	Bhakti-marga
iii	Jana-marga

#### 4.1 HINDUISM AND CHRISTIANITY

Hinduism and Christianity differ on fundamental beliefs on heaven hell and reincarnation to mention a few. From the Hindu perspective, heaven (Sanskrit varga) and hell (Neraka) are temporary places where every soul has to live either for the good deeds done or for their sins committed. After a soul suffers its due punishment in hell, or after a soul has enjoyed enough in the heave, it again enters the life death cycle. There is no concepts of permanent hell. Permanent heaven is called (Akshardhem).

However, also exist significant similarities in Christian and Hindu theology, most notably in that both religious present a Trinitarian view of God. The holy trinity of Christianity, is sometimes seen as roughly analogues to the trimurti of Hinduism, whose members – Brahma, Vishnu and shiva are seen as the three principal manifestation of Brahman or God head.

Christian Hindu relations are a mixed affairs. On one hand, Hinduism natural tendency has been to recognize the divine basis of various other religions and to reverse that founders and saintly parishioners. On the other hand, perceptions of aggressive proselytism on the part of some Christian groups have led to occasional incidents of anti-christian violence, often fueled by nationalist political parties.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit you have been exposed to Hinduism as a religion of the Hindus. In addition, you have been thought and realized the peculiarities of Hinduism as a religion different from other revealed religions such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Through this unit again, you are made to understand that Hinduism has its own scriptures through which a clear understanding of the basic tenets of Hinduism could be attained. You are therefore enjoined to pay thorough attention to the study of this unit and master the concepts therein before you go to the next unit.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Hinduism is best described as Orthopraxy rather than or orthodoxy. Discuss.
2. What does Hinduism teach about soul, sin and salvation?
3. Discuss the Caste system in Hinduism
4. What is meant by Karma, Samsara and Morksha in Hinduism?

## 6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA

**Question 1: Hinduism is described as orthopraxy rather than orthodoxy – Discuss.**

- i Brief explanation on Hinduism as a religion
- ii Explanation on the concept of orthodoxy, the orthopraxy of Hinduism is manifested through the followings.
- iii There is no element of dogmatism in the scheme of Hinduism
- iv No doctrinal orthodoxy
- v Hinduism is not a creedal religion
- vi No revelation, as Hinduism is seen as a natural, metaphysical and a reflective religion.

**Question 2: What does Hinduism teach about soul, sin and salvation?**

### SOUL

- i Hinduism teaches that soul is eternal and shares the very essence of all living things.
- ii Soul is imprisoned with the impurities of finite existence
- iii The soul does not act as the agent of sin
- iv Hinduism teaches the realization of the immortality of the soul
- v Hinduism sees the body as the prison house for the soul
- vi Hinduism rejects resurrection of the body

### SIN

- i Hinduism teaches that sin belongs to the realm of the metaphysical
- ii It is the ignorance of truth
- iii It is the feeling of individuality
- iv That is Hinduism the true never sin
- v Sin neither born nor does it die

## **SALVATION**

- i Hinduism sees salvation as the separation of the eternal soul from the world
- ii It is the relationship of the soul to God
- iii Salvation enables soul to attain mortality
- iv Salvation gives way for a mystical union between the soul and Braham
- v Salvation can be obtained in Hinduism through:
  - i Disinterested Action (Karme-merga)
  - ii The path of exclusive devotion to God (Bhakti-marga) and
  - iii Spiritual insight (Janas-marga)

**Question 3:** Discuss the caste system in Hinduism caste system in Hinduism is of five ones folds which include four major ones as well as one minor. The popular ones includes: The Brahmins: These are the priestly group. They are the intermediaries between the Supreme Being and men

- i They are usually approached in all matters of worship
- ii The Kastriyas: There are the various in Hinduism who are the fight for the course of Hindus. They are the kings maker for the Hindus.
- iii The Vaisyas: the group are eminent traders who possess formidable properties including lands among the Hindus. They are very influential as they use their properties to aid government and non-governmental programmes.
- iv In the early days, they were used as cheap labourers and involved in agricultural services.
- v Out-castes or Untouchables: These are the group of people outside the four major castes. The group came to life as a result of the intermingling among the four castes.

Conclusively, Hindu Caste, systems cannot be regarded as a social scale of class distinction rather the system defines and regulates man's social and religions status as well as his duties and obligation.

### **Question 4: What is meant by Karma: Samsara and Morsha in Hinduism?**

#### **a Karma**

- i This is action or doing
- ii It is a principle of moral reaction to both good and evil action
- iii The law of Karma is fixed in the spiritual realm and unalterable

#### **b Samsara**

- i The Samsara concept is bound up with Karma
- ii it is the re-birth or transmigration of the soul
- iii Samasara makes it possible for man to reborn as god, a higher caste or lower, or even as an animal

**c Morksha**

- i Morksha is the escape, release, liberation or emancipation
- ii Morksha makes the soul to be released from both reigheous and unrighteousness
- iii It is a final escape from the law of Karma

7.0

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## **UNIT 3: BUDDHISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 The Four Truth to life
  - 3.2 The Eight-Fold Path
  - 3.3 Basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and His followers
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored Marked Assignment
  - 6.1 Marking Guide to TMA
  - 7.0 Reference/Further Readings.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **EARLY LIFE OF BUDDHA**

Buddha, the founder of Buddhism was born at about 563 B.C. He acclaimed himself as the last of the 550 reincarnations. Buddha spent his early life in ease and luxury. He was housed in a palace in order to prevent him from seeing the darker side of life. But later he became dissatisfied with palace life. He was equally disturbed by the problem of human suffering. He therefore broke the chain of home-life. He went out seeking answers to the riddles of life.

Buddhism came to China at a time when the intellectuals, were hungry for fresh ideas, but it arrived with massive handicaps. It was saddled with the Indo-European focus on an appearance-reality metaphysics and epistemology, with approximations to concepts of 'truth', sense-data experience, mind as a container of a subjective world populated by counterparts of sensible objects, propositional knowledge, representational belief, a belief-desire psychology together with a logic-informed concept of 'reason' as both a human faculty and a property of beliefs and concepts. The highly developed Buddhist arguments had little purchase on Chinese intellectuals and the only available common form of discourse that could "domesticate" this alien system was Neo-Daoist "abstruse learning" which focused on the metaphysical notions of being and non-being. That issue resonated superficially with a puzzle about the nature of Nirvana. If Nirvana was the opposite of Samsara, (the eternal cycle of rebirth or reincarnation) then was it a state of being or of non-being? Nirvana is the achievement of the Buddha- the expression of Buddha-nature. So the cosmology of this version of Buddhism, like that of the Neo-Daoists, aided achievement of some goal. Realization of the puzzling nature of this state led to Buddhahood.

In his search, he saw a dead man, a suffering old man and a begging monk. This experience was in fulfillment of a prophecy earlier disclosed to him that once he sees these, he (Buddha) would leave home. Now that Buddha had left the palace, he came under the instruction of two famous Brahmin hermits, Alara and Uddaka. He was instructed in ancient wisdom but he was not satisfied with their teachings. Alara and Uddaka were not able to tell him how to put an end to rebirth.

Next, Buddha shifted his base to other five ascetics for further instructions. Yet Buddha received no satisfaction. To him, their teachings were mere delusions. Buddha, therefore, broke on his own. After a prolonged meditation and extreme asceticism, he claimed to have gained enlightenment. He came out with a proclamation that he possessed a message which the world must hear. His message consists in the four truths.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this study, you should be able to:

- Familiar with the origin of Buddhism as a religion.
- Understand Buddha's teaching on the truth of life.
- Explain eight steps to Buddhahood.
- Explain the basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and his followers.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 The Four Truth to life.

The truths are that: suffering is omnipresent; suffering is caused by the desire for possession and self enjoyment; suffering ceases when desire ceases; the Eight-fold path that leads to extinction of desires can only be found in a disciplined mind.

**First Truth:** The first truth simply asserts that suffering is omnipresent in the world. It is involved in the very nature of life; all forms of existence are subject to it. This is what makes life basically a succession of suffering experiences.

**Second Truth:** The second truth deals with the cause of suffering. Buddha felt that the sole cause of suffering is a desire for possession and self enjoyment of every kind. But a more important factor is the desire for the individual to acquire wealth by all possible means. To Buddha therefore, suffering would continue unless the deep, inner craving for possession is forgotten because this cannot ultimately be satisfied.

**Third Truth:** The third truth states that suffering ceases when desire ceases. At this point the selfish craving for possession and the lust for life would have been renounced. Then, genuine peace is found because at this stage, all human passions have been completely extinguished.

**Fourth Truth:** The fourth truth is the path which leads to cessation of suffering. It is the Eight-fold path. This Eight fold path leads to the extinction of man's insatiable desire. It also results in moral perfection. The Eight steps in the path are:

- i. Right views
- ii. Right aspirations
- iii. Right speech
- iv. Right conduct
- v. Right mode of livelihood
- vi. Right effort

- vii. Right awareness
- viii. Right concentration

Such is the way put forward by Buddha. According to the Four Truths, it is only when the mind is pure and the heart is soft that the divine seed of wisdom grows. Such wisdom means the power of seeing things as really as they are and perceiving the right way to peace.

### 3.2 THE EIGHT – FOLD PATH

#### According to the teaching:

Buddha, there are eight steps to Buddhahood. The Eight of steps are as follows:

- i. **Right Views:** This involves acceptance of the Four Truths and a resolute rejection both of incorrect philosophical positions regarding such things as the self and its destiny and of unworthy attitudes which result in covetousness, lying and gossiping.
- ii. **Right Aspirations:** Freeing ones thought from such things as lust, ill-will and cruelty, one should have a firm resolve to achieve the highest goals.
- iii. **Right Speech:** A man must speak plainly and truthfully and abhor lying or vain talk. Works must be gentle, soothing to the ear, penetrating the heart, rightly timed and according to the facts.
- iv. **Right conduct:** This includes charity and abstinence from killing any living being.
- v. **Right mode of livelihood:** A mans life must be free from luxury. Each must take up work which will give scope to his abilities and make him useful to his fellowmen.
- vi. **Right-Effort:** Always pressing on and particularly in four directions. First, there is the effort to avoid the uprising of evil, Second the effort to overcome evils; third, the effort to develop meritorious conditions such as detachment, investigation of the law and fourth, to maintain the meritorious conditions which have already arisen and to bring them to maturity and perfection.
- vii. **Right Awareness:-** This involves contemplation of the feelings of oneself and others, the contemplation of the mind and the contemplation of aiming at the complete mastery of ones mental processes.
- viii. **Right concentration:** This amounts to complete one pointedness of thought, concentrating the mind on a single object, all hindrances having been overcome. It leads into trances where the devotee is purified from all distractions and evils and is filled with rapture, happiness and later passes to the highest possible state of perfection. Such is the way according to Gautama Buddha. It is a combination of morality, concentration and wisdom which consist in the long spiritual processes leading to Buddhahood. According to the way, it is when the mind is pure and the heart is soft that the divine seed of wisdom grows. Such wisdom means the power of seeing things as they really are and perceiving the right way of peace.

### 3.3 BASIC CONCEPTS OF HINDUISM REJECTED BY BUDDHA AND HIS FOLLOWERS

Writers on the comparative study of religion have pointed out that Buddhism is an aristocratic revolt against Hinduism. According to their findings, Buddhism is an aristocratic revolt against Hinduism. Its Brahmin concept and the supporting Caste system. It is quite true to say that Buddhism is to Hinduism what Islam is to Christianity. It is a movement of religious thought which runs counter to Hinduism denying most of what if not all that Hinduism affirms and stand for.

Perhaps Buddha's social background had prepared way for this. He belonged to the Ksatriyas class the War Lords and Aristocracies. But this group was superceded by the Brahmins. Buddha curiously observed the suffering of the lower classes Vaisyas, Sudras and the out-Castes. He then organized an aristocratic religious revolt which gave rise to a dialectical process. Here below are some basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and his followers:

#### (a) **The concept of God**

The concept of God is one of the prominent features of every religion Hinduism believed that there is a supreme being called Brahma. It is the Brahma that governs the universe. Buddha did not concern himself with this concept. He neither affirmed nor denied the existence of Brahma. The question of whether God exists or not is out of his thought. Rather, his interest was based on morality which is expected of everybody.

#### (b) **Denial of Spiritual Beings, Angels, Sacrifices, Temples, Relies etc.**

In Hinduism gods are represented by status or images. To Hinduists, God is the most high and transcendal. This God could however, be viewed in human form. God is then represented by various images. The result is that the Hindusists concentrated so much on the worshipping of the gods, building of temples and incarnation so much that they almost forget about God. The concept of God was therefore uneffective in their lives. Instead, they imagined supernatural forces in the phenomenon of nature. They have a large number of gods such as Indra the god of cloud, lightning and thunder; Shiva, the god of destruction and Vishnu the god who creates and preserves life.

Buddha vehemently denied those gods. He maintained that they have been postulated to safeguard the exploitative position of the Brahmins over the supporting Castes.

#### (c) **The institution of Priesthood**

The institution of priesthood or Brahmin is the most influential and privilege caste. This is because the Brahmins were the keepers of the Hindu scripture. The Brahmins were the keepers of the Hindu scripture. The Brahmins prescribed the rule and conduct for the other groups. They institutionalized the Caste system to safeguard their interest and elevate themselves. The Caste to which they belonged, to, the Brahmin, was tied down to heritage, no social mobility. No matter how highly placed, once born a sudra, one must die a Sudra, onces a Brahmin, always a Brahmin. To further complete their exploitation of the masses; no ritual could be held without a Brahmin; and an individual was not free to worship unless a Brahmin presided over

that ceremony. Lastly, the Brahmin believed that only people of their caste could achieve salvation, Morksha, unto becoming Brahmin. Those belonging to other Castes were to go on suffering transmigration.

In Buddhism however, priesthood received frontal attack. Buddha declared that man does not need the help of a priest to achieve salvation. Buddhists rejected the Caste system and in its place came 'Songha' the order of the Monk.

(d). **Re-incarnation**

Hinduism has the concept of Karma, meaning duty and action. According to this concept, one's soul is not empirical but 'as man' goes into a higher or lower class when reborn according to how one lived and obeyed the Karmic and dharmic laws of liberation. If one wants to change the position of the Brahmins one would have to destroy both the religion and the Caste system.

Buddha rejected this concept of reincarnation because it was intolerable for people of other castes to stomach, especially by the Kshatriyas. The overall effect was the revolt of the self-impressing nature of the religion.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion so far you have learnt the following:

- The genesis of Buddhism as one of the ancient religions.
- That Buddha's main concern was to search for the truth of life.
- That there are eight fold paths to Buddhahood
- That each of the eight-fold path gives one direction or the other as to the right path to life.
- That Buddhism objected to certain basic concepts of Hinduism.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been exposed to the origin of Buddhism. In addition, you have been acquainted with its teachings on the four truths to life. Also you are able to realize that Buddhism teaches the eight paths that lead to the extinction of man's insatiable desires. Through this unit again, you are led to understand the stand of Buddha on certain basic concepts of Hinduism. You are therefore advised to master the salient issues in the study while proceeding to the next unit.

#### **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. Mention and discuss the four Truths of Buddhism
- ii. Explain the eight-fold paths that lead to Buddhahood
- iii. Discuss the basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and his followers.

## 6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA

### Question 1: State the origin of Buddhism

- i Buddhism, the founder of Buddhism was born at about 563 B.C
- ii He spent his early life in ease and luxury
- iii Buddha was later dissatisfied with palace life; thus he went out seeking answers to the riddles of life
- iv Buddhism came to China at a time when the intellectuals were hungry for fresh ideas.
- v Buddha, having left the palace came under the instruction of two famous Brahmin hermits who instructed him in ancient wisdom but he was not satisfied.
- vi Buddha shifted his base to other five ascetics for further instructions but he saw their teachings as mere delusions, thus he broke on his own.
- vii Buddha subjected himself to a prolonged meditation and extreme asceticism thereby he claimed to have received the four truths, which was later tagged Buddhism.

### Question 2: Mention and discuss the form truth of Buddhism

The four truths in Buddhism includes:

- i the first truth: suffering is Omnipresent. This truth, affirmed that suffering is part of life and that all forms of existence are subject to it.
- ii Suffering is caused by the desire for possession and self enjoyment. Also, the desire to acquire wealth by all possible means.
- iii Suffering ceases when desire ceases. The ability to be contented with an individual possession brings genuine peace of mind.
- iv The path that leads to cessation of suffering. This path is of eight folds, they include:
  - i Right views
  - ii Right aspirations
  - iii Right speech
  - iv Right conduct
  - v Right mode of livelihood
  - vi Right effort
  - vii Right awareness
  - viii Right concentration

### Question 3: Explain the eight paths that lead to Buddhahood

The eight paths include:

- i **Right view:** This involves acceptance of the four truths and a resolute rejection of incorrect philosophical positions.
- ii **Right Aspiration:** Freeing ones thought from such things as lust, ill-will and cruelty.

- iii **Right Speech:** Man must speak plainly and truthfully according to the facts.
- iv **Right Conduct:** Thus includes charity and abstinence from killing or destroying the works of other people.
- v **Right mode of livelihood:** Man's life must be free from luxury and perishable things alone rather man's work must be able to speak for his abilities and fame to influence fellowmen.
- vi **Right effort:** Man should always pressing on to avoid the uprising of evil to overcome evils, develop meritorious conditions and efforts that will bring maturity and perfection.
- vii **Right awareness:** This involved contemplating to master one's mental processes.
- viii **Right concentration:** This is a combination of morality, concentration and wisdom which consist in the long spiritual processes. Leading to Buddhahood.

**Question 4: Discuss the basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and his followers.**

The basic concepts of Hinduism rejected by Buddha and his followers were:

- a The Concept of God**
  - i Hinduism believed that there is a supreme being called Brahma
  - ii Buddha did not affirmed nor denied the existence of brahama, rather, his interest was based on morality which is expected of everybody.
- b Denial of spiritual beings**
  - i Hinduism concentrated on the worship of the gods, building of temples and in carnation at the expense of the true God.
  - ii Buddha vehemently denied those gods and maintained that they have been postulated to safeguard the position of the Brahmans over the supporting castes.
- c The institution of priesthood**
  - i The institution of priesthood or Brahm is the most influential and privilege caste.
  - ii The Brahmans responsible for the rule and conduct of other groups
  - iii They institutionalized the caste systems to safeguard their interest and elevate themselves.
  - iv An individual was not free to worship unless a Brahmin presided over that ceremony.
  - v The Brahmans believed that only people of their caste could achieve salvation and Morksha, while those belong to other castes were to go on suffering transmigration.
  - vi In Buddhism, Buddha declared that man does not need to held of a priest to achieve salvation
  - vii Buddhist rejected the caste system and in its place came 'Songha' the order of the monk

**d Re-incarnation**

- i Hinduism has the concept of karma, meaning duty and action
- ii For one to change is position of the Brahmins one would destroy both the religion and the caste system.
- iii Buddha rejected the concept of reincarnation

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## **UNIT 4: SHINTOISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
- 3.1 Varieties of Shinto
- 3.2 Shinto mythology and its moral values to the Japanese
- 3.3 Worship in Shinto Religion
- 3.4 Shinto festivals
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored marked Assignment
- 6.1 Marking Guides to TMA
- 7.0 References/Further Readings.

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Shintoism is the ancient traditional religion of Japan. The religion is as old as the Japanese history itself. Shintoism has no founder, rather the religion was as a result of the reaction of the elites which led to the reformation, compilation and documentation of Japanese ancient traditional religion to become what is now known as Shintoism. The religion originated in Japan, it developed among them with all the beliefs customs and practices and other underlying elements that go to support such practices. Shintoism has got no dogma no scripture and no canon. There are no systematic practices and no permanent ideologies. It also varies from clan to clan.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Familiar with the origin of Shintoism
- Understand the varieties of Shinto in Japanese tradition.
- Learn the moral values embedded in Shinto mythology
- Learn the mode of worship in Shintoism and of course familiar with festival and its celebration.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Varieties of Shinto**

Shintoism could be classified into categories:

- i. Folk Shinto: This is the type of Shinto practices mainly in Shrines. For the purpose of worship, various shrines are constructed in different locations throughout the land of Japan. Inside the shrines are different Kamis attached to them. Because of the presence of many shrines where worship is carried out, there is no universal application in its doctrines. It lacks a form of moral of doctrinal standard which tends to make it an elusive entity. This fact make it possible for adherents of shrine Shinto to use the religion for evil as well as for good.

**ii. Domestic Shinto:** In Domestic Shinto, rituals are basically carried out in private homes. In such homes 'Kamii Dana' the god-shelf, is constructed to house the local god. Kami Dana is a kind of long box containing simple symbols. In front of it is green sakaki twigs and water are placed. Prayers are murmured there daily and hands clapped. On special occasions the family gathers round to say prayers while candles are lit. From all indications therefore Shinto is by nature a religion limited to a particular people. It laid special emphasis on the Japanese people and their ancestors, rather than transmitting a creed based upon inspired writings Shinto worshipers tried to communicate a tradition through rites centered in the shrines. No attempt is made to spread the faith beyond the Japanese people.

**iii. Sect Shinto**

This exists in organized groups with historical founders. They sometimes have canonical scriptures and organized membership, systematized doctrines and specific rituals.

**iv. Shrine Shinto**

These are various shrines located in different parts of the country where people offer sacrifices. These shrines have certain Kami attached to them. Different shrines are constituted for different Kami.

### **3.2 Shinto Mythology and its moral values to the Japanese**

According to Shinto mythology, in the beginning were two Kamis Isanagi and Isanami (both male and female). The first of the two, a male, was regarded as the creator of the Japanese highland. Shortly after the creation, the two of them descended on the highland where they begat other kamis. The other kamis were sea, wind, rivers, plants, and fire-the last of them all.

While begetting fire, Isanami, the mother, was burnt and died. And when she was about to die, Isanagi followed her and disobediently viewed her beauty. The inhabitants of the land of the dead were furious with Isanagi's action and wanted to kill him. He escaped to the land of the living. Isanami had to purify herself through which she begat other Kamis Sun goddess, Amateresu Mikamis,' The Moon god "Tsykiyomi" and the god of Storm' 'Susano '. But it was discovered that the god of storm, Susano' became uncontrollable in behaviour. His unbecoming attitude forced the Sun goddess 'Amateresu Mikami' to withdraw into a cave consequently; total darkness came upon the earth. In order to restore light, other Kamis danced round the cave and eventually induced the sun-goddess to come out. The god of storm was then banished into the land of darkness.

## **Its Moral Values**

The Shinto mythology gives us an insight into Japanese morality. As evident in the myth, both the good and bad attributes of Kamis are also attributes of men as well. Goodness is compared to beauty, brilliance light, excellence, harmony and conformity. Isanami was a good example in all she did. The sincerity, loyalty and humble obedience of some of the Kamis is another excellent example. The myth emphasized that:

- i. Man must act in ways that enhance order and harmony in the society.
- ii. Man is basically good and must strive to remain good
- iii. Man is pure but comes in contact with sickness and death, which make him impure.
- iv. Because of mans contact with evil spirits and ceremonial laxity, man is defiled and he needs ritualistic purifications.

### **3.3 WORSHIP IN SHINTO RELIGION**

Worship is reverence and respect paid to God or any other spiritual beings. In Shinto religion, worship is carried out in domestic altars popularly called 'Karma Dana, it usually something like a shelf protruding from the wall. It has a small roof on it to protect the object of worship the 'Kami'. There is also the public shrine, usually situated in an atmosphere conducive to the worship of the Kami. For the purpose of worship, Rocks, Mountains, Seas are usually conceived as the goddesses of the Kami.

#### **Materials for Worship:**

For the purpose of worship, a bowl of water is usually found at every Kami shrine. This is meant for purification. Also located there is a large offering box placed at the entrance of the Shrine. A bell is ring to arouse the Kami to worship or to drive away evil spirits. There is a symbolic representation of Kami usually found in the innermost sanctuary. This is called the Kami body. It includes salt, mirror, stones, beads to mention but a few. These objects of worship are not all that matter but the ceremony attached to them.

#### **Elements of worship:**

The three key elements of worship in Shintoism are purification, prayer and sacred meals.

(a). **Purification:** It is the first step in every worship be it National or Domestic. Before a worshipper approaches the Kama Dana, he or she has to wash his or her mouth and hands. A person with illness or evil spirit should not participate in Shinto worship because such a person is ritually unclean.

(b) **Prayer:** During Shinto worship prayer is usually said inwardly. Since prayers are not vocalized, such prayers are limited to petitions or a kind of reporting to Kami: on special occasions, an offering could be offered to a fully dressed priest in regalia and a prayer called 'Morito' is said on his behalf in the presence of the worshipers. For a higher fee, a ritual dancing by female dancers is entitled.

(c) **Sacred Meals:** Sacred meals are usually taken with the Kami. The meals are of the kinds which the worshipers eat in their houses, although they are of richer quality. The meals are means of communion between the Kami and worshipers who are his 'children' and consequently a means of fellowship among the 'children' themselves.

### 3.4 Shinto festivals:

Shinto is accorded the highest worship during various festivals and ceremonies. Every shrine has its own festival days. It is in a gala of such celebrations that families gather to celebrate. Such festivals come up before the planting seasons.

**Preparation:** Before the festival days worshippers would have purified themselves with purification water. Sometimes a priest uses the Shakaki tree to purify the congregation in the midst of songs and dancing. Having done this, the door to the shrine is then opened. Offerings of food and wine are made. Prayers are said and worshippers come before the Kami and bow before it. Food offered on the occasion are then carried away, worshippers withdraw to eat the meal, they also taste wine as a sort of communion with Kami.

**Celebration:** During the festival, kaguar or sacred dances are performed inside the shrines. For the general public the crux of the ceremony is the procession carried out by the people in jubilation with portable shrines carried along with them. The portable shrine contains the picture of Kami. After the procession, the portable shrines usually taken back to the larger shrine where the procession usually ends.

Festivals are also held during the enthronement of the Emperor. Other occasions for festivals are: Japanese New Year days and Harvests festivals, the emperor himself performed the priestly function and it takes place during the Autumn. It is now called Japan National Thanks given Days. The Emperor, on behalf of the people, presents the first fruits to the Kami. It is the most solemn of the Shinto ceremonies because it takes place at midnight. Worshippers carry torches or light. It is during this ceremony that the emperor, as a descendant of Amaterasu, communicates with his ancestors who are the Kamis.

Besides these, there is the Grand Purification Ceremony. This is performed twice in a year in the last days of June and December and the purpose is the cleansing of the people and the land from all evils and pollutions they might have incurred during the previous half year. This ceremony indicates a close communion between the Japanese and the Kami. Shinto religions is then basically concerned with this world alone, there is no personal invitation to repentance.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

From the discussion in this unit, you have learnt that:

- Shintoism is an ancient traditional religion of Japan
- Shintoism has no founder, rather it evolved through the reaction of the Japanese elites who compiled and documented Japanese traditions.
- There are Shinto varieties they include the folk and domestic Shinto.
- Shinto mythology gives an insight to Japanese morality.
- There is a unique way of worship in Shinto religion
- The elements of worship in Shinto include purification, prayer and sacred meals.
- The Japanese has peculiar way of celebrating Shinto festivals.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit you have been familiar with the history of Shinto and its varieties. You have been led to understand the moral values embedded in the Shinto mythology and how the Japanese worship Shinto. The discussion also afforded you the materials of worship and the peculiar ways by which Shinto festivals are celebrated. You are therefore advised to master the main issues in the study before you proceed to the next unit.

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. Narrate the Shinto mythology and show its moral values to the Japanese.
- ii. Explain the key elements involved in Shinto worship.
- iii. Write short notes on (i) Folk Shinto and (ii) Domestic Shinto.

## **6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA**

### **Question 1: State origin of Shintoism**

- i Shintoism is the ancient traditional religion of Japan
- ii It has no founder but rather emerged through the reaction of the elites
- iii Shintoism has got no dogma, no scripture and no canon
- iv There are no systematic practices and no permanent ideologies
- v Shintoism is of various kinds
- vi The varieties that exist in shintoism brought some differences in the manner at which it is being practiced from one clan to the other

### **Question 2: Narrate Shinto Mythology and show its moral values to the Japanese**

- i Shinto mythology declared the existence of two Kamis, Isanage and Isanami
- ii Isanagi was regarded as the creator of the Japanese highland
- iii Isanagi and Isanami descended unto highland after the creation, there they begot, sea, wind, rivers, plants and fire.
- iv Isanami was burnt to death while she was giving birth to fire
- v Isanagi viewed her beauty when she was about to die and this made the inhabitant of the land of the dead to be furious and wanted to kill him.
- vi Isanagi escaped to the land of the living
- vii Isanami before she died purified herself and there he gave birth to other Kamis, sun goddess. Amaterasu Mikami, the moon god 'Tsykiyomi' and the god of storm, susano.
- viii Man must act in ways that enhance order and harmony in the society.
- ix Man is basically good and must strive to remain good
- x Man is pure out comes in contact with sickness and death which make him impure
- xi Man is defiled and need ritualistic purifications.

### **Question 3: Explain the key elements involved in Shinto worship**

The key elements of worship in shintoism are:

#### **a Purification**

- i Purification, this is the first step in every worship be it National or Domestic
- ii Worshippers are to wash their hands and mouth before approaching kamadan
- iii A sick person is not allowed to worship Shinto because he/she is seen as an unclean person ritually.

#### **b Prayer**

- i Prayer is usually said silently and inwardly during Shinto worship
- ii Prayers usually be a petition or a reporting to Kami
- iii Special occasion called for offering to be offered to a Priest, who in return pray a prayer called 'Morito'.

#### **c Sacred Meals**

- i Sacred meals are usually taken with the Icamis
- ii The meals in most cares ate in the worshippers houses
- iii Meals are means of communion with the Kami
- iv They also enhancing deep fellowship and relationship among the worshippers who were said to be children of Kami

### **Question 4: Write short notes on a. Folk Shinto and b. Domestic Shinto**

#### **a Folk Shinto**

- i This is the type of Shinto practices mainly in shrines
- ii For easy worship, shrines were constructed in different locations of Japan
- iii Different Kamis were attached to each shrines.
- iv Multiplicity of shrines affected uniformity of doctrines
- v Adherents abuse the non-uniformity of doctrines to perpetuate evils

#### **b Domestic Shinto**

- i Rituals are basically carried out in private homes
- ii Kami-Dana, the god-shelf, holds the local god
- iii Prayers are murmured at domestic Shinto daily and hands clapped
- iv On special occasion, the family gathered round to say prayers and lit the candles
- v Shinto by nature laid emphasis on the Japanese people and their ancestors, this the worshippers communicate the traditional rites in the shrines alone

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## **UNIT 5: CONFUCIANISM**

### **CONTENTS**

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- 2.0** Objectives
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **CONFUCIANISM: ITS ORIGIN**

**Confucius** (551 BCE 479 BCE) was a sage and social philosopher of China whose teachings have deeply influenced East Asia, including China, Korea, and Japan for two thousand five hundred years. The relationship between Confucianism and Confucius himself, however, is tenuous. Confucius' ideas were not accepted during his lifetime and he frequently bemoaned the fact that he remained unemployed by any of the feudal lords.

As with many other prominent figures, such as Jesus, Socrates and Buddha, Confucius did not leave any writings put forward his ideas. Instead, only texts with recollections by his disciples and students are available. This factor was further complicated by the 'Burning of the Books and Burying of the Scholars', a massive suppression of dissenting thought during the Q in Dynasty , more than two centuries after Confucius' death.

However, we can sketch out Confucius' ideas from the fragments that remain. Confucius was a man of letters who worried about the troubled times he lived. He went from place to place trying to spread his political ideas and influence many kings contending for supremacy in China.

## **Confucianism**

Confucianism means the complex system of moral, social, political, and religious teachings built up by Confucius on the ancient Chinese traditions, and perpetuated as the State religion down to the present day. Confucianism aims at making not simply the man of virtue, but the man of knowledge and of good manners. The perfect man must combine the qualities of saint, scholar, and gentleman. Confucianism is a religion without positive revelation, with a minimum of dogmatic teaching, and its popular worship is centred in offerings to the dead, in which the notion of duty is extended beyond the sphere of morals proper so as to embrace almost every detail of daily life.

### **Names for Confucianism**

Several names for Confucianism exist in Chinese. These include:

“School of the Scholars” (Chinese; pinyin; rujia)

“Teaching of the Scholars” (Chinese; pinyin; rujiao)

“Study of the Scholars” (traditional Chinese; simplified Chinese; pinyin; Ruxue)

“Teaching of Confucius” (Chinese pinyin kongjiao)

Three of these four uses the Chinese character Ru, meaning “scholar” These names do not use “Confucius” at all, but instead centers on the figure or idea of the Confucian scholar. However, the suffixes of jia, jiao, and xue carry different implications on the nature of the Confucianism itself.

Rujia contains the character jia, which literally means “house” or “family” in this context; it is more readily construed as meaning “school of thought”, since it is also used to construct the names of philosophical schools contemporary to Confucianism. For example, the Chinese names for Legalism and Mohism end in jia.

Rujiao and Kongjiao contain the Chinese character jiao, true verb “teach”, used in school as term like “education” or “educator”. The term, however, is notably used to construct the names of religions in Chinese: the terms for Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Shinto and other religions in Chinese all end with jiao.

Ruxue contains xue, meaning literally “study” The term is paralleled to “-ology” in English, being used to construct the names of academic fields: the Chinese names of fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, political science, economics and sociology all end in xue

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to :

- Acquainted with the origin of Confucianism.
- Familiar with the themes in Confucian thought.
- Understand the Confucian texts.
- Explain whether Confucianism is a religion or not.

### **3.1 Themes in Confucian Thought**

#### **(a) Governance**

A key Confucian concept is that in order to govern others one must first govern oneself. When developed sufficiently, the King's personal virtue spreads beneficent influence throughout the Kingdom. This idea is developed further in the Great Learning and is tightly linked with the Taoist concept of "wuwei" (traditional Chinese) simplified Chinese: pinyin: wu wei): the less the king does, the more that is done. By being the "calm center" around which the kingdom turns, the king allows everything to function smoothly and avoids having to tamper with the individual parts of the whole.

This idea may be traced back to early shamanistic beliefs, such as the king (Chinese: pinyin: wang) being the axle between the sky, human beings and the Earth. The character itself shows the three levels of the Universe, united by a single line. Another complementary view is that this idea may have been used by ministers and counsellors to deter aristocratic whims that would otherwise be to the detriment of the population.

#### **(b) Ritual**

In Confucianism, the term "ritual" (Chinese, pinyin Ii)" was soon extended to include secular ceremonial behaviour before being used to refer to the propriety or politeness which colours everyday life. Rituals were codified and treated by as a comprehensive system of norms. Confucius himself tried to revive the etiquette of earlier dynasties. After his death, people regarded him as a great authority on ritual behaviours.

It is important to know that "ritual" has a different meaning in context of Confucianism, especially today, from its context in many religions. In Confucianism, the acts that the people tend to carry out in everyday life are considered rituals. Rituals are not necessarily regimented for arbitrary practices, but the routines that people often undergo knowingly or unknowingly throughout their lives shaping the rituals in a way that leads to content and healthy society, and to content and healthy people, is one purpose of Confucian philosophy.

#### **(c) Relationship**

One theme central to Confucianism is that of relationships, and the differing duties arising from the different status one held in relation to others. Individuals are held to simultaneously stand in different degrees of relationship with different people, namely; as a junior in relation to their parents and elders, and as a senior in relation to their young siblings, students and others. While juniors are considered in Confucianism to owe strong duties of reverence and service to their seniors, seniors also have duties of benevolence and concern toward juniors. This theme consistently manifests itself in many aspects of East Asian cultures even to this day, with extensive filial duties on the part of children towards parents and elders, and great concerns of parents towards their children.

Social harmony the great goal of Confucianism thus results partly from every individual knowing his/her place in the social order and playing his/her part well. When Duke Jing of Qi asked about government, by which he meant proper administration so as to bring social harmony, Confucius replied. "There is government, when the prince is prince, and the minister is minister, when the father is father and the son is son."

**(d) Filial piety**

"Filial piety" is considered among the greatest of virtues that must be shown towards both the living and the dead (ancestors). The term "filial", meaning "of a child", denotes the respect that a child, or originally a son, should show to his parents. This relationship was extended by analogy to a series of five relationships:

- (i) Sovereign to subjects
- (ii) Parent to child
- (iii) Husband to wife
- (iv) Elder to younger sibling
- (v) Friend to friend ( The members of this relationship are equal to one another )

Specific duties were prescribed to each of the participant in this set of relationships. Such duties were extended to the dead, where the living stood as sons to their deceased family; this led to the veneration of ancestors.

In time, Filial piety was also built in to the Chinese legal system; a criminal would be punished more harshly if the culprit had committed the crime against a parent, while fathers often exercise enormous power over their children. Much the same was true of other unequal relationships.

The main source of our knowledge of the importance of Filial piety is the Book of Filial Piety, a work attributed to Confucius and his son but almost certainly written in the third century BCE. Filial Piety has continued to play a central role in Confucian thinking to the present day.

**(e) Loyalty**

Loyalty (Chinese) is the equivalent of Filial piety on a different plane. It was particularly relevant for the social class to which most of Confucius' students belonged, because the only way for an ambitious scholar to make his way in the Confucian Chinese world was to enter a ruler's civil service. Like Filial piety, however loyalty was often subverted by the autocratic regime of China. Confucius had advocated sensitivity to the real politics of the class relations that existed in his time; he did not propose that "might make right", but that a superior would have received the "mandate of heaven" should be obeyed because of his moral rectitude. In later ages, however, emphasis was placed on the obligations of the ruled to the ruler and the less on the ruler's obligations to the ruled. Loyalty was also an extension of one's duties to friends, family and spouse. Loyalty to one's leader came first, then to one's family, then to one's spouse and lastly to one's friend. Loyalty was considered one of the greatest human virtues.

**(f) Humanity**

Confucius was concerned with people's individual development, which he maintained took place within the context of human relationships. Ritual and Filial piety are the way in which one should act towards other from an underlying attitude of humanness. Confucius' concept of humanness (Chinese; pinyin ren) is probably best expressed in the Confucian version of the (Ethic of reciprocity) Golden Rule: "what you do not wish for yourself, do not to others;"

Ren also has a particular dimension. If the ruler lacks Ren, Confucianism holds, it will be difficult if not impossible for his subjects to behave humanly. Ren is the basis of Confucian political theory: it presupposes an autocratic ruler, exhorted to refrain from acting inhumanly towards his subjects. An inhumane ruler runs the risk of losing the "Mandate of Heaven", the right to rule, such a mandate less ruler need not to be obeyed. But a ruler who reigns humanely and takes care of the people is to be obeyed strictly, for the benevolence of his dominion shows that he has been mandated by heaven. Confucius himself had little to say on the will of the people, but his leading follower Mencius did state on one occasion that the people's opinion on certain weighty matters should be polled.

**(g) The gentleman**

The term "Junzi" (literally "nobleman") is crucial to classical Confucianism. The ideal of a "gentleman" or "perfect man" is that for which Confucianism exhorts all people to strive. A succinct description of the "perfect man" is one who "combines the qualities of saint, scholar, and gentleman". In modern times the masculine translation in English is also still frequently used. Elitism was bound up with the concept, and gentlemen were expected to act as moral guides to the rest of the society. They were to:

- (i) Cultivate themselves morally
- (ii) Show Filial piety and loyalty where these are due, and
- (iii) Cultivate humanity, or benevolence.

The great exemplar of the perfect gentleman is Confucius himself. Perhaps the greater tragedy of his life was that he was never awarded the high official position, which he desired, from which he wished to demonstrate the general well-being that would ensure if humane persons ruled and administered the state.

The opposite of the Junzi was the Xiaoren (Chinese: pinyin: xiaoren; literally "small person"). The character in this context means pity in mind and heart, narrowly self interested, greedy, superficial, or materialistic.

**3.2 The Confucian Texts**

As Confucianism in its broad sense embraces not only the immediate teaching of Confucius, but also the traditional records, customs, and rites to which he gave the sanction of his approval, and which today rests largely upon his authority, there are reckoned among the Confucian texts severally, that even in his day was venerated as sacred heirlooms of the past. The texts are divided into two categories, known as the

“King” (Classic), and the “Shuh” (Books). The texts of the “King”, which stand first in importance, are commonly reckoned as five, but sometimes as six.

- (a) The first of these is the “Shao-king” (Book of History), a religious and moral work, tracing the hand of providence in a series of great events of past history, and inculcating the lesson that the Heaven-god gives prosperity and length of days only to the virtuous ruler who has the true welfare of the people at heart. Its unity of composition may well bring its time of publication down to the sixth century B.C. though the sources on which the earlier chapters are based may be almost contemporaneous with the events related.
- (b) The second “King” is the so-called “She-King” (Book of Songs), often spoken of as the “Odes”. And of its 305 short lyric poems some belong to the time of the Shang dynasty (1766-1123 B.C), the remaining and perhaps larger, part to the first five centuries of the dynasty of Chow, that is, down to about 600 B.C.
- (c) The third “King” is the so-called “Y-king” (Book of Changes), an enigmatic treatise on the art of divining with the stalks of a native plant, which after being thrown give different indications accordingly as they conform to one or another of the sixty-four hexagrams made up of three broken and three unbroken lines. The short explanations which accompany them, in large measure arbitrary and fantastic, are assigned to the time of Wan and his illustrious son Wu, founders of the Chow dynasty (1122B.C) Since the time of Confucius, the work has been more than doubled by a series of appendixes, ten in number, out of which eight are attributed to Confucius. Only a small portion of these, however are probably authentic.
- (d) The fourth “King” is the “Li-Ki” (Book of Rites). In its present form it dates from the second century of our era, being a compilation from a vast number of documents, most of which date from the earlier part or the Chow dynasty. It gives rules of conduct down to the minute details for religious acts of worship, court functions, social and family relations, dress-in short, for every sphere of human action. It remains today the authoritative guide of correct conduct for every cultivated Chinese. In the “Li-Ki” are many of Confucius’s reputed sayings and two long treatises composed by disciples, which may be said to reflect with substantial accuracy the sayings and teachings of the master. One of these is the treatise known as the “Chung-yung” (Doctrine of the Mean). It forms Book XXVIII of the “Li-Ki”, and is one its most valuable treatises. It consists of a collection of sayings of Confucius characterizing the man of perfect virtue. The other treatise, forming Book XXXIX of the “Li-Ki” is so-called “Ta-Ch’un-ts’ew” (spring and autumn), said to have been written by the hand of Confucius himself. It consists of a connected series of bare annals of the state of Lu for the years 722-484B.C.

To these five “Kings” belongs, the sixth so-called “Hiao-king” (Book of Filial Piety). The Chinese attributes its composition to Confucius, but in the opinion of critical scholars, it is the product of the school of his disciples. Tsang-tze.

Mention has just been made of the two treatises, the “Doctrine of the Mean” and the “Great Learning”, embodied in the “Li-Ki”. In the eleventh century of our era, these two works were united with other Confucian texts, constituting what is

known as the “Sze-shuh” (Four Books). First of these is the “Lun yu” (Analects). It is a work in twenty short chapters, showing what manner of man Confucius was in his a daily life, and recording many of his striking sayings on moral and historical topics. It seems to embody the authentic testimony of his disciples written by one of the next generations.

- (e) The second place in the “Shuh” is given to the “Book of Mencius”. Mencius (Meng-tze) was not an immediate disciple of the master. He lived a century later. He acquired great fame as an exponent of Confucian teaching. His sayings chiefly, on moral topics, were treasured up by disciples, and published in his name. Third and fourth order in the “shuh” come the “Great Learning” and the “Doctrine of the Mean”.

For our earliest knowledge of the content of these Confucian texts, we are indebted to the painstaking research of the Jesuit missionaries in China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who, with a heroic zeal for the spread of Christ’s kingdom united diligence proficiency in the study of Chinese customs, literature, and history that have laid scholars under lasting obligation. Among these we may mention Fathers Premare Regis, Lacharme, Noel, and Ignacio da Cost, by whom most of the Confucian texts were translated and elucidated with great erudition. It was but natural that their pioneer studies was so difficult, a field should be destined to give place to the more accurate and complete monuments of modern scholarship. But even here they have worthy representatives in such scholars as Father Zottoli and Henri Cordier, whose Chinese studies give evidence of vast erudition. The Confucian texts have been made available to English readers by Professor Legge. Besides his monumental work is in seven volumes, entitled “The Chinese Classics” and his version of the “Ch’unts’ew”, he has given the revised translations of the “She”, “Ta-hio” “y”, and “L1-K1” in volumes III, XVI, XXII and XXVIII of “The sacred Books of the East”.

### **3.3 Confucianism A “religion” or not?**

Most religions can be defined as having a set God or a group of gods, an organized priesthood, a belief in a life after death, and organized traditions, thus it is debatable whether Confucianism should be called a true “religion”. While it prescribes a great deal of ritual, little of it could be construed as worship or meditation in a formal sense. However, Tian is sacred to many Confucians. Confucius is occasionally made statements about the existence of other worldly beings that sound distinctly agnostic and humanistic to European and American ears. Thus, Confucianism is often considered a secular ethical tradition and not a “religion”. It is best described as a philosophy with special rituals and beliefs.

Its effects on Chinese and other East Asian societies and cultures has been en masse and parallel effects of religious movements, seen in other cultures. Those who follow the teachings of Confucius say that they are comforted by it. It includes a great deal of ritual and, in its Neo-Confucian formulation, gives a comprehensive explanation of the world, of human nature, etc. Moreover, regions in Chinese culture are not mutually exclusive entities each tradition is free to find its specific niche, its field of specification. One can practice religions such as Taoism, Christianity,

Judaism, Sikhism, the Baha'i faith, Jainism, Islam, Shinto, Buddhism, or Zoroastrianism and still profess Confucian beliefs.

Although Confucianism may include ancestral worship, sacrifice to ancestral spirit and an abstract celestial deity, and the deification of ancient kings and even Confucius himself, all these features can be traced back to non-Confucian Chinese beliefs established long before Confucius and, in this respect, make it difficult to claim that such rituals make Confucianism a religion.

Generally speaking, Confucianism is not considered a religion by Chinese or other east-Asian people. Part of this attitude, may be explained by the stigma on many religion as superstitious, illogical, or unable to deal with modernity. Many Buddhist say that Buddhism is not a religion, but a philosophy, and this is partially a reaction to its popular negative popular views of religion. Similarly, Confucians maintain that Confucianism is not a religion, but rather a moral code or philosophic world view. Many "religions" in East Asia such as Buddhism and Taoism can be considered as "not religions". There is a much blurred line between religion and philosophy in non-Western thought.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION.**

From the discussion you have learnt the following

- That Confucius was a sage and social philosopher of China whose teachings deeply influenced East Asia for two thousand five hundred years.
- Confucianism is an ancient tradition of China and transformed to the state religion down to the present day.
- Confucianism is a religion without positive revelation, with a minimum of dogmatic teaching.
- Its popular worship is centred in offerings to the dead.
- Several names for Confucianism exist in Chinese, such as, School of the Scholars, Teachings of the Scholars, Study of the Scholars, and Teachings of Confucius.
- There are specific themes in Confucian thoughts which shed more lights on the tenets and aspiration of Confucianism.
- Confucian Text is divided into two broad senses, the Classics and the Books.
- Confucianism is often considered a secular ethical tradition and not a "religion" but its effect on Chinese and other East Asian societies and cultures has been immersed and parallels the effects of religious movements seen in other cultures.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to the teachings of Confucianism through the various themes in Confucian thought and texts. In addition, you are made to understand that Confucianism is not a religion in totality but rather philosophical ideology of the Chinese tradition moral code. You are therefore advised strongly to master these facts before you go to the next unit.

## 6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- (I) Trace the origin of Confucianism as a Chinese religion
- (II) Explain in details the Confucian Texts.
- (III) Discuss two of the themes in Confucius thought.

### 6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA

#### **Question 1: Trace the origin of Confucianism as a Chinese religion**

- i Confucianism means the complex system of moral social, political and religious teachings built up by Confucius on the ancient Chinese traditions
- ii Confucianism aims of making man to be of knowledge and of good manners
- iii It is a religion without positive revelation, a minimum of dogmatic teaching with its popular worship centered in offering to the dead.
- iv The religion was inaugurated by Confucius who was a sage and social philosopher of China. He lived between (551-47) BCE
- v Confucius was a main of letters who worried about the trouble times he lived.
- vi Confucius did not leave any writing put forward his ideas rather, only texts with recollections by his disciples and students are available
- vii Several names for Confucianism exists in Chinese. There include:
  - a School of the scholars (Pinyin; rujia)
  - b Teaching of the scholars (rujiao)
  - c Study of the scholars (Ruxue)
  - d Teaching of Confucius (Pinyin Kongjiao)

#### **Question 2: Explain in details the Confucian texts**

The texts are divided into two major categories, they are the “King” (classic) and the Shuh (Books)

- a The ‘Shao-king (Book of History). This is the first Confucian text which established that the heave god gives prosperity and length of day to the virtuous ruler.
- b The second text was ‘She-king’ (Book of Songs) often spoken of as the “Odes”.
  - i Part of its 305 lyric poems belong to the time of the shang dynasty (1766-1123 BC)

- ii The larger part belongs to the first five centuries of the dynasty of chow
- c The third text is called 'Ye king' Book of (Changes)
  - i The text is of about ten (10) in numbers, out of which eight are attributed to Confucius.
  - d The fruit 'king' is the Li-Ki (Book of Rites)
  - i This text gives rules of conduct down to the details for religious acts of worship, court function, social and family relations.
  - ii The text remains the authoritative guide of correct conduct for every cultivated Chinese
  - iii This text also contain many of Confucius reputed sayings and log treatises composed by disciples which related substantially the sayings and teaching of Confucius.
  - e The second group of the Confucius text was known as the 'Book of Mencius'. This text was based on Confucius sayings and teachings chiefly on moral topics, which the third and fourth parts of the 'Shuh' was on the 'Great Learning' and the 'Doctrine of the Mean'.

**Question 3: Discuss two of the Themes in Confucius thought**

- a Governance
  - i To the Confucius, governance rested on the ability to govern oneself
  - ii Leadership by example is paramount in Confucius tradition
  - iii Discipline in leadership influences the followers positively or negatively
- b Filial Piety
  - i Filial piety is considered among the greatest of virtues in Confucianism
  - ii The term 'Filia' means to respect that a child should show to the parents
  - iii This respect was extended to
  - iv The leaders of all categories spiritual, political and as many leaders as one subjected to
  - v Respect to the parents direct or indirect parents
  - vi Husband to wife and wife to the husband
  - vii Elder to young sibling and the young to the elders
  - viii Friend to friend
  - ix Specific duties and responsibilities were attached to each institutions to abide with

**Question 4: Explain Ritual in Confucianism**

- i The term ritual or (Pinyinli) refers to propriety or secular ceremonial behaviour.
- ii It was also codified as a comprehensive system of norms
- iii Ritual has a different meaning in content of Confucianism, for instance, any act that people carryout in everyday life is considered as ritual.

- iv      Rituals are not necessarily regimented for arbitrary practices, but the routings that people often undergo knowingly or unknowingly that can influence their lives and society they live.

## **7.0 REFERENCES / FURTHER READINGS.**

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## **UNIT 6      ZOROASTRIANISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
- 3.1 Basic Beliefs
- 3.1.1 Other characteristics
- 3.3 Beliefs
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutoed Marked Assignment
- 6.1 Marking Guide to TMA
- 7.0 References/ Further Readings

### **1.0                  INTRODUCTION**

This is a religion of ancient Persia based on the worship of a single god, founded by the prophet Zoroaster also called Zoroaster in the 6<sup>th</sup> C BC. The term Zoroastrianism was first attested by the Oxford English Dictionary in 1874 in Archibald Sayce's principles of Comparative Philology. The first surviving reference to Zoroaster in Western scholarship is attributed to Thomas Browne (1605-682), who briefly refers to the prophet in his 1643 *Religio Medici*. The OED records 1743 (Warburton, Pope's Essay) as earliest reference to Zoroaster.

The term Mazdaism (pronounced / mæzdeism) is a typical 19<sup>th</sup> century construct, taking Mazda from the name Ahura Mazda and adding the suffix *ism* to suggest a belief system. The Zoroastrian name of the religion since the times of ancient Persia is *Mazdayasna*, which combines Mazda- with the Avestan language word *yasna*, meaning wisdom worship, devotion to wisdom.' A practitioner of the *Mazdayasna* religion is referred to as a *Mazdayasmi*, a "wisdom worshipper".

In the English language, an adherent of the faith commonly refers to him or herself as a Zoroastrian or, increasingly more common, a Zarathustrian. An older, but still widespread expression is *Behdin*, meaning 'follower of Daena', for which "Good Religion" is one translation. In the Zoroastrian liturgy, the term *Behdin* is also used as a title for an individual who has been formally inducted into the religion.

### **2.0                  OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to

- Account for the origin of Zoroastrianism.
- Explain the basic beliefs of Zoroastrianism.
- Discuss other characteristics of Zoroastrianism.
- Account for the religious tests of Zoroastrianism.
- Explain other principle beliefs in Zoroastrianism.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 BASIC BELIEFS

There is one universal and transcendental God, Ahura Mazda, meaning The Supreme Wisdom, the one Uncreated Creator to whom all worship is ultimately directed. The term Ahura Mazda was constructed by Zoroaster as a combination of a masculine and a feminine word as if to underline the lack of a specific gender, making the divinity radically different from pre-Zoroastrian polytheistic deities. Reflecting Zoroastrianism's geographical and cultural origin between the monotheistic religions of the Middle East and the monotheistic and pantheistic faiths of South Asia as well as reflecting the religion's pluralistic literary origins, contemporary Zoroastrianism features interpretations of the concept of Ahura Mazda covering both monotheism, cosmic or mental dualism, pantheism and panentheism. The pantheist school of Zoroastrianism, as taught by contemporary scholars such as Parviz Varjavand, is in this on-going theological debate strictly referred to as Mazdayasna, meaning "wisdom worship" in contemporary English. It is here important to stress that despite these radical theological differences, dualist and pantheist interpretations of Zoroastrianism have always co-existed, both in Iran and India, throughout the millennia within the same organizational framework.

Ahura Mazda's creation evident as *asha*, truth and order is the antithesis of chaos, evident as *druj*, falsehood and disorder. The resulting conflict involves the entire universe, including humanity, which has an active role to play in the conflict.

Active participation in life through good thoughts, good words and good deeds is necessary to ensure happiness and to keep the chaos at bay. This active participation is a central element in Zoroaster's concept of free will, and Zoroastrianism rejects all forms of monasticism.

Ahura Mazda will ultimately prevail, at which point the universe will undergo a cosmic renovation and time will end (cf: Zoroastrian eschatology). In the final renovation, all of creation even the souls of the dead that were initially banished to "darkness" will be reunited in Ahura Mazda. In Zoroastrian tradition the malevolent is represented by *Druj*, the "Destructive principle", while the benevolent is represented through Ahura Mazda's *Asha*, the instrument or "Bounteous Principle" of the act of creation. It is through *spenta Mainyu* that Ahura Mazda is immanent in humankind and through which the creator interacts with the world. According to Zoroastrian cosmology, in articulating the Ahura Vairya formula Ahura Mazda made this ultimate triumph evident to *Druj*. As expressions and aspect of Creation, Ahura Mazda emanated seven "sparks", the *Amesha Spentas* ("Bounteous Immortals"), that are each the hypostasis and representative of one aspect of that creation. These *Amesha Spenta* are in turn assisted by a league of lesser principles, the *Yazatas*, each "Worthy of Worship" and each again a hypostasis of a moral or physical aspect of creation.

#### DEATH RITUALS

**Death and burial:-** Zoroastrians believe that on the fourth day after death the human soul leaves the body and the body remains as an empty shell. Mourners clean and dress the corpse and pose it on a hard slab, all according to custom. Then they bring in a dog with two spots painted on its forehead, as if it had four eyes. If the dog barks the

person is still alive. If not he is dead. Traditionally Zoroastrians disposed of their dead by leaving them atop open-topped enclosures, called Towers of Silence, or Dohams. Vultures and the weather would clean the flesh off the bones, which were then placed into an ossuary at the center of the Tower (usually a well). Fire and earth were considered too sacred for the dead to be placed in them. While this practice is continued in India by some Parsis, it had ended by the beginning of the twentieth century in Iran. In India, burial and cremation are becoming increasingly popular alternatives as pollution has killed off the vulture population. Alternatively, Parsis have created solar concentrators to intensify the sun's rays and help burn the corpses.

### **3.1.1 OTHER CHARACTERISTICS**

The symbol of fire; The energy of the creator is represented in Zoroastrianism by fire and the sun, which are both enduring, radiant, pure and life sustaining. Zoroastrians usually pray in front of some form of fire ( or any source of light). (It is important to note that fire is not worshipped by Zoroastrians, but is used simply as a symbol and point of focus, much like the crucifix in Catholicism. For details, see fire temple).

Proselytizing and conversion Parsi Zoroastrians do not proselytize. In recent years, however, Zoroastrian communities in Iran, Europe and the Americas have been more tolerant towards conversion. While this move has been supported officially by the Council of Mobeds in Tehran, Iran, it has not been endorsed by the priesthood in Mumbai, India.

Inter-faith marriage: As in many other faiths, Zoroastrians are strongly encouraged to marry others of the same faith, but this is not a requirement of the religion itself. Some members of the Indian Zoroastrian community (the Parsis) contend that a child must have a Parsi father to be eligible for introduction into the faith, but this assertion is considered by most Indians to be a violation of Zoroastrian tenets of gender equality, and may be a remnant of an old legal definition (since overruled) of Parsi. This issue is a matter of great debate within the Parsi community, but with the increasingly global nature of modern society and the dwindling number of Zoroastrians, such opinions are less vociferous than they were previously.

## **3.2 RELIGIOUS TEXTS**

**(a) The Avesta :** The Avesta is the collection of the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism. Although the texts are very old, the compendium as we know it today is essentially the result of a redaction that is thought to have occurred during the reign of Shapur II (309-379 CE). However, some portions of the collection have been lost since then, especially after the fall of the Sassanid empire in 651 CE, after which Zoroastrianism was supplanted by Islam. The oldest existing copy of an Avestan language text dates to 1288 CE.

The most ancient of the texts of the Avesta are in an old Indic Avestan. The majority of the texts are however from a later period: most are probably from the Achaemenid era (648-330 BCE), with a few being even younger. All the texts are believed to have been transmitted orally for centuries before they found written form, and in existing copies, the Avestan language words are written in Din debireh script, a Sassanid era (226-651 CE) invention.

The various texts of the Avesta are generally divided into topical categories, but these are by no means fixed or canonical. Some scholars prefer to place the five categories in two groups, one liturgical and the other general.

- (b) The Yasna, the primary liturgical collection. That Yasna includes the
- (c) Gathas, which are thought to have been composed by Zoroaster himself.
- (d) The Visparad, a collection of supplements to the Yasna.
- (e) The yashts, hymns in honour of the divinities.
- (f) The Vendidad, describes the various forms of evil spirits and ways to confound them. Shorter texts and prayer collections, the five nyaishes (“worship, praise”) the siroze (“thirty days”) (see Zoroastrian calendar) and the afringans (“blessings”). Some of these fragments are collected in the Khorda Avesta, the ‘Little Avesta’, which is the collection of texts for daily lay (as opposed to priestly) use.

The texts of the Avesta are complemented by several secondary works of religious or semi-religious nature, which although not sacred and not used as scripture, have a significant influence on Zoroastrian doctrine. They are all of a much later date in general from between the 9<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries with the youngest treatise dating to the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

### 3.3 PRINCIPAL BELIEFS

Faravaha (or Ferohar), one of the primary symbols of Zoroastrianism, believed to be the depiction of a Fravashi (guardian spirit).

Ahura Mazda is the beginning and the end, the creator of everything which can and cannot be seen, the Eternal the Pure and the only Truth. In the Gathas, the most sacred texts of Zoroastrianism thought to have been composed by Zoroaster himself, the prophet acknowledged devotion to no other divinity besides Ahura Mazda.

Daena (din in modern Persian) is the eternal Law, whose order was revealed to humanity through the MathraSpenta (“Holy Words”). Daena has been used to mean religion, faith, law, even as a translation for the Hindu and Buddhist term Dharma, often interpreted as ‘duty’ but can also mean social order, right conduct, or virtue. The metaphor of the ‘path’ of Daena is represented in Zoroastrianism by the Muslim undershirt Sudra, the “Good/Holy path; and the 72 – threat Kushti girdle, the “pathfinder”.

Daena should not be confused with the fundamental principle asha (Vedic rta), the equitable law of the universe, which governed the life of the ancient Indo-Iranians. For these, asha was the course of everything observable, the motion of the planets and astral bodies, the progression of the seasons, the pattern of daily nomadic herdsman life, governed by regular metronomic events such as sunrise and sunset. All physical creation (geti) was thus determined to run according to a master plan inherent to Ahura Mazda and violations of the order (druj) were violations against creation, and thus violations against Ahura Mazda. This concept of asha versus the druj should not be confused with the good versus evil battle evident in western religions, for although both forms of opposition express moral conflict, the asha versus druj concept is more systemic and less personal, representing, for instance,

chaos (that opposes order); or “uncreation”, evident as natural decay (that opposes creation); or more simply “the lie” (that opposes truth, righteousness). Moreover, in his role as the one uncreated creator of all, Ahura Mazda is not the creator of druj which is “nothing”, anti-creation, and thus (likewise) uncreated. Thus, in Zoroaster’s revelation, Ahura Mazda was perceived to be the creator of only the good (Yasna 31,4), the “supreme benevolent providence” (Yasna 43,11), that will ultimately triumph (Yasna 48,1).

In this schema of asha versus druj, mortal beings (humans and animals both) play a critical role, for they too are created. Here, in their lives, they are active participation in the conflict and it is their duty to defend order, which would decay without counteraction. Throughout the Gathas, Zoroaster emphasizes deeds and actions, and accordingly asceticism is frowned upon in Zoroastrianism. In later Zoroastrianism, this was explained as fleeing from the experiences of lie, which was the very purpose that the urvan (most commonly translated as the ‘soul’) was sent into the mortal world to collect. The avoidance of any aspect of life, which included the avoidance of the pleasures of life, is a shirking of the responsibility and duty to oneself, one’s urvan, and one’s family and social obligations.

Thus, central to Zoroastrianism is the emphasis on moral choice, to choose between the responsibility and duty for which one is in the mortal world, or to give up this duty and so facilitate the work of druj. Similarly predestination is rejected in Zoroastrian teaching. Humans bear responsibility for all situations they are in, and in the way they act to one another. Reward; punishment, happiness and grief all depends on how individuals live their life.

In Zoroastrianism, good transpires for those who do righteous deeds. Those who do evil have themselves to blame for their ruin. Zoroastrian morality is then to be summed up in the simple phrase, “good thoughts, good words, good deeds” (Humata, Hukhra, Hvarshta in Avestan) for it is through these that asha is maintained and druj is kept in check.

Through accumulation, several other beliefs were introduced to the religion that in some instances supersede those expressed in the Gathas. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century the moral and immoral foci came to be represented by Spenta Mainyu and the Satanic antithesis Angra Mainyu, the ‘good spirit’ and ‘evil spirit’ emanations of Ahura Mazda respectively. Although, the names are old, this opposition is a modern western – influenced development popularized by Martin Haug in the 1880s, and was in effect a realignment of the precepts of Zurvanism (Zurvanite Zoroastrianism), which had invented a third deity, Zurvan, in order to explain a mention of twinship (Yasna 30.3) between the moral and immoral. Although, Zurvanism died out by the 10<sup>th</sup> century the critical question of the “twin brothers” mentioned in Yasna 30.3 remained, and Haug’s explanation provided a convenient defence against Christian missionaries who disparaged the Parsis (Indian Zoroastrians) for their ‘dualism’. Haug’s concept was subsequently disseminated as a Parsi interpretation, thus corroborating Haug’s theory and the idea became so popular that it is now almost universally accepted as a doctrine.

## CONCLUSION

From the discussion in this unit you have learnt thus far:

- The historical background of Zoroastrianism as an ancient religion of Persia.
- The basic beliefs in Zoroastrianism
- Other characteristics
- The religious texts which has six divisions that is (i) The Avestal, (ii) The Yasna (iii) Gathers (iv) The visparad (v) The yashts and the (vi) The vendidad.
- Also that there are other principal beliefs in Zoroastrianism for instance it is believed that faravaha is the guardian spirit, while Ahura Mazda is the beginning and the need, and Daena is the eternal law.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to the origin of Zoroastrianism, as an ancient religion of Persia founded by Prophet Zoroaster in the 6<sup>th</sup> BC. Also, the religion has its own distinct beliefs and practices. Like any other religion of the world. It is also revealed Zoroastrianism has its own distinct believe texts where its practices and doctrines are written. The teaching also revealed certain beliefs are classified to be “principal” in Zoroastrianism doctrines; you are therefore advised to master these facts before you proceed to the next unit.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. What are the Basic beliefs in Zoroastriansm?
- ii. Enumerate and explain the religious texts in Zoroastrianism.

### 6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA

#### Question 1: Account for the origin of Zoroastrianism

- i This is a religion of ancient Persia founded by the prophet Zoroaster in the 6<sup>th</sup> BC
- ii Zoroastrianism was first attested to by Oxford English Dictionary in 1874
- iii Zoroastrian of Mazdayasma means wisdom worship or devotion to wisdom
- iv A practitioner of this religion is referred to as a ‘wisdom worshiper’
- v In Zoroastrian liturgy, the term Belidin is used as a title for an individual who has been formally inducted into the religion.

#### Question 2: What are the basic beliefs in Zoroastrianism?

- i Zoroastrianism teaches that there is one universal and transcendental God, Ahwra Mazda, meaning the supreme wisdom.
- ii Zoroastrianism teaches active participation in life through good thought good words and good deeds to ensure happiness in life..
- iii Zoroastrianism rejects all forms of monasticism.
- iv That God/Ahura Marda ruled the world to the end of age.
- v That at the end of the age, all souls including the dead ones shall be re-united.
- vi That God interacts with mankind and the world at large through spenta maniyu.
- vii Zoroastrianism believes that the soul leaves the death body of mankind in the forth days.
- viii Zoroastrianisms disposed their dead body on the top of an enclosure called towers of silence or Dorthems.

- ix The flesh of the body are clean off by the vultures and wealthy thereby the bones were placed on the tower or a well.
- x By the 20<sup>th</sup> C solar and Sun's rays are used to burn the corpse due to few number of vulture available in Persian land.

**Question 3: Enumerate and explain the religious texts in Zoroastrianism**

The religions texts in Zoroastrianism includes:

- i The Avesta: This is the collection of the sacred texts of Zoroastrianism.
- ii The Yasha: This is the primary liturgical collection.
- iii Gathas: This is the composed text by Zoroaster alone.
- iv The visparad: this is a collection of supplements to the Yasna.
- v The Yashts: These are hymns in honour of the divinities.
- vi The vendidad: This text describes the various forms of evil spirits and ways to confound them.

**Question 4: Explain other principles beliefs in Zoroastrianism.**

- i Faravaha one of the primary symbols of Zoroastrianism is believed to be a guardian angel.
- ii Daena is believed to be the eternal law, whose order was revealed to humanity through the Holy Words.
- iii Pedestrianism is rejected in Zoroastrianism rather it is believed that man bears responsibility for all situations he found himself.
- iv Reward, punishment, happiness and grief all depend on how individuals live their live.
- v Zoroastrianism morality is seen as good words and good deeds.

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## **UNIT 7: TAOISM**

### **Contents**

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## **UNIT : 7 TAOISM**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Taoism (pronounced as Daoism) refers to a variety of related philosophical and religious traditions and concepts that have influenced East Asia for over two millennia and the West for over two centuries. The word Tao (or Dao, depending on the Romanization scheme). Means 'path' or 'way', although in Chinese folk religion and philosophy it has taken on more abstract meanings. Taoist propriety and ethics emphasize the Three Jewels of the Tao: compassion moderation and humility. Taoist though generally focuses on nature, men-cosmos correspondence health, longevity, wu wei (action through inaction), liberty and spontaneity.

“Without going out of your door, you can know the ways of the World. Without peeping through your window, you can see the way of Heaven. The further you go, The less you know. Thus, the Sage knows without traveling, Sees without looking, And achieves without struggle.” Lao Tse.

“Different Chinese Philosophers, writing probably in 5-4 centuries B.C., presented some major ideas and a way of life that are nowadays known under the name of Taoism, the way of correspondence between man and the tendency or the course of natural world.” Alan Watts, from his book: “Tao: The Watercourse Way.”

“We believe in the formless and eternal Tao, and we recognize all personified deities as being mere human constructs. We reject hatred, intolerance, and unnecessary violence, and embrace harmony, love and learning, as we are taught by Nature. We place our trust and our lives in the Tao, that we may live in peace and balance with the Universe, both in this moral life and beyond.” Creed of the Reform Taoist Congregation.

“For more than two thousand years, Daoism has evolved in close interaction with the other major traditions of China Confucianism, Buddhism, ethnic creeds, and popular religion – and adapted many of their features. To the present day, Daoism consists of a multiplicity of beliefs and practices, and continues to develop, as it has for the past

millennia, through the interaction between differentiation and integration – the move to change in accordance with political, cultural, and economic developments versus the urge to create stability through belief systems, lineage lines, rituals, and myths.” From the Amazon. Com review of the book “Daoist Identity: History, lineage and ritual.

Tao (pronounced “Dow”) can be roughly translated into English as path or the way. It is basically indefinable. It has to be experienced. It “refers to a power which envelops, surrounds and flows through all things, living and non-living. The Tao regulates natural processes and nourishes balance in the Universe. It embodies the harmony of opposites (i.e. there would be no love without hate, no light without dark, no male without female.)”.

The founder of Taoism is believed by many religious historians to be Lao-Tse (604-531BCE), whose life overlapped that of Confucius (551-479BCE) (Alternative spellings: Lao Tze, Lao Tsu, Lao Tzu, Laozi, Laotze etc). however other historians suggest that he is a synthesis of a number of historical figures. Others suggest that he was a mythical figure. Still others suggest that he lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE.

He was searching for a way that would avoid the constant feudal warfare and other conflicts that disrupted society during his lifetime. The result was his book: Tao-te-Ching (a.k.a Daodejing). Others believe that he is a mythical character.

Taoism started as a combination of psychology and philosophy but evolved into a religious faith in 440 CE when it was adopted as a state religion. At that time Lao-Tse became popularly venerated as deity. Taoism along with Buddhism and Confucianism, became one of the three great religions of China. With the end of Ch’ing Dynasty in 1911, state support for Taoism ended. Much of the Taoist heritage was destroyed during the next period of warlordism. After the communist victory in 1949, religious freedom was severely restricted. “The new government put monks to manual labor, confiscated temples, and plundered treasures. Several million monks were reduced to fewer than 50,000” by 1960. 3 During the cultural revolution in China from 1966 to 1976, much of the remaining Taoist heritage was destroyed. Some religious tolerance has been restored under Deng Xiao-ping from 1982 to the present time.

Taoism currently has about 20 million followers, and is primarily centered in Taiwan. About 30,000 Taoists live in North America; 1,720 in Canada (1991 census). Taoism has had a significant impact on North American culture in areas of “acupuncture, herbalism, holistic medicine, meditation and martial arts...”

Reverence of ancestor spirits and immortals are also common in popular Taoism. Organized Taoism distinguishes in ritual activity from that of the folk religion, which some professional Taoists (Daoshi) view as debased. Chinese alchemy (including Neidan), astrology, cuisine, several Chinese martial arts, Chinese traditional medicine, feng shui, immortality, and many styles of qigong breath training discipline has been intertwined with Taoism throughout history.

### **3.1 CATEGORIES OF TAOISM**

There is debate over how, and whether, Taoism should be subdivided. Livia Kohn divided it into the following three categories (4):

1. “Philosophical Taoism” (Daojia). A philosophical school based on the texts Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi.
2. “Religious Taoism” (Daojia) . a family of organized Chinese religious movements originating from the Celestial Masters movement during the late Han Dynasty and later including the “Orthodox” (Zhengyi) and
3. “Complete Reality” (Quanzhen) sects, which claim lineages going back to Lao Zi or Zhang Daoling in the late Han Dynasty;

“Folk Taoism”- The Chinese folk religion.

This distinction is complicated by hermeneutic (interpretive) difficulties in the categorization of Taoist schools, sects and movement some scholars believe that there is no distinction between Daojia and Daojiao. According to Kirkland, “Most scholars who have seriously studied Taoism, both in Asia and the West, have finally abandoned the simplistic dichotomy of Tao-chiao, “Philosophical Taoism” and “religious Tao-chiao.”, “philosophical Taoism” and “religious Taoism.

Hansen states that the identification of “Taoism” as such first occurred in the early Han Dynasty when dao-jia was identified as a single school. The writings of Laozi and Zhuangzi were linked together under this single tradition during the Han Dynasty, but notably not before. It is unlikely that Zhuangzi was familiar with the text of the Daodejing. Additionally, Graham states that Zhuangzi would not have identified himself as a Taoist, a classification that did not arise until well after his death.

Taoism does not fall strictly under an umbrella or a definition of an organized religion like the Abrahamic traditions, nor can it purely be studied as the originator or a variant of Chinese folk religion, as much of the traditional religion is outside of the tenets and core teachings of Taoism. Robinet asserts that Taoism is better understood than a way of life than as a religion, and that its adherents do not approach or view Taoism the way non-Taoist historians have done. Henri Maspero noted that many scholarly works frame Taoism as a school of thought focused on the quest for immortality.

A Taoist Temple in Taiwan, showing elements of the Jingxiang religious practice and sculptures of Dragon and Lion guardians. Taoism has never been a unified religion, but has rather consisted of numerous teaching based on various revelations. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have very distinct beliefs. Nevertheless, there are certain core beliefs that nearly all the schools share.

### **3.2 BELIEFS AND PRACTICES**

Taoist concepts, beliefs and practices: Tao is the first cause of the universe. It is a force that flows through all life. “The Tao surrounds everyone and therefore everyone must listen to find enlightenment. Each believer’s goal to harmonize themselves with the Tao. Taoism has provided an alternative to the Confucian tradition in China. The two traditions have coexisted in the country, region, and generally within the same individual.

The priesthood views the many gods as manifestations of the one Dao, “which could be represented as an image or a particular things.” The concept of personified deity is foreign to them, as is the concept of the creation of the universe. Thus, they not pray as Christians do; there is no God to hear the prayers or to act upon them. They seek answers to life’s problems through inner meditation and outer observation.

In contrast with the beliefs and practices of he priesthood, most of laity have “believed that spirits pervaded nature ... The gods in heaven acted like and were treated like the officials in the world of men; worshipping the gods was a kind of rehearsal of attitudes towards secular authorities. On the other hand, the demons and ghost of hell acted like and were treated like the bullies, outlaws and threatening strangers in the real world; they were bribed by the people and were ritually arrested by the martial forces of the spirit officials.”

Time is cyclical, not linear as in Western thinking.

Taoists strongly promote health and vitality.

Five main organs and orifices of the body correspond to the five parts of the sky: water, fire, wood, metal and earth.

Each person must nurture the Ch’I (air, breath) that has been given to them.

Development of virtue is ones chief task. The Three Jewels to be sought are compassion, moderation and humanity.

Taoists follow that art of “wu wei”, which is to let nature take its course. For example, one should allow a river to flow towards the sea unimpeded; do not erect a dam which would interfere with its natural flow.

One should plan in advance and consider carefully each action before making it.

A Taoists is kind to other individuals, in part because such an action tends to be reciprocated.

Taoists believe that “people are compassionate by nature... left to their own devices (they) will show this compassion without expecting a reward.”

The Yin Yang symbol:

This is a well known Taoist symbol. “it represents the balance of opposites in the universe. When they are equally present, all is calm. When one is outweighed by the other, there is confusion and disarray.” One source explains that it was derived from astronomical observations which recorded the shadow of the sun throughout a full year. The two swirling shapes inside the symbol give the impression of change – the only constant factor in the universe. One tradition states that Yin (or Ying; the dark side) represents the breath that formed the earth. Yank (the light side) symbolizes the breath that formed the heavens.

One source state: “The most traditional view is that ‘yin’ represents aspects of the feminine: being soft, cool, calm, introspective, and healing ... and “yang” the masculine: being hard, hot, energetic, moving and sometimes aggressive. Another view has the ‘yin’ representing night and ‘yang’ day.

Another source offers a different definition: a common misconception in the west is that” ... yin is soft and passive and yang is hard and energetic. Really it is yang that is soft and yin that is hard, this is because yang is energetic and yin is passive. Yin is like a rock and yang is like water or air, rock is heavy and hard and air is soft and energetic.”

Allan Watts, describes the yin and yang as negative and positive energy poles: “The ideogram indicate the sunny and shady sides of a hill... they are associated with the masculine and the feminine, the firm and the yielding, the strong and the weak, the light and the dark, the rising and the falling heaven and earth, and they are even recognized in such everyday matters as cooking as the spicy and the bland.”

However, since nothing in nature is purely black or purely white, the symbol includes a small black swirl.

Ultimately, the ‘yin’ and ‘yang’ can symbolize any two polarized forces in nature. Taoists believe that humans often intervene in nature and upset the balance of Yin and Yang.

About the name: Taoism or Daoism:

There are two commonly used systems for translating the Mandarin Chinese language into Roman letters: Wade Giles: This system is commonly used in Taiwan and the U.S. The Chinese character for “Way” becomes “Tao,” which leads to the English word “Taoism.”

Hanyu pinyin or Pinyin: This system was developed by the Chinese people and is now finding increased use worldwide. The “Way” becomes “Dao,” which leads to the English word “Daoism.” The “Dao” is pronounced like the “Dow” in “Dow – Jones Index”.

We have chosen to emphasize the “Taoism” spelling. A Google search for “Taoism”: return 245,000 hits, whereas a search for “Daosim” returned only 35,000.

Tai Chi:

There is a long history of involvement by Taoists in various exercise and movement techniques. Tai chi in particular works on all parts of the body. It “stimulates the central nervous system. Lowers blood pressure, relieves stress and gently tones muscles without strain. It also enhances digestion, elimination of wastes and the circulation of blood. Moreover, tai chi’s rhythmic movements message the internal organs and improve their functionality.” Traditional Chinese medicine teaches that illness is caused by blockages or lack of balance in the body’s “chi” (intrinsic energy). Tai Chi is believed to balance this energy flow.

### 3.3 TAOIST THEOLOGY

Taoist theology emphasized various themes found in the Daodejing and Zhuangzi, such as naturalness, vitality, peace, “non-action” (wu wei) emptiness (refinement) detachment, flexibility, receptiveness, spontaneity, the relativism of human ways of life, ways of speaking and guiding behavior.

Main article: Tao

“Tao” is usually translated as road, channel, path, way, doctrine, or line. Wing-tsit Chan stated that Tao meant system of morality to Confucianists, but the natural, eternal, spontaneous, indescribable way things began and pursued their course to Taoists. Hansen disagrees that these were separate meanings and attributes. Cane asserts Tao can be roughly stated to be the flow of the universe, or the force behind the natural order, equating it with the influence that keeps the universe balanced and ordered. Martinson says that Tao is associated with nature, due to a belief that nature demonstrates the Tao. Tao is compared to what it is not, which according to Keller is similar to the negative theology of Western scholars. It is often considered to be the source of both existence and non-existence. La Fargue asserts that Tao is rarely an object of worship, being treated more like the Indian concepts of atman and dharma.

Tao is also associated with the complex concept of De “power; virtue; integrity”, that is, the active expression of Tao. De is the active living, or cultivation, of that “way” .

Wu wei (simplified Chinese: traditional Chinese: pinyin: wuwei) is a central concepts in Taoism. The literal meaning of wu wei is “without action”. It is often expressed by the paradox wei wu wei, meaning “action without action” or “effortless doing”. The practice and efficiency of wu wei are fundamental in Taoist thought, most prominently emphasized in Taoism. The goal of wu wei is alignment with Tao, revealing the soft and invisible power within all things. It is believed by Taoists that masters of wu wei can observe and follow this invisible potential, the innate in-action of the way.

In ancient Taoist texts, wu wei is associated with water through its yielding nature. Water is soft and weak, but it can move earth and carve stone. Taoist philosophy proposes that the universe works harmoniously according to its own ways. When someone exerts his will against the world, he disrupts that harmony. Taoism does not identify man’s will as the root problem. Rather, it asserts that man must place his will in harmony with the natural universe.

Pu (simplified Chinese: traditional Chinese: pinyin: pu, pu; Wade-Giles: p’u; lit. “uncut wood”) is translated “uncarved block”, “unhewn log”, or “simplicity”. It is a metaphor for the state of wu wei and the principle of jian. It represents a passive state of receptiveness. Pu is a symbol for a state of pure potential and perception without prejudice. In this state, Taoists believe everything is seen as it is, without preconceptions or illusion.

Pu is usually seen as keeping oneself in the primordial state of tao. It is believed to be the true nature of the mind, unburdened by knowledge or experiences. In the state of pu, there is no right or wrong, beautiful or ugly. There is only pre experience, or

awareness, free from learned labels and definitions. It is this state of being that is the goal of following wu wei.

Taoists believe that man is a microcosm for the universe. The body ties directly into the Chinese five elements . the five organs correlate with the five elements, the five directions and the seasons. Akin to the Hermetic maxim of “as above, so below,” Taoism posits that man may gain knowledge of the universe by understanding himself.

In Taoism, even beyond Chinese folk religions, various rituals, exercises, and substance are said to positively affect ones physical and mental health. They are also intended o align oneself spiritually with cosmic forces, or enable ecstatic spiritual journeys. These concepts seem basic to Taoism in elite forms. Internal alchemy and various spiritual practices are used by some Taoists to improve health and extend life, theoretically even to the point of physical immortality.

The traditional Chinese religion is polytheistic. Its many deities are part of a heavenly hierarchy that mirrors the bureaucracy of imperial China. According to their beliefs, Chinese deities may be promoted or demoted for their actions. Some deities are also simply exalted humans, such as Guan Yu, the god of honor and piety. The particular deities worshipped very according to geographical regions and historical periods in China, though the general pattern of worship is more constant.

There are disagreements regarding the proper composition of this pantheon. Popular Taosim typically presents the Jade Emperor as the official head deity. Intellectual (“elite”) Taoists, such as the Celestial Masters sect, usually present Laozi (Laojun, “Lord Lao”) and the Three Pure Ones at the top of the Pantheon of deities.

While a number of immortals or other mysterious figures appear in the Zhuangzi, and o a lesser extent in the Tao Te Ching, these have generally not become the objects of worship. Traditional conceptions of Tao area not to be confused with the Western concepts of theism and monotheism. Being on what the Tao does no indicate a union with an eternal spirit in the Hindu sense, but rather living in accordance with nature.

For more details on this topic, see Three Jewels of the Tao.

The Three Jewels, or Three Treasures, (Chinese: pinyin; sanbao; Wade-Giles: san-pao are basic virtue in Taoism. The Three Jewels are compassion and humility. They are also translated as kindness, simplicity (or the absence of excess), and modesty. Arthur Waley describes them as “[t] the three rules that form the practical, political side of the author’s teaching”. He correlate and Three Treasures with “abstention from aggressive war and capital punishment,” “absolute simplicity o living”, and refusal to assert active authority.

Compared to a traditional Western perspective, the Taoist view of sexuality is considerably more at ease. The body is not viewed as a dangerous source of evil temptation, but rather as a positive asset. Taoism reject Western mind-body dualism; mind and body are not set in contrast or opposition with each other. Sex is treated as a vital component to romantic love, however Taoism emphasis the need for self-control and moderation. Complete abstinence is frequently treated as equally dangerous as excessive sexual indulgence. The sexual vitality of men is portrayed ad limited, while

the sexual energy of women is viewed as boundless. Men are encouraged to control ejaculation to preserve this vital energy, but women are encouraged to reach orgasm without restriction. Taoists believe that a man may increase and nourish his own vitality by bringing a woman to orgasm, thereby “activating” her energy and attuning it with himself. This is considered to be benefit to both partners.

### **3.4 TAOIST TEXTS**

The Tao Te Ching, or Daodejing, is widely considered to be the most influential Taoist text. It is a foundational scripture of central importance in Taoism. It has been used as a ritual text throughout the history of religious Taoism. However, the precise date that it was written is the subject of debate: there are those who put it anywhere from the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

Taoist commentators have deeply considered the opening lines of the Tao Te Ching. They are widely discussed in both academic and mainstream literature. A common interpretation is similar to Korzybsk’s observation that “the map is not the territory”. The opening lines, with literal and common translation, are:

Tao literally means “path” or “way” and can figuratively mean “essential nature”, “destiny”, “principle”, or “true path”. The philosophical and religious “Tao” is infinite, without limitation. One view states that the paradoxical opening is intended to prepare the reader for teachings about the unteachable Tao. Tao is believed to be transcendent, indistinct and without form. Hence, it cannot be named or categorized. Even the word “Tao” can be considered a dangerous temptation to make Tao a limiting “name”.

The Tao Te Ching is not thematically ordered. However the main themes of the text are repeatedly expressed using variant formulations, often with only a slight difference. That leading themes revolve around the nature of Tao and how to attain it. Tao is said to be unnameable and accomplishing great things through small means. There is significant debate regarding with English translation of the Tao Te Ching is preferred, and which particular translation methodology is best. Discussions and disputes about various translations of the Tao Te Ching can become acrimonious involving deeply entrenched views.

Ancient commentaries on the Tao Te Ching important texts in their own right. The Heshang Gong commentary was most likely written in the second century AD, and as perhaps the oldest commentary, contains the edition of the Tao Te Ching that was transmitted to the present day. Other important commentaries include the Xiang’er, one of the most important texts from the way of the Celestial Masters and Wang Bi’s commentary.

The Zhuangzi was named after its author, who also appears as a character in the book’s narrative. It is more in the form of a collection of stories than the short aphorisms and maxims of the Tao Te Ching. Also among the cast of characters in the Zhuangzi’s stories is Laozi of the Tao Te Ching, as well as Confucius.

The Daozang, Treasury of Tao) is sometimes referred to as the Taoist canon. It was originally compiled during the Jin, Tang, and Song dynasties. The version surviving today was published during the Ming dynasty. The Ming Daozang includes almost

1500 texts. Following the example of the Buddhist Tripitaka, it is divided into three dong, “caves”, “grottoes”). They are arranged from “highest” to “lowest”. Daoshi generally do not consult published versions of the Daozang, but individually choose, or inherit, texts included in the Daozang. These texts have been passed down for generations from teacher to student.

The Shangqing School has a tradition of approaching Taoism through scriptural study. It is believed that reciting certain texts often enough will be rewarded with immortality.

While the Tao Te Chng is most famous, there are many other important texts in traditional Taoism. Taishang Ganying Pian (“Treatise of the Exalted One on Response and Retribution”) discusses sin and ethics, and has become a popular morality tract in the last few centuries. It asserts that those in harmony with Tao will live long and fruitful lives. The wicked, and their descendants, will suffer and have shortened lives. Both the Tai Ping Jing (“Scripture on Great Peace”) and the Bao PU Zi (“Book of the Master who keeps to Simplicity”) contain early alchemical formulas that early Taoists believed could lead to immortality.

Some forms of Taoism may be traced to prehistoric folk religions in China that later coalesced into a Taoist tradition. Laozi is traditionally regarded as the founder of Taoism and is closely associated in the mid second century AD. Taoism gained official status in China during the Tang Dynasty, whose emperors claimed Laozi as their relative. Several Song emperors, most notably Huizong, were active in promoting Taoism, collecting Taoist texts and publishing editions of the Daoizan. Aspects of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism were consciously synthesized in the Neo-Confucian school, which eventually became Imperia Orthodoxy for state bureaucratic purposes. The Qing Dynasty, however, much favored Confucian classics and rejected Taoist works. During the eighteenth century, the imperial library was constituted, but excluded virtually all Taoist books. By the beginning of the twentieth century, Taoism had fallen so much from favor, that only one complete copy of the Daozang still remained, at the White Cloud Monastery in Beijing. Taoism is one of five religions recognized by the PRC, and regulates its activities through a state bureaucracy (the China Taoist Association).

### **3.5 ADHERENTS OF TAOISM**

The number of Taoists is difficult to estimate, due to a variety of factors including defining Taoism. The number of people practicing Chinese folk religion is estimated to be under four hundred million. Most Chinese people and many others have been influenced in some way by Taoist tradition. Estimates for the number of Taoists world wide range from twenty to over fifty million.

Taoism as with other religions in China have been oppressed and discourage during the Cultural Revolution, thus the number of Taoists today greatly declined from the pre-Communist China.

Geographically, Taoism flourishes best in regions populated by Chinese people: mainland China, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and various Chinese diaspora communities. Taoist literature and art has influenced the cultures of Korea, Japan, and

Vietnam. Organized Taoism seems not to have attracted a large non-chinese following, excepts in Korea (e.g. see Kouk Sun Do ) and Vietnam, until modern times. In Taiwan 7.5 million people (33% of the population) identify themselves as Taoists. In Singapore, 8.5% of the population identify themselves as Taoists. There are also small numbers of Taoists in the Western world.

At certain dates, food may be set out as a sacrifice to the gods and / or spirits of the departed, such as during the Qingming Festival. This may include slaughtered pigs and ducks or fruit. Another form of sacrifice involves the burning of Joss paper or Hell Bank Notes, on the assumption that images thus consumed by the fire will reappear not as a mere image, but as the actual item – in the spirit world, and be available for the departed spirit to use. At other dates, fasting or vegan diet may be practiced.

Also at certain dates, street parades take place. There are lively affairs which invariably involve firecrackers and flower-covered floats broadcasting traditional music. Street parades may also include lion dances and dragon dances; human – occupied puppets (often of the “seventh Lord” and Eighth Lord”), jitong male “Mediums”) who mutilate their skin with knives; Bajiajiang which are Kungfu-practicing honor guards in demonic makeup; and palanguins carrying god-images. The various participants are not considered performers, but rather possessed by the god in question.

Fortune-telling – including astrology, I Ching, and other forms of divination – has long been considered a traditional Taoist pursuit. Mediumship is also widely encountered. We may distinguish between martial forms of medium ship (like the aforementioned jitong) and X spirit-writing, typically through the practice of fuji (planchette writing).

Many Taoists also participated in the reading and writing of books. Taoists of this type tend to be civil servants, elderly retirees, or in modern times, university faculty. While there is considerable overlap with religious Taoism, there are often important divergences in interpretation. Wang Bi, one of the most influential philosophical commentators on the Laozi (and Yijing) was in fact a Confucian.

A number of martial arts traditions, particularly Tai Chi Ch’uan, Bagua Zhang, Wing Chun, Won Yuen Yat Hey Jueng, Bak Mei Pai, Bok Fou Pai, Yaw Gong Moon and Xing Yi Quan, embody Taoist principles to a greater or lesser extent, and some practitioners consider their art to be a means of practicing Taoism.

### **Taoist symbols and images**

The Taijitu (“yin and yang”) symbol as well as the Bagua (“Eight Trigrams”) are associated with Taoist symbolism. While almost all Taoist organizations make use of the yin and yang symbol, one could also call it Confucian, Neo-Confucian or pan-chinese. The yin and yang make a backwards “s” shape, with yin (black or red) on bottom. One is likely to see this symbol as decorations on Taoist organization flags and logos, temple floors, or stitched into clerical robes. According to Song Dynasty sources, it originated around the 10<sup>th</sup> century. Previously, yin and yang were symbolized by a tiger and dragon.

Taoist temples may fly square or triangular flags. They typically feature mystical writing or diagrams and are intended to fulfill various functions including providing guidance for the spirits of the dead, to bring good fortune, increase life span etc. other flags and banners may be those of the gods or immortals themselves.

One sometimes sees a zigzag with seven stars, representing the Big Dipper (or the “Bushel”, the Chinese equivalent). In the Shang dynasty the Big Dipper was considered a deity, while during the Han dynasty, it considered a qi path of the circumpolar god, Taiyi.

Taoist temple in southern China and Taiwan may often be identified by their roofs, which feature Chinese dragons and phoenixes made from multi-colored ceramic tiles . they also stand for the harmony of yin and yang (with the phoenix being yin). A related symbol is the flaming pearl which may be seen on such roofs between two dragons, as well as on the hairpin of a Celestial Master. But in general, Chinese Taoist architecture has no universal features that distinguish it particularly from other structures.

### **Relations with other religions and philosophies**

Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism are one, a painting in the litang style portraying three men laughing by a river stream, 12<sup>th</sup> century, song Dynasty.

The terms Tao and De are religious and philosophical terms shared between Taoism and Confucianism. He authorship of the Tao Te Ching is assigned to Laozi, who is traditionally held to have been a teacher of Confucius. However, some scholars believe the Tao Te Ching arose as a reaction to the Confucianism. Zhunagzi, reacting to the Confucian – Mohist ethical disputes in his “history of thought”, casts Laozi as a prior step o to the Mohists by name and the Confucians by implication.

Early Taoist texts reject the basic assumptions of Confucianism which relied on rituals and order, in favour of the examples o “wild” nature and individualism. Historical Taoists challenged conventional morality, while Confucians considered society debased and in need of strong ethical guidance.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From this unit you have learnt the following:

- The origin of Taoist in China
- Categories of Taoist in China
- Beliefs and Practices about Taoist
- What Taoist theology all about
- The Toast Texts

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been exposed to the background history of Taoism as a religion in China. Also that Taoism could be divided into three which include in

- i. Philosophical Taoism
- ii Religious Taoism and
- iii complete Reality. The Discussion also made it clear that disheart beliefs and preaches in Taoism. The main theology of this ancient religion and its texts were also disused, while issues on the adherents were examined. You are therefore advised to master the salient issues in this unit before you proceed

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. Briefly trace the origin of Taoism
- ii Explain the categories of Taoist you have learnt
- iii Discuss the Belief and practices in Taoist religion

## **6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA**

### **Question 1: Briefly trace the origin of Taoism**

- i The founder of Taoism is believed by many religion historians to be (90 – TSE (604-531BCE) whose life over lapped that of Confucius (551-479 BCE).
- ii Lao-Tse was said to have been searching for peace as against the constant feudal warfare and conflicts over the land during his lifetime.
- iii Taoism started as a combination of psychology and philosophy but evolved into a religious faith in 40CE when it was adopted as a state religion.
- iv Taoism currently has about 20 million followers and is primarily centred in Taiwan.
- v Taoism has had a significant impact on North American culture in areas of acupuncture herbalism holistic medicine, meditation and martial arts.

### **Question 2: Explain the of Taoist you have learnt**

Livia Kohn divided Taoists into three categories, they are:

- i Philosophical Taoism: This is a philosophical school based on the texts Dao De Jing and Zhuangzi.
- ii Religious Taoism: This is a family of organized Chinese religious movements originating from the celestial masters movement during the late Han Dynasty and later including the ‘orthodox’.
- iii Complete Reality: This is the sect which claim lineages back to Laozi or Zhang Daoling in the late Han Dynasty.

Taoism has never been a united religion, but has rather consisted of numerous teaching based on various revelations. Therefore, different branches of Taoism often have very distinct beliefs.

### **Question 3: Discuss the belief and practice in Taoist religion**

- i The concept of personified deity is foreign to Taoist practice, thus adherents of Taoist do not pay as Christians and other religionists do rather they seek answers to life’s problems through inner meditation and other observation.
- ii Taoist strongly promote health and vitality thus each person must nurture the Chi’l (air breath) that has been given to them.
- iii Development of virtue is one’s chief task, the three jewels to be sought are compassion, moderation and humanity.
- iv Taoist beliefs that people should be kind to one another as such action is reciprocated.

### **Question 4: Write expensively on Taoist Theology**

- i Taoist Theology emphasized various themes such as naturalness, vitality peace, emptiness, flexibility, receptiveness, spontaneity, ways of speaking and guiding behaviour.
- ii Taoist asserts that man must place his will in harmony with the natural universe.

- iii Taoist believes that everything is seen as it is, without preconceptions or illusion.
- iv Taoist posits that man may gain knowledge of the universe by understanding himself.
- v Deities are worshipped according to geographical religious and historical periods in China, through the general pattern of worship is more constant.
- vi Taoist teachings on sexuality stands on self – control and moderation.

## **7.0 REFERENCES AND FURTHER READINGS**

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## **MODULE 2:**

### **ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS**

This module focuses on the origins and activities of those religions traced to be originated from Abraham, the father of the Jewish race. These religions include:

- UNIT 1: Judaism
- UNIT 2: Christianity
- UNIT 3: Islam and
- UNIT 4: Baha'ism

### **UNIT ONE: JUDAISM**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Jewish Distinctiveness
  - 3.2 Central Doctrines of Judaism
  - 3.3 Jewish Festivals
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored Marked Assignment
  - 6.1 Marking Guides to TMA
  - 7.0 References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Judaism as a religion cannot be separated from the history of the Jews as a race. Both the history of the Jews and their religion is found on the pages of the Old

**Testament:** It terminates on the note of expectation of the coming Messiah. While waiting for the Messianic age, the Jews were confronted with one problem or the other. Their faith in Yahweh was tested to the highest degree. Then came the New Testament times, the arrival of the expected Messiah, and finally come the birth of Christianity – the period when the Jews of Palestine struggled for existence.

#### **Its Early and Later Formations**

The religion had long been in existence. It has its origin in Babylon when the Jews were taken captive and sent to that town. The religion was basically meant for the Jews alone. It was the belief of the adherents of this faith that God (Yahweh) called no one but the Israelites alone

(a) Early Formation: Judaism had its origin in Abraham, the first of the Patriarchs. who was called from Ur of Chaldea by a divine voice. He was to proceed to the land of Canaan with the promise that his descendants should live there as a great nation (Genesis 12). The promise was transferred to Isaac and Jacob – Abraham's son and grandson respectively.

But Jacob and his family were settled in Egypt, as a result of famine. In Egypt, the Jews grew in large numbers and were factors to be reckoned with politically and socially. As history would have it, as many as they were, the people were turned into Pharaonic serfs. Moses, one of the Jews rescued them when at the direction of Yahweh, led them out of Egyptian bondage. On their way out of Egypt, Yahweh proved to be the Redeemer and Liberator of His people. At the Mt. Sinai, He revealed Himself to the people as the Law Giver. He entered into covenant with the Jews therefore asking them to live according to His instruction, guidance and teaching. The relationship here was that of a personal God (Yahweh) revealing Himself to a specific people (the Jews). Thus Judaism had already taken root.

(b) Later Formation: With the extinct of Moses, Joshua took over the mantle of leadership as the leader of the Jews. After Joshua came the Judges. Then came Saul, David and Solomon propagating Judaism in their own times. It was after the rulership of Solomon that the kingdom of Israel splited into two – Northern and Southern Kingdoms. Between 721 and 587 B.C., the two kingdoms fell into the hands of Asyrians. Jerusalem was razed to the ground. Several Jews were carried into exile especially into Babylon.

There in Babylon, because of the absence of Jerusalem Temple worship, the Jews came as one people with one religion – Judaism. Various houses of prayer called synagogues were put up. Here, Yahweh was offered worship by the Yahweh was offered worship by the Jews in exile. There, the exposition of Torah – the Jewish law, became a fixed institution. Judaism as a religion also came into contact with other parts of the world.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- account for the formation of Judaism
- explain Judaism distinctiveness
- account for the central doctrines of Judaism
- Discuss the Jewish festivals.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Jewish Distinctiveness:**

The Jews – both old and young believe in the distinctiveness of the Jewish race. What actually distinguished them from other races of the world are many among which are: the exodus event, and the Sinai episode. Accordingly, this distinctiveness is reflected in the Jewish attitudes to people of other religions and creeds.

#### **Their Distinctiveness**

- (i) At the age of 15, Jewish son becomes a ‘son of the commandment’.
- (ii) He is called up to the reading of the Torah on the Sabbath following his birth day.
- (iii) On that occasion he is made to believe that the Israelites are the only chosen people of God and to them alone. He has given the Torah.
- (iv) Also, as a mark of distinctiveness, a Jew holds that while all peoples and nations are God’s creatures through Adam, the Jew only is His elected child through Abraham.

- (v) To this extent the Jews are a redeemed community.
- (vi) The Jews are the covenanting partners of God.
- (vii) Because of all these privileges and to actually show his distinctiveness. It is obligatory for a Jew to circumcise.
- (viii) Circumcision as a supreme obligatory sign of loyalty and adherence to Judaism.
- (ix) In Genesis 17: 10 – 12, this was enjoined on Abraham and his descendants – the Jews.
- (x) It was a sign of covenant sealed in the flesh.
- (xi) This makes every Jew a son of the promise because he is Abraham's seed.

### **3.2 Central Doctrines of Judaism**

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to find an authoritative statement which would be generally accepted as absolutely binding to the Jews. However, the following teachings on certain central doctrines of religion of the Jews are generally acceptable to the majority of the Jews. These are:

(a) **God and Man:** In the Jews conception, God is a full personality. He is the Creator who had made man in His image; God is free from all limitations and imperfections. He is the heavenly father to whom man must look for any assistance. This is a friendless universe, but God is concerned with man's fate.

On the other hand the Jews see Man as a creature of God. Man has a share in God's eternal spirit. Man is in cordial relationship with God and reason why god looks favourably on him and desires his well-being. That relationship is disturbed as soon as man fails to act in accordance with God's will. The same relationship can however be restored through atonement.

(b) **Atonement:** Like other theologians, the Jews also teach about atonement. To them, perfect reconciliation is achieved through repentance, prayer and active kindness. God, the Heavenly father sprinkles the clean waters of pardon and forgiveness on any repentant sinner. The Jews therefore, believe that on the Day of Atonement the Israelites resemble the Angels. On that Day, they are without human wants, without sins. Rather, Israelites are linked together in love and peace on the Day of Atonement. On that Day satan is silenced before the throne of glory.

(c) **Messiah:** the term Messiah means God's anointed. The term originated among the Jews in the early centuries, especially when they were in exile. The Jews, while in exile, believed in a divinely appointed person who would deliver Israel from bondage and also bring about the consummation of the divine plan with its corollary peace, freedom and justice.

The belief in the coming Messiah carries with it the life force and the bidding spell of Jewish statehood. When the Messiah comes, He would establish a kingdom where truth, justice and peace reign.

(d) **Future Life:** In the Jewish religion, there is the belief in the resurrection or future life. The concept of after-life probably originated when the Jews were under the Persian rule. The Book of Daniel 12:2 gives as an insight into this fact".... And

many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life and some to shame, and everlasting contempt.

The concept of future-life later becomes a fundamental dogma especially among the Pharisees. It then became a serious offence among the Pharisees to deny the belief in future-life but the Sadducees often deny this. However, since the rabbinic times the concept has become a fundamental doctrine of Judaism.

(e) Scriptures: the Jews believe that Holy Scriptures are the authoritative words of God and have God's inspiration. They hold that not all parts of the scriptures are of equal value. The Torah that is the first five Books of the Old Testament is regarded as the most authoritative group. This is followed by another group known as the prophets who are divided into Former Prophets – the Books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel I and II, Kings I and II and Latter Prophets – Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel. There is also the Book of the Twelve popularly called the Minor Prophets. Then comes the writings – the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Song of Songs, Ecclesiastes, lamentations and Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah and I and II chronicles.

The Jews attaches varying degree of authority to the above sections. Accordingly the Jews regard the Torah as so absolutely and fully inspired that every letter and phrase bears the mark of its divine origin. Slightly lesser degree of authority is attributed to the prophets and to a still lesser degree of importance is assigned to the writings.

In all, the authority of the scripture has never been seriously questioned in Judaism. And with blue care teachings found in the scriptures were passed from generation to generation with awe and reverence. The scriptures were defended by courage and sacrificial love second to none in human history. Many martyrs have laid down their lives all in the name of Torah, especially during the middle ages when the whole Jewish community committed suicide as a public demonstration of loyalty to the Torah.

(f) Good and Evil: Judaism is a monotheistic religion and the reason why its adherents are faced with the problem of Good and Evil. The problem arises out of the fact that the good God permit the existence of evil in His world. Would it be that the good God is imperfect or not competent?

The Toral teaches that everything created by God is good. Evil came into the world because man abused the freedom of will granted him by God. Man's slack in behaviour thwarted the Divine plan. This also explained why the wicked prospers and the righteous suffers.

The Jewish scholar, Heschel maintained that because man is aware of the existence of the power of evil in the world, life assumes unique significance and worth. He further taught: Though there is no reward for good deeds in this world, yet this does not mean that the world is a prison. Rather, it is a place of preparation of invitation of apprenticeship to a future life. Here is the world both the holy and the unholy are mixed and inter related.

Conclusively therefore, the Jews maintained that evil should not be seen only as a threat but also a challenge to human existence.

(g) Torah: This is the entire body of written and moral law. To the Jew's Torah represents the whole mystery and tangible expression of God. It is the exclusive possession of the Jewish people. According to the teachings of the Jews, it was Moses who received the Torah on Mt. Sinai. Moses handed it down to Joshua, Joshua to the Elders, the elders to the Prophets. The prophets in turn handed it down to the man of the Great Synagogue.

Torah is the source of life of the Jewish people. This fact is supported by the Book of Joshua 1:8 which says: "the Torah shall not depart from thy mouth but shall meditate on it day and night. Because of the importance attached to Torah every Jew is required to adhere strictly to it. It is the distinct features of Judaism that made for the separation of the Jew from his fellow men.

(h) Talmud: Talmud is popularly called the "Savings of the Fathers". It is the discussions and decisions of Jewish scholars and Rabbis in matters of Torah. Talmud consists of a large body of commentary materials. It is the scholastic activities of the Rabbis from the beginning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

Talmud can be found in the following articles which serve as the fundamental axioms, the denial to which cuts a man off from Israel:

- (i) Belief in the existence of a creator
- (ii) Belief in His unity
- (iii) Belief in His corporeality
- (iv) Belief in His eternity
- (v) Belief that to Him alone is worship due
- (vi) Belief in the words of the prophets
- (vii) Belief that Moses was the greatest of all Prophets
- (viii) Belief in the revelation of the Lord to Moses of Sinai
- (ix) Belief in immutability of the revealed law
- (x) Belief that God is the Omniscient
- (xi) Belief in retribution in the world and the Here-after
- (xii) Belief in the coming of the Messiah
- (xiii) Belief in the resurrection of the dead.

Like Torah, Talmud also had serious influence in the life of the Jews. It is the Talmud that had also serves as their refuge in the long period of persecution and ghetto life when they were debarred from secular studies.

### **3.3 Jewish Festivals**

What we now know as various Jewish had their origin in the early history of the Israelites. This was the time when the Israelites were organized into a Tribal Confederacy. The period witnessed the Israelites making pilgrimages to the central sanctuary. Three festivals serve to keep alive the memory of the pilgrimages that used to be undertaken three times a year in order to offer sacrifices in Jerusalem. These feasts coincided with the three main crops of the Holy Land: Passover, held at the time of the barley harvest, Pentecost, at the gathering of wheat and Tabernacles at the season of fruit. Here, we shall examine each of the three festivals briefly.

(a) The Passover: This feast is by far the most important of the three. The feast was historized, reinterpreted in terms of Israel's sacred history. It commemorates God's intervention on behalf of his people, the Exodus from Egypt.

The feast was originally a nomadic one. It was observed in the spring time by shepherds to coincide with the time when flocks were usually sent out to find pastures. It was the duty of this God to ensure the welfare and fertility of flocks especially at the time that baby lambs and goats were being burn. The feast was also meant to derive away evil spirits from among the flocks.

The Israelites took over this ancient rite and gave it a new meaning. It was to signify the special relationship between them and God. The feast was celebrated in the month of April by the Israelites. Each family was to select blemish one year-old lamb. On the tenth day of the month, the animal was killed at sunset. The bones of the sacrificial animal were to be broken. Its blood was to be robbed on the lintel of every house where the animal was to be eaten. This was to consecrate the house and protest the inmates. They were to eat the roasted flesh together with unleavened bread, and bitter herbs. The meal was also to be eaten with girded loins. It was to be eaten in haste, while the left-over was to be burnt.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions you have experienced in this unit, you have learnt that:

- Judaism cannot be separated from the history of the Jews as a race.
- The Jews believe in the distinctiveness of the Jewish race
- Judaism acted on its central doctrines.
- Judaism festivals keep the Israelites informed of her background.

#### **4.1 COMPARARISM ISLAMIC AND JUDAISM**

The historical interaction of Islamic and Judaism started in the 7<sup>th</sup> century with the origin and spread of Islam. There are many common aspects between Islam and Judaism, and as Islam developed it gradually became the major religion closest to Judaism. As opposed to Christianity which originated from interaction between ancient Greek and Hebrew cultures. Judaism is very similar to Islam in its fundamental religious outlook structure jurisprudence and prace. There are many traditions within Islam originated from traditions within the Hebrew Bible or from post biblical Jewish traditions. The historical interaction between Christianity and Islam connects fundamental ideas in Christianity with similar ones in Islam. Islam and Christianity share their origins in the Abrahamic tradition although Christianity predates Islam by centuries. Islam accepts many aspects of Christianity as part of its faith with some differences in interpretation and rejects other aspects. Islam believes the Quran as the final revelation from God and a completion of all previous revelations including the Bible.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been exposed to the formative periods of Judaism. Also that the Jews believe in the distinctiveness of the Jewish race from other races of the world, It was also learnt that Judaism has its central doctrines which tailored its activities and streamline its beliefs and practices,. The records also brought out the Jewish festivals,

which it was believed to be the channel of Jewish reminder on all its pillar of doctrines and practices. You are advised to master the salient issues in this unit before you proceed to the next one.

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- (i) Explain the features that make the Jewish distinct from other nationals.
- (ii) Explain what Torah and Talmud meant in Judaism.
- (iii) Examine the feast of Passover and its significance to the Jews.
- (iv) Accounts for the formation of Judaism.

## **6.1 MARKING GUIDES TO TMA**

### **Question 1: Explain the features that make the Jewish distinct from other nationals.**

The features that distinguish the Jews from the other national include:

- (i) That at the age of 15, Jewish son becomes a son of the commandment.
- (ii) He is called up to the reading of the Torah on the Sabbath following his birthday. His made to believe that the Israelites are the only chosen people of God and to them alone.
- (iii) The Jews hold that while all peoples and nations are God's creatures through Adam, the Jews only are God elected through Abraham.
- (iv) The Jews are said to be a redeemed community.
- (v) The Jews are the covenanting partners of God
- (vi) The Jews male child are obliged to circumcision
- (vii) Circumcision is a supreme obligatory sign of loyalty and adherence to Judaism
- (viii) Circumcision is a sign of covenant sealed in the flesh
- (ix) Every Jew are seen as Abraham seed.

### **Question 2: Explain what Toral and Talmid meant in Judaism**

#### **Torah**

- i. Torah to the Jews represents the whole mystery and tangible expression of God.
- ii. It is the exclusive possession of the Jewish people.
- iii. Moses was believed to have received it from Mt. Sinai.
- iv. Moses handed Torah to Joshua to the elders and the elders to the prophets while the elders handed to the man of the Great Synagogue.
- v. Torah is the source of life of the Jewish people.
- vi. Torah made a distinct separation of the Jews from other follow men.

#### **Talmud**

Talmud is popularly called the "savings of the fathers because it is the collection of the discussion and decisions of the Jewish scholars and rabbis in matters of Torah. Talmid service as the fundamental axious to the belief of the Israel. This can be found in the following oxides which include:

- a. Beliefs in the existence of creator.
- b. Beliefs in His unity.
- c. Beliefs in His incorporeity.
- d. Beliefs in His eternity.

- e. Beliefs that to Him alone is worship alone.
- f. Beliefs in the words of the prophet.
- g. Beliefs that Moses was the greater of all prophets.
- h. Beliefs in the revelation of the Lord of Moses of Sinai.
- i. Beliefs in immortality of the revealed law.
- j. Beliefs that God is the Omniscient.
- k. Beliefs in retribution in the world and the hereafter.
- l. Beliefs in the coming of the Messiah.
- m. Beliefs in the resurrection of the dead.

**Question 3: Examine the Feast of Passover and Its Significance to the Jews**

**The Passover**

- i. This is the most important of all the three Jewish festivals.
- ii. The commemorates God's intervention upon the people of Israel for a release from Egypt to the promise land.
- iii. The feast was celebrated in the month of April by the Israelites.
- iv. Each family was to selected a jeas old unblemished lamb and kill on the tenth day of the month as a sacrifice unto God.
- v. The blood of the animal is used to paint the lintel of every house where the animal is to be eaten.
- vi. The family would eat the roasted flesh together with unleavened bread and litter herbs.
- vii. The meal is to be eaten with girded loins.
- viii. The left over was to be burnt.

**Question 4: Account for the Formation of Judaism**

- i. Judaism has its origin in Babylon when the Jews were in exile.
- ii. Judaism was basically meant for the Jesus alone as the Jews believed that God (Yahweh) called no one else but the Israelites alone.
- iii. Abraham was the founder of Judaism as he claimed to have been called by God to leave Ur of Chaldea to Canaan with the promise that he shall become the father of a great nation.
- iv. God's promise was transferred to Isaac and Jacob respectively.
- v. A great famine brought Jacob and his family to Egypt where they eventually settle and grew up in large number.
- vi. The Israelites were later turned into pharaonic self's.
- vii. God used Moses as agent of deliverance to the Israelites in Egypt, who took them out of Pharaoti's territory.
- viii. God appeared to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai, where the Ten Commandments were given as the instrument of guides and protection towards Canaan land from this dimension, Judaism took its course.
- ix. Judaism as a religion enjoyed the understanding of the Jews leaders from Moses to Joshua and the judges thereafter to the monarchical period, Saul, David and Solomon regimes.
- x. The breaking of the united Israel into two kingdoms – Nor and south after the reign of Solomon gave rooms and openings for the enemies attach which eventually took them into exile.

- xi. At Babylon, due to the absence of Jerusalem temple to worship, the Jews came together and inaugurated synagogue for the purpose of worshipping Yahweh from judaistic approach.
- xii. From exile period back to Jerusalem, Judaism became a fixed institution which later came in contact with other religion of the world.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT TWO: CHRISTIANITY FROM EARLY FORMATION TO THE CHURCH OF THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (474 – 800)**

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- 1.0 Introduction
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The history of Christianity concerns the Christian religion and the Christian church, from the ministry of Jesus and his Twelve Apostles and the great Commission, to contemporary times and denominations. Christianity is an Abrahamic religion. It differs most significantly from the others in the claim that Jesus Christ is God the Son. The vast majority of Christians believe in a triune God consisting of three unified and distinct persons. God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. There have been significant theological differences among Christians regarding the divine and human natures of Jesus and the triune nature of God. These differences continue till today.

In many Christian denominations “The Church” is understood theologically as the institution founded by Jesus for the salvation of humankind. This understanding is shared between Catholic and Orthodox traditions. They see in the Church a foundation of Christ, who continues to live in it, through the Holy Spirit. In the Catholic tradition, the Catholic Church is the Body of Christ Protestant churches generally view all Christians to be the Body of Christ. Some Protestant theologians call this High Church. In contrast, Low Church denominations generally emphasise the personal relationship between a believer and Jesus Christ. Other Christians, however, would say that the church is not an institution at all. Instead, it is the gathering of believers, individually, and ultimately in heaven where all believers from all nations and times will be gathered together, so, church history is not just about the history of institutions, but the major happenings amongst believers throughout the world, throughout time.

Christianity began in 1<sup>st</sup> century in AD in Jerusalem. Luke states in Acts 2:5 – 11 that there were present in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost “devout men from every nation under heaven... Parthians, Medes, Flamites, (regions of preset-day Iran), residents of Mesopotamia, Judes and Cappadocia, Pentus (both in Ancient Greece, present-day turkey) and Arabians”. It spread initially near east, ultimately becoming the state religion of America in either 301 or 314, of Ethiopia in 325, of Georgia in 337, and then the state religion of the Roman Empire in 380. During the Age of Exploration (15<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> cent.), Christianity expanded throughout the world, becoming the world’s largest religion.

Throughout its history, the religion has whether schisms and theological disputes have resulted in any distinct churches. The largest branches of Christianity are the Roman Catholic Church, Eastern Orthodox Church and the Protestant churches.

Religious scholars generally agree that Jesus was born to a Jewish mother named Mary in 6-4 B.C. and that he was raised in Nazareth, Galilee. He further claim that Jesus began his ministry around the age of thirty and that it included recruiting disciples who regarded him as a wonderworker, healer and/or the Son of Man and Son of God. He was eventually executed by crucifixion in Jerusalem circle AD 33 on the orders of the Roman Governor of Judea Province, Pontius Pilate) and after his crucifixion Jesus was buried in a tomb.

Christians believes that three days after his death, Jesus and his body were raised from the dead by God and that the empty tomb story is a historical fact. Early works by Jesus’ followers document a number of resurrection appearances and the resurrection of Jesus formed the basis and impetus of the Christian faith. His followers wrote that he appeared to the disciples in Galilee and Jerusalem and that Jesus was on the earth for 40 days before his Ascension to heaven and that he will return to earth again to fulfill aspects of Messanic prophecy, such as the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment and the full establishment of the Kingdom of God.

The main sources of information regarding Jesus’ life and teachings are the four canonical Gospels, and to a lesser extent the Acts of the Apostles and writings of Paul. Christianity’s popularity is largely founded and based on one central point found in these Gospels, that Jesus died and rose from death as God’s sacrifice for human sins.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Account for the formation of Christianity from the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ to the Apostolic era.
- Account for the Canonicity of the Bible.
- Discuss the spread of Christianity to AD 325.
- Account for ecumenical councils.
- Discuss church of the Early Middle Ages (476)

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Early Christianity (33 – 325)**

Early Christianity refers to the period when the religion spread in the Greek/Roman world and beyond, from its beginnings as a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jewish sect to the end of imperial persecution of Christians after ascension of Constantine the great in AD 313, to the First Council of Nicaea in 325. It may be divided into two distinct phases: the apostolic period, when the first apostles were alive and organizing the church, and the post-apostolic period, when an early Episcopal structure developed, whereby bishoprics were governed by bishops (overseers).

##### **Apostolic Church**

The apostolic church, called by some the primitive church, was the community led by Jesus' apostles and his relatives. According to the Great Commission, the resurrected Jesus commanded the disciples to spread his teachings to all the world. The primary source of information for this period is the Acts of the Apostles, which gives a history of the Church from the Great Commission (1:3-11), Pentecost (2) and the establishment of the Jerusalem Church to the spread of the religion among the gentiles, Paul's conversion (9, 22, 26) and eventual imprisonment (house arrest: 28: 30 –31) in Rome in the mid-first century.

The first Christians were essentially all ethnically Jewish or Jewish Proselytes. In other words, Jesus preached the Jewish people and called from them his first disciples, though the earliest documented 'group' of appointed evangelizers, called the Seventy Disciples, was not specifically ethnically Jewish and the Great Commission is specifically directed at 'all nations'. An early difficulty arose concerning the matter of Gentile (non-Jewish) converts as to whether they had 'become Jewish' (usually referring to circumcision and adherence to dietary law, see also Judaisers) as part of becoming Christian. Circumcision was considered repulsive during the period of Hellenization of the Eastern Mediterranean. The decision of Peter, as evidenced by conversion of Centurion Cornelius, was that they did not and the matter was further addressed with the Council of Jerusalem.

The doctrines of the apostles brought the early church into conflict with some Jewish religious authorities. This eventually led to their expulsion from the synagogues. Act records the martyrdom of St. Stephen and James the Great. Thus, Christianity acquired an identity distinct from Rabbinic Judaism.

##### **3.1.1 Worship of Jesus**

The sources for the beliefs of the apostolic community include the gospels and New Testament Epistles. The very earliest accounts are contained in these texts, such as early Christian creeds and hymns, as well as accounts of the Passion, the empty tomb, and Resurrection appearances; often these are dated to within a decade or so of the crucifixion of Jesus, originating within the Jerusalem Church. The earliest Christian creeds and hymns express belief in the risen Jesus, e.g., that preserved in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4 quoted by Paul: "For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the scriptures. The antiquity

of the creed has been located by many scholars to less than a decade after Jesus' death, originating from the Jerusalem apostolic community and no scholar dates it later than the 40s. Other relevant and very early creeds include 1 John 4:2, 2 Timothy 2:8, Romans 1:3-4 and 1 Timothy 3:16, an early creedal hymn.

### **3.1.2 Jewish Continuity**

Early Christianity retained some of the doctrines and practices of first-century Judaism while rejecting others. They held that Jewish scripture to be authoritative and sacred, employing mostly the Septuagint or Targum translations, later called the Old Testament; a term associated with Suppressions, and added other texts as the New Testament canon developed. Christianity also continued other Judaic practices: baptism liturgical worship, including the use of incense, an altar, a set of scriptural readings adapted from synagogue practice, use of sacred music in hymns and prayer, and religious calendar, as well as other distinctive features such as an exclusively male priesthood, and ascetic practices (fasting etc.). Circumcision was rejected as a requirement at the Council of Jerusalem, at 50. Sabbath observance was modified, perhaps as early as Ignatius' Epistle to the Magnesians 9.1. Quarto ecumenism (observation of the Paschal feast on Nisan 14, the day of preparation for Passover) was formally rejected at the First Council of Nicaea.

## **3.2 Post-Apostolic church**

The post-apostolic period concerns the time roughly after the death of the apostles when bishops emerged as overseers of urban Christian populations, and continues during the time of persecutions until the legalization of Christian worship with the advent of Constantine the Great.

### **3.2.1 Persecutions**

From the beginning, Christians were subject to various persecutions. This involved even death for Christians such as Stephen (Acts 7:59) and James, son of Zebedee (12:2). Larger-scale persecutions followed at the hands of the authorities of the Roman Empire, beginning with the year 64, when as reported by the Roman historian Tacitus, the emperor Nero blamed them for that year's great Fire of Rome.

According to Church tradition, it was under Nero's persecution that Saints Peter and Paul were each martyred in Rome. Similarly, several of the New Testament writings mention persecutions and stress endurance through them. For 250 years Christians suffered from sporadic persecutions for their refusal to worship the Roman emperor, considered treasonous and punishable by execution. In spite of these at-times intense persecutions, the Christian religion continued its spread throughout the Mediterranean Basin.

### **3.2.2 Ecclesiastical structure**

By the late first and early second century, a hierarchical and Episcopal structure became clearly visible. Post-apostolic bishops of importance are Polycarp of Smyrna and Irenaeus of Lyons. This structure was based on the doctrine of Apostolic Succession where, by the ritual of the laying on of hands, a bishop becomes the spiritual successor of the previous bishop in a line tracing back to the apostles

themselves. Each Christian community had presbyters, as was the case with Jewish communities, who were also ordained and assisted the bishop; as Christianity spread, especially in rural areas, the presbyters exercised more responsibilities and took distinctive shape as priests, lastly, deacons also performed certain duties, such as tending to the poor and sick.

### **3.2.3 Early Christian Writings**

As Christianity spread, it acquired certain members from well-educated circles of the Hellenistic world; they sometimes became bishops but not always. They produced two sorts of works: theological and 'apostolic', the latter being works aimed at defending the faith by using reason to refute arguments against the veracity of Christianity. These authors are known as the church fathers, and study of them is called Patristics. Notable early fathers include Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp, Justine Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyons, Tertullia, Clement of Alexandria, Origen of Alexandria etc.

### **3.2.4 Canon of the Bible**

The biblical canon is the set of books Christians regard as divinely inspired and thus constituting the Christian bible. Though the early church used the Old Testament according to the canon of the Septuagint (LXX), the apostles did not otherwise leave a defined set of new scriptures' instead the New Testament developed over time.

The writings attributed to the apostles circulated amongst the earliest Christian communities. The Pauline epistles circulated in mass and were collected at the end of the first century AD, Justin Martyr, in the early second century, mentions the 'memoirs of the apostles', which Christians called 'gospels and which were regarded as on par with the Old Testament. A four gospel canon (the Tetramorph) was in place by the time of Irenaeus, c. 160, who refers to it directly. By the early 200's, Origen of Alexandria may have been using the same 27 books as in the modern New Testament, though there were still disputes over the canonicity of Hebrews, James, II Peter, II and III John, and Revelation, (40) see also Antilegomena. Likewise the Muratorian fragments shows that by 200 there existed a set of Christian writings somewhat similar to what is now the New Testament, which include the four gospels. Thus, while there was a good measure of debate in the Early Church over the New Testament canon, the major writings were accepted by almost all Christians by the middle of the second century. It has 367 letters, Athanasius Bishop of Alexandria, gave a list of exactly the same books as what would become the New Testament canon, and the use of the word 'canonised' (kanonizomena) in regard to them. The African Synod of Hippo, in 393, approved the New Testament, as it stands today, together with the Septuagint books, a decision that was repeated by Councils of Carthage in 397 and 419. These councils were under the authority of St. Augustine, who regarded the canon as already closed. Pope Damasus I's Council of Rome in 382, if the Decretum Gelasianum is correctly associated with it, issued a biblical canon identical to that mentioned above, or if not the list is at least a sixth century compilation. Likewise, Damasus's commissioning of the Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible, c. 383, was instrumental to the fixation of the canon in the West. In 405, Pope Innocent I sent a list of the sacred books to Gallic bishop, Exsuperius of Toulouse. When these bishops and councils spoke on the matter, however, they were not defying

something new, but instead “were ratifying what had already become the mind of the church. Thus, from the fourth century, there existed unanimity in the West concerning the New Testament canon (as it is today) and by the fifth century the East, with a few exceptions, had come to accept the Book of Revelation and this had come into harmony on the matter of the canon. Nonetheless, a full dogmatic articulation of the canon was not made until the Council of Trent of 1546 for Roman Catholicism, the thirty-Nine Articles of 1563 for the Church of England, the Westminster Confession of Faith of 1647 for Calvinism, and the Synod of Jerusalem of 1672 for the Greek Orthodox. Church of the Roman Empire (313 – 476).

### **3.3 The Spread of Christianity to AD 325**

Christianity in late antiquity begins with the ascension of Constantine to the emperorship of Rome in the early fourth century, and continues until the advent of the Middle Ages. The terminus of this period is variable because the transformation to the sub-Roman period was gradual and occurred at different times in different areas. It may generally be dated as lasting to the late sixth century and the re-conquests of Justinian, though a more traditional date is 476, the year that Romulus Augustus, traditionally considered the last western emperor, was deposed.

#### **3.3.1 Christianity legalized**

In April 311, Galerius, who had previously been one of the leading figures in the persecutions, issued an edict permitting the practice of the Christian religion under his rule. In 313 Constantine I and Licinius announced toleration of Christianity in the Edict of Milan. Constantine would become the first Christian emperor. By 391, under the reign of Theodosius I, Christianity had become the state religion. Constantine I, the first emperor to embrace Christianity, was also the first emperor to openly promote the newly legalized religion.

#### **3.3.2 Ecumenical Councils**

During this era, several Ecumenical Councils were convened. These were mostly concerned with Christological disputes. The two Councils of Nicaea (325, 382) condemned Arian teachings as heresy and produced a creed. The council of Ephesus condemned Nestorianism and affirmed the Blessed Virgin Mary to be Theotokos (“God-bearer” or “Mother of God”). Perhaps the most significant council was the Council of Chalcedon that affirmed that Christ had two natures, fully god and fully man, distinct yet always in perfect union. This was based largely on Pope Leo the Great’s Tome. Thus, it condemned Monophysism and would be influential in refuting Monothelism. However, not all denominations accepted all the councils, for example Nestorianism and the Assyrian Church of the East split over the Council of Ephesus of 431, Oriental Orthodoxy split over the Council of Chalcedon of 451, Pope Sergius I rejected the Quinisext Council of 692, and the Fourth Council of Constantinople of 869-870 is disputed by Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy.

### **3.3.3 The Council of Trent**

The Council of Trent (1545-1563), initiated by Pope Paul III (1534-1549) addressed issues of certain ecclesiastical corruptions such as simony, absenteeism, nepotism, and other abuses, as well as the reassertion of traditional practices and the dogmatic articulation of the traditional doctrines of the Church, such as the Episcopal structure, clerical celibacy, the seven Sacraments, transubstantiation (the belief that during mass the consecrated bread and wine truly become the body and blood of Christ), the veneration of relics, icons, and saints (especially the Blessed Virgin Mary). The necessity of both faith and good works for salvation, the existence of purgatory and the issuance (but not the sale) of indulgences etc. In other words, all Protestant doctrinal objections and changes were uncompromisingly rejected. The Council also fostered an interest in education for parish priests to increase pastoral care. Milan's Archbishop Saint Charles Borromeo (1538 – 1584) set an example by visiting the remotest parishes and instilling high standards.

### **3.4 Church of the Early Middle Ages (476-800)**

The church in the Early Middle Ages covers the time from the deposition of the 1st Western Emperor in 476 and his replacement with a barbarian king, Odoacer, to the coronation of Charlemagne as “Emperor of the Romans” by Pope Leo III in Rome on Christmas Day, 800. The year 476, however, is a rather artificial division. (71) in the East, Roman imperial rule continued through the period historians now call the Byzantine Empire. Even in the West, where imperial political control gradually declined, distinctly Roman culture continued long afterwards; thus historians today prefer to speak of a “transformation of the Roman world” rather than a “fall of the Roman Empire.” The advent of the Early Middle Ages was a gradual and often localized process whereby, in the West, rural areas became power centers whilst urban areas decline. With the Muslim invasions of the seventh century, rural areas became power centers whilst urban areas declined. With the Muslim invasions of the seventh century, the Western (Latin) and Eastern (Greek) areas of Christianity began to take on distinctive shapes. Whereas in the East the Church maintained its structure and character and evolved more slowly, in the West the Bishops of Rome (i.e. the Popes) were forced to adapt more quickly and flexibly to drastically changing circumstances. In particular whereas the bishops of the East maintained clear allegiance to the eastern Roman Emperor, the Bishop of Rome, while maintaining nominal allegiance to the Eastern Emperor, was forced to negotiate delicate balances with the “barbarian rulers” of the former Western provinces. Although the greater number of Christians remained in the East, the development in the West would set the stage for major developments in the Christian world during the later Middle ages.

## **5.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions in this unit, you have learnt that:

- Christianity emanated from the ministry of Jesus Christ and his twelve apostles.
- A formidable history of the church started from 1<sup>st</sup> century to AD 325.
- The mode of worship in Christendom including reading from the Bible, sing from the hymnals and praying in the name of Jesus Christ.

- The post-Apostolic era of the church exhibited the experience of the church after the death of the apostles; and that the church was persecuted at different occasions.
- Ecclesiastical structure was put in place while the church was expanding and she faced more challenges.
- Early Christian writing was introduced to make available the needed doctrinal materials for the enrichment of the yearning members.
- The canon of the Bible took place to protect the original word of God from the heretical materials that were in circulation.
- Christianity was legalized by empire Constantine in 313 AD.
- There were ecumenical councils whereby the church iron-out the doctrinal issues, challenging and confronting matters for the purpose of standardizations.

#### **4.1 COMPARING CHRISTIANITY AND JUDAISM**

Historically, the relationship between Christianity and Judaism has been strained to say the least. The Jewish conception of the Messiah holds certain similarities to that of Christian, yet there are substantial differences. According to Jews, the Hebrew scriptures contains a small number of prophecies concerning a future descendant of King David who will be anointed as the Jewish peoples new leader and will establish the throne of David in Jerusalem forever. In the Jewish view, this fully human and mortal leader will rebuild the land of Israel and restore the Davidic Kingdom. This subject is covered in the section on Jewish eschatology.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

You have been exposed to the formative periods of Christianity, the worship pattern in Christianity as well as the experience of persecutions after the apostolic era. You also learnt that ecclesiastical structure was based on the doctrine of the apostolic succession. The early Christian writings were embarked upon for the purpose of establishing the true Gospel of Jesus Christ from the mouth of the eye-witnesses before they all died. Also it was written for the purpose of stemmed down heretical movements' activities at tone hand and also to strengthening the faith of faithful Christians at different locations and destinations. It was also discovered that canonization of the Bible was targeted for standardization of the Bible from being polluted. The legalization of Christianity was championed by Emperor Constantine 1<sup>st</sup> in 313 AD that which reposition Christianity as a top world religion. It was also observed that the inauguration of Ecumenical councils was convened for the purpose of formulating certain rules and regulations that aim at strengthened the activities of the then Christian bodies. Protestantism and the church Reformation came to being answer to the displeasure of the Christian youths on various abuses noted in the practices and lives of the church leaders. While Counter-Reformation was said to be the reaction of the Catholicism over the Protestantism. You are therefore enjoined to master the salient issues before your movement to the next unit.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- (v) Briefly explain the origin of Christianity.
- (vi) Discuss the mode of worship in a Christian church.
- (vii) Explain the functions expected of the church leader/pastor.
- (viii) Write all you know about Martin Luther.
- (ix) What are the main objectives of Ecumenism?

## 6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA

Question 1: Briefly discuss the Origin of Christianity

- i. Christianity began in 1<sup>st</sup> century AD in Jerusalem specifically in the day of the Pentecost as recorded by Acts 2:5 – 11.
- ii. It spreads initially in the near East and became the state religion of America in either 301 or 314, of Ethiopia in 325 of Georgia in 337, and then State religion of the Roman empire in 380.
- iii. The largest branches of Christianity are the Roman Catholic Church, the eastern orthodox church and the protestant churches.
- iv. Religious scholars generally agreed that Jesus was born to Virgin Mary and Joseph the carpenter, around 6 – 4 BC and that he was raised up in Nazareth, Galilee.
- v. It was further claimed that Jesus began his ministry around the age of thirty recruited his disciples who worked with him for the period of three years.
- vi. Jesus was eventually executed by crucifixion in Jerusalem by AD33 on the order of Pontius Pilate and he arose on the third day as it was recorded by the gospel.
- vii. Records and evidences of the resurrection appearances of Jesus Christ formed the basis and impetus of the Christians faith.
- viii. The main sources of information regarding Jesus life and teachings are the four canonical Gospels and to a lesser extent the Acts of the Apostles and writings of Paul.
- ix. Christianity's popularity is largely founded and based on one central point found in the Gospels that Jesus died and rose from dead as God's sacrifice for human sins.
- x. In Christian denomination 'the church' is understood theologically as the institution founded by Jesus for salvation of human kind.

### Question 2: Explain the Canonicity of the Bible

- (i) i. The Biblical canon is the set of books Christians regarded as divinely inspired and thus constituting the Christians Bible.
- (ii) ii. Various external circumstances motivated the process of canonization. First, there was the rise of heretics like Marcion, Gnostics and Montanus.
- (iii) iii. Two, when Christians were persecuted for their faith, it became a matter of urgency to know which books could and which not be handed over to the imperial police without incurring the guilt of sacrilege.
- (iv) iv. The scripture were canonized so as to conserve it from being diluted or polluted by traditions which may arise as a result of an attempt to explain the scripture.

- (v) v. The need to preserve God's revelation in order to ward off any change or corruption as a result of tradition or new opinions.
- (vi) vi. The need to observe that is after accepting God's revelation, there is the need to observe and meditating from the word of God from time to time for the purpose of growing in the Lord.

**Question 3: Account for Ecumenical Council of Trent**

- i. The council of Trent (1545 – 1563) was initiated Pope Paul III which was inaugurated to address issues of certain ecclesiastical corruptions such as, absenteeism, nepotism and other abuses as well as the reassertion of traditional practices and the dogmatic articulation of the traditional doctrines of the church.
- ii. The council also addressed problems on Episcopal structure clerical celibacy, the seven sacraments, transubstantiation, the veneration of relics, icons and saints.
- iii. The problems of faith and good works for salvation, the existence of purgatory and the issuance of indulgences were also examined.
- vi. Through this council, all protestant doctrinal objections and changes were uncompromisingly rejected.
- v. The council also formulated theological education for the priests to increase pastoral care.

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## **UNIT THREE: CHRISTIAN FROM PROTESTANT REFORMATION TO ECUMENISM ERA (152 – 159)**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

To understand the reformation of the Christian church one must begin with the deformation. The reformation was an attempt to recover a lost golden age of primitive purity as set forth in the Bible. Why and how did the reformation occur? Answer to the question is what we call the deformation.

Partly because of the initial success of Christianity and in order to gain more converts the church had to accommodate herself to the modes of thought language and behaviour of the people she wanted to convert. Eventually when they became converts they brought with them much of their former paganism. This was true in the Roman world where Christianity was spread chiefly through the conversion of individuals but much more in the German lands where the entire tribes embraced the faith at the instance of their rulers. The ancient gods then survived either as demands or by having their functions transferred to Christian saints.

Another success was in the realm of government. With the fall of the empire under the barbarian impact, the church took over many government functions and became involved in political complications particularly at the success of the Gregorian reform of the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> centuries the church men who initiated the reform were resolved, not to withdraw from the world not to

collaborate with the world but to dominate the world through the church herself had to be reformed. The clergy must put away their wives. But the enforcement of clerical celibacy resulted in widespread clerical concubinage. The general belief at the time was that those who administer the saving sacraments ministering to man's eternal salvation have an authority superior to that of rulers dealing with man's temporal welfare. It therefore, followed that in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, the papacy was solely responsible for regulating the behaviour of rulers. This was done at the expense of pitting on power against another and of becoming so enmeshed in political manipulations as to approach the verge of secularization. The result was that the international role of the papacy eventually called for financial levies on local churches, which the faithful resented especially when the money was squandered onwards the luxurious living.

In the realm of theology, the urge to turn from universals to particular made Christian to initiate sect composed of those committed to the practice of the ideal. This was done in defiance of the church as an organized structure. And for well over 300 years prior to the reformation, the sects Swarned in Southern France and Northern Italy. Typical examples of these sects were the Hustle Movement in England and that of John Wycliffe and his followers – the Lollards. The performance of these groups centred on the ethical teachings aimed at correcting abuses in the church.

It will then be seen that long before Martin Luther pressed the bottom which sparked off the fire of the reformation, the factors just examined above had paved the way for the revival and renewal of the Medieval church.

Here are some Revivalists involved

**(a) Peter Walde**

The leader of the Revivalist known in the history of church Reformation as Waldensians was Peter Walde believed very strongly in Reformation by the Word of God. To this effect he translated the Bible into the vernacular and raised up Lay preachers. Taking a cue from our Lord, Ealde sent out seventy disciples who took their message into Southern France Italy, Spain and Rhine Valley.

He attacks on the worldliness of the church provoked great opposition. An appeal for ecclesiastical recognition of their Lateran Council in 1179, failed and in 1184 Pope Lucius III put the waldenesians under ban. They organized themselves as a separate body appointed their own ministers who administered the Eucharist once a year.

**(b) John Wycliffe (1320 – 1384)**

John Wycliffe, the 'Morning Star' or 'Grandfather' of the Reformation was born in 1320 at a hamlet in Yorkshire. Like Walde he was a biblical

reformer; he graduated in Theology at Oxford and under him the first English translation of the Bible was made. It appears that this political, not theological views led him to criticize the papal system, especially its methods of appointments and taxation. He became convinced as a result his biblical studies, that the church was not what it should be that it must be brought back to apostolic purity of life and doctrines, he taught that the possession of secular power by the clergy was incompatible with true religion and the teaching of Christ the Saviour. He issued out a series of pamphlets which advocated, among other things, the view that the State must intervene and take control of the Church's properties in the interest of the poor. His Teachings on the church.

- Wycliffe asserted that the Bible is the law of God as distinguished from the papal renouncements and traditions. He inferred that the true church is one and indivisible, with Christ as its only Head not the Pope.
- The Babylonian captivity of the Popes at Avignon (1309 – 1377) had undermined popular confidence in papal authority. The true apostolic church, he held is not to be identified with the visible institution but is made up of the elect, who have been predestined to be its members.
- Salvation depends upon predestination and grace rather than upon baptism and membership in the visible church.
- Royal power derives from God, for the purpose of protecting the weak and administering justice and must be accounted for on the Last Day. Hence the King is their superiors in all civil matters and they hold their temporalities by his consent.
- The Pope deserves reverence only when he lives and acts in the Christ like manner, the church can exist without him.
- Property is the result of sin: Christ and the apostles had none.
- Wicked man are not entitled to property and the state must ser that they are deprived of it.
- The clergy and the monks must be compelled to lives in apostolic poverty.
- He condemned the “miracle of the Mass” image worship, prayer for the dead worship of the Virgin Mary and the Saints and the worldliness and laziness of the clergy.
- He challenged the theory that the Pope could not err in teaching revealed.

Both the nobility and the middle class readily accepted this principle but the bishops and the well-endowed religious orders vigorously objected. Wycliffe was later charged to appeal first before the Bishop of London and later before the Archbishop of Catembury (1378). He was accused of heretical teachings. The parliament protected him when he was later condemned by Pope Gregory XI (1380). Although he died two years later, yet his spirit lived on in Britain and on the continent. His itinerant preachers whom he named “Poor Priests”,

and whom posterity knows as Lollards, kept a true flame clearly burning through the long night which only ended at the Reformation

**(c) John Huss (1369 – 1415)**

John Huss was born at Hussinetz, a little town, South of Bohemia in 1369. He rose to become Professor of Philosophy at the University of Prague. Like his predecessor, Huss wanted to reform the church by leading his contemporaries back to the Bible. He became the leader of a reform movement which spread across Bohemia. His movement was soon opposed by the Pope who felt that his position was being threatened. Though he had the support of the entire nations in his church reform he was excommunicated by the Pope. The charge against him was that he was spreading Wycliffe's doctrine which the church had earlier declared as heresy. Eventually, John Huss was brought before the Council of Constance.

John Huss was condemned as heretic and burnt at the stake in 1415. Seven Bishops performed the mockery of degrading him from the priesthood. His clerical garments were taken from him; the cup of Eucharist, for the restoration of which to the laity he had striven was plucked from his hands. "We take from the condemned Judas the cup of salvation". However, the Council of Constance's attempt to destroy heresy by burning Huss was a complete failure. Rather, the death of their leader did not dismay his followers. After suffering for a period of persecution, the eclipse of the ideas for which Huss stood was only temporary. His ideas were to revive again shortly after his death.

**(d) Erasmus Desiderus (1466 – 1536)**

Erasmus Desiderus was born out of wedlock in Rotterdam. He was cared for by his mother but he early lost her and his father in the plague. As a child he was put to school in Deventer and had part of his education through the Brethren of the common life.

His poverty caused him to enter the monastery of the Augustinian Canons at Steyen, but he had no taste for monastic life, neither did he have for the priesthood for which he was ordained in 1490, he was later to become the secretary of the Bishop of Cambrai. Then he studied in Paris, Italy, England and Germany. Although, he obtained the degree of Bachelor of Divinity (BD) in 1498, he had no love for scholastic theology. However, his friend, John Colet, directed him to the Bible and urged him to study Greek. He was in Italy gathering knowledge by the study of the primary sources of ancient literature and deepening his conception of a Christ humanism. His study of the Bible was to make him more critical of clergy and civil rulers.

Erasmus was a sincere Christian and wished for the reform of the church

- He wished to see the church purged of superstition through the use of intelligence and a return to the ethical teachings of Christ.
- He desired to break with the existing Catholic, he initiated no innovation in doctrine of worship. Rather, he pled for ethical living and in a politically divided European, racked by chronic wars, he urged for peace.
- His approach to changes was rational.
- He believed that through the appeal to man's reason both church and society could be improved.
- He did this through his writings

One of such writings was his Handbook of the Christians Soldiers. The book was meant to be a guide to Christian living, depreciating formation and ceremonies and emphasizing morals.

There were "The Praise of Folly" a satirical description of current life from the Pope and cardinals down through kings, nobles, monks, preachers, philosophers and merchants to the lower strata of society.

"The complaints of Peace", in which he praised peace and condemned war and his "familiar Colloquies" in which he held up to ridicule what he deemed the corruption's in the church and the monasteries.

His moral earnestness and his attempt to stress the New Testament, combined with wide readership enjoyed his writing did much to incite people to ask for reform in the church.

## **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain Protestant Reformation
- Account for the efforts of the preliminary reformation revivalists.
- Account for Martin Luther, John Calvin and other revivalists reformation other.
- Explain Counter Reformation
- Explain the period of Revivalism in Christian church
- Discuss Ecumenism.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Protestant Reformation (1521 – 1579)**

In the early 16th century, Movements were begun by two theologians, Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli, that aimed to reform the Church; these reformers are distinguished from previous one's, in that they considered the root of corruptions to be doctrinal (rather than simply a matter of moral weakness or lack of ecclesiastical discipline) and thus they aimed to hand contemporary doctrines to accord with what they perceived to be the "true gospel". The word

protestant is derived from the Latin protestation meaning declaration which refers to the letter of protestation by Luthern princes against the decision of the diet of Speyer in 1529, which reaffirmed the edict of the Diet of Worms against the Reformation. Since that time, the term has been used in many different senses, but most often as a general term refers to Western Christianity that is not subject to papal authority the term “Protestant” was not originally used by reformation era leaders; instead, they called themselves ‘evangelical’ emphasizing the ‘return to the true gospel’ (Greek: evangelion).

The beginning of the Protestant Reformation is generally identified with Martin Luther and the posting of the 95 Theses on the castle church in Wittenberg, Germany. Early priest was against corruptions such as simony, Episcopal vacancies, and the sale of indulgences. The three most important traditions to emerge directly from the Protestant Reformation were the Lutheran, Reformed (Calvinist, are also columnists), and Anglican traditions, though the latter group identified as both “Reformed” and “Catholic”, and some subgroups reject the classification as “Protestant”.

The Protestant Reformation may be divided into two distinct but basically simultaneous movements, the Magisterial Reformation and the Radical Reformation. The Magisterial Reformation involved the alliance of certain theological teachers such as Luther, Ziwingli, Calvinm Cranmer, etc with secular magistrates who cooperated in the reformation of Christendom. Radical Reformers, besides forming communities outside state sanction, often employed other extreme doctrinal change, such as the rejection of tenants of the Councils of Nicea and Chalcedon. Often, the division between magisterial and radical reformers was more violent than the general Catholic and Protestant hostilities.

The Protestant Reformation spread within the confines of Northern Europe, but did not take hold in certain northern areas such as Ireland and parts of Germany. By far the magisterial reformers were more successful and their changes move widespread than the radical reformers. The Catholic response to the Protestant Reformation is known as the Counter Reformation, or Catholic Reformation, which resulted in a reassertion of traditional doctrines and the emergence of new religious orders aimed at both moral reform and new missionary activity. The Counter Reformation reconverted approximately 33% of Northern Europe of Catholicisms and initiated missions in South and Central America, Africa, Asia and even China and Japan. Protestant expansion outside of Europe occurred on a smaller scale through colonization of North America and areas of Africa.

### **3.1.1 Martin Luther**

Martin Luther was an Augustinian friar and professor at the University of Wittenberg. In 1517, he published a list of 95 Theses, or points to be debated, concerning the inflictiness of selling indulgences. Luther had a particular

disdain for Aristotelian philosophy, and as he began developing his own theology, he increasingly came into conflict with holistic scholars, most notably Cardinal Cajetan. Soon, Luther had begun to develop his theology of justification, or process by which one is “made right” (righteous) in the eyes of God. In Catholic theology, one is made righteous by a progressive infusion of grace acceptance through faith and cooperated with through good works. Luther’s doctrine of justification differed from Catholic theology in that justification rather meant “the declaring of one to be righteous”, where God imputes the merits of Christ upon one who remains without inherent merit. In this process, good works are more of an unessential by-product that contribute nothing to one’s own state of righteousness. Conflict between Luther and leading theologians led to his gradual rejection of authority of the Church hierarchy. In 1520, he was condemned for heresy by the papal bull *Exsurge Domine*, which he burned at Wittebergel long with books of canon law.

### **3.1.2 Ulrich Zwingli**

Ulrich Zwingli was a Swiss scholar and parish priest was likewise influential in the beginning of the Protestant Reformation. Zwingli claimed that his theology owned nothing to Luther, and that he had developed it in 1516, before Luther’s famous protest, though his doctrine of justification was remarkably similar to that of the German riar. In 15178, Zwingli was given post at the wealthy collegiate church of the Grossmunster in Zurich, which he would remain until his death at a relatively young age. Soon he had risen to prominence in the city, and when political tension developed between most of Switzerland and the Catholic Habsburg Emperor Charles V. In this environment, Zwingli began preaching his version of reform, with certain points as the aforementioned doctrine of justification, but other (with which Luther vehemently disagreed) such as the position that veneration of icons was actually idolatry and thus a violation of the first commandment, and the denial of the real presence in the Eucharist. Soon the city council had accepted Zwingli’s doctrine and Zurich became a focal point of more radical reforming movements, and certain admires and followers of Zwingli pushed his message and reforms far further than even he had intended, such as rejecting infant baptism. This split between Luther and Zwingli formed the essence of the Protestant division between Lutheran and Reformed theology. Meanwhile, political tensions increased; Zwingli and the Zurich leadership imposed an economic blockade on the inner Catholic states of Switzerland, which led to a battle in which Zwingli, in full armor, was slain along with his troops.

### **3.4.1 John Calvin**

John Calvin was a French cleric and doctor of law turned Protestant Reformer. He belonged to the second generation of the Reformation, publishing his theological tome, the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, in 1536 (latter revised), and establishing himself as leader of the Reformed Church 1 Geneva, which became an ‘unofficial capital’ of Reformed Christianity in the second half of the sixteenth century. He exerted a remarkable amount of authority in

the city and over the city council, such that he had (rather ignominiously) been called a “Protestant Pope”. Calvin established an eldership together with a ‘consistory’, where pastors and the elders established matters of religious discipline for the Genevan population. Calvin’s theology is best known for his doctrine of (double) predestination, which held that God had, from all eternity, providentially foreordained who would be saved (the elect) and likewise who would be damned (the reprobate). Predestination was not the dominant idea in Calvin’s works, but it would seemingly become so for many of his Reformed successors.

### **3.2 Counter Reformation**

The Counter Reformation, or Catholic Reformation, was the response of the Catholic Church to the Protestant Reformation. The essence of the Counter Reformation was a renewed conviction in traditional practices and the upholding of Catholic doctrine as the source of ecclesiastic and moral reform, and the answer to halting the spread of Protestantism. Thus it experiences the founding of new religious orders, such as the Jesuits, the establishment of seminaries for the proper training of priests, renewed worldwide missionary activity, and the development of new yet orthodox forms of spirituality, such as that of the Spanish mystics and the French School of Spirituality. The entire process was spearheaded by the Council of Trent, which clarified and reasserted doctrine, issued dogmatic definitions, and produced the Roman Catechism. Though Ireland, Spain, France and elsewhere featured significantly in the Counter Reformation, its heart was Italy and the various popes of the time, who established the Index Librorum Prohibitorum (the list of prohibited books) and the Roman Inquisition, a system of juridical tribunals and that prosecuted heresy and related offences. The Papacy of St. Pius V (1566 – 1572) was known not only for its focus on halting heresy and worldly abuses within the Church, but also for its focus on improving popular piety in a determined effort to stem the appeal of Protestantism. Pius began his pontificate by giving large alms to the poor, charity and hospitals, and the pontiff was known for consoling the poor and sick, and supporting missionaries. The activities of these pontiffs coincided with a rediscovery of the ancient Christians catacombs in Rome. As Diarmaid MacCulloch stated, “just as these ancient martyrs were revealed once more, Catholics were beginning to be martyred afresh, both in mission fields overseas and in the struggle to win back protestant Northern Europe: the catacombs proved to be an inspiration for many to action and to heroism”.

### **3.3 Revivalism (1720 – 1906)**

Revivalism refers to the Calvinist and Wesleyan revival, called the Great Awakening, in North America which saw the development of evangelical Congregationalist, Presbyterian, Baptist, and new Methodist Churches. When the movement eventually waned, it gave rise to new Restorationist movements.

### **3.3.1 Great Awakening**

The first Great Awakening was a wave of religious enthusiasm among Protestants in the American colonies (1730 – 1740), emphasizing the traditional Reformed virtues of Godly preaching, rudimentary liturgy, and a deep sense of personal guilt and redemption by Christ Jesus. Historian Sydney E. Ahlstrom saw it as part of a “great international Protestant upheaval” that also created Pietism in Germany, the Evangelical Revival, and Methodism in England. It centered on reviving the spirituality of established congregations and mostly affected Congregational, Presbyterian, Dutch Reformed, German Reformed, Baptist and Methodist Churches, while also spread within the slave population. The Second Great Awakening (1800 – 1830), unlike the first, focused on the unchurched and sought to instill in them a deep sense of personal salvation as experienced in revival meetings. It also sparked the beginning of Restorationist groups such as the Mormons and the Holiness movement. The third Great Awakening began from 1857 and was most notable for taking the movement throughout the world, especially in English speaking countries. The final group to emerge from the “Great Awakenings” in North America was Pentecostalism, which had its roots in the Methodist, Wesleyan, and Holiness movements, and began in 1906 on Azusa Street, in Los Angeles. Pentecostalism would later lead to the Charismatic movement.

### **3.7.2 Restorationism**

Restorationism refers to various unaffiliated movements that considered contemporary Christianity, in all its forms, to be a deviation from the true, original Christianity, which these groups then attempted to “Reconstruct”, often using the Book of Acts as a “guidebook” of sorts. Restorationism developed out of the Second Great Awakening and is historically connected to the Protestant Reformation, but differs with it in that Restorationists do not usually describe themselves as “reforming” a Christian church continuously existing from the time of Jesus, but as restoring the Church that they believe was lost at some point. The name Restoration is also used to describe the Latter-day Saints (Mormons) and the Jehovah’s Witness Movement.

### **3.4 Ecumenism**

Ecumenism broadly refers to Movements between Christian groups to establish a degree of unity through dialogue. “Ecumenism” is derived from Greek known as (oikoumene), which means ‘the inhabited world’, but more figuratively something like “universal oneness”. The movement can be distinguished into catholic and Protestant movements, with the latter characterized by a redefined ecclesiology of ‘denominationalism’ (which the Catholic Church, among others, rejects).

#### **3.4.1 Catholic Ecumenism**

Over the last century, a number of moves have been made to reconcile the schism between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox churches. Although progress

has been made, concerns over papal primacy and the independence of the smaller Orthodox churches has blocked a final resolution of the schism

On 30 November 1894, Pope Leo XIII published the Apostolic Letter *Orientalism Dignitas* (on the churches of the East) safeguarding the importance and continuance of the Eastern traditions for the whole Church. On 7 December 1865, a Joint Catholic-Orthodox Declaration of His Holiness Pope Paul VI and the Ecumenical Patriarch Athenagoras I was issued lifting the mutual excommunications of 1054.

Some of the most difficult questions in relation to the ancient Easterners Churches concern some doctrine (i.e. Filioque, Scholasticism, functional purposes of asceticism, the essence of God, Hesychasm, Fourth Crusade, establishment of the Latin Empire, Uniatism to note but a few) as well as practical matters such as the concrete exercise of the claim to papal primacy and how to ensure that ecclesiastical union would not mean mere absorption of the smaller Churches by the Latin component of the much larger Catholic Church (the most numerous single religious denomination in the world), and the stifling or abandonment of their own rich theological, liturgical and cultural heritage.

With respect to Catholic relations with Protestant communities, certain commissions were established to foster dialogue and documents have been produced aimed at identifying points of doctrinal unity, such as the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification produced with the Lutheran World Federation in 1899.

### **3.4.2 Ecumenism within Protestantism**

Ecumenical movements within Protestantism have focused on determining a list of doctrines and practices essential to being Christian and thus extending to all groups which fulfill these basic criteria a (more or less) co-equal status, with perhaps one's own group still retaining a "first among equal" standing. This process involved a redefinition of the idea of "the Church" from traditional theology. This ecclesiology, known as denominationalism, contends that each group (which fulfils the essential criteria of "being Christian") a sub-group of a greater "Christian Church", itself a purely abstract concept with no direct representation, i.e. no group, or 'denomination' claims to be "the Church". Obviously, this ecclesiology is at variance with other groups that indeed consider themselves to be "the Church". The "essential criteria" general consist of belief in the Trinity, belief that Jesus Christ is the only way to have forgiveness and eternal life, and that He died and rose again bodily.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions in this unit you have learnt that:

- The protestant reformation period established the efforts of the revivalists, who taught the course of abuses emanated in the church by 16th century.
- A group of revivalists such as Peter Walde, John Wycliffe, John Huss, Erasmus Deciders champion the earliest known Reformation Order.
- Martin Luther and other renowned evangelists fought and established Reformation Order of 16<sup>th</sup> century.
- Reformation of the church gave birth to Protestantism.
- Counter Reformation registered the efforts of Catholic Church to stemmed down the plan of the protestant movement from moving out of the

catholicizing on one hand, at the same time it was an efforts that gave way for making some corrections in the Catholic Church.

- The Ecumenical Movement aims at working for the unity of the divided churches and denominations to become one and see to the expansion of the Gospel of James Christ.

#### **4.1 ZOROASTRIANISM AND CHRISTIANITY COMPARED**

Similarities with the Christian trinity can be seen between Ahura Mazda and God the father, Miltre and Christ the Logos, as well as between Birz and the Holy Spirit, both of which are associated symbolically with water. Both Zoroastrianism and Christianity consider themselves to be monotheistic, but like all other monotheism they have highlighted certain aspects or energies of the divine to emphasise, and these are not meant to be interpreted as separate divinities. In both religious there are guardian angels, or fravashi which are considered to be created beings and are district from the energies of God or divine emanations.

There have been various theories in the possible relationship between the aspects of Zoroastrianism and ideas of divine emanation in esoteric Christianity, Jewish Kabbalahm Islamic mysticism (Sufism) and other religious systems, such as Gnosticism, Yazidism, and the Druze, among others.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit you have been exposed to the preliminary reformation attempt, the decisive reformation order and the Counter Reformation. You also leant that Protestantism Movement was the offshoot of the reformation order. It was also established that Great awakenings manifested amidst of the then churches and Christian believers as a result of the then revival. Restoration of all purposes took place in the midst of the Christian circle that which heralds expansion amidst the existing churches and at the same time open avenues for the new denominations and movements Protestantism and the church reformation came to being as an answer to the displeasure of the Christian youth on various abuses noted in the practices and lives of the church leaders while Counter Reformation was said to be the Protestantism. You are therefore enjoy to master the salient issues before you move to the next unit.

#### **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. Write briefly on protestant reformation.
- ii. Write all you know about John Wycliffe reformation attempt.
- iii. Who was Martin Luther?
- iv. Discuss Ecumenism order.

#### **6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA**

##### **Question 1: Write briefly on Protestant reformation**

- i. The protestant Reformation was move and spearheaded in 16<sup>th</sup> century by Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli who aimed in reforming the church.
- ii. The word protestant is derived from the Latin word protestation, meaning declaration to do away from Catholicism.
- iii. The protestant reformation may be divided into distinct groups but basically simultaneously movement, the Magisterial Reformation and the radical reformation.

- iv. The Magisterial Reformation involved the alliance of certain theological teachers such as Luther, Zwingli, Calvin and others.
- v. Radical reformation, besides forming communities outside state sanction often employed extreme doctrinal change such as the rejection of tenants of the councils of NICEA and Chalcedon.
- vi. The protestant reformation spread within the countries of Northern Europe except Ireland and parts of Germany before it reached other western world.
- vii. The catholic response to the protestant reformation is known as the Counter Reformation or catholic reformation.
- viii. Counter Reformation resulted in a reassertion of traditional doctrines and the emergence of new religious orders aimed at both moral and new missionary reform.
- ix. The Counter Reformation reconverted Northern Europe to Catholicism and initiated missions in South and Central America, Africa, Asia, China and Japan.
- x. Protestant expansion outside Europe occurred on a smaller scale through colonization of North America and areas of Africa.

**Question 2: write all you know about John Wycliffe Reformation attempt.**

- (i) John Wycliffe known as morning star or grandfather of the reformation was born in 1320 at Yorkshire.
- (ii) His biblical studies made him to realize that the church was not what it should be and that it must be brought back to apostolic purity of life and doctrine.
- (iii) He issued out series of pamphlets which advocated that the state must intervene and take control of the church properties in the interest of the poor. John Wycliffe teachings on the church are:
  - (a) He asserted that the Bible is the law of God and distinguished from the papal pronouncements and traditions.
  - (b) That the true apostolic church is not to be identified with the visible institution but is made up of the elect which have been predestined to be its members.
  - (c) Salvation depends upon predestination and grace rather than upon Baptism and membership in the visible church.
  - (d) Royal powers derive from God for the purpose of protecting the weak and administering justice and must be accounted for on the last day.
  - (e) The people deserve reverence only when he lives and acts in a Christ like manner.
  - (f) Wicked men are not entitled to properly and the state must see that they are deprived of it.
  - (g) The clergy and the monks must be compelled to live in apostolic poverty.
  - (h) He condemned the miracle of the Mass image worship prayer for the dead, worship of the Virgin Mary and the saints and the worldliness and laziness of the clergy.

The above teachings subjected Wycliffe to condemnation and accused of heretical teachings by Pope Gregory XI in 1380.

**Question 3: Who was Martin Luther?**

- i. Martin Luther was a professor at the University of Wittenberg.
- ii. He published a thesis in 1517 concerned the inflictness of selling indulgences.
- iii. Luther developed his own theology of justification or process by which one is made right in the eyes of God.
- iv. Luther doctrine of justification differed for Catholic theology in that justification meant 'declaring of one to be righteous', where God imputes the merits of Christ upon one who remains without inherit merit.
- v. Conflict between Luther and leading theologians led to his gradual rejection by the Catholic authority.
- vi. In 1520, he was condemned for heresy by the papal exsurge Domine and he was burnt to death at Wittenberg along with his books.

**Question 4: Discuss Ecumenism Order**

- i. Ecumenism broadly refers to 'movements between Christian groups to establish a degree of unity through dialogue'.
- ii. Ecumenism is derived from Greek word "Oikoumene" meaning 'the inhabited world' but more figuratively something like "universal oneness".
- iii. The movement can be distinguished into Catholic and protestant movements with the latter characterized of 'denominationalism' which the Catholic Church rejected,
- iv. Catholic Ecumenism came out with setting up of commissions aimed at iron-out the doctrinal differences between Catholicism and protestant churches.
- v. Ecumenism Protestantism focused on determining a list of doctrines and practices essential to being Christian and bases for unity among the members.

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## **UNIT FOUR: ISLAM**

### **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION ISLAM**

#### **The Historical Origins of Islam Arabia before Islam**

Arabia is the great western peninsula of Asia. Its area is about 1,230,000 square miles. The name of Arabia was said to be derived from Araba, a place in Tihama in the southern part of Arabia. Ya'rub ibn Qqahtan the father of the Arabs got his name also from the place, Araba..

Arabia is called the Arabian Peninsula. Three sides of its area is surrounded by water; Euphrates in the north-east, the Arab Gulf in the east. the Indian ocean in the south and the Red Sea in the west.

Arabia consists of seas of sandy deserts and ranges of rocky mountains with severe climatic conditions. The only exception is the south-western corner where Yemen lies. In the desert, rain may fall here and there during the winter season giving rise to growth of patches of grass from which livestock can be fed. In the oases where water gathers in wells, orchards of date palms and some cereals are grown. Most of the people of the central and northern Arabia were nomadic, shifting from one place to another in search of water and pasture. The people of Mecca and Yathrich (Medina) were more stabilized. Two journeys were to be made from Mecca to Yemen and Syria. The first was to take place in winter and the second was to take place in summer. The two journeys were referred to in the Qur'an the sura of Qureysh. The

southern people were civilized. They had established kingdoms among which the kingdom of Sba' existed. Later on, some people from southern Arabia migrated to the north and settled in central Arabia and other places. The migration was due to the collapse of the Ma'rib Dam, the source of fertility.

Beyond Syria in the north-west and Iraq in the north-east two mighty empires. The Byzantine Empire and the Persian Empire. The two empires hated each other. For a century before Islam they had been fighting with each other. Two Arab tribes established two buffer kingdoms which remained till the advent of Islam. The first was in Syria and it is called the Ghasnids. It was considered as a satellite of Byzantine. The other was in Iraq and it is called the Lakkuids. It was also considered as a satellite of Persia.

In most parts of the Arabia peninsula during the pre-Islamic days, there was a lack of civilization. Awful superstitions and idolatry prevailed everywhere. Crimes of infanticide and human sacrifices were common. The various tribes were in constant and perpetual warfare with each other. The absence of any stable government had led to the prevalence of criminal excesses. The whole peninsula was in a pitiful state of sin, depravity, and wickedness.

Although Christianity and Judaism were introduced before Islam by the Christians and the Jews who tried in to Arabia, idolatry still prevailed. The preaching of the two religions was not enough to chance the idolatrous habits and customs. Moreover, most of the Christian and Jews were perhaps more interested in earning their livings. They had already been persecuted by the Romans. So they preferred not to be persecuted again by the Arabs. However, a little progress of preaching the religion of Christianity had been made among the Arabs before Islam.

The traditions of Islam refer to the immediate pre-Islamic era, the age preceding the advent of Islam, as the Age of Ignorance. The reference here is not to be taken as the indication of knowledge. Rather, it is used in the sense of lawlessness which should mean the falling away from the pure monotheism of Abraham and Ishmael to the idolatry which, more than anything else, the prophet denounced with all his power.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Account for the origin of Islam.
- Account for the life of Prophet Mohammad.
- Account for Hijrah.
- Discuss Islamic Beliefs.
- Explain prayer in Islam.
- Account for Zakat
- Discuss fasting in Islam.
- Discuss pilgrimage in Islam.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 The Life of Prophet Mohammad

***His Infancy:*** Muhammad, the son of an illustrious Arab family that was well-known for his religious accomplishments and political activities, was born in Mecca on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi' Awwal (April 20, 571AD). His father died before his birth. According to the custom of the Arabs, Muhammad was sent to the desert for a few years away from the stifling climate of the town. It was the good luck of Halimah, of the tribe of Sa'ad, to serve as the wet nurse of Muhammad. In the desert he learned patience and the tending of sheep and goats. When he was four years old, Muhammad was handed back to his mother. When Muhammad lost his mother in his sixth year, he was taken to the house of his grandfather, 'Abdul-Muttalik, who foresaw for him a splendid future. The grandfather died two years later, leaving him to be cared for by his uncle, Abu-Talib, who had always shown a fatherly interest in him.

***His Childhood:*** The affectionate bond between the young lad and his uncle was so strong that he often traveled with him on caravan journeys. Traditions said when he was twelve he accompanied his uncle on a commercial journey to Syria, where they met a Sytian monk called Babira who recognized in the young man the characteristics of a Prophet. He advised the uncle to take care of Muhammed always, and to mistrust especially the Jews who might do harm to him if ever they learned of the Prophetic mission he would be called to fulfill. ***His Youth:*** Muhammad spent his youth in humble circumstance most of the time working as a shepherd. As he later pointed out, herding sheep was also the occupation of all other Prophets, Musa and Dawud in particular. Muhammed never took part in pagan practices prevailing in Mecca, or in the worship of Idols. From his childhood he endeared himself to all those around him by his manners and virtues. The more he grew in age the more his virtue and wisdom were recognized. As a young man, he distinguished himself by his refined manners, his extreme shyness, his absolute chastity and his avoidance of the easy pleasures pursued by other young men of his community. All those who knew Muhammad had complete confidence in him for he fully deserved the name by which he was called, al-Amin, which means the honest and reliable one. When he was twenty years old he was called to sit with the most venerable Sheiks of the Fudul League, an association which cared for the weak and helpless and sought to assure peace between the tribes. ***His Marriage to Kadija*** when he reached the age of twenty-five. Khadija was a wealthy widow held in honour and esteem in Mecca. She was beautiful and had a good character. Muhammad, accompanied by Maysarah, Kadijah's servant, made the trip to Syria and brought back fabulous profits. Maysarah, in his report to Khadija said that Muhammad had displayed the highest degree of honesty. Khadija, impressed by Muhammad's character, did not hesitate to send a word conveying her wishes to marry Muhammad who was fifteen years younger than her. Muhammad paid Khadija twenty she-camels as a bridal gift, and soon the marriage was concluded. She bore him six children, Al-Qasim, Abdullah, Zaib, Ruqayah, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima. With the exception of Fatima he lost all his children during his lifetime.

Muhammad in his married life revealed to his family and the community his excellent human qualities. The trade which he carried on with his wife's funds kept them in comfortable circumstances, but he used his resources only as a means of spreading happiness. For instance, in order to repay his uncle for having taken care of him in his youth, he took the responsibility for the upbringing of Abu-Talib's son, Ali.

***His Manhood:*** The most famous action of Muhammad recorded was between the time of his marriage and his mission when he was thirty-five years old. The Ka'bah, the Holy Shrine in Mecca, was being rebuilt and when the time came to place the Black Stone (the revered angular stone of the traditional monument), there was a furious competition among the Arab tribes for the honour of lifting it into position. The controversy was about to result to a fight, with swords drawn, when Muhammad was seen to enter. The crowd started shouting, "Ali-Amin!" and all submitted to the arbitration of the honest and reliable one. With his remarkable presence of mind and impartiality which he always showed, Muhammad spread his coat on the ground, put the Black Stone on it, and asked the chiefs of the principal tribes to grasp the edges of the coat and together lift the stone to the required height. Then he took the stone and placed it with his own hands, thus resolving the dispute and restoring harmony among the tribes. Muhammad was dissatisfied with the superstitions and pagan practices prevailing in Mecca. He often wondered how his countrymen could in no way respond to their devotion. In his late thirties, Muhammad devoted himself to the worship of God according to the religion of Abraham. He was able to teach the truth spontaneously. He chose the cave of Hira, as a secluded place away from the bustle and the noise of the city, for his solitary meditation. When he reached the age of forty he approached the decisive divine event, which wrought a complete change in his life and the history of mankind.

### **The Mission of Islam**

The first of the Prophetic vocation of Muhammad was the discovery that everything which he dreamed happened in his waking hours precisely as he had foreseen it. During his contemplation in the cave of Hira', on a hill outside Mecca. Muhammad reflected over the events of day and night: the sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the winds and the living creatures which come and go.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan (February, 610A.D.) Muhammad received his first revelation. This revelation took the form of discussion between teacher and pupil, between the Archangel and Muhammad.

"Read" insisted Gabriel. "But how shall I read?" asked the astonished pupil.

"Read" insisted Gabriel. "What shall I read?" asked the solitary hermit.

Gabriel then recited the first five verses of the sura of al-Alaq (the Clot) which are:

"Read: in the name of your Lord who creates.

Creates man from a clot.

Read, and your Lord is the most generous. Who teaches by the pen.

Teach man that which he knew not.

This was the first fragment of the Qur'an. The angel then disappeared and Muhammad, completely overcome, did not realize the nature of the call. He felt as if he were suffering from fever. He reached home, went to bed and asked his wife to cover him. Khadija, his devoted wife, when she heard his story, assured him with wise and consoling words, "No" she said, "do not worry", God would surely not do you any harm, nor heap shame upon you, for you have never done harm. You always speak the truth, you help the feeble, and you always assist those who suffer, for a just cause."

To comfort him further, Khadija accompanied him on a visit to her cousin, Waraqa Ibn Nawfa, who was familiar with the old scriptures. When Waraqa heard the whole story he said to Muhammad: "This is good news which should fill you with rejoicing. No doubt you are the Prophet announced by Jesus. Oh, that I could live until your countrymen will chase you from your country". "How is it," cried Muhammad, "that they will chase me from here?" "Of course," replied Waraqa, "never any man brought his fellow men what you brought with you without becoming the object of persecution and hostility."

Muhammad was convinced that what he used to dream about and what he had seen at the cave were not imaginary. He looked forward to further calls; and after about three years of restlessness came the revelation that he was not appointed as the Messenger of God to deliver his message to mankind and to invite them to the truth. Gabriel conveyed later to Muhammad his responsibility: "Oh you, who cover yourself carefully, get up, and spread your announcement" (sura 74:1, 2).

Thus Muhammad was not just to receive divine knowledge, he had to transmit it to people as well. To his role of Prophet was thus added that of Messenger.

Muhammad's career as the Messenger of Islam lasted for twenty years, with ten years in Mecca before the Hijrah (the migration from Mecca to Medina) and ten years at Medina before his death. He began his preaching in Mecca by discreetly speaking only in his most intimate circles. Abu Bakr was the first man to be converted to Islam and Khadija was the first woman: "Ali, his cousin, was the first young man. The first foreigners were Zaid Ibn Harithah, the Yemenite: Bilal Ibn Rabah, the Abyssinian and Suhaib Ibn Sinan, the Roman.

Islam spread slowly in Mecca, privately at first, and then, in the tenth year before Hijrah the calling to Islam became public. Muhammad was to preach to the people that God is one. He is the Maker and Creator; He is the Giver of life and the Bringer of death. There is none like Him. He is Supreme. People should give up bowing and bending before stones. They should quit idol worship. The Prophet was to repeat: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger". These ideas alarmed the important people of Mecca. Firstly because, though simple, they struck at the root of their beliefs by denying all the old gods. Secondly, they called on people to break their old habit and traditions.

Although, the Meccans did their best to stop the growth of the Islamic call by threats sometimes and at other time by inducement, the number of Muslims was the forty men and ten women, and they met and prayed in secret. The conversion of such important people as Hamzah and 'Uman in this year gave strong support, and

encouragement to the followers that they were able to perform their prayers openly near the Ka'bah and the new religion began to spread more rapidly. The increase in the number of Muslims aroused the Meccans to redouble their violence and persecutions. The Prophet, therefore, allowed eighty-three men and eighteen women of the persecuted Muslims to seek refuge with the King of Abyssinia, Al-Najashi, who received them well and was himself converted to Islam. Fifteen persecuted Muslims had already been there.

The Prophet himself became the target of conspiracy but was protected by the two family branches more closely related to him, by Hishim and Banu al-Mutaalib, which rallied around him in the Hasimid quarter. At this time he suffered two cruel losses: the death of his uncle Abu-Talib and shortly afterwards the death of his wife Khadija. The Prophet called this year "Year of Suffering". When Muhammad lost the support which his uncle afforded him in Mecca, he left the town to look elsewhere for allies and adherents. He spent ten successful days with the tribe of Thaqif, but at al-Ta'if was received badly and returned disappointed to Mecca. Towards the end of the third year before the Hijrah he saw a faint hope in six men from Medina. These good men, who had come to Mecca to pay their esponent to the Ka'bah, responded enthusiastically to his call and carried the whole message to Medina where they made many converts. A year later, five of these men from Medina with seven new converts visited the Prophet and took an oath to abstain from the bad habits, from all vices and to observe strict discipline. A year later, seventy-five men from Medina came to swear allegiance, confessed their faith and declared their submission. They also promised to defend the Prophet and their Muslim bothers if they choose Medina as their refuge. This represents the first defence treaty in Islamic history.

### **3.2 The Hijrah (Migration from Mecca to Medina) (622 A.D.)**

Before the Hijrah the Muslims did not form a nation or even a community. They did not even have a majority in Mecca. The Prophet prepared himself for the migration to Medina after he had been invited by the Medinah people who assured him that they would help him and fight for Islma. When the Prophet received God's sanction for the Hijrah, he instructed his followers to migrate to Medina in small numbers. The Qureysh, suspecting the arrangements of Hijrah, especially after the disappearance of most of the Muslims from Mecca on after the other, held an emergency meeting and decided to kill Muhammad. Abu Jahl, an important Mecca leader, suggested, and his suggestion was agreed to it, that a strong man should be chosen out of every tribe for the execution, and that all men should strike a blow at Muhammad at once together with sharp swords, so that his blood-shedding would never be the responsibility of a certain tribe.

When the warriors, came to attach Muhammad in his house, were surprised to find 'Ali Ibn Abi Talib there instead cave of Thawr outside Mecca. The attackers traced the footprints to the cave, but did not suspect that Muhammad would be inside, for they found the cobweb covering its entrance. They then came to the conclusion that they might take refuge in some place nearby, an later on, they abandoned their search in that area.

In the cave of Thawr, Muhammad and Bu Bakr concealed themselves for three days and then secretly made their way to Yathrib. The Muslims in Yathrib (Medina) who

by then were numerous had gathered at the way of approach from Mecca. On the 24<sup>th</sup> September, 622, 12 Rabbi' al Awwal, of the first year of the Islamic era Muhammad was seen coming with his party. The people of Yathrib accorded him a most enthusiastic welcome, chanting together with their women and children, songs in his praise. The prophet built his mosque and a little house beside it. The Meccans who went to yathrib and settled there were called al-Muhajirin (the emigrants) and the men and women of Yathrib were called al-Ansar (the helpers). From the beginning there was a great friendship between the two groups. The Ansar shared their wealth with the Meccans and live with them. Muhammad's authority in Medina was entirely new and original in kind: it was at the same time absolute and consultative, theocratic and socialist, based on revealed commandments and general rules.

### **3.3 Islamic Beliefs**

A man announces his acceptance of the beliefs of Islam and his commitment to its regulations; he manifests the existence of Islamic beliefs in his heart, when he proclaims the word of acknowledgement: I acknowledge that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is His Messenger.

#### **3.3.1 Belief in Allah**

The basic belief in Islam is the belief in Allah His existence, His unity, and His perfection. The evidence by which the Qur'an draws people's attention to the belief in Allah is based on reason and inner consciousness or intuition. The rational evidence for belief in Allah is based on Islam's call to ponder on the nature of the Universe the earth, the heavens, the mysteries, the natural laws, the harmony and the unity of the universe. Thus one comes to see that it is impossible that the universe could be self-created, by opposed or contradictory forces, or that the universe. Thus one comes to see that it is impossible that the universe could be self-created, or crated by opposed or contradictory forces, or that the universe is purposeless. This universe was created by an ultimate creative force; it was crated by a supernatural force which guides and manages it through ultimate knowledge and wisdom. The intuitional evidence for belief in Allah is based on the recognition of Allah by our inner consciousness. The Qur'an points out the important psychological fact that there is an instinctive feeling of faith in almighty Allah, the Creator of the universe.

#### **3.3.2 Belief in Angels**

The second basic belief is the belief in Angels. It requires also the belief in Jinn and the Soul. The Qur'an describes Angels as supernatural and states that such is their real nature that they do not appear in the material world generally, but only by divine command. The Angel's functions are concerned with spirits and souls. Some of these functions are recorded in the Qur'an. Some of the Angels carry His revelations, His orders, His messages to His prophet and messengers.

### **3.3.3 Belief in Messengers**

The wisdom of God required sending messengers to people to guide them to the straight path. It also required the prophecy of Muhammad's last service which covers God's decrees and guidance through his messengers and prophets. God knows that reform is usually surrounded with troubles which may create despair in the hearts of the reformers. Therefore, God by relating the story of the prophets in the Qur'an strengthen His divine call among them so that such stories may be a sort of exhortation and examples. God wants his messengers and reformers and people to realize the existence of obstacles and difficulties in their ways and their missions, so that they can uphold impatience and endurance during their missions. In the Qur'an, other messengers have been denied before you but they patiently bore with disbelief and persecution until our help came down to them, for none can chance the decrees of Allah. You have already heard of those Messengers." (Sura 6:34). Besides the basic belief in God in the Divine judgement after resurrection, the adherents of Islam, who became known as Muslims are to hold all the prophets who came before Muhammad, for Muhammad is also the prophet, I honour and respect. There were many of them each was sent to guide his community. The basic teaching of them all was the same but the guidance they gave in matters of practice varied in accordance with the need of time and locality. The prophets mentioned in the Qur'an and their Qur'anic names are as follows:

#### **Prophet's Qur'anic name**

Afm Adam Saleh Sali Noah Nur Lot Lut Hud Hud Eock Idris Mses Musa Abraham Ibrahim David Dawud Ishmael Ismail Slomon Sulaiman Isaac Ishaq Joseph Yusuf Elias Ilyyas Jacob Ya'qub Eliasha Ilyasa Shauib Hau'ayb Zacharias Zakariyya Jonah Yunus Hohn Yahya Job Ayyb Aaron Harun Ezekiel Dul-Kifl Jesus Isa and Mohammed Muhammad.

### **3.3.4 Belief in the Scriptures**

The scriptures are the messages of Allah to mankind. Therefore, the belief in the scriptures is a more logical consequence of belief in angels and Messengers. The Scriptures carry to mankind the instructions concerning the beliefs and the fundamental principles for legislation which guide man in carrying out his obligations and enjoying his rights. Islam calls upon mankind to believe in all the Scriptures which have been revealed through God's Messengers, such as the Qur'an which was revealed to Muhammad the Torah revealed to Moses, the Injil, revealed to Jesse, the Zabur reveal to David, and the Scrolls revealed to Abraham. Since the Prophet Muhammad is stated in the Qur'an to be the final messenger, the Qur'an is considered also the final Scripture. No wonder! For the two sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunna, have covered comprehensively the requirements of mankind.

### **3.3.5 Belief in the Last Day**

The Last Day is described in the Qur'an as the Day of Resurrection, the Day of Judgment, and the Hereafter. It is the life after death. A Muslim never doubts, nor hesitates to hold a firm belief in eternity. Everyone will be revived on the Day of Judgment to be judged. What happens to a man on the Last Day his reward or punishment, his pleasure or pain is determined by what he has chosen to do in this world. In the Qur'an, in Sura 99: 6-8.

Those who obstinately continue to be disbelievers will be punished after Resurrection for that disbelief which contradicts the natural dispositions of man. That punishment according to the Qur'an will continue eternally. It is not definitely stated in the Qur'an whether Hell is everlasting or not, but it is clearly stated that Paradise and its blessing are eternal. Thus the belief in the Judgment of the Last Day is the strongest motive for man to seek perfection and progress in this world in order that he may be accepted and favoured by Allah in the Other World.

### **3.3.6 The Belief in Destiny for Good and Evil**

The six fundamental beliefs of Islam is the belief in destiny for good or evil. In the sight of Islam, man chooses either good or evil by his own free will and is rewarded or punished according to his deeds. He is only guided and advised by the angels of Allah and by the messengers but is still completely free to choose as he wishes. This judgment of man's deeds and their consequences does not contradict at all the belief in what is called the destiny of man. Many people have thought that a belief in destiny implies that everything will happen by itself, whether we wish it or not, and that such a belief will make people pathetic and indifferent towards all progress. The real meaning of belief however is that one believes that God created an orderly world and one should act according to the nature of that world. Thus a man with a sense of destiny will be active in doing anything that is good, knowing that if any bad happens in spite of all precautionary measures, there will be no reason for regret or for blaming oneself.

## **3.4 Prayer**

Prayer is one of the five fundamental principles of Islam. It was instituted on Muslims one year before the Hijrah (migration) from Mecca to Medina. Prayer is a form of physical worship assigned to the Muslim five times a day at specified times. The Muslim can perform prayer anywhere; at the mosque, at home, at the farm, at the factory, in the office wherever he happens to be when the time falls due to prayer. He can pray alone or pray with others standing in a line or lines arrayed closely in straight formation, like a highly disciplined military parade, behind a leader who is followed by the congregation in all that he does. Prayer does not detain man from his daily civil life. On the contrary, prayer encourages man to carry on the business for which his talents qualify him, earning his livelihood, guarding his family and his interest, and abstaining from sin in matters of food and drink and evil amusements. In prayer, the Muslim thinks of his Lord five times a day, appearing before his Lord repeatedly and saluting His name within his heart and soul. The Muslim, in prayer, submits himself

to God and looks forward to his favour. Therefore, he perseveres in obeying His commands.

Prayer in the Qur'an and Sunna

In the Qur'an, sura 4: 103.

“Prayer is enjoined on believers at stated times:

In Sunna:

“Abdullah Ibn ‘Iman reported that he heard the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) saying:

“Islam is based on five pillars: The acknowledgment that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah, the performance of prayer, the give of alms, the performance of pilgrimage and the fasting in the month of Ramadan.

### **Prayer should never be omitted**

Prayer, under no circumstances, should ever be omitted. There is no excuse to omit prayer. The person who is not able to pray standing can pray sitting, if he is not able, he can pray leaning, if he is not able, he can pray lying down, if he is not able, he can move his head, if he is not able, he can move his eyes. Man as long as he is conscious, should never omit prayer. It is stated in the Islamic Law that whosoever deliberately omits his prayers because he does not recognize them as a religious and legitimate duty is to be regarded as an unbeliever. Deliberate omission of prayers constitutes the difference between belief and unbelief. A boy or a girl is asked to pray at the age of seven and is punished for not performing prayer at ten.

### **The Types of Prayer**

The Types of Prayer are:

1. Obligatory prayers:
  - a. The five daily obligatory prayers
  - b. The Friday prayer
  - c. The Funeral prayer, which is a collective obligatory prayer. All Muslims present are responsible until it is performed by any number of persons.
2. The Emphatic Sunna Prayers:
  - a. Al-watr prayer
  - b. The two Ids (Biarams) prayers,
  - c. The Sun eclipse prayer.
  - d. The rain prayer
  - e. The congregational prayer
  - f. The Journey prayer
3. The supererogatory Prayer (Nafl):
  - a. The prayers which belong to the obligatory prayers
  - b. The Mid-morning prayer (al-Duha).
  - c. Al-Tarawih prayer (the prayer performed after the night prayer every night of Ramadan).
  - d. The mosque salutation prayer
  - e. The Dawn prayer (al-Fajr).
  - f. The Moon eclipse prayer

- g. The Tahajjud prayer (the prayer performed after midnight).

### **3.5 Zakat (Religious Tax)**

Introduction: The third form of worship is Zakat (Religious tax). It is a fiscal worship by which Islam requires the well-to-do to care for the needs of the poor and to pay a subsidy to maintain public benefits, like hospital, educational institutions and defence force.

It is a sacred duty incumbent upon the rich to pay out of their possessions in excess of their own requirement; and of those of their dependents. It is the portions which are stated by the Islamic Law.

#### **Its Significance**

Worship through the giving of Zakat is the best means of promoting the welfare of the society, planting compassion, and spreading throughout the people a feeling of love and co-operation. Through the Zakat, the nation protects itself from tyranny, hatred, poverty and crimes, and builds itself on the bases of democracy, love, prosperity and production. Through the Zakat the nation also protects itself from exploitation which may be the result of the concentration of the bulk of the national income in the hands of few individuals, or in the hands of the ruler who might claim it in the name of the state.

Zakat in the Qur'an and Sunna: The Qur'an says in (sura 9: 103): "Take alms of their wealth were with you may purify and sanctify them". In the Sunna: the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H.) said: "Islam is build on the five pillar: the acknowledgement that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; the performance of prayer; the giving of Zakat; the fasting of the month of Ramadan and the performance of pilgrimage.

### **3.6 Fasting Before Islam**

It is necessary to state that fasting was performed by the Christians and the Jews. It is then an ancient form of worship recognized by the previous religions. It was also known to the ancient Egyptians from whom it passed on to the ancient Greeks. Fasting had been performed by the Romans and even the pagans in India and elsewhere and it is practiced till this day.

#### **The Significance of Fasting**

Fasting is the means by which the Muslims voluntarily abandons certain legitimate frivolous enjoyments as a means of putting his soul to a test and promoting its capacity for perseverance, thus strengthening his will to keep away from sins, both obvious and obscure. The Muslim thereby samples enough of starvation to make him a warm-hearted, hospitable person, sympathetic with the poor who are in constant want.

## **Types of Fasting**

Fasting is divided into two main categories

1. The obligatory fasting (Fard), which is:
  - a. The fasting of expiation or atonement (Kaffarah).
  - b. The fasting in the month of Ramadan
  - c. The fasting of vowing (Hadr).
2. The voluntary fasting (Tatawwu’).

## **Fasting in the Month of Ramadan**

It is the abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking and sexual intercourse all the day from dawn to sunset during the whole month of Ramadan each year with the intention to showing submission to God’s command. Fasting was stated by the Qur’an and Sunna in Sha’ban the second year of Hijrah (Migration). Concerning the fasting in the month of Ramadan, the Qur’an says: Ramadan is the month wherein the Qur’an was revealed for the guidance of mankind and to serve as the criterion (or right and wrong). Whosoever among you present in this month shall fast, and whoever is sick or on a journey shall fast an equal number of days later on. Allah desires ease for you and does not want to subject you to hardship so that you could complete the prescribed period. (of fasting) and that you may glorify Allah for having guided you, and that you be grateful.” (Sura 2:185). In the Sunna: On the authority of Abdullah Ibn Uman (May Allah be pleased with them) who said: “I heard the Messenger of Allah (P.B.O.H.) saying”. “Islam is based on five pillars; the acknowledgement that there is not God but Allah: and Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah the performance of prayer; the giving of Alms; the performance of pilgrimage and the performance of fasting during Ramadan.”

## **The Conditions Governing Its Obligation**

1. Maturity: Fasting is not obligatory of those who have not attained maturity; children should be encouraged to fast.
2. The ability of Fasting: Fasting is not obligatory for those who are not able to fast, such as old people and hardworking labourers.

## **Those who are exempted from fasting**

They are divided into two groups:

1. Those who enjoy the exemption known that it requires restitution (Qada’). They must fast after the month of Ramadan an equal number of the days they missed therein. Those are:
  - a. Women in menstruation or confinement,
  - b. The sick person who are advised by the doctor not to fast and
  - c. Those that are on a journey may break their fast if they find it difficult to fast during the journey.
2. Those who enjoy the exemption from fasting which does not require restitution but requires (Fidya) ransom, they can break their fasting and feed a needy person for everyday missed. If the person is not able to pay the Fidya, it is still considered a debt against him to be paid when he is able. Such people are:

- a. The old people who suffer from fasting:
- b. The labourers whose work is very hard such as mining, hard-labour, imprisonment to mention but few.
- c. Nursing women advised by the doctor to break their fast may do so provided they cannot find someone else to do the nursing and cannot afford artificial milk for the child;
- d. The pregnant women, who are advised by the doctor to break their fast, may do so and give fidya. But according to I-Imam Malik's school of law, restitution is required, not the Fidya, but Ibn Abbas, when he can to interpret God's works:  
 "And for those who suffer (from fasting) there is a ransom, the feeding of a man in need."  
 Said since the pregnant and the nursing women may suffer as well, they can break their fasting and give the Fidya provide the suffering is glaring.
- e. The person whose sickness is incurable.

### **3.7 Pilgrimage (Al-Hajj) and the Lesser Pilgrimage ('Umra)**

The literal meaning of pilgrimage (Hajj) is to set out towards a definite objective. In Islamic law it means to set out for the Ka'bah, the Sacred House, and to fulfill the pilgrimage rites.

"Umra mean a visit. In Islamic law it means visiting the Sacred House.

#### **Distinction between Hajj and 'Umra**

Pilgrimage is obligatory and performed in the well-known months (Sawwal, Dhul-Qi'dah and Dhul-Hijjah).

#### **The Significance of Pilgrimage**

Pilgrimage is one of the five fundamental principles of Islam. It was instituted in the sixth year of Hijrah. It is also a form of physical or external worship in Islam. It is an annual form of congregational worship in which all Muslims that is able to make the trip assemble all over the world at Mecca. The home of revelation for Muhammad (peace be upon him). It is a public worship expressing the full equality among Muslims gathered from all over the world with common objectives, all performing the same actions, all seeking to gain God's favour. Abu huraira reported that the Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) said: "He who performs pilgrimage without committing any sin during his journey, returns home as if he were just born. At Mecca pilgrims are spiritually leveled whether rich or poor, rulers or ordinary people, scholars or labourers. There, all of them, wearing similar white, seamless robes and shorn of class distinctions, assemble around a single centre which inspires them with a strong sense of unit. There their views and aims are unified and their resolution is strengthened to work co-operatively for the fulfillment of general good.

## **To Whom Pilgrimage is Obligatory**

Pilgrimage is incumbent upon the adult Muslim in full possession of his faculties, provided he is able to perform it. It is not to be demanded from any one other than Muslims, not from children or lunatics; in accordance with the words of the Prophet: "The pen is withdrawn from three persons i.e. The pen which records human acts pending divine judgment the sleeper till he awakes, the child till he grows up, and the lunatic till he is cured from his insanity". The ability here means meeting the expenses of travel and the provision for the pilgrim; and his family at home. Those of course do not concern the inhabitants of Mecca or its vicinity. If children accompany their families when performing the pilgrimage, it is considered from the children as a laudable action which does not exempt them from the obligation of pilgrimage when they become of age. The parents or guardians of such children may carry out all the rites of pilgrimage for them. He who dies without performing pilgrimage is acquitted of his obligation if his descendant carries out pilgrimage in his name and with his own money, or if they provide a substitute to do this by proxy. The person who is incapacitated by old age or an incurable disease may choose someone to perform pilgrimage on his behalf. Pilgrimage by proxy is not valid unless the person designated has himself already performed it as an obligation.

The state of Ihram makes all men and women stand upon one plane of equality, all wearing the same very simple dress and living the same simple conditions. All distinctions of rank and colour, of wealth and nationality, disappear: and the prince is now indistinguishable from the peasant. The whole of humanity assumes one aspect, one attitude, before the Master. Thus, the greatest and nobles sight of human equality is witnessed in that wonderful dessert plain called "Arafat". The lower connections have all been cut off, and all the comforts of this world have lost their attraction for the Lord. The pilgrim, indeed, represents the last stage of spiritual advancement, and by his outward condition and his movements, the pilgrim only announces to the whole world how all the lower connections must be cut off to reach the great goal of human perfection and nearness to god, which can only be attained by holding true communion with the Unseen Divine Being.

### **4.1 COMPARING CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM**

Islam shares a number of beliefs with Christianity. They share similar views on monotheism, judgment heave, hell, spirits, Angels and a future resurrection. Jesus is acknowledge and respected by Muslims as great prophet. However while Islam relegates Jesus to a lesser status than God in the Quran Mainstream (Trinitarian) Christianity believes quite formerly and without question that Jesus is God, the son one of the three Hypostases of Christianity Holy Trinity, equally God as God the father and the Holy Spirits. However, an Islam parable to the Christian trinity could be seen as the 'beautiful Name' of God, which represent distinctly manifest, qualities of the one God (Allah), rather than ninety-nine distinct goods. The religions both share a belief in the virgin birth of Jesus, his miracles and healing, and that he ascends bodily into heaven. However, Jesus is not accepted as the person of the son within the Trinity by Muslims except in the sense of being someone loved by God. They believe in God as a single entity, not as the Trinity accepted by the vast majority of Christians neither do Muslims accept Jesus crucifixion. Since Muslims believe only in the worship of a strictly monotheistic God, who never assumed human flesh, they do not

accept the use of icons, and see this as shirk (idolatry). Muslim influence played a part in the initiation of iconoclasm and their conquests caused the iconoclasm in the Byzantine Empire. For the same reason, they do not worship or pray to Muhammad, Jesus or any other prophets excepts to God (Allah).

Adherents of Islam have historically referred to themselves, Jews and Christians (among others) as people of the Book since they all base their religion on books that are considered to have a divine origin. Christians however neither recognize the Quran as a genesis book of divine revelation nor agree with its assessment of Jesus as were prophet, Muslims for their part, believe that parts of the Gospel, Torah and Jewish prophetic books have been forgotten, misinterpreted or distorted by their followers. Based on that perspective, Muslims reject belief in the Trinity or any other expression of the divinity of Jesus, as incompatible with monotheism not surprisingly, the faiths have often experienced controversy and conflict. At the same time, much fanciful dialogue has occurred as well. The writings of catholic theologian, Thomas Aquinas frequently cite those of the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimode, as well as Muslim thinker Averoes. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Pope John Paul II, the first Pope to pray in a mosque, delivered an address at Omayyad Mosque in Damascus, saying: “It is important that Muslims and Christians continue to explore philosophical and theological question together in order to come to a more objective and comprehensive knowledge of each other religion beliefs. Better mutual understanding will surely lead, at the practical level to a new way of presenting our two religions not in opposition as have happened too often in the past but in partnership for the good of human family”. In countries denominated Islam, Christians typically practice their faith under severe restructures proselytizing Muslims is often a criminal act, and any Muslim who converts to Christianity would likely face severe censure from family and friends, if not also legal repercussions/ in contrast Muslims in countries denominated by Christians are general allowed to worship unhindered.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions in this unit, you have learnt about:

- The origins of Islam.
- The Life of Prophet Mohammad.
- The Hijrah.
- Islamic Beliefs.
- Prayer.
- Zakat.
- Fasting.
- Pilgrimage.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been familiar with the historical background of Islam, the life and call of Prophet Mohammad. The event that led to Hijrah as well as the Islamic Beliefs. Also the study afforded you to know what Prayer, Zakat, Fasting and Pilgrimage meant in Islam. You are advised to master the main issues in this unit before you move to the next one.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Account for the life and call of Prophet Mohammad to Prophethood.
- ii. What are the Basic beliefs in Islam?
- iii. Examine Hijrah in Islam.
- iv. Write extensively on Pilgrimage in Islam.

### 6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA

**Question 1:** Account for the life and call of Prophet Mohammed to Prophethood

- (i) Prophet Mohammed was born in Mecca on Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of Rabi (April 20, 511 AD), though his father had died before he was born.
- (ii) Young Mohammed was nursed in the desert according to the tradition of Arabs by Halimah.
- (iii) In the desert, he was trained on the act of patience and tending of sheep and goats and at the age of four years old, he was handed out to his mother.
- (iv) At the age of six years old, his mother died and he was handed over to his grandfather, Abdul-Mattalik.
- (v) The grandfather also died two years later and Mohammed was put in care of his uncle Abu-Talibi.
- (vi) Abu-Talibi took good care of Mohammed and exposed him to the caravan trade through which it was revealed that Mohammed would become a great man.
- (vii) Mohammed spent his youth in humble circumstance most of the time working as a shepherd.
- (viii) He was called Al-Amin which means the honest and reliable one this virtue fetched him to become member of the Fudul League in Mecca.
- (ix) He married to Khadija, a prominent young widow and a wealthy business woman who found Mohammed to be a worthy husband.
- (x) The marriage was blessed with six children but only Fatima was survived while the remaining five died in his life time.
- (xi) Mohammed was commissioned as a prophet in 17<sup>th</sup> of Ramadan (Feb 610 AD) when Angel Gabriel commissioned him as prophet and the founder of Islam at the cave of Hijira.
- (xii) Khadija supported and favoured Mohammed in his prophethood assignment and they fought the cause of Islam together between the people of Mecca and Medina.
- (xiii) The struggle to Islamize Mecca and Medina brought about religious war called Hirah, that is forceful migration of Mohammed and his associates from Mecca to Medina.
- (xiv) Mohammed's career as the messenger of Islam lasted for twenty years, with ten years in Mecca before the Hijrah and ten years at Medina before his death.

**Question 2:** What are the basic beliefs in Islam?

The basic beliefs in Islam are:

- (i) Belief in Allah  
Islam teaches the existence and reality of Allah as the creator and perfecter of life. The rational evidence for belief in Allah is based on Islam's call to

ponder on the nature of the universe the earth, heavens, the mysteries, the nature laws, the harmony and the unity of the universe.

- (ii) **Belief in Angels**  
The Quran describes Angels as supernatural and that such is their real nature that they do not appear in the material world generally, but only by divine command.
- (iii) **Belief in Messengers**  
The wisdom of God required sending the messenger to people to guide them to the straight path. Prophet Mohammed was the last of all messengers of Allah. Quran teaches that all Muslims should uphold all the prophets, honour and respect them.
- (iv) **Belief in the Scripture**  
The scriptures are the messenger of Allah to mankind. Islam calls upon mankind to believe in all the scriptures which have been revealed through God's messengers, such as the Quran, Torah, Injil, the Zabul and the scrolls.
- (v) **Belief in the Last Day**  
The last day is described in the Quran as the day of Resurrection, the day of Judgment and the Hereafter. The belief in the Judgment of the last day is the strongest motive for man to seek perfection and progress in this world in order that he may be accepted and favoured by Allah in the other world.
- (vi) **The belief in Destiny for Good and Evil**  
In the sight of Islam man chosen either good or evil by his own free will and is rewarded or punished according to his deeds. He is only guided and advised by the cases of Allah and by the messengers but still completely free to chose as he wishes.

**Question 3:** Compare and Contrast the Teaching of Islam and Christianity

- i. Islam shares similar views on Monotheism, judgment, heaven hell, spirits, angels and a future resurrection.
- ii. Jesus is acknowledged and respected by Muslim as a great prophet but was relegated a lesser status than God.
- iii. Both religions share a belief in the virgin birth of Jesus, his miracles and healing.
- iv. Islam, however, does not accept the person of sonship of Jesus Christ in the Trinitarian doctrine of Christian. Even rejected in its entirety the doctrine of trinity.
- v. Islam does not accept Jesus crucifixion death on the cross.
- vi. The two religions have Abraham background, as father Abraham is said to be the grandfather to the two religions.
- vii. Both Islam and Christianity are seen as the religions of the book Holy Quran and the Bible.
- viii. The two religions have often experienced controversy and conflict due to their differences and the level of understanding of their followers, but through dialogue, conferences, seminars and various teachings, and associations there has been some improvement and good relations at various sectors of life in the world.

**Question 4:** Write extensively on Pilgrimage in Islam

- (i) Pilgrimage is one of the five fundamental principles of Islam.
- (ii) It is an annual form of congregation worship in which all Muslims who are able to make the trip assemble all over the world at Mecca.
- (iii) Pilgrimage is incumbent upon the adult Muslims in full possession of his/her faculties, provided he's/she's financially able.
- (iv) Pilgrimage is not for the aged, infants, sick person and pregnant woman, but only the able bodies who will be able to discharge the rites to be performed in Mecca.
- (v) Pilgrimage by proxy is not valid unless the person designated has himself/herself already performed it as an obligation.
- (vi) At Mecca pilgrims are spiritually leveled whether rich or poor, rules or ordinary people, scholars or labourers, colour or nationality.
- (vii) Pilgrimage represents the last stage of spiritual advancement which lead man to perfection and nearness to God.

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## **UNIT FIVE: BAHAIISM**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Spread of the Faith
  - 3.2 Religious and Social Tenets of Bahai Faith
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

#### **Bahaism**

The word Bahai derives from ‘Baha’ (glory, spendor) and signifies a follower of Bahallah. Bahai faith is a religion founded by Mirza Husayn Ali. The religion stemmed from Babi faith founded in 1844 by Mirza Ali Muhammed of Shiraz known as Babi. The religion emphasized the forth coming appearance of “Him Whom god shall Make Manifest” – a new prophet or Messenger of God. The Babi faith in turn spring from Shiah Islam which believed in the return of the 12<sup>th</sup> Imam – a successor of Muhammed. This Imam would renew religion and guide the faithful.

On May 22, 1844, in Shiraz, Persia, a young descendant of Muhammed, Sliyyid Ali Muhammed, proclaimed to be a learned Shaykhi divine, Mulla Husayn-I-Bushrui, that he was the expected Quaim. Because of its declaration Mulla Husayn became the first disciple of SIYYID Ali Muhammad, who assumed the title of the Babigate; or Channel of grace from some still veiled from the sight of men).

Soon the teachings of the Bab, the principal of which was the tidings of the coming of “Him Whom God shall make Manifest”, spread all over Persia, provoking strong opposing on the part of the clergy and the government. The Bab was arrested and after several years of incarceration, condemned to death. In 1850 he was brought to Tabtiz, where he was suspended by ropes against a wall in a public square. A regiment of several hundred soldiers fired a volley. When the smoke cleared, the large crowd that had gathered at the place of execution saw ropes out by bullets but the Bab had disappeared. He was found unhurt in an adjacent building calmly covering with a disciple. The executive was repeated this time effectively. There followed large-scale persecution of the Babis in which more than 20,000 people lost their lives.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Account for the origin of Bahaism.
- Explain how Bahaism was spread.
- Discuss the religious and social tenets of Bahai faith.

- Discuss how Bahaiism is being practiced.
- Account for the organization and administration of Bahai community.

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 The Spread of the Faith**

Bahauallah, who had been an early disciple of the Bab was arrested in connection with an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the Shiah of Persia, Nasiri – Din (1852) by two Babis. The two Babis were said to have wanted to avenge the death of their master. Bahauallah was thrown into the Black pit, a notorious jail in Tihiran. While in jail, he became aware of his mission as a messenger of God. After his release in 1853 he went to Baghdad where he revived the Babi community. The Persian government was alerted. Bahauallah and his followers were forced to move further away from Persian borders.

After spending twelve days in his hideout, Bahauallah declared to a small number of Babis that he was the messenger of god whose advent had been prophesized by the Bab. He made a public proclamation of his mission in letters (tablets) which he addressed to the rulers of Persia, Turkey, Russia, Australia as well as to the Pope and to Christian and Muslim clergy collectively. The majority acknowledge Bahauallah's claim and henceforth, became known as Bahais. Before his death in 1892, Bahauallah saw his religion spread to many parts of the world. Before his death, Bahauallah appointed his eldest son, Abdul-Baha (servant of the glory) 1844-1921, as the leader of the Bahai community and the authorized interpreter of this teachings. Abdul-Baha not only administered the affairs of the movement from Palestine but also actively engaged in spreading the faith, traveling in Africa, Europe and America from 1910 to 1913.

#### **3.2 Religious and Social Tenets of Bahai Faith**

During the course of his teachings, Bahauallah had proclaimed that this religion was the newest religion on earth. According to him, Bahai faith is the fulfillment of all, world religions. For a Christian, the prophecy concerning the return of Christ in the glory of the father has been fulfilled. His new name in this day is Bahauallah, the glory of God. For those who hold to Jewish faith the prophecy of the coming of the Lord of Hosts has been fulfilled in Bahauallah. For Muslims the prophecy concerning the 'Great Announcement' has been fulfilled in the appearance of Bahauallah. Similarly, the Buddhist prophecy concerning the return of Krishna has at last been fulfilled by the same prophet, Bahauallah. For a Zoroastrian, Bahauallah fulfils his awaited coming of the Shiah Bahran. With the advent of Bahaiism, God has released the spiritual power which will unite all mankind in one universal faith and establish peace and brotherhood in the person of Bahauallah. Followers of all religions must therefore turn to Bahauallah for spiritual guidance. He further pushed his argument forward with the following religious and social tenets:

##### **(a) God is Unknowable:**

Bahauallah teaches that God is unknowable and beyond every human attribute such as corporal existence, ascent and descent, egress and regress. No tie of direct intercourse can possibly bind Him to His creatures. No sign can indicate His presence or His

absence. Rather, God had chosen to reveal Himself through his messengers, among them. Abraham, Moses, Zoroaster, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Mohammed and Bab who were one and all exponents on earth of him who is the central of the universe.

**(b) God is the Creator:**

In Bahai teachings, God is the Creator; Man was created through God's love. The purpose of man's existence as taught by Bahauallah is to know and to worship God and to carry forward an ever-advancing civilization. Man Bahauallah taught is the noblest and most perfect of all created things and is endowed with an immortal soul, which later separating from the body, enters a new form of existence. To fulfill God's purpose, man must recognize the messenger of God within whose dispensation he lives.

**(c) The Oneness of Mankind:**

Unity or oneness is found in everything. There is only one God unit is found in every part of His creation from the very smallest thing to the infinitely large universe of sun, stars and planets. There must be unity in the human family. This means unity of classes, of races, of religions and of nations. According to Bahauallah's teaching, the unity of races, religions and nations will be accomplished in Bahai era. It is the plan of God and He will bring it into existence. The ignorance and prejudice of man may delay it but they cannot prevent it.

**(d) Oneness of Religion:**

Bahauallah says the oneness of religion help to bring peace, unity and happiness to the world. The peoples of the world, whatever race or religion are subject of one God. The difference between the ordinances under which they abide should be attributed to the varying requirements and urgent needs of the age in which they were revealed. All religions are reflection of His Will and purpose.

**(e) Elimination of Prejudice:**

Prejudice is deciding about something before we know the true facts about it. It comes from our emotion or feelings and not from our minds. It is always unjust to someone or something. Many kinds of prejudice are found in all countries and among all people. This includes dislike or hatred of people of other nations or tribes; prejudice between the followers of the great religions of the world; racial prejudice between the White and the Black; and class prejudice. To study and fellow the Bahai faith is the surest way to cure prejudice. The Bahai teaching replaces prejudice with love, unity and justice.

**(f) The Harmony of Science and Religion:**

Religion comes to man through Divine Revelation. Science comes through observation and investigation. But Bahauallah says that the beginning of all knowledge is the knowledge of God. So, scientific knowledge as well as the religion are therefore manifestation of God. True science and true religion are therefore two parts of divine truth. They cannot disagree when properly understood since man's progress depends on the two. Some hundreds of years ago, science and religion really fought each other when the church was the authority then, It was considered wrong to use the power of reason (science) which is God's greatest gift to man. Things have changed for better. The Bahai Faith is the link which unite true science and true religion.

**(g) Equality of Men and Women:**

Humanity is like a bird whose two wings represent men and women. Unless the wings are equally strong the bid for mankind cannot fly well. It is therefore necessary for men and women in the world to receive education on equally basis. If it is impossible for both boys and girls in a family to go to school, it is more important for the girls to receive education. The reason for this is that the mother is the first and most important teacher of the children. Children of ignorant mother have a poor start in life.

**3.3 Practices in Bahaism:**

Membership in the Bahai community is open to all who profess faith in Bahauallah and accept his teachings. There are no initiation ceremonies, no sacraments, and no clergy. Every Bahai, however, is under the spiritual obligation to pray daily: fast 19 days a year, going without food or drink from sunrise to sunset; to abstain totally from narcotics, alcohol, or any substances that affect the minds to practice monogamy; to obtain the consent of parents to marriage; and to attend the Nineteen Day Feast on the first day of each month of the Bahai calendar. The Nineteen Day Feast, originally instituted by the Bab, brings together the Bahais of a given locality for prayer, the reading of scriptures, the discussion of community activities and for the enjoyment of one another's company. The feast is designed to ensure universal participation in the affairs of the community and the cultivation of the spirit of brotherhood and fellowship. Eventually, Bahai's in every location plan to erect a house of worship around which will be grouped such institutions as a home for the aged, an orphanage, a school and a hospital. In the early 1970s, houses of worship existed in Illinois, Frankfurt West Germany, Kampala Uganda, Sydney Australia etc. In the temples there is no preaching; services consist of recitation of the scriptures of all religions.

**3.4 The Organization and Administration of Bahai Community:**

The Bahai community is governed according to general principles proclaimed by Bahauallah and through institutions created by him that were elaborated and expended by his son and successor Abdul Baha. These principles and institutions constitute the Bahai administrative order which the followers of the faith believe to be a blue print of a future world order.

## **Organization and Administration**

- (i) **Local Level:** The governance of the Bahai Community begins on the level with the election of a local spiritual assembly. The electoral process excludes campaigning, parties or factions, nomination and campaigning for office. The Local Spiritual Assembly has jurisdiction over all local affairs of the Bahai community.
- (ii) **National level:** On the national scale, each year Bahais elect delegates to a National Convention that elects a National Spiritual Assembly with jurisdiction over the entire country.
- (iii) **International Convention:** All National Spiritual Assemblies of the world periodically constitute themselves into an international convention and elect the Supreme governing body as the Universal House of Justice. In accordance with Bahullah's writings, the Universal House of Justice functions as the Supreme administrative, legislative and judicial body of Bahai commonwealth. It applies the laws promulgated by Bahaulah and legislates on matter not covered in the sacred texts. The seat of the Universal House of Justice is in Haifa, Israel, in the immediate vicinity of the Shrines of Bahaulah at Bahji near Akka.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussions you have experienced so far in this unit, you have learnt that:

- Bahaim was founded in 1844 by Mirza Ali Muhammed.
- The Spread of Bahaim come into being in 1853 to Persian land and beyond.
- Bahaim was spread with the aid of its religious and social tenets which is of seven (7) in number.
- Bahaim has its own peculiar manner of practicing it.
- The Bahai community is governed according to general principles proclaimed by Bahaulah.

## **4.1 CHRISTIANITY AND BAHAI FAITH**

The Bahai faith believes that there is one God who sends divine messengers to guide humanity throughout time, which is called progressive revelation (Baha'i) and is different from the Christian belief of progressive revelation (Christian). They believe in the divine knowledge and essence of Jesus among other messengers such as Muhammed Zorester and Moses. The followers of the Bahai faith believe in God, as do Christians and recognize Jesus teachings but they have different views of the Trinity and divinity of Jesus. The Bahai view of prophets is that although they have both human and divine characteristics, they are not themselves God, but rather "divine manifestations". They also see the Trinity as symbolic where Jesus and the Holy Spirit are polished mirrors that reflect the pure light from God. Bahais share some view with Christianity regarding moral and immoral behaviour. Bahai condemned polygamy, pre-marital sex, and homosexual including homosexuals with love, respect and dignity.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been acquainted with the origin of Bahaism as an offshoot of Islamic religion through a man called Mirza Ali Muhammad. You are also aware that Bahauallah was the one that champion the course of spreading Bahaism to Persia, Turkey, Russia, Australia and other parts of the world. It was also discussed that Bahaism has its religious and social tenets which formulated its activities and programmes. The discussion also established the manners at which Bahaism is being practiced while its organization and administrative procedures for its members are explained.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i. Discuss the religious and social tenets of Bahaism.
- ii. Write extensively on the organization and administration of Bahai community.
- iii. Compare and contrast Christianity and Bahai faith.

## 6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA

### Question 1: Discuss the religious and social tenets of Bahaism

The religious and social tenets of Bahaism are as follows:

- i. God is unknowable  
Bahauallah teaches that God is unknowable and beyond every human attributes. No sign can indicate is presence or His absence, rather God had chosen to reveal himself through His messengers.
- ii. God is the creator  
Bahauism teachers that God is the creator and that man was created through God's love. Bahauallah taught that man is the most perfect of all created things endowed with an immortal soul which later separated from the body and enters a new form of existence.
- iii. The oneness of mankind  
Bahauallah teachers that, the unity of races, religious and nations will be accomplished in Bahahai era. He claimed that ignorance and prejudice of man may delay it but they cannot prevent it.
- iv. Oneness of religion  
Bahauallah toadies that the oneness of religion help to bring peace unity and happiness to the world. That the people of the world. That the peoples of the world, whatever race of religion are subject to one god.
- v. Elimination of prejudice  
Prejudice is a decision on an issue before the truth is revealed. It comes from man's emotion or feelings and not from the mind. The result of prejudice includes dislike, hatred and rejection of other people. Bahauallah teaches that following his tenets is the surest way to cure prejudice as his teaching centred on love, unity and justice.
- vi. The harmony of science and religion  
Bahauallah teaches that the beginning of all knowledge is the knowledge of God. That true science and time religion are two parts of divine truth. The two cannot disagree when properly understood since man's progress depends on the two the Bahai faith is the link which unit the science and religion.

- vii. Equality of man and women Bahanllah teaches that men and women of the world must be educated for the purpose of equally of life. He emphasized that woman folk must be given sound education because she is the mother and the first teacher for the child.

**Question 2: Write extensively on the organization and administration of Bahai community**

Bahai community is governed according to the general principles of Bahanllah and his successor. Bahanllah organization and administration are categorized as:

- (i) Local level: The governance begins with the election of a local spiritual assembly. The local spiritual assembly has jurisdiction over all local affairs of the Bahai community.
- (ii) Natural level: The national spiritual leaders are to govern and lead the entire nation and they are to be elected on annual basic.
- (iii) International convention: Membership or delegates to international convention in Bahatism are the congregation of all national spiritual assemblies of the body who elect the supreme governing body as the universal House of Justice. This universal house of justice functions as the supreme administrative, legislative and judicial body of Bahai common wealth. It enforces the laws promulgated by Bahanllah and legislates in matter not covered in the sacred texts.

**Question 3: Compare and contrast Christianity and Bahai faith**

- i) The Bahai faith believes that there is one God as Christianity teachers Bahatism however does not believes and teachers the messiahship of John Christ rather sees and teachers that Jesus is one of the messengers sent by God to guide humanity.
- ii) Bahai share some views with Christianity regarding moral and immoral behaviour. It condemns polygamy, pre-marital set and homosexual acts while treating all mankind with love and respect.
- iii) Bahai sees the prophets as God sent people with divine manifestations but they cannot equate with God who bestowed on them his divine powers.
- iv) Membership in the Bahai community is open to all who profess faith in Bahanllah while membership in Christianity is meant for those who adopted and confess Jesus Christ as the Lord and saviour.
- v) There is no initiation ceremonies no sacraments and no clergy in Bahai faith. In Christian denominative and churches new members are to receive water baptism at the completion of the enquiry class for the purpose of becoming a full fledge members clergy and leaders are appointed in Christian gathering and assemblies for divine directions and spiritual administrations.
- vi) Both religious preach and approved the need for ferment prayers by the members daily. While Bahai imposed 19 days compulsory fasting on its members Christianity teaches fasting, but the period and time to fast is always determine for a purpose.
- vii) The monogamy type of marriage is approved by both Bahai and Christian faith, while consent of parents and the payment of dowry are necessities that go with marriage.
- viii) The two religious have various observed feast but Bahai specifically imposed 19 days feast from the first day of each month to its members, however, it is the belief of the two, religious that feast and festivals are meant to refresh members and empowering them spiritually.

- ix) Both Bahai and Christianity practice building of the place of worship. However the practices and use of place of worship in Bahai differs from that of Christianity, while members gathered listening and acted according to the directive of the spiritual leaders in Christian circle no preaching of any kind in Bahai, rather individual members do congregated to recite from the scriptures pray and leave for their homes.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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### **MODULE 3. AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**

This module examined African Traditional Religion and Religious Dialogue. The module is divided into two units. They include;

1. Unit 1: African Traditional Religion from early formation to the Technological Development in the society.
2. Unit 2: Nature of African Traditional Religion
3. Unit 3: Religious Dialogue.

#### **UNIT 1: AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION: FROM THE EARLY FORMATION TO THE TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIETY**

##### **Contents:**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
- 3.1 Various Terminologies used in Describing African Traditional Religion.
  - 3.1.1 Towards an Appropriate Terminology
- 3.2 Sources of Information on African Traditional Religion.
- 3.3 Identifiable Roles of Religion in the African society.
- 3.4 Sociological Dimensions of Traditional Religion
- 3.5 African Religion and Technology Development in the Society.
- 4.0 Conclusions
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored Marked Assignment
- 6.1 Making Guard to TMA
- 7.0 References/Further Readings.

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

African traditional religion also to as African Indigenous religion is a term referring to a variety of religions indigenous to the continent of Africa. African Traditional religions involve teachings, practices, and rituals that African lend structures to indigenous African societies. These traditional African religions also play a large part in the cultural understanding and awareness of the people and their communities. The purpose of the study of African Traditional Religion is to discover the belief and philosophy of Africans about the Supreme Being and the supernatural World.

#### **DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED IN THE STUDY OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

The African Traditional Religion scholars have observed the following obstacles during research.

## **1. The content**

The African continent was described as a 'dark continent' why the size disallows access to some remote villages despite modern communication gadgets. Researchers gather local information from handful of people and used that as a basis of reaching conclusions to their findings. This is unhealthy for the proper study of their religion.

## **2. Dislocated population**

Owing to many factors like European settlement and inter-tribal invasions, some African people were either exterminated or dislocated. As a result, some of the people die and some eventually absorbed by other people. In cases even where the indigenous population is still live, the memory of their tradition had become distorted and in some cases, almost forgotten.

## **3. Indoctrination**

The African people were made to believe by the Westerners that their culture and religion were irrelevant. Africans easily reject their cultural value. It is such people that eventually lose touch with these traditions.

## **4. Western Education**

The adoption of Western education at the expense of African form of education had been responsible for civilization. Africans migrate from their local situations to urban centres. They lost touch with their traditional values. In some cases, such people find themselves as heads of the traditional cults and they are ignorant of the significance of the cult they lead. Information gathered from such sources, can at best be warped.

## **5. Language**

Africa is a confluence of innumerable languages, with different dialects. Nigeria has over 250 languages and 400 dialects. The researcher is thus faced with the problem of analyzing the traditions in languages that are foreign to him.

## **6. Death**

The aged people who had first hand information on African Traditional Religion are dying. The knowledge of the tradition and religion of the people usually perishes with them. Their children are also victims of Western education and have lost interest in African traditions. The aged had no reliable successor to hand over to. Today, we have distortions, exaggerations and gaps in our study of African Traditional Religion.

## **7. Other Faiths**

African continent had been invaded by external religions. This has resulted in irreparable damage to the African Traditional Religion in that those people either lose touch completely or become syncretistic in their approach.

## **8. Unwritten Records**

Since African Traditional Religion relies on oral traditions, the scholars must be patient in the collection, collation and analysis of these traditions. For objective purpose, the scholars should interview many adherents of the religion and examine other various views.

### **2.0 Objectives**

At the end of this unit you should be able to;

- Explain with what African Traditional Religion is all about.
- State the difficulties encountered in describing African Traditional Religion.
- State various terminologies used in describing African Traditional Religion.
- Explain sources of information African Traditional Religion.
- Discuss the identifiable roles of Religion in the African society.
- Account for the identifiable roles of religion in the African society.
- Explain the sociological dimensions of African Traditional Religion.
- State the sociological dimension of African Traditional Religion.
- Discuss African Traditional Religion and Technological development in the society.

### **3.0 Main Content**

#### **3.1 Various Terminologies used in Describing African Traditional Religion.**

The Westerner scholars had no grasp of the religion. They coin various terminologies to describe the beliefs and practices of the Africans. We will examine these concepts.

##### **1. Paganism**

Paganism had its root in the Latin word 'paganus', which is used for a village dweller, that is, one that is far away from civilization. The word originally is used by sociologists to distinguish between the civilized and the sophisticated or the rustic, unpolished from the polished and the educated; hence it has no religious connotation. The word in African Traditional Religion connotes racial discrimination. It is derogatory terms imposed by Europeans to describe their superiority over Africans who they believe are inferior to them.

## **2. Heathenism**

Heathenism is derived from the German language and also means one who dwells outside the circle of enlightenment. The root word is heath which refers to the outskirts of the town where vagabonds and outlaws lives and the heathen is the one has the characteristics of the heath dwellers. The word is a tool in the hand of racial discriminators.

## **3. Idolatry**

This word is derived from the Greek eidolon. It means something which is false. Since these representations in African Traditional Religion are mere symbols, it would be unfair to label African Traditional Religion as counterfeit and lacking originality.

## **4. Fetishism**

This word originates from The Latin factitius. Europeans spelt it as feitico, fetiche, fetish or faitis and it carries the meaning of an object that has been made beautifully and neatly. It also carries the meaning of a charm. In the real sense, fetishism is the religion in which the object of worship is not symbolic but it is worshipped for itself and this kind of belief is absent in Africa.

## **5. Animism**

The usage of this word was popularized by E.B. Taylor. He defines it as the doctrine of souls and other spiritual beings in general. Animism is not a monopoly of African Traditional Religion alone, all religions have a share of the doctrine of animism. The being of God in any religion is established on the fact that God is Spirit.

## **6. Polytheism**

Polytheism is the best in two or more gods, that are co-eternal, co powerful and equal in attributes. The divinities that are many are representatives or ministers who have derived their power and existence from God Himself and are actually nothing apart from God. The African believes only in one Supreme God.

### **3.1.1 TOWARDS AN APPROPRIATE TERMINOLOGY**

E.G. Parrinder advised that it would be useful to device a term which would denote religions that have a supreme God and also worship other gods. One thing that has been established so far in the structure of African Traditional Religion is that there is a belief in God and He is a little transcendent and holy, man on his own cannot approach him, hence the need to go through intermediaries who are the divinities. As a result, many scholars have suggested terms that are rather descriptive. Professor Osador Imasogie recommends the term bureaucratic monotheism. This term underscores the fact that there is a belief in one God (monotheism) who is approached through the divinities. Others also suggest diffused monotheism or implicit monotheism. This term underscores the fact that there is a belief in one God (monotheism) who is approached through the divinities. Others also suggest diffused

monotheism or implicit monotheism. Though these terms are good for the academic purpose and scholastic work, but what then will the adherents of the religion themselves call their religion? Definitely, they will feel awkward with these terms. This problem is recognized by Prof. Bolaji Idowu who called for the use of the local name for God. But the problem, which he also sights immediately would be a bewildering number of 'isms' like Olodumareism (Yoruba), Chukwuism (Igbo), Onyameism (Akan), Ngewoism (Mende) or Imanaism (Ruanda – Urundi). While it is desirable to have a name that will aptly describe the African Traditional Religion, it may be very enigmatic, if not an impossible task, for there are many obstacles like the diversity of language, culture and the religion itself.

### **3.2 SOURCES OF INFORMATION OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

The main source for the study of African Traditional Religion is from oral traditions. These include:

#### **1. Myths**

The modern day meaning of myth is primitive tale, false beliefs or imaginary but not really existent. The Greek word muthos actually means 'anything delivered by word of mouth'. A myth is a vehicle for conveying a certain fact about his experiences. It endeavours to probe and answers questions about origins, meanings and purposes and they are clothed in stories which serve as a means of keeping them in memory as well as handling them over from generation to generation.

#### **2. Liturgy**

Liturgy consists of the pattern and the subject-matter of worship. It is a means of communion and communication with the Deity within the setting of worship. For the purpose of study, the following elements in liturgy should be taken into account:

- a. **The Invocation:** In invocation, the divine being is called by names and attributes and is called to attend worship.
- b. **Prayer:** This is the means by which the needs of the worshippers and the divine Being is sought to satisfy them.

From the liturgies of African Traditional Religion, we learn the names and the attributes of the Deity or the divinities, the confidence and the hopes of the people, the capability believed to belong to the Deity and the general relationship between the Supreme Being, the divinities and man.

#### **3. Songs**

Songs constitute a rich heritage in Africa. The people express their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears about the future through their hymns. In each people group in Africa, there are materials to analysis in the songs of the land.

#### **4. Sayings**

These includes proverbs and adages that found everywhere in Africa. They also express the belief of the people about their religion, their society and the world around them.

### **3.3 IDENTIFIABLE ROLES OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION IN THE AFRICAN SOCIETY**

All the societal institutions of Africa is highly influenced by religion and their religion likewise is influenced by the society. Lets examine some identifiable roles of religion in the African society.

#### **Religion and Politics**

Religion and Politics are bedfellows. It is religion that stabilizes politics in the African setting. In Yoruba land, there is a relationship between religion and politics. The Oba occupies both the political and the religious office. He acts as the chief-priest and stands in the gap between the people and God. He is also regarded as holding power in trust for Olodumare, the Supreme Being; hence he is called the 'Alase Ekeji Orisa', (second in command to the divinity). Despite the influence of Western culture and foreign regions, the Oba is still regarded as belonging to other religions which aim at promoting peace in his community. Therefore, no matter the Oba's religious affiliation before ascending the throne, he still performs the leadership role in the traditional religious life of the people.

#### **African Religion and Corporate Existence**

African societies cherish their corporate existence. The individual does not and cannot exist in isolation. He owes his existence to others, including the past generation and his contemporaries. Thus, the community makes an individual. The African child goes through rites continues throughout his life and ends only at death, when he is even incorporated into the wider family of the ancestors. At every point in his religious awareness, he is made to understand the fact that he is just a part of the whole and that he has certain responsibilities towards himself as well as others.

#### **African Religion and Economy**

Because of the religious influence over the life of the people, worship and holidays affect the timing and rhythm of work in the society. The economic value of goods is partly determined by its religious values. The commodities are expensive on the sixth day of the Oro festival because on the seventh day, women who form the bulk of commercial activities would be banned from going out. The distribution of wealth is determined by religious norms.

### **3.4 SOCIOLOGICAL DIMENSIONS OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

Though, traditional religions is not conversion – oriented, and it is diverse in terms of the objects of worship, the methods and demands placed upon the worshipper, it is still an all society affair. In order to appreciate this dimension we would examine three elements; the use of oracles, shrines and taboos.

#### **The Use of Oracles**

On the personal level, the consultation of oracle starts immediately a child is born. Parents approach a diviner to know the destiny of their child. Again when it is time for the child to choose a career, the oracle is consulted to know which work would suit him best. Similarly at marriage, the oracle is again consulted to ensure that he or she gets a suitable partner. At death, the oracle may be consulted if the circumstance of the death is mysterious. At the societal level, the oracle is consulted at important phases in the community's life. When an Oba is to be appointed, it is the oracle that makes the final selection. The oracle must also be consulted before the community undertakes a war. Despite the influence of foreign religion and western culture, people still consult the oracle when the going gets tough

#### **The Use of Shrines**

The shrine is the face of the divinity. It therefore, serves as communal place of worship both at family and societal levels. The shrine then becomes the meeting place of man and his object of worship. Consequently, important activities takes place in this location to give legal and religious sanction to the decisions taken and make them binding. For example, the Oba is usually crowed in the shrine, favours are sought from the divinity in the shrine and their presence guarantees peace and stability in the society. Shrines serve as a refuge place. Any show of disrespect to the sacred place may have adverse effect not only on the individual but also the society.

#### **The Use of Taboos**

The taboos are rules for ethical guideline of the people. The society entrenches the taboos into her religious system. The people are educated about them. The proper knowledge of the taboos integrates an individual into the society. The violation of a taboo may result in grave consequence to the society and also to the individual. When taboos are observed, the gods are happy; the society lives in peace and harmony.

### **3.5 AFRICAN RELIGION AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOCIETY**

The advent of modern technology sometimes allows undue rationalization in all matters pertaining to religion. Since it is a subtle way of preaching man's self-sufficiency, the feelings of this independence robbed so many people of their need for devotion to God. Also due to modern technology, the reality of the life hereafter in denied Humanity sometimes doubts the authenticity of the judgment of God, hence evil flourishes. It is not only African Traditional Religion that has suffered the destructive tendencies of technological advancement, it affects all religions.

### **Importance of Religion to African Society**

1. It gives understating. It gives a sense of direction even when man is confronted with the uncertainty of the hereafter. Most Africans have been equipped by their religion to face life emotionally intellectually and culturally.
2. Religion answers some questions that nothing else can answer. Where science and technology stops, religion continues to give solution to answers on Gods existence, suffering and pain in the world and what happens after death.
3. It provides moral values which regulates and harmonize the human community. Religion tells man that which is evil and that which is good. In Africa, these moral build the relationship between people and their world.
4. It gives food for spiritual hunger. Since man is conscious of his spiritual dimension, most Africans satisfy their spiritual hunger in their religion. The religious ceremony to most of them serve as channels of contact with the spiritual world.
5. It is also means of communication. This communication is in two directions. First, there is a social communication and secondly, there is vertical communication. As people meet together to worship, they communicate and understand themselves better, thus serving as a social coercion. They also worship God and are psychologically satisfied.
6. African religion is a celebration and affirmation of life. This is seen in the various rituals, festivals and ceremonies that are carried out. They celebrate life both in joy and sorrow.
7. Religion teaches that man is created. He must remain dependent on the God that has created him.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion in this unit you have learnt that African Traditional Religion plays significant cover in the cultural understanding and awareness of the people of African and that:

- There were difficulties in the study of African Traditional Religion.
- That European researchers gave various terminologies in describing African Traditional Religion.
- That there are sources of information on African Traditional Religion.
- That African Traditional Religion plays indefinable roles in the African society.
- That there are sociological dimensions for African Traditional Religion.
- That despite the modern technology African Traditional Religion is still very relevant.

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been exposed to the concepts and activities on African Traditional Religion. The difficulties encountered for studying Africa as well as the various terminologies used in describing African Traditional Religion. It was also established that there are source of information on African Traditional Religion while it was also discovered that African Traditional Religion has its identifiable roles in the

African society. The study also revealed that sociological dimension of African Traditional Religion and confirmed its relevance to African society despite the threat of the modern day technology. You are therefore advise to master the main issues in this unit before you move to the next one.

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- i. State the difficulties encountered in the study of African Traditional Religion.
- ii. Explain what (i) Fetishism (ii) Paganism and (iii) Idolatry meant in African Traditional Religion.
- iii. What are the sources of information in the study of African Traditional Religion?
- iv. Account for the importance of religion to African society.

## **6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA**

### **Question 1: State the difficulties encountered in the study of African Traditional Religion.**

The following obstacles were observed by the scholars in the study of African Traditional Religion.

- x) The Content  
The earliest research claimed that the size of the continent was large and full of remote and inaccessible areas thus generalized on the few information they laid their hands upon.
- xi) Dislocated Population  
Tribal and inter-tribal invasions and wars migration and boundary adjustment as well as the earliest European demarcation and re-grouping of tribes region and kingdoms posed problems cultural pollution and fagging of ideas and history have manifested.
- xii) Indoctrination  
The westerners claimed that African cultures and religion are barbaric and ungodly hence imposed their foreign life, this in returns create a big gap as the modern civilization lured the young generation away from anything African in nature.
- xiii) Western Education  
Western education creates room for all sorts of migration from the rural to urban and urban to foreign lands. The movements away from man's immediate environment make Africa culture and religion to be seen less superior to the modern culture as majority of the Africans have little or no knowledge about their heritage.
- xiv) Language  
Africa is endowed with innumerable language with different dialects for instance Nigeria alone is endowed with over 250 language and 400 dialects. This alone confused the researchers and even made their work more complex to analyse and even to relate one tradition to the other.
- xv) Death  
Majority of the custodians of the African cultures and heritage had died, while others are dying, thus the knowledge of the tradition and religion of the Africans perished with them. This problem brought about distorter history and facts thus a big gap is created in the study of African Traditional Religion.
- xvi) Other Faiths

African continent had been invaded by external religion that which have brought threat and damage to the African Traditional Religion as African are losing touch and interpret in their religion.

xvii) Unwriting Records

Much of the information on African Traditional Religion are on oral form, thus the researchers have to interview many adherent before they could secure authentic facts and information.

**Question 2: Explain what**

- i) Fetishism
- ii) Paganism and
- iii) Idolatry meant in African Traditional Religion

i) Fetishism

This word originated from the Latin word, 'Factitius' which is spelt by the Europeans as 'fetico' Fetiche, Fetish or 'Fatis' and it carries the meaning of an object that has been made beautifully and neatly. It also carries the meaning of a charm, and in the real sense, fetislusu is the religion in which the object worship is not symbolic but it is worshipped for itself. This kind of belief is absent in Africa.

ii) Paganism

Paganism had it root in the Latin word 'Paganus' which is used for a village dweller, that is, one that is far away from civilization. The word originally is used by sociologist to distinguish between the civilized and the sophisticated or unpolished from the polished and the educated, hence it has no religious connotation. The word connotes racial discrimination. It is derogatory terms imposed by Europeans to described their superiority over Africans who they believe are inferior to them.

iii) Idolatry

This word is derived from the Greek word 'eidolon' meaning 'false' the representations in African Traditional Religion are mere symbols, therefore it would be unfair for the European scholars to label African Traditional Religion as counterfeit and lacking originality.

**Question 3: What are the sources of information for the study of African Traditional Religion?**

The main sources for the study of African Traditional Religion include the following:

- i) The Greek word for myths is 'Muttos' meaning 'anything delivered by word of mouth'. It endeavours to probe and answers question about origins, meaning and purposes and they are clothed with stores which serve as a means of keeping them in memory as well as handling them over from generation to generation.
- ii) Liturgy  
Liturgy consists of the pattern and the subject matter of worship. It is means of communion and communication with the deity within the setting of worship.
- iii) Songs  
Songs constitute a rich heritage in Africa. People express their joys and sorrow, their hopes and fears about the future through their hymns.
- iv) Sayings

Sayings include proverbs and adages that found everywhere in Africa. Sayings also express the belief of the people about their religion their society and the world around them.

**Question 4: Account for the Importance of Religion to African Society**

- i) Religion gives understanding  
Through religion African are equipped to face life emotionally, intellectually and culturally.
- ii) Religion answers some question that other human efforts cannot answered. Where science and technology stops religion continues to give solution to answers on God's existence suffering and pain in the world and the event on hereafter.
- iii) It provides moral values: Religion educates man on what is evil and what is good. Religion leads man on how to be good neighbours to fellowmen.
- iv) It gives food for spiritual hunger through religious the spiritual hunger and thirsty are met. Religious ceremonies serve as channels of contact with the spiritual world.
- v) Religious as a means of communication  
There are two communication directions that religion tends to provide for. There is social and vertical communication. Through worship man satisfied social interaction with fellow believers while the psychological satisfaction are met through daily communication with God.
- vi) Celebration and affirmation of life  
Through various rituals, festivals and ceremonies, life of man at birth, marriage, death and even in sorrow are celebrated the effect of which mans morale are enhanced.
- vii) Religion teaches the origin of man  
Through religion, man knows his essence, that God is the creator and that man should adored him at all time.

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## **UNIT 2: WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

### **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
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  - 3.1 Nature of West African Traditional Religion
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    - 3.1.3 Rites in Connection with Passage of Life
  - 3.2 Divinities in African Traditional Religion
    - 3.2.1 Divinities in Different African Localities
    - 3.2.2 Positions and Duties of the Divinities
  - 3.3 African Mysterious Powers
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    - 3.3.2 Medicine
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    - 3.4.1 Witchcraft
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- 4.0 Conclusion
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Religion is found in every human society. It is a sacred institution which educates persons on his/her beliefs and practices in relation to the divine being. The Traditional Religion in African is regarded as the cohesive factor in the society. Its aim among others is to foster peace and harmony and uphold moral values in African society. Hence religion permeates the African society. Culturally, African became religious from the cradle unlike Islam or Christianity which emphasizes personal conversion.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain the nature of West African, African Traditional Religion.
- State the concept of God among West African.
- State worships and sacrifices in West African Traditional Religion.
- Explain rites in connection with passage of life.
- Discuss divinities in different African localities
- Explain magic and medicine.
- Discuss witchcraft and sorcery.
- Distinguish between a medicine man and a priest.
- Explain diviners.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

#### 3.1 Nature of West African Traditional Religion

West African Traditional Religion has the following peculiar features:

- a. Beliefs – teaching (dos and don'ts)
- b. Practices – ceremonies and festivals which show how people express their beliefs.
- c. Religious objects and place – sacred symbols, shrines and signs.
- d. Values and morals – the ideals that uphold people in their interpersonal relationship.
- e. Religious officials – people who lead in matters of religion.

Let's examine three characteristics of West African Traditional Religion.

##### 1. It is part of African Heritage

Traditional religion is another legacy bequeathed from the ancestors. West African Religion is believed to be the product of the thinking and experience of the forebears. The forebears formulated the religious ethics, observed the ceremonies and rituals, told proverbs and myths which carried religious meanings and evolved laws and customs which safeguarded the life of the individuals and his community. This heritage can only be understood from its religious perspective because there is no dichotomy between the sacred and the secular in African life.

##### 2. It belongs to the people

African Religion has worshippers. The people identify and esteem the relevance of religion in their live. Therefore, the religion belongs to each people with which it has evolved. The people also migrate alongside with their religion.

##### 3. It is a Revealed Religion

It exists as result of human experiences of the mystery of the universe. Humankind discovers the existence of the Supreme Being. Thus, the religion evolved through a long period of time. During this process, the practices and beliefs that are relevant to the people's spiritual growth are preserved while those that are not beneficial are dropped.

#### 3.1.1 THE CONCEPT OF GOD AMONG WEST AFRICANS

Some Westerners once had erroneous notion about African's belief about God. They felt that the idea of God was borrowed from the missionaries. A.B. Ellis claimed that the Akan of Ghana added the belief in Nana Nyankupon (Lord of the Sky) because of the influence of Christian faith. Gradually, it became an established fact that his belief about God was not foreign to the African man. William Bosman later observed that the West Africans believed in a High God who created the universe and they preferred Him before the idol-gods and do pray or offer sacrifices to Him. The African conception about God is not remote. Consequently, the concept of God in some ethnic groups would be examined.

### **The Yoruba concept of God**

**There are three Yoruba names for God, Olodumare, Olorun and Olofin Orun.**

**Olodumare:** Olodumare is made up of Olo means owner or Lord of; Odu means fullness or very large and Mare means do not go. Thus, Olodumare means a Being who is Lord and Supreme and who has the added quality of being stable, dependable, and unique in majesty.

**Olorun:** Olorun is the common name for God and it is prefixed Olo and suffixed Orun, which means the owner of heaven. This name signifies the transcendent reality of God.

**Olofin-Orin:** Olofin-Orun is found mostly in liturgy. It is used as an alternative for Olodumare. Olofin-Orin indicates Gods exalted office as the supreme Ruler who is in heaven.

ALL the names above are descriptive of God's character. It confirms that He is real among the Yoruba people.

### **The Igbo Concept of God**

There are three Igbo names for God; Chukwu, Chineke and Obasi.

The common one is Chukwu. Chi means Source Being or spirit and Uku means great, immense or superlative. Chukwu then means the Great Sourced Being or The Great One from whom all being originates.

Chineke is also made up of chi, ne means 'who' and ke means 'Creator'. The name means 'The Spirit that Creates' or The Source Being who creates all things'.

Obasi is widely used by the Ibibio and the derivation has got lost.

### **The Akan Concept of God**

The Akan of Ghana call God by several names. One of such names is Odonmakoma. The first word, Odom, means 'grace' or 'mercy'. The second ankoma means 'plentiful' or 'complete'. The name suggests He who is complete in his grace or mercy.

Onyame is another name. it means one that fills you and makes you satisfies you. Thus the Akan sees God as the dependable One who satisfies all needs of humankind.

## **ATTRIBUTES OF GOD**

### **1. The creator**

The people see God as the Creator of all things. The Yoruba appellation, Eleda, reveals Him as the owner of creation. The Akan call Him Odomankoma or Borebore (Originator, Carver) and the Igbo call Him Chineke.

### **2. Compassionate**

God is seen as a benevolent, kind and merciful King. A Yoruba proverb underscores this: It is the Almighty God that drives away flies for the tailless cow.

### **3. Immortal**

Africans believe that nothing else will remain if the Supreme Being ceases to exist. He is thus addressed as 'The Mighty', 'Immovable', 'Hard', 'Ancient Durable Peak'. They believe that He is the timeless being

### **4. Trustworthy and Dependable**

In expression of His dependability, the Akan say of God as "Twi Aduampon" which means Lean on a tree do not fall. This signifies firmness, reliability and dependability. Other attributes are Omnipresence, Omnipotence, Omniscience and the great Judge.

## **WORSHIP OF GOD AMONG AFRICANS**

African sometimes approaches God through the divinities. The Yoruba people are classic example. They have no direct public worship of God. They believe that God is not an object that can be confined to a Temple. They have elaborated indirect worship. The Yoruba regard divinities as the messengers or intermediaries between man and God. Nevertheless, outside ritual contexts, the people recognize Olodumare's readiness to intervene directly in human affairs. They sometimes make direct appeals to Him. Therefore, the people call on God for help. Also, when one is denied justice, he/she seeks redress from God.

The Akan in Ghana has shrines and temples for the Supreme Being. There are priest dedicated to His service for regular worship. Apart from personal altars, every Akon compound has an altar for Onyame. Daily devotions and offerings are made at this family temple. The weekly worship of Onyame holds on Saturdays.

The Igbo people also have altars and shrines. The Ikenye, the eldest member of the community, directs the worship. Aja Eze Emu is one of such direct worship. It is observed during the dry and rainy seasons.

### **3.1.2 WORSHIPS AND SACRIFICES IN WEST AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION.**

There are different types of worship in West Africa as it is explained below:

#### **1. Daily Worship**

Daily worship is usually performed in people's house. It is a means of saying good morning to the invisible spiritual beings and committing ones household, the community and the affairs of the day to the spirits. It is not elaborate. Items of worship are: cold water, kolanut and bitter-kola. It is usually offered by the family head. After the prayers, a lobe or two of the kolanut is placed in the shrine. The left-outs are shared among the family members.

#### **2. Weekly Worship**

Weekly worship is more elaborate with large attendance of worshipers. It is led by a priest or priestess of the particular divinity on the divinity's sacred day. Prayers are offered for the health, prosperity and protection of the worshippers. It is usually rounded off with an eulogy in praise of the divinity.

### **3. Annual worship**

This worship takes place at the central shrine of the divinity. The worship is much elaborate. It may involve the whole community and visitors. It is a festival period of joy, thanksgiving and covenant renewal. Worshippers show gratitude for the blessings of the past year and pray for guidance in the New Year.

### **4. Special Worship**

The worship can be performed at any time apart from regular worships. Sometimes, people are called to make special worship. The request is as instructed by the oracle. The priest officiates at the worship.

## **SACRIFICES**

Sacrifice plays an important role in religion. It is almost inconceivable to have a religion without a form of sacrifice in West African society. Sacrifices are communion between man and the Supreme Being. Sacrifice helps in gaining favours of the divinity. The following are the categories of sacrifices.

### **Thanks – offering**

This is made in appreciation of blessings from the divinity, or in seeking his favour. It is accompanied with feasting. The worshippers and the divinity share common meal. The blessings that follow this are enormous. The requests are granted. The beneficial relation between man and the divinity is strengthened. The occasion calls for thanks and offerings, bumper harvests, successful expeditions and when victory is won over enemies.

### **Votive Offering**

The worshipper supplicates to the divinity for favour. The worshiper promises to sacrifice either his/her properties if the requests are granted. Votive offerings are accompanied by dancing, music, eating, and drinking.

### **Expiation Offering**

This is an atonement sacrifice. It is usually offered when there is crop failure, protracted illness and sudden death, famine, plague and diseases. The worshipper undergoes self-abasement. The sacrifice is meant to ward off evils and restore divine blessings. After this sacrifice is made, the worshipper is transformed from defilement to purity.

### **Foundation Sacrifice**

This is made at the beginning of a new venture. The sacrifice makes the business thrive. Hardly to anyone in the African society embark on anything unless the divinity invokes their blessings.

### **Preventive Sacrifice**

It is offered to stop an impending disaster. The worshipper seeks protection through these sacrifices. The worshipper is allowed to replace his life by sacrificing with

specific items. The victim or items are robbed against the body of the worshiper and treated like a corpse.

### **Meal and Drink Offering**

This type of sacrifice takes place daily but mostly it is offered with what the people eat at home. Libation is poured after the meal has been offered to the divinity and the rest is shared among the worshippers as a sacramental feast.

### **3.1.3 RITES CONNECTION WITH PASSAGE OF LIFE**

There are many stages that a man has to pass in life. These are periods when people are metaphysically and sociologically made new beings with new social roles: children become adults, man and women are made husbands and wives and the deceased are made ancestors. The rituals associated with each one of them are called rites of passage. Each of these stages is distinctive and is observed in West African communities with religious ceremonies. They include birth rites, puberty rites, marriage rites and funeral rites. Since these rites differ from one ethnic group to another, we would examine the rites in certain ethnic groups.

#### **The Yoruba**

a. **Birth Rites:-** Child bearing among the Yoruba is of great importance. They often regard the new child as the reincarnation of an ancestor. Pregnant women are catered for to ensure safe delivery. Medicine men provide talisman, amulets and rings to ward off evil forces. The pregnant woman must also observe certain taboos. She must be indoor during scorching sun to prevent the spirit of the born-die children from entering her womb.

The first eight days of the baby's arrival are the most critical. The baby is still regarded as a visitor whose stay on earth is not yet certain. On the third day, the Ifa oracle through the "Esa – n – taye" ceremony finds out what the destiny of the child is. The naming ceremony of the female child is on the eighth day while the ninth day is for the male. The parents or grandparents or any other elderly person in the family performs the naming ceremony. Materials used are honey, salt, sugar (which symbolizes the goodness of earthy), bitter – kola (to symbolize a safe journey through life) and kolanut (to ward off evil). The materials are for the guests at the ceremony. The name of the child usually reflects the circumstances of the child's birth or that of the family at the time of the birth.

#### **b. Puberty Rites**

The major puberty rite in Yorubaland is the circumcision rite. This is carried out when a boy twenty years old or before he takes a wife. As a sign of maturity, a female child may also be circumcised. Tattooing of shoulders, back, trunk and thighs are also done by girls. Marriage can only be done if this rite has been observed.

#### **c. Marriage**

Marriage in the Yoruba culture is a duty, a requirement and a rhythm of life. It is not optional. Everybody is expected to fulfill this obligation. It is an event that also involves the whole community.

When a girl is ready for marriage (if she has not been betrothed at birth), a group from the prospective husband's house approaches the girl's family. The wife's family asks for time of consideration. They use the period to consult the oracle and carry out secret investigations into the two families to see if there are any anti-society diseases (insanity or leprosy) among them. The union and marriage negotiations commence when the report of their investigation proves positive. The groom's family understands the Idana. They pay the bride price- a token of gratitude for the care of the girl since childhood and for giving her out in marriage to them. The gift also legalizes the marriage. The man that paid the bride price owns the wife and the children born.

Marriage occasion is always a joyous occasion. Prayers are offered for the new bride. The tutelary divinity is also invoked to bless, protect and guard the girl. At her husband's house, she would be introduced and prayed for and welcomed to her new home.

### **The Mende**

#### **a. Birth**

An elderly woman midwifes pregnant women among the Mende. Men are not allowed to be in the house during the labour and delivery time. Naming ceremony is on the fourth day for males and the third day for females. The child is also named according to the circumstances obtaining at the time of the birth. A boy who is born after the death of another child is called Gibas while a girl is called Gilo. Both names means "let this one live". The Mene has a particular way of christening female children. A woman takes the child out, faces the sun; spits on the child's face and give the names. The father, the father's brother or any elderly man in the family in the same procedure give name to the male child.

#### **b. Puberty**

Puberty rites are elaborate. The children (boys and girls) at the age of fourteen or fifteen undergo period of training and initiation into adulthood. The boy is initiated into Poro society and the girl into Sande society. They are given new names after the ceremony.

#### **c. Marriage**

In most cases, the Mende girl has been betrothed early in life. Proper marriage starts as soon as she is initiated into the Sande society. Sex is prohibited for the uninitiated. The boy takes his bridewealth, a lump sum of money and other goods to his father in law. The parents give them to the girl whose consent would be sought on the proposal. The answer is usually positive. Two days later, the husband will send an elderly woman to his parent – in-law for his wife. The girl's mother blesses her by spitting on her hand and rubbing the saliva on the girl's forehead. The girl leaves for her husband's house in company of dancers.

### **The Ashanti**

The pregnant Ashanti woman has many restrictions. She is not allowed to leave the compound and she is to cover her head and breasts when going out become unavoidable. She must not be told that she is pregnant. She must not abuse a divinity. She must not sight blood or any ugly thing. Failure to observe these can lead to a

miscarriage or an abnormal child. She is kept indoors for the first three months. She leaves for her parent's house when the pregnancy becomes eighth months. She stays there till delivery. Female attendants are called in on the delivery day. No special attention is given the new child for the first eight days because no one knows if the child decides to stay on earth. Clothes are provided for the baby and a name is given after eight days. The child is named in line with the day of birth. A baby boy born on Friday is called Kofi and the one on Saturday is called Kwame.

**b. Puberty**

An Ashanti girl marks her puberty rite at the first sign of her menstruation. She informs her mother as soon as she sees her menses for the first time. The mother informs the community. She returns home to pour libation to Nyame and the ancestors. The girls public and armpit hair are shaved. This symbolizes is a new baby in adulthood. A ceremony is performed. Everybody is given enough to eat and to drink. Then the girl is ripe for marriage.

**c. Marriage**

When an Ashanti man decide to take a girl as wife, he presents gift to his parent – in-law. It could be clearing the coca farm or tobacco, fish or meat. This is done to curry the favour of the girl's parents. After the parents' agreement, the ancestors seal the marriage. The girl is then allowed to follow her husband home.

### **3.2 DIVINITIES IN AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGION**

Divinities are gods who emanated from Supreme Deity. They have attribute of the Supreme Being and are in essence His offspring. Thus, the Edo believes Olokun as the son of Osanobwa, the Akan of Ghana regards Abosom as the son of Nyame. These are few examples.

These divinities render service the theocratic government of the world. For example, Orisa – Nla was asked to create and equip the solid earth as well as moulding mans physical structures.

#### **CATEGORIES OF THE DIVINITIES**

They can be divided into three categories based on their positions, functions and influence.

**1. The Primordial Divinities**

These are believed to be the divinities of heaven. They are believed to be in existence with the Supreme Being before the creation of the universe. They usually thought of as parking in the work of creation.

**2. Deified Ancestors**

These are human beings who are deified because of the extraordinary live they have lived. The examples are Jakuta and Sango. Jakuta was the original thunder divinity while Sango was the fourth Alaafin of Oyo. Sango was a powerful figure while on earth. He spits fire while speaking. At death, he was deified and was given the attributes of Jakuta and he becomes the thunder divinity in Yorubaland.

### **3. Personification of Nature and Phenomena**

These groups of divinities are spirits associated with hills, mountains, rivers, brooks, lakes or thick forest. Whatever is considered the abode of spirits becomes a sacred place. Examples of these are the Olumo rock at Abeokuta and the Oke-Ibadan at Ibadan. These two hills are worshipped for having protected the people in times of war. There is also the Osun River at Osogbo whom the adherents believed to have the ability of giving children to the barren.

#### **3.2.1 DIVINITIES IN DIFFERENT AFRICAN LOCALITIES**

##### **1. Orisa – Nla**

This is the arch-divinities among the Yoruba. He is also called Obatala. He was believed to have been given the work of creation. He moulds man's physical form and creates the deformed person at will. He is often described as the deputy of son of Olodumare.

##### **Attribute**

##### **Purity**

Orisa – nla associated with white colour which symbolizes purity and transparency. His whitewashed temple has emblems of white chalk, white containers and his priests wear white clothes. His sacrificial foods include snail (bloodless) and shea – butter. The water in his shrine is changed everyday to retain absolute freshness. The one who draws the water must not talk to anybody until she has fetched the water from the designated river. He represents the purity of Olodumare. The adherents are expected to be plain, pure, clean and men of proven integrity.

##### **Authority**

In recognition of his delegated powers from God, he is usually called Alabalase- the proposer that wields the scepter. He passes this scepter to kings to confirm them of divine rulership.

Orisa – Nla is worshipped all over Yorubaland and the barren comes to him for children while the sick comes for healing too. They are made to drink from the water in his shrine at treatment.

##### **Orunmila**

Orumila or Ifa is the oracle divinity in Yorubaland. He is one of Olodumare's principal representatives on earth. He was said to know when man's destiny was being determined. So he is called 'Eleri-Ipin' that is the witness of destiny.

Great wisdom and power and attribute to him and he also tells the priest (Babalawo) what roots and leaves could be used for healing purposes. Osanyin who is said to be a brother, friend, partner or servant of Orunmila assists him in discharging duties.

The following are mysterious stories that surround this legendary figure:

- a. He was sent to earth by Olodumare for being too clever when he outwitted Olodumare in an argument.
- b. He had no bones in his body and so he is carried about by others.
- c. Orumila treated Olodumare's illness
- d. Orunmila had no brother or sister until he used 180 palm nuts to divine for his mother who then gave birth to Osanyin.

- e. Orunmila descended from heaven and was found amidst banana plant with an opele, Ifa palm-nuts, Ifa vessel and an offering consisting of a rat, a fish, snails and a female goat. He was then brought home after several sacrifice.

He taught Babalawos the art of divining and healing. Thereafter, he departed to an unknown place.

He knows everything about man and gives right counsel; people consult him throughout the passage of life (birth, marriage, sickness, business ventures and death). In consulting Orunmila, the diviner makes use of the geomantic form of divination know as Ifa. The word is at times used synonymously with Orunmila, but it is used often to refer to the system of divination. There are many stories connected to with each Ifa corpus. The story told by the diviner is identified with the client's problem, and he is instructed to do what the character in the story did to overcome his problems. Orunmila's worship is widespread in Yorubaland. His shrine is located in the priest's house. The white plate that contains palm-kernels, cowries, graven elephant tusks is his emblem. The priest makes sacrifices according to Orunmila's instruction. A simple sacrifice may involve pouring of palm – oil and breaking of Kola nut and bitter – Kola. An elaborate one may involve killing a fowl or he – goat.

### **Sonpona**

He is regarded exclusively as the smallpox deity. He is seen as a short-tempered and cruel divinity that attacks people with mental illness or smallpox. He has many appellations like 'Olode' that is, the lord of the open or ile-gbona (the hot earth).

He forbids lying, poisoning and bad magic. The punishment must be accepted with cheerfulness, joy and gratitude. Thus people do not mourn the victims of Sopenna. The victims' property is confiscated by the priest and the body is taken to the evil forest. He represents a god of justice.

His shrine is found outside the village. It consists of a mound of earth over which is placed a wide-moulded clay pot called 'agbado'. A special broom made from 'osepotu' (*Sida carpinifolia*) which is smeared with cam wood is placed by the side of the agbada.

The cult was prohibited in 1917. it was observed that some intentionally spread the diseases so that they can inherit the properties of the perceived victims.

### **Ala**

This is the arch-divinity in Igboland. She is the earth goddess called Ale, Ane, Ani or Ana in different parts of the land. As the great mother goddess, she is the spirit of fertility, the ruler of the underworld and the dearest and closest of all the divinities. She is believed to be powerful, beneficent and the custodian of morality.

Her status indicates her as carrying a child in her arms or on her knees to indicate her as the goddess of fertility. Women pray to her for children and farmers pray for good harvest. As the custodian of morality, she gives and administers moral laws.

Her shrine is found on family and communal levels. The Igbo believe that a group is not complete without Ala's shrine because she is the invisible president of the community. The shrine is a clay pot containing eggs, water or palm-wine placed at the foot of cotton tree.

Sacrifices are offered to her before planting commences and before harvesting. Sacrificial items include palm-wine, yams, eggs, cocoyam, garden eggs and other farm products. In some cases, the items may include a tortoise. It is always an occasion of merriment.

### **Amadioha or Kamalu**

This is the Igbo thunder divinity. He is also called Igwe and Ogufe. Like Sango, he descends swiftly on offenders and his judgments are fair. It is only the priest of Amadioha that can bury his victims usually at the spot of the victim's death. The victim's possessions are claimed by the priests. Amadioha is regarded as the giver of rain and fertility. Prayers are offered to him for good harvest and children.

### **Olokun**

Olokun is the Edo arch divinity. The name literally means the owners of the sea. He is regarded as a beneficent divinity. He has all material wellbeing and he provides as he wills. People ask for riches, success in trade and all undertakings.

He is the divinity of inspiration and idealism. His adherents are believed to possess magnetizing mind, overwhelming charm and remarkable accuracy in all things. His emblems include pots containing water, pieces of white chalk, peeled rods and white clothes. White fowls, white pigeon and white clothes are used for his sacrifices. The head of Olokun priests is called the Ohen and he mediates between the people and the deity.

### **Sokogba**

Sokogba is the thunder divinity in Nupeland. He has the characteristics of Sango deity and he punishes offenders too. He provides children and such children are dedicated to him for life. The children he gives enjoy the protection of the divinity.

### **Tano**

This is the arch-divinity in Ashanti land and he is associated with River Tano. He is also called Takora. He is described as a king or great father. He is the creator divinity and his sacred day is Friday. The main temple is found near the source of river Tano but other shrines can be found by rivers and fords. The emblems are found in a basket of brass pan. His adherent observance of certain taboos, for example menstruating women do should not go near the river. He has no sympathy for women, hence there is no priestess. His special food includes eggs, fowls and wine. These are offered regularly.

### **3.2.2 POSITIONS AND DUTIES OF THE DIVINITIES**

The divinities have responsibilities. They are ministers with portfolios in the theocratic government of God. The belief is that God has delegated authority to them.

They are intermediaries. People worship God through them. They are worshipped daily through sacrifices. They have temples, shrines, priests, priestesses and devotees.

They are also semi-autonomous agents. Each of them is the executive head of his department. Their adherents see them as a means to an end and not an end in themselves.

#### **Worship of divinities**

Worship is an expression of man's attitude towards God and other spiritual beings. It is an act of communication and communion between man and the supernatural world. It is a means of strengthening the cord of relationship between God and man and a mean so restoring broken communion as a result of sin.

Worship can be regular or occasional. There are also daily worships to adore God for his protection. The adoration is offered along new requests. It is not always flamboyant when compared with the communal one. Usually, cold water, kolanut or bitter kola is offered to the tutelary divinity of the household or compound. The priest of Orunmila, for example, offers kolanut and pours oil at the shrine before embarking on the day's activities.

People can worship under special arrangements. Preparations are made in line with the need of the occasion. The nature of such worship depends on the prescription of the oracle. The annual festival observed in honour of each divinity is very elaborate and in characterized with merriment.

#### **Objects of worship**

Each divinity has his or her specific sacred objects which can either be symbols or emblems. The symbols are usually the anthropomorphic images of the divinity while the emblems can be sacred objects set aside as visual representations. Iron is the emblem of Ogun while the laterite is that of Esu just external, physical, visual, concrete representation, of the internal concept of spiritual entities. Consequently, these objects can be replaced, removed, or turn into common use without being of the divinity affected. Other objects usually present in the shrine include calabashes, stones, carved images, pots, ax-heads, and metal snakes among others.

The emblems are however kept out of profane gaze and must not be touched by ordinary persons. They are mostly kept in the temple or shrines where the priest and priestesses take care of them daily.

#### **Relationship with the Supreme Being**

1. They are created by God. God relates with them as His sons and daughters.
3. They derive their existence from God. They become lifeless without Him.

4. Each divinity has its own local name in the local language, e.g. Jakuta in Yoruba, Sokogba in Nupe and Amadioha in Igbo all express the wrath of God.
5. They are seen as ministers in charge of various departments of the earth.
6. They are seen as intermediaries between the Supreme Being and man and are only channels through which man could approach the Supreme Being.
7. The divinities in each locality usually form a pantheon over which there is an arch-divine who is more closely related to the Supreme Being like Obatala in Yoruba.

The main weakness of this system of belief is that it is crude and usually leads to turning the means into an end in itself.

### **3.3.1 MAGIC AND MEDICINE**

#### **Definition**

Magic is a ritual activity which influences human or natural events through access to an external mystical force. Thus, magic influences people and events. It involves the manipulation of certain objects to cause a supernatural being to produce or prevent a particular result unobtainable ordinarily. Man bends the forces of nature to his will through his means. Also, man, being a limited being, taps the elemental forces of the universe, to solve the problems confronting him through the use of magical powers.

#### **Forms of Magic**

There are two kinds of magic: homeopathic and contagious.

##### 1) Homeopathic magic

In this type of magic, a magician produces an effect by imitating it with the aid of supernatural powers. It can be used both positively and negatively. It makes use of objects similar to its target to represent the target.

For example, a barren woman may be asked to carry a doll on her back in imitation of a nursing mother. And she gets pregnant eventually. A man with a broken leg may be asked to produce a fowl whose legs would be broken. The fowl would recover and the person whose leg is broken recovers too. In cases of severe drought, water is thrown into the air. The magician then summons rain through incantations. This could also be done by making a thick black smoke like cloud.

##### 2) Contagious/Sympathetic Magic

It is believed that whatever one does to a material object will affect the one with whom the object was in contact with. It is widely believed in West Africa that finger nails, hair, spittle, urine, placenta among others can be used to harm a person. It can also be used for the good of the society. The teeth of snakes, lions and other wild animals prevent wild animals from attacking those carrying such totems.

### 3.3.2 Medicine

This is any substance that can be used to treat or prevent illness or diseases. Medicine is both curative and preventive in the African society. It is the art of using available forces of nature of prevent diseases and to preserve and restore health.

Medicine in Africa is closely associated with religion. Since God is the source and author of medicine, people believe that the medicine man or traditional doctor receives his call from the tutelary divinity and practices in reference to God.

### Religion and Magic Compared

#### a) *Similarities*

Magic and religion are closely related. It may be difficult to separate them.

- 1) Magic and religion recognize the existence of power beyond them.
- 2) They have a common root. They arose as a result of man's sense of need and are man's attempt to deal with the mystery of his environment.
- 3) They are both symbolic. There are objects used to represent supernatural entities. A carved wood may represent a divinity while in magic it may represent the image of an enemy.
- 4) They have taboos that are to be observed.
- 5) They arose from the desire of man to dominate and have power over others.

#### b) *Differences*

- 1) Magic deals with non-human and more arbitrary order of reality while religion seeks to foster fellowship in human relationship and between man and god.
- 2) While magic is used to attain selfish ends most of the time, religion is concerned more with the good of the community by giving sanctions to common laws and norms. Consequently, while religion gives inner sense of sanity, peace and self-being, magic cannot.
- 3) Magic tends to show man how to obtain certain good things by his own efforts. Through magic, power is tapped to satisfy man's needs. Religion on the other hand stresses communion and communication with the divine with submission and appeal in focus through prayers and sacrifices. Religion implies trust, dependence and submission while magic implies self aggrandizement.
- 4) Religion calls for high moral standard from its adherent to ensure his relationship with the divine being. Magic on the other hand depends on knowing the right techniques whether you are morally right or not.

In summary, the two are not mutually exclusive. They have both existed alongside one another across the centuries.

## 3.4 Witchcraft and Sorcery

### 3.4.1 Witchcraft

To most Africans, witchcraft is an ugly reality. Even the scientifically inclined who cannot openly admit this fact have a tingling sensation when they are confronted with

the inexplicable. Those who have also learnt by experience will not hesitate to say that the scholars who have denied the reality of witches are suffering from ignorance.

Witches are believed to be people with inherent power. Although some witches acquired these powers to protect their wards, it is mostly believed that the powers are evils, anti-social are not best used to harm people. They are called Aje, Obayifo Aze, Amozu in Yoruba, Twi, Fon and Igbo respectively. They are mostly women, but men are also found especially at the head of their guilds. Some are born witches while others acquires it. One may possess this power without awareness and can also use it destructively out of ignorance. This is what makes the concept of witchcraft mystifying, appalling and sinister. They operate mainly at night. They attend meetings spiritually because the body of those at the meeting will still be on their beds at home. During this outing if anything happens to the astral body with which they have travelled, that will also happened to the physical body. From confessions, a member 'donate' close relations to these secret societies. This would be regarded as 'meat' to be eaten. They also possess power to render medicines and magic useless in Africa witches are said to be responsible for misfortunate – accidents, sudden deaths, poverty, bareness and human miseries. Some have positive contribution to the society. They can also protect their families.

### **3.4.2 Sorcery**

This is the application of evil magic on people or objects. Life and property can be destroyed. Generally, it is an anti-societal employment of supernatural powers. The following are the deeds of sorcerers.

- 2) A sorcerer may call lightning, elephantiasis, or even apply direct poison on his victim.
- 3) He may kill a victim by means of invocation through homeopathic magic.
- 4) He may curse his victim who may becomes insane or commit suicide.
- 5) He may send will animals (snakes, scorpions) to his victim.

Consequently, they are seen as threats to peaceful coexistence in the society. As a result, most people resort to diviners and medicine-men for protection. Charms, amulets, medicinal drinks and ointments are used for protection as prescribed by diviners.

## **3.5 Religion Leaders**

### **3.5.1 Medicine-Men**

They are also called herbalists and traditional doctors. In the local languages, they are called Dibia (Igbo), Samankwafo (Twi) and Onisegun (Yoruba). To the African mind, sicknesses and misfortunes of this world are spiritual. It requires religious approach for a lasting solution.

In Africa, medicine is part of God's creation. It is associated with religion. So a medicine man does not practice in isolation. He is an intermediary between God and man. The medicine-man as such as accessible, and he is a friend of the community. He plays an important role in communal life.

There is no fixed rule governing the 'calling' of the medicine-man usually, he is called when he is younger relatives. Both a sexes are represented in the profession, but there are more men. Through there are individual characteristics, most medicine-

men are trustworthy, friendly, willing and ready to serve at moderate charges (or at no charge if their patient cannot afford it).

Professionally medicine-men usually undergo training. He is taught the medicinal value, the quality and use of different herbs, leaves, roots, fruits barks, grasses and other things like dead insects, bones, feathers, powers, animal excreta and shells. He is also taught the causes, cures and prevention of common ailments and typical problems. He is trained also to combat witches and sorcerers and the handling of elemental spirits. After training he is publicly initiated and then recognized as a medicine-man. It is important to note that the medicine-men works cooperatively and so training goes on even after formal learning.

### **Functions of Medicine-Men**

- 1 They combat witches, sorcerers and other forms of social misfortunes.
- 2 They serve as doctors. They cure diseases. They discover the cause of the sickness, diagnose the nature and apply the right treatment. They suggest how to prevent future re-occurrence.
- 3 They also practice divination. When individuals or the community at large want to know the cause of certain afflictions, the medicine-men are invited.
- 4 They aid increased productivity and good results. They advise and assist on how to ensure success in business. They prepare examinations success charms for student. A medicine-man has the ability of becoming anti-societal. But the medicine-men believe that the one who does that cannot be prosperous for life. So generally, they help in moulding societal moral values and counsel people in distress.

### **3.5.2 Priesthood in African Society**

The priest is the mediator between man and the gods (God). Each tribe has a local name for the priest. He is called Babalorisa (Yoruba), Obosomofo (Twi), Veduno (Fon) and Atama (Igbo). The ministers in the temples, shrines, sacred groves and other religious centres. He may be set apart from birth or called to the service of the god. Both men and women are eligible. There are two types of priests among the people– the lay priest and professional priest. The lay priest is the family head. He officiates at the domestic or ancestral shrine. They consult the ancestors on behalf of the family or clan. Hence they link the living and the dead together. Priesthood in this category passes on to the most senior person in the family. The professional priest is concerned with the cult of divinities. The called or the one set apart from birth understudies the priest. He succeeds the older priest at death or if the divinity chooses him as the next priest. This period of tutelage may last for several years. While in training, he undertakes series of training in occult knowledge and performance of public rituals. He is also subjected to strict taboos. He needs to be caste, ascetic and abstain from certain foods and clothes. He is usually clothed in white. Where priesthood is non-hereditary, the priest-elect is singled out with signs which indicates that the divinity has elected him as a potential priest. This may involve his disappearance for seven days without being able to give a coherent explanation for it. After this, a diviner would be consulted for confirmation after which he would be installed.

There is also the concept of the divine ruler. The king is considered a divine ruler, hence, he is considered the deputy of the gods on earth. As a result, the king is usually given his staff of office as of that status. It is with the staff that he performs his priestly duty. He leads in rituals and ceremonies that involve the whole community. He is the priest of the community.

### **Functions of Priest**

- 1) **Intercession**  
The priest intercedes with the divinity on behalf of the people. The evils in the community may indicate the ineffectiveness of the priest to be in constant consultation with God.
- 2) **Sacrifices**  
The priest offers sacrifices and say prayers at the shrine. He leads worship during the yearly festival of the divinity. As the custodian of the religion, and keepers of religious treasures and knowledge, he ensure that the emblem and symbols of the divinity are suitable and reverently preserved.
- 3) **Custom**  
He ensures that customs and practices related to the divinity are upheld. He knows the taboos surrounding the cult and transmits them correctly.
- 4) **Divination**  
He divines for the whole community. He is also an herbalist or medicine man.
- 5) **Kingship Issues**  
The priest installs the king. He also performs the necessary rites of burial for the dead king.
- 6) **Counsellor**  
Since he is an important figure in the community, he is a member of the council of he community. He advises people. He settles quarrel and enforces morality.

In summary, the priest is essential in the day-to-day running of the community's affairs. He presides over meetings and communities and serves as judge in most cases and act as director with regard to the general well being of the community.

### **3.5.3 Distinction between the Medicine Men and the Priest**

These personalities are important to the African society. The people believe that without them, the community would be in disarray. Despite the similarities of these people, they are still different in several ways.

- 1) There is difference on point of ecstasy. The priestly function powers is fixed while it breaks out in the medicine-man.
- 2) The priest is more functional in social gathering than the medicine-man.
- 3) The priest fixes times, places and actions of worship while the medicine-man is controlled by the spirit.
- 4) The medicine-man has the spiritual and physical power and knowledge but has no institution like a priest. The priest has an established shrine but the medicine-man has none.

- 5) The medicine-man operates in practical elements; materials and words (incantation) but the priest operates with strict rules.
- 6) Both the priest and the medicine-man use herbs and charms for the benefits of man.

### **3.5.4 Diviners**

As their names implies, they are primarily concerned with acts of divination. Divination is the practice of foretelling the future, reveal the unknown or find out the wish of a divinity or spirit. In most cases, the diviner combines the roles of a medicine-man and diviner (though there are some medicine men who are not diviners). Divination is the means by which individuals and communities find solution to their problems. The desire to know the will of the deity on the future of people's live makes the role of the diviners very important. They are also consulted sometimes during incurable disease; the crises of life, when a barren woman desires children, or, mysterious death or plague.

The Ifa divination, which associated with the cult of Orunmila among the Yoruba, is the most widely used. This system has been copied by the Edo, the Fon and the Ewe. Some divine with stone, gourds and palm-reading. The choice and training of diviners is sometimes hereditary or from the personal decision of prospective diviners. It has no age or sex barrier. During training, the apprentice learns the names, sign of divination figures ceremony before he begins to practice. The diviner like a medicine-man acts as intermediary between man and the supernatural world for the sake of their community. They find out hidden secret and pass them to the people. They are also custodians of the interest and lives of the people. They interpret the mysteries of life, convey the messages of the gods to the devotees and settle disputes. As seers, they unravel the mystery of the universe. Other religious leaders include family and ritual elders and operators at initiation rites. They act as unofficial religious leaders. Religious leaders are the symbolic points of contact between the historical and the spiritual worlds. Their presence makes the life of the community a profound religious ones. West African societies would have lost contact with the religious phenomenon without these religious leaders.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion in this unit you have learnt that, religion is regarded as a cohesive factor in the society. Its aim among others is to foster peace and harmony and uphold moral values in African society. Also that West African has concept for God.

- That African have peculiar ways of worshipping.
- That there are rites in connection with passage of life.
- That there is a place for divinities in the theocratic government of God in African setting.
- That each divinity has its position in the African Traditional Religion.
- That magic and medicine are part of the cultural heritages in African.
- That witchcraft and sorcery are powers known to have inherited from the divinities.
- That priesthood is giving a recognition in the activities of the African Traditional Religion.
- That there is a distinction between the medicine man and a priest.
- That diviners has its position and function in the scheme of African Traditional Religion.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have been exposed to the nature of West African Traditional Religion. The study revealed that West Africans believed in a High God thus the conception about God is peculiar to each locality. It was also discovered that there are different types of worship in West African Traditional Religion and that there are ways by which sacrifices are offered to God.

- It was also learnt that African Traditional Religion recognizes the various stages of human development with its peculiar rites. The study also revealed that divinities are beings that stand between man and God in the theocratic government of God in African Traditional Religion.
- The study also revealed that mysterious powers are recognized as part of the African heritage and thus, magic, medicine, witchcraft, sorcery and diviners are given due recognition in the scheme of African Traditional Religion.

## 6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT

- i) State the attributes of God in West African Traditional Religion.
- ii) Account for sacrifice in the West African Traditional Religion.
- iii) Distinguish between religion and magic.
- iv) What are the functions of a priest in African Traditional Religion

### 6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA

#### **Question 1: State the attitudes of God in West African Traditional Religion**

The attributes of God according to African Traditional Religion are:

- (i) God the creator  
The people see God as the creator of all things. The Yoruba appellation Eleda, reveal him as the owner of creation, while Akan called him Odomankome, meaning originator.
- (ii) Compassionate  
God is seen as a benevolent, kind and merciful king, thus the Yoruba addresses him as the 'Almighty' God that drives away flies for the tailless cow.
- (iii) Immortal  
Africans address God as 'The Mighty Immovable and Ancient of Day'. Africans believe that nothing else will remain if the Supreme Being ceases to exist. They believe that he is the timeless being.
- (iv) Dependable  
In expression of his dependability, the Akan sees God as 'Twi Aduampon' meaning 'Leaning on a there do not fall'. This signifies firmness, reliability and dependability.
- (v) Judge  
God is seen in African sense as the chief judge of the world. It is believed that he's to judge the world on the day of judgment, and his judgment is just and devoid of injustice.
- (vi) Omnipresent

God from the African point of view is said to be everywhere, thus he is been address as Olowogbogbowo-kari-aye, meaning his influences cut-across the whole world.

**Question 2: Account for sacrifice in the West African Traditional Religion**

Sacrifice is a means of communion with Supreme Being in African sense; it helps in gaining forms of the divinity.

The followings are the categories of sacrifices in African sense.

- (ii) Thanksgiving  
This is an offering meant to appreciate the blessings one has received from God, through the divinity. Thus offering strengthening the relationship between man and the divinity. The occasions that call for thanks-offering are bumper harvest, successful expeditions and when victory is won over enemies.
- (iii) Votive offering  
This is an offering upon the promise by the worshipper to the divinity in return for an answered request. Votive offerings are accompanied by dancing, music, eating and drinking.
- (iv) Expiation offering  
This is an atonement sacrifice. It is usually offered when there is crop failure, protracted illness, sudden death, famine plague and diseases. The sacrifice is meant to ward off evils and restore divine blessings.
- (v) Foundation sacrifice  
This is made at the beginning of a new venture. Africans believe that for any business to thrive, there is the need for the divinity to involve their blessing upon such venture.
- (vi) Preventive sacrifice  
This sacrifice is offered to stop an impending disaster. The worshippers is allowed to replace his life by sacrificing with specific items, such items may be used to robbed the victims body or the affected are of the body of the victim.
- (vii) Meals and drinking offering  
This is the type of sacrifice to be offered on daily basis. Libation is poured after the meal has been offered to the divinity and the rest is shared among the worshipers as a sacramental feast.

**Question 3: Distinguish between Religion and Magic**

Magic and religion are closely related

Similarities

- 1) Magic and religion recognize the existence of a power beyond man.
- 2) They arose as a result of mans sense of need and are mans attempt to deal with the mystery of his environment.
- 3) They are both symbolic.
- 4) They have taboos that are to be observed.
- 5) They arose from the desire of man to dominate and have power over others.

Differences

- 1) Magic deals with non-human while religion seeks to foster fellowship in human relationship and between man and God.
- 2) Magic is used to attain selfish and most of the time, religion is concerned with the good of the community.

- 3) Magic tends to show man how to obtain certain good things by his own efforts. Religion on the other hand stresses communion and communication with the divine through prayers and sacrifices.
- 4) Religion calls for high moral standard from its adherents to ensure his relationship with the divine being magic on the other hand depends on knowing the right techniques.

**Question 4: What are the functions of a priest in African Traditional Religion?**

The priest is the mediator between man and the gods are God.

The function of the priest includes:

- 1) Intercession: The priest intercedes with the divinity on behalf of the people for the purpose of presenting such case or cases to God or deity.
- 2) Sacrifices: The priest offer sacrifice and prayers at the shrines. He leads worship daily occasionally and at the yearly festival of the divinity.
- 3) Customs: He ensures that customs and practices related to the divinity are upheld.
- 4) Divination: He divines for the whole community. He is also an herbalist or medicine man.
- 5) Kingship and chieftaincy issues: The priest installs the king. He also performs the necessary rites of burial for the dead king.
- 6) Counselor: He advises people and settled quarrels and disputes as well as enforcement of morality.

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### **UNIT 3: RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE.**

#### **Content**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The need for religious dialogue
  - 3.2 Factors for effective religious dialogue
  - 3.3 Areas of dialogue and co-operation between the three main religions in Nigeria.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutored marked Assignment.
- 7.0 References/ Further Readings

#### **1.0. INTRODUCTION**

**Definition of Dialogue:** Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views. The primary purpose of dialogue is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she can change and grow. Dialogue involves the sharing of understanding and experience. It is a significant method of building community. Dialogue is also a means of expanding self knowledge.

Dialogue is defined as “The Natural consequence of the concern by civilized people of all faiths to eliminate hatred and bigotry (Akinyemi 2001). The objective of dialogue is to prevent and remove all forms of hatred, suspicion, jealousy and vices that are manifestations of religious acrimony.

Dialogue was further explained by Mala as a school of thought which is concerned about person, meeting and encounter and co-operation in work and worship as well as about sustained mutual involvement in local level contact (Mala 1988). Essentially dialogue can lead to a common desire for a search for thorough and reciprocal exchange of information and insight with each other, thus deepening and strengthening our knowledge of each other’s religious truth. Traditionalists, Muslims, and Christians in Nigeria should remember that Nigeria is a pluralistic religious society. The non-Muslims cannot afford to view Islam and Muslims through the eyes of Western Europe, which has almost unitary belief system (Badmos 1993).

Kenny (1982) enjoined Christians to enter into religious discussion with prudence and charity for the purpose of positive results. He also advised that while witnessing to non-Christians they should give due respects to the faith and interest of such people by way of listening and accept them the way they can reason rather than cohesive approach that can lead to violence and unfruitful results.

Pope John Paul II on his visit to Nigeria in February 1982, submitted as follows;

1. That because of the faith that we have in God, Christianity and Islam have many things in common: the privilege of prayer, the duty of justice accompanied by compassion and almsgiving and above all, a sacred respect for the dignity of man
2. Christians and Muslims can engage in dialogue in order to understand each other to understand each better at both the level of scholar and in person-to-person relationship, in the family and in places of work and play.
3. We can promote more honesty and discipline in private and public life, greater courage and wisdom in politics, elimination of political antagonism and removal of discrimination because of religion.
4. Both of us (Christians and Muslims) can spearhead the principle and practice of religious education of children.
5. True dialogue and partnership demand a constant reference of fundamental truth about man, the dignity and equality of human person, individual and as a member of a society (Akinyemi 2001).

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES.**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand what religious dialogue is all about
- Explain the rationale for religious dialogue
- Explain the factors for effective religious dialogue
- Familiarize yourself with the areas of co-operation between the three religions in Nigeria.

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 THE NEED FOR RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE.**

- i. It is a proper mode for discourse with one's neighbour.
- ii. It serves as means of mutual understanding between individual and community
- iii. It is a preferable way of preventing clashes and settling conflicts.
- iv. It is a mode especially and religious discourse.
- v. It is a mode which is not confined to religious men and women but may be accepted by people who are motivated by secular ideologies.
- vi. It is sober and rational and allows both critical and appreciative approaches.

Inter-religious dialogue operates in three areas; the practical where we collaborate to help humanity; the cognitive- where we seek understanding the truth and the spiritual-where we attempt to experience the partner's religion 'from within'. In inter-religious dialogue we unlearn misinformation about each other and begin to know each other as we truly are. Through inter-religious dialogue, we together begin to explore new areas of reality, meaning and of truth, of which neither of the participants had not been aware of before. This is possible because of questions, insights and probing produced in the dialogue.

### **3.2. FACTORS FOR EFFECTIVE RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE.**

For inter-religious dialogue to be effective, the following rules must be observed.

- a) Partners must enter into dialogue so as to learn, change and grow not that we can force change on the other.
- b) It must be a two-sided project within each religious community and between religious communities. That is to say each participant enter into dialogue not only with his partners across the faith line, but with co-religionists, to share with them the fruit of the inter-religious dialogue.
- c) Each participant must assume a complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners. This is so because absence of sincerity prevents dialogue from happening. Where there is no truth there is no dialogue.
- d) Each participant must define himself. It is mandatory that each dialogue partner define what it means to be a authentic member of his tradition.
- e) Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard- and-fast as to where the point of disagreement is. Rather each partner should listen to the other partners with openness while still maintaining integrity.
- f) Persons entering into inter-religious dialogue must be minimally self –critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions. A lack of such self-criticism implies that one's own tradition already has all correct answers to the question of religion. Such an attitude makes dialogue unnecessary and not even impossible.

### **3.3 AREAS OF DIALOGUE AND CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE THREE MAIN RELIGIONS IN NIGERIA**

Carefully scrutinizing the religious situation, it is apparent that the initial stage of introduction, Islam and Christianity made only astonishing shallow penetration in converting the men of Nigeria, with all his historical-cultural roots, social dimensions, self-consciousness and expectations. Total conversion had been impossible. What exists appears to be an extremely complex religious picture out of which several current religious experiences could be discerned. The encounter between Islam and Traditional religion on one hand and between Christianity and the Traditional religion on the other hand resulted in the process of acculturation producing half-caste cultures. Originating from different backgrounds the process of partial withholding and partial rejection becomes glaringly clear. The overall picture tends to be one of unofficial 'baptizing' of African cultural traditions into the Islamic and Christianity

no doubt had little significance in the little life of Nigerians. But as time passed by Nigerian began to live in community with people who are committed to faiths and ideologies other than their own. They live in families sometimes of mixed faiths. The effect was that there came interaction, co-operation and relationship between the adherents of the three religions. Here below are some of these areas.

### **Belief in God**

Islam, Christianity and African Traditional religion teach the existence of God, though different names are accorded HIM. While the Muslims call him Allah, the Christians all him God and the adherents of African religion address Him as Deity. Holding the belief in the oneness of God, Muslims accept that Allah is one, the Merciful and the Creator. Christians also accept God as the creator of all things visible and invisible. Both religions hold that since God is one, the acts of apostasy with Him could be considered as a great sin. As the Creator, Lord of Heaven and Earth, no other being could be compared with Him. Similarly to the above notion, the Traditionalists hold that the Deity is One and Supreme. Being the Creator and the absolute Ruler of the Universe, the Deity is immortal and unique. He is the absolute Controller of the Universe. He is the sustainer of the world. All things are from Him, for Him and responsible to Him. He is the Sovereign ruler of the world, the King, Omnipotent and Omnipresent. From the above sketch, it would be observed that the three religions generally recognize the headship of God, though different approaches are taken to worshipping Him. Morally the three religions regard the Creator as upholding the law and judging men after death in accordance with their actions. In this regard the belief is strong that God is closer to people. He is not just a power but a real Supreme person with life and consciousness. Because He knows all things and He is All-powerful, His existence is clearly common to adherents of the three religions.

### **Belief in Angels**

Occurrence of wonders and philosophical thoughts made man perceive the existence of angels. These angels are not only the messengers of God; they are believed to be helping God in administering the world. In Muslims' conception, these angels are numerous. They are the servants of Allah and are invisible. The Christians hold that angels appear to man not in human physical forms but in spirits to give revelations. They serve as the intermediaries between prophets and God. Similarly the Traditionists accept the angels' cetherioisc known as divinities, as the intermediaries between God and men. Related to the Deity in a unique way, the divinities are not mere creatures but children of the Deity. The Divinities serve God's will and assist Him in the theocratic control and maintenance of the world. From what has been mentioned above, it is clear that the followers of these religions have a kind insight into spiritual realities of life.

### **Belief in Holiness of God**

To understand their religion ethos and philosophical perception, it is very essential to consider the concepts of the spiritual elements in relations to those of God. The holiness of god occupies the highest rung in the ladders of the three religions. Judging by the belief and practice in Islam and Christianity, God (Allah) is holy. Hence mosque and churches are made holy before worship. In the same vein, worshippers

must be free of all evil thoughts. God is holy and in holiness must He be worshipped. Equally acknowledging the ritual and ethical cleanliness, Traditionalists claim that the Deity's clothes in white robe and dwells in clean heaven. He impeccable, Utterance of dirty words is unwelcomed near His shrine. It is required that the minds of those who come to the shrines must be free evil thoughts. When this is done worshippers could then communicate with the Deity. Because of the Deity's holiness, adherents hold that He must be worshipped in holiness. Unquestionably, the three religions emphasize holiness' required of priest's because of their nearness to God.

### **Belief in Heaven and Hell**

The concept of Heaven and Hell has been the focus of worship in African Traditional religion as well as in Islam and Christianity. In Islam, Heaven is regarded as a place of joy. It is a place of meeting with Allah for the righteous. Islam perceives Hell as a place of falling down to a great death for the wicked. But Islam also sees it as a place of purification. There, the purified will be allowed into the paradise after the repentance. In Christianity, no one can inherit paradise without performing certain moral obligations such as love of one another, devotion to God, purity of heart, generosity and absolute faith in Christ. Christianity is Heaven centered. Many places have been prepared for the righteous by the Father in Heaven where they would enjoy a sinless life. Everlasting doom however awaits the unrighteous in hell. Similarly, in African Traditional religion, Hell has been perceived as a place for the wicked that have not been accorded a place in Heaven. Such people continue to suffer. But rather than staying in hell, they would ultimately decide to transmigrate. They become dwarf, evil spirits like the born-to-die. Sometimes they could continue living unstable lives as a cycle without an end. For the three religions therefore, Heaven could be regarded as a place of reward for the righteous as Hell could be seen as a place of punishment for the unrighteousness.

### **Belief in the Last Day**

Religiously, the Last Day serves as the set objective towards what devotion is directed. In order to achieve this set goal an individual has to be sinless before the Creator. Attaching great premium to the justice of the Deity, the Traditionalists hold that He is just and the Judge of men and the world. He giving every creature a name indicates that He wants to be recording the deeds of an individual against his name. This record he will make use of on the Judgment day. In the Last Day therefore, the soul will appear before the Deity for Judgment. The good and the wicked will be given their respective rewards. Equally convinced of the final judgment of the dead in Christ, Christian's believe that every righteous individual would drop the life of flesh and blood and live eternally. This becomes the day of resurrection as Christ Himself rose from the dead. Because all things are put under subjection the last to be destroyed would be death. Unquestionably, believers of the three religions anticipate the last Day when their soul would appear before God for Judgment.

There is no gain saying the fact that religion remains a potent factor to reckon with in the scheme of things in Nigeria. Although Islam and Christianity have now penetrated into almost every facet of Nigerian society, traditional religion has not been completely displaced, Traditionalism prevails. Christianity and Islam spreads. The three religions co-exist. Essentially the basic conventional beliefs held between the

three religions have without doubt fostered understanding among their devotees. Conventional beliefs strengthen harmonious interaction.

Dialogue between the three major religions in Nigeria can be seen as inter religious dialogue. It is a dialogue that concerns itself with the three groups of people who are of different religious beliefs.

This kind of dialogue is not meant to compromise one's faith with the other, but a dialogue that gives room for mutual understanding and an opening for peaceful co-existence in the community. This is necessary because Nigeria is multi-religious nation where members of Christians, Muslims and the African Traditional worshippers are even found within family settings, in public places, market areas and all over, thus it is imperative that they dialogue together so as to understand individual feelings, interest and faith for the purpose of living harmonious life.

Dialogue between these groups of religious beliefs, according to Ishaya (2007) would address the followings;

1. The need to walk together towards the truth.
2. The need to come together to arrest the constant religious crises that characterize Nigerian society.
3. The need to come together to address common problems among them, and issues like education, youth empowerment, health, light, roads and a host of other social amenities.
4. The issue of leadership in the country, and
5. The question of citizenship. It is a belief that if the above suggestions and ideas are addressed squarely. Nigeria will be at peace.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

From the discussion in this unit you have learnt the following:

- That dialogue aims to settle issues of disagreement between two or a group of people in a more matured and logic conclusion.
- Religious dialogue is needful in a pluralistic society like Nigeria for a peaceful co-existence.
- Certain steps needed to be taken for effectiveness of religious dialogue.
- That despite in the destined differences of the three main religious in Nigeria, there are areas where the three agreed on the core issues.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have been able to understand what dialogue is all about and the need for religious dialogue. In addition you are able to understand that there are factors that aim at an effective religious dialogue. The study also afforded you the opportunity to realize that the three main religions in Nigeria agreed on major fundamental issues which boosted the understanding and morale of their adherents in one and the understanding of the opposite adherents on what the other religion teaches.

## **6.0 TUTORED MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

- I. Define dialogue and suggest the best approach to it in a multi-religious society.
- II. What are the ground rules for effective inter-religions dialogue?
- III. Explain the areas where the three main religions in Nigeria agreed.

## **6.1 MARKING GUIDE TO TMA**

### **Question 1: What is dialogue? Suggest the reason for it in a multi-religious society.**

Dialogue is a conversation on a common subject between two or more persons with differing views. The primary purpose of dialogue is for each participant to learn from one and other so that he or she can change and grow.

The need for Religion Dialogue includes:

- ii) It is a proper mode for discourse with ones neighbour.
- iii) It serves as means of mutual understanding between individual and community.
- iv) It is a preferable way of preventing clashes and setting conflicts.
- v) It is a mode which is not confined to religious man and women but may be accepted by people who are motivated by secular ideologies.
- vi) It is sober and rational and allows both critical and appreciative approaches.

### **Question 2: What are the ground rules for effective inter-religious Dialogue?**

- 1) Partners must enter into dialogue so as to learn, change and grow not that we can force change on the other.
- 2) It must be a two-sided project with each religious community and between religious communities.
- 3) Each participant must assume a complete honesty and sincerity in the other partners.
- 4) Each participant must define himself.
- 5) Each participant must come to the dialogue with no hard and fast rule as to where the point of disagreement is.
- 6) Persons entering into inter-religious dialogue must be minimally self critical of both themselves and their own religious traditions.

### **Question 3: Explain the areas where the three main religious in Nigeria agreed.**

The meeting point for the three main religious in Nigeria are:

**1. Belief in God**

Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion teach the existence of God, though different names are accorded him.

**2. Belief in Angels**

The three religions agreed that angels exist. They were seen as the messenger of God who assists him to administering the world. The three religions teach that there are good and benevolent angels as well as bad or evil angels.

**3. Beliefs in Holiness of God**

The three religions place the concept of Holiness of God in highest esteem, thus they all teach and demonstrate Holiness of God both at their worship places and through other actions.

**4. Belief in Heaven and Hell**

The concept of Heaven and Hell has been the focus of worship in African Traditional Religion as well as in Islam and Christianity. The three religions see heaven as a place of joy for the righteous while hell is meant for the sinners and the ungodly individuals.

**5. Belief in the Last Day**

The three religions teach that in the Last Day the souls of men will appear before God for judgment. The good and the wicked people will be given their respective rewards. The good to eternal life while the wicked people to hell fire.

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